

“Bare Journal” Liar

Artists are distinguished by their alternative perceptions of our modern world. Yet they are mostly ignored and maligned, being considered outsiders of mainstream society. Recently in western countries, however, they are gaining appreciation for their abilities by being included in company discussions and think tanks - not to provide solutions - yet because they ask important questions. More vibrant communities can evolve when artist's ideas become further integrated into the social and economic sectors.

To broaden the dialog between art and its audiences, while creating opportunities to learn more about the workings of the artists mind, Cata Odata Art Space in Ubud, via its artist in residency program, presents “Bare Journal” Liar. Open from 7 June, the exhibition showcases the results of the one-month residency program, which not only include sketches, paintings, sculptures and installations, yet highlights the diaries of the two participating artists, and one accompanying art writer.

“After our first artist in residency program in 2014 the question that arose was how can we inspire deeper levels of connectivity between artists and the community?” says Ratna Odata, co-founder and creative director of Cata Odata, a new artists run initiative that opened in May 2014. “From there the first draft of “Bare Journal”, which accesses the rarely exposed, behind-the-scenes world of the artist's creative journey, was born.”

“The prerequisite is the participants must record their daily progress through writings or imagery into a personal journal. During the 30 day period of exhibition, however, the journal then becomes public domain, open to the community to read and also to write impressions, messages, or criticism. The residency participants are also encouraged to make regular journal postings on the social media platform, Facebook,” Ratna adds. Themed “Liar” (Wild) this years program features 2 self-taught artists, Imam Sucahyo from Surabaya, East Java, and Rat Heist, from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, along with art writer Mohamad Arifin, also from Surabaya.

For Heist, the concept of “wild” is coherent with his lifestyle as a street artist in Kuala Lumpur, where he often performs graffiti and illegal acts of creative vandalism. “I enjoyed that the focus was not upon the finished artworks, but the journal instead,” Heist says. “This is an unconventional and fresh concept that will encourage prospects for artist to engage better with their environment, beyond the usual interaction with the audience that occurs during an exhibition and at the opening.”

During the residency Heist created an inspiring series of marine animal sculptures from clay, cement, and found objects. He also exhibited paintings on canvas and timber palings, as well as graffiti upon the art space walls. Illustrations of animals, personal archetypal symbols of knowledge and wisdom, feature alongside his journal offerings. In contrast to his wild, urban artist presence Heist's diaries reveal a highly astute character, sensitive and intelligent, with the courage to reflect on some of his most painful life experiences, including the subject of personal loss. Widely read, amongst his writings he pays homage to famous people such as Oscar Wilde, Pablo Picasso and George Orwell.

For Sucahyo, wild is akin to the powerful artistic urges he experiences, and the infinite creative energy he freely accesses. His quirky sketches and paintings are characterized by raw, naïve figures, human and otherwise, that are suggestive of primitive art. These spontaneous and dynamic expressions are loaded with emotion, and often accompanied by text narrating tales about his life. His style of “outsider art” is perfectly suited to the residency's “Wild” theme. “The residency program has given me greater confidence to be able to showcase my imperfect works,” Sucahyo says. “What's important is that I am successful in expressing my ideas, rather than trying to achieve a finished result.”

Sucahyo's journaling was characterized by abstract and eclectic, free flowing prose. “I had the freedom to write without boundaries,” he says. “And this was a very liberating for me.” One entry touches upon cultural identity and ancient Kejawen mythology that states that everyone is born with an invisible twin. Sucahyo reveals his inner dialog with his twin who is his eternal critic, constantly reminding him of his faults and mistaken ways.

While Arifin is known for his contributions to art projects and catalogs in Surabaya, this program reveals he is gifted with artistic talent as well. Invited on this program to make written comment about the artist's creative processes, his journals fail to reveal notable insights. "Textagram #1,2 &3" his clever compositions of photocopied text transformed into collages are, however, aesthetically strong, and are positive contributions to the exhibition. One artwork features an attractive arrangement of geometrical forms, while in another strips of text loosely and randomly attached create interesting visual patterns.

Another highlight of the exhibition is a collection of print out Facebook journal entries, text and photographs, attached to a wall. Social media has given birth to a new and dynamic platform for real time public journaling, and these entries are intriguing and entertaining, while emphasizing the relationship between communication technology and the evolution of popular contemporary culture.

"This event would not be complete without the presence and participation of the audience to leave their mark upon the journals," says Ratna. "Hopefully, by the end of this journey, both artists and audiences will gain new insights, and ideas, as well as giving more recognition to the world of art that we celebrate together. That is what's meaningful for us."

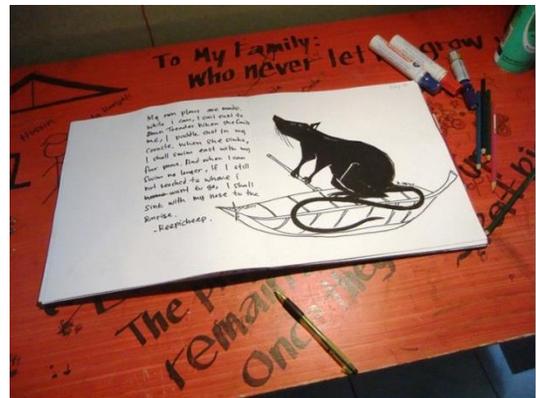
Art thrives upon inquiry and experimentation, and the vision of Cata Odata, via this progressive program, contributing to the development of contemporary art deserves recognition.

"Bare Journal" Liar continues until 7 August
Open daily 10am-6pm, Cata Odata Art Space,
Opposite the Pura Dalem Temple,
Jalan Raya, Penestanan Klod, Ubud, Bali.

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Sculptures by Rat Heist. Image Richard Horstman



Bare Journal by Rat Heist. Image Richard Horstman



Bare Journal - Facebook entries Image Richard Horstman



Imam Suahyo, Bare Journal Image Richard Horstman