

# Association for Corporate Support of the Arts –Creators’ Workshop– “Cultural Hub, Regions and Communities”

24th January 2017 | SHIBAURA HOUSE · 5F (3-15-4 Shibaura, Minato-ku, Tokyo)

## **REPORT**

■Participants : 19(Corporate members 4| General 12 | overseas participant 3)

### **Opening Remarks: Mr. Taneo Kato (Executive Director of Association for Corporate Support of the Arts)**



Welcome everyone. In recent years, our Association for Corporate Support of the Arts has proposed an idea, "creative archipelago" towards the question of what kind of legacy we can leave for the nation after 2020. "Creative archipelago", is a way of thinking to make the entire island (Japan itself) creative, thus all people become creative.

As a part of process, we have been holding variety of seminars and workshops. I was particularly inspired by the thoughts of Mr. Marco, that how we can build creative society in local regions even after such huge disasters. Mr. Marco, as an Indonesian leading expert of restoration activities through culture and arts after the earthquake in Indonesia, has visited us several times after our disaster in March 2011 to encourage us.

Also we have visited Kuala Lumpur and George Town last year, and we were very impressed with the activity of encouraging the Georgetown district of Penang Island presented by Mr. Duncan from Think City. We really thought that bringing Think City today to introduce a way of urban rejuvenation to you is very meaningful.

Today’s workshop also offers you the presentations from both Mr. Marco and Mr. Duncan, but of course, we would like to make a lot of discussions with everyone here so that our association can even learn from. And also we hope that this workshop will certainly cherish Japanese society and community by bringing in various ideas to everyone.

Thank you very much!

## **Presentation ① : Marco Kusumawijaya**



Konnichiwa! My name is Marco. Our organization company 'Rujak Center for Urban Studies' is printed on this Japanese Furoshiki. We are very inspired by Furoshiki, because we are also doing disaster management. You can use it for disaster, for example, you can use it for broken hands, or you can use it to fill in water, you can use it to hold big stones to break other stones to help other people, and of course, you can use it to cover your head to protect it from dusts. I will pass it around, but basically our organization is a center for urban studies. We do studies, we do not pretend to plan or intervene urban planning unless we find it fairly important to produce knowledge. As you can see in Furoshiki, there are two big roads crossing, and many trees are present. Our organization is operating based on this two-important vertical and horizontal axis.

So we have two important accesses, we emphasize on the process of change based on the production of knowledge.

I will introduce five initiatives that we have taken in terms of using arts in different parts of Indonesia. First one we started in 2014, was called Lout Pasi. We organized an exhibition, well we do not like to use this word as it sounds so colonial, but we open called artists, creative practitioners and workers, and we have received 132 applicants. Then we invited 30 artists and people in the creative environment of Eastern island of Indonesia for two weeks to do research and projects with people living on the islands. They lived different parts of islands, in fact, there were 4 different islands. For example, one person discovered 28 species of new sweet potatoes while he was there. It is not only about arts, but included food and way of living. This was not just art, but it was an art work that thought how to develop the food culture. Another work is called 'Eat Species'- a work to like fish and eat fish. There was another artist who composed a song, together with the children and farmers of the island. Some artists tried to rediscover the culture and tradition that are deeply rooted in the island through theatrical works and music.

The second initiative focuses on the 'knowledge'. It is an initiative to revitalize the history of cities and regions by using art and culture. The festival has been held in various cities in the suburbs of Jakarta, in various cities, but we have set up a place to publish the knowledge born in the festival, such as photos and posters of the event.

This is the initiative just started about 2 months ago. Jakarta is quite different between the south and the north. Culture and arts flourish more in south, so we are doing activities to try to bring arts to the north and transform the north side into an artistic place. North Jakarta consists of people almost in the working

class, urban poor, minority Chinese and so on. They have nothing to do with arts. Art is considered as something that the wealthy people are into, and the poor people are in the north. So arts and culture are concentrated in wealthy areas, in the South.

It is an initiative that we started together with German and Dutch artists two months ago. A performance stage was built on the river and it has been utilized as a place where everyone in the community can gather. What we built on the river is very important, as the river continues to be modernized by embankment and other people, the meaning that community people can manage rivers and maintain a good environment on their own. The existence of the stage displays such a meaning. I think art is a very important thing as art can induce new ideas.

In the project of how we can use the empty house and space, community people are getting used to think how they can renovate them by themselves rather than being told by someone. This is the initiative we are trying to achieve. By recruiting volunteers not only from people in the community but also from overseas, I think it is important that more views and ideas are expanded for new ideas and approaches. This was done last week (in the picture), I am doing artistic work with the artists in the temporary housing. This area, as you know, was broken down due to the earthquake with collapsed houses, and heartbroken community. In the south of this area, there is an Indonesian national heritage site. The government planned to tear all the area down except the heritage site. So our activity aims to activate the area once again so that various people with various backgrounds will not be kicked out. We use arts as a tool to cooperate with people and community.

This is an advertisement published by Rujak Center. We are recruiting volunteers. If we are involving communities, we need to familiarize each community's perspective, so we recruit volunteers to shorten the distance between us and community through public volunteers. Also, Rujak center currently has a fund system called ASA fund as well as Residency Program, and we are trying to combine these two and making a fellowship program. Anyone can apply, not just Indonesian, but everyone. The picture of the residency program is like this.

Thank you very much.

## Presentation ② : Mr. Duncan Cave



Hello. My name is Duncan Cave. I work with the organization called Think City based in Malaysia. But before I start telling you about my organization, please let me set some context of why we started.

We live in the age of cities. In 2007, for the first time, more people around the world lived in cities rather than rural areas. Ten years ago, more than 50% of the global population lived in urban areas for the first time. Looking at the past 60 years, the number of cities with more than 1 million people has increased by more than 400%.

This situation will continue as urbanization progresses. Malaysia is rapidly urbanized, and Malaysia has urbanized at a more rapid rate than most countries. This is a picture of Kuala Lumpur, but as the urbanization progresses, the tall buildings have been rapidly built. And the effect of this has been a rapidly changing urban landscape, which has removed the traditional contextual fabric of the city and displaced many traditional communities.

In the past like 50-100 years ago, the built infrastructure encouraged human interaction, creating a vibrant social and economic environment. In the past we were very connected with our city. Designing for vast impersonal spaces discourages human interaction and breaks the connection with the city. As our cities become more and more the same, like you can see all American brands coming in such as MacDonald's, Starbucks, KFC and IKEA, we lose connection with our identity and our uniqueness. That lack of connection leads to indifference and lack of civic mindedness. For instance, there are frequent violations of manners, such as stopping the car behind the car, doodling on the wall, and social illness.

Think City is an organization focused on community based urban regeneration.

We were formed in George Town, Penang, Malaysia in 2009. We are fully owned by Khazanah Nasional berhad, our national investment arm. We are a hybrid organization, we are not-for-profit, non-political and in many ways act like an NGO. We have now 4 offices in KL, George Town, Butterworth and Johor Bahru.

Think City was created to kick start the urban regeneration of George Town following its inscription as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2008.

George Town was recognized as a UNESCO site due to its high number of historic buildings and its preserved cultural traditions. For around 40 years there had been little investment in George Town, and much of the city was in decay.

We wanted to find a way to connect people once again with what was unique about their city and rekindle a love for their home

Think City created a small grants programme, which was at first distributed to owners of historic buildings that wished to refurbish them. The aim was to act as a catalyst – when one or two buildings on a street are renovated it can inspire other building owners to follow. It shows a commercial sense to rebuild the building and in fact it can earn money. It inspires other people to use the building for a new purpose and other buildings can make the community more important.

Also we place a strong emphasis on restoring buildings that are culturally significant, such as temples and mosques. This is a park in the center of Georgetown, but Georgetown did not have enough clean public spaces. If you can see the picture before, you will understand, but there was hardly any green. We rebuilt it as a place for people to gather together with the community and local governments. It is now a park where events are also possible. You can restore art to cities, and choosing sites that can help build a community

The idea behind using arts and culture is to reconnect people with their city.

To create livable cities that city must have a soul – each city has something unique about it.

Cities need to capitalize on their arts and culture – this can reconnect people to what is unique about their city

Arts can be used for different scales of intervention.

At the micro level, Arts have been successful at transforming an old printing works in Kuala Lumpur into a vibrant hub featuring co-working space, food and beverage outlets, and event spaces. Originally this was a printing company, but considering how to activate various kinds of space depending on art, we transformed all the space into an event space for co-working space, art presentation etc..

At a slightly larger scale We have used arts to help rejuvenate a former market square that was pedestrianized by city council. Building a public space is not enough – the space needs to be activated to be turned into a PLACE. And we have used arts to help We helped support a Fringe Festival in a post-industrial town – surprising the locals that there was so much talent, and raising a sense of pride for their home.

There is also a small back lane (back alley) as one of the characteristics of the city in Malaysia, but there is garbage and motorcycles are stopped, making it a tough dead space. It was very wasteful of space. So in order to restore the back lane again using art, we made a stage in Johor Bahru. It is a stage where you can perform with real music concerts.

Arts on the move is a series of performance art events held inside the metro train station – surprising people by having arts in an unexpected venue, and lightening their commute home. This is the old market square of Kuala Lumpur, the road is causing a traffic jam. The City Council (municipality?) Designed a sidewalk, but nothing happens by merely designing a sidewalk so we decided to use space for various events. Art, performance, market for people to sell such as people gather. By inviting local artists, external artists, such as regional fringe festivals, art work will lead to the discovery that there are people with such talents among their communities.

We also support a number of book publications that are aimed at reconnecting people with their city and community. Georgetown supports local writers and supports publishing books. There is a great deal of talent at the grass roots level in Malaysia. Yet there is a lack of investment from corporations. When we do get investment, we can produce world class events that can do huge amounts to transform our cities.

Think City also works in partnership with international organizations that share our ethos. Partnerships with organizations such as the Getty Conservation Institute based in Los Angeles or the Architectural Association of London have helped bring world class knowledge to Malaysia through classes, workshops, seminars and publications.

For us, linking local artists with domestic and foreign organizations is very important for obtaining a variety of ideas. Thank you very much.

## Theme : “Cultural Hub, Regions and Communities”

### Background :

A town in a rural area once crowded with merchants. Facing the sea, the current main industries are fishery, shipbuilding and manufacturing industries. However, this town is facing problems with decreasing population about 30,000 people and the aging rate is 40% (40% of residents are elderly). The area where people live is becoming a shuttered town, and the local government has started planning a strategy to attract corporations to revitalize the town. On the other hand, in areas where cultural assets such as old Shoya (village headman) streets and temples have continued to survive since the Edo era (16<sup>th</sup> century), the local government focuses on the tourist industry such as hiring elderly people who are familiar with the state of the old town as guides, some of which have gained popularity from tourists. There are some cafes and traditional artifact shops.

### Exercise :

In your group, you can use a vacant house in one of the Shoya Street as a cultural facility. The local government agreed to cover only the cost of facility maintenance. So let's think about the best way to use this house with a program that everyone with various ages and backgrounds can gather and enjoy, which would potentially lead to build a creative town and community. Make full use of the expertise of your group members and local resources.

### Group Work :

1. Introduction to each other (Your name, positions/company, your expertise and your interests)

2. Discussion and Planning

< Tips for group work >

- Concept, objectives and goal
- Examples and cases that you can look into (nationally and internationally), and their issues
- What kind of program would it be effective?
- Think about the way to collaborate with artists, managers, corporations, local communities, and local government
- What would it be necessary to secure the continuity of program (such as budget and manpower)?  
And what would be the issues/problems to do so? \_\_\_\_\_



### 3. Developing the strategies / Summarization

#### PRESENTATION BY EACH GROUP

##### GROUP A



Our important keyword is "mix-use". Our discussion began as follows. The question began from how we can promote this place and make it bigger. As a population of this village is decreasing, how and what can we make something there? And we have discussed about money, time and creating people's activities.

As our proposal, the first stage is to build a cultural facility that integrates with cultural programs. In such, we will make the facility that university students can use for camping and training. This allows us to utilize university students who are interested in this area as man power and labor force to contribute to the community. They can try and practice their knowledge in the area and place. For example, architectural students can learn traditional architectural and building techniques and skills. Students can have a connection with the community by spending there.

Another proposal is an artist-in-residency program. We will prepare two facilities. One is for commercial use that people can dry fishes and sell fishes at cultural facilities. As an option, university students can also create their own programs. With students spending more time in the community, Japanese university students can get close to many companies and facilities.

We would like to call people from the outside to revitalize as well. We want outside people to come to work in dried fish factories, which creates more employment opportunities as well as makes their products as a main local product which tourists would buy.

It is not necessary to label old people as the elderly, but as a center of the community, we must respect them as ordinary older people. People in quite different fields, for example, baseball players often go to the rural areas for their training when they are off, can also take advantage of this facility. It is not only to call artists to create works, but also anyone who has idea to do whatever they think contributes to the local revitalization. This would certainly lead to our 'mix-use' proposal.

## **GROUP B**

This town is a depopulated town with many typical elderly people. As people steadily stepped out, we thought that it is important not to restrain them from the town but to enhance the appeal of the town itself first so that people are coming from outside.

What should we do to enhance charm of the town?  
Looking at a current situation, even if an outsider arrives and does an art event, the event might be just one-off or might run a several times if lucky, but nothing in the town would change at all after that. That is not because local people in the town do not want to do such things by themselves or they cannot be bothered to do such things. They cannot afford to do things like that, or cannot spend such money or time to these kinds of things



as their lives are already full. But you might think local people show their attitudes that they don't mind if outside people want to do art projects or events. Even if people from different areas come to the town and say they want to do such things, local people are not motivated.

In order to make art projects sustainable, we will continue doing such activities, during the process we are expecting to create new things. But we do not know in advance how it will be turned out, we have no choice but to think about it after the course.

Even when we think about what to do for this town, we need to start with the idea that art is being only a first transient. Then what can we do? The attractiveness of local region is the attractiveness of the place, town and city as well as people living there. In order to draw out the attractiveness of people, the thing that outsiders should do in the area like Japan, where there are many elderly people living, is to listen to the story of grandfathers and grandmothers such as unspoken histories brought by those people and their most memorable or shining stories in their lives. Among those stories, we thought that we could find special skills and knowledge that these elderly people possess. We can create an environment where children, grandchildren, or grand-grandchildren can hear these stories from elders. By providing this opportunity, we can break the boundaries between generations, so that memories of the area, memories of the town, and their skills and knowledge can be seen again by everyone that the existence of elders are well contributed. Many old people think they are useless because they are the existence of the past. What we want to do is to use this Shoya's vacant house as a place where each person who is there can be attractive as an artist by providing the story-telling opportunities, and to make such a place where such things are happening on a daily basis. By the existence of artists, each person there is respected and recognized as an attractive person in the area/town. We will make such a place. This is probably very important.

However, in fact with a small world of about 30,000 people, there are many kinds of human relationships. Like, that person used to do such such, so now we do not want to have anything to do with that person. In order to overcome those kinds of traits, and to proceed our plan of 'everyone is an artist', we need to bring someone like a curator from outside of the town, and let him or her draw out various appeals and attractiveness of people in this town, rather than letting him or her do whatever he or she wants to do. In this case, we need a good manpower who can coordinate such a project.

In conclusion, we want to make this Shoya house into a place to display the memories of the town and people, to allow interactions to be born between generations, and to bring a curator who can provide these which we mentioned above. It is a good start to use art as a first step, but it is not good to think how to revitalize while doing art projects and events. Rather we should turn each local resident into an artist, that is what we can use this Shoya house for.

### **GROUP C**

Art is no just artist coming in, more of nurturing culture. So we talked about like, what is the current need of community? How do you engage with people in the whole village? What are the stories of the place? What are the unique stories coming out of the place? Regarding the usage of the space, what is there to bring people back in the area to open the business? Because the village is famous with fishery, we could find retired shipbuilders or fishermen to tell the stories to children, starting with showing their houses,

going around. Each week, we do a tour to one house leads the tour to tell the story, then go to second, and third house. Every week happens led by family members, so it becomes very intimate and small. Another thing is to make your own tradition crafts, so what is the traditional craft in the area? Can you use that to educate children? Also can you make traditional dance movement into exercise? So like how do you create a new form of exercise where all can participate? For instance, like American Line Dance where young and old can together do. Someone put bookstore, good. Because bookstore is universal, young and old. Performing arts is very small component. And I love the idea of cooking studio because everybody loves to eat. What is the traditional dishes of the area? Can older people start having a cooking demonstration? And teaching new how to cook because some of us don't know how to cook.



This space is not an art space, but we are thinking multi-use space, sometimes for arts, sometimes for culture and sometimes for activities. We have story-telling by elders to school children, how to get old to be young. Contest for the youth to come up with the performance. I was told this place is rich in poultry. So how local poultry merge with new art expression. So documentary films show the area. The town has cultural heritage site, so elders can explain it to children, and we can create a space for children to communicate with elders.

One of the most important things is all should be used to build the connection to the community. And once you have all these, you start creating skill-set-need, so we need program manager, curator who thinks of ideas and sees how these fit into a whole year. Then we need someone to implement all to a program. You need stage manager, production manager and tour guide. So this is new economy. What we need is to advertise for people who have left this town to come back to take up these positions and come back and teach people in this area. So we get people from outside to teach and people inside to do self-sustain.

In the reverse version of snack bars where young girls usually listen to the elderly's story, but on the contrary elderly listens to the story of young people and communicates. In promoting this project, we will use the concept to create a town that you want to live for 10 years longer.

Whole this from first three years of program, maybe 60-70% funding from corporations, but whole strategy is by year 5 to 8, you reverse it. So 60% for self and 40% funded by corporation. From day 1, you start to think about how to be self-sustainable.

## **Guest Comment**

### **Marco**

I think I have strong impression from three presentations of urban revitalization you wanted to do though this exercise is really a process of rediscovery. Mr. Matsui said old people is a starting point, not something to end because if you started with rediscovery, you should actually start with old people as they know a lot, history of the place. I think it is very great that this group explained the place not just architectural heritage, but living culture with people with stories.

The process of rediscovery you mentioned and extreme kinds of idea of 'mix-use', I want to emphasize, is really a same thing. It means that mix-use is an attitude, you can grow mix-use together with community.

My point is that first I love to congratulate you with so many ideas that have come out. When you bring all ideas to community, they will generate even more ideas than what you have produces. With that attitude, idea of rediscovery, idea of programming, mix-use should be seen as something growing the process after you started with old people or old people with young people. You have to believe community has more ideas. Every time I go to community as an artist or architect, artistic producers, I also come up idea, but more learn about thing is now go to community without idea. Because I know how much they have idea.

### **Duncan**

It is good to see all people starting to connect with community again. The difficulty for planning a workshop like this is you have no information. Trying to make up a plan with a very little and simple paragraph is almost impossible. That is the whole point. You cannot plan this kind of thing without actually going to the site and talking to the community, finding what it is that they need, what is the difficulty, what is missing out?

I think you all talk about mix-use of building, What the final use is going to be would depend on the time and occasion. But mix-use means more flexible. Because you can go in with 5 or 7 or 10 ideas to use up the space, and only a few might be going to work. But someone else is coming to say 'I have this idea such such', then keep it flexible is important.

You talk about sustainability, but none of you have mentioned about that. I think it is necessary to be addressed. You may have a generous funder that prepared to pay for a certain amount of period, but things change. The company may go busted, or they might want to invest on something else. So you need, from the day 1, to think how to make it financially sustainable. So you need to think of some kind of business to pay rent, or pay other costs. But I think it is very vital part that none of you addressed properly. It is on-ground work, not sitting on the table talking about it, you need to go to the site. That is important.

## **Q&A**

### **- You are a kind of entrepreneur, so what is art for you?**

#### **Duncan**

From Think City's point of view, we see art as a tool, I know it sounds horrible, but that is how we see it. We are making our city livable. If your own people want to enjoy living the city, art and culture are a crucial part of that. And we focus on art and culture, we could also focus on sporting but we don't think sporting has much impact as much as arts and culture. What type of art? It doesn't matter as long as it works.

### **- What is your criteria of what works?**

#### **Duncan**

So for example of street performance in George Town, it becomes too successful that tourists line up to take photos with performers. Whether it is successful or not, in that case, we check how local feels about it. If you make all for local, you don't go for tourists. Tourists are like an ice on a cake.

### **- You are architect, so how do you use arts?**

#### **Marco**

My appreciation to arts started with me as an urbanist, not as an architect. Urbanist means someone who studies cities, interested in the knowledge of cities. I was involved in arts because I was a first architect to chair Jakarta Arts Council for 3 and half years. That is why I was involved in arts in more production side rather than because I am an artist. But the thing I learned was that artists or arts is also a process of producing knowledge, especially in contemporary art when you produce the work, you do a lot of research. So actually producing lot of knowledge. That is how I am interested in working in arts together with urban knowledge.

Secondly, their ability to communicate with people, to touch the hearts of people. Being a good communicator, I also learned that artists are developing ways to engage with people. Together with artists, we did participatory planning process in village, we don't call participatory at all, we rather call it festival of future, and we use art and growing for people to imagine future. First question is 'can you draw your imagining future of village ten years from now?'. Artists work with them helping realizing that. So arts are used as a communication strategy.