Interrupting Colors: Reading the Visual Culture of Urban Indonesia through its Revitalized Rainbow Slums (Case Study: Malang)

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Abstract

In the recent decade there has been a trend of slum revitalization by using rainbow colors in various urban cities in Indonesia. This movement intends to present slums, as a desirable tourist attraction of the city, and the reproductions of this Rainbow Village throughout the country is a manifestation of the desirability of its visual aesthetic. Drawing on ethnographic flâneur observations and images representation of the slums in tourist mediums of a rainbow revitalization project in an urban slum in Malang, this paper aims to show how this pocket of slum has become an interrupting scene in the urban landscape of Indonesia. Aesthetic experience is integral to the (re)distribution of power, this paper argues that the Visual Culture and Visual Aesthetic of the Rainbow Village can increase the visibility of slums and transform the way urban residents experience the commons—through slums. Furthermore, the existence of the visual aesthetic of the color village acts as an interrupting force to the flattening of our visual culture and pushes back against the homogenization of urban space.

Keywords: *colors, ethnographic flâneur, pockets, rainbow village, tourism, visual culture*

1   Introduction

Rapid urban population growth is a reality especially in emerging economies. Jakarta itself has an urban population growth of 2-4%, while cities like Tokyo or New York only has a growth of 0-2% [1]. However with this population growth in emerging cities, a high degree of informality is also growing. In the traditional definition of urban planning, the city is the outcome of centralized rules and decisions, while the informal city results from social, economic, and sometimes 'illegal' bottom up processes. Informality is often reinforced by structural inequalities, which themselves have unique historical and economic drivers [2]. One visible product of this informal city are urban slums.

The United Nations Habitat definition of slums highlights urban inequalities in five important aspects: 1) structural quality of housing, 2) overcrowding, 3) access to safe water, 4) access to sanitation, and 5) insecure residential status [3]. However these static indicators may distract us

from understanding slums.

In the words of Peter Marris [4], *"A slum is a slum only in the eyes of someone for whom it is an anomaly – a disruption of the urban norm and relationships that to the observer seem appropriate to his or her own values and perceptions."* Hence, a slum is only a slum to the people who observe it.

The basic rationale for the 'slum-upgrading' movement of the 1970s was simple: residents needed cleaner and safer environments in order to thrive. Today the interventions are more nuanced, but this concern for environmental health persists. The reality in most slums is that residents actually value their environment, but the transaction costs associated with providing services are frequently too high so that they are powerless to intervene at a meaningful scale. Hence, slums are often lacking in basic infrastructure. By being tolerated but never integrated into the city, households are locked into this behavior and scapegoated as the cause of more complex environmental problems [5].

In Indonesia, this type of settlement is commonly known as '*kampung kota*'. Originally referring to the area on the riverbank near the landing point, and along the path leading to settlements on higher ground, kampong was later adopted by the Europeans and associated with 'compound' and 'camp' [6]. Sitting outside the spatial planning of the colonial government '*kampung kota*' developed a local organizational structure—providing a basis for community and spatial management—which is still in practice.

In the recent decade there has been a trend of slum revitalization by using rainbow colors in various urban cities in Indonesia, which in local language is called *"Kampung Pelangi"* or *"Kampung Warna-Warni"*, or when translated "Rainbow Village" or "Color Village". To the writers' knowledge there are at least 8 different color village projects in various cities in Indonesia, which includes Malang, Semarang, Surabaya, Balikpapan, Lubuklinggau, Pangkalan Bun, Jakarta and Manado [7, 8] . This movement intends to present slums as a desirable tourist attraction, by turning it from a dirty area into a beautiful place, as shown in these excerpts from news and tourism articles:

> *"The Rainbow Village used to be a dirty area, but now it has been turned into a favorite place for tourists and those who like to take selfies"* [9]

> *"Jodipan used to be a dirty village, but now it had been turned into an interesting tourist spot"* [10]

The reproductions of these Rainbow Village throughout the country are arguably a manifestation of the desirability of its visual aesthetic.

Such slum revitalization can be viewed as an art intervention that transcends and breaks the social diktats of beauty and aesthetic imposed by our consumerist society. This movement of revitalizing slums through art is a global phenomenon, with organizations such as OrgansparkZ/ Art [11] creating art installations such as Favela-Painting in Brazil to fight against global inequality and poverty. These installations offer a powerful and invigorating creative alternative on how to intervene in deprived and marginalized communities in order to allow those communities to build more sustainable lives and respect from within and outside.

Drawing on ethnographic *flâneur* observations and images representation of the slums in tourist mediums of a rainbow revitalization project in an urban slum (here forth interchangeably called as "Color Village") in Malang, this paper aims to show how this pocket of slum has become an interrupting scene in the urban landscape of Indonesia.

2   Theoretical Framework

"Slum Tourism": A force of what?

Slum upgrading projects, especially the ones with art installations are accompanied with an influx of tourists, which is often referred to as "Slum Tourism". But what is Slum Tourism?

Firstly, lets dissect the relationship between tourism and visual culture. Rich evidence suggests that tourism is an image-rich cultural and commercial part of the material world, and that tourism itself can be seen as a sensual undertaking dominated by visual imagery [12]. In 2004, Adrian Franklin [13] argued that tourism is a 'relentless force' that is 're-ordering society'. He continues that the way we act in our everyday lives is becoming more like that of a tourist by "wanting to live near easily available Italian or Vietnamese Food, the urge to take photos of the most mundane subjects, going out to drinks mid-week and not just on weekends". While these descriptions do not fit everyone word by word, even we in Indonesia can sympathize with the notion of wanting to live like a tourist even in our hometown. Data has shown us that the service economy is expanding in ways that stretch far beyond the needs of holidaymakers: we have all become tourists. In our post-modern world, by going someplace else to compare ourselves with others, we re-affirm our own identity and in so doing take comfort in our 'search for happiness' [14].

In 1997, Avgerinou and Ericson [12] said, *"Whether we acknowledge it or not, we live in an era of visual culture, in the so called* 'brain d'images'*, which influences enormously our attitudes, beliefs, values and general lifestyle. The images inundating our environment, be it private or public, come in different forms and through several channels of visual communication. The almost ubiquitous TV set is not the only one to blame. Films, advertising, and new technologies of printing and reproduction are also responsible for this flood of visual message*s".

Having said that, tourism is one of the many forms of our modern visual culture. Tourism is essentially a visual experience: we leave our homes to travel to see places, thus adding to our stock of personal knowledge about and experience of the world in the hope of finding novelty, renewal or our authentic self in the company of like-minded others. These social practices were contextualized and developed by John Urry [15], who took 'the aestheticisation of consumption' as an overarching theme to consider the importance of tourism as both an agent and signifier of social change in a post-modern world.

Tourism also, if taken as a prime manifestation of social change, has the ability to act as a vehicle for showing how visual discourse of leisure can be located in 'the practices, politics and poetics of cultural and visual representation' [16].

Over the course of the past decades, slum tourism as an activity has been growing in popularity, and is offered in an increasing number of destinations in the Global South. It takes place in various ways, but the most obvious and established practices are guided tours. In some cities guided slum visits already constitute an important element in the range of offers made by the urban tourism industry. Steinbrink et.al. [17] argues that the main characteristic of this phenomenon – often also called 'slumming' – is the touristic valorization of poverty-stricken urban areas of the metropolises in so-called developing or emerging nations, which are visited primarily by tourists from the Global North.

Hence, when viewing "slum tourism"; poverty, ethics and power are core issues; they are in the center of a wide range of academic debates, each with long traditions. Poverty's relevance for the study of slum tourism results first and foremost from the fact that poverty is the defining feature

and lowest common denominator of what is usually defined as 'slum' [18]. And poverty also seems to be the main attraction: it appears plausible to assume that the attractiveness of slums as tourist destinations is often directly connected with conceptions and associations tourists have of the places they intend to visit (tourists want to see what they expect to see). The desire to see people living in poverty immediately raises concerns about the ethics of slum tourism.

As Steinbrink et.al. [17] observed, "*Slum tourism is heavily criticized in public discourses and morally judged in the media. Slum tourists from the North are criticized as immoral gawkers, and the tourist gaze on poverty is compared to a visit to a zoo and judged as distasteful. This judgment seems to be so fundamentally evident that the question of why it is considered as ethically wrong to look at the poor is rarely asked, nor is the question of how such a moralizing view on slum tourism influences its form and practice.*" But is this always the case?

 The question of power in slum tourism on the other hand is derived from the assumption of relative powerlessness of slum dwellers *vis-à-vis* the visiting tourists and the tour operators. Underlying the notion of social voyeurism seems to be the idea that tourists are more powerful than the poor they visit. It is for that reason that watching the poor is considered problematic [17]. But to what extent do these criticism towards "slum tourism" fair in comparison to the benefits to the community that it might provide? And, if the residents of the slums are not just gazed upon, but actively participate in the act of "slum tourism", can these arguments still hold?

Slum Tourism, as traditionally defined, is nothing new in Indonesia, albeit not being as popular. The first known commercial slum tourism was started in Jakarta, Indonesia, by Ronny Poluan in 2008. After a period of unemployment, the former documentary filmmaker founded his company 'Jakarta Hidden Tours' in 2008. For a fee of US$56 for two people, the company offers one of five different tours leading to the slums of Ciliwung, Tanah Abang, Papango, Galur or Luar Batang [19]. To our knowledge he is still the only one who offers organized slum tours in Indonesia.

It is also impossible to talk about tourism without photography, because there is no such thing as unmediated tourism. Photographic images themselves are described by Bernard Edelman [20] as 'legal fiction', and therefore it is important to acknowledge how the photographic images of tourist destination mediates and intervenes in our understanding of the object itself.

In terms of "slum tourism" photographic representation also plays a huge role in creating a narrative of the space. These image representations discursively shape the image of the slum, and thereby create the tourists' curiousness and interests. In some cases, films and books even directly trigger the occurrence of slum tourism [21]. The ethics of these representations are often as deeply contested as those of slum tourism; and the ethical skepticism concerning representations shows similar patterns. This leads to two other sets of questions: first, how are slums portrayed in slum tourism? Who decides what and how to showcase? Are the slum destinations represented in ways that are 'objective' or 'fair', or are they shown in a distorted manner, romanticized or dramatized? And what are the reasons and dynamics behind these practices and representations? Second, is the touristification of slums a form of exploitation of the poor? Freire-Medeiros [22] argues that as the slum tours are sold to tourists, they commoditize poverty. It is of interest to see how the Color Village is positioning itself among this global phenomenon of slum tourism, is it also commoditizing poverty?

Interruption or Interrupting Interruption?

Another aspect of slum-upgrading projects is its possibility to 'interrupt' the narrative of a city. Interruption here is understood as a break upon an action, bringing about a temporal rupture,

creating an interval that draws attention to itself precisely as deliberately 'counter'. Interruption entails a wide range of such temporal interventions, while also addresses the idea of spatial interruption in the built environment that calls attention to issues of ongoing urban development and restructuring [23]. Yet, to what extend does a given interruption have 'teeth' as a means of hampering, in however small a way, the overwhelming tsunami of globalization?

However, as argued by Shirley Jordan [23], the existence of the slums themselves, which are some of the global city's defining spaces, can in themselves seen as potentially interruptive parallel environments, peripheries whose messy horizontality rivals the obsessively sleek verticality of the global center. The sharp contrast of the urban poor and the urban rich in the Brazilian context was best illustrated by the Tuca Vieira's widely reproduced photograph of the Paraisopolis favela in Sao Paulo. Showing the razor sharp edge dividing the low rise sprawl of the favela and the high-rise clustering of fortified luxury living, the photo comments powerfully on the severity of urban separation. From the outside the favela can be seen as incoherent, threatening, amorphous and un-navigable, which serves as a metaphor for the mass of its inhabitants; who almost seem to secrete this habitat organically like a carapace. Gonzales photograph brings into mutual interruption two perspectives: one that is comfortable with the favela and one that finds it physically disturbing. If slum can be viewed as an interruption of the urban landscape, then how about slum upgrading, is it interrupting the interruption? Or is it a new form of interruption?

Despite the potentiality of interruption in driving change, Ackbar Abbas [24] wrote cautiously, *"It would be false optimism to assume that interruption can expose the lie and give us the truth. What it can do however is to create 'noise'. Noise can take the form of protest, but also of artworks, performances, spatial constructions or theories. And noise can disrupt and disturb the smooth operation of the system, but also try to take it elsewhere."* However, he continued with the quote by W.B. Yeats,"*In dreams begins responsibility,*" and asked, *"could it also be that it is in the interruption that dreams of a better world begin?".*

3   Methodology

Literature study was used to obtain relevant information on the background of the city of Malang, while to obtain demographic data of the specific area of the "Color Village", surveys of the residents were done; the survey had a margin of error of 1%, with sample sizes given in Table 1. Then, to understand the timeline and progression of the color village project, extensive interviews with people involved in the project were done. This includes stakeholders such as the student initiators, community leaders (*Kepala RT*), and company representatives (see section 4.2 for a clear understanding of the actors).

Observations were drawn by ethnographic *flâneur*, which employs walking and observing as primary methodology, or often described as 'walking practices'. It is important to emphasize however that in using *flâneur* the writer has put herself in alienation; in which she presents herself as one of the crowd and yet apart from the crowd; and therefore 'remains anonymous, devoid of personality, and unremarkable in the crowd' [25]. Which, as Judith Okely [26] had criticized, makes *flâneurie* distinct from 'real' ethnographic practices, as she pointed out that 'holding to the ideal of forming close relationships with those we study is crucial to engage in ethnographic practices'. However within the scope of this study, the writer still considers the choice of *flâneurie* as appropriate. During the process of *flâneurie*, the writer also took pictures to capture certain aspects as she sees fit—these pictures will in turn also be used in the discussion points. This in

itself is another character of *flâneur* that typically combines artistic and ambulatory practices in exploring the city done by a specific group of people [27], and emphasizes the creative and expressive potential of *flâneur* [28]. Yet despite these limitations, this has been the scope on which this study was built on.

4   Urban Backdrop: A Description of Malang City

With an agreeable temperature all year round, Malang has traditionally been a tourist destination for the neighboring big city of Surabaya. The population density of Malang is about 7,870 people/km^2 [29], which is much below Jakarta with 15,174 people/km^2, or its neighboring big city, Surabaya with 9,900 people/km^2. The most industrially dense area is Kecamatan Blimbing which houses 40% of all the industries in Malang, this administrative area also happens to be the place where the Color Village is located.

As a tourist destination in 2018 Malang has about 104 hotels with 4,324 room with an occupancy rate of 57% and 45.21% for star hotels and non star hotels respectively. Based on National Socio Economic Survey in 2018 the average per capita spending is about IDR 1,619,392 or about USD 110.

5   The Color Village of Malang

Jodipan and Ksatrian are two Administrative Villages (*Kelurahan*) in the area of Bllimbing, Malang, East Java, Indonesia. A small part of both of these *kelurahan* are located around the riverside of Brantas River (see **Figure 1** for clarity) , which means that in accordance to the Government Order PP no. 82 2011 on Water Quality Management and Water Pollution Control [30], these areas are considered illegal neighborhoods; the residents however have been occupying the area for more than 10 years. Making Jodipan and Kesatrian an example of an informal settlement, with many not having certainty in their residential status.

5.1   Area Demographic

Jodipan has a population size of 91 households, while Kesatrian has a population size of 220 households. A survey done in this study on the area shows us the demographic of the residents, where the sample size analyzed were 48 and 69 for Jodipan and Kesatrian respectively.

Table 1. Total Population Size and Sample Size observed in this study

	Jodipan (household)	Kesatrian (household)
Population Size	91	220
Sample Size	48	69

Most of the residents also claim to own their property with 88% in Jodipan and 100% in Ksatrian, despite the area legally owned by the state; either through the state owned Train Company or the Local Government.

Based on the poverty line by the National Statistic Body, a household in Indonesia is considered living in poverty when they earn less than 45 USD per month. The questionnaire shows that 15% of the residents are living below that poverty line, while the majority of the residents or about 67% earn between 75-225 USD per month. However since most of the residents are self-employed, incomes are unstable, making even the best earning households susceptible to fragile economic situations.
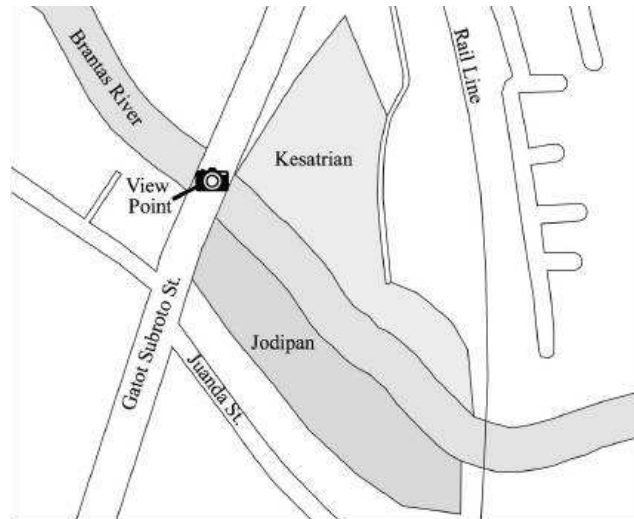

Figure 1. Location Map of Jodipan and Kesatrian, the Color Village of Malang.

5.2   Project Timeline Description: Becoming a Color Village

The Color Village Project of Jodipan and Kesatrian were not done all at the same time, instead there was a distinct process in its creation starting from Jodipan then followed by Kesatrian. Pictures of how the Area looked like prior to the Project can be seen in **Figure 2.**

(a) Public area

(b) Incoming stairs

(c) A typical house

(d) Stairs to entrance

(e) Public space and public toilet

(f) Public Bathroom

Figure 2. Different areas in Jodipan and Kesatrian before they are turned into a "Color Village"

In general, the project can be separated by timeline to two segments:

1) Jodipan Area: In February 2016, a group of students from the Communication Department of Muhammadiyah Malang University initiated a project to paint parts of the Jodipan area with bright colors. The students collaborated with PT Indana, a local paint company in Malang, to receive help in the form of the paint and funding. PT. Indana welcomed the students' initiative

and used the project as a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) platform for their paint brand Decofresh. The project, tittle ”*Decofresh Mewarnai Jodipan*” or ”Decofresh Coloring Jodipan”, was initiated as part of a Public Relations Class. Its affiliation with an ongoing class, gave a one-semester time frame for the completion of the project, starting from February to June 2016, although in reality the project was officially completed in September 2016.

The Projects main purpose is to fulfill the duty of the Public Relations CSR of the company. The project needed to fulfill the triple bottom line of CSR, which stressed the company's action to focus on the sustainable impact of the project economically, socially and environmentally. Both the students and the company designed the project not to only help the residents, but also as a tool for better public recognition for the company. Therefore the choice of the location became crucial.

In Malang, there are 26 areas that are considered to be slums, and the students have surveyed about 4 areas prior to choosing Jodipan as their target. It is worth mentioning that almost every year PT Indana always performs a recoloring project for low income communities, and the students were critical to the choice of location of these projects, one was behind a large building, impossible to be seen from the main street, and therefore it lacked the ability to be a public relations tool for the company. Out of the 4 surveyed slums, most of them are not visible from the main street, resulting in a smaller impact for the company if those areas were to be chosen for the project, which the students were very aware of.

Jodipan therefore became a convenient choice due to its visibility from one of the main streets in Malang and its scenic position. The area was particularly chosen for its visibility from the Gatot Subroto Bridge, so that it can become a good viewpoint for the public who is passing by. Additional consideration in favor for Jodipan was the clear view of the rail-line bridge from the viewpoint, which increased the visual appeal of the area (see **Figure 1** for clarity).

Most importantly though, the head of the community of Jodipan was also seen as a welcoming figure by the students. He was willing to work with the students and therefore not only was the location good, the relationship they have built with the head of the community was also stronger. Therefore, the main reason for the choice of Jodipan was its location and the willingness of the community leader to work with the students.

With the help of the community leader, the students were able to involve the residents in their coloring work, with each resident is given 15 choices of colors to choose from for their respective houses. This brought a high sense of pride, ownership and the realization that this color intervention project could have a more transformative impact on the community than simply an illustration of street art. It marked the beginning of *Kampung Pelangi* as a community-art project, in a true collaborative sense. The students also collaborated with military officers, workers from the paint company (PT Indana) and Local Mural Artist communities in Malang to paint the neighborhood. The workers from the company especially were sent in order to ensure a high standard quality of paint application, as the company does not want it to be represented badly.

Since this was a project part of the public relations class, the success of the project was also measured by the amount of publicity it received. By the end of the painting, the project already received 8 features in local newspapers, and also was featured by accounts on social media. This increased the hype of the project for local tourist, so that the influx of the tourist increased dramatically.

Other than the visual changes, in Jodipan Village the project also brought a new solid waste collecting system for the neighborhood, which uses the entrance money of 2,000 IDR paid by tourists to enter the neighborhood. The new system helped change residents behavior that was

used to litter directly into the river. In this new system, the community arranges for a garbage collection system from the trash bin in front of their house to the temporary garbage disposal area, and also they can make payment for the collection of their garbage from that temporary garbage disposal area to the landfill. Since the trash bin now is in front of their houses, it became more convenient than throwing the trash directly to the river. With the earned money, the residents are also planning on building new toilets to facilitate the coming tourists.

2) Kesatrian Area: During the official opening of the Jodipan Project to the public that was attended by both the high officials from the company and the local government on 4 September 2016, the sitting Mayor of Malang at the time, H. Mochammad Anton, requested to PT. Indana to extend the visual improvements project to the neighboring village, Kesatrian (colored in yellow in Figure 1). He reasoned that the contrast of the view from Jodipan (that is now clean and colored beautifully), with the Kesatrian Village across the river, is too stark; making it undesirable for aesthetic purpose.

This then started the continuation of the project to include the Kesatrian village that was completed by November 2016. In this section of the project also community involvement was high, since residents were already aware of the success of the neighboring Jodipan Village (in terms of increased income and reputation, which will be explained in further sections), they were more eager and willing to transform their village into a "Color Village". The completed transformation of both Jodipan and Kesatrian can be seen in **Figure 3**, where Kesatrian is on the left side and Jodipan is on the right side, the picture is taken exactly the viewpoint from the bridge on above the two villages.

Figure 3. Before (a) and After (b) picture of the Jodipan and Kesatrian "Color Village" from the bridge view point. This after picture was taken after the initial completion of both the Jodipan and Kesatrian Section Project in 2016, it has since been extended with an additional pedestrian bridge.

5.3   Economic and Environmental Impact of "Slum Tourism"

The economic impact to the area can be classified into a communal impact and to the individual impact. To the community the direct impact is in the form of entrance ticket that is paid by the incoming tourist. During weekdays an average of 200 visitors per day come into the village, while during the weekends on average 800 visitor come, bringing in a total 1,620 USD per month to the village. The incoming money is then used to pay for the waste management system in Jodipan, where the community now employs one resident to collect garbage directly from residents' houses on a daily basis, and communal activities in both Jodipan and Kesatrian.

To the individual the economic impact can be classified as direct and indirect income. The direct income consists of added income that is obtained by households in which a family member works at the entrance ticketing counter, 46% residents in Jodipan and 25% residents in Kesatrian receive direct income due to this project. With a slight majority (55%) of these residents earning an additional 30-90 USD per month in Jodipan and 76% in Kesatrian earning an additional 90-150 USD per month.

The indirect income comes to residents who opened business after the project because of the influx of tourist; 31% residents in Jodipan and 13% residents in Kesatrian. In Jodipan, among the households that have businesses, 50% claim to receive an additional 22.5-52.5 USD per month through their business, while in Kesatrian 57% claim to make an additional 52.5-75 USD per month. Data collected by another research performed by Noorsetya [31] et.al. also shows a range of income revenue from selling goods in the area between IDR 50,000-75,000 (USD 3.4 -5) per day during weekday, and up to IDR 400,000-500,000 (USD 27.2-34) per day during weekend.

Unlike other projects that deal with behavior change to improve sanitation through education of residents, this project simply improves the area visually through changing its colors. However, it succeeded in changing certain sanitation behavior of the residents by reducing waste thrown directly into the river and cutting unhygienic practices such as open defecation [32, 33]. This is because the project gave residents economic benefits, and therefore solidifies the need for a cleaner environment to maintain the influx of tourists to their area. With the incoming tourists, residents are also forced to change open defecation behavior as there no longer is "private space" to do so—with the gaze of the tourist being everywhere.

5.4   Response after the Project

The residents have been actively welcoming its new status as a tourist attraction. Its residents that were initially famous for being *Preman* ('Freeman' or the Indonesian word for ganster or vigilantes), now are obtaining livelihood from the tourist industry to their village—although the exact conversion rate is not part of the scope of this paper. Through interview with community leaders we found an interesting observation from the head of the Kesatrian community,

> *"The problem with our color village is that if someone visits our place once, they will already feel satisfied because they think they have seen everything that they can see from this village. Therefore it is important that the coloring itself is not the only tourist attraction in this area. If we want people to come more than once, we have to make events and attractions. Right now we have started making weekly events like Movie screenings, and some small attractions like a zoo (with rabbits), and we try to change the art on our walls if possible, so that people don't get bored of coming here. If we have the money, we would like to get a ferris wheel to put close to the river. We have to keep on being creative."*

The backdrop of the color village has given residents the motivation to fill in their neighborhood with interesting activities to attract tourist. Other than what is quoted above, women circles also actively create things to decorate the village that they change every several months (see Figure 4(a) for illustration). As mentioned, transaction costs associated with providing change at a meaningful scale are frequently too high for residents so that they are typically powerless to intervene, yet once such large scale intervention had been done, such as this coloring project, it is up to the residents to fill the space with meaningful activities, and to keep their area relevant.

On the other side, the city government officials have established the area as an official tourist attraction, despite it formerly being constantly susceptible to eviction before the project. In 2017, the local government has requested PT. Indana to build a pedestrian bridge from Jodipan to Kesatrian in an effort to increase the neighborhood's attractiveness for tourists. The reason being, as the two Villages are not directly connected, when tourists come to either of them, they will typically not go to the other, as to do so they must walk out the village first and cross the main highway bridge. Hence a pedestrian bridge that can connect both villages and therefore increase movement in between the tourist destinations was desirable.

In October 9th, 2017 Jembatan Kaca Ngalam, which is the first "glass-bridge" in Indonesia was inaugurated, about one year after the first inauguration of the original CSR Project, Jodipan. As an extension of this joint collaboration between the private sector, government and company; Civil Engineering students from UMM designed the bridge.

(a) Communal art installations initiated by women circles from the neighborhood that are frequently updated to attract new visitors

(b) Public Toilets repainted, with public areas serving as food stands

Figure 4. Communal areas are turned into art installation areas (a) and eating areas with improved public toilet facility (b)

Figure 5. The "Ngalam Glass-Bridge" that was erected to connect by foot the previously unconnected Villages of Jodipan and Kesatrian, which has now become a new Icon for Malang City. The image was taken from the instagram account of @novi_nasya

6   Reading the Color Village of Malang

6.1   The Creation of a Tourist Destination from an Urban Slum

Despite being started by a group of students, at a relatively 'modest' scale, because since the beginning the project was a part of a class assignment in Public Relations, one of the parameter of success of the project was the public and media reception to improve the public relation of the company (PT Indana—the paint company approached by the students) with the public. Looking at it in these terms, the coloring itself was a publicity stunt, but as a result the Color Village gained fast traction, beyond anyone's expectation. This is perhaps possible because of the role of digital technologies like smartphones and communication platforms like social media that was already readily available at the time. It made it easier for students and their immediate network to promote the images of the newly re-colored slum through selfies and other image representations.

One of the early decisions that resulted in its success was the initial choice of location by the students of the project; the location was chosen precisely because Jodipan was one of the few visible slums from the main street of Malang City. Added bonus was also the existence of a bridge from which viewers can gaze onto the Village, and take a selfie. Which, according to the students will increase the visibility of the company's brand. It is important to note that this project was not the first CSR project run by the company, but is arguably the most successful as it increased the visibility of the company from a regional to the national context.

Due to the push of the students, the project was able to attract tourist and also media attention. The increasing numbers of tourist visiting the area resulted in economic benefit to the residents that ensured the sustainability of the project. This shows that a sustainable sanitation facility in lower income neighborhoods and slums can be obtained through an approach that is not straight forward. By giving economic benefit both at the residential and local government level, this simple project is able to solidify the benefits of a cleaner environment and change behavior.

At the same time the added tourist area is also beneficial to the local government so that there is incentive to improve the project (by adding a "glass bridge") and even replicate it in different areas of the city. Other local governments also take note and take lead in making their own version of color village in their respective area. This is a domino effect of the making of a new tourist-destination from an urban slum.

It is perhaps interesting to note though that the color village model is different with 'slum tourism' as mentioned by the literature from the Favela's of Brazil. Firstly, we must see it from how the media represents it, whether in mainstream media or in the social media of those who visit it. In many ways, the media presents the image of a "Color Village", separate from its urban poor identity, the main focus of the media is hence in its apparent "beauty" and its ability to serve as a tourist destination. Even if the residential comparative poverty, and its transformation from a "dirty" to a "clean and beautiful space" is mentioned, it is mainly to emphasize on the beauty, popularity and its ability to serve as a "instagrammable spot".

> *"The Rainbow Village has a visit worthy appeal. It is colorful and instagramable. Let's come visit!"* [34]

> *"In this Color Village there are many interesting spots that can be used to take selfies, such as The Umbrella Alley, The 3D Paintings, Colorful walls, Colorful stairs and Kaca Ngalam Bridge.*

What do you think? Is it not an instagrammable place for those of you who like to hunt pictures?"
[35]

We can argue that for the "color village" in the context of Malang, the predominant attraction is not poverty—rather it is the Aesthetic of the 'Color Village' themselves. The coming tourist find novelty in the Aesthetic expression and experience of going through the Color Village, rather than through the gazing at the residents of the Village. It is not poverty that attracts them, it is the colors, art and its ability for it to serve as background in their own creation of image.

6.2   The intersection between: the road to a new communal identity through 'art'

"There can be no failed, unsuccessful, unresolved, or boring works of collaborative art because all are equally essential to the task of strengthening the social bond.." Claire Bishop
[36]

Before we seek to investigate whether the Color Village project can be considered collaborative art—without an artistic driver, other than the idea of a rainbow, it is worth mentioning many times over that the project was driven by the students, who acted initially as a connector between the interest of the company, and the interest of the residents. The students are the intersection between[1]—and perhaps in this context they also become the driving artist of a new aesthetic. Later on, as the project gained more traction and the economic impact is visible even to the city, the local government also gained more interest to participate in the defining of the space, yet the framework has been set before by the intersection between the students, the company and the community.

In the initial conception of the space, the idea of "Color Village" itself is a novel and alien idea to the residents, and was proposed mainly by the student. The concept was chosen because

1.   The company willing to collaborate with the students for this project was a paint company, so that their main product is paint. If the collaborator was a company with a different product, the outcome of the CSR project would arguably be very different in nature.

2.   The students, being perhaps more knowledgeable and have more access to international news, already have an image and idea on how to "revitalize" a slum based on images they have seen of the Favela in Brazil.

Hence it is fair to say that the concept of "color village" is not a bottom up idea, it did not come from the desire of the residents. Rather it is an intersection between the interest of the company, and the apparent interest of the residents as seen from the perspective of the students. Yet, the project did not stop as being a power-play between the company, "rebranding" the slum and therefore overriding the will of the residents entirely—the environment was ripe for it to become something more altogether.

The location of Jodipan and Kesatrian has proven to be the most important strategic choice, it has created a Goldie lock environment in which an economic value for the residents is blatantly apparent since the beginning, so that the residents have ample interest to claim color village as their

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1   It is worth mentioning that it is common for students to initiate movements to "intervene" in communities. There is a long tradition of students (especially university students) being an "agent of change" in communities in Indonesia [40]. Most universities provide space for *Kuliah Kerja Nyata* (Real World Studies), where students can serve the community by using their respective field.

own. Without this economic impact, arguably residents' active participation would be impossible.

It is also important to note that the image of the area prior to the recoloring is that of a "*Preman* Slum*" or an area for vigilantes and outcasts, who were mainly looked down upon by society, yet it is perhaps precisely because of this bad image that the residents have more to gain from the rebranding of their community. Below is an excerpt from conversations with a local Malang resident who tells the story of the Color Village

> *"I am so impressed by the color village project, you must know that the area is known to be filled by Preman (vigilantes), thereweare no good people there. I used to be afraid to pass the area, more so to meet its residents. But now it is like a completely different place. We can visit, and even the residents are very friendly. How much things have changed!"*

Similar things were also said by many others. From the perspective of the local residents of the city, outside of the color village, the perception they have of the area has changed dramatically. Which perhaps also served as a catalyst for the residents to jump in to the project as they have a chance to redeem the image of their slum. In the words of the head of the communities,

> *"People say we are a slum, and that our place is dirty. But actually we are not. We want to show them that we are also clean and beautiful, more than they imagine."* Head of Jodipan

> *"We are known as being "bad people" for outsiders, but we can change.* We are given the opportunity to make an honest living, so we will make the best of it."* Head of Ksatrian.

Therefore, it is true that the idea of the color village is 'alien', and that it was in its conception a top down approach, brought into the community by the students. Yet this idea of the color village had served as a new framework of creation for the residents, in which they can input their own innovation and creativity. The Color Village Brand therefore becomes a new identity to which the community can attach itself to, it is a new idea that now connects the residents in ways it did not exist before.

Prior to this, the color of their houses was decided based solemnly on personal preferences, but now the community must work together to maintain the image of the color village, to serve its purpose for the community. They now work hand in hand to create art installations, paintings, all to give their own interpretation of the idea of Color Village—a new social bond is created attached to a new communal identity. This process itself can be seen as a participatory practice that rehumanizes – or at least de-alienates – a society rendered numb and fragmented by the repressive instrumentality of capitalism.

6.3   The Birth of 'Public Space' and the act of 'City Walking'

Slums are often forgotten and invisible areas of the city; they are tolerated (albeit not with security of ownership) but never truly integrated into the city. The opening of the Color Village, with its murals and its invitation to be 'explored', gave a signal for others to enter a space that was formerly more 'private' or 'communal'. Hence, the birth of the Color Village is arguably also the birth of a new Public Space.

(a) A Mural in at one of the houses   (b) An art instalation by a loacal resident

Figure 6. Murals and art installations are scattered everywhere within the Color Village, with residents taking pride in the respective art that they have on their doorstep.

The Color Village of Jodipan and Kesatrian in Malang are also special in a way that by being the slum that they are, to enter it, visitors are forced to walk. This is as much because of the narrow alleys typical of slums, as also because of the *conture* of the area in which it is located in, making the act of visiting an act of "city walking". Something that is rare in the urban Indonesian context dominated by cars and motorcycles. It can be argued then that by creating these circumstances, the Color Village compound forces the visitors to be *flâneurs*—to observe the street scape as they walk, which makes what was once invisible (the slums), visible.

More so, this need for "seamless" walk was also apparent to the residents and the government that quickly saw the need of a connecting pedestrian bridge between the two villages; which in turn resulted in a more comfortable and long walking experience for visitors. The two villages that have always been close in proximity, but difficult to cross too, suddenly was connected for the sake of a smoother touristic experience. Even the choice of the design of the bridge was taken based on the aesthetic necessity of the area, in order to increase its desirability for tourists to walk and explore the Color Village.

Residents also started creating *'Misbar'* or open air movie viewing during the weekends, and small zoo areas in order to increase the tourists dwelling time inside their area. In many ways, the Village has now become a Public Space, where an array of activities is possible. Which gives urban residents space to experience the commons—through slums.

6.4 Interrupting Colors

> *"Art should comfort the disturbed and disturb the comfortable." Banksy*

One of the questions imposed in this study is whether the Color Village is a quiet "pocket" of resistance. The pocket of resistance here borrows a metaphor coined by John Berger [37], and refers to a disruption of a bigger hegemony that enforces homogenization of the urban landscape. Is the Color Village of Jodipan and Kesatrian a smaller space of contestation associated with or brought about by visual culture? Is it a form where everyday spaces have been transformed into sites of interruption that pushes back against the homogenization of urban space and the flattening of cultural difference?

It is true that, aesthetically, the Color Village is spectacular and surprising—it is often considered over the top, and invites an imagination that is beyond slum and closer to wonderland. Many have also called it to be 'kitsch', or in bad taste; yet the flocking of tourist into the area suggest a desire for this Aesthetic, despite what modern designers think of it.

The birth of the Color Village as a public space also calls to attention whether the creation of public space out of a conventionally communal space is not in itself an act of disruption. As Shirley Jordan [23] wrote, "*Interruption repeatedly calls attention to the public/private dichotomy of city life (the public in the private and the private in the public) and strains towards the restoration of some degree of intimacy that seems achievable only by putting on hold the velocity and mobility of globalization.*" By the creation of this public space, it de-alienates urban residents of Malang to a corner of their city that was once invisible.

Scholars have long argued that practices that make the marginalized visible create subversive possibilities, and might act as a form of resistance to dominant narratives that position slums merely as "the other". The potential for walking practices that challenge hegemonies is constituted by a tension between subject position and the projects that subvert these positions [38]. But the creation of the color village blurred the lines of the slums; the space is no longer a slum—it is a spectacle, an experience, a destination. When in slum tourism, the main attraction is poverty—here, the main attraction are the colors. It is therefore perhaps reasonably arguable that in the specific case of color village—poverty is not commoditized.

It is also worth mentioning that gentrification projects usually takes place to revamp areas like slums to look like other urban area, but the fact that the color village looks kitsch and undesirable for "modern taste" means that perhaps precisely this aesthetic is an interruption. It shows that the Color Village wants to stand out and be seen, instead of being like other parts of the urban space.

This initiative even went beyond local and regional influence, attracting and capturing imagination at both national and international level. This is perhaps what Grant Kester [39] meant when he wrote that "art, with its redemptive, quasi-spiritual association, plays such a crucial role in urban gentrification. It provided a ready-made set of metaphors and images ("urban renaissance" and even the city itself as a "work of art") that transformed the bottom-line calculations of the real estate speculator into the ennobling aspirations of a Florentine prince." In the color village, the idea of the color village had served as a set of metaphors and images, that is now readily available for others to use – for whatever they desire. And perhaps through this project, it stimulated people to start questioning their assumptions of what Urban Slums can be, what they represent and, above all, to engage with them rather than to exclude them.

The project challenged the 'imaginary' boundaries constructed to separate these slum spaces from civil society. It empowered the slum community to build their own narrative, providing them with a voice, (re)distributing power. And, with it, it became an interrupting force to the flattening of our visual culture.

7   Conclusion

The Color Village in Malang, is an example of a successful creation of a new Tourist Destination from an urban slum. The birth of this tourist destination is arguably also the birth of a new public space, that turned areas that were once 'communal' and 'private', into a walkable city landscape. The spectacular, surprising and over the top aesthetic of the Color Village blurs the image of the

area from a former slum, into something that resembles wonderland.

Aesthetic experience is integral to the dynamic in the (re)distribution of power, and through ethnographic *flâneur* and analysis of photographic representation of the slums in tourist mediums this paper argues that the Visual Culture of the Rainbow Village can increase the visibility of slums and transform the way urban residents experience the commons—through slums. Furthermore, the existence of the visual aesthetic of the color village acts as an interrupting force to the flattening of our visual culture and pushes back against the homogenization of urban space.

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