

The Memories Hurrying Home

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Exhibition View









Suvi's Experiment To Spell Events

Muhammad Abe

In 1999, 20 years ago, Madura suffered a total blackout for three months. At that time Suvi was still young, still in elementary school. Suvi still remembers how "darkness" overshadows entire Madura. He and his family had to flee from his home to the Village Hall in Bangkalan, where he lived with other families, while adult men had to guard in their villages, guarding his village from the threat of "ninja" targeting religious leaders in Madura. At the same time as the three-month blackout in Madura, conflict in Kalimantan between ethnic groups involving migrants from Madura began to flare up.

While in elementary school, Suvi met conflict survivors who were evacuated to Madura, Suvi was in the same class as a child from Kalimantan who had scars on his body. When Suvi was in junior high school, information about the conflict in Kalimantan increased through his experience watching recorded conflict through VCD player that he watched with his friends in the family room. For Suvi, ethnic conflict in Kalimantan is known in pieces of incomplete information. In 2019, he had the opportunity to visit Pontianak, armed with a piece of Tempo news published few years ago. In Pontianak he met many people from various backgrounds, visited shelters of Madurese who were driven from Sambas, interacted with artists from various ethnic backgrounds. Suvi was later escorted by the Dayaks when they made a brief visit to Sambas, a place that is still "forbidden" for Madurese.

Suvi's experience in the "tension" both directly experienced by himself, and his experienced through other media, was a trigger for Suvi to work. Suvi's working

strategy was to record the "tension" in poetic form, which he did as if someone were keeping a diary. Suvi's poems depart from being a kind of intermediary that connects data, incidents outside of himself with memories that are inside him.

Suvi's works discuss the banal on violence in a poetic perspective. In this process Suvi tried to supplement his knowledge of ethnic conflict in Kalimantan with variety of literatures, which led to the incompleteness of knowledge about what was the root of the conflict, or what actually happened in the conflict. When he visited conflict sites, what he found was prolonged injury and loss.

To understand what happened to the ethnic conflict in Kalimantan, Suvi chose to visit his memories, personal memories that he experienced as a way to open up possibilities to reveal new narratives about the conflict.

Suvi's sharp and dense visual language helps him speak a lot with economical visualization. Suvi's works with a broad landscape background do not present any ornamental ornaments, Suvi is sufficient to place one or two objects in the middle of the landscape as sharp focus. This may be rooted in his habit of recording events as poetry, which made him accustomed to choosing sharp and strong metaphors to represent the "tension" he experienced. The visual power of Suvi makes his work which, although its form may be simple, but it can be "overflowed" in its readings, a decomposed cow carcass in Suvi's work can speak many things, shuttling between ethnic conflict in Kalimantan, Suvi's personal experience, or Maduea masculine cuture.

The paper sewing work, which is visually very economical, but very effective in conveying many things that lie behind it, is Suvi's way of telling himself and the "tensions" about the wounds and losses he experienced outside himself. The two works can be the examples of how Suvi spoke subtly through idioms which he chose as metaphors, which were subtle but dived deeply into the elements he found as links that link him and ethnic Madurese conflicts

so that they can open the talks about humanity wider.

Through his solo exhibition Suvi has the opportunity to "return" to memories from his past. The memories that have been "haunting," as if there are things that have never been discussed. If art today tries to fill a canvas with colorful aesthetic values, Suvi chooses to tell stories in the simplest way, through images that are extensions of his body's experiences. In this simple picture, Suvi's work can actually "overflow" talking not only about himself or his ethnicity, but furthermore talking about universal humanitarian issues.

Cow Eye Table 18:48 - 19:48
ink on paper (60 piece),
iron table
19, 5 x 13 (sketches)
240 x 117 cm (table), 2019







Landscape and Ruined Cow (detail)
watercolour and tobacco extract on paper
79 x 60 cm (6 panel), 2019











Landscape and Ruined Cow
watercolour and tobacco extract on paper
79 x 60 cm (6 panel), 2019







above:
Landscape and The Last Chapter
watercolour and tobacco extract on paper
52 x 57 cm, 2019

right:
Daun Jatuh
cat air di atas kertas
100 x 70 cm (2 panel), 2019











When the Darker Night Come
iron chamber, crock and water
247 x 123 x 183 cm, 2019











Sewing Paper
sewing thread, watercolour, onionskin paper and iron
96 x 71 x 83 cm (5 panel), 2019

Right:
Dan Sembuh…
sewing thread, watercolour, onionskin paper and iron table performance, 2019













The Cow and The Remains #3
watercolour and tobacco extract
on paper
32 x 32 x 151 cm, 2019





The Cow and The Remains #5
watercolour and tobacco extract
on paper
157 x 53 cm, 2019

The Cow and The Remains #4
watercolour and tobacco extract
on paper
157 x 53 cm, 2019





The Cow and The Remains #1
watercolour and tobacco extract
on paper
106 x 79 cm, 2019

The Cow and The Remains #2
watercolour and tobacco extract
on paper
157 x 53 cm, 2019







Sempadung Horizon #2
watercolour and tobacco extract
on paper
44,5 x 31 cm, 2019

Sempadung Horizon #3
watercolour and tobacco extract
on paper
44,5 x 25,5 cm, 2019

Sempadung Horizon #1
watercolour and tobacco extract
on paper
156 x 85 cm, 2019

Remapping Suvi Poetic Mapping

Artistic reflection on the practice of creating The Memories Hurrying Home

Manshur Zikri

THE MEMORIES HURRYING HOME begins with a framework of awareness of the body as a subject (as well as an object); a body to which so many narratives are attached. The body seems to be a medium for the recording of events, which events are often projected into the realm of mental images through memories. When it has passed, the "materiality" of events can be brought back and measured in many ways, one of them is through sound (air medium; oral), when they are expressed — told, again and again.

If we treat memories as abstract forms of events, there are times when we will see the body as a living inscription, because on this body that events have been "engraved" by experiences - the body of the subject is an important material of experience, because it is unlikely for us to be able to touch back those experiences physically, but remembering them. Getting to know the body, or "unravel" body' s narratives, means exploring the unique possibility to "feel" any event that has been engraved in life. The engraving of events can vary, but the most bitter - from which we learn much about the importance of peace - is the carving of wounds, both in their physical form and in their conceptual position.

Meanwhile, things that are surging within can simultaneously push out into complex expressions. Rarely, there is a need to contextualize personal matters with the public events that accompany them. If then ambivalence — the impact of that effort — influences the expression and the determination of the process of enriching self-conception, can it be a possibility of seeing the relationship

between personal struggle and existing social tensions? When responding to the issue of violence, an artist can consciously position himself as a representative of certain social groups that are in contact with other social groups. The framing done by artists about the complexity of their personal and social experiences can be another offer of poetry mapping conflict awareness.

Positioning himself as a specific laboratory to unravel his subjective understanding of identity politics and experiences of violence, Suvi tries to explore the possibility of ambivalent situations that are also caused by memories and trauma of violence. As the heir to the social-cultural conflict narrative that engulfed the previous generation, Suvi agreed that his personal body had become a metaphor for the concept of home to which various bitter memories — of family, birthplace, overseas area, and social relations — pressed for rushing home. Suvi responded his body as a source of anecdotes that were inevitably connected to broader social, political, and cultural meanings. In the home (or body), instead of remembering, Suvi communicates — if not wrestle — with memories of returning home.

In fact, Suvi Wahyudianto works (Bangkalan, Madura, 28 April 1992) are often as visual translations of what is experienced and felt in his own body and in the bodies of people in his surroundings. In other words, Suvi indeed start a long research project on the experience of violence due to social conflict - which at one moment took a short break to spread into solo exhibition - from a very performative idea. However, in Suvi' s artistic exploration, the idea of performativity (we call it that because it departs from exploration of body), which become the basis of its visual map about the polemics of violent experiences, does not necessarily translate into "medium" art practices the body "- say for example performance art – only. Suvi precisely works a lot with a two-dimensional approach, while his several other works (ie installation of objects) are selected very tight to become a key hook for a number of different issues which is framed in his painting series.

Obviously, all of these questions pivot three important questions: How does the body understand the experience of violence? How is the body' s understanding that, then, unpacking it as a way of seeing, or imagining, other narratives that have been hidden so far? And how the narratives, in the end, are constructed as new ideas / possibilities that lead to the idea of peace and reconciliation?

These questions tried to be answered by the artist by processing the findings he obtained while doing the Rimpang X Kelana residency program in West Kalimantan (by visiting four locations, namely Pontianak, Singkawang, Sintang, and Sambas). This residency is part of an experiment to "re-experience" the residual discourse of violence. "Pilgrimage" to these locations - that' s how the artist termed his research - was conducted 20 years after the conflict. From the artist' s point of view, this experiment is an attempt to determine the limitations of the body (both psychologically and physically) in dealing with personal trauma occurring in the domestic sphere and collective trauma that develops in society; two forms of trauma which, allegedly by the artist himself, are interrelated with one another. The findings are elaborated with other materials that refer to past experiences before the "pilgrimage".

Framing the creating process of Suvi' s visual works, the curation of this exhibition departs from a scenario that underlies the artist' s intentions (based on his own confession): when meeting memories of the birthplace, as well as other memories in overseas, Suvi realizes that some of his experiences were very personal (which is generally related to the form of the relationship between him and the members of the batih family) that has a strong connection with - or is part of - a larger social event. The memories jostle into his mind, throng the threshold of his feelings, then his body can fully "re-connect" the after effect of real experiences of the past, and then influence his perception in interpreting existing social interaction

models. All of these memories are present simultaneously as a rain of fragments of the story, which increasingly fills the spaces of his body (home) and forced to be shed. One time, the fragments were so slashing, tearing apart, but at the other times it also triggered a state of solitude, infrequently they also appear ambiguous and gray. Screaming, perhaps, is a way to push the fragments out of the body / house. But Suvi did not forget to think: is there another way to blow everything up to aesthetics ...?

Like a seismograph machine, Suvi' s hand becomes a needle that moves as a result of repeated memories and experiences; and the Memories Hurrying Home series are seismograms that indicate a psychological fluctuation with a scheme that can be explored to understand the social tensions that surround the personal lives of the artist, also us: contemporary society that walking on collective trauma from various conflicts, both those that occurred in the past, which is still ongoing today in its latent nature, or is actually happen today in various regions. Also in the scheme, a little articulation of self-identity is subtly indicated in order to recognize a social position that is tightly determined by cultural contestation and overshadow power relations. Emphasizing criticism of the situation, Suvi raise game of language that utilize contrasting characters, both in terms of formal construction (visual experiments) and substantial (issues contained or framed in them).

Objects such as cows, Juang leaf, yarn and paper, and crock — which construct Suvi' s poetic map construction in this series — are not without reason. All of these objects are, in fact, on the one hand are deeply attached to Suvi' s personal life. However, on the other hand, in the society environment of Suvi' s hometown, Madura, these objects also carry values that locally believed to signify a channel of communication, classification and social status, identity politics, and certain expectations. And of course, with different but quite identical treatments, these objects also live in communities in other areas along with the context of their particular local problems and beliefs. The intersection between subjective meanings of these objects in terms of personal, and how the values inherent in those objects are

understood, preserved, modified, or abandoned by the society in the development of wider and longer social life, are the main vertices Suvi was drawn deliberately to map the relationship between his personal bitter experiences and tragic events in the phenomenon of violence that were considered to be the aftermath of cultural conflict, which were actually laden with socio-economic-political factors.

It is interesting to review how Suvi experimented in emphasizing the concepts of ambiguity and contrast that I alluded above, as we can see in the series of paintings depicting the carcass of a single cow lying on the ground and backed by a lonely horizon. Deliberately displaying conditions that contrast with how local society in his village usually interpret the position of cows - a symbol of courage and self-success achievements (male) - Suvi seems to criticize his cultural position in order to reflect the situation of subjects torn apart by the trauma caused by the cultural conflict. The expanse of the sky is empty, but with a bubbling color composition that is quite dynamic through experimentation of brushwork with watercolors and tobacco extracts on paper, coupled with a protruding red color from the roar of the wound that fills the carcass flesh that looks "chaotic". An impressive composition of a state of loneliness after brutality — for whatever reason — comes as a disturbing silence because it still keeps traces the loud and noisy memories.

By being aware of the context of local values contained in cows as one of the markers of a particular society's culture, the painting series not only represents the artist's rage, but also stimulates our sensitivity to the tug-of-war of violence cases, many of which have not yet been never finished. The silence, or the quite, seems to be a far more reverberating moment than the violence that preceded it — or caused it. And is it not in latent moments, usually, we can actually feel more tension and then be compelled to more closely to examine issues of violence that are so familiar and disturbing?

In accordance with the above interpretation, we can appreciate that Suvi's cows are taxa expressions, on one

side, in the sense that they instinctively present as a doubt of the cultural values that have so far not only affected the painter, but also us. On the other side, Suvi' s cows are also a form of articulation about taxa itself, because it is constructed as an assertiveness to criticize the factual situation and describe the current situation of individuals or groups of people existence who are "...di bawah angin" ("... under the wind")[1] . Furthermore, it becomes a deconstructive step to re-examine the context of tradition as well as the power relations that construct that tradition.

It is important to note in this essay that Suvi' s own recognition of the cows he painted: "The cow is me." Deliberately "embodied" the symbolism of the cow to himself, Suvi indirectly slices layer by layer of discourse which determines the social meaning of himself in the middle of society. The intensity in exploring the visual logic of a cow object — referring to a stack of cow' s eye sketches and the installation of four pages of a sketch of the artist' s and cow' s body fragments — would indicate how far Suvi struggles with his personality, while directing our interpretation to the artist' s struggle in searching the relationship of personal problems with things outside himself, especially when this series stands together in a sequence with his other works.

The visual experiments conducted by Suvi in this exhibition, of course, include not only the level of processing issues into visual construction in the form of indirect illustrations, but also trying to target and cross the limits of possibilities in terms of medium processing and visual composition in order to find a model layered translation; he follows the desire to free his artistic intuition from empirical burdens.

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1 The term "... under the wind" intentionally I took from an informant, which is listed in the interview data (January 1. 2004), and analyzed by Gerben Noteboom for the article titled "Experience of Violence" (See Gerben Noteboom, 2015, Forgotten People : Poverty, Risk and Social Security in Indonesia: The Case of the Madurese, in Southeast Asia, No. 6, ISBN 978-90-04-28298-8, Brill, Leiden, http://dx.doi.org/ 10.26530 / OAPEN_613437, p. 243). That sentence, as quoted, indicates the situation and feelings of insecurity experienced by the Madurese society after the violence happened in Kalimantan.

As we can see in the series of installations in the picture of Juang leaf (representation of identity) and thread stitching (representation of wounds) treated with mixed media, Suvi consciously dispels the shackles that usually arise when we are in a situation that "demands" us to be able to unravel the truth of the story as brightly as possible. In fact, by realizing that Juang leaf are contextual icons of violent events related to their cultural significance in a particular conflict area, while wounded images are illustrations that often trap us into cliché narratives when talking about violence, Suvi deals with those traps by focusing on the two objects as the main elements for testing the discipline of lines against the sphere, and investigating the possibility of superimposed technique as a visual language; instead of rambling on issues, Suvi returned to the stance of art corner. Through this practice, Suvi makes art as an idea that can refine the way we reflect the experiences of violence.

Suvi also tried to explore other performative experiences that he framed into the Memories Hurrying Home. One of the interesting experiences to be explored, as noted in Muhammad AB' s writing, is the "dark experience" - borrowing the term Suvi - which is unforgettable, that the event of power outages in Madura in the same year as the events of violence in conflict areas that exist across the sea. Experiencing "darkness" in the true sense, that is the crisis of lighting aids; an event that was experienced massively, not just by Suvi. At those moments too, the emotional struggle within him goes hand in hand with constraints that are felt physically: when he and his friends must go through nights without lighting, Suvi must also pass without the figure of a father who goes somewhere. The memory of this experience is intertwined with the memory of another "dark experience", which experienced personally: his habit when maghrib came to obeyed his mother' s orders to shout, call his father — who was somewhere — in the crock hole. In the screaming action, dark visual is a performative experience that is so imprinted. In fact, the tradition of calling "a distant figure" (to return home) through a water container — like a crock — also exists in the daily tradition of some society outside the social group environment in Suvi' s hometown.

In other words, what is experienced individually is basically a collective experience.

The presence of the crock in the context of the Memories Hurrying Home, finally, became a binder of the lost narratives that revolved around as a result of the conflict that hit the society in general. There, Suvi understood that the narrative of loss that he has was part of a narrative of loss which could be more universal. Choosing with subjective awareness in the context of the aesthetic experiments interests, Suvi presents the crock as a poetic statement to frame the combination of personal trauma and social trauma; Suvi' s crock is a dark container into which we can contemplate the possibilities which overlap but are also interconnected, though not yet explicit — and it is very likely never to be clear.

Elaborating the autoetnographic approach into the art, Suvi' s works in the series Memories Hurrying Home is indeed not in his intention to be a complete picture or illustration of how the discourse of cultural violence and conflict management by power works on the body of individuals and society. Instead of chronological narratives that applies aspects of causality in cases of violent conflict, the map expansion made by Suvi, probably, comes as a self-proclaimed visual performance. They are intertwined with one another as a pattern to signify a state that has actually disappeared: a state of forgiveness and a state of peace. By disturbing our visual and mind zones which are often lulled by pseudo comfort, the concept of violence which is then processed as an aesthetic style in these works might trigger a call - if not trigger us all to join in calling - forgiveness and peace.

Indeed, through his works, Suvi is not laying out definitive answer, yet conclusion, whether the latter two things will come or not. Because, as we can explore from one work to another, Suvi is actually narrated them all in poetry. Yet, hasn' t history recorded that "poetry enable free conversation" and "improbable hypocritical

cohesiveness" [2], and that poetry is able to soften hard things so that we can together going forward to a new situation, which is better…?

2 Goenawan Mohamad, 1963, "Seribu Slogan dan Sebuah Puisi" (A Thousand Slogans and a Poem), in Goenawan Mohammad, Seni, Politik, Pembebasan, ed. (Goenawan Mohammad Art, Politics, Liberation, ed.) Tia Setiadi, IRCiSoD, 2018, p. 91-92.



SUVI WAHYUDIANTO (Bangkalan, Madura, 28 April 1992) is a young artist from Madura who now lives and works in Yogyakarta. After earning a bachelor's degree from the Department of Visual Arts, Faculty of Language and Art, Surabaya State University in 2017, Suvi later won the UOB Painting of the Year 2018 award at the national (Indonesian) and international (Southeast Asian) level for his work entitled Angs't , a mixed media work that abstractly articulates the concept of empathy in order to respond to personal experiences and collective memories of social conflict.

Suvi's artistic practice includes exploring visual language through poetic approaches to broaden the possibility of interpretations of tragic events related to socio-cultural tensions in the past and today, as well as parsing issues related to identity politics. Through textual studies and participatory historical studies, as well as the elaboration of the autoethnographic approach into the art, Suvi's focus creates works that seek to uncover new narratives as a counterpoint to mainstream narratives, in their efforts to deconstruct the discourse of violent conflict that has been happening in society, and encouraging ideas of reconciliation and raising empathic awareness in post-conflict situations.

The poetic exploration is often translated into various techniques of creating and processing the medium, with a variety of results ranging from painting, installation of objects, to text-based works. One of his most recent work, *Catatan Hari Berkabung*, dan *Satu Mata Sapi yang Menyedihkan* (2019), was made based on the results of his research while undergoing the Rimpang X Kelana residency program in West Kalimantan. Presented at the Jogja National Museum for the Biennale Jogja XV - Equator # 5, 2019, the work frames a number of narratives

that he collected while interacting with residents in Pontianak, Singkawang, Sintang, and Sambas; this work presents a critical reading of maps of collective memory that still exist between generations, in connection with experiences of violence that have occurred in these cities.

Suvi Wahyudianto has been involved in various national and international art events, including **the 7th Biennale Jawa Timur - "Worlds A Hoax"** (Prabangkara Gallery, Taman Budaya Jawa Timur, 2017), **UOB Painting of the Year** (UOB Art Gallery, Singapore, 2018), **BA[KER]TAS - "Exhibition of Five Young Artists Selected by Ugo Untoro"** (Galeri Kertas Studio Hanafi, Depok, May 2018), **Manifesto 6.0 - "Multipolar: Visual Art after 20 Years of Reform"** (National Gallery of Indonesia, Jakarta, May 2018), **Biennale Jawa Tengah II - "The Future of History"** (Kota Lama Semarang, Semarang, October 2018), **Pameran Besar Seni Rupe ke - 6 - "Panji: Penguat Karakter Bangsa"** (Kota Batu, Jawa Timur, October 2018), **Indonesian Contemporary Art and Design (ICAD) X: "Factor X"** (grandkemang Hotel, Jakarta, 2019), and **the Jogja Biennale XV: EQUATOR # 5 Indonesia with Southeast Asia: "Do We Play at the Same Playground"** (Jogja National Museum, Yogyakarta, 2019) . He has also held solo exhibitions, including **"Homo Sapirin"** (C2O Gallery, Surabaya, 2016; curated by Ayos Purwoaji) and **"ONGGHA"** (REDBASE Foundation, Yogyakarta, 2017).



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