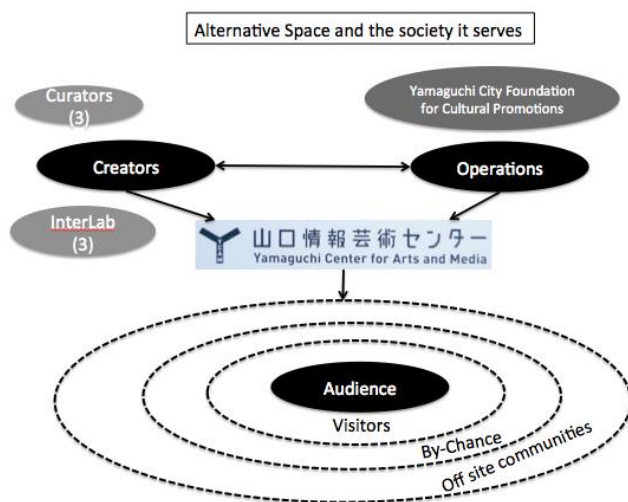


Title. The role of alternative space + fabrication labs in the development of media art in Japan and South east Asia:

The purpose of this research is to investigate the phenomenon of “alternative spaces” or “center creation spaces” in the development of media art. Also, this research will attempt to determine the variables of a creative environment, or creation centric environment. Four alternative spaces were determined as main case-studies. The rationale behind the multiple locations is based on 2 theories. The first one is from a critical essay by Steven A. Moore titled, “Technology, Place and Nonmodern Regionalism”. The gist of this essay is how technology is understood as “asocial application of scientific truths”. Technology comes “to define who and what we are”, based on Heidegger’s theory. Therefore, technology is a “social system” that is part of its society and context. Thus, technology is like “place”; where, the struggle between competing interests play out. The main statement is that technology is best understood by geography; such as location; and not by history. History is interprets reality through time; for instance in sequence, cause and effects; but geography interprets human events in space (real-time, relationships, rhizome). Technological network dominant the places inhabited by humans & nonhumans, much like a rhizome.



The 4 alternative spaces and fabrication labs areas selected for this study are; Yamaguchi Center for Arts + Media (YCAM) (JPN), FabLab Kamakura (JPN), 98B Collaboratory (PHY) and Lifepatch (IDN). Using a comparative analysis, the areas in Japan and South East Asia will be analyzed.

Generally, how technology is received by its society. In the northern hemisphere, countries such as Japan

are known as technology producers while South East Asia is a region of technology consumption.

Location 1: Yamaguchi Center Arts + Media: An alternative Institution.

With the help of Young Ja Park, YCAM Edulab curator, we spoke to 18 people at YCAM. Overall the interviews went well and were very orderly. The staffs were very cooperative however, it was a bit more challenging to get interviews with visitors or end-users of the space.



I divided the interviews for 3 types of people. First were creators that included Interlab, Edulab and curators. Secondly, were people involved in “Operations” and management. Thirdly, I interviews collaborators whom are people who regularly work with YCAM but are not directly employed by the institution. Lastly, I wanted to address the situation among the visitor.

Major points needed to support a creation-centered environment according to the YCAM creators was the ‘time’ factor. Ample research time is needed to understand a new subject. Researching also comes in the form of prototyping solutions with a great degree of trial and error.

Team dynamics is also a very important

- Ample Research time
- Time to do trial and error testing
- Clear mission or direction of project
- Understanding team member’s role
- Respecting team member’s role

With regards to YCAM’s audience, they feel that it’s very important that local communities in Yamaguchi are involved in the creative projects and that YCAM should position itself as a community driver/leader. The YCAM creators feel that their projects should have direct benefit to their local audience first. I also noted that YCAM 10th anniversary was an important event because the diverse programs that showcased and connected local communities with international communities.

Preliminary outcomes from interviews at YCAM;

Among “collaborators”:

Part 1: Operations to support a creation-centered environment

1. Often began as a volunteer than returned for continuing their support.
2. Involvement comes from shared similar visions.
3. YCAM outsourcing parts of the project to citizens
4. Understanding the mission.

Part 2: Audience Target

1. General public’s perception is that YCAM is too difficult to understand. This creates “intimidation” and many just “tune-off”.
2. Strong sense of responsibility to deliver a better understanding of YCAM’s projects.

Preliminary outcomes from interviews at YCAM;

Among “users and children”.

Children were challenging to interview because, as I discovered, they have trouble talking to people who they are not familiar with. Also, this has to do with the age and personality of each child. Through a casual conversation with one girl, Mao (11-year-old) girl translated by Park (EduLab curator), I got to find out that she liked to come to YCAM because it was a good place to meet friends and make new ones. It is also very close to her house which makes it convenient. She likes to play hide n' seek in the YCAM building. She likes to YCAM especially in the summer because there are more activities for kids like last year's Korogaru Pavilion.



So, Mao looks forward to the summertime activities. She said she didn't like the workshops which she spoke in reference to "Surround Sound" because she found it boring because it was too long (it was about 3 hours). I would like to especially note that Mao (and some other children) have close and trustworthy friendship with a few of the staff like Chiho Mikura and Young Ja Park.



I also had the opportunity to converse with ABE Kazunao, Artistic Director and Chief Curator and Director of YCAM, ADACHI Akeo. They shared many deep insights of the founding and the future missions of the institution.

(Left Photo: Director ADACHI, Akeo presented a drawing during my interview with him)

Title. “Let’s Cook Malaysian Curry Workshop”: a workshop to enhance food, living and media between community.

In exchange for the support YCAM has shown for my research, I volunteered to host a food workshop for their YAMA KITCHEN. YAMA KITCHEN started in 2014 as part of the "Asia dive in MEDIA / ART KITCHEN YAMAGUCHI: Region Open Laboratory to participate" which was held at an alternative space of Yamaguchi Eki-dori. The concept was an outcome of architect unit dot Architects as a mobile kitchen that served as a social media bar to stimulate information exchange and communication of the region explained as the "food-living media". Organized by the Life & Eat Club Sponsored by: Yamaguchi City Foundation for Cultural Promotion.

This time around, since N3 Gallery, the alternative space that YAMA KITCHEN used to operate in is now closed, we decided to host the YAMA KITCHEN in the café space at YCAM. Currently, the café space is unoccupied and has an industrial kitchen ideal for mass cooking. It also has a great serving and eating space. The first situation we had to deal was to procure suitable pots and pans for the cooking trials. For this, YCAM staff drove out to Ato district, an area in countryside, to burrow pots and eating utensils.

(Pictured Right: Yama Kitchen Table was designed by the architects)



(Pictures left)

Traveled to Ato District to burrow the utensils and large cooking pots



able to feed everyone.

I realized that “nasi lemak” even though is a very common dish in Malaysia, is difficult to make and required expensive spices. For instance, the long grain rice was bought online. I was also apprehensive about the acceptance level of chili among the staff. The 2nd trial, I focused on curry. Curry would be easier to make because the process was similar to that

of making soup. It was rather successful, but I still had problems with making the right portion for a large group. The group was about 25 people and the food was still not enough.



(Photo Left: 1st attempt for cooking workshop was where I tried to make “Nasi Lemak”.

I requested that children and parents are encouraged to participate at our public workshop. Finally, the day of the workshop arrived. All of the

participants got to know of the workshop through word-of-mouth. There was very little promotion. We received about 20 participants and there were about 5 children.

With the help of Young Ja Park, we divided the participants into 3 groups. I started the event with a brief introduction to the curry and spices. Then I proceeded to the “Spice Table” to show the different types of chili we used. Nearly all of the spices were brought it from Malaysia due to the difficulty in sourcing them locally. The workshop lasted for 3 hours whereby the last 30 minutes was spent enjoying the fruits of our labour. Needless to say, even YCAM staff came in to join the eating at the end. Below are pictures from pur workshop.



1. Introduction to Malaysia + Malaysian spices used for curry.



2. I am showing the different type of chilies I brought from Malaysia. They were the dried chilies, chili padi and red chili.



3. Participants using the industrial stove to make curry.



4. The children who helped prepare the curry were the first in line to taste their creations.



5. One of the finished curry made during the workshop.



6. The best part was that everyone ate together to enjoy the curry. Even YCAM staff from the office joined us.

Conclusion

This activity is related to YCAM's mission of the AGRI-BIO-KITCHEN where it attempts to look at food as a connection medium. Indeed, that was true with the Curry workshop because people cooked together with very little verbal communication and communicated instead through the tastes, ingredients and flavours. Cooking is also a good introduction to the science of recycling, gardening and making compost because it deals with every day aspect of life, which is eating to stay alive. This workshop was a kick-starter and used as a baseline study to participants' feedback on organizing such future events related with food, kitchen and media.

My second periodic report will cover my observations and informal interviews with Youka Watanabe, co-founder of FabLab Kamakura and Kazutoshi Tsuda, co-founder of FabLab Kitakagaya in Japan. Lastly, I will end it with a short section of my research stay with 98B Collaboratory in Manila, The Philippines.

Youka Watanabe has been an instrumental person to kick-start FabLab Kamakura with Professor Hiroya Tanaka of Keio University. She strongly believes that the fabrication knowledge and fablabs can act as an agent for community building. While the FabLab idea was conceived and developed at MIT, the sustainability of the fablab depends

largely on its ability to serve its local users. Therefore, every Fablab in Japan caters to each community's issues while they are as they are connected on a national level.

Each fablab offers a different entry point into the world of digital fabrication. During my stay in Japan, I visited 3 fablabs in 3 different cities.

Fablab Yamaguchi

Kawaguchi, Ayu Tabuki

Fablab Yamaguchi is located in the shopping arcade of Yamaguchi. The arcade gets a lot of foot traffic and is very accessible to people who just happen to walk by. It only opens for 3 days in a week and sometimes small groups of people use the space for various social activities like knitting classes.

Interview with Mr. Kawaguchi: Director of Fab Lab Yamaguchi, Yamaguchi Prefecture.

The Fablab director is Mr. Kawaguchi. 7 years ago, he wanted to explore an alternative working life to that of the average salaryman. He soon became friends with Mr. Aida at a film workshop. Mr. Aida who was the chief educator of Yamaguchi Center of Arts and Media at the time.

At 35 Mr. Kawaguchi retired from working in a company, to start his own company. His current company is his own, and he works closely with YCAM as external support (Support contractor)

He believes that even though Yamaguchi is a small city, it has an international link.

Established somewhere in June 2015, Fablab Yamaguchi was initiated by the local city council. Initially, they wanted to house it at the cable tv office, but Kawaguchi thought that that site might not be very inviting for first-time users of the facility. He suggested to look for a shoplot at the shopping arcade. A few months later. A shop lot nearby to his company was available for rent. He proposed to the funders that FabLab take up that space.

From then on, they worked closely with Fablab Kamakura for knowledge transfer and training the lab's managers. It also offers membership for users to use the machines outside of the time of the labs.

I had the chance to attend s 3D printing workshop. The class was from 11AM-2 PM and it was 2000 per person. Ayu Tabuki was our teacher and we started off with introduction video to fusion360. Our mission was to print a mug that day.

I learned from my 1st experience at a fablab was a form of motivation to initiate creativity among citizens. The idea of prefabrication that can be done on a smaller scale allows people to familiarize the notion of trial and error that is part of creation.

FabLab Kamakura, Kamakura, Kanagawa Prefecture.

FabLab Kamakura, on the other hand, is located in a well-known tourist area named Kamakura. FabLab Kamakura is housed inside a heritage architecture that is an old sake warehouse that has been moved to Kamakura and converted into

an office space and residence. This Fab Lab is known to be the first FabLab in Japan and is spearheaded by Youka Watanabe and Professor Hiroya Tanaka.

I found the architecture beautiful and is a clever idea of up-cycling an otherwise unwanted sake storehouse however, Youka admits that they have very limited space at the lab. This has forced her to rethink the usage of physical space and learning.



Photo above: FabLab Kamakura working space found on the 2nd floor.

For example, she can only conduct workshops in small groups (6-8 people). This is one of her motivation to position FabLab Kamakura to offer specialized skills like the Fab Academy, while the other labs can offer introductory to intermediate knowledge.

The physical spaces should be only used for meeting people and for production. Data-making can be done at home or on move. For example, an person in Tokyo will spend about 2-4 hours per day on train and they can easily to 3D modeling on their mobile devices while on the train. Watanabe plans to increase more online courses part of FabLab Kamakura.

In our conversation, Watanabe also mentioned about Fab Café Shibuya and FabLab Kamakura. Fab Café is a good example of “entrance” or introduction to fabrication making through the coffee culture. Besides having good coffee and food; Fab Café also provides access to fabrication tools with a small fee. Fab Café also organizes workshops where customers can make gifts. It was good way to fab-making as a way to make the knowledge more accessible. It’s location in Shibuya; the hub of Tokyo’s coffee culture is a good example of leveraging off the local commercial community.

Fablab Kitakagaya, Suminoe-ku, Osaka city.

My next visit FabLab visit was to Kitakagaya in Osaka. Kazatoshi Tsuda was my tour guide as he pointed out that FabLab Kitakagaya was located in a small industrial area. Small factories that once made up this manufacturing hub had since moved out to other locations and this has resulted in many empty lots in the area. The real estate property developers have taken bold steps to ensure urban regeneration through an arts foundation to assist in local arts projects in this area.

The FabLab takes up one lot in the shared space. Other creative companies like an architecture firm, a wood-work carpenters and NPO also shares the space where FabLab is located. The space has a shared bar, workshop, living room and exhibition space, which can also be rented out to host events.

As for the community, Kitakagaya caters to creative professional who come as far as Kyoto. Most of the members already have some experience working with the manufacturing equipment. Grants from the real estate developer, private donations and membership fees help fund the upkeep of the lab as well as purchase of the equipment.

The FabLab Kitakagaya space is quite compact too, but they have a separate place for woodwork that opens to a backyard. While the space is small, I feel that they have many shared spaces with other creative which make it easier to collaborate or to extend their activities. However, Tsuda mentioned that the small space means they don't have a lot of large workshops there, instead they are active to organize off-site programs in schools and other places.

98B Collaboratory

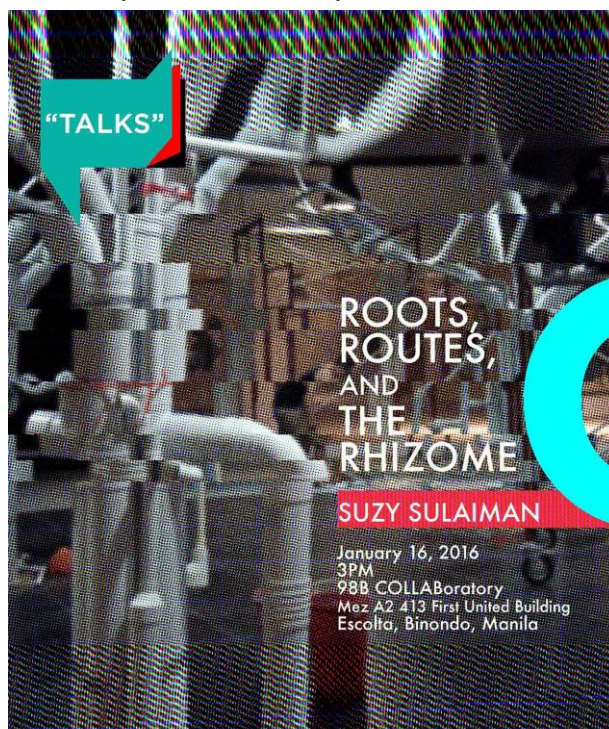


Derek and Ian)

98B Collaboratory is an artist-run founded and co-directed by Mark Salvatus, Hirano, and Marika Constantino. They

After my 2 months in Japan, I moved on to the southeast Asian phase of my research.

I would like to share my observations with 98B Collaboratory. I spent a total 10 days in Manila and stayed at the 98B Annex, which is an artist



residency I shared with 3 other local artists.

(Photo above: My discussion meeting with artists

initiative co-Mayumi begun in 2012

SUPPORTED BY:



and started at Mark's apartment where they hosted talks. The need to start this group stemmed from the difficulty to find a 'independent' space to host a talk because all spaces in Manila at the time was either an institution or gallery-run spaces. The other reason for initiating 98B was according to Mark's experience, that at the time, Philippine art was represented by commercial gallery artists.

Since then, they have moved out of Mark's apartment and to Escolta, where they were given a space by the building owners. From there, 98B has expended their activities by including as much of the local community as possible.

During my visit, I had the chance to meet several of the members and collaborators who actively work with 98B. The artists and 98B member that I met were Julius Redilus, Charles Salozor, Christian T., Derek Tumalan, Ian Carlos, Jay Pacena and Jett Ilagan. I also gave a talk titled, "Roots, routes and the rhizome" at 98B in Escolta. It was attended by some members and friends of the space. Also, I skyped with previous 98B Collaboratory resident artist from Taiwan, Wen-Tsao. Wen-Tsao stayed in Manila for over 2 months as part of a Bamboo Curtain Studio exchange program.



All in all, my experience with 98B Manila was different in Japan. A huge factor that shapes any of the activities in Manila is location because the traffic is very bad and this makes it difficult (and unsafe) to move from one place to another. This probably results in the fragmented arts scene.

Photo next: My talk at 98B Collaboratory, Escolta attended by artists and designers.

Lifepatch and HONFabLab [Jogjakarta], Jogjakarta, Indonesia.

At the last 10 days of my fellowship, I visited and interviewed 2 alternative spaces in Jogjakarta, Indonesia runned by artist collectives Lifepatch and House of Natural Fibre. Jogjakarta is located in central Java. It is a 'university city' because they are about 20 universities in this city, with 4 of them being public universities. This means there is a strong student population with a quite educated residents.

Lifepatch

I visited Lifepatch collective at their house on Jalan Bugisan. Their house consisted of a living area, kitchen; mini-workshop spaces of biolab, electrical and carpentry; and a large workshop table in the middle of the house. They often conducted workshops for the residents in the community at their house. Throughout my time at Lifepatch, I was ascorted by 2 of their members, Andreas Siagian and Adhari Donari.



Photo above: Lifepatch house is also an active community space for workshops.

I went to a noise gig called "Jogja Noise Bombing". I was very surprised to see such a big crowd, somewhere between 100-150 people attending such experimental sound event. In my thoughts, I compared this to the experimental scene in Kuala Lumpur, where it would be very difficult to get even 50 people to attend. I was also surprised to get a chance to listen to diverse noise performances by artists from Kalimantan, Solo and internationally like USA.



Picture above: The large student crowds who attend the experimental music scene.

Another art space I visited belonged to a contemporary artist. This artist and his wife, built a studio, gallery hall, outdoor open theater and a café, on their property where they lived. This artist also has an in-house artist-in-residency where he invited a Taiwanese musician as a resident. There was an outdoor performance area in his garden called ‘Kombo’ where these artists performed; even internationally-acclaimed musicians Senyawa performed that day.



Photo above: Indonesian musician performs with international artist at Kombo.

There is also a fablab in Jogjakarta called House of Natural Fibre's (HONF) Fab Lab. The Fablab was initiated by the artist collective HONF and is managed by Tommy. HONF fablab is a combination of café and fabrication lab. People would pay a fee to use the fabrication machine at the fablab. A very interesting section of this fab lab is its biology lab, which I do not find in the Japanese Fab Labs.



Photo above: The biology lab at HONFab Lab.

In conclusion, I find Jogjakarta to be a vibrant art city with diverse art scene despite its fragmented art infrastructure. It is a fertile ground for traditional arts and experimental art that is mostly taken up by the artists' own initiative.