



Ramadan, a matter of waiting: here you can see the food ready by 4PM, waiting for the 5h40 praying call.

My first day of Ramadhan : I missed the sahur (the meal before dawn) because I was waiting for musician to wake me up, waiting for hearing some the sound of people happily sharing a brunch together. This did not happen, I only heard some voices in the dark but seemed to be few people not so happy so I went back to sleep. I woke up relatively early, around 8:30 and it was incredibly quiet. No « makan! » welcome as I go out of my room (obviously), but also nobody around at all !

I experienced the first day (and to a lesser degrees the other) of ramadhan as a waiting. Not so much being hungry in the body (though at 1pm, after skyping with my boyfriend eating breakfast, I did feel my belly), but mostly waiting for the moment of breaking the fast (buka puasa). More because I was curious of how it would be, and missing the social act of eating together, than for the nutrient intake and mouth pleasure.

I had to keep myself busy. So funny thing is I cooked a lot (maybe in order to keep a contact with the food, or because I wanted to make something for this special occasion). I was happy to see I could cook without eating here and there, tasting or licking my fingers (which I otherwise always do). I made bread. I also worked on the banana skins, getting rid of all the bananas I had buy for the unborn workshop, like a mass production factory, while listening french radio. It felt almost like home! I cooked the banana itself, sliced in the oven, some topped with chili. (Banana is a by product in my skin research, so I need to find new recipes, quite fast or easy. So far I made ice-cream, pancake and bread and this oven dry, pretty good).

In the afternoon I slept a little bit, or tried to. More people came in, it became little bit more lively. I went walking a bit to keep myself moving and buy ingredients for further cooking. I had the (good) surprise to hear the muezzin sing the call for pray while it was still light , around 5h40 PM. People gathered in the eating area, there was a big tea pot, and fried things. I forgot to mention that I do drink I the day, so I am not entirely fasting. Under the basket was rice, fish, chicken, egg, some vegetables. People had brought sate and other street food. It was probably more in quality and diversity than usual, like it is for celebration or party, but not so specific food. Unlike people from Arab and Maghreb countries, Indone-

sian don't have extremely sweet cakes. You can find dates in the supermarket during ramadhan, but we did not have them at home. To my surprise eating made me feel very tired. I layed down for a while then forced myself to go for a digestive walk in the village. In the evenings of ramadhan there is a lot more prayers, so between the religious songs and the children's crackers, it is almost never silent. I was surprised by the number of religious people, the numerous mosques were full, some women even praying outside, in their long, white scarfs. I came back and chit chat with people, but went to sleep when they decided to cook and eat more (indomie), around 11h.



A taste of europe



my ramadan production

I woke up soon later to the sound of music outside. I thought it was time for sahur, and get up. But it was only 00:30! I could not manage to sleep again, felt somehow hungry, and had obsessional eating session of my bread and jam. I then made new bread and phone calls, ... in the end I managed to sleep some more hours before 4AM when Ika woke me up. I was disappointed by sahur : it was rice and or noodles again. I ate without being hungry and went back to sleep.

The following days I tried to find my own way to ramadan. First thing was finding how and when to sleep. Before-hand I thought I could live in the night and sleep in the day (which is I think something most people that don't have specific work do). But if I don't sleep in the night, I start eating in a very unhealthy manner, which I don't like. Plus I don't really manage, or want to sleep in the day, since I have ideas I want to try with bananas and cooking. So I decided to skip the sahur, eat only in the evening and sleep more. I still have troubles sleeping, especially around 11h or 12h, I feel very hot and thirsty.

The next step is what and how to eat. Because eating a big meal at 5pm makes the evening feel very long before sleeping. Should I eat again, like a dinner? But then the risk is to eat obsessively. And very important, the lack of fruits. Indonesians don't eat so much fruit (generally speaking) and if I eat only once or twice with them, I don't get much vitamins and

refreshing taste. Before I would eat fruits for breakfast and maybe fruit juices along the day. So I decided to make sure I buy and eat fruit for buck puasa. I think I will break the fast with what I do for breakfast first, then go for a walk and eat real meal later. The only thing is that I lose the social part of it, not fitting their rhythms.



fall asleep in the music studio, where they have air conditioner ...this is local style sleeping , anywhere, anytime.

Since I do eat less (though sometimes very bad and obsessional eating), I started feeling floating and light dizziness, which makes me afraid I lack of some nutrients (such as vitamins) and hurt my body. But also like this experience, and imagined my body starting eating its own-made fat. (Hi, Arne Hendriks). It is funny how fasting can make me both tired and slower (at least slowing my brain activity, I have more troubles understanding the Indonesian number for example ; and could not imagine myself

working on my computer) but also very productive in term of hand work. Cooking and cleaning banana skins. I also enjoyed the silence and getting back to myself. The slowing down.

But sometimes I hate the lack of energy and the feeling depress, homesick. It goes up and down, and that is also just how it is staying so long in a foreign country, I suppose.



SO WHAT WITH THE BANANAS?



I am fascinated by the bananas, here. I am still unsure why. I like the banana tree for its large leaves, sometimes dotted in a very regular manner. I like the massive branch on which banana grows. I think I like the massiveness of the tree (its leaves, its branches, while at the same time it feels gracious and light. It is also a very sensual tree, with the generous curves of his leaves, the powerful branch and the huge, red, ovale shaped heart -not to speak about the bananas themselves, massed around the heart like begging hands and fingers, which are already famous for their phallic shape.





The end of bananas reminds me of nipples. It is both a masculine and feminine tree. But ok, maybe I love bananas and banana trees for their sexual appeal. But not only : I love the colours of bananas. Especially the red pigmentation that occur when the bananas grew tightly together : red dots or circles are the trace of their neighbour's body. But also darker, brownish dots, appear as they grew more mature. I even love the mould developing in their last age.

I have been trying to highlight this beauty of colours of pattern, by trying to do banana leather. Unfortunately, I could not manage to avoid the oxydation and all the pieces became really dark. However the dark itself is interesting, and the patterns can be seen against the light, by transparency.



Banana products

So my first goal was to make banana leather, that I could use as textile. To avoid decay I cleaned the skin from the soft banana, reaching for the small bananas (pisang muli), a very thin and translucent skin. I let them dry, but not directly in the sun.



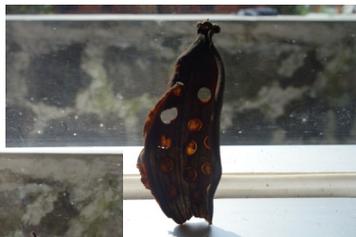
In the process of peeling and cleaning the bananas, and because the pattern is seen by transparency, I discovered I could also carve them, removing more soft skin here than there. I especially liked making dotted patterns. But simply draw or write with a small stick (or non-functioning pen) works also. At that time I was trying to develop a workshop or happening moment for the opening of an exhibition in jaf.

The good thing when carving (without cleaning the skin first) is that one can first see the drawing more dark than the rest (because faster oxydation where the skin has

been pushed) but then, once dried, it appear lighter in transparency.

It is also fairly easy. My idea for a workshop was to peel the poising in a particular way, and to ask people to illustrated their wish to the futur, for themselves or for someone else ,on the banana skin. Then put again the banana inside the peel, and giving it to that other person, who could read the wish from the banana peel. Eating the banana would sort of celebrate the deal of making this wish possible in the future, and their could keep the peel as memory object. (but this workshop did not happen)

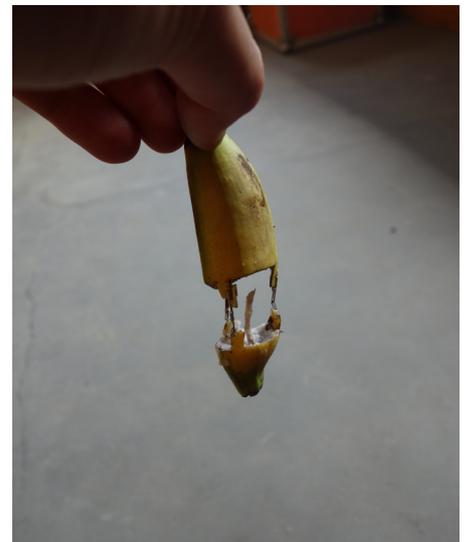




One difficult part with drying the bananas is that it curls up in the process. This adds up to the fact that the skin already has volume to start with. One has therefore to put it in a frame or under a press. I used metal wire to create a frame and sewed the skins around it, but it takes a lot of time and the skins are fragile. Now I think i could have sandwiched them between 2 meshes. But the wire showed useful for drying empty volumes, especially because the skins reduces a lot and get stuck to their frame. Something solid I could not have removed, but wires were flexible enough.

Still researching how to show best their coloured beauty, and keep them sort of more neat and proper, I found out I could stick them onto paper, as soon as I had cleaned them well. I like the contrast of their shape with the paper. Though they also darkened, the patterns are a little bit visible. But once again, best was to hold it against the light.

Therefore I thought of making Chinese lanterns with the skins, my first attempt, using the whole banana as it has a parachute shape already was a failure (to heavy). But I am trying again, switching to making kite since that is a game for a lot of children here. I do stick the skins onto specific kite paper, let's see.





I also was interested in the shape of the banana, trying to keep the skin as a whole while carefully removing the flesh. I made coffee drips, since coffee is a big trend here. My first drips were very tiny since i used small bananas, but their is also huge bananas I can use. The coffee barista told me the fruit-fermentation smell of the skin was disturbing his fine taste. So I tried the next prototype dried in the oven, which made the smell more caramelised, ad the skins so dark and brittle! However it is so humid here that the day after they were again softer.



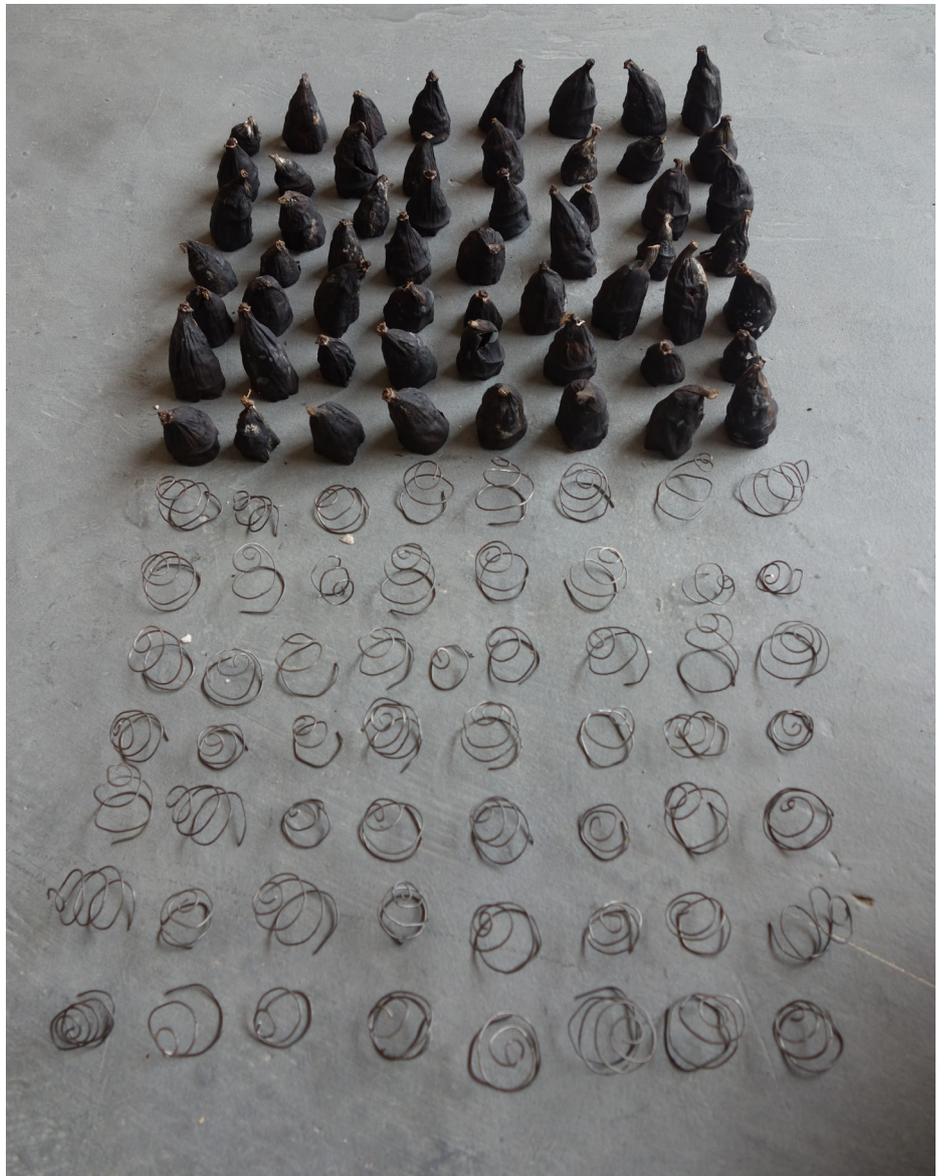
Because of the humidity, whatever how dried and cleaned the skins were, they still become smooth again, and if let alone for a long time, develop some brown mould on it surface, like a soft baby skin. I am not sure if this is bad or not.

For now I have found only one way to keep the banana from oxydation and mould, and that is through plastifying. But I don't like the aspect of the plastic sheets so much. So I just bough glycemol and will try to do my own plastic.

As previously said, I am also fascinated by the position of the bananas on the branch, which reminded me of fingers pointing. I trying showing this by drawing but it did not work so good, so I made sculpture. I would love to do it again, with the finger being flutes also, to create some kind of wind musical installation, but I doubt I will have the time. (I need to make choices)

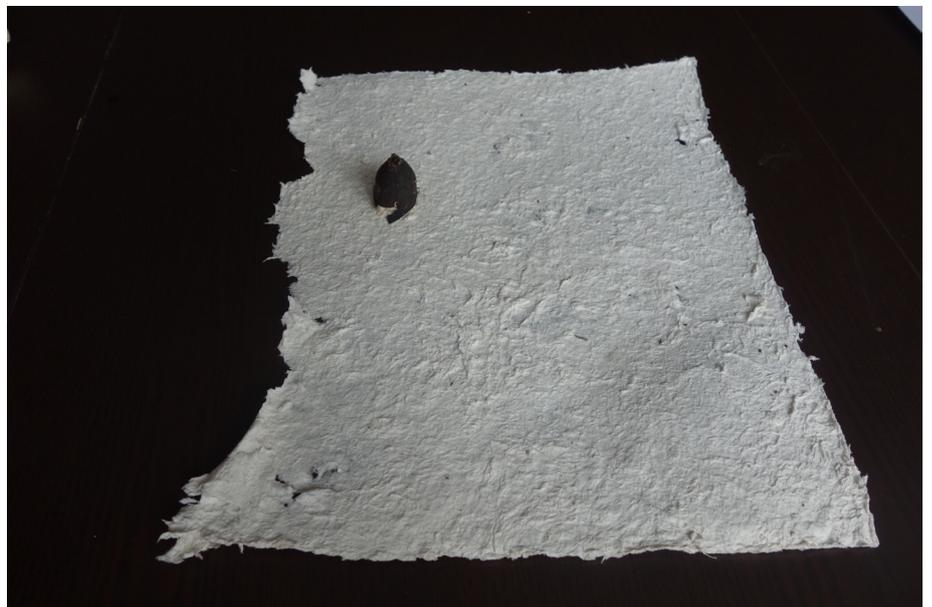
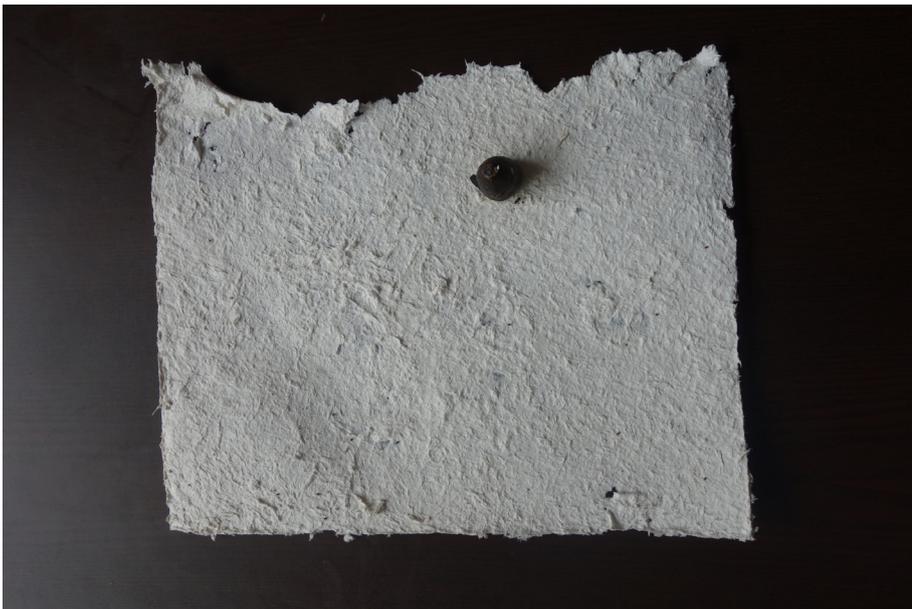


I also mentioned the nipple aspect of each banana ends (which we don't find in the imported banana is Europe). I made legion of half bananas, I like them very much but I don't really know what to do with them.





I made my own paper, in order to stick the banana onto it (since incorporating them in the paper pulp did not work). It allowed me to go 3D.



So yes, I am spending a lot of time with bananas, I am still very fascinated by them. But I am afraid I can keep on researching for ever. I suppose I should now focus on ways to share the fascination I have. Or link this material with something else. It is also ironical that I came here for their social activism, willing to research on a generous society. And I end up working on my own in a studio type. Not doing the basic thing I know I should which is keep communicate about your project and ask for help or feedback.

I did discuss with Arie, also people from Jaf would like me to do an exhibition or something before I go, which is a good thing. He is also very interested in food and would like to do a street food court in order to meet people that are not already familiar with Jaf or their ideas. Food has this characteristic of being universal need, so let's use this. Also there is a lot of new food inventions booming in the villages or city, and he would like to research on how come such trends are created. I have always been interested in street food sellers, so great. Especially if I can make food that is not fried, become trendy. The idea is to sell each week a different food, related to banana -since I am using the skins only, banana stays as by product. Also maybe display the non-food banana products I make. Maybe organising cooking workshop at the end of the week for those who want to learn this specific recipe. So we need to think of the material we use for the cart and culture (maybe more me), find a name and logo (arie), think of ways to get paid (money+something else?), invent new food and how to cook them in the streets.

Next to that I also am making my own sourdough (from bananas!), bread, cream cheese and yogurt. And I would like to give workshop for people to start making their own. I have been asked for jam workshop aswell.

And something I really want to try out it making is all their fermented food : oncom in particular, peuyeum and tempeh. See if I can get bioplastic form their mycellium.



peyem, fermented and sweet casava (or can be other things)



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