Visual History

A Neglected Resource for the Longue Durée

Jean Gelman Taylor

Felipe Fernández-Armesto enjoins historians to study creative works of the past. Here, he writes, is a precious source of images and sentiments that informed thought and behaviour of peoples long gone (Fernández-Armesto 2002:152). Art and literature, he continues, help historians interpret documents and other material evidence, which are the stuff of historical research. Peter Burke (2001:13) reminds us that artworks, like any other of the historian's sources (which he calls 'traces of the past in the present'), must be studied within their social context. By this he means the cultural, political and material setting, artistic conventions of the day, the circumstances in which an image was commissioned, its intended function, and the physical location in which a work was originally seen. Svetlana Alpers (1983) characterises Dutch painting as 'the art of describing'. Burke links this value for observation of detail with urban culture, and notes that the inventor of the microscope was Dutch.¹ But painters do not see with an 'innocent eye'. Portraits, scenes of small groups, rural and city views are, in Burke's words, 'painted opinion'.²

Fernand Braudel's methodology of the long time-span in historical studies of society fosters asking of visual records if there are constants in topics and themes, if there are changes in perspective (Braudel 1980:25–54). In the case of Dutch images of Indonesia and Indonesians, a long time span allows charting of visual experience, impact, adjustment and perspective. It yields a more subtle understanding of what we may already know from written records.

Dutch artists produced a corpus of visual imagery in three centuries of interaction with peoples and places in the Indonesian archipelago. These images formed and reflected sensibilities of artists and audiences in the Netherlands and in communities across 'VOC Asia' and the Netherlands Indies.³ These latter included the multi-ethnic inhabitants of private households – immigrants,

1 Burke (2001:84). This was Cornelis Drebbel (1572–1633).

2 Burke (2001:19, 122). He adds that 'photographs are no exception to this rule', and this holds true of the so-called 'candid camera' shot as well as the posed or staged photograph.

3 VOC are the Dutch initials for the United East Indies Company (1602–1799). VOC Asia was a string of trading posts in Asian ports and across the Indonesian archipelago, headquartered in Batavia (present-day Jakarta).

locally born, Indigenous – as well as purchasers of artworks, apprentices and artisans in wood- and metal-working, assistants in ateliers and photographic studios, and local artists who came into contact with Dutch artists or their work.

The body of Dutch art in and on Indonesia sprang from an increasingly urban, prosperous society in Holland where, in the seventeenth century, a growing proportion of the population could afford works of art. Art ceased to be constrained by patronage in the Netherlands Golden Age. Alongside small numbers of artists working on commissions for the nobility, guild artists now produced for a mass of anonymous buyers. Art markets and auctions circulated artworks, generated and responded to public demand. In every year of the seventeenth century, 63,000–70,000 pictures were painted for a population numbering approximately 1.85 million (North 2010:90). Inventories of well-to-do villagers and townspeople record ownership of paintings and establish changes in the function of art, popular values and taste. Religious art, which had assisted the private devotions of Roman Catholics, gave way to Protestant preference for morally instructive, mundane scenes. By the 1650s, the Dutch buying public wanted sea- and landscapes, and the well-to-do commissioned portraits of themselves.

This visual culture, with its secular subject matter and love for ‘the look of things’ (Berger 1974), travelled to Indonesia’s islands. Batavia, founded in 1619, already had an art market by 1627. In that year, Gillis Vinant’s art collection was auctioned. This Dutch merchant had amassed 28 paintings in all. His collection included nine landscapes and seven Chinese paintings.⁴

Surveying three centuries of production, we find sketches, oil- and watercolours, portraits, sea- and landscapes. Alongside work of the hand, we find mechanically produced images from the earliest days of lithography in the 1840s to photographs and, from around 1912, moving pictures.⁵ This creative work catered for a Dutch public avid for images of the Indies. The crowds visiting colonial halls of the great international exhibitions of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries attest to the instructive and aesthetic appeal of the image.

4 North (2010:94). Some of Vinant’s paintings are identified in the inventory by size and frame rather than subject matter.

5 Many of the paintings and photographs I discuss here are located in the digital image collections of the Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies (KITLV), the Tropenmuseum (TM) of the Royal Tropical Institute (KIT) and the Rijksmuseum (RM) in Amsterdam. Text citations include archive initials with catalogue number. Websites are: www.kitlv.nl; www.tropenmuseum.nl; and www.rijksmuseum.nl/collectie.

New art forms – wood carvings, illustrated manuscripts, decorated textiles, puppets, ritual objects of gold, silver filigree jewellery, and the like – journeyed from Indonesian manufactories and artists' centres to the glass cabinets of Holland's new museums of the nineteenth century.⁶ In this novel cultural milieu, Dutch Everyman and Everywoman could now see for themselves what, until this new age of public culture, had been hidden in the private collections of the royal house and in the country villas of Indies *nouveaux riches* repatriates in Holland. The *longue durée* approach enables us to trace a history of deepening engagement of Dutch people in Indonesian communities over time and place, and a history of Dutch lives there that encompassed relationships of both kin and conqueror. This body of artworks parallels and illustrates research interests of Peter Boomgaard whose scholarship is honoured in this book.⁷

From Ship's Deck to Shore

The first works from Dutch painters were views of Indonesia's bays, fortified settlements and mountains concealing an unknown interior, such as *View of Batavia from the Sea* (RM SK-A-2513) by Hendrick Jacobsz Dubbels (1621–1707). While these paintings are of mighty Dutch vessels, crashing waves and stormy skies, they establish for historians from the beginning the entwined nature of Dutch-Indonesian relations. For the Dutch ships, anchored offshore, are surrounded by smaller Asian vessels ferrying travellers and goods into port.

Going ashore brought the Dutch into relations with sellers of all kinds, introduced women into their contacts, and led to new features of urban landscape in the archipelago. A painting by Abraham Storck (1644–1708), 'Onrust Island off Batavia', (RM SK-A-739), shows dry dock shipyards built to support the VOC's maritime commerce and two windmills.⁸ Markets and local characters are recorded in pencil and paint. Some were the work of amateurs, some of draughtsmen and trained artists who drew

6 The world's first colonial museum opened in Haarlem in 1871. Its collections were later transferred to the Royal Tropical Institute, which opened in Amsterdam in 1910. Drieënhuizen (2012) discusses three private collections of artworks assembled in the Indies and later acquired by museums in the Netherlands.

7 Boomgaard's publications cover Indonesia's agriculture and livestock industries, forests, wildlife, landholding, demography, disease and technology transfer. They are supported and informed by visual data from the Netherlands' rich image archives. Boomgaard's *oeuvre* validates insights of historians of art and of the *longue durée*. See, for example, Boomgaard (1996, 2001a, 2003c, 2008a) and Boomgaard and Van Dijk (2001).

8 The flag on the main ship bears the VOC logo and date 1699. Indonesian and Dutch men scrape the hull of one of the ships.

what they saw on site and in their local studio, or who, on returning to Holland, painted from sketches and memory. And some of these early instructive scenes of the Indies were produced by artists who never left Holland.⁹

Four large paintings in the Rijksmuseum collection illustrate Batavia at mid-century. Two are portraits. Much of Aelbert Cuyp's portrait of senior merchant Jacob Mathieusen, his wife and Indonesian servant is given over to Batavia's harbour and fort.¹⁰ The slave-servant holds an enormous *payung* or umbrella over the couple who are about to repatriate. Bay, fort, slave and *payung* evoke VOC Asia, but Cuyp (1620–1691) never left Holland. Yet his painterly imagination captured essentials of its headquarters in his depiction of Dutch and Asian vessels and the Javanese status symbol. Some commentators have scorned Cuyp's depiction of the Indonesian man as fanciful, but the Dutch artist Jacob Jansz. Coeman (c. 1636–1706), who did go to Batavia and spent 43 years there, rendered the male slave in his portrait of the Cnoll family in a style very similar to Cuyp's (RM SK-A-4062). Central figures in this opulent

FIGURE 12.1 *Abraham Storck, Onrust Island off Batavia*
COLLECTION RIJKSMUSEUM, AMSTERDAM (RM SK-A-739).

9 There is no evidence Dubbels ever travelled to Java.

10 RM SK-A-2350. See Zandvliet (2002:181–182) on identification of Mathieusen. Alternative forms of his name in VOC documents are Mahuysen and Martensen.

painting are senior merchant Pieter Cnoll, his part-Japanese wife Cornelia van Nieuwenroode, and two of their daughters. In painting the Cnoll women as Eurasians, Coeman presents an image of the VOC's female elite that we know from birth and marriage records to be accurate (J. Taylor: 2007, 2009).

The other two paintings illustrate Batavia's markets. Albert Eckhout's *A Market Stall in Batavia* presents (RM SK-A-4070), in the manner of a Dutch still life, a rich assemblage of mangoes, bananas, pineapples, rambutan and durian, some cut open to reveal their inner composition. These exotic fruits are named for viewers on a scroll in the painting's right-hand corner. Eckhout (c. 1610–1665) may have derived his notions of Batavia markets from returned travellers, for the scene he paints he never personally saw. Perhaps he viewed tropical fruits grown under glass in Amsterdam's botanical garden, established in 1628. Perhaps he was inspired by his sojourn of 1637–1644 in Brazil as commissioned painter for Johan Maurits, governor of the Dutch colony there. The stall's Chinese seller and Indonesian women customers tell a truth ambiguously.¹¹ Andries Beeckman (?–1664) painted Batavia's fort and market when in Holland, but based his painting on drawings he had made in Batavia. He painted two versions, each with a different combination of the representative characters who inhabit the central space of his canvas. The Rijksmuseum's version has a pair of robed Chinese men in conversation, a Muslim teacher in white turban and robe, manual labourers in loin cloths and head wrappers, and women in *kain kebaya*, one walking arm-in-arm with a European man.¹²

An early overview of Batavia comes from its Chinese community in the form of a medallion presented to Governor-General Jacques Specx as he prepared to repatriate in 1632 (De Haan 1922–23:G8). It gives an urban planner's view of the walled city, showing the castle's relationship to the sea-lanes, to the young city's neighbourhoods and environs. The obverse is engraved in Latin and Chinese characters. This mapped image of Batavia reminds us that, at this stage, the Dutch were more on Indonesia's seas than on land, more turned outwards than to the villages and princely capitals of the interior.

11 Dutch artists often portrayed servants as cheeky thieves. Cuyp painted an Indonesian stealing a banana from the Chinese fruit seller's stall. Coeman, too, has painted the man-servant surreptitiously reaching for an orange from the bowl the female servant offers the Cnolls.

12 *Batavia Castle seen from the West Side of the Kali Besar*, c. 1656, RM SK-A-19. The second version of Beeckman's painting (Tropenmuseum, 118–167) is in the KIT. *Kain kebaya* consists of a long-sleeved blouse and a length of material wrapped around the waist, covering the legs to the ankles.

Dutch Encounters with Asian Arts

The first Asian art the Dutch came to know was a natural circumstance of their positioning within a maritime world: it was the art of China and Japan. The Chinese exported their artworks to VOC markets; the Dutch exported Japan's to Asia and Europe. For all three partners, art was a commodity. Asian and European urban classes wanted to own and display art objects, both novel and traditional. Art in the form of trade goods cultivated individual preferences for a broadening range of creative works. We have already noted the Chinese paintings in Vinant's collection. Probate inventories from Batavia establish that this was to be a characteristic of Dutch collecting in Batavia.¹³ Trade figures confirm the taste developed in Europe for Asian ceramics. Over two centuries, the VOC shipped 43 million pieces of porcelain to the Netherlands (De Vries 2008:130).

The Chinese adapted their designs to Dutch forms, such as painted tiles for VOC markets (De Haan 1922–23:D24, D25). In turn, Dutch artists borrowed Chinese motifs and forms. The Amsterdam artist, Cornelis Pronk (1691–1754), for example, sent designs for a series of glazed porcelain plates to his VOC contacts in Batavia. They forwarded his designs to Guangdong and then shipped the finished plates back for sale to connoisseurs of the new *chinoiserie* in Europe around 1736.¹⁴ Oliver Impey and Christiaan Jörg have documented the VOC's export trade in Japanese lacquer ware to other Asian markets and to Holland (Impey and Jörg 2005). VOC officials presented trays, boxes, chests and cabinets as gifts to envoys and potentates everywhere they conducted business, and so introduced a new repertoire into various cultural milieus.¹⁵

Because VOC dealings with Indonesian statelets were, in the early decades of contact, primarily on the coasts, Indigenous art the Dutch first came to know grew out of Indonesia's Muslim culture. Close to princely residences in port towns the Dutch saw mosques that were distinguished by multiple roofs. VOC-era Dutch were both observers of, and participants in, this Islamic-infused culture. The Dutchman Lucas Cardeel (d. Batavia after 1706), for instance, having become Raden Wiraguna in the employ of Sultan Ageng of Banten (r. 1651–1683)

13 De Loos-Haaxman (1941); North and Ormrod (1998); Scalliet et al., (1999); Zandvliet (2002).

14 Pronk's design has a Chinese woman and maid at its centre, and Chinese men and women alternating with birds in cartouches around the perimeter, RM AK-RBK-15939-A. Pronk's original drawing is catalogued as RM RP-T-1967-18.

15 On Asian luxury goods sent on VOC ships to the Netherlands see Van Campen and Hartkamp-Jonxis (2011).

FIGURE 12.2 *Cornelis Pronk, Porcelain Dish with Chinese Design*
COLLECTION RIJKSMUSEUM, AMSTERDAM (RM AK-RBK-15939).

and a Muslim, designed a minaret for Banten's principal mosque.¹⁶ Minarets were not then a feature of Southeast Asia's mosques. Multi-roofed structures could not readily accommodate them. Verandas attached to a mosque housed the local solution for alerting the congregation to prayer in the form of a large drum (*bedug*).¹⁷ Cardeel's way out for the five-roofed mosque of Banten was to design a tower for the mosque grounds. This Dutch Muslim perhaps modelled his minaret on the lighthouse from a remembered past in Holland.

¹⁶ KITLV 36 A-48, KITLV 27538.

¹⁷ The *bedug* became controversial as Indonesians travelled more in Muslim lands of the Middle East and Central Asia. A late nineteenth century fatwa declared it an unacceptable substitute for the muezzin's call to prayer (Kaptein 1997:10).

Through diplomatic exchange the Dutch came into contact with Islamic-inspired art styles such as royal 'golden letters'. These establish the skills of Indigenous illuminators and their participation in a Muslim artistic tradition emanating from Persia and Mughal India. Anonymous Indigenous artists embellished text with borders of flowers and leaves in gold and coloured inks in repeating geometric patterns, and interspersed single flowers within text to indicate new cantos or sections. Elaborate floral frontispieces and colophons begin and end manuscripts.¹⁸

Little influence of Indonesian art styles or themes is discernible in Dutch paintings from this period, but Asian decorative forms migrated into European-style furniture, such as chairs, armoires, tables and bedsteads. They were made in Batavia workshops, crafted from Coromandel and Indonesian woods, elaborately carved with flowers and foliage by Indian, Sri Lankan and Indigenous woodworkers.¹⁹ Deon Viljoen has traced the journey of one piece, a massive bureau-cabinet with inlays of Asian hardwoods and ivory, he believes was commissioned from Batavia's furniture workshops and Javanese woodcarvers by Hendrik Swellengrebel, governor of the Cape settlement from 1739 to 1751. On repatriation, the cabinet travelled with Swellengrebel from Cape Town to the villa he purchased near Utrecht.²⁰ In this micro-history we find Javanese decorative forms incorporated into furniture showing the influence of mid-eighteenth century Dutch and German designs. It reminds us that Javanese were involved in the production of other 'European' artworks in Indonesia, for example, mixing paints and stretching canvases in painters' studios.

The Human Likeness: Typologies and Portraits

In the early decades of contact, the Dutch did not travel much inland. Frederik Coyett was the first Dutchman reputed to have seen the Borobudur. That was in 1732. It was the monument's Buddha images that attracted his eye. Borobudur's wall panels, alive with men, women and heavenly beings, framed

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- 18 See examples of royal letters in Gallop (1991, 2011:105–140); *Pameran seabad* 1992: figures 53–55; and examples of decorated manuscripts in Gallop (1995: figures 76–77); and Kumar and McGlynn (1996).
 - 19 See examples in the Rijksmuseum: BK-1994-37, BK-NM-12028-1 and NG-10998. See also De Haan 1922–23:C1–C24.
 - 20 Viljoen 2007:450–459. The inventory of Swellengrebel's possessions shows he also brought to the Netherlands Chinese and Japanese ceramics, lacquered furniture and Indian textiles.

by trees, foliage, birds and monkeys, were possibly not visible to him on account of the dirt, rubble and plants that had accumulated over the centuries. Coyett brought several of the Buddha sculptures back to Batavia and placed them in the garden surrounding the villa he built just before his death in 1736. In time his landed estate passed to Batavia's Chinese community who, also attracted to the Buddha images, transformed Coyett's residence into the Chinese temple and burial ground known as Klenteng Sentiong (now named Vihara Buddhayana).²¹

For much of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, what remains of artists' records, therefore, are harbour city scenes, views of new suburbs outside Batavia's walls, and the country estate of governors-general in Buitenzorg (Bogor). From Johannes Rach (1720–d. Batavia 1783) there are many drawings (ink on paper) of official buildings and residences of the VOC, of churches, tree-lined avenues and public fountains in Batavia, and of the environs of Buitenzorg. Into these settings Rach placed representative groupings: ladies and gentlemen of the VOC elite; Chinese merchants and porters; Indigenous working people in town and fields.²² Again we see the entwined lives of these recognizable types. J.E. Brandes (1743–1808) has also left many views of Batavia and Batavians, illustrations of Chinese temples, Indonesian troops, Javanese dancers, and a coloured drawing of his own house and extensive grounds.²³

Into this world of interconnected sea ports the Dutch introduced the portrait. VOC personnel brought likenesses of relatives with them to their postings in Asia; they commissioned portraits of themselves abroad; they had copies made to circulate among family that was scattered across the globe. The VOC commissioned portraits of every governor-general. It became a convention to portray these demi-royals of the Batavian Republic in the ceremonial dress then prevailing in Holland, with rod of office and emblems of the world's first global corporation. The ill-fated governor-general, Adriaan Valckenier (r. 1737–1741), for example, strikes an open pose in happier times, in wig, red velvet jacket and intricately embroidered waistcoat before a drapery pulled aside to allow view of a Dutch ship, the VOC's lifeline.²⁴ His portraitist, Theodorus

21 "Dari Goenoeng Sarie ke Kelenteng Sentiong," *Kompas*, 10 October 2009.

22 See Rach's drawings from 1765–75 in the Rijksmuseum, NG-400-AA, D, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, S, T and Y; and drawings dating from 1770–1772, KITLV 51 C-1-4.

23 198 of Brandes's drawings are examined in De Bruijn and Raben, 2004. The Rijksmuseum holds 600 of his watercolours and drawings. The drawing of his house is catalogued as RM NG-1985-7-2-143.

24 *Portrait of Valckenier, 1737*, by Th. J. Rheen (d. Batavia 1745), RM SK-A-3778, and a copy (by Rheen), RM SK-A-4547.

Justinus Rheen, had begun his artistic career in Amsterdam, but worked in Batavia from 1737.²⁵ The official portrait of Valckenier's predecessor, Abraham Patras, is also attributed to Rheen.²⁶

Few portraits of Dutch women have survived. Of those known, most were of wives and daughters of the VOC's elite. They stand, in the conventions of Dutch portraiture of the age, before balustrades, Grecian urns, columns and draperies. Little anchors them in place. No background scenery, flowers or animals allow viewers to identify a specific Asian locale. Only mountains or ships painted into the background suggest 'the East'. While, at the time, portraits of elite families were commissioned works of known persons, their subjects are now often unknown to us. For example, the child holding a bunch of grapes in a 1663 portrait by Coeman has been identified as Joanna van Riebeeck, younger daughter of the Cape's founder, or alternatively as Johannes van Rees, future brother-in-law to Van Riebeeck.²⁷ Karel Schoeman attributes another mid-seventeenth century portrait of a young girl to Coeman on the basis of its painterly skill and style, and assumes that Coeman painted her during his lay-over in Cape Town on the voyage out from Holland in 1664.²⁸

The Dutch portrait entered a world with quite different traditions governing the public representation of men and women. In place of the portrait, which explores an individual's character through the face, Indonesian traditions contemporary with the Dutch revealed individuals through family or lineage name and rank titles. Illustrations of heroes and heroines in manuscripts presented them as stylized, *wayang*-like figures.²⁹ An older, pre-Islamic tradition on Java rendered kings and queens in sculpted conventions of deities.³⁰ So it was possibly a jarring innovation when portraits of governors-general were presented by VOC officials to sultans and military allies. Did this custom induce a new sense of self? All that can safely be said is that at least one VOC-era sultan

25 Rijksbureau voor Kunsthistorische Documentatie, Entry 66509 (www.rkd.nl).

26 RM SK-A-3777, and copy RM SK-A-4546.

27 J. Taylor (2007:70–76). The portrait in the Rijksmuseum is catalogued RM SK-A-809.

28 Schoeman (2006): back cover. The girl stands brilliant in a red dress before a leafy countryside that is threatened by rain clouds.

29 See, for example, the Princess of Jengala, *Serat Panji Jayakusuma* manuscript, c. 1840, National Library of Indonesia, KBG 139, reproduced in Kumar and McGlynn (1996: x, 182), and *wayang*-like travellers in a two-masted sailing ship (p. 183). Examples from *Serat Damar Wulan* (British Library MSS Jav. 89, early nineteenth century) are in Coster-Wijsman (1953:153–163); Gallop (1991: figure 22); and Gallop (1995: figures 44–46).

30 For example, a late thirteenth century sculpture of Prajnaparamita, Buddhist goddess of wisdom, is thought to represent Ken Dedes, first queen of Singhasari (National Museum of Indonesia).

FIGURE 12.3 *J.J. Coeman, The Cnoll Family*
COLLECTION RIJKSMUSEUM, AMSTERDAM (RM SK-A-4062).

entered into a compact with an unknown Dutch artist to sit for his own portrait. This was Sultan Sayfoeddin of Tidore (r. 1657–1689).³¹ Apparently the sultan did not long have the leisure to study his image, for his portrait embarked on its own journeys, eventually coming to Amsterdam's Rijksmuseum by way of Poland and France.

Few named likenesses of Indonesian individuals, as distinct from representative 'types' in paintings and sketches, have survived from the VOC centuries. Léonard Blussé (1997) makes the case that the male servant in Coeman's portrait of the Cnoll family (RM SK-A-4062) is Untung, better known in Indonesian histories as Surapati. Blussé traces his life from Balinese slave, to head of a Balinese militia serving the VOC, to militia commander for Amangkurat II, and finally to ruler of his own realm in East Java. Women servants were favourite subjects for Dutch painters, but their names are unknown. So it is an exception in this genre to be able to identify an Indigenous woman servant in a drawing by Jan

31 Zandvliet (2002): front cover and 121. Some Indonesian dignitaries also sat for their portraits in the later colonial period, even though photographic portraits were then fashionable and cheaper. See portraits of Adipati Mandoera Djajadiningrat, KITLV 5051, and Raden Tumenggung Kartatatanagara, KITLV 37 C-167, both painted in 1846 by Charles William Meredith van de Velde (1818–1898).

Brandes (RM NG-1985-7-2-72). She was his domestic companion and carer for his son. Brandes called her Roosje.

Javanese assistants and apprentices who worked for European artists and draughtsmen became familiar with European art styles. Perhaps some painted parts of large canvases as their counterparts did in Holland. The American medical doctor and naturalist, Thomas Horsfield (1773–1859), who drew Java's antiquities and daily life, trained the Javanese he hired in painting techniques. 'Javanese Procession' by one of his Indigenous staff shows a long line of men and women, drawn in semi-profile, but naturalistically. Some play drums, gongs and a wind instrument; men carry aloft women in ceremonial costume; *payung* bearers follow two men on horseback.³² From the early nineteenth century some Indian and Chinese artists in Java were painting Indonesia's flora and fauna in the European scientific style that combined precision of observation with beautiful images (Gallop 1995: plates 31–9).

Nature Turned into Landscape

With the expansion of Dutch military and economic control into Java's interior in the nineteenth century, European artists came to know the hinterlands of coastal cities. From 'inner Java' come paintings in which human beings, Dutch and Indonesian, are dwarfed before magnificent mountains, embedded into the natural landscape, rather than imposing themselves on it. Java's mountains fill the canvases Abraham Salm (1801–1876) painted during the 29 years he spent in the Indies. They overwhelm the tiny figures of villagers who celebrate weddings, walk along tracks or sail in small craft.³³ Three Europeans raise their arms to the smoking crater of Gedeh Mountain in a painting by Adrianus Johannes Bik (1790–1872); their Indigenous attendants squat at a distance, apparently indifferent to the natural wonder before them.³⁴ Jan Simon Gerardus Gramberg (1823–1888) also emphasized the majesty of landscape in which Indonesians pursued their daily lives. In his painting 'Prahu Mountain' (TM 3728-448) a farmer carrying his load trudges through un-noticing; a man in Muslim dress studies his book; Gramberg alone urges us to contemplate the grandeur of nature.³⁵

32 Gallop (1995): plate 16, early nineteenth-century watercolour.

33 See, for example, *View of Salak Mountain*, KITLV 47 A-72 (painted 1865–1876), *View of Kedong Badak estate and the main road to Bogor*, KITLV 47 D-17 (1872); and *Solo River*, TM 3728–417.

34 *Gedeh Mountain*, c. 1828, TM 3728–528.

35 *Prahu Mountain*, TM 3728–448. See other examples of this genre by F.C. Wilsen (TM 3728–422; KITLV 47 A-78), and by Van de Velde (TM 4108–237).

FIGURE 12.4 *J.S.G. Gramberg, Prahu Mountain*
NATIONAL MUSEUM OF WORLD CULTURES (TM 3728–448).

Even subjects of historical significance could be rendered in soft, romantic style. A painting of the all-Java highway, the Great Post Road, that Governor-General H.W. Daendels (r. 1808–1811) called for and that shifts of Java's *corvée* labourers laid across mountains, through forests and malarial swamps over 1,000 kilometres at great cost to health and life, exemplifies this style and mentality. The anonymous artist has painted a pleasant scene of smoothly surfaced road winding through stepped rice fields bordered by forest and a long view to distant mountains. Small figures of Indonesian porters and a covered coach are in the foreground (TM 1012–1). Nor did the turmoil, destruction and death toll of the Diponegoro War (1825–1830) in Java intrude into serene scenes of high mountains and luxuriant forests painted by Antoine Auguste Joseph Payen (1792–1853), who first arrived in Java in 1817. In one landscape, painted in 1828, a gentle light bathes the neat house of the assistant-resident of Banyuwangi. His Indigenous servants hold a *payung* above him; messengers who have travelled the Post Road bring him mail (RM SK-A-3452).

This pastoral style continued into the twentieth century, even though Indonesian landscapes had by then been permanently transformed by deforestation, commercial farms, steel bridges, railways, factories, new towns

and denser populations. Mountains, rice fields and a huge tree suggest unchanging countryside still overwhelms insignificant humanity in a landscape painted around 1954 by Jan Christiaan Poortenaar (1886–1958). A few Indonesians sit idly in an otherwise empty scene, in which there is no trace of modern Java's motorized bicycles, busy markets and crowds (TM 4754–126). Indonesian artists, such as R. Basuki Abdullah (1915–1993), also painted in this style, called 'Mooi Indië' (beautiful Indies).³⁶

Painted History

With paintings of historical events we return to the theme of artists creating images of people and activities they themselves did not witness. Javanese manuscript embellishers had their own traditions of visual history. From the late nineteenth century two history paintings by an unknown Javanese artist show a marriage of Indigenous narrative convention and European elements. Both are watercolours, painted around 1890, of dramatic episodes in the reign of Amangkurat II (r. 1677–1703). The first imagines the execution in 1680 of Prince Trunajaya. At centre the sultan personally stabs the captured rebel with his *kris* 'Noble Blabor' (KITLV 48 M-5). Attendants carry lances and a sword; one holds a *payung* over his sultan. Trunajaya's sisters weep. Dutchmen are incorporated into the composition as witnesses; a Javanese attending them holds aloft a Dutch flag. The second imagines Amangkurat overseeing execution by strangling in 1703 of a faithless wife and her lover (KITLV 48 M-6). Here the sultan is elevated above the scene, seated on a stool; retainers sit cross-legged on the ground. One holds a *payung* over Amangkurat, another two men pay obeisance. Tigers maul the offending wife's women servants who are confined, naked, in a cage.³⁷ Both historical scenes are set outdoors and framed by trees and birds. While two-dimensional, the figures are drawn with life-like, individual features.

A colonial government building with the royal coat-of-arms, a large Dutch flag and a crowd of uniformed military with lances drawn dominate a history painting by Nicolaas Pieneman (1809–1860). It records Pangeran Diponegoro's enforced departure into exile in Sulawesi (RM SK-A-2238). Diponegoro's capture in 1830 brought five years of warfare to an end. No major obstacle now remained to impede the extension of Dutch power across Java. Willem I of the

36 See for example, *Gedeh Volcano in West Java*, TM 4818–1, painted before 1949.

37 A legend identifies the wife as Raden Ayu Lembah, her lover as Raden Soekra, and names other prominent figures in the painting.

FIGURE 12.5 Unknown Javanese artist, Amangkurat oversees execution of wife and lover
UNIVERSITEIT LEIDEN, COLLECTIONS KITLV (48M-6).

Netherlands (r. 1815–40) commissioned Pieneman, who specialized in painting historical subjects and portraits of the famous, to commemorate this turning point in Dutch-Indonesian relations. Pieneman's conception of the traumatic scene was based on a sketch made on the spot by F.V.H.A. de Steurs, aide-de-camp (and son-in-law) to the commanding officer, Baron Hendrik Merkus de Kock. Pieneman may also have consulted a study from 1835 of Diponegoro by the Java-based Bik (TM 1574–32). The defeated prince stands in a circle of light, looking beyond the soldiers across Java's rice fields, past its mountains to the inland sea that will carry him away as directed by De Kock. Pieneman records Diponegoro's self-identification as a Muslim *emir* by the green turban on his head and clothing. Women, in Javanese dress, kneel in despair.

The Javanese artist who excelled in Dutch art techniques, who spent 22 years in Europe, and who was painter by appointment to Willem II (r. 1840–1849), Raden Saleh (c. 1807–1880), also recreated this iconic moment, six years after his own return to Java in 1851.³⁸ Neither Pieneman nor Saleh acknowledged Diponegoro's illustrious descent with a *payung*. Saleh's rendering of the

38 The Capture of Prince Diponegoro by Raden Saleh Syarif Bustaman, 1857, Museum Istana, Jakarta.

scene stages Pieneman's portrayal in reverse. No Dutch flag flies over the crowd. In contrast to the glowing light of Pieneman's painting, Saleh's canvas is dark and gloomy. He depicts Diponegoro's Java by mountains and an arid landscape. The prince's rigid stance is interpreted by Saleh's great-grandnephew, George H. Hundeshagen, as angry and challenging to De Kock.³⁹ He argues that the painting had a surface meaning apparent to Dutch viewers and a 'clandestine' message of resistance for the Javanese. It is, however, doubtful if many Javanese could have seen Saleh's painting in 1857 (or indeed before 1978) and formed this interpretation as it was sent to the Netherlands upon completion.⁴⁰

In preparation for the painting, Saleh visited sites associated with Diponegoro in Central Java, but in some respects he mirrored Dutch artists of earlier times, for he painted 'Java' from Holland during his long European sojourn that had begun at age fourteen in 1829. Take, for example, his portrait of Governor-General J.C. Baud (r. 1833–1835), painted in Holland in 1835 (RM SK-A-3799). Baud is seated before the drapery and Grecian urn of convention, but against a dawn sky, the Buitenzorg palace and a palm tree, perhaps a scene remembered in Holland from Saleh's youth.⁴¹ Saleh also reflected styles of Dutch contemporaries in painting beautiful Java. In a posthumous portrait of Daendels, also executed in the Netherlands, the governor-general stands against a view of mountain range and forest, before a balustrade. He points to a map, dated 1810, of the projected route of the Post Road. There is a glimpse of the road and tiny figures of workers, but no hint of their wretchedness in its construction (RM SK-A-3790).

Glimpses of Modernity and Emergence of the Individual

Commissioning of official portraits of governors-general outlasted the VOC and continued, through the age of photography, until dissolution of the Netherlands Indies. But photographic images quickly dominate the visual heritage in numbers, range of subjects and geographic scope. Mechanical image-makers imitated painters with views of majestic mountains and beautiful scenery,⁴² but they also used the new device to photograph modernity in all its

39 G.H. Hundeshagen, <http://www.raden-saleh-id.org/diponegorocapture.html>. The article includes a preparatory sketch Raden Saleh made for the painting in 1856.

40 The painting was hung in The Hague palace and later in the Bronbeek Military Veterans' Home. In 1978 the Orange Nassau Foundation presented it to Indonesia.

41 Saleh had studied painting with Payen in Bogor.

42 See, for example, *Salak Mountain viewed from Batutulis*, before 1880, KITLV 26663, and *Confluence of Seumpo and Tjoet Rivers, Lhokseumawe*, 1924, KITLV 18019.

forms. Cameramen followed colonial armies, explorers and entrepreneurs across the archipelago. From the KITLV image archive are photographs of: army troops on the march (5202), individual officers framed in oval portraits (2504), their gravestones in military cemeteries (3415); hillsides stripped of their forest cover (75701); young rubber plantations (75722); railway tracks (27038), road construction (26353), telephone poles (153978), factories (28484), oil rigs (16734), public buildings (34531) and massive banks (35072). Batavia stretches far beyond market and harbour; it encompasses the headquarters of businesses (5224), the building housing the People's Assembly (90168), schools (1400856), parks (100624) and swimming pools (77244).

Dutch, Chinese and Indigenous men were behind the camera. Most famous was the Javanese Kassian Cephas (1845–1912) (Knaap 1999). Cephas's camera recorded Java's antiquities (KITLV 40199), its modern Dutch infrastructure (KITLV 19367), colonial institutions (RM NG-1944-10-13-2), and ceremonies marking the Muslim calendar (KITLV 2351). As official photographer to the sultan, Cephas was admitted into the Yogya *kraton* to record palace dance troupes (KITLV 3905) and make photographic portraits of Hamengkubuwono VII, his queen and crown prince (KITLV 10002, 10003, 10005). These were portraits of people representing office and their office's ideals. For European consumers Cephas photographed young women clad in floral batiks amid abundant nature (KITLV 10727), and sentimental photos of young mothers with babies (KITLV 10728). Cephas also photographed the social life shared by Dutch and Javanese elites, as represented in *Wayang Beber Performance at the House of Wahidin Sudirohusudo, with G.A.J. Hazeu and Group Photo on the Back Veranda of Wahidin Sudirohusudo's House, including Hazeu*.⁴³

Many photographs in the KITLV archive are of family groups.⁴⁴ Alongside the history of building a colony and enmeshing Indonesians into the world economy is the social history of a mixed society that took on local dress forms, spoke Malay, engaged in Indonesian arts and crafts, and incorporated Java's hipped roofs and verandas into their domestic architecture. These family photographs challenge assumptions of segregation in colonial life. They tell us what the demographers and statisticians document, that approximately 80% of the Dutch in the Indies were both Indonesian and Dutch. The immediacy of these photographs causes us to think more deeply about the quality of

43 The catalogue numbers for these two photographs are KITLV 3953 and KITLV 34594. Wahidin (1852–1917), a medical doctor and founder of Budi Utomo, is honoured in Indonesia as a pioneer of nationalism. Hazeu (1870–1929) was a scholar of Indonesian languages, folklore and *wayang*, and advisor for Native and Arab Affairs 1907–1919.

44 See, for example: KITLV 77650, 78505, 86075, 151380 and 503394.

relationships between the people depicted, between them and their environment, and between viewers and viewed. They explain, in the way no written document can, the ambiguities of colonial life, the hostility of nationalists to people who chose the Dutch side of their personal inheritance over (and against) the Indonesian, and the fraught meanings of 'homeland' for Eurasians. Such photographs tell the end to the story that had begun when Indonesians first ferried Dutchmen ashore, a history seventeenth-century Dutch artists had unknowingly recorded in paint.

Well-off Indonesians also took themselves to photographic studios or summoned professional photographers to their residences.⁴⁵ They hung framed photographs on their walls for public display and assembled albums that are archives for the emergence of the individual. Photographs allow private study of self, compel acceptance of critical scrutiny by others. Migrated to newspapers, the individual's image is subject to being discarded. Photographs chart the emergence of elite wives and daughters from decorous seclusion on to the public stage and so document the challenge of Dutch female immigrants to existing class, cultural and religious conventions. Photographs commissioned by Indonesian upper classes are a visual, datable history of becoming self-consciously modern, and parallels the new genres of memoir and autobiography that staged and exposed the self to reading publics.

The camera also narrates Indies lives from the perspective of Indigenous partners in colonial rule. In 1924, Raden Toemengoeng Soerjawinoto, *bupati* of Gresik, presented a souvenir album (KITLV 898) to Resident W.P. Hillen and his wife on their departure from Surabaya. Regent Soerjawinoto's album gives us a clear idea of what he anticipated would prompt pleasing memories of Indies service for his Dutch colleague. The very first photograph in the album is of the menu from a dinner, held on 15 July 1924, for the Hillens (94782). It begins with bouillon soup with tomatoes, and promises Veuve Cliquot *demi-sec*. The regent's handwriting labels each photograph's subject and location in Dutch. There are photographs of local scenery, of Soerjawinoto's residence, the Chinese and Arab quarters and cemeteries, plus many of the mosque, grotto and graveyard of Sunan Giri (KITLV 94800–8) and of Njai Ageng Penatij (KITLV 94795), wife of the *patih* of Majapahit who raised the saint. There are photos of Dutch installations, such as water pumping machines, a salt manufacturing site, the Gresik railway station, a village school and a credit bank. In this assemblage we discern the regent's perception of who constituted Surabaya's elite, his pride in Surabaya's importance in the early history of Islam in the region, and his conception of his own role in the modernization processes that Dutch

45 Examples from the KITLV archive are: 4184, 4747, 6354 and 119347.

colonial rule was channelling into Java. There is the claiming of partnership, not subordination.

A private album assembled by an Indigenous family around 1920 in the Moluccas (KITLV 503) conveys the lure of the modern Dutch lifestyle for members of an emerging middle class (H. Schulte Nordholt 2009:105–20). The family appears to be Christian, for there are no visual indications of Islamic culture in the photographs. While photographs in the regent's presentation album show elite life lived in the public gaze, these are mostly photographs of domestic life, taken at home. A family group sits around a table on the veranda (80740). Women wear *kain kebaya*, they hold babies (80733, 80737); a father in singlet and trousers sits in the backyard with children beside a birdcage (80745). Remarkable are views of their dining room with no householder present to distract attention from the table laid with cloth and dinner service, the dresser, cupboard with glass doors and oil lamp (80749). Two unnumbered photographs show a mirror in the hallway and a framed snap of a family group on the wall. In pride of place, photograph number two in the album, is the family's Singer sewing machine operated by a woman seated at a table (80734).

Some photos in the album appear to record service in the lower reaches of colonial administration. It seems the family, in the course of the husband's career, was stationed in an 'Alfoer' village. The album contains photos of curly haired men lined up in a row, naked except for a loincloth (80751), their huts on the edge of a forest (80752, 80753). The album's last photo is of the father in *jas tutup* (collarless, buttoned jacket) and trousers, standing with his wife, dressed in *kain kebaya*, outside their house (80757). Did this family, fully clothed, occupants of the concrete house with glass windows and lace curtains, view Moluccans as 'Others', as uncivilized? Did they see through the eyes of the Dutch? Or did the Dutch perceive such Moluccans through the eyes of other Indonesians? In making them photographable, did the camera impose a way of looking at others? This album, assembled by the family as a record of its own daily life, is suggestive of lifestyle and attitudes of all those Indigenous families whose careers were bound up with the Dutch, but who, not belonging to elite circles, have left no written testimonials of their lives.

Many other photographs in the image archives offer clues to the daily life of thousands of ordinary Indonesians. They show Indigenous men who were lorry drivers (TM 10014093), bicycled through city streets (TM 10014702), were factory workers (TM 60020405) and apprentice draughtsmen (TM 60020323). We see women customers queuing at village credit institutions (TM 10001465), sorting coffee beans (KITLV 26927) and operating sewing machines (KITLV 13110). Alongside these examples of modern lifestyles we see Indies subjects

FIGURE 12.6 *Indonesian family album*, Woman Seated with her Sewing Machine
UNIVERSITEIT LEIDEN, COLLECTIONS KITLV (80734).

(mostly men) becoming Indonesians in photographs that record the development of political life in the late colony.⁴⁶

The earliest moving pictures made in the Indies (1912–1913) also give a visual history of a modernizing colony and new kinds of colonized people. Johann Christian Lamster (1872–1954) was commissioned by Amsterdam's Colonial Institute to film advances achieved by a benign, rational administration in the Indies. Lamster had already spent 15 years in the colony as soldier, civil servant, husband and father. Before his camera women bring their babies to the colonial medical officer (an Indonesian man) for smallpox inoculation, veterinary students practice handling animals, factory workers process sisal into rope, railway employees drive and maintain a steam locomotive. Dutch, Eurasian and Indonesian children spill out of school and climb aboard city trams. Here is Lamster's vision of Holland's colonial subjects: industrious, self-managing, and receptive of the modern.⁴⁷

46 See, for example, *Inaugural Meeting of Sarekat Islam in Blitar*, 1914, KITLV 9174; *First Congress of the National Party of Indonesia (PNI) in Surabaya*, 1928, KITLV 53494; and *Second Congress of the Federation of Political Associations of the Indonesian Nation (PPPKI) in Surakarta*, 1929, KITLV 53480.

47 Van Dijk et al., (2010). DVD of 15 of Lamster's films.

Visual history complements and enhances the written record. It can challenge received notions by its very focus on the daily round and raise awareness of gaps in knowledge. It may tell us what the written record conceals. As with written records, visual records are accidents of history in what remains and what we select for study. In three centuries of image-making we may note other constraints: the force of artistic conventions, for instance, that indicated European status in Indonesia by urns, draperies, balustrades and heavy winter clothing, or the dictates of early camera technology that controlled stance, place and hour. Here I have drawn attention to the convention of the *payung*. It indicates status in Indonesian hierarchies, but it also shows Dutch people adapting to novel circumstances, how they tried to make themselves understood or asserted rights over Indonesians.

Adopting Braudel's long time span allows us, even from a preliminary survey of images, to chart adaptation and change through mutual interaction in colonial histories. Seascapes give way to urban views and representative 'types'. Landscapes of sublime nature and insignificant humanity are, seen through the camera's lens, denuded hills and agricultural estates where men and women toil. Portraits of elites give way to photos of commoners. Photographs of officials tell us of the alliance between Dutch and Indonesian elites that made colonial rule possible. Photographs of families and individuals signal a modern consciousness of self.

Reliability of the visual record is a constant concern for historical study. We have noted paintings of places and people imagined by artists who themselves saw neither the sites nor individuals that filled their canvases, but relied on the information of others who had. And we have noted examples of artists who did work in the Indies but chose, in painting nature, not to see the transformations before them that modern technology and increasing population were bringing to Java's countryside. The camera allowed a wider range of subjects and a greater spread of social classes, situations and moods to be recorded. Through its unique emphasis on the human face, the camera hints of relationships and complications behind the staged pieces, the set expressions or pretence of unrehearsed moment.

Through seven decades of mechanically produced images we discern the desire of camera owners to record modern life. Thus we learn that Indonesian Everyman and Everywoman embraced new technology. They became drivers of lorries, operators of factory machinery. They did not shun the new. We see adopting and adapting in Lamster's film clip of the Indonesian paramedic vaccinating village babies. An intrusive medical procedure is turned into public ceremony. Film director, vaccinator and village authorities colluded in a 'performance'. But we also learn that 'housewives', in submitting their babies to

this new medical practice, were also participants and partners in colonial modernity.

We see altered perspectives most strikingly in the newly acquired habit of Indonesians viewing themselves. The camera has never left Indonesian hands; it is an indelible part of contemporary Indonesian culture. Alongside letters and autobiography, photographs document the emergence of the named individual in Indonesian life. This novel way of understanding self and society began when Sultan Sayfoeddin and Roosje studied their portraits.

Artists and art forms cross cultural borders. We find a common delight in lovely things, a shared impulse for learning, and a medium revelatory of the hidden, the voiceless and the byways of history.