



UTE META BAUER :

# KURATOR YANG PUNYA VISI DAN NYALI

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Foto dokumentasi penulis

Duduk bersama, tertawa bersama, dialog bersama; sosok yang sangat bersahaja. Itulah kiranya yang tampak pertama dari Ute Meta Bauer, kurator internasional tersohor—berperan pada *Dokumenta 11* dan *Berlin Biennale 3*—direktur program visual arts di MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology), guru besar *Theory, Practice and Transfer of Contemporary Art*, aktivis perempuan, pluralisme dan budaya.

Ia, yang sebenarnya menjadi bintang tamu pada *workshop "Multi-Faceted Curator"* (diadakan oleh Goethe Institut bekerjasama dengan [Asia-Europe Foundation](#)), malah duduk sebagai pengamat bersama pengamat yang lain. Ia seakan tidak ingin menonjolkan kepandaian dan keahliannya, dan tetap rendah hati sepanjang seminar berlangsung. Malah, ketika lampu sorot menyinari dirinya, saat presentasi di Bandung, ia meminta agar lampu jangan diarahkan ke dirinya. Cara ia berbicara pun tidak menyombong. Tapi, justru sikapnya yang bersahaja itulah memberi aksentuasi tersendiri pada sosok perempuan dengan segudang pengalaman penting.

Ia menjadi kurator selama 18 tahun, menjadi guru besar perempuan pertama

pada universitas yang berumur 300 tahun di Jena, Artistic Director dari *Künstlerhaus Stuttgart*, guru besar di *Academy of Fine Arts* di Vienna, kepala *the Institute for Art and Cultural Science*, dan direktur pendiri dari *Norwegian Office for Contemporary Art*, Oslo. Selain berperan pada *Dokumenta* dan *Berlin Biennale*, ia juga mengkuratori berbagai pameran, termasuk *Architectures of Discourse* (Barcelona, 2001), *First Story—Women Building/New Narratives for the 21st Century* for the *European Cultural Capital Porto 2001*, dan program *the Artist-in-Residence* di *ArtPace*, San Antonio, Texas (2004).

Selain menjadi pengamat, ia juga menjadi fasilitator pada kelompok yang mendiskusikan "representasi" kuratorial pada *workshop "Multi-Faceted Curator"*. Secara halus dan sangat profesional, ia berhasil membimbing kelompok ini pada pertanyaan "representasi apa dan untuk siapa?", serta kesimpulan bahwa "hanya representasi" tidaklah relevan. Lebih penting bagi seorang kurator untuk menciptakan ruang dan suasana yang memungkinkan umpan balik dan kritik.

Ketika ditanya apa yang paling penting baginya sebagai kurator, ia

menjawab: akses. Sebagai kurator ia ingin memberi akses pada informasi dan praktik seni kepada sebanyak mungkin orang. Ia juga mengidamkan agar budaya bisa memainkan peran lebih mendalam dan tidak terpuruk hanya menjadi hiburan. Pertemuan kurator muda dari berbagai negara di Eropa dan Asia seperti yang terjadi selama satu minggu *workshop* ia anggap penting sekali, karena memungkinkan pertukaran pandangan dari berbagai sudut, termasuk berbagai budaya. Untuk itu ia menghadiri dan memberikan kontribusi kepada pertemuan "Multi-Faceted Curator" bahkan tanpa honor.

Kuratorial, katanya, merupakan refleksi artistik yang dapat mendorong semangat masyarakat. Berbincang mengenai posisi kurator, ia mengatakan, baginya ada tiga hal yang ia junjung tinggi: memiliki nyali, imajinasi, dan tanggung jawab.<sup>[1]</sup>

**Uta Meta Bauer:**  
**The curator with vision and guts**

*Carla Bianpoen*

*Photo is from the writer*

She is a very down-to-earth person, with whom you can sit, laugh, and talk freely. She is Uta Meta Bauer, the director of Visual Arts Programme at Massachusetts Institute of Technology; professor of theory, practice and transfer of contemporary art; activist on gender equality, pluralism, and culture.

She was meant to be the guest star for “Multi-faceted Curator” workshops (co-organised by Goethe Institut and **Asia-Europe Foundation**), but instead she chose to sit as an observer together with some others, apparently to keep her profile low. This happened throughout the seminar. In one occasion, after a spotlight was spotted to her during a presentation in Bandung, she immediately asked the lighting man to direct his light somewhere else. She also maintained her humble tone while speaking, and it is this very humble attitude that differentiates this experience-rich woman from others.

She has been working as a curator for 18 years. She is the first woman professor at the 300-year old Jena University; the artistic director at Künstlerhaus Stuttgart, a professor at Academy of Fine Arts of Vienna; the head of the Institute for Art and Cultural Science; and the founding director of Norwegian Office for Contemporary Art in Oslo. Besides active at Documenta and Berlin Biennale, she also curated many exhibitions, including Architectures of Discourse (Barcelona 2001), First Story – Women Building/New Narratives for the 21<sup>st</sup> century for the European Cultural Capital Porto 2001, and artist-in-residence of ArtPace, San Antonio, Texas (2004).

In “Multi-faceted Curator,” besides acting as observer, she also played the role of facilitator in a group discussing on “representation.” Smoothly and professionally, she has been successful in bringing the group to the question “what representation? And for whom?” Hence, a conclusion like “it is only a representation” is no longer relevant, because a more important issue for a curator is to create a conducive space and ambience for feedbacks and critics.

Someone asked, what is the most important thing to work as a curator; She answered: accessibility. As a curator, she wants to give access to information and art practices to as many people as possible. She also dreams about the increasing role on culture in the society beyond a mere entertainment. This one-week meeting of young curators from European and Asian countries is very important to her, to allow an exchange of views, inclusive that of cultural views. To show this view, she was willing to take part and contribute in this meeting without any honorarium.

Curatorial, according to her, is an artistic reflection that can boost society’s spirit. In the midst of discussing curator’s position in this world, she shared her view on values that she upholds: guts, imagination and responsibility.

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