

This vibrant painting captures the signature tongue in cheek humour and bold expressive style of Hahan, delivered in the vivid, saturated colours and cartoon aesthetic the artist has deployed throughout his career, along with a medley of figures, motifs and symbols that come together in all the highly energised and un-precious chaos of contemporary pop culture

It centres around a group of comical figures, donning bow ties, white gloves, polished shoes and gleaming gold tooth smiles, surrounded by bags of money. The figures beam with exuberant but somewhat untrusting expressions, they seem happy with themselves and whatever act has put them in this situation of agency and plenty, but are they smiling in happiness or laughing at the rest of us?

With its bright colours and lively figures this is certainly an attractive and playful painting, but it simultaneously gestures at something more sinister underlying its immediate narrative. It's a work by an artist who has become a prominent figure in Indonesian and global art, exuding the characteristic style that the artist has spent years in experimenting with and refining, and which has been appreciated and discussed all over the world.

And through this style of production the artist has become known for prompting critical and witty questionings of the art world through parody, satire and interventionist actions that draw on all the tools of an over stimulated art market, to playfully undermine and question it.

So where does this painting fit in the art market and in arts discourse today?

Is it just another part of a saturated and schizophrenic art market?

Is it a unique expression by an influential artist working today, through which we can learn more about today's world and our contemporary social condition?

The painting certainly refers us directly to the art market, awash with symbols of currency and logos, the central text unashamedly and indiscreetly points us to the 'paranoid market', framed by the recognisable arch of stars from the paramount pictures movie house (perhaps asking us whether this is also merely a produce of another form of over-hyped commercially-driven entertainment).

So what is a painting like this worth?

Does its value lie in its aesthetic and conceptual weight?

Is the importance determined by the exhibition in which it's been displayed, which curator has selected it, which gallery is showing it or how many art fairs it has travelled to?

Or does its value lie in its place in art history and contemporary art discourse? What is this painting adding to the history of Indonesian art, what is it adding to our understanding of global contemporary arts practice?

Does its value lie in how much you like looking at it and how much you want to hang it in your house?

How much does this painting cost anyway?

But of course this painting is an individual artwork and object too, and we can appreciate its basic attributes, perhaps as all art should be. It has a remarkably energetic style, bursting with vivid colours, an accumulation of figures gesturing at a dense narrative and creating an array of associations which can lead us to our own journeys of interpretation and metaphor, and to consider what these signifiers mean to us and how they operate in our own communities and across the world.

Looking more closely we notice a grand explosion which surrounds the central characters, extending into the infinite distance of a starlit space. And here perhaps the artist is reminding us of the eventual but imminent end and erasure of any art industry, career or artwork. So with all the possible success, money and fame in this paranoid market, in the grand scheme of everything else, what does it all matter anyway?

