

NOTE ON CREATION OF FLOURISH AND BJEOU COLABORATION WORK

By : Albertus RPA

From a women to all women and all men

When menstruation come...

The peak of the process of the womb prepares itself to receive the duty of taking care human seed.

When menstruation come...

The womb is crying for the not coming ovulation

When menstruation come...

The food prepared for the human seed is not used

When menstruation come...

Blood and liquid flow out every second...every six days...every month...

When menstruation come...

Misery which always comes every month

When menstruation come...

A woman is ready for becoming a mother

When menstruation come...

Women bleed

Women look for bandage... Looks for tampon...

Women are sad for not being pregnant

Women are happy for not being pregnant

Women are in pain

When menstruation come...

Women are not dirty

Women do not contagious

Women are not disgusting

Women are not dangerous

Women will not cause the harvest failure

Women do not clean themselves

Women are not purifying themselves

When menstruation comes...

Why do women can not pray...

Why are women alienated...

Why can we cook...

Women do not want to be pity at... but they do not want to be harmed.

(quoted from the work concept of Flourish and Bjeou)

One night, I went to Bjeou & Flourish's house (afterward I will write Bejo because I feel more familiar with this spelling)

We were talking about their project that will be first presented for a week start on 22 of September 2003 at Visual art gallery "Galeri Seni Rupa FSSR UNS" (and also planed to be presented at some other place as well). In the chat was revealed the idea and the background of flourish and Bejo collaboration work of multimedia installation which speak a lot about menstruation and may other concerted to that natural phenomenon, biologically, psychologically, social, and even on the values stage which in the realm often placed women who are having it limited by all rules which are created on the development of cultural values.

Flourish Sekarjati has a special interest and intensity on everything about woman from the beginning of her work of fine art. Not only because of she is born as a woman in this life, but more than that, what I also caught from her themes is her consciousness on having a woman body it self. Not only on recognizing body biologically but also the body and it connection to all matter which are participating in its existence.

On her previous painting, Flourish started with presenting women as theme, women in her neighborhood, on her next work is about pregnancy, and this time on multimedia installation in collaboration with Bejo, they present/reveal menstruation.

Actually, it is not a new matter for woman theme in work of art, from the beginning of fine art to it's development to modern fine art at western, there are many painting which are presenting woman character on canvas, and in our nation as well (Indonesia). More over in the era which is called "Mooi Indie" woman is presented beautifully, even more there is an impression that it is an important element for a painter to present aesthetic valves on his painting in that era. The beauty of woman's body is explored and "praised" by painters who almost all are men.

But it is needed to underline, that in that era (and actually until now there are still many who done it, because somehow woman in common sight is beautiful) women in their bodies are just objects; they are just as one of the medias used by painters (Once more, who are mostly men) to deliver their expression on beauty or even often women are black sheeped as a symbol of the cause flow. It can be in a work revealed, for instance, if we recall words – which are considered as wisdom – of our ancestor (Javanese) that men are often fall on three matter , wealth, statue, and women, thus men are suggested to be careful on that three matter. But aren't men who are also often become the cause of women flaw?

Without any intentions to compare or to blame actually, of course it because the opinions come up from this case is still possible to debate. I just want to place human as human who are in their own functions, and that each of them has their own weakness and strength. "Woman" is a natural (kodrati) creature, and is also always paired with their binary opposition who is called a "man" with their entire

existence attribute which is considered inherent essentially (Farah Wardani, Perempuan sebagai tanda, KOMPAS 5 September 2003).

Even so woman in cultural creation and development (it is more obvious in those who still maintain traditional values) which is not bane all this time – in many places – dominated by men often in marginal position, with all right limitation but full of obligation. And it is often because of its women signs.

Flourish will not challenge anything about those opinions; she just wants to learn more about herself as a woman with all things lead her existence. She is not shouting to force people to name her identity or fanatically consider her mind as more superior from her opposite binary. As in her caught on gender fight will never end, more over when the fight is only based on the intention to beat the opposites without seeing the function. Once more she and her collaboration partner Bejo, are just trying to criticize one of phenomenon which is routine and common to happen to women, a feminism sign (sign of women) which in one particular base the coming is expected, but in another case is rejected, menstruation and things related to that matter. There is a thought which has to be stated through their visual work soon, that's all. And Flourish placed herself independently as a woman who has opinion on her own body to shot other bodies in the same sex in hers.

Menstruation in it's general understanding is ovum's melted, ovum which are ready to be ovulated, which happened periodically on almost women bodies which have undergone puberty (and ends at the old age called menopause). The form is blood – dirty – which flows out of vagina. Often, the happening for some women is painful, or even very painfully, and psychologically menstruation is very affecting emotion, it just that the degree / stage of pain and affected emotion for each women are different. Some are very troubled and some are just normal common – commonly, so that their activity is not disturbed and hygienists is always maintained, women use feminism napkins or tampon to keep the blood which is flowing out during their everyday mobility.

Flourish personally, as the first idea founder to bring menstruation as her work concept, actually doesn't have any serious problem with the menstruation problem which is routinely come to her as to other normal women, biologically, psychologically, in social relationship, and even her right as a religious person. It just caught the problem on some people surrounding her and when question around those problem elaborated, she found many cases on menstruation and many things connected to that happening.

Why does woman who is menstruating by some people considered dirty, even though she has wore a napkin or tampon which it hygienists technology has becoming more and more sophisticated? Why does considered not pure, while the phenomenon is said as one of the sign of fertility, the possibility of the new human? Why, for instance, in some religion, discriminate those who are menstruation for not allowed to do the worship, or even to enter the worship place? Why there are some beliefs they have to be exhale from ritual ceremony because they are considered *ngualati* (Javanese = punishment) given by the nature or by supernatural power to

mistake a deed which breaks the spiritual rules)? Why does in traditional society structure they should be exhale while menstruating? And many other questions which come up and disturbing her all this time. Flourish and Bjeou try to find the answer from some people they met, from written materials and from discussion from many different perspectives.

On their finding process, both of them found various answer and information on menstruation with various things and reality related to it. There are some relational answer which can – relatively – be considered as true but there are not view answer which are “fatalist”, accept un analytically because cultural harms which has become a dogma. For example, both of them found data that in a certain wood, in a traditional community, every woman who is menstruating must stay in house and is not allowed to get out until her period is over. The reason is quite make sense, since they live in the forest, while bandage technology has not known yet, thus the menstruation blood is worried to be sense by wild animal so they can come and attack them (or specially to those women). But there is also an answer which is only “pokoknya begitu” (Indonesian = it just meant to be) that’s the rule and it’s a sin to disobey it. Usually related to beliefs and it’s rituals. And soon and so forth, it is including Flourish and Bejo’s own opinion on the two opposite side of reality of woman’s position when she is menstruating, her relation to her community in various field; menstruation can be used as a reason by a social structure to limit women’s right, but it also often being used by woman as an excuse to obtain facility of her exclusive existence.

This collaboration pair accepts those data as reality. It enrich their knowledge on menstruation, then question, answer and their own opinions are crystallized to a concept of a fine art work, multimedia installation.

Woman and Men’s existence in their view is returned to the ancient function, then from that point they start to see the development path of social values and religion on one society. It is included in it, their focus, and menstruation. In this era (which often called modern era) in many country which can be said modern and tends to be rational, when freedom aura, with liberalization issue, including traffic and chaos of ideology, freedom of opinion and communication – information globalization, obligations and rights equality which is meant function differentiation between men and women, and individual rights approval, thus actually, horizontally menstruation is not a big deal anymore. Limitation and facilities which of course different, and that is not matter (it just that in our country those simple but important sometime still troubled). But on vertical relation, human are so bounded to dogmas and multi interpretation religion. It is not a surprise when there are some interpretation on a particular rules or warning, include in it, interpretation on how we should treat women who are menstruating, whether for the women them selves or for the people related to them. Since those interpretations are so powerful in holding people belief (thus it) also considered as sound of truth. Thus often people just obey without any courage to question the reason of the rules making.

It is in this side Flourish has an enough tempestuous felling to make her focus her attention, why does menstruation considered taboo for a particular ceremonial

religiosity. Cause for her communicate to *Yang Maha Esa* (God) is very personal, in any body condition is not matter since body – in her thought is only a *wadag*. One's religiosity is not seen from whether those people enter a particular worship house, but more on his whole life expression (a quotation....). Flourish and Bejo will not debate this matter, just an expression which is presented through its artistic and aesthetic language in a work of art, multimedia installation.

* Unemployed and a (perhaps) good husband to be