COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
Research School of Humanities and the Arts
SCHOOL OF ART

GRADUATE PROGRAM

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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Entanglement:
Individual and Participatory Art Practice in Indonesia

DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PART FULFILMENT FOR THE
DEGREE OF THE DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY OF
THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

September 2016

Dissertation

Declaration of originality

I, Ellen Kent…………………………………..hereby declare that the thesis here presented is the outcome of the research project undertaken during my candidacy, that I am the sole author unless otherwise indicated, and that I have fully documented the sources of ideas, references, quotations and paraphrases attributable to other authors.

Acknowledgements

This research was conducted with the generous financial support of a scholarship from the College of Arts and Social Sciences, Australian National University and a Prime Minister's Australia Asia Endeavour Postgraduate Award.

So many thanks are due to so many people. My *komunitas* in Indonesia and Australia: IVAA, FSRD ITB, Cemeti, YBY, JAF, Sanggar Bangun Budaya, Joglo Jago, IAM, Arskala, S14, SCP, 4A, ANU SOFA; thank you for accommodating me and my family (often literally) as we took this journey together.

The intellectual guidance and support of my supervisors and co-supervisors, Patsy Payne, Michelle Antoinette, Ariel Heryanto and Raquel Ormella has been invaluable, as has been the patient reading, re-reading and critical feedback from Caroline Turner, Virginia Hooker and Chaitanya Sambrani. Much gratitude is also due to the artists who form the basis of this research, for their time and efforts, and for their creativity.

This PhD has been shaped by many formal, informal and rigorous conversations with fellow researchers, artists, artworkers and writers, especially Rikrik Kusmara, Fajar Abadi, Pitra Hutomo, Grace Samboh, Brigitta Isabella, Jim Supangkat, Farah Wardani, Rizki Zaelani, Syafiatudina, Nindityo Adipurnomo, Mella Jaarsma, Enin Supriyanto, Agnesia Linda, Yustina Neni, Tisna Sanjaya, Irma Damajanti, Antariksa, Anang Saptoto, Woto Wibowo, Arief Yudi, Yuma Loranita, Tedi En, Ginggi Syar Haysim, Marco Kusumawijaya, Irwan Ahmett, Tita Salina, Ismal Muntaha, Herra Pahlasari, Aminuddin T. Siregar, Willy Himawan, Deden Durahman,Tintin Wulia, Litha Jayadianti, Faiz Fa, Dian Ariyani, Karina Roosvita, Kelsie Prabawa, Nadiah Bamadhaj, Annie Sloman, Kristi Dewi Monfries, Angie Bexley, Rebecca Meckelburg, Christine Clark, Alison Procter, Robert Guth, Robyn Houen, Evi Eliyanah, Maria Myutel and Meg Downes and so many, many more. Your stimulation, encouragement and support is manifest in this project: thank you.

To my parents, Sue and Tony, my sisters Anna and Kate, and most importantly my husband Shane, and also his family, I owe you my endless gratitude for tolerating me, spurring me on, and for sharing the care of all of those children we have made. And thanks kids, for being you, and never failing to remind us of how much more important you are than anything else.

To our friends and neighbours, who are so much more than that, in Scullin, Bandung and Yogyakarta: without your music, food, love and care none of this would have been worthwhile. Thanks for the joy!

The work of these past few years is dedicated to Tasha, Scott, and Tedi, who were there when it began but not when it ended – but who will always inspire persistence, love and kindness in pursuit of the greatest challenge: a life well lived.

Abstract

This dissertation takes as its subject matter the joint practice of participatory and individual art, and sets out to understand why these practices are so prevalent among contemporary Indonesian artists. It constitutes two-thirds of a body of research towards a doctorate of philosophy, in which the remaining one-third comprises practice-led research into the nexus between individual and participatory modes in my own art practice.

The arguments set out in the dissertation are the result of research into primary and secondary written resources, translations, field observations, interviews with artists and with other experts in Indonesia. This is the first body of research to address combined individual and participatory art in Indonesia. Sanento Yuliman described the "artistic ideology" of Indonesian modernism as simultaneously autonomous and independent, and heteronomously tied to tradition and society's needs. This formed the foundations from which modern art discourse in Indonesia involved artists in the lives of the people (*rakyat*) while also defending artists' rights to individual expression: a binding knot of the kind that Jacques Rancière describes as the "aesthetic regime". I draw attention to the way participation consistently features alongside individuality in discourses from those early artists; during art's instrumentalisation in development discourses; and when contemporary artists begin involving the *rakyat* in participatory art. Case studies addressing the work of five contemporary artists (Arahmaiani Feisal, Made "Bayak" Muliana, I Wayan "Suklu" Sujana, Tisna Sanjaya, and Elia Nurvista) show how contemporary artists have extended this continuum to involve people in the making of art, while still maintaining significant individual practices. I demonstrate how particular contexts and networks of production have continued to engage with those early modernist concepts of autonomy and heteronomy, as well as exogenous and originary endogenous discourses, to create conditions which mandate the joint practice of participatory and individual art for many artists. In responding to these conditions, the work by contemporary artists presented in this research consciously engages with and reconstructs discourses from Indonesian and global art histories.

A note to the reader

The following work contains material often gathered from Indonesian language sources. All translations herein are my own unless indicated otherwise. As an experienced, qualified and accredited translator of art texts from Indonesian to English, I am confident that my translations reflect the intentions of the original authors as far as possible. In cases where direct translation of the author's intent is not possible, or where translation fails to denote the correct conceptual or cultural underpinnings of the word, I have elected to use the original word with an accompanying explanation, either in the body of the text or in the accompanying glossary (Appendix A). Other terms of address, titles and frequently occurring abbreviations are also included in this glossary.

Over the course of the history of the Indonesian language, spelling conventions have changed. I have elected to use modern spelling as a general rule, except in the case of individuals' names. In those cases I have used the spelling preferred by the individuals. Hence, for instance, I refer to Sukarno, but Soeharto and Soedjojono.

In many cases there are published variations of the spelling and usage of living artists' names. The names I use are those usually used with an honorific such as Pak (Mr) or Bu (Ma'am) when referring to or addressing the individual in Indonesian. In most cases this means using the artists' first name, as in Arahmaiani (Feisal), Tisna (Sanjaya), and Elia (Nurvista). In some cases, this means using their surname, such as (FX) Harsono, or a pseudonym, as for I Wayan "Suklu" Sujana, and Made "Bayak" Muliana.

I have endeavoured to include web citations that are as up-to-date as possible. However some sites have moved over the course of my research and likely will continue to do so. In some cases I have included references to accessible web-based material that supports my arguments but is not directly cited. In those cases I have not included access dates.

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Entanglement:

Individual and Participatory Art Practice in Indonesia

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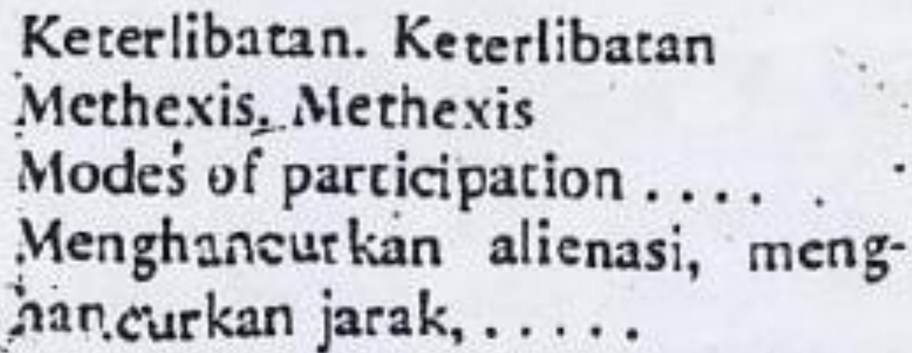
Keterlibatan. Keterlibatan
Methexis. Methexis
Modes of participation . . . .
Menghancurkan alienasi, meng-
hancurkan jarak, ...

Participation. Participation

Methexis. Methexis

Modes of participation….

Destroying alienation, destroying

distance….[1]

[1] I found this short poem in a newspaper review of the seminal 1975 exhibition *Seni Rupa Baru Indonesia ’75* (New Indonesian Fine Art ’75), showing the work of a group later known as the Gerakan Seni Rupa Baru Indonesia (GSRBI The New Indonesian Art Movement). The article’s author is not mentioned, and the Indonesian Visual Arts Archive, which holds the clipping, has no information on the publishing paper or the author of the poem. Contact with several members of the GSRBI failed to reveal its provenance, but the poem’s reference to methexis recalls Jim Supangkat’s tendency to refer to the early etymological roots of language in an effort to understand art practice, and also Sanento Yuliman’s involvement in theatre.

Introduction

0.1 Foundations

This dissertation addresses the joint practice of participatory and individual art, and sets out to understand why these practices are so prevalent among contemporary Indonesian artists. Pre-eminent Indonesian art historian and critic Sanento Yuliman described the "artistic ideology" of Indonesian modernism as simultaneously defending the artists' creative autonomy *and* being heteronomously tied to tradition and society's needs. I argue that this binding knot between autonomy and heteronomy – the same knot that French philosopher Rancière describes as the "aesthetic regime" – formed the foundations from which artistic practice in Indonesia increasingly involved itself in the lives of the people. I show how in recent decades artists have expanded this continuum to involve the people in the making of art and, in doing so, have consciously engaged with and reconstructed discourses in Indonesian and global art history. Presenting case studies drawn around the practices of five contemporary artists, I demonstrate how individual and participatory art traverses a wide spectrum of practices and motivations. Artworks by Arahmaiani Feisal, Made Bayak, I Wayan "Suklu" Sujana, Tisna Sanjaya and Elia Nurvista show how artists are negotiating new forms within a "climate" conducive to participatory and individual art practice, and which was set in the early days of the Indonesian nation.

What is the role of art and the artist in society? Conversely, what is the role of society in art and for the artist? Implicitly, the poem on the previous page asks and answers these questions, at least for the author of the poem and members of the *Gerakan Seni Rupa Baru Indonesia* (New Fine Art Movement of Indonesia, GSRBI). But from what context did this attitude emerge and where did it lead? These are the questions I set out to answer in the following dissertation. Through exploration of primary and secondary sources, many of which I have translated from Indonesian, and through fieldwork observing and interviewing artists working in both individual and participatory forms, I trace the impact of early discourses around autonomy and heteronomy through different generations and forms of practice.

Questions around the form and function of art in society have vexed artists since at least the beginning of the modernist project in early 20th century Europe.[2] Various avant-garde movements in Western Europe and the USA have been known for their explorations around the rights and expectations of artists. Yet reading these art histories, one could be forgiven for assuming existential artistic tussles occurred only in the centres of Europe and the USA, a point made by many art historians of what has been called – in an indicative term – the "periphery".[3]

Over the past 20 years an argument centred on socially or dialogically oriented art has emerged within dominant discourses of art history and art criticism. Key texts have debated the genesis of art practices variously described as relational aesthetics, dialogical or community art, or participatory art. They attend to the aesthetic and ethical forms of these practices, their value to society and the individual, their role in critiquing, or even perpetuating, state authority, and the challenges posed to object-centred critical frameworks.[4] Primarily, these debates have focused on the influence of certain historical events in Europe and the USA, and the practice of a number of key artists, also largely located in North and South America and in Europe. For the larger part too, the conversation has been conducted among art historians, critics, curators and other professional observers of artistic practice. Artists have rarely contributed to the discussion on why they choose to practise in this way.[5]

---

[2] Claire Bishop traces the history of participatory arts from the Futurists in 1910 through to 2010 in Bishop, *Artificial Hells; Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship* (London: Verso, 2012).

[3] See, for instance, Patrick Flores and John Clark's essays in Michelle Antoinette and Caroline Turner, eds., *Contemporary Asian Art and Exhibitions: Connectivities and World-making* (Canberra: ANU Press, 2014); Jim Supangkat, "Multiculturalism/multimodernsim" in *Traditions/Tensions: Contemporary Art in Asia* ed. A. Poshyananda (New York: Asia Society Galleries & Sydney, The Fine Arts Press, 1996); Sanento Yuliman, "Perspektif Baru", in *Gerakan Seni Rupa Baru Indonesia*, ed. Jim Supangkat (Jakarta: PT Gramedia, 1979), pp. 96-98; Caroline Turner, ed. *Tradition and Change: Contemporary Art of Asia and the Pacific* (Brisbane: 1993); "Asian Modernisms", *ART AsiaPacific*, no. 1039-3625, 1039-3625 (1998). The work of these scholars, and their chorus to inscribe Asian art histories into world art history, was a driving force behind this dissertation.

[4] See, for instance, Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, 2010 ed. (Paris: Le Presses du Réel, 1998; repr., 2002, 2009, 2010); Claire Bishop, "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics", *October* (2004), pp. 51-79; Chantal Mouffe, "Artistic Activism and Agonistic Spaces", *ART&RESEARCH: A Journal of Ideas, Contexts and Methods* 1, no. 2 (2007), http://www.artandresearch.org.uk/v1n2/mouffe.html; Grant H. Kester, *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004); Grant H. Kester, *The One and the Many: Contemporary Collaborative Art in a Global Context* (Durham [N.C.]: Duke University Press, 2011).

[5] Suzanne Lacy, Allan Kaprow, Joseph Beuys and, in the Indonesian context, Moelyono and FX Harsono are exceptions.

In Western European and North and South American art histories, the social turn after the 1990s has often been positioned as one driven by a desire to break away from modernist reification of the individual, and to "overturn the traditional relationship between the art object, the artist and the audience".[6] Although this was clearly part of the impetus for the unknown author of the poem reprinted at the beginning of this Introdution, my observations of art practice in Indonesia over the past 15 years have led me to ask whether this is the only motivation for participatory practice in Indonesia.

Bishop organises her review and critique of the historical and contemporary manifestations of "orientation to social context" around the "legacy of the historic avant-garde – hence the decision to include Eastern Europe and South America, but not Asia".[7] Bishop's decision to exclude Asia, and the clear gap in scholarship that it indicates, was a driving force for my research project. Nonetheless, Bishop's approach has been influential, not least in that it has assisted me to define some of the parameters of what is considered to be participatory art, and how this is differentiated (if at all) from individual art. I define "participatory art" in relation to the artists' concept, that is: artwork in which the participation of other individuals or groups is central to the manifestation of the artwork. Theorists like Bishop, Grant Kester, Miwon Kwon and Homi Bhabha have applied similar definitions to interdisciplinary collaborative art, community art, delegated performance, conversational or dialogical projects, pedagogical projects, workshops, mass spectacles, walking tours, artist collectives, activist movements and radical theatre. In response to the Indonesian context, I expand the definition to include artists' own participation in society when conducted as a conscious creative act. By contrast, I define individual artworks as those conceived solely by the artist.

While other artisans or technical experts may be involved in the production of this kind of artwork, they are not integral to the work's concept. It is important to acknowledge the fluidity of this apparently binary opposition between individual and participatory art, and to note the porosity of any limitations on art practice. For instance, among the participatory artworks produced in Indonesia in the last 20 years, several have involved

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[6] Bishop, *Artificial Hells; Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*, p. 2.Ibid., p. 2.
[7] Ibid., p. 2.

artisans as delegated performers whose role is integral to the artwork's conception. Furthermore, while many participatory artworks are performative to a degree, not all performance art is participatory. This porosity is in fact essential within the "artistic ideology" that Yuliman proposes and which I link to Rancière's "aesthetic regime" in Chapter 1.1.

Participatory art practice is widespread in Indonesia and recently much discussed among Indonesian artists. I identify some forums for these discussions in Chapter 3. However, in spite of these discussions, participatory art practice among Indonesian artists has received relatively little scholarly attention, with the few exceptions described in the next section of this introduction and in more detail in Chapter 2. In Indonesia there is little public funding for the arts. Yet innovative participatory projects happen every day in the major art city centres of Yogyakarta, Bandung and Jakarta and in industrial towns, remote villages and suburban streets. What is motivating this flourishing participatory art scene? And why do artists continue to make individual works as well as inviting others to engage in their work?

0.2 Literature review

One challenge for this research has been finding texts which are specifically relevant to participatory art practice in the Indonesian context. There are an increasing number of texts exploring relational or dialogical aesthetics, participatory art, littoral art practices and so on in the European and North American context. Recent scholarship (discussed below) has even ventured as far as South America and India to find a "global" expression of participatory art, but the theoretical frameworks developed in these texts uniformly depend on key moments in European history, key European philosophers and, frequently, limiting cultural or social expressions, such as linking ameliorative tendencies in participatory art to Christianity.[8]

This indicates discord between the linear historical narrative of Western art history and the reality of art practice in "other" places. In 1995, curator and writer Jim Supangkat contested that in works exhibited in the Non-Aligned Exhibition in Jakarta, "There are also signs of the contiguity of modern/contemporary art with local forces –

[8] See, for instance, Kester, *The One and the Many: Contemporary Collaborative Art in a Global Context*, pp. 106–115, and Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*, p. 39.

cultural background, socio-political conditions and the influence of traditional art – which signifies that contemporary/modern art in developing nations is unconnected to avant-garde traditions in Europe (which are currently believed to be the basis of modern art)."[9]

Key works in the body of literature on relational, participatory and dialogical art practices include Bourriaud's *Relational Aesthetics.* He contends that much artistic practice in the 1990s and beyond broke from the audience-focused art of the 60s by developing theory and practice which encompasses "the whole of human relations and their social context, rather than an independent and private space".[10] Bourriaud describes these practices as "social interstices" after Marx's alternative economic systems. They do not attempt to challenge broader social systems and their inherent inequalities, instead residing alongside them, "filling in the cracks in the social bond".[11] In recent years, Bourriaud's contentions have been contested and eclipsed through rigorous scholarship, which has refocused the debate on the trajectory of participation and dialogue in art over the past century.

Grant Kester says Bourriaud's conception "collapses all activist art into the condition of 1930s socialist realism, (and) fails to convey the complexity and diversity of socially engaged art practice over the last several decades".[12] Kester himself has developed ideas around "littoral" practice and dialogical aesthetics, looking at projects in Europe, the Americas, India and Myanmar that create dialogue around social and environmental issues.[13] Kester is also concerned with identifying a framework for effective evaluation of artworks that invoke the social as aesthetic form, noting a tendency for critics to fail work based on a lack of "sensory engagement" or, conversely, to judge a work entirely on its "political efficacy". In *The One and the Many,* Kester questions both the ethical and aesthetic efficacy of participatory art that

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[9] Jim Supangkat, "'Buku Putih' Pameran GNB", *Jurnal Seni Rupa* II (1995), pp. 5-16.
[10] Ranciere, *Relational Aesthetics,* p. 113.
[11] Ibid., p. 36.
[12] Kester, *The One and the Many: Contemporary Collaborative Art in a Global Context*, p. 31.
[13] Kester, *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art*; "Dialogical Aesthetics: A Critical Framework for Littoral Art", *Variant Supplement* 9 (1999), http://www.variant.org.uk/9texts/KesterSupplement.html. (accessed 10/09/2012)

seeks to agitate the audience in order to achieve a shift or "correction" in political attitude.[14]

The attempt to find a critical or evaluative method which is neither entirely formalist nor ethically based is echoed in Bishop's early essays on the "social turn", where she objects to Bourriaud and Kester's valorisation of "re-humanising" art forms and argues for a more antagonistic social engagement.[15] Bishop's 2012 book *Artificial Hell* expands on this early essay, charting a history of participatory art that links key historical moments of social and political change in Europe with surges in art practice that demanded more active roles for audiences.[16]

Another early critique that Bishop consolidated in *Artificial Hells* is alignment of the interests of neo-liberal governments and artists working in the social realm. The former's interests lie in handing over all social responsibilities to the community, with the latter's (sometimes) intentions to ameliorate social discord fulfilling this abrogation, simultaneously generating a casualised, privatised "freelance workforce".[17] This proposition is particularly resonant in Indonesia, where arts and social welfare infrastructure remains inadequate, as I extrapolate in Chapter 3 when describing the work of Jatiwangi Art Factory.

Bishop's attention to the emergence of participatory art as a "genre in its own right"[18] includes an edited collection of writing from theorists, curators and artists relevant to participatory practice.[19] In particular, Rancière's essay "Problems and Transformations in Critical Art" is among those that identified a "third way" of understanding

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[14] Kester, *The One and the Many: Contemporary Collaborative Art in a Global Context*. p. 62. In this analysis Kester takes direct issue with Bishop's stance that the ethical infractions perceived in the reproduction of unethical conditions are justifiable – or do not require justification – due to their function in exposing the same inequity.
[15] Claire Bishop, "The Social Turn: Collaboration and its Discontents", *Artforum* 44 (2006), pp. 178-183, and "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics", *October*, no. 110 (2004), pp. 51-79.
[16] These key historical moments include the emergence of fascism in Italy and the Russian revolution, the general strike of Paris in May 1968 and the fall of the Communism in East Germany.
[17] Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship,* pp. 13-18 and pp. 214-15.
[18] Ibid., p. 2.
[19] Essays from Umberto Eco, Jacques Rancière, Joseph Beuys, Allan Kaprow, Roland Barthes and Hal Foster, among others, provide a useful background to the shifts in thinking that have influenced many artists to re-imagine the role of art and artists in the modern era. *Participation* (London: The MIT Press, 2006).

aesthetics, art and politics.[20] Rancière returns to this in "*The Emancipated Spectator*",[21] where he identified the importance of the spectacle as a mediating term in education, theatre and art. The "third term" stands between the artist and the audience/viewer, providing a mediator "to which the other two can refer, but preventing any kind of 'equal' or 'undistorted' transmission…The same thing that links them must also separate them". Rancière's third term is useful in the study of participatory and individual art because it deconstructs the binary oppositions assumed to exist between different forms of practice.

Before the rise of these discussions in the 21st century, Lacy identified new genre public art as "visual art that uses both traditional and non-traditional media to communicate and interact with a broad and diversified audience about issues directly relevant to their lives".[22] Echoing Roland Barthe's essay "The Death of the Author" she reinstated the subjectivity of the audience/reader/public as the primary site for a text's meaning to materialise.[23] In the mid 1990s, Miwon Kwon's useful typology of "community" art critiqued the inherent inequities involved in institutional facilitation of community oriented projects.[24]

In 1998, Homi Bhabha coined the term "conversational art", identifying a philosophical genealogy from the pragmatist tradition which rejects the Enlightenment's privileging of rationality: "a tyranny of fact over value, logic over rhetoric".[25] In his reading, conversational art is a dialogue between culture and community, while visual art programs have confrontations between the object and subject.

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[20] Jacques Rancière, "Problems and Transformations (2004)", in *Participation*, ed. Claire Bishop (London: Whitechapel/The MIT Press, 2006), p. 86.
[21] Jacques Rancière, ""The Emancipated Spectator". *Artforum International* 45, no. 7 (2007), pp. 270-281.
[22] Suzanne Lacy, ed., *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art* (Seattle: Bay Press, 1995), p. 19.
[23] Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author", in *Image, Music, Text*, ed. Stephen Heath (London: Fontana Press, 1977), pp. 142-148.
[24] Kwon's book deals largely with site-specific art works, but later chapters track the course of tangential practices that lean to "community-specific" work. Her critique is largely centred on the Chicago city public art exhibition *Culture in Action,* curated by Mary Jane Jacobs. Miwon Kwon, *One Place After Another: Site-specific Art and Locational Identity* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2002).
[25] Richard Rorty, *Consequences of Pragmatism* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota, 1986). Bhabha was writing in the catalogue for another of Jacob's collaborative community art projects in Atlanta during the 1996 Olympics. Homi K. Bhabha, "Conversational Art", in *Conversations at the Castle: Changing Audiences and Contemporary Art*, ed. Mary Jane Jacob (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1998), p. 41.

Bhabha's conception of cultural hybridity as a "'third space' which enables other positions to emerge from it" is useful for understanding the demands on early Indonesian modernist painters to imagine a new unifying cultural identity drawn from Indonesia and beyond.[26] It also links to Yuliman's converse concern for developing a plurality of frameworks for Indonesian art, to Rancière's aforementioned third term, and to art historian John Clark's call to reconsider the distinctions between exogenous and endogenous art discourses.[27] All these ideas are instrumental to this dissertation.

A complicated question in participatory art centres on the artist's rights (or responsibilities) in relation to social engagement. The role of the artist as any sort of critical or aesthetic expert is disparaged in both Kwon and Kester's critique, but Bishop reasserts the artist's right (or responsibility) to antagonise society. It is also a significant question in Indonesian art history and practice, which is explored in detail in Chapter 2. A persistent narrative casts responsibility for social change on art in both participatory and individual forms. However, not all participatory art in Indonesia aims for social change, and emerging artists in particular are exploring less didactic forms. The concept of the communally-minded and ameliorative artist echoes stereotypes of traditional "Asian" artists/artisans, while the antagonistic artist recalls archetypal images of modernism's individual genius, critical of and separate from wider society. Yet in 1949, painter Oesman Effendi wrote: "The difference between East and West is relative, and one day it will be nonsense".[28] Like Effendi, I am suspicious of these binaries, and this has been reinforced by the results of my research.

From the practitioner's perspective, German conceptual artist Joseph Beuys is one of the artists who best embodies these slippery identities. Beuys is often cited as the originator of the idea that "art is life", which proposes that all people can and should be artists. This notion, and Beuys' practice specifically, is often cited by artists who

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[26] Sanento Yuliman, "Mencari Indonesia Dalam Seni Lukis Indonesia (first published Budaya Dyaja 1969)", in *Dua Seni Rupa: Sepilihan Tulian Sanento Yuliman*, ed. Asikin Hasan (Jakarta: Yayasan Kalam, 2001), p. 67.
[27] Yuliman, ibid.; Jacques Rancière, "The Aesthetic Revolution and its Outcomes", *New Left Review* 14, no. March April (2002), pp. 133-151; John Clark, "The Worlding of the Asian Modern", in *Contemporary Asian Art and Exhibitions: Connectivities and World-making*, ed. Michelle Antoinette and Caroline Turner (Canberra, Australia: ANU Press, 2014), pp. 69-70.
[28] Effendi is writing in reply to Basuki Resobowo, in an exchange on the subject of "Indonesian-ness" in painting. Yuliman, "Mencari Indonesia Dalam Seni Lukis Indonesia (first published Budaya Dyaja 1969)", p. 66.

engage in participatory practices, including some of those examined in this research. It is also an idea that provides for the contingency of practising with other people, and allows artists to create work with unspecified outcomes. Beuys is also one of the few foreign artists that contemporary Indonesian artists regularly cite as an influence.

There are several main texts that specifically address socially engaged practice in Indonesia, covering the periods from the 1930s to the 1990s. The first among these is pioneering modernist painter S. Soedjojono's (1913–1986) own collection of essays published in 1946, *Seni Lukis, Kesenian dan Seniman* (Painting, Art and Artists), which featured the key essay "Kesenian, Seniman dan Masyarakat" (Art, Artists and Society). Another seminal work is Foulcher's book titled *Social Commitment in Literature and the Arts — the Indonesian "Institute of People's Culture" 1950–1965*, which is, in essence, a history of the *Lembaga Kebudayaan Rakyat,* known as Lekra, which Foulcher translates as the Institute of People's Culture. According to Foulcher:

> Lekra represents the first sustained attempt in modern Indonesian history to address what has been one of the major themes of world-wide intellectual and cultural history since the mid-nineteenth century…It was the first organisational response in Indonesia to the question of the relationship between a committment to social and political change and the practice of art and literature.[29]

In Lekra, Foulcher finds a concern with balancing between formal aesthetic matters and the ethical or moral concerns of appropriate subject matter, intention and style. Art historian Claire Holt addressed some of these issues in her seminal 1965 publication *Art in Indonesia*, in a chapter considering the development of modern Indonesian art. Exploring Lekra's activity from a relatively contemporary perspective, Holt also detailed the social, political and creative activities of one of Lekra's founding members, painter Soedjojono. Holt also points to similar aesthetic concerns to those raised by Bishop decades later: the commitment to enacting social change, Holt contends, compromises an artist's ability to respond and express them aesthetically. She compares two artists, both known for their social engagement, especially through their mentoring of young artists in the *sanggar* (studio-based mentoring collectives) but ultimately diverging in their practice of autonomy:

[29] Keith Foulcher, *Social Commitment in Literature and the Arts: the Indonesian "Institute of People's Culture" 1950–1965* (Monash University, Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, 1986), p. 201.

> Sudjojono was destroyed as an artist by his commitment to communism, his particular morality. Affandi, in contrast, consistently pursued his art with complete concentration on the expressiveness of his work, without regard to any social ideology that could affect his choice of subject or style…[30]

After Holt, Astri Wright examined these same recurring social motifs underpinning Indonesian painting, and also began to examine the question of an Indonesian aesthetic. She points to the Javanese concepts of *halus* and *kasar*, which can be translated in many ways but generally relate to concepts of fine and unrefined.[31] Although in contemporary culture the two words are often used as binaries relating to good or bad behaviour, Wright sees their etymological history as more intertwined: two parts of a whole (as in *yin/yang*) but forming an aesthetic sense that requires a balance of emotion and form. Again the fundamental basis of aesthetics in Indonesia is identified in the dismissal of the opposition between forms hitherto regarded as "allegories of opposition".[32]

Many shorter essays make useful contributions to the field of participatory art. Julie Ewington, who has been involved in cross-cultural engagement between Australian and Indonesian artists and institutions, notably through the Asia Pacific Triennial exhibitions, has drawn attention to the impact of socialised performance arts traditions on socially-oriented art in Indonesia.[33] Heidi Arbuckle has published on the development of activist and artist collective Taring Padi, and that organisation published a collection of essays responding to their practices.[34] Amanda Katherine Rath has discussed the role of social intercourse and location in the processes of particular artists, including FX Harsono and Mella Jaarsma.[35]

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[30] Claire Holt, *Art in Indonesia: Continuities and Change* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1967), p. 232.

[31] Wright, Astri. "Can one Speak of an Indonesian Aesthetic?" in *Soul, Spirit, and Mountain: Preoccupations of Contemporary Indonesian Painters*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press 1994.

[32] "Allegories of opposition" is another term Rancière uses to describe "partitions of the sensible, a distribution of places and of the capacities or incapacities attached to those places". Jacques Rancière, "The Emancipated Spectator", p. 277.

[33] Julie Ewington, "Between the Cracks: Art and Method in Southeast Asia", *Art Asia Pacific* 3, no. 4 (1996), pp. 57-63.

[34] Heidi Arbuckle, *Taring Padi: Praktek Budaya Radikal di Indonesia* (Yogyakarta: LkiS, 2009); Ronny Agustinus, ed. *Taring Padi, Seni Membongkar Tirani* (Yogyakarta: Lumbung Press, 2011).

[35] FX Harsono and Amanda Katherine Rath, *Repetition/position/FX Harsono,* (Magelang, Central Java, Indonesia: Langgeng Art Foundation, 2010); Amanda Katherine Rath, "On the 'Work' of Art", in *15 Years Cemeti Art House: Exploring Vacuum, 1988-2003* (Yogyakarta: Cemeti Art House, 2003), pp. 94-102.

To develop my understanding of the social and historical context, where possible I have sought resources related directly to visual arts and from Indonesian scholars. Some of the most detailed discussions of the social, political and cultural contexts in Indonesia during the *Orde Lama* (Old Order) – the period of President Sukarno's leadership from 1945 through to the mid-1960s – related to literature, but are also relevant (and often linked) to visual arts practice. Many manifestos and creeds were issued by artists and collectives during this time, and these are explored in more detail in Chapter 1. These debates and declarations on the shaping of Indonesian culture give evidence that the development of originary art discourses, drawn from endogenous and exogenous sources, was a strong feature in Indonesia's first three decades. The importance of these originary discourses in post-colonial nations like Indonesia has been noted by Clark, who draws attention to their role in voicing (possibly pre-existing) "parallel or alternative modernities". Chapter 2 explores some of these originary discourses, and their ongoing significance is demonstrated throughout the dissertation.

From the *Orde Baru* (New Order, 1966–98) there are few texts from inside Indonesia that address participatory art, with the work of Sanento Yuliman a notable exception (although Yuliman does not address Lekra in detail, probably due to active state repression of leftist ideology). Other exceptions include a number of texts published by artists involved in the GSRBI in the 1970s and 1980s, and the Binal Experimental Arts exhibition in the early 1990s. Many of these texts were published in widely circulated newspapers such as *Kedaulatan Rakyat (The People's Sovereignty)* and *TEMPO (TIME)*. In Chapter 2, I address some key examples of these texts further and analyse the role they have played in positioning participatory art in Indonesia.

Outside of Indonesia, Brita Miklouho-Maklai investigated socially-engaged practices and philosophies from 1966 to 1990, focusing largely on GSRBI and the work of (now deceased) artist Semsar Siahaan.[36] Throughout the 1990s, increased regional activity and exhibitions resulted in a number of catalogue essays and journal articles of relevance. From this period there are a great many texts that focus solely on the object-based practices of Indonesian artists, including those mentioned in this

[36] Brita Miklouho-Maklai, *Exposing Society's Wounds, Some Aspects of Contemporary Art Since 1966*, (Adelaide: Flinders University of South Australia, 1991).

dissertation, but few attend to their (locally) well-known participatory projects. Again there are some exceptions, including writing on Heri Dono and ARX by curator Pamela Zeplin.[37] After the fall of the *Order Baru* (New Order, 1966–98), the field of participatory art practice opened up in Indonesia. The *Art and Human Rights* exhibition held in Canberra in the early 2000s was among the first to foreground artists with participatory and socially-engaged practices, including many from the Asian region. An associated publication and conference expanded the scholarly field.[38] Overall, however, the amount of secondary resources available to the English language reader interested in learning more about a broad range of participatory arts practice in Indonesia, or indeed anywhere outside of the Americas and Europe, is limited.

By and large, the texts discussed above focus on the adoption of society as a theme for or subject of artistic practice. Although useful in understanding some of the motivations and manifestations of artists' ideas, they have limited relevance in addressing participatory art as such. What is required is a philosophical theory that is broad enough to make sense of the diversity of participatory practice and its relationship to studio practice, and to describe its position within these constructions around socially-engaged practice and other practices in Indonesian art history. This dissertation is, in part, a step towards the construction of such a theory.

0.3 Research methodologies

Bishop contends that methodological readings of socially-engaged art demand a sociological approach.[39] In building a picture of art practice in Indonesia, I have considered specific artists and artworks as well as the historical, structural, social and institutional background to artists' work. This includes: the broader field of contemporary art in global contexts, in which Indonesian art is inevitably implicated; the national and regional context; provincial and local cultural permutations; and importantly the "art scene", the institutions, galleries, museums, collectors, curators,

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[37] Pamela Zeplin, "The ARX Experiment, Perth, 1987–1999: Communities, Controversy & Regionality", paper presented at the *Australian Council of University Art and Design Schools* (Edith Cowan University, University of Western Australia, Curtin University and Central TAFE, 2005); "Winged Horse Dreaming: Heri Dono in Adelaide" in *The Dream Republic*, ed. Pamela Zeplin and Jim Supangkat (Adelaide: South Australian School of Art Gallery, 2007).

[38] Caroline Turner and Nancy Sever, eds., *Witnessing to Silence: Art and Human Rights* (Canberra: Australian National University School of Art Gallery, 2003).

[39] Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*. pp. 6-7.

theorists, critics, art workers and so on, which play a role in disseminating, guiding, funding and exhibiting particular modes of praxis.[40]

In undertaking this research I have also been conscious of my own positions as both an artist and a researcher. Furthermore, my studio research for this PhD also explores the question of how individual and participatory practice can be read with one practice. My dual position as a practising artist and art researcher during my time in the field gave me a perspective grounded in a familiarity with the challenges and obstacles inherent in this kind of art practice in Indonesia. Thus, the perspective on participatory and individual art presented in this dissertation is grounded in experiences of practice and production as I witnessed them. I have constructed contemporary case studies from observation, participation and conversations with artists, and contextualised them through analysis of the social and historical contexts from which they emerge.

The artists addressed in the case studies represent a diverse range of practices that combine participatory and individual approaches. Before the going in to the field I identified a number of senior artists to approach; I selected emerging artists during my field research based on recommendations from curators and other artists. From an initial list of around a dozen artists, I researched the practices of eight, and selected five as case studies for this dissertation. Some of these artists, such as Tisna Sanjaya and Arahmaiani, are well-known internationally, yet their participatory practices are not widely documented or critiqued. I focus particularly on individual artists rather than artist collectives in order to map the different ways artists formulate individual and participatory practices. Furthermore, looking at individual artists who combine both of these practices in Indonesia demands (as it does in the broader literature) a re-evaluation of modernist discourses. It enables a critical deconstruction of the apparent binaries of individual and participatory art without deferring to stereotypes of Eastern communitarianism and Western individualism.

In 1995 Hal Foster argued persuasively against the artist as ethnographer, identifying a tendency among artists working with ethnic and culturally sited communities to make assumptions about the political transformativity and alterity of their subjects. This

[40] In Indonesia this is usually referred to as the *medan sosial seni rupa* – the social scene of visual arts. A comprehensive analysis of this "social scene" can be found in Andryanto Rikrik Kusmara, "Medium Seni Dalam Medan Sosial Seni Rupa Kontemporar Indonesia", 2011, Bandung (unpublished thesis).

alterity, as a key aspect of anthropology, is what Foster contends draws artists to the "quasi-ethnographic" turn, fulfilling a desire to "self-otherise". In Foster's reading there are three main assumptions that drive the ethnographic art projects: that artistic transformation creates political transformation and that it originates from elsewhere; that the other is always outside and also the site of subversion; and lastly that:

> … if the invoked artist is not perceived as socially and/or culturally other, he or she has but limited access to this transformative alterity, and, more, that if he or she is perceived as other, he or she has automatic access to it.[41]

This argument that artists are attempting to exploit the other in the search for self-actualisation echoes literary theorist Edward Said's *Orientalism*, a most influential and formative text for those in any field of study related to post-colonial nations like Indonesia.[42] Foster and Said's arguments here present limitations for artists who seek to address cultural or ethnic issues (from their own or other cultures). One of the major issues both texts raise is the problem of representation – or, more specifically, on whose behalf artists speak. Which institutions, formal or otherwise, lie behind artists' work and thus influence the representational forms that emerge? This is salient in the Indonesian context, where artists have historically been closely aligned with social movements, political parties and non-government organisations in various periods.

While these particular texts by Foster and Said create intellectual obstacles for the kind of research I am attempting here, a more recent position helps to locate the artist-as-researcher in the context of a cultural "other", specifically in Southeast Asian civilisation. Indonesia specialist Adrian Vickers argues that Southeast Asian studies need to return to these studies of representation:

> Examining the civilisation of Southeast Asia thus requires complex forms of cultural history and anthropology…A Western-oriented model of change would perhaps locate forms of modernity as a response to the West, but such an approach ignores Southeast Asian agency. A post-Saidian analysis needs to incorporate Southeast Asian modernities as Southeast Asian epistemologies...The way into these civilizational forms is a study of representations, which can be

[41] Hal Foster, "The Artist as Ethnographer?", in *The Traffic in Culture: Refiguring Art and Anthropology*, ed. George E. Marcus (Berkely and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995), pp. 302-309.
[42] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (USA: Pantheon Books, 1978).

> philological or art historical. The study of Southeast Asian civilisation should take as its object both high and popular forms of culture.[43]

In an effort to foreground this Southeast Asian agency – or in this case, Indonesian agency – I have focused my research of secondary resources mainly (but not exclusively) on Indonesian writers.[44] Furthermore, to return to Vickers' comments, the distinction between high and popular culture is one of the very aspects that Indonesian artists and writers perceive as dominant in "Western" art history and attempt to distance themselves from through participatory art and social engagement.[45] Artists, from early modernist painter Soedjojono through to GSRBI, and writers like Sanento Yuliman, have valorised art that engages with the vernacular of lay society. Yuliman also attempted to develop an Indonesian epistemology of art by deliberately eschewing almost all reference to art discourses from outside Indonesia.[46] He produced a body of work of the kind that art historian John Clark describes as "originary works for the long-term term and, in most cases, almost wholly endogenous genealogies of the modern".[47] This dissertation is heavily indebted to Yuliman's historical accounts, theories and critical frameworks.

Thus I argue for an ethnographic approach to this research. As an artist-researcher, the ethnographic field research provides a methodology that requires both an immersive, emic approach and a distanced, etic phase. In the emic phase, I took a reflexive, intuitive approach. I participated in or assisted with artists' projects, attended events and devoted considerable hours to simply being in the same space and time as the artists, observing and recording photographic, video and audio documentation of their interactions with participants. Questions, where they arose, were unstructured, formulated in response to the situation at hand. This contingent approach, dependent on the artists' process, is intended to understand how the artists see their own

[43] Adrian Vickers, "Southeast Asian Studies after Said", *Arts: The Journal of the Sydney University Arts Association* 31 (2012), pp. 68-69.

[44] In this I am indebted to the Indonesian Visual Arts Archive, which provides a comprehensive digitised collection of Indonesian language sources, many of which are being translated for the first time. I was a part of the translation team for the Indonesia Visual Art Archive and Asia Art Archive Translation Project. See http://www.aaa.org.hk/IVAA_TranslationProject.

[45] See for instance, "Manifesto Gerakan Seni Rupa Baru 1987" in Jim Supangkat et al., *Seni Rupa Baru Proyek 1: Pasaraya Dunia Fantasi*, catalogue for exhibition at Taman Ismail Marzuki (Jakarta: Percetakan Gramedia, 1987), pp. 4-6.

[46] "Ihwal Kritik Seni Rupa Yang Berwibawa" in Enin Supriyanto, *Setelah Aktivism* (Yogyakarta: Hyphen, 2015).

[47] John Clark, "The Worlding of the Asian Modern", pp. 69-70.

practice, rather than how it is experienced by participants. Contingency is particularly evident where the artists' voices emerged. As a rule, interviews involved minimal questions, and artists tended to speak at length on – and off – topic, with relatively little input from myself. As a result, quotations from artists included in the body of the dissertation are rarely accompanied by questions, as they seldom relate to a specific query.

Researcher Alexandra Crosby described a similar methodology for her study of festivals and environmental activism in Java, which she tied to *nongkrong.*[48] This term loosely translates to "hanging out", but occupies a more specific dialogical and sociological (and often gendered) space in contemporary culture, and in the Indonesian art world. It also relates closely to the practice of conversation as a method or medium in art practice. Post-colonial theorist Homi Bhabha identifies conversation as useful because of its contingent and uncertain approach:

> What kind of knowledge do we expect from the practice and representation of art? How does conversation change our relation, as artists and audiences, to cultural experience and the social transformation of our times?[49]

Using conversation rather than structured interviews in data collection offers research subjects more agency in negotiating the ideas contained therein. The result may be more speculative but this creates productive fissures from which I generate new approaches to ideas of what participation means in art practice in Indonesia and in the broader context of contemporary art.

The etic phase provides a counterpoint, and requires periods of concentration on the reading and writing of theory. In my methodology, field notes were a part of this analytical period, and were written soon after, but not during, field activities. Writing requires a self-distancing from (art) activity, providing space to reflect on my experience of artists' practice. The analytical period contains tensions and contingencies as well, and the task of reading proved endless. Added to this was the evolution of the field as I wrote. Participation, art in society, community art, art as an urban tactic, the commons: these were some of the themes of major exhibitions held

[48] Alexandra Lara Crosby, "Festivals in Java: Localising Cultural Activism and Environmental Politics, 2005–2010" (University of Technology, Sydney, 2013), pp. 69-70.
[49] Homi K. Bhabha, "Conversational Art", pp. 40-41.

during my two years of field research, evidence that focus on participatory art in Indonesia is intensifying. Consequently, discourses and practice remain in a state of negotiation. While the etic position of analysis from a critical distance may aim for greater impartiality, it nonetheless remains a dynamic and responsive practice in this field.

From the merging of the etic and emic positions, a third space is generated from which this dissertation emerges (much as my artwork emerges from a personal experience of a broader social reality). The result is not purely art history, art theory or ethnography; it is unavoidably sociological due to the very nature of the kind of art practice being explored. In short, reflecting the field in which the research is located, the methodology I have adopted is responsive and contingent, designed to analyse a field which is continuously negotiating/renegotiating cultural and artistic practices and their role within society.

0.4 Writing the argument

The focus on social responsibility combined with artists' autonomy in the early nationalist period (1930s to 1950s) created a role in which artists were seen to be interpreters of society's needs. This later evolved into attempts to broaden artists' horizons and their ability to advocate on behalf of "the (marginalised) people" – the *rakyat* – through practices like *turba* (going down to the people) in the 1950s and 1960s. It is important to note that in the drive to establish a position for art that defended the rights of the people, the rights of women were not an abiding concern for artists or art discourses. This too establishes a pattern of representation and absence which remains glaringly obvious in Indonesian art practice today, where women artists remain a small minority.

By the mid 1970s, then through to the 1990s, and in concert with increasing interdisciplinary practice and engagement with regional and international discourses – in sociology, education and development as well as art – artists evolved this focus on social responsibility. These evolved practices were directly aimed at conscientising the *rakyat* (the people) through the artist's direct participation in their lives, which in turn involved the *rakyat* creative practice as critical thinking. Alongside this ideology of

conscientisation, the same artists maintained their autonomous individual practices, experimenting with installation, performance and other more traditional forms such as print, painting and sculpture. Some of the artists practising in this way founded what has become Indonesia's art establishment: galleries, residency programs, artist collectives, archives and biennales that have encouraged the continuance of this combination of individual and participatory practice. Many of these establishments consistently demand that artists demonstrate a relationship with society as well as their autonomous practice, and this will be examined further in Chapter 2.

This aesthetic regime, and its inherently conjunctive function, has developed in Indonesia over the past 10 years, especially among emerging artists, as the strands of responsibility and conscientisation have become interwoven with the material and conceptual experimentation of individual practice. This has resulted in less didactic and more open-ended participatory art than was practised by earlier generations: art that raises questions around the form and function of aesthetic practice. These questions resonate with, and indeed draw on discourses of participatory, relational and dialogical aesthetics, which, as mentioned earlier, have been widely debated in Europe and the USA in the last two decades, and in Indonesia in more recent times. I argue that these questions of form and function link today's artists back to the conjunctive autonomous and heteronomous practices, and the imperative to explore originary art discourses, which were established by the first artist-citizens of modern Indonesia. Nonetheless I also demonstrate that these contemporary explorations are conducted in a dialectical frame with earlier forms and discourses, and constantly challenge and subvert them.

0.5 Chapter outline

The main body of the dissertation is divided into two parts. **Part 1** contains social, historical, theoretical, cultural and contextual analyses relevant to the combined practice of participatory and individual art making in Indonesia. **Part 2** presents case studies drawn from the practices of contemporary Indonesian artists, and links them to the analyses in Part 1.

Chapter 1 initially sets out a theoretical framework for understanding participatory and individual practice in Indonesian art. I draw parallels between Yuliman's comprehensive analysis and speculations on the nature of Indonesian art practice –

especially his theory of a modernist "artistic ideology" of continuity rather than rupture – and Rancière's conception of the aesthetic regime, through which he questions the very existence of a modernist aesthetic built on rupture. I argue that the parallel between these two theories positions the aesthetic regime as an appropriate framework for understanding the development of participatory and individual practices in contemporary Indonesian art. I demonstrate how the aesthetic regime in Indonesia allows for a continuity of art practice that remains dynamic without necessitating the epistemological rupture that is often associated with participatory art.[50] The latter part of the chapter foregrounds Indonesian art history and practice – drawing attention to contested and supressed discourses, and to a lesser extent addresses global discourses on participatory practice. I describe how Indonesian art practices and discourses have developed alongside, and in response to, key historical periods and situations.

Chapter 2 focuses on cultural, institutional and discursive constructs that encourage artists to combine individual and participatory practice in the Indonesian context. First I look at several endogenous concepts of autonomy and heteronomy that are invoked in art practice: *jiwa ketok* (the visible soul), *turba* (going down below) and *gotong royong* (cooperative work). These concepts also raise the notion of artists' conscious participation in society as a source for their art, a concept which resonates through the case studies. Second, I analyse how discourses on participatory art were largely conceived and written outside of aesthetic considerations or art historical discourses, instead focusing on development theory and pedagogy. Referring initially to the writings of artist FX Harsono, I trace his analysis of a specific place for social engagement across Indonesian art history. I look at texts produced by Harsono and others on the work of Moelyono – Indonesia's most well-known exponent of participatory art practice – and argue that although participatory practice has been well-established in Indonesia since the early 1980s, it has been instrumentalised through discourses that serve and privilege non-art fields.

In **Chapter 3** I describe a network of institutions, artist-run initiatives, foundations, exhibitions and academic collectives that encourage, support and perpetuate practices

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[50] In this I echo Claire Bishop's contention that participatory art has been a feature of art practice throughout the 21st century. Bishop, *Artificial Hells; Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*.

that combine participatory and individual elements. I argue that these institutional and quasi-institutional infrastructures are important because they serve to perpetuate the artistic ideology of combined autonomy and heteronomy by linking different generations of Indonesian artists through mentorship and curatorial guidance. They are also instrumental in setting the direction of discourse by developing originary practices and theories. An example is the Yogyakarta Biennale Foundation's evocation of the 1955 Asia-Africa Conference of non-aligned nations in its 10-year *Equator Series*, or ART|JOG's 2015 art fair titled *Fluxus: The Unending Loop Between Art and Society*. The endogenous concepts first described in Chapter 2 are directly raised in the forums described in Chapter 3, demonstrating their ongoing relevance.

In **Chapter 4** the first case studies invert the dominant construction of participatory art, developing arguments on notions of artists' participation in society that first appeared in Chapter 2. I look at the work of painter, performer and installation artist Arahmaiani (b. 1961), and that of younger artist and activist Made Bayak (b. 1980). I compare how both artists position themselves in relation to civil and social organisations, and the influence of this kind of participation on their work. Arahmaiani and Bayak both see their role in society as two-pronged, contributing creative ideas and opinions as "public intellectuals" and as artists making work in response to society's issues. In Arahmaiani's relationship with a local Islamic community she has only intellectual engagement, but uses products made by artisans at the school in her own work as a signifier of local genius. However, Bayak's performance work, which is linked specifically to a particular protest movement, demonstrates a comparatively more tangible and concrete reciprocity between individual and participatory practice. His *Plasticology* project includes his individual paintings and an ongoing campaign of workshops using the same distinctive creative process in order to disseminate environmental awareness through fundamentally participatory approaches.

Chapter 5 demonstrates how I Wayan Suklu's (b. 1967) personal-interactive-social construction provides his art practice with a frame that echoes the autonomous-heteronomous construction but adds a middle ground. His work in painting and drawing bleeds into a particular participatory project involving participants in "automatic" drawing on novels, which then feed back into Suklu's own practice. His

interactive works engender aesthetic experience by inviting other practitioners and audiences to enter and respond physically to installations. Suklu's self-declared influences also combine his early training in Balinese modernist painting's distinct formula of individual expression and meditative repetition with the Western abstract formalism and expressionism that he studied at art school. Additionally, in recent years Suklu has embraced philosopher Bruno Latour's actor-network theory.[51] In his expressive paintings, Suklu embraces repetitious methods and non-representational forms to create a "discrepant abstraction".[52] I argue that Suklu's practice subverts stereotypes of Asian communitarianism and Western individualism by drawing theoretical influence for his socially-oriented practice from a Western theorist and his commitment to individual expression from Balinese modernist art practices.

Chapter 6 looks at the multivalent practice of Tisna Sanjaya (b. 1958), in which he utilises high art and popular culture to involve different audiences in his social and environmental activism. Tisna's etchings, paintings and performances have long been renowned for their theatrical power and didactic qualities, and also for their stylistic references to German printmakers and the European avant-garde, referencing Käthe Kollwitz and Joseph Beuys among others. However, the aesthetic material that Tisna more commonly draws on stems from his own Sundanese (West Javanese) culture. By using specifically Sundanese cultural tropes, both from modern and traditional vocabularies, Tisna directs his environmental and social messages to specific audiences in West Java. In his exploration of *seni reak* (a Sundanese performance tradition), Tisna produces etchings and an installation for "high art" audiences in a gallery setting and a vox-pop style television show, reviving a popular folk character for a mass audience. Tisna produces individual and participatory works out of traditional and modern sources because it expands the didactic power of his work across economic and class boundaries. Thus, he demonstrates the continuing relevance of Yuliman's artistic ideology of continuity and the aesthetic regime in Indonesian art.

Finally, in **Chapter 7**, I turn to the work of Elia Nurvista (b. 1983) from Yogyakarta. Elia often uses food as a medium for her artistic explorations, continuing a tradition of

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[51] Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social – An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).
[52] I borrow this term from Kobena Mercer et al., *Discrepant Abstraction* (London: MIT Press and InIVA, 2006).

alimentary art making that has been developing in Indonesia for at least two decades. For Elia, food is not a site for the creation of utopian interstices but a site for subversion and questioning around issues of authority, othering and identity. Working in rural and urban communities to develop new recipes, she draws directly on her readings of contemporary texts on participation and relational aesthetics. The participatory works described in this chapter also invoke participatory art practices established in different phases of Indonesia's art history, not as homage but rather as an attempt to recast the relationship between artist and society as co-constructers of new knowledge. I also analyse a print and video installation that presents a fictional narrative around colonial alimentary customs and domestic servitude, deconstructing received understandings of the world and our subjective experiences of it. I argue that Elia's artworks provide us with a classic example of the aesthetic regime and the formation of originary discourses.

In my **Conclusion** I bring the scholarship of Part 1 and Part 2 together to highlight key findings drawn from a comparison of the diverse practices in individual and participatory art evident among the artists described in earlier chapters. I link specific practices and theories described in Part 1 to discourses from inside and outside of Indonesia, and apply these to particular works discussed in the case studies in Part 2.

I contend that the combination of participatory and individual practice in Indonesia remains strongly influenced by originary discourses combining autonomy and heteronomy, which were set out at the advent of modernist art discourses in Indonesia. Yet through practice, artists continue to test these values against exogenous art discourses. This continual discursive and practical testing of the endogenous against the exogenous is embedded in Indonesian art discourses. In this way, Indonesian artists are developing new and varied responses to early Indonesian forms and discourses that sought to conjoin autonomy and heteronomy, and are claiming a place for distinctive practices that should rightly be recognised at the forefront of contemporary art practice in the aesthetic regime.

PART 1:

Historical, Social and Cultural Constructs Supporting Participatory and Individual Art Practice in Indonesia

Chapter 1

The Indonesian context: unconventional modernisms and concealed discourses

> If there was a framework that proposed clear and detailed characteristics of Indonesian-ness, a proud trademark of Indonesian painting, there would still be artists who would deliberately deviate from it, just to prove that they can be different…But why one framework? Why not several frameworks, why not many? Is it not possible that Indonesia contains rich and unknown facets and concerns, increasing numbers of facets and concerns, including those that are mutually oppositional?
>
> Sanento Yuliman, 1969[53]

In order to answer the research question "Why and how do so many Indonesian artists combine participatory and individual artistic practices?" a philosophical theory must be broad enough to understand the diversity of participatory practices and their relationship to equally diverse individual practices, and specific enough to analyse their form and function within Indonesian art. In the first section of this chapter, I propose a theoretical framework that underpins both the discursive argument and the ethnographical research set out in this dissertation. As I explained in the Introduction, this framework draws primarily on the ideas of Sanento Yuliman (1941–1992) and Jacques Rancière (b. 1940) to form a theory applicable to the historical and contemporary contexts that lead many contemporary Indonesian artists to embrace individual and participatory artwork in their practice. I argue Yuliman's theory of continuity in the "artistic ideology" forms a binding knot between autonomy and heteronomy – the same knot that Ranciere describes as the "aesthetic regime" – establishing the foundations from which artistic practice in Indonesia is increasingly involved in the lives of the people. Yuliman's artistic ideology emphasises the experiential and inherently autonomous nature of art, which penetrates established art "categories" and is receptive to heteronomous influences. This is mirrored in

[53] Sanento Yuliman, "Mencari Indonesia Dalam Seni Lukis Indonesia (first published Budaya Dyaja 1969)", p. 67.

Rancière's alternative to the "incoherent label 'modernity'": an aesthetic regime based on the inseparability of autonomy and heteronomy. In embracing Yuliman and Rancière's suspicion of the "modernist" label I do not claim that Indonesian art then or now is not modern and experimental. On the contrary, Indonesian modern art has been inextricably and explicitly tied to encounters with modernity from its advent. However, these ties manifest a double bind, equal parts resistance to Western modernist ideologies and valorisation of artistic autonomy. I argue Yuliman's artistic ideology and Rancière's aesthetic regime provide a framework for understanding the continuity of Indonesian art practice, which simultaneously encompasses traditional and modern, academic and vernacular, endogenous and exogenous, individual and participatory practices.

After developing this convergent theoretical framework through readings of Yuliman and Rancière, in the remainder of this chapter I trace the narrative of the "multi-modernisms" of Indonesian art, from its developments alongside the emergence of the Indonesian nation-state through to the contemporary context.[54] Firstly I trace a chronology of Indonesian art from the struggle against Dutch colonisation through to Japanese occupation, describing the discourses and practices from that time. I focus on ideas around social realism and artistic autonomy, which continue to be formative on the trajectory of Indonesian art.[55] Cultural workers – artists, authors, dramaturges – played an extremely important and visible role in the imagining of the new, independent Indonesian nation and in defining unified culture over the nations first two decades. In fact, Benedict Anderson used the role of literature (and print

[54] Curator and writer Jim Supangkat uses the phrase "multi-modernism" to describe the diversity of approaches to modernism outside the Western canon in "Multiculturalism/multimodernsim", in *Traditions/Tensions: Contemporary Art In Asia* ed. A. Poshyananda (New York: Asia Society Galleries & Sydney, The Fine Arts Press, 1996.) Others similar ideas appear in Geeta Kapur, "Recent Developments of 'Southern' Contemporary Art; avant-garde art practice in the emerging context" (paper presented at the Unity in Diversity in International Art, Jakarta, 1995); *When Was Modernism: Essays on contemporary cultural practice in India* (New Delhi: Tulika Books, 2000); John Clark, *Modernity in Asian Art* (Wild Peony Pty Ltd, 1993); John Clark "The Worlding of the Asian Modern", pp. 67-88; Kobena Mercer et al., *Discrepant Abstraction* (London: MIT Press and InIVA, 2006); John Clark, *Modern Asian Art* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1998); Alison Carroll, *The Revolutionary Century: Art in Asia 1900 to 2000* (Victoria: Macmillan Art Publishing, 2010).

[55] "Seratus tahun untuk satu atau dua wacana" in Enin Supriyanto, *Setelah Aktivism* (Yogyakarta: Hyphen, 2015).

technology) in the imagining of an invisible political alliance between Indonesians of vastly different backgrounds as an example in his seminal treatise on nationalism.[56]

I then follow this trajectory forward to identify how revolutionary modernism was institutionalised in collectives and organisations like the *Lembaga Kebudayaan Rakyat* (Institute of People's Culture, known as Lekra) and the art academies. These institutions perpetuated, and also resisted, the dominant discursive paradigms that focused on social realism and representation of the *rakyat,* or "the people". The dominance of the left came to an abrupt and violent end in 1965–66, as the oppressive New Order regime took control. In the third section, I describe how this affected artistic practice and discourse over the subsequent three decades, ushering in new explorations of abstraction and social engagement. These apparently diverse approaches often appeared within individual artists' practice. Furthermore, late in this period independent contemporary art spaces like Cemeti Art House began to influence the development of art, and regional initiatives also began to make a mark. Throughout this chapter's selective examination of Indonesian art history and theory, I demonstrate how the dual foci on social responsibility and individual autonomy, and the tension between perceived exogenous and endogenous discourses have continued to play out.

1.1 Sanento Yuliman and the aesthetic regime of continuity

Sanento Yuliman's undergraduate studies were undertaken at the Bandung Institute of Technology and his doctoral dissertation (unpublished) examined the role of Soedjojono and in the genesis of contemporary Indonesian painting, conferred by the E*cole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Socia*les, Paris in 1981.[57] But before his studies in France, Yuliman was building a reputation as an art critic with a deep understanding of Indonesian art history and a unique perspective on the genesis of Indonesian modernism. In the late 1960s, Yuliman was already publishing carefully worded critiques of the trajectory of socially engaged art in Indonesia; his writing

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[56] Anderson included an excerpt from a serialised story published in 1924 by nationalist-communist Mas Marco Kartodikromo titled *Semarang Hitam* (Black Semarang). Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, pp.30-33.

[57] My preliminary inquiries have not revealed whether Yuliman and Rancière were known to each other or each other's work.

simultaneously highlighted the ethical responsibilities felt by Indonesian artists as well as the pressure that dominant leftist ideology applied to art practice before 1965 (this period is discussed in more detail in section 1.3).[58]

Yuliman's premature death in 1992 cut short the invaluable contribution he was making to the establishment of objective and knowledgeable art criticism in Indonesia, a field he claimed lacked purpose and originality. Fortunately, by 1970 Yuliman had already begun the task of formulating an approach to the understanding of Indonesian art in all its forms and setting the parameters for the necessary steps to a rigorous history of Indonesian art.

In "Seni Lukis di Indonesia: Persoalan-Persoalannya, Dulu dan Sekarang" (Painting in Indonesia: Issues Past and Present) Yuliman demonstrated how discussions and arguments thus far on Indonesian art (to 1970) revolved around one principle, that is, "modernism", which, Yuliman contended, was rooted in "a broader reality, changes in society and culture that are occurring in Indonesia and the rest of the world"; in other words, modernisation.[59] Yuliman identified three main stances within modernism: the artist as the centre of creative energy; the autonomy of art (especially from political influence); and the opening up of art practice to all traditions, rather than its categorisation by culture. These stances, he argued, gave rise to the *Polemik Kebudayaan* (Cultural Polemic) that revolutionary intellectuals engaged in in the 1930s: how can modern art that is focused on the individual artist be of use, benefit or meaning to broader society? How can art drawn from the treasury of the world's art still base itself on the territory and interests of the nation?

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[58] Yuliman, "Mencari Indonesia Dalam Seni Lukis Indonesia (first published Budaya Dyaja 1969)", p. 65. In this article Yuliman quotes literary critic Rivai Apin's statement: "I feel that this disease emerged from the perception that if they didn't paint the revolution no-one would say they were revolutionaries, and if they didn't paint the common people then they weren't socialists." However, Yuliman does not directly discuss Lekra, probably because he wrote during a time when discussions of leftist ideology were censored by the New Order government. Later, Kenneth George and Astri Wright's research into an A.D. Pirous painting *The Sun After September 1965* (1968) confirmed the threat that artists who were not engaged in social realism or other Lekra sanctioned artistic pursuits perceived themselves to be under. George, "Some Things That Have Happened to the Sun after September 1965: Politics and the Interpretation of an Indonesian Painting." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 39, no. 4 (1997), pp. 603-34; A. Wright, *Soul, Spirit, and Mountain: Preoccupations of Contemporary Indonesian Painters* (Oxford University Press Kuala Lumpur, 1994), p. 163.

[59] Sanento Yuliman, "Seni Lukis di Indonesia: Persoalan-Persoalannya, dulu dan sekarang (Budaya Djawa, Dec 1970)", in *Dua Seni Rupa, Sepilihan Tulisan Sanento Yuliman*, ed. Hasan Asikin (Jakarta: Yayasan Kalam, 2001), pp. 70-71.

Yuliman deconstructed these questions, linking them back to one social factor: that modern art in Indonesia appeared in the midst of living art traditions.[60] These traditions come from the people, are widely understood and have functional cross-overs into many social practices. Yuliman claimed that traditional art is drawn from much narrower developments than modern art and that those who criticise Western modern art's (apparent) isolation from society are actually looking for art that can be more easily and widely understood. In turn this relates to the need of a developing society like Indonesia to utilise all resources to achieve concrete change. This includes art, which is "called on and demanded to join in the production of direct and immediate effects of praxis".[61] Yuliman was broadly sympathetic to this understanding but saw it as a kind of trap, intended to create a singular vision of Indonesian modern art. To question modern art, he argued, we must make astute empirical observations of artworks and artistic practice rather than turning to *a priori* desires and ideas. In this way, Indonesia could break out of the cycle of questions regarding modernism and its relationship to society and "give birth to new perspectives, new knowledge, and new questions".[62]

Much of Yuliman's writings appeared as individual articles in magazines and journals such as *Budaya Djaya,* and a series of exhibition reviews published over 10 years in *TEMPO.* In 2001 a collection of his most prominent articles, and some unpublished works found in his archives after his death, were edited by Asikin Hasan, and published as *Dua Seni Rupa: Sepilihan Tulisan Sanento Yuliman* (Two Visual Arts: A Selection of Sanento Yuliman's Essays). The biography included in the book points out that although Yuliman published two books, he had yet to reach his full potential:

> His search for factual justifications made him cautious about drawing conclusions. Because of this, his passing meant Indonesian modern art suffered a loss of standard…Today there is almost no foundation for the constellation of opinions in Indonesian art. There is no

[60] Similar arguments have been made around art practice in India, see: Subramanyan, Kalpathi Ganpathi. *The Living Tradition: Perspectives on Modern Indian Art*, (Calcutta: Seagull Books, 1987).
[61] Yuliman, "Seni Lukis di Indonesia: Persoalan-Persoalannya, dulu dan sekarang (Budaya Djawa, Dec 1970)", pp. 75-76.
[62] Ibid., p. 77.

aesthetic basis, no acknowledged version of history, and no influential theories have emerged.[63]

While considerable advances have been made in the last 15 years with the publication of journals, art historical essays and books as well as monographs on early artists, there remains a need for a comprehensive and empirically sound history of Indonesian art. *Dua Seni Rupa* takes its title from a paper Yuliman presented to the National Arts Symposium, Surabaya Arts Board in July 1984, which brought together many strands of Yuliman's thinking in a description of Indonesian art cast as widely as possible, including the "majority of material culture, namely all sections that treat form as an important aspect".[64] The significance of this title reveals Yuliman's prevailing concern with the deconstruction of hierarchies of art, both those borrowed from the "Western" canon and those endemic to the feudalist values of Indonesia's diverse traditional cultures. This is also evident in his involvement with *Gerakan Seni Rupa Baru Indonesia* (GSRBI), on which he bestowed the role of renewing Indonesian art.

In the essays republished in *Dua Seni Rupa*, Yuliman was determined to point out the instability and inseparability of the hierarchies of high and low art, and their mutual influence on each other.[65] For instance he pointed out that the aesthetic reproduced in the landscape paintings on *becaks* (trishaws) is indebted to the *mooi Indië* (beautiful Indies) paintings that S. Soedjojono rejected, and that the so-called tradition of glass painting is a relatively recent phenomenon.[66] I argue that this, among other elements of Yuliman's discourse on the development of Indonesian art (in particular his concerns with continuity) align with, yet pre-date, the publication of Rancière's philosophical theory of aesthetic revolution. Rancière's reading of Schiller's *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Mankind* yields the following contention:

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[63] Asikin Hasan's biographical note on Yuliman, in *Dua Seni Rupa: Sepilihan Tulisan Sanento Yuliman* (Jakarta: Yayasan Kalam, 2001), p. 314.
[64] "Dua Seni Rupa (Paper for the Simposium Nasional Seni Rupa, at the Dewan Kesenian Surabaya, 1984)", p. 24.
[65] It is important to note here that Yuliman's distinctions between high and low art differ from those conventionally used in the Western canon. Yuliman links low art to the economic disadvantage of its producers (artisans). He locates design, including product and industrial design, among the high arts because of their functional relationship to the middle and upper classes. These class oriented distinctions between his and low art are in contrast to the (much debated) Western construction of high art as ethically and aesthetically transformative (i.e. educational) and low art as commercially oriented and/or functional.
[66] Yuliman, "Dua Seni Rupa (Paper for the Simposium Nasional Seni Rupa, at the Dewan Kesenian Surabaya, 1984)", p. 29.

> ...there exists a specific sensory experience—the aesthetic—that holds the promise of both a new world of Art and a new life for individuals and the community.[67]

Rancière describes this as both a statement (the existence of the aesthetic) *and* a promise (the new world of art and life), drawing particular attention to the conjunction "and". The "and", Rancière argues, signifies an ongoing relationship between autonomy and heteronomy. He proposes that in a work of art, its autonomy is dismissed by the heterogeneity of the aesthetic experience of the work of art. According to Rancière the construction of this "aesthetic regime" applies not only to art, but also to the experience of living, in other words, the "art of living":

> The aesthetic regime asserts the absolute singularity of art and, at the same time, destroys any pragmatic criterion for isolating this singularity. It simultaneously establishes the autonomy of art and the identity of its forms with the forms that life uses to shape itself.[68]

Yuliman noted in a 1986 speech that "…differentiation or sharp oppositions between fine arts and functional arts…are seen by many aestheticians as without foundation, merely a matter of the emphasis on particular functions," effectively arguing against the divisions modernism constructs between the "arts".[69] While Rancière specifically refers to the Western art canon in his writing, I argue that the aesthetic regime, especially in its alignment with Yuliman's thinking, opens the way for all forms of aesthetic experience, including those that have previously been called "multi-modernism", derivation or post-modernism, to be considered in a manner that accounts for their historical and contextual specificity, without excessive dependence on particular historical moments in that same Western canon. Together, Yuliman artistic ideology and Ranciere's aesthetic regime allow us to conceptualise Indonesian art that exists alongside *and* in tension with tradition, an art that may address both sublime divinity and the mundane aesthetic experiences of the everyday.

The aesthetic regime simultaneously encompasses all experience as potentially aesthetic, and contracts the multiple categorisations of plural "arts" into the singular

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[67] Jacques Rancière, "The Aesthetic Revolution and its Outcomes", p. 133.
[68] Rancière, "The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible, tr. Gabriel Rockhill", (London: Continuum Publishing, 2004), p. 23.
[69] Yuliman, "Seni Rupa Dalam Kehidupan Kita Sekarang (oration at the opening of the Senate at Institut Teknologi Bandung 9 October 1986)", p. 41.

"art", neither high nor low, painting nor craft, material nor conceptual.[70] Rancière argues that the aesthetic regime is in fact the true name for the "incoherent label 'modernity'", calling into question modernism's principles of rupture between the old and the new, the figurative and non-figurative, representation and anti-representation. He argues that "the notion of modernity thus seems to have been deliberately invented to prevent a clear understanding of the transformations of art and its relationships with the other spheres of collective experience."[71] In his *Estetik Yang Merabunkan* (Aesthetics that Blind) essay, Yuliman criticises the tendency of contemporary painters and historians to ignore the painting traditions of Indonesia's past, as well as current practices like glass painting among "commoners". He complains that "the belief that there is only one frame of reference (perspective, values, and opinions) that is right and legitimate for art – a universal frame of reference – has contaminated our vision."[72]

I argue that it is Yuliman's complex construction of "continuity", however, that prefigures most strongly Rancière's aesthetic regime, thus forming the basis for the use of that regime as an analytical tool for development of participatory art in Indonesia. Whereas some claimed the advent of abstraction was a rupture in the otherwise solid commitment to social realism, Yuliman saw the seeds sown for abstraction in the birth of one of the earliest art collectives, the *Persatuan Ahli Gambar Indonesia* (Association of Indonesian Draughtsmen, known as Persagi and discussed in section 1.2 of this chapter).[73] Although the artists of Persagi did not make abstract paintings, the basic ideas for this were implicit in their thinking. Yuliman quoted painter Basuki Resobowo, who in 1949 determined the difference between the teapot and the painting of the teapot as lying in their functions. "The teapot on the canvas has other obligations…the line and colour that we intend to arrange harmoniously (a unity

[70] The aesthetic regime is one of three regimes that Rancière identifies in art practice, the other two being the "ethical regime" in which works of art "are viewed as images to be questioned for their truth and for their effect on the ethos of individuals and the community"; and the "representational regime" in which "works of art belong to the sphere of imitation, and so are no longer subject to the laws of truth or the common rules of utility." These two regimes represent sole commitment to heteronomy (ethical regime), and complete autonomy (representational regime). The aesthetic regime takes up the middle ground. Jacques Rancière, "The Aesthetic Revolution and its Outcomes", p. 135.
[71] Rancière, "The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible", tr. Gabriel Rockhill, p. 26.
[72] Yuliman, "Estetik Yang Merabunkan (TEMPO, 20 June 1987)", p. 22.
[73] On Abstraction as rupture, see for instance, Brita Miklouho-Maklai, *Exposing Society's Wounds, Some Aspects of Contemporary Art Since 1966*, p. 16-22.

of emotion) functions to fill the field of the canvas." This, wrote Yuliman, shows that "the development of painting in Indonesia has since Persagi, prepared the ideas and sensibilities – let's say it prepared the climate – for the development of a number of abstract paintings."[74]

Six years later, in a 1976 essay, Yuliman developed this point in his essay *Seni Lukis Baru Indonesia* (Indonesia's New Painting) shortly after the first GSRBI exhibition in Jakarta. This period also produced the strident 1974 Black December Statement, in which a number of art school students rejected the dominance of decorative painting, and saw the emergence of what Yuliman describes as anti-lyricism. He was concerned lest the development of abstraction distract from the continuity he identified as consistent across abstraction and other forms. This he called an "artistic ideology" (we might read this as an "aesthetic"): a complexity of thought, attitude and emotion that is a shared basis for different individual practices and which extends across time periods. Yuliman contended that, firstly, this ideology is based on respect for the artist as an individual, free to choose his or her own style and form. Secondly, it holds the belief, passed on through the *sanggar* and institutions, that "visual elements and their arrangement, regardless of the object they depict, can evoke, declare or convey valuable emotions, feelings or artistic experiences." Yuliman provides evidence of the breadth of this theory through Soedjojono's *jiwa ketok* (visible soul) of the individual artist, which Soedjojono first wrote of in 1946, Basuki Resobowo's stance on feeling and painting in 1949, and Nashar's statement on the importance of the "how", and not the "what", in painting in 1963.[75]

I argue that this continuity can be extended to the shift towards what Yuliman calls anti-lyricism. This attempt by young artists to distance themselves from the emotion and poetry of form, which they saw as dominant in the art of the past, appeared before and during the 1970s in two forms. The first form was cool, mathematical, geometrical painting styles, including those of FX Harsono in the early 1970s.[76] In the

[74] Quoted in Yuliman, "Seni Lukis di Indonesia: Persoalan-Persoalannya, Dulu dan Sekarang (Budaya Djawa, Dec 1970)", pp. 72-73.
[75] Yuliman, "Seni Lukis Indonesia Baru (Dewan Kesenian Jakarta, 1976)", p. 93.
[76] Refer to the exegesis accompanying this dissertation for further analysis of Harsono's abstract tendencies.

second form, Yuliman points to a tendency towards actuality (what we might call "found objects") and concreteness:

> If lyricism filters and transforms experiences and emotions into the world of the imaginary, then through this tendency we see artists avoiding this filtering and transformation. It is not a picture of the objects on display, but rather the objects themselves. It is not the feeling of disgust that is drawn out and into the imagination, but an actual feeling of disgust, presented without distance, which makes people turn away in disgust...
> These artworks are not a slice of the imaginary world contemplated at a distance, but rather the concrete object which physically involves the viewer.[77]

In this analysis of GSRBI's exhibition, and another published as the essay "Perspektif Baru" (A New Perspective) in 1979, Yuliman contended that these artists were trying to leave behind traditions that located art within a literal and metaphorical "frame" that separated them from the sphere of lived experience.[78] This echoed and expanded on Soedjojono's declaration 30 years earlier that "high art is work based on our daily life transmuted by the artist himself who is immersed in it". However, in Yuliman's analysis of anti-lyricism, the need for transmutation into high art is removed. Twenty-six years after Yuliman, Rancière pushes these frames further away, affirming that the aesthetic regime "rejects…partitioning of times and spaces, sites and functions." However, as we see in Indonesia, this rejection retains a paradoxical responsibility for art: "…it ratifies its basic principle: matters of art are matters of education."[79] Through these three statements refuting the separation of art from life, I argue that Rancière's theory of the aesthetic regime is a true heir to Yuliman's analysis of art – modern, contemporary, post-modern, post-traditional, and neo-traditional – in Indonesia.

1.2 Soedjojono and the first artist-citizens

Indonesia, at least in its current geo-political form, is a direct product of the modernisation project that dominated Western Europe and North America in the 19th and 20th centuries. It is a nation born out of the legacy of nearly 300 years of Dutch commercial and governmental colonisation and the rupture of the Second World War,

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[77] Yuliman,"Seni Lukis Indonesia Baru (Dewan Kesenian Jakarta, 1976)", p. 101.
[78] Yuliman, Sanento. "Perspektif Baru", in *Gerakan Seni Rupa Baru Indonesia*, edited by Jim Supangkat, 96-98. Jakarta: PT Gramedia, 1979.
[79] Rancière, "The Aesthetic Revolution and its Outcomes", p. 107.

and out of resistance to these same processes.[80] Many communities, especially those in coastal areas, had previously had contact with societies throughout Asia and the Pacific (long before its colonisation by Europeans) and as distant as the Middle East.[81] These were not foreign relations between nation states but between traders and religious, feudal and monarchical power-centres, introducing new cultural elements through trade and migration.[82] It is clear that the process of cultural hybridity as described by Homi Bhabha – as a new "third space" emerging from encounters between distinct cultures – and the invention of tradition as described by historian Eric Hobsbawm – are endemic in the history of the region and Indonesia.[83]

According to Supangkat's early writing, the modernist art movement in Indonesia began with the nationalist movement's rejection of colonial administration, creating a modernism of idealism.[84] However, in recent times Supangkat has argued, like Werner Krauss, that modernism began with Raden Saleh (1811–1880), a Javanese painter and prince who trained and lived in the Netherlands for two decades before returning to paint his homeland in a lavish, romantic style. Soedjojono later dubbed paintings in this style – attributed also to visiting artists from Europe – "*mooi Indië* (Beautiful Indies), a derogatory term referring to the genre's popularity with the Dutch colonial elite (Fig. 1). Yet Krauss positions Saleh as one of the first artists to depict colonial resistance, in his painting *Penangkapan Pangeran Diponegoro* (The Arrest of Prince Diponegoro, 1857, Fig. 2).[85]

[80] Indonesia has at times been presented as the archetypal example of specific processes and effects of modernisation, in particular nationalism, the invention of tradition and ecological change. See, for instance, Anderson, *Imagined Communities*; Eric J. Hobsbawm and Terence O. Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition,* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992); and Clifford Geertz, *Agricultural Involution: the Process of Ecological Change in Indonesia*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963).
[81] See Anthony Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce,1450–1680, Vol. 1 and 2* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988–1993); G. Chaloupka, *Journey in Time: The World's Longest Continuing Art Tradition* (Sydney, 1993; repr., 1999).
[82] The National Gallery of Australia's collection includes ceramics, bronzes, wood carvings and textiles that were imported and exported to and from Indonesia as far back as the Bronze Age.
[83] Bhabha's conception of the "third space", a new and distinct culture that arises from encounters between other distinct cultures, was formative to my initial thinking around Indonesian "national" culture and art. See Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994).
[84] Supangkat, "Multiculturalism/multimodernsim".
[85] Werner Kraus, "Raden Saleh's interpretation of the arrest of Diponegoro: An Example of Indonesian Proto-Nationalist Modernism", *Archipel*, no. 69 (2005), pp. 259–94. Kraus argues that Saleh's painting referred not only to Dutch artist Nicolaas *Pieneman's 1835 depiction of the same event but also* Louis Gallait's *Abdication of Charles V* (1841).

Figure 1: Basuki Abdullah, *Pemandangan* (Landscape), 1957, oil on canvas, 126 x 78.5 cm.

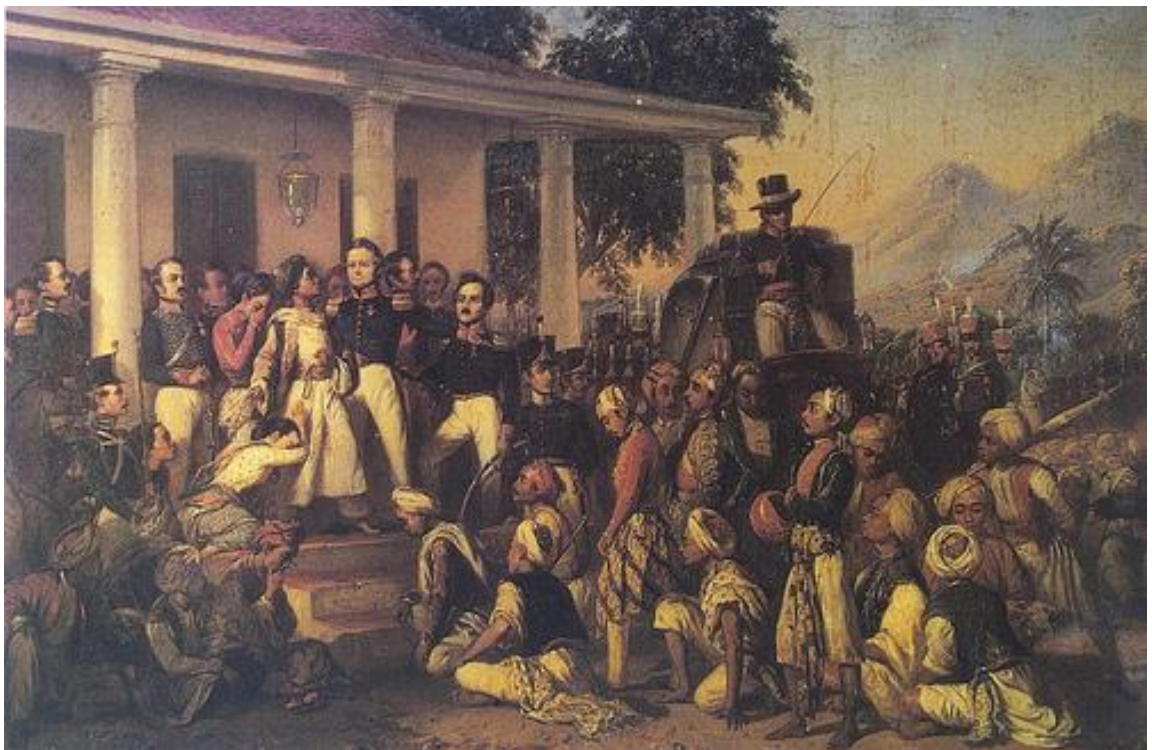

Figure 2: Raden Saleh, *Penangkapan Pangeran Diponegoro* (The Arrest of Prince Diponegoro), 1857, oil on canvas, 112 × 178 cm.

The 1935 "great debate" known as the *Polemik Kebudayaan* consumed those working in literature and the arts.[86] Most prominently, writer and intellectual Takdir Alisjahbana argued that Indonesians should seek equality by cultivating "Western" individualism and materialism, while the poet Sanoesi Pane urged a syncretic approach based on the superiority of the East.[87]

What the concept of "the great debate" fails to address is the similarity that both sides declare—the imperative to construct an Indonesian culture from its disparate elements, as laid out in the nationalist ideology of unity in diversity. Paradoxically, as Yuliman pointed out in the quotation that introduces this chapter, an (implicit) unwillingness to accept diverse aesthetic approaches to the project of nation building framed this debate, and created what Jacques Rancière, in a different time and context, calls "allegories of opposition: the opposition of collective and individual, image and living reality, activity and passivity, self-possession and alienation".[88] The assumption that these phenomena are indeed in opposition to each other must be called into question, in Indonesia as much as anywhere else, in order to understand the complexity of art's role in society and society's role in artists' practice. In Indonesia, the apparent polarities of the *Polemik Kebudayaan* were assuaged in the 1945 Constitution, which emphasised a national culture built on indigenous traditions and enriched by foreign cultures, oriented to national unity and civilizational progress.[89] Throughout this chapter I demonstrate how the construct of the *Polemik Kebudayaan* contributed to a pendulum of dominant art discourses, swinging largely on political terms. This allowed different art practices (politically engaged or "apolitical" art) visibility, depending on the prevailing power structure and the interests that served it.

Many critics and scholars alike have perpetuated these paradigms. In 1967 Claire Holt positioned Yogyakarta as the centre of "Indonesianism", while Bandung stood for the

[86] I borrow this term from Claire Holt, *Art in Indonesia: Continuities and Change*, pp. 211-254.
[87] For further descriptions and analysis of this cultural polemic see ibid; Antariksa, *Tuan Tanah Kawin Muda* (Yogyakarta: Yayasan Seni Cemeti, 2005), pp.5-6; Yustiono, "Seni Rupa Kontemporar Indonesia dan Era Asia Pacific" *Jurnal Seni Rupa* 2 (1995).
[88] Jacques Rancière, "The Emancipated Spectator", p. 277.
[89] Virginia Matheson Hooker, "Expression: Creativity Despite Constraint", in *Indonesia Beyond Suharto: Polity, Economy, Society, Transition*, ed. Donald K. Emmerson (New York: M.E Sharpe, The Asia Society, 1999).

"purely aesthetic" and international.[90] Thirty years later, academic Kenneth George described the "personal experiments" of Bandung artists as "cool intellectualism" in contrast to Yogyakartan artists "exuberant…embrace of the people".[91] However, Sanento Yuliman described these oppositional constructions as the "myth of the 'Yogya camp' and 'Bandung camp' established by older artists, formulated first by Trisno Sumardjo and consecrated by Claire Holt" and then extinguished by the advent of GSRBI.[92] The "myth" of these constructions perpetuates false dichotomies between abstract formalism and social realism, intellectualism and morality, community and individual, passion and technique, which I argue are, in Indonesia at least, far less distinct than each "camp" suggests. Yuliman pleaded a case for the acceptance of diverse frames of thinking and approach, and rejected the notion that Indonesian art would only claim its place in the world when it achieved a unified perspective.

The artist often described as the father of Indonesian modernism, Soedjojono, reflected the growing spirit of socialist nationalism in his late 1930s manifesto. In a published collection of his essays, Soedjojono highlighted the importance of truth as the primary element of beauty, insisting that the soul of the artist should be visible through their brushstrokes *(jiwa ketok)*. He urged painters to study the drawings of children, not yet "destroyed" by the teachings of Western colours, rather than focusing on the legacy of "dead" Hindu-Buddhist civilisations whose material culture remains evident in Java and elsewhere in Indonesia (especially Bali). Soedjojono paradoxically also stressed that Western influences must not be thrown away but rather that artists must learn the techniques of the West in order to look to the East (Fig. 3).[93]

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[90] Claire Holt, *Art in Indonesia: Continuities and Change*, p. 252.

[91] George subsequently stresses Holt's "acute observation" that Yogyakartan artists are focused on the social significance of the art work, but also quotes the Bandung 11 catalogue essay which declares the art work "an experiment created by an artist as a response to life." Kenneth M. George, "Some Things That Have Happened to the Sun after September 1965: Politics and the Interpretation of an Indonesian Painting", p. 617.

[92] Sanento Yuliman, "Kemana Semangat Muda (date unknown)", in *Dua Seni Rupa: Sepilihan Tulisan Sanento Yuliman*, ed. Hasan Asikin (Jakarta: Yayasan Kalam, 2001), p. 148.

[93] Soedjojono, *Seni Loekis, Kesenian dan Seniman* (Yogyakarta: Penerbit Indonesia Sekarang, 1946), pp. 13-15. Translation of quote from p. 15 is my own.

Figure 3: Soedjojono, *Kawan-kawan Revolusi* (Comrades of the Revolution), 1947, oil on canvas, 95 x 150 cm.

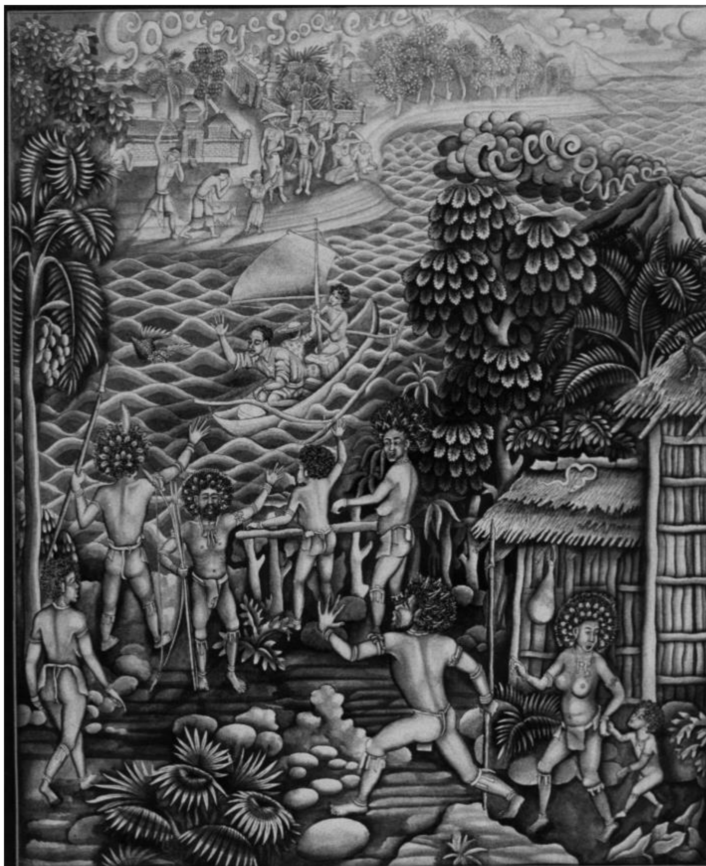

Figure 4: I Nyoman Ngendon, *Balinese saying "Goodbye" to M. Mead and G. Bateson and Papuans saying "Welcome",* 1938, ink on paper (size not specified).

Soedjojono implored artists of the then Dutch East Indies (but to whom he refers as "Painters of Indonesia") to reject the romanticised view of the beautiful Indies. Instead, he urges, they should paint:

> …sugar factories and the emaciated peasant, the motorcars of the rich and the pants of the poor youth….This is our reality….Because high art is work based on our daily life transmuted by the artist himself who is immersed in it, and then creates.[94]

This orientation to "social realism", as it came to be called, was nonetheless to be driven by an "internal motivation" rather than as a reference to morality or tradition.[95] The individual was paramount for Soedjojono: in the words leading up to his oft-quoted nationalistic fervour, he argued that artists must be brave enough to defend their own ideas and style, even if the public response is not favourable. Soedjojono's writing and attitude remain influential on contemporary artists, in particular *jiwa ketok* and its sense of individual expressionism. The legacy of this concept will be discussed further in Chapter 2.3.

Meanwhile, a parallel but distinct form of modernism was developing in Bali, born out of substantially different circumstances. Yuliman points out that painting traditions have been maintained in Bali for centuries due to the presence of living Balinese-Hindu religious practices which require paintings on cloth, paper and lontar palm.[96] In the mid to late 1920s, several pictorial influences began to impact on the artists who had previously practised "traditional" painting in the temple context. The influx of Western tourists, changes to illustrated educational resources in primary schools and the arrival of photography introduced through advertising presented new ways of image making.[97] Prominent artists from this period include Mokoh, Tjokorde Oka, Togog, and I Nyoman Ngendon.

However, as Vickers notes:

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[94] Soedjojono, quoted in translation in Holt, *Art in Indonesia: Continuities and Change*, pp. 195-196.
[95] Soedjojono, *Seni Loekis, Kesenian dan Seniman*, p. 8.
[96] Sanento Yuliman, "Seni Lukis di Indonesia: Persoalan-Persoalannya, dulu dan sekarang (Budaya Djawa, Dec 1970)", in *Dua Seni Rupa, Sepilihan Tulisan Sanento Yuliman*, ed. Hasan Asikin (Jakarta: Yayasan Kalam, 2001), p. 78. Yuliman also wrote about painting traditions from prehistory through to modern times in early chapters of the same book.
[97] Hildred Geertz, *Images of Power: Balinese Paintings Made for Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead* (Singapore: University of Hawaii, 1994), p. 10.

> The complexity of relationships between "traditional" and "modern" and "Indonesian" and "Balinese" means that there is no single process of development from local tradition to national modernism.[98]

There is no consensus on the extent to which Western intervention triggered or influenced these developments but there were clearly several "points of contact" between artists exploring these new approaches and European and American individuals. In the 1930s, anthropologists Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead commissioned over 1000 drawings and paintings to support their research into the Balinese character. Analysing these images, anthropologist Hildred Geertz asserted that: "Rather than providing materials for an ethnography of Bali, the paintings from the village Batuan give instead an ethnography of Balinese imaginations" (Fig. 4).[99]

European artists Walter Spies and Rudolph Bonnet also resided in and around Ubud village from the late 1920s. With Cokorodo Raka Sukawati of the Ubud royal family and other local painters, Spies and Bonnet founded the Pita Maha Arts Society in 1936. This was used as a vehicle to promote Balinese painting in Indonesia and abroad, and as a measure of control over the aesthetic form of emerging practice.[100] The ongoing influence of Pita Maha and Balinese modernism will be explored further in Chapters 4 and 5, which discuss I Wayan "Suklu" Sujana and Made Bayak's explorations of the social, political and personal resonances of the style.

In terms of the aesthetic that has subsequently become most widely recognised as Balinese painting, anthropologist Hildred Geertz argued that the specific use of line and repetitious shapes or pattern were drawn from traditional sculpture and textiles. This style appears to have been Pita Maha's preference, and artists who explored alternative pictorial styles, such as I Nyoman Ngendon's minimalist line-drawing portraits, came into conflict with Bonnet.[101]

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[98] Adrian Vickers, "Bali's Place in Indonesian Art", in *Crossing Boundaries—Bali: A Window to 20th Century Indonesian Art* (Melbourne: Asia Society AustralAsia Centre, 2002), p. 22.
[99] Geertz, *Images of Power: Balinese Paintings Made for Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead,* p. 1.
[100] Debate continues over the influence Spies and especially Bonnet exercised over Balinese painters. See Geertz, ibid. and Christopher Hill, *Survival and Change: Three Generations of Balinese Painters* (Canberra: Pandanus Books, 2006), p. 46.
[101] Geertz, *Images of Power: Balinese Paintings Made for Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead*, p. 17, and Hill, *Survival and Change: Three Generations of Balinese Painters*, pp. 512-552.

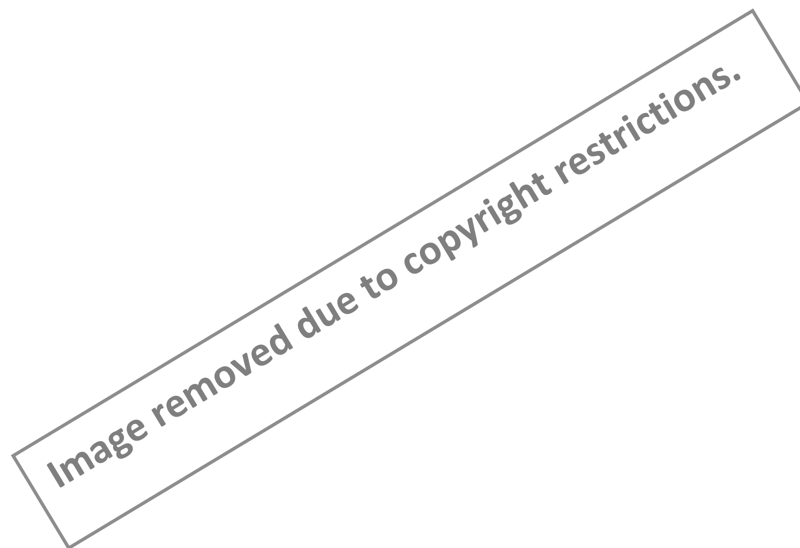

Figure 5: Members of Persagi, 1940. Standing left to right Tubagus Ateng Rusyian, Soedjojono, Rameli, Damsyik, Agus Djaya, S. Tutur, Sudiardjo, unknown, Sindu Sisworo, Saptarita Latif, Sudiardjo's wife. Squatting left to right: S. Parman, Herbert Hutagalung.

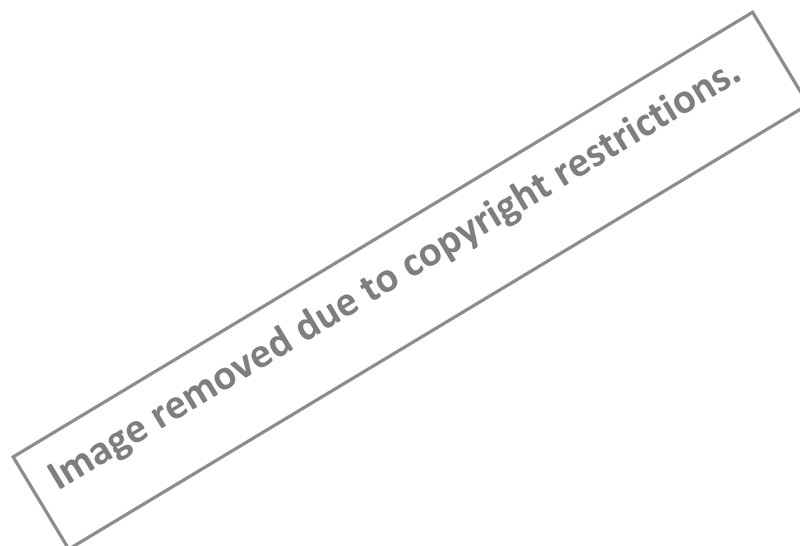

Figure 6: Soedjojono, *Sanggar Seniman Indonesia Muda* (Young Indonesian Artists' Collective), 1947, ink on paper, 40 x 13 cm.

Ngendon also travelled to Java during the Japanese occupation, where he became a member of Persagi. Returning to Bali, he played a key role in the nationalist movement there until he was captured and killed after the Japanese surrender.[102]

Persagi was one of the most well known of the *sanggar*, co-founded by Soedjojono (with Agus Djaya) in Jakarta, in 1938 (Fig. 5). Soedjojono later also established *Seniman Indonesia Muda* (Young Indonesian Artists, known as SIM) in Madiun, East Java in 1946, before he moved to Yogyakarta. The *sanggar* provided a focal point for efforts to realise the collective goals of the independence movement.[103] Here, artists lived, worked, debated and created in the one space, often around the teachings of a senior figure within the collective (Fig. 6). The *Angkatan 1945* (1945 Generation), a collective of revolutionaries including Henk Ngantung, Mochtar Apin and Rivai Apin, issued one of the earliest modernist-style manifestos, the humanist Gelanggang Creed, in 1950. It maintained:

> We are the legitimate heirs to world culture and we will continue this culture in our own way. We are born of the many and our understanding of the people is that they are a diverse assembly from which a healthy new world can be born….Our respect for the situation around us (society) is the respect of people who know that there is a mutual influence between society and artists.[104]

The drive to imagine a new culture that represented and was responsive to the circumstances of ordinary Indonesians remained the main motivation for painters and writers. Modernity and progress met tradition and culture to forge a perpetually shifting national identity through the imaginings of artists, writers, musicians and

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[102] Geertz, *Images of Power: Balinese Paintings Made for Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead*, pp. 18-19. Also see http://sydney.edu.au/heurist/balipaintings/8017.html. From the texts I have seen, dates of Ngendon's death are unclear, and none specify who was responsible for his execution. However, in personal correspondence (January, 2017) Adrian Vickers informed me he had seen decisive evidenc that Ngendong was killed in 1946 on order of the King of Gianyar, on behalf of the Netherlands Indies Civil Administration (NICA).

[103] Andryanto Rikrik Kusmara, "Medium Seni Dalam Medan Sosial Seni Rupa Kontemporar Indonesia", 2011, Bandung (unpublished doctoral dissertation), p. 1. Many of the *sanggar* artists remained close to power after independence: for instance President Sukarno appointed Henk Ngantung the first governor of Jakarta.

[104] My translation of the text as published at https://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Surat_Kepercayaan_Gelanggang. It is also published in Keith Foulcher, *Social Commitment in Literature and the Arts: the Indonesian "Institute of People's Culture" 1950-1965*, pp. 2-3. The text was first published in the *Siasat* Journal on 22 October, 1950.

cultural workers.[105] Importantly too, these were not all-encompassing imaginings in a geographical or cultural sense. The unrest and separatism that characterised the Indonesian state's early years was based on the very real sense that debates around Indonesian culture were conducted by Javanese on behalf of the nation. This "Java-centricism" continued to affect the development of Indonesian art in the contemporary context, with all the major art schools and institutions (galleries, museums) being centred in Java (with the exception of those in Bali), forcing artists from other islands to move to Java for the sake of their careers.[106]

The movement for independence was well established by the time Indonesia was occupied by the Japanese in 1942. Indonesians initially welcomed Japanese forces, seeing Japan's achievements as a model for the possibilities of a sovereign Asian nation. The occupation was a time of sharp development for Indonesian artists. The Japanese set up the Keimin Bunka Shidoso arts and cultural association in 1943, which provided materials, training and promotion for artists (Fig. 7).[107] However, Indonesian members soon realised they were expected to generate propaganda for the Japanese.[108] As the regime became more brutal, some artists secretly documented the abuses conducted by the Japanese (Fig. 8).[109] On 17 August 1945, two days after the Japanese surrender, future first president Sukarno read out the Proclamation of Independence, flanked by fellow revolutionary and future vice-president M. Hatta.

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[105] This manifested in many cultural forms, and particularly in diplomatic missions. See Jennifer Lindsay, *Heirs to World Culture: Being Indonesian, 1950-1965* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2012).
[106] A detailed account of the imposition of "Javanism" on the regions, and also resistance to it, appears in Hooker, "Expression: Creativity Despite Constraint", pp. 271-277. However, in recent years, the government's Art Directorate initiated a series of exhibitions of contemporary Indonesian art titled *Pameran Besar Seni Rupa Indonesia* (Major Exhibition of Indonesian Art), held in *Taman Budaya* (Cultural Centres) outside of Java (Jambi, Sumatera, [2013], Sentani, Papua [2014] , Kupang, West Timor [2015] and Manado, North Sulawesi [2016]). The exhibitions were curated by Rizki Zaelani and Rikrik Kusmara. Furthermore, a contemporary art biennale title *Trajectory!* was held in Makassar, South Sulawesi, in 2015.
[107] Antariksa, *Tuan Tanah Kawin Muda*.
[108] Dewi Yuliati, Dhanang Respati Puguh, and Mahendra Pudji Utama, "Seni Sebagai Media Propaganda Pada Masa Pendudukan Jepang di Jawa (1942-1945)", (2002). For an analysis of the role of the Japanese occupation in the revolutionary movement, see Benedict Anderson, *Java in a Time of Revolution: Occupation and Resistance, 1944-1946*, Modern Indonesia Project (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972). For a study of the way the Japanese occupation was depicted in Indonesia, see Remco Raben, *Representing the Japanese Occupation of Indonesia: Personal Testimonies and Public Images in Indonesia, Japan and the Netherlands* (Amsterdam, Zwolle: Waanders, 1999).
[109] Helena Spanjaard and Hong Djien Oei, *Exploring Modern Indonesian Art: the Collection of Dr. Oei Hong Djien* (Singapore: SNP Editions, 2004), pp. 74-75. Similarly, artists later documented Dutch atrocities during the Independence war.

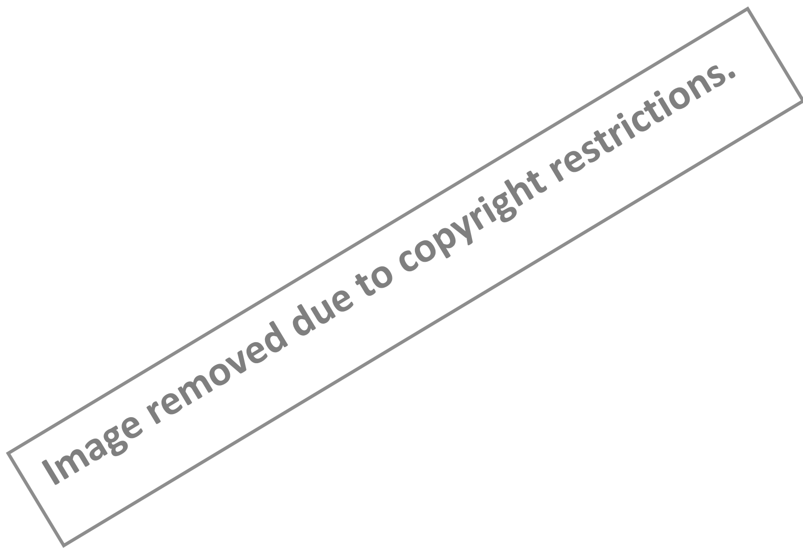

Figure 7: Keimin Bunka Shidoso publications featuring member artists Soedjojono (top left), Kartono Yudhokusumo (top right) and Emiria Soenassa (bottom).

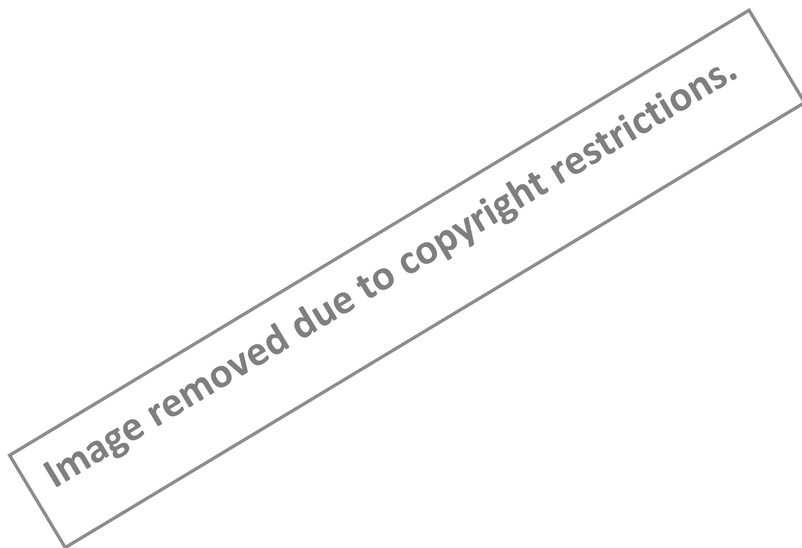

Figure 8: Lee Man Fong, *Praktek Penjiksaan oleh Tentara Jepang* (Torture Practices of the Japanese Army), 1945, oil on board, 44 x 76.5 cm.

In 1949, after a lengthy armed struggle that inspired painters for years to come, motions at the United Nations forced the Dutch to transfer power and recognise this year as the birth of the Indonesian state. Like most post-colonial nation states, Indonesia's borders were defined in relation to its coloniser's occupation; disparate and previously unconnected ethnic, cultural and language groups became part of one nation state. With its government centralised in Java, and ongoing transmigration from Java into other islands, the imposition of Javanese culture was keenly felt. The islands of the archipelago were also home to a centuries-old Chinese diaspora, which encompassed new migrants and assimilated communities, and had been a continuing site of social and state violence and repression throughout Indonesia's history.[110]

Religion has been another point of contention, especially since the founding of the nation state. Ostensibly, the new state was secular yet the dominance of Islam in Indonesia was, and remains, a site of syncretism with local beliefs, resistance and nationalist fervour.[111] With so many points of tension, it was difficult for the new nation to settle on its form of democracy; unrest, separatism and armed conflict with external forces were widespread.[112] The issue of ethnic, cultural and religious identity remains important in Indonesian art, as will become evident in the case studies presented in Part 2. In particular this issue is a site on which artists explore the social experience of marginalised groups in Indonesia, a tendency which FX Harsono – among the artists now specifically dealing with the history of Chinese Indonesians in his art – refers to as *kerakyatan* and which is explored in detail in Chapter 2.4.[113]

In the early decades of independence, Indonesian leaders looked to artists and writers to build a sense of a shared past and a unified future within the diversity of its many

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[110] For a comprehensive history of Chinese Indonesians and the Chinese diaspora in Indonesia, see Tim Lindsey and Helen Pausacker, *Chinese Indonesians: Remembering, Distorting, Forgetting* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2005); and also Siew-Min Sai and Chang-Yau Hoon, *Chinese Indonesians Reassessed: History, Religion and Belonging* (London, New York: Routledge, 2013).

[111] The history of Islam in Indonesia is covered in, for instance, Michael Laffan, *The Makings of Indonesian Islam: Orientalism and the Narration of a Sufi Past* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2011), and with specific reference to Java and the syncretic variation *kejawen* see Mark Woodward, *Java, Indonesia and Islam*, vol. 3 (New York: Springer, 2010). For the role of Islam in contemporary society, see Carool Kersten, *Islam in Indonesia: the Contest for Society, Ideas and Values* (London: Hurst & Company, 2015).

[112] Separatist movements emerged in the Moluccas (1950), Aceh (1953) and Irian Jaya/West Papua (1961), among others. External conflicts were waged along the Malaysian border (Konfrontasi: 1963-66).

[113] I deal with Harsono's art practice more specifically in the exegesis accompanying the body of artwork presented alongside this dissertation.

languages, ethnicities and cultural practices.[114] They saw it as imperative that the new culture arise from, and be for, the *rakyat* (the people). This concept of the *rakyat* became the basis for many of the dominant discourses in art during the early years of the Indonesian state (Fig. 9). As mentioned in the Introduction, emancipatory modernist art discourses that centred on the *rakyat* nonetheless failed to address the fate of those most oppressed in Indonesia's (post) feudalist, post-colonial context: women. The absence, and even the erasure, of women artists is evident throughout Indonesian art history, and some of the work to redress this has begun.[115]

1.3 The Institute of People's Culture (Lekra) and the art schools

Lekra was the most influential of the early organisations. Associated with the left and closely aligned to the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI), Lekra consciously worked towards a new culture that would break the shackles of colonialism and its consequent feelings of inferiority.[116]

Lekra was unabashedly modernist and nationalist, but universal values were not among its key concerns. On the contrary, it sought to appropriate the diverse cultures of the new Indonesian state as components of an independent national culture that need not rely solely on discourses from elsewhere to develop its own unique culture.

[114] The imperative for unity manifested in the National motto "Bhinekaan Tunggal Ika" or Unity in Diversity. There were diverse cultural manifestations of this drive, and many of these are addressed in Jennifer Lindsay, *Heirs to World Culture: Being Indonesian, 1950-1965* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2012).

[115] An interesting analysis of the way the art world in Indonesia mimicked its former colonial-masters is presented in Heidi Arbuckle, "Performing Emiria Sunassa: Reframing the Female Subject in Post/colonial Indonesia" (The University of Melbourne, 2011). Arbuckle's dissertation provides an invaluable exploration of the absence and erasure of women from artistic discourse in Indonesian art history. See also C. Bianpoen et al., *Indonesian Women Artists: The Curtain Opens* (Yayasan Senirupa Indonesia, 2007).

[116] Art historians have published different accounts of the institutional relationship between Lekra and the PKI (Indonesian Communist Party). The generally accepted view now is that Lekra was established autonomously of PKI, but with the support of key PKI figures. In the elections of 1955 several members of Lekra, including Soedjojono, Affandi and Hendra Gunawan, were elected to parliament as PKI representatives. For various perspectives on Lekra's relationship with PKI see: Foulcher, *Social Commitment in Literature and the Arts: the Indonesian "Institute of People's Culture" 1950-1965*; Brita Miklouho-Maklai, *Exposing Society's Wounds, Some Aspects of Contemporary Art Since 1966*; Sudarmadji, *Dari Saleh Sampai Aming, Seni Lukis Indonesia Baru Dalam Sejarah dan Appresiasi* (Yogyakarta: Sekolah Tinggi Seni Rupa 'ASRI', 1974); Antariksa, *Tuan Tanah Kawin Muda*.

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Figure 9: Soedjojono, *Perusing a Poster,* 1956, oil on canvas, 109 x 140 cm.

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Figure 10: Amrus Natalsya, *Kawan-Kawanku* (My Comrades), 1957, oil on canvas, dimensions unknown.

As foundational as Lekra was to the ethics of modern Indonesian art, it was relatively unconcerned with, or at least non-prescriptive with regard to, aesthetic form, preferring the "pursuit of appropriate states of mind".[117] One of the most important aspects of the Lekra's legacy is certainly the concept of *turun ke bawah (turba),* which means "to go down below [to the people]" (Fig. 10):

> …[*turba*] was not only a description, but a working method...It expressed a particular concept of the relationship between cultural workers and ordinary people…the artist was at one with the thoughts and feelings of the people, not an observer of their lives but a full participant in them. The slogan was intended to raise the issue of class identity.[118]

Foulcher's description raises a number of issues and questions that continue to be relevant to contemporary art practice. The first is the question of what precisely cultural workers (poets, artists, authors and performers) were doing when "going down below". I will discuss this further in Chapter 2.3, which addresses a number of originary discourses that have been influential on individual and participatory art practice in Indonesia. Other issues emerge through the notion of class consciousness that association with the *rakyat* and "going down" evokes. Antariksa's text on the relationship between Lekra and visual art/artists attends to these issues, and in turn provides a starting point for my analysis of the impact Lekra's ideology – particularly *turba* – has had on subsequent generations of artists.

The mutual rehabilitation performed through Lekra's *turba* methodology raises Foster's critical assumptions around the alterity and transformativity of the other, and complicates them by raising the prospect of artists as participants in life, rather than observers.[119] This is an issue overlooked in the discourse of participatory art outside of Indonesia, and one which emerges as an important aspect of the artistic practices described in this dissertation. Sections in Chapters 2 and 6 will expand on this understanding of the artist as participant in society as a crucial mode of practice in Indonesia.

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[117] Foulcher, *Social Commitment in Literature and the Arts: the Indonesian "Institute of People's Culture" 1950-1965*, pp. 24-25.
[118] Ibid., p. 110.
[119] Hal Foster, "The Artist as Ethnographer?", p. 302.

Two of Indonesia's most prominent art schools were established around the same time as Lekra. The Akademi Seni Rupa Indonesia (ASRI, Indonesian Academy of Fine Arts), which later became the Institut Seni Indonesia (ISI, Indonesian Institute of the Arts), was founded in Yogyakarta in 1948, although it only obtained its own building in 1957 (Fig. 11). In Bandung in 1950, the *Balai Perguruan Tinggi Guru Gambar* (Tertiary Office for Drawing Teachers) was the precursor to what is now the Faculty of Fine Art and Design at the Institut Teknologi Bandung (ITB, Institute of Technology, Bandung). In the "Yogya camp" vs "Bandung camp" paradigm described earlier, they have since been widely (although not exclusively) reported to exist in tension with each other. In 1954, ITB was accused of perpetuating the Western laboratory model that had been introduced by Dutch artists such as Ries Mulder.[120] By contrast, Yogyakarta's ASRI has been viewed as dedicated to the development of an expressly Indonesian aesthetic.[121]

The art schools provided a means of state intervention on artistic practice that was more direct than that achievable through Lekra. Although often seen as being in competition with the *sanggar* collectives, there were many crossovers during the initial decades of the establishment of tertiary institutions. Leftist artists such as Soedjojono, Affandi, Hendra Gunawan, Abdulsalman, Harijadi and Suromo taught at ISI and many students were encouraged to join Lekra. It took some time and further political upheaval before the academies began to replace the *sanggar,* locating and authorising artistic discourse within the institution. Since then, these institutions have had various periods of stagnation, repression and genuine academic discourse.[122] Their influence, especially as targets of creative resistance, became particularly apparent in the 1970s, as will be discussed in section 1.4 of this chapter.

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[120] Trisno Sumardjo, "Bandung Mengabdi Laboratorium Barat", *Mingguan Siasat* 391, no. 4 (1954), p. 26.

[121] Sanento Yuliman, "Kemana Semangat Muda (date unknown)", in *Dua Seni Rupa: Sepilihan Tulisan Sanento Yuliman*, ed. Hasan Asikin (Jakarta: Yayasan Kalam, 2001), p. 148. This dichotomy was also critiqued in Helena Spanjaard, "Bandung, the laboratory of the West?", in *Modern Indonesian Art; Three Generations of Tradition and Change*, ed. Joseph Fischer (1990), pp. 54-77

[122] Antariksa, *Tuan Tanah Kawin Muda,* p. 26.

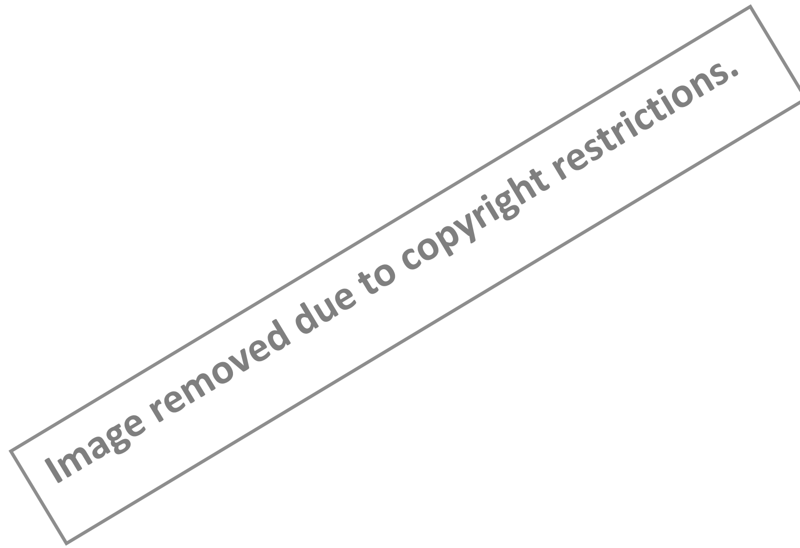

Figure 11: Akademi Seni Rupa Indonesia (Indonesian Academy of Fine Arts), Gampingan, Yogyakarta, in the 1950s.

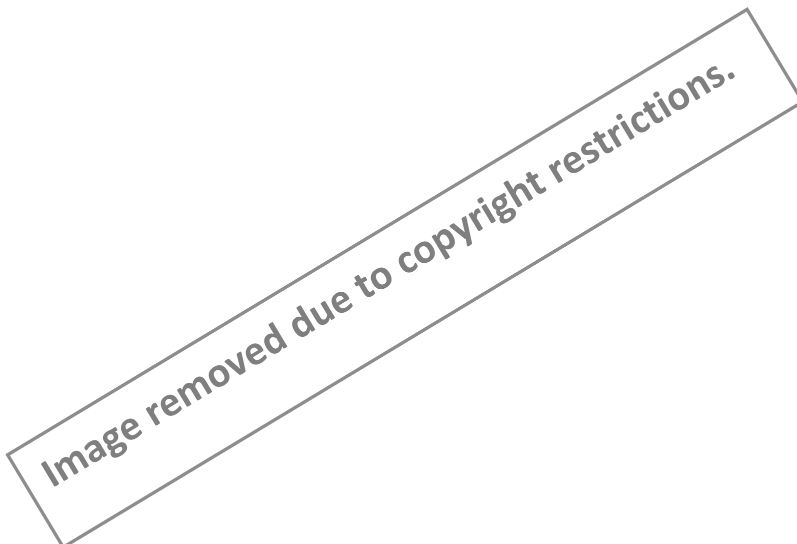

Figure 12: A.D. Pirous, *Ayat di Atas Putih* (Verses on White), 1972, mixed media, canvas, acrylic paint.

In 1957, with the support of the PKI, Sukarno abandoned liberal democracy and introduced his "guided democracy". In 1963, responding to Lekra's increasing dominance over cultural practice, including exhibition of artwork and legitimation of artistic output, the *Manifesto Kebudayaan* (Cultural Manifesto, known as Manikebu) was formulated and signed by many artists and cultural workers. Manikebu claimed a position for an Indonesian national culture within a community of nations and reaffirmed allegiance to Pancasila, the five tenets of the Indonesian state as declared by Sukarno.[123] In 1965, after an alleged communist coup, Major General Soeharto instated himself as the new leader, denouncing Sukarno's communist leanings.[124] In the following months, a military propaganda campaign incited violent reprisals against suspected communists or communist sympathisers, including *Gerakan Wanita Indonesia* (Indonesian Women's Movement, known as Gerwani), student and farmers' associations and labour organisations.[125]

Up to two million Indonesians were killed or went missing during this time during communal, state and military violence.[126] Unknown numbers of artworks from Lekra and other artists and periods were destroyed or disappeared. Many artists and cultural workers disappeared or were imprisoned, disappeared, murdered or exiled during this, the inauguration of the regime known as the *Orde Baru,* or the New Order.[127]

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[123] Goenawan Mohamad and Harry Aveling, *The "Cultural Manifesto" Affair Revisited: Literature and Politics in Indonesia in the 1960s, a Signatory's View*, vol. 134 (Melbourne: Monash Asia Institute Press, 2011).

[124] For further accounts see John Roosa, *Pretext for Mass Murder: the September 30th Movement and Suharto's Coup D'état in Indonesia* (Madison, Wis: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006) There is yet to be an account that verifies whether this was an attempted Communist coup, an isolated movement within the PKI, an army mutiny, a political blunder or a successful military conspiracy. See A. Heryanto, *State Terrorism and Political Identity in Indonesia: Fatally Belonging* (Taylor & Francis, 2006), pp.7-8. See also Robert Cribb, "Unresolved Problems in the Indonesian Killings of 1965–1966", *Asian Survey* 42, no. 4 (2002).

[125] On the significance of Gerwani in 1965–66 and subsequently on the women's movement in Indonesia, see Saskia Eleonora Wieringa, "Sexual Slander and the 1965/66 Mass Killings in Indonesia: Political and Methodological Considerations", *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 41, no. 4 (2011), pp. 544-565.

[126] The number of victims is disputed amongst various sources ranging from 500,000 to 2 million. See footnote 72 for further reading.

[127] Miklouho-Maklai, *Exposing Society's Wounds, Some Aspects of Contemporary Art Since 1966*, p. 16. Among the many who were imprisoned subsequent to October 1965 were Hendra Gunawan, Djoko Pekik, Hersri Setiawan and Pramoedya Ananta Toer. Many more were killed, particularly from the traditional performing arts.

1.4 The New Order and New Indonesian Art: Opportunity and Oppression

During the *Orde Baru,* earlier imperatives for social engagement were replaced with a drive for art to be centred on the expression of an apolitical national culture, drawing on the material cultures of ethnic groups and cultures within the archipelago.[128] While this is often seen as an about-turn in aesthetics, I argue that there is in fact a continuum of representational art practice, albeit with Lekra's class-consciousness removed.[129] The focus remained, as for Soedjojono and Sanoesi Pane, on art practice as a research methodology for the realisation of a unified national culture. This argument is also supported by Yuliman's conception of an "artistic ideology" of continuity, which links representation to abstraction.

However, formalism and abstraction were more than astute apolitical positions and more complicated than merely art practice removed from the socio-political realm. Recent scholarship has pointed to the extent to which artist and design group Decenta was involved in formulating and representing a national culture directly at the behest of the *Orde Baru* regime, taking commissions for building interiors and public art.[130] On the social front, in the catalogue for a 1966 exhibition of 11 formalist artists from Bandung, the relational aspect was underscored: "... since a work of art is a means of communication...[it] is the effort of a man to reach out to his fellow man; it is an experiment created by an artist as a response to life."[131] Writer and curator Alia Swastika sees the 1970s dominated by four prominent abstract artists: Amang Rahman, Amri Yahya, A.D. Pirous and Ahmad Sadali, the last two mentioned being

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[128] For a comprehensive analysis on the development of creativity and artistic expression during the *Orde Baru*, see Hooker, "Expression: Creativity Despite Constraint".

[129] For a perspectives positioning this as an about-turn in representation, see Miklouho-Maklai, Brita. *Exposing Society's Wounds, Some Aspects of Contemporary Art Since 1966*, pp. 16-22.

[130] Decenta comprised Adriaan Palar, A.D. Pirous, G. Sidharta, Sunaryo, T. Sutanto and Priyanto Sunarto, all Bandung artists practising in what are loosely described as abstract and/or design based forms. As well as their artistic practices, they were a commercial design firm that designed decorative elements referencing ethnic cultures within (often contested) regions of Indonesia, for government buildings and other state commissioned works. Chabib Duta Hapsoro, "Identitas Keindonesiaan dalam Elemen-elemen Estetik Kelompok Decenta: Representasi Praktik Depolitisasi Orde Baru dalam Bidang Kebudayaan[i]", *CHADUHA: Tulisan-tulisan Chabib Duta Hapsoro*, 2015, https://chaduha.wordpress.com/2015/06/29/identitas-keindonesiaan-dalam-elemen-elemen-estetik-kelompok-decenta-representasi-praktik-depolitisasi-orde-baru-dalam-bidang-kebudayaani/.

[131] From the catalogue to *Sebelas Seniman Bandung* (Eleven Bandung Artists), 13–22 December, 1966, quoted in Kenneth M. George, "Some Things That Have Happened to the Sun after September 1965: Politics and the Interpretation of an Indonesian Painting", p. 616.

"more clearly in the 'Islamic art' sphere..."[132] (Fig. 12). However, particularly in the case of A.D. Pirous, who was also a member of Decenta, this did not mean disengagement from social and collective engagement; as well as his activities with Decenta, Pirous held free art classes with children at his home in Bandung, exhibiting their work alongside his own.[133] Complex relationships between politics, identity and the social realm remained during the *Orde Baru,* demonstrating the porosity of these categories.

With some exceptions, representation, memorialisation or direct reference to the 1965–66 massacres did not even begin until almost 30 years later, when artists such as Dadang Christanto and FX Harsono began to draw on the experiences of their families during that period and earlier.[134] Those who suffered losses or who were implicated as communists did not speak publicly; people mourned and grieved and wondered about the missing alone and in silence. There were no public memorials, and the few texts and films that addressed the period were blatantly false.[135] Decades later, former political prisoners (known as ex-*tahanan politik*, shortened on official stamps to ET) and their families still suffer institutional and social discrimination and sometimes violence. As recently as 2013, social gatherings of former political prisoner's families were violently attacked and in 2014 screenings of a recent film addressing the legacy of 1965 were shut down by "social organisations".[136]

Labour unionisation, protests against working or living conditions and even inadvertent evocation of communist symbology can still trigger formal (authoritarian) or informal

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[132] Swastika, quoting Mikke Susanto in "Agency and Internationalism", *Skripta* 2 (2015) (pp. unknown).
[133] This was raised during an informal conversation with Pirous at his gallery, Serambi Pirous, June 2014.
[134] Writing on A.D. Pirous' painting, *The Sun After September 1965,* Kenneth George contested Astri Wright's interpretations of the painting as a "language of dissent" against the massacres in 1965–66. George, "Some Things That Have Happened to the Sun after September 1965: Politics and the Interpretation of an Indonesian Painting", p. 609.
[135] See Ariel Heryanto, *State Terrorism and Political Identity in Indonesia: Fatally Belonging*, pp. 6-7; and Astri Wright, "A Taste of Soil: Dadang Christanto on Systemic Violence", *ArtAsiaPacific* 3, no. 1 (1996), pp. 74-77.
[136] Muh. Syaifullah, "Pertemuan Keluarga Eks Tapol Dibubarkan Massa", *TEMPO*, 27/10/2013 (http://www.tempo.co/read/news/2013/10/27/058525068/Pertemuan-Keluarga-Eks-Tapol-Dibubarkan-Massa); "Pemutaran dan Diskusi Film di Fisipol UGM Dihentikan Ormas", *Kedaulatan Rakyat Jogja*, 18/12/2014 (http://krjogja.com/read/241197/pemutaran-dan-diskusi-film-di-fisipol-ugm-dihentikan-ormas.kr).

(social) accusations. This has created a kind of "dialogical" state terrorism, in which the populace collaborates with authorities to perpetuate repressive mechanisms.[137]

The autocratic *Orde Baru* regime redeveloped ties with the USA and other "Western" states, stabilised the economy, violently quashed dissent and confined expression of Islam to the cultural sphere. Media and corporate activity was tightly controlled, often owned by the president's cronies, and what Indonesians know as *korupsi, kolusi* and *nepotisme* became endemic. Activists, writers, artists and musicians who criticised the government were censored, beaten and/or imprisoned.[138] However, there were various phases of intensity in state repression and suspicion of citizens. In the mid 1970s, there was some room for veiled critique from contemporary artists, just as a new generation was emerging and reacting to the attitudes of senior artists and the conditions of wider society. Reviving the *sanggar* tradition, groups of student artists often worked together to create their own exhibitions and discuss the possibilities of a socially engaged art practice.[139]

Three artists' groups in particular from that period have received most attention: *Desember Hitam* (Black December), GSRBI, and PIPA (*Kepribadian Apa*, What Identity). These three movements all arose out of young art school students or practising artists who were frustrated by the dominance of decorative art. They saw Indonesian contemporary art as stagnant, and wanted to challenge the status quo. *Desember Hitam* famously sent a floral tribute to the Major Indonesian Painting Exhibition of 1974, with the note "Condolences on the death of Indonesian painting". This caused considerable controversy; ASRI's director reportedly warned students to leave these matters to students of sociology and economics, because mixing them up with art was "very dangerous". The students, including FX Harsono, were expelled, and several lecturers who defended them were also dismissed.[140]

[137] Heryanto, *State Terrorism and Political Identity in Indonesia: Fatally Belonging*.
[138] A recent account of some of the latter cases of these human rights abuses, including the disappearance of poet Wiji Thukul, and how political government figures were implicated, can be found here: http://asiapacific.anu.edu.au/newmandala/2014/05/08/wither-human-rights/.
[139] Miklouho-Maklai, *Exposing Society's Wounds, Some Aspects of Contemporary Art Since 1966*, p. 21.
[140] Ibid., pp. 23-24.

Image removed due to copyright restrictions.

Figure 13: FX Harsono, *Paling Top ’75* (Most Popular ’75), 1975, plastic gun, textile, wooden crate, wire mesh 50 x 100 x 157 cm. Exhibited in the first exhibition by GSRBI in 1975.

Image removed due to copyright restrictions.

Figure 14: *Kepribadian Apa* (PIPA), *ASEAN Tower*, 1977, found objects, 300 x 300 x 300 cm.

GSRBI, arguably one of the most influential artist movements in the contemporary era, evolved in part from *Desember Hitam*. Like Lekra and the *Angkatan '45*, GSRBI had a manifesto. It stated that they were "striving for a more alive art, in the sense of demanding attention, natural, useful, a living reality throughout the whole spectrum of society" (Fig. 13).[141] The PIPA collective also involved several members of GSRBI and Moelyono; their confronting exhibition in Yogyakarta was banned after just two days (Fig. 14).[142] Like other emerging artists , these groups strove for interdisciplinarity, experimentating with form and medium and focusing on concept over form. With these priorities, installation and found objects were their visual language, which they saw as more accessible for being drawn from the everyday (Fig. 15).[143]

To develop this language, many Indonesian artists in the 1980s used objective social research, sometimes collaborating with sociologists. Although these practices sometimes mirrored *turba* – especially in the work of Moelyono, who lived and worked with farmers displaced by the construction of dams – the aesthetic manifestations were very different. Artists' research findings were presented in deliberately dry, unemotional formulations, through photographs and tables, as was evident in the catalogue for the *Proses '85* exhibition in Jakarta (Fig. 16).[144] In his essay for GSRBI's 1987 exhibition *Pasar Raya Dunia Fantasi* (Fantasy World Supermarket) catalogue, Supangkat and Yuliman reflected that what remained from earlier work was "a manifestation of exploration, opposition to elitism and revitalizing pluralism in fine art through practices of art in every day life."[145]

Later in the same catalogue, then-literary critic Arief Budiman analysed GSRBI's stance against the wholesale adoption of European modernism through the perspective of the *Polemik Kebudayaan* of the 1930s, reading the re-emergence of the debate around Indonesian art's orientation as proof that the national culture was still in a state of indecision.[146]

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[141] Miklouho-Maklai, ibid., pp. 111-114.
[142] Ibid p. 70
[143] Sanento Yuliman and J. Supangkat, "Seni Rupa Sehari-Hari Menentang Elitisme", in *Seni Rupa Baru Proyek 1 Pasar Raya Dunia Fantasi*, ed. J. Supangkat (Jakarta: Gramedia, 1987), pp. 14-18.
[144] Wienardi et al., *Proses '85*, at Pasar Seni Ancol (Jakarta: Sinar Harapan 1985).
[145] Yuliman and Supangkat, "Seni Rupa Sehari-Hari Menentang Elitisme", p. 16.
[146] Arief Budiman, "Menduniawikan Nilai Estetika yang Sakral" Sanento Yuliman et al., *Pasar Raya Dunia Fantasi*, ed. Taman Ismail Marzuki, Gerakan Seni Rupa Baru (Jakarta1987), pp. 23-25.

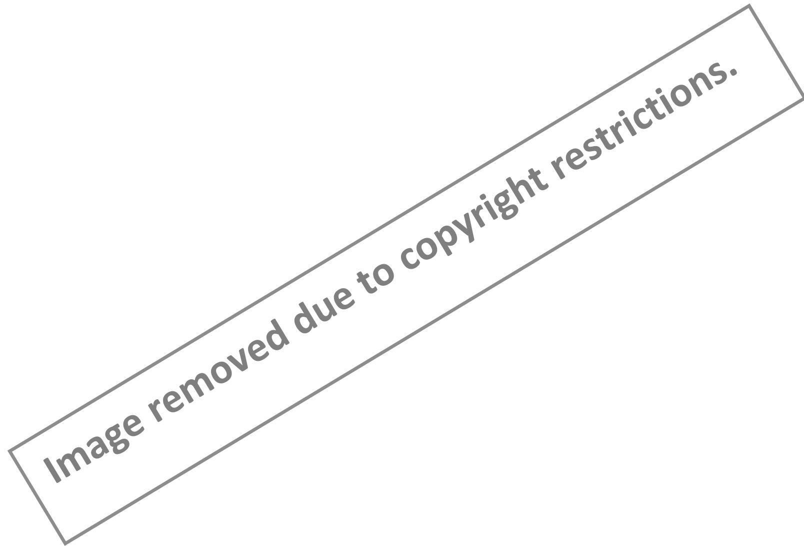

Figure 15: GSRBI, *Pasar Raya Dunia Fantasi* exhibition installation shot, 1987.

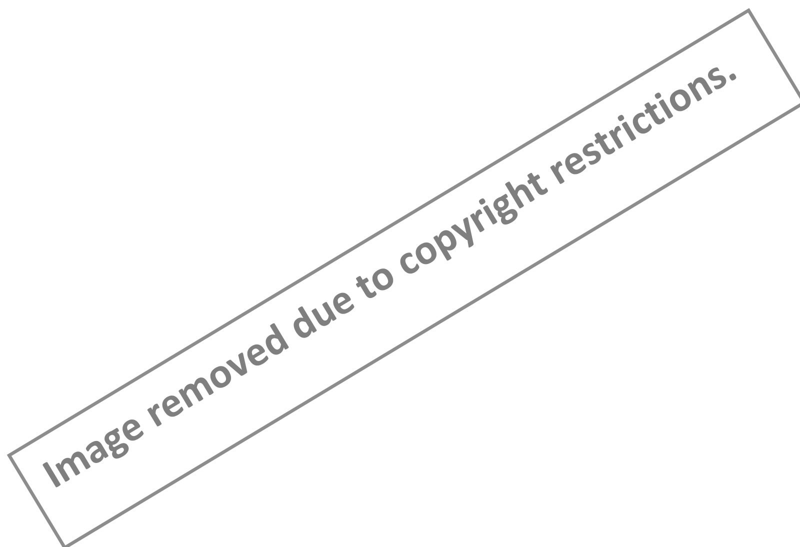

Figure 16: FX Harsono, *Korban Merkuri 1* (Mercury Victim 1), 1985, photograph, dimensions unknown. Shown in the *Proses '85* exhibition.

As a signatory to the 1963 *Manifesto Kebudayaan,* Budiman was in a unique position to analyse the GSRBI's contribution to this new polemic, identifying tension between GSRBI's commitment to the local social context and their understanding of universal humanism. Similarly, critical debates continued in the mass media.[147]

On the "restless" activist art of the late 1970s and 1980s, which is discussed further in Chapter 4 and 6, Yuliman identifies two particular tendencies. The first was the inclination to work far away from art centres, in public spaces and rural areas, and the second was the use of binary pairs in their terminology: on the one hand, "self-searching", "participation in their surroundings", "resistance", "opposition" and "experiment" and on the other, "establishment", "elitism" and "conformism".[148] Yuliman identifies the peak of this restlessness as manifesting in Bandung through Semsar Siahaan's *Oleh-Oleh dari Desa II* (Souvenirs from the Village II) in 1981, which involved setting fire to a sculpture made by senior artist Sunaryo.[149]

Indirectly mentioned in Yuliman's text, but rarely appearing in writing about the history of art practice in Indonesia during *Orde Baru*, was the emergence of *jeprut* performances, or "happenings", in Bandung. An interdisciplinary group of visual artists, theatre actors and poets emerged from various institutions in Bandung in the mid to late 1980s, intervening on public spaces in performative and unpredictable ways. They reflected the sense of restlessness Yuliman identified among young artists at the time. Recently, the concept has seen an enthusiastic revival among both original practitioners – including Tisna Sanjaya, Arahmaiani, Isa Perkasa and Herry Dim – and new practitioners.[150] *Jeprut* is a loosely organised concept which focuses its actions on local sites and communities. I speculate that it is underrepresented because its spontaneous and chaotic actions focused on public areas undermine the dominant

[147] Sudarmadji and Kusnadi, "Polemik Kusnadi dan Sudarmadji di 'Kedaulatan Rakyat' Yogyakarta", in *Gerakan Seni Rupa Baru Indonesia*, ed. J. Supangkat and Sanento Yuliman (Jakarta: PT Gramedia, 1979).
[148] Yuliman, "Kemana Semangat Muda (date unknown)", p. 149.
[149] This contentious and critical event is also described in more detail in Miklouho-Maklai, *Exposing Society's Wounds, Some Aspects of Contemporary Art Since 1966*, pp. 95-96.
[150] I first heard of *jeprut* when interviewing Tisna Sanjaya in 2013. The name comes from an onomatopoeic Sundanese (West Java) word for a break that occurs as a result of tension. Sanento Yuliman's review of a 1987 exhibition by Arahmaiani contains an indirect reference to a *jeprut* event at Harry Roesli's home. Yuliman, "Si Resah di Simpang Jalan (1987)". The same incident is raised in the recent publication Heru Hikayat et al., *Jeprut: Sebuah Buku Tentang Sejarah Jeprut yang Sebenarnya* (Bandung 2016).

discourse of Bandung as cool, Western and formalist. Another contributing factor may be that it has only recently begun to "write itself" (unlike GSRBI, which published prolifically during and since their active period), in conjunction with a 2014 exhibition at the Soemardja Gallery at ITB (Fig. 17).[151]

The first publication on *jeprut* has been compiled in a somewhat haphazard manner; although the theoretical concepts are strong, the chronology and composition remains unclear and lacking sound research. Within the texts, mostly written by those who have been involved in early *jeprut* happenings, the *jeprut* label is retrospectively applied to diverse elements of Indonesian culture, including Rendra's poetry performances, Harry Roesli's opera *Ken Arok*, and even anecdotal events from the 1960s. Concomitant with the local focus of *jeprut*, practitioners linked it to international art movements like Fluxus and Dada, but with explicit differences, particularly the spontaneity of the interventions. These were often not publicised, and would take place in crowded public places without warning. The confluence of theatre and installation art, with participants and "*jepruters"* (artists, performers, musicians) interacting and intervening on the existing environment, is said to have emerged from *Studi Klub Teater*, an influential group in Bandung in the 1980s, of which Tisna Sanjaya, discussed in Chapter 6, was a key member.[152]

Not only are the practices of GSRBI and *jeprut* artists direct precursors to the material that will appear in the case studies of this thesis but also some of the artists, specifically Moelyono and FX Harsono, are among the most prolific writers and practitioners of participatory art. Thus, as their voices emerge throughout the dissertation, the reader will have greater insight into their earlier creative and theoretical activities. The contemporary practices of Tisna Sanjaya and Arahmaiani, both among the originators of *jeprut,* are also featured in the case studies in Part 2,

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[151] Although *Jeprut* counts prominent artists Arahmaiani and Tisna Sanjaya among its members, until recently few published texts address its formation and development. For other accounts see Edwin Jurriëns, "Indonesian video art: discourse, display and development", *RIMA: Review of Indonesian and Malaysian Affairs* 43, no. 2 (2009), pp. 165-189, or see http://indonesiaatmelbourne.unimelb.edu.au/tisna-sanjaya-and-the-art-of-snapping-and-mapping/.

[152] Established by Jakob Sumardjo and Saini KM in Bandung in 1958, Studi Klub Teater (STB) was a progressive course in modernist theatre and performance. In later years musicians and artists, including Tisna Sanjaya, became involved. Arahman Ali, "Komunitas Teater di Bandung", *Journal of Australia Indonesia Arts Alliance* 18 (2004), http://www.aiaa.org.au/newsletter/news18/news18.html.

representing important examples of participatory practice as activist and didactic/pedagogic practice in Indonesia.

Although *jeprut's* actions were spontaneous and sometimes obscure in intention, this was not entirely without reason. In the 1980s, the *Orde Baru* began to ruthlessly enforce zero tolerance of dissent or crime; suspected criminals were killed and their bodies dumped in public places in a crackdown down known as *Petrus*.[153] The challenge for some artists was how to remain critical without attracting reprisal. One prominent example of reprisal was the closure of Moelyono's 1993 installation exhibition commemorating the life of female labour activist Marsinah, who was tortured and murdered (Fig. 18). Moelyono narrowly escaped prosecution, due to representations from Indonesia's Legal Aid Association.[154] Other artists, such as Arahmaiani, were arrested and jailed for their outspokenness.[155]

The end of the Cold War began to erode the New Order's capacity to enforce social control through fear of communist uprising. At the same time, Western art historical institutions were beginning to reach out to the "periphery" for alternatives to the Eurocentric canon, and the global art world began to emerge.[156] In the early 1990s, human rights abuses in East Timor strained international relations, and military support from the USA was restricted. Networks of artists, journalists, intellectuals, writers and students, locally and internationally, were building their capacity to resist, and by the mid 1990s political opposition to Soeharto had consolidated, although it was still often met with violence.[157]

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[153] Heryanto, *State Terrorism and Political Identity in Indonesia: Fatally Belonging*, p. 21.
[154] M. Taufiqurrahman, "Moelyono: The Arts and Social Responsibility", *Jakarta Post*, 3/2/2006, www.thejakartapost.com/news/2006/02/03/arts-and-social-responsibility.html.
[155] FX Harsono, "Kerakyatan dalam Seni Lukis Indonesia Sejak PERSAGI Hingga Kini", in *Politik dan gender: aspek-aspek seni visual Indonesia*, ed. Adi Wicaksono, et al (Yogyakarta: Yayasan Seni Cemeti, 2003), p. 76. Harsono confirms that Arahmaiani was jailed in Bandung for a month after her Independence Day performance *Perayaan Kemerdekaan* (*Celebrating Independence*) on 17 August 1983.
[156] Arham Rahman, "Post-1989 Indonesia; Investigating the Position of Our Art in the Era of Globalised Art", *Skripta* II (2015)(pages unknown). An often cited early example of this trend was *Magiciens de la Terre,* curated by Jean-Hubert Martin for the Centre Georges Pompidou. Large scale exhibitions including Indonesian artists included the Havana Biennale, Fukuoka Asian Art Triennale and Asia-Pacific Triennial in Brisbane.
[157] Hooker, "Expression: Creativity Despite Constraint", pp. 285-290. On regional and international networks see Pat Hoffie, "A New Tide Turning: Australia in the Region 1993–2003", in *Art and Social Change: Contemporary Art in Asia and the Pacific*, ed. Caroline Turner (Canberra: Pandanus Books, 2005), pp. 516-541.

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Figure 17: Nanang Gawe and the Urban Invalid Group, *Gerobak Cinta Pelancong Negri Belangbuntal* (Love Wagon for Travellers of the Motley-Bloated Land), 2014, exhibited as part of the *Jeprut Permanen* (Permanent Jeprut) exhibition at Soemardja Gallery, Bandung. Jeprut artist Abah Nanu Muda explains the work to visitors.

Image removed due to copyright restrictions.

Figure 18: Moelyono, *Seni Rupa Untuk Marsinah*, 1994. Exhibition at the Dewan Kesenian Surabaya (Surabaya Arts Board).

In 1988, artists Nindityo Adipurnomo and Mella Jaarsma founded *Galeri Cemeti*, later *Rumah Seni Cemeti* or Cemeti Art House, Indonesia's first contemporary art space. This pioneering enterprise became a central point for the exhibition of emerging artists and development of a contemporary art discourse, building networks among artists across Java, Bali and Sumatra, and also internationally.[158] Their programming, publication and events were conducted with care to avoid attracting the attention of the hypervigilant *Orde Baru* apparatus; protocols were fulfilled and artwork and discussions toed the line when necessary.[159] Cemeti also provided the world outside with a contact point inside Indonesia. As such, Nindityo, Mella and the Cemeti stable came to have a profound influence on the distribution of contemporary Indonesian art to (most significantly) Australia and Japan, but also Germany, the Netherlands and even South America, where a proliferation of exhibitions large and small was beginning to recognise art from the "global south".[160] Cemeti Art House, and Mella and Nindityo as artists, have also had a profound influence on the propagation of participatory art in Indonesia and on the careers of all the artists examined in this dissertation. Nindityo in particular has been at the helm of several recent projects to develop participatory practice with young artists, some of which are detailed in Chapter 3.6.

1.5 Reformation: turning the "new" into the contemporary

The Asian economic crisis of 1997 brought hardship to a nation whose growing middle class had been seduced into silence by rising incomes. Both the middle class and the rural and urban poor were affected and student protests became a public focus. In May 1998, peaceful protests were held in universities across Indonesia, including Trisakti University in Jakarta. Artists were involved, often with the specific role of constructing visual protest material such as banners, effigies and other site-specific responses (Fig. 19).

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[158] Christine Clark, "Distinctive Voices: Artist Initiated Spaces and Projects", *Art and Social Change: Contemporary Art in Asia and the Pacific*, ed. Caroline Turner (Canberra: Pandanus Books, 2005), pp. 554-568. Further analysis of Cemeti's role in contemporary Indonesian art can be found in Susan Ingham's dissertation *Powerlines: Alternative Art and Infrastructure in Indonesia in the 1990s* (2008, unpublished).

[159] Cemeti's approach to dealing with the *Orde Baru* while remaining critical of their policies is detailed by Jim Supangkat and Landung Rusyanto Simatupang, *Outlet: Yogya dalam Peta Seni Rupa Kontemporer Indonesia* Yogyakarta: Yayasan Seni Cemeti, 2000), pp. 36-48, and also Asikin Hasan et al., *Exploring Vacuum: 1988-2003: 15 Years Cemeti Art House*, ed. S. Situmorang, et al. (Yogyakarta: Cemeti Art House,).

[160] Swastika, "Agency and Internationalism".

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Figure 19: Taring Padi collective, effigy of Soeharto, 1998, attending a pro-democracy protest in Yogyayarta.

Image removed due to copyright restrictions.

Figure 20: Jompet Kuswidananto, *Ugoran Prasad*, Rita Darani, *1hrs 2be Oth3rs*, 2003, metal plate, paint, 2-channel video recorder.

When police moved to prevent students marching on parliament, soldiers opened fire and four students were shot dead. This triggered riots across the nation, and, eventually, Soeharto's resignation. The Reform era – *Reformasi* – bloodstained and bitter, had arrived.[161]

Reformasi brought freedom from tyrannical oppression of expression, but it did not bring peace or prosperity for all Indonesians. The Asian financial crisis continued to impact on the poorest Indonesians, with soaring prices for staples such as cooking fuel and rice. Between 1998 and 2004, Presidents Habibie, Wahid, Megawati and finally Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, took their turn dealing with communal violence, natural disasters, corruption, economic hardship, separatist movements and human rights issues. In the early years of the new millennium, younger artists began to create art and performance which were not grounded in criticism of government or its instruments but rather looked at aspects of contemporary life – mobile phones, social media, corruption in society and gender issues (Fig. 20).

Some artists were still engaged with specifically Indonesian political issues, particularly in relation to the prevailing military hegemony and human rights abuses in outer regions of Indonesia.[162] Among the socially oriented practices in this period, those of the Taring Padi collective have been well documented.[163] They maintained the momentum of *Reformasi's* critique of power with performative protests that also utilised relief printmaking as a method for the production of poster editions, hand-printed on low cost paper and distributed through activist and artist networks (Fig. 21). Taring Padi's determinedly collaborative approach to art making (singular authorship is rare in their oeuvre) limits their relevance to the questions about individual practice posed in this research; they are nonetheless indicative of the ongoing role of social engagement in Indonesian art practice.

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[161] For detailed accounts of the events surrounding and subsequent to *Reformasi* see Arief Budiman et al., *Reformasi: Crisis and Change in Indonesia* (Michigan: Monash Asia Institute, 1999).
[162] Elly Kent, "Mining the Self", in *Beyond the Self: Contemporary Portraiture from Asia* (Canberra: National Portrait Gallery, 2011), p.p. 42-43.
[163] See Stuart Koop and Heidi Arbuckle, *Taring Padi* (Monash University Museum of Art, 2002); Heidi Arbuckle, *Taring Padi: Praktek Budaya Radikal di Indonesia*; Ronny Agustinus, ed. *Taring Padi, Seni Membongkar Tirani* (Yogyakarta: Lumbung Press, 2011).

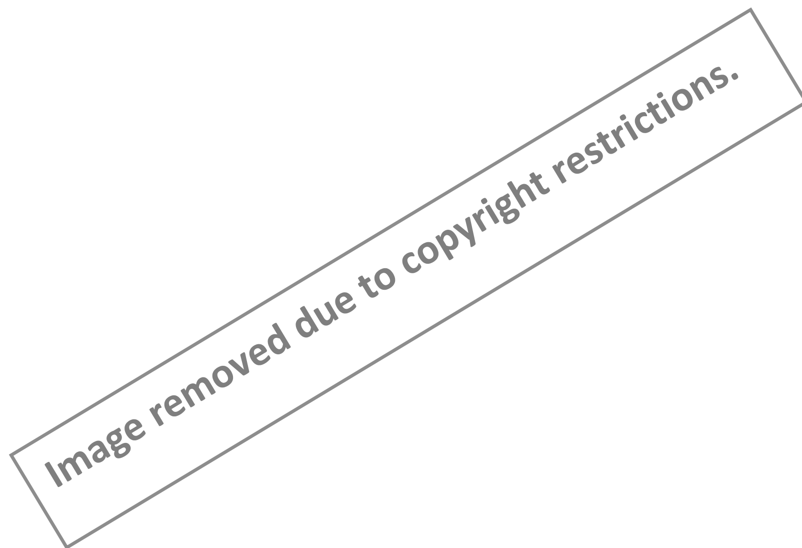

Figure 21: Taring Padi, *Cara Melawan Korupsi* (How to Fight Corruption), 2002, ink on paper. 59 x 84 cm

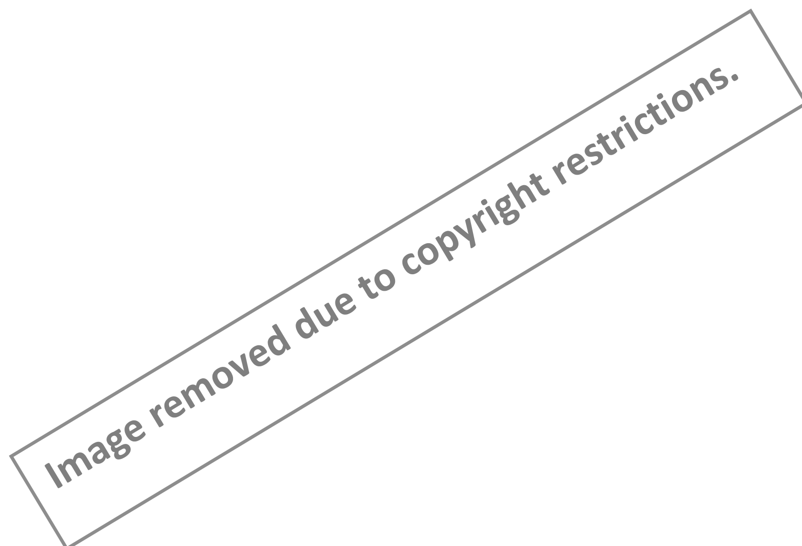

Figure 22: Apotik Komik, *Sakit Berlanjut* (Ongoing Illness), 1999, cardboard and paint, 4 x 50 x 30 cm each.

The Apotik Komik collective focused on bringing art into the public space in the late 1990s and early 2000s, reviving a public mural movement for which Yogyakarta has since become famous.[164] Apotik Komik reclaimed these walls from both state propaganda and commercial interests (Fig. 22). Today, the battle for public space between artwork and advertising continues in Yogyakarta, often symptomatic of the fact that for a great many Java-based artists there is no longer a singular enemy at which to direct criticism. Critical art has shifted focus and is often directed at society, at the growing middle-class and its apathy towards the poor, at corporate exploitation of resources, both human and environmental, at the forgetting and remembering of the past, both in its cultural apexes and its violent nadirs, and at insidious social control enacted through religious and cultural taboos (Fig. 23).[165] As Indonesia emerged from political reform and settled into relative stability, its society, like many, was still rife with conflict, shifting values, mismatched taboos and the growing pains of the 21st century. These challenges set the stage for artists working in the contemporary context in Indonesia over the past decade, which will be taken up again in Part 2 of this dissertation.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I began by bringing together key arguments from the writings of Yuliman and Rancière, to build a framework through which these influential discourses and practices can be read. This foregrounded Yuliman's concept of Indonesian modernist art as a continuity that prioritises the experiential nature of art and – in its inherent autonomy – penetrates all established art categories of time and place and is thus opened up to all influences.[166] This, I argued, is closely related to Rancière's conception of the aesthetic regime, which he proposes as an alternative to the "incoherent label 'modernity'". The aesthetic regime refutes the valorisation of

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[164] Note that recent research by Antariksa, not yet published, indicates that mural traditions in Yogyakarta in fact emerged from the Japanese occupation, and Resobowo has referred to Pelukis Muda's prolific activity in this field: Basuki Resobowo, *Bercermin Di Muka Kaca* (Yogyakarta: Ombak, 2004).

[165] Many of these issues were explored by contemporary artists in a touring exhibition which travelled to Europe and Australia. See Alexandra Kuss and Rizki Zaelani, *Awas! Recent Art from Indonesia* (Yogyakarta: Cemeti Art Foundation, 2002).

[166] Yuliman, "Seni Lukis di Indonesia: Persoalan-Persoalannya, dulu dan sekarang (Budaya Djawa, Dec 1970)", pp. 73-74.

rupture, so "the 'aesthetic experience' is one of heterogeneity, such that for the subject of that experience it is also the dismissal of a certain autonomy".[167]

I then mapped the development of Indonesian modernist art in relation to the social and historical context of the Indonesian nation, and notions of autonomy and heteronomy. I traced their interactive relationship through the decades, pointing to formative moments of discourse and practice, and revealing some tensions and discourses that have yet to receive broader attention in the literature, yet are informative to the development of participatory and individual art practice in Indonesia.

Yuliman's writings have not previously been applied to the analysis of participatory practices in Indonesia, and indeed his death precedes the wide consideration of participatory art in the rest of the world. Yet in the year of his death, participation and the active involvement of non-artists in the realisation of aesthetic experiences conceived by individual artists began to take centre stage in Indonesian art practice. The 1992 *Pameran Binal Eksperimental* (Wild Experimental Exhibition) was described by GSRBI co-founder Jim Supangkat, renowned curator and co-author of several of Yuliman's essays, as the equal of GRSBI.[168] He praised its determined resistance to the stagnancy of the establishment.[169] In this event, many works, including Heri Dono's work *Kuda Binal,* pushed the boundaries of social involvement in contemporary art, breaking new ground in what would years later be described as "relational aesthetics".[170] In Chapter 2, *Kuda Binal* provides a starting point for a broad analysis of contemporary participatory art practice in Indonesia.

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[167] Rancière, "The Aesthetic Revolution and its Outcomes", p. 134.
[168] A full account of this exhibition, which was mounted in response to the restrictive entry criteria for Yogyakarta Painting Biennale, can be found in "Pameran Binal Eksperimental Arts: Upaya Dinamiskan Seni Rupa Yogya", *Bernas*, 24/07/199, http://archive.ivaa-online.org/khazanahs/detail/1836
[169] Arief Santosa, "Jim Supangkat: Kasus 'Binal' Peluang Emas Bagi Yogya", *Kedaulatan Rakyat*, 16/08/1992, http://archive.ivaa-online.org/khazanahs/detail/1698.
[170] Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*.

Image removed due to copyright restrictions.

Figure 23: Digie Sigit, *Untuk Munir* (For Munir), 2013, stencil mural. The text reads “We are still here and we are multiplying”. Munir, a human rights activist, was assassinated by poisoning in 2004.

Figure 24: Fajar Abadi, *Rasa Dari Kata* (The Flavour of Words), 2013, prawn crackers shaped as words, powdered flavour sachets, ultraviolet lights. Participatory art work exhibited during the “…” exhibition at Rachel Gallery, Jakarta, 2013.

Chapter 2

Sites of production: social and cultural constructs underpinning participatory and individual art practice in Indonesia

In this chapter I address the sites of production that engender the combination of participatory and individual art practice in Indonesia, looking at cultural and art historical contexts in more detail. These contexts demonstrate the ongoing relevance of Yuliman's artistic ideology through the development of originary discourses and the conjunctive autonomous and heteronomous practices of the aesthetic regime. First, I describe one of the earliest delegated participatory performances to be well-documented and described in Indonesia. Heri Dono's (b. 1960) *Kuda Binal* (Wild Horses) (1992) is an example of how artists adapt traditional, endogenous forms to develop new, more widely accessible (or legible) originary aesthetic languages that communicate contemporary issues with urban audiences (Fig. 25).

This example leads into an examination of one of the broader cultural constructs that has developed in Java: *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation). Artists, theorists and arts organisations have recast this as a frame for collaborative and participatory art practice. I also situate the originary art discourses of *jiwa ketok* and *turba* (raised in Chapter 1) within an ongoing discourse through which Indonesian artists negotiate autonomy and heteronomy in their relationship with society. These three concepts are situated as originary discourses, developed out of local cultural constructs and encounters with modernity.

In the second section I analyse specific examples of how participatory practice has been "written" across journalistic, scholarly and sociological texts in Indonesia. One of the key writers in this context is artist FX Harsono. His writing encompasses the whole spectrum of socially engaged practice in Indonesian history, through the idea of *kerakyatan,* a word which adds the "ke-an" confix to the word *rakyat* (the people), turning it into a state or condition related to the people. Elaborating on artists' participation in society as a specific form of practice, some of Harsono's writing is part

of a larger body of work focused on the artistic and developmental practices conducted by Moelyono (b. 1957). I analyse how much of these early discourses on participatory art was conceived and written outside of aesthetic considerations or art historical discourses, instead focusing on development theory and pedagogy.

The practices and concepts described in this chapter demonstrate that artistic practice combining participatory and individual modes does not emerge solely in response to the rising popularity of participatory practice world-wide.[171] I argue that in both its abstract and concrete forms, the cultural context described here situates contemporary artists within a field established by discourses of modern Indonesian art. These are not received uncritically, and remain part of an ongoing dialectic with discourses from other disciplines, cultures and places. This continuing relationship between autonomy and heteronomy, developed as an originary endogenous discourse that then continues to engage with exogenous influences, reveals that social and cultural constructs are among the primary reasons that so many Indonesian artists create both participatory and individual art.

2.1 Wild Horses and stone masons: tradition reimagined

> The fire in the middle of the arena raged. Suddenly the sound of a drum thundered in the audience's ears, followed by the sound of a gong, and the shrill call of five trumpets. Ten riders on *kuda lumping* then descended into the 10 x 10 metre arena. This was the beginning of the *Kuda Binal* performance…by painter Heri Dono, held on Wednesday night, 29 July 1992, on the western corner of the northern town square in Yogya...Idioms from traditional art and symbols of modern society were inverted in this performance. Everything reflected wildness and humour. The heads of the ten *kuda lumping* are not all horse-heads…some sport human heads, others resemble animals, there are even those that depict mysterious creatures. Meanwhile, the ten actors wearing old fashioned clothes are also wearing gas masks, apparatus of modern man. They dance around while spraying kerosene and setting it alight, the only form of illumination for this performance…
> …Heri Dono's painting and mixed media merge. Just look to the animals made from cardboard carried in this performance…These forms are precisely the same as the objects that always appear in his paintings. Barong, dragons and all manner of other creatures and the costumes of the 60 actors also quickly reveal the character and

[171] Bishop describes the "orientation to social context" as a "near-global phenomenon". *Artificial Hells; Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*, p. 2.

> colours of Heri Dono paintings. The expressions in this performance were rough and wild, so the intensity was palpable.[172]

This passionate prose describes a performance often cited as a seminal work in the history of experimental performance art in Indonesia.[173] It appeared as part of the *Pameran Binal Eksperimental* (Wild Experimental Exhibition) – a rebellious event held to counter the formalist and formalised Yogyakarta Painting Biennale (1992) – in which the artists placed integral conceptual value on the active participation of individuals other than themselves. As the account above describes, Heri Dono inverted idioms from tradition, enlisting local grave diggers and stonemasons as dancers in a performance that parodied Central Javanese dance forms. In *Kuda Binal* the dancers' movements were rough simulations of the "horse dances" they referred to, but appeared more animalistic, exaggerated by the uneven ground on which they were performed and the untrained movements of the performers (Fig. 26).[174] Heri says:

> They had never danced before. That was the first time. And they were bad ….in terms of dance theory, they were wrong, their movements. But that was so interesting, because it became a new reference for dance….I was able to learn from the culture they usually practised, not as an academic problem, but as a new form of knowledge…[175]

In referring to European practice, Bishop argues that before 1989 the traditions of performance art "valorised live presence and immediacy via the artist's own body".[176] After the end of the Cold War in 1989, which I identified in Chapter 1.4 as also influential in Indonesia, she contends this "live presence" is attached to the "collective body" of a social group. In Indonesia, Heri's *Kuda Binal* and other works that followed

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[172] Raihul Fadjri, "Gebu Yogya 1992: Terobosan Kuda Binal", *TEMPO*, 8/8 1992, http://archive.ivaa-online.org/khazanahs/detail/1701.

[173] See, for instance, Alexandra Kuss, "Hak Istimewa Kelokalan Telah Berhamburan", in *Paradigma dan Pasar: Aspek-aspek Seni Visual Indonesia*, ed. Adi et al Wicaksono (Yogyakarta: Yayasan Seni Cemeti, 2003) p. 91; Jim Supangkat, "Multiculturalism/multimodernsim", pp. 70-81; Michelle Antoinette, "Cosmopatriots: on distant belongings and close encounters", in *Deterritorializing Aesthetics: International Art and its New Cosmopolitanisms, from an Indonesian Perspective*, ed. Edwin Jurriëns and Jeroen de Kloet (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007), pp. 205-233.

[174] Dancers in folk performances of *jathilan* and *jaran kepeng* use a woven horse.

[175] Heri Dono, "Interview by Elly Kent", (2014).

[176] Bishop, *Artificial Hells; Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*, p. 219. In Indonesia, this valorisation of the artist's body can be seen in the *jeprut* performances, Arahmaiani's public interventions (*Kecelakaan I – Accident I, 1981; Manusia Koran – Newspaper People, 1981)* Dadang Christanto performance of the self as victim (*For Those Who Have Been Killed*, 1992–93) Iwan Wijono's *The Greenman* (1996) and Melati Suryodarmo's feats of endurance (*Rindu – Longing 1996, Exergie Butter Dance, 2000)*. Melati was also a student of Marina Abromovic, an exemplar of this tendency. Bishop, *Artificial Hells; Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*, p. 219.

(*The Chair*, 1993; *Semar Farts*, 2000) are an example of this shift away from the focus on the artist's own body. However, other artists, such as Arahmaiani and Tisna Sanjaya, continue to use their own bodies as a primary vehicle for their concepts. Nonetheless, both of these artists have increasingly involved others in their performances, as my analysis of their work in later chapters demonstrates.

Heri's inclusion of his own paintings in *Kuda Binal* demonstrates the integral role that his interpretation of tradition plays in his object-artworks, and in the setting of the performance itself. Modern elements like gas masks, and idioms from tradition, such as the woven horse silhouette that the performers "rode" while they danced, were brought together to raise particular issues about environmental destruction and pollution (Fig. 27). Thus Heri departitioned time and space, site and function, tradition and modernity, putting them to the service of contemporary issues. This departitioning was also enacted through the participation of stonemasons in the place of dancers, which opened productive sites out of their failure to master the dance:

> …the interesting thing is that psychologically, when people make mistakes in an artistic exploration (in their own field) they see it as something that shouldn't happen, because you can't make a mistake. But, if its someone from a different discipline – say I'm a painter then I make a dance, choreography – if there's a mistake I don't feel too strongly that I have failed.[177]

The primary role of participants, then, was to subvert audience assumptions and open up space for new interpretations.[178]

[177] Heri Dono, "Interview by Elly Kent", (2014).
[178] The accompanying flyer reminded the audience "that this isn't tradisional (sic.) horse trance dance with the traditional bamboo horse...it's *kuda binal!* So we hope that you'll watch it with an open mind", "Heri Dono Presents: Kuda Binal", (Yogyakarta, 1992).

Figure 25: Heri Dono, *Kuda Binal*, 1992, brochure for participatory performance.

Figure 26: Heri Dono, *Kuda Binal*, 1992. Grave diggers play the role of traditional dancers in a folk “horse” dance.

Heri's departitioning extends the anti-lyricism discussed in Chapter 1.1, which manifested in GSRBI's use of found material to produce what Yuliman called "objects which physically involve the viewer".[179] This set the stage for artists like Heri to experiment with local and global idioms. Like GSRBI's work, *Kuda Binal* evoked vernacular forms. Combining creative autonomy with participation allowed Heri and other artists involved in the *Pameran Eksperimental Binal to* recognise and resist stagnation, and to seek its antidote by bringing together things that are otherwise set in opposition to each other, or to art. After anti-lyricism dissolved the constructions that kept Indonesian art inside literal and metaphoric frames, the next challenge for the expansion of the realm of aesthetic experience was the effort "to reject the impression that modern art is an ivory tower and re-instate its place in the midst of the praxis of social life".[180]

Bringing together disparate elements to imagine new roles and responsibilities for the artist and participants, Heri drew attention to the dynamic and changing nature of tradition. He located artists as generators of that change, creating new traditions by reordering the old. The brochure accompanying the show stated:

> …Kuda Binal was born from an age-old tradition, and we recreate it here for you as contemporary art. We present it to each and every level of society. We hope it will open the door to the start of a new tradition.[181]

Heri explicitly expects the audience to negotiate their own meanings from the performance. I argue that *Kuda Binal* opens a multitude of frames for contemporary art, as exhorted by Yuliman (see the beginning of Chapter 1). These neither exclude nor replicate existing, living traditions – echoing not only Rancière's "third term" between the artist and viewer but also Bhabha's "third space" emerging from distinct entities. The *Pameran Binal Eksperimental* provided a platform for artists to challenge established categories of time, space and meaning in Indonesian art, an aesthetic regime in which "art and life can exchange their properties".[182] In *Kuda Binal,* rather than being exchanged, these properties collide in a deliberate clash between modern

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[179] Sanento Yuliman, "Perspektif Baru", p. 98.
[180] From a review of the *Wild Experimental Exhibition* by ethnomusicologist: Franki Raden, "Menempatkan Seni di Masyarakat", *Kompas,* 16 August 1992, http://archive.ivaa-online.org/khazanahs/detail/1656.
[181] Dono, "Heri Dono Presents: Kuda Binal".
[182] Jacques Rancière, "The Aesthetic Revolution and its Outcomes", p. 137.

art establishment (and its separation from society) and traditional art (and its separation from contemporary life).

2.2 Local knowledge: *gotong royong*

In his engagement with his self-perceived roots, Heri's is a very different project to relational aesthetics, which Bourriaud identifies as emerging from the philosophies of the Enlightenment, Dadaism and Marx's social interstices.[183] *Kuda Binal* invokes and inverts tradition in order to question the order of things, and to develop new traditions and ideas. A similar tendency can be recognised in broader art discourses in Indonesia, where cultural concepts previously tied to tradition are recast in conversation with exogenous art theory and practice to develop new, originary art discourses. One example of an originary Javanese cultural construction that has been invoked in contemporary art discourses around aesthetics and collaborative practice is *gotong royong.*

An early painting by Heri, *Gotong Royong* (1984, Fig. 28) playfully illustrates this contested and appropriated social practice with a depiction of three distorted figures working in concert to lift a tiny bucket. *Gotong royong,* or mutual cooperation, is one of the fundamental principles of the modern Indonesian social system, co-opted from agrarian customs and promoted by the state at various points in the discourse of Indonesian nationalism and modernisation. Sukarno described the compression of the five points of the Pancasila – the five principles on which the Indonesian nation was founded – into one main principal: *gotong royong*.[184] Yet, renowned composer Suka Hardjana has emphasised the universality of formalised social cooperation around the world, arguing that state obsession with *gotong royong* results in a lack of emphasis on individual excellence, thus eroding national excellence.[185]

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[183] Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*.
[184] J.D. Legge, *Sukarno: a Political Biography* (Allen Lane London, 1972). Sukarno identified the *Pancasila* as the five principles of nationalism, internationalism, democracy, social prosperity for all, belief in God.
[185] Suka Hardjana, "Membaca Ulang Gotong Royong Tradisi dalam Perspektif Satu", keynote presentation at *Equator Symposium 2014: The One and the Many* (Gadjah Mada University, Yogyakarta: Yayasan Biennale Jogja, 2014).

Image removed due to copyright restrictions.

Figure 27: Heri Dono, *Kuda Binal*, 1992.

Image removed due to copyright restrictions.

Figure 28: Heri Dono, *Gotong Royong* (Working Together) 1984, acrylic on canvas, 97 x 97 cm.

Gotong royong is not only a political tool for the construction of national tradition; it is often used to describe the system by which many Indonesians, especially those outside the middle class, access support and social welfare that might otherwise be provided by the state.[186] As well as its manifestation in broader society, it makes important appearances in arts discourse. In 2011, architect and arts researcher Yoshi Fajar Krisnomurti contextualised the philosophy and implementation of the 2009 Biennale Jogja within a *gotong royong* framework, describing how artists and art-workers cooperated, collaborated, volunteered and donated food, board, time and artworks in order to realise the major arts event on a limited budget.[187] In a different context, in 2014 a film documenting the working practices that were developed through the HackteriaLAB project used the principle of *gotong royong* to describe the interdisciplinary collaboration between artists and science students (Fig. 29).[188]

I argue that *gotong royong* is used by the actors in these contexts to describe collaborative practices that are among other underlying influences – such as social performativity and modernism oriented to social responsibility – on participatory practices for many Indonesian artists. Yet there is, anecdotally at least, another side to *gotong royong* in the arts: the exploitation of young artists in the implementation of projects “for the greater good” of Indonesian art in a poorly funded arts environment.[189] In Indonesian art practice, the evocation of *gotong royong* dates back as far as the early years of the nation-state when the *sanggar* still held strong influence over practice, and it remains current for artists and institutions who wish to engender cooperation and social engagement.[190]

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[186] For instance, in 2010, following the eruption of the Merapi volcano and displacement of 300,000 people, emergency aid and evacuations were initially conducted by residents themselves. Once residents were allowed to return to the mountain, communal effort locally described as *gotong royong* played a key role in clearing ash, sand and debris. Elly Kent, “Semua Tempat Sekolah”, paper presented at *The Third International Graduate Student Conference on Indonesia: Indonesian Urban Cultures and Societies* (Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta: The Graduate School, Gadjah Mada University 2011).
[187] Yoshi Fajar Krisnomurti, “Gugur Gunung, Gotong Royong, and Jamming”, (2011). http://www.biennalejogja.org/news-en/gugur-gunung-gotong-royong-and-jamming/?lang=en#more-259, (accessed 16/05/2012).
[188] “Seni Gotong Royong”, documentary film, (X-Code Films, 2014).
[189] I have had a number of informal conversations with artists on this subject, specifically in relation to the implementation of programs associated with large-scale projects such as the biennales and art festivals.
[190] Miklouho-Maklai, *Exposing Society’s Wounds, Some Aspects of Contemporary Art Since 1966*, p. 17.

Anthropologist J.R. Bowen argues that, in Indonesia, "state and local actors are both continually engaged in the construction of 'tradition' in a dialogue…in which the outcome is by no means pre-determined by the state".[191] This suggests the manner in which those functions which might usually be fulfilled by the state can become a field of practice for artists and institutions dealing with the persistent failure of the state to achieve strong welfare systems and arts infrastructure. This is also the controversial field in which Bishop identifies neo-liberalist state co-option of participatory art practice to substitute strong, state-supported welfare systems.[192] Locating *gotong royong* – and its inherent focus on the individual's responsiveness and responsibility to the outer world – within arts discourses that also valorise autonomous creativity raises important questions around assumptions that Indonesian (or at least Javanese) traditions are inherently and exclusively communal. These questions are fundamental to the next two, more specifically art-related, concepts addressed in this chapter: *jiwa ketok* and *turba.*

2.3 Local knowledge: *Jiwa ketok* and *turba*

> If an artist makes an art object, then that art object is none other than his own soul made visible. Art is the visible soul. So art is the soul.[193]

This statement, published in 1946 in essay "Art, Artists and Society", was the fundamental philosophy of iconic Indonesian modernist painter, Soedjojono. *Jiwa ketok,* the "visible soul", has remained a point of resistance and consolidation over the decades since. In their 1987 catalogue for *Pasar Raya Dunia Fantasi* (Fantasy World Super Market), GSRBI rejected the idea that the artist must retain an emotional connection to the artwork in order for it to be successful.[194] Yet for many present-day Indonesian artists, Soedjojono's legacy remains influential.

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[191] John R. Bowen, "On the political construction of tradition: gotong royong in Indonesia", *The Journal of Asian Studies* 45, no. 03 (1986), p. 456.
[192] Bishop, *Artificial Hells; Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*, p. 13.
[193] Soedjojono, "Kesenian, Seniman dan Masyarakat", in *Seni Loekis, Kesenian dan Seniman* (Yogyakarta: Penerbit Indonesia Sekarang 1946), p. 69.
[194] Jim Supangkat et al., "Seni Rupa Baru Proyek 1: Pasaraya Dunia Fantasi", p. 19.

Figure 29: *HackteriaLAB* at the Kedai Kebun Forum art space in Yogyakarta, 2014.

Figure 30: Documentation of a meeting in Surakarta in 1985, titled *Situasi Seni Rupa Kita dan Seni Rupa Terlibat* (The Situation of Our Art and Art that is Involved). From left to right: Srihadi, unknown, Soedjojono, Sudarso SP, Sanento Yuliman.

In her 2012 publication *Dari Khaos ke Khaosmos* (From Chaos to Chaosmos), painter and theorist Stanislaus Yangni asserts that "(Soedjojono's) credo of the 'visible soul' was the first discourse of Indonesian fine art".[195] She places this discourse alongside Deleuzian philosophy in her ruminations on the aesthetic in painting – contemporary and past, Indonesian and otherwise. In 2013, an exhibition called *Jiwa Ketok, Kebangsaan dan Kita* (The Visible Soul, Nationality and Us) was held at the National Gallery of Indonesia. Contemporary artists produced diverse works demonstrating both resistance to and nostalgia for the kind of "social realism" that *jiwa ketok* produced.

As mentioned in Chapter 1.2 Soedjojono was well known for his fiery admonishments of slavish orientation to the West, yet also advised young artists to study the techniques of Western painters. In 1967 Claire Holt wrote of Soedjojono:

> He believed that artists should be politically conscious and cited Picasso and Diego de Rivera as good examples. Art, he held, should be dedicated to the social and political struggle.[196]

But for Soedjojono, this commitment to the social struggle does not suggest that artists allow themselves to be beholden to society's traditions or morals, rather that they should maintain their individual character. Yuliman argued that this focus on the individual as the centre of creative energy is one of three main tenets of Indonesian modernism (see Chapter 1.1). This motif repeats throughout Soedjojono's writing, including his essay titled "Seni Loekis di Indonesia, Sekarang dan Jang Akan Datang" (Painting in Indonesia, Now and in the Future):

> Every artist: the number one thing is to be founded on the artist's own character. And an artist must be courageous in all things, and especially dare to give their ideas to the world, even though not a single member of the public regards them well.[197]

This dual commitment to the socio-political realm through the representation of the struggles of society and to the vehement privileging of the artist as independent from society sets the "climate" (to borrow a term from Yuliman) in which present-day

[195] Stanislaus Yangni, *Dari Khaos ke Khaosmos: Estetika Seni Rupa* (Yogyakarta: Erupsi Akademia and Institut Seni Indonesia, 2012), p. 14.
[196] Claire Holt, *Art in Indonesia: Continuities and Change*, p. 216.
[197] Soedjojono, "Seni Loekis di Indonesia, Sekarang dan Jang Akan Datang", p. 7.

Indonesian artists create both individual and participatory works.[198] For Soedjojono, the autonomy of the artist as an individual was imperative to the creation of art, which could only be beautiful if it remained truthful, created through confrontation with social realities. To this end, “realism” is positioned as the primary goal of the artist, one inherently subjective in Soedjojono’s construction. However, as Yangni argues, this does not locate “realism” as a technique or stylistic tendency, which would lead to a dead end.[199] Rather, she contends that the “realism of *jiwa ketok”* is associated with a consciousness of human history in the here and now. In claiming *jiwa ketok* as foundational art theory in Indonesia, Yangni reveals the ongoing interpretation of the “visible soul” in contemporary arts practice. This continuing concern for the artists’ creative autonomy remains centred on a consciousness and response to reality.

The Lekra philosophy of *turba* – going down below into society – did not negate the emphasis on the artist as the centre for creative energy. In fact, Soedjojono was an influential member of Lekra and the formulation of *turba* as a philosophy of practice reflects his insistence that artists turn to realism for honest individual expression.[200]

At Lekra’s first National Congress in 1959, *turba* was formulated as a methodology to ensure artists could meet the ethical values set out in Lekra’s early manifestos. Lekra distilled its modernist, outward looking and socialist-nationalist philosophies into the “1-5-1 Principles”. In summary, these firstly set politics as commander, then defined five sub-principles pertaining to: “combining individual creativity with the wisdom of the many”; the wide distribution of high quality art; the harmonic combination of content and form; wholesome traditions meeting revolutionary modernity; and the combination of revolutionary realism with revolutionary romanticism.

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[198] See Chapter 1.1 for further context on the use of this phrase. Sanento Yuliman, “Seni Lukis di Indonesia: Persoalan-Persoalannya, dulu dan sekarang (Budaya Djawa, Dec 1970)”, in *Dua Seni Rupa, Sepilihan Tulisan Sanento Yuliman*, ed. Hasan Asikin (Jakarta: Yayasan Kalam, 2001), p. 73.

[199] Yangni, *Dari Khaos ke Khaosmos: Estetika Seni Rupa*, p. 30.

[200] Lekra’s 1955 *Mukadimah* manifesto declared that “In the field of art, Lekra urges creative initiative, and creative daring, and Lekra approves of every form, style, etc. as long as it is faithful to the truth, and as long as it strives for the utmost artistic beauty. The *Mukadimah* also specified that “artists, scholars and cultural workers should be on the side of the people and serve the people if they are to produce works of lasting value,” thus establishing a clear ethical basis for the evaluation of artwork. Keith Foulcher, *Social Commitment in Literature and the Arts: The Indonesian “Institute of People’s Culture” 1950–1965*.

Lastly, 1-5-1 dictated that art workers should:

> 1: Go Down Below, through interviews and in-depth investigation of the conditions and aspirations of the people.[201]

It was this last aspect of the 1-5-1 Principles that came to dominate artistic methodologies. In Antariksa's account of Lekra and visual art practice, he cites former Lekra member Hersri Setiawan's description of *turba* as a research method. Setiawan tells of spending a week in the village of Saragedug, just east of Yogyakarta, to collect folktales:

> In the afternoon we would hoe or weed, and in the evening…while we plaited reeds we would develop discussions about folk tales with the farmers.[202]

These folk tales became the subject matter of literary output for Setiawan. From this we can see that rather than benefiting those 'below' through artistic intervention, the purpose of *turba* was, at least from Setiawan's perspective, to develop artists and cultural workers and their organisations. Noting that artists are generally born into middle-class urban families, Setiawan attests that *turba's* purpose was to "catch the heart-beat of those below" and re-voice the repertoire of art and cultural forms at this level of society. Indonesian literature academic Keith Foulcher writes:

> It expressed a particular concept of the relationship between cultural workers and ordinary people, and was intended to ensure that the artist was at one with the thoughts and feelings of the people, not an observer of their lives but a full participant in them….[203]

This raises another aspect of participatory art in the Indonesian context. For many Indonesian artists, the concept of participatory art is closely tied to the participation of artists in society. Evidence of this appears throughout the history of Indonesian modern art, including in regular artists meetings to reassess its relevance, for instance,

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[201] Aminuddin T. Siregar and Tempo Team, "LEKRA: Analysis of a discourse", *Tempo*, Sept. 30–Oct. 6 2013.
[202] Quoted in Antariksa, *Tuan Tanah Kawin Muda* (Yogyakarta: Yayasan Seni Cemeti, 2005), p. 66.
[203] Foulcher, *Social Commitment in Literature and the Arts: The Indonesian "Institute of People's Culture" 1950–1965,* p. 110.

in the 1985 meeting titled "The situation of our art and art that is involved", which included artists from GSRBI, Soedjojono and Sanento Yuliman (Fig. 30).[204]

I will expand on the basis for this argument in the next section of this chapter, and demonstrate it when comparing the practices of Arahmaiani and Made Bayak in Chapter 4. Swastika also sees *turba* as the roots of participatory art practice in Indonesia, saying it "indicates there was already a desire to be close to the subject". She traces this desire back to activism and performance art in political demonstrations, during which artists then invited fellow demonstrators to join them.[205] As outlined in Chapter 5, Made Bayak's involvement in the *Tolak Reklamasi* (Reject Reclamation) movement provides an example of this as an ongoing practice directly influenced by *turba*.

While the legacy of *turba* inspires contemporary politically conscious artists, the reality in the 1950s and 1960s was somewhat less romantic. Kusni Sulang wrote of objections during the 1964 conference, when artists complained that they spent too much time making banners and had little time for creation, much less *turba*.[206] Musicians similarly protested that so much time was spent performing at cultural events that there was no time for composition or consideration of the context.

Foulcher has argued that Lekra's art will remain "a site on which meanings will continue to be built".[207] However, I argue the *artworks* produced by Lekra, at least in the visual arts, have had limited impact on the discourse of Indonesian art (perhaps because of the scarcity of examples). Rather, its *philosophies* of autonomous and heteronomous artistic practice, "combining individual creativity with the wisdom of the many", and its conception of *turba* as a methodology that engendered artists' participation in society, have had far greater impact on the aesthetic form of

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[204] *Terlibat* may also be translated as "participatory", the sense is that art participates in society, rather than the reverse. The thrust of this meeting is reported to have revolved around nostalgic memories of revolutionary involvement from Soedjojono and anxiety about how to marry activism with aesthetics from the GSRBI members. M.H. Agus Burhan, "Saresehan Seni Rupa di Surakarta '85: Seni Rupa Kita dan Seni Rupa Terlibat", *SANI Majalah,* 1986, pp. 55-66.

[205] Alia Swastika, "Interview by Elly Kent", (2014). The work of artist collective Taring Padi are prime examples of this tendency.

[206] In the same letter, Sulang claims that the models for farmers that appeared in paintings were in fact city people in farmer's clothing. Antariksa, *Tuan Tanah Kawin Muda*, p. 79.

[207] Foulcher, *Social Commitment in Literature and the Arts: The Indonesian "Institute of People's Culture" 1950–1965*, p. 208.

Indonesian art.[208] In spite of fractured implementation and ambiguous intentions, or perhaps because of them, *turba* remains an exemplar of heteronomous art practice in Indonesia, in the minds of artists, curators and cultural workers.

In my examination of *turba* and *jiwa ketok* I have shown how these two concepts have set continuing discourses of joint autonomy and heteronomy for art practice in Indonesia, allowing artists to seek inspiration from exogenous discourses and recast them into endogenous knowledge structures and art practices. In the next section I will explore how the dominant, even hegemonic, perception of art as a pedagogical and emancipatory tool was perpetuated through writing about practice and theory in the 1980s and 1990s.

2.4 Writing participation: discourses on artists, the "people" and conscientisation in Indonesia

The concept of the artist as a participant in society took a divergent path from *turba* in the 1980s when artists began to actively seek ways in which to interpret their own experiences of ordinary life – rather than that of the "other" *rakyat* – through their art. GSRBI artist and writer FX Harsono described this practice, and its attendant commitment to making more meaningful contributions to society through art, as "renewal":[209]

> Almost all renewal artists undertake some work outside their individual creative arts practice. Of course, they cannot live from their art alone, whether it is painting, sculpture or design. Initially these strategic efforts at survival were not acknowledged as a lifestyle which is at heart an artistic one, but then there emerged a new

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[208] In contrast to Setiawan, Amrus Natalsya, the head of Bumi Tarung – an artists' group which took *turba* as its primary creative process – saw *turba* as knowledge: social knowledge that could then be offered to an audience. However, his understanding of this knowledge was "that farmers should be defended. That feudalism is bad". Antariksa claims that the social realism and the revolutionary romanticism, which were integral to the so-called "1-5-1 Principles" of Lekra's approach to art and culture, were discussed primarily among Lekra leaders but not at the lower levels. Similarly, for all the good intentions to "expand (art) out and up", according to iconic Lekra artist Djoko Pekik, Lekra promoted only folk art forms at the sub-district level (*kecamatan*) and "high arts" at the regency level (*kabupaten*). Antariksa, *Tuan Tanah Kawin Muda*. p. 72.

[209] Harsono, a leading figure in the *Black December* group described in Chapter 1 as a precursor to GSRBI, of which he was also a founding member, has developed a practice that integrates social research as a fundamental part of his creative process, alongside his teaching and academic writing. In this dissertation I will focus only on Harsono's writing, but his practice has been fundamentally influential on the practical component of my PhD research and this is described in my exegesis.

> awareness among these innovative artists, that the act of earning a living and creating art form an inseparable unit.[210]

Lamenting the status of "renewal art", Harsono identifies participation in society as a defining and undervalued aspect of "renewal art" practice. In the past, the strong relationship between social situations and creativity in Indonesia has been linked to traditional art forms like shadow puppetry.[211] However, for some Indonesian artists in the 1980s it was, rather, related to their attempts to develop and deepen their understanding of the issues faced by Indonesian society. Artists' involvement with NGOs, activist networks and in their own local communities is a pertinent aspect that surfaces frequently in writing about participatory art and artists. Harsono writes:

> However they struggle with poverty, immersing themselves with the poor, their involvement in NGOs and their efforts to expand the concept of sociology and culture…These activities are always regarded as having no direct connection to their creation of art, and tend to be ignored by art aficionados.[212]

Here Harsono reveals the tension between autonomy and heteronomy; he argues that the desire to manifest both in art practice is thwarted by modernist concepts of universalism and the pure autonomy of the arts. In a later essay on *kerakyatan* (see introduction to this chapter for a definition) as a theme in Indonesian painting, Harsono traces the development of art concerned with the struggle of the populace through various stages of Indonesian art history.[213] He identifies shifts in the understanding of who the *rakyat* is and what role the artist should take in relation to them, pinpointing an expansion of the concept of *kerakyatan* to the emergence of artists involved in GSRBI and PIPA, including Dedi Eri Supria, Hardi, Semsar Siahaan, Tisna Sanjaya, Arahmaiani and Moelyono, and others who emerge subsequently, such as Dadang Christanto, Agus Suwage and Agung Kurniawan and then the Apotik Komik and Taring Padi collectives.

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[210] FX Harsono, "Upaya Mandiri Seni Rupa Pembaruan" in Moelyono, *Seni Rupa Penyadaran* (Yogyakarta: Yayasan Bentang Budaya, 1997), pp. 101–111.
[211] Julie Ewington, "Between the Cracks: Art and Method in Southeast Asia".
[212] FX Harsono, "Upaya Mandiri Seni Rupa Pembaruan".
[213] FX Harsono "Kerakyatan dalam Seni Lukis Indonesia Sejak PERSAGI Hingga Kini", pp. 56-91. *Kerakyatan* is technically translated as "populism". In a personal communication with Harsono (29/7/2015) he described the use of the word as a theme in art as referring to painting and practices that are concerned with the fate of "those who are repressed by the government's policies … so those that do not have the economic, social or political ability to resist". As with the use of the term *rakyat* in the context of the arts, this use of the word seems to lack a precise translation. Hence I have elected to use the Indonesian word rather than risk an imprecise translation.

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Figure 31: FX Harsono, *Hutan Triplek* (Plywood forest), 1985, screen-print on plywood. Installed in the *Proses '85* exhibition.

Image removed due to copyright restrictions.

Figure 32: Moelyono's work *Refleksi Bendungan Wonorejo* (Reflections on the Wonorejo Dam) (1994) featuring on the cover of an NGO's quarterly publication.

This development in artists' conceptions of which sections of society need attention, Harsono says, is directly related to their expanding networks:

> …drawing on their critical observations of the reality of existence and their interactions with society and groups outside the arts...they no longer identify the problems of the people as limited to the problems experienced by the *wong cilik* (little people/peasants), rather more diversely....environmental pollution, eviction, workers, war, cultures of violence, the clash between modernity and tradition, and so on.[214]

Harsono's description of the problems younger artists of the 1970s and 1980s took up in their art picks up almost directly from where Yuliman left off in one of his last essays, which discussed the sense of unrest among largely the same artists, including Harsono himself (Fig. 31). To demonstrate, Yuliman quoted phrases that different artists used to describe the shifting direction of their practice: "publically oriented" (FX Harsono); "communication art" (Gendut Riyanto); and "art that is beneficial to society" (Harris Purnama). Yuliman stressed that this art is often the "result of collaboration, and perhaps even with a role for the audience or the public (which thus changes their role, and that of the artist)".[215]

This shift in attitude to art practice and to the *rakyat* resulted in an increasingly direct pedagogical function for art, which artists like Moelyono, Arahmaiani and Tisna Sanjaya then developed through their interaction with NGOs, society and non arts-groups. I will describe this further in chapters on Arahmaiani and Tisna, but here I argue that this is a development and expansion of the goals of Lekra's *turba,* an ideology which sought to expand artists' experience and knowledge so that they could accurately represent the subjects of their artwork. Among these artists, however, Harsono points to an academic rather than experiential catalyst, which also influenced attitudes to participation:

> Alignment (with society) begins with intellectual awareness due to educational background, not from the experience of living in the community. The younger generation, for example Moelyono, began to engage with NGOs, encountering participatory research methods...[216]

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[214] Harsono "Kerakyatan dalam Seni Lukis Indonesia Sejak PERSAGI Hingga Kini", p. 70.
[215] Yuliman, "Kemana Semangat Muda (date unknown)", p. 151.
[216] Harsono, "Kerakyatan dalam Seni Lukis Indonesia Sejak PERSAGI Hingga Kini", p. 85.

Harsono's perspective differs slightly from Alia Swastika's, who links participation to activism in a political, demonstrative sense, and also to the ties that emerge between activist groups and artists.[217]

In Harsono's model, which is also supported by Moelyono's statements, artists in the 1980s became interested in engaging community participation through their involvement with NGOs that were using participatory research methods. Ironically, these methods emerged out of development discourses that arrived in Indonesia during the *Orde Baru*'s development period. In contrast to Yuliman, Harsono formulates this paradigm of "alignment with *kerakyatan"* as the dominant discourse. In a 2003 essay tracing the history of socially oriented art, Harsono uses Tisna Sanjaya as an exemplar of this multifaceted practice:

> To gain an intensive understanding of the issues, Tisna often interacts with the people, on campus, around his neighbourhood, or in public spaces. Not infrequently, Tisna conducts his performances with NGO groups, although he is not a member of any particular NGO.[218]

Harsono here identifies how, by working with NGOs and "society and groups outside the arts", Tisna eschews the idea that art can be completely independent.

Harsono's earlier essay, "The Independent Efforts of Renewal Art*"* was published in *Seni Rupa Penyadaran (*Art for Conscientising), a collection of essays on emerging experimental participatory art practices led by Moelyono. Harsono's title flags the same difficult navigation between the dynamics of autonomy and heteronomy that writer and curator Hendro Wiyanto describes as an eternal tension in Moelyono's work:

> …but these two dynamics exist simultaneously in himself, the first giving certainty to the community as genuine subjects of development that cannot be manipulated or reduced, the second merely giving birth to various "genres tags" (public art, *seni KUD*, community art, conceptual art, awareness art etc.) and ensuing confusion.[219]

This confusion continues throughout the writing around participatory and individual art, which is beset by the instrumentalisation of art as a tool to implement

[217] Swastika, "Interview by Elly Kent".
[218] Harsono, "Kerakyatan dalam Seni Lukis Indonesia Sejak PERSAGI Hingga Kini", p. 77.
[219] Wiyanto, Hendro in Moelyono, *Seni Rupa Penyadaran*, p. vii.

development and pedagogical theory. Attempts to formulate a theoretical framework in support of the combination of individual and participatory practice were aimed more at defence and justification, and also a mapping out of methodology, rather than extensive reflection on aesthetics and ethics.

The publication of *Seni Rupa Penyadaran* came at a time when Moelyono's work in marginalised communities was attracting considerable media and curatorial attention locally and overseas (Fig. 32).[220] This was probably influenced by his networks with NGOs, burgeoning international interest in political art from the "periphery", and the rapidly approaching fall of the repressive *Orde Baru*. The book was positioned as an attempt to "encourage more accurate study of the decision to use social languages in visual art, and a healthy perspective in assigning proportion to art work which chooses to voice the problems of the lower social classes".[221] The title of the book reflected Moelyono's own "writing" of his practice, and its valence among artists in the 1980s. In a 1989 forum, artist Siti Adiyati borrowed the term "conscientisation" from Brazilian pedagogist Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* and described Moelyono's art as *Seni Rupa Penyadaran*, or "Art for Conscientisation".[222]

Whilst already setting out an ideological basis for "art for conscientisation", in this book Moelyono preserves the specific role he sees for art as a tool in emancipation. In this he valorises the role of aesthetics in its relation to Greek root words for feeling and sensation, and links its to the "development of dialogue that creates a critical consciousness…both through working processes and the finished work as it is discussed with the broader community".[223] Thus, Moelyono brings aesthetics as a

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[220] See, for instance, "Artist Moelyono intends to promote social awareness", *The Jakarta Post* (1988); "Moelyono's art invites dialog on social issues", *The Jakarta Post* (1997); Supangkat, "Multiculturalism/multimodernsim". Also note Moelyono's inclusion in *Art in Southeast Asia 1997: Glimpses into the Future,* curated by (Junichi Shioda, Osamu Fukunaga, Yasuko Furuichi) at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo; *Plastic (& other) Waste*, curated by Apinan Poshyananda at Chulalongkorn University Bangkok, Bangkok, Thailand**;** Australia & Regions Artists' Exchange: *Torque: ARX 4 The Fourth Artists' Regional Exchange*, 1995, at Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts (PICA), Perth, Australia; and the Third Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art, *Beyond the Future* 1999, at the Queensland Art Gallery.

[221] Moelyono, *Seni Rupa Penyadaran,* p. 23.

[222] Moelyono, *Pak Moel Guru Nggambar* (Yogyakarta: Insist Press, 2005), p. 32.

[223] Here Moelyono is drawing his understanding of aesthetics from Ursula Meyer's text *Conceptual Art,* 1972, ibid., p. 45. Jim Supangkat and Sanento Yuliman also make links to Greek root words in their writing on GSRBI in the 1980s. See Sanento Yuliman and J. Supangkat, "Seni Rupa Sehari-Hari Menentang Elitisme".

sensory experience together with consciousness and the capacity for subjective criticality. In his construction, the role of art and artists as catalysts in conscientising art is explicit, although the *rakyat* are positioned as subjects and drivers in this process of creating new culture:

> As creators of culture, the *rakyat* has the potential and right to visual art as a medium for dialogue...In the dialogue process, in the social reality, there is a need for concern, involvement, alignment, participation and contributions from accompanying professional or graduate art workers.[224]

The specific role for artists and their understanding of art that Moelyono identifies here is eclipsed by theories of participatory research and pedagogical aspirations in later publications. In subsequent texts, which I explore in more detail shortly, the focus is primarily on Moelyono's work as an example of the kind of sociological praxis that Freire defined as "reflection and action directed at the structures to be transformed".[225]

Especially since he established working relations with NGOs, Moelyono's work has demonstrated a strong focus on applying theory and practice to enacting social change. This has manifested not only in his art projects but also in his propensity for writing, rewriting and publishing accounts of his work, and the pedagogical theories he develops within this work. His earliest and most frequently (self-) cited foray into pedagogic art practice involved an unexpected opportunity to voluntarily teach drawing in a small, isolated primary school in the village of Brumbun, East Java. While working as a teacher at a private school in a nearby regional centre, Tulungagung, Moelyono travelled 35 kilometres by foot to Brumbun most weekends, an experience he has described in several essays, in *Seni Rupa Penyadaran* and his later book *Pak Moel Guru Nggambar*. Moelyono describes children drawing in the sand, on recycled calendars, cardboard and any medium they could find. When Moelyono organised assistance from the students at his Tulungagung Catholic school after a devastating fire in Brumbun, parental support for the drawing class in Brumbun improved. Moelyono observed that at this point children began to use drawing to record social interactions occurring around them. In March 1987, they held their first exhibition in the home of a

[224] Moelyono, *Seni Rupa Penyadaran*, p. 44.
[225] P. Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Continuum, 1970), p. 126.

resident, an opportunity to demonstrate advances in children's drawing, reading and writing.[226] Months later, an exhibition of the children's work at Bentara Budaya exhibition space in Yogyakarta resulted in heightened external interest in Moelyono's work and the fate of the Brumbun community.

Subsequently, in 1988 Moelyono was awarded an Ashoka Fellowship, which provided a stipend, allowing him to increase his activity at Brumbun.[227] He also began to work closely with established NGOs such as WALHI (Environment Lobby) and API (Association for Sociology Researchers). API introduced Moelyono to the concept of participatory research and the pedagogical teachings of Paulo Freire, and Moelyono quickly adopted these theories in explaining his own work:

> I came to know terms and names such as participative, participatory, methodology, dialogical, transformative, Paulo Freire, Gramsci, and others that I had never heard or imagined when I was studying at art school.[228]

Art as pedagogical practice is well-established and has formed the basis for educational movements, and, in recent decades, thoughtful explorations of the unique potential of art as pedagogy and artists as teachers have emerged.[229] However, throughout the texts presented in *Pak Moel Guru Nggambar,* the transformative potential of art specifically remains strangely unexplored. Intead the transformative functions of pedagogy in general are favoured. This is representative of the dominant approach to participatory art in Indonesia, which tends to instrumentalise its functions and present them as part of a toolkit for social workers in the field.

An essay by sociologist Aditjondro in the book rigorously applies Freire's pedagogical theory to Moelyono's practice, and within the first paragraph highlights a dual role for art as "beautiful entertainment" and as a pathway to "consciousness for broader

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[226] This observation is usually accompanied by an anecdote in which a child's drawing shows a plantation foreman purloining timber, leading to an incident in which the village head eventually defends the drawing. Moelyono, *Pak Moel Guru Nggambar,* pp. 23-24.

[227] The Ashoka Foundation is a non-profit organisation based in the USA and funded by private, corporate and government donations. It awards fellowships to outstanding social entrepeneurs.

[228] Ibid., p. 31.

[229] See, for instance, Emily Pringle, "The Artist as Educator: Examining Relationships between Art Practice and Pedagogy in the Gallery Context", *Tate Papers No. 11* (2009) http://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/tate-papers/11/artist-as-educator-examining-relationships-between-art-practice-and-pedagogy-in-gallery-context; bell hooks, *Teaching to transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom* (Great Britain, New York: Routledge, 1994).

society". Although this could link Moelyono's practice to the evocative power of the artwork in Yuliman's theory of continuity in Indonesian art, and to the discourse around life and art that Harsono raised at the beginning of the same book, the rest of Aditjondro's essay instead analyses Moelyono's practice in comparison to Freire's conscientising methodology. Aditjondro claims Moelyono's method is superior to Friere's because he replaced sociology graduates with ordinary residents and projected slides with children's artworks. Yet his "conceptual framework for an alternative education which pivots on visual arts activity" positions artworks as interchangeable with essays or texts produced by academics/intellectuals out of interaction with "the poor". This effectively removes the specificity of art as a tool within the framework. In *Pak Moel Guru Nggambar,* a procession from "artist as teacher" to "teacher using art" becomes increasingly apparent through Moelyono's own writing.[230] Initially consisting of prose recounting the progression of events, subsequent passages include didactic paragraphs and tables that resemble teaching resources more than an exegesis on artistic practice.

In 2003, in a text published by the Cemeti Art Foundation, Moelyono returns to describe his earliest experiences using art as a tool to engage children and adults with broader social and historical contexts than they might ordinarily encounter. The essay also includes a detailed description of *Kesenian Unit Desa* (KUD, *Village Unit Art,* 1985), the often cited, yet rarely explored final failed assessment piece for Moelyono's undergraduate degree (Fig. 33). This was an outdoor installation which drew directly on Moelyono's extensive experiences in the swampy Waung Village. During his *turba*-like informal residency in Waung, Moelyono, with the help of residents and other art school students, constructed vegetable gardens for local consumption. In his work for his final exam, Moelyono constructed an outdoor installation of found media from Waung's vernacular building materials, creating small settings that evoked gathering and discussion as it customarily occurs in rural Java, complete with Waung produce.[231]

[230] The concept of "artist as teacher" has been increasingly explored since avant-garde artist Joseph Beuys first described teaching as his greatest work of art in 1969. Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship* (London: Verso, 2012), p. 243.
[231] This is the same social form of *nongkrong* described in the Methodologies section 0.3 in the Introduction.

Figure 33: Moelyono, *Kesenian Unit Desa*, (Village Unit Art), 1985, found objects, cloves, tiles, mats. Left: detail; right: installation.

Figure 34: Moelyono and the Kebonsari Village community, Untitled, 2004, grass, labels. Exhibited as part of the *Lintang Desa* exhibition, Cemeti Art House, 2004.

Moelyono's intentions with this work were both political and pedagogic, but not directed solely at farmers:

> Like the farmers selling cloves they have harvested to the KUD (*Kooperasi Unit Desa*, Village Unit Cooperative), this work was "harvested from the issues" faced by the village and taken to the KUD as a forum to discuss and find solutions with "clever" city people. [232]

Moelyono was told the project was better suited to a postgraduate program and he failed the painting-major exam. However, in this work we can find perhaps the earliest iteration of an Indonesian artist consciously attempting to combine participatory and individual practice, both conceptually and through material and aesthetic forms. Moreover, it is certainly one of the earliest works to position the individual artwork both as an object produced through the artist's participation in society *and* as a site for society's participation.

In Moelyono's work there is a tension at play between the individual expression that contemporary art inherits from modernist discourse and the drive to play a tangible, quantifiable role in social change through deep creative engagement with others. Nindityo Adipurnomo's curatorial essay for the exhibition *Retak Wajah Anak-anak Bendungan/Disintegrating Faces of the Children of the Dam* (2011) provides a more recent and more nuanced account of the difficulties this presents the artist and curator.

Retak Wajah was held at Cemeti Art House, and followed up on the Waung Village project on which Moelyono's final, failed painting examination was based 25 years earlier. Waung's swamps, previously subject to regular flooding, evaporated after the construction of the Wonorejo dam. Moelyono's self-penned essay recounts his ongoing engagement with the area throughout the dam's construction, including teaching glass painting and joining a traditional music group. He describes how a subsequent exhibition "indirectly influenced the amount of financial compensation for the land to meet the demands of the residents", by generating increased media attention.[233]

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[232] Moelyono, "Seni Rupa Penyadaran: Praksis dari Arus Pinggiran", in *Politik dan Gender*, ed. Adi et al Wicaksono (Yogyakarta: Yayasan Seni Cemeti 2003), p. 103.
[233] Moelyono in Nindityo Adipurnomo, Priyambudi Sulistiyanto, and Moelyono, *Retak Wajah Anak-anak Bendungan/Disintegrating Faces of the Children of the Dam* (Yogyakarta: Cemeti Art House, 2011), p. 4.

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Figure 35: Moelyono, *Retak Wajah Anak-Anak Bendungan* (Disintegrating Faces of the Children of the Dam), 2011, Cemeti Art House, Yogyakarta. Exhibition installation view.

Figure 36: Moelyono, *Art Goes to Village Tactic*, 2013, documentation, lesson plans, photographs.

Reflections of the Wonorejo Dam was held in Solo (1994) and in Perth as part of *ARX (Artists Regional Exchange) 4* (1995).

The catalogue includes a text written by the artist summarising his career and the project, and describing the geo-political facts of the Wonorejo dam from which the project emerged, including land acquisition and resulting displacement, followed by a summary of his own career. This echoes the dry, research based approach to artwork shown in the catalogue for the *Proses '85* (1985) exhibition, described in Chapter 1.4. In developing their individual works for that exhibition, artists such as FX Harsono and Moelyono stressed a "proportional" and emotionally detached approach to quantifiable data, observation and documentation they collected through their participation in NGO projects.[234]

The *Proses '85* artists' focus on process over product is echoed in Bishop's assertion, a quarter century later, that "today's participatory art is often at pains to emphasise process over a definitive image, concept or object". Bishop also draws attention to the primacy of the invisible in these practices: "a social situation, a change of energy, a raised consciousness".[235] This consciousness-raising is clearly apparent in artworks emerging in Indonesia in the mid 1980s, and also in the work of artists in the contemporary case studies for this dissertation.

Moelyono's subsequent artworks have regularly displayed statistical data and official documents such as maps, planograms and tables alongside artefacts of rural life (Fig. 35). However, this distinctive aesthetic decision is rarely addressed (if at all) in literature on his practice. In one exceptional essay, Nindityo Adipurnomo opines that it is a strategy to bring the perpetrators and victims into the gallery space, to "record the fragility of the rural sector". Yet he identifies a double-edged exoticisation in his own curatorial approaching Moelyono's work, describing a debate they had while preparing the exhibition:

> … I felt confronted by the calculated estimations of stereotypical middle-class urbanites that Moelyono felt it was important to target with this work. Phrases like "nouveau riche" and "Facebook generation" came complete with specific indicators of their characteristics (fast, cheap and instant); once again I was aware of an attempt to stereotype target audiences that made me feel

[234] Wienardi et al., *Proses '85*, at Pasar Seni Ancol (Jakarta: Sinar Harapan 1985), p. 11.
[235] Bishop, *Artificial Hells; Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship,* p. 6.

> uncomfortable (not to say hopeless) in my efforts to build a dialogue around Moelyono's art in a gallery space.[236]

Nindityo's account of his frustration locates some of Moelyono's work, which brought "village art artefacts" that had been submerged by the dam project into the gallery space, as an exoticisation of "village art" for a perceived urban "other" in need of pedagogical realignment. Yet perhaps because of their long professional and personal association, Nindityo retains his faith in the fundamental "anti-fetishist" qualities of Moelyono's work. Nindityo's scepticism about the exoticisation of subject and audience, particularly with regard to Moelyono's hyper-realist paintings of village children with cracked mud covering their faces, evaporates in his descriptions of the installation work that "transforms the exhibition space into confiscated land that will…be flooded".[237]

In this installation, vertical white strings dropped towards the floor under the weight of plumbs, dissecting the space into a three-dimensional drawing which viewers walked into and underneath. This arrangement, Nindityo writes, generated an affective empathy with the farmers through physical embodiment (Fig. 35):

> Although simple, the installation, which was very site specific, created a fantasy; as if the crowds of visitors at the exhibition opening were threatened by the release of millions of cubic metres of water at any time.[238]

This is one of the few visual analyses in the many Indonesian texts on Moelyono's artwork. In the discourse that has developed around *Seni Rupa Penyadaran* and other pedagogical projects, exogenous instrumentalising development theories received through NGOs have eclipsed aesthetic concerns. This is evident partly through the focus on Freirean pedagogy, which maintains a hierarchy in which "dialogue takes place inside some programme and content".[239] Interestingly, the pedagogical theories developed by Ki Hadjar Dewantara in Indonesia's early nationalist period seem not to have a role in these debates on *Seni Rupa Penyadaran*, even though Dewantara

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[236] Adipurnomo, Sulistiyanto, and Moelyono, *Retak Wajah Anak-anak Bendungan/Disintegrating Faces of the Children of the Dam*, p. 17.
[237] Ibid., pp. 17–19.
[238] Ibid., p. 18.
[239] Bishop, *Artificial Hells; Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*, p. 266. Here Bishop is quoting Paulo Freire and Ira Shor, *A Pedagogy for Liberation; Dialogues on Transformative Educaion* (London: Macmillan, 1987), p. 102.

developed these theories from intense study of progressive educational theories of Montessori and Tagore.[240]

The catalogue for the 15th Jakarta Biennale (2013), for instance, reflects the dominant paradigm for writing on Moelyono's practice. Although the brief biographical text offers no descriptions of Moelyono's work, *Art Goes to Village Tactic* (2013), in the Biennale the form of that installation echoed the same dominant paradigm evident in his writing (Fig. 36).

Displaying Moelyono's collection of lesson plans and snapshots from his education work with NGOs and art projects, the installation was precisely the kind of "pedagogical aesthetics" that theorist Irit Rogoff points out "has taken away the burden to rethink and dislodge daily those dominant burdens ourselves".[241] I argue that this has also been the function of the majority of writing on Moelyono's practice, including his own texts, which over time have served to institutionalise and rigidify his practice within a narrow band of didactic possibilities. Rather than expanding art's potential to dissolve the boundaries between critical education and creative expression, the texts propagate aesthetic practices that "render education a product or tool in the 'knowledge economy'".[242]

Conclusion

In this chapter I have introduced some of the sites of production and local knowledge that engender combined participatory and individual art practice in Indonesia. My account of these is necessarily circumscribed by time and space, but those presented are primary examples of a continuity of theory and practice in which exogenous and endogenous discourses have been seen as fundamental to the development of frameworks for Indonesian art. Within these frameworks, the autonomy of the artist as the centre of creative energy, and their responsiveness to the conditions of society around them, are seen as a united and continuous artistic ideology.

[240] Ruth T. McVey, "Taman Siswa and the Indonesian National Awakening", *Indonesia*, no. 4 (1967), p. 133.
[241] Irit Rogoff, "Turning", *e-flux journal* 1(2008), http://www.e-flux.com/journal/turning/.
[242] Ibid.

I began by reflecting on an example of this dual focus in the work of Heri Dono. His *Kuda Binal* performance is an example of the inversion of traditions, both modernist and Javanese, that set values around the expert and layperson, tradition and modernity, and individual and communal expression on a collision course with each other. I argue that this work exemplifies the aesthetic regime's task of permeating the partitions between art and life, and at the same time shows how artists and institutions utilise this regime to bring together exogenous and endogenous discourses in Indonesia, constructing new originary discourses.

I have addressed a number of the elements adopted into these discourses, demonstrating how the Indonesian nationalist construction of *gotong royong* has been recast by artists and theorists. In new discourses, *gotong royong* is used to develop and critique ideas around individual artists' sensibilities and collective work for the common good in the practice of artists and institutions in Indonesia. Similarly, I demonstrated how artists and institutions, from the early modernist period to the present day, have invoked the specific philosophies of *turba* and *jiwa ketok* as discourses around artists' autonomy as expressive individuals *and* their heteronomous responsibility as participants in society. Using evidence from contemporary and contemporaneous writers, I argue that both these positions are embedded in *jiwa ketok* and *turba*.

I continued to focus on writing around artists and their role in society in the second section, where I analysed the body of literature that emerged around participatory practices in Indonesia in the late 1980s and 1990s through to the 2000s. This writing has largely focused on the "conscientising art" of artists who were exposed to discourses around emancipatory pedagogy and participatory development through their own involvement in NGOs. Texts by curators, sociologists and artists themselves tended to focus on the ethical and social value of the artwork, and rarely addressed aesthetic values. I conclude that this undermines the critical function of art, miring the artists in repetition rather than experimentation, and thus failing to advance the

emancipatory potential of the aesthetic regime's insistence that "matters of art are matters of education".[243]

This chapter has demonstrated that the development of originary discourses preceding and accompanying combined participatory and individual art in Indonesia have functioned to mandate conjunctive autonomous and heteronomous approaches to art. In the next chapter I map some of the networks in which these discourses manifest, evolve and are perpetuated, or sometimes resisted, through institutional and individual practices.

[243] Rancière, "The Aesthetic Revolution and its Outcomes", p. 137.

Chapter 3

An ecosystem of production: institutional practices supporting participatory and individual art practice in Indonesia

In the previous chapter, I showed how sites of production for participatory and individual art are embedded in art historical and cultural constructs in Indonesia. These constructs – primarily *jiwa ketok, turba, gotong royong* and *rasa* – emerged through Indonesia's encounter with modernity and post-coloniality, and through the ideological practices of modern artists who sought to create space both for autonomous artistic practice and socially engaged participation. They were then carried through the decades and reinterpreted by subsequent generations of artists, generating new discourses around *kerakyatan* and conscientisation.

In this chapter, those abstract, localised concepts around artists and their relationship to society come together with exogenous discourses, appearing as concrete forms in contemporary institutional and curatorial practice in Indonesia. Taking the 2014 Equator Symposium as a starting point, I map out a network of interrelated institutions and quasi-institutions – such as large-scale exhibitions, symposiums and artist-run initiatives – that work together to support, and often mandate, the combination of participatory and individual art practice and theory in Indonesia. It is necessarily an incomplete map, as the generative nature of these institutional and curatorial practices means there are almost infinite permutations and divergences. This analysis is based on my observations of programs between 2012 and 2015, and as such is largely focused on Yogyakarta, and, to a lesser extent, Jakarta, where key projects took place during that period. Observations of activity prior to 2012 would undoubtedly result in a different "network" of individuals and institutions, and almost certainly different geographic locales.[244]

[244] For instance, the Bandung based collective Common Rooms and artist-run initiative S14 were highly active prior to my field research period, but I was unable to witness sustained activity in participatory art practice from either during the 12-month period I spent in Bandung (2013–2014). For further

The network that I describe here provides an overview of the ways in which the discourses described in Chapters 1 and 2 continue to resonate in the present day, and are in fact deliberately evoked in many forums. This network demonstrates how these institutional forums work to continue the negotiation of originary discourses around participatory and individual practice by discussing local and external theories and practices together. I also contend that the dominance of discourses around participatory art in institutions serves to perpetuate this artistic practice, compelling artists to combine both participatory and individual practice in order to gain recognition and support.

3.1 The Equator Symposium: the one and the many

One of the outstanding aspects of the supporting structures for art practice in Indonesia is the intersection of individuals, institutions, programs and commercial organisations, which creates a complex web of competing interests and stakeholders.

In tracing this complexity I have identified the Equator Symposium (ES) of the *Yayasan Biennale Yogyakarta* (YBY, Biennale Yogyakarta Foundation) as a departure point from which to follow the threads of the web.[245] This is not to designate the ES as a centre point as such, but rather one among many intersecting foci. The ES is one of two main programs organised by the YBY, the other being the Biennale Jogja (BJ). The BJ includes the Parallel Events (PE) program, which I will discuss later in this chapter.

The ES emerged from the conception of the "Equator Series", in which iterations of the BJ involve collaboration and co-curation with art practitioners from along the equatorial belt over five iterations from 2011 to 2022. This concept was developed as an alternative to discourses around the "Global South", reinvigorating concepts behind the 1955 Asia-Africa Conference of non-aligned (largely postcolonial) nations, held in Bandung.[246]

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information on some organisations active in Bandung and Jakarta, see Edwin Jurriëns, "Art and the city", *Inside Indonesia*, no. 112 (2013), http://www.insideindonesia.org/art-and-the-city.

[245] I was an intern with the Yayasan Biennale Yogyakarta, working in the Equator Symposium team from July to December 2014, under the auspices of the Australia Awards program. The team included Enin Supriyanto, Grace Samboh, Ratna Mufida and me.

[246] See http://www.biennalejogja.org ABOUT (accessed 2/04/2013). A similar concept motivated the Non-Aligned Movement Exhibition (Pameran Gerakan Non-Blok) in 1995, which brought together

Figure 37: Jogja Biennale XI, *Equator #1, Shadow Lines: Indonesia Meets India*, 2011, Jogja Nasional Museum.

Figure 38: Jogja Biennale XIII, Equator #3, *Hacking Conflict: Indonesia Meets Nigeria*, 2015, Jogja Nasional Museum.

"modern" art from the non-aligned nations in a large, and heavily criticised, exhibition. Jim Supangkat, "'Buku Putih' Pameran GNB".

In 2011, for the first iteration of the Equator series, the YBY approached Indian curator Suman Gopinath, who worked as co-curator with Indonesia's Alia Swastika to bring together BJXI *Shadow Lines: Indonesia Meets India*, a program addressing religion and religiosity in and in between both nations (Fig. 37). This theme was laden with the centuries-long history of religious flow between India and Indonesia.[247] In 2013, BJXII *Not A Dead End: Indonesia Encounters the Arab Peninsula*, curated by Egyptian Sarah Rifky and Indonesian Agung Hujatnikajennong, evoked responses around migrant workers, Islamic pilgrimages and other patterns of relations.[248] In 2015 Woto "Wok the Rock" Wibowo and Jude Anogwih curated BJXIII *Hacking Conflict: Indonesia Meets Nigeria,* which focused on shared histories of internal conflict (Fig. 38).[249] In 2017 the partner country will be Latin American; in 2019 the Biennale will focus on the Pacific under the title the Ocean Biennale; and in 2021 the Biennale will return to Southeast Asia.

The Equator Symposium was launched in 2013 as an academic sister event to the Biennale Jogja, with the goals of nurturing the relationships between art practitioners, curators, writers and academics that develop from the Biennale exhibitions, and working towards a final conference in 2022 (Fig. 39). According to their website:

> The Equator Symposium wants to be bridge between as many 'local geniuses' as possible from around the equator…Through the Equator Symposium, YBY positions itself as the connecting agent and also the point of dissemination for the latest ideas, developments and growth from all the countries in the equatorial region.[250]

This reflects the ES organisers' interest in developing networks out of the long-term Biennale program rather than each singular event, as the exhibition is charged to do. For the launch event in 2013, characterised by organisers as a kind of mini-symposium, and the first major symposium in 2014, presenters were invited from Jakarta,

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[247] Julie Romain, "Indian Architecture in the 'Sanskrit Cosmopolis': " in *The Temples of the Dieng Plateau. Early Interactions Between South and Southeast Asia: Reflections on Cross-cultural Exchange*, ed. Pierre-Yves Manguin, A. Mani, and Geoff Wade (Singapore: ISEAS Publishing, 2011), pp. 299–305.

[248] Time constraints hampered the Equator Series Biennale #1, but #2 was beset by a lack of curatorial cooperation and communication, and largely failed to connect with the broader public. For a comprehensive review, see: Irham Anshari, "Konsumsi Medium, Konsumsi Gagasan", *Skripta* 1, no. 1 (2014), pp. 53–65.

[249] For a review of the most recent Jogja Biennale, see Elly Kent, "Biennale Jogja XIII: Hacking Conflict – Indonesia meets Nigeria", *Artlink* 2016, pp. 75–77.

[250] http:/Equatorsymposium.org (accessed 20/12/2014).

Yogyakarta, Bandung, Jatiwangi, Surabaya, Bangalore, Kolkata, Hong Kong, Singapore and the US (Fig. 40).

Figure 39: Dr S.T. Sunardi speaking at a closed workshop for emerging academics to develop papers for the 1st Equator Symposium, SaRang Art Space, Yogyakarta, 2014.

Figure 40: The program for the 2014 Equator Symposium, *The One and the Many, Ethics and Aesthetic Practices in Our 21st Century Democracy*, Gadjah Mada University, Yogyakarta.

The title of the 2014 academic symposium, *The One and the Many: Ethics and Aesthetic Practices in Our 21st Century Democracy*, strongly invoked recent discourse on participatory art practice. ES project manager Grace Samboh stressed that this was not intended to suggest that Kester's *The One and The Many* is a pre-eminent text but rather to educe the broad possibilities for new forms of art practice on individual and collective levels.[251] However, at the same time, the concept of *gotong royong,* or cooperative work, as explained in Chapter 2.2, was a strong basis for critical discussions in the 2014 ES, with musicologist Suka Hardjana presenting a keynote speech titled *Rereading the Gotong Royong Tradition in the Perspective of the One.*

The breadth of "Western" discourses that artists and theorists engage with as they establish originary discourses in Indonesia is also demonstrated in other forums. For instance, the Langgeng Art Foundation holds a series of talks called *Guru Muda* (Young Teachers), which gives early-career academics and writers the opportunity to publically present papers on the thinkers like Gayatri Spivak, Alain Badiou and Gilles Deleuze. Similarly, the 2015 BJXII invited Nicolas Bourriaud to present a public lecture, which was followed by a heated panel discussion between Bourriaud and Indonesian curators and historians Alia Swastika, Antariksa, Enin Supriyanto and Agung Hujatnikajennong.[252]

The ES is an instructive point from which to address further sites of production for individual and participatory art practice and theory in Indonesia, not least because many of the institutional and disciplinary cross-overs are made visible through the ES program. The ES program is designed to bring together "experts, academics, and artists…so that they can map various aspects of the socio-cultural issues that occur around us at community, national and global levels".[253] One point to begin unravelling the web of relations around current participatory praxis in Indonesia is the organising team of ES itself, and the experts, academics and artist that it engages in conversation.

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[251] See, for instance, the footnote to the introductory text for the symposium's themes, *Who is the One? Who are the Many?* at
http://equatorsymposium.org/index.php/Who_is_the_One%3F_Who_are_the_Many%3F.
[252] This panel discussion is addressed further in Chapter 4.3.
[253] Enin Supriyanto, *Foreword from the Project Officer* in the Equator Symposium Guidebook, 2014.

Image removed due to copyright restrictions.

Figure 41: Arief Yudi Rahman (founder of Jatiwangi Art Foundation – JAF) speaking at the Equator Symposium Launch, 2013, at the Duta Wacana Christian University University, Yogyakarta.

Figure 42: The house where founders Arief Yudi and Ginggi Hasyim were raised, and the roof tile factory at the rear, are now also the site for the artist-run initiative, Jatiwangi Art Factory.

As well as her role as ES program manager, Grace Samboh (b. 1984) has, since 2014, been working closely with Jatiwangi Art Factory (JAF) and also organised HackteriaLAB 2014, which brought together artists, makers and science students to imagine new possibilities in technology and the arts. JAF were key contributors to both the launch and the inaugural edition of the ES in 2013, and HackteriaLAB's documentary film *Gotong Royong* was screened at the ES in 2014.

JAF co-founder Arief Yudi Rahman made an unconventional paper presentation in 2013; rather than speaking himself, he invited members of the audience (such as former JAF artist-in-residence Mella Jaarsma) to explain JAF's work (Fig. 41). In their session, JAF were joined by a diverse range of community and participatory art collectives, such as *Yayasan Kampung Halaman* (Backyard Foundation, a media-training organisation for teenagers) and *Teater Garasi* (Garage Theatre). Their inclusion in a forum titled "Media, Arts and Culture: Changes and Challenges in our 21st Century Democracy" shows how ES organisers and arts practitioners continue to work towards many frameworks for artistic ideologies, in response to the changing cultural and political landscape. The discourses they build examine their positions as arts practitioners participating in community organisations, expanding their heteronomous role by developing creative autonomy among individuals and communities.

3.2 Jatiwangi Art Factory: future thinkers

JAF is among the primary sites of production for participatory art practice in contemporary Indonesia. Located in a semi-rural area of Majalengka Regency in West Java, JAF runs community-oriented art programs from a tile factory and home, with broad aims to develop discourses around local, rural life through arts and cultural activities, such as festivals, performances, visual art, music, video, ceramics, exhibitions, artist residencies, monthly discussions, radio broadcasts and education programs (Fig. 44). Their perspective is defiantly village oriented, although they approach this from a sophisticated and organised framework. From their base in Jatisura hamlet, they run a radio station, have a popular rock band called *Hanyaterra,* which uses instruments entirely made from ceramics, and host regular community-oriented festivals and exhibitions.

Founded by Arief Yudi Rahman and Ginggi Hasyim (both raised in Jatisura) in 2005, since 2008 JAF has worked with the village level (Jatiwangi) government to conduct social research through contemporary art. This collaboration manifests largely in the legitimising presence of key figures of the local government within JAF's collective. The sub-district head (*Pak Camat*) featured frequently in video works, performances and events in 2008–14, even recording his own song with *Hanyaterra*. Importantly, Ginggi Hasyim was the elected village head (*Pak Kuwu)* of Jatisura hamlet at the time of this research.[254] JAF are used to playing a role somewhere between government and provocateur, as the project I describe later illustrates. Importantly, JAF's methodology brings endogenous and exogenous discourses into contact with each other in an effort to expand the horizons of both artists-in-residence and the local community.[255]

In 2013–14 I followed several of JAF's projects as a participant-observer. One of these was the *Festival Masa Depan* (Festival of the Future, 2013). This was a collaborative project implemented throughout the Jatisura hamlet by the Jakarta based Rujak Centre for Urban Studies, a number of volunteers and JAF members.[256] *Festival Masa Depan* was conducted in three phases: the *Festival of Vision,* the *Festival of Reality* and the *Festival of Change*. The two-day *Festival of Vision* invited residents to imagine Jatisura 10 years into the future, generating 108 drawings made by residents divided into groups of men, women and children (Fig. 44). These divisions also influenced the form of the projections or desires for Jatiwangi's future, in perhaps predictably gendered ways.[257]

[254] Under Ginggi's leadership the neighbourhood has seen considerable change in terms of local culture and environmental awareness. Dian Tri Irawaty, "Festival Masa Depan: Desa Jatisura 10 tahun ke Depan", Rujak, http://rujak.org/2014/04/festival-masa-depan-desa-jatisura-10-tahun-ke-depan/. (accessed 3/12/2014)

[255] Frans A. Prasetyo, "Art, Activism and Endogenous Development Strategy", in *Equator Symposium* (Universitas Gadjah Mada: Yayasan Bienale Yogyakarta, 2014). Prasetyo and I co-authored a chapter in a recent publication: Elly Kent and F. Prasetyo, "'SIASAT' – Artistic Tactics for Transgression on State Authority", in *Paririmbon Jatiwangi* ed. Grace Samboh (Majalengka: Yayasan Daun Salambar, 2016).

[256] Although it may seem incongruous for an urban planning organisation to be involved in an area that is often described as a 'village', Jatisura's population of [6339 people in 2012 census] sits tightly alongside many other 'villages' that make up Jatiwangi subdistrict. Several tens of thousand people live here in close proximity to each other, many of whom are employed in tile making factories. However, farmers and farm labourers make up the majority of household heads. Tri Irawaty, "Festival Masa Depan: Desa Jatisura 10 tahun ke Depan".

[257] Irawaty notes that the men of the village were more focused on infrastructure, farming machinery and modernised buildings, whilst the women produced visions of public facilities for health, education and collective recreation, and economy based centred on home industries. Interestingly, the children's

Figure 43: The rear of the family complex and the surrounding streets feature murals made by artists in residence.

Figure 44: Arief Yudi consults residents during the participatory project *Festival of Vision* (2013), which encouraged local residents to imagine possible futures for Jatiwangi, and incorporated these into future urban planning proposals.

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drawing showed a very different Jatisura, evoking a more the rural version of the village with rice fields, trees, animal farms and flowing rivers, whilst teenagers also sought communal public facilities for sport and parks. Tri Irawaty, "Festival Masa Depan: Desa Jatisura 10 tahun ke Depan".

Figure 45: The *Festival of Vision* forum at JAF, where local participants presented collaborative drawings envisioning Jatiwangi's future.

Figure 46: The forum was co-opted by local government representatives, who attempted to present their latest urban planning research and strategies.

Artist residencies are a significant aspect of JAF's program. They invite Indonesian and international artists to conduct participatory art projects that engage with the local community, exposing residents to diverse cultural and social influences, fundamentally altering the nature of the otherwise homogenous community (Fig. 41).[258]

One of the most telling incidents during the *Festival of Vision* occurred during a forum where residents presented drawings depicting their visions for the future (Fig. 45). Government officials, who arrived at the forum late and had not participated in the drawing process, suddenly announced their intention to present the results of their latest survey and planning for "20 years into the future of Jatisura". They produced a projector and screen, and abruptly turned JAF's *Festival Masa Depan* into a "Focus Group Discussion and Apprehension of Society's Aspirations, A Directive on Spatial Planning in the Village" (Fig. 46).

This incident, which apparently mirrored others that occurred more frequently as parliamentary and presidential elections drew near, reflected the experience of community artists in Britain in the 1980s. In that instance, "co-option by the state shifted community art into the position of social provision…rather than community empowerment fomenting and supporting campaigns for social justice".[259] Yet, while authorities attempted to turn JAF's community creative exercise into a focus group discussion, the artists viewed this as an opportunity for antagonism. By inviting authorities to participate only as passive observers, JAF rejected their "expertise" and demonstrated the potential of community planning (Fig. 47).[260]

In 2013, JAF were paired with the Trotoart community of artists in Penjaringan, South Jakarta, to help realise an off-site community art project for the 15th Jakarta Biennale. Together, JAF and Trotoart cleared a site that had been used as an illegal rubbish dump, turning it into a futsal field that since been used for children's education programs, community sport and a weekly aerobics program.

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[258] Former artists in residence include Mella Jaarsma and Nindityo Adipurnomo, Fajar Abadi, Irwan Ahmett, Juliana Yasin, Wanda Gillespie, Cornelius Delaney, Makiko Watanabe and Mae Aguinaldo, among others.
[259] Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells; Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*, p. 188.
[260] Iriwaty quotes the Ministry for Interior's Regulation 51, 2007, regarding community based village-level development as stipulating in article 6.11 that spatial planning in villages should be conducted in a participatory manner. One imagines Focus Group Discussions to be a primary method of "participation".

Figure 47: JAF members quickly moved to prevent the government officials' formal presentation from continuing, and re-instated discussions based on local residents' drawings.

Figure 48: Trotoart and Jatiwangi Art Factory, *Project 12 x 36 m Under the Speed* in 15th Jakarta Biennale, *Siasat*, 2013. The two artist collective collaborated to construct a futsal field on the site of a former rubbish dump under a flyover.

3.3 Jakarta Biennale and ruangrupa: social tactics in the city

The 15th Jakarta Biennale's curatorial premise, *Siasat* (Tactics), identified artists and artworks that demonstrate how individuals and communities, especially in urban Indonesia, cope with social inequality, environmental pressure and poverty. The resulting biennale consisted of a large main exhibition in the underground car park at Taman Ismail Marzuki and further projects across Jakarta city, many implemented primarily outside of gallery and museum spaces altogether (Fig. 48, 49).[261]

This was not the first Jakarta Biennale to depart from curatorial themes that engage the public and address issues of social concern in Jakarta.[262] However, it is an important point of reference within this dissertation as it occurred at a time when the conceptualisation of participatory practice in Indonesia was increasingly orienting itself towards, and within, the recent discourses around relational aesthetics, dialogical art and participatory art practice that I discussed in the Introduction to this dissertation.

Nonetheless, the inclusion of Moelyono's work, anomalously agrarian in an exhibition otherwise focused on urban lifestyles, indicates ongoing attempts to read these exogenous discourses through local practices like conscientisation, which have previously been centred on rural areas. As I pointed out in the previous chapter, the discourse that has developed around "conscientisation art" is drawn almost exclusively from exogenous Freirean pedagogical and development discourses, but nonetheless has become an originary discourse in Indonesian participatory practice, along with *turba* and *jiwa ketok*.

Another organisation that has contributed in various ways to the dominance of participatory practice in Indonesia today is ruangrupa, a Jakarta based artist-run initiative founded in 2000, which also featured at both ES events and exhibited in the BJXI in 2011.[263] At the ES launch in 2013, Reza Asung presented a paper describing ruangrupa's diverse activities, which range through exhibitions, international

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[261] Taman Ismail Marzuki, often referred to as TIM, is a large cultural venue in central Jakarta, which has a theatre, exhibition space, studios etc. It is also adjacent to the Institut Kesenian Jakarta (IKJ, Jakarta Institute of the Arts) and was the venue for the early GSRBI exhibitions.

[262] Alia Swastika, "Biennale Sebagai Ruang Wacana: Penciptaan, Pembacaan dan Gagasan Tentang Publik", *Skripta* 1, no. 1 (2014), pp. 5-15

[263] Grace Samboh's profile at International Curators mentions that she also began her career in the arts with ruangrupa. http://curatorsintl.org/collaborators/grace-samboh (accessed 22/10/2015)

"collaboratories", video festivals, youth and student involvement, urban art interventions, journal publications and curatorial workshops. Their work is mostly focused on urban issues in the city of Jakarta, where they are based. Nonetheless, ruangrupa has a strong presence outside of Jakarta, and has worked on various projects with JAF, Cemeti Art House, and Kunci Cultural Studies Centre, among others. One of ruangrupa's most geographically broad works was *Gerobak Bioskop* (Cinema Cart), with JAF acting as one of 10 hosts and contributors across the archipelago (Fig. 50). In 2013, ruangrupa director Ade Darmawan was also the driving curatorial force behind the Jakarta Biennale.

The 15th Jakarta Biennale's adoption of urban "tactics" as a curatorial concept adds an interesting element to philosopher Michel de Certeau's understanding of the term. De Certeau distinguishes between tactics and strategies in terms of time and space. The tactic, he argues, departs from no spatial or institutional localisation (such as a biennale); these are the preserve of the strategy, which operates from its "proper" locale to establish relations with "exteriors" (competitors, partners or, in the case of the Jakarta Biennale, city officials, commercial sponsors and so on).[264] As a curatorial approach, "tactics" point to the paradoxical nature of the role of socially engaged art in the world today. The Biennale is run and funded by a long-standing Jakarta establishment, the *Dewan Kesenian Jakarta* (DKJ, the Jakarta Arts Board). The board has, over the years, drawn some members from ruangrupa, who are now part of the establishment and who curated, managed and organised the 2013 Biennale. Ade Darmawan's introduction to the Biennale's catalogue states that:

> In recent years, it is becoming more urgent to revisit and re-examine the position of the public in the planning and development of the city...Many urban dwellers thrive despite the absence of the state, and some of them have been contributing to the life of the city…To encourage sophistication of these sporadic and speculative practices, we need to see them with a critical eye, to re-arrange, formulate, and make them more expandable, spreadable, and locally adaptable.[265]

From this we might extrapolate that what the organisers of the Biennale hope to achieve is, in fact, the locating of these tactics.

[264] Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Trans. Steven Rendall. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984). p. xix.
[265] Ade Darmawan, "Siasat, an Introduction", in *Katalog 15th Jakarta Biennale 2013*, ed. Adi Yunanto (Jakarta: Dewan Kesenian Jakarta, 2013). pp. 8-11

Figure 49: The 15th Jakarta Biennale, *Siasat*, Taman Ismail Marzuki (underground carpark), 2013.

Image removed due to copyright restrictions.

Figure 50: ruangrupa, *Gerobak Bioskop*, 2011, documentation in the Jogja Biennale XI catalogue.

From their institutionalised position, the Jakarta Biennale has adopted tactics as its strategy; tactics (or more precisely the tacticians) become the "exteriors" to the Biennale's "proper", and through the process of re-arrangement, expansion and adaptation they become absorbed into that institution. Where this occurs, sites of production risk becoming sites of reproduction, as we saw in the discussion of Moelyono's work in the Jakarta Biennale in the last chapter. In that context, the very aspect of Jakarta citizen-tacticians' existence that the Biennale seeks to identify might well be lost through the process of identification.

Arham Rahman's analysis of the Jakarta Biennale 2013 was more optimistic. He saw the exhibition as a kind of Trojan horse: a gift to the city that provides space to attack from within. He points out the populist nature of the politics at play, noting that:

> In the exhibition space all sorts of fields are exhibited and art loses its episteme. Art is encouraged to become political and involved in critiquing particular dominances.[266]

But Rahman also raises concerns similar to those expressed by Bishop in her deconstruction of ameliorative art: identifying the problems of the city with colourful rubbish carts and murals about terrible traffic does little to effect or even engage with structural change (Fig. 51).

3.4 Parallels and intersections

At the 2014 ES, the Biennale Jogja's Parallel Events (PE) program was the subject of a paper by Hendra Himawan. Drawing heavily on the writings of Bishop, Bourriaud, Kester and Helguera, Himawan mapped a pathway from the 1992 *Pameran Binal Eksperimental* and the *Kuda Binal* performance, which I described in Chapter 2, via subsequent Biennales through to the PE program in the present-day Biennale Jogja. Himawan foregrounded the continuous focus on the role of artists in society.[267]

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[266] Arham Rahman, "Laku Politis Lewat 'Siasat'" *Skripta* 1, no. 1 (2014), pp. 19–30.

[267] Hendra Himawan, "Praktek Parallek Events Biennale Jogja dan Wacana Seni Partisipatori", paper presented at *The One and The Many: Ethics and Aesthetic Practice in our 21st Century Democracy* Equator Symposium(Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta, 2014). This term harks back to the title of Soedjojono's seminal 1946 essay "Art, Artists and Society". Soedjojono, *Seni Loekis, Kesenian dan Seniman* (Yogyakarta: Penerbit Indonesia Sekarang 1946).

Figure 51: Abdul Rahman alias Maman, *Manusia Gerobag* (Trash Pickers), 2013, rubbish cart, murals, public workshops.

Figure 52: Ace House Collective, *Realis Tekno Museum*, 2013, installation of objects collected and made during a collaborative research project.

The PE invites applicants to join a competitive process, creating public programs parallel to the Biennale's theme. Although one of the end goals is to broaden the pool of competent arts professionals, the PE is also intended "to break down divisions within the dynamics of interactive unity that is typical of Yogyakartan civil society".[268] This focus on the dissolution of social boundaries exemplifies the departitioning role of the aesthetic regime.

In the 2011 PE, Kunci Cultural Studies Centre, an independent collective of artists, academics and historians located in in Yogyakarta, investigated the history of Indian descendants living in Yogyakarta. Their research based project produced interviews, analytical texts and narrative essays which were published on a website,[269] as well as discussion groups and an exhibition. For participating artist Elia Nurvista (whose work will feature in Chapter 7) this experience exposed her to the intellectual challenge of creating participatory artwork. It was a formative influence on her subsequent practice:

> …Kunci facilitated our work with the Indian community, they invited historians…and to help us work with communities they invited several practitioners who had been doing it for some time. Then for the form of the work I began to think, the form needn't always be an object, needn't always be in material form...[270]

For her contribution to the project, *Tur Jalan Sutera* (The Silk Road Tour), Elia invited participants to join her in visiting a series of textiles shops to ask the owners about textiles, their experiences as immigrants, the history of their shops, and so on. Methodologies foregrounding historical and cultural research seem predominant in PE programs. PE 2011 winners, the artist collective Acehouse, presented a "subversive reading of popular culture in Indonesia and India" in their installation *Tak Ada Rotan Akar Punjabi* (There Is No Rattan With Punjabi Roots) (Fig. 53).[271]

[268] http://www.biennalejogja.org/2013/programmes/parallel-events/about-parallel-events/?lang=en, (accessed 2/04/2013).
[269] See http://studindia.kunci.or.id/.
[270] Interview with Elia Nurvista, 16/10/2014.
[271] http://www.biennalejogja.org/2011/category/Parallel-Events/ (accessed 20/09/2015.)

Images removed due to copyright restrictions.

Figure 53: Entries in the Parallel Events Program for the Biennale Jogja XI, 2011.Left: Kunci Cultural Studies Centre, poster for a public presentation on the history of the Indian Community in Yogyakarta. Right: Acehouse Collective, *Tak Ada Rotan Akar Punjabi* (There Is No Rattan With Punjabi Roots).

Image removed due to copyright restrictions.

Figure 54: Colliq Pujie, *Titik Balik: Aksara Serang dan Bilang-Bilang di Sulawesi Selatan* (Turning point: Serang and Bilang-Bilang Script in Southern Sulawesi), Parallel Events entry, Biennale Jogja XII, Equator #2, Not A Dead End: Indonesia Encounters the Arab Peninsula, 2013.

Of the 29 proposals for the 2013 PE, the majority of applicants were not artists. Eventual winners, Colliq Pujie, researched Arab and Makassan literary traditions in *Titik Balik: Aksara Serang dan Bilang-Bilang di Sulawesi Selatan* (Turning point: Serang and Bilang-Bilang Script in Southern Sulawesi).[272] They were able to work so successfully with the Library and Archival Body for the South Sulawesi Region that they were allowed to bring key historical artefacts to Yogyakarta for exhibition alongside four interpretive artworks and cultural performances (Fig. 54). This project was one of the most effective in attracting elements of Yogyakartan society who would otherwise not engage with the contemporary art scene, largely because the members of Colliq Pujie were from Yogyakarta's population of Sulawesi history and culture students. Sociologist Bambang Kusomo reflected that in the process of Parallel Events:

> In every encounter, implicit or explicit, we come upon dynamic "processes of negotiation" and "conflicts of power", as well as the display of boundless cultural mobility. This, it seems, is a source of endless artistic creativity.[273]

The interdisciplinary practice encouraged by the PE program not only benefits the Biennale by broadening its audience but also propagates this participatory, interdisciplinary approach; both Kunci and Acehouse's subsequent projects stand testament to this. In the 2013 Jakarta Biennale, Acehouse built on their experiences with research based collaborative output in their installation *Realis Tekno Museum,* which drew on an ethnographic study of a small town undergoing processes of modernisation. In 2015, Kunci held an exhibition as the culmination of a collaborative research project with the Stedelijk Museum Bureau Amsterdam (SMBA): *Made in Commons*.

3.5 Commons and the digital native: unconcrete concrete

The two-year *Made in Commons* project involved Dutch and Indonesian artists in conversation, research, travel, collaboration and research. Facilitated in Indonesia by Kunci Cultural Studies Centre, its outcomes included two exhibitions of artwork produced from participatory projects and residencies, the first at Stedelijk Museum

[272] Arham Rahman, "Turning point: Serang and Bilang-Bilang Script in Southern Sulawesi", (unpublished [forthcoming?], Yayasan Biennale Yogyakarta, 2014).
[273] Bambang Kusumo, "Pengumuman Pemenang Parallel Event BJ XII Equator #2", Yayasan Biennale Yogyakarta, http://www.biennalejogja.org/2013/berita/pengumuman-pemenang-pareallel-event-bj-xii-equator-2/. (accessed 21/08/2015)

Bureau Amsterdam (SMBA) in 2014, and the second at Jogja Nasional Museum (JNM) in 2015. Woto "Wok the Rock" Wibowo (artist, juror for the 2013 PE and curator of Biennale Jogja XIII) implemented his *#plesirseni* project in the lead up to the *Made in Commons* exhibition at JNM. *#plesirseni* emerged in response to an earlier project by Dutch artist Reinhaart Vanhoe, which mapped commons or "do-it-with-others" (DIWO) practices in Indonesia, but failed to address the role of social media as contemporary commons (Fig. 55). Wok's project examined new avenues for participatory and individual practice in Indonesia, and, in particular, its significance to supporting institutions that depend on new art publics.

From 2005, new youth media players have reflected and influenced the lifestyles of young Indonesians by promoting themselves as "a portal for the youth to focus on art, music, lifestyle, gadget, local scene".[274] ART|JOG, a commercial art fair held annually since 2008, has provided fodder for this new art public in Yogyakarta, attracting 1,500 visitors a day over two weeks in 2014, and also criticism of its young audiences and their "selfie" habits.[275] In 2015, ART|JOG8 organisers embraced selfies as the basis of their curatorial approach, bringing together a diverse range of kinetic, participatory and interactive artworks under the title *Infinity in Flux: the Unending Loop that Bonds the Artist and the Audience*.[276] Popular social media sites confirmed the audience's digital engagement with works at ART|JOG8; in late 2015 19,508 images on Instagram were tagged #artjog, and ART|JOG8's twitter account had 8,018 followers. Wok affirms that the confluence of smartphone hardware and applications drives this phenomenon because "it doesn't just show who you are, but where you are…if it was internet without smart phones, they (selfies) would be no use".[277]

[274] This quotation from http://whatnotnetwork.com/ (accessed 1/09/2015). I traced these developments in more detail in Elly Kent, "#plesirseni: Emerging art publics in Java", paper presented at the *Society in Indonesia* Seminar, Australian National University, November, 2016.
[275] Kurniyanto, "Pengunjung ART JOG 2013 Membludak, Panitia Berencana Berlakukan Tiket Masuk", *Harian Jogja*, 21/07/2013, http://www.harianjogja.com/baca/2013/07/21/pengunjung-art-jog-2013-membludak-panitia-berencana-berlakukan-tiket-428893 (accessed 30/09/2015). Also see Benyamin Siburian, "Pameran Seni dan Pameran Selfie", *Kompasiana* (2014), http://www.kompasiana.com/benyamin.siburian/pameran-seni-dan-pameran-selfie_54f6d76ca33311de5b8b49a0 (accessed 30/09/2015).
[276] Talenia Phua Gajardo et al., "Interview with Bambang 'Toko' Witjaksono", *The Artling,* 2015, https://theartling.com/artzine/2015/06/16/interview-bambang-toko-witjaksono/ (accessed 30/9/2015).
[277] Woto (Wok the Rock) Wibowo, "Interview by Elly Kent", (2015).

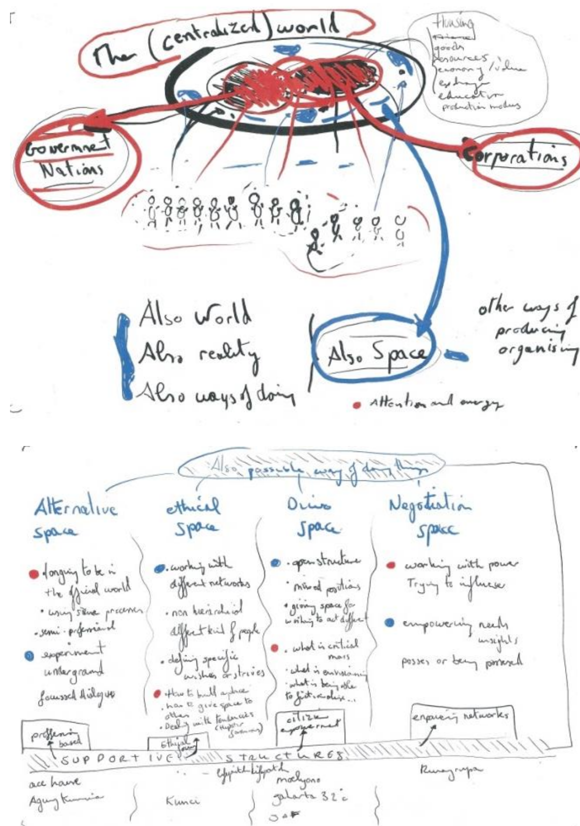

Figure 55: Excerpts from a zine produced by an artist designed in response to a zine by artist Reinhaart Vanhoe, mapping commons or "do-it-with-others" (DIWO) practices in Indonesia.

Figure 56: Wok the Rok, *#plesirseni*, twitter posts by participants in an art project that experimented with social media.

To demonstrate how communities form around social media, Wok worked with "Twitter buzzers" (professional Twitter users with more than 2,000 followers) to popularise *#plesirseni* with exhibition visitors (Fig. 56). Conicidentally, these *buzzers* were among the new "lifestyle" art public that had attended ART|JOG and other big exhibitions but had avoided Yogyakarta's many smaller exhibitions because of a lack of information and percieved elitism among the "art crowd". Wok related one *#plesirseni* follower's experience at a gallery talk:

> This speaker said this (selfies) was a bad thing, as if it meant people didn't understand art...he was disappointed…because he thought that it could be a valid way of appreciating the art work…So I saw that there was a intersection, and I decided during the exhibition we would have a series of discussions, so they could also meet with art people.[278]

Aside from its pedagogic intentions, one of the most striking aspects of *#plesirseni* was the gradual withdrawal of the artist from a position of authority/author, as Wok recognised the community asserting their authority over "what art is". Approaching the *Made in Commons* exhibition, which required a physical manifestation of the project, followers dismissed Wok's proposed installation of a single tablet as not "artistic" or "creative" enough. Instead, *#plesirseni* members designed their own representation, a series of smartphone sized perspex rectangles featuring selected tweets (Fig. 57). *#plesirseni* followers' lived experience of the spectacle was independent of the artist's intentions and they asserted their emancipation by reinterpreting the project from each individual's perspective.

#plesirseni further complicates the autonomous-heteronomous paradigm in Indonesian art history, representing the extremities of the fate that Walter Benjamin assigned to art in the age of mechanical reproduction, completely surrendered to the masses for endless distribution.[279] I argue it is also precisely the destiny that Yuliman desired for Indonesian art, leaving behind the traditions of literal and metaphorical "frames" which separate art from the sphere of lived experience.[280]

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[278] Ibid.
[279] Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction", *Visual Culture: Experiences in Visual Culture* 4 (2011) pp. 114–137.
[280] Sanento Yuliman, "Perspektif Baru", pp. 96–98.

Figure 57: Wok the Rok, *#plesirseni*, installation designed by participants for the Made in Commons exhibition, 2015.

Figure 58: Haryo “Yose” Suyoro’s *Komunitas Bunyi* (Community of Sound) 1999, delegated performance.

3.6 Liminal: Cemeti Art House and In-Between Spaces

The separation of art from lived experience was the driving force behind another art project, curated and coordinated by Linda Mayasari at Cemeti Art House from March to June in 2015. From 1999 Cemeti began to feature more participatory art projects, including Haryo "Yose" Suyoro's *Komunitas Bunyi* (Community of Sound, 1999) and Tisna Sanjaya's *Ruang Etsa dan Sepak Bola* (An Etching and Soccer Space, 2000) project (Fig. 58, 59). For their 15th anniversary in 2003, Cemeti's co-founders Mella Jaarsma and Nindityo Adipurnomo curated *Exploring Vacuum,* an exhibition of work by what Nindityo referred to as "multiprofession" artists: artists also involved in research, architecture, curatorship and design, among other fields. Nindityo identified the activities of these diverse actors within the Indonesian art system as "alternative strategies", which:

> …enabled them to approach/directly run experiments, induce processes, and conduct research concerning art as a process in the context of its community, in order to develop networking to preserve the support community while preparing the habitat for its propagation.[281]

Fifteen years later, these networks are increasingly insititutionalised. As demonstrated by the example provided in section 3.4, addressing the Parallel Events associated with the Biennale Jogja, one of the important objectives remains to propagate new audiences for artists' "habitat" through community involvement. Giving examples in ruangrupa in Jakarta, Galeri Barak in Bandung, Galeri Kedai Kebun (which is the site of one of artist Elia Nurvista's projects described in Chapter 7) and Galeri Benda in Yogyakarta, Nindityo points out that these multiprofessional organisations, which proliferated in the subsequent decade, do not necessarily position themselves as anti-hegemonic or anti-establishment, and are thus able to "win their alternative positions among centres of authority and guardians of aesthetic values…" such as art institutions and academies.[282]

[281] Cemeti Art House, *Exploring Vacuum: 1988–2003: 15 years Cemeti Art House*, p. 202. For English descriptions of the projects, see http://25years.cemetiarthouse.com/program/pseudo-partisipative-project/ and http://www.cemetiarthouse.com/index.php?page=exhibition&id=42&lang=en. Also, see Andy Sri Wahyudi et al., *Pseudo-partisipatif* (Yogyakarta: Cemeti Art House, 2013).
[282] Cemeti Art House, *Exploring vacuum: 1988–2003: 15 years Cemeti Art House*, p. 202.

Images removed due to copyright restrictions.

Figure 59: Tisna Sanjaya, *Ruang Etsa dan Sepak Bola* (An Etching and Soccer Space), sometimes known as Art and Football for Peace, 2000, etchings, banners, performative soccer game with local residents and artists and ritual foot bathing.

Image removed due to copyright restrictions.

Figure 60: Nindityo Adipurnomo, *Tekor Tilas: The Art of Walking Tour*, audio tour to carved stone installations in suburban sites, Mantrijeron.

As was evident in the 1950s when the *sanggar* and the newly formed art academies shared staff and ideologies (see Chapter 1.2), the task of establishing the trajectories of art practice and discourse is not held by institutions alone. Rather, it is negotiated between senior artists, artist-run initiatives, academics and curators, as well as institutions like the Yayasan Biennale Foundation, on which Mella and Nindityo are current board members and which was, until 2016, headed by Yustina Neni, co-founder of the abovementioned Galeri Kedai Kebun (alias Kedai Kebun Forum). Deeply embedded in these networks, Cemeti Art House has since 2010 worked from a non-exhibition focused platform, instead concentrating on "reinventing 'Art and Society'" by emphasising process and community-oriented practices. This platform, while undoubtedly responsive to trends in art practice, might well be positioned as a catalyst for the demonstrated institutional tendency to compel artists to produce both participatory and individual artworks. In addition, it firmly continues Cemeti's insistence on drawing from discourses and practices from home and abroad, with its programming largely consisting of residency programs that bring together local and international artists.

In 2013 as part of *Turning Targets,* a year-long series of projects to mark Cemeti's 25th anniversary, Nindityo and Linda Mayasari conceived and led the *Pseudopartisipatif* (Pseudo-Participative) project and exhibition. Like previous projects at Cemeti, it brought together artists from diverse disciplines to research and create artworks. In 2014–15, Linda also generated the *Liminal* project and exhibition. Among others, invited artists included Elia Nurvista, comic-book collective Mulyakarya, Nindityo Adipurnomo and Timoteus Anggawan Kusno. They attended a series of discussions and lectures before presenting their responses in the form of installations, performances and research projects. Final presentations took place in a week that saw Yogyakarta inundated by international curators, collectors and art enthusiasts, as ART|JOG8 opened with its similar but more grandiose themes around "the unending loop that bonds the artist and the audience" (see section 3.5 of this chapter).

Figure 61: Elia Nurvista, *Fast and Foodrious*, 2015, fast food auction.

Figure 62: Timoteus Anggawan Kusno, *Anatomy of a Lost Memory*, 2015, participatory space featuring found objects, audio recordings (from an initial performative reading).

Drawing on anthropologist Victor Turner's analysis of the role of liminal rituals as triggers for critical thinking, the *Liminal* project sought to foster artworks which engaged with the intermingling of "exhibition", "event" and "knowledge". This intermingling was identified by Turner as a key feature of liminality, which allows the ritual experience to operate outside of established socio-cultural structures.[283] By linking contemporary art practices with the kinds of socio-cultural practices Turner referred to, Linda Mayasari sought to identify artists as generators of de-structured liminal spaces, in which participants were encouraged to engage in critical thinking.

Through the intermingling implicit in liminality, three main themes emerged from the eight artists/groups involved: value and auction as engagement; memory, history and fiction; and installation as participation. Ideas around the role of participation in assigning value were explored in two works which hinged on the audience's presence during the opening event: Elia Nurvista's riotous fast food auction *Fast and Foodrious*; and Gatot D. Sulistiyanto's complicated process for accumulating audiences for exclusive sound-art performances. Both drew attention to the precarity of value, with *Fast and Foodrious* garnering prices up to 10 times local retail value for "exotic" hamburgers and fried chicken, while Gatot's *Santiswara* (Hymn) attracted bids based on the number of audience members they could provide (Fig. 61). Direct audience participation also was invoked in an exploration of concepts around societal participation in Nindityo Adipurnomo's *Tekor Tilas.* This audio walking tour took audiences out of the exhibition space and guided them to various neighbourhood sites, accompanied by narratives that mixed fact and fiction. At these sites Adipurnomo had installed sculptures that invited audiences to, for example, bury their heads inside large carved stones to block out surrounding noise (Fig. 60).

The utilisation of installation as a trigger for audience participation, and narrative that was at once believable and fanciful, also underpinned Timoteus Anggawan Kusno's powerful site-specific installation *Anatomy of a Lost Memory* (Fig.62). This experiential space was secretively guarded, with gallery staff registering prospective visitors until after a stirring performative reading of (real or fictional?) testimonies of violence.

[283] Victor Turner, "Betwixt and Between: the Liminal Period in Rites de Passage", in *Reader in Comparative Religion: An Anthropological Approach (4th Edition)*, ed. William A. Lessa and Evon Z. Vogt (New York: Harper and Row, 1979), pp. 234–243.

Donning gloves and face masks, groups of five visitors were admitted into a small room to see a wooden box purportedly containing the "Gonomanggala-Sangid Monument", which remained in quarantine for administrative reasons. The room's walls and desk were adorned with traces of research into the monument's mysterious appearance at massacre sites throughout Indonesia and East Timor: fragments of bones, photographs, typed reports and obsolete technology replaying those same testimonies performed at the opening.

In the context of Indonesia, a society still beset by forgetting and impunity towards the perpetrators of past violence and state-fictionalised history, *Anatomy of a Lost Memory* represented a potent absence of memorial. In this way it represented the potency of art as the kind of liminal space Victor Turner described: a space in between, from which to critique and re-imagine culture. It also points to a conscious and considered engagement – on the part of Cemeti Art House and, through them, the artists – with both exogenous and endogenous discourses about the role of art and culture, and artists, in society.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have introduced a web of institutional practices that engender, mandate and support the combination of individual and participatory practice in Indonesian art today. From a theoretical perspective, the institutional practices discussed in this section fit neatly into Bourriaud's "relational aesthetics": artwork creating "social interstices" and "filling in the cracks in the social bond".[284] However, as noted in the introductory chapter, this theory, apparently radical within the context of Euro-American modernism, needs to be re-examined in the Indonesian context. There, artists have long sought to align more closely with their audience, yet maintain autonomy by combining individual and participatory art practices.

Similarly, Claire Bishop's concerns about the ethics of neo-liberal and capitalist appropriation of ameliorative art practices in the European context are complicated in Indonesia.[285] This is partly because of a lack of arts and social welfare infrastructure

[284] N. Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, p. 36.
[285] Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship* pp. 13–17; 214–15. For the second analysis Bishop draws on references from Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities*.

into which arts pratice can be inserted, but also due to a history of appropriation of art practice by leftist organisations like Lekra, and subsequent suppression of social orientation, as discussed in Chapters 1 and 2. More recently in Indonesia, art projects like Jatiwangi Art Factory's *Festival of the Future* have been the subject of officials' attempts to appropriate their momentum for government interests. Similarly, brand ambassadors from the art scene are used to generate interest and credibility in youth markets, a strategy that relies heavily on consumers' use of digital media to perpetuate advertising campaigns.[286] In response, artists and institutions have, in turn, appropriated digital strategies to generate new art publics. The participatory tools of the digital age – social media, citizen science/journalism/art and, critically, smartphones and mobile data – are rapidly becoming indispensible to audiences and, therefore, institutions.

The complications that the Indonesian context inject into the theories offered by European and North American theorists do not, however, preclude Indonesian artists, art workers and institutions from engaging with exogenous discourses. In this chapter, I have demonstrated the various ways that these appear in discursive forums such as symposiums, exhibitions and art projects. It is clear that the longing for concrete experiences, the "anti-lyricism" identified by Yuliman (as discussed in Chapter 1) continues to drive Indonesian artists to seek direct encounters with society and individuals in the community.

Yuliman's theory of continuity identified methodologies and practices that leave behind the literal and metaphorical "frames" that separate art from the sphere of lived experience.[287] The Equator Symposium (ES) 2014 aimed to "reveal the ecosystem in the associations of the many…either physical or virtual, and how these encounters are then disseminated to many more people". From the analyses in this chapter, drawing outwards from the "ecosystem" that ES exists within, we can see that the scope of

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[286] For example, see tobacco company A Mild's "*A Mild A Create*" programming, including a YouTube video shot at Salihara, a prominent art space in Jakarta, featuring a rock music competition. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-pGr8DGsgio. Another recent A Mild arts program in 2015 was "Go Ahead", for which ruangrupa founder Ade Darmawan was a judge, and the winners exhibited a collaborative artwork at the Melbourne Fringe Festival: https://www.melbournefringe.com.au/program/event/view/043c14a4-d6b4-4ff9-9830-918a111aef7a (accessed 30/09/2016).

[287] Sanento Yuliman, "Perspektif Baru", in *Gerakan Seni Rupa Baru Indonesia*, ed. Jim Supangkat (Jakarta: PT Gramedia, 1979), pp. 96–98.

lived experience has expanded, and with it the possibilities for artistic spectacles based on autonomous, concrete experiences. It has become the departure point for art projects as diverse as building sports fields, studying literary traditions, urban planning, social research and walking tours. For all their diversity, the themes of these kinds of projects echo across the decades as artists continue to departition art from ordinary life, using it as a spectacle to mediate between themselves and the audience.

This chapter also shows how large and small institutions in the Indonesian art world – ART|JOG, Yayasan Biennale Yogyakarta (YBY – through its programs the Jogja Biennale and the Equator Symposium), Jakarta Biennale, ruangrupa, Kunci Cultural Studies Centre, Cemeti Art House and Jatiwangi Art Factory, to provide a few recent examples – are both utilising and being utilised by artists who engage in participatory praxis. For these institutions, artists (and non-artists in the case of Parallel Events) who can bridge object-based studio practice and participatory practice provide particularly fertile ground. Those artists are able to provide content for conventional exhibitions but the participatory nature of the production process gathers new stakeholders, who are then absorbed into the audience. This is an audience of emancipated spectators, empowered to interpret art through their autonomous experience of it rather than in reference to the terms set by the artist or by art history.[288]

In this way contemporary institutions perpetuate individual and participatory practice for the specific purpose of departitioning the boundaries between art and society, not only for the benefit of society but also with the intention of generating new audiences and arts professionals. By propagating the aesthetic regime and artistic ideologies of the kind Yuliman identified (see Chapter 1.1), combining autonomous and heteronomous art practice and the development of originary discourses, they replenish “stock” for their own institutional futures.

[288] Jacques Rancière, “The Emancipated Spectator”.

PART 2:

Individual and Participatory Practice in Contemporary Indonesian Art: Case Studies from the Field

In this section I examine the work of five contemporary artists, focusing on works that demonstrate how they move between individual and participatory practice. These artists – Arahmaiani Feisal (b. 1961), Made Bayak (b. 1980), I Wayan "Suklu" Sujana (b. 1967), Tisna Sanjaya (b. 1958), and Elia Nurvista (b. 1983) – live and work across Java and Bali and have diverse practices and influences. Each artist was trained in traditional, object-based "fine arts" yet each has also broadened their practice into forms of social engagement that are dependent on the participation of others, usually non-artists. I have selected these particular artists not because they demonstrate a consistent style, or methodology but because each presents a variation on art practice that combines individual and participatory approaches. I seek to address, as I quoted Yuliman suggesting at the beginning of Chapter 1, "many frameworks". Hence I have selected artists who demonstrate not the most common frameworks, but the broadest range. As discussed in the Introduction, not all artists who were observed as part of my field research appear as case studies in the dissertation. Still more artists were originally proposed as research subjects prior to field research but were unable to be followed. Rather than following as many artists as possible, I elected to focus on several in depth. Those who appear here have been included to demonstrate that diversity and depth.

The order in which each artist appears in Part 2 is designed to build my argument that these many frameworks conjoin autonomous and heteronomous practices, continuously seeking to departition the separation between life and art, individual and society, foreign and local. As such, in **Chapter 4**, on Arahmaiani and Made Bayak, I show how both artists, while emerging from very different times and backgrounds, see participation as a reciprocal and mutually rehabilitative process, similar to that set out in *turba.* Both eschew a clear delineation between participatory art and artists' participation in society as "public intellectuals". Yet a comparison between the artists reveals subtle differences in their perceptions of their authority as creative individuals, and their relationship with modernist constructions around individual artists.[1] **Chapter 5** on Suklu recalls the conjunction of autonomy and heteronomy demonstrated

[1] A reader has suggested to me that this difference may be driven by Arahmaiani's experiences as an artist working in resistance to the *Order Baru*, and Bayak's emergence after *Reformasi* (see Chapter 1.5). However, as my analysis shows, Bayak's work continues to engage with the legacy of the *Order Baru*, while Arahmaiani's contemporary work is focused on societal, rather than political concerns.

through *jiwa ketok* and *turba* by setting out an exemplar in which three discrete realms of making and participatory practice are strictly defined but also are allowed to intervene on each other. In **Chapter 6** Tisna Sanjaya expands the notion of "public intellectual" by using diverse forums – television, art fairs and folk traditions – to "conscientise" a broader range of participants and audiences. His resistance to instrumentalisation both helps and hinders his art's capacity to generate social change. In **Chapter 7**, Elia Nurvista's practice demonstrates how emerging contemporary artists in Indonesia continue to engage with the discourses and practices set out by their forebears, yet do so in a manner informed by complex critiques of instrumentalisation, post-colonial discourse, cosmopolitanism and art theory.

I have approached these case studies in part as ethnographic descriptions of practice, particularly in relation to observations of participatory art. On occasions I was able to join the artworks as a participant and at other times as a close observer. In addressing artists' individual practices, I incorporate visual analysis, describing the compositions and construction of each work, while also introducing theoretical analyses drawing on the frameworks set out in Part 1. It is in Part 2 that the emic and etic ethnographic methodologies I described in my Introduction come to the fore.

As I have set out in Chapters 1, 2 and 3, contemporary art practice in Indonesia exists in a context informed by particular socio-cultural and art historical concepts, and each of these artists is engaged with these in different ways. In describing and analysing artists' practice, I frame *jiwa ketok, turba, gotong royong, kerakyatan* and conscientisation as sites of influence and resistance. In Chapter 1, I argued for an inherent relationship between Yuliman's theory of a continuous, unruptured "artistic ideology" across diverse forms and periods of Indonesian art practice, and Rancière's claim for an aesthetic regime based on the principle of an autonomous and heteronomous bind. That argument is further developed in the Part 2, demonstrating a dual commitment to the individual artist as the centre of creativity and a responsibility, or sensibility, to the reality of the society they live. Furthermore, I show how these commitments are grounded in engagement with a diverse range of exogenous and endogenous discourses, brought together to form originary discourses that are specific to Indonesia yet which demonstrate possibilities for discourse and practice elsewhere.

Chapter 4

Arahmaiani Feisal and Made "Bayak" Muliana: participatory art and participating artists

> We need, you could say, to broaden our canvas as much as possible to include life itself. And exchange our brushes and paint with the elements that exist in life.
>
> Arahmaiani[2]

In this chapter I address the work of two artists from different generations and different cultural backgrounds who share similar principles towards participatory and individual art. Addressing the work of Arahmaiani Feisal (b. 1961, Bandung), and Made "Bayak" Muliana (b. 1980, Gianyar), I argue that, nonetheless, in practice their approaches to the combination of autonomous and heteronomous art practice reveal distinct differences. I bring these two artists together here in order to further explore the notions of artists' participation in society. In comparing the two artists, I reflect how the practice of each helped me to understand the relationship between "participatory art" and "participating in society" in Indonesia.

I have argued in previous chapters that Indonesian art history is characterised by a continuous and simultaneous commitment to the artist as an autonomous individual *and* to artists' obligations to respond to the heteronomous conditions of the people and environment around them. Here I use Arahmaiani and Bayak's practice to elaborate on an aspect of participatory art practice first raised in Chapters 2.3 and 2.4. There I showed how *turba*, which behove artists to relate to the *rakyat* as "not an observer of their lives but a full participant in them", revealed a fundamental understanding of participation as a reciprocal practice in Indonesia.[3] In this reciprocity, the artist's creative process includes conscious participation in society – organised or otherwise – as a basis for their artwork. In Arahmaiani and Bayak's practice there is a shift in this approach as they identify a *specific* role for artists' participation in society, seeing artists as a source of creative and intellectual knowledge. In Chapter 2.4

[2] Quoted in Sanento Yuliman, "Si Resah Di Simpang Jalan (1987)", in *Dua Seni Rupa: Sepilihan Tulisan Sanento Yuliman*, ed. Asikin Hasan (Jakarta: Yayasan Kalam, 2001), p. 198.

[3] Keith Foulcher, *Social Commitment in Literature and the Arts: the Indonesian "Institute of People's Culture" 1950–1965* (Monash University, Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, 1986), p. 110.

Harsono's analysis of *kerakyatan*, which manifested through engagement with NGOs and social organisations in the 1980s and 1990s, provided evidence of this alternative perspective among contemporary artists. In this chapter my analysis explores some of the ways reciprocal participation plays out in Indonesia.

First I consider the work of Arahmaiani, now a senior contemporary artist with an internationally recognised practice. Rather than foregrounding those well-documented international projects, I focus on an installation and performance in a small Yogyakarta exhibition, and the interactions I was able to observe in the lead-up to this event. In part, this discrete focus reflects particular challenges and opportunities that Arahmaiani's work presented during my field research.

These challenges and opportunities opened new lines of enquiry for my research, which found a place in my analysis of Bayak's activist practices. Bayak's artwork demonstrates another divergent understanding of reciprocal participation in Indonesian art history and contemporary practice. I examine several manifestations of activism in Bayak's art practice, which spans individual and participatory artworks involving painting, pedagogical projects and performance.

4.1 Public intellectual: the artist as participant – Arahmaiani

Generally, literature on participatory art addresses practices that engender participation in the artists' work. Rarely is the artist's participation in society considered. An exception, at least in theoretical terms, can be found in Kester's focus on "dialogical art". In his book *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art*, Kester asks:

> What happens when artists situate their practice in this larger cultural and political field? How do they negotiate between the tactical demands of a given community struggle (which may require more conventional modes of political expression) and the sceptical, self-reflexive attitude towards coherent forms of identity that is so central to the avant-garde tradition?[4]

[4] Grant H. Kester, *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), p. 130. Another exception can be found in the Richter's analysis of Beuys teaching practice: Petra Richter, "Beuys: 'To be a Teacher is My Greatest Work of Art!'", *Online Papers* (2006), http://www.henry-moore.org/hmi/online-papers/papers/petra-richter.

According to Kester there are two common responses to evaluating these practices. One forgoes analysis or questioning of the artist, regarding artistic transgression of social and cultural boundaries as inherently liberatory, while ignoring artists' (usual) class privilege. The other response fetishises authenticity and rejects discursive actions that are not conducted by integral community members. Kester proposes a third approach, to "address each artist-community interaction as a specific case (subject to the influence of persistent forms of difference and privilege)", an approach I have taken here.[5]

In Chapter 2 I described several examples of art movements and artists who defined conscious participation in society as integral to their creative processes, a tendency that Harsono has described as *kerakyatan*.[6] These have manifested in Soedjojono's social realism, Lekra's *turba*, Moelyono's "conscientisation art" and in artists' engagement with NGOs and other organisations. In my early approach to participatory art practice I defined the concept largely as the participation of others in the artist's practice or work. In understanding how Arahmaiani positions and understands participation in her practice, my definition shifted to include this idea of participation in society.

Arahmaiani is well known in Indonesia and internationally, representing Indonesia at the Venice Biennale (2003), the Sao Paulo Biennial and the Gwangju Biennale (2002), and the Asia Pacific Triennial (1996), among others. She has made residencies, teaching and art projects overseas the major part of her practice since the 1990s, and through these explores issues of power, gender, religion and culture in different national and global contexts. In Indonesia in the 1990s, Arahmaiani's subversive public performances gained the attention of Sanento Yuliman, as well as the authorities (see Chapter 1.4).

[5] Kester, *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art*, pp. 130–131.
[6] FX Harsono, "Kerakyatan Dalam Seni Lukis Indonesia Sejak Persagi Hingga Kini", in *Politik Dan Gender: Aspek-Aspek Seni Visual Indonesia*, ed. Adi Wicaksono, et al (Yogyakarta: Yayasan Seni Cemeti, 2003). pp. 56-91.

Image removed due to copyright restrictions.

Figure 63: Arahmaiani, *Manusia Koran* (Newspaper People), 1980, performative intervention on public space.

Image removed due to copyright restrictions.

Figure 64: Arahmaiani, *Kecelakaan I* (Accident I), 1981. Right: performative distribution of flyers (Arahmaiani in black slacks on the left, Tisna Sanjaya on the right). Left: Painting outlines on Dago Road, Bandung.

In reviewing Arahmaiani's 1987 art event *Anjing Mati Lalu Terbang* (The Dog Died and then Flew) in Bandung, Yuliman drew attention to her earlier interventions on public space, as well as the dialogical nature of her projects (Fig. 63, 64). The significance of the discussions and presentations held in association with the exhibition prompted Yuliman to observe that these kinds of events were becoming increasingly common: "This reflects restlessness about the course that should be taken, a questioning attitude, and a thirst for information and ideas".[7] It was in this atmosphere of agitation that the *jeprut* movement, described in Chapter 1.3, emerged, involving Arahmaiani, Tisna Sanjaya, Isa Perkasa and others. In another text from the same era, Yuliman noted that the art of this "restless generation" may well be the "fruit of collaboration, even perhaps with a role for the audience or public".[8]

This was an astute observation, although the involvement of the audience in Arahmaiani's work since then has largely occurred overseas. Her two most well-known participatory projects took place on the international stage: *Soho Baby* (2004), performed in Beijing, New York and Aachen, Germany, and *Breaking Words* (2004–06), performed in Japan, Singapore, Malaysia and Northern Ireland (Fig. 65, 66).

According to curator Zang Wineng, the textual and international advent of audience participation in Arahmaiani's work is no coincidence:

> In *Soho Baby* and *Breaking Words*, Arahmaiani invites the participation of local audiences—at a fundamental level replicating the (mis-)exchanges that take place between people of different races and nationalities in a globalized world.[9]

In this reading, audience participation in Arahmaiani's artworks is positioned as a specific tool to represent the cultural dissonance that occurs so overtly in globalised encounters on an international stage. In part, my delayed recognition of the importance of artists' own participation in communities was a consequence of the logistical impossibility of applying an emic methodology to Arahmaiani's internationally-oriented participatory practice.

[7] Sanento Yuliman, "Si Resah di Simpang Jalan (1987)", p. 196.
[8] "Kemana Semangat Muda (date unknown)", in *Dua Seni Rupa: Sepilihan Tulisan Sanento Yuliman*, ed. Hasan Asikin (Jakarta: Yayasan Kalam, 2001), p. 151.
[9] Wang Zineng, "New Trajectories: Arahmaiani in Yogyakarta", *Review/Preview* (2008), http://www.mutualart.com/OpenArticle/New-Trajectories--Arahmaiani-in-Yogyakar/FC795F19A74268AA, (accessed 16/05/2016).

Image removed due to copyright restrictions.

Figure 65: Arahmaiani, *Soho Baby*, 2004, iterative participatory artwork, this iteration in Beijing.

Image removed due to copyright restrictions.

Figure 66: Arahmaiani, *Breaking Words*, 2004–2006, iterative participatory performance, this iteration in Beijing.

In April 2014, I heard Arahmaiani refer to her work with a local *pesantren* (Islamic school for studies of the Quran, usually a boarding school) during a public discussion at the Indonesian Visual Arts Archive (IVAA), and requested permission to observe this project in situ.[10] Arahmaiani arranged for me to meet a *kyai* (scholar and teacher) from the Amumarta Pesantren at her home, with the understanding that we would go on to look at the creative environmental project Arahmaiani had mentioned (Fig. 67).[11] This project focused specifically on exploring bio-fuel production and natural dye applications for the *Calophyllum inophyllum Linn* tree (locally called *nyamplung*; Fig. 68). I was particularly interested in the textile project Arahmaiani had mentioned: *batik* (wax resist dyeing) using dyes made from by-products of the bio-fuel production. I assumed from her comments that Arahmaiani was directly engaged in this process.

It quickly became clear that it would not be possible to visit the *pesantren* without extensive negotiations on many levels, with the level of difficulty outweighing the benefits.[12] Additionally, I struggled to grasp the precise nature of Arahmaiani's relationship with the *pesantren,* particularly in terms of the "community art" aspect she mentioned at IVAA. I asked Arahmaiani about her activity at Amumarta and with other communities she had mentioned, and she replied:

> For me as an artist here (Indonesia), my role is (to)…provide stimulation for how this can be more creative, finding solutions for problems. But with the members of the group, for example here making batik, I'm not involved directly...Or with planting trees, I don't need to do that. But I engage with all of that, I listen to the ideas, I give my opinion, I think about it, I think about what ideas might develop from that. For example "oh yeah I want to use batik *nyamplung* for my work because it's related to this..." And from here interactions continue and are useful for everyone. That's what is important. [13]

By positioning herself in this way, Arahmaiani resists the dominant paradigms around socially-engaged work in Indonesia, which are centred on the class consciousness that practices like *turba* and conscientisation aim to raise.

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[10] Her comments were made at a public seminar "Cultural Development, Community Arts and Creative Empowerment." hosted by Indonesian Visual Arts Archive and Kunci Cultural studies, April 2014.
[11] Arahmaiani, email, 28 August 2014.
[12] In speaking with the *kyai,* I gained the impression that he was suspicious of my motivations and I found it impossible to make it clear to him that my research was focused only on Arahmaiani's involvement in the project rather than any technical production aspects. I believe the *kyai's* concerns were probably centred on concerns for intellectual property and commercial-in-confidence.
[13] Arahmaiani Feisal, "Interview by Elly Kent #2", 03/09/2014.

Figure 67: The Amumarta Pesantren in south Yogyakarta: image published on the pesantren's blog, http://amumarta.blogspot.com.au/2014/11/latar-belakang-dan-proses-berdirinya.html.

Figure 68: The calophyllum inophlyum nut, which is collected to produce bio-fuel oil. In Java the nut is referred to as nyamplung.

The leadership of Lekra, for instance, laid out three basic practices of *turba* that artists should follow when "going down below": working with, eating with and sleeping on the same mat as the *rakyat bawah*.[14] For Arahmaiani, direct working engagement with society is less important than the ideas she can contribute to specific communities. Identifying Arahmaiani's practice in Indonesia as "participatory art" challenges the dominant paradigm. However, Harsono's concept of *kerakyatan* and Antariksa's text on *turba* during the 1950s and 1960s provided a larger theoretical framework within which Arahmaiani's participation in social organisations can be understood.

In a discussion of Arahmaiani's work in Sydney in 2007, artist and academic Ray Langenbach said that "many public intellectuals are 'border intellectuals' – they are inside their nations and are also outside their nations". Langenbach sees this as a similar bifurcation to Arahmaiani's role as both an Indonesian public intellectual and an artist presenting "cultural commodities on the international circuit".[15] While this blurring of the boundaries between intellectual and artist can clearly be situated within the conjunction of autonomy and heteronomy that has characterised Indonesian art discourses, its intellectual distance sets it apart from *turba* and conscientisation. Nonetheless Arahmaiani defines this as activism, and it remains an important input to her artistic practice. Answering Langenbach's questions about why she chooses to combine political activism and art practice, Arahmaiani said:

> For me, it is very important to continue my activism and maintain this activity with the community. Otherwise I would probably doubt what I am doing overall.[16]

Arahmaiani regards her participation in communities as an integral part of her creative processes, but nonetheless maintains a stronger focus on her creative autonomy. The challenge for my research has been to identify what this "activity with the community" is, and how its influence manifests in her artworks.

[14] Antariksa, *Tuan Tanah Kawin Muda,* Yogyakarta: Yayasan Seni Cemeti, 2005), p. 52.
[15] Ray Langenbach and Arahmaiani, "Resistance in Islam and the Artist Movement: Discussion with Dr Ray Langenbach at Artspace, Sydney", in *Go Slow Bro!*, ed. Kadek Krishna Adidharma (Magelang: Langgeng Art Foundation, 2008), p. 101.
[16] Ibid., p. 106.

4.2 The unified eye: Where do the Quiet Ones Go?

After several interviews and site visits, it became clear that I was unlikely to be able to observe Arahmaiani "in the field" with the communities she spoke of. Instead I resolved to follow the development of the work that she mentioned in our meeting with the *kyai*, which involved the use of *batik* fabric created at the Amumarta Pesantren. Plans for this work entered our conversation with the *kyai* suddenly, as if an afterthought, when Arahmaiani requested a "very small amount" of the *batik* fabric produced by the *pesantren*. The *batik* fabric was to be used in an installation and performance titled *Kemana Yang Diam* (Where do the Quiet Ones Go, 2014) for a group exhibition themed around a Javanese myth called *Sabda Palon Noyogenggong* (Fig. 69). Arahmaiani explained the story of *ratu adil,* (the just ruler) from ancient times, who will return when the Javanese people regain a "unified eye".[17] This was fertile ground for Arahmaiani's recent shift from looking at global perceptions of Islam towards work developing from a Buddhist perspective.[18] This shift has been informed by her study with monks in Thailand, and more recently in Tibet, where Arahmaiani has been working on an environmental regeneration project with a monastery.[19]

Although the motifs used in Arahmaiani's works have shifted from Islam to Buddhism, her critique remains focused on the superstructures of capitalism and consumerist culture. While her 2007 performative work *Make-up or Break-up* featured a series of banners with the names of multinational corporations spelled in Jawi (Malay-Arab) script in colourful fabric, *Kemana Yang Diam* references Buddhist iconography, critiquing the noisiness of popular and consumer culture in Java.[20]

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[17] The exhibition, *Kembalinya Sabda Palon Noyogenggong* (The Return of Sabda Palon Noyogenggong), was held at Bentara Budaya in Yogyakarta in 2014. Sabda Palon was a preacher and advisor to King Brawijaya V, who signalled the demise of the last Buddhist kingdom in Java when he converted to Islam in 1478. Sabda Palon swore to return in 500 years to establish a just ruler in a time of corruption and natural disaster, and according to Thomas Reuter, to sweep away Islam and re-establish Hindu-Buddhism. Thomas A. Reuter, "Great Expectations: Hindu Revival Movements in Java", *Australian Journal of Anthropology* 12, no. 3 (2001), pp. 327-338. When recounting this legend to me in the presence of the *Kyai*, Arahmaiani did not mention the aspects relating to Islam. However, as it is a well-known legend, it seems likely they both would be aware of this.

[18] See, for instance, *Make up or Break Up* in Sydney (2007) and *Stitching the Wound* in Bangkok (2006).

[19] Arahmaiani Feisal, "My Second Life in Tibet", *ArtAsiaPacific*, no. 79 (2012), p. 47.

[20] *Make-up or Break-up* emerged from a residency at Sydney's Artspace, with performances involving local artists, activists and students. Hendro Wiyanto et al., *Go Slow Bro!* ed. Kadek Krishna Adidharma (Magelang: Langgeng Art Foundation, 2008), p. 90.

Figure 69: The batik nyamplung motif fabric created at the Amumarta Pesantren using dyes made from waste produced from oil production.

Figure 70: Arahamaini, *Stitching the Wound*, 2006; this photograph from the work's installation at the Jogja Biennale XI, Equator #1, Shadow Lines: Indonesia Meets India.

Arahmaiani has long utilised fabric and cushions as a metaphor for pacifist and humanist ideals. Describing her 1981 work *Kecelakaan I* (Accident), Yuliman recalled Arahmaiani winding red fabric around street poles (Fig. 64).[21] Her 2006 installation *Stitching the Wound* comprised oversized Arabic letters shaped into colourful cushions, subverting the negative and aggressive associations with Arabic script that developed after the 9/11 attacks in New York and Washington (Fig. 70).[22]

In *Kemana Yang Diam*, Arahmaiani's use of fabric and cushions was less grand and interventionist. Rather, the intention for the small cushions, covered with *batik* created from the eco-friendly processes at the Amumarta Pesantren, was to invite the audience into a state of contemplation or meditation.

The cushion sat beside a wooden box, similar in shape to the footprint of the Javanese Buddhist temple Borobudur, containing a temporary garden. While motorbikes, advertisers and spruikers traversed the busy streets outside the exhibition space, viewers were invited to sit on a cushion beside an installation of soil, to contemplate alfalfa sprouts growing in a mandala shape (Fig. 71). The state of meditation was not intended to be cathartic, as in Suklu's work in the next chapter. Rather it countered what Arahmaiani considers a lack of space and time for quiet reflection in contemporary Javanese culture.

A similar but smaller installation and performance, titled *In Memory of Nature,* was staged at Sangkring Art Space in Yogyakarta and at Art Stage in Singapore, both in 2013 (Fig. 72). While previous iterations included vigorous flag waving or the destruction of the mandala, the performance here reflected the quiet, contemplative atmosphere Arahmaiani wanted to generate for the *Sabda Palon Noyogenggong* exhibition. During the opening, Arahmaiani and four other performers reimagined a ceremonial ritual, with traditional Javanese Hindu-Buddhist offerings made by fellow performance artists: a man made-up as the Javanese divinity Semar – a humorous but wise father figure from Javanese shadow-puppet narratives – and another man wearing traditional Javanese court dress, a power-board inexplicably slung around his waist (Fig. 73).

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[21] Yuliman, Sanento. "Si Resah di Simpang Jalan (1987)", p. 197.
[22] Wiyanto et al., *Go Slow Bro!,* p. 25.

Figure 71: Arahmaiani, *Kemana Yang Diam* (Where do the Quiet Ones Go), 2014, installation view.

Image removed due to copyright restrictions.

Figure 72: Arahmaiani, *Memory of Nature*, 2013, performance at Art Stage Singapore.

The formal, silently powered individual shuffled around the installation, placing incense in each corner of the wooden box. Dressed in black, Arahmaiani and the other two performers remained seated on the cushions, occasionally chiming Tibetan *tingsha* meditation bells while a noisy crowd milled through the exhibition (Fig. 74).

Some in the audience were oblivious, some entranced; a few curious children seemed intent on reading the performers' passive faces (Fig. 75). After the performance I took a seat on a cushion to contemplate the growing plants. The scent of incense mixing with the cooling evening air helped, but I was soon distracted by the other works in the exhibition. No one else came to sit by the soil while I was there.

Subtlety – even ambiguity – was the guiding principle in this work. I asked Arahmaiani about the complex confluence of potential meanings implied by using *nyamplung* (bio-fuel by-product) batik, created in an Islamic *pesantren,* in a work appropriating Buddhist motifs and aesthetics. Arahmaiani acknowledged that although the materials were laden with meaning, the audience was unlikely to seek out more ambiguous references to ecology and culture.[23]

4.3 To join or not to join: participation and politics

Analysing Arahmaiani's approach to the nexus between individual and participatory practice based on this artwork and my experiences interviewing her seemed like an impossible task. This changed when I made a second visit to a young Balinese artist, Made "Bayak" Muliana. Bayak's practice, addressed later in this chapter, has similarities and differences to Arahmaiani's, but during a conversation in 2014 he identified an important link between his participation in activist organisations and his practice. Bayak's explication alerted me to the ongoing pertinence of artists' participation in society, as indicated in *turba*. Yet Arahmaiani's constructions around these art practices complicate the paradigm further.

[23] Feisal, "Interview by Elly Kent#2".

Figure 73: A performer dressed as Semar, an important figure in the Javanese interpretation of the Hindu Epic Mahabarata. Arahmaiani, *Kemana Yang Diam* (Where do the Quiet Ones Go), 2014, installation view.

Figure 74: Arahmaiani, *Kemana Yang Diam* (Where do the Quiet Ones Go), 2014, performance and installation.

Figure 75: Arahmaiani, *Kemana Yang Diam* (Where do the Quiet Ones Go), 2014, performance and installation.

Image removed due to copyright restrictions.

Figure 76: Arahmaiani Feisal *Etalase* (Display Case), 1994, 95 x 146.5 x 65.5 cm, display case, photograph, icon, Coca-Cola bottle, the Koran, fan, mirror, drum, condoms, sand.

Arahmaiani prefers, at least at this stage of her career, to avoid joining any particular group or organisation as a formal member, maintaining her autonomous status.[24] Although often described as an activist, Arahmaiani advocates a "middle path" that echoes the Buddhist philosophy she has studied.[25] The messages implicit in her artworks have often been strident and controversial. *Etalase* (Display Case, 1994) triggered a backlash in Indonesia for including the Koran alongside condoms, and in the US for the Koran's proximity to a Cocoa-cola bottle. But Arahmaiani has stressed that she does not intend to take sides (Fig. 76).[26] Rather she takes an eternally critical stance, in particular to the disjuncture or hypocrisy she sees in religious attitudes within capitalist culture.[27]

Although Arahmaiani's self-narration refers to the influence of her maternal grandfather's *kejawen* faith on her personal philosophy, in our conversations about her plans for *Kemana Yang Diam* performance/installation she also professed her status as an outsider to Javanese culture, declaring her neutrality as an observer.[28] Similarly, Arahmaiani has declared her position both as a "Muslim woman" and an objective observer of Islam; as a consequence she has been accused of spying for the West, and at the same time encountered suspicion that she is involved in terrorist networks.[29] By simultaneously positioning herself as inside and outside, Arahmaiani provides an exemplar of *jiwa ketok*, locating herself as an autonomous creative individual working in response to the realities of society. In an interview with Harsono from 2000, Arahmaiani commented on artists' relationships to society:

> Their position is as a mediator between the "high" and "low" worlds, becoming a mediator between the "refined" and the "rough", the "sacred" and the profane, the "divine" and the earthly or between civilisation and nature, dreams and reality. The artist is an intellectual,

[24] Arahmaiani Feisal, "Interview by Elly Kent #1", 14/10/2013.

[25] Wiyanto et al., *Go Slow Bro!* p. 25 and in my interview: Feisal, "Interview by Elly Kent #1".

[26] Heidi Arbuckle, "Unveiling Taboo", in *Go Slow Bro!*, ed. Kadek Krishna Adidharma (Magelang: Langgeng Art Foundation, 2008), Interview with Heidi Arbuckle in Wiyanto et al., *Go Slow Bro!,* p. 79-81.

[27] Arbuckle, "Unveiling Taboo", pp. 86-87.

[28] *Kejawen*,sometimes also *kebatinan*, is an unorthodox form of Islam that retains (especially ritual) elements of formerly dominant Hindu, Buddhist and animist religions on Java. Arahmaiani raised her grandfather's influence in my interview with her, and also in other texts, for instance in her interview with Heidi Arbuckle in *Go Slow Bro!.*

[29] Arbuckle, "Unveiling Taboo", p. 79; and Ray Langenbach and Arahmaiani, "Resistance in Islam and the Artist Movement: Discussion with Dr Ray Langenbach at Artspace, Sydney", p. 96.

> but also an ordinary person, the artist may dream and fantasise, but along with this they must also leave their footprints on the earth.[30]

Arahmaiani's social interactions with communities as a facilitator for dialogue and discussion provide a didactic platform from which she can attempt to affect change – to leave footprints – by developing relationships with community leaders. The participation of communities in Arahmaiani's own artwork seems, at most, to involve a few individuals (usually professional performing artists) in strictly choreographed performances, or contributions material support as occurred in *Kemana Yang Diam*.

Arahmaiani's personal art making – in this instance, installation; elsewhere painting – is an individual pursuit of great personal significance, but also a medium to dream about change in the communities she interacts with, again a didactic stance. Harsono questions the validity of this kind of engagement with communities, which he says makes a limited contribution to creative practice as "inspiration and as a source of ideas, and not yet as a part of the process of creating art work collectively". This, Harsono argues, indicates that the artist's attitude has yet to shift away from the principle of (modern) fine art in which "the individual is an autonomous subject in the creation of art".[31] However, the artistic ideologies Yuliman identified in Indonesia sought to join the notion of the individual artist as the centre of creative expression with the expectation that they remain responsive to the environment around them. In spite of its sometimes contradictory rhetoric, Arahmaiani's work perpetuates the bind between autonomy and heteronomy that Yuliman recognized. As is evident in the next section and following chapters, artists like Made Bayak further challenge Harsono's assertion that the autonomy of the artist is dominant in Indonesia.

4.4 Participation, pedagogy and politics: Made Bayak

Bayak and Arahmaiani share similar concerns in their art practices, specifically social and environmental issues. They also both work across painting and performance in their individual practices and activate these as didactic spaces. However, thus far Bayak has located his discourse firmly on Balinese soil, albeit acknowledging the global resonances of the issues he works with.

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[30] Harsono, "Kerakyatan Dalam Seni Lukis Indonesia Sejak Persagi Hingga Kini", p. 77, quoting an interview with Arahmaiani from 28 April 2000.
[31] Ibid., p. 86.

Plasticology is an ongoing project entailing individual and participatory artworks that involve painting and assemblage. It initially emerged from a solo exhibition in 2008 when Bayak was challenged to turn waste into artwork. As writer Wayan "Jengki" Sunarta points out, the *Plasticology* project seems a perfect fit with government policy in Bali over the last four years.[32] But the government's "Bali Green Province" initiative has yet to prove a genuine commitment to combating environmental degradation, as demonstrated by the governor's approval of a massive new tourist development on land "reclaimed" from Benoa Bay.[33] Opposition to this development has galvanised a collection of musicians, artists, writers and activists in a long-running and steadily growing series of actions. Bayak has been an integral part of this movement, contributing performances and artworks.

In his paintings from the *Plasticology* series, Bayak takes up two interlinked issues. He is driven to analyse, critique and act on the degradation of the Balinese landscape as a result of plastic litter. Additionally, he is concerned with the exoticisation of Bali's culture and image in the name of attracting tourists, and appropriates imagery from contemporary and historical examples of this in his paintings.

> The icons displayed in his work evoke Bali's exotic past which, from the Dutch colonial era to the present day, are exploited by the cultural propaganda of the tourism industry...Related to such issues, Bayak cynically constructs "new propaganda," chiefly to rebuild the image of exotic Bali from plastic debris.[34]

When I visited Bayak's studio, just such a new propaganda painting was underway (Fig. 77). *Hidden History and Legacy – The Island of The Gods* (2013) departs from classic *mooi Indië* Balinese scenery: in the background terraced rice paddies are interrupted only by rising volcanoes or temple gates.[35] Onto this idyll, however, heavy machinery encroaches. Dark grey skyscrapers punch voids in the scenery. In the foreground,

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[32] Wayan "Jengki" Sunarta, "Plasticology: A Tale from the Island of the Gods", (Bali: Yayaa Art Space and Management, 2013), p. 1.

[33] This development will take up 75% of the bay, impacting on threatened mangrove forests, tidal movements and waste management, as well as the livelihoods and welfare of those communities living and working around the bay. For a comprehensive description of PT Tirta Wahana Bali International's plans, government permission processes and the *Tolak Reklamasi* movement, see Johnny Langenheim, "Battle for Bali: Campaigners Fight Back Against Unchecked Development", *The Guardian* (2014), http://www.theguardian.com/environment/the-coral-triangle/2014/oct/22/battle-for-bali-campaigners-fight-back-against-unchecked-development. (accessed 19/22/2014)

[34] Sunarta, "Plasticology: A Tale from the Island of the Gods", p. 5.

[35] See Chapter 1.1 and 1.2 for further context regarding the *mooi Indie* (beautiful Indies) genre of painting in Indonesia.

smaller dwellings are depicted; signs advertising “land for sale” protrude from the ripened rice fields. These scenes emanate from a tranquil central focus, a nostalgic appropriation of the “simple forest hideaway” marketed to Bali’s visitors. A bamboo hut perches on the edge of a cool blue river, with enormous strangler fig trees rising up behind it. The river flows towards the viewer, ending in a quiet rocky stream passing through the rice fields. Around the edge of the canvas a monochrome border panel features skulls and bones, symbols of violent death (Fig. 78). Heavy machinery teeters atop batik patterns that signify rocks or clouds. Scaffolding lies behind a whited-out Balinese ceremonial arch. Dragons breathe roads instead of fire. A couple rendered in the style traditionally used for magical *tumbal* line drawings are not, as is customary, separated by the divisive tree but are tied to it, awaiting execution.[36]

Bayak’s work makes explicit the links between the unchecked tourism-oriented development that began in the 1970s under the auspices of the centralised *Orde Baru* government and the mass killings that occurred across the archipelago, and particularly heavily in Bali, in 1965. These massacres, Bayak argues, wiped out much of Bali’s strong and rebellious intellectual class and cowed the remainder into silence. In this understanding, Bali’s current state of environmental degradation and socio-cultural decline is built on the violence and human rights abuses of the *Order Baru*.

Bayak’s concern with environmental mismanagement, exoticisation and the moral and political corruption that underlie them has deep roots. Under I Wayan “Suklu” Sujana’s tutelage at Sekolah Tinggi Seni Indonesia (STSI, Indonesian College of the Arts) in Denpasar, Bayak joined a student collective called *Klinik Seni Taxu* (Taxu Art Clinic) in the early 2000s.[37] Taxu was formed around disenchantment with the direction of contemporary art from Bali, at the time most famously represented by a diasporic community of Balinese artists in Yogyakarta, the *Sanggar Dewata Indonesia* (SDI, Studio of the Gods). Taxu saw SDI as perpetuating Balinese culture’s exoticised identity.

[36] Christopher Hill, *Survival and Change: Three Generations of Balinese Painters* (Canberra: Pandanus Books, 2006), p. 99. This style of tree is a common device in traditional Balinese temple paintings, used to indicate division between two parties depicted. Ibid., p. 37.
[37] *Taxu* is a cynical play on *taksu,* a mystical skill attributed to artists and artisans in Bali.I was first alerted to Taxu’s ideological basis by their associate, Balinese artist and lecturer at ITB, Willy Himawan, who wrote his master’s thesis on Taxu. Further detailed descriptions of their genesis and philosophy can be found at: I Ngurah Suryawan Mari Berbagi Pengalaman, 2009, https://yogaparta.wordpress.com/2009/01/05/budaya-taksu-budaya-palsu-membongkar-peta-pemikiran-seni-dan-budaya-bali/.

Figure 77: I Made “Bayak” Muliana, *Hidden History and Legacy – The Island of the Gods*, 2013, 245 x 122 cm, mixed media.

Figure 78: I Made “Bayak” Muliana, *Hidden History and Legacy – The Island of the Gods*, 2013, detail.

Taxu's most well-known work outside Bali was their own foray in Yogyakarta.[38] This exhibition and event, called *Memasak dan Sejarah* (Cooking and History), was held at Cemeti Art House in 2004 (Fig. 79, 80). After interviewing survivors of the 1965 massacres in Bali, Taxu members visited a sweet potato crop growing on a site identified as a mass grave. Produce from the field was brought to Cemeti, and cooked and served to visitors before finally the artists revealed the meal's provenance. One account of the performance explains:

> …the aim of the performance – which culminated in a number of audience members vomiting in disgust – was to move away from the "exoticisation of violence"…(that)…characterised media coverage of the conflicts that had emerged after Soeharto's resignation…[39]

Taxu combined research, found materials pre-laden with significance and antagonistic participation, recalling the anti-lyricist works Yuliman described in the 1970s:

> It is not the feeling of disgust that is drawn out and into the imagination, but an actual feeling of disgust, presented without distance, which makes people turn away in disgust...[40]

In Taxu's work, this disgust drew participants' attention to their supressed horror at the nations' violent history. Whilst Bayak's *Plasticology* series also continues this use of found objects and experiential approaches – especially in its pedagogical methodology – it is less antagonistic. Bayak utilises plastic waste as a base medium, substituting canvas. Over this he layers paint and charcoal with brush or stencil, developing images that recall classical Balinese painting – as described in Chapter 1.1 – and also that of the image of Bali projected through tourist advertising.

Dewa Putu Bedil After Rudolf Bonnet (2013) appropriates Rudolf Bonnet's famous drawing of the Padang Tegal painter Dewa Poetoe in his youth (Fig. 81). Where Bonnet's pastel drawing is rendered on paper over board, this painting has been composed on top of a layer of plastic shopping bags from local Indonesian franchises and KFC, stretched over a board (Fig. 82).

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[38] I was first alerted to Taxu's ideological basis by their associate, Balinese artist and lecturer at ITB, Willy Himawan, who wrote his master's thesis on Taxu. Further detailed descriptions of their genesis and philosophy can be found at: I Ngurah Suryawan Mari Berbagi Pengalaman, 2009, https://yogaparta.wordpress.com/2009/01/05/budaya-taksu-budaya-palsu-membongkar-peta-pemikiran-seni-dan-budaya-bali/.

[39] Laurence J. Kirmayer et al., *Understanding Trauma: Integrating Biological, Clinical, and Cultural Perspectives* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 404.

[40] Yuliman, "Seni Lukis Indonesia Baru" (Dewan Kesenian Jakarta, 1976), p. 101.

Figure 79: I Made Bayak Muliana, untitled installation, *Memasak dan Sejarah* exhibition, Cemeti Art House, 2004.

Figure 80: Klinik Seni Taxu, *Memasak dan Sejarah* exhibition, Cemeti Art House, 2004, documentation of participatory performance.

The head and shoulders are rendered in pointillist style with monochromatic spray paint and permanent ink; floral motifs create a frame around the figure. Floral patterns recur in many of the *Plasticology* paintings, echoing the teeming background motifs of both modernist and traditional Balinese paintings. In Bayak's works, these stencils of tendrils and petals are a strategy to evoke the exoticisation of the painting's subject, an ironic ornament to the waste produced by commodification and capitalist modernisation.

Writer Yudha Bantono points to the influences of street art on Bayak's practice.[41] Although his analysis cites Bayak's appropriation of Bonnet's portrait as a signifier of "the legacy of *colonial constructions* of Bali as an island heaven…with friendly, apolitical locals", Bantono's own reading sees the painting as symbolic of Bali's traditional past facing the present.[42] Furthermore, while, Bayak insists that his use of plastic is a pragmatic attempt to exemplify the repurposing of waste, Bantono interprets the appearance of specific brands as signifiers of the encroachment of global foods and markets on local models.[43]

Building on Klinik Seni Taxu's approach, Bayak's work critiques the representation of Balinese identity by past and present artists, and particularly censures the art market (global and local) and its role in perpetuating idealised views of Bali. In one body of work, Bayak purchased cheap Balinese landscape paintings from tourist art markets, then added hotels. In another he layered handwritten words from tourist brochures (villa, exotic, love, guide book) and barcodes over the surfaces of paintings of bare-chested women (Fig. 83). I argue that Bantono's reading of *Dewa Putu Bedil* as a critique of globalisation indicates his own concerns rather than the artist's. Bayak's past works and statements instead locate the painting within a critical stance that links Bali's environmental destruction to the local art market's perpetuation of its reputation as an unspoilt tropical idyll.

[41] Bayak's CV lists five mural projects between 2004 and 2011, including one with Apotik Komik artist Arie Dyanto.
[42] Yudha Bantono, "Bali Dalam Sekantong Plastik: Seni Rupa Plasticology Made Bayak", (Facebook, 2014). My emphasis.
[43] This is a particularly laboured interpretation as the three brands "featured" are all local franchises, or sell foods tailored to local tastes in Indonesia (rather than introducing foreign flavours).

Image removed due to copyright restrictions.

Figure 81: Rudolph Bonnet, *Dewa Poetoe*, 1947, chalk and pastel on paper laid on cardboard, 43 x 33 cm.

Figure 82: I Made Bayak Muliana, *Dewa Putu After Rudolf Bonnet*, 2013, ink and pen on plastic waste, 65 x 75 cm.

Bantono's account also describes Bayak's working processes, stressing his handmade approach to stencils: "He strongly believes that the touch of his own hand has a soul when he is making art..."[44] Here we see evidence of the ongoing legacy of *jiwa ketok,* the visible soul of the artist that Soedjojono insisted on, and which Yangni proposes as the basis for an Indonesian aesthetic (see Chapter 2.3). But this can also be linked to the attitudes of Bayak's teacher Suklu, and Suklu's own teacher Ketut Liyer, both of whom see the process of making as equally important to the result.[45] For Bayak, as for Suklu, the artist's social role is also imperative to their practice. Bantono writes:

> The involvement of people is very meaningful for Bayak, because his *Plasticology* is intended not only to represent himself through his works of art, but also as a consciousness that has implications for the broader community.[46]

While Arahmaiani sees participation in part as providing communities with intellectual guidance, the driving force behind Bayak's participatory works is raising awareness of a specific issue. He seeks not to develop participants' critical consciousness but to create behavioural change around waste management.

4.5 *Plasticology:* starting from the bottom

In Bayak's participatory art, he designs workshops specifically for children because he believes they are the generation who will be most able to effect change in the future. Although developed from his own painting methodology, *Plasticology* communicates a simpler message: plastic waste is a problem. Bayak deliberately avoids bringing any further layers of meaning to the workshops to avoid diluting the primary message:

> I don't tell them anything about art discourse or concepts…I just want them to have fun and understand that plastic is dangerous, it's in our environment everywhere, and this is a small thing they can make from it to hang up in their home. [47]

The workshop held at the Ubud Writers and Readers Festival (UWRF) Children's Programs in 2014 was representative of many iterations of *Plasticology,* particularly in that the bulk of the participants were expatriates living in Bali.

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[44] Bantono, "Bali Dalam Sekantong Plastik: Seni Rupa Plasticology Made Bayak".
[45] Hill, *Survival and Change: Three Generations of Balinese Painters,* p. 104. Wayan "Jengki" Sunarta, Wayan Suklu and Ema Sukarelawanto, *The Unseen Things*, exhibition catalogue (Ubud: Komaneka Fine Art Gallery, 2012), p. 41.
[46] Bantono, "Bali Dalam Sekantong Plastik: Seni Rupa Plasticology Made Bayak".
[47] Made Bayak, "Interview by Elly Kent #2", 07/09/2014.

Figure 83: I Made Bayak Muliana, *Sukawati Series*, 2011.
Left: *Bali Exotic*, 2011, oil on canvas. Right: *Trapped Behind Bars*, 2011, oil on canvas.

Figure 84: Made Bayak, *Plasticology* Workshop, 2014, Ubud Writers and Readers Festival (UWRF) Children's Program.

It differed in that most of Bayak's workshops are conducted in classroom settings. In the early years of *Plasticology*, Bayak noted that "most of those who appreciated it were foreigners who had been living in Bali for a long time".[48] However, since 2015 he has been increasingly invited to implement workshops in Indonesian schools.[49]

The Children's Programs during the 2014 UWRF were conducted in a small hall with a high corrugated iron roof and woven bamboo walls. The youngest of the 25 participants was around five years old; the oldest in their early teens (Fig. 84). As Bayak introduced himself and the project, three students from local schools – the only Indonesian participants – students from local schools, arrived, baulking at the room filled with children from what Bayak describes as "the international community" (Fig. 85).

Eventually, with encouragement from Bayak's son Damar, they entered, sitting among the crowd. Bayak began bilingually, but as many of the children could not understand his accent, UWRF facilitator, Ari, translated. Plastic rubbish was tipped onto a central table with a flourish, colourful and shiny. The children responded with their imaginings of the contents. "Yummy!" they called out. "What's inside is yummy", Bayak replied, "but the outside is not yummy".

From mid 2014, Bayak *Plasticology* workshops focused on a specific silver-foil lined plastic that is not accepted by recyclers in Indonesia. In his introduction, Bayak explained to the children that this is not collected by the trash-pickers who remove plastic, glass and paper from household waste to sell to recycling companies. The three local boys listened intensely, perhaps because Bayak spoke to them in Indonesian directly. In the next stage of the process, where the participants selected a range of plastics to iron flat and glue onto wooden boards, it became apparent that they had taken the silver plastic problem very seriously.

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[48] Dwe Rachmanto and Made Muliana Bayak, *Wawancara dengan Made Bayak*, *Proyek Pemetaan Seniman Modern dan Kontemporer Indonesia* (youtube: Galeri Nasional Indonesia,2013), https://youtu.be/VHohyatPcUI).

[49] See, for instance, Cisilia Augustina, "Made Bayak Ajak Siswa Sd Olah Sampah Menjadi Karya Seni", *Tribun Bali* (2015), http://bali.tribunnews.com/2015/12/09/made-bayak-ajak-siswa-sd-olah-sampah-menjadi-karya-seni. Raiza Andini, "Puluhan Pelajar Di Singaraja Melukis Di Atas Sampah Plastik", *Okezone.news* (2016), http://news.okezone.com/read/2016/04/25/65/1372058/puluhan-pelajar-di-singaraja-melukis-di-atas-sampah-plastik.; Dewi Rachmayani, *Plasticology Made in Bali Lentera Indonesia* (youtube: NET. Documentary, 2015), 30 mins.

Figure 85: Older children are particularly interested in the possibility of creating three-dimensional works.

Figure 86: Bayak explains the process to children participating in his *Plasticology* workshop at the UWRF Children's Program workshop.

By contrast, the non-Indonesian speakers seemed to choose their plastics based on their aesthetic properties rather than the potential impact on the environment. A number of the older children were fascinated by the effect of the iron on plastic shopping bags, and the textures and effects they could achieve in an abstract composition (Fig. 85). Bayak's interactions with participants focused mainly on practical elements. He helped them to iron safely and monitored the use of glue guns, making no suggestions as to creative decisions. Once the backing boards were covered, the next task was to draw pictures onto white paper, cut them out and fix them to the backing board (Fig. 86).

Evaluating the *Plasticology* workshops as an artwork poses the same challenges raised by Bishop and Kester in their debates around the form and function of participatory art (see Introduction 0.2). Having established that process is the primary concern in Bayak's participatory projects, how should we then evaluate the success of these processes? This seems a difficult task given the goal is raising consciousness around the disposal of plastic waste. Do the works produced by participants contain clues to the aesthetic impact of the process? That is, are there signs of the range of sensorial and emotional responses that participants experience?

As mentioned earlier, the Balinese participants took the content of Bayak's introduction very seriously, producing three works which used only silver-foil lined plastics, and highlighting this by turning the silver-foil to face out. In the foreground they attached large line drawings, which joined the disparate elements of paper and plastic. Their drawings – a landscape and two airplanes in flight – interpreted the silver as a single field of sky (Fig. 87). The boys' compositional decisions demonstrated their understanding and reflections on the content imparted in the workshops, evidence of the success of Bayak's message about silver plastic. By contrast, another image from the documentation shows three other participants focusing on, respectively, repositioning the packaging imagery, building a three-dimensional face, and assembling and framing colour fields (Fig. 88). In these three works, the participants eschewed the second step of Bayak's process and instead drew their entire compositions from "found" colour, imagery and form.

Figure 87: Several participants made works which featured the silver-foil lined plastic prominently, reflecting one of the specific points Bayak had made during his introduction.

Figure 88: Three participants chose to construct their compositions from the plastic waste only, rather than adding a drawing on paper over the top.

Another striking artefact from the workshop was a carefully constructed composition combining blue and orange toilet paper packaging, and featuring a single flying creature with large white wings, loosely fixed and cut from white shopping bags. This participant also avoided the second stage of adding paper drawings. Consequently, there was a clarity and simplicity in this work which meant that the medium was tangible but not dominant. By smoothing over the disjuncture between the cognitive response to rubbish and the effect of complementary fields of colour, this composition simultaneously revealed and concealed its origins (Fig. 89).

These artworks reveal the participants' resistance to the prescribed process, instead engaging with its materiality. In Bayak's own *Plasticology* works, the plastic background is used instead of paper or canvas in order to draw attention to the re-use potential of waste. Rather than reinforcing this, adding a layer of paper and representational drawing seems to negate the message regarding plastic re-use. Later I asked Bayak why drawing on paper was necessary. In reply he emphasised that he wants the workshops to be "fun and easy"; as drawing on the plastic is difficult he generally reserves this for older children. As for representation over abstraction, Bayak feels it is impossible for him to explain and apply the principles of abstraction with children in these workshops.[50]

In her analysis of pedagogic projects, Bishop highlighted how "their dominant goal seemed to be the production of a dynamic experience for participants, rather than the production of complex artistic forms".[51] As evidenced by Bayak's response, in the *Plasticology* workshops a dynamic experience – "fun and easy" art making – is the primary vehicle for raising consciousness of plastic waste and its impact. I suggest, however, that the traces of this consciousness are evident in the artistic forms that emerge, in the very complexity of participants' resistance to Bayak's simplified process. These variations on the process Bayak sets out during the workshop are evidence of participants' creative engagement with the material, proof of their attempts to reposition plastic waste as artistic media. How far this consciousness impacts on participant behaviour remains a question, but not one Bayak sets out to answer.

[50] Made Bayak, "Interview by Elly Kent #1", 22/12/2013; Personal communication, 19 October 2014.
[51] Claire Bishop, "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics", *October* (2004), p. 246.

Figure 89: This work also used only materials from plastic waste, creating a delicate composition with relatively subtle appearance of advertising text.

Figure 90: A banner for the Tolak Reklamasi (Reject Reclamation) movement in Denpasar, Bali.

In his art objects, Bayak permits his audience to feel the pleasure of political alliance as they recognise his references to the causative relationship between over-development and poor waste management. But what might be challenging messages in other contexts (such as if the works are in the proximity of government or corporate offices) are less so when displayed in a gallery setting attended by expatriates already immersed in an alternative lifestyle.[52] Interestingly, the opposite is so in his workshops: Bayak prioritises the individual participant's right to creative expression within their (assumed) comfort zones rather than exploiting the medium to push the environmental message the work is based on. In Bayak's *Plasticology* works, both participatory and individual, this tension between artistic autonomy and responsive heteronomy compromises both aspects to some extent.

As asserted in Part 1, discourses simultaneously defending the individual artist as the centre of creativity *and* mandating responsiveness to society are endemic to Indonesia. In pedagogic projects, this bind between autonomy and heteronomy creates a "double finality", which means that "this art must tread the fine line of a dual horizon – faced towards the social field but also towards art itself".[53] In *Plasticology,* Bayak attempts to negotiate this horizon by inverting expectations that his individual artworks should face "art itself" and his participatory works should face the "social field". Instead, he vests creative autonomy on participants in his *Plasticology* workshops, and positions his own artwork in response to the heteronomous conditions of his home island. As an ongoing project, *Plasticology* continues to navigate this tricky horizon, but, in his relationship with *Tolak Reklamasi,* Bayak stakes a more tangibly oppositional role for his art.

4.6 Performing opposition: the burial of Made Bayak

Like Arahmaiani, Bayak's performances and public persona provide fodder for his artworks. In Bayak's case, his participation in society feeds both individual and participatory works. One of the communities he participates in is the *Tolak Reklamasi*

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[52] See Kester for an interesting perspective on how political artworks confirm the audience's self-perceived progressive attitudes without engendering social change. Grant H. Kester, *The One and the Many: Contemporary Collaborative Art in a Global Context* (Durham [N.C.]: Duke University Press, 2011), p. 63.

[53] Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship* (London: Verso, 2012), p. 274.

(Reject Reclamation) movement, a collection of civil organisations that vehemently opposes the reclamation of parts of Benoa Bay for the purposes of developing a luxury tourist island (Fig. 90). Bayak holds that, apart from his commitment to the movement's goal of preventing reclamation, his involvement also fires his creativity.[54] The political aspect of Bayak's participation is evident in his artwork, which is often directed back into the "movement" as performances during public demonstrations, posters and paintings sold to fundraise for the movement (Fig. 91). Describing his work, Bayak evokes Indonesian and Western art history simultaneously, calling his actions both *turba* and happenings. His public Facebook page has featured documentation of him visiting a rubbish dump:

> I prefer to call this *TURBA,* because *blusukan* is too mainstream….this morning 6 November 2014 I visited the tip, the tip is actually the same age as I am, before it was a gorge (a creek) and now it is 90% full to the brim. It's only 300 metres to the main road…and very close to people's houses.[55]

In comparing *turba* to *blusukan*, Bayak is referring to what has become the Indonesian political equivalent to "pressing the flesh", the practice of spontaneously visiting under-privileged areas to gain a first-hand experience of the lives and conditions of the poor (Fig. 92).

The term *blusukan* has been popularised in recent times by President Joko Widodo, yet was called *turba* during Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's presidential term.[56] From the exchange that accompanied Bayak's post, it is clear that *turba* remains alive for him, and a methodology that he aims to share with others; Bayak also posted a link to an earlier issue of Tempo, which reprinted the *turba* methodology.[57]

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[54] Bayak, "Interview by Elly Kent #2".
[55] "Mencari Inspirasi Di TPA", (Facebook, 5/11/2014).
[56] The etymology of the term and its recent evolution is described in Wijayanto Samirin, "Blusukan", Opinion, *Kompas.com* (2013), http://nasional.kompas.com/read/2013/01/12/11232457/Blusukan (acessed 13/12/2015)
[57] Aminuddin T. Siregar et al, "Lekra: Analysis of a Discourse", *Tempo*, 30 Sept.–06 Oct. 2013.

Figure 91: A poster for the Tolak Reklamasi (Reject Reclamation) movement, featuring a painting by I Made Bayak Muliana.

Figure 92: Bayak documented a trip to the local rubbish tip, referring to the experience on social media as “turba”.

Bayak's recent performances have also been associated with the *Tolak Reklamasi* movement, with documentation used as propaganda online (Fig. 93).[58] One such performance took place at the *Tolak Reklamasi Teluk Benoa Art Event* held in a beachside parking lot in October 2014. The documentation of Bayak's performance has been enhanced with the use of a drone, multiple camera angles and background music laden with historical and political references for a particular segment of the audience.[59] Constructed from thousands of still photos edited into a stop-motion animation, the video begins with Bayak standing in front of scaffolding rising into the grey sky.

He wears an *udeng* (Balinese headscarf) in a triangle over his brow and a red and white chequered sarong around his waist. With these "traditional" signifiers of Balinese identity, Bayak sports a white t-shirt with the *Tolak Reklamasi* logo. He stands straight, eyes closed, hands clasped in a meditative gesture. To Bayak's right stands a mechanical digger, the shadow of its hydraulic arm rising as it tips black sand onto his head. As the process continues, the viewer's perspective soars and circles, moving in and out of close-ups and full body shots, or images of the crowd standing at a safe distance from the heavy machine and its suffocating load. The crowd is peppered with cameras and a band performs overhead on a floating platform. In some of the stills Bayak is obscured by the falling black sand; in others his face is clearly visible, impassive, eyes closed. As the sand reaches his shoulders, others enter the frame: at first a woman climbs to the top of the pile, then children, some also wearing *udeng* and sarong, join her in tearing away the sand with their hands, freeing Bayak from the mountain of black sand as the video fades to black. As effective propaganda demands, the signifying elements in Bayak's performance are overt. Heavy machinery features strongly in propaganda for the movement, as do Balinese costumes and classic raised fists (Fig. 94).[60]

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[58] The video documentation is the work of Roberto Aria and functions as propaganda for *Tolak Reklamasi*. Roberto Aria, "Art Event – Bali Tolak Reklamasi Teluk Benoa", (youtube.com, 2014). https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7D3zRiDgI0U (accessed 2/11/2014).
[59] The music is by Rage Against the Machine, known globally for their anti-capitalist, anti-war stance in the 1990s and 2000s.
[60] See, for instance, the blog of artist Herry Sucahya, which describes the process of constructing the poster shown in Figure 100. This image was also later turned into a colossal wire and cardboard sculpture. http://herrysucahya.blogspot.com.au/2015/07/bali-tolak-reklamasi-poster.html.

Images removed due to copyright restrictions.

Figure 93: Stills from Robert Aria's video documentation of Bayak's performance at the *Tolak Reklamasi Teluk Benoa Art Event*.

The political necessity of clear and consistent symbols of rejection, local identity and development provides a stock of ready-made symbols for artists. For Bayak, this kind of engagement with the *Tolak Reklamasi* movement performs dual functions: it is both his responsibility to his society and future generations, and a method to maintain ethical commitment to his own practice:

> As much as I can, I get involved in the movement or initiative because it's like a way of keeping the flame alive in my spirit…I'm really worried that, as an artist, I will reach a comfort zone: ok, I'll just sit in the studio painting, I'll read the newspaper, there is unrest, I'll make an artwork. I don't want to be like that. I want to feel it in the field...That's it, I don't put any limits on it, like that it's too activist, or too political, or "what will the artwork be like?"[61]

Bayak's approach differs greatly to Arahmaiani, who prefers to avoid alliance with particular organisations. Bayak's work, on the other hand, epitomises Alia Swastika's speculation (referred to in Chapter 2.4) that participatory art practice has developed through performances at protests which ultimately invite fellow protestors to join in.[62] Bayak's pedagogic projects also developed from his involvement in an alternative school, Sekolah Anak Tangguh, which fellow activists set up in protest at narrow curricula in public schools (Fig. 95). Participating and interacting with community activities on their own terms is the other side of Bayak's pedagogic participatory and individual art practice. He interprets *turba* as a learning tool, similar to Hersri Setiawan's descriptions in Chapter 2.3.

Also like the *turba* artists, Bayak's interactions with the *Tolak Reklamasi* movement inform subsequent paintings, including *Hidden History and Legacy – The Island of The Gods*, which I described earlier in this chapter. Others, which Bayak has created for sale as fundraisers for the movement, allow him greater interpretative freedom than his performance at the *Tolak Reklamasi Teluk Benoa Art Event* (Fig. 96, 97).

[61] Bayak, "Interview by Elly Kent #2".
[62] Alia Swastika, "Interview by Elly Kent", 3/12/2014.

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Figure 94: Herry Sucahya, propaganda poster for the Tolak Reklamasi movement. Herry describes the process for making the image on his blog.

Figure 95: Sekolah Anak Tangguh (School for Resilient Children) was set up by Bayak and other artists to fill gaps in the curricula provided in local government primary schools.

Figure 96: I Made Bayak Muliana, *Monster Who Drain the Underground Water*, 2013, acrylic paint on canvas, 100 x 100 cm.

Figure 97: I Made Bayak Muliana, *Alien Who Try to Build New Island of Sunset And Sunrise*, 2013, acrylic, permanent ink and plastic waste on canvas 100 x 100 cm.

For Bayak, his participation as a public artist and activist in the *Tolak Reklamasi* movement is the fuel, or the food – perhaps even the justification – for the didactic nature of his art practice. In this practice Bayak eschews the middle road and yet simultaneously attempts to straddle all sides of the activist artists' work, in a valiant but perilous attempt to departition politics, history, art and education. In this case, the task of the aesthetic regime to bind life to art and the individual to society raises the stakes for the socio-politically committed artist.

Conclusion

In this chapter I presented the work of two artists whose practices challenge the one-way flow of participation that dominates international discourses on participatory art. Arahmaiani's practice became increasingly opaque as I drew closer, yet gained clarity when viewed through Yuliman's assessment of the "restless" generation and Harsono's *kerakyatan.* Consequently, this perspective became fundamental to understanding the historical and contemporary context of participatory and individual art in Indonesia.

Made Bayak also explicitly positions the participatory elements of his practice as reciprocal, emphasising the importance of his participation in social movements as the ignition for his other work. Bayak's pedagogical works – his *Plasticology* workshops – traverse a fine line between their social intentions to raise awareness of waste among children and his sense that the fundamental basis of this message must be creative and fun. Similarly, Bayak's activist performances lean strongly towards propaganda but engender a creative drive that is expressed with greater nuance in his paintings. There Bayak enquires into the complex nature of the problems facing Balinese society and opens up space for his viewers to do the same.

I return, then, to the enigmatic bind between autonomy and heteronomy that frames this dissertation. This "artistic ideology" – with its emphasis on the dissolution of binary oppositions between life and art, which modernism is perceived to reify – sets the agenda for both artists. Yet this agenda, like its early manifestations in *turba* and conscientisation, calls for the "pursuit of appropriate states of mind" rather than

dictating methodologies.[63] In 2003, Harsono remained unconvinced that Indonesian artists had succeeded in overcoming the modernist distinctions between the individual and society. He describes a paradoxical situation:

> Here we see the ambiguity of the artist, on the one hand the creation of artwork as a medium for conscientisation – not as a medium for the expression of individual aesthetic of the artist alone – and on the other hand the artist is still within the conventions of modern art that locates the autonomous individual as the creator… This is because the adherence to principles of fine art is still strong amongst artists, so that art work is identified with autonomous, individual work, even though the ideas are reflections of the artists' involvement in the community.[64]

I contend, however, that these are precisely the characteristics that have allowed Indonesian artists to develop such diverse conjunctions of individual and participatory work, practices which have, over the decades, proliferated, continuing to explore riskier and more experimental manifestations.

In the next chapter I address the work of another Balinese artist, teacher and public figure. I Wayan "Suklu" Sujana was Bayak's teacher and mentor yet his approach to individual and participatory practice is far less politically driven and derives its motivation from distinctly modernist, autonomous forms from both Balinese and "Western" discourses. Suklu constructs a "personal-interactive-social" structure around his work that echoes the conjunction of autonomy and heteronomy by adding a middle ground.

[63] Foulcher identified the "pursuit of appropriate states of mind" as the over-riding concern of Lekra, rather than aesthetic concerns. *Social Commitment in Literature and the Arts – the Indonesian "Institute of People's Culture" 1950–1965*, p. 25.
[64] FX Harsono, "Kerakyatan Dalam Seni Lukis Indonesia Sejak Persagi Hingga Kini", p. 87.

Chapter 5

I Wayan "Suklu" Sujana: personal-interactive-social

> My paintings are like my exhaled breath. They are full of my personal spirit.[65]
>
> Involving the arts and social community is inevitable, if there is a desire to make art that is meaningful for broader society.[66]
>
> I Wayan "Suklu" Sujana

These two statements by I Wayan Sujana (b. 1967), better known as "Suklu", are a tangible representation of the paradigms that this contemporary artist, and others examined in this dissertation, work with. Echoing Soedjojono's *jiwa ketok*, Suklu refers to his paintings as an extension of his own spirit, maintaining a commitment to the process of making and to the artist's hand. He regards the artist as the centre of individual expression, embedding personal meaning in his art objects. Yet the drive to carry the cathartic, expressive energy he experiences in the drawing process through to a broader audience compels him to open his practices up to the involvement – the participation – of others.

Suklu has constructed a personal formula around the scope of his practice, which provides a useful language and structure with which to analyse his work. This "personal-interactive-social" structure, which breaks Suklu's practice into three areas with different levels of engagement with autonomy and heteronomy, is an example of how Indonesian artists are consciously formulating new conceptual frameworks around individual and participatory practices. Indeed, I present Suklu's practice in this dissertation because of this conscious and studied way he devises and theorises his practice. However, despite his clear delineation of these "personal-interactive-social" spaces, I contend that in Suklu's work all three are mutually informative and aesthetically linked.

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[65] Wang Zineng, *Elok Berkelok* (Singapore: The Aryaseni Gallery, 2008), p. 10.
[66] Suklu, interviewed by Sukarelawanto in Wayan "Jengki" Sunarta, Wayan Suklu, and Ema Sukarelawanto, *The Unseen Things*, p. 49.

The first space produces what Suklu calls “personal” works: individual expressive artwork using painting, drawing or sculptural techniques that tend towards abstraction. To extrapolate the form and function of the personal space in Suklu’s practice, I analyse a painting called *Musim Bergeser (Shifting Seasons)* from 2012. I show how Suklu’s abstract expressionist approach can be linked equally to his studies in formalist modern (Western) art theory and his training under modernist Balinese painters. The second space is an “interactive” space, where audiences or other artists are invited to engage directly with bamboo constructions that Suklu has designed specifically for that purpose. These large installations become “third spaces” when activated by the practice of dancers, musicians or other performers, a hybrid artwork evolving out of the creativity of two artists. I analyse the *Cenderawasih (Paradise)* installation from 2010, and also maintain that BatuBelah Art Space, Suklu’s open studio and performance space, is another manifestation of this conception of “interactive” space. The last space in Suklu’s formulation is what he calls the “social” space, in which he surrenders aesthetic decisions and practical implementation to participants. I will look at Suklu’s ongoing *Drawing on Novels* project as an example of this kind of practice, and trace the links between this “social” practice and his “personal” works.

After describing the elements of Suklu’s trivalent practice through specific examples, I turn to an analysis of the theoretical and philosophical influences on Suklu’s practice. These include Latour’s actor-network-theory (ANT) and the specific modernist tendencies evolved from the philosophies of traditional Balinese painting. Suklu’s personal-interactive-social construction provides his art practice with a frame that echoes the binding knot of the autonomous-heteronomous construction. He does this by invoking both “ends” of the knot through his personal (autonomous) artworks and his social (heteronomous) projects, which are then tied together through interactive installations, spaces and events. Furthermore, Suklu’s self-declared influences combine exogenous and endogenous theories and practices, which he has consolidated into a conceptual framework to support his tripartite approach. As such, I argue that Suklu’s practice provides an exemplar for the combination of individual and participatory practices that have emerged in Indonesia over the past 25 years. Like other artists, his practice has grown in a conducive “climate” set in the earliest conceptions of Indonesian modernism.

5.1 Personal space: repetition and meditation

On the day I met Suklu, I first wandered through the Agung Rai Museum of Art (ARMA) in Ubud, visiting rooms filled with paintings from what has become known as the Balinese "classic" style of painting. These are characteristically idealised: figurative scenes of pre-modern agrarian life or from folk tales and the Hindu epics. They are executed in stylised, flat and decorative compositions, generally with muted colours thick with ornamentation (Fig. 98). The contemporary section of ARMA featured installations by artists such as Nyoman Erawan, whose enormous phallic *Lingga Yoni* soft sculptures soared up to the high ceilings (Fig. 99). In the courtyard the remains of Erawan's performance at the opening of the BaliACT festival left the otherwise tropical idyll looking like an act of violence had occurred. Only slightly familiar with Suklu's work, I wondered at the time where his work would fall among these distinct visual languages that have emerged from this island.

Being a Balinese artist, Suklu's practice emerged from a specific art historical context that differs somewhat from Java and other parts of Indonesia. As described in Chapter 1.1, Balinese painting has a long pre-modern history associated with religious practice. In part influenced by this historical tradition and in part due to Bali's unique engagement with European artists and American anthropologists, as well as other travellers, Balinese modernist painting developed distinct styles.

Suklu's paintings cannot be completely separated from this divergent modernist tradition – although they may not be immediately identifiable as a part of it – partly because of the influence of the training received from one of the original modernist painters from the Pita Maha era in the 1930s. In his early twenties, from 1987, Suklu spent three years living and studying in the Pengosekan area, known as an artists' village. There Suklu lived with classical painter Ketut Liyer (1922–2016), who was a member of the Balinese painters association, the Pita Maha Arts Society founded by Cokorda Agung Sukawati, Walter Spies and Rudolph Bonnet in 1936 (see Chapter 1.2). Ketut Liyer's influence on the young Suklu was strong.

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Figure 98: Ida Bagus Made, *Dewi Uma* (Parvati), 1972, acrylic on canvas.

Figure 99: Nyoman Erawan, *Lingga Yoni,* 2013, soft sculptural material, installed at the Agung Rai Museum of Art (ARMA) 2013.

According to writer and poet Wayan "Jengki" Sunarta:

> It was Ketut Liyer who opened Suklu to the concept that every painting, both traditional and modern, had its own character in compositional relationships...The aspect that impressed him most …was the act of meditation through the drawing of lines, *nyeket* [sketching], *nyigar* [shading], *mangsi* [black lines], colouring and several other processes.[67]

This attention to process, line and tone remains influential on Suklu's work. Yet in spite of his attraction to the classical processes that he studied under Ketut, Suklu did not uncritically accept the characteristic style of the area. At the time, Pengosekan painters were also known for painting stylised flora and fauna, a trend which the young Suklu strongly resisted (Fig. 100).[68] Nonetheless, the process of line drawing and intense focus, particularly as generated through repetition, has had a strong impact on Suklu's subsequent works, as is evident in the works described in this chapter.

In his individual practice, Suklu focuses strongly on repetition of line and colour to generate a meditative state. He credits a single transformative experience at a lecture he attended after his graduation from art college for awakening in him a consciousness of the potential of meditation in everyday acts. Suklu attended a public forum addressing the life work of poet-priest Ida Made Pedanda Sidemen, one of Bali's most celebrated literary figures.[69] Suklu says:

> From that discussion I was convinced that artistic processes are a form of meditation in everyday life. The process is most important, not the end result.[70]

Using repetition of line and colour allows Suklu to immerse himself in the process and, simultaneously, in meditation.

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[67] Ibid., p. 41. The three terms mentioned here refer to sketching (*nyeket*), gradations of tone (*nyigar*), and the use of black ink (*mangsi*, named after the oily soot from kerosene lamps that was used in the past). For a more detailed explanation of these terms, see Tang Adimawan, "Sepintas Perkembangan Sejarah Seni Lukis Bali dari Masa Kerajaan Hingga Neo Pitahama", *Pitamaha* 2014, http://neopitamaha.blogspot.com.au/.

[68] Sunarta, Suklu and Sukarelawanto, *The Unseen Things*, p. 41.

[69] In 2011, the Ubud Writer's Festival was dedicated to Sidemen's work, and he is a regular subject of seminars and panel discussion throughout the island. Sideman was renowned for his philosophical poetry, architectural works and simple poetry. He was reported to be 126 years old when he died in 1984, his life having spanned the history of Bali's modernisation from feudalist kingdoms through colonisation and into the Republic of Indonesia. I Made Sujaya, "Ida Pedanda Made Sidemen, Pengarang Besar Bali yang Menyiapkan Sendiri 'Jalan Pulang'", *Balisaja.com: Portal Bali yang Benar-Benar Bali*, 2013. http://www.balisaja.com/2013/09/ida-pedanda-made-sidemen-pengarang.html, (accessed 20/11/2016).

[70] Suklu, quoted in Sunarta, Suklu and Sukarelawanto, *The Unseen Things*, p. 41.

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Figure 100: I Dewa Putu Sena (Pengosekan painter) *Labu* (Pumpkin), date unknown, acrylic on canvas, 90 x 70 cm.

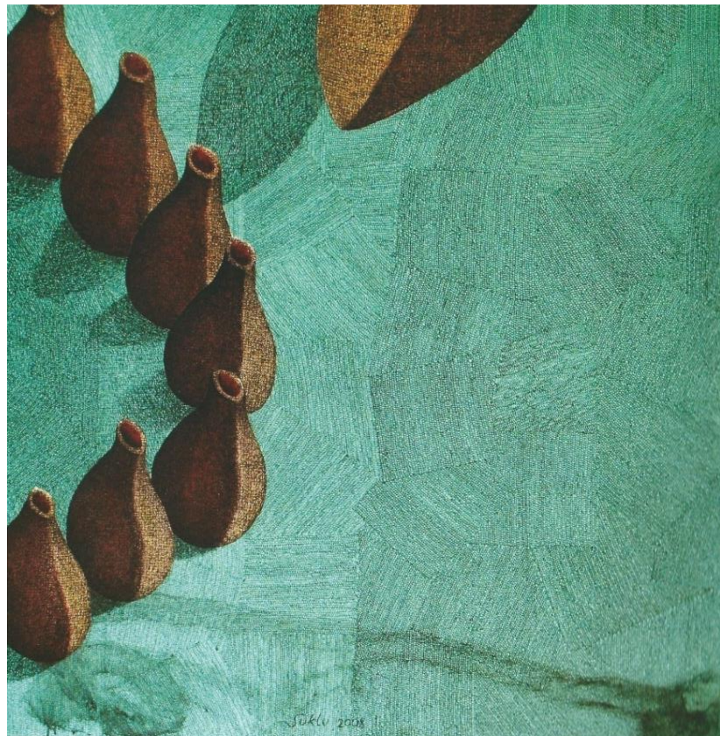

Figure 101: I Wayan “Suklu” Sujana, *Elok Berelok*, 2008, ink and acrylic on canvas, 100 x 100 cm.

Repetition of line and colour is evident in Suklu's sculptural works, often assembled from collections of found objects (coconut husks, sea shells) or reliant on repetitious craft practices such as weaving bamboo. It is also evident in his paintings, many of which are constructed from thousands of small curved lines grouped or separated to build up tone and dimension.

In the catalogue for Suklu's 2008 exhibition *Elok Berkelok (Lovely Curves),* Wang Zineng refers to these lines as a compositional device and claims that Suklu's use of meditation in painting is "without profound or fanciful theory" (Fig. 101).[71] I contest that on the contrary, from Suklu's perspective, meditation and repetition are intimately bound to both Balinese-Hindu cultural practice and the principles of modernist art, from which Suklu has developed an approach that can be read through Kobena Mercer's notion of "discrepant abstraction".[72]

Mercer has assembled a collection of essays primarily focused on heteronomous influences on American abstraction, which have been left out of the "institutional narrative" of abstraction that is focused on "purity". There is great potential for abstract traditions from outside of the USA and Europe, including those in Indonesia, to contribute to a broader discourse on "discrepant abstractions". This is evidenced by Suklu's conscious attempts to incorporate heteronomous religio-spiritual experiences with formalist modernist tenets when creating abstract artworks. This also raises the importance of the aesthetic regime as an incorporative framework that resists discrete categories of medium and style.[73]

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[71] Zineng, *Elok Berkelok (Lovely Curves)*, p. 10.

[72] Kobena Mercer et al., *Discrepant Abstraction* (London: MIT Press and InIVA, 2006). Unfortunately the book lacks comprehensive analysis of the flow of abstraction out of Euro-American centres and how discrepant abstractions have been formulated in other places. Only one essay, *Rethinking Calligraphic Modernism,* by Iftikhar Dadi, is focused on the specific function of abstraction in modernist calligraphic paintings produced in North Africa, the Middle East, and West and South Asia.

[73] Art critic Clement Greenberg's 1961 essay emphasises Western modernist art's tendency to critique mediums within their own limitations, by drawing attention to, for instance, painting's flatness. Clement Greenberg, "Modernist Painting", in *Esthetics Contemporary*, ed. R. Kostelanetz (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1978), p. 430.

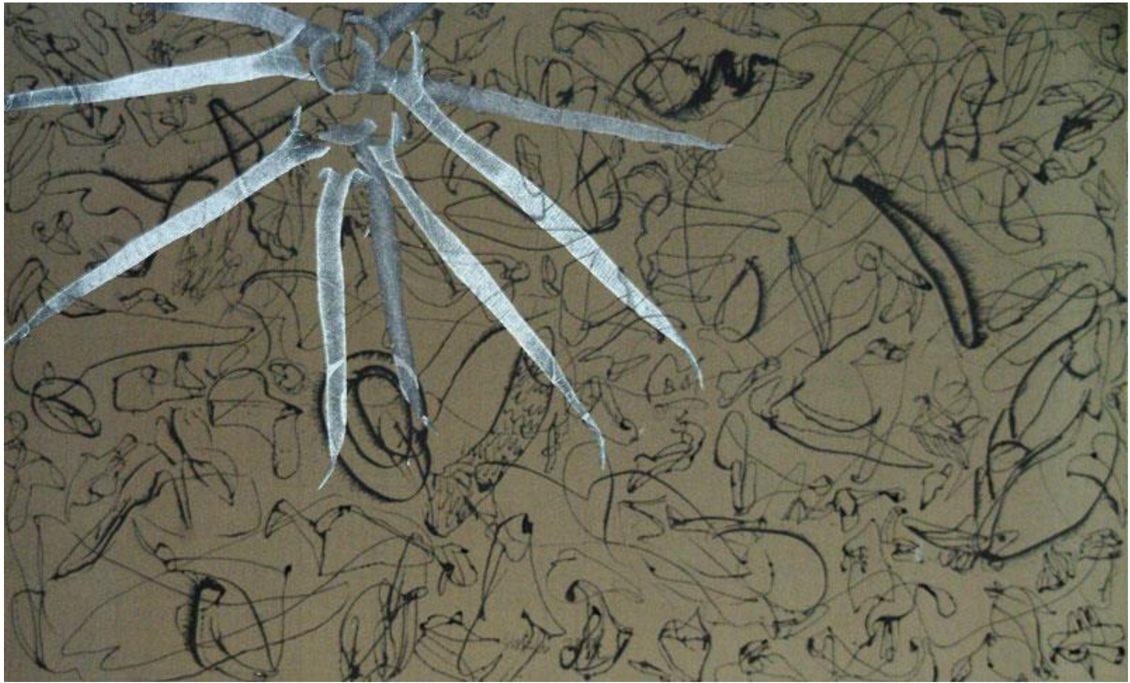

Figure 102: I Wayan “Suklu” Sujana, *Musim Bergeser* (Shifting Seasons), 2012, ink and acrylic on un-primed canvas, 120 x 200 cm.

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Figure 103: Willem de Kooning (1904–1998) *Black and White Abstraction*, ca. 1950, Sapolin enamel on chart paper, 54.6 x 77.5 cm, collection of RISD Museum (Rhode Island School of Design).

After absorbing Pedanda Sidemen's philosophy of repetition as meditation, Suklu spent 13 years searching for a framework within which to implement his conviction that there was creative merit in these practices. In an interview he stated:

> Eventually after I went to ISI and I really studied the theory and practice of modern art, only then could I do it. So for the repetition of line and colour, I take this from formalism in visual art, line, colour, texture. Only later did I have an understanding of how to share it with the public…The technique is from modern art, but I associate it with traditional text…not narrative, but traditional concepts like repetitious mantra, or the sound of a bell.[74]

From this conversation and through analysis of the works Suklu produces, it is clear that he takes a highly conceptual approach to the various exogenous and endogenous influences on his practice. The marriage of formalism and metaphysics informs all aspects of Suklu's practice.

In the painting *Musim Bergeser* (Shifting Seasons, 2012), two surfaces interact to suggest this duality of purpose (Fig. 103). The large un-primed canvas field has been filled with dynamic, flowing lines of black ink, seemingly randomly applied with a free and urgent hand. At times the lines draw together to suggest a form, an object, but as we focus our eyes we realise they are no more than suggestions. Some leap forward, thicker lines and shading propelling them into a middle ground; perhaps we can see an ear or a ring just left of centre, or maybe the phallic protrusion to its right suggests a *lingga-yoni* formation? Other perspectival shapes emerge, suggesting depth of field, but are then flattened by the apparently random intersection of curving lines that play across the surface. Unlike the small, carefully curved lines that make up the background of many of Suklu's paintings, these lines are more like traces of the hand as it moves from one abstract form to another, a cursive conjunction. The line work in *Musim Bergeser* unfolds in the manner of gestural abstraction, invoking Willem de Kooning's black and white abstractions of the late 1950s, where the figure is neither absent nor overtly present (Fig. 103).

Over the top of this field of floating lines and shapes, tapering strips of white intrude, strident and carefully executed, moving down from the centre left at the top of the canvas and emanating from a central source like the petals of a spider orchid or ylang-

[74] I Wayan Suklu Sujana, "Interview by Elly Kent", 18/10/2013. ISI Denpasar is the Indonesian Institute of Art campus in Bali's capital city, Denpasar.

ylang flower. On each petal, dimension and depth are inscribed through tone built up from hundreds of tiny lines. Where the petals fall across the gestural marks on the base layer, those marks show through, reasserting their presence. This ghostly white, flowery form, at once foreboding and beautiful, evokes the monochromatic paintings produced by many classical Balinese painters, particularly those collected by anthropologists Bateson and Mead in their search for the "Balinese character" among the painters of Batuan village in the 1930s (Fig. 104).

This composition is full of contradictions: a monochromatic approach is maintained, but undermined by the natural tones of the canvas. White tendrils contrast with the raw canvas background; the naturalistic form of the white flower has been controlled and stylised while the abstract gestures seem to refer to natural movement. Rather than a result of an "east-west" fusion, I reason that Suklu's work instead explores key *a priori* elements of both Balinese and Western modernist traditions, drawing overlapping elements from each. Both traditions equally inform his process-oriented aesthetic, his use of line, movement and texture to build up a field of contrast, and his adoption of meditation as methodology. Chapter 1.1 detailed Yuliman's contestation that the "climate" for the emergence of abstraction in Indonesian painting was set by a continuous artistic ideology that allowed "visual elements" to "evoke, declare or convey valuable emotions, feelings or artistic experiences".[75] This is echoed in Mercer's description of the "third perspective" in which he claims:

> …abstraction merely refers to a range of artistic procedures whose outcome is to lay bare the basic signifying elements of form, line and colour, on which all art is based as a medium of visual communication.[76]

Comparing these two approaches shows how the modernist idea that abstract expressionism is a rupturing exercise in "purity" is undermined by the diversity of practices within the aesthetic regime.[77]

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[75] Sanento Yuliman, "Seni Lukis Indonesia Baru (Dewan Kesenian Jakarta, 1976)", in *Dua Seni Rupa: Sepilihan Tulisan Sanento Yuliman*, ed. Hasan Asikin (Jakarta: Yayasan Kalam, 2001), p. 93.
[76] Mercer et al., *Discrepant Abstraction*, p. 19. Mercer is referring to Mel Gooding's position in *Abstract Art* (Tate Publishing, 2001), pp. 6-7.
[77] Greenberg described the rupturing nature of "purity" in modernist self-definition (i.e., pure autonomy). Clement Greenberg, "Modernist Painting", p. 429.

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Figure 104: I Dewa Kompiang Ketut Kandel (Batuan, 1909-1972) untitled, washed pen and ink on paper, 28 x 37.5 cm.

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Figure 105: I Wayan "Suklu" Sujana, *Gerak Menjauh* (Moving Away), approx. 100 x 200 x 100 cm (each pod).

Practices that draw on what Rancière calls the artwork's role as a "third term" inherently and inevitably mediate between the artist and the viewer so that the only truly autonomous aspect of an artwork's existence – in this case, an abstract expressionist painting – is the viewer's experience.[78] The artist's conception and the artwork's physical form are always heteronomously informed by each other and the context of their existence. Even when artists like Suklu draw on their "personal spirit" in the process of abstract painting, they are often doing so in conscious evocation of the same processes used by their forebears (such as *jiwa ketok,* as described in Chapter 2.3) to produce less opaque images.

In Hill's analysis of Ketut Liyer's painting practice (Suklu's teacher and mentor), he asserts that, contrary to expectations, the image in Liyer's seemingly stylised paintings emerges "from its composition (or form) and from the way it was made, rather than from its subject matter".[79] The repetition of shape and the uniform gesture used to create shapes and composition in Ketut's classical paintings engender the same meditative immersion that Suklu expresses through abstraction.

Art historian Jean Couteau notes that Suklu's work plays with pattern and shape to build form in the same way that "classic" Balinese painting does:

> This "identity" is evident in the repetitive patterns of his geometric abstractions, which draw upon the salient feature of all Balinese art (be it music, dance or painting), as once noted by the anthropologist, Gregory Bateson: the repetition or semi-repetition of patterns, combined with one another in a melodious "musical" manner. In his paintings, what Suklu does is to capture this basic structure of Balinese aesthetics and then give it a contemporary "skin".[80]

While this reference to a skin may seem to point to an understanding of Suklu's works as only superficially contemporary, it is actually made in the context of a Balinese saying which reminds the peanut not to forget its skin: its origins. In this we can read Suklu's artworks as contemporary vessels, carrying tradition within them, yet firmly positioned as artwork emerging from an originary discourse (Fig. 105).

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[78] Jacques Rancière, "The Emancipated Spectator", *Artforum International* 45, no. 7 (2007), p. 278.
[79] Christopher Hill, *Survival and Change: Three Generations of Balinese Painters*, p. 106.
[80] Jean Couteau, "Reading Objects", (Ubud, Bali: Gaya Fusion Art Space, 2008), pp. 4-5.

In his personal space of art-making, Suklu is testing forms that reject neither tradition nor modernity but seek a meditative space for individual reflection on these external pressures. In his interactive spaces, Suklu begins to push the boundaries of these individual reflections into defined, yet open, aesthetic arenas.

5.2 Social space: participation and proliferation

Like de Kooning, Suklu demonstrates a "churning self-immersion in different approaches to the physical process of making…"[81] Also like de Kooning, he seeks inspiration for his abstract contemplations from novels – but in an entirely different manner.[82] *Drawing on Novels* is an ongoing work that operates in both Suklu's "personal" and "social" spaces, and is grounded in the conviction that the "unconscious is something", and that it can be tapped into through visual manifestations. The practice that Suklu uses in *Drawing on Novels* was originally a personal creative exercise to maintain fluid drawing skills and for meditation; the work involves "unconscious" or "automatic" drawing with charcoal on the pages of novels. Through this practice, executed immediately on rising and throughout the day, Suklu meditates, allowing his hand to make the marks without theme or subject. As he begins to draw, he notes how forms appear unbidden, retains the thought for later or moves on to new shapes (Fig. 106). The forms often resemble the line work in the painting *Musim Bergeser.* In our interview, I asked how this process informed his other practices. He replied:

> Sometimes other forms emerge, which suddenly cross over into something else, so "this could be an object". That's why I've come to need it, so every morning when I wake up in the morning I do this first…In Bali, priests begin the day with a mantra; I use this as a visual mantra.[83]

Suklu's dedication to automatic drawing on novels as a method for bringing the unconscious to the surface prompted him to bring the work into his "social" space as a kind of expressive therapeutic tool for participants.

[81] Rackstraw Downes, "De Kooning's Attitude", *Art Journal* 48, no. 3 (1989), p. 241.
[82] For instance, De Kooning's painting *Light in August* (1947) was inspired by Faulkner's 1932 novel of the same name. David Clarke, "Abstract expressionism and third world art: a post-colonial approach to 'American' art", in *Discrepant Abstraction*, ed. Kobena Mercer (London: MIT Press and InIVA, 2006), pp. 44-45.
[83] Sujana, "Interview by Elly Kent".

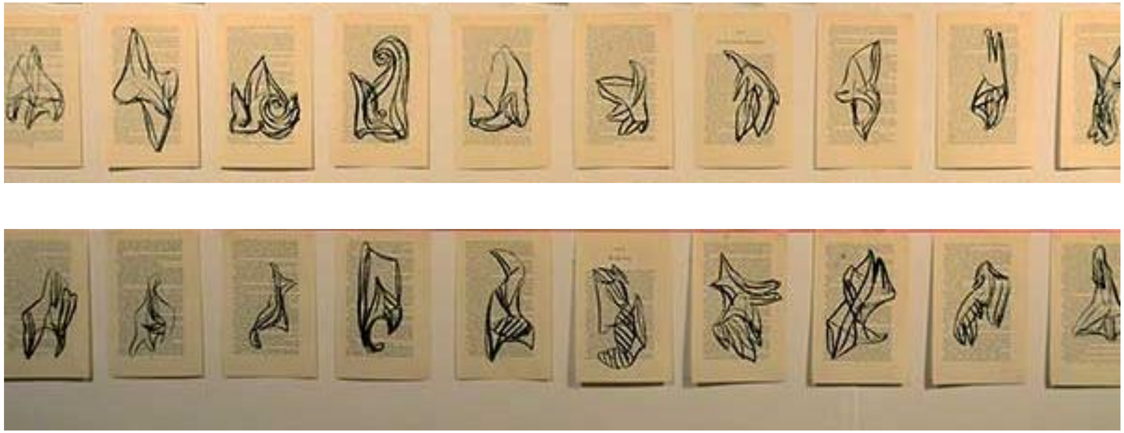

Figure 106: I Wayan “Suklu” Sujana, *Drawing in Novel*, 2011, charcoal on pages from novels.

Figure 107: *Drawing On Novels*, a participatory workshop conducted at Bentara Budaya, Denpasar, by I Wayan “Suklu” Sujana during BaliACT, 2013.

Drawing on his own sense of the cathartic nature of the process, and as an effective method for developing new forms (for instance, for bamboo sculptures or paintings), Suklu's description of the methodology recalls meditative detachment:

> Take one novel. Feel the environment surround you. Open up the very first page on novel then open your mind, feeling, memory etc. Let your fingers touch the surface of the page. Then take the charcoal and (rather than) following your willing(ness) to capture something inside your mind and heart, instead open yourself to anything surrounding…it will be the stimulation to expressing those "things" into the form of visual language. See those pages as your recalling existence.[84]

By responding not to the content of the novel itself but to the surrounding environment, Suklu sees drawing on novels as a process that inscribes a secondary text onto the original narrative. The choice of fictional novels rather than other books is deliberate; both the primary and secondary texts are constructed apart from reality.

The day after our initial interview I joined the *Drawing on Novels* workshop at a seminar for the BaliACT festival, *Art in Culture and Tradition* (2013). Suklu's formal presentation focused on his "social space", where he identified three methods for approaching the community: "Repetition of Line and Colour", "Drawing on Novels" and "Bamboo-Strong-And-Flexible". After this presentation explaining the theory behind his approaches, Suklu invited the audience to participate in drawing on novels. The audience attending the seminar consisted largely of senior high school and university students, aspiring artists for the most part.[85] Suklu began by asking the entire audience to reconfigure the seating into a large circle and then collect novels provided by the organisers. With Suklu demonstrating whilst circulating and speaking to the group, the participants began to draw (Fig. 107). He described the concept to participants as "something very personal" in which he saw expressive power and conceptual simplicity. For these reasons, he decided to shift his habit of drawing on novels from the personal space into the social space, sharing it with his students at ISI Denpasar and visitors to his BatuBelah Art Space, and in other forums. Hence we can see

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[84] I Wayan Suklu Sujana, "Tiga Metode Pendekatan Seni Pada Masyarakat", 2013, Bentara Budaya, Denspasar, Bali. I have adjusted this text slightly to make it more legible. The instructions appear to echo those of Tristan Tzara's instructions on how to make a Dadaist poem, published in the fifth of his Seven Dada Manifestos (1916–1920).

[85] High school, college and university students in Indonesia are often obliged to attend a certain number of external forums that are not always specified by a teacher.

Drawing on Novels as evidence of the flow between the discrete areas of practice – personal and social spaces – that Suklu has devised.

Even as he is enacting and demonstrating his personal-interactive-social spaces, Suklu is simultaneously departitioning them. In November 2013, the "secondary texts" inscribed onto novels by participants at BaliACT and during previous iterations at BatuBelah Art Space were exhibited as an installation titled *2 Fiksi (2 Fictions)* in the *Bandung Paper Art Show* at Museum Sri Baduga. This installation of the novels in *2 Fiksi* indicates porosity in the boundaries between the conscious and unconscious in Suklu's work. Two books that featured prominently, by virtue of being arranged with covers closed and facing up, were *The Complete Novels of Kafka* and an Indonesian version of Elizabeth Gilbert's *Eat, Pray, Love*, in which Suklu's former mentor Ketut Liyer is a key figure in the protagonist's spiritual enlightenment (Fig. 108). I suggest that these two versions of existential doubt – one profoundly modernist and dark, the other populist self-help – indicate the conscious thought that Suklu must inevitably invest in the final presentation of *Drawing on Novels,* when the work moved into the exhibition space of the "third term" between artist and audience.

According to Suklu, during his master's degree Asmudjo Irianto and Tisna Sanjaya (both lecturers at the Institute of Technology, Bandung) disagreed over whether Suklu's individual practice in the *Drawing on Novels* project was too personal to be considered contemporary. Suklu says Irianto felt the drawings should be "contextual with the text" of the novels. But Suklu's preference for an unconscious, simultaneously meditative and formalist approach to making demonstrates how his practice moves beyond the constraints of contemporary art when it is defined in resistance to modernism.

Irianto identifies resistance to modern art discourse as a feature of contemporary art in Indonesia, but I argue that Suklu's practice, and that of the other artists presented in this dissertation, shows how contemporary artists continue to be informed by and responsive to the modernist discourses and practices described in Chapters 1 and 2.[86] Suklu's work consistently penetrates these apparent boundaries between traditional,

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[86] Irianto outlines this resistance as among the many defining factors of contemporary art in "Konteks Tradisi dan Sosial-Politik Dalam Seni Rupa Kontemporar Yogyakarta Era '90an", in *Outlet: Yogya Dalam Peta Seni Rupa Contemporer Indonesia* (Yogyakarta: Yayasan Seni Cemeti, 2000), p. 73-106.

modernist and contemporary practices, encompassing all in his own explorations of individual and participatory art practice:

> In many of my repetitive works, I always invite other people to be involved within them, to experience the process themselves. I don't care what form the end result takes. The important thing is the process. And other people can also experience and feel the process that I am enacting. Indirectly I am actually inviting other people to also enact a meditative process within my artistic practice.[87]

By attempting to bring the unconscious to the surface through automatic, autonomous drawing, refuting the singular authority of the novel as narrative and refusing his own role as a singular author of the secondary texts in his *2 Fiksi* installation, Suklu dissolves the boundaries between autonomy and heteronomy. He is also engaging with another prominent concern of postmodernist discourse, namely the author's role (or lack thereof) in determining the reader's interpretation of the text. Suklu's concerns with this seminal argument – first raised by French post-structuralist Roland Barthes and echoed in Rancière's *The Emancipated Spectator* – shows a continuing engagement with ideas that emerge from his context as an artist in the "global world", as well as those specific to his own cultural milieu.[88] In his interactive works, Suklu continues this dissolution of singular authorship by creating works specifically designed to engage with other artistic disciplines.

5.3 Interactive space: intersections

In his interactive work, Suklu builds an intersection between the social and the personal, retaining control over the concept or design of the work and yet incorporating the intervention of other artists, such as dancers, musicians or other visual artists, as an integral element. He says he makes the works as interesting as possible for other artists in order to attract them to the possibilities of performance within the work.[89] Suklu's interactive works therefore act as an invitation and generative spectacle.

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[87] Sunarta, Suklu and Sukarelawanto, *The Unseen Things*, p. 42. (quotation from Suklu)
[88] Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author", in *Image, Music, Text*, (London: Fontana Press, 1977), pp. 142-148. See also Michel Foucault, "What is An Author?" in *Language, Counter-memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, ed. D. F Bouchard (New York: Cornell University Press, 1977), pp. 113-138; Sean Burke, *The Death and Return of the Author: Criticism and Subjectivity in Barthes, Foucault and Derrida* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998).
[89] Sujana, "Interview by Elly Kent".

Figure 108: I Wayan “Suklu” Sujana, *Fiksi 2* (2 Fictions), 2014, exhibited at the Bandung Paper Art Show, 2013.

Figure 109: A newspaper image of I Wayan “Suklu” Sujana’s work *Tempat Duduk Durga* (Durga’s Seat), bamboo installation.

One of the works designed to encourage interaction was built in Bandung, West Java, at the end of Suklu's post-graduate study at ITB (Institute of Technology Bandung). The large bamboo constructions were installed around the Centre Culturel Français de Bandung (CCF, now the Institute Francais Indonesia) in an exhibition titled *Jejak* (Traces) in 2010 (Fig. 109). A newspaper article described the work in detail:

> The 5 metre high installation stands as tall as the building's roof. Several thin tendrils of bamboo that curve to the left above it could be seen as a tail, although it is unclear which part is the head and which is the body… Whilst *Cenderawasih* (Paradise) is strong enough to climb to its peak, *Kursi-Meja* (Chair and Table) is for two people to sit at...*Tempat Duduk Durga* (Durga's Seat) has the same function...In this work, Suklu interprets the opposing characteristics of the *wayang* figure Batari Durga. Her beauty and ire are channeled through the intersecting bamboo rising in the centre and curving at its ends.[90]

Jejak represented Suklu's attempt to reconcile the different working methods he uses in Bali – where his work is intuitive and direct – and the expectations in Bandung where "the public is known to appreciate artwork that balances concept and beauty".[91] Furthermore, these works are heavily laden with the aesthetic and conceptual nuances of the Hindu-Balinese society Suklu originates from. Presenting them in the context of Bandung, a city that has seen a rapid rise in the performance of Islamic identity in the public sphere – both by individuals and the state – further complicates the work's context.[92] While the title *Jejak* is reportedly in reference to Suklu's intention to leave behind a trace of his time living in Bandung, it is also possible to read the works as referring to the remaining traces of the Hindu civilisations that much of Sundanese (West Javanese) culture is based on. The ongoing yet largely unspoken link between these past civilisations – described in 1946 by Soedjojono as "dead civilisations" – and contemporary interpretations of Islam in Sunda is also raised through works by Tisna Sanjaya, described in the next chapter.

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[90] Anwar Siswadi, "Jejak Wayan Suklu di Bandung", *Tempo*, 3 February 2010, p. c3. Batari Durga is the Balinese-Hindu mother goddess of creation, preservation and destruction.

[91] Suklu quoted in ibid.

[92] A recent article tracks the shifts in religious practice and state attitudes in Bandung since religious freedom laws were enshrined in 2004. Agus Ahmad Safei and Julian Millie, "Religious Bandung II: The Champion Arrives", *Inside Indonesia* no. 124 (2016), http://www.insideindonesia.org/religious-bandung-ii-the-champion-arrives.

Figure 110: Documentation of a performance at the opening night of the *Jejak* (Traces) exhibition, 2010 during which Balinese dancer I Nyoman Sura interacted with I Wayan "Suklu" Sujana's bamboo installation Cenderawasih.

Figure 111: Documentation of a performance at the opening night of the *Jejak* (Traces) exhibition, 2010 during which several youth clad in Sundanese traditional dress used I Wayan "Suklu" Sujana's bamboo installation Cenderawasih as an instrument.

Jejak opened with interactive performances. Two youths, clad in traditional Sundanese black tunics and slacks with batik head scarves, moved slowly through the bamboo structure tapping on each element to raise a different tone. This was followed by dancers Lena Guslina (b. 1977) and I Nyoman Sura (1976–2013) performing Sura's choreography of a human couple who are givers of light and life (Fig. 110, 111). Suklu reportedly spent the performance drawing the dancers on small canvasses.[93] In his review, urban ethnographer Frans Ari Prasetyo was moved to include descriptions of the soft rain and the smell of the kerosene torches during the opening. He described the atmosphere of performance as "near yet far, mysterious but real, contrasting but harmonised, inspiring in the midst of a lack of traditional consciousness, which is continually eroded by the hegemony of propriety".[94] The conceptual framework behind Suklu's interactive works results in complex experiences, drawing the viewer in through interplay of texture, line, repetition and movement but also opening their senses to the environment around them.

The large-scale bamboo work of *Cenderawasih* formed an imposing geometrical entrance to the building behind it. Inside the courtyard, *Tempat Duduk Durga's* soaring bamboo trunks with tapering ends fell away randomly, contrasting with the neat, solid structure at the base. The dance performances and music, and the audience's interactions with the bamboo works, are, however, what justifies their existence beyond purely formalist concerns. This is where the hierarchies of artistic disciplines – such as visual and performance art, craft and fine art, functional and aesthetic – are dissolved. This occurs alongside the deconstruction of divisions between influences from traditional and modern art practices from Bali and elsewhere.

This installation, and Sura's choreography, was in fact in its second iteration, having earlier been installed and performed at the 2009 "happening art festival" in Suklu's hometown of Klungkung in Bali.[95] In 2011, this site became the location for Suklu's own open access art space, BatuBelah Art Space. As interactive works, the large bamboo

[93] Siswadi, "Jejak Wayan Suklu di Bandung".
[94] Frans Prasetyo, "SUKLU di CCF Bandung", in *Play with Frankazoid*, ed. F. Prasetyo (Bandung: Blogspot, 2010), http://fransariprasetyo.blogspot.com.au/2011/03/jejak-exhibition-di-ccf-bandung.html (accessed 2/02/2016).
[95] *Apa Ini? Apa Itu?* (What is This? What is That?), 2009, headed by Suklu in collaboration with Djagad Art Space.

constructions lend themselves more to ritual or celebratory activities such as festivals, but a visit to BatuBelah revealed a more prosaic manifestation of the interactive space.While Suklu categorises his physical art space at BatuBelah as part of his social practice, during my field research it became clear that it also acts as a formalised extension of his personal space into his interactive space.

Located next to his family's compound on the coastal edge of Klungkung, where the town bleeds into rice fields, the space includes an open-air studio for workshops and classes, a lawn and garden leading down to a fish pond, and Suklu's own studio, library and storage space. Across the pond and garden, bamboo platforms remain in situ after initially being constructed as part of an interactive performative artwork, similar to the one that took place in Bandung. When I visited in December 2013, installations from an earlier interactive project were still standing: one work, created by a participating student, was constructed from green bottles painted white and then etched to reveal the drawing as glinting green glass; another consisted of rolls of what appeared to be mattress innersprings (Fig. 112). The latter had been the site of a performance in which students from ISI Denpasar had crawled through the wire tunnel, painting ink onto a long stretch of fabric tangled within Suklu's construction. Some of the students had returned on the day of my visit and were continuing to interact with the space and Suklu's family (and mine). They rearranged installations, drew with ink on paper, rehearsed a rock band and caught and barbequed fish.

Suklu has been strongly influenced by the work of Tisna Sanjaya, who was one of his lecturers during his studies at ITB. Tisna himself was inspired by Beuys' exhortation of the "social organism as a work of art" to set up a community art space in Bandung in 2008–09, a precursor to BatuBelah, which I will discuss in detail in the next chapter.[96] Yet BatuBelah is not a community art space. Rather, Suklu characterises it as a social space within his art practice. In this sense, it is unlike any of the communities as "sites" described by Miwon Kwon, because its unifying element is not related to a mythic defining character.[97]

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[96] Joseph Beuys, "I Am Searching for a Field Character", in *Participation*, ed. C. Bishop, *Documents of Contemporary Art* (London: Whitechapel Gallery, MIT Press, 2006), p. 125.
[97] Miwon Kwon, *One Place After Another: Site-specific Art and Locational Identity* (The MIT Press, 2004), pp. 118-120. See Introduction 0.2.

Figure 112: Artworks in the outdoor area of BatuBelah Art Space, Klunkung, Bali, in 2013.

Figure 113: Students for the Institut Seni Indonesia (ISI, Indonesian Arts Institute), Denpasar visit BatuBelah on the weekend to draw and rehearse their band.

Instead, the site revolves around Suklu's individual personality as a charismatic artist with an attendant social responsibility: BatuBelah is a social organism in a singular sense, a site for social interactions with a particular individual.[98] At BatuBelah, Suklu's role as the individual centre of creative expression is extended physically to engage with others, whether through his own social work, which expands his role as a teacher beyond campus and into his personal, interactive and social spaces, or through the interactive sculpture that he generates in what Beuys described as "active thinking" (Fig. 113). Beuys himself claimed teaching was his greatest work of art, and this commitment to the broader (extra-institutional) notions of the artist as teacher are another feature Tisna and Suklu share.[99]

However, unlike Tisna, Suklu does not refer specifically to Beuys in the formulation of his theoretical or practical approaches. Instead, he has found legitimation through actor-network-theory (ANT). Initially proposed by Bruno Latour in the late 1980s, ANT is focused on the reassembly of the social, rather than its deconstruction. It allows for the agency of non-human entities such as "microbes, scallops, rocks and ships".[100] Rather than seeing human relations as a stable entity called the "social", ANT maps the "associations" between all factors within a context, including inanimate objects and non-human living things. It sees the social as inherently unstable and shifting in response to the agency of these things.

This same attitude is inherent in Suklu's interactive works, which open up his personal making practice to the intervention of others, the weather and other contingent conditions. It is also embedded in the making of his abstract paintings, which address both seen and unseen things. In describing this process, Suklu says:

> I was conscious of observing matter and objects; then I discovered a method for the "observation" of objects. I saw that there was something other than the objects I was observing…then this other picture is what pushes me to improvise with "de-formative" forms – a clear picture of the object's threshold of reality…When I look at many

[98] "BBAS History", https://batubelahartspace.wordpress.com/bbas-history/ (accessed 2/11/2016)
[99] Beuys, "I Am Searching for a Field Character". On the subject of teaching, Beuys' often-cited quote is from an interview with Willoughby Sharp in Art Forum, November 1969, and was referred to in Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*, p. 245. For an analysis of his teaching practice as art practice, see also Petra Richter, "Beuys: 'To be a Teacher is My Greatest Work of Art!'".
[100] Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 10.

> things or objects, I see "unseen things" outside of them all. They appear as a threshold of reality outside of the presence of those objects, which nurtures my intuition to immediately celebrate material form, but actually it's not about the forms, there are things more important than materiality.[101]

Interestingly, Nicolas Bourriaud gave a breathless account of contemporary European artists' move towards a similarly anti-anthropocentric speculative realism during a public lecture held in association with the Biennale Jogja XII in 2015.[102] During the panel discussion afterwards, Bourriaud was challenged to differentiate speculative realism from older forms of animist belief – like those practised in Balinese Hinduism – which assign agency to material and immaterial forms. Bourriaud declined. In her account of living traditional Balinese arts, Geertz also emphasises that "life for the Balinese is largely taken up with transactions with the unseen world".[103] Such transactions with the immaterial and non-human world, although unseen, also animate Suklu's work, which unites contemporary philosophies such as ANT with the unseen elements inherent in Balinese culture.

Conclusion

> In the beginning my friends would say: Suklu, why are you always taking up things from outside of yourself? No, that's what I need. I need it to keep growing.[104]

In the above quotation, Suklu fervidly defends his openness to heteronomy – influences from tradition, local and Western modernism, sociality, ANT and the unseen things of our world. Yet in the same statement he grounds this in his own autonomous drive, what *he* needs. In Chapter 2, I described how Indonesian artists, theorists and institutions have reinterpreted aesthetic and social traditions (or perceived traditions) such as *gotong royong,* and divergent modernist discourses such as *jiwa ketok* and *turba,* to serve the purposes of contemporary artistic explorations. In addition, I developed Yuliman's contention that, in both their original and recent interpretations, these discourses emphasised receptive engagement with external discourses. In this

[101] Sunarta, Suklu and Sukarelawanto, *The Unseen Things*. p. 38.
[102] 17 November 2015, Gedung Societet Militer, Yogyakarta. Further descriptions of the lecture can be found in Chapter 3.1. Bourriaud's term "relational aesthetics" is described in Introduction 0.2.
[103] Hildred Geertz, *Images of Power: Balinese Paintings Made for Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead* (Singapore: University of Hawaii, 1994), p. 25.
[104] Sujana, "Interview by Elly Kent".

chapter I have shown how Suklu's reinterpretation of traditions – modernist traditions from Bali and abstract expressionist traditions from "the West" – demonstrate the continuity of this binding knot between exogenous and endogenous discourses, and between autonomous and heteronomous practices.

In analysing Suklu's conception of a trivalent practice, I have drawn on particular examples of his personal, interactive and social works. The clear delineations that Suklu has used to frame his practice made it possible to classify *Musim Bergeser* as a personal work, in contrast to the social work of *Drawing on Novels.* It also provides a position for *Jejak* and BatuBelah Art Space as interactive spaces that manifest encounters between the personal and social. Yet these boundaries are slippery; the unconscious charcoal drawings on novels strongly resemble the meandering lines of *Musim Bergeser* – all the more so when we know that the social practice of *Drawing on Novels* was preceded by a near identical personal practice. The educational nature of the social spaces extends into the interactive spaces, allowing BatuBelah to act as a focal point for Suklu's creative autonomy and for his social work. Plans for interactive bamboo objects are just as likely to emerge from that personal drawing practice, a daily "mantra" for Suklu. I contend, therefore, that the personal-interactive-social construct is as much an exercise in opening up to different kinds of practice as it is in defining limits.

The correlation between ANT, Balinese-Hindu animism and anti-anthropocentricism supports my contention that in Suklu's work there is a concurrence, rather than a convergence, between modernist discourse (Latour defends ANT as distinct from post-modernist sociological theory) and Balinese philosophical traditions.[105] Rather than constructing a framework of comparison or juxtaposition between these exogenous and endogenous discourses (which have both, in turn, emerged as originary discourses from earlier encounters) Suklu's work reveals common threads in these fields. These common threads form the basis for a practice that is continuously working against pre-constructed understandings of the role of the individual and the social, the artist and the lay person, the object and the experience.

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[105] Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction To Actor-Network-Theory*, p. 11.

Early in this chapter I referred to Suklu's paintings as "discrepant abstraction", a modernist practice that deliberately eschews the autonomous purity of the dominant paradigm of abstraction.[106] Equally, Suklu's social practice evades the signifiers commonly assigned to participatory practice: it is neither emancipatory nor socially engaged in a politicised sense; it is a social practice that remains oriented to individual expression. Suklu's interactive works – bamboo installations and his open art space – are perhaps the most conventional of his works, and yet these unmoving monolithic structures are entirely determined through their usefulness as settings for the creative works of others.

Suklu's careful mapping out of his various ideas and his conscious attempt to find common ground in contemporary, modernist and traditional arts practices provide a useful example of the diverse approaches to, and influences on, specific artists' practices in Indonesia. At its most structured, Suklu provides us with a Venn diagram-like description of practices which overlap and are mutually informative. At its most deconstructive, it pulls apart these careful circles and weaves them together. Suklu's consistent commitment to pushing the boundaries between disciplines of art, and to departitioning the distinctions between traditional and modern, local and foreign, individual and collective, demonstrates precisely how the aesthetic regime builds the "artistic ideology" of Indonesian art that Yuliman identified. This ideology links generations of artists and dissimilar practices – such as abstraction and representation – through a commitment to the expressive power of art (described in detail in Chapter 1.1).

In the next chapter, this departitioning is furthered in the work of Suklu's friend and teacher, Tisna Sanjaya, which expands the boundaries of the "artistic ideology" by developing a practice of cyclical influence between community projects, participatory television, performance, etching and painting.

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[106] Mercer et al., *Discrepant Abstraction*.

Chapter 6

Tisna Sanjaya: didactic activism and internal dialectic

This chapter addresses the work of multi-disciplinary artist and Institute of Technology Bandung (ITB) lecturer Tisna Sanjaya (b. 1958), whose work demonstrates an evermore complex approach to the bind between autonomous and heteronomous practice. Drawing on his experiences studying printmaking in Germany, Tisna emphasises the continuing importance of the individual artist as creator in that discipline, and applies this to his studio practice and his leadership of activist art projects.[107] In his television persona, individual practice and community-oriented performances, Tisna plays ambiguous roles which allow him to speak to diverse audiences in different registers. He does this partly by incorporating the vernacular of different social classes and activating different mediums in order to access different groups of people. Tisna's practice is carefully constructed around endogenous and exogenous modernist discourses on the individual artist as the autonomous centre of creative expression, and heteronomous roles traditionally assigned to community leaders in Sundanese (West Javanese) culture.

Much of Tisna's artwork is in response to his Sundanese heritage and the unique conditions of his home city, Bandung. I look at three specific works from this diverse range of foci, demonstrating their interconnectedness and the reciprocal influence of individual and participatory work. During the field research for this case study, Tisna embraced my emic methodology, incorporating my presence into the very content of some of his work. This allowed a unique perspective from which to analyse the emotional impact of his carefully composed works.

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[107] From 1991 to 1994, Tisna studied in Braunschweig, at the Hochschule für Bildende Künste (HBK). In 1997 he took up a DAAD fellowship to do his Masters at HBK Braunschweig.
C. Bianpoen, "Tisna Sanjaya: Etching as a Way of Life", *Nafas*(2009), http://universes-in-universe.org/eng/nafas/articles/2009/tisna_sanjaya.

First I address Tisna's regular television show, *Si Kabayan Nyintreuk* (Kabayan the Eccentric, 2007-ongoing), in which he plays the role of Sundanese folk figure Si Kabayan. As Kabayan, Tisna visits sites of environmental degradation, social disadvantage, cultural revival and political resistance. He interviews residents, invites participation and advocates local and traditional values. In this chapter I discuss a particular episode in which Kabayan visited a performance of *seni reak,* a Sundanese trance-dance tradition which is rarely performed today.

Tisna's own personality (or persona) is not far removed from the character of Si Kabayan, and this is evident in the second work I analyse: a series of etchings based on drawings he made during the shooting of *Si Kabayan Nyintreuk* at the *seni reak* performance. I show how Tisna activates etching as an individual expressive and creative space, drawing widely on traditional and modernist influences from Sunda and Europe, specifically Germany.

Finally, I address Tisna's *Imah Budaya (Cultural Centre,* shortened to *IBU,* meaning mother) project, located in the industrial suburb of Cigondewah. To unpack the complexity of this "site-as-artwork", which draws on the notions like Joseph Beuys' "social sculpture" as much as it does Indonesian forms of social support like *gotong royong* (cooperative work, as described in Chapter 2.2), I describe an event Tisna organised and performed for me and a group of Australian students when we visited the site in 2013 and I compare this experience with literature around an exhibition that drew on the activity at the site.

Curator and academic Rizki Zaelani has described Tisna's visual works and particular recurring figurative images, including that of "the artist" (Tisna himself), through Benjamin's principle of the dialectical image. In this dialectic, Tisna brings together a "montage of quoted (images)" to illuminate the traditional and the contemporary in the same field.[108] In his participatory works, Tisna's self-image also dominates his interactions, through performance and leadership. Tisna uses his self-image to signify this charismatic personality and to manifest subversion of binary oppositions like

[108] Rizki Akhmad Zaelani et al., *Ideocracy: Rethinking the Regime of Etching: Solo Exhibition of Tisna Sanjaya* (Jakarta: Galeri Nasional Indonesia, 2008), p. 25.

vernacular/literary, lay/expert and traditional/modern.[109] Thus Tisna's practice also dissolves other binary oppositions around the individual, autonomous artist and heteronomous social and participatory art practice. In this conjunctive approach, Tisna perpetuates Yuliman's "artistic ideology" by emphasising the integral influence of exogenous and endogenous discourses on his thinking, through which he generates originary discourses and practices in Indonesian art.

6.1 *Si Kabayan Nyintreuk*: eccentricity and activism

An online search for Tisna Sanjaya and Si Kabayan will eventually reveal a video featuring a full-grown man, be-goggled and half naked, frolicking in the fetid flood waters that beset the southern suburbs of Bandung with every heavy downpour. Tisna became terribly ill after shooting this scene for the television show *Si Kabayan Nyintreuk*, suffering fevers and cold sweats for days, but he sees his suffering as insignificant compared to that of the residents of these suburbs, who suffer the absurdity of living in an area that is inundated many times a year.

Kabayan is a folk figure who first appeared in print in Indonesia's early modern literature and has since appeared in film, radio and television (Fig. 114). Kabayan, a naïve country boy who has been compared to the French literary characters of Molière, customarily represents the paradigm of rural/traditional values in conflict with urban/modern circumstances in Indonesia, and more specifically Sunda.[110] Tisna inverts this paradigm, presenting Kabayan's naivety as a rational perspective from which to critique the irrational problems that have appeared alongside modernity in Bandung: poverty, unchecked urban development, flooding and pollution, and the decline of traditional local practices that address such issues (Fig. 115). Local issues are addressed in an ongoing television series with popular appeal, yet with reference also to the absurdist theatre practices Tisna encountered in *Studi Klub Teater*, from which the *jeprut* concept, described in Chapter 1.3, also originated.

[109] Clifford Geertz points out that, although charismatic personalities are fundamental to centralised power (in Java and other places), "...its most flamboyant expressions tend to appear among people at some distance from the centre." Clifford Geertz, "Centers, Kings, and Charisma: Reflections on the Symbolics of Power", in *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology* (New York: Basic Books, 1983), pp. 143-144.
[110] Tommy Christomy, "Si Kabayan Dan Molière: Sebuah Kasus Untuk Sastra Bandingan", The Southeast Asian Review, 16, no. 1 (2006), pp. 143-160.

Figure 114: Publicity for a *Si Kabayan* film that was released in 1975.

Figure 115: Screen shots from *Si Kabayan Nyintreuk* episodes, featuring Tisna Sanjaya as Kabayan.

In December 2013, Tisna invited me to a Sundanese folk performance in the suburbs. The performance, s*eni reak,* portrays the taming of a mythical beast (the *reak*) by its handler. Similar to other trance rituals from the archipelago, the "peak" moment conventionally sees the *reak* performer falling into a trance, performing feats of physical endurance and unconsciously animalistic behaviour, such as eating broken glass, scrambling up trees or running away on all fours. There has been little scholarly attention to *seni reak* compared to other forms, perhaps because it lacks the colourful costumes, props and large performance troops that characterise other trance performance forms. By contrast, *seni reak* may consist of no more than a few musicians, a vocalist and two performers. The *reak* beast is signified by an unremarkable hessian sack affixed to a mask by its long black mane; the second performer takes the role of the *reak's* "handler".

Seni reak, like its cousins *jathilan, reog* and *barong,* originated as an oppositional performative ritual – a coded critique of authoritarian powers such as dominant kingdoms, external religious values or foreign colonists.[111] Its historically subaltern status supports Tisna's determination that local forms of culture and resistance must be revived in order to face the challenges of modernisation in Indonesia. Over the course of my research, *seni reak* gained increasing significance in Tisna's repertoire, appearing in etchings, paintings and his own performances repeatedly.

The *reak* performance was held in an outer suburb on a derelict sports court – a concrete field with 12-foot high fences on every side. An audience of passers-by gathered outside the fence on the elevated verge of the road at one end of the court.[112] A simple marquee stood in the middle of the concrete field (Fig. 116). Underneath sat a primary audience of special guests; local officials and community leaders, and some of Tisna's academic colleagues from ITB, took it in turns to offer

[111] Dadan Rusmana, "Reak: Pendidikan Budaya Yang Memudar", *Dadan Rusmana: Goresan Pena*, 2011, https://dadanrusmana.wordpress.com/2011/01/23/11/ (accessed 15/07/2014).

[112] From my observations of these kinds of performances in similar suburban settings in other areas of Java, local residents witness the performance from a much closer vantage point, blurring the boundary of the marquee, which is customarily provided for invited officials (neighbourhood leaders, local government officials etc.). However, such performances are now quite rare in Bandung suburbs, with the exception of Independence Day celebrations. I am unsure as to whether local residents hesitated to enter the sports field because they were discouraged by the fence (although a gate was open), or because they were not aware of the performance previously, or because they were unused to such performances and had no sense of the appropriate behaviour expected of them as audience members.

long speeches almost entirely in the Sundanese language. Tisna also spoke briefly, in his Kabayan persona. In the meantime, he sketched the speakers, members of the crowd, and the musicians who slowly gathered under the shade of a tree beside the court (Fig. 117). All the while, the television crew (two operators, sound and vision) circled.

The official ceremonies began with a man, dressed in a black tunic, loose slacks and a Sundanese brown-and-yellow-ochre batik headdress, lighting incense and cigarettes, and placing these beside a dish of food, flowers and other offerings. This man played the role of the shaman, whose role it was to awaken the beast. Another young man took on the role of the *reak,* stepping into the hessian sack and raising his arms in a star shape whilst emitting a shriek with a whistle under the mask. The performance lasted only a few minutes, with admirably athletic movements, but without any apparent transgression of consciousness or bestial trances like those I have witnessed in other folk performances, such as *jathilan* (the horse dance that Heri Dono's *Kuda Binal,* discussed in Chapter 2.1, was based on). The *seni reak* performance was brief and anti-climactic after the hours of waiting and speeches in the hot sun, but Tisna/Si Kabayan remained as engaged as he had been during the speeches, drawing and making notes on paper as he witnessed the event.

After the *seni reak* performance, Tisna/Kabayan invited several of his own special guests – academics who reside in Cibiru and two members of the of the *seni reak* troupe – to join him for a conversation recorded for the television show (Fig. 118). The six men sat cross-legged around two platters of ceremonial food, discussing the symbolism of each part of the meal: the mountainous *tumpang* cone of yellow rice; boiled eggs; whole coconut; splayed chicken; and the mirror on the platter, incense and cigarettes burning in a small stone dish. Their conversation, largely in Sundanese, revolved around the relationship between maintaining traditional practices, with *seni reak* and the ritual meal as examples, cultural resilience and political corruption.

Figure 116: A futsal field in Cibiru, Bandung, West Java, as the site of a seni reak performance.

Figure 117: Tisna Sanjaya as Si Kabayan, sketching the seni reak performance during the shooting of an episode of *Si Kabayan Nyintreuk* (Kabayan the Eccentric) (2007-ongoing).

When the conversation became too abstract, Si Kabayan brought it back to his agenda:

> How do all these signs and symbols show us a pathway from the problems we have with corruption; pollution; flooding everywhere; poverty everywhere?

"It's like this," replied Dr Enjang AS, a lecturer in Communications at the National Islamic University and the author of several texts on Sundanese Islam:

> We are often lied to by what we see "jati kasilih ku janti" [a Sundanese saying meaning: the local is defeated by the foreigner]… We're attracted to the cultures of others, from elsewhere, as far as we understand them, but meanwhile we throw away the wise and sophisticated culture that our ancestors observed… How else can we repair our nation if we don't symbolise these problems?

For Tisna, the performance of *seni reak* is an entry point into bigger issues around the formation of critical dialogue between citizens and authority. It is also a way to address another volatile issue in Indonesia, namely the role of Islam and its manifestation in society. Travelling back to ITB after the event, Tisna explained that traditional arts such as *seni reak* are often opposed by those who see Sundanese rituals as incompatible with Islamic teaching:

> Today there were two issues. One was to express to the government that traditional arts should be supported. The second was to explain that these symbols have a position within Islam, which is dominant…Of course, the position of traditional art – with its positive energy coming from a relationship with nature, and its humanist side, and ritual, tradition and so on – this is the same spirit as the contemporary art that I make.

Here Tisna emphasises the similarity of spirit between contemporary and traditional art forms as mediums to critique power, and also as sources of positive energy. Ultimately Tisna's goal is to utilise the communicative power of any art form to his best advantage. Departitioning traditional and contemporary art on television creates enormous potential to reach diverse audiences.

Throughout the discussion of food, the camera crew circled, capturing the congenial atmosphere. The audience thinned, but a number remained on the outside of the fence, fascinated by the process. Tisna was constantly in the camera's eye: drawing the performance, interviewing attendees, conversing over food or presenting a monologue. He directed and was directed by his crew. As we left he borrowed the musicians' cart, instructing the crew to record his final monologue (Fig. 119). Moments

later, the cameraman sent Tisna up the street to record an atmospheric shot among the suburban greenery, instructing him to casually flick the rain drops off an overhanging leaf as he passed. Ten takes were required to perfect the shot and, as he had done throughout the day, Tisna persisted until the job was done.

Tisna's attention to the many aspects of the process – social interactions, performances to camera, sketching the *seni reak,* speeches – demonstrate his commitment to gaining as much material from this event as possible. In an interview on the morning of the *seni reak* excursion, Tisna attributed this discipline directly to his experiences studying etching in Germany. He seeks to impart this into his interactive work, and vice versa:

> …they inform each other. I think that kind of modernism, that system, is also important here, for its mentality, perhaps for issues that are "back to basics", even to push for a system that is more public…When I am staying at Cigondewah I think of it as my copper plate, on the land.[113]

It is evident from this formulation of reciprocal influence that Tisna does not see any particular element of his practice, whether individual, performative or participatory, as predominant. He seeks to fortify each element by sharing strong points to supplement weaknesses. Participatory works are strengthened by disciplined planning and crafting of the concepts. Individually created works are based on social interaction. Additionally, Tisna identifies the discipline of modernist approaches as influential on his attempts to create work that is more accessible to the general public, and to push for a more socially-oriented modernism.

Si Kabayan stories originate from oral folk traditions but appeared in print and theatre from the late 1950s, attributable to a number of different authors.[114] Zaelani maintains that Tisna's interpretation of Kabayan differs radically from past versions but also draws on specific narrative elements from cinematic versions of the folktale from 1975 onwards.

[113] Tisna Sanjaya, "Interview by Elly Kent", 12/12/2013.
[114] Memen Durachman, "Cerita Si Kabayan: Transformasi, Proses Penciptaan, Makna, Dan Fungsi", *MetaSastra* 1, no. 1 (2008), https://metasastra.wordpress.com/2009/11/15/cerita-si-kabayan-transformasi-proses-penciptaan-makna-dan-fungsi/.

Figure 118: Tisna Sanjaya as Si Kabayan, talking to special guests during the shooting of an episode of Si Kabayan Nyintreuk (Kabayan the Eccentric) (2007-ongoing).

Figure 119: Tisna Sanjaya as Si Kabayan, shooting the final monologue for an episode of *Si Kabayan Nyintreuk* (Kabayan the Eccentric) (2007-ongoing).

In popular culture versions of Si Kabayan, a series of mishaps inevitably draws Kabayan away from his rural village into a city where he is confounded by the paradox of modernity: great progress seemingly leading inexorably to greater suffering. By contrast, Tisna's version of Kabayan is strategic and forthright; Zaelani identifies this as emerging from Tisna's fundamentally philosophical self.[115] This philosophical side is partly drawn from his background as part of a large, devout Islamic family whose religious convictions were consistently manifested through social and environmental engagement; Tisna recalls his family participating in rubbish clean-ups in Cigondewah, as part of regular mosque activities. Furthermore, Tisna shares the television role of Kabayan with his brother, Iman Sholeh, equally renowned in Indonesia for his community theatre and literary work, and his founding role in the Cultural Centre of Ledeng (CCL).[116]

Si Kabayan Nyintreuk episodes typically last 15 minutes, comprising an introductory monologue; footage of the issue at hand; and short interviews with key figures and members of the public. Emphasising a humanist perspective, Kabayan provides background information or historical context and wraps up with a philosophical monologue. Largely spoken in Sundanese, the target audience is in and around Bandung. In the *Seni Reak* episode, Kabayan began by describing the art form's role in traditional culture, emphasising its specificity to Sunda and its relationship to the environment through agrarian thanksgiving rituals. The context of the performers' lifestyles in a working-class outer-Bandung suburb was also highlighted, while the conversation about the symbology of the ritual meal was intended to legitimise *seni reak* to both Islamic and secular intellectuals. In his final monologue, Tisna recounted the day's events and summarised his didactic message: local wisdom and traditional arts have an important contribution to make in dealing with modern life's problems, and therefore they must be preserved.

Tisna's interpretation of Si Kabayan rings true to philosophy scholar Sumarjo's claim that the original echoes the Sufi tradition of the "eccentric" religious student whose

[115] Rizki Zaelani, "Interview by Elly Kent", 30/08/2013.
[116] Ledeng is in the hilly northern area of Bandung. This theatre community is also known as *Celah-Celah Langit* (Openings in the Sky).

apparent laziness and non-conformity is seen as a counterpoint and valid spiritual path.[117] Tisna himself describes his approach to the character as fluid:

> Actually I don't take on the characteristic of Si Kabayan as he is in the myths, and I don't really "play" Si Kabayan…Its just Tisna, nothing changed, just my clothes.[118]

Zaelani proposes that Kabayan is an extension of Tisna's personality rather than an alternative persona. Tisna's move into television was a deliberate strategy to broaden the audience for his social messages, and to involve more people – participants like academics and performers, sex workers or rubbish collectors – in the transmission of that message. As such, he evokes Bishop's observation that:

> ...the most striking and memorable forms of participation are produced when artists act upon a gnawing social curiosity without the incapacitating restrictions of guilt. This fidelity to singularised desire – rather than to social consensus – enables…work to join a tradition of highly authored situations that fuse reality with carefully calculated artifice.[119]

Tisna's performance of Kabayan allows him to craft the role that participation plays in his "highly authored situations", amplifying the perspectives of select participants and muffling those that are unhelpful to his message. In the shooting of another episode in Tisna's own neighbourhood, he invited the newly elected mayor to attend Independence Day celebrations. Kabayan then proceeded to interrupt the mayor's speech with his own political demands. This determination to exploit the participation of others (including politicians) in the interests of advancing his own agenda is what makes *Si Kabayan Nyintreuk* such a striking and innovative work. Ultimately it is an unapologetically didactic exercise:

> …I use Si Kabayan to revitalise tradition…Because Indonesian people still love to watch TV, so it becomes a very interesting media. I put into it what isn't in etching, isn't in Cigondewah, isn't in my performance art...[120]

Using television as a medium to revitalise tradition may seem paradoxical, but it is precisely this kind of deconstruction of the "partitions of the sensible" between new and old, technological and traditional, and high and low media that allows the aesthetic

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[117] Yakob Sumarjo, *Paradoks Cerita-Cerita Si Kabayan* (Bandung: Yrama Widya, 2014).
[118] Sanjaya, "Interview by Elly Kent".
[119] Bishop, *Artificial Hell: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*, p. 39.
[120] Sanjaya, "Interview by Elly Kent".

regime to insist – as *turba* and conscientisation have done in the past (see Chapter 2) – "that matters of art are matters of education".[121] For Tisna, whose work dissolves the boundaries between art forms by consistently moving across them, *Si Kabayan* is an exercise in educating the broadest spectrum of people possible. The next section shows how material from Tisna's television show about *seni reak* migrated into his etching practice and thus into the gallery space.

6.2 Etching performance: reflections from praxis

> To find a form that accommodates the mess, that is the task of the artist now.
>
> Samuel Beckett [122]

Visiting his studio, I found Tisna seated at a small desk in the back room of his space on the ITB campus. The window was ajar, allowing glimpses into a courtyard below. Tisna hunched over a copperplate, scratching small marks into the bitumen surface, leaving sparkling traces of the copper plate underneath. Etched and printed, the contrast reversed: copper tones became deep blacks while the bitumen revealed cream coloured paper. Similarly, the text inscribed on the copperplate was mirrored on the final print. This inversion between the matrix and the print is one source of the "discipline" required to control the results in printmaking; Tisna then transfers this discipline to his participatory works.

The prints Tisna was preparing were exhibited in the annual ART|JOG 2014 fair in Yogyakarta. The theme was "Legacies of Power", and Tisna's etchings were eventually displayed alongside a video documenting a collaborative performance in the heavily polluted Cikapudung River, where Tisna and fellow Bandung performance artists have held *jeprut* to draw attention to the paucity of government leadership and community responsibility in protecting waterways (Fig. 120). The etchings brought together a complex autobiography of artistic and political persuasions.

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[121] Jacques Rancière, "The Aesthetic Revolution and Its Outcomes", *New Left Review* 14, no. March April (2002), p. 137.
[122] In conversation with John Driver, quoted in Deirdre Bair, *Samuel Beckett: A Biography* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990).

Figure 120: Tisna Sanjaya, *Jangan Kotori Air Ibumu* (Don't Pollute Your Mother's Water) 2014, installation view, ART|JOG 2014.

Figure 121: Tisna Sanjaya, *Jangan Kotori Air Ibumu* (Don't Pollute Your Mother's Water) 2014, detail, bottom centre print.

Tisna's etchings, paintings and installations directly reference Joseph Beuys, absurdist theatre, Nietzsche, Picasso and Goenawan Mohammad, among others, whilst never wavering in his attention to the local political, environmental, social and cultural conditions of Indonesia. Popular counter-culture, European modernist forms such as absurdist theatre, Sundanese performance practices and Renaissance imagery are combined in a series of five final etchings titled *Jangan Kotori Air Ibumu* (Don't Pollute Your Mother's Water), which reference Goya and Surrealism as much as they invoke Sundanese and Indonesian idioms (Fig. 121). Within these images, Tisna used text to extrapolate etching's inextricable link to environmental conditions.[123] "The Art of Etching is a classic art that lives in the poetics of the everyday", is inscribed around a fish that floats in the upper quadrant of a composition.[124] Along the line of the fishing rod held by the mysterious central figure is written "This machine fights fascists", quoting from text on the guitar of American counter-culture icon Woody Guthrie. Appropriations of Renaissance images of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden and Michelangelo's David occupy other parts of this composition, the fourth in the series in the ART|JOG 2014 installation. To the right of this image hung the final etching, which took *seni reak* as its theme (Fig. 122).

The *reak* beast forms the central figure of this print, the white shape in stark contrast to the deep black background. Its horse-shaped body seems to lack solid form, and resembles a wispy cloud more than a solid creature (or costume). Its head rises up, almost the same size as the body, rearing back with its dragon jaws agape and one decorated eye regarding the viewer, mane streaming behind. The *reak's* immateriality – its role as the "monster or dragon" in a liminal trance ritual – and its contrasting material manifestation as a physical costume, are both evident through Tisna's rendering.[125] Three hooved feet are grounded to a half-sphere, on which is inscribed the text "ReAK".

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[123] Other printmakers have also exploited the reflection of environmental cause and effect inherent in etching by exposing plates to sea water, air pollution, acid rain etc. to create images. See for instance the work of Heather Burness or John Cage.

[124] *Seni Etsa adalah seni klasik yang hidup dari poetic keseharian.*

[125] In Victor Turner's analysis of liminal rituals, monsters or dragons serve as the "exhibitions" which "startle neophytes into thinking about objects, persons, relationships and features of their environments they have hitherto taken for granted". Victor Turner, "Betwixt and Between: The Liminal

Figure 122: Tisna Sanjaya , Jangan Kotori Air Ibumu (Don’t Pollute Your Mother’s Water) 2014, detail, bottom right print (artist’s note reads reAk).

Figure 123: Tisna Sanjaya, sketch of a seni reak performance at Cibiru, during the shooting of an episode of Si Kabayan Nyintreuk (Kabayan the Eccentric) 2007-ongoing.

Period in Rites De Passage”, in *Reader in Comparative Religion: An Anthropological Approach (4th Edition)*, ed. William A. Lessa and Evon Z. Vogt (New York: Harper and Row, 1979), p. 240.

But, inside the neck, a line drawing depicts a human face: the performer inside, complete with the shrill whistle that constitutes the creature's voice. Through Tisna's careful composition, we can view the physical and metaphysical presence of *reak*. The image employs tenebrism, leaving much of the composition black while the remainder contrasts stark white; mid-tones are rare and the dimensionality of the forms is described through line alone. Tisna's etching reverses the compositional decisions evident in the sketches from our excursion to the *Seni Reak* performance (Fig. 123). The sketches of the *reak* mid-leap are grounded in the reality of the performance: notes on form. Translated to the etching plate, the *reak* returns to the realm of the spirits, depicting the performers' ambiguous relationship with the *reak* beast.

For Tisna, performance, theatre and etching are inextricably linked, entering his life during his formative years of study in the fine arts department of the teaching college IKIP (*Institut Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendikikan* – Institute of Teaching and Education). Here he was a member of *Studi Klub Teater* (Theatre Study Club) and was active both as a performer and set designer.[126] He describes his involvement in theatre and his burgeoning etching practice as mutually influential:

> For instance…my etchings, there are many that have titles from the theatre in the 1980s, like *The Thief's Party*. That was the title of the theatre-work by Rahman Sahbur…I was on the artistic team, making posters, making banners...at the same time, I was making etchings, and this was influenced by the scripts. And that also influenced the stage.[127]

Tisna's early years in the theatre formed the basis for what has become a highly formalised and disciplined practice, in which etching serves as a jumping off point, and a grounding, for works in television, painting, installation and performance art.

Studying printmaking in Germany, Tisna was introduced to a more solitary pursuit, and to printmaking's historical role in social critique. He was inspired by artists such as Käthe Kollwitz and Otto Dix, whose work documented trauma and social oppression in Germany between the World Wars. Tisna embraced the discipline, technical demands and temporal commitments of etching as a working method and basis for socially-engaged creative practice. He developed proficient printmaking skills and encountered

[126] *Studi Klub Teater* was a renowned theatre group in Indonesia, established in 1958. See Ian Brown, "Two Visionaries of Indonesian Theatre", *Inside Indonesia*, no. 72 Oct–Dec (2002). http://www.insideindonesia.org/two-visionaries-of-indonesian-theatre-2
[127] Sanjaya, "Interview by Elly Kent".

ways of thinking and a cultural context far removed from his experience growing up in semi-rural West Java.[128] Much of this was tied directly to the social and cultural history of printmaking and its inherent links to the history of industrialisation and modernity in Germany and in the world.[129] Zaelani relates this to Adorno's aesthetic relations of production, which designate the process of art-making with a dual essence: both an autonomous entity and subject to the traces of social relations:

> …Hence the technical proficiency and working methods, for Tisna, were not only meaningful in and of themselves – as techniques per se – but also as part of the totality of the cultural environment and living patterns of the society that nurtures it.[130]

For Tisna, the traditions of etching are as important as the Sundanese traditions he was raised in. The "ritual" of the process of etching, which he refers to frequently, develops an artistic character that attends to the technical attributes of discipline and control but also demands the artist remain open to unexpected, contingent results. Zaelani refers to this as the "regime of etching", which he contends is the basis for all of Tisna's work in other mediums.

For Tisna, etching is also an internal negotiation between the corporeal and social body and his subjective self. It is both a personal and a political act and, in its deference to the centrality of the artist's personal vision, it is where Tisna adheres most strictly to modernist explorations of nihilism, absurdity and the universality of the human condition. Tisna's etchings seek answers beyond local. Zaelani asserts:

> It is important that we remember that the definition of "tradition" for Tisna is also the tradition of the aspirations of universal art, which form the vocabulary of his familiarity and his knowledge.[131]

Thus Tisna's practice embraces exogenous discourses and recasts them as originary social imperatives in his endogenous art works. Universalist, modernist traditions from Europe and Indonesia – and their manifestations through printmaking, painting,

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[128] Bianpoen, "Tisna Sanjaya: Etching as a Way of Life".
[129] This history is related to Benedict Anderson's theories of print capitalism and the imagined community of nationhood, but also to Walter Benjamin's theories around the democratizing effect of mechanical production on the work of art. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London and New York Verso, 1991); Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction", *Visual Culture: Experiences in Visual Culture* 4 (2011), pp. 114-137.
[130] Rizki Akhmad Zaelani, "Ideocracy – Tisna Sanjaya Menimbang-Ulang 'Rezim Etsa'", in *Ideocracy: Rethinking the Regime of Etching* (Jakarta Galeri Nasional Indonesia, 2008), p. 20.
[131] Ibid., p. 25.

theatre and literature in both locations – are integral to Tisna's humanist orientation. These are evident in Tisna's etchings, installations and paintings through his appropriation of imagery and text, but his social practice also appropriates physical, ritual and relational expressions and manoeuvres, such as those described in the next section, which looks at Tisna's attempt to establish a cultural centre in an industrial suburb of Bandung.

6.3 *IBU* at Cigondewah

Analysing peripatetic Singaporean artist Jay Koh's early art practice in Germany, Kester notes Koh's recognition:

> …that complex social and political issues…cannot be adequately addressed simply by fabricating physical objects (sculptures, paintings and so on) but require polyvalent responses that operate on multiple levels of public interaction.[132]

As demonstrated by *Si Kabayan Nyintreuk,* Tisna engenders multiple levels of public interaction through the use of diverse media, from popular television to "high" art, treating each as a communicative, didactic platform for environmental and social activism.

Imah Budaya – often referred to simply as "Cigondewah" after the industrial suburb where it is located in Bandung – extends this polyvalent response further into the realm of community engagement. *Imah Budaya* – known as *IBU (Mother),* for short – is the site of Tisna's most ambitious, and perhaps most flawed, art projects: a community centre ostensibly for the benefit of local residents and factory workers. Formally established in 2009, after Tisna traded paintings for ownership of the land in 2008, *IBU* is a small brick building with wooden architectural features from Central Java – also acquired through the trade of paintings (Fig. 124).

[132] Grant H. Kester, *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art*, p. 102.

Figure 124: Imah Budaya (Cultural Centre), established by Tisna Sanjaya in Cigondewah, Bandung, in 2009.

Figure 125: Tree planting with local government officials at Imah Budaya (Cultural Centre), in Cigondewah, Bandung, 2010.

Conceived and created in fulfilment of his doctoral degree at ISI (Indonesian Institute of Art), Tisna's final presentation on *IBU* documents regular activity: tree plantings with municipal and provincial officials (Fig. 125); visits from Tisna's printmaking students at ITB (Fig. 126); and pigeon racing, football matches and band rehearsals (Fig. 127). Visiting in September 2013, I found myself lost on the back of a motorbike, heading to *IBU* to meet a group of ANU printmaking students on their first trip to Indonesia. Cigondewah is on the far south-western side of Bandung, where textile factories have long dumped their waste into local water supplies, turning them multi-coloured hues, and where over the past two decades farmers have sold land to plastic recycling warehouses and factories. Tisna's family is originally from Cigondewah; he recalls school holidays visiting family living among rice fields and swimming in the river.

To introduce our group of ANU School of Art undergraduates and lecturers to *IBU*, Tisna had promised an art project of the kind he had often enacted there. We were expecting to be involved in "body-printing", which in Tisna's practice involves using the human body as a stencil for life-size "prints". This was my second visit to *IBU,* but on my first – which I will describe briefly later – it was quiet and empty. On this occasion, Tisna had organised a full program of performative absurdity; I arrived last to find bemused students and teachers milling out the front. The ITB students assisting Tisna steered me to the veranda, where a group of men and women were playing Sundanese string and wind instruments. A welcoming ceremony began; the traditional offering of a handful of uncooked rice to guests was replaced with tiny pieces of colourful or blackened plastic, in various stages of the plastic recycling process. This substitution, in an area which was once rich with rice fields and is now enveloped in plastic rubbish, was eventually explained, but initially the Australian students were understandably uncomprehending. Finally we were invited into the building, where we were surprised to meet reporters from a local TV station. It dawned on me that the day would be somewhat different to our expectations; a series of orchestrated performative and participatory actions were certainly in store for us.

Figure 126: Tisna’s printmaking students from the Institute of Technology, Bandung, visit Imah Budaya (Cultural Centre) in Cigondewah, Bandung, 2010.

Figure 127: Football matches, pigeon racing and martial arts training at Imah Budaya (Cultural Centre) in Cigondewah, Bandung, 2010.

Tisna began by taking us on a tour of the plastic "warehouse" nearby, where an elderly widow and a man with an intellectual disability sorted and cut up plastic for recycling (Fig. 128).[133] We were confronted not only with their appalling working conditions and the mere 70 cents the woman told us she could earn in a day but also by the warehouse boss, a woman with flashy jewellery decorating her fashionably modest dress, who claimed her workers were lucky to work for a halal boss rather than neighbouring Chinese workshops. We tried to formulate questions to politely but firmly indicate our position on what we had just witnessed, but were caught in a trap of cultural dissonance and social obligation.

Other aspects of the day were more opaque, such as the presence of local government officials ostensibly responsible for the welfare of the area's environment and citizens. Tisna escorted us all to the back of the property to witness the black-blue water running down what was once the local water source. Students asked pointed questions about the dumping of chemicals and the enforcement of rules, and the officials were witness to our palpable shock as local residents explained that if they use water from the river they suffer illness and rashes. Instead they rely on water distributed from wells controlled by factory/warehouses. The sub-district linked this state of affairs to the ignorance and poor standard of education among locals, rather than any failure of government.

Noting the emotional and physical exhaustion of his foreign guests, Tisna shifted gears into the performative "body-painting" exercise he had initially proposed. In an introductory speech, Tisna dedicated the performance to the widow we had met in the yard of the plastic warehouse, and he and his assistant proceeded with the ash, plastic and glue composition, to the accompaniment of live traditional Sundanese music performed by the quartet (Fig. 129).

[133] The owner of the "warehouse" insisted we refer to it as such, rather than as a processing plant or factory, due to zoning regulations. However, the site was clearly not used exclusively for storage, and also housed active heavy machinery for processing plastic.

Figure 128: A student visiting a plastic recycling processing plant neighbouring Imah Budaya (Cultural Centre) in Cigondewah, Bandung.

Figure 129: Tisna Sanjaya, body painting performance at Imah Budaya (Cultural Centre) in Cigondewah, Bandung, 2013.

Karen Lim, curator of the National University of Singapore Museum (who hosted a solo exhibition of Tisna's Cigondewah work in 2011), has said that

> …what Tisna Sanjaya is doing is creating possibilities, to express…Cigondewah, through his memories, through present time, and through what could be the future. And I think that is beautiful in itself, because that is a whole process of not just research into the minds of people, but it is true practice, you are physically talking to the people living here. And by talking to the people the relationship is made.[134]

Although I empathise with her point, Lim's view of the artist's strategies for enacting change seems overly romantic, in light of my own experiences. Across the course of our visit to Cigondewah that day, we spent many hours in a state of confusion and discombobulation. We were participants in an absurd and disturbing tour of the ambiguous ethics and confronting aesthetics of the dark side of urbanisation, sustainability and industrialisation – a tour which echoed the absurdist "artificial hells" of Dada tours of Paris streets, or the Futurists' antagonistic theatre events combining symphonies, poetry and exhibition through a "conflation of promotionalism and politics".[135]

On the one hand, Tisna introduced us to outrageous violations of environmental, living and employment standards, which are legislated. On the other, he politely introduced us to the people who had failed to enforce these laws and invited us all to sit down to *tumpang,* the same ritual celebratory meal we had eaten at the *seni reak* performance. Were we the honoured guests? Or were the officials? What were we celebrating, less than a hundred metres from where the elderly and infirm sat amid piles of plastic?

The day's events, a confusing procession of appropriated rituals, harsh realities and conceptual performance, raised many questions for students visiting from the "first world", and some did not hesitate to challenge Tisna with them. The ire that Tisna's efforts raised adds an interesting variation to the debate over antagonism and amelioration in literature around relational or dialogical aesthetics that has taken place between Kester and Bishop over successive publications (see literature review in

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[134] Karen Lim, interviewed in *Dream of Cigondewah*, (2011). This interview appears in a DVD supplied to me by Tisna Sanjaya. No supplementary information is available.

[135] For descriptions of Dada tours, see André Breton and Matthew S. Witkovsky, "Artificial Hells. Inauguration of the '1921 Dada Season'", *October* 105 (2003). The Futurists' approach was described in Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*, pp. 43-44.

Introduction, 0.2) In particular, it echoed the kind of enraged response Kester described artist Rirkrit Tiravanija attracting from fellow artists when he reconstructed his New York apartment in a prestigious gallery in Cologne, Germany, at the same time that Cologne police were evicting homeless squatters nearby.[136] By contrast, Tisna had certainly not ignored the political, social and cultural context that his work is situated in. However, the students' discomfiture was similar to Stefan Roemer's criticism of Tiravanija: they were concerned they had witnessed "empty platitudes and…commitment to image over real change".[137]

While sympathetic to the students' apprehensions, I argue that Tisna's concerns and intentions in Cigondewah are genuine. However, his approach and actions have been diluted by the many other activist projects he is involved in, as I will explain shortly. Nonetheless, at *IBU* we find the antagonism that Bishop valorises occurring at a site publicly lauded for its ameliorative intentions, and directed at discomfiting not the Biennale visitors that Kester describes as potentially experiencing "pleasure or self-affirmation" at having their political awareness confirmed but rather at local officials and foreign students.[138] Their primary experience was not affirming or pleasurable but uncomfortable and disturbing.

Bringing together disparate elements of reality/documentary (the widow and the factory owner) with performance, painting and delegated performance (the musicians) and the unconsciously performed figurative elements (local officials, foreign students, local students), Tisna constructed a highly considered and structured form. The whole, then, was like a pop collage in which different elements are included and juxtaposed precisely for the critical effect of the totality rather than their individual qualities.[139]

[136] The exhibition was called "Tomorrow is Another Day", (1996–1997). Kester, *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art,* p. 105.

[137] Stefan Roemer, *Tomorrow Is Another Day: A Video Criticism of Rirkrit Tiravanija's Exhibition "Tomorrow Is Another Day" at the Kölnischer Kunstverein* (Cologne: Kölner Videomagazin N-TV, 1997), video.

[138] Kester, *The One and the Many: Contemporary Collaborative Art in a Global Context,* p. 63.

[139] Gregory Scholette's 2011 essay on art and resistance to neo-liberalism describes several "self-institutionalising" experimental artists' collectives groups as indebted to "the photomontage work of (German Dadaist) John Heartfield in the 1930s and détournement tactics of the Situationist International in the 1960s". Gregory Scholette, "Can We Resist the Historic Compromise of Neoliberal Art?", in *Imagining Resistance: Visual Culture and Activism in Canada*, ed. Kerry J. Cronin and Kirsty Robertson (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2011), pp. 27-47.

Figure 130: Tisna Sanjaya *Cigondewah*: *An Art Project*, exhibition at National University of Singapore (NUS) Gallery, 2011. Installation view, “Entrance, rubbish, birdcages” (NUS documentation).

Figure 131: Tisna Sanjaya *Cigondewah: An Art Project*, exhibition at National University of Singapore (NUS) Gallery, 2011. Installation view “Welcome to the Cigondewah Tourist area, Bandung” (NUS documentation).

If we take Highmore's definition of the aesthetic as the opposite of the anaesthetic – profoundly related to the realm of feelings and emotion – this was certainly an aesthetic experience.[140] Reiterating the "anti-lyricism" Yuliman identified in emerging artists of the 1970s (see Chapter 1.1) Tisna transgresses the "frame" that separates art from life. The experience was olfactory, sensory: confronting one's own body and mind in relation to the bodies and minds of others, making the experiences of others unavoidably tangible. But is this what Tisna intended to achieve through *IBU?*

In "Air, Sampah, Seni" (Water, Rubbish, Art), Tisna's proposal to establish *IBU* as part of his doctoral studies, he asked whether art can still enlighten the community to do something positive and constructive. The targets for the project included a green oasis free of plastic, and Cigondewah's elevation to the centre of attention for environmentally minded citizens of Bandung and beyond.[141] In 2011, Lim's curatorial essay for *Cigondewah: An Art Project* at the National University of Singapore (NUS) praised the "indisputably fertile" years since *IBU's* establishment, which "transformed Cigondewah's culture and environment then and now".[142] Yet on my first visit to *IBU,* the building was empty and quiet, and seemingly had been for some time. Tisna was unable to meet me; so he arranged for his relative, a Cigondewah local, to open the place up for me. It was an awkward but fortuitous experience. My field notes record:

> The story goes that the community centre is used by the local community for things like band practice, meetings, pigeon races etc. (He) is enthusiastic about a past era in which students from Tisna's classes at ITB spent considerable time at the centre, establishing the garden and interacting with locals. Now however, he says the only regular activity held is a fortnightly *pencak silat* (martial arts) session for kids on Sundays. I ask if I can come and watch some time…(he) suggests the one in the *alun-alun* Mesjid Agung (the Great Mosque in Bandung's town square) might be more interesting. "So, are people around here very interested in this space?" I ask. "No, not really. Everyone around here works hard, every day. They don't have time to come and spend here."

In a catalogue for a 2009 *Cigondewah* exhibition in Jakarta, curator Asmudjo Irianto pointed out the difficulties inherent in *IBU's* utopian ideal: the apathy of local residents

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[140] Ben Highmore, *Ordinary Lives: Studies in the Everyday* (London, New York: Routledge, 2011), p. x.
[141] Tisna Sanjaya, "Air, Sampah, Seni (Doctoral Research Proposal)", Pascasarjana (Unpublished, Institut Seni Indonesia, Yogyakarta, 2007).
[142] Karen Lim, *Cigondewah: An Art Project* (Singapore: National University of Singapore Museum, 2011), p. 1.

and their lack of references for art-oriented practice. It will need to be, he wrote "…a long-term project, with interactions that must be fostered and continuously developed with the neighbouring community".[143]

Sustaining community engagement is a difficult commitment, especially for a universally humanist individual like Tisna, who is drawn to defend so many issues. In 2013 he led a successful campaign to divert the construction of a mall in Babakan Siliwangi, a green area known as "Bandung's lungs". He has shot hundreds of *Si Kabayan Nyintreuk* episodes and has maintained his teaching and individual arts practice. The grand aspirations of *IBU,* it seems, have suffered from this busy schedule. Tisna's intermittent engagement with *IBU* has nonetheless brought him international recognition and supported at least three dedicated exhibitions of work inspired by his experiences.[144]

For the aforementioned NUS exhibition, Tisna brought three tonnes of plastic waste into Singapore from Cigondewah. An Indonesian review reported:

> The once shiny (exhibition space) is now full of plastic rubbish. All kinds of plastic. From chip packets to ice-cream wrappers. All kinds of bird cages also hang at different heights…Entering a little further, we are drawn towards photographs of a river, scribbled plans for greening, a video of an interview with the sub-district head and labourers, protest posters and even a Bandung municipality metal sign with the words "Welcome to the Cigondewah Tourist area, Bandung".[145] (Fig. 130, 131)

Further on, the writer describes the dominant presence of lumps of melted and plastic charcoal. Documentation from the gallery shows two large woks set apart from each other, the distance bridged by a long piece of timber. One wok contains unprocessed plastic waste, the other large lumps of its post-processing state, black and oozing. Handwritten text is around the bottom of each wok and, in the shadow of the plank, "Viva Neo Mooi Indie" is written on the grey floor (Fig. 132). On a nearby wall, small jars filled with water – some clean, some filthy – from Cigondewah's streams and wells are labelled with residents' names and barcodes (Fig. 133).

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[143] Asmudjo Jono Irianto, "Cigondewah", Kendra Gallery, http://www.kendragallery.com/exhibition/11/cigondewah-a-solo-exhibition-by-tisna-sanjaya.

[144] Two exhibitions were presented in 2011: one at NUS Museum, Singapore, and in an outdoor installation at the National Gallery of Indonesia, Jakarta.

[145] Seno Joko Suyono, "Tisna Dan Sampah Cigondewah", *Tempo Interaktif* (2011), http://majalah.tempointeraktif.com/id/arsip/2011/03/21/SR/mbm.20110321.SR136221.id.html.

Figure 132: Tisna Sanjaya *Cigondewah: An Art Project*, exhibition at National University of Singapore (NUS) Gallery, 2011. Installation view “Viva Mooi Indie” (NUS documentation).

Figure 133: Tisna Sanjaya *Cigondewah*: *An Art Project*, exhibition at National University of Singapore (NUS) Gallery, 2011. Installation view “Air Sumur” (NUS documentation).

Filling an immaculate gallery in pristine Singapore with rubbish and polluted water from the backwaters of Bandung, Indonesia, was an eye-catching move. The link back to the *mooi Indië* (beautiful Indies, detailed in Chapter 1.1) demonstrates Tisna's ongoing dialogue with the social responsibilities embedded in Indonesian art discourses. The *IBU* project fulfils Soedjojono's exhortation against art focused only on Indonesia's beautiful landscapes.

> The new artist would not only paint…romantic or picturesque and sweetish subjects, but also sugar factories and the emaciated peasant, the motorcars of the rich and the pants of the poor youth....Because high art is worked based on our daily life transmuted by the artist who is himself immersed in it.[146]

Certainly, Tisna's individual practice avoids "sweetish subjects" and draws heavily on the social and environmental issues he has observed in the field. Yet in his own focus on art's role in daily life, another of Tisna's handwritten scrawls referred not to Soedjojono but to 20th century German avant-garde artist Joseph Beuys: his maxim "Art = Capital" was inscribed across the wall of the gallery space (Fig. 134). In Chapter 2 I argued that Indonesian art discourses have followed a trajectory along a path marked by a joint commitment to artists' creative autonomy and their heteronomous responsibility to society. Furthermore, a tendency to embrace exogenous discourses and recast these in what Clark calls "originary endogenous discourses" has continued from the pre-Independence Cultural Polemic through to today.[147] Tisna's practice around Cigondewah strongly demonstrates the continuity of these approaches in the present day.

[146] Quoted in Claire Holt, *Art in Indonesia: Continuities and Change* (Cornell University Press Ithaca, NY, 1967), pp. 195-196.
[147] John Clark, "The Worlding of the Asian Modern", in *Contemporary Asian Art and Exhibitions: Connectivities and World-making*, ed. Michelle Antoinette and Caroline Turner (Canberra, Australia: ANU press, 2014), pp. 67-88.

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Figure 134: Tisna Sanjaya *Cigondewah*: *An Art Project*, exhibition at National University of Singapore (NUS) Gallery, 2011. Installation view "*Art = Kapital*" (NUS documentation).

Figure 135: Tisna Sanjaya, performance art at Art+Moments exhibition, Jogja National Museum, 2015. The resulting artworks were then installed in the exhibition, under the title *Organik Sintetik* (2015).

In publicity material for the NUS *Cigondewah: An Art Project* exhibition, organisers assert that: "Authorial independence, community agency, and their fluid interactions set particular contexts and outcomes" for the project.[148] Yet my experiences of *IBU* and Cigondewah point to the difficulties the artist faces in enacting this in reality. Cigondewah remains underprivileged, polluted and poorly-represented by its leaders, but Tisna's reputation has made much progress based on his work there. It remains to be seen if this cultural capital can be returned to the place and people of Cigondewah.

Conclusion

In 2015, I attended an exhibition opening at Jogja National Museum (JNM) in Yogyakarta and found, to my surprise, Tisna performing in the car park in front of the exhibition space.[149] An enormous wok the size of a small bath bubbled over a fire, billowing fumes from melting plastic. In front of this, small baskets were scattered, containing brightly coloured snippets of plastic. Tisna stood beside the wok, smearing glue, paint and plastic onto two oversized canvases. On his right, two *seni reak* performers were, for good measure, wielding a prop from *kuda lumping*, a Central Javanese trance dance with similar – but better known – populist cultural resonance (Fig. 135). As I looked closer I noticed that this was indeed the same *seni reak* troupe we had met in Cibiru while filming *Si Kabayan Nyintreuk.* Eighteen months later, Tisna had developed a relationship with the troupe and incorporated their participation into this decidedly contemporary performance art.

Bishop has argued that the pre-history of the development of participation in contemporary art lies in theatre and performance rather than in painting and the ready-made.[150] Certainly in Tisna's practice we can see how this resonates, both in the sense of the modernist theatre traditions he encountered through *Studi Klub Teater* and in the Sundanese and Javanese performance traditions he appropriates in his individual and participatory works. However, in Tisna's art there are also strong links to social engagement and the discipline of printmaking as well as the spatial effect of installation. Like the Futurists and Dadaists, Tisna sees the boundaries between music, theatre, art objects and literature as permeable, and necessarily so. Tisna has

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[148] Karen Lim, *Cigondewah: Tisna Sanjaya* (Singapore NUS Press, 2011), p. 7.
[149] This was a major curated group exhibition: "Art+Moments", 7-30 June 2015.
[150] Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship,* p. 41.

emphasised and extended this permeability in an effort to communicate to ever-broader audiences through a polyvalent practice.

Harsono linked Tisna's practice back to ever-present concerns with *kerakyatan* (see chapter 2.4) in Indonesian art:

> On the one hand the artist is concerned with interacting with society, while on the other hand the artist is used to working in the aesthetic realm that tends to formalism and individualism. Both can continue harmoniously, and it is not impossible that their fusion will generate new inspiration in the creation of art work. Tisna observes that the individual cannot refuse the issues that occur outside of themselves, including in relation to their art.[151]

Here Harsono neatly identifies the cyclical nature of participatory and individual practice in Tisna's work, exemplifying the autonomous-heteronomous bind. Each of the objects that Tisna creates in turn produces, or is produced by, an experience that engages with a broader audience, a non-art audience. The evidence of this is revealed in the ethnographic account of my experiences at Cigondewah, and is also made clear by the popular fame generated by *Si Kabayan Nyintreuk*. Even Tisna's etchings, which he acknowledges as his most solitary artistic pursuit and which are enjoyed largely in private collections and public museums, are unavoidably influenced by his own experiences and interactions as Kabayan and at Cigondewah. I have demonstrated this through the influence of Kabayan's experience of *seni reak* on Tisna's etchings, but it is more subtly drawn through the material relationship between the Cigondewah site and the performative use of plastic cuttings, plastic ash and natural materials from the site – which ultimately resurfaced in the performance at JNM.

In spite of their differences in form, Tisna's participatory work through *Imah Budaya* at Cigondewah and the *Si Kabayan Nyintreuk* television program operate in similar ways to the etchings he creates in his solitary studio practice. The art objects and experiences communicate to one audience through their physical manifestations: their objecthood is directed at the contemporary art audiences best represented by patrons of commercial galleries, privileged collectors, curators and art historians. These followers are unlikely to ever venture into a suburb like Cigondewah without the express invitation of a coveted artist; nor would they bring the refuse of a dubious

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[151] FX Harsono, "Kerakyatan Dalam Seni Lukis Indonesia Sejak Persagi Hingga Kini", p. 78.

recycling process into their home, unless it brings with it social or economic capital. Attached to Tisna's reputation, both of these situations become viable.

It may well be that the neatly packaged discomfort that Tisna Sanjaya's work offers, through his attempts to revive tradition, decry environmental destruction and nurture social cohesion, change little on a broad scale in Indonesia or even in Sunda. Nonetheless my own experience of the affective power of Tisna's performative participation, and the resonance of his work in triggering emotion and feeling, demonstrated the aesthetic success of his work on an individual, experiential level. This affective, communicative power, I argue, is inextricably linked to Tisna's ability to penetrate the "partitions of the sensible": those binary categories that Rancière contends divide art from life, tradition from modernity, and the communal from the individual.[152] It also strongly demonstrates the continuing relevance of the anti-lyricism that Yuliman identified among artists of the 1970s generation, and their determination to make art that is "not a slice of the imaginary world contemplated at a distance, but rather the concrete object which physically involves the viewer".[153] In the final case study, I will address the work of a Yogyakarta artist whose work in rural communities, evocation of the symbolic potential of food, and commitment to both endogenous and exogenous art discourses echoes Tisna's own work. Elia Nurvista, nonetheless, locates her participatory practice within cosmopolitan, rather than provincial, concerns.

[152] Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible* (London: Continuum Publishing, 2004), pp. 23-24;
[153] Sanento Yuliman, "Seni Lukis Indonesia Baru (Dewan Kesenian Jakarta, 1976)", pp. 101.

Chapter 7

Elia Nurvista: political commensality

This chapter addresses the practice of Yogyakarta based artist Elia Nurvista (b. 1983). Associated with Kunci Cultural Studies Centre and Cemeti Art House, Nurvista is part of a generation of Indonesian artists who are increasingly encouraged, through the curatorial and discursive practices of institutions and pseudo-institutions, to explore participatory practice through international residencies. Elia has participated in residencies in Japan, Taiwan, England, Australia and Germany, and in local formats such as Cemeti Art House's 2014 *Liminal* exhibition and Kunci's *Made in Commons* project described in Chapter 3.5 and 3.6.

I focus primarily on three of Elia's works, although I also address associated works that demonstrate the slippage between participation, performance and installation. All of the works have been produced with diverse methodologies that perpetuate and depend on various modes of participation. I observed the first two works addressed here as a participant in the first case and as an audience member in the second.

First, I describe and analyse the socially-oriented *Adiboga Wonoasri* (Wonoasri Fine Dining, 2013), in which unfamiliar ingredients were a vehicle to critique the relationship between othering and cosmopolitanism in a venue at the heart of Yogyakarta's contemporary art scene. This work engaged the public with cooking and eating between signifiers of the local and the international, and simultaneously subverted past practices of social engagement in Indonesia by denying representation of the *rakyat.* Instead, the work drew attention to the disjuncture between sustenance and status by presenting starvation foods in a fine-dining context.

I contrast *Adiboga Wonoasri* to another of Elia's social, participatory cooking projects, *Rayuan Pulau Kelapa* (2014, translating roughly to Seductive Coconut Island)*,* which more specifically echoes practices of conscientisation among the (rural) *rakyat.*[154]

[154] The title refers to an Indonesian song composed by Ismail Marzuki in the early days of Independence, which praises Indonesia's fertility and natural beauty, espousing the singer's eternal love for the homeland. It was regularly performed at international events attended by cultural mission youth groups

Nonetheless, it critiques conscientisation as art practice by questioning its fundamental belief that artists are inherently conscientised. Conducted in a village in the arid limestone hills outside of Yogyakarta, *Rayuan Pulau Kelapa* involved local women in the revival of under-utilised root crops by reinventing "traditional" recipes. Here Elia uses cooking as a vehicle to establish social relationships between a variety of parties, based on an exploration of shared experiences and lost practices in commensality, simultaneously revealing the power structures behind unhealthy consumption in rural Indonesia.

The third work, research based video and screen-print installation *A Conversation: Ons Indisch Erfgoed* (Our Indies Heritage, 2015), was developed from an earlier interactive, artist-orchestrated meal titled *The Flamboyant Table: Rijsttafel Revisited* (2014, London). A customary meal for colonials in the Dutch East Indies, *rijsttafel* provides a departure point for Elia's enquiries into labour relations in colonial Java and their (exoticising) appropriation for present-day performances of hospitality and national pride. In my analysis of the works related to *rijsttafel,* I rely entirely on the etic methodology, having been unable to observe the works first-hand. Instead I draw on documentation on social media and interviews with the artist.

In his analysis of commensality as art practice in Southeast Asia, Francis Maravillas asked:

> How then can we gauge the ways in which such art is generative at different scales, able to produce new modalities of relationality and connectivity—that are imaginative, affective and resonant—in and through the tangle of differences between locales that may be far distant from each other?[155]

In these locales, Elia's practice has been influenced by a complex web of discourses that have developed inside and outside of Indonesia: her work, to borrow a phrase from Michelle Antoinette, is "distinctive in its emergence from or influence by particular Asian cultural contexts of production, with concurrent relevance and

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attending World Festivals of Youth and Students. See Jennifer Lindsay, *Heirs to World Culture: Being Indonesian, 1950-1965* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2012), p. 211.

[155] Francis Maravillas, "Food and Hospitality in Contemporary Asian Art", in *Contemporary Asian Art and Exhibitions: Connectivities and World-making*, ed. Michelle Antoinette and Caroline Turner (Canberra: ANU Press, 2014), p. 167.

relation to the world".[156] Elia joins an esteemed tradition of Indonesian artists engaging with the wider world through travel.

This tradition stems back to (probably) the first modern Indonesian painter, Raden Saleh (1811–1880), who spent two decades living in Europe.[157] In the nation's early years, government and commercially sponsored cultural missions were sent to North Asia, South Asia and Southeast Asia, Eastern and Western Europe, the Americas, and Africa in the 1950s and 1960s, including Affandi's travels through Europe, India and America from the 1950s to the 1980s.[158] Also in the 1980s, the emergence of the Artists Regional Exchange (ARX) took many Indonesian artists abroad.[159]

Strongly influenced by her own travels yet driven by curiosity about the specificities of Indonesian self-identification at home and in the broader world, Elia's work epitomises the delicate complexity of cosmopolitanism, using food as a research tool. Coinciding with the speculations of Pollock et al. on cosmopolitanism at the beginning of this century, Elia's work transverses "nationalism, globalization, and multiculturalism" but also invokes "domesticity as a vital interlocutor and not just an interloper in law, politics, and public ethics".[160]

For Elia, the Indonesian context is not a theme but a departure point for participatory projects which question interpellation and post-colonial subjectivity. The convivial atmosphere that food and cooking engenders in her works belies her political undertones. Elia is not seeking new relational forms but rather is exposing forms that enact the distributions of power that consumption and waste can signify, by re-enacting those forms or by exploring alternative paths alongside participants.

[156] Michelle Antoinette, "Epilogue — 'My Future is Not a Dream': Shifting Worlds of Contemporary Asian Art and Exhibitions", in *Contemporary Asian Art and Exhibitions: Connectivities and World-making*, ed. Michelle Antoinette and Caroline Turner (Canberra, Australia: ANU Press, 2014), p. 235.
[157] John Clark, "The Worlding of the Asian Modern", p. 78.
[158] Lindsay, *Heirs to World Culture: Being Indonesian, 1950-1965*.
[159] Participants in ARX include Elia's mentors Moelyono and curator Enin Supriyanto.
[160] Sheldon Pollock et al., "Cosmopolitanisms", *Public Culture* 12, no. 3 (2000), pp. 577-589.

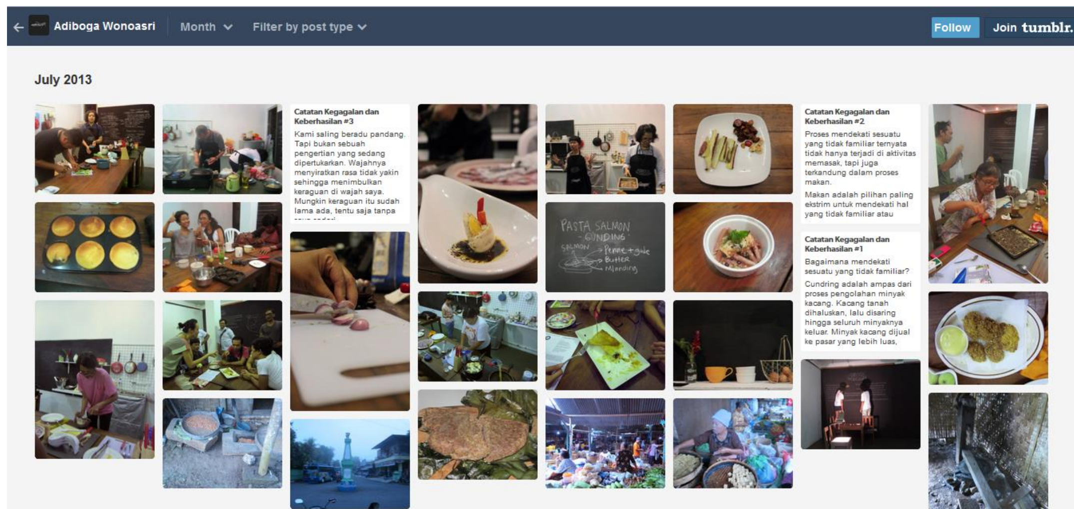

Figure 136: Elia Nurvista, *Adiboga Wonoasri* (Wonoasri Fine Dining), 2013, blog authored by Syafiatudina.

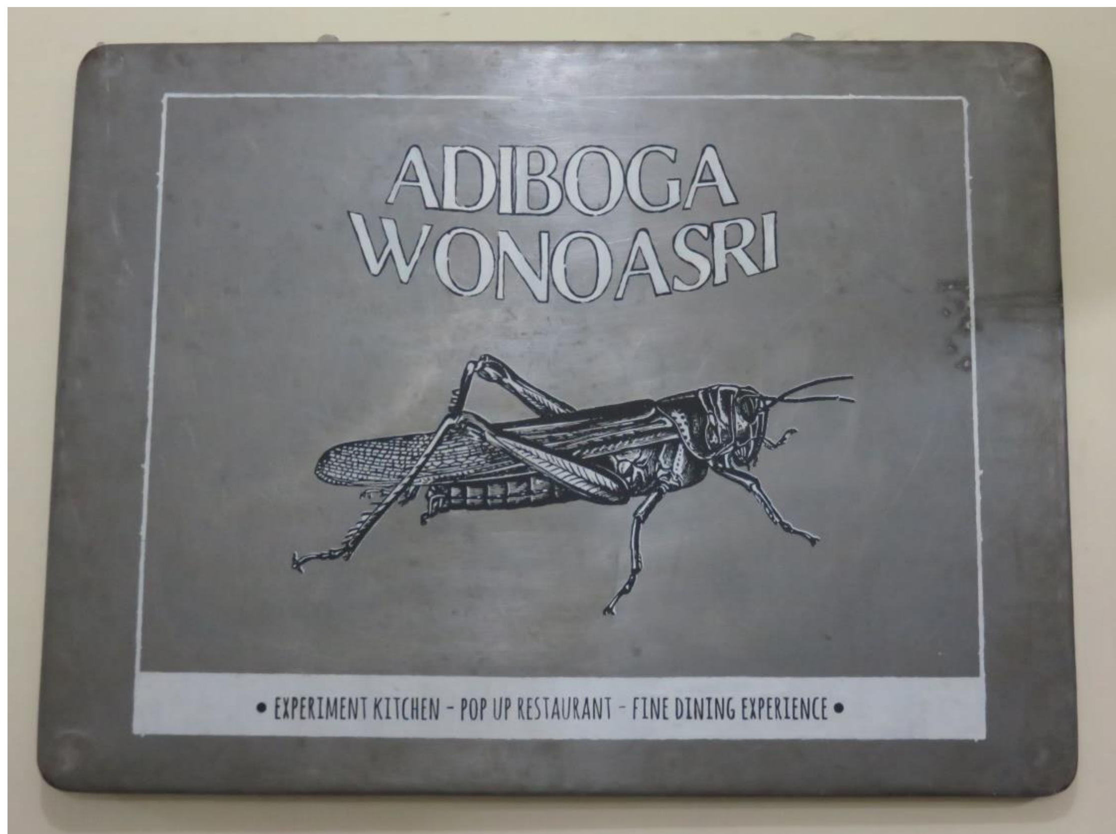

Figure 137: Elia Nurvista and Prihatmo Moki, *Adiboga Wonoasri* signage 2013.

The context of production of these works is integral to each work's internal logic, and to my thesis. It reveals the influence of quasi-institutional and art-historical practices on emerging artists, and the way in which these artists are located, and locate themselves, within continuous and expansive networks that structure art's interface with the Indonesian public. This includes Elia's embedded position in a generation of Yogyakarta artists emerging from the stables of Cemeti Art House, Kedai Kebun Forum, the Yogyakarta Biennale Foundation and others. They are also mentored (formally and informally) by senior artists and curators integral to those establishments – Agung Kurniawan, Nindityo Adipurnomo, Mella Jaarsma, Enin Supriyanto and Moelyono, among others.

Elia's practice also demonstrates the influence of contemporary writing from the USA and Europe on relational and participatory practice in Indonesia. Thus, an examination of Elia's work supports key arguments in this dissertation by demonstrating the complex relations between influences from Euro-American and endogenous discourses in Indonesian art history. This in turn points to a practice responsive to heteronomous and autonomous motivations.

7.1 *Adiboga Wonoasri:* cosmopolitanism out of starvation

> When cooking is conducted as part of an art project, how should we evaluate the food? By its taste or aesthetic? By aesthetic, I mean not only its visual appeal but also its capacity to engender alternative knowledge.[161]

In the first four weeks of *Adiboga Wonoasri* (Wonoasri Fine Dining), Elia and her assistant Syafiatudina (Dina) utilised famine foods Elia had encountered in Wonoasri in an art project that addressed the questions above and many more.[162] They took over the gallery Kedai Kebun Forum (KKF), turning it into a fully functioning kitchen and documenting the process on a blog written by Dina (Fig. 136, 137).[163]

[161] Syafiatudina, "Catatan Kegagalan dan Keberhasilan", *adibogawonoasri-blog*, 2013, http://adibogawonoasri-blog.tumblr.com/about.

[162] The title translates loosely to Wonoasri Fine Dining. Wonoasri is a play on the name of the area that the primary ingredients were drawn from, with the last two syllables exchanged to evoke the Indonesian word for natural beauty, "*asri".*

[163] Kedai Kebun Forum is a privately run gallery space, event venue and restaurant owned and run by Agung Kurniawan, Yustina Neni and their staff. It is located on Tirtodipuran street in Mantrijeron, the

Image removed due to copyright restrictions.

Figure 138: Seeds that are processed to produce oil (lower row) and the by-products that came to be used as starvation foods (upper row).

Image removed due to copyright restrictions.

Figure 139: Wonosari is a relatively dry, mountainous area of Central Java, and has historically seen periods of starvation related to both social and environmental conditions.

same suburb that houses Cemeti Art House, Langgeng Art Foundation, Ark Galerie, MES56, Acehouse, Krack Studio and a range of accommodation aimed at foreigners.

According to Elia's research, during food shortages residents of Ponjong in Wonosari (south of Yogyakarta) enhanced their access to fats and proteins by harvesting waste from the processing of seeds and nuts for oil.[164] Examples include *cundring,* harvested from the dregs of peanut oil production, and *cabuk*, similarly gathered from sesame oil production (Fig. 138). In spite of the now stable availability of other ingredients, these have retained their position in Ponjong diets more as "romantic" nostalgia foods than the staples they once were. Elia first encountered these unusual foods while visiting her partner's family in Wonosari (Fig. 139).

The venue for *Adiboga Wonoasri*, KKF, is a gallery/restaurant located in a part of Yogyakarta that has recently seen the mushrooming of international restaurants – ideal for a cooking project designed to appeal to cosmopolitan art audiences in Yogyakarta (Fig. 140). The experimental approach was mentored by joint KKF founder and senior contemporary artist Agung Kurniawan, who, looking for alternative approaches, directed Elia to re-inscribe the gallery space. However, the use of meals as an element of artwork – particularly as a symbol linking contemporary art to the "local" – is well established in Indonesia, as evident in Tisna Sanjaya's work as discussed in Chapter 6, and also in Moelyono's 2004 exhibition at Cemeti Art House, *Lintang Desa.*[165] At KKF, Elia, Dina and the audience of passers-by, visitors to the restaurant and gallery, and a "viral" audience attracted through social media, explored the culinary possibilities of the unusual ingredients by creating new dishes (Fig. 141, 142). I joined the second stage of the project, when a selection of dishes from the first stage was served to eight diners – by prior reservation – over two weeks.

[164] Geologically the Wonosari area is chalky, dry and difficult agricultural land. Historically it is also known as a hotspot for leftist exiles, and thus a target during the 1965 massacres. These factors and others have contributed to higher than average experiences of starvation there during crises in Indonesia's history.
[165] This exhibition featured a meal served inside a marquee installed in the gallery space, complete with village-style celebratory banners.

Figure 140: Elia Nurvista, *Adiboga Wonoasri*, 2013. A fully functional kitchen and dining bench in the Kedai Kebun Forum (KKF) gallery space, attended by curators, artists and art-worker from Yogyakarta's contemporary art scene.

Figure 141: A major feature in the exhibition space was a large blackboard documenting experiments with ingredients.

Cundring and *cabuk* are unlikely additions to cosmopolitan cuisine. My field notes describe the strong tastes and aromas as "bitter and fishy". On project's blog, Dina wrote of how difficult it was to adjust to the unfamiliar flavour: "We add spices like cinnamon, nutmeg and lemon. But it doesn't cover up the smell we find so strange." This strangeness became a point of enquiry, with Elia inviting participants to create palatable dishes using *cundring* and other ingredients. Dina continued:

> This matter of covering up. Is this actually a part of cooking, if we are trying to cover up the flavour that *cundring* is contributing to the food? And it is also covering up something that is unfamiliar. Is there another strategy for facing the unfamiliar, other than covering it up?[166]

Dina articulates how consuming unfamiliar food can be an aesthetic experience in building understanding. Elia too, described the tension and the necessary act of faith inherent in allowing unfamiliar food into one's digestive system.[167] As Maravillas argued, the activation of this "alimentary tract" as a site of trust and knowledge building "confounds any neat distinction between self and other…by engendering appetites and aversions through a recurrent performance of ethics wherein the terms of encounter with otherness are negotiated".[168] To eat the unknown is to broker new relations with the strange.

Rancière speaks of strangeness as spectacle, describing artists using strangeness as an enigma which demands the spectator's investigation, creating pedagogical distance between artist and spectator. Through this framework, I read *turba* ("going down below" to the people, as described in Chapter 1.2 and 2.3) as a fraught attempt to overcome the pedagogical distance that the gap between artist and subject can generate. Hersri Setiawan described the process of *turba* as an attempt to:

> ...turn oneself into a vehicle for those below, in order to voice what life underneath is like. This is only possible if there is no longer a distance between [artists and] those below.[169]

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[166] Syafiatudina, "Catatan Kegagalan dan Keberhasilan".
[167] Aisyah Hilal, "Kenali Adiboga Wonoasri di Yogyakarta", *National Geographic Indonesia* (2013), http://nationalgeographic.co.id/berita/2013/07/kenali-adiboga-wonoasri-di-yogyakarta.
[168] Maravillas, "Food and Hospitality in Contemporary Asian Art," pp. 159-160, in reference to Parama Roy, *Alimentary tracts: appetites, aversions, and the postcolonial* (Durham [N.C.]: Duke University Press, 2010).
[169] Quoted in Antariksa, *Tuan Tanah Kawin Muda*, p. 57.

However, another *turba* practitioner described the process as generating "social knowledge" to be passed on to society: paintings as pedagogy. As described in Chapter 1 and 2, emancipatory approaches lost favour (and indeed became dangerous to pursue) after the communist purge in the mid 1960s. Traces re-emerged in the 1980s through the Freirean concept of conscientisation. A reification of pedagogical distance drove Moelyono's assertion – drawing on Friere's praxis – that the conscientisation of the *rakyat* should be conducted by "professionals or graduates" (see Chapter 2.4).[170] In *Adiboga Wonoasri*, the artist deliberately eschewed both of these approaches to artistic, pedagogic authority, deconstructing strangeness by locating herself as an "ignorant master":

> ...the "ignorant master"...does not teach his knowledge to the student. He commands them to venture forth in the forest, to report what they see, what they think of what they have seen, to verify it, and so on.[171]

Here, neither the artist nor the participant is master of this unfamiliar material; both encounter its strangeness and mobilise further unfamiliar foods to confront or conceal it. As the participants experimented with ingredients ranging from couscous to kimchee, in conjunction with Ponjong ingredients, they also deconstructed partitions between "self-possession" and "alienation".[172] On the kitchen-stage of popular television we see this self-possession represented by the mastery of the celebrity chef, revealing (teaching about) exotic/alien ingredients to audiences who aspire to purchase and consume them. In *Adiboga Wonoasri*, participants simultaneously invoked and repressed the strangeness of Ponjong's waste-efficient ingredients through horizontal relations with the ingredients and the artist.Especially in the first stage, there was a deliberate decision to avoid in situ didactic explanations such as wall texts. Dina elaborated:

> But I think all of the kitchen's contents and the ingredients were strange and exotic objects, we thought it would be interesting to try

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[170] In these constructs, the artist is seen as a master of an inherent critical capacity, which can then be transferred to "the people", who, by definition, are lacking. In Rancière's Emancipated Spectator, he specifically critiques the same kinds of pedagogical theatre practices espoused in Friere's Pedagogy of the Oppressed, the text that Moelyono drew on for the ideas around conscientisation. In particular, Rancière questions the assumption that active participation in theatre is inherently more capable of raising consciousness than passive spectatorship.

[171] Jacques Rancière, "The Emancipated Spectator", p. 276.

[172] These two apparently binary oppositions are among those Rancière specifically calls into question. Ibid., p. 274.

> out the unfamiliarity and we wanted to be open to that, as a kind of cosmopolitanism… So we were actually remixing, maybe quite recklessly, looking for things around us that were unfamiliar.

During the second stage, a guest from Ponjong joined the guests at each meal, receiving an extended introduction but having no specified role or brief (Fig. 142, 143). At the meal I attended, the woman from Ponjong who accompanied us was quite reserved and seemed uncomfortable with questions about the food. Later I asked Elia whether she felt this was an effective replacement for visual or text based representations. Elia replied:

> On different nights it was different; sometimes it was quite successful in creating a description... Sometimes the person we invited wasn't articulate enough. Sometimes the other participants weren't really curious.[173]

She then related how an art collector who attended the "restaurant" phase had complained that the quality of the food did not warrant the cover charge, especially given it was not cooked by chefs. These discrepant expectations point to some of the challenges facing participatory art in an atmosphere where infrastructure – galleries, museums and residency projects – are often funded by collectors.[174] The collector expects to attain a qualitatively determined product in exchange for money: an *actual* fine dining experience. The artist, conversely, is interested in how appropriating a (non-mimetic) fine dining experience raises questions around consumer culture. Ironically, in this instance, the art collector (apparently) unconsciously inserted herself into that critique as the paradigmatic consumer.

The inherent risk of this strategy reveals the open-ended nature of the Elia's intentions. Unlike Tisna's *Si Kabayan Nyintreuk* or Bayak's *Plasticology,* the content and form within *Adiboga Wonoasri* raises questions, rather than directing knowledge or behaviour. It epitomises the kinds of alimentary artwork that Maravillas says "intimate new forms of cosmopolitanism and foreground the tensile connections between the aesthetic, the ethical and the political in an increasingly globalised world".[175]

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[173] Syafiatudina and Elia Nurvista, "Interview by Elly Kent", 24/03/2015. This and previous quote.
[174] Many artists produce limited edition or single issue artworks drawn directly from documentation of their projects. See, for instance, FX Harsono's hyper-realist paintings of still frames from his performance videos.
[175] Maravillas, "Food and Hospitality in Contemporary Asian Art", p. 159.

Figure 142: The second stage of *Adiboga Wonoasri* involved a series of meals selected from the experiments, served to a small number of guests, one of whom would be a resident of Ponjong.

Figure 143: Plating was a highly considered aspect of the aesthetic in the second stage of *Adiboga Wonoasri.*

Bringing famine foods into the milieu of Yogyakarta's expanding international dining scene; wrestling with the urge to cover up the strange taste of the unfamiliar local with the familiarly foreign; conjoining the residents of a bucolic village with a population of peripatetic artists, writers, musicians and creative types in a contrived social situation: *Adiboga Wonoasri* defies definition as local or global. It is instead an exemplar of the cosmopolitan explorations that Pollock et al. describe as "grounded in the tenebrous moment of transition",[176] posing a set of, as yet, unanswerable questions: Who is the "other" in a cosmo-political world? How do we generate and share knowledge through aesthetic experiences? What does it mean to be local and what relative boundaries does this establish in a global world? What is inherited by "heirs to world culture"?[177]

The next artwork addressed raises similar questions, evoking tensions around temporal and cultural transition. In *Rayuan Pulau Kelapa*, Elia expands her practice to more explicitly explore ideas around the relationship between the artist and society, in a project with a small group of housewives in the mountains outside of Yogyakarta.

7.2 *Rayuan Pulau Kelapa: turba,* conscientisation and negotiation

In *Adiboga Wonoasri,* Elia raised issues around practices of representing the "other" inherent in the socially-engaged practices of artists in the 1970s and in the *turba* period, subverting them by avoiding the representation of conditions or communities. Nonetheless, her subsequent project, *Rayuan Pulau Kelapa,* is inextricable from these precursors and the complex networks of quasi-institutional guidance that engender participatory art in Indonesia.

Rayuan Pulau Kelapa was conducted at *Bumi Pemuda Rahayu* (Land of Peaceful Youth, known as BPR), which is projected as a community cultural/arts centre that "aims to support a vision of ecological sustainability through work with communities and arts on practical and theoretical levels".[178]

[176] Pollock et al., "Cosmopolitanisms", p. 581.
[177] This term was central to the declarations of the universalist Gelanggang Creed. See Chapter 1.1.
[178] "Our profile", http://www.bumipemudarahayu.org/about/profile. This is the passion project of Jakarta architect and urbanist Marco Kusumawijaya, who was responsible for the design of the *Festival Masa Depan* at Jatiwangi Art Factory in 2013. Also involved are Antariksa from Kunci Cultural Studies

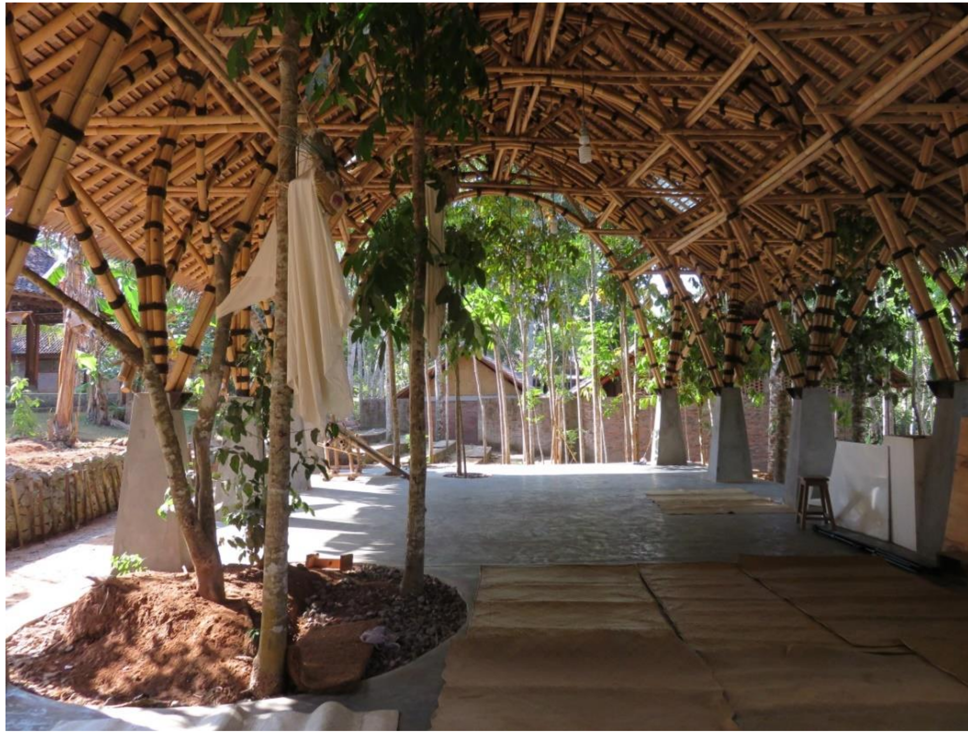

Figure 144: The main hall at Bumi Pemuda Rahayu (Land of Peaceful Youth), Muntuk, Gunung Kidul, Central Java.

Figure 145: A planning meeting for *Rayuan Pulau Kelapa*, at Kunci Cultural Studies Centre, 2014.

Centre, and Kristi Monfries, who has worked closely with photography collective MES56 (for more on all of these artist-run-initiatives and quasi institutions, see Chapter 5).

Located in Muntuk village southeast of Yogyakarta, BPR consists of accommodation for artists, studios and storage spaces, a traditional Javanese pavilion and the residence of founder Marco Kusumawijya. The main BPR building is a large hall with curved pillars supporting a high, thatched roof, built with bamboo structural techniques that use no nails or screws (Fig. 144). Off the *balai* (hall) is a relatively small kitchen, which, on my first visit, was crowded with women participating in the *Rayuan Pulau Kelapa* project.

My first encounter with the project was attending a planning meeting with the artists and facilitators at Kunci Cultural Studies Centre in September 2014 (Fig. 145). The project began with a cooking competition held on 17th August, Independence Day, 2014. Entrants from five villages worked to strict conditions: no MSG; locally sourced, unprocessed ingredients; minimal oil; and the story of the provenance of the recipe or ingredients. Later, participants visited permaculture farm *Bumi Langit* (Land and Sky) and a nearby mushroom specialist to look at successful arid area agricultural projects. Program manager Kristi Monfries explained how the project supports BPR's goals:

> It's not only an interesting political food thing – the undertone is that – but its also very good in terms of making relationships with the community around us which…artists-in-residence have…said that's really lacking.[179]

Rayuan Pulau Kelapa developed in response to a request from local women for a project more relevant to their own needs, "an activity that touches on cooking".[180] Elia and fellow artist Jim Allen Abel (Jimbo) set the parameters and direction after talking with the women, a nutritionist and local farmers. During the planning meeting, Elia identified tubers (*umbi-umbi*) as a focus for further activities. The Dlingo area is located in one of Indonesia's arid zones, where heavily irrigated crops, like rice, are unproductive. Rather, sorghum, corn and root vegetables have provided staple carbohydrates for many generations. Government directives compelling rice-growing and consumption obliterated these farming practices, which became a distant memory as older generations passed away and packaged foods became more readily available.[181]

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[179] Elia Nurvista, Kristi Monfries, and Jim Allen Abel. "Rayuan Pulau Kelapa Meeting at KUNCI." 2014.
[180] Elia Nurvista et al., public presentation "Rayuan Pulau Kelapa ", moderated byKristi Monfries, 2014, Bumi Pemuda Rahayu, Dlingo, Central Java.
[181] Peter Boomgaard, "In the Shadow of Rice: Roots and Tubers in Indonesian History, 1500-1950", *Agricultural History* 77, no. 4 (2003), pp. 582-610.

Figure 146: A talk by a nutritionist provided information on the nutritional value of locally available produce, compared to processed foods.

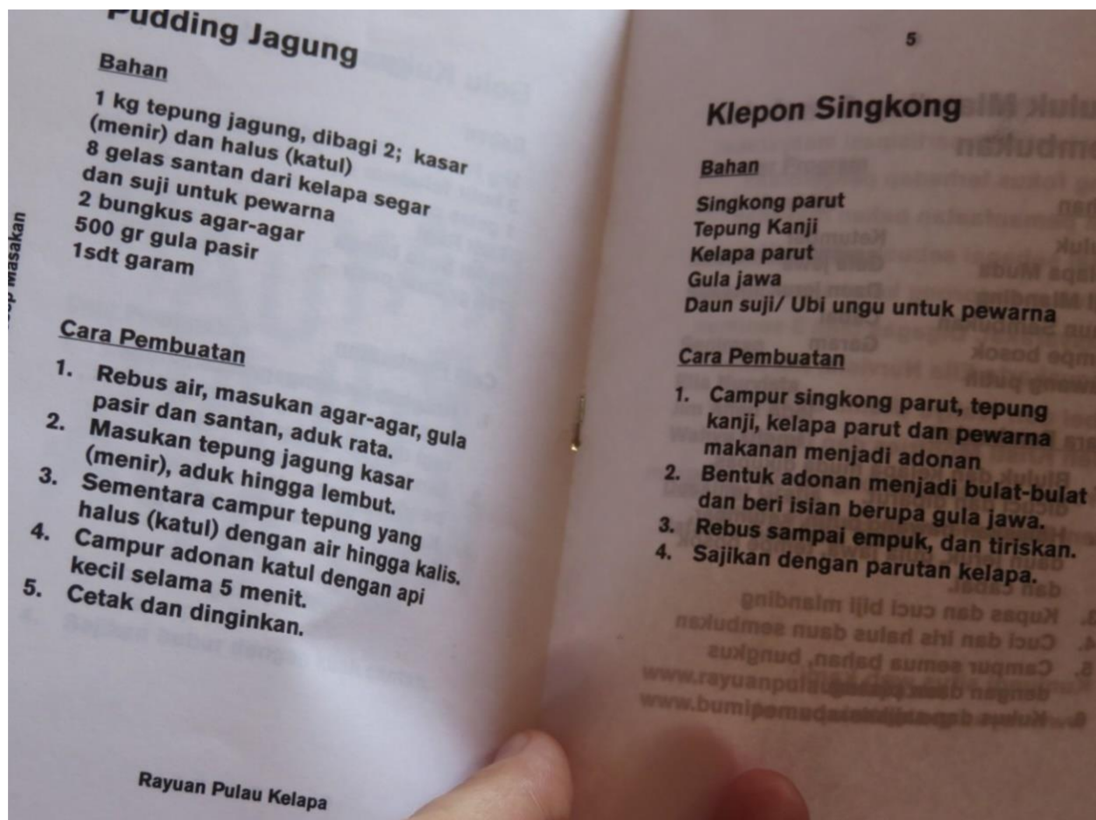
Figure 147: Some of the dishes served during the public presentation at the end of the project.

Elia related a story from a participant who had cultivated a crop of tubers, involving the whole family in a labour-intensive harvest yielding several kilograms. At market, however, the whole crop fetched just Rp1000, about 10 cents. The story highlighted the unviability of these crops as primary produce for market and the artists and facilitators decided to focus on the health benefits of their consuming tubers endemic to the arid area and exploring the potential for secondary products.

My first visit to BPR was to observe a nutritionist speaking to participants in *Rayuan Pulau Kelapa*. Both Elia and the nutritionist were quick to build a rapport with the participants, who were forthcoming with questions and myths to be debunked (Fig. 146). Over subsequent weeks, participants invented and tested recipes using local tuber varieties. The final presentation in October 2014 demonstrated the strategic success of focusing on local issues and involving local women to build community relationships.[182] As well as taste-testing the recipes the women had refined and perfected, the presentation was an opportunity for the women to relate their experiences within the project. About 15 women wearing beige aprons screen-printed with *Rayuan Pulau Kelapa* served yam dishes seasoned with palm sugar and coconut or pandan, made entirely from locally-grown products (Fig. 147). Attendees milled around two small tables, quizzing the cooks and reading the small recipe zine provided (Fig. 148). As we ate and chatted, artists and participants prepared to make a presentation to the audience of artists from Jogja and neighbours from Muntuk.

After Jimbo’s attempt to introduce the project, Elia took over to briefly outline the aims and processes. She invited comments before handing over to Ibu Lilik, the in situ facilitator who articulately described the many hours the group had spent experimenting with recipes (Fig. 149). Ibu Lilik emphasised that the project’s relevance to their domestic roles as food providers made it easier to prioritise. One participant affirmed that, although she lives next door, until this project she had never visited before. Her effusive testimony closed with the tale of one participant who stayed up all night to perfect a recipe, joking that she was too afraid to come back to BPR until she had.

[182] Previous artists-in-residence had involved local men in activities such as designing a guard post building for the site; see http://www.bumipemudarahayu.org/residency-year/2013/.



Pudding Jagung

Bahan

1 kg tepung jagung, dibagi 2; kasar (menir) dan halus (katul)
8 gelas santan dari kelapa segar dan suji untuk pewarna
2 bungkus agar-agar
500 gr gula pasir
1sdt garam

Cara Pembuatan

1. Rebus air, masukan agar-agar, gula pasir dan santan, aduk rata.
2. Masukan tepung jagung kasar (menir), aduk hingga lembut.
3. Sementara campur tepung yang halus (katul) dengan air hingga kalis.
4. Campur adonan katul dengan api kecil selama 5 menit.
5. Cetak dan dinginkan.

Rayuan Pulau Kelapa

5

Klepon Singkong

Bahan

Singkong parut
Tepung Kanji
Kelapa parut
Gula jawa
Daun suji/ Ubi ungu untuk pewarna

Cara Pembuatan

1. Campur singkong parut, tepung kanji, kelapa parut dan pewarna makanan menjadi adonan
2. Bentuk adonan menjadi bulat-bulat dan beri isian berupa gula jawa.
3. Rebus sampai empuk, dan tiriskan.
4. Sajikan dengan parutan kelapa.

Figure 148: A zine produced for distribution at the final session contained lyrics to the song *Rayuan Pulau Kelapa* and recipes for the dishes served.

Figure 149: Ibu Lilik (left) speaks on behalf of the participants at the public presentation at the end of the *Rayuan Pulau Kelapa* project. (Right: Elia Nurvista)

These presentations were far from statistical or even anecdotal proof of the efficacy of the art project in improving diet or reviving local sources of fresh produce. Nonetheless, they do speak for the success of Elia's flexible methodology in this context, and in relation to BPR's goals.

In her ontology of community based arts practice, Miwon Kwon identifies "sited communities" as pre-existing cohesive units with shared "locational bases".[183] At its beginning, *Rayuan Pulau Kelapa* fitted within this structure, but as it progressed its goals morphed into those of an "ongoing invented community" of Muntuk cooks interested in local produce. For Elia's practice, this kind of sited community work was a new experience. Yet the aims of this project demanded similar responsiveness and contingency to *Adiboga Wonoasri*, with failure and negotiation embedded in the process: Ibu Lilik noted in her speech that "in our failures success is born". During my first visit, I asked Elia how long the project would continue. Her answer echoes the *turba* artists referred to earlier in this chapter, attempting to generate "social knowledge" by reducing the gap between her and society (or the *rakyat*, in the tradition of *turba* and conscientisation):

> …I am totally conscious that we are working with a community, and furthermore, not in a residency...Actually we need to slow down; we need to be more observant. And it's not just them [the community], we are also learning…Because we are concerned with collaborating with them, we need to observe the situation. For instance if they say "*mbak*, we just can't do it"; we might want to hurry up, but they're also busy. It's collaboration, not us looking at them…[184]

However, unlike Hersri Setiawan, Elia's intention is not to be a vehicle for the voices of people she works with. Elia's comments have evolved from the conversations she developed with participants early in the project's manifestation, from its inception at an "Independence Day Healthy Cooking Competition". Elia has resisted these distinctly pedagogic beginnings, utilising the connection with participants as a learning opportunity, not only for participants but also for herself. It was from these conversations that Elia was able to learn that tubers were not a viable commercial crop, a crucial decision in the trajectory of the project. By contrast, her colleague Jimbo

[183] Kwon, *One Place After Another: Site-specific Art and Locational Identity*, pp. 120–126.
[184] Elia Nurvista, "Interview by Elly Kent at BPR", 12/09/2014. *Mbak* is a term of address for a woman of similar age to the speaker.

was more focused on the potential to subvert nationalist cultural constructs around rice as a signifier of the archipelago's fertility (hence the project's title). This kind of subversion of popular culture resonates with a contemporary art crowd trained in critical semiotics, but fell flat when he introduced the project to a gathering consisting largely of rural residents of Muntuk. Elia's approach, however, echoes the philosophical approach of American pragmatist philosopher Richard Rorty, who argued that:

> …to see wisdom as consisting in the ability to sustain a conversation, is to see human beings as generators of new descriptions rather than beings one hopes to be able to describe accurately.[185]

Rather than positioning her work as a direct counter to government policy, Elia's wisdom lies in her effort to understand the role of art in generating new approaches to old problems, rather than representing them. In her relationship as an artist to society, in *Rayuan Pulau Kelapa* Elia demonstrates an alliance with the principles of the 1950 Gelanggang Creed, which preceded *turba*. In Chapter 1.1, I described how this universal humanist declaration by the *Angkatan 1945* (1945 Generation) sought to regard society with the "respect of people who know that there is a mutual influence between society and artists" contributing to the development of an Indonesian modernism that embraced both autonomous and heteronomous influences.[186] The legacy of the Gelanggang Creed's positioning of Indonesian artists as "legitimate heirs to world culture" extends the realm of influence beyond Indonesian traditions and culture, and stakes a cosmopolitan claim for Indonesia's future.

The final body of work examined in this dissertation demonstrates how opportunities to travel lead to the incorporation of ideas from other places and cultures, including those historically linked to Indonesia through colonialism. As in the works described thus far, the participatory, performative and installation works that emerge from Elia's investigation of *rijsttafel* ("rice table", a customary meal for Dutch East Indies colonists) do not present definitive perspectives, instead raising questions about colonisers, the colonised and their shared legacies.

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[185] R. Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), p. 378.
[186] Keith Foulcher, *Social Commitment in Literature and the Arts: the Indonesian "Institute of People's Culture" 1950-1965*, pp. 2–3. The text was first published in the *Siasat* Journal on 22 October, 1950.

7.3 A conversation: true fiction, fictional truth

> A word about the so-called "Indonesian" *rijsttafel.* This was a colonial invention, a larger-than-life adaptation of the Indonesian style of serving rice with several savoury side dishes and condiments. With time, money and plenty of servants to make almost anything possible, the Dutch developed a "rice-table" where as many as 18-20 dishes might be served, each borne into the room by a comely maiden or uniformed "boy".[187]

Scholarly texts like the one quoted above focus on *rijsttafel's* historical role in the "credible public performance of cultural identity" where "the daily necessity of eating assumed a deep significance…demonstrating cultural affiliation (or aspiration)".[188] Meanwhile tourist guides to the Netherlands and food bloggers describe a "complex and intriguing Indonesian feast".[189]

The *Politics of Foo*d program at the Delfina Foundation in London brings together a diverse array of professionals from around the world to undertake workshops in food politics, debating, social research and more.[190] Elia joined the first season of the program, and quickly decided to focus her research on *rijsttafel.* She began the month-long residency with a visit to the Indonesian Embassy, where the staff proposed she hold a *rijsttafel* with their support. This seemed a surprising development, as *rijsttafel* is often described as a culinary demonstration of both the economic and labour excess that colonial power afforded the Dutch in Indonesia.

Pairing with Dutch curator Nat Muller, Elia learned that discourses around the dark aspects of colonial history have historically been avoided in the Netherlands.[191] Consequently, many cities in the Netherlands boast Indonesian restaurants serving *rijsttafel*.

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[187] Heinz Von Holzen, Wendy Hutton, and Lother Arsana, *The Food of Indonesia: Authentic recipes from the Spice Islands* (Tuttle Publishing, 1999). A similar but more detailed description can be found at http://www.culturebriefings.com/articles/indrcetb.html.

[188] Susie Protschky, "The Colonial Table: Food, Culture and Dutch identity in Colonial Indonesia", *Australian Journal of Politics & History* 54, no. 3 (2008), p. 356.

[189] http://www.saveur.com/article/Travels/Rijstaffel, accessed 10/02/2016.

[190] See http://delfinafoundation.com/programmes/public-and-thematic-programmes/theme-the-politics-of-food-season-1/. For the second season, Mella Jaarsma was also a participating artist.

[191] J. H. Houben Vincent, "A Torn Soul: The Dutch Public Discussion on the Colonial Past in 1995", *Indonesia* 63, no. 63 (1997).

Figure 151: Elia Nurvista, *The Flamboyant Table: Rijsttafel Revisited*, 2014, delegated performance, Delfina Foundation, “Politics of Food” series.

Although not popular in Indonesia for many years, *rijsttafel* has resurfaced for the foreign tourist market, as London based Indonesian food critic Sri Owen testified:

> Saddest of all is that the *rijstaffel's* prestige has carried it into present-day hotels and restaurants in Indonesia itself...In the foyer of a very big, very smart hotel in Bali I saw a poster…It was illustrated with a photograph of a young western man and his western wife…a line of beautiful Balinese maidens, in brightly-coloured local costume, queued to serve them with the regulation array of traditional, authentic dishes.[192]

This image of the "inappropriate, untimely *rijsttafel*" – to borrow Owen's pejoratives – with its exoticisation of colonial subservience and excess for foreign tourists, provided the provocation and the form for Elia's artist-orchestrated meal *The Flamboyant Table: Rijsttafel Revisited* (2014). In London, Elia's *rifsttafel* became what Francis Maravillas describes as a "translation (as opposed to the mere transfer)" of a critique of post-colonial self-exoticisation and of ahistorical nostalgic performances which reassert the colonial paradigm.[193]

Drawing on Owen's criticisms, the performance of *rjsttafel* raised the same concerns that bell hooks expresses:

> The over-riding fear is that cultural, ethnic and racial differences will be continually commodified and offered up as new dishes to enhance the white palate – that the other will be eaten, consumed and forgotten.[194]

In Elia's participatory meal, several possible contexts for this kind of critique of commodification are conflated: both Elia and her *rijsttafel* are "the other" in London, a fusion of European and Asian colonial histories other than those ubiquitous in London – such as Britain's own South Asian colonial legacy.[195] Simultaneously, *The Flamboyant Table: Rijsttafel Revisited* appropriated the colonial-colonised dynamic, but located it as it is in Amsterdam: an exotic-nostalgic commodity for a cosmopolitan consumer (Fig. 150).

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[192] Sri Owen, "MISUNDERSTANDING FOOD TRADITIONS or, Rijsttafel to Go", *Sri Owen: Looking at Southeast Asian Food – Eating, Cooking and Travelling*, 2006-2014, http://sriowen.squarespace.com/rijsttafel-to-go/. Sri Owen, an expatriate Indonesian food writer living in London, is best-known for her publication "The Rice Book", a cookbook which also touches on the social and historical significance of rice in many cultures.

[193] Maravillas, "Food and Hospitality in Contemporary Asian Art", p. 163.

[194] bell hooks, *Black Looks: Race and Representation* (Boston, MA: South End Press, 1992), p. 39.

[195] It should not be overlooked that during the Napoleonic wars, Britain invaded Dutch-controlled Java and held power for five years.

Figure 151: Elia Nurvista, *A Conversation: Ons Indisch Erfgoed (Our Indies Heritage)*, 2014, installed for *The Lizard is a Liar*, Museum Vargas, University of the Philippines, Manila, 2014-15.

To implement this performance, Elia delegated the role of table-waiting to Indonesian students. But rather than subservient, demure service, these maidens emptied the rice dishes straight onto the table, fashioning them into sculptures. Dishes appeared one after the other without cease or explanation, parodying the excess of the colonial table. Subverting the contemporary fashion of explaining the ingredients' provenance and flavour, Elia and writer Michael C. Vasquez instead elaborated the historical context of *rijsttafel* and the cultural significance of rice across the archipelago.[196]

There are few first-person accounts of the Delfina performance, or documented responses from the participants.[197] Elia herself said the participants' comments were that the food was interesting – perhaps, indeed, "consumed and forgotten", as hooks anticipated. Elia spoke more to the residency than the event; she was challenged by the highly intellectual engagement with food as a research material and felt she developed her sensitivity and capacity to articulate the political concerns she wants to explore.[198]

A subsequent work from Elia's research into *rijsttafel* was an installation called *A Conversation: Ons Indisch Erfgoed* (Our Indies Heritage).[199] Elia was away from Indonesia from October to December 2014 so, out of necessity and creativity, much of the work to produce the installation was delegated and directed remotely.

The installation comprises a photograph of a *rijsttafel* taking place in the home of a Dutch family in Bandung in 1936 and a small screen showing two video-interviews; both are mounted against ornate patterned wallpaper (Fig. 151). These three sets of image, each utilising colour, framing and technology to signify temporal and cultural references, cast the viewer into a space that is simultaneously present and past, nostalgic and political (Fig. 152).

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[196] Elia Nurvista, "Interview by Elly Kent (Rijstaffel)", (2014).
[197] Some photographic documentation can be viewed on curator Nat Muller's website, http://www.natmuller.com/rijsttafel.html.
[198] Nurvista, "Interview by Elly Kent (Rijstaffel)".
[199] Exhibited in *The Lizard is a Liar*, Museum Vargas, University of Philippines, Manila, from December 2014 to January 2015.

Figure 152: Elia Nurvista, *A Conversation: Ons Indisch Erfgoed,* 2014, stills from the mock documentary.

In the black-and-white photograph, the family sit around a table so deeply stacked with dishes there is barely an empty space. Leaning over the table, a "native" servant bears another dish from which a middle-aged Dutchman spoons food into his plate. The scene is flooded with light, bouncing off the fore and mid-ground surfaces, white tablecloth and china, the predominantly white clothes of the subjects, and the walls. Mid-tones emerge on the reflective surfaces of the furnishings, clustering around the family to create a sense of intimacy.[200]

From this domestic abundance enabled by colonised labour – a scene ubiquitous among artefacts of Dutch colonial photography – Elia extrapolated a narrative to assign to a fictional character, the adult version of one of the children in the photograph.[201] "Mr Hendrik" appears in a small room seated in a deck chair, addressing an unseen interviewer.[202] Prompted to respond to the aforementioned photograph, he recalls (in English) domestic life in the Dutch East Indies, initially focusing on warm memories of domestic staff almost identical to those described by Stoler and Strassler in their study comparing Dutch and Indonesian memories of domestic labour during the late colonial period.[203]

The script reflected documented memories so accurately because, in fact, the real-life experiences of the actor playing Mr Hendrik's fictional character strongly influenced the script. Halfway through the video, the framing shifts to a straight-to-camera perspective, positioning the viewer as interlocutor. The script shifts too, rapidly progressing from the personal, through the specific labour/economic relations in the Dutch East Indies and ending with a globalised Marxist position:

> In those days I thought they were really good and happy…But when I imagine myself in their position, I think I wouldn't be really happy…I

[200] The photo is from the Tropenmuseum Collection but is available through commons via Wikipedia's entry on *rijsttafel:* https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rijsttafel#/media/File:COLLECTIE_TROPENMUSEUM_De_familie_C.H._Japing_met_tante_Jet_en_oom_Jan_Breeman_aan_de_rijsttafel_Bandoeng_TMnr_10030167.jpg.
[201] Protschky, "The Colonial Table: Food, Culture and Dutch Identity in Colonial Indonesia", p. 20.
[202] Mr Hendrik responds to questions that appear as text throughout the nearly 20 minute video.
[203] Ann Laura Stoler and Karen Strassler, "Castings for the Colonial: Memory Work in 'New Order' Java," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 42, no. 01 (2000). When I asked Elia if this text had been influential on her script, she replied that she had not yet read it (personal communication February 16, 2016). Stoler and Strassler suggest that domestic accounts predominate because "In contrast to nation-centred narratives, the domestic occupies a space that is neither heroic, nor particularly eventful, nor marked by the brash violences in which colonial relationships are more often thought to be located", pp. 9-10.

> would see those Europeans wasting food whereas I and my family were living in poverty...But …this was also because the servants apparently agreed to the system, and up to now the system is the same in many places in the world. There are people in power and they have the material abundance, and there are people who are poor…system remains stable so long as both parties agree to it.

The second part of the video features an Indonesian man presented as the son of the servant in the *rijsttafel* photograph. Elia drew on a collection of short stories by renowned 20th century Indonesian writer Pramoedya Ananta Toer to construct Pak Budi's script. In Stoler and Strassler's writing on "memory work" in Java, Pramoedya's *Tales from Djakarta* caricaturing Jakarta residents in the years immediately after decolonisation are positioned as a literary trope in which stories "frequently locate the life tragedies of the urban poor…in the domestic service sector".[204] Budi's "memories" of his father's service echo the subservient colonial mentality that appears in that volume. Asked whether looking at the photo reminds him of colonialism, he says:

> No! This was my father's work and his service to that family. Colonialism is fighting and battles, shooting. My father said the true colonisers were the Japanese. They were very cruel. The family my father worked for were captured and sent to barracks. It was the Japanese that sent the Dutch back to Holland.

Unlike Stoler and Strassler's sources, the fictional Pak Budi's father proudly kept a copy of the photograph that his former boss had taken; however, he did take the classic narrative turn they describe, re-framing the apparent stability and monotony of domestic service against the dramatic and traumatic events of the Japanese occupation. Pak Budi's demeanour throughout the film is jovial, even in his derision of "white bosses". His script reflects the "unhomogenised body of accounts built around the minimal scaffolds of sanctioned formulas".[205] Indeed, Elia has drawn directly on these literary scaffolds to imagine the script for her videos in *A Conversation: Ons Indisch Erfgoed*.

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[204] Ibid., p. 44. A translation of *Djongos and Babu* can be found in Pramoedya Ananta Toer, "Flunkey and Maid", *Indonesia* 61 (1996).

[205] "Scores of photos show servants blurred in the background…crucial to the colonial 'backdrop'...But these are images cherished by Dutch colonials, not the colonized. Such snapshots are literally and figuratively absent from the memories that servants have of domestic labour and from the stories they choose to tell about it." Stoler and Strassler, "Castings for the Colonial: Memory Work in 'New Order' Java", p. 20. In Pramoedya's 'Djongos dan Babu' (Flunkey and Maid) a similar turn is cynically documented; at first the family serves the Dutch, then turns to the Japanese with enthusiasm before being 'suddenly disgusted with Japan' and returning to their fervour for white *tuan* (bosses). Ibid., p. 14.

Figure 153: Elia Nurvista and Prihatmo Moki, screen-printed stickers that make up the wallpaper for the installation *A Conversation: Ons Indisch Erfgoed,* (2014).

Figure 154: “Heirs to world culture”: Elia’s reading material, photo taken in her studio in 2015.

The wallpaper behind the screen and the photo depicts the exotic foods of the Dutch East Indies. Assembled from hundreds of square screen-printed stickers, these blue-and-white images resemble the Delftware tiles produced in the Netherlands from the 16th century. With a central motif of tropical fruit and corner decorations featuring Indies spices, they represent what Elia imagines the Dutch in the Indies considered exotic and foreign food (Fig. 153).[206] Finally, the entire production process, from filming through to the design and printing of the wallpaper (drawn by artist Prihatmo Moki to Elia's specifications) and the performance, was delegated.[207]

Key themes within *A Conversation: Ons Indisch Erfgoed* are the delegation of (domestic) labour and the appropriation of food culture. Different parts of the installation converse on these, yet they reach no firm, didactic conclusion. Claire Bishop has argued that delegated performance in video works "trouble the border between live and mediated", providing artists with a medium that can actively dissolve boundaries between fiction and fact. Bishop goes on to assert the implicit relationship between delegation and the ethics of labour:

> ...at its best, delegated performance produces disruptive events that testify to a shared reality between viewers and performers, and which defy not only agreed ways of thinking about pleasure, labour and ethics, but also the intellectual frameworks we have inherited to understand these ideas today.[208]

It is this link back to the ethics of labour that makes *A Conversation: Ons Indisch Erfgoed* such an interesting example of delegated performance and appropriation. The work both affirms and subverts the viewer's expectations, testifying to the complex individual experiences of the meta-narratives of colonisation and post-colonial discourse – and yet its testimonies are fiction. The appropriation of the cultural aesthetics of different times and places makes this disjuncture obvious – and yet, it is genuine artefacts that are appropriated. Thus, *A Conversation: Ons Indisch Erfgoed* exemplifies the "and/or" configuration of the aesthetic regime, blurring boundaries between history and memory, authenticity and inauthenticity, past and present.

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[206] Elia Nurvista, "Interview by Elly Kent (home studio)", 05/05/2015.

[207] As discussed in Chapter 1, performance art has long been established in Indonesia. Delegated performance, too, is an integral part of contemporary performance; Mella Jaarsma's *Pribumi-Pribumi* in 1988 and Heri Dono's *Kuda Binal,* described in Chapter 3, is another example. Video art is also strong, but delegated video performance is rare, with Krisna Murti's work probably the most well-known exception.

[208] Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*, p. 239.

7.4 Past present perfect tension: reinterpreting history

Elia's deft manipulation of time, space and memory in her individual works is inseparable from her participatory works. Similar to Mella Jaarsma's work, rather than being "about food", Elia's work is about the social and political relations that food may represent, engender, subvert or re-invent. Still experimenting with different methodologies, Elia considers food a research tool rather than a subject:

> …I'm interested in *rijsttafel* because I can look at other issues through…food ritual. I want to look further at how the present is connected to the past.[209]

This temporal consciousness permeates Elia's artistic processes and references, as she tests old and new relations between the artist and society in Indonesia, filtering them through close readings of texts on participation, and relational and dialogical aesthetics.

Elia's approach to community based artwork in *Rayuan Pulau Kelapa* strikingly resembles *turba's* implementation by "going down" to the *rakyat* and the pedagogic forms of conscientisation art proposed by Moelyono. Yet these sensibilities are somehow inverted: like artists practising *turba*, Elia emphasises the importance of the artist's learning, "a working method for educating and conscientising oneself, like a maturation of the art worker".[210] Yet Elia aims for collaborative and co-constructive learning, rather than seeing communities as research subjects.

This co-constructive approach resembles the conscientisation practices used in Moelyono's art classes to develop "critical consciousness among the *rakyat bawah*, both through working processes and the finished work as it is discussed with the broader community".[211] However, during an interview, Elia described attending a workshop with Moelyono and asking him how this kind of practice should be evaluated. Moelyono's answer, says Elia, focused on the affective capacity of the subsequent artworks in depicting the *rakyat*'s struggles to others, primarily authorities.[212]

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[209] Elia Nurvista, "Interview by Elly Kent (Jln Tirtodipuran)", 13/10/2014.
[210] Setiawan quoted in Antariksa, *Tuan Tanah Kawin Muda*, p. 66.
[211] Moelyono, *Seni Rupa Penyadaran* (Yogyakarta: Yayasan Bentang Budaya, 1997), p. 45.
[212] Nurvista, "Interview by Elly Kent (Jln Tirtodipuran)".

In *Rayuan Pulau Kelapa*, Elia's process is not directed towards representation of the women of Muntuk to the broader community or authorities. Although documentation exists on the website, the sole artefact created by the artists is the zine recipe book. The conscientisation achieved during the project is both shared: equally experienced by artist and participants; and discrete: intended primarily for the artists and participants.

By contrast, although *Adiboga Wonoasri* took its initiative from an encounter with the alimentary customs of a specific *rakyat* site, it almost entirely removed those customs from the context that designates them as such. In the cosmopolitan contemporary art scene in Yogyakarta, the insertion of ingredients that are both foreign *and* local critiques global trends towards "eating the other" through culinary exoticisation, and the turn to agrarian nostalgia and reification of the *rakyat* within Indonesian art history. Dina explains:

> …in relation to your question about previous artists or senior artists and their desire to be representative of the *rakyat*, but also seeing the artist as a part of society through joint action; in *Adiboga Wonoasri* it was more reflective. Look at…people in the art world, as cosmopolitan people once every three months they might travel for a biennale or a residency, they have very good references about lots of things and other cultures, but behind these cosmopolitan people there is still a side that is actually searching for roots, origins…so people were always asking about Ponjong and what the people are like.[213]

The decision to restrict participants' access to these "authentic" origins locates the other and the self not as binary oppositions but as part of the same process of knowledge-making. The similarities between *Adiboga Wonoasri* and *Rayuan Pulau Kelapa* lie in this shared responsibility towards knowledge-making as the site of the "artwork". Located in, and conceived for, communities linked by language and culture but separated by vastly different experiences and lifestyles, both projects produce what Maravillas calls "new modalities of relationality and connectivity" through the very process of collaboratively imagining new forms of food.[214] Elia identifies key differences in her own approach and that of Moelyono:

[213] Syafiatudina and Nurvista, "Interview by Elly Kent", 24/03/2015.
[214] Maravillas, "Food and Hospitality in Contemporary Asian Art", p. 167.

> …many people said to me, what are you doing, do you really want to change society? Because they think that community art has to be like that. I don't think that's my intention, or my task…I think my goals… are more open; there is more speculation.[215]

As discussed in Chapter 3, sites that engender this speculative criticality by providing quasi-institutional support like residencies, projects, mentorship and liaison are also integral to this shift in focus. Similarly, these sites are also the primary generators of new theoretical discourses that draw specifically on both exogenous discourses around participatory and relational art, and endogenous discourses on artists' autonomy and social responsibility (Fig. 154). As John Clark emphasises, it is important to carefully reconceive – I argue even to departition – the distinctions between exogenous and endogenous art discourses.[216] This paradigm is further complicated by the critical manner in which the theories of Kester, Bishop, Bourriaud and others are received in Indonesia, relative to the accepting attitudes documented towards pedagogic and development discourses in the era of conscientisation art.

Conclusion

In August 2013, a couple of months into my fieldwork, I travelled by train to Yogyakarta to join some talks and see exhibitions, and, in particular, to attend the *Adiboga Wonoasri* fine-dining experience at KKF. On my first afternoon, I attended an artists' talk for the *Dobrak* (Break-down) exhibition at Cemeti Art House. During intense discussions of the value of art and interdisciplinarity, sociologist Nuraini Juliastuti from Kunci Cultural Studies Centre mentioned a reading group to be held the next evening. I went along to what turned out to be the last night of the "Down the Rabbit Hole" reading group (led by Dina and attended by Elia, among others) focused on Claire Bishop's *Artificial Hells,* which I had finished reading only months before. As the months went by, engagement with the discourses around relational aesthetics, dialogical aesthetics, participatory art and many other permutations continued. I have mapped out many of these biennales, symposiums and exhibitions in Chapter 3, but I briefly raise them again here to give further context to the practices I have described in my analysis of Elia Nurvista's practice.

[215] Elly Kent and Elia Nurvista, "Interview with Elia Nurvista (Jln Tirtodipuran)".
[216] John Clark, "The Worlding of the Asian Modern", p. 69.

Indonesian artists, especially those who began their practices in the mid 2000s and after, read, discuss and draw on the work of the European and American theorists mentioned above. This is not in spite of the claim of Asia's exclusion from the avant-garde – a claim I refuted in my introduction – but rather because of it. The presence of Asian artists in Europe, and especially in Paris, during the mid to late 19th century clearly illustrates the mutually informative, but often ignored, relations between the European avant-garde and those artists who would later return to their home countries to establish distinct engagements with modernist discourses.[217] Jim Supangkat asserts that in Indonesia the lack of commitment to erasing tradition created a "modernism of idealism"; this in turn created the conditions – even the compulsion – for artists to continuously refer back to relations, people, community and society within their artwork. The impetus to "transmute daily life", as Soedjojono demanded, was embedded in Indonesian modernist discourses from the beginning, but always in coexistence with the artist's unique position as creator. In Indonesian modernism, the artist's right to individual expression came with a responsibility to seek the "correct" subject to express. There are of course many exceptions to this: as Yuliman pointed out, even if a singular framework for Indonesian art was settled "there would still be artists who would deliberately deviate from it".[218] Like Yuliman, I argue there should be many frameworks, and many will have inherent contradictions within them.

In Indonesia today, established and emerging artists are engaging with the frameworks proposed by Bourriaud, Bishop and Kester, and also Miwon Kwon, Mary-Jane Jacob and Suzanne Lacey. A series of talks called "Young Teachers" at the Langgeng Art Foundation, Yogyakarta, gives young academics and writers the opportunity to present papers on the thinkers like Gayatri Spivak, Alain Badiou and Gilles Deleuze. In my last few months of fieldwork in Indonesia, I attended another "Down the Rabbit Hole" reading group where we discussed Rancière's *The Ignorant School Master*; also in

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[217] See, for example, Clark's description of Raden Saleh's encounter with Baudelaire, and the strong presence of Japanese artists in Paris. Ibid. See also Hugh Honour & John Fleming, *A World History of Art*, (4th ed), Fleming Honour Ltd, London, 1995, pp. 669-670, referred to by Enin Supriyanto in his essay on poster art in Enin Supriyanto, *Setelah Aktivism* (Yogyakarta: Hyphen, 2015).

[218] Sanento Yuliman, "Mencari Indonesia Dalam Seni Lukis Indonesia (first published Budaya Dyaja 1969)", in *Dua Seni Rupa: Sepilihan Tulian Sanento Yuliman*, ed. Asikin Hasan (Jakarta: Yayasan Kalam, 2001), p. 67.

attendance were art historian Antariksa, Syafiatudina (Dina) and Elia Nurvista, and other Yogyakarta arts practitioners.

These art workers are well-versed in global discourses on art, aesthetics and the social realm. Yet, as Dina asserted, they are more intimately connected to the embodied experience of their everyday cultural and historical contexts, and their formal and informal artistic education. They are familiar with the work of Rirkrit Tiravanija, but they know local artists like Mella Jaarsma, Moelyono, FX Harsono and Hersri Setiawan personally. They read Bourriaud, Bishop and Kester, but they internalise Moelyono, *rasa* and *turba* through direct mentorship and curatorial guidance that is inextricably linked to the social realm of the art world they reside in. Arguably, this search for roots is an inherent part of their cosmopolitanism, inflected by the legacy of autonomous and heteronomous practices and a cycle of endogenous-exogenous-originary discourses. This by no means undermines the influence that global discourses have on contemporary art and artists in Indonesia. However, as demonstrated by the encounter between Antariksa and Bourriaud at the Biennale Jogja XIII forum, described in Chapter 5.3, Indonesian contemporary artists are still alert to both the universalising and marginalising tendencies of discourses that emerge from the centres of power in art history, criticism, theory and practice, through their control over publication, markets, and the collection and dissemination of art.

Conclusion

This dissertation has addressed a specific set of research questions, which asked why and how Indonesian artists combine individual and participatory practices. Participatory, relational, dialogical and community-oriented art practices have garnered increased academic and curatorial attention over the past 20 years, after Nicolas Bourriaud's *Relational Aesthetics* (1992) triggered interest in the aesthetic, ethical, and evaluative implications of art practised in the social realm. Yet, with a few exceptions, little academic or discursive attention has been directed towards these kinds of practices outside of the USA and Europe. Similarly, little of the research into these forms has addressed the nexus between artists' practice as individuals – for instance in making objects or studio works – and their work involving participants.

In my task to redress these gaps, I have narrowed my focus to Indonesian artists who practise participatory art – which I define as practices in which the artist involves others, primarily non-artists, in the implementation of their artworks – and who also create works, such as objects, paintings, prints and installations, by themselves. Drawing on Jacques Rancière's theorisation of the deconstruction of the "partitions of the sensible", I argue against evaluating participation in terms of active or passive engagement.[219] Instead I have focused on the aesthetic implications for artists' work when it relies on the involvement of other people as a fundamental conceptual element, and the relationship between this and their individual aesthetic practice.

Claire Bishop highlighted that research and analysis of participatory art practice necessitates a partly sociological approach, and noted that her own lack of language skills has limited her own research on other countries.[220] As an Indonesian arts specialist and translator, and having previously researched arts programming for families in Indonesia, I was highly aware that participatory art is widely practised in Indonesia, and that most of the artists who work in this field are also known (often more so) for their individual artworks. With my language and cultural skills, I have been able to conduct deep primary and secondary research into this field in Indonesia,

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[219] Jacques Rancière, "The Emancipated Spectator", p. 277.
[220] Bishop, *Artificial Hell: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*, pp. 7-8.

including the translation and comparison of many texts not previously considered in analysis of Indonesian participatory art.

Focusing my research explicitly on the nexus between individual and participatory art practice in Indonesia, specific lines of enquiry emerged, from historical and sociological contexts through to contemporary practice and the “art-world” that it emerges from. This encompassed contexts specific to Indonesia, as well as the now well-established position of Indonesian artists on the world stage and the climate of globalised communication.

To address these lines of enquiry, I drew on a wide range of written material, including newspaper and journal articles, exhibition catalogues and books published in Indonesia over 70 years from 1946 (the year after Independence was declared) to 2016. International sources, especially from the USA, Europe and Britain, were also important, especially in identifying the direction of my research. Finally, much of the content of the dissertation is drawn from my field research, which resulted in first-hand observational descriptions of participatory art projects, exhibitions and artworks, as well as interviews with artists and other actors in the Indonesian art scene.

Drawing on these primary and secondary resources, this dissertation traced the specific characteristics of the development of modernism in Indonesian art theory and practice. Using examples from early individual artists and artist collectives, who actively published their thinking in the early years of the Indonesian nation’s formation, in Chapter 1 I drew on Sanento Yuliman’s contentions that modernism in Indonesia embraced positions that are often located as binary oppositions in the Western art canon. The aesthetic form and function of Indonesian modernist art was informed by traditions from around the archipelago, and simultaneously incorporated references to the European avant-garde. Similarly, Indonesian artists reified the artists’ relationship with the *rakyat* (ordinary people) and also defended the individual artist as the centre of creative expression.

My arguments with regard to this configuration were strongly influenced by the writing of Sanento Yuliman, Indonesia’s pre-eminent art historian and critic up to and beyond his death in 1992. In Chapter 1, I compared Yuliman’s theory of “two arts” in Indonesia to Rancière’s conception of the aesthetic regime. Both of these approaches

wrestle with tendencies to identify modernist discourse as a reification of the universal and progressive, and both demand recognition of the inextricable relationship between the aesthetic and the social, highlighting the conjunctive and contradictory nature of aesthetic practice. Yuliman declares that "The belief that there is only one frame of reference (perspective, values, and opinions) that is right and legitimate for art – a universal frame of reference – has contaminated our vision".[221] Meanwhile Rancière asserts that "The notion of modernity thus seems to have been deliberately invented to prevent a clear understanding of the transformations of art and its relationships with the other spheres of collective experience".[222] Both Rancière and Yuliman see art as fundamentally multivalent.

Drawing on Rancière and Yuliman, I developed a conjunctive framework which structures the remainder of the dissertation, highlighting two particular paradigms which are continuous over the course of Indonesian art history and into the present day. These are the continuity of an "artistic ideology" (as Yuliman refers to it) which conjoins autonomy and heteronomy, and originary art discourses drawing on diverse sources.

8.1 An artistic ideology

In Chapter 1.1, I elaborated on the theories of Sanento Yuliman and Jacques Rancière, who both propose alternatives to the often-contested concept of universal modernism in the arts. Rancière asks a question that is echoed in Yuliman's investigations of Indonesian modernism:

> How can the notion of "aesthetics" as a specific experience lead at once to a pure world of art and of the self-suppression of art in the tradition of avant-garde radicalism and the aestheticisation of common existence?[223]

The answer lies in Rancière's proposition of the "aesthetic regime", which he argues pivots on the essentially conjunctive nature of aesthetics, binding autonomy and heteronomy together. This is also a key concern for Yuliman, who demonstrated the

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[221] Sanento Yuliman, "Estetik Yang Merabunkan (TEMPO, 20 June 1987)", in *Dua Seni Rupa: Sepilihan Tulisan Sanento Yuliman*, ed. Asikin Hasan (Jakarta Yayasan Kalam, 2001), p. 22.
[222] Jacques Rancière, "The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible, tr. Gabriel Rockhill", (London: Continuum Publishing, 2004), p. 26.
[223] Ranciere "The Aesthetic Revolution and its Outcomes", p. 134.

instability and inseparability of the hierarchies of high and low art, and their mutual influence on each other.[224] I argue, therefore, that the aesthetic regime perpetuates Yuliman's concerns in analysing Indonesian art, through his proposal of an "artistic ideology" of continuity, and his understanding that Indonesian art takes three main stances: the artist as the centre of creative energy, the autonomy of art (especially from political influence), and the opening up of art practice to all traditions. Hence I locate the artistic ideology as an appropriate tool with which to project Yuliman's theories onto developments in individual and participatory art after his death. In Chapter 1 and 2, I traced the evidence for this artistic ideology in Indonesian art through historical signposts, specifically in the writings and manifestos of Soedjojono, the Gelanggang Creed, Lekra (Institute of People's Culture), the *Gerakan Seni Rupa Baru* (The New Indonesian Art Movement, or GSRBI) and *jeprut* (a form of performative public intervention). These individuals, collectives and movements held both social engagement and artists' autonomy in the same esteem. GSRBI, and to some extent *jeprut*, attracted the vested attention and involvement of Yuliman and other thinkers, specifically because of their attempts to define a path for Indonesian art that was not dependent on Western constructs.[225]

I also applied my analysis of conjoined autonomy and heteronomy and originary discourses to the work of particular artists. In Chapter 2, I focus on the challenges it has created in the writing of a discourse around participatory art practice in Indonesia, drawing on texts written in response to Heri Dono's seminal 1992 performance *Kuda Binal* (Wild Horse). *Kuda Binal* was representative of the radical thrust of discourse that developed around the *Pameran Binal Eksperimental* (Wild Experimental Exhibition), held to counter the conservatism of the Yogyakarta Biennale in 1992. Prioritising a return to the traditional and social, artworks in the *Binal Eksperimental* were among the first in Indonesia to situate participation as an integral element of the artworks' form and concept. This discursive attention to the aesthetics of participation has faced consistent challenges from the realm of pedagogy and ethics in Indonesia.

[224] Yuliman, "Dua Seni Rupa (Paper for the Simposium Nasional Seni Rupa, at the Dewan Kesenian Surabaya, 1984)" in *Dua Seni Rupa: Sepilihan Tulisan Sanento Yuliman*, ed. Hasan Asikin (Jakarta: Yayasan Kalam, 2001).
[225] J. Supangkat, "Gerakan Seni Rupa Baru Indonesia", *PT Gramedia, Jakarta* (1979).

Nindityo Adipurnomo has contended that texts addressing artist Moelyono's cooperation with NGOs have been partial to sociological discourse:

> In the ensuing debate, greater focus was placed on the assumptions of the social movement than the art movement…for Moleyono it was certainly more relevant to pay attention to who and how both the subject and object mediated the movement.[226]

The impact of writing around Moelyono's participatory *"seni rupa penyadaran"* (conscientisation art) shifted participatory art out of the art discourses by prioritising socio-ethical concerns, mirroring pedagogical and developmental discourse, and reinstating the partitions between art and other fields of life.

This is also a concern prevalent in the discourse around participatory art outside Indonesia, and one which, in its associations with external discourses around participatory development, is also relevant to the development of originary discourses. In Chapter 3, I explore how these originary discourses continue to evolve in the present day, through a ecology of institutional and quasi-institutional practices. Within this ecology, artist-run initiatives, galleries, residencies, symposiums and major exhibitions explore, perpetuate, resist and challenge the exogenous and endogenous discourses around individual and participatory approaches to artistic practice. The discourses generated through this activity continue to test the boundaries and definitions of this practice, but in doing so also function to perpetuate a sense that artists must combine autonomy and heteronomy in their practice.

The framework of conjoined autonomy and heteronomy is also demonstrably evident in particular forms of practice that emerged in Indonesia in the 1940s and 1950s. The ongoing influence of Lekra's conception of *turba* (going down among oppressed or marginalised social groups) and Soedjojono's *jiwa ketok* (the visible soul of the individual artist) is demonstrated throughout the dissertation. Both of these concepts, and their concomitant reification of the expressive rights and social responsibilities of the individual artist , set the "climate" for contemporary artists' continuing enactment of a dual role encompassing participatory and individual artworks. In invoking climate as an analogy, I drew on Yuliman's similar argument against positioning the advent of

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[226] Nindityo Adipurnomo, Priyambudi Sulistiyanto, and Moelyono, *Retak Wajah Anak-anak Bendungan/Disintegrating Faces of the Children of the Dam* (Yogyakarta: Cemeti Art House 2011), p. 13-14.

abstraction in Indonesian painting as a rupture. Instead, Yuliman argues that the climate for abstraction was set by early painters' artistic ideology, which insisted that even in representative painting "visual elements and their arrangement, regardless of the object they depict, can evoke, declare or convey valuable emotions, feelings or artistic experiences".[227] The evocative power of art links autonomous concepts like *jiwa ketok* and its valorisation of the creative independence of the artist to heteronomous approaches like *turba,* with its intention to "catch the heart-beat of those below".[228] In addition, drawing on Hersri Setiawan's memories of practising *turba* for literary purposes, I show that the particular formulation of heteronomy that developed within *turba* dictated that participation in society should have an important influence on an artist's creative practice. This opened up interpretations of participatory art to include both the artist's participation in society and the participation of members of society in the artist's work.

Throughout the dissertation, the bond between autonomy and heteronomy structures my analysis of artists' practice. Chapters 4 through to 8 focus on the work of five contemporary artists – I Made "Bayak" Muliana, Arahmaiani, I Wayan "Suklu" Sujana, Tisna Sanjaya and Elia Nurvista – who demonstrate different approaches to artistic practice combining participatory and individual methodologies. Analysis of these particular artists shows the diversity of practices underway in Indonesia, providing a lens with which to examine the different tendencies evident in different generations and to highlight how the legacy of the discourse around autonomy and heteronomy continues to resonate across diverse forms and methodologies.

Some of these artists respond directly and specifically to forms like *turba* and *jiwa ketok* from the early nationalist period, or "conscientisation art" from the 1980s and 1990s. For instance, in Chapter 5 I describe Arahmaiani and Made Bayak's practices to elaborate on the reciprocal nature of participatory practice that *turba* set in place, and which was carried forward in the "conscientisation art" of Moelyono. The emphasis on the artists' role in society in the practice of *turba*, which behoved artists to relate to the

[227] Yuliman, "Seni Lukis Indonesia Baru (Dewan Kesenian Jakarta, 1976)", p. 93.
[228] Antariksa, *Tuan Tanah Kawin Muda*, p. 66.

rakyat as "not an observer of their lives but a full participant in them",[229] revealed a fundamental understanding that artists must make direct and conscious efforts to involve themselves in society and community. In Arahmaiani's work this concept helped to explain the disjuncture I initially encountered between my preconceptions of participation and Arahmaiani's descriptions of her "community art" projects. FX Harsono argues that Arahmaiani's community work "can only provide a contribution to creative practice that is limited to inspiration and as a source of ideas, and not yet as a part of the process of creating art work collectively".[230] Nonetheless, this struggle is still sited on the spectrum of Yuliman's artistic ideology, wrestling with the spaces in between autonomy and heteronomy.

Made Bayak is a Balinese artist who often works in schools, is active in the movement that opposes the reclamation of land in Benoa Bay in Bali, and also works with diverse communities. He engages with students at elite private schools (generally international) and local public schools, performs at festivals and demonstrations, and exhibits his paintings in commercial and public gallery spaces. Bayak's *Plasticology* project is also indebted to the pedagogical practices pioneered by Moelyono, conscientising as are his performances and paintings. His specific evocation of *turba* in online forums demonstrates a consciousness of deeper historical imperatives to combine his artistic autonomy with social responsibility. Yet, unlike *turba*, which aimed to develop artists so their works could communicate the problems of the *rakyat* to the middle class, Bayak works to disseminate the same message of environmental activism to both elite and ordinary members of society. In the dualistic approach Moelyono takes, the community participates in conscientising art projects led by the artist, and the artist independently produces paintings and installations that represent that community's problems to the powerful elite. By contrast, Bayak's participatory art projects and his individual artworks and performances are aligned in their messages on behaviours and actions related to the environment. While Moelyono's practice is focused on emancipation of marginalised communities through representation and advocacy, Bayak's practice demands that individuals, corporations and governments take responsibility for their environment through engagement and protest. This

[229] Keith Foulcher, *Social Commitment in Literature and the Arts: the Indonesian "Institute of People's Culture" 1950-1965*, p. 110.
[230] FX Harsono, "Kerakyatan dalam Seni Lukis Indonesia Sejak PERSAGI Hingga Kini", p. 77.

declining focus on the *rakyat* as an “other” in need of emancipation is a key difference between the approaches of established and emerging artists, and is further explored in the chapter on Elia Nurvista.

At the opening of Chapter 5 I quote I Wayan “Suklu” Sujana’s assertion that his paintings are a manifestation of his deepest self, in a corporeal and spiritual sense that echoes the “visible soul” of *jiwa ketok.* “My paintings are like my exhaled breath. They are full of my personal spirit,” Suklu insists.[231] Suklu’s construction of a three-pronged practice encompasses (personal) expressive painting and drawing, large-scale outdoor (interactive) installations and participatory (social) artworks. Drawing on actor-network-theory (ANT), Suklu sees these spaces as mutually informative but distinct in form and function. For Suklu, combining autonomous and heteronomous artistic practice is a formalist concern, carefully designed to develop his own sense of the expressive and self-reflective power of art, and to share this with other artists and non-artists.

In Chapter 6, I look at the diverse and experimental practice of Tisna Sanjaya, who, like Bayak, is concerned with environmental and cultural preservation. Similar to Bayak, Tisna utilises his arts practice to voice didactic messages to different classes and power bases in society, but the breadth of mediums he uses to do this – etching, painting, performance, television, community development, music and theatre – has also expanded his audience. For instance, his television show *Si Kabayan Nyintreuk* is immensely popular among ordinary people (who are generally more aware of his role on television than his status as a contemporary artist). On the other hand, Tisna’s paintings, etchings and installations have been routinely included in local, regional and international exhibitions and art fairs for over two decades. I argue, however, that the very breadth of Tisna’s practice has, to an extent, undermined the capacity of his site-specific community development project, *Imah Budaya* (Cultural Centre), to generate the lasting social change he aspires to.

Harsono describes the ongoing concern for socially-engaged art practice over the history of Indonesian art as *kerakyatan,* directly linking the works of the earliest

[231] Quoting I Wayan Sujana Suklu in Wang Zineng, *Elok Berkelok (Lovely Curves)*, p. 10.

modern painters – for instance, members of the *Persagi* painters collective established in 1938 – to the work of artists like Arahmaiani and Tisna Sanjaya. While Harsono laments the difficulties this senior generation of artists (which he is part of) have had in resolving concerns for society with aesthetic expression, he identifies a shift in their methodologies from previous generations. While the artists of the 1950s and 1960s gained an understanding of social problems by living among the poor, artists who began their practice in the 1970s and 1980s did so through their education and work with NGOs. I argue that among the emerging generation of artists, represented in this dissertation by Made Bayak and Elia Nurvista, attitudes to the role of art and artists in society are shifting again, moving towards more equivocal approaches. This further develops the aesthetic regime's intention to departition the categories of art and life, participant and viewer, art object and art experience.

Elia Nurvista, who features in Chapter 7, combines hospitality and food politics with post-colonial discourse in often performative and participatory projects. In spite of her professed admiration of Moelyono's practice, Nurvista's attitude to engagement with ordinary citizens is aimed less at conscientising than at open-ended and collaborative explorations of problems in various social classes and demographics. In her 2014 project *Rayuan Pulau Kelapa* (Seductive Coconut Island), she spent time in a rural community. The project explored potential uses for former staples that were supplanted by rice growing in the 20th century, by engaging housewives in adapting local recipes and publicly presenting their findings. In *Adiboga Wonoasri* (Wonoasri Fine Dining) in the cosmopolitan heart of Yogyakarta, she introduced famine foods from a nearby region to young, hip art patrons. These participants tested the ingredients and adapted recipes, this time from around the world. Both of these projects eschewed the representative and overtly educative function for art that was inscribed in *turba* and conscientisation; rather, they took participants on a path without a defined destination. In these works Elia took quotidian rituals of cooking and eating into the realm of artistic practice, and simultaneously injected the creative work of the artist into ordinary cooking and eating.

In Elia and Bayak's work, we can gauge a shift in the understanding of art's function in society, and more specifically an increasingly broad approach to the concept of the

rakyat. The class distinctions and development-oriented activism that underpinned the participatory practice of the 1970s and 1980s have become blurred as more Indonesians from all economic classes join the ranks of global consumers. While Tisna and Arahmaiani are also evolving their approaches to this new dynamic, Elia and Bayak's work focuses on tracing the present-day impact of subtle historical narratives and projecting future relations between humans and our environment, our patterns of consumption and the construction of our cultures. The search for a distinctly Indonesian expression based on *kerakyatan* culture and interactions with the oppressed and marginalised "masses", which once dominated socially-engaged art practice in Indonesia, is not rendered irrelevant but is openly questioned.

In their studio practice, too, younger artists take a less heroic approach to the function of the artwork, often producing individual works that are utilised as "settings" for their praxis, extending their concepts in visual form to enhance or sometimes to "document" their works. This documentation often differs from the conventional video and photographic documentation that we are familiar with from earlier iterations of participatory practice.[232] Neither are they works that the artists produce out of their encounters with the *rakyat* in order to speak on their behalf. Rather they may be semi-fictionalised accounts, as in Elia's *A Conversation: Ons Indisch Erfgoed* (Our Indies Heritage), which explored the role of colonial culinary customs from the perspective of both colonised and coloniser. Or they may be attempts to propagandise a particular political position, as in the stop-motion video produced from Bayak's performance supporting the *Tolak Reklamasi* movement.

In this dissertation I have traced the discourse around conjunctive autonomous and heteronomous arts practice from its inception in the writings of early 20th century painters like Soedjojono and influential literary groups like Gelanggang, through its institutionalisation in Lekra, and its reconstruction by later groups like GSRBI. All of these examples, however, can also be brought to bear on the second discourse that I have identified as influential on, and also influenced by, Indonesian art practice, namely originary discourses developed from a dialectic between exogenous and endogenous sources.

[232] See, for example, the documentation of Heri Dono's *Kuda Binal (Wild Horse)*, held by the Indonesian Visual Art Archive: http://archive.ivaa-online.org/artworks/detail/2701.

8.2 Originary discourses

Early tensions existed between exogenous discourses – which mainly emerged from what Indonesian artists identify as "the West" – and endogenous discourses coming from the many cultures that were drawn into the new nation of Indonesia (but primarily drawn from Javanese philosophy). These were evident in the work of Indonesia's first "modern" painter, Raden Saleh, who spent two decades living and working in Europe in the mid 19th century. John Clark positions Saleh as the first of many Asian artists who have relativised endogenous discourses through the influence of the exogenous discourses they encountered through "deep, colonially constructed, contact with European art centres and dominant art styles".[233] These tensions became the dominant paradigm in nationalist discourse, and also in Indonesian arts practice more generally around the time of the Cultural Polemic in 1935. In the introduction to this dissertation, I indicated how this tussle between Indonesia's early revolutionary intellectuals foreshadowed an ongoing battle between those who sought inspiration from "Western" modernity, universal values and technological progress, and those who thought the new nation's culture should draw on traditional cultural practices and ancestral knowledge and wisdom. In between these, some individuals sought a middle path.[234]

The Cultural Polemic remains an important touchstone for contemporary art in Indonesia today, and its debates over the extent to which artists and institutions should engage with either exogenous or endogenous practices still resonate.[235] In Chapter 2, I demonstrate this by identifying specific "originary discourses" of the kind Clark asserts emerge through encounters between exogenous and endogenous discourses, producing "almost wholly endogenous genealogies of the modern".[236] *Gotong royong* is linked to collaborative practice through a number of essays and projects, while *jiwa ketok* and *turba* are explored as originary discourses that parallel Western modernist concerns for the autonomy of the artist and the roots of participatory art practice. The ongoing relevance of these concepts has been

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[233] John Clark, "The Worlding of the Asian Modern", p .78.
[234] Yustiono, "Seni Rupa Kontemporar Indonesia dan Era Asia Pacific" *Jurnal Seni Rupa* 2(1995), pp. 57-62.
[235] In part this is evident by the regularity with which it is referred to in literature written by Indonesian curators, artists and academics.
[236] Clark, "The Worlding of the Asian Modern", p. 70.

demonstrated on a number of occasions in the past decade, and particularly the last three years, where *gotong royong, jiwa ketok* and *turba* have been specifically addressed as the subject of academic works, curatorial concepts or artworks in Indonesia. These concepts also appear in my analysis of the five artists I have used as case studies.

This consensus between originary discourses that have emerged specifically in the Indonesian context and expansive exogenous discourses is evident, and consciously developed, in the practices of Elia Nurvista, I Wayan "Suklu" Sujana and Tisna Sanjaya. In Chapter 5, I argue that Suklu's formalist tendencies, his often abstract, repetitious paintings, and his commitment to meditation as a form of creative practice can be read as what Kobena Mercer has described as "discrepant abstraction". Suklu's conscious engagement with actor-network-theory (ANT) and his attention to the "unseen things" that have dominated Balinese painting practice since the early modernist period is not a convergence of discourses drawn from exogenous and endogenous sources. Rather, Suklu is drawn to both ANT and the "unseen things" in his work because of the concurrence of anti-anthropocentricism in both. Nonetheless, Suklu's anti-anthropocentric tendency does not seek to exclude humans from his art, but rather encourages relations with the unconscious and unseen through expressive art-making.

In the work of Tisna Sanjaya and Elia Nurvista, a comparison of the approaches to originary Indonesian discourses and those from elsewhere reveals not concurrence but deliberate attempts to "fill the gaps". Tisna's education in printmaking in Germany exposed him to both the historical role of print technology in social and political critique and the intense and often solitary discipline of the medium's processes. Tisna reinvests this intensity and discipline into his participatory and socially-engaged projects through rigorous planning and design, and reciprocally draws on the "connection to the public" to generate the content of his paintings and etchings. Tisna's artworks often directly (through quoted texts) and indirectly (through imitation and homage) refer to the notions of "social sculpture" proposed by Joseph Beuys, but, in a dialectical fashion, Tisna takes his aesthetic and social content from the context of encounters between Sundanese culture and modernisation, such as the modernist literary renderings of Sundanese folk tales that have inspired his television persona. In

Chapter 7, Elia Nurvista extends this mutually supplementary approach to diverse discourses but, as a member of an emerging generation of artists, also applies her critique to the participatory practices of artists in Tisna's generation. While building on and subverting concepts of research, engagement and emancipation that emerge through Indonesian discourses around *turba* in the 1950s, and "conscientisation art" in the 1980s, Elia is also deeply involved in collaborative efforts to read and discuss recent literature on participation and aesthetics with other Indonesian artists and intellectuals. In a conscious manner similar to that which Tisna applies to diverse influences, Elia seeks to explore the same territory as *turba* and conscientisation art but also draws on the writings of Claire Bishop and Jacques Rancière and, especially, on discourses around the increasing prominence as food as a medium and research tool in artistic practice. Conducting projects in rural and urban areas in Indonesia, as well as undertaking overseas residencies, Elia's practice serves to highlight both the continuing impact of originary Indonesian art discourses on contemporary artists and the ongoing renegotiation of those discourses through contact with local and overseas contexts.

8.3 Coda

This dissertation has taken up and extended Yuliman's argument that Indonesian art after the nation's formation was based on three principles: cultural legacies, especially the unformulated connection between intuition, emotion and reality; the influence of historical and contemporary social events; and the influence of and resistance to the west, from colonisation through to mass communications. I have argued that a set of specific circumstances in Indonesian art history and culture have nurtured an attitude to artistic practice that deconstructs the binary oppositions between autonomous and heteronomous practice that modernism is assumed, often erroneously, to demand. As such, the aesthetic regime's embodiment in historical and contemporary art practice in Indonesia has generated a fertile climate in which many contemporary artists have progressed logically to a position where participatory and individual works are embraced as key elements of a whole practice.

I have demonstrated that in embracing both participatory and individual work in their creative practice, different artists have explored diverse concepts of social

participation and creative individuality. In doing so, they have continued to explore, resist and draw on the methodologies and discourses of social responsibility and artistic honesty generated by Indonesian arts practitioners through their early 20th century encounters with modernity and the founding of the nation state. I contend that for contemporary artists and the institutional networks that support them, these discourses and methodologies – which confer on artists a kind of superior access to a fixed and "true" morality – are no longer seen as guidelines for responsible socially-engaged arts practice. Rather, they are influential art historical moments that have shaped an aesthetic regime and originary discourses that artists and institutions frequently refer to, question and subvert. Thus the legacy of these art historical moments in Indonesia continues to generate a climate that embraces and encourages participatory and individual artworks as key, mutually influential modes for many artists.

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Appendix A

Glossary

Angkatan '45	'45 Generation, mostly writers but also artists and other cultural workers who emerged during the revolution for Independence, which was declared in 1945. They issued the universalist Gelanggang Creed in 1950.
ASRI (Akademi Seni Rupa Indonesia)	Indonesian Academy of Visual Art, part of a larger group of academies. ASRI's campus was in Gampingan, Yogyakarta.
gotong royong	Often translated as mutual assistance, gotong royong is both a broad concept of communal responsibility and also often a specific event similar to a working bee.
Ibu, Bu	Mrs, mother or a general honoric for an older woman
Bapak, Pak	Mr, father, or a general honorific for an older man
Mas	A Javanese honorific for a male of similar or older age, often used in place of the person's name.
Mbak	A Javanese honorific for a female of a similar or older age, often used in place of the person's name.
ISI (Insititut Seni Indonesia)	Indonesian Institute of the Arts. Encompassing all art forms, traditional and contemporary, performance, visual arts and music. Campuses are located in Yogyakarta, Java and Denpasar, Bali. The Denpasar visual arts campus was formerly known as STSI, and the Yogyakarta visual arts campus was known as ASRI.

IVAA	*Indonesian Visual Arts Archive*
jiwa kethok	'visible soul', a concept popularised by modernist artist Soedjojono, to describe the importance of the artist's own soul, evident (according to Sudjojono) in the brushstrokes of a painting.
kejawen	Sometimes also *kebatinan*, a form on unorthodox Islam that retains (especially ritual) elements of formerly dominant Hindu, Buddhist and animist religions on Java. More commonly practiced in Central and East Java.
Kyai	Islamic scholar and teacher
Lembaga Kebudayaan Rakyat (Lekra)	Institute for People's Culture 1950-1965
Manikebu	The universal humanist *Manifesto Kebudayaan,* (Cultural Manifesto) of 1963
masyarakat	Usually translated to society, can also often refer to more specific communities, or sometimes even people (plural as opposed to singular). Also see *rakyat.*
Nyamplung	Calophyllum inophyllum Linn tree, known in Australia as the Alexandrian Laurel or Beautyleaf
Pancasila	Five principles of the Indonesian nation-state. 1. Belief in Almighty God; 2. Just and civilised humanity; 3. Indonesian Unity; 4. Representational democracy; 5. Social justice for all
Pesantren	Islamic boarding school or study community
rakyat	A contraction of *masyarakat,* but usually used in the

	socialist sense of 'the people', as opposed to 'the state', 'the leaders' or other figures of authority. Often carries class-conscious associations that are attached to farmers, small traders, the poor.
Rakyat bawah	Similar to rakyat but with specific reference to land-less farmers, small traders, the poor. Sometimes translated as "lower classes".
STSI *(Sekolah Tinggi Seni Indonesia)*	Indonesian Tertiary School of Art
turba	From the phrase '*turun ke bawah'* or 'to go down', a term used by leftist artists to describe spending time with 'the people' in order to be able to represent their condition. Also a key methodology advocated by the Institute for People's Culture (LEKRA).
udeng	Balinese man's headdress.

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

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GRADUATE PROGRAM

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Ellen Kent

Entanglement: Individual and Participatory Art Practice Across Cultures

EXEGESIS SUBMITTED IN PART FULFILMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF THE DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY OF THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

September 2016

Declaration of Originality

I, Ellen Kent ………………………………………….. hereby declare
that the thesis here presented is the outcome of the research project undertaken during my candidacy, that I am the sole author unless otherwise indicated, and that I have fully documented the sources of ideas, references, quotations and paraphrases attributable to other authors.

Acknowledgements

This research was conducted with the generous financial support of a scholarship from the College of Arts and Social Sciences, Australian National University and a Prime Minister's Australia Asia Endeavour Postgraduate Award.

First and foremost, my thanks go to the participants who enriched the process and result of the artworks presented in this exegesis. Thanks to the staff and students at Mulwaree High School, especially Mr Neil Wardle; at Turner Primary School, especially Sally Visser-Marchant; to Sekolah Tumbuh, especially Iman Santosa and Litha Jayadinanti, S.D Kanisius Sumber, especially Mas Damar, Mas Untung and Mbak Ika; and Sekolah Gajah Wong, especially Faiz Fa. We are forever indebted to our *komunitas* in Indonesia and Australia: IVAA, FSRD ITB, Cemeti, YBY, JAF, Sanggar Bangun Budaya, Joglo Jago, IAM, Arskala, S14, SCP, 4A, ANU SOFA; for accommodating me and my family (often literally) as we took this journey together. And most importantly, thank you to my fabulous collaborators Gunawan Julianto, Yoko Masturrait and Tanto Wedus from Tlatah Bocah for inspiring me to explore this kind of art practice and teaching me so much.

The intellectual guidance and support of my supervisors and co-supervisors, Patsy Payne, Michelle Antoinette, Ariel Heryanto and Raquel Ormella has been invaluable, as has been the patient reading, re-reading and critical feedback from Caroline Turner, Virginia Hooker and Chaitanya Sambrani. Much gratitude is also due to the artists who form the basis of this research, for their time and efforts, and for their creativity.

This PhD has been shaped by many formal, informal and rigorous conversations with fellow researchers, artists, art workers and writers, especially Rikrik Kusmara, Fajar Abadi, Pitra Hutomo, Grace Samboh, Brigitta Isabella, Jim Supangkat, Farah Wardani, Rizki Zaelani, Syafiatudina, Nindityo Adipurnomo, Mella Jaarsma, Enin Supriyanto, Agnesia Linda, Yustina Neni, Tisna Sanjaya, Irma Damajanti, Antariksa, Anang Saptoto, Woto Wibowo, Arief Yudi, Yuma Loranita, Tedi En, Ginggi Syar Haysim, Marco Kusumawijaya, Irwan Ahmett, Tita Salina, Ismal Muntaha Herra Pahlasari, Aminuddin T. Siregar, Willy Himawan, Deden Durahman, Tintin Wulia, Litha Jayadianti, Faiz Fa, Dian Ariyani, Karina Roosvita, Dewi Kelsie Prabawa, Nadiah Bamadhaj, Annie Sloman,

Kristi Monfries, Angie Bexely, Rebecca Meckelburg, Christine Clark, Alison Procter, Robert Guth, Robyn Houen, Evi Eliyanah, Maria Myutel and Meg Downes and so many, many more. Your stimulation, encouragement and support is manifest in this project: thank you.

To my parents, Sue and Tony, my sisters Anna and Kate, and most importantly my husband Shane, and also his family, I owe you my endless gratitude for tolerating me, spurring me on, and for sharing the care of all of those children we have made. And thanks kids, for being you, and never failing to remind us of how much more important you are than anything else.

To our friends and neighbours, who are so much more than that, in Scullin, Bandung and Yogyakarta: without your music, food, love and care none of this would have been worthwhile. Thanks for the joy!

The work of these past few years is dedicated to Tasha, Scott, and Tedi, who were there when it began but not when it ended – but who will always inspire persistence, love and kindness in pursuit of the greatest challenge: a life well lived.

Abstract

This PhD addresses approaches to art practice that are simultaneously individual and participatory. It comprises a research-based dissertation that sets out to understand why combined practices are so prevalent among contemporary Indonesian artists (66.66̇%), and a practice-led body of work that investigates the nexus between individual and participatory modes in my own art practice, accompanied by an exegesis (33.33̇%) .

The body of work experiments with variations on participatory and individual art within community, institutional, educational and public spaces. I became interested in these spaces in between the one and the many while observing art and cultural practices in Indonesia, and working in museum education in Australia. Consequently, both fields – contemporary art in Indonesia and my own art practice – are inextricably linked. The mediums used are responsive to the contexts of those sites and diverse conversations I seek to generate through the works. They include fabric remnants, diverse printmaking techniques, wax resist on paper and a two-channel video installation. The exegesis addresses the conceptual background, intentions, research methodologies and results of this practice-led research into the nexus between individual and participatory modes of practice. In responding to the different sites (referred to above) and artistic modes, I examine both links and points of difference, and demonstrate the continuing role of art as a liminal space of expression and criticality.

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Introduction

Professionally and personally, I have long straddled the boundaries between seemingly different worlds. Often this is evident more through institutionalised descriptive language employed around activities than it is my own experience of them. "Double-degree", "bi-lingual", "part-time", "dual-focus" and "cross-disciplinary" all suggest a binary existence that is, in practice, far less distinct than the labels suggest. It is in the in-between spaces of these apparently divided experiences, these absences of certainty, that I locate my academic and artistic project. For the purposes of my PhD, this has manifested in a two-part research project: $66.6\dot{6}\%$ theoretical dissertation and $33.3\dot{3}\%$ arts practice. This exegesis is part of the latter. Both aspects of my research address similar research questions in very different contexts; namely, questions around participatory arts practice and its relationship to individual art practice. How do these practices relate to each other? What does maintaining both participatory and individual practice mean for the artist?

My dissertation addresses these questions in the context of contemporary art in Indonesia, examining several case studies of artists whose practices encompass both participatory and individual works, and looking at how particular works reveal the intersection of these different strands of practice, and the socio-cultural and art historical context in Indonesia. Through my body of work I take a similar practice-led approach to the research question by exploring several modes of practice to test the methodologies and distinctions between participatory and individual art. This exegesis relates to projects completed as part of that research and the overall conceptual approaches embedded in the process.

The first project in the research is *Nee (Born As),* a participatory project which foregrounds conversation and embroidery – or, more broadly, stitching – as a tool to encourage participants to share stories about lost names. The second project, *Limen*, is also related to textiles through my considerations of pattern and culture, and takes the form of an installation using *batik* (wax resist) on paper. *People and Place* was a

participatory printmaking project which I conducted in cooperation with a number of schools in Indonesia and Australia. Finally, *Coda* is a pair of video works that emerged in response to an unexpected downpour, which turned an iteration of *Nee (Born As)* into a solitary moment of reflection in 2014.

What I wanted to achieve through this process, and therefore what I hope to communicate through this exegesis, is an understanding of how and why these approaches, and their characteristics, do or do not work in my practice. I wanted not only to explore the dissimilarities in these modes of practice but also to pinpoint where they intersect and overlap, implicitly or explicitly. In doing so, I intended to identify a path to practice that is more socially responsive, without necessitating representation or didacticism. As will become clear throughout this writing, I am not in search of a singular answer or a defined point of arrival; I am interested in the spaces in between and the directions they lead.

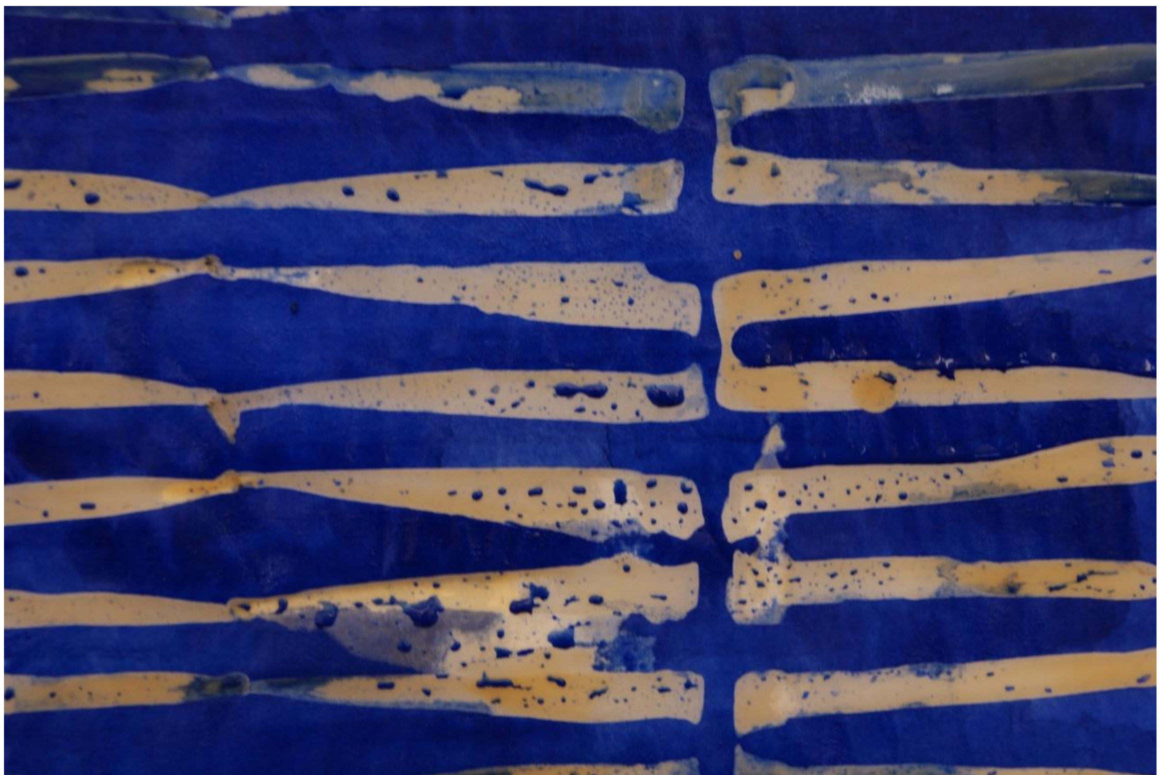
Structure

In the first chapter of this exegesis, I outline a set of ideas that constitute significant aspects of my practice, which I have identified over the course of this research. For want of a less prescriptive signifier, I call these "key words". I relate these key words back to the practices and artworks of several artists who have influenced my own artwork, especially in the context of this research project. The notion of the word as a key – the distillation of an idea into a word – is compelling to me because in my work as a researcher, writer, translator and artist, I work between images and words.

In the second chapter, I describe and analyse the processes involved in the projects I have undertaken. I use the word "project" here to refer to the whole of the process of the work's making, from conception to physical manifestation. In these chapters, I treat the projects as (mostly) discrete stages on the journey of the research as a whole. I draw out those aspects of each project that have most informed my research.

The last chapter of the exegesis brings together key aspects of each project, locating them as part of a larger exploration of modes of practice. I describe how the four bodies of work are drawn together in a final presentation of the research, and how

their final forms – successes and failures – define the conclusions and their representation in the exhibition space.



Chapter 1

Siting the "Work" in Language: Key Words and Works

Introduction

Claude Lévi-Strauss insists on the complex relationship between language and image, even when it seems to leave out important concepts. He says:

> Now, there is an intermediary between images and concepts, namely signs. For signs can always be defined…as a link between images and concepts. In the union thus brought about, images and concepts play the part of the signifying and signified respectively.[1]

Here, by identifying signs as intermediaries between images and concepts, he opens up the possibility for language to mediate in the same way that other theorists, who I will elaborate on in this chapter, describe participation, conversation and spectacle in art.[2] Art is then, whether image or concept, signifier and signified. The signifiers – key-words – that I describe in this chapter are, therefore, image and concept, art and language. They stand alongside specific works of art and artists in helping me to formulate my thinking and the images and concepts that emerge. In this they also become "keys" to understanding the practice and theory addressed in this exegesis.

Participation (and individuality)

> One of the main impetuses behind participatory art has therefore been a restoration of the social bond through a collective elaboration of meaning.[3]

One of my first encounters with participatory art was both unexpected and cathartic: not merely restoring a social bond, as Claire Bishop proposes above, but establishing entirely new bonds, which continue to influence the course of my life.

In 2003, in my third year studying for a double degree in visual arts and Asian studies, I was invited to volunteer as an artist's assistant in the lead up to the *Witnessing to Silence: Art and Human Rights* exhibition. The experience of sitting with Mella Jaarsma,

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[1] Claude Lévi Strauss, *The Savage Mind*, trans. George Weidenfield and Nicholson Ltd. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), p. 12.

[2] These theorists include Claire Bishop, Homi Bhabha and Jacques Rancière.

[3] Claire Bishop, ed. *Participation* (London: The MIT Press, 2006), p. 12.

conversing and sewing aromatic dried herbs, bark, seaweed and seahorses into a costume called *The Healer,* was particularly affective (Fig. 1). I wore the costume during a performance at the opening of the exhibition at the Canberra Contemporary Arts Space, where the three costumes, *The Healer, The Feeder* and *The Warrior*, trailed down into woks of boiling water at the model/performer's feet. From these woks, audience members were invited to eat, as the pungent aromas of boiling squid, seaweed, herbs and shredded army uniforms filled the room (Fig. 2). This work was one of a long series of costumes – or skins, as she sometimes refers to them – and performance, which Mella continues to explore to this day. The concept behind the series is exemplified in an anecdote she relates from her *Hi Inlander (Hello Native) (1998–99)* performance at the opening of the Asia-Pacific Triennial, where an Aboriginal model, Rodney, wore the costume. Mella says:

> He was surprised to see a white person representing Indonesia...Hearing my Dutch accent he suddenly started to speak Dutch to me, a big surprise!…Rodney turned out to be an Aboriginal from the stolen generation…Rodney grew up in a Dutch immigrant family, who moved back to the Netherlands when he was eleven...Isn't it a moment of exchange like this that I had made the artwork for?

Mella then related how, moments later, a startled Hong Kong journalist realised that it was not an indigenous artist who was responsible for the veils made of animal pelts. A fellow Indonesian artist, meanwhile, objected to her use of the colonial term *inlander*, used to refer to "native" Indonesians. "How I love such confusion", she asserts.[4]

Mella's embrace of cultural dissonance as a productive space for her artwork, and her explorations of ideas of cultural belonging and alienation, stereotype and exoticisation, continues to influence my work. The form of participation that Mella often implements is what Claire Bishop has described as "delegated performance", and in Mella's performances this includes both the model's role and audience engagement through cooking and eating.[5]

[4] Mella Jaarsma, "Retrospection", *Woven Maze*(2000), http://www.universes-in-universe.de/woven-maze/jaarsma/ (accessed 10/05/2016).

[5] At the *Hi Inlander (Hello Native) (1998–99)* performance during the opening of the 3rd Asia Pacific Triennial, meat corresponding to the pelts used in the veils—kangaroo, frogs, chicken and fish—was cooked with spices and recipes from a range of cultural sources.

Figure 1: Mella Jaarsma, *The Healer*, 2003, Chinese and Indonesian traditional medicines (herbs, seaweed, sea-horses), performance, installation with video, Canberra Contemporary Art Space.

Figure 2: Mella Jaarsma, *The Feeder*, 2003, dried squid, performance, installation with video, Canberra Contemporary Art Space.

Mella's embrace of cultural dissonance as a productive space for her artwork, and her explorations of ideas of cultural belonging and alienation, stereotype and exoticisation, continues to influence my work. The form of participation that Mella often implements is what Claire Bishop has described as "delegated performance", and in Mella's performances this includes both the model's role and audience engagement through cooking and eating.[6] This understanding that the element of participation in artwork can generate a "moment of exchange", where meaning-making related to the work is shared between artist and audience, is one I share and seek to perpetuate. My understanding of participation in the context of my practice is also defined by my submission of key aesthetic and meaning-making elements to individuals or groups other than myself.

As Bishop points out, participation's ubiquitous presence in all fields from reality TV to viral marketing undermines assumptions drawn from the historical link between participation and social change.[7] However, my objective in using participatory art in this research is not to evaluate the success of participation as an emancipatory tool but to understand participation's function as an aesthetic and interpretive element.

While in some critiques the level of "active" participation is equated to participants' capacity to engage conceptually, Jacques Rancière challenges this binary relationship. His argument assumes that the interpretive capacity of passive (spectator) and active (participant) audiences is equal.[8] In my practice, this important consideration infers a horizontal relation between participation, spectatorship and interpretation, which manifests in conversation.

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[6] At the *Hi Inlander (Hello Native) (1998–99)* performance during the opening of the 3rd Asia Pacific Triennial, meat corresponding to the pelts used in the veils – kangaroo, frogs, chicken and fish – was cooked with spices and recipes from a range of cultural sources.
[7] Bishop, *Participation,* pp. 11–12.
[8] Jacques Rancière. "The Emancipated Spectator". *Artforum International* 45, no. 7 (2007), p. 277.

Conversation

> What kind of knowledge do we expect from the practice and representation of art? How does conversation change our relation, as artists and audiences, to cultural experience and the social transformation of our times?[9]

In this quotation, Homi Bhabha raises two questions around art in the modern era, and the increasingly important role that conversation plays in today's art. A key aspect of conversation that resonates with my practice, both participatory and individual, is negotiation and interaction within a set of predefined rules. Like participation, conversation relies on implicit rules; etiquette which exists to maintain dialogue. Pragmatist philosopher Richard Rorty argued that we should recognise the ability to sustain conversation as wisdom, and positions "human beings as *generators* of new descriptions rather than *beings* one hopes to be able to describe accurately".[10] Thus, conversation is a creative form that counters the primacy of visual representation. Bhabha identifies this as a philosophical tradition in which conversation is the dialogue between culture and community. By rejecting the "tyranny of fact over value, logic over rhetoric", visuality is no longer the only measure of truth.[11] The alternative is a conversational reality that is more contingent and unpredictable.

In *Nee (Born As)*, conversation is the primary aesthetic element, and this emerged, as I describe in Chapter Two, from a specific experience of conversation during another artist's participatory project in 2012. In that context, I encountered the work of artist FX Harsono, who has used what he calls "social research" in his work since the 1970s. This social research is largely based on interviews and conversations with people marginalised by government or corporate interests, a practice which some Indonesian artists adopted – in cooperation with NGOs – in the 1980s.[12] However, Harsono's particular challenge has been how to manifest the influence of those conversations in his artistic practice.

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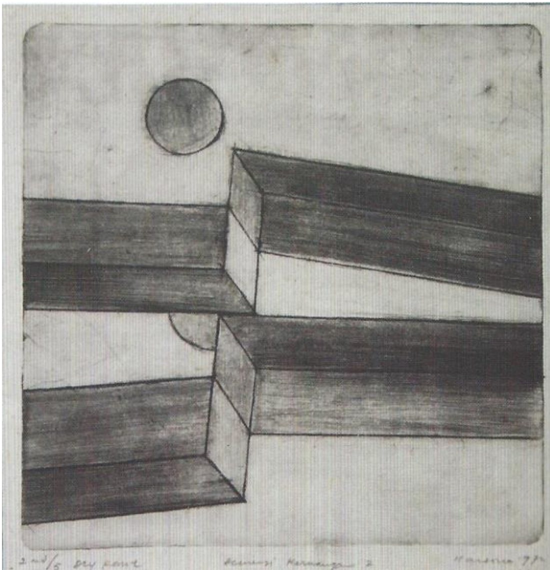
[9] H.K. Bhabha, "Conversational Art", in *Conversations at the Castle: Changing Audiences and Contemporary Art*, ed. Mary Jane Jacob (Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1998), pp. 40–41.
[10] R. Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), p. 378. My emphasis.
[11] Bhabha, "Conversational Art", p. 41.
[12] Wienardi et al., "Proses '85", catalogue for exhibition at Pasar Seni Ancol (Jakarta: Sinar Harapan, 1985)

Figure 3: FX Harsono, *Rewriting on the Tomb*, 2013, video, single channel video 13' 40" (looping).



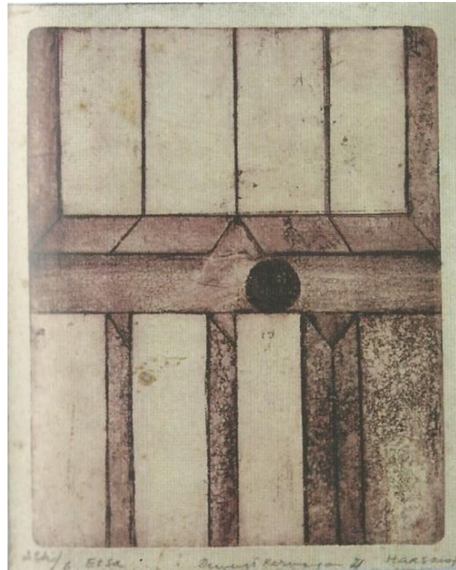


Figure 4 (left): FX Harsono, *Spatial Dimensions 2*, 1972, drypoint engraving.

Figure 5 (right): FX Harsono, *Spatial Dimensions 4*, 1972, etching.

Harsono writes:

> For example, we can see how the process of making art work involves interaction between the artist and the community, which is communal. This process is seen as limited to social activity, or practice for conscientisation, not as a creative process…[13]

While Harsono's integration of social research into his creative process has resulted in diverse artworks, those that deal with the repetitious, performative re-inscription of names have been particularly influential on the four works I address in this exegesis (Fig. 3, 6). In the early 1970s, Harsono was intrigued by geometric forms and explored a kind of formalist abstraction he referred to as "spatial dimensions", utilising minimal colour (Fig. 4, 5). In his later installations, which were directed to critiquing the power exerted by Indonesia's violent and repressive New Order regime (1965–1998), this sense of formalist balance reappeared. While Amanda Katherine Rath relates the installation *Suara Yang Tak Bersuara* (Voices without Voices, 1994) (Fig. 7) to the "cultural foundations" of the Javanese cosmological map of kingdoms, I argue that Harsono's highly structured, often symmetrical and high-contrast installations, like that of *Rewriting The Erased* (2009), continue to draw on his formalist concerns of spatial dimensions yet integrate the socio-political concerns that came to dominate his work in the mid to late 1970s. Installation represents a medium whereby Harsono links what he learns from social research with his personal experiences, and then reinscribes into his individual, formalist works for the interpretation of another audience.

[13] FX Harsono, "Kerakyatan dalam Seni Lukis Indonesia Sejak PERSAGI Hingga Kini", in Politik dan gender: aspek-aspek seni visual Indonesia, ed. Adi Wicaksono et al (Yogyakarta: Yayasan Seni Cemeti, 2003), p. 87.

Figure 6: FX Harsono, *Rewriting The Erased*, 2009, paper, ink, antique chair and table, video. For this work Harsono re-learned how to write his birth name, Oh Hong Bun, over and over again, forming a pattern of movement and objects, reflecting the construction of cultural knowledge.

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Figure 7: FX Harsono, *The Voices Controlled by the* Powers, 1994, unpainted wooden masks.

Trace

Frederick Turner links trace to suggestions, hints, evidence or residues as well as tracks, paths or trajectories:

> But a trace is also a mark that an artist makes on a canvas, the stroke of the chisel on the sculptor's block of stone. It is what we leave behind, our wake or trail, the path we make that others may follow…[14]

In the works described in the following chapters, trace is the concept I use to deal with the problem of the "visualisation of reality" and its "tyranny of fact over value".[15] I am resistant to documentation because its visuality can undermine the open conditions I seek to create with these works. The process of documentation can also interfere with the atmosphere the artwork is generating. But rather than seeing this as an obstacle, I identify it as another avenue of exploration. How can the trace of a performative, participative or temporal "project" provide a secondary audience with an *alternative,* rather than inferior, experience? What can be invested in those marks that might trigger a different but concomitant aesthetic experience and conversation?

In *Nee (Born As)* and *People and Place,* the works' trace became an integral part of the process, linking each iteration's participants with each other and with secondary audiences. This trace was created as an integral yet tangential part of the process. Trace was evidence of the thinking that resulted from conversations in *People and Place* and of the thinking that began conversations in *Nee (Born As).*

I encountered this kind of approach to traces that trigger ongoing participation in two artworks in Alfredo and Isabel Aquilizan's *Project Another Country* series*: In-Flight* (2009) and *In-Habit* (2012) (Fig. 8, 9). Both of these works prompted engagement by providing abundant materials and a few simple examples of what participants might do; beyond that, the field was open. What fascinated me about the process of engaging with these works – which I did with my children – was how the works left behind by other participants triggered responses both in the making and in the conversations that inevitably accompanied it.

[14] Frederick Turner, "Time, Trace and Art", *American Arts Quarterly* 30, no. 4 (2013), http://www.nccsc.net/essays/time-trace-and-art

[15] R. Rorty, *Consequences of Pragmatism* (University of Minnesota, 1986), referenced by Bhabha, "Conversational Art", p. 41.

These conversations propagated the ideas of impermanence and precarity that the artists had embedded in the original works, but which they had also invested with contingent interpretations, rather than visual truths.[16] In *Limen*, unexpected traces of the process also led me to consider which result of the process should actually constitute the exhibited work – a decision which remained unresolved until the final installation. *Coda*, too, emerged from the traces of incident, the result of a lack of contingency or "wet-weather" plan, and became a metaphorical reflection on individual experience.

Contingency

Provisional, conditional, (inter) dependent, risky: contingency is what links the *making* processes that I explore in these projects to each other. Making art, making conversation and making interpretations is inherently contingent and contextual work. Bhabha says:

> …(if) contextual contingency liberates us from a binary and polarised view that opposes reason to passion, the present to the past, it also commits us to living our lives and making our art from experiences that are ambivalent, contradictory and unresolved.[17]

When I first began working on art and interpretation with other people, it was in a gallery setting, generally with children.[18] Each project was tightly scheduled and planned in detail. And yet each iteration – sometimes three in a day – would be entirely different. Each individual contributed their perspective, thus generating a different group. Our approach to these programs was co-constructive. Co-constructivism expands Vygotsky's role for the individual learner in construction of meaning, applying it in a social or cultural context.[19] In this model, meaning is negotiated, not dictated; and interpretation is a social exercise, contingent on and subject to each member way of seeing.

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[16] *In-Habit (Project Another Country)* was inspired "by the fragile houses and itinerant existence of the marginalized Badjao people, who live scattered across…the Sulu Archipelago in the south western Philippines, and on the northern shores of Borneo". Michael Young, "Set Adrift: Alfredo and Isabel Aquilizan", ArtAsiaPacific, no. 81 (2012), pp. 78-87.

[17] Bhabha, "Conversational Art", p. 42.

[18] From 2006 to 2010, I worked as a gallery educator at the National Portrait Gallery, Canberra.

[19] K. Reusser, "Co-constructivism in Educational Theory and Practice", in *International Encyclopaedia of the Social & Behavioural Sciences*, eds. Neil J. Smelser and Paul B. Baltes (Michigan: Elsevier, 2001), pp. 2058-2062.

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Figure 8: Alfredo and Isabel Aquilizan, *In-Flight (Project Another Country)*, 2009, recyclable household waste formed into flying machines, 6th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art, Queensland Art Gallery.

Image removed due to copyright restrictions.

Figure 9: Alfredo and Isabel Aquilizan, *In-Habit (Project Another Country)*, 2009, cardboard boxes and mixed media, Sherman Gallery, Sydney.

A similar pattern of provisionality governs my research for individual works, through accident, mishap and, open-ended explorations of form, material and concept. By bringing together different elements – found objects, diverse mark-making, paper, projected light – and exploring the physical, conceptual and visual properties of these elements without conscious intent, my process echoes the contingency of conversation.

Liminality

The word "liminality" is drawn from the Latin *limen*: the base of a doorway, the threshold. In anthropology it is the status-less state that initiates entry in the middle stages of a rite of passage. Victor Turner notes:

> During the liminal period neophytes are alternately forced and encouraged to think about their society, their cosmos, and the powers that generate and sustain them.[20]

For Turner, the key to liminality is its position outside of structure. Removal from the social structure places initiates in an ambiguous state and compels liminal reflection in which transformation occurs. Similarly, my participatory and individual artworks follow a process that begins outside fixed structures of meaning, creating conditions or objects for reflection by using abstracted or distorted, sometimes juxtaposed, objects that call attention to, or critique, the structures that underlie experience.

Bhabha's concept of hybridity as productive of a "third space" and Rancière's positioning of spectacle as a "third term" that mediates the artist's intentions and the audience's interpretation locate liminality as the artistic site where cultural meaning is renegotiated.[21]

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[20] Victor Turner, "Betwixt and Between: the Liminal Period in Rites de Passage", in *Reader in Comparative Religion: An Anthropological Approach* (4th Edition), eds. William A. Lessa and Evon Z. Vogt (New York: Harper and Row, 1979), p. 240. Turner goes on: "In it those ideas, sentiments, and facts that been hitherto for the neophytes bound up in configurations and accepted unthinkingly are ... resolved into their constituents. These constituents are isolated and made into objects of reflection."

[21] "… the importance of hybridity is not a third moment that emerged from two original sources, but as a 'third space' which enables other positions to emerge from it. The process of cultural hybridity constantly gives rise to something new and unrecognisable", Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 172; Rancière, Jacques. "The Emancipated Spectator", p. 278.

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Conclusion

In this chapter, I have outlined a number of key concepts in the language and practice that have informed my approach to the practice-led research project. In doing so, I have added depth and texture to my original research question: How do participatory and individual practices relate to each other and what does maintaining these practices mean for the artist? This depth and texture comes through an additional question: Can participation, conversation, interpretation, trace, contingency and liminality be invoked to create these "objects of reflection" that Turner has identified as cultural turning points?

I have demonstrated how participation works to question and celebrate cultural difference in Mella Jaarsma's work and how the conversations generated in my experience of Mella's work, and also with FX Harsono, have led to my own experiments in conversation based artworks. I have also argued that conversation's power in art lies in its openness to interpretation, a contingency which integrates participatory and individual experiences with each other. In the traces of the Aquilizans' participatory artworks, I have demonstrated how what is left behind by previous participants can act to communicate the artwork to subsequent participants and audiences. Finally, I have argued that contingency and liminality can locate participatory and individual works within the realm of conversation and dialogue by seeing the work as inherently informed by the audience, regardless of their active or passive participation. This, finally, leads to my body of work, where my own practical explorations of these elements provide answers to the questionable dichotomous relationship between participation and individual practice. Through these, I argue for the inseparability of these realms of practice: the impossibility of departitioning the sensibility of autonomous and heteronomous practice.

<u>CHAPTER 2:</u>
BODIES AND WORK

Figure 10: *Nee (Born As)* at the Canberra Museum and Gallery, during the You Are Here Festival, 2016.

Introduction

I began my research in the studio. Previously, my practice primarily utilised banal found objects – ring-pulls, plastic containers or kitchen implements – as the basis for elaborate ornaments and patterns. These became assemblages, prints (digital, screen, embossing, frottage), digital or slide projections with patterns applied to found objects in various ways. When I began my PhD, I continued to collect an ever-expanding range of objects and images to work with (Fig. 11).

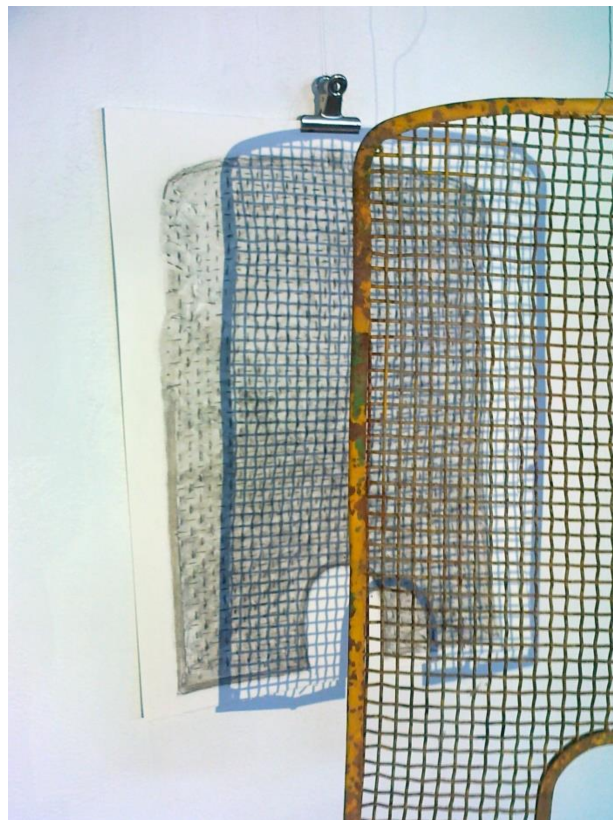
At the same time, in late 2011, I became involved in a project at the 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art in Sydney, through which I was introduced to a community of artists, poets, curators and social researchers. Triggered by those encounters, I brought the objects into conversations with the drawings (Fig. 12). The challenge was how to develop a body of work from these playful, personal conversations with materials and address the imperative of my research question: How do participatory and individual practices relate to each other and what does maintaining these practices mean for the artist?

In the first section of this chapter, I describe the process of developing and implementing the participatory work *Nee (Born As)* and the installation *Limen,* both of which emerged from my early interactions with materials, artists and social research. The works described in the second section were in response to those methodologies, deliberately resisting key aspects of the conceptualisation and implementation of *Nee (Born As)* and *Limen.*

This comparative strategy, in which each project intentionally explored different aspects of participatory and individual practice, allowed me to generate a new body of knowledge through my works. The results of this research indicate that a combined approach to these practices can generate liminal spaces in different forms, allowing for reflection on social and cultural structures. In conclusion, I argue that *Nee (Born As)* is most successful in generating the kind of intimate, deep conversations that I hoped to engender through my art practice.

Figure 11: Botanical drawing transferred to cocky skull, 2011.

Figure 12: Frottage, shadow and truck grill, 2011.



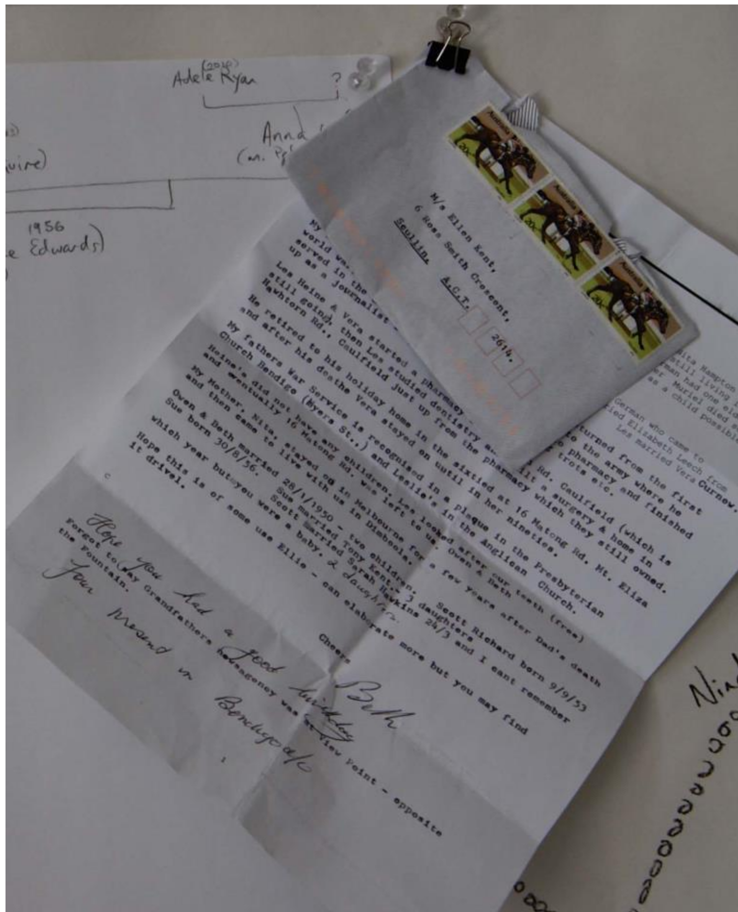


Figure 13: I wrote to my grandmother to ask about the maiden names of those in her maternal line; she replied by email, typewriter and hand-written postscript.

Figure 14: *Nee (Born As)* (detail, 2015). Brick sized blocks of remnant fabric record traces of “lost” names.

Early works

Nee (Born As) (2012–): conversational realities

The first participatory artwork that I designed and implemented for this research emerged out of my experiences in the *In Memory of a Name* project in 2011–2012.[22] As a participant in that project, I developed *Nee (Born As).* Here I address both of these projects from different subjective perspectives: that of participant and that of artist.

Led by Indonesian artist FX Harsono, *In Memory of a Name* formed what Miwon Kwon would call a "temporary invented community" and what 4A referred to as a curatorium: of artists, poets, curators, writers and social researchers.[23] In Indonesian in 1966, a Cabinet decree forced citizens of Chinese descent to adopt a non-Chinese name, effectively obliterating signifiers of otherness from Indonesian society.[24] Harsono, whose birth name was Oh Hong Bun, chose his baptismal name, Franciscus Xavier (FX), and Harsono.

After the 1998 fall of President Suharto's New Order regime, Harsono and many artists who worked to expose corruption, collusion and nepotism among the political and business elite, hit a creative vacuum.[25] Harsono turned to his family history, exploring the personal intricacies and individual costs of human rights abuse in Indonesia's history. Through detailed social research and documentation, Harsono has explored the experiences of Chinese Indonesians. In 2009, in a poetic embodiment of his research and his own experience, Harsono created the performance video *Rewriting The Erased* (Fig. 6). Harsono's practice, and in particular that work, formed the jumping off point for the 4A curatorium to research the context of naming, discrimination and power in the Australian context.

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[22] *In Memory of a Name* was part of *Edge of Elsewhere*, a four-year project in community art practices undertaken by the 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art and the Campbelltown Arts Centre.
[23] Miwon Kwon, *One Place After Another: Site-specific Art and Locational Identity* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2002), pp. 126-130.
[24] This decision was influenced by complex historical, political and social factors. For a comprehensive description of these factors and their relationship to Harsono's work, see Philip Smith, "Writing in the rain: Erasure, trauma, and Chinese Indonesian identity in the recent work of FX Harsono", *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 46, no. 1 (2015), pp. 119-133; and Christine Clark et al., "Beyond the Self: Contemporary Portraiture from Asia", ed. Bronwyn Mahoney, (Canberra: National Portrait Gallery, 2011).
[25] For more on this period in Indonesian contemporary art, see *15 years Cemeti Art House: Exploring Vacuum* (Yogyakarta: Cemeti Art House, 2003).

Our findings were documented in film, narrative prose, spread sheets, dot points and poetry.[26] My own research into maiden names swung me from stridently adversarial to ambiguity. I was surprised to discover that, according to one study, up to 85 per cent of new brides in Australia take their partner's surname.[27] Interviewing my mother and sisters, I learned that my mother had kept her maiden name, until her family forced her to change by writing cheques for "Mrs Kent". A close friend gave up her estranged father's surname with relief when she married. These micro-narratives complicated my political position, destabilising my prior assumptions about why women change their names. Several proposals from the curatorium centred on bringing the conversational experience of the curatorium into a public space.[28] This interest in generating conversations also fed into my PhD research, raising new questions around different kinds of conversations and engagement – for instance, in public or private spaces, intimate settings or classrooms.

In Chapter 1, I indicated that conversation as a key concept informing this research project, referring to Bhabha's notion that conversation acts as dialogue between culture and community, "shrinking the distance between the object and the subject and shattering the silence around art objects". He writes:

> This results in an aesthetic strategy that articulates hitherto unconnected moments between memory and history, revises the traditional divisions between private and public, rearticulates the past and the present, and, through the performance of the artwork, fosters unexplored relationships between historical or biographical events, artistic innovations, and an enlarged sense of cultural community.[29]

With such a strategy, I began *Nee (Born As)*: an invitation to sit, stitch and share stories of names.[30]

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[26] For further descriptions of the curatorium see Helen Fong, "In Memory of a Name: An Opportunity for Professional Development", *Art Monthly Australia*, no. 253 (2012). Also, Scott Wark, "Critical Reverie", *das Super Paper*, no. 21 (2011), http://dasplatforms.com/magazines/issue-21/critical-reverie-/.

[27] I no longer have the citation for this article, but a similar article published in July 2012 discussed similar findings made by Dr Deborah Dempsey and Jo Lindsey at Swinburne University: Daniella Miletic, "Most women say 'I do' to husband's name", *The Age*, July 20, 2012, http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/most-women-say-i-do-to-husbands-name-20120719-22d5c.html#ixzz40whdlNm4 (accessed 02/04/2015)

[28] For more about the various projects that emerged from the curatorium, most of which were presented in February 2012, see https://edgeofelsewhere.wordpress.com/category/fx-harsono-in-memory-of-a-name/.

[29] Bhabha, "Conversational Art", p. 42.

[30] I use the word "stitch" rather than "embroider" to avoid implications of refined skill.

Image removed due to copyright restrictions.

Figure 15: Tracey Emin*, All the People I've Ever Slept With (1963–1995)*, embroidery and applique on tent.

Image removed due to copyright restrictions.

Figure 16: Suffragette Handkerchief, 1912.

Departing from my original case studies, I invoked women's work with sewing and fabric, but to open up contingency I let my feminist perspective go and asked participants simply to reflect on their own experience of lost or found names. Each chose a name to memorialise on a brick-sized rectangle of fabric; each scrap of fabric became part of a malleable memorial wall (Fig. 10).

There is a long history of quilted memorials, embroidery as subversion and stitching as contemporary art. Tracey Emin stitched the names of everyone she ever slept with onto a tent (Fig. 15), but, long before this jailed suffragettes stitched their names as messages of hope for their comrades outside (Fig. 16). The AIDS memorial quilt began in the mid 1980s and continues through digital documentation (Fig. 17). These precedents demonstrate the powerful link between textile traditions, communal and commemorative action, and resistance.

I conducted the first iteration of *Nee (Born As)* in my garage/studio (Fig. 18). Immediately, participants began to affect the object and concept. They brought fabric a little too large or small for my imagined bricks. Small children stitched abstract compositions. During the second iteration I realised how integral the flexibility of fabric was to the concept: I was reminded that not all scripts travel horizontally when a participant from Korea commemorated her father's death (Fig. 20). An old friend inscribed the Vietnamese name she had exchanged for the Anglo name Jane in primary school – the only one in her family to do so. In its last iteration, I asked one participant about the name stitched onto the small piece of checked fabric; she told us that it was her own name, stitched as a preparatory ritual before taking a more gender neutral name.

Our conversations about names traced discrimination, power relations, gender stereotypes, domestic and social violence, the negotiation of identity, familial interaction and assimilation of the other. Our making recorded the names that evoked these discourses. In each reiteration of *Nee (Born As)*, I defined an intimate, site-specific space, responsive to the particular setting (Fig. 21, 26).

Image removed due to copyright restrictions.

Figure 17: The AIDS Memorial Quilt, 1987–current.

Figure 18: First iteration of *Nee (Born As)* in my garage, 26 January 2012.

Figure 19 (above): *Nee (Born As)* at 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art.

Figure 20 (left): Korean script productively disrupted my preconceptions of the format.

The reiteration of the project was where trace, which I discussed in chapter one, became important. Quality video or audio documentation would require me to remove myself from conversation, taking a privileged position augmented by technology; alternatively I could introduce a third party to manage this, potentially destroying the intimacy I sought to generate. Documenting these stories as video or audio recordings would undermine the contingency of the conversational element, which is intended to replace "realism and reportage" with "metaphor and figurative language".[31] Rather, during implementation of *Nee (Born As),* I allowed the wall to stand alone as the trace of the conversations. Subsequent audiences are invited to consider this trace imaginatively, by sharing their own conversations.

As I identified in Chapter One, the notion of trace is an important conceptual link between the different projects undertaken in my PhD. However, in each work, trace plays a slightly different role. In *Limen,* trace was among the first places that I began to see the influence of *Nee (Born As)* appearing in my studio work. While in *Nee (Born As)* trace was central to the reiterative nature of the conversations and an alternative to documentation, in *Limen* trace emerged out of relationships between materials, process and myself: the maker.

[31]Bhabha, "Conversational Art", p. 41.

Figure 21: *Nee (Born As)* at the Scullin Party at the Shops, March 2013.

Figure 22: *Nee (Born As)* at the ITB *Pasar Seni* (Art Market), November 2014.

Figure 23: *Nee (Born As)* in my garage in Bandung, March 2014.

Figure 24: At ITB campus on a Sunday morning, June 2014.

Figure 25: *Nee (Born As)* at IAM Art Space, Yogyakarta, with neighbourhood boys.

Figure 26: *Nee (Born As)* at IAM Art Space, Yogyakarta, with local and visiting artists.

Limen (2013): studio explorations in "promiscuous intermingling"

One of my earliest attempts to bring the participatory work of *Nee (Born As)* to bear on my studio work was to frottage the stitched wall. The delicate Japanese paper I used for this process lost its integrity quickly under the pressure, and the results translated none of the narrative nuances of the original work, but the *hoshu* paper stayed in my studio and eventually became the basis of *Limen*, the first resolved studio works to emerge from my practice based research.

My studio work has been informed by my intellectual interests, my background, my life experience and my aesthetic inclinations. As a young child I learned the Indonesian language and became fascinated with textiles, patterns and their role as social and personal reference points while living and travelling in Southeast Asia with my family (Fig. 27). Eleven years after first living in Indonesia, during my undergraduate degree I returned to study at art school, expanding my vocabulary of imagery and techniques. I sought to explore these further at art school in Australia, whilst reading post-structural and post-colonial discourses alongside non-canonical art histories in my Asian studies degree. Bhabha's concept of the "third space" became a touchstone for my academic and artistic explorations.[32]

My interest in the instability of identity, meaning, interpretation and re-ordering is deeply rooted in my early experiences and education, and this is evident in my practical and theoretical research. Here I return to the form and function of liminality, as discussed in chapter one. Turner draws attention to the way liminal rituals provide space to reflect on ideas about society and power that have been "bound up in configurations and accepted unthinkingly".[33] These unthinkingly accepted configurations, I argue, are the patterns with which we see the world: the basis on which we accept stereotypes, norms and biases in our societies, what Rancière calls the "distribution of the sensible".

[32] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, p. 172.
[33] Turner, "Betwixt and Between: the Liminal Period in Rites de Passage", p. 240.

Figure 27: Familiar fabric patterns from our lives in Indonesia, worn by men from our local community, including my father (far right).

Figure 28: Early explorations with sewing and drafting paper.

To deconstruct these patterns of thinking, liminal ritual – like art – distorts and abstracts, drawing attention to particular features, creating "objects of reflection" in which:

> Elements are withdrawn from their usual settings and combined with one another in a totally unique configuration...there is a promiscuous intermingling and juxtaposing of the categories of event, experience and knowledge, with a pedagogic intention.[34]

As described earlier, I began "promiscuous intermingling" of materials around the same time that I formulated *Nee (Born As)*. Playing with various references to walls, women's work and subversions of the monumental, I folded small boxes from drafting paper, embroidering names inside each precarious construction (Fig. 28). This led me to machine-stitching drafting paper, which in turn prompted similar actions with other kinds of paper. I constructed large sheets of *hoshu* paper by stitching together narrower rolls. I then turned my attention back to the collections of objects, stretching large *hoshu* sheets over aluminium frames that had formerly served as fly-screens.

At this point, the limen made a literal and figurative appearance in my work, as I cast light through the taut screens. My approach to the experiments took on a characteristic of continual deconstruction: each step involved disrupting the results of the previous one. I pleated the taut paper (Fig. 29), laid wax onto the surface to combat its opacity and, eventually, put colour over the top of this wax, a modified form of batik on paper (Fig. 30). By activating a dialectic between each step, and reflecting on the results, I understood how their "promiscuous intermingling" and unstable significance generated liminality by refuting fixed interpretation.

I then began to consider how to conceive a "body of work", planning a series of different sized and configured *Limen*. I identified metal objects – domestic utensils, hardware – that would stamp wax onto paper, instead of elaborately patterned copper blocks used in traditional *tjap* batik. I tested elaborate patterns, mixing various stamps and layers of colour, gradations of colour and materials as the basis for the pigment. From the results of this "data" I began to pare back to simple patterns using only one utensil and three colours mixed directly from concrete oxide powder – an industrial colouring used in DIY wall-rendering and domestic paving – dissolved in water.

[34] *The Anthropology of Performance* (New York: PAJ Publishing, 1986), pp. 241–242.

Figure 29: Pleated *hoshu* paper stretched over an aluminium door frame.

Figure 30: Experiments with different stamps and pigments.

Figure 31 (above): *Limen: Screw* in progress.

Figure 32 (right): *Limen: Plunge* (detail).

The patterns appropriated those commonly found in textiles: grids, accumulative shapes, rhomb-like links and alternating colours. Each also referred to a significant piece of fabric in my memory: the bold, undulating brown and yellow curtains in my bedroom as a five year old, the parting gift of blue and silver silk-embroidered *songket* rough cotton *batik* received as a wedding gift (Fig. 33).

The results initially appear as uniform patterns on stretched fabric. As the viewer approaches the work, the pattern reveals itself to be constructed from familiar objects, imperfectly arranged on a paper ground. Art theorist Gregory Minnisale has used a framework of cognitive psychology to identify a process of coarse to fine grain visual recognition that extends and deepens the contemplation of the artworks (Fig. 34).[35] This is deliberately invoked in the *Limen* works, through perceptual shifts between fields of pattern and individual elements. Within the framework of liminality, the removal of elements from their usual contexts in the kitchen, the shed or the ethnographic museum functions to prompt viewers to consider and reflect on the object's symbolic and functional place in the structure of society.

Making these works was a deeply immersive process; it took *time*. Once the aesthetic decisions had been made, the making process was an aesthetic experience in itself; each small stamping action carried with it potential risk and reward. Each was also irreversible, so meditations on social, structural and cosmic analogies to the process were inevitable. Though they number in the thousands, not one of the patterns' elements is identical. I came to consider the patterns I was painstakingly creating as metaphors for culture itself. From the outside, from a distance, culture can seem monolithic, strictly governed and self- regulating. But from the inside, culture is marked by anomaly, resistance, tension and renegotiation; it is dynamic and shifting.

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[35] Dr Gregory Minnisale, "A Contemporary Pointillism?" paper presented at *Together <> Apart: Art Association of Australia and New Zealand Annual Conference 2012* (University of Sydney, National Art School, 2012).

Figure 33: *Songket* cloth from Lombok; gift from a friend after an arts residency in Yogyakarta.

Figure 34: Coarse to fine grain vision. *Limen*: *Screw* (detail).

Early conclusions

How do these practices relate to each other? What does maintaining both participatory and individual practice mean for the artist?

As experiments in individual and participatory practice, *Nee (Born As)* and *Limen* may seem superficially unconnected, but their simultaneous progress meant the concepts I considered when making the works were strongly mutually influential. Both works are intended to generate explicit conversations: among participants and viewers in *Nee (Born As)* and as internal dialectic within viewers of *Limen.* From my perspective, these conversations and dialogues were intended as a reflection on the position of our individual stories within a grand narrative of culture and society. Nancy points to the impossible trap of the individual and community:

> …to be absolutely alone, it is not enough that I be so; I must also be alone being alone – and this of course is contradictory. The logic of the absolute violates the absolute.[36]

Hence, as the course to fine grain construct emphasises, a seemingly perfect pattern is actually an imperfect collection of individuals (marks) constitutive of the same structural universe that they are separate from. Within the artworks, this push and pull between the elements and composition of the work, or between the object and the experience, is designed to engage the viewer in dialogical concerns.

Both of these works activate a liminal, in-between space in order to achieve “objects of reflection”. *Nee (Born As)* calls upon “moments between memory and history”: in between grand narratives and the small stitches, we learned the complexities of each other’s experiences.[37] *Limen* is intended to create space for the viewer to oscillate between their initial and subsequent interpretations.

As Rancière asserts in *The Emancipated Spectator* “The spectacle is a third term, to which the other two can refer, but which prevents any kind of ‘equal or undistorted’ transmission.”[38] With these initial works, my intentions, or at least my interpretations, addressed the incongruent process of trying to define culture as a whole entity. The

[36] First published in 1986, Nancy’s seminal text on mortality and concepts of community was republished: Jean-Luc Nancy, “The Inoperative Community”, in C. Bishop, ed. *Participation (Documents of Contemporary Art)*, p. 57.
[37] Bhabha, “Conversational Art”, p. 42.
[38] Rancière, “The Emancipated Spectator”, p. 278.

fact that the viewers and participants will inevitably make their own interpretations is in itself a validation of this interpretation. In the subsequent works that I describe in the next section, interpretation, participation, contingency, conversation, trace and liminality again play important roles in the material and conceptual development of the work.

Late works

People and Place and *Coda* were developed in response to the methodologies I had used in the two earlier works, countering specific elements in *Nee (Born As)* and *Limen.* As a site of interpretation between myself and participants, *People and Place* narrowed the contingency that was inherent to the success of the participatory element in *Nee (Born As).* In *Coda,* I drew on a far more experiential and subjective concept than that of *Limen,* producing works using a more responsive and intuitive approach. *Coda* inverted the intellectual, material and design-oriented processes of *Limen.* This dialectical approach sought to explore and test the parameters and boundaries of the research question, to identify points of porosity between participatory and individual approaches, and to scope the limitations of each form in my own practice.

***People and Place* (2013–2015): projecting pedagogy**

Writing on pedagogic projects, Bishop compares Rancière's deconstruction of transmissive education to Freire's pedagogical theories, which do not entirely dismiss the authority of the teacher. While Rancière valorised the ignorant schoolmaster – a position I also took as the unskilled seamstress in *Nee (Born As)* – for Freire, dialogue "is not a 'free space' where you can say what you want. Dialogue takes place inside some program and content..."[39] Freire's concept of dialogue is reflected in the model of participation I utilised in *People and Place*, where the process took place within constructed "program and content".

[39] Paulo Freire and Ira Shor, *A Pedagogy for Liberation: Dialogues on Transforming Education* (London: Macmillan, 1987), p. 102, quoted in Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship* (London: Verso, 2012), p. 266. Freire's "pedagogy of the oppressed" was popular with artists and activists in Indonesia and Southeast Asia in the 1980s.

I drew inspiration from elaborate, hand drawn batik cloths called *tiga negeri* (three countries), which were dyed in several neighbouring kingdoms of Java as a kind of document of inter-state cooperation (Fig. 35).[40] The project facilitated the creation of a large-scale, collaborative, pattern based artwork that explored understandings and representations of place. The "program" included exposing students to textiles, books and original artworks which illustrated the ways in which past and present communities in Australia and Indonesia visualised their knowledge of place through pattern and motif. Students then worked together to design their own symbolic or abstract representations of place, and added this to a large cloth (12m x 12m).[41] Although a detailed map assigned each motif a location on the large cloth, my vision of a repetitious pattern emerging from different motifs slowly dissolved in the chaos of the classroom setting.

Student groups were given the autonomy to design their motifs within the parameters of materials at hand. Inevitably, this dictated some of the uniformity that emerged in each school, but the factor of group dynamic was also influential, with "good ideas" spreading from group to group.[42] Certain aspects of the discussions and examples garnered more interest from particular groups. *Tjap batik* (copper stamp) fascinated the Tumbuh Primary children, perhaps because the pattern was familiar to them from their location in the centre of the Sultan's inner sanctum within Yogyakarta city (Fig. 36). The Turner children had studied Expressionism, so abstract and minimalist compositions were evocative of place for many of them (Fig. 37, 38). The Mulwaree High School students' cognitive development led some to symbolic representations of complex concepts, like the contrasting environmental conditions of flood and drought (Fig. 39, 40). The tiny students of Sekolah Gajah Wong, a free preschool for children in a squatter community, used the plastic drink bottles their parents and neighbours collect for cash to create mono-prints (Fig. 44).

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[40] John Gillow, *Traditional Indonesian Textiles* (London: Thames and Hudson 1992), plates 67, 152, 153.

[41] Artist Michal Glikson accompanied me to Mulwaree High School and Turner School and produced two documentaries documenting early stages of the process. Sekolah Tumbuh students sent a video introducing themselves to Australian participants and demonstrating some of the techniques later used by Sekolah Gajah Wong. Sekolah Dasar Kanisius has limited access to technology but their participation was documented by local children's arts organisation Tlatah Bocah.

[42] For instance, at Kanisius School, most groups ended up using the end of a biro to make small neat circles in the matrix.

Figure 35: *Tiga Negeri* (three country) cloth, dyed in three kingdoms in Java.

Figure 36: *People and Place*, Sultan's symbol, Tumbuh Primary School, Yogyakarta, 2014.

Figure 37 (right): *People and Place,* abstract designs from Turner school, using materials collected from the schoolyard, 2013.

Figure 38: *People and Place,* design from Turner school, prize winning school chicken,

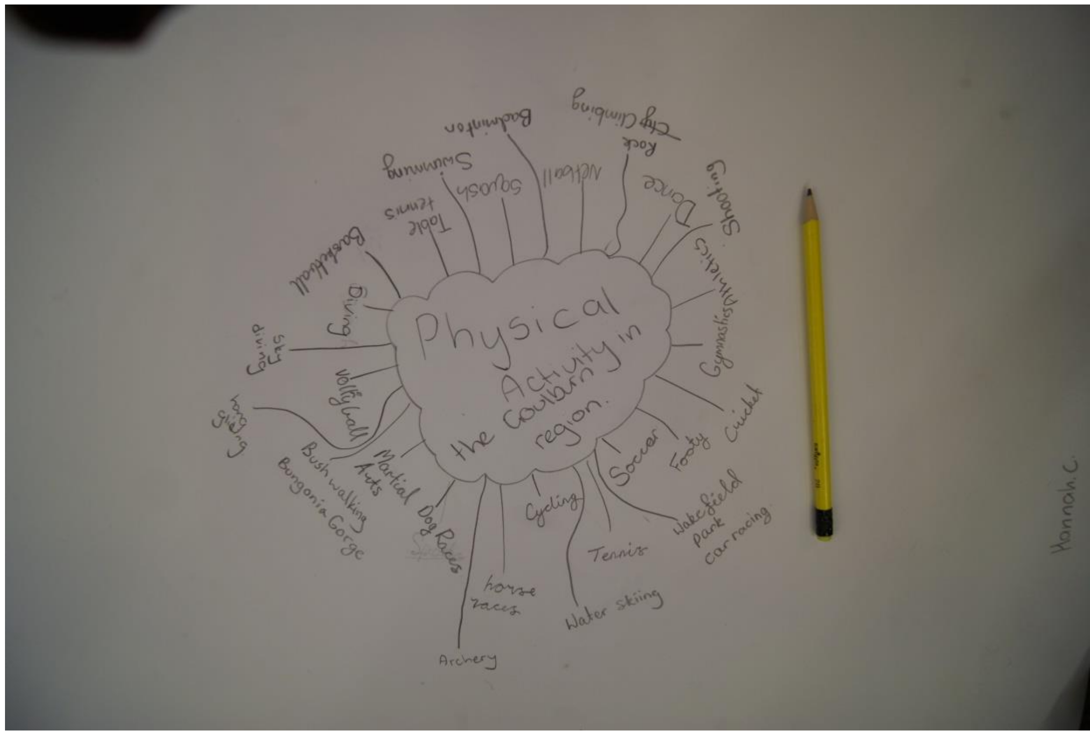

Figure 39: *People and Place*, Mulwaree High School brainstorm, 2013.

Figure 40: *People and Place*, Mulwaree High School drought and flood motif, 2013.

Unlike other cross-cultural projects I have conducted, and also unlike *Nee (Born As),* this project was marked by institutionalised formality, which burdened the implementation with bureaucracy and formalities, and sometimes exploitative conditions.[43] Bishop has highlighted how the instrumentalisation of participatory art in European cultural policy has the state once provided assistance.[44] In the year that the Australian government announced its 'Asian century white-paper' and cultural and educational policies were subsequently re-oriented, an Asian focussed arts program may have fulfilled new curriculum requirements for Asian studies, providing relief for overstretched teaching staff but undermining the program's implementation.[45]

In the final stages of the project I traced my own experiences by designing a motif in response to each school, utilising the same processes (relief, screen print, mono-print), to echo forms that students had used in their motifs: silhouette, abstraction, symbolism. Finally, I engaged a Yogyakarta embroiderer to frame each motif in gold thread, to resolve the ambiguous edges that had emerged as motifs veered off-course and to invest in it a unifying framework. This returned each motif from its liminal phase of reflection into a broader structure of meaning.

Although students were briefed to design their motifs in response to the concept of place, inevitably their place was already intuitively embedded in their approaches, and evident in their aesthetic decisions. People and Place may well have come to reflect people and place even without the introductory stages discussing the concept.

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[43] Negotiations with Turner School started with the principal's firm assertion that the project must be available to the 150 year 3 and 4 students. I spent countless hours cleaning up the art room from classes held prior to the project, had to insist the teacher remain present and soon gave up expectations of teacher support for managing student behaviour. Due to the rigours of the school schedule, I would have no more than 40 minutes with each class at a time, often with less than 20 minutes a week for us to share a single step in the process.

[44] Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*, p. 5.

[45] The National Arts curriculum for years 3-4 states that "students will explore the arts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and of the Asia region and learn that they are used for different purposes. While the arts in the local community should be the initial focus for learning, students are also aware of and interested in the arts from more distant locations…" "Australian Curriculum", (Australian Curriculum Assesment and Reporting Authority, 2010).

Figure 41 (left): *People and Place,* fern prints, Sekolah Dasar Kanisius, Sumber Village, 2014.

In Indonesia, in one of the worst education systems in the world, *People and Place* also filled a void in the system, not state-dictated but rather identified by passionate teachers who commit their own energy and time to filling it.[46] The opportunity to connect with other cultures through creative processes was embraced and celebrated,

[46] Al Jazeera, "Educating Indonesia", 101 East (2013), http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/101east/2013/02/201321965257154992.html (accessed 30/03/2015)

and given the kind of support and time reserved for sports carnivals in Australian schools.

Coda (2014–2016): resolve

As *People and Place* reached the end of its implementation, and *Nee (Born As)* continued, I wondered at times about the influence the participatory methodologies would have on my individual practice. Without a studio (or, indeed, time as I focused on writing my dissertation), my solo practice had receded. However, a fortuitous accident emerged from the contingent space of *Nee (Born As)*, offering me space to return to the deep, liminal contemplation that I had experienced in making *Limen*. At an outdoor arts festival at the Institute of Technology in Bandung (ITB), I was assigned a space in the shade under a tall tree.[47] My assistants and I stretched the fabric wall between the tree and a bamboo post, and spread mats on the ground. A family and a group of young women joined us as we began (Fig. 22). Within half an hour the blue skies suddenly turned dark and almost immediately an enormous tropical downpour began. We barely had time to pull down the wall and rush undercover before the grass was flooded. The other items we had been unable to carry were clustered under the tree; the ground mats thrown over the top gave little protection. Eventually we decided to ferry our equipment back to the sculpture workshop rather than occupying the damp edges of the over-crowded bike shelter. When the sun came out again an hour later, I began to lay my fabric remnants out to dry (Fig. 45). The sonorous call to prayer from ITB's famous Salman mosque echoed out. I had moved away from Bandung a few months earlier after a year studying at ITB, and the quiet atmosphere of the breezeway beside my old office, in contrast to the crowds that thronged on the other side of the building, set a reflective tone.[48] Intrigued by a gentle breeze fluttering the patterns and textures as they hung from the bamboo, away from the crowded festival, I began to film them drying.

[47] Since the 1980s, ITB has held a "Pasar Seni" (art market) every three to four years, organised by students in the art school. It includes a commercial market where stall holders pay for space, and a curated section for art projects, which I was invited to join.
[48] I lived in Bandung from July 2013 to July 2014, spending a year at ITB with the support of an Australia-Asia Endeavour Award from the Australian government.

The experience was intensely nostalgic. I reflected not only on the aesthetic combination of sound, colour, light and movement but also on my past experience of hanging and drying. In the first year of the PhD I took a course in visual anthropology with renowned film maker Gary Kildea, who encouraged us to examine our mundane domesticities through “single-take shots”. I remembered setting my camera up to document my twice daily task of hanging up the laundry. The scents and sounds of that repetitious experience in my Canberra backyard flooded in over the top of those in the ITB sculpture yard, heightening my sensitivity to the similarly emotive state I encountered in this contrasting setting.

The two video scenes that resulted from this experience are a deeply personal response to that aesthetic experience. Rather than representing these situations, I intended to generate the affect of that situation, utilising the sound, movement and colour to draw a horizontal link between nostalgia and ennui, past and present, strange and familiar. For me, it evokes the same political tensions that informed *Nee (Born As),* not because it came out of the material of that project, but because it draws on the gendered domestic roles that I both resist and fulfil, and my experience as a expatriate, which also involved tension and negotiation. Aesthetician Ben Highmore proposes a “quotidian aesthetics” that recognises everyday, unremarkable actions as the “lively sensual material that both shapes and articulates intimate worldly experience”.[49] *Coda* reflects on specific instances of this sensual material embedded in my ordinary life, but the viewer’s interpretation will be fundamentally informed by their own worldly experience.

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[49] Ben Highmore, *Ordinary Lives: Studies in the Everyday* (London, New York: Routledge, 2011), p. 53.

These audio-visual works can only stand as “a mediating ‘spectacle’ between the artist’s idea and the spectator’s feeling and interpretation”.[50] The same vulnerabilities to contingency and interpretation are inherent in these personal works, and I invest the work’s capacity to generate conversation and reflection in these vulnerabilities.

Late conclusions

How do these practices relate to each other? What does maintaining both participatory and individual practice mean for the artist?

People and Place’s structured program – in form and content – was designed as a conscious response to the conditional and open-ended form of *Nee (Born As).* Similarly the concept behind *Coda* developed in a spontaneous counterpoint to the work of *Limen.* In this way both these projects contained elements that were also counterintuitive (even within the use of intuition in *Coda)* to my usual practice. As such, this research has expanded on my repertoire of forms and has allowed me to understand more deeply why, for instance, *People and Place’s* more rigid form did not allow enough room for the contingency that I argue was the key to the success of *Nee (Born As).*

Relative to each other as participatory and individual forms, maintaining both elements within my practice over the course of the five years I have been undertaking this research has also allowed me to observe the sometimes explicit and sometimes implicit ways these forms influence each other, and the ways in which they do not. While *Limen* and *Nee (Born As)* were, as I described earlier in this chapter, mutually informative, generating deep consideration on culture and its impact on our individual lives, *People and Place* did not generate any further artwork, or even an inclination to respond creatively outside of the project. I argue that its very structure and institutionalisation contained the work, and precluded the possibility of me making my own creative response outside the boundaries of the project. In the final, chapter, I reflect further on how these four projects have generated further ideas or precluded them, and how the different artworks are, and are not, interrelated. To achieve this comparative analysis, I analyse all four works in relation to a liminal framework.

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[50] Rancière, “The Emancipated Spectator”, p. 278.

CHAPTER 3:

REFLECTIONS/CONCLUSIONS

Introducing this exegesis, I presented a series of "signs" – participation, conversation, trace, contingency and liminality – that relate to my practice and my experiences of the work of several artists who make participatory and individual artworks. I then described my own approach to conceiving and implementing four artworks that explored similar concepts and practices. In this final chapter I address the interaction between different modes of participatory and individual artwork and how they manifest at this final juncture of the research project.

Pragmatist philosopher Richard Rorty's argument for regarding human beings as "generators of new descriptions" rather than "beings to be described" points to the potential for new ideas and understandings – new "descriptions" – to emerge from participation and conversation rather than visual representation.[51] By contrast, Rancière argues for the deconstruction of partitions that assign look/knowing and active/passive as binary oppositions.[52] In between these two arguments, I have explored diverse methodologies across four artworks.

The two participatory projects, *Nee (Born As)* and *People and Place,* take up the pragmatist mantle and emphasise dialogue and conversation as the "work" between artist and participant, and, importantly, between participants. The other two visual artworks, *Limen* and *Coda,* operate on the assumption that interpreting visual work *is* a form of participating, a way of knowing. Each work was generated through different technical and conceptual approaches, yet contingency linked each process of making, whether individual or participatory. The four artworks represent visual traces of each process, providing contingent spaces for audiences to make interpretations, shift between assumptions, continue conversations or reflect on experience through another's lens.

Interactions across culture and language – whether these are in visual, processual, dialogical or pedagogical registers – are the foundation of the research. But the

[51] R. Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), p. 378.
[52] Jacques Rancière, "The Emancipated Spectator", p. 277.

importance of domesticity, which had thus far remained a secondary concern, became strikingly evident during the process of designing the installation of artworks for the examination exhibition. While each artwork had made separate public appearances during the research period, the installation of all four in one space brought to light further conversations around ideas of home, work, relationships and values that are embedded in culture and language, and in signs and what they signify. Perhaps it is the prosaic nature of culture and language that locates much of the new knowledge generated through this research within what might be termed a "domestic space".

In conceiving the "aesthetic regime" – a regime which rejects the modernist separation of art from ordinary life – Rancière sees autonomy and heteronomy as linked in three ways. Firstly, he affirms the primacy and autonomy of the *experience* that a work of art generates, which validates any sentiment aroused regardless of the artist's intention. This is, paradoxically, also the second link, a sign of the artwork's heterogeneity, its contingent relationship to that experience. Finally, Rancière insists that the object of that experience, the artwork, is "'aesthetic', in so far as it is not—or at least not only—art".[53] In the exhibition of the four artworks together, the primacy of the aesthetic experience is drawn out through the arrangement of the works in a way that is both circumambulatory and chronological.

In the first space, *Limen* draws the viewer into a conversation between the work and its trace. Placing these two parts of the process – the intentional and the incidental – invites attention to processual origins of the work and its domestic motifs. *Nee (Born As)* resides behind *Limen,* in a spatial zone designated by furnishings borrowed from my home and that of my mother and grandmother, whose stories were so important to the genesis of the work. The work remains in progress, actively awaiting new names and narratives. While *Limen* is lit with traditional gallery spots, *Nee* basks in natural light, reflecting its history of iterations in shared public and domestic spaces.

Circling clockwise from *Nee (Born As)*, visitors find the large fabric collaborative print work created through the *People and Place* project. Suspended from the ceiling as a hexagonal prism, the closed and circulatory nature of its installation reflects its status

[53] Rancière, Jacques. "The Aesthetic Revolution and its Outcomes". *New Left Review* 14, March April (2002), p. 135.

as a completed work. *People and Place* represents a set of relations which the viewer can only participate in through observation of its traces: the motifs printed on the fabric and the video documentaries accompanying it (produced by Michal Glikson).

The hanging fabric of *People and Place* leads into a more abstract interpretation of personal and social relationships with pattern, motif and fabric: *Coda*. The two large video projections occupy both walls of a corner in the gallery, their edges meeting and their respective audio tracks intermingling across the space in between. *Coda* adds movement and sound to the section that houses the "late works", in contrast to the static presence of *People and Place*.

The decisions made regarding the display of the culmination of my practice based research extrapolate liminal ritual's three parts: "what is shown", particularly in the museological installation of *Limen* and *Coda)*; "what is done", particularly in relation to the actively installed *Nee (Born As)*; and "what is said", particularly in relation to the didacticism of *People and Place.*[54]

Furthermore, each work can also be analysed through a framework of liminality. *Nee (Born As)* conforms most closely to the three parts of ritual as described above, which Turner refers to as exhibition, action and instruction. Conversation was the overt goal of the work in its making and in the traces that the making left. To achieve this, each phase of making – the "action" – was accompanied by an "exhibition" of traces from the project's past: the memorial wall of fabric. Finally, but most importantly, "instructions" were related to each participant individually (frequently by other participants) before the stitching and conversation ensued. The trace that carries on – the myriad of names spelled out and the unrecorded stories behind them – maintains the "exhibition" phase for an unspecified period into the future, so long as the work can generate conversation and reflection.

People and Place complicated the three parts of a liminal ritual, moving in and out of these phases over the course of its implementation. Firstly, artefacts of similar collaborations were shown, followed by actions of collecting and experimenting, then

[54] Victor Turner, "Betwixt and Between: the Liminal Period in Rites de Passage", in *Reader in Comparative Religion: An Anthropological Approach (4th Edition)*, ed. William A. Lessa and Evon Z. Vogt (New York: Harper and Row, 1979), p. 239.

instructions on design and making, followed by the implementation of those instructions as action. The small group in which participants collaborated to design their motif resembled initiates bound by their shared concern and the imperative to reach consensus in their design. Once this consensus was reached, a further phase of exhibition intervened, when the combined designs of previous participants were revealed in the larger work. Positioning the larger work as the "structure" within a liminal framework explains why it was important for student groups to negotiate their understanding of place separate to that structure. The knowledge they generate in their designs is then fixed by its application to the larger structural work.

Finally, in my studio practice, liminality is less of a tactic for interpretation than it is subject and object of the research itself. In the solitary setting of individual work, liminality may be more or less ritualised. Making is located as a threshold between absence and presence, yet it retains its function as a site for the renegotiation of meaning. In *Limen,* as in *People and Place* and *Nee (Born As),* the working process removes objects and signs from their place in established knowledge structures and, by intermingling them, forces reinterpretation of their meaning.

In *Coda,* the video couples an unexpected moment of solitary contemplation with the quotidian rituals that it evoked through subliminal association. The former represents a moment of withdrawal from the larger structure of an art festival; the latter is embedded in the structure of ordinary domesticity and gender tropes. Setting them against each other builds a narrative that is specifically nostalgic for me but, like *Limen, Nee (Born As)* and *People and Place,* will conjure different responses from different individuals in conversation with the fabrics, colours and sounds. Unlike the three earlier projects, the liminal aspect of *Coda* reflects on my personal experiences of structure rather than an intellectual engagement with them.

How, then, do these participatory and individual practices relate to each other and what does maintaining these practices mean for me?

In all of the methodologies, a trace of process, conversation or contingency is produced. This functions as an "exhibition" to elicit reflection: a limen (or in Rancière's terminology "third term") that sits between my intentions and future audience/participant interpretations. The processes that generated these disparate

bodies of work may seem superficially distinguishable by the level at which the audiences or participants are engaged, but to see them as such replicates the "partition of the sensible" that renders a hierarchy of interpretative validity.[55] Rather, all of the methodologies explored during this research project are differentiated only by the space in which new interpretations are generated: in each case, a third liminal space.

Post-colonial poet and academic Édouard Glissant describes a theory of relation identity "linked not to a creation of the world but to the conscious and contradictory experience of contacts among cultures".[56] Like Bhabha's conversational art, this approach to human existence calls on us to transcend the filial institutions of defined communities and build new contingent and uncertain relations. As an artist, I have used this project to construct a practical comparison of different methodologies, resulting in a unique body of work that contributes new knowledge to the field of participatory and individual practice. I argue that invoking both participatory practice and consciously dialectical individual practice generates liminal spaces in which audiences can reflect on and reconsider the structures of society and culture. In these spaces, I have imagined new ways of living together, and invited audiences and participants to find transient meanings in a contingent, uncertain world.

[55] Rancière, "The Emancipated Spectator", p. 277.
[56] Éduoard Glissant, "Poetics of Relation", in *Participation*, ed. C. Bishop, *Documents of Contemporary Art* (London: Whitechapel, 2006), p. 78.

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