

CURATION AND PRESENTATION TO ENRICH VALUE ON INTERMEDIA ART IN A CONTEMPORARY ART EXHIBITION (CASE STUDY ON ARTJOG)

Putri R.A.E.Harbie

*Alumni of Cinematography Undergraduate Program, Multimedia Nusantara
University, Tangerang; Master Student in Arts Management (Gallery and
Museum Management), Graduate Studies of Indonesian Institute of Arts,
Yogyakarta
putriharbie@gmail.com*

ABSTRACT

The moving image has evolved into a very common medium used in both narrative and non-narrative way, exhibited in a film festival or art exhibition. Narrative film nowadays distributed digitally and can be exhibited in both the big screen and small screen (such as mobile phone, laptop screen, mini projector) without possibly losing any storytelling value. While non-narrative film/video mostly exhibited in a special treatment to enrich the main message. The small screen was commonly used to present this medium in an art exhibition. Art manager has a responsibility to curate and presents the intermedia works in order to reach either aesthetic value or financial value. There is a myth that intermedia art isn't a profitable collectible item, so when an artist uses the medium it was considered an artwork made for fun. In this research, the writer will analyze small screen exhibition on one of the largest contemporary art exhibition in Yogyakarta, ARTJOG. The research method used was qualitative with literature, archive, and interview approach. Hopefully, this research will be a good discourse between moving image and fine art.

*Keyword: Intermedia art; moving image; small screen; exhibition;
contemporary art*

BACKGROUND

Curation and presentation was part of managerial work in a contemporary art exhibition because these two crucial jobs will provide discourse, implicit value and

financial value. In the last 10 years, intermedia art keep getting common in the contemporary art scene and also became a collectible artwork. ARTJOG is one of the main art infrastructures in Indonesia that always able to deliver all kind of medium in the best light.

Susanto (2018) associate intermedia with mixed media and gesamtkunstwerk that means this medium was able to combine many medium or art branch into one total work of art. The definition of intermedia art (or often mentioned as new media art) was a developing term. As mentioned by Susanto, intermedia art should actually become a new collaborative form of two medium. While new media art refers to non-conventional medium uses in the art world which means this sophistication might be developed over time. In this paper, the writer focus on intermedia work that mainly uses video or film as one of the media involved.

Curation as quoted from The Concise Oxford Thesaurus (1995) on Susanto's Diksi Rupa (2018) defined as the work of taking care, observing, keeping, conserve and representing the artifact. Susanto also stated that the work of curator on the art world is to planned and execute the exhibition not only on the practical side but also to build a discourse on how the artwork represented.

Presentation is one of curator's work that plays a big part in how people see, value and appreciate art. The presentation mainly is art director's work, but curator in ARTJOG always use with the ability on Art Direction too. Artwork in a display room and catalogue is the main focus form of presentation that will be analyzed through a literature review. In this paper, the writer will analyze the curation and presentation process of intermedia artwork involving film/video (moving image) in ARTJOG.

Intermedia art involving moving image was called in a few different terms in this paper: new media art, video art or performance video art. New media art was a label for unconventional medium and most of the time involving technology, video art is one of the common new media art forms. Performance video art was also mistaken a few time as performance art documentation video. The writer can conclude that performance video art was produced like a film with planned audiovisual to strengthen the energy brought by the performance artist. While performance art documentation video was shot at an event, sometimes to show how the performance art connected to different surrounding and spectator can make a difference, the video also sometimes to replace when an artist can't be present to perform their art.

PURPOSE

This paper was trying to answer some question such as: (1)How does the curation and presentation of intermedia art differ from the conventional medium in ARTJOG? The involvement of technology and electronic devices will need special treatment, but how does the treatment implement?; (2)How artists manage the distribution of their intermedia art (involving moving image)? Indonesian video artist doesn't work with the same distribution as a filmmaker, how is it different from video artist overseas?.

HYPOTHESES

Intermedia art involving moving image was basically time-based, so the curation process might take longer than curating conventional art medium. The writer hypothesizes that the curation will take a special session and a different method from the static image submission. ARTJOG possibly try to have the same proportion of varied medium to avoid being political to certain art medium. The presentation will always follow the artist's proposed sketch to keep a certain statement of the artwork and ARTJOG will keep communicating the whole process to the artist. Video artist was distributing their artwork independently without involving other third-party, especially on submitting to a contemporary art exhibition. The writer also has the assumption that video artwork was sold with complete equipment used on exhibition (such as projector, screen, sound, etc.). Following the developing myth of the last 20 years, video art has no market in the contemporary art world.

METHODOLOGY

This paper is using qualitative methodology because curation and presentation were always different regarding the curator, art director, event, theme, and occasion. The case study was chosen because ARTJOG has become one of Indonesian art infrastructure pioneer that has grown its reputation Internationally. The references came from academic journals, books and interview.

THE INTERMEDIA ART IN INDONESIAN CONTEMPORARY ART SCENE

Before going to the findings, it is important to understand that intermedia art on this matter might have several different terms used to labeling video artwork. According to Ma & Sudenburg (2012: on Westgeest, 2016), Lucas Hildebrand (academician on cinema

studies) categorize all artwork involving electronic devices as one kind, so it is common to use terms such as ‘media art’ for video artwork. On the last decade, boundaries between video, film and other technology-based medium were so thin. The writer also stated that there are various terms used in this paper to refer to intermedia art involving moving images. It might be common in the art world to not use single terms while talking about video art.

The main interviewee for this research is Bambang ‘Toko’ Witjaksono, longtime art director and head curator of ARTJOG. As one of the biggest circuit for the young and emerging artist, ARTJOG always having an open submission without no limitation on medium and doesn’t have to be represented by a gallery. Almost every year there are moving image-based artwork showing at ARTJOG. Regarding the position of Indonesian intermedia art (focusing on moving image, film or video) in the contemporary art world, Bambang ‘Toko’ gives a piece of very important information:

“.. the video art in Indonesia at the time was still something new and in very early development. Most of the Indonesian video artist was not focus on one type of medium, so there are not many artists that we could call ‘video artist’. Academically only Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB) that was establish an intermedia art program, and there are also not many discussion partners that have the expertise to talk about the concept or technical aspect of it.” [translated from Bahasa Indonesia)

So with the statement above, there are some tendencies of being a multidisciplinary artist in Indonesian contemporary art scene. The bachelor program just established, so the existence of focused video artist might not happen in the near future in Indonesia.

The writer also needs to criticize that formal new media art education might not always necessary to become a video artist. There are also possibilities in fine art and film major which do have an intermedia art as one of the subjects in their curriculum. The source of knowledge in Indonesian art scene can be learned everywhere informally, but in terms of the firm art infrastructure, scholar plays a very important role. There is also a common mindset that a real artist should always break the rules of what art school offers. It’s leading to a controversial discourse in the International art scene as well when an artist was always doing research-based artwork, the execution might not reach it’s best as the sophisticated discourse proposed on the presentation. Curator plays a big part in terms of both educating and presents a potential artist in the best light.

One of film/video based art that memorable for Bambang ‘Toko’ was not from Indonesian artist, it was Marina Abramovic. The works were rented for a month by ARTJOG from an organization called LIMA. LIMA was Netherlands-based organization working to preserves, distributes and researches media art. The distribution system was similar to a film distribution company, but in LI-MA they focused on media art and call the ‘screening fee’ as ‘renting fee’. But the technical aspect has been standardized to match the artist’s aesthetic consideration of the artist. Video artist was slightly different from a filmmaker, the medium and presentation bring a vital implicit meaning, while filmmaker technical needs might be negotiable. Film distribution mainly uses Digital Cinema Package (DCP) but LIMA able to send it either digitally (via file cloud WeTransfer or external hard disk) or with various type of physical copy (DVD, Blu Ray, Digital BETACAM, etc.). The physical copy should have been posted back one week after screening or exhibition and all the presentation should meet the requirement mentioned by LIMA.

CURATORIAL AND PRESENTATION PRACTICES IN ARTJOG

ARTJOG receives so many submission from the open call and close call, to curate the curatorial team sit together in a room and projected the images submitted by artists without seeing the name. Specifically for time-based intermedia art (such as video art, film and performance video), they still have another consideration such as the installation sketch plan and technical needs. If the video was chosen, then the team would call and have some sort of negotiation to the artist when they’re having a problem with the sketch or providing technical devices. The presentation process is always involving artist and ARTJOG in two-way communication if the artist can’t go to Yogyakarta. Some problems that might be occurred when the artist can’t be present was the sense of space that was used for ARTJOG, the Jogja National Museum.

Bambang ‘Toko’ also mentioned that there are also possibilities that video art gets damaged because of the unstable electricity in Yogyakarta. For the past few years, ARTJOG was held in Jogja National Museum (ex. Akademi Seni Rupa Indonesia, the oldest art school in Indonesia), because of the status as a heritage building, the electricity power was limited so ARTJOG has to always prepared for electric generator to support the electricity requirement. Some screen might need to take some time to ‘restart’ and the artwork might be gone for around 1 hour. These difficulties might also happen in other building or cities in Indonesia. Video artist needs to be considerate to put their technical needs in a few other alternative technical presentation

Following the presentation, the catalogue is one of the most important supporting material. The printed publication was separated in several version one is pre-event catalogue, Jogja art weeks (ARTJOG guidebook) and post-event catalogue. The pre-event catalogue was usually much thinner than the post-event, not every artwork was featured on the pre-event catalogue. Jogja Art Week meant to be for all art exhibition promotional publication outside ARTJOG that held around the same time. This publication was to provide more choices on other artwork to collect, it also helps Yogyakarta's other creative economy businesses. In the post-event catalogue, every artwork involved, discourses and program were there. It might be said as a final report of the event. Some catalogue had artwork description on it, but ARTJOG mostly features only the artwork title, artist name, size and material. Every year ARTJOG can exhibit more than 100 artworks, so if they're trying to put it on catalogue it will be too thick. Otherwise, they do provide artwork description on physical site (for several works only).

The catalogue is supposed to be a supporting material for the exhibition, but there is also some limitation when representing time-based artwork on a printed image. Bambang 'Toko' share his experience with LIMA catalogue on media art, he said it was similar to film preview (trailer, only show a quarter of duration). ARTJOG might able to apply this method, but the fact that the art exhibition itself was not involving all moving image artwork it would be difficult.

APPRECIATION VALUE AND FINANCIAL VALUE OF VIDEO ART

Appreciation of art in the Indonesian public is still under early development. As a third world country, Indonesia has no museum culture or high literacy level on appreciating art and history. The valuation might not always be involving money, some can appreciate by writing or responding to the discourse proposed by the artist. There is also some common belief that critic was never in a good deed and people tend to avoid having a discourse.

Video art is still a very taboo medium to collect in Southeast Asia, Indonesia only has one collector that focused on collecting new media art, Wiyu Wahono. The other might still find it too risky to collect digital and high-tech artwork. The maintenance of video artwork was still depending on the artist and it's possibly not long lasting enough to be inherited by the next 100 years. Bambang 'Toko' mentioned in his interview that there are not many people in Indonesia that technically capable of taking care of such a medium at the time. The video artwork might be broken and vanished from the whole Indonesian Inter-media art history, so the value was questioned.

ARTJOG has been researched academically several time due to its International success in developing Indonesian contemporary art infrastructure. Luft (2016) conduct research about ARTJOG as one that plays a major role in developing Indonesian art infrastructure. Luft mentioned that ARTJOG invites some International artist (such as Marina Abramovic & Yoko Ono) as one of their strategic decision to get more International collector's attention. In 2013, this strategic lead ARTJOG having 65% of the artwork sold to an International collector.

From the writer's observation so far, ARTJOG possibly uses the power of celebrity in Indonesia and also from the International art world to stimulate more curiosity of the broader audience. From the interview with Bambang 'Toko', he mentioned that this strategy was suggested by an independent curator Enin Supriyanto and lead to a focus group discussion with Lorenzo Rudolf from Art Basel (at the time). ARTJOG itself has a different format than any other art fair, 'Toko' mentioned that people used to say it as Biennale Fair. The discourse was just like Biennale but there is a financial transaction like an art fair.

VIDEO ART AS A COLLECTION

The writer's hypotheses have been proved wrong when a video artwork was collected the only common thing that was given to the collectors nowadays was just a digital file, technical devices usually not included. The artist will give the file followed by a technical tutorial in terms the collector want to exhibit it somewhere else for the public. The artist will make a statement paper about how many copies of the file was made and who else is collecting the other copy. When the collectors want to show it publicly, the artist should have been contacted for further special technical needs. It gains some question regarding the sponsorship ARTJOG get from EPSON for several projectors and television devices. Bambang 'Toko' explains that the audiovisual devices support was only for the exhibition, the artist does not always have to use it for their video artwork. The sponsored projector usually have the recent technology and high specification up to 20000 lumens, and the television up to 50 inches, some work might need higher specification or lower to support their aesthetic choices.

CONCLUSION

Curatorial in ARTJOG was basically based on the theme of the year and quality, every medium choice doesn't have a special percentage to fulfill. The curation process needs a different treatment because it was a time-based work, the sketch was still negotiable and can be discussed further once the video artwork was chosen. Every aspect of the final

physical presentation came from the collaboration between the artist and the exhibitor.

In the contemporary art world, most emerging artist is distributing their own work because they are not represented by a gallery yet. In Indonesia, there is a lot of open call system for some of the biggest art exhibition, so being represented by a gallery is not always necessary. When the artist was represented by a gallery, they will have another chance to show their work International art fair involving gallery booth. ARTJOG was one unique format of art fair because it doesn't always need gallery and the discourse was impactful.

ARTJOG rent some of Marina's video artwork through a media art distributor called LIMA in the Netherlands, but the system was not a screening fee but it's a renting fee. The difference with the film was there are specific technical requirements to fulfill by the exhibitor in order to present it in the best condition.

To conclude, Indonesian intermedia art was still at the early stage of development. Seeing moving images as part of contemporary art might be ambitious 20 years ago, but today it is a common medium you can find an art exhibition. Every art form should think openly about how they collaborate with each other in the future. The writer wishes that this paper could become a bridge between moving image and fine art.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- LIMA (n.d.). Rates and Rental conditions. Didapat dari <http://www.lima.nl/lima/distribution/conditions>
- Luft, A. (2016). ARTJOG, *The Pseudo Art Fair and Cultural Policies: Towards The Development of Creative Industries and Art Infrastructure*. SKRIPTA. Didapat dari https://www.academia.edu/24623440/ARTJOG_The_Pseudo_Art_Fair_and_Cultural_Policies_Towards_The_Development_of_Creative_Industries_and_Art_Infrastructure.
- Susanto, M. (2018). *Diksi Rupa (Cetakan Ketiga)*. Yogyakarta, Indonesia: Dicti Art Lab.
- Witjaksono, B. (March 12th, 2019). Interview.