

Mi You

# What Politics? What Aesthetics?: Reflections on documenta fifteen

Whether this documenta should be defended is not the question. The question is how it can be defended in a way that also allows for a constructive critique of the exhibition.

Anti-Semitism allegations have cast dark clouds over what is arguably the world's largest contemporary art exhibition. The culmination of these events was documenta's decision in June to remove a banner made by the Indonesian collective Taring Padi depicting the political violence of the Suharto regime, in which the public noticed two clearly anti-Semitic figures. But by that point a cascade of events had been fermenting for months. These include a January blog post by a small Kassel-based organization decrying members of the Palestinian collective The Question of Funding as anti-Semitic; a cancelled series of public debates on anti-Semitism and racism in May; various instances of inadequate crisis management; and even before the opening, the exhibition space of the Palestinian collective was vandalized with a cryptic death threat. All the while, pressure was building up at the top level of German politics, where the Green cultural minister had been involved in mitigation since the very beginning.



documenta fifteen: The Question of Funding hosts Eltiqa, 2022, installation view, WH22, Kassel, June 15, 2022. Photo: Nils Klinger.

Hosted in Kassel, a small city in central Germany, the hundred-day event with a budget of €42.2 million<sup>1</sup> included 1,500 artists participating in the exhibition and public programs and welcomed over 730,000 visitors. The Jakarta-based artist collective ruangrupa were appointed artistic directors and proposed “lumbung” (rice barn) as a curatorial approach, a concept in which collaboration, redistribution, and collective governance are key to the process and material realization. The exhibition venues were transformed into buzzing showcases of art and activism, collaborative community-building processes, and archives that are revisited and kept alive. The accompanying activations, from

talks to DJ sets, from shared meals to cleansing rituals, extended the gesture of hospitality to the audience and lent the event a festive character. The media was split between homing in on perceived instances of anti-Semitism (such as the German weekly *Der Spiegel*'s overstatement of "Antisemitism 15") and cheerleading for the "good vibes" provided by ruangrupa's inclusive exhibition concept.

It is regrettable that the potential for anti-Semitic content was not mitigated – and could not be, as multiple parties kept on talking over each other. While one side referred to the specific German historical burden of preventing hate speech, the other pointed to the perpetuation of racial prejudice, counter-charging the initial allegations of anti-Semitism as racist and made in bad faith – which, of course, they were. But it is even more regrettable to see that in this febrile, frequently hostile atmosphere in the media, when faced with political headwinds, art practitioners, curators, managers, and the public all turned on one another. No one came away from the turmoil unscathed. Except, that is, for those on the far right clamoring for the defunding of this event in the future.

It is perhaps not altogether surprising that international leftist art critics have broadly aligned with curators and artists against what is considered a German bureaucratic managerial machine that enforces what it purports to be benevolent censorship. The media's<sup>2</sup> simplistic deployment of the term "Global South" to homogenize disparate realities and serve as a placeholder in a political morality play – in which the West is always already cast as the baddie – are rightly subject to critique. However, it is easier to take an antiestablishment view than to build an institution. Many from the Global South intimately know how important it is to build and maintain institutions. Working with various governmental actors, representatives of the private sector, foreign funding bodies, and diverse community actors is difficult but extends a much-needed lifeline to Global South initiatives. When so much is at stake in what is both a crisis of the institution and of the hitherto hegemonic Global North, could the South champion decolonization by putting its know-how into a spirited defense of institutions? Could this be done, if only to acknowledge that it is possible to build something – something institutional – together despite considerable geopolitical and ideological differences? How could this be done with defiance, in order to rise above being cast as the permanently victimized junior partner?

Admittedly, this is a counterintuitive, perhaps even unfashionable and untimely ask.

The cognitive divide between the North and the South runs deep. One might therefore be forgiven for assuming that the antiestablishment thrust of documenta fifteen issues from an anti-Western, counter-hegemonic framework, as cultural commentators in Germany have noted with an air of haughty disapproval. Upon first seeing the exhibits, I immediately thought that the World Social Forum must have been the curatorial reference for this documenta. An umbrella for the alter-globalization movement with the bold claim that "Another World Is Possible," the annual World Social Forum, founded in 2001, has hosted diverse groups of activists from worker, peasant, transgender, Indigenous, and peace movements, deliberately accompanied by an art and culture program, which was visited by 150,000 people at the Forum's peak in the mid-2000s. Where else but ruangrupa's documenta would one expect to see (a bit of a throwback to) so many artistic and cultural manifestations of grassroots activism and organized causes across the world? But when invited by the World Social Forum to present their work in 2004, ruangrupa declined the offer by saying, "It's too political for us."

A constructive critique might take as its starting point the transnationalization of political alignments and the instrumentalization of the arts in the Global South today.



Keimin Bunka Shidosho office in Jakarta. License: Public domain.

### The Socioeconomic Context

ruangrupa is a collective that was established in 2000, two years after the collapse of Indonesia's Suharto regime and the concomitant New Order that reigned from 1965 to 1998 and deliberately stymied mass participation in the political process. Originally a small group of artists who wanted to open a meeting space to engage with diverse artistic practices, ruangrupa has deftly navigated

between foreign funding bodies, local government agencies, and the private sector to support their activities. A large sum that ruangrupa received around 2018 from the Ford Foundation caused a schism in the collective. Those who remained used the money to build a space and cultural infrastructure in Jakarta. Clearly, foreign donors not only carry the danger of the “NGO-ization” of the art sector in the Global South<sup>3</sup> but also risk presenting artists and art organizations in increasingly interchangeable ways, whereby a type of art collective is asked to solve a type of social issue.<sup>4</sup> ruangrupa’s approach to institutions could be described as “tactical,” combining activism and populism while trying to find their own place in the food chain of sponsors.<sup>5</sup> One could argue that this dilemma informs a practice that transcends the critique of the instrumentalization of art – a critique rehearsed ad nauseam in Western art discourse – and focuses instead on the embeddedness of art in society. But when asked to curate documenta, ruangrupa had to ask themselves how to carve out a place for this approach in the “hegemonic center” of the art world.

Lumbung, the central concept of documenta fifteen, refers to Indonesian rice barns where surplus crops are stored, to be redistributed within the community in times of need. The term is held up as a paradigm and serves as a model for ruangrupa’s modus operandi of resource allocation and sharing among the participating artists and surrounding society. However, the use of the concept is not devoid of self-exoticization, and the image of community life and self-governance is not as simple, or simply good, as it seems. Lumbung also symbolizes the perennial issue of food insecurity, with Indonesians caught between the aspiration for self-sufficiency and international marketization and development. The moral order of sharing and exchange through lumbung coexisted with centralized management of decentralized lumbungs in historical empires such as Ubud. Later, the imperative for self-sufficiency was as much on the political agenda of Suharto’s government as in now-president Jokowi’s development of a national food reserve called “Lumbung Pangan Nasional.”<sup>6</sup> The latter emerged to manage the downsides of global food conglomerates and development agencies. But there is more to the curatorial use of lumbung than an uncomfortable terminological affinity with the populists in power. Marxian cultural theorists will rightly recognize the incorporation of a residual practice (communal culture based on surplus) into a dominant system of practices and values (as rhetorics serving neoliberal statecraft).<sup>7</sup>

There is nothing natural, spontaneous, or, for lack of a better word, innocent about public and community art in Indonesia. The brief episode of Keimin Bunka Shidosho (KBS, literally “Institute for People’s Education and Cultural Guidance,” popularly known as “cultural center”) formed part of the propaganda machine during the Japanese occupation of Indonesia from 1942 to 1945 and has left a lasting legacy in modern art history. The Japanese pursued three propaganda objectives that left an imprint on Javanese art. Locals were encouraged to engage in artistic practices emanating from everyday life, to foster public involvement, and to exhibit in places easily accessible to the public. In this vein, Takashi Kono, graphic designer and supervisor of the Fine Art department of KBS, contended that art “should not be above but right in the middle of society.”<sup>8</sup> Now, as ever, one needs to articulate what collectivity means and be clearheaded about cooptation.

Other Indonesian traditions of collectivism harkening back to the pre-independence 1930s include *gotong-royong* (mutual cooperation) and *sanggar*, a collective space where members share their learning experiences under the auspices of a mentor.<sup>9</sup> The group Seniman Indonesia Muda (SIM, founded in 1946) played a prominent role in popularizing sanggar, becoming a “national model” for artist collectives in Indonesia. The key difference between sanggar and more conventional master classes and workshops in the Western tradition is the centrality of political discussions, if not of indoctrination,<sup>10</sup> that helped to promote the anti-colonial agenda, both in its nationalist and leftist iterations. In this sense the sanggar model is closer to the Artists’ Union of the USSR, which arose at approximately the same time.

Another key feature of sanggar is the collective production of art. In the authoritarian New Order era the tendency to form art collectives remained prevalent, but they were strongly depoliticized, even as they exalted their commitment to a modern understanding of nationhood. The sanggar system of training was replaced by art academies and eventually transformed into a mere space to study or produce paintings together.<sup>11</sup> Since 1998, new “alternative” models of collective production have proliferated, growing out of the *reformasi* mindset and its liberal and individualistic tendencies that resonated with an era that was neoliberal in its economic outlook and postmodern in its aesthetic sensibilities. Reminiscences of the sanggar or New Order hierarchical academic models can be seen in cases where a senior artist (usually the founder) acts as a “mentor” to educate or guide young artists.

ruangrupa's management, although it aims to overcome vertical authority in favor of horizontal structures, has itself fallen victim to the siren song of hierarchical organization.<sup>12</sup> It owes something to the representational logic of the New Order, practicing a hodgepodge of activism and populism.<sup>13</sup> At the same time, the instrumentalization of art and its collective coproduction conjure the original sanggar spirit. Like other concepts invoked by ruangrupa such as lumbung, sanggar constitutes a peculiar hybrid of artistic autonomy and social responsibility. The conceptual duality of these notions means that the artistic activities can be both antagonistic and ameliorative.<sup>14</sup>



documenta fifteen: Jatiwangi art Factory, installation view, Hübner areal, Kassel, 2022. Photo: Frank Sperling.

### What Politics? What Aesthetics?

If the roots and operations of collectives in the Global South merit more attention, the ways in which they become projections of politics for the consumption of audiences in the Global North also require further investigation. The transformation of community-based, collective, and participatory art from a formal principle to a method of merging art and politics stands in need of a sustained inquiry. As Claire Bishop described in a recent talk reflecting on her 2012 book *Artificial Hells*, the kind of participatory art she set out to criticize in her book substituted politics for art. In other words, faced with a perceived political gridlock in the late 1990s and early 2000s, artists transposed political discourses and practices onto the field of art and its adjacent institutions. On the other hand, later artistic practices tended to pick up elements of participatory, community-based, but also relational art in support of political activism (Occupy Wall Street, Black Lives Matter, Gilets Jaunes, environmental activism, the ongoing protests in Chile, etc.).<sup>15</sup> Bishop's reflections thus outline the different modalities of collective and community-based art in the West, channeling in

new ways Benjamin's distinction between the "aestheticization of politics" and the "politicization of aesthetics."

From a Global South perspective, perhaps the best one could have hoped for in this documenta is an energizing "anti-aesthetics of anti-politics" celebrating the efficacy of art and the positive sense of "anti-politics," at least in the particular places where they happen.<sup>16</sup> The World Social Forum has vanished into relative insignificance mostly because of global socioeconomic transformations and the lack of adequate institutional fora to articulate protest. What remains of the original impetus can be observed at documenta, an institution that has historically always reflected on the social function of art, but has also functioned as a conduit for art-driven internationalist politics (paving the way for the "First Transnational," as Peter Osborne wryly termed it<sup>17</sup>).

When institutions in the Global North showcase contemporary art from the Global South – sometimes mediated by Global South curators – there is a tendency to abide too readily by the idea that the separation of art and (everyday) culture<sup>18</sup> is completely irrelevant to artistic discourses in the Global South. Projecting the solution to the problem of art's social function on an absolute "other" creates a convenient shortcut to bypass the issue. Typically, institutional programs take the form of proposing either an immanent synthesis, in which art is defined either in utilitarian terms within a given society, or as a transcendental medium, if not to say a spiritual force that possesses agency within everyday life (see the oversupply of rituals at documenta). Regardless of the form that is emphasized in individual cases, such artworks are presented as fully incommensurable within the logic of autonomous art associated with the Global North, thereby foreclosing any political or even aesthetic critique based on distinctions between art and nonart. At the same time, art from the Global South is not necessarily framed as an intentional and radical counterpoint to depoliticized global art, but rather as integrated social practice, with individual artists and collectives supposedly representing the tenets of "their culture."

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FSC Dynamo Windrad, Kassel.

Arguably, the greatest opportunity inherent in this documenta was to go beyond such sterile oppositions and to encourage the practice, and not just the display, of different ways of doing and making art/culture. ruangrupa visionarily incorporated the thriving ecosystem of local – often small – social and art initiatives into its “ekosistem” and offered space for them to work, network, and create programs. Dynamo Windrad, a local Kassel football club with strong leftist leanings, has long been offering political education alongside its sports activities, reaching out to children with migration backgrounds in particular. In this spirit, documenta fifteen hosted a “Fussballalla” event to coincide with the UEFA European Football Championship in 2021, and collaborated with Dynamo to put together a program for this year’s exhibition. However, it was hard to cut through the wall of scandal and outrage surrounding the latest edition of documenta to offer something meaningful to the crowds usually drawn to Dynamo games. By all means, the football club has already cultivated a well-functioning ecosystem that is both social and artistic; documenta fifteen aspired to achieve something similar (with added artistic elements) but was not geared towards long-term commitment. As part of documenta fifteen, artists could be led to draw inspiration from Dynamo’s negotiation with political parties for funding, not just piggyback on its successes and subsume it into the art machine. In return, Dynamo stood to benefit from entering into exchanges with other initiatives present in Kassel. Neither happened enough. At documenta fifteen, even among initiatives of the Global South, extended interactions were in short supply.

Those intent on learning from non-Western operational models would be well advised to immerse themselves in the context in which they originated. One example of artists operating

beyond the art machine is Jatiwangi art Factory based in rural West Java, which has brought back to life a local clay roof-tile factory, successfully keeping it afloat for more than twenty years. In addition, it established a practice of making music with clay tiles. With local and international support, the collective has opened a terracotta museum and art biennial, integrated its music program into school curricula, and hosted spectacular live performances for enraptured audiences. Jatiwangi’s presentation at documenta was a clever mix of artistic installations, interactive works, and performances, where the audience was invited to join in the celebration of grassroots DIY creativity. Yet from a curatorial point of view, one might object that if the stated point of the exhibition was to deliver more than moments of collective elation, then the curators should have provided an account of how Jatiwangi art Factory juggles grassroots creativity at a small scale and a much larger playing field with regimented politics, both of the municipal government and international NGOs. Here, things may not be all that joyful after all. Does a public oath to protect Jatiwangi culture and cultivate clay sworn by local political leaders and repeated by thousands of villagers and students really lend itself to being a paragon of emancipatory politics?<sup>19</sup> And if that’s the price to pay for collective self-empowerment, are there any lessons from this experiment that practitioners elsewhere might heed?

For starters, practitioners in Germany, or anywhere else in the more privileged parts of the world, should learn not to take their cultural funding for granted. Indeed, given the multiple crises engulfing Western societies, even in Germany art funding may not be sustainable at current levels in the long run. Demonstrating one’s own social relevance and tapping into alternative funding sources, whether political, developmental, private, or otherwise, are surely skills that will come in handy – so is anticipating the compromises that different types of funding entail. Add to that a healthy distance from the more excessive outgrowths of the puritanical morality that, over the last decade or so, has made significant inroads into the art world.<sup>20</sup> Emancipatory politics could be possible even under compromised funding conditions if one is articulate about one’s own politics. The critique is a means to an end – a horizon of progressive politics, not an end in itself.



Artistic Team and ruangrupa members at ruRuHaus in Kassel, 2021. From left to right: Lara Khaldi, Iswanto Hartono, Gertrude Flentge, Mirwan Andan, Frederikke Hansen, Julia Sarisetiati, Reza Afisina, Ajeng Nurul Aini, Ade Darmawan, and Indra Ameng. Photo: Nicolas Wefers.

### Money and What To Do With It

There is a recognizable ecosystemic turn in organizational and curatorial practices today. Ecosystems strive to structurally integrate different “stakeholders” including artists, audiences, and their wider communities, administrators, and curators, as well as infrastructures. Writings on ecosystems thinking have proliferated since the 1960s, most notably in the wake of the “systems ecology” championed by, among others, Eugene Odum. Key elements in this development were the rise of eco-energetics (the analysis of functional attributes like flows of matter and energy), efforts at resource conservation, comprehensive recycling systems, and a broader awareness of the dynamics of ecosystems. In the 1980s and ’90s, ecosystem studies shifted from a descriptive to a more prescriptive regime, especially as far as resilience, sustainability, and a new ethics of preservation were concerned in spheres such as business and technological innovations. This is not surprising, given the cybernetic undertones of the term “ecosystem” and the techno-social managerial imaginaries inherent in it. In arts and culture, one finds Ian David Moss’s “ecosystem-based arts research” and recent calls to conceive of museums as ecosystems, for example at the Taipei Biennial in 2018.<sup>21</sup>

By enumerating the different actors within the field of art, ecosystem thinking is supposed to help adjust and improve the system. Concretely, however, it is often aimed at a more or less comfortable form of artistic survival in places lacking the appropriate infrastructure. ruangrupa cofounder Ade Darmawan explains the role of self-organized art collectives this way:

“In the absence of formal art infrastructure, they work to improve the local system. They attempt an ideal system ... Artistic strategies are developed in accordance with the ecosystem in which the initiative of artists lives.”<sup>22</sup>

On a slightly bigger scale, the art organization Koalisi Seni (Indonesian Art Coalition) is working directly within legal and administrative spheres to promote (and ratify) the goal of a “healthy” or “balanced” art ecosystem.<sup>23</sup> Policy papers from cultural politicians and legislative texts in Indonesia teem with “ecosystem” terminology. For example, Law No. 5/2017 on the Advancement of Culture, ratified in 2017, discusses the role of cultural ecosystems (*ekosistem Kebudayaan*) at length.<sup>24</sup> The current left-leaning cultural minister has injected terms such as “participation,” “empowerment,” and “social entrepreneurship” into his policy dispensations, all the while diminishing the room to maneuver for artistic initiatives and cultural organizations.

Talk of ecosystems can be an exercise in shrewd political PR as much as it can point to a conceptual edifice built on sheer material necessity. All too often, the curators’ use of the term at documenta fifteen mistook one for the other. Several endogenous initiatives and ecosystems on display in Kassel came into being in places where infrastructure development lagged behind, making it necessary to assemble the resources needed for cultural production under conditions of scarcity. But now, bolstered by generous funding from documenta fifteen, such initiatives are faced with the unnerving question of what to do with this money.

At the heart of documenta fifteen was a curatorial concept striving for the construction of collectivities and new forms of self-organization. Such experiments and reconfigurations do not occur in a vacuum. They have blossomed, admittedly on a smaller scale, under such monikers as “infrastructure critique,” “para-institutions,”<sup>25</sup> “translocal organizations,”<sup>26</sup> “alter-institutional and para-institutional organizations,”<sup>27</sup> and “instituent practices.”<sup>28</sup> Yet the flourishing of these concepts raises an intriguing question: Does the organizational become an end in itself, a kind of institutional self-actualization of the artists, curators, and community organizers? Are we entering an era in which artistic curatorial practices are merged into organizational development, or even entrepreneurship?<sup>29</sup>

That institutional funding irrigated, as it were, the ecosystems of many local initiatives around the world might indicate that ruangrupa managed to reconfigure the biennial format from the “back end.” documenta fifteen relied on a governance structure of “mini *majelis*”

(“gathering” or “meeting” in Indonesian): based on their affinities, five collectives or individual artists from the documenta artist list were grouped together in order to share ideas, skills, programmatic outlooks, and a common space. They were also expected to oversee the management of their financial resources. In addition to the seed funding (or honorarium) of €20,000 and the €50,000 to €60,000 production budget allocated to each participating collective or individual artist, there was a €20,000 allowance for each group or artist that went into the collective pool of each mini *majelis*. The five collectives were to decide jointly on how to spend the €100,000.

In reality, spending the money was subject to certain rules imposed by the institution. Most importantly, it needed to be spent within the documenta framework, which meant that artists ended up inviting their friends and colleagues to put on “something” at documenta. By spreading the money too thin, what was heralded as collective self-empowerment was reduced to an assemblage of small gestures. The contacts between the invited artists, their peers, and the audience often did not amount to anything resembling a learning experience worthy of the name. The back end of a biennial is still the back end of a biennial, and those in the South should know that the resources of this back end run downstream.<sup>30</sup> While attempts to rethink the economy of biennials and to reconfigure their organizational structure are not only welcome but overdue, at the end of the day, redistributing downstream from a fixed-use pot will not affect, let alone threaten, the status quo in the art world.

Given that the value chain in the art world is predictably short, it only takes two or three levels of downstream redistribution to reach the much-vaunted “communities.” The exhibition’s lumbung shop, rather than generating revenues upstream, embodied everything that is problematic about value chains in the art world. Handcrafted goods from small communities in the Global South, created in association or coordination with artists, were sold at documenta and beyond its duration. This is the well-worn value-adding mechanism of eco-minded artisanal consumer goods, with the added veneer of art. The art world’s fetishization of handicraft has invited objections as early as the Arts and Crafts movement in nineteenth-century England, and yet there was little engagement with diverse and complex value chains at this documenta.

To be sure, artists with nuanced understandings of economics were present, but the lack of explicit curatorial framing detracted from the critical propositions – or even better,

critical viabilities – of such nuanced projects. Inland, an art and agriculture initiative based in Spain, advises the EU on the use of art for rural development policies while facilitating shepherds’ and nomadic peoples’ movements.<sup>31</sup> It is also reconstructing an abandoned village for collective artistic and agricultural production. Over the years, the group has set up a Shepherds School and a multidisciplinary syllabus shedding light on the relationship between art, farmers’ know-how, and agro-ecology. Their presentation at documenta fifteen was a safe balance of art, documents, ethnographic objects, and a cheese pavilion. To highlight how Inland’s practice aligns with larger public and private interests, my colleague Vienne Chan and I have designed a Social and Environmental Investment Plan to create sustainable funding for the Shepherds School.<sup>32</sup> At the same time, Inland, together with artist Hito Steyerl, has been working on a “Cheesecoin” to model a noncapitalist economy that has its supply tied to annual cheese production, and hence to ecological well-being. The coin, endowed with a gift-like or even talismanic character, is supposed to circulate in the community. At documenta, Steyerl produced a video driven by her signature tongue-in-cheek narrative that framed Cheesecoin as a fictive currency fueling the struggle against a reality TV show encroaching on Inland.

The push of Inland to go beyond art cannot evade the pull of the art world, which collapses serious endeavors to change society into speculative narratives. Still, the actual practice of Inland exceeds the attention economy of the art world, and some of the initiatives do carry out situated and long-term social and cultural work beyond the exhibition format accorded to them by documenta. If the political battles of the art world were the only battles that they – and all of us involved in art – were waging, then some complacency in curatorship and in viewership could be allowed. Instead, we might very well flex the wrong muscles for too long, until we realize politics is happening somewhere else.

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1  
According to the exhibition's five-year economic plan for 2019 to 2023, this budget is made up of the following: admission fees €12.5 million; third-party funds and other income €4.7 million; the shareholders – the city of Kassel and the state of Hesse – €10.75 million each; and the German Federal Cultural Foundation €3.5 million. On top of that, a buffer of €5 to €6 million is set aside for contingencies.

2  
Florian Cramer made a detailed mapping of the German media and the political factions behind the documenta debates in his contribution to the symposium "(un)Common Grounds: Reflecting on documenta fifteen" hosted by Framer Framed on September 23, 2022. A video recording of the symposium will be available in the near future. In the meantime, see <https://framerframed.nl/en/projecten/uncommon-grounds-reflecting-on-documenta-fifteen>.

3  
Hanan Toukan interprets the depoliticizing effects of the "NGO-ization" of society as resulting from the professionalization of activism and a shift from a grassroots "political society" to a professionalized elite "civil society." See Toukan, "On Being 'The Other' in Post-Civil War Lebanon: Aid and the Politics of Art in Processes of Contemporary Cultural Production," *Arab Studies Journal* 18, no. 1 (2010). See also Minna Valjakka, "Arts and Ecosystems: Building Towards Regeneration of 'Cultural Resilience' in Indonesia," in *Forces of Art: Perspectives from a Changing World*, ed. Carin Kuoni et al. (Valiz, 2021).

4  
See, for example, Justin Malachowski's study on documenta fifteen member El Warcha: "Staging Arts in the Historic City: Development Funding, Social Media Images, and Tunisia's Contemporary Public Art Scene," *Journal of City and Society*, forthcoming.

5  
David Teh, "Who Cares a Lot? Ruangrupa as Curatorship," *Afterall*, no. 30 (2012) <https://afterall.org/article/who-cares-a-lot-ruangrupa-a-s-curatorship>.

6  
Lula Lasminingrat and Efriza, "The Development of National Food Estate: The Indonesian Food Crisis Anticipation Strategy," *Jurnal Pertahanan & Bela Negara* 10, no. 3 (2020). See also an analysis on the deployment of lumbung, both historical and in policy speak, in Graeme MacRae and Thomas Reuter, "Lumbung Nation," *Indonesia and the Malay World* 48, no. 142 (2020).

7  
See, for example, Raymond Williams, "Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory," *New Left Review*, no. 82 (1973).

8  
See, for example, Antariksa, "Cross-Cultural Counterparts: The Role of Keimin Bunka Shidosho in Indonesian Art, 1942–1945," in *Tsuyoshi Ozawa: The Return of Painter F*, ed. Keiko Toyoda and Fumi Toyoda (Tokyo: Shiseido, 2015). English translation <https://www.heath.tw/nml-art-icle/cross-cultural-counterparts-the-role-of-keimin-bunka-shidosho-in-indonesian-art-1942-1945/?lang=en>.

9  
Agung Hujatnika and Almira Belinda Zainsjah, "Artist Collectives in Post-1998 Indonesia: Resurgence, or a Turn (?)," International Conference on Aesthetics and the Sciences of Art (AESCIART), published in *Art Creation, Mediation, and Reception in the 21st Century Indonesia* (2020).

10  
Claire Holt, *Art in Indonesia: Continuities and Change* (Cornell University Press, 1967).

11  
Hujatnika and Zainsjah, "Artist Collectives in Post-1998 Indonesia."

12  
Valjakka, "Arts and Ecosystems."

13  
Teh, "Who Cares a Lot?"

14  
Elly Kent, "The History of Conscious Collectivity Behind Ruangrupa," *ArtReview Asia*, July 6, 2022 <https://artreview.com/the-history-of-conscious-collectivity-behind-ruangrupa/>.

15  
See "XIV: Audience as Allies, Witnesses, and Enemies (Claire Bishop, Tania Bruguera, Ann Liv Young & Florian Malzacher)," March 28, 2022, in *Art of Assembly*, podcast <https://art-of-assembly.net/2022/03/28/xiv-audience-as-allies-witnesses-and-enemies-claire-bishop-tania-bruguera-ann-liv-young-florian-malzacher/>.

16  
The positive sense of "anti-politics" was manifested by Vaclav Havel, as "one of the ways of seeking and achieving meaningful lives, of protecting them and serving them" beyond the technology of power and manipulation.

17  
Peter Osborne, *Anywhere or Not at All: Philosophy of Contemporary Art* (Verso, 2013).

18

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See Juliane Rebentisch, "Autonomie? Autonomie! Ästhetische Erfahrung heute," in *Ästhetische Erfahrung: Gegenstände, Konzepte, Geschichtlichkeit*, ed. Sonderforschungsbereich 626 (FU Berlin, 2006). See also *Antinomies of Art and Culture: Modernity, Postmodernity, Contemporaneity*, ed. Terry Smith, Okwui Enwezor, and Nancy Condee (Duke University Press, 2009).

19  
See documenta's YouTube channel for a video portrait of the collective, which was also on display in the exhibition <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S9SRLhyYmzs>.

20  
Ghalya Saadawi has made a comprehensive exposition on the "critical virtue" of art, which art uses to reproduce itself while economically and ideologically lubricating capitalism. See Saadawi, "Vapid Virtues, Real Stakes," in *Between the Material and the Possible*, ed. Bassam El Baroni (Sternberg Press, 2022). See also Victoria Ivanova's analysis of art as a new container for the liberal subject of human rights: "Two Lives, One Order," 2015 <https://barddraft.files.wordpress.com/2015/01/ivanova.pdf>.

21  
Moss, "An Ecosystem-Based Approach to Arts Research," *Fractured Atlas Blog*, October 17, 2011 <https://blog.fracturedatlas.org/an-ecosystem-based-approach-to-arts-research-e95cbc0946fe>; and "Post-Nature: A Museum as an Ecosystem," Taipei Biennial website, 2018 <https://www.taipeibiennial.org/2018/?lang=en&ddlLang=en-us>.

22  
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30  
"Upstream" and "downstream" are terms used in supply-chain studies and business. The terms are applicable to the art world if one traces the flow of funding and the availability of venues and avenues, together with value-adding mechanisms in the arts. Some artists have comprehensive understandings of this and have been trying to push artists "upstream." See Gary Zhexi Zhang, "The Artist of the Future," *ArtReview*, April 2020 <https://artreview.com/back-to-the-drawing-board/>.

31  
Inland's proximity to power means their position is, of course, much more privileged than that of many other like-minded initiatives.

32  
This is a creative development based on the cogent analysis of Social Impact Bonds (SIBs) made by Emily Rosamond, "Shared Stakes, Distributed Investment: Socially Engaged Art and the Financialization of Social Impact," *Finance and Society* 2, no. 2 (2016). Identifying specific points

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through which Inland's projects develop these supporting structures, we align them with existing lines of public funding and examine how private investment can reinforce governmental efforts beyond financial contributions and the logic of investment. Details of the project will be published in an upcoming issue of *OnCurating*.

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