

Ideal Paradise in the Museum of Violence

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Portal Theater – The interaction space between the show and the audience actually happened outside when the show's choreographer Claudia Bosse greeted and invited the audience to enter the installation rooms.

She chose the audience randomly by pointing, without knowing the identity, or at least the name of the audience. There were more than 50 viewers who attended, not only local viewers, but also some international viewers.

Four-five selected spectators were directed towards a door that was still locked. Behind the door was a black cloak that was used to block the spectator's observation directly into the installation room.

Like a teacher who is patient and faithfully accompanies her students, this method is a new thing while I watch shows in Jakarta.

But so, Bosse in his site-specific works wants to invite her audience into a personal experience about the show. Bringing the viewer into the auric moment to experience what she is serving.

Some spectators who were still waiting outside, including me, cautioned, as well as curious to immediately see the food menu that he prepared in his installation room.

From the outside, visible light was reflected on dull glass in the East Jakarta State Film Production Building (PFN). Everyone can not wait to be appointed to enter the real arena of play.

All are chosen at random. Without differentiating. Local and foreign audiences are sometimes chosen together. Because no name was mentioned, some viewers were confused when being pointed at (in English).

Not all viewers were immediately appointed. But some of them are offered, whether to enter or not. But because all who gathered there wanted to enter, the offer was never rejected.

The clock showed around 17:30 WIB when one by one the audience began to be called. If only half an hour is spent demonstrating the 'performance'.

Museum of Violence

When entering the room, the audience was greeted with a creepy voice from a speaker who hung overhead near the entrance. Mystical sounds, like throwing an audience into the supernatural.

There are eight rooms that are used as a place to install works. Some are very small and narrow, but some are wider.

In a small room, usually more scary and scary. In addition to the bright lights, the sound that is played from the hidden small speakers is so creepy.

Each room is almost filled with bones, skulls, X-rayed organs in humans, female hair, mannequins, preserved birds, photographs of naked women, burlap sacks, wood, stones, and many others.

The bones were scattered on the floor, but there were some stored in the cupboard. While ancient birds and reptiles and mannequin dolls are generally hung on a stand with various points of view, or attached to the wall.

The dull colors of the floor and floor of the old Studio PFN building seemed to add to the aura of fear. There is a cold that blows from the artifacts. Not many viewers stared at each object for a long time.

Certainly no one dares to stare at these objects alone. Perhaps he will run, or not enter the installation room at all. Dark shadows from objects seemed to grab the audience's body.



The audience stood in front of the entrance to the show installation room while waiting to be called by Claudia Bosse. -Dock. portalteater.com

Bosse makes these eight installation rooms like a museum, if the theater is a museum like in Bambang Prihadi's performance (2019).

Museum that holds historical and past history archives. Where there is historical continuity that exists between the archives with the audience in their present.

Yes, Bosse does not present human history archives that are full of peace or happiness, but all of them are in the form of violence, terror, or arguably cannibalism, which was carried out by humans at one time, which had a great impact on humans today.

Bones, skulls, wrapped carpets, preserved birds, haunted women's hair, and video demonstrations, are symbols of how civilization has been damaged by anarchism or terrorism.

One of the most fundamental causes of all forms of violence or chaos in the world order is the system that regulates the human life cycle, namely democracy.

For Bosse, democracy born in the West has plunged the entire human race into a structurally anarchist cage. Democracy allows chaos, terrorism, disappearance, domination, hegemony and capitalism.

Referring to the ancient civilization in Greece, as one of the best systems of the worst, democracy leaves a long history of pain. Women, slaves and foreigners were excluded from the fully political social world.

The losers in politics are not only eliminated, but also lost their lives. In all cultures and nations, women have always been victims of democracy.

Constitutional restrictions that cut women's political rights, sexual harassment, discrimination and domestication of work, are a series of violent practices due to a democratic system that perpetuates men's power over women.

The voices of rebellion against democracy were loudly sounded by Bosse in this installation from various angles of space.

Rows of mannequins with blond, black, and long hair are symbols that women have been conquered by the democratic power system.

Taking the closest distance, these objects seem to reflect a memory into the audience's awareness of the whining, bitterness and darkness of the female world.

The memory might die like a cold museum, but actually when it is exhibited in a specific space drama, it is as if the archives want to talk to the audience about the context of the problem itself.

Some photos, audio recordings, and videos convey the audience in one particular space that what they see is a reflection of the political life of their own people. That violence against women continues to hit our nation.

Likewise with terrorism which results in the destruction of as many innocent people as possible. Women and children were promised heaven even though they had to go far away to a land they did not recognize.

In this installation, Bosse wants to challenge the audience of awareness as well as unconsciousness of the political and cultural identity that underlies it.

Along with the installation of the object, there are six performers who fill the spaces, among which are known, there are Riyadhus Shalihin, Yola Yulfianti, Akbar Yumni, John Heryanto, and Alfiah Rahdini.

Except for the sprawling John Heryanto, the other actors stood staring at something in front of him. When viewers enter the installation room to look at objects, they sometimes stare blankly at the audience.

If only for an hour they were silent and tried to talk to the public in silence. After that, they walked slowly towards a larger room next to it. The room is a hall.

The room is currently no longer in use and may have been used as a museum because the government no longer treats it. Whereas in the past, all national film productions, including the G30S / PKI films, were born from this building.

In that room is actually not a totally empty room. There are already five performers who have been standing still. From a glass diorama, viewers can look at them into it.

They are Rita Matu Mona, Ayu Permata Sari, Ideb Surgana Yuga, Liswati, and Laksmi Notokusumo. All from Indonesia.

Like the six performers in the installation room that the crowd surrounded, they are also the body of the exhibition that helped shape the public image of the whole narration presented.



Performers perform body choreography in a "The Last Ideal Paradise" rehearsal by Claudia Bosse. -Dock. Goethe-Institut Indonesien.

Ideal Paradise

Compared to the mainstream view of adherents of world religions, Bosse in the 2.5-hour show presents a historical narrative about an ideal paradise differently.

For a long time she studied the Scriptures and finally discovered that heaven was described as a particular legal system.

She then compared heaven to the workings of democracy in Europe. That is about the ways the state regulates space, territory, responding to knowledge, prohibitions and exclusion.

Bosse then sees heaven as a scourge when humans want to get rid of their fellow humans in order to achieve what they want. Or he wants to enjoy the promise of seven virgins in heaven at the expense of the lives of innocent fellow.

Through this work, she wants to pass down the specter and try to put the audience into its level, to see how the audience challenges her.

Then a short, old woman came into the game arena. She towed an iron container filled with stones and a piece of aluminum pipe.

Before entering the arena, she releases the fastener on the rope that limits the audience and performer space.

In the arena, previously there were four performers from theatercombinant who performed body choreography movements to express the emptiness of consciousness. Everyone was wearing silver clothes.

They entered one by one, preceded by a slim bodied performer. The sound of the sound following the choreography of the body it formed. While the ten Indonesian performers stand at the far end of the arena.

Myths about the existence of supernatural powers are still quite obvious in this layer. Where Bosse still presents a puff of smoke when the performers crawl into the arena.

In it the performers are no longer present as actors. They act as well as the audience watching the audience again. Two-body merges into one.

Going forward with perfect choreography techniques, they are as suspicious, afraid and avoid the audience even though occasionally a performer wants to crash, run around, back and forth, like looking for something.

When the old woman let go of the rope, the audience who had previously crowded in a narrow space could finally breathe air because it could enter the arena to form its own dramaturgy.

Then the fourteen performers stormed the audience together, with a look of suspicion but did not know where the point of the gaze was.

The audience scattered. There were laughter, fear and avoidance. One or two spectators ignored standing nailed.

The performers melted into the audience, approaching, staring, but not making a sound. Viewers who do not understand, confused then fumbled as if they wanted to know the next scene. Sort of waiting for a surprise.

Immediately the audience scattered into all the rooms when the performers choreographed by jerking their feet to the floor. They not only form a gathering point, but also spread and rub against the audience.

A choreography of how the body reacts to violent practices and bursts of anxiety, bitterness, and chaos. Increasingly faster, rhythmically, then they both shouted satisfied.

Basically, humans want to find happiness, or in religious terms: heaven. Then after reaching the peak of satisfaction, the performers parade the words "IDEAL PARADISE" which each letter is put on a pole.

The audience also followed the procession like a cross tablo in the tradition of the Catholic Church. Perhaps Bosse in this performance wanted to present the message that religion can bring people to heaven.

If you do not follow the path of religion, then this trip is a search for the identity of the 'ideal paradise' offered by Bosse. She wants every humanbeing to find their own way to reach what he wants to achieve to be perfect.

Throughout the job, the performers recite key words from their life biographies. Some of the audience laughed, confused, and engrossed in chatting with friends or girlfriends during the pilgrimage. The symbol that heaven also does not need to be sought for them. There are only celebrating at this time.

After circling the PFN complex which was a mess in one round, the performers and spectators reentered the room when they last performed, but have been reduced so that it becomes narrower.

If previously spacious and spaced out, in this new room, the performers and the audience seemed to have melted down. For some viewers who don't know the performers, it is almost certain they have difficulty finding it.

Chaos returned. The ideal paradise is never obtained. Humans are now faced with a new problem, namely the problem of territorial protectionism.

As is happening today when America and China fought only because they claimed the boundaries of political and economic territory, not just territory.

A theatercombinant performer then demonstrates how the human body is affected by the territorial and political boundaries created by humans.

Then the three friends spread colorful tarps. Above them they roll, kick, react to language cues that are heard from each earphone attached to their ear.

Pat Toh and Mun Wai Lee from Singapore, the two Chinese ethnic performers in the performance, recited Chinese words and were followed by the two theatercombinant performers. There is no difficulty for them to understand other languages.

Then collapse the territorial protectionism made by democratic leaders today. The world has changed into a 'global village' which allows people from all over the world to talk in one language.



Performers performed a rehearsal for the show "the last Ideal Paradise" by Clausia Bosse at the PFN Studio in East Jakarta. -Dock. Goethe-Institut Indonesien.

Sound Dramaturgy

The ten Indonesian performers pushed the wheeled walls which limited the performance space to the corner of the room so that it formed the room as before.

Space drama is now moving to sound drama.

After opening a new room, the performers remained silent. They seemed to want to spy on the audience. Or want to reflect themselves on the audience.

While the audience was confused as to what kind of drama room they should form. Finally some sat and others remained standing. There are also those who approach the performers to try to enter their emotions.

Silent room crept for a moment. Then the actors form a line and sound a harmonious sound. Male actors sound bass, while female actors voice soprano.

Moving away from the drama of sound, the actors are now moving and looking for their own space while still sounding the tone.

Then the tenth pairs of performers (except foreign performers) swipe each other and kidnap the body, overlap, support, hold, as if not wanting to knock each other down.

The costumes they wear have the same composition lines. Some are wearing shorts, some are wearing long pants. Both male and female actors.

Their clothes are generally sleeveless and thin. What is different is that all Indonesian female actors do not wear shoes, while male actors wear sneakers.

At first they choreographed in twos, then shifted into threes and eventually formed a flock of bodies in a vortex.

Still pressing, swiping and touching, they show how one body depends on the other. To exhale the most basic philosophy of human life, that it is always social; nothing is alone in this world.

Long choreographing the body, the performers then move on and sound their traumatic biography to the public, or what is referred to as the living archive.

Some are traumatized by the political system, religion, sexuality, to race and culture and others. This traumatic biography is intended as a therapeutic medium for actors to pick up their people's awareness and live as actual humans.

At its peak, to show harmony among humans, performers gathered to one corner to form a line.

As they progressed, they sounded words, sounds and songs to show how the body's artistic response to the social and political constellation and political thought that is alive and developing today.

Like in Europe, the Middle East, Africa, or the US, how are we in Indonesia. Where is our next step? And where should we place ourselves in the existing socio-political structure? How do we shape our body image?

The performance in the form of installation, choreography and performance was presented for three days by theatercombinant in collaboration with 10 Indonesian artists, on 26, 28 and 29 February 2020 at PFN Studio in East Jakarta.

This performance was supported by the Goethe-Institut Indonesien. Indonesia became the first country where works made since 2015 were aired in Asia. *