Beyond the Exhibition

Anarchist Aesthetics as Artistic Possibility for Political Art in Indonesia

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Abstract

This essay examines the exhibition as an apparatus of institutional control within the Indonesian visual arts context, arguing for its active sabotage through anarchist aesthetic practices. Drawing from Michael Scrivener's tripartite framework of the anarchist aesthetic—total artistic freedom, critique of alienated art, and art as social critique—and extending it through Graeberian concepts of direct action and prefigurative politics, this analysis positions the exhibition as a site of struggle against domination rather than exploitation. The 1976 Gerakan Seni Rupa Baru (GSRB) Concept Exhibition serves as a case study of radical avant-garde practice that prefigured exhibition sabotage. However, through an anarchist-anti-authoritarian lens, this essay also critiques GSRB's limitations, identifying their reproduction of vanguardist hierarchies, teleological historical narratives, and insufficient engagement with the problem of audience. The essay concludes by proposing concrete strategies for curatorial sabotage, emphasizing direct action, autonomous space creation, aesthetic democratization, and the refusal of commodification.

Keyword: anarchist aesthetics, anti-authoritarian, direct action, exhibition-making.

In contemporary Indonesian art discourse, the exhibition (pameran) has achieved the status of naturalized inevitability—a ritual through which artistic practice must pass to attain legitimacy within institutional frameworks. This naturalization, however, demands critical interrogation. The exhibition is not a neutral container for aesthetic experience but an apparatus of control, a mechanism through which institutional power regulates visibility, interpretation, and authority. Drawing from Scrivener's (1979) formulation of the anarchist aesthetic, we recognize this as a form of "domination"—a totalizing structure that shapes not only artistic production but the very consciousness of artists and audiences. Scrivener argues that "the social world which men and women confront every day is totalitarian; totally organized from top to bottom, from left to right, without any free zones within which one might formulate a counter-cultural opposition." The exhibition participates in this totalization.

This essay contends that the conventional exhibition must be actively sabotaged. Synthesizing Scrivener's anarchist aesthetic framework—with its insistence on total artistic freedom, its critique of alienated art, and its vision of art as social critique—with Graeber's (2004) theorization of direct action and prefigurative politics, we can understand the exhibition as a terrain of struggle. The operative question is not how to produce superior exhibitions but how to refuse, disrupt, and ultimately dismantle the exhibition as an apparatus of authority.

The 1976 Gerakan Seni Rupa Baru (GSRB) Concept Exhibition offers a significant precedent for this sabotage. By transforming the exhibition into collective discursive practice, filling walls with unorganized scribbles, and refusing the production of finished objects for passive consumption, GSRB enacted a form of direct action against the logic of conventional display. Their practice resonates with what Scrivener identifies as the avant-garde's "desire to overcome the dichotomy of art and life, to counteract audience passivity, to demystify aesthetic creation, to insist upon a participatory art." However, as Scrivener's anarchist critique illuminates, we must also interrogate GSRB through an anti-authoritarian lens. Did their "radical avant-gardeism" reproduce

hierarchies of its own? Did their rejection of conventional exhibition forms genuinely challenge institutional authority, or did it merely create new forms of vanguardism tethered to the very structures they sought to critique? These questions are essential for any genuinely anarchist aesthetic practice.

I. Linguistic Fracture: Colonial Inheritance and Epistemic Violence

Prior to the twentieth century, the vocabulary for visual arts events in the Nusantara archipelago did not recognize "pameran" in its contemporary sense. Archival data from early twentieth-century newspapers reveals that "pameran" signified an act of boasting or self-display—a mental gesture of exhibitionism rather than a spatial or institutional practice. In Islam Bergerak, the phrase "boeat pameran sadja" (just for showing off) was deployed to critique religious practices that aimed merely to display piety before the public. Similarly, in Djawa Tengah (July 1917), a feudal figure was described as engaging in "pameran" and "kembagoesan" (beautification) as manifestations of feudal arrogance. In the Malay dialect of marketplaces, "pameran" did not refer to an event for art but to an attitude—the act of showing oneself off.

The actual technical term for visual arts events during this period was seteleng, a borrowing from the Dutch tentoonstelling. This term appears in reporting about koloniale tentoonstelling (colonial exhibitions) and kunst tentoonstelling (art exhibitions). Examining the linguistic roots reveals the epistemological assumptions embedded in the term. Tentoonstelling combines tentoon (showing or exhibiting) and stellen (placing or positioning). The root stellen is cognate with install and stel (to set up). Tentoonstelling thus inherently presupposes an active subject—the museum, curator, or art institution—tasked with installing and positioning exhibited objects.

This linguistic inheritance is not neutral. Within the logic of tentoonstelling, the act of display presupposes a regulation of power over space and objects. The Dutch language also possesses terms such as opslag (warehouse) and depot (storage space), indicating that in nineteenth-century European thought, an object—whether ethnographic statue, painting, or cultural artifact—only acquired aesthetic value when removed from storage and positioned within the exhibition space. The arrangement of objects became simultaneously the arrangement of meaning. This constitutes the root of what we might term the politics of display: hierarchies of aesthetic value are not inherent in objects but produced through the curatorial act of positioning.

The word "pameran" only began to replace "seteleng" in the 1950s, concurrent with the consolidation of Indonesian as the national language. However, this linguistic shift was not merely lexical replacement. "Pameran" inherited the connotative burden of pamer and pamer-pameran while simultaneously accommodating the meaning structure of tentoonstelling. The result is a term perpetually in tension—between the courage to exhibit works and the actualization of a solitary, (presumed) genius artist-subject. As Scrivener notes in his analysis of the romantic avant-garde, the cult of the Genius "reinforced audience passivity and mystified the concept of artistic creation." The Indonesian linguistic fracture reveals how colonial epistemologies continue to shape the terms through which artistic practice is understood. To refuse this inheritance is to engage in linguistic sabotage—to insist that the exhibition is not a neutral term but a weapon of institutional control.

II. GSRB 1976: Radical Avant-Gardeism and Its Contradictions

The 1976 GSRB Concept Exhibition at Balai Budaya Jakarta constitutes one of the most significant acts of exhibition sabotage in Indonesian art history. According to Siti Adiyati Subangun's documentation, the event was less an exhibition than a "scribbling action"—a process that deliberately blurred the boundary between knowledge production and reproduction, between presentation and representation.

The process was divided into two phases. The first three days (August 23–25, 1976) involved non-stop marathon discussions among GSRB members and sympathizers. Participants chatted, debated, joked, thought, exchanged ideas, learned, and read books. The conclusions of these discussions, along with various unresolved grievances, were written, scribbled, and drawn on paper pasted along the walls. Drawings, writings, photographs, plastic, newspaper clippings, chairs, sandals, sculptures—all were integrated with writings about art history, aesthetics, social sciences, and politics. What was produced was not a work in the traditional sense, nor an exhibition that calculated spatial order, but a process that deliberately suspended the boundary between production and reproduction of knowledge, between presentation and representation.

The most radical aspect of this concept exhibition was its attempt to negate itself as an exhibition. By making the discussion process the primary material, by permitting walls to be filled with unorganized scribbles, GSRB performed a deformation of the logic of exhibiting within established aesthetic conventions. They did not install finished objects for a passive public. Instead, they invited the public to observe how a group thought collectively, debated, and inscribed their anxieties in a "raw" state.

Siti Adyati's notes affirm that this exhibition was primarily significant for the internal movement itself: "discussions among movement members, trying to compare the contents of their heads, and seeking common problems." The exhibition's main function was thus not external communication to the art public but internal epistemic consolidation. This represents an inversion: the exhibition was not made for the audience but by practitioners for themselves. The audience was invited to witness a process rather than a final "work of art."

This practice embodies what Scrivener describes as the anarchist insistence upon art as social critique: "since art is an experience, it is a way to define and redefine human needs, altering sociopolitical structures accordingly." The GSRB exhibition refused the commodification of artistic production by prioritizing process over product, collective discussion over individual authorship, and epistemic exploration over aesthetic consumption. It constituted, in effect, a prefigurative act of direct action against the logic of conventional display.

However, from an anarchist and anti-authoritarian perspective, the GSRB movement reveals significant contradictions that demand critical examination. Scrivener's analysis of the avant-garde's limitations provides the theoretical framework for this critique.

1. The Cult of the Artist-Intellectual: Despite its collective pretense, the GSRB movement was driven by a core group of artist-intellectuals who positioned themselves as the vanguard of artistic consciousness. This replicates the very structure of authority they sought to critique—the figure of the enlightened leader who guides the masses toward greater awareness. As Scrivener warns, the romantic avant-garde's "cult of the Genius" reinforced audience passivity and mystified the creative process. The GSRB's internal discussions and diagram-making, while ostensibly collective, were still shaped by the intellectual au-

thority of its core members. The "common problems" they sought were defined by the group's own epistemological framework, leaving limited room for genuinely participatory meaning-making from outside the movement. This reflects what Scrivener identifies as the avant-garde's tendency to "domesticate the avant-garde and integrate it into the established culture in the form of 'high art.'"

2. The Hierarchical Avant-Garde and Teleological Narration: Scrivener argues that modernist critical apparatuses function as "the filter through which avant-garde literature passes." The GSRB's Diagram of Indonesian Art History, complete with periodization from Raden Saleh to the contemporary period, represents an attempt to impose order on the chaotic multiplicity of artistic practice. This diagram-making is itself an act of authority—a claim to know and define the trajectory of Indonesian art. The diagram positions the GSRB movement as the culmination of this history, the moment of rupture that reveals the truth of art's development. This teleological narrative mirrors the very structures of institutional authority they sought to challenge. As Scrivener notes, the modernist sensibility "can tell good from bad, high from low, and will never lose control when experiencing an artwork." The GSRB's diagrammatic impulse performs a similar function of discernment and hierarchy.

3. The Problem of Audience and Social Transformation: The GSRB exhibition prioritized internal movement discussion over external communication. While this inversion of the exhibition's purpose is radical in one sense, it also reveals a fundamental limitation: the movement remained oriented toward itself rather than toward broader social transformation. As Scrivener notes, the avant-garde's radical innovations were often met with "censorship, repression, unpopularity, ridicule, refusing to call it art." However, the GSRB's relative obscurity and limited audience reach raises questions about whether their practice was genuinely counter-cultural or merely an internal ritual that never threatened the established order. Emma Goldman's critique, cited by Scrivener, is pertinent here: "The entire school, Kropotkin, Bakunin, and the rest, had a childish faith in what Peter calls 'the creative spirit of the people.' I'll be damned if I can see it. If the people could really create out of themselves, could a thousand Lenins or the rest have put the noose back on the throat of the Russian masses?" The GSRB's reliance on the creative potential of the artistic vanguard similarly risks overestimating the transformative power of internal movement practice without sustained engagement with broader publics.

The GSRB's messy, unorganized walls—their scribbles and chaos—carried its own aesthetic logic. The unorganized was organized into a new aesthetic, the chaotic into a new form of display. This is the perennial problem of the avant-garde: its critique of bourgeois aesthetics becomes, itself, a new aesthetic. The scribbled wall becomes a new kind of masterpiece, the collective discussion a new kind of spectacle. As Scrivener writes, "the avant-garde, however, must be challenged at all times because, like everything else in a capitalist society, it tends toward commodification." The GSRB's aesthetic of disruption, precisely because it is aesthetically striking, becomes susceptible to institutional absorption. The very scribbles that once signified resistance now hang on the walls of retrospective exhibitions as historical artifacts. This is the structural irony that Scrivener identifies: "The avant-garde has always dramatized the desire to overcome the dichotomy of art

and life, to counteract audience passivity, to demystify aesthetic creation, to insist upon a participatory art." Yet this dramatization, however radical, risks becoming merely another gesture.

III. Immateriality and Void: A Genealogy of Exhibition Sabotage

The GSRB's attempt to transcend the logic of the exhibition was not historically isolated. In the global history of contemporary art, the period from the 1950s to the 1970s witnessed a series of experiments that sought to destabilize fundamental assumptions about aesthetic conventions. These practices operated within what we might term an aesthetics of immateriality—a strategic sabotage of the exhibition's dependence on the object.

Yves Klein, in 1958, emptied the Galerie Iris Clert in Paris. His exhibition Le Vide (The Void) displayed only white walls, empty cabinets, and a vacant atmosphere. The public still came, queued, and witnessed nothingness. Klein demonstrated that the exhibition space itself already constituted a concrete embodiment of aesthetics—that the gallery institution did not require objects to be considered an "exhibition."

Robert Rauschenberg, in 1953, erased a drawing by Willem de Kooning. Erased de Kooning Drawing was an act of erasure that paradoxically produced a new work. What hung on the wall was not the original drawing but the traces of erasure: an exhibition about absence, about destructive action that became creative.

Piero Manzoni created Achrome (colorless canvases) and Artist's Breath (balloons containing the artist's breath), reducing art to air—something that could not be fully held or commodified. Andy Warhol's Time Capsules and Michael Asher's completely emptied gallery space complete this genealogy of practices that refused the presence of the object as the center of the exhibition.

What unites these experiments? They all operate through what might be called the aesthetics of immateriality. They are not interested in displayed objects but in the condition of space, in action, in the relationship between audience and emptiness. Within the framework of classical tentoonstelling, the aesthetics of immateriality constitutes a contradiction: how is it possible to position (stellen) something that has no form? The answer is that these practices actually exhibit the failure of the logic of exhibition itself. By emptying the space, by erasing the drawing, by transforming breath into art, they demonstrate that the exhibition institution operates on fragile assumptions.

Scrivener's analysis of the avant-garde is crucial here: "The avant-garde has always dramatized the desire to overcome the dichotomy of art and life, to counteract audience passivity, to demystify aesthetic creation, to insist upon a participatory art." The practices of Klein, Rauschenberg, Manzoni, and others represent attempts to dissolve the barriers between artistic production and everyday experience, to challenge the authority of the institution that mediates between creator and audience.

However, Scrivener warns that "the avant-garde, however, must go beyond the stage of merely making a gesture in this direction and start seriously implementing this aesthetic program." The aesthetics of immateriality, while radical in its challenge to conventional display practices, risks becoming merely another gesture absorbed by the institution it seeks to critique. This is the structural irony of avant-garde practice: its critique is often ultimately incorporated and neutralized by the very system it opposes.

Scrivener's analysis of modernism offers a powerful framework for understanding how institutions absorb and neutralize avant-garde resistance. He describes modernism as a filter through which avant-garde literature passes:

> "If an author cannot be dismissed outright, then s/he is domesticated with a barrage of irrelevant and pedantic criticism, burying the author's rebellious art underneath a rubble of words."

The same dynamic operates in the visual arts. The GSRB exhibition, in its time, represented a fundamental challenge to the art institution. But over the decades, that challenge has been domesticated. The exhibition is now taught in art schools as a historical moment, analyzed in academic papers, and celebrated in retrospectives. Its radical edge has been blunted by the very institution it sought to critique.

Scrivener identifies the characteristics of the modernist sensibility that accomplishes this domestication:

> "This sensibility cultivates seriousness and a certain kind of (serious) irony, values the importance of complexity, is uncomfortable with spontaneity and sincerity, discourages levity, playfulness and propaganda, stresses the importance of aesthetic unity and insists upon discrete boundaries between art and society. The modernist can tell good from bad, high from low, and will never lose control when experiencing an artwork."

This modernist sensibility is the enemy of anarchist aesthetics. It insists upon the very boundaries that the anarchist seeks to dissolve. It maintains the hierarchy of high and low that the anarchist refuses. It demands the control that the anarchist sabotages. It is, in Scrivener's terms, an apparatus of domination that operates through the aesthetic rather than the explicitly political.

Scrivener notes that "there is a crisis in modernism today because not only does hardly anyone produce modernist literature, but modernist criticism has been subjected to several decades of devastating critiques." However, "bourgeois ideology will reconstitute itself in some form or other to substitute for the discredited modernist creed." The question for anarchist practice is whether it will remain one step ahead of this reconstitution or whether it will be domesticated once again. Scrivener's tripartite framework of the anarchist aesthetic provides the theoretical grounding for a practice of exhibition sabotage.

First, an uncompromising insistence upon total freedom for the artist. This is not merely freedom of expression but freedom from the institutional apparatus that determines what constitutes legitimate art. As Scrivener notes, "art is avant-garde which makes radical innovations in either the art's form or content or both." The GSRB concept exhibition, in refusing to produce finished works for passive consumption, enacted this principle. By making the discussion process itself the exhibition, they declared that the creative process cannot be reduced to its final product, and that the audience is not merely a consumer but a participant in the construction of meaning. Second, a critique of elitist, alienated art and a visionary alternative in which art becomes integrated into everyday life. The GSRB's use of non-art materials—newspaper clippings, sandals, plastic, chairs—and their blurring of boundaries between discussion and display, between art and life, exemplifies this integration. As Scrivener notes, following Kropotkin and Morris, the

anarchist vision is of art that "permeated social life in all its aspects." The GSRB exhibition, in its messy, inclusive, process-oriented approach, points toward a practice where art is not separate from everyday experience but emerges from collective dialogue and engagement.

Third, art as social critique: "since art is an experience, it is a way to define and redefine human needs, altering socio-political structures accordingly." The GSRB exhibition was explicitly critical of the art market, of "sweet painting styles," of the reduction of artists to marketable personalities. But its critique went deeper: by refusing to produce a conventional exhibition, it questioned the very institutional structures that sustain the art world. Scrivener's analysis of the tension between the avant-garde and the anarchist vision of unalienated art is crucial. He criticizes Kropotkin, Proudhon, and Tolstoy for using "the ideal of unalienated future art to discredit the avant-garde." The GSRB exhibition, however, suggests a possible synthesis: it was simultaneously avant-garde in its formal experimentation and engaged in its social critique. It refused the dichotomy between the avant-garde and engaged art that Scrivener identifies as "an unfortunate one." As Scrivener notes, "unless art breaks new ground in content or technique then it is no different from bourgeois art or totalitarian art." The GSRB's aesthetic adventure was precisely its attempt to discover new realms of experience while remaining critically engaged with social reality.

However, Scrivener also insists that "the avant-garde, however, must be challenged at all times because, like everything else in a capitalist society, it tends toward commodification." The GSRB's practice, while radical in its moment, has since been incorporated into the institutional narrative. This suggests that even a synthesis of avant-garde innovation and social engagement is not immune to institutional absorption.

VI. Direct Action Against the Exhibition Apparatus

If the anarchist aesthetic provides the theoretical framework, direct action provides the method. Direct action, in the anarchist tradition, means acting directly on the conditions one seeks to change, rather than working through intermediaries or representatives. Graeber (2004) identifies direct action as a prefigurative practice that embodies the society one seeks to create. Applied to the exhibition, direct action manifests through several strategies.

Refusal to Participate: The most fundamental act of exhibition sabotage is simply to refuse. As Scrivener notes, the avant-garde's radical innovations are often met with "censorship, repression, unpopularity, ridicule, refusing to call it art." This refusal is not a sign of failure but of success—it indicates that the work has genuinely challenged the established order. The anarchist curator or artist must be willing to be rejected, to be unpopular, to be censored. The goal is not institutional acceptance but institutional disruption.

"Sabotage of the Apparatus" means using the exhibition's own logic against itself. Yves Klein's empty room, Rauschenberg's erased drawing, Manzoni's bottled breath—all are acts of sabotage that use the exhibition's dependence on the object to demonstrate the emptiness of that dependence. The GSRB's messy, unorganized walls operated similarly: they refused the clean, ordered arrangement that the exhibition demands, exposing the arbitrary nature of curatorial authority. Direct action also means creating spaces outside the institutional apparatus. As Scrivener writes, "a libertarian counter-culture has to be avant-garde to maintain its critical perspective on capitalist exploitation and modern domination." This counter-culture cannot be contained within the

gallery or museum. It must operate in the streets, in community spaces, in occupied buildings. It must be, as Scrivener puts it, "a living alternative to the culture industry and its consumerism."

The exhibition is fundamentally a mechanism of commodification. It transforms art into objects that can be bought, sold, and traded. The anarchist response is to refuse this transformation: to produce work that cannot be commodified, to prioritize process over product, to insist on collective authorship. The GSRB's scribbled walls could not be sold; they were ephemeral, process-oriented, and collective. Finally, direct action means creating the conditions for everyone to become an artist. Scrivener argues that what matters is "aesthetic education, the proliferation of aesthetic skills and training so that former audiences can create their own art (or at least become more critically aware participants in aesthetic experiences)." The anarchist exhibition is not a space for passive consumption but a site of collective production. It is a place where audiences become creators, where the boundary between artist and public is dissolved.

VII. The Limits of Institutional Critique

However, the anarchist curator must also recognize the limits of institutional critique. As Scrivener notes, "the avant-garde, however, must be challenged at all times because, like everything else in a capitalist society, it tends toward commodification." The very act of critique can be absorbed and neutralized by the institution it seeks to challenge.

Scrivener identifies this problem in his analysis of the romantic avant-garde: "The romantics did not understand fully the avant-garde nature of their art and often merely elevated it above what they perceived as popular art. Even though the romantics were the first avant-gardists, they also formulated ideas which would domesticate the avant-garde and integrate it into the established culture in the form of 'high art.'"

The same dynamic applies to the GSRB. Their radical critique has been absorbed into the mainstream narrative of Indonesian art history. Their scribbles hang on the walls of retrospectives as historical artifacts. The radical edge has been blunted. This is the fundamental problem of institutional critique: it is always in danger of becoming another form of institutional practice. The anarchist response is not to abandon institutional critique but to maintain it as a constant, never-ending process. As Scrivener argues, "a libertarian counter-culture has to be avant-garde to maintain its critical perspective." This means that the anarchist must always be in motion, always refusing the institution's attempts to absorb and neutralize the critique.

Scrivener's essay concludes with a crucial insight: the primary problem of modernity is not exploitation but domination. He cites Emma Goldman's realization that economic exploitation alone could not explain "why so many working people were supporting fascism, why so many workers had supported World War One." The problem, then, was "authoritarianism, the willingness to accept political authority, the inability to pursue self-determination."

This insight has profound implications for the politics of exhibition. The exhibition is not merely an economic apparatus; it is an apparatus of domination. It trains audiences in passivity, deference to authority, and acceptance of hierarchy. It teaches us to look at art rather than to make it, to consume rather than to create, to defer to curators rather than to trust our own judgment.

The anarchist exhibition is thus a form of anti-domination practice. It refuses the authority of the curator, the hierarchy of the institution, the passivity of the audience. It creates conditions for collective creation and mutual aid. It insists that art is not something made by specialists

for passive consumers but something that emerges from collective dialogue and engagement. Scrivener's call for a "libertarian counter-culture" that "has to be avant-garde to maintain its critical perspective" is precisely the call that the contemporary Indonesian art world needs. The exhibition must be recognized as a site of struggle, a terrain where the battle for autonomy and self-determination is fought. The anarchist curator is not a neutral facilitator but an active combatant, engaged in a continuous act of sabotage against the apparatus of domination.

Drawing from Scrivener's analysis and the lessons of the GSRB, we can propose concrete strategies for curatorial sabotage:

First, refuse the cult of the Genius. The romantic figure of the solitary genius reinforces audience passivity and mystifies artistic creation. The anarchist practice insists on collective creation, participatory art, and the demystification of aesthetic production. This means rejecting the figure of the curator as auteur and embracing curatorial practice as a collective process. And, refuse the dichotomy between avant-garde and engaged art. This dichotomy is, as Scrivener notes, "an unfortunate one." The anarchist practice must be both formally innovative and socially engaged. The GSRB exhibition demonstrates that these are not opposites but complementary aspects of a single practice. However, this synthesis must be constantly renewed to prevent its institutional absorption.

The anarchist must always be in motion, always refusing the institution's attempts to neutralize the critique. This means refusing the canonization of radical moments, refusing the aestheticization of resistance, refusing the transformation of critique into commodity. As Scrivener argues, "unless anarchism is linked with the attempt to build a counter-culture, a living alternative to the culture industry and its consumerism, then it will merely be the left-wing of a reformist effort to patch up the irrational breakdowns of the capitalist system."

A libertarian counter-culture has to be avant-garde to maintain its critical perspective on capitalist exploitation and modern domination. This counter-culture cannot be contained within the gallery or museum. It must operate in the streets, in community spaces, in occupied buildings. It must be, as Scrivener puts it, "a living alternative to the culture industry and its consumerism. The goal is not to make better exhibitions but to create conditions in which everyone can become an artist. This means aesthetic education, the proliferation of aesthetic skills, and the insistence upon participatory art. The anarchist practice must understand that the problem is not just economic exploitation but the entire culture of authority, hierarchy, and submission. The exhibition is one site of this culture. Sabotaging the exhibition is one way of challenging the culture of domination.

Conclusion: The Exhibition as Battlefield

What, then, is an exhibition? Not space, not an event, not merely a collection of objects. An exhibition is a convention that governs the relationship between objects, space, and audience. And like all conventions, it can be broken, stretched, or abandoned. What is called a "creation-free art exhibition" is not the absence of works but the awareness that works—in the traditional sense—are not an absolute requirement for an exhibition. An exhibition can contain discussion, can contain emptiness, can contain breath. An exhibition can be a place where a group of people think together, then leave scribbles on walls that are never tidy.

Yves Klein emptied the space; GSRB filled the walls with untidy scribbles; both, from very different contexts, demonstrate the same thing: that the exhibition is a battlefield of definitions. Who has the right to determine what is worthy of being exhibited, how to arrange it, and why the public should see it? These are the artistic gaps that continue to unfold to this day.

Scrivener concludes his essay with a call for a counter-culture that maintains its critical perspective "at all times." This is the anarchist imperative: to refuse the absorption of critique into the institution, to maintain the radical edge, to continue the sabotage.

For Indonesian artists and curators, the question is not how to produce superior exhibitions but how to refuse the exhibition as an apparatus of control. How to sabotage it. How to create alternative spaces where art is not a commodity but a collective practice. How to transform the audience from passive consumers into active participants. How to act directly against the apparatus of exhibition, without intermediaries, without deference to authority.

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