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Photography As A Bridge To Intercultural Interaction In Bali During The Netherland Indies Colonial Period Of The 1920-1930S

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This article presents the process of commencing inter-cultural interactions and artistic collaboration between Balinese and western photographers through photography. In the beginning, the photography project only showed visual record of the Kings, the royal family along with the royal government apparatus in Bali. Beginning with Gregor Krause, a colonial doctor who practiced photography, the others photographers then began exploring nature, culture, art and Balinese society into recording their photographic works. The activity then continued to be an artistic collaboration between westerners as photographers and Balinese as photo models. Not only that, the collaboration also extends to the incorporation of many western cultural elements into photography properties. In addition, the models that appear in photographic works are not only from the royal community, but begin to spread to ordinary residents, artists and their environment. Through the bridge of photography, many western artists combine their ideas with Balinese artists to design and create works of art in the needs of photographic documentation. The collaborative work then attracted tourists to Bali to enjoy the exotica of Bali which was first collaborated by western photographers and writers.

Keywords : Photography, Bali, Colaboration, Art, Culture, Colonial

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Introduction

This article presents the process of commencing inter-cultural interactions and artistic collaboration between Balinese and western photographers through photography. In the beginning, the photography project only showed visual record of the Kings, the royal family along with the royal government apparatus in Bali.

Since photography technology known in the Dutch East Indies in 1841, the camera became part of the modern technology used by the Dutch Government to carry out its new policy. Control of the colony is no longer done by developing fortifications or placing troops and cannons, but by mastering modern transportation and communication technology. The beginning of the use of photography by the colonial government became a marker of the colonial agenda recording in the field of visual imaging as well as describing the conquest and development of colonies, with the aim of perpetuating occupation in various regions. Many overlapping colonial interests are reflected in the photographic footage that supports this policy. Colonies in Asia and Africa are often seen as underdeveloped and inhabited by primitive native peoples. Europeans, on the other hand, see themselves as a more developed nation. By conquering and occupying the colony, they image themselves as a superior nation that is advancing local civilization. This depiction of activities to promote local civilization is important in attracting the interest of people from Europe to come and live in the colony. This conquered land was then imaged as a new area full of opportunities and promising prosperity, so that private entrepreneurs open businesses in the archipelago, such as plantations, factories and private companies, including photography services to serve the needs of the self-image of migrants from Europe, needs which are then imitated by local nobility who want to be modern.

In addition to emphasizing the relation of colonial power over its colonies and the need for self-image that began to be modern, the camera as an image recording device in the colonial period was also used for a number of scientific explorations. European settlers made a number of aspects of the documentation of the lives of local communities, with approaches to the exact sciences and social sciences, such as geography and anthropology, including anthropometry (the measurement of the human body). This documentation helped to form stereotypes that tended to be racist and supported the colonial gaze, which saw local communities as being inferior (the other). The visual representation of non-European local communities as objects of research like this makes Europeans seem to be superior culturally and scientifically.

In addition to photographers and scientists, the medium of photography in the colonial period was also used by a group of diplomats and clergy. Photography was at first

very technical and expensive, so only educated and abundant groups of people could enjoy it as a kind of luxury.

The colonial regime in fact not only depended on military and economic power to perpetuate its power, but also on the dominance of forms of cultural representation. How Europeans viewed and represented colonial reality often made social differences increasingly rigid and worsened racial and gender hierarchies.

The same was true of the early European views when their preliminary links to Bali. Initially, by contemporary European standards, Balinese were considered mystical, savage and primitive. Therefore we need a cultural bridge to conquer all the backwardness. In the period 1860-1890s Isidore Van Kinsbergen, Walter Bentley Woodbury and James Page had visited Bali several times to photograph Balinese life, nature and arts in a photography project. Then Ohannes Kurkdjian began his exploration of photography in Bali in the late 19th century.

In preparation for conquering Bali for the mission of Pax Nedherlandica, Governor General Van Heutz sent artist WOJ Nieuwenkamp to conduct art studies, mapping and photography in Bali. Besides being an artist, Nieuwenkamp was also an adventurer, ethnologist, art collector, photographer and writer who first came to Bali on March 17, 1904 through an assignment by the Dutch East Indies colonial army. In Bali Nieuwenkamp observed art, social and architecture, sketched and photographed many old temples and important castles in Bali, including maps of strategic streets in Bali which were later known to be used for the interests of the Dutch East Indies military expedition of the kingdoms of Badung, Tabanan and Klungkung (Carpenter, 1997: 7). Later Nieuwenkamp's work was known to be an important reference in the Dutch conquest of the Kingdom of Badung in 1906 and Klungkung 1908, as well as ending the full sovereignty of the kings of Bali. After the Colonial Government's complete conquest of Bali, a colonial policy was pursued to preserve their image in protecting and caring for Balinese culture. This point was made with the consideration that Bali did not have natural resources such as mining, agriculture and plantations which could be exploited as commodities that benefited the colonial government (Hitchcock, 1995: 3).

Intercultural Interaction Initiate

Learning from the previous situation in Java, on the advice of Gericke, a cultural expert, the colonial government began to organize Balinese culture on the basis of, "How can they control a very large colony if they do not understand their history and culture". The Javanese frontal attitude towards the colonial authorities according to Gericke was caused by the tendency of the Europeans to ignore or even damage the Javanese cultural order they possessed and exalted (Margana, 2018: 3).



Image 1. The use of white cloth reflectors as reflectors is assisted by Balinese assistants
In the process of shooting by Walter Spies

Gericke recommends that the State make a serious effort to study the history and culture of indigenous people (not only Java) so that a harmonious atmosphere and social and political conditions can be created. (Margana, 2018: 4).

In this spirit the Colonial government organized the community and Balinese culture, which became known as the Baliseering policy. Vickers (1989: 11) described how the Dutch colonial government redefined the image of Bali from its image as a wildly uncivilized place into the image of an island paradise. The imagery encouraged the arrival of many photographers, artists, anthropologists, filmmakers and writers.

The colonial government initially commissioned a doctor who was also a photography enthusiast named Gregor Krause in 1912 to deal with the Cholera outbreak in Bali. During his assignment in Bali, Krause captured more than 4000 photos and wrote a publication text about Bali that contained more than 400 of his photographs in 1920. Krause's book significantly conveyed to the world about Bali, a small island that has extraordinary cultural richness. Krause's book influenced many writers and photographers coming to Bali (Krause, 2001: 9). Photos of Krause then opened the eyes of the European community about the exoticism of Bali.

Inspired by Krause photographs, Hickman Powell and Andrew Roosevelt embarked on a trip to Bali in the early 1920s to carry out photography, cultural observations and interactions with the Balinese. They then published their admiration for Bali in a legendary book entitled "Bali the Last Paradise". The book is also a starting point for the relationship and collaboration of western photographers with the Balinese people.

Impressed to Powell & Roosevelt publication, Franklin Price Knott an American National Geographic photographer, did an adventure in Bali while shooting with an

autochromatic color film for the first time in 1928 in Bali. Knott presents a variety of Balinese people's lives in recorded color photographs, agricultural life, dancers, rituals and of course the bare-breasted Balinese girl figure. The best photos of Knott were published in National Geographic Volume LIII No.3 magazine in March 1928, with an article titled Artist Adventures on the Island of Bali.

Knott's photo works show the simplicity of Balinese society, daily life filled with hard work, a system of production, management and storage of food systems, a variety of splendor of clothes in staging performing arts and exotic Balinese girls in daily life and religious rites. While from a technical standpoint, Knott presented color photography techniques for the first time in Bali. There had never been a photographer before Knott who used a medium of color film to explore Bali.

As the highlight of intercultural interaction in Bali, Walter Spies was interested coming to Bali for the first time at the invitation of Ubud nobleman Cokorda Raka Sukawati in 1927. Walter Spies' arrival in Bali aroused his love for the nature and culture of Bali. In 1928 Spies began to settle and document Balinese Art, community activities and also publish a Book. Together with Anthropologist Margaret Mead, Walter Spies published a book containing a collection of his photographic works entitled Dance and Drama in Bali. Walter Spies's visual record in Bali greatly influenced Balinese art and inspired many people to come to Bali.

Before the arrival of Spies, sacred art in Bali had its own space in people's lives. Especially in religious rituals in temples or rites in certain places. It is difficult for a foreign researcher or photographer to record a documentary. For its proximity to many important Puri figures and Balinese artists. Spies then planned to do a mapping and photo shoot of Balinese art with Margaret Mead. Focusing on classical dances and plays spread throughout Bali. One of Spies' prefix photography projects is to record documentaries on the performance of the candidates in Singapadu Village. All the performances of the candidates which are usually performed in the afternoon until the evening are shifted to the morning due to irradiation. Morning light that emerged from the east became Spies' point of attention to optimize the camera's exposure.

The use of white cloth as a reflector reflector to reduce contrast is also used by Spies in shooting. In a sacred performance of Balinese art such a setting should never have been done. But for matters of lighting, Spies managed to include it as an important element of photography. In addition to utilizing the reflector element, Spies included artistic smoke in giving a mystical nuance to the nuances of his photo lighting. The fog effect should always appear in paintings made by Spies.



Image 2. The use of smoke effect as a mystical nuance
In the process of shooting by Walter Spies

In the smoke effect, the use of back light as a silhouette nuance also appears as a mystical reinforcement in the unity of Walter Spies' photo. In this pose also began to appear *kerauhan* scenes that do not fully contain mystical, but replaced with mere theater scenes.

From the side of the shooting position, Spies also made an important consideration, namely taking an angle from above, it was collaborated and planned carefully to build a tower at the location of the shoot so as to get a different angle. The position of the photo shoot is very contrary to the position of the Balinese people who usually have to sit, in a kneeling position or cross-legged in a prospective performance. Especially when the *barong* scene appears on the stage. The position of Spies at the top also gives a new perspective on the Balinese people will decrease the spiritual power of the *barong* and *rangda* which are central in the performance of the candidates.

Spies collaboration with Balinese artists who initially through the medium of photography continues to collaborate with the performing arts. In collaboration with dance maestro I Wayan Limbak, Spies working on the colossal *Kecak* dance, which later became the iconic art of Bali. Walter Spies's knowledge of Balinese cultural richness and his role in modernizing Balinese art has made him

much sought after by Western anthropologists and artists.

Concluding Remarks

Beginning with Gregor Krause, a colonial doctor who practiced photography, the others photographers then began exploring nature, culture, art and Balinese society into recording their photographic works. The activity then continued to be an artistic collaboration between westerners as photographers and Balinese as photo models. Not only that, the collaboration also extends to the incorporation of many western cultural elements into photography properties. In addition, the models that appear in photographic works are not only from the royal community, but begin to spread to ordinary residents, artists and their environment. Through the bridge of photography, many western artists combine their ideas with Balinese artists to design and create works of art in the needs of photographic documentation. The collaborative work then attracted tourists to Bali to enjoy the exotica of Bali which was first collaborated by western photographers and writers.



Image 3. Utilization of bamboo towers to take photo angles
In the process of shooting by Walter Spies

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