

BHINNEKA TUNGGAL IKA

Harmony of Indonesia in Pictures



Embassy of
the Republic of Indonesia
Brussels





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Republic of Indonesia
Brussels



70th Anniversary of Indonesia and Belgium Diplomatic Relations

BHINNEKA TUNGGAL IKA
Harmony of Indonesia in Pictures

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19 November – 3 December 2019
Exhibition at Federal Parliament of Belgium
Brussels



Embassy of the
Republic of Indonesia
Brussels

H.E. Yuri O. Thamrin

Ambassador of Indonesia to the
Kingdom of Belgium,
Grand Duchy of Luxembourg and
the European Union

Bhinneka Tunggal Ika is Indonesia's national slogan which means 'Unity in Diversity'. It is used to describe Indonesia as ethnically and culturally very diverse country. With population more than 268 million people, around 300 distinct native ethnic groups, more than 700 distinct languages, and embraces most of the major world religions, namely Islam, Christian, Catholics, Buddhism and Hinduism, Indonesia is one of the largest democracies in the world that nurtures diversity and also unity as a nation. We are united by *Bahasa Indonesia*, our national language; and most importantly we are united by *Pancasila*, the five principles of Indonesia's national ideology that has become our main reference for believing in God, just and civilized humanity, unity of Indonesia, democracy, and social justice.

Therefore, the theme of the Exhibition is "*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika: Harmony of Indonesia in Pictures*". This Exhibition is being held for the celebration of the 70th Anniversary of the Diplomatic Relation between Indonesia and Belgium this year. It is our hope that through this exhibition we can promote together these values of respect and tolerance adhered by Indonesians as well as by our Belgian colleagues.

The beautiful photos in this book, some of them are displayed in the Exhibition, will show a glimpse of Indonesia's diversity in daily life from the eyes of two very talented Belgian photographers: Nick Somers and Boris Vermeersch. The two young photographers were selected for their talents for the Photography Project last July, sponsored by Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (MoRA) and the Embassy. They visited various places in Indonesia namely Jakarta, Semarang, Magelang, Muntilan, Yogyakarta, Solo, Malang, Surabaya and Bali, and had the opportunity to get a glimpse of Indonesian life and documented it through their lenses.

This exhibition is also enriched by some beautiful pictures by Nathan Ishar, a participant of Indonesian Interfaith Scholarship (IIS) who also travelled to Indonesia last August with his other 13 fellow participants to watch closely how different religions are practiced in Indonesia. Some of good moments of IIS programs captured in pictures are also shown during the Exhibition.

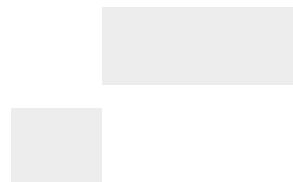
Both Photography Project and IIS Scholarship were such short trips to Indonesia that may not reflect all the richness and diversity of Indonesia, or the challenges that it faces in building religious harmony. But, we are hopeful that the beautiful pictures in this book can portray

the experience and the exploration of Nick, Boris and Nathan in finding how Indonesians live their daily life; how Indonesians cultivate what they have in common despite their differences; and how tolerance and respect are nurtured for creating national harmony.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my gratitude to the Parliament of Belgium and to the President of the Chamber of the Representatives of Belgium, His Excellency Patrick Dewael, for the kindness to host the Photo Exhibition which will run until the 3rd of December. I am hopeful that through this Exhibition, there will be a better understanding and appreciation about Indonesia by our Belgian friends.

I would also like to thank the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia for great collaboration with the Embassy in organizing the photography project and the IIS Scholarship with such a great impact. Therefore, I believe that these two projects and our collaboration should continue in the coming years. Finally, I would like to extend my appreciation to Nick Somers, Boris Vermeersch and Nathan Ishar for their wonderful pictures portraying harmony in Indonesia.

I thank you.





H.E. Patrick Dewael

President of the Chamber of
Representatives of Belgium

Your Excellency, Ladies and Gentlemen, Dames en heren in uw ambten en hoedanigheden, Mesdames et Messieurs en vos grades et qualités,

Welkom op de opening van de fototentoonstelling ‘Harmony of Indonesia in Pictures’, die we samen met de ambassade van Indonesië organiseren naar aanleiding van de 70^{ste} verjaardag van de diplomatieke relaties tussen Indonesië en België.

Les relations entre nos deux pays ont débuté en 1947 lorsque le Belge Paul Van Zeeland, alors Sénateur coopté, a été choisi comme membre du ‘Comité des Trois Nations’, aux côtés de l’Australien Richard Kirby et de l’Américain Dr. Frank P. Graham, dans le cadre d’une mission de bons offices. Il s’agissait de régler le conflit entre l’Indonésie et les Pays-Bas relatif au transfert de souveraineté à l’Etat Indonésien.

Subsequently, Belgium was among the first European nations to recognize Indonesia in 1949. In December 1949 Indonesia appointed a representative to the Kingdom of Belgium.

Au fil des années, des liens d’amitié se sont profondément tissés entre nos deux pays qui se reflètent dans plusieurs domaines d’activités. C’est ainsi que la Belgique est le seul pays d’Europe qui possède un parc thématique consacré à l’Indonésie.

‘The Kingdom of Ganesha’, werd in 2009 ingehuldigd/geopend door de toenmalige Indonesische Minister van Toerisme en Cultuur en bevindt zich in Pairi Daiza Conservation Park, een dierenpark in Brugelette, België.

Le temple de Pairi Daiza est le plus grand temple hindouiste consacré par des prêtres hindouistes en dehors de Bali. Les fêtes traditionnelles et les cérémonies rituelles privées qui y sont parfois organisées par les membres de cette communauté religieuse Indonésienne en disent long sur le raffinement d’une culture qui mêle intimement sacré et vie quotidienne.

Verfijning, harmonie en interconnectie tussen dagelijkse leven en godsdienst zijn alomtegenwoordig in de fototentoonstelling. Niet voor niets luidt het Indonesische motto ‘*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*’, vrij vertaald : ‘Eenheid in diversiteit’.

Your Excellency, Ladies and gentlemen let us go on with our ‘*Gotong royong*’, (= ‘carry together’ = ‘mutual cooperation for a shared goal’)

Ik dank u allen voor uw aanwezigheid.

On behalf of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, I convey my whole-hearted congratulations for the Photography Exhibition organized by the Indonesian Embassy in Brussels and the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia featuring Belgian emerging photographers, Nick Somers and Boris Vermeersch, in the Belgian Federal Parliament on November 19th – December 3rd, 2019. They visited Indonesia on July 7th – 13th, specifically Jakarta, Semarang, Yogyakarta, Surakarta, Malang, Surabaya and Bali to capture the religious life in Indonesia in a photography series. They visited those cities accompanied by representatives from the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Indonesian Embassy in Brussels.

I sincerely hope that the narratives of Indonesia's religiousity and harmony as presented in this exhibition will bring a clear picture to the public in Belgium and Europe about the daily religious life in Indonesia. Considering the extent of the diversity in Indonesian cultures, languages, ethnic groups and religiosity, I completely realise that this photography series has not yet captured Indonesia's richness completely. Hence, in the future such project shall be continued including other cities to explore more about Indonesia.

To all honorable audience, I wish you a great experience in viewing this photography exhibition about Indonesia.



Dr. H. Nifasri, M.Pd

Head of the Center for
Religious Harmony,
The Ministry of Religious Affairs of
the Republic of Indonesia

**TAMAN MINI
INDONESIA INDAH**

Jakarta

In this large complex of miniature parks, the religious houses of all official religions stand in the same area. As seen, Saint Catherine church next to Pangeran Diponegoro Mosque (1973).



THE MOSQUE OF THE CEMETERY OF MATARAM KINGS

Kotagede, Yogyakarta

Religion is family affair. Most Indonesians first learned about religion from their family, especially their parents.

A man teaches a boy “wudu” (ritual purification) before the Friday prayer in the complex of the Tomb of Mataram Kings.



“DIVERSITY IS REALITY, HARMONY IS NECESSITY”

As a nation of abundant varieties, harmony is a keyword for Indonesia. The diversity of cultures with 700 living languages from 300 ethnic groups on 17.000 islands is enriched by six official religions and other traditional beliefs. It is nothing less than suitable that Indonesia's national motto is “Bhinneka Tunggal Ika”, Old Javanese translated as ‘unity in diversity’. There are six legally recognized monotheistic religions in Indonesia: Islam, Protestant Christianity, Rome Catholic, Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism, with the share in the population respectively 87,2%, 6,9%, 2,9%, 1,7%, 0,7% and 0,05%.

“Religious Diversity in Indonesia”: The Documentary Photography Project

The Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Indonesian Embassy in Brussels invited two young Belgian photographers to capture the religious diversity in Indonesia. Considering the largeness of Indonesia's land, this project specifically handles Java and Bali. Through a selection process, Nick Somers and Boris Vermeersch were appointed to conduct this project. They had the opportunity to visit each different places in Java (Jakarta, Semarang, Magelang, Muntian, Yogyakarta, Solo, Malang and Surabaya) and Bali.

The visit was a short one-week trip, but it was nevertheless a valuable journey. It was a first trip to Indonesia for both photographers, so they could see Indonesian (religious) landscape and life scenes with a fresh look. Originating from Belgium with its own dynamic and problematic about religions, both emerging photographers are aware that religion is a topic that needs to be handled “with great care” (Vermeersch), hence the strategy of the visual imagery was “to follow first impressions looking for





where religion stands in daily life and how different religions co-exist” (Somers). Starting from these points, the selection of the images took place and the whole exhibition is built on the spirit of understanding and experiencing religious diversity and interfaith harmony.

As a photography series within the documentary style, the images *show things* rather than they *tell things*. No events are recorded as in a reportage or press photo. In this discourse of photography style, images are working together like bricks of a building, rather than being a stand-alone picture. Only by examining the images as a whole series would the viewer come to a comprehensive reading. Some stories are included in this book to embody the experience of both photographers on some certain subjects.

Religions in Different Life Space

Religions do not only take place but also make place in the society. In the spatial order, Indonesian urban landscapes are mostly adorned with a number of towers of religious houses. In the public sphere, religious sites do not only fulfill the religious function, but also become a social space, even a touristic hotspot. Kids wearing *sarong* play paper plane just next to the entrance of Kotagede Grand Mosque in Yogyakarta, young women wearing *hijab* at the front row of the St. Mary of the Assumption Cathedral in Jakarta, domestic and foreign tourists – regardless their beliefs or disbelief – visit Confucian, Buddhist or Hindu temples as a part of their holiday. More than it is experienced in Belgium, religion in Indonesia is an integral part of daily life of people individually. Not only in religious houses where the religion followers pray together, the prayers are also conducted alone in private spaces with a true loyalty and solemnity – see the lady praying *Sholat* in a temporary DIY setting using a refrigerator cardboard to delineate its ‘holy boundary’. Even in the company or government buildings, just like in shopping malls, in each public place in Indonesia you would find a *musholla* (small mosque).

Interfaith Harmony

Indonesians' way of life and national identity is strongly based on multiculturalism with *Pancasila* as the country's ideology. It consists of 5 principles: 1) One and Only God, 2) a just and civilized humanity, 3) the unity of Indonesia, 4) democracy, and 5) social justice. The religions and nation's ideology are intertwined and find a solid ground in the nation's political philosophy. A grand sculpture of Garuda Pancasila takes a distinctive place just at a corner outside the Jakarta's Cathedral, surrounded by plants and flowers, just like statues of Jesus and Mary are decorated.

Tolerance and harmony are not merely words for Indonesian religious believers. The Santa Maria Ganjuran orphanage in Bantul, southern of Yogyakarta, is taking care dozens of children of all religions. Islamic students pay visit and stay for a couple of days regularly to a school for Catholic priests in Mertoyudan, Central Java, in order to enrich their understanding of both religions. In these places, the inhabitants take their responsibility not only personally but also collectively, like cleaning the whole premises together. This is another core tenet of Indonesian philosophy: "*gotong royong*" (literally 'to carry together', or comprehended as mutual cooperation for a shared goal).

The importance of maintaining tolerance and harmony in Indonesia is reflected in the presence of PKUB (*Pusat Kerukunan Umat Beragama*, the Center for Religious Harmony), within the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs. Various programs are carried out in order to build a more harmonious religious life all over Indonesia, as well as to promote Indonesia's religious tolerance to the world at large. Yearly, The Indonesian Embassy in Brussels and PKUB organize an IIS Program (Indonesian Interfaith Scholarship) inviting professionals from Europe to personally encounter the religious diversity and interfaith harmony in several cities in

Indonesia. Nathan Ishar was one of the IIS 2019 participants. His photographic documentation of the 2019 IIS Program is also included in this exhibition.

Throughout the history, the religions in Indonesia have been acculturated and thence have become embedded solidly in the daily life. The PKUB slogan "Diversity is Reality, Harmony is Necessity" represents the nation's both success and on-going challenges in maintaining a harmonious life for all Indonesia's citizens. The government therefore continuously endeavors toward more harmony, among other through internal, interfaith, and international dialogues, just as this exhibition in the Belgian Federal Parliament.

* The title is the slogan of PKUB (*Pusat Kerukunan Umat Beragama*, The Center for Religious Harmony, the Ministry of Religious Affairs).



**PETER CANISIUS MINOR
SEMINARY MERTOYUDAN**

Magelang, Central Java

Young male Catholics are educated to become Jesuit priests in this secondary school within the SJ (Society of Jesus/Societa Iesu) order, established in 1912. This Seminary is in the same order as Sint-Barbaracollege in Ghent and Sint-Jan Berchmanscollege in Brussels.



TIEN KOK SI
Confucian Temple

Surakarta, Solo

Dated from around 1748, this temple is used by Tri Dharma followers (Taoism, Kong Hu Cu/Confucianism and Buddhism), mainly of Chinese descendants.



BLENDUK CHURCH

Semarang, Central Java

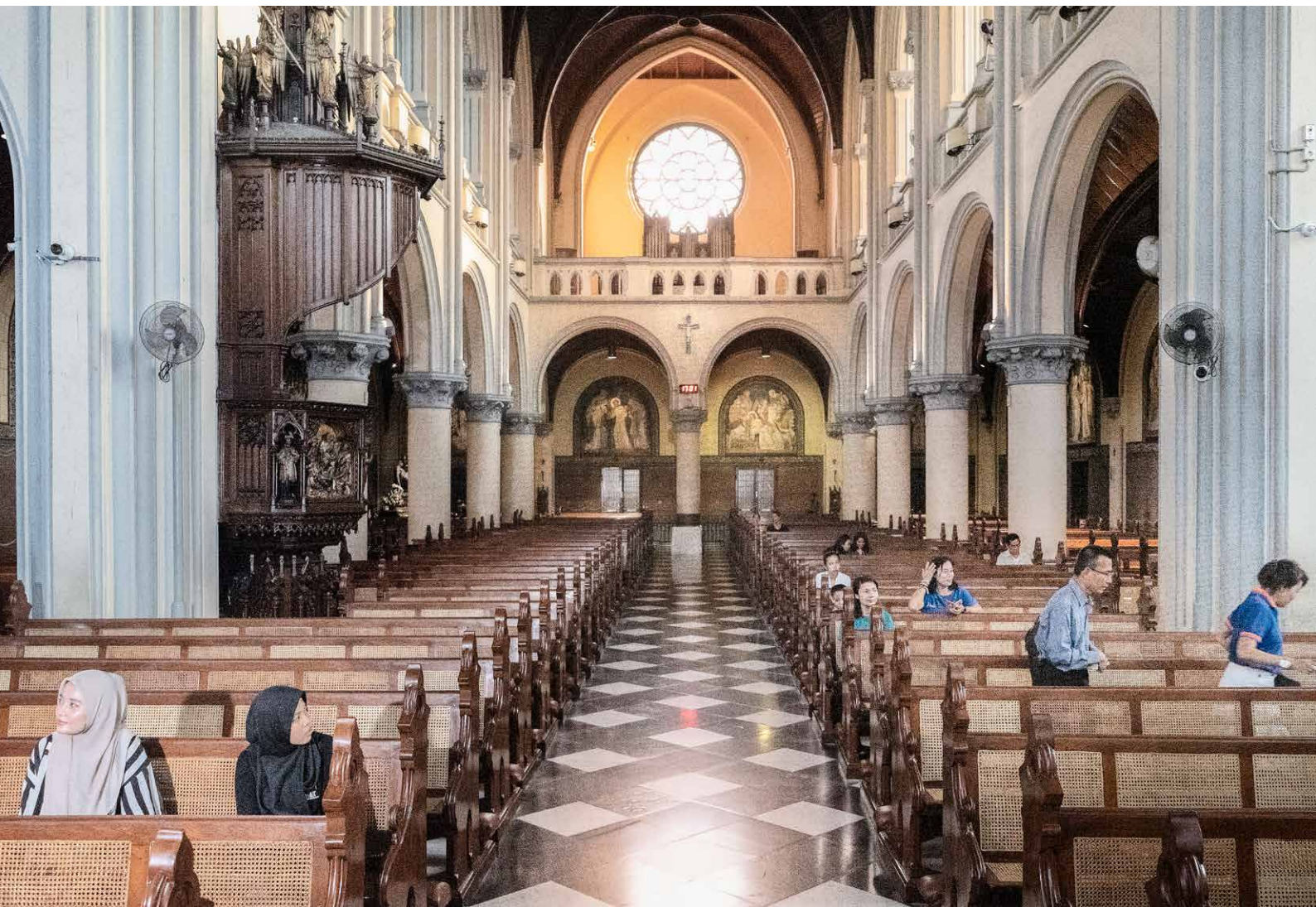
This octagonal, copper-skinned dome Protestant church built in 1753 is the oldest church in Central Java. The name stems from Javanese word "mblendhuk" which means dome. Both inhabitants and tourists spend afternoon in the cozy garden in front of this church.



MAHANAIM CHURCH AND AL-MUQARRABIEN MOSQUE

Tanjung Priok, North Jakarta

Daily life in the port area of Jakarta in front of the neighboring Protestant Church Mahanaim and Al-Muqarrabien Mosque, whose members have a friendly relation since their establishment 45 years ago.



**ST. MARY OF THE ASSUMPTION
CATHEDRAL**

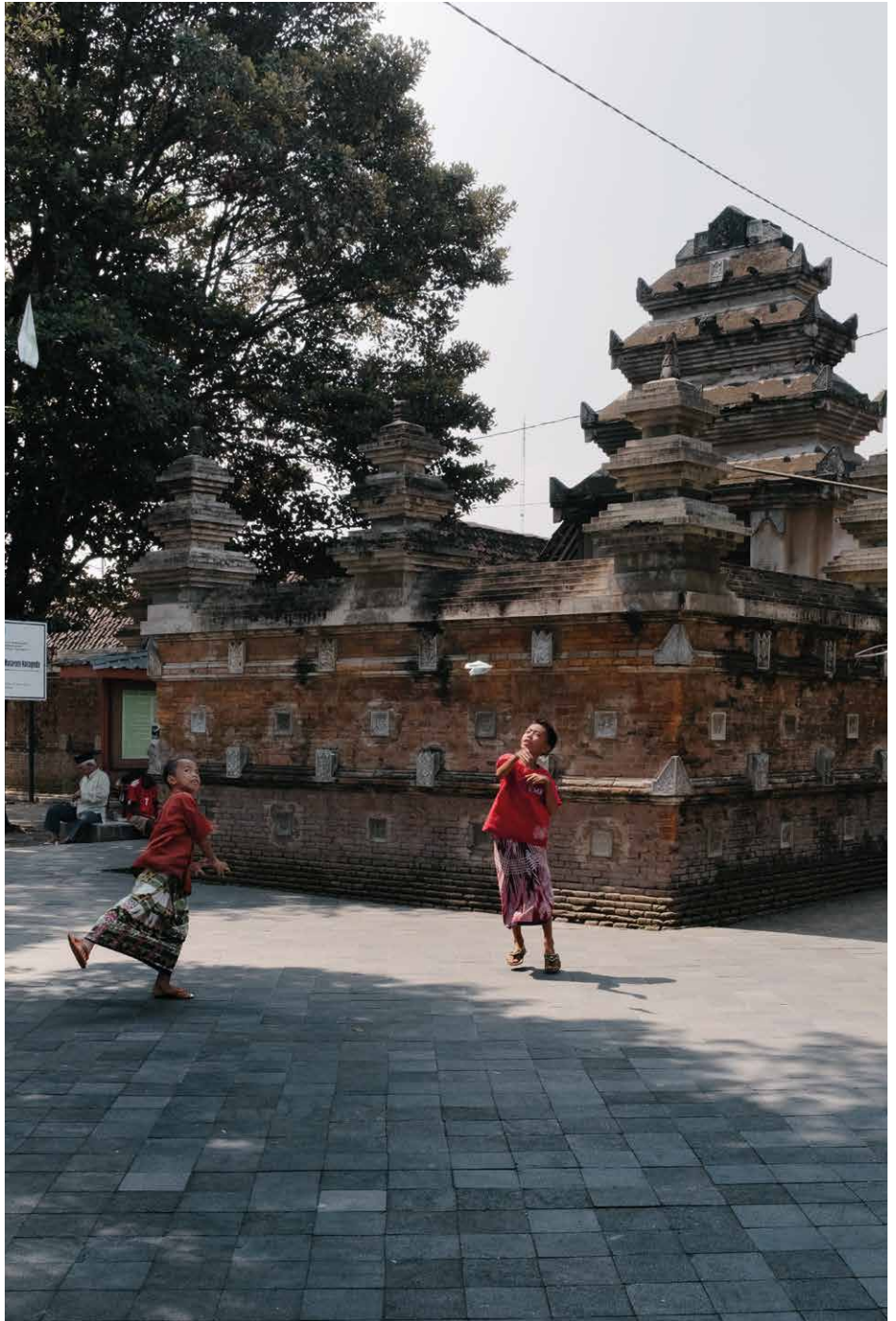
Jakarta

This Catholic Church of “Onze Lieve Vrouwe ten Hemelopneming”, was consecrated in 1901 and built in the neo-gothic style. Located in Central Jakarta, this church stands right in front of the Southeast Asia’s largest mosque, Masjid Istiqlal.

THE CEMETERY OF MATARAM KINGS

Kotagede, Yogyakarta

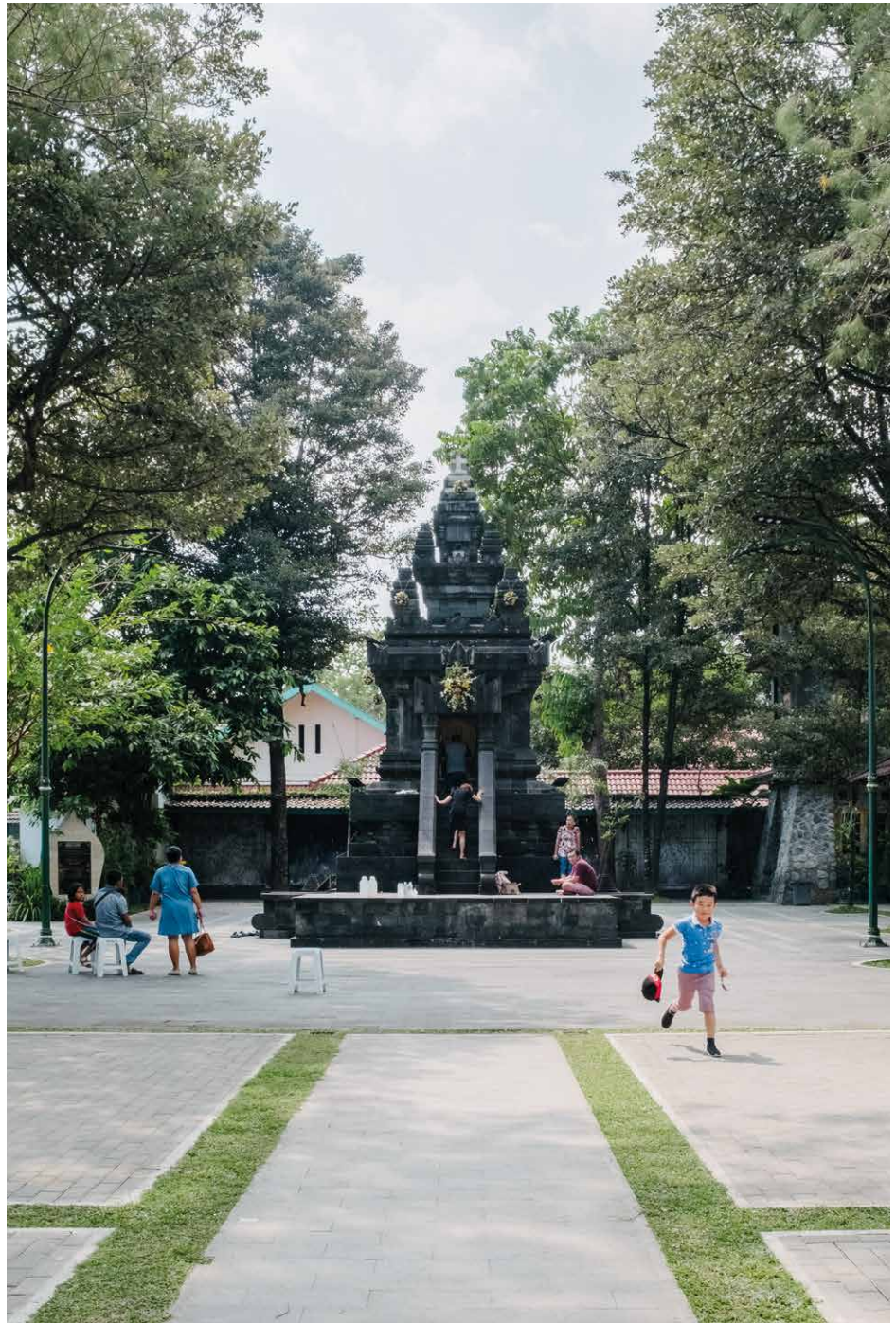
The founder of the Mataram kingdom, Panembahan Senopati (16th century), is buried in the small graveyard of an old mosque located in the suburb of Kotagede. It is the last resting place of other royals too. The buildings resemble Hindu Balinese temple structures and in this area wearing *sarong* is obligatory.

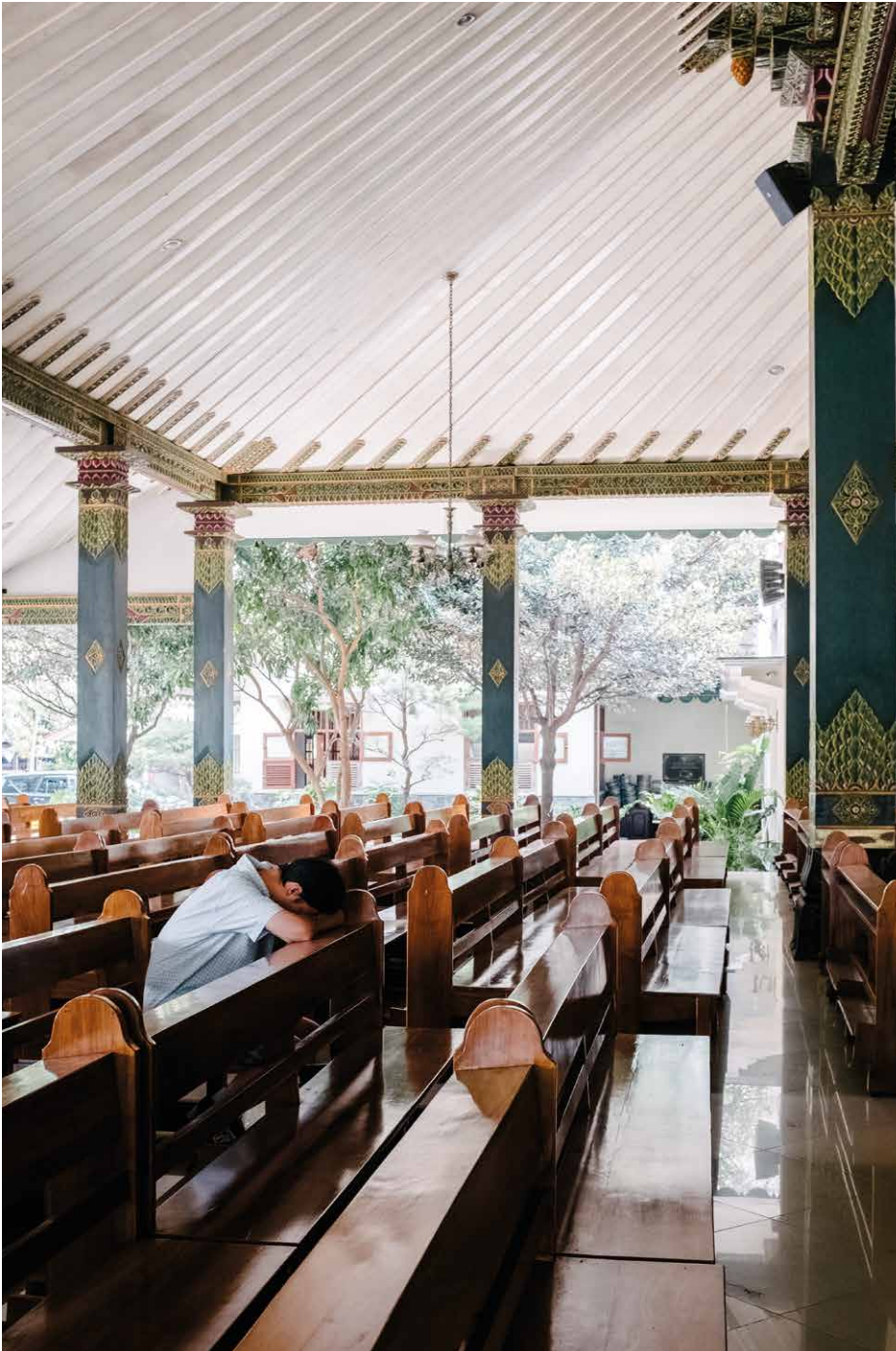


GANJURAN CHURCH

Bantul, Yogyakarta

Architecturally of a Hindu style, this temple is part of the Ganjuran Church in Yogyakarta. Built in 1924 by the Schmutzer Family, former owner of a local sugar factory during the Dutch colonial period, the complex of this Catholic church has a traditional Javanese – Hindu style including this temple. The Schmutzers worked on establishing educational and medical facilities as well. It is a great example of acculturation of religions in Indonesia.





GANJURAN CHURCH

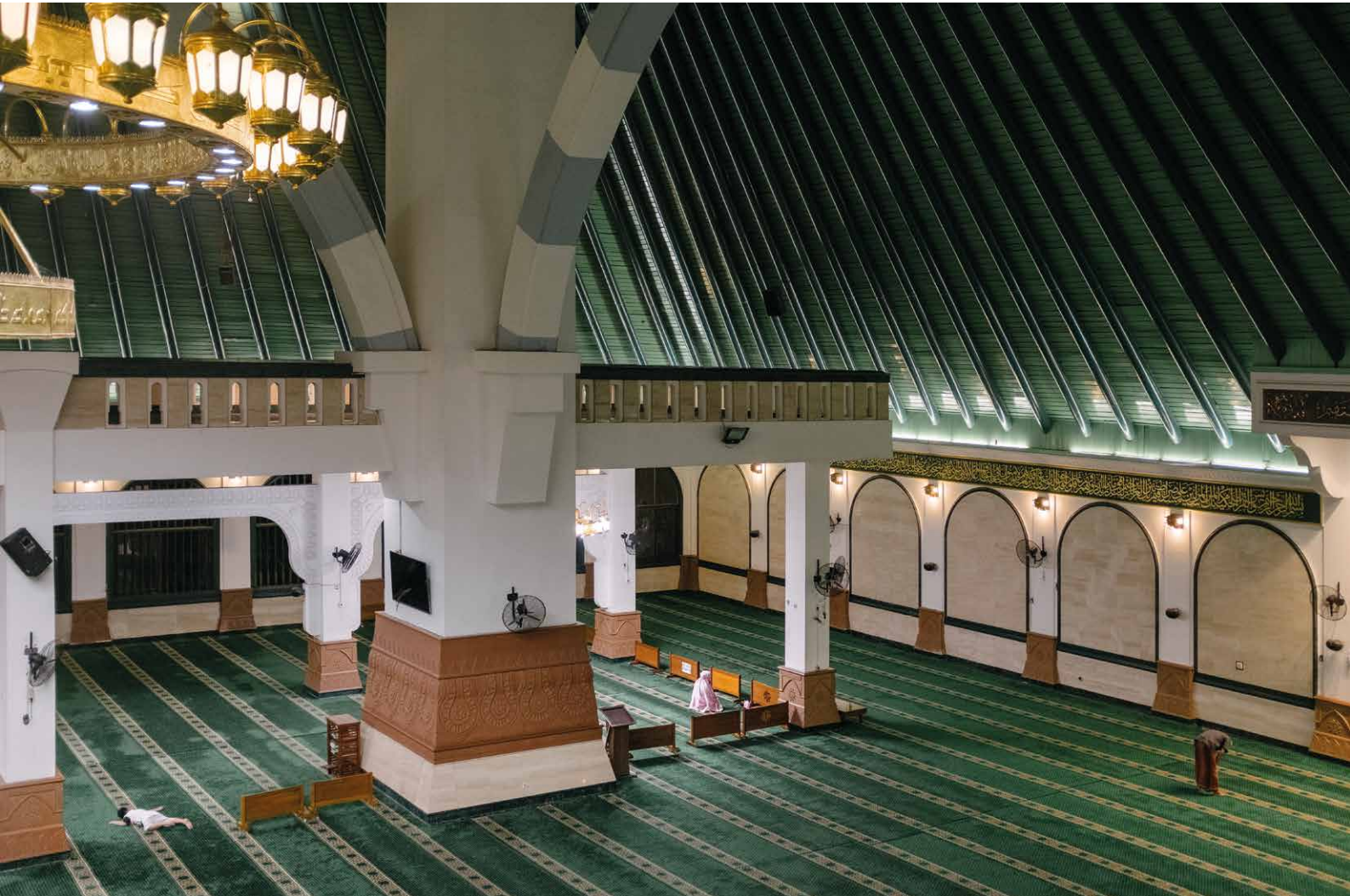
Bantul, Yogyakarta

This is the main part of the Catholic Church where the mass takes place. The Javanese *joglo* roof style as seen here, is associated with the residences of nobility, traditionally reserved for Javanese palace. The architecture of Javanese traditional houses had a strong influence on the Dutch colonial architecture and contributes to the development of Indonesia's modern architecture.

**GREAT MOSQUE OF
CENTRAL JAVA**

Semarang, Central Java

Established in 2006, the 10 hectares area of the Great Mosque (Masjid Agung) has a central roof that resembles joglo style, the traditional Javanese house, and symbolizes the rising steps toward heaven or to gain God's blessing. Shown here is a man and a woman doing *Sholat* separately and a kid resting while waiting for his parents.





BOROBUDUR TEMPLE

Magelang, Central Java

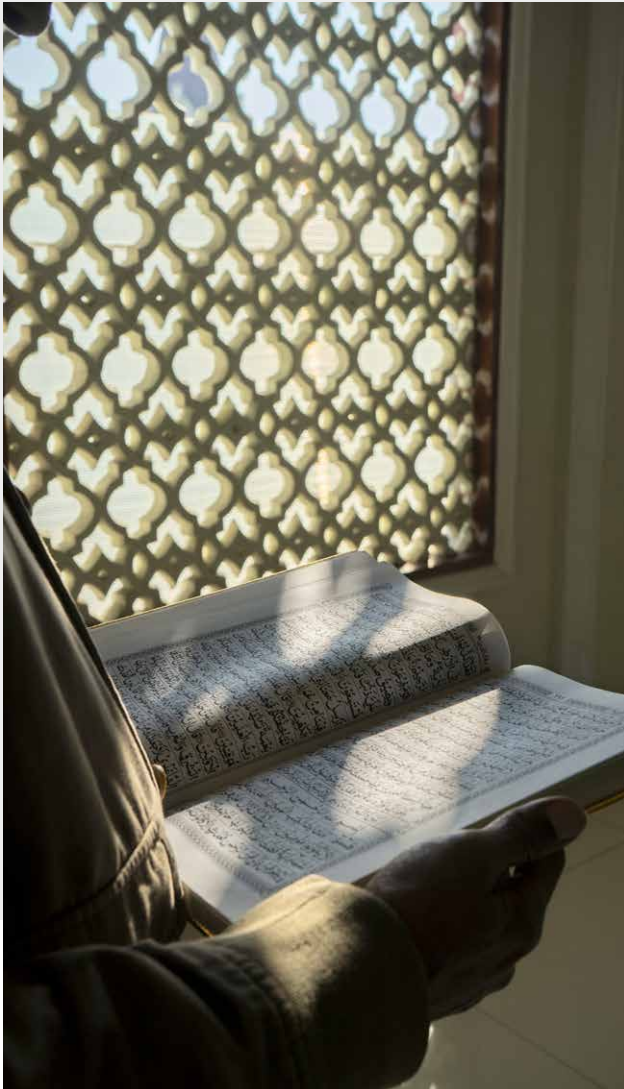
A UNESCO world heritage site, Candi (temple) Borobudur is the largest Buddhist monument in the world. Dated from the 9th century, Borobudur has recently survived bombings by extremists in 1985, the 2006 great earthquake and in 2014 a threat from a self-proclaimed Indonesian branch of ISIS. As the most visited tourist attraction in Indonesia, Borobudur is also facing visitor overload problems.



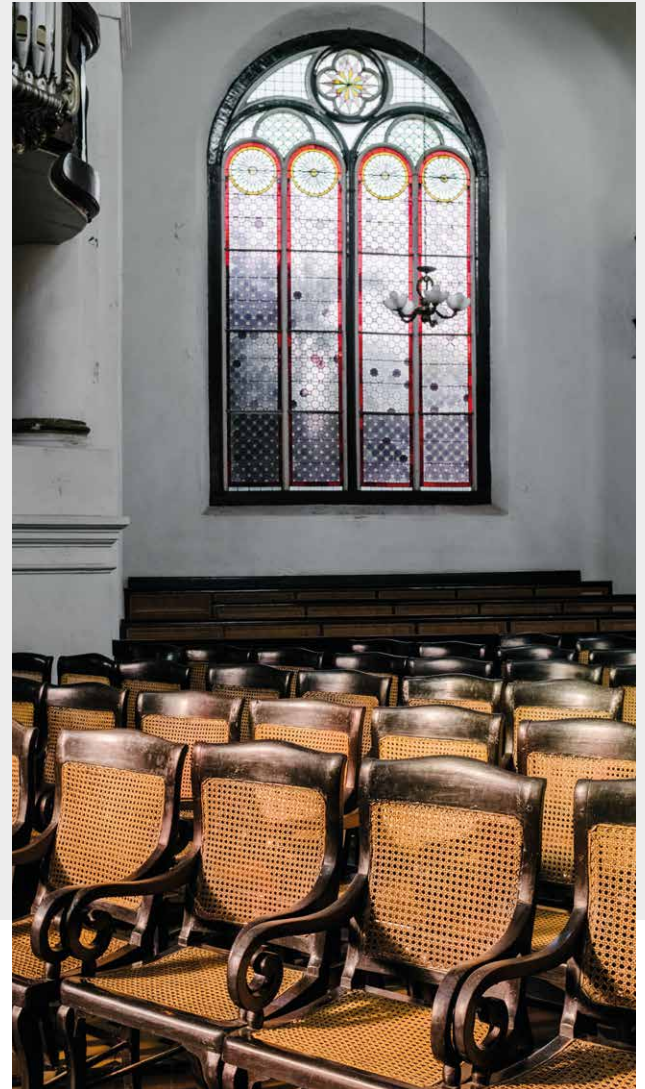
VIHARA TANAH PUTIH

Semarang, Central Java

Led by Sangha Theravada Indonesia, the followers of Buddhism in Semarang could pray together in Vihara Tanah Putih that was first established in 1965 and relocated in 1976. The community of Vihara Tanah Putih also serves the society by organizing charity events like food donation and blood donation.



Quran reciting is part of daily life for Muslims. It is a noble and rewarding activity that is conducted individually or together, including in the family or neighborhood.



The province of Central Java is famous for its furniture industry including teak and rattan. In the interior of this Blenduk Church in Central Java, the acculturation of religion and Javanese culture is prominently seen.



ST. SERVATIUS CATHOLIC CHURCH

Kampung Sawah, Bekasi,
West Java

An area in Bekasi, outskirts of Jakarta, has been a great example for religious tolerance and harmony: Kampung Sawah has a mosque side by side with a Catholic church and a Protestant church.

SURROUNDED BY RELIGION EVERYWHERE I WENT

By Nick Somers

I arrived in Indonesia without any real prior knowledge or experiences about the country and having done minimal research as preparation. I was ready to follow only first impressions looking for where religion stands in daily life and how different religions coexist. As it turned out, this was one of those instances where looking for the story was hardly necessary. First of all, religion is such a central pillar in the lives of Indonesian people, which is obviously a great luxury to have when working on a project about religion. On every corner, in every street in both chaotic city centers and open rural areas, it was always possible to find something religious everywhere I went. I passed hundreds and hundreds of churches, mosques and temples. The walls of non-religious buildings were often covered in murals and drawings depicting religious subjects. I got to visit schools where the next generation of priests were being prepared for the future, even local businesses selling rooftops for mosques. I was surrounded by religion everywhere I went.

Then there was what helped me most of all capturing this, the nature of the people of Indonesia itself. There have been only few places where I have felt this instantly welcomed and got to meet this many open and warm people. Wherever I went, be it places of religious importance, cafés or just in the streets, I would always meet people who were eager to have a conversation, to share about their culture but also ask about mine. These short encounters I had during my time across Indonesia where more than once started by people who saw me with my camera and came to meet me, without even asking to see the photo I made of them afterwards. Motivated by only the moment of in-

teraction, not by being perceived in a way they wanted. Any shyness I had at the beginning of my work, photographing people in what is such an important and personal aspect of their lives disappeared quickly once I realized that I was in fact welcome. I wasn't the cliché fly on the wall, stealing photos without the wall, stealing photos without people noticing. I was a guest and got to capture the places and moments where I was welcomed.

My stay in Indonesia was short. In one week I travelled hundreds of kilometers through Indonesia, still only seeing just a small part of what this country has to offer. But what I saw made a lasting impression on me. And I hope it will only be the start of more to come.



RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY IN INDONESIA

By Boris Vermeersch



Religious diversity as main topic to photograph can be a tricky thing. Certainly when you're the son of an ethics teacher.

All religions have a number of sensitive strings and practicing people can easily feel offended. As recent developments in the world have shown: extremism is on the rise and non-extremists should be cautious to not inflame the further rise of radical thinking. It is a topic that needs to be touched on lightly and with great care, to not enhance further disunity.

With this in the back of my mind I set forth at the beginning of this photographic journey. Throughout the project, I aimed to create an overall image that shows interest, curiosity, colour, light and love. As starting point with any contact, I aimed to be respectful and open-minded, patient and constructive.

Having grown up in the heart of Europe, I had questions about the practice of religion in Indonesia. The country is so rich in different cultures and spirituality which are constantly merging, yet a religious belief in one of the six monotheistic religions is obligatory. Continuously I have sought to implement this friction in my images by bringing elements of different religions into the same frame and to light them so that the construction of the image is exposed.

Gardeners, schoolgirls and many others performed as actors, resulting in a set of pictures that is luminous, colourful and bright but also carries an inner contrast within itself. This contrast is exercised through colour processes and the use of lighting, staging and the careful selection of elements within the frame. These structures convey a hidden message of friction

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What I aim for is to stir your thoughts and senses. By opening up towards each others differences and similarities, a lot can be learned and the discussion on how we deal with different religions in our societies can be opened. I hope these images will spark conversation.

Terima Kasih to all people involved at the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Indonesia and the Indonesian Embassy in Brussels, especially Ms. Elisabeth Ida, Ms. Margot Vandervoort, Mr. Nick Somers and Mr. Paulus Tasik, who have my sincere gratitude and love.



Musholla is an Islamic prayer room, much smaller than a mosque. In Indonesia, such room is to be found in all public buildings including shopping malls, schools, government offices and traditional markets.



An afternoon prayer in Al-Muqarrabien Mosque, North Jakarta. The *Sholat* is carried out five times a day from dawn to evening called as *Fajr*, *Zuhr*, *Asr*, *Maghrib* and *Isha*.



**ST. MARY'S CAVE
SENDANGSONO**

Kulonprogo, Yogyakarta

Established officially in 1929, as commonly in pilgrimage places, local shops are providing pilgrimage related objects. The architect of Sendangsono contemplation site, Priest Mangunwijoyo, won the Aga Khan Award for Architecture in 1992 for his works on architecture that enables connection with the local communities' livelihood.

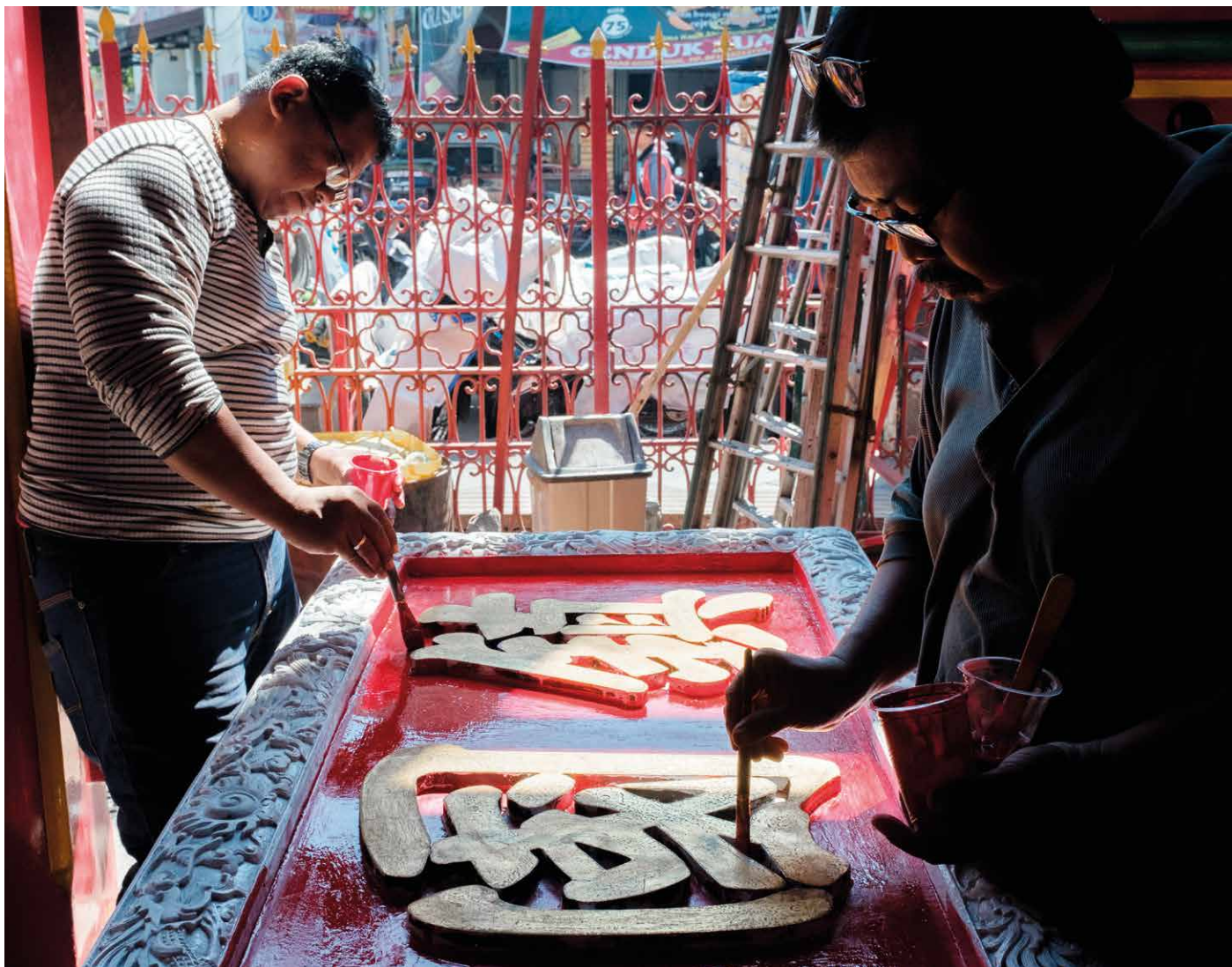


**ST. MARY GANJURAN
ORPHANAGE**

Bantul, Yogyakarta



Located behind the Hindu-style Ganjuran Church and run by Carolus Borromeus nuns, this orphanage dated from 1936 works more as a foster family open to all religions from all over Indonesia. The children are not necessarily orphans and are not to be adopted.



TIEN KOK SI

Surakarta, Solo

Gotong royong to make a signboard for the Confucian Temple in Central Java. Within this spirit, many religious sites in Indonesia are built by the community themselves, which fosters the sense of belonging and togetherness.



"*Jumatan*" or Friday prayers where people flock the mosques to listen to sermons continued by the obligatory *Sholat*. They parked their vehicle, left their shoes and sandals in front of the door, guarded by one person that will eventually join the *Sholat* himself. No need to worry, all will remain in the same spot when the people finish their prayers.



A teacher of the Holy Quran in the study room. He teaches Muslims who wish to study the Quran, to recite it and understand its values.



**VIHĀRA PADEPOKAN
DHAMMADĪPA ĀRĀMA**

Batu, Malang

Established in 1985, this Vipassana Meditation Center and Buddhist Monastery also provides a museum and lodgings for public.

KEJAWEN SPIRITUAL MOVEMENT

Mount Kawi, Malang,
East Java

People of all religions perform pilgrimages to the sacred Mount Kawi. In this enchanting epicenter they ask for guidance and blessings to the Kejawan priests. Behind that curtain, a priest is receiving guests individually with their prayers.

The Kejawan (Javanese traditional belief) represents an overarching spiritual tradition that flows through animals, plants and humans. Other spiritual movements include Dayak Kaharingan (Kalimantan/Borneo), Sunda Wiwitan (Banten, West Java) and Aluk Todolo (Tana Toraja, Sulawesi).





**IMAM OF THE
AL-MUQARRABIEN MOSQUE**

Jakarta



Muslims do a ritual purification before praying. This procedure for cleansing parts of the body is called "wudu" and cleans the person from worldly affairs.



IMAM OF THE MATARAM GRAND MOSQUE

Kotagede, Yogyakarta

The Imam of the Mataram Grand Mosque in Kotagede (Yogyakarta) is wearing *peci*, the typical Indonesian hat that is worn by men nationwide disregard the religion. Male children can also wear *peci* which is normally made in black velvet. The white *koko* shirt influenced by Chinese clothing is accompanied by *sarong* with Indonesian traditional motives.



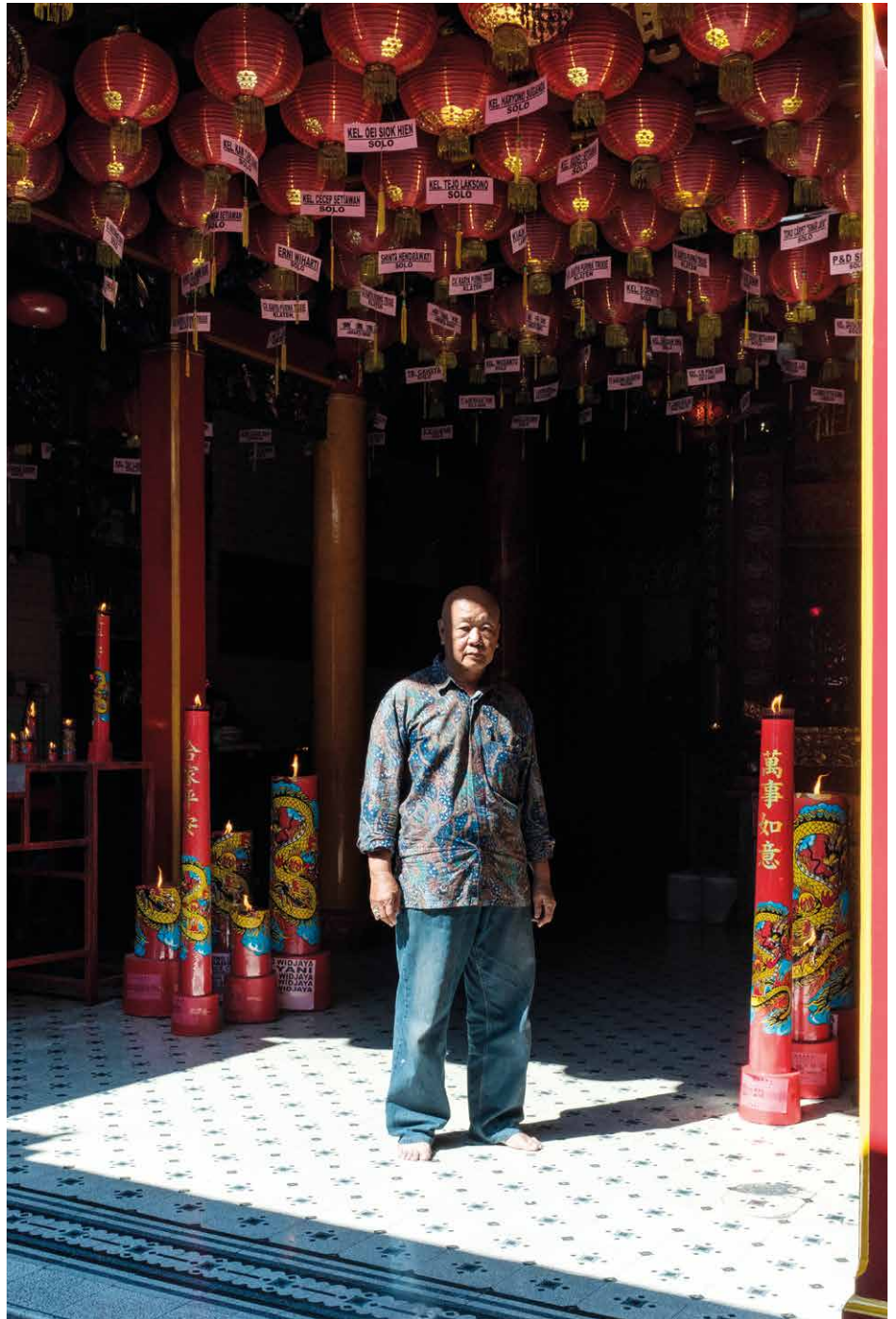
On this page, a man is wearing *gamis*. This long tunic has become a trend for some groups of Indonesian male Muslims since the beginning of 2000 with the influence of Arabic thawb or dishdasha, just as the turban.

It is mostly associated with fundamentalist or extremist groups, which pose threats and challenges to Indonesia's social and religious harmony.

TIEN KOK SI
Confucian Temple

Surakarta, Solo

A “klenteng” (Indonesian for Confucian Temple) has Chinese architectural style with dominantly red color and special ornaments like dragons and lampions. Families and companies can express their prayers and support to the temple, by which their names are displayed with a lampion.





The *hijab* (or “jilbab” in Indonesian language) is worn to express religious identity of Muslima (female Islam believer). In Indonesia *jilbab* has become highly popular the last two decades. From a religious and cultural movement, Muslim-wear evolves to a fashion-savvy trend and booming industry. By 2020 Indonesia is predicted to be the Islamic Fashion Capital of the world.



Sholat (prayer) is an obligatory religious duty for every Muslim. This physical, mental, and spiritual act of worship is conducted five times every day at prescribed times, with different postures facing towards the Ka'ba in Mecca. Delineating her 'holy boundary' using cardboard, this lady is prostrating, performing Sholat privately without having to be in a religious house.



Rosario (the holy Rosary), is a set of prayer beads used in a traditional Roman Catholic devotion and used both in group and private prayers.

In Islam, the prayer beads is called “tasbeih”.



Each Balinese Hindu family has a temple in their house, with offerings being placed in each shrine following appropriate times, often daily. In the “Kingdom of Ganesha” area in Pairi Daiza in Brugelette, Belgium, there is a large Balinese Temple which is a tribute to the supreme deity that favours harmony, serenity, prosperity and happiness.



**VIHĀRA PADEPOKAN
DHAMMADĪPA ĀRĀMA**

Batu, Malang

This Buddhist monastery dated from 1985 is built for Indonesian Buddhist renunciates who are going to be ordained to become Bhikku (male monk).

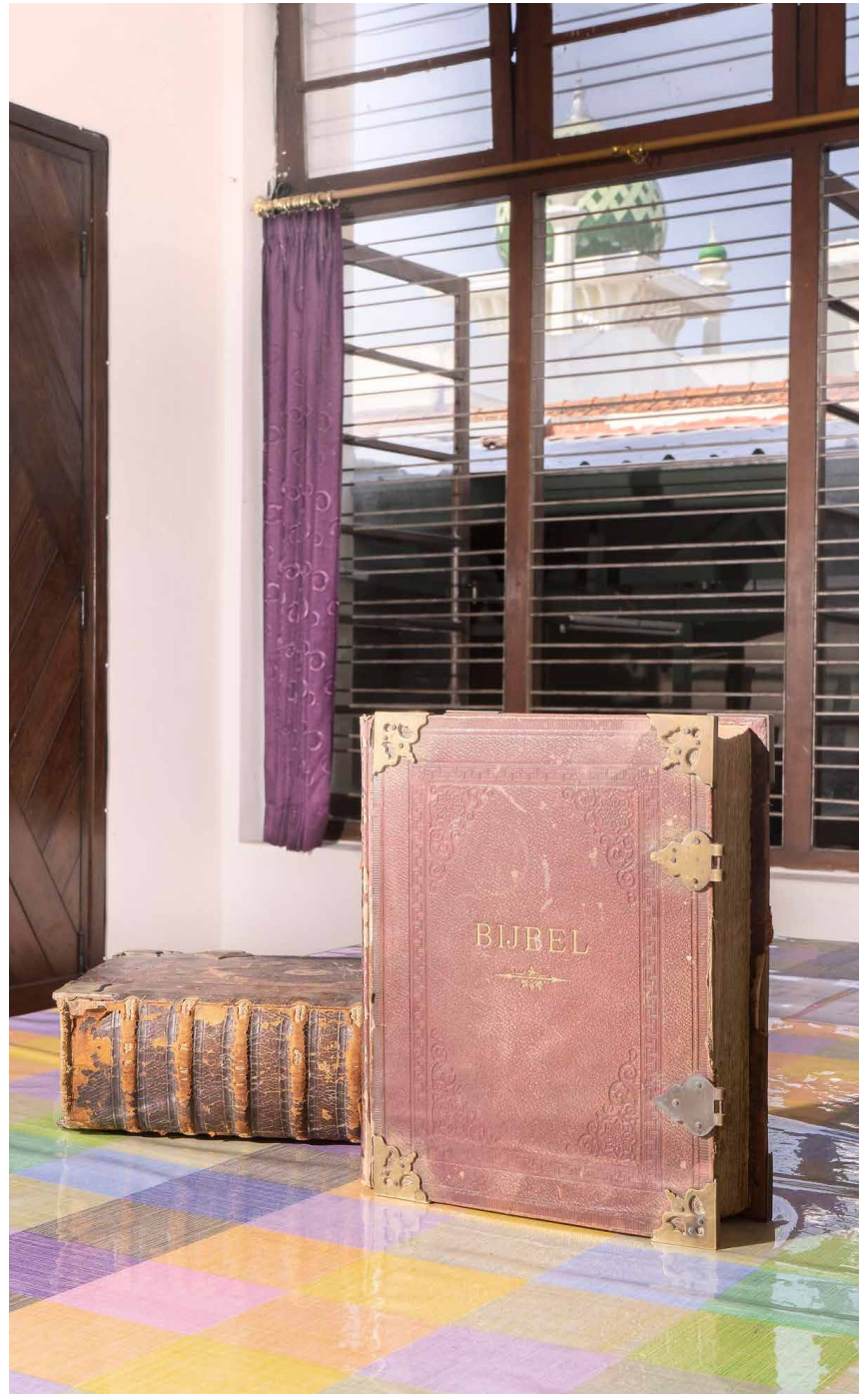


**VIHĀRA PADEPOKAN
DHAMMADĪPA ĀRĀMA**

Batu, Malang

Religions make use of strong and wonderful symbolism. The dragon symbolizes unlimited power, which embodies both yin and yang in unity. As an attribute of virtues, gold symbolizes not only wealth, but also wisdom, enlightenment and love.

In a modern era where religious sites from different religions are standing next to each other, where *Azan* (the sound of calling for Muslims to pray) can be heard, the church's work in serving the community never ceases. It even grows bigger as a beacon of tolerance, together with their colleagues next door.

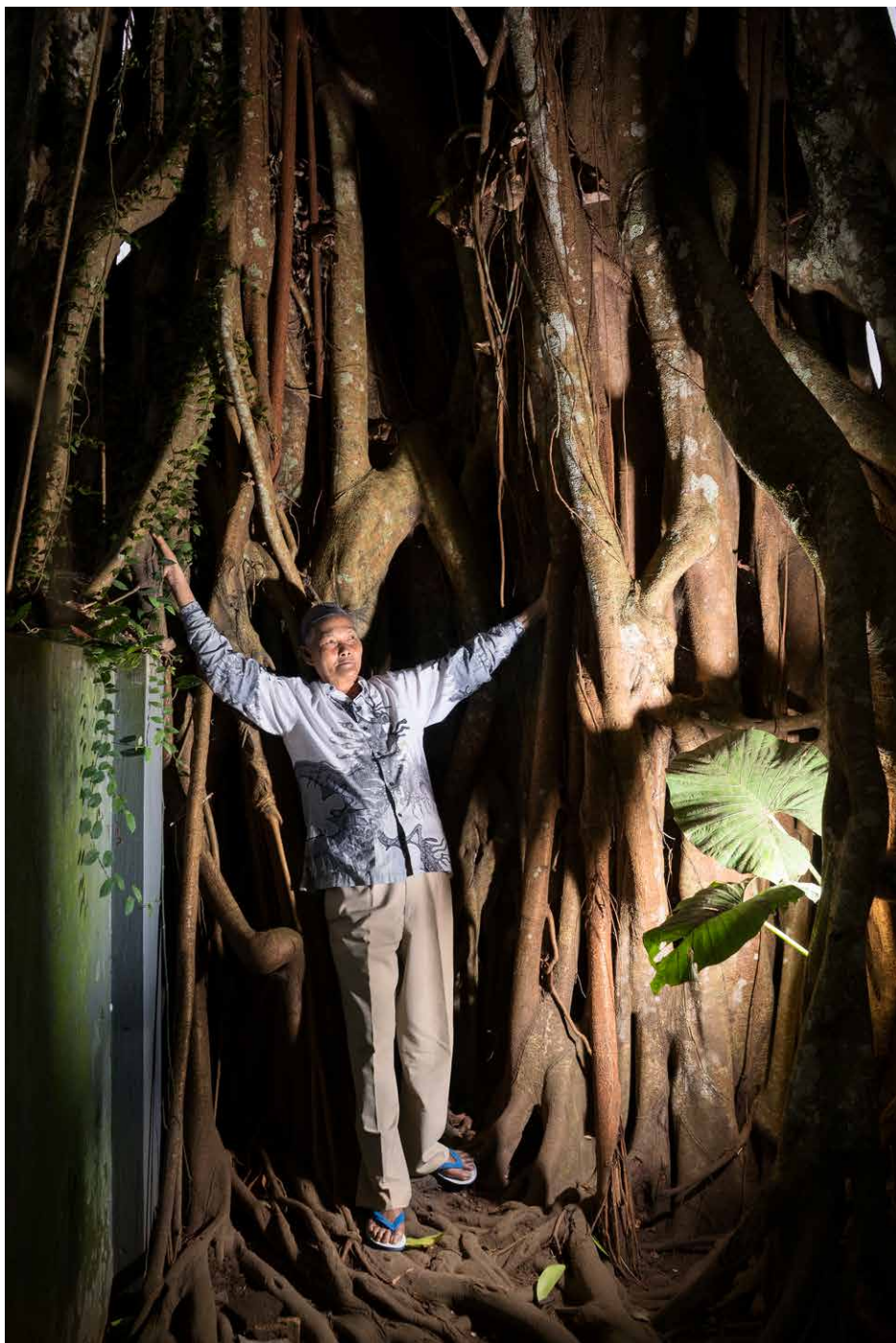


MOUNT KAWI

Malang, East Java

Prayer cards contain prediction of the future. After a ritual process of selecting the card, a unique foretelling is read to the participant.





MOUNT KAWI

Malang, East Java

A Confucianism believer in Mount Kawi posing proudly to show his love for the great bodhi tree. The fig tree (*Ficus religiosa*) originated from India is considered sacred, people meditate under this old big tree and it is forbidden to take picture of this ritual.



INDONESIAN INTERFAITH SCHOLARSHIP

Since 2012, the Indonesian Embassy in Brussels and the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia organize annually the Indonesian Interfaith Scholarship (IIS) program for Belgian citizens and officials from the European Union institutions. This program allows the participants to gain a better understanding of how communities with different religious and ethnic backgrounds can live side by side. There is a strong tradition of tolerance and pluralism in Indonesia. Through this Scholarship, participants acquire a first-hand experience of this harmony in the society. Until 2019 there have been 54 participants to this program.

This beautiful documentation of the IIS program is made by Nathan Ishar, one of the IIS 2019 participants.

PESANTREN (ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOL)

Pandanaran, Yogyakarta

Students from Pesantren Pandanaran and Emmanuel Foulon, participant of the IIS, taking a *wefie*.



AR-RIDHA BAITI JAMAK ISLAMIYAH MOSQUE

Jakarta

Delegates took the opportunity to get into a dialogue with religious leaders in Jakarta at lunch after a sermon by Dr. K.H. Aswin R. Yusuf.



CATHOLIC CHURCH ST. SERVATIUS

Jakarta

At Kampung Sawah, an interfaith community, religious leaders highlighted the mechanisms and dynamics of living in a religiously diverse area.



KAMPUNG SAWAH

Jakarta

The IIS participants encountered several churches and communities of different faiths when they arrived at the GKP (Christian Pasundan Church) Kampung Sawah.



PURA ULUN

Bali

Some members of the delegation went to the center of Bali, visiting Ubud and Pura Ulun, a temple at a peaceful lake, encountering and engaging with locals.



PESANTREN PANDANARAN

Yogyakarta

Students from Pesantren Pandanaran and Philippe Perchoc, participant of the IIS, taking a photo together.



PURA TIRTA EMPUL

Bali

Philippe takes part of the hindu purification ritual at the holy springs of Pura (Temple) Tirta Empul.

PUJA MANDALA

Bali

In the Buddhist shrine at Puja Mandala, the delegation had a dialogue with leaders from Buddhist, Catholic and Protestant communities.



PESANTREN PANDANARAN

Yogyakarta

Meeting with the Executive Board and students of Pesantren Pandanaran, with some art performances by the students.





BIOGRAPHY



Boris Vermeersch (BE, 1993) uses photography to reflect on - and in an attempt to add value to - our intriguing world. In his work he tries to push the boundaries of documentary practices. Currently based in Brussels and Amsterdam, he combines freelance work with being a tutor to kids and teenagers in the audiovisual arts at Dil'Arte.

Nick Somers (BE, 1993) is a documentary photographer based in Ghent. Central in his personal work lies the contrast between people's personal worlds and the actual reality wherein these have to exist. Motivated by this desire to meet people and their stories, he tries to create as much of a personal connection with the subject as possible. After starting his education in Antwerp, he temporarily moved to Bolivia where he worked as a photojournalist and teacher. Today, back in Belgium, he is completing a master in Fine Arts - Photography at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts (KASK) in Ghent.

Nathan Ishar (DE, 1987) is a freelance photographer and videographer based in Germany and Belgium, currently a student of visual arts (MA) at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts, Antwerp in Belgium. His artistic work explores means of religious institutions. By involving himself into rituals his approach documents different layers of spirituality and allows existential questions to be scrutinized. Covering events and portraiture are the main focus of his commercial works for a variety of clients from institutions, corporations to magazines. He held workshops at the Museum Ludwig and the Photokina professional stage.

Elisabeth Ida works as a staff of the Public Diplomacy and Social-Cultural Division in the Indonesian Embassy in Brussels. Graduated as a Master of Fine Arts from the School of Arts (KASK) in Ghent in 2010, she then specialized in 'Exhibition and Management of Contemporary Arts' in the same school. Elisabeth is a Fulbright awardee at the University of California in Los Angeles (UCLA).

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