Epilogue: Future Tense

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This volume was conceived in what seems now the relative calm of 2019 and reveals the complex social and political conditions that have underpinned the development of art in Indonesia over a period of more than 70 years. It grew out of a conference at The Australian National University held in conjunction with a retrospective exhibition at the National Gallery of Australia. That exhibition featured art from the period of intense creative, political and social change that has unfolded in Indonesia in the decades after the fall of the autocratic New Order and through the proliferation of public expression that was fostered by Reformasi, as well as recent events that have been characterised by some scholars as ‘democratic regression’.¹

As we moved forward with our plans for the book, the world shifted on enormous and minute scales: nations around the world, including our own, battled months of unprecedented extreme weather events and climate-induced disasters. Barely had the air cleared when the World Health Organization declared a global pandemic that forced the closure of public institutions including our own university. Confined to our territorial borders, and often to our own homes, as millions around the world suffered and died from COVID-19, we have questioned the place of art and art history in such a context. What meaning can we find in our efforts to compile a volume that reveals the complex social and political conditions that have underpinned the development of fine arts in Indonesia, when Indonesians are suffering grief and loss on a scale that defies documentation? What is the purpose of art in times so unpredictable, uncertain and painful? We have persisted through this existential doubt in part because we see that our colleagues, friends and

family in Indonesia continue with their own work: creating, expressing and responding to the conditions created by the pandemic; adjusting their lifestyles from peripatetic artworkers to housebound creatives; and maintaining a vigorous and rigorous discourse around what it means to make art and contribute to society in Indonesia and the world.

This discourse in essence encompasses the book’s broader themes: the artistic ideologies that underpin a continuous faith in the expressive power of all kinds of art; the particular responsibilities of an artist to their own society; and the issues of identity—religious, gendered, ethnic, regional and more—that have emerged in the art discussed in the preceding pages of this book. It is a living discourse, shifting, changing, resolving and dissolving as the tenacity of the individuals, and their experiences of the world in which they live, are brought to bear. In this Epilogue, we also wanted to capture something of the urgency of this state of play in Indonesian art today.

Art and artists have long held an influential position in Indonesian society—in politics, in movements for social and environmental justice, community development, education, commercial design and contemporary life. As everywhere, Indonesian society is now in unprecedented times. After decades of enormous social change on global and local scales, what role will art and artists play in Indonesia’s future? We invited five practitioners from diverse sectors within the theory and practice of Indonesian art to respond to this question in a public forum entitled ‘Arts and Artists in Society: Pathways for Indonesian Art in the 21st Century’ held, in the spirit and necessity of the times, as a webinar via video link. Through this focused and significant forum, we aimed to identify some starting points to carry forward from this closing chapter into future research and practice.

We identified five key areas for exploration, based on our most recent observations and the long-term issues raised by contributors to the book. These were:

1. curatorial practice and its contribution to intellectual debate on the national and international stage
2. art history/historiography and its contribution to understandings of the role of art in broader Indonesian history
3. artistic and curatorial practice outside of the major centres
4. interdisciplinary collaboration in experimental and research-based art
5. pedagogy and politics in artistic practice and the emergence of new directions within old discourses in Indonesia but also globally.
To gain a deeper understanding of the significance of these issues in Indonesia today and into the future, we invited the five practitioners to reflect on their experiences and to speculate on the possibilities for their fields. Art historian, then at Cornell University, Dr Anissa Rahadiningtyas spoke about art history and collaborative research and practice. Artists I Made Bayak and Karina Roosvita talked about established and emerging areas of art practice. The challenges of curating art beyond the major metropolitan centres were addressed by Arham Rahman, who has worked from inside and outside Sulawesi on projects such as the Makassar Biennale, and by Alia Swastika, who examined the shifting roles of curators on the national and international contemporary art stage.

What emerged from this coalescence of diverse art practitioners was a palpable sense of the continuing, and deepening, intersections between these themes and the themes in earlier chapters of this book. However, it was also clear that there are distinct new pathways—in part engendered by the enormous social and technological shifts that have taken place since this book project began. These are: first, the impact of the largest and longest global pandemic of modern times, coronavirus, and its attendant impacts on mobility and proximity; and, second, shifts in attitudes to human rights, political engagement and ethno-religious visibility in Indonesia since the fall of the New Order in 1998.

Visibility through Practice and Theory: Absences and Erasures

As observed by our discussant Wulan Dirgantoro in her summary of the perspectives offered by the speakers, there was a focus on bringing visibility to the ‘absences and erasures’ in art practices, art communities and art historiography in Indonesia. The particular phrase ‘absences and erasures’ emerged from Anissa Rahadiningtyas’s examination of the role of religion, in this case Islam, in shaping modernist art practices in Indonesia. It may also remind readers of the important work over recent decades to redress the deliberate erasure of women artists from art history canons, in Indonesia and around the world, as examined by Alia Swastika in Chapter 8 of this book. Dirgantoro extends the scope of this redressing

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of ‘absences and erasures’ from the under-examined histories of Islamic art to encompass the ‘public and collective memory’ of the anti-communist purge in Indonesia in the mid-1960s, and also includes gender and environmental issues that remain unresolved, if not exacerbated, as a consequence of contemporary developments. Explicit in these efforts are movements to decolonisation and decentring, both of art historical canons imposed by Euro-American norms, and also of centralised governance inherited from departing colonial powers in the mid-twentieth century and exploited by the New Order regime. What do these movements mean for ordinary Indonesians, for minority identity groups, for those newly empowered and for those more recently marginalised?

### The Expressive Power of Artwork

The expressive power of artwork continues to be directed by many artists to imagining and enacting social change, often through collective action. Relationality—collectivity, interdisciplinarity, responsibility, tension between those who are considered inside and those outside or other—is a strong feature in the challenges and opportunities faced by those working in the arts in Indonesian today. Artist and arts organiser Karina Roosvita presents a diagrammatic reflection of the predominant (not to say exclusive) preoccupation with collaboration, in which she positions interlocking circles of ‘writers’, ‘researchers’, ‘artists’ and ‘activists’ so that they overlap and create a central, shared space that she labels ‘collaboration’.

Rather than undermining the expressive power of art, this collaborative approach is seen to accommodate the kind of multi-perspectival and evidence-based movement needed to address the complex problems that Indonesia, and all nations, are facing today. Dirgantoro notes an:

> ongoing concern and role for art and artists with and in communities, to effect social transformation and positive change, especially related to climate change and gender … these issues cannot be solved by one alone, but instead require a collective movement to effect these changes.³

³ Unless otherwise stated, all quotations from participants at the webinar come from the recording made of that event: ‘Arts and Artists in Society: Pathways for Indonesian Art in the 21st Century’, ANU webinar, 11 March 2021.
As an example of this approach, Roosvita points to her work on the issue of gender inequality, which she has been addressing since 2010. She emphasises that this is an issue too complex for her to solve by herself, so her projects bring together representatives from each of the four groups defined in her diagram, to seek collective solutions. Interestingly, some of Roosvita’s projects dealing with gender have focused on the Indonesian art world, which has in recent years faced its own revelations of internal gender-based violence and harassment, as well as a belated acknowledgement of the vast inequities experienced by women artists and art workers. Workshops facilitated by activists and experts from women’s crises centres discuss issues such as ‘what defines violence’ and how to ensure art spaces are safe spaces for all genders. In addition, discussion groups focused on feminist readings

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4 The esteemed ‘Koalisi Seni’ (Coalition for the Arts) formed an advocacy group in 2021 to specifically address these issues, while a new wave of collectives focused on building an arts scene inclusive of women and non-binary arts workers (e.g. Peretas and Futuwonder) has been gathering momentum since the mid-2010s.
and projects to reveal the experiences of women, LGBTQI+ and non-binary identifying individuals and groups in Indonesia are increasingly frequent on the art world’s calendar. It seems certain that as the effects of these endeavours resonate through younger generations of artists, the Indonesian art scene of the future will be a more diverse and inclusive one.

This coalition of practitioners in diverse fields is far from unprecedented. From revolutionary studio cooperatives (sanggar) in the 1930s and 1940s, to institutions and forums dedicated to the ‘people’s culture’, to study groups and research collectives, chapters in the book provide examples of how Indonesian artists and curators have invested in collaboration to create work that is both aesthetically sound and a practical way to communicate with the broader public. The drive to work together towards common goals has long also encompassed environmental concerns. As we have seen in the chapters by Turner, Kent and Hooker in this book, the degradation of the natural environment as a result of human exploitation (and in turn, the impact of this damaged landscape on the social environment) has preoccupied many Indonesian artists since the 1970s. One of their responses has been to collaborate with NGOs and movements such as WALHI (Wahana Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia/Indonesian Forum for the Environment), or with other civil society organisations, including religious
groups, to effect change. Bayak’s work over recent years with the enormous Tolak Reklamasi movement, which opposed a reclamation project in Bali’s previously protected Benoa Bay (see Map 2), has seen him work as part of a coalition of musicians, artists, writers and activists in a long-running series of actions. Bayak was an integral part of this movement, contributing performances and artworks, and his involvement also ‘fires his creativity’.  

From the perspective of form and material, these environmentally conscious practices have often encompassed the use of post-consumer waste as an artistic medium. We can see evidence of both these trends over recent decades in the practice of established artists such as Tisna Sanjaya, FX Harsono, Nindityo Adipurnomo, Moelyono, I Made Bayak, Tita Salina, Irwan Ahmett and many more. But Swastika identifies the recent emergence of a ‘new relationship with environment’ through eco-friendly studios and ‘awareness of the natural aspect of art events’ or, in other words, attention to the environmental impact of art-making and public presentation itself, and efforts to mitigate its ill effects.

A few examples of artists currently exploring environmentally friendly art practices include the printmaking collectives Grafis Minggiran and Grafis HuruHara, as well as contemporary batik artists Nia Fliam and Agus Ismoyo through their Brahma Tirta Sari studio. Textile artists appear to be at the forefront of this movement, with a 2021 project curated by Swastika also exploring traditional, plant-based weaving practices through a collaboration that brought together textile artists Charwei Tsai (Taiwan) and Nency Dwi Ratna (Sumba, Indonesia) (see Map 1). Together they explored the use of natural fibres and dyes, as well as motifs of regeneration, that have been practised for countless generations by Ratna’s ‘Marapu’ ancestors in Eastern Indonesia. Cast into contemporary form, the weavings that resulted from this project, dyed with indigo, turmeric, and morinda leaves and roots, were displayed in an installation titled Ndewa and Hamanang (2021), as part of The Womb & The Diamond (31 January – 30 May 2021) exhibition at the Live Forever Foundation’s Vital Space and the National Taichung Theatre in Taichung City, Taiwan.

5 Elly Kent, Artists and the People: Ideologies of Art in Indonesia (Singapore: NUS Press, 2022), 166. 
7 Marapu is the ancestral religion primarily practised on the islands of Sumba and Flores in Eastern Indonesia.
The kernel of these kinds of transnational art projects may well be found in the activities of Indonesia’s earliest post-independence artists, who travelled across the globe in the 1950s to represent their newly formed nation.\(^9\)

and to satisfy their own intellectual and creative curiosity. But twenty-first century Indonesian curators, artists and institutions are consciously exploiting the disruptive possibilities embedded in deconstructing false binaries between traditional and contemporary practices. Swastika writes: ‘Encounters between contemporary artists such as Tsai with younger generations of weavers like Ratna open new possibilities for the future of art, particularly in places like Asia’.

**Decolonisation and Decentring**

The project of decolonisation and decentring spans the breadth of practices in Indonesia. Transnational collaborations have long been one of the primary approaches to dismantling the colonial structures that have controlled many of the world’s subjugated peoples. In Indonesia in 2010, taking as its reference Sukarno’s historic Asia–Africa Conference held in Bandung in 1955, the Biennale Jogja is one among many initiatives to reframe postcolonial geographical norms in order to explore relations between the centre and the periphery, between art and society, and between nations with similar historical and geographic contexts. Architect and member of the Biennale Yogyakarta Foundation, Eko Prawoto, wrote in the 2011 Biennale Jogja catalogue:

> Biennale Jogja looks to the future, developing a new perspective while confronting the established conventions for events of this nature … We search for a common platform that would stimulate the growth of diverse perspectives that would bring forth new alternatives to the hegemonic discourse … The equator will become a common platform to ‘re-read’ the world by focusing on the centres in the region around the equatorial belt, with perspectives that are non-centred.

Ten years later Swastika, who was co-curator of the Biennale Jogja Equator #1 and then went on to become director, points out that, in the present day, ‘while we are experiencing an intimate relation with

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11 Swastika, ‘Charwei Tsai’.
[the] virtual world’, the internet may be the main medium of the future. Simultaneously, she says, constraints on geographic mobility bring local communities and community spaces into greater proximity, creating the possibility that ‘centred’ exhibitions may not play as significant a role as they have before. This search for a common platform to decentre and decolonise continues, not only through subsequent iterations of the Biennale Jogja’s equatorial explorations, but also through art projects that take place away from the Java and Bali-centric art centres, such as the Makassar Biennale on Sulawesi, the Jatiwangi Art Factory in rural West Java and, in 2020, a proliferation of online events. Amid the COVID-19 restrictions, many artists focused their practices on projects to support their local communities: for example, artist Anang Saptoto collaborated with farmers to market their produce through social media in the absence of traditional markets, and Tisna Sanjaya distributed personal protective equipment by post to health workers across his region of West Java.\textsuperscript{14}

Dirgantoro identified among our presenters a ‘deep concern with past practices in institutions and society about the way artistic, cultural and political identity … [is] being written into the history of Indonesian art’. The tensions between the recognition of a singular national identity, and the manifold ethno-religious identities that have been amplified since the fall of the New Order and the rise of the internet in the first two decades of the twenty-first century, remain pertinent. Speaking on the history of modern and contemporary art in Sulawesi, Rahman noted that among the many barriers to the development of robust art discourse in the regions is a sense that those outside (including those who have migrated away) are not welcome to comment on or contribute to the conversation. While this protective instinct is logical in the context of an art world working in resistance to the homogenising effect of globalisation, Rahadiningtyas proposes an important counter position that sees the local and global coming together to challenge older art canons. She stresses the need for projects to explore art history and history at a community level, a proposal that has a precedent in one of Rahman’s own projects for the ‘Parallel Events’ program for the Biennale Jogja XII Equator #2. With his research collective Coliq Puji, Rahman conducted research into the history of Arab and Makassan literary traditions. Rahman and his collective were able to work so successfully with the Library and Archival Body for the South Sulawesi Region that they were given permission to take key historical artefacts from Sulawesi to Yogyakarta to exhibit alongside four interpretive artworks.

\textsuperscript{14} Kent, \textit{Artists and the People}, 1–4.
Within Indonesia, these early efforts ultimately brought peripheral art histories into the centre and succeeded in expanding the audience for contemporary art and art histories there. But subsequent events like the Makassar Biennale (established in 2015), which has a perpetual theme of ‘maritime’ reflecting the province’s cultural and economic history, push the decentring project further, to cultivate communities of scholars and artists who work on their own art histories. In preparation for the 2021 Makassar Biennale, research and writing workshops were held not only across Sulawesi, but also in Flores and West Papua (see Map 3), which lie in provinces virtually unrepresented in the Indonesian art worlds of
the past. Facilitated by Director of Makassar Biennale, writer and curator Anwar ‘Jimpe’ Rachman and others, the workshops are designed to develop arts and cultural discourse as well as practitioner networks.\footnote{‘Writing and Research Workshop Sekapur Sirih in Five Cities’, Yayasan Makassar Biennale, accessed 26 April 2021, makassarbiennale.org/writing-and-research-workshop-sekapur-sirih-in-five-cities/}

The decolonisation projects on a more global scale often involve speaking back to art and other histories in colonial centres. Swastika described such an endeavour conducted with artist Iswanto Hartono in Amsterdam, as part of the 2017 Europalia Festival. In this project, Hartono created a wax, life-sized copy of a well-known statue of colonial Dutch figure Jan Pieterszoon Coen—recognised both as the founder of Batavia (now Jakarta) and the ‘Butcher of Banda’\footnote{In the seventeenth century, Dutch and English trading companies used every tactic to gain a monopoly of the trade in spices that were grown only in Eastern Indonesia, particularly nutmeg and mace on the island of Banda (see Map 1). To prevent the local population engaging in free trade, Coen (in 1621) and others virtually depopulated Banda by deportation, starvation and massacres to ensure they controlled both the growing and selling of spices. See M. C. Ricklefs, \textit{A History of Modern Indonesia since c. 1200} (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave, 2001), 34. See also Titarubi’s artwork on this era in Introduction (Figure 0.6).}—which was then transformed into a ‘candle’ and set alight to melt into nothingness. The original statue occupied a public park in central Jakarta for 70 years until it was removed during the Japanese occupation of Indonesia. Indicative of the complexities of the postcolonial and decolonial imperatives of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the park has, since the 1960s, featured the ‘West Irian Liberation Monument’, which the city government claims was the design of Henk Ngantung, the first post-independence governor of Jakarta and also a former general secretary of Lekra. It was executed in bronze by sculptor Edhi Sunarso.\footnote{The annexation of West Irian (now known as West Papua) was conducted under pressure, but minimal supervision, from the UN in the midst of a power vacuum created by the rapid departure of the Dutch colonists. The legitimacy of the conduct of the referendum on the question of whether to join Indonesia or create an independent state has been strongly contested and West Papua remains an uneasy member of the Unitary States of the Republic of Indonesia, vulnerable to exploitation of its vast natural resources and human rights abuse. See ‘Pembebasan Irian Jaya, Monumen’, Jakarta Go Id, accessed 26 April 2021, web.archive.org/web/20171108100930/http://www.jakarta.go.id/web/encyclopedia/detail/2331/Pembebasan-Irian-Jaya-Monumen.}

Hartono wrote:

Street names are changed, monuments are taken down and buildings are destroyed. But the VOC’s [Dutch United East India Company’s] true legacy—a corrupt system—was not destroyed by purging the monuments. As a matter of fact, the Soeharto era was synonymous [with] corruption.\footnote{Linawati Sidarto, ‘The Burning Memory of Colonialism’, \textit{Jakarta Post}, 9 November 2017, accessed 24 April 2021, www.thejakartapost.com/life/2017/11/09/the-burning-memory-of-colonialism.html. Spelling of Suharto/Soeharto as in the original text.}
History and Historiography

History and historiography play an increasingly important role in the creation of intellectual and artistic projects and communities. The imperative to decolonisation and decentring is driven by a search for the truth that seems, as in the case described above, to lead inexorably further and further back into history and art history. While revelations about the political context, international involvement, and ongoing impunity and secrecy around perpetrators of the violence of 1965 continue to be unearthed by researchers, artists’ relations are often focused on more personal individual and family truths. These personal truths, as Turner discusses in Chapter 7, were the catalyst inspiring the artworks of Dadang Christanto. As FX Harsono has described, at the end of the New Order, artists were finally free to examine the subjugation of their own histories in public, and the search for historical truths in familial archives has been a staple of Indonesian art since that time. Many younger generations of artists are encountering these histories first through the artwork of senior artists, and then through their own explorations.

Figure 11.5: I Made ‘Bayak’ Muliana, Industry, Hidden History and Legacy the Island of the Gods, 2014.
Mixed media on plywood. Photograph and permission courtesy the artist.
Bayak’s large-scale paintings depicting the links between colonial history, the mass killings of 1965, and the present-day exploitation of Bali’s human and natural resources represent creative historiographies that can create a bridge to the ‘truth’ for younger generations. He says:

The questions come from my young son, when I was creating the scene of murder during 1965, and he asked a question, a simple question. ‘Is this a true story? Or is it imagination?’ And I said to him, ‘This is true. But soon, if you want to understand it more you can learn more’.

Since the fall of the New Order in 1998, seeing history in new ways has become important in defining new ways of understanding the present and future of Indonesia. Elia Nurvista’s re-imaginings of *rijstafel*, a Dutch multi-dish buffet meal of performative excess, led her to further examinations of food politics and the intersection between colonial labour exploitation and the intimate domestic relations as documented in the archives of Dutch museum collections. Zico Albaiquni’s large-scale paintings draw on images found in nineteenth- and twentieth-century ethnographic photograph collections, juxtaposed with renditions of Indonesian art historical objects and contemporary visual culture. Through these encounters he explores commonalities across the colonial, capitalist and canonical gaze. Dirgantoro underscores the importance of the archive ‘in excavating the past … but also as an archive for building future memory’ through curatorial practice.

In Rahadiningtyas’s vision for the future of Indonesian art history, she points to opportunities for art historians to develop accessible and inclusive community-based scholarship. Already present in collaborative spaces in Bandung, Yogyakarta, Jakarta and—in part through the work of initiatives like the Indonesian Visual Art Archive (IVAA) *Gudskul* (*ruangrupa*) and the Makassar Biennale—in other cities in Indonesia, these networks expand ‘the possibility to produce research, workshops, and programs that focus on comparative modernities’.

Rahadiningtyas also proposes:

initiatives in teaching and writing art history within and outside of institutions or universities—and perhaps, they could be more connected—where students or participants could actively participate in producing low-stakes research and entries, building databases on Wikipedia, or on other digital humanities platforms, of women and other marginalized groups of artists or artistic practices in Indonesia.
Technology and Disruption

Technology and disruption have created opportunities and challenges. In the very recent past, there have been fundamental shifts in the ways that people are connected, and to whom they are connected, facilitated by new technologies and the impact of the pandemic on mobility and proximity. These changes are not sudden but have been underway for several decades. Technology and COVID-19 have accelerated their effects and potential, both positive and negative. The digital humanities are, for many young scholars, their first encounter with archives and history.

In Indonesia, as in most Southeast Asian nations, the combination of relatively good mobile coverage, extreme disparity between the rich and the poor, and generally low levels of higher education and digital literacy create a complex environment for the utilisation of digital infrastructure towards positive ends. As Rahadiningtyas notes, technology, especially the internet, is ‘one of the tools that can be utilised to foster more collaborative works in terms of building databases’; yet, as Swastika warns, it is still necessary to consider how to mitigate the elitism of access to the internet, and how to ‘democratise this infrastructure so that it can be accessed by everyone’. Swastika also emphasises the role that technology can play in promoting greater access to those outside the centre. The global pandemic has forced the gatekeepers of such canonical spaces and institutions to stand aside. She says:

> I’ve been following many zoom meetings and discussions and I’ve been hearing so many stories not only happening in Java or the centre of culture here, but we expand, from Papua, from Palu, from Poso, from Aceh—I think this is really being enabled by the technology.

Arts initiatives have pivoted to technology in ways that have arguably facilitated their initial aims with greater openness. The *Inkubator Inisiatif*, launched in 2019 by Karina Roosvita, Lashita Situmorang and Venerdi Handoyo, is an ongoing project to establish an independent platform for knowledge sharing to reach a wider public than many of the existing workshops and study clubs allowed. One of its aims is to encourage and support the emergence of female artists. Established artists Arahmaiani and Mella Jaarsma, as well as curators Grace Samboh and Alia Swastika, have contributed to this effort. In 2021, *Inkubator Inisiatif* offered free online
masterclasses for up to 100 participants to share the ‘interdisciplinary and intergenerational expertise’ of masters and mentors like FX Harsono, Martin Suryajaya and Grace Samboh.

Conclusion

Two key questions emerged from our webinar discussions across different time zones and geographic boundaries. First, artist Tintin Wulia, whose own practice spans continents, drew our attention to the rapidly approaching Documenta 15, directed by Jakarta collective ruangrupa and asked how Indonesian arts practitioners see newly formed networks within the existing networks they have been weaving between their respective worlds? Second, art historian Wulan Dirgantoro sought to synthesise the past and the future by asking whether artistic practices, despite being a reminder of difficult pasts, could also be a source of hope?

Swastika responded by pointing to a work presented by a group of sociology students, Studio Malya, whose collectively produced artwork featured in the 2019 Jogja Biennale:

More and more younger generations in Indonesia try to dig into what we call this dark history and try to find their own way to articulate their memory or articulate their interpretation of what they’ve read in history lessons.

After participating in an art project with women survivors of 1965, organised by Agung Kurniawan, Studio Malya began their own series of interviews with survivors. These were then interpreted in artworks and installations that were presented as a ‘new museum’ documenting ‘historical events and conflict management practices which have long been overlooked due to the existence of dominant narratives/interests’.  

Swastika concluded: ‘I have so much optimism for this trajectory for art and history, and this will be one of the starting points for creating [the] critical thinking space’.

Roosvita responded to Dirgantoro’s provocation by referring to Tintin Wulia’s own participatory work, *Nous Ne Notons Pas Les Fleurs* (*We Don’t Record the Flowers*, 2009–15). She drew attention to the fluidity and flexibility of art like Wulia’s to open channels through which to encourage dialogue. In this multi-iteration installation, audiences in various cities in Asia and Europe deconstructed cartographic floral arrangements as they retraced their own migratory routes, all the while monitored by surveillance videos that are then recast in multi-channel video works. Roosvita says:

> When you see artwork like that it will create dialogue [with] the people who come to the exhibition … With my work it’s a bit different because I bring the art as like a vehicle and then create like a workshop to address the issue. Both of these ways are actually important for us now.

This optimism about the emergence of a diversity of forms is echoed by Rahadiningtyas in her expectations for the future of art history in Indonesia, as she highlights in her proposal that there is also the possibility to:
work together with universities in Indonesia to build art history curriculum and syllabi that make use of or highlight the universities’ strength as laboratories of artistic and curatorial practice … And building classes to facilitate students’ research and collaboration with artists’ spaces—artist-led galleries, collaborative research spaces, private collections’ and museums such as the Museum MACAN [Modern and Contemporary Art in Nusantara] in Jakarta.  

Figure 11.7: Tintin Wulia, Nous Ne Notons Pas Les Fleurs, Jakarta, 2010.  

Eight-channel video installation (unsynchronised, looped) in the collection of the Singapore Art Museum, from a participatory installation (2009–15). Wulia initiated this work during a residency in India, and has re-created the map of flowers, spice and herbs representing different countries in various locations around the world. Audiences were invited to move components of the map around to reflect their personal histories and journeys, with the shifting boundaries documented on video. Image and permission courtesy the artist.

MACAN showcases the international (and Indonesian) art collection of Haryanto Adikoesoemo, and also serves as a centre for new curatorial, exhibition-making and public programming around modern and contemporary art in Jakarta. It opened to the public in 2017.

These kinds of activities, well underway outside of formal institutions through organisations like Gudskul, IVAA and KUNCI, can be further enhanced and reach larger audiences by mainstreaming artistic research and practice through universities. Universities also benefit from the integration of more speculative and open forms of research that art practice can facilitate, and the more intimate stories that these practices can bring into focus.

All the participants in the webinar saw hope in more open access to history and memory, and greater opportunities to share these stories with others through exhibitions and collaboration. As Bayak put it: ‘So that simple thing I think really brings more hope to the future of art itself, and to the future of knowing the other stories of ourselves’.
This text is taken from *Living Art: Indonesian Artists Engage Politics, Society and History*, edited by Elly Kent, Virginia Hooker and Caroline Turner, published 2022 by ANU Press, The Australian National University, Canberra, Australia.