/ A Vanishing Art
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As a form of dramatic and musical theater, the Cantonese Opera was inscribed as valuable world heritage to be preserved by the United Nations in 2009. It was first performed during the reign of the Ming Dynasty Jiajing Emperor (1521 - 1567) and known as one of the 256 recognized Chinese opera genres with the combination of dialogue, singing, music, acting, colorful make-up and costumes.

Since World War II, the Cantonese Opera had not been well-preserved due to wars and political instability in several countries in Asia, the areas where the opera originated. Despite its popularity and long history, Cantonese Opera is slowly vanishing. Modernity & industrialization affected the development of Cantonese Opera. It become less popular among the new generation and the audience is getting less. (Penang Heritage Society / 2015).
Hindu civil code permits divorce on certain grounds and yet the religion does not approve divorce as the concept is alien to Hinduism. For Balinese families, Balinese Hindus divorced woman has more consequences compared to other cultures.

Due to the customs and traditions in Balinese society, if a woman gets divorced, she will lose all the family, community, and no financial support. The Balinese system is patriarchal and so the children belong to the father’s family. As a result, Balinese women lose rights in their children if they divorce and nearly always result in a poor outcome for the wife as they will not get any financial support after the divorce.
According to a study conducted by researchers from the University of California, San Francisco, 18 percent of older adults live alone and 43 percent report feeling lonely on a regular basis. The study showed that loneliness is a significant predictor of depression and poor health among older adults. (PannaFoto Institute / 2017)
Crown, High Heels, and Hijab
Indonesia is the largest Muslim majority country in the world and more than 80 percent of its population are Muslim. Despite the fact that many Indonesian Muslim women wear hijab as reflecting the call in the Quran to cover themselves; wearing hijab has become a fashion statement among young Muslim women in Indonesia.

For the last five years, there has been a thriving hijab fashion in Indonesia. Hijab becomes fashion and this phenomenon has resulted in several hijab styles and Islamic fashion festivals, not to mention more than six or seven Muslim beauty pageants which are held every year. Various Muslim beauty pageants have been held with the premise that Muslim women can still appear smart, stylish, and beautiful even though their whole body is covered up.

The World Muslimah pageant is one of the beauty pageants in Indonesia designed to instil pride of young Muslim women. The contest aims to recognize the beauty and potential of young women who wear hijab and offer something positive in compliance with its culture as well. The World Muslimah pageant was first held in 2011 in Jakarta. Initially the contest was only followed by Indonesian Muslim women, but nowadays the contest open to young Muslim women throughout the world with ages between 18 - 24 years old. For becoming a finalist, the requirements are very different such as wearing hijab every day and being able to recite Quran.

Unlike other beauty pageants where the contestants wear sexy dresses or bikinis, The World Muslimah pageant judges the contestants on how well the recited the Quran verses, their religious abilities - including memorization of the Quran, their hijab experience, and also their views on Islam and the modern world. Once they are selected as finalists, they underwent quarantine sessions for a few days and performing religious activities, morning prayers, Tahjud (Muslim night prayers), learning public speaking, fashion modeling, attending classes about Islamic finance, or sometimes discussing about Quran, Hadiths, and its translation.

When the contest becomes fashion opportunity, it raises a public debate. Although there has been much debate over the purpose of hijab related to Muslim beauty pageants, this kind of Muslim beauty pageant still attracts thousands of young Muslim women every year. **

(Edge Humanity Magazine / 2017)
Xu Xi, a former Indonesian national, born and raised in Hong Kong, the author of eleven books; five novels, five collections of short fiction & essays, and most recently INTERRUPTIONS, an ekphrastic essay collection in collaboration with photographer David Clarke. She has won the O. Henry Award and has been shortlisted for The Man Asian Literary Award. Xu Xi is also editor of four anthologies of Hong Kong writing in English. These days she splits time between New York and Hong Kong.
Xia Zi Zai (36), Chinese migrant worker in Singapore
Indonesian woman in coastal area / East Java, 2017
Undocumented Indonesian migrant worker / Malaysia, 2014
Okky started her journalism career in 2003 as a reporter. Over the years she has been working as a writer for online news, copywriter, and TV scriptwriter. Previously, she was an Editor-in-Chief for graphic design magazine. In 2013 she received a Fellowship to study Visual Literacy in The Newsroom at Asian Center For Journalism - Ateneo de Manila University, Philippines. Most recent, she is one of the 30 selected photographers from Asian countries to participate in the 10th Edition of the Angkor Photo Workshops 2014 in Cambodia.

Since 2012, she has also been working as a regular contributor and Project Assistant for Permata Photojournalist Grant Program at PannaFoto Institute, a non-profit organization based in Jakarta, Indonesia, serves as a platform for education and fosters an understanding of photography through its interdisciplinary programs with the support of World Press Photo Foundation in Netherlands.

She is currently pursuing her career as an independent documentary photographer. She loves to work with long term documentary projects focusing on gender issues and human rights. Her projects can be seen on her website www.okkyardya.com

2014 Angkor Photo Festival & Workshops (2014 Batch), Siem Reap, Cambodia

2015 Foundry Photojournalism Workshop (mentored by James Whitlow Delano)

2015 Kathmandu Photo Festival, Nepal. (The Veteran Club)
"I first came to Malaysia on August 17, 2009. I remember exactly, on the day when Indonesian people all over the world commemorated our Independence Day, I left my country, my family, and traveled far looking for a better life. And it wasn't easy for me to work as a migrant worker in a foreign country..."

- Wagirah (Malaysia, Sept, 2013)
Wagirah is one among million illegal migrant workers in Malaysia. Malaysian government recorded there were 1.3 million illegal migrant workers and most of them were Indonesian.

As one of the Southeast Asia's wealthiest countries, Malaysia is a magnet for migrants from neighboring country including Indonesia. Statistic from national Agency for Placement and Protection of Indonesian Overseas Workers (BNP2TKI) reports that Malaysia is the top destination country for Indonesian migrant workers. It is about 45% of Indonesian migrant workers choose to work in Malaysia. Drawing on data contained at BNP2TKI, there are about 150,235 Indonesian migrant workers yearly work in Malaysia.

This situation is possible since the two countries geographically, language, and culturally are close one another. Low income - high unemployment in Indonesia and high income - low unemployment in Malaysia, are frequently justified as push and pull factors of Indonesian migrant workers in Malaysia, respectively. Thus Indonesia becomes the main labor-exporting country to Malaysia and it is also estimated that 80% of them are undocumented migrant workers. Wagirah and other subjects in this story, are very much vulnerable to be trafficked both on the way to Malaysia or in Malaysia as well. Furthermore, running away from employer's place because of bad treatment or sexual harassment by the employer is another concerning situation experienced by Indonesian migrant workers in Malaysia.

Thus their status became illegal. Many sectors of Malaysia economy rely on the exploited labor of illegal / undocumented migrant workers and most Indonesian illegal migrant workers work in jobs that Malaysians won’t do. This ongoing project is not only to examine the long-run relationship among income, remittances, unemployment, or migrant workers issues between Indonesia and Malaysia, but also questioning the protection and promotion of fundamental rights: a right to life and security; to sustainable livelihood; to be heard; to have an identity; and to have access to basic social services; without any exception.
Malaysia (2012). Juwariah has become an illegal migrant worker in Malaysia for more than 5 years. Only a few months after this photo was taken, she was netted as an illegal immigrant when the immigration authorities went into houses and checked the documents of each occupant. Juwariah was one of those netted in the raid and jailed for three months in Pokok Sena penitentiary, Kedah, before she was finally deported to Indonesia.
Malaysia (2014). “I was stopped by police officers when I was coming home from work. Since I couldn’t show my passport, I was ordered to get into the police car. There were 4 police officers in the car already. They threatened to put me in jail and asked for money. I only had 40 ringgit and they said it was not enough. Then one of them said if I was not able to pay, I could ‘pay’ with my body.”
Malaysia (2014). Jumriyah shows a photo when she was still working as a domestic worker in Saudi Arabia. "The house in Saudi was 3-storey and I was the only maid. I worked non-stop from 6 am to 1 am." Jumriyah became an illegal migrant worker in Malaysia since September 2013. She first became a migrant worker when she was 13 years old.

Jumriyah came to Malaysia in September 2013 through Batam Island. Batam is one of the exit point locations in mobilization pathways of migrants which is the conventional mode of the shipment of potential unprocedural migrant workers. She first became a migrant worker when she was 13. By falsifying her age and other data, she set out to be a migrant worker to Saudi Arabia. Sexual harassment, physical abuse committed by her employer, salaries not being paid for 6 years, caused her to return to Indonesia and decided to try her luck as overseas migrant worker in Malaysia.