

Digital

DEBORAH ISKANDAR DISCOVERS PERFORMANCE ART ONLINE

Tho would have thought that something as direct and embodied as performance art could be presented digitally in an online exhibition? Although artists creatively adapted their performances the combination seems unlikely, due to CO-VID-19, many galleries are forced to become creative and launch new online initiatives. At ISA, we have seamlessly been able to present works by performance artists through the proxy of your gadget or screens.

Performance artist collectives have recently begun experimenting more with multiple group video chat applications and social media homepages to create artist-led online performance festivals. The most recent one was an artist-led project, "Njir, Gitu Doang", sup-

ported by indeks.id, INDO\ART\NOW and PRFRMNC.RAR, where seven up and coming, emerging, and established performance to a zoom call format.

The concept of "performance art" originated in the 1970s as it evolved from futuristic dance, plays and other forms of expression since the early 20th century. Other than live performances, performance artists also showcase their artistic expression through the medium of photography, film and video stills. The 1950s and 1960s saw the birth of the "Happenings" movement which emerged from the theatrical settings of Dada and Surrealism. In 1960s Asia, there were "Butoh"

performances, a derivative of Japanese dance which developed at the same time. Butoh (舞踏, Butō) is a type of Japanese movement theatre that incorporates an assorted scope of exercises, procedures and inspirations for movements, execution, or development. Following World War II, Butoh emerged in 1959 through the joint efforts of its two key authors, Tatsumi Hijikata and Kazuo Ohno. As camera technology evolved, performance artists increasingly incorporated photography as more than just as an archive, but as an alternative medium and mode of experimentation. In the 21st century, the photography format has become more ideal for performance art festivals, events, and exhibitions that choose to, or are forced to host online initiatives without having to go live. Platforms such as an Instagram page or interactive catalogues have become new ways to experience performance art.

In Indonesia, the "69 Performance Club" was founded by Hafiz Rancajale and Forum Lenteng. In April, they launched an online initiative titled "DOMESTIC FORMATION", a performance photography event as a response to the PSBB (Pembatasan Sosial Berskala Besar) or the stay home notice. The nine performance artists tried to capture their daily experiences in their individual homes and relate them to the social issues that were occurring as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. They immortalised their body movements together



with the space and the objects around them into a still frame, while leaving the audience to imagine the movements in their head.

ISA Art & Design, as a pioneer of the onlineoffline gallery format in Indonesia, chose to take on the less-travelled road of exhibiting performance art photography. "CORPOREAL/ MATERIAL" is an exhibition of photographic archives of performance art and performance photography pieces. Created together with performance art curator, Riyadhus Shalihin, the exhibit held in the virtual realm features artworks from prominent performance artists such as Agung Eko Sutrisno, Alfiah Rahdini, Aliansyah Caniago, Angga Wedhaswara, Arahmaiani, Dea Widya, FX Harsono, Jason Lim, Jim Allen Abel, Redha Sorana & Slamet Riyadhi, Semsar Siahaan, Wimo Ambala Bayang, and Subashri Sankarasubramanian.

The gallery has been thinking about the online aspect of presenting art since it was founded earlier this year, but the current situation proved that there is a pressing need for us to have an online alternative in viewing and appreciating art. Through this exhibition, ISA Art and Design aims to educate the public about

the lesser-known form of performance art. This pandemic is also a difficult time for artists since there are no physical openings or festivals at the moment, so through this online initiative, ISA Art and Design hopes to create market support for established and emerging performance artists and performance photography artists. Art is also an excellent way of 'steering the ship' into a more hopeful direction; online art exhibitions and projects are a way for us to enjoy ourselves and work on a meaningful and fulfilling project while being socially-distanced. This exhibition is also a leap of faith for the gallery in presenting performance art pieces.

This exhibition also features some of the most famous performance art pieces in the form of photography, one of which is a photography series by FX Harsono titled "Burn Victim (Korban 1/ Yang Mati dan yang Terbakar)". The significance of this piece is not only because of the calibre of FX Harsono, a seminal artist that was also part of a revolutionary art movement "Gerakan Seni Rupa Baru", but this artwork also comments on one of the biggest national tragedies ever to happen in Indonesia – the 1998 riots.





- Writing in the Rain series by FX Harsono
- CORPOREAL/MATERIAL exhibit announcement
- Angkatan Keenam (Belanda Sudah Dekat! Series -2008) by Wimo Ambala Bayang
- Burn Victim by FX Harsono

Another featured work by FX Harsono is the "Writing in the Rain" series, a series of video stills from FX Harsono's performance video that was displayed at New York's Times Square in 2018 as part of the "Midnight Moments" programme.

Wimo Ambala Bayang is a photography artist that is actively creating with MES 56. In this exhibition, ISA Art and Design presents his ongoing series "Belanda Sudah Dekat". This work discusses post-colonial issues using humour and the lens of community. Many of MES 56 artists utilise a lot of performance art elements in their photography practice.

This exhibition also showcases work by Jason Lim, Singapore's performance art figure, who is a master ceramist. "Duet with Light II" is a performance that happened during the 2012 Venice International Performance Art Week. In the "Duet with Light II" photography series, the photograph of the live performance becomes an artwork series in itself.

The exhibition could be viewed through these links http://bit.ly/corporealmaterial http://bit.ly/corporealmaterialEPUB

These online initiatives prove that art stays resilient even through these tough times and that we as an audience could continue to support the art scene while staying home.

With more than two decades of immersive experience in the art world, Deborah Iskandar is an expert in both Southeast Asian and international art. Her eye and passion for art is the driving force behind the online/offline gallery based in Jakarta, Indonesia, providing a dedicated platform for emerging and prominent women artists of the region. Originated as a consultancy firm, ISA Art & Design also works closely with architects and interior designers to provide

desirable artworks for private and public refinement.

ISA Art + Design ®

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