CHAPTER I. MODERN INDONESIAN ART PRE 1966

Modern Indonesian art was born in the turmoil of the Dutch occupation. In 1937 PERSAGI artists raised its voice in a nationalistic spirit against feudalism and imperialism:

...This is our reality. And the living artist... who does not seek beauty in antiquity - Majapahit or Mataram - or in the mental world of the tourist, will himself live as long as the world exists. Because high art is work based on our daily life transmuted by the artist himself who is immersed in it...

Sudjojono, 1937\textsuperscript{14}.

This spirit was directed against colonial art. This idealistic and nature-based naturalistic form of art called \textit{Mooi Indie}\textsuperscript{15} which had dominated the art world in Indonesia (the Netherlands East Indies) since the Dutch formally took over the archipelago in 1816\textsuperscript{16}.

\textsuperscript{14}translated by Claire Holt (1967), \textit{Indonesian Art Continuity and Change}, p. 197
The members of PERSAGI were Sudjojono, Ramli, Abdul Salam, Agus Jaya Suminta, S. Sudiarjo, Emiria Sunarsa (the only woman in PERSAGI), Saptarita Latif, Herbert Hutaingalung, S. Tutur, Sindo Sisworo, Syaib Sastrawiwy, TB. Ateng Rusyan, Sukirmo, Surono, Surono, Otto Jaya Suntara, Hendrojasmana, Sumitro, Iton Lasmana, and L. Setiyoso.

\textsuperscript{15}\textit{Mooi Indie} means the beauty of Netherlands East Indies. The art work itself was mainly based on the \textit{French Barbizon} style which was brought by European artists.

\textsuperscript{16}The Dutch occupied the Netherlands East Indies in this year whilst the official statement from Indonesian government says that the colonisation was started in 1596 with the first arrival of VOC, The Netherlands East Indies Company.
The PERSAGI artists were influenced by Mexican artist, Diego Rivera, thought that art ought to visualise reality under the Dutch occupation. The new artist would no longer paint only the peaceful hut, blue mountains, romantic or picturesque and sweetish subjects, but also sugar factories and the emaciated peasant, the motorcars of the rich and the pants of the poor youth; the sandals, trousers, and jacket of the man on the street\textsuperscript{17}

The PERSAGI artists formed a counter group to \textit{Mooi Indie} artists who consisted of painters from Europe and elite Indonesians. Divorced from the local reality they gave their allegiance to the Dutch. On the other hand the cry of PERSAGI was painted again and again as that of common people\textsuperscript{18}.

PERSAGI's commitment shows a strong link between the political situation\textsuperscript{19} and social problems in the new Indonesian modern art:

My society is the society who understands the reality... sky reality could not be understood...For twenty years I have known Phidias, da Vinci and Picasso in God's world; but now, I am in the flesh and bone of the society,... I want to talk to them with their examples, with their things and fantasies, and with their languages. Without those things, they would not understand me. I want them to understand... for my happiness, for their happiness...\textsuperscript{20}.  

\textsuperscript{17}Holt (1967) translation p. 196
\textsuperscript{18}People here refer to all Indonesians, except aristocratic families and/ or people working for the Dutch.
\textsuperscript{19}In fact the nationalistic spirit in art was derived from the political demand for the independence.
In the meantime, the Dutch were seen as the "enemy" who had created poverty in the society, and as a result, art was thought to be a tool in the liberation of society from colonialism.

Before colonial art was established, Western art was initially brought to Indonesia by Western spice merchants\textsuperscript{21} in the late sixteenth century for trading purposes. The Portuguese and The Dutch merchants brought varieties of souvenirs including paintings; mostly portraits or landscapes\textsuperscript{22}. Instead of bringing the paintings themselves, VOC (the Netherlands East Indies Company) brought amateur draughtsmen for documenting their voyages and mapping the geography such as volcanos, coral-reefs, bays, fortresses, fauna and flora. Those drawings mostly ended up in the locked filing cabinet of the VOC administrator in Holland; however, some drawings were printed either as etchings or lithographs\textsuperscript{23}.

The competition among European traders in the East had forced the VOC to establish the Batavian Society for Arts and Sciences in 1778. This institution aimed to document the wildlife, vegetation and the cultural phenomena in the Netherlands East Indies. As a result, for the first time professional artists were being invited to be part of the archaeological expedition under Lieutenant Governor Nicolaus Euerhard on Prambanan.

\textsuperscript{21}The Portuguese arrived in Malacca Strait in 1511 and were followed by the Dutch in 1596 in the Ambon Strait
\textsuperscript{22}Holt (1967) p.191
\textsuperscript{23} Ruud Spruit (1992) \textit{Indonisische Impressies Oosterse thema's in de Westerse Schilderkunst} p. 10. Some of the drawings were done by Joan Niewkofs, Francois Valentijn and Georg Euerhard Rhumpius.
temple, Central Java. This expedition was continued by Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles, an Englishman, who was the administrator for the VOC in 1811-1816 and published *The History of Java* in 1817.

During the Dutch occupation, the expedition continued under Professor Caspar Reinward's supervision. Born in Germany, he was hired as "a governor to the cause of the Arts and Sciences". He was assisted by two professional draughtsmen: Adrianus Johannes and Jannes Theodorus Bik, and a Belgian painter, Antoine Auguste Joseph Payen. Apart from the formal expedition, some European artists had come to the archipelago and worked individually. Both these independent artists and government sponsored expedition experts were the beginning of colonial art in The Netherlands East Indies.

Colonial art itself began with the rapid increase of European artists under the Dutch administration. As a result, the *Bataviasche Kunstkring* (the Batavian Art Circle) was founded in 1902 followed by *Bond van Nederlandsch-Indische Kunstkringen* (the Alliance of Art Circles of the Netherlands East Indies) established in 1916. Subsequently, some concerts,

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24 ibid p. 9  
25 ibid  
26 Ruud Spruit mentions approximately 1,200 European artists who came to the East Indies either for long term or short visits, including Marius Bauer (1867-1932), W.O.J Niewkamp (1874-1950), Walter Spies (1895-1942), Rudolf Bonnet (1895-1979), W. Hofker (1902-1981), Isaac Israels (1865-1934), Rolland Strasser (1895-1974), Carel Dake Jr (1886-1946), etc whom produced paintings of the local genre which were visualised through their foreign' eyes either in the form of realism, impressionism and post impressionism called *Moot Indie*. 
exhibitions and lectures were held in the Dutch Kunstkringen; however, only European and a few elite native families could gain entry to such events. Only rare events were open publicly, for example, the international art exhibitions such as Regnault’s collection\textsuperscript{27}, from 1935-1939 annually\textsuperscript{28}.

While European artists dominated the Netherlands East Indies, the first "native" artist of this genre, Raden Saleh Sjarif Bustaman (1807\textsuperscript{29}-1880) went to Holland in 1829\textsuperscript{30}. Raden Saleh gradually gained an international reputation as the "Prince of Java", painting in an Oriental-Classicism style. Born into a ningrat aristocrat family in Terboyo, Semarang-Central Java, he was brought up by his uncle until the age of nine. From his uncle’s position as the head of Semarang district, Saleh got to know a Dutch family in Jakarta who raised him whilst his family was involved in the underground movement\textsuperscript{31} against the Dutch. By living with a Dutch family and being educated by them, Saleh had a chance to meet Professor Caspar Reinward in.

\textsuperscript{27}a wealthy Dutch painting businessman
\textsuperscript{28}Spruit p.10
The works which were being exhibited were Van Gogh, De Toulouse-Lautrec, Redon, Utrillo, Gauguin, Van Dongen, Kandinsky, Chagall, Picasso, Kollwits, De Chirico, Ensor, Suyter and Dufy.
\textsuperscript{29}1807 is used here as the year of birth of Raden Saleh instead of 1810, 1814 or 1816 based on the Indonesian art writers’ data such as Sanento Yuliman, Sudarmaji and Soekondo Bustaman. Saleh met Prof. Caspar Reinward for the first time in 1817 which supports this earlier birth date.
\textsuperscript{30}At that time there was concern and a fear by the Dutch that Saleh’s family had been involved in the Java War. Saleh’s departure for Holland was intended to keep Saleh away from his family’s political business.
\textsuperscript{31}This underground movement led to the Java War in 1825-1830, led by Prince Diponegoro.
1817 who suggested that he do water colour. Later on, his water colours attracted Payen's attention and from Payen, Saleh obtained a proper supervision in 1826 by working in an archaeological expedition. Gradually, Saleh's talent improved and his works impressed Baron van der Capellen who replaced Prof. Reinward's position\textsuperscript{32} as the Governor General in the East Indies. Saleh then gained a scholarship to undertake art education in Holland\textsuperscript{33} under Baron's patronage and Payen's recommendation.

Saleh is now regarded as "the founder of Indonesian modern art". This acclaim is best demonstrated by his painting "Antara hidup dan mati" (In between life and death)\textsuperscript{34} which demonstrates the spirit of nationalism. The work visualises a fight between a lion and a bison\textsuperscript{35} which is believed to represent the nationalistic spirit oppressed by the Dutch. The acclaim for Saleh's nationalism is problematic because Saleh copied a lot of European masterpieces in particular French Romantic artists such as Gericault and Delacroix. Moreover, the art he produced on his return to Indonesia shows little nationalist content and he led a bourgeois Western life style until his death in 1880.

\textsuperscript{32}Prof. Reinward left Indonesia in 1822
\textsuperscript{33}While Saleh was abroad, he was tutored by the famous Dutch portrait Cornelis Kruseman and well known Romantic landscape-painter, Andreas Schelhout. Gradually, Saleh gained a reputation among European salon painters while he travelled around Europe, and got some honorary titles from the Oranye dynasty during his residency in Europe for twenty years. He returned to Indonesia in 1851.
\textsuperscript{34}un-illustrated picture
\textsuperscript{35}The lion refers to the Dutch whilst the bison represents the bull, the symbol of the Indonesian Nationalist Party.
A. NATIONALIST ART.

The spirit of nationalism, which played an important role in forming Indonesian art, was derived from the political movement following the Dutch Ethical Policy, a policy which allowed elite natives to gain a Dutch education. Due to their education, some young outspoken aristocrats started to raise nationalist consciousness in support of independence as well as to spread education among the people. As a result Taman Siswa (The Pupil's Garden) School was founded in 1922 by Ki Hajar Dewantara. The school's philosophy was a mixture of "Montessori and the Dalton system tinged with the anthroposophic teachings of Rudolf Steiner and the ethical-aesthetic approach of Rabindranath Tagore"\(^{35}\) blended into a Javanese spirit of love and care. The aim of this school was to creatively stimulate and activate the children to love each other, to express their thought freely, to plant the nationalistic spirit, and to appreciate the diversity of the indigenous cultures. Art education was considered an important subject and subsequently, drawing and painting were introduced as part of the curriculum. Among the first students of the Taman

\(^{35}\)Holt (1967) p. 195
Siswa School were Sudjojono, Suromo, Basuki Resobowo and Abbas Alibasyah who challenged the Mooi Indie domination by forming PERSAGI. For this, Sudjojono wrote:

Dear readers, we have to admit that art is international ...; however, it must have national identity ... and the artist [must be] nationalist...

Nationalism was PERSAGI's soul in shaping the modern Indonesian art. The dilemma was that the group of artists could not produce the national art form.

Following the first PERSAGI exhibition held in the Kunstaal Kolff, a book shop in Jakarta, in 1937, a common criticism of PERSAGI was as follows:

Those paintings are not Eastern,... the way they paint just exactly the same as modern Western artists do...So, we are amazed. If there was no Kokoschka, Klee, Munch, Chagall, Utrillo or the others, it would not be possible for any Indonesian in Java to produce those artworks...

Of their "Indonesianism" it was said:

The spaces and themes which are produced, might be the things, landscapes and Indonesian themes. However, the style (brushstroke) and taste of colours are Western. Moreover, the way they visualise their mind is not far away from Adolf, Locatelli, Jan Frank, Sayers and other Dutch or European artists here...

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The idea of modern art as well as nationalism was thoroughly new. Both ideas were brought by the coloniser, and could not be resisted by the Indonesians. To counter this influence, it was not surprising that PERSAGI artists had to rely on some art magazines such as "de Fakkel" and "Elsevier's Maandschrift" from Holland and "The Studio" from England in creating their art-works\(^4\).

Nationalism is a spiritual concept for PERSAGI artists which is demonstrated in Sudjojono's work "Sayang saya bukan anjing" (It is a pity, that I am not a dog)\(^4\). According to Sudjojono, this work visualised the living condition of the people under Dutch colonisation where dogs had more freedom than human beings.

The spirit of nationalism became stronger under Japanese colonisation (1942-1945). At that time the Dai Nippon Military Service thought that art and artists could play an important role "to reach the last victory in the battle" in supporting the Japanese slogan "to build the Eastern culture" for "Developing the Great East Asia Nation"\(^4\). This is why the Japanese established Keimin Bunka Shidosho in 1942 as the centre of information. It was aimed to facilitate artists by providing them with a place for exhibition; the centre also gave an award for the best works\(^4\) instead of guiding the arts for propaganda.

\(^{4}\)Although the Dutch established the Art Circle and The Alliance, in fact no art academy was being established in Indonesia during colonisation.

\(^{41}\)un-illustrated picture

\(^{42}\)Japanese slogan, quoted in Sanento Yuliman (1976) p. 11-12; also see Keimin Bunka Shidosho leader's speech in Keboedajaan Timoer Magazine I/2603

\(^{43}\)The theme for competition was given by The Japanese Military Service such as Romusha -forced labour-. In one stage, romusha was sculptured by Affandi as an emaciated skeleton man which was seen in reality. Although this work was selected
purposes. Meanwhile, the artists had started to form a close relationship with political leaders such as Sukarno in *Pusat Tenaga Rakyat* (PUTERA: The Centre of People's Energy, founded in 1943). Politicians such as Sukarno and Mohammad Hatta together with educator, K.H. Dewantara and religious leader K.H. Mansur believed that the arts could be used for political propaganda. Nevertheless, the art work started to be infiltrated by a political agenda in an attempt to push for Indonesia's independence.

Following Japanese occupation after the Second World War, The Dutch sought to regain power in Indonesia by entering the archipelago under The Alliance army. This attempt was resisted by the Indonesian people who fought for four years in the Physical Revolution war before the United Nations finally acknowledged its independence in 1949. During this period, the capital city had to be shifted from Jakarta to Yogyakarta which soon became the centre of art activity. At this time, various *sanggar* (art workshops) were blooming, for example: *Pusat Tenaga Pelukis Indonesia* (Centre of Strength of Indonesian Painters, 1945) headed by painter Djajengasmoro, *Seniman Indonesia Muda* (SIM, Young Artists of Indonesia, 1946) founded by Sudjojono, *Seni Rupa Masyarakat* (Plastic Art of the Community, 1946) supervised by Affandi and later on *Pelukis Rakyat* (People's Painter, 1947) under Hendra's leadership. They were producing anti-Dutch and revolutionary posters\(^4\) as well as war paintings ordered by the politicians. The primary

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by the Japanese artists who acted as a jury; Affandi's work was refused by *Kempetai* - The Japanese Military Service.

\(^4\)Holt (1967) p. 201
subject matter of these art works are war scenes and scenes of rakyat kecil, the poor people. Hence, Yogyakarta sanggar artists with their strong self-reliance and social responsibility had shaped the form of Modern Indonesian art through collaboration with politicians in the struggle for independence.

B. THE GREAT DEBATE.

The shape of Indonesian culture has been an ongoing debate, due in no small part to the large number of different ethnic groups and cultures which make up the archipelago's identity. Writers have been arguing about the form of new Modern Indonesian culture since 1933. Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana started the debate by saying that it was time for Indonesia to build a "dynamic" modern culture based on Western theory and leave all the "static" and "feudal" old cultures behind. In response to Alisjahbana's view, Sanusi Pane replied that Indonesian culture could not be changed in a very short time due to the nation's way of life and its inherent character which is totally different from the West. The two different points of views soon became a great polemic between writers, artists and other intellectuals. They sought to

\[45\] Maklai (1991) p.12
contribute their own thought about the cultural problematic that would shape the new culture. On the other hand, K.H. Dewantara offered an alternative opinion. He believed in strengthening Asian cultural links instead of leaning towards Western theory; for instance he saw India as a "mother" culture of Indonesia\(^{46}\).

This debate, according to Holt, concerned itself with four main issues: the ignorance of local cultural diversities, the confusion in adapting the term of "the West" and "modernity", the emergence of new Islam reformism among Indonesians, and also the emotions of intellectuals in the cultural circles; all these factors demonstrated the search for a direction as well as the process of creation of an identity of a nation.

Sudjojono in PERSAGI had suggested "Indonesianism" could only be reached through the spirit of political "nationalism" in the works of art. This meant that prior to achieving independence all "true Indonesian" art work should reflect the struggle for nationalism.

Due to intense focus in the struggle for independence together with the direct experience of being *rakyat kecil*, the poor people\(^{47}\) in the chaotic political situation, the two themes of nationalism and identity with the common people became the only subject matter presented in Indonesian modern art either in realist, impressionist, post impressionist or expressionist

\(^{46}\)Indian culture had penetrated the local Malayo-Polynesian culture of Indonesia through Hinduism and Buddhism since the first and eighth century respectively.

\(^{47}\)Maklai (1991) p.10
styles. These subject matters were widely accepted by most of Yogyakarta's sanggar artists and later on formed a social commitment in the arts circle.

C. SOCIAL COMMITMENT IN THE OLD ORDER ERA.

Threatened by the new imperialism and American capitalism resulting from the Round Table Conference and the Marshall Plan, some artists who committed themselves to Marxist ideology established an art organisation called *Lembaga Kebudayaan Rakyat* (LEKRA, The Institute of People's Culture) in 1950. LEKRA was founded by leftist writers in Jakarta. The first secretariat consisted of A.S. Dharta (poet), M.S. Ashar (painter), Henk Ngantung (painter), Joobar Ajoeb (writer) and Njoto (writer)\(^48\).

LEKRA aimed to raise the "kerakyatan" (people-consciousness) awareness in the national art form to foster culture against feudalism and imperialism. In the previous manifesto (1950) it was declared that:

The failure of the August 1945 Revolution\(^49\) gave the opportunity to feudal and imperialist culture to continue its efforts to poison and destroy the character and the soul of the Indonesian People...

\(^48\) Njoto, was then elected as the member of Politburo of *Partai Komunis Indonesia*, PKI, The Indonesian Communist Party, in 1951. After all Njoto brought the Party concept to LEKRA.

\(^49\) The 17th of August is the day Indonesian political leaders proclaimed independence in 1945. It is known as The August 1945 Revolution
In short: feudal and imperialist culture has thoroughly destroyed the soul of the Indonesian People, giving them the mind and spirit of slaves...\textsuperscript{50}

In this manifesto, LEKRA saw the new Indonesian culture as threatened following the failure of the August 1945 Revolution. LEKRA saw the ruling elite in Indonesia as a new colonial or semi-colonial power which had planted a feudal system in the society and as a result created another colonialism among the majority of the ignorant people. A people's culture could be activated to resist the re-establishment of neo-colonialism and feudalism as the basis of the development\textsuperscript{51} of the new Indonesian culture.

In 1955 (officially adopted in 1959), the manifesto was being revised by high-lighting the role of ordinary people in the People's Culture:

Bearing in mind, that the people are the sole creators of culture, and that the building of a new Indonesian culture can only be carried out by the people,... \textsuperscript{52}

LEKRA insisted that "the people" was the key word in building the nation-culture. The people were placed as the "owner of the country" who had the right to have a decent life.

At the same time the left wing party, The Indonesian Communist Party (\textit{Partai Komunis Indonesia}, PKI) promoted the same awareness as that promoted by LEKRA to gain power. Several times, Njoto, The Communist

\textsuperscript{50} The LEKRA's manifesto is translated by Keith Foulcher. For fuller description see Foulcher (1986) \textit{Social Commitment in Literature and the Arts}.
\textsuperscript{51} Foulcher (1986) p.18
\textsuperscript{52} ibid.
Party agitator spoke with leading sanggar artists such as Sudjojono, Hendra and Affandi either in Seniman Indonesia Muda or Pelukis Rakyat. They discussed the artists role in politics, focusing on the class struggle and the value of a "socialist realist" style in gaining social equality in the spirit of nationalism.

LEKRA not only raised the "people consciousness" of anti imperialism and feudalism, but LEKRA also held many cultural discussions, exhibitions and opened up the political horizon for artists. For those, LEKRA was crying out for "... [a] people-mindedness art [that] is none other than realist art". LEKRA had suggested artists should show the spirit of nationalism and anti imperialism in their works. It became a basic formula for LEKRA artists in creating good art-works. This formula was based on consciousness and used the slogan "Politics is the commander" and "Moving Down".

"Moving Down" means promoting the people-mindedness as a primary consciousness and concern in the art world; the term "people" includes workers and farmers. This term was slightly altered to include soldiers in 1964. Keith Foulcher has suggested that this change might be related to Maoist influences in the Indonesian Communist Party in the 1960s; however, Joobar Ajoeb has explained that the change was due to the

53ibid p. 21, LEKRA menyambut p.13
54ibid p. 129
55personal communication in February 1995. J. Ajoeb has explained that the formula of the people had changed following the tragedy in Jengkol village, Kediri-East Java where an eight months pregnant woman was run over by the stonewalls driven by the soldier in a land reform demonstration. That tragedy led to another riot when mothers demanded the soldier's punishment.
realisation that soldiers were also a part of the ordinary people. This people-mindedness concept had shaped the atmosphere of socialism in the art world.

An example of the "moving down" concept was Amrus Natalsha's "Kawan-kawanku" (My friends) (Figure 1). It depicted a group of people who were waiting for something. Their expression was puzzled. It shows the struggling class condition (ie. workers) which can be noticed from their simple clothes. Their hands were placed in front of their chests, and the others hold their heads. It suggests that they were waiting for the next job.

"Politics is the commander" in LEKRA's view was the way to open up the artists's horizon toward socio-political problems. The aims were to encourage and to stimulate artists to produce works which were related to "truth" or "objectivity" in the society and nation. "Truth" or "objectivity" demanded a realist-form.

"Politics is the commander" paralleled Aidit's writing (Dengan Sastra dan Seni, 1964). In this writing, Aidit suggested that literature and art must be integrated with concrete political tasks. Politics was seen as the important key in shaping the new Indonesian culture. It was recommended that Indonesians must collaborate with the government in facing the threat of the Alliance (The British and The United States of America)\(^{56}\).

Mohamad Hadi's batik entitled "The New Emerging Forces" (NEFO) (Figure 2) was an example of "Politics is the commander". During the early 1960s President Sukarno popularised the slogan NEFO in counterbalancing

\(^{56}\)interview with Pramoedya Ananta Toer done by Hayam Wuruk journalist in 1994. (limited circulation)
the strength of colonial and neo-colonial forces in the Third World\textsuperscript{57}. Although the members of NEFO were never made explicit, Hadi's batik design was derived from a Chinese dragon pattern, the Middle-Eastern winged horse, the Afro-Asian elephant and the \textit{banteng}, Javanese bull as a symbol of The Indonesian Nationalist Party.

"Socialist-realism" had become an "optional view"\textsuperscript{58} for LEKRA members. "Socialist-realism" for some people meant a cultural formula for political purposes based on the Soviet Union's doctrine of Socialist Realism in the 1930s. However, Indonesian "Socialist-realism" as accepted by most of the artists came to mean the bind between the artists and the society and its problems\textsuperscript{59} through the production of their artworks.

LEKRA had also declared five points as the artists' manifesto:

- Art works should reflect all levels of the society
- A sensitive and ideological integrity coupled with high quality artistic performance.
- A positive drawing upon tradition integrated with the revolutionary present
- Individual creativity combined with the skills of the masses
- Revolutionary realism and revolutionary romanticism\textsuperscript{60}

\textsuperscript{57}Robyn Maxwell (1988) "Political Motives: The Batiks of Mohamad Hadi of Solo" in a \textit{Asian Arts and Textiles} brochure, ANG, Canberra. No paging number.
\textsuperscript{58}Joebar Ajoeb (1990) \textit{Sebuah Mocopat Kebudayaan Indonesia} p.36.
\textsuperscript{59}Foulcher (1986) p.202
\textsuperscript{60}remembering the revolution time
In one of the manifestos: "revolutionary realism and revolutionary romanticism", Joebar Ajob has argued that "Socialist-realism" was not a guiding principle for LEKRA's political aims but only for some of its members. "Socialist-realism" was seen as a major guide-line in the production of works of art\(^6\).

Artists who interpreted "Politics is the Commander" as a political message to articulate the political purposes in the art works, were drawn into radical thought. As a result they considered that ideology was more important than aesthetic value\(^6\). For example, if the party was concentrating on land reform by saying "destroy the land lord", the artists should feel duty bound and indeed honoured to produce art works based on the theme raised by the Party\(^6\). Kusmuljo's "Petani Boyolali" (Farmers from Boyolali) (Figure 3), a black and white wood cut, is an example of this view. The image is of strong muscular and angry farmers with their sickles demanding land reform. Another example is Arifin's black and white wood cut,'Crush Malaysia, Crush U.S. Imperialist Film" (Figure 4), in supporting Sukarno political movement toward anti imperialism.

LEKRA's views dominated intellectual debate within artistic circles concerning the nature of Indonesian culture during the period 1950-1965 with

\(^{61}\)Maklai (1991) p.11 mentions that socialist-realism should be seen as a guideline rather than a prescription toward Njoto's approach into LEKRA artists

\(^{62}\)F.X. Harsono (1993.a) "Seni Rupa Berorientasi pada politik, Sah". Kompas 30 Mei

\(^{63}\)F.X. Harsono (1992) "Perkembangan Seni Rupa Kontemporer di Indonesia, tinjauan problematik". SENI, Yogyakarta p. 127
its emphasis on Marxist ideology and the socialist-realist style. It led to resistance among those artists who were not keen to include political tension in their work. The resisting artists who believed in individualism and the universalist-humanist concept declared the "Cultural Manifesto" (Manifes Kebudayaan) and challenged Sukarno's Political Manifesto (Manifestasi Politik, MANIPO) on the national culture in 1963:

We, artists and intellectuals of Indonesia, declare a Cultural Manifesto that confirms our opinions, goals and National Cultural Politics. For us, culture is an attempt to perfect the condition of human life. We do not prioritize any particular aspect of culture [ie. politics] from the others. Every aspect of a culture works together for that culture according to its essential nature. In practicing our National Cultural awareness we attempt with all sincerity, to defend and develop a pride as Indonesians amongst other cultures and nations. Pancasila\(^\text{64}\) is our cultural philosophy\(^\text{65}\).

People who believe in the Cultural Manifesto\(^\text{66}\) argued that socialist-realism should be seen in the context of people's cultural history. Cultural History is seen as the source of knowledge in producing new culture and people should not rely only on the temporal political tension amongst

\(^{64}\)Pancasila is derived from the Hindu concept and becomes a State philosophy. Pancasila carries five points such as: Believe in God, Humanity, Unity, Democracy and Social Justice.

\(^{65}\)The Cultural Manifesto is translated by Ms. Rae Agahari

politicians. Political concern in art works was supposed to be based on cultural background as opposed to being based on political factions.

Other non LEKRA artists, who were being oppressed by the LEKRA domination had to find protection under another political party which formed its own cultural organisation such as:

- *Lembaga Seniman Budayawan Muslim Indonesia* (LESBUMI, Institute of Indonesian Moslem Artists and Cultured People) affiliated under *Nahdatul Ulama*, the Moslem Party;

- *Lembaga Kebudayaan Nasional* (LKN, National Institute of Culture) attached to the Indonesian Nationalist Party (PNI).

- *Lembaga Kebudayaan Indonesia Katolik* (LKIK, The Indonesian Catholic Cultural Institute) under the Indonesian Catholic Party.

- *Lembaga Kristen Indonesia* (LEKRINDO, Indonesian Christian Institute) under the Indonesian Christian Party.\(^{67}\)

Political tensions among the ruling elite which had been simmering since independence reached its climax in 1965. The Communist Party attempted a *coup d'etat* by raising a false alarm\(^{68}\) amongst the lower ranking official army. The result of this fake alarm was the slaughter of the six top Army generals (this tragedy was called *Gerakan 30 September*, the 30th September Movement by the anti communist army). In retaliation, the army indiscriminately killed people who were suspected of having affiliations with

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\(^{67}\)Maklai (1991) p. 15

\(^{68}\)Dewan Jenderal
the communist party or similar organisations\textsuperscript{69}. Most of them were innocent and there were no formal trials in which they could be judged. LEKRA with its socialist outlook was considered one of the culprit organisations\textsuperscript{70}. The organisation was liquidated and the majority of its members suffered the same fate\textsuperscript{71}; some were prosecuted, jailed or killed without trial. The art works which were produced during this period were destroyed and burnt. Social commitment in the art field was silenced.

\textsuperscript{69}Pramoedya Ananta Toer in a transcript interview (1994.a) mentions more than a million people were killed during this red scare, whilst the official statement has never been released. Pramoedya is a prominent leftist writer who was jailed at Pulau Buru for fourteen years. He was released in 1979 within an official document "... secara hukum tidak terlibat dalam Gerakan 30 September PKI..." (... officially, did not get involved in the 30th September Movement).

\textsuperscript{70}In \textit{Sebuah Mocopat Kebudayaan Indonesia} (1990) p. 5 Joobar Ajob says that LEKRA was not an art organisation under the Communist Party's umbrella toward LEKRA's social commitment. It seems that J. Ajob has concealed the relationship between LEKRA and PKI due to the hard time given to LEKRA members in the New Order government.

\textsuperscript{71}Acknowledged by Joobar Ajob, the former Secretary General of LEKRA period 1957-1965, that is some of LEKRA members were Communist, mostly the artists did not understand either Communism, Marxism or Leninism.
CHAPTER II: INDONESIAN ART POST 1966

A. THE "OLD" ART IN THE CULTURE OF FEAR

Between 1966 and 1975, artists chose to express their personal feelings through visual means, rather than being concerned with social problems. Political and social issues were left behind. Some artists drew themselves into their own emotions by worshipping the spiritual values of the abstract-expressionist style, whilst others explored visual elements which were found in traditional and tribal arts.

Abstract-expressionism and decorative art became the dominant styles. These two art styles were believed to be the way to reach the form of modern Indonesian art. During the period of 1970-1980, it could be said that the best works which were chosen in the Indonesian Painting Biennial belonged to these two styles.

These dominant styles were adopted by the two prominent art schools in Indonesia\textsuperscript{72}, Bandung art school, \textit{Fakultas Seni Rupa dan Desain, Institut}

\textsuperscript{72}The other art school is the Jakarta Institute of the Arts founded in 1968. There are some Visual Art departments in some universities such as Udayana University in
Teknologi Bandung, ITB (Faculty of Visual Art and Design, The Bandung Institute of Technology) and Yogyakarta art school (formerly Akademi Seni Rupa Indonesia, ASRI: The Visual Art Academy of Indonesia; now known as Institut Seni Indonesia, ISI, The Indonesian Art Institute).

In pre 1965, Bandung and Yogyakarta art schools had a totally different approach to the ideal Indonesian art form. ASRI\(^\text{73}\), founded in 1950, was dominated by sanggar artists such as Hendra, Affandi and Abbas Alibasjah. These sanggar artists had a strong commitment to class struggle and subsequently, ASRI\(^\text{74}\) had a tendency to praise the scene of daily life. Due to the lack of Western theoretical and historical background from their former teachers, the students had to find their own way in creating art-work and this is indicated in the saying "cari sendiri", search for your own style. Works frequently portrayed the activities of daily life, borrowing a Western "grammar" of figurative-decorative style either in realism and naturalism, or expressionism\(^\text{75}\). For example, Batara Lubis' "Gerobak Sapi" (cow-carriage), 1955 (Figure 5), oil on canvas, depicted the activities of the common people.

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Den Pasar, Bali; the University March Eleven (Universitas Sebelas Maret) in Solo. See Astri Wright (1994) Soul, Spirit and Mountain p.22

\(^{73}\)ASRI's first director was Katamsi who held a Dutch teacher's degree, see Helena Spanjaard (1993) " The Controversy between the Academies of Bandung an Yogyakarta" in Clark, J. (ed) Modernity in Asian Art p.86

\(^{74}\)ibid p. 87

The curriculum was derived from a Dutch teacher's training course in drawing and painting. The subjects which were taught: proportion, anatomy, perspective and composition. Quite often they did "out door" sketching and had direct contact with the people's life in a "kampung", village.

\(^{75}\)ibid p.85
A carriage pulled by cows, was used as the main transportation in goods delivery. The work portrayed a scene of resting cows at the end of a delivery.

On the other hand, the Bandung art school (founded in 1947), was established by the Dutch art educator and painter, Ries Mulder and draughtsman, Simon Admiraal, using a Dutch curriculum, 76 balancing art theory and the practice of art 77. Ries Mulder, instead of driving away political tension 78, introduced Jaques Villon's geometric cubist style to his students. The Bandung art school had earlier produced "Ries Mulderism", a form of geometrical cubism in which the object could not be seen clearly. For example Ahmad Sadali's "Central Park, New York", 1957 (Figure 6).

Critics attacked the Bandung art school for condoning "slavery to the West" 79, in which the art-works were considered to be "artificial", "bloodless", and could not represent Indonesian art 80. Trisno Sumardjo suggested that Bandung artists should forget their Western education, and return to their reality as Indonesians. Another harsh attack on Bandung's works came from the leftist writer, Sitor Situmorang, who said that the art-works were

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76 ibid p.92
77 ibid p.92-93
78 Ries Mulder did not want his students to get involved in anti Dutch politics.
79 Trisno Sumardjo, "Bandung mengabdi laboratorium Barat", Mingguan Siasat 391, 5 Desember 1954 p. 26
80 Helena Spanjaard (1990) "Bandung, the Laboratory of the West?" in Joseph Fischer (ed) Modern Indonesian Art p.55
superficial and were influenced by Western bourgeois taste. There was no content, no message and no vision in their works. Due to the rejection of the art critics and politicians none of the previous work of the Bandung artists was placed in the presidential palace collection. The work was considered as "Western" art as it attempted to copy Ries Mulder's work. The rejection was based on concerns about anti-colonial and neo-imperialism. After gaining independence from the Dutch, Indonesian intellectuals thought that any dependence on the Dutch meant to implement "neo-colonialism". The politician (Sukarno) did not want to keep "neo-colonial" art in his collection.

In the aftermath of the coup, both art schools had the same approach toward the post 1966 political trauma. Both art schools drew back on social and political issues, and started raising personal feelings based on their traditional background.

Yogyakarta art school had shifted from genre scenery into the wayang, puppet art form, based on the Indian epics, Ramayana and Mahabharata, concentrating on symbolism and spiritual interest. Moreover, the exploration of traditional techniques such as batik, had begun. As a result, Yogyakarta artists became familiar with the decorative-traditional approach.

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81ibid p.56

82Batik was part of the traditional fine art of Indonesia (ie: Javanese culture). The traditional fine art was keris -dagger-, batik, wayang, etc. All of those fine art relate to the spiritual and symbolism which is represented in the patterns, shapes and functions.
Meanwhile, Bandung art school following the criticism and oppression during the Old Order, sent their young staff\textsuperscript{83} to the United States of America to gain further education\textsuperscript{84}. As a result of their study, they shifted from Mulder-cubism into the New York school style, in particular abstract-expressionism based on their spiritual vision and the exploration of traditional arts.

The artists' strong determination to investigate their traditional background gained the attention of foreign scholars\textsuperscript{85} such as Joseph Fischer and Helena Spanjaard\textsuperscript{86}. Foreign scholars had approached modern Indonesian art through a "Western" point of view in particular drawing on the work of Claire Holt who had said that Indonesian artists should refer to the richness of cultural diversity\textsuperscript{87}. It seems that those foreign scholars were creating a "bridge" for Western audiences in seeing and understanding modern Indonesian art. However, they ignored the personal opinion of the artists toward the trauma of the coup\textsuperscript{88}.

\textsuperscript{83} First Mulder's pupil
\textsuperscript{84} Ahmad Sadali, A.D. Pirous and Srihadi had gone to USA at the end of 1960s.
\textsuperscript{85} Indonesia has very limited art history or art theory teaching due to the ignorance on this subject. Art history only plays a small part of the art school curriculum. Mostly, Indonesian art historians are trained overseas.
\textsuperscript{86} Other foreign scholars such as Astri Wright has approached modern Indonesian art through the artist's role in Soul, Spirit and Mountain (1994), while Britta Maklai has put her interest in the way that the new radical artists have challenged the society in Exposing Society's Wounds (1991).
\textsuperscript{87} Holt (1967) p. 197
\textsuperscript{88} Artists were afraid to discuss the coup's aftermath, in particular remembering LEKRA's artists who were prosecuted, tortured, jailed or killed. They did not want to put social-political issues in their work due to the fear of being associated with LEKRA. They have refused to talk about the trauma and intended to forget the things in the past.
In order to present Indonesian art to an international public, some foreign scholars and Indonesian art critics, wrote Modern Indonesian Art, Three Generation of Tradition and Change\textsuperscript{89}. Indonesian art was presented in terms of its traditional sources in the symbolism, that represented spiritual belief in visual form. Symbolism related to the spiritual meaning of tradition in form, shape, and philosophy. For example, the form of the triangle was related to gunungan\textsuperscript{90}, like a mountain. Sometimes, the triangle was transformed into the shape of a temple (such as Borodubur, the Buddhist temple in Central Java) or the form of pohon hayat or kalpataru, the tree of life.

Srihadi's Borobudur (Figure 70) (1982) shows the tranquillity of the temple through the colour harmony of the green grass, the blue sky and shady dark grey Borobudur. This is visualised with strong horizon lines in a variety of colours. The object is stylised. In Srihadi's Javanese philosophy:

Beauty in ethics and aesthetic serves the good of the world, ... Art is beauty for me in the ethical and aesthetic sense; it serves the creation of

\textsuperscript{89}A catalogue for representing the modern Indonesian art for the wide art world, edited by Joseph Fischer, published in 1990.

\textsuperscript{90}Gunungan is a stylisation of a mountain shape. It is used as the opening of wayang performance; made from cured water buffalo skin and finely carved and coloured. It is also related to Kalpataru or pohon hayat, the tree of life, in which all of the creatures live. To start the performance the puppeteer puts the gunungan in the banana tree trunk.
good art and not destruction. In the same way I understand freedom in art, not as destruction, but as creation..."\textsuperscript{91}.

The serenity of Borobudur turns up clearly in Srihadi's colour harmony.

Like Srihadi, a number of Indonesian artists were also looking for symbolic sources from a traditional background. Another form was \textit{perahu kematian} the ship-of-the-dead, which could be found in almost every single tribal art motif. The \textit{perahu kematian} was used as a vehicle of the dead to reach the other world. In some areas, \textit{perahu} (= real boat/ ship) plays an important role as either the main transportation, and/ or the equipment to earn a living. The form of \textit{perahu} such as \textit{phinisi} and \textit{sampan} itself is quite artistic. Some artists such as Affandi, Zaini and Rusli constantly painted \textit{perahu} in their works. For example, Rusli's "\textit{Perahu-perahu}" (Boats) (Figure 8) depicted four boats through simple and expressive brushstrokes in cheerful colours of green, yellow and red.

Another use of traditional sources could be found in the \textit{wayang} legends. The object of Indonesian painters is not only the heroes but also the \textit{punakawan}\textsuperscript{92} characters. The \textit{punakawan} are believed to be an Indonesian original creation, adapting the Indian epics (\textit{Ramayana} and \textit{Mahabharata}). The \textit{punakawan} are clown figures who act as servants to the heroes and are

\textsuperscript{91}Quoted from Spanjaard (1990) p. 60

\textsuperscript{92}There are few figures of \textit{Punakawan} called \textit{Semar} (the father), \textit{Petruk}, \textit{Gareng}, \textit{Bagong} (the children). The other figures which are not related to this family called \textit{Togog} and \textit{Limbuk} (the only woman in \textit{punakawan}). \textit{Semar} is believed to be as the re-incarnation of \textit{Bhatara Guru} (the chief God in \textit{pewayangan}, the \textit{wayang} world) or \textit{Bhatara Kreshna} (the God of knowledge). \textit{Semar} acts as the adviser of the heroes in facing the evil one.
quite talkative in voicing the people's view. Both the heroes and the *punakawan* figures are visualised in the modern painting. Most of the time, the painters identify themselves as one of the *punakawan* figure whom they admire. For example, O.H. Supono's work entitled "Wayang" (Figure 9) depicted the *punakawan* family, *Semar, Petruk, Gareng* and *Bagong*.

Masks are also used in modern Indonesian art. Joseph Fischer has observed that "masks hide, transform and emphasise but do not disguise the personalities and roles of those who wear them." Like *wayang* figures, masks are a favourite source of inspiration.

Instead of taking the symbolism and the characters of traditional sources, some artists approached spiritual belief directly from religion; for example portraying the ritual ceremony in the Hindu temple, including activities such as offering the *sesaji*, or traditional dancing. Moslem artists, on the other hand, tended to explore the beauty of Islamic calligraphy derived from the *Koran*. The portrayal did not only recreate the beautiful shape of words; the words themselves carried a meaning which was believed to have *tuah*, a power, for readers. For example, Amang Rahman's *Yassin* (Figure 10).

All of those examples indicate approaches using symbolism and the spiritual in the representation of tradition. For some artists, traditional sources can be approached from the aesthetics of decorative art. For example, Sunaryo from the Bandung art school approached the minor primitive-tribal art (i.e:

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Nias and Asmat) without knowing the meaning. For him the tribal art could be
seen as something exotic which is similar to the way Picasso saw the African
masks.94

There was a tendency among the artists to investigate and examine
indigenous traditional and tribal art during period of 1966 to 1975. This
approach was in part a result of the influence of Holt's theory as well as the
national slogan "Unity in Diversity". The artists were challenged to form an
Indonesian art. As A.D. Pirous says:

...the contemporary art forms in Indonesia are growing in the midst of
a turmoil of influences from [both] tradition and from modern life. In
the turmoil, in the search for form and substance, there maybe
collisions of values into one artistic expression that is symbolic; this
can be seen as something distinctly Indonesian.95

It was not easy to define "Indonesianism" in modern Indonesian art. In
Indonesia, there was a wish to be seen as a unique country with its own unique
art form. Hence, nationalistic spirit became the guide in the search for the
national art form.

It was quite puzzling for the artists in putting political content in their art-
works. The political imperative says that Indonesia as a nation is formed by
the diversity of its ethnic groups and traditional cultures, so it was assumed

94Semsar Siahaan believes that Sunaryo deliberately exploited tribal art for his own
personal commercial advantage particularly when foreign buyers had penetrated the
Indonesian art market. (Personal communication, February 1995)
95A.D. Pirous, "Indonesian Contemporary Art" lecture held at the occasion of
symposium in the Museum of Ethnology, Rotterdam, 3 November 1988, quoted from
Spanjaard (1990) p. 76.
that Indonesian modern art could be formed through traditional arts. This led to a persistent attitude among artists in searching for the "ideal" form of Indonesian art that it could be developed from the investigation of traditional arts.

The ideal form of Indonesian art which was assumed to be based on the exploration of the diversity of traditional arts, led modern Indonesian art into a period of eclipse. The artists attempted to ignore social problems - the society's wounds - in the aftermath of the coup. The investigation of traditional arts as a formula in shaping a national art, was seen by them as the only way they could express themselves as modern artists. However, the domination of this perspective was not supported by the critical and analytical thinking of the younger generation. As a result, younger Indonesian artists were searching for national identity without a clear understanding of why they should have that identity.

For some foreign scholars such as Joseph Fischer and Helena Spanjaard, the idea of shaping the modern art through the exploration of the richness of traditional arts was seen as a unique idea. These scholars have a modernist view that traditional arts without interacting with the tradition have played an important role in the visual development of modern Indonesian art.

There are, however, inadequacies in this. The development of modern Indonesian art needs to be understood not only in visual terms, but also in emotional social and political terms. What are the reasons behind their visual
art-works? Tradition for example could be used as a starting point in examining the artists' attitudes toward a culture of fear.

Symbolism was used by artists to represent the inner spirit. The gunungan (like a mountain), temple, or kalpataru (tree of life) was used in seeking protection from nature. Srihadi, like other artists, camouflaged the misery through the harmony of life. This is related to Javanese customs: when problems come up in daily life, people attempt to solve them by offering sesaji to nature. There was a belief among the Javanese that problems which appeared in life were caused by the ignorance of people in worshipping the spirit. Srihadi in his view of the beauty of "good" art says "... I do not accept some trends in contemporary art which aim at destruction...". It could be argued that Srihadi avoided the "destruction" which would have forced him to deal with the pain of political trauma which was oppressing the artists. As a result he became quite determined to explore the relation between ethics and aesthetics in the Javanese way of life.

Secondly, symbolism was used as a means of counteracting the dejection, the sadness, the sorrow and the loss of hope. This reversal was achieved by using the masks and, or the wayang character, in particular the punakawan. The punakawan is the figure who is always concerned about rakyat kecil, the poor people. The punakawan contemplates the fierceness of

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96 This is part of traditional Javanese belief, Kejawen. This belief is based on animism in worshipping the spirit.
97 quoted in Spanjaard (1990) p. 60
98 ibid
the ruling elite in a clown figure. Through them, artists are reconciled to their suffering through laughter. Implicitly, punakawan was used to remind the ruling elite to serve the people instead of abusing their power.

Thirdly, symbolism is a key element in traditional arts which became a style in modern Indonesian art for reasons already discussed. Visually, traditional art has its own characteristics such as flatness, or the rendition of rich and luxuriant vegetation in a horror vacui composition. It is based on the belief that space left empty would be occupied by evil spirit. In Indonesian tribal art\textsuperscript{99}, space is never left empty. It is always decorated to avoid the devil spirit. Instinctively, modern Indonesian artists had similar thoughts in protecting themselves from feelings of horror by using the richness of decorative art as a token of security.

Fourthly, religion, and in particular Islam, which had successfully supported the right wing army in defeating the attempted communist coup d'etat, had become a bourgeois attitude among the elite. Politically, Islam played an important role in oppressing the Communist ideology pre 1965. Together with the student movement (now known as Angkatan '66, '66 Movement), Islam favoured the takeover of the right wing army\textsuperscript{100}. In the trauma of the aftermath, all leftist thinking -either Communism, Marxism or Leninism- was automatically identified with atheism. The way to

\textsuperscript{99}Horror vacui is not only found in Indonesian art past living tradition; but also found in almost every single tribal art in the world.

\textsuperscript{100}This claim was made by Dr. George Adicondro, a senior lecturer from Satya Wacana University, Salatiga, Indonesia in a guest lecturer at Sydney University, November 1994.
avoid being accused as a communist or as an atheist was by showing one's religious faith publicly. In the art-world, it seems that Islam was used as a tool to protect the artist ideologically. Religion was used as a defence against communist phobia.

The use of tradition was not then primarily a source of inspiration in the romantic sense, but rather a complex set of choices which arose from the specific cultural, political and, historical situation. Modern Indonesian artists were living in a culture of fear, a fact which Western scholars chose not to perceive, in their explanations of the work of this period. The artists sought to conceal their political trauma through the adherence to traditional material. They thus enshrined themselves within this approach and became a muted voice producing stagnant art.

B. THE "NEW" ART: CHALLENGING THE SOCIETY.

In the early 1970s, the student group Angkatan '66 which had supported the right wing and Islam in its anti-communism, changed their attitude toward the New Order government. The ruling elite began to be seen as an improper,
illegitimate government\textsuperscript{103}, whose members and families benefited personally from monopoly policies as the national economy collapsed\textsuperscript{102}. The students, post Angkatan '66 became an opposition and were quite powerful in voicing their ideas.

Displeased with the government's authoritarian manner, students led a boycott against Japanese goods in 1974, in events which came to be called the Malari Affairs\textsuperscript{103}. Following the action, student leaders were arrested, major newspapers and magazines were banned. As a result, the ruling elite imposed political "stability" on every single youth organisation's activities by insisting that activities be carried out through Golkar, the ruling party\textsuperscript{104}.

Parallel to the political state, was the art world which had matured as an establishment in its own way. However, this situation was seen as a fake and inauthentic shape by young radical artists, who felt that they were shackled by conventional art forms and could not express their creativity or their social criticism freely. Tight governmental control in politics and the arrogant outlook of established artists and art critics created dissent among outspoken young artists and art students.

\textsuperscript{101}Dr. Buyung Nasution, Legal Aids spokesperson (Lembaga Bantuan Hukum, LBH) Jakarta. A guest lecturer at The Australian National University, Canberra, August 1994.

\textsuperscript{102}there was an agricultural crisis which led into inflation

\textsuperscript{103}Malari Affairs: Malapetaka Januari (the January riot) in 1974. Following student's demonstration, some people were paid to create the riot by burning the Japanese vehicles. According to Dr. George Adicondro that was the government's counter-reaction in developing a faulty impression for students.

\textsuperscript{104}Dr. George Adicondro (1994)
A floral wreath, entitled "Condolences on the death of Indonesian painting" was sent to the judges at the Indonesian Painting Biennale, 31 December 1974 in Jakarta. The message was signed by thirteen\textsuperscript{105} young artists and art students - from ASRI Yogyakarta and ITB Bandung -, and constituted a cry for freedom in art. The artists were protesting the stagnation of Indonesian art which was in their view controlled by "totalitarian" authorities. They accused the judges of having a bourgeois taste for "decorative" and "consumerist" art\textsuperscript{106} and with having an inadequate understanding of art. Together with the protest, the Black December statement was announced. In this statement, the artists demanded a change in the future to allow for a diversity of styles in other works. Moreover, they demanded a greater freedom of media\textsuperscript{107} and content to develop "new art" together with the established art styles (ie. abstract-expressionism and decorative art.)

This action did not gain the political sympathy of ASRI which was at that time directed by Abbas Alibasjah. He accused the students of "disturbing the stability of our country's development, and blackening the good name of

\textsuperscript{105}The Black December statement was signed by F.X. Harsono, Bonyong Munni Ardhi, Ris Purwana, Hardi, Siti Adiyati Subangun, D.A. Peransi, Ikranegeara, Daryono and others. They were from Jakarta, Yogyakarta and Bandung.

\textsuperscript{106}Meanwhile five paintings done by A.D. Pirous, Aming Prayitno, Widayat, Irsam and Abbas Alibasjah were chosen as the best paintings.

\textsuperscript{107}The artists identified the criteria as stated by few outspoken artists in following the Major Indonesian Painting Exhibition held biennially was that the art work must be flat and two dimensional, either in oil painting, acrylic or water colour. See Proposal Binal 1989 no paging number. "Binal" (literally wild) was aimed to counteract the official Painting Biennale exhibition. According to "Binal" artists, the criterion of official biennale never changed.
ASRI'. Regarding the Black December demands by artists to re-direct their concern to the social, economical and political problems, Alibasjah warned that this could be "very dangerous turn" for the art circle. Some of the Black December members who were also ASRI students, -such as F.X. Harsono, Bonyong Muni Ardhi, Ris Purwana and Hardi- were forced to leave the art school. Some ASRI lecturers who gave them support were also dismissed. Unlike ASRI, both ITB and IKJ\textsuperscript{108} invited the members of the Black December group to have an exhibition and discussion at their institutes.

Following the Black December incident in ASRI, the "Nusantara-Nusantara" (Archipelago-archipelago) exhibition was held by ASRI students in Yogyakarta. In this context the members\textsuperscript{109} expressed criticism of the totalitarian manner of their teachers; once again ASRI reacted strongly toward their rebel students and those who did not apologise for their criticism were forced to leave the school. In the early morning of the following day after the ultimatum was announced, seven out of eight students had written an apology to the director, isolating Agus Dermawan, who was then accused of having started the criticism. He was subsequently expelled.

Whilst the Indonesian art circle was facing difficult problems, the echo of the American avant-garde gained artists' attention. With New York

\textsuperscript{108}IKJ, Institut Kesenian Jakarta, The Jakarta Art Institute. It was established as Lembaga Pendidikan Kesenian Jakarta (LPKJ) in 1968; in 1970 had become IKJ.

\textsuperscript{109}The members were Samikun, I Gusti Bagus Widjaja, Wardoyo, Kristianto, Sudarisman, Suatmadji, Agustinus Sumargo and Agus Dermawan
identified as the centre of art activities, the avant-garde had become the mainstream. But in New York as well, issues of human rights, feminism and the Vietnam War were also figured by artists, and this became a model for Indonesia\textsuperscript{110} in its longing for freedom and its desire to explore different media styles, ideas and content.

Realising the lack of strong commitment in contemporary Indonesian art, eleven young artists\textsuperscript{111} from Jakarta, Bandung and Yogyakarta attempted to break through the dominion of the "old art". Calling themselves the \textit{Gerakan Seni Rupa Baru}, the group held a controversial exhibition in Jakarta in 1975. Their exhibition was seen as an attack on the authorities in the art circle who esteemed the magnificence of personal feeling. Kusnadi, a prominent art critic said the exhibition was "overacting", "using the word baru (new) without offering a new creativity", it was branded as "vulgar", and accused of "vandalism". For Kusnadi, "they [the \textit{Gerakan} artists] were only a minority of students with lack of education, who mistakenly thought that expressing dissatisfaction constituted art..."\textsuperscript{112}

\textsuperscript{110}Interestingly, the American avant-garde influences was being refused by the \textit{Gerakan} artists who thought that Indonesian art should be seen in an Indonesian context.

\textsuperscript{111}The members were Ayool Subroto, Bachtiar Ainoel, Pandu Sudewo, Nanik Mirna, Muryoto Hartoyo, F.X. Harsono, Bonyong Munni Ardhi, Hardi, Ris Purwana, Siti Adiyati Subangun and Jim Supangkat.

The art-works which were shown in the first exhibition consisted mainly of mixed-media, collages and assemblages. Some examples of these works are, Bonyong Muni Ardhi's "Door in the dimension of space 75" which was made from a collage of dolls, masks and found objects; such as window and doors. Jim Supangkat's "Sarapan" (Breakfast) contained a table and chairs, set for a meal. However, instead of putting a serving of rice, Supangkat put a severed hand. It was considered as new and contradictory in the Indonesian art world because people were used to seeing the 'old art'. The works attempted to show the reality of social problems.

The most controversial art work in this exhibition was Jim Supangkat's "Ken Dedes" (Figure 12). Supangkat sculptured Ken Dedes, - the most beautiful legendary queen from the twelfth century Singasari kingdom, from the head up to her shoulder in a classical form. The realistic replica was placed on top of a rectangular box which functioned as a plinth as well as her body from the breast down to the feet. Within the box, Ken Dedes' body was drawn in a very simple line in the shape of a seductive sexy woman. The image showed a modern woman in a vulgar pose. Her breast is exposed, her unzipped jeans show her pubic hair while one hand on the hip suggests that she is a prostitute.

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113 un-illustrated picture
114 Supangkat was strongly influenced by the film 'Taxi Driver', directed by Scorsese in 1972 with Jodie Foster as a young prostitute.
The *Ken Dedes* work eventually led to a polemic between Kusnadi, a senior art critic, and Sudarmaji, art critics from the younger generation. In his anger, Kusnadi accused Jim Supangkat of plagiarism, using vulgar, profane and pornographic elements to "disgrace the Indonesian culture". In his reply to Kusnadi, Sudarmaji said that Kusnadi's opinion was old-fashioned. Sudarmaji considered Kusnadi's point of view irrelevant because he did not try to understand Supangkat's work in his own terms. Supangkat believed that *Ken Dedes* represented the modern Indonesian woman as seen in film and magazines.

With regards to plagiarism and the question of originality, Sudarmaji acknowledged that those young artists developed the found objects. The artists offered a different approach to seeing found objects as art works.

The confrontation between Kusnadi and Sudarmaji became a long debate. Kusnadi represented "elderly" art critics and was also a prominent "art tutor" in the Art Division, Department of Culture and Education. Kusnadi could not accept the young artists' rebellion from the "guiding line" in producing good Indonesian art. Sudarmaji with his moderate view could understand what the *Gerakan* artists were up to. However, Sudarmaji was not articulate enough to examine the *Gerakan* concepts. He did not dare to point

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out the main problems, that is the culture of fear, which the Indonesian artists were facing during that time.

Other art critics such as Sanento Yuliman and Bambang Bujono were more successful in analysing the *Gerakan* through the "grammar" of visual art. They attempted to evaluate the *Gerakan* rebellion against the idea of the "stagnant" art and the limitation of medium (i.e. two dimensional painting). Sanento pointed out implicitly that the *Gerakan* protested against the stagnant art in Indonesia, but he did not clarify the reason why. Bambang sympathetically said that the *Gerakan* had exchanged the language of the brush for the language of objects\textsuperscript{117}.

Together with the powerful exhibition, the *Gerakan* declared The Five Points of its manifesto. It began:

In creating art, one needs to banish as far as possible the images of "art" which have been accepted up till now. (The *Gerakan* considers them "old art", that is, art limited only to the following: painting, sculpture and printmaking...\textsuperscript{118}

In the first sentence, the influence of Duchamp and Dada in their appropriation of anti-art ideas, and the challenge to elitist distinctions between art objects\textsuperscript{119} is clearly seen. The beginning of the manifesto is the expression of puzzled young artists. The *Gerakan* was crying out for something natural

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\textsuperscript{117}Maklai (1991) p. 29


and spontaneous to posit against "art". It could be seen as a release of a new psychic energy based on their rejection of Dada theory. Similar to Hugo Ball's reading, "... [as a] symbol in opposition to the outmoded world of grown-ups..." Gerakan questioned the "old art" in constructing a "new art" by penetrating the limitation of the art form.

Furthermore, Gerakan says:

In creating works of art, we have to banish the elite conception of an artwork such as for painting, sculpture, and drawing, etc\(^{120}\).

This demand was based on the plurality of forms which were then being acknowledged in the American avant-garde movement. Since the 1950s, the avant-garde had challenged the visual arts, performing art, architecture and other disciplines, combining two and three media, mixing the aural and the visual, uniting the static and the active, and linking the isolated object and the total environment\(^{121}\). However, the Gerakan was not only summarising what had happened in the broader art world but also implemented the visual elements of traditional arts. This made the Gerakan different from the American avant-garde and from Dada, and this element was unique to the Gerakan; it cannot be found in either the American avant-garde or Dadaism.

The second point challenged artists' elitism, believing that actual social problems are more important issues than personal feelings...\(^{122}\)

This should be compared with Joseph Beuys who had said\(^{123}\):

\(^{120}\)opcit
\(^{121}\)\textit{opcit}
\(^{122}\)(1993) \textit{Breakthrough}, p.3
\(^{123}\)opcit
... only art is capable of dismantling the repressive effects of an irrelevant social system that continues to torture those who are already in their deathbed; to dismantle in order to build a SOCIAL ORGANISM AS A WORK OF ART.

The Gerakan demanded that "specialisation" and "elitism" should be evicted. Artists should not conceal the wounds of society under the splendour of their art works. The artists, they demanded, had to face reality.

In the third point, the Gerakan protested the "sterility of Indonesian art" and demanded a diversity of new art styles, urging artists to:

strive for "the creative possibilities of art", in the sense of aiming for the harmony of style in Indonesian art...\textsuperscript{124}

In the search for creative work, the Gerakan opposed the idea of being "cantri" (lit. student, apprentice). The Gerakan refused the notion that the student had to follow his master's step which was the care in the Indonesian art schools.

The most challenging demand in their manifesto emerged in the fourth point. It urged artists to:

strive for the development of an "Indonesian" art, by giving priority to the research of history of the New Indonesian Art ...\textsuperscript{125}

They believed that the history of the new Indonesian art did not appear in books that are written by foreign scholars.

\textsuperscript{124} opcit
\textsuperscript{125} ibid
Indonesian artists had a passion to speak for themselves. They did not want to be drawn in the midst of a Western (ie. Euro-American) concept which was not always suitable for the Indonesian\textsuperscript{126}.

There was a feeling of incompetence among Indonesians in relation to Westerners who had advance technology and a wealth of information. There was a wish to catch up with the advanced knowledge of Westerners especially by Indonesians who were educated in the West (Euro-America),

\[ \ldots \text{ everybody is talking about fostering development in the "Alien" country, in "that" [Northern Hemisphere] part of the world. And there are a number of people in "this" [Southern Hemisphere, ie. Indonesia] part of the world who have tried putting themselves in "that" for the fear of being seen backward}\textsuperscript{127}. \]

The expectation is that an Indonesian can be identical to the people from "that" side if he or she follows "their" step.

For this, the Gerakan attempted:

\[ \text{To oppose the sterile opinions of those who say that art is universal: to oppose those who make the problems of Indonesian art dependent on the theorisation of art overseas.}\textsuperscript{128} \]

It is undeniable that one culture influences the others. However, there are always differences that make one culture distinct from others. These differences are factors that make each culture unique. The Gerakan realised

\textsuperscript{126}Although in the first three points of the manifesto it can clearly be seen that the Gerakan's concepts were influenced by Western art, there was an attempt to develop concepts according to Indonesian needs.


\textsuperscript{128}opcit
this uniqueness, and they stood up for it. They believed that Indonesian art can be theorised independently from the foreign conceptualisation of it.

Realising this dilemma, in the fifth point, the Gerakan is "striving for art that is more alive". They demanded "concentration on a natural and useful, representation of reality throughout the whole spectrum of society". The Gerakan was aware that art and society, local environment and its problems, were important factors in shaping the "new" art of Indonesia.

In summary, the Gerakan sought the establishment of a new form in Indonesian art, contradicting the stagnant "old art" which had operated in a culture of fear.

Art was used as a healing tool of society by the Gerakan artists. Gerakan artists played an important role as the "antenna of the society", by exposing the "wounds" and "forcing" people to reveal the reality.

Indonesian intellectuals attempted to analyse and discuss the Gerakan manifesto; however, it seemed that everybody was talking in a "silent" language. They were aware that the nature of Indonesian art was being confronted, but no body dared to speak up. As a result the discussion and the critical approach was impeded. No-one was prepared to go beyond talking about the technique, medium, and the visual content.

There were a few criticisms that devalued the Gerakan's Manifesto. Firstly, people preferred to label the Gerakan as an immature activity of the young artists needing to vent their energy. Secondly, Tuti Heraty Noerhadi, a

\[1^{129}ibid\]
poet, said that the Gerakan offered a dubious activity. The artists want to make a noise and promote themselves by creating a miscellaneous art\textsuperscript{130}.

After gaining a lot of attention in the public, the Gerakan became a model for other young radical artists. The Gerakan became a "style" in contemporary art during the second half of the 1970s.

In 1976, Tulus Warsito and Budi Sulistyо held an exhibition in Yogyakarta entitled "Pop Art Essentialism". They used found objects and put them in the hall as "fine art". In doing so, Budi Sulistyо painted the words PAINTING - HANDLE WITH CARE. Their exhibition was aimed to expose the elite by showing how "empty" the "art for art sake"\textsuperscript{131} was.

The second Gerakan exhibition was held in 1977\textsuperscript{132} in Jakarta. Representation of various kinds of social problems were exhibited in multimedia, collage and painting. Some works such as F.X. Harsono's "Offering for our Time"\textsuperscript{133} derived from the traditional village custom in making the sesaji, offering. Harsono arranged some glasses containing flowers, and some dishes in a tray. Inside the dishes he put plastic toys instead of food offering. Another artist whose work became a focus was Dede Eri Supria. With exceptional skill, the artist painted the urban poor of a big city in a photorealistic style\textsuperscript{134}.

\textsuperscript{131}Maklai (1991) p. 66
\textsuperscript{132}Some new members joined this exhibition such as S. Prinka, Ronald Manulang, Satyagraha, Nyoman Nuarta, Wagiono and Dede Eri Supria.
\textsuperscript{133}un-illustrated picture
\textsuperscript{134}Maklai (1991) p.68
One Dede's painting entitled "Self-portrait" (Figure 11) depicted the artists himself standing beside the shanty towns along the river-side.

This exhibition was received by the wider art critics as a "strange, unique and surprising" event while others commented that there was a "pleasing naughtiness" related to the revolutionary Indonesian poet, Chairil Anwar. Agus Dermawan noticed that this exhibition was better organised than the previous one due to the artists' confidence in expressing their idea.

In Jakarta, following the Gerakan II show, an exhibition of "Conceptual Art" was held. The works were aimed as a protest of "the lost direction of Indonesian art". The show consisted of "Action Sketching" by the artists, and ensued the discussion of "how serious is our art?".

The Gerakan "style" attracted numbers of young artists who felt that the style was suited to their youthful temperament. "Gerakan Seni Rupa Baru" became fashionable and trendy for contemporary Indonesian artists as a "seni rupa penggembira" ("fun art")135. Those young artists wanted to portray their emotions in the form of criticism and protest without understanding the Gerakan manifesto correctly.

By 1978, there was high tension between the government and the student activists. The students opposed the dictatorship of the ruling elite after

Chairil Anwar was an Indonesian poet during the revolutionary time. His poem inspired the Indonesian intellectuals in the fighting for the independent.
136F.X. Harsono, personal communication January 1995
the re-appointment of Suharto as president. The activity was concentrated at the University of Gajah Mada (UGM) Yogyakarta and Institut Teknologi Bandung (ITB). As a consequence, UGM and ITB were raided by the police; student leaders were arrested and "normalisasi kampus" (de-politicization in campuses) was applied\textsuperscript{137}.

In the midst of political turmoil in 1979, the Gerakan exhibited their third show in Jakarta. They blatantly expressed their concern on social issues and the exhibition room became a forum of social and political issues. For example in Dede Eri Supria's photorealist painting "Manusia Urban" (Urban People)\textsuperscript{138}, acrylic on canvas, the people were depicted as beggars who lived in a big city. He portrayed the poor people in mazes, surrounded by labyrinths and corridors of windows. The painting presented images of a bleak and confusing future for the poor of a metropolis. F.X. Harsono portrayed the future of "forced" transmigration in his installation entitled "Transmigrasi" (Transmigration)\textsuperscript{139}, and Hardi printed his self portrait in a formal presidential costume entitled "President of Indonesia 2001" (Figure 13).

Siti Adiyati Subangun in her mixed-media work displayed a hungry people who had to eat a water hyacinth\textsuperscript{140}. Her work was derived from Kerawang tragedy. Kerawang, the country side Western part of Jakarta was well known

\textsuperscript{137}Dr. George Adicondro (1994). Some major newspapers and magazines were banned. The "normalisasi kampus" prohibited political activities. As a result political discussion had shifted into social discussion, in particular environments, off campus.

\textsuperscript{138}un-illustrated picture

\textsuperscript{139}un-illustrated picture

\textsuperscript{140}un-illustrated picture
as the "lumbung beras" (rice supplier) for West Java (including Jakarta). Ironically, all of the rice was taken away to be sold in a big city by the landowners, whilst the peasant had to eat the water hyacinth due to their poverty.

Ayip Rosidi, a writer, said that the audience comprehended the artist's aims in opening the society's wounds. However, other critics saw this exhibition as a threat to the national stability. Soegeng Zein Supriyanto in his article "Seni Rupa Paranoid A-Pedagogis" saw the Gerakan as the re-birth of the social revolution movement. He worried that the Gerakan could be used by "orang-orang yang sakit hati" (revengeful people) against the government. With this in mind, Supriyanto called for scholars, psychiatrists, philosophers and educators to investigate and examine the movement. He also suggested that the Directorate of the Art Foundation under the Department of Education and Culture should exercise the power of censorship.

Supriyanto picked out Dede Eri Supria's work, and asked, accusingly if Dede did have a sympathy for homeless people, why did he not live with or give his money to them. During that time, urbanisation became a big problem for the Jakarta local government due to the city's rapid development, which attracted people from outside Jakarta to get a job. Whilst in small cities or villages it was difficult for many people to obtain a job or a fair salary.

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141 Maklai (1991) p.74
142 In my interview, January 1995, Dede Eri Supria admitted that in his early years coming back to Jakarta, he was "homeless" between 1979 up to early 1980s. He did not have a permanent place to stay and could not afford it. Sometimes he stayed with his relatives and quite often he stayed in Balai Budaya exhibition hall. This condition eventually turned up strongly in his works.
Subsequently, large numbers of un-skilled and un-educated workers went to Jakarta. Those people who did not qualify in gaining a job became beggars and some of them became criminals. As a result, the local government faced problems. Jakarta as a prestigious metropolitan city had created complex social problems such as unemployment, homelessness, poverty and a high criminal rate\textsuperscript{143}.

Supriyanto also harshly attacked Siti Adiyati Subangun for having "sad nostalgia", and asked

\[ \text{... was it a water hyacinth like that which was eaten by the people of Kerawang? We do not exactly know, and perhaps the artists do not exactly know either...} \text{\textsuperscript{144}} \]

Through the work in the exhibition, the audience understood clearly the \textit{Gerakan} manifesto which had, four years earlier, demanded a concern for social problems. \textit{Gerakan} members articulated their concepts and ideas through a visual language which clearly paralleled their verbal manifesto. The audience was asked to think and to contemplate the social problems. Visual art was not only to be used as a tool in seeing the beauty of nature, or to express the artists' inner-feeling, etcetera, but also to display "the wounds".

The \textit{Gerakan} vision definitely appeared in their works in their rejection of what they regarded as the stagnant art, produced in a climate of fear.

\textsuperscript{143}There was also criticism toward the state government. The development was not supposed to be only concentrated at Jakarta, but also other areas in reducing the number of urbanisation.

\textsuperscript{144}Maklai's translation (1991) p.75
Explicitly, the *Gerakan* used Joseph Beuys' theory, "show your wounds" in the process of healing the society.

Due to criticism and tight government policy (Hardi was in detention after the exhibition), inner conflicts started to develop among members. For some members, *Gerakan* was seen as a concept of "new art", as a style or a "language" whilst others were pleased that the *Gerakan* brought a new value to Indonesian art. Others thought, that *Gerakan* as "kelompok" (a group) had changed into "momok" (a vampire)\(^{145}\), which demanded that artists create something new (ie. provide fresh blood) that had not previously been seen in Indonesia.

These conflicts emerged for a number of reasons. Firstly, as a group, *Gerakan* established a "new art" (in particular the use of mixed-media, installation, etc) in Indonesia. *Gerakan* members insisted persistently that their "new art" needed to be acknowledged as a visual language alongside the "old art" and there was resistance to this. After shocking the Indonesian art circle at their first appearance, the *Gerakan* "new art" itself gained recognition.

Secondly, *Gerakan* brought a new value, the spirit of fearlessness in facing the social trauma. *Gerakan* tried to speak up about themselves, their concern for their society.

Thirdly, *Gerakan* was seen as an umbrella institution which could hide the individual artist's identity. Artists felt that they were trapped under the

Gerakan banner. People would see them as a member of Gerakan but not as an individual artist. Their own identity was always linked to Gerakan's.

The Gerakan Seni Rupa Baru "had been forced to stop its activities" due to complex internal and external problems. However, Gerakan succeeded in re-generating an awareness among artists and the younger generation. Gerakan had opened up a new horizon in Indonesian art, making it possible to make art which looks at the reality of daily life such as ritual-ceremonial, environment, social, economical and political problems.

Following the third Gerakan exhibition, some of the members presented other works in a show entitled "Kepribadian Apa" (What Identity) in Yogyakarta, 1979. The exhibition questioned the identity of Indonesian art. The visual art-work was combined with a music show performed by the musician Sapto and Jack Body. The event was considered atypical and it created a lot of controversy. The works consisted of multi-media which mocked the national figures and excess of national development. This show was closed down by the police on the second day without any explanation.

C. AFTER THE GERAKAN SENI RUPA BARU

\[146\]Maklai (1991) p. 77
\[147\]In 1987, The Gerakan held their fourth show. It seems that the exhibition was largely for nostalgic reasons since the artists had lost interest as a group.
\[148\]Personal communication with Dede Eri Supria, January 1995.
Society's inner feeling is the expression of the society's soul. 
Society has soul and a body 
Society's body is custom, institutions and law 
Society's soul is the common instinct which can only be realised in symbol and legend 
This is the sacred path via which society's soul is joined with the spirit of the one.

("The Struggle of the Naga tribe", Rendra)\textsuperscript{149}

Rendra's poem accurately describes how important the "soul of society" was in Indonesian art from 1980 onward. Following the de-politicization on campuses, students shifted their attentions onto environmental problems. They collaborated with some Non-Government Organisations (NGO)\textsuperscript{150} in helping poor people either in the cities or the villages\textsuperscript{151}. By working closely with the people, the students gained the idea of becoming "the one", integrated into the society.

Some young artists who were students during the Gerakan movement, began to seriously investigate social problems. Numbers of young artists took the struggling class as the main source of inspiration. Daily life could become a primary concern without getting involved in politics directly. Those young artists had learnt from earlier

\textsuperscript{150}Wahana Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia (WALHI, the Indonesian Environmental Group), Pusat Informasi Jaringan Antar Ras (PIJAR) or SKEPHI
\textsuperscript{151}The main programs were environment awareness together with basic education for children, health especially for women and children, hygienic awareness, etc.
experiences such as through the closing down of exhibitions or the detention of some radical artists, and they carried a heavy load in challenging the society as well as finding a way to avoid troubles.

Humanity became the main concern in some artists' works. The social gap between the rich and the poor, injustice, and the issues of human rights were considered as major social problems.

One of the most challenging and experimental young artists\textsuperscript{152} was Heri Dono\textsuperscript{153}.

My obsessions especially concern problems of humanity...[although] I am not involved in political or social problems...\textsuperscript{154}. According to Heri Dono, the society was living in a long nightmare where violence existed everywhere. Colonisation, suffering from hunger, persecution, torment, human exploitation, and environmental damage, etcetera.

He had an obsession that "... the social structure must be turned around 180 degrees"\textsuperscript{155}. He wanted the people to be equal in the future.

Fascinatingly, Heri Dono faced horror with his extra ordinary sense of humour. Through his laughter, he offered his belief in healing the society.

\textsuperscript{152}Wright (1994) p. 232
\textsuperscript{153}born in Jakarta 1960. His father was an army officer; however, unlike other army officials, his father did not train Heri in an "army" atmosphere. The father was quite moderate and gave a freedom for the children. Personal communication, February 1995.
\textsuperscript{154}ibid p.236
\textsuperscript{155}ibid
I use humour in my work... A person who does not look more deeply into my paintings will laugh, [she or he will] see my work as an expression of humour. But someone who enters it might cry... I am not only involved with the problem of visual art. I am involved with tragedy.\textsuperscript{156}

Heri Dono is fond of the Javanese' sub-culture technique \textit{plesetan} (pun intended to draw the laughter in order to cope with sadness) in visualising his nightmare.

Heri Dono gained his formal art education at ISI (formerly ASRI) in 1980-1987. However, Heri did not submit his final thesis due to his protest at the impertinent attitude of ISI\textsuperscript{157}. At that time Heri was studying \textit{wayang} with Sukasman, a local \textit{dalang} (puppeteer) and puppet carver. The work experience with Sukasman deeply impressed Heri and had a big influences on Heri's concepts, content and ideas. Heri works in installation and performance as well as painting.

He has admired and been influenced by Juan Miro, Vincent Van Gogh and Pablo Picasso, in particular Picasso's "Guernica". He combines a variety of images from indigenous culture (ie. folk art and the form of \textit{wayang} legend) and the problems of humanity as the source of inspiration for his artwork. His work is a narration of "common human activities [which] are contrasted with outrageous monster form. The characters are often presented in a process of metamorphosis or dismemberment; they threaten each other with guns, teeth

\textsuperscript{156}ibid
\textsuperscript{157}Personal communication, September 1993.
and claws. He has portrayed his protests and cynicism towards the reality of Indonesian life uniquely and comically.

"Vegetarian" (figure 14), oil on canvas, 1994, shows the scene of rain forest exploitation due to the increased economic growth policy. In this work, Heri painted an erupted volcano in a strong ochre-earthly-red colour. In the middle of the volcano, there is a gate where people come in or out. A large neglected tree trunk is placed at the lower left side, suggesting the selfish attitude of the company holder who is drawn in his formal business suit, although his jacket is painted in green — the colour of environmentalism. Two honorary stars lace his right shoulder. He is smiling proudly with one hand on his hip, and the other hand waving. He is also smoking a tobacco pipe, a symbol of the elite.

In the upper side of the painting, a group of guards are depicted as monsters, ready to fight, with bared teeth and showing their claws. One of them in the upper left corner, representing an army person wears a helmet. He has a woman on one arm, whilst the other hand is ready to withdraw the pistol from his pocket.

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158 Ibid p. 232-233
159 The issue was raised by WALHI and widely reported by major news papers in 1993, that there was serious rain forest damage in Sumatra and Kalimantan due to the exploitation by a timber company which held a rain forest concession to support the ply-wood industry, but which had in fact over used the right. Moreover, they did not re-plant the forest appropriately. The company share holders had proudly announced that they had succeeded in increasing economic growth, in spite of the abuse of the concession.
160 Heri used the volcanic eruption to show his anger, personal communication, February 1995
Thus, Heri Dono portrayed the violence and brutality as a common life style within intensively inhuman action in Indonesia.

Heri's cynical attitude toward development and the exploitative economy was visualised in an installation work entitled "Glass Vehicles" (figure 15), 1995\textsuperscript{161}. Heri saw Indonesian economic development as a tool for enforcing Euro-America modernism. As Chandra Singh Hardy from the World Bank said in 1987:

... there is what the twentieth century or post war world offered, called development [sic]. It is a simple model, very clearly defined. It is mechanistic, it is technological, and it has limited ranking of values. You save, you invest, you acquire, you dominate, you beat another person, and that is what is development\textsuperscript{162}.

Indonesia is in need of economic development. The state government has made the economic growth a political strategy for increasing the Gross National Product (GNP). This scale is used as a standard to justify the nation-wealth. However that development also has a negative effect on the society. The local customs have been devalued due to personal desire. Everybody competes to gain a better life than others. Community values and feeling are destroyed. Everybody wants to achieve a privileged life as an egotistical person. It leads them into the "trap" of modernity, making them selfish, competitive persons.

\textsuperscript{161}It was displayed in Tokyo, Japan. February 1995
\textsuperscript{162}quoted from "Pembangunan Rasa Malu" by Kartono Mohamad in \textit{Tempo} February 1994
"Glass Vehicles" (figure 15) is a mixed-media work made from prawn cracker boxes placed on three wheeled vehicles. Each box has a doll in a traditional Javanese costume. The work depicts the trapped people in a transparent box of life. They live a solitary life and they do not communicate. They are the symbol of people who live a private life style. They have a big television, cars, the luxury of eating in a fancy restaurant, and entertainment. They live in a "kereta kencana" (the royal carriage).

Interestingly, Heri used the form of the cracker box\textsuperscript{163} to point out that people aspire to live in a kereta kencana (royal carriage) while in fact they live in a kaleng kerupuk (cracker box). For Heri, these people were playing a fake dramatisation of life. Their arrogant manner was seen as stupidity, and Heri Dono laughed at them.

Another artist concerned with social issues is Dadang Christanto. Dadang was born in 1957, in a small village near Tegal, Central Java and educated in ISI between 1975 and 1986.

Dadang became involved with a Yogyakarta artists community, founded by Rendra when Dadang was a student. Since then he started questioning society. Dadang's empathy with the problems of social inequality led him to join PUSKAT, a catholic organisation, which serves and helps poor people, either in urban or rural areas. Between 1987 and 1990 Dadang was directly engaged in helping villagers to gain some decent standards of living.

\textsuperscript{163}Kaleng Kerupuk. This crackers' box is associated with the poor; crackers, a snack food equal to potato chips, is usually sold in a warung, a food stall.
After 1990, Dadang returned to the art circle and started to produce artwork. "For those who are poor", became the main slogan in his works. His empathy is always with uneducated poor people, the people who are being oppressed, are tortured, are sacrificed, are powerless, are voiceless, are burdened, are victims of violence, are victims of dupe, are victims of injustice\textsuperscript{164}. However, Dadang's art work is actually aimed at the ruling elite and educated people. His hope is that his works can raise the people's awareness of social problems.

What I want is to gain a proper life for the people, an equality of human right...
I do not like people living in fear\textsuperscript{165}.

According to him, \textit{rakyat kecil}, poor people are not aware of their own rights and are not aware that they are oppressed by the ruling elite.

My aim is to implant a self critical awareness among the elite, who are well educated and have the power to change the system. Only they can change the situation\textsuperscript{166}.

Currently, Dadang is actively involved in \textit{Rumah Budaya} (House of Culture), an intellectual group which holds social and ecological discussions.

In depicting his voice of concern, Dadang sub-consciously derives the image from the living tradition of his cultural background, in particular Javanese and Balinese culture\textsuperscript{167}.

\textsuperscript{164}John McGregor (1993), "For those who are poor" \textit{Inside Indonesia}, December no. 37 p.31
\textsuperscript{165}Personal communication, February 1995
\textsuperscript{166}Personal communication, February 1995

65
I try to infuse my works with a primitive touch as a symbol of empathy with the victims of oppression...\textsuperscript{168}

Dadang used woven palm leaf-rib (\textit{lidi}) and bamboo to represent the images of floating souls in "For those who have been killed" (Figure 16)\textsuperscript{169}. It was derived from the Javanese myth that if people die before their time, their souls would not gain a place. Their souls are in limbo.

The bamboo represents the soul. The bamboo was hung, so that it did not touch the ground and it did not reach the ceiling. It symbolised a position in between two worlds.

In his performance accompanying the installation work, Dadang covered himself in white clay, uniting himself with his work, becoming the floating soul.

He asked the audience to participate in blessing the soul so that it could reach its place, a gesture which refers to the Javanese custom of blessing the dead\textsuperscript{170}.

Heri Dono and Dadang Christanto are examples of outspoken artists who benefited from the advantages made by \textit{Gerakan Seni Rupa Baru} action in breaking-through the "death" and "stagnation" of the "old" Indonesian art. The \textit{Gerakan} did not only strike for freedom in creating art in a various styles and medium, but also liberate the artists to speak about the social problems.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{167}Maklai (1991. b), "Dadang Christanto, contemporary Indonesian artist" University of South Australia Art Museum.
\item \textsuperscript{168}McGregor (1993) p.37
\item \textsuperscript{169}Performed in Brisbane Triennial, September 1993
\item \textsuperscript{170}Usually done in a certain day such as 7, 40, 100 and 1,000 days after the death.
\end{itemize}
Hence, the young artists after Gerakan have been afforded the opportunity to address their concern for the problems of humanity instead of just highlighting the political issues.
CHAPTER III. SPEAKING "THE VOICE OF MUTED PEOPLE"

The Gerakan had successfully re-implemented social awareness among the artists in the period 1980 to 1995. This meant that artists from the younger generation were speaking critically of the daily phenomena in their work. By increasing a concern for social issues in the art circle, some artists began to collaborate with some Non Government Organisations (NGOs). The NGOs provided accurate data on the ecological and the environmental damages in the country, as well as exposing other social problems. Together with NGOs, some artists raised the problems they noticed within their arts. The aim was to raise the awareness of the Indonesian ruling elite and the educated people, so that they might focus their attention on the problems.

In the work of F.X. Harsono and Dede Eri Supria\textsuperscript{171} in particular social issues were a consistent theme. Harsono concentrated on the problems of injustice and environmental damages whilst Dede Eri Supria focused on the poverty of urban people. Both artists expressed similar sympathy for the rakyat kecil, poor people who, by fate, were oppressed by the ruling elite. However, Harsono and Dede offered a different approach in depicting the social problems. Harsono intended to use a symbolic "graphical" language in

\textsuperscript{171} Both artists were Gerakan Seni Rupa Baru members. Harsono was the co-founder, and Dede started to join the Gerakan at the second show in 1977.
his multi media, whilst Dede's practical attitude depicted the problems in a
photorealist style.

A. F.X. HARSONO: "THE VOICE OF MUTED PEOPLE".

Harsono was born in 1949 in Blitar - East Java, and was the only
Indonesian artist who depicted his ideas through graphical symbol172. He
explored the efficiency of symbolic language in order to communicate
effectively with his audience.

Harsono was educated in STSRI (Sekolah Tinggi Seni Rupa Indonesia-
ASRI, the secondary art school) and ASRI Yogyakarta from 1969 to 1974. His
involvement in the Black December movement (1974) led to his being forced
to leave ASRI, and he never completed his study there. Fortunately, he
returned to study in the Jakarta Art School (IKJ in 1987-1991) and majored in
painting.

As a critical artist, Harsono was always fighting the "establishment" of
Modern Indonesian art. For him, Modern Indonesian art was "sterile",

172Harsono is a quite well known graphic-designer in Jakarta. He runs the "Gugus
Graphis", an advertising agency. Moreover, he is a lecturer at the Jakarta Art School
at the Graphic Design Department. He is also an editor for Dialog, a limited
circulation art-magazine, and quite often writes about Indonesian social-realist art and
its problem in some newspapers and art journals. Harsono is one of a few social-
realist artists who does not live on his art. He makes a living from his professional job
as a graphic designer.
"stagnant", and "dead". He was brought up in the first half of the 1970s during the midst of student activities which always challenged the system and society.

Harsono recalled,

I was majoring in painting under Fajar Sidik's supervision [in third year, 1972]. Under his guidance, I produced some geometrical and non-figurative paintings... I was busy analysing the geometric-forms by using the tools [ie. ruler, etc], and using flat colours. There was no emotion or symbolic meaning. For almost two years I did it, and one day I got terribly bored. My art-work was so "cold"... I wanted a change in my work. I was bored with two dimensional works... At the end of 1973, my work gradually changed. I started to combine 2-D and 3-D..."

Affected by the student movement during the Malari Affairs in January 1974, Harsono began to develop an interest in socio-political problems within his work. As an outspoken art student, Harsono joined the Black December movement and challenged the "established" art. The following year, Harsono co-founded the Gerakan Seni Rupa Baru, which confronted the "stagnant and old" art and introduced "new" art.

173Personal communication, January 1995. For his forthcoming exhibition in 1996, he is going to exhibit the re-printed Sudjojono and Affandi's (who were considered as The Masters of Indonesian artists) works in black and white together with nominal Indonesian currency entitled "uang 1" (money 1), "uang 2", "uang 3" and so on.

174During that period, paintings was strictly in 2-D form, whilst 3-D was only for sculpture. The art student was not encouraged to experiment with media.

Following the de-politicization in 1978, when political activities had to be shifted to concerns of social problems (particularly environmental issues) some outspoken artists decided to co-operate with the NGOs. Harsono participated in *Wahana Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia* (WALHI, The Indonesian Environmental Group). The first exhibition in this collaboration, entitled "Environmental Art", was held at Parangtritis Beach, Yogyakarta, in 1982. The artists depicted environmental damage, particularly water and air pollution, in their multi-media works. In the following three years, Harsono joined "Proses 85" in the "Environment Art Exhibit" at Ancol\textsuperscript{176}, Jakarta. This show was sponsored by WALHI and supported by the Minister of Population and Environment, Emil Salim, as well as the Director of Ancol, Ciputra\textsuperscript{177}. WALHI discovered that approximately 2,000 factories and 30,000 large and small home-businesses dumped their unprocessed waste into Jakarta's seventeen rivers\textsuperscript{178}. The waste contained mercury and other poisonous materials. As a result, the water become polluted, the fish died and became extinct and poor urban people who lived beside the rivers suffered serious health problems and some died\textsuperscript{179}.

\textsuperscript{176}Ancol is located in the Northern part of Jakarta. It used to be a swamp area until Ciputra - a wealthy and successful real-estate man - built an entertainment and amusement complex in the early 1970s. In the Ancol area, Ciputra who is an art lover and collector built a Gallery and an Ancol Art Market where the artists, craft people and art students can sell their work directly to the consumers.

\textsuperscript{177}Wright (1994) p. 215.

\textsuperscript{178}ibid

\textsuperscript{179}The poor urban people who lived on the river's side used the water for their daily needs such as bathing and washing. Some wells located closely to the river were contaminated. People used the well's water for cooking and drinking.
The art exhibition consisted of photographs, poster-information, conceptual arts and poetry.

Harsono did not only express interest in environmental problems, he was also critical of the people's modern consumerist life-style in a big city. He exhibited in the *Gerakan Seni Rupa Baru IV* show (1987) in Jakarta, a work entitled "PASARAYA, Dunia Fantasi" (Supermarket, Fantasy World). This work attempted to ridicule the attitude of consumerism using Javanese sub-culture *plesetan*. The intent was to elicit laughter. Collectively the group created an artificial supermarket in the exhibition hall. In the entrance there was a huge poster (nine metres high) depicting a woman taking her clothes off with the caption reading "Sabar dong!!" (Be patient, please). Other posters included a fashion clothing sale in an advertisement of "OBROL BESAR" (Big Gossip) instead of "OBRAL BESAR" (Big Sale), and there was also a poster of a woman with a provocative smile entitled "Your smile rips my wallet".

After graduating from the Jakarta Art School in 1991, Harsono mostly concentrated on the problems of poor people who were not lucky enough to enjoy the country's development. He protested against the un-balanced condition that resulted from increasing economical-growth. Harsono was upset by the unequal rights, injustice, oppression and similar problems in the

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180 pun intended to draw the laughter in order to cope with sadness.
181 The image was derived from a common sticker which could be found on the back of trucks or buses. The idea was based on a women's under-wear advertisement.
183 Personal communication, January 1995.
society. His collection of works (1992-1994) on the rakyat kecil, poor people and environmental damage were exhibited in Jakarta 1994\textsuperscript{184}.

In her introduction, Director General of Cultural Affairs, Professor Edi Sedyawati\textsuperscript{185}, describes the sympathy expressed in Harsono's works:

As a thinking man, as a person who cares, Harsono questions the significance of certain societal conventions...\textsuperscript{186}

Eight installation works were set up in the exhibition hall through which Harsono was speaking the "Voice of Muted People"\textsuperscript{187}.

"Gambar Alam, Kemenangan Teknologi" (Portrait of Nature, the Victory of Technology\textsuperscript{188}) (Figure 17), 1994, was an installation work using natural materials, branches, books, stones and other found objects. In the work, Harsono depicted the Indonesian elite as those who had privileges or rights beyond those of the common people. The elite were allowed to destroy

\textsuperscript{184}At the Gedung Seni Rupa Exhibition Hall.
\textsuperscript{185}Harsono found it be a problem to have a solo exhibition in the Gedung Seni Rupa Exhibition Hall due to his role in the Black December movement and as the Gerakan co-founder. (Personal communication, January 1995). The Gedung Seni Rupa Exhibition Hall is owned and controlled by The Ministry of Education and Culture Department. Luckily, he met Prof. Edi Sedyawati who was Harsono's thesis co-supervisor on Thema Kerakyatan dalam Seni Lukis Indonesia Jakarta Art School, 1991. Dr (previous). Edi Sedyawati was a deputy Rector at The Jakarta Art Institute 1988-1991. With Prof. Sedyawati's patronage, Harsono got a chance to exhibit his works at that hall.
\textsuperscript{187}In this exhibition, Harsono was reviewed as an artist who fulfilled his duty for his society. See Danarto's "Instalasi dari sisa-sisa teriakan". Republika, Agustus 1994. p. 7.
\textsuperscript{188}All of titles in the Harsono's show, 1994, are translated by Margaret Agusta.
the ecology and the environment ostensibly while increasing the Gross National Product. Harsono protested the Progress of Time (kemajuan jaman) in Indonesia which was "forced to mimic that in the West [Euro-America]."

"Suara dari Dasar Bendungan" (Voice from the Base of the Dam/Devotional visit) (figure 18), 1994, was an installation of found objects, branches, tempayan (a big clay-bowl to keep drinking water), and water. This work was inspired by the conflicts which had arisen around the Nipah Dam Project (Sampang village, Madura\textsuperscript{189}). The state government built a dam to overcome agricultural problems; but, the land owners were forced to leave their property without proper reimbursement\textsuperscript{190}. In this work, Harsono used a symbolic language. The tempayan symbolised the dam, filled with water. Some dried branches floated as a symbol of Sampang people who were sacrificed in fostering development. The exploitation, victimisation, and killing of innocent people disturbed Harsono's sense of humanity. The terror was used to make the common people subservient. In his concern Harsono said:

...killing and violence are still being carried out by those with political power, and in my society there is a continuing problem with the imbalance of power. We are all part of a culture of violence...\textsuperscript{191}

\textsuperscript{189}Madura is a small island located at the upper-east of Java. The island was arid. The local people are relatively poor, and mainly work as peasants, fishermen or as a traditional salt-maker.

\textsuperscript{190}The fund was corrupted by the local government, and the land-owners were forced to sign an agreement without legal advice.

"Haki Yang tak punya hak suara" (Just the Right) (Figure 19), 1993, was exhibited for the first time at the Asia Pacific Triennial (of Contemporary Art), at Brisbane, Queensland. It depicted six human bodies which were tied onto wooden panels. Banana leaves were spread in front of the bodies. The poor people of Indonesia use banana leaves to cover the body. Harsono said:

Human rights for poor people are almost dead and buried. Development and multinational industries often increase their sufferings. There is a lack of meaning to human rights. And this is not only limited to the third world\textsuperscript{192}.

Violence and the killing of innocent people haunted Harsono. For example, the case of Marsinah, a woman from East Java who was murdered for speaking out on labourers rights in the labour's strike in East Java, 1993. Together with another twelve men as a labour's representative, Marsinah charged the local factory's owner to increase their wages. In return for their demand, the labour representative people, included Marsinah, were kidnapped and tortured by the "security"\textsuperscript{193}.

Marsinah was depicted as Kartini\textsuperscript{194} in "Kata Perempuan itu" (That Woman said) (Figure 20), 1993-1994, a multi-media work, mixing video and screen

\textsuperscript{192}ibid

\textsuperscript{193}The rumours was some provocateur "agents" was paid by the factory owner "to give a lesson" to these outspoken labourers, which led to Marsinah's death. This tragedy became a national news which was soon censored by the Ministry of Information, but some Human Right activists brought this case to Vienna's Human Right Conference in 1993. At the same year Moelyono exhibited Marsinah case in Surabaya, East Java. The exhibition was closed down by the police just before the opening.

\textsuperscript{194}Kartini is a Javanese princess from the nineteenth century who fought for equal education for women during the Dutch occupation. Her father was forced by the
prints, with different backgrounds and foregrounds representing issues such as deforestation, advanced technology; human oppression; exploitation of women and money-orientated matters. By portraying Kartini, a symbol of Indonesian Woman Liberation, Harsono was crying out for women to have the same opportunities and rights as men. He compared Kartini with Marsinah, who fought for labourers rights but was tragically tortured, raped and murdered.

Harsono did not only speak for muted people, but also mocked the ruling elite. For Harsono, the ruling elite was cynically depicted in "Suara dari atas tahta" (The voice from the throne/ Power and Oppression) (Figure 21), 1992, (exhibited at the first time at ARX, in Perth). Harsono portrayed the power holder by using the symbol of the chair (throne). This chair was surrounded by barbed wire to protect it. Behind the chair was some printed Keris (daggers) in huge sizes symbolising power. In front of the chair, some piles of soil were covered with a "bloody" white linen spread. This work powerfully ridiculed the power holder by emphasising that the way they held on to their throne was by victimising the people.

"Monumen cermin diri/ Suara budaya kekerasan" (Monument of reflection/ Voice of the culture of violence) (Figure 22), 1993, was exhibited for the first time at the Asia Pacific Triennial, Brisbane. Harsono represented the violence and power structures in the society. The work is in a temple shape which was built out of bamboo. This monument was adorned with plastic-

Dutch to arrange for her to be married to slow down her ambition. Once the woman got married, she would lose her rights to speak up.
weapon toys, and surrounded by a few glass-paintings. Harsono illustrated how the bureaucracy of the society condoned violence.

Harsono not only portrayed the condition of social imbalance, but also demanded freedom of expression. "Suara yang tak bersuara/ Isyarat" (Voice without voice/ Sign), 1993, was depicting Harsono as an outspoken artist who spoke up for his freedom; however, he was just like another muted people who had to speak a "silent" language. For example, Harsono called for democracy which is not easy to get in Indonesia. He printed the word "DEMOKRASI" (Democracy) (Figure 23), 1994, by means of a symbolic language, so that not everybody would be able to understand it. A special knowledge was required in order to understand Harsono's views shown in his exhibition.

Harsono, depicted as a "muted" outspoken artist, was represented in the work "Suara yang terampas" (Memorandum Indonesia) (Figure 24), in 1994. This work was inspired by the leading news magazines which banned the reporting of the ruling family's business affairs. Following that incident, artists and writers signed "Memorandum Indonesia" which cried out for freedom of expression. Harsono in his sadness, portrayed a group of wooden masks without mouths on a floor, whilst the cut mouths were spread besides the masks.

The purpose of Harsono's work was to scorn the ruling elite by depicting them as impulsive, straight forward and naive. In Harsono's opinion, the power holder was a vampire. Vampires victimised people by burning their houses, hauled people from their properties, and terrorised them by killing the
innocent\textsuperscript{195}. Harsono not only creates protest art, but also critiques art. He express his sympathy for the oppressed people by listening to their problems, then announcing it by means of his art-works and his writings\textsuperscript{196}. In Harsono's opinion, artists have the right to challenge the society's beliefs while attempting to gain equal rights for everyone.

B. DEDE ERI SUPRIA: "URBAN PEOPLE, A CITY DILEMMA".

Dede Eri Supria (born 1956) is Indonesia's most successful photo-realist painter\textsuperscript{197}. Born as the seventh child of twelve, he was brought up in a struggling working class family in Jakarta. His father was a technical-school (STM) teacher who had to keep two jobs to make ends meet, "... We were


\textsuperscript{196}Harsono has written some articles on social-realism art and its problems such as "Seni Rupa berorientasi pada politik, Sah", (Talking politics in a visual art, Valid), 1993. This article was aimed to defend Semsar Siahaan and Moelyono's exhibitions which were closed down by the police.

\textsuperscript{197}Since 1977, Dede has designed \textbf{Tempo} magazine covers. (Personal communication, January 1995). In 1977 his designs were valued at 10,000 rupiahs and in 1994 approximately 450,000 rupiahs (210 \$US). His painting (in 1995) is valued at approximately seventeen million rupiahs (8,300 \$US) whilst the most expensive painting commissioned by the Indocement Company, 1600 x 250 cm is worth a hundred million rupiahs (\$45,000 US).
always short of money due to the size of the family..."\(^{198}\) In supporting his big family, Dede's father also worked as a photographic printer, and the children were required to help. Since in his early childhood, Dede had contributed to the support of the family.

As a child, Dede liked to create graffiti in his neighbourhood. Realising his talent, his family sent him to study with Dukut Hendranoto (alias "Pak Ooq"), a local artisan. From Dukut Hendranoto, Dede gained a basic technical knowledge in painting. Then, Dede was asked to play an important role in his father's photographic printing business\(^ {199}\).

Dede had his formal art education in Sekolah Tinggi Seni Rupa Indonesia (STSRI, secondary art school) in Yogyakarta, 1977-1979. Without finishing his study, he returned to Jakarta in late 1979.

For Dede, during his study in Yogyakarta, Jakarta had changed dramatically. Physical development had been priorities in Jakarta. Together with the growth of the city, urbanisation had become a major problem. Jakarta offered a dual dilemma. The city is full of high-rise buildings, freeway, billboards, never ending traffic as well as the struggling-class people such as poor labourers, poor women and their neglected children, un-employed, homeless, and criminals. Dede, as a Jakartan, is obsessed with those problems.

\(^{198}\) Personal communication, January 1995. All of the subsequent citations are from my interview done in 1995, except if noted.

\(^{199}\) Dede recalls when he was in grade five (in age of eleven or twelve).
Through his photo-realist painting, Dede expresses his obsession. His works portray "harsh depictions of two contrasting modes of life, animate and inanimate, urban and rural, machine and human."²⁰⁰

"Jakarta is a symbol of a forced-development victim." Jakarta was obligated to be a metropolis, and people who live in it were forced to catch up with the metropolitan rhythm. People are always active with their own businesses in their attempt to earn some more money. Their aims are to be able to afford to live in a privileged metropolitan life-style which is parallel to Western-modernism. On the other hand, development had decreased social values. People become selfish and they ignore the social implication.

For this, Dede said:

...There was something in my mind that I wanted to share with people since I had come back to Jakarta... I saw Jakarta grow so fast as a metropolis, and I was part of the poor urban people... In my early years I did not have a permanent place to stay and I could not afford it... Sometimes I stayed with my relatives and quite often I had to stay at Balai Budaya [Cultural Centre] exhibition hall... Nowadays, I do not have a financial problem any more, but how about some people who are living on the street? Who will pay attention to their problems? Through my aesthetic point of view, I share my concern...

Dede's skill and life-experiences make him a skilful photo-realist painter. With his exceptional photo-realist style in depicting the urban people, Dede astonished the Indonesian art-circle when he joined Gerakan Seni Rupa

Baru II's exhibition in 1977. This was the time when the echo of New York modern art reached the Indonesian art circle and eclipsed realism.

Dede recalled:

...[When I was in Yogyakarta] in late the 1970s realism was being neglected by the artists. Everybody was enchanted by the new American art [in particular abstract-expressionism]. We thought it was a "modern" art... [Dede laughs]. I did it too, but then I realised through realism I could visualise my idea easier... However, quite often I felt embarrassed to show my work to friends, or if my friend introduced me as a realist "traditionalist" painter...

Since the late 1960s, apparently our artists did not want to pay attention to daily-life scenery. Human intimacy was ignored. The art was aimed to show the artist as an intellectual... the visual work was in a "mess" (tidak karuan), and it confused the audience. Our art-circle became so vivid and lively with so many different styles [from Euro-America], except realism!

Once, Sudarmaji [a prominent art critics and also Dede's teacher] said to me "Why are you so keen on realism... Realism never develops like other styles. Look at Basuki Abdullah or Sudjojono's works... They are only skilled artists(!)

Being challenged by the dominant style (abstract expressionism), Dede persistently combined realism and photography as his style. Admiring Sudjojono as a master in realism, Dede says, "The audiences appreciate our works well". Dede's photo-realist painting did not only bring a "fresh air" in the Gerakan Seni Rupa Baru II's show which mainly consisted of installation

\[201\] "Intellectual" here was parallel to well-educated people. This idea existed following the return of artists (in particular Bandung artists) from overseas, especially from the USA. They brought New York school style (ie. abstract-expressionist) to the Indonesian art-circle.

\[202\] Together with Bambang Darno, Ronald Manulang, Gendut Riyanto and Haris Purnomo, Dede held an exhibition from village to village in 1978.
and mixed-media, but it also showed to the art "authority" that realism could be developed as a new style.

Dede's portrayal of the developing metropolis, offers a number of contradictions. For example, "Balada Becak" (Becak \textsuperscript{203} Ballad) (Figure 25), acrylic on canvas, 1990, depicted Jakarta as a futuristic land. The background portrayed sky-scrapers buildings and numbers of billboards (in particular Marlboro \textsuperscript{204} advertisements), whilst as a foreground, the becak and the old and tired driver shows an empty expression. One of his hands covered his face from the sun, which also suggested a gesture in waiting for a customer.

This work was inspired by the issue of a local government directive in the late 1980s that "Jakarta must be clear of becaks" (Daerah bebas becak). Becaks were seen as the cause of traffic jams. Following this decree all becaks were seized either on the street or at the owner's backyard, and drawn to Jakarta Bay. The local government did not provide any compensation for the owner or an alternative job for the drivers.

"Jam Istirahat" (Break) (figure 26), 1992, acrylic on canvas, portrayed city development. It depicted a building-construction site of sky scraper buildings. The development is equivalent to the economic growth, which is symbolised by new Bank high-rise buildings. Side by side, Dede put a number

\textsuperscript{203}Becak is a tricycle vehicle which is similar to the chinese-rickshaw. However, if rickshaw is pulled by person, becak is pushed by the cycler behind.

\textsuperscript{204}Marlboro became, for Dede, a symbol of the ways in enforcing the American product for Indonesians which Indonesians were being forced to buy American products.
of Banks which are rapidly growing in Indonesia, in particular Jakarta. Among the solid, massive, and prestigious buildings, two labourers take a break.

"Memasang tiang pancang" (The Supporting Columns) (figure 27) 1992, acrylic on canvas, showed unprotected labourers building concrete columns of a building. The building itself is depicted as a disorderly pile of used packaging-boxes. For Dede, a packaging-box is a symbol of consumerist life-style. Moreover, used packaging-boxes can be recycled as luggage when the poor urban people have to move to another place. Quite often, used-packaging-boxes were employed as a "roof" for homeless people in shanty towns along the river-side. It could also be a "wall" for those who lived under the bridge.

"Di sela-sela kardus" (Amongst the used packaging-boxes) (Figure 28), 1995, acrylic on canvas, portrayed a teenager with his head down. He expresses his lost hopes in a labyrinth of used packaging-boxes. On the upper side, there is a window as a symbol of hope, for the future.

Jakarta's development was exclusively designed for the rich, elite, and well-educated people. The common un-educated, poor people only got the left-overs. In the "Pasukan Oranye" (Orange-Batalyon) (Figure 29), 1992, acrylic on canvas, Dede represented a team of city-cleaners who had to work from early morning until late at night for small wages. They were dressed in their orange overall uniforms.

Jakarta, for almost every single Indonesian, is a dream land. Jakarta is a city where people can make their ambitions come true, a city where people
can have a chance of sophisticated life style, career and power. Jakarta as a metropolis attracts people just like the light captivates the moths during night time. However, Jakarta is portrayed as a disorganised city in a hilarious manner by Dede through "Penunggang Kuda dari Amerika" (The Horse Rider from America) (Figure 30), 1993, acrylic on canvas. He depicted Jakarta in a chaotic composition of huge billboards (ie. Marlboro, Pizza) together with a Seven-up can and a supermarket bar-code, as a "Western" world. The painting is a symbol of Western life style. His message is that Indonesians would think that they are "modern" if they smoke Marlboro, eat pizza, drink soft-drink and do their grocery shopping in fancy supermarket.

For Dede, Jakarta offers a complex of problems. It is a growing city in the "Yang berusaha tumbuh" (That Struggles to Grow) (Figure 31), 1992, acrylic on canvas. In the painting there are young sprouts struggle to live amongst the abundant massive, enormous and monumental buildings.

Jakarta is seen as a token of development that disgraces humanity. The development victimises the majority of people. Many people built the city with their labours, and then were neglected. Many people did not gain a proper share of the development.

Dede Eri Supria, F.X. Harsono and other artists who are concerned with social issues, realise that they can only portray these human dilemmas through their art-works. They are not able to change the situation and system. The artists are aware that their audiences are not the struggling class people, but the elite. They are conscious that their art-works cannot be consumed by
the *rakyat kecil*, poor people due to their lack of appreciation. The poor people demand proper food rather than comprehend the art-works.

The socialist-realist artists challenge the society where inequality exists. Their ideas are depicted from the enforcement of Euro-American modernisation as a model for development as well as the over-used rights from the power holder. The development is needed by a developing country like Indonesia. However, Euro-American modernisation does not need to be copied by Indonesians. Development is aimed to make everybody equal in gaining a decent life style, but in fact it victimises *rakyat kecil*, the poor people. Individuality becomes the exclusive aim of life which eclipses social values.
EPILOGUE: "RAKYAT KECIL" IN MODERN INDONESIAN ART

The artist's commitment toward the society in the form of socialist-realist art, has shaped modern Indonesian art through its acceptance or resistance toward political change. Since PERSAGI (1937), which implanted a modern art concept through its social outlook, until the recent works in 1994 which show a full range of social issues, socialist-realism has become the backbone of modern Indonesian art.

There are two important issues to be highlighted in analysing Indonesian socialist-realism, firstly the idea and the development of socialist-realism, and secondly the function of socialist-realism.

The main source for the artist's social commitment is based on the rakyat kecil, and their problems. The rakyat kecil who dominate the Indonesian population, and who strove and built the nation prior to independence, were then sacrificed and victimised by the development of the nation after the state was formed.

In interpreting the rakyat kecil socialist-realism was shaped by the political movement and in turn hoped to shape the political movement. In the period pre 1966, socialist-realist artists (particularly LEKRA artists) were encouraged to consider social and political issues in their art works. LEKRA's slogan "Politics is the commander" illustrates the importance of political
action in the art-circle. Artists and writers were encouraged to participate within politics in defending the nation from foreign threat (ie. the British and the United States of America in the Cold War)\textsuperscript{205}. This threat was seen as neo-imperialism toward the new state. However, when LEKRA dominated the art-circle between 1950 and 1965, the arrogance of LEKRA figures resulted in their failure to mobilize those artists who did not closely follow the party line.

On the other hand, in the period after 1966, socialist-realist artists were more likely to be oppressed by the ruling elite. Following the political and economical changes since 1966, priorities have been directed towards economic-growth\textsuperscript{206}. This has required the New Order government to become dependent on a Euro-America development model. Unluckily, in shaping the "Progression of Time" (kemajuan jaman), have been extensive abuses of human rights by the ruling elite. This has resulted in inequality, injustice, and annihilation of human beings.

All of those negative effects of the development are portrayed and high-lighted by the socialist-realist artists in their works. Subsequently, the art works have mainly dealt with issues of humanism. In doing so, socialist-realist art has been predominantly in two dimensional media particularly in a realist or photorealist style. On the other hand, "socialist-realist" art can be meant as a medium in uniting the artist and its society.

The function of socialist-realism has been to act as a tool to influence the elite. The artists are not only acting as a reflectors of the "Time" (jaman),

\textsuperscript{205}See interview on Pramoedya Ananta Toer done by SAS edisi 42. p.6
\textsuperscript{206}Mas'oeed, Mohtar (1978). pp. 4-6.
but also as a challengers society. The idea of challenging society is derived from the wish to shape an active and progressive culture.

In the limits placed on freedom of expression after the 1965 coup\textsuperscript{207}, the artists had a struggle in bringing humanist issues to their art works without identifying specific figures of the elite. For example, in Semsar Siahaan\textsuperscript{208} poem,

\begin{quote}
Respected Important Gentleman
It is time that the activity of Fine Arts and its academy should come down to the dominant level of Indonesian Society (Farmers and Fishermen).
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{207}Particularly during the "pre succession" post Suharto (1967), every single minor issues on his family and friends' business would be seen as a political threat.

\textsuperscript{208}Semsar Siahaan is the most controversial socialist-realist artist in Indonesia. He cynically ridiculed the elite in his earlier works, and was subsequently interrogated. Born in 1952 into respectable family in Medan, North Sumatra, he gained his early painting education in Belgrade, Yugoslavia when his father was appointed as a military attache in 1965-1968. Semsar then went to San Francisco from 1975 to 1977. In 1977 he returned to Indonesia and enrolled at Bandung Art School (ITB) majoring in Sculpture. In Bandung, 1981, Semsar mocked his supervisor (Drs. Sunaryo who, according to Semsar, exploited the minor tribal art for his own financial benefit) by creating a replica of one of Sunaryo's piece of work entitled "The Image of Irian in Torso". Semsar then burnt the replica. Subsequently, Semsar was suspended for two years from his study and later on in 1983, he was expelled. Semsar then went to Holland for six months.

In his solo exhibition in 1988, at Yogyakarta, Semsar was questioned by the local police and accused of "staging the exhibition to humiliate the authorities". His exhibition was closed down on the third day. In Bandung, the same year, the local police attempted to closed down his exhibition soon after the opening. However, Semsar demanded a written order, which the police did not have. After the show was over, Semsar burnt all of his black and white drawings accompanied in the show (240 pieces) as a symbol of the society's liberation.

Furthermore Semsar says, "It is time for artists to set fire once again to the spirit of renewal of human beings through art".
It must interact with society, in simplicity without its own dreams (masturbation).
Reality demands more attention from the Art Academy in the name of the welfare of the Indonesian People, as a whole and as it should be.

Semsar

This poem could only talk about a "respected important gentlemen" rather than "name" him.

It is not easy to breakthrough the "established" society and gain freedom as well as educating the poor ignorant people. Socialist-realist art as protest or critique is more likely to be aimed at the ruling elite, who have the authority to change the structure. In this sense, socialist-realist art in Indonesia is not directed to the main source of artists inspiration, the rakyat kecil, but to the elite.

Socialist-realist art in Indonesia is not only "art for art sake" but it also has a social vision to liberate the society from its ignorance. Socialist-realist art has created the modern Indonesian art and, in this sense it has the capacity to transform the Indonesian avant-garde. Socialist-realism is an art which can lead society toward a critical and analytical path. In achieving this, a collaboration between artists, scientists and scholars in the disciplines of sociology, ecology, and other disciplines is needed. Socialist-realist art is a form of union between artists and the society, a union which is creating a developed and advanced community as well as offering the society's values.

\[^{209}\text{translated by Keith Foulcher in (title), Inside Indonesia October 1988 no.15. p. 27 (?)}\]
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APPENDIX I

LIMA JURUS GEBRAKAN GERAKAN SENI RUPA BARU INDONESIA


2. Membuang sejauh mungkin sikap "spesialis" dalam seni rupa yang cenderung membangun "bahasa elitis" yang didasari sikap "avand-gardisme" yang dibangun oleh imaji: seniman seharusnya menyuruk ke dalam mencari hal-hal subtil (agar tidak dimengerti masyarakat, karena seniman adalah bagian dari misteri hidup?). Sebagai gantinya, percaya pada segi "kesamaan" yang ada pada manusia dikarenakan lingkungan kehidupan yang sama. Percaya pada masalah-masalah sosial yang aktual sebagai masalah yang lebih penting untuk dibicarakan daripada sentimen-sentimen pribadi. Dalam hal ini, _kekayaan ide atau gagasan lebih utama daripada ketrampilan "master" dalam menggarap elemen-elemen bentuk._


5. Mencita-citakan seni rupa yang lebih hidup, dalam arti tidak diragukan kehadirannya, wajar, berguna, dan hidup meluas di kalangan masyarakat.
1816 Dutch formally take over control of the Indonesian archipelago from the British, official statements dating their occupation from the arrival of the Dutch East Indies' Company in 1596.
1817 Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles published The History of Java in London.
1825-1830 Java War against Dutch led by Prince Diponegoro.
1829 Raden Saleh (1807-1880), a north Javanese aristocrat, went to study painting in Holland and travelled widely in Europe. He returned in 1851. In Java he did portraits and landscapes.
1902 De Bataviache Kunstkring (The Batavian Art Circle was established in the Dutch colonial capital of Batavia (later Jakarta).
1908 Dr. Wahidin Sudirohusodo and others founded the Budi Utomo, a Nationalist Movement.
1916 De Bond von Nederlandsch Kunstkringen (The Alliance of Art Circles of the Netherlands' East Indies) established in Jakarta. Around 1,200 European artists worked in Indonesian during colonisation from 1816-1945.
1922 Taman Siswa (The Pupil's Garden) national education established in Jakarta by Ki Hajar Dewantara which later spread nationally. Among its early pupils were Rusli (1916) Sudjojono, Basuki Resobowo, Abbas Alibasjah.
1928 Sumpah Pemuda (Youth Oath) taken by nationalist in Jakarta of "One Nation, One Country, One Language", the first time the Indonesian anthem was sung.

1937 PERSAGI: *Persatuan Ahli-ahli Gambar Indonesia* (Union of Indonesian Painters) founded in Jakarta by Sudjojono, its secretary 91913-1986), a student of Pingardie in 1928, and Agus Djaja Suminta, its chairman (1913-1994) who as national-romantic realist reacted against painting of Mooy Indie. PERSAGI exhibition held in the same year at the *Kunstzaal Kolff* bookshop in Jakarta and later in 1941 at the *Bataviache Kunstkring*. *Bataviache Kunstkring* offered to exhibit Sudjojono' work at an exhibition although he was not a member and could not qualify for an award.

1942 Japanese occupiers established *Keimin Bunka Shidosho* (*Pusat Kebudayaan, Centre for Direction in culture and Enlightening the People*) as a cultural centre in Jakarta.

1943 In return for Indonesian political cooperation with the Japanese, Sukarno, Mohammad Hatta and other nationalist including the educator Ki Hajar Dewantara, the religious leader Ki Hadji Mansjoer, and the artists Sudjojono, Affandi, Kartono Yudhokusumo, Suromo, Dullah, and Hendra were allowed to establish PUTERA: *Pusat Tenaga Rakyat* (Centre of Empowering the People) which promote art and culture. The first PUTERA exhibition was in May.

1944 PUTERA was disbanded and Sudjojono was asked to teach at *Keimin Bunka Shidosho*.

1945 August 17th, Independence was declared by Sukarno, Mohammad Hatta and other young nationalists.


1947 Dutch teacher training course in drawing begun as Visual Arts Department, University of Indonesia in Bandung.

1948 The visual Arts Department was integrated into ITB: Institut Teknologi Bandung. Teachers were Ries Mulder and Simon Admiraal.

1950 ASRI *Akademi Seni Rupa Indonesia* (Indonesia Academy of Visual Arts) founded in Yogyakarta, although planned from 1948. First head was Katamsi, a Dutch-trained drawing teacher.
* LEKRA: Lembaga Kebudayaan Rakyat (Institute of People's Culture) founded by leftist writers in Jakarta, whose first secretariat included A.S. Dharta (writer & poet), Henk Ngantung (painter), Njoto (writer), who was in 1951 elected to the Politburo of the Indonesian Communist Party and brought the party's concepts into LEKRA.

1963 Manifes Kebudayaan (Cultural Manifesto) issued by artists attacking the art line of LEKRA.

1964 Manifes Kebudayaan denounced by Sukarno. "There is a debate on culture. My stance on culture is already out own character. Destroy Manikebu (Cultural Manifesto) because Manikebu weakens the revolution..."

1965 September 30th. The failure of an alleged Communist coup, followed by a successful military counter coup resulted in widespread executions and imprisonments. Trubus was shot mysteriously and Basuki Rosobowo went to exile in Holland. Those detained include Hendra Gunawan (until 1978) Djoko Pekik, Amrus Natalsya, Batara Lubis, Mohamad Hadi, a batik painter from Solo. LEKRA was dissolved along with the Indonesian Communist Party.

* Academy of Art formed as part of University Udayana, Den Pasar, Bali


* Bandung Art School started to send their young staff to gain further education to USA

1968 The New Order Government invite the foreign capitalist to invest in Indonesia.

* Lembaga Pendidikan dan Kesenian Jakarta, now IKI, Institu Kesenian Jakarta (Jakarta Institute of The Arts) founded at the art and performance centre TIM: Taman Ismail Marzuki.

1973 Danarto exhibited first conceptual art environment in Jakarta

1974 January, student boycott of Japanese products turned into riot when some "people" said to have been paid by the army burnt Japanese cars in Tanjung Priok harbour area of Jakarta. Student leader were arrested and some major newspapers and magazines banned.

* Jakarta Art Council selections of First Jakarta Biennial criticised by younger artists and art students who sign the Desember Hitam (Black December) Manifesto, including Harsono, Bonyong Munni Ardhi, Siti Adiyati Subangun, Ris Purwana, Hardi (ASRI students), D.A. Peransi, Ikranegara, Daryono. These ASRI students were expelled from the art school. This was followed by the Nusantara-Nusantara (Archipelago-Archipelago) exhibition in Yogyakarta of students from ASRI including Samikun, I Gusti Bagus Widjaja, Wardoyo S, Sudariman, Suatmaji, Agustinus Sumargo, and Agus Dermawan. They were forced to apologise
to the director of ASRI. Only Agus Dermawan did not apologise; he was expelled and later became a famous writer.

1975 August, Gerakan Seni Rupa Baru Indonesia (New Art including Anyool Subroto, Bachtiar Zainoel, Pandu Sudewo, Nanik Mirna, Muryoto Hartoyo, Bonyong Munni Ardhi, Jim Spangkat, Hardi, Ris Purwana, Siti Adiyati Subangun and Harsono.

1977 Gerakan Seni Rupa Baru II exhibition held in Jakarta.
* September, young artist group in Yogyakarta exhibit "Kepribadian Apa"? (What Identity) with their multi-media exhibition prevented from opening because the works's mockery of national figures and excess of national development.

1978 Students demonstrated publically against re-appointment of Suharto as President. Universitas Gajah Mada (Yogyakarta) and Institut Teknologi Bandung were occupied by police, student leaders arrested and some newspapers were banned. De-politisization on campuses.

1979 Gerakan Seni Rupa III exhibition. The artist Hardi printed his self-portrait in a formal presidential costume as "President Indonesia 2001", was jailed after the exhibition.
* Students begin to cooperate with Non Governmental Organisations. Some artists such as Harsono in WALHI: Wahana Lingkungan Indonesia (Indonesia Environmental Organisation), Semsar Siahaan, Moelyono, Dadang Christanto, etc.

1987 Gerakan Seni Rupa Baru IV was held, apparently for nostalgic reasons, with several artists having lost interest in the group. The exhibition was called PASARAYA, duniya fantasi (Supermarket, fantasy world)

1993 Pameran Untuk Marsinah exhibition, held to commemorate the murdered woman union spokesperson Marsinah, was closed by the police in Surabaya.

1994 Artists and writers sign the Memorandum Indonesia calling for freedom of expression to protest against the government's banning of three news magazines.
* Harsono held the exhibition "The Voice of Muted People" in Jakarta.
THE VOICE OF MUTED PEOPLE

IN MODERN INDONESIAN ART

SETIANINGSIH PURNOMO

MASTER THESIS

1995
PLEASE NOTE

The greatest amount of care has been taken while scanning this thesis,

and the best possible result has been obtained.
THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN SYDNEY

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ART HISTORY DEPARTMENT

SETIANINGSIH PURNOMO

THESIS
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ABSTRACT

THE VOICE OF MUTED PEOPLE: This research into Indonesian Socialist-Realism Art, examines how art has shaped the political and social environments of the New Order Government. This text examines contemporary artists' attitudes toward social commitment and social commentary during the period of 1980-1995. Conflicting views of Indonesian contemporary artists were obtained from research undertaken in Indonesia during 1995. In this thesis I raise the problem that Indonesian Socialist-Realism not only a style of art for contemporary Indonesian artists, but also as a union of artists' attitude toward the society. I offer this argument to be used in understanding modern Indonesian art from "inner" point of view, and I hope it could lead to the discovery of new knowledge.
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27. Dede Eri Supria, *The Supporting Columns*, 1992, acrylic on canvas, 194 x 144 cm, photograph courtesy of the artist.


29. Dede Eri Supria, *Orange-Batalyon*, 1992, acrylic on canvas, 134 x 140 cm, photograph courtesy of the artist.

30. Dede Eri Supria, *The Horse Rider from America*, 1993, acrylic on canvas, 95 x 75 cm, photograph courtesy of the artist.

INTRODUCTION

The primary focus of early modern Indonesian art was nationalism. This spirit of nationalism was derived from the political turbulence created by Dutch colonisation, post World War II, Indonesians, as a proud and culturally strong people, rejected the idea of foreign domination. Hence, modern art which was implanted by Persatuan Ahli-ahli Gambar Indonesia (PERSAGI, The Indonesian Painters Union, formed in 1937) artists, for the first time in Modern Indonesian Art History carried a political load. In doing so, PERSAGI offered artists an idea of being "nationalist-modernist" by portraying the daily life of "rakyat kecil", the common people or poor people.

Rakyat kecil was a primary subject matter in the first decade of modern Indonesian art. The theme of rakyat kecil had dominated the Indonesian art-world since the revolutionary period of the 1940s. However, the theme "disappeared" after the first decade during the political change from the Old Order to the New Order government1.

The New Order Government emphasised economic-growth by leaning on the West (Euro-America) as a model of development2. Mohtar Mas'oed, an

1Mas'oed, Mohtar (1978). "The State Re-Organisation of Society under the New Order" Prisma The Indonesian Indicator. LP3ES no. 47. Jakarta. p. 4
Mohtar Mas'oed argued that the New Order government beliefs that the never-ending conflict over ideology during the Old Order led into state-economical breakdown.

2ibid
Indonesian political theorist, observed that the New Order Government used Euro-American theorists in supporting the economic-development as a basic ideology. According to Mas'oed, Indonesian intellectuals who were educated in the United States of America believed that, the Euro-American development could be applied in Indonesia. However, a commitment to this development resulted in negative effects on Indonesian society. The Euro-American model, with individuality as a privileged life-style, was not entirely suitable for Indonesians who saw themselves as "a microcosm of society, the one cannot exist without the other."^4.

During the early period of the New Order, Claire Holt, an American Art Historian, offered her theory. Holt said that modern Indonesian art could be developed from the diversity of traditional arts. Holt's theory was widely accepted by the returning young artists from overseas, in particular from the

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This notion was derived from the first Prime Minister in 1950s, Mr. Sutan Sjahrir, who said that Indonesia needed to be "an industrialised economy, an egalitarian society, and an activist welfare state founded on democratic principles".

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3 ibid pp. 5-6

One theorist was S.M. Lipset who argued that a nation would achieve a high degree of liberal democracy if it achieved a high level of economic development. Another theorist was D. Bell who had a deep knowledge of the Western history. Bell said that the West solved its problems during the Industrial Revolution by creating technological advances and economic development.

4 Hans Rhodius and John Darling (1980) Walter Spies and Balinese Art, Zuthpen. p. 75. Although John Darling addressed this phrase for Balinese, this philosophy of life was found in other Indonesian ethnic groups too.

5 Claire Holt was the first foreign scholar who investigated Indonesian art. So far, the only Indonesian art history was written by her. She did her research in Indonesia in the mid 1950s and published the book in 1967 by which time the situation she had described had changed substantially.
United States of America⁶. This notion created a dominant "established" modern Indonesian art in the exploration of traditional arts. In the period from 1966-1975, abstract-expressionism, based on personal contemplation and spiritual belief, together with decorative art and an exploration of traditional arts, flourished and dominated Indonesian modern art.

The political changes of the New Order government in the traumatic aftermath of the Communist coup d'état have shaped modern Indonesian art. The history of visual arts in Indonesia has moved from the domination of nationalist art against Dutch colonisation, to socialist-realism, through to individual aesthetic expression either in abstract-expressionism or decorative art. This approach was the way that artists expressed their bitterness in the aftermath of the Communist coup. These art styles were acknowledged by some artists as the most compatible way to reach an ideal form of Indonesian art; however, for some more outspoken artists this approach was believed to be the death of Indonesian art.

In order to liberate society by exposing its wounds, a few radical Indonesian artists have broken through the culture of fear by speaking for "the voices of muted people"⁷ in their works between 1980 and 1995. These artists are challenging the values of their society by showing the seaminess and unpleasant nature of daily phenomena in the modern Indonesian nation-state.

⁶Bandung Art School at the second half of 1960s sent their young staff to USA to gain further art education.

⁷This title is inspired by F.X. Harsono's exhibition, held in Jakarta 1994 "Mendengar ulang suara-suara yang hilang"(Listening once more to lost voices, translated by Margaret Agusta)
As a result, some of the young outspoken artists and art students challenged the "establishment" art styles by founding the New Indonesian Art Movement (Gerakan Seni Rupa Baru) in 1975. As well as reconstructing the new Indonesian art by breaking through the domination of the "old art"\(^8\), either in medium or content, the Gerakan Seni Rupa Baru cried for a consideration of "social problems as more important issues to be discussed than personal feelings. Their attitude created a controversy both in art circles and in the government which had "established" depoliticization in order to create "greater national stability"\(^9\). These new artists faced rejection among the established artists as well as art critics who saw their work as "miscellaneous" art works. At the same time censorship was being applied through police action, such as the jailing of the painter Hardi in 1979 for his self portrait entitled "President of Indonesia 2001" (Figure 13) exhibited in the Gerakan

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\(^8\)Old art means the dominant art styles which have been integrated and accepted well into academic categorisation and artistic expression in Indonesia. These are primarily abstract-expressionism and decorative art.

\(^9\)The second point of their five line manifesto;
1. Banishing as far as possible the images of "limited art" (ie: painting, sculpture and printmaking).
2. Believing in actual social problems as more important issues to be discussed than personal feelings.
3. Opposing the "master-apprentice" attitude.
4. Striving for Indonesian Art based on Indonesian art theorist.
5. Striving for art which is integral to the society.


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\(^10\)The official phrase which is always used to counter the rebel notion. Also see F.X. Harsono (1993.a) "Seni rupa berorientasi pada politik, Sah" Kompas 30 Mei 1993
Seni Rupa Baru exhibition in Jakarta. Hardi had printed his self-portrait in the formal presidential costume\textsuperscript{11}.

As well as the rejection from that audience, inner problems among the Gerakan Seni Rupa Baru artists simmered and led to the end of its activity.

Although the Gerakan Seni Rupa Baru had to stop its activities, the artists have taken responsibility, through aesthetic means, to ensure socio critical awareness in society\textsuperscript{12}. As Adolfo Sanchez Vazquez says:

In a certain sense, each society gets the art it deserves, both because of the art it favours or tolerates, and because artists, as members of society, they have with the society. This means that art and society, far from finding themselves in a relationship of mutual externality or indifference, either seek each other out or avoid one another, meet or separate, but can never completely turn their backs on each other...

The relationship between art and society cannot be ignored, for art itself is a social phenomenon; first, because the artist, however unique his primary experience might be, is a social being; second because his work, however deeply marked by his primary experience and however unique and unrepeatable its objection or form might be, is always a bridge, a connecting link between the artists and other members of society; third, because a work of art affects other people -it contributes to the reaffirmation or devaluation of their ideas, goals, or values- and is a

\textsuperscript{11}During that time the issue of the future president of Indonesia was considered as a very sensitive topic. Even today, the topic is still discussed widely but still as a public secret.

\textsuperscript{12}F.X. Harsono (1995) "Seni Rupapun membidik Kekuasaan" Republika 22 Januari 1995
social force which, with its emotional or ideological weight, shakes or moves people...13.

This thesis does not attempt to explain the political movement which has been shaping the Indonesian art form nor to write Indonesian art history; however, to understand and then, to examine the contemporary artists' attitude toward their social commitment in the period 1980-1995. In doing so the historical background and cultural polemics will intersect. From interviews with some outspoken artists and writers in the Old and the New Order eras, this thesis aims to examine the conflicts among Indonesian contemporary artists due to their wish to shape Indonesian art through their social commitment. Two modern critical artists have been chosen in order to highlight the tension existing both in the Indonesian art world and more importantly within Indonesian society as a whole. The chosen artists are F.X. Harsono in his multimedia art works and, Dede Eri Supria in his photorealist paintings.

Firstly, I will review the Modern Indonesian art movement which has been shaped by socio-political changes, and the artists' social commitment.

Secondly, I will investigate F.X. Harsono and Dede Eri Supria's attitudes towards their "voice for the muted people" in content, idea, and form.

13Adolfo Sanchez Vazquez (1973) Art and Society, essays in Marxist Aesthetics, p.112