

Artist Talks, Saturday 22 February, 2015, 12 noon
INTERVIEWER: Maurice O’Riordan, Director, NCCArt

PARTICIPANTS: Sadat Laope (exhibiting artist), Amina McConvell (Administrator, NCCArt, and collaborator for Sadat’s exhibition),
an audience member

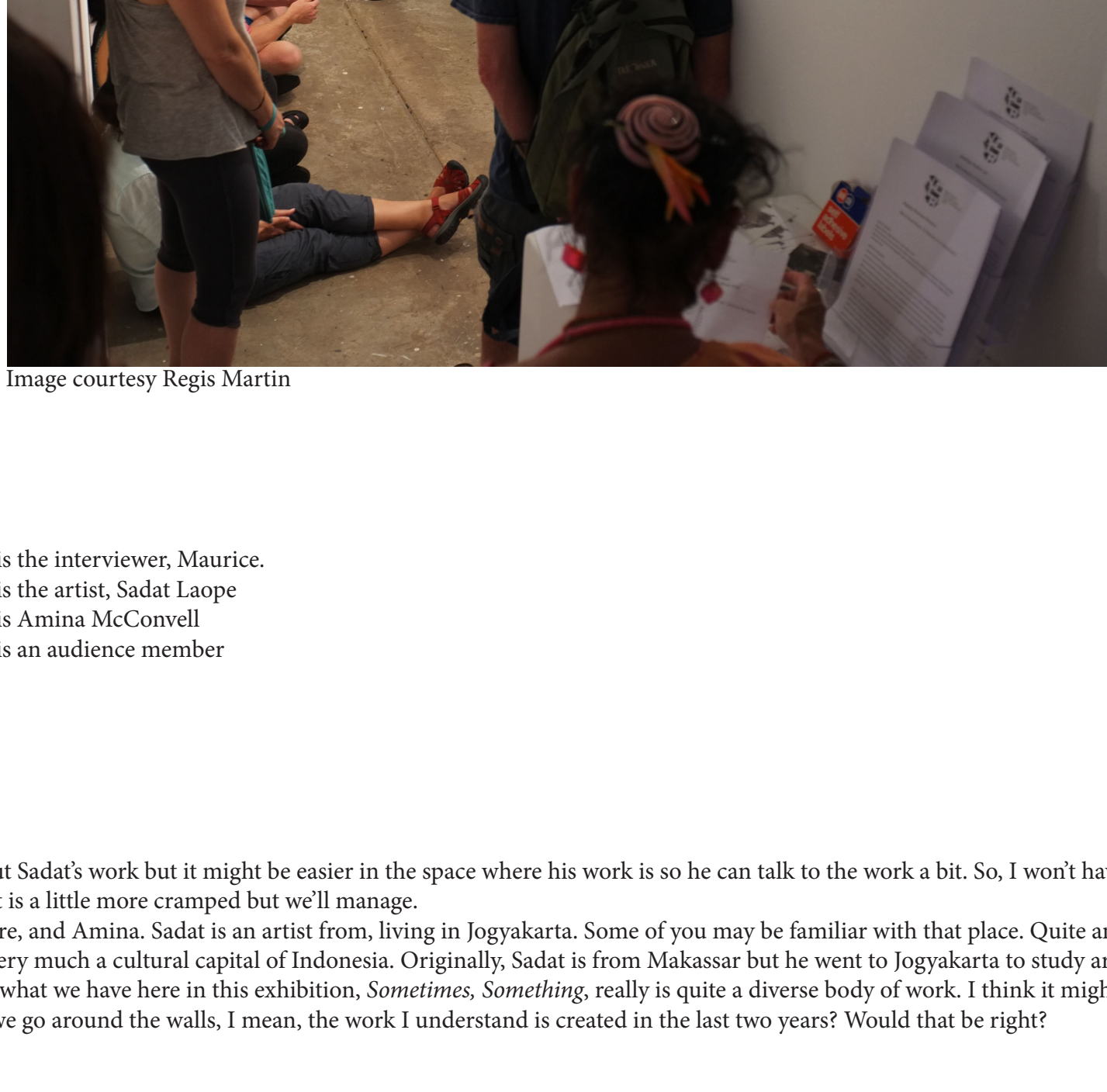


Image courtesy Regis Martin

TRANSCRIPT:

M indicates the speaker is the interviewer, Maurice.

S indicates the speaker is the artist, Sadat Laope

A indicates the speaker is Amina McConvell

AM indicates the speaker is an audience member

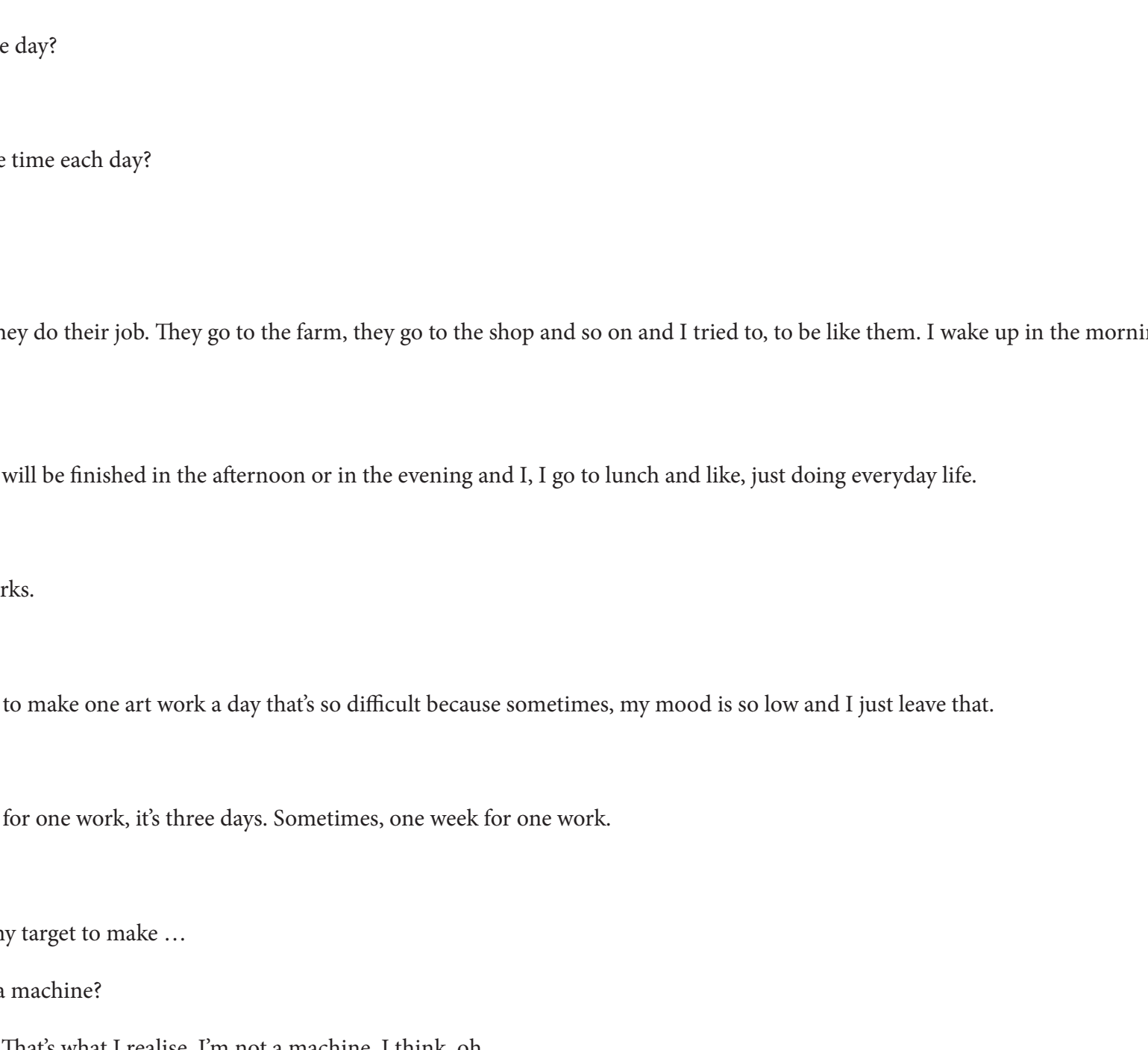
M We will now talk about Sadat’s work but it might be easier in the space where his work is so he can talk to the work a bit. So, I won’t have the mic, I’ll just wander in there and it is a little more cramped but we’ll manage.
Sadat, please come here, and Amina. Sadat is an artist from, living in Jogjakarta. Some of you may be familiar with that place. Quite an historical city in Java, a long time and still very much a cultural capital of Indonesia. Originally, Sadat is from Makassar but he went to Jogjakarta to study art at one of the main institutions there. So, what we have here in this exhibition, *Sometimes. Something.* really is quite a diverse body of work. I think it might be easier if we start, Sadat, just if you, as we go around the walls, I mean, the work I understand is created in the last two years? Would that be right?

S Last three years.

M Last three years. So, maybe, how about we start with this, to me these seem quite, like a diary in a way. How do you see this cluster? These are sixteen works created sort of independently of each other. How do you see the body of work, or, you know, what, just talk a little bit about this particular body of work.

S Okay, it’s about this work.

M Mmm, mmm.



S So first time I was thinking about how, if I make a drawing, one drawing every day.

M Mmm, mmm.

S One drawing a day.

M Mmm, mmm.

S So, I tried to.

M Any time of the day?

S Yes.

M Not exact same time each day?

S Yeah.

M No.

S Like, people, they do their job. They go to the farm, they go to the shop and so on and I tried to, to be like them. I wake up in the morning and start doing my job.

M Mmm, mmm.

S So, I hope this will be finished in the afternoon or in the evening and I, I go to lunch and like, just doing everyday life.

M Mmm, mmm.

S Making art works.

M Mmm, mmm.

S But, of course, to make one art work a day that’s so difficult because sometimes, my mood is so low and I just leave that.

M Mmm, mmm.

S So, sometimes for one work, it’s three days. Sometimes, one week for one work.

M Mmm, mmm.

S So, it’s out of my target to make ...

M So, you’re not a machine?

S Yeah, yep, yes. That’s what I realise, I’m not a machine. I think, oh ...

M Do you want to be a machine?

S I must be a fun, funny man, fun man and not forget my targets, yeah.

M Mmm, mmm.

S The important thing is the work, to work, yeah, just that.

M I mean, it seems to me that, you know, they’re quite, you know you may sit down and be, not thinking about anything in particular, just seems quite like free, what you are depicting, what you are drawing. Like, there’s no, no set theme, just whatever you might think to draw that day.

S Yeah.

M Is it like that?

S Because I live in Jogjakarta in some agricultural area.

M Yes, yes.

S They’re farming, they produce the foods and, yeah it’s so dynamic in farming, yeah.

M Mmm, mmm.

S So, every day, I look at them, I look at them going into the farmland, I look at them bring their ... their vegetable, their fruit to market so that’s interesting and, yeah, it’s like under my, under my conscious, yeah?

M Yeah, like subconscious.

S Yeah, yeah, like some interesting so ...

M Is because you, you want to see art as an everyday thing also?

S Yeah, yeah, yeah. So, I think, why must I talk about the global situation, war, everything, everything make me confused?

M Mmm, mmm.

S In my surround, there’s something interesting, something interesting in my ...

M Yes, you don’t have to go, you don’t have to look far.

S Yeah, in my studio there’s, yeah, there’s trees, there’s ...

M Mmm, mmm.

S Of course I tried to explain my imagination to others.

M Mmm, mmm, as well, yes.

S Yes, some imagination, some thinking and ...

M Do you normally show your work like this, in, like installation of drawings like that or is that a new thing?

S It is a new thing.

M Mmm, mmm.

S Before I was do this but it’s not too ... like this because it just, yeah. That was, I tried to ... because that was, I tried to, talk about the world. The world with many, many problems, many, many ... But now it’s, I think it’s a ... I think it works because I just talk about my relation, myself and my surround.

M Local world.

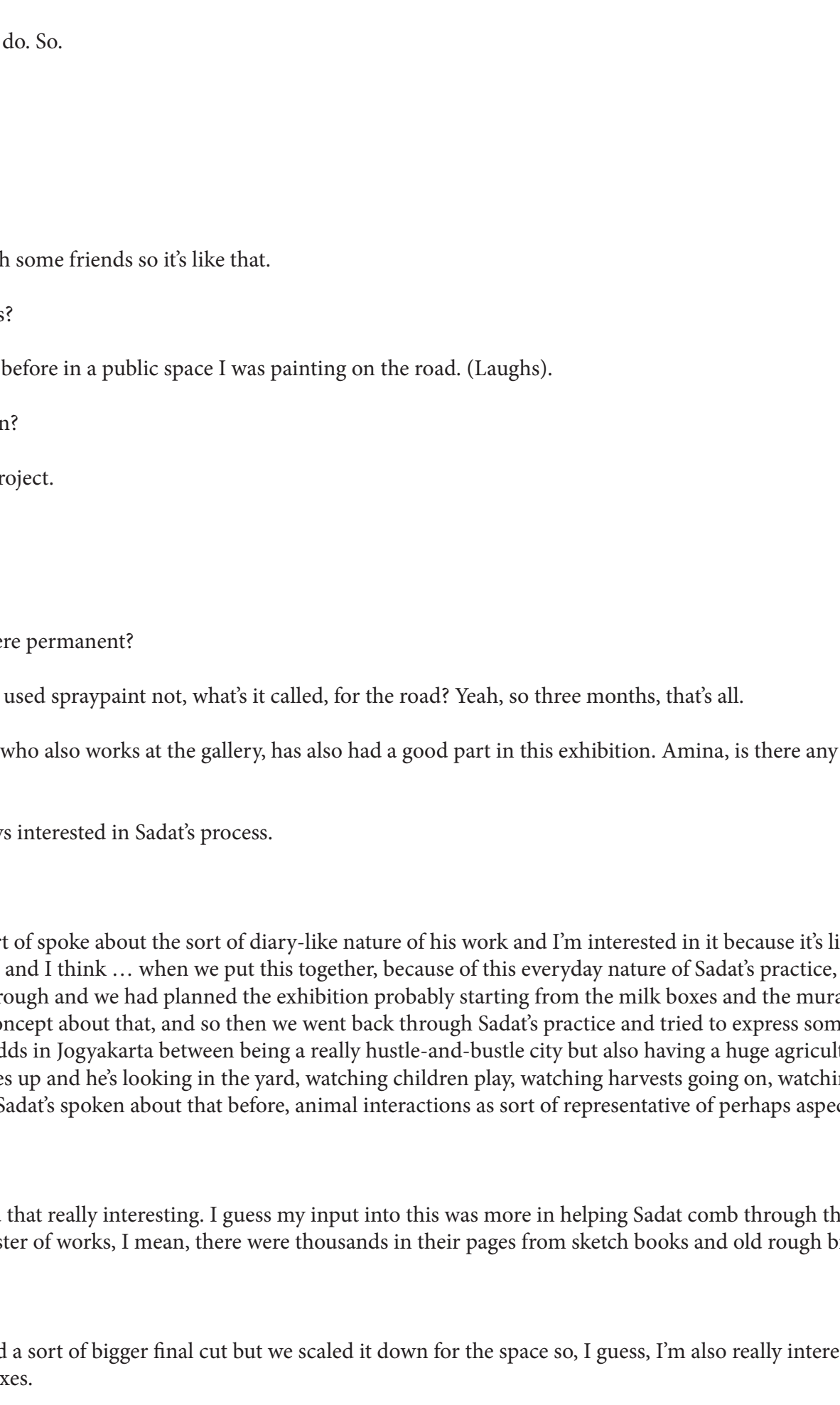
S Yeah. My connection with the chicken ...

M Well, on the chicken.

S With the God, you know.

M On the chicken.

S With the horse, yes, yes.



M Well, it’s interesting because when Matty [van Roden] saw this work, the mural, which we might talk about now, he ... because he just came back from Brazil, it was kind of quite familiar because the, you know, things like the rooster and, you know things that provide kind of important food, or even, income. You know, you can see images of them a lot like it’s almost like, you know, it’s a well understood symbol.

S Yes, yes, yes.

M So, for you, the rooster appears in some of the images as well. What is the ... how do you see the rooster?

S First, I am inspired by artists like Picasso, and Affendi from Jogjakarta.

M Mmm, mmm.

S Because they paint rooster, cocks.

M Did they, paint it very differently to you?

S That makes the question why. I don’t know, in Australia, in Indonesia.

M Mmm, mmm.

S The rooster is a symbol of man.

M Mmm, mmm.

S Symbol of man.

M Not so much about the ...

S For the brave man.

M Oh.

S Like ... ayam jantan is rooster.

M Like a ... some power as well?

S Some.

M Like rooster means strong man or something.

S Yes, strong man, yes.

M What about the agricultural connection?

S Yeah ... it’s there.

M Or is it a combination?

S (Laughs), Yeah.

M You also have done murals in Jogjakarta?

S Yes.

M Quite different? Much bigger than this? Quite different? Different subject? The murals you have done before, you’ve done murals before in Jogjakarta?

S Oh, mural is ... I make murals for industry so they pay me for painting like noodle advertising.

M Oh, so you’ve done those sort of murals as well?

S Yeah, yeah, yeah. Of course I do. So.

M Do you do that often?

S Sometimes.

M Oh, okay.

S I make mural in the shop with some friends so it’s like that.

M Do you see those as art works?

S Ah, no, just design, yeah. So, before in a public space I was painting on the road. (Laughs).

M Oh, okay: Without permission?

S On the road, that’s a public project.

M Oh, okay.

S Like a barcode system.

M Oh, okay, oh. So they stay there permanent?

S Just temporary because I just used spraypaint not, what’s it called, for the road? Yeah, so three months, that’s all.

M Oh, okay, Amina McConvell who also works at the gallery, has also had a good part in this exhibition. Amina, is there any particular points or questions you have for Sadat?

A I guess, I would say I’m always interested in Sadat’s process.

M Mmm, mmm.

A And I think we’ve already sort of spoke about the sort of diary-like nature of his work and I’m interested in it because it’s like a sort of everyday contemplation of the busyness of Jogjakarta and I think ... when we put this together, because of this everyday nature of Sadat’s practice, there was mountains and mountains of paper to sift through and we had planned the exhibition probably starting from the milk boxes and the mural element. So, this installation ... and well written, I guess, a concept about that, and so then we went back through Sadat’s practice and tried to express something about the interconnection of, like, that’s sometimes at odds in Jogjakarta between being a really hustle-and-bustle city but also having a huge agricultural presence. And, I guess, like in Sadat’s daily life, if he wakes up and he’s looking in the yard, watching children play, watching harvests going on, watching animals, just roaming the street, all the sort of ... and I think Sadat’s spoken about that before, animal interactions as sort of representative of perhaps aspects of humanity.

M Human, human society.

A Yeah, I think so, and so I find that really interesting. I guess my input into this was more in helping Sadat comb through this enormous body of work that he had and so ... like in this cluster of works, I mean, there were thousands in their pages from sketch books and old rough bits of paper.

M Mmm, mmm.

A And so, and we originally had a sort of bigger final cut but we scaled it down for the space so, I guess, I’m also really interested in the way Sadat uses old discarded things like milk boxes.

M Mmm, mmm.

A I was asking Sadat this morning why, why do you paint on milk boxes so maybe he could explain that.



M Yes.

S First, I just ... why must [I use] canvas? Why must on canvas?

M Oh.

S Yeah, because in history, it’s on wood, tempura on wood.

M On rock.

S Yeah, so if you not paint on canvas or that’s not somebody not buy that ...

M Mmm, mmm.

S Yeah? So I just think, why, why you must think about market.

A Yep.

S The important thing of art is creativity, yeah?

M Mmm.

S Make something ...

M Not thinking about the market.

S Yeah, yeah, yeah. Make something, maybe that’s just rubbish and make that some art, yeah?

A So it doesn’t meet the expectations of the art market?

S Yes. Of course, it’s in a process of, for me for, to choose the material, yeah?

M Mmm, mmm.

S Some material was, and the milk box, that is exotic for me.

M Oh, is it? Hard to find in Jogjakarta? Milk box like that? These are from Jogjakarta, the milk boxes?

A Yeah, we started having milk boxes when we were living together.

M Because, even, people don’t usually drink milk there.

S It’s like a silent sculpture, yeah. I must do something with this.

M So are these your, you’ve done other work on milk boxes like that? Or that’s a new thing for you? Or you just use other things?

S In your beringness to do drawing, I paint the milk boxes.

M Sure, sure. I guess the other thing, and we probably should wind up. I think it’s impressive to see the range of, you know, you have the different pen and ink here. You have the etching, you have the woodblock print, you have the painting here, you have the painting there so, ink works here, so I think it’s your know, a good, I guess that’s what impresses me too, the range of mediums.

S Yeah.

M But we might just ask if anyone has a question? You don’t have to but we might have one, and if you don’t ...

AM I just have a question about this one Sadat, like where did that image come from?

S The story of ...

M This is the ...

S The dark side, yeah. This is the dark side of ...

M Beauty.

S Yeah, it is, it is.

AM It’s a farmer’s hat, isn’t it?

S Yeah, so the story was begun from the ... I read in the paper about in the south mountain of Jogja, there’s a farmland and, the rain just coming, yeah, so always dry, always dry in that place so they’re working and doesn’t have a ...

A The crops don’t grow?

S Yeah, the crops don’t grow and no water, and I ask to my friend. ‘It’s true?’ ‘Yes, it’s true, it’s a fact.’ So about some people hang their selves because they don’t have anything.

A So, it’s she’s, is she, this is part, is she a woman farmer and she’s wearing a farmer’s hat?

M But she’s got bikinis. Do women farmers in Indonesia usually farm in bikinis? (Collective laughter).

AM The ideal woman. (Collective laughter).

S There’s a trend, trends in 2000, 2004, 2005, many artists are drawing or painting ...

M Bikini women?

S Yeah, bikini or, sorry, underpants.

M Okay, yeah, sure, sure.

S Yeah, just like that. And, some performers are to doing that in the street, on the street.

M Okay, sure, sure.

S You have to sort of make a (relation) about art and that situation.

M Yes, yes, yes. I guess the other thing, and we will finish, is you know, I think one way to look at Sadat’s work to is within ... there is the history of and the everyday murals in Jogjakarta, but there’s also a history of satire in you know Indonesian art and you know Jogjakarta is a very active visual arts city. So, thank you everyone for listening and thank you Sadat and Amina. (Applause).