

MAKING SENSATION: SCULPTURING BAMBOO BY JOKO AVIANTO

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Abstract:

The creation of visual art has often been considered to be the privilege of the artist, where art is confined to the purpose and intention of its creation, and the assessment of art becomes a series of explanations that restrain the meaning of an artistic expression. From the perspective of Deleuze-Guattari, art is a monument of sensation that transcends the boundaries of subject and object, and it stands as a statement about itself. The relationship between the artist-subject and material-object used in the process of creating visual art is therefore in the domain of visual practice as a kind of thinking and acting strategy. Joko Avianto's three-dimensional works exhibited in Frankfurt, Germany, and Yokohama, Japan, are examples of Deleuze-Guattari's explanation of monuments of sensations in their embodiment. Joko Avianto creates a distinctive and subjective method of artistic action in his creative process, transforming perception into percept and affection into affect, and affirming the state of becoming. Art, visual art, and art practice are mechanisms that allow them to express an ethico-aesthetic paradigm. This paradigm reconnects each existence and becoming of the subject, through aesthetic experience, to the re-emerging new world. Thus, what makes art special is its capability to both transcend and surpass the limits to rediscover or restore the boundless.

Keywords:

affect and percept • art practice • bamboo medium • ethico-aesthetics • monuments of sensation

Introduction

The three-dimensional works presented by Joko Avianto (born in Bandung, Indonesia, 1976) are unusual expressions of fine art practice. In the history of sculpture making, works are more commonly made from durable materials such as marble or metal; taking a completely different approach, Avianto employs bamboo, which is quite alien to the tradition of sculpting, especially in the development of Western modern art history. Bamboo is more commonly used in the East, in Indonesia, where Avianto spent his early formative years, or in the Eastern Asian regions such as Japan or China. This paper is not mainly to discuss the historical development of sculpture, rather, the author uses Avianto's works as an opportunity to discuss issues concerning some artistic practice using aesthetic approaches, particularly through the eyes of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari.

The three-dimensional works of Avianto have become a challenging art appreciation experience in the world of art. The world embraced by a person in the art world is the world of imagery, and imagery will always move and never allow people to stand still⁴. Art is also a world of creation that, in practice, closely intersects with scientific knowledge and philosophical thoughts. No art is immune to the fundamental assistance by the indispensable know-how of techniques, tools, or materials to conceive it; just as – vice versa – philosophical articulations inevitably need to express themselves through artistic processes and expressions. Any creation that involves sensory power is indubitably closer to art, and it is art that embodies spiritual entities; however, the expression of philosophical concepts also contains a certain level of sensory sensitivity. In reality, the worlds of science, art, and philosophy are all creative, even when, of the three, only philosophy creates levels of concepts within a very strict framework⁵. Art needs philosophy to understand the world of imagery because it is merely a mental representation that records the sensory experience of human beings. The process of creating art, within the world of imagery, is paradoxical as it is recognized by philosophy. Philosophy recognizes that any attempt to define imagery is no different than ascertaining logocentrism, whereas imagery is more of a presence

than of words. It is a mental representation that fundamentally overcomes possible representation attempts, not to mention the verbal and gestural discourse. Even imagery is not language. It is the reality that represents itself⁶.

Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari realize that art does not possess opinions. Art eases the bonds of rules that tie each element to perception, affection, and opinion, and replaces them with a monument composed of percept, affect, and blocs of sensation that operate to replace the function of language in art⁷. We often see landscape paintings or figurative sculptures, and subsequently, the connection of perception-affection-opinion elements in our minds quickly leads us to conclude what we know about the image of the landscape or the person that we can recognize. We assume that art has “spoken” to us, and the expression of both works contains an opinion conveyed to us. Deleuze and Guattari do not propose art in that direction. A stark example in their discussion of art lies in the development of abstract art that moves away from the articulation of language. The expression of abstract art is also relevant to the discussion of the three-dimensional works done by Avianto.

The development of abstract art is part of the modernist movement, and modernist artists were at the time optimistic about showing the most fundamental foundation of reality. This also explains the purpose of the modern art movement, which moved away from representational art expressions towards non-representational forms or abstract expressions. Non-representational art aimed to show the visual elements of existence in the form of true and pure colours, and forms that were liberated from representational content. The artists thus believed that there was a pre-cultural basis beyond the representation of reality. This belief explains the existence of creative cognition that works to search for pre-cognitive reality⁸. Avianto’s three-dimensional works are an expression of abstract art rather than representational art; it is no longer relevant to connect the beauty of the work’s expression with the meaning of the form it shows. One is instead gracefully greeted by the unique beauty structure created by the expression of the work.

The important trajectory of the modern art movement is moving away from the matter of beauty *per se* and towards formal investigations as

the foundation of beauty construction. Imitation or representation from creative activity at the level of material forms produces aesthetic effects that are completely separated from the social, cultural, and psychological context of human cognition, thus taking the stage extensively. Beauty is thus abstracted⁹. Abstraction stipulates something indirectly from what is being abstracted, which is called figuration or formative visual imagery. According to art historian Hans Belting, art must offer something more important than visual imagery¹⁰.

Imagery is a phenomenon recorded by the imagination. Art helps to uncover images that manifest and speak to humans¹¹. Only the images that can find a medium will reach human experience. What is important and is to be found in images can only be embodied or reified by the proper media. Art is the medium for the manifestation of images, so the experience of creating or appreciating art is a unique experience, as Deleuze defines it as an 'encounter'. An object of an encounter is fundamentally different from an object of recognition. In the object of recognition, various knowledge, beliefs, or values that we believe are reaffirmed. We, and the entire world we live in, are reaffirmed by the world we recognize, and the world we are supposed to live in. The object of recognition is a representation of something that is always and has been in its place¹². Deleuze proposes the main characteristic of an object of encounter: such objects can only be affirmed by sensation¹³. Further, an object of encounter is not only affirmed by sensation but also through other faculties (that can remember or imagine). Thus, such affirmation requires the exercise of perceptual faculties and trains other abilities, like common sense. Therefore, common sense is the basis and also the limit of the general sensory experience.

The process of creating and appreciating visual art is more than just bringing to life a general sensory experience. Confronting Avianto's three-dimensional artwork requires experience beyond speculating what form the bamboo material has been turned into. The encounter with the artwork requires aesthetic experience. In Deleuze's aesthetic framework, art is no longer understood solely as the appearance of representational imagery. Art can be properly understood as a truly expressive concept¹⁴. Representation is certainly a kind of knowledge, but such knowledge is not sufficient to recognize something that arises from itself. A representation, or representational knowledge, only assumes a position outside the object

that it wants to know to create an analogical sign about the object it wants to recognize. An expressive concept, or even the expression itself, on the other hand, encompasses both the object and the idea in expressing its essence as a common notion¹⁵.

Art can no longer be understood merely as a boundary or as a representation of art because art is experienced and becomes part of expressive experience. Aesthetic experience is not enough to confine art within the limits of aesthetic concepts because art is a medium of images that present itself. One cannot judge an image, for one should learn from it. In the realm of imageriality, people are challenged to dive beneath the surface, that is, to be in places considered shallow by the intellect. What is on the surface is precisely a person's contact with reality. Those who do not appreciate the Real and remain untouched by it may not even be able to experience the simplest truth¹⁶. Visual art is a medium of images that is affirmed by sensation and directly touched by physical experience, but one cannot immediately recognize the presence of images through art before being able to recognize the arrangement or construction within the body of art itself through aesthetic experience.

The concept within the body of art is the principle of the structure or organization it contains. Such concepts are complex because they are also composed of other concepts. Deleuze explains that the concept within the body of art permeates the structure and organization, or composition, of other higher concepts. Deleuze calls it a concept within a concept, or a system within a system; the keywords that apply in such a movement are 'tendency,' 'coexistence,' and 'variation.'¹⁷ A work of visual art will be understood within the arrangement of concepts about the artist, just as the concept of the artist will be understood within the structural concepts of the art. This will also be understood in its composition with respect to other concepts concerning science and philosophy. Understanding art as a construction of creation is often only related to the figure of the artist as the creator as if what is created by the artist is what is intended and determined by her or him. Certainly, the intention of an artist is in the work he or she creates, but as art, the expression of the work goes beyond what the artist may have limited to. An object of sculpture, for example, is considered important because it is also an expression of the tradition of sculpture; in essence, an object of art or an artwork is important because

it has become art. Thus, art is independent of its creator through self-positing of what it creates and is perpetuated in itself. What is perpetuated as an object or work of visual art is a block of sensation consisting of percept and affect components. For Deleuze, 'the work of art is a being of sensation and nothing else: it exists in itself'¹⁸.



Joko Avianto, *"The Border between good and evil is terribly frizzy"*, (2017) Yokohama Triennale – International Exhibition of Contemporary Art, The City of Yokohama, Japan.

Art as Becoming

According to Deleuze, art as sensation does not mean that the issue of art only applies to and is about art itself; rather, art is related to life, to unique everyday experiences, and most importantly, to creativity. To express creativity, more than just a representational result is needed; it requires a gap between sensation and everyday life experience, between percept and perception, and between affect and affection. This gap does not prevent the discovery of a deep connection, rather, the difference in creative processes indicates different findings¹⁹. A creative artist with the power of creation will articulate the power of sensation in its separateness from the temporality of life experiences. The essential characteristic of affection and perception is their fleeting, ephemeral nature. Life experiences are nothing but a transitional state from one perception to another, or from one affection to another state of affection. Meanwhile, sensation, on the other hand, is constant as long as the material that supports its existence remains²⁰: a canvas, stone, or bamboo.

Artists are people who appreciate one aspect of the truth contained in reality; when working on their art, they are actually created by reality²¹. The imagination of the artists, which is commonly thought to be 'theirs', is essentially a part of reality; artists do not create but bring a connection to reality. Deleuze-Guattari describes artists as figures who 'extricate' or 'wrest' sensations from ordinary life experiences, 'elevate' the perception to the level of the percept and affection to the level of the affect, and 'liberate' aesthetic figures from the problem of figuration²². What artists create, in terms of sensation, is not about events or experiences in life that 'come and go', but rather an aesthetic experience that can last and present reality. Art is a world of images offered by the knowledge itself²³. Images will always move and never let people stay still; in this context, it is not a person's identity as a subject that is most important, but rather a dynamic that is constantly transformed²⁴. The 'true image' is 'direct impressions of the sense'²⁵ and all images, in sensory affirmation, are virtual²⁶.

True creative art actualizes the virtual, which is understood as the realm of affect. This is what gives art an ethical imperative that enables it to move beyond all that is already known (including ourselves as actualized beings).

Art that actualizes the virtual is a kind of self-overcoming²⁷. Art is not an arena for self-assertion, but a place for self-discovery. The imageriality of art is a process of self-formation through an appreciation of reality that presents itself through images, a process that cannot be contaminated by any subjective or domineering desires²⁸.

A work of art cannot be separated from how it is recognized and understood: it is more than just what is visible, and it is often then involved in the presence of concepts. However, the expression of visual art is a figure of aesthetic images (aesthetic figures) that is not the same as conceptual characters (conceptual *personae*). Aesthetic figures indicate the state of sensation of concepts, while conceptual *personae* are constructed through concepts of sensation. There may be a reciprocal relationship between sensations of concepts and concepts of sensation, but both are not constructed by the same tone of becoming. Sensory becoming, which is the result of sensations of concepts, is an action by which someone or something continuously “becomes-other” in line with the situation that is happening. Conceptual becoming, or conceptual *personae*, is an action by which an ordinary event can avoid being only in its ordinary and ongoing state. Conceptual becoming is heterogeneity captured in an absolute form, while sensory becoming is the “otherness” achieved in matters of expression. Art is a monument of sensation, a monument that not only actualizes a virtual event but also includes or contains the event within it. Virtual events provide a monument of sensation with a body, life, or a universe²⁹.

Art as sensation, rather than representation, renews our relationship with the world. Art no longer tries to explain the world, as if it has the distance to explain what the world is or should be. Deleuze-Guattari even said that “we are not in the world, we become with the world; we become by contemplating it. Everything is vision, becoming. We become universes. Becoming animal, plant, molecular, becoming zero³⁰.” Becoming is the affect of trajectories of zones that are not directly or clearly recognizable, or that we cannot know beforehand; becoming is a way of differentiating various places or objects “naturally” (without any conceptual control or representational form). Affect, in relation to sensation, is a matter of non-human states because affect transcends the bonds of “survival” to become the sensation of creative moments of unorganized life³¹.

The life of a vision is a non-organic continuation. Understanding the creation of art as a way of bringing a vision to life through the act of creation, or the art practice, is a way of recognizing the continuity of affect in artistic expression. To express an unlimited world in a limited work of art, in other words, is a process through which the “becoming of the world” is expressed in a construction. This contains its own conditions that operate at a mechanistic level. Every work of art, every sensation, emerges through an abstract machine to express an unlimited level. Through this mechanism, an actual becoming that has a certain precision and specificity involves or infolds the changes in its real conditions³². Unlimited planes of emotions, such as pain, suffering, joy, or happiness, for example, actualize in their real properties through the limited nature of visual art sensations. In all art, the role of the artist is that of presenters of various affects. They are the discoverers and creators of affects. They not only create those in their works but also present them to us who witness their artistic endeavours. Artists present these until we become together with those affects, drawn into their numerous concoctions³³.

Abstract works, like Avianto’s three-dimensional oeuvres, provide a framework for a compositional level. Art, in the zenith of abstraction development, prepares a conceptual representation of the universe. However, this is not through representation, but through sensation³⁴. Sensation is the specific world of artistic appearance; Deleuze-Guattari said, “Whether through words, colours, sounds, or stone, art is the language of sensations³⁵.” Sensation is the being and the becoming; sensation is the percept and affect of the development of modern art³⁶.

Art Practice as the Making Sensation

The aesthetic and art concepts of Deleuze-Guattari, which are attached to the development of modern art, have important relevance for the way we recognize the development of contemporary art. On the one hand, their ideas obviously separate modern art (which stands alone) from traditional art (which is communal and cosmological); on the other hand, art still has potential because it has the possibility of becoming “eternal” in its way of preserving and enlivening a vision of boundless life experience within, or

together with, the world. Art preserves and perhaps art is the only thing in the world that can be preserved. Art preserves and is also preserved within itself (*quid juris*), even though in actuality the existence of art is nothing more than a material state that supports and enables its existence (*quid facto*)³⁷. According to Deleuze-Guattari, a work of art is a productive machine that does not represent anything, and that cannot be represented within itself; a work of art only exists as a conjunction of various material streams and traces of expression³⁸. Here, we understand works of art in visual or media images to present themselves. Image, in this context, does not necessarily mean a visual image. Image is more accurately described as a presence because it is different from concepts or images. A presence is complex and contains various layers of meaning and experiential elements that cannot be fully explained from just one perspective³⁹. Image is richer than what is visual because it records what is real. There is a very strong presence that colors the image, namely the Real (realness)⁴⁰.

Phenomenology finds sensation in the perceptual and affective “a priori” materials with which it raises various perceptions and affective experiences of a lived life. Phenomenology should become phenomenology of art because the immanence of what lives to become a transcendental subject must be expressed in transcendental functions that not only determine experiences that are universal but also cross through life itself — which is here and now— while at the same time containing the living aspect by constituting living sensations⁴¹. Through the perspective of phenomenology, art practice is not to be understood as a representation of judgments about reality and life experience. Art practice is part of the experience of life itself; the artist does not work to judge the reality other than the one being evaluated by the world he or she is currently living. The way an artist creates and works with art practice is, in and of itself, a way of thinking through action. Brian Massumi explains that art practice is “philosophy in action” because the compositions created by art evoke philosophical thinking reactions. Thus, art as “which makes philosophical thinking actions” is capable of advancing various variations of worldviews that were previously unarticulated or unthought, into integration or expression that unfolds or makes visible⁴².

The art practice is a mechanism for art as an abstract machine. An abstract machine is an action of guiding mechanisms that direct the world towards its “creative flow⁴³.” The abstract machine is both vital and material, presenting itself as a worthy life for every material condition. Deleuze-Guattari referred to it as material vitalism that cannot be denied and exists everywhere but is often concealed, covered up, and no longer recognizable due to the habit of idealizing forms of representation that serve as models of recognition that are hylomorphic⁴⁴. The first principle of art as an abstract machine is that it is real and not representational. The abstract machine is a vital mechanism of the world that constantly emerges as new, a creative mechanism that operates at the level of the Real. Here, the problems of the world become something magical, as a living world where nothing is given except for creation⁴⁵. In the mechanism of the machine, the creation of an artwork is not intended to be a representation but a result of a creation initiative. Such an understanding does not exclude it from producing representational works of art; however, mimetic expressions can still create possibilities for recognizing the world in a new way. Art remains a sensory becoming and is free from the conceptual restraints that often restrict mimetic or representational forms. A work of art must be able to “stand on its own,” it must find a way to sustain itself since it is separated from the support of the creator’s autonomy and the “objectivity” of the various issues it expresses. As Deleuze-Guattari said, “Sensations are beings whose validity lies in themselves and exceeds any lived. They could be said to exist in the absence of man because man, as he is caught in stone, on the canvas, or by words, is himself a compound of percepts and affects⁴⁶.”

The three-dimensional works of Joko Avianto demonstrate the sensation created through the combination of percepts and affects in the practice of visual arts. The composition of sensations created through the use of uncommon bamboo material as a medium not only illustrates the development of abstract sculpture in contemporary art but also showcases the art practice as a unique thinking strategy in the creation of sensations.



Joko Avianto, “*Root*,” (2015), Exhibition: ROOTS: Indonesian Contemporary Art, Frankfurter Kunstverein – Frankfurt, Germany

Twistifying

Deleuze-Guattari said that “we paint, sculpt, compose, and write sensations⁴⁷.” As percepts, sensations are no longer perceptions that merely refer to the form of the object being represented as a reference, but they grow into something that appears as themselves. The bamboo material becomes its unique self. Through the use of material, the goal of art is to apprehend percept from perception, from objects, and from the way we feel about subjects. Art also captures affect from affection as a transitional state that is constantly moving from one state to another. The material used in art helps to extract blocks of sensation and refines them into pure sensation. To achieve this, a method is needed, and each artist will do it differently. Each artist will face different types of materials, and even the development of science and technology has provided unlimited choices for art. In the practice of creating visual art, when the state of the

material is considered to have ended and has transformed into a medium, that is where sensation begins.

The first affect that emerges is in the encounter between artists and the materials they use to their art. For Avianto, bamboo material seemed to be waiting for him to rediscover it. Avianto recognizes bamboo in his way until he finds a unique way to treat it. Avianto makes cuts and slits between the sections of bamboo to create flexibility in the bamboo sections so that each section becomes 'individuated' - although bamboo itself generally has the flexibility to bounce freely. The individuation of each section of bamboo goes beyond its ability to bounce to the limits of shifting, rotating, or folding; Avianto plays by twisting the direction of the natural flexibility of the bamboo fibres, allowing him to bend and shape them. Joko Avianto created a working method called 'twistifying' bamboo material into a unique, individuated sensation of bamboo affect. As an affect, a work of visual art "sticks just as well to the subjectivity of the one who is its utterer as it does to the one who is its addressee⁴⁸." According to Guattari, affect is even a "pre-personal category" that has no discursive limits and lives beyond various boundaries.

The affect is a sensory becoming and such sensory is seized in the problem of expression. A monument of sensation, or a work of art, not only actualizes a virtual event but also combines and contains the virtual within it. The work of art as a monument of sensation gives body to the virtual, a life, or a universe⁴⁹. Affect and percept go beyond the changes in the affection and perception of our life experience, both are non-human states of our being. Affect is not a crossing from one state of life to another, but rather towards a non-human becoming of human beings. Becoming, therefore, is not an imitation or a sympathetic experience, nor an imaginary identification. Although there is a resemblance to the previous state, becoming is a state that contains the old state seen at a distance by the new state, and both are seen at the same time. The affect of bamboo from the twistifying method carried out by Avianto not only reminds us who are living in the world (with our experience of bamboo stems and trees) but also affirms the possibility of our state of being with the world. We feel the state and changes of bamboo material as well as the changing world while we are part of that change.

Affect is a very specific feeling and only exists as sensation. Affect is a zone that cannot be determined or distinguished beforehand, and it continues to exist endlessly. Avianto's twistifying method brings to life the folds of the bamboo stalks, intertwined like a ripple of movement, each folded part then re-emerges as a new part, all parts moving in unison, seemingly moving towards an indeterminate direction. We see the overall shape as a composition of the movement of bamboo stalks that appear and disappear. This composition is essentially virtual, composing a form from the formless (the unform); becoming a kind of virtual whole as a transformational state or a transitional flow from the actual three-dimensional form. This composition moves into existence like a new "aura" of the environment and the concealment of something that then appears actual⁵⁰.

Forming

Deleuze-Guattari believes that composition is the only definition of art; composition is an aesthetic gatekeeper and what is not composed is not a work of art. However, it is important to distinguish between a technical composition that explains the arrangement of materials or elements used in the field of science, and an aesthetic composition that works for the arrangement of sensations. Only aesthetic composition is truly worthy of being called composition, and a work of art is never produced solely or for the sake of technical composition decisions⁵¹. A composition or form of a work of art cannot be separated from how the work is treated. As Massumi explains, "The artist's activity does not stand outside its 'object' and operate upon it, as some alien matter⁵²". This is what is interesting about Avianto's three-dimensional work because the existence of the work is formed by the way the bamboo material is treated. The knots, clusters, folds, and bends, as well as the flow or stoppage of the bamboo stems that Avianto composes become a form of unity.

Avianto's actions in shaping the work are in line with his previous experience in finding affect and perception in bamboo as a medium. The form of the works is a combination of small shapes that are woven together into a composition. The compositional form arises from direct

experience and experimentation through the act of working. Such actions require experience involving creative action, leaving behind various previous failures until they can become an intensive process that modulates an actual emergence. Creative practice is not understood only as a way to manipulate various independent and separate variables; creative practice brings these singular variations and makes them an integral part, as an expression of revelation or unfolding expression⁵³.

The form we see in Avianto's works is not a closed state, even though it appears as a movement that closes inward; essentially, the form or composition is open or opens up the process of becoming. The composition of the work maintains, but it is not about bamboo material as a *de facto* state of the work, but rather about the state that creates a sense of satisfaction. This feeling is percept and affect, which, *de jure*, maintain themselves. Unlike monumental statues made of copper and metal, his works are supported by bamboo, which is relatively fragile and unable to last. Avianto understands that bamboo is not a permanent material like copper and metal, but he chooses it because the material can create a special sensation that cannot be achieved with metal. Bamboo, as a medium, still has a sensation that gives it strength to exist and maintain itself in its infinity in line with the duration of the strength of the supporting bamboo material⁵⁴.

Installing

The two three-dimensional works of Joko Avianto exhibited in different places in Japan and Germany display different installation methods. The artwork titled "*The Border between good and evil is terribly frizzy*" (2017) was exhibited as part of the Yokohama Triennale – International Exhibition of Contemporary Art in Yokohama, Japan. It was installed in the middle of a room, standing upright with a large size that surpasses human scale. Meanwhile, the artwork "*Rool*" (2015) was installed outdoors, attached to the outer wall of the architectural gallery building. It was part of the "*ROOTS: Indonesian Contemporary Art*" exhibition held at the Frankfurter Kunstverein in Frankfurt, Germany. Both works use bamboo as their material and are created through the twistifying working method. They

both emphasize the process of creation as an experience that transforms perception into percept and affection into affect. Exclusively, the two works emphasize that art is not first and foremost about the object; on the very contrary, it underlines the process of art-making to become a creative event. This leads to a creative phase that eventually brings forth an actual moment⁵⁵. It is this very moment that enables imagery to let the medium present itself.

In the process of creating sensations, the works exhibited in different places stand-alone, upright as monuments of sensation. As an actual moment, each work is in a different creative situation. *“The Border between good and evil is terribly frizzly”* is an event in which the public experience is in a state of closeness, surrounding its existence, and even one can be under the shade of the work, feeling together the sensations of the folds of the bamboo medium. *“Root,”* on the other hand, is an event related to the architectural structure of the building, where the public is already familiar with its characteristics. The artwork transforms the public’s perception of the historic Frankfurter Kunstverein building into a different percept state and creates an affect instead of the affection of the original and common architectural state. To excite the sensation will always mean to open, to transform, to empty, and then to direct the state of perception and affection into the power of sensation, making it an experience of percept and affect found through the actual art medium events. In Avianto’s two works, we can no longer distinguish whether the form as a whole is created by the flow of folds of the shapes that make it up or vice versa. Sensation is a unity of experience in which the overall structure and its parts cannot be separated. This unity approaches the understanding of ethics or ethical attitudes.

Deleuze, grounding his philosophical research on Spinoza, found that the science of affect could be treated as ethics. Here, the understanding of ethics is an organization of a person’s world with which joyful encounters can be produced, or an organization of affects that assumes the role of “joy-increasing type,” with which we enhance our potential to do better things in the world. In this context, the practice of visual art is a kind of ethics or ethico-aesthetics; an organization of productive encounters through art⁵⁶. The public’s encounter with the affect organization provided by the two exhibitions, *“The Border between good and evil is terribly frizzly”* and

“*Root*”, generates excitement that is incited by the material and medium of bamboo. For the German public who is not familiar with it, the encounter creates new expectations of the warmth and flexibility value of bamboo stalks. For the Japanese public who lives close to it, the encounter creates a joyful distance, resulting in a way to separate the feeling of familiarity and rediscover the possibilities of the flexibility of the bamboo medium.

Art and Ethico-aesthetics

According to Deleuze, what should be taken as the general introduction is **Art** (with a capital ‘A’) as the art of ethics itself, that is, the way of organizing ethical encounters, composing actual relations, constructing forces, and experiencing the creative mapping of that experience⁵⁷. Deleuze explains that “the important thing is to understand life, each living individuality, not as a form, or of a development of form, but as a complex relation between differential velocities, between deceleration and acceleration of particles. A composition of speeds and slowness on a plane of immanence⁵⁸”. The two Joko Avianto’s three-dimensional works show the vital organization of the whole with its units, not to become a predictable form development, but to be in a specific experiential flow in each part, ultimately forming a complex unity.

Life itself creates various zones where each living being revolves around it, and only art can penetrate and reach the inner core of life by being bold enough to act as a co-creator. When the moment of transition from material to medium occurs until it eventually changes into sensation, art itself has lived in an uncertain zone⁵⁹. Art, however, ensures the state of life through one’s sensory experience. The problematic aspect of affect, together with the sensory, results in what Felix Guattari calls a “polyphonic and heterogenetic comprehension of subjectivity⁶⁰.” This explains the process of ‘subjectivation’, the continuous emergence of new affectual individuation. This is not to produce a new ‘I’ not as a subjective reference point, but rather the ‘I’ as part of a wider ontological process of creation or part of the ethico-aesthetics paradigm. This paradigm is both ethical and aesthetic because it declares an important ethical choice and its increasingly critical state: ‘either we objectify, we reify, we ‘scientifize’ subjectivity or else we attempt to seize it in its dimension of processual creativity⁶¹.’

Art practice is often considered to be the ‘property’ of the artist and is only determined by the artist’s intention. In reality, the artist eventually submits to the fact that each party enjoying their work can create affect and percept in different ways. The ethico-aesthetics paradigm avoids ways of maintaining the ‘ownership’ of a creation process and instead places it in a broader and wider creative framework. Every art practice is, actually, a way of forming art as a monument of sensation: a series of processes of transition from perception to percept and affection to affect that transcends individuals, even when it comes to the ‘non-human’ of the human state. The ethico-aesthetics paradigm eliminates the ‘I’ and turns it into the becoming of the ‘I’, or continuous subjectivation. The art practice explains that subjectivation is a creative process of self-organization (or self-organization of affect beyond the ‘self’) that composes a continuous state of various affect variants. Subjectivation is a fundamental aesthetic process in how one constitutes their experience of a work of art⁶².

In short, the sensation cannot occupy a specific place or state without then making it extensive – expanding it beyond the possibilities commonly found on earth and freeing all sensations from conceptual frameworks. In that sensation, everything has the potential to become equally boundless. It is possible that what makes art special is its action of transcending the limited to rediscover or restore the unbounded. Such art practice is a kind of crossing to bring ourselves much closer to the unlimited or the Real.

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- 27 O’Sullivan, *op. cit.*, 51 .
- 28 Tedjoworo, *op. cit.*, 147.
- 29 Deleuze & Guattari, *WP*, *op. cit.*, 177.
- 30 *Ibid.*, 169.
- 31 Zepke, *op. cit.*, 179.
- 32 *Ibid.*, 5.
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