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DARI LOKAKARYA “MULTI-FACETED CURATOR”

KURATOR, SENI RUPA KONTEMPORER DAN MULTIKULTURALISME

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Foto dokumentasi Goethe Institute Jakarta



Selama 5 hari, 6-11 Maret 2006 lalu, belasan kurator dari berbagai negara Asia dan Eropa berkumpul di Jakarta dan Bandung. Mereka bertemu, berdiskusi, membahas tantangan kerja kurator dalam praktek seni rupa kontemporer yang terus berubah. Mereka mencari kemungkinan kerjasama, merangkai jaringan, dengan kesadaran multikulturalisme.

Acara lokakarya “Multi-Faceted Curator” (selanjutnya disingkat MFC) ini diselenggarakan oleh Goethe-Institut Jakarta (selanjutnya ditulis GIJ) dan [Asia-Europe Foundation \(ASEF\)](#). Bagi pihak GIJ, MFC sebenarnya berdampingan

dengan proyek seni rupa/fotografi “artconneXions” yang melibatkan sejumlah kurator dan fotografer dalam sebuah proyek kerjasama lintas budaya. Hasil karya dari proses kerjasama ini kemudian ditampilkan dalam pameran bertajuk “artconneXions” yang juga akan berkeliling ke sejumlah kota/negara. Di Indonesia, acara ini dipamerkan di Museum Nasional, Jakarta, dari tanggal 7-28 Maret 2006. Sementara bagi ASEF, ini adalah salah satu dari sekian banyak kegiatan kerjasama seni-budaya antara Asia dan Eropa yang diprakarsainya.

MFC adalah acara besar dan penting bagi GIJ dan ASEF. Pihak ASEF, yang

diwakili oleh pejabat bidang kerjasama kebudayaan, Marie Le Sourd, hadir dan sibuk menjaga kelancaran acara di Jakarta dan Bandung. Sementara dari pihak GIJ, Dr. Marla Stukenberg, Kepala Bagian Program Budaya—yang mencakup wilayah Asia Tenggara, Australia dan Selandia Baru—dengan tekun mengarahkan dan mengikuti seluruh proses lokakarya. Arti penting acara ini makin ditegaskan dengan kehadiran Dr. Hans-Georg Knopp. Ia adalah Sekjen Goethe-Institut, yang pernah menjabat direktur lembaga kerjasama seni-budaya internasional House of World Cultures, Berlin. Tuan Knopp ikut tekun menyimak diskusi-diskusi dalam sesi lokakarya ini selama dua hari (6-7 Maret) penuh. Tak cukup dengan itu, penyelenggara menghadirkan juga Dr. Ute Metta Bauer, kurator internasional dengan segudang pengalaman di berbagai acara seni rupa kelas dunia, yang sekarang menjabat direktur Program Seni Rupa di MIT. Ute, demikian panggilan akrabnya, hadir sebagai pengamat. Ia juga menyampaikan dua presentasi publik di Bandung dan Jakarta sebagai pelengkap acara MFC. (Lebih jauh tentang Ute Metta Bauer, baca boks artikel ini).

MFC, dirancang sebagai forum pertemuan kurator antarnegara untuk membahas soal-soal seputar praktek



kerja kuratorial lintas-negara dan lintas-budaya. Agenda pokoknya adalah mencari kemungkinan perumusan dan penerapan strategi-strategi baru bagi kerja kuratorial yang dapat menghadirkan proses kerjasama seni yang bersifat lintas-budaya, lintas-negara, di masa sekarang dan masa depan.

Dengan tujuan seperti itu, maka jadi jelas mengapa kurator yang diundang adalah mereka yang rata-rata berusia 30-an, dan baru beberapa tahun terakhir ini aktif mengerjakan berbagai kerja kuratorial secara berpindah-pindah di berbagai negara. Harapannya, mereka dapat berkenalan, bertemu, bertukarpikiran dan berkesempatan menjalin jaringan bagi kerjasama di masa depan. Penyelenggara memang sudah berniat menjadikan forum ini penuh suasana "multikulturalisme". Bayangkan ada sepuluh kurator mewakili negara-negara Eropa, sembilan mewakili negara-negara Asia, ditambah tiga orang narasumber (satu orang *resource curators*, Dr. Angelika Nollert, berhalangan hadir), dan tujuh orang pengamat aktif (jurnalis, penulis, kurator, akademisi). Saya hadir bersama rombongan terakhir ini, diundang sebagai pengamat sekaligus mewakili majalah Visual Arts.

Sudah sejak hari pertama, saat jamuan makan malam menyambut para peserta

di Jakarta, persoalan multikulturalisme mulai hadir karena identitas diri sejumlah peserta yang benar-benar "multikultural". Pertanyaan basa-basi yang saya lontarkan saat berkenalan dengan beberapa peserta: "Anda berasal dari mana?", mendapat jawaban yang samasekali tidak sederhana. Seorang narasumber, Jay Koh, misalnya, adalah seniman dan kurator dengan berbagai pengalaman kerja di lingkup seni rupa kontemporer internasional, lahir dan besar di Singapura, tapi sekarang warganegara Jerman. Sudah 20 tahun terakhir ia menetap di Jerman. Beberapa tahun terakhir ini ia banyak menghabiskan waktunya mengerjakan proyek seni rupa berbasis komunitas di Myanmar, negeri yang dikuasai junta militer itu.

Bagaimana dengan peserta lain, khususnya yang perempuan, yang kali ini memang lebih banyak ketimbang peserta laki-laki? Hampir serupa. Sue Hajdu, misalnya, berdarah Hongaria, lahir di Australia, menyelesaikan pendidikan pascasarjana Seni Rupa di Sydney, dan kini sibuk dengan *artist initiative space* yang didirikannya di kota Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam. Lembaganya punya nama unik, lucu: *a little blah blah*. Perempuan lain, Kyongfa Choi, berdarah Korea, lahir di Jepang, menyelesaikan MA bidang Sejarah dan Teori Seni di Inggris, sekarang menetap dan bekerja sambil menyelesaikan pendidikan kuratorial di

Swedia. Nataline Colonnello, asal Italia, mendalami Seni Rupa Kontemporer Cina di Universitas Venesia, kini bekerja sebagai kritikus dan kurator di Beijing. Tobias Berger, dari Jerman, sekian tahun mengelola galeri alternatif di Selandia Baru, dan kini mencoba mengelola hal serupa di HongKong, dan seterusnya... Hampir semua peserta datang dengan atribut multikultural semacam itu.

Kenyataan itu membuat saya menduga-duga bahwa persoalan multikulturalisme, dengan berbagai kompleksitas persoalannya, pasti akan jadi pokok masalah selama lokakarya. Tapi, saya juga khawatir, kalau-kalau dalam acara singkat dan resmi semacam ini para peserta nantinya terdorong untuk sekedar bersikap ramah dan kemudian meninggalkan sikap kritisnya. Saya kemukakan pendapat saya ini saat hari pertama lokakarya yang berlangsung di ruang depan auditorium GoetheHaus, GII. Saya katakan bahwa semoga semua peserta bisa membuat pertemuan ini tidak sekedar berisi "diplomasi kebudayaan" yang cenderung menyembunyikan berbagai dimensi politik suatu soal dibalik bungkus kosmetik.

Tapi, syukur, kekhawatiran saya tak jadi kenyataan. Saat lokakarya hari ke-dua (Selasa, 7 Maret 2006)—setelah hari pertama diisi presentasi pengenalan semua peserta serta penjelasan tentang sasaran lokakarya oleh Marie Le Sourd dan Marla Stukenberg—para peserta menunjukkan sikap kritisnya dengan berbagai cara saat mereka terlibat diskusi dalam kelompok kerjanya masing-masing. Terbagi ke dalam tiga kelompok kerja/diskusi, masing-masing kelompok diminta untuk membahas topik-topik khusus: "Identitas", "Seni dan Bahasa", dan "Lokal/Global". Mendengar berbagai lontaran pendapat serta adu argumen di tiap kelompok, tiap peserta menegaskan berbagai perbedaan posisi yang mereka ambil dan dengan terang-terangan mengemukakan bahwa segala perbedaan ini tidak mudah dikompromikan

dan harus diterima sebagai kondisi problematik bagi praktek kuratorial masa kini. Pertanyaannya kemudian: Apa peran yang bisa dan akan diambil oleh kurator menghadapi kondisi demikian? Atau, hal yang lebih personal dan mendasar yang diajukan Ute Meta Bauer untuk semua peserta: Untuk apa, untuk siapa dan mengapa kita melakukan kerja kuratorial?

Memang tidak mudah menjawab semua pertanyaan itu. Dan berbagai gagasan tetap tidak bersimpul sampai saat sesi diskusi berakhir. Tapi, dalam obrolan ringan dengan sejumlah peserta di sela-sela rehat, saya dapat kesan bahwa semua peserta mulai menyadari bahwa diskursus kerja kuratorial lintas-kultural adalah soal yang kompleks. Ini juga cukup jelas terdengar dalam presentasi tiap kelompok. Semua kelompok telah mulai memaparkan hasil identifikasi dan pemetaan mereka terhadap sejumlah persoalan yang akan muncul jika kerja kuratorial berhadapan dengan kompleksitas konteks sejarah, budaya, sosial-politik, juga ekonomi yang mengiringi praktek seni rupa kontemporer dunia di berbagai belahan bumi.

Hari ke-tiga (8 Maret 2006), sesi diskusi diisi dengan tema yang tak kalah kompleks. Peserta dibagi lagi ke dalam tiga kelompok, dan masing-masing kelompok membahas salah satu dari tiga soal: “Kurasi Lintas-Budaya”, “Strategi-Strategi Baru Kerja Kuratorial”, dan “Cara-cara Baru Representasi.” Kurang lebih, dengan pokok-pokok soal ini, narasumber dan penyelenggara mengharapkan agar tiap peserta bisa meneruskan apa yang telah dihasilkan dalam sesi diskusi hari sebelumnya, membentuk pendekatan dan jawaban terhadap persoalan yang telah berhasil dikenali.

Tentu saja, dari sesi ini juga sulit diharapkan muncul gagasan yang definitif, katakanlah semacam proyek kerjasama kuratorial berdimensi lintas-

budaya yang mungkin direalisasikan oleh para peserta. Diskusi soal ini masih terus berlanjut saat lokakarya berpindah tempat ke Selasar Sunaryo, Bandung, keesokan harinya. Tapi, mungkin tertolong suasana Selasar Sunaryo yang tenang dan nyaman, sejumlah rumusan pendekatan mulai tampil ke permukaan. Pendekatan-pendekatan ini dibayangkan bisa menjadi landasan strategis kerjasama kuratorial lintas-budaya. Beberapa diantaranya: kurator sebagai mediator proses dialog antar-budaya, kurator sebagai penerjemah/pengalih-bahasa di lingkungan yang berbeda-beda, kurator sebagai pelancong budaya yang bisa sekedar singgah, kerja kuratorial lintas-budaya berdimensi interdisipliner, dan juga, komunitas sebagai landasan kerja seni rupa kontemporer yang dapat mempertautkan “kepentingan bersama”. Soal terakhir ini, sedikit-banyak bersinggungan dengan pokok pikiran yang disampaikan Ute Meta Bauer dalam presentasi dan diskusi yang berlangsung di Pusat Kebudayaan Perancis (CCF), Bandung (Kamis, 9 Maret 2006).

Akhirnya, lokakarya yang seru dan mengasyikkan ini harus berakhir tanpa sebuah proyek definitif yang bisa disepakati bersama. Tapi, bukan berarti masing-masing peserta tak memperoleh hasil apapun. Perkenalan, perbincangan informal di saat rehat, pertukaran cerita dan informasi antar peserta, tanpa sengaja justru membuka berbagai peluang ke-jasama dan pembentukan jaringan pertukaran informasi. Saya yakin, setelah segala obrolan riang, loncat-loncat bersama digoyang musik olahan DJ Asung dari ruangrupa (ini acara perpisahan di halaman tengah GII, Sabtu 11 Maret), juga pelukan dan salam perpisahan, di benak-benak masing-masing peserta masih berkecamuk sejumlah gagasan dan rencana yang entah suatu saat nanti akan muncul dalam bentuk acara atau proyek seni rupa yang menarik.

Keesokan harinya, (semua tentu terlambat bangun, dengan tubuh

penat dan mata berat setelah “pesta heboh” sampai larut malam) para narasumber dan penyelenggara—Jay Koh, Nina Möntmann, Rifky Effendi, Ute Meta Bauer, Marie Le Sourd dan Marla Stukenberg—masih harus bertemu, rapat evaluasi. Saya tidak tahu apa dan bagaimana hasil evaluasi mereka. Tapi, saya berharap mereka tetap bersemangat dan mau meneruskan acara penting dan berharga ini. Moga-moga juga bisa melibatkan lebih banyak lagi kurator muda dari Indonesia. Tak bisa disangkal, dengan kondisi infrastruktur serba minim, acara-acara semacam MFC adalah ruang dan kesempatan belajar yang sangat berharga bagi para kurator muda Indonesia—juga rekan-rekan dari negara-negara Asia Tenggara yang mungkin selama ini masih ketinggalan jauh dalam hal praktek kuratorial seni rupa kontemporer.

Epilog

Selang beberapa hari kemudian, Marie Le Sourd yang lincah dan penuh semangat, sudah meluncurkan *mailinglist* beranggotakan semua peserta lokakarya. Saat kami mulai saling bertukar salam lewat *e-mail* di hari pertama, satu *e-mail* masuk dari Swedia, Kyongfa menulis: “Saya masih tertarik dengan gagasan Airport Biennale (yang sempat dibicarakan di Bandung). Saya yakin ada peluang bagi kita semua yang serba beda ini untuk menghasilkan hal-hal menarik dan menyenangkan dalam acara itu.” Hari berikutnya, Riel Hilario, perupa dan kurator dari Philipina mengajak saya membuat jaringan informasi seni rupa kontemporer Asia Tenggara, juga mungkin sebuah proyek seni rupa. Ia bilang, Nur Hanim (Malaysia) juga berminat ikut serta. Keren Detton (Perancis) menawarkan apakah ada yang mau terlibat dalam proyek seni rupa yang sedang dikerjakannya di Perancis. Marie Le Sourd—lagi—menyampaikan bahwa ASEF masih punya bantuan dana 5 000 euro kalau ada yang mau meneruskan gagasan dari lokakarya menjadi sebuah proyek nyata. Nah...[V]

From “Multi-faceted Curator” Workshop Curator, Contemporary Visual Art and Multiculturalism

Enin Supriyanto

Photo by Goethe Institute Jakarta

For 5 days, 6-11 March 2006, several curators from Asian and European countries gathered in Jakarta and Bandung. They met, discussed, talked about curators' challenge in the field of contemporary visual art that changes constantly. They seek for the possibility to co-operate and build network, using the understanding of multiculturalism as background.

The workshop “Multi-faceted Curator” (MFC) was organised by Goethe-Institut Jakarta (GIJ) and **Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)**. For GIJ, MFC was a juxtaposition of its photography and visual art project “artconneXions,” which involved several curators and photographers in a cross-cultural activity. The output will then be showcased in the artconneXions exhibition that will be touring many countries. In Indonesia, this event will be held in the National Museum Jakarta, from 7-28 March 2006. Meanwhile for ASEF, this was one of many Asia-Europe cultural exchanges that it has initiated.

MFC was a big and important event for both GIJ and ASEF. ASEF, which was represented by its cultural exchange officer Marie Le Sourd, was present and busy in making sure that everything went well in Jakarta and Bandung. Similarly, Dr Marla Stukenberg, GIJ's Head of Cultural Programme – that covers South-east Asia, Australia, and New Zealand – passionately directed and followed all workshop process. The importance of this event was highlighted by the presence of Dr Hans-Georg Knopp, the Secretary-general of Goethe-Institut (who once was the director for the international cultural cooperation body House of World Cultures in Berlin). Mr Knopp also showed his passion while being involved in the discussion sessions for the full two days (6 and 7 March). As if that was not enough, the organisers invited Dr Ute Metta Bauer, an international curator with experiences in world-class visual art exhibitions, and also the director of Visual Art Programme in MIT. Ute, which came as an observer, delivered two public presentations in Bandung and Jakarta in MFC (more about Ute Meta Bauer on the article box behind).

MFC was designed as a meeting forum between curators to discuss matters related to cross-country and cross-cultural curatorial works. The main agenda was to attempt the possibility to formulate and apply some strategies for curatorial works, to allow an art co-operation process that is cross-cultural, cross-country, and sustainable.

Given such agenda, it was clear that the invited curators were generally in their 30s, and had just been active with the curatorial works in several countries for the past few years. It was hoped that they can get to know and exchange knowledge one another, and have the opportunity to build a networking for future projects. Indeed, the organisers intentionally created a “multiculturalistic” forum, with 10 curators representing Europe, 9 others representing Asia and 3 resource persons (one resource curator, Dr Angelika Nollerts, was unable to come), and 7 active observers (including journalists, writers, curators, and academicians). I came both as an observer and the representative from Visual Arts Magazine.

Since the very first day during the welcome dinner, multiculturalism issues had been discussed, mainly because the present participants were truly multicultural. My simple ice-breaking question, “Where are you from?” received a far-from-simple answer. For instance, Jay Koh, one of the resource persons, is an artist and curator with rich experience in international contemporary visual art world. He was born, and grew up in Singapore, but has been residing in Germany for the past 20

years, and is a German national. During the past few years, he spent most of his time working in community-based visual art project in the military-controlled Myanmar.

How about other participants, particularly female participants who, in this workshop, dominated their male counterpart? Just about the same. Sue Hadju is a good example. A Hungarian-descent, she was born in Australia and finished her postgraduate study in Visual Art in Sydney. She is now busy with the *artist initiative space* which she initiated in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. She picked a unique and funny name for it: *a little bla blah*. Kyongfa Choi, a Korean-descent and Japanese-born female participant, finished her MA in History and Art Theory in England, resides in Sweden to finish her curatorial education there. Italian Nataline Colonnello, who read Chinese Contemporary Visual Art in Venice University, works as critics and curator in Beijing. German Tobias Berger spent many years managing an alternative gallery in New Zealand, and currently puts his efforts in similar projects in Hong Kong. And there were many other participants; most of them came with these kinds of multicultural attributes.

This underlying fact had made me believing that multicultural topics, with their complexity, would be the center issue of the workshop. On the other hand, I was concerned on the possibility that given the short period of the project, participants would tend to be nice to others and, as the result, lose their critical point-of-views. I made this concern public on the Day One of the workshop that was held in GoetheHaus auditorium, GIJ. I shared my hope to them to make this event not as a “cultural diplomacy” field that tends to manipulate the real issues under cosmetics.

I was glad my concern did not materialise. On the Day Two (Wednesday 7 March 2006) – after a busy Day One with introductory notes from everyone, as well as the presentation by Marie le Sourd and Marla Stukenberg on the purpose of the workshop’s target – all participants in their own ways showed their sharp and critical opinions within their own working groups. The three working group were given a specific topic to be discussed, namely “Identity,” “Art and Language” and “Local/Global.” Backed by variety of comments and arguments in each group, in general each participant emphasised that all these cross-cultural differences might be hard to be compromised, and instead must be accepted as the problematic fact for future curatorial projects. The next question was then: What is the role that curator can, and will take, given such fact? Or, as Ute Meta Bauer put it in a more fundamental question to all participants: What is the purpose of us doing curatorial works?

It was indeed difficult to find answers for these questions. The discussion was going on without any conclusive results. Nevertheless, on the sideline chat with some participants, I received the impression that they had started to understand that cross-cultural curatorial works is a complex issue. The same sentiment was felt in the group presentations, in which all presenters showed potential problems with curatorial works that intersect with complexity of history, culture, socio-politics, and economics elements.

In Day Three (8 March 2006), the session was filled with other complex issue. Three groups were again formed, each discussed issue on “Cross-Cultural Curating,” “New Strategies in Curatorial Works” and “New Ways of Representation.” By throwing out these themes, the organisers and resource persons seemed to hope participants would have a clear continuation path from the previous days’ discussion, and from here, they could start to find a proper approach to answer the problems.

As expected, it was difficult to come out with a definite result in this session. The discussion continued at the Selasar Sunaryo Bandung at the following day. Probably due to the quiet and convenient ambience offered by Selasar Sunaryo, some ideas on possible approaches had surfaced during this session. These approached were imagined to become strategic departure points for cross-cultural curatorial co-operation. Some of which are: curators as mediators in cross-cultural dialogue process; curators as interpreters/translators in different fields; curators as tourists; inter-disciplinary

cross-cultural curatorial works; and community as the platform for contemporary visual art work that will bond “social interests” together. The similar issue of community was also brought by Uta Meta Bauer in her presentation in French Cultural Center (CCF) Bandung (9 March 2006).

Eventually, this happening and entertaining workshop must come to an end, resulting in no agreement on solid projects. Nevertheless, the interaction and dialogue process between participants, be it formal or informal, had opened the unintended opportunity for future co-operation. I personally believed that after this light chitchatting and that dancing around following the rhythm from DJ Asung from Ruang Rupa (as part of the farewell party in GIJ, Saturday 11 March 2006), there were ideas and plans inside everybody’s mind, something that would be realised in God-knows-when.

The following days, when everyone was for sure late to wake up after the “heavy party” in previous night, all the resource persons and organisers – Jay Koh, Nina Möntmann, Rifky Effendy, Ute Meta Bauer, Marie le Sourd and Marla Stukenberg – would have to meet for an evaluation meeting. I had no idea whatsoever on what might be the result of this meeting, but I hoped that they share the same excitement with all the participants on the project, and they would like to create a continuation for this important and precious workshop. I also hoped that more young Indonesian curators would be involved in the future. With the limited resources available to Indonesian curators, projects like MFC are precious rooms of learning for them – also for their South-east Asian counterparts who may be left behind in field of contemporary visual art curatorial practices.

Epilog

Few days after the event, the supple and energetic Marie le Sourd announced a mailing list for all participants. In the midst of exchanging email thereafter, Kyongfa wrote from Sweden: “I am still interested with the idea of Airport Biennale...” something that had been discussed during the workshop, “...I believe there will be an opportunity for all of us to have some interesting stuff in that event.” The following day, artist and curator Riel Hilario from Philippines asked me to join him to build a South-east Asian contemporary visual art information network, and also possibly a visual art project, and added that Malaysian Nur Hanim had also shown her interest to help out. French Karen Detton asked if anyone might be interested to join her on-going visual art project in France. Marie le Sourd – again – hinted that ASEF still had budget of 5000 Euro to support the realisation of the idea from the workshop. Well well well...

[end]