

THE NEW INDONESIAN HOUSE

ROBERT POWELL

photographs by ALBERT LIM KS



TUTTLE



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Front endpaper The sun rises over misty valleys below Dago House No. 1 in Bandung (page 104).

Back endpaper Sunset over the K House (page 68).

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Page 2 The transparent entrance lobby of the Ampera House (page 156).

Pages 4–5 Beneath the curved roof form of the Kayu Aga House (page 120), transparent “boxes” house the living area and kitchen/dining area.

Pages 6–7 A steel mesh “veil” overlays the concrete-framed Joelianto Residence (page 34).

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the new indonesian house

The first decade of the twenty-first century saw a remarkable surge in the quality of residential architecture in Indonesia. The architects who are at the forefront of this phenomenon are the product of a “revolution” that occurred in the late 1980s when a group of undergraduates at the University of Indonesia came together to produce “Architrave,” the internal journal put together by students from the department of architecture. Irianto Purnomo Hadi, Yori Antar, Sonny Sutanto, Achmad Noerzaman, Boy Bhirawa, Ranuwijaya and Syahrul Partawijaya upgraded what had previously been a basic publication of stenciled prints to a magazine featuring current architectural issues, and produced four editions that were circulated to other campuses.

Without realizing it, they put in motion a significant shift in Indonesian architecture, because the magazine paved the way for the formation, in 1989, of *Arsitek Muda Indonesia* (AMI) or Forum of Young Indonesian Architects, as students from other campuses eagerly followed up the topics. Irianto Purnomo Hadi now looks back on those days and reflects that “It was history in the making. It feels strange for we were just a bunch of unpretentious kids, but with a lot of energy, enthusiasm and ambition.”¹

Two decades have passed and members of AMI now form a nexus at the core of the profession in Indonesia. Most of the houses in this book are by members of the group who, in parallel with their contemporaries in Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines, have, to quote Philip Goad, “moved beyond the attractive formal signs of so-called regional architecture, to a re-thinking of the fundamental issues of space, material practice, tropicality, sustainability, urbanity and place—in essence a return to Ignasi de Sola Morales’s ‘ground zero’ for architecture, a sort of phenomenological and existential base for the production of architecture....”²

INTRODUCTION

IN THE LAST TWO DECADES OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY, ARCHITECTURAL DISCOURSE IN MANY ASIAN COUNTRIES THAT WERE COLONIZED BY EUROPEAN POWERS REVOLVED AROUND THE NOTIONS OF “IDENTITY”³ AND “CRITICAL REGIONALISM.”⁴ IN 1985, DR SUHA ÖZKAN, AT THAT TIME DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE AGA KHAN AWARD FOR ARCHITECTURE (AKAA), COMMISSIONED ME TO EDIT THE PROCEEDINGS OF A SEMINAR HELD IN KUALA LUMPUR ON THE SUBJECT OF “ARCHITECTURE AND IDENTITY.” THIS

SEMINAR, THE FIRST IN A SERIES TITLED “EXPLORING ARCHITECTURE IN ISLAMIC CULTURES,” WAS ORGANIZED BY THE AKAA AND THE UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MALAYSIA. ROBI SULARTO SASTROWARDOYO, THE FORMER HEAD OF THE ARCHITECTURE DEPARTMENT AT UDAYANA UNIVERSITY IN BALI AND A FOUNDING PARTNER OF ATELIER ENAM, DELIVERED ONE OF THE KEYNOTE PAPERS ON THE THEME OF ARCHITECTURAL IDENTITY IN INDONESIA, ESTABLISHED THROUGH ADHERENCE TO THE PANCASILA MAXIMS OF *BHINNEKA TUNGGAL IKA* OR “UNITY IN DIVERSITY.”

The seminar was my introduction to the contemporary architecture of Southeast Asia and specifically to the architectural issues in the post-colonial Islamic world. When I subsequently edited the proceedings of two other AKAA seminars, the first held in Bangladesh in 1986 on “Regionalism in Architecture” and the second in Zanzibar in 1988 on “The Architecture of Housing,” I encountered two other distinguished academics from Indonesia.⁵ Professor Hasan Poerbo from Bandung University and Professor Johan Silus from the Surabaya Institute of Technology, together with Budi A. Sukada, then editor of the *Journal of Ikatan Arsitek Indonesia*, all spoke on the public housing programs in Indonesia, and thus my interest in the architecture of Indonesia was kindled.

Between 1993 and 2009 I returned to Indonesia on numerous occasions in the course of writing a series of eight books on contemporary architecture in Southeast Asia, including *The Asian House* (1993), *The Tropical Asian House* (1996), *The Urban Asian House* (1998) and *The New Asian House* (2001). The books were among the first to celebrate contemporary houses and included a romantic villa in Bogor by Jaya Ibrahim, an essay in deconstruction by Sardjono Sani, a quiet modern home by Tan Tjiang Ay, and other houses by the renowned artist Sunaryo, Ismeth Abidin, Solichin Gunawan and Ani Isdiati, Adhi Moersid of Atelier Enam, Muhammad Thamrin and Susiani Silalahi of Rekamatra, and Irianto Purnomo Hadi and Richard Dalrymple of PAI. The books also included “Bali-style” houses by Hendra Hadiprana and Faried Masdoeki of Grahacipta Hadiprana, and expatriates such as Michael White (Made Wijaya), Patrick Collins, Leonard Lueras and Rudolfo Giusti. It was on one of these visits that I encountered the work of the renowned Sri Lankan architect Geoffrey Bawa on the Batujimbah Estate at Sanur. Later, as consultant editor of *Space* magazine (Singapore) from 1999 to 2001, I published work by Andra Martin and Cheong Yew Kuan.



ARCHITECTURE IN INDONESIA AFTER INDEPENDENCE

TO UNDERSTAND THE RESIDENTIAL ARCHITECTURE OF INDONESIA AT THE END OF THE FIRST DECADE OF THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY, IT IS NECESSARY TO BEGIN WITH A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE SECOND HALF OF THE PRECEDING CENTURY AND EVENTS FOLLOWING INDEPENDENCE IN 1945.⁶ THE POLITICAL CLIMATE AT THE TIME CONTRIBUTED SIGNIFICANTLY TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF MODERN ARCHITECTURAL CONCEPTS. THE FIRST PRESIDENT OF THE NEW REPUBLIC, SUKARNO, HAD TRAINED AS A CIVIL ENGINEER AT THE TECHNISCHE HOGESCHOOL IN BANDUNG.⁷ HE HAD VERY CLEAR VIEWS ON ARCHITECTURE AND URBAN PLANNING, AND THEREFORE MODERNITY WAS ACCORDED A POWERFUL SYMBOLIC IMPORTANCE AS AN INDICATOR OF NATIONAL UNITY.

The first architectural school in Indonesia was established in October 1950 at the Institute of Technology in Bandung (ITB) and was modeled on the curriculum at Delft University of Technology in the Netherlands. By the early 1960s, works of the twentieth-century "masters," Frank Lloyd Wright, Walter Gropius and Le Corbusier, found their way into the curriculum, partly as a result of a twinning arrangement with the Univer-

sity of Kentucky in the USA, and students were strongly influenced by publications on modern architecture designed by Alvar Aalto in Scandinavia and Walter Gropius in Germany.⁸

Sukarno's vision of Indonesia as the fulcrum of a new world order culminated in the Bandung conference of non-aligned nations that brought together the leaders of Pakistan, Sri Lanka, India and Myanmar (or Burma as it was then known) in 1955. Sukarno, who portrayed himself as the first leader of the Non-Aligned Movement, hosted the conference.

Modern architecture took on huge political significance in Sukarno's "Guided Democracy," and in this respect there were parallels with other Southeast Asian countries. In the Philippines, during the presidency of Ferdinand Marcos (1965–86), architect Leandro Locsin designed a number of powerful modern symbols, such as the Theater of Performing Arts in the Cultural Center of the Philippines (1969). In neighboring Singapore, which became a republic in August 1965 following its secession from the Federation of Malaysia, modern architecture, such as that produced by, for example, William Lim Siew Wai, Lim Cheong Keat and Chen Voon Fee of The Malayan Architects Co-Partnership in their design for the Singapore NTUC Conference Hall (1965), expressed the aspirations of the new republic.

Architect Friedrich Silaban, who was influenced by Le Corbusier, came closest to realizing Sukarno's nationalist ideals in architecture and urban design. Silaban's projects,

mainly in Jakarta, including the Bank Indonesia building, which utilized a modern architectural language appropriated from European modernism. And in the 1960s, a group of young Indonesian students in the Netherlands came together under the banner of ATAP (literally interpreted as "roof"), to reject the idea that Indonesian architecture could be characterized through applying traditional forms. The group included architects Soejoedi, Han Awal, Bian Poen, Soewondo Bismo Soetedjo and his wife Wan Jin, and Mustafa Pamoentjak.

Sukarno's successor, Suharto, took over the reins of power in March 1967 and led a strong, central, military-dominated government for thirty years. At this time, the question of "identity" surfaced in architectural discourse. Under Suharto's "New Order" government, Indonesia pursued the *Pancasila* maxim of "Unity in Diversity." Unity was associated with the past and respect for cultural traditions. The revival of traditional cultures was linked to the public image of the New Order, and the establishment of Taman Mini Indonesia Indah (TMII) in 1975 became an expression of the ideology of *Pancasila*.⁹ The implications of TMII were considerable in restraining the modern tendencies of the previous regime. Suharto, who was said not to have a strong affinity with modernism, played a part in promoting the use of ethnic architectural themes in public buildings. Traditional architecture was often used in an inflated form and became associated with "national" identity, whereas modern architecture became identified with "foreign" or "Western." A building with a rational modernist plan would often be topped with a traditional roof form—usually with decidedly unsatisfactory aesthetic results.

By the mid-1970s, the question of national architectural style and identity had become a controversial issue for Indonesian architects. The issue was discussed in academic institutions with great passion and the identity question had parallels in other Southeast Asian countries.

Architectural identity was often seen as the resolution of a "paradox" expressed by the French philosopher Paul Ricour in his 1965 essay on "Universal Truths and National Cultures," in which he wrote, "In order to get on the road to modernisation, is it necessary to jettison the old cultural past? ... On the one hand the nation has to root itself in the soil of its past, forge a national spirit and unfurl this spiritual and cultural revindication of the colonists personality. But in order to take part in modern civilisation, it is necessary at the same time to invest in scientific, technical and political rationality: something which often requires the pure and simple abandonment of a whole cultural past. There is the paradox; how to become modern and to return to your sources."¹⁰

And more to the point—what are the sources? Architecture in Indonesia has always been incredibly diverse, and the traditional vernacular architecture includes influences from numerous cultures, including Chinese (Buddhist and Christian), Indian (mainly Hindu) and Middle Eastern Islamic traditions, in addition to Dutch colonial and Indische architecture. In fact,

one might reasonably ask whether an "authentic" Indonesian architecture actually exists, even with reference to the country's vernacular work, which is highly diverse from an ethnic perspective. Contemporary architects in Indonesia were essentially faced with the same situation that existed in other Asian countries—how to modernize while maintaining a core of cultural identity.

The architecture of Y. B. Mangunwijaya, also known as Romo Mangun, stands out in this respect. According to his contemporary Han Awal, many Indonesian architects were deeply influenced by modern Western architects of the likes of Oscar Niemeyer and Le Corbusier. "But Romo Mangun was different," says Han. "After training at the Institute of Technology Bandung he continued his studies at the Rhineland-Westphalia Institute of Technology in Aachen, Germany, and Mangunwijaya should have been following the mainstream in architecture." But, according to Han, who helped Romo Mangun on the project, "Romo Mangun's buildings were always made with an eye to local tradition. For example, when he built a church in Cilincing, North Jakarta, Romo Mangun wanted it to be in the Betawi (traditional Jakarta) style with a slightly slanted roof. Nevertheless, its interior was modern with four pillars supporting vaulted ceilings as Romo had seen in the West."

In another building, the Said Naum Mosque, designed in 1977 by Atelier Enam, traditional Javanese idioms were skillfully reinterpreted to produce a modern regional architecture compatible with the best indigenous work. The project was the recipient of an Aga Khan Award for Architecture in 1986. But these and the work of the design team for Universitas Indonesia's Administrative Center Building were exceptions.

ARSITEK MUDA INDONESIA

IN 1989, A GROUP OF YOUNG ARCHITECTURAL GRADUATES WHO HAD A COMMON INTEREST IN BROADENING DISCUSSION ABOUT ARCHITECTURE AND URBAN DESIGN IN INDONESIA FORMED ARSITEK MUDA INDONESIA (AMI) OR FORUM OF YOUNG INDONESIAN ARCHITECTS. THE GROUP WAS MOTIVATED BY THE PERCEIVED LACK OF A FORUM FOR IDEAS AT THE TIME AND IT MOVED RESOLUTELY TO CREATE A SPACE FOR COMMUNICATION, EXPERIMENTATION, EXHIBITIONS, PUBLICATIONS AND ARCHITECTURAL EXPLORATION AMONG YOUNG PROFESSIONAL ARCHITECTS, ACADEMICS AND STUDENTS IN INDONESIA.

Focusing on building design, urban space and public art, the group has subsequently broadened its base to include cultural commentators, sociologists, artists and NGO activists with similar concerns about the condition of the built and natural environment in Indonesia. Its attempt to return to the public a role in urban design and planning was underlined by its involvement during the post-riot situation in Jakarta and Solo in 1998–2000.¹¹



The seven founding members of the group were Irianto Purnomo Hadi, Yori Antar and Sonny Sutanto (all graduates of the University of Indonesia and Sutanto subsequently of UCLA, USA), Andra Matin (Parahyangan Catholic University Bandung) and Sardjono Sani (Parahyangan Catholic University and subsequently the University of Colorado at Denver, USA), and Ahmad D. Tardyana and Bambang Eryudhawan (both graduates of the Institute of Technology Bandung, and subsequently the University of New South Wales, Australia). They resolved to promote their views with exhibitions of their work.

The group grew rapidly from seven to fifteen by the time of their first exhibition with the inclusion of Jeffrey Budiman and Marco Kusumawijaya (Parahyangan Catholic University), Achmad Noerzaman, Boy Bhirawa and Dicky Hendrasto (University of Indonesia) and Gatot Surarjo and Ahmad Rida Soemardi (Institute of Technology Bandung). From the outset, the members were resolved to be supportive of each other and to engender a spirit of openness, sharing and cooperation. They also resolved not to attack each other but to encourage exploratory discussions about architecture and to create a critical dialogue—something they felt to be lacking. Members of the group are all now in their late forties.

The original core group gradually expanded to embrace the ‘next generation of AMI’ (sometimes referred to as AMINext), among them Adi Purnomo (Gajah Mada University, Yogyakarta),

Ahmad Djuhara, Wendy J. Djuhara, Kusuma Agustianto, Tan Tik Lam, Denny Gondojatmiko, Zenin Adrian, Maria Rosantina and Gregorius Supie Yolodi (all Parahyangan Catholic University), Andy Pratama (University of Indonesia), Sukendro “Kendro” Sukendar Priyoso and Jeffry Sandy (both Trisakti University, Jakarta), Ridwan Kamil (University of California at Berkeley, USA), Budi Pradono (Duta Wacana Christian University, Yogyakarta), Antony Liu, Ferry Ridwan and Yanto Effendi (all Tarumanagara University, Jakarta), Willis Kusuma (Tarumanagara University and subsequently the University of California, USA) and Idris Samad (Art Center Pasadena). Members of the next generation are now in their late thirties or early forties.

An even younger generation of architects that includes Danny Wicaksono (University of Trisakti), who works alongside Adi Purnomo in mamostudio, Agit Mohd Sagitha, Wiyoga, Dicky Padmawijaya, Ginanjar Randhani and Mohammad Hikmat Subarkah (all graduates of Parahyangan Catholic University), have been enthusiastic in perpetuating the aims of the group. The youngest members wryly refer to themselves as IPAMI (the Union of Employees of AMI)

Houses designed by members of Arsitek Muda Indonesia (AMI) comprise the majority of the dwellings featured in this book. This was not my intention at the outset, but as the book took shape I was drawn to the conclusion that since its inception the group has been a catalyst for change, experimentation and indeed the advancement of architecture in Indonesia.



I first came into contact with the members of AMI in 1994/95 when I was researching my book *The Tropical Asian House*. I met Sardjono Sani who had just completed a seminal house for his own family intriguingly named "The Nobody House," and I was subsequently introduced to Yori Antar, Achmad Noerzman and Ahmad Rida (Tata) Soemardi. The group had just published a book of their work entitled *AMI Exploration 1990–1995* that recorded their first exhibition at the National Monument in celebration of Indonesia's fiftieth anniversary of independence. In the words of Sonny Sutanto, the book essentially contained "propaganda to move Indonesian architecture in a different direction," for "AMI was a romantic revolution that tended to be egalitarian, (it was) the underdog, (and) faced the walls of the establishment, (with) an obvious enemy (in) stagnant paternalism."¹²

Gunawan Tjahjono put it in similar terms. "In 1990, AMI emerged from growing disappointment (with) the stagnant Indonesian architecture ... with a passion to challenge the weariness found in architectural designs at the time.... AMI's presence was a breath of fresh air and a revelation to sleeping Indonesian architecture. Finally, a dynamic movement took responsibility for Indonesian architecture...."¹³

In early 1999, the group celebrated their tenth year with a joint exhibition of their work. Launched in the Netherlands, the exhibition was later displayed in the Dutch Embassy in Jakarta, from December 1999 to January 2000. The group

published a second book, *Works and Projects of Young Indonesian Architects 1997–2002*, sometimes referred to as "the Orange Book," which illustrated the body of work emerging from AMI members.

Almost a decade passed until, in 2009, while researching the current publication, I was reunited with several of the founding members and encountered the next generation (AMINext), including Adi Purnomo, Ahmad and Wendy Djuhara and Gregorius Supie Yoladi.

In October 2009, at the time of our meeting, Ahmad Djuhara was the chairman of IAI (Ikatan Arsitek Indonesia) Jakarta Chapter while Andra Matin chaired the IAI Awards Jury in 2008 and Adi Purnomo received the institute's Gold Medal in the same year. This would seem to indicate that the group, once at the fringe of the profession, now occupies the center ground. Some, indeed, might be regarded as "the establishment": Achmad Noerzman is now CEO of the giant Arkonin Group, a huge conglomerate of design professionals, while Dicky Hendrasto and Budiman Hendropurnomo are directors of PT Duta Cermat Mandiri, the Indonesian arm of Denton Corker Marshall, an Australian practice with global connections. AMI was also the moving force behind the Jakarta Architecture Triennale that was in session in November 2009.

The formation of AMI has parallels with similar groups in neighboring countries that sought to encourage critical

thinking about architecture against a background of societal change. In 1990, William Lim Siew Wai and a group of graduates of the Architectural Association (AA) School of Architecture in London formed AAAAsia based in Singapore, and Dr Ken Yeang initiated a similar group in Malaysia under the title Asian Design Forum (ADF) in May 1990.

It is also noteworthy that in addition to the hard core of AMI members from the University of Indonesia, another significant group, including Andra Matin, Sardjono Sani, Ahmad Djuhara, Kusuma Agustianto, Jeffrey Budiman, Tan Tik Lam and Gregorius Supie Yolodi, are graduates of the architecture school at Parahyangan Catholic University in Bandung, the oldest private architectural school in Indonesia and one which has enjoyed a status equal to the public universities since it was established in 1960.

Dr Johannes Widodo, now Associate Professor of Architecture at the National University of Singapore, was close to events. From 1984 to 2000 he was first Lecturer and later Senior Lecturer at Parahyangan Catholic University in Bandung. From 1996 to 1998 he was Head of Architecture. He recalls, "During the period 1986–2000, students' publications were thriving, such as PILAR (critical magazine), and later KREA (creative design journal). Many students were also involved in extra-curricular groups, such as ARJAU (Arsitektur Hijau or Green Architecture) and BX (Bandung Experiments). ARJAU is an activity group which combines adventure and scientific expeditions to explore nature and to map uncharted settlements across the Indonesian archipelago, while BX is a critical group focusing on learning and design experimentation to challenge the established design practice and curriculum in Indonesia. Many students who were involved in these publications and organizations later emerged as leaders, including those who founded AMI. Architecture students at Parahyangan Catholic University enjoyed a lot of intellectual and political freedom through those activities and channels during the most oppressive period of Suharto's rule; some of them (not many) were involved in political activism against Suharto, especially at an intellectual level. It was also a period when the Internet and computers became more accessible to students in Indonesia and there was free Internet access to students of architecture. All of these factors have contributed in the formation and progression of AMI as a movement, not just as an ordinary organization."¹⁴

The membership of AMI also drew on graduates of Tarumanagara University, the University of Trisakti in Jakarta, Gajah Mada University and Duta Wacana Christian University in Yogyakarta, and the Institute of Technology Bandung.

The formation of AMI could be linked to societal and cultural shifts in the late 1980s. Yori Antar was the facilitator of the group, which gradually grew as its aims were passed on by word of mouth and Fax messages. Their primary concerns were the moribund state of the profession, which was dominated by large practices, and dissatisfaction with their professional institute that seemed to have little interest in

"good design." They agreed to mount an exhibition of their work—most of it conceptual, some of it small built works. Irianto Purnomo Hadi, the first president of the group (in fact, the only president since they quickly agreed to drop the grandiose title) explains that "During the Suharto Regime it was generally the case that you had to say what the government wanted to hear. We simply 'agreed to disagree,' which in itself was a statement of rebellion."¹⁵ It is evident that some senior members of the profession regarded the vocal group, who met every Wednesday evening in their first year of existence, with suspicion. Their habit of all wearing black was even seen as provocative and "elitist."¹⁶

The Asian financial crisis at the end of the 1990s had far-reaching consequences on the Indonesian economy and on society. With the collapse in the value of the Indonesian currency, foreign investment shrank, and there was widespread unemployment accompanied by food shortages and price rises. Increasingly, prominent political opponents spoke out against Suharto's presidency, and university students organized nationwide demonstrations. Abdurrahman Wahid, Chairman of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), mobilized people behind the "Reformasi" movement. The shooting of four Trisakti University student demonstrators in Jakarta on May 12, 1998 triggered rioting across the city and in other cities such as Medan and Surakarta. Young architects, too, were moved to protest, and as Gregorius Supie Yolodi, a member of *Arsitek Muda Indonesia*, recalls, "1998 was a time of rebellion" against the status quo.¹⁷ Following public outrage at the events, a student occupation of the parliament building, street protests across the country, and the desertion of key political allies, on May 21, 1998 Suharto announced his resignation.

The immediate consequences of the 1998 riots on architecture have been discussed most pertinently by Associate Professor Abidin Kusno in his incisive paper, "Back to the City: A Note on Urban Architecture in the New Indonesia." He states that "We do not know exactly the significance of the May riots in altering the subjectivities of Indonesian architects, but soon after the event, some architects pledged to make architecture sensitive to local cultures so that it would be accepted by society...."

"There was," he wrote, "a sense that the sharp line between the haves and the have-nots would have to be altered through architectural design and that one criteria for a good house is a house that unites with its surroundings. However that sentence is understood, it shows a change of consciousness if not architectural strategy in the post-Suharto era."¹⁸

From 1989 onwards, *Arsitek Muda Indonesia* engaged in discussions and exhibitions. Gradually, upper middle-class patrons accepted their works, which placed emphasis on visual appearance and design individuality. Sardjono Sani's family house in Pondok Indah, Andra Matin's Gedung Dua Delapan and Ahmad Djuhara's Steel House became icons for a new generation of architects. The Sixth IAI Award cycle in 1999 underlined this new direction in the discourse on



Indonesian architecture. The institute, alert to the shifting ground, stated that the criteria for winning an award was that architecture must “raise human dignity, be responsible to the social environment, and be sensitive towards the social context within which the building is embedded.”

In writing at length on the emergence and effect of *Arsitek Muda Indonesia*, I am aware that this paints an incomplete picture since their activity has been largely confined to Jakarta and Bandung whereas, in reality, Indonesia is a vast archipelago. Eko Agus Prawoto, who practices and teaches in Yogyakarta, points out that “There is a different sensibility in Yogyakarta to that in Jakarta. Almost 75 percent of the wealth of the country passes through the capital and clearly that has an effect on architecture. In Yogyakarta, architects are required to ‘do more with less.’”¹⁹

EKO PRAWOTO'S OWN ARCHITECTURE IS REMARKABLY SIMILAR TO THE ATTRIBUTES OF A DWELLING IN THE TROPICS SUMMARIZED IN MY 1996 *THE TROPICAL ASIAN HOUSE*. THE FIRST THREE CRITERIA WERE ARTICULATED IN A DISCUSSION WITH GEOFFREY BAWA WHILE WE DINED ON THE TERRACE OF HIS HOME AT LUNUGANGA IN SRI LANKA.²⁰ BAWA MAINTAINED THAT A HOUSE IN THE TROPICS IS ABOUT LIVING IN CLOSE PROXIMITY TO

THE NATURAL WORLD, AND THEREFORE ANY SUBSTANTIAL TREES ON THE SITE SHOULD NOT BE DESTROYED. A HOUSE IN THE TROPICS, HE ASSERTED, SHOULD BE DESIGNED WITH THE MINIMAL USE OF GLASS. OTHER ATTRIBUTES INCLUDE THE USE OF GARDENS AND NON-REFLECTIVE SURFACES TO REDUCE RADIATED HEAT, WIDE OVERHANGING EAVES TO PROVIDE SHADE, THE OMISSION OF GUTTERS, THE USE OF IN-BETWEEN SPACES IN THE FORM OF VERANDAS, TERRACES AND SHADED BALCONIES, TALL ROOMS TO CREATE THERMAL AIR MASS AND PROVIDE THERMAL INSULATION, PERMEABLE WALLS FACING PREVAILING WINDS TO GIVE NATURAL VENTILATION, AND PLANS THAT ARE ONE ROOM DEEP WITH OPENINGS ON OPPOSITE SIDES CAPABLE OF BEING ADJUSTED TO PROMOTE NATURAL VENTILATION BY THE “VENTURI” EFFECT.

These criteria are still relevant in Indonesian architecture today but the urban house cannot be so pure. To this list must be added another imperative, namely duality between the public side of a house and the private side. This is linked to a perception of security, with the public side being “closed” and the private side “open.”

The challenge facing architects in Jakarta and other cities in Indonesia is to design houses that permit their clients to live a relaxed open lifestyle with verandas, terraces and courtyard

spaces while simultaneously solving issues of security. Living in a conurbation necessitates a variety of responses to the perceived threat of intruders, including high perimeter walls and electronic surveillance devices. A house in the city invariably includes some means of isolating and securing the family sleeping quarters at night.

The houses shown here embody a hierarchy of privacy with a public façade that seeks not to attract undue attention or to make an extravagant display of wealth, and interior spaces that embrace and shelter their occupants while opening out to courtyards and terraces. The houses provide a haven of calm and a "refuge" from the frantic pace of life in the city and seek to modify the effects of air pollution, noise and increasingly high temperatures that inevitably necessitate air-conditioning in some parts of a house.

THE EMERGENCE OF AN URBAN MIDDLE CLASS

THE EMERGENCE OF ARSITEK MUDA INDONESIA AND OTHER GROUPS SUCH AS FORUM ARSITEK MEDAN (FAM), BOMBARS IN MANADO, SAMM (SPIRIT ARSITEK MUDA MALANG) IN EAST JAVA AND DESAINER MUDA SURABAYA (DE MAYA), ALSO IN EAST JAVA, HAS BEEN PARALLELED BY THE GROWTH OF AN URBAN MIDDLE CLASS IN INDONESIA. THIS EXPANDING MIDDLE CLASS HAS, IN SOME CASES, STUDIED OVERSEAS AND TRAVELED WIDELY, IN THE PROCESS BECOMING CONVERSANT WITH ARCHITECTURE AND INTERIOR DESIGN ELSEWHERE. IT IS RELEVANT TO MENTION THE PHENOMENA AT THIS POINT FOR IT HAD AN EFFECT ON THE ARCHITECTURAL MODELS THAT FOUND FAVOR FROM 1989 ONWARD.²¹

In the early 1990s, as a result of a spate of books and magazines on architecture in the region, Indonesia's middle classes began to appreciate the country's own architects.²² Home owners realized that Indonesian architects were capable of constructing houses that were sophisticated in design. Simultaneously, the growth of the Internet in the last decade of the twentieth century enabled images to be transferred across borders with phenomenal speed and brought awareness of design in other parts of Asia.

The New Indonesian House gives insights into the aspirations of the rapidly growing upper middle and upper classes in Indonesia, who operate in a dynamic and plural culture.

THE BALI EFFECT

THE POPULAR IMAGE OF TROPICAL ARCHITECTURE IN INDONESIA HAS LONG BEEN AND STILL IS LARGELY DRIVEN BY ORIENTALIST NOTIONS OF SOUTHEAST ASIA AS AN EXOTIC DESTINATION, AND BY CURRENT TOURIST ASPIRATIONS FOR A NON-WESTERN LIVING EXPERIENCE.²³

The published residential architecture of Bali is dominated by the creations of numerous foreign architects who have taken up residence on the fabled island. Bali is a "different world," offering a sybaritic lifestyle that is quite divorced from Java and Sumatra. The question inevitably arises whether the production of resort-style dwellings is in any sense Indonesian. The houses there often appropriate traditional vernacular forms and materials for Western expatriate lifestyles.

I have published several of these exotic houses in earlier books, and indeed I have had the pleasure of vacationing in some of them. The lifestyles of the inhabitants are manifestly divorced from and, in most cases, in total contrast to the lives of the local people. Nevertheless, the design of houses for expatriates has had a profound effect on how the Indonesian house is perceived by non-Indonesians.

This new book contains examples of this genre but most are designed by Indonesian architects, including the Tukad Balian House, which is owned by an American landscape architect and his Indonesian wife and designed by Antony Liu and Ferry Ridwan; the Kayu Aga House, owned by an Italian businessman and designed by Balinese architect Yoka Sara; Villa Ombak Luwung, owned by a banker based in Singapore and designed by another Balinese architect, Popo Danes, and the Villa Kalyani, owned by a French banker based in Singapore and designed by Balinese architect Sekar Warni. Another of the houses, the Joelianto Residence, is owned by a Jakarta entrepreneur and is designed by Andra Matin, while Villa Dewi Sri is designed by an expatriate German architect, Walter Wagner. A house in the resort village of Alila Soori, owned by a Singaporean architect and his Indo-nesian partner, is designed by Chan Soo Khian of SCDA.

SOCIAL ISSUES

SOCIAL HOUSING IS A SUBJECT THAT FINDS ITS WAY INTO MOST CONVERSATIONS WITH YOUNG INDONESIAN ARCHITECTS. AHMAD DJUHARA BELIEVES STRONGLY THAT THIS IS A ROLE MORE ARCHITECTS SHOULD ENGAGE IN. IT IS ALSO A SUBJECT BROUGHT UP IN CONVERSATION WITH ECO AGUS PRAWOTO. IT IS EVIDENT THAT MANY ARCHITECTS, WHILE PRODUCING ENVIABLE DWELLINGS FOR THEIR AFFLUENT CLIENTS, WOULD WELCOME THE OPPORTUNITY TO BRING SOME OF THEIR EXPERTISE TO MASS HOUSING AND HOUSING FOR THE POOR.

In the past, there were architects in Indonesia who gave attention to these issues. Romo Mangun's desire to create dwellings for the poor was indisputable. During his time, there were a few other such architects who worked in this sphere. In Surabaya, there was Johan Silas. This professor, who helped establish the Technical and Architectural Department at the November 10 Institute of Technology in Surabaya, was one of the architects who helped create the Kampung Improvement Program (KIP). In Bandung, the late Hasan Poerbo, a professor in the Technology and Architecture Department at ITB, was also known as a "people's architecture" proponent and was

always concerned with the human aspect of each building. Aspects of “people’s architecture” can also be seen in the works of Professor Eko Budihardjo, Rector of Diponegoro University in Semarang. Running through his writings is his belief that society is capable of building better, more cost-effective and simpler houses.

The gap between rich and poor is evident in Jakarta. The children of the wealthy are educated in universities overseas—in the USA, Singapore and the Netherlands, for instance—but it is common to encounter the children of the poor who walk barefoot and live under road viaducts and in squalid shacks alongside festering canals.

The Indian architect Charles Correa once famously said in the context of Mumbai that “The rich need the poor and the poor need the rich.” This is not to suggest that class divisions should be perpetuated but it is evident that all the houses in this book could not function without maids, cooks, drivers and gardeners. It is an important consideration in the design of custom-designed dwellings.

There are “invisible walls” in dwellings that define the areas where domestic staff may be at certain times of the day. These flexible boundaries shift: when the maid is cleaning the house, she may have access to all parts of the house; when guests arrive, she fades into the background; when a child needs attention, she appears as if by magic; when the family is away, she has the run of the whole house, and when the family retires at night, she slips away to a small bedroom often little more than a boxroom. This is “maidspace” and can equally be applied to the situation of the ubiquitous driver. The extent to which architects and clients incorporate well-lit, well-ventilated habitable maidspace is a reflection of a country’s maturity as a caring society.

INFLUENCES ON RECENT RESIDENTIAL ARCHITECTURE

OF THE TWENTY-SEVEN HOUSES FEATURED IN THIS BOOK, FOURTEEN ARE LOCATED IN JAKARTA, FIVE IN BANDUNG, ONE IN YOGYAKARTA AND SEVEN IN BALI. THE HOUSES REPRESENT THE WORK OF SOME NINETEEN INDONESIAN PRACTICES AND TWO SINGAPORE-BASED PRACTITIONERS, WITH WALTER WAGNER BEING THE SOLE EXPATRIATE ARCHITECT INCLUDED. SOME OF THE INDONESIAN ARCHITECTS PURSUED THEIR GRADUATE ARCHITECTURAL EDUCATION OVERSEAS AT DELFT UNIVERSITY OR THE BERLAGE INSTITUTE IN THE NETHERLANDS. OTHERS TOOK A ROUTE THAT LED THEM TO GRADUATE SCHOOLS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO, THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA AT GAINSVILLE, THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LOS ANGELES AND THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA BERKELEY IN THE USA, BUT A LARGE MAJORITY COMPLETED THEIR ARCHITECTURAL TRAINING IN INDONESIA.

The early masters of the modern movement have been a significant influence on the current generation of architects. Many young Indonesian architects refer to the seminal projects of Le Corbusier, Oscar Niemeyer, Mies van der Rohe, Alvar Aalto, Louis Kahn and Frank Lloyd Wright, and they are frequently mentioned as formative influences. The Japanese masters Tadao Ando and Kengo Kuma are evidently even more important influences, while nearer home Mangunwijaya and Tjiang Tan Ay have influenced several young architects.

Whereas the early meetings of AMI were summoned by hand-drawn missives sent via Fax by Yori Antar from the office of Han Awal, or by word of mouth, the youngest generation communicate by digital means and their circle has widened to include Indonesians studying overseas in Japan, Singapore and the USA. Between 2008 and 2010, sixteen issues of an E-Magazine entitled *Jong Arsitek* were published, and Danny Wicaksono believes that Indonesian architecture in the future will inevitably reflect global influences.

A JOURNEY WITHOUT MAPS

WRITING A BOOK ON RESIDENTIAL ARCHITECTURE IS A “JOURNEY WITHOUT MAPS.” AT THE OUTSET, I HAD A VAGUE IDEA OF THE DESTINATION. BUT THE JOURNEY HAS BEEN ENRICHED BY EXPERIENCES BOTH PHYSICAL AND METAPHYSICAL. THERE HAVE BEEN UNEXPECTED ENCOUNTERS ALONG THE WAY; FRUSTRATING DETOURS AND THEN—NEW DISCOVERIES. AT TIMES, PROGRESS HAS BEEN HALTED BY UNCERTAINTY BUT OFTEN A CHANCE ENCOUNTER HAS GIVEN THE PROCESS NEW MOMENTUM.

For an architect, the design of a custom-made family dwelling is a demanding yet ultimately immensely rewarding commission. A designer rarely has such a close relationship with the end user. The most successful houses arise out of a strong empathy between the client and the designer. This compatibility is of critical importance because a house is ultimately “a social portrait of its owner.”

The houses in this book illustrate exemplary residential architecture in Indonesia at the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century and demonstrate remarkable advances in design exploration in the country.²⁴ Architects are producing work with a level of refinement, sophistication and environmental awareness that is comparable with the best in the world. There are changing cultural responses and greater awareness of social and environmental issues—and this is resulting in new and frequently unconventional dwellings in the Indonesian context. We are witnessing the emergence of design genius in Indonesia that has been germinating since 1989. Nurtured by the intellectual debate within the architectural community and by increasingly knowledgeable patronage, it is blooming in a stunning variety of exhilarating architectural expressions.