

ANUSAPATI

PLANTSCAPE



24 MARCH — 14 APRIL 2018



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ANUSAPATI
"PLANTSCAPE"
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ROH PROJECTS

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ON THE COVER AND THIS SPREAD:
Details from PlantScape
2018
Tree Roots and Electroplated Leaves
Variable Dimensions

PERASAAN-PERASAAN YANG DIBANGUN OLEH INGATAN-INGATAN

— Grace Samboh

Sepanjang perjalanan artistiknya, Anusapati bekerja dengan kayu dan dengan hal-hal di seputar perkayuan. Seumur hidup Indonesia, pengembangan dan pembangunan berpusat di Jakarta dan sekitarnya, baik yang kemudian diklaim sebagai Jakarta maupun kota-kota satelitnya. Kedua hal ini seolah tidak berhubungan satu sama lain, tetapi bisa jadi analogus.

Anusapati menghabiskan sebagian masa kecilnya di sebuah daerah yang tak jauh dari ujung dunia. Ia dan teman-teman kecilnya kerap saling mengingatkan, "Awas, jangan main sampai ke ujung dunia!" Seolah dekat sekali ujung dunia itu! Ternyata, yang mereka maksud ujung dunia waktu itu adalah sehampan pohon karet yang (seolah) tiada berujung di dekat permukiman mereka. Daerah itupun masih disebut Kebun Karet sampai sekarang. Semenjak zaman penjajahan Belanda, perkebunan karet memang bisa sampai ratusan hektar luasnya di seputar Batavia. Kebijakan industrialisasi Orde Baru adalah tonggak perubahan tata guna lahan ini. Apalagi desa-desa yang terletak di pinggir Jakarta. Semenjak awal 1970-an, pembangunan pabrik-pabrik dan perubahan menuju kawasan industri terjadi hampir serempak di pinggiran Jakarta. Sekarang, ruang hidup masa kecil Anusapati itu sudah tidak ada lagi. Pohon-pohon karet telah berganti menjadi jalan tol Jagorawi, mal, pabrik garmen, perumahan, bumi perkemahan, dlsb.

"Ingatan adalah sumber inspirasi, penjelasan, dan pengetahuan,"¹ kata Anusapati. Ada jenjang dan dramatisasi yang diperlukan dalam runutan berpikir itu. Ingatan adalah kekuatan pikiran untuk mereproduksi perasaan atau kesan berdasarkan sesuatu yang pernah dialami. Sementara kenangan adalah munculnya lagi pikiran yang pernah ada karena dipicu oleh sesuatu yang di luar diri. "Ingatan, lho, bukan kenangan," lanjutnya.

Sejumlah pohon lain juga ada di hampir setiap halaman kawan kecilnya, di sekitar rumahnya itu; misalnya pohon jengkol, kecap, jambu mete, dan durian. Buah dari pohon-pohon ini bisa dimakan begitu saja ataupun diolah menjadi masakan. Anusapati masih ingat betul bagaimana jajaran pohonnya, karakter daunnya, sampai dengan bentuk buah dan bijinya. Sekarang ini, pohon-pohon ini tak ada lagi di kawasan perkotaan manapun. Bahkan tukang tanaman pun tak menjualnya lagi. Apa yang Anda lihat di ruang pameran kedua didapatkan Anusapati dari sumber-sumber yang cenderung acak. Ranting, daun, dan buah jengkol didapatnya dari salah seorang muridnya yang mengaku masih mengenal pohon itu karena ada di halaman rumahnya di Purbalingga. Sementara kecap didapatkannya di Serang, dari seorang mahasiswa lain yang bisa mendeskripsikan karakter buah dan bijinya sesuai dengan ingatannya.

Pernyataan Anusapati mengenai ingatan tadi mengingatkan saya pada catatan Jose Luis Borges mengenai bagaimana Plato 'menghidupkan kembali' gurunya, Socrates. Ingatan Plato akan Socrates adalah suka, duka, sekaligus kerinduannya. Ia sama sekali tidak berusaha mengenang Socrates melalu benda-benda ataupun naskah-naskah. Menurut Borges, Plato menggunakan ingatannya justru untuk menjadi sumber penghidupan, bukan untuk berkubang dalam duka. Plato menggunakan ingatannya sebagai landasan untuk terus menerus memaknai ulang sekaligus memberikan makna baru akan pikiran-pikiran Socrates.

THESE FEELINGS THAT ARE BUILT BY MEMORIES

All throughout his artistic journey, Anusapati has worked with wood and everything else surrounding wood. As far as the history of Indonesia goes, establishment and development have been centered in Jakarta and its surroundings, both the areas that are then claimed as Jakarta and its satellite cities. These two things don't seem related to one another but they can be analogus.

Anusapati spent his childhood in an area not too far from an edge of the world. With his childhood friends, they would remind each other, "Watch out, don't play to the end of the world!" As if the end of the world was just around the corner! It turns out that the end of the world was a phrase that pointed at the endless rubber trees near their residence. The plantation was so big that the rubber trees seemed to be endless. Until now, the area is aptly named Kebun Karet (Rubber Garden). Since the Dutch colonial era, rubber plantation areas can indeed be up to hundreds of hectares around Batavia. The New Order's industrialization policy was a milestone for the changes of this land's usage. Especially in villages located on the edges of Jakarta. Since the early 70s, the construction of factories and the changes gearing towards industrial zones occurred almost simultaneously on the outskirts of Jakarta. Today, Anusapati's childhood area no longer exists. The endless rubber trees have become Jagorawi toll road, malls, garment factories, houses, camping grounds, etc.

"Memories are a source of inspiration, explanation and knowledge,"¹ Anusapati said. Levels and dramatizations are a requirement in this thinking sequence. Memory is the mind's ability to reproduce feelings or impressions based on something that has been experienced. While remembrance is the reappearance of a thought that existed once because it was triggered by something outside of the self. "Memories, yeah, not remembrances." He continued.

There were also a number of other trees in almost every one of his childhood friends' gardens such as jengkol, santol, cashew, and durian. All the fruits from these trees can be eaten straight away or processed through cooking. Anusapati still remembers clearly the ranks of the trees, the character of the leaves, even the shape of the fruits and seeds. Nowadays, these trees are no longer around in urban areas. Plant shops no longer sell them. What you see in the second exhibition room is obtained from a rather random sources. One from a student of his who claimed that he is familiar with the jengkol twigs, fruit and tree because he has one in his house in Purbalingga. And another one from his student whose hometown is in Serang could describe the character of the fruit and seed the same way he'd remembered it.

Anusapati's statement reminds me of Jose Luis Borges' account of Plato 'reviving' his teacher Socrates. Plato's memories of Socrates were of his joy, sorrow and sense of longing. He did not attempt to remember Socrates through objects or manuscripts at all. According to Borges, Plato did not use his memories to wallow in sorrow, but rather as a source of life. Plato used his memory as a foundation to continually reinterpret and give new meaning to Socrates' thoughts.

Plato pernah membicarakan buku dengan nada yang agak merendahkan:

“Apa itu buku? Seperti halnya gambar, buku juga mencoba jadi makhluk hidup; padahal apabila kita bertanya pada si buku, ia tak bisa menjawab. Maka dari itu, kita juga tahu bahwa buku itu mati.” Supaya buku bisa menjadi sesuatu yang hidup, dengan bahagiannya ia menciptakan percakapan-percakapan Platonik yang semacam meramalkan rasa penasaran, keraguan, dan pertanyaan pembacanya. Kita juga bisa bilang bahwa Plato sudah lama merindukan Socrates. Setelah kematian Socrates, ia sering berkata pada dirinya sendiri, “Hm, kira-kira apa pendapat Socrates mengenai keraguanku yang ini? Atau pikiranku yang kemarin?” Akhirnya, supaya ia bisa mendengar lagi suara sang guru yang dicintainya, ia menuliskan jawaban-jawaban sang guru. Dalam ragam percakapan ini, Socrates adalah pembela kebenaran. Terkadang, kita bisa melihat bagaimana perasaan Socrates didramatisasi. Seringkali tak ada kesimpulan dalam percakapan-percakapan ini sebab Plato menulis sembari berpikir; jadi, ia sendiri tidak tahu kapan ia akan sampai pada halaman terakhir. Ia membiarkan pikirannya menjadir liar, sekaligus mendramatisasi pikiran itu bagi banyak orang. Saya pikir, tujuan utamanya adalah untuk menciptakan perasaan bahwa Socrates masih bersamanya, dan tidak pernah meminum racun sialan itu.²

Dalam kekaryaannya, Anusapati menggunakan kayu-kayu bekas pakai atau kayu-kayu yang dalam ambang kematian. Tidak ada dari kayu-kayu ini yang dibunuh semata untuk kekaryaannya. Karya-karya Anusapati selalu hadir dengan kesan yang mendalam dan pandangan yang mencerahkan. Hal ini berasal dari pemikiran dan kepekaan seorang seniman mengenai bentuk dan material yang digunakan yang bersumber dari lingkungan sehari-hari.³ Dengan sadar, Anusapati hanya memanfaatkan potongan-potongan kayu sisa orang lain atau limbah kayu dari pohon yang telah mati, telah rubuh, atau hendak ditebang orang.

Akar-akar yang bergelayut di atap ruang pameran kali ini adalah pohon-pohon cendana India. Tak jelas apa nama latin dari pohon ini. Walaupun nama, bau, dan nasibnya mirip, sesungguhnya mereka tidak berasal dari keluarga yang sama dengan pohon cendana. Damar pohon cendana India ini konon juga bisa diolah menjadi atsiri; dengan kualitas yang lebih rendah, maka juga lebih murah. Di dekat studio Anusapati, adalah sebuah areal perkebunan kecil yang seluruhnya berisi pohon cendana India ini. Si pemilik kebun ternyata dibohongi oleh sebuah perusahaan yang mengaku akan menjadi pembeli tunggal damar pohon ini. Setelah dua tahun, si calon pembeli damar pohon tsb tak bisa dihubungi, pemilik perkebunan ini pun putus asa. Perlahan, ia mulai menebangi pohon cendana India ini supaya bisa menjual lahannya. Anusapati membeli pohon-pohon ini. Walaupun ia tahu persis kalau kayu itu tak akan bisa bertahan lama. Ia memberi mereka kesempatan terakhir untuk berfungsi dalam dunia ini. Akar dan kayu cendana India inilah yang bisa Anda saksikan di seluruh ruang pameran pertama. Anusapati memberikan kesempatan bagi kayu-kayu ini untuk pernah menjadi indah. Untuk mengakhiri perjalanannya sebagai sesuatu yang indah.

Preservasi maupun konservasi bukanlah bagian dari cara berpikir (dan berkarya) Anusapati. Tak ada juga kehendaknya untuk menghadirkan penilaian, apalagi penuduhan, akan perilaku manusia terhadap kayu-kayu dan pepohonan tsb, apalagi terhadap alam secara umum. Anusapati sedang menyodorkan realita siklus kehidupan, di mana yang tidak dibutuhkan akan hilang selamanya. Tak ada sama sekali upaya representasional dalam karya Anusapati kali ini. Kayu-kayu pohon cendana India itu hadir apa adanya, sementara ranting-ranting serta bebuahan lainnya ‘dimumifikasi’. Ya, mumifikasi. Para tembaga, perunggu, perak, ataupun emas itu benar-benar menyimpan ranting,

In one of the dialogues of Plato, he speaks about books in a rather disparaging way:

“What is a book? A book seems, like a picture, to be a living being; and yet if we ask it something, it does not answer. Then we see that it is dead.” In order to make the book into a living thing, he invented—happily for us—the Platonic dialogue, which forestalls the reader’s doubts and questions. But we might say also that Plato was wistful about Socrates. After Socrates’ death, he would say to himself, “Now, what would Socrates have said about this particular doubt of mine?” And then, in order to hear once again the voice of the master he loved, he wrote the dialogues. In some of these dialogues, Socrates stands for the truth. In others, Plato has dramatized his many moods. And some of those dialogues come to no conclusion whatever, because Plato was thinking as he wrote them; he did not know the last page when he wrote the first. He was letting his mind wander, and he was dramatizing that mind into many people. I suppose his chief aim was the illusion that, despite the fact that Socrates had drunk the hemlock, Socrates was still with him.²

The woods in Anusapati’s work are used wood or from trees on the brink of death. None of these trees were killed to be in one of Anusapati’s artworks. Anusapati’s works always present deep impressions and enlightening views. This is derived from the thinking and sensitivity of an artists regarding shapes and materials used that come from everyday environments.³ Consciously, Anusapati only uses someone else’s leftover pieces of wood or wood waste from trees that were dead, have fallen or were about to be cut down.

This time, the roots that hang from the exhibition room are Indian sandalwood. It is not clear what is this tree’s latin name. Although the name, smell and fate are similar, they’re not from the same family as the sandalwood tree. The resins of this Indian sandalwood can also be processed into essential oil; with a lower quality therefore cheaper prices. Nearby Anusapati’s studio, there is a small plantation area consisting entirely of these Indian sandalwood trees. The owner of this plantation was lied to by a company who claimed they were going to be the sole purchaser of the trees resin. After two years however, the prospective buyer for the resin could not be reached and he grew desperate. The whole Indian sandalwood plantation was slowly cut down so he could sell the land. Thus, Anusapati bought these trees. Even though he knew that these woods are not going to last for long. He gave them a last chance to function in this world. These roots and woods of the sandalwood are what you can see all over the first exhibition room. Anusapati has given these woods an opportunity to be beautiful once again. To end their journey as something beautiful.

Neither preservation nor conservation are part of Anusapati’s way of thinking (and working). Nor is there any desire from him to present judgments, let alone accusations, of human behaviour towards woods and trees or nature in general. Anusapati is presenting the reality of life’s cycle, where the unneeded will be lost forever. There is no representational effort whatsoever in Anusapati’s work this time. The Indian sandalwood are presented as they are, whereas the twigs and fruits are mummified. Yes, mummified. The copper, bronze, silver and gold really contain the twigs, leaves, fruits and seeds from the trees that Anusapati wants to display. Anusapati’s childhood memories no longer belongs to him now, but to all of us who has seen it. We are not only confronted with the representation of Anusapati’s childhood memories but also with the original sources as well as the results of Anusapati processing his memories. Concretely, we are confronted with the objects within Anusapati’s memories, his feelings towards those memories, as well as the sources of the memories themselves.

² Jorge Luis Borges, 2000. “The Riddle of Poetry” dalam *This Craft of Verse (The Charles Eliot Norton Lectures 1967-1968)*. Cambridge, Massachusetts & London, England: Harvard University Press. Hal. 4-8.

³ Hendro Wiyanto, 2001. Pengantar kuratorial pameran tunggal Anusapati “Genesis” di Nadi Gallery, Jakarta, Indonesia.

² Jorge Luis Borges, 2000. “The Riddle of Poetry” in *This Craft of Verse (The Charles Eliot Norton Lectures 1967-1968)*. Cambridge, Massachusetts & London, England: Harvard University Press. Pg. 4-8.

³ Hendro Wiyanto, 2001. Curatorial introduction to Anusapati’s solo exhibition “Genesis” at Nadi Gallery, Jakarta, Indonesia.

daun, buah, dan biji dari pohon-pohon ingin dihadirkan Anusapati. Ingatan masa kecil Anusapati bukan hanya menjadi miliknya saja sekarang, tetapi juga milik kita semua yang pernah melihatnya. Kita tidak hanya berhadapan dengan representasi dari ingatan masa kecil Anusapati, tetapi juga dengan sumber aslinya sekaligus hasil olahan Anusapati akan ingatannya itu. Secara kongkret, kita dihadapkan dengan obyek dalam ingatan Anusapati, perasaannya yang lekat terhadap ingatan itu, sekaligus sumber dari ingatan itu sendiri.

Sanento Yuliman pernah berpendapat bahwa para seniman di Indonesia, dari gaya manapun (realisme sampai dengan abstrak), kerap merasa berkewajiban untuk mengungkapkan pengalaman mereka senyata-nyatanya. Hasilnya beragam mulai dari kenyataan yang diwakilkan, disarikan sampai dengan yang dihadirkan begitu saja ke dalam ruang pameran.⁴ Kongkretisme dalam khasanah praktek artistik Anusapati adalah kelanjutan dari cara berpikir Sanento Yuliman yang dipaparkannya dalam konteks Seni Rupa Baru tadi. Benda-benda yang diolah kemudian dihadirkannya dalam ruang pameran adalah produk dari ingatannya, bukan pengalamannya. Bukan kenangan, nostalgia, ataupun pengalaman masa kecilnya yang ingin ia hadirkan bagi kita semua.

Ingatannyalah yang ditawarkan pada kita semua melalui karya-karyanya. Ingatan yang menginspirasi rasa keingin-tahuannya, pencariannya, sekaligus praktek artistiknya diolahnya menjadi sebetulnya pengetahuan akan ruang, waktu, dan sepenggal kenyataan di dunia ini. Ingatan adalah kenyataan yang sudah lampau bagi Anusapati. Apa yang dihadirkannya sekarang adalah keberpihakannya pada ingatan itu sendiri, alam di sekitarnya, sekaligus keberlangsungan lingkungan hidup kita sendiri.

Kayu, beserta pepohonan dan habitatnya, bukan sekadar bahan bagi Anusapati. Kerimbunan ruang hidup masa kecilnya itu telah terus menerus menjadi alasannya untuk berkarya sekaligus gagasan utama kekaryanya. Dalam pameran ini, Anusapati menggunakan dua pendekatan untuk mengolah karyanya. Yang pertama cenderung empirik, spasial, dan intuitif. Sementara yang kedua lebih hipotetik, serebral, dan rasional. Kedua hal ini harafiah dalam khasanah berpikir Anusapati dan manifestasinya pun terbagi ke dalam dua ruangan. Dalam khasanah praktek artistik Anusapati, kedua ruang pameran ini mewakili dua jenis poetika yang berbeda. Ruang pertama dibangunnya untuk menggugah perasaan-perasaan dan emosi kita. Sementara ruang yang kedua dibangunnya untuk menggelitik intelektualitas kita mengenai benda-benda yang dihadirkannya. Ruang pertama menggugah rasa, sementara ruang kedua meyakinkan Anda akan perasaan-perasaan Anda sendiri.

Selamat datang di 'ujung dunia'!

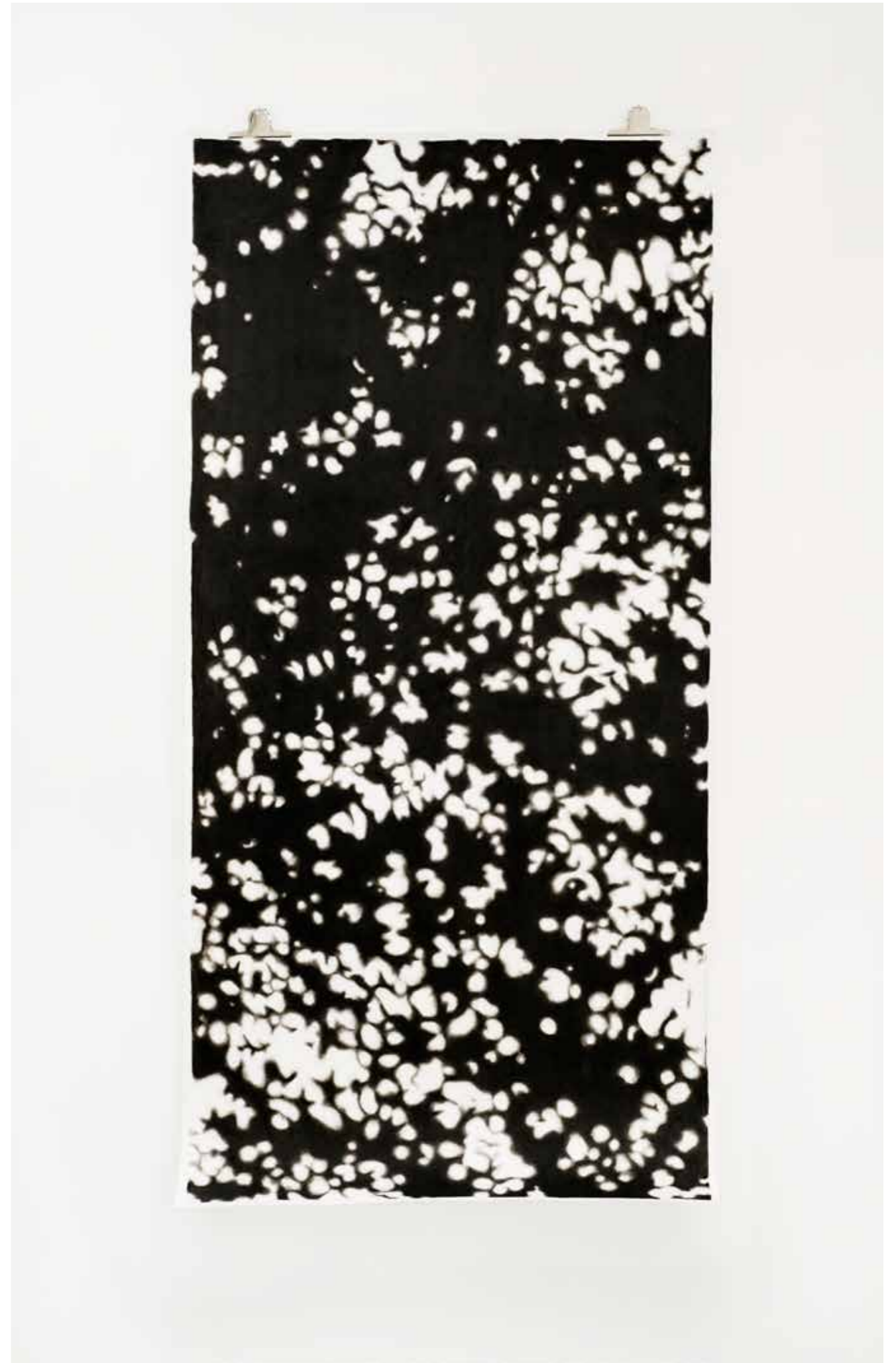
Sanento Yuliman argues that artists in Indonesia, of any style (from realism to abstract), feel obliged to express their experience as real as it can be. The results range from representational, abstraction, to found objects presented as they are in the exhibition room.⁴ The concretism in Anusapati's artistic practice is a continuation of Sanento Yuliman's way of thinking that he has laid out in the context of Seni Rupa Baru (Indonesia's New Art Movement). He would process these objects and then exhibit them in spaces as the products of his memories, not his experiences. He doesn't want to present us with his remembrance, nostalgia or childhood experience.

It is his memories that he is offering to us all through his artwork. The memories that inspire his curiosity, his quest, as well as his artistic practices are cultivated into the form of knowledge of space, time and a piece of reality in this world. For Anusapati, memories are realities from the past. What he offers us is his stance to these memories, the nature surrounding it, as well as our current ecosystem.

Wood, along with the trees and its habitat, are not mere materials for Anusapati. The greeneries from his childhood times has given him the reason to make art, and it also has become the main source of ideas for him. In this exhibition, Anusapati uses two approaches to cultivate his artwork. The first tends to be empirical, spatial and intuitive. While the second is more hypothetical, cerebral and rational. Both of them are literal in Anusapati's collection of thoughts and his manifestation are thusly divided into two rooms. In Anusapati's artistic practices, these two exhibition rooms represent two different types of poetics. He built the first room to invoke our feelings and emotions. Whereas the second room was built to tickle our intellectual with regards to the objects he has presented. The first room intrigues you, while the second room assures you of your own feelings.

Welcome to the 'end of the world'!





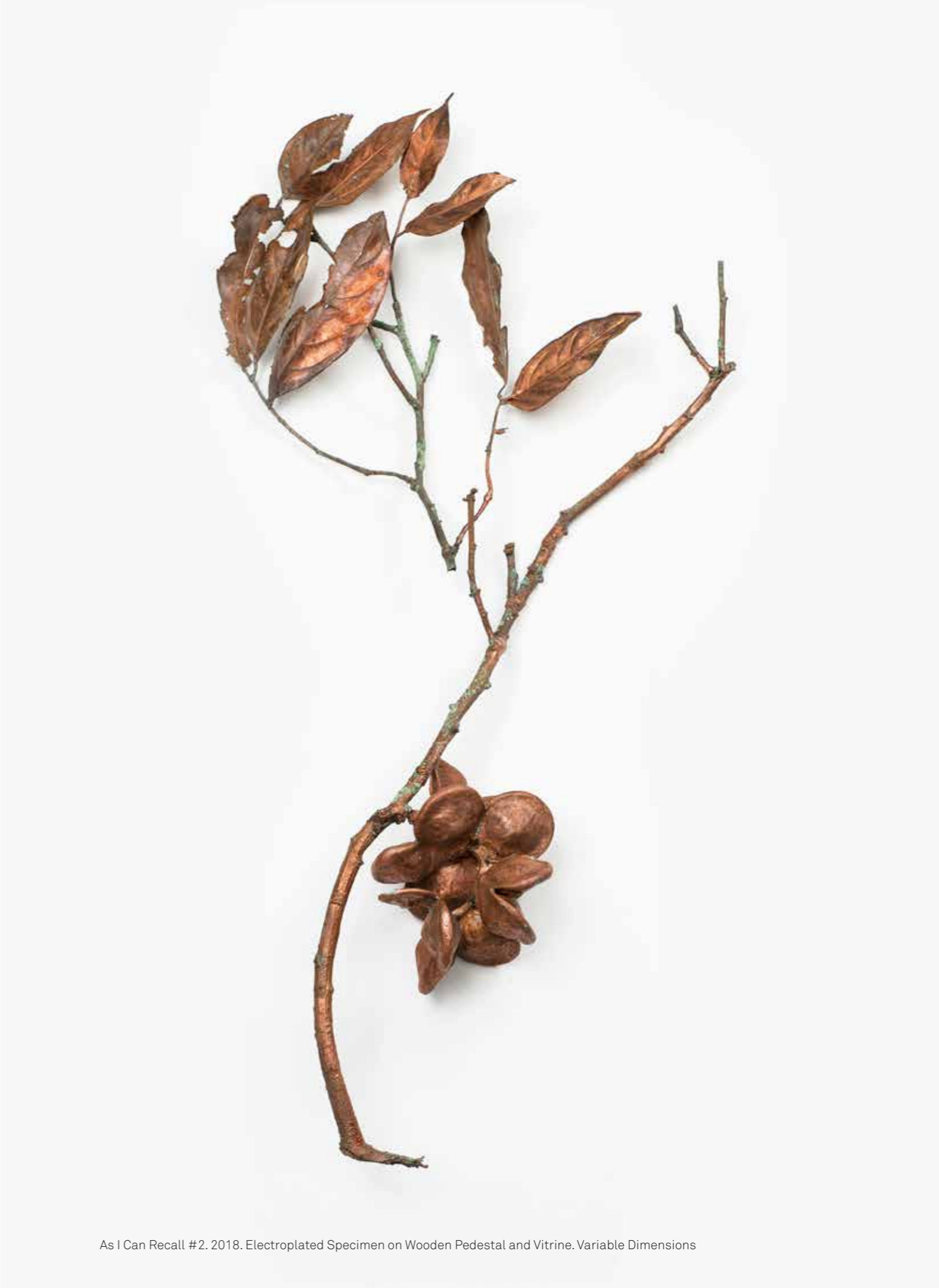
Seri Kebon Karet #4. 2018. Charcoal on Paper. 244 x 122 cm



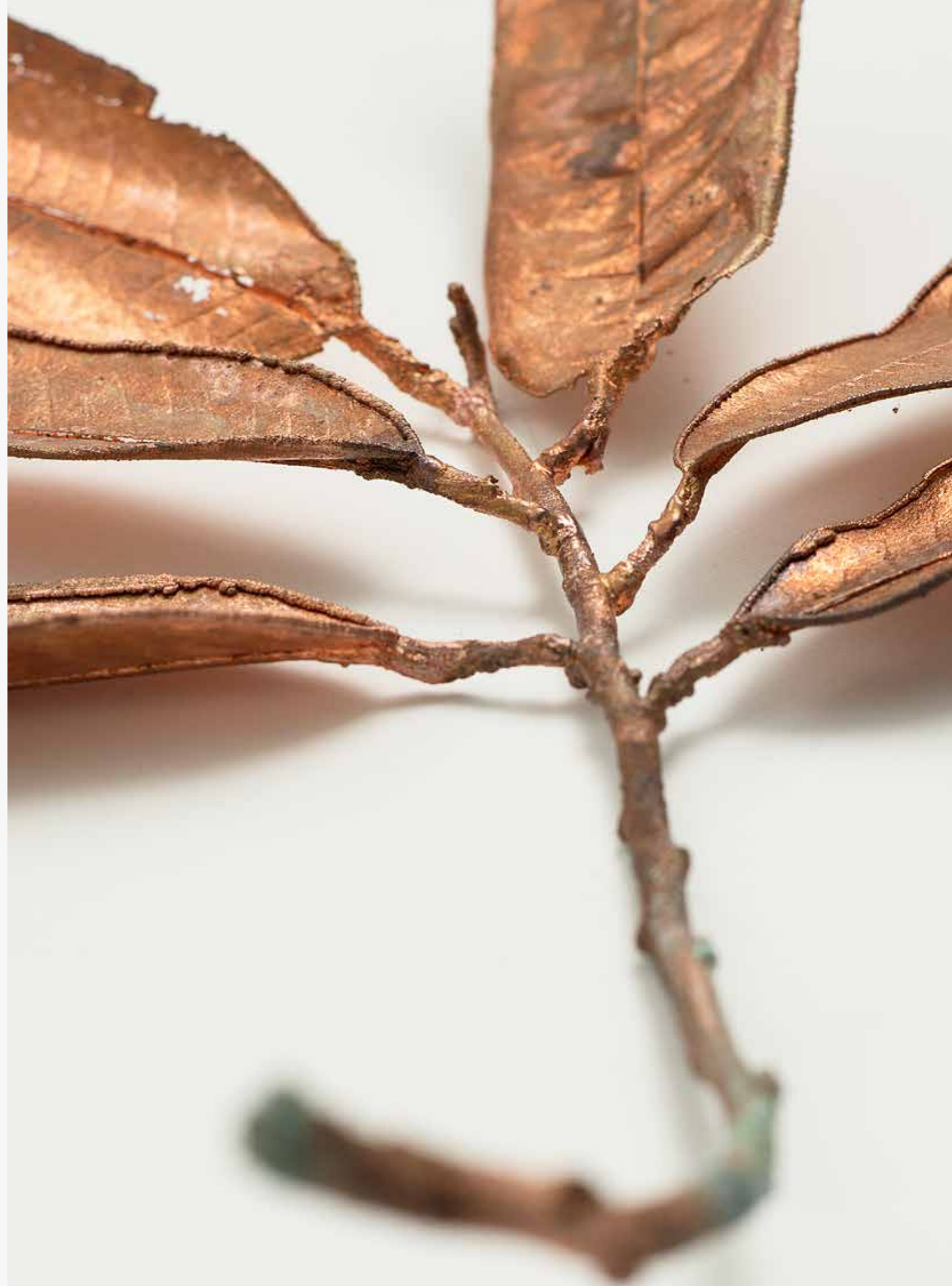
Shadow #10. 2012. Charcoal on Paper. 300 x 150 cm



As I Can Recall #1. 2018. Electroplated Specimen on Wooden Pedestal and Vitrine. Variable Dimensions



As I Can Recall #2. 2018. Electroplated Specimen on Wooden Pedestal and Vitrine. Variable Dimensions





As I Can Recall #4. 2018. Electroplated Specimen on Wooden Pedestal and Vitrine. Variable Dimensions



As I Can Recall #5. 2018. Electroplated Specimen on Wooden Pedestal and Vitrine. Variable Dimensions



ANUSAPATI

Anusapati was born in Surakarta, Central Java, in September 1957. He completed his studies at ASRI Yogyakarta in 1983, and at the School of Art and Design, Pratt Institute, New York, USA (1990). Currently, he lectures at the Faculty of Art, Indonesian Art Institute (ISI) Yogyakarta. He works extensively using bamboo and wood (especially teak wood), as the manifestation of his nature-abiding attitude—in addition to working with bronze, found objects, and creating installation works. His sculptures are built out of objects from daily life, such as the traditional slit drum (kentongan), boats, traditional chignons (konde), etc, which gain new volumes and forms that liberate.

His works have been shown not just in Indonesia, but also in the US, in Europe, Australia, and Japan. For instance, his solo exhibition for the MFA Thesis Exhibition, Pratt Institute, New York, USA (1990); “Reconstruction”, at the Kitamoto Cultural Center Gallery, Saitama, Japan (1997), and “The Story of Tree”, Mon Décor Gallery, Jakarta (2008). His works have been included in a number of group shows, such as: “the 9th Jakarta Art Biennale”, Taman Ismail Marzuki, Jakarta; and “India Triennale VIII”; as well as “The Sculpture Survey 1”, Gomboc Galleries, Australia (2000); and “Ekspansi” (Expansion), Indonesian National Gallery, Jakarta (2011). In addition, he also participated in an artists’ residency and workshop program in Australia (2001), as well as symposiums in the Philippines (1994) and Taiwan (2005).

His works have been selected into the collections of a number of galleries and museums, including the Indonesian National Gallery, Jakarta; Langgeng Gallery, Magelang; Singapore Art Museum, Singapore; Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, Australia; and the collection of the City Government of Kitamoto-Shi, Saitama-Ken, Japan.

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