

Art Activities of *Bengkel Muda Surabaya* During Pandemi

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Abstract

The Bengkel Muda Surabaya (BMS) as art community is one of the art communities that has been maintaining maintained its existence since 1973. Many distinguished figures have been resulted from this community, for example Leo Kristy, Akhudiat, Sirikit Syah, Amang Rahman, Basuki Rachmat etc. During the pandemic, when the PSBB (Large-Scale Social Restrictions) was imposed, almost all art activities that were usually carried out face-to-face cannot be held. Art activities are activities of the artists' soul to explore the creation of art, of course, cannot be limited on that way. Therefore, BMS members continue perform artistic activities in a certain way. This article is to describe how artist members stay creative and connected during this pandemic. The method that was used in this research is descriptive qualitative using reference and interview techniques. The results obtained are that BMS continues to perform virtual art activities and several virtual discussions during the pandemic Funding issues are implemented in a self-supporting manner.

Keywords: art activities, virtual, qualitative-descriptive, referential, interview

A. Introduction

Bengkel Muda Surabaya (BMS) is an art community in Surabaya that was born in 1973 and still exists today. The art community is located at Jalan Governor Suryo 15 Surabaya, in one location with complex of Balai Pemuda Surabaya. With the motto "Giving souls to life lost souls", BMS can be creative and take advantage of freedom through life (Bengkel Muda Surabaya, 2018).

The BMS community is engaged in the arts with a non-profit concept. This community is open to people. BMS, which has long been an

art community in Surabaya, has produced many artists at the national level. Among the names of artists who have worked at BMS include: Basuki Rakhmat, Gombloh, Leo Kristi, Franky Sahilatua, Mardi Luhung, Arif B Prasetyo, Syaiful Hadjar, Naniel, Widodo Basuki, Budi Palopo, Sirikit Syah, S. Parmin etc. (Bengkel Muda Surabaya, 2018). This group is also a gathering community for journalists to discuss issues with artists. In the arts, BMS has several fields of activity, including music, theater (drama), painting, dance, nature lovers, to the art of reading Al Quran

(Bengkel Muda Surabaya, 2018).

In the historical record of BMS (Bengkel Muda Surabaya, 2018), this community was created not only for the sake of art, but also it cares about human values. Several demonstrations aimed at the government took place several times to fight for human values and justice. Humanity that has been eroded by the regime's power, the progress of the times, human greed, etc., are major themes in activities arts in this community. Demonstrating by means of theatrical performances, poetry readings, and musical performances through folk songs is a common thing for the BMS arts community. All training and art performances are always done face-to-face. Performers and connoisseurs or audiences of art when they can meet, is a special event, because enjoying art by being directly present to the object or subject of art has a different taste. Several poetry anthologies by literary activists BMS have been successfully published. Some of the performances that had received attention from art connoisseurs were the performances of the plays "Jalan Tembakau" (The

Tobacco Way), "Wayang Kentrung", "Aduh", "Kota dan Konstruksi Kesunyian" (City and Construction of Silence), etc. (Bengkel Muda Surabaya, 2018)

It was also noted that the East Java Provincial Education Office collaborated with BMS to accommodate the younger generation in developing their artistic spirit (East Java Provincial Education Office, 2019). This proves that BMS is an art community that has high integrity in the arts. BMS is trusted to foster the younger generation with training programs for children's theater, adult theater, creative writing training, music classes, fine arts, as well as holding periodic discussion forums, all of which are free of charge for those who participate (East Java Provincial Education Office, 2019).

The time of the pandemic has arrived almost everywhere in the world. Since the first third of 2020, which is March (Rowe, 2021), Indonesia has also been affected by the Covid 19 pandemic. Immediately, the Indonesian government works to prevent the spread of the Covid virus after the high number of deaths from this virus.

The efforts made by the Indonesian government are by means of Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB- *Pembatasan Sosial Berskala Besar*), hand washing movements, wear masks, and #stay at home (Fatimah & HH, 2021), (Manor, 2021), (Safriana, 2020), (Gandhawani, 2020), (Sabrina, 2020). With the PSBB and recommendations stay at home, some areas of activity can no longer be carried out directly. Call it the field of education, which causes students and teachers to conduct online learning (Sinaga, 2020). The tourism and arts sectors are prohibited from opening directly which results in crowds of people (Fatimah & HH, 2021). This is of course to prevent the spread of the covid 19 virus.

With this PSBB rule, the BMS art community also stops all training activities, discussions, and some performances that require face-to-face meetings, for an indefinite period, depending on the city government's policy in dealing with the covid pandemic. Several face-to-face activities, such as literary discussions and poetry readings which are usually held regularly

every month, have been temporarily suspended since the PSBB regulations were enacted. Creative writing training activities, theater training, music, painting, etc. for the general public are also pause for a while. At the beginning of the enforced of the PSBB, all artistic activities that required attendance were not allowed to be held. So this is a concern for art activists. The creativity and artistic spirit of the performers are of course difficult to contain. Then came the ideas of artistic activities in other ways to accommodate art activists in order to maintain their creativity. This article will describe how the activities of the BMS art crew during the pandemic to be creative in the arts.

B. Research Method

The discussion in this research uses descriptive qualitative methods. This method is to photograph or explore object situations which in this case are social phenomena of the art community in depth (Sugiyono, 2016). The focus of the discussion is in the form of artistic activities of BMS members during the pandemic.

The data collection technique uses literacy studies from various references (print and electronic, written and visual video, BMS was chat, and Facebook Group). This data is taken by using the internet to browse data sources. Data collection is also complemented by the results of an interview with the general chairman of BMS (Heroe Budiarto) which was held in mid-October 2021. The interview was carried out using the whatsapp application.

For the validity of the data, apart from using reference materials from various sources, confirmability techniques are also used. With confirmability, the interview function does not only dig up data but also obtains the validity of the data (Sugiyono, 2016).

C. Results and Discussion

The initial enactment of the PSBB for Surabaya, which required residents to only work at home, certainly made some patterns of community activity change. In the world of education, the learning system has changed to distance learning by utilizing the internet

network (social media, online learning applications, and online conference applications) (Sinaga, 2020). Even in art activities, the PSBB rules bring a pattern of change in the form of performances (Saputri, WJA, & A, 2021), (Fatimah & HH, 2021), (Rowe, 2021), (Sabrina, 2020), (Safriana, 2020). Likewise, the pattern of artistic activities of BMS artists.

In order to maintain communication, coordination, and exchange of information, BMS activists use WhatsApp. Information for the general public, BMS utilizes Facebook, web-wordpress, IG, and the Youtube channel (Bengkel Muda Surabaya, 2014) (Bengkel Muda Surabaya, 2018) (Chanel Bengkel Muda Surabaya, 2018). With these applications, BMS is still active in processing their arts. When in the early days of the PSBB, several BMS activists, in coordination by Hare Rumemper, presented a virtual performance with the title "Ruwatan dalam Pagar1-3" (Rumemper, 2020). Each BMS activist who is interested in participating in this art activity is

welcome to send a video of performance of their art which is done in their respective homes. "Ruwatan in Pagar 1" is filled with 12 BMS art activists, uploaded on the Youtube channel on April 3, 2020. Besides being filled with poetry readings, humming and playing the xylophone, dancing, singing, and breathing exercises art. Editing was done by Jill Kalaran, produce in a video with a duration of 13 minutes 19 seconds that was slick and artistically natural. The youtube link can be seen at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N4CyxCBfjks&t=396s>. "Ruwatan dalam Pagar 2" (can be seen at the link https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_0SdWajRGt8), filled with performances by 11 artists with several performances, including singing, ndalang, poetry reading, playing percussion music, flute playing performance, monologue performance. In the second series with a duration of 11 minutes 25 seconds, uploaded on the Youtube channel on April 7, 2020. "Ruwatan dalam Pagar 3", filled by 13 BMS activists, which was uploaded on

April 23, 2020. On this occasion the performance presented was poetry reading, action performance gestures, guitar performances, dance, singing, which are arranged in video edits complement each other's performances. Editing by Jill Kalaran produces aesthetically pleasing virtual art. This can be seen at the link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cfgtt8CDFRY>.

Still in April, which for literary activists is the month of literature, because this month is the anniversary of the death of the great Indonesian poet, Chairil Anwar. BMS also strives to create works by holding a virtual reading of Chairil Anwar's poems. There were ten BMS crew who presented a performance reading of Chairil Anwar's poems. This reading performance technique was made independently by recording at home, using a cell phone. The video recording is sent to the BMS video editor (Jill Kalaran) to be made into an aesthetic virtual masterpiece. The video is 19 minutes 11 seconds, with the title "Celebrating Elan Vital Chairil Anwar". The virtual poetry reading can be seen on the YouTube

channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MSs74rHseTg>.

In accordance with the city government's recommendation to do activities at home, do not stop BMS art activities. The next activity, a poetry parade entitled "Allah Maha Indah" (Allah is Beatifull) to commemorate the fasting month of Ramadan. This virtual poetry reading was warmly welcomed by many poets who wanted to explore the soul. There were 30 poets who participated in this event. In order not to get bored, the BMS video editor team divided it into four episodes. Episode 1, opened with the appearance of Abdul Hadi WM (Indonesian national writer) and 6 BMS crew. Episode 2, filled with writers M. Anis, Mardi Luhung, Aming Aminnudin and 6 poetry readers. Episode 3, filled with Akhudiat, Bagus Putu Parto, Aribowo, and 5 members of BMS. Episode 4 was filled with a long poetry reading by Sifak Indiana, a lecturer in Biology Education, and a folk music performance.

To celebrate the birth month of Surabaya, in June, BMS is still

holding virtual poetry readings. Packaged in a video of 4 episodes uploaded on the YouTube channel. "Surabaya 727" is the name of this show. Enlivened by 10 poets from various regions (episode 1). In episode 2 filled by 5 poets. Episode 3 contains 8 poets, and episode 4 features Arthur Jhon Haroni (the first generation member of BMS), as the epilogue of the show "Surabaya 727".

Then, successively, there are Sirikit Syah's book launch, book review, "Aksi Merah Putih" (Virtual Poetry Parade), discussion forum series "Surabaya Jangan Ambyar" (Surabaya Don't Be Abandoned). For the virtual book review, they included a review of Widodo Basuki's book "Geguritan Ajisaka Angejawa" (Java Poetries Ajisaka Angejawa), Yusuf Susilo with his book "Serat Plerok" and a review of the short story "Sang Badut dan Penyair" (The Clown and the Poet) by Hamid N.

The discussion series "Surabaya Jangan Ambyar" will be held from 18 September 2020 to 13 November 2020. There are 9 series/sessions discussing the socio-cultural issues of the city of Surabaya

with various competent speakers from Surabaya every week. This discussion is open to the public, which is broadcast by using the Zoom Meeting application and live broadcast on the YouTube channel. For session 1, "Surabaya Jangan Ambyar" presents keynote speaker by Prof. Dr. Ir. Johan Silas, and the panelists are Dr. Pinky Saptandari, Dr. Achmad Chusairi, Mashuri, MA, discussed the village that formed the character of the city. Session 2, held on September 25, 2020, with Dr. Purnawan Basundoro, Eddy Samson, Omar Ishananto, and Freddy H. Istanto, discussed the theme of Destruction and Transfer of Functions of Buildings and Historic Buildings. Session 3, with the theme Culture Strategy and Government Policy, with Dr. Aribowo, Lina Puryanti Ph.D, Vincensius Awey, and A.H. Tony. Session 4, featuring keynote speaker and some panelists: Ir. H. Moh. Rudiansyah, M. Anis, Kuncarsono Praseyo and Jopram, with Henky Kurniady as moderator. Session 4 presents the theme of the Role of Stakeholders in Building a City of Surabaya with Character. Session 5, with the theme The Role of

the Educated for the City of Surabaya with Character. This session featured the keynote speaker Prof. Daniel M. Rasyid, and the panelists: Dr. Akmal Boedianto, Ir. Oktavijanto Putra, and Yuliati Umrah.

The series "Surabaya Jangan Ambyar" in the 6th session, taking the theme of City Economic Development, together with Dr. Tjuk Kasturi Sukiadi (Activist), Ir. H. Erlangga Satriagung, (CEO of Wira Jatim Group), Lutfi Hakim (Vice Chairman of PWI East Java), Andi Budiman (Creative Industry) and Dyah Katarina (Member of the Surabaya City DPRD). In the 6th session, panelists Dyah Katarina could not fill the event due to busy schedules that could not be left behind. For the 7th session, the theme was Cultural Strategy Patterns Strengthening Surabaya's Position as a Maritime City. In session 7, it featured Dr. Autar Abdilah, M.Si, with panelists Dr. Samodra, PhD, Lt. Gend. (ret) Suharto, and Oki Lukito. For the 8th session, the BMS series discussion presented the theme of Building a Cultural Strategy for City Progress. The resource persons in this

session were Airlangga Pribadi Kasman, with panelists Esti Durahsanti, Adrian Perkasa, and Cyntia Handy. The last series of the virtual discussion series "Surabaya Jangan Ambyar", presents the topic of Madani Surabaya. The virtual discussion, which was held on November 13, 2020, featured speakers Wisnu Sakti Buana and Arif Afandi. "Surabaya Jangan Ambyar" discussion series, moderated by Hetty Palestina Yunani and Henky Kurniadi.

The next virtual art activity by the BMS community is Monologue Week. For 7 days, the BMS crew reads the script and performs a monologue, which takes place on 22-27 December 2020. The monologue performance is recorded and performed independently or with the BMS team to be packaged in the form of virtual consumption. Before being uploaded to the BMS Youtube channel, the video recording was edited by the BMS implementation team. There were monologue performances from Annisa FR, Arthur JH, Akhudiat, Amang Mawadi, Parmin Ras, Anang Hanani,

Mahamuni Paksi, Adnan Guntur, and Heroe Budiarto.

When the first generation member of BMS, namely Akhudiat passed away, on August 7, 2021, deep sorrow enveloped all BMS members. Akhudiat is an artist who has dedicated his life to the arts, and has produced many quality literary works. Therefore, to commemorate Akhudiat, BMS offered a virtual poetry reading. This event was welcomed by all people who love the world of art and literature, not just BMS members. This event was followed by 13 virtual poetry reading performances, which were uploaded on the YouTube channel from 14 August – 31 August 2021. This event was also attended by students of SMKN 12 Surabaya, Zedezane Z and Panji Satria.

In every virtual event and performance, the funds used come from the self-sufficiency of BMS members. Only the spirit of work and art is the main capital for BMS members. Until in the end BMS got a good appreciation from the East Java Provincial Education Office, East Java Tourism Office, and from the

East Java Language Center. On October 21, 2021, BMS received the Sotasoma Award from the East Java Provincial Language Center in the literary community category. For the first time since the PSBB was enforced, the BMS crew appeared in front of a limited public at the East Java Language Center. This appearance certainly requires practice. 80% of the exercises are done independently with intense communication through social media. 20% is done face-to-face before appearing in full in public. Of course this event was recorded and uploaded on the YouTube channel for the public to enjoy.

D. Conclusion

When the first generation member of BMS, namely Akhudiat passed away, on August 7, 2021, deep sorrow enveloped all BMS members. Akhudiat is an artist who has dedicated his life to the arts, and has produced many quality literary works. Therefore, to commemorate Akhudiat, BMS offered a virtual poetry reading. This event was welcomed by all people who love the

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