

# Picture and Drawing Education in Nineteenth-Century Java

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## Introduction

Before the nineteenth century there was no indigenous tradition of drawing in Java. The climate did not support the invention or import of paper, parchment, and pencils. The only materials that withstood the impact of tropical weather were stone, bark-paper and prepared leaves of certain palm trees. No materials to invite the development of drawing. The introduction of paper, ink, pencils, as well as drawing techniques, is closely connected to the colonial impact.

However, in rudimentary form, drawing was not completely unknown on the island. A small number of Javanese manuscripts produced since the seventeenth century was (rather crudely) illustrated, and in a number of old texts drawing and drawn images are mentioned. None of these old samples have survived or are remembered.

## Early impact of European art

At the very start of European expansion towards the East, engravings and paintings were transported in the hulls of the ships *en route* to Asia. In the case of Java, these were Dutch ships. For the first journey east-bound, the Dutch flotilla's cargo included prints and oil paintings, meant as gifts for local rulers. In 1620 Jan Pieterzon Coen, the founder of Batavia, presented the Sultan of Palembang/Sumatra with an oil painting of Amsterdam harbor. In 1637 the Dutch East India Company (VOC) in Amsterdam was asked for a supply of paintings, in order to offer them to the Prince of Martapura/Borneo. In 1651 the independent Ruler of Mataram in Central Java received five paintings as a gift.<sup>1</sup>

1 Holt 1967, p. 119.

These incomplete records indicate that even in the seventeenth century European art had become a commodity in Southeast Asia and played a certain role in symbolic and material exchange and trade systems.

And not only did art travel, artists did too. In the archives of the VOC we often come across persons called *schilder* painters. We know, for example, that Dirk Lievens, a landscape and portrait painter, moved to Batavia in 1648 and died there two years later.<sup>2</sup> He was the younger brother of the well-known Dutch artist Jan Lievens, who shared a studio with his friend Rembrandt van Rijn. In 1670 Rembrandt's daughter Cornelia (1652–1678), the only child to survive Rembrandt, boarded a sailing ship bound for Batavia with her husband, the painter Cornelis Suythoff (1652–1678). Their hope to make a fortune as artists was very short lived. Neither could survive on their trade in Batavia, instead they had to take up all kinds of odd jobs. Suythoff finally worked as a jailer and both passed away after some short years in Batavia. They left two young sons behind, the elder one was named after his grandfather, Rembrandt.

Whether early European paintings and the few visiting artists that went to Java had an impact on the visual tradition of the Javanese elite cannot be substantiated. But these early events might have laid the ground for later developments.

## Early evidence of drawing education in Java

The earliest evidence of a Chinese artisan/artist on Java who must have had received some drawing education along European lines is found in the travel journal of Caspar Schmalkalden from Thüringen, Germany. Schmalkalden lived on Java between 1642 and 1652 and noted a watercolor of a Javanese rhinoceros next to an illustration in his text (» *Fig. 1*), "This rhinoceros was painted by a Chinese painter based on a living one in Batavia."<sup>3</sup>

Strange enough, the drawing is very close to the famous woodcut *Rhinoceros* by Albrecht Dürer (1515). Form, shape, nature, the whole *gestalt* of the animal is reminiscent of Dürer's *Rhinoceros*. But how can we explain the fact that a Chinese in seventeenth-century Java had access to an almost 140-year-old German woodcut? It is not very likely that there was a copy of Dürer's *Rhinoceros* extant in Batavia. I believe that the Chinese had seen the illustration of the rhino in Johannes Jonstonus' book *Naeukeurige Beschryving van de Natuur der Vier-Voetige Dieren ...* (Amsterdam, 1649–53). This publication was the most famous animal book of the seventeenth century and was printed in a number of languages. The rhino in Jonstonus' book was a copy of the

2 Van Brakel/Scaliet/van Duuren/ten Kate 1998, p. 16.

3 Joost 1983, p. 118.



**Fig. 1** Chinese Artist, *Rhinoceros*, c. 1650, Forschungs- und Landesbibliothek Gotha (Joost 1983, p. 118).

rhino in Conrad Gessner's *Historiae animalium*, and Gessner's rhino followed Dürer's woodcut very closely. Jonstonus' book was available in Batavia while Schmalkalden was living there. At least one copy of the *Naeukeurige Beschryving* had been shipped from Holland to Java and eventually passed on to the Dutch factory Deshima near Nagasaki/Japan. The book was meant as a gift for the Shogun in Edo/Japan and was actually presented to him by Hendrik Indijk, director of the Dutch enclave in 1663.<sup>4</sup> Before Jonstonus' work was taken to Japan, it must have been around in Batavia for a certain period, since all goods of the Dutch East India Company intended to be shipped to eastern harbors had to pass through Batavia, and the boat from Batavia to Deshima/Japan left once a year.

It is of interest to note that the anonymous Chinese painter in Batavia was not only acquainted with Dürer's idea of a rhinoceros but must have seen a real rhinoceros as well. This is proven by the fact that he did not repeat Dürer's anatomical mistake,

<sup>4</sup> The Japanese historian Sugita Genpaku claims in his *Rangaku Kotohajime* (History of Dutch science) 1817, that Jonstonus' book has to be regarded as the starting point of the *rangaku*, the *Dutch science*, in Japan.

the so called ‘Dürer hornlet’.<sup>5</sup> The Chinese might have seen the young rhinoceros that was wounded and taken to Batavia in 1647.<sup>6</sup>

One hundred years after the rhino was drawn for Schalkalden’s diary, Josua van Jpern makes mention of another Chinese painter in Batavia. He identifies a Chinese artist, who did some drawings and watercolors for him, as Hokki.<sup>7</sup> The same Hokki was rather critically commented on by the then secretary of *Bataviasch Genootschap van Wetenschappen en Kunsten*, Friedrich Baron von Wurmb.<sup>8</sup> He complains that the Chinese draftsman (Hokki) is not able (or not willing?) to follow his instructions:

We have here a Chinese man who has a very accomplished and steady hand for drawing and can draw the form of anything given to him with great accuracy and detail; but despite all of my efforts and the best examples that I have shown him, it is not possible to get him to use the correct coloring and necessary shadowing in his paintings because he does not fully grasp the requisite characteristics of a painting.<sup>9</sup>

This is the first written document on art education in Java and it sounds like an early and interesting case of cross-cultural misunderstanding.

30 years later, Sir Stamford Raffles, British Lieutenant Governor of Java between 1811 and 1816, wrote in his famous *History of Java*, the first book on Java of any importance:

The Javanese have made no progress in drawing or painting; nor are there any traces to be found of their having, at any former period of their history, attained any proficiency in this art.“ But he added, “They are not, however, ignorant of proportions or perspective, nor are they insensible to the beauty and

5 Dürer had never seen a real rhinoceros, but had to rely on a description only. He gave his rhino a small horn on its neck. For more than two centuries this mistake was repeated by almost all European artists again and again.

6 Saar 1662, p. 36. This rhino is also mentioned by Johann Jakob Merklein and Johann von der Behr. Javanese rhinoceroses were not a common sight in the towns of Java.

7 Van Jpern 1782, p. 352. Van Jpern worked as secretary of the *Bataviasch Genootschap van Wetenschappen en Kunsten*. Hokki might not have been the real name of the Chinese draftsman, but rather relates to his place of origin: Hokkien.

8 Friedrich von Wurmb, who was responsible for the library of the *Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen*, was an uncle of Charlotte von Lengefeld, wife of Friedrich von Schiller.

9 Wurmb 1794, p. 272: “Wir haben hier einen Chinesen, der eine äußerst fertige und stäte Hand zum Zeichnen hat, und die Umrissse alles dessen, was man ihm zum Abzeichnen vorlegt, mit der größten Genauigkeit und Feinheit zeichnet, aber ohnerachtet aller Mühe, die ich mir dierhalb mit ihm gegeben, und die besten Muster, die ich ihm vorgelegt habe, so ist es doch ohnmöglich, ihn dahin zu bringen, daß er die gehörige Farbgebung und die erforderliche Schattierung in seinen Gemälden beobachtet.”

effect of the productions of other nations. Their eye is correct and their hand steady, and if required to sketch any particular object, they produce a very fair resemblance of the original. They are imitative, and though genius in this art may not have appeared among them, there is reason to believe that, with due encouragement, they would not be found less ingenious than other nations in a similar stage of civilization.<sup>10</sup>

## Drawing education during the nineteenth century

While the power relations between the local and the colonial authorities started to change dramatically during the nineteenth century in Java, the indigenous elite began to accept increasingly larger parts of the Dutch cultural model. Being modern (and accepted by the Europeans) now meant accepting certain habits of the colonial power holders. By creating a Creole or hybrid culture, the local elite inwardly stayed devoted to their own cultural values, while outwardly they adopted a thin layer of Dutch everyday culture. Just like the Dutch, they also began to display paintings (or rather prints) in their residencies and houses. When Duke Bernhard von Sachsen-Weimar-Eisenach, commander-in-chief of the Dutch-Indian forces and godson of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, visited the residence of the Sultan of Sumenap on Madura on August 12, 1859 he wrote, “Hanging on the columns and pillars are all sorts of European paintings, lithographs etc., badly drawn views of European cities etc.”<sup>11</sup>

And the novelist Therese von Bacheracht-Lützow, who travelled with Duke Bernhard, remarked in addition:

The Panembahan had bad lithographs nailed in golden frames to the pillars of his audience hall, depicting scenes from the last French revolution in 1848. ... He believed that these poorly executed pictures, which a roguish Surabaya salesman talked him into buying, constituted the beginning of a precious art collection.<sup>12</sup>

10 Raffles 1830, vol. 1, p. 528.

11 Starklof 1866, p. 252.

12 Von Bacheracht 2006, p. 126: “An den hölzernen Säulen hat der Panembahan schlechte Lithographien in goldenen Rahmen annageln lassen, welche Szenen aus der letzten französischen Revolution vom Jahre 1848 vorstellen. Er ahnt nicht, der gute Panembahan, dass er auf dieser Weise dem republikanischen Prinzip Raum in seinem Kraton gegeben hat. [...] Er glaubt, in diesen schlecht ausgeführten Bildern, welche ein verschmitzter Surabayaer Kaufmann ihn aufgeschwatzt hat, den Anfang einer kostbaren Gemäldegalerie zu besitzen.”



**Fig. 2** John Newman, *A Javanese Grandee and an Attendant*, c. 1811. Watercolor 249 x 395 mm. British Library WD 953, f.96 (107).

Therese's observation is precise, but her judgment certainly wrong. No "roguish Surabaya salesman" had to talk the local Madurese ruler into buying prints. He was most probably looking for them and displayed them as proof of his own modernity. Maybe he had them "nailed to the pillars" just hours before his distinguished visitors arrived to demonstrate that he was "civilized" already and needed no further instructions by the colonial masters.

We have a visual document of a similar, but earlier situation. It is a watercolor by the Anglo-Indian artist John Newman, who served in Java as a draftsman in the service of Colin Mackenzie between 1811 and 1813. His watercolor *A Javanese grandee and an attendant* (» Fig. 2) includes a framed picture, a simple harbor scene or seascape, on the wall of a room at the Regent of Semarang, Surya Adimanggala.<sup>13</sup>

The picture – maybe a Dutch print, maybe a local watercolor, maybe a Chinese reverse glass painting – stands as witness to a changing taste and visual mode.

Other Asians were as well impressed by the products of European art. The Vietnamese envoy Phan Huy Chú, who visited Batavia in 1833, rated in a rare intercultural insight the artistic abilities of the Dutch equal to the best Chinese painters, and he was astonished that Europeans had acquired this ability without having studied in China!<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Surya Adimanggala was the uncle of the Javanese artist Raden Saleh, see below.

<sup>14</sup> Kelly 1998.

The demand for talented illustrators increased during the short British interregnum in Java (1811–1816). New survey sheets and maps needed to be made, old ones copied and improved. The British also started a new interest in the natural and cultural history of Java, which resulted in a whole number of articles and books. Lieutenant Governor Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles and his colleague John Crawfurd nurtured a strong historical and ethnographic interest. Both penned important “Histories” of Java and the Archipelago and needed numerous illustrations for their published and unpublished works. Since the times of enlightenment, scientific illustrations had grown in importance. The involvement and integration of visual argumentation in scientific discourses developed a growing need for illustrators. Raffles could not request illustrators from England (because of Napoleon’s Continental Blockade) and was therefore forced to look for local talents (Dutch, French, Chinese, Indian, Malays and Javanese). Munshi Abdullah, Raffles’ translator, wrote that in 1811 Raffles hired a Chinese illustrator from Macao in Malacca and added that he was “very expert at drawing life-like pictures of fruits and flowers.”<sup>15</sup> The Chinese artist – his name might have been A Kow – quite likely belonged to the increasing group of “Chinese Trade Art” painters who worked in the open ports of the South China Coast, namely Canton and Macao, for the European and American market. Some of them moved down south and found employment in what is now Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia.

## Colonial drawing education in Java during the nineteenth century

We have to differentiate between two types of drawing education in nineteenth-century Java: 1. Drawing instructions offered by colonial schools and institutions and 2. Drawing lessons organized by private persons, mostly artists or art societies.

The colonial administration was interested in producing able draftsmen for practical reasons like map making, technical drawings, land surveying, and documentation of flora and fauna. Artists and art societies were working on a different agenda. For them, drawing education was an essential part of universal education, a concept developed throughout the eighteenth century by David Hume and Immanuel Kant.<sup>16</sup>

15 Abdallah Ibn 1970, p. 76.

16 The idea of the aesthetic grew into one of the most privileged and rarified categories in the upcoming modern tradition and was certainly meant for ‘civilized races’ only, not, as David Hume expressed it for ‘negroes and other species of men’. Javanese people certainly were regarded as ‘other species of men’ and it was generally understood, even by highly educated men like Friedrich Baron von Wurmb, that they had no access to the aesthetic. Baron von Wurmb wrote in 1781 (Wurmb 1794, p. 249), that in Java “no Raphael and no Mengs” will ever appear.

## Drawing instructions in public and private schools

After the British interregnum in Java (1811–1816), the Dutch started to transform the former territories of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) into an effective colony, which soon developed into one of the most successful exploitation systems ever invented. The VOC, which was disbanded by the end of 1799, had offered some drawing education through the Marine Academy in Semarang/Java (1782–1811), which was the first educational institution in Java that included drawing lessons in its curriculum and produced a number of able draftsmen. After the Dutch had taken control over Java again in 1816, the Academy was reopened as Militaire School. Drawing lessons at Militaire School placed emphasis on the production of maps, plans for fortifications, etc. But most of the students were able to draw natural objects as well. Only few had the ability to produce human figures. The educational program of the Militaire School was the prelude for art education in Java. The school was meant for Europeans only.

Since the native Javanese were expected to produce export crops, the colonial administration felt no need for educated natives. Besides a very small number of so called *lagere schoolen* (elementary schools), for a limited number of Dutch children and children of the native elite, no schools existed in Java. The first *lagere school* was opened on February 24, 1817 in Batavia. The Swiss traveler Phytter zu Neueck, who spent the years between 1819 and 1827 in Java, mentions in his book *Skizzen von der Insel Java* that the curriculum of the *lagere school* in Batavia included some basic instruction in drawing, dance and music.

Some years later, in the 1830s, the so called *lands teekenschool* (public drawing school) was established and attached to the elementary schools (there were now four of them) in Batavia. Students were instructed twice a week for two hours in topographical, technical and free hand drawing. For some decades attendance at the drawing school was limited to Europeans, Indo-Europeans and maybe the Chinese as well. Only in 1863 were native students allowed to join the lessons at the *lands teekenschool*.

Who were the instructors at the drawing school in Batavia and what kind of qualification did they have? Unfortunately, we have very few documents on the personnel at the *lands teekenschool*. We know that in 1845 a certain Bouhuijs was employed as a *tekenmeester* (drawing instructor) at the school in Batavia.<sup>17</sup> Around 1870 the drawing instructor at the same school was a certain M. L. Huart. Huart, most probably Belgian, was a lithographer and specialist for topographic drawing. He was born in 1823 and got married in 1852 in The Hague. Two years later, at the age of 31, he travelled to Batavia with his wife. By the end of 1854 he was appointed *graveur* (lithographer) with the corps of engineers of the Dutch colonial army. Since his pay was not substantial enough to support his family, he offered his service as a designer of name cards,

<sup>17</sup> *Javasche courant*, July 9, 1845.



invoices, vouchers and other items. He also worked as an illustrator for scientific articles written in the colony. Besides that, he offered private drawing lessons. In 1870 he was appointed drawing teacher at the *lands teekenschool*. M. L. Huart, whose educational background is not known, was certainly an experienced artist and a good choice for teaching drawing at the public drawing school in Batavia. He retired in 1882 and returned to Brussels where he died in November 1889.

## Drawing schools in other Javanese towns

Besides Batavia, drawing schools were established in Semarang and Surabaya. The school in Semarang was opened as a joint venture between the artist Müller-Kruseman and the local government in 1850 and we can expect that Müller-Kruseman put more emphasis on artistic than on technical drawing.

Johan Caspar Müller-Kruseman was born in Leeuwarden in 1805 as a member of the extended Kruseman family, who originated from Hamm in Germany. Johan Caspar studied for a while in The Hague with his uncle Cornelis Kruseman, the most successful Dutch artist in the first half of the nineteenth century. He decided to move to the colony and arrived in Java in 1832. He did not, like most other artists, settle in Batavia or Surabaya, but moved to the small town of Surakarta/Central Java, where he lived as a portrait painter and drawing instructor. From this time, we know a portrait painting by Müller-Kruseman of the legendary sugar planter and landowner Johannes Augustinus Dezentje. In Solo he got married to Johanna Charlotta van de Wal. Apparently, he was then able to make enough money to support a family. In 1850 we find Müller-Kruseman in Semarang as the principal of a public/private drawing school. He lectured on Tuesdays and Fridays for two hours and asked for five guilders from his students as a monthly contribution. The school was supported by the president of the *sub-kommissie van onderwijs* (sub-commission of education) who voiced the hope that a great number of parents might register their children for the drawing lessons and in doing so, support their *vorming en ontwikkeling*, their education and development.<sup>18</sup> It is intriguing to note that a government institution was not arguing for better trained but for better educated and generally improved children.

After the death of Johan Caspar Müller-Kruseman in 1856, the school was taken over by the government and “more useful” lessons, like topographical and technical drawing, received increased attention. In 1868 around 160 students were enrolled in the *lands teekenschool* in Semarang, all of them students of the local elementary schools. Starting April 1, 1869 the drawing school was opened to children who were

18 *Semarangsch adventie-blad*, March 9, 1850.

not enrolled in a public school. The monthly fee was now four guilders and the drawing teacher was a certain J. F. Schönhals.<sup>19</sup>

Besides the public drawing school there was a private school in Semarang, the so called *Instituut Bodjong*, which employed a drawing teacher as well.

The situation in Surabaya was different again as here it was not the government nor a local artist who established drawing lessons but the *Maatschappij tot Nut van 't Algemeen* or *'t Nut* as it is commonly called. This society was founded in 1784 in Edam as a Dutch charity with a strong educational character. Maybe it can be compared to the *British Society of the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge*, founded 40 year later in 1826. *'t Nut* aimed at the greatest possible wellbeing of individuals and society. Its emphasis on discussion and learning provided an important impetus for the development of a democratic society in Holland. *'t Nut* established chapters in many cities in the Netherlands and also in the colony. The most important in Java was the one in Surabaya, a town of traders and early industrialists, more open towards ideas of social reform. *'t Nut* in Surabaya was founded in 1833 and one of its first programs was to establish a public library and a drawing class for the poor. Unfortunately, that initial input did not last very long. The drawing school closed down after a couple of months as the drawing instructor had found a better paid job. The same story repeated itself 20 years later. A new start for a drawing school was made in 1853, but was shut down again in 1856. A government-sponsored drawing school in Surabaya was not opened before 1864.<sup>20</sup>

When we talk about government-sponsored drawing instruction, we have to consider the *Corps Pupillen* as well. The *Corps Pupillen* was a cadet school, which played a certain role in introducing drawing in Java. The school was situated in Gombong in Central Java and was run by the military department. It was an establishment for abandoned children, fathered by European soldiers with Asian mothers. Some of them were given the chance to join the *Corps Pupillen* to acquire a basic education and receive some drawing lessons as well. A visitor to Gombong reported:

Entering the drawing class you notice with great satisfaction the impressive results of some students in the field of topographic, technical as well as artistic drawing.<sup>21</sup>

19 *De Locomotief*, March 31 1869. Schönhals was appointed drawing instructor in March 1868 and used his newly found economic security to get married in December 1868. When he left Semarang for Batavia in 1877, he auctioned off an impressive array of furniture, carts and horses, paintings and drawing equipment. Schönhals died 1884 in Batavia.

20 *Oostpost Soerabaja*, April 4, 1864.

21 *Java-bode*, June 15, 1863: "De teekenzaal binnengetreden, zit men met en waare genoeg de werkelijk goede vorderingen van allen en van enkele leerlingen de flinke en correcte teekeningen, zowel topographische en bouwkundige als handteekeningen."

The *Corps Pupillen*, founded by one of the many Barons von Lützow in 1846, is still unexplored. Therefore we do not know how its large number of alumni, who seeped back into local society, affected the development and acceptance of western style drawing in small towns and villages.

One of the drawing instructors of the *Corps Pupillen* was Simon Willem Camerik, employed between 1856 and 1859. After he had left the school in 1859, Camerik settled in the royal town of Yogyakarta, where he was subsequently appointed “painter of his Highness the Sultan of Yogyakarta.” Simon Willem Camerik was born on the island of Bangka in 1830 to a Dutch father, a medical doctor, and a Chinese mother. After the death of his mother he travelled to Holland with his father in 1838 and never received an appropriate education. Around 1850 he was running a bakery and cake shop in Amsterdam and in 1855 he enlisted in the colonial army and went to Java. In 1856 he was employed as a *tekenmeester* at Corps Pupillen in Gombang. As his salary was so low that he could not save enough money to bring his wife and son to Java as well, he left the Corps Pupillen and went to Yogyakarta to work as an independent artist. Soon he realized that the new medium photography was more in demand than painting and he opened one of the first photo studios in Yogyakarta. He was appointed photographer of the Sultan and asked to take the Javanese boy Kassian Cephas as an apprentice. Kassian Cephas finally became the first and highly celebrated Javanese professional photographer.<sup>22</sup>

## The results of the public drawing schools in Java

Instruction in the *teekenschoolen* was oriented towards low-key careers of lower middle-class boys in the military or bureaucratic sector. The impact of the alumni of drawing schools on the arts in Java is not easy to judge as no research at all was done so far on these questions. The number of native, Javanese students was extremely low. In 1869 the district of Soemedang (200,000 inhabitants) counted 53 schoolboys and in Patti, settled by a population almost as high as Amsterdam, 81 children were enrolled in a public school!<sup>23</sup>

None of the few successful local artists of nineteenth-century Java, Raden Saleh, Jan Daniel Beynon, Mas Pirngadie attended institutional art classes. They received some instruction from travelling artists in Java or were able, like Raden Saleh, to travel to Europe and pick up a thorough art education in The Hague and Dresden. Beynon was also educated in the Netherlands. He studied at the Art Academy in Amsterdam.

22 Kassian Cephas might have been the first Javanese photographer. But he was not the first Javanese who produced a photograph. When the painter Raden Saleh was visited by the Italian traveler in Batavia in 1866, he handed him a photograph of his house in Cikini which he had produced himself.

23 *De Economist*, 1870, part 1, p. 249.

Mas Pirngadie had some basic, but important instruction from Otto Carl Freiherr von Juncker Bigatto, a senior surveyor, who for some years successfully operated a private art school in Pasuruan in East Java.<sup>24</sup>

In 1882, almost 50 years after the first drawing classes were established in Batavia, a newspaper report wrote:

Drawing instructions at the first and third elementary school in Batavia has, by neglect of the instructor, more or less collapsed. Only by the end of December [1881] could another instructor restart the classes. The drawing school in Semarang counted 62 students of little talent by the end of 1881. And from Surabaya news reaches us that the drawing instruction at the government school was rather bad. Summa summarum: drawing education, a very important venue of physical and spiritual education, is in dire need of reorganization.<sup>25</sup>

## Private drawing lessons

Besides public drawing instruction, basically oriented towards teaching professional skills for technical draftsmen, a second, private venue of drawing education existed in the colony.<sup>26</sup> Since the early nineteenth century, drawing was considered an essential part of the education of the new bourgeois middle class in Europe, and to a certain extent in the colonies as well. The ability to draw, like the ability to play an instrument or to dance, was regarded as a core competency for educated young people, men and women alike. Friedrich Schiller's influential letters *Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen* (On the aesthetic education of mankind) were known in the colony Netherlands Indies and were program for a certain sector of the colonial society.

24 Bigatto, an aristocrat from Regensburg, Germany, was one of those strange and loveable personalities in the colony who organized, against all odds, some sort of cultural life in very remote places. A predecessor of Bigatto was T.H. Hesselaar, a local boy who had picked up some drawing education in Holland. He taught drawing at the local elementary school in Pasuruan.

25 *Java-bode*, January 10, 1882: "De teekencursus an de 1e en 3e lagere school in Batavia, war door nalatigheid van de teekenmeester nagenoeg verlopen. In het laast van Dec. kon eerst een andere teekenmeester met de geven van lessen belaaft worden. De Gouv. teekenschool de Semarang telde ultimo Dec. 62 leerlingen met wenig vlijt. Omtrent de teekenschool to Soerabaia is alleen vermeld, dat het onderwijs daar gegeven zeer slecht was. (Summa summarum: het teekenonderwijs, een zeer voornaam middle de opvoeding – lichamelijke als zedelijke – behoeft reorganisatie.)"

26 Besides attending a public drawing school or private classes, there was of course also the possibility to acquire some knowledge in the art of drawing through self-study. From 1858 on, a do-it-yourself book on drawing was available in the bookshops of the colony: Bakker 1857. It was the Dutch version of Leo Bergmanns: *Praktische Schule des Zeichners. Für Lehrer und Lernende* (1855).

The humanistic background of the educational program in the colony was rather similar to the one in Europe. But there was a big psychological gap between the two situations. I would like to argue that the colonizers needed and used the aesthetic because they could not claim a civic humanism derived from their daily colonial practice and existence. How can you live with slaves around your house and believe in the values of humanism at the same time? The practice of drawing, playing music and reciting poems, in one word the aesthetic, served in the colony as an anchor in troubled waters, as a self-insuring instrument and a means to construct and endure the alterity of the everyday social surroundings.

After the reorganization of the colony Netherlands East India in 1816, some artists started to migrate to Batavia to offer their services as portrait painters and art instructors. Maybe they were inspired by the success of European artists in British India in the late eighteenth century. Or they left Europe because they could not find employment in the post-Napoleonic political order, where by the end of the war too many young officers, too many medical doctors and maybe too many young artists found themselves without a proper economic perspective. Many of the officers and doctors migrated to Russia and the Netherlands-Indies. It seems that some young artists were heading the same direction.

We know from advertisements in Batavian newspapers that between 1815 and 1820, at least six young artists arrived in the Archipelago. Five of them were French, one Dutch. The five French artists came through Calcutta and/or Mauritius, the former French possession *Ile de France* in the Indian Ocean – a fact which is not yet fully understood.<sup>27</sup>

To conclude, in the early years of the nineteenth century European artists who travelled to the Netherlands Indies could hardly make a living as artists or/and drawing instructors. They usually left the colony after some short years. The situation changed after the end of the Java War (1830). Now a successful *Beamten-Staat* was established, followed by a booming colonial economy. For artists who decided to work and settle in Java prospects looked slightly better. Some could live off commissions and drawing instructions, or/and found employment in certain government agencies. Drawing as the only medium for documentation declined in importance as photography rapidly took over this field. Some of the established artists experimented with photography as well, or even switched completely to the new medium. The importance of drawing in everyday life was calibrated anew. It clearly became obsolete as a technical tool to map and reproduce images as in this field photography gained the upper hand. But drawing and painting, just like in Europe, did not disappear. It entered more and more the artistic and educational field and was recognized as an important cultural technique and *Bildungsgut*. Art was clearly understood as an aspect of modernization and by that, art practice moved up the social ladder in the colony. For some young Javanese, especially

27 See information about the French artists in the appendix.

for women, education and art education was regarded a possibility to enter modernity and an increased social status through a side door. Raden Adjeng Kartini, a young noble woman who is regarded in Indonesia as the first Indonesian who fought for female emancipation, wrote to a friend in the Netherlands:

Why did God give us talents and not the opportunity to make use of them? My two sisters have studied drawing and painting, and without any instruction, have made fair progress, according to those who know. They would gladly go on with their studies. But here in Java, there is no opportunity, and we cannot go to Europe. To go there we should have to have the consent of his Excellency, the Minister of Finance, and that we have not. We must depend entirely upon ourselves, if we wish to go forward ... I draw and paint too, but take much more pleasure in the pen than in the pencil.<sup>28</sup>

Kartini claimed that her sisters and other children of the local elite did not receive drawing instruction at all. But this is not correct. Raden Kartini and her two sisters were instructed by Mrs. Ovink-Westenenk and especially Kartini's sister Roekmini developed quite a talent in drawing and painting in oil.

## The Javanese artist Raden Saleh (1811–1880) as teacher and art instructor

Drawing instruction and education in Java were clearly products of the colonial constellation. Instruction was either supplied by Dutch institutions or European artists and most of the students who followed these instructions must have been Europeans, Eurasians or Chinese. But it was not only the teachers and students who were 'European', the whole idea that drawing education could be ascribed a cultural value was a strong western concept. Modernization and a certain interest in the arts and in art education went hand in hand.

A growing number of native chiefs and intellectuals understood that education was the key to personal and social progress and that the art of drawing had to be regarded an integral part of Western knowledge. Some children of the native aristocrats had drawing instruction since around 1840 and even earlier. But it was only in the last quarter of the nineteenth century that the ability to draw was accepted as a worthwhile practice.

The Indonesian nationalist movement, which started in 1906, understood this connection very well and strongly supported the artistic education of the next

28 Letter to Stella Zeehandelaar, November 6, 1899, in: Geertz 1985, p. 41.



**Fig. 3** Karl Bähr, *Portrait of Raden Saleh*, 1841, oil on canvas, 86.5 x 71.7 cm, Art Museum Riga.

generation. Sukarno, the first president of the Republic of Indonesia, was himself an accomplished artist, a product of this development.

An exception to the above-mentioned rule was Raden Saleh Bustaman (1811–1880; » *Fig. 3*).

He was born into an old Javanese-Arab family in Semarang/Central Java and since his father died young, Saleh was taken in by his uncle Surya Adimanggala, Regent of Semarang. Surya Adimanggala was a progressive native chief who befriended Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles and helped him to compile his *History of Java*. He commissioned illustrated Javanese manuscripts and might have been one of the illustrators himself. Two of his elder sons were educated at the English college in Calcutta and returned to Java as “perfect English Gentlemen”. Surya Adimanggala also asked (without success) American and German Baptist missionaries to set up a printing press for him in Semarang in order to produce school books for the native Javanese.<sup>29</sup> While the regent’s sons were educated in India in order to connect Surya Adimanggala to the British colonial administration in Java, he had to find, after the Dutch returned to

29 Smith 1824, p. 540.

the Indies in 1816, another relative to be educated in the tradition of the Dutch and make sure that he could establish a good relationship with the new masters as well. His choice was his young nephew Raden Saleh and as there were no Dutch schools around, he gave him in custodial care of the Belgian painter Antoine Payen (1792–1853), an artist attached to the so called Reinwardt Commission. Professor Caspar G. C. Reinwardt (1773–1854) was appointed by King Willem I of the Netherlands to lead a commission to Java, to map the agricultural and mineral riches of the colony and report on the state of education, medical knowledge and other matters. Reinwardt was accompanied by two draftsmen, Jannes Theodorus Bik (1796–1875) and his brother Adrianus Johannes Bik (1790–1872) and the painter Antoine Payen.

The boy Raden Saleh received some drawing instruction by one of the Bik brothers before he entered a teacher/student relationship with Antoine August Joseph Payen that lasted for at least three years (1819–1822) and resulted in a lifelong bond and mutual affection between student and teacher.

The first trace of Saleh found in the archives is a letter he wrote on September 30, 1820 to Professor Caspar Georg Karl Reinwardt. In the letter Saleh reports that he lives in the *pasanggrihan* (government rest house) at the bridge over the Cikajo river, producing botanical drawings. He writes that his teacher Payen is satisfied with him and that he will soon send the drawings to Reinwardt. It is important to remember that Saleh was just nine years old at that time.

The young Raden Saleh spent the next few years in Buitenzorg and Cianjur in Westjava and after Payen had left Java for Europe, he practiced and developed his skills and also went into oil painting. Some of Raden Saleh's drawings from around 1822 have been preserved (» *Fig. 4 and 5*).

They comprise a series of watercolors depicting various kinds of agricultural equipment, as well as farmers in typical dress. These small sheets show the direction Saleh's training was meant to take. The idea was to turn him into a colonial artisan, able to document the natural resources and the ethnographic peculiarities of Java and play his part in the economic and scientific appropriation of the island.

While Saleh stayed in West Java, an anti-colonial rebellion broke out in Central Java in which important parts of Raden Saleh's family were involved. This definitively prevented the boy from returning to Semarang. He was accepted into the lower administrative service and worked as a *magat* (clerk) in Cianjur. But apparently, working as a clerk was not what Raden Saleh wanted from life. He kept on developing his artistic skills and when Karl Gericke, a German missionary who was later to become a leading scholar in the field of Indonesian studies, travelled through Cianjur in 1827, he came across a certain "Raden Saleh, a young man who paints in a remarkable way." This note indicates that Gericke perceived the young man neither as a clerk nor as a draftsman but as a painter. When the secretary of the financial department, Jean Baptiste de Linge, was recalled to Holland in 1829 to submit his report, Saleh gratefully accepted the



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**Fig. 4** Raden Saleh, *Weapons and Tools*, c. 1822, Watercolor on paper, 34.7 x 38.2 cm. Collection of Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, Leiden, coll. No. TM-H-3270i.

**Fig. 5** Raden Saleh, *Teapot and Snacks*, watercolor on paper, 15.5 x 35.2 cm, Tropenmuseum Amsterdam.

offer to accompany him as his secretary on the ship *Raymond*. On July 20, 1829 de Linge and Saleh arrived at the Port of Antwerp.

Saleh spent the next 22 years in Europe. He was educated by Cornelis Kruseman and Andries Schelfhout in The Hague, Johan Christian Clausen Dahl in Dresden and strongly influenced by Horace Vernet in Paris. This is not the place to tell the amazing story of the young Javanese artist in Europe who later claimed, “I arrived as a Javanese in Europe and return a real German to Java.”<sup>30</sup> But we have to note that he might have been the first artist from Asia who was educated and celebrated in major European cities.

When he finally returned to his native island in 1852, he dominated the art world and market and, in a way, art education as well. He painted numerous portraits and a number of outstanding landscapes of his native Java. It was said that nobody was as good at painting the tropical light as Raden Saleh. He was respected by Javanese and Dutch authorities alike and a visit to his neo-gothic home in Batavia was a must for many travelers.

Raden Saleh also taught drawing and painting and accepted students of all the races found in the colony: Javanese, Sundanese, Chinese and Dutch. And he was the first local artist in Java and maybe Asia (except China) to develop educational material – drawing templates – for local schools.

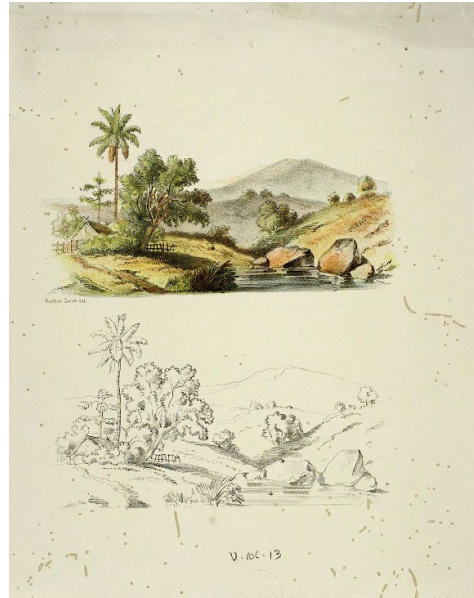
Around the year 1860 it became evident that the colony needed a better educational system. Economic processes had become more complex and the need for an educated or semi-educated population became more pressing. It was not only a question of more but a question of better schools. And better schools needed better teachers who could fall back on better teaching material. This applied to drawing lessons as well.

Textbooks for local and native schools in Java were only gradually introduced. One pioneer in this field was Karel Frederik Holle (1829–1896) who had compiled a reader in Sundanese language. Holle adhered to the philosophy of the English utilitarian school of philosophy which believed that everything should be supported that produces the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people. For this reason, he was committed to providing Sundanese and Javanese children with a practical (agricultural) and artistic education as a better trained and better educated farmer produces higher yields which benefits himself and society at the same time. With this intention in mind, he proposed to the government that *teekenvoorbeelden* – drawing templates to help teach drawing – should be developed and printed. Initially, Holle himself created a number of such *teekenvoorbeelden*, but soon realized that it made more sense to engage a specialist to carry out the task. He thought immediately of Raden Saleh with whom he had already worked on transcribing ancient inscriptions. Raden Saleh’s fame as a painter and illustrator had spread throughout the relevant strata of society and there was no-one in the colony who was his equal. Finally, Ludolph Anne Jan Wilt

30 For his biography, see: Kraus/Vogelsang 2012, p. 131.



**Fig. 6** Raden Saleh, *Drawing Template of Tree Trunks*, Perpustakaan Nasional Jakarta.



**Fig. 7** Raden Saleh, *Drawing Template of a Landscape*, Perpustakaan Nasional Jakarta.

Sloet van de Beele, Governor General of the colony asked Raden Saleh to design drawing templates for native schools as he found it inappropriate that Javanese children should practice their skills by drawing Dutch apple and pear trees.<sup>31</sup>

Most of his critics doubted Saleh's ability to do the job as a native artist was not expected to be able to understand the nature of an European textbook. At a meeting of the board of the Batavian Society for the Arts and Science in 1864, schools inspector J. A. van der Chijs presented four of the templates designed by Raden Saleh, which were met with astonished applause from all board members. His material was accepted, lithographed by W. D. Wiemans, printed at the Landsdrukkerij (state printers) in Batavia and sold to schools (and the public) throughout the colony.

A report of 1867 mentions that drawing lessons were offered at 12 regency schools in the colony and that these 12 schools each possessed one copy of Raden Saleh's drawing templates or *teekenvoorbeelden*, as they were called in Dutch. The *teekenvoorbeelden* were produced in the form of a collection of loose sheets. 26 of these sheets survived and are part of the collection of the National Library in Jakarta (» *Figs. 6, 7*).

31 Verslag der Handelingen van de Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, gedurende het zittingjaar 1869–1870 van September 20, 1869 – 17 September 1870. 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting of November 11, 1869, p. 164.

Others are to be found in Leiden University and at the Staatsbibliothek in Berlin. They are proof of the high quality of drawing lesson material Raden Saleh provided for Javanese schoolchildren.

15 of these lithographs presented in the lower half of the sheet the outline of the subject to be drawn – e.g. a tree trunk with root formation and lowermost branches. The upper half then shows how the same trunk can be given shape and volume by adding color and shading.

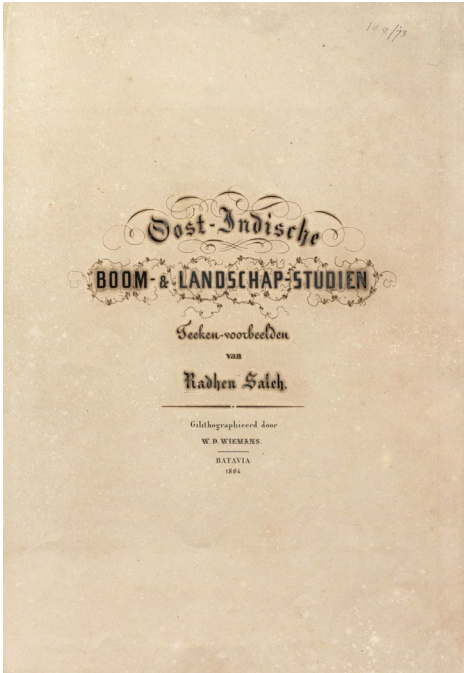
The individual sheets guide students step-by-step, showing them how to portray stones and boulders, then wood and trees, until they are able to compose entire Javanese landscapes. The system begins with simple motifs which become increasingly more complex. I have no proof yet, but it is possible that Raden Saleh fell back on Wilhelm Hermes *Berliner Systematische Zeichenschule* templates he might have seen or owned during his time in Dresden between 1839 and 1844.

And he might as well have remembered his time in the studio of Andreas Schelfhout in The Hague. There he was expected to draw and paint the different natures of wood, like a fresh cut tree trunk in opposition to a rotten one. This task he mastered in some of his Dutch landscape paintings between 1832 and 1836 and he repeated it in his collection of templates. Besides the mentioned drawing templates, 12 further drawings by Raden Saleh were lithographed in 1864 and published under the title *Oost-Indische Boom- & Landschap-Studien. Teeken-Voorbeelden van Raden Saleh* (Saleh 1864). This collection was intended for use in schools as well, but also sold as prints in bookshops (» *Figs. 8, 9*).

The teaching material developed by Raden Saleh in 1863/64 was of very high quality and provided native students with an excellent instrument. There was no comparable development in any other colony in Asia. With his drawing templates, Raden Saleh provided Javanese schools with a treasure whose mere existence must have had an impact on the position of the arts in Java. We do not know how long these schoolbooks were used for drawing lessons and which others replaced them. However, the fact alone that very little of the 120 original copies remain shows that they were subjected to vigorous use (and wear).<sup>32</sup> Perhaps future generations of researchers will succeed in finding traces of and assessing these drawing templates in the works of early twentieth-century Javanese artists.

In his country, Raden Saleh is called *pelepor seni-lukis Indonesia* (Pioneer of Indonesian Art), and in the same right he should be honored as *pelepor pendidikan seni rupa Indonesia* (Pioneer of Indonesian Art Education) as well. For the first time, a native of a colony appropriated an icon of European culture (formal art education) and offered it to his people. This can be regarded as a highly symbolic act of

32 1881 another 1,000 copies of Raden Saleh's *teekenvoorbeelden*, the black and white edition, were purchased by the Education Department in Batavia for 1,440,00 Guilders. *De locomotief*, December 12, 1885.



**Fig. 8** Title of Saleh 1864. Jakarta.



**Fig. 9** Lontar from Saleh 1864.

self-empowerment and emancipation, even if the original input was given by a colonial institution. The development of a local Indonesian modernity did not start before the 1930s. But the different channels of drawing instruction and drawing education that developed during the nineteenth century were essential preconditions for the later development. You need a fairly large number of people trained in the art of drawing before a pool of prospective artists can emerge. In this respect, drawing education in nineteenth-century Java, which was not discussed by art historians, colonial or post-colonial scholars so far, has to be regarded as one of the intellectual strands responsible for the emergence of a modern Indonesia.

## Appendix

### First group of French artists who arrived in Batavia in 1815–20

**J. Briois** worked for Sir Stamford Raffles in Bengkulu/Sumatra and was most probably hired by the French naturalists Diard and Duvaucel in Barrackpore near Calcutta to join them on their trip to Bengkulu in 1819.<sup>33</sup> He produced a number of watercolors of local birds for Raffles' second collection of naturalia in 1825/26, after Raffles' huge 'first' collection of 2500 natural history drawings was destroyed in the burning the East India Man *Fame* in 1825. So far we have no idea what happened to J. Briois after Bengkulu was returned to the Dutch (1824). There are no further records that mention his name either in Batavia, Singapore or Calcutta, but the possibility that he settled in one of the cities mentioned as a drawing teacher cannot be ruled out.

**H. Dorfeuille** arrived in February 1818 in Batavia and introduced himself with the impressive title of "painter of his majesty King Ferdinand VII of Spain". He must have met Ferdinand VII in France between 1808 and 1813, while the king was interned by Napoleon. It seems that Dorfeuille had produced some miniature portraits of the exiled king. Dorfeuille's portraits of Ferdinand VII are yet to be localized. I believe they became marginal and inconsequential, pushed into the background after Francisco Goya was commissioned to produce his massive portraits of Ferdinand. Dorfeuille announced in Batavia that he was going to start a drawing academy, modeled on the *Academy Beaux Art* in Paris. It seems that he and his academy had no great success as he finally opened a shop in Batavia in 1822 where he sold wines, perfumes, shoes and drawing pens. In July 1824 he left the colony, disillusioned, for Europe again.

**L. Thomasset**, a portrait and miniature painter, arrived in Batavia in May 1818. He announced that he had come from Bengal to Batavia<sup>34</sup> to paint portraits and give instruction in drawing to young ladies and gentlemen. He was willing to instruct his customers in their own house, or have them come to his studio at Molenvlied.<sup>35</sup> He left Batavia for Europe in November 1820.

33 Noltie 2009, pp. 165–166.

34 *Bataviasche Courant*, May 23, 1818.

35 *Bataviasche Courant*, August 8, 1818.

**J. P. Giraud** announced his arrival in the colony on the same day as Thomasette announced his departure from Batavia. Giraud offered the common dual service: production of portraits and drawing instruction for the public.

**August Jean Latour** was born in Metz around 1796 and came to Indonesia in 1818. First he was employed by the Natural Science Commission and travelled in this capacity to New Guinea. After the Natural Science Commission was dissolved, he stayed on in Java and in October 1822 offered drawing lessons to the public.<sup>36</sup> In February 1824 he was employed as a draftsman at the botanical garden in Buitenzorg/Bogor. Some of his natural history drawings were lithographed and published in Carl Ludwig Blume's *Flora Javae nec non Insularum Adjentium* and other works.

**Roelofs Kimmel** arrived in Batavia in June 1817.<sup>37</sup> Kimmel was born in Zwolle around 1775. Unlike his French colleagues, he settled for good in Batavia, got married and died there in 1831. Apparently, his success as an art instructor was limited. Besides a small boat, he bequeathed nothing else to his widow.

None of the artists mentioned exhibited outside their studios. And as far I know, no work by any of them (except Latour) survived.

## Second group of artists from France, Belgium, the Netherlands, United Kingdom and Germany in Batavia in 1825–30

**John Charles Lavalette** (1800–1865) introduced himself on August 27, 1831 in the newspaper *Javasche Courant* as a painter of miniatures. He seems to have had some success as he got married in November 1834 and settled for good in the colony.<sup>38</sup> He found employment as a draftsman with the Department of Waterways in Batavia. In February 1856 Lavalette moved to Surakarta as a temporary drawing instructor at the Training School for Native Teachers. In October 1858 he was finally appointed ordinary drawing teacher at the above-mentioned institute.<sup>39</sup> He died in Surakarta on September 15, 1865.<sup>40</sup>

36 *Bataviasche Courant*, November 2, 1822.

37 *Bataviasche Courant*, July 12, 1817.

38 John Charles Lavalette got married on November 30, 1834 in Batavia to a certain Nancij Fisk. *Javasche courant*, December 10, 1834.

39 *De Oostpost*, October 18<sup>th</sup>, 1858.

40 *Java-bode*, September 12, 1865. In his obituary he was no longer referred to as John but Jean.

**Agatha Peter Paul Rödler** was born in Mainz, Germany on February 3, 1811. He was a student of Philipp Kiefer (1784–1843).<sup>41</sup> His brother was the landscape painter Jakob Rödler who worked in Vienna. Between 1834 and 1848 Agatha Peter Paul Rödler settled in Paris and worked as an illustrator.<sup>42</sup> It is possible that he met the Javanese painter Raden Saleh in Paris and was encouraged by him to travel to Java, where he arrived in 1850. He settled in Batavia, but, like most artists, was forced to look for commissions in other cities (Semarang and Surabaya) as well. In 1854 he tried to start a new career as a photographer. He called his new technique *Lichtteekenen* (drawing with light).<sup>43</sup> A. P. P. Rödler died in February 1857 in Indramayu, a small forgotten town between Cirebon and Batavia.<sup>44</sup> At least two of his portrait paintings survived as part of a private collection in the Netherlands.

**Anthony Duijshart Jr.** settled in Surabaya in 1853. He was a flexible fellow; besides portrait paintings and photographic portraits he also sold locks, brandy and beer.

**Jacob Janssen**, born 1779 in Einlage, Prussia (today Poland), died in 1856 in Sydney. He was a travelling artist who had spent many years in North America, Brazil and Calcutta. He arrived in Batavia on May 31, 1837 from Bengal and advertised to the public that he was ready to serve as an instructor for drawing and painting in Batavia.<sup>45</sup> For reasons unknown, he spent only four months in Java. He left for Singapore, Manila and finally Sydney in September 1837. His diary (mostly in German), kept in Mitchell Library, Sydney, is not yet transcribed and annotated. Maybe it contains notes on his stay in Java as well. One of his Indian sketch books *Costumes of Calcutta* is with the State Library of New South Wales.

**Johan Caspar Müller-Kruseman**: see above.

41 Schrohe 1912, p. 220.

42 Thieme/Becker 1964–1966, vol. 28, p. 483.

43 Samarangsch advertentie-blad, August 12, 1854.

44 *Java-bode*, February 28, 1857.

45 *Javasche courant*, June 7, 1837.



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