

## The Influence of Santiniketan in Jakarta Arts Institute's Education System

Citra Smara Dewi, Nungki Kusumastuti, Anna Sungkar, Nicholas Wila Adi

citradewi@senirupaikj.ac.id, kusumastuti01@yahoo.co.id,

anna\_sungkar@yahoo.co.id, [punyanicho@gmail.com](mailto:punyanicho@gmail.com)

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### Abstract

This research focuses on the influence of Santiniketan education, India, in the formation of the Jakarta Arts Education Institute (LPKJ) in 1970, which later changed its name to the Jakarta Institute of the Arts (IKJ). IKJ is the first art college in Indonesia that applies the concept of interdisciplinary education and learning outside the campus so that students gain experience interacting with culture and society. The concept of off-campus education with the name "Kampus Merdeka" in the 21st century, has been reappointed by the Government of Indonesia, so it is important to re-interpret the concept of IKJ education 50 years ago. The novelty of this research is in the scope and locus of study, namely IKJ, the first Art College located in the capital city of Jakarta. Qualitative research methodology is used, with the historical writing approach, namely heuristics, criticism, interpretation and historiography. The results showed that IKJ education concept was inspired by spirit of Santiniketan which instilled Eastern cultural values, that being close to nature through learning experiences outside the classroom and interdisciplinary arts. The IKJ founders, consisting of artists, painters, film and theater directors, dancers, and intellectuals, had a big role in adapting the Santiniketan education system, one of influencer role was Rusli, a painter who had studied at Santiniketan in 1932-1939.

**Key Words:** Santiniketan, LPKJ, IKJ, PKJ – TIM, DKJ, Rusli, Pesantren, Sanggar, Learning Outside the Classroom, Interdisciplinary Art.

### Introduction

Studying the history of the establishment of the Art Education Institute in the 1970s, especially in the city of Jakarta, has its own dynamic, because it cannot be separated from the social, political, economic, and scientific spark of its era. In 1970s, Indonesia had just escaped from a major political event, that was the affair known as September 30th Putsch (G30S) which culminated in a change of leadership, from President Soekarno to President Soeharto. One of political traumas experienced by Indonesian people at that time was the presence of People's Cultural Institute affiliated with Communist party, so that the slogan "Politics is the Commander" was born. This situation became one of Governor Ali Sadikin's considerations in building the civilization of the city of Jakarta, namely to give freedom of expression to artists in the arts and arts education, but on the condition that it should not linked to political interests, "art must be free from political interests". So that in 1968 the Jakarta Arts Center, Taman Ismail Marzuki (TIM) was founded.

The history of establishment Jakarta Arts Education Institute (LPKJ) associated with Jakarta Arts Center (PKJ), Taman Ismail Marzuki, at initiative of Governor Jakarta Province, Ali Sadikin, in 1968. After PKJ-TIM was established, it was deemed necessary to establish an educational institution, which will produce professional artists to build the civilization of the city of Jakarta. Governor Ali Sadikin emphasized the importance of presenting a fluid art education institution because it was considered that art education did not require a formal form so that all people could learn art without obtaining a certificate. In subsequent developments, LPKJ changed its name to Jakarta Arts Institute.

At the beginning of LPKJ establishment, many figures, including artists, painters, directors, dancers, choreographers, scholars, and writers were involved in finding the ideal education system. At that time Misbach Yusa Biran, a film director, screenwriter and member of the Jakarta Arts Council, was attracted by the painters Rusli and I Wajan Diyah, who had just returned from India, studying at Santiniketan. Misbach wanted to adopt the concept of education that grew in India. Santiniketan means "a place of peace". It is a typical school exploring local culture that is tailored to the needs of community.

The curriculum developed at Santiniketan is also different, that is, it teaches skills that are closely related to local culture. The concept of education is based on local wisdom, close to nature, so those who have been educated at this school really understand their culture and can use their knowledge to rich their culture and to advance the lives of their people. The spirit of education in Santiniketan, India, if we look closely, does have similarities with the education system in the LPKJ, especially at the beginning of its establishment. These similarities include the importance of learning off-campus, being one with nature and the importance of quality interactions between students and teachers who are closer to each other. The closeness between students and teachers in teaching and learning process reminds us of the education system in the style of a *sanggar* (studio) or *pesantren* (boarding school). Taufik Ismail, a famous Indonesian rhymester, said that the education system in LKPI is a combination of the *pesantren* and classical systems, the "pesantren" system with *kyai* (spiritual father that leads *pesantren*) and *cantrik* (apprentice) figures, there are close and open relationships between lecturers and students, absolutely for LPKJ arts education (Kompas daily, 24 June 1975).

LPKJ will have its own character compared to other Art Colleges in Indonesia, because it is the first Art College that has cross-disciplinary in nature, consisting of five academies: Academy of Fine Arts, Academy of Cinematography, Academy of Theater, Academy of Music and Academy of Dance. Meanwhile, the other arts colleges that were born in the 1960s were initially limited to the disciplines of Dance, *Karawitan* (Javanese traditional music) and Fine Arts (FSR IKJ. 2010: 31).

In addition, the freedom of students in obtaining cross-artistic education is also seen in the LPKJ education system. The same applies to Santiniketan, India. Departing from this thought, the authors want to further develop a study of relationship between Santiniketan and LPKJ. The form of LPKJ education which was founded in 1970s has spirit of interacting with the surrounding environment, which is a trend in 21st century education. Through interaction with environment, sensitivity, empathy, responsibility, and commitment will be achieved, which are very important principles for artists personal development.

There has been a previous study related to the method applied by Tagore, which was carried out by Yogyakarta State University students, Marzuki and Siti Khanifah (2016), namely the "Ideal Education of Tagore's Perspective and Ki Hajar Dewantara in the Character Building of Students". This research examines the influence of the Santiniketan education system, from the Tagore perspective on Ki Hajar Dewantara's Taman Siswa Education. Then Guha, M. (2013) also wrote about "Education in a Tagorean Perspective" in International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention. The novelty of this research is to examine the influence of Santiniketan on formation of LPKJ in 1970, which has never been done before.

### Research Method

This study uses historical method approach, namely *heuristics*, which is an activity related to the search for and finding raw material in accordance with the research objectives. *Verification*, which includes external and internal criticism of historical sources, the process of selecting data found in the field through a process of testing these data, both in terms of material and content. *Interpretation* or *explanation*, the process of interpreting or giving meaning and arranging the elements that have been obtained from the previous stages. And the last is the stage which aims to obtain a collection of facts that have a meaning (*fact of meaning*). The approach with the method of interpretation and explanation consists of the narrative method (*history of event*), structural, and structuristic. *Historiography* is the process of writing history based on proven facts. Then, historical writing is based on 3 concepts: Fact / Source, Objectivity and Truth (Southgate, 1996).

Conducting research on Art Education Institutions cannot be separated from the role of structure, where the involvement and active role of individuals and groups of individuals in changing the structure. Structure is a relationship between elements that results in a mutual agreement. According to Kartodirjo, as quoted by Sjamsuddin, that in the historical methodology there is an implicit understanding of theoretical knowledge and philosophy, the latter is especially used for writing of critical-analytical history (Sjamsuddin, Helius. 2016: 12).

### The Concept of LPKJ Education in 1970

The history of LPKJ's establishment has a close relationship with the establishment of the Jakarta Arts Center, Taman Ismail Marzuki (PKJ TIM) in 1968. PKJ TIM as the Jakarta Arts Center has a strategic role in providing space for appreciation and education art development in Indonesia. According to David T Hill, the formation of PKJ TIM cannot be separated from political events in 1965. PKJ TIM was an effort to present art institutions that prioritize "art for art" and independent from political interests.

*"The establishment of TIM in 1968 was testimony to the successful working relationship forged between anti communist artis, in ascendancy after the purge of the left wing in 1965-4, and ali sadikin. The idea of a national cultural venue had been mooted prior to the political turmoil of 1965, but the concept was not implemented. With the defeat of the leftists assured, artist who supported the new order regime held discussions with the recently appointed Jakarta governor regarding the establishment of a national cultural centre with state backing" (Hill, 1993:245).*

The spirit of establishing a TIM, which is free from political interests, has influenced various policies implemented in various programs of the Jakarta Arts Council. Likewise, the birth of the LPKJ since its inception has emphasized the principle of education that is open and does not provide room for intervention on the part of Government. This principle is fully supported by Governor Ali Sadikin, that all management and art programs as well as education will be left to the experts, namely artists, writers, cultural observers and art educators. LPKJ in the beginning, there were no certain prerequisites to be able to enter this educational institution, it was different from other educational institutions that students should have at least a high school level diploma.

The process of establishing the LPKJ was carried out by starting regular meetings between the Jakarta Academy and Jakarta Arts Council (DKJ). The Jakarta Academy is an advisory board for the Governor of Jakarta for arts and culture, the members are elected by DKJ. DKJ members who take care of the fine arts are Zaini, Trisno Soemardjo and Oesman Effendi. Meanwhile, the Jakarta Academy members who joined to think about LPKJ were Affandi, Rusli and Popo Iskandar. They then formed a team of thinkers who were entrusted with the concept of art education. In this team there was D.A. Peransi, a film expert, Asrul Sani, a theater expert, D. Djayakusuma, a theater expert, Wahyu Sihombing, a theater expert, and Trisno Soemardjo, who at that time served as chairman of the DKJ and was also known as a respected painter and fine art thinker. Trisno gave a substantial view that art education institutes must have a future-oriented philosophical foundation. This statement was conveyed by Roedjito, a painter, lecturer at the IKJ, to the authors when he was still teaching. Finally, based on the think-tank working group, LPKJ education concept was completed and submitted to Ali, the Jakarta Governor. In 1970 the Jakarta Arts Education Institute (LPKJ) was officially established at the Taman Ismail Marzuki Cultural Center complex. Education takes place on the third floor of the main building where the Jakarta Arts Council and Academy also have offices on the second floor (Figure 1).

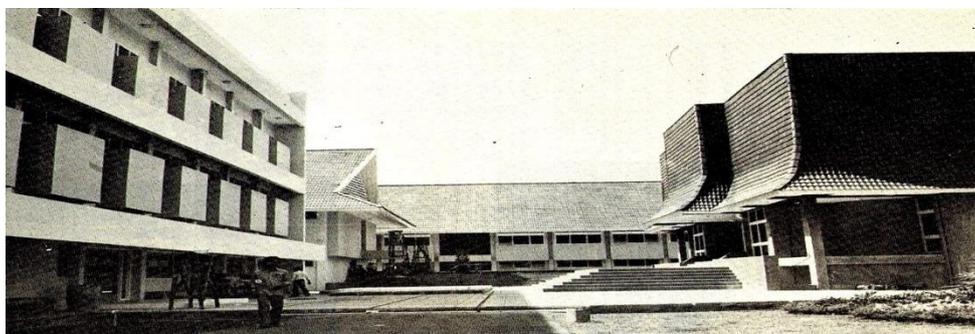


Figure 1 – DKJ building (doc: DKJ Documentation Center, Jakarta).

At the beginning of the LPKJ establishment, many figures, including artists, painters, directors, dancers, choreographers, scholars, and writers were involved in finding the ideal education system. Misbach Yusa Biran said that the painter Rusli and I Wajan Diyah had just returned from India to study at Santiniketan, they offered

the concept of education that grew in India. As explained at the beginning of the article, the spirit of education in Santiniketan, India, if you look closely, does have a spirit that is not much different at the beginning of the education system at LPKJ, namely learning off campus and adopting an education system that emphasizes the quality of interaction and communication between students and teachers closer and intense. As Taufik Ismail said,

*"The combination between the pesantren and classical systems, we have tried here since the first year of the LPKJ. Indeed, we have not yet obtained the final form. We're still looking. But what is currently going on is quite successful. The "pesantren" system with its kyai and cantrik figures, as well as a close and open relationship between lecturers and students, is essential for LPKJ arts education. In public lectures such as languages for example, the "pesantren" system has not been successfully implemented. But in the practice of painting, for example, automatic "personal touch" between lecturers and students is created. Because without it, a creative atmosphere will not arise, which means the failure of lecturer's teaching"* (Kompas Daily, 1975).

Another uniqueness of LPKJ is interdisciplinary education between Fine Arts, Performances and Film which are in one campus,

*"The presence of the LPKJ in Jakarta is considered unique because it is the only arts higher education institution that provides education in five different fields and integrated arts disciplines. This kind of education is the first in Indonesia, even according to Taufik Ismail, it may be the only one in Southeast Asia. In fact, according to Misbach, at one of the preparatory meetings for the establishment of LPKJ, he was asked to also open education in the field of literature, but when we asked, he did not remember exactly why this idea was not implemented"* (FSR IKJ, 26 December 2009).

### **The Influence of Santiniketan Education in LPKJ, 1970s**

The creation of the Indian Santiniketan school always connected to the role of Rabindranath Tagore. Tagore was born May 6, 1861 in Calcutta India, and was a highly respected Guru in all corners of his country. Tagore comes from the word "Thakur", the name for the gods (like Gusti in Javanese). Tagore's grandfather, Surendranath Tagore, was one of the important figures in India especially for the Brahma Samaj Movement. His father, Deven Dranath Tagore, was a Maharsi, and since he was young, he was active in the National movement and through his literary works was able to ignite the spirit of the nation. In 1901 he founded the Shanti Niketan (Place of Peace) school which later changed its name to Visvha Bharati University in 1922 (Tagore, Rabindranath. 2001: vii).

Tagore explained that spiritual knowledge is as important as scientific knowledge. Both are essential for developing trust in learning and in life. This is because developing self-confidence is important to an individual personality allowing him to accept strengths as well as weaknesses. Student self-confidence is an advantage for accepting one's weaknesses and mistakes. It plays an important role in self-conception to deepen self-appreciation. The learning approach taken by Rabindranath Tagore in the education system is experiential learning. This pattern can be seen from the Shantiniketan education model, in which Tagore provides a very interesting and comfortable outdoor learning experience (Guha, M. 2013).

The formation of the LPKJ in 1970 was inseparable from the role of the figures in this case, namely artists, cultural observers, intellectuals and lecturers, most of whom were registered as members of the Jakarta Arts Council formation. The experiences of these figures influenced the concept of the formation of LPKJ. Several names of figures who became the study of this research were recorded, as said by Misbach Yusa Biran. According to Misbach, there were two very important figures in the formation of the LPKJ who had conveyed the Santiniketan Education system, namely painter Rusli and dancer Wayan Diya. Both figures have received education in India, but the one who has formal education at Santiniketan is the painter Rusli.

Rusli was born in Medan in 1916, has mixed blood from his father and Javanese from his mother. When he was a child growing up in Medan, he went to school at HIS Medan. Continuing the MULO school in Yogyakarta, then entered the Yogyakarta Student Park. He then continued his education at the Kala Bhawana Art Department at the Santiniketan University of Rabindaranath Tagore, India. For 5 years (1934 - 1939) he studied fine art, sculpture and philosophy of eastern art. After returning from India, Rusli became a drawing teacher at Taman Siswa Yogyakarta (for 10 years). Rusli became part of "Seniman Masyarakat" (Community Artist). And when Sudjojono and some members of SIM (Seniman Indonesia Muda = Young Indonesian Artist) association moved to Surakarta, he acted as chairman of the Yogyakarta branch of SIM between 1947-1948. Rusli became head of the arts department at the Indonesian Defense Ministry's Army education section and around 1951 Rusli became a lecturer at the Indonesian Academy of Fine Arts, Yogyakarta. In 1953-1956, Rusli had the opportunity to visit various countries in Western Europe including the Netherlands at the invitation of Sticusa, a Dutch cultural institution in Indonesia which is now known as Erasmus Huis. In 1960, he was trusted to be the vice chairman of the International of Plastic Art, UNESCO (IAPA) in Indonesia. Then in 1970, he was elected to the membership for life.

The Santiniketan Education and Learning Model has inspired Rusli, who had studied there and as a Member of the Jakarta Academy, for the system to be implemented in LPKJ. However, this model is not contained in the LPKJ academic manuscript because the educational model resembles a sanggar or pesantren or padepokan (hermitage) with the added value of studying theories and concepts. Initially, LPKJ did not have an academic degree. The education and learning model like in Santiniketan was indeed carried out by several lecturers at the LPKJ but not all lecturers did it as standard of learning.

According to Rusli, information about Santiniketan was obtained when he was in the fifth grade of HIS (primary school),

*"At that time, I read the news in a magazine about the arrival of Rabindranath Tagore to Indonesia. The news is complemented by an article about Santiniketan. In this article, it is stated that Santiniketan is a free university, does not use rooms, the classes are only under trees, that is what caught my attention. When I left for India, my goal was only one Santiniketan. However, when I arrived in India, I got stuck in a medical school in Calcutta, joined by some friends who chose that school. As it turned out, medicine didn't suit me. Studying in medicine has many rules, and is told to read a lot of thick books. Wow, lame. I only lasted two months. I then went to Santiniketan, enrolled in the arts department. I see that in this school the painters or artists are very free – if you want to paint, yes; you don't want to paint, yes - you don't have to do it. It suits me"* (Rusli. 2001: 21).

While studying at Santiniketan, Rusli chose a major in painting, however, he also studied sculpture, dance, architecture, art philosophy, English literature, and even studied Indian classical dance, Katakali. Education at Santiniketan is a free method with a teacher who is a first-rate painter in India. The role of a teacher is not to teach painting techniques but rather to be present in the context of the spirit and to provide an atmosphere for students. Direct experience related to choosing a theme is very important, for example, how to paint a rainy atmosphere, you must first get experience and catch the feel of bathing in the rain:

*"I once painted girls in the rain. My lecturer said that my painting is visually good, but there is the most important thing, namely the rainy atmosphere, which is not in the painting. I was told to walk in the rain for five days. "It's the rainy season now. You walk in the rain every day until I tell you to stop," said my lecturer. After I lived it, I could feel the rainy atmosphere. After that I made the same painting again and I put in a rainy atmosphere"* (Rusli. 2001: 22).

Apart from Rusli, other teachers who have similarities method with Santiniketan education system are the teacher and painter, Oesman Effendi, Nashar and Zaini. Coincidentally, the three teachers came from Padang, West Sumatra. In the history of the establishment of education in West Sumatra, it is known that Kayu Tanam school has been influenced by Santiniketan. When this research was carried out, no data was found that

strengthened this context, but what was interesting was the spirit that the three founders of the LPKJ Fine Arts Academy had always instilled, namely how the artists must respect nature in the process of working.

Studying at LPKJ, students are instilled with a concern for the social and natural environment. Training about environmental sensitivity is a provision to make students have sensitive character but also be strong and independent. It is common for students to be invited to visit a wider open space, such as visiting beaches, mountains, markets, stations to make sketches, make films and create outdoor dance choreographies. Before working, students are asked to appreciate the open nature (Figure 2).



Figure 2 – Students visit a temple in order to study outside the classroom (doc: FSR IKJ Library).

The Chairperson of LPKJ in 1979, D. Djayakusuma, said that the experience of LPKJ students in interacting with the social and natural environment was very important so students as prospective artists did not become "ivory towers",

*"The walls of lecture halls and studios can make students knowledgeable and skilled, but not live in their surroundings, and can turn into ivory towers, which are artsy for the arts only, but not for the happiness and spiritual wealth of society. Going to the village, into the village, roam the forest, learning from and working with local artists, with them going to the fields, is what LPKJ students dream of"* (D. Djayakusuma. 1979: 7).

One example of outdoor learning activities carried out by LPKJ students of the Fine Arts Academy in 1978 was visiting the Surowono temple, East Java, students from the Dance Academy to Bali, and a multi-disciplinary group to Nias island. Another teacher who played an important role in instilling the spirit of Santiniketan was painter Nashar. In one of the writings of "Surat-surat Malam" (Night Letters) written by Nashar, he tells of his teaching experience at LPKJ, which gives students personal freedom in their work.

*"To offer the pattern of freedom that I have, to students, together with OE (Oesman Effendi) in the framework of a workshop (off-campus study) in Kali Baru, we do not require students to paint directly but encourage them to get along with their natural surroundings first".*

According to OE and Nashar, the Academy of Fine Arts should implement a studio education system in which students must have greater abilities in terms of practice. Life and nature are the "main teachers", while theoretical and scientific courses are only support to help understanding of life and nature. One of OE's students, Mustika, said that OE is an artist who has principles and always emphasizes that the best teacher to become a painter is "nature". According to OE, an educator must lead students to get close to nature, observe nature. This natural rhythm must be captured and expressed by the painter (FSR IKJ. 2010: 72).

The concept of LPKJ education that Nashar and OE applied has in common with the teachings of Santiniketan, namely the importance of students interacting with nature in order to live up the universe. Taking LPKJ students to study outside the classroom, sketching is part of LPKJ Fine Arts Academy Education curriculum. The recognition that was conveyed by the painter Rusli when studying at Santiniketan, especially in applying the principle of the importance of a student living the object or theme of a painting before working, was also applied by OE and Nashar. When a student is going to paint a boat or a natural landscape, then the student is invited to go into the open air, to breathe the air of the universe, so that he can get the essence of natural forces.

The existence of DKJ members and LPKJ lecturers play an important role in the formation of the LPKJ. Misbach Yusa Biran, who attended the initial meetings of the LPKJ formation, often mentioned the name of the painter Rusli who always brought up the concept of Santiniketan education, while another name was dancer I Wayan Diya. However, after the authors conducted data searches and interviews, Wayan Diya did not play a strategic role. That the person concerned had studied in India is true but did not specifically convey the idea of Santiniketan.

The educational background of LPKJ thinkers and founders, especially those who had received Santiniketan education system, is reflected in the concept of LPKJ education in the 1970s. In this case, it can be seen how knowledge can function as a form of authority that simultaneously spreads the effects of power (Foucault, Michel. 2002: 87). According to Foucault, power is not only owned or controlled by the State or Government, but power is everywhere, because power is closely related to the dimensions of relations. This means that where relationship exist, there will be a new form of power. And all of us who are involved in a relationship are a part of mechanism for that power. Power according to Foucault is not something negative but on the contrary is productive and reproductive. The relationship between LPKJ lecturers who coincidentally came from the Minang realm, formed the power in implementing the education system in LPKJ with the spirit of Santiniketan.

IKJ is still standing today, although in its development there have been several changes in curriculum policy. This change concerns various government policies in the 1990s, especially those emphasize administrative issues towards quantity, including the attendance of students and lecturers who must meet a number of measurable meetings in one semester. Gradually this changed the concept of off-campus education and the concept of cross-disciplinary art education which was the legacy of IKJ at the beginning of its formation. The content of the curriculum, which requires students to master one art discipline, also limits the space for lecturers and students to apply education outside the campus. However, there are still traces of the spirit of Santiniketan education, namely students studying outside campus and are allowed to take interdisciplinary courses. Facing today's global challenges, the spirit of Santiniketan, which became one of the foundations for the establishment of the LPKJ-IKJ in 1970, is very relevant, because it can produce graduates who are ready to use in the arts industry and creative economy, who have independence and sensitivity to the social environment.

## Conclusion

1. In the process of establishing the LPKJ, the role of structure, namely the relationship between internal and external elements, is very important. The role of members of the Jakarta Arts Council, artists, intellectuals, academics is the key in providing views and ideas in the concept of education. Rusli who attended school in Santiniketan, was very influential in directing the concept of LPKJ education.
2. Santiniketan Education emphasizes the importance of creating a pleasant and comfortable learning atmosphere through learning outside the classroom, so that the character of students can be formed naturally. Education is also expected to motivate students to appreciate the community environment through caring and sharing attitudes. This spirit of education influences the concept of LPKJ education, namely through learning models outside the classroom and interacting with the social environment.
3. Traces of the Santiniketan spirit seen in the LPKJ education system, namely learning outside the classroom and interacting intensely with open nature. The form of close communication between students and teachers is known as “sanggar” or “pesantren” education. The concept of Santiniketan education gives freedom to students to explore other fields of art, beyond the choice of students.
4. Through the concept of Santiniketan Education which was built in 1970, currently LPKJ-IKJ graduates play an important role, even becoming the vanguard in advancing cultural arts in Indonesia, because they become creative, innovative and productive workers who are ready to be absorbed by industry or independent workers in the field of art.

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