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## Everyday

DEBORAH ISKANDAR PONDERS ON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ART IN LIFE

hat comes to mind when you think about art? Do you think about a grand landscape, maybe a beautiful portrait, or even abstract splatters and brushstrokes? Have you ever considered that a single chair could be art?

The convention of representing everyday objects appeared in the art world before the 1700s, when Dutch painters started to paint everyday objects as part of their still life paintings. Usually, still life painting has symbolic meanings contained in every item depicted in it. Many painters paint still lifes to be a reminder of human ephemerality. But the inclusion of an actual object (or part of it) rather



between tool and function; losing the objective behind our action/s. By freezing time, and using analogue objects, Meliantha is creating a moment where we can be truly present.

Ella Wijt also incorporates everyday objects into her artworks. Although the items that she includes might be small in size, it has a profound contribution to the look and feel of the painting. She does not think of her creative practice and her art practice as separate. Ella incorporates cattail grass and dried flowers from her living quarters into her painting. The painting itself features domestic subject matter. Windows, curtains, chairs, flower pots, painted with sufficient negative space, creates a composition of quiet and serenity.

We are so used to going through the motions of routine. These slight alterations of everyday objects could help us step back and realise that fascinating detail and wonderment could exist anywhere. This December, ISA Art and Design will be presenting an exhibition of artists that raises the theme of everyday aesthetics. This exhibition will also be part of the OPPO Art Jakarta Virtual Programme. For more information, visit www.isaartanddesign.com.

than its representation in artworks only started in the late modern period with Synthetic Cubist Collages.

The inclusion of non-art objects and its elevation into art in the Western understanding was reintroduced in Indonesia in the 1970s, one of which was through the Gerakan Seni Rupa Baru movement. This movement took under its wings the exploration of installations, photography, found objects, performances, as opposed to the decorative paintings and sculptures popular and championed during the era.

New meanings, objectives, and styles of art that utilise everyday objects developed along the way. Its intention of usage could be cubist, dadaist, situationist, or even pop; depending on how the artist looks at it. Nevertheless, the appearance of everyday objects removed from its mundane context could help us appreciate and reflect our everydayness more.

Meliantha Muliawan is an Indonesian artist that utilises everyday objects in her work. She uses different methods to position the objects such that they appear frozen in time. Meliantha pairs stockings and silk ties with table fans, or a telephone with cotton socks; the unusual combinations make the whole artwork feel familiar yet so strange at the same time.



Meliantha features items that are slightly outdated and distinctly analogue. Analogue objects are often more specialised, devoting themselves to one particular function, while digital tools champion agglomeration and compactness. However, this compactness might mean that we are losing the connection

- Ella Wijt, Ursula, 2020, 56 x 56 cm, Pencil, dried grass, yarn and acrylic on raw canvas
- . Meliantha Muliawan, Telephone & Sock, 2019,
- 16x16x100cm, Telephone, Sock, Resin & Acrylic Paint Meliantha Muliawan, Blow #1, 2019

50x65x24cm, Fan, Tie, Resin & Acrylic Paint