

**SEEKING ARTISTIC TRANSFORMATION  
*ELSEWHERE*: MICRORESIDENCIES WITH  
CASE STUDIES FROM YOGYAKARTA AND  
BALI, INDONESIA**

**TENGGU KAMILIAH BINTE TENGGU BAH DAR**

School of Art, Design & Media

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the increasing importance and prominence of artist residencies in relation to broader developments in contemporary art practices that is characterised by an expansion into the field of culture. It begins by first examining the definitions and typologies of residencies, highlighting in particular the microresidence—a type of residence that is small-scale and often artist-run. In looking at the typologies of residencies through its working method, process and outcome, it reveals how particular residencies are structured to support current contemporary art practices that are now more discursive and in which the artwork is increasingly deaestheticised and dematerialised. Of particular interest is how, with the increasingly nomadic practice of artists, the act of traveling and dwelling elsewhere with residencies also provides resident artists with access to spatial, temporal and cultural alterity that is potentially transformative. With data collected through fieldwork and participant observation, microresidences Cemeti Art House in Yogyakarta and Ketemu Project Space in Bali, Indonesia serves as case studies of how a residency programme might structure itself to support discursive practices and the importance placed on sociality. By making visible the production happening in residencies, the thesis hopes to highlight the value of present-day artist residencies not just for artists but also the locality it is embedded in.

# INTRODUCTION

## *The phenomena*

After 29 hours and 25 minutes of flight and transit, I had finally arrived in Medellín for a five-week residency at Casa Tres Patios. It would be the beginning of a double journey—one was a journey through the multiple terrains of Colombia composed of its social, cultural and political elements, and the other was a journey guided by both a professional and academic interest in the phenomenon of residencies. The latter was sparked by my own immediate encounter with the structure of the residency programme, as well as from observing the daily practice of other residents and visiting other art spaces hosting residencies. It raised in my mind questions about residencies, which are pertinent considering how it has flourished in the past two decades. A cursory glance at the global art system highlights how residency programmes have now come into prominence and constitutes a network of institutions that also includes museums, commercial galleries, government agencies and non-profit organisations.

Just a brief, and by no means comprehensive, overview of residency programmes in Singapore illustrates how entrenched residencies are in the global art system. The government agency National Arts Council (NAC) has brokered connections with international industry partners to create professional development opportunities for arts and cultural professionals in Singapore (National Arts Council 2017a). In the case of the visual arts, these include fully sponsored residency programmes such as the 12-month Künstlerhaus Bethanien Residency Programme in Berlin, Germany, and the 3-month Dena Foundation Artist Residency Programme launched in 2012 and the 4-month Dena Foundation Curator Residency Programme launched in 2013, both at the Centre International d'Accueil et d'Echanges des Récollets Paris, France. Aside from these specific programmes, the NAC also provides

funding for artists doing other residencies. In their annual report for the financial year 2015/2016, NAC has given partial funding under their Capability Development Grant to six applicants in the visual arts (National Arts Council 2017b, p. 116 of 126).

As for large institutions in Singapore itself, there is the NTU Centre for Contemporary Art Singapore (CCA) Residencies programme that have been ongoing since 2014. This residencies programme is one of the three pillars of CCA—the second is exhibitions, and being a national research centre of Nanyang Technological University, the third is research and academic education (NTU Centre For Contemporary Art Singapore 2014). It hosts both local and international artists, curators, critics and scholars. There are seven dedicated studio spaces for the resident artists who need not produce work for an exhibition at the CCA (NTU Centre For Contemporary Art Singapore 2014). On the other hand, The Singapore Tyler Print Institute (STPI) is a non-profit organisation with a Visiting Artists Programme consisting of an artist residency that culminates in an exhibition (Tan 2015). Since 2002, prominent artists have been and continue to be invited to work with the institute's master printer Eitaro Ogawa and his team of printers and papermakers to create works (Tan 2015). STPI's workshop, gallery, offices and residences are all located within the same building (Tan 2015).

Commercial galleries too offer residency programmes, often couched as an incentive for represented artists of the gallery. Singapore gallery Yeo Workshop announced in 2016 their new collaboration with Grafis Minggiran Print Studio in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, to run an invite-only collaborative programme named Artists with Artists (Yeo Workshop n.d.). The resident artist, usually an artist already represented by the gallery, spends at most two weeks expanding upon their technical and conceptual skills with the printmakers of Grafis Minggiran. Another commercial gallery is TAKSU with gallery spaces in Kuala Lumpur, Bali and Singapore. In 2004, the TAKSU Artist

Residency Programme was initiated. It takes place in Kuala Lumpur, between 45 and 60 days, and concludes with a solo exhibition (TAKSU n.d.).

In a different residency model, there is The Art Incubator founded by Charmaine Toh in 2008. It is a community-based organisation that *facilitates* the research, creation and presentation of new works through residencies and exhibitions (The Art Incubator n.d.). Although the organisation lacks a physical space, it has access to an extensive network from which to tap on. In partnership with arts organisations such as Grey Projects and Objectifs in Singapore, Victorian College of the Arts and Gertrude Contemporary in Melbourne, Australia, 98B and Green Papaya Art Projects in Manila, the Philippines, Bamboo Curtain Studio in Taipei, Taiwan, and PLATFORM3 in Bandung, Indonesia, the Art Incubator had regularly organised and hosted residencies for Singapore artists locally and abroad. Similarly, Grey Projects, a non-profit art space founded by Jason Wee, too have forged partnerships with various art spaces to exchange artists for residencies. Their first and long-standing residency partner is Hangar in Barcelona, Spain, with the first artist exchange having taken place in 2011 (Grey Projects n.d.). My own residency in Medellín was part of an exchange between Grey Projects and Casa Tres Patios.

Finally, there is the Pulau Ubin Artists-in-Residency programme by the collective The Artists Village. It began in 2011, offering residents a small house with basic amenities, as well as a very modest stipend and material fees (The Artists Village n.d.). It is the only residency programme in Singapore located outside the metropolis on the small offshore island of Ubin. To get to Ubin from the metropolis, one must take a 15-minute boat ride from Changi Village. As such, Ubin's relative isolation from the metropolis makes location a distinguishing feature of the Pulau Ubin Artists-in-Residency programme especially for the local artists it hosts.

The above reveals that there is not just one model for residencies, and that each residency programme is composed of a constellation of factors—

such as duration, location, and provisions—arranged on different scales. How these factors are arranged depends largely on the means, function and network of the organisation that is organising and hosting the residency. Nonetheless, despite the increasing access to residencies for Singapore practitioners in the visual arts in the past 15 years or so, the experience, process, structure, and history of residencies generally have not been thoroughly examined. And indeed, the different models, scales and constellation of factors for residencies make it a challenge to examine cohesively. For this reason, this thesis will be focussing on microresidencies—a type of residence that is small-scale and often artist-run—, of which there are comparably more in Indonesia than Singapore.

### ***Microresidences in Yogyakarta and Bali, Indonesia***

A similar overview of residency programmes in Indonesia is difficult to collate because of the lack of information and documentation available online in Bahasa Indonesia, and even less so is available in English. However, through fieldwork and interviews, I can provide an overview of specific microresidences in Yogyakarta and Bali as well as the contemporary art ecology they are located in.

Clustered in the south of Yogyakarta city are many different art spaces, including galleries, artist-run spaces, artist studios, Jogja National Museum, multifunctional spaces that combine café, art and event like Kedai Kebun Forum and ViaVia Café, and institutions like Indonesian Visual Arts Archive, KUNCI Cultural Studies Center, and Cemeti Institute of Art and Society (formerly Cemeti Art House). The Jogja National Museum has also been the venue for the art fair-cum-exhibition ARTJOG, which has been held annually since 2008, and Biennale Jogja, which has held its Equator series consistently since 2011 in partnership with equatorial countries. These two major visual art events draw in both local and international artists and audiences. Located within the area are three microresidencies that were observed for the purpose

of this thesis—the former Cemeti Art House, Ruang MES 56 and Ace House Collective which are all within 10 minutes walk of each other.

The former Cemeti Art House started in 1988 by Nindityo Adipurnomo and Mella Jaarsma as a space to exhibit and communicate the works of Indonesian and contemporary artists (Cemeti Art House n.d.). Asmudjo Jono Irianto stated in his reflection on Cemeti Art House 15<sup>th</sup> year anniversary that Cemeti Art House was significant for providing “the sophistication the contemporary art world in Indonesian [*sic*] needs” at a time when many “visual art exhibitions or activities generally referred to the framework of modern visual art” resulting in what he termed “graceless and stagnant modern art” (Asmudjo Jono Irianto 2000, p. 25). It saw itself as a centre for the exhibiting, documenting, promoting and circulating of information for and on the visual arts (Cemeti Art House n.d.). Since then it has expanded to take on the role of stimulating art practices, art discourses and art management by supporting solo exhibitions, and mentoring curators and art managers (Cemeti Art House n.d.). At the tail end of 2006, Cemeti Art House started formal residency programmes for artists, curators, writers and art critics often in collaboration and through the support of international institutions. In an interview with Mella, she informed me that the residency programmes was part of an effort to bring the focus again to art production and art practice as opposed to art as commodity spurred by the art market boom.

Mes 56 first started as a contemporary photography collective composed of students from the first photography class at the Indonesian Institute of the Arts, Yogyakarta. In an interview with Wok The Rock, he stated that the collective first formed in 2002 in response to a need for a space to exhibit the works of its members. The members found it hard for their works to gain acceptance in the contemporary art circle as photography was not recognised as new media arts. Yet, their works were also not accepted by the photography circle as their use of archival images, scans, and found digital

images such as screenshots were not regarded as photography. Hence, MES 56 was formed to support its members by giving their works a platform.

But now, these forms of works have been accepted in both contemporary art and photography circles and there is no longer an urgency to organise exhibitions. At the time when I interviewed Wok in December 2016, he mentioned a desire to engage not only art students and young artists to learn something different than what was offered in art school, but also students and graduates from other disciplines like sociology. He described this new vision to turn Ruang MES 56 into a lab for people to learn, work and have fun. On its newly revamped website, Ruang MES 56 has largely shed its photography identity. Ruang MES 56's new tagline is "A Cooperative Space for Art Et Cetera" and describes itself as "an artist collective working cooperatively with their communities and networks to manage a house for studio, education, playground and a place to live in" (MES 56 n.d.).

For the self-funded Ruang MES 56, residencies provided the collective with some income. But more than that, MES 56 also host residencies as a way not only for themselves but also the community at large to continue to learn from others through close interaction and engagement. Their residency programme does not have a fix structure: how long the duration of stay, whether a final exhibition will be mounted, and whether the resident artist is interested to focus on research or production is negotiated based on the resident artist's interest and financial capacity.

Another artist collective is Ace House Collective, which started in 2011 by a group of friends who were mostly former printmaking students from the Indonesian Institute of the Arts, Yogyakarta who organised exhibitions even though they were without their own physical space. In 2014, the collective launched a self-funded space located only two minutes' walk from Ruang MES 56. The space consists of a clothing shop at the front run by a friend of the

collective, a long exhibiting space divided into three galleries, a kitchen to the back, a storage room, and two small bedrooms.

Members of the collective are mostly in their 30s, yet in an interview with one of its members, Gintani Swastika, mentioned repeatedly that the space was not only to support and engage artists of the younger generation but to also connect with them and to understand their perspective. In line with that, the collective has a three-months residency-cum-mentorship programme called the Three Musketeers Project. The first edition was in 2014 and opened to applicants under 30 years old, and the second edition was in 2016 and opened to applicants under 28 years old. Gintani has mentioned that the next edition might have an even lower age limit for applicants.

Three residents for each edition were selected through an open call in which applicants had to submit a portfolio of works, a CV, a motivational statement and their choice of two mentors from members of the collective. In addition to the two mentors, a third mentor selected by the collective would oversee the three residents to present an additional perspective. The programme, described as intense by both the residents and the members, consisted of a public presentation by the residents, guest lectures, studio visits, weekly meetings with the mentors, artwork production and an exhibition.

The six residents from the two editions came from Yogyakarta, Surabaya, Bandung and Jakarta, and at the time of the residency, they were all still studying in university. The reason they were keen on the residency and mentorship programme was for the opportunity to learn outside the constriction of school, as they were often restricted to the medium they majored in and were sometimes discouraged from exploring particular themes and issues. Through the Three Musketeers Project, the residents could work across different mediums and freely explore their interests. This sense of shared learning also goes both ways; Gintani added that through the

programme and the residents, members of the collective also kept on learning.

The art ecology in Bali, on the other hand, is different from Yogyakarta. Although there are a number of private museums and galleries dedicated to Balinese art in Ubud, there is no cluster of contemporary art spaces. The two microresidences Ketemu Project Space and Cata Odata are 35 minutes apart by car. Nor are there any current major visual art events on the scale of ARTJOG and Biennale Jogja. That tourism is a major industry in Bali has shaped its art ecology. In Ubud, a popular tourist destination, there are rows of art shops selling souvenir paintings. Hotels located in tourist areas like Sanur have their own art galleries that have become an important exhibiting space for artists based in Bali—Ketemu Project Space held the exhibition *Merayakan Murni (Celebrating Murni)* at Sudakara Art Space in 2016 which is part of Sudamala Resorts in Sanur, while Cata Odata has organised the exhibition *The Enigma: Looking at Life Through Women's Eyes* at Artotel also located in Sanur in 2018. Interviews with the founders of Ketemu Project Space and Cata Odata reveal how these spaces interact with the art ecology, but also despite the differences, how these spaces are not dissimilar to microresidences in Yogyakarta.

Ketemu Project Space was first established in 2015 by a young husband and wife duo—Budi Agung Kuswara (Kabul), an Indonesian, and Samantha Tio (Mintio), a Singaporean. In 2016, at the time of the interview, Kabul was 34 years old and Mintio was 30 years old. Trained in painting and photography respectively, Kabul and Mintio felt “limited by the way their works and practice only extends to the audience in the commercial art market” (Ketemu Project Space 2017a). And so, Ketemu was conceptualised in 2011 “with the goal of developing projects with the participation of community members to address social issues and harness creativity for social empowerment” (Ketemu Project Space 2017a). Prior to moving to Bali where Kabul is from, they had spent a few years in Yogyakarta which had greatly informed their views on art

and community and where they completed their first co-creation initiative *Malam di Jari Kita* (The Wax on Our Fingers) with batik craft-makers of Klaten in central Java in 2012. Kabul and Mintio bring this same goal to their residency programmes under Ketemu Project Space which focuses on residents either working with the local community, on the local social environment or with local materials. The focus on local materials is because they would like the research or outcome of the residency to benefit the local community who themselves have access to that material too. As an example, research or work on a project requiring high speed Internet would not be beneficial to the community as such infrastructure is not easily available to them.

Ketemu Project Space is housed in a residential neighbourhood, in a house where Kabul, Mintio and their young daughter lives. The house can be re-functioned to suit the scale and configuration of their projects and residency programmes. In early 2015, when they hosted short two-weeks residencies, the front room was the resident's bedroom and studio, while the back room was the office and bedroom for Kabul and Mintio and their daughter that was separated by only a curtain. From November 2015, when the duration of the residency was extended for a month or more, the back room served mainly as a separate private bedroom space for themselves, while the front room is a multifunctional space that serves as an office and studio for themselves, two staff members, and residents. The front garden courtyard is also utilised as a meeting and hosting space, and other times a presentation and workshop space. When projects get extremely busy and several people are in the house, both the front and back rooms are converted into offices in the day. For these month-long residencies, the residents are often given accommodation elsewhere. But true to the flexibility of Ketemu Project Space, the house is always open to residents to stay should they fall sick, or have returned short-term to complete projects and exhibitions.

Echoing what Ruang MES 56 and Ace House Collective said about learning, both Kabul and Mintio saw residencies as a form of “alternative education” from which they and others could learn. As such, they require all their residents to lead a public sharing session called Ketemu Aja, meaning “to meet”. When schedules permit, Ketemu Project Space also organises a Ketemu Makan! session, a casual dinner gathering where resident artists invite 8 guests from the local community who they would like to meet and often come from fields related to their artistic interest. They also tap on their social networks to introduce their residents to local practitioners and artists in an effort not only to encourage meaningful engagement and interaction, but to also extend the learning process to the local art community through exchange of ideas and perspectives.

Bali’s established tourist infrastructure also proved to be a boon for their residency programme in aiding resident’s mobility—English is spoken more extensively in Bali, and the launch of transportation app GO-JEK and Grab in 2015 meant that residents could travel around Bali more independently without relying on their host.

Cata Odata describes itself as an art house and is founded by theatre set designer Ratna Odata and visual artist Kenyut Djunaidi at the end of 2013 when they rented a three-storey building in Ubud. The building houses a studio in the basement floor, a gallery on the ground floor, and living space for the founders, staff and residents on the top floor. At the time of the interview in 2016, Ratna was 27 years old and Kenyut was 37 years old. Both of them originally hailed from East Java and hence, one of their focus for Cata Odata is on bringing East Java- and Bali-based artists together in conversation and exchange through residencies and exhibitions. Ratna funds the space through her work as a set designer, and takes advantage of Bali’s tourism industry by renting out the studio space and bedrooms to artists on a sojourn in Bali and bedrooms to tourists and travellers, and sale of artworks from their regular exhibition programmes to international visitors. Cata Odata also responds to

the art ecology of Bali through their selection of artists for their residency programme. In an interview with Rat Heist, a Malaysian artist who participated in the 2015 edition of Bare Journal residency programme, informed me that he was encouraged by Cata Odata to make sculptures during his residency as it was different from sculptures in Bali which are often religious-based.

The ethos of sharing, learning and exchange is also apparent in how the first edition of Bare Journal is structured. The residency hosted three residents for five weeks—two Indonesian artist and writer, and one Malaysian artist. Residents are given accommodation, meals, studio space, an exhibition, and materials within the means of Cata Odata. Both Ratna and Kenyut also support the artists by organising studio and workshop visits. The residents shared a room with bunk beds so that they would be in close proximity and could interact and observe each other's working method. Ratna informed me that this was important particularly for the Indonesian residents who do not get much opportunity to travel out of Indonesia to observe how things are done differently. Another way in which the ethos of sharing, learning and exchange manifest is through the journals in which the residents record their thoughts and process on a daily basis. These journals are then displayed at the exhibition where visitors are free to read and respond on the pages of the journal itself. After 2016, Cata Odata expanded with three more additional people to their team, and together so has their programming that reflects the two founders different disciplinary backgrounds. The 2017 edition of Bare Journal hosted a dance choreographer from Jakarta, a visual artist based in Bali, and a writer with a theatre background from Bali.

While an overview of the many residency programmes in Bali and Yogyakarta is beyond the scope of this thesis, describing these five art spaces and their residency programmes provides a glimpse into the niche that each art space occupies and the role they play in their respective art ecology, and how this might also be reflected in their residency programmes. With older art

spaces like Cemeti Art House and Ruang MES 56, we can also see how it has evolved in response to a changing art ecology.

### ***Structure of this thesis***

This thesis is largely concerned with exploring artist residencies in relation to broader developments in contemporary art practices. It seeks to answer how particular models of artist residencies support the discourse-specific practices that had emerged in the 1990s and why artist residencies have come to be an important infrastructure in the global contemporary art.

Before fully jumping into the topic of artist residencies is a chapter on the methodology employed by this research—the participant observation as a method of data collection. I have dedicated some space to explaining what participant observation is, how it is applicable to this research and what this method yields in order to allay doubts of the applicability of a method often associated with anthropology to the discipline of curatorial studies. I hope that the extensive discussion on participant observation and its relevance to this research will beat a path for the use of participant observation in curatorial studies. I would like to highlight here that participant observation studies only yield analytic descriptions consisting of empirical generalisations. The value of these analytic descriptions comes later when enough scholarship is built on a topic in order for comparative studies to be made. I hope my description of microresidencies in Indonesia will be of use to future research on the topic.

Following the chapter on methodology is a chapter broadly discussing artist residencies. I present a brief history on the development of artist residencies, but it is not an in-depth historical account. Rather it describes in broad strokes when and how the modern-day artist residencies emerged and evolved. I will however go into more depth about the different models of artist residencies seen in the present day, before bringing into focus a particular residency model—the microresidence. Ketemu Project will be the case study

in this chapter on how a microresidence can be viewed as a form of artistic practice. Before moving to the next chapter on developments in contemporary art practices, I will highlight the Artist Placement Group from United Kingdom that was established in the 1960s—could the Artist Placement Group be the first residency programme catered for the discourse-specific practices that was emerging?

The penultimate chapter on developments in contemporary art practices borrows largely texts on the ethnographic turn in contemporary art by Hal Foster and site-specific art by Miwon Kwon. Interweaving their text with observations and commentaries from both art practitioners and academics, I look at how residencies with its spatial and discursive practice became an important infrastructure in global contemporary art. This chapter ends with Cemeti Art House as a case study to look at how a residency programme might be structured to support a discursive practice.

## METHODOLOGY

### *Participant observation as a method of data collection*

Participant observation is a method of data collection that employs multiple strategies of investigation including differing degrees in involvement of participation from passive to complete participation in the field, informal and formal interviews as well as the sourcing of documents and artefacts. Together they provide various and differing accounts and interpretations on the unfolding processes and on-going patterns of interaction within and surrounding microresidencies in Yogyakarta and Bali. This section will provide a brief history and explanation of this method of data collection, how it has been employed in this research on microresidencies, and the limitations and challenges encountered.

Participant observation is often subsumed under the types of research principally conducted by social anthropologists and sociologists which are broadly known as fieldwork, ethnography, case study, qualitative research, interpretive procedures and field research—although each terminology indicates different emphasis and conceptualisation in the research done. This research paper however largely eschews those other terminologies, as they are closely associated with the discipline and theoretical framework of social anthropology and sociology, and thus also seek to avoid in engaging with these disciplines' specific discourses. Nonetheless, participant observation as a terminology is employed here as it refers to a characteristic method of conducting research in the field and will be described shortly in detail. While the section below borrows largely from texts that speak specifically about participant observation, it will also take texts culled from books on field research, fieldwork and ethnography due to their overlapping focus on collecting data using observational methods in their investigation of a social world structured by its actors.

### ***A brief background on field research and participant observation***

Burgess (2006, pp. 1-2) succinctly describes the 'field' in field research as referring to the "circumscribed area of study which have been the subject of social research" and field research as the style of research which "relies on an observational approach involving a relationship between the researcher and those who are researched". As mentioned above, this type of research is principally conducted by social anthropologists and sociologists. Indeed, Burgess (2006, p. 10) states that field research as we know it today stemmed largely from a twentieth-century development in social anthropology where the work of anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski was particularly influential.

Where initially field research was conducted in an *elsewhere* that is another culture and preferably in another country, for several reasons outlined by Burgess (2006, p. 12), anthropologists and field research eventually shifted their focus of work from overseas to the local neighbourhood in urban areas or urban-industrial settings such as factories, schools and hospitals. Anthropologists are now found working in towns and cities of industrial societies across the globe. But this shift in fields has thrown into question the applicability of the Malinowskian model of field research. To this, Burgess (2006, p. 12) observed that the shift in fields have also meant a shift in theoretical positions from that of holistic studies to the detailed treatment of particular topics and themes. This is because the scale and diversity of urban life have made it problematic for researchers to extrapolate from a small-scale study to the whole city or even segment of the city. As such, holism has been sacrificed for a micro-level ethnography of a segmented population, often a study of a small number of informants in depth (Burgess 2006, p. 12). Yet, anthropological field research in urban areas have nonetheless retained several features associated with the traditional Malinowskian model: the researchers reside in situ, and continue to employ

participant observation, unstructured interviews and the use of key informants (Burgess 2006, p. 13).

As to social research undertaken by sociologists, Burgess (2006) has found some interchange between social anthropology and sociology in terms of the observational methods used and perspectives employed. In particular, there was the Manchester School of Social Anthropology which extended into sociology and whose research included the study of British communities, factories and schools in Britain, and the Chicago School of Sociologists in America which employed the anthropological methods used to study North American Indians to the study of inhabitants and diverse groups in the city of Chicago, including homeless men, street gangs, delinquents and dance hall girls.

Burgess' (2006, pp. 13-16) concise survey of the observational method employed by sociologists provides varied examples of how field research is done within urban settings. In such substantive disciplinary focus like the sociology of labour and industry, sociology of health and illness, and sociology of education, the Manchester sociologists employed a methodological approach and perspective common to British social anthropology, which seeks to elucidate the meaning of social situations by studying situations from their subjects' point of view, particularly how they interpret their experience and construct their reality, and how these in turn are modified during the process of interaction. Similarly, the Manchester sociologists were required to learn about their field of study from those who lived within it, which thus involved collecting data to aid understandings of the situation and to make behaviour comprehensible to those outside and inside the system studied (Burgess 2006, p. 14). And so, the Manchester sociologists who studied factories not only observed the situations factory workers are located in, but also took on jobs within factories in order to share in the work experiences of those whom they studied (Burgess 2006, p. 14). And in the studies of sociology of education, researchers taught classes while doing their research (Burgess 2006, p. 16). As

can be seen, field research as a method of investigation developed in relation to the theoretical perspectives or theoretical orientations central to the discipline of anthropology and sociology.

Yet, this paper is not an anthropological nor a sociological undertaking, but it employs and modifies the method of field research to its study of microresidencies. As shown above, while field research has its roots in twentieth-century anthropology and its studies of distant cultures, it was gradually employed in social research done 'at home' in urban societies in spite of the shift in fields and theoretical positions. In particular, such research were conceptualised as an in-depth small-scale study of a small group of informants by focussing on a particular community, be it homeless men or street gangs, or by focussing on a particular geographical location, be it a hospital or a school. This paper will also take a similar approach in its study of microresidencies by limiting itself between two and three microresidencies each in Yogyakarta and Bali to use as case studies. In particular, these microresidencies were selected as case studies because of the accessibility to informants willing to share their views and experiences, and in one case, even invited me to participate in their residency programme.

### ***The uses and limitations of participant observation***

The strength of the anthropological and sociological method of investigation lies in its ability to elucidate the meaning of social situations from the point of view of those being studied. This method of investigation is applicable to this research paper as it seeks to understand how and why microresidencies are structured the way they are, and how the resident artists interact with and within those structures. The method of investigation encompasses many strategies and is known as participant observation. As McCall and Simmons (1969, n.p.) briefly sums it up, "[p]articipant observation is not a single method but rather a characteristic style of research which makes use of a number of methods and techniques—observation, informant

interviewing, document analysis, respondent interviewing, and participation with self-analysis". These methods and techniques will be addressed below.

McCall and Simmons (1969, p. 3) further described participant observation as a research enterprise resulting in an analytic description of a complex social organisation, whether it be a criminal gang, occupational group, mental hospital, community, or the like. While the analytic description that McCall and Simmons speaks of relates to anthropological and sociological studies, it is nonetheless important to discuss it here as it throws light on the uses and limitations of studies using participant observation.

According to McCall and Simmons (1969, p. 3), an analytic description firstly employs the concepts, propositions, and empirical generalisations of a body of scientific theory as the basic guides in analysis and reporting; secondly, it then employs thorough and systematic collection, classification, and reporting of facts; and thirdly, it generates new empirical generalisations, and perhaps concepts and propositions, based on these data. This definition of an analytic description is applicable to this study of microresidencies as the paper will begin with building on existing literature on microresidencies and other interrelated concepts, before delving into the case studies which will generate new empirical generalisations. McCall and Simmons (1969, p. 3) further stated that,

analytic description is primarily an empirical application and modification of scientific theory rather than an efficient and powerful test of such a theory, since only one case—however complex—in involved in the study. This is not to say that participant observation studies cannot be used to test theory. That test of theory comes in comparing such analytic descriptions of complex cases when these are available in sufficient number and variety. Anthropologists test theories by comparing analytic descriptions of

societies, and community sociologists by comparing community studies.

Here it is worth noting that the purpose of participant observation studies merely results in analytic descriptions consisting of empirical generalisations, and not more. Indeed, as it stands alone, these analytic descriptions might be charged for being anecdotal or subjectively peculiar to the informants who are studied. The value of such studies, however, comes later when enough scholarship has been built on a topic for future researchers to mine for comparative studies. In a topic where scholarship is lacking, this paper hopes to be of use to future researchers seeking to compare case studies on the phenomenon of microresidencies.

### ***The multiple strategies of participant observation***

As mentioned above, field research and participant observation developed as a method of investigation in relation to the theoretical perspectives of anthropology and sociology. Participant observation was described by Jorgensen (1989, p. 12) as “exceptional for studying processes, relationships among people and events, the organisation of people and events, continuities over time, and patterns, as well as the immediate sociocultural contexts in which human existence unfolds”. This method of investigation is developed to understand a social world that is not objective, but rather one that involves subjective meanings and experiences constructed by participants in social situations (Burgess 2006, p. 64). Accordingly, it is the tasks of these anthropologists and sociologists to interpret the meanings and experiences of social actors (Burgess 2006, p. 64). And that task can only be achieved through participation with the individuals involved (Burgess 2006, p. 64). Participant observation collects data on situations as they occur as opposed to artificial situations, as in experimental research, or constructs of artificial situations provided by the researcher, as in survey research (Burgess 2006, p. 65). The value of being a participant observer, Burgess (2006, p. 65)

argues, lies in the opportunity to collect rich detailed data based on observations in natural settings and to obtain accounts of situations in the participants' own language, thereby giving access to the concepts used in everyday life. Furthermore, through various accounts and versions of events obtained from informants, the researcher can construct an account of a social situation (Burgess 2006, p. 65).

According to Jorgensen (1989, pp. 12-13), participant observation is especially appropriate for scholarly problems when little is known about the phenomenon, when there are important differences between the views of insiders and outsiders, and when the phenomenon is somehow obscured from the view of outsiders, or when the phenomenon is hidden from public view. These points are particularly applicable to this paper's research on microresidencies as there is a lack of scholarship on microresidencies, the views of the organisation hosting a microresidence and the resident artists might or might not differ from the view of the audiences and communities the microresidencies engages, and often, the process of microresidencies and the experience of the resident artists are obscured.

Also, Jorgensen (1989, p. 13) added that participant observation is most appropriate when certain minimal conditions are present, which are the following: the research problem is concerned with human meanings and interactions viewed from the insiders' perspective; the phenomenon of investigation is observable within an everyday life situation or setting; the researcher is able to gain access to an appropriate setting; the phenomenon is sufficiently limited in size and location to be studied as a case; study questions are appropriate for case study; and the research problem can be addressed by qualitative data gathered by direct observation and other means pertinent to the field setting. Similarly, these conditions are present to varying degrees in this research on microresidencies: the research problem is concerned with exploring the intentions of the organisation hosting the microresidencies, and the perspectives of the resident artists; as microresidencies are more

temporally and spatially specific, it is often observable in everyday settings; access to the microresidencies, the host organisation and the resident artists are sufficient to investigate the phenomenon; and focussing on specific microresidencies in Yogyakarta and Bali as case studies makes the research enterprise rather wieldy.

As to the study questions and research problem, these were developed in a cyclical sequence as opposed to a linear sequence. A linear sequence begins with defining a research problem before data can be collected whereas a cyclical sequence begins with the selection of a research project and the scope of investigation (Spradley 1980, p. 28). With a cyclical sequence, the logic and process of inquiry is open-ended, flexible, opportunistic, and open to constant redefinition subjected to what is observed (Jorgensen 1989, p. 14). And indeed, this research paper was developed and refined continuously in tandem with various visits to Yogyakarta and Bali where after getting an overview of the situation, the research was narrowed so as to make more focused observations. Following which, analysis of the observations becomes a process of question-discovery, that is, the researcher analyses the field data compiled from participant observation to discover questions (Spradley 1980, p. 33). I would further like to posit that the analysis following the observations also raises questions for future research that might not fall within the scope of the research enterprise.

Moreover, these various visits to Yogyakarta and Bali totalling 12 weeks over the course of 15 months were crucial in facilitating access to research sites. It is my view that the art communities in Yogyakarta and Bali greatly appreciated building rapport and relationships based on face-to-face interactions, much of it through casual activities such as hanging out and attending events, which allowed me to ease into chosen research sites. Access here refers to gaining permission to do research in a particular social setting or institution (Burgess 2006, p. 31). The particular research sites here—Cemeti Institute of Art and Society (formerly Cemeti Art House), Ruang MES 56 and

Ace House Collective in Yogyakarta, and Cata Odata and Ketemu Project Space in Bali—were not only selected based on its relevance to the research topic but also the willingness of individuals to cooperate, and convenience due to time, location and already established contacts. Furthermore, I would posit that my own personal biography came into play as well. Most of my informants and interlocutors are themselves young art practitioners of similar age to me, and female. And similarly, due to my lack of fluency in Bahasa Indonesia, I gravitated towards informants and interlocutors who were comfortable than most in communicating in the English language.

So what exactly does participant observation entail? After gaining an entrée to a social setting, Spradley (1980, p. 54) states that the participant observer comes to a social situation with two purposes: firstly to observe the activities, people, and physical aspects of the situation, and secondly to engage in activities appropriate to the situation. But as Ingold (2014, p. 387) cautions, “[t]o observe is not to objectify; it is to attend to persons and things, to learn from them, and to follow in precept and practice”. I would like to forewarn that as observations are by and large an inherent aspect of participant observation, that much of the section dedicated to the primary data will be descriptive, serving as both materials to be documented for posterity as much as materials to be analysed.

As to participation, there are according to Spradley (1980, p. 58) differences in the degree of involvement on the part of the researcher both with people and in the activities. These degrees of participation fall under four categories: passive participation, moderate participation, active participation, and complete participation. In passive participation, the researcher is present at the scene of action but does not participate or interact with other people to any great extent. Here, the researcher finds an ‘observation post’ from which to observe and record what goes on. Spradley (1980, p. 59) adds that if the passive participant occupies any role in the social situation, it will only be that of ‘bystander’, ‘spectator’ or ‘loiterer’. A moderate participant seeks to

maintain a balance between an insider and an outsider while an active participant seeks to do what other people are doing (Spradley 1980, p. 60). And lastly, complete participation occurs when the researcher studies a situation in which they are already ordinary participants (Spradley 1980, p. 60).

However much Spradley has broken down these degrees of participation into neat categories, my experience in the social settings is less so, especially as I came into this research already as an arts practitioner and who had gained entrée into the situation as a curator on the project Merayakan Murni organised by Ketemu Project Space. This resulted in moving through various social contexts and developing several roles that existed simultaneously and overlapped not just over the course of the visits to Yogyakarta and Bali, but also throughout this research. The curious fluctuating role of the researcher-as-participant-observer is acknowledged by Spradley (1980) and Burgess (2006). Burgess (2006, p. 65) mentioned that participant observers are involved in face-to-face relationships with those who are researched, thus becoming part of the context that is being observed. Meanwhile Spradley (1980, p. 56) alludes to the largely phenomenological nature of participant observation, particularly so for the complete participant who studies a situation in which they are already ordinary participants:

The ordinary participant in a social situation usually experiences it in an immediate, subjective manner. We see some of what goes on around us; we experience our own movements; we move through a sequence of activities as subjects, as the one engaging in the activities. In short, we are *insiders*. Our experience of participating in a social situation takes on meaning and coherence from the fact that we are *inside* the situation, part of it. (italics in original)

Spradley (1980, p. 57) further adds that the difference between the ordinary participant and the participant observer, even a complete participant, is the

dual role of both an insider and outsider that the participant observer encompasses:

The participant observer, on the other hand, will experience being both insider and outsider simultaneously. You probably won't have this simultaneous insider/observer experience all the time. On some occasions, you may suddenly realize you have been acting as a full participant, without observing as an outsider. At other times, you will probably be able to find an observation post and become a more detached observer.

It is through this immersive experience of coming to know coupled with direct observations that the participant observer becomes privy to the dynamics of that context, whether it be the activities, the people or the physical space. Such direct observations that can be made as a participant observer includes looking at the main features of the physical space, as this research is partially focussed on: for example, the kind of space or building, how the space is organised, and how things and people are arranged. But these direct observations are also aided by casual conversations and communication with others, as when certain behaviours and intentions are pointed out.

To return to McCall and Simmons (1969, p. 3), the nature of complex social organisations is such that it is a largely latent organisation, that is, it is largely unintended and unrecognised by the members themselves. Consequently, in order to obtain an analytic description, the social researcher must observe the organisation directly (McCall & Simmons 1969, p. 3). Direct observation however is still not sufficient as McCall and Simmons (1969, p. 4) states that firstly, the organisation is typically being manifested in several locales simultaneously; secondly, the organisation has typically been in existence for some time before the researcher undertook his or her study; and thirdly, many of its features or determinants, such as the motives, intentions,

interests, and perceptions of its members, are only imperfectly inferable by direct observation. Therefore, participant observation entails more than just direct observation. Other strategies of indirect observations are also utilised including obtaining observations from perceptive persons, records and documents. These were also done in this research where interviews were made and artefacts or records were documented, such as Cata Odata's Bare Journals, which are individual handmade journals created by resident artist Rat Heist and resident writer Arifinism during their one-month residency at Cata Odata. I also came across many Indonesian publications useful to the research but were not easily available in Singapore: these included post-residency and exhibition catalogues (*Alex Cuffe* 2013; *AWAS!* 2000; Garcellano 2002), and publications documenting the history of Cemeti Art House (*15 Years* 2003; *Turning Targets* 2014) and Ruang MES 56 (*Stories of A Space* 2015). Much of these indirect observations however were made by people within the organisation hosting the microresidences, and not enough from the resident artists themselves and the audience or community. This is unavoidable as the people within the host organisations are there to witness the process and, anchored as they are to their space and organisation compared to the transient resident artists and audiences, are also the most accessible to me.

The interview methods according to the research enterprise of participant observation fall under two categories: the informal interview and the formal interview. Much like the categories of participation, the distinction between an informal and a formal interview is not so clear. While Spradley (1980, p. 123) says that a formal interview occurs at an appointed time and results from a specific request to hold the interview, and an informal interview occurs whenever a question is asked to someone during the course of participant observation, as when engaged in casual conversations, I found that the formal interview I conducted took on the tone of a casual conversation. Primarily, the 'interview as conversation' suggests that there is a give-and-take at the heart of the interview where the relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee is an egalitarian one, and the interviewer

and the interviewee share in co-producing knowledge (Skinner 2012, p. 8). As mentioned above, this might have occurred due to my age and my own position as an arts practitioner which might have instilled a sense of camaraderie. Additionally, this egalitarian relationship also meant that the researcher is often responding to the interests and concerns of the people encountered. At times this might lead to information unknown to the researchers, or will lead the researcher to even more materials. On the other hand, asking questions which people are not very interested in does not take the line of inquiry very far.

Nonetheless, the interviews at times differed slightly from casual conversations as they are specifically characterized by a question-and-answer format. But just as described by Jorgensen (1989, p. 88), these interviews were much like an ordinary conversation as the questioning is casual, free flowing, and unencumbered by extensive preconceptions of what and how the topics will be discussed. A strategy for ensuring that information is gathered systematically is to raise the same set of issues with different interviewees, which allows for examining similar or different viewpoints held (Jorgensen 1989, p. 88). The type of questions asked by a participant observer is descriptive questions. Jorgensen (1989, p. 88) defines descriptive questions as “general requests for information about people, places, events, and so on” and which “explore the general contours of some matter in fairly comprehensive detail”. Descriptive questions can further be broken down into different specific types: grand-tour questions request for an overview of some matter of interest; mini-tour questions request for more detailed exploration of a particular matter; example questions request for illustrations and examples of matters of interest; experience questions query about people’s direct experiences or what has actually happened; and native-language questions request for extrapolation or clarification of particular terms, concepts, phrases used (Jorgensen 1989, p. 86).

I have used these types of descriptive questions in my interviews as well, often beginning with grand-tour questions about the history of the microresidence before delving into specific residency programmes. With microresidences that have not been extensively written about, like Ace House Collective, Ketemu Project Space and Cata Odata, I begin by asking how and why the art space came about, and their source of funding. Other descriptive questions delve into the spatial organisation of the art space, the organisational structure of the art space and microresidence, and the structure of the residency programme. For microresidences which have hosted many artists and residency programmes, questions seeking to compare and contrast examples and experiences are most fruitful. Interviews with artists however often take the form of mini-tour and experience questions, as it delves into the artists' own personal and subjective experiences.

### ***Overview of field research conducted***

As mentioned above, I gained entrée into the situation through an invitation from Ketemu Project Space to join their year-long project Merayakan Murni as a curator. As described by Ketemu Project Space, Merayakan Murni “gathers artists and creatives to create works in response to the legacy of late Balinese artist I GAK Murniasih” (Ketemu Project Space 2017b), and many of the topics raised through the project was on gender and society, specifically in the context of Bali. The project included gathering and sharing an archive on the artist, a residency programme comprising of 5 artists and myself, an exhibition by both Indonesian and international artists, and a catalogue. The project and role of curator afforded me the opportunity to not only experience a residency programme, but to also observe closely how a microresidence functions. This research project was shaped and re-shaped based on on-going observations. It was also through Ketemu Project Space's network that I was introduced to the founders and collectives of other microresidences whom I would then interview. The first table below details who was interviewed and when. Throughout the year 2015 and 2016, the

Merayakan Murni project and the research project were in entanglement as can be seen in the second table below on the location and details of the participant-observation in which the purpose of the stay in both Bali and Yogyakarta overlapped.

<b>INTERVIEWS</b>	
<b>Interviewee</b>	<b>Details</b>
Budi Agung Kuswara (Kabul) and Samantha Tio (Mintio), co-founders of Ketemu Project Space	Interviewed in Bali on 29 August 2016
Natasha Lubis, former resident artist with Ketemu Project Space for Merayakan Murni project	Interviewed in Bali on 30 August 2016
Ratna Odata, co-founder of Cata Odata	Interviewed in Bali on 31 August 2016
Rat Heist, former resident artist with Cata Odata for 2015 Bare Journal residency programme	Interviewed in Penang on 13 November 2016
Mella Jaarsma, co-founder of Cemeti Art House	Interviewed in Yogyakarta on 8 December 2016
Syafiatudina, writer, curator and researcher at KUNCI Cultural Studies Center	Interviewed in Yogyakarta on 8 December 2016 for her observation of residency programmes and its impact on the local art community
Wok the Rock, current director of Ruang MES 56	Interviewed in Yogyakarta on 9 December 2016
Gintani Swastika, co-founder of Ace House Collective	Interviewed in Yogyakarta on 12 December 2016

*\*Transcript of interviews attached in appendix*

<b>PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION</b>	
<b>Location</b>	<b>Details</b>
Yogyakarta 28 September 2015 to 5 October 2015 (8 days)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First trip to Yogyakarta visiting art spaces, galleries, studios and generally explored the art scene there</li> <li>• Introduced to members of Ruang MES 56</li> </ul>
Bali 26 November 2015 to 28 December 2015 (46 days)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A 6-week residency with Ketemu Project Space for Merayakan Murni project</li> <li>• Observed the running of Ketemu Project Space and their preparation for upcoming resident artists</li> <li>• Explored the Bali contemporary art scene</li> <li>• Introduced to the co-founders of Cata Odata</li> </ul>

Yogyakarta 28 December 2015 to 10 January 2016 (13 days)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuation of research residency with Ketemu Project Space</li> <li>• Purchased publications from Cemeti Art House and Indonesian Visual Art Archive</li> <li>• Introduced to Mella Jaarsma of Cemeti Art House</li> </ul>
Bali 21 May 2016 to 3 June 2016 (13 days)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Returned to Ketemu Project Space to prepare for Merayakan Murni exhibition that opens on 16 July 2016</li> <li>• Observed and shadowed artist Marieke Warmelink on her residency</li> <li>• Conversations with the Ketemu team about the experiences of previous residents</li> </ul>
Bali 7 July 2016 to 21 July 2016 (14 days)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Returned to Ketemu Project Space to install Merayakan Murni exhibition</li> </ul>
Bali 24 August 2016 to 1 September 2016 (8 days)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Returned to Ketemu Project Space for catalogue launch</li> <li>• Conducted interviews with Ketemu Project Space, Natasha Lubis and Cata Odata</li> </ul>
Penang 12 November 2016 to 14 November 2016 (3 days)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attending Rat Heist's solo exhibition at Run Amok Gallery</li> <li>• Conducted interview with Rat Heist</li> </ul>
Yogyakarta 5 December 2016 to 13 December 2016 (8 days)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purchased publications from Cemeti Art House</li> <li>• Conducted interviews with Mella Jaarsma, Syafiatudina, MES 56, Ace House Collective</li> </ul>
Bali 13 December 2016 to 22 December 2016 (9 days)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Took photo documentation of the journals from Cata Odata's Bare Journal residency programme</li> <li>• Visited Cata Odata which had expanded their staff and Ketemu Project Space which had taken on a new project</li> </ul>

### ***The limited scope of this research***

Above, I have addressed some of the limitations of this research. But there are two which I would like to elaborate on here. Firstly, many of the interviews were conducted with the organisation that hosted residencies as they are the most accessible. As such, this paper is heavily weighted towards the perspective of the microresidencies. It is only for the case studies in Bali

that I interviewed recent resident artists each from the microresidencies of Cata Odata and Ketemu Project Space. While in Yogyakarta, I found one key informant who came from the perspective of the audience or art community of Yogyakarta. Future research into microresidencies could be enriched further by including the perspective of more resident artists, and the audience or community engaged by the resident artists and microresidencies.

Secondly, I did not engage in in depth interviews with select informants or interlocutors. According to Jorgensen (1989, p. 90), an in depth interview is a very special form of interviewing that seeks to explore particular matters in elaborate and comprehensive details. To accomplish this, the in depth interview may run two hours, or even more, repeatedly over an extended period of time. In other words, the same person may be interviewed on different occasions for several hours over days, weeks, or even months (Jorgensen 1989, p. 90). In depth interviews are especially valuable when participant observation has resulted in the identification of particular people who are especially knowledgeable about a matter of interest and are willing to talk or be interviewed intensively (Jorgensen 1989, pp. 90-91). People I have identified as suitable are Mella Jaarsma and Theodora Agni, respectively the co-founder of Cemeti Institute of Art and Society (formerly Cemeti Art House) and the residency manager of the organisation, who have witnessed many residency programmes and resident artists. Unfortunately, time and my lack of proficiency in Bahasa Indonesia did not allow for in depth interviews. Furthermore, an expanded research where both resident artists and audience are interviewed would provide more base materials to discuss with persons engaged in in depth interviews.

I have spent a fair amount of words on participant observation as a method of data collection as I believe this paper is largely structured by its investigative method. As McCall and Simmons had written, the analytic description resulting from participant observation first employs the concepts, propositions and empirical generalisations of a body of knowledge as the basic

guides in analysis and reporting. Otherwise also known as a literature review, which make up the next two chapters.

# ***RESIDENCIES***

## ***A brief history on the development of artist residencies***

Artist residencies being a relatively new phenomenon are under-researched in academia. As such for this section, I will be relying on the writings from TransArtists.org, a platform that is part of DutchCulture, Centre for International Cooperation and that provides information, resource and knowledge on artist residencies, and a policy handbook by The Open Method of Coordination Working Group on Artists' Residencies (2014) that is part of the European Agenda for Culture, from now on shortened to OMC. As OMC (2014, p. 69) stated, "Artists have always been travelling to search for new assignments, to learn new skills and techniques from other 'master' artists, to be informed about the latest developments in the arts. The numerous artists that travelled to Italy during the Renaissance clearly supports this claim." But this thesis is not interested in sketching out a detailed history of artists' travels and mobility. Rather, this thesis will focus on more recent forms and models of residencies that support contemporary art practices.

According to TransArtists (n.d.), the first wave of artist residencies as we know them today began around 1900 through the patronage of benefactors who would offer guest studios to individual artists. It was regarded as a new kind of romantic patronage (TransArtists n.d.). Concurrently, artists themselves began settling collectively in the countryside, forming artists' colonies, in order to realise their artistic ideas (TransArtists n.d.). In the 1960s, a new wave of artist residencies emerged. These models aimed for social action and attempted to involve the public in seeking for social and political change (TransArtists n.d.). One such example is the Artist Placement Group in United Kingdom, which will be elaborated on further below.

Although the history of artist residencies can be traced further back, it has changed its form and model in recent times. TransArtists (n.d.) stated that “we are dealing with a new, fashionable phenomenon that owes its explosive growth to the globalisation of artists’ nomadic behaviour”. The growth of artist residencies as a worldwide phenomenon is facilitated by easy and cheaper means of traveling and quicker means of communication through the Internet (TransArtists n.d.). Indeed, in the 1990s, new residency initiatives proliferated beyond the Western world and across the globe. While these initiatives are characterised by a strong grassroots connection and desire to create alternative locally-based centres of knowledge production, the changing technoscape has allowed these initiatives to position themselves as an indispensable node in connecting the local scene with the global art world (TransArtists n.d.). This is seen most readily in Cemeti Arts House, one of the case studies from Yogyakarta, Indonesia in this thesis. In particular, since 2010 we have seen research-driven residencies increasing in number (TransArtists n.d.). These research-driven residencies revolve around peer-to-peer exchange and are focussed on topics important to both hosts and guests. The main crux of such residencies is that they are spaces for the development of knowledge and understanding not only in the arts but in society as well (TransArtists n.d.). In my next chapter, I have laid out the changing artistic practices that have shaped this new development in artist residencies. The short of it is that artistic practices have in recent decades moved into the expanded sphere of culture.

### ***Definitions***

From the examples in the introduction, we have seen that just in Singapore alone there are various types of residencies. Residencies as a concept is open and fluid, and will continue to change just as artistic practices continually change. As such, the OMC has given a definition that seeks to retain the essence of the residency phenomenon but remain broad enough to allow for these changes. According to OMC, “Artists’ residencies provide artists

and other creative professional with time, space and resources to work, individually or collectively, on areas of their practice that reward heightened reflection or focus.” (OMC 2014, p. 9)

In one particular publication meant to be a resource for North American art school graduates and emerging artists who have yet to be initiated into the art world *modus operandi*, residencies are defined as “professionally run communities that offer artists the opportunity to have space and time to think and create new work.” (Wojak & Miller 2011, p. 231) According to Wojak and Miller, artists’ colonies, artists’ retreats, studio collectives, and artists’ communities fall under the category of residencies. Similarly, just from the introduction to the chapter on residencies, one can easily conclude that there is no specific standard to residencies: they can be located in rural areas and cities; an artist may be given a stipend, or asked to pay a fee; the duration of a residency can be anywhere from a week to a few months to a year; residencies may be funded privately, through public funds, or through business enterprise; and may consist not only of visual artists, but also practitioners from different and diverse fields such as writers, composers, scholars and historians (Wojak & Miller 2011, p. 231).

Two things are striking in this narrow definition: community and a dedicated space for and to work. That residencies are conceived of as communities comes through in the description and supposed benefits of residencies as described by Wojak and Miller. Highlighted in the chapter is that residencies often encourage a sense of community as residents attend lectures, critiques, and share meals together (Wojak & Miller 2011, p. 231). Residencies also facilitate collaboration opportunities with fellow artists, provide access to mentors and a community of artists with whom the sharing of processes and conversations might have a lasting impact on an artist’s practice (Wojak & Miller 2011, p. 232-233). The residency as conceived here is also more traditionally studio-based—providing refuge for an artist to work

towards a finished object or product. This can be seen in the advice quoted in the book by artist Alyson Pou on residencies:

For my last residency, I set the goal of getting a script written and had already done most of my historical research and planned a plot structure before the residency began. Once there, I did do more research and interviewed a couple of people, but it helped that I had a work outline already in place. With this kind of preparation, I was able to accomplish more in less time. Residencies are precious chunks of uninterrupted time, and for me, it is that opportunity to think and work expansively that is the true value of a residency.” (Wojak & Miller 2011, p. 232)

Artist and writer An Xiao (2012a, 2012b, 2012c) through a 3-part series of articles on *Hyperallergic* weighed the costs and benefits of residencies for young artists. She echoes to some degree the benefits laid out by Wojak and Miller in saying that the most important benefit of residencies are firstly finding a new space and energy to work and secondly building valuable relationships and connections with artists outside the usual circle (An Xiao 2012b). Nonetheless, she brings up the crucial point that residencies are rather inaccessible to young artists for whom the commitment to a residency is hard to make, as being less likely to support their living through their work, they often must juggle a number of paid work opportunities or a day job to make ends meet (An Xiao 2012c). As residency programmes that provide for all costs and a stipend tend to be extremely competitive to get in, residencies privilege those with financial means and without familial commitment. This unevenness in accessibility is particularly consequential as artist residencies are said to provide “a great leap forward for one’s art career” (An Xiao 2012c) not just by providing artists with space and time to work but by also giving artists the opportunity to meet with other artists, curators and writers, thereby, according to An Xiao (2012b), building a network that can potentially lead to more shows, reviews and sales. Additionally, that artist residencies are

meant to provide artists with uninterrupted time for reflection, focus and creation is also constrained by current economic realities and, for international artists, by immigration and visa rules (OMC 2014, p. 15). OMC (2014, p. 15) has noted that there is a general tendency to spend less time in residencies. Where before, 6 to 12 months residencies were common, nowadays residencies are more likely to be for 3 months or 6 weeks, or even less (OMC 2014, p. 15). The element of residencies providing time for artists is also complicated by the itinerant artists who are constantly running from one project to another—a form of survival strategy as will be explained in the next chapter—making it harder for artists to commit to such long-term residencies.

The above definitions given are narrow and intensional, meaning it specifies the necessary and sufficient conditions of artist residencies. I would also like to bring up the extensional definitions of artist residencies given by Res Artis, particularly as it relates to the itinerant artists and the structural nomadism in global contemporary art. Res Artis is an association established in 1993 that promotes the role of residential art programmes as a vital part of the contemporary arts world and consists of a large network of over 600 centres, organisations and individuals in over 70 countries who are “dedicated to offering artists, curators, and all manner of creative people the essential time and place away from the pressures and habits of everyday life, an experience framed within a unique geographic and cultural context” (Res Artis 2017a). Indeed, the focus on geographic and cultural context is reinforced by the tagline on its ‘About Res Artis’ page, which is “Encounter the world in residencies” (Res Artis 2017a). It is again emphasised on their ‘About Residencies’ page when it is stated that “[a]rtist residencies emphasise the importance of meaningful and multi-layered cultural exchange and immersion into another culture” (Res Artis 2017b) and in their extensional definitions of artist residencies (Res Artis 2017c) where it is also mentioned that artist residencies are “[e]ngaged with context by connecting the local to the global”, “[t]ools for inter-cultural understanding and capacity building”, “[c]atalysts for global mobility”, and are “[i]mportant contributors to cultural policy and

cultural diplomacy”. In these extensional definitions, the *elsewhere*—whether geographical or cultural—is always present and becomes an important component to the residency experience. I choose to highlight this because throughout this thesis, and particularly in the following chapter, I will be discussing the fetish and obsession for alterity that contemporary art practices seek and that residencies offer. Additionally, Res Artis (2017c) gave two other extensional definitions, in which artist residencies are “[e]ncounters with the unknown” and are “[r]eflective of their lexical meaning as ‘an act of dwelling in a place’”. Notions of encounters as a discursive practice and dwelling as a spatial practice are components of the residency experience that will also be explored throughout this thesis.

### **The resident artist in traveling and dwelling**

In Res Artis’ extensional definitions, it is difficult to uncouple traveling and dwelling from the concept of the residency. As such, I would like to add a short note on the resident artist in traveling and dwelling.

From September 1 to October 30 2002, Filipino artist Lyra Abueg Garcellano found herself in Yogyakarta on residency with Cemeti Art Foundation (CAF). CAF was hosting the annual UNESCO-Aschberg programme ‘Bursaries for Artists: Residency with the Cemeti Art Foundation’ for the fourth time. And for this residency, they had decided to organise it differently from previous years. As mentioned in the foreword:

“On the three previous occasions, this programme rounded off with an exhibition of the selected artist’s works. The “expectation” that there would be an exhibition of the artist’s works to some extent bound the artist to something that exacted consideration, concentration, thought and energy; at a time when getting to know the environment, community, and customs, not to mention a myriad of new kinds of

food, had already sapped its own consideration, concentration, thought and energy.” (Garcellano 2002, p. 3)

Indeed, the act of traveling to and dwelling elsewhere for a new stranger takes its own toll. For a resident artist, they must contend with not only adjusting to their new environment, but also undertaking residency work.

Yet, for all the different typologies of residencies to be mentioned below, the two crucial dimensions of a residency related to traveling and dwelling were not addressed in more depth. A residency can essentially be broken down into two dimensions: spatial and temporal. With the spatial dimension, a residency is based on the idea of location, or relocation, of dwelling or occupying a new place. The temporal dimension of the residency is based on somewhat stepping out of habitual time, yet also occupying a more condensed temporality as the resident artist is hyper aware of the limited time he or she has during the residency.

Curtis and Pajaczkowska (1994) in speaking about the journey of the traveller and tourist is very much similar to the spatial and temporal dimension of residency mentioned above: that the movement of the traveller and the tourist is a movement beyond liminality marked by the physical movement outside the integrated regimes of time and space, a lapse, that is, in the regular rhythms of mundane existence. Traveling, much like residencies, thus offers spatial and temporal alterity. Curtis and Pajaczkowska argue that for the traveller, this experience of alterity, and unfamiliarity, encountered in dialectic of difference concentrates as well as broadens the mind leading to metamorphosis and transformation. And perhaps the appeal of a residency elsewhere is the acquiring of the depth of perspective required for the production of knowledge. This very much echoes Foster’s statement elaborated in the next chapter on how the site of both artistic and political transformation is *elsewhere*.

## ***Typologies of Residencies***

OMC (2014, pp. 17-24) in their research on artist residencies has come up with seven categories, although their descriptions of each are very rudimentary, making it difficult to properly analyse, although I will highlight differences and similarities where I can.

The first is the 'classic' residency model hosted by organisations whose main activity is the artist residencies (OMC 2014, p. 17). The organisations are often well established and have a strong reputation in the arts world (OMC 2014, p. 17). This 'classic' residency model's focus is on the development of the artists and their artwork (OMC 2014, p. 17). Resident artists can also expect visits from curators, programmers and collectors invited by the organisation (OMC 2014, p. 17), allowing the artists to expand their social network.

The second model is artist residencies connected with art institutions and festivals, where the artists can benefit from closeness to an active arts environment, including its professional management and established audience (OMC 2014, p. 18). Often, the resident artists can engage in discussions and feedback from other professionals or the public through the presentation of their works-in-progress (OMC 2014, p. 18). The first and second model of course differ in that where the first model involve organisations focussing only on artist residencies, the second model most likely involve organisations hosting artist residencies either alongside or as part of other activities such as exhibitions and educational programmes.

The third model is artist-led residency centres, which are often shaped by the personalities and priorities of the founder or founders and is thus focussed on a specific interest, area or network (OMC 2014, p. 20). These artist-led residency centres can vary from small-scale artist-run organisations to organisations that occupy an essential position in the local art scene (OMC

2014, p. 20), though they can also be both. In that these artist-led residency centres often have clear interests or networks, it is similar to the fourth and fifth model—the thematic residencies, and the interdisciplinary and cross-sectorial residencies.

The fourth model is the thematic residencies that encompasses all sorts of approaches in contributing to a common theme, such as celebrating a particular heritage or regional identity (OMC 2014, p. 22). The fifth model is the interdisciplinary and cross-sectorial residencies that hosts creative practitioners working with a diverse range of media and across different disciplines and fields (OMC 2014, p. 24). In this model, exploring the possibilities through collaboration is paramount to the process (OMC 2014, p. 24). But both the artist-led residency centres and the thematic residencies could be just as collaborative and interdisciplinary as the interdisciplinary and cross-sectorial residencies; it is dependent on the interest and network of the artist-led residency, and the theme and the approach of the thematic residencies.

The sixth model is the research-based residencies where the process of research is core to the experience of the residency (OMC 2014, p. 21). Research-based residencies most likely support artists with discourse-specific practices—a form and method of artistic practice that will be elaborated on in the next chapter. By contrast, the seventh and last is the production-based residencies where the practical realisation of an idea or project is the central aim (OMC 2014, p. 23). As such, organisations hosting such residencies would offer infrastructure, material and know-how (OMC 2014, p. 23). Additionally, OMC (2014, p. 23) states that many discipline-specific residencies fall under this category. In contrast to research-based residencies which I posit most likely supports discourse-specific practices, production-based residencies supports medium-specific practices. Foster (1996, p. 199) has noted that medium-specific practices move “vertically, in a diachronic engagement with the disciplinary forms of a given genre or medium.” And production-based

residencies offering infrastructure, material and especially know-how are crucial in supporting an artist with a medium-specific practice to move vertically.

These seven typologies given by OMC are clearly not mutually exclusive. A quick survey of residencies shows it is not hard to observe that residencies combine two or more of these models. A 'classic' residency may just as well also be a production-based residency. And an artist residency connected with an art festival may also be a thematic residency, as resident artists may be selected for how well their practice fits with or addresses the theme of the festival. Though the description for each category is only rudimentary, it nonetheless reveals the current tendencies of ever-evolving artistic practices, which includes increasing interests in interdisciplinary engagement, as well as research and discourses.

Curator Johan Pousette offers an alternative typology of residencies, one that is focussed on new forms and methods of artistic practice and the level of support required of the host organisation, such as personnel, time, information and technical resources. Pousette draws from his experience of setting up and running an artist-in-residency programme at Baltic Art Centre on the Island of Gotland, Sweden from 2004 to 2007.

Pousette (2011) begins by stating the changing working practices of artists in contemporary art, one in which there is a shift from studio-based methods to taking a situation or a context as the starting point, means that residencies need to be flexible in accommodating these artistic practices and rethink the support structures they have in place. The practice of many contemporary artists now have moved away from earlier notions of the artist's work taking place in contemplative solitary seclusion. Today's artists deploy a different approach, with many having an interest in interactivity, social and political engagement and working within social networks. As such, he describes three types of residencies of different support structures that are

befitting to specific types of artistic practices. These serve as an alternative typology to the one given by OMC. The three broad types are: the traditional model, the process-oriented residency programme, and the production-focussed residency.

Much like the definition given by OMC, all three models provide artists with time, space and resources to work either individually or collectively on *areas of their practice*, which encompasses not only working on their art but also on reflection and re-evaluation of artistic expression, experimentation and research. The traditional model, much like OMC's 'classic' residency model, mainly focuses on providing a retreat for the artist to work on his or her own art. The artist is offered a studio as well as time and space away from everyday life (Pousette 2011, p. 45). In this instance, the host organisation need not contend with much else besides providing workspace and lodging, unlike the other two models.

The second model is the process-oriented residency programme that also offers artists time to develop, to undertake artistic research and to network—inside and/or outside the studio (Pousette 2011, p. 45). The notion of open-minded and experimental process is embedded in this type of residency and demands a more active staff and more substantial support to facilitate the exploration of new grounds for upcoming projects or site-specific work. The host organisation also takes on the role of mediator for the resident artists, helping them establish contacts with and within the local community to foster mutual exchanges and a more fruitful engagement with the local context (Pousette 2011, p. 45). To that end, the residency programme would also often include lectures and open studio not just as a form of public engagement but also as part of the working practice (Pousette 2011, p. 45). I would like to add to this observations made by Hito Steyerl and Boris (2006) on residencies and types of artistic production as it is applicable to the process-oriented residency programme. The kind of residency work undertaken at process-oriented residency programmes comes to be more

visible and valued when there is an expanded understanding of production and labour. Steyerl and Buden (2006) state that the type of production within residencies has radically altered in that its results are not primarily products or objects but rather relations between people. As such, the result of the residency is performative rather than object-based. Where Pousette highlights the mediating role of the host organisation and its staff, Steyerl and Buden highlights that residency work carried out by the resident artists consists of a type of affective labour to create relations, communication and networks through meetings, greetings, small talk and exchange of e-mail addresses.

The third model is the production-focussed residency programme in which support from professional staff, together with funding, is crucial in the creation of a new work of art. Residency programmes such as these may encompass an entire project or only parts of it—either confined to its initial phase or the final realisation of the artwork (Pousette 2011, p. 46). The professional staffs at the residency provide support by contributing their theoretical, technical and financial expertise to the project (Pousette 2011, p. 46). Similarly, the host organisation also takes on the important role of brokering connections between the resident artists and the local actors and communities when some of these projects call for collaborative partners (Pousette 2011, p. 45). In such cases, this often results in the creation of networks and local-international partnerships that can lead to the stimulation of the regional art field (Pousette 2011, p. 47). Production-focussed residencies that keep the production process at a local level also create flow-on benefits in areas of local economy and regional development across many creative disciplines. Additionally, it also creates new contacts and, importantly, a local base for the residency programme (Pousette 2011, p. 47).

Pousette (2011) also highlights the potential for production-focussed residencies to be a space that supports practices, production and artists that might not find support elsewhere. These production-focussed residencies can complement local production either by adding an international dimension

through a roster of resident artists from abroad or by providing the opportunity to produce a project with a degree of risk-taking—which most institutions often would not allow in their exhibitions programme (Pousette 2011, pp. 46-47). The residency programme can do this by embarking on an open-ended process without demanding a certain outcome or by taking on talented but unknown artists (Pousette 2011, p. 47). This in turn benefits the local public for whom new players and artworks also means a greater diversity of cultural offerings.

Pousette seems confident that given time, residencies facilitating open-ended processes would eventually yield successful outcomes even if the physical result are not to be seen until years later. Specifically, he adds that these open-ended artistic processes will lead to innovative advancements in contemporary art that few other institutions can cultivate (Pousette 2011, p. 47). Pousette (2011, p. 47) echoes the OMC's definition on residencies above as providing time and space for artists to work on areas of their practice that reward heightened reflection or focus when he says that “[t]he opportunity for innovation arises when the core business [of a residency programme] remains the artist's own development, freedom and experimentation.” The cumulative effect and benefit of residencies then is not just the forward progression of the artists' practice, which in turn means more artistic offerings to and from the field of contemporary art, but also the development of the local art field with it if the residency centre is one that is strongly engaged with and involved in the local arena.

The typologies given by both Pousette and OMC are evidence of the diverse frameworks that residencies operate on. The typologies given by OMC mainly highlight two frameworks for looking at residencies. The first framework focuses on the characteristic of the host organisation and residency centres—whether its main activity is solely residency programmes, or whether the residency programme is only one component of the art institution's, festival's or artist-led space's many other activities. The second

framework focuses more on the working method, process and outcome of the residency programme—whether the artists are working individually or collectively on a thematic project, a research, an interdisciplinary or cross-sectorial collaboration, or on producing works. Pousette’s typology of residencies is closer to the latter framework, although his brings more into focus how the host organisation and residency centre supports the working method, process and outcome. Yet in all this, scale is only mentioned once by OMC when describing that artist-led residency centres can also be small-scale artist-run organisations. This thesis will be looking at small-scale residencies called microresidencies. But instead of selecting scale as a single framework, I will focus on scale as a single component among other components alongside the characteristic of the host organisation and residency centre as well as the working method, process and delineated outcome of the residency programme.

### ***Microresidences***

As had already been stated, a microresidence refers to small-scale and often artist-run residence (Youkobo Art Space 2017). There is even a Microresidence Network, which aims to investigate and make visible the broad existence of microresidencies (Youkobo Art Space 2017). The network had emerged from a survey initiated in 2011 by Youkobo Art Space, which is based in Tokyo, Japan. At present, the network consists of 48 microresidences, one of which is Ruang MES 56 (Microresidence Network 2017).

It was Youkobo Art Space that had coined the term ‘microresidence’ in 2011 (Murata & Murata 2017). The term in turn originates from a short essay by Recoder and Gibson (2005) reflecting on their three-month residency experience at Youkobo Art Space. The essay highlights that the Youkobo Art Space residency programme was unique due to its size—“its intimacy of scale” (Recoder & Gibson 2005). Yet, they state that though small, the microresidency at Youkobo Art Space afforded for a lot of flexibility, allowing

the resident artist to freely explore, interpret and personalise what Youkobo Art Space offers as 'art space' (Recoder & Gibson 2005). By this, they refer to the open ensemble of studio, gallery and residence spaces that can easily be converted to accommodate different purposes. Aside from the space itself, Recoder and Gibson also observe the flexibility of the staff that manages the space. In this case, it is the space's co-directors Hiroko and Tatsuhiko Murata who would often enquire after the resident artists and solicit for their inputs and suggestions, giving resident artists a sense that he or she is an active participant in the shaping of the art space (Recoder & Gibson 2005). Their description certainly highlights a form of sociality that is often seen and also valued in artist-run spaces.

Besides being small-scale in terms of budget and size of facilities, the interim report published after the 2011 survey also included that microresidences are often artist-run, independent, grassroots, highly flexible, provide a high level of support for artists and take special care of human relationships (Youkobo Art Space 2012).

As the case studies of microresidences in Yogyakarta and Bali are also artist-run and place a lot of value on sociality, I would like to expand on these two points further. For this, I will be relying on an essay by Detterer (2012) on collective practices of the avant-garde in the late 1960s and 1970s in the West. Nonetheless, the essay proves useful and applicable in its description of the spirit and culture of artist-run spaces. The artist-run organisations of that era had a common goal of "free affiliation and exchange between avant-garde artists in order to engage with experimental art practices" (Dettner 2012, p. 12). As artistic practices came to be centred on the concept and an intellectually elaborated approach and direction, the concept's realisation became of secondary importance (Dettner 2012, p. 18). Rather, with the artwork dematerialised, information and ideas become the core components of a radically changing concept of art (Dettner 2012, p. 12). As the concept of art changed, so did the space of production. With the heightened importance

of 'information', the studio as the traditional stronghold of creativity had to be redefined. And it is here that artist-run spaces and organisations with its goal of free affiliation and exchange started to develop. Detterer (2012, pp. 18-19) states:

“[t]he studio opened up to the outside world, and became a multi-perspective field of action, with a “bridge” leading from it to the collectively organized artist-run space. Instead of expecting creative inspiration from withdrawing into splendid isolation as a solitary artist, the artist was subjected to a wide range of stimuli from the communally used experimental site. This place served multi-functionally as a laboratory, mindset, stage, media workshop, exhibition area, place of exchange, but also as a meeting point for having fun with one another.”

With the change in artistic practices and proliferation of artist-run spaces, the role of the artist and his or her identity had expanded far beyond the act of individual imaginative creation so that the artist came to the fore instead as a social being and a participant in communal exchanges. According to Detterer (2012, p. 20), the spirit of artist-run spaces is highly communal—it seeks to mitigate the artist’s isolation in social and economic terms by revising the conventional professional image of the artists from the solitary artist to the artist as a social being and the production of art as a communal project and collective action. One method in which the artist as a social being is reinforced in the artist-run space itself is when the living space and the working space are combined, thereby strengthening the social bond between the members (2012, p. 20).

In light of this, it is clear that one of the defining features of microresidences is its focus on the artist as a social being particularly as microresidences seek to take special care of human relationships. This is exemplified by the experience of Recoder and Gibson at Youkobo Art Space

who had direct constant contact with the co-directors of the space itself. From my observations of microresidences in Indonesia, I found that the small intimate scale of the microresidences itself would also reinforce sociality: being small in facility, there are more opportunities for face-to-face interactions and there is no institutional identity to hide behind. In such heightened spaces of exchange and interaction, one can see how even temporary resident artists can easily develop a bond to the microresidence through its people and participate actively in its shaping.

In Bali, both Ketemu Project Space and Cata Odata are housed in intimate private residences where the founders also live. At Cata Odata, during the Bare Journal residency programme, the three residents share a room with bunk beds on the same floor with the founders and staff. The kitchen, located on the same floor, has a large dining table where the founders, staff and resident artists and writers eat, relax, hold meetings and work on their laptops. The kitchen and the dining table become a fluid and interchangeable space for working and bonding. While Ketemu Project Space will house their resident artists in a separate location, this is not always the case. During my residency with Ketemu Project Space, for the majority of my stay I had shared a bedroom with one of the co-founder Samantha Tio and her toddler daughter. There was only a curtain separating their bed from mine. While privacy was sacrificed, the close proximity to others in the space meant that there were more interactions and exchanges that enriched my residency experience. A subsequent resident artist, Marieke Warmelink, caught a fever and flu. During that time, she was invited to stay at the private residence so that she will have company and be properly looked after by the staff. It would seem that proximity in close quarters also meant forging tighter social bonds, one where resident artists and the people of the host organisation form deeper responsible reciprocal relationships. As private and public spaces are often blurred in these microresidences, the founders of both spaces have told me that they often take the character and personality of potential resident artists into account so as to minimize friction during the residency. Members

of MES 56 who I interviewed also made this same comment.

The importance of sociality is especially prominent at Ruang MES 56. The art space is housed in a building with a gallery, an office, two bedrooms—one for a resident artist and another for a member artist who lives there—, and a large courtyard conducive to hanging out. Almost every other night, the members and friends of MES 56 will be drinking, smoking, conversing and hanging out at the courtyard, often loud and boisterous and up to the late hours. I have been told by its member Wok the Rock that they appreciate a resident artist who can join in this sociality and while I was interviewing members of MES 56, they would reminisce fondly of past resident artists who would join in their night sessions. Wok the Rock also mentioned that if a resident artist were unhappy with the situation, the members of MES 56 would rather move the resident artist to another place of residence than abandon their courtyard. This particular form of sociality in Indonesia is called *nongkrong*, which I will explain in greater detail in the following chapter, and it is an important activity that not only allows for the exchange of information and is a space for shared energy, but is also the glue that bonds the Yogyakarta art community.

Kabul and Mintio of Ketemu Project Space also supports the artist as a social being with a family life through their residency programmes. Ketemu Project Space readily supports artists who bring their partners or family with them. As young parents and artists themselves, this is their way of addressing the ‘parent-shaped hole in the art world’ where artist-parents struggle to divide time between childrearing and working. In a review on an exhibition titled *The Let Down Reflex* at EFA Project Space in New York, which addresses the complexities of parenting in the art world, Borgen states that the art world often treats children and families as *persona non grata* (Borgen 2016). The exhibition itself attempts to remedy the incompatibility of parenting and the art world through a small gesture of moving the exhibition’s opening from “the prime-time slot of the evening to the afternoon to accommodate

families” (Borgen 2016), especially families with small children who wind down for bedtime in the late afternoon. Similarly, Ketemu Project Space’s openness in hosting artist with partners and children is one such attempt to change the structure of the art world to be friendlier towards artist-parents.

### ***Artist Placement Group, United Kingdom***

Before continuing on to Ketemu Project as a case study of a microresidence and to the next chapter that focuses on developments in contemporary art practices, I would like to look at the Artist Placement Group in relation to residencies, relying largely on Bishop’s writing about the group. The Artist Placement Group is also a relevant segue into discussions of discourse-specific art that will be elaborated on in the next chapter.

Artist John Latham and his then-partner Barbara Steveni founded the Artist Placement Group in 1966, and it continued on till 1989. The organisation’s activities represented a rethinking of the artist’s place in society in the later 1960s and 1970s. As Bishop (2012, p. 164) states, the organisation was premised on the idea that art can be useful and that artists can serve society. It exemplified the shift from object-based art to discourse-specific art as it contributed to society not by making works of art but through interactions of the artist in the context of institutions and organisations. To that end, Latham and Steveni negotiated and organised placements and residencies for British artists in various private corporations and companies and public bodies (Bishop 2012, p. 164).

Much like the process-focussed residencies of today where the residency take on the role of mediator, the Artist Placement Group would write to a selection of host organisations outlining the goals of the group. Interested host organisations would then pay a fee to the artist who then undertakes a residency on site (Bishop 2012, p. 164). The host organisations however were advised not to anticipate the production of artworks and to

instead come to terms with seeing the placement as bringing the benefits of having a creative outsider within their midst (Bishop 2012, p. 164)—similar to present-day process-focussed residencies in which production is more performative than object-oriented.

Another similarity to Pousette's description of the open-ended process in production-based residencies is what the Artist Placement Group called the 'open brief' which for Bishop (2012, p. 175) defined a new model of patronage: outcomes of the placement were not determined in advance and depended entirely on the individual artist in the context he or she finds herself in (Bishop 2012, p. 166). The Artist Placement Group's slogan 'the context is half the work' is also a point of interest in this discussion. The slogan indicates a broader concern with context than with specific mediums like painting and sculpture and seems to presage the direction of contemporary art practices towards discourse-specific art. And indeed, in pushing artists out into society the Artist Placement Group also seems to presage the ethnographic turn in contemporary art. Whether present-day residency models takes its cue and inspiration from the Artist Placement Group is difficult to say, but Bishop (2012, p. 176) herself declared that the Artist Placement Group should be appreciated for its determination to provide a new post-studio framework for artistic production and for providing opportunities for long-term in depth interdisciplinary research.

I would like to return to the notion of *elsewhere* with a comment from Chenal (2011, p. 213) about a 'space of difference'. While the concept of the residency is often tied to geographical mobility and about going elsewhere, this elsewhere need not necessarily be outside the borders of one's own country. As the Artist Placement Group has shown, residencies can take place in the artist's own environment, city or town. Chenal (2011, p. 213) states that even here, artists can still experience difference as the challenge becomes about working in totally different contexts whether professionally, scientifically or politically when the artist enters into a new system of

relations. In this instance, Chenal (2011, p. 213) says that “[i]n terms of difference, ‘otherness’ can be very close.”

### ***Ketemu Project Space: Case study of a microresidence***

Here I will focus on Ketemu Project Space as a case study on how it functions as a microresidence. The core ideology of Ketemu Project Space is in the name itself; it is an artist-run space whose goal is the developing of *projects* with the participation of community members to address social issues and harness creativity for social empowerment. And this translates to the configuration of their home base, as Mintio explains in the interview,

“—we do not have a show space. We only have an office and we only have a studio space. We’re actually really conscious that Ketemu Project Space is not ‘Ketemu Art Space’. Because we are very focussed on the process and the production of art more heavily than the presentation of art. That doesn’t mean that we neglect that as well. So that means when we think about how we present art, we do not think about physical space or of actually owning a space. We think about having external partnerships; like with Merayakan Murni, we have a partnership with Sudamala Resorts.”

In 2017, Ketemu Project Space had dropped ‘Space’ from their name to be Ketemu Project, further reflecting their practice, focus and working methodology. But for the sake of historicity, this thesis will still use the name Ketemu Project Space. While flexibility is a characteristic of a microresidence, Ketemu Project Space’s identity and grounding as a project space focussed on community engagement and social issues makes it doubly so. Mintio elaborates on the necessity of being fluid and flexible,

“in terms of how we organise ourselves and how we facilitate, [it is]

something that always morphs and always change according to the time, according to the person, according to the environment, and the conditions. I think it kind of reflects the necessities of every social project that you don't have a cookie cutter or one-size-fits-all kind of solution that you can apply to everything. Like what is important for us in terms of process—not only as facilitators but also as artists—is that we always have to be sensitive and aware of the people involved, to the environment surrounding the project, and then making decisions from there.”

Similarly, their residency programmes are also tailored to the specific projects they are working on. Firstly, their residency programmes are on an invite-only basis where they invite artists whose concerns tie in with the project that is being developed. Secondly, the structure of the residency programme and the configuration of the home base changes and adapts to the project they are developing. As mentioned in the first chapter, in 2015, when Ketemu Project Space was running short two-weeks residencies, they hosted the resident artists in their home base. But in 2016, under the Merayakan Murni project, the residency duration extended to between four and six weeks to accommodate the research and artwork production towards an exhibition that had to be undertaken by the resident artists. The project also necessitated a larger office and meeting space for volunteers, staff, curators and resident artists, and hence the front room that had formerly been the resident's room and studio had to be converted to an office. Unable to host resident artists for such extended periods at the home base, Ketemu Project Space found a partner who had a vacation home in Bali to accommodate the resident artists. Where a microresidence is often described as small-scale in terms of budget and size of facilities, Ketemu Project Space has developed a survival strategy built on flexibility and partnerships.

Ketemu Project Space's fluidity and flexibility also means that its residency programmes morphs across the different models given by OMC depending on both the project and the artist's practice. Within Merayakan Murni residency programmes itself, there were a combination of different types of residency models. As a whole, the Merayakan Murni residencies can be said to be thematic as artists were invited to respond to the legacy of I GAK Murniasih. My own residency experience where I spent six weeks in Bali was a research-based residency as I undertook to research on Balinese art history and society. The same can be said of Wawi Navarroza's residency as she had used her time in Bali to look into I GAK Murniasih's oeuvre and her own exploration into tropicality. As a photographer, she undertook her production back in her studio in Manila, Philippines. Yet, she had also sought out a mixologist to learn about infusing herbs, fruits and spirits, and used it as a way of translating her experience of Bali during her residency. She then shared these concoctions during her Ketemu Aja! session thereby adding an interdisciplinary dimension to her residency. On the other hand, Imhathai Suwatthanasilp and Marieke Warmelink undertook a production-based residency as they completed their work during their residency, with Imhathai working diligently on her works at a studio much like a 'classic' residency model while Marieke collaborated with a Bali-based documentary-maker to film the lives of Balinese women.

However, when we move away from looking at artists and their individual residencies to look at the Merayakan Murni residency programmes as a whole, we can apply Pousette's process-oriented and production-focussed residency models differently to Ketemu Project Space and the microresidence itself. Pousette's residency models delineates how a residency programme can support artists and the development of new forms and methods of artistic practice, but it can be argued that the microresidence—often artist-run, independent and includes the heavy involvement of the founders and staff—is a method of artistic practice itself writ large. In following that a residency encompasses time and space to reflect and re-evaluate artistic expression,

experimentation and research, the Merayakan Murni residency programmes as a whole also reflects and re-evaluates artistic expression, experimentation and research in the context of Bali through the different lens of each resident artist, and in turn shared through the Ketemu Aja! sessions and the exhibition. The Merayakan Murni residency programmes has been able to do this because of the project's one-year timespan and cohesiveness in focussing on the topics of gender, society and art through the works of I GAK Murniasih. And through residencies where Ketemu Project Space helps establish contacts between the resident artists and local actors and communities, the microresidence too is involved in the production of relations between people, while strengthening their own local networks and their position within the local art ecology.

When the Merayakan Murni project is looked at in toto, it reveals how the microresidence is an extension of Kabul and Mintio's shared artistic practice housed under Ketemu Project Space, and hence can be regarded as a form of artistic production and outcome—one that has been dematerialised into discourse. The Merayakan Murni project takes the social issue of gender as its site for artistic production, and gender is further signified and politicised through the residency programme that hosted five female artists and one female curator over the course of a year. Mintio explained that this choice was intentional, and reflected their aspirations for an art world in which profiles that are typically marginalised are better represented.

Even as each artist researches into their own interest and artwork while on residency, the cumulative dialogue and exchange between the resident artists, the curators, the Ketemu Project Space team and the local community evolved into both a research enterprise on and a discursive platform for issues of gender, art and society, in keeping with Ketemu Project Space's commitment to engagement with the local context,. And although the residency programmes culminated in an exhibition that presented object-based art, the Merayakan Murni project itself was open-minded and process-based such that the conversations with resident artists and the artworks they

produced to some degree steered the discourses generated by the project. I will use Suwatthanasilp's residency as an example. In the first few days of being in Bali, resident artist Suwatthanasilp had sieved through the storage facility that housed Murniasih's personal artefacts, whereupon she fortuitously came across a tub of Murniasih's hair; Suwatthanasilp creates delicate sculptures from hair, whose shape often symbolised aspects of womanhood and femininity. Suwatthanasilp decided to crochet Murniasih's hair into the shape of the family shrines commonly seen in Bali. The work, titled *Murni's Temple* (2016), was a commentary on the fringe position Balinese women held in the family structure as they do not receive their own shrine, depending instead on the shrine of their father's or their husband's after marriage. More than that, Suwatthanasilp's residency and artwork also contributed to Ketemu Project Space's continual reflection on not only how an artist's legacy can be re-represented through the Merayakan Murni project but also how it can be reanimated artistically. These concerns and reflections were then addressed in a panel discussion named "Drawing:Breath – Sustaining Legacies for Artists' Afterlife" held during the exhibition.

In taking a broader look at the method in which Ketemu Project Space has chosen to structure and organise their residency programme for the Merayakan Murni project, we can see how a microresidence, particularly those that are artist-run, can be an artistic form. In the example of Ketemu Project Space, this artistic form is one that is socially collaborative between both artists and artists, and artists and community. The post-studio framework of programming residencies, discussions and workshops used by Ketemu Project Space for artistic production is also part of a broader development of contemporary art practices which will be the focus of the next chapter.

## ***DEVELOPMENTS IN CONTEMPORARY ART PRACTICES***

One of the few questions that have plagued me while researching for this thesis is ‘why have non-studio based residencies become such a common phenomenon especially in the last few years?’ This section seeks to examine one of the threads—a particular strand of artistic practice—that might have contributed to this phenomenon. Residencies as an infrastructure that supports artists and their practices cannot be separated from developments in contemporary art. This section will highlight specific developments in contemporary art that have shaped artistic practices as documented in *The Return of the Real* by Hal Foster (1996), examining in particular the chapter “The Artist as Ethnographer”, and *One Place After Another* by Miwon Kwon (2002) on site-specific art. It should be noted that this thesis does not purport to unify these developments in contemporary art cohesively, but rather, it seeks to draw relations between these developments and the typologies of residencies that were addressed earlier.

In brief, and as an introduction to the section, Foster (1996, p. 184) states that the ethnographic turn in contemporary art was driven by developments constituting “a series of shifts in the *siting* of art: from the surface of the medium to the space of the museum, from institutional frames to discursive networks, to the point where many artists and critics treat conditions like desire or disease, AIDS or homelessness, as sites for art”. Kwon (2002) has also made similar observations in how notions of site-specificity have shifted. In the late 1960s, it shifted from a phenomenological or experiential understanding of the site to investigations of institutional critique in which the site of art is not only a physical space but also a space constituted through social, economic and political processes. Following that, the notion of site-specificity was again redefined. The literal space of art and the physical conditions of a specific location receded as the primary element, and the

conception of a site became deterritorialised to encompass broader cultural, social and discursive fields. This has led to a broader and intense engagement with what Foster (1996, p. 184) terms “the expanded field of culture”, inclusive of non-art spaces, non-art institutions, and non-art issue.

In this new site-oriented art, Kwon (2002, p. 26) states that the distinguishing characteristic is one in which the artwork’s relationship to the actuality of a location—as site—and the social conditions of the institutional frame—also as site—are both subordinated to a discursively determined site that is delineated as a field of knowledge, intellectual exchange or cultural debate. This inclination towards knowledge production, intellectual exchange or cultural debate manifests itself in how host organisations structure their residencies, whether through focussing on research as the prime activity of the artists during their residencies or through activities such as talks and workshops.

Together these core texts highlight how specific artistic practices now operate outside the traditional studio, thereby giving rise to the itinerant or nomadic artists. Kwon observed that increasing institutional interest in this new site-oriented art have meant also a more intensive mobilisation of artists to create works in various cities where artists are invited by art institutions or biennales. And so, a successful artist is one that travels constantly and often works on more than one site-specific project at a time while, as Kwon (2002, p. 46) puts it, “globetrotting as a guest, tourist, adventurer, temporary in-house critic, or pseudo-ethnographer.”

### ***Discourse-specific art and practices***

The positioning of the artist as ethnographer (or in Kwon’s words “pseudo-ethnographer”) was made well known by Foster in his book *Return of the Real* where he traces the genealogies of art and theory since 1960 and dedicated a chapter on the siting of art in the expanded field of culture in the

late 1980s, in which of course the artist plays the role of ethnographer. Foster states that the ethnographic turn in contemporary art were driven by developments that began first in minimalist art in the 1960s then through conceptual, performance, body and site-specific art in the 1970s: from investigations into the material constituents of the art medium, its spatial conditions and corporeal basis of perception to investigations on the discursive network of different practices and institutions as well as other subjectivities and communities, taking into account their social realities whether economic, ethnic or sexual (Foster 1996, p. 184).

Anthropology being the discipline that takes culture as its object of study, artists then naturally aspired to its tradition of fieldwork particularly also because it combined both theory and practice. He states that in this new ethnographer paradigm are three assumptions. The first assumption is that “the site of political transformation is the site of artistic transformation” (Foster 1996, p. 173). This was the result of the breakdown of the restrictive boundaries between art and artist, and identity and community caused partially by pressure from various social movements like civil rights, feminisms, queer politics and multiculturalism together with theoretical developments in cultural studies and post-colonial discourse and others (Foster 1996, 184).

Second, is the assumption that “this site is always *elsewhere*, in the field of the other”—particularly the cultural other, the oppressed postcolonial, the subaltern or the subcultural (Foster 1996, p. 173). This has led to communities and localities being treated as ethnographic sites or a form of site-specific art. Indeed, some residency programmes follow in this footsteps by positioning themselves as the launch pad into surrounding sites for incoming artists to carry out ‘embedded research’.

And the third assumption is that “if the invoked artists is *not* perceived as socially and/or culturally other, he or she has but limited access to this transformative alterity, and that if he or she *is* perceived as other, he or she

has automatic access to it" (Foster 1996, p. 173). For artists whose sites are communities, Foster (1996, p. 198) has noted how the artist and the community becomes reductively linked and framed by the institution such that the artist stands for the identity of the sited community in order to represent it institutionally. The result is that the artist becomes primitivised and anthropologised. Petersen (2012, p. 198) echoes Foster in speaking about the curatorial practices, and attitude and policies of institutions towards artists of non-Western origin, stating that in the 1980s, a time when migration and globalisation further intensified, that cultural identity became an issue in the discourses on contemporary art and curatorial practices. In these discourses and practices, the artist's cultural identity is often projected onto the artwork and taken to be an essential and inherent quality that the artwork has (Petersen 2012, p. 198). Petersen (2012, p. 198) who holds the view that identity is a construction has argued that instead, cultural identity should be regarded as a character the artist can choose to stage and represent rather than essentialised and reified. It should be noted that Petersen uses the term cultural identity as a shorthand for a cluster of interrelated concepts that relates to the cultural aspects of identity, especially culture, ethnicity, migration, globalisation and multiculturalism (Petersen 2012, pp. 199-200). Looked at another way, it could be argued that residencies assist artists who are not perceived as socially and/or culturally other gain access to not only a transformative alterity but also institutional currency through the proximity to communities and localities offered by residencies.

This ethnographer paradigm has yielded what Foster calls discourse-specific art. Unlike medium-specific practice, artists with discourse-specific practice work horizontally, that is, they move synchronically from social issue to issue, and from political debate to debate (Foster 1996, p. 199). The mode of operation for the artist as ethnographer is to select a site, enter its culture and learn its language, conceptualise a project and then present it, and soon after, move on to the next site where the cycle is repeated again (Foster 1996, p. 202). Indeed, now there is a network of residencies littered across the world

that supports this mode of operation where the artist might explore variations of social issues and political debates in different locations and cultures.

Moreover, Bishop (2012) too has also alluded to this horizontal and synchronic movement of artists signalled by the term 'project', which for her had a specific genesis in a post-studio site-specific art steeped in social awareness. She mentioned the rise of the term 'project' to describe a particular tendency of art that arose in the 1990s. By 'project' she means art after 1989 which "aspires to replace the work of art as a finite object with an open-ended, post-studio, research-based, social process, extending over time and mutable in form" (Bishop 2012, p. 194), and they include the types of art understood as collective practice, self-organised activist groups, trans-disciplinary research, participatory and socially engaged art, and experimental curating. Bishop notes that this new tendency arose after the collapse of socialism and loss of collective political horizon or goal while simultaneously there was also an increase in privatisation and neo-liberal reforms (Bishop 2012, p. 193-194).

In discussing the methods and forms of these projects, she focused on those that were largely of participatory and socially-engaged art and experimental curating, and gave as case studies three exhibitions that marked a transition from site-specific art that were more spatially focussed to a form of project that embedded artists in the social field, indeed much like how an (artist as) ethnographer would attempt to gain access and understanding of a site. One of these exhibitions is Project Unité curated by Yves Apetitalot, which took place at a housing estate by Le Corbusier in Firminy, France, that is populated mostly by single parents, students, immigrants and old age pensioners. The project materialised in the form of an exhibition with forty European and US artists, architects and designers working in situ, assuming the role of inhabitants and producing work for 29 empty apartments (Bishop 2012, p. 196). While some of the artists addressed the building and its architecture, others engaged directly with the residents in a process that was

more sociological in spirit (Bishop 2012, p. 197). Still, one artist, Heimo Zobernig, converted one of the apartments into a café (Bishop 2012, p. 198). I chose to highlight Project Unité as a case study given by Bishop because of her comment that the use of the word 'project' rather than 'exhibition' in the title Project Unité seemed to her to imply that the totality of the situation was more important than a final exhibition of works (Bishop 2012, p. 199). She stated that the word 'project' carried connotations of art overlapping and engaging with the social sphere rather than being removed from it, much akin to an architectural project (Bishop 2012, p. 199). Another reason I chose to highlight Project Unité is that it provides an example of how experimental curatorial practices and strategies also plays a role in supporting the post-studio and discourse-specific art that was emerging by choosing an *elsewhere* for the site of their projects and by facilitating access to its concomitant transformative alterity.

But this tendency towards projects indicating renewed social awareness of artists in the 1990s is just one side of a coin. As mentioned above, art as projects came at a time of increasing privatisation and neo-liberal reforms. The other side of the coin that Bishop observed is that art as project fits into the current phase of capitalism which is dominated by networks and projects, and where fluidity, mobility and adaptability are the most esteemed values (Bishop 2012, p. 215). Indeed, these values are embodied in the post-studio and discourse-specific artists whose lives are often characterised by a succession of projects after projects based on strong networks and successful connections with others. As the mobilisation of artists become more intense, traveling through a circuit of exhibitions, biennials and project spaces for site-responsive project, Bishop (2012, p. 216) has stated that "it is tempting to speculate that the most successful artists are those who can integrate, collaborate, be flexible, work with different audiences, *and* respond to the exhibition's thematic framework." Additionally, Bishop (2012, p. 216) concedes that even though the 'project' was a term introduced in the 1990s to describe a more embedded and socially aware mode of artistic practice, it is

also just as equally a survival strategy for creative individuals and art practitioners working under the precarious labour conditions of neoliberalism. Adding to that, it is also difficult for cultural workers to jointly influence, organise or change those conditions of production.

The dynamic of residencies have also compounded the effect of networks and mobility. Steyerl and Buden (2006) have stated that an aspect of residencies is deterritorialisation as it creates transnational sets of relations aligned to the rhythm of the global cultural industries. The product of which is a form of structural nomadism. As Steyerl and Buden (2006) puts it, residencies act “like space stations for upwardly mobile self-entrepreneurs they [*sic*] function as accelerators for self-marketing and as training grounds for the lifestyle of highly mobile cultural operators.” Residencies too support the global cultural industries’ ideology of “competition, relentless creativity and almost mandatory openness to cooperation and mobility” (Steyerl & Buden 2006).

Kwon also echoes Foster in how these discourse-specific art develops. To elaborate further on the genealogy and three main paradigms of site-specificity as charted by Kwon, there was first the site-specific art of the 1960s which aspired to exceed the limitations of traditional media like paintings and sculpture, and also to undermine the exchange value of art by not being discrete and transportable. These site-specific works took the physical conditions and elements of a particular location—the size, scale, texture, dimensions of walls and ceilings, existing light condition, seasonal characteristics of climate and etc.—as integral to its production, presentation and reception (Kwon 2002, p. 11-12).

Around the 1970s, a different model of site-specificity informed by institutional critique and conceptual art developed (Kwon 2002, p. 13). Still through a materialist investigation of institutional critique, physical space came to be expressions of underlying social, economic and political structures,

and cultural frameworks defined by the institutions of art. These site-specific works sought to decode the site so as to expose these hidden operations (Kwon 2002, p. 14). It was here too that the site of art began to diverge from the physical conditions of a location and the literal space of art in order to engage with the site in discursive terms, often leading to the deaestheticisation and dematerialisation of the artwork (Kwon 2002, pp. 19-24).

Lastly, Kwon (2002, p. 24) observes that the site-oriented practices of today is driven by the pursuit for a more intense engagement with everyday life and the world outside of art, or as mentioned above, the expanded field of culture. As such, often the site of art extends beyond the familiar art contexts to more “public” realms—anything from a billboard, a disenfranchised community, a magazine page, a social cause, a theoretical concept or a political debate (Kwon 2002, p. 3). Similarly, as part of its expansion, site-specific art is also informed by popular discourses and a broader range of disciplines, including anthropology, literary criticisms, computer science, natural and cultural histories architecture and urbanism, fashion, music, and television (Kwon 2002, p. 26). As mentioned above, the distinguishing characteristic of today’s practice of site-specific art is that the actual physical conditions of a location and the social conditions and structures that underpin it are subordinated to a site that is delineated discursively. Kwon (2002, p. 26) highlights in particular that unlike the two earlier models of site-specific art, the site in today’s model is not defined as a precondition but is instead generated by the artwork in a discursive vector.

Kwon was careful to note that in the three paradigms of site-specificity she proposed, there are no discrete chronological separations or neat periodising break between them, and that the paradigms serves as an outline of competing definitions that operate in overlapping ways in site-oriented art. As useful as these paradigms are, I would argue that they are focussed on the *artwork* in relation to the different categories of sites, and that to apply these

paradigms to the context of residencies, these paradigms need to be expanded to also focus on *process*. In understanding site-specificity through process, the purported subordination of locational sites to discursive sites is not total, especially in the instances of residencies in which artists come as guest, tourist, adventurer, temporary in-house critic and pseudo-ethnographer all at once. These are roles anchored in specific locations, or at least localities, —in the house of the host, destination sites, unexplored territories, and geographically bounded and observable interactions or objects of study. The extent of the relationship between the location as site and the artwork depends on many factors, and warrants closer examination, but this will require a larger comparative study when enough research of analytic descriptions have been made, as have been mentioned in the earlier chapter.

### ***The artist as ethnographer; the residency as port of call***

Of course, Kwon (2002, pp. 28-29) adds that the parameters of location still matters, with slippages between discursive content and location. But she argues that the primary site addressed by site specificity today is not necessarily bounded to the location. While a location might serve as material source and inspiration for the discursive site, it is not an indexical relationship (Kwon 2002, p. 29). It is precisely this lack of bounded relationship in today's site-oriented art that has caused its unhinging from location, with the site-oriented art becoming another discrete, autonomous and transportable work. Itinerant artists now travel to biennales, museums and festivals exchanging their service as a form of art commodity, where they engage in their chosen "site" according to the particularities of the framework provided by the institution. With the increasing dematerialisation of the artwork, it is now the artists rather than the art object that travels, turning the site-oriented art into a nomadic practice. Because of these changing conditions of artistic production and content, the artist now comes to approximate the work (in a different manner than Foster's and Petersen's similar statement), and taking on not just the role of a maker of aesthetic objects, but also as collaborator,

researcher, facilitator, educator, coordinator and administrator. These two points—a nomadic practice and the performative characteristic of the artist’s mode of operation—points some answers as to the rise of non-studio based residency programmes. Bearing this in mind, even when the siting of art are in specific locations and places, Kwon (2002, p. 53) argues that it “can also be a means to *extract* the social and historical dimensions of these places in order to variously serve the thematic drive of an artist.” Her observation here is relevant to what is said of artists in residency programmes in Yogyakarta.

In speaking about the importance of location above, there is a risk of fetishizing locality. While in Yogyakarta, I interviewed Syafiatudina, a curator and writer at KUNCI Cultural Studies Center in Yogyakarta, about her perspective on foreign artists coming to Yogyakarta on residencies. Over the years, she has observed many residency programmes across Yogyakarta. She commented: “Sometimes I feel tired of how certain topics are constantly appearing whenever resident artists are working in Yogyakarta. Like for example, we often joke about the constant reference to myth, like the Queen of the South Seas, or the Sultan, or Javanese culture... It’s quite tiring to meet someone new every three months and have to explain or deal with the same questions all over again. For example: How are Muslims here? And how are myths, the Sultan and the Javanese? —That kind of thing. Works that I find interesting during residencies are the works that can go beyond this cliché or stereotype of Yogyakarta or Indonesia.” Here it seems, the revolving door of artists playing pseudo-ethnographers have worn out Yogyakarta’s art community by thrusting onto them the burdensome role of informant.

This was a reiteration of the same sentiments in her essay titled *Residency as encounter between journeys* for the publication on Australian artist Alex Cuffe’s residency with Cemeti Art House in 2012. Syafiatudina (2013) observed that in Yogyakarta, there are several art spaces with residency programmes supporting foreign artists in their production process and facilitating dialogues, collaborations and exchange of knowledge between

visiting foreign artists and the locals, including Indonesian artists. This exchange can take the form of the foreign artists gaining knowledge of the local by living and interacting with their surroundings, while the locals gain knowledge of the foreign artists including their perception on the local environment. In particular, the outsider status of these foreign artists might lead them to raise questions for re-evaluating “things that may have become taken for granted” (Syafiatudina 2013, n.p.). However, despite the potential for such fruitful and beneficial exchange, Syafiatudina noted the dissatisfaction of locals with the representational strategies employed in the works produced by foreign artists on residency as many of these works “have the tendency to see Yogyakarta—a place known for its spiritualism, ritual and antique cultural products—with a certain exoticism” (Syafiatudina 2013, n.p.).

Syafiatudina likens the resident artist to the anthropologist (or ethnographer to use Foster’s words), and in doing so, levels the same criticism against the paradigm underlying residencies that Clifford (1992), a historian of anthropology, has also said of anthropological field research method. The paradigm underlying residencies, or at least in the case of the Cemeti residency programme, according to Syafiatudina is similar to the anthropologists in that both the artist and the anthropologist live at a far away work location, strive to get involved in the local context such as the community, atmosphere or surrounding landscape, and have a tendency to find empirical evidence based on experience to use in their work. In toto, the residency paradigm can be said to “prioritise the process of living and dwelling as a determining factor, in so far as foreign artists can be truly involved in the local context, until a representative strategy emerges which is considered relevant.” (Syafiatudina 2013 n.p.)

There are two interrelated criticisms that Syafiatudina levels at this paradigm. First is the tendency to narrow the field by regarding locality as being confined to the work location, such as Yogyakarta. Locality however is not a bounded entity, as Syafiatudina expands in her interview, but “it is

always related to other localities, translocal, and how this network of translocalities can be the opportunity to learn about the global system that regulates us.” Thereby, this first tendency marginalises related areas outside of the work location. Secondly, if the concept of a bounded and “authentic” locality is not rethought, then the result of such residencies will inevitably be clichéd as have been illustrated above—the representation of Yogyakarta as quintessentially centred around the sultanate, myths and Javanese spiritualism. This tendency works like horse blinkers, preventing one to see that the Yogyakarta sultanate is also influenced by the activities of the central government and other social groups, including fundamentalist Islamic movements (Syafiatudina 2013, n.p.).

The criticism that Clifford made about disciplinary anthropology and twentieth-century ethnography, which is based on the Malinowskian model, is the normative strategies in localising the construction and representation of “cultures”. His criticism is focussed on how cultural analysis constitutes its objects, such as societies, traditions, communities, and identities, in spatial terms and through specific spatial practices of research (Clifford 1992, p. 97). One such spatial practice is that of dwelling in the same site where one undertakes research, resulting in centring “the culture” on a particular locus or bounded site such as “the village” or “the field” (Clifford 1992, 98). This spatial practice is bounded by space and time as “one can only be a participant-observer some *where*” (Clifford 1992, p. 98) where they “stay and dig in (for a time)” (Clifford 1992, p. 99).

It is this localising of the anthropologist’s object of study in “the field” that tends to marginalise or erase several blurred boundary areas and historical realities that extends beyond the ethnographic frame. These criticisms were made in 1992 in an essay titled *Traveling Cultures* that Clifford (1992, p. 97) describes as “*entering* a very large domain of comparative cultural studies: the diverse, interconnected histories of travel and displacement in the late twentieth century”. And so when he states that

traditional ethnography has privileged relations of dwelling, it was in comparison to relations of travel. This is perhaps a response to changes Clifford observed, in that culture as an analytic distinction in anthropology is not what it used to be—bounded and integral—and is faced with the representational challenge to portray and understand local/global historical encounters, co-productions, dominations, and resistances through focussing on hybrid, cosmopolitan experiences as much as on rooted, native ones. In this other analytic distinction of culture that privileges traveling, Clifford (1992, p. 101) suggested that its chronotope, that is, the setting or scene organising time and space in representable form, “comes to resemble as much a site of travel encounters as of residence, less a tent in a village... and more like a hotel lobby, ship, or bus.”

Residencies, in its own specific style, quality and duration, encompass this co-existing duality of dwelling and traveling, and resemble as much a chronotope of culture—of culture as sites traversed by people, goods, technologies, ideas, images and money—and cultural encounter. Whether the host organisation’s sole focus is the residency programme, or the residency programme operates concurrently with other programmes and tasks such as production, exhibitions, education, public engagement etc., residencies often see a stream of artists landing, dwelling and interacting before again taking off.

There is also, as when it comes to encounters, the role that the host organisation might assume as mediators. In a catalogue for the internationally traveling exhibition *AWAS! Recent Art from Indonesia, 1999-2002*, is an essay by curator Damon Moon (2000) where he writes his observations on the process of trans-cultural or intercultural curation—typically in which a curator from one country goes to another that is culturally different to select works to exhibit back in the country where the curator is based at or in a different place altogether. In such trans-cultural curation, curators as the sanctioned intermediaries of powerful networks have redefined their roles as cultural

mediators. But as Moon observed, the curators arriving in a foreign country too require another mediator that comes in the form of 'para-structures'. Moon (2000, p. 70) describes the important role these para-structures play in "forming a network which allows the curators access to a community of artists, curators, academics, gallery owners, writers and critics." He adds that a para-structure with established links to other cultural institutions in other countries would often become the conduit for the majority of such intercultural interactions and 'the first port of call' in a curator's foreign visit as a cultural powerbroker.

These same observations could be applied to host organisations and residency programmes as well. Many a residencies emerge through established links between cultural institutions in different countries. The residency programme Alex Cuffe was a part of is HotWave #5 in which three artists—one from Indonesia, one from Australia, and one from The Netherlands—stayed for three months at Cemeti Art House. The programme itself was in collaboration with Asialink in Australia and Heden in The Netherlands. In a similar fashion, host organisations of residencies too take on the role of mediator between the resident artists and the community of artists, curators, academics, gallery owners, writers, and critics within the locality. The host organisation also at times functions as a guide through the complexities of an unfamiliar city. In contrast to the transient visit of the "'parachute curator' who descends from the sky to choose work before disappearing again into the heavens" (Moon 2000, p. 68), for host organisations with regular residency programmes, the intercultural interactions goes on for extended durations and higher frequency. With each interaction, the dominance of residencies in increased—ossifying its position in supporting the ethnographic turn in contemporary art and theory. Additionally, certain residencies might come to be a part of more powerful networks, thereby becoming a more desired port of call for the itinerant artists.

But these networks could potentially be advantageous for the local communities in that through the intervention of imported artists and curators, local artists and curators may be invited to work and exhibit elsewhere, in turn leading to the cultural exports from those communities or localities. This process need not always involve crossing national or geographical borders—it could be between cities within the same country, or communities within the same location. It is tempting to then theorise residencies as resembling a port of call, especially as they begin to form important nodes in the network of the global art system, and support the circulation of people, ideas, and technologies through residency programmes, international collaborations, workshops, lectures and so on. Additionally, as host organisations with residency programmes take on the role of cultural powerbrokers that import and export art practitioners, one cannot help but see the analogy between a port of call and a residency.

It is by this same process that residencies also *reproduce* localities in the context of the global art system. In their position as a port of call for artists and curators, and their concomitant role as mediators between the local community and the global art world, art spaces and residencies like Cemeti Art House renders visible the contemporary art scene in Yogyakarta, and Yogyakarta itself, on the global radar. Moreover, through former resident artists and curators, locality and its cultural specificities are constantly reproduced again in exhibitions, biennales and festivals elsewhere. Production happening in residencies is two-fold: the production of art, and the reproduction of locality and its concomitant element of alterity. This is particularly so for residencies supporting discursive practices where culture is a primary resource and material in art-making.

Returning again to the spatial practice of residencies, locality plays a significant role in a residency programme as resident artists live, dwell and work within a specific locality. Nonetheless, it should be noted that despite spatial practice being integral, a residency is also a set of discursive practices—

especially for artists who are skilled communicators—and as such, could potentially expand the artistic research beyond the physical locality of the residency. In the diary-format publication on Garcellano's two-month residency with Cemeti Art Foundation (now known as Indonesian Visual Art Archive) in Yogyakarta, Garcellano (2002, p. 21) wrote about a conversation she had in her first week with another artist also in Yogyakarta for residency:

“He told me that the nice part of meeting people is when one is finally able to cross the levels of hi and hello and ask the more relevant questions. Right now it's too early, he says. Maybe later on, during the middle of my residency, I will be able to ask questions and people will be willing to answer them.”

And indeed, the entire publication is littered with details of conversations from her encounters followed by her own reflections on them. In the last week of her residency, seeking to summarise her activities and its concomitant benefit, Garcellano (2002, p. 58) wrote:

“I recall asking myself early on the trip that once in Manila, what next? I am still not certain but what I am quite sure is that more than ever before, when I return home I will definitely know more about my culture, my history and myself. The more fascinating conversations did not happen during lectures or the art openings. It was always during the moments when I was just lounging around and I suddenly find myself having a conversation with someone over a glass or soda or while reading a book. [...] Since that conversation with Nadiah [Bamadhaj], and from listening to Stuart [Koop]'s lecture on Australian contemporary art, and from further talks with Julie [Spencer] and so many others, I felt everything has finally become clearer. Whereas I understand that my direction had already been about investigating the past in order to understand the present and maybe the future, I had never really been able to

think about it concretely. In a way, I was just trudging along. Now, as I prepare to go home I have gained a new perspective.”

Garcellano’s writing above exemplifies the discursive practice of residencies, especially a residency surrounded by a critical community composed of both locals and a constant rotation of visiting art practitioners, which facilitates the beneficial exchange of ideas and discourse through both formal and informal conversational settings.

As Garcellano’s residency took place in Yogyakarta, it would be remiss of me to apply this statement to other residencies elsewhere. Each experience is not only just particular to the residency programme, but perhaps also to the locality it takes place in. In my conversation with Syafiatudina she observed that as Yogyakarta is a small city and as time and people’s schedule are flexible, it is easier to forge relationships and have these in depth conversational exchanges. Another socio-cultural practice that I argue allows for these casual in depth conversational exchanges to take place is that of *nongkrong*, which essentially means ‘hanging out’. But ‘hanging out’ is not all frivolity. Dahl (2016) has argued that *nongkrong* is an essential process in the functioning and flourishing of the artistic practices and communities in Yogyakarta’s art scene. She states that in many of the city’s art spaces, groups of friends cluster over cigarettes, coffee and food made possible by the inexpensive rent and relaxed pace of life (Dahl 2016, p. 110). It is a kind of sociality that glues the Yogyakarta art scene together by allowing for the exchange of conversations and interactions based on shared energy and feeling between people that becomes a locus of potential creative energy from which ideas flows and projects gain traction (Dahl 2016, p. 112). *Nongkrong* is also the site and conduit through which ideas and information circulate within the art community through the supportive web of relationships that it had build. This casual form of knowledge-share becomes particularly influential on the development of many artists for whom their education in actual schools were lacking (Dahl 2016, p. 116). And for an art space and artist-run initiative

to sustain itself collectively and creatively, nongkrong is an important process that builds trust and affection among its group of people (Dahl 2016, p. 113). And perhaps a resident artist's access to and participation in the Yogyakarta art community depends largely on how well he or she is able to nongkrong.

I have already mentioned before that we should view residency work undertaken by resident artists within a more expanded understanding of types of artistic production and labour. The discursive practice of residencies, to return to Steyerl and Buden, is centred on a performative type of production and affective labour that pursues relations between people. And in that sense, residencies' spatial component is not just geographical but also relational. This *elsewhere* for artistic transformation is not just a matter of physical location; it is also a space of possible encounters and relations.

***Cemeti Art House: Structuring the residency programme towards supporting a discursive practice***

I observed through an interview with Mella Jaarsma, co-founder of Cemeti Art House, that residency programmes can be structured such that certain practices—whether locational or discursive—are encouraged. Although Cemeti Art House is now considered an institution in Yogyakarta contemporary art, it is nonetheless small in scale. At the time that I interviewed Mella, the staff consisted of a residency manager, an archivist and the two founders—herself and her husband Nindityo Adipurnomo. When the art space first started in 1988, it was just herself and Nindityo, and the space was also a private residence like Cata Odata and Ketemu Project Space with an exhibition space at the front and living quarters at the back. In 1991, they had additional help and from 1992 onwards, they had two staff on hand. While before Mella and Nindityo would host resident artists on an ad-hoc basis, it was only in 2006 that they began to formalise their residency programmes. Despite its institutional standing in the Yogyakarta contemporary art scene, it

is certainly not comparable to large well-funded institutions in other cities. For these reasons, I consider Cemeti Art House a microresidence.

And like other microresidences, relationships and connections between the resident artists and others are important to Cemeti Art House in order to facilitate dialogues and exchanges. Although they go about this in a more structured way than just having a courtyard to nongkrong. Mella revealed to me that for their Landing Soon residency programme, it was important for them to house the resident artist from overseas and the resident artist from Indonesia in the same space so that they would not be able to hide from each other. Although the resident artists are not required to collaborate with each other, Cemeti Art House wanted there to be dialogue and exchanges between the resident artists. Morel (2014, p. 216), the then general and artistic director of Heden, whom Cemeti Art House partnered with for the Landing Soon residency programme, had said that it was important for their Dutch artists to get in touch with a non-Western culture, to allow them to explore art practices in Indonesia, and to gain new impulses through an exchange of artistic ideas, knowledge and information. And it was for these reasons that the Dutch artists were coupled with an Indonesian counterpart during their residency period (Morel 2014, p. 216).

Other ways in which the residency programmes brings the resident artists in dialogue with the locals is through artists' assistants who are hired on a residency basis and need not necessarily have a fine art background. In Mella's view, they expect the assistants to not only be learning from the resident artists but to also contribute their own knowledge and their network. Finally, each residency ends with a publication in which a local writer or curator is hired to contribute an essay. This is not only to support local writers and curators but to also stimulate them through conversations with the resident artist. Galligan (2014, pp. 219-220), a former resident artist at Cemeti Art House, have also stated that "Cemeti was always looking to encourage spaces for connection and discussion [...] They have worked hard to open up

territory previously unclaimed or ignored by artists—prioritising screenings, performances, talks, art criticism and commissioned catalogue—a discursive approach that has since been embraced other younger collectives and art institutions in Indonesia.”

Here I would like to digress a bit to highlight these other discursive practices of screenings, performances and talks. According to Bishop (2012, p. 241), the 2000s saw a marked rise of pedagogic projects by contemporary artists. Artists have become increasingly engaged in projects in which the tropes of education are appropriated as both a form and a method. These tropes include lectures, seminars, libraries, reading-rooms, publications and workshops (Bishop 2012, p. 241). Bishop partially accords this rising interests in pedagogic projects to decades of developments in participatory art where artists attempt to forge a closer connection between art and life, particularly through their interventions into social processes which they deem their art (Bishop 2012, p. 241). Although Bishop comes from the perspective of decades of development in participatory art, certain aspects of these developments are not exclusive to participatory art. As Foster and Kwon have shown above, discourse-specific practices too have entered into much of the non-art realm to also investigate processes of everyday life. Similarly, the increasingly dematerialisation of discourse-specific art has led to artists employing different, usually performative, strategies for presentation, many of which include the tropes of education mentioned by Bishop.

Finally, as a closing statement to this chapter, according to Mella, a successful residency is one where the resident artists connect with people through networking, sharing and friendship. Here again, the element of sociality so important to microresidences and artist-run spaces pops up. And sociality is indeed not unimportant, as I have shown that the discursive practices of residencies are fuel for contemporary artistic practices. Discursive practices and the concomitant sociality needs to be recognised as a type of

production that uses affective labour so that microresidences can be valued for the element they place such importance on—human relationships.

## CONCLUSION

The two case studies of microresidences—Ketemu Project Space and Cemeti Art House—had been used to different purposes. As a case study of a microresidence, Ketemu Project Space provided an instance in how microresidences that are often artist-run can be understood as an artistic genre. As highlighted in the case study, the act of hosting resident artists is an extension of the hosting artists' artistic vision and practice through the choice of resident artists invited, the project or artwork developed with these resident artists, and the expectations placed on the resident artists in sharing their artistic research and knowledge with the local arts community. Ketemu Project Space provided a clear example of how a microresidence can be viewed as an artistic genre because of how closely Kabul's and Mintio's social practice is channelled through Ketemu Project Space as their platform. The case study opens up a possible line of future inquiry into studying microresidences as an artistic genre.

Cemeti Art House, having held residency programmes since 2006 allows them to learn and make adjustments to the residency structure, provided a case study of how a microresidence can structure itself such that a discursive practice constitutes the residency experience through creating spaces for connection, discussion and friendship. But after 10 years, during which Yogyakarta's art ecology has become more internationalised partly through the increase in the number of residency programmes, Mella has noticed a shift in how resident artists and their works are received by the local arts community. Where before the local community would be excited by the arrival of a new foreign resident artist and involve themselves in engaging the artist, now they are less interested and engaged in the resident artists and their works, and, as related to me by Mella, finding it "a bit boring" as they can discern how a resident artist will develop the specific theme they have chosen. This relates to Syafiatudina's comment on how wearisome it is to see the same

themes and topics constantly recurring in the resident artists' artistic research, and having to field the same questions and hold the same discussions.

While I have mentioned above that affective labour in creating relations on the part of resident artists should be considered a type of production, it should also be noted that the local arts community in playing host, as well as an interlocutor providing information and understanding of the local context, to resident artists too requires their affective labour. And that the negative impact of so many resident artists flowing in and out as they seek artistic transformation elsewhere through extracting narratives and accessing the context of alterity has caused a pall of fatigue to fall upon the local arts community. This is particularly a point of concern in a global art world in which there is increasing mobility with itinerant artists seeking out the differential context of places, with their own aesthetic, motivic and ideological preferences of the areas they choose for residencies.

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# APPENDIXES

## **Interview with Ketemu Project Space**

Co-founders Budi Agung Kuswara and Samantha Tio

29 August 2016

Bali, Indonesia

Kamiliah Bahdar = KB

Budi Agung Kuswara (Kabul) = BAK

Samantha Tio (Mintio) = ST

KB: How did Ketemu Project Space start?

BAK: Ketemu Project Space is started by the concept of 'art with community'. And is an initial project we did in Jogja, first working with batik-makers community. And during the process itself we learned a lot about how to work with communities to bring the authenticity of the kecenderungan of the community. So as artists who both have individual practice, when we first come to this way of working with community, we realised a lot of things that we can't apply to the community. Like, we can't apply our personal practice as an artist when we work with communities. So this experience give us idea of how we should work with communities and the result itself, for me, is we managed to fulfil a lot of other benefit through art—rather than just personal practice benefit like economic value, intensity with the artwork and the artist—that we cannot get in our personal practice but we can have it when we work with communities. Mostly we learn a lot about the situation in the community to benefit our practice of community art.

ST: So the space only came out of necessity in 2014 or 2015, cos we made the decision to move from Jogja to Singapore then Bali because of family. So that's when we realised we actually wanted a kind of platform or ruang whereby we could actually continue this conversation of art and community, that existed initially through our projects, but we wanted to extend it to the local community here. That's why Ketemu Space only came later.

KB: So before that it was Ketemu Project? And the space only came later?

ST: Yes. So basically when we actually made the move from Singapore—actually we were in Jogja first, then we did a couple of residencies, then we were in Singapore—and then, we actually had to decide where we wanted to settle down because of starting a family. And in making the decision to come to Bali, and also from the understanding from various friends—like we actually met Ruth (an arts and project manager) a couple of times before we moved here and she told us a little bit about the art ecology here and she personally said, she felt that the kind of critical arena is absent, and based on that when we were actually told not to move here—we were told by Valentine (gallerist) not to move here as well—but in making the decision to move here, we decided that we would want to initiate that kind of environment here, and hence the space.

- KB: How do you fund the space?
- ST: Everything is mostly self-funded. We were very lucky that after our first project, with Malam Di Jari Kita, we had an exhibition at the NUS Museum. And basically, what happened was, a collector actually collected the entire set of work and then donated it to the museum, which was actually really our dream come true. So because of the project being from the community, we wanted it to actually go full circle and actually return and benefit the community, so we actually used the funds from selling that work to build this physical space. But then we knew that in building this physical space, it could not just be for us alone, so that's why we extended the space to artists and programmes for the community to be held here.
- KB: Just to go into details. Before you started this space, Ketemu Project was just the two of you. And then when you started Ketemu Project Space, did you immediately bring in staff or was that much later?
- ST: It was much later. We brought in our first staff with our first project with the space in early 2015 when we were commissioned to create a project for the SEA Games. Because of that commission we received some funding and that's why we could have staffing for that particular year. Then rolling on to Merayakan Murni, we actually got funding from Valentine to cover the operation costs for about 11 months which ended in July, when the exhibition opened.
- KB: You mentioned you wanted to bring in artists. Why did you decide on a residency?
- BAK: Because my experience doing residencies. There is a research based on it, on the process of residency, because when you live in new place, you bring different kind of idea or perspective from your social setting to different social setting that will definitely give a more or new way of seeing the everyday life. Like something very simple. You just can see in a different way with your different background. So this will benefit the society here. This has happened long time ago since—people come here and do research (in general) but the result of the research itself is not go back to the society that owned the or is in this social setting. There is no platform or programme that facilitate this transfer of knowledge to the society who own the... what do you call it?
- KB: Knowledge?
- BAK: Can say that is a knowledge, but mostly the society itself who live in this social setting won't see this as a knowledge. Because they are inside. So that's why when people from outside come in and do research, they will find something as a knowledge that is valuable. But Ketemu facilitate that to bring this back to the society that they can absorb that as a new perspective to seeing themselves.
- ST: We also saw residencies as a form of alternative education. Because as artists we kind of fall out of the mainstream academic stream, and I think in many

ways, we do not actually access as easily to formal education. So because of that, in the decision to continue to learn, we started this residency programme. Cos that's where we were free to invite whoever we would love to learn from, and not only restricting that learning process to ourselves, but having a residency as a platform, we could actually share it with the people around us. So it's in a way, residency programme here in Ketemu is a community way of learning together as artists and also spreading the knowledge together as artists.

- KB: So that's where the Ketemu Aja session comes in? (Ketemu Aja means "to meet", and is the name of the sharing session by Ketemu's AIR)
- ST: Correct. And also, I mean, what we would like to see and something we have seen in our past residencies is that local practitioners and local artists actually coming in to chip in to enhancing the experience of the residence. Like, for example, when Marieke Warmelink was here, we actually had Wayan Upadana and a couple of other artists bring her around and introducing her to their families and also the way of life and their own cultures. So in a sense, to us, that is a kind of successful engagement, because it is not only us taking care of the resident but the community comes together to share their responsibilities as well.
- KB: I wanted to also ask about the physical space. Why did you decide on the location Batubulan? And how would you describe the immediate environment?
- BAK: Other than the personal family reason (Kabul's mother lives 2 doors down), Batubulan also now become like urban area. A lot of people from other part of Bali, they work in like south of Bali and they will live in Batubulan area. So that's mean more urban. And from the location itself, it's in between of spots like Sanur, Denpasar and Ubud—they all have different kind of character of community. Because in Bali art scene itself, Ubud is the centre of Balinese art scene. And the format is, I can say, is like old style formation of art as the infrastructure to support the tourism. So, in other community like Denpasar, it's different than Ubud—it's more capturing other values, can say like, political idea of art and all those other potential of art, other than just become the infrastructure of tourism.
- ST: And also Batubulan historically is a place that is relatively creative because we have the sanngars and the dance schools actually based here—so you have like the Barong dance theatres around here. And it's also a place for stone carving and lot of the hard traditional art forms that's based here. And adding on to what Kabul just said, that you know, Batubulan is kind of a space outside of the tourist areas and also outside the key city areas. So, for example, artists like Citra who needs to kind of move out of the village to be able to focus on her practice have chosen more affordable housing that is actually located around here.
- BAK: Yea, but the most important thing is not only about the location and the physical building but more to the programme itself actually. Like how we try to facilitate the other art community from outside the mainstream of Gianyar

and Ubud to speak their voices, their ideas, like West Bali and East Bali—it's more interesting. For now, I don't think like museums, cos it's mostly private museums, has been doing this—listen to the voice of the other part of Bali to see their idea of art. So, it's not only about the location, it's also about the programme that we try to develop. That's why we use the Ketemu as a name and also concept.

ST: And also how we actually function, or add function to the space—we do not have a show space. So we also have an office and we only have a studio space. We're actually really conscious that Ketemu Project Space is not 'Ketemu Art Space'. Because we are very focussed on the process and the production of art, more heavily than the presentation of art. That doesn't mean that we neglect that as well. So that means that when we think about how we present art, we do not think about physical space or of actually owning a space. We think about having external partnerships, like with Merayakan Murni we have a partnership with Sudamala Resorts, and also using other platforms, like the online platforms, like things in the virtual world that we can actually use to present the kind of art or projects or processes that we are undergoing here.

KB: I also want to talk more about the artists. One of the things is that you have a very small studio space that is not exactly equipped either. How do you go about selecting who comes for residency? Do you focus more on very post-studio based practices? And actually, do artists propose or do you sort of invite residents to come in?

BAK: At the moment, we just use very basic idea of inviting artists to come to Bali because Bali arts scene itself is not that advanced. We just try to apply this format to Bali. For now, we based on project that the artists who has similar concern with what the project that we develop. But maybe in future, because we have more clear agenda and more specific, then we can start to think of how we will select the artists that can come and support the programme. Yea, sementara ini seperti itu. Like, for example, now our practice with the community, like the schizophrenic community, we have some ideas that we would love to connect this community to same community in other country. Is also, a way to learn of what and how the other country or the community in other country try to work with this community, and what is the format. I know it is really different because it's in different social setting but that's why we always want to know and understand more from different perspective that which will suitable that we can apply to Bali. It's more like that. It's specific in the concern of every project that Ketemu create and also it will be specific to benefit the society or the community that we work with.

KB: Who have you invited in the past, before Merayakan Murni?

BAK: We invited multidiscipline creative people, or creative people with mutildiscipline. Every activity that is in Ketemu, or to develop Ketemu, is a project, because we are really concern of process. For example, like, to make the logo of Ketemu—then we will do that as a programme, as a project. Then we will invite a designer to come here to feel the atmosphere here and follow our activity. This is our way to work. We enjoy the process because it's really

different the result. So, one, designer. Kedua, Alecia (Neo) and Filippo (Fabricca) because they have a focussed practice of working with community as well. And when we work together, we got a lot of different way of seeing or more rich idea to transform the idea to the community through art.

KB: So when they came, there was a particular programme that was running?

ST: Yea, we had a particular project that was running. Which was the project in Kintamani about the lake. So it was an environment-based project that year.

KB: So how did you involve them in that project?

ST: Basically, they actually help us to kickstart the project. They developed workshops and games to kind of interact with the students so they get to know us, and to get them to kind of more open to creative processes before we started the actual work for the project.

KB: And they were here for two weeks?

ST: They were here for two weeks. But intense two weeks!

BAK: Intense.

ST: It's like really really intense cos Filippo is... he's practiced for a long time in interactive processes and participatory processes. From that two weeks we've learned so much from him. But he was really pushing us, in a very positive way.

KB: So after Filippo and Alecia, it was Elizabeth (Gan) was it?

ST: No, it was actually Boim (Gamaliel W. Budiharga) and Senja—the designers. Then after that it was Elizabeth.

BAK: Elizabeth... she has an interest in pottery.

ST: I think it was nice at that time cos we were also going to start Belimbing, our production arm that was supposed to produce objects and art merchandises to help with the cost of running the space. Elizabeth at the same time was also about to start her pottery workshop in Singapore. So when she was here, we were also discussing ways whereby we could develop a kind of enterprise to support the cost of our non-profit organisation.

BAK: But we also concern to engage not only artists, also craftsman to come here and meet the resident so that they can exchange. And not only the craftsman—we also engage like the company, for example CushCush. And maybe during the programme, they can exchange idea or develop their own networking in multidiscipline.

ST: I think craft is also a very good access point to the latent potential of the Balinese community. Because Balinese people, they are dexterous, and I think crafts is one of the strongest elements in terms of thinking about the creative

economy of Bali. So it's one thing that not only that we learn and explore quite deeply when Elizabeth was here, but also through CushCush who you know... they have been quite like really important partners in the process of Ketemu... so then from there we actually get to learn about how they actually fully tap on these potentials to create contemporary objects or contemporary ideas in design or even art, through the very basic traditional processes that already exist here.

KB: I want to go into details about these earlier residencies. When the earlier residents came, the studio space and the bedroom was at the front?

ST: Yes, correct.

KB: And the office was at the back, with the personal bedroom?

BAK: Yes.

ST: Where was the office ah?

BAK: At the back, when we used this (front room) as the bedroom.

ST: Yea, yea, yea. We moved so much. We kind of re-function the space.

KB: And you didn't have any other staff?

BAK: We had Dewi.

KB: Ah, you had Dewi as operations manager. Did you help support the residents? Or did you get volunteers?

ST: No, we collaborated very directly with them.

BAK: Volunteers yes. Like intern.

ST: Oh yea, we had an intern!

KB: Did you have a lot of email or Skype conversations in preparation for them to come to Ketemu?

BAK: Oh yes, yes.

KB: So there were a lot of discussions before?

BAK: Yes, yes.

KB: How many months preparation before they came?

BAK: About 2 months.

- KB: So when they came, they've already discussed ideas through emails and Skype. So the moment they came, everything was already prepared and scheduled?
- BAK: Yes, yes. Dewi will prepare the itinerary. But the most interesting thing is that through those itineraries, we will have different approach at the end. That's why we interested in process-base.
- KB: I'm planning to interview Elizabeth and Alecia as well about their experience. Just to collate a lot of materials. So when the residents stayed here, what was it like? The interactions between everyone—between Ketemu and the artists? Cos it's such a private space, and I think I'm very interested in looking at the different kind of spaces that residencies have. So this is a house yea, it's a very private space, then you're living in the same house. Then there are certain residencies where the studio is elsewhere and the office is somewhere else, and you house the artist somewhere else. How would you describe that kind of dynamic in Ketemu? The very close face-to-face interactions. Maybe also the idea of hosting?
- BAK: We more facilitate the programme. We more like facilitator. Again, again, like facilitator. We facilitate them, not always stay in Ketemu. Because when we have partner who can support their stay, for example like Valentine—his house, we more like facilitate them to have the access of what they are interested in.
- ST: Like you said it's really intimate, especially during the season where our residents stay here. That's why for that season the programme is a lot shorter but a lot more intense. Also because of the nature of the programme, we do not expect artists to produce work. So what we only have as a residency expectation, we just only expect them to kind of share. But then with the second season, with Merayakan Murni, cos they had to produce work, that's why we extended the residency period for a longer period of time. But with that in consideration, and also with addition of a staff in our office, we need a bigger office too, that's why we had to house the resident outside because it was a longer period of time and also we had a bigger team. So I think for the both seasons, the both residencies have very different dynamics but they still held on to the same kind of intentions.
- KB: So with Merayakan Murni as well there was also a lot of pre-discussion before they even came right? Especially with Marieke.
- BAK: Marieke, Im (Imhathai Suwatthanasilp) and Wawi too.
- ST: It was nice because for most of our residents for this season, they were already established artists.
- BAK: They have a lot of experience. We can see the difference.
- ST: And you could really feel it when they actually come, and to watch them work on a very very professional level. I think for all 3 of them, they were really direct into creating their works. There were really really prepared

already in terms of where they were at their career and what they knew about what to expect for the residency. So in a sense, it was intense but it was direct at the same time. We had a very good rhythm.

KB: How about in comparison to younger artists? Still young in their practice and new to the residency format?

ST: I mean we had that with Natasha. I mean this is her first residency, and she was also a recent graduate. But the only thing is that with Natasha's residency, we did not provide the support in terms of space cos she already had her own space. And because she was a little bit further out, our interactions were a little bit more limited. But we did have like the Whatsapp group to kind of know what her programme is and to actually communicate with her. But then, as with all residencies, however successful they kind of collaboration between the host and the resident, always depends on how receptive both of them are. So if in terms of, like for example, if the host is not receptive but the artist wants to do around it, you don't really get a good interaction. Or if the artist is not very receptive but the host is—it always takes both hands to clap.

KB: So do you find having a lot of the face-to-face interaction is very important? Especially because it's process-based and about facilitating.

BAK: Yes.

ST: Yea, but it also depends on how aware the artist is in terms of communication. So like for example, Wawi (Navarozza) is very good with communicating because she Instagram her entire process, and you know, she just publishes it. All you have to do if just go on her Facebook page and you know. She'll even tag Ketemu. So we're always update via those channels because she's really active. So we know she's always working. That's great.

With Im, she just pulls us in and then we're into a meeting and everything is face-to-face, and on her whatsapp she updates us everyday. She takes photos of her process and she updates everyday. And she's also really good with social media. She's always posting her process. So for that, there was not much we needed to do in terms of finding out what she was doing. And then we Marieke, it was like, "ok guys, today I'm going to do this, this, this. I've achieved this, this, this." And she'll take photos and she'll update us. So with artists who are at a certain maturity, like we didn't need to kind of "hey, what are you doing?" They fed us with the information, which makes them a lot more independent and makes our responsibilities as a host a lot lighter.

KB: Actually, how would you describe Bali as a place for the residents? Because it is quite developed infrastructure-wise for people to move around, so do you think... So Bali as a whole, do you think it's easy for artists to sort of immediately feel comfortable? Or do you think that the environment is something that it takes a while for them to adapt to?

- BAK: In the basic thing is, I think it is ok. Yea, it's ok. But again, if we have the mature artist then it's not a problem for them. Like Marieke, she just go on a motorbike and go around by herself. Yea, is not difficult.
- ST: Between the two years—between our first season and the second season—there were actually recent developments in infrastructure in Bali too. Like for example, for our first season we didn't have the applications like Gojek and Grab, so in terms of like how dependent the artists were on us in terms of bringing them around was actually really quite intense. But with the second season, like part of our residency package, we say download Gojek, download Grab, or if we need to get a resident from one point or another, all we need to do is to kind of take out our app and book a cab for them, and we can actually arrange transportation. So mobility between that two seasons you can really feel the distinct it is in terms of supporting residents here.
- BAK: Yea, and we also, like again, volunteer yea. Like one of the curator do residency here—she's from Singapore—then we asked a volunteer that helped her to go around.
- KB: Ajeng? And she's been so helpful as well cos she speaks really good English. So yea, how about language barriers and things like that?
- ST: Yea, in Bali it's a lot better than other parts of Indonesia cos there's more English spoken here. But you know, with Bali there's pros and cons. Because Bali has always had that reputation of being a kind of paradise island or holiday island. But then when you're a resident, you're not exactly on a holiday. And that's the kind of idea that we wanna keep straight with our residents. I mean, like Valentine said, "I don't want the artists to come here just because it's Bali". So we're actually really careful and that's why we do not have our open call yet. Because we know that it will be difficult to administrate the kind of applications that would come based on the kind of international perception of what Bali is. The moment we encounter that, it's already a difficult barrier to help the resident go deeper socially.
- BAK: But this also can be good infrastructure to support the programme in future. Even if we do open call, we will always have a proper selection. In some way, this tourism infrastructure, it will help a lot, and yea. It's not like, always bad.
- ST: I think the challenge in Bali is also audienceship. And you know, it's not like in Yogyakarta where you always have a constant flow of audience because it's university town, and students there, or actually residents there, are always concern with the attainment of a broader base of knowledge. You always have people coming. It's kind of onwards stream of intellectuals and people who are there to learn. But Bali, people who come, they kind of shut themselves up because they are here for a holiday. So, a majority of people who visit Bali do not or they're not mentally kind of open to looking at art kind of critically. They're here to enjoy themselves. And then, also, with that nature, even the local audience, they do not have that kind of practice. Unless they have studied outside of Bali, or they have studied overseas, then do they understand the value of that kind of experiences. So for example, our volunteer Ajeng and Merio, they all have kind of studied in Yogya before, so

they appreciate this kind of environment. But people who kind of are educated locally, until now, we don't really see the kind of initiative of on their part to... you don't see that kind of hunger for knowledge as much as you do with the students in Yogya.

BAK: But I think it's because not their fault. Because not a lot of programme that give this opportunity for the Balinese art society to can find the benefit of this. We start now, Ketemu... I mean Ketemu now is starting. But from our recent experience that we make one exhibition but in those exhibition have several event, we always have quite excited people who attend. I feel that's very positive, especially for Bali. The question is if, how we can continue and consistent to offer this kind of activity and event...

ST: Also, our idea is not to limit our audienceship to geography. So that's why in the most recent event, we actually explored live streaming which really kind of helped us transgress the limits of geography or space or time. And also, we see the value of inviting strong speakers even like if we have to bring them from overseas. We need to kind of grow even the quality of our programmes for the local audience. And we've been very lucky that for most of our programmes or most Ketemu Aja, we kind of have 50/50 local audience and foreign audience. And the foreign audience, it's nice because when they hear of us through online platforms or outside of Bali, they make it a point to come here to attend. So it's nice we have that kind of dual kind of support, from outside and also from inside. So we're not entirely dependent on the audience here to drive us to produce quality programmes.

BAK: But for future we have to address this concern to develop the local audience. That's mean, we try to engage those people who have interest in art but they are not often actively invited to the art event. Because mostly it's centralised in Gianyar. Like we engage from West Bali and from other part of Bali. That's the one way to try to develop this concern that Balinese art is belong to all Balinese people who are concern.

ST: And also we every programme we kind of on a very personal level direct it to individuals. So in a sense that, for example, when we have a programme about gender or sexuality, we will call up our friends or in circles or in organisations that have dealings or interest in that. So everytime we have an audience, we have a small audience, but they are an effective audience, because they have direct connections to the kind of themes or subjects or ideas that we are addressing in that particular programme. So in a sense that it's also a lot more effective that way than to the kind of huge big general audience that it's kind of not directly interested. So, like on an average basis, we get about 25 people for every programme. But that 25 people we know personally and we have direct interaction with, so sometimes when they feel like there's value in our programmes they will come back. So in a sense that we are keeping things small but hopefully for the long run...

KB: I just have two main questions left. So the first: I know you said that for the residency here you're not really focussed on production. My question would be, what are the sort of facilities or spaces for production that artists can tap on here? I know there are certain weaknesses, say for example, printing

photographs. But I'm sure there are strenghts also. When residents come here, how do they find that balance?

ST: Actually, I wanna clarify something, we're not focussed on outcomes but we're focus on process and production. So when we talk about production, we are actually mainly thinking about the production of artists but because we also have researchers and curators and... we're not focussed on your usual outcome, but we are still focussed on production. Like the creation of something.

BAK: It's depend actually for the artist because we more like strive for the artist to work with local material. But if it has to be done that's something we don't have in Bali, we still have Indonesia like Jakarta. But for now, we try to make the artist focus in the local material. Because also that's one of the, can be give the benefit of the idea to the local people to see the value what material that around them.

ST: There's two focusses that our residency have, that we hope that each resident artist or resident researcher achieve, is that: 1) he or she has to work with a local community or a local social environment, if he or she does not, it's ok, 2) they have to at least work with a local material that's available here. So these are the two conditions of our residency. That even before they arrive, they have to express interest in either-or or both, that "I want to either work with a community or I want to work with a material that's specific to Bali or available here".

BAK: We try to reduce import.

ST: It's also a kind of environmental sustainability here. And also, if the artist were to research something that would benefit the local community, the local community needs to have access to that material too. So like, for example, if the artist is researching say on... something that requires really super high speed internet, and they're doing that here... then they impart the knowledge here to people... and it's like "yo, we cannot do anything!" We don't have that. Infrastructurally we're not even ready for that. So how does that benefit? It's kind of missing the point. So artists here always have to kind of use materials that are available locally. And you see that in a very nice way from Wawi's infusion. I mean it's kind of on a metaphorical level that she picks the flavours that are available here and she infuses it and that is something that people here can continue to do.

KB: So my last question is about your roles as facilitators. Different residencies have different leadership... you know how some residencies are very curator-led and some residencies are artist-led. You mentioned a lot of time that you see that when residents come in, Ketemu's role is more as a facilitator. Can you talk a bit more about that? What do you see facilitating as? For example, using an assumption that might not be true: perhaps a curator-led residency would push the resident on ideas and concept, but an artist-led residency would push the resident towards experimentation.

ST: For example, initially, that process of facilitating has been very dependent on the both of us especially in the first season. But, like what I say, what I hope our ultimate goal will be is a community-led facilitation. And that's because, unlike curators, unlike experimental residencies that you have discussed earlier on, we see ourselves as people in the community actually shaping your experience of the resident artist, rather than a one-person kind of influence. So that's why when I talk about Marieke's residency and that when different artists actually came in to bring her around and to show her different things, we wanted the artist to be enriched by the kind of social networks available here. So in future right, what we really hope to see in Ketemu's residency is that lots of volunteers coming in, lots of community players from different parts of Bali coming in and say "Come to my place over the weekend and I'll show you everything that has got to do with your research interest." In the sense that we are kind of more participation-based kind of led residencies. So that's why before a resident comes, they don't fill in lots of forms. We talk to the resident or potential resident at length to kind of understand what their character is like. And for us, we always look out for somebody who is open and who is willing to listen and who's willing to share. So then, based on that two kind of qualities, they are ready for that kind of facilitation we have available here.

ST: (to Kabul) Do you have anything to say?

BAK: Apa yang tadi?

ST: How do you see Ketemu in facilitating the residents?

ST: Also, it's kind of a lot on a persona basis. As our team grows, you know, we have Ruth and Dewi also facilitating at the same time in their own ways. Like Ajeng also facilitates in her own way. We let that happen. So that's why we really feel that, you know, the resident experience can really be immersive. So that they're not kind of stuck in the kind of institution or the kind of framework for organisation, or what the idea of a residency should be. We just open everything up.

KB: I think that's it for me. Unless you have any last closing comments.

BAK: Closing comment is: because we just start, specially to find the best format that we can apply in this Balinese society to see the benefit of art, we don't have any closing statement yet...

ST: I think just to kind of elaborate with him, that we see our process as a space and in terms of how we organise ourselves and how we facilitate, something that always morphs and always change according to the time, according to the person, according to the environment, and the conditions. I think it kind of reflects the necessities of every kind of social project, that you don't have a kind of cookie cutter or one-size-fits-all kind of solution that you kind of apply to everything. Like what is important for us in terms of process, not only as facilitators, but also as artists, is that we always have to be sensitive and aware to the people involved, to the environment surrounding the project, and then making decisions from there. So in a sense that, kind of reflective of Bali

social ideology and religious ideology that everything has to be really fluid. The whole idea of water and how it flows and shaping it according to the kind of topography of the situation.

KB: I forgot to ask one last question! When you do residencies, you're also open to families and to the artists bringing their partners along. Why that decision?

BAK: I think Sam will answer that.

ST: Yes, as I make milk for Cening.

ST: I think the identity of the artists in the past 50 to 30 years has been pushed towards becoming a brand or even becoming a commodity. So, in terms of looking at an artist in those early years of the market boom and contemporary art being blue chips for investments—the identity of the artist seems to only be limited to their production, but not exactly as human beings. And that's kind of a perception we want to change with our residency programmes. And we do it very very consciously, that behind the artist is also family life, the people around them, and that helps define an artist and their practice. So aside from your regular nucleus family, for example, if we have a gay artist as resident, we will invite his gay partner too, married or not. It's kind of like we see the way we programme or we accept different artist into the Ketemu family as a kind of commentary on what we would like to see for the future of art. So for example, Merayakan Murni, all our artists are women. And as you know, that kind of imbalance in the art world today, women probably only have 30% of the shows or there's the recent show—51 artist in the recent show and there's only 3 women, a contemporary art show at some very big place. So the way we select who comes in residence and how they come, our kind of aspirations for how different people are represented in art. Also looking more at people of colour, looking more at women, looking more at families. The kind of artist's profiles that are typically marginalised in the past, we tend to give more support to

KB: Thanks you guys!

## **Interview with Natasha Lubis**

30 August 2016

Bali, Indonesia

Kamiliah Bahdar = KB

Natasha Lubis = NL

[9:13]

NL: Back to my practice I guess. When I was in London, it was strictly for study right, for 2 years. I didn't get time to kind of stay and digest it at that location. But the school was highly theoretical so it was theory-based mostly, like really finding out what you're interested and then kind of channeling it into writing. So a lot of consuming these kind of western thinking I guess.

And for me, at the start I was not as well-read as some others. So I really started and I was starting the course—like trying to find what fits me. Doing that for two years really affect my thinking pattern—like I need to depend on somebody's writing, in order to validate something. In Goldsmiths, I was getting into women issues and female identity, but towards the end. So really interested, but also towards media and how media portrayal of female identity and things like that. But I don't really have a cultural focus, like I don't really look back on my culture. It's quite still really western and not specific.

KB: Did you feel that when you were there?

NL: Yea. I still feel like my work wasn't rooted in a specific cultural point of view. Like I don't really set myself as this, like a person from a certain culture. But, kinda more like looking, observing, and strictly from media or from mass culture, popular culture.

KB: And did you feel all these theories you were reading like a little bit more abstract?

NL: Yea, definitely. Maybe there was a problem in the system as well as in the institution... in a way they give too much to the students and then we need to digest it ourselves. And some people are better at it, maybe they're more experience, but some are just, you know, we don't know how to arrange them. Maybe that's a problem with the institution. But that's specific one, I'm not sure with others.

KB: What's your programme?

NL: It was an MFA.

KB: A generic MFA?

NL: Yea, cos I think, in Goldsmiths, they don't have a specific MFA. So the MFA all combine to one, so you can work with whatever materials and it's still under one MFA. So everything is under one course. Cos other schools have MFA Painting, MFA Sculpture... they don't have it in this school. But yea, the whole process, the whole two years, is basically kind of going to lectures and taking

in what you want, and trying not to forget... so it's really, you have to be quite independent thinking in that way. To be honest, towards the end I was still confused. At the end, it was not a clear thing.

KB: You were confused about your practice in some ways?

NL: Yea, cos I get a lot of input and still not enough time to digest it.

KB: Before you went on your MFA, you did your BFA at Monash?

NL: Yea. Then I took a year off. I did design jobs like illustration.

KB: But were you sort of still thinking about your own practice?

NL: Not really. Nothing conceptual. So that's a big part of practice right? Cos with the skill I think, I was playing around with digital, comes with the job as well, even though not too creative. I thought I was putting it into practice but you know, it's a different thing when. Cos after the degree, I kind forget about all the intensity of what does it take to have an artistic practice.

KB: And you were back in Jakarta?

NL: Oh no, I got a one-year working visa.

KB: Oh right, so you stayed in Melbourne.

NL: For about a year, and then, my parents were like... my parents feel like I should just study now while they can help out a bit: "What do you want to take, what do you want to take?" So, I was like "yea, yea I want to do it, I want to do a masters" while they're still forcing me and they want to help. So yea, I looked for a good school and tried to apply for it, and I got in that one. But yea, at the start it was really overwhelming at Goldsmiths. I even asked at one point asked the teacher why did I get in. Like, two years—finishing a year, and I still have another year. I struggle. But then there's different elements in the struggle—like I'm in a new city, I'm by myself. The personal level also adds to it. You're in London by yourself and you don't have a family. Maybe if the school was at a place where I have some family or people I know it would be more manageable. But there was like different elements, like personal and like the practice—which is very personal too. If it was a more familiar place, it would be a bit better I guess. Cos it's a new city, complete new people, I didn't know anyone. There were a group of people I got along with in the end. But yea, in London, I guess different parts of the world have very different influence on you. Cos in London, a lot of discussion were totally different... well, I don't know. Well, I focussed towards certain things that, when I come here, they don't talk about it a lot. Except, online it's a different thing.

But then yea, finding out about the Ketemu residency was really good cos it was still kind of the topic that I'm really interested in. And the works are really resonates. Like you know, the Murni's works towards certain topics that I'm really interested in. Like how it looks also kinda reminds me of surrealism. There's different references I can see when I was browsing through the

works. So it was like, I knew I had to do a residency... but when Savitri (Sastrawan) asked me if I want to apply for it, it was natural that I would say yes. I think for anyone it's an interesting subject matter, especially like female artists such a lot of things to dig into.

Just trying to track back...

KB: So you said there was a continuation between towards the end of your school and you're trying to figure out the issues on women...

NL: But maybe like there's from different perspective as well cos I was more looking towards media and popular culture, cos I was really influenced by music and things surrounding these cultural and sub-cultural things, which in a way is quite western point of view. Cos with Murni... yea, when I get here, I know it's different things that I have to look into. It doesn't really have much to do with the media. So it's different side of female issues with Murni. Cos I was thinking when I got in, maybe I didn't do enough research at the start before a residency I think, because it's my first residency so like next time I think I would need to tell myself to do like a prior research before starting because it's such a short time.

KB: Speaking of that, in preparation of you coming, was there a lot of communication between you and Savitri or Ketemu Project Space?

NL: There were Skype meetings. I mean, they were saying maybe do my own research before. I think yea, I did do the research but not enough. But then I found out that it was not enough research when I got here.

KB: Don't worry, I also had the same thing when I did my first residency.

NL: You should have known even when you haven't done enough research, you would kind of know. I just thought, "I was reading and I get the feel of this artist" but then that's not enough. You need to make an opinion or what focus you want to take. The struggle was, when I came here I still need to kind of find out what's my main interest towards this and what I want to look, really look at through her work. So during the residency I did several changes and last minute changes of what my interest would be. I think I'm lucky cos they're quite... it's a friendly environment this particular team cos they're really one community, they're close to each other. It's a good thing for me cos I don't feel that scared or intimidated but the bad thing maybe is that, more relax. And the location as well, cos it's Bali. The level of urgency is not as high as... I don't know, if it's with a different kind of people.

And because I was still in this Goldsmiths mindset when I got in, I focussed more towards reading kind of research of all the things I find interesting. But doesn't necessarily make something out of it, cos like, you know, how much can you learn about someone. So yea, reading a lot about Murni and context about Murni and her practice... but yea, they're still someone else's opinion. I didn't...

KB: You weren't forming your own voice?

- NL: Yea, yea. And maybe that's the difficulty at the research strategy. Especially when they offer such a, cos this residency, they're quite open to failed work. And then that's what they've been promoting at the start as well. But I didn't use it, I didn't use it much because I was focussing more reading and kind of closed kind of research. And maybe I didn't think it through even though I have heard them promote this, that they would be willing to take me around.
- KB: So in terms of your itinerary during the whole residency, what did you sort of do?
- NL: Oh yea, I think we didn't really plan like a structured itinerary at the start, so it wasn't a set plan. So we just take it how it goes. Maybe I end up going to Tenganan village, kinda get to know what's the local tradition or what's a local Balinese female or something. I mean, I didn't get much out of that actually, cos it's quite a tourist place. But yea, that's the time where I guess you can get a good thing out of these fieldtrips. What else did I forget? But yea, trying to talk to some local artists. I think that's one of the... cos I like having conversations with local artists...
- KB: Did you do it?
- NL: Yea, I met Oka Rusmini. It was at an event, so it wasn't really full discussion. And then she told me to read her book first. And then it was like, "ok, ok" but then I didn't end up reading. I mean I read half of it, but then only half of it was available online.
- KB: So you felt like your residency experience would have been more enriched if you had actually done more fieldwork and gone out more?
- NL: Actually, that would be questionable too the fieldwork. Cos maybe certain types of artists have different types that inspire them. Cos at the start when we were still planning, I was interested in Balinese female. That's such a broad thing but then I had not idea what I would get out of it as well. Cos some people argue as well that there's no such thing as a Balinese cos it's so global now and those kind of arguments. So meeting like an authentic traditional Balinese woman is not... they don't even know if it exist anymore.
- KB: It's imaginary...
- NL: Yea, yea. So maybe we have discussions about it like how? That's why I ended up going to Tenganan to kind of know what's an authentic Balinese cultural tradition feels like. But even that I didn't get much out of it. I tried talking to some people, but they say what I wanted to hear, like "yea, it's an authentic village, we don't like outsiders some in..."
- KB: This is the Bali Aga?
- NL: Yea, Bali Aga. But then some older men says, "yea, yea, some outsiders can come in", and it was really mixed messages. I mean, it was a good experience but I didn't get anything. I didn't get much out of it. So yea, getting to know

the Balinese female identity I think is quite good by actually talking to Balinese female, like even artists or people at Ketemu.

KB: But you didn't get enough of that? Did you feel like you sort of met enough of them? Or did you have enough intensive talks with them?

NL: Yea, I did talk with these people. I met and have good conversations, but there are different types of women anyway. So it's like a weird thing to try to find the right one in a way. But maybe I say this, cos usually I depend my practice on imagination. So usually the works are imaginings and fantasies and are more important in the work. It depends, for the work I make I don't really rely on precision of facts. But with the conversations I had with these women, I kinda get a good grasps of what I want to know. But yea, of course getting more fieldwork if I know where to go would be good right? Like more experience in the field, in the place you're in. But mostly in the residency, my research just experiencing Bali and going around. Like, that's in. And try to make sense of it in my way. I'm quite a visual person, and in my work as well, so just even in a visual sense, like trying to get inspired—like, what does the place give me or something—... So I guess I didn't develop a social issue, like a clear social issue that I want to point out—I didn't really get that from the stay at the residency for one month... But then again I'm not sure, am I suppose to put forward an important question or something.

KB: I guess also, would you say also because your practice is still quite young, and you're still sort of trying to figure things out...

NL: And also maybe there's a clash between with what I used to do... from the interest or research that I used to be doing... like it wasn't culturally specific and I was really absorbing all this media and kind of western-influenced information. So this type of research is kinda different way of working—so kinda adjusting to that takes a lot of prior thinking about what I want to do, like really planning it.

KB: How about it terms of working with materials? Cos you produced your work in Bali. Did you find it a bit hard here? I imagine cos London is a lot more developed infrastructure and material-wise.

NL: I guess because I don't use really difficult materials. Cos maybe I was trying to make it easy for myself as well, so I didn't look for materials that is hard to get and I was working with some things that I already work with before. So I focussed on the colours and more technical painting. But the images are still images used in the media, found images that kind of reflect on what it is I was interested on that talks about the theme or topic I was interested in. But yea, working in Bali, I guess, I don't know it depends—cos they say they have a lot of good workshops here, would be easier to have bigger spaces compared to London. Cos in London it's easier to get materials cos you can just do there even though you don't drive, you know, good transport, but the disadvantage is that it's expensive and there's some things that really hinder you from buying all these things that's available to you. But here in Bali as a location, I guess, in terms of getting around it's difficult but it's cheaper and you can actually get it if, you know, not much financial issues so you can get some

materials that you want. But yea, here, cos I haven't worked with kind of weird materials maybe, I don't find much difficulties. Cos I was using canvas and paint colours and photo print which is quite easy to obtain. But yea, I think I would love to try out something new while I'm here, or even learn something new at a workshop somewhere.

KB: How about the Ketemu Aja session? And you also had a Ketemu Makan session where you screened a film? How was that developed and what was your experience of it?

NL: The Ketemu Aja session, like some of the... cos we were focussing on kind of inviting female artists in Bali that Ruth would know or somebody would know. But some of them are in Art Basel or something, a lot of them couldn't make it. But yea, from the people who came, I think there were Citra and some people like that... that's one of the point where we just have conversations. It's not a full on discussion, but just having conversations to find out what is it like to be here, what's it like to work here as an artist in Bali, so yea, I get a good sense of how they do their practice.

KB: Was it helpful, that whole process of sort of maybe putting together all of the materials you've been reading, all your thoughts, and presenting it, and sort of getting feedback?

NL: Which one is this? Oh, you mean the Ketemu Aja? Ahhhhh... yea, yea... it was helpful to get feedback. But then like, it was also like, for the Ketemu Aja, it was focussing kind of on more of a different topic than I actually end up making the work. Cos I was looking into the monstrous feminine and some of the texts that support that notion and discussed that notion, and it was quite an abstract topic. And in the presentation, I was just kinda discussing a lot on Wulan Dirgantoro's text about the monstrous feminine. And a lot of things I kind of obtained from that work, I get some inspiration from her text. In terms of with being useful or not, I'm not sure. It depends on the audience as well, maybe what I was talking about is interesting and can open conversations, but maybe it was too abstract for the audience. It was too theoretical as well. I mean I wasn't being theoretical in the writing, it's something that's hard to be discussed if the audience haven't read some of the writings that's been talked about. So it's kinda be too broad of a talk. Cos some artists like Imhathai used it to present her work, which for a 20 minute talk is more easier to digest for the audience. I guess it was more helpful for the artists, I mean in this audience anyway, cos people could directly comment on her work, what they think about her work. But then maybe she already had a broad range of work that she can present. And I wasn't confident... oh, I get some feedback from Noella. Cos I put on some of my works at the start but the full presentation wasn't just about my work. But I get some feedback about my work. Yea, it was just interesting. But about the topic of the talk that I prepared, I don't think it worked that well. Cos like I said, it was too broad of a talk and too short of a time, and it's just too complicated to be digested.

KB: And how about your Ketemu Makan session? What was that?

- NL: Oh yea, that was the one where some artists couldn't come cos they were away. But yea, it was casual I think. Yea, it was casual, informal, so there weren't any goals to be achieved at that particular session. Maybe if more people came, it would have been better. But... who came? I think a lot more men came. More of the male artists.
- KB: Usual the case.
- NL: Yea, it was kinda of a casual night. There was not big discussions going on that night. But the Ketemu Aja was interesting. Oh yea, the Ketemu Aja, maybe like it's nice to have some of the male artists coming as well cos you know, women talking about female issues, I realised a lot of the men get quite defensive in here, in Bali. Or I don't know if that's the thing everywhere. I guess especially in Bali cos I noticed that several times, not even at mine. Or they get quiet. It's funny cos it just reflects some of the research I've made about Balinese family structure or something. I mean, I don't know, I don't want to...
- KB: No, don't worry. I noticed that as well here. It's like "oh, women just talk about themselves", and I'm just like "well, we're half the population. What's wrong with talking about ourselves".
- NL: Cos even talking afterwards, like talking to some of the male artists—a couple of people already asked "well, what do you think?", and these are nice people right, nice guys, and they're like, "oh yea, I don't think it exist anymore that barrier". I respect their opinion but then, that's such a presumptuous statement, it's like *they know*. But it's just kinda funny to me about these kind of working artists having a solid opinion about female issues and they just don't want to talk about it.
- KB: It's like mansplaining.
- NL: Cos it's probably more open in other countries. Like in western countries, I don't think they would dare to say it.
- KB: You've been away from Indonesia, and you've been to Bali as only a tourist on a holiday. And before this, 6 years away from home. So what was it like coming back here? And then also, coming back here to do a residency. How did that feel?
- NL: I mean, there was a sense of relief. I mean I knew cos I didn't have citizenship abroad at all, so I knew it was quite inevitable to come back, so it was at the back of my head even though I was studying abroad, I knew at the end that I would need to go back. But then, getting residency was a relief cos it's a good step I guess and then I liked the topic that was presented to me, I mean, I was grateful for it. So, coming to Bali of all places, it's a good spot. So getting residency I feel was a good start for me coming back. And yea, it was a good experience. Cos maybe I don't really imagine myself what's happening in 2 years or maybe if I do that I would get stressed like seeing what's the opportunities here. I try to be optimistic I guess in Indonesia cos in my head I believe if I make good work, it would be... I don't know, you would get

something out of it. But, I think... what's the question? How do I feel in general?

KB: I suppose, in some ways, do you feel a bit foreign when you move through the city? Do you feel absorbed by it?

NL: I mean Indonesia has many layers in its social structure; it really depends on the person's background. Cos me, I'm quite privileged that I get to study abroad, my family's still so supportive, even in that sense I'm quite foreign compared to some other Indonesians. Definitely there's a... I feel foreign in a way... and my interest as well. And I'm from the city, very urban city—I was born in Jakarta. So there's not much strong tradition that was preserved when I was growing. I mean there is tradition that my family is still really attached to like Sulawesi where they're from and they eat and cook these food but in terms of thinking, they're quite liberal. So I think it really depends on the personal background of each person. I think a lot of people feel like me—quite foreign in their own country. Especially if they studied abroad. And I guess depends on their country as well... Indonesia, compared to some other developed countries can make you feel foreign I guess if you have a western mindset in a way. But with Bali I guess... I don't know Bali... I still haven't figured out about Bali yet. Cos there's so many foreigners here as well, even from Jakarta coming in and so I meet them. I know some people who are friends back in Jakarta. And they just moved this year. So it's kind of weird—so what's the actual character of this place? Maybe it's a different community—like the local community. My family here, like my aunt—my aunt is Manadonese, from Sulawesi—but the guy she married, my uncle here, he's not even Balinese. He's half Javanese half Manadonese as well. They've lived here for a long time. So it's still like, being with them on the weekend, still don't feel like they're true Balinese, you know, like the Balinese family structure I don't sense it from them.

Yea, definitely, it's hard coming back in from abroad and trying to adjust yourself. But maybe in Jakarta there's a lot of people who studied abroad, so it's like, you're not the only person trying to find yourself there. But maybe, in Jakarta, they don't complain about it, it's just something you have to deal with. Yea, in Jakarta really complain coming in from abroad, but then, the mentality is that you have to deal with it.

KB: So you can of fit right back in, in some ways?

NL: I mean, they get frustrated. They have to deal with it. I think that's their mentality, I see from friends coming back from abroad. I mean, in the art perspective, I just, maybe I just try to stay optimistic about it, try to make good work, and try to like to put it out, to show it if possible. But I guess like the good thing about Jakarta, and Indonesia, is that it's quite small. It's quite easy to meet people in the same field if you really want to.

KB: Yea, cos it's a lot more packed.

NL: And then you have like family connections, you have closer smaller networks. In Indonesia, you would know who's a working artist. While abroad, it's

completely foreign place as well. Even though I live abroad longer, there's no country that I find, like you know, "that's my place". It's weird...

- KB: I was going to lead into asking, if in some ways, with you coming back, and then not being based in Bali before this, but now based in Bali, whether you felt like there was a moment... but also, what I'm getting from this, if that you're also thinking about your own practice... did you feel like a lot of anxiety, a sense of displacement you had to go through, a long period of adjusting and finding your way around.
- NL: Yea, cos it takes time to adjust. Yea, there is. But I haven't imagined myself like... I'm trying to be in the present and not think about what's going on. Even now I'm not handling it well. I'm quite naïve and optimistic in the sense that my first plan is try to make good work. Cos I think that will lead me somewhere. Of course it brings anxiety cos here in Indonesia, the circumstance in the area that I want to be in is not stable. Cos maybe I don't have any other options... I mean, there are people in worst positions. And maybe like some people kinda make me optimistic. Seeing some artists my age working well in art. You know Natisa Jones?
- KB: Yea, yea. She's not based in Bali?
- NL: She's based in Bali. She seems to be doing well with her studio work and she's quite isolated in a way—she doesn't have a big community of art. I mean, she knows people but she doesn't work with communities. But she seems to be doing well, like she makes a living out of it. So looking at people like that makes me a bit more optimistic about being in Indonesia, or about the market anyway, cos I have no idea about what's going on. But of course some people who get back from abroad, still feel longing to go back to abroad, to more developed country, but maybe I'll worry about that after some time. Now I'm still kinda thinking about near plan, what I want to do. Cos I haven't met a lot of people here, still a lot of people I haven't met like Indonesian artists. So there's still excitement in Indonesia, like meeting people. So I'm not disillusioned yet. Is that the question?
- KB: I was wondering that there's so much for you to absorb and to sort of adapt to while you're here. Just wondering if that has had an impact on your residency experience as well.
- NL: Ah, ok. Yes, definitely. With residency, it's suppose to be only a month right? But maybe because the structure was kind of... like some people arrived late, some people didn't end up doing it... so it was more of an open plan when it was my month. So I was doing a bit more than a month. But then I guess this residency, they were quite relaxed and free as well, like I can come in whenever I want, and I can do the research my own time or something. If I need them I contact them. I'm not sure with other residencies, whether they have more set plans?
- KB: I think it depends. I guess it's also the arrangement of where you're living and things like that.

- NL: Yea, cos I live quite far. So I think they're quite make it more open for me. And then maybe they think I'm Indonesian as well, I've been here quite a few times you know. So some basic things I don't need them to take me around, like I can go around myself, I can speak the language. So, but in terms of culture shock, there's not much. Maybe cos I speak Bahasa and actually I can survive going myself, not like if you're from abroad which will be more of a problem. But I think the struggle for me is more into finding what I want to talk about in the work. Just solely based on a small amount of time. But yea, I guess that's something I should have known from the start. It's such a packed time too. But it depends on the artist's pace cos I'm quite slow. I mean I can get slow reading things—I can get stuck reading. I know my pattern would be stuck into reading. But yea.
- KB: Do you think you would have been benefited from being pushed a bit more? Or having sort of more...
- NL: Clear plan?
- KB: If maybe the curators or the space was a lot more proactive in pushing you forward? Or had more face-to-face meeting?
- NL: It's the same as Goldsmiths probably. Not pushed but... maybe it's my fault as well. I kind of more... maybe some people know more about what to do right cos it depends on the artists. With me, I was trying to guide myself. So, and I can't make up my mind sometimes. I think it's with me as well. You mean proactive if they decide on certain things?
- KB: Or if there was more discussion between you and the team or the curators?
- NL: Yea, it also comes back to the artist. I would need to have a start, or a vague idea on something first. I mean, I had a vague idea but I think it was too vague as well. Or... maybe I should just have do it with some kind of input, not kinda think about it. But I think I did end up just thinking about it and not doing it. And maybe cos I wasn't used to being field person, so I feel it wasn't necessary. But in a residency next time, I think I just do it. Especially they did a month for a research time, so I can make my work after in a way cos I wasn't the last one. So maybe that one month with the people, I can just push it and just really fit everything in a month. Cos maybe in my head I will be in Bali was maybe 3 months and can kind of prolong things. So the timing and scheduling thing is an important part in a residency—I mean for next experience.
- KB: Yea, for sure.
- NL: With people you've talked to doing their residency for the first time, what's their struggle?
- KB: Oh for me when I was doing my residency, I was very unfamiliar with the place I was at.
- NL: Where was it?

KB: I was in Colombia. I didn't speak the language and that was so hard.

NL: In Bogota?

KB: In Medellin.

NL: It was a month?

KB: It was 5 weeks. But I didn't do anything.

NL: That's super foreign.

KB: For a curator's residency it was a bit weird as well because most curator's residencies would be very structured—you worked towards something. But this was very open. It's a lot like Ketemu. It was about process.

NL: When was this?

KB: This was two years ago. I was very lost and I didn't know my way around.

NL: Did you show it? Or did you keep it to yourself?

KB: I kind of kept it to myself... ... [1:03:08] The two things have to meet—the host organisation and the artist have to meet halfway. So both parties have to be proactive. But I think with younger artists they're a lot more timid and they sort of want to show that they can handle things on their own. And really, at some kind they can demand, like "Look, I would like to talk about this. Tell me what you think."

NL: Yea, especially timid in my own ideas as well—trying to push something is just... I don't know, like still... cos I'm also not sure—I'm still trying to be sure about what I want to say I guess. So keeping locked to myself in a way, cos yea, don't wanna waste anyone's time or something. Or sometimes might sound stupid. But in a way I guess, yea, you have to do your own research as an artist, have to spend time figuring out what's focus point. That's the homework for the artist in a way, and so you can communicate it more clearly. I'm just worried if I don't communicate something that makes sense... or yea, maybe things like, maybe some people don't know how to figure this if I say I want to meet local Balinese women, but that's a broad statement—they wouldn't know. Their response would be "What's a local Balinese woman?" And I'll look at them and "I don't know". And then just step back and go "Actually, I don't know what I'm doing".

KB: Yea, admitting that you don't know what you're doing—it's actually really scary to admit something like that.

### **Interview with Cata Odata**

Founder Ratna Odata

31 August 2016

Bali, Indonesia

Kamiliah Bahdar = KB

Ratna Odata= RO

Kenyut Djunaidi = KD

KB: Can I ask how old you are?

RO: I'm... forget. Hold on, I'm counting. I'm 27.

KB: Then how old is Kenyut?

RO: Kenyut is ten years older than me—so 37. He also forgets. If you ask, he will answer 24 or something. Yea, but actually he's almost 40.

KB: We all pretend we're 24.

RO: ... [chatter about age]

KB: I'm asking cos the other organisation I interviewed is Ketemu, and Sam is 29.

RO: That's just two years older.

KB: So I was wondering how old you guys are, cos both organisations are kind of the same—young creatives, young space, new in Bali.

RO: Yea, I'm very new, in fact, not only in Bali. I have to admit that my realisation that I'm really attracted to the arts world is not... what you call it... I just realised it quite late. Well, I don't want to say late. It's basically I didn't know that it was art. I know that I'm attracted to creativity, like you know choreography or whatever, that has a connection with art. But since, in my hometown especially, art is almost non-existence. Like my parents, for example—

KB: From Surabaya?

RO: No, my hometown is in Kediri. It's a small town. It's where gudang garam came from. It's four hours drive from Surabaya. So yea, over there, we—especially I born in a Chinese community—and being Chinese in Indonesia is a challenge. Especially to our older generation—they always feel insecure. Because they experience the day when they are not allowed to work for the government and things like that. So, for instance, my mum and my dad, they exposed us—us means me and my younger brother—to all kinds of things. They want me to learn piano, they want me to learn this, study this, study that. Not because they appreciate of what that is, but it's just for “just in case” situation. Do you get what I mean? So let's say, one day, our political situation is not good, I have a skill to feed my family. So it's really a different concept. Like my parents, they know about creativity but the reason they

push us to do that, is not because for self-enrichment or something. It's just for "just in case" situation.

[Saying goodbye to a visitor] [4:58]

Yea, so back again, it's very practical. So when I build more and more interest in this kind of world, you know, creativity, I don't realise there is another concept to see a bigger possibility from art. What I know is, "ok, next time I can be a piano teacher, or a drawing teacher". So it's very much more practical, until when I was in senior high school. That's when I move to Surabaya, the capital city. I think that's when it started. But it also started very strange, because in Surabaya, again, I studied in a private school and it was—I have to say—there are more Chinese community in that private school rather than a... sekolah negeri itu apa?

KB: Public school? Government school?

RO: Yea, government school. It's Catholic and more Chinese community, so it's pretty much very very strong in the background of industry. You know, those parent who work in this industry, that industry. It's more like a business community rather than an art community. Also, back then, I don't know this idea of art is still completely different, until end of that senior high school. It just happen suddenly that I have to lead a art club, but it's more like a performing club—so it's a collaboration between dance and cheerleaders, that kind of thing. So that's when I realised that is something called tramagedy, there is called visual art. And that discovery, I also made it by myself, especially from internet. I just realised that out there, there is this kind of world. Cos in my school, it's more like a science... you get the idea... so we don't really expose to art world... so I realised I really attracted to this kind of creativity. It's very late, in the time when I was in senior high school when I decided yes, I want to do this kind of this for my life. Not just for fun. I really want to contribute cos it's just so much... I don't know how to express, but it's something that I cannot leave basically. So that's when I start, I have to make a move where I want to go next. Cos you have to go university, you have to go to that. Then I found about NAFA, I found about Lasalle. So that's how it all started. So it's a very insecure years—for the very first 3 years at least, I have a lot of insecurity...

KB: When you were in Lasalle?

RO: When I was in Lasalle in Singapore. So it's a very long story. At first I got accepted in NAFA for art management. But then I realised, I need something more practical cos I know that eventually I want to go back to Indonesia. It's very insecure basically. So I decided to apply Lasalle that has a more, at least to me, the facility they have for performing arts is just tremendous. It's amazing ie. theatre, there's black box. It's just there, and I thought it's a good idea as well if I can learn something that can be my income support because it's difficult. That's how I started. So I enrolled into foundation of visual art, then I got accepted into technical theatre where I learn about set designing. And during the first month, when I was in level 1, I was so scared, so scared, because everything—first, I don't speak English and my English is like worst at

that time, even worst than now, not that I'm very good right now, but that was worst. And also, all the terminologies that they have in theatre are pretty much already more structured. You know they have their own term, they have a lot of things. And suddenly, it scared me off. So I realised that's cos I don't have a strong foundation. I don't even know what's going on in Indonesia yet I say that I want to go back to Indonesia to do something like this. How is that possible and all the thinking about parents and family back then, cos they all oppose my decision to go to art—well, classic. And everything just scared be off so I decided to just stop for a while. So I returned. I quit school, I go back to Indonesia, I called whoever I can get in touch, even if they're not the main figure in art industry of Indonesia—so I'm talking about my art teacher back in elementary school, or those from junior high school. Whoever I know I just call them up so I just, what is I, just go to their place, talk a lot of things, and you know, I just want to make sure that I can do this. Because I really hate the idea that I'm starting something but I don't finish it off. I don't like that kind of idea. And I think, having that one-year break is really, like suddenly, everything is clear. Like I want to do it, although that is not the main art industry of Indonesia, but it's good enough. That at least I know this is what I want to do for the rest of my life. So again, I got back to Lasalle, but this time I don't go, although they accepted me in the course I want to go to—but I decided I take another foundation of performing art because I really want to expose myself. Basically, I want to get learn from all of these things that very strange to me.

KB: You didn't go back to technical theatre?

RO: In the end I go back to technical theatre, but I want to finish that foundation of performing arts as well because, that's the thing, I don't know. I just want to know first—learn so many things first and it's really great. After I had that one year of foundation in performing art—it's not visual art, it's performing art—so I got both of the world now, then I finish the set design, and luckily in Lasalle, they allow international students to work, so I also working during the holiday. I took designing job and start to save money. That's how I fund this Cata Odata basically.

KB: So you funded Cata Odata through your own personal funding?

RO: Yea.

KB: So is the building itself rented? On a yearly basis or did you sign a 20-year contract?

RO: At first it's just 2 years. I have to say it's earlier than I expected. When I feel it's time to go back to Indonesia, that's when I finally finished all the thesis and works or whatever, I realised that I have to start something, at least based here, and you can work wherever you wanna work. And yea, that's when !—what I have in mind is that I just want to find a *koskosan*, a room for rent or hopefully a small house that has a small garage that I can play with—you know, just a small thing, not a big thing. But it's already 3 months, me and Kenyut, we try to find the space that I really want to live to base in. I couldn't find it. I couldn't find it until back then—Kenyut needs to deliver a

invitation because last time he has another art space called Bledog Art Space, so they got an exhibition back then—so he delivers invitation and it was sending invitation to woman artist living across Cata Odata, and that was the first time I found this building. It was crumbling down, it was an old building. And it's crazy, it's basically need a lot of touch to revive this place. So at first there is a sign "disewakan", like for rent, and I thought "whoa!" because I couldn't go in. But when I look from outside, it's perfect place for this kind of activity, but hold on, it's huge, I don't think I can afford it because Penestanan is quite expensive as well in Ubud. And I just like, ah, heck care, I don't even know the owner. I mean, if I just call him and ask, he don't meet me and I don't meet him as well, so if it's embarrassing, I don't care. So I just ring him up and apparently it was his manager. So the manager, first question he ask me, "Oh yea mbak, it's for rent. How much budget do you have mbak?". I was like "What the fuck? What, the first you ask is like budget? You don't even explain what is this?" So yea, I told him, "Frankly, I have this much, which is obviously ridiculous for a house as big as this." And he ends up "Oh, that's difficult mbak, but let me speak to the owner". And apparently the owner wants to meet us cos he wanted to know what kind of intention and want for this building, and apparently he likes us, and he allow us to use this building with a very low budget basically.

KB: So you signed the contract for two years?

RO: For two years, cos that's just amount of money I can spend for this house. I don't know... well what I have in mind at least it's a good starting point to learn and that's why also, why we don't want to expose ourselves too much because we're also learning now. So everything we approach someone, artists especially, I say "We are learning here. We are together, and we want to grow with you. So it's pretty much a learning process for both of us." I don't mean me and Kenyut, but Cata Odata and the artists. Apparently they really keen as well because, well hopefully, they said it, because it's a good thing for them as well. So yea, we continue, then after that, we managed to get another 2 years.

KB: Oh wow! So when did Cata Odata start?

RO: End of 2014. November 2014 yea mas [to Kenyut]. Kita mulai kapan si? 2013! Oh my god time flies. End of 2013. But yea, I think we spent at least 6 months to revive this building because it's crumbling down, it's crazy. Basically it's haunted house. The first time we go here, we love to drink coffee in warung with bapak-bapak, "Oh, you're new here. Where do you stay?", "There", "Oh, you live in haunted house!", because it was empty for a very long time, and because it's near the beringin, but I really love it.

KB: It makes the space cooler.

RO: Yea, beringin does cos it brings a lot of water basically. Yea, but the downside is that it's humid. Ubud is already humid, on top of that, you have beringin next to you.

KB: So you and Kenyut are considered the founders of this place?

RO: Mmmm. Cos also that time, his rent for Bledog Art Space is also over, and also his partner left to California. So it's a good idea as well if we continue his journey here. But we are still hoping that one day, we can revive Bledog Art Space as well, because it's pretty much different concept as well. Here Cata Odata we focus on local—Bali and East Java. But Bledog is more open. It's more like an artist space, like a communal space. While here, it's hybrid—half communal but half gallery. We still have a gallery set up as well.

KB: So you live here as well right? So the two of you live here, sama nenek?

RO: Mmm, sama nenek.

KB: So would you describe the gallery as a very public space, but over here is sort of semi-public?

RO: It's still open, but we don't... obviously for those who can come here is... it always begins with a conversation. If he really keen and interested to find out more, then we will expose ourselves more basically. But then, cos sometimes it's not good as well when you really open everything, because not only me, but whoever lives here, they also need privacy. But pretty much the gallery and the studio downstairs is pretty much open.

KB: That's a good way to divide it as well. So why did you choose Bali?

RO: Again, infrastructure. So in a sense that, I have to say that, until today, we still pretty much depend on tourism as well. At least half of it, cos we have to do cross-funds. And also here, Bali attracts a lot of international community. Not only tourist but they live here in Bali, so that's why the local art community is more sustainable—I think that's because of that as well, it attracts more broader audience. And also because Kenyut lives here for 7 years, and he pretty much knows about this place. And I think also that's because it's not far away from East Java, and there is historical links that connected us. For instance, like the story of Rangda, it came from my hometown. But the funniest thing is that we in Kediri never heard about this story, although it started there. So it's really... I don't know, somehow it's connected. Although I don't know if it a cliché or something, but I feel no stranger basically when I was here. And also, it's more open, cos in Java especially when we're talking about art, they can be more—well, East Java yea, not Java—they can be more conservation compared to Bali. So it's more the climate for experimental, for new idea, it's more flourish here rather than in East Java.

So ideally, of course, I really want to start something as well in East Java cos that's where I came from. But the thing is, for the beginning, I don't want to put a lot of burden on our shoulder—yea, be good to yourself. And I think with the climate that Bali has, it's more conducive. Cos the thing is, we're very conscious with our capacity. So obviously, there's a lot of reasons before we started—ok, let's just start it here—because it also came from my capacity. Like, my family for instance, they really oppose me—I cannot depend on them basically. Obviously, I don't have that access yet. But hopefully one day, if I know some people in Surabaya so-called philanthropist, someone who

loves art that wants to contribute to this, then yea. It's different. If you're an artist, it's easier. But the thing is, I'm not an artist so I want to—I have to have a strategy to build this art centre, although I still don't like the sound art centre—Why must be centralised?

KB: So how else do you fund the space? You also have a shop.

RO: I do have a shop but currently it's not working yet. Because again, we don't have a team, and if you ask me why do I form team, it's that not that I don't want to form a team but I want to take my time. Because I'm really stranger here, unlike Kenyut—Kentyut already lives here for 7 years. But I have Cata Odata at the same time that I moved in to this island. So I want to take my time as well to get to know the community, to learn, to observe—cos I don't want to hurt each other. You get what I mean? You mean someone and suddenly boom, and then apparently something happen in your partnership and there you go, you have an enemy to each other. I don't want that to happen. So that's why... also, it's frustrating. Cos I know that without a team, you cannot move faster. But the thing is, it's best, like right now, just slowly, learn about the community, learn about the situation, and then, it's better—well hopefully. Like what's going to happen in one month, hopefully Ajeng and Merio could also bring energy. And it takes time as well for us to know each other.

KB: When I come back, I'm excited to see what happens to this space, what the energy is like.

RO: Well, I will tell you—the rental of this place is going to be over next October. Right now we are in the process of securing a new place, so it won't be here anymore.

KB: Are you looking at Ubud area? Gianyar?

RO: It's very difficult for me to leave Ubud now.

KB: In terms of rental price? Or?

RO: No, not really. In terms of rental price, it's easier to find a cheaper price in Denpasar, near Sanur area. But it's dry. I like greens. At least for the past 3 to 6 months, I already started looking into a new space.

KB: In Ubud area?

RO: No, not only in Ubud. I look at Sanur, I look at Denpasar, then I look at Canggu but Canggu is the worst choice. And it's not as green as Ubud. So I don't know if I can leave this space anymore because... yea, a lot of people say if you really want to make your art space as a business, you have to move to Seminyak, or you have to move to Canggu if we think about business. I'm not sure how true that is, but many people encourage us to just move out from Ubud. But it's already difficult for my personally. But Kenyut no, cos Kenyut already lives here for 7 years so I think he's ready for a new environment. But me, I don't know. It's very difficult to imagine myself in another place. I think

because—in fact, it's very difficult for me to imagine myself leaving this place because we're already know the neighbours and we really get a long well. Like, grandma also have a lot of friends—the elderly lady they always came here and just chitchat like that. I think I'm going to miss that if I have to leave this house. But the thing is, this house is very very old, and it takes a lot of attention. The house asks us many attention because things are broken down, so if we finish fixing this, another thing is broken, we fix that, another thing is broken. It's old house, so it start crumbling down. And if we want to continue here, the only way out is to rent this space for a very long time, and we put in money to do things. But it's not within our capacity. So I don't know, I mean, right now, yes I'm still trying to find a way out like finding a patron or something—some sort of investor. But, I don't know. Again, just now I told you about investors, sometimes it can get very tricky, especially in the art cos that's when you have to compromise your ideals. I don't know if I'm ready with that compromising yet, cos right now I'm still trying to build my identity as an art space owner as well. So I don't want to have another person to patronising me in the term of messing around with my ideals, because no. Just like you, you get your own way to find yourself. And yea, pretty much, we're still in that stage. I don't know, maybe later after we've found who we are and what we are, then we're ready to present ourselves to these people but not now.

KB: It's nice that you don't feel pressured to move fast. That you—

RO: Oh, who said that I don't feel pressured? It is pressuring. But again, the stress that I get from that pressure is less from the stress that I get from imagining that I am in deep shit. You get what I mean? Let's say if I found an investor and they invest like one billion rupiah, that means I owe that one billion rupiah, although I said I have intellectual property, but it's different. Still, money, it can bring you forward. I don't want to put myself in that situation as well, so I think it's better to deal with that stress from the pressure rather than dealing with stress from owing money to someone because no. No. That's scarier. I can deal with that, but not that. Yes, it's pressurising but it's fine.

KB: Why did you choose Ubud? Was it a conscious decision Ubud for this space?

RO: I think because of Kenyut. Because, as I told you, I don't have any link or any access to the so-called Indonesian art world. So I'm pretty much alone when I want to start this. And the only person that I can trust is Kenyut, and until today is Kenyut. And Kenyut is already live in Ubud, and he knows this place well. So I think that's one of the biggest reason why I start Ubud. And also because I love green. So there's a lot of thought as well. Like the thought that Ubud is no longer an artistic space. It's more of a new age hub, so-called, that irritates us a lot. But I think we can do ok. That's something we can deal with. Until today, we still not trying to catch the wave, because there is a lot of spaces that just because there is a new hype in yoga and things like that, suddenly they create the space becoming like a retreat centre or yoga centre, but we don't care at all. So yea, I think it's fine. We have our own path basically. Yea, I think biggest reason why I choose Ubud is that because of

Kenyut. Cos I cannot go myself. I need at least someone who already know about the community

KB: Kenyut, kenapa Ubud?

KD: Kenapa? Pertama, because international. Pertama kali saya dapat undangan exhibition waktu saya di Surabaya ada satu gallery invite me to solo exhibition there. And after, we thinking, "I must go to Bali". Because my friend already here and I already know some artists here. And also, the situation here—suasana. And before I organise exhibition also in Surabaya, I thinking, "ok, I go to Ubud, I only need to create art work". Jadi saya hanya mau melukis atau buat karya saya sendiri di sini. But after two years, I think I will organise exhibition again. Dan sejak 2009, saya start buat exhibition lagi di sini.

RO: It's more conducive. Di sini kan lebih conducive kan?

KD: First I also think about international, and I see the artists in Surabaya and Bali is different. Different artwork. So I need exchange, pertukaran, jadi Bali bisa lihat karya karya dari Surabaya artists.

RO: Because Ubud is used to be an artist hub perhaps, because many artists—Indonesian artists yea back then... siapa aja mas yang pernah ke sini?

KD: Soedjojono, Hendra, Affandi, Nasar, also Fajar Sidik.

RO: Whoa, most of them. Ubud attracts a lot of artists. Because it was relatively cheap before the new age era came. And just now Kenyut also mentioned he needs to work as an artist at least himself, that means because, pretty much you still cannot sell your artworks to the local community because the idea of collecting art is non-existent within the big community. I'm not talking about collectors who already collect, but in terms of public. They don't an interest in collecting art, so Indonesian artists, if they really want to just focus being an artist, they need a very conducive place and Ubud was pretty much very laid back area that everything is pretty much affordable until new age era came. That's when everything become very...

KB: Kapan itu ya?

RO: After the Eat, Pray, Love. And it's really weird. That's how amazing literature can change the whole perception of a place. Because back then—well this is what I read from articles—I don't know how it was all started because many people feel that the author of this book is pretty much, they used the word, delusion, but it's pretty much not what's happening. It's not going on. It's not what Ubud is basically what she wrote there. Yes what she wrote there has a tremendous impact on this international community that now have the ability to visit here, visit there. Just because one book, it changed this whole perception of Ubud. And it's start to have a 180 degrees change. It's amazing the power from literature.

KB: And Julia Roberts and the movie.

- RO: Yes, on top of that, Hollywood. That's when it all started.
- KD: I think not only about—
- RO: Not only that? What is it?
- KD: Yes, because recession in Europe. Cos in Bali it's really cheap. A lot of friends came here. They love the situation. Also the price is low. So, they just— example, from Germany, they will work in Australia for one month, two months, and save money there, and holiday here for 3 months, 4 months. And after go to Germany working, and back here again. So not only about yoga.
- RO: So yea, the thing is it's become more expensive, many artists left the village because they simply can't afford it anymore to live here. It's already becoming similar from the place they came from. Like Surabaya, you can't be an artist if you don't work for something else basically. Yea, it's no longer doable again. So many artists attracted to live in Ubud, I mean used to, a long time ago. That's because he can live just being an artist. Not being anything else. So it's pretty much serve their ideal. But yea, no longer.
- KB: How would you describe Cata Odata's position in Bali, in relation to the art ecology in Bali?
- RO: I have to say we are not in the right capacity to say that. As I've told you, right now, we're still trying to find who we are and what we are. But the only thing that we can say is that we want to contribute as good as possible, as best as possible, in at least bridging, like right now, one of the most frustrating fact is that why language—one of the thing I've found at least, maybe I'm wrong, that's why I say I'm really taking my time to find what can we, Cata Odata, do to improve—not improve—to contribute to this art world locally, I mean for Bali and East Java. There are many artists who cannot speak English, and the thing is, if we're talking about contemporary—contemporary is pretty much something that we adopt. It's not really starting from our community, it's from somewhere else, and we adopt it. And the thing is, like right now, the residency programme—one of the thing why many artists, I believe, why there are many artists becoming very experimental, very innovative, that's because they have the access to learn, to go somewhere, to know more, to grow more, to meet people and blah blah blah, and the thing is, it doesn't happen for the local community. I mean, at least for the artists that we work with, that we thought they have a very great idea, they have a great techniques, that basically the artwork to us is very valuable, but they don't know how to speak English. So how can they learn? And yea, it's start questioning why don't they learn? But then again, if you ask why don't you learn, why don't you learn Indonesian instead. It's like, oh my god it's very frustrating. I don't know. But maybe one of the reason why they think it's difficult to learn English is that because they already struggling with so many other things. Like for me, I can speak English because my parents have the capacity to—they don't know how to speak English—but just because they scared, the just-in-case situation, they just push us to study this, study that, study that with their own capacity, with their own money, I'm just fortunate

enough that I exposed to this since I was young. But people like Kenyut for instance—Kenyut grow pretty much on the street. He needs to make a living with his own strength—and I have to say that Indonesians, there are more Indonesians that are like Kenyut rather than like me, but it doesn't mean that I have better idea than what Kenyut has, because I told you that Kenyut is more genius than me if talking about idea and things like that he's more realistic. While me, I'm more "let's do this, let's do that", and he's more "are you sure, how's this this this?" So he's more realistic. So what I'm saying is that just because people like us, those who have a access to that kind of world, doesn't mean they are better than people like Kenyut who doesn't have that privilege.

So again, back to the art world, that's why I said, many artists that we think have a strength, strong artworks, ideas and thoughts—they don't have voice just because they don't know how to speak English. So that's one of the things that we learn as well from the residency because we really can feel it, there's a big gap. Do you remember about the residency that we have—we call it Bare Journal, and you know, basically, at least, we must have 3 participants. So these 3 participants consists at least 1 local artist, 1 international artist—and by international we mean they are recognised internationally or they are from another country—and the other one is a writer. So during one month, 3 of them, not only share a studio...

KB: So it's one month only?

RO: One month only right now. But why I said right now is because of course, this is a progress—when we make an improvement on it right?—so if next year, if suddenly we have 2 months or 3 months, that means that's also an improvement. But right now, our capacity can only manage for one month because obviously, art writer—Indonesian art writer—if I have to make him stay here for 3 months, I'm not sure I can give him a fee to feed the family, so I don't know if that's possible basically. But I don't know—if I can find a patron just for residencies, then perhaps yes. If not, then I have to make sure they at least survive for the family. So there's a lot of things that we have to consider about this, but of course, if you ask, is it the exact formula, then of course no.

KB: The writer is from Indonesia as well?

RO: Yes. Two locals, and one international. Why? Because this: this is another thing as well. It's very easy to invite artists from overseas to come here to Indoensia but it's not easy to send artists from Indonesia to overseas unless you have money to sponsor them, and right now we don't have that capacity. So how we can bridge that by having this space? So we ensure that this artist, the overseas artist, must contribute something to this two local participants.

KB: Contribute in what way?

RO: By sharing space—not only the studio but also the room, it's a bunk bed basically. And at least, even if the Indonesian artists couldn't speak English, they can observe. Because it's observing is one of the point. Artists, especially

in Indonesian, don't speak well anyway. So at least by giving him or her the chance to observe something new, they will think themselves. And also, one of the things why we call it a Bare Journal is because we don't focus on the end result, but instead on the process, so we don't care by the end of the day the artworks. So we want to encourage the process. So by the end of the residency where we have the exhibition usually, even if the artworks are not done, it's fine. Because what we want to showcase is actually the journal that they kept. Which is also not perfect yet. The thing is, last year we have one artist from Malaysia, he speaks more English rather than Melayu. So all the words are written in English. And when we opened that journal in the exhibition, it's very obvious the journal written in English received more attention compared to the other journal that was written in Bahasa. First, because apparently the local art community—many of them also don't know how to speak English. And also, many of them are not ready to share their thoughts. Because in that journal, we always reserve one empty page for everyone who reads that to leave their message or to leave their thoughts or to leave critiques or whatever, it's really up to you—you can draw as well. So we can see that the journal written in English received more marks from the international community who came here, who already know how to speak English well, who are already familiar with this kind of world. But from the local community, there isn't any. But that doesn't mean it's wrong to do it, because I believe the only way for them to finally make them ready to show their thoughts is by giving them a chance like this, as many as possible. So then, hopefully, one day they grow interested in sharing open thoughts and things like that. I think it's a programme that we must continue, this kind of things. So yeah, it's more on the journal. And also, one of the things why journal, that's because artworks will go, but journal will be left behind—will remain here. So we can always open the journal any time, at least if the other participants don't know how to read it now, doesn't mean he cannot read it one year later. Maybe he can learn English? I don't know, something like that.

- KB: And once you do more residencies, you collect more journals. I think it can be very interesting as well to see what all the residents have to say. So when you say local, you mean Indonesian but not necessarily Bali?
- RO: Indonesian from Bali or East Java. Back again to the first commitment for Cata Odata—Bali and East Java. But that doesn't mean we don't invite anyone else outside those regions, but the mixture at least 80% are from Bali and East Java, 20% from anywhere else. Like the recent photographic exhibition is from Jakarta as well. It's not that we close our doors to anyone else, but the priority—every art space always prioritises someone or a group.
- KB: So you only had one cycle right for the residencies? How many cycles have you had?
- RO: For now, once a year. But this year we couldn't do it because we had a lot of homework in infrastructure, like—I don't want to say it's sad, it's actually a blessing. So like Tony, the Bloo Lagoon, he really wants us to make an event at least once every three months. And now there's only me and Kenyut and we're like struggling. Hopefully by having Anjeng and Merio, then we can have a residency again next year.

- KB: But you've only had one so far right?
- RO: Two. But the first one we cannot call it a Bare Journal—that was when it started. So the two of them, the two first participant, was new media—
- KB: In 2014?
- RO: Yea, 2014. They keep a journal, and then I thought “hey, that’s a good idea if not only you”—cos it was just a girl who kept a journal but not the guy from Surabaya. Then I think, “hey, it’s a good idea if you also make a journal as well”. So that’s how it was started, but back then, we don’t know what is it: that is can be called as a Bare Journal. So this is the kind of things that I’ve told you—we are in the process to find out who we are and how, and what kind of structure that we can work the best with.
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- RO: Our space also hosted a couple of students from Malang. It’s from art school and they interning here. It was started in 2014 as well. So far we have two waves of interns.
- KB: So how long do they intern here for?
- RO: 3 weeks.
- KB: You host them here? Mereka menginap di sini?
- RO: Yea, they stay here as well. And yea, so one of them suddenly came to Bali again. So he’s in a midst of finishing his thesis but yea, again, he hates writing. Ah, classic. So he came here, he’s a street artist and he’s very diligent. He’s one of the most diligent student from the internship programme that we’ve had so far. And he managed to set up an artist space back in Malang. They really well-received by the community. So yea, when he was here, we suddenly—Kenyut actually—make an impromptu open studio and it’s actually in the hanging library. Did you go there just now? There’s a lot of artworks. It was him basically. He lives in the hanging studio, so at night he sleeps there. And yea, he just used the space as functional as possible—for study independently. And I thought it’s a good idea as well if we can have a residency that only for student. So we call it Maybe, Perhaps. But right now we’re still talking with Mas Dwi. Mas Dwi is also one of our—I have to say Mas Dwi contribute a lot of things for us, so pretty much he is also our team. So yea, basically, I want to cook this residency—how we’re gonna do it with him as well. But the idea is that, this kind of residency, first of all is not a lot. There’s not a lot of choice in Indonesia. And in overseas, there are only few of them that managed to get the fund to go out and especially for student. So I think it would be a great idea as well if we can have residency programme just for students. So maybe we can call it MOS—you know, Masa Orientasi Siswa. Have you ever heard about that?
- KB: It’s like a undergraduate orientation programme?

RO: It's actually famous for the new student, like orientation week. But the thing is in Indonesia, it's a little bit weird, and a little bit cruel. And I think this is also one of the culture they are trying to erase as well. So basically, we call it peloncohan. So these new, especially in senior high school, and some of the universities as well, so these new freshmen, they have to come to school in very humiliating form—like a weird, like you tie your hair into 3 buns and you have an embarrassing name tag or something like that, and all the weird attributes that I think is not a good idea as well. But the thing is, there is a point as well from that if the senior doesn't abuse their power. I think it was started cos they want to show that the real world is not easy. Do you get what I mean? Something like that. But the thing is, it went wrong when the senior start abusing their power, like a bullying and that kind of thing. It also invite them to do that because they have the mindset, "oh, my senior used to do that to me so now that I become the senior, I have the right to do that to my junior". So that's a very wrong mindset as well. So I don't agree with that kind of peloncohan as well. But MOS itself—Masa Orientasi Siswa—is basically help you to orientate and adapt, and it's not a secret anymore. When we were a student, we have a lot of ideals in our mind, and when we go out there in the real world, we start realise, "oh my god it's very far away from what I though". And then many of them start to crumbling down, they don't want to continue, they want to do something else. It's not only art, it's everywhere. It's any kind of discipline. So I think it's a good—I mean if we can have that residency, so we won't make an exhibition out of that, but we'll make an open studio. And open studio sometimes can be very frightening as well cos you don't know who will come and who will question you.

KB: I think that's a great idea.

RO: So I think we're gonna start a new concept as well for residency, that only for, strictly for art student.

KB: Can I talk more about the Bare Journal residency?

RO: Oh yes, sure.

KB: I really want to go into the details of it. Is it an open call or do you much prefer to invite people?

RO: We want to create an open call but right now, we're still writing. Cos when we start to open call, we have to ready with the kind of information, what kind of goal that we want to look, because we don't want the residency that we have that's said, I just want to provide the local community to learn something, to bridge that thing, so I don't want just inviting them and not sure if it will bring back to the community. So yea, right now, I think we're in the process of writing the introduction and things like that. How is it easier to make it, to explain it, but not to lengthy. That's one of my—I hate writing. For the past two years, I have no choice but to write as well and obviously the writings I do is very ridiculous.

KB: So when you invite them, do you help them cover the cost? And what do you provide?

- RO: I provide the space, accommodation and also the in-house food, and the exhibition space, and the material within our capacity. So if you want to working with silver, obviously we won't—for materials, it is something that we will discuss with the artists. So we will tell him or her prior they're application this is how much we can contribute to you—out of that we cannot contribute. We are trying as transparent as possible and also, we always ask a lot of questions. Cos yea, obviously people, especially those from overseas come here, they have a lot of expectations, and obviously if it's something like "oh, my artworks must be sold", then I'm sorry, we are not in that capacity yet.
- KB: So there is a lot of discussions before they come?
- RO: Yes, a lot of discussions.
- KB: How about the itinerary? When the residents come, do you schedule stuff for them?
- RO: Many of them studio visits of course. Like give them a chance to visit another artist, and also visit another something outside the art world, but it's still pretty much cultural things. So yea, we try to bring them to places like that, but again, within our capacity.
- KB: Other than that, they're mostly quite independent? Or you expect them to be quite independent?
- RO: What do you mean by independent?
- KB: To come up with ideas for their own schedule?
- RO: Yea, of course.
- KB: To go out and explore on their own as well?
- RO: If they have; we always them if they have thoughts or needs or something, just feel free to tell us and if we can contribute, if we can support, we will support you. And that's not an exception basically if he wants to visit something or do something. As long as we can, then why not? Because again, the very first beginning, we are here to grow with the artists, not to, what you call it—"hey, I'm the gallery, and you're my artist and you have to listen to me all the time"—no. We are not that kind of art space, so yea, we're really pretty much organic.
- KB: For my thesis, I'd like to interview the art space and the artists as well. So the two artists—one's from Malaysia?
- RO: One artist from Malaysia and another artist is from Tuban—but I think it's very difficult to talk to him because he's very introvert. And that's why we also think about journal because many of artists are very introvert. So at least

writing is less scarier than talking. And yea, the writer is from Surabaya, but I think right now he's in—

KB: I think I might have a chance to go Malaysia actually. Dari KL ya, Kuala Lumpur?

RO: Kuala Lumpur.

[Kenyt bring out the journal]

KB: Ini bikin sendiri atau beli?

RO: Bikin sendiri. They make themselves. I still promise him, but again, I am very very sorry towards them because they're suppose to be one big publication. We will make a book out of this 3 into one. But the thing is right now we don't have the time yet. That's also the reason why we don't want to force ourselves having a residency this year, because we don't want to keep promising something that we haven't finished yet.

KB: Tell me more about hosting the residents? What do you see your role as a host, or what is it like the interaction between Cata Odata and the artists when they're here? Is it very intense because it's one month? Do you find it intense or santai sedikit?

RO: We try to be as intense as santai as possible.

KB: Intense as santai as possible?

RO: Like the talks that we had just now after lunch. We are talking about something like work and things like that, but it's not as intense as if you have a forum and talk about that, you get what I mean? Yea, and we prefer it that way because again, like Imam Sucahyo for instance, the participant from Indonesia—if I put him in front of a forum that needs to speak like a public speaking, I think things will go wrong. He's not ready to do that. Yea, and not only him. We are also not ready to do that as well because yea, as I said many times, we are still in a state to find our identity.

## **Interview with Rat Heist**

13 November 2016

Penang, Malaysia

Kamiliah Bahdar = KB

Rat Heist = RH

KB: So I just need to know a bit about yourself: how long have you been making art? What kind of media? How did it start and develop?

RH: My parents, both of them, they practice art. But they actually do it just for fun. My dad into sculpting and my mum she paints. And both of them, they never have any exhibitions—sometimes people buy but normally their friends, sometimes people commission them to paint. So since I was a kid, always watch them painting, sculpting, stuff like that. A lot of my time spent doing what they're doing, but most of the time I'm more on painting than sculpting cos my dad is kind of a bit fierce. And he likes to work in his own zone—like, no one disturb him. So I hang out with my mum. When I first started, I paint a lot—yea, that's how I started.

KB: And you started since you were young?

RH: Yea, but in terms of my first going into gallery, it was 2006. \

KB: And was it in KL?

RH: Yea, in KL.

KB: So you didn't start out as a graffiti artist?

RH: Yea, I did a lot of graffiti before 2006. And even when I first started going into the gallery, I still carry a lot of graffiti style and characters into my artwork. But I slowly think that it's somehow lost its essence when I bring a graffiti which suppose to be on the streets, on walls, into a gallery. It's kinda lost its wildness. Because I have my own analogy of graffiti—it's like a wild elephant. When you see an elephant in the jungle or if you go to Africa and you see them there, you immediately know that you're looking at a wild elephant. But the moment you bring that same elephant into a zoo, you just call them elephant. You no longer recognise that same elephant as a wild elephant. So the wild is gone once it enters the zoo. So I slowly changed my style—I really dig graphic novels, films, anime, stuff like that, so that's why my colour schemes more like graphic novel kind of style.

KB: So how long were you doing graffiti for though?

RH: Perhaps I started since '93, '94.

KB: So when you stopped doing works on public walls, what kind of works were they? Did they come from more personal experiences? Or did they deal with political issues, pop culture...

RH: My first graffiti actually in my own school. I always interested in arts cos I grew up in a family that practice arts. And in that school, they have all the facilities to teach us printmaking—I mean I'm interested in printmaking at that time but they always teach us how to draw and draw and draw. I wanted to learn new skills that I can't really just learn from anyone, like I need people who can really teach me. And coincidentally, the school had the facilities to teach us how to do printmaking because I've been to the storeroom and I saw everything—they have everything. And especially in the early 90s, like for silkscreen for example, it's not like nowadays technologies—it's totally different—now there's a lot of chemicals that can make it easier for anyone to learn printmaking. But back then it's hard. So I'm really interested in learning how to do printmaking at that time, but later I discovered that our art teachers—he used all the school facilities, the printmaking facilities, for his own businesses but he never taught us how to learn how to do printmaking. So I was a bit disappointed and I spray a lot of things about that—my frustration on his corruption, of using school facilities for his business. So yea, and I was caught. I was caught and they just asked me to paint over the graffiti.

KB: So then, since then it has always been like voicing your frustration through graffiti?

RH: Perhaps, it's the...—graffiti has always been about something like that: to voice out frustration, or just to—it's like even when you see people writing their names in the street, it's somehow unconsciously it's them trying to tell the world they exist. Graffiti has always had that kind of tones.

KB: Kinda like voices from the margin that's not heard through all your mainstream media?

RH: Yea.

KB: So then, when started showing in the galleries and working on paintings and sculptures, what were they usually about? Or what kind of materials did you work with?

RH: What?

KB: Paintings and sculptures—what were they about?

RH: It's still pretty much the same because I grew up in family that really to me taught me well about the world, about racial issues, about even gender inequality, and you know stuff like that. So my work, even when I do work on canvas or sculpture, I still work around that subject or topics.

KB: A lot of your sculptures, you work with materials that are like found objects?

RH: Found object and even my clay I use clay that I've made myself.

KB: So you work with ceramic?

RH: No, I use paper clay.

KB: What's paper clay?

RH: Because I try to do something that I can have really control on, and I didn't see myself in the future to start in just paper clay. But when I first started, I just started sculpting the past 2 or 3 years, so still quite new in sculpting, so I think it's the easiest material and it's cheap, and I can gather the material easily and I don't need kiln—so I can easily do sculpting, sculptures using paper clay. But I do love to learn use other kind of materials for my sculptures in future.

KB: So around that time you did you residency in 2015: so what were you up to around that year in 2014 and 2015 before the residency? What did you think about your own artistic practice? Did you feel comfortable with it? Or...

RH: Comfortable? What do you mean?

KB: I suppose... have you found a focus by then? Were you looking to experiment with something? Or were you showing a lot as well around that time?

RH: Showing a lot?

KB: Showing in galleries or exhibiting.

RH: You mean before the residency? I don't really have a lot of gallery shows actually, only like...—I think until this show, probably around 10 or I don't know... I don't really have a lot of gallery shows. But the way I see life I guess, made me just do what I wanna do, I don't really think much about "am I comfortable enough to do it?", or "am I ready now to do it?"—I don't think much about that. So when I first met them, I came there for a 3-countries show: Sama-Sama—Indonesian, Philippines and Malaysian artists. So I met Kenyut, and he offered me to do residency there, and I was like "yea, why not". So I don't think much, I don't think too much about "am I ready for this?" or whatever.

KB: And Sama-Sama was also in 2015 right?

RH: Yea, the same year.

KB: When was it? I have it written down... it was in January. Then you went for the residency in June?

RH: Yea.

KB: So what was that like? You guys were just having a chat and he invited you for the residency? How did it happen?

RH: I can't really remember how it really happened and when the conversation about the residency happened. But even when I came in January, we already

talked about this, but I never really say anything about me wanting to do this residency, but later, somehow they asked me, so I was like “ok, let’s go”.

KB: So you sort of just decided to go for it. And then, did you have any expectations?

RH: Expectations? What do you mean?

KB: About the residency?

RH: No, I don’t. Maybe perhaps the fact that that was my first so I don’t have past experience of doing residencies so I don’t have any expectations based on past experiences cos I never had that. So when I went there, I didn’t really have expectations, but you know, everything that they say they can provide is good enough for me—they provide space, they provide food and they talked about that they will take me do studio visits like visiting other artists in Bali. So yea, we really do that, and it was fun. But the expectations thing, I don’t have any.

KB: You had to cover your own flight?

RH: Yea.

KB: With your own, sort of self-funded, or did you apply for funding?

RH: I self-funded.

KB: So when you were there for the Sama-Sama exhibition, how long were you in Bali for?

RH: For the Sama-Sama, I think I was there for a week.

KB: Would you say you were in Bali as an artist? Or did you actually sort of had time to...—have you been to Bali before that?

RH: No, the Sama-Sama was my first time to Bali.

KB: You were there with like an entourage? There were other artists from Malaysia?

RH: Yea, yea.

KB: What were you doing during that one week? Did you have time to see Bali, or were you very busy with the exhibition?

RH: Well, they take us to a lot of nice places like visiting so many galleries and museums that I can’t remember. There’s so many galleries and museums over there. And a lot of stuff like that, like visiting, shopping and things like that. I think the only time that we really spend for the exhibition was during setting up and then on the day of the launching of the exhibition.

- KB: I'm asking cos I think when we talk about residencies in Bali, Bali is a very specific kind of place. It's very much a tourist place. Like when I was gonna go to Bali, a lot of people just sort of believe that I was going there to do something, they're like "you're just using that as an excuse to go on a holiday". So I think, what Bali is known for sort of and the artist's previous experience there would impact maybe what they will do when they're on residencies, or sort of impact their perception when they're there I guess.
- RH: I don't really get it.
- KB: I think to experience Bali as a tourist versus to experience Bali as an artist-in-residence is two very different things, but I think it informs each other in some ways when going to Bali. I think it will impact the artist's experience as well.
- RH: Ok.
- KB: As opposed to going on a residency in Jogja, where it's known as a place for artistic production. Maybe for you, you didn't feel that gap?
- RH: I... I don't. I don't really feel that.
- KB: So can you tell me a bit more about the pre-residency process? Like, between January and June, was there a lot of contact with Cata Odata? And how did you prepare for the residency?
- RH: Ok, well, when they first tell me about this idea, I was thinking about doing a lot of paintings cos I think it's the easiest form of works that I can do over there. Because I did ask about materials that I use here to make my own clay, so it's quite difficult to get that over there. But they say that they kinda interested in my sculpture, because for example in Bali, most of their sculptures were religious-based, so even during Sama-Sama, like there were a few other artists who do sculptures, but somehow they kinda like my sculpture because it's like totally different. I think perhaps it's also influenced by where I came from, cos like I think, for that show Malaysian artists have like totally different kind of styles. Like Indonesian artists somehow they have, like every artist have that Indonesian style still there. And the Filipino artists they have that particular style that when you see you can easily recognise it, "oh, this must be a Philippines artist". So somehow they kind of like arts from Malaysian artists—each artist have different style, have different medium, different kind of works. So yea, when they ask me to come for their residency, they try to encourage me to do sculptures. So, they did suggest me to deal with clay but I don't think I have time to because I never used clay so I don't think I have enough time to like learn and at the same time to do my work for the residency. So I bring my own clay from KL to go there. So before that, my preparation was to prepare my clay, and then I have to prepare for my visa because I need to stay there for more than a month, and flight to get there, that's all.

- KB: Did you do any kind of research on Bali? Were you thinking about Bali as a place because that's where you're presenting your work? So you're presenting it to a Bali audience.
- RH: No. That's something, because...—it took me a few days till I finally figured out what I want to do.
- KB: When you were there?
- RH: Yea. Because somehow...—because before that I simply assumed that, I assumed I always know what to do. Because, for example, in my sketchbook I have a lot of works that from my sketchbook that I haven't transferred into sculpture so I can work with that sketch anytime. But once I got into Bali, I feel the environment, it's different than the kind of environment that creates my sketch, you know, like the chaos and the noise from KL, that's kinda environment that brings my sketch. So when I came to Bali, it just didn't feel right. I just feel like I need to work on something different than what I had in my sketchbook. So I came up with new works. In terms of that, my preparation started when I got there.
- KB: I'll get back to that later. But while you were on residency, you mentioned that Cata Odata provided a studio space, living space as well as food. And then, they also provided materials? They did provide materials?
- RH: Clay I bring myself, but like other stuff, I can just ask them. Like brushes, or even acrylic paint, so they provided them.
- KB: So any kind of other support? Did you have an itinerary when you were there? Like, they did the studio visits. But were there other things that you wanted to see, you wanted to do as part of your process?
- RH: I'm not very clear with that question.
- KB: So like, did they schedule things for you aside from a lot of studio visits?
- RH: Well, they always refer to me first whenever they think of something that probably interests me, so they will suggest to me first. Like, if let's say, I don't really wanna go, so yea, I just stay and do my work. But most of the time, everything that they suggests to me sounds fun, and sounds interesting because like, I did check out how the Balinese people do the roof tiles. So yea, it was fun. Because before this, I just learned theory about clay, and theory sounds so hard, but when I got a chance to look at it myself, it's not that hard. So I can do it here. Even like I can do my own kiln, like I don't have to buy the shop kiln, costly. So, a lot of visiting that I do over there is good for me, bring a lot of benefits to the thing that I do like sculpting and stuff like that. So I like it.
- KB: So what were some of the places that you went?
- RH: The names I forgot.

KB: So you went to the roof tile factory?

RH: It's more like a small family business.

KB: What kind of other places did you go? Did you visit a few artists? Any kind of workshop places? Stone carvers?

RH: Yea, I visited a few artists. Woodcarving yea, I watched woodcarving. Stone carving also yea. I think that's like most of it. And then the others like visiting artists' studios and galleries and museums.

KB: Did you go to Rumah Topeng?

RH: Yea, I love that place—Rumah Topeng. We spend like, I don't know, 3 hours maybe. So many collections, I love that place. Because at the same time, I love masks. I bought like 2 Balinese masks after my residency.

KB: Did you have time to explore your neighbourhood—like Penestanan and Ubud? Did you go around?

RH: Yea, they kind of like let us do anything freely, cos I try to like to do a lot of work from found object, so they let me go looking for things. I walked from Cata Odata to Ubud, I just walked cos I think it's easier to walk because if I have to ride motorbike, I probably miss a lot of things, so yea, I walk. They just let me explore or go anywhere to.

KB: Did you travel out of Ubud or Penestanan a lot? Or mostly stayed in that area?

RH: Most of the time I just spend in Cata Odata or just go around near Cata Odata. But there's like a few times I went to Bloo Lagoon. That's a really beautiful place. We went there—it's like two hours ride on motorbike.

KB: And you ride your own motorbike?

RH: No, there's a few of us, and I just like—

KB: Tumpang. And mostly it was just Kenyut and Ratna right? They didn't have an extra staff or anything?

RH: Recently, Ratna told me that they have new members. But when I was there, it was just Kenyut and Ratna.

KB: So they were always there? Mostly when it comes to giving you support, it was just the two of them?

RH: Yea.

KB: What kind of expectations did they have? Obviously the exhibition? And then you had to write the journal? Were there any sort of expectations on their part about what they would expect the artist-in-residence to do?

RH: Well, they didn't say anything about their expectations. They never asked me anything for them. I don't think they have any expectations. They even tell me, like say if I couldn't finish my work, I can just display whatever that I can come up with, so I don't have to really try so hard to finish my work. I mean they like allow me to display unfinished artwork for the show. But eventually, I finished it all.

KB: So there must have been a lot of face-to-face time with Kenyut and Ratna, cos you guys all lived in the same space.

RH: Mm-hmm.

KB: So a lot of communication between you and Cata Odata?

RH: Mm-hmm.

KB: Just wondering yea.

RH: When I was working, they don't really disturb me. They just let me do my work alone. Sometimes they just show up, checking me out, we chat a bit, then they leave cos they don't want to disturb me doing my work.

KB: So how about the other two residents—Arifin and Imam?

RH: Yea, Arifin and Imam. Arifin, he's a writer, so he stayed there to write about the residency. And Imam is a really nice painter—he paints very naïve outsider kind of paintings. So... what's the question again?

KB: So then, I know you guys shared a room right? Cos Ratna was telling me that you guys shared a room with a bunk bed. But what's it like, the interaction between the 3 of you there?

RH: It was ok. I mean like, I can speak Bahasa Indonesia so communication is not really a problem. And somehow I kind of find it easy to hang out and communicate with Imam. He's quite shy actually, but I don't know how to explain it or to tell you, but somehow I can easily relate to how he feel about other people and for that it's easy for him to accept me, and to like throw away his shyness, it's like that.

KB: Was there a lot of creative dialogue between the 3 of you? Because I mean you guys were in the same space for a month? Would you say there was a lot of exchange—creative exchange—between the 3 of you?

RH: Well, yea, it does happen. For example, like Imam, he just paints. But during that residency, we kind of exchanged materials—he sculpted a few sculptures but still with his own style, it's figurative but very naïve kind of figure. And like for example, Arifin, he kind of did street art and graffiti also, so yea, so we do talk a lot about that. And Imam also, he's seen Basquiat's works, so his works and Basquiat's works there's some similarity going there. So there's a lot of discussion or talk about those kind of stuff among us 3.

- KB: Especially I suppose during the informal times like when you guys are like having coffee, there would have been a lot of conversations.
- RH: I think we talked about a lot of different stuff. Cos like, they also wanted to know from Malaysian artists kind of perspective, how arts happening here in Malaysia, how the graffiti scene is in Malaysia for example. So they ask me about that, and so I also ask the same questions to them about how graffiti or how street art is over there in Indonesia. And it's not just that. We talk about even food, politics, even religion because before Bali, my first visit to Bali was during Sama-Sama and I think my first experience during Sama-Sama totally changed a lot. Because before that I go to either Jogja, or Jakarta. It's somehow, the feeling that I had in Jakarta or Jogja, it's not really different from how I felt when I'm here in KL. It's busy, it's the kind of life that people live, it's frustrating or stuff like that. So when I go to Bali, they are all chill and relaxed. I've met like a lot of artists who when they wake up, they drink their coffee, they go to their paddy field, they check their vegetable and everything, and they come back home eat lunch, then later they start painting. So I kind of love that kind of life, it's not rushed and busy everyday.
- KB: So you felt the environment in Bali, because it was different, gave you time to reflect, or it offered something new in terms of perspective?
- RH: Kind of, yea. It's really...—somehow it's the same as how I see my work in my sketchbook, it's not really suit the environment in Bali, so I changed it.
- KB: How did you change it? In what direction did it go?
- RH: It's more...—I don't know how to explain it in words, I think the feeling is more peaceful I guess. If I paint animals—cos my subject normally animals like rats, stray dogs or ravens or crows—but when I did my work using the same subject or animals, at least to me, I felt that its convey calmness or peaceful feeling, because that's how I kinda felt over there—nice feeling. Even like, when I sleep over there, when I dream, it's totally different kind of dreams than when I sleep here in Malaysia.
- KB: So it reflected this newfound calmness you felt over there?
- RH: Yea.
- KB: Did you choose to work with any kind of new materials while you were there? I mean, it was materials you found during your walks? And you brought clay from Malaysia? Cos craft is so strong in Bali, so just wondering if you picked up other materials while you were there to work with?
- RH: I think the only...—I found a lot of found objects over there but I didn't really use all of them because later, I think I found out, the only perhaps downside of what I saw in Bali was that they throw rubbish everywhere. So that's a turn-off—it's the same thing I saw in KL. So I used a lot of plastic bottles, stuff like that, stuff that I think that people throw away. Actually I found a lot of found objects that I don't use for my work, and I just left them there.

- KB: All accumulating in the studio. Were there any sort of blocks that you came across when you were making or producing your works? Like challenges that you had to overcome?
- RH: Not really. I do not I had any kind of blocks or any kind like that—I think it went well. It's just that, I think, because working on sculptures is not like doing painting. You have to take time to let it dry, and work on it again, so sometimes there's a few layers—layer after layer after layer—so you need to like wait for the first layer to dry a bit and it's not like painting. Working with acrylic for example, the drying time for acrylic is very fast so you can work it faster. But when I'm working on sculptures, like the drying process between first and second layer, at least a day. So yea, I think that's the only...—it's not really something that block, it's just that, kind of gave me some kind of panic attack. So I was a bit worried. But actually, they kept reminding me that it's ok if I can't finish it, I can just display unfinished artworks. So yea, it's just me being me, the panic part—actually they didn't force me.
- KB: Were you producing every day? Or did you take the first week to absorb your environment before you started during your second and third week?
- RH: The first few days I just do sketch, because like I said, I initially think I can just use my old sketch but once I got there, I think this is not suitable—I think I should come up with something new. So with the first few days, I just sketch and sketch, and then, I can't remember when, but it was during the first week I think, we go to Bloo Lagoon—there's a beach so I started to collect shells and stuff like that. It's a beautiful beach but there's a lot of plastic bottles and shells. I think I started working on my sculptures on the second week.
- KB: Then the third week... and the fourth week was the exhibition?
- RH: Umm, no. I think it's the fifth week. But I always work on several works at one time. It's not like I work on one and work on it till finish. I work on several artworks at one time.
- KB: So how about the journals? Did you find the journals useful for your process?
- RH: Yea, it's very useful. Because I'm really bad at keeping track of what I do or documentation. Doing graffiti for example, the only thing that I'm really bad at is documenting my works, my graffiti. And knowing that graffiti won't last that long, documentation is very important, and that is something that I really bad at. So somehow, after doing that residency, it taught me a lot about documenting what I do. So now whenever I do graffiti, I will make sure to take photos of it, and I start documenting my work. So I think yea, it really helps. It's good thing that they came up with that idea.
- KB: Are you much of a writer? Did you write a lot?
- RH: No, I'm not. I don't write a lot.
- KB: So must have been hard for you to start?

- RH: Well, the thing is, they made it clear that it doesn't have to be in the form of writing. I can also draw. It's like, there's a Japanese...— I forgot the terms, I think it's Ineki or what—they teach children to write diaries but in the form of drawings in Japan. So it's pretty much like that. But over there, I kinda do both—sometimes I write, sometime I draw.
- KB: What did you think about the one month that you had? Even though they said don't worry it doesn't have to be finished work, the fact that you had one month to prepare and produce the works for the exhibition, how did you deal with that? Or was it a kind of challenge that you took up? Or did you find it constraining? Basically, was it a very intense one month, and you were just working non-stop? Sort of, the impact of time?
- RH: I think the environment, and the environment that they created didn't create that kind of environment to me. It didn't constrain me or whatever. I didn't feel like that. But like, if to speak mathematically, it's impossible to produce a lot of artwork in one month, especially sculptures. But somehow they managed to create the environment that didn't really push me to, but I still managed to do it. So yea, I don't know what kind of magic or whatever they do, but there's no pressure, there's no...—like I said, I did feel a bit panicked earlier but they kind of like managed to create the kind of environment that slowly made me comfortable and didn't pressure myself to work and work and work.
- KB: That's great! Cos one month is actually really short.
- RH: Yea, really short. Especially for sculpture.
- KB: So how was the exhibition put together? I mean, cos it's 3 artists, did you guys discuss it together with Ratna and Kenyut? Or did Ratna and Kenyut sort of took on a more curatorial role? Or was it in discussion with the artists?
- RH: We all discussed about it—all of us, along with Ratna and Kenyut. So we talked about how we're gonna put the thing on. I think pretty much like everything that involved the residents, they will discuss it with us. Like I said, even when they plan to take us somewhere, they will discuss it with us first. They don't push us to just follow them or whatever or wherever they go.
- KB: Actually, that's one of the things I wanted to ask. One way of looking at a residency is in terms of hospitality—so the host organisation being the host, and the artists being the guests, and there's always some kind of power dynamics. So maybe, just an example, it might be very different from your experience, younger artists might feel very timid as guests especially if the people running the residencies are much older, more experienced artists. Certain artists might feel, not pressured, but they want to please the host—so if the host have planned something, they feel almost obligated to go for it. I was just wondering about your experience, and looking at this idea of the host and guest.

RH: Like, I said, they are super nice people. It's just like...—when people are nice to you, you automatically give back to them. They nice to you, you give the same kind of nice feeling back to them. So, yea... there's no such kind of—all those kind of examples that you just gave. It didn't happen. I never felt like that.

KB: So would you say it's almost like being with friends?

RH: Yea, yea, it's just friends. Like between work, we all drink coffee. There's a lot of gerai nearby, and like we eat over there. It's like hanging out with friends like that—there's no like feeling of me as a guest artist and they as the host. There's no...—the gap is like gone. They are just my friends.

KB: That's really cool. I mean, they are really nice people—they just open up to you, and you also feel like opening up yourself to them.

RH: So it's like, it became just like...—automatically you know what to give back to them. Like sometimes, they never asks us to sweep the floor or anything, but we just do it because, yea, they're nice people, and we see we have time so why not sweep the floor... there's no feeling of differences at all—the kind of feeling like they are my host, I'm their guest, such feeling to me personally, I didn't feel like that.

KB: Maybe you can tell me more about the space—like what did you think of it? Or how the space would define the interaction?

RH: I don't quite get it?

KB: You had a shared bedroom, and you had the kitchen—was the kitchen more of a communal space where everyone got together?

RH: Yes, yea.

KB: And when you're in the studio on the ground level, was it sort of known as like, “oh, if I'm there, you sort of don't disturb”. So what was it like?

RH: Oh, ok. There's a period of time, they kind of like asks us if we ok to open the studios for anyone who wanted to visit and watch us producing our work, so we were like, “we're ok with it”. Like I said, they always discuss with us, asks us first kinda thing. So yea, there's a period of time when, I think like the first two or three weeks, they open the whole spaces to anyone.

KB: Did they publicise it?

RH: Yea, they announced it on Facebook if anyone wanted to visit, they say to watch artists producing their work, can come and visit. There's a lot of people come and check us working. But I think towards the end of the residency, they closed their open studio, so they just let us working on our work without anyone visiting us anymore.

KB: So what did you think about the space? Or what did you think about that being the space where you sleep and where you work but also where Kenyut and Ratna are, did you, I suppose, how did you feel about? Cos there are different residencies with different kind of arrangements, like the studio is here, and where you live is here, and sometimes you don't live with you host. So what are your thoughts on it I guess?

RH: I don't quite get the question. I mean, how do I feel?

KB: Yea, or what did you think about it?

RH: About the residency?

KB: About the living arrangement, or the spatial arrangement?

RH: I like it. I really love it. Because compared to what I had now, my studio is super small, and it's sometimes impossible for me to work, because I always work on a few artworks at the same time, but at my space now, so small that sometimes I have to only work on like two or three artworks at one time. So it's difficult, it's very hard for me to work. But once I got there, the space is really...—it really helps me, like even psychologically I think, because like, the calmness and the quietness of that area like sometimes, I just didn't realise that times like goes very fast—I didn't feel time at all sometimes. That kind of feeling...—it was great, I love that space. I think if I wanted a space here in Malaysia, I would love something like that—that kind of space. Like far from the city.

KB: Alright, so also the environment around it?

RH: Yea, yea. The environment, and the weather also.

KB: I guess I was asking more of like in terms of it's a private space but also a public space, cos the gallery's on the first floor, and then you sort of in each other's faces all the time. There's no sort of privacy, but I guess for you that's not even a problem, it doesn't even come to mind.

RH: Yea... is that your question just now?

KB: Yea, but I'm leaving it also quite open.

RH: Yea, it's not a problem to me in terms of privacy. I'm not sure about the others though, seriously. Because the way I'm brought up myself, I think, privacy in terms of living or working in the same space with other people is not a problem with me. So I can deal with that, but I'm not sure about the others.

KB: I mean for me this is also one of my research focus is looking at microresidences, so the residencies that are small in budget, and they're usually artist-run, small facilities. Cos you know you have like proper institutional residencies where there's a studio and they provide a living space far away, and then you have your staff that works in an office. So the

kind of interaction is really very different, it's kind of formal, it's very hierarchical. So for me, I'm also trying to look at how in this microresidences, how artists negotiate their way around it, what they think about the benefits of a lot of these face-to-face interactions.

RH: Again? I'm sorry.

KB: I guess for me I'm also looking at comparisons between big residencies and how small residencies are really very different, because it's really about a lot of these face-to-face interactions with people.

RH: I guess it's hard for me to really answer this, because it's my only experience doing residencies. So yea, I'm not sure how to answer this.

KB: No, it's ok, don't worry. But it sounds like you adjusted really well to the experience.

RH: Yea.

KB: So I wanted to ask a bit about the exhibition. Were there terms of consignment or when you produced the works, were they for sale?

RH: Yea, it's for sale.

KB: Then Cata Odata will take a cut?

RH: Yea, actually, it was so great, that I actually told them that I'm so happy staying here, I don't want anything—"you can sell everything here and take all the money". But they are very nice people, and they know I'm going to reject that money, because it was sold out—all my artwork was sold. So, I told them I don't want the money because I'm so happy there, I'm really happy, cos I kind of needed that escape for a while. I think Bali is the best place for that kind of escape, cos like other parts of Indonesian—when I go to Jakarta, the feeling it's just like in KL, it's quite the same and there's still a lot of tensions in Jakarta or Jogja, but in Bali, it's so calm, it's so peaceful. They're religious people, they're very religious but there's no religious tension, over there is pretty much like zero. Even last when bombing, it's not done by Balinese, it's from other parts of Indonesia. So I'm pretty happy there, I've always wanted to have that kind of escape and I think that was like one of my best experience, so I told them I don't want any money. I gave all of my sculpture to Cata Odata, but on the day I went back, at the airport, he gave me the money.

KB: I was just gonna ask how you shipped your works back because they're sculptures, but since you managed to sell all of them, that's great. So were the buyers?

RH: There's one Singaporean girl—I forgot her name,

KB: So they were mostly like foreign tourists?

- RH: Another guy who bought most of my work—he's from China but he got a gallery in Bali, so yea, he bought pretty much the rest of my sculptures. He almost wanted to buy everyone of them, but like, before that there's this one Singaporean girl who already bought one.
- KB: Ok, that's great to know. So I guess it was very well-received by the audience?
- RH: I guess because, like I said, when you got to Bali, the sculptures is pretty limited to the same kind of style, so when they saw my sculpture, it's totally...—it's pretty new for them. So I guess that's kind of like the reason why it gets such...—received well.
- KB: How about the journals? What were the reactions to the journals?
- RH: Well, in terms of...—cos I wrote a lot in English so a lot of locals didn't really respond to my journal because maybe language varies, but there's also a lot of foreigners who came, and yea, the response was quite well, quite good.
- KB: Well, for me, I thought what was the interesting thing about having that exhibition where you presented works, and also having the journal was a different way to reach the audience, it's almost a different way to communicate with the audience—which I think is a very interesting format; to communicate the work but also the experience and the artists' perspective.
- RH: Yea, yea. I think although I never had any previous experience of residencies, but I think this kind of ideas is quite new, and I feel I'm happy with the way they put up this kind of residencies. So yea, it's good. Because, like I said, they really taught me a lot about myself. Like after that, I do a lot of my own documentations of my works, so I learn from that. So it's good things.
- KB: So how has it been since you came back? How has the experience impacted on you, aside from learning to document? Were there any other impact? Or do you seem sort of changed in your interests or how you work, or how you think?
- RH: Maybe among things that I wished to do in the future that I learned from doing that residency is to work on clay. Cos I learned how to do simple DIY kiln, and then I know an easier way how to measure ratio of how many dirt, how many sand to make clay, so yea, I think that is among the huge things that I really want to explore after this, that came from my experience during the residency.
- KB: That's great.
- RH: Even one of my...—because the business they do these kind of roof tiles. So every time when they finish baking, they spit.
- KB: As in, they literally spit?
- RH: Yea, they spit on each of it. Just a little bit. When I saw that, I thought, I asked them what are you doing, is there any—cos you know Bali, you can easily

think of is there any mystical thing, that kind of stuff. So he's response was quite sarcastic and right on my face at the same time—he says that “Do you think that everything in Bali revolves around all this mystical or things like that? Actually, it's simple science—if the tile absorb the water, it means the tile is well-baked. That's all.” That's why they spit, that's all. There's no jumpy or what. And I feel bad for asking them.

KB: Did you spend the whole day there at the roof tile place?

RH: No, not the whole day. Just like there's a few different sections—I did watch how they put it inside the mould, and if I got further back, I see them baking. So I didn't have to go throughout the whole process.

KB: So do you have any of your own reflections on the residency? Like what would you have done differently?

RH: I guess—I never asked this question to myself. Maybe it's not really from the residency alone but more like from the whole time I spent in Bali during that time. Like now, I think I have interests in many kinds of other mediums and materials based on what I saw in Bali. Like, before I see all of these people working, I always think about restrictions that I had—like, I wanted to do this but I don't have the equipment and materials and whatever. But during my residency there and during my stay, doing all the studio visits, places I go and saw, it taught me a lot about... for example if I can't afford to buy that material for example, they could have a way to build it on my own—for example, a kiln is very expensive but when I got there, they showed me DIY kiln, so I was like yea, “I actually can do it”. And then I'm interested in welding. There's this one guy, he used car batteries—

KB: And you found out about this through one of your studio visits?

RH: Yea. So there's a lot of...—before that I just think too much about restriction, about this and that—I can't do this because I don't this, I can't do that because I don't have that. But, artists over there, they don't think too much about that—they think about how to look for other ways to get the same kind of results for anything. Like, if they can't afford to buy kiln, what they can do to get the same results of baking sculpture in kiln for example. Or if they can't afford to buy welding machine, what they can do to replace or an alternative to welding machine—that kind of thing I learned on that residency.

KB: That's good. I'm so glad you had a really good experience, cos I'm sure there are artists who've had terrible experiences on residencies.

RH: If in the future I have residencies, I hope I don't have that kind of bad experiences. I heard a lot from friends who did residencies outside and they had bad experiences. I hope I don't have to go through that.

KB: Well, thank you so much.

After the interview, he mentioned about going to Elizabeth Gan's talk at Ketemu Project Space, where she talked about a Singapore potter who would do raku firing during the Hungry Ghost festival because that is the only time that open fires are allowed—he was taken by the strategies people used to circumvent restrictions.

## **Interview with Cemeti Art House**

Co-founder Mella Jaarsma

8 December 2016

Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Kamiliah Bahdar = KB

Mella Jaarsma = MJ

KB: Actually, one of the things I was a bit confused about Cemeti Art House and Cemeti Art Foundation.

MJ: I'll explain.

KB: Cos I was reading the publication with Lyra Garcellano, and so it said that it was organised by Cemeti Art Foundation. So I was a bit confused.

MJ: Some people mix it up. So sometimes if you use other people's text as a reference, you can have the wrong information so it's always good to re-check. So I can start with explaining...

KB: Yea, that'd be great.

MJ: So Cemeti Gallery in that time was set up in 1988. And then, the Cemeti Art Foundation we initiated but it was founded by Nindityo then Agung Kurniawan and Nenny I think—so only 3 people who founded this. Then we have 7 people in the board. And the idea was actually that, because in between 1988 and '95, we were really the only arts space in Jogjakarta and so we started with only exhibitions—we organised monthly exhibitions and then we also started with archive already from the beginning. And was also in the beginning that curators came in and people started to get interested in what was going on in Indonesia. So Nindit and me got so busy with writing especially faxes and letters, and printing photographs and sending to everybody, and copying slides and things like that—it was just very costly and lots of work as well. But of course for our own artists, this archive thing was such an important thing—we set up an archive you know—and of course the artists did not create their own archive mostly so we had to go to the studios to make photographs of their works and everything, do the data and everything, and so yea we thought that if we set up a foundation we can sort of get more people involved and we can look for money if it's possible. But in that time also, we were approached by a funder, so it was first Hivos from the Netherlands, they were looking actually for an organisation to support, and yea, they saw the work we did in Cemeti and they really trusted us, so that's why when we started with the foundation we had to use the name—they did not force it but the trust sort of came out of Cemeti you know. So we set up the Cemeti Art Foundation but we really from the beginning set it up as separate institution from the gallery space. Also, because in that time, we don't know what's going to happen, you know, if you suddenly already have the things you've been running for a few years, it's your child, and suddenly you have a board above you who decides what you have to do, so we didn't want to be in that position, so that's why, "ok, we just create another organisation called the Cemeti Art Foundation and get other people

involved”, but yea, still sort of the same name—so we had Cemeti Gallery and then Cemeti Art Foundation. But of course it was always very confusing. Because people thought that Cemeti Art House was under the umbrella of the Cemeti Art Foundation or things like that. Of course we were involved and working quite hard to set it up and everything but in the end they could run it themselves, and also in the end it was already in the trust of the foundation, and so after I think 12 years we changed the name into the Indonesian Visual Art Archive.

KB: So even under Cemeti Art Foundation they had residency programmes?

MJ: Yea, that was because...--the first residency programmes, I think that was with UNESCO, and they wanted to have an official legal body or organisation, and that was the foundation. So we were still involved in hosting artists but then they went through the Cemeti Art Foundation at that time, because we did not have a... we had a status as a company or something so it's not really like... yea. And also a few residencies with AsiaLink in the beginning, was also through the foundation.

KB: Yea, because it does get a little bit confusing. But then the host organisation would actually be Cemeti Art House?

MJ: Not always. Some of it we were involved, like in hosting the artists. But some of the artists were hosted by people working in the foundation actually. Like **Dannieus** [5:10] for example from Australia through AsiaLink—he was actually more hosted through the foundation. But for example, the UNESCO artists, mostly we were hosting actually. They also exhibited here—I remember the artists from Ljubljana, **what's her name, Sikit as or something** [5:30]. He stayed somewhere else but he exhibited here and so we sort of guided his production and everything. So it was a bit of mixing at that time.

KB: So then it was more towards the end of it when it became much more separate, when the Cemeti Art Foundation became IVAA?

MJ: When also in the beginning, there was so little organisations, so even the Cemeti Art Foundation had to do many different things. So example, we organised this AWAS! traveling exhibition. Also organising discourse but also exhibitions, and then doing archive, all kinds of projects, for example—mostly international projects, we did under the name of the foundation because then it was easier to get the funding. So it was a bit blur actually at that time. And IVAA, because also the structure became more clear, and it was more focussing on arts discourse and education and archiving. So then, depending on the directors also, in the end it got some good directors who sort of bring forward their own mission and their own ideas, and so we had to be less involved as well. The first one who could sort of work more independently was **Ella** [7:00]—she's the director of the **HPPHK** or something.

KB: So is Cemeti Art House now considered—is it still a registered company rather than a...

MJ: Now we officially since 2007, we are an association. So we set up an association. In the beginning, we did not want to have... because in that time in the Suharto era, it was also very hard to set up a foundation. And also, this whole structure of a foundation, we thought it would not fit because we are the executives and we are the initiatives, how do you say it?—the founders—and also, if you have a foundation, you must have a clear board and then the people who are working on a daily basis have to be different from the ones in the board for example. We thought we just want to keep it small and we just want to—yea, all the things we have been build and set up, we just sort of want to maintain. And that was also we already work with staff and small staff, and we have not much funding anyway, so yea, just keep it sort of simple.

KB: I'm really interested in the idea of how organisations decide to structure themselves, and I'm sure over the years, it's always been a flexible thing. Like you changed the structure...

MJ: It's true but it also depend on government. So for now, this whole association is not an official legal body anymore in Indonesia. So this is also complicated a bit, and now we have to think what we have to do—cos the only thing which is sort of seen as a non-profit organisation is a foundation. And it has to go through the legal system in Jakarta and through the offices there. So it's a different thing you know. So maybe in the future we have to set it up.

KB: Could I ask a bit more about throughout the years, how has the organisational structure been? Maybe not so much on the legal side, but the number of staff you had, and maybe did it change according to the projects you got, the funding that you got?

MJ: Yes. When we started, it was just the two of us—Nindityo and me. So we started in '88 and then until we handed over to three girls for one year in 1990. And then when we came back, we kept one girl working for us. So we started with one staff in 1991, and then in '92 we got two other staff. Then it was two staff always. Actually until 2006, we started our residency programme and then we added a residency manager. And in that time, the residency was not taking place in Cemeti but we rented another house. So the artists were living and working in another house separately, and then the manager was also working there. So it was separate. Because here we still did our monthly changing exhibition, so this was another programme that was parallel. But then also, they has exhibition in here for one week—more like a presentation. But that was only three years—that was the Landing Soon project.

KB: So then what happened after the Landing Soon, which was the Hot Wave?

MJ: Hot Wave? So after that, the house we could not rent anymore. So we started to build two rooms upstairs here. So then we thought, ok we just change the whole setting because we were sort of burnt out after doing endless residencies and like 11 exhibitions a year. So that was a lot you know. And still, we have to the residency exhibitions, so we had like 15 exhibitions a year. So that was really really a lot. So we just wanted to do it differently. And

after 2009, so then we decided that when we have residency programme, the artists work in the space, so then the gallery space become like studio space. And then they stay upstairs or we have another small house they rent—or that we rent for them. So this [the gallery] became our working space, and until now that's how we run it. So twice a year now we have three months of residencies, and then in between we still have our other projects going on.

KB: So the current one that is twice a year would be the Makan Angin programme?

MJ: Yes. Now it's called different name I think—Pasang Air. I think from next year it will just be called residency I think—Cemeti Residency, just simple.

KB: So the studio space, it's almost an open concept, so is it more like an open studio space?

MJ: Yes it is, yea, yea. Cos also some of the artists, they work behind the computer, so they just sit here to work. But some artists really start to build things in this space because we give the space. We had one artist from, he lives in The Netherlands but he's from Cypress, so this whole space he just built a whole building in the space during so many weeks. Yea, it's just used in different ways. After the last evaluation—cos also sometimes we also feel it's a bit pity cos some of the artists they're not really work in the space even though we provide the space that we normally use for exhibitions. So when it's sort of three months empty—so it really depends on the artists. Some artists don't want to work here—they just work in the room or they just work in other workshops. So then we feel that yea, three months is a long time to have it empty, cos people are still coming in and they expect something to see, or they want to help, or they want to see something, or they want to learn something. And when there's nothing happening, we feel like, yea, for the flow it's not so good as well. So the new staff is reconsidering how to do it, to bring the new residency forward. I don't know yet what we are gonna do, but probably it's part of the space will be in use as the exhibition, and part of the space will be residency space—I think, something like that, I don't know what to do, it's their thing.

KB: Maybe you can tell me a bit about Landing Soon. I mean, they all have different names, so I'm guessing they're structured a little differently.

MJ: Yea, a little bit different. The first residency that we started with was with an organisation in The Netherlands. We work already with them since '95. So they're already send artists here not on the name residency but just like sometimes for exhibition, sometimes just to stay and work and go back again. And also they invite Indonesian artists to come to have exhibition and residency with them. So from '95 already several of those exchanges happens. And then we thought together we have to do it more structured, and then we both look for ways to get fundings and then finally we got funding from Dutch Embassy cos lucky some development money that we could get. And also they could pay for the Indonesian artists, and from then on the idea came, ok, we could make a programme with four Indonesian artists and four Dutch artists a year. So every time two artists and then three

months. So there was full—the whole year full. And that's why we rented a separate house because then it was full residency on and during three years—every time residency. So after three months then the next artists came in.

KB: So it was an exchange? So every three months...

MJ: No, no, no. They all came here. From '95 till 2006, with that organisation, it was called Artoteek Den Haag in the Hague. Now it's changed name—now the name is Heden. But that organisation we have a long relationship already, and so we thought it was very interesting for the Indonesian artists and the Dutch artists to set up with residency—so the first Landing Soon was really based on these two countries actually. And then it was like four residencies a year with two artists. So we rented a house and they both stayed in the house and they both worked in the house.

KB: Is the house far away from the Cemeti?

MJ: No, it was just around the corner. Now it's the Mediterranean restaurant. Before it was called "pink house" because the colour in the front was pink, so if we talk about "pink house" everyone would know.

And it was very interesting. The good thing about this project was that the organisation from The Netherlands—cos it was an old organisation—and they worked with artists from The Netherlands, so especially the director, he has a lot of long relationships with the artists. So the artists that he selected, he really know well and he really could see if they were interested to be sent here, if it was good for their career or if their attitude was ok to come to Indonesia—so in that sense it worked very well. And we also had this policy, like err, ok we don't look only to young artists. So he sent artists from as old as 65 I think, and the youngest was twenty-something. But that was just very interesting you know. And sometimes we tried to match a bit with this artist and that artist, but in the end we just let it go. So we didn't try to mix them in, cos sometimes you think this is perfect because they have a certain same theme or you know, but then it also depends on the dynamic and how their personality is, so it does not matter to which kind of material, what type of medium—it's just interesting to put people together and see what comes out of it. It's surprising, we had like Octora who was only twenty-something at the time was with Cilia Erens who was 62 in that time. And they're still friends until now and it was formed here. So it's things like that, it's very interesting.

KB: So how was the Indonesian artists selected? Was it through an open call?

MJ: Yea, we selected with our staff. So we did an open call in the beginning—yea, we did an open call from the beginning actually. So we asked them to send in a portfolio with at least works from the last three years, and then 15 works, and a sort of a motivation why they want to join the residency, and their CV. And then all of them we do a first screening and then we do interviews with people through Skype or we ask them to come and from then on we select.

- KB: So the choice of having two artists sharing the same house—that's a a very conscious choice. So what was the reason for that?
- MJ: Yea I think it's very important to create a sort of intensive time. Because also the Indonesian artists, most of them are not from Jogja right—from Bandung, from Jakarta. So they also need a place to stay. So if they're both connected in one space, they sort of cannot hide you know. So not necessarily they collaborate in their work, but at least through dialogue and sort of exchange happen through that. And of course many problems came out of it as well—yea, that's normal. This is not just between the artists but also the manager, or every time we also have assistants for the artists. So it brings the whole specific dynamics—it depends on all those persons who are there. But we always say in the beginning that everybody has to be open and if there are any problems, don't wait until the end but just tell them. And after the first residency that we had, we decided to do weekly meetings because, yea, to tackle all small problems and to also guide the artists more in their production or in their research. So until now, this is still sort of the format. So once a week, everybody meets together—the staff of Cemeti, the assistants, the manager, and the artists—and then see what they've been doing the last week, if they have anything to share on that, and then what they're going to do for the coming week, so that we can help them, and we can give them tips, so we can put them in certain network or... and that's very helpful actually.
- KB: And that was after the first experience?
- MJ: Yea, that was after the first residency. We had meetings, and it was a bit loose and it was maybe the residency manager at that time—it was her first experience to do such a think so yea.
- KB: Even when the artists live in the same building, there would still be the weekly meeting?
- MJ: Yes, yes. Because it's just the way of communicating also with the rest of us, and also, like, we sort of have the expertise about what's going on in the city. So for example, if they want to meet a historian also we can set them up with, or we can give some input to the manager as well to organise things, or—. And also interesting to hear things from the assistants because they bring their own network of course as well. So we sort of expand also our network through the assistants—it's very interesting also.
- KB: Are the assistants usually art students?
- MJ: Not necessarily. We got assistants from all kinds—from musicians, theatre, from the researchers, from historians, sociologists, anthropologists, yea all those kind of people.
- KB: Usually, because you would hire the assistants when the residents come in, sometimes it's by accident maybe?
- MJ: We sort of screen them, because also our policy is that every time we look for different assistants. Because it's really a learning thing for the people. The

assistants, they never—when they come in for interview, they never realise that they also have to give things. They always think they come to learn as an assistant, which is true but on the other hand they also have to give something. You know, what are their strengths, what network do they have, also does it fit with the interest of the artists, or for example, if you have a video artist come in who is researching on landscape, so we found somebody in geography, or you know... so yea.

- KB: I think it's interesting that each residency is a new artist assistant. Because then that just opens up the opportunity for people here to...
- MJ: Yea, to learn. Because it's good for English and it's also very interesting for them to see how a professional artist works. Yea, just simple things yea—so, how serious they are about their work, how disciplined they are—of course there are many problems also like assistants come too late, difficult with appointments, they learn from that. That's why also important that we guide them, and we have the meetings and hear complains, and then ok, don't hold it too late for example until it becomes very irritating—you have to do something about it.
- KB: If they're not used to the sense of time here, then it'll be a bit frustrating. So, can you tell me a bit more about the role of the residency manager? Their area of responsibility...
- MJ: Yea, she is responsible, or he is responsible for the flow in everything—in means that she has to be sensitive to see what is going on on the work floor, how everybody is communicating with each other, if the artists are happy, if we can help them somehow, just to see what they need—it's not that you have to be available all the time, but it's more like a, how do you say, that you also can decide that this one is work for the assistant and this one is work for the manager [delegate]. Cos for the manager it's important to understand to guide somehow, besides all the more practical things like setting up artists with making a programme for example. Cos mostly the first month what the manager is doing is organising introduction to the art scene here—so she sets up a meeting with the artists in studios, or bring them to other art spaces, so she has to see what the interests of the artists are and then try to bring them to places where they can see something interesting. So this is important, and also for the second month, she has to organise a workshop—cos mostly we ask the artists to not only to come here and explore things and get things, but to also share things. So we ask them to do a programme for the public somehow, so it can be for children, it can be for art students, it can be for anything but somehow to share something. So she has to be in contact with the artists to talk about it also, what is interesting, and then she has to organise it. Some go to the school to talk to the teachers, and you know things like that. And also in the first month, to organise the artist talk as well. It's also introduction—she has to introduce the artists to the artist scene here, that's most important.
- KB: So with Hot Wave, how was it different from Landing Soon?

MJ: Since then we've changed the format. So instead of two artists, we have three artists coming together. Because we thought it was interesting not only to have the Dutch-Indonesia conversation but to have another artist coming in. And in that time also AsiaLink approached us, and we joined together. So in the beginning, I don't know exactly the thinking—two artists from Australia as well each year—one or two, I forgot. And then also, we try to look also to get other artists from Asia but that's not always so easy. So we failed several times to look for funding for Asian artists, because you know the idea was Australia, New Zealand or Asia artists together with one Dutch artist and one Indonesian artist. But we got from Taiwan, we had an exchange project from Bamboo Curtain Studio in Taipei. And they often asked—separate from our residency—they asked as an advisor to give several names for artists they can select for their residency programme. And they wanted to look for funding to send one artist here, so we worked several times with Bamboo Curtain Studio, and then the funding came from New York—from ACC, Asian Cultural Council.

KB: So often the residencies would be fully funded—so it would be flight, accommodation as well as a stipend.

MJ: Yes, so there are things like they get material costs, they get per diem, then they get a place to stay, then they get a studio space, and then we have money for even a little for workshops, for materials or snacks or things like that. And also the presentation in the end. And until last year, we also made a publication for each artists. Unfortunately that stopped—that funding is not there anymore.

KB: For the publication itself?

MJ: Yea. And also because in the end, somehow, during the last few years, it became harder to make those publications, because sometimes the artists were not so open or not so... I don't know... it's just one year later then finally published, because they say yea, they still want to do this, do that. So you know what I mean? They wanted to add things... so it was like a long... we were already in the next residency and we still have to deal with the old residency publication. So it became something like a burden for us as well. So now we decided to make sort of a newsletter, especially on the residencies, so in the end of this year, we get a—we sort of make a small publication of all the residencies during the last year. And then also it's online and everything, so it's easy.

KB: I just think the internet has made it really amazing as well. For me, it's so important to put materials on the internet, even if you did a softcopy publication, just put that online because it reaches people. For me, for my research on things that happen five years ago, they have it on YouTube or they have a link—you never know who's going to want these materials.

So the Hot Wave residencies are also three months?

MJ: Yup, it was three months but then twice a year. So we started with the project then we changed it, cos it was here. Then we had these two blocks a

year. At the time, it was the first of April until the end of June. Just the last few years we changed it to the first of March till the end of May, then the first of September until the end of November.

KB: How about Makan Angin? That was much shorter—there were only three editions of that?

MJ: Ok, because Nindityo didn't like the name in the end. So ok, we found it a bit too open so... yea, just wanted to change the name. The former one was just because of the funding—it was these three years, then it was this one project... And Hot Wave was also sort of clear you know—also with the funding and everything, and we also made it into a 3 ½ year project.

KB: So then from Makan Angin onwards all the way to Pasang Air and Kerjasama as well...

MJ: Yea, that's a different project actually. So in between our regular residency, some other shorter or different residencies take place. So for example, one time we had a residency with the project from The Netherlands also with one architect and one fashion designer—they stayed here but then there was no Indonesian artist connected. Of course we put them together with Indonesian people to work together but not officially as a residency artist. And then, three years ago we started with this project as like Kerjasama for example. The first idea was also to bring one Indonesian artist three months in Alice Springs in Australia, and then after that Australian artist come three months here. But because the Indonesian artist was quite lonely and is very... and three months is just so long and also it's the idea of indigenous-Indonesian exchange, so then it was for us also more interesting to have an indigenous mostly urban artist to be set up in Alice Springs together with the Indonesian artist—so that was the last two years we run it like that. They lived together for six weeks in Alice Springs, then come here six weeks to work here, then do a project and an exhibition in the end.

KB: That's a very interesting format as well.

MJ: But it also became after evaluation—after the first trial and error.

KB: I think it's always a case of trial and error.

MJ: That's why it's interesting you know... you learn from your programme.

KB: And it really has to be catered to the space as well. And taking care of the artists' emotional and psychological needs.

MJ: And yea, nowadays, I think it's also changed a bit the whole idea of residencies—the spirit of the residency itself I think if we compare with ten years ago when we started in 2006, and now 2016, residency become so much more a common thing, and many artists also involved in residencies and sometimes we can see that the residency artist especially from abroad, but also maybe with the local ones, once they've been in several residencies, they are less opened to explore and to do crazy things. Yea, because in the

end, they just do their work here, production, instead of really being inspired by the place and what's going on and explore new things you know. Can you imagine just working like this? So if you come in fresh, never done a residency, you come in fresh, you come to Jogjakarta and you do a residency, it brought a lot, also for the local people, for the local artists, brought a lot of exchange, people give their whole spirit, their whole life in those three months you know. But once you've been—for example, you're hopping from India to whatever to whatever, then ok, next I'm in Indonesia, it's just different. So the whole spirit of residencies in that sense is changing.

KB: I would think for artist that's done more residencies, they're more prepared and they know what to do.

MJ: On one side yes, on the other side yea... it's less special. I was interested for example in the older artists from The Netherlands, they were never on residencies because this happened before. But for them also, to go to Indonesia, come for three months, it's really special.

KB: The period of three months... also the main residencies that you have are three months, and not shorter and not longer—is it a case of visa?

MJ: Not so much because we can extend that to half a year if we have to. But it's more like, some people are teaching, or having many projects coming up, so three months is a sort of—also from the Indonesian artists—that we can sort of ask them to focus on one thing. Cos after that, they start to disappear. They go to do other things and then we not going to pay for that. We want to keep it focussed and intensive.

KB: Other residencies have it much shorter, like five weeks...

MJ: I think that is too short. I think three months in that sense is quite ok, in the sense that at least you have one month to sort of look around and do research and see what you wanna explore. And then one month more, still looking and going around and start production maybe and then last month sort of focussing on producing things, so I think it's sort of ok three months.

I mean for myself, I did several residencies only one month. Yea, I can work fast but still it's of course a different experience. Especially if you can manage to sort of have a feeling that you can feel at home, that you feel connected with people, that you see them several times—one month is too fast actually.

KB: Cemeti has been doing residencies before 2006—so before the first Landing Soon?

MJ: Yea, but sort of... like when people came and we had to rent a house for them somewhere... so it's sort of, how do you say, random?

KB: Ad-hoc?

MJ: Ad-hoc, exactly. It happened but yea... but it was also—from then on we also learned that we really need an assistant to do it otherwise you're just busy

bringing the artist on a motorbike somewhere, translate all the time, you know what I mean? In that sense, we really wanted to set up a proper infrastructure for the artist you know.

KB: I suppose I'm wondering about the relationship between the residency programme and the things that Cemeti does? So the relationship between both—like in 2006 that's when the residencies became formalised, was it because you felt the kind of programming or focus that Cemeti did needed to be supplemented with a residency as well?

MJ: Yes I think so. Yes, especially you know... 2006... we started at the end of 2006. For example in 2007 there was the big boom. So the commercial thing become so important. And we felt like we do residency to make it as a contrast to focus again on the art production instead of on the commodity. So for us, that was very important to take that step and to go into that direction because we are sort of already started to be frustrated—let's say artists leaving us because they jump to the commercial galleries and... I don't know, the whole art world changed so much in 2008 and 2009. So we thought, ok we will just be with the artists and we see if there are artists who still want to be involved in the research and creating special projects and we opened to the exchange, community-based and think about society and things like that. So, yea, it was actually our survival to work with those residencies. And also to think about again art practice—what is art practice, and what is the function of art in the society. Because I was so fed up also with always like the discussions at the time was always about the art market and the booming, and in the end it was just so boring, talking about this work is this, leaves the studio and goes directly in the hands of the auction house then the collector, and that was it. So for what you make art? So to have a different topic and different discussion, in that sense it was very important also especially in the end of the 2000s to give a certain balance you know. And also to sort of—because at the time it was not easy to find young artists who want to do crazy things. Everybody just wanted to go for the money. Everybody went to Jakarta to do exhibitions and things like that. And then still we want to look for young artists who want to create and do different kind of projects, so that was very good also that we could sort of support those young artists who still want to do different things.

KB: I see also in Singapore when I was working in a commercial gallery. There's sort of no room to fail because the only time they get to show is with a commercial gallery or an art fair, and I think if given the opportunity to do a more experimental exhibition they would.

MJ: Yea, yea exactly. For example we also have like Beatrix, she was like booming—a young artist who was booming. I really like her works. I said I open to do this residency and then she came to Jogja from Bandung and she already has a name here—like, oh, Beatrix you know. And she felt also like it was a burden—all those expectations. But she tried to go through it you know. She really tried to do different things and in the end she only made two paintings and very different—she was braved enough to change the whole style and whatever and to go into discussion... and this was yea, you fail or you do different things—that's the idea of the residency you know. And in

that sense it was also very important this whole idea of the residency—I think the spirit of the last two years maybe, it's harder because I feel that the public is also reacting differently to the residency artists, like, the art scene itself. Before everybody exciting—oh, artist from Taiwan, oh, artist from America, artists from wherever—they're willing to open and to discuss. But nowadays so many residency artists are also coming to Jogjakarta and they're sort of... they still connect with the community where they're based but it's somehow harder to sort of mingle and... how do you say... involvement of the local scene is less intensive than say five years ago. And we also get sort of comments now from public like “yea, it's a bit boring with the residency artists, with the residencies nowadays, with the projects”. Yea also, I don't know, it's maybe also the artists are less intensive working on projects... I don't know what it is.

KB: The residency artists?

MJ: Yea the residency artists. I don't know how they communicate with the local scene. And then, yea, it's just different. Maybe the art scene is changing I feel also. Maybe cos now there's so many things going on so the focus is also more spread out and more communities and more galleries—everybody has their own thing and it's all smaller cells now instead of everybody's looking at what's going on you know. So it's different. And then also I feel that the public—they want to have more, they want to see more the real artworks again.

KB: Back to the art object?

MJ: Yea. Maybe art object—but to be challenged, to be surprised. Cos sometimes they feel already after ten years of residency, there's a sort of certain flow in what people are creating during those residencies you know. So it's a bit err... how do you say... they already can see what or where it's going to—ok, artists again working with this or this theme, like picking up. Less surprising than five years ago, or ten years ago.

KB: I guess it's also... needing to find... if you look at the idea of the selection of artists and the space that they're in, the work that they do, the topic that they touch on as a form of choreography, as a form of dance... it's almost like you need to re-choreograph a different dance maybe?

MJ: Yea, it's true. But for example if you get artists who are running from one project to another, for them to concentrate, be full, do different things and be involved is also... it's just harder you know. Because artists nowadays are also more occupied than say ten years ago. They're more open to develop whatever into something—they're more like, ok from here go there, go there, go there.

KB: And to me, the term like artists-in-residence is someone who is present, like really really present, mentally and physically. I was reading this really young New York curator who is writing on an online platform, and she was just saying that residencies should consider restructuring themselves to allow

people to not have to stay for three months, can stay a couple of days or a weekend. But I'm like, then you're not an artist-in-residence.

MJ: Yea, yea. What does it then mean? What's the difference from then a tourist for example? Because that's also the question. Some artist, we don't really force them to work but we hope something comes out. Because yea, I mean, what is the difference between being very superficial, just coming to a place, and with you as an artist-in-residence? So, there should be some distinction yea? But what is it? And for some artists you can say this was enough and for the other artist you think, oh, you have to go further. Yea, because that also depends. We see it with different artists. Some artists just take it easy and then we really try to sort of challenge them to go beyond or to go further. And for some artists, they just challenge themselves. So it really depends. In that sense it's also good to have the manager and the weekly meetings because it really looking at what's going on and where are they stuck or are they necessarily stuck, is it good that they are stuck or not, or are they just lazy. Yea it also happens sometimes. It's allowed to be lazy but yea, still then you know.

KB: Just one last question. I'm also interested in this idea of there being a host organisation and there being an artists and the relationship of hospitality. How do you see the relationship between the host organisation and the artist in terms of hospitality?

MJ: I think it's very important that the organisation is providing the network and the sharing and the friendship—I think this is much more important than the physical space for example—the room or the studio. If successful residency, it's much more that you have people to connect to. So that's why I think we work really hard on making those connections so that artists get to know the artists they're interested in or they are getting to know people who can help them develop certain skills or they get interested in traditional culture... so for me, to connect artists to those kind of thing and open up their eyes is much more important than physical—have a nice room with aircon or they have a great studio space. Cos this you can have at home you know. So I think this makes the importance of the residency. So for me, nowadays in Jogja have many residencies—artists open up the space for other artists, with Alfi for example—but they just give a space so for me this is not a residency.

KB: Oh! Cos in my research, there's so many different types of residencies, and there is the studio-based residencies which is more of a retreat I suppose.

MJ: But for me in a city in Jogja, I mean... for me it has to be different than staying at home you know what I mean? If you want to stay in a closed room, then yea, you can also stay at home—then why would you have to be here? It must have a purpose. So there must be something that you want to explore here, than you just stay in your room. So it's must be important to have an organisation who then can bridge the artist to what is going on. So that's our main job I think, also as a host.

But now we sometimes also get comments from the Indonesian artists—yea, in Cemeti the artists get too spoilt. And I'm like, can it be? Yea—"it's too

perfect, you give too much, so you spoil them. That's why sometimes they are not doing the right things cos you spoil them too much. They have an assistant, they get a motorbike with the assistant..."—they have to struggle more or whatever, I don't know. Yea, it's funny those comments. But I can understand what they mean. Maybe sometimes. But there's also cos we think three months is short so we try to make it as intense and good as possible you know. So yea... but yea... it's interesting. You can ask other artists about their experience in Cemeti for example.

KB: Yea, I think I should. I think I will get in touch with them. I think that's it for now actually. Thank you so much.

MJ: Did you read some of the text in the 25 Cemeti book?

KB: Yes I did! So I read Dina's text as well as the director of the organisation in...

MJ: Heden yea? And the last is also interesting cos there's a quote from the artists Briony.

KB: I found the publication so useful and important because I don't think anyone else sort of publishes—only the really big residencies institution like CCA. But otherwise in Indonesia, the Cemeti publications are the only one that talk about residencies.

MJ: Because we thought also that as part of the residencies it's also important to sort of stimulate writers or curators who write. That's why also I force to get money for the publication because then there's a bigger scene involved, not only those artists you know. So it's going far beyond that you know. You train the manager, you train the assistant, then the writers and so. And also it's good to communicate because it's like for especially the foreign artists—they communicate their work to Indonesians and then also for them to understand what is going on with the foreign artists and artists outside Jogja as well—for them to understand, to go in-depth and to write about them, it's very important.

And now it's all online. We always work in the same system—we ask three writers to write an essay also from outside, to write essay about the residencies. So still the same idea but not hardcopy print.

KB: But then also the writing itself becomes a sort of document.

MJ: Exactly, yea. And we have to design it to make it into an e-book. So we still design it and everything.

## **Interview with Syafiatudina**

8 December 2016

Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Kamiliah Bahdar = KB

Syafiatudina = DN

DN: What can be seen as a benefit for both the host and the resident?—and the host not only organisation host like Cemeti but also us as the community or people around the organisation, the institution, because somehow we also take the role of host. Host is... maybe in terms of... I don't know, like hanging out with the artists that we like or sometimes eating together, so it's a very... very different way or type of residency that I encounter in Europe for example. It's very very different, and I discussed this a lot with Wok, and we came to the conclusion that Cemeti residency format is very generous, very... how to say... yea, very generous. It's a different attitude towards residency and hospitality compared to what we have or had in Europe for example.

KB: Explain what Europe is like?

DN: So when I was Europe, not the whole region because I don't visit the whole continent. My experience is limited to what I had in Netherlands and Germany. So for example, in Netherlands, I did a kind of residency... it's actually more of a period between the opening of my exhibition at Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam—

KB: So this is a residency as a curator?

DN: Yes, as a curator. But I had the opportunity to stay in an apartment of friend who at that time did two years residency at Rijksakademie, so it feels like I am doing residency in a place where others doing residency as well, so it's very interesting to see for example how they organise their things in a place where they know they will not stay long. So two years is long but not too long, it's not permanent, still temporary. So I experienced that. And then in Germany I did residency two months in related to my project with ifa-Galerie in Berlin but they put me in—so my accommodation was in [redacted] [3:50]. It used to be a train station, like a small train station. But then this organiser they got the opportunity to use the space for five years and they changed it into residency place. So imagine a train station change into a residency place, there are many rooms, a kitchen that we share together, and most of them stayed the longest is six months, the shortest is two weeks. So it's a constant change every time. So yea, that's how I got the experience of doing residency in other places besides Jogja.

KB: So the community then takes on the role of also hosting the artist-in-residence that come in—would you say it's also because, compared to the two experiences you have in Europe, could you say that it's also those were bigger institutions, like more established, and then there were more artists coming in at the same time?

DN: That's one of the aspects—the factor. But I think also different attitude towards working and living. In Berlin for example, although many people say it's a different type of Germany—it's not Germany, it's somewhere else. Many of the inhabitants in Berlin are either working as an artist or freelancers in creative industry, so they have a very flexible working time compared to other parts of Germany with strict office hours. But there are also still very much somehow limiting themselves—I mean, few people that I met, like the division between personal work and networking for example... although I met few people who gradually become my friend, like we meet during dinner, we have drinks together, but it's also very rare to find these kind of relation. Most of the artists or curators that I met, or organiser of a space, they still perceive myself as another type of work. Like meeting for coffee, you need to plan it two weeks before or one week before. It's impossible to do anything spontaneously. While here in Jogja, maybe cos the size of the city is small, but it is more possible to—in terms of time—the time is very flexible here. We can meet in my office or other office and we can hang out or we can even initiate something together from the residency. So this kind of improvisational modes of working in residency that I find here is very strong. I cannot find it in, for example, in Berlin or Amsterdam. So, I think it's also—related with the notion of hospitality—that in more bigger institution, hospitality is their work, it's part of their doing in office hour. So for example, if I have problem in the night, I cannot reach them. Maybe they come to me in the day during the office hour. But here, it's not really like that. I saw few people who based in Jogja, who lives in the city, who treat the residency artist as more as a friend rather than workload. Yea, it's a very different type.

KB: Has it got to do with the host organisation?

DN: I think so.

KB: Like, do you hang out with artist-in-residence at Sarang?

DN: No. Not really. It's also related with our relation to the host. Like in Cemeti, Agni is my friend. I mean, we hang out several times. And then when Agni came and introduced me to the artist-in-residence that she currently working with, I see as also as something that I do for Agni—not for the artist. Because I think “ah, Agni needs my help so I'll help her by talking to the artists”, but also... because for example, Cemeti or Agni helped me before. So it's a reciprocal give and take relation, which might never end.

KB: But that's what reciprocal relationships are.

DN: Yea, yea. But also, I also often... how to say... try to avoid certain people or artists or curators in residence because I heard for example friends telling me that they feel exploited by the artists or by the curators because of the very—I think, what I took from their stories—the resident has a very somehow definite ideas on what they want to produce and use others around them as a means of production, as a tool for production, without considering maybe this person has a different ideas—not really open to the possibility of working together. So there's also that kind of relations—it's not all unicorns and rainbows.

- KB: I'm sure people relationships are very... there's always the good and the bad. I'm sure Cemeti has bad experiences with residents as well—it's part of the game.
- DN: Yea it is, it is. But I also think it's a game worth to play because I have many situations or even experiences that people who live outside—for example not in Jogja—I feel them more close or I have more shared affinity or shared interests with them compared to people I meet here or who lives here. So this idea of the possibility of friendships coming out of this temporary relation is something that I always hope whenever someone is coming—ok, I can maybe help him or her more as a professional, like just giving my two hours of my time then they will find another person who they feel closely related personally. But there are also people I feel “ah, I want to work with him or with her”. I find it very interesting. So there's always that kind of two-sided.
- KB: Sometimes it's also like jodoh.
- DN: Yea, jodoh—“yea, I feel not good”, “yea, it's good”, “I feel exploited”, “no, I feel like I'm taking something from this relation”. It's always in that tension.
- KB: Do you sense a difference in connection as an audience between an artist-in-residence from Indonesia and an artist-in-residence from abroad? Because Cemeti as both—I'm just taking a guess from what you published—maybe in terms of how they represent or how they take in the space and the environment?
- DN: Yea I think it's very different. I mean because, I think whenever we deal with strangers—someone we first meet—there's always presumption playing in in the way we perceive the other, whether the person come from Indonesia or from Netherland or from other country. And also, it's also both ways—not just me looking at them but them looking at myself—so there's always this presumption, maybe stereotypes. And I think with foreign artists—artists who not coming from Indonesia, their stereotypes are much... not strong... but more visible. It can be sensed directly. For example how they lead the conversation into what direction or topics they want to hear, and when I say something that is not related or not similar to what they expect me to say, there's a certain disappointment or it will trigger their curiosity or something like that. And I feel much more driven or much more interested in the artists or curators, like foreigners, who can go beyond the cliché stereotypes of Jogjakarta, or of Asians or of curator or artists and getting into the more personal subjective point on certain things. I think sometimes I feel tired of how certain topics are constantly appearing whenever artists-in-residence are working in Jogja. Like for example, we often joking about the constant reference to myth, like the queen of South Seas, or the sultan, or the Javanese culture, something like that. So I mean—
- KB: Yea, the constant dealing with... I know what you mean—looking at culture cos that's the most visible thing. If talking about social relations or politics, it's a bit more invisible for an artist-in-residence that comes in for only three months.

DN: So it's quite tiring to meet someone new every three months and have to explain or to deal with the same question all over again for example. How is Muslim here? And how is Muslim, myth, Sultan, Javanese?—that kind of thing. So I think also works that I find interesting during residency is the works that can go beyond this cliché or stereotypical of Jogja, or Indonesia.

KB: I don't know how to ask this...

DN: Shoot, shoot.

KB: I'm not too sure how to phrase it—what do the locals see or get from this constant rotation of artists-in-residence. I mean, we can talk about knowledge sharing and knowledge transfer, but do you feel that that is actually enough? Is that enough of an impact?

DN: That's a very interesting question. I think in a sense... I think... there's... I always try to not to fetishizing the permanent over the temporary. Or the longer over the short—the person who stayed for two weeks can have much deep and engaging conversation rather than the person who stayed for three months, or four months, or even a year. And also, I think also because residency is a different type of labour—because as a resident you get paid for being in different places, and the freedom to organise your time completely different from your usual routine, daily routine. Maybe back in your city, you are a designer, then here you can sleep whole day, walk around all day and doing whatever you want. So it's a freedom of time—that what we have in residency, or as an artist-in-residence. It's that type of freedom. So I also try to be careful as a host, as an organiser of residency programme, not to force someone to, or to impose them on the idea of productively that I have. For example, for me a productive day is sitting at the desk reading and writing. And many see travellers' productivity is going outside wondering around, meeting people. But I also acknowledge the type of work in residency to read for example, or to think of their practices. In a slow process, it doesn't have to be like three months of always producing everyday. So, it's a matter of having a different rhythm of life etc. The reason why I mention this to respond to your question also related to the idea of benefit. I think in residency, gain or benefit is something that cannot be expected immediately. Maybe the benefit or the impact or the result can be seen three months after the artists leave, or maybe on the first day of the artist—it has a different... how to say... like... in Indonesia we say riak—you know when you throw stone into the water and it has like—

KB: The ripples.

DN: The ripples. Yes the ripples. So, I also think of benefit in this metaphor of ripples. So, the ripples in the centre may be that there is this checking of stereotypes or of clichés that we have towards others—“Germans are very precise and disciplined, but no, I saw German artists as relaxed as we are here”. Or “Indonesians are very friendly and not work oriented—no I also say Indonesians artists who works, always want to work everyday.” So it's a constant revising of category, of thinking, that kind of thing. But also, in terms

of the visible one, I saw many collectives or individuals that get the opportunity to do residency from the residency artists that they met in Jogja. So maybe they find a similar interest, continue to have communication after the artists leave, or the curators leave, and he or she invite someone from Jogja to come to their city or to their country to work together. So it's a one example. The other also is the landscape of this area are changing because of residency or travellers in arts and culture scene—we have more and more exotic food like Italian restaurants, coffee shops, maybe it can be said residency is one of the factor for gentrification. But I think it's also not as simple as that. I think the problem with gentrification is that certain areas become less accessible to certain class of people. And it's another phenomena in urban context that we cannot say one thing is the main contributing factor, that it has to do with more complex things like how our economy works, how the development of this city in general or in other places are also contributing to this, rise of property values for example. But I have encountered several remarks from people saying, "ah, it's the artists, especially the traveling artists are the ones who contribute to the process of gentrification for example." But for now I'm not very certain with that statement.

KB: Yea, it's like a snowball effect. Of course it doesn't help that the keratin is nearby, and that's a huge tourist spot in itself.

DN: It is, it is. So what else? Also, another somehow can be put as a benefit, is that in a place where—in a city where education is very much limited to university, to have this kind of alternative space, and artists from elsewhere coming and explain about their practice, and also about the context they coming from, it's a part of how the city operates as a kind of school, that we learn from each other. And having someone from different context coming adds more layer and more types of information than we have. So maybe also that?

Ah, I think I read something from [Sius \[31:18\]](#), but it's in Indonesian. It's in Skripta, a journal published by Ark Galerie Alia Swastika. She wrote about biennales and cosmopolitanism in Indonesia. So maybe can be good for you to read it. It's in Bahasa Indonesia but it's not long.

KB: I think I can read it. My bahasa has improved tremendously—language immersion programme.

DN: Yea, and also we have biennales which adding more. And the Jogja Biennale, they also have residency programmes—in both countries, in Jogja Indonesia and in the partnering countries like Nigeria, and now is Brazil, India.

So how you see this? With the people you talk so far, how they see this residency?

KB: My current thesis, the sort of materials I've collected, has been dominated a lot from the perspectives of the host organisation as well as the artists that come in. So the host organisation, I think for them, they see bringing in artists, to have a residency programme, as a kind of transference and sharing of knowledge. Or even creating collective knowledge I suppose. And for the

artists that come in, for them it's sort of coming to a new context to learn for their artistic practice and also maybe on a personal level, changing the way they think by observing what's around, by observing what other people are doing. For me, definitely I think, I haven't gotten the perspective of the audience, or the host community. There was once we were having a debriefing at Ketemu Project Space, and Ruth the project manager was like—cos she's seen around like 5 to 6 residents coming in and out—and for her, it's like... she's not sure how there's actually a benefit for the community. And I think it's so intangible, so hard to tell. And I guess for me, it's also interesting to look at the residency as part of this supplementary programme to what the host organisation also does.

DN: Yea, that's true. I mean, for example, before you came, I'm writing this email to one collective and one artist that KUNCI wants to invite for residency next year. And because I knew them personally, I feel I can be straightforward and say what I expect from them. And with one artist, I ask her to be the observer of our school, and see what can come out of this observation period. So it's a residency for the host, in this sense of KUNCI, is to find outsider perspective on what we've been doing because we are very close to what we are working on. Sometimes we lack of the big picture, of what we're missing, it's having a critical friends coming over and say "this is what we're working on", or something like that, so it's somehow complementary of our project. And I think in my position, I host residency, I did residency as a curator and an artist in residence, I'm also somehow the audience of this residency project cos I went to Cemeti, I went to MES, I went to Ace House. Recently I also see others, for example in Sewon Art Space, in Studio Kalahan, so yea... it's different changing of role. Yea it made me think... it's hard for me to say, to think of, the result or what we gain—for example say, Ah Chong, the librarian—once he was very focused on completing or adding more to our collections of PDF, so every time he met someone or residents coming to KUNCI, he always asks like "can you copy me five books that you have?" And I think it's a very good initiative from him because although we have the Internet as a way to communicate and to exchange books and things, but with the Internet is not as... somehow as similar in all places, there's difference of speed, different places doesn't have Internet, different places have more PDF... to be able to meet someone from different place and asks what kind of books they like or interests they have or books they want to share to us, it's... yea, it's turns out face-to-face or direct contact is still important and it can trespass this limitations of copyrights. And also, to realise what kind of infrastructure we have—I think this reflection for me, not only as a host... even not as a host, more as an audience, that we also think Indonesians, or Jogja especially, that we are lacking of infrastructure, we don't have museums, we don't have good schools, we don't have bookshops, we don't have... we don't have that kind of thing as a tools to learn, but then, meeting someone from other places made me realise things that I think is natural, or taken for granted. For example, the technology of printing books here, of photocopying books—I mean maybe five years ago, I just realised for example in Netherlands you can't copy the whole book because of copyright. But here, even a photocopy shop will offer you a PDF, they already have database of PDF that students from certain majors are looking. So it's a custom made book. That kind of like different way of looking infrastructure

facility, technology—something that I see emerge of, made me realise by encounter with people of other background. So I think residencies is a form of work, or form of exchange, that really can challenge our idea of productivity, of values, because once... because it's based on the process, on the trust that both party, the host, the residents, the locals, the foreigners, will get something out of it although we're not sure how, or what. So it's a type of relations without goals. And I think that the most interesting artists with the most interesting residency programme is not enforcing something that you have to do, you have to produce something, but it's to build relations, or to create understandings.

KB: But to go back to the very first remark that you made, that is something that will happen in Indonesia but not necessarily in West Europe.

DN: I think it's related to professionalization in the arts. I'm sorry, you haven't finished your question...

KB: Oh no, cos I'm also thinking, among friends and people I know, there's so many things that can be said about NTU CCA's residencies, and in the two or three years they've been open, they've maybe hosted about a 120 curators, researchers, and artists. As someone within the community or is an arts practitioner, you don't really... you're not a witness to any of those things there, that's happening in the studio.

DN: I think that's because it is a bubble that as if being a residency artists or residency curators, that you have a distance with the daily life around you. Yea, but itself is a bubble. I mean, for someone who once did residency there, it's easy to only encounter people who only related to CCA or fellow residence, or someone from same circle or same sphere, like local artists or local curators. But very less contact for example with neighbours—who are the neighbours of NTU CCA? For example here, the contact are inevitable—it is always constant contact with others. Although maybe it's not as direct as another one—maybe you can only talk to fellow artists but you have to walk and see the neighbours perceive you, look at you, even ask you if you want to see batik or take ride in becak—o constant reminder that you are elsewhere. So I think in that sense, the more amount of contact during the time of the residency, of being in one location, really allow different type of results, of benefit, of impact, to appear. Do I make myself clear? I mean, for example, the becak driver, I think maybe many of them learn English by doing, because they are used with tourists or with artists-in-residence maybe. Like Pak Sarono, the cleaner in Cemeti, he can speak few English because of his encounter with residence. And also, maybe someone who lives here, maybe having warung next to Cemeti, like Pay Bey, also the same thing. And maybe it sounds superficial, like “ah, these people can speak English because there's foreign artists living around there”, but I think it's not only that, but also how our perception of the world are constantly in challenged whenever we encounter the others. But then this challenge becomes much and much limited to certain scope if the contact is also very less with the location. Maybe this can lead to a question like what does it mean to be in a location?

KB: Yea, definitely. I was trying to look a lot at two things, which is temporality and spatiality. But I think to really explore spatiality, as in the wider environment, is going to be a PhD thesis. But yea, I improved my bahasa from all the Gojek drivers—I keep taking the Gojek everywhere.

DN: I think locations, being in a place, displacement, that questions about benefit of traveling, of encountering others, is much layered, much complex, much—as I told you—contingent. I can understand for example how institutions like NTU CCA needs to assess the way they programme their residency when they think of how the location shape the residency instead of the question of impact. Because... how to say it... because... I think from every time... not every time, I only did this twice or three times—how to write report about project, there's always the question of impact—how many audience you reach?, how many women artist you invite?, how is the demographic of your audience?—that kind of thing. So there's a problem with impact because it always put this logic of quantity and it should be outreach to more people. Yet, I think it's not relevant to only see in fact from quantity but yea... no, no, no. I will revise my response...

I think there is this—Gita and I—we just had a conversation last night to arrange our schedule next year, and we found out that next year we will be traveling a lot. And we have to be careful not to travel a lot because we are starting a school here, and it's something we really want to invest our time because being here, and to focus on the new relations that we establish with different people. So we start to make this schedule, but then, when we see that “oh, this is too much”, then I said “maybe I should reject that proposal, maybe I should just stay here”—but then comes the consequences. I don't get the money because in KUNCI we are paid less. I mean, we are only paid part-time. So I have to find job elsewhere to support ourselves. And residency interestingly becomes one of our main sources of income. And I know some of my friends, artists most of them, they also rely themselves on residency to get income because their work are not saleable in the market, so being in residency is getting money. But then, then comes the concern of spatiality, of location, I feel I don't stay here long enough to really invest in my practice, because I always been in foreign places, I spend most of my energy to explain who I am rather than to do it really. So it's always like possibility, possibility, possibility, but to translate that possibility into practice, I need to be at home—but being at home doesn't pay me money. So then I talk with Gita that this is the vicious cycle of the residency—that you have to keep traveling in order to support ourselves. We also get money to host others to come. But then how to see this temporary encounters can be part of much larger network which has interests, which connect interests, even alliances, in different region or different countries to address issues—to connect the local and the global, to see that our problems is not really only ours but related to others, and it's a part of much corrupted bigger system, of economy for example. So that's why I like residencies that's more of giving time, not really forcing to produce something, that the idea of impact can be invented as we go along as the process.

KB: I also guess it depends on how much you can direct yourself to something—direct the direction of your residency. In order to make these connections

between what's happening in different places. Sometimes it's the process of uncovering that will take time. And then the moment you're constantly traveling between different places, it's always getting familiar then coming back and everything is unfamiliar again.

DN: That's true.

KB: But you mentioned in this essay and I thought it was really interesting, and I felt like maybe it was a suggestion when you said that "a meeting is not between the foreign and the local but rather between two travellers that cross paths". I don't know if since you've written that if you've thought through it, or have more thoughts about it.

DN: That's... now I remember... I wrote that sentence because I think I'm addressing to the notion of traveling not only as a mobility of bodies from one place to another, but it's also the movement of ideas, of the feeling of belonging, or attaching oneself to not only certain place but certain group, certain ideas. For example, that it's hard to put one person or in an individual in one fix category—she's Javanese, that she's not only Javanese, she's Muslim, she's a housewife, she's a worker, or he's an artist, he's also taking care of the children—so it's also a movement between one identity to another identity, it's constant changing. It's constant changing of being oneself. I see it as another movement that make everyone is a traveller on its own. For example, Gatari—she's working in KUNCI, but she's also active in MES56, and she's also involved in Bakudapan—she's moving from one community to another but who is Gatari? For example, she lives in Malang but she doesn't speak Javanese—that's very strange but that's the way she is. And she's graduated from photography department but she cannot take pictures. So that's how certain stereotypes are being constantly challenged once you realise that we have to go beyond the relation of host organiser, of local and foreigner, that there's no such thing as authentic local.

KB: No, there's no such thing as authenticity. Didn't Appadurai write something like that? Something about the native is always fixed in a certain locality, and he was also talking about the five scapes.

DN: Actually, I read a lot when I wrote that text. I read a lot of James Clifford's Routes.

KB: I could totally tell.

DN: That's how I get this statement that perhaps temporary inhabiting is a mode of being in today's world that's become more and more visible.

KB: Collecting all your remarks and statements—if we talk about anthropologists, this encounter is about challenging the knowledge or stereotypes of the other, and the idea of creating an increasingly cosmopolitan society.

DN: Yea, all the cosmopolitan become increasingly visible.

KB: I wasn't going anywhere with that question. I was just sort of like trying to wrap my head around what is this cosmopolitanism? Hasn't it always existed? Is it a good thing? Is it a bad thing?

DN: The thing is always both. I mean, for example, Gita—she did research on the mobility of artists during 60s and how, for example, during or after or before the Asian Africa Conference in Bandung in 1955—this idea that the south should somehow create alliance based on shared struggle towards imperialism and colonialism—and all of this region, they experienced colonialism, just gained their independence at that time. So I said, as a new nation it's important to see how we can see ourselves not as an individual or a—not only as nation, but also as community—in this world. How we share the same struggle? What kind of struggle? But also the alliance was not as innocent as we think they are because there are many politics involved—like a few dictators are part of this alliance as well. But in terms of the intellectuals and the artists, it's interesting how they create this bureau like writers' bureau, artists' bureau, journalists' bureau, and they try to be independent from the influence of the Cold War which happened at that time. And I think that's also the same departing points that are constantly being used by Biennale Jogja when they create this equator biennale—to learn about ourselves by mirroring others. But the problem with this kind of, I think for me, I see the problem is that it's being focussed too much even fetishizing the local—locality, like “this happens in Indonesia because it's an Indonesian thing or it's an Asian thing”. I don't say that local is not important, but to see local not as a one entity but it's always related to other localities, translocal, and how this network of translocalities can be the opportunity to learn about the global system that regulate us. The thing that that should always be in correspondence to each other—the local, the global and how to use this modes of thinking, of looking at our condition today, as a way to imagine a different future for example.

And so, back to residency, I think the real work starts when we are back home, or the place that we consider as home.

KB: I've always been interested in this idea of homecoming as well—after being away, the impact of that and what it means, and what goes on after that, which we don't see.

DN: I'm sorry to put more complex thinking, or to respond to your question with more complexities.

It's also interesting how we think we know what residency is, but when it comes to the practice, it's totally different from one organisation to another even if they share the same city. For example, a friend Agung Kurniawan is an artist. Alia told me that he's currently doing a residency with himself. And the way he do this, is he's doing a kind of... not internship, because I'm not sure if he also working there... but he spend time a lot in this mental hospital—I'm not sure in which area in Jogja—to observe patients—because the mental hospital will close down next year—because the government decided to put all the mental hospitals into one institution. So all the local mental hospital in each district will close, and they will send all to one hospital. I think it's

interesting because—I assume—he using this idea of residency as a way of organising time—to put one thing in his focus in one period of time. And that's his idea of doing residency. And to experience the distance—that it's not a familiar place in his daily life. So how residency can be self-organised in different place. I mean, that's one interesting example on how people doing residency. Or also residency that self-funded and based on the availability of cheap tickets to regions in Southeast Asia, and how these people who have the opportunity to direct their work because they've funded themselves—yea, how this can be done.

KB: Agung Kurniawan's example reminded me of the Artist Placement Group.

DN: Yea, yea, yea the Artist Placement Group. Like that, exactly like that.

I have a friend who is working as a stewardess in Air Asia, and she enlists me in her free ticket list. So each yea she will discuss with me and some other friends—like, the four of us—to decide to where we going to go with this free tickets. And interestingly, I always consider myself as a tourist whenever I'm doing this free ticket trip with my friends. And Wok say like, “why don't you use it as an opportunity to go to places where they don't invite you for residency but you use it as a residency? You organise the trip as a kind of residency—you meet fellow artists, curators, try to use that trip as a way to rethink my practices”—the usual thing that I always do in residency. I said “yea, that's true.” That means I have this fix definition of what residency is being practiced, and the difference with tourist.

KB: Yea, that's something that comes up a lot right, about whether an artist-in-residence is really just a tourist or a traveller? Like, what do they do that's really different anyway?

Anyway, thank you.

## **Interview with MES 56**

Members Wok the Rock

9 December 2016

Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Kamiliah Bahdar = KB

Wok = WK

Dholy = DH

Abud = AD

A few members of MES56 are present and they chime in often. Preamble before recording—MES56 has a bedroom for residency artists, and a bedroom for a member currently living there. At the moment that member is Abud. Artists can approach MES56 for a residency whenever, and MES56 and the artists will discuss an arrangement which is open. They do not have a structured programme. For example, artists can approach with whatever budget they have, with how long they would like to stay, and what they would like to do, and MES56 negotiates with the artists based on their capacity. The members of MES56 support the residency programme. For example, according to the interest of the incoming artist, they will attach a member with similar interests to help.

KB: So is there anything happening at MES56 now?

WK: No. These two months until February, we are preparing for new platforms. So we will change the platforms, change the forms of the organisation and the mission, and something like that, the structures. We always change the platform. We don't say experimenting about it but we always change cos like, for example like "ah, now we think it's too boring, it's not really work, or not really going well, or not really happening or something", so we think we have to rethink something and then we do a meeting, like very intense meeting, and try to find new direction. We always do that a few times.

KB: When was the last time you had this?

WK: Last time is 2011 when I was chosen at the director. No, 2012. No, early 2013.

KB: Is it cos Jogja is changing or the scene is changing?

WK: Yes, the scene are changing, especially for our internal proposes is also changed. And we need new direction, or new ways.

KB: To be relevant I guess?

WK: Yea, more relevant. More effective. More efficient. More hype and dynamic. So from when we started in 2002 until now, we still doing the same proposes, of mission—is we always still using what we think in the 2002. In 2002, at that time we need a space to show our works because at that time photography is not really accepted in contemporary art, but also not accepted in the photography scene in Indonesia. So in photography scene, they think that our work is not photography because sometimes we do this kind of archival photography stuffs and screen captures, scanning, something like that. So

they say it's not photography. It's more like into the arts. But the arts at that time also photography is not considered as a new media arts—it's like "ah, you do this kind of photography, you know, photography!" So at that time is urgency for us to create our own space, to show our works. But until now, we still think about it—we making exhibitions all the time: organising, making exhibitions, something like that. But now, photography has been accepted both in contemporary art and the photography scene. Our practices. And there are many alternative spaces to do an exhibition in Jogja—there are many, even café or restaurant or hotel, even hotel. So it's not urgency for us anymore. For me at least, I think it's not an urgency to do an exhibition. And now, nowadays there are lots and lots of demand from the young artists, like students, or young artists to learn something outside what they have in the university, in the art university. Also some people from other disciplines, like sociology or whatever, they interested to be an artist or to make an artwork, like art practices for the young people now and of course they don't get any education or knowledge about the arts in their university. So this big demand is made me to think that I need to change this platform—not making exhibition anymore but more like learning centre or working space for young artist to get in touch with each other and learn altogether by themselves. And yea, of course we will provide from experts if they ask. Well actually, we already doing that for long time as well.

KB: Like the creative workshops and the talks.

WK: Like hanging out, like a working space as well, here is a working space, anyone can come here to work. But the priority is always making exhibition. So not just change—we just swept the priority. So here it's more laboratory for people to learn, to work, and to have fun. And then, you can show your process to other place which is now a lot. And easy. It's easy to get. And also now we have lots of networks of galleries, or art spaces, anywhere. So we can help to promote.

KB: As someone you used to work in a commercial gallery, constantly programming exhibitions is very tiring. And it gets very boring.

WK: Yea, it is, it is. When you preparing—

[Dholy comes in]

KB: I still think exhibitions are still important. But nowadays, I kind of like having almost like a one year to work on an exhibition so it becomes like an entire project, and it's a lead up to an exhibition. So a lot of research, a lot of programmes that go with it, but in the end there's something—you bring together something to show or present. One of the things I'm really interested in as well, and there's a lot of potential also, is publications. But printing in Singapore is expensive, and publication takes a lot of effort. I think it might be harder than an exhibition cos it's the fact that when you publish something, it's gonna be there for the next 100 years. An exhibition might end after two months.

WK: Well, this production methodologies and process-based activities for me is more into the future than making exhibitions. Well making exhibitions is important to show the research, but I think we just tired to organise an exhibition. And making lots of more workshops and more activities, parties, hanging out, is more fun and is more productive, especially for the residency programmes—the artists will love it. Because they will stay here among the studios, among the people to get easy connected, and to have fun as well.

DL: And just with society.

WK: Yea, cos through workshops, it's automatically we engage with other collectives or groups or communities, or the peoples. So it's gonna be much more fun.

KB: So you think you'll still be doing residencies a lot in the future?

WK: Yea, I guess so. I guess so. I mean like not only international artists, but like locals.

KB: So like the residencies, the international artist residencies, you have a bedroom and a studio space for them to work in?

WK: [nods]

KB: And if they want to, they can do an exhibition after that?

WK: Well yea. Like I said, we don't have very fixed structure. It depends on the artist. If they only want to stay here and get in touch with the community, it's ok. So there's no obligation to do an exhibition. Just for a week here to hang out, to meet peoples. Or you can do very intense production—works and you need a show, something like that? Yea, we can deal with that. So it depends on the artists.

KB: Usually, what's the shortest and what's the longest they would stay?

WK: The longest I think is three months.

KB: And the shortest is maybe about two weeks?

WK: One week. One week is like you know, you come here to stay, to get in touch with the people, and to get in touch with the community here. And to know about the art scene here.

KB: So what kind of support would you give the international artists?

WK: Full support except money. You know like assistant—someone who will help you for everything. And then to get you in touch with the communities here. Of course we don't provide lots of facilities because we don't have lots of facilities. But we will get you in touch with people who can help you to borrow, to rent like that.

KB: Will a lot of it be relying on the collective itself? Like the people withing ME56?

WK: [nods]

KB: How big is the group now?

WK: The group—we have 18 members now.

KB: And they're all in Jogja?

WK: They're all in Jogja. They all have very different direction, or different interests. So usually like there's an artist-in-residence here, then we do like a short interview about what is your interests, and something like that, and then we get you in touch with our member who have similar interests. And then you can work with him—I mean like, he can assist you or he can help you to discuss the interests, we think that's very important.

KB: How do you screen your residents? Like, I'm sure you have said no before. How do you know they're the right fit for MES56?

WK: Screening yea. That's very difficult actually. That's very difficult, even for the very established institution. Actually, they don't have very proper screen you know. Of course we only look at their proposals and interests. That's it. And of course about the budget, because we don't provide anything. If you don't have any money, then "ok, let's make a plan or something to help you find support or something." But of course it's from the proposal and interest. And then also something like scouting—you know when we meet peoples and we like their works, and like the people—that's very important actually, we like the people—then we just ask them, "ah, do you want to do a residency at MES? We don't have any money, but we can help you. 100% support. Except money." The characters of the people—that's the one that I said even big institutions don't have it. I used to watch a movie, it's an American movie, about the selection of an assistant for CIA research leader, and it includes the interview or the researching about the people. Like "do you snore when you sleep?", "are you like people?", "are you feminist? Are you sexist?"—so many questions about you, even the way you drink—something like that—and if you got any trouble, how you deal with? Even researching you. For me it's important actually—because once we have very difficult people, very difficult artists. In 2010 [2014?]-she came to MES56 through our friend—

KB: Where's she from?

WK: She's from Greece. Our friend introduced us about her, and she come over. And then we talked about what she would love to do in her residency here. And at the time—she's very intelligent and very conceptual works, and we like that kind of works, and we accepted. And we just "ok, let's do it. Do you have money? Do you have any budget?", "oh yes I have", "ok, let's do it". If you don't have any budget, we can help you to find, something like that. Let's do it. And then—she's very difficult.

DL: During residency

WK: She's very difficult. I don't say she's a bad people. She's very difficult. Very difficult in doing social interaction with other people.

[Someone echoes "Not easy-going"]

WK: Yea, not easy-going and everything goes to very complicated. Actually it's very easy stuff, and then she always make it very hard, and very strong. And then our feelings and atmosphere becomes very stressful and very strong. Like uggggghhhh, something like that. Even she would love to call the police or something, and of course, it's very intense and very strong; one time one of our members get very angry with her about her visa, she make it very complicated, very very complicated, and then, our friend actually—he will help her for her document for the visa—and he is very angry, crash the paper and throw it to her. And then it becomes MORE difficult times for us. At the end, for the exhibition, not many people comes cos people don't like her. But we cannot say to her, and she was mad at me because she said we cannot do a proper publication because not many people come, so ahhh. It's very difficult, so it's about the person.

But how do we screen the person, the artist, if you apply from different country? It's impossible. From recommendation? Recommendation not really honest. Or if we know mutual friends we can ask, that's the easiest way. But if we don't know anything about them, well, we have to accept. Then we have to kick them out. Cos also like in Ruang Rupa, they had a residency artist from Mexico, like few years ago, like in 2007 or 2008. This guy, like the Ruang Rupa told me, this guy is always going out—always going out to a party, and always come back very late, and very drunk, everyday, and they never saw him progress work. Like he never work or something. So always going out and come back with girls, and always different girls, and always drunk and very messy. But actually they accept it, they accept him, because he is very nice project, or great artworks. And then one time, one night, he came back from a party—of course completely drunk—and then he sleep, and then he smoking while sleeping, and then the cigarette fell down to the bed, and it burnt. It almost burnt the house! So and then, Ade, the director of Ruang Rupa, he sent him back. And call the Mexican Embassy and ask them to deportation. It almost burnt the house. And it's been one month doing nothing. So we don't know something like that. Actually that's one of the problems in residency programme. That it's not easy—we don't know this people. And then after that, Ruang Rupa terminated the residency programme. Until now! They don't want to do it anymore. So only by recommendation or if they meet someone directly.

KB: That's a really bad experience. What is a really good experience like?

WK: Really good experience... I can say Dainam [Kim]. He's from South Korea. He cannot speak English at all—at all. But he is very very kind person, and he's very...

DL: Without proper English.

WK: He cannot speaking English at all. But he's always trying hard to get in touch with us—hang out and try to talk, to get in touch. And he's not only with us, but also for the community. Like the nearby warung—you know he get in touch with the shopkeepers and the people around. He gets very well known. And especially for Circle K shopkeeper because he loves to drink beer, and he always buy lots of beers. So he's become like very popular in the community.

DL: In the night he drunk, and wake up early morning to work.

WK: Taking pictures.

DL: And go around taking pictures for his project.

WK: His project is to take pictures of the pos kamling. Pos kamling is the security post that organised by local. So it's not a company—it's organised by the people, like a collective security post. So he found that it's interesting then he take pictures—so many pos kamling. All around Jogja. And he walk! And become popular of course in Jogja. If we go to any pos kamling with him, just passing through, "Oh, Dainam! Dainam!" And we don't know those people. Because he's not only taking the picture, but also hang out in the pos kamling.

DL: In touch with the people.

WK: So nice project, nice people. For us, it's the successful residency for us—engaging the community and also making good works, and good interaction.

KB: Does anyone live here?

DL: Abud lives here.

KB: Cos I'm thinking, from what you said, I think a good artist-in-residence can help re-energise the space while they're here I guess.

WK: So at his opening, lots of people come. Even we don't know these people. Just "ah, I met him somewhere. I met him!" He cannot speak English at all.

KB: Did he learn Bahasa?

WK: Very little. Very little. He just use like [imitates hand gestures].

DL: Eat chicken! [hand gestures] Drink drink! [hand gestures] And he cooking for us.

WK: He cook lots.

DL: Cooking, drinking and working. And wake up early, go around, take pictures.

WK: Until late afternoon.

DL: So the progress is so strong, because everyday he have a progress and always show us too.

KB: So usually each year, how many artists do you try to host?

WK: We never count. We never plan. So sometimes...

DL: Two or three.

WK: Yea, maximum we have three a year. Maximum three a year.

KB: Then how about local artists who do residency in MES? Do they also stay in the building.

WK: Yea we do. From Bandung.

DL: One month stay at MES, and doing works, and final research presentation in MES.

WK: Actually, for me personally, I'd like to create a residency that send or invite from Jogja to other islands in Indonesia. Or to bring them to come here. More focussing into that. It's very little opportunity for people from Makassar, people from Papua, people from other islands except Java. It's very rare. It's very rare.

KB: Actually, it's rare for people from Java to go to those islands right?

WK: Very expensive. That's the problem. Because of the structure. Transportation system and structure make it very expensive. For example, from Jogja to Papua, by flight, is the same price to go to Amsterdam. It's very very expensive. Because you know of the structures. For me, it's gonna be great if we can invite people from different islands in Indonesia. Java is very centralised.

KB: And we don't get to see what they're doing also. Like, we don't know what's happening.

WK: We know very little. We know very little. That's why it's important to do it, then we knows what's going on there.

KB: So what do you think... also looking at it from the audience's point of view, do you think having an artist-in-residence is also important for the local art scene or the community?

WK: Yes, yes, because they... simply we want to know what other people from different cultures or different countries doing. For example, like me, I'm always curious to see the exhibition or to get in touch or to get to know any residency artist who's doing a residency in Jogja. To learn. To know who are you, what kind of people in your country, what kind of culture you have. I think it's an interesting thing for people to see their exhibition.

KB: I was looking at the Co-Temporary exhibitions, do you have other kind of networks that you work with overseas? You also work very closely with the organisations here like Cemeti right? Like you guys were hosting a publication from a Cemeti artist-in-residence—there was a publication launch, Tourist Trophy.

WK: Yea, that time Lieven was doing a residency at Cemeti, and then he also interested into photography and we want...

DL: To do a portfolio photography and he interest to exhibit his photography works in MES.

KB: And he has a different work for Cemeti?

DL: Yes.

WK: Well in Jogja it's quite open and easy to do a cooperation between the art spaces or galleries.

DL: So Mella had a recommendation for Lieven Hendriks to be in MES.

WK: Yea, Mella was introduce him to us. Also, like three years ago, there was two artists that apply to residency with Cemeti actually, but at that time Cemeti already had a resident. And then Mella asks us if we can host them even if their practice is not photography. But we like their works, and it's good for us as well to work with them, to know about them, cos they quite unique: both of them have Indonesian parents, half Indonesian or something like that. We also want to learn about their experience as well.

KB: So aside from the Co-Temporary exhibition which was together with the Taiwanese OCAC, do you guys also have tie-ins or exchange networks working together on an artist residency?

WK: We have the exchange ideas or proposes, but with OCAC, it's not really official exchange programme like Cemeti with Asialink. Not really like that. Actually we don't have this official partner to do an exchange programme. With OCAC actually, they willing to do that, but they say it's hard for them to find the funding so they cannot make it official with MES56. So there's a will—"let's continue next year, let's see, if we got funding let's do again."

But I'm proposing a different direction for next year if they got any funding. Exchanging the space, not the artists. Or exchange the directors or the direction. Or staff.

DL: MES56 as directors of OCAC.

WK: Organisation exchange—like do you want to know about Indonesia, about collective Indonesia? Please come to MES56 and organise it. And we will come to Taipei and we will organise OCAC. Yes, exchange spaces, exchange organisation—direct action! Direct experience as well: "ahh, working in Taipei have to be like this, like this, like this." And they also like "ahhhhhh!" and they

learn and they know that this is Jogja ways, how people work here, how the cultures work here.

KB: I had the same experience in Bali as well cos I had to set up an exhibition. Cos I'm so used to working with professional art-handlers. It's a very different working experience—you literally have to stand there and watch them hang the work whereas in Singapore you go, yea 1.5 over there. And they put it up and I can work on my emails.

WK: We can work until late: "ahhh, I need to smoke" when working. And then jump in the roof barefoot: "no, it's ok. Still fine."

KB: I hope that happens. It's really cool

WK: Yea I hope so. Because the exchange project that they want to develop is to learn about collectivities and the connection with the political situation within both countries. And how is the government policy impact the exchange culture, cultural exchange, something like that. So for me, it's best not to send artists to make artwork, but let's exchange the organisation then we will learn.

KB: There must be some expectation from MES56. Do you at least expect them to do a workshop or a talk or really, they can come here and decide what they want to do?

WK: Like, for example, "ok, I want to do a research residency." Usually for a research, we ask them to do a presentation about who you are, and what is your research about. And then it's up to you to do a presentation about what you get during your residency. If not, it's ok. But we always want to do a final presentation because people want to know what you're doing here. And if you want to do an exhibition residency, actually we ask you do to a presentation the same—introduce yourself, your interest or something like that, and your plan. And then, we ask you to do workshops but it's not a mandatory—so you can do it or not. But it will be good if you do a workshop because it will engage with the community. And then a final presentation—you can do a presentation only if your work is not finished. Or you can do an exhibition as a final presentation. Presentations. Workshops. The additional is like lecturing, or group discussion.

KB: Or an open studio maybe?

WK: Open studio is not really matter in Jogja because studio is always open. Yea, it's true. My experience when I went to Australia for first time or in Europe for first time, there's open studio—"what is open studio?" Then, "ahhh, ok." Because they close the studio—they close the door. Really. Close the door. And no one knows what you doing, and then you open it and people come. But here, we don't have that concept—studio is always open. You can just come anytime and to talk. So yea, we don't have those kind of programme or open studio.

DL: Last time we have a programme for open studio...

WK: Not really an open studio. It's like a...

[Someone says, "squatting, squatting"]

WK: To turn the gallery space as a studio. And then ask people to come and be introduced; we make a publication to invite people. Now we have four rooms in there—four exhibition spaces. And so, we just say to people, now we turn the space into a studio, there are three artists and one researcher working there, and please come over.

DL: And final exhibition, they do a presentation about work-in-progress.

KB: Yea, then you show the process. Cos there's so much pressure to show finished artwork.

WK: I like what Mintio did for her residency at MES56. First she does the presentation to introduce about her practice and about who she is. And then she makes lots of workshops. And in the middle of her residency, she's doing like work-in-progress exhibition. But at that time at a different place—I mean, this is our new space. The old house. It's nice because her studio is not at MES56 so people are curious about it. Then she did the work-in-progress exhibition where she's doing the presentation and to show the work-in-progress materials. And at the end, she did the exhibition but at ICAN because she needs a bigger space to show.

DL: She collaborate with the ibu-ibu in Klaten.

WK: I think it's the best residency we had. Even if she's not come to MES very regularly, but she always get in touch, and she's working in different place. But what she do, it's really beautiful. And the progress... it's one-year residency. It's long-term residency. And the research is [makes sweet hand gesture] very nice—very nice works.

KB: And very different from her earlier works as well.

WK: Completely different. Completely different.

KB: She would never do that in Singapore.

WK: Because she's doing like video works, installation video. New media stuffs.

KB: I think her residency here is like a turning point in her career.

DL: Engagement with local community.

WK: And she's interested to do a similar space—like an alternative space, engage with the community—in Bali. Yea, her works is beautiful—this old print, on batik. And working in community engagement.

- DL: And she's a proper photographer with large camera to take a picture with ibu-ibu. Print on batik.
- KB: She brought her large format camera?
- DL: Yea!
- KB: Yea, I was thinking as well, do you think there's some kind of limitation to residencies? I mean, a lot of artists cannot do more than three months because they have a lot of commitments to other projects, or they have to do other things to make money as well, so they can't do a residency for very long. Do you see the former artists-in-residence coming back to Jogja regularly?
- WK: Yea. Not many, but there are few. There are few of them—not only continue, but some of them come back here to a new project.
- DL: Tim Woodward.
- KB: Do they do a residency somewhere else, or they come on their own? Do they come back to MES56?
- WK: Not really, because for us it's good for resident artists to get in touch with other collectives. And when they come here, they don't have to work with us again. If you want to work with us, it's ok—we love it. But if you want to do with other collectives that you met during your previous, that's also lovely. Broaden the networks as well. And it's also like a hub—MES56 also, we want this space like a hub—distribute knowledge to other collectives or community. I hope. I hope we will keep that on. But of course, few of them come back here again because they have a boyfriend or girlfriend.
- We had two application this year by students, like foreign students who study here. We not accept them because we know that they will use this residency programme only to continue their stay in Indonesia—no, we don't want that.
- KB: But how do you know?
- WK: Well we know. We ask people. We ask some friends. The easy one is to see or to look at that he or she has a local boyfriend or girlfriend or not. And during their stay here, do they going holiday in other places or not, like going out to Bali, going out to Lombok, going out to there and there and there—less work. Then just simply say that they might be want to live in Indonesia and to have fun, except—some people of course, some students, they going around Indonesia for a research or to do a community development which is fine, which is good.
- KB: But they wouldn't go to Bali. They would go to different types of cities.
- WK: Yea, like the beautiful places and just hanging out while having fun. Because there are lots of those kind of applications in Jogja, by exchange students. And usually the application is like "hi, I'm a painter. I studied painting now at

ISI, and now I'm also interested in photography, and I want to do a residency at MES, would you give us a letter of recommendation and..." Ok, you want to extend your visa. Then they send their photography works... and it's like "what kind of photograph is this?" Like Toraja, something like that. It's not easy to do a screen—it's not easy. Sometimes I always feel that it's better to have a good character of artists, or people, then best works. Sometimes. Sometimes I feel like that—"ah, as long as you're nice people"... but bad work? It's fine. You bring your knowledge and your friends or networks, that's it. Your work is bad? That's ok. Cos you know, some art spaces, or some art institutions, are willing to have international famous established artist to do a residency in Jogja, like bringing them here, but... for me still, is he a good people? Is he a nice people? Is he asik? That's very important. Like in Jogja Biennale in 2011, we working with the Middle East, and the co-curator is from the Middle East and he's quite well know curator—young and quite well-known and she invite all the established artists from the Middle East who had been good, or nice, experience to do an exhibition at Tate Modern—something like that, something like Guggenheim.

DL: Documenta.

WK: What they do here? Nothing! They only send their works. Some of them come here, but "I need an assistant" and they just sit at their hotel and "do that, do this, do that, do this" and never engage with the community here because "I'm famous, and it's hot here, and humid." And always going out by a cab. And the work is just like "ok, so-so."

KB: Do you find a difference between... aside from the established artists from the Middle East... do you find a difference between a really young artists who are doing their first residency or mid-career artists doing their first residency or people that have done residencies before? Do they approach their time here differently? Do you find someone with more experience... do young artists need more of a push, do they get lost? What do you see from the artist experience when they come in? What do you sort of observe?

WK: Some of them, they do that—like writing about their experience to a magazine or an art magazine, or to their blogs, and got interviewed. Also some of them get us connected to get in touch with their networks, to get opportunity. Got a few like that. But some are just back home happily. And then just disappear. Well it depends on the people.

KB: But how about when they're here? For example, when young artists come in and they've never done a residency, do you feel like you need to push them more, is their progress a lot slower? Do they struggle?

WK: Yes of course. Of course they struggle. Especially when young and never been to Asia—of course it's hard times for them. But we help them. We're not pushing them of course, cos it's hard time for them—with the food, and the climate. We help them to adapt with the environment firstly. We don't push them of course. We help them. But if they lazy, of course we push them—so hard. So hard.

DL: We bullying.

WK: Even crying. Tontey and Yahya cry. And Victor. He's from The Netherlands. He's very young.

DL: 23 years old?

WK: Very young and it's his first time in Asia. And for one month, it's ok for us, because he need to adapt here. But he learns very quickly and he's doing good work. But one time, just maybe three weeks before his exhibition, he become very lazy. He become very very lazy.

DL: Middle of residency, he had an accident. Because he goes to club and got drunk and accident.

WK: So we pushed him, and he cried.

DL: And his mama! "Mama..." [Imitates crying]

WK: If you lazy, we push you. Sometimes very strong. If you lazy and you not working so well, we do very hard things for you. Like Tontey yea... Tontey is from Jakarta. Also Yahya from Jakarta. "You young, you should be working fast, not slow, you have to think more!"

DL: "Easy to make it", "Make better!"

WK: We do like internal discussions with the artists, like brainstorming.

KB: More about the production of their work, like sourcing materials and everything... do they have a hard time finding materials here? Or, getting their things printed?

WK: Not really. Cos getting materials is quite easy here and very cheap. Of course we don't have particular stuff—we don't have it, like if it's only available in Japan. You cannot get it here. But generally, it's very easy to find. And we assist as well to find materials.

DL: And our member has a print shop—good quality. Support for the residency artists.

WK: Big discount.

KB: Yea, cos Jogja is the art city of Indonesia, so in terms of like for artists to produce their works, it's easier for them. But maybe it other places, it's a lot harder.

WK: Like, for example in Jakarta, it's easy to find materials, but the space of the work is small. It's hard to find a proper space that you need in Jakarta. In here, it's quite easy to have a space—a big space. Of course, it's not easy—well, it's quite easy, it's very possible to find. And materials. Yea, usually on materials to produce artworks—most of them are amazed when they

experience it. “Ah, it’s cheap. It’s easy to find. I can make it big installation now!” –something like that.

KB: About the organisation as host and the artist as guest—what are your thoughts on the idea of hospitality and like hosting guests in the house?

WK: It’s very important. Hospitality it very important for us. Very very important. Like I said, it’s better to have a good person. Because we give, or we try to give, good hospitality—warm, very warm feeling, something like that. But of course, some of them maybe a bit feel uncomfortable, cos we do lots of party here cos we stay in this house. We have very nice room for resident artists, but we do quite lots of party here.

DL: When we have artist-in-resident, one or two weeks we always make party.

AD: Suddenly party.

DL: “Ok, I will cook!”, “Ok, I have a music!”—party.

WK: Sometimes it’s finish at like 3am. If then they don’t join the party, then like “oh my god, can you shut the music up. Guys please go home.” And we don’t have hot water. So they have to cook the water first then bring it to their bathroom. Maybe the noisy problem. But if you like party, you’ll love it. Of course you will love it.

But yea, if you feel uncomfortable about the noisy after midnight, you can tell us, and we try to find you other place to stay.

KB: Is there anything else you guys would like to add?

WK: Well, I want to add something. This residency structures—like presentation, and the workshops, then making exhibitions for the final presentation—it’s not mandatory I think. We need to find another way, a new way, to do that, to implement those kind of events—like presentation, like workshops than final exhibition.

KB: Do you mean it’s not mandatory, or do you feel like the audience gets bored cos it happens all the time? As in, you’re saying that you want a different way to reach or engage the audience?

WK: Yes. How to engage the community? I think it’s more important. Because the idea of residency programme is exchanging—exchange cultures. So it must be more into that. Maybe you don’t need to an exhibition, or you don’t need to do a presentation, but like a formal presentation. Maybe presentation can be held in different way to get engage with the people—doing an other way. For me, it’s much better. Or workshops as well—what kind of workshops? It’s more involved with the community because you want to exchange your culture, or your ideas, or your knowledge.

KB: The community here is people around? Not necessarily the art community?

WK: Yea, the peoples. Not only the art. Because for me, it's nice to see... for example, like Mintio—after her stay here, and then she develop. That's a cool for me—that's the best research for a residency. Like you find something new—"it blew my mind, and it changed my mind." Then you become more confident, you become more successful, and broadening the network that you have—something like that. It's more important. To push you that, so you have to really really doing social interaction here, then too busy producing something. Like what you said, "working harder, partying harder." With peoples, and you came back and become new peoples and you have bigger network because you have the network here—you know lots of artists, or any collectives or whatever, and you bring it to your place and you introduce, and exchange more for other people to come here, to bring people here to come there—that's more important for research for residency programme. Not just "hi, I just come back from Jogjakarta and I had an exhibition", "What's going on there? Did you meet him? Did you meet her?", "No, no."—it's stopped there, it's dead-end user. We don't want that.

KB: Thank you.

### **Interview with Ace House Collective**

Co-founder and member Gintani Swastika

12 December 2016

Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Kamiliah Bahdar = KB

Gintani Swastika = GS

Uji Hahan = HH

KB: How old is this space actually?

GS: Since 2014. So we rent the space at the end of 2013. And then, we renovate. And like meeting to prepare what's kind of programme, what we have to do with the space, and then we launch the space on 2014. March 2014. So since 2013, like renovate and we have an intensive meeting for the programme, for the blah blah. Because—so Ace House Collective is basically start on 2011. But then we thought that time, we thought that physical space is not our urgency. So yea, keep brainstorm. That's after we graduated from the art school, from ISI.

KB: So you guys all graduated around 2011?

GS: 2009, 2010.

KB: Are you all from the same angkatan?

GS: Yea. So actually we are hang out friends, like classmates also. Like most of the members are from class 2002, printmaking department. And I'm 2003, printing-making department also—eh, majoring in printmaking, in the visual arts department—no, fine art department. Visual art faculty, fine art department, and majoring in printmaking. And the other is from... one of our member is from painting department—so most is from printmaking. Even then, most of us is doing painting.

KB: And Hahan is the ceramicist?

GS: Hahan is printmaking, but most of his works is painting and sculpture. But then he invited to Jakarta Contemporary Ceramics Biennale.

KB: To present sculptures?

GS: Yea, ceramic sculptures. And then one of our member is from economic department. So Elia is actually one of our member. So start of 2011, we have 21 members, and then... there is a competition held by Jogja Biennale—the parallel event. And so, actually we were mostly hanging out together, but we are never under one name. But then after we graduate, since most of us is not originally from Jogja, but... —I mean, I'm originally from Jogja—but then the other is like, they didn't have any thought to go back to their hometown. And actually our generation is also part of the Asian booming market, which was around 2007. And during that time when we were still at art school, the

price is already high—not really high, but then you can imagine like when you were still a student, we can sell our artwork for lets say up to 5 million rupiah.

KB: So how does that affect Ace House Collective? So there was a reason to continue being an artist?

GS: I think for us—sell or not sell, is not part of the focus. Because since we were in the art school in the uni, we doing lots of... before we run the space, we often initiate small exhibition like self-independent, self-organising exhibitions—in one generation with friends. Like, we used a friend's house to present our artworks. And Ace House generation, our generation, is somehow as a scapegoat from the older generation, from the senior, because our artworks they say is un-political—there's no issues. Yea, during the Suharto era, we were in elementary school, high school, but then after we graduate from high school, when we enter arts school, it's over. So somehow... like Agung Kurniawan, he said that our generation as a celebrating generation—like, no political issues, background, blah. But at that time, the big issues is between Bandung and Jogja young artists—there is an article, an essay, in newsletter, he's talking about vis-à-vis Jogja and Bandung. Like Bandung is more conceptual, more clear, more western thought let's say, comparing to Jogja which more agraris, and norak...

KB: What is norak?

GS: Norak is like kota-wannabe.

KB: Oh. So still rural?

GS: Yea, rural, semi-urban. Yea, like typical stereotyping. So yea. But then, our generation is actually the first wave... not the first wave... the first wave is maybe the generation of Eddie Hara... maybe let's say the second wave of pop visual culture which is now there are no difference between the younger generation. But at that time, the art scene is doesn't accept our works.

KB: Because it was political?

GS: Yea, it wasn't political. And then like, in the market, our Ace House members' works is like dark and tengkorak, because most of the collectors Chinese, they didn't want to buy because it's not good for the feng shui.

KB: So you had to make your own exhibitions?

GS: Yea. But then suddenly, during the booming market, there are lots of galleries—lots of people building new galleries, running new galleries.

KB: In Jogja?

GS: In Jakarta. Suddenly we are invite by the exhibition... —we never invited to the exhibition but then that year was like... like that's very prestigious moment to invite...

- KB: So that was during when Ace House Collective was already formed?
- GS: Before. Like 2007 and 2009.
- KB: But has the market slowed down?
- GS: Yea, 2009 and 2010. So at the time... Ace House is also part of our reflection because what we'll do... not what we'll do, but we already choose Jogja is our base let's say... so since no one back to their town, then what we do? What we have to do now? And the new strategy, the new method? It's just... first it's we make a collective to update each other. Because after we graduate from the school there are no one space as our meet space let's say. So, Ace House is our first... like, we have meeting—not meeting actually, like weekly hang out, weekly meeting. But yea, it's quite serious topic—like, what we should do, everything. More to “what's the new art world scene?”—it was on 2011. So we choose the place, and then usually we meet on Sunday at 3pm until late to talk like everything. Because on 2004, when we were in early student, most of us is went to, or hang out to, another alternative space in Jogja. Because at that time, Sewon ISI is very quiet—very quiet, like only campus—there are no more activities except everyone going to school and then going back to their home, to do their works, blah blah. Then, after the school, mostly we went to north cos there's lots of gigs, lots of opening exhibitions. So yea, that's our activities when we were as a student. Then mostly we hang out at Kedai Kebun—me, I was working at Cemeti as artist assistant. Like the other boys is hang out in MES56 and Kedai Kebun or IVAA or YSC—dulu sebelum IVAA?
- KB: Oh, Yayasan Seni Cemeti.
- GS: And there is another alternative space, but now is already gone. So make a space is also part of our reflection and contribution to the younger generation.
- KB: Cos I'm looking at the space—and you told me a lot of the people in Ace House have a print-making background, but now they're doing mostly paintings—so why did you select more of a gallery space? Rather than a different type of space?
- GS: Gallery space rather than a?
- KB: Maybe a workshop space, or a studio?
- GS: Apa ya... yea, of course, we have another activities, but yea, I think... that's part of our... because our background is visual arts, so we need a gallery to present the artworks. I think that's the main idea.
- KB: Do you still feel having exhibitions is important?
- GS: Yea, yea. Now, nowadays, it's very important also. I mean, I know in Jogja there is a lot of exhibition—yea so much, yea, over—but then like, we thought we still need physical space to present the artworks because also,

there's lots of group exhibitions, not solo—it's very rare to find solo exhibition in Jogja. Actually, we also have another space—the shop and the small space. And it's also a space for young artists, like everyone, to present his or her solo show too. But mostly... because we have small space, like maximum for its exhibition is five people.

But because this programme is for young artists under 28 [referring to current exhibition]. We have programme called Three Musketeers programme. So this is our second time. The first is in 2014. But then during that time, MES56 and also Kedai Kebun Forum also initiate—so this is mentorship and semi-residency programme—so during that yea, MES and KKF also initiated the mentorship programme. We made a collaboration with them, and then initiate Kaleidoscope—that's the first platform. It should be a biennale for young artists under 35. Actually I'm the director and Dina is the curator but then we still think about the next... what should be the next platform of the Kaleidoscope... it should be on 2007 already but then we still thought that maybe it's better on 2011 because every two year there is the Jogja Biennale—there's lots of events. And during the biennale we always... not we always... but most of us is maybe getting busy. So yea.

Ah yea, so this is the second time. So we made an open submission. The first year is under 30, and the second year is under 28. But next we will be more lower, because most of them are 22 years old.

KB: So the mentorship and semi-residency—what's the structure like? How does it work?

GS: So the applicant—on the proposal they have to mention aside from their works, their CV, and also motivational statement. They have to mention two of our Ace House members for their mentor, and then we will give them one person to make it cross-perspective, so there will be mentoring by three people. So each participant who's selected will be mentored by three. And then we also have a guest lecture based on their needs, and like studio visits. So the first year we had 16 applicants—we have from Semarang, Solo, Jakarta, Bandung, Surabaya. But mostly still in Java.

KB: So how long is the programme?

GS: Three months.

KB: Then they come here and stay?

GS: Yea, yea.

KB: You guys provide a place?

GS: Yea, yea. So the first year is only one from Bandung, two other is from Jogja, and then this year is from Jakarta and the first [artist in the space] is from Surabaya—but he is originally from Madura. Yea, we have a first activities is they have to... we have a public talk—ask them to introduce themselves to the public and then their previous works, and then they have to make their

works in Jogja also, and then in the end, there is the exhibition—we call it critique session to invite the public to give their feedback.

KB: In the second round there were more applicants?

GS: Yea, 24. So the next two exhibition, we invite the unselected participants to present their works, then to like criticise our... from what the ideal as the perspective from the younger generation.

KB: So really engaging with the much younger generation.

GS: Yea, we still use the same activities with Cemeti, because Cemeti is the first who run the residency—I know it's not the first, but they the longest and also consistent—but then of course we have mentoring programme which is quite intense.

KB: So what's everyone's average age at Ace House?

GS: Most of us was born early 80s, so the oldest was born in '81 and youngest is '85. I'm '84. Then we also invite Elsa... there's lots of young artists and we also invite Elsa as our bridge to the younger.

KB: She's much younger?

GS: Yea.

KB: Also from ISI?

GS: No. From UGM, sociology department. Now she's still in her final year...

KB: So aside from Three Musketeers, do you have any other residency programmes?

GS: We don't have a regular programme for residency. Because... actually funding is not the main—yea, it's quite the main... we feel that we are not really ready to host a residency from abroad. Yea, there is a proposal to—they want to have residence in Ace House. Start of 2014, we have a programme called Hijackkk Studio because the first residency, there is two of our friends—actually I meet them during the curator forum in 4A in Sydney—and they want to make an Asia trip and want to learn more about Asia's art scene, and one of the destination is in Jogja, and they want to stay a month in Jogja. Then during the month, I offer them “why you not use our space as your studio?” And their name is Jack and KK—Australian. So why we name it Hijackkk is cos like “hi” and “jackkk” with triple k... cos, “ok, you can occupy our space for a month. You can do anything.” That's one is before we rent the room, so they stay at **Bu Garnisa's house** [30:49] for a month, the hotel nearby. And then they use our space as their studio. So that programme is dedicated to them since they are our first. At that time, our first year, so we still like “how to manage the residency programme?” Then next will be one Korean artist—she also proposed us to have residency in Ace House. On 2015 there is one artist from Taiwan.

- KB: But do you know them personally from before?
- GS: The next one is not. We still preparing for the... yea, if we host residency, especially from abroad, what we have to do since we don't have any funding? And what's the difference? We still think about that—like, temporary stay, and then like hosting is quite... Dina say "80% of our time is hosting"... and what is the... I don't know... we still think about what kind of residencies and yea.
- Because also... I don't know... this is part of my opinion—I mean, not opinion—when we held the artist talk or exhibition with overseas artists, the audience is not much—the audience is less comparing with the local artists. I don't know, I still curious about why. In Jogja it's very hard to get audience if the artist is from overseas.
- KB: So 3M is the only residency in Ace House with local artists?
- GS: Yea, it's Indonesia. Actually now we start our new programme, our next programme—so we have one of our friends, he had a space in Hartono mall, the biggest and the newest mall in Jogja, and one of our programme is also residency. But that one is hopefully not from local but also overseas can be part of it. So they will stay in mall—actually, this is still idea, but like we are very curious about... the project called Mall Contemporary Art Centre since there is a lot of contemporary art centres, like this institution is everywhere. There's lots of abbreviation like CCA, or OCAC, like MCAC. So we try to imitate this in the mall—like usually when you go to the museum there is a museum shop—there will be an MCAC shop. There is a space, and in the space we have like various activities programmes is the residency. So they have to respond the limitation of the space... so what we talk in the programme is the limit of the space, I mean the regulation, you know it's very uncomfortable to make works in the mall—it's not your comfort zone. There is no wet toilet, like if you need to take a shower—like this regulation. Or working overtime because they close at 10pm. Most of us will keep until late cos doing our works.
- KB: So I wanted to ask a bit more about Three Musketeers? Where are they from?
- GS: Two from Jogja and one from Bandung.
- KB: What's it like for them? They would have just graduated from school?
- GS: Two from Jogja is not yet graduate—still art student. Also two of them is from ISI—one from printmaking department and one from graphic design department. Have you met Aria?
- KB: I don't think so.
- GS: And then the one from Bandung, she's already graduated.

[Hahan comes in]

KB: What was it like for them doing a mentorship residency programme?

GS: It's like... how? They thought it's very intense, and so mostly one of the reasons why they want to join the programme—most of their reason, or the big motive, they want to learn aside from the formal education. Because let's say, mostly if they come from printmaking, they have to work with printmaking background. Or graphic design. But mostly is not really change the medium—like the one from Bandung, usually she's work with stitching and fabric, but in the 3M project, she made sculpture. Like very new for her. And the two other is—the one from printmaking department, he worked with hand drawing. But he can explore—that is, the theme or the issues is the one that he cannot present in school. The lecture will not accept. And like also, the one from graphic design, he made interactive works and more to photography. And the mentorship programme is also part of Ace House member to learn—it's also to keep learning. It's like mutual and two-way, from the mentor and the participant.

KB: Then how about for this one? [referring to current exhibition]

GS: Most of them, they said it's very intense.

KB: Do they meet with the mentors every week?

GS: Every week, yea. So each of them, they have a small group. So we have big group, contain all of the mentors and three of the participants—totally 10 people in the one big group. That's for weekly meeting. So each group have to update the progress of each participant, but during that time, the small group they have specific meeting. So small group then big group. If we invite one lecture, everybody have to attend. And if we go visit studio, everyone goes. So everyone can learn what she or he needs to.

One from Surabaya, one from Jakarta, and one from Jogja.

KB: All three are still in school, or they've graduated?

GS: No one graduate yet. This is their final year—three of them.

KB: So they're doing this cos they wanted to learn from outside of their school.

GS: Yea.

KB: Yea, it's very hard for me to tell what their background is. The first one is probably from painting background?

GS: Two of them—they were from... pendidikan apa ya?

KB: Research?

- GS: No, no, no. Not academic. Because two of them are from universitas negeri—like public university. Most of public university... like Yogyakarta public university.
- HH: So the university itself direct the strand to be teacher, teaching. So it's specific. So they have visual art department, but they learn all the technique—but it's more for after you finish, you can using for teaching.
- GS: Art teacher.
- HH: Every big city we have. Almost we have. It's a bit different from ISI or IKJ or ITB. Because they're more specific to make art.
- GS: That's why they feel inferior. Because like, "we're going to be teacher, not as an artist".
- KB: And it's also very hard for them to get access to the art scene right?
- GS: Yup, yup.
- KB: Cos if I look at the CV, a lot of the artists that get shown are from ISI.
- GS: Yea, yea.
- HH: I think for us, the student for that university is always more progressive itself because they trying to learning more than the student who study in ISI or IKJ we feel.
- GS: IKJ is less. Because somehow they feel overconfident. That's true.
- HH: And always celebrate as art student.
- GS: Now lots of young artists from UGM.
- KB: Oh, UGM has an art department as well?
- GS: No, no, no. No. Now it's getting lots from aside ISI or ITB or IKJ. IKJ now is less. The one who is active in Jakarta is Universitas Negeri Jakarta. The same one that train teachers. Do you heard Serum? It's an art space in Jakarta. Mostly they were from UNJ.
- KB: Do you know what the previous batch of Three Musketeers is doing now? They're still in school?
- GS: Yea, they're still in school. Just got from my friends, from Tontey actually, one of them, Sakinah, there is an article about her in Nylon Indonesia.
- HH: So actually, this artist Sakinah, is in UNJ—a lot of persons talking about what she's doing before cos its interesting.
- KB: Is there anything else you want to add about Ace House?

GS: Are you curious about where we get our funding?

KB: Yea, definitely!

GS: So we are self-funded, but it's mix I think. Like, on the first and the second year, we got support from Hurley—the surfing brand from California—since Hahan is the brand ambassador for Hurley. But then he doesn't get fees from Hurley, but the money goes to Ace House to run the project. But it's not permanent.

KB: So that's only every year?

GS: Every project. So we have to propose the project.

HH: But almost all the project, they take it

GS: But still it's not... yea, as long as we still pay the rent for two years. So each year, total is 25 million rupiah—storage, two residency room, and the shop. So for two years, it's 50 million.

HH: No, with shop it's 32 million.

GS: Oh yea, for its 64 million.

HH: But this, the shop itself we collaborate with one of the friends who often selling brand Gildan—more tshirt and cap. So we working with him, so it's like collaboration. We split the rent fee.

KB: So the contract for the place is every two years?

HH: We trying every two years, because we decide to really specifically what we want to doing the two years. First period we want to promote Ace House the name. So we doing a lot of the project, a lot involved with the young person. Make person know name of Ace House. The second period, we are trying to work with the collectives around Indonesia.

GS: Now Hurley not support us anymore. They have a new management. So this is what we do before we were working with Hurley [shows portfolio of prints compiled into books on laptop]—we make book set, compile from each of our member works, so we make it limited edition.

HH: So the book set is actually a work—a book. Actually, it's like we make a printmaking printing for 10 edition, and we compile in one book. We try to sell that.

GS: This is the first book set for the first project—for the parallel biennale event in 2011. It contained 18 prints. We realise we have product, so why we don't sell our products. Each artwork is 10 edition print, so total 11 or 12—10 for the works, and 2 for artists' proof. Then we make five edition according to target

of the fundraising. So let's say 50 million rupiah—we sell it for 9.5 million rupiah. And this is the second—on the second we doing with etching.

HH: The idea for make this stuff—because we thinking we want to involve our friends, we don't want to only make proposal and send to big institution for funding.

GS: So we send it to friends, to the artists, to the collectors, to everyone—to the potential. We send it through email first—the email said, “if you'd like to support our project”.

KB: So when you sell the works, the money is used for Ace House?

GS: Yea. And this is for Kaleidoscope. This is what we made for Kaleidoscope. And since the three institutions have different artistic artworks: so Kedai Kebun, they made etching print, Ace House with silkscreen, and MES with photography. So three of us can be as edition right? So sell it as edition. Four artists for each institution—so 12 prints. And 10 edition book set. Each is 15 million rupiah, exclude shipping.

It's interesting, cos the first book set—FX Harsono buy it, and then Agus Suwage. The other is young collector, another collector from Malaysia. It's not big collector.

HH: They have same spirit as us—same music, so they know. Before they collect the book set, they talking to us.

GS: They send us email with questions, very detail. There's lots of questions. And then most of them, they come to Jogja like to see, and then talk to us.

HH: For the Kaleidoscope itself, we still have seven. And we make product for Kaleidoscope.

GS: So we do two fundraising—first is the book set, and the second is merchandise.

HH: So the product itself is actually representing the Indonesian artists—the artists we have respect for and really beyond their time, so we choose several of artists, so we trying to find what they represent to us. So we make kuachi.

GS: So kuachi Ade Darmawan. It's also part of to promote the event and also to give information about artists, or art history, and the practitioner or the professional in work.

KB: Why is Ade Darmawan kuachi?

HH: So the kuachi is from bunga matahari—is a sunflower.

GS: It's actually very local joke. During that time, he has relation with Mia Matahari. So kuachi with Ade Darmawan—renyah metropolitan, gurihnya sokongan. We have tagline for highlight. Metropolitan because he is the

founder of Ruang Rupa and mostly Ruang Rupa talk about urban metropolitan thing.

HH: Renyah is more like crunchy. Easy to eat. And gurihnya sokongan. Gurih is like salty.

GS: It's like good flavour of funding.

HH: Sokongan is funding.

GS: Like you got funding through the metropolitan issues. Then there's a short biography of Ade Darmawan: "Ade Darmawan is the founder of Ruang Rupa. His works is about blah blah."

HH: But we try to use our language itself because we want to get the young person to know. So the bio itself is not really like bio.

GS: And this is kopi hitam Rifky Effendy—the curator from Bandung. Mostly he's working with young artists. So the tagline is: pahit melecet. Because kopi is pahit, and melecet is like... like rising star.

HH: Promote the young artists.

GS: And he often to drink coffee. When we meet him, he always bring coffee. Farah Wardani ubi ungu: lupa menatah, lupa sejarah. So you know, she's basically archivist.

HH: Forget to organise, you will forget your history.

GS: Me and Hahan, and Pak Agung (Kedai Kebun), and Dholy (MES56) who create the product. So each of institution we send the representation as gold-digger. To get the funding.

KB: I love how Ugo Untoro is moonshine.

HH: When people think of Ugo—he's always drunk.

KB: They know you guys are making this?

HH: Yea, he come to our presentation.

GS: We call them first to get permission. Mas Enin also support. So we make pencil for Mas Enin. And the pencil is the hotel pencil—when you write it's very sharp but somehow it's not dark. You know the cheap hotel pencil.

We also make sambal pecel Titarubi.

HH: Cos Titarubi is very straight to the point.

GS: Bahasanya pedas.