



CRYPTIC

Sublimity of Made KaEK
Sosok Samar Made KaEK

Cryptic, Sublimity of Made Kaek

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I have known Made Kaek for more than two decades. We often walk together, interact, and talk about various things. I know, Kaek often could not even stand to be quiet for a while. He always wanted to move actively. I often caught a positive and productive restlessness on him.

One day, in my studio, Batubelah, Lembang, Klungkung, the sheets of *rice paper* (paddy paper) lying on the table side by side with the colors in his hands within in an eye wink was full of scratches forming *cryptic*. In English-Indonesian Dictionary, *cryptic* is defined as: 1 Vague, unclear, *cryptic statement*- cryptic speech; 2 Not clear, *cryptic message*-unclear messages, messages that have hidden meanings. The hidden message in visual arts can be interpreted as a code, it requires intelligence and knowledge to open the password. Thus, the scratches born from Kaek's hands are messages that are still vague.

Kaek has a way of painting with manual screen printing, making patterns with objects. Rice paper was piled up with things like newspapers, plywood, and can lids placed in such a way, then he started painting. In the second stage, those objects were removed, leaving a patterned blank surface. Then he responds with the concept of colors and lines, at once forming the overall two-dimensional structure. Finally, he gave unconventional contours and colors, as an accent that the painting has been considered finished. Aha! In my mind it is a method of creation.

Once in a beautiful dusk, on another day, I had the opportunity to visit Kaek's house. The studio is next to the kitchen, where there is a veranda in front of it for coffee and chatting. We sat across from each other accompanied by coffee and *jaje klepon* typical cake of Sukawati. We talked about art, Kaek's art journey. "I had started *drawing* since the eighties, to be precise in 1989 when I was studying in Yogyakarta," Kaek said. While showing a picture of a natural curve with big teeth. Then, excitedly he told the momentum, why he was intense in drawing. I just smiled as I took

a sip of my coffee, dreaming he had done it in Batubelah.

"When I managed to *realize* "It's a subconscious memory, in other words, spilling pictures in certain areas, I felt calm, as if I've had sex," Kaek said. Similar as ascetic or yoga ascetics practice to remove various kinds of psychic load and negative images, while Kaek releases subconscious pressure, in an emotive-referential way.

We can find emotive-referential expressions in verbal and visual works since ancient time. Roman Jakobson a linguist, broke down linguistic expression scheme into six kinds, including connotative, phatic, poetic, meta linguistic, emotive, and referential. Emotive-referential is an expression of emotion referring to the outside/inside world. Kaek's visual language could be observed from this spectrum.

As our conversation grew darker at night, Kaek asked if I could curate a solo exhibition he planned for July 2022. Hmm. I doubted, I felt too close to Kaek, so the analysis would tend to be subjective. I agreed because he designed the exhibition in his house, featuring the studio, kitchen, gallery and all the knick-knacks part of *artwork* exhibited. I could see the other side of this one friend. He is an *art event organizer*, gallery owner, artist, and helping fellow artists with domestic affairs.

Emotive Expression, Expressionism

Kaek was amazed at his encounter with prominent educators/artists Widayat and Nyoman Gunarsa in Yogyakarta. He got the meaning of freedom in expressing the lines and shapes of two characters, expressing emotions referring to the inner world and outer world. The essence of icon of outer world is captured by a way of individual expression, and the lines and shapes of Widayat's model are different from those of Nyoman Gunarsa. Kaek seemed to find a little enlightenment, watching the way their emotive expression. He called it a momentum. As a lighter continuing to live in his subconscious until now. This young man was only

nineteen years old at the time. While studying law at Atmajaya Yogyakarta, he learned art practices from young Balinese who were currently studying at ASRI, now ISI Yogyakarta. The repertoire of Yogyakarta was able to articulate his artistic interests, talents, and abilities which he did not find in Banjar Pagan Tengah, Kelurahan Sumerta Kauh, Denpasar, in his childhood.

Tracing the emotive artistic expression we can enjoy through primitive art works, from wong-wongan paintings, children's paintings, traditional sculptures, to abstract expressionist Balinese artists today. Generally, it is characterized by distortions, *brush stroke*, and colors representing certain psychological emotions. The excellence of emotive art communicates ideas and feelings effectively, powerfully, and clearly. The history of Western art recorded the psychoanalytic approach by Sigmund Freud to explore the relationship between meaning of unconscious (*unconsciousness*) in the artwork. It is a complex method involving the artist, the appreciator's artistic response, and the cultural context. This art form uses colors and lines in a symbolic and soulful manner. Then, Carl Gustav Jung developed an analytical psychological approach emphasizing the concept of personality *extrovert* and *introvert*, archetypes, and the collective unconscious. The analytical psychology parallels to Kaek's emotive expressions, as Jung focused on studying the subconscious such as dreams, fantasies, myths, fairy tales, superstitions, and the occultism (belief in supernatural powers that humans can master).

The concept of such revolutionary emotive expression was later baptized as an expressionism, a synonym for modern art, in general, at the transition of the 19th century to the 20th century. Oskar Kokoschka (1886-1980) and Egon Schiele (1890-1918) were two of the most famous figures of Austrian expressionism. Both were influenced by the German and Austrian versions of Art Nouveau, particularly the work of Gustav Klimt, who was a leading artistic figure in Vienna at the transition century. Affandi is the most prominent Indonesian artist who until the end of his life was steadfast on the path of expressionism.

Three Chambers; Personal, Interaction, Social

Kaek always follows the development of this increasingly sophisticated local, regional and global art according to his psychological needs. The development of new materials makes

him not only build illusions on two dimensions, but also explore public spaces for interacting and collaborating. Then, the spectrum expands by building entities in social field of art in the form of galleries and art management. Until now he has explored various types of medium, including paper, canvas, plate, and sand stone. In his artistic journey, he has surpassed a number of solo exhibitions and joint exhibitions both nationally and internationally.

The house and studio become a laboratory for Kaek's personal space exploration. Where ideas and concepts are melted. Making designs of *brief*, *drawing*, models, and notes which were later developed into two dimension (*bimatra*) and three dimension (*trimatra*) works. He also worked on the interior-exterior of the house and the yard. At this level he produces several types of works including paintings, drawings, sketches, drafts and concept notes. He uses personal authority to get the job done, without outside intervention.

The interaction space is a more fluid space, Kaek is prepared to collaborate or *intermingle* with other artists. He moves beyond narrow specializations to broader and more flexible areas. He plays from the illusion of space to the concrete dimension. His art form is rigid, interactive, connected, and participatory. In this solo exhibition, friends and colleagues have the opportunity to fill the interaction space. An academician Nyoman Darma Putra, provided his views on Kaek's works entitled "*Cryptic SAMAR Made Kaek, Stunning Artwork of Myths Attractively Reformed*". Both have been interacting intensely for a long period of time. Kaek made several visual works for the cover of Nyoman Darma Putra's book.

The obstetrician who is also a poet Dewa Putu Sahadewa sparked through the poem "I Invite Faces; *Cryptic, Made Kaek*" who made this work as a form of visual-verbal *chemistry*. Then, the sculptor Wayan Catra helped translated Kaek's sketches into reliefs or sculptures made of sand stone. At the opening of the exhibition, a contemporary dancer who has traveled around the world, Agung Gunawan, came to Bali to respond to Kaek's works, which will melt in visual-kinesthetic *chemistry*. This interaction space creates various types of works including installation art, visual-verbal, visual-kinesthetic, *performance*, sand stone reliefs/statues, and artistic artifacts.

He built Rumah Paros and *art management* in an effort to take a role in social space. Many other well-established artists have

taken on this role, for example the late Made Wianta (Septuh Gallery), Wayan Sika (Sika Contemporary), Wayan Sujana Suklu (Batubelah Art Space), the Galangkangin group (Galangkangin Art Space), Putu Suidiana Bonus (Batu 8 Studio), and others. Apart from being a place to exhibit the work of other artists, it also functions as an educational space. A place for young children to know and practice art. At this point, without any administrative conditions they deserve high awards and even subsidies from the government. Apart from facilitating the community, it also builds a sustainable art follicle. I think Kaek built the gallery as a form of *healing* as social beings.

The Fairy Tale of the Two Poles

Kaek shows us a unique visual masterpiece. Elements of form, colors, and lines are created between things in unconscious space (*things in unconscious*) and things in reality. The result is a fictional form scrambling and dissolving each other, a new reality in a form of code, a kind of vague message. *Extraordinary* figures using image-shape logic in front and behind both look like holographic.

Mentioning one of the works, *Fairy Tale Without Wing* (2022), for example, shows the way he unites the inner and outer worlds. Almost all types of his works show the same tendency, both in the two dimension/three dimensions. Unusual shapes resembling fictitious figures - I prefer to call it a fairy tale. The Fairy tales are written in visual language. He did do his work in a 'clear eye', of course using the schemata or vocabulary he has had for a long period of time, so that we could recognize his visual characteristics.

Two-dimensional and three-dimensional works are the result of intense diversification, combining and analogizing. Extreme deformation and distortion of images of animals or masked humans. The application of color to forms did not follow the rules of reality, color composition following abstract harmony. If there is no form, then colors talk. The border line was not always black, he also used white, red, orange, and even yellow as the contours of the field. We are forced to enjoy his work in a vague form, psychologically arising curiosity, deeper curiosity. Kaek used a typical childlike expression of harmony logic in his works.

Humans give birth to works of art, human body has a rigid entity. The human brain is wired to process symbols. At a certain point in human evolution, the brains of our ancestors formed universal

language abilities. Noam Chomsky, a linguist, found that there is a common "grammar" in all languages. We are all assembled in the same way, at first glance it looks different because of the influence of cultural locality. Kaek runs his life in the midst of a unified culture, customs, and religion supporting the creation of characteristic works *cryptic* strongly. While doing *healing*, beautiful, emotive-referential works were produced, as well as helped develop and maintain the spirit of Balinese art. ■

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