

GALERIE CHRISTIAN HOSP

EVERYTHING YOU CAN IMAGINE IS REAL #1

by Handiwirman Saputra, Yuli Prayitno and Yusra Martunus

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Exhibition: June 25 – July 30, 2011

Handiwirman Saputra, Yuli Prayitno, and Yusra Martunus occupy a special place in the Indonesian contemporary art world. Together, and as peers, they can be regarded as the new wave of Indonesian sculpture art. Conceptually and rationally, they chose to take quite a different route to the ones taken by their predecessors which are often dominated by socio-political representations. Their works seem to embark upon a reinvestigation of material and form. However, this does not mean that their works are devoid of any social or sociological content, hidden though they are.

Handiwirman's three-dimensional pieces clearly demonstrate their authenticity. We can even say that Handiwirman is heading in a completely different direction than either his predecessors or even his contemporaries. Without a formal sculpture education/training, Handi is unfettered in his exploration of various material- and structural/formative- possibilities. From the beginning of his artistic career, Handi has always been interested in working with materials that are often overlooked in sculpture art, such as cotton, foam, rubber bands, plastic clumps, and corrugated steel. At a glance, Handi's three-dimensional pieces have the inclination to come across as unmonumental. However, Handi himself has no intention to deconstruct the question of material hierarchy, or is in any way positioning himself as being against materials commonly found in high art conventions, like metal or marble.

Handi chose a few particular materials due to their unique characteristics and visual qualities. It is through these humble, inexpensive, and commonplace materials that Handi is able to embark on an exploration of his imagination. As such, Handiwirman's works don't often refer to any particular consideration other than as manifestations of imaginative forms; although there are also instances where they arouse associations with the realm of objects and nature. This places an important emphasis on the connection between materials and forms in Handiwirman's pieces. Both of these aspects are immutable. The forms in Handiwirman's works are statements found within the materials he uses. We can go so far as to say that Handi has restored our understanding of the art of sculpture to the vast possibilities of form and a consciousness of the characteristics inherent in each or any material. This seems to convey Handi to the realm of formalism, placing him within the framework of a truth-to-the-material concept. However, since his materials and outward forms do not immediately associate themselves with formalist sculptures, it is probably more appropriate for us to term Handiwirman's sculptural tendencies as: contemporary formalism.

Yuli Prayitno's presentation in this exhibition reminds us of hunting trophies. However, his deer antlers look soft and malleable, as if to disacknowledge the hardness of common deer antlers. Yuli borrows the common forms of deer antlers and skulls to show the character of silicon-rubber. The only way to bring about the rubber's characteristics to the fullest is to deform these antlers as well as pressing them between sheets of glass. His departure from the commonly known characteristics of natural deer antlers can also be read as Yuli's way to gainsay reality. His more recent works are mostly related to the question of covers, or enclosures, in this case, a malleable one. To Yuli, all the things we see and understand in and of the world reside mostly on a superficial level, outer covers. These outer covers--which appear flexible and malleable--hide a certain reality

within it, something that we may never fully understand. Through Yuli's imagination, we will arrive at a "reality" that consists of a row of flexible 'antlers' and a configuration of equally flexible 'wooden chairs'.

Seen briefly, Yusra's pieces resemble formalist sculptures, especially with regards to their form. However, upon closer inspection, we will discover a certain Duchampian tendency and other representational aspects in them. For instance, his sculpture incorporating a towel bar, in 09101 (lentur-series), or his piece titled 1101 (envelope-series), distilled from the borders of par avion (airmail) envelopes. It is interesting to note that the most abstract-looking piece in this exhibition actually retains a metaphorical aspect as well as a connotative meaning. However, unlike other works with verbal socio-political contents, Yusra's pieces are quite removed from them. More accurately, we should say that Yusra's art pieces are analogies of form-constructions within a framework of social-constructions. This is evident in the pieces making up the lentur series, each made up of two components, where one is in constant adjustment to the other. They seem to also serve as a message that humans must constantly be flexible (lentur) in his social environment, to avoid confrontation. For Yusra, however, it is not nearly as important for viewers to read his works through their socio-political aspects, common knowledge as they are. What is more important to him is how his observations of various social situations can serve as triggers for him to build imaginations of form within his works.

It is undeniable that the works presented here, by these three artists, all serve to demonstrate how imagination still plays a very important role in contemporary art. The works we see here are manifestations of a fertile imagination made concrete, right in front of our eyes.

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