

Rocking Indonesia: The Cultural Legacy of the Rolling Stones in Bandung

Curator: Muhammad Irfan

Artist: Irama Nusantara, Rama Saputra, Mufti "Amenk" Priyanka, Wawan Christiawan

Date: 2024.08.30 — 10.27, 2:00pm - 8:00pm, Wed - Sun

About Exhibition

TheCube is honored to invite Muhammad Irfan, a writer and pop music researcher from Indonesia, to curate the exhibition Rocking Indonesia: The Cultural Legacy of the Rolling Stones in Bandung. The exhibition features archival materials, works and participation of sound artist Rama Saputra, visual artist Mufti "Amenk" Priyanka, performance artist Wawan Christiawan, and Irama Nusantara.

In recent years, Indonesian contemporary and sound artists have increasingly attracted global attention. For example, the music projects of the 2022 Kassel Documenta and the 2023 Taipei Biennale have invited artists and curators from Indonesia. However, many Taiwanese audiences are still wondering why Indonesia has such strong creative energy. The exhibition Rocking Indonesia: The Cultural Legacy of the Rolling Stones in Bandung hopes to explore the source of Indonesia's artistic creativity from a bottom-up perspective, looking into daily lives and popular culture of Indonesian society. The city of Bandung is the place where "Bandung Conference" was held, an event that gave birth to the concept of "South".

This exhibition integrates archives, sound, painting and performance, and will run from August 30 to October 27, during which there will be public events such as performances and lectures. In addition, Bandung artist "Amenk", who was famous for combining ink painting and comic techniques, passed away due to illness during the preparation of this exhibition. We would like to dedicate this exhibition to "Amenk".

Event

I. Opening Performance

Opening: 2024.08.30 (Fri) 5:30pm - 8:00pm

Venue: TheCube Project Space, Taipei

Performer: Rama Saputra, Muhammad Irfan

II. 2024 Sonic Shaman: Prelude feat. Rocking Indonesia Touring Concert

Date: 2024.09.01 (Sun) 2:00pm - 7:00pm

Venue: Vital Space (No.789, Sec. 2, Gongyi Rd., Nantun Dist., Taichung City)

Line-up: Rama Saputra, DJ Popish, PA66, Chen Yi Chung, Tian Group, Social Dis Dance

III. Rocking Indonesia Talks and Performance Art

Date: To be announced (stay tuned for further announcement)

Venue: TheCube Project Space, Taipei

Speakers: Wawan Christiawan (Indonesia), Irama Nusantara (Indonesia)

Curatorial Statement

by Muhammad Irfan (Curator)

At a certain point, music arrives not only with its melodic flow but also with visual imagery and imagination, intertwined with character, persona, and stemming from societal contexts. It transforms to be more than just “leisure entertainment,” but considered as “representative” and be “a part of” its audience or listeners. The concept of Rocking Indonesia emerged through this thesis, taking Bandung —a city in West Java, Indonesia— as a focal point, with The Rolling Stones as its subject, which is the closest example for me, as a curator, to understand this thesis.

This personal reason stems from my belief that a city's identity influences the social pulse of its community, further impacting the artistic response of its creators, in this case, music. Born as a cosmopolitan city, Bandung, with all its unique traits, becomes a battleground of ideas from thousands of pages read, thousands of notes played, thousands of film durations watched, and layers of 'isms' from various corners of the world studied, debated, or simply felt on the surface, affecting how the city's daily life unfolds. When discussing this in the context of music, I have no hesitation in mentioning The Rolling Stones.

In Bandung, The Rolling Stones became more than just a British band consisting of Mick Jagger, Keith Richards, Charlie Watts, and Ronnie Wood (and if you're eccentric enough, you certainly wouldn't forget Brian Jones!). They became a slang, a symbol of “new coolness” for several decades, generalizing Western rock music while also becoming a part of local rock. Beyond that, The Rolling Stones are also interpreted as “tough,” “uncontrollable,” and “dangerous,” applying not only to music but also to football, street violence, the vulnerability of a neighborhood, and even food. Therefore, it is not necessary to memorize hundreds of The Rolling Stones' catalogs to attach the word “Jagger” or their iconic lips and tongue logo. In short, they become a living culture in the midst of society.

For instance, “Jagger” is interpreted as a “thug” or “troublemaker,” and people with such tendencies are nicknamed “Jagger.” During the celebration of Indonesia's Independence Day on August 17, often marked by bands in villages, intimidating shouts like “A, Stone A!” or “Don't play Western songs, just play Stone songs” can be heard, indicating the audience's request for performers to play The Rolling Stones' songs. Humorously, the audience will still dance even if the performers play other Western rock songs that are not by The Rolling Stones. This is what I mean by “becoming a generalization of Western rock music while also being part of local rock.” Uniquely, The Rolling Stones have also become synonymous with those living in the narrow, bustling alleys of the city with their dense population and various social issues.

Referring to these facts, through Rocking Indonesia, I intend to “bring” the vibration of The Rolling Stones in Bandung to the exhibition space at TheCube Project Space, Taipei. Combining archival exhibitions, visuals, and sound art, I want to invite visitors to understand and feel how The Rolling Stones, as a Western cultural product, transform within the local life of Bandung, Indonesia, and become an example of the relationship between music and its audience.

Among the archives on display, most are from *AKTUIL* magazine (1967-1986), a popular music magazine published in Bandung, which became a catalyst and a propagandist for Western pop culture in Indonesia post-1965. Through *AKTUIL*, I aim to show how the media portrayed The Rolling Stones (especially the iconic Mick Jagger and Keith Richards) hyperbolically, not just in music but also in lifestyles associated with the credo of sex, drugs, and rock 'n roll. I then show how this rock 'n roll imagination was brought to the people through local heroes like Deddy Stanzah (The Rollies, Superkid), who came to be seen as the ideal local version of Mick Jagger. This

made him the “Mick Jagger among us,” and his image was subsequently replicated by fans as a new form of The Rolling Stones they knew.

Irama Nusantara, a musical archivist group from Indonesia compiled a mixtape to suggest how some local musicians “stole” The Rolling Stones’ hook for their works, especially in the 1960s to the 1970s. At the end of September, we will also invite Wawan Christiawan, a Rolling Stones fan, senior live performance artist to perform his interpretation of the phenomenon.

Similarly, several archives of cassettes, vinyl records, and digital mixtapes are expected to illustrate how local Bandung musicians, especially from the late 1960s to the 1980s, took significant influence from The Rolling Stones’ songs. There is also a video collage depicting how society’s interpretation of The Rolling Stones has evolved over time. In order to “bring Bandung to Taipei” and help visitors imagine the kind of space that this music grew up, I also invited two artists from Bandung, Rama Saputra and Mufti “Amenk” Priyanka, to capture this environment through soundscapes and visual sketches.

This exhibition is the first and perhaps the last exhibition abroad for Amenk, a tribute to him, who passed away in June 2024 due to illness during the preparatory period of this project.

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About the Curator

Muhammad Irfan also known as Irfan Popish, is a writer from Bandung, Indonesia. Currently based in Hsinchu, Taiwan, Irfan is pursuing Inter-Asia Cultural Studies at the National Yang Ming Chiao Tung University. His works include *Bandung Pop Darlings* (2019), a book publication about two decades of the Indie Pop scene in his hometown, Bandung, and Numpang Gandeng, a video essay about underground bands among the Indonesian Migrant Workers community in Taiwan. His latest work is an intimate show *Have You Ever Met Dao Ming Tse* at the Taipei Fine Arts Museum in January 2024.

About the Artists

Rama Saputra

Rama Saputra or Ramaputratrantra is an Indonesian artist and music producer. His work deals with speculative syncretic identity, artistic thought of 'Synthdentity' (synthesis and identity) synthetic electronic sounds in tribal/mysticism-inspired music, and postcolonial critiques of power. Rama vibrates his interest and experience through performances, compositions, and/or collaborative interdisciplinary work with researchers, dancers, filmmakers and visual artists. He also pursued music creation and programs collectively; eclectic rock band GAUNG, Taiwan-Indonesia inter-artistic project Sundialll, archival and curatorial program Non-Aligned Sonic Cooperation (NASC), improvisational music gigs Opus Jam (2017-2021), part of annual Bandung improvisation festival Sontak, and label partner of Sacred Bridge Foundation Tradisi records (ID/UK).

See Rama works here: <http://ramasaputra.weebly.com/>

Mufti “Amenk” Priyanka a.k.a Amenkcoy is a Bandung, West Java, Indonesia graphic artist. Amenkcoy likes to capture the everyday life that for most people can be so trivial, trivial, unimportant, plebeian, crotch, even taboo. But precisely therein lies the expertise of Amenkcoy in the work, he always managed to construct a paradoxical narrative of the everyday life of the masses of the most complex urban society. Through his artworks, Amenkcoy is a contemporary artist. He always shows a variety of parodies, intertextuality, criticism of the establishment of ideology or culture, ironic, pastiche, and others.

See Amenkcoy works on: <https://indoartnow.com/artists/mufti-priyanka-a-k-a-amenk>

Wawan Christiawan

Wawan Christiawan is an art performance artist, musician, former lecturer, and fan of The Rolling Stones. He lives and works in Bandung Indonesia and lectures at the Theater Dept of Indonesian Art College, Bandung, and is the Artistic Director of Asbestos Art Space Education. He participated in several art programs such as the Artist-in-residence program 2000 ALCHEMY; World New Media Art Artist and Curators Meeting; Australian Network and Technology (ANAT), Queensland, Australia; 1999 ITBX-Curtin University, School of Art in Perth, West Australia. His performance art includes 2010 Undisclosed Territory in Solo, Indonesia; 2009 The Art of Encountering in Hilsende, Germany; Duo Performance with Mimi Fadmi at Asbestos ArtSpace, Bandung, 2005; 1st Southeast Asia Performance Art Symposium and 6th Asiatopia International Festival Bangkok, Thailand 2004; Performance Studies International # 10, Singapore 2003; and 5th Asiatopia International Festival, Bangkok, Thailand.

See Christiawan works here: <https://wchristiawan.blogspot.com/>

Irama Nusantara

Irama Nusantara is a preservation and archiving of data and information on Indonesian popular music. This is based on the awareness that it is important for the public to recognize and understand modern Indonesian music as part of the nation's identity. The effort that Irama Nusantara has taken as a first step is digital archiving. Currently the Irama Nusantara site is still in the development stage, where there are still many features that have not been implemented. There is still a lot of content in the queue that will enter our library every day. Apart from these archiving efforts, Irama Nusantara has a dream to develop other efforts that will be carried out in the future.

<https://www.iramanusantara.org/>

Organizer: TheCube Project Space

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