

Pictures from the other Side



Photographs from Jakarta and elsewhere in
Indonesia

By

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Introduction

The title of this book, ***Pictures from the other Side***, has a double meaning: The 'other side' in this context is a view of Jakarta and Indonesia from the viewpoint of a foreigner. The title page tries to illustrate this 'other side', with a wide street cutting through the city with the face of a curious child on the opposite side. Another meaning of 'other side' comes from the purpose of this book which I put together with my friends in mind on the 'other side' of the globe, in Europe. I wanted to give them an impression of my world on my side of the globe. An allusion to a popular pop song ("Hello from the other side") which sings of a bygone love is also intended. For me, this bygone love is my Jakarta that is gradually turning into a jungle of wires and concrete blocks.

In this book, I try to show the places as they are or as they were. However, I have not deliberately photographed the ugly corners. I am of the opinion that there are plenty of beautiful colour books on the market which show the best sides of Indonesia. I have nothing to add to that perspective. Therefore, I have set out to illustrate my world as it appears to me. The fact that I have chosen to publish this book entirely in black-and-white may add to the perception that my effort is to introduce a negative bias - but this is clearly not my intention. Moreover, I find that things in the state of decay, weathering, destruction have their own aesthetic charm which - unfortunately - is not obvious for every looker. Again, without question, Indonesia has many beautiful sides which are worth to be captured in images and shown to the world. And there are many other books which do this very well.

In the mid 1980s, I moved to Jakarta for professional reasons. I have lived in Indonesia since then and embraced the ambiance and richness of the Indonesian culture. The purpose of this book is to share images from Jakarta and my travels through most of the archipelago. This book is an exposé of black and white photographs that were taken during my day-to-day adventures. These are grouped into several sections. You will see the diversity of landscapes and people, the great wealth and also great poverty. It is a country that has endured earthquakes, floods, and political unrest. However, it is a country of great beauty, grit, and gracious people.

Over the years, pictures have stacked and I felt the need to organize and comment them. From that pile, I have generated a personal album for my relatives. Now, this book is more general and with pictures with – as I would like to believe – public interest.

Amongst my photographs is a prevalence for newer pictures which were taken with digital cameras. From my archive of old, analogue images on negative or slide film, I can see that my interest and with it the sujet of my images, has changed over time.

Technically, the bulk of the images have been originally taken in black-and-white (both on film and digital) and only a few of them were converted from color to gray scale.

For the original b/w images, I often used special camera settings and a strong red filter which enhances the contrast in sunlight and shows bright white clouds on a dark sky. For publishing all the images have been carefully edited cropped, rotated (tilt-removal), applied contrast enhancement and in some cases montaged from several frames into a single panorama (using Hugin™ software). No

inclusion of foreign objects and/or persons has taken place nor have I removed anything from the images and I therefore claim that the images in this book are still authentic.

The text and image captions of this book have been reviewed by a friendly native English speaker. However, she insisted to remain unnamed.

Contents

The images in this book are grouped into the following sections:

Buildings and Architecture

Buildings and other structures in various stages of construction and decay.

The Ladies

Images of girls and ladies. A picture book about Indonesia in general and Jakarta in particular would not be complete without reference to the females.

The Children

Indonesia is a young country. Statistically, more than forty percent of the population are younger than twenty-five years.

The Guys

Having started with portraits of the ladies, a variety of male characters had to be included – not only for the political correctness.

History, Culture and Tradition

Pictures of whatever may fall into this category – from traditional dance over rock music to picturesque graveyards.

Tourist Area

A few images of tourists and places that tourists like to visit. Only a few shots – because there are many other publications illustrating these spots.

The Less Fortunate

Where there is light, there is shadow. In the shadow of the high rising buildings are people living on the bare minimum.

Waiting

Waiting has a much deeper meaning than just letting the time pass until something else happens.

Food

Wherever there are people, there is food, all day and all night. Social events revolve around food, not drinks.

Shops and Malls

Various impressions of the temples of commerce – glitz and vanity.

The informal Economy

Compared to the flashy shops and malls, the informal sector is probably as important.

Transport

One of the first words yelled at a new tourist are "Need transport?" Without question, in such a large country and city transport is of the essence to get around.

The Neighbourhood

Where people live.

Police and Uniforms

For historical reasons, police, army and uniformed units play an important role in the country.

Recycling

Trash and recycling take up a disproportionately large space. Indonesia is one of the worst polluters in the Asia-Pacific region and the government is making efforts to change this. These pictures illustrate the struggle.

Kaputt

Pictures of things that are broken, out of order, in decay. I am not suggesting that these are typical views but – as explained before – I like objects in the state of decay.

Rainy Season

It is raining nearly half of the year. Contrary to the common belief, the rainy season is actually a pleasant time. The weather is cool, the air free of dust and smoke and the rain is warm and falls only for a few hours in the afternoon.

Landscape

I had to include some landscape scenes. This country is just too beautiful. Even in black-and-white.

Shadows from the Past

This is a section with a few images from the 1980s. They have been included to illustrate at which fast pace this city is developing. The annotations are meant to give the viewer points to orient and to compare to the present-day situation with the past.

Geometry and Shape

A section with black-and-white images dedicated to the aesthetics of black and white geometries. There is no

deeper message in these pictures.



Buildings and Architecture





Looking out my office window in 2013 from the Stock Exchange building towards the south-east. On the very left, the Pacific Place, another shopping mall. The high risers in the background have now more company, more have been built, meanwhile.



Another Jakarta panorama, looking south from the Shangri-La Hotel (Photo circa 2008).

Overleaf:

Office buildings along Jl. Jend. Sudirman, the main street in the central business area of the city. This scene has changed a lot since this picture was taken in April 2015. Some buildings have disappeared, new ones have been built and the mosque in the middle of the image is no longer visible from this location.

The ghosts at the base of this picture are artefacts from composing a mosaic made of several exposures.

Now popular is the car-less Sundays where you find vendors, walkers, bike riders, locals and expats all enjoying the open road of Sudirman from morning until noon.





A palm tree seemingly growing out of the concrete of the city pavement along Jl. Jend. Sudirman in the central business area of the city. (Jakarta, 2012).



Panorama of high-risers in the **Central Business District, CBD**. From left to right: The Stock Exchange building, Bapindo Plaza (Mandiri) Citibank and the Energy Building in the background. This picture was taken in February 2012. It is surprising how much this skyline has changed over the last six years, over the course of completing this book.



Between a popular area of Senayan office buildings and a high-end mall, there is this beautiful Banyan tree where people gather to relax in the shade and meet with friends and colleagues.



Looking north over central Jakarta. The building in the centre of this image is the police headquarters. (April 2013).



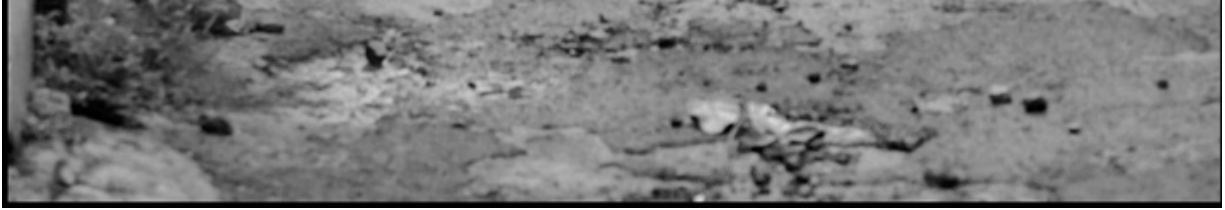


North Jakarta, called *Kota* (literally: city) was the old and historic centre of the city, dating back to the colonial days when the city was still named Batavia. Now, this part of the city is derelict and old buildings – or their ruins – serve as storage places. However, parts of the old city are gradually being restored to attract tourists. (July 2017).



**Land, previously occupied by small houses, is cleared
to make
space for more apartment buildings.
(South Jakarta, 2012).**





A South Jakarta neighbourhood.
(December 2013).



Old warehouse buildings from colonial times being
renovated.
(North Jakarta, August 2018).



Building and...



... demolishing...



... or installing electricity cables.