

## REDISCOVERING PHOTOGRAPHY AS TOURISM MARKETING MEDIA IN BALI

From Colonial to Digital Age

I Made Bayu Pramana<sup>1)</sup>

<sup>1)</sup> Institut Seni Indonesia Denpasar  
[bayupramana@isi-dps.ac.id](mailto:bayupramana@isi-dps.ac.id)

### ABSTRACT

*Balinese exotica documentation at the early of the 20th century has become a magnet for tourist arrivals in the activities of photographers. Beginning to photograph people's and natures, photography then plays an important role as a media for promoting Bali in the 1920's. The tourism promotion media is outlined in the form travel guides, published by the colonial government in various needs. Observing this, it is necessary to review the chronology that built the promotion media from historical perspectives from the colonial to digital era. With the use of descriptive qualitative methods, this article refers to the aesthetic theory and history of photography in terms of technical and ideational in reading the media for promoting Bali tourism - who the photographer is, and how the spread of the promotional media. The image of the island of paradise that was built through bare-breasted Balinese women encouraged the attraction of the flow of mass tourism to Bali. Until the current digital era, when Bali has fundamentally changed a lot. Culture is no longer the only attraction. The loading of various digital photos of Bali on social media has become a new form of marketing in Bali as a world tourism destination.*

Keywords: Bali, Colonial, Photography, Tourism, Digital, Marketing

### PRELIMINARY

Authentic ethnic Balinese exotica documentation in the early 20th century has become a magnet for the arrival of travelers in the activities of photographers, artists, writers, anthropologists and eastern lovers. When westerners find dark-skinned people, they consider it exotic. When the Dutch saw the native population of the archipelago, they considered it exotic. Exotic images continue to be produced with the premise that a particular culture is "another, different" (otherness). A culture is considered exotic, then the culture is revealed to be just something new for the consumption of the Western eye (Wijaya, 2018: 19).

Beginning with the need to photograph people's lives, nature, culture and arts to get to know Bali, photography then plays an important role as a media for promoting Bali's exoticism at the beginning of the tourism era. In addition to taking objects from Europeans and native elites, as well as various occupational professions, various ethnic groups in the Dutch East Indies also became objects of commercial photographers.

The tourism promotion media is outlined in the form of books, posters, postcards, magazines, brochures and travel guides, published by the colonial government, shipping airlines, and travel agents in various needs (Sunjayadi, 2008: 302). Moving on from this, photography and tourism together became two inseparable things, because photography displays a variety of visual beauty and appeal that were designed to come and enjoy the destinations prepared by the colonial government.

Photographs taken by photographers both working independently and carrying out "state assignments" are also included in brochures, postcards, magazines and travel guide books that are distributed throughout the country which are considered to have the potential to bring in quite a number of tourists.

The tourism promotion media is outlined in the form of books, posters, postcards, magazines, brochures and travel guides, published by the colonial government,

shipping airlines, and travel agents in various needs (Sunjayadi, 2008: 302). Moving on from this, photography and tourism together became two inseparable things, because photography displays a variety of visual beauty and appeal that were designed to come and enjoy the destinations prepared by the colonial government.

## **METHOD**

The method used in this research is a descriptive exploratory method with an interdisciplinary historical approach, through the heuristic stages (source collection), source criticism, interpretation and historiography. The author tries to collect contemporary sources, especially those related to the development of Photography in Bali

## **HISTORY OF PHOTOGRAPHY IN INDONESIA**

In 1841, a Dutch health official named Juriaan Munich got an assignment from the Colonial Ministry to undertake a photography project in the Indies. He first landed in Batavia with a daguerreotype camera. Munich was given the task of perpetuating plants and natural conditions in Indonesia as a way to get information about natural conditions. The Munich project did not produce good photos due to weather humidity and temperature conditions that damaged the recording plate. The photography project was replaced by Adolf Schaefer in 1845 to document the reliefs of the Borobudur temple. Since then, the camera has become a part of modern technology used by the Dutch Government to carry out its new policy. Control and control of the colony is no longer done by building fortifications or placing troops and cannons, but by mastering modern transportation and communication technology. Within this framework, photography carries out its functions through colonial administrative workers, court employees, military officers, and missionaries.

The presence of photography in the Dutch East Indies seemed to be able to answer the European curiosity of the colony and its inhabitants. It is also thanks to photography that the Western world knows the archipelago and the "exoticism" in it, which then makes Europeans come to explore this exoticism. In addition, photography is also credited with recording traces of Hindu-Buddhist history and the development of Nusantara civilization, especially Java. However, photography has become a business that is considered to be able to bring huge profits and make many people competing to set up commercial photo studios (Pratiwi, 2014: 14). Not only that, the Colonial government used photography as a documentary media in many political events, agreements, and conquests of the local rulers of the archipelago, including Bali.

## **PHOTOGRAPHY IN BALI**

In the period 1860-1890s photographers Isidore Van Kinsbergen, Walter Bentley Woodbury and James Page had visited Bali several times to photograph Balinese life, nature and arts in a photography project. Not to forget Ohannes Kurkdjian began his exploration of photography in Bali in the late 19th century. In preparation for conquering Bali for the mission of Pax Nedherlandica, Governor General Van Heutz sent WOJ artist Nieuwenkamp to conduct art studies, mapping and photo shoots in Bali. Besides being an artist, Nieuwenkamp was also an adventurer, ethnologist, art collector, photo photographer and writer who first came to Bali on March 17, 1904 through an assignment by the Dutch East Indies colonial army. In Bali Nieuwenkamp observed art, social and architecture, sketched and photographed many old temples and important castles in Bali, including maps of strategic streets in Bali which were later known to be used for the benefit of the Dutch East Indies military expedition of the kingdoms of Badung, Tabanan and Klungkung ( Carpenter, 1997: 7). Later Nieuwenkamp's work was known to be an important reference in the Dutch conquest of the Kingdom of Badung in 1906 and Klungkung 1908, as well as ending the full sovereignty of the kings of Bali.

After controlling all of Bali, the colonial government commissioned a doctor who was also a photography enthusiast named Gregor Krausse in 1912 to handle the cholera outbreak in Bali, Krausse also photographed the daily life of the Balinese people. Dr. Krause who is also engaged in Photography brought a simple Leica 35mm camera. During his assignment in Bali, Kraus took more than 4000 photos and wrote a publication text about Bali which contained more than 400 of his photographs in 1920. Krause's book significantly conveyed to the world about Bali, a small island that has extraordinary cultural richness. . Krause's book influenced many writers and photographers coming to Bali (Krause, 2001: 9). Photographs of Krausse then opened the eyes of the European community about the exoticism of Bali.

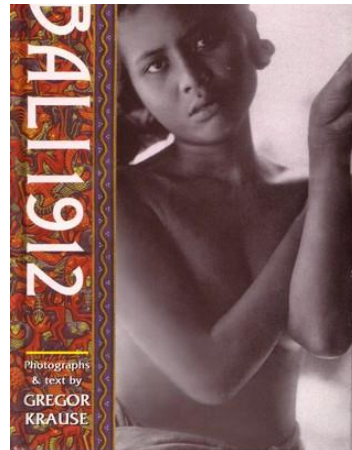


Figure 1. Bali 1912  
Photo Book by Gregor Krause

In the late twenties, when Java was considered to be impure because it was becoming more modern and the emergence of an increasingly radical nationalist movement, attention was shifted to Bali which was considered to be pure and relatively safer. The first focal point of tourism which previously was the natural landscape in Java shifted to culture in Bali. Photographs of bare-breasted Balinese women are also an attraction (Sunjayadi, 2008: 310). Bali, also known as the island of the gods, is an alternative choice for tourists.

#### **TOURISM AND MEDIA PROMOTION OF TOURISM IN COLONIAL BALI**

Bali began to open for tourism destinations in 1914. A publication from the official Tourism Bureau that year warned that because of the scarce number of lodgings, more visitors than three groups were not permitted to visit Bali at one time. In 1924 there were 213 visitors. In 1934 it increased to around 3000, and they had already complained that Bali was damaged by tourism (Haks, 2011: 207).

Learning from the previous situation in Java, the colonial government, at the suggestion of Gericke, began to organize Balinese culture on the basis of: "How can they control a very large colony if they do not understand their history and culture?" The Javanese frontal attitude towards the colonial authorities according to Gericke was caused by the tendency of Europeans to ignore or even damage the Javanese cultural order that they had and exalted (Margana, 2018: 3).

Gericke recommends that the State make a serious effort to study the history and culture of indigenous people (not only Java) in order to create a harmonious atmosphere and socio-political conditions. (Margana, 2018: 4). In this spirit the Colonial government organized the community and Balinese culture, which became known as the Baliseering policy. Vickers (1989: 11) described how the Dutch colonial government redefined the image of Bali from its image as a wildly uncivilized place into the image of an island paradise. The imagery encouraged the arrival of many photographers, artists, anthropologists, filmmakers and writers.

Hickman Powel and Andrew Roosevelt embarked on a trip to Bali in the early 1920s to carry out photography, cultural observations and interactions with the Balinese. They then published their admiration for Bali in a legendary book entitled "Bali the Last Paradise". The book is also a starting point for the relationship and collaboration of western photographers with the Balinese people.

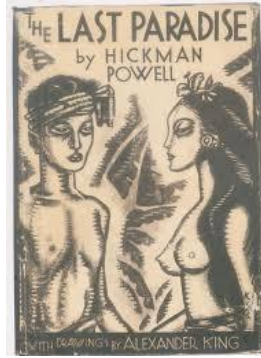


Figure 2. Book Bali The Last Paradise  
Hickman Powell & Andrew Roosevelt  
1920

Franklin Price Knott, an American National Geographic photographer, did an adventure in Bali while shooting with an autochromatic color film for the first time in 1928 in Bali. Knott presents a variety of Balinese people's lives in color photo footage, agricultural life, dancers, rituals and of course the bare-breasted Balinese girl figure. The best photos of Knott were published in National Geographic Volume LIII No.3 magazine in March 1928, with an article titled Artist Adventures on the Island of Bali. Knott's photographic works show the simplicity of Balinese society, daily life filled with hard work, a system of production, management and systematic food storage, various splendor of clothes in performing arts and exoticism of Balinese girls in daily life and religious rites. While from a technical standpoint, Knott presented color photography techniques for the first time in Bali. There had never been a photographer before Knott who used a medium of color film to explore Bali.



Figure 3. Autochrome by Franklin Price Knott  
The National Geographic Magazine  
March 1928, Volume LIII, Number Three

Almost simultaneously with Knott, Walter Spies first came to Bali at the invitation of Cokorda Raka Sukawati The king of Ubud in 1927 . The arrival of Walter Spies in Bali aroused his love for the nature and culture of Bali. Spies documented Balinese Art, community activities and also published Books. Together with Anthropologist Margaret Mead, Walter Spies published a book containing a collection of his photographic works entitled Dance and Drama in Bali. Walter Spies's visual record in Bali greatly influenced Balinese art and inspired many people to come to Bali.

At the beginning of the 1930s, Gregor Krausse, Karl White, Andrew Roosevelt, PAJ Moojen, Theodore Van Earp, Franklin Price Knott, Walter Spies, Arthur Fleischman, Rudolf Bonnet, Miguel Covarubiass, Baron Viktor Von Plessen, Henri De De La Falaise, Margaret Maid, Philip Hanson Hiss, Robert Koke, Gothard Schuh, USA Wandia, J. Kersten, K. Satake and a series of other famous names. Photography, writing and film works also encourage tourism promotion that was pioneered by the Dutch shipping company KPM, Rotterdam Lloyd, and Ruys Company by seeking professional photographers.

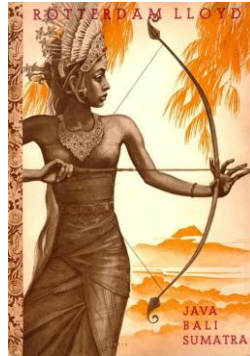


Figure 4.  
Travel brochure published by  
the Rotterdam Lloyd shipping company

Photographs taken by photographers both working independently and carrying out "state assignments" are also included in brochures, postcards, magazines and travel guide books that are distributed throughout the country which are considered to have the potential to bring in quite a number of tourists.

The use of postcards, tourist guidebooks and brochures as tourism promotional materials was the beginning of a popular perspective at that time. The travel guide book was mostly published by an official government agency that deals with tourism promotion in the Dutch East Indies, *Officieel Vereeniging Touristenverke Boureau* (often abbreviated to VTV). This tourism agency was established on April 13, 1908 in Batavia, with *Besluit* signed by Governor General Van Heutz (Sunjayadi, 2008: 308).

Photography in the field of tourism has an important role both for tourism actors, in this case of course the government deals specifically with tourism, as well as the private sector. The existence of photography for tourism actors is certainly for the needs of publication or promotion of tourism objects because photography is considered capable of representing the beauty of existing tourist objects in accordance with the original.

In addition, photography is also very closely related to tourists or people who travel. For tourists, photos are a must when traveling, because apart from being a souvenir, photos are also a personal archive and even as a venue to show off to others (Antopani, 2015: 30). Bali has gradually evolved into one of the most romantic stops on tourist itineraries, and what is fed by romantic images from photographs documented by Western cultural travelers, as well as illustrations from artists tasked with depicting Balinese exoticism in a number of western books and articles. Passionate with a series of new sights, sounds and smells of the daily rituals of the daily Balinese civilization, tourists then stay longer with local residents, some are even permanent and rush to print new books to tell the whole world about Balinese exotic magic spells (Hermanu, 2013: 14). In addition to its rich culture and natural beauty, the construction of tourist accommodation that began with the construction of Bali Hotels also encourages the presence of tourists to Bali.

## POST INDEPENDENCE TO DIGITAL ERA

Since 1950 tourism in Bali has become a national tourism. But until the 1950s access to Bali was still expensive, especially by airplanes. Only Indonesians who are able to become tourists in Bali. They were fascinated by the strength of the Balinese people to hold the tradition and preserve their art. Likewise the impression obtained from tourist books and brochures. Throughout the 1950s to the 1960s. In the 1950s the Balinese began to pioneer tourism again in their area. Their involvement marked a new era in the history of Balinese tourism and ended the era of exotic tourism built by the Dutch colonial government (Sjafari: 2013). In 1962 President Soekarno also initiated the establishment of the Bali Beach Hotel in Sanur Denpasar as one of the five-star and largest hotels in Bali at that time.

Development of tourism in Bali was continued by President Soeharto by expanding Tuban airport in 1975, then established under the name Ngurah Rai International Airport. And followed by the establishment of a special tourism area in Nusa Dua. The momentum then became a milestone in the emergence of mass tourism flows in Bali. During this period Bali was also visited by many foreign photographers and writers. Bali is massively displayed in many books, postcards, travel magazines and foreign book articles. Almost in every corner of the tourist area can be found postcards with a picture of Bali.

When the era of digital photography is increasingly developing, tourism promotion media is also developing towards social media. In addition to Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Path, and Line, which are the people's favorite social media, the most popular platform is Instagram which contains photos. With the growing number of users, Instagram is a great opportunity for business people to do promotional activities. Bali tourism promotion media also appeared in many portals.



Figure 5.  
Iconic Gate of Pura Lempuyang  
Source: Instagram @iwwm a famous Bali Instagram Photographer

Promotion through social media has proven to be very effective because it can be seen in seconds and can publish unpopular destinations into new destinations favored by young people using social media. This encourages the emergence of a variety of new destinations that are viral in Bali. The unlimited range of photography works via social media throughout the world remains the main focus of Bali today to survive as the most popular destination in the world.

## CONCLUSION

The using of photography technology in Bali which is part of the Dutch East Indies government, supports a wealth of colonial tourism promotion material in the Dutch

East Indies. The photos about Bali were initially only used by researchers, photographers, writers for their research needs. Photographs of the best selected works were finally used in printed material in the form of books, magazines, postcards and illustrations in tourism publicized guidebooks. The selection of photographs presented reflects the interests of the colonial government in presenting Bali's image as the last Heaven on Earth. Changes in technology towards digital, especially the Instagram platform, still makes photography the most important thing in tourism promotion media. In addition, it can be concluded that photography is one of the historical markers of the start of the era of the tourism industry in Bali.

## REFERENCE

- Carpenter, Bruce W. 1997. *W.O.J. Nieuwenkamp – First European Artist in Bali*. Singapore : Uitgeverij Uniepers Abcoude / Editions Didier Millet.
- Covarrubias, Miquel. 1937. *Island of Bali*. Great Britain : Cassel & Company Limited.
- Freitag, Thomas U. 2007. *Bali : 3 Balinese Photographers 1913-2007*. Denpasar : Grya Santrian Gallery.
- Haks, Leo & Steven Wachlin. 2011. *Indonesia 500 Early Post Cards*. Singapore : EDM books.
- Hermanu. 2013. *Seni Foto Walter Spies : Bali 1930*. Yogyakarta : Bentara Budaya Yogyakarta.
- Hitchcock, Michael & Lucy Norris. 1995. *Bali the Imaginary Museum : The Photographs of Walter Spies and Beryl de Zoete*. Kuala Lumpur : Oxford University Press, Oxford Singapore New York.
- Jansen, Frans (Ed.). 2007. *Bali in the 1930's, Photographs & Sculptures by Arthur Fleischmann*. Netherland : Pictures Publisher.
- Knott, Franklin Price. 1928. *Artist Adventures on the Island of Bali*. Washington DC : National Geographic Society.
- Krause, Gregor. 2001. *Bali 1912*. Singapore : Pepper Publication.
- Margana, Sri. 2018. *Sana Budaya : dari Orientalisme hingga Nasionalisme*. Yogyakarta : Museum Sono Budoyo. (Katalog Pameran Sono Budoyo ; Sejarah dan Identitas Keistimewaan).
- Picard, Michel. 1992. *Bali ; Tourisme culturel el culturel touristique atau Bali ; Pariwisata Budaya dan Budaya Pariwisata*. Terjemahan Jean Couteau dan Warih Wisatsana (2006). Jakarta : KPG dan Forum Jakarta Paris.
- Pratiwi, Daniek Intan. 2014. *Fotografi di Hindia Belanda*. Yogyakarta : Jurnal Lembaran Sejarah Vol.11 No.2 (2014).
- Soedjono, Soeprpto. 2006. *Pot-Pouri Fotografi*. Jakarta : Penerbit Universitas Trisakti.
- Stroomberg, J. 2018. *Hindia Belanda 1930*. Yogyakarta : IRCiSoD
- Sunjayadi, Achmad. 2007. *Vereeninging Teoristen Verkeer Batavia - Perhimpunan Turisme Batavia (1908-1942), Awal Turisme Modern di Hindia Belanda*. Jakarta : FIB UI.
- Vickers, Adrian. 1996. *Bali a Paradise Created*. Australia : Periplus-Penguins Books.
- Wubin, Zhuang. 2016. *Photography in Southeast Asia, a Survey*. Singapore : National University of Singapore Press.