



Source: © Fee des chiens.

Figure 1: Fee des chiens from Denpasar

Graffiti in Indonesia: Colors bloom in the concrete jungle

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Abstract: Graffiti art is on the rise in Southeast Asia. Gradually, more and more confident young women are entering the vivid Indonesian graffiti writing scene to express themselves artistically on walls in the public spaces of mega-cities like Jakarta. In 2014, the Indonesian capital became the founding site of the first Southeast Asian graffiti network especially for women called "Ladies on Wall". Pioneer and leader of the community is Bunga Fatia, a 29-year-old graphic designer living in Jakarta.

Keywords: Graffiti, street art, Indonesia, Writing, Jakarta, Ladies on Wall

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It is noisy and humid in the concrete jungle of Jakarta. Almost 30 million people live in the mega-metropolis and Indonesia's lively capital continues to grow rapidly. In the midst of the city hustle stands a cool young lady equipped with spray cans. Graffiti art is on the rise in Southeast Asia and the 29-year-old Bunga belongs to the first female graffiti artists in Indonesia. Her name means "flower" in Indonesian. To make the city bloom with colorful graffiti is also part of her mission.

Bunga, who studied graphic design, established a movement called "Ladies on Wall" in 2014 to empower young female graffiti artists in their process of creative expression in public spheres. Inspired by illegal graffiti in the streets of Jakarta, she picked up a spray can for the first time in 2005. "Until 2013, I only sprayed with boys, because there were no like-minded girls", explains Bunga. Since Indonesia is the largest muslim country in the world, with a population of about 270 million people, most of the female graffiti artists are muslim and wear hijabs. However hindu artists from Bali also participate in the "Ladies on Wall" spraying events, which annually take place in different cities throughout Indonesia such as Jakarta, Bandung or Tangerang.

The growing graffiti network, which once started with nine ambitious women in Jakarta, already includes more than 60 artists from all over the country. That makes "Ladies on Wall" the largest community of female graffiti writers not only in Indonesia itself, but all over Southeast Asia. The women share their mural artworks on instagram and stay connected via social media.

A wide variety of graffiti styles are represented within the network. Some artists are specialized in designing characters, while other artists' images are influenced by colorful pop art or graffiti letterings, with high level of complexity - the so-called "wildstyle". Due to its interwoven and overlapping letters, this style is often difficult to decrypt by untrained eyes from outside of the graffiti scene. Bali based artist "Fee des chiens", which means "fairy of the dogs" in French, took part in the 2017 edition of "Ladies on Wall". In her artworks she mainly focuses on animals. By painting dogs disguised as cheerful humans, she particularly wants to draw attention to the adverse living conditions of Bali dogs.

Street art and graffiti in Indonesia is currently still burdened with the reputation of subversive art, which by no means delights all urban residents. The latest edition of "Ladies on Wall" however was supported by The Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia and was held in the city of Karawang (West Java) in October 2019.

Artists featured in the photos:

Bunga (29) from Jakarta, Fee des chiens from Denpasar, Naysh (23) from Bogor, Cloris (23) from Makassar and Yosh (22) from Jakarta.



Figure 2: The artist group Ladies on the Wall posing together for a selfie

Source: XYXY



Source: © Fee des chiens

Figure 3&4: Fee des chiens (Denpasar) collaboration with French artist Nuublaa



Source: © Les chiens.

FÉE des CHIENS '16

Source: © Ladies on Wall doc.



Source: © Ladies on Wall doc.



Figure 5&6: The artist Bunga (29) from Jakarta

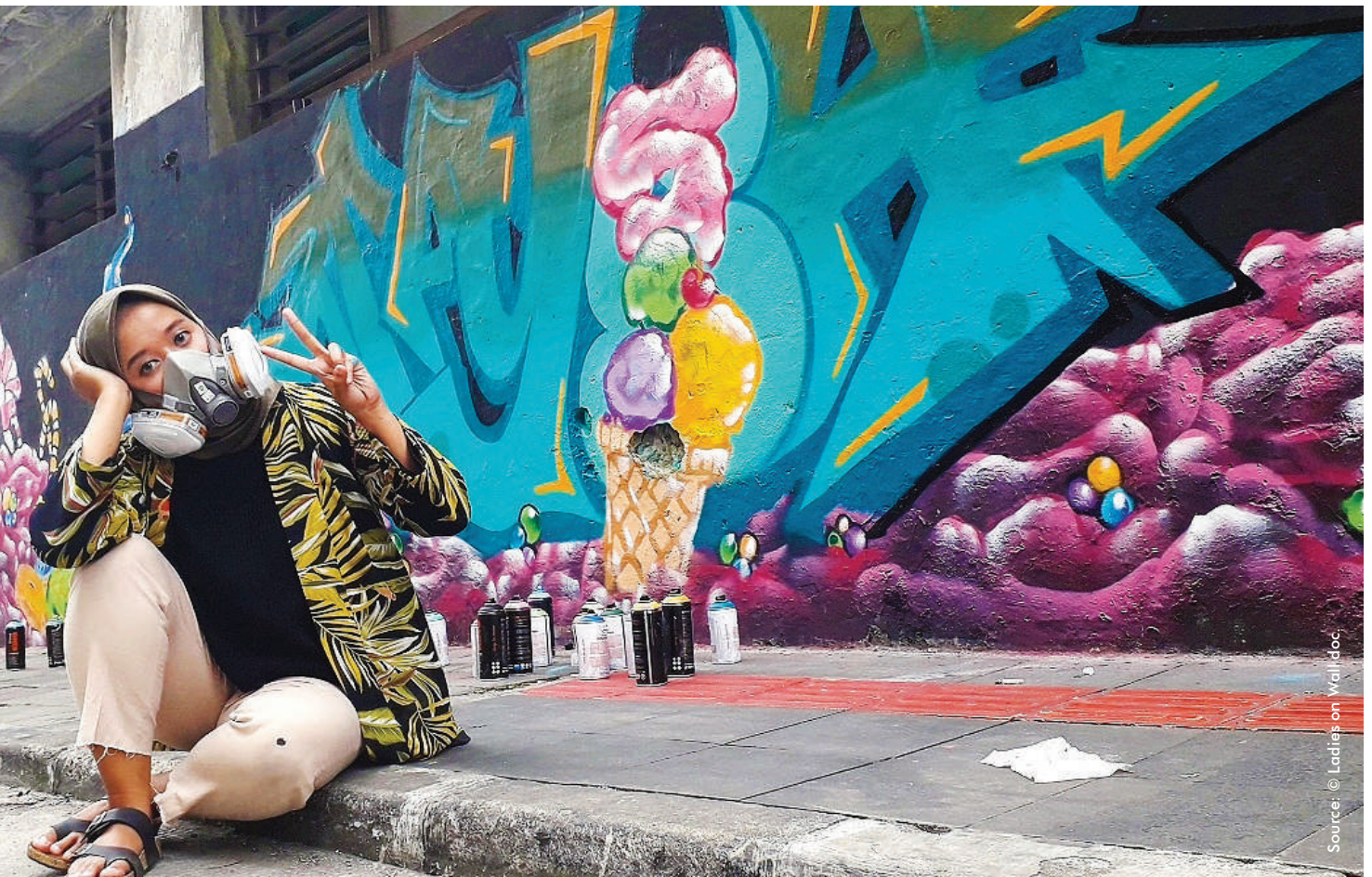


Source: © Ladies on Wall doc.



Source: © Cloris.

Figure 7: Cloris (23) from Makassa / Figure 8: Yosh (22) from Jakarta



Source: © Ladies on Wall.doc



Source: © Ladies on Wall.doc

Figure 9: Naysh (23) from Bogor / Figure 10: MNDY from Tangerang at the Ladies on Wall Graffiti Jam 2016



Figure 11: Spraying action initiated by Bunga / Figure 12: Graffiti piece by Bunga on Gili Trawangan, Lombok 2019

Corresponding Author: Andreas Margara [andreamargara@hotmail.com, Twitter: @andreamargara] is a German journalist and historian focussing on Southeast Asian-related topics. In 2018, he organized a nationwide HipHop symposium at the Popakademie Baden-Württemberg in Mannheim together with Frederik "Torch" Hahn. At the Popakademie, he is responsible for communications. As a consultant, he assists the City of Heidelberg to build the first German HipHop archive.