

Experimental Method on “Pseudo Delights” Artwork

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ABSTRACT

In 1975 Indonesian contemporary art was believed to be born and marked by the occurrence of the “Black December” event which then initiated the Gerakan Seni Rupa Baru Indonesia. Arts academy also swiftly respond to this phenomenon by putting an art experimentation course as their subject in ITB and ASRI Yogyakarta. Another example was made in 1987, a successful experimental exhibition “Pasaraya Dunia Fantasi” which was held Taman Ismail Marzuki being a headline. It is now four decades the development of experimentation medium celebrated even to other non-art disciplines. Being consider of it the author seeks to bring back the methods of the past that have been adapted to the contexts of today's problems and technological advances. In this research will be a study to develop experimentation model by using some reference logic theory such as design thinking method to produce a work. The development of contemporary art and design has not been widely recognized as an interdisciplinary area that could potentially be developed into a sophisticated and cutting-edge work. In contrast, in some academic and art academic discourses, student's views are narrowed by thickening the barriers between art and design under the pretext of need capitalization of education. Therefore, the author tries to create a method of designing an experimentation work entitled 'Pseudo Delights'. This work has been previously executed and exhibited at the National Gallery. Pseudo Delight is a performative event specially engineered to respond to today's hyper-reality phenomenon. Where the development of information and mass media is celebrated massively. The rise of many social media applications such as *Instagram*, the urban communities can celebrate the exclusivity of their lives in a virtual gallery freely. As to convince others about the image of their modern life that is considered successful often the image that appears then contain excessive payload or false sign. Something paradoxical to the advancement of information technology today is presenting a lot of fake images has become the era of the death of information itself.

Keywords: *experimental arts, design thinking, performative event*

ABSTRAK

Pada tahun 1975 seni rupa kontemporer Indonesia diyakini lahir dengan tanda hadirnya peristiwa “Black December” yang kemudian mengawali Gerakan Seni Rupa Baru Indonesia. Akademi seni juga dengan cepat merespon fenomena ini dengan menambahkan mata kuliah eksperimentas seni sebagai salah satu subjek pendidikan seni di ITB dan ASRI Yogyakarta. Contoh lain ada pada tahun 1987 ketika sebuah pameran eksperimental yang sukses “Pasaraya Dunia Fantasi” yang diadakan Taman Ismail Marzuki menjadi berita utama. Sekarang empat dekade lebih pengembangan media eksperimen telah dirayakan bahkan untuk kegiatan

disiplin non-seni lainnya. Dengan mempertimbangkan hal itu penulis berusaha untuk mengembalikan metode masa lalu yang telah disesuaikan dengan konteks masalah saat ini dan kemajuan teknologi. Dalam penelitian ini akan dilakukan penelitian untuk mengembangkan model eksperimen dengan menggunakan beberapa teori logika referensi seperti merancang metode berpikir untuk menghasilkan suatu karya. Perkembangan seni dan desain kontemporer belum diakui secara luas sebagai bidang interdisipliner yang berpotensi dikembangkan menjadi karya canggih dan mutakhir. Sebaliknya, dalam beberapa wacana akademis dan seni, pandangan siswa dipersempit dengan mempertebal hambatan antara seni dan desain dengan dalih kapitalisasi kebutuhan pendidikan. Oleh karena itu, penulis mencoba membuat metode merancang karya eksperimen berjudul 'Pseudo Delights'. Karya ini sebelumnya telah dieksekusi dan dipamerkan di Galeri Nasional. Pseudo Delights adalah acara performatif yang dirancang khusus untuk merespons fenomena hiper realitas saat ini. Di mana perkembangan informasi dan media massa dirayakan secara masif. Maraknya banyak aplikasi media sosial seperti instagram, masyarakat perkotaan dapat merayakan eksklusivitas kehidupan mereka di galeri virtual secara bebas. Seperti untuk meyakinkan orang lain tentang citra kehidupan modern mereka yang dianggap sukses sering gambar yang muncul kemudian mengandung muatan berlebihan atau tanda palsu. Sesuatu yang paradoks dengan kemajuan teknologi informasi saat ini adalah menghadirkan banyak gambar palsu yang telah menjadi era kematian informasi itu sendiri.

Kata Kunci: seni eksperimental, berpikir desain, peristiwa performatif

PSEUDO DELIGHTS INTRODUCTION

In 2017 I was invited to work with selected artists Exi (s) t at the National Gallery of Jakarta. Exi (s) t is an annual exhibition program for Jakarta youth under 30 years old which was initiated by Mr. FX. Harsono, one of the senior artists of the Indonesian New Art Movement (GSRB), is believed to be the forerunner of Indonesian contemporary art along with the owner of the art and design room Dia.Lo.Gue Mr. Hermawan Tanzil and the young curator of the Cemeti 25-year grant exhibition, Mitha Budhyarto. At that time the Exi (s) t program ran for 5 years, therefore the organizers took the initiative to celebrate the sustainability by holding a collective exhibition of selected artists from Exi (s) t # 1 to # 5 with the title 'Tomorrow As We Know It'.

Exi (s) t is an art mentoring program that culminates in a joint exhibition that is aspired to create young Indonesian contemporary artists who struggle and survive in a specific character area, Jakarta. I call it urbanists. Unlike other professional artists who were born and departed from the fine arts academies in Bandung and Yogyakarta, the average Jakarta artist is an applied art graduate even non-arts who already have other jobs in order to survive. It can be said that these urban artists are involved in the social field of art in an inclusive manner and have

their own anxiety about the typical city issues, namely the problem of chaos and hedonism.

There are 15 artists selected with quite different backgrounds. Some of us are graphic designers, illustrators, photographers and musicians, I myself work as a lecturer in visual communication design. One thing that becomes the equation and then binds us is the issue of urban identity itself. Therefore when faced with the theme offered by curators Evelyn Huang and Shila Ghaisani, the issue that I raised was not separated from the two issues of urbanity that have been mentioned in the previous paragraph. The theme of the 'end of the world' or 'doomsday' embodied in the text "Tomorrow as we know it.", Is the inducement of ideas that lead artists to respond to issues typical of urban cities that are related to the exploitation of technological progress and its impact on humanity.

The "Pseudo Delights" work was then born as a result of long discussions and an arena of exchange of ideas scheduled during the exhibition preparation process. Here is the artist statement that became the foundation of my thinking space:

"Pseudo Delights" is a performative activity that responds to the post-modern technology situation at this time. Where the development of information and mass media is no longer found but celebrated massively. The social media phenomenon of Instagram user darling, for example, has become a common lifestyle of urban society. A lifestyle that tends to be hedonistic is closely related to the life of the people of Jakarta. Therefore, many values of the essential values of life progress are actually burdened by the demands to always look exclusive and luxurious. And with the emergence of many applications on social media such as Instagram, in the end urban communities are given the free space to celebrate the exclusivity of their lives into a virtual gallery. And in order to convince other people (read: followers) about the image of their modern life that is considered successful, often the image that appears is then manipulated so that it contains the charge of excessive marks or even false signs (pseudo sign). This term is often referred to in the book *Hypersemiotics of the thought* of a professor Yasraf Amir Pilliang. The reality is presented beyond the real reality through the help of advanced features of photo manipulation tools such as gallery filters, visual applications, and visual framing techniques. This becomes a paradoxical thing for the advancement of information technology today which actually presents a lot of false images that indicate the death of the information itself.

PERFORMANCE ART PARTICIPATORY

What I did in this work was that I designed an event that was adopted from everyday reality, entered into a gallery, namely by changing one corner of the National Gallery into a promotion room for dessert products (a dessert from the fine dining tradition in West which is usually made feels sweet). White long tables are beautifully arranged with various beautiful tools and flower decorations deliberately presented to adjust the concept of modern aristocratic dining procedures. On the right and left there is a photo menu that I took from the virtual gallery Instagram, some of my close friends who have a great hobby of posting about their lifestyle and daily consumption patterns. I used plowing method that was taking their photos secretly without asking them permission first, I acted that as a sign that today voyeurism and/or peeping culture also seem to thrive in the psychological aspects of urban society. Myself included. I have calculated the risk somehow, so that this antagonistic strategy does not necessarily let me take off without direction. When the opening of the exhibition where this event was executed I invited my good friends and explained the concept and justification of my work. It was proven that none of them had any problems with my action.

Continuing the narrative about Pseudo Delights, the layout or lay-out of the menu photos from Instagram I show in accordance with the appearance of their social media complete with profile photos, location info, number of likes, and comments netted. There are about 6 fake 'menus' on the wall along with various food ingredients I prepare when visitors order one from the menu. On the contrary, from the menu image displayed on the wall, the food menu material that I tried actually came from everyday food products that were 'cheap' and tended to be underestimated by both instant products and traditional foods such as biscuits, icing sugar, cream, getuk, even combro (products processed cassava from West Java). The contradiction of the mated symbols in a narrative is a sign of my initial effort to conduct an experiment on the work.

I then acted as a chef and waiter who made and delivered food orders that visitors requested. The purchase system is free, but with the condition that visitors who want to order food, I must first put a round sticker on the bottom right of the menu so that at the end of this performative activity, which food menu is the favorite. This round sticker also resembles a sign of activity that occurs in the art market the main route is when an artwork has been sold out. Thus I want to design a situation of perception of works of art where art audiences or art lovers seem to be anesthetized and feel they do not feel distant from the artwork itself even they can respond and consume the artwork literally. For this approach to the audiences I named the methods was using 'instruction based art' which close to gamification paradigm. In the art world we use to call it partisipatory art method who build aesthetical relation between art subject and object art with interactions.

However, the process of executing this performance activity is not without constraints. I as the sole performer of this performance art is quite overwhelmed by the number of visitors who enthusiastically want to taste this work. I serve them personally one by one and explain many times my concepts and alignments about the issues I raise with them. This causes the time needed to serve each person to be long enough so that it is less efficient if you want to embrace as many people as possible.

The lack of preparation time because it collides with my teaching time, makes compromises as a reasonable solution so that this event can be held. Contemporary art allows the process of producing works of art can also be seen as art itself or what we often hear the term 'process art'. Therefore, I continue to carry out my scenario design work and claim it as a prototype work that has not been completed and can be developed at any time.



Figure 1. A dessert menu was made by local food cassave 'misro' (privat doc.)



Figure 2. Another dessert menu was made by ordinary crackers (privat doc.)



Figure 3. Audiences was queueing to have artist's service (privat doc.)



Figure 4. Audiences was queueing to have artist's service (privat doc.)

ENHANCEMENT ARTWORK WITH DESIGN THINKING METHODS

... creativity is the habit of continually doing things in new ways to make a positive difference to our life (Hyper Island, 2016)

In the academic environment that works as a lecturer, I am obliged to carry out the Tri Dharma of Higher Education as determined by the Director General of Higher Education in Indonesia, including the areas of Teaching, Scientific Research, and Community Service. I can use this to develop the art work process that I have done by first converting it into a scientific research with the aim of achieving research is to produce an innovation.

Although quite active in the social field of fine arts, my way of thinking was influenced by the scientific background of visual communication design where I completed a bachelor's degree program. Therefore, I will apply the design thinking method in the development of Pseudo Delights performative artwork. This reminds us also of the fact that research-based art whose data collection resembles design research methods has been widely practiced in Indonesian contemporary art discourses. One of the artists who have done the method even from the 1980s is Mr. FX Harsono, one of the mentors of the Exi (s) t exhibition program. The above

premise is also a celebration of the value offered by the contemporary art school that art is believed to be able to be merged back with any aspects beyond the issue of art itself both its application to non-arts. This includes design.

Design thinking in the perspective of the way of thinking is a method of answering creative problems involving several relevant stakeholders from several different disciplines. The term design thinking has existed since the 1960s initially in America to answer product design needs. Then it was more popularized by the early 2000s by Stanford University by including it in curriculum content for engineering students. This method focuses on creating innovative solutions to human needs or human-centered design.

Double diamond is a scheme that is commonly used in the application of thinking design methods that are circulating at this time may have gained a lot of interpretation and expansion of meaning. There are several stages from problem finding to problem solving that must be passed to apply this method according to the British Design Council, IDEO's human centered ideology, namely:

1. Discover: do research, find and find the source of the problem.
2. Define: search for synthesis, select the problem area to be focused.
3. Develop: develop ideas and potential solutions in several alternatives.
4. Deliver: implement a solution that works well.
5. Solution: the problem is solved for the context of the time.

Whereas according to the Stanford School of Design, the design thinking process can be elaborated into:

1. Empathize, empathize and try to find out from another human's point of view.
2. Define, decide the source of the problem.
3. Ideate, elaborating the idea of creation in a sketch
4. Prototype, make some prototypes or dummy.
5. Test, finalize selected prototypes into finished products.

And the 5 things above are cycles that can be repeated depending on deadlines and supporting resources. This is also the application of an ideology even a design process will never stop.

Based on the aforementioned scheme, the first stage of design thinking method can be applied, namely empathize, that in the case of the development of "Pseudo Delights" work there are several problems that arise based on input from stakeholders, namely previous work participants, fellow performance artists who also use food as the medium. From the participants of the previous work, the input which expressed the problem was the lack of instructions that could invite them to interact with the work. Then for fellow artists said artistic objects that arouse the intuition of the audience to participate are also less mature. Symbols that are contradictory to excessive reality such as the use of food raw materials which are

underestimated and considered village-style food (foods considered to be produced for low-income community consumption) are also less thickened.

At the Define stage, then I as a researcher determined that the problem was in the aspect of human orientation design that was less elaborated so that it had an impact on the pattern of interaction. The thing that later became my focus was how to produce an object of work which included a combination of interactive digital design and instruction design in accordance with the input of stakeholders number one and three.

Until the Ideate stage, I again developed what menus can be processed so that it can outwit the perceptions of prospective participants because the raw materials contrast with what is expected. The location of the event is also considered to be no longer executed in a gallery but on a public site that can be accessed by a wider audiences.

I consider the prototype stage to be implemented even though it is not in a systematic order. Because it starts with the logic of art work I think this can be claimed as legitimate because the work of intuition sometimes appears randomly. Therefore the journey of "Pseudo Delights" that has been carried out for 3 weeks at the National Gallery in 2017 is the prototyping stage itself. However this prototyping process should be continued to refine some shortcomings of the first prototype so the work will improve. The second prototyping will take place at Studio Plesungan this early November on Undisclosed Territory #11 performance art event, Karang Anyar. A good coincidence that I was invited by Melati Suryodarmo to participate again this year with a theme "You are what you eat." My scenario is I will elaborate some local food that is considered as low culture or 'kampung' dishes.

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Deret foto berwarna terpanjang di panggung terbuka Studio Plesungan, Karanganyar, Jawa Tengah. Bukan foto biasa, melainkan tangkapan layar dari unggahan beberapa orang di Instagram. Foto-foto makanan itu mengunggah selera.

Memilik dari keterangan yang tertulis, makanan berupa kue itu adalah menu-menu keluaran restoran atau kafe, entah dari negara mana. Makanan itu kemungkinan dipotret dan diunggah di media sosial tersebut oleh para pemesannya sebelum disantap.

Beberapa meter dari foto tersebut, seniman Fransisca Retno bergulat dengan alat-alat masak. Dia sedang melakukan pertunjukan yang sekilas mirip dengan demo memasak. Bahan utamanya adalah kue-kue tradisional berupa getuk, serabi, dan timun. Tungganya dengan cektan menghias makanan kampung itu. Bernoda potongan keju, krim whipping serta cracker, sajian itu berubah rupa layaknya makanan mewah.

Beberapa kali dia mendekatkan hasil karyanya dengan foto-foto makanan tadi untuk memastikan kemiripannya. Setelah itu, ia memperlihatkan penonton menyantap hasil karyanya. Syaratnya, sebelum menyantapnya, penonton harus menotret makanan tersebut dan mengunggah di Instagram dengan dibubuhi tagar #pseudoDelight. Fransisca menyediakan beberapa bunga imitasi untuk penghias agar makanan lebih cantik saat dipotret.

Melalui pertunjukan seni performe berjudul *Pseudo Delight* itu, Fransisca mencoba menyajikan realitas kehidupan masyarakat masa kini. Aktivitas makan bukan sekadar memenuhi kebutuhan biologis, tapi juga bagian dari gaya hidup. "Mereka memamerkan makanan yang disantapnya melalui media sosial," kata Fransisca. Seolah ada korelasi antara bentuk makanan, keindahan gambar, kelezatan, dan status sosial. "Padahal semuanya hanya semu."

Aplikasi pengambil gambar di telepon pintar disebutnya sebagai peralatan manipulatif. Perangkat itu bisa membuat obyek biasa menjadi jauh lebih indah. Selain itu, penggunaan jajanan kampung sebagai material pertunjukan tersebut seolah-olah menjadi olak-olok terhadap realitas tersebut. Hasil potret para



Seniman Fransisca Retno menyajikan karya *Pseudo Delight* dalam ajang *Undisclosed Territory* di Studio Plesungan Karanganyar, Ahad 11 November 2018.

Serabi hingga Tudung Saji

Undisclosed Territory mengajak seniman merespons makanan.



Seniman Bobby Ari Setyawan menyajikan karya *Tudung Saji* dalam ajang *Undisclosed Territory* di Studio Plesungan Karanganyar, Ahad 11 November 2018.

penonton yang diunggah di Instagram ternyata juga tidak kalah dengan foto makanan di restoran atau kafe kelas atas.

Karya pengajar desain grafis dan ilustrator itu menjadi bagian dari acara *Undisclosed Territory* #11, yang digelar di Studio Plesungan, Karanganyar, Jawa Tengah, 9-11 November 2018. Belasan seniman menyuguhkan karya seni performe dalam acara yang digagas pendiri Studio Plesungan, Mélati Suryodarmo, tersebut.

Tahun ini, *Undisclosed Territory* menyajikan tema utama "We Are What We Eat". "Sebuah ungkapan yang sebenarnya sudah sering didengar," ujar Melati. Pada dasarnya, kehidupan manusia dipengaruhi berbagai faktor, salah satunya makanan

yang dikonsumsi.

Makanan dan budaya merupakan dua hal yang saling mempengaruhi. "Keduanya juga saling memiliki keterkaitan," ucapnya. Dia mencontohkan tradisi kenduri di Indonesia, sajian kulakan pada hari Thanksgiving, hingga sajian telur saat Paskah.

Masyarakat Eropa yang telah makan dan biasa mengonsumsi biji-bijian sebagai makanan pokok, menurut Melati, pada

"Seolah ada korelasi antara bentuk makanan, keindahan gambar, kelezatan, dan status sosial. Padahal semuanya hanya semu."

akhirnya terpengaruh dengan kebiasaan masyarakat Amerika yang makan kentang. Teknologi pangan, industri, dan transportasi telah membawa berbagai jenis makanan dari belahan dunia lain ke supermarket terdekat.

Dalam dunia seni kontemporer, ia melanjutkan, gagasan tradisi ritual dan makanan telah dikenal di seni pertunjukan dan seni visual. Dalam sejarah seni pertunjukan Barat, makanan digunakan sebagai bahan utama

atau obyek atau bahkan subyek utama. *Undisclosed Territory* mengajak para seniman mencoba mengeksplorasi pemikiran-pemikiran dalam menyikapi hal itu.

Seniman lain, koreografer Bobby Ari Setyawan, menyuguhkan pertunjukan berbeda dengan perpaduan pertunjukan tradisional dengan kontemporer. Melalui karyanya yang berjudul *Tudung Saji*, Bobby dan sembilan rekannya mengawali koreografi dengan memperagakan adegan kenduren atau kondangan yang banyak dilakukan masyarakat perdesaan pada hari-hari tertentu.

Mereka duduk bersila mengelilingi dua tudung saji yang diletakkan di tengah panggung. Sembari memegang piring kosong, mulut mereka sibuk merapal *clo-doa*. Suara dentingan piring yang beradu dengan lantai membuat pertunjukan di bawah guyruran hujan itu bernuansa misterius. Selanjutnya, Bobby menari dengan mengeksplorasi tudung saji di tengah panggung. Dia seolah ingin menutup tabuhnya dengan tudung saji.

Bagi Bobby, tudung saji merupakan benda paling misterius dalam acara kenduri. "Saat menghadiri kenduri, kita tidak pernah tahu masakan apa yang tersaji di bawah tudung saji sebelum secara dimulainya," ucap Bobby. Menyayangkan masakan yang mungkin terhidang di bawah tudung saji merupakan perpaduan rasa penasaran dan harapan. ●

Figure 5. Article from national newspaper (Tempo doc.)



Figure 6. Pseudo Delights layout for Undisclosed Territory #11 (privat doc.)

ART, DESIGN, AND EVERYDAY LIFE ACTIVITY

The development of information technology and the current globalization is happening in this contemporary era generates consequences that inevitably that is becoming increasingly elastic. The boundaries of conventional terminology that used to be very thick began to fade. Therefore, it is now important for the academy to be more flexible to adapt to the times, and processing collaborations should be more enhanced to produce innovations. Hopefully, these innovations can be used to respond to the problematic of the society today with the medium of art as well as design as its vehicles.

As Joseph Beuys ever said that everybody is an artist, for now, can be so much relevant, like also Jeff Koons ever said there was no separation between art and everyday life (object). As postmodern icons, these artists have influenced me to take art more further even to everyday life activities. And I realized this action art is not only the one because medium performance art has been developed for almost 60 years since the Fluxus. In order to honour that movement, I think it is important to keep continuing the experiment with conceptual thinking so arts can be adjusted to its functions in every era.

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