

## **The Woman Image seen from within the State Bureaucracy**

Susi Pudjiastuti became a talk of the nation after her picture, smoking a cigarette and chilling out after the inauguration of Kabinet Kerja 2014-2015 - the Ministerial Team under the new president - was distributed widely. Tons of responses of an assorted point of views commenting on her from ethics, moral and law perspectives filled social media. Controversy ensued. Susi was one disputed minister: a woman with smoking habit, reveals a leg with tattoo, and only a junior high school graduate. Is she a true female representation in the country's democratic freedom nowadays?

Minister Susi contradicts the woman image under the New Order (1966-1998) that ruled the country for more than three decades. Women's position was under the state control during that period. It was ensured through, among others, the establishment of Dharma Wanita, a compulsory organization for the spouses of every (male) government employees. The state's control in cultural terms can be seen from the "woman" concept constructed under its hegemony which was an image of a polite, feminine, submissive and loyal woman. To women, this means the loss of real autonomy while to society at large this means manipulation and robbery of its greatest assets (Suryakusuma, 2011: 25).

After the fall of the New Order in 1998, the spirit of reform was ignited. Governmental aspects underwent a process of democratization, so did Dharma Wanita that changed its name to Dharma Wanita Persatuan, in the hope of becoming an independent and democratic organization. Today the members are not affiliated with a certain political party and are granted the political rights. Is this change something expected for the ideals of democratization, freedom and social justice, allowing people to keep their hope for a better social situation?

Wani Ditata Project is an attempt to re-read history within the political bureaucracy constructed by the state through a cultural perspective: how are women constructed in terms of political interest? This project is conducted through researching the archives of Dharma Wanita during the New Order era as well as through direct observation of Dharma Wanita Persatuan today. The result is going to be presented in an exhibition of various art mediums, such as video, photography, found objects and installation.

Nine artists involved in this project are selected from those who were born between 1970-1980: Aprilia Apsari, Julia Sarisetiati, Kartika Jahja, Keke Tumbuan, Marishka Soekarna, Otty Widasari, Tita Salina and Yaya Sung. Those born in the 1970s lived through the New Order regime until their adulthood while those in the 1980s lived as teenagers under the New Order before they witnessed the fall of this regime.

This art project tries to bridge the tension between the two artist generations and to represent the images that reigned in Dharma Wanita during the New Order regime and its relations to imagery representation development in the context of today.

As an artistic practice, one can hope that this exhibition will help us review the women construction in political and social spheres from time to time. The state of affairs of Indonesian women's organization is a reflection of the country's political development that surely influences social changes and situations. It is about how we are present as a part of a past history, and vice versa. History is what makes us up

today. An attempt to reflect on this condition allows us to formulate and discover new ideas for the future.

### Angga Wijaya

Angga Wijaya graduated from the Art Department of Jakarta State University (UNJ). He has participated in various curatorial workshops, such as those organized by the Jakarta Arts Council, Japan Foundation and ruangrupa. Today he focuses on curatorial work of projects that are specifically based on research using social, cultural and educational approaches. In 2014 he was selected to join *Run and Learn: New Curatorial Constellation*, a program of Japan Foundation in Tokyo.