

Hybrid Architecture and Contested Space of Colonial Interaction: Colonial Exhibitions at Pasar Gambir of Batavia and Jaarmarkt of Surabaya

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Abstract In the early of twentieth century, there was a development of technology and an expansion and cultural domination of the middle class that introduced the Dutch East Indies to modernity. Although in reality a clear dichotomy between the colonizer and the colonized was still present, there were some events that allowed local middle class to practice western culture. This phenomenon was clearly shown in the way local people mimic Dutch's lifestyles, from hybrid architectural styles and the idea of modern lifestyles spread out that basically showed a mix of both Western and local cultures. A night fair at Pasar Gambir was held by the Batavia City Government to display modern products and technology while the Surabaya government organized a similar fair of Jaarmarkt Surabaya that attracted diverse crowd ranging from the Europeans and local middle-class. Those colonial exhibitions became a rare event where both the colonizer and the colonized practiced modernity. During these period, the organizer exposed hybrid architecture adopting both European and Indies architectural elements. The night fair offered a temporary 'negotiating moment' for both the colonized and the colonizer to mingle and enjoy each other's company by creating a utopian-neutral ground and using leisure as its façade. This moment in history offered not only the way local people tried to localize the idea modernity but also a lesson of social and cultural integration. In this research, we discuss the colonial fair of Pasar Gambir in Batavia and Jaarmarkt in Surabaya that became a contested space for interaction between the Dutch and Indies people through the use of hybrid architecture.

Keywords: Pasar Gambir Batavia, Jaarmarkt Surabaya, colonial exhibition, hybrid architecture, contested space

1. Introduction

In the early of twentieth century, there was not only a fast development of technology and multi-cultural influence in the Netherland Indies that introduced colonial society to modernity but also local events that reflected how people adapted to the idea of modernity. As modern lifestyle and technology being exposed to the locals, they started adopting their colonial counterparts as a response toward modernity. Locals have been seen to model Western lifestyle due to the frequent advertisement of modern living shown in the medias, much that it became part of daily lives in the Indies [1]. Despite the contrasting difference between the colonizer and the colonized, there were some events that allowed local middle class to practice Western culture. One of the important events was at colonial exhibitions held in major city in Java, such as Pasar Gambir of Batavia, Jaarmarkt in Surabaya and Jaarbeurs in Bandung. The buildings produced exclusively for these colonial exhibitions were innovative in a sense they presented a new building style integrated both Western and Indies architecture in its design.

These temporary exhibitions attracted diverse crowd ranging from the Europeans, Chinese, and local middle-class and became a rare moment where both colonizer and colonized practiced modernity. During the flourish periods of colonial exhibitions in the Indies, roughly between 1910s-1930s, the organizer presented hybrid architecture that adopted both European and Indies architectural elements and somehow illustrated how the two contrasting cultures could live together in harmony. The colonial



exhibitions offered a temporary ‘negotiating moment’ for both the colonized and the colonizer to accept and enjoy each other’s company by creating a utopian-neutral ground and using leisure and modern products as its façade.

Before the discovery of hybrid architecture, most of the buildings styles in Netherland Indies adopted the European style. However, their European-mannered architecture style was only suitable for the climate in Europe and did not match the tropical climate in the Indies. This issue led architects of the Netherland Indies to figure out what Indies style architecture might be. The discussion was prominent among the Netherland Indies architects, such as Thomas Karsten, Wolff Schoemaker, and Henri Maclaine Pont who were some Dutch architects and planners who involved in the search of suitable architecture for the Indies at the time [2]. Some analysis conducted upon the Javanese architecture had led them to discover how local culture became the element that embodied the building and how it became the main characteristic of Indies architecture. It was not long after the realization of richness of Indies architecture that drove Dutch architects and planners to create modern innovations that combined both European and Indies styles. The mixture between both contrasting cultures had presented as a new style that expressed cultural hybridization that they believed to be the birth of the new and appropriate Indies style. The idea of hybrid architecture, as a combination of both local and Western architectural principles was spread throughout the colony that considered suitable for the tropical climate and adoption of modern architectural style. It was in the temporary colonial exhibitions buildings, such as in Pasar Gambir of Batavia and Jaarmarkt of Surabaya that offered illustration how architecture played a great role in mediating modernity to local people and even helped to create a contested space for colonial interaction.

This paper examines primarily architecture during colonial Indonesia or the Netherlands Indies, because the practice of architecture during this time also showed an adaptation to local condition. It is in the effort to understand that the hybrid architecture present during this period was loaded with cultural, historical, and local context that this paper will be settled. This paper proposes to contribute to the variety of approaches of sustainability, especially as part of architectural education and practice through history. As the case studies were two colonial exhibitions held during the Dutch colonial era in the Netherlands Indies because hybrid architectures in those two temporal exhibitions presented some innovations and relations to tropical architecture.

This paper attempts to analyze how hybrid architecture mediated changes in the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized and the colonial exhibitions created a contested space for unusual colonial interaction. The duality in architecture – the strict segregation between the colonizer and the colonized culture – was challenged by ephemeral exhibitions during the Dutch colonial period when the idea of modern lifestyle started to develop in the colony.

2. Methods

The research conducted for this research was based on qualitative methods. Primary data were obtained from collection of colonial studies and literature reviews. Qualitative methods, such as interviews, document, archive reviews and survey of colonial exhibitions and architecture were used in order to uncover motivations and development of hybrid architecture during the Dutch colonial period in the Netherlands Indies. First, literature from books, journals and local archives for the colonial exhibitions were collected to gain information for the purpose of holding colonial exhibitions and the strategy of using local architecture. The focus of the analyses was the Pasar Gambir colonial exhibition in Batavia and Jaarmarkt in Surabaya. These chains of events then led us to the findings of colonial exhibition as a contested space with the organizer of the exhibition made use of hybrid architecture. The hybridity that we found in colonial exhibition acted as proof on how the Dutch Indies struggled to find ways to design a building that was suitable for tropical climate but also attracted the local people. Then, analyses of colonial exhibitions were carried to determine the significance of the use of hybrid architecture and how the exhibition became a contested space that used local images as a way of spreading the idea of modernity.

3. Discussion

3.1 Colonial Exhibition of Pasar Gambir in Batavia

During the 1920s-1930s the annual Pasar Gambir fair was held in Koningsplein Batavia or nowadays Lapangan Merdeka, Jakarta. The Chairman of the Pasar Gambir Committee Meyroos proudly mentioned what the popularity of Pasar Gambir meant for the Dutch colony and how the colonial exhibition corresponded with two elements of modernity, light and leisure. Pavilions at Pasar Gambir were ephemeral in which each year came with new architectural forms yet often used Indies vernacular architecture as references. J.H. Antonisse, the architect of Pasar Gambir, brought together local and Western architectural forms that in the end invented hybrid architecture that had never presented before. Pasar Gambir was not only successfully delivered the tradition of the nineteenth century world fairs in the West but also gave way to hybrid architecture that dealt with locality to a greater extent.



Figure 1. The 1927 Pasar Gambir

The 1927 Pasar Gambir adopted Joglo-house-style for the roofs. The design seemed simple and the pyramid shaped roof was accentuated at the end of every side with greater pitch roof. The architectural composition followed three divisions of traditional houses and was purposely made symmetrical. The lower part of the pavilions consisted of square columns that extended to the body part. Due to the elimination of solid base and pavilions, Pasar Gambir had spacious and open areas and the roofs dominated the architectural compositions. The area within one building seemed broader than the vertical oriented pavilion and the connector between two pavilions looked more horizontal compared to last years' layout. The roof was made from palm leaves.

Other type of pavilions was set lower yet looked more elaborated. The roofs of this second type had three levels with moderate and taper angles and ended with a long antenna. The body was solid but left with some openings. The walls made good ventilations as well as fantastic decorations.

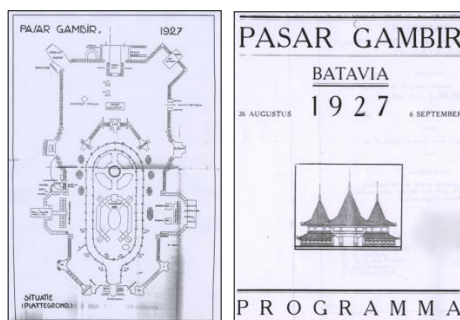


Figure 2. Program and Plan of the 1927 Pasar Gambir. Programma Van Den Pasar Gambir 1926.

The image from the 1927 Pasar Gambir's program showed the symmetrical arrangement of the pavilions. The main entrance was the tallest building, stood aside twin buildings. The middle lower part was open that show the main gate. The First Aid Post was located at the west side of the fair close to the street and a bicycle park was located on the southeast area. *Droog Aquarium* Pavilion was on the north area showing J.H. Soumokil collection from his underwater findings in Molucca. The agriculture and livestock department looked very open to the visitors, showing the agriculture and the horticulture products and some demonstration. The native industry pavilion was bigger than the previous year and a small exhibition hall was added to the pavilion.



Figure 3. The bird eye view of the 1927 Pasar Gambir.

Slightly different from previous years, the 1927 Pasar Gambir had more varieties. Besides the plain rectangular plan, some buildings had rotated rectangular orientation and cross plan. The exit area was located at the center of north side, besides the theater hall. The main restaurant and the water fountain were at the central axis not far from the dance floor and the main restaurant. It became a bit different compare to the last year where more linear structures made the dance floor more open to public.

3.1.1 Colonial Exhibition of Jaarmarkt in Surabaya

The term Jaarmarkt was derived from the Netherland's word *Jaar* from year and *Markt* from market. It was an annual fair conducted by the Netherland Indies to showcase local and imported goods as well as using entertainment as leisure for marketing purpose. J.E Jasper held the first fair in 21 May in 1905 with the financial help from the government [3]. A Dutch architect Cosman Citroen was assigned to design the buildings of *Jaarmarkt*. Citroen was involved with various committees and councils [4] including a member of the board of the *Soerabajasche Jaarmarktvereniging* (Surabaya Annual Fair Association) from 1923 onwards and he was also asked to design a building complex for the ninth Annual Fair in 1923 and to continue the new Surabaya Town Hall in Ketabang. He held the position of president of the Vereeniging "*het Oudheidkundig Museum*" (Archaeological Museum Association) in Surabaya for some years [5]. Citroen's projects and experiences showed that he was involved in various projects and aware of both modern and local architectures. In addition, Citroen was one of Dutch architects practicing in the Indies who got honorary mention at the Paris International Exhibition with the theme of International Exhibition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts held between 28 April and October 1925. Citroen's works were showcased for the first time for modern decorative arts together with J.H. Antonisse and B.J.K. Cramer, two Dutch architects involved in the design of Pasar Gambir as well as Thomas Karsten and PAJ Moojen who supported modern architecture and local adaptation in buildings.

Citroen was known as an architect who considered tropical climate of the Indies in his design. His design for Lawang Sewu in Semarang for instance used stacking roof or double gable system that allowed fresh air to come in and supported cross ventilation and natural light in the building.

In 1925, Citroen produced a general layout for Jaarmarkt where buildings were arranged almost symmetrically with the main entrance was located alongside the main artery in order to capture the crowd's attention. The side entrances were placed on the axis of northern and southern part of the front elevations, which were used for service access.

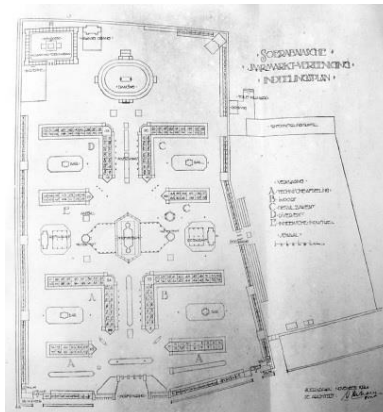


Figure 4. General lay-out of the Jaarmarkt of 1925

In line with the temporality of the event of Jaarmarkt, Citroen made his design to be non-permanent in order to decrease the budget. At the time Surabaya was known as *Kota Pelabuhan* or main trading harbor in Netherland Indies, and Citroen imbued the idea of trading harbor into his 1930 Jaarmarkt design. The building appearances were composed with pylons that similarly resembled the prow of a ship and built using wood as its main material. Citroen used teak wood as the main material for composing the main and side entrance, the music tents, and the building on the corner of the site were an expression of Citroen's talent in wood construction [6].

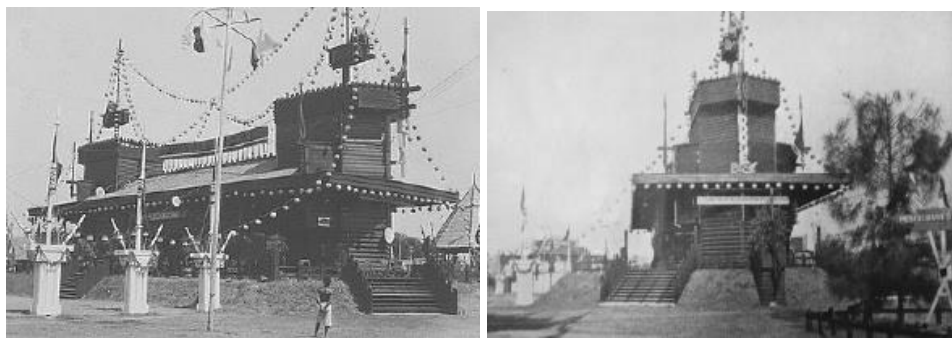


Figure 5. 1930 Jaarmarkt design

Despite Citroen's effort to create a design that resembled the deck of a ship, the building also showed a similar feature as that of a fort depicted through its symmetrical rectangle form. Since the event was only eligible for those who could afford the entrance fee, Jaarmarkt designed to be surrounded by these wood structures, which created some sort of an enclave that distinguished the fair from the rest of the city. The method of enveloping a space was similar to what we can find in a fort without the trench that surrounded it. However, the design was able to maintain its hybridity in a sense that the European styled *fort* was balanced by the Indies styled slanted roof for the lower level in which it provided an access for the rain to flow through.

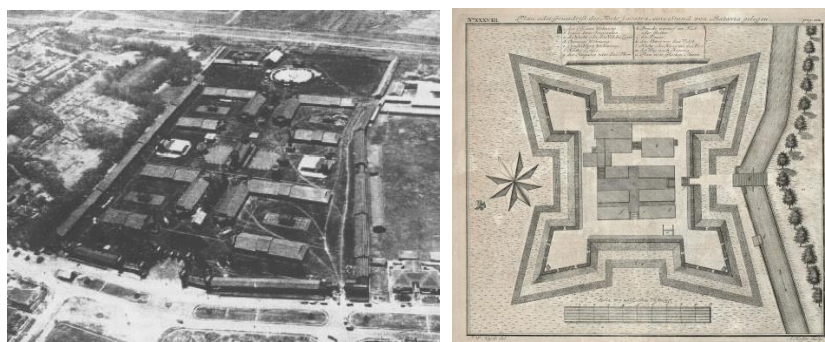


Figure 6. Jaarmarkt layout (1925) in bird-eye view in comparison with a VOC Fort in North Batavia

Jaarmarkt attraction was related to the events that were being offered to the visitors. The fair exhibited many varieties of entertainments ranging from local entertainment such as *Wayang*, *Ludruk*, *Reog*, *Gandroeng*, *Barong*, *Keroncong*, *Paseran* to European entertainments such as fireworks, dance halls, and musics [3]. However, in Jaarmarkt there was also an exhibition called *Kampung Pertukangan*, which were built to showcase the craftsmanship of Javanese and Madura people as well as important products, such as beautiful patterned cloth Batik. The design of *Kampung Pertukangan* adopted the Minangkabau style of *Rumah Gadang* for the central part with the roof pointed upward and did not take Javanese architecture as its main reference.

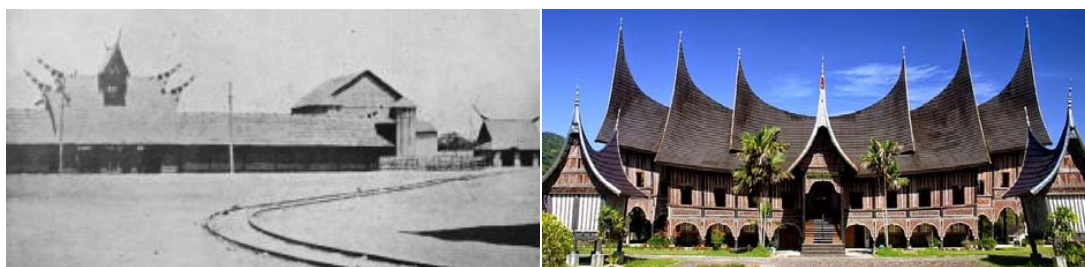


Figure 7. Comparison between *Kampung Pertukangan* exhibition building and Minangkabau style *Rumah Gadang*

3.2 Contested Space

These colonial exhibitions provided a *stage* for their visitors to practice modernity but also in a sense of celebrating the colonial achievements on regulating the land and illustrated the future for the colonised natives [7]. As modernity emerged along with the exposure toward Western lifestyle, local people had shown to be more interested in lifestyle (compared to achieving their own independence). The sense of wanting to be a part of the modernity had influenced local people to believe that their identity was related to their culture and they were aware of modern culture. The term *cultural citizenship* is the idea of how the position of ethnic minorities identified to achieve liberation [8]. The occurrence of *cultural citizenship* occurred when the colonized started embracing the modern culture of the colonizer that they saw in some colonial events like colonial exhibitions. The idea of being a part of modern culture influenced local people to modify their lifestyle that was previously related to local traditions to be adapted to modern conditions. Local people started embracing modern lifestyle and accepted the idea of hybrid architecture or the appearance of *dandies* that acted as fashion ambassador whom they modeled after their colonial counterparts. They tended to seek refuge among the crowd but at the same time became a part of the crowd in the event like Pasar Gambir and Jaarmarkt that celebrated modernity. The sense of duality that hybrid architecture or the dandies had – between local and modern culture – could only be practiced in colonial exhibitions as a modern but temporary event. Similar phenomenon also occurred, for instance, in the nineteenth century Paris where there was the presences of *flaneur* who drifts amongst the crowd yet also alienated themselves because of their individuality [9].

The appearance of the ‘modernized local fair’ at Surabaya’s Jaarmarkt indicated the importance of both local fairs as places for interaction between the Dutch and middle-class Indies in the Dutch late-colonial era. As public spaces, colonial fairs became a stage for the negotiation of economic, social and cultural relations that could not be directly spoken or easily created because of the strict segregation in colonial lives. The hybrid character of the architecture appeared, although in different degree.

4. Conclusion

Hybrid architecture that was used for colonial exhibitions showed innovations in architecture that combined both Western and Indies architectural styles. The use of hybrid architecture can be a lesson in using local consideration in creating sustainable response toward tropical climate. Colonial exhibitions also acted as a contested place where the idea of the hybridity also happened in interactions among visitors and became the identity of the space despite the contrasting difference of colonial lives. From this knowledge of the past, diversity and temporality can be a point of architectural adaptation to changes in society. Although in reality a clear dichotomy between the colonizer and the colonized was still present, there were some events that allowed local middle class to practice western culture. This phenomenon was clearly shown in the way local people mimic Dutch's lifestyles, from hybrid architectural styles and modern lifestyles that basically showed a mix of both Western and local cultures. Pasar Gambir and Jaarmarkt Surabaya not only displayed modern products and technology but also attracted diverse crowd and created a rare event where both the colonizer and the colonized practiced modernity. The night fair offered a temporary 'negotiating moment' for both the colonized and the colonizer and became a contested space for interaction between the Dutch and Indies people through the use of hybrid architecture.

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