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When the “West” meets the “East”: School museum in Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Ko se “Zahod” sreča z “Vzhodom”: Šolski muzej v Jogjakarti, Indonezija

*Certainly, travel is more than the seeing of sights;
it is a change that goes on, deep and
permanent, in the ideas of living.*

Miriam Beard

Izvleček

Šolski muzej v Jogjakarti – Museum Pendidikan Indonesia (MPI) je prvi nacionalni šolski muzej v Indoneziji. Državna univerza v Jogjakarti (Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta) ga je ustanovila 8. julija 2008. Gre za zelo mlad muzej, mladost pa še nič ne pove o njihovih aktivnostih in ciljih. MPI ima velike načrte: predstaviti želi zgodovino izobraževanja v celotni državi. V ozadju tega cilja zasledimo uradni nacionalni slogan »Bhinneka Tunggal Ika«, kar pomeni »enotnost v različnosti«. V Indoneziji sobiva več kot tristo etničnih skupin. Za krepitev nacionalne identitete je treba spoštovati različnost in dati vrednost kulturi in zgodovini izobraževanja vsake etnične skupine. Razstavna zbirka muzeja je še skromna, a načrtujejo nove raziskave in pripravo dodatnih razstav ter aktivnosti. Kot gost MPI-ja sem se udeležila festivala muzejev, ki je potekal od 23. do 28. septembra 2012 v Jogjakarti.

Abstract

The School Museum in Yogyakarta – Museum Pendidikan Indonesia (MPI) is the first national school museum in Indonesia. It was established on 8th of July in 2008 by the Yogyakarta State University (Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta). It is very a young museum but this tells nothing about its activities and goals. MPI has great plan: it tries to present the history of education of the entire country. Behind its aim lies the official national slogan »Bhinneka Tunggal Ika«, which means “Unity in Diversity”. There are over 300 ethnic groups in Indonesia. As my interlocutor pointed out to strengthen national identity they have to respect diversity and give value to the cultures and education histories of each ethnic group. For now the exhibition collection is modest, but MPI is planning to conduct new researches and prepare additional exhibitions and activities. As a guest of the MPI I attended the festival of museums, which was held from 23rd to 28th of September 2012 in Yogyakarta.

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Ključne besede: šolski muzej, univerza, Jogjakarta, Indonezija, Museum Pendidikan Indonesia

Key words: school museum, university, Yogyakarta, Indonesia, Museum Pendidikan Indonesia

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For me it is important from time to time to step out of the frame of my own culture from time to time, to create a distance to it and to revalue my position and my understanding of life premises. I see travelling primarily as a possibility for cooperation and integration with other people, which can bring new knowledge and deepen my understanding. This was also the case with my travelling to Indonesia in September 2012. Besides visiting the great Borobudur temple, the wonderful Mount Bromo in Bromo Tengger Semeru National Park and other interesting places, I have worked in a School museum (in Bahasa Indonesia: Museum Pendidikan Indonesia) and attended the festival of museums in Yogyakarta.

With this presentation I want to share my experience and insights in the field of museology especially in Yogyakarta which I believe is less known in the West. The paper shortly presents the Museum Pendidikan Indonesia (MPI) and shows the importance of the festival of museums, which can be understood as an idea for the presentation of museums and their work in the public space. This kind of interventions in the public space can present one idea of connecting museums and education in a new, attractive way.

“Never ending Asia”

Indonesia is a country in Southeast Asia. It has a long and diverse history. It has been a Portuguese and Dutch colony, during the Second World War it was occupied by Japan. After the war The Netherlands tried to re-establish their rule, but they faced the international pressure and after four years of sometimes brutal fighting had to recognize Indonesian independence in December 1949. It is interesting that the majority of the Indonesian population is barely aware of their historical link with the Netherlands.¹ Indonesia is an archipelago comprising approximately 17,508 islands. It is the world's fourth most populous country with over 251 million people, most of them Muslims – around 86% of population. It is especially interesting in the terms of museology, education and cultural policy that there are around 300 distinct native ethnic groups and 742 different languages and dialects. Indonesia is a republic, with an elected legislature and

1 Paul Doolan, »Time for Dutch Courage in Indonesia,« *History Today* 47, no. 3 (1997): <http://www.historytoday.com/paul-doolan/time-dutch-courage-indonesia>.



*School Museum in Yogyakarta / MPI - Museum Pendidikan Indonesia.
(Photo: Tina Palaić)*

president. The capital city is Jakarta. The main tourist spot in Indonesia is the island of Bali; on the second place is the city of Yogyakarta².

I have worked with the MPI in the city of Yogyakarta, which is considered to be the cultural, historical and educational center of the main island of Java. Yogyakarta impressed me with its cultural offer and the vividness of the city was amazing. The nick name of the city is shortly Yogya. Because it offers many attractions it is also known as »Never Ending Asia«. It is possible to explore traditional crafts, such as batik textile and silver jewelry, traditional and modern art, for example puppet shows and ballet performances. There are also a lot of different festivals which co-create cultural life of the city. They organize numerous festivals, for example fashion festival, cultural festival, festival of arts, of technology, culinary festival and also festival of museums.³

2 Central Intelligence Agency, »The World Factbook: Indonesia,« <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/id.html> (accessed 11. 03. 2014).

3 Indonesia travel, »Discover Indonesia,« <http://www.indonesia.travel/en/discover-indonesia/region-detail/33/di-yogyakarta> (accessed 11. 03. 2014).

Museums in Indonesia

The concept of the 'museum' has long been attributed to the European ideals of late Renaissance culture and the Enlightenment. Museums today are not restricted to the bounds of Western civilization; in fact in almost every country in the world we can find at least one of these institutions. The development of museums in non-Western countries was and continues to be influenced by the mission, principles, philosophies and practices of historically Western museums.⁴ The number of museums in Indonesia started to increase during the first National Development Plan in the 1970s, when President Suharto directed considerable resources towards a rejuvenation of national institutions, including museums. Currently there are approximately 275 museums in Indonesia.⁵

There are many problems that Indonesian museums nowadays still face. In an article *Appropriate museology in theory and practice* by Christina F. Kreps⁶ we can read, that museum workers remain poorly trained, collections poorly cared for and poorly managed, museums inadequately funded and that they operate with limited material resources. While much has changed in Indonesia and within the Indonesian museum profession since 1989, museums still tend to not be well integrated into local communities or of much interest to their members.

School museum in Yogyakarta (MPI)

Before I went to Indonesia I contacted few different organizations. Some were connected with the field of museology and other with the field of domestic violence and child abuse, which is my other field of interest. I received two answers and after some conversation I decided to collaborate with the MPI. My aim was to get knowledge about the history of education in Indonesia; I also wanted to get to know their exhibitions and work processes. I was lucky because at the time of my visit they were also preparing the program for the festival of museums, which was held in Yogyakarta from 23rd to 28th of September. With their invitation I attended the festival of museums.

MPI is the first national school museum in Indonesia. It was established on 8th of July in 2008 by the Yogyakarta State University, which in greater part also

4 Angelina Ong, »Museums in Non-Western Contexts: Challenging the Popular Paradigm,« <http://museumstudies.columbian.gwu.edu/sites/museumstudies.columbian.gwu.edu/files/downloads/museumsinnon-westerncontexts.pdf> (2007), (accessed 10. 03. 2014).

5 Hubert J. Gijzen, »The Practical Guide for Museum Revitalisation in Indonesia. UNESCO and Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Indonesia,« <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0019/001920/192097m.pdf>; (2011), (accessed 11. 03. 2014).

6 Christina F. Kreps, »Appropriate museology in theory and practice,« *Museum Management and Curatorship* 23, no. 1 (2008): 23-41.



*Explaining the history of education in Indonesia on the carnival of museums.
(Photo: Tina Palaić)*

finances the museum. MPI is the member of Barahmus,⁷ Yogyakarta association of museums, which was established in 1971 and links 32 museums of this city. Barahmus is also co-organizer of the festival of museums in Yogyakarta. There are many local museums in Yogyakarta and elsewhere in Indonesia, which present chosen parts of the history of education. For example they show the development of education in the local environment, specific educational institutions, some people who are important for the field of education ... But my interlocutor, Mr. Asnan Arifin, coordinator in the field of education and information in MPI, said, that his institution has greater goal: it tries to present the history of education of the entire country. They would like to offer information about the history of education and about cultures of all ethnic groups in Indonesia. In his view they have to respect diversity and give value to the cultures and education histories of each ethnic group in order to strengthen national identity. Behind this aim lies the official national slogan »Bhinneka Tunggal Ika«, which means “Unity in Diversity”.

The main exhibition at the MPI tries to present the basic picture of the history of education in Indonesia since independence (1949). They use three ex-

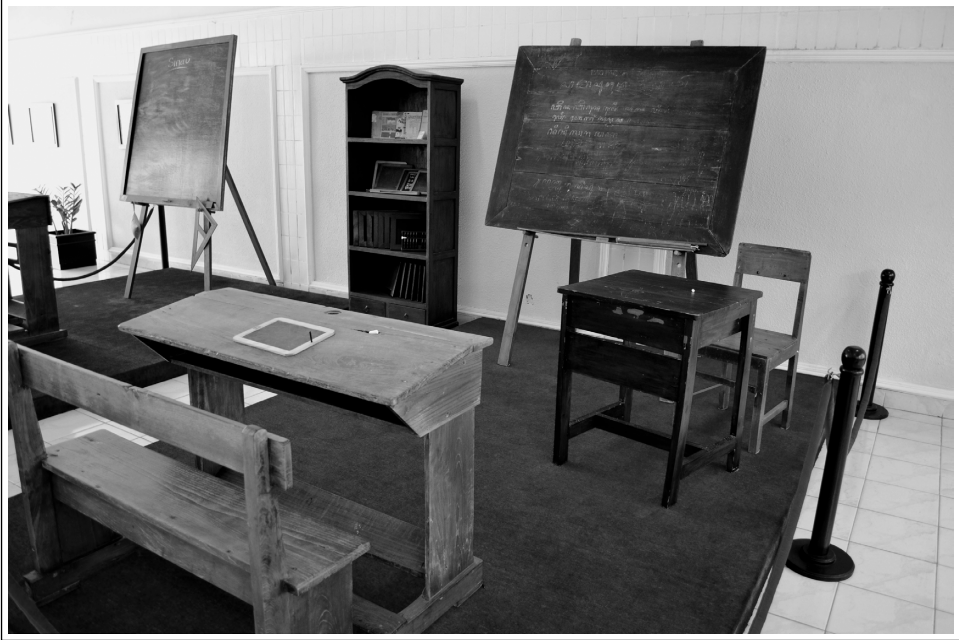
7 Barahmus, [http://gudeg.net/id/directory/12/1776/Barahmus-\(Badan-Musyawah-Musea\)-Yogyakarta.html#_Ux7lwPl5Osl](http://gudeg.net/id/directory/12/1776/Barahmus-(Badan-Musyawah-Musea)-Yogyakarta.html#_Ux7lwPl5Osl); (accessed 11. 03. 2014).



*The MPI permanent exhibition on education in Indonesia.
(Photo: Tina Palaić)*

hibition rooms for it. In the first room, we can see photos of all the ministers of education since 1949 onwards. There it is also possible to see “an old classroom” with two blackboards, some school desks and an interesting school bell. In the second room it is possible to see photos of important people in the national history of education. Some photos are presenting different school conditions. It is also possible to see some school documents and school books. The third exhibition room is the most thematically unified. There it is possible to explore different technical equipment, used in schools. At the reception we can find the most popular exhibit, a bicycle is the symbol of teachers in Indonesia.

MPI has many plans for the future. They are planning to establish a library and a room for preservation. They also want to prepare pedagogical activities for visitors, such as lessons from the past and different workshops, where participants will not just get new knowledge but will also produce it. What is clear is the fact that more researches and additional materials are needed to accomplish the mission to become the museum which presents the history of education of all the Indonesia. The MPI is also struggling with staff shortages. Only few people are employed and the important part of work is made by volunteers. Mr. Asnan proudly called those students, who help with the activities at the MPI, “Sahabat museum”, which means friend of the museum.



The old classroom in School Museum in Yogyakarta / MPI - Museum Pendidikan Indonesia. (Photo: Tina Palaić)

Festival of museums: “Museum goes to Istana”

As a guest of the MPI I attended the festival of museums, which was held from 23rd to 28th of September in Yogyakarta. The theme of the festival was “museum goes to Istana”, which means Sultan’s palace. This name was chosen because the central happening took place in the Sultan’s palace in Yogyakarta. As I mentioned before, integration of museums in the local environment is one of the problems in the field of museology in Indonesia. There are 42 museums in Yogyakarta, but local people usually do not visit them. With the festival of museums they bring museums to the people. Popularization of museums is the main aim of this festival and in fact it attracted many people who see it as a source of fun and new information.

The festival started with the carnival of museums. 28 museums from Yogyakarta and 5 from the capital city, Jakarta, started with the carnival at the main street of the city, called Malioboro. During of the carnival it was closed for the traffic. Personnel and volunteers from the MPI prepared a presentation of the museum for the carnival and included me as a special guest. Every member of the group had his or her own role. Most of the volunteers were teachers, dressed in traditional clothes, pushing bicycles by their side. Mr. Asnan Arifin from the MPI presented Ahmad Dahlan, a prominent historical figure, very important for the field of education. Due to his strong efforts religious teaching was given in public



Bicycle was regarded as one of the most important accessory for teachers because it was their only means of transportation. (Photo: Tina Palaić)

schools and general knowledge was given in religious schools. Three historical women figures were also presented at the carnival: one is princess Kartini, who was fighting for the independence and position for Javanese women. She also established the Javanese girls' school. In 1964 she was declared a national heroine. One volunteer presented Raden Dewi Sartika, who implemented the first women school and was also declared a national heroine. I presented Rosa Abendanon, female friend of princess Kartini from Netherlands, who influenced Kartini with her philosophy about women rights.

We can see the carnival of museums at the main street of the city as a show of museums. Museums presented their exhibits and activities in very imaginative ways. It was an intervention of museums in the public space, which connected museology with education. The carnival ended in the Sultan's palace, where museums provided information about their collections and activities. Over the next six days there were many visitors, school pupils, adults and also tourists, who were excited about the variety of offer at the event.

MPI presented some exhibits from the school history. It also offered visitors the possibility to write on an slates with the traditional pen in the environment of old classroom. Visitors were reminded of their own school experiences and shared stories of their childhood and education.

The stall of the Museum of volcano Merapi was also very interesting. They had a model of the volcano Merapi, and from time to time there was a small eruption.



MPI group at the carnival of museums. (Photo: Robby)

Volcano Merapi is located about 30 km north of the city of Yogyakarta and is considered as the most active volcano in Indonesia, with regular eruptions from 1548.

The stall of the Museum Affandi was one of the most visited stall at the festival. A very tall men with a pipe in one hand and yellow tempera in another attracted most visitors. This man presented Affandi, a very important Indonesian painter, who lived also in Yogyakarta. He turned his own home in Yogyakarta into museum, which is still open today. Tempera in his hand illustrates his style of painting. He was not using a brush but he put color on the canvas directly from the tempera.

Museum of puppets exhibited many different puppets. Museum worker at the stall tried to explain everything about puppets to me. After it I decided to visit one of the puppets museums in Yogyakarta to see the puppet show. A puppet shows – or *wayang kulit* - are a very important part of the cultural tradition of Indonesia. The term wayang is a Javanese word, used to describe puppet theatre or sometimes the puppet itself. Wayang means shadow what is connected with the style of the show. It is possible to watch the puppet show from both sides of the canvas – to see puppets as shadows or you can watch the performance from the back of the puppeteer. Puppet show usually presents stories from the Hindu epics Ramayana and Mahabharata. UNESCO designated wayang kulit, a shadow puppet theatre as a Masterpiece of Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity in 2003. In return for the acknowledgment, UNESCO required Indonesians to preserve their heritage.

Conclusion

I was impressed by the cultural offer and the pace of the city of Yogyakarta. For the wholeness of the experience it was very important that I collaborated with the personnel and volunteers of the MPI. With attendance at the festival of museums I gained new acquaintances in the field of museology and pedagogy who presented their views and perspectives of museology in Indonesia. That encouraged me to think about new ways of promoting museum content in Slovenia. With this article I wanted to present my experience and insights in the field of museology in Indonesia, which in my opinion is not so known in Slovenia, and encouraged people who work in the field of museology to think about the variety of possibilities to bring museums closer to the people.

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Summary

When the “West” meets the “East”: School museum in Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Tina Palaić

When someone combines work and pleasure only good things can happen. That was the case with my travel to Indonesia, where I went in September 2012. I love to travel and see new places but usually this is not enough for me. I also want to work with local people and get to know their concepts of life. Besides visiting the great Borobudur temple and the wonderful

Mount Bromo in Bromo Tengger Semeru National Park I have met very nice and friendly people at the School Museum in Yogyakarta – Museum Pendidikan Indonesia (MPI).

MPI is the first national school museum in Indonesia. It was established on 8th of July in 2008 by the Yogyakarta State University (Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta). It is very young museum but this tells nothing about its activities and goals. MPI has great plan: it tries to present the history of education of the entire country. Behind its aim lies the official national slogan »Bhinneka Tunggal Ika«, which means “Unity in Diversity”. There are over 300 ethnic groups in Indonesia. As my interlocutor pointed out to strengthen national identity they have to respect diversity and give value to the cultures and education histories of each ethnic group. For now the exhibition collection is modest, but MOI is planning to conduct new researches and prepare additional exhibitions and activities.

As a guest of the MPI I attended the festival of museums, which was held from 23rd to 28th of September in Yogyakarta. The theme of the festival was “museum goes to Istana”, which means Sultan’s palace. 28 museums from Yogya and 5 from the capital city, Jakarta, started with the carnival of museums at the main street of the city, called Malioboro. They presented their activities and materials in a very imaginative ways. The carnival ended in Sultan’s palace where the central happening took place.

Povzetek

Ko se “Zahod” sreča z “Vzhodom”: Šolski muzej v Jogjakarti, Indonezija

Tina Palaić

Kadar združimo delo z užitkom, zmeraj kaj dobrega nastane. Tako je bilo tudi v prime-ru mojega potovanja v Indonezijo, kamor sem odšla v septembru leta 2012. Zelo rada potujem in obiščem nove kraje, vendar običajno zame to ni dovolj. Med obiskom tuje dežele mi je pomembno tudi, da sodelujem z domačini in spoznavam njihove življenjske koncepte. Poleg ogleda veličastnega templja Borobudur in čudovitega vulkana Bromo v Nacionalnem parku Bromo Tengger Semeru sem spoznala zelo prijetne ljudi v Šolskem muzeju v Yogyakarta – v Museum Pendidikan Indonesia (MPI).

MPI je prvi nacionalni šolski muzej v Indoneziji. 8. julija 2008 ga je ustanovila Državna univerza v Jogjakarti (Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta). Gre za zelo mlad muzej, mladost pa še nič ne pove o njihovih aktivnostih in ciljih. MPI ima velike načrte: predstaviti želi zgodovino izobraževanja v celotni državi. V ozadju tega cilja zasledimo uradni nacionalni slogan »Bhinneka Tunggal Ika«, kar pomeni »enotnost v različnosti«. V Indoneziji sobiva več kot tristo etničnih skupin. Kot je poudaril moj sogovornik, je za krepitev nacionalne identitete treba spoštovati različnost in dati vrednost kulturi in zgodovini izobraževanja vsake etnične skupine. Razstava zbirka muzeja je še skromna, a načrtujejo nove raziskave in pripravo dodatnih razstav ter aktivnosti.

Kot gost MPI-ja sem se udeležila festivala muzejev, ki je potekal od 23. do 28. septembra v Jogjakarti. Tema festivala je bila »muzej gre v palačo«, s čimer je bila mišljena sultanova palača v Jogjakarti. 28 muzejev iz Jogjakarte in 5 iz glavnega mesta, Jakarte, je festival pričelo s karnevalom muzejev na začetku glavne ulice mesta, imenovane Malioboro. Aktivnosti in muzejske eksponate so predstavili na zelo domiselen način. Karneval se je zaključil v sultanovi palači, kjer je naslednje dni potekalo osrednje dogajanje festivala.