

Quirky Cartoons Loved all the Way to the Land of the Lion

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Pamela Halomoan has proven that animation characters made by a young Indonesian can make their way all over the world!

At the age of 19, her works have been showcased in Singapore, England, USA, and Turkey for people to enjoy. Moreover, her characters have even attracted the attention of many visitors during the Singapore Toy, Game, and Comic Convention 2010.

She had always wanted to be a designer, said Pamela who also enjoys traveling. She has come up with hundreds and even thousands of characters but the one that clicked was created in late 2009 when she did an assignment to make a TV commercial. This character's name is Wolly, with droopy eyes and an unusual form made out of a combination of several animals and objects.

After three years of studying in one of the top design schools in Singapore, Pam, as Pamela Halomoan likes to be called, has been continuing to produce new ideas and expand her imagination. She is currently a freelance illustrator for some local and foreign companies.

For Pam, who has just graduated, her journey has not been easy. She has experienced the bitterness of rejection and disheartening comments about her work. Luckily, Pam wasn't discouraged for long. She regained her enthusiasm from the advice of a friend, "If you yourself don't appreciate your own work, then who will?"

How did you get into designing characters?

From when I was little, I spent a lot of time watching cartoons with my parents. Then I thought to myself, why doesn't Indonesia have their own cartoons? Why are all the cartoons always from other countries? From then on I wanted to be able to make an Indonesian character, one that is memorable and can be loved by all cartoon enthusiasts from every generation.

So you've had a talent for drawing from a young age?

Perhaps it's in my genes. My dad and my older brother are both architects. Their drawing skills are very good. Maybe their talent rubbed off on me a little bit, hehee. When I was in primary school, I took drawing lessons but not for long. Then I began focusing on drawing again after my parents wouldn't let me major in music for college studies. Basically, I do like to doodle because I think that playing around with pictures and colours is a beautiful thing.

What inspired you to come up with your characters?

What stands out the most from my characters are their droopy eyes, it makes it look like they're sleepy. I got the idea from looking at myself and my friends who, a lot of times, look like that maybe because of so many sleepless nights due to homework and assignments, hehee. Form-wise, I like to mix and match different animals, like for example a frog and a giraffe, a dinosaur and a crocodile. Then I randomly draw out what it might look like and, *tah-daaaaa*, it becomes a new character! I like oddly shaped, quirky kind of characters. When the drawing is done, I start coming up with ideas for their names and personalities.

Their personality and biographies are also important because when they are animated, they become somewhat just like us, humans.

So how many characters have you designed so far?

For animation, I have seven characters so far. The latest ones are from an animation using puppets made of clay and mixed media such as cloth, foam, metal, and wood. This animation is my final year project and will be played at our upcoming Graduation Show.

What are the odds you face when creating a new design?

The hardest part is designing something that can deliver your message well. Sometimes the design is not enough for others to understand what you're trying to say. Like for example an animation that is meant to be humorous but when people see it, they just watch it with a straight face. In other words, the design failed. Besides that, maintaining consistency in your own style is not easy because clients may ask for something that is very different from our usual characters and designs.

When did you first enter your artworks as part of an exhibition?

The first time was during the Papertoys Exhibition in Turkey. At the time, a fellow Indonesian artist, Thunderpanda, recommended me. Thank God, the gallery owner told me they liked it and it was even one of their favourites. Unfortunately, I couldn't attend it myself because I had class.

From all the international exhibitions you've taken part in so far, which one has an impression on you the most?

The last one, in Singapore. I got to meet a lot of people who like my designs. They bought some of my merchandise, had a simple chat, took pictures with me, and even added me on Facebook. It felt really good to be able to make something that other people appreciate and I made a lot of new friends too.

Any advice so we can design just like you? Hahaa.

Don't! If you want to design, you have to have your own style. I hate it when people say my style looks like someone else's. So far, the people who say that are just teasing me. But if it turns out to be the same, I'd definitely go back and change it. You will be proud as a designer if people recognize your works as something original, not something that looks like someone else's work.

So you have any upcoming exhibitions soon?

Yes. This coming August, there will be another exhibition but because of time and financial constraints, I think I'll put that on hold for now. Right now I want to build up more on networking and hopefully be more active in the international exhibition scene.

Are you interested in making your own comics?

Well, I had an offer from an American comic artist to do one together but because we were both busy, especially me with my final project and all, we've decided to postpone the project.. Hehee.

Do you plan to come back to Indonesia?

Of course! I can't stay away too long from Indonesian food. But because I'm on tuition grant from the Ministry of Education of Singapore, I need to stay here to work for the next three years. After that, I would like to gain more experiences in other countries. After becoming a well-established entrepreneur, I will come back to Indonesia. Because for people my age it's not easy to earn money in Jakarta, hehee.

What dream do you want to fulfill in five to ten years?

A lot! I want to take part in exhibitions all across the globe, launch even more products, have my own animation or TV show, become a great entrepreneur, and make my family happy. Hehee. My last obsession is to have a panda as my pet. But I don't think that's going to happen, is it? I'd feel bad for the panda anyway. Hehee.

Biodata :

Name : Pamela Halomoan

Place/Date of Birth : Jakarta / July 12 1993

Education : - SMA Sang Timur, Jakarta
- Diploma Design and Media Animation
- Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts, Singapore (2008)

Achievements : - The Wild Things Exhibition, Jakarta, 2010
- Singapore Game Toy Comic Convention, Singapore, 2010
- Papertoys Exhibition in Milk Gone Mad!, Istanbul, Turkey, 2010

PAMELA HALOMOAN MEMBUKTIKAN KARAKTER ANIMASI KARYA ANAK INDONESIA JUGA BISA MENDUNIA

Oleh : Hervinny Wongso

Di USIA yang ke-19, karyanya telah dinikmati masyarakat Singapura, Inggris, Amerika, dan Turki. Tidak hanya itu, karakter yang ia buat bahkan berhasil menarik hati banyak pengunjung saat dipamerkan di Singapore Game Toy Comic Convention, pada 2010.

Cita-cita menjadi desainer telah lama muncul di pikiran cewek pecinta *travelling* itu. Ratusan bahkan ribuan karakter telah ia buat. Namun, yang 'klik' dengan hatinya baru ia temukan akhir 2009, saat membuat tugas untuk iklan TV. Tokoh itu bernama Wolly, dengan mata setengah terbuka diikuti bentuk badan yang aneh karena menggabungkan beberapa hewan dan benda.

Selama tiga tahun kuliah di salah satu universitas desain terbaik di Singapura, Pam, sapaan akrab Pamela Halomoan, tidak berhenti menelurkan ide dan imajinasinya. Kini, Pam telah menjadi ilustrator lepas (*freelance*) untuk beberapa perusahaan nasional dan internasional.

Perjalanan cewek yang baru diwisuda itu tidak dicapai dengan mudah. Ia sudah mengecap rasanya sakit hati saat karyanya ditolak dan dihina. Bahkan, pernah ada yang mencemooh dengan mengibaratkan desainnya bak komputer rusak! Untungnya, keputusan Pam tidak berlangsung lama. Semangatnya kembali terpacu kala mendapat nasihat salah satu teman, "Kalau bukan *elo*, siapa lagi yang bakal *ngehargain* karya lo?".

Gimana ceritanya bisa kepikiran untuk mendesain karakter?

Dari kecil, aku sering *habisin* waktu bersama orang tua sambil *nonton* kartun sama-sama. Nah, waktu itu aku *mikir*, kenapa di Indonesia enggak ada kartun buatan sendiri, ya? Kenapa selalu dari luar negeri? Dari sana, aku mulai *kepikiran* untuk bisa membuat karakter dari Indonesia yang bisa diingat orang, baik anak-anak maupun dewasa pecinta tokoh kartun.

Wah, jadi sudah berbakat gambar sejak kecil, ya?

Bisa jadi karena turunan juga. Soalnya, papa dan kakakku arsitek. Gambar mereka bagus banget. Mungkin aku *kecipratan* sedikit *talent* mereka, ya, jadi lumayan bisa gambar, *hehe*. Waktu SD aku pernah les gambar, tapi enggak lama. Kemudian, aku lebih fokus menggambar sejak dilarang orang tuaku masuk jurusan musik saat kuliah. Pada dasarnya sih, aku memang suka corat-coret karena menurutku bermain dengan gambar dan warna itu indah, *hehe*.

Apa yang menginspirasi bentuk karakter yang kamu buat?

Bagian yang paling beda dari karakter yang aku bikin adalah mata yang selalu separuh tertutup, seperti orang mengantuk. Itu terinspirasi oleh mataku dan teman-teman yang sering begitu karena terlalu banyak bergadang *ngerjain* tugas, *hehe*. Kalau dari bentuk, aku suka menggabungkan beberapa binatang, misalnya kodok dan jerapah, dinosaurus dan buaya. Kemudian corat-coret secara acak dan *tadaaaa*, jadilah mereka! Aku suka bentuk yang 'rada' ajaib dan berkarakter. Kalau gambarnya sudah jadi, tiba-tiba muncul saja ide untuk nama dan *personality* tokohnya.

Personality dan biografi mereka juga penting, lo. Sebab, kalau mereka dianimasikan dan bergerak, ya, mereka hampir sama seperti manusia.

Jadi, sudah berapa karakter yang sudah kamu desain sampai sekarang?

Kalau animasi, sejauh ini sudah bikin tujuh tokoh. Yang terbaru itu aku bikin animasi dengan *puppet* dari *clay and mix media*, seperti kain, busa, besi, dan kayu. Animasi ini juga menjadi tugas akhir aku di kampus yang ditampilkan di *graduation show*.

Apa kesulitan yang sering dialami saat membuat desain baru?

Yang tersulit adalah bagaimana membuat sebuah karya agar mampu menyampaikan pesan dengan benar. Terkadang, desain tidak cukup kuat untuk dimengerti. Misalnya, animasi komedi malah ditangkap datar saja oleh yang melihat. Itu berarti desainnya gagal. Selain itu, mempertahankan ciri khas pribadi di setiap karya yang dibuat juga tantangan karena terkadang *client* suka meminta hal yang jauh berbeda dengan karakter kita.

Kapan pertama kalinya kamu mengikutsertakan karyamu dalam pameran?

Pameran pertama itu saat Papertoys Exhibition di Turki. Waktu itu aku direkomendasikan sama artis Indonesia, Thunderpanda. Puji Tuhan, pemilik galerinya suka dan bilang desain aku salah satu yang paling mereka sukai. Cuma sayangnya aku enggak bisa hadir karena kuliah.

Dari semua pameran internasional yang pernah kamu ikuti, mana yang paling berkesan?

Yang paling berkesan itu waktu pameran terakhir di Singapura. Di sana, aku bertemu langsung dengan orang-orang yang suka desainku. Mereka juga beli, *ngobrol*, foto bareng, bahkan *add* aku di *Facebook*. Rasanya senang banget bisa membuat sesuatu yang disenangi orang sekaligus bisa menambah teman.

Gimana caranya supaya bisa bikin desain kayak kamu?

Hahaha. Jangan! Kalau mau berkarya, harus punya ciri khas sendiri. Aku paling sebel kalau ada orang yang menyamakan karyaku dengan orang lain. Sejauh ini sih mereka masih bercanda. Tapi, kalau memang ada yang sama, pasti akan aku ubah semua. Kamu bakal bangga kalau orang tahu kamu karena karya yang *original*, bukan karena karya kamu mirip orang lain.

Ada rencana pameran lagi dalam waktu dekat?

Ada. Harusnya Agustus ini ada pameran lagi, cuma karena ada masalah waktu dan *financial*, jadi *akupending* dulu. Sekarang lagi mulai aktif. Aku *pengen* membangun *network* dan bisa lebih aktif dalam pameran internasional.

Enggak ingin membuat komik sendiri saja?

Ada sih tawaran bikin komik bareng *comic artist* dari Amerika. Tapi, karena kesibukan masing-masing, terutama karena tugas akhir kemarin, *project* kami tunda dulu. *Hehe*.

Enggak mau kembali ke Indonesia?

Mau banget! Aku enggak tahan enggak makan makanan Indonesia. Tapi, karena dapat beasiswa dari Ministry of Education Singapore, aku ada ikatan untuk bekerja di sini sampai tiga tahun ke depan. Setelah itu, aku berencana mau cari pengalaman di negara lain lagi. Rencananya, kalau sudah bisa jadi *entrepreneur* yang mapan, aku baru akan menetap di Indonesia lagi. Soalnya, seumuran aku kan masih susah cari uang di Jakarta. *Hehe*.

Apa dream yang mau diwujudkan dalam 5-10 tahun ke depan?

Banyak! Aku *pengen* pameran keliling dunia, *launching* produk yang lebih beragam lagi, punya animasi/TV show, jadi *entrepreneur* yang mantap, dan membahagiakan keluarga. *Hehe*. Obsesi terakhir sih ingin memelihara panda. Tapi, kayaknya enggak mungkin, ya? Kasihan pandanya. *Hehe*.

Biodata :

Nama : Pamela Halomoan
Tempat/Tanggal Lahir : Jakarta / July 12 1993
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