

Indonesian diary

Jaromil's Journal of Musings

November 16, 2009

Journeys across Indonesia (2007 - 2008)

This travel diary gathers the documentation of my journeys in Indonesia: impressions of cultural, technological and artistic encounters along the way.

Arrival in Jakarta

Sat, 22 Dec 2007

I quickly find a good & modest accommodation in Jakarta, sea food goreng and time for a nap. On the first impression, Indonesia reminds me of India: people is very friendly and smiles all the time at my curly hair (**kerupu** in bahasa). I look very comical for my striking resemblance to Ahmad Albar¹ an extremely popular '80s Indonesian rock-star, currently jailed.

Never travel without ukulele

Mon, 24 Dec 2007

Nothing much happening today, before leaving to Jogja I briefly visited a market in Jakarta, there i bought a green Ukulele guitar: here people enjoys the long nights sitting at the borders of streets playing instruments and I'm really looking forward to join them whenever i can :)

Arrive in Jogja

Tue, 25 Dec 2007

Arrival in Jogja with the train was at 4 o'clock in the morning: best choice then is to have a 2 hours sleep on the benches inside the station, with the relaxing feeling of not having electronic eyes pointed on you: the train station is camera-free, quite unique nowadays!

But unfortunately the liberating feeling of being outside of the matrix is interrupted by a fat tourist with an even fatter photo camera around his neck: he stands up and takes a picture of all passengers half asleep on this mild, hot and humid Christmas morning, then runs away ashamed of having disturbed everyone... damn it.

Jogja on a tall-bike

Wed, 26 Dec 2007

Just arrived in Jogja and thanks to the bicycle clown Piero I've had a fixed a bike out of spare parts since the very first day. And one of the bikes we use is a **tall-bike!** I'm not sure i can describe it well, but can you imagine us around in Jogja riding on tall-bikes?

the effect is really explosive :) people starts laughing hard, irresistible!

Taring Padi

Wed, 26 Dec 2007

I've had the opportunity to visit the atelier of Taring Padi, an artist collective of international fame producing amazing paintings.

Soon ready with all documentation, I've started an article documenting² with photos the procedure on how they make these big paintings on cloth using simple materials, a relatively cheap technique and lots of fun together.

¹http://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ahmad_Albar

²[taring_padi.html](#)



Figure 0.1: Piero on his tall-bike

Floods report

Thu, 27 Dec 2007

A local newspaper publishes the sad list of towns flooded by the monsoon rains, here they follow the numbers i could catch:

- Solo: 26.720 people relocated (5.344 families)
- Karanganyar: 71 dead
- Pekalongan: 1 dead
- Pemasang: 1 lost
- Wonogiri: 17 dead
- Sragen: 3 lost
- Banyumas: 1 dead

Yogyakarta biennale opening

Fri, 28 Dec 2007

<http://biennalejogja.com>



Figure 0.2: Taring Padi artist collective



I've Been there and my impression is more than positive; it has been a privileged introduction to social and cultural issues depicted by Indonesian artists with colourful tints and creativity.

The audience is constantly confronted with actual issues, be them social or intimate, absolutely touching. Several paintings and sculptures are blooming from the artistic life of this place to witness good historical memory and vivid imagination of the young and aware scene of artists presented.

One of the surprising features is the quality of details: when these artists make art, they really do it personally, caring about all details, employing all the time it takes. Plus they do it themselves, while Bob Sick declares the death of Beuys³ on the walls of an avenue, ten more artists show their dedication in mastering every single aspect of their productions.



the Bike Clown Circus

Sat, 29 Dec 2007

The Bike-Clown-Circus made a brilliant performance in occasion of the Biennale, so here we go documenting about this amazing group of gypsies traveling around the world by bike to give people a smile and inspiration to save our world from pollution.

I couldn't resist from featuring them with photos and interviews⁴.

The Volcano lighting up the year

Tue, 1 Jan 2008

Looking for the second hand watch

Sat, 5 Jan 2008

Yogyakarta hosts an amazing market of recycled objects ranging from antique decorations to bicycle parts, numismatics and of course electronics, with plenty of mobile phone and accessories, clothes and tools. Friendly merchants look at the overwhelmed me wandering around and ask "what are you looking for?"... my reply is simply "this!" meaning literally *all this*: such a big market, so many people making a living with recycling - and knowing well how to do it, some even live performing soldering circuits in front of customers :)

Borobudur temple

Thu, 10 Jan 2008

A very inspiring experience, i must have walked through it twice up and down in circles, until i realized this temple is a deeply articulated opera recording and playing back the narrative of Buddhism using time, space and light in a way that media-art can barely describe even nowadays.

Incredible. Sorry, no further words available in poor human language, just a pitiful photo for the record.

³<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special:Search?search=Beuys>

⁴cyclown-circus.html



Figure 0.3: the Merapi vulcano welcoming 2008

Reflections, looking back and forth

Mon, 14 Jan 2008

I'm still working in setting up this diary and journal, at the time of writing it is not yet public, but by now some good friends know its existence. My intention is also to publish things noted down in the past, and in this process time and thoughts swirl and reference each other.

Today, while publishing the Net Collectivism⁵ collage of thoughts, by reading it again something revamps in me the passion, the confusion, the intense feeling of being connected in a network, dealing with *Our Mind*.

I feel finally mature enough to understand some of Artaud's words and I dream, with eyes wide open, to overcome the cage of individualism, to reach the state of grace in his Common Soul. But, thinking back to Europe, how can we steer out of nihilism and individualism?

On my way back to Jakarta, meditating during my trip, I wish i could share with Pierre Levy⁶ the optimism for a Collective Intelligence - then suddenly i wake up and I'm looking at Taring Padi⁷'s collective painting about Suharto's holocaust in Indonesia, while the dictator is dying in a TV show.

Local elections in a small town

Sun, 20 Jan 2008

I accompanied a friend to vote for local elections in a little district of Jakarta, first thing I notice is that the urns are separated: one box for men, another one for women... so I'm just wondering about the conversion rate.

⁵net_collectivism.html

⁶proximity.html

⁷taring_padi.html



Figure 0.4: the Borobudur temple nearby Jogja

Out for a while

Tue, 22 Jan 2008

My visit permit expires after 30 days, so I'll be out of Indonesia for a while. Most of the time i spent to re-organise thoughts and ideas and studying Lisp and Scheme languages. Asia is always very inspiring for studying and the National Library of Singapore is a perfect location for that.

A little hacker meeting

Sun, 10 Feb 2008

Linked documents: Internet in Indonesia⁸, Hacker Space Design Patterns⁹, Hackers in Indonesia¹⁰

An inspiring informal meeting happened, I'm sure participants will keep it in their memory for a while. Let's hope it is just a start, hopefully inspiring larger TAZ¹¹ as the hackmeeting¹² in Italy and Spain and the Chaos Computer Camp¹³ in Germany.

Here you can read a transcription of our meeting¹⁴.

Back in Jakarta

Sun, 10 Feb 2008

The most astonishing thing for me, being back after 2 weeks, is to find out that Bono, an engineer and UNIX expert whom I've shown d:b¹⁵, has migrated all desktops of his company (previously running m\$

⁸documents/Internet_in_Indonesia_MerlynaLim2004.pdf

⁹documents/Hacker-Space-Design-Patterns.pdf

¹⁰documents/BCS2006-Purbo.pdf

¹¹http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Temporary_Autonomous_Zone

¹²<http://www.hackmeeting.org>

¹³<http://events.ccc.de/camp/2007/>

¹⁴jakarta_hackermeeting.html

¹⁵<http://dynebolic.org>

winblurs) to use it. His colleagues, mostly engineers and programmers, are already mastering the system, customising it for their needs and soon organising courses.

My guess now is that dyne:3 development will see some Indonesian participation :)

Staying at IKOHI

Mon, 11 Feb 2008

While in Jakarta I've been a guest in IKOHI¹⁶, an organisation campaigning for the *human right to not disappear*, as this is often the way military brutality operated in Indonesia during persecutions in the '60s and more recently end of '90s. Activists at IKOHI are very busy these days monitoring how history gets (re)written on mainstream media concerning the war crimes of recently departed dictator.

Frank Zappa as antidote to censorship

Wed, 13 Feb 2008

While being around with a lot of interesting people during this trip, I've been hearing a couple of stories about censorship of published artworks: it is well predictable that in all places of this world most interesting things are censored, i believe that happens in any establishment.

So I've found appropriate showing to my Indonesian friends this video recording of Frank Zappa on CNN Crossfire talkshow¹⁷.

Asian-Pacific Transmission incoming

Thu, 14 Feb 2008

Since the start of the Transmission¹⁸ initiative I'm being part of this network of hackers and video-makers sharing knowledge to implement media-democracy using open source software and independent online distribution of video.

Later on this year, among the many things happening in Indonesia, in Jakarta will be held the first Asian-Pacific Transmission¹⁹ meeting, so I've been invited to join And of the Engagemedia²⁰ collective and Andan of Ruangrupa²¹ to visit the beautiful site of Sukabumi where the initiative will be held.

Crackdown on "Underground Culture"

Sat, 16 Feb 2008

Right in the period I was visiting the splendid setup of Common Room in Bandung, something very sad happened: 10 people died for stampede²² in a hard-core music concert, several press sources report the fact on international scale.

The event has immediately given ground for a campaign against "Underground Culture" (as several newspapers titled) where old and new conservatives rallied against the *rebellious younger generations*, pointing the finger at the content of such concerts rather than the obvious lack of proper infrastructure.

It all sounds very familiar to me...

VeeJaying night "Hello Disco"

Fri, 22 Feb 2008

As a guest performer in the **vjnumberone** crew, together with Tommy Surya and Julian Abraham, we beamed a liveset all night in Jogja's most crowded club. Amazing! I wasn't doing something like that since years (easy to tell by the way i fell asleep on the backstage couch).

We used 2 projectors and 3 computers all setup from a balcony, arranged mixing by switching cables and overlapping beams running 3 different software in a full cross-over of tools, keeping the leit motif of spinning cubes.

¹⁶<http://www.ikohi.blogspot.com/>

¹⁷videos/FrankZappaonCrossfire.ogm

¹⁸<http://transmission.cc>

¹⁹<http://transmission.cc/txap>

²⁰<http://engagemedia.org>

²¹<http://ruangrupa.org>

²²<http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/AD44C633-2B4E-4842-BF02-FC9CE327F77B.htm>



I definitely went wireframe, but still not that minimal: using a computer mounted microphone for a spectral analysis of ambient (loud!) music Fluxus 3d engine²³ was perfectly in sync, no frame skips, no latency in audio capture and FFT, all running on my EEEPC²⁴.

The House of Natural Fiber

Tue, 4 Mar 2008

Time to leave has come for me, but *dulcis in fundo* I've found a home also on this side of the world, and is made of natural fiber by young artists and true friends.

For the majority of time I've spent in Java, HONF²⁵ has welcomed me in the best possible way: i feel now part of this extended family of artists gathering together from heterogeneous contexts to constitute an Indonesian Media Art Laboratory.

So the next appointment is the Cellsbutton media art festival in August: at the junction between one of the most active volcanoes of Planet Hearth and timeless Temples, we are planning to gather again.

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²³<http://www.pawfal.org/fluxus/>

²⁴[eeepc.html](http://www.eeepc.html)

²⁵<http://www.natural-fiber.com>





Figure 0.5: J & J bet on a bright future!