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Commons people: managing music and culture in contemporary Yogyakarta

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Citation

Juliastuti, N. (2019, May 21). *Commons people: managing music and culture in contemporary Yogyakarta*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/73550>

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Title: Commons people: managing music and culture in contemporary Yogyakarta

Issue Date: 2019-05-21

CHAPTER 3

STUDYING PARTICIPATION THROUGH *WALK THE FOLK*

I walked up a narrow steep road in front of Mira's house with a group of friends. Mira and her family live in Kaliurang area, at the foot of Mount Merapi. Undulating terrain, hilly roads, lots of trees, and villas, were things that one could expect while doing an excursion into the area. Kaliurang is a popular local tourist destination. People come to the area to seek calmness and enjoy its beautiful scenery, away from the hustle and bustle of Jogja. We walked, chatted, looked around, scanned anything that caught our attention, and found reasons to open conversation with each other again—particularly with Mira and her husband, Dito, the hosts of the trip and the gig.

I was not entirely familiar with all people at the event. The fact that we were all here for the same event was the only bond between us. As we walked, I tried to find a personal mode of contribution to the conversation within the group.

We were attending an event called *Walk the Folk: a participatory secret gig*. Mira's house served as the meeting point of the people who came for the show. I had never been to her house before, but I felt somewhat familiar with it as the house appeared regularly in Mira's social media accounts, along with snippets of her daily life and work routine.

To start off, Sandi, one of the organisers of the event, and also a close friend of Mira's, gave some opening remarks. We stood on the veranda of the house and listened to him. Sandi talked about Folk Afternoon, a precursor of Walk the Folk. Folk Afternoon was a regular live music acoustic gig that he helped establish with Mira. In accordance with the name, Walk the Folk is an event based around folk music. The idea of the event was founded on the memories that Sandi collected from collective playing guitar activities while hanging out and chatting with his friends and neighbors in his *kampung*. Playing the guitar and singing on the side of the street is a common practice for establishing and maintaining social contacts with one's neighbours. Mira and Sandi often cited these relaxed guitar-playing activities as the context from which Folk Afternoon, and later Walk the Folk, took its inspiration.

Folk Afternoon was usually held in Lir Space (<http://www.lirspace.net/>)—an alternative space comprised of an art gallery, shop, restaurant, and reading

room. In Folk Afternoon, the musicians and the audience would sit in a room, playing and enjoying music. Walk the Folk is designed to take place in a different kind of music venue; it is not in a room, or a terrace, of a building, but in an open, outdoor space. This chapter examines Walk the Folk, and its relation to Kaliurang where it took place.

On Mira's personal website (<http://www.miraasriningtyas.com/>), she describes herself as an independent curator and writer. My knowledge of her has been largely informed by her curatorial activities in Lir Space where she serves as the founder and in-house curator as well as her blogging and reviews about visual art, design, and travelogues in magazines like *Truly Jogja*, *Things*, *Dewi*, and *Elle Décor Indonesia*.

Even before I conducted this research, there had been many moments where the paths of my activities crossed with that of Mira's—at exhibition openings, discussions, seminars, and so forth. Mira was familiar with my activities in Kunci and participated in some of Kunci's activities.

My presence at the event at Kaliurang can be explained through looking at how my activities intersected with those of Mira's. A few weeks earlier, I had met Mira at the opening of Aditya Novali's exhibition at Cemeti Art House. She told me briefly about Walk the Folk, which she referred to as "a secret participatory gig" and invited me to attend it. She knew I was researching music culture and thought that I might be interested in the event. The name suggested that Walk the Folk was an event about walking which become a part of the way of doing music. According to Mira, in Walk the Folk, we would walk together to explore Kaliurang's secret places and enjoy music. I was immediately interested by her short description about Walk the Folk and said yes. Though I have to admit that a factor that also made it attractive to me was the line-up of the musicians that would participate – inclusive of Gardika Gigih, Layur, Frau and Banda Neira. These were musicians who were well-known in the Jogja Indie scene.

WALK THE FOLK AND PARTICIPATION TURN

Mira explained that Walk the Folk was basically an open stage for numerous musicians. But the implications of her concept of "a secret participatory gig" were unclear. Participation seemed to be a key part of the event. What did it mean and what would they do to achieve it? To connect it with the walking

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element of the event, would participation also imply a capability to walk, and to take action? At once the event sounds a bit oxymoronic as 'secretive' does not seem to comply with the openness that the participation contains.

Within the context of art theory, the theoretical elaboration of participation discourse has also been developing. As participatory art becomes an important category and is circulated within the global art system (Bourriaud 1998, Bishop 2012), participation emerges as a subject of study. It is something to learn and discuss. Bishop's book in particular, *Artificial Hell: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*, was the main reference on which the people who were eager to take part in the participatory art discourse keen on reading. As the enthusiasm for engaging in the discourse of participatory art grew, the tendency to attach 'participatory art' or 'socially engaged art' labels to certain art practices followed.

During the research period, there were numerous discussions about participation and participatory art. Kunci Cultural Studies Center, the cultural organization and research collective of which I am a part, held a series of reading group on Bishop's book in early 2013. This reading group was one of numerous efforts within the Yogyakarta art scene where practitioners, researchers and artists sought to come to terms with 'participation'. The scope of the group was small and only lasted for three months. The participants of the reading group were artists, art managers, curators, writers and researchers, who had employed the notion of participation in their works. Mira was one of them.

The interest in discussing the matter of participation, establishing a political position, morality stance, and conveying thoughts on the issue seemed to grow during this time. What was the impetus to such eagerness? What does the interest in the participatory art signify? The organization of Walk the Folk, while highlighting the attention to participation, prompted further questions about what changes to expect from creating a music event called 'a participatory gig.' Indeed, what does it mean to be interested in 'participatory art' where the meaning of 'participation' in a local context has been continuously redefined?

To follow Bishop, and to historicize the trajectory of the participation discourse that the people behind the participatory art activities' formation undertook, participatory art reflects attempts to interchange the conventional relationship between the artists, their works, and the audience. The format of

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what is referred to as artworks is loosened and artworks become “open-ended, post-studio, research-based, social process, extending over time and mutable in form” (Bishop, 2012: 120). It provides greater room for difference, variation and exploration. Any aspect of the work is subject to changes and adjustments. How would the changes in defining the production of work in art equip an artist with sensibilities towards one’s context?

Using Walk the Folk as the focus, in this chapter, I study the dynamic course and social life of participation as a concept and practice in Yogyakarta. The notion of having a participatory quality in Walk the Folk sprang from an intention to make it an open stage for performers and audience alike. I use it as a cue to perceive the organization of the event as a means to redefine the established notions of authority, artist, and audience, through reorganizing the stage. How would the reorganization of the stage, making it mobile and more open, inform the new meaning of participation culture?

In order to answer the question, I divide the chapter into three parts. In the first part, I give an overview of Lir Space as a cultural environment to shape the creation of Walk the Folk as well as the people who were part of it. Lir Space is a part of the rise of alternative spaces that emerged after 1998. Lir Space and its activists are a space and the people that were born, grew up, and inhabit the cultural production climate, characterized by participation culture. The management of Lir Space is a space-making act, a crucial element of the cultural movement post-1998. I elaborate on how Walk the Folk functions as an environmentally driven performance space. In doing so, I contextualize Walk the Folk within the rise of gigs that take place in a scenic (or pleasant) environment. I examine the factors which are taken into account in setting up a small, limited, and participatory gig such as Walk the Folk.

In my attempt to understand the meaning of participation in Walk the Folk, in the second part, I look back to historical references, which point to social engagement practices, coupled with the desires for capturing the environment better. To illustrate this, I use the case of the leftist Institute of People’s Culture (or *Lekra*, an abbreviation of *Lembaga Kebudayaan Rakyat*) and the urgency to produce seni kerakyatan, or art for the people, as the aesthetics and political standard for evaluating art in the 1950s and the 1960s. In the context of contemporary Jogja where artists are asked to rethink the ethical dimensions of their works, it is worth revisiting Lekra’s practices. It demonstrates that the people, (‘*rakyat*’ in Indonesian) have been

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the source of inspiration and ideology formation for artists. In this part, I also try to situate Walk the Folk in the context of *Kuliah Kerja Nyata*, which roughly translates as 'practical university studies'. *Kuliah Kerja Nyata*, or usually referred to and abbreviated as KKN, is a student community service, and an established mechanism, designed for delivering a concrete contribution organized by the university. KKN was as part of the immediate social contribution trajectory for the people who organized Walk the Folk and participated in it as Kaliurang has been an important KKN site for the universities in Jogja. Many students were sent to live and work in the villages around the Kaliurang area. In the final section of the second part, I provide an overview of The Kaliurang Project, initiated in 2013—a year before Walk the Folk started. The Kaliurang Project is one of Mira's earlier projects where she developed her earlier thoughts about research and cultural projects, which involve social engagement of wider participants.

In the third part, I analyse the stage and walking as practiced in Walk the Folk. I explain the attempt to redefine the concept of stage through the creation of mobile and multiple stages. Such a conception of the stage has the potential to blur the boundaries between the performers and the audience. Through an exploration of walking as the main mode used in organizing Walk the Folk, I question whether the reorganization of the stage leads to a conversation between the participants of the event and the Kaliurang residents. My observation is that the shared sense of experiencing a space when walking together during the gig does not translate into conversation or collaboration among the participants, but finds moments of sharing on social media platform instead.

PART ONE

Lir Space

The idea of participation, or, participatory art, as employed at Walk the Folk, relates to ideas of participation as evident and exercised at Lir Space.

Mira, Dito, Sandi, and their friends who were involved in organizing Walk the Folk and Folk Afternoon were still in high school in 1998 – the year in which President Suharto stepped down and when the reformasi era started. When they started college, some of the pioneering, alternative spaces had already

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closed. They heard about the stories and documentation of these spaces from other people, or through articles in various mass media. Some other alternative spaces have become established cultural centers, and on the other hand, new alternative spaces have been growing. Many students had chosen these spaces, as they provide more contextual and appealing programs for extra-curricular activities, than through subscribing to extra-curricular activities schemes available within the university environment.

Before founding Lir Space in 2012, Mira and Dito were both seeking to participate in promising activities organized by various cultural spaces in Indonesia or abroad. For example, Mira was one of the selected curators to participate in the Young Curator Forum organized by Cemeti Art House (Yogyakarta). She also undertook a residency and research at 98B COLLABoratory in Manila, and Japan Foundation in Jakarta selected her to be part of their Young Curators Workshop. 4A, Sydney, selected her to take part in their intensive curatorial workshop.

During her college years, Mira was involved in an environmental NGO, helped initiate an environmental friendly school for children, and opened a public library. As an institution, Lir Space is a product of Mira's participation in various cultural spaces, which existed in post-Reformasi Indonesia and the cultural mobility she enjoyed. It was also the outcome of the dedicated time for reading and digesting any possible knowledge materials that she had access to.

As a space, Lir consists of a shop, restaurant, gallery, and library. Like other alternative spaces, it runs on an independent and flexible financial structure. It does not have stable support from any founding agencies. The shop and the restaurant are the main support system of the space. In practice it uses the personal resources of Mira and Dito. To support the running of its activities, it mainly relies on the generous networks of friends and their willingness to contribute their free labor to the operation of the space.

There is a solid geographical-cultural imaginary axis, which lives in the minds of the Jogja residents. It divides the city into two parts—the northern part and the southern one. This division marks the boundaries between the two parts based on the existence of Mount Merapi and the Southern sea in the northern and the southern parts of the city respectively. Standing at the center of the axis is the Sultan's Palace.

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Drawing on the existing axis logic, Mira and Dito reinterpreted the northern part of the city as the intellectual bearing of the city. It was the area where non-art universities are located. While, the southern part of the city was reinterpreted as the cultural bearing of the city. It is the main domain where artists, alternative spaces, artists run spaces, and galleries can be found.

Geographically Lir Space is located at the center of the city. Based on this, Lir Space preferred to see them as the gate bridging the inhabitants of the northern part of the city (too much intellectual pressure, not enough exposed to art environment), and the inhabitants of the southern part of the city (too much art, and perhaps intellectually inadequate). Lir Space is the domain for those who want to study or wish to learn more about making art. The exhibition and workshop being held at Lir Space are intended to be a training site.

Most of the artists who exhibit at Lir Space are regarded as emerging artists, in comparison to many of the local and international artists who circulate in the art spaces in the southern part of Yogyakarta. Ex-Lab was a program, which depicted the goal of the space best. It was a 'laboratory for the making of solo exhibition'. The participants of the program were selected through an application process and they took part in a three-months workshop. During the workshop, artists, cultural practitioners, and researchers in small classes mentored the participants. The topic for each class was different in accordance with the common ground shared with the participants. Mira invited me to be a mentor for Ex-Lab in 2014 and she asked me to talk about artists who use historical materials in their works.

Mira and Sandi were the organisers of Folk Afternoon and Walk the Folk, but the way the events were organized were often linked to what serves as the backdrop for them: what they did on a daily basis, who they hung around with, where they spent their time and what they did when they were together, and so forth. Initially, I intended to make Mira the center of this chapter, but I kept finding myself changing focus to Sandi, Dito, and other people who were a part of her circle of friends. It is relevant at this point to list her circle of friends and to locate them in particular cultural places.

Sandi was a professional yoga instructor and teaches yoga at Balance Mind Body Soul studio. Mira was one of his students there. Though having a formal education background in engineering, Sandi nurtured fondness for design and photography. He exhibited his photography work in an exhibition called

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“Strangely Beautiful: Traveling through the Eyes of a Solitary Walker” at Lir Space in 2012. Since then Mira and Sandi’s shared ideas and interests have transformed into various forms of activities.

Dito, Mira’s husband, is a visual artist who is also a member of Ruang Mes 56. Together with his sister, they were actively involved in publishing *Truly Jogja*, a Jogja-based magazine on art and the city. In the magazine there were numerous articles about Walk the Folk, Folk Afternoon, and other activities conducted in Lir Space. I knew Dito from his work at *Truly Jogja*. When he started to pursue his photography works through involvement in Ruang Mes 56, I felt like I had already known him for long time. This is also because Kunci and Ruang Mes 56 have always been within close geographical proximity.

Moki is a visual artist and musician. He has founded and been a part of numerous music projects: Sik’ Sri, Airport Radio, Sweet Mistake, The Wonosari, Black Ribbon, Shopping List, and Punkasila—a collaborative project between Jogja-based artists and Danius Kesminas—a Melbourne-based artist. Moki and Sandi formed a band called Gemati. Moki, together with Malcolm Smith, an Australian artist, and Rudy Hermawan, he founded Krack!—a printmaking studio and gallery in the southern part of Jogja.

Sandi, Dito and Moki play varying roles as collaborators in Mira’s projects. They also regularly appear in Mira’s postings on social media platforms—showing their friendship-based activities—lunch, picnic, and other things. From social media, I saw that Moki was a regular attendee at Folk Afternoon gigs. He and Sandi also played regularly at Folk Afternoon gigs. Moki would sit quietly and enjoy other music, but would readily take up the guitar and play when needed. On the Folk Afternoon gig to celebrate its first anniversary, Moki opened a small booth to provide free silk-screen for the audience. I brought a dress to the event and had a Folk Afternoon logo printed on the back of my dress.

The reconceptualization of the Folk Afternoon gigs took place as they were doing it. As a project, it was always put in ‘in progress’ mode. The Walk the Folk that I attended was the first edition of the event. In follow-up, they evaluated it and discussed different mechanisms to make it better. In the second edition of Walk the Folk, some aspects were evolved conceptually. This will be discussed further in this chapter.

WALK THE FOLK AS AN ENVIRONMENTALLY DRIVEN PERFORMANCE SPACE

Amidst the vibrant and dynamic life of art and the cultural scene of Jogja, a general comment or lament that was often encountered during research was that the city was still experiencing a lack of adequate places for music performances. The definition of adequacy might vary, but many would refer to a performance space with spacious design and good quality of acoustics. A description of the performance spaces in the city provides insights into the current condition of art and cultural spaces. The performance spaces in Jogja can be divided into two main categories. The first category is a performance space that is attached to a gallery or art institution. It can be an established performance space or other multi-purpose space³¹ (e.g. auditorium) that is readily mutated into a performance space. Second, the performance spaces that can also be categorized as public spaces, such as parks, university buildings, or stadium.³² Some cafes are also growing to be potential performance spaces.³³

When Walk the Folk took place, there had been other gigs—big and small—in other cities, which were also held in amongst beautiful natural scenery. Rrrec Fest in the Valley—an annual music festival organized by Ruang Rupa is an example. Taking place in Tanakita Camping Ground in Sukabumi, West Java, with an emerging and prominent musicians line-up, Rrrec Fest quickly attracts many people and musicians to participate. The event is usually sold out weeks in advance. In Bandung, similar events called Lazy Music Festival and Lazy Hiking Club have also emerged. Both events are organized regularly to perform music and explore the beautiful scenery of Bandung at the same time.³⁴

31 To mention the examples of such spaces, they are Kedai Kebun Forum, Societet Militair, Tembi Rumah Budaya, Bentara Budaya, Langgeng Gallery, Indonesia Contemporary Art Network, Jogja Expo Centre, and the Yogyakarta branch of Institute Francais d'Indonesie. In recent development, many musicians have performed in the auditorium of Pusat Kebudayaan Kusnadi Harjasumantri, the Kusnadi Harjasumantri Cultural Center, of Gadjah Mada University.

32 The most recent edition of Festival Kesenian Yogyakarta, or Yogyakarta Art Festival, transformed a food court in Condong Catur area in north Jogja as the main stage for various forms of performances. Still in the category of public space as performance space was the stadium, most notably the Kridosono and Maguwoharjo stadiums, Taman Sari water castle (the former royal garden of the sultanate of Yogyakarta), and both the northern and the southern squares of the royal palace of the sultan of Jogja.

33 Oxen Free and Kedai Koppi Bell provide an example of bar and café, which opens the space for music experiments. Yes No Klub, a live music event initiated by Yes No Wave, regularly organized music events in Oxen Free.

The locations that are remote from city centers or the usual tourist destinations seems to make comment on the lack of a proper place for music performance. At the same time, these performances also indicate there is an inclination to organize gigs in café, houses, or certain buildings, which aim to create a more intimate and personal ambience.

Though organised by Mira and Sandi, part of the impetus to establish the first Walk the Folk came from Gardika Gigih, a singer and piano player. Gigih proposed the idea of having himself and other musicians playing the piano at Mira's house in Kaliurang. In attempting to remove music from the realm of commodities, these intimacy-driven gigs have the potential to be more private and exclusive.

Compared to the usual performance where anyone who can afford to pay for tickets can be in the audience, within the framework of the newly designed gigs, having money does not necessarily provide one with the possibility for watching certain gigs. As the description about the profile of the participants would make clear, it was rather *koneksi*, connection with the event-organizer and abilities to present cultural capital prove to be more important factors.

SMALL, LIMITED, PARTICIPATORY

Both Mira and Sandi reflected that Folk Afternoon had become 'a too ordinary music concert'. Folk Afternoon was initially designed to capture the ordinariness and informality of music and depict music as part of the everyday. Based on my impressions gathered from attending the events, Folk Afternoon is a subdued and relaxed music event. To follow what Sandi said in his speech, it was a low-key event, and aimed to be as low-key as the common sight of seeing a group of people playing guitars together in a kampong at night.

At some point, however, Sandi and others considered that it had become 'too famous'. Folk Afternoon had become a popular music event to see the performance of popular and good musicians. But to be able to create an interesting gig, which attracted a large audience was not necessarily what

34 Ruang Rupa organized Rrreec Fest. The organization of Lazy Music Festival and Lazy Hiking Club indicates the close relation between the musicians who live and work in Bandung. During research, I observed the names of the musicians who appeared to be part of the regular organizer—Bottlesmoker, Tetangga Pak Gesang, Nada Fiksi, and Teman Sebangku.

Sandi and Mira were aiming for. For example, Mira used the word *gengges* to describe the large audience at one of the gigs. This term of Indonesian slang pejoratively described the crowd as 'disturbing' the event. Each time there were performances by famous indie musicians, the gigs were always well-attended. One such infamous case was when Folk Afternoon invited Elda from Stars and Rabbit, Eggy from Answer Sheet, and Tetangga Pak Gesang. Folk Afternoon was becoming too popular.

Mira, Sandi, and Dito, started to envisage a new music event: Walk the Folk. It was different from Folk Afternoon as it incorporated walking and several different locations for performances. They wanted it to be smaller in scale, but conceptually strong, so that it could still be used as a site for a wider discourse on art. The new event was imagined to be a space where one could be 'gigging' and 'meet like-minded people at shows' (Fonarow 2006: 97). The number of the audience members has to be kept small so that it would make it easier to control. Mira wanted to avoid any form of *gengges* (disturbance). To ensure this, the organization of Walk the Folk would not be accompanied with any form of advertisement.

The decision to limit the audience numbers might be considered to contradict the idea of wider participation. Perhaps to compensate for this tension, the organizers also sought for a group of small audience, who could participate in Walk the Folk through contributing their skills or knowledge. The event was both an opening up of the concept of 'stage', while also placing limits and expectations upon the audience. What kind of participation could emerge from this event? A prospective audience might be someone, whose capacity the organisers (Mira, Sandi and Dito) were already familiar with. The artists who performed in Walk the Folk and the organizers worked as a team to select a group of a suitable audience.

There were four musicians, or guest stars, in the first edition of Walk the Folk that I attended: Gigih, Layur, Lani or Frau, and the duo Bandaneira (Ananda and Rara). Lani invited Nadya, a musician and a member of Individual Life. There was a song in Frau's first album that was co-written by Lani and Nadya. Mira invited me because she knew that I was doing research about music. There was Titah Asmaning, a crew member at Lir Space, who is also a journalist at Warning Magazine. Titah showed her interests in writing about Walk the Folk in mass media. It turned out that her essay on it appeared in

Cobra magazine titled *Walk the Folk: Piknik, Musik, Kisah, dan Jalan Kaki* (*Walk the Folk: Picnic, Music, Stories, and Walking*). All photos, which appeared with her writing were created by Dito and used to illustrate this chapter. Titah and other crew from Lir Space spent the whole night transforming the garage in Mira and Dito's house into a stage. Dito and Mira invited Moki, a close friend, and also Sandi's band mate in Gemati.

When I arrived at Mira's house, I saw someone holding a piece of paper with the guest list in his hands. Later I found out he was also a crew of Lir Space. Each time there was a guest coming into the house, he would tick off a name. It started to make me feel privileged, because I was there at the special invitation from the organizer to enjoy good music from good musicians.

PART TWO

Lekra and Turba

Before 'participatory art' became one of the keywords to stimulate the art and cultural discourse, the idea of 'research-driven art' or 'the artist researcher' informed the development of visual art discourse in Indonesia. In accordance with the growing interest in participation, Hal Foster's exploration of 'the artist as ethnographer' has become another important reading material and deepened the discussion about 'the artist as researcher' (Foster, 1996: 171-203) among cultural activists and theorists in Jogja. Foster captured the turn to research in contemporary art practices with 'new ethnographic envy' (*ibid.* 182). Research gained a new currency as an important element in art production. In the early 2000s, I observed that curatorial workshops organized by alternative spaces in Jogja and Jakarta included a class about doing research in art practices. The inclination for doing research is in line with an increasing mobility to characterize art practices. Many artists seek out for having opportunities for living, working, and researching, in various cultural contexts. Traveling and art residencies are the activities to which the Lir Space activists aspire. The *Walk the Folk* event was an invitation to artists to take an excursion into the surrounding environment and engage with it.

Part of learning from the surrounding environment involves learning from the people. The Institute of People's Culture (LEKRA, or Lembaga Kebudayaan Rakyat) and its *Satu Lima Satu* (One Five One, 1-5-1) principle was an example of an art association which was able to formulate a method

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for articulating art works which not only had high artistic value but was also emblematic of Indonesian identity and the people's culture. The 1-5-1 principle reads:

Adhering to the principle of politics as the guardian, we conduct the combination of five propositions — egalitarian and eminent, high level discourse on ideology and high artistic value, combining the good practices of traditions and revolutionary contemporary values, combining the creativity of the individuals and the wisdom of the masses, and combining socialist realism and revolutionary romanticism through the *Turun ke Bawah* method, or 'get down to the grassroots'.³⁵

The close relation between LEKRA and the Indonesian Communist Party has been the source of discussion for other scholars (see also see Foulcher 2001, Antariksa 2005, Bodden 2012, Yuliantri 2012). Antariksa's research drew on transcripts of interviews with artists who lived and worked within the *sanggar*, and who associated themselves with LEKRA from 1950 to 1965. Within the realm of the art world in the 1950s and the 1960s, the empathy for the people served as the key factor in art production. This leads to another point in Antariksa's research that *Turun ke Bawah*, usually abbreviated as *Turba*, was a concept that was not entirely novel for those involved in the art world during that period. He depicted LEKRA as an art organization to show that to engage in art means to engage with the politics and the people. Politics and people are the valid arenas for artists.

To follow the political turmoil in 1965, those who were associated with Indonesian Communist Party—including writers, artists, and cultural activists that organized under LEKRA, were exiled (Setiawan 2004, Hill 2012, 2014, Isa and Makki 2011, Sipayung 2011).

While the artists who employed *Turba* as a work method attempted to embody it in their works, the research process itself was often invisible. Only through memoirs and various writings produced by the artists who lived in the period is the research process evident. Basuki Resobowo (2005), a

35 The Indonesian version of the Prinsip 1-5-1 of LEKRA reads: Dengan berlandaskan azas politik sebagai panglima, menjalankan 5 kombinasi, yaitu meluas dan meninggi, tinggi mutu ideologi dan tinggi mutu artistik, memadukan tradisi yang baik dan kekinian yang revolusioner, memadukan kreativitet individual dan kearifan massa, dan memadukan realisme sosialis dan romantik revolusioner, melalui cara kerja turun ke bawah.

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prominent painter and activist in LEKRA, wrote his memoir in exile in the Netherlands, observed that capturing suffering is the main task of art. A similar belief underpinned the works of Amrus Natalsya and the development of Sanggar Bumi Tarung in 1961 (Thamrin 2008).³⁶ Suffering was shared, and supplied energy to the artists' acts of participation in their environment.

In her memoir, a prominent artist Mia Bustam wrote of a similar basic principle of doing painting emphasized by her husband, Sudjojono, to his students: "*gunakan baik-baik matamu*", use your eyes properly, and learn from the surroundings (Bustam 2006: 34). In an evocative manner Nashar (2002: 100-101) recalled the learning from the environment ritual performed while living and studying at Gabungan Pelukis Indonesia, GPI, or the Association of Indonesian Painters, in Jakarta. Part of the basic activities during the process included walking and observing the environment—they also are important elements which make up Walk the Folk activities. Below is Nashar's account of the learning practice:

We roamed the streets at night. With sketchbooks in our hands, we explored the streets of Jakarta. Regularly we ended up in the ever-chaotic Senen area. In many cases we walked and chatted along the way to Jatinegara. The distance between Senen and Jatinegara was approximately 7 km. What were the points of attractions from Senen and Jatinegara to us at that time? What did we get from such experience? There must have been something interesting and powerful which drew us to these areas.

To go to a certain place is to explore and conduct a deep observation. In the case of LEKRA, to go to a certain place, and to conduct *Turba* is also to show political engagement with the people. It indicates the intention of Turba practitioners to switch the roles with those who lived in the Turba locations, or those who were conceptually positioned below the Turba practitioners. The conceptualization of Turba occurred at different historical moment. I provide Turba case as a historical evidence of the idealization of art, how art is mobilized, to serve a specific task and relevance to the society. Walk the Folk does not identify itself with Turba. But the participation concept attached to

³⁶ A *sanggar* is perhaps the best-known word referring to an art and cultural space. It derives from Kawi, an ancient Javanese language. It means a small room used for worshipping god. It can also mean an association that has been established for multiple purposes. Sanggar, in the context of art, is a space in which a group of people learns to make art under the auspices of a mentor. During the early development of modern Indonesian art, establishing an art association played an important role not only in defining the relation between art and politics, but also defining the meaning of doing art when Indonesia was still in the early stage of developing national consciousness.

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the organization of the event suggests the legacy of social engagement in practicing art. Walk the Folk is inclined to do an outward music voyage. It implies that it is about music, but it should not be limited to just that. It begs for further examination of what the scenery might function in the Walk the Folk repertoire.

KULIAH KERJA NYATA

Although *Kuliah Kerja Nyata*, hereafter referred to as KKN, operates outside the art field, it is a familiar activity to the participants of Walk the Folk. The people that I talked to during the event came from different university backgrounds. They told me how KKN was part of their early experience in making a contribution to their society. The implementation of KKN is a part of the students' assignment process during the final year in the university. In the KKN scheme, the participation of students in the 'real world' was part of the top-down requirement to get the degree from the university (Gellert, 2014: 383).³⁷ The existence of KKN demonstrates an effort of established education institutions to experiment on a certain mode of contribution to the broader public.

In KKN, students are obliged to live in a designated village, *desa*, to design and do various kinds of *kerja nyata*, or 'practical work' for the people of the village. To participate in the society is to provide useful contribution. In order to make a contribution, the students ought to dwell in a new and unfamiliar environment. To live in a village, as necessitated in KKN practices, suggests a willingness to let go some parts of the privilege of being a student. The students are also expected to learn from the values of the people who still live in a village and have not had access to university education. This is important in order to be able to feel what it is like to be outside the comfort zone of home and university building. Before Mira started to explore Kaliurang as a new field in her art practices, Kaliurang has been known as a destination to conduct KKN. It is useful to situate Walk the Folk within the KKN context due to the familiarity of Kaliurang to the KKN practices in Jogja-based universities.

Gadjah Mada University was one of the first universities in Indonesia to

37 Gellert's article focuses on Anis Baswedan's *Indonesia Mengajar*, or Indonesia Teaching. Derived its inspiration from PTM, KKN, and also the US-based "Teach", *Indonesia Mengajar* calls for young Indonesian university graduates to become teachers in remote areas for one year.

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implement the kind of voluntary work that would later become KKN (Hardjasoemantri 1983). Within the Gadjah Mada University context, the embryo of KKN can be traced back to the history of *Pengerahan Tenaga Mahasiswa* (Student Workforce Deployment), abbreviated as PTM, in 1951. Within the PTM scheme, Gadjah Mada University sent out their students to conduct *Pengerahan Tenaga Mahasiswa* in schools outside Java.³⁸

To facilitate more engagement with the local people, the students usually live in the house of one of the local administrative authorities. In his work on KKN, Guinness writes, 'typically students spend two months in the host community, devising and then implementing a development initiative with their hosts. They may build a pathway or a fence, simplify administrative procedures, establish an aquaculture system, stock a library, run classes or sports programmes for neighbourhood children, or commence an economic initiative for their hosts to develop' (Guinness 2012: 334).

Since the financial crisis of 1998 and the ensuing *reformasi* era, the scheme of KKN in the university has been undergoing changes and attempts to re-contextualize it. For example, the KKN program at Gadjah Mada University has been renamed KKN-PPM (Kuliah Kerja Nyata – Program Pemberdayaan Masyarakat) referring to Student Community Service and Community Empowerment. It is based on five principles: co-creation, co-financing, flexibility, sustainability, and research based community services. Such dynamics echo the critical reflection that have been posed towards KKN.

When Walk the Folk took place, there had been many changes in the organization of KKN. Many universities in Jogja had developed new methods for contributing to the society. While, some other universities, decided to discontinue their KKN programs. Regardless, KKN had long been instilled in the memory of many as a long-standing contribution model within the university system.

I go back to an intention of the artists who practiced Turba to switch the position with the people who lived in the imagined under. In the context of KKN, the social status of the students is regarded superior to the people who live in the KKN locations. The students come to an unfamiliar location, with an

³⁸ The goals of the present-day KKN are stated on Gadjah Mada University's website as follows: to produce students who 1) have ability to analyze problems and shifts in society; 2) have empathy and interests in various forms of problems in society; 3) have the capacity for applying science and technology in using an interdisciplinary approach through teamwork; 4) are able to plant the following personality values (nationalism and Pancasila mentality, hard-working ethos, responsible, independent, leadership, entrepreneurship and researcher mentalities) (<http://ugm.ac.id/id/p2m/3620-direktorat.pengabdian.kepada.masyarakat>).

intention to teach something, to fix a building, or to provide some kind of assistance. They are positioned as a giver, and also a teacher, because they are educated. I began to make sense of why the universities use the word 'deployment' to refer to the students' departure to a KKN location. An Indonesian translation of 'deployment' is *diterjunkan*. *Terjun* means to dive, or to plunge downwards into something. In this case, it seems that the students are regarded as presents, or a troupe of givers, that fall from the sky.

THE KALIURANG PROJECT

To make research an essential aspect in art production involves allowing more access to the field of art production. Art production has grown to be an inclusive site for anyone who would like to use art in engaging the environment. In this context, it is important to refer to Mira's educational background and how she has emerged and is considered as a curator in the contemporary art field. She has a degree in Communication Studies from Atma Jaya University – one of the best universities in Jogja. Much of her knowledge of art, however, has been obtained either through self-learning or attending various residency and workshop schemes provided by non-university-based institutions. This non-linear route to become a player in the art scene, as evident in Mira's trajectory, is not uncommon. I would argue that this is partly facilitated by the open nature of production in contemporary art practices, by taking into account various non-artistic elements.

Walk the Folk was centered in Kaliurang – the same area where Mira grew up and still lives. The Kaliurang Project, hereafter shortened as TKP, highlights research as an important element and played a role in informing Walk the Folk. TKP comprised two main activities—live-in (also referred to as short-term residency) and documentation of the findings. The invited participants were cultural researchers, writers, and multi-disciplinary artists. The participants were encouraged to create collaborative works to draw on local stories and oral histories of the community.

TKP was initiated in 2013, a year before Walk the Folk created. TKP is a project in which Mira exercised her early thoughts about a site-specific art project, which included social engagement elements from various artists. In TKP, Kaliurang is considered as a site for live-in, and conducting fieldwork. Kaliurang, as such, is both Mira's home and her field. In organizing TKP, Kaliurang is extended to be the possible place for fieldwork of other arts

practitioners. TKP was the precursor of Walk the Folk in that it helped Mira to gain expertise in Kaliurang—what is around the area, what places to go, how to get to certain places and who were the best persons to meet.

In order to provide context for the participants of TKP, Mira included writings about her childhood in Kaliurang in the project description. The following is an extract from her writing (the original writing is in English):

“I grew up amazed by day stories of fishes that blinks, man who got lost in the forest by the enchanting spells of forest fairies, and the white tiger that gives climber warning when the path they’re going through is dangerous. At night I would shiver on stories of will-o-wisp that used to chase my mom and her little friends when she points out the torchlight to the treetops or banshee that enjoys kidnapping people and children who still playing outside when the sun is setting down. It’s easier for me and my sister to believe in Enid Blyton’s stories and all the fairytales mother told us, because we know that somewhere deep inside the forest behind our home, magic creeps secretly under the spell of the mighty kingdom of Mt. Merapi—our nurturing Gramps.”

The project description also states that the initial ideas were to include Kaliurang residents as the cultural guides of the participants and to present the findings in the form of book publication and art presentation. Based on the conversation with Mira and some participants of the project, TKP was unsuccessful. One participant who participated in the live-in process failed to develop a discussion about what kind of alternative histories could be expected from the project. While other participants left the live-in period ahead of schedule. The fact that Walk the Folk was centered in the same area, however, indicates an attempt to justify Kaliurang as the convincing ground for participation.

PART THREE

Walk the Folk and the idea of collapsing the stage

Instead of creating a gig with a conventional spatial arrangement—one stage fixed at the center of the venue—Walk the Folk is an event with many stages. In order to get to each stage, just like its name suggests, the crowd had to walk to them. Another interpretation of the name could be referred to as an

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act to travel and explore aspects of 'folk music'.

The first destination was, it turned out to be, a quiet tennis court. The area where there were rows of benches for the audience transformed into a stage, before it moved to the center of the court. The sun was shining brightly and there was little shade. The second destination and the second stage, was a space created from the shade of the big tree. There was an abandoned old house next to the tree.

Ananda of Bandaneira asked Mira about the age of the house. Mira's reply was the house must have been very old, since it used beautiful tiles produced by the legendary Jogja-based tile factory, which has the same name as the organization that I worked for—Kunci. The third stage was an empty and disused pool. We walked down the narrow steep path to get there. It was built to function as water storage should Mount Merapi erupt. During quiet moments like this, the pool seemed idle and abandoned. Murals and graffiti were written all over the walls of the empty pool.

The fourth stage was the backyard of a villa that was located not far from Mira's house. The family who owns the property lives in Jakarta and they only visit the villa twice a year—usually to celebrate the end of Ramadhan and New Year's Eve with other family members. There was a small house at the corner of the yard. Pak Dasirin and his family lived there. Pak Dasirin was trusted to be the caretaker of the villa and he also works as an itinerant photographer in the Kaliurang area – working mainly around the 'Goa Jepang' (Japanese caves). The fifth stage was Mira's house. There are two areas in the house that were used as the stages for the event. The first one is the foyer where the piano is located, while the second area was the garage.

The choice of stage locations indicates the insider and intimate knowledge of its initiator, particularly Mira who was born and grew up in the area. In other words, the stages were all hidden places: familiar only to locals and long-term residents. It is the quality, which gives the word 'secret' in the event's name more sense. In order to access these spaces, one needs to rely on other people to show the way, or otherwise to depend on serendipity.

For Mira, the dissolution of the stage is one of the key elements of the Walk the Folk event. In regular music gigs, a stage is the most basic requirement. In Folk Afternoon and Walk the Folk, the stage—as it might have appeared in the regular gigs—is made intangible. There are no clear lines demarcating the

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stage area and the audience. The stage is commonly defined as an “exclusive space for performers. The audience is denied access to it” (Fonarow, 2006: 81). For Walk the Folk, their temporal determination of the stage is key to creating an intimate ambience of the venue.

In Walk the Folk the stages were not at the geometric center of the space. In contrast to regular gigs where the position of the stage is affixed to the focus of the space, the stage moved from one place to another. As the stage is physically moving, in Walk the Folk the convention of the stage is reconfigured. The stage is not the same physical object—it is something they opportunistically declare as a ‘stage’. Events are premised on the temporality of their stages. There is an attempt to soften the authoritarian and conventional boundary of the stage with a less defined audience. This is a concept that is embedded in the agreement with the invited musicians. The musicians who performed were informed of the participation ideas of the organizer. The musicians were there with readiness to perform, and the same readiness to accept that they might not be the only performers on the stage.

Fonarow (2006) offers an insightful hypothesis of participation in the music event. In building a theory of participation in a music gig, Fonarow dissects the structures of zones at a gig venue, based on her observation of the London Forum. Using the lens of the spatial organization of a venue, Fonarow observes the politics of social interaction that is created between the musicians and the audience as well as among the audience. In Fonarow's model (see Figure 1), zone one is populated with diehard fans. Most of them are young people. They translate their intense feeling towards the music and the musician into a demonstration of a more physical interaction with the musician and the other audience members. Zone two is populated with people who want to focus more on music, and less on the demonstrative physical activities arising in zone one. Thus, it provides a space for a more contemplative audience. Zone three is populated with people who engage in the music industry and the media. In most of the time of a gig, they commonly show little interest in music being performed; notwithstanding they are people who are key to music events happening. Zone three is for those who are there for networking, business meetings, or socialization (Fonarow, 2006: 79-152).

A venue described by Fonarow in her study appears as a space which enables social interaction. The movement of an individual, or a fan there, reflects changes that have happened in their relation with music and other

crucial aspects in their lives. But the meaning of a stage, the center of the live movement on site, does not seem to move beyond its function as the site of the musician's performances.

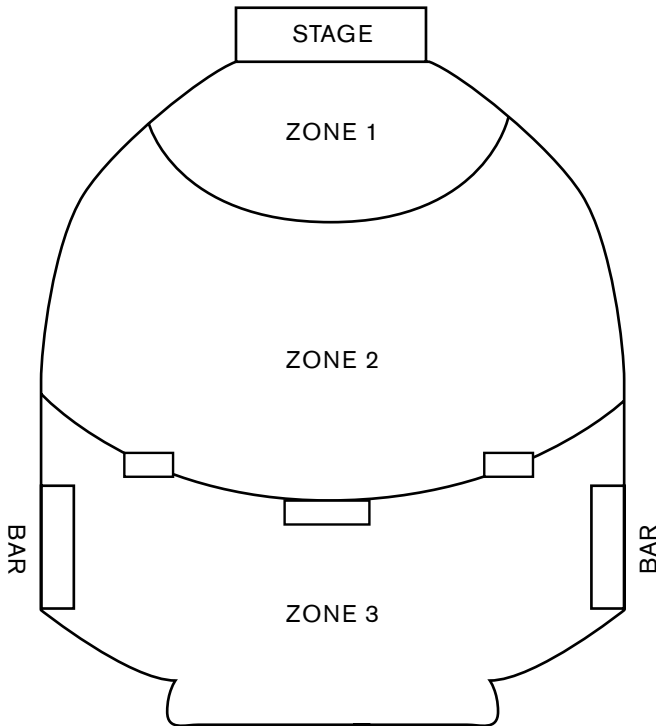


Figure 1. Wendy Fonarow's zones of participation "Model of zones based on the London Forum" (2013: 83).

To draw on Fonarow's conceptualization of the audience zone as an active zone, I examine the intention of the initiator of Walk the Folk to collapse the conventional concept of the stage. For the purposes of analysis, I describe the spatial organization of the venue (see figure 2). The figure also represents the movement of the stage. By breaking the exclusivity of the stage, the audience zone transforms into an active zone. It is the zone

where the audience is usually located. At once it is a zone where any parts of the zone can potentially be adopted as additional stages (see figure 3). The stage becomes an ephemeral, temporal artifact rather than a traditional fixed platform.

The people who came to attend the event are positioned to be ready for something to be performed. They were not there just as a spectator, but ready to be actively engaged in the event. They were potentially the performers, and so too the ‘invited real performers’ could anticipate enjoyment as the audience. However, though the stages in Walk the Folk illustrated above are intended to create new active zones for all the participants (meaning the artists and the audience), it failed. It did not automatically make the psychological distance between the artists or performers and the audience disappear. A stage in Walk the Folk, or a spot, which have just transformed into a stage is still psychologically the center of our attention. To travel from one stage to another, and to roam some parts of the Kaliurang area did not lead to the participations of other people in the event.

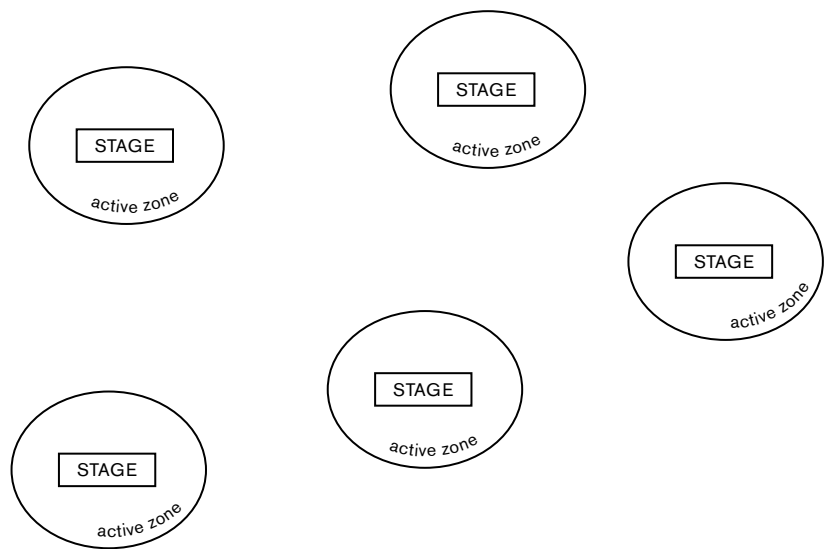


Figure 2. Spatial organization of Folk Afternoon and Walk the Folk

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The new stages, or new active zones, to emerge from Walk the Folk, were unable to be activated as spaces where interaction between the participants of the music event and the Kaliurang residents could occur. During Walk the Folk, there were no other people than those exclusively selected participants who attended the show or were engaged in the music activities performed.

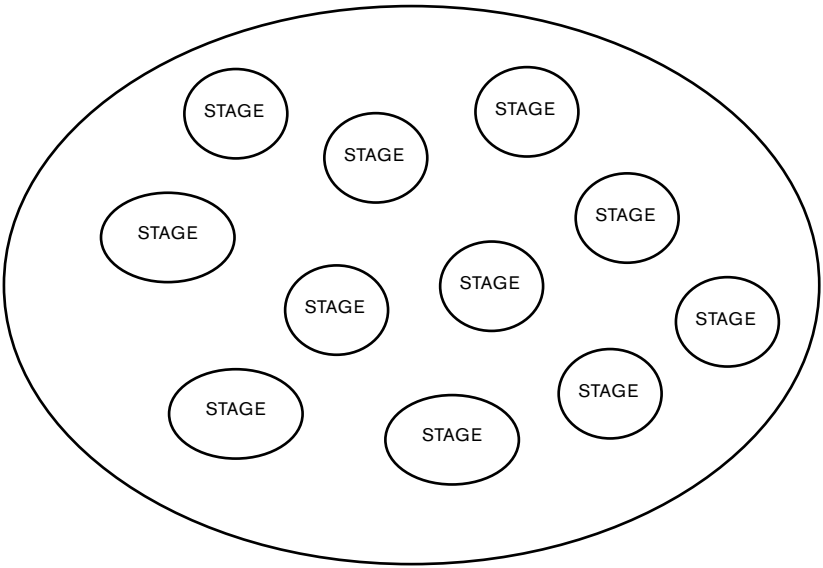


Figure 3. Participatory stage

TO WALK INTO THE SPACE OF PARTICIPATION

Titah, a Yogyakarta-based arts writer, (2014) connects walking in Walk the Folk with the idea of 'to occupy' (2014). Elsewhere, Mitchell (2013) asserts that to occupy a space means to make visible the oppressed power. As I read Titah's essay, and took the word occupy seriously, and tried to recall what had happened that day with Walk the Folk, it is difficult to recognize any intention to collapse the different levels of authority. The idea of occupy implies there is an intention to stay for as long as the participants could keep

the endurance level strong. What we did was we walked, stopped for a while for some music session and conversation, and walked again. We never stopped for long, or found reasons to stay.

Mitchell (2013: 109-110) characterizes the spaces to be occupied as empty spaces, which functions as 'clearing' in the midst of a dense and contested city. The spaces have the potentiality to allow people to gather and co-ordinate collective works. The emptiness of these spaces, as Mitchell further suggests, might not be *empty* at all as it might also mean 'a sign of defeat', thus they are 'emptied' and 'cleared' (2013: 212). The emptiness is the sign of being defeated. They are pregnant with the stories of being defeated, but are left unsaid or silenced for reasons. To occupy a space means to make visible the oppressed power; it is to fill up the space literally and to make the authorities squirm.

Can walking then serve as a method for deepening the understanding of the environment and shaping the imagination of participation? In analyzing walking practices, Pink (2008) talked about walking as a potential medium to share a sense of 'sensoriality' (*ibid.* 184-185). What Pink means by sensoriality is a series of practices that take place within walking as well as being emplaced and attuned to the walking participants and environment surrounds. Pink provides examples, which range from "walking, eating, imagining, drinking, photographing, and audio-and-video recording" (*ibid.* 176). Levebfre's analysis of 'rhythmanalysis' (2004) is instructive to complicate and deepen the perspective about sensoriality. While Pink emphasizes the entanglement process among walking participants in the place-making formation, Levebfre (2004: 1-18), suggests moving beyond senses, repetition, and movement, to indicate rhythm. His proposal is to use rhythm more as a tool to critically view the presence of the everyday life, the complexity of time, and the social space where it is located.

I try to connect the notion of emptiness that Mitchell proposed with the actual empty feeling that I felt during my time in Kaliurang. I saw many abandoned houses, empty villas, defunct hotels and motels, a restaurant, which stopped function as a restaurant, old buildings. Some of them were still in good condition; others were already dilapidated. I did not see many local tourists in the area.

My notes, however, were filled with stories. They recorded what I saw and experienced while walking together with the others as well as on the

surrounding environment. They are the products of various moments to narrate other events. But these notes stay in my notebook and are not shared. The organizers of Walk the Folk did not create any mechanism to share what everyone was thinking about when walking together around Kaliurang. Each of us might see the same things, think about different things, and process that in our minds, but we kept on walking. My notes read:

1. We passed a *pos ronda*, a night watchman post, across from the tennis court. Dito: "So this is a *pos ronda*". Lani: "Please tell me something about it. I would like to hear such stories." Dito: "OK. This is the place where people gather to in order to guard the kampung." Me: "How many people that usually gather here for ronda?" Lani: "Nah...ten?" Dito: "Nah...That I don't know. Because I never go here for my *ronda* shift." (He laughed.) Me: "Is it still a norm here to ask or pay someone when you don't think you can meet your ronda obligation?" Dito: "It is still happening here. But here *ronda* has always been connected to an activity for also actively taking part should Mount Merapi grow to be alarming for people who live here, so...".³⁹
2. When we left Mira's house and walked towards the tennis court, on our left was a modest hotel with a big yard owned by Mira's parents. She did not tell if the hotel belonged to her family. But everyone in the group knew it. Instead she started to talk about 'The Kaliurang Project'—a project of Lir Space that was organized a year before (discussed above). "The Kaliurang Project is a project of Kaliurang's alternative history," she said. There were seven artists invited to take part in it—including Dito. I asked about what works that the participants of the project did. But everyone around me was busy talking to each other. And Mira was quickly drawn into the conversation started by others in the group. There the topic of the Kaliurang Project disappeared into the air.
3. We passed Wisma Kaliurang, a now defunct hotel which was closed following a raid by the Front Pembela Islam, the Islamic Defender Front on a drag queen show organized by a number of LGBT rights organizations in 2005. Mira mentioned it in passing. Some people in

³⁹ See Kusno (2006) to learn more about the potentiality of *ronda* as a means to preserve urban memories in Java.

the groups said “Oh” in response. I waited to see whether the conversation would continue, but it did not. Then we started walking again. We passed the building where *Perjanjian Kaliurang*, Kaliurang Negotiation, as part of *Perundingan Tiga Negara*, the Three Countries Treaty took place in 1946. We passed a gallery and an art shop owned by the prominent artist Sapto Hudoyo, which seemed to be no longer in use. It is a non-functioning art and cultural institution. As we walked, I seemed to lose count of the number of hotels and motels, all which seemed to be idle for I do not know how long. Do people still go and stay there for their holidays? There was so much idleness and emptiness in the area.

4. We were approaching the fourth stage at that time. We passed the abandoned warung kopi, more abandoned houses, and a kind of monument with the Atma Jaya University emblem painted on it. Atma Jaya University is the alma mater of Mira and Dito. According to Dito, who walked next to me at that time, it was there to mark the accomplishment of KKN of the Atma Jaya students. Moki commented upon the monument: “I think the monument is useless. It is just standing there and doing nothing. How come the students of your alma mater create such a useless activity like that!” Dito said in reply, “Ah but when I was at the final year there, *Kuliah Kerja Nyata* was abolished. I did not have to do it anymore.”

There was something bubbling beneath that seemed to be empty and ordinary. A now defunct Wisma Kaliurang is evidence of an ongoing battle of sexual minority groups against Islam radical groups. Hetero-normative Islamic activistis had once been a persecutor in the area. Many more defunct hotels and homestays indicate the former economic value of Kaliurang as a tourism site which has since declined over recent years. There were other forms of tourism infrastructure that have dwindled too. I saw a woman with a bamboo basket full of *salak* fruit, an important fruit commodity of the area, who quietly approached us while we gathered in a tennis court. She must have thought that we were tourists who visited Kaliurang (but neither one bought the *salak* from her, nor made conversation with her). One reason is because going to the scenic beauty of Mount Merapi and its surrounding is no longer the favorite leisure option. Kaliurang has long stopped to be an area, which promises job opportunities. In every corner of the city now there are new boutique hotels which offer extra comfort and luxury for customers. What is attractive for local tourists has changed.

But throughout the gig, there was no space to talk about this and other things that such emptiness evokes. We just passed them, except when they were used as the stages to perform music and other activities in the event. Later that day I realized that when Walk the Folk was nearly finished, the unfamiliarity with the other participants of the event remained. Perhaps I was not the only one who felt that way. I perceived this as the usual feeling which occurs after watching a music performance somewhere; there is no need to know the people who are at the audience so long as we are content with the performance. I had enjoyed the music performed on that day and probably others did too.

When Walk the Folk had finished, and later checked Instagram, I saw that Mira, myself and other participants had posted similar scenes and images to Instagram. Our social media postings were the only thing to make visible or record our shared presence in Walk the Folk. To share certain moments from Walk the Folk through social media platforms felt normal for me, and probably for everyone who participated in it. To create our digital visibility is part of the contemporary urge to create personalized accounts of everyday amidst the fast-flowing information. I consider Abidin's argument (2016) when researching about selfie practices that taking selfie should not be dismissed as being frivolous and marginal, but needs to be taken into account as a potential site to craft and pursue a sense of self-productivity and self-actualization in a wider sense. In relation to the social media postings of Walk the Folk, how should this social media visibility be perceived? To post everything online is part of our digital participation habit. Though I am not sure whether this is deemed fit into the participation scheme that the Walk the Folk organizer imagined.

In the process of writing this chapter, Mira sent me a series of updates on the second Walk the Folk. There was an increase in the number of participants and also an increased contribution from the participants. There was a craft group who gave a free workshop. We Need More Stage, a photographer collective who dedicate themselves to making and documenting music performances, attended Walk the Folk not just for the purpose of documenting it. They also brought fresh fruits to enjoy in the picnic and music listening activities. There was also a spontaneous band created by two other participants. In the second Walk the Folk, the organizer created various themes ('abandoned house walk,' 'popular tourism sites,' 'secret garden,' 'photo walk: finding the most photographic site in Kaliurang') on which the participants could imagine their contributions.

From my office in Leiden, I saw more photos of this event on Instagram. The second edition of Walk the Folk indicated further experiments on redefining contribution concept better. To frame Walk the Folk as an art project allows for improvements and adjustments. As I looked at the photos, I wondered whether Kaliurang serves more as a photo backdrop rather than a social context to dwell. Every picture posted on a social media platform appears as a kind of souvenir. It is a souvenir of Kaliurang, playing music, and other activities facilitated Walk the Folk. Walk the Folk emerged as an avenue for music playing activity, and enjoying tranquil surroundings, without losing the connection with the ever-bustling flow in the digital age.

CONCLUSION

In an attempt to understand the meaning of participation in Walk the Folk, I have taken a circuitous route and gone through different contexts, finding historical references and impetuses. Walk the Folk is a work where 'participation' and 'participatory' (along with other concepts such as 'research-based art practices', 'artist-researcher', and other concepts to embody a call for a more socially-engaged art practices) are learned, theoretically consumed, translated, and appropriated. The organization of Walk the Folk opened up an opportunity to become a tool for defining and question the existing participatory-based art practices. It emerges as an avenue for questioning the meaning of contribution in the environment.

Using the axis of stage, audience, participant, and mode of interaction between musician and audience, Walk the Folk attempts to re-imagine the meaning of participation and contribution. On a limited scale, the organization of Walk the Folk becomes a site to experiment on a series of strategies to organize a participatory art project. In the introduction chapter, I have introduced commons as a sensibility to recognize what one does to contribute to the environment in an ethical manner. To practice commons requires a participation habit. Walk the Folk contributes to the nurture of moments to produce the participation climate within art production.

In the context of Walk the Folk, participation becomes a concept to gather people on the stage and perform their skills and personal capacities. It centers on the idea to widen the space for doing music. To some extent, Walk the Folk becomes an alternative music event in the city, and a space where collaboration might take place. The second edition of Walk the Folk indicates

this. Walk the Folk ceases to become a transactional relation between a musician and a fan. Music brings many people together. The concept of Walk the Folk (reconceptualization of the stage, walking to interesting spots in order to play and listen to some music) is regarded as being interesting. Kaliurang serves as a backdrop from which the participants felt inspired by and used it for their works. Walk the Folk brings an opportunity to deepen knowledge of a local touristic place. It is a place, which might be an unfamiliar context for many. The question remains, is what the participants have learnt from Kaliurang. The participation concept in Walk the Folk inevitably entails questions regarding the contribution to Kaliurang.

My observation is that the questions about the people and the surroundings keep fleeting away; they did not seem to find a right moment to be addressed and studied. Such observation is not intended to reduce the pleasure element of playing music and other activities related to music in an environment like Kaliurang. Participation is hard to grip. To label an art project a 'participatory art project' is to affix certain expectation of what value that the project might bring. My notes described above assert my personal views of Kaliurang as a place too loaded to be treated as a performance place. It suggests my personal modes of being attuned to the area, which might be different from others. Any kind of art project has different stakeholders, who might have different kind of expectation.

As a location where commoning takes place, Kaliurang emerged as a site where participation feels difficult to translate into a mode of contribution. Walking is a tool for collective learning. My notes reflect my own expectation of Walk the Folk as a project with the potential to be a site for learning about participation culture. In the previous section, I have elaborated on how my notes were bubbling and filled with stories. They are the stories which are not shared and discussed together among the participants. My notes cannot remember the discussion of a protocol for walking together in a new environment. My notes derive from another expectation of Walk the Folk being a long-term project, or a project with a clear timeline (just like Turba or KKN practices). To see Walk the Folk as part of a learning process is to open a possibility for seeing it as a project, which does not have a clear point of beginning and ending. It can happen anytime, anywhere. It leads to a new possibility to see Walk the Folk as an option of visiting mode—among other options. It is an option to be developed as a way for living and working with the others.

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At the same time, I value the idea of labeling Walk the Folk as a participatory art project to be a recognition of 'participation' as a certain mannerism in doing art. While Walk the Folk has the potentials to strive as an important music performance and attract people, the challenge is to see how such mannerism would evolve into something else. At the moment, Walk the Folk indicates 'participation' as a concept in an art project mobilized to return to art/music.