



THE FUTURE OF ARTISTIC INSTITUTIONS

Attitudes Towards a Communal Shift; Ruangrupa Case Study

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INTRODUCTION

In the early morning of February 22, 2019, documenta officials in Kassel, Germany announced their selection for the first artist collective to curate documenta, and the first time that its curatorial direction emerged from Asia. The ruangrupa artist collective from Jakarta will be taking up the challenge of curating this quintennial exhibition also known as the “The Museum of 100 Days” from June 18th to September 25, 2022.¹ The artist collective has been active in the Indonesian and international scene since its creation in 2000. Due to its global exhibitions and multidisciplinary techniques, ruangrupa has now grown into a well-known collective concept in the field of contemporary art. Although the title ‘ruangrupa’ stands as an all-encompassing collective name, its other project titles include ArtLab, RURURadio, Ok.Video Festival, Jakarta 32°C, RURU Kids, RUR Shop, Gudskul, *Karbon* Journal, and RURU gallery. By 2020, the collective has grown to include nine official members: Ajeng Nurul Aini, Farid Rakun, Iswanto Hartono, Mirwan Andan, Indra Ameng, Ade Darmawan, Daniella Fitria Praptono, Julia Sarisetiati, and Reza Afisinasix (fig.1). This thesis, in a broader sense, describes the prevalent role that artist collectives have had in recent art history. Furthermore, it is also intended to identify ruangrupa collective’s curatorial approaches and its representational platform as a curatorial “attitude” rather than solely a curatorial strategy.

I. The History of Artist Collectives and Alternative Art Spaces

The artist collective can be defined as a group of artists that work together on similar ideological platforms.² In the contemporary world, artist collectives have an expansive reach due to their digital media presence, multidisciplinary approaches, as well as programs and activities that affect direct change in society.³ There are many forms of the artist collective in art history and especially within the greater category of the “artist-run” space. Ancient, Medieval and Modern art throughout the world utilized the “artist workshop” as a common space for artistic production.⁴ These types

¹ ruangrupa is spelled in lowercase letters. Sometimes also referenced as “Ruru” in their other projects.

² Tate Modern, “Artist Collective”, accessed January 20th, 2020, [tps://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/c/collective](https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/c/collective).

³ Gabriele Detterer and Maurizio Nannucci. *Artist-run Spaces : Nonprofit Collective Organizations in the 1960s and 1970s*. (Documents Series ; 7. Zurich : Dijon : Florence: Jrp/Ringier ; Les Presses Du Réel ; Zona Archives, 2012), 28.

⁴ Throughout art history, the term “artist workshop” is used to describe a place where artists produce their art or craft work. This term was very popular in Renaissance art but it has also been used to describe prehistoric, classical, medieval and modern art making spaces.

of artist workshops gathered artists and skilled technicians alike who either worked as successful artists, or utilized the space as workers in a common atelier. In effect, these types of artist spaces have been part of the art world in one way or another throughout recent centuries, although their intentions and methods have shifted. For political reasons in the 1960's and 1970's, artists turned toward collaborative efforts, forming groups of like-minded individuals in order to have a controlled space of representation separate from government institutions.

Today, politically minded artist collectives like ruangrupa generally approach issues regarding identity, transnational processes of communication, 'local' community initiatives, strategies for expanding the viewing public, and building participation in alternative art spaces.⁵ The alternative space is a venue that provides an adequate meeting space for people to gather around art or discussions rather than the traditional focus on artists as innovators. Ruangrupa has the advantage of being an alternative space with innovative social concepts that function both in and outside of reputable institutions. In other words, ruangrupa offers a democratic platform that encourages freedom of expression in ecosystems that affect local and international identities. The exceptional participation from members of the collective, visitors, community members and partners, who they call "friends," make these collective events a uniquely organic process that takes on a life of its own. Artist collectives like Taring Padi (1998- present), Jatiwangi factory (2006- present) and Jiandiyin (2002- present) are other examples of Southeast Asian collectives that have complex networks intertwined with community engagement and postmodern curatorial strategies. These collectives all provide an alternative to the dominant traditional artistic institution.

Henri Lefebvre describes spaces of representation as "a dominated space that is sustained, which attempts to modify and reappropriate the imagination. It takes up the physical space and symbolically uses objects in it so that these spaces represent coherent non-verbal systems and symbols."⁶ Lefebvre makes evident in his definition of spaces of representation, that a cohesion

⁵ In this context, the term "local" community stands for the society in which ruangrupa is exhibiting in or referring to in their exhibition. They often seek the involvement of many members, local initiatives or groups of people that are not necessarily involved in the artworld. An example the SONSBEK'16 exhibition in Arnhem, Netherlands when ruangrupa sponsored Arnhemia, a local football team.

⁶ Original sentence "Les espaces de représentation: l'espace dominé, donc, subi, que tente de modifier et de s'approprier l'imagination. Il recouvre l'espace physique en utilisant symboliquement ses objets. De sorte que ces espaces de représentation tendraient (mêmes réserves que précédemment) vers des systèmes plus ou moins cohérents de symboles et de signes non verbaux." Henri Lefebvre, *La Production De L'espace. Société Et Urbanisme*. (Paris: Éditions Anthropos, 1974), 49.

between objects and symbols must be sustained by a dominant group. I argue that ruangrupa's alternative curatorial platform critiques "the white wall" gallery space and is interested in creating a new approach for envisioning the art space. In Indonesian the term *ruang* means 'space' and *rupa* means 'visual'. As a "visual space" that is also a non-profit organization, ruangrupa is interested in various recurring themes like the social scope of cities and rural areas throughout the world, projects in public contexts, and popular culture. It has created activities centered around bringing people together in various participatory formal and informal platforms. Among ruangrupa's most mediatized activities are the OK.Videofestival (the largest media festival of Southeast Asia), the Gudskul (collective studies and contemporary art ecosystem) and local and international exhibitions in collaboration with interdisciplinary artists .

II. Hypothesis

The phenomena of artist collectives is approached in this thesis by contextualizing the history, coordination, and transformation of Indonesian artist collectives as one of the most significant movements of the twenty-first century. Based on contemporary currents in art, it could be argued that artist collectives are gaining momentum as an activist and communal platform for cultural management. In this thesis, I seek to answer my research question: What curatorial approaches does the socially-engaged artist collective ruangrupa utilize, and to what extent do these bring about change in methods of curating for institutions? The aim of this thesis is to show how artist-run practices, such as artist collectives, are a distinctive, relevant, and central part of contemporary art culture, as well as how they present a complex and necessary set of methodological alternatives in the representation of art. My goal is to contribute to an understanding of socially-engaged methods of curating while applying ruangrupa's techniques as an alternative space for education and community participation. I expect to find that the use of alternative spaces, activism, and diverse networks are successful traits in the coordination of events that encourage inclusive exchanges in the artworld.

III. Theoretical framework

Since the 1970's, artist collectives have become an ever-growing phenomenon, yet they are vastly underrepresented in the art world. In the course of the research for this thesis it became clear that

there was a particular academic literature gap for Southeast Asian artist collectives. Therefore, in my thesis I seek to redress this substantial oversight in the study of contemporary art. Although ruangrupa is becoming increasingly known in the art community, it is still not extensively written about in secondary academic literature.

The framework for this thesis utilizes theories for social engagement in the public space as a means for community action. The aim is to explain and critique ruangrupa's methods of curation and coordination of events that are intended to reach wider audiences by expanding the role of art institutions into the community. I will investigate theories concerning institutional critiques using authors like Gabriele Detterer and Maurizio Nannucci to situate ruangrupa within the history of artist-run spaces. Throughout this thesis I will also be using Chantal Mouffe's critique of dominant systems of representation and the effect of conflictual art in neoliberal economies. Mouffe's arguments are approached from a similar perspective as Henrie Lefebvre's book on "The Production of Space" and the submission of space to hierarchies of power.

In the first chapter, I contextualize institutional critiques within Indonesian artistic movements and artist collectives as spaces that provide essential resources for experimental models of radical new cultural movements. In Indonesia, activism was an important part of the twentieth and the start of the twenty-first century for a multitude of reasons. Some of which included student protests aimed to end the Suharto military dictatorship (1966-1998), others were interested in ending the "elitist" avant garde movements in Indonesia. The artist collective known as the group of five along with other artists, started the New Art Movement (Indonesian: *Gerakan Seni Rupa Baru*) which protested the need for a change in representational politics for National Indonesian art. The New Art Movement sought to create multidisciplinary forms of art that strove to emancipate themselves from authoritative hierarchies in art.⁷ This movement was particularly interested in making art that represented a general audience, using political, economic and social themes as inspiration for their works.

In 1998, when the Indonesian President Suharto stepped down from power, a change towards democracy gave Indonesians the alternative to question their identity and enjoy new found freedoms.⁸ During this new period, people who had joined in the protests of the 1990's were often

⁷ Mitch Cohen,, and Yvonne Spielmann, *Contemporary Indonesian Art : Artists, Art Spaces, and Collectors*. (Singapore: NUS Press, 2017), 27.

⁸ It is important to note that the change from the New Order Regime towards a new government did not mean that artists were not faced with political challenges. However, after the New Order regime, artists were able to question

labeled as “anarchists”. The ruangrupa collective identifies with the anarchist movements, which partly inspires their creation when it comes to socially engaged methods of creation. According to Chantal Mouffe, conflictual positions in art create radical changes in terms of countering hegemonic structures and finding alternatives to consumer culture. Henceforth, my thesis situates activism and discursive praxis as a curatorial attitude towards expanding the public outwards, into the community.

In the second chapter, the term “space” is especially important to this thesis because it is treated as an agent for the trajectory of perception in curation. Encyclopedia Britannica defines space as “a boundless, three-dimensional extent in which objects and events occur and have relative position and direction.”⁹ Studying space in contemporary art, one must always consider the web of social and cultural norms of that particular period. This is because perception is a vital component of artistic creation and that the context and construction of the space in which art is exhibited plays with the interpretation from the public.¹⁰ The author of reinaart vanhoe, writes extensively on ruangrupa’s use of space as a hybrid between dialogue and action and explains the concept of ruangrupa’s “also-space”.¹¹ As reinaart describes, the also-space “Encourage[s] artists to consider their production from within the different communities they are part of (artists, neighbors, social class, hobbies, profession, knowledge, etc..) beginning with the ontology of being in common”.¹² I interviewed reinaart in March 2020 and I will be using his testimonies as primary research. His experience working with the ruangrupa members for twenty years and his collaboration as part of a larger community-based practice will contribute to what is to come for documenta fifteen. The Art collective Compound (ACC) is located in South Jakarta and co-managed with other artist collectives. It is influential to ruangrupa’s project management because

national identity and confront political themes in their work with less restrictions than before. During the New Order, large public gatherings were often banned by the government in order to subdue activist behavior burgeoning throughout the country. Tod Jones, “Indonesian Cultural Policy, 1950-2003: culture, institutions, government” (PhD diss., Curtin University of Technology, 2005), 197

⁹ Britannica, “*Space: Physics and Metaphysics*”, britannica.com, accessed December 9, 2016.

¹⁰ The reason the term “space” is used rather than “place” is because place designates a particular point in the space. Space encompasses a broader sense or attitude that is not always visible or easily identifiable.

¹¹ The author reinaart vanhoe does not capitalize his first and last name. When I asked him in an interview why this was so, he said it felt more approachable.

¹² Vanhoe, Reinaart. *Also-space, from Hot to Something Else : How Indonesian Art Initiatives Have Reinvented Networking*. (Onomatopée (Series); No. 136. 2016), 72.

it is a physical space that houses the “art ecosystem”.¹³ This physical public space provides resources, spaces and classes to people interested in contributing to collective practices. Besides their physical space, it can be argued that their virtual spaces like their radio show, social media platforms and video art construct an alternative digital space that expands ruangrupa’s role as mediators of public art.

In the third chapter, ruangrupa’s socially engaged art is analyzed as part of pedagogical and action derived attitude for curating. Knowledge building is a strategy used by ruangrupa’s ‘generous structure’ as well as the creation of networks of professionals as ‘friends’. In fact, one of ruangrupa’s mottos “make friendship, not art” stated by Ade Darmawan stresses the act of building social relations in order to change society for the better.¹⁴ However, this informal discursive process may prove to be harder to maintain as ruangrupa’s availability becomes scarcer as the sheer amount of projects and networks increase.¹⁵ As seen during Documenta 11, when Okwui Enwezor was the curator, these types of discursive stimulations between the organizers, artists and visitors have become essential for experimental spaces. This type of interactive structure fits with ruangrupa’s agenda. In fact, I argue that this type of new organized social space which carries an activist and discursive political stance is one of the reasons they have been selected as the first artist collectives to curate documenta in 2022. What this says about twenty-first century cultural management is that there is an interest in including a diversity of perspectives, with both artists and coordinators, that entice greater audience participation.

IV. Expected outcome

In my research, I anticipate finding out how artist collectives, specifically ruangrupa, approaches curation to go beyond the limits of artistic direction. In the future, ruangrupa’s curatorial platform will influence the way institutions function when they seek to expand the meaning of the art public. In fact, ruangrupa’s curatorial perspective based social networks reflect a fluctuating and somewhat informal method of dispersing knowledge. Due to ruangrupa’s experimental and self-

¹³ The “ecosystem” also known as the Gudskul, is co- managed with two other collectives Serrum and Grafis Huru Hara. It includes the following programs: ArtLab, RURUradio, Jakarta 32°C, RURU Kids, RURU Shop, *Karbon Journal*, and RURU gallery

¹⁴ Darmawan, Ade. “Freedom Lecture #7” De Balie, Amsterdam, October 23, 2014.

¹⁵ Vanhoe, Reinaart. *Also-space, from Hot to Something Else : How Indonesian Art Initiatives Have Reinvented Networking*. (Onomatopée (Series); No. 136. 2016), 34.

sustaining approach to an art space, hierarchies in the artworld are being dismantled. This is supported by evidence explaining alternative movements that have contributed to the critique of the “elitist” world of art towards a more socially engaged method of assembling people around cultural expression. Ruangrupa’s ability to emphasize popular interactive mediums like video art, karaoke and do-it-yourself projects inspire greater public involvement because they are targeting community-engagement as a main part of their practice. The second chapter explains ruangrupa’s construction of an alternative art space as a functional catalyst for physical and digital space. They create spaces where people can gather and discuss ideas, projects, and just to be together because civic themes fluctuate as needs arise. In the last chapter, their curatorial attitude is encompassed by the strengthening of networks and “friendships” meaning that their ideas grow within an ecosystem that never stops developing and which relies on every person involved. In effect, in my research I expect to find that ruangrupa’s curatorial approaches may in fact be closer to what ruangrupa references as a curatorial “attitude” rather than a strategy. This distinction between a curatorial attitude and a strategy will be made clear throughout this thesis as supportive elements from their exhibitions.

1. Twentieth Century Institutional Critique: Working Together for a Louder Voice

1.1. Contextual Indonesian Art

Ruangrupa's redefinition of the hierarchical art paradigm to be more community-oriented originally stems from a lack of experimental public and noncommercial art institutions in Indonesia.¹⁶ Ruangrupa is not the only artist collective to tackle the lack of public representational spaces. Since the 2000's, an increasing number of artists have craved a radical return towards collective art while looking towards the future. Taring Padi is an example of an artist collective from Indonesia which recognizes itself as a progressive cultural organization while rejecting the "elite" discourse of art institutions.¹⁷ Ketjilbergerak is another example of an artist collective that is vocal about the lack of cultural spaces for emerging artists in Yogyakarta. In Indonesia, there has been a significant peak in these types of collectives as both a functional shared space and a strategic democratic stance for inclusivity.¹⁸ Ketjilbergerak, ruangrupa, and Taring Padi, function with an underlying message to circumvent the dominant hegemony towards a more inclusive and social approach. Ruangrupa can be situated in this particular postmodern mentality that challenges current artistic hierarchies by giving agency to community action, although ruangrupa does not acknowledge themselves as a form of institutional critique, their approach to the artist-run space contests certain powerful models of representation.

We must also consider that a recurring component of Indonesian culture has been to experience artistic creation within a group of people and not necessarily inside a museum or gallery. In fact, the most popular forms of expression are music and dance, hardly ever to be performed alone. The Indonesian term *seni rupa* literally translates as "visual art", which is a term approached in a different way than in the rest of the world. *Seni rupa* includes a wide variety of cultural fields like dance, theater, music, painting and other forms of visual art that all have an

¹⁶ "Visual After Soeharto: Meeting the challenges of a Booming Market" University of Melbourne, 2018, Accessed June 12, 2020. <https://indonesiaatmelbourne.unimelb.edu.au/visual-arts-after-reformasi-meeting-the-challenges-of-a-booming-market/>

¹⁷Taring Padi, "About Taring Padi" Accessed April 1,2020. <https://www.taringpadi.com/?lang=en>

¹⁸ "Visual After Soeharto: Meeting the challenges of a Booming Market" University of Melbourne, 2018, Accessed June 12, 2020.

equal cultural value.¹⁹ In the West, people tend to distinguish between dance and theater art forms as performative arts which are different from the top of the hierarchy sculpture and paint mediums of the “visual arts”.²⁰ Over the last decades, due to an increase in new media and cultural expression in public spaces, mediums that cross the boundary between public space and social engagement, especially through new media, reflect a greater interest from the Indonesian population.

In order to address the dissatisfaction from some Indonesian artists with art institutions we need to look at what Tatehata Akira, a Japanese art critic, identifies as the first contemporary art movement in Indonesia as New Art Movement.²¹ This movement was created as a way for artists to unite and contest the “white cube” as a decontextualized space that displays art disinterested from the “real” world. The New Art Movement and other socially engaged artists collectives in Southeast Asia like the Kaisahan collective from the Philippines refuted against the depoliticization of the artistic space and instead encouraged the first steps towards the decolonization of art in the region. The New Art Movement came into being after Black December Movement in 1974 brought together young artists from Bandung, Jakarta and Yogyakarta joined in protest against the decision of the Jury of *Grand Exhibition on Indonesian Painting*.²² Five young artists, also known as the Group of Five that included Hardi, FX Harsono, B. Munni Ardhi, Nanik Mirna, and Siti Adiyati grew frustrated with conservative attitudes towards the exhibition at Jakarta Art Council. On the final night of the exhibition, the group of five handed out condolence letters to the winners and floral wreaths to the judges with a ribbon that read “Our Condolences for the Death of Indonesian Painting” during the closing of the ceremony. This defiant act was rendered especially confrontational due to the great numbers of artists and audience members that were present to witness the unfolding of events.

In 1975, the group of artists created the Gerakan Seni Rupa Baru (The New Art Movement in English), an Indonesian resistance movement that pioneered through the rest of the 1980’s with their manifesto *Lima Jurus Gerakan Seni Rupa Baru Indonesia* (Five Breakthrough Maneuvers of

¹⁹ Cohen, Mitch, and Spielmann, Yvonne. *Contemporary Indonesian Art : Artists, Art Spaces, and Collectors*. (Singapore: NUS Press, 2017), 55.

²⁰ It is important to note that for many reasons creative and lived expression is at its most successful in Indonesia when it is shared. Therefore, to define Indonesian art within a Western system of knowledge can be limiting to the intrinsic meaning of the works as well as the audience it fosters.

²¹Tatehata Akira, “Art and criticism”, *Asian Modernism: Diverse Development in Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand*, Japan Foundation Asia Center, Tokyo, 1995, 201.

²² Today the *Grand exhibition on Indonesain Painting* is known as the Jakarta Art Biennale today.

Indonesian New Art Movement).²³ They contested the “elitist” attitudes of the judges and disagreed with certain Academies in Indonesia concerned solely with Western Avant-garde and modern art.²⁴ The manifesto was published during a period of disagreement with the way the discipline of art was limited in Indonesia in terms of accepted mediums (sculpture, painting and printing) as well as the lack of diversity in Indonesian art forms.²⁵ The driving forces behind this movement were the artists and collaborators, mostly made up of youths from Bandung and Yogyakarta. The Gerakan Seni Rupa Baru’s institutional critique of the Grand Exhibition on Indonesian Painting emphasized the need for Indonesian artists to receive more recognition for emerging art that questioned “the real” as a contextualizing agent for sharing political opinions.²⁶

After president Suharto resigned in 1998, this shift towards democracy paved the way for an increase in forms of liberated expression. This was also during a period when Indonesian artists had access to a wider international network, enabling non-conforming artists to make a living and express their political views freely. During the 1990’s large survey exhibitions were created around the South-Pacific region that understood the complexity of the various histories coming together under the “Asian Biennialization” of international exchange.²⁷ The first Biennales in Asia commenced with the Tokyo Biennale in 1952 although early Asian biennales focused mainly on Northeast Asian art during its first phase (between 1950 and 1980’s).²⁸ It was not until the 1990’s that the second phase of biennales developed in additional parts of Asia developed to include other regional areas and that the Indonesian’s international art scene began to blossom.²⁹ These cross-

²³ Some of the artists involved drew up a manifesto explaining the five decisive strategies for their New Art Movement. In this manifesto they were asking for art professionals to critically look at new possibilities for social engagement and move away from its conservative standards.

Supangkat, Jim. “Gerakan Seni Rupa Baru Indonesia; Kumpulan Karangan,” Gramedia, No 79. (1979).

²⁴ The term “elitist” has been used by several Indonesian artist collectives and art movements like Taring Padi and the New Art Movement to define the avant-garde aesthetic and reputation that Western Modern art has gained as “high-art”.

²⁵ Supangkat, Jim. “Gerakan Seni Rupa Baru Indonesia; Kumpulan Karangan,” Gramedia, No 79. (1979).

²⁶ In modern Indonesian art movements like the Gerakan Seni Rupa Baru Indonesia; Kumpulan Karangan there was a disagreement between the “new”, (or the fetization of new art forms, styles, mediums) and the “real” which acted as a contextual agent for art to be social and politically inspired. Seng Tu Fin “The ages of Manifestos : the discursive struggles between the “new” and the “real” in exhibitions.” *From a History of Exhibitions towards a future of exhibition-making, China and Southeast Asia*. (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2019) 56-71.

²⁷ I use the encompassing word ‘biennale’ as an umbrella term for large international landmark exhibitions that also include triennials and quinquennial exhibitions like documenta as spaces where intercultural dialogues have converged in urban centers around the world.

²⁸ Charles Green and Anthony Gardner. *Biennials, Triennials, and Documenta : The Exhibitions That Created Contemporary Art*. (Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley Blackwell, 2016), 11.

²⁹ As globalized cultural networks grew, Indonesia was introduced to various exhibitions such as the Asia Pacific Triennial (APT) in Brisbane, Australia (1993- today), the Biennale of Yogyakarta in Indonesia (1988- today), Gwangju biennale in South Korea (1995- today) and the Shanghai Biennale in China (2000- today).

continental exhibitions became vital to the work of ruangrupa as they participated in several of them and explored the meaning of urban centers and circuits or relational and contextual interactions.

During this time, film and video art increased in popularity due to its fast communication features which influenced the flourishing of digital art in universities in Java. Ruangrupa's creation of Indonesia's first international video festival, the OK.Video Jakarta International Video Festival can be seen as a great example of experimenting with curating video works in different ways. When it was established by ruangrupa in 2003, it was the biggest video and media festival in Southeast Asia. The video festival is usually around a month long and includes the video works from artists local and international artists. These events function with various public locations where people can watch the videos and interact. To give a brief description of the coordination of this event we will look at the Ok.Video festival, *Order Baru* edition in 2015 that was broken down into thematic events. The first week consisted of workshops with previously selected artists to experiment with video art together. Then throughout the month of the festival there was an open lab where people could participate together, followed by a symposium, discussion events, multimedia performances, and tours of the works led by the curator (fig. 2). As a curatorial platform, festivals are a constant source of inspiration for ruangrupa and serves as a way to explore current styles and grow networks of visitors and artists. These festivals are usually collaborative events designed to include a large number of contributors like artists and sponsors. The Ok.Video festival often asks for open-call submissions, meaning that artworks could be accepted based on merit rather than the artists' status.

Another example of their curatorial attitude which is interested in popular cultural is their exhibition *THE KUDA: The Untold Story of Indonesian Underground Music in the 70s* at the seventh Annual Asia Pacific Triennial (APT7) of Contemporary Art in Australia. APT7 brought attention to curatorial practices that engage the viewer to consider archives as documented history but also to acknowledge the invisible histories that are not recognized. Ruangrupa's art was part of the larger exhibition that included seventy-five artists from twenty-seven countries in the region touching on themes of the archive and ephemerality in the art process. In the Queensland Art Gallery Ruangrupa curated the space into a "mini-museum" that displayed formal and informal

documentation based on a fictional 1970's band named The Kuda (fig.3).³⁰ Ruangrupa's concept was to present 70's rock music during the Suharto era and juxtapose it with Brisbane music scene in the Bjelke-Petersen period to see if there were any parallels. Using other popular mediums like graffiti, print and vintage 'archival' objects, they built the fictional identity of an Indonesian band that would have performed in Brisbane in the 1970's (figure 3). The exhibition space was presented with two large graffiti frescos, a table in the middle with chairs that is filled with hand drawn tags, as well as didactic panels both on the walls and in display cases.

Both the Ok.Video festival and the *The Kuda* exhibition creatively approach the theme of reinventing the art space into multidisciplinary practices that inform and engage the viewer. This curatorial approach to popular mediums like video, graffiti and print can generate a general interest for museums to invest energy into reaching a wider public. Although ruangrupa does not reference their own work as an institutional critique, their measures of approaching the museum space in the APT7 demonstrates a playful take on hidden histories and the censorship during the 70's in Indonesia. The Ok.video festival became an innovative space in Southeast Asia for artists around the world to submit their works and participate in informal and formal gatherings with a large network of participants.

1.2. Socially Engaged Art and Contextual Art

Ruangrupa's self-sustained organization is reforming the art institution in different ways than artist collectives in the West. Their curatorial structure emphasizes giving the viewer a more active role as participant, who then no longer becomes solely a viewer but a collaborator. Ruangrupa's particular interest in acting contextually parallels the literary contextualism of the 1980's, otherwise known as *sastra kontekstual* in Indonesian. This is part of a movement in Indonesia that sought to socially and politically engage readers and question the institutions that were creating injustices in society. Artists like F.X Harsono, a member of the New Art Movement, proposed the term *seni kontekstual* (contextual art) to reflect a similar ideology than the literary contextual movement. F.X. Harsono stated in an interview, "Critical art should be able to bring

³⁰ Michelle Antoinette, "The seventh Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art", Queensland Art Gallery, Gallery of Modern Art, 2013, Accessed June 5, 2020.
<http://artasiapacific.com/Magazine/82/TheSeventhAsiaPacificTriennialOfContemporaryArt>

awareness about the plight of society and their suffering through aesthetic means.”³¹ The primary aim becomes the method in which the artists practices dialogical interactions and through various methods of communication. Activist groups were formed which employed their creative practices with strong ethical concerns on various social issues. To the artist, and in light of the contextual art aesthetic, this artistic practice enabled members of society to participate in relevant humanitarian topics with an array of creative interpretations.

For many Indonesian artist collectives, being unaffiliated with the government gave them the possibility to reinvent themselves and stray away from the hierarchical constraints of traditional art. In a way, this could be considered a reaction to political tension in a globalizing economy that emphasises production rather than quality. Dettner and Nannucci argue that artists collectives wanted to group together with like-minded people, people that generally believed in equality, trust, and active participation.³² Although *ruangrupa* shares many of the ideas supported by postmodern theories, the collective members often reject the somewhat exclusive manner that art professionals can approach their art and curatorial strategies.³³ *Ruangrupa* has often given more emphasis on people led approaches and tries to stray away from language that isn't easily understood outside the art historical field. This is important to mention because their need to defy certain artistic and theoretical definitions essentially comes from the fact that their art can only be experienced or if possible, lived with. However, their practices can fall into a multitude of postmodern categories like Nicolas Bourriaud's "relational aesthetics", Nancy Fraser's redefinition of Jurgen's "public Sphere", Grant Kester's "dialogical aesthetics". All of these theories provide an academic standing to *ruangrupa*'s perspective yet they fall short of complete accuracy because they are Western theories based on particular social interventions that are now applied as a world-wide models for art.

The question that socially engaged practitioners often ask themselves is- how can we teach or practice art outside of the mainstream artworld? Often these responses are met with critical concepts from postcolonial theory, feminist theory, activism, and global art which end up being represented as themes to an exhibition rather than an intervention. An example of this is the

³¹ Amanda Rath "The conditions of Possibility and the Limits of Effectiveness; The ethical Universal in the Works of F.X Harsono" in F.X Harsono, *Titik Nyeri/point of Pain* (Jakarta; langgeng Icon Gallery, 2007) 82.

³² Dettner and Nannucci. *Artist-run Spaces : Nonprofit Collective Organizations in the 1960s and 1970s*, 13.

³³ I use the term "exclusive" to define the academic vernacular that sometimes formalizes art to the point that it is misunderstood by the general public.

Istanbul Biennale (2013) which presented the Gezi park protests in an idealized and didactic way. The archived materials were displayed, but there was no direct connection to the activists communities in the exhibition. As the Historian Thomas Woods stated “The problem with the exhibit was not that it championed a revisionist perspective about the past, Instead, the key issues are the exhibit’s academic curatorial style, methodology, and apparent lack of respect for the audience”.³⁴ Throughout the art world it has been made clear that institutions have often lacked the knowledge and methods to act contextually, often risking to represent a romantic version of activist and collective practices.

Since the 1970’s, the artworld has encountered a strange evolution in the realm of the art market. Activist art and radical art claimed to counter the narrative of the dominant hegemony, while at the same time partaking in its hierarchical system. For instance movements like the New Art Movement, Fluxus and Happening attempted to de-objectify and de-capitalize art through creating lived and ephemeral experiences in which the performance was more important than the end result. An example of this from the Fluxus group is the work by Alison Knowles *Make a Salad* (1962) in which participants are asked to create a salad by cutting up vegetables. The piece can be seen as a multisensory experience in which the sounds of the knives on the cutting board had just as important of an effect on the piece than the visual components. However, these artistic practices can be challenging for the art market due to the impermanence of the work, keeping in mind that the artist also needs to exchange their work for an income. Sometimes artists had no other professional choice to survive than to abide by the market.

Chantal Mouffe explains that the critique of the institution is also used to the advantage of economic businesses by performing alliances with marginalized communities yet not offering to change the systemic injustices. Mouffe explains that this form of avant-garde notion has to be abandoned for real change to take place. Mouffe states “What is needed is widening the field of artistic intervention, by intervening directly in a multiplicity of social spaces in order to oppose the program of total mobilization of capitalism.”³⁵ Mouffe articulates that it is only through complete knowledge of democratic politics that this type of social order has to be effectively questioned and changed. She acknowledges that to understand political art there needs to be a “lack

³⁴ Thomas A.Woods, “Museums and the Public; Doing History Together” *The Journal of American History* 82, No.3 (December 1995); 114.

³⁵ Chantal Mouffe, "Artistic Activism and Agonistic Spaces," *Art & Research* 1 (2007): 1.

of final ground” and room for contestation.³⁶ This type of suggestive representational platform favors uncertainty and ephemerality and is conducive to social dialogue. Such an activist stance is reminiscent of the curatorial methods that ruangrupa utilizes as a community and contextually driven collective.

What critical art is meant to do, according to Mouffe, is precisely to question the dominant hegemony. While ruangrupa seeks to find relevant topics in communities around the world, like urbanization, community outreach, and human interaction, the collective is specifically interested in urban spaces and initiatives that in turn create a social pedagogical catalyst in various localities. Artist collectives have been known to present tools and spaces for discussion if those tools are missing in the community. Olsen explains that the distribution of places has been a constant worry for artist collectives that are invested in socially engaged art.³⁷ The spaces in which these collectives perform and exhibit their work is inherently political and as curators, ruangrupa has constantly been working with local and/or cultural networks in communities. One of the members of ruangrupa, Ade Darmawan stated:

How can visual art be located in the same relevant idea "spaces" as today's socio-cultural problems? Since we are in Jakarta, the most obvious urban problems are in view. Various subjects arise in the art projects and workshops: printed matter as a product of urban culture, public space, residential settlements, photography and social context, the propaganda of the municipal government, transport, and other things.³⁸

In 2013, the collaborative exhibition *Vertical Villages* with ArtLab (ruangrupa's artist residency program) and the Australian artist Keg De Souza was shown at the 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art and explored how student temporary migrants organized themselves in

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.

³⁷ Cecilie Sachs Olsen, "Urban Space and the Politics of Socially Engaged Art," *Progress in Human Geography* 43, No. 6 (2019): 986.

³⁸ In an interview Ade Darmawan, a founding member of ruangrupa explains their strategies towards addressing the urban space on a global scale. Hendro Wiyanto, "ruangrupa. Alternative Space & Culture Analysis" October 2005, accessed May 20th, 2020. <https://universes.art/en/nafas/articles/2005/ruangrupa>

the urban environment of Sydney (Fig. 4).³⁹ This project was a collaboration with the artists and students studying in Sydney in order to learn how student migrants interacted with the architecture and design of their environments as a way for developing experiences towards their surroundings. The exhibition explored the feeling of displacement and the tension between belonging and appropriating new cultural surroundings. Such a project emphasized the perception of globalization on students and their integration within the urban space. The artists initiated the project using relational mapping asking students to identify their most common routes in Sydney. These maps identified the movements of student groups within the city and the regions. The maps were then studied for further research on displacement and the experiences of student migrants and used throughout the exhibition. It was curated using various everyday objects like people's personal belongings and forms of correspondences. These objects and communication archives like letters and messages were incorporated throughout the young, stylized domestic space of new Sydney residents.

The urban environment is a constant influence in ruangrupa's works.⁴⁰ Ruangrupa continually focuses on concerns and experiences confronting social spaces in public environments. The urban space has become the symbol of a postmodern world. However, on a political level, cities increasingly represent new habits of consumption and extreme economic disparity. As Olsen explains, "urban imaginaries" are a cognitive process in which our minds transport images from our environment we are familiar with, reinforcing what Lefebvre would identify as a "virtual object".⁴¹ The virtual aspect of urban spaces regulates the tension between the process of imagination and the material form. According to Lefebvre "The virtual" melds with the temporal, where the present and the future simultaneously happen at once as accepted realities.⁴² The Ruangrupa collective approaches the notion of the public space, and the urban environment as a center for communal discourse and shared identity that connects most of us around the globe. This

³⁹ ArtLab is an artist residency and collaborative urban and media studies program that functions with the Gudskul ecosystem and ruangrupa. It is a space for individual artists and interdisciplinary groups from within and outside Indonesia to come and exchange ideas while working together.

⁴⁰ Jakarta is one of the most densely populated areas in the world with 14,464 people per square kilometer. "Jakarta Population", World population review, Last modified May 2020, <https://worldpopulationreview.com/world-cities/jakarta-population/>

⁴¹ Cecilie Sachs Olsen. "Urban Space and the Politics of Socially Engaged Art," 986-89.

⁴² Henri Lefebvre. *The Urban Revolution*, trans. Bononno R. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003 [1970]): 12.

is a recurrent interest that investigates contextually driven responses from various societies around the world through the means of interaction.

2. Redefining the Art “Space”

2.1. Public Space

Many artist collectives in Java view their cultural practices as “place-making”, or ways to amplify the needs of the community. In this particular collaborative process, the term “space” suggests an environment, usually accessible to a general public. This type of practice has become important in enhancing a location’s identity and a sense of place as part of the creative process. This ‘place-making’ approach is constituted of interdisciplinary management of public areas that draw on existing resources to enhance the general well-being of members in the community.⁴³

Public art became first an object *in* public space, and then a sculpting of that space as objects too evaporated, leaving only relations behind.⁴⁴

As Hilde Hein explains in the quote above, contemporary public art is no longer only artworks in an outdoor public space and the issue goes much deeper than a geographical placement. Social practice in public art is a discipline that has been thriving ever since there was a major shift in global representational politics in postmodernity. Today, there is an inclination for public art to function in relation to space where the meaning is not free from its terrain. The word “public” is inherently political, therefore when challenging these conventions one must be critical of the public that constitutes the audience. If representational spaces are clear on the message they are fighting for and not just against, then ideas can be materialized within the framework of “civic imagination”. As the curator of documenta 11 Okwui Enwezor argues, if “Civic imagination” is practiced in a critical way, it creates a mechanism for constructing models of *civitas*, enabling intersectional work that entices civic experimentation.⁴⁵ In his view, the conception of an artist’s

⁴³ Projects for Public Spaces, “What is placemaking?” 2007, accessed May 12, 2020.
<https://www.pps.org/article/what-is-placemaking>

⁴⁴ Hilde Hein, “What Is Public Art?: Time, Place and Meaning. (Symposium: Public Art).” *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 54, no. 1 (1996): 2.

⁴⁵ Okwui Enwezor, “Civitas, Citizenship, Civility, Art and the Civic Imagination (lecture)” Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin. (Dec. 2012), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MSZ6OzIUDYA>

work in a “civic society” searches for the advancement of all the diverse members of a community without fetishizing “the public” as a concept.⁴⁶

Public art today can be loosely defined as falling into the following categories: sculpture, place-making, monuments, memorials, performance, activism, social engagement, and a multitude of other disciplines that are too broad to categorize because they are part of a lived relational experience.⁴⁷ The work of ruangrupa would most likely fall under “multiple” and “multidisciplinary categories” as well as “activism” and “social engagement”. By labeling their works as multidisciplinary, ruangrupa melds together popular mediums in art with contact zones (conferences, presentations, virtual or physical classes, relational events, artist residencies).⁴⁸ Besides this definition of public art, the increasing popularity of new media technology has shifted the public space towards the virtual space. In the twenty-first century, space is now increasingly becoming “psychologically internalized” and people have the advantage of being connected to accessible information systems and social networks, something that successful artist collectives have seen as an opportunity.⁴⁹

In order to elaborate on the concept of what the public space entails I examine and critique the notion of the “public sphere”. Jürgen Habermas, presents the study for the “public sphere” to encompass the greater study of public art and cultural movements that create democratic interventions. Habermas’s definition for the term “public sphere” can suggest a virtual community which does not necessarily have to live in any detectable space. Habermas explains that “[The public sphere is] made up of private people gathered together as a public and articulating the needs of society with the state”.⁵⁰ In this theoretical space, there is a sense of urgency to discuss mutual needs while intending to reach a common public goal. As Lefebvre puts it “everything that is in the space, whether produced by nature, society, or the collaboration or conflict between the two.”⁵¹ In other words, gathering simultaneously amongst one another takes the dimension of a social

⁴⁶ Okwui Enwezor *Talking Contemporary Curating. ICI Perspectives in Curating*, interviewed by Terry Smith. (New York, NY: Independent Curators International, 2015), 99.

⁴⁷ Cartiere, Cameron., Zebracki, Martin Marcin. *The Everyday Practice of Public Art : Art, Space and Social Inclusion*,

⁴⁸Some of ruangrupa’s popular mediums include stickers, printmaking, graffiti, performance, multimedia, video, graphic design, and photography.

⁴⁹ Hilde Hein, "What Is Public Art?: Time, Place and Meaning. (Symposium: Public Art)." *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 54, no. 1 (1996): 1-7.

⁵⁰ Jürgen Habermas and Thomas Burger. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere : An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. (Cambridge: Policy Press, 1989); 176.

⁵¹ Henri Lefebvre, *La Production De L'espace. Société Et Urbanisme*, 121.

space. But in order to understand the space we must ask ourselves, who or what is being gathered and why?⁵²

According to Nancy Fraser, Habermas' theory is problematic because it is viewed as a Western utopia, rooted in "liberal concepts of the bourgeois public sphere".⁵³ Since the Public Sphere from Habermas' perspective is limited in terms of non-Western context of public areas, a slightly more accurate way of viewing ruangrupa would be to consider them within what Nancy Fraser refers to as "transnational public sphere." Fraser's expansion on Habermas's theory critiques the very notion of the public (the one most often represented on a national, political level) as a hegemonic one. Consequently, marginalized groups are the least likely to feel represented on a social level and therefore the capacity for the general public to reach political agency is insufficient from the public sphere theory. Ruangrupa is not technically a public institution, however, as a non-profit organization it serves as an alternative both a local and international space. Their digital platforms are a great example of their national international public outreach and in May of 2020, they have thirteen active Instagram accounts managed or partially managed by the ruangrupa team of professionals.⁵⁴ These Instagram accounts give them a large visibility and following, which attracts a larger public to their events. Local residents of Jakarta often refer to ruangrupa's Instagram accounts to gain information on their events and workshops.

According to Lee and Lefebvre, when investigating a space we have to consider the people creating it and their reason for maintaining it the way they do.⁵⁵ It may be because of this divide between hierarchies in economic classes that artist collectives in Indonesia have become so popular. Ruangrupa's workshops and Gudskul offers scholarships to students who are interested in participating but who's parents cannot necessarily afford it. In a personal anecdote, Nazar Udin, a friend of mine who lived and taught linguistics in the Universitas Indonesia before teaching at Leiden University informed me of his introduction to the ruangrupa collective. With a glimmer in his eyes he explains to me that ruangrupa is getting to be very known in Jakarta and that his wife

⁵² Henri Lefèbvre. *La Production De L'espace. Société Et Urbanisme*, 121.

⁵³ Nancy Fraser and Kate Nash. *Transnationalizing the Public Sphere*, (Cambridge, UK ; Malden, MA : Polity Press, 2014), 16.

⁵⁴ Ruangrupa's Instagram accounts are the following; @gudskul @rururadio, @rurushop, @rurukidsjakarta, @rurulab, @rurugallery, @ruangrupa, @_r_u_x, @okvideofestival, @jurnalkarbon, @jakarta32c, @rrrec_fest, @documentafifteen.

⁵⁵ Henri Lefèbvre, *La Production De L'espace. Société Et Urbanisme*; Doreen Lee. *Activist Archives: Youth Culture and the Political Past in Indonesia*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 66.

follows them on Instagram. In October of 2019, she unexpectedly saw an Instagram post that grabbed her attention. It was about one of their workshop events with Gudskul and both Nazar and his wife immediately thought about introducing their young son to a new creative activity. After a short tutorial at the Gudskul, Nazar, his wife and their son drew on t-shirts using markers in a “vintage” type of style while embracing the Do-it-yourself aesthetic. Everyone that participated at the workshop was able to take their t-shirts home afterwards.⁵⁶ In effect, Gudskul events in the Art Collective Compound in Jakarta create exchanges between visitors and artists. This naturally encourages the growth of a communal model for participation and presence to people outside of the artworld.

Communication and Interaction is not limited to the physical realm in a space, it can also be instigated through the written or digital archive, just like in Nazar’s case. Habermas stressed the need for new media and publications, which as a form of communication is conducted in an imagined space. The public sphere does not have to be linked to a spatial concept and it is too often mistakenly understood as a physical and static terrain. Directly working with the Jakarta social sphere is what enables ruangrupa to confront social themes in Jakarta. A good example of their social intervention was their Do-It-Yourself handmade face shields that came out during the COVID-19 virus pandemic (Fig. 6). These were designed by Prusa and ruangrupa’s Gudskul to raise donations to provide face shields to medical professionals. Their Instagram enabled this initiative to travel the world and provide sanitary medical supplies for the local victims and health workers of Jakarta. Throughout this second chapter ruangrupa will be continue to be placed in a critical light as a virtual and physical space of interaction.

2.2. Aslo-Space; Between Dialogue and Action

According to Lefebvre, spaces are created from powerful cultural and systematic narratives that dictate the structures that we are able to join. Spaces evolve and change with power structures, therefore creating a space that allows access to a greater number of people is more difficult because it has to be grown from a perceived, conceived and lived social structure.⁵⁷ In effect, space is politicized, lived and evolving. There have been many recent studies on space as a medium and its context in the ever changing scope of modernity. To list a few examples of these modern and

⁵⁶ Nazar Udin, “A Jakarta resident’s experience of Guskul”, personal communication, May 20th, 2020.

⁵⁷ Henri Lefèbvre, *La Production De L'espace. Société Et Urbanisme*, 49.

contemporary structures, there are the virtual spaces, the non-places, the public spheres, the gendered spaces, the also-space and the list goes on.⁵⁸ One of the contemporary theories on spaces that is most relevant to this thesis is the also-spaces. Reinaart explains that ruangrupa serves more than just as an ‘alternative space’ and demonstrates throughout his book the meaning of also-space as a hybrid between discussion and action.⁵⁹

The also-space was coined by the Belgian artist and art historian reinaart vanhoe in 2016.⁶⁰ The term “also-space” briefly describes a postmodern transitional fluid space for collaboration between artists and local communities that they are part of. The ontology of also-space would exist with the frameworks of “being in common”.⁶¹ The also-space serves as an alternative to common notions of art spaces, although according to reinaart, it is important to note that it is not an ‘alternative space’. Reinaart explains that by stating that they are an alternative space, it is like declaring that the dominant hegemony within the cultural capitalist system has a greater force while the alternative space is just another temporary counter initiative.⁶² According to reinaart, the also-space provides new solutions that can be adapted anywhere in the world. It has a viable platform for creating sustainable communities that are given an opportunity to focus on local initiatives that overcome consumerist culture.

In this book, reinaart focuses mainly on ruangrupa’s conceptual frame that resonates with collaborative twentieth century experimental artistic practices. The author believes that Indonesia provides the ideal setting for artists interested in exploring the *warga* concept (Citizen/ citizenship in English) as an art process. In Indonesia, artist collectives tend to be influenced by *warga* to portray day to day reality as a tool for dismantling power structures, which then gives more agency to those people and their community.⁶³ This is demonstrated by ruangrupa in their exhibition the *Sweet and Sour Story of Sugar* in Jakarta (2012), when they curated a space that denounced the commodification of sugar and colonialism present in four countries (Brazil, Indonesia, Suriname,

⁵⁸ “Non-spaces” are also known as the globalised transitional spaces that welcome visitors and strangers but do not offer them a sense of belonging. To give an example of the non-space they are the airports and hotels to the traveling twenty-first century blue collar workers.; Marc Augé and John. Howe. *Non-places*. (2nd ed. London: Verso, 2008), 9.

⁵⁹ reinaart vanhoe, *Also-space, from Hot to Something Else : How Indonesian Art Initiatives Have Reinvented Networking*. (Onomatopee (Series) ; No. 136. 2016), 34.

⁶⁰ reinaart vanhoe is spelt with lower-case letters out of the author’s preference.

⁶¹ reinaart vanhoe, *Also-space, from Hot to Something Else : How Indonesian Art Initiatives Have Reinvented Networking*, 34.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 72.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 73.

Netherlands). One facet of the exhibition was the ‘shop’ they created called Sugar Town with ‘products’ that contained photo archive material and recent photos by artists from 6 other countries (fig.7). The exhibition was then shown in Jakarta as well as the Noorderlicht Institution of Photography in the Netherlands. An important facet of the also-space is that it functions with the artists intent on making geo-political contributions, without being limited solely to their immediate community as their audience. It is important for ruangrupa to construct most of its themes while reflecting on the different groups of people surrounding them and including those groups of people as contributing artists.

The reflection of local and temporal communities in the exhibition’s environment is made clear during one of ruangrupa’s largest collaborative exhibitions in Europe, the SONSBEERK ’16: *transACTION* exhibition in Arnhem, Netherlands. This exhibition and the temporary “*ruru huis*” (Dutch for “ruru house”) was made up of micro scale examples of also-spaces created in various parts of the city (fig.8). Because the connection to the city and its residents was very important to their curatorial vision, ruangrupa set up the “ruru huis” in the city center in order to better understand Arnhem’s citizens. This “house” was a user-friendly space meaning that it was not geared towards coordinated events, but rather inspired by an improvised setting for interaction. The ruruhuis was located in a store front for the total duration of one year during the preliminary planning, and later as part of the main exhibition. The catalogue of the SONSBEERK exhibition states “The “ruru huis” will also host a program of public events, discussions and publications, semi-public gatherings, film screenings, karaoke parties and small exhibitions.”⁶⁴ This curatorial approach brings forth relational interactions, also referred to as *nongkrong*, which is the Indonesian term for talking, hanging out and showing that you care for others.

Besides the ruru huis, one of the most important installation spaces was in the Sonsbeek Park where many activities took place to engage with visitors. Artists from various different countries came together to display their site specific artworks and create meeting points for visitors to explore. There was also a selection of artists exhibiting their works in the Arnhem museum and in public areas throughout the streets of Arnhem. Their strategy or attitude for curating was described as “*transACTION*” which emphasized exchanges in the sense of the sharing of ideas, discussions, and with their surrounding and on their surrounding.⁶⁵ Ruangrupa invited the Dutch

⁶⁴ Anne Marjolein Pink, “Nongkrong” in *ruru huis*, ed.reinaart vanhoe and Krista Jantowoski, (Arnhem: Walter Books, 2016) 95.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 95.

artist Jan Rothuizen to collaborate with them on finding a fluid approach that fits the “visual identity” of the city and the exhibition. Some of the main inspirations for the exhibition was the alternative stories of residents, certain infrastructures and their use, alternative values (social/economical), network building, and empowering themselves and others. Therefore their reflection on spaces and architecture was crucial to the curation of works and was carefully coordinated with the installation of architectural spaces and site specific installations artworks like *The Exchange* by Rob Voerman (fig.9).

Part of the uniqueness of ruangrupa and their process is their generous structure that works on a political level. As reinaart states, the promotion of the collective’s needs and political agenda necessitates them to actively partake in the environment “Otherwise it runs the risk of becoming another cultural institution that merely refers to its social environment in its activities, but doesn’t not work with this environment-which is exactly what has happened to many cultural institutions in the West.”⁶⁶ However, informal discursive processes may be hard to maintain in the future, especially if such fluid activities are not so easy to maintain as ruangrupa’s popularity builds.⁶⁷ From the original six members working as ruangrupa collective in 2000, to a staff of around 35 people today. Reinaart agrees that it’s become more complicated to keep an equilibrium between conversation and pragmatic action while being productive.⁶⁸ This is not due to an increase in members but rather the increasing need to plan larger events which necessitates detailed planning in advance.

Reinaart, since his time working on the SONSBEK’16 exhibition has built his own ‘also-space in the Netherlands. He created a space in Rotterdam which he identifies as a trial-run for this type of initiative called the ook_huis.⁶⁹ The space opened in April of 2019 and functions as a permanent meeting area for people from any background and field of interest. The way the space functions for the most part is with spontaneous meetings during the open house hours. The weekly events consist of Saturday morning yoga sessions and the Friday night open house, yet it’s a place that is in a constantly welcoming mood. Besides having a flexible schedule, the space also has a

⁶⁶ vanhoe, reinaart. *Also-space, from Hot to Something Else : How Indonesian Art Initiatives Have Reinvented Networking*, 34.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 34.

⁶⁸ In the interview with reinaart he explained how long term plans are difficult for ruangrupa to anticipate. In the past, details with the budget were not clear and so they had to change venues at the last minute which was a lot of additional work for everyone. reinaart vanhoe “Ruangrupa and Also-Space” private interview in Rotterdam, March 6th, 2020.

⁶⁹ The Dutch term “ook” can be defined as “also” in english.

kitchen, an outdoor area, a large recreational room, bedrooms for people who need a place to sleep. Reinaart explained that the most important part of the space was the feeling of rest it gave off.⁷⁰ The ook_huis is a permanent space and does not have the stress of paying for the rent through organized events, which vanhoe believes gives the ook_huis the freedom to be open, receptive and spontaneous.⁷¹ The biggest inspiration reinaart took from ruangrupa was the “we just do” attitude. This creates a kind of unpredictable quality that enables ook_huis to engage with gatherings through discussion and ideas, even in disagreement and adapt to the context of the project.

2.3. Art Ecosystems

In order to understand ruangrupa’s conceptualization of space the concept of an art ecosystem and their Lumbung needs to be discussed. Up until now we have approached concepts of space, for example the public sphere, virtual space and the also-space. Ruangrupa’s notion of space is central to their work and in this section we look towards the future to know what to expect for the next curatorial strategy for documenta fifteen. Since they were founded in 2000 ruangrupa relocated ‘houses’ four times.⁷² Common features of these ‘houses’ were their large scale infrastructure and shared spaces to work and gather. From 2015 to 2018 ruangrupa originally created the co-developed cultural platform Gudang Sarinah Ekosistem “It [Gudang Sarinah Ekosistem] also aspires to be able to make connections and collaborate, to share knowledge and ideas, as well as to encourage critical thinking, creativity, and innovations. The results of these joint collaborations are open for public access—and presented with various exhibitions, festivals, workshops, discussions, film screenings, music concerts, and publications of journals.”⁷³ As of 2018 ruangrupa relocated into its current permanent space, The Art Collective Compound (ACC)(fig. 10). The ACC is situated in a spacious warehouse open 24 hours a day, and 7 days a week in the Jagakarsa district of Jakarta. This is a co-developed space and co-managed space with two other artist collectives, Serrum and Grafis Huru Hara. The ACC acts as an “activation space” for events and projects that engage with experimental dialogue through experience based-

⁷⁰ reinaart vanhoe “Ruangrupa and Also-Space” private interview in Rotterdam, March 6th, 2020.

⁷¹ reinaart vanhoe “Ruangrupa and Also-Space”

⁷² Ruangrupa uses the term ‘house’ to describe their physical infrastructure that welcomes guests, artists, the collective and visitors.

⁷³ ruangrupa, “About ruangrupa” Accessed April 5, 2020. <http://ruru.ruangrupa.org/index.php/about-ruangrupa/>

learning.⁷⁴⁷⁵ This art activation space harmonizes with the ideas from Gudskul and Gudside artist studios. Over all the space “aims to maintain, cultivate and establish an integrated support system for creative talents, diverse communities, and various institutions.”⁷⁶

In terms of funding, ruangrupa has developed a clever way to balance funds between each project. Through its inclusive and dynamic organization between members of communities in Jakarta and international organizations, they have developed a method of pooling together funds between the ACC organizations and collectives. Where cultural and pedagogical projects (like the Gudskul) lack in funding they make up for in their RUX Container finances. RUX Container is a contemporary art gallery that functions with a fundraising mechanism. This system divides the funds between each program and artist collectives Serrum and Grafis Huru Hara and consists of: Education Division focusing on Collective Ecosystem and Contemporary Art Studies, Creative Business Unit (RUX), Art Collectives Compound, and Artists Studio Complex (Gudside). Devising an “Ecosystem” which operates the finances for programs, facilities and the circulation of knowledge sustains a delicate balance between art creation and art market. This particular organizational structure enables other spaces to rely less on raising funds and more on the creative process.

The *lumbung* structure is both the name of an agricultural village tradition and the architectural structure used to keep extra rice by farmers.⁷⁷ The lumbung is where communities store crops for the off seasons before it is later redistributed (fig.11). Ruangrupa uses this architecture as a curatorial platform to compare their ecosystem to the redistribution of “common resources”.⁷⁸ The lumbung model then represents a “collective source pot”, serving both visitors and artists as a communally shared synergy of stories and ideas. Kwan states “The *lumbung* is the village hearth that nurtures gathering communal bodies while safeguarding their survival and futures. In particular, ruangrupa describes the lumbung as central to their curatorial mode of working, and essential to their long-term artistic aspirations”⁷⁹. This architecture is very particular

⁷⁴ ruangrupa, “Gudskul” Accessed April 5, 2020, <http://ruru.ruangrupa.org/index.php/gudskul/>

⁷⁵ Today, ACC consists of Studio Grafis Huru Hara, Serrum Art Handling, Serrum Gallery, OK. Video, Jakarta 32°C, RURU Gallery, RURU Shop, RURU Kids, RURU Radio, a library, and Waste Management. ruangrupa, “Gudskul”

⁷⁶ ruangrupa, “About ruangrupa”

⁷⁷ Annie Jael Kwan, “Gudskul: new ecosystems for learning” ArtReview, Last modified January 13, 2020. <https://artreview.com/ara-winter-2019-feature-gudskul/>

⁷⁸ documenta, “documenta fifteen”, accessed April 20th, 2020. https://www.documenta.de/en/documenta-fifteen/#2578_lumbung

⁷⁹ Kwan, “Gudskul: new ecosystems for learning”

in the sense that it is reminiscent of agricultural and communal exchanges. In fact, ruangrupa will be using the symbolic model of the lumbung for their curatorial platform during documenta fifteen. This will consist in a selection of lumbung-members or initiatives that have local social structures which are representative of community-based practices that reflect lumbung values. Some of these initiatives selected as “lumbung members” include Fondation du Festival du Niger (Ségou, Mali), Gudskul (Jakarta, Indonesia), Jatiwangi Art Factory (Jakarta, Indonesia), Khalil Sakakini Cultural Center (Ramallah, Palestine), and Más Arte Más Acción (MAMA) (Nuqui, Choco, Colombia).

To give an example of one of the lumbung member initiatives developed by ruangrupa for documenta fifteen, is the ruruHaus (ruru for ruangrupa and Huis is German for House). The ruruHaus developed from ruangrupa’s experience establishing the ruruhuis SONSBEEK’16 as a pre-exhibition relational space (fig.8). The Haus will be a starting point for the exhibition to serve as a contextualized public-space project with programmed events (fig.12). It goes hand in hand with their *nongkrong* (Indonesian for hanging out or meeting up) which has been used in most projects as its curatorial attitude for physical and digital participation. Initially the ruruHaus will start out small but will grow as there are more visitors and collaborators sharing their skills, knowledge, experiences, resources and values in the larger ecosystem of Kassel. As a curatorial platform the ruruHaus will include a kitchen, a laboratory and a radio station that will share a multitude of perspectives.⁸⁰ The Haus is located in the city center, in a previous Sportarena department store in Kassel. This central and urban placement creates easy accessibility for residents to stop by to absorb, contribute or exchange.

The type of majelis practiced in the ruruHaus will be decided by the relationships catalyzed by its existence. Instead of conceptual explanations, connections to Kassel’s initiatives are currently being conducted in order to practice *nongkrong*, both physically and online. Within its capacity as an ecosystem for collective works, ruruHaus will invite communities/artists/collectives/students, etc., to participate in, activate, and capture the space together.⁸¹

⁸⁰ documenta, “documenta fifteen”

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

As documenta stated in the quote above, there is going to be an ecosystem of collective works featured in the rurHaus. Therefore the art ecosystem has become a transient process between all different points of view in order to share ideas. This curatorial attitude offers a variety of possibilities linked to the public-space and community-based project planning. It was announced on Jun 18, 2020 that reinaart vanhoe will be the first active member of ruruHaus.⁸² What we can be certain of is ruangrupa's structure serves communal modes of exchanges centered around the common good, and not only for the art interested public, but general audiences as well. However, because ruangrupa and documenta are in the early stages of planning, it is still unsure how this organization will further develop.

⁸² *Ibid.*

3. Creating Global and Local Networks

3.1. Friendly and Fluid Discursive Attitudes

Throughout the contemporary art epoque, the importance of the curator as a type of international star became increasingly evident over the past few decades.. The curator was the one who addressed the “discourse” through written or spoken communication but did not necessarily seek to share the limelight. This can even be observed within documenta’s early exhibitions, especially since documenta 5 in 1972. However, it is clear that ruangrupa rejects the notion of the “curator as star” and the even longer history of the “artist as genius”.⁸³ Darmawan, one of the members of ruangrupa explains that creation or ruangrupa’s *Karbon Journal* aims to give various different perspectives, offering a critical voice that explains artworks in socio-cultural context. *Karbon Journal* is run by ruangrupa and gives a platform for writers to talk about issues regarding the public space and the urban visual culture of Indonesia. Darmawan describes the idea behind the journal as:

The artist should no longer position himself as a "prophet" or "healer", as the center of consciousness and master of a language that is not that of the broad public or understood by it. We see the relationship to the public sphere more horizontally, as more permeable in both directions, and not distanced; we see ourselves more in the position of a collaborator than as furnishers, negotiators, or mediators. With this viewpoint, we have no difficulties entering the "real" world of everyday life as a main component of the work (art).⁸⁴

During the 1970’s, Michel Foucault used the “archive” to approach the way that conventions, codes, language and representation created fields of knowledge.⁸⁵ Foucault remarks

⁸³ Linda Nochlin in her essay “Why have there been no great women artists?” 1971. The very definition of the great artist is centered on patriarchal value systems, which would exclude women and minorities. To reach “greatness” in the arts was socially manipulated for most of recorded history. Therefore artists that were outside of this constructed aesthetic were ultimately considered less valuable.

⁸⁴ Hendro Wiyanto, “ruangrupa. Alternative Space & Culture Analysis” October 2005, accessed May 20th, 2020. <https://universes.art/en/nafas/articles/2005/ruangrupa>

⁸⁵ Foucault, Michel. "Orders of Discourse." *Social Science Information* 10, No. 2 (1971) ; Foucault, Michel, Alan Sheridan. *The archaeology of knowledge*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1972.

that when confronted by a discourse it is important to know who the author is, who gave them the right to speak, to know how they qualified, what is their status and which institutions are supporting their point of view?⁸⁶ These questions, approached in such a manner may highlight some of the key conceptions of accepted forms of knowledge. Foucault explains “At all events, one thing at least must be emphasized here: that the analysis of discourse thus understood, does not reveal the universality of a meaning, but brings to light the action of imposed rarity, with a fundamental power of affirmation.”⁸⁷ This quote is important because the methods for discursive practices in ruangrupa’s work intentionally seek a variety in perspectives, rather than reverberate one grand narrative. Throughout modern history, the curator was the editor of the exhibition catalogues and could frame the exhibition almost as if it was an artwork in itself. This enabled a shift in curatorial practice from aesthetically pleasing art objects to the documentation of unconventional curatorial practices.⁸⁸ Therefore, the curator’s words and their vision was intended to guide visitors in their experience of the artworks. Initially, curator’s publications and catalogues were controlled by the critical vision of the curator. However, as postmodernists gained larger influence on contemporary art theory, intellectuals and academics sought a way to decentralize authority. For example, documenta 11 had a variety of platforms for discussion like workshops, conferences, discussions, that were just as important as the final exhibition.⁸⁹

The curator of documenta 11 (2002), Okwui Enwezor described this postcolonial shift towards a multiplicity of narratives as a method for knowledge production that inspired his experimental program coordination strategies.⁹⁰ These various platforms for discussions were later included in the documenta catalogue as a crucial part of the exhibition. Artist collectives follow a similar way of expressing their opinions in published texts and in discursive methods of program coordination. According to Howardena Pindell, the communicative power of the printed page serves as an alternative space for representing art and enables artist collectives to confront the public directly rather than being influenced by curators and dealers while maintaining their

⁸⁶ Foucault, Michel. "Orders of Discourse." *Social Science Information* 10, No. 2 (1971): 50

⁸⁷ Foucault, Michel. "Orders of Discourse." *Social Science Information* 10, No. 2 (1971): 234

⁸⁸ Green and Gardner. *Biennials, Triennials, and Documenta : The Exhibitions That Created Contemporary Art*, 25.

⁸⁹ The curator Okwui Enwezor created 5 platforms for documenta 11. “ Democracy Unrealized” addressing issues in development ethics (Berlin), “Experiments with Truth” conferences on ethnic, racial, religious, and sectarian conflicts (New Delhi), “Créolité and creolization” cultural workshops on modern creoleness (Caribbean), “Under Siege” conferences on African culture and urban imaginaries (Freetozb, Johannesburg, Kinshasa, lagos), “Exhibition Kassel” exhibition of 117 artists and the final platform (Kassel).

⁹⁰ Okwui Enwezor, “The black box” *documenta11_platform 5* exh.cat. (ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz, 2002): 42.

‘alternative’ status.⁹¹ Subsequently, the notion of the archive as an accessible resource has been an important facet of the artist collective because it allows them to frame their own argument in their own manner. As Foucault explains “The archive is first the law of what can be said, the system that governs the appearance of statements as unique events.”⁹² Artist collectives and their use of the archive is a way for them to create an alternative narrative and space that is supported by a network rather than solely an institution. This makes their perspective easier to share in the exhibition space, the digital space and the archival space.

In terms of printed media and accessible publications ruangrupa has had its fair share of success. They began a Journal in 2000 called *Jurnal Karbon* that they have published seven editions in print until making them available only online after 2007. Besides *Jurnal Karbon* they have also published event catalogues for their annual Ok.video festival and exhibition catalogues for *The Sweet and Sour Story of Sugar* exhibition, and *Decompression#10* exhibition⁹³ It is important to note that most of these publications are in both English and Indonesian, this is a factor that enables the text to reach a greater international audience and therefore gains more traction in contemporary art. One of the *Karbon Journals* that proved to be most interesting to my topic is *Jurnal Karbon; Alternative Space* published in 2003 due to its inclusion of a variety of artist collectives and alternative spaces in Indonesia. In this third edition of *Karbon Journal*, F.X. Harsono, one of the most influential artists in Indonesia wrote “A social being, an artist should always communicate and interact with his or her society.”⁹⁴ Through the use of archival information and discourse artist collectives like ruangrupa are facilitating local and communal cultural practices with the transmission of ideas and skills.

As opposed to the artistic activist movements of the last decade of the twentieth century, present-day artist collectives can include an online presence as either a strategy or a playground. Crucial networking strategies like video and print media coverage can be their greatest weapon. Collective publications and studio spaces were created for social encounters where visitors and artists shared a safe space to openly criticize hegemonic systems. Some of these spaces might be considered as an art laboratory, which function as a space for experimentation, creative processes,

⁹¹ Pindell, Howardena. *The heart of the Questions: the Writings and paintings of Howardena Pindell*, (Midmarch Arts Press, New York, 1997), 90.

⁹² Foucault, Michel, Alan Sheridan. *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), 129.

⁹³ Their online compilation of information about exhibitions can be found with this resource. ruangrupa “Proyek Terpilih”, Accessed March 20th, <https://ruangrupa.id/proyek-terpilih/>

⁹⁴ F.X. Harsono, “Deciphering the Map of Indonesian Visual Art Communities” *Karbon Jurnal 05 (2003)*:16

an exhibition area and most importantly a meeting point for discussions. The Canadian based artist run space, Art Metropole is a good example of an early artist collective still active today. It was founded in 1974 as a non-profit artist run-space which still publishes books, videos, audio, electronic media and introduces their collections freely on the website.⁹⁵ Dettner and Nannucci argue that the ability for new methods of communication gave rise to the greatest objective of an artist-run space - collaborative participation.⁹⁶ The authors explain that with the ability to implicate the presence of the audience or other artists into a collaborative living space whether through virtual or physical presence, reinforces motivation towards communal projects.⁹⁷ The implications of the artists within the communal space served as a public and social terrain that might have given artists and viewers a sense of cultural belonging.

Ruangrupa has been using various networking methods for expanding their contacts which are constantly evolving. In the beginning it was much easier for them to be informal and welcome other artists to join and collaborate with them, as they grew in popularity their reach began to evolve in various ways.⁹⁸ In their book *Decompression #10*, they reference the notion of “friendship” and gaining “friends” instead of the concept of networking.⁹⁹ They describe a kind of fluid and personal style or relating to each other that is informal. These friends also include formal institutions that they collaborate, reinforcing that they do not have a strategy but rather an “attitude”.¹⁰⁰ A strategy would imply anticipating all of the steps taken towards attaining a goal, whereas attitude would suggest a way of being that does not have a predetermined objective. According to ruangrupa, part of this attitude is to give and expect nothing in return, which would not be possible as a strategy. There is a sentence that describes this well in Indonesia “Hanya memberi tak Harap Kembali”, translated to “ Given sincerely, expecting nothing in return- an Indonesian maxim to explain unconditional love, normally given by mothers to their children.”¹⁰¹ In addition, members of ruangrupa have used the slogan “Don’t make art, make friends” previously in the exhibition *Cosmopolis #1* at the Centre Pompidou in 2017.¹⁰² Although they are not the first

⁹⁵ Art Metropole, “Artist-Run Europe”, accessed January 20, 2020, <https://artmetropole.com/shop/14415>

⁹⁶ Dettner and Nannucci. *Artist-run Spaces : Nonprofit Collective Organizations in the 1960s and 1970s*, 19.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁹⁸ Reinaart vanhoe “Ruangrupa and Also-Space” private interview in Rotterdam, March 6th, 2020.

⁹⁹ Hujatnikajennong, Rakun, Ambyo, Hujatnikajennong, Agung, Rakun, Farid, Ambyo, Rani, and Ruangrupa. *Decompression#10 : Expanding the Space and Public Ruangrupa's 10th Anniversary.*, 16.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 16.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 242.

¹⁰² The Centre Pompidou, *Cosmopolis #1: Collective Intelligence* (Paris: the Centre Pompidou), 11.

to come up with the concept of “friendship” in curatorial practices and many art professionals in Southeast Asia have used this to create meaningful connections. The Yogyakarta-based curator Grace Samboh emphasized the popularity of using friendship as a way to create in Indonesia.¹⁰³ The Indonesian cultural network KUNCI is another example of a cultural space that functions with a membership based on friendship and informality as well as self-sustaining and collective practices.

Which comes back to the *nongkrong* method, discussed in the previous chapters as a method for “hanging out” with individuals and sharing informal discussions. *Nongkrong* can be understood as fluid methods of communication that continually influence the artists and participants in the process. This could simply be talking, and showing that you care about others. This practice dates back to the early days of *ruangrupa* when private living rooms functioned as public spaces due to the political situation of the 1900’s in Indonesia.¹⁰⁴ This relaxed perspective is believed to alleviate judgment so people may feel more at ease to share ideas that they may not have otherwise done. I argue that although this is one of their strongest curatorial methods, it is time consuming and sometimes impractical for long term planning.¹⁰⁵ Because the artwork is affected by conversation it is difficult to know where the project will end up. This can deplete productivity and could lead artists to work too hard and do too much. It can be expected that trying to connect to people on such a personal and honest level would require a lot of time and energy. The artist reinaart gives an example of what he calls “overdoing” as a consequence to this kind of way of working in this way during large exhibitions. He explains that during the Jakarta 32°C Festival of 2014 when he was supervising students he noticed that the collective members that should lead the workshops in reality ran out of time so they couldn’t be fully invested in the planning.¹⁰⁶

A way that *ruangrupa* has proven to be a genuine platform for exchange is their constant use of the opportunities to share information, tools, knowledge and data throughout different

¹⁰³ Grace Samboh, “Taking and Giving: friendship as a Way of Thinking and Doing” (Symposium: StPaul St Curatorial) Auckland, July 2016.

¹⁰⁴ From 1963 until 1995, cultural organizations needed a license to hold different types of meetings. Cultural meetings included gatherings around music, dance, drama, poetry, opera, and other artforms. Tod Jones, “Indonesian Cultural Policy, 1950-2003: culture, institutions, government” (PhD diss., Curtin University of Technology, 2005), 178.

¹⁰⁵ Anne Marjolein Pink, “Nongkrong” in *ruru huis*, ed. reinaart vanhoe and Krista Jantowoski, (Arnhem: Walter Books, 2016) 94.

¹⁰⁶ Vanhoe, Reinaart. *Also-space, from Hot to Something Else*, 44.

communities so that in turn those communities can also share it within their networks and create artistic ideas from them.¹⁰⁷ For example their *Perayaan 10 Tahun ruangrupa pre-event* for the 10 year anniversary of ruangrupa in 2010 consisted of an open studio space where visitors came and interacted with artists. Artists gave away their works to visitors like stickers, pins, screen prints, postcards, stencils, posters, calendars, video, photos, graphic material, seals and such for free.¹⁰⁸ Visitors were also encouraged to bring their own materials like cloth to be screen printed on or USB drives so they could upload the works of artists. For ruangrupa this was not simply a way to look at an exchange of material objects but rather a transition of “dialogue, idea exchange, experience, taste, ect..”¹⁰⁹

Artist residencies are also an optimal way for artists to be in contact with one another and form transnational alliances. For example, the Indonesian artist collective Kunci had a decolonial research residency followed by the symposium *Tropical Dissonance: Decolonizing Knowledge Through Ethnographic Archives* (2017) at the Tropenmuseum in Amsterdam. This six week research residency resulted in the symposium *Tropical Dissonance: Decolonizing Knowledge Through Ethnographic Archives*. This symposium was part of a bigger project titled “School of Improper education” in which KUNCI experiments with alternative modes of education and knowledge transmission. The Tropical Dissonance residency was also accompanied by the KUNCI Radio show. Jatiwangi Art factory is another Indonesian artist collective with an important artist residency program that also functions as a biennial festival. The festival joins participating artists to exchange in the traditions and cultures of the people of Jatiwangi and, in return, the artists in residence can share their own cultural influences.¹¹⁰ Ruangrupa runs a residency program called ArtLab which was designed to produce a series of research and artistic collaborations on topics that the collective also plays with. In chapter 1.3 of this thesis, we discussed the exhibition *Vertical Villages*, which was part of the ArtLab residency with the Australian artist Keg De Souza. ArtLab encourages artists to explore topics that include new media, the urban environment, decentralization and decolonization to name a few of their recent projects. ArtLab was created

¹⁰⁷ Hujatnikajennong, Rakun, Ambyo, Hujatnikajennong, Agung, Rakun, Farid, Ambyo, Rani, and Ruangrupa. *Decompression#10 : Expanding the Space and Public Ruangrupa's 10th Anniversary*, 130.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 242.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 242.

¹¹⁰ Jatiwangi art factory, “about”, Accessed March 21, 2020. <https://jatiwangiartfactory.tumblr.com/run>

with the intention of bridging transnational approaches with the common concept of the social and public space.

Ruangrupa has carefully created a social circle based on a generous structure. As described in their “Decompression 10” book the generous structure is based on “Open minded sharing of knowledge and energy with our everyday and professional environment”.¹¹¹ Instead of calculating every step it is more about offering time and energy with a general goal in mind set out to reach. Ade Darmawan once told reinaart “often no one even seems to remember who exactly came up with what idea.”¹¹² On a political level this generous structure serves as a method for promoting collective needs and understanding the objectives and interests of its members. This is precisely one of the artistic attitudes that ruangrupa utilizes that sets them apart from other cultural institutions. Without this mutual generosity ruangrupa would risk being a cultural space that mentions its social environment in its activities but doesn’t directly work in this community. One of the ways ruangrupa makes sure to follow this generous structure is through the spaces that are available for visitors, students, artists and members. For example, the ruangrupa house in Jakarta has an open door policy. Reinaart explains his experience “You can always sleep there, you can always find someone to talk to, the library is open without restrictions”.¹¹³ In addition to this, spaces that were not yet claimed could be used by other artists in order to work, eat, hold meetings, or simply gather. However, due to the sheer amount of work and “working too much” it has become increasingly difficult for them to maintain this spontaneity with a full agenda.¹¹⁴

3.2. Socially Engaged Curatorial Practice

It may be evident by now that through certain artistic approaches ruangrupa tries to reach out to their audience and relate to them in an equal way, enabling an alternative space to emerge. Their methods can vary, yet they often come down to one thing; building connections. This is why relational aesthetics serves as an effective parallel for some of ruangrupa’s characteristics as an attitude for socially engaged art that enables visitors to expose and share their interpretations and experiences. The connection that visitors create with their surroundings, whether through

¹¹¹ vanhoe, *Also-space, from Hot to Something Else*, 34.

¹¹² reinaart vanhoe “Ruangrupa and Also-Space” private interview in Rotterdam, March 6th, 2020. (own abbreviation)

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 34.

¹¹⁴ vanhoe “Ruangrupa and Also-Space” private interview in Rotterdam, March 6th, 2020.

discussions or contemplative introspection, does not necessitate a well-versed account of the space. Instead, spontaneous reactions to everyday ideas could subsequently lead to further action as a developing process. Emerging studies have suggested that to build greater participation in art spaces, relational aesthetics builds a positive alternative to the “white cube”.¹¹⁵ This is done with the participatory intention of turning visitors into creators themselves, rather than solely consumers of other people’s creativity. According to Choi, the artistic space “(...) needs to encourage visitors to create such narratives through educational support or educational intervention.”¹¹⁶

Ruangrupa’s routine events consist of festivals, collaborative projects, international and national exhibitions, journal publications, and events like “Karaoke sessions that are full of laughter, dining receptions, philosophical discussions, workshops, clubbing sessions, film screenings, garage sales”¹¹⁷ Their relational approach to art that invites ‘a space of encounter’ informs the viewer that the moments of social interaction are crucial in the meaning behind the work. Ruangrupa’s process is maintained through a diverse platform defined by reinaart as “acting contextually”. This entails that ruangrupa “consciously relates and connects their own activities to the context and living environment in which the work is produced.”¹¹⁸ Using this type of proto artistic institution, artists claim that they are prioritizing the local over the global. In a system of artistic canons that span from a wide range of global movements, the notion of ‘local’ is becoming an increasingly distant reality.

The Author Thomas Berguis identified ruangrupa’s use of space for social engagement as part of “relational aesthetics”. Ruangrupa’s works that engage with relational aesthetics exhibit human relations as an artwork in itself, which in themselves transcends the meaning.¹¹⁹ An example of this kind of relational aesthetics is ruangrupa’s *Lekker Eten Zonder Betalen* (Dutch: Good Eating Without Paying) exhibition at the Cemeti Art House in Yogyakarta (2003)(fig.13). This group exhibition with other artists consisted of a large dinner on the opening night where people gathered around food and inside the gallery. The gallery was set up like a domestic interior to

¹¹⁵ Synghee Choi, "Relational Aesthetics in Art Museum Education: Engendering Visitors' Narratives Through Participatory Acts for Interpretive Experience." *Studies in Art Education* 55, no. 1 (2013): 59.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 59.

¹¹⁷ Hujatnikajennong, Rakun, Ambyo, Hujatnikajennong, Agung, Rakun, Farid, Ambyo, Rani, and Ruangrupa. *Decompression#10 : Expanding the Space and Public Ruangrupa's 10th Anniversary: Ruru & Friends*, Ruru.net, Ruru.zip, 1.

¹¹⁸ Vanhoe, Reinaart. *Also-space, from Hot to Something Else : How Indonesian Art Initiatives Have Reinvented Networking*. (Onomatopee (Series); No. 136. 2016). 34.

¹¹⁹ Berghuis, Thomas J. “Ruangrupa: What Could Be ‘Art to Come’.” In *Third Text*, 395-407. Vol. 25. Series 4. Routledge, 2011.

imitate a casual environment and incite exchanges between visitors. Ruangrupa's part in this was the setup of a specific atmosphere that resonated through the dinner party and music. The objects that were left behind from the event became "filled with memory and energy" and were left in their used state for the temporary exhibition.¹²⁰ This type of art could fall into the category of relational aesthetics, developed by the French art historian Nicolas Bourriaud which states that knowledge is not only acquired from books but it is also experienced as a transient process. Therefore, relational aesthetics transforms museum exhibitions from didactic texts to engaging visitors in performances during exhibitions, events, and specific contexts. It places visitors at the center of the work in order to understand the particular interpretation of the code within the space.

According to Bourriaud's aesthetic theory, relational aesthetics does not have to stand for an activist protest to be part of relational aesthetics. Most relational works abide to a certain public of art connoisseurs and so it is not attached to any motive towards social or political change in a community.¹²¹ However, a similar idea of participation and lived experience can be found in both ruangrupa and relational aesthetics. Chantal Mouffe argues that with contemporary art, there should be a critical perspective. In this case, it would demand the personal engagement of visitors in cultural practices. The philosopher John Dewey focused a study on student based learning through engaged methods of participation. According to Dewey, lived experience was celebrated as a form of knowledge which would build off the development of subjectivity through dialogue and analysis.¹²² An advantage to this kind of "flow" between networks is that discussions enable community members so situate themselves within an exchange. Which raises the question - is this creation of networks and collectives feasible outside of the 'artworld' and cultural management? It may not be true for all artist collectives but ruangrupa has attempted to step outside of the boundaries of cultural management many times before, each time redefining what artistic practices can mean.

Since its creation, ruangrupa has constantly been involved in pedagogical structures that encourage visitors and other collectives to partake in communal methods of working. As they began to build a larger creative space, the Contemporary Art Collective and Ecosystem Studies or

¹²⁰ ruangrupa, "*Lekker Eten Zonder Betalen*" Accessed April 5, 2020. <http://ruru.ruangrupa.org/index.php/portfolio-items/lekker-eten-zonder-betalen>

¹²¹ Synghee Choi, "Relational Aesthetics in Art Museum Education: Engendering Visitors' Narratives Through Participatory Acts for Interpretive Experience." *Studies in Art Education* 55, no. 1 (2013): 56.

¹²² Ledwith and Springett, *Participatory Practice: Community-based Action for Transformative Change*. (Bristol: Policy Press, 2012)

Gudskul (pronounced “good school” in English) was co-developed in 2018. The Gudskul is described as a public learning space designed to promote methods of critical and experimental dialogue through a process of exchange and experience-based learning.¹²³ Kwan describes the Gudskul’s pedagogical initiatives as:

Displacing the currently prevalent role of the supercurator in the international art world, the centrality of cooperative work will allow the exhibition to take on questions of how collaboration and solidarity, and thinking about sustainability and the redistribution of resources, might impact other locales globally, and more particularly those outside the usual ‘art capitals’.¹²⁴

Students are an essential part of Gudskul because they target two themes that are important to ruangrupa; youth culture and education. At the Gudskul’s collectives’ studies, they organize year long classes as well as shorter courses. The shorter courses have been in high demand and in 2018 they attracted over 300 students, some of which were given scholarships or ‘pay as you can’ subsidies.¹²⁵ The shared commercial income from the Art Collective Compound (including ruangrupa, Serrum and Grafis Huru Hara) provide the remaining financial costs to sustain the school. The Gudskul’s pedagogical platform resembles the structure that ruangrupa uses in their own exhibitions; collaboration on concepts that fit as a larger facultative project.

3.3. documenta’s Mission and the Future of Curatorial Practices

Ruangrupa was selected unanimously to be the curators of documenta fifteen by the International Finding committee. Philippe Pirotte and Elvira Dyangani Ose, two of the members of the selection committee for documenta gave these reasons to why they were selected “We have appointed ruangrupa because they have demonstrated the ability to appeal to various communities, including groups that go beyond pure art audiences, and to promote local commitment and participation. Their curatorial approach is based on an international network of local community-based art

¹²³ Ruangrupa, “Gudskul” Accessed March 12, 2020. <http://ruru.ruangrupa.org/index.php/gudskul/>

¹²⁴ Kwan, “Gudskul: new ecosystems for learning” ArtReview.

¹²⁵ Kwan, “Gudskul: new ecosystems for learning” ArtReview.

organizations.”¹²⁶ Additional motivations behind their selection was ruangrupa’s methods of addressing the art spaces as a means to approach current issues in society. It has been clear throughout recent documenta exhibitions that they do not shy away from political and social issues in their way of approaching knowledge production. For this new quintennial exhibition, documenta is interested in social debates which encourage a diversity in perspectives through various communication methods.

The documenta exhibitions were first established in 1955 in the South German city of Kassel, partially as a way to make amends with the devastating history of Germany in WWII. During this period modern art was a target for looting and ridiculed as “degenerate art” during the third reich of Nazi Germany. Documenta’s 100-day exhibitions have become more politicized over the years, and over the years it has been considered an alternative to the traditional canons of Western contemporary art. Oftentimes, documenta pushes the international discourse about art in different socio-political ways and sets new international standards for exhibitions. Two of the members of ruangrupa, Farid Rakun and Ade Darmawan, explained:

Our curatorial approach aims at a different community-oriented model of resource usage – economical, but also taking ideas, knowledge, programs and innovations into account. If documenta was launched in 1955 to heal war wounds, why shouldn’t we focus documenta 15 on today’s injuries, especially ones rooted in colonialism, capitalism, or patriarchal structures, and contrast them with partnership-based models that enable people to have a different view of the world.¹²⁷

In the previous documenta exhibition, documenta 14 (2017), ruangrupa organized its internet radio station as the partner of a decentralized radio project *Every Time a Ear di Soun*. The radio show brought eight international radio stations together for the listening pleasure of anyone with a connection to the internet. For the upcoming documenta fifteen, ruangrupa is already preparing a new radio show that will be played throughout the floors of the ruruHaus in Kassel. The ruruHaus will be a space that will be active within the community of Kassel through various

¹²⁶ Documenta, “ruangrupa Selected as Artistic Direction of documenta 15 [SEP] For the First Time an Artist Collective Curates the International Art Exhibition” Press conference, February 22, 2018.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

programs (see chapter 2.3).¹²⁸ Reinaart vanhoe was selected to be the first member of the ruruHaus due to his experience in the SONSBEK'16 exhibition. During SONSBEK, reinaart was contributing his perspective and collaborating on projects in the ruruhuis. Because he participated in several of ruangrupa's events over the last twenty years as well as led his own 'house' in the Netherlands called ook_huis his experience renders him the ideal first contributor.

Documenta 11 is of particular interest to this thesis because the curator Okwui Enwezor was one of the most forward-thinking curators of the twentieth century.¹²⁹ His cutting-edge curatorial approach towards spatiality, globalization and postcolonialism strongly reflects some of Ruangrupa's strategies to bring activist change to the artworld. During Documental 11 in 2002, Enwezor envisioned this exhibition as a rupture of the tradition of Western centric art in order to create an alternative representational space that engages with narratives regarding postcolonialism. Enwezor states “ [T]he political and historical vision of the Western avant-garde has remained narrow. The propagators of the avant-garde have done little to constitute a space of self-reflexivity that can understand new relations of artistic modernity not founded on Westernism.”¹³⁰ ¹³¹ Enwezor was interested in cultural practices that addressed infrastructural activism as an important facet to contemporary curating.¹³² Which paved the way for curatorial practices, like ruangrupa, that are not afraid to contest political injustices.

Enwezor's cultural and political narrative on postcolonialism was meant to decentralize Western art from the global art market and take a closer look at societies that have been overlooked due to the power of colonial artistic representation.¹³³ In addition, Enwezor attested to the notion of spatiality in globalization and the many characteristics of decentralizing that would transform contemporary society.¹³⁴ Alluding to the transformation of subjectivities caused by both temporal and spatial experiences. Documenta 11 can be seen as a disruption of the central location of the art

¹²⁸ These programs still remain in the planning stages, and therefore have not been disclosed with the public as of June 2020.

¹²⁹ Okwui Enwezor ranked 20th in 2016 on the Art Review's list of most powerful figures in the contemporary art world. Art Review “Okwui Enwezor”, Accessed May 10, 2020, https://artreview.com/power_100/okwui_enwezor/

¹³⁰ Okwui Enwezor, “The black box” *documenta11_platform 5* exh.cat. (ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz, 2002).

¹³¹ The term “Westernism” according to Okwui Enwezor references the tendency in the artworld to prioritize Western works as more valuable than non-Western art.

¹³² Okwui Enwezor *Talking Contemporary Curating. ICI Perspectives in Curating*, interviewed by Terry Smith. (New York, NY: Independent Curators International, 2015), 102.

¹³³ To decentralize the dominant Western art means to leave more room for other groups. Okwui enwezor was especially important in raising consciousness about cultural practices in Africa in his curatorial practice.

¹³⁴ This can be seen during his time as curator of documenta 11 when he created five platforms for discussions around the world. Most of which were outside Europe and North America.

world urging the margins to perform in the center. Stewart Martin explained “There is therefore a new political ontology of totalization at stake today. In the terms of phenomenological ontology, Documenta 11 discloses a different world to that disclosed by the historical avant-gardes.”¹³⁵ According to Enwezor, collectivization through artistic production tends to arise at moments of political crisis, and has therefore occurred throughout the history of art. Such crises often lead to a re-evaluation of artistic practices and a reconfiguration of the position of the artist in relation to society. As stated by Darmawan, the “main purpose is to reclaim the public space that has been controlled by bureaucracy, authority and anarchical urban infrastructure.”¹³⁶

Ruangrupa explains that “[their curatorial approach for documenta fifteen] aims at a different kind of collaborative model of resource use economically, but also in terms of ideas, knowledge, programs, and innovation.”¹³⁷ There will be assemblies, artist residencies, and public activities envisioned within an interdisciplinary process. One of the key components of documenta fifteen as an institution is that it will not only welcome various community-based practices but actively be a part of the community itself. How documenta plans on performing in the community is still unclear, but there will be programs in place like the ruruHaus which will most likely function with and for the Kassel community. Other, more global participation will be essential in the form of exchanges with various networks that advocate inclusivity. Because we can consider ruangrupa’s curatorial approach to be more of an attitude than a strategy, we can predict that documenta fifteen will emphasize the need for fluid and open discussions that favor participation in their ‘lambung’ structure.

Documenta explains that the curatorial approaches being developed are “based on proximity and shared desires” which has been prevalent in the past as ruangrupa’s collaborative method for socially engaged methods of curating a space.¹³⁸ Documenta’s exhibitions have been increasingly interested in the curators as a type of super-artist in which the organizational structure reflects the curator’s intentions. Although ruangrupa has been said to oppose this type of functioning, will the reception from the art community be one of fetishization or participation? The practice of curation is committed to the process of conceptualization while ruangrupa is always

¹³⁵ Stewart Martin, "A New World Art? - Documenting Documenta 11." *Radical Philosophy*, no. 122 (2003):10

¹³⁶ Darmawan, Ade quoted by Kurniawan, Agung. ‘The Rebels from the Living Room’. In: *Shifting Map*, 151

¹³⁷ documenta, “documenta fifteen”, accessed April 20th, 2020. (own addition)

¹³⁸ documenta, “documenta fifteen”, Accessed April 20th, 2020.

searching for new platforms for shared discourses.¹³⁹ This discursive practice that favors popular art may serve as a model for actively deconstructing certain art institutions limited by Western conceptions of knowledge production. However, the immense scale and complexity of documenta fifteen is a formidable challenge that the ruangrupa collective will tackle together leading up to the integrated event.

¹³⁹ Smith, Terry. *Talking Contemporary Curating. ICI Perspectives in Curating* (New York, NY: Independent Curators International, 2015).

CONCLUSION

Reviewing the Problem

In this thesis, I seek to answer my research question: What curatorial approaches does the socially-engaged artist collective ruangrupa utilize, and to what extent do these bring about change in methods of curating for institutions? Before we can answer this, “curatorial approaches” has to be redefined in ruangrupa’s own terms as curatorial “attitudes” rather than curatorial strategies. Suggesting that ruangrupa’s curatorial attitude is based on cultural projects that reflect community engagement and spontaneous relational connections. From an international perspective, ruangrupa offers an alternative space to museums, commercial galleries and established art spaces. This enables them to thrive as a self-sustaining platform and manage interdisciplinary projects that reach diverse audiences. But to what extent do artist collectives substitute established institutions or serve as their complementary partner in contemporary art? An argument to this approach states that many critical artists in the past have claimed to counter the narrative of hegemony, while at the same time partaking in its hierarchal system. Throughout this thesis, I aim to establish a critical reading of current curatorial developments in the field of collective studies in order to situate the emergence of independent networks in Indonesia and beyond.

Collaborative Curatorial Approaches in Cultural Management

Ruangrupa’s focus on non-object based media which stimulates discussion and experience was not unexpected for the twenty-first century. But their method of turning it into a highly varied and diverse network made up of a transnational public is exceptional. As part of their core lumbung platform they encourage the informal democratization of materials, time, collaboration and ideas equally among members and other participating artists and/or visitors. The balance between popular social events and ruangrupa’s interest in political themes is precisely the type of informal space that instigates greater audience participation. This has been shown in their past events which entice both praxis and discussion, such as the Ok.video festival, ArtLab, SONSBEEK’16, Gudskul, *Lekker Eten Zonder Betalen*, *The Kuda*, and RURUradio.

In general artist collectives thrive from collaborative, discursive and fluid approaches for cultural management programs. Ruangrupa’s curatorial approach resembles more of an attitude

than a strategy because it offers a space for creating art as a living process with its own intrinsic value, rather than a final product. *Nongkrong* or “hanging out” can be considered one of their pivotal curatorial attitudes because it does not have a definite final goal to reach. Sometimes this consists of investing a lot of time in human relations while not expecting anything in return. This type of approach emphasizes building or maintaining networks as the initial meaning to their work. What makes ruangrupa’s platform so unique, and one of the reasons they were selected for documenta is their advocacy for cultural inclusivity through socially engaged participation both from cultural management and participants.

The collaborative turn of the 1960’s and 1970’s stimulated artists and people alike to work together in order to control and develop their own cultural infrastructure. Fluxus and Happenings are examples of art movements that moved away from the collection-based space into an experience making phenomenon. In the Suharto era (1966-1998) museums became physical manifestations of a united nationality that sought to represent more conservative values of Indonesian culture. The New Art Movement started the first institutional critique from artist collective’s against the government’s interference on artist’s freedom of expression. Since this movement, artist collectives and cultural networks have been prospering in Indonesia, most often as non-profit organizations that sanction community-oriented vectors for knowledge as the principal strategy for both artistic and curatorial practices.

Artist collectives in Java in particular view their contributions as “place-making” by working contextually in the environment of those communities. The topic of space has often been theorized in ruangrupa’s method for bridging the gap between the public and culture. Public art today is more than an artwork in a public space, rather it can be defined as the lived expression and reaction of culture in public areas. Ruangrupa’s permanent public space, the Art Collective Compound (ACC) in Jakarta is open to everyone every day of the week with various facilities open for use. Besides their physical space, I argue that their virtual spaces are an important curatorial approach. These virtual spaces that function with online accessible archives like their radio show, social media platforms, *Karbon Journal* and new media (video, music, sound) works enable them to create an additional genre of public art. Ruangrupa’s alternative spaces offers characteristics of complex modern art spaces. Three of which are applied to them in this thesis, the also-space, alternative space and art ecosystem. I argue that one of their most influential curatorial attitudes is to create alternative spaces that offer cultural environments open to exchanges outside

of consumerist culture. The also-space is a term used by reinaart to explain ruangrupa's coordination of ethical and social structures of exchanges that emphasize generosity within heterogenous environments. These semi-formal spaces are interested in the intersection of various disciplines and therefore welcome diversity in discussions and perspectives. A good example of these also-spaces are the various programs within the Gudskul art ecosystem which negotiate space as a public infrastructure that organizes outside of the institutionalized artworld.

Although we do not know what curatorial developments documenta fifteen will undergo we can assume that ruangrupa's collective approach of experience making will be an important theme. Through ruangrupa's co-management of the Gudskul and other pedagogical platforms like *Karbon journal*, the RURU radio show, the ArtLab residency it is safe to propose that a central method for curation will be captured by shared communication methods as a means for creating an alternative space. For example, their radio show that will air in the ruruHaus, one of the permanent "houses" of documenta. Today, to be a successful curator at documenta it takes more than using the latest news and concepts, it requires thinking contextually while looking towards global frameworks that entice social action. It is about moderating the viewer or artist into the creation of their own narrative by giving them the tools to explore temporal and spatial knowledge. What this says about collaborative curatorial practices is that there is no longer a linear process from creation to exhibition, but rather a continuous inflection on the curator and the viewer as artists themselves. More than ever before in recent history has the social awareness collectives been able to effectively change the course of the future of artistic institutions.

Back to the Hypothesis

In the beginning of my research I hypothesized that the use of alternative spaces, activism, and diverse networks would be key to creating successful characteristics for curatorial approaches in the artworld. Later, I found that some of ruangrupa's most successful curatorial strategies like *nongkrong*, and *lumbung* are more interested in the semi-formal exchange in knowledge production that create large educational ecosystem. Therefore, their curatorial attitude is not always about activism and critical themes, but it seeks to appeal to include diverse audiences. Whether this is enjoying a dinner in an exhibition, learning a skill in their workshops, or simply hanging out, their alternative spaces and online archives are within reach to all open-minded students from all walks of life.

IMAGES

CHAPTER ONE



Figure 1

ruangrupa, “Members of ruangrupa collective”, *Universes art*, by Jin Panji and Gudskul, Jakarta, 2019: Reza Afisina, Indra Ameng, Farid Rakun, Daniella Fitria Praptono, Iswanto Hartono, Ajeng Nurul Aini, Ade Darmawan, Julia Sarisetiati, and Mirwan Andan.



Figure 2

ruangrupa, Ok.Video festival video screening, 2009, photograph, Jakarta.



Figure 3

Ruangrupa, *The Kuda: the Untold Story of Indonesian Underground Music in the 70s*, 2012, mixed media; installation view.



Figure 4

ruangrupa ArtLab and Keg de Souza, *Vertical Villages*, mixed media; installation view, 4A Center For Contemporary Asian Art, 2013. Photo: Zan Wimberley.



Figure 5

Gudskul, "Karaoke", *ruangrupa*, Jakarta

CHAPTER TWO



Figure 6

Josef Prusa/ Gudskul, *Support Face Shield Productionin Gudskul* , 2020, 3D printing, and graphic, plastic (Gudskul)



Figure 7

Ruangrupa, *The Sweet and Sour Story of Sugar*, mixed media; installation view, Galeri Kuntskring, Jakarta, 2016.



Figure 8

ruangrupa, *rurhuis*, Looierstraat, Arnhem, 2016, seen from the front.



Figure 9

Rob Voerman, *The exchange*, 2016, wood, alumni, colored glass, dark plexiglass, dimensions variable, (Anherm, Sonsbeek'16; transACTION exhibition).



Figure 10

Gudskul, *The Art Collective Compound*, Durian Raya No.30, Jakarta Selatan, seen from above, 2018, photo: ruangrupa.

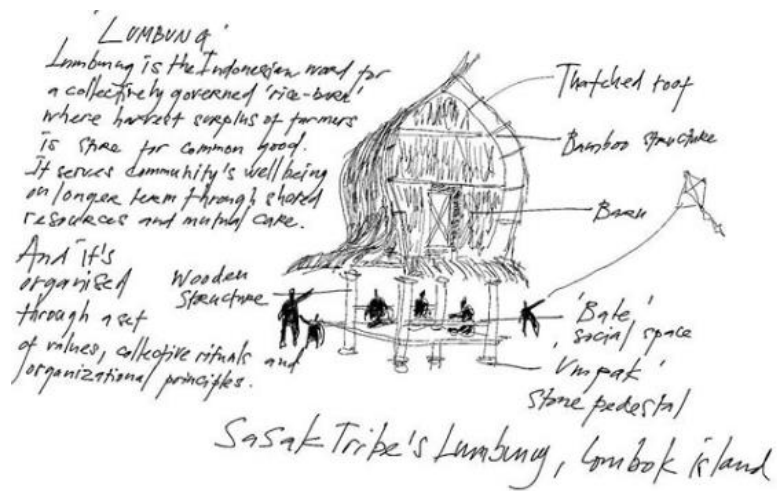


Figure 11

ruangrupa, "Lumbung", Illustration, date unknown, documenta fifteen.



Figure 12

ruangrupa, *ruruHaus*, documenta and museum Fridericianum gGmbH, Kassel, 2020, seen from front, Photo: Nicolas Wefers

CHAPTER THREE

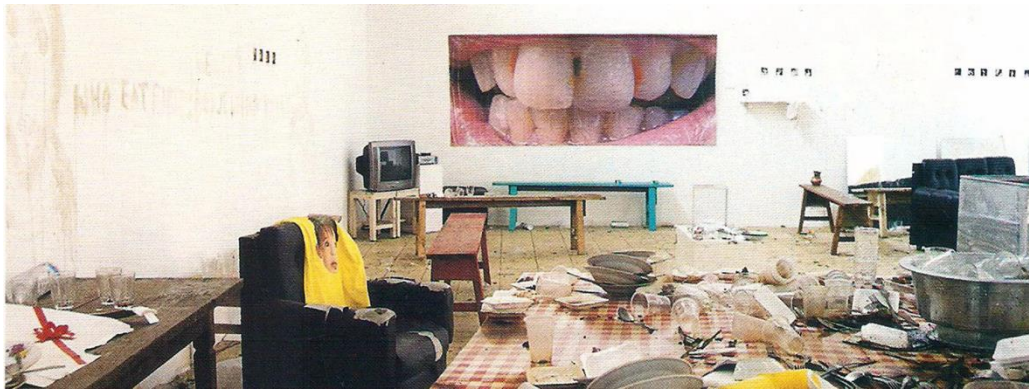


Figure 13

ruangrupa, *Lekker Eten Zonder Betalen*, 2003, mixed media; installation view, Cemeti Gallery, Yogyakarta, accessed January 2020.

IMAGE LIST

Cover page

Gudskul, “karaoke”, *ruangrupa*, Jakarta.

ruangrupa, *ruruHaus*, documenta and museum Fridericianum gGmbH, Kassel, 2020, seen from front, Photo: Nicolas Wefers

ruangrupa, “Members of ruangrupa collective”, *Universes art*, by Jin Panji and Gudskul, Jakarta, 2019

1. Downloaded November 12, 2020.

<https://universes.art/en/documenta/2022/ruangrupa>

2. Downloaded January 23, 2020.

<http://maxx.nmartproject.net/ok-video-festival-jakarta/>

3. Downloaded January 23, 2020.

<https://ruru.ruangrupa.org/index.php/portfolio-items/the-kuda-the-untold-story-of-indonesian-un>

4. Downloaded May 12, 2020.

<http://www.4a.com.au/vertical-villages/>

5. Downloaded May 22, 2020.

<https://ruangrupa.id/gudskul/sial-hingga-gaji-ketua-rt>

6. Instagram: @ruangrupa, Jakarta Selatan, April 4, 2020.

7. Downloaded April 20, 2020.

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8. Downloaded June 24, 2020.

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9. Downloaded June 14th, 2020.

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10. Downloaded May 1, 2020.

<https://ruangrupa.id/tentang/>

11. Downloaded June 3, 2020. <https://www.documenta.de/en/press#press/2783-documenta-fifteen-and-lumbung-practice-announcement-of-the-first-lumbung-members>

12. Download June 20, 2020.

<https://www.documenta.de/en/documenta-fifteen/#news>

13. Downloaded November 12, 2020.

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