TRAVERSING THE BOUNDARIES?

ART AND FILM IN INDONESIA WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO
PERBATASAN / BOUNDARIES:
LUCIA HARTINI, PAINTINGS FROM A LIFE

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Disclaimer

This doctoral dissertation was prepared for publication under conditions of extreme duress compounded by a virus-infected memory stick resulting in the inadvertent printing of several undetected typographical errors and syntactical “re-arrangements”. Because the subsequent listing of all errata is impossible, attention is drawn to the following pages where these problems have affected both the meaning of the argument and important substantiating details: 13, 31, 54, 67, 68, 69, 88, 95 fn., 110 fn., 142, 171, 182, 183 fn., 196, 211 fn., 229 (whole page), 237, 250, 276, 290, 317 fn..

Jennifer Dudley
STATEMENT

I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work which has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary education institution. All sources are acknowledged in the footnotes and the bibliography.

Signed: ……………………………………………………………………………………………

Jennifer Ann Dudley
ABSTRACT

The repressive political conditions of the New Order state and the social dislocation caused by rapid industrial and technological development unquestionably affected the nature of artistic and cultural production in Indonesia. This thesis considers the dynamic of these conditions within a focused long-term study of the art and life of Indonesian “Surealis” painter, Lucia Hartini. My doctoral dissertation comprises this thesis and the forty-two minute documentary film Perbatasan / Boundaries: Lucia Hartini, Paintings from a Life (1999 – 2002) which I filmed in Indonesia and presents Lucia Hartini and her art in the context of her times from the historical standpoint of Reformasi and millennial change. Art historically, this thesis informs us of a wider journey, that of selected twentieth century Indonesian contemporary artists exploring concepts of simulacra, hyper-reality, the meta-real and the surreal through the stylistic use of photo-realism.

Lucia Hartini is known for her “Beautiful Surrealism”. A founding member of the “Surealis Yogya”, formed in 1985, she was the only woman from the original group to continue painting professionally from the late 1970s, throughout the New Order, and into the era of Reform. The consideration of Lucia Hartini’s work in this thesis acknowledges the gradual shift in her concerns. Lucia’s paintings respond to her natural and social environment, as well as to the challenges and dramatic changes in her life. This thesis charts the journey of her artistic maturation, so richly embodied in her third solo exhibition, “Irama Kehidupan / The Spirit of Life”, in January 2002. Through a critical commentary on paintings selected from her oeuvre and the textual analysis of Perbatasan / Boundaries, I discuss Lucia Hartini’s subject matter, unique systems of image formation and use of detail, her particular contribution to the characteristic qualities of Indonesian “Surealisme”. I regard the techniques, conceptual approaches and processes of filmmaking as intrinsic to this exploration, a methodological perspective arising from Hendro Wiyanto (2001) observation that Indonesia’s “Surealis” artists present us with “reality bundled as a dream”.

Lucia Hartini’s work raises questions of gender and personal transformation. This thesis argues that, for many years, the tensions created by the contrary forces of political repression and social transformation characterising much of New Order Indonesia, were reflected in her art. In a microcosmic-macrocosmic sense, Lucia and her art quietly contributed to attitudinal and social change in Indonesia. Works painted between 1986 and 1996 autobiographically chart a shift from personal distress.
to a growing sense of empowerment, followed by life-changing spiritual growth. I contextualize these paintings socially by studying the changing interstices between Lucia Hartini’s private life, her professional creative practice and the public persona she adopted in Indonesia’s emergent civilian society. My approach is informed by a conceptual framework based on difference, hybridity and its transformations, on the psychology of borderlands, negotiation and the transcendence of boundaries, witnessed through a study of the spiritual practice and quest for religious tolerance important to Lucia and evident in her art. This thesis reveals those boundaries which were transcended and those which remain negotiable.

Twice filming Lucia Hartini’s art, I was also affected by the dramatically different conditions of production prevailing in 1992 in New Order Indonesia and those possible between 1999 and 2001 during Reformasi. These differences are highlighted in the textual analysis of Perbatasan / Boundaries. Engaging comparisons between contemporary Indonesian art and Indonesian documentary and feature films, I discuss important attempts to solve the problems associated with restrictions on freedom of expression in paintings made prior to Reformasi. I consider the different uses of figurative realism to depict subjects deemed controversial by the state, and the creation of credible representations in art and convincing characterisations in filmmaking. The dramatically real yet poetic work of the Indonesian Neo-realist filmmakers of the 1950s exemplified one such solution. Their films and ideas prompted comparisons with the photo-realism, poetic intent and dramatic juxtapositional image making of the “Surealis Yogya”. The relationship I perceive between Neo-realist cinematic practice and contemporary international documentary filmmaking encouraged me to make a documentary about Lucia rather than a purely creative or experimentally surreal work. Because of Reformasi and the changes wrought by Lucia’s personal development, Perbatasan / Boundaries: Lucia Hartini, Paintings from a Life (1999 – 2002) is the documentary which my first short experimental video, Pusaran / Vortex: From the Kitchen to Outer Space (1992 - 1993), made during the New Order, could not be.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you firstly to Lucia Hartini for her patience and to her husband, Operasi Rachman, her parents and family, and to the collectors of Lucia’s work who allowed me to film on their premises: Bapak Basuki Handoko, Bapak Jakob Suntosa, B. Reredana, Butet Kartarendjas, the Galeri Nasional and the staff at the Bentara Budaya, Jakarta. I am indebted to many people in Indonesia and Australia over the years who have contributed their time and insights to this project. They are remembered in my films and this thesis, even if they are not mentioned directly.

I wish to thank my teachers in Yogyakarta, particularly the late Bagong Kussudiardja with whom I studied, and from whose sanggar I learned much. I treasure the memories of the ASRI students who became my friends and the artists and writers they are today. Their work has provided many of the insights and sources for this dissertation. Special thanks go to Haryanto (Totok) and Elizabeth Basuki, through whom I met Dadang Christanto, Eddie Hara and then Lucia. Thanks also to Michael O’Ferrall with whom I have been able to share enthusiasm and information across the years. In her professional capacity as the head of Indonesia’s Department for Education and the Arts, a brilliant and knowledgeable dancer as well as a scholar of repute, Dra. Ibu Edi Sedyawati twice approved my requests to visit Indonesia with my cameras to research and compile documentation on Indonesia’s artists and performers. I also appreciate the assistance of Studio Audio Visuel, Yogyakarta, on three occasions since 1990.

Indonesia’s national passion for the arts has meant there are private archives of reviews and catalogues and Indonesian critics and arts writers with whom to confer. A big thank you to Indonesia’s press, its filmmakers and media, and to the lively email lists I frequented in the course of my research, John Clark’s Indonesia-L Archives, Apa Kabar, kpd Pijar and Joyo, as well as journal, gallery and art websites and the Javafredders. I wish to thank my MPhil. supervisor at Murdoch, Dr. Paul Stange who suggested I upgrade my study program to a PhD. Particular thanks go to Associate Professor Dr. Carol Warren who accepted me mid-stream. Without her editorial severity this work would be hazy indeed. As a Tanzanian, a filmmaker and an academic, Dr. Martin Mhando provided me with many informed suggestions concerning documentary filmmaking and its scholarship. I also wish to thank Dr. Ann-
Marie Medcalf who suggested I read *In the Realm of the Diamond Queen*, invaluable for its many invaluable insights.

Although 1972, the year of my first return to Indonesia, now seems far away indeed, this acknowledgement would be incomplete without expressing gratitude to my guiding spirits for the long, sometimes hair-raising but most amazing journey recorded in my films and this thesis. On a more practical note, thanks go to my sister Margaret Bowden for her invaluable last minute assistance; to Michael Muller for his good judgement and digital editing skills; to Andrew Tapsall, Mark Busani and Damien Fasolo for their technical assistance throughout my PhD., and to my dog Scrap who kept many demons at bay. Finally, I offer a special appreciation in memory of my late husband, R. D. J. Weathersbee whose experiences in Indonesia many years before mine are woven into the historical background to this thesis.
NOTES and ABBREVIATIONS

Indonesian words and titles have been translated throughout this thesis. For ordinary words, English translations appear in brackets after the Indonesian word, except for titles of Indonesian paintings and films where a forward slash separates the two languages. Proper names of people and places are not translated, while institutions are introduced by their Indonesian name, their acronym and then translated into English. The acronym is used subsequently.

Where I have quoted conversations in interviews and films, or cited comments appearing in the mass media, my recordings and translations are verbatim, as transcribed. As parts of this thesis are exercises in visual translation and interpretation, I have distinguished wherever possible between what Lucia has said about the works, my immediate and considered responses, informed by historical context and background information and those commentaries contributed by others. As an outsider looking in, albeit from a privileged vantage point, I apologize in advance for any mistakes made.
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BIBLIOGRAPHY

Films
Books, articles, essays, papers, on-line sources
REPRODUCTIONS

All paintings are by Lucia Hartini unless stated otherwise. Regarding film stills, I am listed as the director of *Pusaran / Vortex: From the Kitchen to Outer Space* (1993) and *Perbatasan / Boundaries: Lucia Hartini, Paintings from a Life* (2000, 2002) as Jenni Dudley and Jennifer Delandeys when these two films are first cited. The names of all other filmmakers whose stills are reproduced appear with the title of their films.

Plate 8. Still from *Perbatasan / Boundaries* (2002); Lucia's mother at Temanggung.
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Plate 55. Lucia Hartini playing the *celempong* (zither).

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Plate 58. Still from *Pusaran / Vortex* (1993); Lucia in her kitchen swirling paintwater.


Plate 60. Still from *Perbatasan / Boundaries* (2002). An early sketch by Lucia superimposed over footage of Malioboro.


Plate 62. Still from *Perbatasan / Boundaries* (2002); Lucia and Operasi Rachman on their wedding day, Yogyakarta, August, 2001.


Plate 64. Artist unknown. Detail, three scenes from a “modern” traditional painting sourced from a Balinese manuscript depicting a battle scene from the *Ramayana*, c. 1971.
ERRATA

p.315. “the controlled abandon of groundedness, distinguishing surrealism” should read the controlled abandon of groundedness, distinguishing her surrealism
INTRODUCTION

Hush may silence prevail. ....

it is the opening of the senses, the doorway to the world,
a place to begin.

Thus here shall we commence.

This Introduction provides a brief overview of the structure of this thesis, thereby establishing the social and personal contexts for the narrative biography of Lucia Hartini, the commentaries on her work and the textual analysis of the documentary film Perbatasan / Boundaries: Lucia Hartini, Paintings from a Life (2000 - 2002) which together comprise my doctoral dissertation. The chronological perspective informing both film and thesis is that of late New Order Indonesia, the ferment of Reformasi and the early years of the Reform era in the new Millennium.

This thesis reviews Lucia Hartini’s career as an artist from her youth to her maturity, coinciding with the cycles of flowering and re-seeding of Indonesia’s modern and contemporary arts in the years between 1970 and 2002. The emergence and development of Hartini’s unique form of “Surealisme” and the relationship of her art to that of other Yogyakarta trained or based painters adopting “Surealisme Yogya” as their banner is introduced, and the nature of this surrealism defined. The complex relationships and tensions between Lucia’s life, her art, and her career as an artist as these have changed over the years are examined. In my commentaries on her paintings, recurring themes are detailed and discussed, as are those formal relationships arising from systems of image formation, which, together with particular psychological synchronicities I perceive in her art, suggest a resemblance with those in film. These qualities led me to use the camera as a methodological tool for studying Lucia Hartini’s art, as well as recording her life.

The thesis is divided into three interconnected sections. The first section includes the Introduction and a comprehensive review of literature consulted. It details the approaches, practical methodologies and conceptual frameworks used to develop the Abstract presented. The second section tells Lucia Hartini’s story
as a linear personal narrative from which key themes emerge and the major arguments of the thesis are established. This contextualizing structure establishes a historical timeline for Lucia’s biography and the development of her art, creating a sense of her geographical, cultural and societal location. Anchoring the interpretations and extended commentary on Lucia’s paintings in both *Perbatasan / Boundaries* and this thesis, this framework situates the textual analysis of the film in the third section.

This final section is devoted to a textual analysis of *Perbatasan / Boundaries*, which describes the concepts and processes of documentary filmmaking engaged during a period of dramatic attitudinal, social and political change, situating my/our documentary in the context of documentary film production in Indonesia and Australia. The relationships between Lucia’s art and film are considered in greater depth. The concluding chapter draws together significant factors emerging from the narrative biography of Lucia Hartini’s life, important observations arising from the commentaries on her oeuvre and the film, and summarises the major arguments presented in the thesis.

My study of Lucia and her art is socially contextualized. It is grounded in those art historical arguments which maintain that, in Indonesia, as in many Asian countries in the modern era, the histories of cultures and the state as the primary agent of power have limited or facilitated the development of its artists. These histories have affected the nature of art produced there, its wider relationships in local social and national contexts, its situation, reception and distribution, and the discourses about and around it (Clark, John, 1998: 19 - 23). These arguments challenged simplistically framed postcolonial and postmodern views which regarded art from the world beyond the Eur-American centres as the product of Western domination. In its modern forms, this art was perceived as imitating the course of development of modern art in the West, ignoring the power of existing cultural roots. At its best, this new art was seen as art from the peripheries and defined in relation to centres elsewhere. By contrast, the counter arguments concerning Indonesian art, such as those advanced by Clark and most of the scholars acknowledged in this thesis, have been accepted internationally since 1993. They are applied specifically to my study of Lucia Hartini’s “Surealisme”. Indeed, the entire complex of arguments cannot be ignored in any discussion of art produced in Yogyakarta for several reasons.

Claire Holt (1967), Wright (1991, 1994), Maklai (1991, 1996, 1998), Marianto (1993, 1994, 1997, 2001), Jennifer Dudley (1992), Supangkat (1996, 1997) and Spanjaard (1993, 2003) have all remarked that most of the Yogyakartan artists they interviewed and whose work they studied, were pre-occupied with the relationships between their art and society. Defining these relationships was seen as a moral duty arising from their profession as artists, or at very least, an expression of the human spirit which is socially beneficial in itself. Their preoccupation with the nature of these relationships bred an individuation of artistic styles, including expressions of loss as well as social and perhaps, indirectly, political critique. Some maintained a tenuous connection with the heroic Social Realism of the Sukarnoist era, a style actively discouraged after Suharto seized power in 1965 because of its association with communism.

There are three major factors at play in modern and contemporary art from...
Yogyakarta. One is cultural and specific to Central Java and Yogyakarta, the second is political and contingent upon policies of the Indonesian state in its Revolutionary, New Order and Reform era manifestations, and the third, and by no means least, the unique character of each individual artist. The concept that artists have a moral duty to society has a long pre-colonial history, dating back to the Hindu-Buddhist epoch of temple building in Java and Bali when priests were also architects working with craftsmen-poets (*taksan*, in Sanskrit), as noted by Holt (1967: 39) and subsequently by Kenneth Frampton (1995) and Mahatmanto, 1999, in a collection of essays dedicated to Yogyanese priest, architect, novelist and Human Rights activist, Romo Y. B. Mangunwijaya. The link to the present is the popularly recognisable form of figurative naturalism used to visually tell religious narratives in the past.

The idea of intellectuals as *empu* (princes of the wind) arrived in Central Java in the fifteenth century with Islam. *Empu* were creative spirits who, serving the purpose of Allah, sat slightly outside the hurly burly of society, contributing their scholarship, insights and moral perspectives for the development of human thought and the benefit of society. Because of the prohibition on figurative imagery in Islamic art at the time, *empu* excelled at literature. However, writing in Arabic invoked the calligraphy of the Koranic texts, and also, in Central Java, the rich tradition of poetic scripts written in Classical Javanese.\footnote{The literal translation of *Empu yang berumah diatas angin* is one who lives on the wind. Synonymous with thought, *empu* is the name given to intellectuals, especially to writers, although less often to artists. Agung Harjuno (2001: 5) writes, “an *empu* is a master who not only has high technical ability, but is also grounded in esoteric knowledge and has achieved a high level of meditative practice.”} Arguably this provided a basis for those whose art was decorative, expressive, abstract or highly coded to claim connection with concepts implying controversial intellectual concepts of an artist’s moral duty to society, whether or not their art was rooted in tradition or was a new and highly individuated expression of Indonesian modernism.

In *Kejawen*, the processes of crafting were considered a form of spiritual practice which improved the moral worth of the individual artist, and so, indirectly, benefited society (Wright, 1991, 1994: 48 - 50). In the modern era, this
idea was gradually transferred to the Fine Arts of painting and sculpture, favouring finely wrought and highly detailed works. By contrast, in European and American modernism, we associate the evidence of an artist’s social conscience and the performance of their duty to society with a choice of subject matter sympathetic to ideas of social justice and/or humanitarian compassion. These subjects are most usually depicted through figurative Realism and/or as art arising from work generated together with members of the community.  

When the power of the Indonesian state made life difficult for Realist artists and others wishing to critique the status quo through observation of the effects of development and the maladministration of political power, Yogyakartan attitudes to the moral and social worth of art and its makers provided a cultural space within which artists could creatively negotiate official limitations on subject matter and style. The infill between the twin poles of society and state, the middle section of Bhabha’s (1994) bridge, became extremely important and full of latent power in its own right (Ch. 2).

In Yogyakarta from the mid 1970s onwards, artists who believed that making art was a site of struggle against personal or social conflicts could be found in almost every stylistic group. The emphases on the particular ends towards which their struggles advanced varied greatly and were hotly discussed. Between 1946 and 1950, Yogyakarta was the revolutionary capital of the Indonesian nation in its struggle for independence. Between 1950 and 1968, the ninth Sultan of Yogyakarta was either Minister of Finance or Minister of Defence in the Sukarno-Hatta governments of the new nation. From 1973 to 1978, he was Vice-President, eminently linking the birth of the modern Indonesian nation and both Old and New Order regimes under the Presidencies of Sukarno and Suharto. Consequently, many Yogyakartans had an active interest in the concepts of nation and the state. They were aware of their rights vis-à-vis their former European colonisers, the Japanese who had occupied the archipelago during World War II.

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2 Wright (1994: 49 - 50) cites Affandi as an example of this bridge between modern Indonesian artists and the lower status tukang gambar (draughtsman) of the past. But Affandi also created another bridge, which greatly enhanced the status of Indonesian painters in modern times. To his enormous skill as a draughtsman, he added subject matter drawn from the daily reality of everyday life, painted in a highly expressive realist style. In his later years, his brushstrokes became ever more calligraphic in execution and spirit.
and the power brokers of the post-War world, whose wealth was courted despite official yet vaguely generalised disapproval of foreign life-styles, values, behaviour and geo-political power.

Where they were able to do so, the historically and politically entrenched position of both Hamengku Buwono IX and his son, Hamengku Buwono X and their willingness to open their city to students from every corner of the archipelago and to visitors from abroad provided an umbrella of tolerance towards innovative cultural expression in their domain (Hatley, Barbara, 1999). The creative history of most Yogyakartan artists of Lucia’s generation is linked to the Indonesian National Academy of Art, ASRI, which was established in 1950, even in a spirit of protest against the academy, the hallmark of avant-gardism in modern art everywhere.

The need for careful and clever expression during the New Order, coupled with the interest of Western scholars and art aficionados, also pushed the boundaries of content and interpretation in creative cultural expression, supporting the argument that some aspects of Reformasi were a flowering of foundations laid during the nationalist era, and further cultivated against the grain of repression during the New Order. The language of visual expression was finely honed, codifying social critique in allusive ways. Yet the wider truth remains that for most Indonesians and for much of the New Order, fear and repression stunted freedom of expression and popular political participation, retarding the development of sophisticated concepts of governance as opposed to those based on the authoritarian exercise of power.

Spiritual growth entailed efforts different to those usually associated with the resolution of conflicts at the interstices of personal and societal domains and in humanitarian struggles more generally. However, the prevalence of similar ideas concerning the moral worth of making art derived from both societal and spiritual or religious streams demonstrates the ongoing relevance of one of the significant continuities observed by Holt (1967) in her ground-breaking book *Art in Indonesia, Continuities and Change*. The spirited and eventually financially lucrative reworking of the “forbidden fruits” of Realism and figurative representation by Lucia Hartini and the “Surealis Yogya” is a case in point.
During most of the New Order, if one was neither physically or mentally tough, nor supported by a *sanggar*, the largely patriarchal atelier system, life could become difficult indeed. Trapped in an impossible marriage, Lucia Hartini’s isolation in successive urban *kampung* (villages, small suburbs) prompted neither adventurous risk taking nor peace of mind, despite her connections with the “*Surealis Yogya*”. Long before she began her pursuit of spiritual growth, her first struggles were gender-based. They were waged against the cultural conditioning imposed by Javanese society towards women. Choosing to work at the microcosmic level of self and family, Lucia overcame this barrier by continuing to paint her “*Surealisme Indah / Beautiful Surrealism*”, despite extreme conflict.

Lucia is often presented as the most apolitical and psychologically self-absorbed of the “*Surealis Yogya*” painters (Wright, 1994, 1998; Haryanto Basuki, personal communication, 2002). However, I suggest that many of Lucia’s most powerful works were also emotively surreal psychological portraits of the artist’s times and changed with her personal situation and that of Indonesian society. Repression produced painful but insightful works which charted despair; the liberation of *Reformasi* produced works characterised by topicality, joy and a caution, expressed as critique. Regardless of the political climate of the times, the communicative relevance of Hartini’s paintings always extended beyond the material boundaries of the canvas, a quality emphasized once more by Marianto (2002: 2) in his catalogue essay for Lucia’s 2002 exhibition, “*The Spirit of Life*”.

In January 1998 Lucia confided that, for many years, she was reluctant to publicly discuss her opinions, beyond expressing humanitarian concern.³ Until her spiritual involvement with the teachings of the female *guru*, Master Ching Hai in 1996, and her friendship with Moch Operasi Rachman, she explains that she lacked the self-confidence, the spiritual and political awareness, and the conceptual language to do so (Ch. 6). She suggested people look at her art instead. And when they did, viewers saw Lucia’s own experience and concerns, terrors and joys as a woman, drawn not only from her life, but that of many other Indonesian women, revealed within the meticulously painted surfaces of her large

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canvases. Some were also aware of the physical struggle Lucia faced when painting her enormous canvases, some three metres in length by two metres high.

Lucia’s gradual politicisation developed from her awareness of important gender-based issues concerning Indonesian women’s roles, expectations and equity. They arose from her individual struggle to overcome feelings of powerlessness as an individual and as a woman faced with violence and teror (terror), simultaneously despite and because of her success as an artist. I suggest that the struggle to metaphorically transform her experience and perceptions on a large scale through her “Surealisme” was itself an act of resistance. Continuing to paint from this perspective was a key to personal growth, self-empowerment, spiritual enrichment and eventually, a wider involvement with society. Lucia successfully applied her interest in the transformative as a surrealistic device in art to her own being, becoming “Surealis Saya / Myself the Surrealist”, a unique personage, both publicly and in private. Her personal triumph over doubt and suffering coincided with the energy and political liberation of Reformasi, a fortuitous and very Indonesian synchronicity of micro and macro cycles. Because of Reformasi and media freedom, many people including Lucia were encouraged to express their views in the public domain. This thesis chronicles this progression, which was vital for filmmaking. Similarly, scholars of art history who wished to discuss Indonesia and individual Indonesian artists like Lucia Hartini, now found it much easier to pursue particular arguments and state conclusions than previously.

In its academic consideration of Lucia Hartini and her art, this thesis must consider previous attempts to define Indonesian “Surealisme”. Did Lucia remain a “Surealis” or did her paintings transcend the stylistic labels attached by herself, her peers, critics and scholars over the years? When discussing the Yogyakartan based artists who called themselves “Surealis”, Wright (1991, 1994: 114) suggests that Javanese Surrealism describes the shared stylistic qualities of the group more accurately than Indonesian Surrealism because, besides living in

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4 Supangkat and Zaelani first broached this interpretation was in their catalogue essay for Lucia Hartini’s paintings exhibited in The Mutation: Painsstaking Realism in Indonesian Contemporary Painting. My understanding of Lucia’s position has emerged from the interviews we filmed for Perbatasan / Boundaries, as early as January 1998 before a close reading of the catalogue texts.
Yogyakarta, the painters were predominantly Javanese. However, while the group originated in Yogyakarta prior to 1985, and had chosen the name “Surealis Yogya” as their banner for exhibitions at that time, not all the original and subsequent members were Javanese.\(^5\)

Many were of ethnically and religiously mixed parentage. Dede Eri Supria was Jakartan, Yanuar Ernawati was Sumatran, while I. Gusti Nengah Nurata, a founding member, like Made Wianta, was Balinese. Krishna Adi Boyke Samudera, a later member, was from Pontianak. Representatively, they were Indonesian. Initially, there seemed nothing particularly Javanese about their subject matter or concerns because much of it reflected conditions common throughout Indonesia as a developing country. Early in her career, Lucia’s lecturers at STSRI/ASRI decided that the Dutch New Renaissance painter Diana Vandenberg should be Lucia’s mentor, a stylistic pairing which Lucia refused. Lucia preferred “Surealisme saya”, her own meticulously painted, figurative yet hybrid surrealism, later described by one reviewer, Agus Yudho Basuki (1987), as “Surealisme Indah / Beautiful Surrealism”.

Like Maklai (1991, 1996), and Marianto (1994, 1997, 2001), I prefer the original title “Surealis Yogya” when discussing the early period of Lucia’s work. I also use quotation marks to distinguish the individual personal surrealisms of the Yogyanese group from their European antecedents, because the artists’ name for themselves acknowledges place, intention and hybridity. The title “Surealis Yogya” emphasises the originality of the Indonesians in a locale far removed from Europe and America. Yet despite their Indonesianness, most of the “Surealis” refrained from any overtly nationalist agenda.\(^6\) None of them could be canonised as “The Indonesian Surrealists” except in the sense that their art depicted their

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\(^5\) While Wright (1994: 116) suggests that the surrealism of artists in Yogyakarta is a specifically Javanese surrealism, she cites Ivan Sagito who was born in Malang, East Java, as confirming the feeling of some higher presence unique to Yogyakarta. From my limited interviews with Iwan between 1990 and 1992, this statement locates his “Surealisme” as specifically Yogyakartan rather than from his home town.

\(^6\) The exception may be Dede Eri, who left the “Surealis Yogya” early on to return to Jakarta. In the mid-1990s, Dede turned his hand to commissioned history paintings, such as the 10 by 15 metre long canvas, The Battle of Aceh. He also painted a portrait of the then President, Soeharto, initially for a book cover. The portrait was reprinted as the insignia of Rp. 50,000 banknotes (Dermawan T., 1999).
emotive responses to the disjunctive situations and fragmented psychological attitudes evident everywhere in a rapidly developing but still largely impoverished nation. With a surreal twist, the depiction of altered psychological and psycho-spiritual states and cleverly condensed, often cryptic, image making, “Surealis” art allows viewers to glimpse another world beyond the immediate surface of everyday life without ignoring its humour and drama, injustice and pain.

Because of the veiled social comment evident in their art, Maklai (1991, 1996, 1998) and Spanjaard (2003: 161 - 165) both place the “Surealis” painters Lucia Hartini, Iwan Sagito and Agus Kamal in the Arus Baru / New Directions, a broad stream associated with its founder, Dede Eri Supria, after his return to Jakarta. Maklai (1991: 83 - 88; 1998: 82 - 91) writes that the artists used elements of photo-realism, perspective and dislocation to depict the powerlessness of humans in the face of an increasingly alien environment permeated by the influence of a cold technology and developmental processes which often appeared inhumane. However, unlike Supria, Hartini only directly addressed matters of national concern associated with civil society as recognisable subject matter in works painted for her 2002 exhibition, at the height of Reformasi. By then, framing the disastrous consequences of environmental mismanagement in beautiful but foreboding visions, developed from her observations, might serve a wider national and worldwide humanitarian interest beyond demonstrating personal distress and the insights obtained through spiritual practice. In the catalogue for Lucia’s 2002 exhibition, “Irama Kehidupan / The Spirit of Life”, Marianto (2002: 2 - 4) acknowledges her “Sureal” pedigree, but refers to her as an artist and painter, a significant distinction and a tribute to her personal growth and much valued professionalism.

After 1990, attempts to revise nomenclature were generated from within

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7 There is considerable overlap between the artists of the “Surealis Yogya” and those in Arus Baru. I tend to agree with Wiyanto (1985, 1992, 2002) who maintains that it does not really matter whether or not one calls these artists “Surealis”. Regardless of any stylistic treatments appearing to transform or transcend their subject matter, all of them reference a lived reality impossible to ignore. Both reality and a supra-reality beyond the surface of everyday life which may or may not be surreal, are captured in their work. Therein lies the particular power of their art, a juxtaposition of the rational and illogical that sits well with the essential characteristics of film.

8 Personal communication. Lucia Hartini, Yogyakarta, August 2001.
Indonesia’s arts community itself. Artists, gallerists and curators alike sought to establish conceptually and stylistically sympathetic groupings among the former surrealists. The artists were rapidly developing as individuals for whom the original catchall exhibition banner had become inadequate. For instance, based on Spanjaard’s (1988) early research and a largely formalist definition of surrealism concerning the degree of unexpected and non-rational disruption of the picture plane, a group of Dutch curators claimed that Dede Eri was the only true Surrealist of the group. Ignoring the problems attached to Realism in Suharto’s Indonesia, the rest of the “Surealis Yogya” were then regarded as Meta-realists, Expressive Realists, Fantastical or Magic Realists, Photographic Realists or Hyper-realists (which, ironically, was Dede’s own description of his painting style).9 In response, those pursuing strange imagery derived from day-dreams and the metaphysical appeared together in a Jakartan exhibition “Lamunan dan Metafisika” held at Archipelago Gallery, managed by former Yogyakartan installation artist, Siti Adiyati Subangun. Lucia Hartini participated, exhibiting some striking cosmoscapes.

In 1997, Japan’s Ushiroshji and Indonesia’s Supangkat curated the exhibition The Mutation: Painstaking Realism in Indonesian Contemporary Painting (1997). Wishing to significantly re-position their substantial international exhibition at the end of the twentieth century, the curators questioned the meaning of the term “Surealisme” twenty years after its emergence in Yogyakarta. They selected paintings by prominent mid-career Indonesian artists who claimed their work referred to a reality beyond the surface and substance of the everyday world and its objects, depicted with painstaking realism and painted meticulously. Most of the selected artists, including Lucia Hartini who contributed surreal portraits of her guru, Master Ching Hai, referenced photography when rendering the dimensions of this “other” or supra-reality. Realis Cermat (Painstaking Realist) works in this exhibition outnumbered those described as examples of Mutant Realism or Fantastical Surrealism.

Ironically, most represented the end of the century development of Arus

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9 Personal communication. Ipong Purnamasidih, Jakarta 1999.
Baru – except for those by Lucia Hartini, unless one considers her portraits of the Master as portraits of woman triumphant. Indeed, as Sanento Yuliman remarked in *Tempo*, (1-7-1987), “an artist is made up of more than just a particular style”. Curatorial nomenclature aside, Lucia’s painting was still her “Surrealisme” and, at a deeper level, part of the ongoing project of personal transformation noted in the essay accompanying her work in the catalogue for *The Mutation*.

In this thesis, I demonstrate how “Surrealism” artists helped develop standards of professional artistic practice in Indonesia, cultivating the climate of aesthetic understanding through exhibitions of their work and the publication of educative and explanatory reviews and catalogues in the press and galleries. They were well placed to benefit from the development of an informed, forward-thinking patronage from Indonesia’s growing number of private collectors, many of whom were emerging from its burgeoning corporate sector. Lucia’s alignment with the *Bentara Budaya Galleries* in Yogyakarta and Jakarta is a case in point. Her work was purchased for their collections and received favourable publicity through the newspaper *Kompas*. She made many sales to collectors who continued to purchase her work subsequently. However, it was the encouragement of another woman, a female graphic designer and friend of her sister and the subsequent financial contribution made by the designer and her husband, which enabled Lucia to hold her first exhibition (Marianto, 2001).

This thesis then argues that the long, much reviewed, but largely quiet public contribution of the “Surrealis Yogya” helped develop the critical atmosphere and attitudinal changes leading to *Reformasi*. If the “real” is impossible to depict realistically, then to do so surrealistcally, from a uniquely personal perspective, is, of itself, a creative critique of the status quo in art and culture, as in the wider domain of society. Drawing on sophisticated image making, the disruption of the picture plane, visual and/or narrative condensation through visual and linguistic punning, the transfer of characteristic surface features of one object to another and metamorphic transubstantiation, Lucia Hartini and the “Surrealism Yogya” created personal yet still socially anchored renditions of symbolic worlds. Theirs was a visual discourse which countered that officially promoted by the State as National Culture, yet remained thoroughly
Those “Surealis” artists who have continued to create images and multimedia works since 1981, have further developed their own unique variations of the stylistic elements characterising Indonesian “Surealisme”. In the best of these surreal works, the perceptions of viewers and their attitudes towards the real are simultaneously affirmed and subverted. The artist observes the conundrums, presents a paradox, and asks viewers to choose their own interpretation.

I cannot claim originality in conjectures concerning the latent power of social criticism lying beneath the meticulously painted surfaces of much Indonesian “Surealis” art. This position was first worked intensively in related yet different ways by three female foreign scholars, Wright (1991, 1994), Maklai (1991, 1996) and Spanjaard (1990, 1993, 2003), as well as the Yogyakarta-based Indonesian scholar, art lover and critic, Marianto (1993, 1994, 1997, 2001). My own research and filmmaking practice in Indonesia in the period 1997 to 2002 has allowed me to contribute to the solid scholarly groundwork already laid, following my own hunches.

Furthermore, the passage of time and the inexorable progress of Reformasi has vindicated such arguments. Since media freedom and the dismantling of the laws relating to treasonable activities previously used to arrest dissident intellectuals and journalists, as well as new legislation promoting the ethnic, racial, religious and political tolerance required to realize regional autonomy and multiculturalism, critical discourse in the Indonesian public domain has been liberated (Wright, 1999d). Artists’ rapid uptake of issues of concern has maintained their presence as topics for open discussion. This is an enormous difference from the days when fear and repression sealed the mouths and minds of so many creative spirits in Indonesia (Dudley, 1992), so much so that desires for a broadly based religious tolerance, the demise of discrimination and oppression and a plea for environmental sanity could appear as explicit subject matter in Lucia Hartini’s paintings for her 2002 exhibition.

Freedom of speech has encouraged social and political criticism and the discussion of formerly taboo subjects such as ethnic and gender equity and family violence on radio and television, having made a tentative appearance in film from
the mid 1990s onwards. This change was crucial for the confidence of my subjects before the camera and the nature of the material available for this dissertation. In 1992, I began my detailed research with Lucia by filming silences. She refused to speak directly to the camera, but was happy to work with me selecting content and essays culled from her exhibition catalogues. Because my projected art video lacked a pre-approved script, these edited texts were developed as a scripted narration, read by Firdaus, an Indonesian colleague when creating the soundtrack for *Pusaran / Vortex; From the Kitchen to Outer Space* (1993) back in Australia. By contrast, prior to commencing filming *Perbatasan / Boundaries* in 1999, Lucia and I had developed a preliminary script, most of which was abandoned in 2001. Its existence was no longer a necessary precaution. Unlike the past, where what little Lucia revealed had prudently conformed to social expectations or a workable stereotype which guardedly admitted some of her difficulties, she was now comfortable with her personal narrative and its intersections with social and professional ones. This thesis considers and contextualizes these narratives.

During the New Order, much was unreported in Indonesia. News telecasts rarely showed footage of either natural or man-made disasters. If approved for broadcast, the information conveyed was scanty, always out of date and usually inaccurate. Long fascinated by nature, Lucia Hartini worked its awesome and terrifying power into her canvases. For many art lovers, dramatic explosions in frying pans wedged between rocks in the ocean, vortices of tumultuously billowing clouds and telegraph poles appearing above bizarre floods of water characterised her “*Srealisme Indah / Beautiful Surrealism*”. Some of Hartini’s well-known images have since informed the way television cameramen filmed the aftermath of Millennial earthquakes and the tsunami in Aceh, the eruption of Mount Merapi and the Lapindo Brantas disaster in East Java. Lucia’s “*Srealisme*” burst from television sets into living rooms worldwide, at once a testament to the all too tragically real fragility of life in Indonesia and a condensation of its complexities. From its originally limited exposure, her work has since re-entered the national psyche.

The next set of arguments arises from my study of the scale and unique
conceptualisation of Lucia Hartini’s art and her willingness to work with video and filmmaking, initially conceived as a mutually rewarding exercise. Instead, through Lucia’s unique “Surrealisme”, I found a key to a new field of enquiry, that of the complex interrelationships between art and film in Indonesia, thrown into high relief by the consequences of Reformasi. In this thesis I treat only those areas of possible comparison which assisted my own filmmaking and the development of fresh, insightful commentaries on Lucia Hartini’s art.

Beyond a consideration of Perbatasan / Boundaries in the context of documentary production in Indonesia and Australia, I have used video and concepts derived from filmmaking practice as instruments of visual enquiry to better understand the formal aspects of Lucia Hartini’s paintings and their underlying concerns. As one who works visually, this has helped me develop the extended detailed discursive and contextualized commentary on her art which comprises a substantial part of this thesis. Despite difficulty, working the two systems of expression, one visual, the other literary, has been an insightful and enriching exercise, but crucial to advancing key arguments in this thesis.

In an interview published in the Yogyakartan daily, Bernas, in 1985, Lucia confided that her canvases were “never wide enough” to carry her inspiration or her vision, a statement repeated to the camera in Perbatasan / Boundaries. I believe that the vast scale of Hartini’s canvases, their stylistic and formal qualities and the nature of the subjects addressed within them in a sequential but non-linear, and disjunctive yet still narrative manner over many years, suggest a relationship with cinema and its framings. Furthermore, the formal qualities of wayang kulit as a performative proto-cinematic multi-art form in Indonesia, as well as Lucia’s long involvement with declamatory poetry reading and playing the (celempong) zither, provide a strong conceptual foundation for this approach.

Contextually, this thesis shows how the fascination with the transubstantive, transformative and the transcendentally “real” increasingly distinguished the work of a sizeable group of Indonesian visual artists including Lucia Hartini and many of the “Surealis Yogya”. The creative links between European Surrealism and film are many, and observations regarding the power of art styles to influence film well argued (Matthews, J. H., 1971; Hammond, P., ed.)
1978; Kuenzli, Rudolf R., ed. 1987), yet in Indonesia, there seems to have been little written regarding the transference of art styles across to film. The two major exceptions fall outside the New Order period. In the 1950s, Indonesian Neorealist filmmakers reworked some of the concerns and stylistic aspects of Indonesia’s revolutionary generation of expressive Realist painters (Prakosa, Gotot, 1997). During Reformasi, Marselli Sumarno ventured back into the territory of Neo-realism in his debut feature film Sri (1999). Beyond conceptual concerns, some of the shots in this film are clearly informed by the works of particular “Surealis” painters and are further detailed in this thesis.

Except for some short experimental student films and the crossover works of Sardono, the fertile space beyond opened up by the “Surealis Yogya” remained problematic and generally unpopular in Indonesian film throughout most of the New Order. If both art and film had been established by a new nation and a developmentalist state as necessary aspects of national cultural expression, why were there such pronounced differences between the two in terms of socially adventurous content, reception and distribution? My thesis investigates these questions where they shed further light on my subject and her art.

Why choose to make a documentary about a “Surealis” artist rather than work with her to create a surreal film? The spirit of the times encapsulated by the euphoria of Reformasi after so many years of constraint, and the life affirming changes in Lucia’s life, made capturing the reality of these special years an attractive prospect. The intention of documentary filmmaking is to convey the authenticity or revelatory truth of the reality(ies) in question. However, this intention establishes a tension between an authentic record of the real and filmic language, if not a potential paradox. In this thesis, I suggest that this paradox is the conceptual starting point of Indonesian “Surealisme”, defined by Wiyanto (2001) as “reality bundled in a dream”, a view entirely consistent with many of Lucia’s paintings. Furthermore, Reformasi was that rare thing, a real dream come true for millions of Indonesians.

In the context of film, the suspension of disbelief required to watch creates a similar paradox. In a fictional film, the filmmaker asks us to share in a dream, which is the illusion of reality created by script, plot and actors as
seductive shadows on the screen. Because it is also a transient immaterial phenomenon, documentary film, like all film, is also a dream. Yet it demands that we accept that what we see on the screen is a true record of a particular reality, verified by opinions convincingly supported with factual evidence. Documentary is a real story played out before our eyes, one told by real people rather than conveyed by actors. This “true reality” might be interrupted by passages which are re-enactments of past events or creative interpretations of certain aspects of the documentary material presented by either the subjects of the film or the filmmaker. Thus, like much of Lucia Hartini’s “Surealisme”, documentary film is also “reality bundled in a dream”.

As if confirming these insights, Lucia elected to screen the documentary on the opening night of her January 2002 exhibition at the Bentara Budaya Galleries in Jakarta. A hundred-strong crowd stood and watched our “documentary wayang” on a large television screen for forty-five minutes before the doors to the gallery were drawn back and the surrealistically ‘real’ painted “wayang for the millennium” within revealed. Lucia’s decision and the response of viewers encouraged me to pursue the hybrid marriage of disciplines, ideas and approaches which inform and structure this thesis. By examining in detail the nature of representation in two fields of artistic endeavour in Indonesia, this thesis demonstrates how its visual arts and film have simultaneously been sites of great achievement yet ongoing creative, personal and social struggle during the New Order. They have remained so for a complex of different but related reasons in the era of Reform. (Plate 1).
CHAPTER 1
THEMES AND CONTEXTS.

Because my approach to Lucia Hartini’s art is situated, thematic and interpretative, this thesis is conceptually broad in scope. In shaping this perspective, I establish five sub-sections, *Society, Art, Gender, Spirituality and Film*. Within these sub-sections, I review the themes and the wide range of sources which structure the commentaries on Lucia Hartini’s art and the textual analysis of *Perbatasan / Boundaries; Lucia Hartini, Paintings from a Life*. These sources also inform the contextualizations and arguments developed in Sections II and III of this thesis. Because of the inter-relationships between themes and within contexts, vitally important source books and compendiums may not be listed in the first sub-section to which they apply, but in those sub-sections where they are most pertinent.

Since a core argument of this thesis is the contextualization of Lucia Hartini’s life and art within the dramatic transformations taking place in Indonesian society, this literature review commences with the sub-section *Society*. As Indonesian artists, including those of “Surealis Yogya”, have so often stated, their art was created in response to the situations they observed and experienced across a period of constant change. Their symbolism, while unique and highly personal, remained culturally, and thus, socially connected, but their freedom of expression was initially constrained by economic factors and then by cultural, religious, and most directly, by political ones. I begin with a consideration of literature examining the social and political climate in Lucia Hartini’s Indonesia, and Yogyakarta in particular, during the mid to late New Order period. This first sub-section is brought up to date with a written snapshot of *Reformasi*, the mass movement spearheaded by students, intellectuals, Suharto’s political opponents, and the Indonesian people.

The second sub-section, *Art*, reviews a wide variety of literature on Indonesian art and its development from the 1950s until 2002, providing a cultural overview and art historical context for Lucia Hartini’s work. I initially derived my academic overview of Modern, “New” and “Contemporary” Indonesian art from those scholars writing in English whose major studies have
established and expanded the field, generating ongoing debate. I acknowledge the value of Claire Holt’s (1967) pioneering work, *Art in Indonesia, Continuities and Change*, but pay particular attention to literature studying the new Indonesian art emerging from the mid 1970s onwards. Later designated “Contemporary” on the world stage, this “New” art was the product of national development, even if many of its makers challenged the idea of an homogeneous National Culture which enshrined “tradisi” (“tradition”) without interrogating the nature of its cultural basis.


In Indonesia itself, the emergence of many individual modes of visual expression encouraged a growing band of Indonesian writers, reviewers and collectors to debate and communicate opinion, explanation and interpretation in the emerging public domain. My research has canvassed a wide range of Indonesian language sources, such as art reviews in hard copy and electronic form, as well as relevant scholarly works and catalogue essays. These sources confirm the contingency of artistic practice in New Order Indonesia prior to the changes enabled by freedom of expression and the increased range and accessibility of written works ushered in by *Reformasi*, a subject central to this thesis. Attention is paid to major contributions such as Asikin Hasan’s (2001) compilation of Sanento Yuliman’s essays and reviews written between 1981 and 1991, published posthumously. Yuliman discusses a plethora of artistic traditions informing the nature and style of image making including those investigating the strategic recuperation and re-working of previous forms and styles. Lucia
Hartini’s paintings are formally discussed at length in four of Sanento’s articles, as in several by journalist and arts reviewer Carla Bianpoen (1986 - 2002), who also wrote extensively for the English language paper, *The Indonesian Observer*.

I then present a brief synopsis of literature considering the subject matter, thematic treatment and stylistic characteristics of Lucia Hartini’s art. Themes selected for emphasis in this thesis are grouped together in three general categories: those reflecting the sublime in nature and its forces both powerful and gentle, but also conveying a sense of loss for development’s depredation of the natural world (Maklai, 1991, 1996, 1998); those presenting viewers with gesturally dramatic renditions of women’s situations expressed through Lucia’s personal experience, often rendered as a psychological depiction of life in the New Order state; and those which chart Lucia’s mystical journey and spiritual development over the years, her healing from within and without and her social empowerment.

While the existing literature sometimes reveals Lucia’s concerns, often citing interviews with the artist, there is very little detailed discussion of her system of image formation and the nature of her compositions. This thesis addresses this omission through its exclusive focus on Lucia Hartini and acknowledges the important educative contribution made by Wright’s online articles for the Javafred website (http://www.javafred.net). Written between 1998 and 2000, these articles have informed that part of this thesis concerning canvases painted between 1993 and 1996. Particular reference is made to “Lucia Hartini, Javanese Painter: Against the Grain Towards Herself” (Wright, 1998), subsequently published in Taylor, ed., (2000) *Studies in Southeast Asian Art: Festschrift for Professor Stanley O’Connor*. Beyond biographical information, Wright offers readers a view informed by feminism and interpretations largely based on the feelings she experiences when contemplating Lucia’s work.

Literature concerning the photographic image and film, central to the discussion of *Perbatasan / Boundaries* in this thesis, has also provided important insights into the interpretation of Lucia’s art. Neither Lucia Hartini’s mystical and spiritual interests nor the imagery of most of her canvases represent an easy accommodation with the dynamics of New Order Indonesia. Frequently, a single
image will contain an allusive and richly metaphoric condensation of several themes, as in a still from a fantastical film. Unlike “ideology” that conceals or misrepresents something “real” preceding it, the imagery of Hartini’s paintings invokes Baudrillard’s (1988) definition of simulacra. Beyond their photographic attention to detail, her paintings, like those of her peers, the “Surealis” and Hyperrealis artists, are signs that “precede the “real” and conceal nothing. They are not unreal, but more real than real. They are neo-real or hyperreal” (Heryanto Ariel, 1993: 22). In the Yogyakartan context, and for those in the know, despite and because of the hegemonic constructions of the New Order state, they are “surealis” (Wisetrotomo, Suwarno, 1994; Marianto, 1997).

These observations, Lucia’s performative and often disjunctive framing of photo-real representations and the nature of “Surealis” image formation engaged my interest in reflexively examining perceived relationships between the two fields of art and film in New Order Indonesia. Unlike Marianto (2001), who sees the “Surealis Yogya” as inheriting the legacy of the great Indonesian Realist painters, the dramatic juxtapositional and montagist characteristics and subconscious elements of Indonesian “Surealisme” remind me aesthetically of Indonesian Neo-realist film of the Realist period. This does not mean that the choice of legacy was deliberate. Rather, because of cultural repression and the official suspicion of Realism in the first fifteen years of the New Order period, the aesthetic solutions of young artists wishing to use a photo-real visual language to comment on their perceptions and the disjunctive nature of their times, were similar to those of Neo-realist filmmakers and Neo-realism’s stylistically “fuzzy” border with certain genres of documentary filmmaking.

The third sub-section, Gender, relies upon many contemporary scholarly studies and literary sources informing my analysis of gender relations, roles and expectations, conflicts and challenges for Indonesian women during a period of rapid social transition. Much of the Indonesia-specific body of this literature is from comparatively recent anthologies, and most is compiled and written by women researchers and commentators, such as that by Mayling Oey-Gardiner and Bianpoen (2000). This literature charts the conflict between a gradual liberation born of development which, for many women, eased the bonds of tradition,
increasing work choices and enabling the development of careers in a modern sense, and the restrictions applied by the New Order state through regimentation, force and teror (terror). Lucia’s endeavour is best seen as another working of the join between, and even a reconciliation of, opposites in the immediate realm of home and family, carried into the wider society beyond through the pursuit of a professional career, an experience shared by many other women artists in Indonesia (Sinaga, Dolorosa, 2003).

Several important sources rigorously consider and creatively express the sense of being located physically and psychologically “between” states of existence and political systems, as described in Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing’s (1993) book *In the Realm of the Diamond Queen: Marginality in an Out-of-the-Way Place*. They also explore the physical impact of the processes of cultural change. If we are to follow Homi Bhabha’s (1994: 159 - 160) summation of these historically contextual dynamics in *The Location of Culture*, “colonial” refers to particular cultural formations as well as to systems of political and economic power relations, certainly evident in Indonesia during both the Old and New Orders. Considering cultural expression, Trinh T. Minh-Ha, argues that the modernism she critiques in *Woman, Native, Other* (1989), is the “Modernism” of the West, not the peculiar and sometimes specific blends of systems accommodation actually experienced in countries beyond the West as modernity. In *Framer Framed*, Trinh (1992) argues that the recognition of hybridity is essential to post-colonial and post-modern discourses. In the Third World at the time she was writing, and many parts of the developed world, hybridity distinguished personal identities, to say nothing of national ones.

The place of hybridity is also the place of my identity.

On the other hand, modernism is opposed to hybridity, longing for purity and denying the very hybridity that was essential to its existence.

(Trinh, 1992: 129)

Microcosmically, it has proved difficult to separate Lucia’s particular distillation of sosok perempuan (women’s issues) from the artist’s sympathy for the natural world, the emphasis she has placed on her personal spiritual journey
and a search for religious and social harmony. Arguably, Lucia’s violation within marriage also replicated the violation of nature and humanity in Indonesia by the processes of development. Powerless, she clung to her painting, but remained a good mother to her children. Lucia’s quest, as an artist and contributor to culture, meant she must find inner strength, because of the personal challenges attendant on choosing art as her profession. Because of the climate of fear in which she and her peers worked, she must succeed to survive. When Lucia embarked on her spiritual journey, she sought to gain inner strength. She was then able to re-engage with society in a positive way, supporting women’s causes, campaigns for conservation, and for the cessation of discrimination on the grounds of gender, ethnicity and religion.

Thus literature informing the sub-sections on Spirituality and Film is also relevant in the context of Gender. Spiritual growth encouraged the next stage of Lucia Hartini’s social empowerment, finally leading to her divorce. Her emotional, professional and financial survival guaranteed, and her children’s future provided for, Lucia was then free to marry again. Questions of religious belief and affiliation arose once more, because her new husband, Moch Operasi Rachman, was also Muslim. Thus I consider literature examining the changing interpretations and social actualisation of women’s position in a society where Islam is the majority religion.

The sub-section, Spirituality, introduces a range of religious, devotional and Indonesianist literature. These sources expanded my knowledge of the cultural, religious and spiritual frameworks and informed subjects discussed with Lucia Hartini in our interviews. At the time I began this dissertation, Lucia was an avid follower of the teachings and spiritual practice of her guru, Master Ching Hai. The Supreme Master (1994) is renowned for her transmission of the Quan Yin method of instant enlightenment, set forth in her booklet, The Key of Immediate Enlightenment. Master Ching Hai’s search for the Truth and concern for all sentient beings is expressed in doctrines and teachings which bridge religions. Prior to embarking on a guided spiritual path, Lucia haphazardly practised aspects of Kebatinan without guidance, a pursuit seen as dangerous by many Javanese (Stange, Paul, 1979: 39) and despite her acculturation in Kejawen,
the Hindu-Buddhist mystical tradition of Java. Literature providing an understanding of this background and its relationship to Lucia’s paintings is listed in the sub-section on *Spirituality*.

While these sources contributed to the scope of my research, my approach to editing *Perbatasan / Boundaries* and to the interpretations of Lucia’s paintings in this thesis, I needed to write about the experiential information Lucia provided regarding spiritual gnosis in a manner likely to withstand academic scrutiny. Stange’s (1979, 1984, 1993) essays assisted me develop this discourse in content and form. However, I was most familiar with the spirit of enquiry and thinking systems of the Buddhist teachings of Gayuto, a Tibetan stream of Mahayana Buddhism similar to the Vajrayana Buddhism extant in Central Java. Hence a selection of Mahayana and Javanist texts which I found helpful are listed in the sub-section on *Spirituality*, as are those concerning Theravadan *vipassana* meditation and Dhamma teachings which I had studied many years ago.

Literature pertinent to the theoretical discussion of film is summarised in the thematic section on *Film*, the remainder appearing in Chapters 8 and 9 of this thesis. Because very few written sources exist for the study of Indonesian film, most of my sources are the films themselves and my own notes in the field, gathered since 1990. Thus my theoretical work is necessarily largely informed by non-Indonesian sources. Apart from some reports and detailed studies by Krishna Sen (1988, 1994, 2000), Barbara Hatley (1988, 1999) and David Hanan (1998), most of the Indonesian literature which focuses on the representation of women in Indonesian cinema became available only after my project had commenced. Many of these works are mentioned in the sub-section *Gender*. Similarly, few of the existing sources, actually discuss issues surrounding the direction and production of Indonesian film. Although my information has been garnered widely and includes interviews with the filmmakers themselves, I have worked back from this base into a study of proto-cinematic forms extant in Indonesia and closely aligned with its visual and performing arts. A range of Indonesian and Javanist sources such as Mangkunegara K.G.P.A.A., the VII (1957), Stange (1977), Niels Mulder (1978) and Ward Keeler (1987), have proved useful conceptually.

My own filmmaking practice and ongoing field-based research in
Indonesia prompted consideration of the relationships between visual art and film in Indonesia between 1980 and 1998, with particular reference to Lucia Hartini’s paintings and those of other members of the “Surealis Yogya”. Despite the paucity of sources, similarities between Indonesian Neo-realist film and the art of the “Surealis Yogya” are discussed. Extensive use is made of Salim Said’s (1991) book, *Shadows on the Silver Screen, A Social History of Indonesian Film*, Gotot Prakosa’s (1997) anthology, *Film Pinggiran: Film Pendek, Film Eksperimental and Film Dokumenter*, and various interviews with Garin Nugroho (1994 - 2002).

In researching the concepts and themes underlying *Perbatasan / Boundaries* and discussed in this thesis, I have consulted a wide range of engaged and populist sources besides library texts. Such sources are like life-blood for an historian fascinated by the dynamic of historical process, or a documentary filmmaker wishing to capture the ethos of an era and follow the heat of debate. Living on-line for long periods of time via my laptop, I scoured email chat-lists, on-line journals, Indonesian newspapers and Indonesia-focused archives, delighted as new and previously unlikely literature appeared. Some were compilations of essays sporadically published in the Indonesian press since 1982, others the enthusiastic fruit of the attitudinal changes and loss of fear accompanying *Reformasi*. Although one may argue that freedom of information in Indonesia remains constrained by business affiliations, sponsorship, and particular religious and cultural sensitivities, (as elsewhere), these new and largely critical publications appeared rapidly following legislation granting freedom of the Press.

**1.1. Society**

In 1991, Keith Foulcher encouraged me to make *Pusaran / Vortex* as visually exotic as possible, suggesting that the power and scale of Hartini’s art would seduce viewers, enticing them to learn more. By positing my film in terms of its ‘difference’, that is, its non-Western qualities and referents, yet stressing the shared particularity of an art medium, I might begin a dialogue with Australian audiences regarding the cultural and aesthetic framings of Indonesian art. Attracted to know more of this vibrant sector emerging within modern Indonesian
culture, Australians might re-examine their views of Indonesia and the basis of their appreciation and understanding of its contemporary dimensions through an exploration of the visual arts beyond the familiar traditional and decoratively worked fine crafts.10

What were the relationships between the makers of this startling new Indonesian art and their society? What was crucial in the creation of images depicting the power of the local and regional vis-a-vis the construction of an Indonesian National Cultural identity (Tsing, 1993)? How did discussions surrounding new Indonesian art relate to Indonesian sensibilities vis-a-vis the West, often seen as non-desirable other by many, when a need to share exhibition arenas and engage with a wider discourse about the meaning of art and the development of one’s work rendered/fantasised the West and its messengers as most desirable “others” (Supangkat, 1997)?

These questions entail consideration of the respective spheres of production and reception and the nature of the connections between them. Inevitably societal, they might also be less tangible, ethereal and perhaps spiritual, points well argued by Foulcher (1990) in “The Construction of An Indonesian Political Culture: Patterns of Hegemony and Resistance”, and his Monash Working paper, “The Manifesto is Not Dead; Indonesian Literary Politics Thirty Years On” (1994). In the latter, Foulcher recounts a telling example of the contradictory pressures bedevilling creative spirits in New Order Indonesia. He cites Ikranegara’s edited recollections of conversations between Rendra and Pramoedya Ananta Toer during the middle years of the New Order.11 Rendra remarks that “all of Pramoedya’s books suffer from aesthetic weakness and all that he wrote in his Lekra period was of poor quality ”, being too influenced by “an ideology emanating from the West” (Foulcher, 1994: 11). Ironically, one may also question the degree of influence of Western thinking on Rendra’s own literary output, as one might appreciate the degree of very Javanese thinking in the construction of narrative in Pramoedya’s work.


11 Ikranegara claims this discussion was without enmity and in friendship.
Nevertheless, Rendra’s argument points to core issues arising in intellectual debate about the arts in New Order Indonesia, a subject addressed in this thesis. 12 Like many others, Rendra stridently opposed the bans on Pramoedya’s works in force for much of the New Order period, and changed his view regarding the quality of the venerable author’s later works, pronouncing them very fine (Foulcher, 1994: 11). Perhaps it is not politics itself which was the issue here, but the direction from which the inspiration for the works provoking this censure had come. At the heart of so many Indonesian cultural debates lay the degree to which outside influences (mainly “Western”) had been considered and appropriated within existing Indonesian idioms, rather than superficially adopted simply to appear “modern”. This observation is crucial to my thinking on Indonesian “Surrealisme” and the art of Lucia Hartini.

I am also interested in this story from another angle, that of the younger writer who dares to criticise his elder in an exchange recorded by another literary figure, culturally a difficult task for many Indonesians. Such meetings are crucial in the creation of a healthy creative environment. In this thesis, I explore dynamics of this nature in relation to the contemporary visual arts in Indonesia. Rendra has described the power of the marginal position creative figures could choose to occupy in Suharto’s Indonesia in order to fulfill their creative destiny. He seemed to find sustenance in this view despite the ongoing difficulties he faced in the production and reception of his own work. 13 As with many

12 Perhaps it was the presence of “leftist” Western thinking in Pramoedya’s works which was the issue for the poet, but might not the presence of this thinking also apply to some of Rendra’s work as a dramatist? The general tenets of Rendra’s play, *Kisah Perjuangan Suku Naga / The Struggle of the Naga Tribe* (1982), seem to refute Rendra’s position quoted above. The author’s sympathies are with the struggling tribespeople rather than with the neo-colonialist attitudes of the state. The tribespeople are enlightened and empowered through the characters of a foreign (Latin American) anthropologist and an educated “native son” who returns home to his land and people. The latter’s function in the plot is that of a cadre in a populist movement, seeking to maintain land rights and cultural integrity in the face of rapacious development.

13 Personal communication. W. S. Rendra, Adelaide, March 1988. Rendra’s stance may also be framed in terms of a Hindu-Buddhist notion of suffering in which all existence is regarded thus because each moment does not last. This accords with the Islamic injunction to surrender one’s destiny to Allah (*pasrah*) and with a Central Javanese belief which viewed great art as the product of struggle. While consistent with Yogyakarta’s Revolutionary history, this attitude also coalesces with Catholic Christianity’s concept of “just” wars. Again the link is with moral inquiry, but also with the spiritual - a difficult fusion, but important to the inquiry of this thesis.
Indonesian artists and writers seeking to develop contemporary Indonesian visual aesthetics and the appropriate critical discourses with which to situate modern and contemporary Indonesian art, I begin by surveying the wide spectrum of opinion on these questions.

Daniel T. Sparringa’s (1997) doctoral dissertation, The Role of the Intellectuals in New Order Indonesia, analyses the intellectual endeavour and role of a broad cross-section of the Indonesian intelligentsia in the evolution of late New Order society, drawing on interview material collected in 1992 and 1993. Many Indonesian intellectuals consider Sparringa’s research important in developing a credible theoretical basis for Reformasi. He conceptualises his study through the application of several “leftist” Western European theoretical models. In writing from the sociological perspective of grounded theory towards an understanding of attitudes shaping progressive Indonesian thought, Sparringa considers ideology, hegemony, discourse and power, orientalism and resistance. For instance, he bases his definition of ideology on Marx, but canvases several other thinkers, such as Althusser, Durkheim and Thompson. Sparringa’s selection of Gramsci’s theoretical model of hegemony rather than Foucault’s as a primary tool of analysis provided me with useful conceptual keys when considering particular aspects of Indonesian “Surealisme” (Sparringa, 1997: 9 - 22), even though Sparringa excludes Indonesia’s contemporary artists (including most filmmakers) from his sample group of intellectuals.

The continued creative contributions of artists and filmmakers at the cutting edge of culture throughout the New Order period challenge a key contention of John Pemberton’s (1994) book On the Subject of “Java”. Pemberton argues that a central aim of the New Order was “the creation of a modern, unitary National Culture”, homogeneically unified and ritually touristic

14 Sparringa sought appropriate tools with which to examine the bewildering pluralism of Indonesia, a post-modern archipelagic nation-state developed from a previously feudal, successively colonised, multi-ethnic and multi-lingual base. His aim was to establish feasible alternatives to the centrist and hegemonic structures reinforced by repression and violence by which the Indonesian State under Suharto sought to implement Bhinneka Tunggal Ika / Unity in Diversity. Sparringa’s work was embargoed from 1997 until March 2000, by which time the processes of Reformasi were well underway and Indonesia was moving tentatively towards democratic reforms.
in the manner of Jakarta’s Taman Mini.\textsuperscript{15} In this simulacral, strangely post-modern Indonesia, the “Beautiful Indonesia” designed to mask the horrors of 1965 – 1966, we have many opportunities to view snapshots of ethnographically categorised, “authentic” diversity, taken when members of every ethnic group of the archipelago are invited as guests to a wedding.\textsuperscript{16} They may wear their own traditional costumes, but the wedding always proceeds according to elite Javanese priyayi rules (Pemberton, 1994: 154 - 189), Java being the seat of real political and symbolic power in the integralist New Order state. The “culture effect” so created replicates and incessantly ritualises tradition, simultaneously contributing to tradition’s disempowerment and suppressing the diversity of intellectual life and critical discourse (Pemberton, 1994: 9 - 11).

Citing Foucault’s insistence that “Culture is an effect of history, and not its illustration”, Maklai (1996: ix) challenges Pemberton (1994: 17) at the point at which he admits the riskiness and possible weakness of his argument. Working from interviews and primary documents, she stresses the moral agency and playfulness of many Yogyakartan visual artists, crediting their originality of vision and independence of action. I concur with Maklai’s observations. The artists of my study were neither the active agents of homogenising national unification projects, nor were they its passive victims, expected to be colourful despite their many depictions of the crushing weight of developmentalism on the lives of millions of Indonesians. As individuals, artists were even considered

\textsuperscript{15} \textit{Taman Mini} is a cultural theme park in an outer suburb of Jakarta, established by President Suharto’s wife, Ibu Tien, in the early 1980s when the centralization of government in Jakarta was being swiftly and rapidly implemented, and ideas of developing the entire island of Java as a Metropolis were seriously entertained. Featuring ethnically representative cultural displays in buildings designed in the architectural style of the major regional and ethnic groupings of Indonesia, \textit{Taman Mini} is a snapshot in miniature of archipelagic Indonesia’s cultural diversity. It offers a more elaborate version of the popular exhibition spaces and \textit{Pasar Seni} (Art Market) at Ancol, the recreation park near the port of Jakarta. \textit{Pasar Seni} had proved very popular in its attempt to be culturally representative at both ends of the art spectrum. \textit{Taman Mini} provided much-needed spaces for the traditional arts and became home to a major dance festival. As a theme park, its cultural representations were ersatz, rather than authentic, but it was also a product of its times internationally and so perceived as desirably “Modern”. In fact, it was Post-modern. Its intention was to provide an officially approved taste of Indonesia for those who could neither stay long nor travel widely. \textit{Taman Mini} was a place for show as opposed to substance, and generally, although not always, the purely performative as opposed to a critical and distilled enactment.
eccentrically different, but the visions produced from this difference were culturally esteemed. In the larger scale of things, they mattered and had power.

Some carefully criticised those constructions of National Culture which had elevated “tradisi” as metaspook (Pemberton, 1994: 11). Among these was the re-interpreted concept of *Tanah Air* (Our Land and Water), with its appeal to early nationalist sentiment. Geographic in reach rather than specificities and its real and symbolic references to the interactions of natural elements, *Tanah Air* was strategically useful to the developmental agenda of the modernising integralist and militarised New Order state, centrally governed from Jakarta. While this concept encouraged the creation of a number of “progressive” projects on islands other than Java, designed to generate social cohesion beyond the successive waves of repression and relaxation, the nature of the nation being created was rarely questioned.

In his article, “‘Archipelagic Culture’ as an Exclusionary Government Discourse in Indonesia”, Gregory Acciaioli (2001) suggests that true multi-ethnic variety was further subsumed within a concept of nation defined by Duara (1995: 15) in which nation is “best seen as a relational identity … A historical configuration designed to include certain groups and exclude or marginalise others – often violently”. Acciaioli (2001: 3) writes that the New Order regime generated the notion of a shared culture by constructing the idea of a common “cultural substrate for all the people of the archipelago”, labelled “*kebudayaan nusantara*” (archipelagic culture). The function of this putative cultural substrate was to make explicit, recover, or uncover a distinctively local genius” (Soebadio, 1985: 11). Its framers argued that “*kebudayaan nusantara*” enabled the peoples of the archipelago to function as a single socio-economic unit - a repository of material “specific cultural resources”, epitomised by *Taman Mini*.  

Like National Culture, this aspect of *Tanah Air* together with the actual multi-cultural hybridity of the Indonesian nation was carefully reconsidered by a

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17 My understanding of the current view of “*kebudayaan nusantara*” is that each ethnic group has its own cultural expression within which great variety of form and regional styles are encouraged. They are autonomously themselves, and together they comprise Indonesia. Whether or not the nation functions as a single socio-economic unit or as a federation of autonomous units remains debatable. In 2005, parts of *Taman Mini* were re-designed. It is now surrounded by water, stocked with fish.
handful of Indonesian writers and artists, including Lucia Hartini, prior to Reformasi. Tanah Air sometimes appears in her paintings in its elemental symbolic sense, where she accords it a particularly female interpretation (Chs. 3 and 4). While many could not articulate this difference in emphasis, they were able to embody and/or enact it creatively in their work.

Artists, writers and performers recuperated and re-activated many other modes and ideas stemming from specific and surprising streams from the past. In drawing upon their versions of “a powerful indigenous discourse beyond the anthropological frame” (Pemberton, 1994: 13), they selected sources at odds with those designated appropriate to the concept of National Culture favoured by the New Order regime, so resisting its normalising intentions. Marianto (1997: 140) claims the “Surealis Yogya” challenged the re-invention of ritual through satire and their unconventional “takes” on familiar images and various aspects of society. In the early years, they explored other and more recent populist traditions, such as “Bahasa Gali-gali”, the language of gangsters and resistance fighters (1997: 124 - 125). Some structured their works according to the onomatopoeic rhythms of “B’asa Walikata” (supposedly a parody on the chant of monks), and were influenced by rock’n roll and the blues.

While aspects of the “Surealis” stance were initially socially disengaged rather than consciously critical, the Yogyakartan artists gradually realised the significance of the legal strictures constraining their freedom of expression. Heryanto (1993: 36 - 37), and Marianto (1997: 140 - 141) both suggest that their encounter with corpses during the Petrus affair of 1983 and the trials of the sellers of banned books and their student supporters between 1989 and 1990 prompted this realisation. Figurative artists became more careful when criticising the status quo, prompting allusion and cryptic visual condensation in their work.

Contrary to Pemberton’s (1994: 14 - 15) observation regarding New Order Indonesia’s promulgation of “an underlying, stabilized cultural order” denying a place for chaos as function and motivator, many younger artists valued and depicted the reverse. Their works expressed the startling disruption of the expected and the formal disjunction of realistically depicted objects and sequences, reflecting the reality of their experiential world in which even dreams
were disrupted. Helene Cixous (1986) quotes a statement by Antonio Gramsci applicable to the Indonesian context from 1985 onwards:

> When a political man exercises pressure for the art of his time to express a given cultural world, it consists of a political activity, not art criticism: if the cultural world for which one struggles is a living and necessary fact, its expansiveness will be irresistible, and it will find its artists.

(Gramsci, cited in Clement and Cixous, 1986: 159)\(^\text{18}\)

When the financial crisis of 1998, *Krismon*, struck Indonesia, an estimated 80 million Indonesians out of the total population of 202.1 million were plunged back to an existence below the poverty line (Hadiz, Vedi, 1999: 107). Many regarded *Krismon* as the catalyst for Suharto’s downfall. Some scholars now suggest that the burgeoning strength of the movement for organized change which became *Reformasi* was the major factor; others that *Reformasi* embodied a cumulative flowering of the particular successes of the New Order state, thereby sowing the seeds for the regime’s eventual displacement (Kerjasama Pusat Penelitian dan Pengembangan Kemasyarakatan dan Kebudayaan – LIPI, 2001). Despite the capricious nature of repression, the provision of a basic education and health service for millions had begun to change attitudes and expectations. Javanese millennarianism, technological change, generational change, the growing strength and importance of Islam and group memories of earlier archipelagic patterns of social upheaval accompanying regime change all provided fertile ground for *Reformasi*. In this thesis, I argue that the survival of artists and other cultural creators and the following they had built around themselves over the years of the New Order, also contributed to this process. By late 1997, their combined public presence in person and on-line was an undeniable reality, confirming a radical interpretation of Gramsci’s view.\(^\text{19}\)

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\(^{18}\) One must be careful here. In *Mbatik Manah: Symbols and Status in Central Javanese Batik* (1986: 28, fns.11, 12), Justine Boow uses Gramsci to explain the resurgence of artisan production of batik textiles during the New Order. This became one of the badges of developmentalism, reinforcing a desirable aspect of the status quo rather than promoting change.

The Reformasi movement began to gather form and strength in 1994 after President Suharto publicly lost the confidence of a wide range of progressive elements in Indonesia’s rapidly but unequally developing society. Together with the conflicts in East Timor and Aceh, and the position of the military within government which effectively dampened criticism of its actions, an increasing number of protests erupted around humanitarian issues. I witnessed a small farmers’ protest against forced removal from their land in Yogyakarta in 1991 and in 1994, the large demonstration in the square surrounding the National Monument, Monas, in Jakarta. This broadly based demonstration protested the revocation of the publishing licences of Tempo, Kompas and Detik following the exposure of massive government overspending on second-hand German warships. Tensions within the edifice of Suharto’s regime coalesced with global economic forces, the dynamic of expansion, and an ever-widening critical discourse regarding the implementation of development projects. These factors raised issues of human rights and questioned current modes of regimenting the rakyat (the broad mass of the people), formerly integral to Sukarno’s concept of the Indonesian Nation. These anti-hegemonic forces coalesced to bring down the New Order, setting Indonesia on a path toward democratic reform and sweeping structural and administrative changes in governance.

Pemberton (1994) criticises mid to late New Order intellectuals for their failure to dislodge government from power. Yet the seemingly aimless successive gatherings and dispersals of energy, which he regarded as characterising the period, also allowed time for the tides of dissent to swell, to acquire mass, information and a critical discourse, until they were able to productively challenge the regime on all fronts. Eventually the cracking edifice crumbles and the wave breaks, precipitating the Gramscian rupture of Reformasi. In Curtis Levy’s

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20 Personal observation. Jakarta, June 1994. If one applies Pemberton’s observation of successive waves of “sukses” and “ekses” to the generation of public protest prior to Reformasi, one must acknowledge that, in this case, successive gatherings of energy became increasingly larger, louder and more cohesively framed politically. Finally, their force successfully resisted dissipation.

21 Since Reformasi, the term warga (citizenry) has replaced rakyat in popular public discourse.

22 Gramsci’s Prison Notebooks (1971: 12 - 13 and 442 - 462) also provided one of Sparringa’s chief sources.
prescient film, *Invitation to a Wedding* (1996), the documentary cum post-modern road movie in which everything goes wrong, assistant director Fakhri Amri indicates as much. The pair’s intention had been to make a film about Gus Dur. Instead, we learn much about Islam, tension and brewing dissent in Indonesia, as the filmmakers drive across Java to attend Fakhri’s daughter’s wedding. “We are a patient people”, snaps an irate Fakhri to a mock-boorish Levy in a sequence set in a roadside warung. “But we know when we must act.”

Benedict Anderson’s essay, “A Time of Darkness and a Time of Light,” was first published in *Language and Power. Exploring Political Cultures in Indonesia* (1990), and reprinted in *The Spectre of Comparisons: Nationalism, South-East Asia and the World* (1998). Also reprinted was the essay “Professional Dreams” in which Anderson cautions that ancient and chaotic dynamics may still have the capacity to affect the outcomes of late twentieth century upheaval in a nation he regards as simultaneously geographically improbable, mythic and pragmatic. Anderson argues that the Indonesian nation is one bound together by a moral contract between its culturally and religiously diverse citizens, as well as by power, governance, and law, an idea developed in relation to symbols in modern Indonesian art by Wright (1994) in *Soul, Spirit and Mountain: Preoccupations of Contemporary Indonesian Painters*. Coinciding with Reformasi, the reprints of Anderson’s essays appeared when the shape of the nation and the nature of its systems of governance were the subject of intense scrutiny and change. In resurrecting commentaries on Javanese pre-Modern and Modernist Indonesian texts, Anderson draws attention to deeper dynamics at work in the Indonesian national psyche. Simultaneously, he provides space for contemporary readings in which both culturally specific traditional dynamics and globally influenced pragmatic realisations apply.

In “A Time of Darkness and a Time of Light” Anderson (1998: 88 - 89) considers the autobiography of Soetomo, the founder of Boedi Oetomo. He reviews the ideas and aspirations of this movement, suggesting that Modernism was seen by the first generation of educated Indonesians as a new historical era symbolised by an ongoing cycle of light.²³ Possibilities for social change through
political reform would increase because of improvements bestowed by Modernity’s gifts, defined as the guaranteed provision of food and education and the active utilisation of advances in science and health. The moral shape of a person’s life would change over time and humanity would improve accordingly.

Anderson postulates Soetomo’s scientifically based model of progress, cumulatively linear in its trajectory, as the refutation of Raden Ngabehi Ronggawarsita’s (1873) late nineteenth century vision of dread, expressed in the epic *Serat Kala Tidha / Poem for a Time of Darkness*. The last poet of the court of Surakarta sees Java (the world) as entering a cycle of doom. In a political interpretation of this “history” as prophecy based on memories of past times and their conjunction with cosmological cycles in the present era, the traditional authority structures of a feudal society lose their links with the divine. Despite the apparent worth of the state’s rulers, there is social disorder. One must become mad, writes Ronggawarsita or starve (Anderson 1998: 78). As a result, there will be no good examples left to hand down. We may choose to read Hartini’s Millennial paintings *Roh Perahu Nabi Nuh / The Spirit of Noah’s Ark* (2001), *Sumur Sulaiman / Solomon’s Well* (2000), and *Prahara Televisi / Televisual Storm* (2001), (Plates 49, 50 and 51), as cautionary texts, supporting Ronggawarsita’s prognostications.24

“Professional Dreams” analyses an earlier Javanese literary epic, the *Serat Centhini*. In this meta-narrative of inscription as embodiment, the authors display the power possessed by the wandering bands of the street and countryside to upend and rupture power. But does this really happen? Drawing a broad bow between the present and the past, Anderson selects the tale of a troupe of skilled performers led by the hypnotic conjurer Cebolang. The Adipati’s seduction of the young dancer, Nurwitri is followed by Cebolang’s erotically violent sodomisation

23 Light and shade in their various physical manifestations in Indonesia are regarded as signifiers of events and affective states. These attributions are pan-cultural and multi-religious, but the conceptualisations of light referred to by Anderson in this essay are Javanese.

24 Like hundreds of his friends and followers, Lucia Hartini, Clara Anna and I attended the funeral of journalist and writer Linus Suryadi at Sleman in August 1999. Those close to Linus were fascinated by Ronggawarsita, studying his life and writings closely. Afterwards a small group conducted a séance in which the poet’s spirit was summoned. They sought advice regarding suitable ways to celebrate and care for Suryadi’s literary legacy.
of the Adipati. The troupe manifest terrifying spectacles for the entertainment and seduction of the crowd, their magical and sometimes unpleasant tricks are presented as acts of conjuring. Yet despite shock and violence, nothing really changes as a consequence. The audience awake as though from a trance and are horrified by what has transpired, then vanish back to the known rounds of a bucolic rural existence, accepting their lot.

By republishing this essay in 1998, thereby encouraging debates on the concept of prophecy as history, Anderson analogously suggests Reformasi may be either a millennial re-enactment of an earlier populist dynamic, or a grander and more tumultuous version of the sporadic outbreaks of rebutan (violence) which characterised the New Order. We are left to examine and refute or confirm this proposition in the light of subsequent events.

My analysis of Reformasi owes more to Gramsci than to Pemberton or Anderson. Despite the terrible bloodletting which erupted across the archipelago, I see Reformasi as more than a prolonged rebutan in which many millions ran amuk (Pemberton, 1994: 18; Anderson, 1998: 118). As conducted by the middle-classes, the students and the bulk of the Indonesian population, Reformasi was an energetic and surprisingly orderly process, which nevertheless constituted a valid example of Gramscian political rupture. The gathering strength of this movement created a temporary power vacuum during which many millions voiced their discontent as well as demanding that their aspirations for the future be met. Unlike the conjurers’ audience in the Serat Centhini, six years later, Indonesia’s 220 million people have remained visible and actively engaged in making their political future as a democratic nation work.

Reformasi swept away the repression of civil liberties in Indonesia and overthrew Suharto’s New Order. Suharto lost power in May 1998.27 The majority

25 An Adipati was a local ruler from the minor nobility.

26 There were riots and burnings in Jakarta in 1998. Elsewhere in Java, much of Solo was destroyed. Prolonged violence erupted in Kalimantan, Central Sulawesi, Maluku and Lampung, catalysed by communalism and severe economic difficulty, fuelled by ethnic and religious difference, and reputedly, fanned by interests from within the military itself.

27 Suharto lost power for a variety of reasons. Conservatives argue that he was unable to arrange his succession, being both unwilling and unable to implement the necessary democratic structural
of Indonesians had finally refused to be lulled by the cycles of *sukses* and *ekses* described by Pemberton (1994), rejecting the placatory fantasies of cones of rice beneath chicken coops dramatically transformed into bouquets of flowers, turtles or snakes.\(^{28}\) (Plate 2). Again unlike the conjurers’ audience, they were no longer terrified by the equivalent of the horrible spectacles perpetrated by Cebolang and his crew, and remained uncowed by the conjurers’ reversals of their tricks (Anderson, 1998: 116). Except for those who became the perpetrators of violent spectacles, Indonesians quickly rejected disbelief, remaining active, critical and engaged and the momentum of *Reformasi* continued. They demanded a participatory democracy, a non-repressive state, transparent and equitable in its operations, and a civil society, governed by the rule of law.

In the quest to create this society, the transitional President, B. J. Habibie, replaced President Suharto. A succession of reformist Presidents followed. After the nation’s first democratic election in 1999, the office passed first to Abdurrahman Wahid; then, in 2001, to Megawati Sukarnoputri; and most recently, after the first direct Presidential election, to Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, in September 2004. With these changes, the machinery and structure of politics and governance have been overhauled, along with the repressive legislation and accompanying atmosphere which previously inhibited freedom of expression and stifled culture. Through regional autonomy, the state is now purposely acknowledging the pluralism of its multi-ethnic, multi-religious and geographically spread constituency. However, there remain several major dilemmas, some of which are legal and concern the mechanics of democratic process. Others are administrative, and involve the resolution of conflicts such as the need to conserve and sustainability manage Indonesia’s rich natural resources against the twin pressures of rapid population and economic growth while simultaneously respecting human rights.

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\(^{28}\) Lucia confined such images to paintings like *Serangkai Anugerah / Gifts Gathered Together* (1993), (Plate 2).
Because these problems inform several of Lucia Hartini’s canvases in her recent exhibition “Irama Kehidupan”, I have consulted current sources analysing the issues concerned. As with the development of modern Indonesian art, some of these sources first emerged in newspapers, magazines, journals and the flyers, broadsheets and internet communications of Reformasi research and activist groups. While some commentators prior to the Presidential elections of 2004 argued that the New Order was not yet substantially dismantled, for those working creatively and who populate the pages of this thesis, Reformasi has meant an easing of restrictions, applied stringently and capriciously in the past.

1.2. Art

Lucia Hartini’s work has attracted comment since the late 1970s, at first
locally in newspaper and magazine reviews, then nationally and internationally in catalogue essays accompanying her exhibitions. Almost all these articles were by Indonesian writers on art. Adopting a variety of perspectives in their reviews were: H. Wibowo (1981 - 1992); Dermawan T. (1981 - 2002); Marianto (1985 - 2002); Wiyanto (1985 - 2002); Supangkat (1986 - 2002); Bianpoen and her feature articles on women artists for the *Indonesian Observer* and *The Jakarta Post* (1986 - 2002); Bre Reredana and his *Kompas* Arts editorials (1986 - 1999); Agus Yudo Basuki (1987); Yuliman (1981 - 1991) and FX Mulyadi (2002). Some also contributed in depth catalogue essays for Lucia’s exhibitions as well as media reviews. Marianto and Wiyanto (1982 – 2002), Purnamasidih (1992 - 2002); Suwarno Wisetrotomo (1994 - 2002); Soedarso SP (1994) and Ashadi Siregar (1997) have all written about Indonesian “Surealisme” and aspects of the artist’s work, including its spiritual dimension, for several of her exhibitions.

Later, reproductions of Lucia Hartini’s paintings and very limited discussions about their gestation appeared in books written as compendiums by Indonesian and non-Indonesian authors. The Indonesian writers were joined at various times by foreign scholars like Wright (1990, 1994, 1999 a, b, c, d, 2000); Clark (1992, 1998, 1998); Spanjaard (1988 - 2000, 2003, 2004), Miklouho-Maklai (1991, 1996, 1998) and Turner (1993, 1996, 2002), all of whom had engaged in discussions and research with their Indonesian counterparts. The work of these writers provides insights into the evolution of critical and theoretical writing about Indonesian art from the mid-1970s onwards, among other forms of contemporary cultural expression. These commentaries reveal much about the parameters of possible discourse given the restrictions curtailing reportage and artistic expression in the public domain in Indonesia prior to *Reformasi* and the achievement of press freedom in 1997.

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29 The years across which these articles appeared are indicated in brackets after the writers’ names.

30 Several Indonesian literary figures had been imprisoned for their suspected communist connections during the coup of 1965 - 66, and when released from prison, had lived under house arrest. Prominent examples were Pramoedya Ananta Toer, Putu Oka Sukanta and the painter Djoko Pekik. In 1982, W. S. Rendra spent many months under house arrest. While the work of Rendra, Ratna Sarumpaet, and the filmmakers Slamet Rahardjo and Eros Djaret for instance, was acclaimed abroad, performances and films were banned or played for dramatically shortened seasons within Indonesia; the works of others never passed the censors. Journalists, NGO workers
Arts reviewers carefully negotiated their subject matter for many reasons besides the political, as detailed by Mamannoor (2002: 45, 46, 66 - 97) in *Wacana Kritik Seni Rupa di Indonesia*. For some, the focus of their critical reviewing was academic, assisting and promoting the development of student artists, while others, like the painters Hardi and Aant Kawisar, seized opportunities for polemical debate.\(^ {31}\) Remaining mindful that their opinions could diminish an artist’s right to make a living from their work, reviewers like Dermawan T., wrote for the general public as journalists: their approach was educative, explanatory and promotional. Critics wrote in a climate where audiences might find some art difficult to understand, and political, cultural and religious sensibilities might be easily offended, as had happened to filmmakers, writers and poets during the 1950s (Said, Salim, 1991: 60 - 75). Visual material graphically depicting social realities like violence, poverty, corruption and the dynamics and effects of repression was approached with caution.

Ironically, allusive and cryptic visual and written statements succeeded in generating innovative genres in both the visual arts and writing. Keys to these works were provided in artists’ manifestos, and newspaper and journal reviews of the time. Despite pressures to self-censor their work, the reviews, commentaries and essays by the Indonesian writers mentioned dealt with a wide range of artistic expression. Consistently revealing of their era, they accurately sketched many of the attitudes expressed by artists and cultivated those of their audiences. Frequently contextual and often pragmatic, they also exposed the problems of the marketplace.

Catalogue essays shed light on an Indonesian appreciation of art and debated its place in society. Particular reference has been made to the following

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31 Both Maklai (1991) and Mamannoor (2002: 79, 82) mention Hardi’s commentaries on various controversies beginning with the *Desember Hitam* event of December 1974.

Also cautious in expressing their opinions, international scholars sought to expose Indonesian art to the international public while encouraging its growth at home. Their approaches were culturally contextual, supportive and expository, rather than abrasively critical. They referred to the humanitarian rather than political concerns of artists whose works expressed social comment. In Australia, articles on Indonesian art and artists appeared in newspapers and special interest magazines like *Artlink* whenever Indonesian artists exhibited or visited. They were interviewed and their art reviewed. In the 1980s and early 1990s, writers hesitated to jeopardise the vulnerable situation of artists inside Indonesia by linking the subject matter of their art directly to political issues. Like the artists themselves, some took great pleasure in the use of condensation, allusion and metaphor in their critical and scholarly dissemblings.

However, unlike Dermawan T., Supangkat, Yuliman, and Sumarsam (1995) in his study of the development of gamelan music, foreign writers rarely seemed to address subjects like “the origins of Modern Art in Indonesia”. Some had considered it was not their place to do so. Wright (1994: 5) expressly says she has sought to avoid the pitfall of “genealogically tracking” Indonesian artists by tying their art to Western forerunners. She was typical of the international

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32 Personal communication. Dadang Christanto, Adelaide, August 1992, during Christanto’s residency at the University of South Australia. Other Indonesian visual artists visiting Australia between 1986 and 1993 corroborated his views.
scholars of the visual arts in Asia who met in Melbourne in 1993 determined to
de-centre their studies from the contemporary discourses which postulated
contemporary Eur-American art as the centre of world art, and all new art in the
Third World as either derivative or peripheral to that from the “West” (Clark,
1998). This created a tendency to automatically brand recent Indonesian art
appearing on the world stage as “Contemporary” with little further investigation.
Yet in Indonesia itself, debates surrounding the use of this term had raged since

Many times, Indonesian scholars and writers ventured to the edge of
difficult interfaces. They wished to develop a new theoretical discourse of their
own, distinct from the long traditions of intertextuality characterising Indonesian
discursive styles, to state opinions and sustain them with argument. Yet to situate
one’s writing on art and artists contextually was very difficult. Too many scars
were left by the ideological culture wars before and after the massacres of 1965
and 1966, the imprisonment of artists and writers suspected of communist
sympathies, and the continuing lurking threat posed by the Criminal Codes under
Suharto’s regime. Fearing they might be seen as embracing or as co-opted by
ethnic and racial identity politics, Indonesian writers must first survey this
territory carefully before identifying and establishing the grounds of scholarship.
Writers began to create their own contemporary forms from philosophical,
religious, sociological, literary and experiential sources, a task which dominated
their efforts from 1989 onwards.

As with those from the West, Indonesian writers on art have been greatly
assisted by the artists and performers themselves. Often, the two perspectives of
making and writing about art were combined. Hardi and Kawisar are both painters

33 Hanan (1988: 11 - 20) notes concerns voiced earlier by foreign-based scholars of Indonesian
cinema. It was important to challenge the blinkered mono-cultural pre-war colonial narratives
about Indonesian culture which had characterised early documentaries and newsreels

34 This strategy of avoidance laid foreign writers open to the charge that they had simply subsumed
Asian discourses on Indonesian art within current Western ones because of its global presence.
The premise underlying events like ARX in Perth and the Asia Pacific Triennale in Queensland,
Australia, lay in providing a forum for artists across the Asia Pacific region to meet and develop
critical discourses drawn from their own histories, conceptual frameworks, aesthetics and
concerns.
whose commentaries and reviews have been widely published in the magazines *Horison* and *Kolam*, and in newspapers and magazines like *Kompas* and *Tempo*. Marianto, Purnamasidih and Harsono are graphic artists, as well as authors of significant publications and all have curated exhibitions. Arahmaiani is a performance artist and curator, who, since 2000, has written essays on art from a feminist perspective in catalogue essays and in the journal *Mitra*, (Ed/7, Jakarta, Mei - Juli 2001). Her opinions frame the rationale of the exhibitions and events she curates. Arahmaiani has also written poetry, a form linked to her singing and performance work.

A musician and skilled reader of poetry, literary metaphors have long been woven into Lucia Hartini’s work.35 In 1999, she maintained that catalogue essays and detailed reviews of her exhibition work were the most thorough and satisfying sources charting her artistic development to date. As in the call and response of a conversation or in a musical reprise, the essayists replied to Lucia’s offering of her “surealis” art in a contemporary reworking of Central Javanese cultural tradition. Although her paintings are now dispersed in collections throughout Asia and further afield, Lucia has maintained a record of her collectors, facilitating in-depth study of her oeuvre. Short references to her early works abound in art books which chart the development of Indonesian modern and contemporary art, key examples being Wright’s compendium on Indonesian art, *Soul, Spirit and Mountain: Preoccupations of Contemporary Indonesian Painters*, (1994), Clark’s book *Modern Asian Art* (1998), and the prolific writings of Marianto (1994, 1995), including his University of Wollongong Doctoral thesis (1997). Recently revised and published as *Surealisme Yogyakarta* (2001), this book is admirable for its public recognition of the disastrous intersection between Hartini’s professional success and her difficult first marriage, and for cautiously broaching the issue of domestic violence and women’s rights in Islamic marriages.

As with Supangkat’s *Indonesian Modern Art and Beyond* (1997), these compendiums are now well-known reference texts, although Marianto’s work

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Indonesian writers about art engage an analogous extrapolation developed from the coralline rocks which appear frequently in Lucia’s paintings. Linguistically, *karangan* or coral reef also refers to “an inset, a composition, or a piece of writing” (Echols and Shadily, Vol.I, 1990: 261).
touches on the biographical and includes a more extensive account of Lucia Hartini and her painting. Marianto’s focus on the Yogyakartan painters draws analogies between the work of the “Surealis Yogya” and specifically Central Javanese linguistic forms and embedded cultural meanings. He explains how artists circumvented official restrictions in depicting social issues and humanitarian concerns by encasing their visual references within the imagistic smoothness synonymous with New Order cultural values. During Reformasi, Marianto carefully introduces the political, so developing in his own voice aspects of Wright’s earlier work.

Wright’s (1994) book, *Soul, Spirit and Mountain: Preoccupations of Contemporary Indonesian Painters* focuses on a selection of modern and contemporary artists. She introduces the new art of the late 1980s and early 1990s, while referring back to selected works from preceding periods, pursuing socio-cultural and religious strands of influence, crucial to an understanding of a range of widely differing works. Selecting several ubiquitous symbols appearing in Indonesian modern and contemporary art, she examines their long historical pedigree as well as the variety of formal treatments and contextual and symbolic meanings conferred on them by the many different artists surveyed.

In the Preface Wright quotes a passage from Toer which describes the Mountain as *pesangon*.

> The Mountain is simply *‘pesangon’*, (the totality of cultural and personal baggage one is given during one’s formative years), with its intenseness symbolized by the peaks; the temple is the knowledge, learning, intelligence and wisdom that could be abstracted from, formulated out of, the mountain, while the sun is the ‘I’, in its integrity. It is this sun that makes everything beneath visible or invisible, bright or dark. When all three are present in the mysticum, then the creative process has begun. The mountain and the temple are the tangible raw materials which only come to life when struck by the sun’s rays ... And with the aid of this diagram, literary criticism, and art criticism in general, can trace the mountain which makes possible the erection of the temple, and then the sun that illuminates it.


A discussion of Hartini’s early works also appears in Maklai’s unpublished M.A. thesis manuscript, *The Cryptic Image: The Surreal in Contemporary Art from Yogyakarta* (1996). Maklai’s earlier monograph, *Exposing Society’s Wounds* (1991), describes the Yogyakarta-trained avant-garde beginning with the *Gerakan Seni Rupa Baru*. While providing a genealogy of their origins within a taxonomy of Indonesian Modern Art, Maklai does not attempt to trace the origins of Indonesian Modernism in detail, as do Supangkat (1997) and Yuliman (2001). Instead, her emphasis is on the nature of the relationships which Indonesian artists perceived and manifested between their art and society. After spending eighteen months extensively documenting interviews from many artists, researching reviews and a plethora of other documents, she writes about their uniquely perceived role as the moral conscience of society.

Artists regarded themselves and were seen as the bearers of witness at many levels of experience, communicated through their art. Protected by *wahyu* (inspiration) and the control of light, shade and colour, contemporary Indonesian artists of the 1980s and early 1990s still saw themselves as mediating between humankind, god and the cosmos. Such views were frequently expressed to me when studying in Yogyakarta in 1974, as they were to Maklai sixteen years later. They confirm Holt’s (1967) earlier observation in *Art in Indonesia, Continuities and Change* regarding the Yogyakartan artists in particular:

> The artist’s conscience is inseparable from their moral conscience. They would never say “The picture is the thing” - but would insist it has a social significance.
> (Holt, 1967: 214)

In the Preface to *Exposing Society’s Wounds*, Maklai (1991: 2) suggests that the Yogyakartan view of the creation of art as a moral duty resonated with the
views of Josef Beuys, who saw artists as the healers of society’s wounds. Conferring with some younger contemporary artists who had worked with Beuys in Europe, Maklai examines the influence of this sympathetic connection. Her argument is crucial to an understanding of Hartini’s work, particularly those works she regarded as thematically affiliated with the *Arus Baru,* and later, those special paintings arising from her artistically mediated rendition of visionary shamanism arising from spiritual experience and its resulting personal and social applications.

In his papers for the Second Asia Pacific Triennale, Brisbane (1996: 26 - 29; 27 - 29), Supangkat argues for a unique evolution of Indonesian art in the twentieth century. Particular examples of Indonesian art are perceived as “Contemporary” on the world stage rather than simply “New”. However, as in other Third World situations, one cannot consider Indonesian art only in terms of the evolutionary progress of modernism thrust upon all developing societies by the domination of the West and further encouraged by textbook accounts of the history of Euro-American art. Instead, Supangkat argues that Modern Indonesian art has also evolved according to plural Indonesian cultural-intellectual traditions, including those of appropriation and incorporation. The most recent examples of such work have continued to develop on the basis of Indonesian modernism and are thus contemporary in Indonesia. But not all will be “Contemporary” in a global sense.

In *Indonesian Modern Art and Beyond,* published in 1997, Supangkat argues that Modern Indonesian art had its genesis in the already hybridised culture of the courts of Central Java. The fusion of Central Javanese concepts of *kagunan* (fineness), with European Fine Art traditions of painting and sculpture and Chinese portraiture established a particular path for the development of Modernism in Indonesia, and certainly established a relevant historical precedent for Indonesian “Surealisme”. Supangkat argues that Modern Indonesian art was a


38 Writing on the evolution of gamelan music in *Gamelan, Cultural Interaction and Musical Development in Central Java,* Sumarsam (1995), advances a similar line, referring to the Javanese courts as home to a “Mestizo culture”.

hybrid from the beginning, inherently defying the quest for purity canonised by Western European Modernism. Furthermore, although concepts and images from the modernising West entering Indonesia encountered extant practices of appropriation and hybridisation, why should an account of the development of art in Indonesia be constrained by the categorisations of the West? While many recent examples of Modern Indonesian art actually resembled Western Post-modernism in their appropriations and pluralism, they were simply seen by Indonesians themselves as “modern”, proving one must examine the biases inherent in historiography carefully, lest they “kill” both the discourse and the non-Western art itself (Supangkat, 1997: 7).39

Like development in Indonesia, the evolution of Indonesian art has been uneven, overlapping and pluralist. Supangkat describes the “Surealis Yogya” as the youthful avant-garde rebellion against the Decorativists and their prohibitions on Realism. While the very concept of an avant-garde which challenges and replaces an established artistic canon is a quintessentially Modernist idea, originating in the West, Supangkat suggests that the particular qualities of the “Surealis” and Hyper-real is painters exemplify only one part of the picture of the hybridi “multi-modernities” he proposes. Supangkat continues this theme in The Mutation: Painstaking Realism in Indonesian Contemporary Painting (1997), a collection of catalogue essays accompanying the exhibition of the same name, curated as an artistic exchange between Indonesia and Japan. In these texts, Hyperrealists have now become Realis Cermat (Painstaking Realists). Supra-realism and its fascination with transience, transubstantiation and the transformative is now called Mutant Realism, while Fantastical Surrealism describes those for whom states of mind and the metaphysical was paramount (Supangkat and Ushiroshji, 1997). These terms tortuously engulfed the former “Beautiful Surrealism” of Lucia Hartini’s work.

In a collection of essays now posthumously collated in Dua Senirupa / Two Arts, Selected Writings of Sanento Yuliman (Hasan, ed., 2001), Yuliman

39 While I agree with the need for caution, it has actually become very hard to practice such rigour convincingly, because of the interpenetration of influence in a shrinking global world. Nevertheless, like Supangkat and Papastergiadis (2003), I agree we should not abandon the effort.
(1994) argues for a twentieth century post-Independence archipelagic hybridity. He suggests that the infusion of influences from the great craft traditions of modern Indonesia’s diverse cultures contributed new forms and perceptions, a new energy and vibrance. Sanento prefers to consider kriya, handicrafts, as the arts of everyday use rather than the “low-art” postulated as the antithesis of the “fine art” traditions of the West, defined as sculpture and painting. He proposes a revaluing of these traditions in their own right, arguing that Indonesia’s craft traditions have been responsible for important shifts in thinking in Indonesian visual arts in the modern period. Yet when Sanento (2001) discusses Indonesian painting, he does so in terms of volume, mass, composition, movement, motif, colour and detail, the formalist terminology of Modernism honed in Europe. However, he was able to apply a more Indonesian perspective to critical discussions of new Indonesian sculpture, assemblage, installation and performance.

In his doctoral dissertation, Marianto (1997) acknowledges the hybridity of Indonesia’s contemporary visual arts as the product of cultural clash and economic disjuncture. Developing Supangkat’s position regarding the Indonesian avant-garde, Marianto suggests that, conceptually, the “Surealis Yogya” were the descendants of the great Indonesian Realist painters of the 1950s and 1960s, although they were unable, and unwilling, to acknowledge this influence directly. He largely refutes Spanjaard (2003: 161, 187) who argues that historically, and despite their later pronouncements, Yogyakarta’s “Surealis” artists, developed renaissance oil paint techniques, and with them, a “New Renaissance” interest in metaphysical content and styles only after Diana Vandenberg taught there in 1986. Vandenberg subsequently encouraged three of these artists to study in the Netherlands. In Chapter 4, I also dispute Spanjaard’s argument in relation to Lucia Hartini and Ivan Sagito, whose early works I first saw in 1985 when their metaphysically “Surealis” as opposed to Meta-realist style was already well established.

In this thesis, I suggest that Realism could not be challenged in any free and open sense because it was actively discouraged for political reasons. Decorativism was a convenient and officially sanctioned replacement, rather than
a development of the earlier style. Neither a reaction nor a challenge to Realism, Decorativism was not avant-garde. I suggest that the younger artists who found Decorativism unsatisfying, discovered a creative, temporally relevant and highly constructive way to adapt and continue the legacy of figurative and expressive realism whilst simultaneously raiding Decorativism. Regardless of politics, their “New Art” embodied a resonant national consciousness as distinct from a National Cultural consciousness because of Indonesian Realism’s association with the birth of the Indonesian nation. Despite and almost because of the strictures imposed, they contributed much that was new. They were avant-garde.

Marianto argues strongly for the particular influence which the regional and local had on the vision of its artists. Discussing the artists of Yogyakarta and Central Java between 1975 and 1994, he says they realised both the dynamic of the concept of difference and the power of the particular. Like Supangkat and Yuliman, he looks at Indonesian factors first, and then beyond, seeking situational parallels and insights in the work of international theorists, not all of whom are from the West. While different in emphasis, Mamannoor (2002: 31 - 32) advances a version of Supangkat’s argument. He considers that the development of art in Indonesia, like many other intellectual endeavours, has followed particular streams, already indigenous to Indonesia’s archipelagic cultures. Rather than following European models, Indonesian art has evolved internally, and often hybridically, within these streams while maintaining a dialogue with the wider world. Because the concerns of Indonesian artists now self-consciously reflect their times and they position themselves accordingly, their works may be designated as “Modern” or “Contemporary”.

Mamannoor makes a particular space for the spiritual and cosmological in his treatment of styles of criticism in Indonesian art, devoting Part Two of Wacana Kritik Seni Rupa di Indonesia (2002: 123 - 175) to the complexity of this critical genre alone. His theoretical position has been developed in conjunction with artists whose work deals with spiritual and cosmological subjects. Although Mamannoor does not dwell on Lucia Hartini’s paintings, his approach has assisted me comprehend several aspects of her art. He claims that contemporary cosmological art is a unique genre within Indonesian art, sharing a closer
conceptual commonality with other forms of Asian art than it does with the art of the West.\textsuperscript{40}

In the era of global diasporas, I suggest the generalisations of Mamannoor’s wider position are debatable, a point made by Wisetrotomo (2002) in relation to Asian Christian art. For most artists, the visual field is now overcrowded with a myriad of images from different sources. However, regarding Mamannoor’s overview of Indonesian art, like Supangkat, I agree there is no single nationally applicable continuum. Besides uneven development and the unequal distribution of resources, there has always been a tendency for artists to work as individuals within groups or in the style of particular masters. Completely auteurist artists, especially painters and particularly women like Kartika Affandi and Lucia Hartini, are rare indeed (Wright, 1999 a). Different aesthetic values and subjective emphases are reflected in the art forms created by various ethnic and religious groups. Examples abound in Balinese art and in the abstractions derived from Islamic calligraphy, popular throughout the archipelago.

The new art which became known internationally as “Contemporary Indonesian Art” in the 1980s and 1990s comprised sophisticated and often highly cerebral hybrid works. These were created in practice and in discourse with several pre-existing streams of Indonesian art and performance rather than as purely expressive or decorative works. A new generation of globally networked younger artists now works out of the hybrid streams so created. They reference concepts having international currency, to which they contribute local and Indonesian compositional schema and points of view. By contrast, Justine Boow’s regionally limited study, \textit{Mbatik Manah: Symbols and Status in Central Javanese Batik} (1986) contributed an appreciation of Lucia Hartini’s painting from a surprising, even traditional, angle. Boow’s work on the structural homology underlying local modes of image formation, social organization and insights into particular ways of thinking in Central Java, prompted a specific consideration of the characteristic compositional types, imagery and disposition of forms evident in Hartini’s paintings.

\footnote{Mamannoor (2002: 167, 170) provides diagrams of his analysis showing the processes of creating and critically evaluating cosmological works.}
Included in Boow’s study is the application of Islamic aesthetics to the design of creative works, already synthesised by centuries of Hindu and Buddhist influence. I appreciate her clarification of difficult concepts such as the abstract aesthetic of *semu*, and the various forms of *rasa* or feeling and sensibility upon which contemporary Indonesian visual artists and performers continue to draw today.\(^{41}\) Both subjects are dealt with further in Ann Kumar and John McGlynn’s (1996) visually beautiful compendium, *Illuminations: the Writing Traditions of Indonesia*, and in Robyn Maxwell’s work on the textile traditions of Southeast Asia, *Textiles of Southeast Asia: Tradition, Trade and Transformation* (2003). Beyond providing visual evidence of the enormous range of two-dimensional compositional structures and iconography in archipelagic Indonesia, these volumes offer insights into the relationships between the conceptual aspects of image construction and cultural reference.

In his many essays and newspaper reviews now anthologised, the late Linus Suryadi A.G. (1994, 1999), focuses specifically on the local in its historic and/or contemporary dimensions. Suryadi claims that since the early 1970s, Yogyakartan intellectuals, including visual artists, were engaged in a critical and ecumenical reworking of Javanese culture, distinct from the priyayi Javanism espoused as National Culture by the New Order state. Their efforts have created a uniquely regional perspective ensconced within its own powerful Central Javanese intellectual traditions: that of the liberal intelligentsia, many of whom are Catholic or aligned with neo-modernist Islam. Hatley (1999: 271, fn. 9) notes that Yogyakarta’s Sultan Hamengku Buwono X continued to sponsor politically critical creative expression from 1988 onwards.

Suryadi’s work reflects a critique from within the body of the cultural

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\(^{41}\) *Semu* describes something which is unclear, abstract, ambiguous, even secretive, a concept of abstraction relating to forms of periodic and decorative patterning deriving from Indian and Islamic aesthetic theories (Boow, 1988: 96). *Rasa* refers to sentiment or feeling as “the sum of, but much greater than, perception through the five senses (*panca indra*). It is the pure sixth sense, *rasa sejati*. *Rasa sejati* is located in the heart, but is distinct from *rasa jaba*, feelings of the heart” (Weiss, 1977: 243, cited in Boow, 1988: 97). The Hindu *Natyasastra* describes eight basic sentiments or types of *rasa*. These are: *srngara*, the erotic; *lasya*, the comic; *karuna*, the pathetic; *raudra*, the furious; *vira*, the heroic; *bhayanaka*, the terrible; *didhatsa*, the odious and *abdhuta*, the marvellous (Boow, 1988: 97), a division which also exists in Java. Furthermore, *rasa* is crucial to Javanese cultural and artistic expression because “No meaning proceeds without sentiment” (Sears, 1980: 14).
value-system selected by the New Order state as the basis for a National Culture, whose cultural syncretism and hybrid elements made such challenges possible. *Perbatasan / Boundaries* situates Lucia Hartini’s association within this specifically Yogyakartan and Central Javanese intellectual ethos. Her art is shown in relation to the collections in which her paintings are housed and/or exhibited, primarily the Bentara Budaya Galleries attached to the newspaper *Kompas* in Yogyakarta and Jakarta.

While including the opinions of several notable writers and journalists, Sparringa’s comprehensive historical overview, *The Role of the Intellectuals in New Order Indonesia* (1997), generally excludes artists, poets and creative writers. Sparringa does not explore their nexus with groups of intellectuals similar to those mentioned above, who were the patrons, critics and publicists for the artists and writers discussed in this thesis. His attitudinal samples are drawn from members of the intelligentsia positioned in the military, the bureaucracy, academia, journalism and religious circles. These thinkers were in positions to enact their opinions (Sparringa, 1997: 89 - 90), but were rarely able to do so. By comparison, most of the artists and creative figures in my study were free agents, performing their role of society’s conscience-keepers, in an embryonic public sphere as yet unprotected by the legal and administrative structures of a politically active civil society.

The intellectuals and public servants of Sparringa’s study had reason to remain nameless. Those in this thesis were quite happy to be named in written work for their creative identities were their livelihood. Yet despite their traditional moral authority, artists remained politically and economically vulnerable even though they may have been attached to art academies and/or sheltered by systems of patronage. Filmmakers were more vulnerable still. If we are to accept the view of W. S. Rendra, who favoured the power of the marginal position of creative work for its comparative freedom despite the risks involved, then the choice and/or contingency of an *empu*’s sphere of influence is a personal one.

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42 Although Sparringa’s interviewees were described by position and affiliation only, many were still recognisable to their fellow Indonesians and to foreign observers. Since Reformasi, real names are most usually attached in similar studies or public enquiries into various improprieties.
Artists could have abandoned creative work to become the public servants, religious clerics, academics, journalists and military personnel who inform Sparringa’s study. Instead, most respected their calling and guarded their independence, points made strongly by both Lucia Hartini and her first husband Arifin when interviewed regarding their exhibition works in 1981. Instead, artists chose struggle and creative effort rather than the comparatively more secure and conservative paths of serving the national development effort described above. The landscape of their life’s journey resembles the rocky isthmuses, passageways and emotional gestures evident in many of Lucia Hartini’s canvases. In these paintings she elicits our interaction, engagement and understanding, with her journey as an artist, an Indonesian and as a woman. One such example is the strange landscape in “Dari Ufuk Planet ...” / “Planetary horizons ...” (1990), which featured in the 1990 exhibition Lamunan dan Metafisika at Archipelago Gallery, Jakarta, which graced the cover of Lucia’s first major solo exhibition in 1992, at the Bentara Budaya, Jakarta, and (Plate 3).

1.3. Gender

Interrogations of gender within the wider contexts of Indonesian society are suggested in Perbatasan / Boundaries, but are dealt with more explicitly in this thesis. Theoretical preparations for Pusaran / Vortex, my first film with Lucia, focused on discourses of difference derived from Derrida (1990) and Kristeva (1981), who writes:

Sexual difference which is at once biological, physiological, and relative to reproduction – is translated by and translates a difference in relation to subjects to the symbolic contract which is the social contract; a difference, then, in the relationship to power, language and meaning.

The sharpest and most subtle point of feminist subversion brought about by the new generation will henceforth be situated on the terrain of the inseparable conjunction of the sexual and the symbolic, in order to try to discover, first of the female, and then, in the end, that of the individual.

(Kristeva, 1981: 21)

Since 1994, I have regarded gender issues in Indonesia as sites of in-culture negotiation in which campaigns to protect women’s rights and foster individual self-empowerment operating in conjunction with wider structural social change aimed to ameliorate women’s conditions of existence and work. By 1998, most Indonesian women I knew were well aware of their sexual difference and its behavioural and symbolic codifications. For them, the struggle was to knowingly maintain their sense of self and improve their situation in society in times of rapid change and increasing regimentation. Through personal empowerment, they would gain a political voice.

Thus, as a filmmaker and scholar, I began by working with the visual representations of sosok perempuan (women’s issues) which Lucia Hartini
created from her own experience. Through personal struggles, she identified with the gender-based difficulties of many Indonesian women, including that of domestic or family violence, a subject extensively considered in Chapters 5 and 6. Seeking to enhance my empathetic understanding of Lucia’s situation prior to filming, I canvassed studies of gender relating to women in the developing world such as those by Trinh in “L’innecriture: Feminisme et litterature” (1983), Woman, Native, Other (1989) and Framer Framed (1992), and then by Tsing (1993) in In the Realm of the Diamond Queen: Marginality in an Out-of-the-Way Place.

As postulated by Trinh (1992: 133) in Framer Framed, the feminist struggle is “not just against forms of domination and exploitation, but also against less easily locateable forms of subjection or of binarist subjectivity.” Was I to consider Lucia’s situation in terms of sexism experienced by Indonesian women, measured according to Western experience and scholarship? Or was I to look at my subject from other perspectives, which, accepting cultural differences in gender produced by religion and custom, advocated women’s empowerment as an instrumental strategy? What did “empowerment” in the Indonesian context mean beyond making a virtue of resistance? Was this another Western concept imposed from outside, or was it something more gradual, a consciousness emerging from within the women themselves? In late New Order Indonesia, the role of the state in the lives of women and their families was impossible to ignore. Thorough consideration of the impact of education and development on women’s socialisation and awareness of their situation was necessary.

Reference is made to a diverse range of studies by Indonesian and international scholars, focusing on the situation of women within their families and communities in Indonesia in terms of gender, economics, development, labour, religious praxis and political standing. Examples are Saskia Weeringa’s histories of the women’s movement in Indonesia (1995, 2000); Barbara Leigh (1993) on education and employment patterns; Norma Sullivan (1994) on women and development in Masters and Managers. A Study of Gender Relations in

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Urban Java; Krishna Sen and Maila Stivens (1998) edited collection of essays, Gender and Power in Affluent Asia; and Susan Blackburn’s (2001) anthology Love, Sex and Power: Women in South-East Asia. Indonesia was changing fast, and, like Lucia, as a creator of visual representations, I was rethinking my position as researcher and filmmaker.

Darmiyanti Muchtar’s M. Phil. Thesis, The Rise of the Indonesian Women’s Movement in the New Order State (1999), examines the distinctive new and autonomous women’s movement emerging from the interplay between the gender politics characteristic of the New Order and the forces for democratisation and development. These forces provided an entry point for global discourses on women. Muchtar (1999: 3) argues that this autonomous movement initially developed from a “growing awareness of women’s issues, (and was) not a women’s movement”: it operated outside the womens’ organizations like Dharma Wanita and the PKK, which were part of the apparatus of the state. This awareness informs Lucia Hartini’s art over the decade 1986 to 1996. Lucia, like many other women artists, was part of the growing body of professional but informally organized women for whom gender was an explicit issue in relation to rewards for work and professional standing in the public domain. However, while painting might be seen as a small-scale enterprise and a suitable arena for female labour participation in developing economies, for Lucia, it was first and foremost a conceptual and aesthetic form of cultural expression.

An account of Lucia and her work since 1996 is featured in Bianpoen’s (2000) overview essay, “Indonesian Women Artists: Between Vision and Formation” in the English language version of Indonesian Women: The Journey Continues (Oey-Gardiner and Bianpoen, 2000). Bianpoen provides short biographies of a broad cross-section of contemporary Indonesian women artists, together with well-researched, concise descriptions of their work. In depth reflexive studies of the work of many women artists have appeared in the countless art reviews Bianpoen has written over the years for the Indonesian Observer, the Jakarta Post and on-line sites like Javafred. Choosing the now popular medium of biography to study the lives of women artists in society, as opposed to the gossip-driven reportage of an earlier era, Indonesian Women: The
Journey Continues reflects the concerns and tastes of its times.

The general focus of this anthology remains informative and instrumentally and exhortatively pro-active. The book contains a foreword and seventeen essays written by Indonesian women, mostly working in academia and journalism. The essayists consider gender roles and relations, issues of gender equity and the analysis of women’s relationship with power flows, the states of everyday between-ness experienced by an increasing number of Indonesian women. They concentrate on developments arising from the Family Welfare Movement, women’s service organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Health, Education and Business, and the Women’s Movement during the New Order, and the impact of these organizations on governance post-Reformasi. The anthology includes discussion of women’s representation in the Indonesian parliaments and upper levels of administration, also discussed in studies by Suryakusuma (1987, 1996) and Istiadah (1995). Muchtar (1999) addresses similar issues in her thesis.

Gardiner and Bianpoen’s anthology is a new, inclusive and topically comprehensive addition to the compendiums of prominent Indonesian women published during the New Order. Similar approaches are beginning to appear in the large and sometimes lavishly illustrated “coffee-table” art books now being published on prominent Indonesian artists. Most noticeable is the shift away from portraying artists as “tokoh” or “personalities” in isolation from their social base and philosophical beliefs. Their artistic and professional development is comprehensively charted, while their lives are now portrayed in a fuller sense, told through the voices of family, friends, peers, colleagues and business

45 Istiadah cites several compendiums, for example, Masadiah’s listing of Islamic women prominent in New Order Indonesia. The large compendium, Kebijakan Kebudayaan di Masa Orde Baru (2001), published by the Indonesian Institute for Sciences and the Ford Foundation, covers education, religion, ethnic affairs, visual arts, language and literature. Not only do many women receive mention, but many have participated in its compilation. The publication’s focus is not solely on personality, but is related to achievements and organizational participation.

46 There are now many of these written about contemporary artists like Dede Eri Supria, Teguh Ostenrik, Erika Hesti-Wahyuni, Ay Tjoe Christine, Entang Wiharso, as well as on artists of the revolutionary generation such as Sudjana Kerton and Hendra Gunawan. Proportionately, there are still very few about Indonesia’s women artists, who until now, have been individually represented by small catalogues and larger, more comprehensive group exhibition booklets.
associates. Moving beyond facile representation of the artist’s character, these biographies are a telling in the round, resembling documentary films told from multiple perspectives. Mostly they present bodies of information without necessarily investigating the artist’s work in depth. By contrast, Wright’s (1999a) on-line article comparing Kartika Affandi and Lucia Hartini discusses the lives and recent oeuvre of the two artists she describes as “identity pioneers” in considerable detail, expanding further on points noted in “Soul, Spirit and Mountain (1994). In her (1998) essay, “Lucia Hartini, Javanese Painter: Against the Grain Towards Herself”, Wright makes extensive use of interviews with the artist to discuss several key works from 1993 onwards, supporting her interpretations with feminist sources.

In the essay, “Texts Through Time”, published in Aesthetic Tradition and Cultural Transition in Java and Bali, Peggy Choy (1984: 71 - 73) describes a Solonese performance tradition in which the wooden box containing wayang golek puppets is the body from which various aspects of a person’s character are successively drawn and activated by the puppeteer. The monologue performed by the dalang represents an abstract personal internalisation of the particular lakon selected. The performance style is an exploration of the contingent self – an earlier version of the progression away from one’s ancestry through identity towards the fulfilment of destiny posited by Anderson (1998) as the aim of Soetomo’s autobiography. So it is with these biographies about Indonesian artists. The book is the body from which the author animates the artist’s life and work, assisted by those who know him/her best.

Yet for those who lack a window into an artist’s life, or who, for professional reasons, must attempt impartiality when permitted to document that life, such as myself with Lucia Hartini, questions concerning the truthfulness of these documents arise. For instance, Linda Connor and Patsy Asch (2004: 164), Australian ethnographic filmmakers active in Indonesia between 1979 and 1991, adopted Teresa de Lauretis’ definition of gender as an approach to understanding their subject and her world. This definition regards gender as “the set of effects produced in bodies, behaviour and social relations”, which are further created (replicated?) by the deployment of “a complex political technology”.
Connor and Asch then argue that these sets of effects are also culturally connected systems of representations. Gendered identities are constructed through technologies of representation. Differently available to men and women, they function between and across sexual duality. Again, they are contingent. Like books, newspapers and magazines, paintings, films and television are technologies of representation, and are thus instruments which conjure with and frame gender, exerting a powerful influence on our consciousness. These representations are further constructed at the point of depiction and of reception, an argument productively informing my analysis of Lucia Hartini’s work.

Yet as an individual Indonesian woman and as an artist creating representations, Lucia faced similar dilemmas. Many of her powerfully condensed images are representations of gender issues, but might also double as intensely communicative self-portraits. Although often highly emotive, these paintings have a formal coolness reflecting a dispassionate consideration of gender roles and expectations when seen as something other than a discourse emphasising inscription as embodiment. This is pertinent when considering Lucia’s very real struggles against aspects of her enculturation as a Javanese woman and her fears as an artist. Her aspirations, the pressures of her art production and career, and the fulfilment of her talent as destiny, often conflicted severely with social expectations as well as personal situation and inclination. Although apparently unguided by feminist theory, Lucia Hartini did attempt to look from the outside at the realities of her life, her attitudes and the emotions so produced. Consequently, several of her major paintings may be read beyond the personal as representational works which demonstrate not only an awareness of the condition of Indonesian women, but also of the transformative potential of the contingent self in a time of seemingly permanent transition and the resistance to oppression and repression thus enabled.47

As well as charting her undeniable success as an artist, I trace Lucia’s later personal re-empowerment through spiritual growth and a mastery of speech.

47 Discussing the conceptual sources which have influenced her work as a filmmaker, Trinh (1992: 233) maintains that “post-structuralism is what it is today thanks to non-Western thinking”. Her film *Naked Spaces – Living is Round* (1985) is a similar exploration of the contingency of self, generating possibilities for exploration and change (Trinh, 1992: 3 - 45).
Cixous (1987, 1997) encourages women to use writing as an artist paints, to probe linguistic and cultural difference, “undo repression and endow the woman with increased force in matters of re-engendering social and linguistic relations” (Andermatt Conley, 1992: xvi and xviii). Tsing (1993) provides the better analogy in situations where women may not necessarily have acquired the skills to read and write, but her argument has merit for the telling of Indonesian women’s stories generally. As noted by essayists like Ipong Purnamasidih in 1992, Lucia was not content to paint aspects of herself into her canvases, but wished also to crowd the pores of her canvases with stories. Her success furthered her confidence and she continued painting.

After many years of cautious speech and depoliticisation under the New Order, many women outside the state-sanctioned women’s organizations felt they also needed encouragement in framing their opinions and speaking out. This was so for Lucia Hartini, despite her professional success. Concerned that the audience for her paintings seemed unprepared to seek past aesthetic appreciation for a deeper understanding through rasa (feeling) (Wisetrotomo, 1994), Lucia had long felt inhibited and frustrated when presenting her views publicly. Eventually she was able to reject a popular representation threatening to stigmatise her as a “suffering female vis-à-vis the successful and heroic male” figures she encountered professionally (Heryanto, 2000: 302 - 308).

Papers by Hatley (1988, 1999) and Sen’s writings on media in Indonesia (1988, 1994, 2000) have provided relevant insights concerning the actual construction of representations of Indonesian women in the media, particularly in theatre and film. By contrast, Sita Aripurnami (1991, 2000) was one of the few Indonesian women writing on the subject of women’s representation in Indonesian cinema. Sen engages the post-modern strategy of disorderly readings to heighten her critiques of gender representations in Indonesian feature film. Hatley’s careful dissection of characters in Indonesian theatrical productions and

48 For an explanation of rasa, see Ch. 1: 51, fn. 42.

49 As a technique of empowerment prompting activist engagement, disorderly readings work well, although without preliminary theoretical framing, such readings may sometimes become counter-productive for scholarship (but not for creative production).
film reveals the conflict generated by truthful and enlightened characterisations of both women and men where these intersect with tradition and conventional opinion of the time. She also discusses the difficulty of consistently staging such representations, whether in drama or filmically. Consequently, in the late New Order period, parody and satire emerged as the preferred safe option for passing comment and telling risky tales.

During the Reformasi period, Hatley (1999: 272 - 282) adopted a broad-brush approach in her commentaries on theatre, be it from the margins or mainstream. Her chapter in Reformasi: Crisis and Change in Indonesia considers women’s particular contribution to the movement for political reform and social change. Hatley describes the Ruwatan Bumi (Earth Awakening) events and the many performances and exhibitions centred on the theme of violence towards women, referring both to violence perpetrated by the state and the mass rapes of Chinese women and girls in May 1998. The latter compounded the connection of state and community violence with the perceived disrespect in Indonesian communities for women generally. Lucia Hartini participated in several of these protest exhibitions and art events. Women’s sentiments and protests were linked to global initiatives on the celebration of universal human rights day, 10-12-1998 and the visit of a special UN Rappoteur on Violence Against Women (Hatley, 1999: 82 - 83). In the same volume, Rita Kolibonso (1999: 335 - 340) covers these events in detail specifically from the perspective of gender. Networking and the internet enabled many millions of women to share these tragedies, struggles and protests before they appeared in written form.

Post-Reformasi, we are able to read contemporary Indonesian female voices on such topics, in essays, novels and autobiographies. Aripurnami’s (2000: 50 - 65) essay, “Whiny, Finicky, Bitchy, Stupid and ‘Revealing’: The Image of Women in Indonesian Films”, contains much detailed information about the representation of women in the roles scripted for them, as well as the public’s expectation of their performances. The editorials and articles by Ibu Toety Herati among many others for the arts journal Mitra; interviews recorded with female directors and stars like Christine Hakim (Rhode, 2000), the performance artist Arahmaiani, Lucia and her sister Clara Anna all provide incisive critiques of
conventional representations and provoke analysis of audience response to plotlines and characters. In mid-2001, I interviewed a number of younger filmmakers and media personalities who were keen to expand on the dramatic and documentary opportunities for Indonesian women in cinema on either side of the camera. They discussed their feelings and responses to perceived restrictions and expectations relating to gender with frankness and clarity.

The popular expression of a range of perceptions, insights and discourses of action and empowerment can be found in the radio broadcasts of the women of Yayasan Perempuan and Suara Ibu Peduli during Reformasi, collated in Jurnal Perempuan Diskusi Radio (1999). The broadcasts highlight subjects important to Indonesian women, now finding their voice in greater numbers than ever before. Panels featuring speakers from diverse cultural, intellectual and religious backgrounds were formed. Speakers were united by their concern for the issues important in generating a civil society. Hot topics engaged by the four part program Edition No.7 entitled Pesan Perdamaian Perempuan (Women’s Demands for Peace) were “Reflections on Violence Towards Women”; “Women Take to the Streets”; “The Murder of Ita Marthadinata”; and “Ending the Joint Role of the Armed Forces”. The panel featured the astronomer Dr. Karlina Lesono, Nuriyah Gus Dur, the activist Gadis Arivia (now a filmmaker) and Suster Fransisco from Santa Ursula College respectively.

Other programs addressed racism, violence and social aggression, the construction and representation of gender, the role of informal women’s organizations and cooperatives, the development of civil society and the politicisation of the middle class. Despite the fact that many activists, students and cultural workers believed that changes to the law lay at the heart of Reformasi, public attention has only recently been paid to intensely problematic gender-based issues such as family violence, terror and family law. Discussion on the nature of civil society also entailed a consideration of the legal status of women in Indonesia, both secular and in relation to Islam. These issues were examined through focus groups during the Reformasi era. They appear in academic papers,

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and campaigns to raise consciousness through informal and formal groups and the publication and wide distribution of informative topic-focused web pages and practical handbooks such as that by Farida Ciciek (1999) on domestic violence. The complex nexus between religion, culture and the state is addressed where appropriate throughout this thesis.

1.4. Spirituality

It is impossible to ignore a discussion of gender roles and expectations and gender-based conflicts in any focus on Lucia Hartini’s life and work. It is also necessary to understand the importance of the psycho-spiritual and the mystical as parts of a lived cosmology derived from Kejawen and expressed through imagery drawn from the natural world and personal experience in Hartini’s art (Stange, 1979: 40). I began my research at this point, subsequently re-reading Wright’s (1998, 2000) Festchrift paper, “Lucia Hartini, Javanese Painter: Against the Grain Towards Herself” when editing Perbatasan / Boundaries. Wright, like Maklai posits Lucia as a contemporary, actively feminist, Asian shaman. While that may have been true of Lucia prior to her encounter with Master Ching Hai’s teachings in 1996, in 1998, when we decided to make another film, Lucia was thoroughly immersed in the practice and teachings of the Master’s (1994) syncretic form of Buddhism, set forth in The Key of Immediate Enlightenment. By October 1998, Lucia had also become very close to Operasi Rachmann, a long time friend, Reformasi activist and devout Muslim whose interest was Sufic mysticism and who was then studying with a renowned guru from Solo. In Perbatasan / Boundaries, Lucia clarifies this shift in emphasis, one emphasizing her spiritual growth. Towards the film’s conclusion, they are shown on the afternoon of their wedding.

In the concise handbook, Kejawen: Javanese Traditional Spiritual Teaching, Suryo S. Negoro (2000) describes Kejawen as a threefold broadly tiered multi-faceted interlocking philosophical framework explaining the universe, the world and the place of humankind within it. Beyond establishing a cosmological structure, Kejawen advises adherence to a code of behaviour and
spiritual practice, destined to strengthen one’s *batin* or inner strength.⁵¹ *Kejawen* has always informed the conceptual background of Lucia Hartini’s work, as is evident in her working of the triple-tiered cosmological pairings, microcosmos / macrocosmos, self / society, and universal / cosmic. *Kejawen* also informs the structural homology of many of Lucia’s compositions. To these, Lucia adds colouration, transubstantiation as opposed to the morphism of European surrealism, and an almost scientific attention to the rendition of detail. These are the key characteristics of Hartini’s “Beautiful Surrealism”, as described by Purnamasidih in our interviews recorded for *Perbatasan / Boundaries.*⁵² Similar stylistic qualities, differently emphasized, appear in the work of other artists of the “Surealis Yogya”, such as Ivan Sagito, Agus Kamal and Effendi.

Judith Becker’s book *Gamelan Stories: Tantrism, Islam, and Aesthetics in Central Java* (1993) shows how Animist and Hindu aspects of *Kejawen* predate Javanese Vajrayana (Tantric) Buddhism. Absorbed into the framework of Vajrayana, they were then blended back into everyday practice where they have since been modified by other influences, especially by Sufic Islam. Becker’s work and two essays by Stange “Interpreting Javanist Millennial Imagery” (1989) and “The Collapse of Lineage and Availability of Gnosis” (1991), have been of particular relevance in tracing these streams of influence.

Not only does the historical overview introducing Becker’s study illuminate the social and cultural context of Lucia Hartini’s early years, the Javanist performative perspective of Becker’s *Gamelan Stories* emphasises the spiritual and mystical aspects of *ghending* (gamelan composition), encouraging me to look at the paintings of Lucia Hartini and the “Surealis Yogya” with fresh eyes. Becker has contributed to my understanding of the rich allusivity and spiritual dimensions of Yogyanese “Surrealisme” when interpreting particularly powerful paintings by Lucia Hartini, such as *Lensa Mata Mata / Spy Lens* (1989). Relevant to an appreciation of the musical and performative references in Lucia’s painting, Becker’s insights allowed me to better understand and work with her

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⁵¹ Negoro includes interpretations from several highly regarded Central Javanese teachers. I found the chapters by Ki Soekardi most relevant.

response to the camera.  

Having great sympathy for Lucia’s desire to rid her mind and body from the trauma of violence and sexual humiliation, and a substantial personal involvement with Buddhism, I used this experiential, and for me, necessarily philosophical foundation to develop a clearer understanding of Lucia Hartini’s recounted experiences. Making the documentary Making Mandalas (1999) and attending Buddhist events and teachings all established useful contexts which assisted me clarify Lucia’s distillation of the Master’s teachings and find a suitably academic way of writing about Lucia’s spirituality and its nexus with her art. Among the Buddhist texts consulted were Marzuki and Awuy (1972) Namo Buddhaya, The Monument of Homage to Buddha; compilations of Theravada Abhidhamma teachings and Tibetan Mahayana teachings from the Lama Yeshe Wisdom Archive; Chogyam Trungpa (1973) Cutting through Spiritual Materialism and Santideva (1997) A Guide to The Bodhisattva Way of Life.

I also sought sympathetic academic references with which to consider Lucia Hartini’s experience of severe psychological disturbance and physical collapse. Excluding understandable paranoia preceding this event (Chs. 5 and 6), the final dimensions of this disturbance seem more like an unguided, and hence extremely rapid opening to the universe and dissolution of all boundaries with psychotic consequences as opposed to straightforward spirit possession. Such experiences are well known in Java and Malaysia, but the literature accessible to me provided few really useful comparisons for Lucia’s experience. In his essay “Configurations of a Javanese Possession Experience” (1979: 39-52), Stange chronicles three examples, although the subjects discussed involve three Javanese men and a Western woman. None of these cases really approximate Lucia’s

53 Lucia Hartini is a celempung (zither) player and a reader of poetry, her sister Yanti, a dancer. Because I once played gamelan, I had actually read an article by Judith Becker before I read Wright’s book Soul, Spirit, Mountain. Wright and I discussed Yogyakartan “Surrealisme” during the late 1980s and early 1990s, together with Foulcher, Maklai and the Indonesian artists, musicians and performers who visited Adelaide.

54 Personal communication. Venerables Thupten Lodey (Gayuto) and Thupten Dondrub (Gelugpa), Perth, 1999 - 2001.

55 With the help of her son, Loko, Lucia cautiously described this experience to me in detail in 1992, seven years before she recounted it directly to the camera in 1999. I was glad of her confidences, which refuted misleading information received from others.

Linda Connor’s paper in Marsella, and White (1982: 251 - 259) on Balinese mental health and healing “The Unbounded Self: Balinese Therapy in Theory and Practice” provides instances which are more relevant to the types of disturbance and subsequent healing processes described by Lucia Hartini, as do Connor’s (1996) filmmaking notes about her projects with Timothy and Patsy Asch and the Balinese faith healer Jero Tapakan (1978 – 1982). Tsing (1993: 201 - 205, 242 - 243) also describes instances of women’s *dewa* possession in South Kalimantan. Like Connor, Tsing describes how these experiences may open the path to shamanism. The woman concerned is no longer a victim or hysterical patient. Discovering and developing knowledge, she gains wisdom, inner strength and other powers, as for instance, an ability to heal others (Jero Tapakan), or intuit the future (Lucia Hartini). Stange (1979, 1993) however, advises care in the use of the term “shamanism” as not all seekers after the truth in Java are involved with ritual practices.56 Indeed, when I began working with Lucia again in 1998, shamanistic practices were no longer Lucia’s primary spiritual focus, although her psychic ability has informed at least three of the major pieces painted subsequently (Ch.7).

Reviewing my first filmmaking project with Lucia in 1992, it seemed that she was increasingly using her painting as a metaphoric device and a pathway for spiritual growth. She had begun doing so long before she was able to discuss this aspect of her working process in the public domain (Wisetrotomo, 1994), or channel it sufficiently well to develop a satisfying wisdom and heal herself. Concepts of the power of the mind to transform the self and the art of reviewing one’s process as a series of contingent selves are explored by Connor (1982) and Choy (1984) respectively. Their studies presented a creative and culturally relevant way of accounting for Lucia’s struggle with psychological balance.

Many Buddhist and other Eastern spiritual practices are mystically based on submission to one’s teacher’s requests and the personal exploration which

56 Previously, Lucia’s “ritual” had been painting at night, an action which calmed her after the stress and drama of her busy day. However, at the time of her most intense involvement with the Master’s teachings, she was painting only devotional portraits of her Master. The benefits of this involvement appeared later.
follows. But in the Western world, these practices raise seeming contradictions between concepts of the contingency of self required for submission to a spiritual teacher and Western ideas of the kinds of individual empowerment leading to social enactment. Why then do so many writers on Indonesia and from the developing world, even those as different in focus as Stange (1993: 232) in “Inner Dimensions of the Indonesian Revolution”, and Simon Philpott (2000), suggest that contingency of self enables the successful resistance of repressive systems and regimes when coupled with education and purposive organization?

Trinh (1992: 132 - 133) maintains that “the work of critical inquiry cannot be content with fixed anti-positions”. She rejects the erection of “oppositions” and the setting of one work against another, advancing a Buddhist argument based on contingency and a practical assessment of Third World realities to support her view:

And in my latest work on Third World feminism, I had lots of problems with personal pronouns because “I” stood for both white and non-white values and so I had to use the entire range of personal pronouns – we, they, she, capital I, small I, you – in order to bring out this nonmonolithic position.

(Trinh, 1992: 234)

Edward Said (2002: 13) argues that a critical examination of traditions also assists resistance, and is the quiet contributor to historical process. The activation of such conceptual frameworks provides a transformative perspective beyond the personal and individual, necessary in a shrinking and increasingly diasporic world. I investigate these psycho-spiritual and transformative dynamics in my consideration of Lucia Hartini’s life and work.

In her particular spiritual journey towards wisdom consciousness, Lucia discarded the fatalistic pragmatism of victimhood and the psychological enactment within herself of the societal disjunctions perceived by the “Surealis Yogya”, painted from beneath the veil of art since 1985. She regained a sense of contingent advantage and positive action, arising from her cultivation of inner strength through spiritual practice. She had also found a teacher who emphasized the doctrinal bridges between different religious faiths, confirming many of Lucia’s existing, but up until that point, incoherently expressed values.
In a societal application, the term contingent advantage may define the situation and the actions of an individual within a group of persons, which then forms part of a larger group (Hornby, 1974: 138). During Reformasi, Lucia was then able to fully participate in society once more according to her personal cycle and the spirit of one’s times. I became interested in these perspectives, beyond the usual realms of art historical scholarship because, assisted by the cultivation of inner strength and the social dynamics of her time, Lucia Hartini was so clearly applying concepts of transubstantiation and the transformative to herself, as well as within the frames of her canvases. For her, as for millions of Indonesians, the bridges between cosmology, religion, spiritual growth and democratic social change existed and were untrammeled.

1.5. Film

Prior to fieldwork and filming in Indonesia, and with my ideas still in flux, I watched films and studied interviews and books written by many different documentary and experimental filmmakers. Among these were Wim Wenders (1991), Martin Mhando (2000), Josko Petkovic (1994), John Darling (1986 - 89) and the team of Connor and the Asches (1978 - 1992). Besides those whose work was specifically about Indonesia, I have included articles and books by women making films about other women such as Yvonne Rainer (1985), Trinh (1989, 1992), Ruby Rich (1998) and those mentioned in Annette Kuhn’s overview of European women filmmakers in Women’s Pictures, Feminism and Cinema (1983). As a woman making a film and writing this thesis about a woman artist, I sought parallels for my insights and approaches. Apart from Trinh’s work, I found little that was directly relevant to my subject, but much that contributed to my thinking on film generally.

been a problematic form for many years in Indonesia, while feature films addressing controversial subjects rarely survived the censors’ blades with integrity (Sen and Hill, 2000; Pandjaitan and Aryani, 2001). What were the leaps of faith required to give cinematic form to the imaginary and the surreal, developing difficult and/or engaging plotlines and endowing new richness of depth and credibility to characters, particularly female ones? Had documentary film suddenly flourished in a new climate of comparative freedom? I was seeking a wider conceptual contextualisation in which to position my films about Lucia Hartini and her art. I wished to investigate the contrasting fortunes arising from the production of challenging images in Indonesian art and cinema respectively and pursue my ideas regarding conceptual exchange between the two forms in terms of image formation and the creation and critical reception of representations.

In *Shadows on the Silver Screen* (1991), Salim Said (1991: 3 - 4) claims that, Indonesians have “a problem with the truth when it is expressed on film”, regardless of the censorship of subject matter deemed politically undesirable or even traitorous. Documentary and feature filmmaker Garin Nugroho also propounds this view in his many interviews, as does Prakosa (1997) in his anthology *Film Pinggiran, Film Eksperimental, dan Film Dokumenter* and young documentary maker Ibu Eci, in an interview conducted in Jakarta in 2001. Said argues that the Indonesian face was missing in the dream worlds of Indonesian cinema for many years. Most of the dreams represented belonged to someone else and were created by re-working plotlines from elsewhere, originally from Chinese and European films, and later from Hollywood. Often the plots of several foreign films were condensed in developing one Indonesian film, a strategy both exposed and exploited by Nugroho in the feature film *Surat Untuk Bidadari / Letter for an Angel* (1996). The “Surealis Yogya” also used this montagist compositional strategy of juxtaposition and condensation.

Said’s critique is echoed by Harry Suharyadi Dagoe in relation to his documentary film *Coming Out* (1999). When interviewed in 2001, Harry commented on the Balinese attitude to Indonesian documentary film, “If it doesn’t look like Hollywood, then it’s just no good!” He claims that Indonesians
generally rejected documentary because it “had no story”. Questioning young Balinese students on documentary film in 1999, I was told that by “no story”, they meant that documentary did not transcend the real. Perhaps they could not see a relevant mythic, and hence culturally sanctioned connection in the very real stories of most documentary films. By contrast, contemporary Indonesian painters and particularly the Hyper-real and the “Surealis Yogya” like Lucia Hartini, rarely abandoned their distilled perceptions of Indonesian realities. Even if this was transposed in strange and fantastical ways, their imagery was always painstakingly rendered in photo-realistic detail.

Said remarks on the preference of Indonesian audiences for the ornamental and decorative in cultural expression. Regardless of the abstract and aesthetic base of forms like wayang, which appeal to those Western filmmakers, who, like Said, see in them a relationship with cinematic theory, Indonesians prefer somewhat sweetly sentimental and “pretty” films with simple and entertaining narrative structures. Said relates this view to the persistence of attitudes which regard film as one more product in the marketplace. As with pre-WW II European and Hollywood studio-system models, and despite a new plethora of Indonesian


58 Personal communication. Aldo Suryadiputra, Den Pasar, July 1999. Reflecting on a recent installation by Gede Yasa and a group of young Balinese artists at Cemeti Art House in Yogyakarta (July 2004), which dealt “realistically” with the painful subject of the 1965-66 massacres in Bali, perhaps “no story” means that documentary does not take one out of oneself into another realm as does Balinese performance - trance for instance. Since the Kuta and Renon bombings, and the production of several major documentaries such as John and Sarah Darling’s The Healing of Bali (2003), this may no longer be so. The bombings were as an event of tragic and mythic proportions, involving thousands of Balinese as well as foreigners in an all too real contemporary experience. Most of those on screen and speaking in the Darling’s film are Balinese.

59 Excluding the films of Eisenstein, which were both art and propagandist entertainment, until German expressionism in the 1930s and post-World War II Nouvel Vague in France, cinema was popularly considered as entertainment, presenting audiences with producers’ ideas of the modernist dreams and wish fulfilment of the twentieth century masses. One can hardly blame Indonesians for wanting light escapist romantic comedies as a relief from generally frugal lifestyles, colonial newsreels and developmentalist propaganda. Said, Prakosa and Nugroho, emphasize the point that an Indonesian critical and/or self-reflexive art cinema was always marginalised in the extreme. Apart from a few notable short-lived exceptions, there was, quite simply, no other choice but entertainment. However, once Reformasi was underway, films which had been ‘hidden’ for several years suddenly gained commercial release, and the filmmaking avant-garde surged ahead. Marselli Sumarno chose to recuperate the brief glory of Indonesian Neo-realist cinema in his auteurist feature film Sri (1999), while many young filmmakers used press freedom and digital technology to make experimental features about the issues in their world, including sex, drugs, rock and roll, HIV Aids, family dysfunction and unemployment.
television stations, film is regarded as *perdagangan* (commerce) rather than *budaya* (culture) (Said, 1991: 10 - 11, 37 - 48). Few Indonesian filmmakers have been able to either ignore or rework this territory; even fewer have studied it academically.  

Similar attitudes applied to the appreciation of contemporary Indonesian art in the 1980s. In 1984, writing for *Nova* magazine, Agus Yudo Basuki (12-2-1984), an early critic of Lucia Hartini’s painting, wrote appreciatively about her series of exploding frypans. He ignored their metaphoric content but commented at length on their sweetness of colour and finely painted detail. Said suggests that, in film, such categorisations and attitudes often reflected the ethnicity of the creators and producers concerned. Since *Reformasi*, Indonesian critics and filmmakers have reviewed these problems once more. Not surprisingly, issues have emerged similar to those raised in Sanento Yuliman’s (2001: 109-122) probing commentary which examined the effect of the Art Boom on Indonesia’s modern and contemporary artists a decade earlier. Yuliman’s concerns were presented at a gathering of painters in East Java in August 1990.

In 1990, through my interest in video and filmmaking, and associated with my work with Indonesian artists and our discussions regarding their working context, I began to look at sources of alternative media production in Indonesia. I accompanied artist Dadang Christanto, then working at Studio Audio Visuel in Yogyakarta, to a community media workshop at Barron beach on the South Coast of Central Java. The enthusiasm and alternative spirit of participants transcended

60 Marselli Sumarno, Kem Atmojo and FTV-IKJ hoped to challenge these entrenched attitudes through *Sri*. The Indonesian distribution network *Jaringan-21* handled the film’s theatrical release.

61 Personal communication. Lucia Hartini, Yogyakarta, August 1999. Lucia appreciated his description of her work as “*Surealisme Indah / Beautiful Surrealism*” but later expressed annoyance at the rest of Basuki’s remarks, sensing in them a distinct gender bias.

62 Said remarks that Indonesian films represented the tastes of their distributors, the Indonesian Chinese (1991: 16 - 30). Arguably Agus Yudo Basuki consciously or unconsciously implied a similar assumption when reviewing Lucia Hartini’s work, a stance predicated not only on her gender but also on her ethnicity. A recent example regarding Indonesian film can be found in derogatory comments made by those who disliked Nia Dinata’s dramatic debut feature film *Cau Bao Kan* (2001), based on an Indonesian Chinese story, by formerly banned novelist, Remy Sylado. They have since commended Nia’s recently released film, *Arisan / Credit Society* (2004), describing it as “a smart comedy with stylish characters”, presumably because it is ethnically appropriate and “entertaining”, despite the tragedy portrayed.
their scarce resources and spartan facilities. These workshops enhanced the skills base of practitioners having a commitment to social change. They were able to elicit responses regarding existing media production and source realistic stories from ordinary Indonesians who would otherwise have no chance to contribute comment and might like to see themselves through their own eyes. The eventual success of this line of thought has been in the production of educational media and, more recently, television rather than film.

In 1990, documentary-type material was just finding its way into Indonesian television programming, but remained generally unpopular. Previously, observational work in the style of Sinema Rush Copy described by Prakosa (1997: 167 - 171), the cinematographic method established by the adventurous and financially circumscribed young filmmakers based at the Jakarta Institute for the Arts in the 1980s, was often presented in an unfinished state in academia or during seminars. In conversation with Ishizaka Kenji at the Yamagata Festival (Documentary Box, #14, 1999), Indonesian filmmaker Garin Nugroho maintains that, if Indonesians disliked documentary film because it was “too real”, then this was because representations of reality reminded them of painful truths and experiences they could not discuss or were powerless to change. Apart from versions of events disguised within wayang stories and fanciful Panji tales, history must be presented from the government’s perspective. Informational documentary had long been synonymous with propaganda, to be endured at its worst and useful in the context of public education at best. Furthermore, to probe a person’s character, to analyse or unfavourably criticise their actions and work was considered rude and possibly shameful by the Javanese in particular, further limiting the types of documentary genre available to Indonesian filmmakers.63

The difficulties of Indonesian documentary filmmakers were apparent to Australian filmmakers giving workshops in conjunction with their projects in

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63 Personal communication. Lucia Hartini, Jakarta, January 2002. Prior to screening Perbatasan / Boundaries at the opening of Lucia Hartini’s January 2002 exhibition, Lucia, Operasi and Clara Anna reviewed the film one more time. Lucia explained she “was worried about her family”, the main reason being the scenes depicting family violence.
Initially, no matter how engaging, Nugroho’s documentaries were regarded as “too true” and their themes as largely “too difficult” for a popular audience, until he found a formula for success which engaged popular taste and satisfied him as a filmmaker intellectually and artistically.

From 1990 onwards, Nugroho’s work may be seen as a counter discourse whose arena was the televisual. To overcome difficulties with censorship in Indonesia and reach a broader audience, Nugroho and Mira Lesmana developed a documentary series based on stories from the lives of children throughout the archipelago. Well-researched, slightly sweetened from their original source and narrated for a television audience, many of the themes addressed would have been otherwise impossible to present at the time without such devices of displacement. From these episodes, Nugroho selected certain stories for intense and direct treatment in focused observational documentaries, then reworked them as dramatic feature films. *Dongeng Kancil Tentang Kemerdekaan / Kancil’s Tale of Freedom* (1994), a ground-breaking documentary about a little band of street kids in Yogyakarta, became the feature film, *Daun Diatas Bantal / Leaf on a Pillow* (1998). Nugroho’s feature film *Surat Untuk Bidadari / Letter for an Angel* (1996), resembled a documentary drama in many ways.

A similar approach informed former documentary-makers Nan T. Achnas and Mira Lesmana in the four-part film *Kuldesak / Cul-de-Sac* (1996). In this short feature based on a group of Jakarta stories, the actors prepared their roles by living in the social milieu of the characters in their respective scripts. The extensive dramatisation of real stories and histories which tentatively mixed reality with elements of fantasy stylistically seemed to offer a solution to the problems perceived by Said, Nugroho and others. Yet the comparative freedoms available to filmmakers since *Reformasi* has not assisted filmmakers to satisfactorily work the difficult join between these two modalities, as evidenced by the failure of Slamet Rahardjo’s *Marsinah* (2002). To date, the most

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successful telling of Marsinah’s story has been through Ratna Sarumpaet’s play, *Marsinah Mengugat*.

Trinh argues that the most important ingredient in making film is cinematic vision; the rest is categorisation according to emphasis. That is how we distinguish between making an objective, analytical, or observational documentary film or one which is subjective, that is, personally confessional or self-reflexive, and presumably, documentaries which mix these forms in a single film. In *Framer Framed*, “Film as Translation: A Net with No Fisherman” Trinh writes:

> I am not interested in using film to “express myself,” but rather to expose the social self (and selves) which necessarily mediate(s) the making as well as the viewing of the film.
> (Trinh, 1992: 119)

Trinh’s attempt to distinguish her filmmaking as an act of somewhat dispassionate reflexive intention rather than indulgent self-expression, accords with Lucia Hartini’s approach to the subject of the contingent self, evident in paintings created between 1989 and 1996. Trinh’s views also resonate with the direct cinematographic methods of the Indonesian Neo-realist and the *Sinema Rush Copy* filmmakers discussed in Prakosa’s 1997 anthology.

Prakosa (1997: 167 - 171) writes that the student practitioners of this style were encouraged to live among those whom they were to film, to know their lives and emotions and seek resonance in the images thus captured. These sixteen millimetre films were largely unedited, and were often presented as “works in progress” with on-the-spot narration. Like Trinh, the young Jakartan filmmakers captured and explored the apparently real and the mediated self, implying, in both instances, possibilities for exploring the contingent self with its socially transformative possibilities. Yet in general, they regarded their achievements as low-cost solutions to production difficulties caused by the system of official permissions and poor technical resources, conditions later used to argue their disadvantage vis-à-vis filmmakers internationally. I suggest that the sophisticated

While praising the actors, critic Joko Anwar writes that “the film simply plays out like a dramatisation of the news”, giving the audience nothing new (*The Jakarta Post*, 6-4-2002).
visions enabled from this philosophical and practitioner base have just only begun to re-emerge and develop since 1999. As yet, commentary on this new work remains largely unresearched and unsupported, by comparison with the volume of critical and scholarly work accorded the visual arts in Indonesia.

Besides observations arising from my own filmmaking work in Indonesia and in pursuit of answers, I decided to investigate a hunch further, but found few sources to directly support my emerging contentions. In his two volume work, Cinema I, *The Movement-Image* and Cinema II, *The Time-Image* (1987), Gilles Deleuze discusses directorial awareness of the possibilities of the screen as a diegetic space on which are played out convincing creations of a visual and cinematic as opposed to a narrative awareness of time. I use Deleuze’s concept as the starting point for my argument that *wayang beber* and *wayang kulit*, the shadow puppet play with its double-sided screen, constitute the original proto-cinematic forms of Indonesia.

Although he did not venture far down this path, the title of Said’s (1991) survey of Indonesian film, *Shadows on the Silver Screen*, also suggests the validity of this enquiry. I found this most useful in a discussion of documentary film and the dialogue engaged with its fundamental paradoxes, that is, between John Grierson’s (1979: 83) “authenticity and the drama that resides in the living fact”, and Dai Vaughan’s (1999: 55) “record and filmic language”, visible evidence of the ‘dual nature of film, a convincing reality created from shadows’. I then emphasize *wayang*’s subtle connections with works by many of Indonesia’s contemporary visual artists, formally demonstrating the occasional validity of a reading of art as film, especially during New Order Indonesia. The complexity of image formation in both Indonesian art and film and the relationships between the two are discussed further in Section III of this thesis.

In the textual analysis of *Perbatasan / Boundaries*, I consider the construction and gender-dynamics of the representations of women in literature, the visual arts and cinema prevalent in Indonesia across the years of my study. In

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67 This quotation is from Vaughan’s essay, “The Aesthetics of Ambiguity”, first published in Crawford and Turton’s (1992) anthology, *Film as Ethnography*. The essay was reprinted in 1999 in Vaughan’s own compilation, *For Documentary: twelve essays*. Except where I cite other authors quoting the 1992 publication, I reference Vaughan’s 1999 reprint.
this respect, my approach to filmmaking was informed by the theoretical, practical and critical contributions of filmmakers and writers working in the field in Asia and in Indonesia in particular, such as Trinh, O’Connor and Asch, Sen, Hatley and Aripurnami. I also re-read Laura Mulvey and her much-cited paper “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” (1975), which has been important worldwide to women working in the visual arts as well as in film. Mulvey analyses the gaze with which we view and receive presented and performed experience and its representation in images. She argues that, for many years, Hollywood in particular demeaned the capacity of female actors to develop a range of credible characterisations, a lack evident in the scripts offered them by producers and in direction. Assuming audience preference, a predominantly male industry cast women simultaneously as “bearer of the look and object of the gaze”.

Mulvey’s work has provoked many responses since in both art and cinema practice. In “The Cinema of Bodies and Female Directors”, Deleuze (1989: 196 - 197) argues that Mulvey has rarely been critiqued, but now should be. With the advent of women’s liberation and the acceptance of gender-diversity, “Hollywood has taken several leaves from her book.” Being the “bearer of the look” is no longer considered a necessarily powerless position because women as well as men are now proficient in constructing their own interpretations of the gendered subjects represented by actors on the screen. In many contemporary films, be these fiction or documentary, those who lack in some way are constructed as both protagonists and heroes, a position similar to the “passive acquiescence to fate” apparent in many “Sraulic” works between 1986 and 1993. In feature films, they convince us of their reality through skilful acting: in documentary, we believe they are real in themselves. They may happen to be accidentally before the camera, but their degree of premeditated awareness when captured in interview and/or about their daily life, as well as their knowledge of the way the media creates representations, often means we recognise that they consciously project what they wish us to see.

Mulvey’s insights remain useful in a discussion regarding the relationships between art and film in Indonesia, even if nowadays we openly acknowledge our
complicity in projecting our fantasies onto the creators of screen characters. Lucia Hartini’s film-posterish painting of a woman resembling the actress Christine Hakim in *Tembang Laut Selatan / Singing the South Sea* (1995) can be read as a cinematically aware investigation of both female representation and the dynamics of the gaze. This painting plays lightly with response and critique. In terms of actual viewing and visual association, woman as screen goddess as opposed to mythical goddess, is both the object of male and female desire. She is also "bearer of the look". As would a cinema audience, we viewers of the painting regard the screen goddess from the viewpoint of Nyai Loro Kidul, Queen of the South Sea. We must look upwards to view the work. (Plate 4).

Our behaviour is also similar, being motivated by desire. The power of our/her gaze drags the larger than lifesize sexually incandescent beauty simultaneously towards us and down into the depths of the ocean, the lair of Nyai Loro Kidul. The full dimension of her reality is drowned in our relentless attachment to visual pleasure, as is the common sense of a lover in the depths of an amorous passion. The same is true for our reception of the handsome meditator Arjuna Wibawa in Hartini’s painting Ciptoening Mintorogo (2000) (Plate 5). Through Hartini’s appeal to our senses and imaginative consciousness, we are encouraged to believe Arjuna will be tempted by the angels dressed as Bedaya dancers, arise and begin to dance.

Ciptoening Mintorogo is a painterly embodiment of fantasy arising from an interrogation of both male and female objects of desire, evoking cross-gendered appeal. As with Tembang Laut Selatan, this canvas is a shamelessly erotic investigation of the gaze. Such representational and conceptual qualities are encouraged from within Javanese literary and performative traditions (Suryadi, 1995; Sumarsam, 1995), a point made by Hatley (1988) in her discussion Roro Mendut (1986), and Day (2000) in Fluid Iron. Yet constrained within the dynamic of a single image, both paintings underscore the frequently unsatisfactory treatment of erotic themes in contemporary Indonesian visual art and film. In Ciptoening Mintorogo in particular, the figures appear simultaneously unconvincingly real and not quite “surreal”. Their awkwardness suggests this particular representational area remains problematic for Indonesia’s creative cultural workers and controversial for audiences, as do issues pertaining to gender-based conflict and the emancipation of Indonesian women in real life.

Although often lingering unresolved intellectually, Lucia Hartini’s “Surealisme” has been a useful vehicle within which such problems are simultaneously creatively raised and stylistically subsumed. As in documentary, her paintings imaginatively fuse authenticity and drama, record and visual language. Beyond their large scale, they reflect ‘the dual nature of film’. Their clever construction and cryptic condensation, and the gestural, photo-real imagery
and psycho-spiritual depths which elicit viewers sentiment and emotion, request further thought, inviting personal resolution. Together with the long years and productivity of her professional practice as a female artist in an arena dominated by men, Lucia Hartini’s art has made a valuable attitudinal contribution to the changes leading to Reformasi.

In this chapter, I discuss the approaches used in gathering research material, the conceptual frameworks shaping the textual commentaries on Lucia Hartini’s paintings and their filmic interpretations within the context of her life and times. Because the narratives developed are personal, familial and social, my approaches are consistent with broader conceptual frameworks supporting the arguments of this thesis. The application of these conceptual frameworks in making *Perbatasan / Boundaries* is discussed in Section III, which commences with a detailed exposition of theories concerning documentary film and its practice in Indonesia.

The interpretative commentaries on Lucia Hartini’s paintings in the following chapters are written from the premise that knowing something about Lucia Hartini’s rich inner world adds to an appreciation of her paintings. This inner world encompasses Lucia’s acculturation, her education, her artistic practice, her reception of ideas from elsewhere, her intuition and a dedicated spiritual practice derived from syncretic religious and mystical traditions.

Conversation, interview and collaborative recording with the video camera has elicited Lucia’s version of her personal narrative, her comments about her most recent work and confirmed or denied reported and written statements made about previous paintings. Acknowledging Lucia’s conceptual spaces and admitting my own has been integral to our more or less collaborative efforts to bridge two occasionally similar but mostly different worlds in the processes of research and filmmaking. In the commentaries of this thesis, it is necessary to distinguish between what I personally see, feel, hear, think and interpret, what Lucia has told me about her life and art, and what I have discovered, heard and read from others. In these chapters, I am writing feelings, silences, differences, meeting points, interpretations, and, sometimes, as explanation, parallels.

When I first encountered Lucia Hartini and her paintings, existing scholarship on Indonesian art and the particular discursive narratives concerning
her art were already contextualized within modernising Indonesian and adaptive Javanese conceptual frameworks. The concept of hybridity and a sub-set of related ideas offered appropriate theoretical approaches for developing the arguments of this thesis. Despite and because of the uniquely Indonesian quality of Lucia Hartini’s “Surealisme”, the quantity of work produced during her long career and the accumulation of a considerable body of previous scholarship, fresh contemplation, and a degree of critical historiography is now required when writing commentaries on her work. My efforts as a researcher, filmmaker and thesis writer have been further guided by insights from Western philosophy and recent seminally important contributions to art historical analysis. These have informed my appreciation and guided my research, just as the literature of gaps and spaces between, hybridity and mixture has developed my understanding of the Indonesianness of Lucia Hartini’s art.

2.1. Approaches and Practical Methodologies

In this dissertation project, I worked with two intentions at the same time, to make a film and collect data for this thesis. Requiring much self-reflexivity and negotiation, these processes did not always coalesce neatly. My conscious aim as a filmmaker was to conjure forth a ‘Diamond Queen’ space of mutual understanding as in Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing’s (1993) study of marginality and the negotiation of power, meaning and relationship across cultures In the Realm of the Diamond Queen: Marginality in an Out-of-the-Way Place. Audience reactions to these filmic collaborations with Lucia suggest we have succeeded. However, the conceptual ‘Diamond Queen’ space of my thesis has proved as elusive to capture as that described by Tsing in her interactions with her Meratus Dayak subject Uma Adang.

Despite willing co-operation from Lucia Hartini and her family, and the acquisition of much culturally informative and visually useful material in the short time available for filming, the material captured on camera could not tell Lucia’s story fully. There were many gaps in the social narrative of her early years, as well as in the self-reflexive information concerning the painful and difficult experiences and motivations underlying some of her decisions and
actions in adult life. Lucia was occasionally shy, hesitant, embarrassed and protective of herself and those close to her, worrying about what may or may not be imputed by what had been said. I did not necessarily revisit this painful territory later, even after the need for cautious speech had passed (Ch. 5). Two years after her divorce and a pro-active stand against violence towards women, Lucia desired closure.

*Perbatasan / Boundaries* records part of what was said and sometimes, what wasn’t. This thesis records more of both. This has meant the writing of silences in verbally minimal communications taking place both on and off screen. Yet the wordless spaces captured by the camera are neither silent nor without resonance. The construction of meaning in these spaces between was informed by previous conversations between myself and my subject(s), and knowledge of the relevant contexts in which the events discussed and opinions formed took place. For this, I drew on understandings developed from a long engagement with the field as an artist, filmmaker, friend and curator.

In reviewing Lucia Hartini’s professional development as an artist, it was necessary to review mine also. What was similar and what not in the development of our careers? What biases and assumptions might impose themselves on the research process, or alternatively, what productive insights arise accordingly? While I am neither a painter nor an artist of Lucia’s stature, we are both artists from places which, when we began our respective careers, were far from the power centres of the international art world. At first, both of us made our careers locally, then exhibited nationally, and were chosen for international exhibitions attracting government support. We have both seen the rapid development of the contemporary arts in our respective nations. Thus reflexive and empathetic approaches helped me address Lucia’s personal narrative, the development of her art and career and my responses to both in a non-nostalgic discursive manner. This background also determined the methods of gathering information for this dissertation. These methods have been observation, interview, action research and creative production.

The approaches first used in the collection of information were those of observation and conversation. Using standard practical methodologies, some of
this information was captured on video and recorded on small cassettes. From the personal and social narratives which emerged, I selected certain subjects as the basis of a subsequent intensive interview and recording process, the approach of oral history. I perused the internet for relevant contemporary information contributing to my approaches in the field. Other approaches were traditionally archival; I collected newspaper and journal reviews and articles of interest and sourced documents in Australian and Indonesian libraries. Next, I selected the themes highlighted in Chapter 1 as a framework within which to consider Lucia Hartini’s personal story, her art and her times.

The third set of approaches relates to processes of review and analysis. Scrutinising Hartini’s paintings more closely, critically reviewing my first film, footage, notes and previous writing, identified problems to be addressed. This reflexive process also suggested new approaches to test when compiling *Perbatasan / Boundaries* and then writing this thesis. I could not satisfactorily work on filmmaking and writing simultaneously, although the successive stages of each fed the next stage of creating and experimentally revising the other. Regardless of subject matter, the arguments of an academic exposition must be clearly set out. Although meaning may be condensed metaphorically, as in many of Lucia Hartini’s images, academic convention requires that it be precisely conveyed. Emotional material must be treated dispassionately and the body of work proceed in a logical manner rather than the often spontaneous and sometimes personally idiosyncratic one associated with creative making, including documentary filmmaking. Unlike my filmmaking, writing this thesis often seemed at cross purposes with my subject matter.

Little actual discourse analysis of our conversations and interviews was possible. Wishing to appear in control of her feelings, Lucia sometimes indicated that she felt uncomfortable using words to describe personal situations and emotional states, better conveyed through her paintings. Rather than refusing to speak, she used an allusive communicative style which she called “Bahasa Meditasi” (“Meditative Language”). While suiting her “Surrealis” persona, this strategy rarely produced clear information. In the past, Lucia had used this linguistic device to conceal shyness and uncertainty, so avoiding the discomfort of
unguarded disclosures. For my part, I knew it was culturally unproductive to ask probing questions of someone who was an expert in her field. I must introduce an area of enquiry indirectly and present my questions as invitations to further conversation. Moreover, when I sought to open a discussion of social narratives in interviews as opposed to informal conversation around the table, Lucia often faltered and I was left with the task of reading silences. As I had suggested she should only say on camera that with which she felt comfortable, I had to accept the consequences. *Perbatasan / Boundaries* was to be a documentary for cinema and possible television screening.

Until *Reformasi*, most of my friends among Lucia’s Indonesian peers had also refused to set their personal narratives within the context of wider social narratives when discussing the past. In this refusal, I recognised not just uncertainty, fear, and a degree of necessary closure, but also a disdain for the processes of “history” in the forms presented by the Indonesian state prior to *Reformasi*. For many years, the intellectually repressive climate of New Order Indonesia had effectively discouraged the development of useful discourses of enquiry, a problem that my artist friends recognised, but still found difficult to surmount (Dudley, 1992, Wright, 1999 d.).

*Writing silences*

In some ways, these silences are consciously interactive, akin to the processes discussed by Anna Tsing (1993) and acknowledged by Nikos Papastergiadis (2003) in the essay “Ambient Fears”.

Gaps awaiting activation, silences represent part of a theoretical framework through which we ascribe intellectual meaning to non-verbal communication, informed by prior knowledge, our feelings and guesswork. In the absence of a common language providing accurate analysis and societal perspective, we work the spaces of slippage between the real, the recorded, and the realms of memory and dramatisation,

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68 Personal communication. Lucia Hartini, August 1999.

69 Papastergiadis’ paper was first delivered as a lecture in Finland on 30-11-2001 in response to the terrorist attacks of September 11, then appeared as a companion piece to the exhibition *Fallout* at the Victorian College of the Arts. An abbreviated version in essay form was published in *Artlink*, vol. 23 #1, 2003. Papastergiadis (2003: 28) claims that his lecture was speculative, an emotive response to the moment composed from the heart and not conceived as an academic paper.
spontaneously rendered gesturally, and later, through re-enactments. Perhaps, as in *Perbatasan / Boundaries*, these may be worked as interpretative fiction. In our case, these re-enactments and fictions were devised because the experientially real remained too difficult, too painful and even too dangerous to divulge directly. In *Perbatasan / Boundaries*, Hartini’s silences also mirror the gap between the viewer and the worlds depicted in her paintings, the emotions conveyed through gesture, and the ideas proposed which invite response and further investigation.

In interviews with writers as diverse as Suwarno Wisetrotomo (1994) and Jim Supangkat (1997), Lucia indicates her personal shyness and her spiritual reluctance to be the only person telling her story, while gradually accepting the necessity to speak out with her own voice. Finally, she is compelled to speak as a modern Indonesian woman for whom emancipation and gender issues matter greatly. But unlike her paintings with their elaborate fields of detail, she presents us with a skeletal conversational structure.

Our interactions occupy the “Third Space” proposed by Papastergiadis as the site of increasingly necessary discourse, the acceptance and negotiation of difference and the potential cultivation of understanding. It is from these interactions that the actual and conceptual constructions respectively constituting the ‘Diamond Queen’ spaces of this dissertation are created. My task as thesis writer is to convey relationships between my experiences living in Indonesia (including the interactions of which I was part), filmmaking and writing, and those reading this thesis. Although this does not imply the automatic creation of new conceptual ‘Diamond Queens’ in the spaces between these words and their readers, or between the sequential images of *Perbatasan / Boundaries* and their viewers, the approaches and conceptual frameworks used to anchor this thesis have sought to encourage rather than prohibit this response.

*Developing conversations, writing narratives, creating histories*

As a preliminary precaution, I had twice developed roughly sketched scripts from my conversations with Lucia, which she adapted prior to filming in 1999. Despite the existence of the 1998 - 1999 script, my approach to documentary filmmaking can be seen as a form of action research. Although veracity was clearly important, I did not construct my interview questions as
formally as might a social scientist. I was just as concerned with gaining the cooperation of those before the lens of my digital handycam and the filmic suitability of the footage captured, as with the information obtained, and whether or not it would fit the parameters already sketched, either by myself or by Lucia.

Because we had already established a successful, partially collaborative, creative approach to our previous filmmaking endeavours, and certain of the subjects treated in interview were sensitive, maintaining a non-threatening atmosphere assumed priority. I defined fields of enquiry in conversation with Lucia, recording what happened, later using the same conversational approach and a minimal, loosely framed style of questioning with other Indonesian artists. Suggestive rather than interrogative, this approach permitted my subject(s) to explore and initiate topics. Much of what was said emerged spontaneously. Lucia embarked on various subjects because she knew or assumed I might be interested in them, mentioning others because they were of particular interest to her. She chose to describe her involvement with Operasi Rachman in activist projects intended to relieve suffering caused by food shortages during Krismon.

I noted much of the interaction which commenced and sometimes continued off-camera in this open-ended conversational process, providing background depth to the sparse text of the documentary. In an era of popular reflection on the notion of power, the nature and intention of the Indonesian state, civil society, the rule of law and governance, it was important to empower my respondents, accepting their proffered and sometimes opinionated speech as oral history, then intuiting from gestures and prior knowledge where straightforward communication failed. Even subtle elements had resonance when discussed further with my subjects.

Some of these elements challenged easy preconceptions of intellectual “correctness”. Both Trinh (1992) and Supangkat (1996, 1997) issue cautions regarding the danger of writing histories and art-historical analyses about Third World subjects in the intellectual modes created by the West. Although both writers argue that such discourses are incompatible with the conceptual frameworks of hybridity and the plural multi-modernities they respectively espouse, I now regard their argument as a corrective in terms of emphasis rather
than accuracy, given centuries of cultural interaction. Mamannoor (2002) makes a similar point regarding the treatment of the cosmological in Indonesian art.

Trinh in particular develops the post-colonial argument which considers history as a discourse of “truth manufacture” favouring those colonisers, usually white, in possession of power and control. For this reason, “history needs constantly to be rewritten” because alternative accounts of events, told by other voices, in languages and styles of discourse different to those used by power holders must be heard (Trinh, 1992: 129). Otherwise diversity, difference and indigeneity will be “captured, solidified and pinned to a butterfly board”, killed by the political and academic discourses so often dominated by the West and, for many women, by men (Trinh, 1989: 48).

But a valid place still remains for the methodological approaches of oral history, in this case, applied biographically, to art history. Such approaches also provide the keys whereby those previously excluded might unlock their stories and opinions, speaking in their own voices, although the contextualization and temporality of these personal stories matters greatly in a particularistically focused situated analysis. This analysis then constitutes a form of history. For instance, in both *Perbatasan / Boundaries* and this textual analysis, I suggest that certain of my subjects’ responses, as well as particular perspectives of my own, draw on a sense of history, even if this is expressed as “anti-history”. My awareness has been derived from academic training while that of my subjects has been born of the direct personal experience of lives lived in sometimes dangerous and dramatic times where survival was paramount. Both acknowledge positionality and contingencies of power, change and frame. Differences might lie in the importance and accuracy accorded verbal articulation, but both have exerted particular emphases on this dissertation project.

*Between making and writing*

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70 Wright’s (1998, 2000) *Festschrift* essay, “Lucia Hartini; Javanese Painter Against the Grain, Towards Herself” exemplifies this approach. Trinh (1981) has used the methodologies of art history and oral history when writing about art from the East when shown in the West in the essay *Un Art Sans Oeuvre / An Art without Work* (Trinh, 1992: 234), and when depicting Vietnamese women’s lives in her 1989 documentary *Surname Viet, Given Name Nam* (Trinh, 1992: 144). Her purpose is to carefully deconstruct previous visual, textual and discursive interpretations she regards as facile.
In 1999, the time available for filming was short. Despite the mood of elation and the desire to converse freely about personal narratives, there remained a residual wariness beneath the surface regarding social narratives, particularly those involving the nation, and among older Indonesians. Perhaps these moments of unguarded freedom would not last. Returning in 2001, I found the subjects I revisited much more comfortable with the camera and at ease when divulging personal and social information. They had acquired a contextual perspective, confidently seizing their own historical discourse. Lucia, now married to Moch Operasi Rachman, was also more relaxed and confident of the new directions she had worked so hard to achieve.

When discussing her film *Naked Spaces – Living is Round* (1985), Trinh says she cannot claim to be its writer. Instead, this film is “written by those before the camera lens”. Trinh’s name appears on the credits but she has subsequently crossed it out.\(^71\) Similarly, although Lucia and I are credited as writers, many parts of *Perbatasan / Boundaries* are performatively “written” by people other than ourselves. They had decided on sequences and organized the footage, from which I, as editor, selected what was required to best record events, convey meaning and suggest a range of readings. Although impossible to deny the primacy of my editorial vision, I strove to make these filmic “mixtures” non-hegemonic, reflecting the plurality of these sources. While plural, they form parts of a whole, rather than parts split off from a whole, because the process of horizontal levelling implied by that strategy had formerly contributed to the growing sense of alienation experienced in New Order Indonesia.\(^72\) Instead, the events of Reformasi can be seen as a process of re-empowerment of Indonesia’s citizens and their re-integration with democratic reclamation of their state and nation.

*Perbatasan / Boundaries* and this thesis use approaches privileging the voice and perceptions of Lucia Hartini, including engagement with her silences. These approaches provide a legitimate and creative space for developing a text

\(^{71}\) In *Perbatasan / Boundaries*, both Lucia and myself are credited as the writers, and all other contributors in the interviews are acknowledged. Through their input and the use of locally sourced footage, I was able to shape the film.

\(^{72}\) The effect of this process on Indonesian society depicted is convincingly and tragically depicted in the paintings of Dede Eri Supria, Ivan Sagito, Sucipto Adi and Asri Nugroho.
which, in respecting difference, situates Lucia Hartini within her times, in sympathy with the Javanese sense of harmonising one’s life with the movements of the cosmological cycle into which one is born, so fulfilling one’s destiny (Ch. 6). This does not suggest a writing of history as prophecy as in pre- and colonial times. Rather, by collaborating in making this documentary film prior to completing her exhibition “Irama Kehidupan / The Spirit of Life” (2002), Lucia affirms her conscious seizing of a politically resonant and astrologically well-aspected opportunity to visually condense her aspirations and apprehensions for the future, even as a counter-discourse.

Unlike the many years in the past where her “Surealisme” echoed a sense of loss and victimhood, Lucia’s paintings proclaim a sense of individual strength making constructive actions possible from a socially critical basis. Indeed, our respective engagements with history in making Perbatasan / Boundaries have produced individual recuperations of narrativity and power, which, although wrought with difficulty, grapple with concepts of boundaries, hybridity and the shifting nature of borders in different ways – of working with mixtures.

Mixture is not confined to an elite. It is not just the cosmopolitan artist who has lots of frequent flyer points that is engaged in mixture. Everybody now has to translate across cultural differences in their everyday lives.
(Papastergiadis, 2003: 34)

Extending the consequences of these concepts, the approaches selected for this dissertation also engage with the contemporary reality of Papastergiadis’ concept of conceptual and practical “mixture”, applicable in both Indonesian and Australian contexts.

2.2. Ordering Experience, Developing Conceptual Frameworks in the Domains of Self and Society.

My particular conceptual search in this dissertation project was for scholarly frameworks with the potential to bridge experiential and cultural differences rather than subsume such positions within a generalised notion of “diversity”. Seeking to avoid subsumation also led to difficulties structuring both
film and this thesis, a task addressed by choosing hybridity as my overarching conceptual framework. My choice was confirmed after reading Indonesian writers who have conceptually explored hybridity in the Indonesian context. Although not necessarily agreeing completely with their resulting theoretical constructs, I have found them insightful.

For instance, according to Supangkat (1997: 10), multi-modernities are the hybridic cultural entities arising in the spaces created between the impact of modernity and systems from elsewhere on the cultural and ethnic diversity of archipelagic Indonesia. Born of a reality which is always plural, the impacts of multi-modernities are experienced individually and plurally. This concept has helped me understand the worlds negotiated and painted by Lucia Hartini. Hopefully, it has infused my filmmaking with a lively richness, as in *Perbatasan / Boundaries* where Lucia’s mother describes travelling to Jakarta by plane to attend her daughter’s exhibition in 1990. This journey took “only half an hour instead of a day by becak”. Lucia however, expressed anxiety about wider public perceptions of her mother’s quaint remarks in the sophisticated milieu of art exhibitions in Jakarta and on television.

How was I to write about experiential knowledge and explain perceived philosophical parallels between Lucia’s already hybridised world and mine in relation to commentaries on Lucia Hartini’s paintings and a textual analysis of my filmic interpretations of her art? Was this exercise similar to that faced by the “Surealis” artists when painting their world of personal and societal disjuncture? In some ways, I think so. And then, how was I to structure my responses, observations and ratiocinations?

*Activating concepts of hybridity as conceptual framework: “in-betweenness”, the view through and beyond*

For Trinh (1992), recognition of hybridity is essential to post-colonial and post-modern discourses. Exhibiting art and screening film provide us with opportunities to engage in further discourses which are influenced by concepts arising from philosophy, politics and cultural studies as well as aesthetics (Clark,

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73 Pemberton’s (1994) book is entitled *On the Subject of “Java”* for similar reasons. Central “Javanese” culture was not a static entity, but had been in flux for many centuries.
1998: 18 - 19). In the Third World at the time Trinh (1992: 129) was writing, and in many parts of the developed world, hybridity distinguished personal identities, to say nothing of national ones. At the points of encountering the stranger who might so easily be categorised as “other”, hybrid identities are flushed to the surface, where they may be further activated and interact creatively, although not necessarily harmoniously. If one refrains from erecting oppositions and the setting of one work against another (Trinh, 1992: 234), even disharmony may prompt further debate and the kind of understanding embodied by Anna Tsing and Uma Adang’s conceptual ‘Diamond Queen’ in the “Third Space” which Papastergiadis (2003) claims is now so evidently present everywhere.

Beyond the societal and in order to understand and sympathetically represent the personal, I, as researcher, filmmaker and thesis writer, must acknowledge the philosophical, theoretical and religious systems concerned, and then negotiate, perhaps even activate, the gaps between. These gaps, akin to the silences in my conversations with Lucia, loosely translate as those between East and West, but are, as Trinh demonstrates, infinitely less precise and uneven than those who create across racial, cultural and geographical boundaries first find them to be. Trinh remarks that, in the first stage of her work, she often tended to approach the West with monolithic conceptions, “and then, in the process of the work, to let them crumble away as East and West keep on meeting and moving away from each other” (Trinh, 1992: 234).

In this dissertation process, mine has been the reverse task, moving from West to East, meeting and moving away again, although, in this case, both my “West” and Lucia Hartini’s “East” were already hybridic. Trinh argues that both translation and filmmaking imply “questions of language, power and meaning” and that both are necessarily processes “whereby the self loses its fixed boundaries” (Trinh, 1992: 133). Her interest lies in non-dualistic thinking, a process supporting concepts of the contingent self. These considerations have been impossible to ignore in my work with Lucia, who constantly struggled to reconcile the disjunctures between the realities of her life, her creative work as a “Surealis” artist and its attendant pressures. As a friend who was also a researcher familiar with the language of scholarship in the Visual Arts in
Australia, I also had to “re-arrange my mind” when writing this thesis.

Experientially and perceptively, Indonesian arts writer and critic Carla Bianpoen (2000), discusses Indonesian women’s situation in the last two decades of the twentieth century as being one of “betweenness” in almost every respect. Whenever I contemplate Lucia’s cleverly titled canvas, *Pemandangan Malam / Night View* or *View of Wax* (1992) (Plate 6), I feel this same sense of betweenness, of a perilous respite following escape from the chaotic void juxtaposed with the lure of a realm beyond. Drawing on the literature of boundaries and borderlands within the wider conceptual framework of hybridity, I intuit an emotional understanding of Indonesian women’s fraught relationships with society, their struggle to survive and their desire for improvement.

Remaining within this framework, I seek to draw out the connections between Lucia Hartini’s inner world, manifested in her paintings and the wider world of society and state, by working the interstices and gaps between. Homi Bhabha (1994: 19) sees gaps as the spaces of “in-betweenness”. Bridges, stairwells and passages are “liminal spaces, in-between the designations of identity” on/in which a passage along or through becomes “the process of symbolic interaction, the connective tissue that constructs the difference between upper and lower, black and white” preventing “identities at either end from settling into primordial polarities” (Bhabha, 1994: 5). These same locations and structures exist in Lucia Hartini’s paintings *Lensa Mata Mata / Prying Eyes / Spy Lens* (1989), (Plate 39), and cosmoscapes like *Bulan Biru / Blue Moon* (1988) and “*Dari Ufuk Planet .../ Planetary horizons*” (1990), (Plate 3). In these canvases, the artist seemingly paints a psychological portrait of her times beyond the controlled expression of feelings and mental states derived from personal pain and confusion. Yet visually, she articulates those same physical and psychological spaces described by Trinh, Tsing, Bhabha and Bianpoen.

Compounding the existing surreal hybridity of her painted worlds, Hartini adds a further dimension as the need to structure her spiritual explorations grows.

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74 While Clark (1998: 213, 285 - 286) suggests Hartini’s imagery indicates feelings of exclusion from the warmth of love despite the visibility of the object of desire, intimating longing for its rationed presence, I suggest that reading this work beyond the personal as an emotive psychological meta-portrait of her society and times heightens both its mood and impact.
consciously imbuing her larger canvases with a temporal aspect which embodies their spiritual dimension (Wisetrotomo, 1994). The duration and physicality of their painting bears witness to Central Javanese concepts of struggle and the metaphysical dimension of transcendence. These canvases are no longer parallel to Lucia Hartini’s life, existing as bearers of feelings and emotions transferred through brushstrokes and paint. In the difficult physical and psycho-spiritual process of their creation, they have become her life.

This directional shift and the resolution of long-term difficulties through personal healing and spiritual transformation demonstrates the wisdom of adopting a thirty year scope to this study of Lucia Hartini’s “Surrealisme Yang Indah / Beautiful Surrealism” using the conceptual framework of hybridity, and cognisant of the realities of daily life in Indonesia between 1959 and 2002. Despite sharing certain of its characteristic attributes, Hartini’s “Surrealisme” is Indonesian and not stylistically derivative from that from the West (Ch. 4).

Negotiations around the line between oneself and one’s subjects: exploring the “Third Space”

Tsing’s (1993) book, In the Realm of the Diamond Queen: Marginality in an Out-of-the-Way Place, is a scholarly work which successfully attempts a similar task to my films with Lucia and this thesis. Although set in Central Kalimantan among a tribal ethnic group, the Meratus Dayaks, rather than in Yogyakarta, Central Java, among an occasional tribe of young artists, Tsing’s book is chronologically synchronous with that period of Lucia Hartini’s life and career depicted in the short art video Pusaran / Vortex (1993) and later discussed in Perbatasan / Boundaries and this thesis.75

Both Tsing and I focus on performatively creative shamanistic women

75 Wright’s (1999 a.) article “‘Difference in Diversity’: Women as Modern Artists in Indonesia” discusses both Kartika Affandi and Lucia Hartini, as two examples of very different, Yogyakartan-based professional artists who are both painters. Neither completed a tertiary education in art, but both are described as practitioners and painters of insights obtained through Kebatinan practice. However, like Maklai, Wright attributes shamanism to Lucia Hartini alone. By selecting Tsing’s work, I have chosen a parallel which heightens the socially contextual and culturally mystical aspect of Lucia Hartini’s life and work, although here I limit the chronological relevance of her shamanism to the years prior to 1996, before her involvement with the teachings of Master Ching Hai. Between 1982 and 1992, Lucia’s “tribe” were her fellow painters, the “Surealis Yogya”, rather than the established studio painter, Kartika. Kartika’s later travels to work as an artist with aboriginals in Central Australia is an inappropriate parallel in this instance.
who pursued concepts of “beyond”, (implying boundaries), and “in-betweenness”, (encompassing both borderlands and hybridity), in their storytelling and painting respectively. Both Tsing and myself have had to consider the influence of our own roles as active participants in the creation of conceptual ‘Diamond Queens’ in the “Third Spaces” between ourselves and our subjects-become-friends within the exchange or who are already our friends. The lines between are crossed several times over in such collaborations. Hybridity is inevitable as there is no pure field possible in today’s globalised world, except perhaps at the moment of first encounter. By the time I came to make *Pusaran / Vortex*, to research and make *Perbatasan / Boundaries* and write this thesis, years of prior interaction made any chance of engagement solely with Lucia Hartini’s art impossible. Choosing to portray both the person and her “*Surrealisme*” allowed us to make films easily and made this thesis possible to write.

Documentary offers the chance to go beneath the skin and, interpretatively, beyond the frame, especially when the artist before the lens has a passion for capturing the forces at work beneath and beyond the surface of everyday life. Despite their abstraction, she depicts these forces in photographically real form. The extra dimension at play is the conceptual world of the psyche and the soul, encompassing Lucia’s fascination with the observation of nature, her interest in the mystical and her quest for harmony between religions through her own spiritual practice (2.3.) Yet documentary also parallels that which is before the lens, without necessarily being its mirror, using the language of film interpretatively, to highlight the truth(s) of the material presented.

The Search for the ‘Diamond Queen’

In *In the Realm of the Diamond Queen: Marginality in an Out-of-the-Way Place*, Tsing (1993) writes that she was dubbed “the student” by her friend and chief informant Uma Adang.76 Tsing, herself the product of a hybrid diasporic lineage, started her research from a point where neither she nor Uma Adang, the Meratus Indonesian, “represented” their respective cultures in any simple sense.

Referring to both parties as “strange, strong-minded women exploring our own as well as the other’s ethnic borders,” she then proceeds to advance an argument framed in terms of hybridity as a key tool of analysis (1993: 22).

One goal of this ethnography is to show a variety of unexpected personal intersections through which I was able to learn about varied Meratus positionings. I hope to show how my understanding of gender, power, and culture in the Meratus Mountains draws from particularistically situated dialogues: indeed, all ethnography is so constructed. The ‘Diamond Queen’ in the title of this book refers not to Uma Adang, nor to myself as identified by Uma Adang, but to the conceptual space we created in our ethnographic interaction.
(Tsing, 1993: 22)

Tsing’s framework acknowledges the joint creation of a ‘Diamond Queen’, whether conceptual or actual, as the strange and beautiful hybrid goal of her research. This aim may also apply to a partially or wholly collaborative work of art or film. Similarly, my study, while not an ethnography, includes many self-reflexive considerations of perceptions and positionings, a freshly conscious effort to avoid the framings of “self” and “other” while simultaneously acknowledging and respecting undeniable difference.

The conceptual space described by Tsing is created by a simultaneous respect for difference, the discovery of cultural border crossings, and sometimes, a voiding of boundaries, as evident in Hartini’s canvas *Batas Antara Dua Sisi / Boundary Between Two Sides* (1992), (Plate 37). It is this space and the ‘Diamond Queen’ created therein which interested me as a filmmaker. My work required a detailed consideration of my relationship towards my subject, the contemporary Indonesian artist Lucia Hartini, hers towards me, and ours individually and together towards others involved or encountered during the process. I suggest that the concept of creating a sparkling if transient ‘Diamond Queen’ from the mutual understandings formed in the interactive space of the filmmaking and research process also resonates with the successive realisations which mark Lucia’s spiritual quest. These mutual realisations are themselves conceptual hybridities and are clearly expressed in Hartini’s art.
Although the subject of Tsing’s book is far removed from the subject of my thesis in terms of geographic locale, ethnicity, class and education, the two projects are analogous in certain respects. Both concern the generation of mutually conjured representations in actual and conceptual “Third Spaces”. I first met Lucia Hartini and photographed her work in 1985. Tsing commenced her research in 1986. At this time, the diversity of culture in New Order Indonesia was represented by the administration of National Culture sanctioned by the state. Like government, National Culture was imposed from Jakarta. While the apparatus of state fared haphazardly in Kalimantan, its consequences were none the less destructive. National Culture could interrupt but never quite control the living culture of the Meratus Dayaks. Similarly, it was unable to constrain completely the resolutely creative and resourceful Yogyakartan artists and their allusive, critical and potent visual discourse.

Tsing investigates marginality and discourses of local empowerment other than those of development advocated by and originating from the extended apparatus of the “centre”. She proposes a reverse “cultural effect” generated by the persistence of spiritual practices that maintain connections with nature (Tsing, 1993: 22 - 31) and values the potential power of creative acts of storytelling and performance, even when enacted before small audiences. These may be formally playful and hybridic. Beyond its centrality to the task of recording oral history, Tsing ascribes a key role to storytelling as a strategy for empowerment when faced with a colonialistic national administrative strategy. Her book reads as a compelling example of real-life storytelling in which all the characters, including her own, are satisfyingly fleshed-out.

Rooted in tradition, and experience, often idiosyncratically recounted, storytelling is a means whereby the personal and the local are foregrounded against the overarching homogeneous narratives of national development. Storytelling situates local commentaries within “wider negotiations of meaning and power at the same time as recognising local stakes and specificities” (Tsing, 1993: 9). Storytelling provides the basis through which strategies of resistance and associations preserving tribal or community knowledge and manifesting a sense of self-determination might be developed, later impacting on the national
stage. This shift in focus reverses the dominance of a foreign gaze predicated solely on Western theories and culture in the study of a non-Western “other/them” (Tsing, 1993: 9).

Similarly, in contexts where the Indonesian state attempted to set the boundaries of National Culture and its discourse, Lucia Hartini, the “Surealis Jogya” and their peers recuperated non-mainstream stories, alternative linguistic discourses, (eg. the Serat Kala Tidha and Bahasa Gali gali), and non-Western styles of compositional arrangement on the picture plane, as in the dispersal of images in Wayang Beber, the stillness of temple carving and the gravure of Dayak tattoos. Although learning the painterly techniques of the Old Masters from Neo-Renaissance Dutch artists in Yogya karta and in the Netherlands, the “Surealis” painters only adopted aspects of their Meta-realist style critically, if at all.

The parallel with Tsing’s observations encourages me to propose an argument supporting the quietly subversive role of the “Surealis Jogya” based on the figurative nature of their work and the complex but still populist nature of their references. This parallel also suggests the validity of considering the relationships between “Surealis” art and Indonesian film. Compositionally, many “Surealis” works appeared to be part of a wider narrative extending beyond the frame of the canvas or the walls of the gallery, while the gestural and performative aspects of Ivan Sagito and Lucia Hartini’s paintings in particular, suggest a relationship with the framings of cinema. However the context and consequence of audience reception of art and film in Indonesia heighten the differences between the two.

The artists’ success lay in their performance as artists within the concentrated space of art galleries and the restricted, but targeted distribution of their work to collectors. Through the publication of reviews and catalogues, their art and its discourse reached a wider literate public of art lovers. Just as the female shamans Uma Adang and Induan Hiling were well known to many Meratus Dayaks in the traditional territories through which they travelled frequently, so the work of Indonesia’s artists and the artists themselves carried their visions, their concerns and carefully voiced opinions across and beyond national borders into the global arena, where their impact was considerable.
By contrast, because of its potentially vast audience, the content and style of Indonesian film was heavily controlled. Very few films and even fewer documentaries, working with content and perspectives similar to that of Indonesia’s young contemporary and controversial _Arus Baru_ and “Surealis” artists, ever received the same exposure and critical acceptance. The careful promotion and popular reception of the “Surealis” work over the years eventually succeeded in turning “the gaze of the discriminated back upon the eye of power”, as Bhabha’s (1994: 160) observations of hybridity’s possibilities for generating attitudinal change suggest.

Tsing recounts that her gradual enmeshment with several key people in the group she chose to study facilitated her research. Her close relationship with Uma Adang in particular is central to Tsing’s study, and a crucial element in developing her understanding of the issues she has set out to examine. Her study is a fascinating account of the dynamics of this relationship of privilege, enabling her access to the stories of others within the group. The significant person who opened up my understanding of a wider set of dynamics through the viewpoint of gender was a woman, the educated and comparatively worldly contemporary artist, Lucia Hartini. By focusing on an extraordinary, perhaps eccentric, woman, my analytical focus was drawn to the relationships between gender, culture, ethnicity (to a lesser extent) and state rule.

During the troubled middle years of her career, Lucia’s experience most resembled Tsing’s description of the younger female Meratus shaman, Induan Hiling. When about to accept familial judgement that she was crazy, Induan Hiling was comforted by Uma Adang who told her that she was a shaman-in-training and not to worry. Induan Hiling continued with her vocation and saw no reason why she should not become the equal of male shamans in her practice (Tsing, 1993: 233 - 234). Just as Lucia Hartini’s endeavour was to succeed as a professional Indonesian artist in competition with her male peers, rather than as a “woman artist”, Induan Hiling’s endeavour was to practice Meratus shamanism, not “women’s shamanism” (Tsing, 1993: 269).

Tsing observes that such dedication to shamanism was the local route to a political voice. Uma Adang, whose eclectic hybrid ragbag of stories, histories and
political views were delivered in a mocking and parodic manner as opposed to a coherently critical one, was not considered “crazy” within her immediate community. However she was deemed so by an educated Indonesian who regarded much of her commentary as “subversive” and irreligious, striking at vulnerabilities in the structure of authority. He confides to Tsing that elsewhere in Indonesia the senior shaman “should be arrested” (Tsing, 1993: 36).77

Tsing observes that the style of Uma Adang’s expression and her position of leadership in the community made her a good example of Bhabha’s “hybrid colonial subject”. Her fragmented parodies do not actually change the system with which she happily although eccentrically engages.78 In terms of an analysis predicated on gender, Tsing (1993: 245 - 248) regards Induan Hiling as the more subversive of the two. She cites Induan’s determination to excel at shamanism and the seriousness with which she composes and performs her ethnically “authentic songs” while simultaneously identifying with Rhoma Irama as the benchmark for contemporaneity and her own ambition, as evidence that Induan Hiling demands something more. Tsing also observes that although their own immediate communities consider these women “eccentric”, they respect their professional and performative abilities, their originality and independence – a more tolerant view than that of the educated official. Lucia’s anxiety about how she appeared in the public domain were heightened whenever she left her familiar milieu of Yogyakarta, largely because she inevitably encountered attitudes like that of Tsing’s educated male informant.

For reasons established in Chapters 5 and 6 of this thesis, at one stage in her life, Lucia Hartini lived outside her social matrix, as did both Uma Adang and Induan Hiling. The “difference” of these respective “subjects” serves to highlight wider concerns in an analysis of the operations of the New Order state and its

77 This was not Lucia’s experience, but it was that of performance artist Arahamaiani, Lucia’s senior by some years.

78 In 1994, Lucia Hartini was increasingly distressed that she and her work were perceived in this way. Her work was enjoyed as entertainment only, which, to her, threatened to diminish its power and integrity (Ch. 4). In the above analogy, Lucia had now become more like Uma Adang, but beyond her role within the original group of “Surealis” artists as equal and keeper of the karang (financial chest), she was not a leader in any wider community sense. In Java, under the New Order, she could not easily access acceptable paths to power even had she wished to do so.
effect on culture, women and their profession of spirituality as well as their presence in the world of work beyond the home. This similarity requires closer scrutiny, particularly in relation to concepts of difference, marginality, boundaries and borders.

Although Lucia Hartini’s parentage, aspects of her lifestyle, and the strength of her views contributed to her sense of alienation in her immediate community, Lucia’s practice as artist was not marginal within the terms of her profession. Her success may well be considered rare for gender-based reasons, and therefore “different”, as Lucia emphatically acknowledges in Perbatasan / Boundaries. Unlike Tsing’s Meratus Dayak shamans, it was not marginal. Lucia’s situation, like her work, encapsulated hybridity. While creatively productive, this condition, experienced by many women professionals in developing Indonesia, became a source of further psychological pressure. Lucia’s perception of this pressure is reflected in a series of major canvases painted between 1992 and 1994.

Two related but differently situated readings of Hartini’s powerfully emotive painting Pemandangan Malam / Night View / View of Wax (1992) provide further insight into the psycho-social dimensions sketched above. These are not translations but interpretations, because Lucia did not discuss Pemandangan Malam with me directly. When filming in 1992, she simply sat before the work, smoking quizzically. She told me the idea came to her late in the afternoon as she was burning the small amount of rubbish she had swept into a corner of her yard at Ke tanggunan. She always smoked a kretek (clove cigarette) as she did her mandatory rubbish disposal duty, because the smoke often smelled bad. This was her recreation of that moment.

79 In a catalogue essay for Batas Antara Dua Sisi, (1994), Marianto uses the term langka (rare) to describe Lucia and her work.

80 Personal communication. Lucia Hartini, Yogyakarta, July 1992. The conversation later shifted to a discussion of food contamination. Lucia was concerned because there was a new very cheap sweet being sold to children in the streets. It was made of chemical byproducts and was possibly toxic. The sellers always came past her house at rubbish burning time, when her attention was distracted and her children were getting restless, awaiting their evening meal. She feared they would choose the sweet instead of bakso. Was this conversation a disjointed explanation of the paintings content, or was it a loose social contextualization?
The painting’s composition depicts an oval-shaped borderland comprised of apparently barren, spiky corrals of rock separating a vast whirling oceanic void from the beautiful but cold silvery planetscape beyond (Plate 6). In a simile drawn from *Kejawen* (Stange, 1979), and applicable to other canvases Lucia painted for her 1994 exhibition, *Batas Antara Dua Sisi / A Boundary Between Two Sides*, a boundary may also be a centre, thin as the edge on the back of a knife (Wistrotomo, 1994). It may even be that thin sliver of reality which separates us from the voids of chaos and creation. But in *Pemandangan Malam*, this rocky space is at once a physical boundary between elemental and imaginary or metaphysical states and a difficult and inhospitable borderland - a place which is conceptually that of in-betweenness.

As suggested by the title, this rocky borderland may also be seen as walls of encrusted wax surrounding a wax pan rim. Such a border is congealed and solid until heat is applied. As this encrustation melts, its fantastic gothic shapes shift and drip, becoming progressively narrower, a powerful metaphor for the changing condition of real and conceptual borderlands. Beneath lies the hidden metal knife-edge of the pan’s rim, which is the real boundary constraining the whirling vortex within.

At a personal level, this work may also reflect Lucia’s working processes of the time, as described to me, to Marianto (1994, 1996, 1997, 2001) and as portrayed in *Perbatasan / Boundaries*. At night, when all was quiet and her children asleep, Lucia painted on the details of her canvases, her new brushstrokes seeming to arise from the sections previously painted. Marianto (1994) describes her psychological state at the time as akin to trance, an automatic form of painting which swept away the cares and tensions of the day. Perhaps the vortex within the painting signifies this subconscious churning of the brain from which thoughts and ideas are expelled, concretised as congealed wax visually transubstantiated as rock. Further refined, this mass of contorted form emerges symbolically as the art of a painting once completed or the mystical transport of the mind, free of dross.

*Pemandangan Malam* suggests the possibilities of physical and psychological transcendence. It plays with notions of transubstantiation. Yet in reality, and despite Lucia’s optical vantage point as a painter, the artist implies that she is also like millions of Indonesian women workers, struggling to maintain a place for themselves and their families on the dissolving edge between the whirlpool and the unknown. Beyond this shifting edge lies a shining realm, posited perhaps as an idealised future, the goal of progress and development. However,

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81 *Malam* (night) also means wax or paraffin (Echols and Shadilly, Vol. I., 1990: 358). *Pemalam* (the act of applying wax) is a term used when describing the process of making batik. Early in her career, Lucia drew patterns for batik studios to earn cash when money was tight. In 1985, she told me that she only made batik for herself and her family, although Marianto (2001: 227) claims that she also made fine batik for a living. Lucia understood the industry through her mother and because she had also worked in the industry for pin money to pay for her art materials. Lucia sympathized with the thousands of women batikers working throughout central Java with great skill and low wages.

82 Many artists in Yogyakarta work thus. On returning to Australia, it was my preferred way of working for many years.
the colouration depicts this realm as cool, even chilly, rather than warm and inviting.\(^{83}\)

Boundaries may be permeable, transcended and perhaps voided in the pursuit of creating a ‘Diamond Queen’, especially in the realms of the painterly imagination, trance and spiritual practice. Borders as boundaries are the physical edges where something ends and something else begins. Politically, they delineate the domains of nations and states. Borders may be negotiable or not, transgressable or not. Borderlands are the indeterminate and often uneasy sites on either side of the real and conceptual edges and boundary lines demarcating difference. These spaces are sites of political and cultural contestation. They are primarily sites of slippage with an emerging discourse of their own. But the dual perspective required to survive there might produce culturally hybridic creative expressions and possibly also, a transformative “consciousness of the Borderlands” (Anzaldua, 1987).

Such a discourse is not necessarily a discourse of margins, for in some ways, a borderland is also a centre as well as a periphery. A borderland is a shifting physical and often confusing conceptual space known to many in diverse ways, and so cannot be considered without negotiable possibility. As a place where exchange might occur, it is therefore not outside of power (Papastergiadis, 2003: 34). Conceptually, a borderland is a space provoking reflection, analysis, strategising and negotiation, where old forms of certainty are unsettled, and new forms of uncertainty and doubt arise. Hence a borderland is also a site of adaptive continuities and may become Papastergiadis’ (2003) “Third Space” in which

There is a delicate but subtle level of transformation that occurs as we move from the known to the unknown, the familiar to the unfamiliar (Bhabha, 1994). Hybridity is thus embedded and central to our understanding of the contemporary and the dynamics of globalisation.

(Papastergiadis, 2003: 34)

For these reasons, Supangkat (1997) suggests that the hybrid art of the “Surealis

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\(^{83}\) In Ch.5, I offer other possible interpretations.
Yogya”, among that of a small number of contemporary Indonesian artists, convincingly reflected the uneasy and even fearful experience of post-modernity. Despite psychological difficulty, the resonant success of their hybridic art practice ensured their survival as human beings.

Establishing connections

At the points of cross-cultural contact where communication occurs between the local, the national, and the global, further physical, conceptual and intellectual hybridities are generated, as with the documentary *Perbatasan / Boundaries* and this thesis. Other ‘Diamond Queens’ of mutual understanding are constantly being conjured from these interactions, even those born of tragedy and pain. While some will sparkle long and brightly like that created by Uma Adang and Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing in the remote lands of Central Kalimantan, how many of these solve in any way Papastergiadis’ (2003: 34) question “What do we do when the global hurts the local?” It is impossible to answer this question without invoking a complex chain of social action and resistance, and then the possibility of change and its consequences across national borders as well as within them. But it is important to begin, as was recognised by the “Surealis” artists and their supporters within Indonesia and beyond. Similarly, these considerations have created a respectfully contextual but intuitively applied framework for *Perbatasan / Boundaries*, but one requiring greater conceptual rigour when writing this thesis.

2.3. Seeking Conceptual Bridges Between the Self and Society: considering religion, mysticism and the spiritual, the mind, art, science and philosophy.

When I commenced my research for this project in 1998, Lucia was more preoccupied with the syncretic teachings and meditative practices of her *guru*, the Supreme Master Ching Hai, than with painting. Hence my research, including script development, began with the spiritual changes to Lucia’s life. Master Ching Hai’s teachings are informed by a Buddhist and Taoist appreciation of the compassionate Bhoddisattva, the Goddess of Mercy, Quan Yin. The Master seeks to find common ground between major religions, an approach which resonated with Lucia. Despite her early upbringing as a Christian, and her interest in
Kejawen as a part of the fabric of Central Javanese culture, both Lucia’s husbands have been Muslim. She has had to bridge religious boundaries and cultural values in her everyday life, as a person and as an artist. Convinced that the answers to many of the problems she perceived in her own life and the world around her lay in the Master’s teachings, Lucia applied her energy to these tasks. She was working from the inside out towards change. This new conceptual influence is particularly visible in those paintings created between 1996 and 2002, discussed in detail in Chapter 7.

My research became fourfold in emphasis. Firstly, if Perbatasan / Boundaries was to convince, I needed to understand Lucia’s spiritual involvement and enough of the Master’s teachings to follow her practice. My own re-involvement with Buddhism in late 1998 suggested new ways in which I might also reconsider and apply conceptual frameworks derived from studies of philosophy and spirituality, assisting this aspect of my research and writing. Besides the operation of Karma, Buddhism is predicated on change, the inevitability of suffering, and the exercise of compassion. Accepting these noble truths helps us understand Lucia’s personal experience and her efforts to address the problems in her life.

Secondly, it was impossible to separate Lucia from her Central Javanese cultural background and from Yogyakarta especially. Despite the impact of modernity and globalization and the contemporaneity of her art, I also sought Javanese cultural sources for the metaphysical and mystical aspects of Lucia’s imagery leading to a consideration of Sufic Islam and syncretic Kejawen mysticism, its cosmological system and its belief in an animate spirit world attached to human existence. Beyond acceptance of Kejawen’s cosmological structuring of the universe, and experiential knowledge of its parallel realms of existence, its teachers advise adherence to a code of behaviour and spiritual practice, designed to fortify one’s batin or inner strength.

In order to maintain my arguments concerning the originality and Indonesianness of Yogyanese “Surrealisme”, I must recognise temporality, Lucia’s originality of perception and vision in forming the subject matter, pictorial composition and choice of detail in her art, as in paintings like Dalam
Imajinasi I / In the Imagination (1982), (Plate 53). Her drive to sustain and execute her art under difficult circumstances has been crucial. For instance, while Spanjaard (2003: 187, en 6), claims that Lucia’s psycho-spiritual subject matter, weird compositions, photo-realist style and choice of painting media and techniques show undeniable influence if not derivation from European Surrealism and the Dutch Neo-Renaissance movement of the mid 1980s, I argue that Hartini’s style was already well established several years before she attended Diana Vandenberg’s workshops in Yogyakarta. The same applies to more recent works directly exhibiting influences from Buddhism and the Master’s teachings, as well as Lucia’s re-acquaintance with Islam through her marriage to Moch Operasi Rachman. Works such as Dibawah Payung Duaribu / Beneath the Umbrella of the Millennium (1996) (Plate 44) and Sumur Sulaiman / Solomon’s Well (2000) (Plate 50) are discussed in detail in Chapter 7.

Thirdly, I must separate out information and interpretations gained from Lucia, including statements about the conceptual, spiritual and religious background to her work, from those sourced independently as a result of my own research and analysis. I approached my subject afresh in the spirit of Javanese parallelism, engaging with the dynamics at work in Lucia Hartini’s life and in Indonesia generally. I discuss Karl Popper (1982) at some length because this Western philosopher (of science) theorises the Universe in a manner presenting us with a useful parallel to the cosmology of Kejawan.

This parallel is not perfect in every respect, but extends my consideration of “Surrealis” art created in Yogyakarta during the 1980s. Some of Popper’s ideas apply to those photographically real renditions of objects from the visible world, painted with almost scientific precision, yet which, in their compositional

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84 The transference of much-desired technical information and expertise was certainly justifiable in Indonesia in 1985 - 86. Just as Chinese portraitists introduced fine paper and a type of gouache paint to Java centuries earlier, so the Dutch artist Diana Vandenberg introduced fine art renaissance painting techniques, good quality canvas and oil paints to the emerging artists of Yogyakarta. But this does not necessarily imply a slavish copying of style. Even though Eddie Hara and Dadang Christanto still needed to press their lecturers to use slides, rather than verbally describe the art presented at lectures, young Indonesian artists were aware of art from elsewhere. Thanks to the Wendy Sorenson bequest in the early 1970s, ASRI, the Indonesian National Art Academy, had acquired a library of art books. “Surrealisme” was already well established in Yogyakarta by the time Vandenberg arrived, as exemplified in early paintings by Lucia Hartini, Iwan Sagito and Agus Kamal, dating from 1981 onwards.
disjunction, suggest the invisible forces at work beneath and beyond their surface. This quality later characterised most of the paintings selected for the 1997 exhibition of *The Mutation*.

As one working in the digital domain, a direct reading of Popper as well as an appreciation of his philosophy through the lens and portal of cyberspace theorist Michael Benedikt (2000), has informed my interpretations of Lucia’s canvases. These readings have helped me isolate those dimensions of *Kejawen* and mysticism most important in developing the conceptual frameworks of this thesis, including those concerning film. The conceptual frameworks of Buddhism and those constructed from the elaboration of interstices, boundaries, borderlands and hybridity already engaged in this chapter, mesh well with these parallels.

Fourthly, this thesis seeks answers explaining the links between spiritual and religious practice and democratic social action, the dynamic of *Reformasi* in which Lucia consciously participated. How did I treat such influences in my filmic interpretations of particular paintings when editing *Perbatasan / Boundaries* (1999 – 2002)? In *Pusaran / Vortex* (1993), these interpretations had remained largely rooted in cosmological symbolism derived from *Kejawen*, except for a brief, and at that time incomplete, reference to Lucia’s anti-nuclear sentiment and a highly personal maternal focus on *sosok perempuan* (women’s issues). By comparison, are these links, or their absence, between the personal, spiritual and religious, and then, the socially participatory and art, made intersticially explicit in *Perbatasan / Boundaries* - and are they convincing? Is there some synchronicity between the conceptual frameworks within which my films were made and considered in this thesis and those developed to assist my interpretative approaches to the study of Lucia Hartini’s art?

*The Key to Instant Enlightenment*

In 1997, talking to Lucia, observing her devotion to the Master and the difference spiritual practice had made to her life and the focus of her work, I became interested in concepts of the contingent and transformative self. I sought cultural, religious and spiritually weighted definitions of this self beyond the immediately pragmatic and temporal ones of a self exhibiting behaviours contingent upon events and deploying a range of personas as masks, useful in the
public domain. In Section II, I describe how the professional requirements of Lucia’s career had trained her well in these skills. Also described is the sequential presentation of canvases in her exhibitions, as though Lucia is a *dalang* (puppeteer) unpacking the contents of his magic box (Choy, 1984), (see Ch. 6).

This play of images as puppets not only exhibits and elicits *rasa*, (sentiment and/or feeling), but also presents us with *watak* (characters), who are *wafat*, (representative characterisations or personae), different aspects of the same self or rather, contingent selves of a particular character.

In 1992, I admired Lucia’s ability to juggle the creative disjunctions of “*Surealis*” art practice within still traditional attitudes towards gender and pressing family responsibilities, including that of being the sole breadwinner. Yet she had endured the scar of violence within the chaos of a failing marriage for many years before succumbing to the mental and physical collapse from which she had just begun to recover.\(^8^5\) Although imperfect, Lucia had acquired a conceptual framework which helped her manage her situation and her recovery, but which also contained inherent dangers. She was seeking new solutions.

In 1997, speaking by telephone, Lucia recounted how she was now following the teachings of Supreme Master Ching Hai. Dedicated to seeking enlightenment in one lifetime, awakening her inherent wisdom and realizing the ultimate Truth, she now practised guided meditation, often for several hours a day. She adhered to a lovingly prepared vegetarian diet, and held prayer meetings with local followers of Master Ching Hai at her new home at Bugisan on the outskirts of Yogya. She actively sought happiness and fulfillment by following the Five Precepts listed by the Master (1994: 70), allowing God to work within her. They are:

Refrain from taking the life of sentient beings.
Refrain from speaking what is not true.
Refrain from taking what is not offered.
Refrain from sexual misconduct.
Refrain from the use of intoxicants.
(Supreme Master Ching Hai, 1994: 70)

\(^8^5\) See the sub-section on *Spirituality*, (Ch. 1), for a discussion of literature relating to this incident. This concept is cohesively explained in Linda Connor’s (1978 - 1982) notes about her filmmaking projects with Jero Tapakan and papers on Balinese mental health and physiological healing.
Lucia had adopted a much more relaxed work schedule, which included mentoring painting students. In 2000, supported by Operasi, she underwent a series of traditional chiropractic and naturopathic treatments to purify her body of pharmaceutical drugs and chemical toxins, which had accumulated over the years of painting her enormous canvases at home.⁸⁶ She now sought “the mercy consciousness of God” rather than the pain and angst which had accompanied her “Surealisme” for so many years prior to 1992. In 1999, she confided that her previous attempts at Kebatinan had been unguided and had produced only escapist daydreams, rather than true understanding. Although many of her “Sureal” works were regarded as mystically charged, Lucia now considered them spiritually immature.⁸⁷ Full of life, Lucia spoke of her progress with great satisfaction and happiness.

*Kejawen, an introduction to Javanese wisdom*

While studies concerning Islam and society proved useful in my study of gender in the modern Indonesian context, *Kejawen* had long influenced Lucia’s work. It may also have erected some cultural obstacles, particularly in relation to questions of gender roles and expectations. Javanese cosmology informed her “Beautiful Surrealism”, presenting viewers with the artist’s long-term fascination with the multiplicitous examples of micro-cosmic/macro-cosmic parallels she observed around her in her everyday life. In *Pusaran / Vortex: From the Kitchen to Outer Space; the paintings of Lucia Hartini* (1993) vortical nebulae in space reflected similar principles of mass, energy and motion to the water eddying away down her kitchen sink. Many of Lucia’s examples discussed for this film – but not

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⁸⁶ In August 2001, I watched Loko’s video record of his mother’s treatment, but did not know whether or not the cure was successful. While the primary cause of Lucia’s physical illness was the subject of conjecture, the possibility it was work related is contextually supported by Occupational Health and Safety studies focusing on the health of artists and craftspeople have been conducted in the USA and Australia (1980’s), but in Indonesia, such concerns have rarely been addressed. Sculptor Dolorosa Sinaga was ill for three years (1997 - 2001), as a consequence of poisoning incurred from casting bronze in her studio. Some suspect Hildawati Sumantri’s death from cancer was caused by her exposure to powdery glazes, chemicals and dust. Lucia had always painted in a room of her house, not in a separate studio. Despite good ventilation in her new home, the smell of oil paint was ever present when I was filming. Popper’s scientific theories on the relationship between forces, objects and products both physical and mental has taught us much about the fragility of the web of life and the dangers posed by contamination.

⁸⁷ Personal communication. Lucia Hartini, Yogyakarta, July 1999.
always those videoed - were also scientifically quantifiable. Lucia’s interest in the forces at work beneath and beyond the physicality of canvas, paint and frame reminded me of Popper’s universe. However, Lucia chose the whorl/eddy/vortex as the universally applicable motif best able to express her *Kejawen*-based perceptions of microcosmos and macrocosmos because it transcended every level of cultural location.

In the concise handbook, *Kejawen: Javanese Traditional Spiritual Teaching*, Suryo S. Negoro (2000) describes *Kejawen* as a threefold broadly tiered multi-faceted interlocking philosophical framework explaining the universe, the world and the place of humankind within it. He includes interpretations from several highly regarded Central Javanese teachers. I found Ki Soekardi’s contribution most informative in a larger sense. Because aspects of *Kejawen* predate Javanese Vajrayana (Tantric) Buddhism, were absorbed into its framework, and then blended back in everyday practice (Becker, 1993), I introduce aspects of Buddhist thinking into the parallels between Popper’s construction of the universe and that of *Kejawen*. Where appropriate, Bhabha’s (1994) insights are also introduced, so linking the conceptual frameworks concerning boundaries, borderlands and hybridities.

**The Universe**

In “Cyberspace, First Steps”, Benedikt (Bell and Kennedy, 2000), compares the architecture and mentality of cyberspace to Popper’s (1982: 161) description of three interactive Worlds and possibly a fourth (or fifth), located in an open, emergent and incompletable universe. This is the cosmology postulated in his book, *The Open Universe: An Argument for Indeterminism*. Popper postulates the veracity of a logic of indeterminism because of and within this open universe. Benedikt’s comparison rests on the structures of physical matter and force described by Popper, and the critical role played by the impossibility of restricting the nature and scope of human mental formations, enquiry and knowledge in the interactions between worlds. Popper’s is not the finite universe of *Kejawen* because he was a modern physicist whose ideas had grown through scientific and technological development. However, *Kejawen* makes qualified
allowances for indeterminism.

Briefly, Popper (1982: 114) identifies World 1 with the objective world of natural things and their physical properties, with their energy, weight, motion and rest, and with the worlds of chemistry and biology. Examining the natural world, these qualities are evident in the forested and grassy mountain landscapes; the lacy structures of coralline rocks and the texture of earth resembling the pores of the skin; the towering cloudscapes, directional winds and waves, the oceans and whirlpools of air and water in Hartini’s canvases. Next is World 2, the psychological world of both humans and animals. This subjective world of consciousness contains intentions, feelings, thoughts, dreams, memories, hopes and fears, even collective myths. Again we are reminded of the dream-like and emotional sub-texts of Lucia’s art, depicted figuratively. However, in the conceptual framework of Kejawen, these signify the psychological plane of many of those elements Popper places in World 3 where they are categorised as “products of the human mind”.

The first group of phenomena in Popper’s World 3 are those of objective, real and public structures, expressed as architectures of various kinds. These same objects are found in Kejawen’s realm of society, and are sometimes depicted in Lucia’s paintings, although usually in part and as symbolic referents only. In terms of their logical consistency and informational content, these structures belong to World 3 and are “subject to the restrictions and valuations of World 3.” Thus “abstract things such as problems, theories and arguments, including mistaken ones, belong to World 3” (Popper, 1982: 114 - 115).

In modernity, World 3 phenomena now include films, radio, television and cyberspace, which are ephemeral, although they rely on sophisticated technology and cleverly engineered structures for their existence. They have become the carriers for transparent mental objects, the patterns of ideas, images, stories, data and the televisual … “a universe of discourse” which Popper (1982: 115) places as a sub-category in World 3. Some of the latter may also exist in World 4, as artistic products, social institutions and systems, as does the art and expression of spirituality conveyed by the canvas and paints of Lucia’s paintings. But as

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88 Kejawen’s roots precede Galileo and the telescope.
objects, the paintings themselves also exist in both Worlds 1 (physical) and 3 (technological), and their ideas and surreal mood in World 3.

The structures and mental objects of World 3 are the conveyances of the “antenna culture” described by Marianto (1997: 24) when situating the art of the “Surealis Yogya”. In 1994, Lucia Hartini claimed she had been driven to distraction by the non-sequiturs arising from her creative process. These included the creation of non-logical juxtapositions of disparate objects in her paintings, her need to resolve her perceptions of the clash between Indonesian and Western cultures and systems and between different cultural and religious values within Indonesian ones. She had tried unsuccessfully to paint the solid structures of these phenomena atop the whirling umbrella of her major work, *Dibawah Payung Duaribu / Beneath the Umbrella of the Millennium* (1996), (see further commentaries, Ch. 7). Eventually, this mixture of World 4, World 3 and World 1 objects makes a recognisable appearance in the small painting *Prahara Televisi / Televisual Storm* (2001), created for Lucia’s 2002 exhibition.

The conceptual framework of *Kejawen* accepts the evolution of life and thought within different spheres, but does not overly concern itself with when these spheres came into existence, only with how. Scholars of *Kejawen* attribute the origin of the universe to the presence of the Creator / Deity within the core of the void. The Creator’s life is felt as a vibration which is everlasting. From this vibration three elements are produced: red elements with a red ray, hot; blue elements with a blue ray, cool; and yellow elements with a yellow ray, wonderful. *Nur*, the silvery white life essence of the universe is produced from the mixture of these elements, and from these various mixtures, the planets, with their different conditions, are born. Hence the silvery white colouration of women’s gowns in some of Hartini’s later canvases, for example the second *Marilyn* (Monroe) (1997) and that of the Master in *Dibawah Payung Duaribu*. But the foreboding colouration of *Prahara Televisi* speaks of the *Kejawen* elements of the universe minus *Nur*, the essence of life, despite the expansion of knowledge derived in modernity. Silver-white is present only on the surface of the sea within the morphing trays containing the major compositional forms of the painting, and, minutely, in the smoke and clouds of the heavens.
Popper (1982: 115 - 116) argues that “World 3 begins only with the evolution of a specifically human language” and is distinguished by “linguistically formulated human knowledge”. Popper’s ordering is scientifically based on partial autonomy, evolutionary principles and irreducibility. In the cosmological parallelism of Kejawen, the production and development of human beings follows a similar path (Soekardi, 2000: 72). Because of the connection of matter across spheres, human evolution is simply assumed. Evolution arises from the mixture of elements and determines the nature of physical bodies and soul bodies. In humans, feelings and wishes are formed from these mixtures. If the wish is strong enough, real products are created, examples being culture in the form of science, and art (including fine craft, often created for ritual purposes in Javanese culture) for instance. Created through the metaphysical body or soul body, these real products are based on logic generated by nur’s activation of the brain (Soekardi, 2000: 73).

Popper would place the first two steps in the evolutionary process according to Kejawen in World 2, and that which they produce, language, storytelling, theories, arguments, then artistic products, social institutions and religious speculation expressed as doctrine and experience, in Worlds 3 and 4 (Popper, 1982: 154). Their psychological dimensions and creative elements resist predictability and reduction to the brain physiology of Popper’s World 1 (1982: 160). Hence they are indeterminate, rather than homogeneous. Although the two systems do not synchronise completely either in structure or detail, Popper’s Worlds are a physicist’s construction of the elements and vibrations or force postulated by Kejawen, which apply equally to the universe, the planets and to human beings (Soekardi, 2000: 71 - 73). Recognition of the interconnectedness of phenomena is also a central concept of Buddhist thinking.

In relation to psychology and the creation of products of the human mind which Popper places World 3, Bhabha’s (1994: 5) concepts of “beyond” and “in-betweenness” provide further useful parallels with Buddhism and Kejawen, particularly in relation to the negotiation of everyday life. The hybridity of the conceptual formations described by Bhabha may arise from and/or express indeterminism. Yet Bhabha’s concept of “splitting” tellingly describes the
psycho-spiritual consequences of the post-modern condition individually and in the mass where the links previously observed between phenomena appear to be severed. Hence metaphysics and the spiritual may be simultaneously determinate and indeterminate, and therefore contingent, but is this the same as an indeterminist view of the world in which the future is neither entailed by, nor necessarily ‘contained in the past’ (Popper, 1982: 92)? At this point, conflicts with the Buddhist concept of Karma arise (see p.116).

Remaining in the realm of psychology and developing the connection between Buddhism and Bhabha, Buddhists consider that all emotions and the abstract mental forms and practices developed from observation, whether empirical or otherwise, translated into patterns of ideas and elaborated as cultural expression and theories, are simply mental objects, whether rational, illogical or creative in character. In this way, they are grounded and hence philosophically comforting. These mental objects exist at the moment of their feeling and thinking, in the “now” of the present moment. We humans choose to arrange them temporally and sequentially as conceptual frameworks, abstract theories or their lack. Hammond (1974) argues that the juxtaposition of rational and irrational thoughts and their creative sequencing defines the connection between European Surrealism and film, a core process linking artists and filmmakers alike. I suggest that such conceptual frameworks are also apparent in the work of the “Surealis” artists, working thirty years later in Indonesia, informed not only by their own familiar philosophical, religious and spiritual backgrounds, but the technologies of modern times.

Mysticism and cyberspace

Whether used as an organisational tool, for graphic design or as a channel of creative communication, cyberspace and its possibilities were not unknown to the “Surealis” artists, even if few accessed it directly. Cyberspace’s capacity to create magic or havoc among those not in the know is well known. Metaphorically, it has a more noble parallel, the replication of the spiritual quest, to which, as a communicative and organisational tool, it contributes.

Benedikt (2000: 31) sees cyberspace as the latest stage in the evolution of World 3, in which the ballast of materiality is cast away again and again, a
familiar process in the particular universes of painting and film editing. This process embodies the creative search to transcend the limitations of the material carriers with which we must work to convey the very ideas compelling us to create in the first place. Cyberspace has now become the weightless, physically transparent and ephemeral carrier of ideas, another invisible force beyond the materiality of canvas, paint and frame and a technologically derived manifestation of Popper’s postulated fourth World. In its infancy in 1982 at the time Popper published his theory of the interactive open universe, cyberspace has prompted awareness and knowledge of and greatly enhanced the interactions between his postulated Worlds.

Apart from the usefulness of cyberspace in my research and the technological relevance of the digital domain in my filmmaking, Benedikt’s postulated casting away of materiality can also be seen as a worldly replication of the spiritual quest, described by Paul Stange (1990) in “The Collapse of Lineage and Availability of Gnosis”:

If an essential quality of mysticism is that all structures are viewed as pathways or vehicles, then it is quite natural, as indicated by the teachings of Buddhism and Sufism, that once the river is crossed, the boat may be left behind. ………
(Stange, 1990: 18)

If religion also exists in Popper’s World 3, and the process of the spiritual quest in World 4, perhaps we may situate the pure experiential essence of this quest in Popper’s posited World 5. Buddhist teachers say we may only know the realms of formlessness when the mind (as distinct from the brain) is truly empty. We must become accomplished meditators and study the teachings in order to achieve this state, the knowledge of nothingess:

The meaning of mysticism never lies in the forms which may have sustained it, as a mode of consciousness, at particular times in the past.……… the key lies in a consciousness which has been liberated from the realms of form. However transmuted through the alchemy of individual practice, traditional forms have their place only as passageways.
(Stange, 1990: 19 - 20)
This consciousness may help us solve the conundrum of indeterminism raised previously, conquering our fear of death and the unknown void which so terrified Lucia Hartini until she encountered the Truth offered by her Master and other spiritual teachers from Buddhist and mystical traditions. This truth is different too but related to that offered by scientists like Popper who also sought to explain the universe, its workings and our place within it. Lucia’s constant fascination with the planets and the Universe, whether informed by science, the cosmology of Kejawen or the truth of the Master’s teachings which would guide her soul in its passage to her destined planet after death is reflected in her portrait of the Master, *Hening Dalam Doa I / Silent Prayer I* (1997), (Plate 46 a.), Ch. 7. Here floating forms hover in the vastness of space, scattered with clusters of stars, nebulae, planets and drifts of clouds, upon which the Master kneels in prayer.

2.4. *Flux*

Among Indonesian theorists writing on art and culture, Supangkat’s (1997: 9 - 10) conceptual construct of multi-modernities does attempt to solve this problem of indeterminism and the experiential and spiritual fates of Indonesians in modernity. Multi-modernities exist in Popper’s *World 3* and occupy an indeterminist space because reality, including its philosophical, metaphysical and spiritual manifestations, is already plural. Supangkat’s is a convincing attempt to reconcile the logic of these difficult variables, variously derived from indigenous Indonesia, from elsewhere in the East, from the West, from religion and from the conceptual formulations of hybridity and the daily realities of multiple ethnicities living side by side in today’s Indonesia. To parallel particular aspects of Bhabha (1994) and Papastergiadis (2003), Popper (1982) and Buddhism still makes sense when applied to events in Indonesia since 1997, whether these entail the rupture and change for the best of Reformasi, or responses to the cataclysmic and wide-ranging spate of natural and man-made disasters since 1997. Popular reactions to these disasters have tested and sometimes challenged Papastergiadis’ (2003: 34 - 35) proposition that when events seem overwhelming and impossible to fit into

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89 Stange (1990: 20) continues: “People may still always tend to assume that the forms which have served as passages for them also tend to function that way for others, and to the extent that they cling to that feeling we will find what I term “religious” rather than truly mystical spirituality.”
existing referential frames, people seek comfort in science or religion. His interest lies in what happens when they turn to art.

The course of Reformasi as a successful mass movement for change does include the successful realisation of a future contained within a culturally and politically hybridic past. However, its political success from May 1998 onwards critically hinged on the indeterminate behaviour of President Suharto who could have used the apparat of repression as he had done many times in the past. Instead, Suharto’s inability to arrange his succession, created a power vacuum which was rapidly and democratically filled by the civilian forces of Reformasi including a military in the process of questioning its role.

There were archipelagic historical, developmentalist and spiritual precursors for Reformasi, such as the Indonesian struggle for independence and the political revolution of 1945. The actions of the students, intellectuals and workers and the citizenry who provided the motor force of Reformasi were also born of philosophies and methods of reasoning emanating from the West, such as empirical rationalism and logical positivism. Despite corruption and uneven development, these ideas were acquired through education and progress made in the areas like medicine, food production and economic growth, resulting in the growth of social awareness on a mass scale. Finally, in terms of spirituality one could argue that the karma of many individuals ripened simultaneously and their actions were in keeping with the cycle of their times, making the co-incidence of Reformasi with the Millennium a fortuitous and well aspected pairing. This is Lucia’s view of what happened, making it easy for her to follow her guru’s injunction “to return to the world”.

*The psycho-spiritual bridge between self and society*

Lucia’s involvement with social action campaigns during Krismon and Reformasi was consistent with her spiritual beliefs, her desire for change and the popular intellectual climate of Millenarianism. Her participation was encouraged through her supportive friendship with Moch Operasi Rachman and the healing effect of a disciplined exercise of the practices associated with the Master’s teachings. Master Ching Hai told Lucia she must re-engage with society, and this she did. Lucia says that through her devotion to the Master and her diligent
practice of the teachings, she (the Master) led me back to myself”.

The Master’s teachings on compassion and the need to find bridges across the doctrinal divides of different religions resonated with Lucia at a personal level. All Buddhists, including Lucia’s Master, advocate the practice of compassion and loving kindness. These practices are similar to Christian and Islamic ideals manifesting as concepts of social justice and community welfare, which have sometimes adapted existing Indonesian models in new ways. These mandatory practices present paths for the enactment of one’s key beliefs in the wider realms of society, and are representative examples of the inter-faith bridges found in the teachings of Supreme Master Ching Hai.

*Art as a tool for reworking relationships between self and society*

In her cultivation of a flexible sense of self, predicated on an exploration of the soul and society (or vice-versa), followed by enactment according to her personal cycle, Lucia activates psycho-social concepts of the contingent self. These concepts resonate with the workings of democratisation explored in the debates of Butler, Laclau and Zizek in *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality* (2000). Particularistically, Stange (1979, 1993) also notes the long history linking spiritual practice in Indonesia, with social action and political struggles.

For much of the New Order, the linkage of mysticism with socially directed struggle was considered potentially destabilizing and hence dangerous. Mystical and spiritual practices sheltering this tradition were marginalized and their edges blunted through an officially endorsed focus on ritual (Stange, 1993, Pemberton, 1994). The weekly village *selamatan* cum community discussion group was the most typical example of officially sanctioned *Kebatinan* practice. To me, these ritual occasions resemble the “dirty pot of realism” skilfully transmuted by the “Surealis Yogya” or reworked as the Hyper-realism of *Arus Baru* and later, as *Realis Cermat* (Painstaking Realism). For instance, *Realis Cermat* artist Jubair, painted the mystical aspects of authentic village-centred yet formerly marginalized mystical practices related to *Kejawen*. Traditions combining mysticism and social activism blossomed rapidly once repression eased, ceased and then vanished.

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90 Personal communication. Lucia Hartini, Yogyakarta, August 1999.
As an artist who survived from her work, Lucia understood the concept of contingent advantage (Hornby, 1974: 138), as can be seen from her continuing affiliation with the “Surealis Yogya”. Initially their visual statements were playful and irreverent, but by the late 1980s, their social insights had become acute, and were expressed in condensed and allusive imagery. In *Kejawen*, the Universe contains a supposedly fixed amount of power which guarantees a hierarchical, stable social order. Supposedly, nature and society are well-managed and the people always have enough. At first, this conceptual framework helped the “Surealis Yogya” and *Arus Baru* artists develop humanitarian arguments against the hegemony of the West and its abuse of the finite sum of power available to the whole world, manifested through rapacious capitalism and heedless applications of technology.

As they became successful established artists with social responsibilities, the “Surealis” and “Arus Baru” artists continued to paint subject matter depicting those Indonesians who had traditionally held this belief, but who were increasingly challenged by the daily realities of uneven development and displacement without recourse to their rights as human beings. As artists, they now understood this disjunctive experience. Their individual empowerment through the cultivation of an inner strength sufficient to sustain them in a climate of repression, and the growing broadly-based impetus towards democratic change now rendered the traditional Javanese concept of a fixity of power problematic. Like many other Indonesians, they realised that, instrumentally, this concept now bolstered the oppression by which they were enslaved. Their art increasingly reflected a conflicted dynamic between an old and new consciousness and the risks run by expressing such ideas.

Lucia Hartini’s painting *Lensa Mata Mata / Prying Eyes / Spy Lens* (1989) (Plate 39), extensively discussed in Chapter 6, reflects these contradictions. Hiding from the eyes which seek to know her thoughts, a woman sleeps in the corner of a narrow maze-like passageway which is slowly cracking around her. The blue cloth supporting her suspended body escapes through every crack. One may accurately read into this work female aspiration to achieve in the worlds beyond the confines of narrow brick walls, but we must also acknowledge fear
and paranoia as the negative consequence of this aspiration. This was Hartini’s experience. *Lensa Mata Mata* is a psychological portrait of a psycho-spiritual crisis with societal ramifications. A decade later, Lucia’s enactment of this painting in *Perbatasan / Boundaries* confirms her now fearless ability to express such meanings in a new era towards which she has made an active contribution as a socially re-empowered woman and as a professional artist.

By 1999, the goal of Lucia’s carefully guided spiritual pursuits has transcended the frame of her major canvases. Lucia has become “Surealis Saya / Myself the Surrealist”, the subject of her spiritual transformations. Her personal triumph over doubt and suffering, her regained health and newfound social awareness coincided with the energy and political liberation of *Reformasi*. For Lucia, this fortuitous and much desired, synchronicity of micro and macro cycles marked the end of a major cycle in her life, celebrated with her “*Irama Kehidupan / Spirit of Life*” exhibition in 2002. Lucia’s journey towards this point provides the overarching narrative structure of both film and thesis.

2.5. Conclusion and Conceptual Introduction to Section II

The approaches, methodologies and conceptual frameworks established in this chapter situate the chronologically linear biography of Lucia Hartini’s life presented in Section II within broader social narratives and historical perspectives largely absent from Lucia’s personal narrative prior to *Reformasi*. Beyond personal responses based in emotion and aesthetic appreciation, these same approaches, conceptual frameworks and historical perspectives inform and structure the extended commentaries on Hartini’s paintings set within the now expanded personal narrative of *Perbatasan / Boundaries*. The multiple readings of paintings selected for comprehensive discussion have been guided by Lucia’s suggestions and comments where these exist, by my own responses, and by those of other writers and scholars, as well as by our respective experiential and historical knowledge of events in Indonesia. As Hendro Wiyanto (1999) so eloquently remarks in *Perbatasan / Boundaries*, contemporary Indonesian artists cannot disconnect their art from society. What they present to us “now and into the future is reality bundled in a dream”.
The conceptual framework of hybridity and its related subsets encourages a culturally connected and creative exploration of gender in Indonesian society. In both Lucia Hartini’s life and art, border negotiations take place at the intersections between individual and society, between gendered social roles and expectations, personal desires and the need to survive as a woman and as an artist. The act of painting increasingly becomes one of resistance, rather than the escapist daydreams of her earlier works. Lucia’s huge canvases with their labyrinthine detail speak of her daily struggle against disappointment, bad health and the threat of the void beyond the small bastion, the borderland as centre which she had secured for herself and her children.

With her worldly success as an artist more certain, Lucia transforms this previously uneasy sense of “in-betweenness” through the difficult pleasure of an individual mystical spiritual quest to strengthen her Inner World, applying the wisdom and enlightenment thus gained in daily life. Continuing to paint professionally from this perspective has been the key to Lucia’s self-empowerment and ongoing spiritual growth. Committed to working within her cultural framework, Lucia’s art expresses her interest in and commitment to the spiritually transformative. In recent years, she uses the device of transubstantiation (Supangkat and Zaelani (1997) to symbolize the transcendence of physical boundaries associated with spiritual practice, echoing religious concepts embedded within Christianity and Buddhism and compatible with those aspects of Islam concerning the dissolution of form in oneness with God.

This thesis presents Lucia Hartini’s paintings as works of spiritually transformative witness, capable of socially pertinent readings as well as an appreciation of their strange and sometimes disturbing aesthetic beauty, surreal in composition and feeling. Within this context, and through an analysis of form, composition, image construction and painterly rendition, my discussion of her paintings in Section II considers their particular qualities as formally synthesized expressions of hybridity beyond mere depictions of content and theme.

Because of the filmic qualities I perceive in Lucia’s work, this critical analysis is linked directly to *Perbatasan / Boundaries*. It is further informed by a consideration of the relationships between art and film in Indonesia across the
same thirty year period. Beyond the particular conceptual frameworks constructed in this chapter, the effects of globalism and the sweeping changes to the conditions of cultural production in Indonesia since Reformasi have made the longitudinal study of Lucia Hartini’s life and the flowering of her “Beautiful Surrealism” within the developmentalist agendas of the New Order regime and into the era of Reform both pertinent and possible. (Plate 7.)

LUCIA HARTINI: A NARRATIVE BIOGRAPHY,

The following biographical portrait of Lucia Hartini adopts a chronologically linear narrative structure as opposed to the experimental, thematically contiguous structure of *Perbatasan / Boundaries: Lucia Hartini, Paintings from a Life* (2002). However, as in the film, I begin Chapter 3 by interrupting Lucia’s introspective introduction to her biography by acknowledging the energy of *Reformasi*. This device indicates the complex intersections between personal and social narratives at play in my dissertation, tying the film more closely to this section of the thesis despite its differences in structure and emphasis. Lucia’s written biography is presented from the mature, liberated and self-confident standpoint I encountered when resuming our semi-collaborative filmmaking in 1999. However, she also recalls times of confusion, pain and sickness. The changed perspective of Lucia’s reflections helped establish the historical framework within which I address the story of her life and consider her art, aided by the broad contextual themes, *Society, Art, Gender and Spirituality* set forth in the first chapter of this thesis.

The narrative arc of this biography begins with Lucia’s childhood and the turmoil of the last years of Sukarno’s presidency, then chronicles her life and achievements as an artist painting her way to public appreciation and financial independence in a career which spanned the era of Suharto’s New Order regime and the tumultuous changes of *Reformasi*. The biography concludes with Lucia’s second marriage in August 2001, and her third solo exhibition at the Bentara Budaya Galleries, Jakarta, in January 2002. Expanding on the sequences and interpretations introduced in *Perbatasan / Boundaries*, this study of Lucia’s life and artistic oeuvre is divided into five major periods. Devoting a chapter to each, I consider Lucia Hartini’s childhood, her youth and student life, her young adulthood and early career. Lastly, I consider the period of her artistic and spiritual maturity, much of which coincided with *Reformasi* and millennial change. Now healed, Lucia regarded this time as one of fortuitous synchronicity, a time to celebrate her talents and the wisdom accumulated in her life thus far.
Noting the vast scale of most of Lucia’s canvases, and the interaction they elicit beyond the material boundaries of canvas and frame, my use of filmmaking as an interpretative device is presented as integral to the analysis and discussion of these works. Particular reference is made to both *Pusaran / Vortex* and *Perbatasan / Boundaries* where this adds to the interpretative descriptions and arguments presented. Unlike *Perbatasan / Boundaries*, and except for purposes of comparison, the paintings discussed are placed in chronological order, marking the phases of Lucia Hartini’s artistic development and highlighting those broad themes of continuing importance to the artist which synchronistically link her life and art to the times in which they were created. These themes are summarised as Lucia’s perceptual, emotional and intellectual relationships with the natural world; her ongoing participation as an educated Indonesian woman in the professional development of contemporary artistic expression from 1976 to 2002, despite the personal and social difficulties she encountered; and the Inner World of her spiritual development.
CHAPTER 3

Lucia Hartini’s personal narrative begins in 1959 in a village near the small town of Temanggung, nestled on the plain beneath the twin volcanic peaks, Sumbing and Slamet in Central Java. Close by is the great ninth century Buddhist stupa of Borobudur, a centre of the Buddhist world. The major architectonic tiers of this structure represent the three spheres of the world according to Buddhism, the realms of Desire (Kamadhatu), of Form (Rupadhatu) and of Formlessness (Arupadhatu), a trilogy familiar to artists and spiritual adepts alike. Because the Javanese builders of Borobudur were averse to rigid demarcations, they divided the structural divisions of the stupa with small plateaus, allowing the three spheres of existence to merge into one another as a harmonious entity (Marzuki and Awuy, 1973).

To seek harmony through personal and spiritual growth and manifest this as tolerance within the Javanese world-view of cyclical personal and historical synchronicity was considered part of one’s enculturation as a Javanese. Like so many Indonesians and from an early age, Lucia faced many struggles to achieve this same fluid transcendence of boundaries in her personal and professional life. These concepts influenced my choice of title for the film Perbatasan / Boundaries in which boundaries as demarcations exist to be challenged within the arrangement and telling of the narrative content as in the form of the documentary itself. However, the primary source of this narrative is Lucia Hartini’s schematic unfolding of the picture of her life, its inner and outward dimensions, and the evolution of her art, respected in both Perbatasan / Boundaries and this thesis.

Perbatasan / Boundaries opens with Lucia speaking reflexively about her life as an artist, so defining the narrative intentions of the documentary. The introduction is interrupted by the disturbance of a festive street parade, establishing the film’s primary location as Yogyakarta at the height of the Reformasi era between 1998 and 2001. Its dynamism is sustained by waves of motor-bike convoys and rallies in which students and next, the entire population of Yogyakarta, took to the streets, supported by Sultan Hamengku Buwono X (rough footage, Operasi Rachman, 1998 - 1999; ISI, 1998 - 99; Aksi Damai, 20
Mei, 1998, Prod. SAV, Yogyakarta, 1998). The action then returns to the artist’s studio, her preferred space and an oasis of calm compared to the tumult of the world outside. Speaking in the present moment, Lucia introduces us to her philosophy of art and her canvases, which are her “other children”.

We are then plunged back into the action, suggesting disjuncture and allowing personal reflexivity, while simultaneously setting out for Temanggung. Suddenly, rural peace replaces city noise. We listen as Lucia’s parents reveal more about the artist. Lucia recounts her childhood memories, reflexively highlighting gender issues and the beginnings of her liberation through education. She is swaddling her sister’s child as she speaks, carefully crossing the ties one after the next. The location then switches back to the central axis of Yogyakarta, which, although filmed in the present, is depicted in such a way that we imagine Lucia’s fascinated arrival as a teenager about to commence her art studies. Into this footage are cut photographs and interviews fleshing out Lucia’s transition from a carefree life as a student, to motherhood and the beginnings of her professional career as an artist. Allusively and directly, these sequences introduce several major themes which later appear in her art.

In this chapter, as in the film, Lucia acknowledges her dislike of regimentation, her love of the grandeur of nature and the pleasure of fantasy and whimsical play. She speaks of her respect for the doors opened to her and other girls through an education in which she acquired knowledge and learnt to think, to draw, to paint and to make. Lucia’s personal account is further contextualized within a social narrative highlighting several major influences in her childhood and youth. These influences include the socialisation of children in Indonesia’s nationalist period, the possible sources of social differentiation and fear, the artistic influences of the time and significant aspects of the education which Tini, as she was then known, received.

Lucia Hartini is the sixth daughter of a policeman and his wife, the parents of nine children. When I shot most of the footage for Perbatasan / Boundaries, both parents were happy to talk about the artist’s early years and their attitudes to their daughter’s career. Lucia’s mother proudly announces her approval of Hartini
Sukarno, for whom Lucia was named. As a service wife and a Catholic Christian, this had been a controversial identification. Many women had disliked Hartini because they disapproved of President Sukarno’s polygamy (Wieringa, 2002: 115 - 119). While Ibu hoped an auspicious future for her daughter would follow an honoured name, in her youth, Lucia preferred to be known as Tini. In 1999, Lucia’s mother was now free to express her admiration for Hartini Sukarno publicly, as she was to acknowledge her Chinese ancestry (Plate 8).

3.1. Considered navigations of the past

Accompanied by Lucia and her parents I visited the mountain village of Gunung Sumbing near the spring featured in *Perbatasan / Boundaries*, some distance from Temanggung. Although Lucia’s professional C. V. always lists Temanggung as her birthplace, Marianto (1996: 111) writes that it was Gunung Sumbing. When discussing her early childhood with Wright (2000: 18), Lucia says their home then was in the police barracks, and very crowded for the large family, with so many children. When we arrived at Gunung Sumbing, it was raining and filming there was not possible. I decided that this aspect of Lucia’s early life was better reflected by Lucia’s parent’s present home in Temanggung.

At Gunung Sumbing, several elderly people introduced by Lucia’s parents, had already restored their portraits of Sukarno and freely proffered their political views, reminding me that Lucia’s early years coincided with the last years of Sukarno’s Presidency, a time of fervent nationalism. These were examples of open conversations, but still controversial historical narratives, such as those concerning the local massacres of communists in 1965 and 1966, were...

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91 Personal communication. Ibu Tjokrosuwarno, Temanggung, August 1999. Ibu did not say exactly why she admired Hartini Sukarno, just that she liked her very much. The admiration was not necessarily political, but was associated with the intense national pride characteristic of the 1950s.

92 Wieringa (2002: 77) notes that Hartini Sukarno encouraged women’s activism in several women’s organizations despite their disapproval of Sukarno’s polygamy. Some cadres in the Catholic organization considered her to have been “nothing more than a call-girl” at the time of her courtship by the President, and an embarrassment to their campaigns to improve women’s situation by reforming marriage laws. Hartini Sukarno is reported to have said that she had no complaints about Bung Karno. She understood Fatimawati’s disappointment, but happily raised the children (Weiringa, 2002: 118). Hartini Sukarno’s public frankness on this subject was appreciated by those Indonesian women who considered her progressive.
not mentioned. Despite the seemingly informal screen presences of Lucia and her mother in *Perbatasan / Boundaries*, Lucia remained wary about the information divulged. The narratives of family and her childhood remained a cautiously recounted navigation of the past for the duration of filming, (Ch. 2).

Lucia resided in Temanggung with her parents until the time of her departure to study art in Yogyakarta in 1976. In 1999, her parents still resided in the small neat house of her youth, opposite the army barracks. Next door lived their Chinese neighbours. The house had a tiny courtyard and a barber’s shop in the front room. The singing bird Lucia acquired as a girl still bounced around his cage in the yard. Lucia showed me the two tiny rooms in which the children remaining at home slept, another reason they preferred to spend so much time outdoors in the beautiful mountain landscape surrounding the town.

![Plate 8. Still from *Perbatasan / Boundaries* (2002). Lucia’s mother at home in Temanggung.](image-url)
Although Lucia developed an impressive career as an artist working alone, Temanggung functioned as a refuge against the alienating pressures of Lucia’s adult life and the frustrations of her career. As in memory, film and works of art hold in creative tension the slippage between what was and that which exists in the present. Realisation of what has passed and/or vanished becomes possible, prompting evaluation of that which remains. During the research process with Lucia and her sisters, Clara Anna and Yanti, many stories from their childhood emerged. Some were recreated and filmed for inclusion in Perbatasan / Boundaries; others noted for use in this thesis. As less and less of this earlier world remains in Java, Lucia considered it important to record these memories.

The natural springs where Temanggung’s children once played have since become a mineral water factory. The centuries-old stone coursing directing its waters to a mountain swimming pool and outwards to the ricefields have been pillaged, and the surrounding land built over.93 But this same clear spring water is also necessary for millions of city dwellers whose local supplies are already polluted. This is the world inherited by Lucia’s children, a Java of successive colonialisms and rapid development with its associated problems. This uneasy passage is reflected in the genesis and development of Indonesian art in the modern and post-modern periods, whose various styles and generational transitions have influenced Lucia and her peers.

As children, they were socialised to be proud but obedient citizens of a romantically revolutionary and fiercely independent Indonesian nation. But the worlds of many were torn apart in the problematic unravelling of Sukarno’s government in 1965 (Cribb, 1990; Weiringa, 2002). What began as an anti-communist coup spread uncontrollably, fed by economic stagnation, administrative chaos and hunger. Terrible violence and bloodshed followed. Some semblance of order was re-established under the military regime of President Suharto. After 1966, the disaffected middle-classes deserted the state capitalism of Guided Democracy, supporting new policies of enforced political stability and development and Panca Sila democracy. New Order governance permitted the re-

93 Personal communication. From a conversation with Lucia, her sisters and Mbak Gina, then Lucia’s household help in Yogyakarta, July 1999.
entry of international capital, economic revival and a form of capitalism grafted onto existing economic practices known as developmentalism (Robison, 1986: 97 - 98). The majority of Indonesians accepted this forced transition for the sake of survival and their ideal of an independent nation. But the traumatic effect of the events of 1965 – 1966 on the psyches of Lucia and her generation persisted well into the present (Wright, 1999d.)

For that part of their professional working lives spent as public figures, the punishment threatened by the Criminal Codes rendered artists’ discussion of this period almost impossible. I had become familiar with Indonesian artists’ obtuse attempts to explain the reasons underlying their fears. Instead I decided to seek Lucia’s account of the many sources from which she distilled ideas for artistic expression. What were the artistic images and cultural practices surrounding her as she grew up, and the ideas and concepts thus conveyed? How was her talent nurtured? What of the imagery associated with citizenship, religion and gender, promoted through successive phases of her education? As an artist, how did she address the representations formally encouraged by the changing character of and aspirations expressed by the Indonesian state as the new nation emerged and developed? Lucia maintained that, since childhood, she admired not only the social realist public sculptures of the 1950s and 1960s, but also the many popular expressions of national allegiance such as the entrance gates of villages and the temporary markers created for celebrations like weddings and special days.94 Between 1998 and 2001 in Yogyakarta, we visited exhibitions by senior artists Sudjana Kerton and Agus Djaaja and her contemporaries like Endang Wiharso, all of whom Lucia appreciated for different reasons. She liked Kerton because he was a romantic revolutionary figure and could draw feet so well!95

3.2. Five Kinds of Love

In an early episode of Perbatasan / Boundaries, the artist describes her best memories of the world of her childhood, depicted as a time of early

94 Personal communication. Lucia Hartini, Yogyakarta, July 1999.

95 Personal communication. Lucia Hartini, Yogyakarta, September 1998.
nationhood and hope, which Indonesians were now permitted to remember again.

Sitting on a small carved and painted chair, Lucia recounts memories of her childhood. Her hair is draped in a single plait over one shoulder, used filmically to symbolise an idealised unbroken relationship with nature; next, freshly cut, in two ponytails, caught with pink frangipani flowers, a schoolgirl neatness representing the development of mental processes and activities.

In descriptions of the idyllic natural world surrounding Temanggung, with its fantastical clouds and gentle breezes, its mountain paths flanked by bushes and small flowers, and rice-fields where sunlight glints on water, Lucia refers to the atmosphere of her early schooling. This was based on the idealistic Pancacinta or ‘five kinds of love to teach our children’, formulated in 1960 by Gerwani, the most radical of the Indonesian Women’s Organisations influential in the Sukarnoist era. Children must express their love

1) of our nation;
2) of parents and humanity in general;
3) of truth and justice;
4) of friendship and peace;
5) of the natural surroundings.

(AK February 1960, cited in Wieringa, 2002: 238)

At the National Conference for Education in 1963, the Pancacinta was revised to include other people and peace, science and culture, (presumably incorporating nature) and work (seemingly at the expense of truth and justice, as these were no longer specifically named). This revision encoded the five core

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96 One might conjecture this revision was designed to placate the modernising zeal of reformist Islam, as discontent over Sukarno’s economic mismanagement of the nation increased (Becker, 1993). Bad rice harvests in 1963 had increased Indonesia’s dependence on rice imports (McIntyre, 1998: 236, 255). Responding to panic, Sukarno urged the people to eat corn and called for more research into rice strains suited to dry cultivation. Believing Indonesians were not yet ready for full democracy, the President’s denial of individual rights in the authoritarian Presidential decree of July 1963 was at odds with his status as Bung Karno, framer of the 1945 Constitution and advocate of an American revolutionary-style style democracy supported by similarly liberationist rhetoric (Bourchier, 1996: 92). Lindsey (1999: 368) describes how Sukarno systematically dismantled the progressive anti-colonial legal system established with nationhood. From 1957 until Sukarno’s downfall, Indonesia increasingly adopted the model of an integralist state, consistent with its communist bloc alliances. The President disempowered parliament, fusing powers and rendering law, like art and film, as one more tool for the Nation. Lindsey suggests that truth and justice, the mainstay of “the rule of law” was despatched in favour of “the rule by law”.

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values providing new foundations for the entire Indonesian school system henceforth based on intellectual, moral, technical, artistic and mental development (Wieringa, 2002: 239). Lucia, and other Indonesian artists of her generation still talk about their lives, ideas and concepts in these terms. However, they have been especially keen to retain individual and collective physical, intellectual and spiritual connections with *alam* (nature), a thread followed in *Perbatasan / Boundaries* and in this thesis. Concern for the loss of the natural world and associated linkages with social tradition were a dominant theme of “Surealis” art. Lucia Hartini’s lament for Indonesia’s damaged environment has been evident in her work since 1981.

Contemporary Indonesian attitudes to the natural environment include the scientific as well as the cosmological. Current ecological and environmental sympathies may be seen as a reaction to Indonesian political constructions in which animism and the systems of political economy accommodating this belief-system were regarded as “non-modern”. Equated with a primitive form of communism, these views were treated with disdain and suspicion, while unthinking development invaded and often completely razed the natural environment. Yet for those many Indonesians who imbibed these sentiments as children, communing with nature remained a powerful source of inspiration. Lucia has never abandoned her childhood fondness for natural phenomena nor her belief in the importance of maintaining the welfare of the natural world as the necessary link between humanity, society and the cosmos.

The appearance of subject matter expressing concerns for the natural world and the problematic interactions of Indonesians with their environment became a conscious site of resistance during the 1980s and 1990s (WALHI, Harsono et al., 1985). Since Reformasi, commitment to environmental concerns has increased as the consequences of depredations unleashed by developmentalism and poverty can no longer be ignored, nor their critics silenced.97

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97 While the general translation for *alam* is nature, by *Alam*, Indonesians often mean wilderness. The renewed interest in heritage which emerged with Reformasi, included long-forgotten aspects of Sukarno’s Indonesia like the celebration of *Ruwatan Bumi* (*Earth Awakening*). *Ruwatan Bumi*
Representing nature in art

To me, Lucia’s descriptions of childhood conjure the vast panoramas of field and mountain which are the staple subject of “Mooie Indies” / “Beautiful Indies” paintings. They depict a nature experienced at close range as teeming, and densely variegated. Her descriptions also invoke images of multi-tiered Balinese paintings replete with animals, birds and insects as well as people busy about their lives. Both genres refer to Realist painter Sudjojono’s description of “the ‘Tri Murti’ of Mother Nature (mountains, trees and paddy fields)” (Dermawan, 1999: 17). Depictions of the Sublime in nature and the teeming worlds of Indic belief represent a patterned invocation of fertility and harmonious order depicted as the interlocking intricacies of the “small world”, linked to the “great world” beyond. This imagery embodies the related concepts of microcosmos and macrocosmos which have characterised the composition, subject, theme and detail in Lucia Hartini’s art since she first began painting.

Beyond naturalistic landscapes, other visual traditions were important to Lucia. She draws on abstract traditions influenced by Islam, such as the decorative embellishments of batik design, the trellising of embroideries and the cutwork filigrees of wayang puppets. All feature a multiplicity of elements enmeshed across the flat plane of other supports. Form and detail are rendered as part of a series of successive elaborate screens. They symbolise that which must be navigated, then passed through on the way to knowledge of a higher order and a mystical union with the divine.

returned as a series of special events, and as an organisation promoting community involvement in nature-oriented activities and healing environmental disasters. The activities of NGOs like WALHI, SKEPHI and Wetlands International, Indonesia, have influenced government, popularising environmental causes and maintaining a substantial on-line and activist presence.

98 This early modern Indonesian landscape genre derived from the Dutch colonial past was still very popular during the 1960s and early 1970s when Lucia was young. Wright (1994) and particularly Supangkat (1997) and Spanjaard (2003: 23 - 50) have all written about “Mooie Indies” painting in detail.

99 Lucia later painted a miniature portrait of herself and her sister Yanti as naked children near a pebbled stream in the forest. The canvas resembled a modern Ubud painting in its depiction of vegetative detail and natural features. (Collection Bagong Kussudiardja).

100 In the documentary, The Days of Ibu Marni, Healthworker (c. 1990), made for the Indonesian Department of Health, director Nan T Achnas was required to show the death of a child, the baby of Ibu Marni’s ‘difficult’ patient, one of the stock characters in films made as agents of
Some of Lucia Hartini’s early landscapes and sketches depicting interiors and street scenes reveal sophisticated mixtures of both sensibilities. The linear forms of these works schematically cover the page both laterally and vertically (Plate 9). Several depict the smallness of people in comparison with nature, expressing a sense of the Sublime with its attendant spiritual connotations, as in Cosmologie I / Cosmology I (c. 1979). With delicate detail, Lucia paints the variously coloured foliage of high-altitude forests and childhood memories of a closeness shared with her siblings, as they walked to and from school. Other paintings capture anecdotal aspects of the artist’s childhood, depicting a rich fantasy world of legend and local stories. In Cosmologie II / Cosmology II, a cluster of flying saucers hover over the rice-fields beneath the mountains behind her home, a whimsical representation of modernity occurring in works by several Indonesian artists and writers.101
Other paintings express the artist’s memories of simple pleasures invoked in loving portraits of her own children. In 1983, Lucia paints her son Loko in his micro-jeans and rainbow hat in a forest of silvery grasses at the edge of the world. In *Bunga Sepatu* (c.1993), she celebrates her turn to receive funds from the arisan (rotating savings and credit group), so she might buy the shoes of which her daughter, Handah, dreams. Handah gazes at a hibiscus flower (bunga sepatu) suspended in the sky. Semiotically, *bunga* means both flower and interest, *sepatu* is shoe, a gentle *plesetan* (wordplay) and an example of one of Lucia’s “clever titles” at which she later became adept.

*Travelling back*

Lucia’s parents encouraged their children to create their own worlds. In an early interview, Lucia describes how their father’s response to the children’s fretfulness was to apportion pieces of precious paper, handing them pencils with which to draw. If they were angry, his solution was the same. He taught them to mediate their difficulties, expressing them through art. In *Pusaran / Vortex*, Lucia recounts how she learnt to draw and simultaneously discipline her emotions, shifting the focus of her emotions through art. Safe within the painted worlds of her canvases, her feelings are successfully externalised, usefully transposed and a sense of calm restored. Even anger may be treated thus, transformed into a symbolic colour or the representation of a red-hot explosion, a disturbance overcome.

Wright (1998: 22) states that Lucia was entranced by her father’s *wayang* stories told through handmade paper puppets. In the *Wayang Kulit* shadow play and the dance-dramas of Java and Bali, the *Gumungan*, or *Kekayon* is the puppet in the shape of the tree of life. The *Gumungan* is also synonymous with *pesangon*,

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101 Wright (2000: 21, fn. 38) expands on Hartini’s narrative account of these phenomena. She mentions that other artists and literary figures including the journalist and expressive realist painter Sudjana Kerton, well known for his objectivity on social and political issues, had sighted UFO’s. In some cases witnesses claim to have been transported, as was the prince in the *Babad Jaka Tjingkir*, who found himself in China (see Florida, 1995).

102 Personal communication. Lucia Hartini, Yogyakarta, August 1999. Members draw funds in turn from their *arisan*.

103 Most consumables in the Indonesia of the 1960s and early 1970s were recycled, including paper. The paper provided by her father would have been a scarce commodity in Indonesia of the late 1960s. As a child, there were few luxuries in Lucia’s life.
(the mountain): it represents both society and the mystical union with the divine. The symbolic flame of spirit and awareness, the Gunungan opens the wayang performance. The prop of dramatic punctuation, it constantly recurs as the legendary and mystical journeys of heroes possessed of supernatural powers dance across the screen by night. Gatotkaca, also known as Bima, the second son of Raden Wrekodara was Lucia’s favourite.104

A legendary Indonesian everyman who struggled against the odds, Gatotkaca succeeded in the end. He had a magic fingernail, “kuku pancanaka”, and was able to fly. Absorbing the transformative imagery of wayang with its symbolism, its stark contrasts and shadowy forms, Lucia acknowledges Gatotkaca’s influence on her imagination. Together with the sense of the vastness of space evident from the mountain slopes above her home, this experience was a source for the images of flight depicted in many of her early works.

Much later, Lucia describes these imaginary transits through the voids of space, past clouds and planets, to writer Hendro Wiyanto.105

Since I was small, I always watched the clouds;
I dreamed I was flying and could see another unfamiliar world;
after succeeding in passing through dense clouds I could see
the planets - forming a strange and fantastic view.
(Hartini, 1992)

In Lucia’s early paintings, the mountains situate the action transpiring in her canvases. Presented naturalistically at first, she begins to interrogate each of the meanings of Gunungan described above, a sequence also reflected in the imagery of Perbatasan / Boundaries.

Revisiting the landscape of her childhood during Reformasi, I travelled

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104 The Sedjarah Wayang Purwa / A History of Wayang Purwa, by Pak Hardjowirogo (1968: 136 - 138), provides detailed descriptions of hundreds of wayang characters. Injured at birth, Gatotkaca was fed special food by the gods to make him strong. He had muscles of steel and bones like iron, his blood was invincible and he could fly and sit upon passing clouds. When he wished, he could fly as fast as lightning.

105 Personal communication. Lucia Hartini, Yogyakarta, 1992, as scripted for the narration of Pusaran / Vortex, and derived from the catalogue essay by Hendro Wiyanto, “Surrealisme Yang Indah” / “Beautiful Surrealism”. The imaginary transits described by Wiyanto in 1989 are powerfully expressed many years later in the canvas “Batas Antara Dua Sisi / Boundary Between Two Sides” (1992).
with the artist, her family members and friends across the valley between the rolling slopes of the two great volcanos. Establishing one location for our documentary, we drove in our own procession of second-hand decommissioned military Jeeps, a party of civilians able to move freely by day and night. Spinning out around us were the panoramas of mountains and space, tobacco fields and forest, and the cloud cosmologies which create the play of light and compositional mass featured in so many of Lucia’s canvases. Even in densely populated Java, places of vast space still exist. High up on the slopes of mountains, the details of the crowded landscapes below dissolve into haze, while their slopes continue to rise up towards peaks high above the cloudline. It is easy to imagine such spaces as the home of those who ride on the wind, the mystical riders of the Prophet’s steed, the flying heroes of the wayang, and the inspired empu, those princes of the wind of epic creation who are the avatars of the artists and poets claiming their inheritance there.

As a young teenager, Lucia helped with the tobacco harvest. She cultivated her ability to draw by sketching portraits of harvest workers and the patrons and families of warehouse-owners. Reportedly, she became the class designer for embroidery patterns and stage costumes at school (Wright, 1998: 24). As her painting evolved, Lucia chose to heighten the panoramic perspectives of the “Mooie Indies” genre, although this was not the only influence evident in her art. The towering cumulus cloudscapes of Java’s equatorial skies have their parallels in European religious art, particularly works of the Baroque period (Huyghe, 1964; Blunt, 1978; Supangkat, 1997: 12 - 13), a style which travelled with Christianity throughout the world.

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A shift towards a Baroque-type treatment of sky, clouds, winds, rocks and oceans also occurred in Lucia’s early work. She had begun by appropriating referents and motifs from local Central Javanese traditions of visual representation such as the luminous naïve worlds of glass painting, the fighting clouds and rocky bridges of Cirebon batik, the tumpal (infilled borders) and zig-zags of batiked and woven cloth, and the conventions of “Mooie Indies” landscape paintings. Such

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106 Personal communication. Lucia Hartini, Temanggung, August 1999.
references were used initially as compositional structures and decorative detail, but were later fully integrated within the compositions and imagery of her canvases becoming uniquely her own creations. Beyond particular styles, Lucia then selected elements of nature and culture as bearers of feeling, using the emotion and fantasy of her canvases to transform her experience and perceptions of the world. Products of the imagination, influenced by the observation of phenomena, this imagery acknowledges the simulacral, suggesting rather than conveying narrative or precise meaning. Lucia’s later work confidently amplifies these characteristics, dramatically contrasting order with forms threatening chaos and decay, beneath shafts of alternately triumphant and foreboding light.

Lucia maintains that her visions originated from simple things. As children, she and her sisters would race to the hilltops behind their home, their mother’s *selendang* (shawls) tied around their waists. They became butterflies, fairies, angels, even Gatotkaca.\(^{107}\) If the “small world” is the microcosmos, embodied in the pores of the skin and the earth, then Lucia’s childhood forays into the baroque grandeur of the macrocosmos of space and time are represented by these flights of fancy. Eventually, the children’s tenuous wings and tails become the draped and fluttering lengths of cloth, evident in many of Lucia’s later paintings. A key element of her visual vocabulary, they are used to link various compositional elements. Sometimes, they change state, becoming clouds, spirit trails and curlicue rocks, appearing as powerfully emotive and metaphorically surreal devices in paintings like *Ratap / Lamentation* (1985), *Dalam Pengawasan / Under Surveillance* (1989) and *Lensa Mata Mata / Spy Lens* (1989). Stretching both backwards and forwards through space and time, like lifetimes in Buddhist thought, linking the present with the past in the face of constant change, these devices suggest laterally disposed continuums rather than the cycles of *Kejawen* belief. (Plate 10).

### 3.3. Preparation for the future

*Setiap hari dulu, bisa ia saksikan kete kunan, kesabarannya membuat kain batik (membatik). Kesabaran itu pulalah yang agaknya menerun pada diri Tini.*

Everyday, she (Lucia’s mother) would observe the coverage of the waxed cloth, preparing herself mentally for batiking. Thus, Tini inherited the patience (required for her work) from her mother.

(Anon, *Berita Nasional*, 7-4-1985)

In the *Bernas* (7-4-1985) article “ Lucia Hartini: Lewat Kanvas Curahkan Segala Mimpi”, Lucia is reported as saying that her mother made batik. Her statement formally defers to both Javanese and New Order values, but is of interest because of the importance accorded the theme of gender evident in her

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\(^{107}\) Personal communication. Lucia Hartini, Imogiri, July – August 1999.
paintings from 1981 onwards. As the designer/drawer concentrating on unusual designs and primary waxer working on commission for batik manufacturers located elsewhere in Central Java, Lucia’s mother was one of thousands of women craftworkers who used their skills to supplement family income (Wright, 1998: 22; Boow, 1988: 34 - 35). This supplement assisted their children’s education and satisfied their private creative needs, associated spiritually with the cultivation of personal calm and forbearance. Ibu hoped her children would learn patience by example through her daily practice of this discipline, a mata pelajaran (“eye” of learning).

In 1992, long before I travelled to Temanggung, Lucia told me her father supplemented his police pension by cutting hair in the tiny barber’s shop set up in the front room of his home. In the Temanggung sequence of Perbatasan / Boundaries, Lucia’s son Loko, then a media student, performs a re-enactment of the waiting customers. Lucia’s father was a veteran of the nationalist struggle for independence. Money must have been tight for a family of nine children on the wage of a policeman with Sukarnoist sympathies, yet Lucia’s parents managed to provide an education for all their children. Around the walls of the small house are various paintings, some by Lucia and others by a younger brother. A portrait of Lucia’s parents as a young couple and a glass painting in wayang mode celebrates the family.

On the living room wall is an early painting by Lucia. It depicts a single horse on a rocky bridge, silhouetted against a cloudy sky. Traditionally, by the age

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108 Personal communication. Lucia Hartini, Yogyakarta, July 1992, and Temanggung, August 1999. Lucia’s father’s profession is also mentioned in the Bernas clipping. The army barracks opposite the family home was a source of customers for the barber’s shop – perhaps even a possible source of potential suitors for the many daughters of this family. In his essay, “In search of Megawati Sukarnoputri”, McIntyre (1998: 234 - 235) recounts stories of Sukarno’s relationship with his daughter Megawati, shedding light on Indonesian attitudes towards families prevalent at the time of Lucia’s girlhood. In his speeches to the nation Sukarno spoke about the life he envisaged for his daughters as they grew up, particularly the suitors whom he considered would be eligible. Regarding Megawati, he told the nation, “I suggested to Megawati that she marry later with a youth from Sulawesi – if he is compatible and has ideals. If this young man is not a young man of high aspirations, I will not give my permission for the marriage even though he may look like Robert Taylor…… The number of young men turned down by Megawati is already large, you know!” This did not preclude Sukarno from envisaging an active role for his eldest daughter in adult life, praising her aim to become an agricultural scientist. Supporting McIntyre, Weiringa (2002) quotes the views of Gerwani members on such matters. These speeches were referred to as “Nation-building in the bedroom” (Sukarno, cited from transcribed speeches, Departmen Penerangan (Department of Information): May 1964: 11).
of forty, a successful Javanese should own a house and a horse among other things. A splendid white horse features in popular Indonesian mythologies originating from Indic and Islamic sources. He/she is called *Ucaisrawa* or *Bouraq* respectively. This horse is not the refined *kuda pingitan*, kept in the stable for show; nor is it the obedient *kuda sado* or working horse, patiently trotting about its business, both popular similes for Javanese wives (Vreede-De Stuers, 1960: 65). An agent of deliverance, the great white horse has parallels in mythologies and stories across the globe. Besides woven expressions in Sumbanese and other decorative iconographies, in Indonesian painting of the modern era, horses as subject matter, can be traced back to Raden Saleh, horses are depicted fighting to the death against wild animals like tigers and elephants.109 (Plate 11). In Raden Saleh’s romantic realism, these animals are depicted with verisimilitude and drama.


109 Melody Kemp (*Inside Indonesia*, No. 40, September, 1994: 22 - 24) quotes Doc Kostermans’ description of fights between specially bred fighting buffaloes and the Sultan’s tigers at the Central Javanese court of Purworedjo in the early years of the twentieth century. These live illustrations of natural selection in action were intended to bolster the power and authority of the Sultanate, a theme further explored by Tony Day in *Fluid Iron* (2000).
As a “Surealis”, Lucia later came to twist this adage. Her hybrid self, the product of nature, culture, education and experience is the horse she now presents to her parents.\footnote{110 Personal communication. Haryanto Tok Basuki, Adelaide, August 2003.} In later canvases, she depicted many multi-coloured horses galloping freely across flower-studded mountain meadows. Everyday horses, they allude to hard work, to enterprise and the creation of wealth - the building of the nation. Mystically, they personify the soul. If we are to judge by Lucia’s father’s comments in Perbatasan / Boundaries, they might also symbolise a plethora of potential worthy suitors for his many daughters, who, have become through education, aspirationally both pingitan and sado.\footnote{111 In Perbatasan / Boundaries there is a sequence showing the family at Temanggung eating a meal prepared from vegetarian ingredients. The farmer’s diet of coarsely-milled rice, tempeh (fermented bean cake), kangkung (water spinach), eggs from the kampung (village) free-range chickens, coconuts from the palm trees, spiced with ginger and lemongrass, onions, garlic, fish paste, tomatoes and red chillies was nutritionally well balanced. The leaves of certain hedge flowers or fruiting trees together with their green fruit could be included as vegetables. Garnered from the side of streams, or home grown, Lucia’s family, like millions of Indonesians, survived and thrived on this low-cost food. It forms an essential part of Lucia’s vegetarian diet, followed at her Master’s request.}

3.4. Survival, Religion and Spiritual Sustenance

In 1965 and 1966, terrible massacres were carried out during the purges of “communists” in the Wonosobo - Temanggung area.\footnote{112 Since the demise of the New Order, these massacres have become the subject of public discussion, research and documentary film, as in the Rambadeta, Wijayanto film, Mass Grave, Digging up the Cruelties: Indonesia’s Forgotten Barbarism (2001). Australian director Chris Hilton’s documentary Shadow Play (2002) also investigated this topic. Even in 2000, the tensions and conflict released by revisiting this history in small communities also became the subject of these films, which were consequently made with great difficulty.} In interviews with other reviewers, Astri Wright and myself, Lucia refers to a constant and nameless fear dating back to her childhood, a feeling of being singled out because of difference,
of a sense of terror and foreboding she could not name. Beyond this, Lucia has always been silent on this subject. I write here only what has been revealed. In 1992, when filming *Pusaran / Vortex*, I decided that Lucia and her family should tell any personal stories relevant to violence and *terror* when and how they saw fit. The focus of *Pusaran / Vortex* would be Lucia’s art. Although I sought more information when filming *Perbatasan / Boundaries*, I had to accept that, for my subjects as for many others, this period remained full of grief and residual fear. What may have been experienced directly may also have been known second-hand from conversations or have been built upon older stories, salvaged from the historical past and amplified by more recent events.

During the New Order, those who were not so reticent when interviewed were subsequently punished in various ways for their frankness. For instance, Curtis Levy says of Fakhri Amrullah, his Indonesian co-director on *Riding the Tiger* (1992):

> I admire Fakhri’s bravery in speaking out on certain things without hiding his identity; for example in relation to the massacres of 1966 in Episode 3 where he is standing on the river-bank talking about the disappearance of some high-school friends. “There were only their caps left on the ground.”

(Levy, 2001)

Levy recounts that Fakhri was harassed by the bureaucracy for some time after he decided to speak out publicly on his past experience, a typical consequence discouraging many others from telling their stories of this time until *Reformasi* was well underway.114

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113 Personal communication. Lucia Hartini, Yogyakarta, August 1992, and August 1999. Comments made by Lucia and her sister Clara Anna in 1999, and recorded in interviews conducted by other researchers, for example Wright (1998: 18 - 19), suggest the large family experienced privation and isolation at this time. Wright conjectures that the sense of ostracism may have been due to the size of the Tjokrosuwarno family, but I surmise that religion, ethnicity and perceived political affiliation may have coalesced to create this situation. The size of the family predates the introduction of Family Planning as a national policy.

114 Many of Sparringa’ interviews, together with Anton Lucas’ historical perspective on the period, informed Levy’s documentary in which many interviewees spoke but not everybody chose to be filmed.
In 1998, Lucia told me about a stone she had found buried in leaves on the floor of a forest near Solo. Looking into the stone, she heard the cry of a young girl. This cry haunted her long after she took the object home. Again, when shooting *Perbatasan / Boundaries* at Barron Beach in 1999, Lucia suddenly told us she felt afraid to go any further up the river mouth, because she sensed something dreadful had happened there. We then sought another location, Gua Lawung, and continued filming. Even so, the section shot in the spectacularly coloured open cave to the side of the tiny beach, was subsequently cut from the documentary for similar reasons. Lucia says she had never been to either beach before – just that she was overwhelmed by a sense of dread. At Imogiri Lucia later told me that when she was small, the family starved. Hunger was a wizened ghost whose stomach and intestines floated after its twisted body. As a child, she had seen this creature. The conversation then shifted to other unrelated ghost stories and light-hearted banter about popular folk beliefs. Like many Indonesians, Lucia now wished to forget privation and fear in a new era. To talk of hunger was a safe subject, a trial overcome, but little was said about other aspects of this period.

During the early years of the New Order, in the period immediately after the anti-communist coup in 1965, the Ministry of Religion was dominated by strict, and by their definition, “reformist” Muslims. They decreed that all Indonesians must believe in God and “have a religion as a move against ‘atheism and communism’” (Becker, 1993: 16). The official necessity to profess one’s religion inferred that links existed between lack of religion and a forbidden ideology, predisposing conflicts against authority. Judith Becker observes that “many Javanese who had only nominal affiliation with Islam, had continued the faith of their ancestors, (a mixture of Vajradanic Tantrism, Islam, appeasement of spirits, veneration for ancestors, and among Peranakan and Chinese, Taoist and Confucian beliefs)”. Although adhering to an earlier informal form of *Pancasila*, they “resisted a declaration of affiliation with Islam” (Becker, 1993: 16).

The army, which had been responsible for most of the slaughter after the coup, was predominantly Muslim. Becker argues that many Javanese sought other

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115 Personal communication. Lucia Hartini, Moch Operasi Rachman, Yogyakarta and Imogiri, July 1999.
religious alternatives because to join Islam would signal they had condoned this loss of life. Conversions to both Catholic and Protestant Christianity increased dramatically, as did conversions to other faiths believed to represent the religions of pre-Islamic Indonesia, that is, to Buddhism and Hinduism. Taoism being regarded as a non-religion was subsumed within Christianity or Buddhism (Becker, 1993: 16 - 17). This explains the quiet maintenance and preservation of syncretist Javanese sites such as the sacred spring depicted in Perbatasan / Boundaries. With its shrine to Semar, the mountain spring is a secluded place with animist associations, but is known as a Buddhist site by Lucia and her parents.

The official stance on religion placed pressure on abangan Javanese and their formerly established practice of tolerance conducive to smoothing relations between community members of different societal groupings and religious persuasions. Regulation and then repression was increasingly used to enforce what had previously been a matter of custom and personal belief. Becker notes that many people converted to various Christian denominations because the Christian infrastructure offered better opportunities for advancing the wellbeing of their families in difficult times. This included access to food.116 Besides the conversion of souls, Christian organisations were active in the areas of education, medical care and enterprise development.117

Christianity assisted Lucia’s cultivation of forbearance and her interest in an individual path to spiritual development, which she says began in childhood.

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116 The 1994 project documenting the history of Central Java, Sejarah Daerah Jawa Tengah, Proyek Inventarisasi dan Dokumentasi Sejarah Nasional, co-ordinated by Depdikbud, describes the Protestant and Catholic Churches in Central Java, 1851 – 1994, details the activities and membership of these congregations. Churches and monasteries with associated enterprises like dairies and cooking oil factories were established in the area near Temanggung at Kedu, Mendut, Muntilan and Magelang. Lucia’s area was famous for tobacco plantations. There was also a Buddhist monastery in Muntilan, the large town at the approach to the Buddhist temple complex of Borobudur. The authors suggest that class distinctions were evident from the beginning, originally due to the colonial context and professional activity, and later according to wealth, ambition and ethnicity.

117 The Christian congregations of Central Java also built schools from primary to tertiary level. Many Central Javanese told me that many people became Catholics post-Independence because Catholic schools offered better educational opportunities for their children. They believed that the quality of medical treatment in hospitals run by the Catholic Church was also better than in government hospitals because they received outside aid (Personal communication, Kadah Lucas, Yogyakarta 1991).
Her awareness of social injustice, first mentioned in interviews in 1985, stems from this source. Her Catholicism was also pragmatic, retained as a pertinent and helpful affiliation fostering professional associations after moving to Yogyakarta. It remained so following her nominal conversion to Islam after her first marriage. In 1996, Lucia was attracted to the teachings of the Supreme Master Ching Hai. Their syncretic hybridity combined Buddhist, Taoist and Catholic Christian beliefs in a manner not dissimilar to aspects of Kejawen spirituality and the religious background of Lucia’s childhood. Committed to self-improvement and spiritual growth, Lucia maintains that the Master’s teachings have finally satisfied the questioning of her beliefs and everyday life. This questioning has directed her constant search for a suitable spiritual path. Lucia’s art has long revealed a view of religion associated with cultural practice and a search for similarities across faiths rather than doctrinal purity.

To control the emotions and grow through successively gained plateaus of understanding was a necessary precursor for commencement on the path of Javanese behavioural refinement. These values, initially inculcated through parental guidance, were an essential part of Lucia’s subsequent training as an artist in Yogyakarta. The arts in Indonesia provided one of the few outlets for the expression of strong emotion and veiled critique. During Lucia’s childhood, the increasing availability of schooling and new sources of information including newspapers, radio and inexpensive paperback books, challenged ngrimo, the Javanese practice of submissive acceptance useful to both colonial rulers and an integralist Indonesian state. Too often in the past, ngrimo had been based on restricted access to information and knowledge, but at school in Temanggung, Lucia was taught Western methods of scientific observation. Ngrimo was tempered through the cultivation of wisdom and an understanding which neither ignored reality nor the more politicised strategies used to deal with it.

With continuing education came a modern awareness of society. Retrospectively Lucia’s childhood experiences provide other metaphors for the transformative energy feeding her art. She and her siblings grew up to appreciate

art, literature and cultural expression as the means by which a sometimes grim everyday reality could be understood and creatively transformed, at least on an individual and familial basis – the means whereby an ordinary horse became a flying steed and a small girl could fly like Gatotkaca.

3.5. *Harapan Masa Depan (Hope for the Future)*

Lucia and Clara Anna told me of strange lights which would appear as rays, shining outwards as though emanating from behind the mountains, a story reflecting the imagery of Rangkuti’s (1949) play, *Sinar Memancar dari Jabal Ennur / A Ray Emanates from Jabal Ennur*, (literally *The Mountain of Light*).\(^{119}\) Everything in their path was touched with magical qualities, the most wondrous being a shaft of gold known locally as *daru*. Should this ray glance upon even a small part of the harvested tobacco crop, it would transform the quality of all the leaves on the drying frames or in the panniers nearby. Stacked in the warehouse, they transferred their imbued magic to the entire crop, making the harvest one of excellent quality. Villagers and warehouse-owners alike knew which warehouses contained these golden leaves, their price on sale confirming their superior quality. Later the golden crop would be mixed with ordinary tobacco, making the blend uniformly good. Like the legend of Gatotkaca, *daru* is a parable about life, about art and the transformative power of excellence on a broader scale. It is relevant to a discourse of hybridity, enriching the local before its exposure in a wider sphere. Lucia claims it has always influenced her motivations as an artist.\(^{120}\)

Lucia left Temanggung in 1976. According to Astri Wright (2000), she was so keen to pursue further studies in art that she and her sister Yanti were spirited away secretly by her older siblings who were already studying in Yogyakarta. Lucia did not wish to stay in Temanggung with her family and

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\(^{119}\) Personal communication. Lucia Hartini, Clara Anna, Temanggung, August 1999. In Rangkuti’s era, such imagery may be read as symbolising the radiant future ahead during the era of Guided Democracy, so reversioning the collectivising imperatives of the Dutch colonial era.

\(^{120}\) Personal communication. Lucia Hartini, Temanggung, August 1999. Further enquiries at *Lembaga Studi Java*, Yogyakarta, confirmed accounts of *daru*, the phenomenon painted into several of Lucia’s early canvases, along with allusions to the lights emanating from behind the mountains, and to the flying saucers responsible for leaving strange metal shards on the mountain tops.
become an army wife or marry a businessman who would not agree to her painting. She wanted the excitement of the regional capital rather than the quiet familiarity of a country town. Lucia’s mother remarks at one point in our interview conversations, “I don’t know why all my children wanted to go and study in Yogyakarta. They must have liked it there I suppose.” But she was clearly proud of them.

Beyond an expression of regret, her parents’ pride is evident. Significantly they did not try to halt the consequences of allowing all of their daughters an education, as well as their sons, a substantial achievement for the parents of nine children. In *Perbatasan / Boundaries*, Lucia’s mother confides that she had only received a primary school education, so expressing an understanding of the importance of opportunity at a time when broader access to education for girls beyond primary school was just beginning in Indonesia. Such aspirations had been a major plank of the various women’s organisations in Sukarno’s Indonesia, subsequently sustained during the New Order, together with efforts to outlaw child marriage and polygamy (Weiringa, 2002; Vreede-De Stuers, 1960).

*Kartini’s legacy*

In *Perbatasan / Boundaries* there is a brief passage between the Temanggung scenes in which the artist recollects her childhood and then sets forth on the path to the next stage of her education as an art student in Yogyakarta. This intermediary sequence is characterised by publicly safe play-acting. Lucia describes her education at the vocational Sekolah Menengah Pertama, the Girl’s Vocational Junior High School in Kartini Street, Temanggung, jokingly referring to her state school as the “Sekolah Kepandaian Perempuan” (“Girls’ Finishing School”). Although ironic, Lucia’s words are spoken without malice. Reflexively,

121 Personal communication. Ibu Tjokrosuwarno, Temanggung, August 1999. As with many students of Lucia’s peer group, a network of family members and friends and benevolent funds contributed to pay for these studies.

122 Ratna Sulastin, the subject of my short film *Tjitutjara - M’petan / Headlice Story* (2002), also observed that her parents encouraged all their children to receive and complete a tertiary education, and to be economically independent before marriage. Ratna trained in Management while her sisters graduated in Dentistry and Agricultural Science. Many of Indonesia’s revolutionary generation expected their daughters to pull their weight beyond the confines of the immediate family. Arguably these parental attitudes and determination were inspired by Sukarno’s proud announcements of daughter Megawati’s aspiration to become an agricultural scientist.
she tells us that it was only later, after commencing her art studies in Yogyakarta, that she valued the lessons learnt at the SMP in Kartini Street. Besides acquiring the skills required to become a charming life companion and a competent housekeeper, a good wife and mother for a future husband, students were introduced to philosophical and empirical scientific enquiry derived from Western thought, as well as needlework and drawing.123

The curriculum of Lucia’s secondary school in Temanggung derived from the model established by the Dutch in colonial times after intense lobbying for change by Raden Ajeng Kartini. Kartini was the early twentieth century Javanese female emancipist who believed that education for women provided the key to their liberation from the restrictive and unjust practices of custom and society (Sejarah Daerah Jawa Tengah, 1994: 119 - 121). In 1911, the famous series of letters which Kartini wrote to her colleagues in the Netherlands and in Java in search of support for her ideas and aims was collected and published under the title, Habis Gelap, Terbitlah Terang, variously translated as After Darkness, Comes the Light or After Darkness, Light Can Shine.124

Provide education for the Indonesian people, and provide it also for the hearts and minds of Indonesia’s women, and soon they will become participants in the elevation of a sacred duty, the progressive improvement of the condition of our people who have so many aspirations for the future!
(Kartini, 1911, cited in Sejarah Daerah Jawa Tengah, 1994: 120)

This extract reveals the reasons underlying the public perception of Kartini as heroic leader of the campaign for the emancipation of women. By extension, she is credited with the evolutionary emancipation of Indonesia’s people, although arguably, her stance on anti-colonialism is not so strong as that against polygamy and for education (Weiringa, 2002: 270 - 271).

123 In an interview with Lucia Hartini in 1994 recorded by Wright (2000), Hartini details her SMP curriculum.

124 The title of Kartini’s book refers to the developmental, the psycho-spiritual and a cosmologically cyclical Javanese sense of history (Anderson, 1990: 34, 242 - 243). Ironically, and as intended, the consequences of implementing the ideas contained within its covers proved far more egalitarian and potentially disruptive than the legitimation of feudalism formerly underpinned by the traditional concepts invested in the last of these metaphors.
On 2-5-1964, Kartini was declared a National Hero, by which time many millions of Indonesian women had attended the schools promoting her legacy and read her writings. The extract cited is frequently quoted in celebratory speeches and eulogies for Kartini Day, attesting to the respect and gratitude felt by many Indonesian women for Kartini’s initiative. In *Perbatasan / Boundaries*, Lucia describes her as “an inspiration to us all”. In Kartini’s ideas lay the keys to a forward progression away from ignorance to the benefit of women and ultimately, for Indonesian society as a whole.

The first Kartini School was opened in Semarang in 1912 (*Sejarah Daerah Jawa Tengah*, 1994: 120), although the first Women’s School established according to Kartini’s principles, was opened by Dewi Sartika in Bandung in 1904 (Weiringa, 2002: 64; Vreede-De Stuers, 1960: 58). The Kartini school catered for the daughters of those involved in the administration, trade and defence of the Netherlands East Indies, as well as the daughters of the Javanese aristocracy, the *priyayi* who had become the regents and titular administrators of Dutch rule. Its success led to widespread support, and in the long-term, contributed to the emancipation of middle-class women in the Indies. The first school was quickly followed by several more in Jakarta, Malang, Madiun and Bogor. Instruction was conducted in Dutch, while the “kartini schools” in the trading cities of the Pasisir, Cirebon, Rembang, Pekalongan, Indramayu and Surabaya used the local language for teaching (*Sejarah Daerah Jawa Tengah*, 1994: 167 - 169). Other types of schools for girls and later, mixed sex schools, were started elsewhere in the Indies (Vreede-De Stuers, 1960: 61 - 74).

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125 Barbara Leigh (1993) claims that Kartini had become a popular symbol of hope of the same order as Srikanth, the mythical warrior-woman wife of Arjuna in the Mahabharata. In an early twentieth century contemporary reading, Kartini epitomizes the spirit of Srikanth in her much-quoted rhetorical question “How can I win if I do not struggle” as opposed to the acquiescent and calm co-wife Sumbadra, resigned to a passive role. Weringa (2002: 242) notes Srikanth’s importance in the women’s campaigns of the early 1960’s in which connections between women’s interests and revolutionary activity were stressed. In Chapter 5, I discuss Lucia’s depiction of Srikanth within the context of an educated and professional Indonesian women’s feminist agenda in the 1990’s, one which also supported the aspirations of Megawati Sukarnoputri.

126 Does the *Sejarah Daerah*’s use of lower case for these schools’ titles indicate they were primary schools, intended for non-priyay students and those from families involved in trade and production, or was this the are the colonial appellation. In *Perbatasan / Boundaries*, Lucia’s mother’s account of her schooling suggests the first interpretation is correct.
Lucia’s “Sekolah Kepandaian Perempuan” with its vocational emphasis was a product of the 1960s. Semiotically, the school’s address doubled as a geographic signifier indicating the style of education provided, a version of Kartini’s vision considered appropriate for its times (Sejarah Daerah Jawa Tengah, 1994: 120 - 121). Temanggung was near the army town of Magelang. Besides its mission to educate the future wives of army officers, policemen and administrators, Lucia’s SMP provided the basics of a vocationally directed education for young women wishing to become teachers or continue their studies. Lucia says she did not realise the importance of this education in teaching her to think, providing her with options in life, and enabling the acquisition of the self-discipline required for achieving set goals, until after she commenced her art studies in Yogyakarta. Despite the inadequate facilities and exciting distractions of the Sekolah Menengah Seni Rupa Indonesia [SMSRI or STSRI], the Indonesian National Art High School, and the Akademi Seni Rupa Indonesia [ASRI], the Indonesian National Art Academy, she successfully applied herself to study.

Lucia’s account of her schooldays was filmed in the artist’s home in Yogyakarta surrounded by her paintings. Her comments also reflect the integration of the many and somewhat contradictory streams flowing through her life since. Not least, her views are the late twentieth century distillation of the idealistic fire of the Kartini campaigns celebrated in the women’s magazine Api Kartini and the emancipatory feminist and domestic self-sufficiency articles of Mak Ompreng (Ibu Trimurti), in the newspaper Harian Rakyat (1960 - 1961) of her mother’s generation (Wieringa, 2002: 234 - 238; 242 - 275). In Perbatasan / Boundaries, Clara Anna’s flowers, Kartini’s tiara for the day, crafted from lotus pods, corn husks, lichens and forest bark, recycled from nature are powerfully resonant of an era and its legacy, given a new lease of aspirational life at the end

127 Lucia makes several puns regarding her school’s name and location. These make visible the aspirational and inscriptive nation-building strategies of a developing state. The first primary school for the education of children was established in Jakarta in 1817. In a revealing example of colonial discourse equating city planning with social engineering, the street on which this school stood was called “Scoolweg” or Schoolway Street. In Yogyakarta, a large Muhammadiyah building housing an Aisyah school was located on Jalan Ahmad Dahlan, after the name of the movement’s founder, later doubling as the name of a New Order general.
of Indonesia’s century of change.

For the young artist, Kartini was more than a “National Hero” officially constructed by the state. As long as I have known Lucia, she has kept on prominent display a bust of Kartini carved from marble by her sister Yanti when studying sculpture at ASRI. If her mother’s idol was Hartini Sukarno, in her formative years, Lucia’s was Kartini, or rather Kartini’s ideas and the representations created around her as a shaper of history. These have helped guide her choice of vocation and her career as an artist. Lucia has attributed to them in part the originality of her artistic vision, its steadfast application and a practical feminism, the foundation of her self-confidence. Not surprisingly, it is the painting of female figures (herself included), and the psychological and emotional realities of a gendered realm, which have formed such a substantial part of the artist’s oeuvre over the years. Initially manifesting in Lucia’s art as the emotive, the bizarre and the surreal, these images are the subject for visual interpretation in the film, Perbatasan / Boundaries, and of art historical analysis in the following chapters of this thesis (Plate 12).

Hand-drawn batik on cotton, natural dyes: 106 x 251.5 cms.
CHAPTER 4
EMBERACING THE SURREAL:

Saya saring, saya saring, saya kasaring; .......diantara baik dan buruk, saya saring. Pada achirnya, saya menjadikan satu, untuk membuat sesuatu baik, sebuah karya yang bermanfa'at.

I sift and sift, separating the coarse husks;
I sift between good and bad. In the end I have a whole.
I sift some more to make of this something which is good,
a work which is of use/has value.
(Hartini, *Perbatasan / Boundaries*, 2002)

Lucia Hartini’s words are a fitting introduction to her student life and her emergence as an artist. They speak of an exploration of invention through quiet personal rebellion against the status quo, and the beginnings of her questioning first about art, leading subsequently to her own deeper but halting consideration of its relationship to society. In this chapter, I consider Lucia’s re-evaluation of traditions inherited from an Indonesian and Central Javanese culture confronting development and the wider world. I analyse processes of cultural fusion and image formation posited as new ways of understanding the heart. This analysis stresses embodiment and change rather than inscription, for, by 1985, Lucia had begun to question this aspect of her socialisation as a Javanese woman.

Chapter 4 begins with a description of place, Yogyakarta during the decade 1976 - 1986. The unique atmosphere of this Central Javanese urban principality has informed Lucia Hartini’s work throughout her career as an artist, moulding her inspiration and talent. Framing memory for use filmically and expanding perceptions in these chapters, my descriptions draw on Bourdieu’s notion of habitus developed in *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1977) and *Pascalian Meditations* (2000); on concepts of *rasa* (sentiment, feeling, the heart in action) from *Kejawen*; and those of hybridity.

This chapter briefly describes the artistic ferment of Yogyakarta prior to the emergence of the group of young artists known as the “Surealis Yogya”. Readers are directed to scholarly works by Wright (1991, 1994), Marianto (1993,
through references to early newspaper reviews and exhibition catalogues, I will focus on the evolution of the “Surealis Yogya” as a loose group of artists sharing an attitudinal affinity. The “Surealis Yogya” were engaged in the production of the meta-real, including that of the unseen world beneath and beyond the material surface of reality perceived with the eye. This was their “Surealisme”, a mode which was felt, rather than described exactly. It was distinct from European Surrealism or the temporally synchronous European Neo-Renaissance style called Meta-realism (Spanjaard, 2003: 161 - 165). Although Indonesian “Surealis” works shared some characteristic perceptions and pre-occupations with the Europeans, its gestation was initially spontaneous and its development remained largely indigenous and autonomous. Apart from a studied technical refinement, and the changes in individual stylistic focus over the years, Indonesian “Surealisme”, was its own beast and increasingly appreciated as such domestically and on the world stage. The focus of the “Surealis Yogya” was contemporary and their energy differed markedly from that dominating the idea of National Culture promulgated by the New Order state.

Chapter 3 provides a description of Lucia Hartini’s childhood enculturation within particular concepts of place, family and nation. This chapter speaks of her need for the freedom to create artistic expressions defining her own identity within a national one. We follow Lucia as she negotiates a shifting and initially fluid balance between the pairings of inner and outer worlds, moving from the carefree and bohemian life of a student, through the romance and competition of courtship, to that of a young married woman and mother. She adopts painting as her vocation and career, becoming increasingly successful as an artist. Her determination to continue marks the beginning of Lucia’s participation in ongoing debates about the representations of Indonesia’s cultural identity and the role played by its artists in this project.128 Key paintings representative of her thematic interests are considered as inspired depictions of

insights emerging at the intersections of personal life between the inner world of evolving traditional custom and educated thought, and society as the outer world, experienced as the pressures of change within a climate of spasmodic political and cultural repression.

From 1985 onwards, the figurative painters of the “Surealis Yogya” became known for their transformative use of objects and themes drawn directly from everyday life, semiotically converted by ringing changes on popular visual and linguistic conventions. Despite the orthodox nature of painting as an expressive medium and its status as a desirable object of consumption, the “Surealis Yogya” were among those contemporary Indonesian artists confirming the veracity of Gramsci’s (1985: 98) statement that “social change will find its artists”. Applying a Gramscian definition of categories of artistic expression and production to their work, they may be seen as “national popular” rather than “corporate”, but their patrons, members of Indonesia’s educated elite and the newly emerging urban middle-class, certainly belonged to this group (Gramsci, 1985: 112). Marianto (2001) writes that Lucia was one of the first exhibitors at the new Bentara Budaya Gallery in Yogyakarta in 1983 and created a sensation when Gramedia purchased the first of her celebrated series of explosions in a frypan, Nuklir dalam Wajan (1982), (see Plate 22).129

According to Yuliman (2001), the initial wave of patrons were not motivated by business investment alone, but were genuinely interested in art. Now able to share the cultivated cultural taste formerly restricted to the aristocracy, and colonial and nationalist political elites, they sought to confirm their identity through the conspicuous consumption of cultural production. Among the small groups constituting the Yogyakartan painters and their growing number of admirers, Lucia’s paintings, together with those of her colleagues, were not considered “strange”. They were “read” visually and appreciated emotionally and socially as well as aesthetically. This contributed greatly to the artists’ ability to work their images in ever more sophisticated and cryptic ways. In the following

129 The Bentara Budaya Galleries in Yogyakarta and Jakarta are attached to the newspaper Kompas and the publishing house Gramedia. Through Gramedia’s initial purchase of her work for the Bentara Budaya collection, Lucia found buyers for her paintings amongst those associated with these progressive media organizations and businessmen and women.
chapters, I suggest this nexus of cultural production, interpretation and consumption began to contribute slowly but forcefully to processes of social change in New Order Indonesia.

4.1. “Urip ki koyo wong mampir ngombe (Life is like stopping to drink)”
(Marianto, 1997: 125)

“All along the Watchtower......”
(Bob Dylan, 1976)

When Lucia went to study in Yogyakarta in 1976, the city was an urban principality with a small but strong regional economy based on local rural production and trade. Still close in time to the courtly traditions of its long and previously feudal history, Yogyakarta emerged with a rush into the twentieth century through the events of Revolution, independence and early nationhood. These were embodied in its people and the person of the Sultan, Hamengku Buwono IX, who succeeded Mohammed Hatta as Vice-President of Indonesia, holding this position under both Sukarno and Suharto. A centre of religion, culture, decorative crafts and trade, and later of education and art, Yogyakarta now attracted a steady flow of people from all over the archipelago. By the late 1970s, the city’s unique architectural heritage and rich cultural life, the Special District made it a popular site for tourist-related development. Strong in its own traditions, the city and its “colourful denizens”, now marketed to an equally fascinated West, now absorbed many new visitors.

The contemporary and “alternative” were also included. Yogyakarta’s artists embraced the influx of foreign visitors for the opportunities they offered. Becoming multi-skilled, they acted as guides to its hotels, markets, warung (street stalls) and cafes; to historic, royal and religious sites; to cultural performances, ceremonies and festivals; to workshops and studios. Others taught batik, painting and language. At night, long-haired young men strummed guitars and played chess endlessly, sitting on the night watch platforms dotted throughout the city. Ongoing processes, these activities have always been a vital part of Yogyakarta’s energy, incorporated into its life (Anderson, 1998: 78 - 81). Symbolically, the people and the traffic thronging Malioboro Street might be seen as the blood of
the city-state, coursing through the central artery of the city as organism, energizing daily the ancient axis of power which links ocean and mountain, *Kraton* (Palace) and market (Wibisono, 2000).

The ethos of this thoroughfare is legendary. The relaxed late afternoon and evening stroll was a feature of days broken by a siesta at noon. Invoking a socially collective dreaming of materiality mixed with desire, the street came alive again each evening when crowds surged along Malioboro’s narrow pavements between shops and street stalls piled high with goods promising abundance for all. This scene has been immortalized many times over in Indonesian art and film.\(^{130}\) The street is both subject and location, depicting the variety and diversity of characters enlivening these works. At night low benches and woven mats appear on its sidewalks and those elsewhere in the city. People sit cross-legged, eating *gudeg*, drinking tea and talking endlessly regardless of the hour.

This description of Yogyakarta in the 1970s and 1980s acknowledges the exotic, and “recuperate(s) the Orient” (Forge, A. in Gerstle and Milner, 1994; Nugroho cited in Kenji, 1999), the better to understand the dark side of the Javanese moon and both colours of the Indonesian flag - a dynamic apparent in Lucia Hartini’s work. Yogyakarta was famous for its “*Romantisme*”, a certain atmosphere in which an aura of magic and the romance of a past including battle and revolution, combined with a libertarian camaraderie and the optimism of a peaceful modernity. “*Romantisme Yogya*” prompted embodiment in works of cultural expression, where its connection with a lazy and wishful eroticism has often been explored.\(^{131}\)

In an early review of Lucia’s work, “Suami Isteri Yang Pelukis / Husband and Wife, Painters” (*Selecta*, 30-11-1981), “*Romantisme Yogya*” is described as a prevailing ethos through which we may conjure forth an impression of a region,  

\(^{130}\) Examples can be found in the paintings of Harijadi S., Hendra Gunawan, Sudjana Kerton, Sudjojono, Henk Ngantung, and, more recently, Sudarisman.

\(^{131}\) In the daydreams of wish fulfillment and the languorous seduction of the senses, vague promises of erotic encounter seemed to hang in the air. They were considered integral to the making of art. It is now almost impossible to experience this atmosphere as it was then. Population growth, urban development and the constant traffic have taken over. Yet somehow, Malioboro and other parts of the city retain their charisma. The subtle eroticism already mentioned in relation to Lucia Hartini’s painting is one of the qualities of “*Romantisme Yogya*”.
its culture and the times. The introduction to Garin Nugroho’s celebrated documentary *Dongeng Kancil Tentang Kemerdeka’an / Kancil’s Tale of Freedom* (1996), about streetkids in Yogyakarta, succinctly states the contradictory component attributes of “Romantisme Yogya”. The camera cuts between sixteen millimetre archival footage of the Proclamation of Merdeka and jubilant, expectant crowds, past and present, to the erection of a fairground and culture-show. We see a contemporary Independence Day parade transiting Malioboro, variously filmed from the viewpoint of several different groups of children, among whom are the urchins who become our guides to their Yogyakarta. Social criticism is apparent and implied, but remains unstated as there is no extraneous authorial and authoritative third part voice in this film. This voice belongs to its child protagonists instead.

An analysis cognisant of hybridity maintains that history must be constantly rewritten to incorporate diverse and plural discourses (Trinh, 1992: 129). An observation of the range and diversity of visual expression in Yogyakarta in the late 1970s and early 1980s confirms that decades of cross-fertilisation and artistic development were suddenly condensed within a few short years. Modernism was barely digested, creating a space for innovative synthesis, increasingly evident in art and the tropes of popular culture.

The new, the crafted and the kitsch confronted the traditional and the classically Javanese in post-modern dissonance. Shop signs advertised everything from taped music to wedding make-up, batik and *sanggul* (the elaborate hairpieces worn traditionally as social signifiers). At pavement level, clumsily painted graphics of dentures and haemorrhoids competed for attention. Higher up, lurid billboard-size movie posters outside cinemas and the large, finely painted pro-government murals exhorting development promised fantasy as compensation for the dislocations of change. Buses and *becaks* alike were festooned with stickers inside and emblazoned outside with individually painted signage, be these “*Mooie Indies*” style landscapes or pictures of pretty women. Small, proudly bedecked horses patiently pulled carriages piled with people and their loads

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132 My translation is the most polite of the cryptically encoded alternatives –“The Wife’s Husband is the Painter” or “Husband the Wife is the Painter”- delivered as *plesetan* (in jest).
through crowded streets. Embellishment appeared on almost every surface. Language reflected similar levels of diversification and creative fusion (Marianto, 1997: 118 - 125).

If the increasing availability of education and the effect of mass communications encouraged a reappraisal of tradition and cultural heritage, then tourism forced this process. The city’s artisans and artists, writers and poets, musicians, dancers, dramatists and intellectuals responded to the clash of cultures with a contemporary restatement of their traditions and fresh expressions born from a synthesis of new and different influences and ideas. Characterised by intellectual and artistic ferment, and much debate, this unique period lasted from the late 1960s to the early 1980s. Although quiet, life in Yogyakarta was never lonely, unlike the perceived noisy and chaotic indifference of a metropolis like Jakarta. As now, Yogyakarta’s famous tolerance was often contrasted favourably with Jakarta’s purported callousness towards the poor and displaced. Art from Yogyakarta was distinguished by an awareness of social issues, evident in the subject and feeling of works created by its artists, as noted by Holt (1967); Maklai (1991, 1996); Wright (1991, 1994); Suryadi (1994, 2000); Yuliman (2001); Supangkat (1997) and Spanjaard (2003).

During the 1970s, Yogyakarta regained its former Revolutionary status as Indonesia’s crucible of cultural innovation, pushing the dissemination of enquiry, challenge, and stylistic revolution in the contemporary visual arts of Indonesia. Besides those writing on art, many Indonesian scholars of sociology, politics, history and literature mention the cultural ferment of this period, among them Suryadi (1994, 1995), Marianto (1997) and Yuliman (2001). However Heryanto (1993), ventures beneath the richly embellished surface of the tourist snapshot to consider both the darker tensions of the past and the politicised present. He proposes Teror or state terrorism in its Yogyakartan manifestation as a counter-discourse to “Romantisme Yogya” (Heryanto, 1993: 39 - 42). Despite such tensions, the best aspects of the spirit of “Romantisme Yogya” were revived

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133 Sindu’s (1983) article, “Lucia Hartini, Lukisan dari Dapur / Paintings from the Kitchen”, and H. Wibowo’s review of the first “Surealis” exhibition in 1985, both mention the artists’ comparisons between the two cities. In the 1970s, the literary magazine Horison often carried essays and short stories considering these perceptions of the metropolis from without.
during the years of Reformasi, as captured in Perbatasan / Boundaries. This revival was intrinsic to the project of popular cultural renewal in a nation attempting democratic restructuring.

Engaging Debate 1: Art and society. “Realism is a dirty cooking pot for rice”

Lucia studied at SMSR and STSRI in Yogyakarta, the Art High School for students intending to proceed to either ASRI, the Art Academy, or to IKIP, the Teachers Training College. She studied art, taught from an Indonesian academic perspective, developing her ability to draw and learning the techniques of painting in oils on canvas. Her sister Yanti studied sculpture and dance. In Perbatasan / Boundaries, Ipong Purnamasidih recollects student lives and conditions in Yogyakarta. He confirms Lucia’s account that the facilities at the Art Schools were overcrowded and poorly resourced. Students from STSRI and ASRI shared the same buildings by turns, and teaching was frequently in disarray. If the teachers were not there, the students were and vice versa. Those formal classes which did take place were conducted beneath the banyan trees in the grounds of ASRI. Students also worked outdoors sketching at various locations around the city. The teachers of STSRI and ASRI conducted their classes conversationally and by example. They were practicing artists and financially dependent on maintaining professional commissions to supplement salaries mainly received in rice. Again, a pressing reality and the ideals espoused officially were in opposition.

This informally “formal” art education was supplemented by the students’ frequent participation in the sanggar (shared studios). Sanggar had developed from centuries of artisan practice and were intrinsic to Yogyakarta’s artistic and cultural ethos. They were linked to Indic tradition, to the Qur’anic study of Islam, to the hybridised courtly heritage of poetic literature, music and dance, and a school or stream-based study of texts. Prior to 1965, sanggar were often politically defined (Maklai, 1991: 12 - 14). Some regarded the creation of visual


135 Sumarsam (1995) and Choy (1984) both mention such linkages. Sanggar continue to flourish today and are regarded as a necessary part of art training and practice, whether they are run as an informal extension of art academies, the schools attaching to the premises of senior artists, or created informally by peer groups of artists on their own initiative.
art as similar to the practiced production of inscriptions which were not merely decorative, but “moved forward from reality to the afterworld” (Ushiroshoji, 1997: 27-28), paving the way for the allusion and cryptic condensations in which the “Surealis Yogya” later excelled. If students did not discover their path at the official Academy, they would seek it in various studios and workshops. Alternatively, they banded together to establish their own studios, relatively free of hierarchy, and the only way for young women artists, as the sanggar were mostly male domains. Marianto (1997: 129) remarks that, as ASRI already smelt like a sanggar, this was an easy transition.

Excitement and artistic ferment are not easily separated from such chaos. The crowding and informality of the art school environment provided students with opportunities to interact with peers from diverse cultural backgrounds. Faced with unique challenges, they had to make their own decisions as individuals, and then conceptually, as artists. If the agenda of the Indonesian state attempted to channel the education of students of culture, then the scarce resources and freewheeling environment of Yogyakarta during the late 1970s and early 1980s impeded attempts at indoctrination. If challenges to the new artistic canons were blunted, then restrictions came from a different source. Contrary to Pemberton’s (1994) arguments, limitations existed to be overcome from within pre-existing streams of cultural diversity – even by the attitudinal qualities of fluidity and accommodation encouraged by Kejawen and Kebatinan practice.

Ten years previously, the anti-communist purges had wreaked havoc among Indonesia’s citizens, the resultant social and political divisions being felt in every aspect of life. Fiercely contested battle-lines were drawn in the arts and intellectual life throughout Indonesia, lasting many years. In Yogyakarta, these divisions were still in evidence a decade later. Negative attitudes towards Realism as a style of artistic expression formed part of this reaction. Prior to the anti-communist coup of 1965, Realism had been associated with LEKRA, the acronym for the left wing cultural organization Lembaga Kebudayaan Rakyat (The Institute for People’s Culture) associated with the PKI, Partai Komunis Indonesia (The Communist Party of Indonesia). LEKRA had extended support to artist’s groups such as Pelukis Rakyat (Painters of the People) and Seniman
Indonesia Muda (Young Artists of Indonesia). Members of these groups included artists who rose to great acclaim, Sudjodjono, Affandi, Hendra Joni Trisno, Batara Lubis, Surono and Kusnadi (Maklai, 1991: 13). Foulcher (1986: 23) suggests that “socialist realism” in the Indonesian context was an attitude rather than a style, an observation which can also be applied to Indonesian “Surealisme”.136

By contrast, Indonesian Modernism of the New Order period, with its emphasis on surface design, decorative expression and abstraction, was regarded as politically neutral and free of Realism’s now negative associations with the socialism of Sukarno’s era. Being non-figurative, such styles were also non-problematic in the eyes of Islam. The fascination of the new enabled Indonesian artists to make formal, but rarely culturally faithful iconographic use of motifs derived from the applied arts across the archipelago. Regarded as truly “Indonesian”, yet simultaneously progressive, and thus synonymous with an opening out of Indonesian attitudes towards the “West”, these new directions enabled contemporary Indonesian artists to claim a space internationally (Kussudiardja, 1993). The developmentalist agenda of the New Order state regarded such trends in cultural production favourably, a situation encouraged by increasing economic ties with the West, and intensified regional and international cultural exchange.

When Lucia commenced her art education, the abstract and decoratively expressive styles characteristic of Modernism were well entrenched, permeating the curriculum and staff selection. Many of her teachers referred to themselves as Decorativists. “Realism is a dirty cooking pot for rice”, they told the students (Maklai, 1996: 79), pressuring them to paint as they did and disappointing those, who, like Lucia, were interested in working figuratively and wanted to learn to paint in the manner of the Old Masters.137 The avant-garde dynamic inherent in

136 Notwithstanding the official stance against Realism, the embryonic national collections of the Indonesian state, then in private hands, were full of realist paintings. People had not stopped admiring the works of Raden Saleh, Basuki Abdullah or Sudjodjono, Batara Lubis, Affandi, Djoko Pekik and others associated with the left during the early 1960s (Maklai, 1991: 13).

137 Personal communication. Haryanto Tok Basuki, Adelaide, August 2003. Some of the student painters who were initially committed to abstraction, like Lucia’s first husband Arifin, also undertook portrait commissions in the Realist style to earn money for food, proving the dirty pot still had its uses (Maklai, 1996)!
Modernism ensured that prohibition soon bred revolt, giving birth to a core group of students whose pro-realist sympathies to the rendition of subject matter emerged in other ways. They worked firstly in Realism, painting portraits “for rice”, then experimented with Realism’s modernist variants, Pop, Hyper-realism and “Surealisme”. Some continued to develop as painters, others switched to installation, performance art, and art in the community.

Engaging Debate 2: objects and the photo-real as liberation of the body and mind

The reaction against Decorativism produced both the Gerakan Seni Rupa Baru (The New Art Movement) and the “Surealis Yogya”. Using the visual equivalent of word play and different fusions of the same archipelagic influences which had inspired the Decorativists, emerging artists paraded their avant-garde attitudes, creating unusual and striking works imbued with youthful energy. Although further eclectic appropriations of Western influences were in keeping with the spirit of post-modern hybridity characterising the 1980s, Indonesian artists stated they did not copy the styles of others.

We inherit the world’s culture, and we will develop this heritage our own way.

(Gelanggang Manifesto, 1950, cited in Supangkat, 1997: 54)

Echoing the sentiment of the Gelanggang Manifesto, the “Surealis Yogya” looked to the West to improve and develop their techniques of painting, but remained inspired by the examples of Raden Saleh and the painters of the revolutionary generation, Sudjodjono, Basoeki Abdullah, Affandi, Sudjana Kerton, Hendra Gunawan, Djoko Pekik and others. Spanjaard (2003: 161 - 165, 187) describes the effect of Dutch Meta-realist painter, Diana Vandenberg’s (1928 - 1997) three month residency in Yogyakarta in the mid 1980s, but overstates her influence on the style of those artists like Lucia Hartini and Ivan Sagito who were already working in a surrealist manner. Lucia painted her first major “Sureal” canvas, Dalam Imajinasi I, in 1981. For her, Vandenberg’s contribution was primarily technical, although arguably, the senior Yogyakartan artists instrumental in choosing Vandenberg had Lucia’s best interests in mind. Scarce resources meant that technical lessons needed re-learning. The use of gouache and acrylic paints, favoured by the decorativists and promulgated
through grants and business promotions as part of development agendas, did not suit the look desired by these young artists. To paint in oils on canvas had been considered Indonesian since the time of Raden Saleh in the colonial era.

Besides the various styles of European painting available through reproductions in books and slides, Lucia Hartini absorbed art from elsewhere in the world through her studies and her friends. Interested in the work of women artists across a variety of genres, she discovered the photographic records of Martha Graham choreographies in a precious book owned by Australian ASRI student, Elizabeth Pollard (Plate 13). Impressed by the extreme angularity of pose evident in Graham’s style, Lucia loosely appropriated the dancer’s shapes and emotional strength in early figurative works such as *Cinta Kasih / Mother Love*, (Plate 14) and *Ratap / Lamentation* (Plate 16), both dating from 1985. Guided by these photographs, and watching her sister, Yanti, who taught dance in the studio of dancer and painter Bagong Kussudiardja, a former pupil of Martha Graham. Lucia taught herself to draw the human figure. Life drawing from nude models was out of the question at STSRI.

Lucia also indulged an interest in literature, encouraged in childhood by her father, feeding her taste for fantasy and the whimsically imaginative. Her reading was adventurous and she was fond of modern Indonesian novels and Rendra’s poetry. Claiming she was inspired by particular images in Iwan Simatupang’s *Merahnya Merah*, a former school text, she remarked jokingly that she had been guilty of “minum merah (drinking red”)!138

First published in 1968 and again in 1977, *Merahnya Merah* was banned a decade later, presumably because it challenged traditional values and was contaminated by Simatupang’s “socialist inclinations”. Regarded as “sureal”, *Merahnya Merah* was very popular among young people in Yogyakarta when Lucia was a student (Heryanto, 1993: 198). They saw themselves reflected in its characters, one of whom is described as “gondrong”, Javanese slang for a long haired youth. Intense and rebellious, he is a “beat” child of his times who dresses

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138 Personal communication. Elizabeth Basuki, Adelaide, September 2000. Elizabeth recounts she visited Lucia one afternoon. Lucia was deeply engrossed in this book, reading with baby in one arm and cooking at the same time, providing another contextual key for the series of paintings of explosions in a wok.

in “a colbert jacket and corduroy pants”, and is interested in less orthodox ideas from the West. Together with denim jeans, rock music and a reappraisal of values, Simatupang’s observational material was synonymous with international student life of the era, as popular then among students in Yogyakarta as elsewhere.¹³⁹

In contemporary Indonesian art, and particularly among artists from Yogyakarta, many believe that social statement and collective meaning is not removed from symbolic representation, despite individual interpretation. Neither is art removed from society, although the nature of this relationship has been the subject of constant debate (Dimyati (1943) and Hamka (1951), cited in Kratz, (1986: 67, 69). In an interview cited in the Bernas (7-4-1985) article, “Lucia Hartini: Lewat Kanvas Curahkan Segala Mimpi”, Lucia explains to the reviewer that she does not run away from the reality of social problems and a world in which things seem out of kilter, although she often dreams of escape. On the contrary, this reality is a source of inspiration for her work.

_Tetapi bukan berarti ingin melarikan diri dari kenyataan. Justru, kenyataan2 seperti itulah yang banyak menjadikan sumber inspirasi lukisan2 saya._

But this doesn’t mean to say I want to run away from reality. In truth, these realities have often been the inspirational source of my paintings. (Hartini, 1985)

Although not overtly “political”, many of Lucia’s early works express a respect for the power of nature as well as fear for the despoliation of the natural world, and an awareness of worldly conflicts metaphorically transposed to the domain of home and family. This was a legitimate way to highlight the psychological and emotional aspects of perceived social issues. Remarking that her canvases were “never wide enough” to carry her inspiration or her vision, Lucia’s attitude also reflected the quiet persistence required for her career. All these qualities influenced my decision to work with Lucia filmically, so positing my

¹³⁹ H.B. Jassin describes Simatupang as an “individualist” and “a humanist with an open personality”, and the novel as “written in clear, sparkling prose, a sketch of the intellectual engaged with seeking responsibility for the problems of humanity, with love and happiness, in the present on earth as in the life hereafter.” From _plesetan_ (punned jest), Marianto (1997: 114) spins the following line “Blue jeans / bulu djin / genies fur / Bu Sugianto”!
consideration of the relationships between art and film in Indonesia.

4.2. Delicate Negotiations: activating the space between Inner and Outer Worlds
Conjuring marriage and career

Because our house was so small, I used to paint in the kitchen. That is, when I wasn’t using it for cooking and drying clothes; and when my husband’s friends came by. When we needed the space, I would move the canvases into our bedroom.

(Hartini, 1992)

Lucia became disillusioned with her lack of progress at Art School. In 1978, her independence of thought and action, refusal to acquiesce to newly introduced rules for uniform wearing and quiet precocity precipitated her expulsion from STSRI. She left without apparent regret. This may not have been beneficial in another career requiring tertiary qualifications, but as painting was her vocation, Lucia’s singular talent was soon confirmed. Far from disappearing from view among the throng of students and youth, Lucia Hartini was set on the path to success.

At 19, she married Arifin, a post-graduate student at ASRI, although her parents disapproved. From Bandung, but of Acehnese descent, he had prospects beyond painting should he wish to take another path. They started a family, and, taking advantage of the interest already shown in her work, Lucia continued painting at home. The young couple exhibited together, the strange and complex imagery and fierce expression of their respective canvases creating considerable critical interest in Yogyakarta and Jakarta. Early reviews from the 1980s reveal aspects of Indonesian attitudes towards gender and tandem careers, as well as the

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140 In 1992, one Yogyakartan artist (name withheld) told me that Lucia was expelled because she liked the work of a LEKRA painter who had disappeared in 1966. She and several others considered the artist’s work “sureal”. Without further corroboration, I regarded this explanation of Lucia’s expulsion as kabar angin (rumour). Another maintained that she refused to wear the newly introduced STSRI uniforms. Her private life may also have contributed to her reputation. Arifin, whom she later married, “stole” Lucia from her then boyfriend, Dede Eri Supria, a story of “Surealis” behaviour recounted retrospectively by several of Lucia’s friends (Personal communication. Haryanto Tok Basuki, Adelaide, August 2003). Lucia simply said that she was regarded as a “naughty girl”.

official and increasingly middle-class ethos distinguishing New Order modernity. In their public appearances as artists, Lucia and Arifin were constructed as a “model young artist couple”, reviewers remarking on their projection of a sophisticated confidence in their abilities and a desire to succeed professionally.

Commenting on their first Jakarta exhibition, a reporter playfully refers to Lucia as “Tini Lusiaharti, aged 22”. He describes her as “naturally gifted and intending to seek her fortune through painting”, but not by selling in a market or on commission through an art shop. Mindful that only a handful of artists in Indonesia survive from the sale of their art, Arifin quips that he does not intend to survive from art alone. He might look for a job in an office! (“Suami Isteri Yang Pelukis”, Selecta, 30-11-1981). Favourable mention is made of their formal art training, although emphasis is most usually placed on Arifin’s academic achievements (Basuki, A.Y., Nova, 12-2-1984: 45). Lucia did not complete her formal studies. One reviewer refers to her as a “drop-out”; others simply mention her studies and the awards for excellence bestowed. These articles are always accompanied by photos of the beaming long haired pair. Clad in jeans and cuddling their young son Loko with his pointed beanie hat and recycled mini-jeans made by Lucia, they pose for the camera with their canvases as backdrop, demonstrating the scale of their distinctive work which their bohemian image complements.141

In these early reviews, Lucia Hartini projected a conventional view of her art and life, keeping the novel aspects of her practice as a painter firmly within a context which included her role as wife and mother. She was careful to stress the dedication with which she painted and her determination to pursue her career as an artist (Selecta, 30-11-1981). She expected her art and her aspirations to be respected and taken seriously. Despite some disparaging insinuations, the writer of the very first review of Lucia’s work in 1981 notes approvingly that her large painting, Dalam Imajinasi I (which he translates as “Image”), took her many months to complete. The artist, like all good Indonesian mothers, had to concern herself with the needs of her young son. Chiding Arifin through the reporter,

141 Dressed like one of Disney’s Seven Dwarfs, Loko featured in several of Lucia and Arifin’s respective early paintings, his rainbow colours representing happiness.
Lucia says she would like her son to be as friendly with his father as he is with her \textit{(Selecta, 30-11-1981)}. Lucia followed this first exhibition with regular participation in group exhibitions, publicly avowing that she intended to continue her career. (Plate 15).


Despite their appearance and unusual canvases, Lucia and Arifin’s profession and its media representation fitted the paradigms of particular nationalising narratives of development-oriented New Order Indonesia. The degree of self-possessed media awareness exhibited in these statements to the press indicated Lucia’s dedication and her resolve to confirm her professionalism in the eyes of the senior artists who held power and influence in the Indonesian arts establishment of the period. In 1983, as now, these adjudicators were mostly male. A synopsis of their aesthetic concerns may be found in the anthology,  

\textsuperscript{142} This first review may be an early by-line of I. Made Suarjana, an Indonesian journalist who has written for many newspapers, journals and worked for Indonesian television over the years.
Apresiasi Seni (1985), an early example of consciously theoretical as opposed to critical or declamatory Indonesian writing on art.\(^{143}\)

Yet despite these professional public appearances, Lucia received little encouragement at home. She lacked the moral support of her husband, although she learned much about painting in discussion with his friends and those of her sister Yanti (Marianto, 1997, 2001). Financial necessity also required her to persevere with painting. Initially, she resigned herself to the first and enjoyed the incentive of the second.

I first interviewed Lucia in 1986 in the tiny 6 metre square house which she contracted with Arifin in Gampingan, the crowded urban kampung near ASRI. In this interview, she conjured the romance of a bohemian artistic existence, with charm and skill. It was hard to see where the family slept amidst the forest of canvases crowding the wall space in every room of the house and stacked beneath the shelter of the eaves outside. Lucia apologized for the clutter in the house, but her overriding concern was the dampness which caused mould to grow on the backs of unprimed canvases. Gradually, mildew seeped through to the front of their canvases, affecting colours and surfaces. In conversation, she and the others present, Eddie Hara and Dadang Christanto, expressed their anxiety about the quality and durability of art materials available in Indonesia, compared to those available to artists in the West.\(^{144}\) Without good materials, they could not succeed professionally. These matters pre-occupied many Indonesian artists and collectors. As the artists were scratching to find enough money to eat, access to professional materials was an aspiration worked into the imaginary worlds of their early paintings.

Women and the state

\(^{143}\) Many critics, artists and academicians contributed to Apresiasi Seni, edited by Drs. Sudarmaji, Agus Dermawan, and Sri Warso Wahono. Contributors were Dan Suwarjono, Affandi, Sudjojono, Abbas Alibasyah, Sudarso Sp., Drs. Sudarmaji, Kusnadi, Prof. Dr. Fuad Hasan, Henk Ngantung, Hardi, Krishna Mustajab and Amrus Natalsysya. The views expressed are often very different.

\(^{144}\) Personal communication. Lucia Hartini, Dadang Christanto, Eddie Hara, Yogyakarta, 1985. When Dadang Christanto visited Adelaide and Melbourne as an Artist-in-Residence in 1991, sponsored by the Australia Indonesia Alliance, he was delighted to gain the advice of Australian painters and conservators regarding solutions to such problems, as was Harsono subsequently regarding water-based screenprinting inks.
Balancing the dual concerns of family needs and professional obligations was of particular importance to Lucia in her twin roles as Javanese wife and young painter. Supplementing the family purse was a traditional duty, regarded as the hallmark of female independence by many Indonesian women and accepted by their men, but with no guarantee of status attached (Sullivan, 1994). Lucia’s success at household management given scarce resources reveals more than skillful practical invention, demonstrating a profound link between her everyday world as a young wife and mother and the nature of her creativity. Her efforts were devoted to many endeavours besides “keeping a spotless house, baking cakes or singing sweetly” (Sullivan, 1994: 186). In her conjurings of daily life Lucia adeptly developed flexibility, invention and patience. Her descriptions of the care lavished on her young children were both real and a metaphor for a career in its infancy, describing the balancing act between family and the creation of art which would last until her children were independent.

I remember that I used small cable spools as tables and the frame of a chicken coop to dry clothes. When it rained and rained, and after I had finished cooking, I used to put the coop over the kerosene stove turned down low, and put the baby’s clothes over that to dry. We Javanese think it’s best for a baby’s clothes to be dried in the sun, but if it rains, then they must be as dry as possible. If they’re at all damp, the baby might catch cold. 145

(Hartini, 1992)

In 1992, when we were shooting *Pusaran / Vortex*, Lucia told me of a long cherished idea for a public art installation, sparked by the forthcoming *Binal Festival – Offensiv!* The genesis of her project resided in memories of the hardship of her early married life and the creative practicality required to make ends meet. She wanted to fill a street using chicken coops of many different sizes and the round wooden spools of electricity cables. But, she observed, there was

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In 1999, Lucia arranged the adoption of baby Megan for her childless sister Yanti. She recounted the story of the multi-purpose stove and chicken coop again in the context of long discussions about differing approaches to child care, keen to have me record this verbatim. In the climate of Reformasi, she hoped the soundness of traditional wisdom would be appreciated, and not considered “old-fashioned”. She wanted to give the baby a good Javanese start to life, confessing scepticism about some aspects of Western methods of infant care.
little point. People would not leave such things in the street. Perfect recyclables, they would take them to use as she herself had done earlier, practical acts of conjuring. Pressed for money, it was better to keep on painting. In June 2001, one of the Public Art projects for Jak-Art coordinated by the Ruangrupa network in Jakarta entailed festooning trees on busy inner-city median strips with discarded tyre inner tubes and large cast-resin birds. After the first day, all the tyres had disappeared, consumed by those who had other, and in their view, more productive uses for them!

The changing nature of women’s work is clearly evident in the conceptualisations underpinning Lucia Hartini’s art and everyday working practice.

I also used the stove to heat my batik wax, because I wanted to make batik for unusual clothing. But just for myself, for us. I liked to sew for myself and my family. I made the children jeans from our worn-out ones. I didn’t make batik for sale, but I drew patterns for batik artists to earn extra money for my canvases and paints. (Hartini, 1992, 1999)

Comparisons made between the employment experience of Lucia and her mother as outworkers in the Central Javanese batik industry sketch the social and economic changes affecting women’s lives over a thirty year period of national development from the mid-1950s to the mid-1980s. They reveal differences attributable to the level of education received, the concomitant possibilities for income generation, and career choice, and demonstrate the consequences of urbanisation and the effect of policies of state development.

Lucia’s involvement with batik was of short duration and differed from that of her mother, the primary waxer of unusual designs. Despite her fondness for detail and skill with textile crafts, Lucia used batik to subsidise her art

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147 Wright (2000) cites an interview with Lucia to this effect. Lucia provided me with the same information conversationally in 1985.
production. For her mother, batiking was a necessary way of life, as painting later became for Lucia. Similarly, Lucia longed for more than the two children espoused by the state, compared to her mother’s nine. Commencing in 1976, the Indonesian state attempted to control population growth by implementing Family Planning. By 1998, at the time of researching Perbatasan / Boundaries, Lucia had two grown-up children and a career as an artist. Her ‘other children’ were the many canvases comprising her oeuvre. Like children, Hartini’s paintings have sifat (nature or character). Created from the heart, they draw firstly on emotion to elicit various rasa (states of feeling) before speaking of arti (meaning). As “characters” they are part of a simultaneously individual and collective visual language. As simulacra, they are set apart from long-standing gendered divisions of labour in the real world.

For women, the Indonesian state appeared to simultaneously emphasize two contradictory values. One requested subordination to men and the other implied the need for the relative autonomy of women necessary to finance the needs of children (Leigh, 1993: 7). In 1978, both expectations were inscribed within the first version of the Panca Dharma Wanita or Rules Governing the Conduct of Women in New Order Indonesia, disseminated by The Directorate General for Rural Development.

1) Wife, standing by the husband;
2) Household manager;
3) Mother, responsible for reproduction;
4) Educator of the children;
5) Citizen of Indonesia.

When these obligations were first codified, matters relating to women and their roles were considered to be part of the PKK, the Family Welfare Movement. The official Indonesian perception of women was very much shaped by the principles laid down in the Panca Dharma Wanita and the five-yearly Garis
Besar Haluan Negara, which provided the basis for the legislation and administration of national policies affecting women. Lucia and millions of women of her generation were encouraged to replace the Pancacinta of their childhood with the official codification of the role of women citizens required by a development-oriented Indonesia. The Panca Dharma Wanita stressed the primacy of a wife’s duty as “mother and help-mate for her husband’s career”.

However, by the late 1980s, the very real difficulties and strain experienced by many Indonesian women in attempting to fulfill the dual roles or peran ganda, encouraged by the official exhortations of the Panca Dharma Wanita came to public attention. Wishing to be good citizens of a modernizing state, women’s difficulties were situated in the space between the inner world of home and family, private thought and home-based work, and the outer world of action, encountered through education, the processes of development, and the pursuit and maintainence of a professional career. As concepts of inner and outer worlds are culturally important to Indonesians, having religious and spiritual connotations beyond the realm of daily life, the renegotiations required of both women and men in modern Indonesia have been psychologically profound. For Lucia Hartini, the struggle to balance the pressures of both worlds began comparatively early in her career.

4.3. Re-arranging the Patterns, Changing the Design

Working outwards away from the familiar

When filming Pusaran / Vortex in 1992, Lucia remarked that, initially, she did not feel restricted by staying at home with her young children. Nor did she feel guilty about spending her free time painting after mothering and housewifely duties were accomplished. As an artist, she would manage both inner and outer worlds from home. The boundaries between these spheres appeared fluid and easily negotiable. Blessed with an acuteness of perception and an unfettered imagination, Lucia was free to transform the objects in the world around her, drawing experientially from past memories and present observations.
Despite her homebound existence, she remained closely connected to the natural world, watching with delight as its patterns and rhythms manifested in the course of her daily life.

I didn’t go out much. I used to get inspiration from the simplest things - even washing the dishes. I could see the patterns of nature and the universe, mirrored right there, close to home - even in my kitchen.

(Hartini, 1992)

Lucia’s observations yielded many examples of the relationships between microcosmos and macrocosmos. Otherwise terrifying, nature’s wild and powerful forces were safely contained within her tiny home. Fantasy landscapes of swirling seas and lacy coral rock composed themselves in her kitchen sink. Cloud cosmologies of oil and water curled across the washing tub. Whether the oil’s source was a greasy frypan or the artists’ work clothes stained with paint, made no difference; all provided insights for synthesis and interpretation. Besides form, shape and pattern, she observed the vertical and lateral linkages between phenomena. Lucia transferred her perceptions, crystallized in an instant as inspiration, then rendered through acute attention to detail, onto her canvases and into her painted worlds.

These conceptual sets lie at the heart of Javanese views of the universe, interpreted as a complex, multi-dimensional system. Until the scientific empiricism of modern times, Kejawen cosmology was constructed as an extension of nature encompassing the wider realms of the environment, the perceivable universe of near space (the planets and the stars) and the cosmos, conceived as neither contracting nor expanding, but as a locus in which the distribution of a

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150 As a foreign student of batik and contemporary culture in Yogyakarta in the mid-1970s, this was a key concept imparted by my teachers and friends. One might practice art, but to progress, one must also cultivate a facilitating spiritual awareness. A favourite exercise of Sumarah meditation was to don a blindfold, and then, following a trusted friend at a distance, make one’s way up the hill beyond the spring of Sendang Kasihan, finding the way by listening to the footfalls and voices of those in front. In 1974, I made two batik paintings about this experience: one in which I imagined the visual appearance of the terrain from the sounds made by my walking feet; the other about the amazing sensation of light and expansive blueness experienced at the top of the hill when the blindfold was removed.
fixed amount of power may vary. Depending on one’s religious beliefs, beyond this lay the Tantric void, a potentially terrifying conceptual space for the unguided (Ch. 2). Lucia accepted the comparative safety of limitation, fitting her painting into the spaces between caring for her family.

In the temporal sphere, *Kejawen* cosmology was replicated structurally as family; as immediate social organization (the village); and then by extrapolation, as the state. Within this framework, humans aimed to achieve harmony in their relationships with its various elements and dimensions, and with each other. The relationships which correspond with these phases are seen firstly, as those pertaining to the discipline and security of family life in childhood, contrasted with aspects of tradition perceived as beneficial or otherwise, and to working harmoniously with nature. Next are those relationships pertaining to society, often seen as the city, its pleasures, learning and the opening of the mind. Social duties, like the responsibilities of parenthood and professional success derived from one’s occupation might then lead to a further level of activity, that of responsible critical, political and/or meta-physical and spiritual activity related to concepts of governance enacted at personal, societal, professional and universal levels.

Early in her career, Lucia was comfortable within this world-view, reflecting it in her paintings. Art historically, we might study Hartini’s oeuvre seeking to find contemporary expressions of a Central Javanese aesthetic sensibility, displayed through particular compositional types and systems of formal organization. We might also find specifically Indonesian and local content alluding to a wide spectrum of literature, folklore and wit as well as to nature and the cosmological. Jim Supangkat (1997) voices the position of non-Western and indigenous cultures vis-à-vis the discursive hegemonising tendencies of those who study them solely from the standpoint of Western European intellectual traditions. Although Supangkat in Turner and Devenport (1996: 27), does not deny any viewer the right to make his or her own interpretations of a work of art, he insists that, as viewers, our aesthetic and contextual readings may profit if we understand something of the cultural field of the artist who created the image.

But the validity of these arguments should not imply that anthropologically based socio-cultural art historical analyses will provide
“correct” meanings of contemporary works of art. This is an impossible proposition, especially when reading across cultures. Furthermore, in contemporary Indonesian art, the power of a work to communicate through feeling and spirit are as important, if not more so, than its tangible formal qualities (Wright, 1991: Introduction).

I suggest that some knowledge of the artist’s personal referential field where this is revealed may well enrich the interpretative possibilities of her/his art. Undeniably, as viewers, we may experience an intense feeling for the intrinsic nature, resonance or symbolic character of an image beyond any literal or allusive meaning contrived by the artist or suggested by the viewer’s personal readings of the arrangement of forms depicted. However, this feeling may be further heightened by some knowledge of its cultural context, as may our aesthetic appreciation of the skillfulness of its creation, encouraging a richer interpretation. This is particularly so regarding the compositional characteristics of a work, and the quality embedded in its details, which, in aggregation, engender aesthetic appreciation and suggest meaning. If we emphasise sifat in a work of art, as with film, and add to this well-informed knowledge of its cultural-intellectual base, we may construct a rich sub-text which heightens our interpretation of the narrative elements of the image. We then empathetically activate the frame and its contents in our respective imaginations.

In Hartini’s painting *Ratap / Lamentation* (1985), a centrally placed woman in a long red gown flies through the air past a circular white marble balustrade similar to those found in Central Javanese Palace architecture. (Plate 16). Beyond lies the sea and the planets, already established as characteristic elements in her painting. When I first saw this image, I, the scholar of Western European art history, immediately recuperated the imagery of Chagall, but soon realised that Lucia’s experience within her familiar milieu had contributed more. Yet her observation of dancers and, by extension, her fascination with the gestural dance of Martha Graham is also evident. The image in *Ratap* has been read as one of escape, expressing the artist’s subconscious desires to leave behind gendered and/or feudalistic strictures, or even the conflicts between traditional order and the chaos of modernity, in search of a space beyond - even if only in flights of
fantasy.\textsuperscript{151}


\textsuperscript{151} Personal communication. Lucia Hartini, Yogyakarta, January 1998, July 1999. In 1999, enlightened by her Master’s teachings, Lucia claimed that daydreams and escapist fantasies prompted the creation of many of her early works. I prefer to draw on the abstract qualities of \textit{semu} existing in the imagery of these works to enhance my interpretations.
But if that is so, why is this work a lament?

Revisiting *Ratap* at century’s end induces my consideration of the many diverse and often conflicted conditions under which Indonesian women have transcended their geographic and cultural boundaries. In the past, women were often objects without agency, exchanged in arranged marriages or those of convenience. In more recent years, they have become the diasporic travellers of transmigration and migration, as wives, students and “guestworkers”. In an emotionally governed reading, the flying woman in *Ratap* may be a friend or relative, about to depart Indonesia, for a promising future. But despite a thirst for the new, she will still lament the loss of close connections, for so long a powerful anchor, as those who remain will lament her absence. *Ratap* expresses both sorrow and trepidation as well as the fantasy of escape and/or the pleasure of boundaries transcended. The pairing of opposite meanings became a quintessential quality of Lucia’s painting as her career blossomed, and another expression of the betweenness she intuited when observing womens’ condition in Indonesia, her own included.

*When the parts no longer fit as before*

By 1980, rapid modernisation, unequal development, dislocation and increasing urbanisation had disrupted many long-standing societal arrangements in Indonesia. The resultant interpersonal and societal strains contributed to formal innovation and justified rebellion in the visual arts as in cultural expression generally, extending well beyond subject matter. Indeed, the “*Surealis*” artists’ very socio-cultural situation as well as their art demonstrates the veracity of Papastergiadis’ (2003) statement concerning hybridity and the “Third Space”:

The survival of traditional perspectives is not dependent on being passed on in an intact, pure, unsullied form, but rather they can incorporate foreign elements, absorb new techniques and commence contrary directions. (Papastergiadis, 203: 34)

How might this have affected the visual arts in Indonesia? In relation to compositional structures and their reflection in batik, Boow (1986: 141 - 144) writes:
Visual designs work by manipulating relationships. The designs of a particular culture may favour certain relationships of the parts over others. Patterns of structure found in an art form can be found at the level of social relationships also, so a design can exhibit a social relationship through an analogous relationship between parts of the design.
(Boow, 1986: 141)

If we accept Boow’s homological interpretation that “spatial arrangements in a culture’s design range may model the arrangement of interpersonal space or of the relations of people to their natural space”, we may also conjecture that extreme changes to such arrangements might generate a remodelling of this design range, or, in art objects, the appearance and meaning of familiar compositional structures and symbols - or at least, their thorough interrogation.

The re-arrangement of previous relationships appeared analogously in individual analyses of precedents, in deconstruction and in the post-modern creation of new and quite individual sets of symbols generated from largely populist sources. The collective meaning of the symbols created was held within small groups rather than the broad masses as previously. This development may be seen as another example of Sumarsam’s (1995) dynamic of Central Javanese cultural hybridity and the multi-modernity formulated by Supangkat (1997: 10 - 11; 1993 - 94: 26). Boow’s research also supports arguments made elsewhere in this thesis, that many traditional aspects of Javanese and other archipelagic cultures were inherently capable of surrealist transformations, even if these transformations appeared as highly innovative reconfigurations rather than as strikingly radical new expressions.

Similarly, the development of these forms is a product of existing

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152 Boow (1986: 126 - 127) provides the example of the relationship of various batik patterns such as Ceplok, Kawung and Parang Rusak to traditional Central Javanese ideas of social organization and rulership embodied in the layout of towns and palace complexes. She argues for the specificity of patterns as signifiers of social status. Discussing batik designs, Boow, (1988: 91) suggests a Javanese counter-perspective “Designs have sifat (quality, character), rather than arti (meaning). Sifat is an Arabic loan word in Indonesian whose meaning approximates form, nature or character. The use of this word formalised and added authority to the concept, placing the interpretation of batik designs within an Islamic aesthetic and religious tradition.” Art works had sifat and spirit; they evoked rasa or feeling. Quite often, they used semu (devices of abstraction and decoration) which rendered the works imprecise and thus multi-referential as texts.
dynamics, even if their emergence appears to be born of a rupture rather than from processes of evolutionary change. Although Hartini’s early paintings and even some of her most recent works, suggest the conformation of social structures and interpersonal relationships with a Javanese sense of design and spatial relationships, they are thoroughly original in their synthesis. Although smooth, they are often disjunctive, oddly composed and quite irregular as opposed to the evenness desired in priyayi (aristocratic) cultural expression. Add odds with the laborious dedication and repetition of brushstrokes required to paint them, Hartini’s canvases increasingly expressed the dislocation and rupture of traditional social patterns of her times, invoking Gramsci’s (1985: 98) opinion:

It is obvious that every individual, including the artist and all his activities, cannot be thought of apart from society, a specific society. Hence the artist does not write or paint – that is, he does not externalise his phantasms – just for his own recollection, to be able to relive the moment of creation. He is an artist only insofar as he externalizes, objectifies and historicizes his phantasms. Every artist-individual, though, is such in a more or less broad and comprehensive way, he is ‘historical’ or ‘social’ to a greater or lesser degree. (Gramsci, 1985: 112)

4.4. Reversioning Surrealism? The Birth of the “Surealis Yogya”

The genesis of “Surealisme” in Indonesia is both fascinating and important in the development of contemporary art. The young artists who banded together as the “Surealis Yogya” in 1985 independently seeking an exhibition platform for their diverse works, saw themselves as subversive in relation to the existing canons of Indonesian modern art. They were flattered that their teachers and local critics found their art bewildering (Wibowo, H, Kedaulatan Rakyat, 6-4-1985). In its early phase, Yogyakartan “Surealisme” was regarded by many scholars, as well as by the artists themselves, as “a specifically Indonesian phenomena distinct from European Surrealism” (Maklai, 1996; Supangkat, 1997; Marianto, 2001). The concept or mood of “Surealisme” was a magical container into which the “Surealis Yogya” poured a uniquely Indonesian syncretic brew, the result of diverse appropriations of decorative details, motifs and symbologies drawn from the rich artistic and cultural traditions of the archipelago
Sensitive to their times, "Surealis" paintings expressed the dilemmas of developmentalism, experienced individually as a mixture of fascination and angst, and collectively, as the perceptually bizarre and emotionally confusing. How could artists paint “meaningful” works in an era replete with paradoxical situations which denied meaning’s existence? Their visual currency was everyday life, at home and in the street, “a revelation at the heart of Yogyakartan life”, and “an articulation of individuality where normally, there is no chance” (Marianto, 1997: 140 - 141).

The eclectic and hybrid base of Yogyakartan “Surealisme” was pan-Indonesian, reflecting the origins of its founding artists, not all of whom were Javanese, although all had trained in Yogyakarta and were influenced by the city’s ambience. Two of the “Surealis Yogya” were Balinese, one was Sumatran, while others were of Indonesian Chinese ancestry (see Introduction). Those exhibiting in the first Indonesian “Surealis” show were the painters Ivan Sagito, V. A. Sudiro, G. H. Supono, Amang Rahman Jubair, Effendi, Made Wianta, I Gusti Nengah Nurata, with Lucia Hartini and Yanuar Ernawati as the only women. This was an independent self-curated show (Wibowo, Kedaulatan Rakyat, 6-4-1985). Several artists associated with the group like Agus Kamal, Boyke Krishna Adi

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153 Maklai (1996) and Marianto (2001) both use quotation marks when referring to Indonesian “Surealisme” and “Surealisme Yogya” for these reasons, so acknowledging a post-Modern rather than Modern influence. While the artists saw themselves as creating new art, this was different to working within modern styles which were globally contemporary at the time, as with Decorativism and Hyper-realism. However, this does not deny the Indonesian-ness of the art concerned.

154 Writers and the artists themselves differ as to who exactly constituted the “Surealis Yogya”. In 1985, Herry Wibowo stated that the degree to which the work of Yanuar Ernawati could be called “Surealis” in the Indonesian sense was debatable at the time because it was highly expressive, freely painted and not the complex product of introverted contemplation. Yet Ernawati’s work reproduced in the catalogue for the 1989 Biennale (1989: 96 - 97) displays the “Sureal” nature of her semi-figurative abstracted image making, despite its very painterly, non-photo-real style. Ernawati describes her paintings as the result of an extended dialogue between the self, living bliss and the eternal beauty of god, a juxtaposition which is the source of her existence and her life. Lucia Hartini describes her art as emanating from the realms of the sub-conscious (1989: 48 - 49). I agree with Marianto, who writes that several other artists, like Dadang Christanto, Eddie Hara, Haryanto Basuki, Heri Dono, Probo and Eko Kucing, also contributed to the development of “Surealisme Yogya”, although they were never exhibiting members of the group. By 2001, Marianto selects the following artists as “Surealis”: Heri Dono, Lucia Hartini, Agus Kamal, Effendi, Iwan Sagito, Sudarisman, Temmy Setiawan, Nurkholis, Probo and Boyke. His categorisation is made on the basis of attitude, rather than medium of expression or a history of consistent co-exhibition.
Samudera, and Sujipto Adi were represented in the first wave of subsequent exhibitions, while by the late 1980s and early 1990s, some newer artists feature in “Surealis” exhibitions. Meanwhile, Dede Eri Supria, Heri Dono, Dadang Christanto and Eddie Hara who had been sympathetic to surrealist ideas developed strong and divergent directions of their own, as did one of the original founding members, Made Wianta.

Were there any similarities between the “Surealis Yogya” and the European Surrealists? For the “Surealis Yogya”, the term “Surealisme” referred to a particular feeling, a mood or sensibility rather than a “style” per se as was the case with the Decorativists. Theirs was not an orchestrated and intellectually substantiated “movement” as was European Surrealism. Yet ideas expressed by some of the “Surealis Yogya” in their artist’s statements for exhibitions resonate emotionally and practically with Salvador Dali’s 1942 definition of Surrealism:

I announce the future birth of a Style. All those who continue to imitate me by redoing “primary surrealism” are doomed to the limbo of lack of style. For to arrive at the creation of a style - instead of continuing to disintegrate, it is necessary to integrate: instead of stubbornly attempting to use Surrealism for purposes of subversion, it is necessary to make of surrealism something as solid, complete and classic as the works of museums.

(Dali, 1942: 396 - 398)

Although it is unlikely they ever read this definition, the young artists described their own work, for which they already held “solid, complete and classic” professional ambitions, as having a surreal mood or atmosphere. In their “take” on the concept of surrealism, the “Surealis Yogya” found an approach to painting consistent with their attempts to formulate an expressive response to the world in which they lived. In particular, they were attracted by the darker realms of the human psyche, the emotionally extreme, the bizarre, the dream-state and the formally metamorphic which they interpreted as the distraught, the dispossessed, the disjunctively juxtapositional; the paranormal and visionary; the mystical, transubstantive and transformatively spiritual. Yet they meticulously painted these psychological dimensions in oils on large canvases using the formally substantial techniques of photo-realism.
Oil on canvas: 145 x 145 cms.

Next, as individuals, they desired to transform the difficulties and economic hardship of their beginnings, by acquiring the resources to paint both well and with permanence. Seemingly, they concurred with Dali’s injunction that “it is necessary to make of surrealism something as solid, complete and classic as the works of museums”. Again, this was a progressive position for their context and times in a country where there was growing interest in the need to create a reliable and respectful market for contemporary art and improve the existing gallery and decaying museum system (Yuliman in ed. Hasan, 1981 - 1991).

Wright (1994: 114) contends that Lucia Hartini was the only one who directly acknowledged a debt of influence to Salvador Dali. Marianto (1997, 2001) maintains that the Yogyakartan artists had all seen reproductions of the European Surrealists’ work. In my opinion, it was impossible for art students
generally to ignore Dali, as his work, life and opinions were then, and still are, universally synonymous in the popular mind with surrealism as an expression of the avant-garde in Modern Art, even as a joke. Lucia Hartini maintained that, for her, Dali’s influence was referential only, and that subjective correspondences and parallels were relevant to a particular phase of her development. She was interested in the psychological dimensions and bizarre aspects of Dali’s work, but did not copy his figurative morphism. Instead she responded to aspects of his conceptual essence in her own way.

Lucia’s querulous homage to Dali is evident in the painting *Dalam Bayangan Salvador Dali / In the Imagination/Shadow/Shade of Salvador Dali* (1990), and in an interview with Ipung Purnamasidih for the catalogue of her 1992 exhibition in Jakarta (Plate 17). Her quintessentially Javanese and sceptically female acknowledgement of his legacy is evident in the multiple connotations of the work’s title: the word *bayangan* carries three possible meanings, shade, shadow and imagination. Marianto finds a further cultural parallel, claiming that the Javanese practice of *Leklekan*, the meditative state of light trance which assisted Lucia paint through the night, is akin to the European Surrealists’ practice of “automatic writing” (Dali, 1942; Breton cited in Jean, 1980: 123, 347 - 348; Marianto, 1994, 2001). However, *Dalam Bayangan Salvador Dali* confirms that what Hartini produces from this “sleep of reason” is not at all the same.

For the most part, the “Surealis Yogya” rejected the intensely individual psychoanalytical focus of the European Surrealists who saw the individual mind as the only admissible field of reference in the creation of surreal works. For

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156 While to date there is only one book devoted to the Indonesian “Surealis”, there are many books on the European Surrealists. These include the pamphlets and magazines written by their members and journal articles contributed by those fascinated by their art. I have referred extensively to The Autobiography of Surrealism edited by Marcel Jean (1980) and Whitney Chadwick’s (1991) Women Artists and the Surrealist Movement. There are fewer books on Indonesian “Surealisme”. Marianto’s (2001) publication is the most comprehensive. As mentioned, catalogues of the period contain good examples of the paintings of Agus Kamal, Iwan Sagito, I.G.N. Nurata, V.A. Sudiro, Sujipto Adi, Boyke Samudera, Effendi and Sugianto. Most of the original group are represented in Pameran Lukisan Lamunan dan Metafisika / Dreams and the Metaphysical, Archipelago Gallery, Jakarta, Dec. 1990, and have appeared as individuals in many showcase mixed exhibitions since.
instance, while Lucia Hartini derived metaphorical imagery from the power of
nature and the scope of the cosmos, in order to depict emotional and
psychological states, she also depicted sublime phenomena in their own right. In
the *Surrealist Manifesto of 1924* (Jean, 1980: 117 - 129), Andre Breton argued
that personal psychological fields are the arenas of individual liberation, and the
means whereby magic is recuperated in society. As with the non-figurative
abstraction of the Decorativists, the “Surealis Yogya” mostly rejected the degree
of abstraction evident in European Surrealism and considered that there was no
need to recuperate magic in Yogyakarta. As with mysticism, many believed in
paranormal powers.157

The “Surealis Yogya” favoured figurative images, often unconsciously
cinematic in vision, drawing inspiration from the bizarre spectacles generated by
cultural clash and intersection, created from the impact of modernisation on their
local communities. They drew attention to the human form, as well as to
particular mental and emotional states, in paintings heightened by the photo–
realism of their rendition.158 On this basis, Marianto suggests the painterly
precursors of the “Surealis Yogya” were the great Indonesian Realist painters of
the revolutionary and early nationalist period. Rendering the poetic, the dramatic
and the resonantly emotive of the everyday on large canvases, I argue that the
“Surealis Yogya” were affectively similar to the Indonesian Neo-realist
filmmakers of the 1950s, while retaining the fierce “Indonesianness” and formal
figurativism of the Realist painters. The “Surealis”, and Hyper-realis artists, did
not paint *en plein air*. Their images were captured mentally or photographically
for painstaking reworking in the studio in compositions which often denied or
optically distorted “real” relationships between figures and ground.

157 Maklai (1996: 63) also comments that Indonesian society of this period remained thoroughly
penetrated by magic, making its further liberation by artists unnecessary. For their specific
recuperations of magic, several of the Australian Surrealists turned to animistic belief systems and
to aboriginal modalities of connection with the land as can be seen in the work of James Gleeson,
and Douglas Roberts, while Dusan Marek and Pixie O’Harris sought magic in tales from their
respective European heritages (James, Bruce, 2003).

158 Early on Sujipto Adi, and later Sudarisman and Asri Nugroho chose to deconstruct figures and
forms by means of their stylistic choices. Most of the other “Surealis” favoured disjunction, but
retained the wholeness of each specific form, while distorting and disembodying particular
elements of the naturalistically “real”.
Neither was Indonesian “Surealisme” a movement in the Modernist European sense. Indonesian “Surealisme” has always remained a loose group of individually evolving painters, who have shared particular thematic interests and stylistic similarities across the years, and who have exhibited together for attitudinal and pragmatic reasons. Initially professing a sense of alienation with society, the “Surealis Yogya” seemed to confirm Salvador Dali’s (1942) pronouncement that the individual and society should be disconnected for true creativity to arise. However, Dali also argued that from the chaos of true creativity, political and social reformation would be born.

Both Maklai (1996: 62) and Marianto (1997: 144) maintain that the “Surealis Yogya” were initially unaware of the historical signification and political analysis of European Surrealism, adopting its anti-establishment posturings as a useful mask for their own feelings of social anomie and youthful bravado. Producing only one manifesto, the Indonesian “Surealis” artists did not promote their ideas didactically through the publication of pamphlets, bulletins, other literary expressions or events. Nor did they run a coherent political agenda or seek to create a school of followers, thereby establishing themselves as a movement. Instead, the Indonesians were very aware of the fate of dissident creative workers in their nation’s recent past, and were, for some years, unaware of the possibilities for change inherent in the attitudes underlying their work.

Semiotically, they drew on the word play of Javanese and other Indonesian languages; on folktales and histories passed down orally; on cultural and even on religious practice, further filtering images garnered from a multi-ethnic diversity. Their paintings engaged viewers socially, as well as emotionally and aesthetically. Stressing the differences between themselves and their European antecedents, the “Surealis Yogya” claimed they were making uniquely Indonesian art, and not a slavish rendition of work from somewhere else (Maklai, 1996). Their alternatively positioned sense of cultural nationalism was shared by many who believed the unique energy and a capacity to fuse different influences from within their own traditions was the most important dynamic driving the development of a lively Indonesian culture (unnamed respondent, Sparringa, 1997).
Within these appropriations of style and meaning, artists found tools for a synthesis enabling them to juxtapose such “truly national because pluralistically-derived” imagery with aspects of the constructed nationalism of New Order culture (Supangkat, 1997). The success of contemporary Indonesian art’s reception as something unique and identifiably Indonesian on the stage of world art was due in no small measure to the impact made by the paintings of the “Surealis Yogya” and the Hyper-realism when they first travelled overseas. Their art was a tribute to the place of dreams and metamorphic transformations in the lives of people who were otherwise “ordinary”. Like the artists, these millions of Indonesian “everymen” and “everywomen” were without worldly power in a non-democratic system. In the real world they were like Gatotkaca, possessed of great fortitude, and like Gatotkaca, in their dreams, and as participating viewers of art and performance, they could fly. Sharing their hopes and fears, dreams and inventions, the artists gave these dreams visual form, not least by daring to suggest the conditions and realities through which they were disempowered.

In Ivan Sagito’s paintings people wait in isolated suspended animation or are depicted with variously aging banana leaves instead of faces (Plate 18). In Agus Kamal’s images of ruined structures and carvings of stone, the world is a prisoner of macrocosmic time within which humanity endures, amid the ruins of the civilizations it has created and the debris of the present moment. Lucia Hartini’s canvases reflect on the natural world and her passage through the imaginary worlds of clouds and planets, tropes which double as images of escape from a restricted present and the search for meta-narratives and realities beyond worldly existence. In actuality, “Surealisme” provided the young woman, trained to be a wife and mother, with a key to re-invention both artistically and socially. Lucia Hartini had begun to consider the situation of women in a rapidly changing Indonesian society. Her scrutiny of the dynamics of gender roles and expectations began with self-reflexive enquiry. Its consequences generated a stream of potent representations and a growing awareness, but also placed stress on her marriage.

159 Several international exhibitions quickly established the “Surealis Yogya” and Indonesian painting on the international stage, the major ones being KIAS which went to the USA and “Mutations”, which travelled to Japan, by which time “Surealisme” was defined as Mutant Realism or Painstaking Realism (see Introduction).

In this canvas, Sagito quotes an earlier painting from the period discussed here.

*Surealis saya (My surrealism)*
(Hartini, 1999)

As Lucia Hartini’s career progressed, her “Surealisme” acquired a solidity of form and execution. Her understanding and interpretation of surrealism as “a personal style” brings her close to Dali, as does her continued emphasis on painting as a Fine Art. Hartini wished to draw serious attention to the scope of the messages implied in her paintings, the dark as well as the imaginary, the fantastical and the potentially metaphysical, or rather, transubstantive in a Javanese rather than a European sense. It is here, as well as in her fascination for the forces at work beneath the surface of the visible world, that viewers might find the conceptual keys to her paintings.
Those characteristics of Lucia Hartini’s art relating to the workings of the mind, the psyche and the sub-conscious remind Western viewers of explanations accompanying the originating visions of European Surrealism. However, this thesis maintains that it is unwise to subsume a justifiably distinctive discourse on Indonesian “Surealisme” within one about European Surrealism beginning with the writings of Breton, the art of Dali, Magritte, de Chirico and others, for the two are not the same.160

Lucia Hartini is an Indonesian woman, not a European male. While her painting *Dibawah Bayangan Salvador Dali* acknowledges Dali’s artistic legacy, it doubles as a playful interrogation of Hartini’s creative relationship with this colossus of the realms of the artistic and psychological imagination from the positions of a post-colonial and Javanese Indonesian female experience. Dali was both revered and feared for the inevitable comparisons made by any male or female artist, even if she/he was drawing upon vastly different sets of cultural referents. Psychological perceptions attributed to stature and scale experienced by women artists in relation to male artists was also a subject addressed by some in the European Surrealist circle. In Lee Miller’s photomontage of 1946, set in the Arizona desert, we see a gigantic Max Ernst patting the head of a tiny Dorothea Tanning, the fellow Surrealist painter who was his wife (Chadwick, 1991: 94).

Chadwick suggests that the European women Surrealists were denied access to the ideological brotherhood of the foundation artists, arguing that they were forced to confront their own reality and the fear that its resources and their energies were finite. As a Javanese, Lucia accepted the notion of a limitation of resources, but in her early career, felt that there were many possibilities for a transcendence of restrictions through imagination expressed in works of art. These possibilities were later problematised, but for intimately personal rather than professional reasons. Importantly, and unlike the Europeans, Hartini was not excluded from either the discussions or the exhibitions of her fellow “Surealis” artists who were mostly male.

160 Although closer in time to the originating European movement, Australia’s Surrealist artists also distilled those concepts and stylistic elements of surrealism which they deemed significant, producing distinctive images as a consequence (James, 2003). Some, like James Gleeson, tied their settler experience to spiritual and conceptual encounters with the aboriginal heart of Australia.
Unashamedly, she painted her perceptions of sexuality and gender. The surreal fascination with sex and death, relates to depictions of female sexuality within Javanese constructions of *alam* (the natural order), and its cycles of reception, fertility, nurturance, harvest, decay, death and rebirth. Yet Hartini’s interpretations mostly avoid the morbid sexism of the Europeans, even though her work often addresses the psychic perception of unwholesomeness and disquiet. Sexuality is rendered as lifegiving in a physical and spiritual sense, referring to the vast body of associated Javanese cultural lore and artistic expression (Resink, 1997). Sometimes we see vegetative lushness and extreme attention to decorative detail as in the hair and drapes of *Kommunikasi Ibu dan Anak / Communication Between Mother and Child* (1989) (Plate 19); and/or its contrast with barrenness, juxtaposed within the one painting, as in *Widodari Membawa Burung / Angel Bearing a Bird* (c. 1987). Conflicts between sexuality and the demanding requirements of nurturing young life have always created difficulties for women artists for practical as well as ideological reasons.


These characteristics are also present in the work of earlier female surrealist painters such as Leonora Carrington, Leonor Fini, Remedios Varo and Frida Kahlo, only one of whom was European (Plates 20 and 21). As with Dali, it is well nigh impossible to argue that Lucia was unaware of the works of women surrealists from elsewhere in the world. For instance, she discovered Frida Kahlo as a student, but did not see fine reproductions of her paintings until 1991, when she received the catalogue from an international retrospective exhibition of Kahlo’s work. Lucia was entranced by the strength of its individual statement, emotional sensibility and visual power, rather than by Kahlo’s style per se.

Several of Hartini’s canvases painted between 1986 and 1994 suggest she understood a number of concepts integral to European Surrealism, intuining the correspondence of “convulsive beauty”, “black humour” and “amour fou” with attitudes, phenomena and expressive tropes drawn from her own cultural context. “Convulsive beauty” may be equated with the Javanese concept of lango or rapturous beauty, and its associations with violence and obligation, a subject explored by Tony Day (2003: 250 - 253) in Fluid Iron. In Bahasa Indonesia, “Amour fou” or “mad love” translates as “mabuk cinta” or “drunken love”. Jokingly, Lucia references this state in the redolently sexual image of a fully blown Bunga Bangkai (Rafflesia lily) in Renungan Bunga / Reflections on a Flower (1994) with its lingga-like stamen. There are two versions of this work: one is pearlescent, set in a barren yet strangely beautiful landscape; the other, a scarlet slash against the deep-blue curtain of night. This enormous flower is not the fabled Wijayakusuma from the legendary island of Nusa Kembangan set in the wild South Sea. After a long tumescence, the Bunga Bangkai blooms for one night, then rapidly putrifys.

4.5. The Wajan, the Cone and the Vortex

Three dominant compositional motifs recur in Lucia Hartini’s paintings from 1981 onwards. These are the wajan, (the wok or frypan), the tumpal or gunungan, (the cone or mountain), and the pusaran, (the whorl, eddy or vortex). Their representations are variously situated in nature, society and the realms of the psyche, and the cosmos. Within these spaces, the motifs allude to women’s
physical presence, their bodies and sexuality, their culturally ascribed roles and their social expectations as well as paths of escape, liberation and transcendence.

The Wajan

In an interview for *Perbatasan / Boundaries* filmed in 2001, Hendro Wiyanto recollects an essay written in 1989. He describes the relationship between the disparate elements of imagery in Lucia Hartini’s work and their fusion within a condensed encrypted image to be read on several levels. Such juxtapositions create fertile ground for comparisons with the construction of images in film. Wiyanto investigates Hartini’s image formation in paintings from the *Imajinasi* series, commenced in 1982, and subsequently known as *Nuklir Dalam Wajan / Nuclear in a Wok*.

We see a wok, a frypan, from which smoke billows explosively. This shows the characteristic conjunction between two events placed within the one painting quite well. Suddenly, it’s as though something cataclysmic happens; something from the world outside enters the domestic space, pervading her consciousness. I think at the time, if I remember correctly, it was news on the radio about hunger, nuclear disaster and so she joined the two together. It doesn’t really matter if you call it surrealism or not; the name is debatable.

(Wiyanto, 2001)

Aspects of “Surealis” creative practice enabled both personal exploration and the revelation of society’s wounds. By allowing characteristics from earlier value systems to surface in memory, and using language, traditional objects, detailed observation, personal caprice and fantasy worlds, together with metaphysical exploration, artists forged powerful metaphors as sets of private weaponry, their personal ammunition against the orthodox and the everyday – becoming resistance fighters and gangsters within the hegemonic culture proposed by the New Order state (Marianto (1997). With art as her *cakrawala* (magic weapon), Lucia Hartini discovered the comparative freedom of professional distance from which she could coolly and creatively address difficult subject matter.

Between 1982 and 1994, Hartini painted twenty-one versions of explosions in which her humble *wajan* (frypan), the quintessential Indonesian
cooking utensil and “that most familiar item in my kitchen”, dominates the composition. As word play, the original title, *Imajinasi*, translates in English (Yanti’s second language) as “Image of Rice”, a humorous invocation of prosperity. But what might be cooked in a *wajan* is only half a meal without rice. Representationally, the wok is a culturally sexualized object, having power as a biological metaphor as well as referencing gender roles (Wright, 2000: 27). Slyly, Lucia describes her frypan as multifunctional and in constant use. With their phallic towers and steaming clouds billowing upwards, Lucia’s rounded woks, appear as a metaphor for her life as a young wife and mother, a humorous yet profound “take” on the classical Indonesian iconographic canon of *lingga* (phallus) and *yoni* (womb).

Not least, these paintings allude to her art-making processes, where juxtapositions of form and colour, and the addition of ascerbic disjunctive elements bring the canvas to life, as in cooking. Her *wajan* might also have literal and metaphoric connections with batiking, *tulis* wax being conventionally heated in a small *wajan* over a charcoal or kerosene stove. After Gramedia’s purchase of the original canvas, the series of paintings created subsequently were popular and sold well, generating income to support home and family. This particular series of therefore expresses the better part of the reality of *peran ganda*, the dual roles Lucia Hartini’s life as a mother and artist. Arguably the most “Surreal” of Lucia’s early works, at least two paintings from this series predate Diana Vandenberg’s residency in Yogyakarta.

However, the images in this series should not be read as exclusively “feminine”. In a wider sense, they reference creation, fertility and destruction on a geological, societal and cosmic scale, apparent in the alternative title for the series, *Nuklir Dalam Wajan / Nuclear in a Wok*. While Lucia’s explosions in a wok might also be seen as an emotional road map of the artist’s life, painted as a psychological outlet for anger and frustration, they transcend the domestic sphere. Their embodiment of the artist’s personal emotional responses to natural catastrophe and disastrous man-made actions, more widely perpetrated, expresses warning. In 1992, when filming *Pusaran / Vortex*, Lucia claimed her ideas for
the continuing changes rung on her humble frypan were a powerful response to the tragedies of nuclear pollution, heard discussed on the radio as she worked.

This canvas was lost, presumed stolen, in the U.K.

Like many of her peers, Lucia was horrified about the chemical poisonings in Bhopal India in 1984. Her emotional response was accordingly fed into her work. She suggests we will be cooking the results of these disasters.
As a mother, my frypan is a most familiar utensil.
The idea about nuclear danger was from the radio news,
About warfare that would poison the earth
(Hartini, 1992)

Beyond diaristic intention, Lucia painted these images to understand and contain those natural and man-made forces against which she felt powerless. Archipelagic and global in scope, they have long featured in Javanese expressions of history as prophecy (Ronggawarsita, 1873), but it is Lucia’s generation who have examined their causality scientifically. Whether displaced through transmigration as a consequence of natural disaster like volcanic eruption or earthquake, or dispossessed for political and economic reasons, millions of Indonesian women were compelled to set forth with their families and a few meager possessions. Included were their frypans, the emblematic symbol of survival, conception and sustenance. The first of the series, together with selected successive versions of the subject have been reproduced in almost every catalogue and every review of the exhibitions in which they appeared between 1983 and 1994 (Plate 22). As archetypal examples of Indonesian “Surrealisme”, the works in this series have since passed into the wider history of contemporary Indonesian art, where they continue to elicit admiration at home and internationally.

The Cone

Iconographically, the cone is one of European Surrealism’s metamorphic “objects” par excellence. It appears frequently in the paintings of de Chirico and Miro, as it does in the works of the Australian Surrealists, particularly the paintings of James Gleeson. We may juxtapose the broad base of the frypan and its even wider mouth with the cone of the Europeans, with its broad base and pointed closure. In Hartini’s work, the cone is both signifier and compositional device. In the world of everyday life in many parts of Indonesia, the inverted cone is a rice steamer, a paradoxically symbolic upending of the mountain. Usually made of woven palm, it differs from the multi-functional wajan for its purpose is
to steam the sacred stuff of life.\footnote{162} In my short film \textit{Road Stories; Cone} (1999), the stylistic study for \textit{Perbatasan / Boundaries}, a small mop-haired child walks on his hands in the midst of a 1999 election rally before the camera cuts to a laughing Lucia, suggesting that, whether as enactment or activation, the task of \textit{Reformasi} was to upend the cone of power in Indonesia.

The cone first appears as the mountain in several of Lucia Hartini’s canvases from the early to mid 1980’s. It is used in a specifically Indonesian context charting the artist’s feelings arising from her questioning of gender roles. This point is emphasized by Lucia Hartini in conversation and noted by Wright in her book \textit{Soul, Spirit, Mountain; Preoccupations of Contemporary Indonesian Painters}. Citing Pramoedya Ananta Toer, Wright conceptualizes the mountain as \textit{pesangon} (society), which evolves as a product of interrelationships, positionings and action infused by spirit or \textit{rasa}. Hence it embraces the spiritual (Wright, 1994: 147 - 150, fns. 3 - 6).\footnote{163}

In \textit{Ratap / Lamentation}, (1985), and \textit{Permohonan Hijau / Green Request} (1986), (Plates 16 and 23), Hartini depicts her female subjects enveloped within cone-shaped masses, using the formal composition of these figures to create great tension visually and psychologically. In both works, the angular gestures of these women push against the cloths which simultaneously protect, constrain and frame them. Hartini’s specific religious references may be threefold, referencing depictions of gender pertinent to Christianity, Hinduism and Islam. These paintings are among the first examples of Hartini’s use of gestural narrative in which forms are constructed to elicit emotional interaction with the viewer. For instance, as in the story of Gatotkacca, the foetus in \textit{Permohonan Hijau} floats in a shell-like sac above the woman’s upturned tear-stained face. Both figures are set within a proscenium arch of drapes and billowing clouds.

\footnote{162} Wright (1994: 147) cautiously suggests Lucia’s frypan represents populist economic systems of sharing, barter, a broad distribution and political egalitarianism, as opposed to the hierarchical pyramid of power characterising the New Order state, citing a précis of Drake’s analysis (1989), that “the New Order triangle would appear tall, with a narrow baseline.” She suggests that Lucia’s woks present an alternative model, that of the lower levels of the economy where bartering and sharing are practiced, inferring this model was closer to the populist Marhaenism of Sukarno’s era.

\footnote{163} Wright supports her analysis drawn from literary sources, with the political interpretation of “mountain” drawn from Geertz (1970: 361) and Anderson (1990).
Increasingly, these types of narrative compositions characterised that body of Hartini’s work dealing with sosok perempuan (women’s issues, gender). Attaching symbolic meaning to the archetypal image anchoring Permohonan Hijau, woman becomes mountain in a primordial statement of transformative female power, linking regenerative fertility symbolically across the natural order. This is a powerful and potentially subversive metamorphosis in Javanese eyes, for woman is depicted as the pillar connecting earth to heaven. Once part of popular belief in archipelagic traditions, but gradually subsumed within increasingly male-dominated and male-oriented discourses and practices of development, such forthright references to animist belief and female power were actively discouraged by official policies of the time. The image reminds us that, in a society where women’s health was often poor for cultural as well as economic reasons, Gatotkaca must be strong to recover from the constraining conditions of his/her gestation and birth lest he/she die in utero (Marianto, 1996: 108, 111).

In this image Lucia engages in an exercise of cultural reclamation and personal empowerment which is both symbolic and actual. Not only does she stake her claim to the tradition of easel painting, which, in 1986, was predominantly a male practice in Indonesia, as elsewhere in the world. She claims her right to start on the path leading to the cultivation of material independence and spiritual wisdom, and to engage with the mountain as a primary symbol of Kejawen belief. Lucia’s frypans and her images of woman as mountain may be seen as painted embodiments of a female understanding of geographic national identity and simultaneously, of the social realities of Indonesia’s women. They refer, in the deepest sense, to the original concept of Tanah Air, and the shifting boundaries of air, land and water found everywhere throughout the Indonesian archipelago (Acciaioli, 2001).

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164 Leigh (1993: 8 - 9) remarks on the preponderance of males in the administration of New Order Indonesia and their monopoly of “official” discourse at all levels of society. “Their pre-eminence is a factor which is often barely noticed, so much does it occur in a taken-for-granted manner within Indonesian society. ….. The relationship of support Indonesian women have towards the significant men in their lives inevitably spills into their own individual relationship with, and perception of the Indonesian state. In this sense developmentalism embodies the dynamic of a gendered male state infused with the work or practices of women as supportive appendages to significant males” (Leigh, 1993: 9, fns.11, 12).
Hartini’s images abound with references to the key metaphors and tropes of Asian and Pacific art and literature. While substantially reworked, as evident in contemporary filmic and metaphysical renditions, they invoke conceptual frameworks positing the interpenetration of physical states. Javanese metaphors do more than link parts of the human body to natural elements: the pores of the skin with the earth; the hair, with luxuriant vegetation and the wild growth of forests or the waves of the ocean; the spine with mountain ranges, the skull with rock formations and cave entrances, and the embryonic and uncertain with a misty haze. The human body is seen as part of the natural world. Not separate from it physically, the body is experientially joined to the cosmos. In Tantric meditative practice, the body becomes a site for the contemplation of mental states, emotions and the spiritual journey. Despite their surrealism, many of Hartini’s works urge respect for the linkages between humankind and the environment. They confront the depredations wrought by modernity. Beyond human endeavour, the precarious lodgement of Lucia’s frypans remind us that Indonesia’s chains of conical volcanos are, like many of its women at the time, mostly merely sleeping, and its oceans temporarily calm.

The Whorl, the Eddy and the Vortex

Since 1978, the whorl, the eddy and the vortex have emerged as characteristic motifs in the imagery of Lucia Hartini’s paintings where they symbolize the flow of energy and the cycles of life and events. While these forms refer primarily to Lucia’s observations of natural phenomena, they are Indic as well as European, African as well as Chinese in origin, their material embodiments being the spindle, the fulcrum and the wheel, primary tools from which civilization developed (Barber, 1994). Lucia chose the vortex as the unifying theme in our first film because it was her favourite motif. Observable everywhere in nature, the vortex represented the concepts of microcosmos and macrocosmos in a way easily understood by audiences beyond Java.

165 The same geographical configurations inform artistic expression in South China, Vietnam, Thailand, PNG and some of the Pacific Islands, particularly in depictions of sexuality and fertility (Turner and Devenport, 1996: 123). Lucia was well aware of the iconographically feminine and mystical meanings of such connections, extending their embodiments in legend and visually translating them into popular modern terms.
Omnipresent and varying widely in type and scale, the vortex as signifier is used to carry a range of meanings through which the artist projects emotions. On a small scale, the whorl may be found in the tangles of hair or the outwardly spiralling petals of the rose: on a larger scale, in the eddies of the oceans and the cloud spirals of the heavens, reflected in early works such as Pusaran di Angkasa / Whirlpool in Space (1986). Beyond these familiar spirals, the vortex appears in the formations of the wider universe, in the black holes and nebulae of astronomical observation.

Gradually, Hartini’s perceptions of an awesome nature, a fascinating subject for painters from Da Vinci onwards, take on surreal and more terrifying forms. Lucia’s whorls are increasingly depicted as huge whirlpools, the aftermath of explosions and/or floods. The artist apprehends the cosmic void expressed as a vortex in space into which energy and matter are irretrievably sucked as in Kekhwatiran / Anxiety (1994) (Ch. 5, Plate 38). Increasingly, these vortices appear malevolent rather than benign, engulfing the central field of her canvases, as in the complex paintings Luapan Emosi / Overflowing Emotion (1992) (Ch. 5, Plate 26) and Pemandangan Malam / Night View / Wax View (c.1992) (Ch. 2, Plate 6). The visual links between Hartini’s series of frypans, the vortical whirlpools of Luapan Emosi and Pemandangan Malam and her thematic concerns regarding environmental depredation and contamination are clear. As Lucia painted through the night, so peasant women and women craftworkers toiled to earn a little extra to support their families, and all were locked within a lingkaran setan ( unholy circle) in which the silvery dreams of abundance promised by development and the pleasant state induced through the first steps of kebatinan practice, seemed increasingly elusive.

By 1989, Lucia Hartini had found wide correspondences between her observation of the natural world, the perspectives of space and time informing her art and those qualities of surrealism concerning depictions of form and structure, attitude and emotion, in which abstractly perceived forces and the imaginary materialised in the world of the canvas. In Pusaran / Vortex, Lucia recalls that she first arrived at the metaphysical realisations underlying her art, intuitively, and almost by accident. Arriving unbidden from some unknown place in strange
dreams and visions or arising cathartically from deep in the subconscious, they are creatively formed and shaped, flowing through her enjoyment of the processes of painting as a meditative act.

Her growing self-awareness of these processes of inspiration and creation, her increasing mastery of energy through meditative practices, and her burgeoning skills as a painter allowed Lucia to control and guide the expressive realisation of her visions on canvas and shape her career as an artist for years to come. Hard won in their resolution, Hartini’s paintings are further discussed in the following two chapters as part of her social context although not depicting it directly. The development of her career is considered as a series of negotiations of contested sites occasioned by an interrogation of gender roles within the context of state repression.
CHAPTER 5

In my view, such women are really in a position to act as a counter-weight (to men). But so often they are regarded as competitors, as rivals, and I do not understand why this is so.
(Hartini, cited in Wisetrotomo, 1994)

In 1994, visual arts reviewer, Suwarno Wisetrotomo, asked Lucia Hartini her opinion regarding women achievers in the professions. Her reply indicates a publicly reluctant but significant shift from the view codified in the Panca Dharma Wanita, that women be the helpmate of their husbands. Although rarely expressed in the context of Indonesian gender politics in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the artist’s awareness of her situation was shared by a growing number of women. Their attitudes were underpinned by long traditions of economic autonomy and female independence based on mutual assistance found in many kampung (villages, suburban divisions) (Geertz, H., 1961; Sullivan, 1994; Bianpoen, 1994). These traditions increasingly conflicted with the “housewifization” projects modelled by government (Muchtar, 1999: 87).

Beyond “management of the household”, this chapter examines the particular pressures placed upon women artists of Lucia’s generation and earlier who became successful in their careers. These pressures are analysed from three different but related perspectives: personal conflicts at the interstices of family, custom and society; the experience and analysis of violence and repression; and the depiction of both through visual representation. This chapter discusses the problems encountered by Lucia and other women artists, postulated as a series of related contested sites, which are simultaneously personal, professional and public. The following two chapters discuss their negotiation.

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166 See Wisetrotomo’s catalogue essay “Batas Diantara Dua Sisi / The Boundary Between Two Sides” written for Hartini’s 1994 exhibition of the same name.
5.1. Identifying the Issues

Proceeding from the individual to society, this chapter traces events in the artist’s life after her separation from her first husband. It continues to examine the socialisation of women in New Order Indonesia, considering their challenges to gender relations and the roles regarded as appropriate by society and the state. Collectively referred to as *sosok perempuan* (women’s issues), these factors are presented as the source of women’s contestation of the status quo, revealing the reasons for women artists’ need to struggle. The representational treatment of *sosok perempuan* in visual art and film is compared with their dimensions in real life. As Lucia concludes, both the real and the representational were problematic.

Lucia Hartini may have been a rebel in some ways, but in others, she held views and values fitting traditional paradigms of Javanese philosophical and societal construction. Professionally, she had become used to working alongside men, with reasonable equality. Yet judging from reviews, from her comments and those of friends and colleagues contributing to this research, Lucia also wished to combine her career within the framework of marriage and family. Initially, this aspiration was not considered problematic, but for many years it became so, a consciousness reflected in her art. Marianto (2001: 226 - 227) traces the disintegration of Lucia’s marriage to the success of her 1983 solo exhibition, engaged independently of her first husband who continued to punish her independence of will and creative success until their separation in 1986. While religious difference as well as professional jealousy contributed to this personal conflict, this thesis concerns those wider emotional dimensions experienced at the interstices where women’s issues and the demands of a rigorous creative production conflicted with the repressive nature of New Order society during the second half of the New Order regime. Indonesian women were compelled to question the nature of these interstices in order to effect real change. In this lay their empowerment.

Writing retrospectively, Ariel Heryanto (1999) speaks of the psychologically gendered nature of violence during the New Order period. He analyses the pressures which set in play a cultural polarity, that of the heroic male and the stigmatised female (Heryanto, 1999: 302 - 308). This analysis extends his
earlier study of the nexus between teror as a state of anxiety or fear and Teror as state terrorism (Heryanto, 1993: 38). I examine Heryanto’s postulated dualistic social dynamic in the context of ideas addressed by Lucia Hartini in her painting, performance artist Arahmaiani in her work and in interview (2001), and by Tony Day, an Australian scholar, in Fluid Iron (2002). The argument may well reflect aspects of a particular nexus of social attitudes against which Indonesian women had always struggled, but the devastating effect of this dynamic was amplified by repression, created by the re-production of teror. As the emancipation of many women improved in a physical and material sense, the conditions in which they worked threatened to confine them in others.

The success of women like Lucia, produced from their dedication, skill and the transcendence of roles previously defined by gender, brought them close to the status of “heroic men” professionally, a subject explored by Wright (1994, 1999a) in relation to Kartika Affandi. Yet the “otherness” confirmed by this success provoked culturally gendered anxieties beyond those of teror, while contributing to its effects. Successful women risked stigmatisation when making their experience and feelings public. They had much to lose if they did not conform to the conventions of the day.

Few women artists had a constant long-term life partner as manager, unlike their male peers whose wives performed the traditional role of supporting their husbands, often managing their careers. Instead, women artists sought the necessary support from elsewhere in their family. The nature of their professional practice sometimes meant they were somewhat divorced from the traditional and developmentalist structures of their neighbourhood kampung. Ultimately, they found themselves in competition with their male peers, some of whom, together with friends and members of the artists’ families, adopted a Pygmalion-type attitude to their career aspirations. Despite their intellectual independence, many women artists acknowledged they felt more comfortable with men’s protection, because of cultural and political repression, even if this protection was indirect.167


The competitiveness did not always extend to those men who were teachers, mentors and theorists supporting women artists in their career aspirations, thereby offering them some protection.
What recourse was available to Indonesia’s women artists as a social group faced with these realities? The individual pressures of juggling family responsibilities with busy individual working lives and professional profiles requiring careful maintenance did not necessarily encourage a close bonding between women artists. Their art and working methods were often quite different, as was the nature of their family responsibilities. However, most shared the need to carefully manage financial resources. They created art within constraints of time and energy, both physical and emotional. Thematically, their work reflected increasingly astute perceptions of the social and intellectual positioning of Indonesian women. Many realised the practical advantage of appearing together in curated exhibitions. Publicly presenting a united front, they built a sympathetic support base through family members, friends, educational bodies, residencies, and connections with art professionals beyond Indonesia.

Lucia Hartini depicts the psychological dimensions of women’s struggle as the constant negotiation of a series of contested sites. In the imagery of her paintings, narrow paths wind through rocky isthmuses and outcrops in fantastical and brooding landscapes depicting the contradictory or chaotic states of a sublime nature. The points of origin and destination of these paths are defined only by the dimensions of the canvas, suggesting they may be read as narrow border zones, and metaphorically, as sites of spiritual passage.

Hartini’s emotional and encrypted response to prevalent attitudes and conditions draws on personal experience and seeks to understand causes. This chapter considers the difficulties and pleasures of the act of painting in a climate of repression and details Lucia’s mastery of the skills required to move her work into the public domain of the exhibition – the world of galleries, curators, dealers, collectors, viewers, journalists and reviewers. As with her painting, Lucia wished to perform this role well, although it brought further pressure. Her success as an artist and the requirements of her career occasionally necessitated a public profile. Her struggle in real life was to maintain her place on the shifting borderland between the inner world of home and family and the outer world of society.

Performance artist Arahmaiani expressed her gratitude towards her mentor Sanento Yuliman for his support and guided criticism when interviewed in Jakarta, June 2001.
necessitated by her career.

Finally, this chapter analyses particular effects of repression on cultural production. I reference several of Lucia’s paintings and cite the experiences of other women artists whose work, like Lucia’s, speaks of a constant engagement with the effects of violence, repression and their contingent tensions. Although these factors were rarely depicted directly in figurative mode as the subject matter of women’s art, some of Lucia’s paintings are symbolic portraits of the effects of teror and state terrorism on the female psyche, tensions heightened by the ambivalent relationship held by Javanese to violence.

Despite being historically embedded within the Javanese experience of social relationships, Hernowo, in ed. Sukandi (1999: 5 - 6) maintains that Javanese tradition had discouraged the public analysis of violence for spiritual reasons. Government regarded the exercise of violence as a necessary prerogative for a strong state. The nexus of violence with concepts of beauty, sex, obligation and power had long been a subject of myth and literary expressions (Day, 2002: 248 - 259). Combined with the effects of cultural repression and the desire to forget the events of 1965 and 1966, the realistic treatment of violence as a subject remained a difficult prospect in progressive art and film. Yet several women artists, including Lucia Hartini and Arahmaiani, attempted to examine the nature of gendered violence in their work. Lucia’s interest was provoked by personal experience and, as with the other artists mentioned, years of observation of its operation in society.

5.2. Perang Kembang (War of the Flowers), Round Two

Because this dissertation investigates the relationships between contemporary art and film in Indonesia, it is pertinent to compare the visual, behavioural and emotional representation of women in Indonesian film with their representation by visual artists. Although the requisite visual and performative language for this task already existed in both fields, I suggest that visual artists had more freedom than filmmakers in the presentation of alternative and critically engaged representations of Indonesian women.

Largely, this was because film was considered primarily as entertainment.
Serious subjects were passable, only if given a Hollywood gloss, or provided with considerable amounts of foreign investment, as in some of the documentaries of Dea Sudarman.\textsuperscript{168} Neither guaranteed their screening in Indonesia as censorship strictures applied. Socially relevant material appeared in short films produced within academies and/or funded through sponsorship, often from foreign sources. The difficulties for feature filmmakers were revealed in the work of those attempting convincing character studies featuring country girls and educated women coming to grips with the interface between work and their personal and familial relationships in a modern urban context. That they might attempt personal journeys of a spiritual nature was never depicted, although the subject of \textit{Dua Tanda Mata} (1985) concerned a woman engaged in a political quest. Instead, from 1986 onwards, it was visual artists who increasingly presented the public with the social mirror of their times.

As artists, Lucia and her peers chose to represent the emotional quandaries and societal dimension of their struggles visually, sometimes with humour, and always with an empathic humanity. Difficulty was not seen as detrimental: cultivating forbearance in adversity was regarded as part of one’s self-development, and struggle an integral part of an artist’s duty to society (Maklai, 1991). The difficulty and pain of this process was depicted less often.

As they developed an understanding of their situation, Indonesia’s contemporary women artists gave form to the intensity of their individual struggles. Using a media focus different to that of film stars and singers, they helped provide Indonesian women with a voice against the abuse of power by the patriarchies of custom and religion. Their solidarity of effort is noted in early \textit{Nuansa Indonesia} exhibitions from the mid-1980s, and those of the Jakarta-based Group of Nine, which showcased the work of Indonesia’s established and emerging women artists. Among the exhibitors in these shows were Kartika Affandi, Farida Srihadi, Hildawati Soemantri, Dolorosa Sinaga, Marida Nasution,

\textsuperscript{168} Dea Sudarman was the Indonesian director on the European/Indonesian documentary productions \textit{The Asmat}, (1982) and \textit{The Korowoi} (1986). She won the Golden Marzocco Prize at the Festivale dei Populi in Florence, worked with several foreign directors and in 1993, sat on the jury for the Joris Ivens Award at the prestigious International Documentary Film Academy in the Netherlands. She then concentrated on her NGO, Yayasan Sejati, created to assist Irianese tribespeople displaced by the Freeport mining venture and now deals in art from Irian.
Iriantine Karnaya, Astari Rasjid and Lucia Hartini.

Reviews of these exhibitions by Indonesian critics and theorists Jim Supangkat and Sanento Yuliman revolved around questions like “Is there a male and female art?” Their enquiries were premised on interrogations of gender-based divisions between men’s and women’s work in Indonesia (Yuliman, “Nuansa Putri VS Kuasa Lelaki” Tempo, 31-10-1987). These divisions were postulated in terms of traditional customary practice, reinforced by Islam, and by the state through the Family Welfare Movement (PKK). Wright (1994) makes much of such distinctions in her interpretations of Indonesian art of the mid-1980s to the early 1990s.

However, several women artists either ignored or deliberately challenged gender-based divisions and the idea that they should abandon the mainstream of painting and sculpture and make “female” art.169 Very little seems to have been written about the artists’ reconfiguration of such distinctions, but in a spirit of quiet revolt, they resolutely set a feminine yet rigorously conceptual stamp on their work. Lucia’s series of explosions in a frypan and wavy seas are one example; Dolorosa Sinaga’s series of cast bronze waves resembling billowing textiles are another. Both remained firmly in the mainstream, exhibiting with their male peers and senior artists. In 1987, prior to the Nuansa Indonesia show, Lucia Hartini exhibited in the invitational Biennale DKJ Seni Lukis Indonesia in July of the same year, together with with her socially aware male peers from the original “Surealis Yogya” under Dede Eri Supria’s banner Arus Baru and Indonesia’s most prominent senior, and mostly male, painters. Sanento Yuliman (“Biennale Mini”, Tempo, 25-7-1987), reviewed Lucia’s contribution to the July Biennale, then followed it with a review of the Arus Baru profile showing at

169 Superficial generalisations on the topic of gender-based divisions of labour require closer scrutiny. Many Westerners, myself included, remember being shocked by the sight of Balinese women road workers carrying large piles of road fill on their heads, cleaning up rubbish and other heavy-duty manual jobs. Village women in Indonesia, like women in western countries, have turned their hands to many tasks where necessary. Arguably, it was the bourgeoisification of attitudes accompanying development, urbanisation and the spread of education for women which gave renewed life to priyayi ideas of suitable “work for women” in the 1980s and early 1990s. Women still perform “men’s jobs”, like tyre-repairs and mechanics in today’s rural Indonesia, although in traditional areas of craft production, agricultural work, and food provision, tasks might also be divided according to gender.
year’s end in Edwin’s Gallery, Jakarta (Yuliman, “Mistik Atau Futuristik”, Tempo, 5-12-1987). In these reviews, Lucia’s work is reviewed as is, formally and favourably, without special reference to her gender.

These concerted showings and reviews fly in the face of attempts made to internationally marginalise the “Surealis Yogya” and Arus Baru artists, based on the European perception that their work was not truly Surrealist. It was tainted with the same mix of “New Age” ideas which excluded Meta-realist art from the official canon of European avant-garde art of the time (Spanjaard, 2003: 161 - 165). Maklai and Supangkat have both conversationally suggested that linking the Indonesian “Surealis” and Arus Baru artists with non-official art cost them an exhibition in the Netherlands. Dutch curators claimed that Dede Eri Supria was the only true Surrealist among the Indonesians because only he disrupted and distorted the picture plane, amusing Dede Eri who considered himself a Hyper-realist.170 He believed they lost the exhibition because someone thought some of his recent works implied criticism of Dutch oil interests in Indonesia (Supangkat and Zaelani, 1997)! Other informants (names withheld) claimed that this was another example of official New Order cultural duplicity. Scaling the peaks of prominence internationally on their merits as artists was already difficult enough for the Indonesian avant-garde, regardless of gender.

*Contextualizing work and women*

Published in 1994, when middle-class urban values and structures were already widely challenged by social and attitudinal change, Norma Sullivan’s detailed sociological study of the complexities involved in gender relations in urban Java provides specifically Yogyakartan examples of these divisions (1994: 83 - 125). Her study was located in Sitiwaru kampung where many women worked in the tourist industry, managing hotels, working as maids, shop assistants, prostitutes, and as cooks for restaurants and stalls. They catered to their

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170 One may conjecture about the reasons behind the European position which Maklai (1996) suggests led to the failure of attempts to show major Indonesian “Surealis” work in the Netherlands, and the spirited domestic response in its favour in Jakarta. It is possible that a failure of nerve at government level was compensated for at home among the community of artists, art lovers, patrons, critics, educators and scholars who maintained their progressive domestic and internationalist position regardless.
clients’ needs, invented and sought out new products, and worked to order.\textsuperscript{171}

For Indonesian women artists, the dynamics of seeking a living from the creation of artworks in a situation lacking a system of state-sponsored arts funding and a structure of welfare in times of need is analogous in practice.\textsuperscript{172} Artists had to seek sponsorships, find patrons, seek collectors through sales in galleries, run small businesses as sidelines and depend on their families when ill or in straightened circumstances. They had to manage. Thus Sullivan’s observations on gender and work also contextualise the source of tensions affecting the work and lives of women artists seeking to reflect their daily experiences beyond previously drawn cultural, and then societal, frames of reference.

The pursuit of their careers involved Indonesian women in diverse negotiations to do with gender and power. Their relationships within their families, among their peers, with men and within the ambit of their particular professions cannot be examined in isolation from the rest of society nor from the gender-making operations of the Indonesian state (Leigh, 2000: 6 - 7). While these conflicts are portrayed as the dynamic driving achievement, both Lucia and the installation and performance artist Arahmaiani symbolised their perceptions of professional practice as a game of chess. Women’s art reflected a growing awareness of their particular personal situations, rather than a collective consideration. Initially, they worked from the realisation that, in their case, expressing the personal was indeed political, increasingly depicting private perceptions of their conditions and relationships publicly.

Cuban Gilberto Perez (1998: 19 - 20) disputes those contemporary European post-modern theories which imply that making art from the standpoints of personal change and social commitment is a bad thing. He argues these views proceed from “the assumption that there is something fundamentally wrong with film, wrong across the board with the practice and enjoyment of art” when art is

\textsuperscript{171} Trinh also discusses these contradictions in the lives of “women of colour” in \textit{Framer Framed} (1992: 133) examining their desires for a more emancipated life.

\textsuperscript{172} Practically speaking, the careers of women artists entailed many of the above-listed “jobs”. In \textit{Perbatasan / Boundaries}, Lucia expresses the despair she came to feel at the gulf between the intellectual and spiritual realms she translates onto canvas and particular aspects of the real-world implications of her vocation. Yet, as with the performance artist, Arahmaiani, both say they met many fascinating people through their art, which widened their horizons.
seen as “the purveyor of illusion, handmaiden of the patriarchy and the bourgeoisie, instrument of the ruling order.” They omit the importance of this struggle for the creation of a visual and verbal language and a pro-actively engaged lifestyle providing conceptual shape and generating meaning from the contradictions, the confusion and stress caused by difficult personal situations. Cixous, cited in Conley (1992), and Tsing (1993) maintain that this struggle is vital for the empowerment of women. The completed coolness of Lucia’s canvases might reference but usually belie her personal torment, a quality noted by Wright, (2000: 26) and Ika Wartika (2001), in interview for Perbatasan / Boundaries. This studied aloofness corresponds with Trinh’s (1992: 119) attitude towards her filmmaking. Both women use creative media “to expose the social self (and selves) which necessarily mediate(s) the making as well as the viewing of the” painting / film. Lucia believed that efforts made as an individual and the emotional witness borne in her paintings would result in societal improvement.

5.3. Contested Stereotypes, Alternative Representations

For many years after her separation in 1986, Lucia Hartini resisted divorce. Like many women in relationships marked by violence, Lucia continued to love her estranged husband, hoping that her forgiving and noble behaviour would eventually dissolve the problems between them and that he would change. She wanted him to protect their children’s interests, and longed for assistance with her own. Past hurts regardless and the occasions when Arifin’s refusals to sign papers allowing her to leave the country for exhibitions abroad, Lucia continued to paint and also to work towards a desired reconciliation. Initially, close friends accepted her situation, offering refuge and support. But Lucia feared that being completely alone would heighten her exposure to the many difficulties of daily existence in a time of increasing repression, she vacillated and her friends gradually drifted away. Severely hurt, a distant relationship with


Indonesian popular culture of this time was full of stories regarding the unhappy fate of women who had been deserted or who had fallen from grace. The subject of gossip, their cases were also
minimal contact seemed better than starting out again. Recent studies of family violence in Indonesia indicate that abused wives regard their status as somehow “less than that of a divorcee”, a view commonly shared by others outside the family concerned (Setiadi, 2002). Abused wives’ feelings of humiliation are intense, and are used to justify their social isolation (Ciciek, 1999: 32 - 39).

Initially, Lucia felt she had failed in marriage, and that her refusals and inadequacies were the cause of the violence inflicted by her husband. When filming *Pusaran / Vortex* in 1992, she explained that her disagreements with Arifin also involved art. Lucia favoured working slowly and with cultural and aesthetic integrity. She disapproved of Arifin’s uncritical fascination with Western ideas. His creative methods were the achievement of peace after war; of a state of calm after an outburst of extreme emotion; and of reunion after absence. Once resident in Bali, he expressed his gestalt in the black and white schemata of his painting. Influenced by Balinese drawing traditions as well as black and white photography, he depicted his life as a prison of the body and emotions. (Plate 24).

Public arguments around such polarities are embedded in the history of the development of the contemporary arts in Indonesia, as they were within the couple’s relationship, making smooth sailing almost impossible. In 1997, Lucia sponsored Arifin’s return to Yogyakarta for an exhibition of his paintings at the Bentara Budaya. The exhibition was seen by many as the return of a prodigal son eager to make amends. Arifin adopted a “Surealis” style similar to Lucia’s in its use of the human figure in dramatic biographical enactment. However, the described in newspapers, in the plots and characters of novels and short stories and television, where plotlines manipulated them into servitude, prostitution and dubious relationships. Women whose marriages were failing felt they had much to lose in a time of increasing bourgeoisification. The effect of such stories was to arouse popular sympathies and compassion for lower-class women, for whom such experiences were all too real. Immediately prior to Reformasi, the eradication of violence towards women became a campaign in the arts. Post-Reformasi, family violence and violence towards women has emerged as a research subject for Indonesian scholars (Setiadi, 2002), and the subject of small practical handbooks providing guidance for change (Ciciek, 1999). But even in 2003, contemporary scholars attempting to research violence in Indonesia still encountered difficulties obtaining personal information from victims. Indonesian researchers have used focus groups to assist this difficulty, but changing public consciousness is slow. Family violence is still seen as either shameful or justifiable. For example, the 2002 Jakarta International Film Festival featured only one film adopting a pro-active stance against domestic violence, an American production. The following year, audiences were left to sympathise with the beaten woman in the Iranian film *The Chalk Circle*.

175 Personal communication. Lucia Hartini, Yogyakarta, August 1992; Nia Fliam, Yogyakarta, August 1992, and as written for the exhibition catalogue *Confess and Conceal* (Fliam1991: 30).
couple’s final attempt at reconciliation failed (Marianto, 1997).

In his catalogue essay for Arifin’s exhibition, Marianto (1997) writes that no single, straight pillar appears to connect Arifin with the divine, a state he assumes to be the source of his angst, which also contributes to Lucia’s. The threatened severance of this desired cosmological connection is dramatically depicted in Marselli Sumarno’s Neo-realist feature film, Sri (1999). The plot turns on Sri’s anguish at the conflicts she must face between love of dance, her dying husband, his rival and her wifely duties and obligations to the family batik business and their social standing. Clinging to the pillar of the pendopo (pavilion),

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176 The catalogue essays for Arifin’s 1997 exhibition detail the rationale for this exhibition from Arifin’s expressed point of view. Writers were Hendro Wiyanto, Gendut Riyanto and M. Dwi Marianto, who found the existentialism expressed in Arifin’s paintings alien to his own Javanese and Christian values.
Sri sinks slowly to the ground, tears indistinguishable from the rain on her face. Her pose and the composition of this filmic image echo Lucia’s painting *Permohonan Hijau* (1986) (Ch. 4, Plate 23), in which the female protagonist has no pillar of support other than the turquoise garment shrouding her form.

Lucia insisted that she wished to show this period of her life in *Perbatasan / Boundaries*, but with camera rolling, words failed her. Prior to filming, she confided that she had often felt her former husband had treated her like a “simple girl from the village”, but behaved like a child. Given the pressures of existence in their tiny house in the crowded *kampung* and Arifin’s interests elsewhere, Lucia was reminded of those many occasions when her alleged “simplicity” had been scorned and publicly constructed as stupidity provoking violence. Off camera, Lucia confided she could no longer reconcile the values of her upbringing, the love she still felt for her husband, her desire to retain him as her partner in life and father of her children, with his constant abuse. Her spiritual values as well as her modernity and emancipist views were offended. Humility and submission may assist spiritual growth, but there are vast differences between a gendered and financially pressured victimhood, a simple life consistent with environmental harmony, and the path of true spiritual practice. In *Perbatasan / Boundaries*, Lucia attributes her feelings of confusion, her “stupidity”, only to her psychological state, prior to spiritual revelation. Was Lucia’s “simplicity” subconsciously an act of resistance?

**Significant omissions**

Lucia’s confusion, her disapproval of her husband’s fascination with the West, and her mounting refusal to tolerate illtreatment also appear in the contradictory and contrary representations of women in cultural expressions of the period. Representational tropes like “beautiful but simple girl from the village” found favour again in the 1980s and 1990s in a rapidly urbanising society with a growing middle-class, almost for nostalgic reasons. They were part of the repertoire of stock characterisations in *wayang wong* (popular theatre), film, ...
sinetron (television soapies), and radio variety shows with diluted interactive political comment. As noted by writers in conversation with women activists in Jakarta, how one responded to such humour was the real question (Jurnal Perempuan, 1999; Oey-Gardiner and Bianpoen, 2000; Arahmaiani, 2001).

Another stereotype popular in Indonesian films of the period was that of the whiny, finicky, bitchy, petulant, ‘revealing’ and stupid female, who provides the title of Sita Aripurnami’s essay from 1994, reprinted as Chapter 3, of Oey-Gardiner and Bianpoen’s anthology, Indonesian Women, The Journey Continues (2000: 51 - 58). Significantly, several Indonesian film producers and directors chose to use these stereotypes as devices through which to examine conflicts in values and role inscriptions created by urbanisation and the changing times. Yet they were unable to pursue these subjects and characters too far, lest their films not survive the censor’s eye or fail at the box office.

Salim Said (1991) and Aripurnami (2000), argue that producers and audience alike were unaccustomed to embrace filmmaking as an opportunity to engage and develop an emotionally credible Indonesian cinema. Rare were the feature films whose plots and direction skilfully unlocked the dramatic potential of the diverse narratives of people caught in contemporary processes of development, including the pressures placed on roles and relationships. Most documentaries on such subjects were educative and mildly propagandist because they were government funded. Their perspectives related to implementation of the desired ministerial objectives of successive Five Year Plans. Excluding Langitku, Rumahku / My Sky, My Home (1991), a play like W.S. Rendra’s Perjuangan Suku Naga / Struggle of the Naga Tribe (1979) and the scenario depicted in Semsar Siahaan’s painting Olympia, Identity with Mother and Child (1986), had few equivalents in films of the late 1980s, and early 1990s. Instead, Indonesia’s contemporary visual artists successfully explored this important narrative, social

178 In the award-winning children’s film, Langitku, Rumahku / My Sky, My Home, (1991), (colloquially, The Sky is my Home), director Slamet Rahardjo tells the story of two boys from Jakarta who travel across Java. One is from a privileged background, the other is poor and becomes separated from his parents when the shanty settlement in which he lives is “cleaned up” by the police. The boys go in search of his family. The elder sister of the rich boy plays her role as a perfect example of the whiny and petulant female described by Aripurnami (2000). Her character contrasts markedly with the characters of the poor women who appear briefly in the film.
and emotional terrain.

Several feature films exploring the subject of revolt or presenting different perspectives on long-standing conventions had emerged a decade earlier, as had Sudarman’s documentary, *The Asmat* (1981 and also 1982) with its sympathetic portrayals of the life of tribal Irianese women. Some of these films tangentially examined issues of ethnicity and place within tales of historical events and heroic exploits against the Dutch during the colonial period. Others, like *Perkawinan / The Marriage* (1974), about Indonesians marrying foreigners and choosing to live in Indonesia, addressed contemporary topics seen as increasingly relevant although often viewed negatively.179

The film *Roro Mendut* (1982), directed by Russian-trained Ami Priyono, is the story of a feisty and insubordinate woman from the Pasisir, captured by an aging aristocratic Central Javanese warlord. She refuses his advances, maintaining her independence by selling cigarettes which men watch her smoke behind a screen in the market.180 Mendut elopes with her lover, the handsome Pronocitro, a prince-like villager who has been adopted into the court for services rendered and because his skill as a fighter is outstanding. Confronting the aristocrat and his troops on the shores of the Southern Ocean, Roro Mendut stabs herself after Pronocitro’s death in the ensuing fight, defiant until the end.

Barbara Hatley’s examination of the Roro Mendut story considers the difference between its representation in *Kethoprak* drama highlighting authority relations, and the film *Roro Mendut*, which deals with issues of sexuality and gender (1987: 12 - 24). Romo Mangunwijaya developed the film script for *Roro Mendut* from his novel, based on various folk versions of the tale. He intended that Mendut be represented as a strong autonomous character, “the ideal of the modern Indonesian woman”. He disliked director Priyono’s use of the story’s

179 The feature film, *Perkawinan* (1974), starring Indonesian actor Miriam Berlina as a young Italian woman who marries into a close-knit Indonesian family after meeting her student husband abroad was the most adventurous and realistic film exploring this topic. The performance won Berlina several awards. Ten years elapsed between this film and *Roro Mendut*.

180 When interviewed by FX Mulyadi for *Kompas* in January 2002 for her “Spirit of Life” exhibition at the Bentara Budaya, Jakarta, Lucia confesses that she still smokes cigarettes! By then, in a match precipitated by the dynamic rupture of *Reformasi*, she had married Operasi, her Pronocitro.
traditional ending, in which Mendut dies defending her lover, placing herself between the aristocrat and Pronocitro. Wishing to make strong comments on contemporary situations through displacement, Mangunwijaya remained critical of the director’s depiction of the relationship between Mendut and Pronocitro (Hatley, 1987: 21), despite the film’s dramatic and cinematographic merit. He preferred his own adaptation in which the representational emphasis was very different.

*Roro Mendut* is an example of the difficulties faced in developing credible alternative visual and dramatic representations of Indonesian women, even when such representations are historically situated. While popular solutions may make powerful statements in relation to the transcendence of gender roles and revolt against formalised authority, they often neglect questions of the power relationships at play. Mangunwijaya’s preferred version of *Roro Mendut* suggests the two are not necessarily synonymous. He wished to use a female “misfit” to engage the argument of justifiable rebellion.181

Aripurnami analyses one more evident and equally unsatisfactory stereotype; that of the woman who succeeds professionally, but whose private life is a failure. Citing Myra Diarsi’s remarks in 1998 that “The women who are acceptable in Indonesian films are those who marry and are subservient to men,” Aripurnami (1994, 2000: 51 - 58) considers the persistence of this generalised and propagandist representation of the pressures faced by many Indonesian women. Aripurnami selects the dramatic feature films *Karmila, Zaman Edan, Suami, Selamat Tinggal Jeannette* and *Perempuan di Persimpangan Jalan*, as examples where producers and directors have sought to address the changing realities of women’s lives through fictional representations situated in contemporary times. In

181 Following the thread of relationships animated by conflicts created through both non-conformity to gender role expectations and the questioning of power relationships outside the conference of formal authority, the comparison between *Roro Mendut* and the later Hollywood film, *Thelma and Louise* (1991) is of interest. In my “disorderly reading”, Gena Davis plays Mendut and Susan Sarandon Pronocitro. In Ridley Scott’s version, both die together, choosing a suicidal leap into the abyss and certain death in the domain of nature, rather than at the hands of men, thus rejecting the state as they see it constituted. A similar option is available in *Roro Mendut*: the runaway pair could walk into the sea and surrender their lives to the power of Alam, but this option is not engaged. Ironically, Scott’s solution comes closer to fulfilling Mangunwijaya’s desired ending.
her opinion, none of them successfully develop the gender-based issues raised.

Quoting an unidentified director in 1994, Aripurnami agrees that the “lack of media through which filmmakers can reflect on and capture social phenomena” made the task of directors more difficult.\(^{182}\) Hence few changes were evident in either plot lines or the representational depiction of women. In Indonesian film, portrayals of independent women were almost invariably portrayals of those going against “Indonesian reality” (Aripurnami, 2000: 58 - 60). These women were often “punished” by suffering disasters in their family lives, rather than the alternative models proffered by the productive family lives of some of the women “heroes” ritually adulated in Indonesian schools.

Prior to 1990, Aripurnami concedes that some films were notable exceptions, “showing strong women who know what they want”. Of films made in the 1990s, she laments that the freedom with which women’s bodies were now exposed was rarely matched by intelligence of plot or characterisation. These characters seemed capable only of crying, excessive talking, stupidity and heavy erotic moaning (Aripurnami, 2000: 54).\(^{183}\) Films which used adventurous approaches examining women’s changing situation in society, through plots, narratives and characters possessing depth and richness were few, and had a difficult time gaining official and/or popular approval, regardless of the producers’ gender. Quoting another unnamed worker in the Indonesian film industry, Aripurnami continues:

> In the current film industry, the important thing is to attract viewers. So add sex and it will sell. Also, put up racy posters, even if the actual film may not be so racy ….
> (Unnamed source, Aripurnami, 2000: 61)

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\(^{182}\) Garin Nugroho (1994, 1999) has made similar comments, in relation to censorship laws.

\(^{183}\) Graphic sex scenes in Indonesian films were forbidden by the LSF, the Film Censorship Board.
contributions of Kartika Affandi, Lucia Hartini, Astari Rasjid, Arahmaiani and Murni so outstanding. In Perbatasan / Boundaries, Lucia remarks that her “Surealisme” was at its peak when she was most distressed - “crazy, that is”. In Perbatasan / Boundaries, Lucia’s statement is echoed by a shadowed image of Kolossal (1993), a painting depicting a floating statuesque woman whose head is shrouded by clouds. While this woman is paradoxically mountainous, there is no visible mirror for her concealed thoughts. Starkly dressed, Lucia then reveals her thoughts and emotions in greater detail as her paintings appear behind her.

That Indonesia’s contemporary women artists must be solid, like a mountain or marble statue, and fight to survive as creative producers was undeniable. Even as recently as 1998, the police in Bali ordered that Murni’s canvases of female reality (including masturbation and the less glamorous aspects of female sexuality such as those experienced at the Family Planning Clinic) be removed from exhibition (Wright, 1998: 6 - 12). Yet Mokoh’s paintings of male homosexuality have not been contested on these grounds. Similarly Dea Sudarman’s beautifully filmed and ethnographically explicit documentaries showing the marriage rituals of Irianese women were never screened publicly in Indonesia. Her women were black, naked, and engaged in a polygamous ritual, happily in charge of their own sexual agency.

Constructing the experientially real

Lucia and her peers were aware of the persistence and power of these “sexy” but flawed representations, particularly in the popular imagination. How were they to respond? In the practical domain, solutions to interstitial problems between self and society were achieved through the conceptualisation and practice of art as professional work transcending therapeutic self-expression and/or divertissement. The women artists of my sample were far too busy to conform to the newer models of middle-class behaviour promoted in the popular vernacular and as part of the national culture. These expectations and stereotypical representations demeaned their difficulties, denied the richness of their daily reality and failed to adequately portray the artists’ very real and practical achievements in the outer world beyond the domain of home and family. For
instance, Kartika raised five children and maintained the art museum of her father, Affandi’s, paintings, before devoting herself more intensively to her own, exhibiting widely and travelling in conjunction with her work.184

**Peran ganda (dual roles)**

Millions of women of all ethnicities and classes in Indonesian society confronted scenarios similar to those conjured by the protagonists in Hartini’s canvases of 1986 – 1994, and by an emotional Lucia in *Perbatasan / Boundaries*.185 These were responsibility for children, with or without a husband’s presence, responsibility for providing food on the table, education, health and wellbeing, and sometimes the need to travel to generate income (Leigh, 2000: 13 - 14). Women artists were also supposed to conform to the behavioural models encoded in the *Panca Dharma Wanita*, yet simultaneously they sustained unusual working lives. They worked at home until exhibition time: once they and their work entered the public domain, both became the object of comment in the outside world, forsaking anonymity. Women artists were often presented as “role models”, particularly those whose work was exhibited overseas, yet they did not fit easily into the usual models of *peran ganda* expected of working women in developing Indonesia.

Aripurnami maintains that *peran ganda* effectively drew “the line between men’s and women’s spaces”, between the outside worlds of action and inside worlds of domesticity and contemplation. The official justification for this policy was presented in moral terms, based on the cross-platform religious injunction to balance the realms of *lahir* (physical maintenance and the negotiation of the outer world of society) and *batin* (the inner world of spiritual awareness and its development). During the New Order, culture and religion, as well as political repression, served to reinforce *peran ganda*, individually regulated from within,

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184 Kartika expresses the measure of exasperation with the climate in which she worked in the canvas, *My Head Split Open* (1995), in which she queries her sanity in continuing her career. She had the head of an ox split open, the better to examine and paint its brain, which she transposes as her own (Wright, 2000: 17).

185 My arguments do not deny the success of New Order development agendas in improving the provision of health services and basic education, establishing these services as agents of profound social change, but nevertheless the factors discussed all impacted heavily on people’s lives.
“confirming the separation between men and women while making the understanding of women’s dual role even more actual” (Aripurnami, 1994: 59).

What happened to those professional women whose lives were supposed to be models for development, but who lacked husbands able to fulfil the familial outward role in the division of duties prescribed by the New Order state? Single professional women must espouse the rhetoric of state policy while effectively performing its opposite. After years of physical and financial separation from her husband, and despite her growing success, this arena held particular terrors for Lucia. It was impossible for her life to conform to the policy model because she was effectively mother and father, performing the professional, breadwinning, managerial and public roles of both. It was important to maintain her professional profile, a task which she and her female peers frequently described as “like playing a game of chess”, yet Lucia felt despised for her lack. Despite her creative mastery of visual expression, she regarded herself as awkward in public and found it hard to maintain confidence in her dealings with the outer world. In her catalogue essay for Confess and Conceal, Nia Fliam (1990: 30) includes a short apologia for the artist, describing the emotional upheaval occasioned by the failure of her marriage. Psychologically stressed and emotionally in turmoil, Lucia attempted to balance the pressures of both worlds and maintain an independent footing in her life and career. (Plate 25).

**Borderlands - a discourse of perilous space**

Beyond the practical realm of the everyday with its many and diffuse pressures, and the climate of repression in which she lived and worked, the key to Lucia Hartini’s artistic survival lay in her willpower as much as her command of the language of visual expression. Between 1989 and 1994, Hartini’s ouevre

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186 Success in achieving a harmony of these roles during the New Order was signified by a degree of curvaceous plumpness, emphasized by wearing a decorative and tightly swathed kain, lacy kebaya and selendang. Hair was arranged in an elaborate chignon (sanggul), the style of which symbolised the relationship of the wearer to a particular man in her life. As a mark of the profession which set her apart from the Wanita Agung, or wives of important men, Lucia always dressed simply but smartly in a casually modern style at her openings. Significantly, she usually wore her long hair down. Styles of women’s dress both at work and formally have become far freer in the post-New Order period. President Megawati’s wardrobe is an example, as is her hair.

187 Personal communication. Lucia Hartini, Yogyakarta, August 1999.
includes many paintings in which the images depicted seem to extend far beyond the frame of the canvas. *Dalam Pengawasan / Under Surveillance* (1989), and *Batas Antara Dua Sisi / The Boundary Between Two Sides* (1992), are two such examples\(^\text{188}\) (Plates 10 and 37).

Plate 25. Still from *Perbatasan / Boundaries* (2002), showing Lucia recounting her story of psychological pressure and distress, later described as her “trial” as the painting *Main Catur / Playing Chess* (c. 1994) takes the screen.

\(^{188}\) In this painting, the “eyes in the sky” are benign, representing Lucia’s feeling that, as children, she and her siblings were watched over by their ancestors, depicted in terms of natural phenomena. However, in later works, the objects of surveillance are related to the fear generated by the spectre of *teror* and their depiction is very different.
Composed in a spirit of non-closure, these works display the artist’s obvious pleasure in the act of painting, an aspect of the female *jouissance* described in the writings of Cixous and Irigaray. Once begun, Lucia lost herself in the rhythmical application of painted detail extended by repetition, synchronous with both the “automatism” of surrealist practice and the decorative elaboration popular in Javanese traditional arts, music and literature. Yet the state of creative ferment preceding the *jouissance* of painting can also be an uneasy and difficult one, particularly if the subject matter is fraught or revelatory. In their texts about women and writing, accounts of a similar discomfort can be found in Cixous’ essay, “Coming to Writing”, cited in Conley (1992: 65), and in Anzaldua’s book, *Borderlands* (1999: 91 - 97). Hartini’s frequent use of the expressions *kekhwatiran* (anxiety or objectless fear) and *rasa sakit*, meaning to feel sickened as well as physically ill, attempt to explain both this experience and a wider sense of concern that somehow, things in general are no longer harmonious. They are “not right” in some large and profound way.

The expansive scale and heightened colour of Lucia’s images contrasts with much that was constrained and difficult in her life. Beset with contradictions between emotion and a search for meaning, the anxieties accompanying their creation are reflected in a series of works depicting enclosed whirlpools perched in space, the most important being *Pemandangan Malam / Night View / Wax View* (c.1992) (Plate 6) and the biomorphic *Luapan Emosi / Overflowing Emotion* (1992) (Plate 26). When filming *Pusaran / Vortex* in 1992, Lucia explained that these feelings assailed her each time she set to work. In an interview with Wisetrotomo in 1994, she stresses she often felt sickened by her thinking and its expression in her art. Initially misunderstanding the nature of this disquiet, I sought deeper reasons for these reactions.

Lucia must fulfil the demands of her profession without neglecting the management of domestic matters, for this would reflect badly on her situation as a modern, middle-class, tertiary-educated Indonesian *ibu*. Noted by community gossips, her peers and her absent husband, this pressure provoked a particular *teror* among the fears already present. Lucia loved her children, and wanted the best for them, but she must find a way to manage the fascinations and disjunctive conflicts of being a “Surealis” artist and a single mother. The combination of Lucia’s personal emotional problems with her working process resulted in a mindfulness towards the state of the world, experienced as disquiet.\(^{189}\) She could not stop working even if ill and exhausted. Beyond economic imperatives, her approach to the process of creativity and painting had become the site for the resolution of unhappiness.

In the natural, societal and psychological readings of *Pemandangan Malam / Night View / Wax View* (c.1992) (Ch. 2, Plate 6), the boundary zone represents the real world in which nature has become a despoiled and barren landscape, a sharp contrast with the futuristic silvery planetscape beyond. Besides speaking of the creative process, this image expresses the contrary pressures impinging upon Lucia Hartini as mother, artist and conjurer in the public domain. The artist must control the energies of creation and destruction. To live, she must

\(^{189}\) Personal communication. Lucia Hartini, Yogyakarta, August 1992.
manage these forces well and profitably, negotiating both inner and outer worlds from her position on the spiky border, depicted as a wasteland. In the realm of society, these reefs as rims, as borderlands, are sites of conflict and pain, sharp as a circlet of tension surrounding the skull. Whether this borderland is comprised of rock or the strange peaked forms created by wax as it successively heats and congeals, the message is the same. One fights to find a secure footing here as the borderland shifts and fluctuates, narrows and widens. In a developing economy, the ever-present threat to survival is the swirling displacement represented by the liquid trapped within the rim of what appears to be a mine. Similarly, the idealised world beyond these reefs may not be as calm and silvery as imagined or desired. Lucia uses a range of cool metallic colours to suggest that the all-important linkages between realms are endangered. She intimates that personal and societal relationships with the cosmos have changed because nature itself is poisoned. This important and revealing canvas represents the end of innocence, and the acceptance for the time being of a necessarily difficult path.

The perceptual and emotional spaces inhabited by Lucia Hartini as artist and woman in New Order Indonesia so powerfully portrayed in Pemandangan Malam and Luapan Emosi echo Anzaldúa’s (1987: Preface) description of a creativity born of a dual perspective embodying a “consciousness of the Borderlands”. Anzaldúa defines borderlands as places of strange ferment and reconfigured nature, where many variables are inescapably thrown together, prompting the resolution of their resultant confusions by working creatively and empathetically with this consciousness.190

In both these canvases, Lucia presents viewers with the psychological portrait of a society and an era from a female perspective, that of a woman inhabiting a precarious resting place on the border of inner and outer worlds. Her perspective is also a dual one, reminiscent of that described by Anzaldúa. While the rhetoric of state ideology and religious doctrines suggested that tradition had provided safe spaces for Indonesian women, many now regarded these spaces as

190 Anzaldúa’s work draws self-reflexively on the experience of Chicano life on the border between Mexico and the USA. Her creative and poetic texts analyse the intersections of Mexican ethnicity and cultural traditions, gender and sexuality with American culture and capitalist economic structures.
illusory. Their enculturation and experience over the centuries had proved otherwise (Cribb, 1990: 10; Day, 2002: 243, 246 - 249).

In the real world, as opposed to the foreboding beauty of the worlds beyond the helical or suspended vortices and their rims, any sense of complacency was threatened by the consequences of the struggle for personal self-improvement within the wider agendas of national development, where improvement was also desired. Like millions of Indonesian women, Lucia realised she must continue the quest for a secure position within these ever-changing contested sites, an anxious and sometimes terrifying prospect (Heryanto, 1993: 19, 38; Supangkat, 1997; Sen, 1999). By 1992, when she painted works like *Luapan Emosi*, Lucia regarded herself as an even stranger hybrid of enculturation, rebellion and intimate personal experience which now included psychological disturbance and terrifying mystical insights. In *Perbatasan / Boundaries*, she describes herself in this state as *makhluk*, a strange and even monstrous creature. Fearing the consequences of her thoughts, Lucia found it ever more difficult to continue painting.

While recognising the precariousness of their situation, Indonesian women optimistically found strength from within their own cultural-intellectual base as well as in ideas and connections from elsewhere. But without moral and critical support, women were rendered constantly vulnerable to personal fear in the face of social pressures. Their resolve evaporated, replaced by a sense of powerlessness; depression threatened. Although Lucia states that her “Surealisme” truly flowered when she was crazy, she did not stop painting, watching her actions and analysing her mental states as though from afar.191

Based on our conversations over the years, I sensed that the conflation of possible interpretations and extrapolated meanings within her art was also a source of increasing disquiet to Lucia herself. Her reversionings of patriarchal traditional and religious canons, and most certainly, her many visual expressions of sympathy in support of women, seem more than the product of indulgence in the surrealist dream with its irrational ramblings and non-conformist ‘takes’ on

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191 Personal communication. Lucia Hartini, Yogyakarta, August 1999.
society. Lucia became afraid of the messages revealed in her work. Socially isolated, there were few people in whom she could confide or with whom she could discuss her visions, intellectually and aesthetically. In a climate of repression, within a relationship patterned by violence, she realised that she too had become vulnerable – despite the reality of Indonesia’s “Art Boom”. Yet she, like many artists and especially the “Surealis” and Arus Baru, profited and were increasingly acclaimed at home and abroad.

5.4. t/Teror (t/Terror) and the Manipulation of Desire

From the late 1980s and well into the 1990s, the Indonesian “Art Boom” was at its peak. Economic growth and an increasingly educated public had created a demand for the work of contemporary artists, dramatists, musicians and poets. Some, like poet and playwright Rendra, were very popular and frequently mentioned in the press. By the mid-1990s, a younger group including the poet Emha Naimun Najib were also blazing controversial careers. Progress for visual artists was steadier, but no less difficult. Praised for their innovation and expressiveness, and rewarded financially, cultural creators continued to experiment, seeking to preserve the dynamic of their art. Some artists practiced self-censorship; others, maintaining the integrity of their social views, made a calculated estimate of how far outright criticism could proceed, before retaliation was likely, proceeding cautiously in order to survive in a restricted public domain.

Yet pervasive anxiety, even fear, was a palpable factor in the lives of many Indonesians able to remember the events of 1965 - 66, and teror was a frequent subject of conversation during this period. In May 1998, artist Dadang Christanto described the students who became the vanguard of Reformasi during 1998 and 1999, taking to the streets, confronting tanks and invading the DPR, as

192 Among a wide range of poems, novels and essays, Emha was well known in Yogyakarta for a “surealis” poem about a non-existent god (Najib, 1976, 1978; Heryanto, 1993). By the late 1980s and early 1990s, popular music (Iwan Fals, Sawung Jabo) had become a venue for critical messages. New workings of traditional theatre forms abounded, as did musical fusions like the Islamic rock opera Kantata Takwa.

“those who don’t remember 1966 and so are not afraid.” Since childhood, his experience had been one in which family, friends and colleagues endured harassment, intimidation and unprovoked violent attack; were the butt of terror tactics, rumour and defamation; had their cameras smashed; their newspapers, shows or performances closed down; lost their jobs, were banned, thrown into jail, placed under house arrest or simply disappeared, and where association was not free.

This is the emotional world depicted by Lucia Hartini in *Luapan Emosi* and *Pemandangan Malam*. In both, I see psychological portraits of an era in which to make good art had become a fraught occupation, subject to the manipulation of desire at the point of creation and in reception. This manipulation was at once the product of external societal forces, the institutional apparatus of a repressive state used in the service of *Teror* as state terrorism, and the reaction of individual artists to these conditions. Through state terrorism, the New Order state aspired to produce a general state of acquiescence in the population as a means of social control. Foucault (1987) writes:

> If power were anything but repressive, if it never did anything but to say no, do you really think anyone would be brought to obey it? (Foucault, 1987: 102)

a statement which encapsulates the reality of the struggle faced by Indonesia’s contemporary cultural workers from the mid-1980s until the mid-1990s. That the “Surealis” and *Arus Baru* artists continued to work against the state’s exercise of power, charting its effects and reflecting on its psychological and emotional dimensions, is a measure of their increasingly acute perceptions and their resistance. As the psychological effects of a climate of terror became a subject of Lucia Hartini’s art during this period, it is useful to examine *teror* more closely and then consider its effect on women, many of whom later reflected that anxiety,

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195 Personal communication. Artists, writers, journalists and musicians in Yogyakarta and Jakarta, 1988 - 1996. *Inside Indonesia* (Oct.- Dec. 1997) published an article extracted from an Amnesty International report on the death of journalist Udin Naimullah. “I write the truth, and if I have to die for it, well so be it,” he wrote, shortly before he was murdered.
even fear, was inculcated in them as children. It was part of their socialisation as middle-class Javanese (Tanesia, 2002). Coupled with the repressive governance of the New Order state, we have Heryanto’s definition of terror:

Terror is not hidden on the underside of culture. It is very much part of its centrepiece, on its surface. But it is never pure, total or stable.
(Heryanto, 1993: 38 - 39)

_Teror as an instrument of social control_

George Rude (1964, 1988) has researched the re-production of terror as a function of state terrorism in revolutionary France, one phase of which, “The Terror”, was named for its primary tactic. _Teror_ in New Order Indonesia may also be analysed using Rude’s study. While some have dismissed _teror_ as atavistic, an aspect of the Malay character or the Javanese one, others agree with Rude, seeing terror as a learned response to collective experiences of oppression, chaos and violence, whose roots lay in the historical past. This position is shared, with reservations and for slightly different reasons, by Day (2002). In Indonesia, _teror_ was regarded as a state deeply instilled in the public consciousness, to be re-activated, orchestrated and manipulated by the apparatus of state, with assistance from agents outside institutional frameworks (Heryanto, 1993; Pemberton, 1994).

In many ways, _teror_ in Indonesia is a perverse example of Foucault’s (1987) idea of governmentality as “self-regulation”, bolstered by the restricted margins of individual freedom enforced by a repressive government. This analysis extends Western psychiatry’s narrow definition of terror as “chronic or overwhelming fear”, “extreme anxiety”, or “hysteria” (Schmid and Jongman, 1988: 2, 19, 20, cited in Heryanto, 1993: 38). Some argue that state terrorism in Indonesia has deep historical roots, being traceable to the disciplinary use of palace armies in earlier archipelagic kingdoms, by the military forces of empire during the Dutch colonial era and the activities of the Kempetai or Military Police during the Japanese occupation of the Netherlands Indies during WWII (Mangunwijaya, cited in Levy, _Riding the Tiger_, 1992; Day, 2002).
After the massacres of 1965 – 1966, state terrorism became part of the apparatus of repression within the structural dynamics of New Order Indonesia. The sporadically eruptive and uneven application of the production of Teror as state terrorism was justified by the regime as a way of maintaining “order” and conformity against perceived threats to security. Teror and state terrorism operated in daily juxtaposition with “the extravagant festivity of the growing tourism industry, an enthusiasm for advanced technology, and various campaigns for Development” (Heryanto, 1993: 38). There were periods of comparative leniency in which critics of governmental policies seized the opportunity to publicly voice their opinions and test the limits of repression. Yet the myriad laws legitimising control at all levels of society, the inculcated sense of teror, and the spectral presence and occasional use of state terrorism enabled state reliance on the self-regulation of a cowed populace.

The regime’s authority responded to challenges with occasional acts of physical violence exerted through the police and the military. The legal system indiscriminately applied old laws dating from the Dutch colonial period which remained part of the machinery of the integralist state together with Presidential decrees made by Sukarno and Suharto explicitly aimed at controlling subversion (Heryanto, 1993: 160; Lubis and Santosa, 1998: 344 - 349; Lindsey, 1998: 368). The decrees and laws concerned were INPRES No.15/1970, Law No.11/1963 on Subversive Operations in the Criminal Code (KUHAP), and Law No. 8/1985 on Social Organisations (Keormasan). Miscreants imprisoned on such charges were denied a fair trial within a legal system which was both piecemeal and corrupt.

Even exhibitions and performances were subject to police clearances while the Indonesian film industry was heavily censored, both directly and indirectly. Controversial plays and films did not always run their planned course. Scripts had to be approved before production commenced and the end product examined for conformity to the original. When films were screened, material deemed visually offensive or problematic by the censors was blurred in projection, often leading to raucous audience response. Finally, if one did not

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196 In Riding the Tiger (1992), Romo Mangunwijaya describes the cruelty of the Kempetai as both structural and arbitrary.
conform or practice skilful dissimulation, then one’s work did not reach the public domain, no matter how aesthetically meritorious or intellectually challenging its contents. Most cultural workers practiced some degree of self-censorship in order to survive.\footnote{Personal communication. Various artists, writers, journalists and musicians, Yogyakarta, Jakarta, 1988 - 1996. Most of the laws relating to treasonable acts were reviewed from 1998 onwards and repealed or substantially modified thereafter, although those relating to Freedom of Information remain problematic.}

Heryanto (1993: 38) further elaborates on the distinctions between teror and Teror as state terrorism. State terrorism used Teror, the community-based system of spying, rumour mongering, and intimidation together with enforced vigilance and sporadic acts of violence against those regarded as dissidents. Fear generated by trauma, the spectre of past experience occasioned by the events of 1965 - 1966, the crowding of a newly urbanised mass society and the grand narratives of a developing nation were interiorised as anxiety - as teror. Tanesia (2002) argues that for many, the Teror orchestrated by Suharto as “Father of the Nation” further amplified the scary ghosts of Indonesians’ behavioural socialisation as children. State terrorism succeeded because it built upon and compounded teror experienced both individually and culturally. Teror as state terrorism systematically applied, was capricious and its deployment unpredictable. Heryanto depicts the city of Yogyakarta as a contested site. For that reason, teror, experienced as anxiety and as apprehension, increased.

\textit{Women and the experience of Teror/teror}

In his catalogue essay for Lucia’s 1994 exhibition, Wistetrotomo writes:

A wave of absurdity rolls and gathers from one question to the next. Thus, Tini’s work does not contain ‘answers’ drawn from obsessions or dreams. Rather it is the reverse; it seems the work is a fusion of snatches of questions as well as their dead-ends; fragments of feeling and experience – from illness, sadness, disease, fear and teror. She expresses the discomfort which sickens her. Is this the sketched outline of Lucia Hartini’s world? (Wisetrotomo, 1994)

\section*{Women and the experience of Teror/teror}

From 1988 onwards, when asked by reviewers and essayists to discuss the
subject matter of her paintings, Lucia Hartini mentions *teror*. In describing the series of paintings *Nuklir Dalam Wajan*, she states that she painted this theme to gain control over forces and difficulties in the real world which she found overpowering. By 1990, this same motivation for paintings exploring her experience of fear, *teror*, and their concomitant frustrations had been both heightened and honed. Although Lucia was never directly victimised by the apparatus of state terrorism in her career as an artist in the sense of being violently assaulted, imprisoned or tortured, she was aware of punishments meted out to those who were attacked.\(^{198}\) She felt compelled to paint tense and distressed psychological states because, increasingly, these states were her perceptual reality. She was also fighting to maintain her position nationally as a newly established and potentially major artist.\(^{199}\)

It is necessary to distinguish Lucia Hartini’s particular experience of *teror* from the kind of general community pressure observed by Norma Sullivan in her study of the lives of women in Sitiwaru, Yogyakarta (Sullivan, 1994: 99-108). Lucia was already familiar with this aspect of urban and village life from years spent in the overcrowded *kampung* of Gampingan when her marriage was disintegrating, (Marianto, 2001: 226). Seeking further information in 1998, I conducted interviews on the subject of *t/Teror* with a number of other Indonesian women, including some young Indonesian Chinese women and students. I wished to compare their experiences with those of prominent male cultural figures with whom I had communicated for many years. The degree of corroboration in these stories is sufficient to confirm the tactics employed and the frequency with which organized social intimidation was practised at grassroots level.

Interviewees all listed prolonged interference with communications such as phone calls which went dead when received, “poisoned letters” from unknown persons and unpleasant “presents”. They, and sometimes their families and friends experienced discrimination in employment, bureaucratic difficulties, sexual harassment, constant noise-making and even damage to their property. There were

\(^{198}\) Personal communication. Mas Genthong, Yogyakarta, January 2002.

problems if they went out unaccompanied or had visitors. Some of these tactics may appear as unrelated events or merely “silly” to Westerners, but were far from silly in the minds of those experiencing them. Differing in intent, persistence and intensity, these patterns of sustained interference went far beyond those considered a normal part of village or urban kampung life where spying, rumormongering and frequent questioning in relation to comings and goings - even by friends and colleagues - was a part of life. The construction and inference of guilt by association and/or relationship was attempted.

Repeated with excessive frequency, intimidatory tactics demoralised their targets, engendering fear, tension and divisiveness. Groups were singled out on the grounds of religion, association, race, ethnicity or imputed political affiliations. Part of the diffuse system of repression, these tactics represented the “soft” arm of state terrorism, as opposed to the direct physical violence exercised at demonstrations, arrests and detentions. The official apparat of state terrorism were easily identified by their uniforms, equipment and action. Some direct confrontations assumed the historical resonance of a pitched battle between tyrannical overlords and rebellious freedom fighters, characterised by liberating and erotic overtones. When control was enacted through local organisations and the community context, the dynamics of state terrorism were mixed with the settling of pre-existing personal scores. Menace was compounded by facelessness.

Heavy-handed attempts to control the lives of Indonesian women, particularly regarding their appearance and their social and associational choices might also be seen as repeated manipulations of desire. Women feared they would be compelled to “pay” in other ways for community assistance, if they complained. Professional jealousies found easy targets beneath an umbrella of haphazard surveillance. In Java, the combination of individual and collective violence contributed to a climate of fear, for which a long history of cultural

\[200\] In January 1998, a young student, Heylen Harsono, sister of a student activist, approached me at my losmen in Yogyakarta. She wanted to discuss her experience of low-level teror. Much of the general background above is drawn from our conversations. I had also forgotten that, when first filming with Lucia in 1992, part of her conversation on this subject is audible on one of my master tapes. As noted by Jemma Purdey and Lauren Bain at the Indonesia Open Council Conference, ANU, Canberra, 2003, the precise nexus between terror, intimidation, violence and community pressure is difficult to pinpoint, yet undeniably existed.
precedent existed.

Lucia became acutely aware of her vulnerability as an artist producing work which seemed alien to many and as a single mother living alone with her children. She was now renting a larger house in the kampung of Ketanggunan, near Wirobrajan in Yogyakarta. She had no live-in household help and despite the occasional presence of her younger sister, her comings and goings and her visitors, including foreigners and those from out-of-town who had come to view her work, were all closely observed. Nominally Muslim since her marriage, and separated from her husband, Lucia was subject to local expectations. She rarely went out unaccompanied, travelling by taxi to do her shopping in the supermarket in downtown Yogyakarta, or by becak from her door to her destination.

Lucia found it increasingly difficult to confide in her friends, some of whom dismissed her as needlessly fearful and paranoid. From the point of view of the victim, once isolated, all become suspect, generating a climate of fear in which other more insidious forms of harassment might be perpetrated (Ciciek, 1999). Lucia now recognised that she too could be a target for Teror, both psychological and physical. Her estranged husband rarely visited, although it was rumoured that “reports” of her behaviour were made to him and to her family, further restricting her associational choices, and compounding her distress. Little wonder Lucia preferred to remain married. She continued to paint, attempting to use the pressure generated by teror to maintain self-discipline. But her fear and suspicion operated as a form of self-censorship. Much later, Lucia realised she had acquiesced in a psychological double bind, a manipulation of desire in which her sense of self-worth as well as her independence was severely eroded.

Comparing artist’s notes

In order to look more closely at t/Teror and its consequences, it is useful to compare Lucia’s situation with that of Indonesian installation and performance artist, Arahmaiani, who also experienced difficulties during this period. Daughter of a Muslim cleric, Arahmaiani differed from Lucia in terms of religious

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201 Personal communication. Lucia Hartini, Yogyakarta 1999.

upbringing, temperament and marital status. Her lifestyle and the experimental and confronting nature of her art, a direct response to the climate of the times, was powerfully reflected in her work, yet in their focus on gender issues, she and Lucia sometimes explored similar territory in their art.

Like Lucia, Arahmaiani had found tertiary study difficult because of her unorthodox ideas and headstrong ways, but when she “dropped out” she was able to study overseas. Perhaps because of her extended visits to Western countries on art scholarships, Arahmaiani appears to have been more politically aware, and more theoretically informed at an earlier point about the nature of the battle in which she was engaged, first as a woman artist and secondly as an independent Indonesian woman.203

The nature of her work and her outspokenness attracted attention, creating difficulties against which she evaluated other aspects of her life. In the 1980s, the criticisms embodied in her work were constructed as youthful rebellion, and dismissed by many, except by theorist Sanento Yuliman, her mentor, and a few older artists like Dolorosa Sinaga and FX Harsono, who recognised her potential. Arahmaiani claims her opinions and her work became the butt of epithet because they challenged certain conventions of Islam before their reinterpretation by neoliberal Islamic scholars including Abdurrahman Wahid and Nurcholis Masdjid (Istiadah, 1995). One early work expressed her desire to be a Kyai. This was impossible, given her gender, and was considered disrespectful. Even so, when interviewed in June 2001, Arahmaiani stated that she owes her intellectual rigour to her Islamic background.204

By contrast, Lucia Hartini says that until comparatively recently, (a few years prior to Reformasi), her image making was intuitive. Her perceptions and subsequent actions were governed by the injustice of her personal situation and the difficulty of reaching compromise. Lucia saw in the personal, a reflection of injustices at work on a much larger scale. She could not ignore the wider

203 Arahmaiani has been an artist in residence in overseas galleries and events, has worked as a project curator and as coordinator, a recent example being for the JakArt Festival programs in June, 2001 held at Rumah Seni Air in Jakarta, an artist-run space in Central Jakarta. Post-Reformasi, Arahmaiani has begun to analyse her experiences in her writing.

prevalence of discriminatory cultural attitudes towards women, although she felt powerless to analyse these satisfactorily. Her reactions were emotional. She felt unable to fight except by continuing to paint, a response which Trinh (1989) suggests may also be construed as resistance.205

As the political climate became more repressive, the pressures on women artists like Lucia and Arahmaiani mounted. Both experienced social ostracism to which they reacted differently, as evidenced in the imagery of their art and the interviews I recorded with them. Arahmaiani’s solution to persecution was to move on when things became too “hot”. She travelled from place to place, occasionally taking work as a singer and dancer.206 With two young children and a professional practice based on the production of large canvases, Lucia could not move so easily when things became difficult. She chose not to go to Bali, where her estranged husband had established another home and family. Feeling progressively more isolated, she turned her powerful insights and energies inwards, with disastrous consequences for both her physical and mental health. In 1991, she collapsed, was hospitalised in Temanggung, then spent six months recuperating with her parents who also cared for her children.207

In Perbatasan / Boundaries, Lucia’s account of her experience of harassment and psychological disturbance is recounted with a thread of wry humour woven into the inevitable pathos of telling a painful confessional story. In a catalogue essay written in 1992, Wiyanto remarks on this quality in Lucia’s work. He praises “her ability to walk a fine line on the edge of the abyss of psychological chaos”. Discussing victims of torture who had survived and were able to recount their experiences, Heryanto says they often chose this same incredulous and slightly humorous tone, as if unable to recount these events as actually having happened to them.

The situation of artists who stepped beyond the boundaries created by society, as well as those bearing witness for the community at large, is best described by Arahmaiani:

205 Personal communication. Lucia Hartini, Yogyakarta, August 1999.


A cheeky and youthful revolt against convention characterised the early career of many Indonesian artists of Lucia’s generation. However, by the early 1990s, these high points seemed offset by years of difficulty. For so long it had been necessary to tread carefully on the borders between the boundaries of private and public worlds in a state which extensively constrained the margins of individual freedom, both Lucia and Arahmaiani knew what it was like to be constructed as “outsiders”. They were publicly acclaimed yet ostracised socially and subjected to psychological harassment beyond that stemming from their enculturation as women.

Neither women were directly “protected” by men, although both had male mentors, colleagues and patrons who were supportive. Their problems stemmed from the nature and demands of their occupation, their gender and sexuality rather than from politics alone. Apart from those at the top, everyone was politically constrained in the New Order state. Only by working constantly, expressing their situations through art, did Lucia Hartini and Arahmaiani gain power as women and as artists, even if parts of their respective personal narratives charted despair.

5.5. Visible Difficulties

*Portret Seorang Tokoh / Portrait of a Star* and *Terjun / Dive - an Interrogation of “bad” paintings*

Much of Lucia’s work produced between 1986 and 1994 may be seen as an artist’s response to the experience of social and cultural transformations, including the state’s use of repression to control the impact, spread and speed of attitudinal change. Also relevant was the conceptual dialogue Indonesian figurative artists and filmmakers conducted with Islam during its communal and
political resurgence from 1990 onwards, whether or not they were religiously inclined. Because Islam was increasingly used by the New Order as one more tool in the architecture of community-based repression, they dreaded the imposition of another layer of scrutiny beyond that necessary to exhibit their work.

Herein lay another double-edged sword. Although desperately desiring creative and expressive freedom, and acknowledging the need to examine and rework the representation of gender roles and social expectations, artists and filmmakers did not want to see Indonesia’s religious values nor its cultural richness swamped by global culture. Defining realistic and credible mainstream and alternative gender representation in the arts in Indonesia was bedevilled by the twin perils of cultural repression and religious sensitivities despite their actual richness in the field of daily life, resulting in the production of divergent conventions. By 1990, the media products of global culture were pouring into the country through the proliferation of “sexy” mainstream American, European and Hong Kong films. Indonesian film censorship regulations had successfully prevented the realistic and credible stagings of sex scenes in Indonesian films for years. Yet, as Garin Nugroho later commented in an interview with David Rohde (2000), one could walk down to the corner store and obtain the bluest of pornographic movies.208

How were artists and filmmakers to deal with the deluge of these once forbidden representations? Like several others, Lucia Hartini attempted to work this material with mixed success, as evident in *Portret Seorang Tokoh / Portrait of a Star* (1990).209 Using performative modes, Lucia increasingly engaged the

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208 Attempts to stifle representational verité continue. Agus Suwage and Davy Linggar’s digitally manipulated photographic installation with pink swing made from the carriage of a becak (pedicab) depicts sequential images of a modern-day Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (an apartment in Jakarta). The work was exhibited in the 2005 CP Biennale in Jakarta and created a storm because it was assumed the models were nude and their poses offensive. Although this was not the case, constant campaigning by members of the *Front Pembela Islam* (FPI), eventually forced curator Jim Supangkat to first cover, then remove the work, despite equally constant support from many quarters. The theme of the exhibition was Urban Culture (javafred@yahoogroups.com from antara.co.id/seenws/?id=19342, retrieved 26-10-2005).

209 Personal communication. Bre Reredana, Jakarta, June 1999; Lucia Hartini, Yogyakarta, July 1999. A film reviewer for *Kompas* and collector of Lucia’s work, Bre was a fan of such representations of Western ‘decadence’ in their own right, not simply to denigrate them. Lucia later explained to
human form to court the desire of viewers. With her generous bosom and Indonesian face, her first portrait of Marilyn Monroe is best seen as an interrogation, albeit problematic, of Western-style representational embodiments of sexual desire and fetishism.

The depiction of the nude has rarely been problematic for contemporary figurative painters in the Western world, but has been and remains so in some sectors of the Muslim one. Although nominally the largest Muslim country in the world, Indonesia has never officially requested its artists to abandon the depiction of the human form, as in Malaysia. Yet in the early 1990s, many contemporary Indonesian artists paused to seriously evaluate and debate the particular Qu’ranic texts which had been interpreted prohibitively elsewhere. In some streams of Islamic thought, the naturalistic figurative representation of humans and in some instances, animals, were considered acts offensive to God’s perfection. Indonesians decided the texts concerned did not imply a ban on figurative naturalism (Dermawan T., 1999: 9 - 10). Instead, the use of figurative naturalism to realistically represent the human form remains a matter of personal choice.

But that choice was also subject to pressure. Life drawing from the nude model was not part of Lucia Hartini’s art training, because it could not be formally taught. She had learnt to draw the human figure from photographs in books, by observing workers and farmers and from private studies at home where family and friends became her models. Sometimes she had difficulty with human anatomy, but reference to photographic sources often solved these difficulties. Other times, her distortions were deliberate, a “badness” which she could use to expressive advantage.

In 1990, figurative and experimental artists in Yogyakarta regarded their situation as similar to that of late Renaissance painters in Southern Europe when faced with a religiously based cultural inquisition created by the rising tide of conservatism in the Catholic Church. The building of many new mosques and the over-amplification of the calls to prayer were regarded by critics as a cynical

me that she had always felt sorry for Marilyn Monroe, who, despite success and idolisation, lived a miserable personal life, the price of fame. In Portret Seorang Tokoh, Lucia pictured the star after the cardinal sin of suicide, liberated from the entrapment of the simulacral. Perhaps this Indonesian Marilyn is also a transvestite, seeking the publicly joyous expression of his/her sexuality.
attempt to impose further control on the masses, dulling their sensitivity. The situation was keenly felt and protested at great cost by many of the city’s artists and intelligentsia who expressed concern at attempts to control the population through intimidation and a false piety.\textsuperscript{210}

Drawing on the decorative artistic traditions of Central Java, Lucia responded by developing a form of decorative anthropomorphism, in which birds and surreal landscapes are used to suggest opinion and convey emotion. While covering similar territory to her figurative paintings, these images would not offend those for whom naturalistic representation of the human form was problematic. For example, Lucia must certainly have thought twice about the degree of realistic detail she could freely employ in willfully representing the naked female body in the cultural and political climate of 1990 in Yogyakarta. Did Lucia’s painting \textit{Terjun / Dive} (1990) looked different in its studio-state prior to exhibition? Echoing late Renaissance works, the finished painting sports a strategic fig leaf of foam placed at the point where the woman’s body enters the water. And again, the title \textit{Terjun} has multiple meanings. In \textit{Bahasa} (Indonesian language), \textit{terjun} as in dive or jump implies intention, but the word also implies a fall – whether of body, character or of water. This image summarises Hartini’s desperate emotional response to the threatened repression of the female mind as well as the female body (Plate 27).

Drawing on a feminist and body-centred approach which also references Buddhist pedagogical narrative, Astri Wright initially saw this work as representing “a turning-point in the artist’s personal development”, a reading reportedly contradicted in conversation by the artist who explains she “had painted it at a time in her life when she had felt completely lost in darkness ... that was the experience she had translated onto canvas” (Wright, 2000: 35 - 36).

Hartini’s honest expression of deep despair suggests that, no matter how clever the re-workings and displacements evident in canvases like \textit{Terjun}, artists felt

\textsuperscript{210} Personal communication. Romo Manguwijaya and Umar Kayam, UGM Sos-Pol and Cultural Studies Seminar, Taman Budaya, Yogyakarta, August 1992. On that same visit, I attended a meeting in Yogyakarta accompanied by Dadang Christanto and FX Harsono at which artists and journalists discussed strategies to respond to this situation.
Oil on canvas: 150 x 150 cms.
unable to satisfactorily engage debates regarding the convincing representation of the earthily and openly sexual, let alone the political. Nor could they directly address the perceived need to protect contemporary Indonesian artistic expression of all sorts against uncontrolled inroads from the West.

In *Terjun*, (Plate 27), Hartini’s body defines the border zone. Instead of the familiar mystical transit upwards and across the airy realms of release, the painting speaks of the artist’s desperation. At first sight, annihilation in the depths because of and despite her need to make art is the opposite of the mystical union of the soul with the universe. Lucia feared she might soon have no chance to be a sensible female Icarus or the fortunate Prince of the *Babad Jaka Tjingkir*.\(^{211}\) Her agency as a woman and her livelihood as a figurative painter were equally threatened. Other Indonesian artists also expressed their frustration that the range and power of visual language was being stifled.\(^{212}\)

If *Terjun* is up-ended or turned horizontally, several different interpretations are suggested.\(^{213}\) The nude figure becomes the plastic-wrapped *ikan bandeng* of Heryanto’s terrorist wordplays, slang for a mutilated and stuffed corpse (Heryanto, 1993: 37). Marianto (2001) reminds us that, during the Petrus affair, mutilated corpses of “offenders” were left in the streets and alleyways of Yogyakarta, in full view of passersby. “Surealis” artist Agus Kamal is known for

\(^{211}\) There are similarities between the myth of Icarus and those of Surya, Arjuna and Tjaka Tjingkir, whose respective characters condense the moral dilemma of the hero. In the spirit of post-modernism, Icarus was appropriated and absorbed into the iconography of young Indonesian artists. (Eddie Hara and Arifin both worked this subject matter). While capable of great and inspirational flights of the imagination, the Indonesian heroes love tenderly but must engage in violence or duplicitous actions for a cause or purpose deemed to be “noble”.

\(^{212}\) Personal communication. Dadang Christanto, Melbourne, September 1992.

Overawed by the fierce, passionate, political and directly homosexual expression of Chilean exile Juan Davila’s work, Christanto lamented that Indonesian painters were prevented from making work which was *edan* (chaotically insane), in order to reveal truth. Their insights and emotions were blunted and muted by the culture and politics of Indonesian society; hence their visual protests were guarded.

\(^{213}\) This creative strategy was engaged by many diverse artists, among them Javanese batik makers, the European Surrealists, Frida Kahlo, Australian Aboriginal artists and the Spanish architect Antonio Gaudi, who upended his model for the cathedral La Sagrada Famiglia in order to examine its load-bearing structures. Dadang Christanto also produced several double-sided three-dimensional images, capable of being read both backwards and forwards. One example was his sculpture *Bureaucracy*, exhibited in Australia in 1991. The task of Indonesian artists, intellectuals and activists was to unlock the rigidity of the mindsets represented by these symbiotic images.
his overwhelmingly graphic renditions of corpses, including those of women and children. Hartini’s image alludes to a terrible perversion of Javanese cosmology as well as the folk beliefs associated with Putri Blorong, the snake woman and Nyai Loro Kidul. These perversions and cruelties originate in the Javanese past in conjunction with the pairings of eros and violence, life and death (Petkovic, 1994; Day, 2002).

One evening, Lucia’s sister Clara Anna recounted the legend of virgin sacrifice practiced in the ancient kingdom centred near Temanggung. Each year, with the arrival of the monsoon rains, the head of the most beautiful and accomplished young girl in the area was severed to cap the mountain spring maintaining the purity of the water beneath the ground and ensuring its plentiful supply. This ritual action confirmed the absolute power of the king. As a filmmaker, I conjecture that some aspects of Lucia’s experience, the beauty and talent which provoked her first husband’s jealousy and attracted neighbourhood attention, together with her experience of teror, may have been linked in some atavistic way in Lucia’s sub-conscious to this local story of virgin sacrifice. In Perbatasan / Boundaries, I allude to this practice. (Plate 28). Lucia recounts that at the time she painted Terjun, she felt like giving up. She felt powerless, unable to act, considering that death might be better.

The fate of many Indonesian women in modern times has also been terrible and tragic, but for reasons other than sacrifice, as in 1993, when the raped and tortured body of the murdered female labour activist Marsinah was discovered thrown on a rubbish dump. Her motor scooter, symbol of her independence, was found in a ditch beside a lonely road. Marsinah was attacked at the level of gender as well as politically. Her femaleness and her independence were impugned: like rubbish she must be “cleaned out” and swept away (Day, 2002: 279). Day argues that physical violence has long been the primary

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In sealing the spring, it is possible that the ruler also assumed symbolic control of the rampant sexuality of Nyai Loro Kidul. The goddess of different guises is the subject of many stories, including her abduction of those wearing deep green to her Palace far beneath ocean waves, and her use of the underground waterways of Java to travel far inland from her home in the Southern Ocean, an approach heralded by nymphs (Resinck, 1997, v56 n2 p313 (4)).

215 Personal communication. Lucia Hartini, Yogyakarta, August 1999.
“sanctioning power of the modern South-East Asian nation-state.” Thus Marsinah’s murder, constructed as punishment for political activities which threatened the authority of the state, together with the propaganda surrounding this event, were designed to engender fear among the regime’s critics and stifle the aspirations of Indonesian women.216


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216 Day (2002: 279 - 280) argues that “crime” was considered a form of “rebellion” rather than of social deviance, and its punishment, a means of restoring order and confirming the power of the state. The style of punishment might be simultaneously spectacular, violent and aesthetic. This attitude toward crime explains why charges of subversion were formerly placed under the Indonesian Criminal Code. Since 1998, Indonesians may well ask whether they have exchanged the perversions of ritual teror such as that perpetrated by Dayaks in Kalimantan against Madurese settlers, or the religious vendettas in Poso and Maluku, for the State terrorism perpetrated by the New Order regime, followed by the democratisation of terrorism as a phenomenon attendant upon the identity politics of Reformasi. Like Nugroho, Day (2002: 283 - 284), maintains that there is a long history for each of these forms of collective social violence. Referencing the Mahabharata, Marianto (1993) describes the “surreality” of the brotherly war in which the field is “flooded with blood up to one’s knees, full of “bush” of hair and “pebbles” of teeth”. 
As filmmaker Garin Nugroho remarks,

My nation was born in blood, this is its signature and must surely influence the nature of its representations in documentary film .... (Nugroho, 1994)

Critics have often accused me of selling misery, of cashing in on tragedy. I always reply that tragedy is important to us, like bloodletting with a knife. Only so can we realise that there is blood in our body, and know what life is all about. Tragedy is the blood we need to awaken and empathise with others. (Nugroho, 1999)

Interpreting *Terjun* (Plate 27), above water the woman’s body appears rigidly frozen, almost doll-like, while below, veiled by the streaking bubbles of her plunge, the torso twisted towards us suggests the fullness of life. The viewer is invited to peel back this watery covering and glimpse the body beneath. In that space between entering the underwater darkness and before annihilation in its depths, the woman is momentarily truly alive, a sensual being in her embrace of the ocean as it closes around her. In this silence, she escapes the ever-present fears and pressures of the external world. Existentially, she is no longer constrained by the nagging doubts of custom and societal repression. As if attempting to stop this transit at the last moment and brake her fall, the woman’s hands are firm, with fingers tensely spread, white-water forced outlines around and through them. In real life, an artist’s hands will always be the principal instrument of the desire to paint and make, of struggle and a site of resistance until the end.

Lucia Hartini’s communicative intention is clear. This sky may not be stormy, but is perpetually overcast (*mendung*). The ocean is vast and unbroken with little movement, feigning lifelessness. The edges of air and water, water and rock, are sharp and do not blend; as boundaries, they are sharply delineated. The lower third of the canvas is an indigo-coloured abyss. Apart from some light turquoise near the water’s surface, some finely delineated and highly coloured detail on the rocks which continue beneath the surface and the greenish swathe fringed by an upward shaft of white water and bubbles, the colours chosen are dull, suggesting cold.
In the *Lakon Dewa Ruci*, Lucia’s childhood favourite, Gatotkaca, personified as Bima, enters the ocean. He encounters his small self, in the form of the spirit being Dewa Ruci who manifests as Bima’s conscience, inviting Bima to enter the contemplative realms through his left ear. In *Terjun*, there is no guarantee that Lucia Hartini will find her small self in this plunge.

Despite its formal and iconographic awkwardness, *Terjun* is a painting impossible to ignore. It is difficult to argue that this is an example of “Surrealisme Yang Indah / Beautiful Surrealism”. Its sensibility communicates the artist’s perception of terrifying realities threatening to engulf her person, her beliefs, her soul and all that she has worked for. In my view, *Terjun*’s aesthetic success is threatened precisely because its emotional honesty as a self-portrait is too great. The painting confirms Hartini’s desperate recognition that *teror* was indeed the manipulation of desire.

In an analysis of Hartini’s oeuvre which foregrounds gender issues and highlights her frequent use of images in which nature is both trope and subject, it may not be too extreme to say this painting depicts a controlled and chilling cry for help. If *Pemandangan Malam* can be seen as a loss of innocence, *Terjun* can be seen as a simulacral departure from a grey world, a lament for the loss of beauty and variety through repression and the manufacture of fear. If one can no longer disempower the bad through beauty, good intention, and the transformative, what hope remains for the belief that with achievement and development comes personal and societal improvement?

5.6. Eros and Violence, Heroes and Struggle

Lucia’s decision to paint herself nude in *Terjun* for public display was extremely self-possessed. If *teror* could be seen as the manipulation of desire, and if modern Indonesian women’s actions were constantly frustrated by misrepresentation in the public domain, what were the options available for change? In research interviews for *Perbatasan / Boundaries*, Lucia confesses it was many years before she relinquished her feelings of personal failure, together with desire for the protection offered by marriage. She must finally confront the shadow of the old woman whose wooden shoes clacked past her wall “every
afternoon at 4pm.” This invisible crone symbolically amplified Lucia’s fear of entrapment within centuries of subtly inscribed gendered repression.217

Eventually, the nub of Lucia’s conflict with her estranged husband, posited as the uneasy pairing of the erotic with the heroic quest in which both were engaged, appeared in her art. The dynamic of this conflict, bearing with it the spectre of violence, invokes a further consideration of desire and its possible embodiments as quests for success and power. Simultaneously sexual and martial in character, these formed the basis of a strong and ordered state. Day (2002: 237, 238, 249 - 256) postulates these concepts derive from historic and religious, even spiritual, cultural sources, not just in Indonesia, but elsewhere in South-East Asia.218 Hartini cautiously ventures into this territory in paintings such as *Meraih Matahari / Greeting the Sun* (1993). (Plate 29).

She envisions her ideal Indonesian man, depicting him as transcending history but not culture. His pose is both simultaneously extreme and gestural. Its spirit evokes the realist statues of transfigured everyday heroes represented in the public sculptures of Sukarno’s era.219 While these public statues commemorated the people, farmers, soldiers or generals, her hero’s streaming hair establishes him as a student, an artist, a poet in a simultaneously legendary, revolutionary and post-colonial context. In the conceptual iconography of Indonesian art, the beautiful young man depicted in this canvas seeks to free himself from the dross of existence. A rock conveniently masks his genitals, forbidden fruit when rendered naturalistically in Indonesia in 1993, and still problematic today. As a

217 Personal communication. Lucia Hartini, Yogyakarta, August 1992 for *Pusaran / Vortex.*

218 Personal communication. Lucia Hartini, Yogyakarta, August 1999. In conversation, she intimates these concepts also existed in recent expressions of national pride.

219 Personal communication. Lucia Hartini, Yogyakarta, July 1999. Several times in our conversations, Lucia expressed a fondness for the public sculptures from this earlier period. Holt (1967) suggests links between the social realist sculptural traditions of the 1950s and 1960s and the era of monumental temple-building, while Anderson (1990) contextualises Indonesian public monument building in terms of real and symbolic architectural structures which “confirm the Power of the rulers of the State” at the time, noting the erotic as well as heroic and exhortative connections of these works as well as their historical relationship to the archipelagic past. Holt (1967: 37 - 39) mentions their nexus with religion and the role of the priest-architect, but only in connection with the Indic past where she quotes a Javanese Sanskrit treatise (778) consulted in the building of *Candi Kalasan.* As a corrective, Lucia informed me that she also appreciated the folk art quality of the gates into and out of towns and villages.
Surealis and painter of the human figure, the placement of the rock is an edgy comment in itself!

Oil on canvas: 150 x 150 cms.
Iconographically revised for modern and contemporary times, the young man might also be a fighter for a rebellious cause or commemorated as a hero of revolution in modern times - an aspirant *empu*, a prince of the wind. However, Lucia suggests these quests may require acts of violence or deception, given the nature of male conditioning in Indonesia and the nation’s history. Moreover, these acts have been accepted and approved by Indonesian women across time. Lucia’s own position is clearly one of ambivalent fascination, compounded by familial loyalty.

While *Meraih Matahari* refers to imagery drawn from the Javanese and Balinese plastic arts and from archipelagic literature, including Tantric illustrations similar to those found in old Javanese manuscripts, almost all these visual expressions have been created by men from a male point of view. *Meraih Matahari* presents us with a strange complex of contemporary attitudes. Firstly, the gendered object of the gaze is reversed. Hartini encourages us to indulge our scopophilic pleasure when regarding the sensuously rendered depiction of a beautiful male body, as though we are contemplating erotic temple sculptures in the small Central and East Javanese sites dedicated to the warrior god, Surya. In a further conceit, the particular object of desire might be the artist herself, represented by the distant white-hot orb of the sun, whose two satellites are her children. Like the souls of her ancestors, they also watch over her. In *Perbatasan / Boundaries*, Lucia suggests this painting is cautionary in intent. The path towards the sun, whatever it may represent, is best taken slowly, with forethought and great care. From a female perspective, it seems neither wise nor always possible just to grab it.

In *Perbatasan/ Boundaries* I seek to convey the complexity of the attitudes and histories informing *Meraih Matahari* through the allusive sequences leading into and out of the interviews accompanying this image. My viewpoint is that of a woman filming another woman telling her story which encompasses a gamut of experience difficult to broach on camera. Few examples existed in Lucia’s own media culture to guide this discursive process.

Arahmaiani also explored some of the same subject matter as Lucia, the better to position herself in terms of an Asian feminist politics of societal relations
between women and men. (Plate 30 a.) As in Meraih Matahari, Arahmaiani’s acrylic canvas Lingga-Yoni (1994) depicts the yoni triumphant, positioned above an erect lingga. Yet in other works, Arahmaiani appears torn between her perception of women’s abuse by men, the value she places on her own cultural values despite their flaws and her personal need for expressive freedom in a repressive climate. In a 1996 performance for an exhibition in Chiang Mai, Thailand, she lies in the “missionary position” atop a plinth placed in a square dug into the ground, surrounded by erotic, even pornographic, yet culturally conflicting images from both Asian and Western films (Asia Society Galleries, 1996: 116, 118 - 19, Plate 30 b.).

Hartini revisits this fraught subject matter in 1997, in the portrait of her estranged husband bearing white roses, Menimbang Perdamaian / Contemplating Peace, painted during their attempted reconciliation. In 1998, after accepting that their reunion had failed and deciding on divorce, Lucia overpaints Arifin’s face with a fierce red Tari Kelano mask, manifesting instead the heroic resistance fighter and spiritual warrior of her dreams, embodied in her close friend, Reformasi activist, Operasi Rachman. (Plate 31).

Wright (2000) expresses surprise at the political intent of Lelaki Bulan Mei / Man of May (1998) because Lucia had always seemed more interested in the life of her inner world. I disagree, arguing that, since 1990, Lucia had become increasingly adept at combining both the personal and the political, or at very least, the acutely socially aware. I photographed Menimbang Perdamaian in both states, early in 1998, and then, again in 1999. While aware of the paintings’ political connotations, I was fascinated by the dramatic and romantic filmic gesture implied. Just as Lucia had manifested her guru when painting Dibawah Payung Duaribu / Beneath the Umbrella of the Millennium (1996), so too, three years later, she had succeeded in claiming the heart and hand of her Javanese “Everyman” and contemporary revolutionary hero whom she married in 2001.

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220 Tari Kelano is a dance associated with the preparation of warriors for battle. They must cultivate anger and a furious countenance, as signified by the red mask. In Fluid Iron (2002: 253 - 54), Tony Day explores the nexus between martial violence and sexual desire expressed in the Javanese epic poem, Abhimanyu.

Other works from this time, such as *Delapan Elang Perkasa / Eight Courageous Eagles/Birds of Prey* (Plate 32) were more obviously political in their reference, although not in the same thought provoking way as many of Hartini’s earlier, experientially filtered canvases alluding to the devastation of nature and women’s situation. The owner of this painting, a businessman involved with shipping who was also an art lover, proudly displayed several of Lucia’s canvases in his Jakarta office. For him, the eagles represented the leaders of Indonesia’s new political parties, but they might be any group of competitors. This group of paintings, products of Lucia’s artistic maturity and the relaxed climate of *Reformasi*, are discussed further in Chapter 7. However, before turning to this period, it is useful to examine the sophisticated visual and aesthetic language which Lucia and her contemporaries developed in the years prior to *Reformasi*. The next chapter concentrates on the public reception of Lucia Hartini’s art, further explaining significant differences between *Pusaran / Vortex* (1993) and *Perbatasan / Boundaries* (2000 – 2002).

CHAPTER 6
THE POETICS OF ALLUSION and THE POLITICS OF SURVIVAL

This chapter explores the visually communicative as opposed to the purely self-expressive intention of Lucia Hartini’s use of analogy, trope and allusion. While particular attention is paid to her use of imagery derived from nature in relation to gender, its sometimes wry, often disillusioned, wistfully contemplative and increasingly spiritual implications are also discussed. Attention is paid to Lucia’s observations of a changing society and the questions so provoked. Where relevant, I indicate how my camera usage and the sequential editing of images into film aided my investigation of Lucia’s approach to artmaking and my interpretations of her work.

The public face of artistic endeavour during the last years of the New Order period is the context for this appreciative exploration. When outspokenness might be dangerous, the controversial, the critical and the political were often couched in subjectively symbolic, allusive and/or universally humanist terms. Contextually, I examine the strategies used by contemporary Indonesian artists enabling them to work with emotionally expressive power and artistic integrity despite repression. Often intertextual, artistic works were replete with indirect references, as were the methods of presentation chosen (Wright, 1998: 15 - 16) and the galleries in which artists exhibited. Hence the careful phrasing of artists’ and curators’ remarks to the press, and the style of expression generated by essayists and reviewers writing about contemporary Indonesian art in the context of censorship and approvals also became a subject of my study.

Emphasizing the cryptic nature of “Surealis” visual communication and the evident difficulties for those discussing this work, Maklai (1996) supports her argument by citing Hooker and Dick (1988).

In a cultural framework which has long valued understatement, allusion, covert and indirect expression of all kinds and finely painted paradox, the ability to allude to and not directly state one’s message has become an accepted convention and a criterion of critical reception.
(Hooker and Dick, 1988, cited in Maklai, 1996: 53)
Lucia Hartini’s artistic expression was cryptic but not always complex in intent. Nor was it necessarily allegorical, except in the case of “history paintings” which were often highly mannered in style. In her 1994 exhibition, Hartini balanced the power of paintings like *Lensa Mata Mata / Spying Eyes / Spy Lens* (1989) and *Srikandi* (1993) (Plates 39 and 41), with others whose sweetness of sentiment appealed to a different, less intellectual section of the art collection market within Indonesia and abroad. Sometimes she attempted to bridge these divergent strands within one painting, as in *Tersangkut di/Pada Ketajaman / Sharp Entanglement* (1992), selected for extensive discussion in this chapter. (Plate 34). Whether or not de-centred Westerners like Wright (2000: 41 - 42) or myself find images such as *Kasih Sayang / Affection* (1993) cloying, they represent a particular pan-Asian taste of the period. (Plate 33). These paintings were acceptable to Malaysian and Arab buyers, who, by 1990, were also collecting contemporary Indonesian art. It is also possible that in less repressive and democratic times, we may be missing other meanings encrypted within these images, if not key aspects of the dynamics leading to their creation, but further investigation of such possibilities lies outside the scope of this dissertation.

Next, this chapter considers the contextual influence of long traditions of analogy, allusion, metaphor, wordplay and performance in the creation of texts of various kinds, a concept engaged by Lucia Hartini when developing the imagery in her paintings. The Bentara Budaya Galleries in Jakarta and Yogyakarta have consistently exhibited and purchased Lucia’s paintings. Affiliated with the Kompas-Gramedia publishing group, the Bentara Budaya houses a large collection of Indonesian artefacts dating back to pre-historic times, as well as a sizeable collection of Balinese art and contemporary Indonesian art. Beyond representing the contemporary moment and questions of taste, their collection policy is underpinned by scholarly perspectives concerning the development of Indonesian art throughout the archipelago.

Writers of exhibition catalogue essays, reviews and works of art historical scholarship hope their words will entice viewers and enhance their awareness. In this chapter, I discuss my responses and those of prominent commentators, critics and scholars of contemporary Indonesian art to a selection of works from Lucia Hartini’s solo exhibitions of 1992 and 1994, comparing them to Lucia’s comments on these same works. Lucia claims that her 1994 exhibition at the Bentara Budaya contains the essence of her emotions, her responses and her spirit, a quality later described by Mamannoor (2002) as cosmological rather than universal in a spiritual sense. Lucia’s statement is important to the arguments presented in this thesis because she distinguishes between the social and spiritual applications of universality.

I then consider Hartini’s 1994 exhibition “Batas Antara Dua Sisi / Boundary Between Two Sides” as an artistic phenomenon in itself, the better to understand concepts of the performative in the art of painting and its relevance to the presentation of the artist’s person as a series of ‘contingent selves’. The paintings exhibited in “Batas Antara Dua Sisi” comprise a body of work spanning the period of Lucia’s psychological and physical collapse and subsequent recovery. As a discrete whole, this exhibition resembles an autobiography of the mind, documenting Hartini’s struggle to obtain mastery of the Inner World, as suggested in her conversations with Suwarno Wisetrotomo (1994). The concept of the contingent self and its activation as a strategy to escape
both domination and confusion, is presented as a specific individual example of the potentially transformative (Philpott, 2000: 157).

The layout and content of the four essays in the 1994 exhibition catalogue, particularly those by Marianto (1994) and Wisetrotomo (1994), demonstrate the importance accorded Lucia Hartini’s personal experience and the substance of her art.221 Marianto (1994) and Wisetrotomo’s (1994) interpretations prompt further investigation of the relationship between the public appreciation of Lucia’s achievements as an artist and the development of her ability to fulfil the social duty expected of her as an artist (Holt, 1967; Maklai, 1991). The totality of this catalogue presentation is considered an important historiographical contribution to debate on Indonesian contemporary art of the period, developing the contribution made by the black and white catalogue for Lucia Hartini’s 1992 exhibition. In their essays for this first catalogue, Reredana, Dermawan T., Purnamasidih and Wiyanto chose the path of public education, firmly situating Hartini’s work as both unique and uniquely surreal, rather than a copy of European Surrealism.

Many of her paintings feature fantastical shapes formed from **karang** (coralline rock). They have deep roots, inviting many different interpretations. In its societal application, **karangan** relates to aggregations of objects, flowers, beads, compositions and arrangements of music, and also to neighbourhood and youth associations (Echols and Shadily, 1990: 261). Hartini’s compositions are distributive, enabling the circulation of perceptions, feelings and ideas; they also have a teaching function (Marianto, 1994). Her roses reference careful development and an abundant maturation of knowledge, personal connection and wealth. They operate within society while not referring to it directly. Distinguishing between Lucia’s stated intentions regarding the sources of her inspiration, its development and the performative interpretations created for **Perbatasan / Boundaries**, Hartini’s work provides us with an opportunity to create

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221 The introduction to the catalogue for “**Batas Antara Dua Sisi**” (1994) is provided by controversial literary figure, the late Dick Hartoko. He claims that, by international standards, Indonesia respects the achievements of its women artists but admonishes the local public, urging them to appreciate the strength of their work. The brief essay by Soedarso Sp., Lucia’s former teacher at STSRI, acknowledges Lucia’s professional development and praises her technical mastery of detail while cautioning that, on occasion, its application is inconsistent. For instance, he mentions the irregular placement of shadows in **Lensa Mata Mata**, (Plate 39), without considering that Hartini’s use of such disjunctive elements may be surreallyistically deliberate.
secondary works. Purnamasidih (1992) writes that stories are painted into every pore of her canvases, making them portals to other worlds. They are given fresh life through the descriptive analyses and interpretations accorded her paintings, in this instance by the writers of catalogue essays, rather than exhibition reviewers, through my filmic interpretations in *Perbatasan / Boundaries*, and as textual analysis and art historical interpretation in this thesis.

Both Marianto and Wisetrotomo (1994) examine Lucia’s oeuvre in the light of cultural beliefs that power of various types, including spiritual power, attaches to particular texts. Because the act of painting these massive canvases is itself a meditative exercise, and more importantly, a spiritual passage, a degree of *sakti* (spiritual power) attaches to some of these works. In 1994, Lucia expressed fear that the imperfect conditions of her life and her inadequate mastery of her Inner World had marred the quality of this desired intangible attribute in her work. Hence feelings and meanings are imperfectly conveyed:

*Lukisan-lukisan itu saya kerjakan dan lahir dari rasa sakit. Tetapi yang terjadi sering justru menyenangkan bagi orang lain.*

My paintings are born and worked from feelings of unease. Yet what so often happens is that other people find pleasure in them.

(Hartini, cited in Wisetrotomo, 1994)

6.1. Acquiring Presence

In January 1998, Lucia Hartini confided that she preferred to seek personal empowerment by strengthening her Inner World. By contrast, many Yogyakartan artists she knew used mysticism and magic as a means of enhancing theirs. In their relationships with society, Indonesian artists had become increasingly interested in the flow of power between themselves as creators and those who appreciated and acquired their work. They deliberately sought mystical experience, often employing *dukun* skilled in the paranormal and black magic, to access and engage the forces of the invisible realms, believing this would assist them creatively. But they also sought to maintain and safeguard their position in
the world of society. One school of mystical practitioners in Yogyakarta considered that paranormal forces were more powerfully present in East Java and Bali. Value was placed on magic and art objects from these places, as on particular allusively cryptic literary and sacred religious texts believed to contain both knowledge and special power. These were objects to be viewed, read and discussed with great care (Weiner, 1995: 76 - 85, Kumar and McGlynn, 1996: 23 - 32). Some makers and collectors hoped that similar sensibilities attributing spiritual power to contemporary art objects applied.

In Central Java, the Western European tradition of painting on canvas had been absorbed into local traditions equating the production of particular types of artistic works with the production of texts (Ch. 4: 161). A number of contemporary artists referenced existing bodies of knowledge as well as styles incorporated within an array of previous works and earlier aesthetic traditions. Their work became increasingly intertextual and allusive. For instance, some Central Javanese traditions owed much to Sufic aesthetic theories stressing intertextuality, dissimulation and multiple layers of meaning (ta’wil) as important requirements of texts (Keddie, 1963: 50 - 51, cited in Boow, 1986: 134).

There is esoteric interpretation of esoteric interpretation. This is so because symbolic interpretations and a full understanding of the truth should be restricted.
(Keddie, cited in Boow, 1986: 130)

Dissimulation and the construction of multiple meanings within a work allowed for creative exploration and metaphorical richness albeit within a confined frame of reference. The Sufic aesthetic legacy which informed Javanese Fine Arts was not the only powerful extant inter-textual and allusive tradition in Indonesia: the other major tradition was Balinese. Weiner argues that, historically, Balinese writers and recorders of culture “became even more adept at wordplay, at saying one thing but meaning another. They were well-versed in the tropes of symbolic allusion,” in order to circumvent the strictures of the Dutch colonial state (Weiner, 1995: 76 - 87). The same could be said of the Javanese, but the latter regarded their expressive modes as conceptually more abstract and more

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finely executed. Both streams were also fascinated by the interaction of visible and invisible worlds. The expressive legacy of allusion was also adaptively modernised and, despite duress, flourished once more during the New Order.

As they matured, these ideas appealed to the more mystically-inclined members of the “Surealis Yogya”, and to collectors and scholars who saw strategic recuperations of ethnic aesthetic traditions and their quotation in artistic works as important correctives to the investment excesses threatening to swamp the Indonesian Fine Arts during the art boom of the early 1990s (Yuliman, 2001). However, those who used these concepts in more earthly ways for social comment or to stress intensely personal experience reflecting the hybridity and irony of post-modern times still needed to proceed with great care. Through her “Surealisme Indah / Beautiful Surrealism”, Lucia was able to swim in both these conceptual streams. As the bureaucratic structures of New Order Indonesia came to resemble their colonial predecessors, threatening outspoken commentators with treason under the Criminal Codes, creative figures took refuge in other traditional and more recently refined modes of expression. Contemporary Central Javanese figurative artists and their collectors were heartened by robust Balinese treatments of the human form and individually mannered decorative approaches to the depiction of nature.

Like those declaiming their ideas in academic, religious and political arenas, artists, like critics, were now expected to be skilled in discussing their art in the public domain, a prospect which terrified Lucia. The commentaries of critics were also carefully scrutinised, caution encouraging formalism or further allusivity and intertextuality. 223 Many dissident Indonesians blamed this circular process for the diminution of the range and freshness of expressive possibilities, which, as Pemberton (1994) remarks, confirmed the failure of National Cultural policy. Despite their use of allusivity, subtlety and cryptic visual condensation, and their desire to believe in their personal power as creative individuals, some of the “Surealis Yogya” and their associates made fun of this self-defeating loop,

223 Personal communication. Arahmaiani, Jakarta, July 2001, Operasi Rachman, Yogyakarta, August 2001. During Reformasi, many obscurantist tendencies favoured previously were seen as restrictive and were discarded in order to promote regeneration in the arts.
claiming exemption from its effects. However, Lucia complained to Wisetrotomo (1994) that the compounding effects of excessive allusivity produced a sea of communicative frustrations outweighing any initial expressive advantages.

That Indonesia’s artistic avant-garde, including its filmmakers, succeeded at all was due to the rarefied nature of the contemporary arts in Indonesian cultural life. Many in positions of bureaucratic and religious authority simply did not understand this new and sometimes startling work, but were suspicious of its effects.224 The most adventurous filmmaking in Indonesia at the time existed in the tertiary and alternative developmental sectors, supported by international grants and Non-Governmental Organizations, where it did not have to pass the rigorous politicised censorship required for mainstream theatrical release or broadcast. Although the audience for such films was even smaller than that for contemporary visual art, the works of both artists and filmmakers were increasingly acclaimed abroad as representative examples of cutting edge Indonesian cultural practice.

Accepting the mantle

In his essay, “Lucia Hartini; Meditasi Dengan Garis dan Srikandi”, written for the catalogue “Batas Antara Dua Sisi”, Marianto (1994) introduces Lucia with an oration, delivered in the manner of an old court poem. Exemplifying the revival of the conventions of Central Javanese culture and literature in Yogyakarta, the contemporary linguistic panache of this oration plays with the simulacral incorporation of priyayi elements as “tradisi” favoured officially.225

To praise the work and activity of this talented woman who is one of a species rare in Indonesia, that of the few women artists who survive from their painting; she who appears to favour the silence of few words and savour solitude, yet who is consumed with spirit when she paints; and whose works have travelled far across the seas, the Pacific, Atlantic, the Indian Ocean - even to the land of the Kangaroo ………

(Marianto, 1994)


225 Personal communication. Landung Simatupang, Yogyakarta, August 1999, Jakarta, July 2001. Many of Yogyakarta’s creative spirits were engaged in the strategically useful reworkings of their own traditions in modernity. For brevity, I cite only the English translation of Marianto’s essay, written after returning from postgraduate study in Australia.
Marianto uses the word, *langka* (rare) to describe Lucia’s professional success as an artist. She has satisfied all the requirements in the pursuit of her vocation thus far, struggle, survival, spirit, creative integrity and the successful distribution of her work. Like the feathers streaming from the neck of the graceful crane atop its rocky perch in *Tersangkut di/Pada Ketajaman*, Lucia’s paintings have “lived on the wind” (Marianto, 1994). Marianto expands on the theme of Lucia’s artistic success despite restrictions, a subject also introduced by controversial but popular columnist and writer, Dick Hartoko. Hartoko’s (1994) Preface to the catalogue suggests Hartini’s work is “colossal”, of the same scale as Michelangelo’s Sistine Chapel ceiling. In the second essay, Lucia’s former teacher from her years at STSRI, Soedarso Sp., uses the word “perupa” to acknowledge Hartini’s professional devotion to art, as opposed to the gendered word “seniwati”. Marianto then proceeds to describe and analyse *Tersangkut* suggesting it is, allusively, a self-portrait, prompting him to write about gender relations and their depiction in her oeuvre.

6.2. *Tersangkut di/Pada Ketajaman* (Sharp Entanglement)

In *Perbatasan / Boundaries*, Lucia, white-garbed and bare-footed stands with difficulty on the sharp limestone rocks of the ocean beach near Gua Lawung on the South Coast of Central Java. Spontaneously enacted as I filmed, Lucia interprets her painting *Tersangkut di/Pada Ketajaman*. (Plate 34). As we stood on the tiny windswept beach, a group of men walked by on the cliffs overhead, loads piled high on their heads. They had been gathering sticks among the groves of low trees and pandanus clinging tenaciously to the rock face with spidery roots. Looking directly at the camera, Lucia speaks about the sparse lives of most Indonesians. Her observations led her to question many things in life, including, at one point, the existence of a god who permitted suffering. Her words were carried away on the wind, completing an accidentally perfect “performance” of

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226 Personal communication. Lucia Hartini, Gua Lawung, August 1999.
At the opening of a retrospective exhibition of the artist Sudjana Kerton at the Vredeburgh some days previously, Lucia remarked on Kerton’s depiction of feet. To her, they represented the tenacity of spirit and will to survive of Indonesia’s farmers. Despite an underlying pessimism, the struggle against conditions towards improvement predicated on dreams and ideals is integral to Javanese thought. These vehicles of hope drove the process of Reformasi.

*Tersangkut di/Pada Ketajaman* covers similar territory to *Terjun / The Dive*, (Plate 27), although lacking its desperate sentiment. In *Tersangkut*, Hartini uses pan-Asian stylistic tropes to offer an alternative presentation of emotionally similar subject matter. Drawn from nature then elegantly distorted, a beautiful white crane forms the compositional centre of this painting. The bird perches tenuously on a branch of eroded coralline stone, its spikes like the protruding

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227 As in parts of Africa, the Javanese wind is a symbolic vehicle representing both continuity and change, the source of possible genealogies of domination and freedom (Tomaselli, 2003: 2; Philpott, 2000: 157).

228 The discrepancy in title and imagery indicates that there may be two versions of this painting. I have retained my interpretations based on the version I remember which I used in *Perbatasan / Boundaries* in which feathers also stream from the crane’s neck. However, this does not invalidate alternative readings which focus on the flock of birds flying beneath. I have had no opportunity to discuss this apperception with the artist and am prepared to acknowledge factual inaccuracy on this point. The complex details of the image encourage speculation about nature and several different interpretations.
roots of mangroves formally rendered in the decorative genres of Balinese wood sculpture. A vast, swirling universe surrounds this tentative resting place. In the delicacy and sweetness of its execution the bird is anthropomorphised, a concession to those who objected to the physicality of a naturalistic representation either for religious reasons, or because the unrestrained emotional impact of a work like *Terjun* rendered its message unacceptable.229

Hartini depicts the crane as vulnerable prey distinguished from its surroundings by its whiteness, a colour denoting purity, but also associated with direction, with the east and the god Siva. The planets beckon but the bird remains confined to its bitterly sharp rock, where freedom and the opportunities for expansion are circumscribed. Surrounded by barren destruction, it seems powerless to change its fate. Marianto (1994) ignores the prima facie environmental message of *Tersangkut* (Plate 34). Because Lucia has often depicted *sosok perempuan* (women’s issues), Marianto intimates that the graceful bird with its downward gaze is an anthropomorphic metaphor for women’s situation.230 Using a discourse of abstraction and hence of dissimulation in a discussion of gender relations, he suggests the artist’s treatment of such themes implies passivity - a fatalism even - which he interprets as acquiescence and an acceptance of restriction through cultural constructs.231

According to Marianto, the crane has not yet given its all to escape this situation. “It is not yet sufficiently assertive or wilful. The tendency to maintain

229 While *Tersangkut* appealed to patrons who were strictly Islamic or to Chinese who appreciated this genre, it also appealed to those Javanese who found unrestrained displays of emotion unacceptable. Speaking about *Terjun* in *Perbatasan / Boundaries*, Ika, the Collections Manager at the Bentara Budaya, Jakarta, remarked she was unable to look at this work for too long. Its effect on her was “sangat mengerikan”, provoking a painful distress which set her on edge. In the *Bernas* article, 7-4-1985, Lucia is reported as saying that she does not run away from reality in her creative process; it is a start. Meanness, butchery, hunger and injustice fill the television and the newspapers. They are an obsession in which one can become trapped – as one can in the events transpiring within one’s own family. Instead, she crowds every corner and each pore of her canvases with stories, with karang. Nine years later, Wisetrotomo, remarks that Lucia has retained her awareness of suffering humanity.

230 In July 1999, Lucia expressed concern that not enough was being done to conserve nature and wildlife in Indonesia. For many years, the crane depicted in *Tersangkut* symbolized this campaign.

231 In Marianto’s opinion, Hartini seemingly agrees with the proposition that Indonesian women are unable to independently formulate analytical socio-cultural critiques and are inclined to defer to and depend on a male relative or husband (Marianto, 1994).
its perch atop the painfully sharp prongs of rock is still too strong”, he writes, (Marianto, 1994). Either Marianto had simply failed to comprehend the magnitude of the dilemma for which Tersangkut provides an extremely apt visual metaphor, or this statement is shorthand for Lucia’s problematic marriage. In a later article, Marianto (1996 - 7) suggests that the torment in Lucia’s life conforms to an internationally accepted narrative for women artists, likening her to Frida Kahlo. Yet such interpretations insufficiently valued Indonesian women’s traditional sources of independence and those newly learned, because they failed to recognise women’s increasing individuation and growing awareness of their rights within the confines of custom and religion.

Conversely, fortunately supportive but protective male attitudes were consistent with a situation in which it remained difficult for Indonesian women to be heard in their own right in the public domain. Other commentators have remarked on the tendency of progressive male artists during the 1980s and 1990s to support women by including their emancipatory struggles as the subjects of art or literature, even to mount protests on their behalf (Bianpoen, 2000; Hatley, 1999). Citing an instance in which Semsar Siahaan’s painting Women Workers was carried as a banner in a labour demonstration, Wright (2000: 29 - 30) interrogates the position taken by male artists and cultural figures whom she regards as “speaking for Indonesian women after the need for this had passed”.232

A tree with many roots

In his essay, Marianto presents Tersangkut’s environmental motifs as bearers of the sign, tropes for human experience and emotion. Later he reworks significant aspects of this interpretation in his 1996 essay “Srikandi, Marsinah and Megawati”, an extended commentary on Hartini’s paintings Lensa Mata Mata

232 Wright (2000) suggests Siahaan has appropriated women’s heroism as his own, superimposing his facial features on the female figures in his large paintings Women Workers – Between Fact and Prison and Black Orchid. In previous paintings and graphic works, Siahaan had depicted women and children as keepers of batin within the fabric of Indonesian society. Now, Indonesian women were increasingly part of the struggle of labour, and, like artists, found themselves as spiritual nurturers and society’s witnesses, both within and without the home. They had transferred their traditional role to the public domain and, in demanding their rights, must be encouraged to speak for themselves. I suggest Siahaan’s male “presence” in this work was not only simulacral, but empathetically transcends gender. Dia, the third person pronoun is not gender specific, and ideally, can function to unite people across causes, just as it does with jokes in Indonesian wordplay.
(1989), (Plate 39) and Srikandi (1993) (Plate 41). My reading of Tersangkut comments directly on the painting’s imagery. Preferring to emphasize the artist’s expressed fondness for the beauty of the natural world and her concern at its fate, I see this painting as a lament for the plight of the fragile crane which tries so desperately to maintain its place in the link between nature and the cosmos. Questioning the reasons for such environmental barrenness, I recall that Lucia has always constructed her version of the surreal from her observation of the cruel as well as the beautiful and bountiful in the processes of evolution and accommodation. The delicate creature with wings spread wide, speaks of her desire to safeguard the riches of the natural and cultural worlds, severely stressed in late New Order Indonesia.

Beyond the alienation of powerful vested economic interests, questions of traditional ownership of land and its intersections with gender, the spiritual, and cultural autonomy all coalesced in campaigns to conserve the environment, save wildlife, restrict destructive resource use and maintain cultural practice. Discussion about environmental issues was already widespread in the Indonesian public domain of 1994, but rigorous enquiries into these subjects remained difficult. Care must be taken lest enquiry and debate be construed as giving “political” weight to animism re-constructed as ideology, (the Marhaenism of Sukarno’s era), so supporting the demands of farmers to retain their land and those of separatists and regional groups desiring autonomy. Again, heartfelt comment was safest when elegantly implied.

In 1991, contentious issues arising from these subjects had been carefully broached in the short documentaries of Nugroho-Lesmana’s children’s television series, Anak Seribu Pulau / Children of a Thousand Islands. The issues emerge through the recounted experiences of children, but the documentaries are narrated by others and not by the children shown on screen. They are presented as stories

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233 This extrapolation is drawn from several conversations with Lucia and others over the years about these topics.

234 Personal communication. FX Harsono, Jakarta, June 1994.

235 I visited Lucia’s house one evening in August 1992 to find the whole family glued to the television watching the weekly episode of this program. Dadang Christanto was also a keen fan. In this instance, some artists subsequently created art supporting the filmmakers’ vision.
in which attitudes criticising mainstream policies are sympathetically revealed rather than voiced directly.

How might we read the stream of feathers released by the stork’s preening or, alternatively, the flocks of cranes passing by beneath? Many possible “meanings” are suggested which are at once personal, environmental, social and political. Is the image a reflection on the passing of time and fertility and the survival of a species as the environment becomes progressively more hostile? Are we to read into the stream allusions to the sacrifices of a woman artist’s career, related to an immediate and particular view of genealogy, the long chain of ancestry or the stream of one’s lifetimes? By extrapolation, the image might also refer to the labour of Indonesia’s masses for daily survival, regardless of gender and ethnicity, artists and writers included. As citizens aspiring to a better world, most in New Order Indonesia were still caught fast by the realities of a harsh existence and the abuse of their rights, filmicly symbolised by the words swept away by the wind as Lucia stands barefoot on the sharp rock.  

6.3. With the image, the structure strikes out through the veil  
(Soefoulis, 1984, cited in Boow, 1986: 142)

In the vastness of nature one finds the richness of the Absolute Creator. Not only the good he has made but also the bad. Not only the bright but also the dark. .......... How can I know what is good if I don’t see the bad? How shall I know the bright, if I haven’t met with the dark!  
(Hamka, 1951, cited in Kratz, 1983)

In a key sequence of Perbatasan / Boundaries, Lucia speaks of “pouring herself onto the canvas, of joining with it”. Wisetrotomo (1994) notes this is an integral part of Lucia’s working process, a means of transferring the fruits of the artist’s inner explorations and experiences, her life itself, to the work in progress. Ideally, her art will exude rasa (spirit and sentiment); it will possess kagunan

236 Personal communication. Lucia Hartini, Gua Lawung, August 1999. 
Such expressions of humility and love of country may seem excessive to an Australian ear, but it is not unusual to hear them in Indonesia. For the best part of the twentieth century and into the post-Reformasi era, Indonesians have maintained their discourse with the concept of nation.
(intellectual and aesthetic fineness), and be perceived as *ikhlas* (heartfelt and sincere). The subjects and themes of her paintings will acquire power, attracting and engaging the viewer’s attention. (Plate 35).

Plate 35. Still from *Perbatasan / Boundaries* (2002). Lucia climbs onto her painting platform while describing the effort of her painting process
In classical Javanese culture, **kagunan adiluhung** describes an artistic creation in which, besides its aesthetic fineness, the concepts engaged are inseparable from the spiritual quality of the artist, that is, from their moral character. Pigeaud (cited in Supangkat, 1997: 11 - 12) defines **kagunan** as “the pouring out of intelligence or sensibility related to nobility of character, which produces the aesthetic/beauty as in a drawing, a sculpture, musical composition and lyrics for songs.” But Lucia reminds Wisetrotomo that the work for **Batas Antara Dua Sisi** has been produced from her struggle with illness and against pessimism. A **celumpung** (zither) player, Hartini also likes the Blues!

Despite their “**Beautiful Surrealism**”, many of her paintings from this period embody a counter-discourse of dissatisfaction and unease. They are visual texts of wounds and confusions as well as images of longed for transcendence, as seen in the enormous canvas **Batas Antara Dua Sisi / Boundary Between Two Sides** (1992), the key work in her 1994 exhibition. (Plate 37). For Lucia, the ordinary, the emotionally painful and the crass provide a foundation and a foil, an irritation against which improvement may be measured and light generated.²³⁷ She incorporates her experience of psychological disturbance and mystical revelation into this schema, an effort dramatically recorded in **Perbatasan / Boundaries**, through the staging and colouration of the scenes in which Lucia recounts this part of her story. At first, her attempts to overcome darkness are through symbolic flight. Later and more productively, she works to gain mastery of her Inner World, to better manage the external one with its disjunctions and almost insurmountable difficulties. The **rasa** evoked in these canvases is alternately furious, controlled and calm. It is not always fine, neither are Hartini’s canvases from this period always smoothly “beautiful”. Instead, they reveal different, often profoundly troubling, aspects of the artist’s emotions.

In **Melintas / Across** (1994), with its obliquely fractured division of the canvas, Lucia depicts various aspects of an unlikely and fantastically contradictory elemental landscape (Plate 36). Between them snakes the crossing, a narrow meandering ledge of jagged rock, patrolled by primitive birds referencing

²³⁷ Personal communication. Lucia Hartini, Yogyakarta, August 1999.
THE PRIMORDIAL AND EVOLUTION. THIS ROCKY LEDGE FORMS A NARROW BORDERLAND, A
BOUNDARY EDGE BETWEEN CHAOS AND FORM – THE BASIC REALITY OF SURVIVAL AND GROWTH
AS WELL AS THE SLIVER OF CONSCIOUSNESS ITSELF. WHILE THE POINTS FROM WHENCE TO
WHEREFORE OF THIS TRANSIT LIE BEYOND THE EDGES OF THE CANVAS, WE THE VIEWERS ARE AT
ONE POINT IN THE CONTINUUM OF THE ETERNITY DEPICTED. OUR EYE-LEVEL IS THE SAME AS
THE CAUTIOUS BIRDS STALKING THE NARROW PATH.

These boundaries are like a knife which has two edges; on one side
blunt, the other sharp. Our understanding tends to gravitate to that
which is substantial. In the context of Tini’s paintings however,
their meaning resides in the question which is the dream and which
reality; or which is the “real” and which the “surreal”.
(Wisetrotomo, 1994)

Such is Wisetrotomo’s analogy in the essay “Batas Antara Dua Sisi Lucia
Hartini”. The boundary as narrow border zone and crossing may be read as
barzakh, the isthmus of form and meaning, which lies between the cloud realms
of incipient possibility and the oceans of energy, the womb of the subconscious, a
space well-known to artists, but one which is often problematic in society. The
Qur’an (55: 19 - 21) states that barzakh is a necessary separation between “the
great bodies of water” despite the freedom Allah has given them, “so that they
might meet”. We may fly above and across boundaries as in Batas Antara Dua
Sisi / The Boundary Between Two Sides (1992), (Plate 37), although, as Lucia
argues in 1999, if this action is to be more than escapism, the perspective
presented must be considered differently. Melintas posits laterality and a forward
transit as a difficult alternative, but desirable for survival when compared with
chaos or involution, the alternatives depicted in Kekhawatiran / Anxiety (1994),
another key work in the exhibition. (Plate 38). In Batas Antara Dua Sisi, we
achieve transcendence, a chance to see the world afresh, and to consider the
multiplicitous nature of and reasons for boundaries. It is as impossible to
generalize about their respective negotiability as it is about their necessity or
otherwise.

To achieve a view of the past into the present, to understand and preserve
continuum, while simultaneously accepting change and recognizing evolutionary

modification, would suggest that one must connect the different spheres of the world laid out below. In this exercise of consciously working both sides of the brain, a *Kebatinan* practitioner knowledgeable in *Kejawen* would strive to master his/her Inner World.  

What else might we deduce from the compositional structure of an image? In 1964, Situmorang wrote, “MANIPOL is a bundle of artistic dynamite, which, with mental understanding followed by concrete social and artistic action, will act as a most explosive material for all forms of the arts…” The emotionally charged rhetoric of the *Gelanggang* and MANIPOL manifestos of the 1950s and 1960s (Said, S., 1990: 66; Supangkat, 1997: 54) continued to resonate during the New

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238 Personal communication. Lucia Hartini and Clara Anna, Yogyakarta, August 1999. Lucia says her idea for Melintas arose from a contemplation of evolution, and from debates about the relative importance of nature and enculturation in shaping human behaviour.
Order and since. The specific interpretation of the nature of “mental understanding” and the direction of its social enactment has been crucial to the unique application of each artist’s “bundle of artistic dynamite”.

Between 1989 and 1994, Lucia focused on the mental process used when creating her work with its play of polarities and condensations. Containment within a circle might create implosion and stasis, without a directional release of energy, while extreme laterality might result in diffusion and dispersal unless some pattern is provided to anchor form. This enquiry consumed Lucia’s energy and made her ill. Her concerns are raised contextually, if inchoately, as “absurdity” in the paintings for “Batas Antara Dua Sisi”. They are no longer as casual and unpremeditated as Marianto (1997) implies in his description of the early phase of Indonesian “Surealisme”.

Seeking refuge

In 1992, when we were filming Pusaran / Vortex, Lucia cautiously described her experience of psychological disturbance, a conversation she did not want me to film. Speaking with the support of her son Loko and with a wry smile, she described her strange behaviour as she found herself increasingly unable to cope with the pressures assailing her from all sides. She would not bathe in her outdoor mandi (bathroom) until nightfall when no-one could see her. With lights out, she changed her clothes in the wardrobe of her room. Obsessed by the conviction she was being watched, Lucia taped over all the cracks in the doors and covered the windows. She chronicled her distress in paintings which, somehow, in the process of observing her mental state with detachment, she says she was “still able to make”.239

Seven years later, in Perbatasan / Boundaries, Lucia poetically and performatively describes her flight from the prying eyes depicted in Lensa Mata Mata / Spying Eyes/Spy Lens (1989).240 (Plate 39) One day the incongruities and absurdities, the fear which amplified past terror, and the difficulties she intuited


240 Personal communication. Lucia Hartini, Yogyakarta, August 1992, and August 1999. Significantly, Lensa Mata-Mata (1989) is one of the works most admired in the West, and was selected by Wright for inclusion for the KIAS exhibition. Although proud of the work, Lucia still regarded this canvas as disturbing, acknowledging it was difficult to paint.
Lucia’s integrative resolution of this episode of her personal life was achieved through positioning it within her own cultural context, as the “blessed madness” which produces healers and visionary seers.241 In the article, “The Unbounded Self: Balinese Therapy in Theory and Practice”, anthropologist and filmmaker Linda Connor (Marsella, and White, 1982: 251 - 259) claims that, for Balinese:

- madness is a potentially inspired and not a degraded state. The phenomenon almost invariably leads out of the mundane world, and in many instances, is perceived to give humans intimations of the divine.
- Such madness is basically beyond human comprehension as the causes are other worldly. It is non-violent and is often associated with initiation into another role.
(Connor, 1982: 251 - 252)

Connor continues

Often they return as a healer after this experience, such autobiographical accounts being considered as cultural constructs par excellence, and thereby an important means of validating aspirations to the role of healer.
(Connor, 1982: 253)

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241 Connor (1982: 251 - 259) observes that the condition is often associated with “the hardships of dire poverty, coupled with more contingent misfortunes, such as the death of close kin and marital problems. Once the subject accepts their new role, the symptoms do not return” (Connor, 1982: 263). Importantly, Lucia says she deliberately sought neither the revelatory experience of madness nor the visionary shamanism which followed. Like Connor’s subject, the spirit medium Jero Tapakan, these events happened to Lucia and she submitted.
From a psychological and cultural perspective, Connor’s analysis fits Lucia’s own description of her experience well. Although Connor’s study was conducted in Bali, comparable states have been observed in Java and Malaysia. Connor notes that social stress and strain, manifesting in behavioural disorder, is often considered by the Balinese as “eccentric, unpredictable, and confused,” but not “mad” [in other words not understood as unreasonable (Connor, 1982: 252 - 255)], although Lucia uses the term gila (crazy) to describe her condition, as does Connor’s subject, the balian (healer) Jero Tapakan. Lucia Hartini also recollects that, despite her illness, her perceptions and inspirations were of a high order. The experience beneficially influenced her “Surealis” vision and the content and composition of her paintings for several years afterwards. She emerged as a visionary painter, prepared to undertake the next stage of her spiritual journey, strengthened in her resolve to engage with the world. Hers was an authentic Indonesian experience, distinct from the “New Ageism” which Spanjaard (2003) claims made Meta-realism not quite “official” in the European mainstream.

Connor (1982: 258 - 9) then observes that “the Balinese have a formal contextualisation of the self, or as may be more appropriate, selves”. Writing on dance as text in Central Java, Choy (1984: 71 - 73) supports this observation, describing how Javanese envisage a multiplicity of characters within the self. She draws an analogy between the puppet master’s box as a body but also as a repository for the cast of wayang characters which emerge as personas in performance. In this instance, Lucia’s magic box is the gallery and the paintings of the exhibition exist as various reflections and/or embodiments of her contingent self (or selves). These selves are also defined in terms of social relationships, which had sometimes been constructed for her and by her as “being crazy”. Like, Arahmaiani, Lucia wished to make art about aspects of her personal experience, her society and incidents she found disturbing yet her responses are profoundly sane and responsible. “Batas Antara Dua Sisi” provided a forum for art in which Hartini was able to posit questions regarding the nature of these relationships, even if her search for solutions led only to more questions, confusion and absurdity (Hartini, cited in Wisetrotomo, 1994).

I suggest that the imagery in Lucia’s canvases of this period must be read
beyond Western psychiatric therapy and the automatism of European Surrealist practice. If we accept Lucia’s claim that her surrealism truly flowered when she was “mad”, we find further confirmation of fundamental differences between Indonesian “Surealisme” and its European antecedent. English Surrealist Leonora Carrington responded angrily to her fellow Surrealists’ attitude to madness, accusing them of making fun of those who, for whatever reason, lost connection with the external world (Chadwick, 1991: 74). Their derision and shallow understanding produced non-credible imitations which she condemned as bad art.

By contrast, Lucia made good use of her experience of disconnection which she describes as *pasrah* (submission to a force far greater than herself). Through this spiritual submission, she “understood the workings of the universe”. Arahmaiani did the same with her ‘outcast’ status. Like Lucia, she used it to rework her art conceptually and politically. Importantly, neither stopped creating exceptional art. For them, that particular disease was incurable.

6.4. *Recounting the Process of Rebirth in One Lifetime: Lensa Mata Mata*

The experience of psychological hiatus and the “death” of consciousness at a specific level of psycho-spiritual development is expressed in the painting *Lensa Mata Mata / Spy Lens* or *Prying Eyes* (1989) (Plate 39). In this canvas, Hartini depicts a woman in foetal position suspended in the folds of a long blue cloth. She is positioned in one corner of the corridor of a red brick maze which meanders back into the far distance. This structure may represent the Great Wall of China (Wright, 1994, Wisetrotomo, 1994), the Red Forts of Delhi and Petra or the Women’s Fort of Laksamana Keumalahayati (Admiral Malahayati) in Kreung, Aceh. A similar compositional motif appears in the painting *Srikandi* (1993), (Plate 41), often regarded as the companion work to *Lensa Mata Mata*, despite their being dated four years apart.242 I suggest the brick passageway may also represent modernity’s patriarchal enculturation of the traditional furrow from which Javanese woman was created, experienced by Lucia and many others as the prison of society (Wright, 2000: 33).

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242 The zigzag occurs in the shape of gamelan scores and the decorative motifs of many traditional Indonesian arts. The same disjunctive mixture of beauty and strength occurs in the wavy fused metal layers of the *kris* (sword)’s blade and the finest textiles (Sumarsam, 1995: 108 - 111).
However, the zigzag structure of this painted maze is also a narrow passage charged with mystical meaning. If *Lensa Mata Mata* is read as a depiction of a healing rebirth within one lifetime, spiritual passage is symbolized by the internal space of the narrow corridor with its cracking material walls - a space within which the adept must stop and acquiesce from time to time, gathering strength and mindfulness for the next stage of the journey ahead.

In *Lensa Mata Mata*, a storm threatens but the woman sleeps on, oblivious to the prying eyes with their acidic gaze and radiating colours of lilac, orange and pale blue hovering overhead. A snakelike rivulet of cloud approaches the sleeper along the narrow corridor, a strange overflow born of gas or smoke or storm cloud, or all three in a discourse of all-time/no-time? Is it a purified essence, distilled from an ominous and perhaps poisonous environment, from which the woman, as bearer of life, seeks refuge? Swathed in her blue cloth, she resists physical penetration; psychologically, we question her state.

The eyes crackle and hiss, as though electrically charged. When conscious, the woman might ask who they are and what they want of her, but she is painted hiding deep within the dreamworlds of sleep. What can we know of her state of consciousness and the visions being born within? Those who read backwards in time from Hartini’s breakdown in 1991, may choose to interpret the image as a self-portrait, a depiction of the catatonic states associated with severe mental disturbance derived from Western psychiatry. The three eyes as spy-lenses directed towards the woman’s curled up body in *Lensa Mata Mata* might then imply a forced surveillance. We are left only with intuitive conjecture because so much in this image defies reality as we know it. For instance, a religious interpretation drawn from within the representations of female archetypes in Western European painting might see this image as an Indonesian deconstruction/reconfiguration of the purification of the Virgin Mary, selected by God as the bearer of destiny.

I prefer to consider influences drawn from the Javanese and Indonesian cultural iconography with which Lucia was equally familiar, and the radical contemporisations so engaged. With a turn of the Surrealist conceptual cone, *Lensa Mata Mata* (Plate 39) may even be read in Tantric terms as the death of the...
conscious self, awaiting spiritual impregnation and the transformation of its creative power, improved and re-energised in rebirth. In the old Javanese Saivite text, the Ganapati-tattwa (transl. Sudarshana Devi, 1958: 3, quoted in Becker, 1993: 79), Ganapati questions Siva concerning the creation of the cosmos and the origin of man. Instead, Lucia extemporizes on tradition in this representation of the re-birth of woman as a fully conscious being.

In this referential frame, the eyes then represent the internalised gaze of the cultural keepers of different ages in a life cycle, consistent with a spiritual or religiously based philosophical interrogation through which phenomena and accepted beliefs are questioned and incremental learning, (mata pelajaran), occurs. But in each interpretation, the female, the woman, is depicted as an object of close and methodical scrutiny from within the world of the canvas, as well as bearer of the gaze from without.

Of cloth and colour

Like other works in “Batas Antara Dua Sisi”, Lensa Mata Mata may consciously represent an image of the contingent self (Trinh, 1992: 157). This painting asks who, when, where, what and how am I, how will I be, and seemingly contextualises these questions environmentally.

So I have taken another way, whereby I can have the fullest opportunity to pay my respects to my forefathers and whoever else has helped me, so that as a result, my own lelakon (story as destiny) can thereby be revealed.
and contemporary real world events in a condensed yet multi-layered surreal image. In *Lensa Mata Mata*, the background with its acrid colours seems rooted in the man-made disasters of industrialisation which have given humanity the chemical poisonings of Bhopal and the nuclear meltdown at Chernobyl. In its symbolic combination of the domestic, the world outside and the metaphysical, *Lensa Mata Mata* resembles her images of exploding frypans.

Can the blue cloth protect the sleeper from contamination, a penetration by osmosis, or other forms of bodily harm? Indonesian artists struggled to find metaphoric means strong enough to visually suggest these many chemical violations of life. The combined imagery of *Lensa Mata Mata* suggests a world collapsing on itself in which inner strength and wisdom is required. The woman’s cloth, a signifier of civilisation and social cohesion since ancient times (Barber, 1994), flutters protectively and valiantly against the terrors of the outer world. Woman, *wadag* (the corporeal), asleep in the left corner of the brick maze, is weightlessly swathed in its folds. Without her *wadah* (container), she would be naked, impossibly vulnerable. A thin and fragile shield, this cloth has persisted for as long as civilisation itself.

In an extrapolation of significant details drawn from regional cultural tradition, Boow (1986; 1988: 64, 141, 74, 75) notes that a blue handloomed cloth was produced near Solo, in Central Java for warrior women and widows of the Surakartan court. Lucia once told me that Sultan Hamengku Buwono II boasted a women’s equestrian army whose members used this cloth, believing in its *sakti* (protective magic). Hartini proposes that ordinary modern Indonesian women are entitled to achieve states of awareness and contingent grace, which formerly, only privileged and powerful women of the courts knew well. Several years


244 Personal communication. Lucia Hartini, Yogyakarta, August 1992.

245 Personal communication. Lucia Hartini, Imogiri, July 1999. When Lucia, Operasi and myself were shooting *Perbatasan / Boundaries*, on location at Imogiri we were prompted to make donations to the upkeep of the Royal Graves. Lucia remarked that she was only happy to do this for the graves of those Royals who had treated their wives fairly and equitably. In past eras, women had acquired privilege and power but at great cost in other respects (Day, 2002).
later, Astari Rasjid expresses the constraints arising from the enculturation of Indonesian women within the built material culture of the late twentieth century, in her fabrication of a delicate lacy kebaya (blouse) constructed from steel mesh (1998). Rasjid implies that a woman’s batin requires a much tougher container in today’s world. In this challenge to the prevailing socialisations represented—one resurrected from the past—lies hope, an aspect Marianto (1996) confessionally develops in his essay “Srikandi, Marsinah and Megawati” for the book, Asian Women Artists (eds. Dysart and Fink, 1996).

The cloth further references Lucia’s perception of Javanese women’s situation through its insistent penetration of the gaps in the structure of the cracking maze. As with Tersangkut (see Plate 34), we may read aspirations to escape entrapment and transcend the conditioning within which women have struggled to claim fortified spaces for themselves. Rarely has their societal context proved helpful for a departure beyond the domestic hearth; but having gathered physical, emotional, mental and spiritual strength, women have found it possible to move forward from these spaces regardless.

The cloth’s escape then becomes suggestive of expansive social and spiritual promise. The cloth is a container for rasa, the inner awareness expressed through isi, the contents, which fill the body with power (Boow, 1986: 102, 1988: 89), and also signifies the first level at which one begins to understand the inner world. This awareness is achieved through a spiritual as opposed to a socially engineered understanding of the paired concepts of lahir and batin. (Plate 40).

Boow, (1986: 102) writes:

Lahir is the manifest world into which one is born, and batin is inner, timeless awareness…. Wadag (body) and lahir (outer world) are kasar: coarse, material. Rasa and isi, of the batin, are halus, refined, ethereal.

Boow, (1986: 102)

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Plate 40. Still from working draft of *Perbatasan / Boundaries* (2000). Lucia’s loosely woven blue shawl and black clothes are the coarse container for a tiny superimposed dancer who represents Lucia’s life spirit – her *batin*. 
In 1992, Wiyanto (1992) illustrates his catalogue essay on Lucia with a reproduction of Magritte’s *The Beautiful Vessel* (1946) in order to clarify essential differences between European and Yogyakartan “Surrealisme”. In the classical sculpture of Europe, the unadorned woman’s body is also the container, as in its tradition of figurative painting. But in Indonesia, Islamic religious sensitivities require that a tube or swathe of cloth must be the container for the depiction of the body, so influencing the development of the two-dimensional figurative arts. While not banned, the public depiction of adult human nudity, whether male or female, has remained highly problematic.

Again, Hartini’s visual solutions to cultural and conceptual problems, her “Surrealisme”, prove unique. Through her choice of cloth and colour, Lucia suggests that a key to women’s acquisition of inner strength and outer resolve lies in the Javanese past. Together with the image of the zig-zagging brick wall, these same elements appear in *Lensa Mata Mata* and *Srikandi* (1993), depicting a multi-referential locality consistent with the artist’s desire that this series of images “live on the wind”.


I do not envisage a “history of mentalities” that will take account of bodies only through the manner in which they have been perceived and given meaning and value; but a “history of bodies” and the manner in which what is most material and most vital in them has been invested.

(Foucault, transl. Hurley, 1978: 132)

1993. *Encountering Srikandi*

Lucia Hartini emerges from the surreal ‘sleep of reason’ with a new persona, that of Srikandi, mythical warrior woman, wife of Arjuna. Srikandi decided she would marry her love *Arjuna* despite his already having a beautiful wife, Dewi Sumbadra, and legions of admirers (Plate 41). She beguiles him to achieve her ends, keeping him through her devotion, and the qualities of loyalty and skill in battle.247
Although defined in relation to a male, and despite Javanist rumours that the historical Srikandi was actually a cross-dressing male and Arjuna’s homosexual lover on the battlefield (Wright, 1994: 124, fn. 5), Srikandi has provided an archetype for many valiant women in the long history of the archipelagic states predating modern Indonesia (Leigh, 1993: 4). Various qualifications of her myth did not deter women seeking courage when confronting the outer world of Indonesian society. At the time Lucia painted her Srikandi (1993), the heroine was emblematic of prominent women in Indonesia of the period (Massadiah et al., 1991), including Islamic women. In conversation in 1999, Lucia indicated she had painted Srikandi with Megawati Sukarnoputri, leader of the Partai Demokratik Indonesia (PDI), in mind, expressing a popular associative identification held by many in the 1990s.

In his extended commentary on Srikandi, Marianto (1996) includes Marsinah in this panoply of authoritative, challenging Indonesian women confiding that he has also rethought his position since 1994. He acknowledges that “sexist blindness is strong, even among intellectuals” (Marianto, 1996: 111). Lucia and Clara Anna’s sympathy for Marsinah’s struggle and their opinions on her fate are outlined in the discussion of gendered violence in Chapter 5. For

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247 Domestically Srikandi is depicted as temperamental, fond of waving her arms and chopping food into tiny pieces when angry! (Hardjowirogo, 1968: 150 - 151).


Massadiah’s (1991) anthology of biographies and autobiographies of Indonesian women of the period, Srikandi: Sejumlah Wanita Indonesia Berprestasi / Some Prominent Indonesian Women, supports the interpretation of many educated Muslims who considered that being a house-wife and mother was only one third of a woman’s role as a human being.

249 Personal communication. Lucia Hartini, Yogyakarta, August 1999.

In 1993, Lucia’s identification with Megawati was based on gender and the triumph of a woman through struggle. After the split in June – July 1996, which saw that section of the party present at the government-managed congress in Medan declare itself the true PDI, Megawati was removed from her position as general chairperson and replaced with Soerjadi. She and her supporters faced intimidation by Suharto’s security forces, but she linked her struggle to “defending the sovereignty that is in the hands of the people” and “redressing the democracy given to us under the 1945 Constitution” (McIntyre, 1998: 251 - 255). The PDI split and Megawati eventually became leader of the PDI Perjuangan. She sought many populist and legitimate ways to keep her pro-democracy cause before the Indonesian public and also engaged in an exercise to creatively renovate her father’s image “according to a democratic blueprint” (McIntyre, 1998: 251 - 255). In the real as well as the symbolic order, Megawati staked a claim to both democracy and struggle, and impressed many with her integrity. After Suharto’s downfall, her branch of the PDI, the PDI Perjuangan, emerged as the rightful and most popular political party.
Oil on canvas: 150 x 150 cms.
them, Marsinah’s spirit survives to inspire future action, but to say *Srikandi* was directly inspired by this event is incorrect. As Marianto points out, the painting emerged shortly after the persecutions of Marsinah and Megawati. Intuited by Lucia, *Srikandi* encapsulates the spirit of the times, marked by Indonesian women’s fraught rise to prominence and real power.

In the wayang, Srikandi fights at Arjuna’s side, but here in the world of the canvas, Lucia / *Srikandi*, who respects Marsinah’s spirit and is sympathetic to Megawati’s aspirations, usually stands alone. To create a sense of strength and firm resolve and depict a transition from puppet to realness, Hartini has fleshed out the three quarter, yet still profile, body view of her subject. In the context of the exhibition, her creative actions resemble those of a *dalang* who selects a three-dimensional *golek* puppet to replace the flat leather puppets who have previously “peopled” the performance. Now it is up to the audience to “nggolek”, to search for the meaning of what they have witnessed. As this search is personal, there are numerous interpretations of what *golek* actually means. If the *lakon* (narrative) performed is a spiritual portrait of an individual’s life, in which its complexities are played out through the many characters represented by the puppets (Choy, 1984: 71 - 72), then each character embodies a particular attribution and/or phase, *wafat*; it has *sifat* and is contingent to that self.

Beyond signifying processes of identification and the self-actualisation of personal growth, Lucia Hartini wishes to avoid too beautiful a depiction of her protagonist. I read the formal ambiguities of this work with its contrapuntal disjunctions of face, body and legs, as a ploy on the artist’s part. Lucia’s Srikandi repels titillation, frustrating certain aspects of scopophilic pleasure, the better to provoke questions in viewers’ minds. As a painting, Hartini demands that viewers contemplate its powerful intent, appreciating this particular image as one whose primary rationale is its nature as representation, rather than as a naturalistic self-portrait. Her self-confident Srikandi is a symbolic condensation of the experience, attitudes and aspirations of many Indonesian women.

Despite Srikandi’s achievements in the wayang world of shadows, we might ask whether *Srikandi* / Lucia / Megawati can enact and sustain her revolt in the real world? Lucia wants her confident creation to be solid and enduring, yet
we perceive the figure as not quite human. Srikandi’s body has the quality of a sculptural bas-relief rather than a realistically rounded natural form. By Lucia’s definition, this depiction is “sureal”, raising several questions.

For Javanese, Lucia’s Srikandi suggests an envisioning of the human body as a continuum between doll or puppet and the human form itself, from that which is lifeless but which can be filled with life, to that which is living (Choy, 1984: 71)

There is a blurring of the boundaries between the two, of human for puppet and puppet for human. We imagine strident music as accompaniment. With her masculine and operatic stance, Srikandi’s attitude further provokes our questioning of her motives. Her pose resembles that of the Tledhek, the solo female dancer who emerged from a carved statue in ancient times. Given the breath of life, her lively existence embodied the first homage paid to the sculptor’s skill (Choy, 1984: 73). Hartini / Srikandi plays the visual tease with purpose, grace, erotic intent and sometimes, gentle humour, performatively activating the conceptual space between image and viewer.

Lucia / Marsinah / Megawati / Srikandi has escaped the narrow confines of the brick maze by claiming it as a fort and not a prison. (Plate 41). The blue-garbed woman astride her fortress claims a female conquest over a man-made construct symbolising societal constraints, be this an institution of the state, like Foucault’s asylum, or the dogmatic excesses of religion. The fort may also represent conquest over a societally engendered and perpetuated “pattern” or convention, “the prison of tradition” symbolised in Pusaran / Vortex by Lucia’s emulation of the old woman who walks in a circle with clacking wooden shoes. In her interpretation comparing Srikandi with Lensa Mata Mata, Wright (2000: 39) notes that Hartini conveys Lucia / Srikandi’s resolve by the central placement of her protagonist and the noticeably different objects and details of foreground, middleground and background. The image represents a confident triumph of the Inner World over the outer one.

Lucia depicts the maze cracking before our eyes such is the force of
historical circumstance and Srikandi’s resolution. She stands poised, set to fight, but we do not yet see the object(s) of her gaze, only the direction of the cone of vision with which she repels the spying eyes which once brought her such grief. Strengthened through her mastery of the Inner World, our protagonist confronts the terrors of the outer one. She has control of her energy, directing it outwards. In the process, she also casts out the internalisations of restraint, but, in the play of reversals, seeks to absorb fresh sight. This cone of vision becomes a borderland in which new perspectives might be exchanged, for the outer world is increasingly bathed in the light of her altered perceptions.

In this new world, we wonder who will be Srikandi’s allies? In the conceptual allegory spun from the painted image, they remain as yet invisible, unknown. In the real world will they take on shape and weight and substance? Will they exist allegorically as phantasms, thought forms, an artist’s personal demons, compounding the forces of the cosmos and the spirit world of Javanese and Balinese belief, rich with creatures of the air, the earth, the waters and forests? Given the levels of contextualisation possible here, the personal/psychospiritual, the socio-political, and the environmental/cosmic, in which location, of which sphere, and at what level will this woman, born again in strength and resolve, choose to fight? Marianto (1996: 108, 111, 113) suggests that education, health and environment must be the start, bolstered by changes to law.

6.6. The Moral Imperative of the Inner World

By 1999, both Lucia and Arahmaiani were using the metaphor of “trial” to describe the difficulties they had endured previously. The very choice of the word conveys their awareness of the many hurdles facing women in late New Order Indonesia. Such difficulties went beyond the personal, the customary, the attitudinal and the political: to solve them required changes to the law. Because


251 Personal and political trials of many sorts were experienced by real people in contemporary situations in late New Order Indonesia and during the chaos of Reformasi. Some received great publicity, being used to test the waters of the emerging civil society. Others were instances of collective modelling for potential leaders waiting in the wings. The word “trial” became part of the aspirational language of the Reformasi movement, its meaning being both actual and symbolic.
freedom of expression had been restricted, and political and legal change was slow, women must somehow maintain their strength of mind. For Lucia, there was wisdom in gaining mastery of her Inner World. No matter how difficult the process, the outcome could be used productively to improve self, conquer challenges, and eventually, act according to one’s resolve on a broader scale.

In his catalogue essay “Batas Antara Dua Sisi Lucia Hartini”, Wisetrotomo cites the quiet and contemplative act of painting as Lucia’s preferred field of expression for her personal experience and social views. Despite pain, she is revitalised by making art; yelling and demonstrations are not her style (Wisetrotomo, 1994). Wisetrotomo suggests that Lucia concretises her struggles within her large canvases, and the volumes of paint and physical effort expended in their creation. Her canvases embody those obstacles to be overcome in every aspect of life. The process of painting each canvas is a spiritual trial, in which the artist’s soul is refined contemporaneously as her brushes render the characteristic narrow, rocky pathways and man-made corridors of her imagery with painstaking detail. Again, this process reminds us of Sudjojono’s statement, “What gives value to the painting is not convention, but the soul of the painter” (Supangkat, 1997: 32).

Supposedly, the artist will emerge victorious, their soul cleansed and polished. Lucia confesses that this now happens only in relation to her success as a painter because the metaphysical and spiritual aspects of her struggle are not communicated to viewers. They marvel at the aesthetic beauty of her painting and apparently seamless technique, while the many important questions raised remain unanswered. Personal flaws and wider social injustice remain, and Lucia finds only confusion. Yet somehow, she must continue (Wisetrotomo, 1994). Painting appears to be only one more difficulty, a lonely pursuit, sometimes sweet, but always the fruit of independent thought and independent appreciation. In Perbatasan / Boundaries, I seek to convey these concepts and experiences, as when Lucia struggles to stand against the congealed flows of Luapan Emosi (1992), (Plates 35 and 26).

Reading back into Wistrotomo’s view of Hartini’s art and using Popper’s (1982: 115) concept of a World 4 containing creativity, the metaphysical and
spiritual, we may also contemplate the sources of free will and the concepts of human freedom.

Dan di sinilah kita kembali disadarkan, di mana letak yang sesungguhnya pengertian “kemerdekaan”; kemerdekaan berkreasi di satu pihak dan kemerdekaan menafsir (mengapresiasi) di pihak yang lain, masing-masing berpangkal pada kemandirian persepsi.

And here we return, our awareness heightened, regarding our true understanding of “freedom”, its location; on one hand, the freedom to create and on the other, the freedom to appreciate, both respectively based in an independence of perception. (Wisetrotomo, 1994)

Wisetrotomo’s essay refers to increasingly public espousals of the value placed on freedom of expression and interpretation by Indonesian artists and writers, which he links to the spiritual quest. His argument supports Holt’s appreciation of those “traditions” in modern Yogyakartan art which consider an artist’s work to be a distillation of the spirit and an expression of personal morality” (Holt, 1967: 214, cited in Maklai, 1996: 14 - 15). Maklai (1991: 2) proposes that one must show the wounds on behalf of society, that they be healed. Wisetrotomo suggests this is also Hartini’s intention in many of the works in “Batas Antara Dua Sisi” (Wisetrotomo, 1994). Despite her struggles and imperfections, Lucia Hartini’s paintings express the moral imperative of strengthening one’s Inner World prior to action in the outer one.

Moreover, in art as in society, to gather and gather for no purpose also makes no sense (Pemberton, 1994: 5 - 6). Wisetrotomo quotes Hartini as saying the result of her speculations only provokes further questions. These questions compound on each other, as a wave gathers before breaking. What is gathered here is not water but absurdity. Lacking alternatives, the endlessness of this process and the demands of artistic execution produce a frustration, experienced physically as sickness. The expression of social comment and philosophical speculation in Hartini’s work is as fragments (Hartini, cited in Wisetrotomo, 1994).

Wisetrotomo indicts those conditions which actively discourage the creation and expression of coherent linkages between elements, facts and actors
on the stage of life. He then situates the problems articulated by Hartini beyond the process of creating new work and the identity politics of gender. The New Order state was no longer seen as “fatherly”, but anti-humanitarian in its methods of control and deleterious for cultural and social development. For many years, Indonesians had desired change but were largely unable to precipitate it directly. They lacked a language of analysis and the repressive climate together with existing legal and administrative structures made it difficult to frame and discuss criticisms openly, let alone constructively posit and implement alternatives.

Wisetrotomo (1994) cites Lucia’s comments concerning her frustration with the discrepancies between the reception of her art and the struggles involved in its creation. Her search for connections between and later, for meaning and its convincing communication, are presented as symptomatic of the depoliticisation experienced by many Indonesian intellectuals and creative workers during mid to late New Order Indonesia (Supangkat, cited in Maklai, 1996: 36 - 37).

In June 1994, there were large protests in Jakarta, and elsewhere including Yogyakarta, occasioned by the license revocation and closure of the magazines Tempo, DeTIK and Editor. This crisis was sparked by critical reporting of the government purchase of second-hand East German warships and armaments for the Indonesian navy despite rice shortages caused by corruption. The demonstrations were accompanied by the violent arrest of many people including intellectuals, writers, journalists and artists, yet, in some ways, the aftermath of this event marked a turning point in the hold of both state terrorism and teror on the Indonesian psyche. President Suharto’s misjudgements on these matters

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252 Heri Dono, Harsono, Dadang Christanto, Moelyono, Arahmaiani, Anusapati, Nindityo and others all depicted representations of this aspect of the state in various installations between 1990 and 1996. Notable examples are the installations Power and Oppression (Harsono, 1992), in which the kris (swords) point downwards, alluding to the process of self-censorship, and Fermentation of Minds (Heri Dono, 1993), an exploration of mechanistic patterns deployed in the production of bureaucracy.

253 I witnessed the Monas, Jakarta protests on 27-6-1994 and their aftermath while curating an exhibition of Aboriginal art from the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Lands at the Museum Nasional, Jakarta, part of the Australia Today Cultural and Trade Mission in 1994. Standing on the pavement in front of the Museum Nasional, I watched the beginning of the protest with Nia Fliam until we were ushered back inside by concerned staff. That night, Dolorosa Sinaga and I searched Jakarta’s hospitals, looking for Semsar Siahaan, injured in the protest. We found him in the Army hospital in Central Jakarta. Semsar’s colleagues were worried about his safety: I joined the effort to ensure
contributed to his growing loss of support and his subsequent demise as President four years later (Forrester and May, 1998; Hadiz, 1999; Lane, 2004).

How did this swelling tide of resistance evolve? Can Lucia’s dedication to personal empowerment be seen as the beginning of one person’s confident rethinking of the relationship of individuals to society and the state, and an example of the beginning of the change of consciousness which coalesced to become Reformasi? Sparringa (1997) examines Foucault’s analysis of the effects of power on subjects by the state and within institutions, applying it to the Indonesian context (Foucault, 1979; 1987: 102). Not every exercise of power necessarily entails the disappearance of freedom, but a state of domination pertains when power constrains or forbids absolutely.

Philpott (2000: 153) maintains that domination is not the necessary effect of the operations of power, although domination through the use of particular strategies designed to “control” populations might be seen as an effect of power. He proposes this analysis opens the way to the inevitability of popular resistance to domination as an effect of power through the existence of established genealogies of domination and freedom (Patton, 1994: 61, cited in Philpott, 2000: 157). Philpott suggests that the recuperation of the contingent self is an important strategy of resistance to domination in the post-colonial era, while Edward Said (2002) argues for the deep-seated impact of an interrogation of existing traditions. More is required if resistance is to succeed in displacing power.

Resistance requires information, critical thinking and effective organization. By the mid 1990s, many Indonesians were better educated, had new and different expectations, and increasing access to new technologies (Sparringa, 1997: 4 - 9). They were becoming more critical of the apparatus of government and its effect on the society in which they lived. Social comment had not disappeared from art, although it remained more overtly evident in works made for overseas exhibition. Constantly pressured to explain their work, artists respected but also challenged earlier conventions of intertextuality and esoteric
communication.\textsuperscript{254} Besides the partially liberating momentum of development itself, there now existed a wealth of competing ideas, philosophies and alternative strategies previously considered conducive to schism and revolt.

The New Order regime regarded an aspirationally hegemonic National Culture as a pragmatic strategy supporting the unification of a far-flung nation, designed to function as a brake on regional fragmentation spurred on by the gains of developmentalism. National Culture insulated governance from the dangers of permitting the masses access to the communicative realms of the elite. But in the spirit of other traditions of archipelagic cultural creation, this bulwark had been gradually and systematically undermined from within, by and through the elements of its construction. A million small critiques might lead to the creation of a vast body of alternatively informed opinion. The growing confidence to publicly express criticism and demand redress might engender civil disobedience on a grand and populist scale, rather than the \textit{rebutan} or conflict usually despatched swiftly by New Order security forces (Pemberton, 1994: 18). While marked by confusion, the process of change was unstoppable.

In the \textit{lakon}, \textit{The Churning of the Sea of Milk}, the white world horse Ucaisrawa emerges from the swirling sea in the temporary aftermath of chaos. In Hartini’s painting \textit{Menepi / Alongside} (1992), many variously coloured horses emerge from a vortical whirlpool bordered by sharp reefs. (Plate 42). From the chatter of thoughts in her head, the contrary voices of her socialisation and the years spent as an artist constructing allusive and cryptic images in difficult times, a pack led by the white horse escapes from the void, running straight towards both artist and viewer, while another pack veers to one side.

\textsuperscript{254} In this instance, the situation of artists in Indonesia resembled those of its progressive filmmakers who were faced with difficulties at home and acclaim abroad. Strangely consistent with Javanese modalities whereby ideas and opposition were historically absorbed by ruling elites, Dea Sudarman’s documentary films on Irian, \textit{The Asmat} (1982) and \textit{The Korowai} (1986), were later used to inform administrators and teachers about Irianese culture although they were never screened publicly in Indonesia. A subsequent Hong Kong-Indonesian co-production feature, \textit{Stone-Age Warriors} (c. 1990), set in Irian, screened, but was targeted as racist and subsequently prohibited (Cohen, 1992). Conversely, Garin Nugroho turned his documentary \textit{Donggeng Kancil Tentang Kemerdekaan} (1995), made with a faulty sixteen millimetre camera and damaged film stock, into the very popular and widely screened fictional feature \textit{Daun Diatas Bantal} (1998), the film’s potent messages of social inequality attaining a wider public than the original documentary.
Plate 42. Lucia Hartini, Menepi / Alongside (1993).
Oil on canvas: 180 x 250 cms.
CHAPTER 7

NEW WAYS OF BEING
The Practice of Meditation, Contemplating the Passage of the Soul After Death, and Returning to the World, 1996 – 2002.

Early in 1998, six years after filming *Pusaran / Vortex*, Lucia Hartini freely described the significant changes in her life. In this chapter, I consider these changes in detail together with the suite of paintings they inspired. These paintings comprised Lucia’s third solo exhibition, “*Irama Kehidupan / The Spirit of Life*”, held at the Bentara Budaya, Jakarta, in January 2002. Previously established thematic threads are considered and new ones introduced. The relationship between personal and artistic change and the social changes contributing to and flowing from *Reformasi* are explored, as are the links between Lucia’s life, her art and the documentary film *Perbatasan / Boundaries*.

Between 1995 and 1999, Lucia faced her fears, seeking the resolution of personal difficulties. A healing process commenced. The strength and clarity gained from her *guru*, the Supreme Master Ching Hai, assisted her spiritual progress, preparing her well for the changing times ahead. By practising the Master’s method, and following her teachings, Lucia harnessed the escapism and mental dangers of an unguided spiritual journey. Through devotional surrender to her Master’s presence, she describes how she found inner peace and joy. She had become “*Surealis Saya / Myself the Surrealist*”, the subject of her life affirming and spiritual transformations.

Conceptualised as spiritual rebirth at a higher level of accomplishment within one’s lifetime, Lucia’s cultivation of spiritual wisdom was closely linked to her participation in the larger cosmic process of cyclical renewal seen by many Javanese as coinciding with the new Millennium. Her “return to the world” at the Master’s injunction, enabled her to embrace society and actively participate in *Reformasi*, whose dynamic was part of this process. Instead of a lament for loss and despoliation, Lucia’s respect for the wellbeing of the natural world, and an expression of this consciousness in her art, is at once homage paid, and a reason

for solicitous protective action.

The experiences initiating Lucia’s new found happiness, the changes in her
life and work and the energy of the era lie at the heart of the narrative direction of
*Perbatasan / Boundaries*. In October 1998, Lucia had just begun planning “*Irama
Kehidupan / Spirit of Life*” and was reviewing her personal and creative
achievements thus far. For her, it was important to capture the moment and mark
welcome change, For me, the opportunity to document this process filmicly was
irresistible. We agreed not to make a continuation of *Pusaran / Vortex*, but to start
afresh in the present moment and in the real world rather than that within the
canvas, respecting the influence of Lucia’s Master, the rupture of *Reformasi* and
with the perspective of the exhibition to be.

Comprising work produced between 1996 and 2001, “*Irama Kehidupan / Spirit of Life*” affirms Lucia’s enactment of personal growth and her distillation of
the spirit of a new era, prompting the creation of prescient works. Despite
physical struggle, most of these paintings are distinguished by a new fluidity, an
openness of composition, and an emphasis on glowing colour. The tri-partite
as a work in progress in the opening sequence of *Perbatasan / Boundaries*, is her
welcoming recitative for the exhibition and for the new Millennium (Plate 43).
The links between individual, societal and spiritual domains are clearly depicted
and combine to suggest an aspirational agenda for the future. Although many of
these images retain a magically disjunctive and fantastical quality, Hartini’s
thematic concerns are now outwardly focused and clearly expressed. The
involuted “*Surealis*” angst characterising many previous works has largely
vanished, but the cautionary nature of images warning of potential environmental
chaos and the need to interrogate societal and humanitarian conditions of
existence remains. We are expected to look for meaning in these paintings as well
as emotively respond to and appreciate their feeling. The exhibition celebrates and
completes a cycle of renewal beginning with the painting *Terjun* (1990), seen by
the artist as marking the lowest point in her life (Hartini, cited in Wright, 1998: 35
- 36), revealing instead Lucia Hartini’s maturity as an artist strengthened through
mastery of her Inner World.

In Java and Bali, spontaneous, freely engaged and fresh interpretations of two important *lakon*, *The Churning of the Sea of Milk* also known as *The Spinning of Mount Mandara*, a major dramatic episode from the over-arching narrative of the Mahabharata, and *The Sriwedari Garden* from the *Lakon Sumantri*, offered a cultural guide to the events unfolding in Indonesia between December 1997 and February 2002. Indonesians had long been encouraged to contextualise and contemporise historical process through such grand mythic narratives, because they are a reminder of the power of collective as well as individual interpretations of *lakon*. Contemporary artistic events exuding this same spirit and similar thematic intentions purged the past and healed individual and collective psyches while speaking to the political and problems requiring urgent solutions.

*The Churning of the Sea of Milk* is a story of rupture and great change, while the *Sumantri* concerns the difficulties of manifesting one’s aspirations and the creation of an ideal world. Both encapsulate crucial issues for the present and future in Indonesia, particularly to do with questions of power balance; of reconciling ethnic, racial and religious difference; of balancing sustainable environmental management with human rights; and the creation of a democratic state with a civil society based on the rule of law. In some versions of *The Churning of the Sea of Milk*, the goddess Danwantari is seen as a beautiful black youth, the god Vishnu, rendering the *lakon* geographically and culturally inclusive and demonstrating once more that possibilities for change lay within existing traditions.

Eiseman (1996: 63 - 66) cites a Balinese version of *The Churning of the Sea of Milk* recounted by a professional bard to a band of noble hermits, living as ascetics, deep in the forest. The tale opens when two princesses see a great world-horse approach. But when asked about the horse’s origins, the bard launches into

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256 In Chapter 6, I explore the idea of role/life aim/destiny as one applicable to the nation as a whole, a concept used in propaganda, both visually and performatively, as a strategy of nation building by Presidents Sukarno and Suharto. Under both regimes, those responsible for Indonesian cultural policy invested a very elastic form with officially desired directions and emphases. During Reformasi, the frequency with which *The Churning of the Sea of Milk* and the *Lakon Sumantri* were staged suggested popular choice rather than official pressure. I attended a performance of *The Churning of the Sea of Milk* in Bali in October 1998, and a very contemporary interpretation of the *Lakon Sumantri* performed by dalang Sukhasman in Yogyakarta a few weeks later.
the story of the spinning of Mount Mandara and the horse is temporarily forgotten. The bard tells how the combined efforts of the Gods and Demons used Mount Mandara as their whisk to churn the oceans of the world, thus creating the first Tirtha Amertha, the holy water which is the Elixir of Eternal Life (Eiseman, 1996: 64). Great destruction follows and eventually the water of the sea turns to milk, “but still there was no Tirtha Amertha.” Wisnu grants the gods and demons renewed energy:

And suddenly, as they churned the Sea of Milk, a sun of 10,000 rays arose from the Sea, followed by the bright cool moon. And the goddess Sri emerged from the sea, clothed in white robes. And the goddess of liquor arose from the sea, as did the white horse, Ucaisrawa. The great jewel named Kastuba which Wisnu now wears on his chest - the jewel which will grant any wish - also emerged. All of these creatures went to where the gods stood watching. And finally there arose from the foam of the creamy sea, the beautiful goddess Danwantari, carrying the white gourd Kamandalu, which held the Tirtha Amertha.

(Eiseman, 1996: 66)

In August 2001, after much soul-searching, Lucia Hartini celebrated her survival and creative regeneration, by marrying her long-time friend, Operasi Rachman. Her new marriage represented a personal challenge, as well as one of reconciling different faiths and re-commencing spiritual growth on a different level.

In the Spirit of Life, (Plate 43), Lucia’s well wishes and cautions for the Millennium, are embodied in the image of baby Megan. Depicted analogously as Kamandalu, the baby symbolises a new aspiration for a beautiful future. This child, a gift to her sister, is the fulfilment of Lucia’s act of compassionate and generous love, embodying hope for herself as well. Lucia’s actions and these paintings are the fruit of her “sifting” the heaps of her achievements in life, depicted as the peaks of distant mountains. The tranquility and wisdom consciousness gained from the Master’s teachings are represented by the music plucked on the celempung (zither) by the white-garbed woman in the upper right

257 “Sifting the heaps” is part of the Gelugpa Mahayana Buddhist Mandala Offering ceremony.
of the canvas, while the gong marks the end of a major cycle in Lucia’s life and that of her nation.

*Prescient communications, 1996*

Through the constancy of her devotion to the act of painting Lucia encountered her spiritual teacher, the Supreme Master Ching Hai. The Master is based in Formosa (Taiwan) but her background, experience and teachings encompass several nations and religions. Lucia found the Master’s teachings sympathetic for several reasons. Prior to dedicating her life to the spiritual path, the Master had worked for Red Cross in Europe, where she assisted refugees from wars and natural disasters. Exhausted, her efforts to stop the suffering of humanity seemed of little use. She decided to seek individual enlightenment, beginning with meditation and studying with many teachers. Leaving her marriage, she travelled first to the Himalayas where she remained in retreat for some time, and then to Taiwan. Having mastered the Quan Yin method, and after some prevarication, the Master decided it was time to teach, sharing her message of Truth and demonstrating the similarities between the great bodies of religious teachings. She must also commence the initiation of sincere students in the Quan Yin method. Assisted by her many followers, she has maintained her humanitarian activities (The Supreme Master Ching Hai, 1994: 16).

The Supreme Master’s emblem is a parasol and her robes are gold. According to some, her approaching presence is preceded by a shimmering light, like that of Kanjeng Ratu Kidul, but differs from that described in popular stories and Javanese literature. Here *wahyu* appears as variously-sized glowing balls of shining white or bluish magical radiance, hovering above the heads of rulers, noble figures and leading protagonists, conferring authority (Stange, 1980: 129; 1984: 258).

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258 The Key of Immediate Enlightenment (1994: 11) is a small booklet containing a selection of the Supreme Master’s teachings, published by her followers. It includes a brief biography. As a child in Au Lac (Vietnam), this daughter of a naturopath attended Catholic Church in the morning, Buddhist temple in the afternoon, and in the evening listened to lectures on the holy teachings. She also read many Buddhist and philosophical texts. Explaining the spiritual lineage of the Master’s method, the anonymous author cites the following: “When Master Ching Hai left home to become a nun, her mother went to a Quan Yin temple to pray for advice. She chose a temple where the Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva was said to answer all questions from sincere devotees. She was told, ‘The Master is a very rare and noble child, one of a billion. She has come to this world, on the mission of the compassionate Quan Yin, to save sentient beings from misery.’”
Wahyu also occurs as diffuse and variously coloured lights shooting through the night sky or nestled on the ground. Befitting a democratic era, wahyu may appear as many small sparkling specks hovering in the air or attached to people and things. I first observed its presence when filming Lucia’s celebrated canvas *Dibawah Payung Duaribu / Beneath the Umbrella of the Millennium* (1996) at Lucia’s home in January 1998. Operasi claimed wahyu was a frequent visitor to our locations in 1999. For Lucia, the event indicated a propitious blessing, a continuance of that experienced when creating this larger than life-size and inspiring work.

In the process of painting the statuesque woman who dominates *Dibawah Payung Duaribu* (Plate 44) and whom she had chosen to symbolize humanity, Lucia felt she was invoking a special energy, conjuring forth a particular individual she had yet to know. The artist may have referred to her own body as the figurative model, but knew she was not painting a self-portrait in any literal sense. Creating this work became Lucia’s personal act of self-reflexivity, purification, integration, and renewal. In her descriptions, the process of painting is again related to the idea of giving life breath to inanimate representation. In this instance, Lucia claims that the intuitive process following the act of creative inspiration was born through surrender to the unknown, an intense and thoroughgoing experience (Supangkat and Zaelani, 1997: 90). Inspired, she felt that *Dibawah Payung Duaribu* would be important, although at the time, she did not understand why.

Gradually, the Master’s presence invoked in the painting began to influence its compositional details. The canvas is large and the painting oriented vertically. The world is simultaneously contemplated and incorporated within the body of a silvery-draped figure, contrapuntally posed. Looking backwards over one shoulder, the woman partly turns away from the viewer. She grasps a cosmic umbrella, the handle of which becomes an “axio mundi”, a magic staff through which earth and heaven are linked. A tempest of rain and rushing torrents surrounds her.

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259 Personal communication. Operasi Rachman, Yogyakarta 1999

I resist the literal attribution of Western symbolism to this figure, one which might read “Liquid/Ocean = Woman/Mother”. The woman painted here as nameless archetype may be an invocation of the goddess within, but is later revealed as a personification of Lucia’s guru, who has re-awakened the artist’s purified *nur* (life-essence). Cixous’ description of such a being is apt. “She is role-free, non-Name, a force that refuses to be fragmented but suffocates codes”; her behaviour is decisive but gentle.

For a life to maintain another life, the touch has to be infinitely delicate: precise, attentive and swift, so as not to pull, track, rush, crush or smother.


Prompted by the strange beauty of this image, we may question not only its *sifat* and the feelings evoked, but also the meanings implied through its compositional structure and further elaborated in its detail. The image requires careful reading. By contrast with laterally composed works like *Menepi* (Plate 42), the image posits unity against diffuseness. While *Dibawah Payung Duaribu* can be seen as a female-centred response to a state perceived as patriarchal, and the woman’s body as a phallogocentric substitution, the painting is mandalic in composition in its upper third. Compositionally, the woman draws our gaze towards the world beyond herself, extending back beyond the painted image set in its gilded frame. Drawing upon Buddhist, Hindu and Christian religious architectural iconography, her figure has the solidity and grace of a towering stupa or church, above which sits a whirling parasol of exquisitely painted clouds. Like twisted ropes of silk, the umbrella’s structure is heightened in relation to the draping folds of the woman’s dress.

Metaphorically, both imply shelter, be this solid, physical and religious, or environmental and spiritual, of a mystical nature. The image then becomes one of empowerment as well as shelter, for the woman appears to directly control the

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261 The female/male pairing of *yoni* (vulva) and *lingga* (phallus) is a recurrent trope in Indic iconography, and is also found in Indonesian art, more particularly in temple carving (Coomaraswamy, 1965: 36; Holt, 1967: 24; Wright, 1994: 45, 2000: 12, 27). Hartini’s reference to these symbols in her work, metamorphosed in the forms of her imagery, is long standing.
cosmos through her pillar of connection, traditionally regarded as the preserve of gods and men, rather than of women. Aware of Lucia’s resolve to strengthen the Inner World as her means of engaging with the outer one, the image represents a vision emanating from a position at the centre of the umbrella or the centre of the whirlwind. The handle, spokes and circle of clouds at the centre of the umbrella, are white. In an interview for Kompas, 2-2-1997, republished in the Suma Ching Hai News, Lucia states that she is protected by the Master’s teachings, symbolised by the intense white light beneath the umbrella. However, the farther the white colour is from the hand of the woman holding the umbrella, the more it is pervaded by other colours. Clarity must fight very hard to maintain its aura against diminution, just as, through compassion and right action, we must cleanse our world for new life to begin.

On separate occasions, Lucia Hartini recounted the process of painting Dibawah Payung Duaribu to myself, (January 1998), and Wright, (2000). Lucia describes her attempts to paint a plethora of consumer items atop the umbrella. Originally she wanted to depict cars, fridges, skyscrapers, highways, whizzing around overhead, and holes in the skin of the umbrella through which some were falling. “I wanted to capture all the environmentally destructive madness of our century. But they (the forms) kept on falling off,” she said. Often repeated in interviews with the artist in relation to this work (1996 – 1998), this statement indicates Lucia’s growing concern with the problems of the modern world. She intended the image to function symbolically as a warning against greed for material ease represented by the commodities we worship and now cannot live without. Abstracting her original vision, Lucia replaced the problematic objects on top of the umbrella with holes symbolic of those in the ozone layer (Kompas, 2-2-1997).

In the age of technology, beneath her umbrella for the millennium, Lucia is sheltered by her beliefs and familiar realities, through faith in the teachings of

262 As a marker of Lucia’s empowerment and spiritual progress, one may compare the female representation depicted in this image (1996) with that in Permohonan Hijau (1986), (Plate 23). Through practice, the supplicant’s requests are answered and her spiritual path confirmed.

her guru who bears the load of the universe, and by the cosmic imagery which has long distinguished her paintings (Supangkat and Zaelani, 1997: 90 - 91). Despite prescient warnings and the suffering of the earth and humanity, she optimistically paints four planets among the whirling mass beneath the umbrella.

Natural disasters will always occur, but the cyclonic torrent surrounding the woman beneath the umbrella speaks of catastrophes further compounded by our actions as humans, produced from a disregard for the myriad interrelationships between objects and conditions in nature. The image may also be read in reverse. In Christian and Islamic iconography, the flowing water symbolises renewal. The painting may also represent a gathering up of a gentle female energy suggesting hope for the future. Lucia later realised that such symbolic interpretations reflected the intent of her Master’s teachings concerning similarities rather than differences between religious and spiritual traditions.264

_Dibawah Payung Duaribu_ has since been recognised as a masterpiece. It is a painting which summarises its times, a beautiful and powerful statement which has captivated many in Indonesia, Malaysia and Japan.265 Lucia was very pleased with _Dibawah Payung Duaribu_, refusing to sell it for many years. Little did she anticipate in 1996 that its creation was to be a turning point in her life and that news of its existence would reach Master Ching Hai’s followers, who came streaming to her house to marvel. Because the painting depicted their emblem, the parasol, which succinctly encapsulates the Master’s teachings, they urged Lucia to join their movement. This she did, eventually meeting the Master and receiving the teachings that were to bring such benefit and peace to her life (Bianpoen, 2000: 75).

7.2. The Teachings

Speaking of the Master in early 1998 Lucia averred, “People should listen to her.

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265 Personal communication. Lucia Hartini, Jakarta, January 2002. At her exhibition, Lucia confided that she also enjoyed the erotic tale _Arjuna Wiwaha_, depicted in _Begawan Ciptohening Minterogo_ (1999). Emphatically different précis of the original story concerning the spiritual resistance of earthly temptation may be found in Holt (1967) and Suryadi (1995).
By attaining inner peace we will attain everything else. All the satisfaction, all the fulfilment of worldly and heavenly desires come from the Kingdom of God - the inner realisation of our eternal harmony, of our eternal wisdom, and of our almighty power. If we do not get these we never find satisfaction, no matter how much money or power, or how high a position we have.

(The Supreme Master Ching Hai, 1994, 20: 3)

Lucia worked her way back to psychological wellbeing through an ordered regime of strict vegetarianism, meditation, spiritual practice and the cultivation of wisdom consciousness. She became convinced that Master Ching Hai was a teacher for the times. Besides encouraging adherence to the Buddhist Precept forbidding the harming and killing sentient beings, the Master draws on the Christian Bible to demonstrate a connection between vegetarianism and sound ecological practice. “Eating meat is against the universal principle of not wanting to be killed” (The Supreme Master Ching Hai, 1994: 78 - 81). The Master decries broadscale deforestation for the purposes of livestock grazing. The destruction of natural resources is an inefficient way of feeding people; in excess, it is motivated by and entails violence. She argues that environmental preservation and renewal depends on maintaining the forests of the earth and the purity of water, prime sources for the basic requirements of life, and a teaching central to Kejawen. Individual realisation of these truths must happen first, but the necessary profound shift in consciousness will require the dedication of many millions of people to improve and change the difficult inheritance created by humanity for itself.

As Lucia’s involvement with the Master’s discipline was paramount in her life at the time of filming Perbatasan / Boundaries, some aphorisms from Master Ching Hai’s teachings from her booklet, The Key of Immediate Enlightenment (1994) are included here. In the attention paid to “the Inner Power, to the compassion, the love and the mercy qualities of God”, the texts selected are consistent with both a Kejawen emphasis on gaining mastery of the Inner World and a hybrid spiritual discourse transcending the boundaries of major religious

266 Personal communication. Lucia Hartini, Yogyakarta, January 1998.
doctrines.

I do not belong to Buddhism or Catholicism. I belong to the Truth and I preach the Truth. You may call it Buddhism, Catholicism, Taoism, or whatever you like. I welcome all!
(The Supreme Master Ching Hai, 1994, 20: 3)

Those who regard concepts of “Truth” as intrinsic to an hegemonic discourse may have difficulty with this aphorism because it encapsulates a spiritual discourse where a particular over-arching Truth is revealed through experiential “knowing”. The Master teaches the keys to immediate enlightenment through which practitioners may realize her experience and understanding of the Truth. However, the aphorism also speaks of enlightenment through the cultivation of wisdom. For Lucia, this wisdom consciousness satisfactorily meshes with those aspects of Kejawen belief which view the cosmos as a field of instruction. The practice of meditation taught by the Master is also an instruction in the passage of the soul after death, a knowledge of the points from which it departs the body, and its flight thereafter. Lucia also wished to know her soul’s destination. To which of the seven differently coloured planets of the cosmos would it travel to await rebirth?267 The Master’s teachings provided her with earthly as well as spiritual guidance on this matter. Lucia was now aware of the preparations she must make to assist her soul’s favourable trajectory and eventual destination.

The peace and strength found within after meditating and through studying the Master’s teachings encouraged Lucia’s engagement with the wider world. She now approached her painting and life with greater confidence and a more relaxed manner, knowing that her Master is supportive of artists and craftspeople and praises the creation of fine and beautiful objects, which she herself enjoys making. Although enormous effort was still required to paint her large canvases, past conflicts associated with her work had evaporated. Lucia seized her chance to review and radically rework the best aspects of her early career as an artist, and by late 1997, she had already addressed several long-standing difficulties.

Applying the Teachings, Removing Obstacles, Returning to the World

Our teaching is that whatever you have to do in this world, do it, do it wholeheartedly. Be responsible and also meditate every day. You will get more knowledge, more wisdom, more peace, in order to serve yourself and serve the world.
Do not forget that you have your own goodness inside you.
Do not forget that you have God dwelling within your body.
Do not forget that you have Buddha within your heart.
(The Supreme Master Ching Hai, 1994, 20:3)

In these meditations and injunctions, Lucia was well rewarded. The internationalism of the Master’s movement brought many new friends and important spiritual and professional opportunities. Through her religious affiliations, Lucia hosted a meditation group at her home, as well as continuing her mentoring of ISISI students and young artists working in a style similar to her own. Together with Operasi Rachman, she became involved in Reformasi, supporting peaceful protest, environmental renewal, the compassionate relief of suffering, and reconciliation across the boundaries of religion and ethnicity. During Krismon, the monetary crisis of 1997 - 1998, Lucia joined the efforts of groups of students and concerned citizens. Banding together, they provided parcels of food relief which they ferried to impoverished rural communities near Yogyakarta.

On May 20th, 1998, Lucia took part in Yogyakarta’s Aksi Damai. These activities were all seen as the exercise of her duties as a citizen and subject of her Sultan, Sri Hamengku Buwono X and Governor of the Special District of Yogyakarta. Footage of this period is incorporated in Perbatasan / Boundaries.

Lucia had already repositioned her life and work in relation to the changing attitudes of and towards Indonesian women and their relationships with society. Now, like millions of others, she sought to harmonise her personal beliefs

269 Personal communication. Lucia Hartini and Operasi Rachman, Yogyakarta, July 1999.
270 Personal communication. Lucia Hartini Yogyakarta, May 1998 by telephone from Adelaide.
Sembako comprises the nine basic commodities required to sustain life; rice, vegetables, salt, fruits, eggs, fish, meat, bean products, cooking oil, oil for cooking (kerosene), and cloth. They had become prohibitively expensive for many, as had the cost of powdered babies’ milk, pharmaceutical medicines and transportation.
with a political education in democracy, to regain her voice and engage with the times. When interviewed in 1999, Lucia explained that she had previously been disinterested in the political sphere, but had learnt a great deal about politics and human rights issues from Operasi Rachman.\(^{271}\) Her participation in the events of this period was an actual as well as symbolic reclamation of the mountain as society. Women’s commitment to regaining their status as equal partners with men in the Indonesian national project was a key factor in this reclamation (Oey-Gardiner and Sulastri, 2000: 19 - 20). Lucia had realized she must address two major obstacles if she was to continue her personal, spiritual and artistic growth. She must conquer her fear of speaking in public and finalize the long separation from her former husband through divorce.

In January 1998, I arranged for a crew from Studio Audio Visuel, Yogyakarta to visit Lucia Hartini’s home and film the interview in which she discusses *Dibawah Payung Duaribu*. Her ease in the public domain reflected the gains made over the years. The previous year, Lucia had visited Malaysia with a party of Indonesian artists, where she had spoken publicly. In 2001, she appeared on a television chat show where the topic discussed was family violence.\(^{272}\) The confidence gained from the teachings of her guru and the participatory spirit of the times was noticeable. During Reformasi, Indonesian women found their voices in greater numbers than ever before, seizing the many new opportunities provided by the media to express their ideas as part of the democratisation process.\(^{273}\)

In conversation, Lucia wryly observed that previously, she had regarded herself as a poor verbal communicator, preferring to say very little publicly.\(^{274}\)

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271 Personal communication. Lucia Hartini, Yogyakarta, August 1999.
Two of Operasi’s teachers, the late Umar Khayyam and the then rector of UGM appear briefly in *Perhatasan / Boundaries* in the Imogiri sequence. The rally showing Abdurrahman Wahid took place elsewhere but was cut into the sequence.

272 Personal communication. Lucia Hartini, Yogyakarta, August 2001.

273 In October 1998 *Yayasan Perempuan* and the wider membership of *SIP, Suara Ibu Peduli*, began their weekly program, *Diskusi Radio*, with assistance from UNIFEM and USAID. Women were welcomed as presenters and discussants as well as audience members. *Diskusi Radio* became the forum for airing the voices of democracy, culture and women’s rights. Its contribution to consciousness-raising was considerable.

Awkward and uncertain as to how her words and opinions might be received, she worried that her verbal inadequacies might diminish the enigmatic value of her paintings, and hence, the appreciation of viewers. Lucia conjectured that the hours spent alone with her work made it difficult to shift register for a public audience, a struggle familiar to many who are not natural extroverts. These fears haunted her as her career developed and she moved in ever more sophisticated circles. Earlier, Lucia regarded the public domain and even her local community as unsafe spaces for the expression of opinions, and like many Indonesian artists who found themselves on the international stage, she was very wary of probing discussions on social and political issues. Safety and effective communication lay in expressing one’s concerns in personal and humanitarian terms. Lucia’s paintings had become more performative in their construction from 1989 onwards. She had discovered another way to resolve communicative difficulties by suggesting interpretations and eliciting responses through consciously activating gap between her work and the viewer.

Lucia was not alone in her discomfort. Many Indonesian women experienced similar feelings and developed corresponding strategies of cautious communication. In interviews published in the international press, President Megawati Sukarnoputri confided that the hardest thing she had to learn was to speak clearly with the coherence and confidence required to fulfil her political aspirations (McIntyre, The Australian, 18 – 19-8-2001). Regarding appropriate modes of delivery of discourses of power in the official public domain before Reformasi, McIntyre (1998: 249) cites the soon to be President Abdurrahman Wahid as advising Megawati Sukarnoputri “to be silent.” Ambiguously referring to the possible power of her hesitations he commented: “She expresses her protest in a silent way: she doesn’t say things easily. … She’s a leader and she leads by not doing anything. … She is not being co-opted by the government, that is enough.” McIntyre (1998: 249) suggests Megawati’s muteness was symbolic, “standing as a sign of decency amid the abuse of power of the Suharto regime”,

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275 When speaking by phone to me on 21st May 1998 at the height of Reformasi in Yogyakarta, Lucia told me she had become involved in local community groups. Despite her status as a divorcee and her profession as artist, as a householder, she now felt included.
her silence becoming a strategy of resistance. In office, Megawati unlearnt her
hesitancy while retaining her caution, maximised her strategic use of silences and
acquired a mastery of English, which formerly, she did not speak well.

*The Sriwedari Garden*

The question raised by the floating image of the beautiful Sriwedari Garden
in the lakon Sumantri concerns the means whereby the citizens of the realm might
obtain the ideal world. This is not just a question of seizing power collectively,
but of realising an ideal. What is the bridge between the two or will the worlds be
forever parallel? The nature of this bridge is a political issue involving the nature
and location of power, the nature of society and the structure of the state. In June
1999, at the height of Reformasi, Indonesians voted for a democratic law-based
state, entailing sweeping changes to legislation, public policy, administration and
civil society. Preceded by much discussion, there followed rapid enactment of
legal and administrative change.

One of Lucia Hartini’s personal achievements celebrated in her 2002
exhibition is directly related to her professional success. For years Lucia had
resisted divorce from her first husband and the subsequent negotiations of
property settlement. Once she agreed to divorce, she faced a long and expensive
legal battle to secure her house and possessions in her own name. She must
protect her paintings and their associated rights against claims made by her former
husband. Several of Lucia’s major works were unsold at the time, and so, like her
house, were vulnerable. She also wished to guarantee inheritance rights for their
children, requiring a solution respecting her rights to assets acquired through her
profession as an artist and independently of her estranged husband. Without a pre-
nuptial agreement determining either the nature of a future property settlement or
inheritance rights, Lucia’s case rested on her husband’s violence, drinking and
infidelity, their long estrangement, and the disproportionate financial contribution
she had made to the household. This entitled her to a just division. Although the
legal process in question left her disillusioned, her eventual success left her
personal affairs intact. If she so desired, Lucia was free to marry again.

7.3. *A Meditation on the Role of the Spiritual in Art*
Concentrating power within herself through spiritual achievement, Lucia’s actions in the outside world mirrored her spiritual discoveries. These actions were reflected in canvases depicting her times through contemporaneously apt re-readings of myth and religious teachings. The detailed and complex allusivity and ironic overtones of the past were replaced by a simplification of image and directness of representation. Hartini now sought to convey the controlled abandon of groundedness, distinguishing surrealism through the use of open compositional structures, a different colour palette and a sometimes looser and less detailed application of paint. Some of these newer works are self-portraits, such as *Merenung / Wondering* (1996), in which Lucia paints herself as a visionary, clad in white, seated on a softly rendered coastal shore, gazing heavenwards. *Merenung* introduces the sequence in *Perbatasan / Boundaries* dealing with Lucia’s spiritual awakening and growth, and is extensively discussed by Wright (2000: 39). In *Portret Diri, Memitik Bintang / Self Portrait, Plucking a Star* (1998), the artist paints herself as an adept, garbed in a simple saffron robe, plucking the shining diamond star of awareness (Plate 7). But we do not know the identity of the subject of *Masa Telah Lalu di Planet Mars / Long Ago on the Planet Mars* (1994), which depicts a naked woman, inspecting the rockpools of a sheltered ocean bay (Plate 45).

These paintings continue a major thematic line in Hartini’s oeuvre which place women and their emotional and intellectual worlds centre stage. While these canvases appeal to many regardless of national and cultural borders, Lucia’s devotional paintings of her internationalist and religiously syncretic Master confront Western viewers directly with profound differences in the reading and appreciation of artworks coming from an Asia now regarded as a sub-category of contemporary globalist universalism. Yet Western viewers imbued with more than a touch of postmodern irony are often hostile to work perceived as devotionally religious and/or intentionally openly spiritual. Many of Hartini’s later works are examples of the spiritual in art, as well as the cosmological. Some may even be classed as religious art.
Plate 45. Film still from *Perbatasan / Boundaries* (2002).

And such a condition implies that it tries to affect at least two things, they are our mind and heart. On the one hand, it can affect our mind and, if it succeeds, will lead to light and freshness, which in turn will lead to wide conception. Or, on the other hand, it possibly touches our heart and, if it succeeds, will lead us to stable emotion, which in turn will lead us to wise behaviour. (Wisetrotomo, 2001)

They radiate a kind of light, an aura, be this *wahyu* or grace. The characteristic qualities of spiritual art are strong character in a moral sense, the expression of particular sensibilities, and the rendering of religious or spiritual philosophies and experiences which imbue the artist’s life. Wisetrotomo emphasizes that spectators viewing such works respond to the quality of the spiritual awareness and wisdom of the artist her/himself, and are moved, even changed, by this experience.

Nor is it the case that religious icons and symbols always constitute the primary language, by which religious faiths (as well as ideology) are affirmed or confirmed in artwork…… They are by no means propagandist's works, which scream out bombastic slogans, while repressing the other's faiths. (Wisetrotomo, 2001)²⁷⁶

²⁷⁶ Although differently positioned, Wisetrotomo’s definition is akin to Bhabha’s definition of Bhabha’s (1994: 29) argument for a reversal of the “exclusionary imperialist ideologies of self and other”. Bhabha suggests we re-appraise the professional or critical stance which shouts, “we are not artists, we are political activists”.

Forms of popular rebellion and popular mobilization are often most subversive and transgressive when they are created through oppositional cultural practices. (Bhabha, 1994: 29)

This mixture may be an uneasy one, a conjuring act which this dissertation suggests was as central
This awareness creates a tangible presence, *rasa sejati*, which is a distillation of *rasa* (feeling) beyond the highly skilled material embodiment present in the work of art. Located in the heart, *rasa sejati* is the sixth sense combining all others; it emits *teja* (radiance). The objective evaluation of religious or spiritual works is difficult because they must satisfy on levels beyond the formal. Wisetrotomo also reinforces the concept of the gap, the *kamar sentong* (empty room) which is the traditional spiritual centre of the Javanese house. In this clearing, no matter how small, space is provided in which change may happen, created from the prepared and receptive mind we bring there.

For all their different ideological backgrounds, forms and languages, spiritual and religious artworks are ones that invoke consciousness latently, keeping providing (sic.) free 'rooms' for anybody. An artwork may also deal with a very simple theme because a great wisdom may result from how we deal with a very simple thing. (Wisetrotomo, 2001)

Hartini’s explanation of the manifestation of the spiritual in art is relevant to a philosophical appreciation of many of the paintings in the body of work exhibited in her “Spirit of Life” exhibition. In the beginning, her canvases are all empty rooms. Awaiting inspiration and activation, they are vessels for the expression of *sifat* and the contingent self. Lucia claims it was not until she seriously applied herself to Master Ching Hai’s practice that she learnt to precisely distinguish between different mental states. As a result, she acknowledged that she had been incorrect in her earlier spiritual practice, referring to the whimsical fantasies of flight in her early paintings as *melamun* (functionally escapist daydreams). Similarly, and despite its instrumental usefulness to her artistic practice in the second stage of her career, Lucia came to regard her mastery of *leklekan* (light trance) as spiritually misguided, despite its former usefulness in the production of her art.\(^\text{277}\) Neither state accorded with the

\(^\text{277}\) *Leklekan* is a form of trance well suited to focusing on activities of a calm and repetitious nature. It was popularly believed that practitioners were able to slow the rhythm of the brain’s
Master’s teachings regarding the empowerment and clarity achieved through spiritual practice

Respecting the Master’s words, Lucia’s spiritual growth proceeded apace. She realised that years of pushing herself to paint by relying on physical stamina, willpower and leklekan as a means to confront and resolve her difficulties had contributed to her psychological collapse under stress and taken its toll physically. The ideas generated from her self-reflexivity are consistent with particular Kebatinan traditions and those of mystical Sufism where “madness” has been referred to as “mysticism without guidance”. According to traditional wisdom, finding the correct teacher and appropriate path often resolves such problems, locating the seeker and trainee adept in a productive social space (Stange, 1979). Lucia claims these new perspectives and the respect for her bodily welfare engendered necessitated by her spiritual practice have also assisted her overcome physical illness in recent years: the Master’s teachings are beneficial generally.278

Since her recovery in 2001, Lucia now works on major canvases, vast in scale, only when well enough to do so. This may be for one week in a month until they are complete, allowing for free time and family commitments. The three canvas painting, Irama Kehidupan / Spirit of Life, (Plate 43) spanning 300 cm x 900 cm, took Hartini two and a half years to finish, during which time she also completed a number of smaller, more freely painted works.

“A confirmation of the visible as evidence”

Hening Dalam Doa I / Silent Prayer I (1997), also entitled Ju-Lai of the Cosmos, is full and rich in colour, and is painted as though glowing from within. (Plate 46 a.). Despite its open composition, in which floating forms hover in a activity from its customary waking levels, down through the alpha state of 7-14 cycles per second to the theta levels of 4-7 cycles per second where mental disquiet has emptied away and one’s mind is at rest (Marianto, 1994).

278 Describing her symptoms to Efix Mulyadi in February 2002, Lucia says she was unable to concentrate and had no ideas. Her hands felt so heavy she could not paint. Modern medicine was unable to find the exact cause of the symptoms experienced, and Lucia turned to complementary medicine, to a paranormal healer known to her husband. Eventually, she recovered. After this purification, and with rest, she was able to paint again, her mind was clear. With renewed inspiration she slowly completed the work for her Jakarta exhibition, this time pacing herself carefully. Viewers always forget the physical toll involved in the production of large canvases, a useful corrective to the romanticised perceptions attached by non-artists to the production of art. Able to frame the creative actions of painting as work, Lucia’s attitude helped her recover.
non-crowded space, scattered with clusters of stars, nebulae, planets and cloud drifts, the painting is highly detailed in the manner of Lucia Hartini’s previous works. The composition provides a formal device through which Lucia Hartini coherently frames the experience of having seen and understood the workings of the universe. In parts, *Hening Dalam Doa II / Silent Prayer II* (1997 represents a point of stylistic departure towards a freer, less detailed, style of painting in Hartini’s attempted depiction of the state of spiritual bliss (Plate 47). However, the work contains areas which are “patterned” rather than rendered with elaborate detail, a device also used in *Irampa Kehidupan, Ju-Lai of the Cosmos* and *Hening Dalam Doa II*. All four are deeply devotional paintings.

According to Wisetrotomo’s definition, these paintings exhibit key characteristics of the spiritual in art. In the first, Master Ching Hai is secularly dressed in simple clothes, kneeling in meditative prayer among the clouds and sparkling planets of the cosmos (Plate 46 a.). In the next, she is clad in a white robe and seated in the pose of deep meditation, levitating above a pond of white lotuses. She resides in a clear, untrammeled and safe space, in a valley encircled by low mists and cloud shadowed mountains (Plate 47). As trope, this glowing clearing signifies Buddhahood or Buddha-being, while the mountains resemble those surrounding the plain of Borobudur approached through ponds of lotuses. Lucia’s multiplicitous lotuses have a stillness, an unreal as opposed to a surreal quality. They are hyper-real, rather than surreal. Resembling a painted bas-relief of carved wood or stone, they refer to temple architecture and to the concept of matter freshly invested with energy and spirit. The light is gentle as though emanating from the forms themselves. Again, this is the *rasa* of perception at work, rather than an exposition of meaning; the creation of art to be absorbed rather than contemplated rationally, to be experienced as joy, an opening of the senses, and an appreciation of the transferred experience of enlightenment.279

279 *Cakra* are the power centres in the body which are successively activated in the various styles of yogic practice and in Tantric meditations, so channelling the kundalini or serpent energy through the body, whereby one experiences the body in order to open the mind (Mullins, 1999). Experientially, one reaches this state after passing through the various *cakra* centres of the body with their associated colours, successively activated and then left behind. There are seven power centres situated between the genitals and the crown of the head; each *cakra* has a quality and a balance of male and female energies. In Java, these are concentrated into three groupings,
Plate 46 a. Still from Perbatasan / Boundaries (2002); Lucia Hartini seated before Hening Dalam Doa I / Silent Prayer I (1997).

Oil on canvas: 200 x 210 cms.

Plate 46 b. Lucia’s pose and my framing echo Sudjodjono’s painting, Dibawah Kelambu / Before the Open Mosquito Net (1939).

associated with particular deities, mental qualities and colours. The seven centers are as follows: genitals, red, representing Siva, sexual energy and will to survive; stomach, blue, and linked to earth and our negotiations there; heart, the balancer, pink then green, representing Vishnu and symbolising intuition; throat and thyroid, turquoise, a sensory enhancer; head and crown cakras, lilac travelling upwards to violet-blue, representing Brahma, the intellect, and the chemical factory of the brain.
The state of meditative grace or bliss is a difficult subject to paint in any literal sense, particularly in figurative representation. Lucia admitted she found it almost impossible to do her subjects justice in these works, especially when choosing the appropriate means of depicting the transcendent state of her subject’s being within the world of the canvas. Hardest to paint was the luminosity of skin and facial expressions. Her new subject matter involved neither the extremes of emotion nor the distortion of personal mental states and was unsuited to a bizarrely surreal stylistic treatment. A form of hyper-realism seemed more appropriate.

To my “Western” mind, *Hening Dalam Doa II* (Plate 47) does not quite succeed formally because of its strange mix of stylised patterning, naturalism and acidic sweetness of colour. Yet in the realms of perception and *rasa sejati*, the radiating tranquility of this work could be felt in the room when we were filming. In *Perbatasan / Boundaries*, the painting is situated to Lucia’s left when she is describing her appreciation of Kartini.

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280 Personal communication. Lucia Hartini, Yogyakarta, August 2001.
Paradoxically, a commensurate freedom of artistic form and expression is not satisfactorily achieved until the artist’s return to the visionary surreal manifested in the glowing but affectionately crude *Eyang Ismoyo* (2001) (Plate 48); the beautiful but cautionary twin works, *Roh Perahu Nabi Nuh / The Ghost of Noah’s Ark* (2001), and *Sumur Sulaiman / Solomon’s Well* (2000) (Plates 49 and 50); and the disturbingly violent *Prahara Televisi / Televisual Tempest* (2001) (Plate 51).

*Ju-Lai of the Cosmos* and *Hening Dalam Doa II* (Plates 46 a. and 47) express and chart the development of Lucia Hartini’s spiritual identification with the Master. The artist’s representation of the cosmos as a field of instruction speaks of a vision gained through the surrender of ego, that she as an adept might gain something more. This depiction of the cosmos is far removed from those occupied by the terrifying vortices of earlier works. For Lucia, it was necessary to begin by following the discipline of the Master’s teachings in order to be like her, thus finding her own path to meditative grace and spiritual wisdom. Even though the states experienced are very similar, in states of Buddhist mystical bliss, the goal is the achievement of nothingness rather than achieving a one-ness with God as in Sufic Islam or Christianity where God is always greater than man (Anderson, 1990: 70 - 71).

In *Kebatinan* practice, one may achieve momentary states of transcendental bliss, representing successive stages of enlightenment (Stange, 1979, Wright, 1991, 1994). Lucia also believes that the workings of the universe are made manifest in cycles of particular duration, just as the gong keeps orchestral time for the gamelan or the *celempong* (zither) soloist. She speaks of her life as a song which will begin again, although it will not repeat in the same way, because this process, as with historical cycles in human affairs, is not exactly circular. Instead, it is seen in terms of rounds of rebirth in this life as “a rediscovery of self and a (re)-discovery of universal principles” repeated until one’s death (Stange, 1989: 134; Anderson, 1990: 34 - 35).

7.4. Vital Signs: The “Spirit of Life” as a Plea for Environmental Sanity

As the variation in Lucia’s song of life included her “return to the world”, the path requested by her Master, so the next group of works from Lucia Hartini’s 2002 exhibition express particular interpretations of this experience. I will discuss three of these paintings in some detail, as they condense other ways of viewing the upheaval of Indonesia’s recent history, expressed through the lens of an artist’s vision. Achieved through re-readings of popular wisdom drawn from religious belief, and legendary narrative expressed through familiar cultural tropes, these works suggest fresh ways of interpreting the present. In them, we find the restatement of contemporary dilemmas regarding the nature of power, its distribution and enactment in the era of Reformasi, and reference to issues involved with the preservation of wilderness and ecological balance.

In *Eyang Ismoyo*, Lucia depicts a full-breasted Semar standing above a bare orange-red world. (Plate 48). Is this being male or female? He/she is clad in a white sarong with her/his hair worn in the style of a *pedanda* (Balinese Priest). Tiny shells fallen from a necklace lie at Semar’s feet. As *wahyu*, flashes of divine inspiration, clarity and good fortune, they must be used with wisdom. These particles of light also shape the destination taken by the souls of those on whom they fall in the passage after death and before rebirth.282

Semar is a somewhat coarse but wise and prescient androgynous deity who deserts the gods (*Dewa*) to live among men.283 His name is derived from the word indistinct or “hazy”, a reference both to his status and to his sexuality (Stange, 1989: 134). According to Javanese sensibilities, Semar’s androgyny represents an ability to concentrate opposites, symbolised by his combination of

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For this to happen, Operasi suggests these flashes must actually enter one’s eye. Hartini’s depiction of their source is also a reference to the creation of a painting and the act of communication between a viewer and their work.

283 Beloved by the Javanese for his humanity, Semar features in *Wayang Kulit* and *Wayang Orang*, especially in the *goro-goro*, the clowning sequences interpolated at particular points of the plot. Usually patient and easy-going, gentle to those in his care and humble in the presence of the gods unless provoked, Semar’s behaviour changes greatly when angry or excited, and with it, his representation. Tears stream from his eyes and mucus from his nose; he belches and passes wind constantly, whilst yelling insults and pleading to the gods to return his better shape (Hardjowirogo, 1968). Although this behaviour represents a socially embarrassing lack of self-control, Javanese simultaneously sympathise with Semar’s plight.
male and female characteristics, seen as the particular source of his power (Anderson, 1990: 28 - 29).

Oil on canvas: 140 x 230 cms.

His spherical shape contains great strength and exceeds that of the gods. On occasion, he uses it to daringly assault heaven, with some success (Hardjowiogo, 1968: 170 - 172; Stange, 1989: 120). His status as a being existing between the worlds of corporeality and the otherworldly space believed to be the home of one’s ancestors, is indicated by his shadow. This is always compressed, indicating he is simultaneously no longer a mortal and not yet a god.
Hartini stresses the female characteristics of Semar’s shape and persona. By exaggerating her/his breasts, the familiar nobility and female nature of his/her character is rendered against the grain of the masculinist representations accorded cult status by some mystical sects in Suharto’s Indonesia284 (Stange, 1989: 131 - 134). Hartini’s rendition has more in common with cults centred on Semar as the guardian spirit of Java in which the masses of ordinary people associated him with the fertility gods of mountain and forest (Stange, 1989: 114). In this distorted but naturalistic fullness of form, Lucia paints Semar as the embodiment of difference and outspoken observation who appeals to men and women alike. These odd characteristics express the occasional behavioural coarseness which highlights, through contrast, all that is good in his/her character. Semar appears instead as the familiar spirit Eyang Ismoyo, an avatar watching over Lucia’s decision to return to the world, rather than as a spiritual guide.

Lucia’s contemporary representation highlights Semar’s continuing rapport with an aspirationally democratic and demographically younger Indonesia. By painting Semar as flawed and populist once more, with her/his androgyny referencing the ancestors and the condition of age, Hartini stresses Semar’s relevance for the times. The canvas may be read as a contemporary reversioning of the persona and legends surrounding this perennially popular Javanese tutelary figure, inspired by Indonesia’s period of tumultuous change.

Commenting on her efforts to depict orang mungil (beings who embrace both sexes in the genderless state of holiness or divinity), Lucia remarked that the most difficult thing to paint was their skin. She wished to convey their sacredness by a luminous softness, a smoothness not of this world, signifying their elevated spiritual and/or mystical status, the shining aura of which Wisetrotomo (2001) speaks. Lucia first observed this quality in her Master, but despite her devotion, she found this perception extremely difficult and painstaking to execute.285 Areas of openness depict an asymmetrically unbounded and non-vortical inky void,

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284 Stange also mentions the attraction which the persona of Semar exercised for certain sections of the military during the New Order period, in relation to Semar’s audacious strength and the usefulness of his populism in creating a “modern” military culture (Stange, 1989: 121 - 126).

exhibiting a freedom of composition new in Hartini’s work. Even the seven variously coloured planets are painted with less surface elaboration by comparison with Lucia’s previous renditions. Again, the emphasis is on glowing colouration, reflecting the light emanating from within her chosen protagonists.

If *Eyang Ismoyo* is read as a refiguring of Semar’s persona in the spirit of contemporary times, Lucia’s magnificent re-interpretations of a pair of stories, one Biblical and one *Qu’ranic*, *Roh Perahu Nabi Nuh / The Spirit of Noah’s Ark* (2001) and *Sumur Sulaiman / Solomon’s Well* (2000) may each be seen as seeking resonance and truth in the religion of the other (Plates 49 and Plate 50). By referencing different belief systems, they bear witness to the religious and political discussions informing the artist’s relationship with her new husband. Consistent with Papastergiadis’ (2003), concept of hybridity and mixture, these two paintings encourage several diverse yet related interpretations.

Iconographically, the image of the ship is a familiar one in archipelagic Indonesia, often associated with mortuary and ceremonial art, occurring in textiles from Sumatra and the Pasisir. The motif is also found among the bas-reliefs adorning Borobudur (Maxwell, 2003: 4 - 5), depictions replete with much lively and accurate historical detail. Beyond the well-known Christian biblical narrative, the painting *Roh Perahu Nabi Nuh* speaks thematically of the mystical journey in which the physical boat is left behind, its solidity replaced with one of the spirit. In Hartini’s painting, allusion is made to the fragility of all that is solid, symbolised by tiny renditions of the great buildings of the world veiled by the miasma of the spirit ship of sea and air, aground on a reef of jagged rocks above the carcass of the Ark. This depiction of diasporas past and present, of the rise and fall of civilisations, suggests dispersal. Embodied in a tiny piece of wood, this might be the song of a fragment, salvaged from the rib of a shipwrecked Chinese junk or a barque of the VOC long ago.

Part of the inspiration for this work actually lies in a tiny shard from the great beam of the Sultan of Mataram’s palace at Imogiri, presented to his retainers on his defeat, and much-divided since. Anderson (1990: 44) argues that

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286 Personal communication. Operasi Rachman, Imogiri, August 1999.
Javanese historically countenanced three possible means of dealing with “the threat posed by proximate concentrations of Power. These are destruction and dispersal, absorption, or a combination of the two”. In a worldly interpretation, the insubstantiality of Lucia’s phantom spirit ship warns of the nature of empire and false resurrections and of the need to examine carefully the character and the consequences of the multiplicity of the pasts carried within.

The coralline hulk of the foundered vessel might also suggest a far less disposable and infinitely more dangerous modern structure, accompanied by the perils of contamination, nuclear and otherwise. Referencing environmental imperatives and the precious purity of the oceans, Lucia challenges the notion of this particular Noah’s Ark as a safe repository for the species of the world in the face of impending environmental disasters, especially man-made ones. We are rapidly creating ecological and political situations which we, as a species, cannot resolve. In the querulous spirit of this work, symbolised by the lone eagle squawking atop its rocky perch, well may we question our previously radiant hopes for a future born of those conceptual and technological means relied on to carry us there.287

The teachings on nature given by the Islamic prophet Sulaiman (Solomon) thematically link this interpretation of *Roh Perahu Nabi Nuh* to the painting *Sumur Sulaiman / Solomon’s Well* (2000), (Plate 50). As she now sits at Operasi’s side, Hartini, imagining herself as the just Queen Balquis (Mernissi, 1993), groups together new symbolic forms among those familiar from the past. In the foreground stand several containers, central to which is a large and solid rock-encased source well with its own quiet whirlpool.288 Resembling a salt container from East Java in shape and carved in one piece from petrified wood, it sits slightly behind an empty frying pan embedded within a grotto, and a delicate gray

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287 Personal communication. Lucia Hartini, Yogyakarta, July 2001. The lone eagle is drawn from the American coat-of-arms, consistent with her view that the US model of development and intervention has created too many problems in the non-Western world, as well as in their own.

288 Personal communication. Operasi Rachman and Lucia Hartini, Yogyakarta, August 2001. At the time of my visit, a number of old East Javanese salt containers like that depicted in *Sumur Sulaiman* hung from a rafter in their kitchen.
coralline goblet, perhaps signifying wisdom. Far off in the distance is another well, standing on legs of rock above the ocean from which pours water, while overhead hovers an enormous blue planet, again comprised entirely of water.

These domestic forms project some sense of comfort and stability within a landscape comprising only weathered rocks, water and air. Optimistically, the image of the perched well suggests the presence of a balancing environmental force, familiar with the channels of purification and the flow of energy circulating through and balancing systems. While Buddhists and deep ecologists would find much that resonates powerfully in the structure of this image, Hartini’s painting strikes a cautionary note. Despite the warm blue beauty of this canvas there is nothing but water in every vessel, including the metal wajan wedged askance on its reef. The life-generating energy of Lucia’s earlier series of explosions in frypans is now entirely absent. This painting asks us to choose from which well we may drink before these waters spill into the ocean And most importantly, from whence will these source waters be replenished and their purity maintained?

The contamination of both the oceans and ground water in the metropolitan area of Jakarta and other cities has been the subject of past environmentally based art-works and investigations by Indonesian artists. Examples exist in the work of Harsono, Mulyadi, Gendut Rianto, Haris Purnama, Bonyong Munni Ardhi and Moelyono in partnership with WALHI in Pameran Seni Rupa Lingkungan, Proses 85, and then by Dadang Christanto and others as installations in the bay of Jakarta.

The subject was once more of concern at the time Lucia was creating Sumur Sulaiman, whose watery world might be read as signifying certain

289 Lucia and Operasi later showed me a photo of their wedding party held some weeks after I left in September 2001, joking that the grouping resembled herself, Operasi and her mother, by now old and frail.

290 The NGO WALHI was founded in 1980 to raise public consciousness about environmental issues. The project mentioned above looked at problems of waste disposal and toxic pollution in the Bay of Jakarta, especially the incidence of health problems directly attributable to poisoning of vegetables and the discharge of chemicals like mercury and chromium into the ocean. In 1995, Christanto used terracotta and bamboo to fashion a series of enormous figures which were planted in the Bay, having previously occupied a garden. This work is now at the Wooloomooloo sheds of the Art Gallery of New South Wales, overlooking Sydney Harbour. Perhaps these installations, like Lucia’s oceans, had their origins in the perceptions and rasa of the experimental outdoor works made by ASRI students on the beaches of Parangtritis and Baron, twenty years earlier.
projected consequences of global warming, the abandonment of land through loss, contamination, starvation and disease. The canvas conjures the spectral presence of far-flung populations and the creation of tribes of global wanderers, whose domestic traces are depicted in Roh Perahu Nabi Nuh. They have been and still are an ever-present and pressing reality in archipelagic Indonesia, as elsewhere in the world. In true “Surrealis” mode, Lucia’s cautionary message was amplified by the flooding of Jakarta during the 2002 exhibition.291

*Envisaging the future...*

This series of paintings reflect a shift, not only in the artist’s personal consciousness and that of others close to her, but in the collective consciousness of millions of Indonesians (Stange, 1989: 115, 133). Many of Lucia Hartini’s recent works point ahead. They raise questions to do with the construction of power and authority, environment and human rights in which the potential conflicts between the third and the fourth cannot be ignored in Indonesia, as elsewhere. Even the elasticated fabric frill around the three-canvas triptych Irama Kehidupan (Plate 43), suggests Lucia’s choice of framing was the imaginatively practical product of post-Reformasi economic conditions and a simultaneously surreal criticism of status in the arts.

In the small painting Prahara Televisi / Televisual Tempest (2001), flames and floods billow forth from television sets placed far apart, questioning the double-edged nature of our increasing access to the spread and reach of global communications (Plate 51). Beyond the disasters wrought by the power of nature, served on a drinks tray, we are asked to question those human actions which replicate the twin perils of wild fire and flood. Visually and communicatively, the trope concerns the nature of representation. How do we respond?

291 In The Draft Report on Report on The Livelihood of IDP’s in Indonesia – District: Halmahera Tengah; Province: Maluku Utara, Depnektrans, 2003 (nd.), URL: http: www.go.id., I discovered lists of items owned by Internally Displaced Persons when they arrive as refugees to settle elsewhere in Indonesia. Objects like those depicted in Sumur Sulaiman always figure among their meagre possessions. The study then proceeded to enumerate what they acquired subsequently. However, I wrote my interpretation of these paintings long before the devastating earthquakes in Sumatra and the tsunami and flooding of 26-12-2004, in the light of which, the abandoned possessions suggest a different and even sadder interpretation of the canvas. As when filming Piknik Bersama Gelandangan in Jakarta in 2001 when I realised that almost all our shots were infused with Dede Eri Supria’s artistic vision, the power of Lucia’s “Beautiful Surrealism” lies in the acute pervasiveness of her envisionments as prediction.
As *Irama Kehidupan / Spirit of Life* celebrates Indonesia’s political rebirth as a fully democratic state, it is also a celebration of the artist’s marriage and a qualified expression of hope for a contented future against the odds. As in Lucia Hartini’s painted elaboration of her life’s journey within the wider one of nation and region, the larger focus within this exhibition is one of survival and completion, a theme reflected in the documentary *Perbatasan / Boundaries*. The muralesque painting *Irama Kehidupan / Spirit of Life*, Lucia’s pictorial three part janturan (formal recitatative), invites us to begin our individual reading of the works in her millenniairial exhibition. In the sequence of this thesis, *Prahara Televisi* is the conceptual janturan introducing the analysis of *Perbatasan / Boundaries* and my filmic interpretation of some of Lucia’s paintings.

Section III extends the study of the relationships between art and film in Indonesia introduced in previous chapters of this thesis. Working directly from observations concerning the treatment of figures and objects in Lucia Hartini’s paintings, I suggest that important formal dynamics in this relationship stem from the long-standing existence of proto-cinematic forms in Java and Bali. My appreciation of Lucia Hartini’s art and that of the “Surealis Yogya” has been further informed by the particular stylistic and conceptual qualities usually associated with Neo-realist filmmaking and hence, on the edge of documentary filmmaking. The scale of Hartini’s canvases, the ability of her images to transcend the material boundaries of canvas, paint and frame, and their ability to communicate feelings and emotions eliciting a psychological fusion of personal and social narratives in viewers of her art speak of these similarities.

Section II broaches these speculations through a detailed study of Lucia Hartini’s art. In this Section, they are studied through the processes of filmmaking with particular reference to my/our documentary *Perbatasan / Boundaries: Lucia Hartini, paintings from a life* and in the context of (mainly) non-fiction films about Indonesia. The detailed textual analysis of this film in Chapter 9 is preceded by theoretical discussions concerning the captured image, its relationship to the paintings of Indonesia’s “Surealis”, Hyper-realis and Realis Cermat / Painstaking Realist painters and definitions of documentary filmmaking pertinent to the filming and production of *Perbatasan / Boundaries*.

In Chapter 8, I consider questions of cultural sensitivity and the camera, whether photographic or motion-capture, and the relationship of these sensitivities to pre-existing Indonesian cinematic forms before proceeding to an investigation of theories concerning documentary filmmaking and their application in the field. These considerations were relevant to my filmmaking in Indonesia with Lucia and with others before the lens of my cameras. While recognising that historically, documentary filmmaking as filmic documentations of people, events, things and
states developed from ethnographic film, I discuss the difference between the
different genres, modes and styles of contemporary documentary filmmaking
within the category of non-fiction and consider their relationship to Neo-realist
film. These distinctions require attention because Perbatasan / Boundaries
includes elements drawn from ethnographic film, several different documentary
genres, fiction, experimental film and multi-media modes. Perbatasan / Boundaries is also informed by my perception of formally visual and emotive
relationships between Neo-realist filmmaking and Lucia Hartini’s “Surrealisme
Indah”. Conceived as a documentary film, my film is a hybrid creation, consistent
with the conceptual frameworks introduced in Section I of this thesis.

In the theoretical discussion of documentary filmmaking engaged in
Chapter 8, I return to these frameworks, considering questions of ethics, power
relationships, and approaches, the use of the camera and the generation of style. I
also discuss a number films about Indonesia, by Indonesian and non-Indonesian
directors which either influenced some of my decisions when devising
Perbatasan / Boundaries or which are conceptually relevant in other ways to
subjects discussed in Section III. Overall, I have adopted Trinh’s (1992: 137 -
187) position regarding the primacy of cinematic vision in making a film,
regarding the rest as categorisation according to emphasis, a non format-specific
and internationally relevant definition.

In the specific textual analysis Perbatasan / Boundaries in Chapter 9, my
reflexivity extends the approaches and conceptual frameworks discussed in
Chapter 2. As an Australian filmmaker making a documentary about an
Indonesian woman artist, I discuss my own decisions, whether based on research
or generated spontaneously, as well as the technical aspects of production. My
responses to people, planned and chance events in the field are situated in
interaction with my subjects, my use of the camera, and decisions made in edit
which have further shaped the film.

I briefly compare my first film, Pusaran / Vortex: From the Kitchen to
Outer Space completed in February 1993, with Perbatasan / Boundaries. We
made the second film because, by 1998, extending the first seemed an irrelevant
exercise, so great were the changes in Indonesia and Lucia’s life, art and career.
When discussing *Perbatasan / Boundaries*, I reference *Pusaran / Vortex* because some aspects of the second film are the creative resolution of problems posed by the first. The processes of review of my work incorporated intuitive and critical responses, derived from self-evaluation and feedback from others, consciously melded together until the shaping of the film took on its own logic (Wenders, W., 1991: 34; 107; 209 - 113). Consistent with the interpretative analyses of Lucia’s paintings in previous chapters, the voices, intentions and views of the respective parties involved in making and viewing are different. The distinction between these positions is maintained in the textual analysis of *Perbatasan / Boundaries*.

Finally, the conditions of production, distribution and reception of works of art and film during mid to late New Order Indonesia are compared, highlighting the creative and expressive advantages of Indonesia’s contemporary artists vis-à-vis its filmmakers. Observations arising from this comparison and the situation at the time I made and screened *Perbatasan / Boundaries* in Indonesia (January, 2002) inform Chapter 10, in which the principal observations and arguments concerning Lucia Hartini’s art and the film *Perbatasan / Boundaries* advanced in this thesis are summarised.
CHAPTER 8
DIRECTORIAL PERSPECTIVES:
The Captured Image, Personal Narrative, and the Documentary Form

This chapter commences with an investigation of theories of image formation and motion capture applicable to Indonesian contexts, a background which informs the documentary film *Perbatasan / Boundaries: Lucia Hartini, Paintings From a Life*. As discussed in Section II, many of the “Surealis Yogya” including Lucia, the *Hyper-real, Arus Baru* and *Realis Cermat* artists used the photographic image in their work as a basis for the distillation of images later rendered in painting. Working between the photographic image and its creative rendition or transformation in painting, these artists investigated the nature of simulacra, creating powerful metaphors for their lived reality, conveying personal feelings, dream worlds and visions, as well as their social perceptions. As a filmmaker documenting Lucia Hartini’s personal narrative and interpreting her paintings, I study her painterly and surreal investigation of simulacra. In this dissertation, I aim to generate multiple dialogues between Lucia’s art, and these investigations, her present and remembered experience and motivations, and my own filmic interpretations of selected canvases which best show these intentions.

In the following four sub-sections, I summarise my early experiences as a photographer and video-maker in Indonesia where I became aware of various cultural and socio-political constructs affecting the way my subjects regarded the camera. I investigate their beliefs regarding the potential power of the camera over one’s soul, and the representation of those before its lens, invoking Jean Baudrillard’s (1988) “daemonic power” of the image. This unnerving quality strengthened the emotive power of the imagery in Lucia Hartini’s paintings, sometimes terrifying their creator. My observations of the camera’s effect on its subjects in Indonesia also influenced my interrogation of the frame(s) used by

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292 Lucia Hartini sometimes referred to photographic images including those reproduced in books, or to their elements, re-arranged. For *Realis Cermat / Painstaking Realism*, see Ch.2.

Personal communication. Lucia Hartini, Yogyakarta, August 1999.
filmmakers making work about Indonesia and Indonesians. The specific application of this awareness affected both my choice of recording apparatus in the field, the nature of video gathered when making *Perbatasan / Boundaries*, and later, the theoretical perspectives informing these chapters.

Secondly, I consider those pre-existing proto-cinematic forms in Indonesia which have influenced visual arts practice in Java and Bali, even in contemporary times, engendering close conceptual relationships between film and the visual arts. This is distinct from the skilled craftmanship required to work creatively in each and distinct from an ethnographic or anthropological analysis. These existing forms and practices suggest that much more might be made of these qualities in Indonesian documentary and feature film, or, where already present, in our appreciation as outsiders looking in (see 8.2).

This two-way view is important. In the last thirty years of the twentieth century, practitioners of both ethnography and anthropology were challenged not only by the changes sweeping through their disciplines, but by their former “native subjects” and informants. Changes of perception, approach and methodology have since resulted in different approaches to ethnographic filmmaking and especially, to the development of documentary film. Nowadays, most of the characteristic genres of documentary also exist as genres within ethnographic film, although historically, ethnographic film preceded documentary. Beyond differences in preferred subject matter, drawing precise distinctions between the two forms is often difficult. This chapter seeks to establish and critically assess the nature of the distinctions I perceive because I include aspects of their characteristic elements in *Perbatasan / Boundaries*. While retaining a conventional documentary form, I use filmic interpretations and dramatic re-enactments. Occasionally, I quote from the stylistic repertoire of ethnographic film. In edit, my film becomes a formal “mixture” deliberately created in the quest for the hybrid “Diamond Queen” of this dissertation.

Fourthly, I establish my working definition of documentary film, including its relationship to ethnographic film and works of fiction emerging over the past thirty years. Interested in Vaughan’s (1992, 1999) perspective on the poetic and interpretative possibilities of documentary practice, I discuss those
conceptual interstices where studying Lucia Hartini’s “Surealisme Indah” (Beautiful Surrealism) encouraged my choice of documentary as the form for Perbatasan / Boundaries. I explore visual and conceptual connections between Indonesian Neo-realist cinema and “Surealisme”, as well as Hyper-realism and Painstaking Realism when discussing the questions raised by this choice. I also comment on the influence of Neo-realism on the development of documentary forms in Indonesia and their re-incarnation as “fictional” feature films in an era of political and cultural repression.

Finally, in formulating these definitions and stylistic rationales, I reference several films which are particularly relevant to problems raised by my subject matter. In 1999, John Darling’s award-winning documentary Lempad, Painter of Bali (1988) was the only documentary then available featuring an Indonesian artist as its subject. The ethnographic series on the Balinese faith healer Jero Tapakan (1979 - 82), made by Linda Connor, Patsy and Timothy Asch, and the highly personal Ned Landers, Carol Ruff documentary, Fifty Years of Silence (1994), suggested ways of establishing convincing modes with which to convey traumatic events in Lucia Hartini’s life. The self-reflexivity and innovative exploration of temporality in Josko Petkovic’s Letter from Eros (1994) suggested alternative approaches to documentary form.

Several of the documentaries made by Garin Nugroho between 1990 and 2001, particularly Donggeng Kancil Tentang Kemerdekaan / Kancil’s Tale of Freedom, together with episodes of the children’s series Children of a Thousand Islands, and The Children’s Encyclopedia, assisted me integrate ethnographic detail as cultural contextualisation within my film, as did Nugroho’s feature film, Surat Untuk Bidadari / Letter for an Angel (1996). Although I did not see this film until after editing Perbatasan / Boundaries, Surat has informed important theoretical aspects of this textual analysis. Politically engaged documentaries like the three-part Olsen-Levy series Riding the Tiger (1992), and the Indonesian episodes of Winds of Change (1999), jointly produced by Electric Pictures and Alley Kat Productions in collaboration with Mira Lesmana and Miles Productions, were also important conceptual markers. These films facilitated my investigation of the nature of the conventions at work in documentary as non-...
fictional realist cinema in Indonesian contexts. Some were studied prior to making *Perbatasan / Boundaries*, and then reviewed in the course of writing these chapters, a process which situated my film within a recognisable body of documentary work about Indonesia. Because *Perbatasan / Boundaries* uses characteristic elements drawn from ethnographic, fiction and experimental film and multi-media modes set within a documentary format, I also refer to self-reflexive and experimental works viewed subsequently, most of which were productions made since 1990. In this and the following chapter, I engage more recent debates regarding the nature and purpose of non-fiction film.

8.1. *The Power of the Camera*

My particular fascination with the captured image arose from a childhood taste for the imaginary exotic, developed from a childhood spent devouring National Geographic magazines. I was seeking visual representations of the Asia of my father’s wartime stories. Later, I spent hours in the art cinemas of Adelaide, the city of my youth. I decided to travel to these places, to test the real and actual with the images and tales I had so avidly consumed.

Once I began to use both still and motion-capture cameras to document my work as a designer and artist, I began to question both the camera’s power and the politics of its usage. What is the nature of the representations in the images captured and how are these viewed? The camera is seen as a tool for capturing slices of “reality”, but we know there is always much more outside the frame, especially when those objects we want to see wholly within it are captured in part only. Films like *The Elephant Man* (1980) have turned on this visual ploy, a device used to advantage by Lucia Hartini in her early painting, *Dalam Imajinasi I / In the Imagination I* (1981) (Plate 52). Both play on devices of concealment and revelation, important in the study of simulacra and the creation of the visual and psychological tensions distinguishing surrealism.

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294 The word “convention” describes an aggregation of approaches used by makers of non-fictional cinema who adhere to a generally accepted group of “rules” pertaining to particular genres of ethnographic and documentary filmmaking practice. However technological development, the influence of film theory and the increasing media-awareness of the subjects of documentary and ethnographic film, has rendered a purity of approach difficult. There is now much intentional slippage between the various categories and genres of non-fictional cinema (Perez, 1998: 23).

*Dalam Imajinasi* was the first of Lucia’s paintings which I documented. Her remarks about the scale of the canvases required to express her vision awakened my interest in studying her art filmically, because my work seemed already half done!
The absence or presence of movement over time distinguishes the framings required by photography from those of film and video. Photography seeks the heightened and often symbolically charged essence of the “frozen moment”. Film and video capture the movement of subjects who appear to “live” with phasic continuity in different dimensions, expanding images both temporally and conceptually. In each instance, we assume the presence of an existential bond between the image and its referent (Nichols, 1981: 240). Unlike painting, which always involves the creation of simulacra at least twice removed from natural subjects perceived by the eye and processed by the brain, photography, film and video appear to create records of the “truth” or verité of (a) moment(s). Usually, they are presented as simulacra of the first order. Yet these images are actually an enigma, the “second nature” of Walter Benjamin’s “different nature” (Moore, 2000: 20 - 21), suggesting that much more lies beneath the surface of the objects captured by the lens. As makers and viewers, we expect conviction, but may also find art. Since Andy Warhol, much visual art and the multi-media world of digital expression have thrived on multiple replications of a photographically captured and/or entirely technologically created non-representational reality, sometimes disregarding simulacra entirely and playing instead with transubstantiation (see Introduction, Chs. 1 and 2).

According to Benjamin (1938) and Jean Epstein (cited in Moore, 2000: 21), the camera’s mechanical nature and its perceived ability to circumvent human mediation, endow it with a neutrality and even an unnatural power (Moore, 2000: 20). Epstein claims that photographic images are the result of the camera’s penetration deep into the web of reality, a space other than that which humans physically and consciously explore. This voyage may expose our collective unconscious world, through which we encounter the archaic, the primitive and the primal. Further, the disturbing “ghost in the machine” which eludes our control is the subject of Baudrillard’s (1988) treatise on the “daemonic power” of the image. These writers consider the camera as the “Third Eye”, recording a “different nature” to that perceived by the naked human eye, but one which is an immediate record of the real, even if the subjects before the lens are consciously contrived prior to capture. Hence Barthes (1981, cited in Perez, 1998:
32) describes the captured image as “an emanation from the referent”, likened by Susan Sontag (1982) to the “delayed rays of a star”. Even Grierson (1979: 30), who was fascinated by the use of the camera as an agent of dramatic representation, regards the camera-eye as a magical instrument. “It can see a thousand things in a thousand places at different times”. Links with Popper and his *Worlds* described in Ch. 2 are evident in these thinkers’ perceptions.

Because the “*Surealis Yogya*” shared a fascination for all of these aspects of the representational quest, a theoretical explanation of its relevance to my filmmaking is necessary. If the filmmaker’s intention is to generate feelings of excitement and awe in the viewer, based on the convincing replication of events which happen at a particular time and place, then the degree to which captured images are mediated during and after filming becomes critical. Where the camera is left to record independently and with minimal intervention, the process may conform to the purists’ rules of ethnographic photography and filmmaking. If the innate poetry of the image or the “ghost in the machine” emerges, then the medium and the motion-capture apparatus has triumphed over the filmmaker’s unmediated camera usage. Such images are essential examples of Vaughan’s (1992, 1999) “language of film”. But, as with art, engagement with this language is usually elicited through wilful camera usage and in edit.

The basic premises of documentary filmmaking are fulfilled when the filmmaker decides which of the captured images are to survive the edit, then manipulates their temporal sequencing into a narrative documenting her/his ideas about the subject. If the intention is to create another level of simulacral artifice from real as opposed to the second and third order “realist” fictive or abstract objects rendered in paintings (Barthes, 1981; Baudrillard, 1988), then photographs, and filmic images must be manipulated compositionally and technically through the conscious intervention of the cameraperson and image developer. As with Lucia Hartini and her canvases, we have entered the realms of the transformative. Filmically, we are dealing with fiction and often, with drama.

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In making *Perbatasan / Boundaries*, I considered a variety of simulacral states, including photographs of Lucia’s paintings; performative presentations by the artist as explanation; and dramatic re-enactments by others. I used both still and video cameras as tools for research as well as further creation, probing into the mix of familiar and exotic realities in which I found myself immersed and alienated by turns. I recorded the action as it unfolded for later viewing and compositing. Encouraged by my artist friends in a spirit of exchange, I used my cameras with confidence, engagement and sensitivity for the creation of films.

Aspirationally empowered as an interrogator of the world, I learnt from experience to practice such strategies judiciously and with humility (Rouch, 1978: 22; Loizos, 1993: 46). My practice in the field as opposed to the studio, led me to question and experiment with the boundaries between ethnographic filmmaking, documentary and fiction in film. The conventional documentary format became the formal shell within which excerpts made in other forms co-exist in metonymic tension with the direct record of actual situations and events.

I questioned the when, where, why and how of shooting evident in the investigations, composition and framings reproduced in stills or on screen. I began to consider the wider implications of multilateral positionings in relation to the camera’s use, both as a creative tool and as an instrument of representation. Mine was not the only position in question here. Although my attitudes regarding pro-filimic intent and camera usage were originally informed by an empathetic understanding of post-colonial attitudes, I had yet to develop a theoretical position with rigour, or carefully examine and distinguish between the rich diversity of modes, genres and styles embodied in documentary filmmaking practice. I studied other films, mostly documentaries, many of which are referenced in this thesis, but gained much from practice in the field. My use of the camera changed as my awareness of my subjects and their culture grew, shaping my work as a filmmaker.

*The camera and the cultural interface in Indonesia*

By the 1980s, many professional documentary filmmakers had swapped the cumbersome rigs of sixteen millimetre celluloid for the comparative ease of Betacam Portapaks. By the early 1990s, video shot with camcorders was well
established in the popular domain, replacing the eight millimetre cameras and home movies of the 1960s. By the end of the decade, many preferred the portable lightweight digital handycam format, harbinger of a further technological revolution. This revolution extended to post production, and included possibilities for rapid replication and cross-platform versioning, of particular benefit to news broadcasting, web-programmers and educationists, as well as filmmakers.

By 1990, the “technological reproducibility” of the camera was enhanced by the rapid development of motion capture apparatus. The enhanced stability, manipulative potential and improved image quality of modern film and video cameras provided those behind the camera with greater flexibility in capturing the action before the lens, and a new freedom vis-à-vis their subjects. Cameras could be increasingly hand-held, or propped on the shoulder to steady the image. Angle of shot, framing on the run, duration of take and editing in camera all combined to provide a sense of being within the action or at least, keeping abreast of it. Technological change also encouraged those before the camera to actively participate in the creation of images via swivel screens and the instant playback of tapes in camera (Leacock and Lelande, 2002; Dudley, 2002; Lewis, 2004: 8 - 13; Asch, T., 1973, cited in Acciaioli, 2004; 124). Sound no longer needed to be recorded separately from the image.

Indonesia’s colourful but far from affluent citizens had become prime targets for the tourist photographer, and also for foreign and local professionals combining participatory anthropology, sociological and political analysis with adventure. Rarely did holidaymakers stop to question the cultural propriety or otherwise of their camera use unless this was pointed out by the locals themselves. My subsequent work in Indonesia conditioned by the practical and cultural realities encountered, and by the variety of responses generated from Indonesians’ experiences as the subjects of others’ image making. Because my focus lay primarily in documenting contemporary Indonesian art, I worked with individuals who were already media-aware. Most had thought carefully about their position in relation to the camera. Beyond pre-existing cultural sensitivities, they had been groomed by years of guarded expression in the public domain of New Order Indonesia.
8.2. Cultural Sensitivity and the Unnatural Eye

When I first attempted to photograph human subjects, I was very conscious of myself as a voyeur. In Indonesia, I was the foreigner behind the camera. Against my best intentions, I was potentially a visual imperialist. As an artist and filmmaker enslaved to the quest for the resonant image, I recognised that this search always entailed encroachment into the physical and psychological space of my subjects. Fascinated and excited by the people I came to know, and for the proffered window into another world, I seized the moment.

However, I frequently encountered people who did not want their photographs taken, or were reluctant to participate in video interviews. On several occasions, my awareness of cultural protocols and the nature of representations important to those before my camera were rapidly and dramatically heightened. In 1991, at the invitation of Indonesian artist Moelyono and his wife Ndari, I travelled to the villages of Brumbun and Ngeranggan in a remote coastal area of East Java accompanied by Dadang Christanto, Brita Miklouho-Maklai, her son, Tristan and my new video Hi-8 camcorder. Moelyono knew these villagers well, creating community art projects with them and depicting them in his paintings and I anticipated the opportunities offered by this visit. These were soon provided by the children of the fishing village whose block prints of their daily life were exhibited and sold to raise money for the new school uniforms Moelyono was delivering that day.

The children were happy to be filmed in the cheerful chaos of trying on their new uniforms. My camera’s presence was incidental to this experience, but others responded very differently. My notes record a conversation between two elderly women in the village of Ngerrangan, the next along the bay from Brumbun and an hour’s trek through the forest. The grandmothers were threshing rice across the back of a chair, while children scurried around their feet.

“This londo (foreigner) must have come with Pak Moel.”
“Is she taking photos?”
“Aren’t you afraid she’ll shorten your life?”
(Personal communication, Ngerrangan, East Java, 1991)
Eventually I was permitted to film the women after Moelyono explained that the video was part of their shared project.

This incident didn’t matter to the Indonesian artists as their working relationships were differently negotiated, but mattered greatly to the women and to my sensibilities. The women were at a distance and not looking directly at the camera, but resented my intrusion. They feared the unnatural power of the camera and suspected my intent. The younger members of the village understood I was making a video about Pak Moel and their work together. Participants in Moelyono’s community events, they were often photographed for his artistic and their communal records. They understood the concept of representation, and cheerfully provided their version of *Dian Desa*, a program about agricultural development and related issues, then popular on TVRI, but much criticised by community-based media workers. 296 Years later, I realised that my sketchy and shaky video record of this visit had engaged evocation, interpretation and deconstruction as an analysis of “the authoritative voice”. It had revealed the real, and despite its many technical imperfections, held power on that basis.

Slightly younger, very worldly Indonesians were also apprehensive of the camera’s power. I questioned writer and gallerist Ibu Toety Herati in Jakarta in June 2001 regarding the paucity of films about Indonesian artists, writers and cultural figures, let alone Indonesian women working in the arts. She replied that yes, there were documentary filmmakers who had started to record her life. To date, Nan T. Achnas had done the most complete and comprehensive work. Ibu Toety enjoyed the process, the material captured was excellent, yet her filmic biography remained incomplete. Echoing the concerns of the Ngerrangan women regarding the daemonic power of the camera, she confessed relief at the unfinished state of Nan’s film, confiding that she knew of three prominent cultural figures who died shortly after documentary films about their lives were

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296 The village of Ngerrangan had a single television set, in the home of the village head. Most of the time, it was incapable of reception. The program concerned, *Dian Desa*, was jokingly criticised because it was “top-down” and glossed over many of the real difficulties which farmers were experiencing as the pace of change in Indonesia accelerated. The particular discontent of the Ngerrangan villagers involved their impending eviction from their land for a resort development and concern for their future as transmigrants. Their improvisation delighted Dadang Christanto: eliciting community response regarding media representation was then part of his work at Studio Audio Visuel Puskat, Yogyakarta.
completed and screened. Believing her life’s work was incomplete, she did not wish to share their fate.

Veteran Yogyakartan painter Rusli explained the corollary position. At the turn of the century, many elderly Indonesians wished to pass with the Millennium with its splendidly aspected astrological portents. This cosmological nexus with long desired social and political change, combined with a sense of renewal shared by millions regardless of religion, was considered particularly auspicious for a good and productive death and/or rebirth. Chatting with a group of young people at Cafe Lontar, in Jakarta in June 2001, Rusli agreed to my filming our interview and happily responded to further questioning. A jilbab-clad woman student was assiduously writing up these conversations. Happy to risk exposure to the camera’s lens, he appeared to thoroughly enjoy the interview session.

Am I staying alive to make just one more really good painting? Maybe, I’ve gone as far as I can with painting in this lifetime. If I last another year or five more, the paintings will be just the same. (Rusli, 2001)

He had his school of artistic followers, and also his biographers. In his estimation, the story of his life was complete.

Similarly, in 1999, Lucia’s parents, now elderly, agreed to speak to the camera for the new film, approaching the experience without apprehension. In 1992, Lucia knew that I wanted to film them and her life in Temanggung for Pusaran / Vortex, but the journey to the mountains did not eventuate. Lucia explained that her parents would not be ready for this experience. But in 1999, Ibu Tjokrosoewarno chatted freely as well as answering my questions about


This informal meeting was followed by an invitation from Rusli and his wife to visit him in Yogyakarta “later”. I appreciated this invitation from the elderly artist who followed his particular star to India long ago in search of inspiration and direction for his life and art. Rusli had no anxiety either about the camera’s powers or about speaking freely and directly for the filmic record. Like Lucia, he was performatively in charge of the camera. Dadang Christanto thought Rusli was the model for Lucia’s Dali although others claimed it was Antonio Blanco who resembled Dali in appearance.

Lucia’s early life. In *Perbatasan / Boundaries*, I include a short conversation in which Ibu describes her first flight by plane to Jakarta, to attend her daughter’s exhibition opening. Here she met her idol, Lucia’s namesake, Hartini Soekarno. The photograph of Lucia with Hartini is included in the film, but I have no photo of Ibu with both Hartinis. Ibu participated from a respectful distance.

The popular recognition of the simulacral actual, the representational power of the image and the camera as its instrument of creation were, and still are, extremely important in the context of artistic expression and documentary filmmaking in Indonesia. This importance is cultural, and therefore psychological and spiritual. It does not hinge on the use of long- and medium-shots as opposed to close-up. Nor does it often apply to films of dramatic fiction. Indonesia’s long and richly varied performative arts tradition has made feature film very popular as a source of entertainment since its introduction during the Dutch colonial period (Said, S., 1991: 13 - 30). In these films, as in *sandiwara* (plays), the protective intermediary mask of make-up, costume and performative device is instantly in place. This is not necessarily so in real life as captured in documentary films where the focus is directly on the person before the lens. The wider considerations provoked by this disjunction are investigated through simulacral representation in the paintings of the “Surealis Yogya” (Marianto, 2001), where they are further distanced by the frame. In real life, such disjunctions are often unmediated and hence experienced differently by those before the camera lens.

Watching the in-camera playback of her dramatic re-telling of her breakdown and subsequent spiritual revelation, Lucia Hartini initially expressed trepidation. This did not concern her performance, but rather her lack of make-up at the time. Carried away by the energy of her confessional monologue, Lucia had forgotten her maskless state. She remembered her potential vulnerability before the probing eye of the camera too late. On reflection, she agreed to the inclusion of extreme close-up shots of her face in the completed film.300

As an artist who had mastered visual expression through painting, Lucia understood the nature of image making in a symbolic as well as an actual sense.

She conceptualised her appearance on screen as a confirmation of personal power, achieved through knowledge and mastery of the Inner World, as well as a celebration of her new confidence. The retold enactment of her physical and psychological collapse and revelatory encounter with the spirit world suggests that any earlier hesitancy towards the camera has been dispelled. Performed in a mode used to read poetry, Lucia’s “acting” is a device of displacement. The captured effect is culturally embedded, doubly simulacral and hence in keeping with her painting. The real Lucia remains successfully protected by the invisible mask assumed through her spiritual fortitude and her acting, while remaining within the documentary context.

**The artist, the camera and the frame**

Prior to production, John Darling reminded me that, in my first film with Lucia, we do not see her actually put brush to canvas, although at one point she is shown decoratively applying sketched detail to a photographic image of her son’s head. In another sequence, she is engaged in the contemplation of a canvas in progress. In 1999, I made sure I captured images of Lucia at work for inclusion in *Perbatasan / Boundaries*. During this session, Lucia reminded me that she and several other Indonesian artists actually disliked this scrutiny. She found this attention unnerving and not good for her work.301

In 2001, sculptor Dolorosa Sinaga expressed the same wariness when I wished to film her in her studio. She was busy shaping the clay form of an expressive new sculpture, to be cast in bronze for a forthcoming exhibition. Eyes on her work, she informed me that there was only one other person she would permit to film her when she was actually working.302 No other reason was given for this reluctance. Dolorosa then moved across to a newly completed bronze, and switched to a passionate exposition of the emotional and social content of her latest sculptures. She spoke directly to the camera, at medium shot, with full knowledge of frame activation.

A lecturer in sculpture and Dean of the Institut Kesenian Jakarta, the Jakarta Art Institute, Dolorosa had much more exposure to the public domain than

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301 Personal communication. Lucia Hartini, Yogyakarta, August 1999.

Lucia. A sophisticated denizen of cosmopolitan Jakarta, and extremely articulate in English, it was unlikely she was nervous before the lens of a handycam operated by an old friend. I now wondered whether her reluctance was also related to a subliminal fear of the camera’s power.

In the absence of detailed explanations from those concerned, I can only speculate as follows. If the creative process entails the mystical transference of sentiment emanating from the heart to the artist’s work in progress - the *emosi* or emotional and emotive spirit which Lucia mentions so often when describing her work - then even contemporary Indonesian artists might fear the camera could divulge more than their trade secrets. As the head sits outside the frame in Javanese manuscript illuminations, to speak of the artistic process is seen as a public expression of creative dissimulation. To actually depict the reality of this aspect of the heart in action may be dangerous, rendering vulnerable the sacred creative spirit, which, like breath, bestows life to matter (Plate 53).

Plate 53. Illustration from a Javanese manuscript, c. 1840, Yogyakarta.

When editing *Perbatasan / Boundaries*, I realised the importance of my choices in the cinematographic composition of scenes depicting Lucia Hartini at work. We see her commencing a canvas or adding the final details. There is a
focus on the hand, the brush and the canvas, or shots in which the whole body is in the frame, albeit at a distance. Unlike the bravura showmanship of many Western artists shown painting for the camera, Lucia and Dolorosa directly occupy the lens in order to explain rather than demonstrate their emotional engagement with their work during the creative process. Recently, Indonesian artists Nurcholis and Iwan Wijono have made performance work directly tied to the video camera, while Eddie Hara, Made Wianta, Sardono and Nyoman Erawan have used film and video to record the performative large-scale public events which they have created. The event is the subject of the work and the artist’s address to the camera, if at all, is simply a part of the action.  

8.2. The Double-sided Screen as cinematic precedent.

As knowledge of one’s subjects attitudes towards the camera and the filming process explains aspects of their behaviour, so a consideration of existing proto-and modern cinematic forms in Indonesia explains their relationship to other forms of cultural expression and perceived problems with the development of an independent Indonesian cinema during the New Order. Like Trinh (1992: 183 - 186), I argue that the very nature of our envisaging of the cinematographic plane is culturally mediated. This mediation has contributed to the distinctive nature of filmmaking arising in different parts of the world, a phenomenon generating many hybrid forms.

I suggest that a distinctively Indonesian cinema engaging temporality began many centuries ago with wayang beber, a two-dimensional drawn scroll narrated by the storyteller while slowly unfurling his cast of cartoon-like characters set in their painted locations. In style and planar division, these scrolls are visually related to the rich manuscript tradition of archipelagic Indonesia, particularly that of Java. The disposition of images across the diegetic space is not necessarily linear. We may interpret these images as illustrations of the narrative presented, or we may choose to disconnect the two, at which point, other

303 In her study of trance dancing in Bali, Suzanne Elliott (1978), suggests that the artist is shielded by the performance, whose “ritual” protects their person from harm, a concept which also pertains to the dalang in wayang kulit performances in Java and Bali.
possibilities, including those for cosmological parallelism and a multidimensional interactivity emerge. (Plate 54 a.).


In 1990, I videoed Dadang Christanto making his contemporary wayang beber scroll. While referencing tradition, he had developed this work from his experience as a teacher of community media techniques, including cartooning and wall magazines, which, in combination, resembled storyboards for film. Arguably, in its abstraction, wayang beber already contained the elements of cinema, a connection made by Christanto.
Formally, this ancient medium is simultaneously physically double-sided and non-dualistic in its imagery, although almost always dualistic in its plotlines. *Wayang kulit* also constitutes a perfect metaphor for the visible and invisible worlds of Javanese and Balinese cosmological belief (Holt, 1967: 128; Ulbricht, 1972: 1, 3 - 4, citing Mangkunegara VIII, 1933). Conceptually, these ancient worlds have metaphysical and spiritual significance within their own cultural context. Contemporaneously, they suggest the dreamworlds created in and by modern-day cinema. Apart from the mythic or populist narrative and moral subject matter carried by *wayang kulit*, the form also embodies the Buddhist distinction between *nama* / things, objects (the puppets) and *rupa* / essence (their shadows). Arguably, *wayang kulit* parallels the paradox of documentary film which both Grierson (1979) and Vaughan (1992, 1999) attempt to define, whether this be between “authenticity and the drama which resides in the living fact” or the more abstract “record and language”. One might watch the “real” theatre of the puppet master manipulating and animating his puppets, or the magical and “unreal” cinema of shadows created by his actions in an intuitive awareness of their effect, born from years of practice.

Believing that godly and popular invisible forces are mystically invoked in these performances, many also believe that the shadows which he creates and which are the doubles of his puppets, protect the *dalang* from harm.\(^{305}\) While endowing the *dalang* with a charismatic persona, this belief is related to, but different from, one concerning Hollywood’s relentless promotion of its stars. Those stars who survive are somehow able to isolate their real “whole” selves from the contingent selves invoked in performance, pushed in direction and driven or devoured by the sometimes savage eye of the public (Ch. 5).

Fascinated by this spectrum of ideas, Lucia Hartini painted Marilyn Monroe at least twice between 1990 and 1997, reasoning that if an actor internalises an oft-repeated character as her/his everyday self, the actor’s Inner

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\(^{305}\) In 1974 in Yogyakarta, I attended the *Wayang Kulit* performance of a significant Lakon (story) from the Mahabharata. The dalang replaced another whose troupe members had encountered difficulty in their village several days prior. Later, the homeward-bound dalang was involved in a traffic accident near my home. My neighbours believed he had insufficient time to correctly observe his preparatory rituals.
World may be unable to ward off the danger to which her/his soul is exposed.\(^{306}\) Sympathetically, she explained that Marilyn was freed from this burden by death, but Lucia was dealing with her own personal need to make sense of similar psychological and creative realities within her own cultural framework (Chs. 2, 5). As a “Surealis”, her art was often seen as standing directly for herself – without any intermediating conceptual container or physical structure as embodiment capable of animation, other than inspiration, the canvas, compositional framing, paint and the generation of emotional response. Despite her Surealisme, she felt the need to make sense of her life in her middle years. Indeed, she speaks of pouring herself and her soul onto the canvas, and of the physical struggle required to complete each of her large canvases as a form of ritual - potentially a mystical experience, but not always so (Ch. 6).

Several scholars of Indonesian art have observed that the temporal realities and the parallels, paradoxes and metaphysical dreamworlds inherent in wayang genres occur in the themes and subjects of many contemporary Indonesian artists, including those of the “Surealis Yogya”. They inform the fantastically situated images, sometimes dialectic and/or sequential in composition, in the contrasts between real and masked faces and the dramatic play of light and dark.\(^{307}\) Works by Iwan Sagito, Heri Dono, Probo, Sudarisman and Jubair spring to mind. Many notable artworks formally exploit the horizontal linearity of the screen and its structure combined with the similar but different appearance of forms on either side of a central division, while some artists have physically created their own wayangs.\(^{308}\) Lucia Hartini has acknowledged an abstracted influence from wayang in her art, particularly those paintings concerning corporeality and its transcendence, expressed first as flight and the fantastic, and next, as breathing life into static material, as in Srikandi (1993),

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\(^{306}\) Personal communication. Lucia Hartini, Yogyakarta, January 1998.

\(^{307}\) Marianto (2001: 203) recounts an amusing, but telling story, in which Dadang Christanto challenged his ASRI teachers, asking them why they did not show slides of the works they described in lectures. Whereupon, Eddie Hara produced some slides!

\(^{308}\) Traditional wayang forms are wayang beber, wayang klitik, wayang kulit, wayang golek, and wayang orang. Modernist wayang forms were created by Sukhasman and Jumaadi, and contemporary ones by Moelyono, Heri Dono and others.
I suggest that the artistically crafted dramatic “vehicles”, the performative visuality, and the aesthetic and temporal variations possible in the manipulation of the elements of wayang beber (story scroll) and particularly wayang kulit with its ephemeral illusions and transparent overlays, laid the basis for the development of close evolutionary relationships between contemporary art and film in Indonesia. Besides these two, aspects of other major wayang forms are evident in the modalities of Indonesian film. I would even suggest that the salient characteristics of most wayang forms establish a speculative basis for reading particular styles of Indonesian art as film. These characteristics have been heightened in the “modernisations” created and performed by contemporary dalang like Sukhasman, who is also a sculptor working with non-conventional materials (Plate 54 b.).


309 I photographed from the front of the screen only. The screen was backlit, blocking out the shadows behind and enhancing the cinematic qualities of the medium.
Wayang beber (story scroll) and wayang kulit have always been presented in terms of their existing artifice. Furthermore, they may be filmed in such a way that their authenticity is maintained, while the visual poetry, which is both their truth and the repository of their meta-narratives, is highlighted. As cinema verité, their illusory qualities are also their verisimilitude. Taken one step further, postverité films, like the conjurers of the Serat Centhini (Ch. 2: 35), may clarify their stance by eventually choosing to reveal the illusion.

Familiar with the interactivity of most wayang forms and the sometimes less than smooth projection of film, Indonesian audiences have a potentially different relationship with the screen. The formal legacy of wayang kulit has made Indonesian audiences uniquely aware of the cinematographic plane. Their responses originate in traditional performative contexts where disruptions are associated with authenticity and the flow of life of which the performance is part. During the New Order, the translation of this awareness to cinema generated risible participation from filmgoers, responding to the spot banning of “difficult” episodes in films. When forced to censor at the last moment, projectionists would pass cellophane or plastic in front of the projector lens to blur “undesirable” images, a practice acquiring event status at Jiffest, Jakarta’s International Film Festival. While audiences seem prepared to accommodate disruptive elements in structure and performance in a serious contemporary setting, even enjoying them, their response also suggests that, for many, the suspension of disbelief had become habitually sporadic rather than complete.

Not surprisingly, and despite their intrinsic highly abstract qualities and capacity for experimentation and development, the superficial popular translation of wayang genres was initially not film but television. Politicians, public educationists and documentary filmmakers alike courted television even before video replaced sixteen millimetre celluloid, because, besides wayang’s ubiquitous popularity, its potential to influence the masses derived from its use as propaganda. Instead, television ultimately diminished both its power and usefulness.

By the early 1980s, critics noted the stultifying effect which wayang conventions were exercising on the visual appearance of television production,
performance and content. The performative conventions of wayang presented characters in profile. Acting and filming had become rigid, representations were simplistic and characterisations predictable. Staging rarely used the space available in any creative way and camera positions rarely moved from fixed points directly in front of the action.

Seeking correctives and responding to the popularity of imported programs, such as American sit-coms and international soapies, the televisual representations characterising Indonesian sinetron acquired a psuedo-realist gloss and, increasingly, dimensional credibility, a change enabled by the increasing availability of new technology. Domestic dramatic feature films began to do more than substitute Indonesian faces for Western, Chinese and Indian ones in plot lines from feature films imported from elsewhere (Sen, 1994). These new models provided impetus for critique, absorption and change, eventually prompting a re-invigoration of traditional performance conventions rather than applying these conventions unthinkingly to television program production and filmmaking as previously (Hatley, 1999: 267 - 284).

Seemingly, Indonesian filmmakers had only just begun to explore their amazing cross-platform visual legacy to the full, although artists and writers had long recognized its potential. For instance, Indonesian poet Sitor Situmorang describes his life as a poet as analogous to “the parallel tracks of a railway line”, one track of which represented his intellectual and artistic commitment and the other, all the other aspects of his character, including his political activism (Foulcher, 1991: 15). His view provides insights into the conceptual world of Indonesian filmmakers engaged with a cinematic legacy which included the wayang screen. Referencing ‘the dual nature of film’, one of the parallel tracks then represents the filmmaker’s mind and allegiances, conceptualised as the investigator of reality driven to discover, record and contextualise that which exists on and beyond the immediate surface and apparent groundedness of everyday life. The other track represents the imagination and skill integral to

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310 Personal communication. Dadang Christanto, Yogyakarta, July 1990.

311 In July 2001, I worked as one of three camerapersons documenting Iwan Wijono’s performance work for the Performance Art Festival and JakArt. This was a chance to compare my working
the artist/filmmaker’s creative process.

Wayang kulit’s fundamental paradox is that of a material reality overlaid by a changing layer of creatively generated shadows. To synergistically hold the elements of this paradox balance while constructing from it a satisfying creative fusion becomes the challenge. Hypothetically, this should advantage a documentary filmmaker working in a society where cinema has a relational affinity with the wayang screen. His/her task is to establish these Bhabhanian “joinings” while the (largely) invisible narrator is the otherwise paranormal taksu (conjuring spirit) conveying additional information generating further meaning (Connor, 1982: 251 - 252). The construct which is documentary film emerges from this creative tension, bound together by the lateral and vertical crossovers between the tracks contributed by filmmaker as dalang and audience alike.

8.3. Defining the Beast

Having discussed the pervasive influence of pre-existing cinematic and cross-platform precursors, I next consider those influences introduced into Java from seberang (outside), first by the Dutch, then by the Japanese, the Chinese and the West. Non-fictional cinema encompasses ethnographic film, (including fragments), documentary and to a certain degree, its hybrid relation, documentary drama, as opposed to the narrative quasi-fiction of the bio-pic or the fictional realism of realist and neo-realist cinema (Perez, 1998: 23). Realist cinema and the

methods with those of Indonesian video-makers. Like Slamet Rahardjo and Garin Nugroho, Iwan, Hafiz and I included a scene set besides a railway track in our video documentation of Piknik Bersama Gelandangan / Picnic with Homeless People. My paper “Invitation to a Picnic” about this exchange was published as an invited academic submission for the Australian International Documentary Conference in February 2004.

312 Personal communication. Clara Anna, Temanggung, July 1999. When filming at the forest spring, Clara Anna was delighted by the light effects in the images she captured using Operasi’s camera, claiming that plants around the watercourse in the ravine and we visitors were outlined by auras of colour. What little I captured was fortuitous. Anna’s appreciation of this microcosmic world and her success was both culturally innate and enhanced by her artistic training and technical skills.

313 Chs. 2 and 4 present comprehensive explanations of the inside/outside dynamic on cultural development in Indonesia. Prakosa (1997: 149 – 154) uses this referential frame to discuss Monnikendam’s film Dewi Dao, comprising archival Dutch colonial footage. Nugroho and Levy also use Japanese and British wartime footage to further reveal the historical background of this dynamic. Salim Said (1991) discusses the influence of cinema from elsewhere in Asia and Russia on the stylistic development of Indonesian filmmaking.
biopic, like the historical novel, invite us to enter a world which purports to be real, but which is first and foremost a cinematic creation, regardless of the reflections on social reality and events conveyed through the representations depicted. The components of the cinematographic plane, including the technological processes used in the film’s making and projection or transmission are not easily discernible, although we know they are there despite the film’s otherwise seamless appearance. We also know that various interventions, both intentional and accidental have transpired, but prefer to read the film as a whole unless it has been obviously constructed otherwise.314

By contrast, in non-fiction films the image usually appears to be not only natural but an unmediated transposition of the reality before the camera lens. It is “real” within the filmmaker’s task of setting up an internally credible filmic world for show. The credibility of non-fiction film is then said to rest on the transparency, the verisimilitude and the “truthfulness” by which the cinematic or televiual image constitutes itself as a record of specific temporal and spatial realities. Although many recent documentaries contain fictional elements such as re-enactments, flashbacks, interpretations, novel camera work, complex edits and other devices associated with fictional cinema and experimental film, they are still regarded as non-fiction films. Many non-fiction films are comprised of largely unmediated sequences of actions-transpiring before the camera. This raw material is developed by the filmmaker(s) from content filmed according to an initial theoretical stance, garnered via the direct camera, using observational techniques (Kuhn, 1982: 147 - 155; Banks, in Crawford and Turton (eds), 1992: 118). This type of material distinguishes ethnographic films and documentaries.

**Ethnographic film**

314 The exception can be found in the work of the “Dogme” filmmakers like Lars Triers, who insist the contrivances of the cinematographic plane must be minimised: the filmmaker should try to work only with what is there - natural lighting, natural sound backgrounding the scripted dialogue with no overlaid musical score and minimal apparatus. This position is similar to that of certain ethnographic filmmakers, although “Dogme” filmmakers work with a contemporary dramatic performance made consciously for film, worked from a script developed specifically for this purpose. The camera is often hand-held and highly mobile, a characteristic of contemporary documentary filmmaking. However, the single continuous highly choreographed cinematographic take of the fictional feature, *The Russian Ark* is a prominent related but different example. Adjustments required by changes in lighting and focus are made without stopping the filming process. Mostly, these transitions are fluid; otherwise their awkwardness is undisguised.
The discipline of ethnography entails detailed observation, careful recording and objectively structured compilation as documentation. Historically, short observational cinematographic fragments of everyday life and ethnographic films pre-dated both documentaries and films of dramatic fiction. Ethnographic film became closely associated with the semi-scientific Western European and American academic disciplines of ethnography and anthropology, enabled by the technological and economic supremacy which had given rise to Western political imperialism. Ethnographic filmmaking was also prompted by the search for the new, and the desire for adventures outside the frame of one’s own familiar milieu. Hence the ethnographic filmmaker’s preferred subjects became the actual, conceptual and ritual way(s) of life and cultural practices of specific ethnicities or sub-cultures. Although such frames of reference were often anthropological, the filmmaker was not necessarily a trained ethnographer or anthropologist. Her/his interest might be communicative in a more general sense as evidenced in the work of ethnographic filmmakers choosing a comparative approach to specific phenomena or practices across cultures.

In the 1970s, several ethnographic filmmakers believed that the degree of subsequent mediation of the material before the lens and the transparency of the cinematographic plane was crucial when distinguishing ethnographic from other modes of non-fictional film. They constructed a set of rules in which the camera was posited as a culturally neutral “Third Eye”. Among them, Karl Heider (1976) recommended the privileging of material for its intrinsic ethnographic worth rather than for its cinematographic merit.

In Heider’s canon of ethnographic filmmaking, “staged scenes are not allowed; artificial manipulation in either shooting or cutting is not allowed” (Heider, 1976: 4). The filmmaker’s stance must be neutral and the cinematographic plane wholly transparent. The camera must never deviate from its original fixed standpoint and no further alterations should be made to focus or light setting. If the microphone intrudes, it is not edited out of the frame. The action is either within range or beyond it. According to Heider, the aim of ethnographic film is to avoid the creation of interpretative representations made
by the filmmaker. Yet in his paper, “The Rashomon Effect”, Heider (1985) also argued that no two ethnographers observing and recording any given field will produce the same results, because the variables are too multiplicitous, thus maintaining his scientific objectivity while admitting that an ethnographer’s cultural background might influence his observations and recordings.

Filmmakers Peter Biella (1988: 60 - 67) and Don Rundstrom (1988: 328 - 337) argue that Heider’s “preferred transparent neutrality” is impossible. Even if the subject is explored collaboratively, “the construction of the cinematographic plane encodes some degree of specifically anthropological analysis.” Rundstrom (1988: 328 - 337) cites an ethnographic film made by Western filmmakers in Japan, which observes the tea ceremony from the respective viewpoints and standpoints of both cultures. The Japanese participants and the filmmakers both stage aspects of the ceremony beforehand, respectively choosing the camera angles to be used during filming, thus highlighting pronounced differences of vision which become part of the ethnographic text of the film. Although the “participatory respect” accorded these different visions and their contribution to the filmmaking process were examples of careful manipulation through direction from both sides of the camera rather than examples of “transparent neutrality”, their attempt to make the camera a mutually brokered, culturally sensitive “Third Eye” is genuine.

These example demonstrate the degree to which “anthropologically correct” ethnographic filmmaking of the mid-1980s was moving away from its earlier models. Filmmakers pushed and stretched the rules of ethnographic filmmaking until the boundaries between ethnographic film and documentary film all but collapsed. The films of Trinh T. Minh-Ha are pertinent examples of this formal yet culturally informative collapse. Trinh interrogates previous ethnographic and mainstream documentary filmmaking practices, from both

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315 Heider argues that the only representations or poetic and dramatic fictions permitted are those existing within the captured material itself, as in Robert Flaherty’s *Nanook of the North*.

316 Culturally specific enhancement through image clustering and thematic continuity are also evident. Rundstrom cites a particular sequence where reference to the seasons is highlighted through the choice of tea-bowl and the dress, age and setting of the social actors and the event itself. Everything is thematically matched to autumn, the choice of season, making further verbal explanation of ethnographic detail unnecessary. The sequence was not unmediated but staged.
inside and outside the world of her subjects. Trinh is inside because she is determined to critique the “I” of Western filmmaking; she is a woman from a war-ravaged post-colonial nation who empathizes with her subjects regardless of whether they are Asian or African. She is outside because, technically, she is the filmmaker directing the camera, but her interest remains her subjects’ lives, their cultural practices and attitudes, and the nature of their intersection with her own. This includes relationships with the West as other, and later, with specific cultural incorporations of / adaptations to nationalism and globalization (Trinh, 2004). Trinh’s films may well be seen as ethnographies, however, true to her conceptual frameworks and practice, they are also hybrid forms. Perhaps because they do not fit easily into any conventionally accepted category, Trinh argues the case for their existence simply as films, contingent upon the cinematic nature of their vision (1992: 137 - 187).

**Documentary form**

The documentary form is further distinguished by the broad scope of the field of interest and the projection of the filmmaker’s positionality, viewpoints and opinions towards or onto his/her subject(s) within this field. Mhando (2002, 2006) maintains that “the attempt to record with a view to create a truth or objectivity which is nonetheless embedded within the craft of the document is what makes a documentary.” While the filmmaker’s opinion or idiosyncratic selection of subject matter may be the original rationale for a documentary film’s existence, her/his expansive vision and directorial treatment may well transcend the initial conceptual frame envisaged, extending the scope of the subject’s relevance.317 Documentary films are often planned and roughly scripted prior to shooting, enabling tighter control of the visible evidence to present the truth(s) presented by the subject(s) and/or subject matter as perceived by the filmmaker in a resoundingly meaningful way. By contrast, ethnographic film is usually heuristic. The degree of scripting and staging of a documentary film may move the work into the arena associated with dramatic fiction, but it is the emphasis

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317 In *Cane Toads: An Unnatural History* (1988), prod. Glenys Rowe, writer/director Michael Lewis uses quirky subject matter, acutely observed and creatively compiled, together with Australian humour to convey important and well-substantiated opinions.
accorded the presentation of facts associated with the truth of the subject matter which ultimately defines such films as documentaries.

Types of documentary are numerous, but four broad categories are generally recognised: expository, impressionistic, observational, and reflexive. Nichols (2001) argues that “all films are documentaries because they engage in social representations”, but recognises a fifth documentary genre, the performative documentary. Stella Bruzzi (2002) further scrutinises this genre which is distinct from the recording of performance but involves spectatorship and its dilemmas. Performative documentaries have the concept of performance as their focus. Indeed, the filmmaker her/himself/selves might well be the subject(s) “performing” for the camera. As in Perbatasan / Boundaries, such documentaries may often engage with necessary and/or justifiable fictions using other performers besides the subject(s) of the documentary.

Plate 55. Lucia playing the celempung (zither), a photograph referenced in the third canvas of Irama Kehidupan, (2001).
While useful in hindsight, the theorizations of Nichols and Bruzzi were published in 2001 and 2002, after I had edited and screened both versions of *Perbatasan / Boundaries* (2000, 2002). Even though Lucia used the performative mode of poetry reading in some of our interviews, I cannot claim to have consciously engaged performative documentary as a genre when making *Perbatasan / Boundaries* between 1999 and 2002. Instead, I subsume the performative within the film for practical reasons, as does Lucia when referencing the photographic image in her paintings. (Plate 55).

**Mode of address**

Ethnographic and documentary forms often differ markedly in the modes with which filmmakers use their material to address the audience, an address which constitutes an empirical conceptualisation of the visible as evidence. Such evidence is an exercise in authenticity (Trinh, 1992). It serves the “truth” of the addresses made by the film’s characters to each other, to the camera and the audience, or by the verbatim interviews presented from within the diegetic space of the film. The early morning market sequence in *Perbatasan / Boundaries* is a pertinent example. Mbak Gina, Clara Anna and the Ibu Penjualan (food seller) all chat among each other about quality and prices, sampling the food, oblivious to the camera. Lucia then arrives and spontaneously announces to everyone via the camera that she hasn’t yet bathed for the day!

The addition of added narrative or discursive and informational commentary extending material already presented within the film usually signifies the classic documentary mode. In many documentaries, an invisible principal narrator speaks from a prepared script in an authoritative voice, sometimes across the voices of those on screen. By contrast, the ethnographic mode is often completely unmediated by narration. Some ethnographic filmmakers like Heider (1976: 127) and Linda Connor, Tim and Patsy Asch (1996) prefer the addition of

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318 Prior to filming in Indonesia, I attended Perth Actor’s Collective Workshops where I learnt how to direct and film actors, also working occasionally as an actor myself. This brief training helped my filmmaking, particularly when obtaining my subject’s confidence and seizing the moment.

319 Trinh questions the assumptions behind these taxonomically different styles because the veracity we accord ethnographic and documentary film is derived from these various modes of address.
supplementary written pedagogical texts whereby the truth of the material witnessed and captured on film is further clarified and contextualised. Such texts minimise the unavoidable seductiveness of film whereby the inherent visual power of the filmic image can so easily overtake the truth of the subject before the lens (Asch, P, cited in Loizos, 1993: 42).

Ethnographic film and documentary practice in Indonesia

It is not the task of this thesis to produce a detailed history of the development of documentary filmmaking in Indonesia, but to survey an area of neglected activity in Indonesia, drawing forth salient observations relevant to my study of Lucia Hartini’s paintings, my experience as a filmmaker and this textual analysis. The following overview backgrounds the arguments advanced in this thesis concerning the relationships between art and film in Indonesia.

Until the 1960s, Indonesia was ethnographically explored by Dutch scholars and then anthropologically and filmicly captured by Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson (1952). A number of Americans and Europeans followed these pioneers into an exotic territory, but since Independence, these historical yet perhaps anomalous realities have been reversed by those “others” previously before the lens. Contemporary Indonesia’s first two independent and consistently productive documentary filmmakers, Dea Sudarman and Garin Nugroho both studied anthropology, and respectively journalism and law. As filmmakers, they drew on the richly diverse ethnic, racial and sub-cultural variety of their archipelagic nation, but their perspectives led them to question both the manner in which the New Order regime was re-creating the concept of the Indonesian nation and its governance.321

320 Recently, the films of Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson have been re-appraised, in Indonesia as elsewhere. Several anthropological web-sites including that of The American Museum of Natural History recently devoted many pages to their archive, and a selection of Mead and Bateson’s films about “Growing up in Bali” were shown during the 2001 Jiffest. People from the cultures filmed expressed gratitude for the records provided, whilst expressing active disagreement regarding the motivations and interpretations of Mead and Bateson (URL: http://www.amnh.org/programs/mead (retrieved 26-10-2005) I chose not to engage in this aspect of the battle of recuperations and reappraisals as it was only partially relevant to my thesis aims.

321 The activities of Indonesian filmmakers like Sudarman and Nugroho may be seen as independent post-colonial recuperations of the anthropological field in Indonesia. By 1982, these recuperations were variously informed. In the light of new intellectual approaches to subject material obtaining within their discipline, the approach of Sudarman and Nugroho to
Although anthropologically informed and fascinated by ethnographic detail, Sudarman and Nugroho also referenced Indonesia’s own filmmaking history, particularly in relation to camera use and the capture of the dramatic and emotive gestural moment. In *The Asmat* (1982), Sudarman’s representations of Irianese tribespeople are heroised collectively and as individuals rather than stereotypes. In *Donggeng Kancil Tentang Kemerdekaan / Kancil’s Tale of Freedom* (1994), Nugroho cuts between archival footage of the declaration of independence and a child’s eye view of contemporary participants at a *Hari Kemerdekaan* (Independence Day) celebration in Yogyakarta in 1994. This staging invokes comparisons between the idealism of the past and the disappointing realities of the present. The film invites interrogation of the nature and function of the Indonesian state.

Despite their desire to make documentaries as opposed to ethnographies, both filmmakers were politically prevented from too direct an engagement with their subjects. Until the 1990s, it was almost impossible for Indonesian filmmakers to independently produce either personal or documentary films. Some trenchant documentary comment took other forms, such as the blend of dramatic fiction, documentary drama and ethnographic verisimilitude transparently evident in Garin Nugroho’s 1996 film *Surat Untuk Bidadari / Letter to an Angel*. Like Lewa, its child protagonist, the filmmaker casts his own lenses in turn upon the impact of nationalist enculturation, the West and global systems on daily life in a remote region of Indonesia. Nugroho’s stance resembles that of the artists of the “Surealis Yogya” who depicted the bizarre disjunctions apparent in their own culture from within rather than from outside the confusion.

ethnographically informed documentary critiqued the films and photographs of those preceding them, like Mead and Bateson.

322 Sudarman abandoned big-budget documentary filmmaking for a series of smaller ethnographies, then ran a foundation assisting her former subjects negotiate Indonesia’s development agenda. Nugroho went on to make a number of feature films, as well as documentaries. A foundation was also attached to his production house and he gave shelter and opportunities to some of his subjects. Sympathetic to agendas of social justice and media development, both Sudarman and Nugroho ran foul of the censorship and broadcast controls exerted by the Indonesian government. However this did not stop the success of their films overseas. As with some Studio Audio Visuel Yogyakarta alternative community development and educative productions, their documentaries screened in overseas festivals and on television, winning a number of prestigious awards. But in New Order Indonesia, none of these productions gained theatrical release.
Ethnographic film as a documentary form

In non-fictional film today, documentary is seen as the overarching mode for the communication of rhetorical arguments. Ethnographic film is only one of the genres of that mode, despite its historical precedence. The ethnographic filmmaker might include controversial issues arising from observation of the subjects before the lens, but if present, these are stated by the film’s subjects. To develop and drive an engaged viewpoint as the film’s focus is not the principal task of ethnographic filmmaking. Theoretically, he/she frames the material before the lens, often at a distance, allowing it to tell its “story”, but narrative does not necessarily assume prominence as it usually does in documentary.

Contemporary ethnography may also focus on (a) particular aspect(s) or group within the filmmaker’s own society, as do my short intimate films about hair braiding and plaiting, Grazia’s Hairdo, A Garden in My Hair (2002) and Tjitutjara / M’Petan; Ratna and Aisha Talk Hair (2002). The films’ subjects address positionality and viewpoint with little prompting from myself, the filmmaker. My focus is chiefly concerned with hair braiding and plaiting, but in Grazia’s Hairdo, besides describing the braiding process, Casta’s wider perceptions and viewpoints include her exposition of colonialism, independence and national development in Tanzania. In Tjitutjara / M’Petan, Ratna’s viewpoints are expressed within her account of the educational experiences of four generations of women in her family. Both are valid as parallel personal social narratives extending Lucia Hartini’s account of her childhood and youth. As with filming particular aspects of Lucia’s life and artistic practice, my standpoints were chosen by the need to obtain clear and explanatory shots of the processes concerned. In edit, subsequent interventions were engaged to serve the truth I sought to portray, including an honest and objective representation of my subjects’ viewpoints, while intending that these short films remain ethnographic rather than documentary in intent.

By contrast, in Perbatasan / Boundaries, Lucia Hartini is seated formally at a table before her vast painting Hening Dalam Doa I, in a pose which is a personal artistic “take” on Sudjodjono’s famous realist canvas, Dibawah Kelambu / Before the Open Mosquito Net (1939), (see Ch. 7, Plate 46 b.). She wears her
hair in a long single plait, symbolically suggesting womanly strength and a desired unbroken relationship with nature (Mernissi, 1991: 109). As an adult, Lucia introduces the story of her childhood. She next appears with her hair cut, caught in two neat schoolgirl bunches, telling us that, as a child, she preferred to sit quietly watching the clouds, appreciating the natural beauty of her surroundings. In edit, her hairstyles are contrived as aspects of costume signifying the social and personal realities of different times in her life, assisting re-enactment and contributing further historical background information to the documentary. But they are not the film’s principal subject as are the braids and plaits in the ethnographically conceived “Braided Lives” series (Dudley, 2004).

The documentary filmmaker consciously searches for and suggests issues, facilitating their interrogation. He/she generally uses an observational frame, which is also investigative. The content of a documentary film serves the viewpoint (s) of its makers. Assisted by their subjects, filmmakers make representations and mount arguments, formulating particular strategies. They persuade us to accept their views as appropriate and convincing presentations of the truth. The degree to which one or more of these aspects of representation are present will vary from film to film, but the idea of representation itself is central to documentary (Nichols, 2001: 5). In the process, documentaries may, like fictional feature film, also embody multiple points of view and standpoints. These derive from the consciously deployed positionality of their makers, the subjects and issues raised, and from the way they are used to distinguish between authentic description and drama in the presentation of material (Grierson, 1979: 83 - 85).

8.4. Reality and Truth, a Question of Genre and Form

Documentary film doesn’t mean avoiding fiction, for no film can avoid fiction: it means establishing a certain relationship, a certain interplay, between the documentary and the fictional aspects of film, so that the documentary aspect can come forward in some significant way.

Perez (1998: 43)

While chance effects caused by inappropriate filters, faulty cameras or
damaged film may be included in ethnographic and documentary films as in Nugroho’s *Donggeng Kancil Tentang Kemerdekaan / Kancil’s Tale of Freedom*, or in some of Tim Asch’s fragments (Douglas, L., 2004), the consciously poetic defines many documentary films whose images have been deliberately manipulated in order to capture this same quality, as in interpretations (Vaughan, 1999: 79 - 81). In these instances, filmic language is weighted against the documentary record of the real to better convey the truth of the filmmaker’s perception of the documentary’s subject. Applying the creative exploration of reality to documentary film as extensions of the truth of its subject(s), Peter Crawford (1992: 2) explains, “Documentary film, including ethnographic film, exists as both *record* and *language* in what Vaughan (1992) describes as the ‘aesthetics of ambiguity’ or the ‘dual nature of film’.”

He argues that, if the documentary filmmaker has queried the authoritative neutrality of the “Third Eye” as the truthful source of the real, he or she must now acknowledge their filmic practices and products as the results of their own social, cultural, political and historical processes, while still acknowledging the contribution of their subjects and pure chance to the finished work. Because of technological development, choices regarding the style of presenting documentary material are now wide indeed, invoking creativity and prompting innovation. Documentary films are free to become relatively open texts, allowing narrative, encouraging speculation and further interpretation, rather than bombarding us authoritatively with many facts about the subject, now matter how accurate or interesting scholastically. While Patsy Asch concurs, remarking that “films and books are only interpretations”, she recommends that films resulting from ethnographic or anthropological research be accompanied by extensive explanatory texts due to the likely generation of multiplicitous interpretations by viewers (Asch, P., cited in Loizos, 1993: 41 - 42).

The formal tensions between the filmic records of the corporeal and the metaphoric, imaginary and symbolic worlds conjured through narrative but transformed through performance, indicate the difference between documentary and cinematic fictions, as does the true to scale, colour and texture of the documentative recording of art objects as opposed to their interpretations.
However, documentary may consciously engage with fictional elements through dramatised re-enactments. These are used when necessary information is either historically distant, too poorly documented visually to use with credibility, or too difficult or painful for the film’s protagonists to broach directly. A powerful Australian example is the 1994 Carol Ruff, Ned Landers documentary, *Fifty Years of Silence*, where these necessary re-enactments add both credibility and emotional power to appalling historical and personal events.

Perhaps the greatest danger to the truth of documentary material comes when the filmmaker applies either extreme self-reflexivity or cinematic effects to a film to heighten its impact. We may be left with a distortion which is nonetheless highly convincing, not as truth, but as fiction, as in certain sequences of Michael Moore’s entertaining documentaries *Roger & Me* (1989) and *Fahrenheit 9/11* (2004). Mark Achbar’s film, *The Corporation* (2004) is a compelling mix of these elements. Our attention is drawn to the conjuring act between the documentary and the fictional aspects of film of which both Patsy Asch (cited in Loizos, 1993: 42) and Perez (1998: 43) speak. However, in less skilled hands, we may be presented in excess with the truth of the material as perceived by the filmmaker, rather than that projected by his/her subjects, whose actuality is the filmmaker’s starting point. When fiction edges past documentation in the mix, we have shifted ground and the forms produced require re-assessment. The veracity of conditions must be represented, retaining the documentary aspect.

In making *Perbatasan / Boundaries*, I chose to switch between these modes in keeping with Lucia Hartini’s art. Although her completed paintings appear fantastical and are finely worked, Lucia claims that her struggles with the corporeal have engendered the disjunctive states from which her art takes form. To that degree, her work is “real” for the struggles it reflects are part of her daily reality (Wisetrotomo, 1994) (see Chs. 5, 6 and 7). They are the truth of her existence reflected in her work as a “Surealis” artist.

I wanted to mesh the beauty, fantasy and terror in Lucia’s work with her accommodation with and spiritual transcendence of an often problematic and painful reality existing beyond the seemingly placid surface of her everyday life in Yogyakarta. I sought ways to bring forward incidents of domestic violence,
teror and the tensions generated by repression while retaining the primacy of my subject and her words in an authentic way. Direct interview and passages of narrative describing the artist’s life, rendered as records of the real, are captured directly on camera, but are contrasted with re-enactments and lyrical interpretations of her paintings, created in edit. Engaging the differences between life and art, I sought to play real and unreal, hyper-real and surreal, the drama of everyday life and dramatisations of painful events against each other, while remaining mindful of the possible distortion of documentary truth inherent in this approach. In this dialogue between actuality and the need to tell painful and difficult truths, I was informed by cinematic Neo-realism as well as by the “Surealis” artists themselves.

8.5. Neo-realism and “Surealisme”, Hyper-realism and Painstaking Realism.

Film theorists writing about documentary and its various genres participate in wider visual discourses concerning the depiction of truth and reality in film. Nichols (2001: 5) postulates that all films are documentaries because all films examine and project social representations, but concedes “there is some very fuzzy territory” in certain dramatic feature films, particularly those by the Italian Neo-realists. What creates this difficulty? Are Neo-realist social representations problematic because they are conveyed by people who are not actors but appear to play themselves, as does Lucia Hartini when describing her physical collapse and psycho-spiritual crisis in *Perbatasan / Boundaries*?

Firstly, the nature of these representations is not clear-cut. Because they are shot in the real world, rather than a studio, Neo-realist films do not look like our present-day idea of dramatic feature film. Because the dramatic mask is inconsistently sustained, our relationship to the world depicted on the screen and our readings of events transpiring there may be confused. Secondly, the Neo-realist emphasis on the drama and poetry emerging from the harsh realities of daily life and the use of non actors in dramatic roles simultaneously asks us to suspend disbelief as in fiction, but accept what we see as immediately both real and true. By contrast, the documentary form endeavours to prevent the suspension
of disbelief, regardless of its dramatically stylised elements.

Thirdly, like their Italian Neo-realist counterparts, first-wave Indonesian Neo-realist filmmakers portrayed the stories of ordinary people caught up in the problems faced by their country after WW II and the upheaval of the struggle for Independence. In the ensuing chaos which followed, Neo-realist directors like Usmar Ismail attempted to capture the lyrical and dramatic qualities within the harsh realities of daily life, contextualising them filmically within the social and political struggles of new nationhood as struggles for life, meaning, ideals and form. These struggles are further reflected in the filmmaking process itself, while key elements of the Indonesian Neo-realist style arise from the constrained conditions of filmmaking at the time.

Salim Said (1991: 51 - 55) maintains that Usmar Ismail’s rapidly produced first feature films *Darah Dan Doa / The Long March* (1950) and *Enam Jam di Yogya / Six Hours in Yogya* (1951) were documentaries made after the fact because they could not be made at the time. A combination of desperate impoverishment and the need for secrecy meant that few people filmed Indonesia’s revolutionary engagements in their war for independence against the Dutch. The quasi-fictionalised subjects of these films set personal narratives of loss, hardship, comradeship and romance against the great Indonesian social narratives of the time, the war of independence and disjunctive birth of a modern nation from a string of Sultanates, colonised since the fifteenth century. But Ismail’s first films were heavily censored, encouraging him to move into fictional features like *Dosa Tak Berampun / The Unforgiveable Sin* (1952) and *Krisis / Crisis* (1953). (Plate 56 a.). In these last two films, Usmail retained the use of scripted characters drawn from real life, and the characteristic Neo-realist non-studio camera, but introduced professional actors into the cast (Said, 1991: 6 - 7).

The Indonesian Neo-realist dialogue was with nationalist propaganda and narrative drama, juxtaposed with a taste for mystical fantasy, the primary documentary and fictional forms extant in Indonesia in the 1950s. As with “Surealisme” decades later, Neo-realist films sought to emotively engage the space between these polarities. Neo-realist plotlines were generated from the lives
Plate 56 a. Still from *Krisis / Crisis* (1953), dir. Usmar Ismail

Plate 56 b. *Lewat Djam Malam* (Curfew), (1954), dir. Usmar Ismail. The location is a real house in an ordinary kampung, while the placement of the actors reflects both Javanese culture and historical experience in several ways.
of real people and events, then fictionalised slightly, so remaining socially and psychologically credible. As with the Italians, Indonesian directors of Neo-realist films found that much which they sought was already present in the real world, requiring no further staging. The cameras also left the confines of the production studio, descending to the streets, as did the students and large numbers of Indonesians from all sectors during Reformasi, almost 50 years later.

During the New Order, this type of camera use with its mobile naturalism generated a new school of followers. Known as Sinema Rush Copy, the Neo-realist camera created a uniquely Indonesian basis for later critical documentary and adventurous low-budget feature film production. Indonesian Neo-realist films also embodied their makers’ dissatisfaction with Hollywood-inspired work procedures (Said, 1991: 7), and hence with the existing Indonesian film production system at the time. Again, they set precedents influencing a newer generation of Indonesian filmmakers. Nearly four decades later, Nugroho, Nan T. Achnas and Marselli Sumarno turned their otherwise marginalised documentary sketches and feature length documentaries into dramatic shorts and popular feature films (Prakosa, 1997).

Like Ismail, Sumarno uses non-actors to play scripted characters in his dramatic feature Sri (1999). Sri’s leading lady, Rina Aryanti, is, like the character she plays, not an actor but a young dancer from a village near Solo in Central Java. Sri was filmed in this same area from whence the idea for the film originated, conferring further authenticity.323 Again, there are similarities with Ismail’s films. Like Krisis / Crisis (1953), Sri (1999) was filmed in the real world rather than in a studio. As with “Surealisme”, the bizarre is representationally conveyed in realistic form. Finally, although conflicted emotionally largely for social reasons, Sri’s character embodies Javanese moral values, and a spirituality conscious of the interactions between macrocosmos and microcosmos. Marselli shares this territory with Lucia Hartini and Iwan Sagito in particular, as seen in Hartini’s painting, Permohonan Hijau / Green Request (1986), (Ch. 4, Plate 23).

In a Kompas feature article about the film’s production values (10-8-

323 Personal communication. Marselli Sumarno, Jakarta, August 1999.
producer Kem Atmojo stresses that *Sri* was anti-Hollywood in style, but also different to a Nugroho film or a television production. Like Ismail, *Sri*’s producers had also sought a different production model. Funds were contributed in kind and by investors, by the government and by the Film and Television school at IKJ.\(^{324}\) In 1998-9, when Sumarno made *Sri*, his path was relatively unencumbered. At last, there were few rules constraining film production, but continuing difficulties with approval and release.

Decades apart, Indonesia’s “*Surealis*” artists, like its Neo-realist directors and Realist painters sought to evoke emotional and critical responses from their audience. Working with photo-realism, the “*Surealis*” sought to rework, transform and often transcend the real. They also conveyed the disjunctures, displacements and dramas of contemporary life juxtaposed with the modernising propaganda of the state, just as the Neo-realist filmmakers had done. “*Surealis*”, *Arus Baru*, *Hyper-realis* and *Painstaking Realist* artists mostly painted their own world and that of ordinary Indonesians around them with an important difference. Although their images originate in the everyday world, they transcend the realities from which they emanate through their innovative treatment of the picture plane in favour of realistically depicted, figuratively recognisable yet spatially displaced forms imbued with fantasy, drama, poesis and the mystical. These images are not “real” in a literal sense, but hyper-real, meta-real or surreal. They convince us of the different orders of reality which their creators seek to convey, whether these be personal, social, psychological or mystically spiritual - the multiplicitous “reality bundled in a dream” described by Wiyanto (2002) in *Perbatasan / Boundaries* (Chs. 3 - 7). Besides their “*Beautiful Surrealism*”, both Lucia Hartini’s life story and her paintings are thoroughly imbued with Neo-realist elements in spirit and execution.


In this part-section, I discuss other conceptual and stylistic influences encouraging my choice of documentary as the formal filmic shell in which to

\(^{324}\) This model resembled a mix of independent and Australian film development funding models at the time of thesis completion (April, 2006).
portray Lucia Hartini’s life and art. In my research process prior to making *Perbatasan / Boundaries* and afterwards, when writing this thesis, I watched several Indonesian films as well as documentaries by Western filmmakers about Indonesia and about visual artists. Most have already been mentioned, but, like the Neo-realist films discussed above, those most relevant to the debate between authenticity and drama, record and language in documentary film are examined in greater detail. This part-section presents the formal and conceptual fruits of this research as it relates to *Perbatasan / Boundaries*. My conscious filmic use of ideas derived from these stylistic precedents is discussed in Chapter 9.

Although visually and contextually information-rich, the stylistic modality of most of the ethnographic films surveyed seemed somewhat distanced. Their approach was too reserved and stilted for my very contemporary subject and the fantastic surreal richness of her work. For the most part, these films lacked the quality of *rasa* or feeling and spirit, so important to Lucia. They were also inappropriate in terms of her long cultivated media-awareness. The stance of the camera as “Third Eye” preferred by many ethnographic filmmakers for its neutrality did not suit my position in relation to my subject. Their usually static camerawork resolutely contained the action before the lens, when I wished instead to convey an artist's holistic view of the world, immersing viewers in this reality. Although largely lived at home and in her studio, the boundaries of Lucia’s “small world” were constantly transcended through her perceptions, her imagination, the outward demands of her career and her spiritual practice. Because I had been acquainted with Lucia Hartini for many years, I sought a degree of confessional intimacy in my film.

*Conversations with friends, developing creative pathways*

My first reference for films about Indonesian artists was John Darling’s *Lempad, Painter of Bali*, made when Darling was a “participatory anthropologist” in Ubud.325 Foreigners from the “First World” who have acquired Lempad’s work are subsequently contrasted with the Lempad family, of which the filmmaker seems to be part. But despite the stance of the camera and his obvious ease in situ,

Darling later decided to add an explanatory authorial third party narration. At the time, this style fitted a formula acceptable to western viewers who were watching the action from outside and required an informative guide to unfamiliar exotic material. Although this additional narration was considered necessary for a television market, it often grated with the images conveyed. No matter how informative, this device often renders the cultural bias of the film’s producers absolutely transparent, sometimes annoyingly so (Hanan, 1998: 16).

As a filmmaker, I preferred those films in which the voices of the film’s protagonists are privileged as they are in many ethnographic fragments and films and the formally critical and self-reflexive documentaries such as Trinh T. Minh-Ha’s *Rassemblage* (1982), *Surname Viet, Given Name Nam* (1989), and Josko Petkovic’s *Letter from Eros* (1994) and *The Barque Stefano* (2002). Although sometimes the filmmaker’s voice and those of others is used narrationally, all differ from classical expository documentaries in which an authorial third party narration and rigorous questioning have been imposed on images.

Again, because Lucia Hartini’s experience as a contemporary artist was very different to Lempad’s, other approaches beyond that of an expository documentary narrated by a third party suggested themselves. Lucia has constantly crossed the borders of traditional and contemporary worlds in Indonesia. Her collectors are primarily Indonesian, and she has become used to explaining her ideas and position to gallerists and reviewers. I chose to let Lucia speak for herself and her relatives friends and colleagues speak directly about her, rather than imposing further narration in English over their voices – even if their discourse was minimal. Subtitles and text boxes do the rest.

Surprisingly, ethnographic film provided useful models in other ways. The five part series, *Jero on Jero: Stories from the Life of a Balinese Healer*, made by anthropologist Linda Connor and filmmakers Tim and Patsy Asch, between 1978 and 1991, was insightful for several reasons. An integral part of a long-term study of the renowned Balinese spirit healer and medium, Jero Tapakan, these five films tell the story of a unique Indonesian woman’s journey, first professionally, then personally and mystically.

Despite the primacy of Jero’s story, initially extracted through Connor’s
patient questioning, I appreciated the filmmakers’ decision to retain many of the accidental interruptions to the action being filmed in Jero’s house and compound. Absolutely unmediated, these interruptions created a sense of Brechtian alienation rendering the filmmaker’s approach resolutely ethnographic and further contextualizing the life of the subject before the lens. They introduced elements of impending drama and mystery. Examples of such shifts of attention can be found in the second and subsequent films of this series. The filmmakers are often compelled to wait while various animate elements in Jero’s compound, aspects of Jero’s daily life and business as a healer, intrude themselves between the camera and its subject(s), Jero and Linda.

This approach resonated with my task as a filmmaker, because I knew it would be difficult to exclude the daily aspects of Lucia’s life from our interviews and the filmmaking process. Furthermore, were I to do so, I would be removing much of the cultural context which subconsciously informs both her work and the audience’s understanding of life in Indonesia. These interruptions are the everyday background within which Lucia paints.

Next, I was intrigued when Jero began to undermine the methodologically “correct” approach of the filmmaker, whether spontaneously at first and included by the filmmaker, and then intentionally so, after she had seen the completed version of the first film. This particular shift of attention happens in the second film of the series and defines the subsequent films. Now at ease with the filmmakers, Jero divulges her story of a difficult personal journey with confidence. Through the strength of her on-screen presence we sympathetically enter the world they share in real life, as well as within the diegetic space of the screen. We become completely aware of the contemporaneity of the subject’s story as Jero pre-empts Linda Connor and her careful questions. Performatively, Jero has seized both the camera lens and the screen. The resulting film is an often poetic work of non-fiction with fictive elements provided by Jero’s account of her experience. It is the subject herself who begins to blur the boundaries between any hard division of Grierson’s (1979: 83) filmic binaries of authentic description and “the drama which resides in the living fact”.

As a filmmaker, I hoped that Lucia and I would attain this same sense of a
shared confidence and communicative ease. I knew that Lucia wanted me to include her experience of psychological disturbance in our new film, as well as emphasize the spiritual dimensions of her recovery. She did not favour a documentary treatment of this disturbance as a psychiatric illness, stressing instead the importance of finding her guru, Master Ching Hai and following her teachings. My challenge would then lie in conveying Lucia’s experiences to potentially cynical non-Indonesian audiences, while remaining true to my subject’s personality and cultural context.

Again, Jero on Jero: Stories from the Life of a Balinese Healer suggested useful perspectives. Initially, the fourth film in the series was the only available source presenting a sensitive and undistorted treatment of psychological disturbance, paranormal experience and spiritually based complementary healing in Indonesia. Jero animatedly describes how she became first ill and then crazy as a result of extreme deprivation and emotional hardship. Eventually she reconnects with her taksu, the “telephone” connecting her to her spirit caller. This possession experience transforms Jero into a healer. The story line was sympathetic to our direction, although I still sought filmicly creative strategies which might convey Lucia’s experience with heightened impact, (drama), without sacrificing credibility. Yet to the end, I failed in this quest. Other possible models explored between 1999 and 2002 did not work. Thus Lucia “performs” the extreme disturbance and anguish of this event in a mode used to read poetry. She is the sole source of the information divulged to the camera.

Otherwise overwhelmed by its reality, Lucia’s account of a profoundly distressing experience is staged rather than heuristically ethnographic, yet we sense unease beneath her projected aura of control. Unlike the heightened depiction of florid insanity experienced by the Tanzanian woman in Martin Mhando’s feature film Maangamizi / The Ancient One (2000), my camera is given little extra with which to visually embroider or expand Lucia’s account. Maintaining the integrity of her art, I situate her experience of madness within an interpretation of works which she was able to paint during this time. In the absence of further visual and clinical information, I found this minimalist presentation convincing and credible within the structure and style of Perbatasan.
Similarly, Lucia’s brief account of her return to Temanggung for hospitalisation and parental care at the time of her breakdown resisted the presentation accorded Mhando’s character who revisits the traumas of her childhood, then re-connects with her ancestral spirits. In Lucia’s case, even though I could have condensed this event filmically, I chose to exclude this period from the finished film, later sensing Lucia’s relief at my decision.

In the absence of psychiatric evidence, sceptics might doubt the credibility of Lucia’s experience. This doubt may create conflict with the expected role of documentary film when documentary is seen only as an exercise in the revelation of truth and its convincing presentation through factual substantiation by authoritative and credible third parties. Yet when we consider the nature of events in Lucia Hartini’s life as detailed in Section II, and Linda O’Connor’s patient examination of similar mental illnesses in Bali, Lucia’s lucid on-camera description of her mental states at the time, as well as the benefits derived from pursuing her spiritual beliefs, encourage us to accept her experience as both real and plausible. Contextually, her paintings as well as her recovery and remarriage furnish us with further evidence.

Confirming choices

My creative choices were confirmed after viewing and revisiting a range of documentaries including the Australian film *Fifty Years of Silence* (1994) and several Indonesian feature films originating from anthropological research and documentary filmmaking ventures. The directors of most documentaries featuring re-enactments clarify their position regarding real, performative and interpretatively fictive elements in order to maintain the truthfulness of the material conveyed and the credibility of the opinions presented. Dramatised insets are usually stylistically distinguished from the interviews and those transposed slices of everyday reality forming the bulk of their content.326

*Fifty Years of Silence* excels in these distinctions, which add to the drama of Jan Ruff O’Hearne’s tragic and simultaneously, empowering story. In one

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326 This holds true except for films which document performance or place ordinary people in unusual situations where their actions become the performance, as in the hybrid contemporary form of Reality Television.
instance, the film shifts first from colour to black and white, invoking Jan’s present journey back to the site of the former Japanese military brothel in Semarang, with her past removal there as a young prisoner of war. The starkly staged black and white sequence which follows is a dramatic re-enactment of her repeated rape. Performed by an Indonesian theatre group, it is shot in Neo-realist style. We see only a corridor, a lace-draped table, a flower vase and soldier’s boots.

My decision to use actors in sequences of *Perbatasan / Boundaries* depicting professional rivalries, conflict and domestic violence was made in Indonesia in 1999 after Lucia found herself unable to directly describe these incidents on camera. Although not created expressly for my film, the *Teater Situs* performance showing the range of emotions experienced while trying to write creatively embodied the range of emotional complexities necessary to dramatically convey Lucia’s fraught relationship with her first husband. The performance evoked frustration, gestation, challenge, conflict, competitiveness, anger and despair. (Plate 57).

Plate 57. *Teater Situs* performing at the rooftop art space at the *Kompas* office, Den Pasar, in 1999.
Garin Nugroho’s feature film *Surat Untuk Bidadari / Letter for an Angel* (1996, released in 1999) is formally hybridic, using a mixture of drama, documentary as drama, and ethnography to tell a story unearthed when researching the children’s documentary series *Anak Anak Seribu Pulau / Children of a Thousand Islands* in 1990.\(^{327}\) Contemporaneously set on the island of Sumba, a liminal locale far from the Javanese centre of New Order Indonesia, *Surat Untuk Bidadari* presents viewers with several problematic representations as well as confronting the difficulties caused by restrictions on freedom of expression in a climate of repression. In this bleak yet oddly matter-of-fact film about a young boy, Lewa, and his violent and disastrous “coming of age”, Nugroho also presents us with the extreme characterisation of a sporadically insane character, Malaria Tua (Old Malaria). Malaria Tua is Lewa’s speech-impaired uncle whose impediment is popularly regarded as a sign of his special links with the divine. However, besides malaria, another possible source of his damaged health is torture. An outcast, he lives mostly in a plane wreck, whose wings are his dancing platform. In this way, Nugroho creates a cinematic representation of the performative as a means of escape from the harsh realities of a life studded with brutal incidents, while the incidents themselves are dispassionately depicted in ethnographically truthful mode.

Despite transpositions of gender, experience and locale, Malaria Tua personifies some of the “defects” Lucia self-reflexively once saw in herself, but in heightened form. He has a long-term illness, has suffered physical and mental violence and transcends an inability to present thoughts verbally through artistic expression. The contextual metaphor for their suffering is the repressive excesses of the New Order state, but within that framework, the differences between the two, personally and socially, is immense. Although physically and emotionally challenged, Lucia Hartini is nevertheless advantaged by her non-peripheral location, education and artistic success. She survives; Malaria Tua does not.

\(^{327}\) In pre-production, Nugroho developed the film’s form by adapting and fusing the thematic structures of three foreign films. This process may be seen as Nugroho’s commentary on the long-established but unacknowledged Indonesian mainstream practice of cutting together plot lines and stories from elsewhere, usually from Hollywood and Shanghai/Hong Kong (Said, 1991: 4). In this instance, the films chosen for cutting together were selected from different cinematic resource bases, including Latin America.
In the working draft of *Perbatasan / Boundaries* (2000), I play with these ideas, introducing a dancer whose movements represent Lucia Hartini’s spirit which continues to strive while the artist’s exhausted mind and body sleeps. (Ch. 6, Plate 40). Sometimes I regret excluding my dancer, selected for artistic emphasis, even if her inclusion may have retrospectively encouraged unfounded charges of inappropriately imitating the work of another.

### 8.7. Summary

In *Perbatasan / Boundaries*, my choices allowed me to indulge in the ‘aesthetics of ambiguity’, privileging the language of film above that of record when interpreting Lucia’s art. Furthermore, as with Neo-realist filmmaking, many events in Lucia’s life could not possibly have been filmed directly in the present moment. They required performative re-enactment. It was also both permissible and necessary to engage fictive modes when dealing with aspects of Lucia’s experience she found too difficult to divulge directly to the camera, as in conventional documentary. Not only do the communicative and stylistic conjuring acts of Lucia Hartini and the Indonesian “Surealis” painters resemble the fine line walked by the Indonesian Neo-realist filmmakers. Both are analogous to Vaughan’s ‘dual nature of film’ because both work with the dichotomies of the real and the unreal, the rational and the irrational. As the surreal, both are transcended.

Intentionally, and in terms of its format, *Perbatasan / Boundaries* is a documentary rather than an ethnographic film, despite the cultural references constantly engaged by my subject and my own interest in depicting ethnographic detail. My interventions as a filmmaker are many and obvious. If we are to pursue the logic of Vaughan’s argument, even the general categorisation of *Perbatasan / Boundaries* as a documentary may be of secondary importance. In some ways, it is simply a film in which issues to do with conflicts between Lucia’s socialisation as an Indonesian woman, her gender and her chosen profession are raised, and her practical and spiritual resolutions of the consequences entailed are presented. As Trinh (1992: 137) suggests, “if the primary nature of the vision is cinematic, the rest is categorisation according to emphasis”.

Formally categorised as a documentary, *Perbatasan / Boundaries* is a cinematic hybrid, rooted in the post-colonial hybrid reality of Lucia Hartini’s life in Indonesia in the last quarter of the twentieth century. The next chapter describes the process of making this documentary, resuming considerations introduced previously concerning the degree to which Lucia’s artistic practice shares certain formal and visual qualities with film.
CHAPTER 9
THE POETICS OF DAILY LIFE AND THE LENS OF SOCIAL ENQUIRY

About Making

This chapter analyses the directorial treatment and production values used when making *Perbatasan / Boundaries* through a particular study of positionality, camera usage, authority and the problematics of narration and temporality. Besides the respective positionings of subjects and filmmaker(s), I discuss the range of expressive possibilities available through digital technologies. These innovations include the use of swivel screens on cameras, attachable shotgun mikes, instant replay via television and computer hook-up, and the role of the internet as an aid to production and transmission as well as the interaction of these factors (where known).

I discuss the politics of documentary film production made as co-productions by people from different cultural backgrounds. When addressing these themes, I describe my account of the efforts made by Lucia Hartini, Operasi Rachman, Clara Anna and myself to create a productive working relationship. We had to find and then secure a conceptual and pragmatic “Third Space” (Papastergiadis, 2003) in which to build our aspirational “Diamond Queen of mutual understanding” (Tsing, 1993) (Ch. 2). Achieving a workable praxis required an interactive sensitivity to social relations comprising our different historical and social experiences, perceptions, and conceptual systems.

What was my position in relation to my subjects, and theirs in relation to me? I was perceived as belonging to the “outside”, while my subjects were “inside”. I must rely on their depth of cultural, religious and local knowledge, despite my frequent visits to Central Java since 1970, yet still maintain my own perspective as filmmaker and thesis writer. While this situation entailed questions of temporal and spiritual power as well as difference, *Reformasi* and its aftermath provided Lucia, Operasi and myself with manageable common ground. From this constantly shifting middle point, we negotiated our respective concepts of temporality and brokered authority in the filmmaking process.

Documentary films, like their makers, are only one aspect of their coming
into being (Rouch, 1978; Nichols, 1983). Regardless of the directors’ original intent and the social actors whose story we follow, the film has its own voice. Just as the dynamic of *Reformasi* transcended Lucia Hartini’s preference for the quiet calm of her studio, urging a public participation she had previously avoided, so the importance of social process in *Perbatasan / Boundaries* became greater than originally intended. Legislative changes guaranteeing freedom of expression and media freedom in Indonesia were an important new external agent in this process. These changes provided a climate more conducive to documentary production, regardless of the degree to which vested interests continued to restrict freedom of speech in Indonesia (as they do in Australia). Experimentation with styles of narration in documentary film assumed greater importance while changed circumstances enabled expressive and creative freedom within the documentary form, vital for a fresh start.

Besides, my challenge was to make a documentary about an Indonesian woman artist and her art as opposed to a Surrealist film in the European sense. My starting point was the conceptual proposition that Indonesian surrealism was different to its European precursor (see Chs.4, 5, 6, and 7) and my observation that Lucia Hartini’s “Surealisme Indah” was itself filmic in conception, scale, psychological concerns and dramatic qualities.

9.1. Exercises in Knowledge and Revision: Defining the “Third Space”

After discussions with Lucia in January 1998, a critical interrogation of theoretical positions adopted previously on my part suggested the need to re-examine first premises before commencing any new work. Spontaneity and experiment required moderation within an increasingly resolved conceptual framework and practical approaches, which, while acknowledging the existence of difference, did not rely so heavily on the objectification of my subject. Self-reflexively, I asked myself was I a friend whose task was to elicit confessional ease, an artistic collaborator, a cool and distant professional filmmaker, or some combination of all these modes? What was my political relationship to my subjects and theirs to me? How would this influence the way the new film was planned, shot and constructed?
As an Australian researcher and filmmaker in Indonesia, it was impossible “to ignore the complexity of cultural production within the interaction of colonisers and colonised” on a local and global scale (Said, E., 1978, cited in Tsing, 1993: 15 - 16). Such complexities were inherent in the localised struggles over power and meaning which engaged Indonesian artists like Lucia and the “Surealis Yogya” (Tsing, 1993: 13). These struggles took place independently in relation to their immediate cultural context and, professionally, with those holding agency over the artists’ work, encompassing its interpretation, promotion and distribution on the world stage.

Although no coloniser in the old imperialist sense, I was still a foreigner in possession of the camera. In 1992, when making Pusaran / Vortex, my first film with Lucia, I was aware I was neither a neutral nor an equal participant in our exchanges. In hindsight, I now consider I had failed to consistently build this awareness into the way I planned, shot and constructed that first experiment in joint production with its potential to enhance our respective creativities. Despite the differences I felt but had inadequately theorised, and our mutual wariness, this film succeeded in a small way as an experimental post-modernist film, sufficiently satisfying for both of us to decide to make another.

By 1999, I had learnt a great deal more about directing, about filming, framing and editing. Questions of positionality and power still applied, but their effect had been softened by our contact across the years between, enabling a free discussion of our respective perspectives. Other factors contributing to this change were Lucia’s confidence, gained through her spiritual journey; the continued involvement of her sister Clara Anna as Production Assistant, Operasi’s untiring presence and participation, and above all, the spirit and attitudinal changes wrought by the heady process of Reformasi, the great current in which we had all been swept along. I had become a familiar visitor to their world and the collaborative process was no longer new to us.

Beyond the practical, the struggle of women like Lucia during the New Order might also be seen as a struggle against a form of oppression perpetrated from within Indonesian society against its own members, constructed along lines of gender, ethnicity, class, and religion. For many, this oppression had been
reinforced by the apparatus of governance. The intersection of these factors with each other and with traditional cultural beliefs and practices had become increasingly problematic in the context of modernity, requiring the creation of new praxis. In 1999, this reality was now evident to many Indonesian women, including Lucia and Clara Anna, and informed our conversations during filming, although the strong opinions they expressed and their analysis of such problems were not always captured directly for the screen. Elements of caution still applied.

I suspect Lucia had soft-pedalled some of her views on gender and religion given her blossoming relationship with Operasi. Judicious rather than ambivalent, she preferred to negotiate and seek harmony through conceptual meeting points. Similarly, it was necessary to use re-enactments performed by the actors and artists of Teater Situs, Bali, to depict the violence of her first marriage, because Lucia was unable to describe this on-camera (Ch. 8, Plate 57). I could not deal with all these factors in depth, nor with the conflicts and/or successes arising at their interstices, selecting instead particular aspects for emphasis. If my subject’s position was informed by a love of nature, post-colonial allegiances, a gender-based awareness of women’s struggles in society, vocational professionalism and spirituality, it was important that this new film should refer to their thematic expression in Lucia’s art.

*Revision and Practice*

*Pusaran / Vortex* contains one particular sequence which I decided to incorporate in *Perbatasan / Boundaries* because it succinctly posits wider issues regarded as problematic for foreign filmmakers working in Indonesia. These issues emerge from Indonesia’s revolutionary and post-colonial heritage and constant reaction through all social groups to the jarring inroads of globalization.

Lucia wanted *Perbatasan / Boundaries* to cover completely different ground. However, she still quite liked this sequence as a straightforward depiction of her sources of inspiration. The artist stands at her kitchen sink as though seeking inspiration in a microcosmic isthmus of coralline rock of detergent bubbles, her action compositionally framed with reference to a painting by the Dutch master Vermeer. Maintaining the quizzical irony of this metaphor, Lucia’s image is further reflected in the round globe of the *wajan* (wok) on the wall,
described in the film’s spoken texts as her “familiar companion”. (Plate 58). At once observational, historicist, and doubly self-reflexive, this reflection also contains my image as filmmaker. The comment is productive of an open text, and not without humour as befits a surrealist film. The sequence mirrors Hartini’s system of image formation, but also alludes to my responsibilities as a filmmaker engaged in the production of a further set of representations (Kuhn, 1982).

For me, the images in this sequence reveal the gap which the ‘Diamond Queens’ of our collaborations past and present, intentionally attempted to fill. As artists, Lucia and I share elements of a transposed artistic heritage, that of the Western European Fine Arts, including the global movements of modernism and post-modernity. These have shaped the recent history of art throughout the world, although they have been/are experienced and filtered differently in many places. We also share a newer experience, very different in its specificities, that of an intellectual post-colonial interrogation of tenets, tropes, and systems of image formation. Elements of this shared historical experience, albeit different in so many ways, might be consciously deployed in carefully creating particular scenes collaboratively. However, to suggest cross-culturally applicable readings for every image constructed in *Perbatasan / Boundaries* was neither my stated intent as a filmmaker, nor Lucia’s as an artist.³⁹

Reconsidering my framing of gender issues in the lives of Indonesian women, I decided that *Pusaran / Vortex* had utilised the theorisation of difference too strongly in its portrayal of the artist as “other” (Ch. 5). In referencing aspects of Javanese tradition, I had depicted Lucia’s unease (disquiet) as a flawed example of Kristevian abjection, rather than a sensitive response to a range of larger fears. While this depiction contrasted with the simultaneously post-modern

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³⁹ One can never guarantee how viewers will read a work even within one culture, as is evidenced in panel shows where film buffs present individual reviews of the same films. For example, when *Pusaran / Vortex: From the Kitchen to Outer Space* was screened at a Women’s Film Festival in Adelaide in 1993, one viewer reportedly suggested that Lucia was my domestic and I was recording her as part of a momento to take home! I thought this neo-colonial interpretation had quite missed the point. Those with an awareness of critical issues in art and film appreciated the scene, the statement of my position as a filmmaker and Lucia’s re-enactment of the inspirational sources of her working process. Feminist members of the audience looking for narrative and didactic representation did not. The comment regarding “the Asian maid” came from someone with none of these affiliations who had little background knowledge of Indonesia.
and poetic treatment of Hartini’s work, I later realised I had misunderstood the emphasis of Lucia’s words. I had portrayed her as a victim rather than as a woman who, by 1992, was beginning to analyse the reasons for her personal and social oppression and a person concerned about the world generally. Besides, as suggested by one viewer, the film lacked insufficient contextualising explanation. People wondered why Lucia Hartini neither spoke, nor provided her viewpoints directly to the camera. Nowhere did I explain why this would have been difficult for her to do so. They wished to know more about the person who created the art. Against the grain of my intentions, I had to accept that most viewers wanted, if not authoritative narration, then some grounded verbal explanation either from my subject or via direct speech from others.

Lucia in her kitchen swirling paintwater.
9.2. Conjuring the past in the present moment

In this part-section, I discuss stylistic influences affecting my camera usage and editorial choices in the context of relationships perceived between Indonesian Neo-realism and contemporary figurative Indonesian art as discussed in Chapter 8. I was particularly impressed by the long-term influence of a style known as *Sinema Rush Copy* on low-budget Indonesian documentary making and dramatic shorts production.

*Sinema Rush Copy*

*Sinema Rush Copy* is a spontaneous, no-frills approach to camera work, designed for non-studio production which had its subliminal genesis in Indonesia during the Revolutionary period. Often edited within the camera, *Sinema Rush Copy* became the signature teaching style in the film school at IKJ, Jakarta from 1979 until 1985. It appealed because of its informal approach and its neat circumvention of the restrictions stifling official documentary filmmaking in Indonesia for most of the New Order (Prakosa, 1997: 169). Accepting the inevitability of tiny budgets and scarce equipment, young filmmakers eagerly seized on this way of working which had acquired the panache of a guerilla activity. *Sinema Rush Copy* was the opposite of the set-shot Russian style which was also influential in Indonesian filmmaking, but which was difficult to employ in the context of “gritty” filmmaking by impoverished media students.

Examples of *Sinema Rush Copy* are a short film about Nias, shot on 16 mm, titled *Film Nias*, one about the Dayaks from Kenyah, Kalimantan, and another about the Suku Badui from Ciliwung in West Java, still cited in alternative circles in 1991 (Personal communication, Dadang Christanto, Yogyakarta, July, 1991; Ken Zuraida, Cikpayung, July, 1991). Garin Nugroho’s film *Air dan Romi / Water and Romi* (1991) is a more developed example of *Sinema Rush Copy* through which is threaded a strong, stand-alone storyline exposing a contentious subject. IKJ houses a collection of short dramatic features created subsequently in workshops, which developed the genre; films by Nan T. Achnas, Harry Suharyadi Dagoe and Krisbiantono are examples.

Working at the local level in an open-ended format for academic or specific-interest group presentation, filmmakers discovered that permissions at the
local RT level were easy to obtain. Moreover, because filming and post-production costs were low, the technological constraints of scarce resources were overcome by developing informal techniques. Crews immersed themselves in the stream of daily life, living with their subjects; following and recording what was happening; editing in camera and on the run (Prakosa, 1997: 168). Commencing with Super 8 and sixteen millimetre cameras, this practice became easier with the arrival of video cameras, an excitement is visible today in the footage shot by younger filmmakers working independently with handycams, or through documentary production companies.\footnote{328} The cinematographic legacy of *Sinema Rush Copy* shines on in the footage of the political rallies and popular demonstrations of *Reformasi* which I sourced in Indonesia, and acquired for *Perbatasan / Boundaries* (Plate 59).

The results were highly mobile. Although the presentation of observational material was rarely analytical or stringently critical, footage and later video could be thematically streamed and developed for presentation with minimal editing. Films made in the spirit of *Sinema Rush Copy* were often presented with accompanying live narration and commentary, making them Spontaneously complete and sometimes, controversial. While referring in the first instance to photojournalism, and in delivery to performance, *Sinema Rush Copy* films engaged the conventions of the double-sided screen, but transcended these modes in their enquiry. However, *Sinema Rush Copy* filmmakers rarely showed their footage to their subjects, and their films remained far from the formalist constructs of classic documentary exemplified by foreign-initiated joint productions like *Riding the Tiger*.

*Sinema Rush Copy* interested me both practically and conceptually. It was a straightforward way of working, well suited to conditions where I might need to think fast to catch the excitement of the moment, without time to formally compose shots. My small digital video camera functioned as a direct extension of

\footnote{328}Dudley, Jennifer, “Film and Global Culture in Other People’s Spaces”, paper presented at the ASAA Conference “Whose Millennium?” Melbourne, July 2000.

\footnote{329}Personal communication. Ibu Eci, Wida Chatab, Jakarta, July 2001. Today, short film production in Indonesia is booming as a consequence.
my arm and hand, the principal tools of my practice as an artist and photographer. Its unobtrusive presence encouraged an ease in those before its lens, allowing me to capture intimate actions, while the swivel screen, permitted interaction and collaboration through instant replay, well-suited to democratic times.

When telling parts of Lucia Hartini’s story, I sought to encapsulate the symbolic geography and romantic atmosphere of Yogyakarta as it existed in the mid-1970s. Raiding the archives looking for historical footage was beyond my budget. Instead, I descended to the streets with my camera in the spirit of Sinema Rush Copy, travelling by day to the various locations Lucia, Operasi, Clara Anna and I had selected for shooting, and driving by night through Yogyakarta. My night filming was atmospherically charged, coinciding with the eve of Hari Kemerdekaan / Independence Day, 1999, while Indonesia awaited the results of its first democratically conducted elections.

Editing within the camera at the time of shooting, I sought a lyrical solution drawn from the present moment, (Plate 60). I then proceeded to use this video as an editorial spine for both Road Stories; Cone (1999), and for the “transiting Yogyakarta” sequence of Perbatasan / Boundaries, layering and cutting into it other material as required, a method used subsequently when editing Piknik Bersama Gelandangan (2001). Viewers are invited to sift the dancing calligraphies of coloured light visually and conceptually, as they dance across the action beneath. These calligraphies are written onto the bodies of the night travellers who leave through the Kraton gate. Forming an irregularly trellised screen, this calligraphic sum of many layers references the Javanese aesthetic concept, *semu*.330

Using the poetic potential and freedom of the small hand-held camera as well as the creative potential of layered multi-timeline digital editing, I discovered a visual key for interpreting the layers of paint and washes in Lucia Hartini’s

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330 Like a silver wire ready to be forged as the filigree for which Yogyakarta is renowned, *semu* is an intricate layering of detail, deployed as decorative abstraction in the visual arts or as metaphor compounded upon itself in literature. Lucia Hartini uses *semu* as a decorative and symbolic device in her works, examples being the transmutation of rocks into buildings on the border zone in Batas Antara Dua Sisi (1994), and in the painting of the barques, one of lacy rock and petrified wood and the other of waves and air in Roh Perahu Nabi Nuh / The Spirit of Noah’s Ark (2001).
Plate 60. Still from *Perbatasan / Boundaries* (2002). An early sketch by Lucia is superimposed over video of Malioboro by night.
work. These digitally enhanced graphic elements are reminiscent of the many-coloured brushstrokes of carefully applied paint Lucia uses to develop the surfaces of rocks and waves in her paintings. Disparate threads of perception, my digital brush-strokes reflect the colours of the Barisan Berwarnai, the seven-streamed troops of Reformasi in whose creation Operasi had been instrumental. Their energy infused the planning of my film, and Lucia, her paintings for “Irama Kehidupan”.

Moving from image capture to the inevitably interventionist exercise of editing, I discovered an appropriate variation of the structural form previously decided. Co-editor Michael Muller suggested we break the continuity of Perbatasan / Boundaries into episodes marked off by text boxes in English. These texts explained the episode ahead, providing audiences with the time to gather their thoughts and digest the subtitles from the preceding sequence. Each episode structurally resembles the compartment of a shell containing a particular period of the artist’s life or themes arising from the interpretation of a painting or series of works. This structural and compositional device, often used in the creation of multi-media, provided an appropriate and resonant key with which to assemble the diffuse and potentially rich contents of our filming, the extra material I had acquired, and the reproductions of Lucia’s paintings within the context of her artistic production. The edit was sampled and sent to Lucia and Operasi for their comments, assisting Operasi compose the score.

9.3. Camera Usage: positionality and pragmatics

No discussion of positionality can exclude the placement of the camera

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331 Formally, dividing the film this way has assisted me develop and expand the ideas within, especially at conference presentations where I have screened discrete episodes of Perbatasan / Boundaries. Iconographically, with its organic yet fantastically varied array of forms and its allusion to sexuality, the shell is a characteristic motif of surrealism, be this European, Australian or Indonesian (James, 2003: 43-51, 109, 132 - 3). In Lucia Hartini’s art, the shell appears in abstract compositional form, as well as in detail, occurring in the rhyzomic shapes of cloud configurations, the rocky isthmuses and multi-coloured surface encrustations of the planets distinguishing many of Lucia’s paintings (see Plates 3, 12 and 48 a.). In Pusaran / Vortex, attention is also paid to the semantic play on the Indonesian word for shell, (kulit) kerang(ka). Literally translated, the word kerang also means “skin, stepping stones arranged as a path through muddy ground or shallow water; a framework” (Echols and Shadily, Vol. I, 1990: 284). The reference then embraces continuums, arrested and resumed, permeable borders and transitional states, all of which are symbolically depicted in the compositions and forms of Hartini’s paintings.
and its manipulation during filming with relation to filmmaker and subjects. The camera may be hand-held and mobile within the action, translated as “inside” in Java; still and reflexive with an intimate focus, also “inside”; or recording it from the “outside” - a fixed, somewhat distant position of observational neutrality. The mobile camera may also be situated outside, but if participatory and engaged in the action, it remains, at that point, conceptually, “inside”, from which point it might be used to evoke both reflexive critique but also as an agent of intervention.332

When appropriate, I consciously used the camera’s position to highlight the increasingly pro-active presence of Indonesian women in the broadening public domain. Emotively, I suggest the associated dilemmas and triumphs of my subject through length of shot, height and angle to heighten mood and engage or distance the audience respectively. Similarly, Lucia’s position in the frame is indicated directionally where necessary, occasionally drawing on wayang conventions: from the populist left facing right; from the refined right facing left; from above; but rarely from below, looking upwards. Lucia considered that this angle made her look arrogant: it was unflattering and to be avoided. Her media-awareness was acute, which I respected.

When filming interviews with Lucia, I checked camera placement and focus with her first. She was able to view these framings in the swivel screen without leaving her position. Several times she indicated she was not happy with the shot; after consideration, this was changed. Once satisfied, Lucia relaxed immediately, and engaged a dialogue with the camera. Rapid shifts in focus and direction are also visible; for instance, when describing Lucia’s experience of psychological teror, the camera, which has been fixed and at mid-shot, suddenly drops. The focus is now on the artist’s hands, highlighted against the blackness of her sweater, her feet and her paintbrushes. I wished to retain the intensity of her

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332 These camera positions roughly correspond with Crawford’s (1992: 125 - 126) fly-driven metaphorical taxonomy of documentary camera styles, kept in mind when shooting Perbatasan / Boundaries. Crawford summarizes these positions as the engaged and roving ‘fly-in-the-soup’, ‘the fly-on-the-wall’ stance of the camera as “Third Eye”, passively observing the action, and ‘the-fly-in-the-eye/I’, respectively.
monologue, but did not wish to visually dwell on her distress.\textsuperscript{333}

When shooting \textit{Perbatasan / Boundaries}, I used a small single-chip digital handycam with swivel screen and detachable shotgun mike. Its unobtrusive size reduced the sense of distance between myself and the subjects and events before my lens, creating a sense of engagement and prompting innovation. I could film from inside the action if I wished, retreating to the detached viewpoint of the fixed camera when necessary. I embraced the freedom of my hand-held mobile camera, with its repertoire of apparently haphazard framing, shifts between monochrome and colour, follow shots, long takes, visible focus shifts and in-camera edits, and the direct gaze at the camera by the film’s protagonists. This reversed gaze immediately posits the viewer somewhere between collaborator and watched party. Through its naturalness and intimacy, the reversed gaze claims authorial space for the documentary’s human subjects, so inviting the viewer into the diegetic space of the film.

Thus \textit{Perbatasan / Boundaries} is knowingly complicit in intention and execution. Although frequently rejecting the distanced stance of the camera as “Third Eye”, I encouraged my subjects to tell their story with minimal intervention by interviewer, camerapersons or sound recordists. If unexpected noises or interruptions occurred, and the sequence was otherwise running well, I continued to focus on my subjects, incorporating disturbances as they did, rather than start the scene again. The smallness of my camera facilitated a gentle, confessional space for Lucia Hartini’s words: like others before its unobtrusive lens, she sometimes seemed to forget its presence. Caught up in the emotive and the performative all else fell away.

I sympathetically and freely explored as much of the artist’s surroundings and daily life as might provide a rich sub-text of culturally contextualising background material. Certain aspects of my collaboration with Lucia Hartini might be considered part of an accidentally ethnographic project in which she was my teacher. In constructing \textit{Perbatasan / Boundaries}, I use images and sequences

\textsuperscript{333} Something similar happened when filming Arahmaiani in Jakarta in June 2001. My tape ran out, allowing her time to recover her composure. In the West, capturing uncontrolled, heightened emotional states on camera is often our directorial desire, but should be handled carefully in Indonesia when the context is documentary rather than dramatic fiction.
sourced from this awareness to heighten the narrative qualities and textural richness of my film. When filming, I stopped thinking about shooting cutaways, searching instead for places, people, incidents, and events - whatever was replete with the details I might need. I quickly created a bank of images and sequences, filming whatever might be needed to best convey the feel of the artist’s daily life and its implied transcendence; to highlight social and cultural detail; and to reference particular aspects of a ritual or spiritual nature. One example is the short sequence showing a young woman stitching a wedding adornment of jasmine buds, filmed in the cool of night near Pasar Beringhardjo on Malioboro, excerpts of which appear as pertinent detail elsewhere in the documentary. My filming for cutaways was not random, nor was it totally spontaneous. Often associative, it resulted from interpretative choices based on interview and the narrative sequences already filmed.

I was also mindful of time and my budget. I provided space for my subjects’ interventions in other ways, following suggestions made by Lucia and Operasi, as when shooting *Pusaran / Vortex* with Lucia in 1992. Operasi continued to use his own NTSC Video Hi-8 camera regardless of obvious discrepancies in format with mine. Besides authenticating cultural difference, what mattered most was the freshness and directness of the images captured. Many of these seemed paradoxical and surreal to me, an ‘instant’ embodiment of Malinowski’s (c. 1923) “‘co-efficient of weirdness’ through the rationale of cultural translation” (Clifford, 1988: 151). For Operasi, these details were simply always there, appearing in his camera without effort. They were not “ethnographic” to him. All too often they eluded my studied attempts to find the quintessential shot. I needed these “odd” images captured in a different format to juxtapose with reproductions of Lucia’s paintings, allowing me another entry to the richly cinematic stylistic territory of lyrical Neo-realism.

As director, I occasionally quoted the stylistic qualities of ethnographic

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334 In *Pusaran / Vortex*, the abstract images derived from floating oil on water were Lucia’s suggestion, as were the elephant ear biscuits in the offering sequence, Lucia’s activation of the semiotic intent of her previous actions. Much later I realised the significance of this sequence. The process of deciphering an allusive image in Java and Bali, is referred to as “peeling” (Weiner, 1995: 76 - 87). “Peeling” is wrapping in reverse, a perception deployed in TVRI’s graphics for their pre-election news segment, broadcast Saturday, 3-7-2004.
film. For instance, in the sequence shot in the deep shade of the mountain spring, I mask the consequences of low-light shooting on Operasi’s analogue video by referencing the quality of images produced by the graininess of old and damaged celluloid, a look I associate with early ethnographic films, newsreels and documentaries shot in black and white. This vision contrasts markedly with the sharpness, colour and clarity of footage captured digitally. I like this quality, Operasi does not, but in my view, as with the creation of a surreal image, the juxtaposition of the two systems works. With its contrast of effects created by different camera systems, enhanced in edit, the imagery of the water meditation sequence simultaneously references Javanese folk tales and modern Indonesian painting. The Imogiri sequences also contain examples where I quickly changed the effects in my camera to blend with Operasi’s luminous footage of Lucia.

My intention as filmmaker was to reveal the texture of my subjects’ lives and Lucia’s paintings through attention to the detail of objects represented. However, I avoid a narrational ethnographic description of these objects and the events of which they are part, wishing to indicate the direction of my interest through the way our cameras are used and the resulting footage edited. I left spaces for the poetic and for individual interpretation, as in the dinner scene at Temanggung where Lucia describes the traditional vegetarian dishes served. Made from seven different colours of leaves and potherbs, some cultivated and others collected “from the water’s edge”, these dishes are in harmony with the seven coloured planets of Javanese cosmology, and the multi-coloured Barisan Tujuh of Reformasi, the points at which the different world-views of the protagonists meet. The scene records the dishes in detail, but primarily, it depicts Javanese family life and a particular phase of Lucia and Operasi’s courtship and her parents’ reaction. It is a love scene, or, more precisely, a betrothal.

The Zeiss lens of my camera provided images of great clarity, enabling me film the detail of Lucia’s paintings with accuracy. Sometimes I used the camera as my own eye, travelling through composition and image to show the way a particular canvas was created, attempting to analyse Hartini’s method of image formation. I later combined this footage in edit with a visual record compiled by scanning high quality photographic reproductions of paintings from her archive.
These reproductions were scanned to disk at Studio Audio Visuel in Yogyakarta, in 1999, using new software specially calibrated for the inclusion of computerised stills in video productions. Using both systems provided an instantaneous and inexpensive means of colour grading and a powerful metaphoric key.

9.4. Authority and the Problematics of Narration

Two key issues emerged from the process of creating *Perbatasan / Boundaries* regarding authority and the problematics of narration in filmmaking. These issues are both conceptual and structural. In this particular instance, they concern the difficulties of emphatically bringing forth what I have felt and understood of the “Surrealisme” of Lucia’s painting within the factually based personal and social narratives shaping the documentary.

Bre Reredana, former film reviewer for *Kompas*, and a collector of Lucia Hartini’s paintings, aptly introduces this discussion of authority and narrational conventions in documentary film, citing the following:

> Every narration is someone’s model of how to behave:
> of the kinds of things to say to ourselves and to each other,
> of what comes first, what comes last, what doesn’t matter,
> and what shouldn’t be said or thought at all, at least, not in public.
> (Nash, 1994:212)

As with literature, the misadventures of film dialogue and images at the hands of Indonesia’s film censors in a time of repression was a subject Reredana knew well. The quotation raises the question of authority in documentary film, long a subject of debate among filmmakers. The authenticity of a work depends on the substance of the material presented, and the credibility of the address made by both subjects and filmmakers to the audience. Is this address commensurate with the form or genre chosen, informationally believable and convincingly delivered? Is the related explanatory and/or interpretative material successfully conveyed?

In modern Indonesia, during the late colonial era and Japanese occupation, Sukarno’s Old Order and for much of the New Order, content and delivery were often rendered problematic by the official strictures placed on filmmaking and
freedom of expression, not least restrictions on content and the various sensitivities of subjects regarding linking their spoken opinions with their appearance on film or video. Because wayang kulit was a major didactic proto-cinematic form in Indonesia, some of its conventions shaped early nationalist documentaries, encouraging their co-option as propaganda. In wayang, the multivocalic dalang speaks the part of each of the different characters presented. Their feelings are apparent through his puppetry skill and elaborated further in the musical and sung accompaniment. Everyone is spoken or sung for.

For many years, the documentary film archive as public record was heavily skewed in favour of the ruling elites. As in wayang, the narrator spoke for most of the characters and explained transpiring events. With the exception of elite figures such as the President, Vice-President, ministers and approved prominent persons and spokespeople, other speaking characters were rare and were often played by actors, whose tone of delivery like the meanings conveyed was invariably didactic. The result was usually propaganda which I define as a closed text produced by a body which attempts to control both systems and information. Propaganda seeks to reinforce and twist the well-known adage, “If it’s on the screen, it must be true”, in order to confer and maintain the power of a ruling body and its apparatus. Propaganda is the official presentation of specifically targeted information in a manner discouraging anything other than a very narrow interpretation, even if the news is good and the cause worthwhile.

Salim Said (1991: 3) suggests propaganda held sway in Indonesia for so long because it suited Indonesians’ purported discomfort with the real. In the visual arts, including film, these simplistic and reassuring interpretations were reinforced through the clever manipulation of folkloric and national symbols, so conferring further authority on the work produced.335 Eventually, the extensive

335 One may argue that the effect of propaganda has wilted in the face of technological advance, cyberspace, various globalisms and post-modern irony. Naked propaganda cannot exist so easily in multi-cultures and mixed economies. Today, propaganda’s effect has been superseded by simulation and displacement as a preferred form of manipulating the truth. Embedded journalism, the solution to restrictions on the freedom of foreign journalists in contested zones, records the deeds of armed forces and civilians in conflict from the point of view of those with superior technology. Yet often, the images captured counteract the partisan politics intended by humanising all parties in the conflict. All we see is slaughter and its aftermath. Most viewers have already been polarized towards the underlying issues on moral grounds and the media’s images do little to
use of film for propaganda purposes fostered both boredom and disillusion. By the mid 1980s, this disillusionment also characterised Indonesian experience in relation to many of the non-fiction films made by Indonesians about themselves. Propaganda eventually muted any critical audience response to important national political, social and cultural issues and third party narrations from approved scripts remained mandatory until their monopoly was gradually and carefully challenged in the 1990s.

President Sukarno reworked the colonial tradition in which films and documentaries in particular, were used as agents of nation building. In an interview with Ishizaka Kenji (1994) at the Yamagata Film Festival, Japan, Garin Nugroho cites Sukarno quoting Lenin, “Film is the tool for the nation, and is to be nationalised, for it is the tool of revolution.” This rubric guided Indonesia’s fledgling domestically produced cinema during the 1950s. All Indonesian documentaries began with a map of the nation. Despite their educative function, officially made documentaries were closely aligned with propaganda and did not permit critical and alternative points of view (Panjaitan and Aryani, 2001: 10 - 12). President Suharto also encouraged this genre of expository informational documentary making, this time in the service of state developmentalism (Prakosa, 1997: 182 - 184). Change happened very slowly in educative documentaries and television because of restrictions on permissible content. Films reflecting badly on the development effort and on perceptions of the nation both inside and outside Indonesia were never shown. Besides political conflict, administrative failure and rumbles of discontent from below, various crises such as natural disasters were also excluded (Quinn, 1989). Some big budget international co-productions were permitted greater leeway but were rarely screened in Indonesia.

The Film Censorship Board approved all scripts for documentary and for dramatic features before production commenced. There was to be no substantial deviation from the script, personnel and nominated production companies in shooting or in post-production (Panjaitan and Aryani, 2001: 32 - 33). The

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336 See Undang-Undang Pnps No.1, 1964, Panjaitan and Aryani (2001: 10).
strictures of the past left a problematic legacy for the next generation of filmmakers whose agency had been impeded by scripting and censorship.\textsuperscript{338} Their sphere of influence has only recently been legitimated and expanded.

As for the subjects of documentary films, compliance with informational documentary conventions and the requirements of state development meant that they mostly relinquished their own voices to others. “Voice of God” narrations or other forms of “sanitised” narrative interventions were considered mandatory, so that films would not offend, promote unhealthy views, criticise authority figures or incite audiences to riot (Panjaitan and Aryani, 2001: 75; Nugroho, in interview, 1999; Darling, in interview, 2000). Many years passed before the directly filmed verbatim and opinionated interview was safely possible for documentary filmmakers and their subjects.\textsuperscript{339}

Foreign directors making documentaries in Indonesia faced the same requirements. When applying to the Indonesian Department for Information, Education and Culture for permission to film in 1992, the letter I received prior to departure was quite clear. As an academic, my filming was permitted under the category “for educative purposes” but prohibited for commercial ones. The Indonesian body listed as consultants was Studio Audio Visuel, Yogyakarta, a connection maintained subsequently when making \textit{Perbatasan / Boundaries}.

Curtis Levy’s three-part series, \textit{Riding the Tiger}, partially protected by the involvement of the Australian Broadcasting Commission among other bodies, was remarkable for its on-screen interviews with a cross-section of Indonesians, some of whom were quite prominent. These interviews were threaded together by narration. However, difficulties arose subsequently. Levy’s Indonesian co-director Fakhri Amrullah experienced “bureaucratic problems” as a result of opinions expressed on camera regarding the events of 1965 - 66. Others were prepared to provide information about similarly controversial topics, but refused to have their

\textsuperscript{337} These injunctions are stipulated in Pasal 14 ayat (2), UU Perfilman 1992 and Pasal 11 and its extrapolations, Peraturan Pemerintah No. 6, 1994 Penyelenggaraan Perfilman.

\textsuperscript{338} I commenced the documentary component of my dissertation by writing a script which Lucia later revised (Dudley and Hartini, 1999). By 2002, its existence and the need to obtain permissions to screen \textit{Perbatasan / Boundaries} at Lucia’s exhibition “Irama Kehidupan” no longer mattered.

faces filmed.\textsuperscript{340} Pandjaitan and Aryani (2001: 17 - 18) describe how successive Indonesian administrations attempted to apply strict regulation to an increasingly technologically sophisticated and varied arena. In many interviews since 1990, Garin Nugroho has voiced the views of an equally increasingly unhappy band of filmmakers, anxious to overcome these strictures, concerned for both the creative integrity and factual credibility of their films.

\textit{Speaking with Lucia}

In my first film with Lucia, the artist refused to address the camera directly. Wary and lacking confidence, she preferred to let her art speak for her (Wisetrotomo, 1994). Vision was accompanied by a minimally scripted narration compiled at Lucia’s suggestion from previously published and hence officially cleared catalogue essays and reviews about the artist and her work. This minimal narration was added during edit. In the post-production process, Indonesian and English were used interchangeably throughout, with subtitles written in the alternate language to the spoken narration. My aim was to simultaneously reference a poetic and allusive discourse while heightening the dreamlike yet disorienting effect of Hartini’s art. In its disjunction of image and sound, languages and subtitles, the twelve minute art video \textit{Pusaran / Vortex} was an exploration of openness and temporality within contextual limitations. My choice of evocation rather than narration, together with Anthony Kastanos’ innovative score, served to highlight a directorial concentration on poetics. My intention was to establish the surreal qualities of Lucia’s art without attempting direct analysis or explanation, and to convey my perception of the already filmic qualities evident in her paintings.

By comparison, \textit{Perbatasan / Boundaries} is a forty-two minute observational and reflexive documentary film, which seeks to capture the feeling of the moment, the period just after the 1999 elections in Indonesia. It is anchored

\footnote{\textsuperscript{340} Personal communication. Curtis Levy, February 2001. In the case of \textit{Riding The Tiger}, in 1990 and 1991 Anton Lucas and Curtis Levy were able to film direct interviews with a wide cross-section of named Indonesians. Levy could weave these into the documentary, knowing its circulation in Indonesia was restricted. (Like several of Nuroho’s documentaries, \textit{Riding the Tiger} did not receive theatrical release in Indonesia until \textit{Jiffest}, 1999). Daniel Sparringa’s interview sample included some of the same people, but he was unable to attach names to his respondents when subsequently writing up his work as a Doctoral thesis for Flinders University. His thesis was embargoed until March 2000.}
in the real world, as well as in the artist’s paintings. The artist, her family and a
number of her colleagues directly discuss her art and its relationship to her life.
Authority is conferred by the length of time they have known Lucia and their
professional standing. Occasionally, my voice as interviewer is heard, and I
appear briefly once: my engagement with my subjects and aspects of the film’s
construction are obvious. In edit, these interviews are set within episodes which
revisit particular times, places and events in Lucia’s life, and before and after
sequences in which Lucia’s paintings are freely interpreted filmically. The stylistic
distinction between observational, reflexive and interpretative modes is clear.

The spoken language used throughout is Bahasa Indonesia. The film is
straightforwardly sub-titled and includes explanatory text-boxes. The direct
speech and dialogue is transcribed and translated, then condensed and timed in
conjunction with the images. Although *Perbatasan / Boundaries* was initially
translated into English, the edit is designed to easily enable multiple translations
into other languages. Despite the televisual format and intimate perspective, there
is no third party narrator. In many informational and expository documentaries, a
third party narrator exists to distance the subject(s) from viewers, so providing a
veracious and authoritative standpoint for the material presented. In other
documentaries, the use of the narrator may also compensate for inadequacies in
expression by the film’s subjects or for the obtuseness of the material presented
which may otherwise confuse viewers (Wright, T., 1992: 275 - 276).

In *Perbatasan / Boundaries*, narration is provided through the direct
speech of those who appear in the film, in keeping with the spirit of Reformasi. 341
For the most part, the subjects look directly at the camera, and the camera shifts
from mid-shot to close-up with their collusion. A mood of elation characterises
the footage I acquired from Indonesian cameramen as well as the interviews I
filmed with Lucia and her family. It was no longer difficult to persuade people to
talk, although many still remained guarded before the camera’s eye. For Lucia, as
for other Indonesian women artists interviewed between 1999 and 2001, the

341 John Darling’s documentary *The Healing of Bali* (2003), about the aftermath of the terrorist
bombings of 2002, also follows this principle; it uses subtitles, but not text boxes. There is no third
party narration whatsoever, and no apparent mediation of what is said by those before the screen.
opportunity for critical reflexivity and forthright speech, was both welcome and reassuring.\footnote{342}

I did not direct Lucia beyond suggesting possible locations, and left what she would say to her discretion and that of Clara Anna. However, personal matters discussed informally around the table at her home and studio, and/or canvassed prior to shooting sometimes failed to emerge convincingly if at all before the camera, leaving me to find other solutions later. For instance, no matter how gently proposed and elicited, the awkward rawness of personal confession remained a culturally difficult form for Lucia, as for most Javanese. During filming, she sometimes found herself unable to speak or having to switch to the performing style used in reading poetry. By creating a credible and watchable filmic persona, Lucia’s skill helped bridge the gap between intensely private experience and its telling in the public domain. Although these “confessional” sequences required further abbreviation in edit, Lucia’s self-mediated account detracts neither from the strength and truth of her experiences, nor from her standing and achievements as an artist. She had become the authoritative narrator of her own experience in real life and on screen, just as Operasi’s camera, and those of several others, had authentically captured events during Reformasi.

9.5. Temporality and The Structure of Narrative Progression

Ethnographic films and documentaries adopting an explanatory, ordered template, suggest that the structure is “natural” rather than aesthetic. We are presented with a coherent whole; a story which moves inexorably forward to the end of the film, presented in terms of representative moments. Although usually characterised by an extreme condensation of time, this ordering remains credible in conveying the narrative presented. Permitted disruptions to this forward movement are flashbacks and the insertion of scenes showing the simultaneous actions of other characters or events important to the central storyline. Flashback

\footnote{342 After years of restriction, I suggest the control Indonesians now have over their own stories and their delivery has been both healing and empowering. In many recent documentaries, we are admitted directly into their reality. This can be seen in Lucia Hartini’s decision to recount in detail the highly emotive story of her physical and emotional abuse, mental collapse and subsequent re-awakening through spiritual growth.}
explains the past; it signifies memory or dream state. It is fragmentary and often stylistically different in treatment to the main body of the film, while the simultaneously presented content usually, (but not always), remains stylistically the same, retaining both realist convention and its own narrative structure.

These structures may resemble those of myth written down, but this is not how stories are told in real life. In most cinematic condensations they have been cleansed of lapses, disjunctures, promptings, backtracking and other forms of narrative disorder which disrupt the storyteller’s motion towards completion (Crawford, 1992: 122). In Perbatasan / Boundaries, as in Pusaran / Vortex, my choice was to disrupt orthodox narrative structure. In the latter, this disruption was extreme, as I separated all the filmic elements to some degree. While Perbatasan / Boundaries follows the format of a documentary suitable for television broadcast, retaining some aspects of the progression ‘setting plus characters-goal-attempts-outcome-resolution’, it also interrogates this form. My documentary is chronologically non-linear in narrative structure. Its motion loops back and forth several times while jumpcuts are occasionally used to quickly shift temporal and spatial continuities.

Perbatasan / Boundaries begins with an interview with Lucia in the present moment, establishing the film’s conversational style and narrative intentions. The confidential mood is disrupted by a festive Reformasi street parade. The parade describes the film’s primary location, Yogyakarta at the height of the Reformasi era between 1998 and 2001. This sequence is followed by clips of convoys and rallies in which students and next the entire population took to the streets (rough footage, Operasi Rachman; ISI, 1998 - 99; Aksi Damai, 20 Mei, 1998, Prod. SAV, Yogyakarta, 1998). The introduction to the context in which the artist lives and works concludes with the Sultan of Yogyakarta, Sri Hamengku Buwono X, accepting the people’s mandate as Governor of Yogyakarta. The last part of his acceptance speech continues beneath a pan across Hartini’s triptych, The Spirit of Life, which she was still painting in 2002, just prior to exhibition in Jakarta. The action then switches to the artist’s studio, her preferred space and an oasis of calm compared to the tumult of the world outside. Lucia introduces us to her philosophy of art and her canvases, which are her “other children”.
We are then plunged back into the action, suggesting historical disjuncture and personal reflexivity, before switching to rural Indonesia and Temanggung. Lucia’s parents reveal more about the artist and we follow as she recounts her childhood memories there, reflexively highlighting gender issues and the beginnings of her liberation through education (Ch. 3). The location then switches back to the central axis of Yogyakarta, which, although filmed in the present, is depicted in such a way that we imagine Lucia’s fascinated arrival as a teenager about to commence her art studies. Into this footage I cut photographs obtained by Lucia and interviews by her colleagues, which flesh out Lucia’s transition from a carefree life as a student, to motherhood and the beginnings of her professional career as an artist.

The next section commences in Jakarta, showing Lucia’s professional success, as well as the difficulties and personal conflicts engendered by this success. Our subsequent journeys to various sites in Central Java contribute appropriate locations for seemingly disjunctive temporal digressions. Thematically however, these digressions draw issues from the past into closer focus and provide opportunities to situate comment on the present, expanding issues to do with gender, family violence, teror, psychological rupture, spirituality and political power. The chronological narrative is largely maintained from this point until 1999. Perbatasan / Boundaries then progresses forward to Lucia’s return to “engagement with the world” (Ch. 7). While Hartini’s paintings are not always chronologically presented within the narrative of the artist’s life, their placement makes contextually thematic, dream-like and sometimes surreal sense within the episodes in which they are placed.

In the structure of Perbatasan / Boundaries, freely interpretative filmic sequences grow out of individual images, usually from reproductions of Lucia’s work. Meanwhile her voice, or the voices of others, continue(s) beneath. The

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343 Various figures of note appear throughout Perbatasan / Boundaries, establishing contextual aspects of intellectual life in Yogyakarta. Besides the sequence showing Abdurrahman Wahid addressing an election rally, there is a brief glimpse of Umar Khayyam in the Imogiri sequence, into which a short section of footage taken at the funeral of Linus Suryadi AG in 1999 is also embedded. The footage showing the Sultan of Yogyakarta and scenes from the Aksi Damai / The Peaceful Protest of May 20, 1998, was provided courtesy of camerapersons working for ISSI, the Indonesian Fine Arts Institute, and Studio Audio Visuel, Yogyakarta.
speakers may not be visible for the entirety of the sequence concerned, but appear
where necessary for emphasis without breaking the continuity of their words. As
Trinh admonishes, I try to do no violence to Lucia’s words nor those of any other.
Again, the appeal of the filmic text is directed to the body, to the visceral
(stomach) or to the finer emotions (heart), bound inseparably with the events of
daily life, breezes, doors banging, interruptions from the street below, cheeky and
potentially disagreeable comments from one’s mother, one’s sister and so on!

“Where are we up to, Jenni? – I forget”, Lucia remarks at one point in the
interviews for the film. In the Imogiri sequence, Operasi’s delighted chuckles at
Lucia’s beauty and his breathlessness as he attempts to maintain focus while
following his subject up the hundreds of stairs, is clearly audible. It meshes
with the overlaid score, which he subsequently composed to my working draft of
the film edited back in Australia. Thus Perbatasan / Boundaries follows the logic
of story telling, rather than myth. Nevertheless Indonesian myths are alluded to in
the filmic interpretations of certain of Lucia Hartini’s paintings.

The middle section of Perbatasan / Boundaries experiments with
temporality and content in ways acceptable to Indonesian audiences, but which
many Westerners find annoying. Lucia’s enactment of the growing distress
leading to her physical and mental collapse and her revelatory encounter with the
spirit world is depicted as three separate but compounding denouements of a
particular personal and highly dramatic problem. In each instance, direct reference
is made to particular paintings.

Although at first glance the artist’s words appear repetitious, Lucia
emphasises the particular nature of her experience at each different plane of

344 If not exactly appreciated by Operasi, this sequence was appreciated by Indonesian members of
a Canberra audience in October 2003, as was the short recap of Gus Dur’s speech in which the
Presidential candidate says the Indonesian people will “eat Suharto for the next thirty years!” Gus
Dur’s speech is part of the sound mix in this sequence. In another instance, a TVRI newsclip from
late March 2004 shows a Golkar supporter seated next to former general Wiranto at a party rally,
eating lunch and visibly smacking his lips as the candidate is interviewed! Wiranto subsequently
ran as a Presidential candidate, partnered by Sholahuddin Wahid, Gus Dur’s younger brother. I am
glad the campaigner’s reaction was included. It would have been so easy to have “tamed” this
footage by cutting the image in edit, as would have happened in the past! Aspirationally,
Indonesia’s multi-party state also now allows Indonesians to be themselves and their media and
filmic expressions to be their own.
existence: that of the body and desire, set in the mountainside spring, cutting to illness and the stress created by acute personal conflict and the requirements of her career as an artist alluded to in Main Catur / Playing Chess (Plate 25); that of society and obligation preceded by an aerial shot of Bundaran, Jakarta, and then against the backdrop of the painting Luapan Emosi / Overflowing Emotion (Plate 26); and finally, that of the psycho-spiritual realm prior to the dissolution of all boundaries between Lucia’s self as ego and the Universe. The last account, starkly framed, is followed by the activation of the work Lensa Mata Mata / Spy Lens (Plate 39). When screened at Murdoch University in March 2002, some Indonesian members of the audience were in tears, others were visibly moved. Australians shifted uncomfortably in their seats, saying afterwards that they found the repetition in this sequence unnecessary.

Elsewhere in Perbatasan / Boundaries, I have used temporal disjunction to explain several concepts integral to Lucia Hartini’s life experience and worldview. These are framed by the artist in terms of her own struggles with, and eventual conquest of temporality (for the time being), and with spiritual growth. For instance, I do not show the artist at her January 2002 Bentara Budaya Jakarta exhibition, although I was present with my camera. Instead, I have left short spaces of black screen where two paintings from this exhibition might eventually be included. I had wished to place Lucia’s recent paintings Roh Perahu Nabi Nuh / The Spirit of Noah’s Ark and Sumur Sulaiman / Solomon’s Well (Plates 49 and 50), before and after the Imogiri sequence respectively. At the time of edit, I was unable to obtain permission from the collector who now owns these works. This reflects a pragmatic ethical choice as opposed to one in favour of chronologically linear temporality.

Metaphysically, I explain this “lack” of completeness as a decision to leave Perbatasan / Boundaries “finished thus far”, consistent with wider Javanese ideas of the temporal and with Lucia Hartini’s decision to follow her guru’s request to “return to the world”. The insights gained through her Master’s teachings, the expressive freedoms of Reformasi, her marriage and the completion of the exhibition, “Irama Kehidupan” marked a new stage in Lucia’s life, contrasting dramatically with the ‘difference’ and ‘abjection’ characterising the
long years before. Yet her break with the past was neither absolute, nor the picture of her life complete. Speaking quietly at her exhibition in 2002, Lucia remarked that the vortex was still present in her work despite the many changes in her life and work which pleased her so much. Self-doubt remained and she felt her existence was perilous for other reasons. Like new social forms, her new relationships still required careful scrutiny and negotiation.

Her remarks echo those of Papastergiadis (2003: 34) who argues that “the past repeats and re-configures itself as new levels of interconnection are established between different cultural perspectives”. Further, the complex mixtures of traditions and new technologies which define the form of today’s contemporary art represent “a final departure from the myth of modernism as being the transcendental form that was catapulted over traditional and non-western cultural formations,” (Papastergiadis, 2003: 34) These intersections of shifts and continuities are evident in several of Hartini’s paintings from the exhibition “Irama Kehidupan” and are reflected in Perbatasan / Boundaries through its looped structure.

Through hours in edit spent testing possible versions of form and narrativity, I have aimed for dimension and allowed space for possible topical expansion – in both Perbatasan / Boundaries and this thesis. The film approaches conclusion with Lucia roughing out the first forms on the blank canvas which will become the triptych Irama Kehidupan / Spirit of Life. (Plate 61). (The almost completed painting appears at the beginning of Perbatasan / Boundaries where it forms the balungan (spine) of the first sequence and at the end of the film.) Developing this sequence, other scenes are cut into the image as infill, referencing one characteristic Central Javanese compositional structure. The documentary concludes with a short sequence filmed in Lucia and Operasi’s studio, with paintings approaching completion, on the afternoon of their wedding day. Lucia’s life is a song which she may play again, but this time, its arrangement is likely to be very different in compositional structure and interpretation (Plate 62).
I commence this concluding chapter by restating my motivation for pursuing the long-term project which became my doctoral dissertation. Next, I reintroduce the person, Lucia Hartini, and situate her work within the context of the “Surealis Yogya”, also providing a synopsis of their importance in the development of contemporary Indonesian painting. This synopsis briefly summarises the arguments advanced in this thesis concerning the particular relationships between “Surealis” art, New Order society, and the dynamics of social change. Because the artists of the “Surealis Yogya” were not overtly political, their work does not record this period of Indonesia’s history in any simplistic or directly didactic sense. Instead, I have presented these relationships as complex, sometimes tenuous and often disconcerting because of their cryptic treatment in “Surealis” art up to the Reformasi era.

I then summarise the conceptual frameworks which underly the textual analyses of Lucia Hartini’s paintings and the documentary film Perbatasan / Boundaries: Lucia Hartini, Paintings from a Life (2000-2002), restating several key observations made in the course of the thesis. These concern the salient characteristics of Hartini’s art and the description of her paintings in Section II. These interpretations are based on what Hartini has said about the paintings, the spoken and written interpretations of others and my own interpretations deriving from personal emotional and aesthetic responses informed by experience and study of Indonesia since 1972. In this thesis, these observations contextually inform my discussion of the gender-based difficulties encountered by Indonesian women in a rapidly developing society; the changing attitudes towards their social roles and expectations; and the changes in these relationships wrought by Indonesian women themselves. Lucia Hartini’s standing as a major contemporary Indonesian artist is established. Like Arahmaiani, she has survived (Chs. 4 - 7).

I briefly summarise the relationships between Lucia Hartini’s spiritual quest, the development of her art and the overcoming of obstacles through the resolution of difficulties in self and society. These spheres are not necessarily
dualistic nor always in opposition. Instead, the tension existing between them may generate a will to resolution capable of producing great change, both in individuals and in society, as happened during the years of Reformasi (Ch. 7). Reference is made to the particular chapters where these observations, conceptual frameworks, arguments and thematic discussions are introduced and expanded in detail.

10.1. Motivations

As I had continued my art studies in Indonesia before meeting Lucia in 1985 and since, I regarded the work of the younger Indonesian artists I met as different from Australian art, but not necessarily exotic. Intuition and memory alone provided insufficient information to account for change and so support the arguments advanced in this thesis. Nostalgia both contributed to and potentially confused matters. On a personal level and as a basis for empathy and understanding, both Perbatasan / Boundaries and this thesis retain those parts of the separate and very different paths of Lucia Hartini’s life and my own where they have crossed. However, this thesis also rigorously addresses contextually relevant aspects of Indonesia’s history, including the development agendas of the New Order period.

As a filmmaker, I was no longer a fellow artist and friend. Because of my cameras, I was understandably scrutinised as the exotic other, and potentially, a visual imperialist. It became both important and necessary to rigorously re-consider my approaches towards the representation of contemporary Indonesian art and its creators, and delve more deeply into recent studies concerning gender and film. I kept abreast of the rapidly evolving technological, theoretical and conceptually creative changes relating to documentary film production, critically considering many non-fiction films about Indonesia within this expanding field, together with selected fictional features.

In Section III, the complex relationships between art and film in New Order Indonesia and into the Reformasi era are explored in depth because of their practical relevance to my own filmmaking as well as their inherent fascinating and unique dynamics. Observations arising from this study have considered
historical development and aesthetic background as well as attitudinal impact based on accessibility, comparative ease of production, reception and distribution. The opportunities for contemporary Indonesian artists to treat controversial themes and ideas, raise difficult issues and develop representations are compared with those of Indonesian filmmakers. Indeed, for much of the New Order period, artists were able to express their response to events in Indonesia which rarely became the subjects of television news coverage, let alone the subjects of films.

10.2. Lucia Hartini and the “Surealis Yogya”

In late 1998, it seemed a very good idea to make a second film with Lucia. Of the artists I came to know, I was drawn to Lucia Hartini because her lived experience and representationally, her painting, visually crystallised many issues of particular importance to Indonesian women and Indonesian artists between 1982 and 2002. Apart from Astri Wright’s Festchrifft essay of 1998, subsequently republished in 2000, I discovered that, up to that point, very little had been written about Lucia and her paintings other than brief synopses in compendiums of Modern and Contemporary Indonesian Art, essays in catalogues supporting her exhibitions, and reviews written subsequently. This thesis redresses this lack of information through thorough Bibliographic research, citing many sources recently collated or available only since Reformasi. For instance, in “Surealisme” Yogyakarta (2001), Marianto comprehensively expands his overview of Lucia Hartini and her work presented in his 1997 doctoral dissertation. He touches briefly but significantly on aspects of Lucia’s personal life, including the subject of domestic violence, before shifting his focus back to her work.

As a filmmaker, making and writing in the light of recent changes sweeping through Indonesia pre and post-Reformasi, I felt there was a need for a socially contextualised overview tracing important aspects of Lucia Hartini’s life and art up until her 2002 exhibition, “Irama Kehidupan”. In Perbatasan / Boundaries, the biographical aspects selected as “important” are those chosen by Lucia, but I contextualise her personal narrative within a wider social one because

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346 In the Festchrifft essay, Wright (1998, 2000) engages a reading of several paintings from the period 1992 to 1996 against the grain of existing interpretations of previous works.
she found it difficult to do so. Observations about events of the period, discernible trends and social attitudes, together with key points raised in the commentaries on selected paintings and the documentary have been discussed in depth in previous chapters and are briefly summarised here.

For instance, in Chapter 3, I suggest that the conditions of Lucia Hartini’s early life were shaped by Indonesia’s newly emergent nationalism as much as by Javanese tradition, influencing particular thematic choices in her art such as her fondness for the sublime in alam (nature) and later, for its loss in development. To portray and elicit emotions was foremost in her work, integral to the capacity of art to generate other ways of seeing things, whether through imagery painted photo-realistically or more indirect means, such as displacement, disjuncture and detail. In subsequent chapters, Lucia Hartini’s career is presented as inextricably part of the development of the contemporary visual arts in Indonesia. It is unique and important for reasons beyond its distinctive and highly individual nature.

By the late 1980s, Lucia was one of a handful of Indonesian women to have formally trained in art at tertiary level and then to have succeeded professionally through the strength and financial success of her art practice. By the late 1990s, she had overcome obstacles posed by domestic violence, ill health, ethnic and religious difference, and contested traditional attitudes and cultural practice regarding the gender roles and expectations considered appropriate for educated middle-class Indonesian women. She participated in the struggles faced by innovative cultural creators during the phases of repression characterising Suharto’s New Order regime. The very fact that she has continued to paint with dedication and great aesthetic and intellectual impact across this entire period is remarkable.

By February 2002, Lucia had achieved three major solo exhibitions and taken part in countless group shows as detailed in her exhibition catalogues (Section II). Her work had been represented in major international exhibitions of Indonesian and Asian art, and she had made several visits to other countries, including Australia and Malaysia. Like an increasing, although still proportionately small number of Indonesian women, Lucia has quietly helped shape the contemporary cultural life and profile of her city and Indonesian cultural
development in the arts generally, simply by doing. Her paintings are careful yet persistent explorations of recurrent themes. Highly personal, often emotional and intensely psychological, the subjects of her work are expressed through tropes drawn from or located in the natural world, exhibiting a deep affection and philosophical concern for the dimensions of nature and our relationship to it as human beings.

Lucia was a founding member of an evolving group of mostly male painters calling themselves the “SUREALIS YOGYA”. Like Brita Miklouho-Maklai (1991, 1996), and Marianto (1994, 1997, 2001), I have used quotation marks to distinguish Indonesian surrealism from its European antecedent and to emphasise the artists’ originality and Indonesian-ness of vision. Neither an art movement nor a latter day Indonesian replication of European Surrealism, this generation of Yogyakartan painters are presented as stylistically innovative surrealists in their own right, each with their uniquely personal style of art.

Initially, the “SUREALIS” artists were motivated by a playful desire to express their creativity and, resisting regimentation, to shock. Besides word-play rendered visually and applied to subject matter drawn from everyday life, their subjects included insights and inspirations which came from afar, or from the strange and sometimes disturbing world of dreams and fable, from the invisible realms of the spirit, including those from the “dark side”. A sequence from PUSARAN / VORTEX demonstrates the early conceptual background of Hartini’s work and reveals her sense of play. This sequence also reveals my own attempts to understand the surreal nature of her work within a contemporary Javanese cultural framework. The artist is sitting on a chair in front of the painting MATA MATA BATIN (1992), successively peeling an orange, an apple and a persimmon (Plate 63). The strings of rind and peel curl in a slow spiralling dance, each one ending in a circle. Lucia and her sister Clara Anna then arrange these strings with other whorl-patterned man-made objects and fruits cut spirally to form a surreal offering on a circular table top which they laughingly set spinning. They engage with the visuality of the image, as well as its semiotic, philosophical, spiritual, and perhaps critical, intent.
Semiotically, the word *meliput(i)*, (to wrap), translates visually as the process of creating a condensed image. When run in reverse as a Yogyakartan linguistic pun, always popular with the *“Surealis Yogya”*, *meliput(i)* also signifies to peel, suggesting the image is “peeled” as it is deciphered by its viewers. On this occasion, Lucia’s artistic intention was to reveal the every-day sources of her inspiration through the choice of one particular motif in her painting. She selected the whorl or vortex to demonstrate the link between microcosmos, macrocosmos, the structures and forces of the natural world, their man-made replications and the cycles of the universe, all of which affect human existence, a form of metaphysical “wrapping”.

The *“Surealis Yogya”* also sought to express extremes of emotion and perception. Sometimes, their subject matter reflected fears occasioned by *teror*, whether buried in the near past of their childhood, or activated more recently by the psychological uncertainties of rapid and unequal development. These uncertainties defined the condition of post-modernity in a once traditional society, encouraging the creation of further hybrid forms, developed on the basis of a small but pre-existing mestizo culture in Java (Chs. 1 and 4). Increasingly, *“Surealis”* work commented allusively on the times.

The *“Surealis Yogya”* may not have issued manifestos, but they bore witness to the bizarre disjunctions arising from cultural clash and development. In the last two decades of the twentieth century, their expression of perceptions and personal visions other than those espoused by the National Culture of the integralist New Order state was cautious, but highly creative. For much of the New Order period, and hence for most of Lucia Hartini’s career, cultural expression in Indonesia was not free. Like the performance and installation artists involved with *Desember Hitam / Black December*, (1974 - 1975) and the *Gerakan Seni Rupa Baru / The New Art Movement*, (1978 - 1986), the *“Surealis Yogya”* (1985 – onwards), *Arus Baru* and later the Hyper-realists belonged to the younger generation of Indonesian visual artists who devised ways around the restrictions

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347 Describing the contribution of early newsreel cameramen in the Dutch East Indies in his Yamagata interview, Garin Nugroho (1994) states that they captured “the skin of the fruit” only.
applied to writers (including journalists), dramatists, filmmakers and artists.

Through distinctive modes of image formation, “Surealis” artists developed visually powerful yet safe ways to frame individual observations and experiences. They were increasingly recognised for their syncretic, condensed and highly allusive yet mainly figurative imagery, photographically real in rendition, and as painters, for the superb execution of their work. Lucia Hartini became well known for her use of immaculately painted visual jokes which reference sexuality and the natural world. Whether depicted in its own right or analogously as trope, Hartini first used images drawn from nature to express beauty, joy and a sense of personal connectedness, and later, as a profoundly disturbing caution.

“Surealis” art struck resonant chords with a diverse range of admirers: it became eagerly sought after in Indonesia and was rapidly regarded as contemporary on the world stage. The lively visual discourse of the artists’ individual styles invigorated the homogenising effect of the promulgation of National Culture with its emphasis on “tradisi” derived from Javanese priyayi traditions through the skilfull recuperation of other, but equally valid, cultural traditions as well as aspects of myth and history (Chs. 1 and 4). Even in recent times, the desire of artists to bear witness to their times was seen as a moral duty. Arguably, this commitment invoked Yogyakarta’s revolutionary heritage and its existence as a Special Region, which, by 1998, resembled a constitutional monarchy within the Indonesian nation. From within Yogyakarta, the heart of a particular concept of the Indonesian nation, the “Surealis” artists contributed to intellectual debate in ways unavailable to the Indonesian intelligentsia embedded within the systems of the state. Instead, members of the intelligentsia and the burgeoning middle classes became their patrons.

Conversely, by 1996, with the forces of attitudinal change accelerating in Indonesia, many former Surealis and Hyper-realis painters began to exhibit as Realis Cermat (Painstaking Realists). The photographic realism of their work distilled and depicted the real world very closely, while simultaneously constructing parallel representations indicating forces and states beyond the precisely figurative renditions on the surface of their canvases. In this mode, Lucia Hartini painted female figures on an heroic scale, expressing the healing
strength and far-sighted wisdom of her religiously hybridic guru, the female Supreme Master, Ching Hai.

10.3. Conceptual Frameworks

This sub-section summarises the approaches, methodologies and conceptual frameworks which underly the documentary Perbatasan / Boundaries and this thesis (Chs. 2, 8 and 9). Beyond my background knowledge and appreciation of Lucia Hartini’s distinctive paintings, my filmmaking and the detailed textual analyses comprising this thesis have been informed by a wide range of oral and written sources. Many of these sources are Indonesian or Asian, and many are very recent, products of the late New Order period and the era of Reformasi. A reading of sources which consider post-coloniality, marginality, hybridity and the cross-cultural dilemmas of the present day have been central to my understanding of Lucia Hartini’s life story and hence of the psychological, spiritual and social dimensions of her work. Pinpointing the nature of her struggles, my distillation of these sources has highlighted the arenas of conflict Lucia experienced as a modern educated Indonesian woman and committed artist seeking to bridge an inherited knowledge-based Javanese world with the scientific rationalism, cultural non-traditionalism and economic systems of the West. These conceptual frameworks assisted me establish a wider social and artistic context for understanding Lucia Hartini and her importance as a major Indonesian artist.

In the filmic and written interpretations of her paintings, I pay attention to the particular qualities of Hartini’s style and to the themes, contemporaneity and personal relevance of the subjects addressed, noting her unique system of image formation, juxtapositional composition and the rendition of detail. Despite Hartini’s “Beautiful Surrealism” and the fantastical quality of her paintings, most have social relevance. Indeed, by the early 1990s and her Arus Baru period, her canvases were intentionally structured to encourage such readings. Many depict sosok perempuan (women’s issues), experienced personally at the interstices between home and society, a state of practical and psychological in-betweenness. Others expressed the artist’s intuited sense of disquiet poetically expressed in Pusaran / Vortex, that all was not right on some larger scale, whether this be in
nature or society, or the sphere local, national or global. Compounded by the repressive actions of the New Order regime, this thesis maintains that Hartini’s perceptions inform the psychological portrait of society painted into many works created between 1989 and 1994.

Acknowledging that she was subject to powerful forces beyond her immediate control, Lucia addressed those affecting her most tangibly. Her struggle became consciously gender-based. In her immediate world, she sought to maintain her professional status as an artist and her duty as the supporting parent for her children, a struggle expressed both literally and metaphorically in her work. Lucia’s personal insights and visual responses are borne through the figurative depiction of human subjects, and the juxtaposition of objects within strange land and cloudscapes. Yet these paintings also stress the possibility of a journey within, along and through these shifting parameters, with great effort and, ultimately, optimistically, towards something better.

As Lucia’s work progressed, surface detail was transposed, suggesting not just negotiation and transcendence, but transference and transubstantiation. Consequently, many of her images have been read symbolically as depicting mystical experience or a spiritual journey. From interviews between 1992 and 1999, we learn that her intention was to convey a sense of this intensely personal journey, away from herself but towards her destiny and perhaps back again, but with a very different consciousness. Since 1996, this journey has been informed by the teachings of Master Ching Hai. Lucia depicted this aspect of her changing spiritual experience and wisdom consciousness in *Dibawah Payung Duaribu / Beneath the Umbrella of the Millennium*, (Ch. 7, Plate 44). She recognised her guru-to-be in the image of the woman emerging as she painted this larger than life-size canvas. Aspirationally, she strove to become this woman through devotion to the Master’s teachings and methods of instant enlightenment.

In another painting, *Hening Dalam Doa I / Silent Prayer I*, also entitled *Julai of the Cosmos* (1997), the Master (who could also be everywoman) is depicted kneeling in prayerful meditation among the clouds and sparkling planets of the cosmos (Ch. 7, Plate 46 a.). In *Perbatasan / Boundaries*, Lucia is shown dressed in *kain* and *kebaya*, demurely seated at the end of the table in her front
rooms before this vast and pearlescent canvas. In playful “Surealis” mode, she leans forward slightly, adopting the pose of the female sitter in Sudjodjono’s famous realistic painting from the revolutionary era, *Dibawah Kelambu / Beneath the Mosquito Net* (1939), (Ch. 7, Plate 46 b.). The respective realms of the cosmos depicted are juxtaposed within the one image, as are the representational possibilities of the visual media engaged. This filmic sequence demonstrates key compositional and dynamic elements of Lucia’s “Surrealisme Indah / Beautiful Surrealism” and the relationships between art and film in Indonesia which so interested me.

If the condensed image is conceptually and compositionally cosmological, it will contain the artist, the world and the universe. Regardless of its immediately apparent representational subject matter, Mamannoor (2002: 134) suggests that an image composed from this consciousness is imbued with the artist’s whole self, including their individual experience, moral character and creative works. Applying his definition of cosmological art, all of these works may be considered as self-portraits whether or not they include representations of the human form or the artist’s own image (Ch. 1).

Lucia found some of her experiential observations almost impossible to describe accurately. They were often both physically and psychologically painful to paint. Yet many of her canvases exhibit a wry humour. Her situation resembles those described by Trinh (1985, 1992) in her films and writing, and Tsing (1993) in *In the Realm of the Diamond Queen* when considering the situation of women in the developing world, both collectively as a social mass and then as individuals within their particular national, social, personal and cultural contexts. Apart from our filmmaking projects together, I suggest that conceptually, Hartini’s life and art bear witness to her own personal quest for the “Diamond Queen”.

My interpretations of the subject matter and spatial placement of principal forms in many of Hartini’s canvases is further informed by the concept of “in-between-ness” postulated by Bhabha (1994) in *The Location of Culture*, and the shifting nature of border zones in relation to the creation of contemporary art described by Nikos Papastergiadis (2003) in his essay, “Ambient Fears”. Lucia inhabited a territory within a border zone which was, with respect to gender,
emotionally and intellectually on the margins of the National Cultural mainstream
despite her success within it. Both the person and her art could be considered
hybrid, in the senses of the term proposed by Trinh, Tsing and Bhabha.

Lucia Hartini’s quest to make sense of both observation and experience
and tie these to the inspiration, the creative act and the processes of painting, is
analogous to a spiritual journey through matter and towards overcoming
obstacles. While this journey “through” and across boundaries takes place within
the unstable and shifting space of locational and perceptual “inbetweenness” and
involves a constant negotiation of borders, there are moments when Lucia’s
envisionment as dreamer, artist and spiritual mystic achieves a transcendence of
boundaries, a real and symbolic reworking of matter and experience. Through
personal crisis, illness and her art, Lucia was compelled to continue this journey
until she achieved inner strength, spiritual wisdom and peace. Her life depended
on it. Lucia was fortunate to find a spiritual teacher, Master Ching Hai, whose
syncretic teachings provided her with a spiritual key which was also useful in
productively responding to the difficulties of daily life.

In Chapter 2, I describe how certain of the Master’s teachings resonate
with Kejawen, Buddhism, and Christianity. In turn, aspects of these religious
philosophies seem strangely consistent with the philosophy of science advanced
in Karl Popper’s (1982) book *The Open Universe: An Argument for
Indeterminism*. Popper (1982: 114 –1 30) structures physical matter, forces,
thought forms and their products, whether material, abstract, systemic,
institutional or cultural within three, perhaps four interactive *Worlds*. The natural
world is placed in *World 1*, the world of physics; *World 2* is the psychological
world. The partially autonomous *World 3* consists of the products of the human
mind which may be material, technological, abstract, or systemic. Creative actions
and processes, and spiritual quests are placed in *World 4*. Popper argues for the
incompleteness of knowledge and hence the openness of the universe, and in
favour of a logic of indeterminism as necessary but insufficient for human
freedom and creativity.

Many of Lucia Hartini’s images bear witness to her abiding fascination for
the empirical observation of nature and the interconnectedness of phenomena. Her
fascination with the cosmos; with mass and the appearance of matter; the forces which play across and through the natural world; the experiential rendered psychologically and sometimes with reference to myth; her choice of photo-realism as the basis of her *surealisme* translated into paint on canvas resonate with Popper’s taxonomies. Kejawen’s *nur* (life essence) exists in all. However, it is I who have found these resonances useful in translation beyond those discussed with Lucia. The conceptual framework developed in Chapter 2 of this thesis has helped me frame the intellectual and spiritual dilemmas Lucia sought to resolve between 1993 and 1994. Overwhelmed by perceptual and experiential conflicts, and wishing to paint, Lucia found that she lacked a convincing philosophical framework, a system of belief that made sense of a difficult and crazy world, and an appropriate language of enquiry and analysis. Absurdity compounded upon itself, as a wave before breaking (Chs. 5 and 6). Yet imaginative ratiocination was also part of Lucia Hartini’s creative work as an artist and she could not desist.

Rather than figuratively chronicle the splitting of society and the psyche in her canvases like some of her peers, she resisted the impulse to fragmentation, seeking to find a join between her individual experience and the problematic real and abstract worlds of her experience. While Lucia described her understandings gleaned in this process “as fragments”, she attempted to paint the intensity of this particular creative struggle through matter towards form as the holistic resolution of her enquiries thus far. Many of her images remain compositional wholes centred around a principal form, even if this form is a passageway.

As with Popper’s interactive *Worlds* and indeterminism, Papastergiadis acknowledges change, the incompletability of knowledge and connectivities. He proposes an abstract space where these become visible, exchange can happen and material and conceptual hybrid realities are encountered, generated and created. In the global and diasporic present, Papastergiadis’ version of the “Third Space” is potentially everywhere. This is the space in which Anna Tsing and the Meratus Dayak shaman, Uma Adang, create a sparkling ‘Diamond Queen’ of mutual understanding from their ethnographic interaction, and within which Lucia Hartini and I created our comparatively impromptu filmic collaborations. Where there is life and the Creator’s will, *nur* definitely exists.
10.4. Perbatasan / Boundaries

Made almost ten years apart, *Pusaran / Vortex* (1993) and *Perbatasan / Boundaries* (2002) chronologically highlight the period of massive change and upheaval in Indonesia over the last decade of the twentieth century. The first was made during the era of media restrictions, while the second was filmed during *Reformasi*, and edited during the struggle to establish democracy, its institutions and practices which followed. Apart from technological change, comparisons between the two indicate the conditions of cultural production during New Order Indonesia, and their significant changes during *Reformasi*.

For instance, in 1992, I worked backwards after shooting, developing the script for *Pusaran / Vortex* from catalogue essays about Lucia’s work, which were published and hence already officially cleared. In October 1998, I began drafting the rough script for what was to become the second film in Australia. Lucia subsequently altered the script prior to us commencing filming in Indonesia. By August 1999, in the gap between political and administrative systems, we treated this script very freely; by November 2001, it was simply no longer needed. The script’s existence had been a precaution should freedom from oppression be temporary. For Lucia, *Perbatasan / Boundaries* celebrated the end of constraints and marked the impact of a new climate of freedom of expression and association in her life and work. While her self-reflexive personal story remains the dominant narrative of *Perbatasan / Boundaries*, the film reflects the liberating energy and the triumphs of *Reformasi*. Encapsulating a moment of social rupture and political change characterised by a mood of expansive exhilaration, I wanted *Perbatasan / Boundaries* to be a spirited product of the times captured within and the documentary which *Pusaran / Vortex* could not be.

In 1985, Lucia stated that her canvases were never wide enough to contain her inspiration and visions. When making *Perbatasan / Boundaries*, I took my cue from this statement, formally contrasting the minimal, intimately told narrative of her life with the condensed yet vibrant nature of her image making, and the creation of re-enactments and poetic filmic interpretations. These chart her personal and artistic development from a self-avowed escapist transcendence of boundaries in life and art to her present position which engaged a grounded
negotiation of borderlands and the overcoming of obstacles through spiritual practice, wisdom consciousness and action in the real world.

*Perbatasan / Boundaries* is a digitally made film which is a hybrid within the documentary genre. It highlights the parallels between the documentary record of Lucia’s life, be these of the moment in interview, as narrated by the artist, her family and colleagues, or as recollected wordlessly and sometimes re-enacted, and her art. Her paintings are inset within the documentary narrative as stills. Some are then freely developed as interpretations or juxtaposed with particular sections of Lucia’s personal narrative. I created my first filmic interpretations of Lucia’s paintings in 1992 and then during *Reformasi*, prior to writing this thesis. The process encouraged a comparative analysis of the difference between the subjects, themes and representations attempted by contemporary Indonesian artists when compared with those of Indonesian filmmakers since 1980. How and why was the transcendentally “real” increasingly the focus of figurative works created by a sizeable group of Indonesian visual artists, while remaining problematic, rare, and generally unpopular in Indonesian film? After all, the potentially rich creative nexus between the cinematic (film) and art had existed since the invention of *wayang beber* and *wayang kulit* (Ch. 8).

My consideration of the relationships between art and film has generated several conclusions. After analysing the respective situations of artists and filmmakers during the New Order and since - especially their ability to depict controversial subject material and the nature of the representations engaged, the creative approaches used, the conditions of production and the accessibility of their work - I conclude that there are some instances when a consideration of the effect of art and its achievements in relation to film in Indonesia is apposite. This thesis has compared the controversial nature of the representations successfully engaged by painters in the emerging public domain with the difficulties faced by Indonesian filmmakers attempting “real” as opposed to simulacral representations when dealing with similar topics and subject matter (Chs. 8 and 9).

From the mid-New Order period onwards, visual artists rarely encountered the same degree of difficulty as filmmakers, particularly documentary filmmakers. Artists may have required local government and police clearances to
exhibit their work, but needed no permission to actually create it, unlike filmmakers. Those granting permissions rarely understood contemporary visual art, permitting latitude. Furthermore, although free, exhibition durations were short and their audiences small when compared with the potentially large audience for film. Compared to filmmakers, visual artists appeared to be the lesser threat. The Art Boom of the late 1980s saw the advent of many new art galleries: patrons acquired paintings at their own risk. Ironically, one could argue that, by the early 1990s, and for the affluent who could afford home theatres, a combination of repression, censorship and new technology began to send Indonesia’s film industry down a distribution path similar to the fine arts, threatening fewer returns for producers and filmmakers alike. Consequently, in 1999, the call went out to save Indonesian cinemas (Prasetyo, E., 1999) and to create an encouraging environment for documentary and feature film production.

Reviews and discussions about the work of Indonesia’s contemporary artists achieved mass circulation through newspapers and journals. This healthy situation created further interest and contributed to attitudinal change. The nexus between publishing media, the galleries and the artists proved culturally and intellectually productive. Its public face is evident at the Kompas-Gramedia-Bentara Budaya complexes in Jakarta and Yogyakarta, and the NGO affiliated Lontar Foundation complex in Jakarta. Neither were institutions funded by government. Echoing Gramsci (1971), these pragmatic associations embodied an alliance between progressive elements in New Order society (Chs. 1 and 4). This alliance created a potent example of Habermas’ (1989) liberal public sphere in action, with democratic consequences. Rarely was this so for film, although some filmmakers sought sponsorship from popular business sources to assist production as well as from the NGO and academic sectors for distribution.

Artists’ queries regarding their relationships with society were reflected in their art. For many years, Lucia’s “Beautiful Surrealism” depicted her conflictual experience of life as a woman and successful artist in New Order Indonesia, seeking a psycho-spiritual resolution of her perception of women’s situation while blazing a practical trail as a single mother with a modern professional career. The paintings of her fellow “Surealis”, Ivan Sagito, poetically depicted the dilemma
of impoverished traditional people, clinging to the fragile remnants of their lives and cultural practice in the face of rapid change (Marianto, 1993), and the body of his dead wife whose life could not be saved by even the best medical facilities in Yogyakarta. All shared a struggle to survive. “Surealis” and Hyper-realis work was acclaimed, finding its way into private and public Indonesian and international collections.

Yet despite cinematographic merit, most Indonesian filmmakers found it almost impossible to realistically depict any of the same material directly. When they did, as with Slamet Rahardjo’s feature film *Langitku Rumahku* (1991), filmmakers courted and encountered dissatisfaction, including accusations of subversion at home despite professional acclaim abroad. The base from which they could develop the drama and credibility of their work was severely restricted by censorship and religious sensitivities. In 2000, Garin Nugroho maintained that this area still remained problematic for Indonesian filmmakers (Rohde, 2000).

10.5. Conclusion

Long ago, I purchased a humble Balinese painting on cloth. (Plate 64). In this excerpt from the Ramayana, clouds as winds, are depicted as eyes, and magic bullets as trailing lines of cosmic energy. A fierce battle is being waged. Although derived from Balinese wayang conventions, the mythic protagonists are figuratively depicted. Stylistically, this figuration is naturalistic rather than mannered as in the representational conventions of Javanese wayang. Yet compositionally, the work is non-naturalistic, being comprised of a series of scenes, arranged vertically one on top of the next in a single narrow strip. A continuous border design runs down both sides and between each scene.

Next page, Plate 64. Artist unknown. Detail from the *Ramayana*, stylistically derived from a traditional manuscript circa 1971. Acrylic on cotton duck: 85cms x 29cms.
Analogously, the actual and compositional structure of this painting is celluloid film. Similarly, the cameras of Indonesia’s filmmakers fused eyes and persons with sound and image as bearers of creatively told narratives and controversial ideas, but few were prepared to dramatically change the narrative infill. Pursuing this analogy further, we might reasonably expect that filmmakers would have made their cameras magic bullets in the struggle for social change. Potentially, mass distribution made their work not bullets but cannon shot. Yet because of its powers to seduce, Indonesian film became a force all too easily harnessed by those wishing to control the nature and range of the stories told and the images so created. At least this was so until 1990, when some astute Indonesian documentary and feature filmmakers began to consistently push the envelope of restriction once more.

By contrast, through the very nature of their medium, and the relentless dynamic of the avant-garde, modernism’s universally applicable artistic legacy, Indonesia’s new and contemporary visual artists were the first to find a way to escape the strictures of the New Order state, frequently presenting their work in the public domain of the art gallery which anyone could enter if they so chose. Lucia Hartini and the “Surealis Yogya” were among those who rang artistically fresh yet cinematically familiar changes on the forbidden “dirty pot” of realism. While art galleries lacked the mass appeal of cinemas or television, Indonesia’s “Surealis” artists painted their experiential Indonesia by fearlessly expanding the range of visual language without abandoning figuration, so circumventing the risks attached to too close a politically sensitive rendition of everyday life. Aided by personal symbolism and a distinctive slant on cultural traditions within a wider artistic context, they spoke freely and emotively for those willing to engage with their art, feel with the heart, and think visually.

Besides the compelling aesthetic beauty of much “Surealis” art, our visual navigation of the perilous rocky paths and narrow crumbling mazes depicted in Lucia Hartini’s paintings suggest discrete episodes from a unique personal narrative – a woman’s narrative, but one which reflects the artist’s struggle to create form from paint on canvas. Lucia’s paintings also chart a spiritual, as well as an artistic and personal journey within which she created spaces of gender
aware physical and psychological security in the midst of chaos for herself and her children.

The scale of many of Hartini’s canvases references the cinema screen with its vast narratives of coloured light and shade played out over time. Her themes are filmic in scope and dramatically affective. In the photo-real “Sureale” execution of her large canvases, Hartini orchestrates a gamut of emotions with a cool and sensitive hand and mostly, without sentimentality, reveals her heart and soul in action. In reality and like cinema, her paintings overwhelm us before we have time to analyse them intellectually. Then we seek to elicit meaning from the strange compositional devices and relationally displaced objects encountered within – and are often surprised by what we find. Lucia Hartini’s art deserves its shining place in Indonesia’s cultural public record. Her paintings are an expressive, accomplished and vital part of that rich and substantial, although sometimes chimerical history of critique and change, so quintessentially Indonesian. In the last decade of the twentieth century, this dynamic has simultaneously chronicled and fed the attitudinal changes propelling both Millennial change and Reformasi with which Lucia’s personal cycle of maturation and achievement coincided. The human dimensions of Lucia’s story in which difficult personal and professional borders are negotiated and important social, professional and spiritual boundaries challenged and transcended, befit the attention which I accord them in this doctoral dissertation.
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