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Research Proposal : Artist residency in Indonesia March- July 2018

1) Purpose of my stay and research question :

During my internship with Arne Hendriks, I worked on the concept of growth. In western society, very often the aim is more, or faster, or bigger. We accumulate and race without necessarily feeling better. I am curious whether consumerism and growth is also attractive in Indonesia. I am hoping for other priorities.

As a designer I am looking for other means of fulfilment or pleasures in people's life. For this project, I decided to entrust the sense of togetherness, and I will research its potential.

Specific points of focus that will help me find answers :

a) The biological point of view.

There is a recent awareness on the complexity of nature. From the bacterias in our stomachs to animal-plant collaborations, it seems that the idea of nature being a jungle with power-relationships was only half of the truth. There is also a great co-operation in nature, as Kropotkine, Frans de Waal, Richard Sennett and Pablo Servigne (amongst others) show in their works. Investigating from this knowledge, can we feel reassured and build new systems for ourselves? On a slightly different point : can we be fascinated and not try to control? Can we allow the foreign?

b) The social point of view. The artistic practice of being implicated.

Jatiwangi art Factory (JaF) is a collective of artists who are working in constant collaboration with the inhabitants and stake-holders. They reflect on the changes happening in their rural area due to globalisation, and question what it is they want to preserve as their identity. They practice an art in action, an art that is politics in a positive way. I am curious how they managed to create a community, how they interact with each-other and how they carry their values. I want to research their position in their locality. I want learn from them, how to develop a social practice and be implicated in my surroundings.

I also want to research generosity : can it be more than a moral incentive? Can it be a tool to improve oneself and make our way on Earth?

c) artistic ethic

Jatiwangi artists are focusing on the future in an energetic and optimistic way. I want to learn where they get their energy from. I think they have a powerful hope that with actions, one can make the world better, and a strong belief in the potential of human beings. I want to become an « hopeful activist » as well. They also seem to have a great freedom. I hope to get some boxes off my head.

2) Methodology :

a) Before I go

I will start learning basic language and facts about Indonesia. I will read books : *Also Space, from Hot to Something Else* by Reinaart Vanhoe (subtitle : How Indonesian art initiatives have reinvented networking) ; *Together* by Richard Sennett ; *The age of empathy, nature's lesson for a kinder society* by Frans de Waal ; *L'entraide, l'autre loi de la jungle* by Pablo Servigne. I will also research what ethnographic research is and look at visual ethnographers' work in order to get some tools to represent my own findings. I will discuss with my teachers about the project.

b) Over there

Generally speaking :

I will keep track of what I experience by means of films, photos, drawings and/or texts in a sort of diary, travel blog or archive. It should be something that I can come back to at a later time and find new things from. This raw material I will analyse in the optic of my research question and process it in a written report with the main guidance of Robert Adolfsson.

Parallel to that I will explore the sense of togetherness of JaF's artists using a tool I created in Studio module (with guidance of Lucas Maassen, approved by Marije Vogelzang and Robert Adolfsson) and that potentially will develop into a graduation project : Agency Learning by Helping.

Concretely I offered my help as member of the Agency to graduating students of DAE for anything related to the project. I could be short or longer term help. They had to explain me their projects and teach me something in the process. I would not get money from it, but knowledge ; I would also not loose any money. It was a way to keep being busy with my hands, opening up to new people and practices, and reflecting on my own. After each helping shift I would register what I got from it, making categories.

With the Agency I am researching the potential of help as a design tool for 1) learning new skills, tricks, methodologies or facts 2) being inspired for personal projects 3) developing a network of other designers, artists or craftsmen, and 4) understanding and getting to know a specific context from inside, being able to compare methodologies. Furthermore, Agency learning by helping is researching ownership and new types of collaboration. It creates space for community building.

I want to bring the Agency to Jatiwangi art Factory because I think it is a good tool for understanding their problematics and the way they solve it. I will have to document my helping shifts cleverly , finding categories that make sense and also medium that communicate easily. Maybe short films and animations (both skills I have to learn though). Or maybe each shifts will be documented differently, but they will all be on a same website (also a skill to master). Or it becomes a recipe book, or another book. This I'll discuss with my teachers.

That will take most of my time. In this project I need to 1) help 2) document my helping shift 3) reflect on what it means for my research question and 4) reflect on how to improve Agency Learning by Helping.

On arrival :

I will spent two-three weeks being overwhelmed and open to anything. I will try to spot something that is specific in their culture (be it rituals, crafts, technics, materials or human interactions) that is fascinating me.

Once I get some landmarks

With the guidance of Johannes, I will work on the formal skills and materialisation of my findings, both concerning this specific something and the ways people can be together.

(I plan to spend 1 to 2 days per week on this.)

With the guidance of Arne Hendriks, I will focus on the implication and social action of my practice. I will develop public events or workshops for the people over there. (I hope to try it out end April or early May and improve it and/or organise more by July.) There is also big chances that I can follow JaF artists in their attempt to « duplicate » their art collective in other villages from different islands with different cultures. It is a great opportunity to see how they bring people together. (I don't have their plan yet but I know it will take 2 weeks per village.)

3) Means :

To conduct my research, I will have the guidance of Robert Adolfsson (former forum teacher and coordinator of Man and Food; he will help me on the writing and organisational part, as well as references), Johannes Steeghs (forum and atelier teacher, he will give me feedback on the materialisation and keep an eye on the thinking process) and Arne Hendricks (Man and Food teacher who will guide me on the conceptual part). Peter Van Casteren will keep track of the process. I will communicate with them via e-mails, attaching visual documentation of my work and written articles. If necessary we can also use video calls. And of course, I will be supported by the artists of Jatiwangi Art Factory, and especially Arie Syarifuddin.

4) Outcome :

-A written document that reports my process and draws conclusion from my findings. It should answer my research question (with the possibility to change it if necessary). It may also contain 1) a documentation of the public event(s) I organised , 2) the documentation of my helping shift. If not, I will provide them apart.

-An oral and materialised presentation of what I have found out during my journey, using means of expression that are best fitting and that I want to work on (it might be performance or installation).

5)Time line :

February to second week of March : at Design Academy Eindhoven

- >Developing research proposal with teachers
- >Getting knowledge on ethnographic research tools, Indonesian contemporary culture and language. (min 8hours/week)

Second week of march to mid-July : in Indonesia.

- >producing each day drawings or selected photos or edited short movie on my experience.
- >sending e-mails to teachers each week with raw materials and an article for the written report.
- >once a month having a Skype session with Robert.
- >working on material and formal skills (min 1 day/week)
- >working on public event (starting in April, min 1 day/week)
- >working on agency learning by helping (min 2 days/week)
- >working on the written report (min 1 day/week)
- >visiting other islands of Indonesia with JaF artists (2 weeks)

End of August or start September : at Design Academy Eindhoven.

- >Final Evaluation