

INDONESIA

Surakarta

Cultural Cities Profile
East Asia



10 June 2021
Tom Fering / creative consultancy

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Special Thanks

Commissioned by the British Council, the research was led by Dr. Tom Fleming, director, Tom Fleming Creative Consultancy (TFCC); Nana Yu-I Lee, senior researcher, TFCC; Chris Joynes, consultant researcher, TFCC. The Indonesia research teams were led by Dwinita Larasati at ICCN, with support from Arianti Ayu Puspita. The CIPG research team were Anesthesia Novianda, Ferzya Farhan and Muhammad Rinaldi Camil. The Tanahindie research team was led by Anwar Rachman, and included Muhaimin Zulhair, Fitriani A Dalay, Fauzan Al Ayyuby, Aziziah Diah Aprilya Wilda Yanti Salam, Ade Awaluddin Firman, Ruth Onduko, and Rafsanjani. ICCN's key city informants were: for Surabaya: Hafsoh Mubarak; for Surabaya: Vicky Arief; for Surabaya: Ashari Ramadhan; for Surabaya: Ronny Lopies; for Jayapura: Murda; for Bandung: Galih Sedayu; for Surabaya: Greg Wuryanto; for Surabaya: Akhmad 'Adin' Khoridin; for Surakarta: Liliek Setiawan; for Aceh: Zulhadi Usman.

The **British Council** builds connections, understanding and trust between people in the UK and other countries through arts and culture, education and the English language. <https://www.britishcouncil.org/>

Tom Fleming Creative Consultancy is the leading international consultancy for culture and the creative economy. We offer research, strategy and policy leadership across the creative, cultural and arts sectors. We offer technical expertise, strategic thinking and the tools to position creativity to the heart of society. With offices in London and Porto and associates in 12 countries, we are an international agency operating in every region. <http://tfconsultancy.co.uk/>

Indonesia Creative Cities Network (ICCN) is a hub organisation for cross-communities forum, connecting 200+ cities/regencies from all over Indonesia that are committed to implement the 10 Principles of Indonesia Creative Cities that was declared in 2015. ICCN published the White Book of Indonesia Creative Cities (2017) that adapts the 10 Principles to the Indonesian government's KPI, and is developing a dashboard of Creative Cities Index as a tool for local governments to make policies/ regulations based on the real time creative economy data of their respective regions. <https://iccn.or.id/>

Centre for Innovation Policy and Governance (CIPG) is a research-based advisory group which aspires to excel in the area of innovation, policy and governance. Considered to be among the first research-based advisory groups, CIPG grows to be an open-minded and multicultural think tank with keen interest in building Indonesian research capacities across many sectors. <https://cipg.or.id/en/>

Tanahindie was established in 1999, composed of personnel from various backgrounds (researchers, authors, advocates, craftspeople, lecturers, students, social workers, and housewives). Exploring urban social development from the perspective of arts and culture, the organisation's activities include research, seminars, exhibitions, reviews, and publication. <https://tanahindie.org/>

Introducing Surakarta

Surakarta, also known as “Solo”, is located at the heart of Central Java Province. Once the capital for the 18th Century Mataram Kingdom, Surakarta is known as one of Indonesia’s most attractive cities. It contains numerous historical and cultural assets associated with the city’s heritage.

With a population of over 522,000, Surakarta has a multi-ethnic population made up of Javanese, Arabic, Chinese, and Indian. Historically, this diversity influenced the layout of the city, with ethnic urban villages or kampongs established in order to facilitate the management of different ethnic groups. “Arab Villages” can be still be found in three neighbourhoods: Pasar Kliwon, Semanggi and Kedung Lumb. Meanwhile, many Chinese villages are concentrated in Balong, Coyudan, and Keprabon areas, recognisable from the presence of temples and pagodas such as the Tien Kok Sie Pagoda.

While Indonesian is the official language, Surakartan people also use the Javanese Mataraman dialect, also spoken in Yogyakarta, Magelang, and Semarang.

Surakarta

Photo © jakpost.net

The City’s Cultural Infrastructure

Javanese culture retains a strong presence within Surakarta and forms the basis of the city’s existing cultural infrastructure. Traditional Javanese buildings still actively function as government offices. It is common to find people wearing traditional clothes, kebaya for female and beskap for male, and traditional art performances are considered central to cultural activities in Solo. Most cultural activities in Surakarta are adapted from the traditions emerging from two palaces: Kasunanan and Mangkunegaraan.



As a city of culture, Surakarta is committed to integrating city development with the preservation, maintenance, and development of existing artistic heritage and cultural infrastructure. The authorities' plans for the city's culture-based economy centre on empowering the small- and medium enterprises (SMEs) connected to the intangible heritage of the city, specifically batik textiles, keris (traditional dagger) craft, cuisine, and performance. Based on an independent assessment conducted by the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy in 2020, there are 274 studios, 41 business associations, and 1000 artistic performers in Surakarta.



Solo has the strengths of the characteristics of building, food, and performing arts. A strong Javanese culture combined with modernity. Collaboration between government and community has been built for a long time.

Liliek Setiawan,
Founder of Surakarta Creative Communities Organisation¹

The city's Smart City Programme, launched in 2018, impacted on the development of Laweyan, a kampong neighbourhood well-known for its batik production. Through access to 3G and 4G networks, local batik producers have begun to reach global markets, and have established a brand image for Surakarta's batik.

This has transformed the kampong into a tourism centre, as well as gaining a reputation as a "Digital Village".

International and domestic tourism also plays a key role within the city's creative economy. Specific strategies include the development of the city's 'wellness tourism', focusing on health and fitness, and the adoption of the Government Incentive Assistance programme for homestays in tourist villages.



The development of a homestay tourism village is considered to be a breakthrough that will be a mainstay in the future, both for the upper and lower middle class people and local residents. Today, homestays are starting to experience very positive changes, starting from the quality of services, buildings, locations, and facilities with the concept of shifting tourism to quality and sustainable tourism.

Sandiaga Uno,
The Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy

Indonesian President Joko Widodo recently inaugurated the Yogyakarta-Solo commuter line, designed to boost the two cities' tourism industry and other economic sectors by enabling domestic and international travellers to easily access both Yogyakarta and Surakarta's rich cultural and historical heritage.

¹ Interviewed by CIPG 10th Feb 2021



Mangkunegaran Palace.

Photo © piotr gabrek - www.sunrise.maplogs.com

Cultural Institutions – a sample

Mangkunegara Palace (Keraton Mangkunegaran)²

Mangkunegaran Palace is the centre of a small Javanese princely state located within Surakarta. Established in 1757 and located in the city centre, the palace is both a centre for living Javanese heritage and a cultural complex, with museum, exhibition and performance spaces focusing on traditional Javanese arts and theatre.

Radyapustaka Museum³

Established in 1890, Radyapustaka Museum is the second oldest museum in Indonesia and is located within the park complex of Taman Sriwedari. In addition to exhibiting a range of historical artefacts and examples of Javanese performing arts and culture, the museum is known for its collection of Indonesian literature in Old Javanese and Dutch languages.

Keris Nusantara Museum⁴

Focussing on Java's cultural heritage, this museum includes regional art and artifacts, but particularly the history, design and manufacturing of ornate Keris weaponry.

Balekambang Park

The Balekambang Park is a historical park founded in 1921, associated with public cultural life in the city. Within the grounds, the park includes the Balekambang Botanical Garden, the Bale Kambang Traditional Ketoprak traditional drama performance space, and a cafe and exhibition space managed by young artists.

Communities, Marketplaces and Creative Hubs

Flux Basement⁵

Established in 2016, Flux Basement is a multidisciplinary collective covering music, fine art and photography. The community focuses on organising and presenting curated events, using open creative dialogue between artists and the public. Regular gigs include Sticking Glue and Street Electronica, which present local and touring musicians often in combination with exhibitions, murals and visual arts. Flux Basement also acts as an independent label, publisher and networking centre.

Pakem Solo⁶

Pakem Solo is a dance studio, workshop and event space supporting creative activities through a range of interventions, including discussions and readings, music performance, kiosks and stalls, mini coworking spaces, and mini galleries and exhibition space.

Muara Market⁷

Muara Market is a market and creative hub providing facilities to support a range of creative activities, including kiosks and stalls for artists, designers and cuisine, a library and digital hub, a performance stage, and services for event organisation.

Sanggar Wayang Gogon⁸

Sanggar Wayang Gogon is an artisanal workshop and centre for Surakarta's traditional style of leather shadow puppets, as well as other accessories and leather crafts.

² <https://puromangkunegaran.com>

³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Radya_Pustaka_Museum

⁴ <https://pariwisatasolo.surakarta.go.id/destinations/belajar-tentang-keris-di-museum-keris/>

⁵ www.instagram.com/fluxbasement

⁶ <https://www.instagram.com/pakemsolo/?hl=en>

⁷ <https://pariwisatasolo.surakarta.go.id/destinations/muara-market/>

⁸ <https://pariwisatasolo.surakarta.go.id/destinations/sanggar-wayang-gogon/>



Muara Market Performing Place

Photo © archive.ivaa-online.org

Kampung Laweyan⁹

After establishing itself as a centre for Batik design and production and becoming a key tourist destination, the urban neighbourhood of Kampung Laweyan is increasingly becoming known as a centre for digital creativity, led by the local adoption of online and digital technologies by SMEs for marketing, promotion and trade.

LED ART Project¹⁰

The LED Art Project is an art space and creative hub providing facilities to support a range of creative activities. It includes exhibition spaces, workshops and rooms for events, discussions and readings. It hosts individual artists and creative communities operating in the digital economy and fine arts sectors, including digital content communities such as Solodelicious and Tekun Colony.

DILO (Digital Lounge) Solo¹¹

Digital Innovation Lounge (DILo) is a government-sponsored creative hub for digital creatives and entrepreneurs. Initiated by Telkom Indonesia and The Indonesian Informatics and Technology Society (Masyarakat Informatika dan Teknologi Indonesia/ MIKTI), DiLo itself is established in many cities in Indonesia as a form of commitment by Indonesian State-Owned Companies (Badan Usaha Milik Negara/ BUMN), to build digital entrepreneurship and to support the technological empowerment of communities in Indonesia. With an active membership of approximately 2500 members, DiLo Solo focuses on programmes to nurture talent, startups & communities to develop and collaborate, with supporting activities and facilities.

Rumah BUMN Solo¹²

A commercial coworking space that provides facilities for individuals, groups and creative communities, supplemented by training events for business development and management.

Ruang Atas¹³

Ruang Atas is an initiative that provides facilities to support creative activities. With a particular focus on small and portable facilities, it provides a range of coworking and exhibition spaces, workshop facilities and discussion forums.

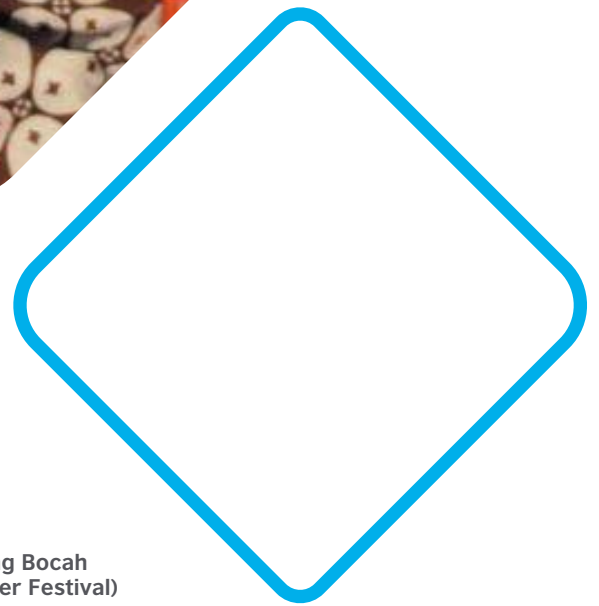
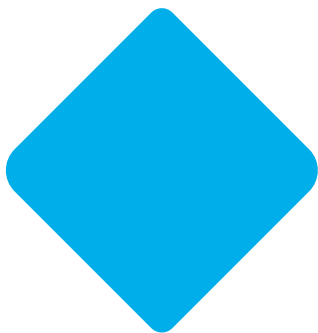
⁹ <https://pariwisatasolo.surakarta.go.id/destinations/kampung-digital-laweyan/>

¹⁰ <https://pariwisatasolo.surakarta.go.id/destinations/led-art-project/>

¹¹ <https://dilo.id/solo>

¹² <https://pariwisatasolo.surakarta.go.id/destinations/rumah-kreatif-bumn-rkb-solo/>

¹³ <https://www.instagram.com/ruang.atas/?hl=en>



Festival Wayang Bocah
(Child Puppeteer Festival)

Photo © www.Surakarta.go.id

Festivals

Solo International Performing Arts¹⁴

Solo International Performing Arts is a major annual festival providing a platform for a broad range of contemporary and traditional performing arts, including dance, music and theatre. While the festival has an international and regional scope, it places a particular emphasis on involving young and emerging generations of Javanese and Indonesian artists in order to develop their role in maintaining the vanguard of Indonesian cultural resilience.

International Gamelan Festival¹⁵

With a particular focus on Javanese courtly traditions, the International Gamelan Festival hosts a programme of concerts by orchestras and ensembles from various generations.

Grebek Sudiro¹⁶

Grebek Sudiro is a community-led carnival organised by Solo's Chinese-Javanese communities to celebrate the Chinese New Year (Imlek). The carnival showcases the acculturation between China and Java, and is usually held around Gede Market (Pasar Gede).

Festival Wayang Bocah¹⁷

Festival Wayang Bocah, or the Child Puppeteer Festival, is an annual event designed to introduce and engage children in the Javanese Wayang traditions. Organised by the city government at the Sriwedari Wayang Orang Building, the festival offers a programme of theatre, workshops, traditional games, traditional musical instruments and fairy tales from across Indonesia. The purpose is to raise knowledge and awareness of the importance of their own culture.

Solo Creative Expo

The Solo Creative Expo is a creative industries event hosted by the city authorities and held every three or four years. Undertaken with the



Solo International Performing Arts Festival.

Photo © imgjakpost.net

objective of promoting and advancing the city's creative industries, the expo is designed to introduce the city's traditional and modern creative enterprises and products with a view to developing the local creative economy.

Solo Batik Carnival¹⁸

An annual event organised by the city government, the Batik Carnival centres on a parade and programme of fashion shows, presenting Surakarta's own batik traditions.

Solo Indonesia Culinary Festival¹⁹

Solo Indonesian Culinary Festival is an annual event promoting cuisine from Central Java and across Indonesia. In addition to cooking demonstrations and workshops, the event distributes thousands of portions of Indonesian cuisine for free.

¹⁴ <https://sipafestival.com/>

¹⁵ <https://www.instagram.com/igfsolo/?hl=en>

¹⁶ <https://pariwisatasolo.surakarta.go.id/sejarah-grebeg-sudiro/>

¹⁷ <https://radarsolo.jawapos.com/read/2019/08/21/151797/gerakan-cinta-budaya-lewat-festival-wayang-bocah>

¹⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Solo_Batik_Carnival

¹⁹ <https://www.facebook.com/sicf.solo/>

Movers and Shakers – a sample

Liliek Setiawan²⁰

Liliek Setiawan is founder of Surakarta Creative Communities Organisation (Organisasi Komunitas Kreatif Surakarta) and Vice Chairman of the city's Forum of Economy Development Employment and Promotion. He is also active in Indonesia Creative Cities Network (ICCN), acting as the first Vice Chairman, and currently as the Deputy of Network Strengthening.

Heru Mataya²¹

Heru Mataya is a cultural and creative consultant, engaged in a broad range of creative activities across Indonesia. He is founder of the Festival Payung Indonesia, and director of Mataya Arts & Heritage, a non-profit cultural organization engaged in organizing public arts events.

Paulus Mintarga²²

Paulus Mintarga is an architect known particularly for his innovative use of recycled or waste materials ranging from wood, iron and rattan to PVC piping. His most famous buildings include Rumah Rempah Karya in Surakarta and the GreenHost Hotel in Prawirotaman, Yogyakarta.

Endah Laras²³

Endah Laras is a musician and singer, known for her repertoire of popular song in Keroncong and Javanese traditions.

Sardono W. Kusumo²⁴

Sardono W. Kusumo is an award-winning dancer, choreographer and film director, who is mostly known for his contemporary dance figures.

Eko PC²⁵

Eko PC is a dancer and choreographer, and founder of his own 'ekosdance' company. Known as the choreographer for the ASIAN Games 2018, he is also a lecturer at Solo Arts Institute.

Irawati Kusumorasri²⁶

Irawati Kusumorasri is a classically-trained dancer and choreographer. A regular dancer at Mangkunegaran Palace, Irawati also plays a key role as a cultural diplomat and is often sent to represent Indonesia as part of international cultural missions.

²⁰ http://www.gbgindonesia.com/en/manufacturing/directory/2015/pt_sekar_lima_pratama/interview.php

²¹ http://matayaartheritage.simplesite.com/?fbclid=IwAR3CT6TNAvoQFJZY-060e6DN4C3w_pJwTAcYTFbA39fjXPgwWfRRPbqp-XO

²² <https://www.indesignlive.co.id/home-slides/paulus-mintarga>

²³ https://www.instagram.com/endahlaras_/?hl=en

²⁴ https://indonesiakaya.com/tokoh-indonesia/sardono_w_kusumo-2/

²⁵ <https://www.solopos.com/duet-eko-pc-dan-penari-jerman-angkat-kestabilan-345765>

²⁶ https://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irawati_Kusumorasri

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