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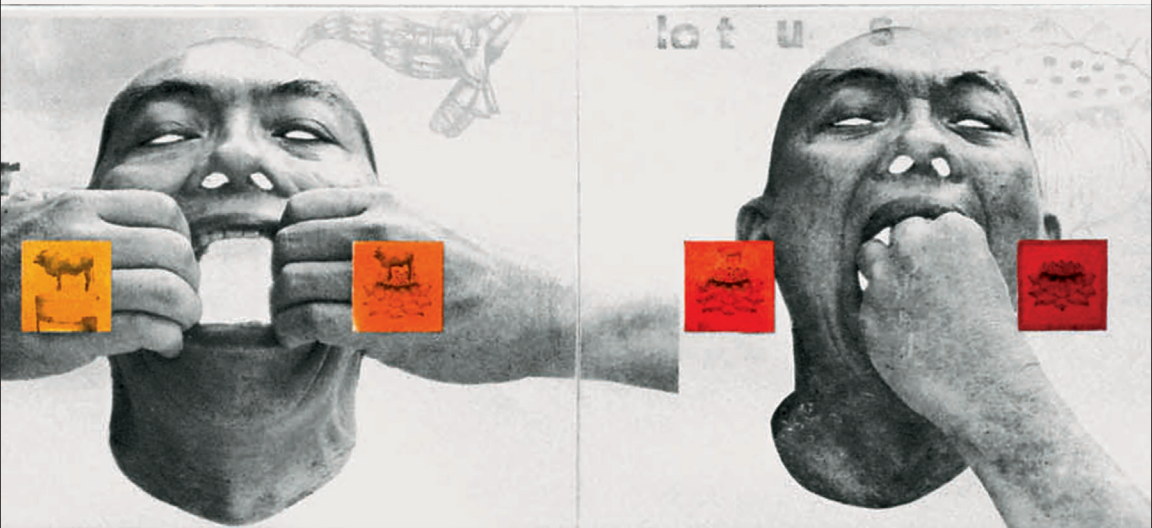
DEMOCRACY,

MEDIATION, AND THE

IMAGE-EVENT IN INDONESIA

KAREN STRASSLER

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Cover art: *Open Your Mouth*, 2002. Photo etching. 57 × 219 cm.
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PREFACE

Leila Chudori's novel, *Pulang* (2012), or *Home*, begins with a scene set in Jakarta in 1968.[1] Hananto has been in hiding, trying to elude the army's relentless pursuit of Communists and leftists after an alleged coup attempt in late 1965.[2] A former journalist, Hananto has spent several months working in a photo studio whose owner kindly took him in. Concealed in the darkroom, he prints the identity photographs that people need for official documents proving they are "clean" of dangerous political affiliations. When four men enter the studio and ask for him by name, the journalist, alone in the darkness, knows he has nowhere left to run. Hananto is led away and ultimately executed.

Indonesia's authoritarian New Order regime (1966–98) began with a purge of Communists and those alleged to be associated with them that left an estimated five hundred thousand to one million people dead and hundreds of thousands more imprisoned. The opening of the novel stages the terror of the regime's early years, which stifled Indonesia's once vibrant and contentious arena of public debate and initiated a panoptic dystopia in which the state's gaze penetrated into the most intimate arenas of daily life. As readers of this opening scene, we feel the claustrophobic enclosure of a regime of surveillance in which only the state's image of its citizens, epitomized in the identity photograph, can come into view.[3]

But in the remainder of the novel, a different visual technology emerges as a counter to the New Order's metaphorical darkroom. Lintang, the novel's young protagonist, is the child of a friend and former colleague of Hananto who was forced into exile by the coup. Born and raised in Paris, and now a college student, Lintang decides to go "home" to Indonesia to make a documentary film about the anticommunist purges that so profoundly changed her father's life and shaped her own.

It is spring 1998, and Indonesia is on the cusp of another political transition. Students are already demonstrating in the streets when Lintang ar-

rives in Jakarta to record accounts of the purges that killed her father's best friend. Her task is to document a history "erased from the pages of textbooks," a history that "has never been written."[4] Via documentary film, she will uncover this "buried" history and open up a "place and a space for those whose voices have all this time been silenced."[5] Lintang sets to work interviewing former prisoners, but her growing romantic relationship with Hananto's son, a passionate activist, draws her into the contemporary drama of the pro-democracy "Reformasi" movement. Lintang is there when the military opens fire on protesting students in a climactic moment that will lead precipitously to the end of the New Order regime.[6] Despite the risks, Lintang instinctively raises her video camera to record the scene. It is a moment—of opening, of possibility, and of danger—that demands images.

Chudori's novel tracks a shift mirrored in my own research trajectory. I had planned, in my dissertation, to study how family memories embedded in personal photography collections offered historical narratives, identities, and dispositions toward the past that were suppressed under, or simply oblique to, those officially promoted by the authoritarian New Order regime. But on the very day in May 1998 that I found out I had received funding to support my research, Jakarta erupted in violent protests that quickly led to President Suharto's resignation. During my dissertation fieldwork (November 1998 to July 2000), in the immediate aftermath of the New Order regime, I was intensely aware of the explosion not only of amateur documentary film production but also of other media through which images were circulating along new, more decentralized circuits, helping to shape an emerging post-authoritarian public sphere. I was so struck by the confluence of a moment of political opening with a diversifying media landscape that when I returned from the field, the first piece I sat down to write was not part of my dissertation but the germ of what would become chapter 1 of this book.[7] While *Refracted Visions: Popular Photography and National Modernity in Java* (2010), the book that grew out of my dissertation, examined a late colonial and postcolonial history of the making of Indonesian subjects via intimate, popular photographic practices, *Demanding Images* moves to a more public arena to think about images as events central to the formation of contested political imaginaries in an exciting but anxious time of transition.

Chudori's novel effectively captures the zeitgeist of the Reformasi moment, which would continue to color Indonesia's experiment with democracy over the next decade and a half. That Chudori's heroine is a budding filmmaker, and that the thematic of documentary in the novel links the recovery of historical memory to aspirations for democracy, is no coincidence.[8]

The medium of documentary film—with its promise of authentic truths grounded in indexical recording, its accessible mode of production, and its ability to circulate beyond state control—became emblematic of Reformasi ideals of transparency, authenticity, the free circulation of information, and popular participation.[9] In *Pulang*, Chudori renders a shift in technologies of image making iconic of the transition from authoritarian rule to a new, more open public sphere. Her novel articulates the ways that images and the media technologies by which they are produced and circulated would become invested with pragmatic efficacy and symbolic weight in the contested envisioning of a new era of Indonesian democracy. It is this process that *Demanding Images* explores.

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contributed their time and insights to this project. To all of you who helped me in ways large and small, I can only say, "Terima kasih."

At home, my greatest debt is to Mary Margaret Steedly and Patricia Spyer. A Hrdy postdoctoral fellowship at the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology and the Harvard University Anthropology Department from 2003 to 2005 as part of their collaborative project, "Signs of Crisis in Southern Asia," provided the critical intellectual space for this project's incubation. Our many conversations over the years about images, media, and Indonesian publics profoundly enriched this book, and I am grateful for Mary and Patsy's critical engagement with and support for this project from start to finish. Mary read the final manuscript with characteristic generosity and intelligence; I so wish she had lived to hold the finished book in her hands.

I thank my colleagues at Queens College and the CUNY Graduate Center. I am lucky to work with people I both like and respect, and I am grateful to them for making teaching, advising, and administrative work a genuinely collective endeavor. I thank my students for reminding me why our work matters. I wish especially to recognize Hazal Corak, Shima Houshyar, Zehra Husain, and China Sajadian, who insightfully commented on the manuscript as it neared completion. Chinonye Alma Otuonye ably assisted with the bibliography.

Thanks to Ken Wissoker and the skilled editors and designers at Duke University Press who ushered this book along its long journey to publication. I thank Jan Williams for expertly crafting the book's index. I am honored to have the artist FX Harsono's *Open Your Mouth* (2002) on the book's cover. A striking example of a demanding image, the piece vividly questions the freedoms of the post-Suharto democratic public sphere and its consumerist media culture.

Earlier versions of several of the chapters of *Demanding Images* have appeared in print. Chapter 1 began as "Currency and Fingerprints: Authentic Reproductions and Political Communication in Indonesia's 'Reform Era.'" *Indonesia* 70 (2000): 71–82, and then was further developed as, "The Face of Money: Crisis, Currency, and Remediation in Post-Suharto Indonesia," *Cultural Anthropology* 24, no. 1 (February 2009): 68–103. An earlier version of chapter 2 appeared as "Gendered Visibilities and the Dream of Transparency: The Chinese-Indonesian Rape Debate in Post-Suharto Indonesia," *Gender and History* 16, no. 4 (2004): 689–725. Chapter 3 began as "The Multi-Media Expert, *Pakar Telematika,*" in "Figures of Modernity in Post-Suharto Indonesia," a multiauthored essay edited by Joshua Barker and Jo-

Gürsel pushed, cajoled, and emboldened me to put my work out into the world. Our conversations about photography keep me excited about what I do.

Over the long years of work on this book, friends and family members patiently listened to my evolving descriptions of the project and provided much needed respite from it. The period spent writing *Demanding Images* coincided with the most consuming phase of parenting (indeed, it strikes me that the book's title may gesture to the way the book so often compelled my attention amid the competing demands of family life). I might never have completed it if not for the loving and capable women who helped us care for our two sons over these years, especially Lorna Motilal, Indra Motilal, Basha Smolen, Novy Linasari, and Tracy Sheffield. My parents, Robert and Toni, my brother Matthew, and everyone else I consider family, continue to make my world as secure and happy a place as one could hope for in these times. Leo and Caleb have filled the space around this book with vibrant life, and Dave's kindness, humor, curiosity, and infectious optimism buoy me at every turn.

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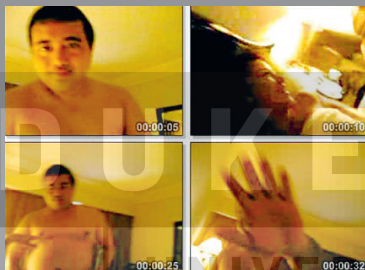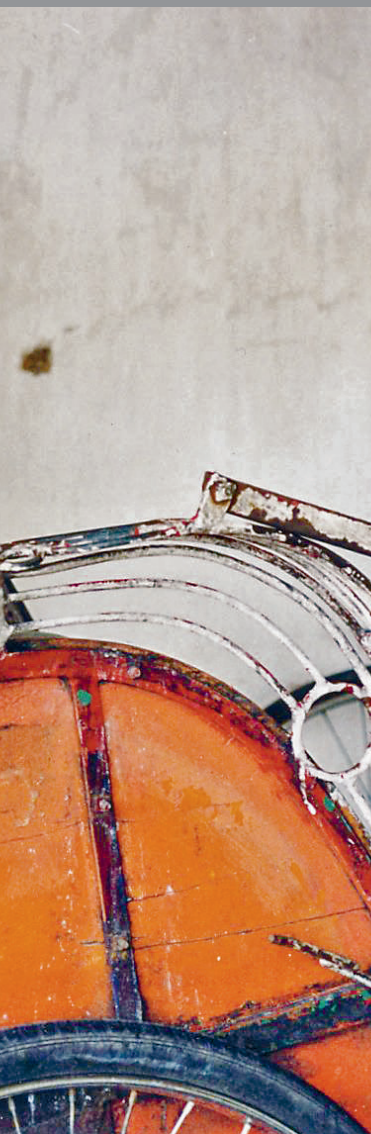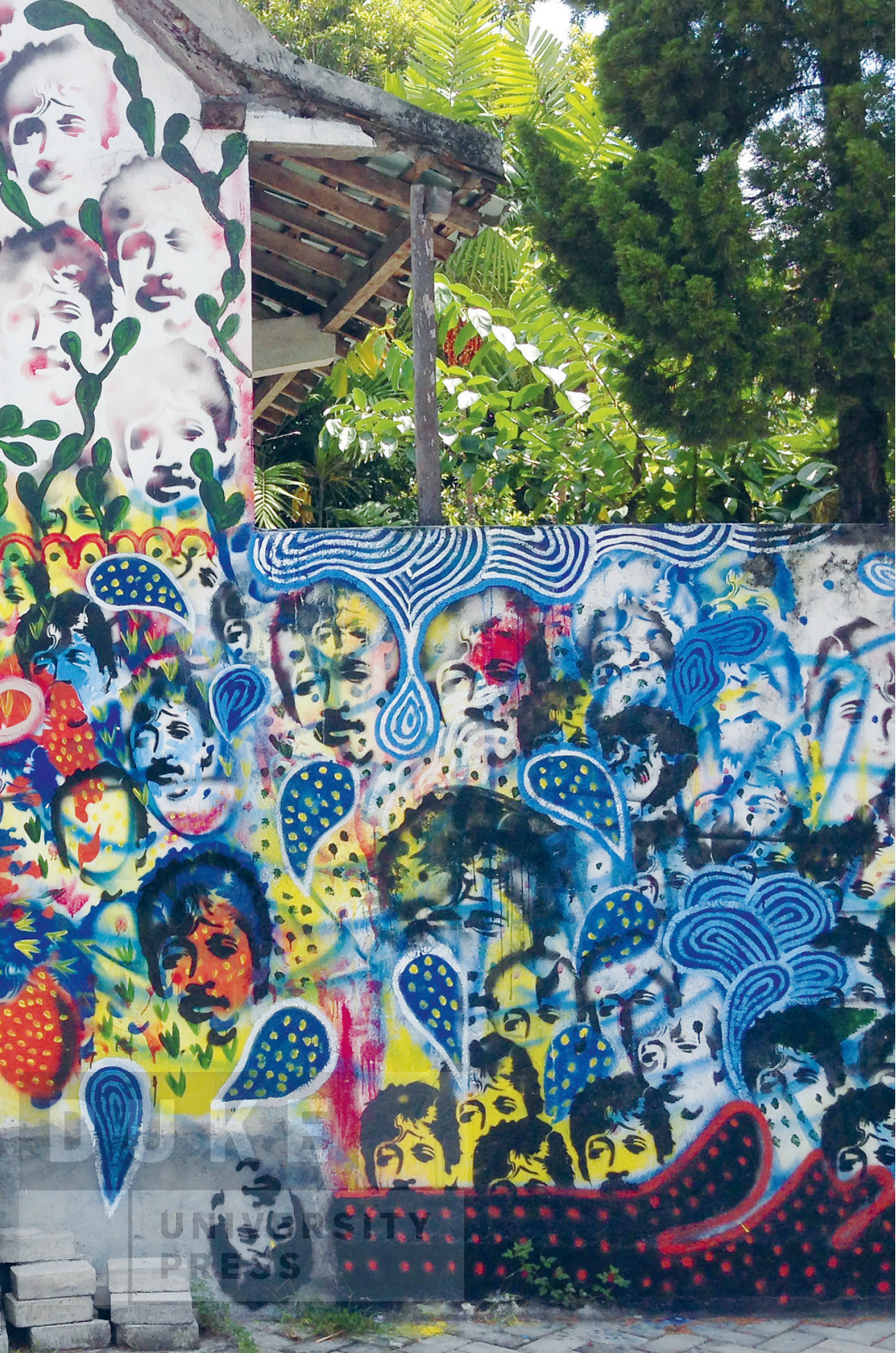
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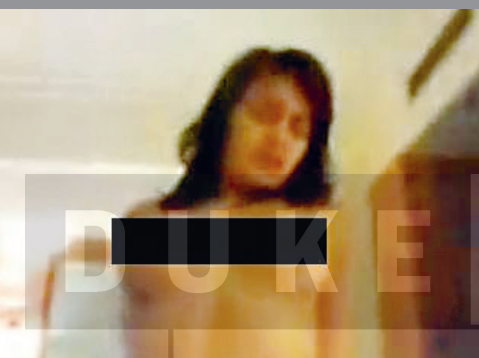
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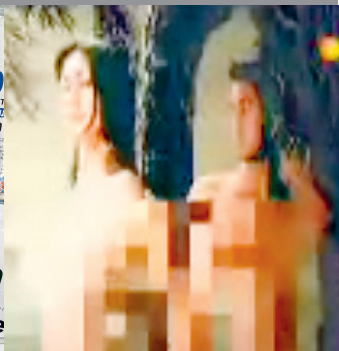
PLATE 1. Typifying the layered and dialogic aesthetic of street art, this wall features street art by multiple artists, including Digie Sigit, Love Hate Love, and Mosters Logos (see chapter 5). Yogyakarta, 2013. Photo by the author.

PLATE 2. *Becak* (pedicab) driver reading a newspaper while waiting for clients, with faded money sticker featuring Megawati Sukarnoputri (see chapter 1). Another version of the sticker appears below, plate 8. Yogyakarta 1999. Photo by the author.

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PLATE 10. "Refuse to Forget" Munir posters by Antitank (see introduction and chapter 5), Yogyakarta, 2013. Photo by the author.

PLATE 11. Books about politics and corruption for sale in a bookstore reflect the flourishing of publishing after 1998 and the centrality of corruption as a theme of public discourse (see introduction and chapter 3). Note the "How's it going?" Suharto image on the cover of one of the books. Yogyakarta, 2013. Photo by the author.

PLATE 12. "Return Them!" poster, demanding the return of missing Reformasi activists (see chapter 2), Yogyakarta, 1998. Photo by the author.

PLATE 13. Comparison of photographs indicating that the model Sophia Latjuba was not actually nude in a controversial photograph taken by Hani Moniaga and published on the cover of the magazine *Popular* (see chapters 3 and 4). From "Beda, Foto Sensual dan Porno, analisis RM Roy Suryo," *Kedaulatan Rakyat*, July 18, 1999.

PLATE 14. "Is There Any Love Left in Indonesia?" Street art by Abimanyu. Framed by a tangle of graffiti, a mural shows a fearful young girl crouching between the silhouettes of security forces on one side and criminal gangs on the other. Not long after this photo was taken, graffiti encroached on the image itself (see chapter 5). Yogyakarta, 2013. Photo by the author.

PLATE 15. Arrested for causing a traffic jam during a protest action, students turn their appearance in court into a visual protest against Suharto's ongoing impunity. This image of students masked as a smiling Suharto appeared as an illustration for several news stories (see chapter 1). From "Luhut MP Pangaribuan Soal Topeng di Persidangan: Wibawa Peradilan Telah Runtuh," *Kompas*, June 25, 1999.

PLATE 16. A severed foot floats amid partially obscured graffiti tags, one example of the impossibility of parsing "scribbles" (*corat-coretan*) from "art" (see chapter 5). Yogyakarta, 2013. Photo by the author.

PLATE 17. An image allegedly of the actress Sukma Ayu, to which a censoring mark has been added. It was part of a series of intimate sexual images, said to originate from a cell phone, that circulated widely in 2004. The images' authenticity and public circulation became a matter of public debate and scandal (see chapter 3). From www.sukma-bjah.cjb.net (accessed August 24, 2004).

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PLATE 21. Still from a television news report on the Pinkswing Park "pornography" case, showing images of Anjasmara and Isabel Yahya that have been pixelated to censor their apparent nudity (see chapter 4). From "Anjasmara dan Abel Diperiksa Polisi," http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OiwonjQBHAI (posted February 5, 2006; accessed September 30, 2013).

PLATE 22. Jokowi and his crowd, Two Finger Salute Concert, Jakarta, July 4, 2014 (see conclusion). Photo by Jay Subyakto, reproduced with permission.

PLATE 23. A playful elephant emerges from a palimpsest of urban inscriptions, Yogyakarta, 2013 (see chapter 5). Photo by the author.

PLATE 24. A street banner proclaims, "Eradicate *Preman* [Thugs/Criminal Gangs], including those who wear the mask of religion, down to their roots. —Yogyakartans against Violence and against Premanism" (see chapter 5). Yogykarta 2013. Photo by the author.

PLATE 25. T-shirts for sale on the street. One features an iconic image of Indonesia's nationalist hero, Sukarno, who was president from 1945 until 1966. The other shows General Suharto, who removed Sukarno from office and ruled as president from 1966 to 1998. The image of the waving Suharto reads, "How's it going? My era was better, wasn't it?" (see introduction). Yogyakarta, 2013. Photo by the author.

PLATE 26. During his presidential campaign in 2014, Jokowi was often alleged to be a puppet of more established and powerful figures, particularly Megawati Sukarnoputri, leader of the Democratic Indonesia Party for Struggle and daughter of former president Sukarno. This ludic meme visually literalizes the idea of Jokowi as Megawati's puppet (see conclusion); compare Sukarno as the power behind Megawati in the equally ludic, but less cynical, Megawati money sticker (plate 8 and chapter 1).

THE EVENTFULNESS OF IMAGES

In 2013, an image of Indonesia's former president Suharto began to circulate on the streets of Java. Affixed as a sticker to car bumpers and windows, appearing on book covers and in online memes, printed on T-shirts and sold as a poster by street vendors, the image showed the long-ruling autocrat smiling cheerfully and waving, with a text that read in colloquial Javanese, "How's it going? My era was better, wasn't it?" (see figures I.1 through I.5; plates 11 and 25).[1]

Fifteen years earlier, during the upsurge of popular protest in 1998 known as "Reformasi" (Reform), protestors had defiantly burned President Suharto's near ubiquitous official portrait; after he stepped down, people gleefully cast it in the garbage. The aging strongman had found power slipping from his grip as a regionwide economic crisis destabilized his rule and angered not only the poor but also the middle class, leading to a wave of student demonstrations across the country that called for an end to "corruption, cronyism, and nepotism." But it was not surprising that nostalgia for Suharto's "New Order" (Orde Baru) regime (1966–98) should emerge a decade and

a half later. For many, "democracy" had failed to halt the corruption and impunity of those in power and had instead fueled widespread unrest and uncertainty. Some were coming to look back on the New Order as a time of stability and prosperity.

That nostalgia for the New Order was not simply a spontaneously arising sentiment, however, was suggested by the opening, also in 2013, of a memorial museum celebrating Suharto's achievements. Sponsored by Suharto's family and located in the small town in Central Java where he was born, the memorial highlighted his prowess as a military hero—including his role in

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FIGURES I.1–I.5.

I.1. "How's it going? My era was better, wasn't it?" Suharto posters for sale in a gift shop, Yogyakarta, February 2013.

I.2. "How's it going? My era was better, wasn't it?" Suharto T-shirts for sale from a street vendor. A T-shirt bearing an iconic portrait of Sukarno, with text from the Proclamation of Independence, is also for sale. Yogyakarta, June 2013.

I.3. "How's it going? My era was better, wasn't it?" Suharto sticker on street cleaner's cart, Yogyakarta, July 2013.

I.4. Image of a waving Suharto on the cover of a book titled *How's It Goin' Kid? My Era Was Better Wasn't It? We Don't Know Anything about Politics, We Just Want to Live Comfortably*. The adjacent book's title is *Don't Be Ashamed to Learn from Pak [Su] Harto*. (See also plate 11.) Yogyakarta, May 2013.

I.5. A version of the "How's it going?" Suharto sticker on a car, which reads, "My era was better . . . How's my country doing, safe and comfortable, right?" Yogyakarta May 2013.

All photos by the author.

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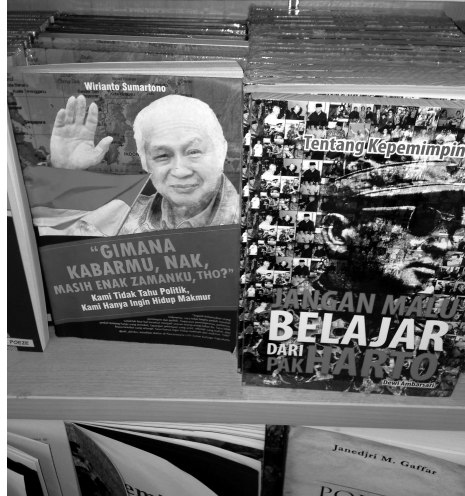
the purges of Communists and other leftists in 1965–66 that led to the killings of an estimated five hundred thousand to one million people and the imprisonment and stigmatization of hundreds of thousands more.[2] Unlike the "How's it going?" image, which pictured Suharto as a benign, grandfatherly figure through the use of irreverent, humorous language and an informal snapshot-style photo, the Suharto museum slickly replayed the official nationalist narratives and militarist iconographies of the New Order regime. (At the same time, one could buy T-shirts with the "How's it going?" image from vendors in front of the museum.) The cultivated rehabilitation of Suharto's image coincided with the lead-up to the 2014 presidential election, in which Suharto's ex-son-in-law, former general Subianto Prabowo, was running as a candidate. Given this context, the appearance of both the popular Suharto images and the memorial museum, which recalled the authoritarian past in respectively playful and glorifying modes, seemed an ominous threat to the unfinished project of the Reformasi movement of 1998.

Yet images burnishing Suharto's memory circulated in an unruly media ecology in which they enjoyed no monopoly. Suharto's "How's it going?" image was not uncontested: a graphic artist who regularly disseminates progressive political commentary online in the form of free, downloadable images quickly produced a counterimage (figures I.6 and I.7). Playing on common laments about the rising cost of living since the Suharto era, it featured a cigar-smoking Suharto with his hands around the neck of a faceless everyman and the text, "How's it going? My era was better, wasn't it? Everything was cheap, including your life!" The image circulated virally on social media and as a sticker given out at documentary film screenings and other events drawing young progressive audiences. Another online meme showed a waving Suharto with the text, "How's it going, corruptors? My era was better wasn't it? You were free to be corrupt in my era, no one went to jail." A
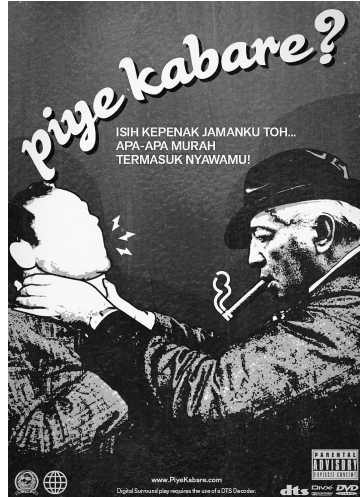
street artist incorporated the "How's it going?" slogan into an anticorruption mural, replacing the photograph of Suharto with his signature cartoon figure, an open-mouthed, toothy icon of rapacity (figure I.8; plate 3). Surya Paloh, a presidential candidate from the National Democratic Party, riffed on the Suharto image with his own campaign billboard. It showed a picture of Paloh waving, with the Javanese text, "Everything's great, Grandpa! Don't worry, I promise my era will be even better, ha-ha-ha!" (figure I.9).[3]

Meanwhile, just a few months after the launch of Suharto's memorial museum, another museum opened two hundred miles away in the town of Batu, birthplace of slain human rights activist Munir Said Thalib. The mu-

FIGURES I.6–I.9

I.6. This "How's it going?" counterimage, by the artist Alit Ambara, was given out as a free sticker at a screening of documentaries on state violence. It reads, "How's it going? My era was better, wasn't it . . . everything was cheap, including your life!" Yogyakarta, April 2013. *Collection of the author.*

I.7. A version of the "How's it going?" counterimage by Alit Ambara, this image was available for free download at Nobodycorp.org, posted April 2013.

I.8. "How's it going?" counterimage created by the street artist Here Here, included in an anticorruption street mural painted collaboratively by several street artists (see plate 3), Yogyakarta, May 2013. *Photo by the author.*

I.9. Presidential candidate Surya Paloh's response to the "How's it going?" image, which reads, "Everything's great, Grandpa! Don't worry, I promise my era will be even better, ha-ha-ha!" The campaign banner, featuring Surya Paloh and his running mate, is productively ambiguous, for it is not entirely clear if the candidate is presenting himself as an alternative to Suharto or as his friendly successor. Political campaign banner, Yogyakarta, May 2013. *Photo by the author.*

seum, the result of tireless effort by Munir's wife, Suciwati, and other activists, commemorates Munir's brave leadership in demanding accountability from the state for human rights abuses during and after the Reformasi movement. It also recounts his poisoning in 2004 while on a plane to the Netherlands, and the failure of the Indonesian judicial system to bring his killers to justice.

The enshrining of Munir's memory was not confined within museum walls. On public surfaces all over Java, images of Munir appear, often accompanied by the slogans "Refuse to Forget" ("Menolak Lupa") or "Resist Forgetting" ("Melawan Lupa") (figures I.10 through I.19; plates 9 and 10). Since his death, street artists have spearheaded this effort to make Munir's face—with its large, down-turned eyes and droopy, full moustache—into an instantly recognizable icon. Munir's face haunts the urban landscape, a silent reminder of the ideals of the Reformasi movement, of which he is the most visible hero. He appears on city walls as a kind of public conscience, a witness mutely reminding passersby that they move through a space of violence, injustice, and forgetting. Over time he has come to stand also for the failed promises of Reformasi, the deferred dreams of democracy.

On the eighth anniversary of Munir's death, in September 2012, thousands of Indonesians, including prominent celebrities, replaced their Facebook and Twitter profile pictures with his image, asking their friends and followers to "Resist Forgetting" the slain leader and the unresolved case of his murder.[4] In December of that year, commemorating what would have been Munir's forty-eighth birthday, artists and journalists plastered the walls of his hometown with ten thousand posters and stenciled images of Munir's face. They handed out sheets of paper bearing the outlines of Munir's face for local citizens to color in: "We . . . invite children, housewives, the people, to color in Munir's face. So that Munir will be everywhere, in

many scales and media. On T-shirts, on roof tiles . . . on walls, and the like."[5] Colored-in images were hung in the town's central square. A prominent artist, himself a former political prisoner under the New Order regime, spray-painted a stenciled image of Munir's face onto a white T-shirt worn by the town's mayor.[6] Images of these events appeared in major Indonesian newspapers, magazines, on television, and online, reverberating far beyond his hometown.

This book attends to images like the Suharto and Munir portraits, tracing their shifting meanings and forms of mediation, the attentions they garner and affects they trigger, and their effects in the making of political imaginaries during a turbulent period of democratization. Affectively charged, symbolic condensations of competing visions of Indonesia's past, present, and future, the "How's it going?" and "Refuse to Forget" images are artifacts of a politics of visibility that has emerged in Indonesia since 1998. Appealing to possible futures through reworked icons of the past, they suggest how making, circulating, and responding to images has become a pervasive mode by which people enact their political agency. Such images travel through an in-

FIGURES I.10–I.14

I.10. This image by street artist Digie Sigit was displayed in a solo exhibition at the Sangkring Art Space in Yogyakarta, September 2013. A bright neon light placed above Munir's portrait symbolizes the need for illumination in the still unresolved case of the activist's murder. Digie Sigit, *For Munir*, 2013, stencil. From https://indoartnow .com/artists/digie-sigit.

I.11. Exemplifying the appropriation of commercialized public spaces practiced by street artists (see chapter 5), Antitank's "Refuse to Forget" poster has been placed on a billboard reading, "This Advertising Space for Rent." Yogyakarta, April 2013.

tricate media ecology, mobilizing the potentials of different media forms and channels of public address: from streets to museums, newspapers to T-shirts, online memes to stickers. As they move and ricochet off of each other—and off of other images and texts—they form a restless, open-ended series. Each act of producing a sticker, downloading a poster, uploading an image as a Twitter avatar, circulating a meme, glancing at a street artist's stencil, or scanning the pages of a newspaper, is a small but potentially critical event in the agonistic and ongoing process of public envisioning.

Demanding Images is about the demand *for* images to prove, expose, and render visible, and the demands that images place *on* the publics they help call into being. The book charts how Reformasi ideals of openness, accountability, authenticity, the free circulation of information, and popular participation were put into practice—and into question—in the decade and a half following the 1998 student movement. Each chapter tracks an unfolding "image-event." By "image-event," I mean a political process set in motion when a specific image or set of images erupts onto and intervenes in a social field, becoming a focal point of discursive and affective engagement across

I.12. Munir appears amid a palimpsest of ads and graffiti on a Yogyakarta street. Antitank, "Refuse to Forget," poster. Yogyakarta, April 2013.

I.13. Worn by time or defaced? Antitank, "Refuse to Forget," poster (see also plate 10), Yogyakarta, April 2013.

I.14. Partially obscured "Refuse to Forget" poster by Antitank amid street art by Love Hate Love and graffiti, Yogyakarta, May 2013.

Unless otherwise noted, photos by the author.

diverse publics. Image-events are political happenings in which images become the material ground of generative struggles to bring a collectivity into view and give shape to its future.

The image-events examined in this book cast light on problems of credibility, authenticity, and truth that have accompanied the process of Indonesian democratization since 1998, given its unsettling of established truths and jockeying among competing forms of authority. Under the authoritarian New Order regime, politics had been conducted as a kind of staged ritual performance, with the state (and its mostly compliant media apparatus) dedicating itself to the cultivation of an ideal appearance of calm and order.[7] Politics as image management has always entailed the risk of images spinning out of the control of their handlers, refusing to conform to an expected path and prescribed meanings.[8] Nevertheless, the central argument of *Demanding Images* is that a democratized public sphere underpinned by a privatized,

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FIGURES I.15–I.19

I.15. This mural by Alit Ambara, Samuel Indratma, Ong Harry Wahyu, and Butet Kertaradjasa (also shown earlier in the chapter and in plate 9) is composed of multiple stenciled images of Munir's face, interspersed with the texts "Lest we forget" and "Remember so that we don't forget." Yogyakarta, May 2013.

I.16. The caption to this image of Munir by Komunal Stensil reads: "Munir Isn't Dead: We Will Multiply, Our Ideas Are Guerrillas." Yogyakarta, October 2012. Image reproduced with permission of Agung Firmanto B., urbancult.net.

I.17. Wheat-paste poster by Urban Noise picturing Munir as a "Saint of Human Rights," Yogyakarta, December 2012. Image reproduced with permission of Agung Firmanto B., urbancult.net.

weakly regulated, and diversified media ecology profoundly enhances the inherent volatility of images, rendering them more significant and eventful participants in political process. Politics in Indonesia has become a politics of turbulent image-events rather than staged and static appearances.

Beyond the specifics of the Indonesian democratic "transition," and even beyond comparable postauthoritarian situations, the Indonesian case can be seen as a harbinger of political forms and dynamics that have since become widespread globally.[9] The dramatic confluence of new image technologies, the liberalization and diversification of the media, and the political opening that occurred after 1998 brought into early and particularly vivid relief characteristics of politics conducted in what I call "complexly mediated" public spheres. When traditional sources of authoritative knowledge—the state and the mass media—are undermined by a more open, commercialized, loosely regulated, and densely networked media ecology, what emerges

I.18. In the typical dialogic practice of street art, a stencil of Munir is embraced by a figure drawn by another artist, with text that reads, "I miss you. You are the key. We need you." The stencil of the woman, below right, reads: "Long Live the Indonesian Woman." Stencils by Digie Sigit; other artist unknown. Yogyakarta, April 2013. Photo by the author.

I.19. This image memorializing Munir includes his birth and death dates and foregrounds his stance as an activist with the presence of a bullhorn. Image by Alit Ambara, available for free download at Nobody.corp (https://nobodycorp.org /2012/09/03/munir-said-thalib-1965-2004/), posted September 9, 2012.

Unless otherwise noted, photos by the author.

are public spheres that are at once more participatory and more fractured and convulsive than ever before. As the sources of images and their vectors multiply, as images reverberate and mutate in erratic and often disruptive ways, and as they are scrutinized and reworked by ordinary people, images become the terrain of political struggles increasingly taking place in the messy arena of the public sphere. Efforts to manipulate and influence "the public" rely on the affective and evidentiary force of images; yet such efforts at persuasion may be derailed by the unpredictable trajectories of image-events. As likely to distract and deflect as they are to reveal and transform, image-events make the conduct of politics a far more uncertain, unruly, and fractious enterprise.

Image-Events

In 1998, as appeals for "reform" became hitched to the ideology of "transparency," a compelling vision of a democratic public sphere took hold in Indonesia: the thick tissue of fear, falsity, allusion, and silence that had characterized the New Order regime's tightly regulated and censored public sphere would be replaced by an open and expansive space of visibility, truth, and authenticity. Disavowal of the Suharto regime's rampant corruption and repression of democratic aspirations drove transparency's ascent as a political ideal.[10] Images became freighted with the promise of democracy and were hailed as embodiments of Reformasi ideals of accountability, accessibility, and popular participation.

Yet as the powers fetishistically invested in images intensified, so, too, did anxieties that they might fall short of their promise. Images circulating in public were subject to doubt, especially as they proliferated freely, unmoored from their authors. Skepticism about the authenticity of images drew attention to the mediating work of the technologies by which they traveled, with the result of disrupting the apparent immediacy on which the ideal of transparency depended. At the same time, the very qualities of materiality and malleability that troubled the demand for transparent truths also made possible forms of creative play at the surface of images. Making, circulating, and delighting in overtly artificed images became prevalent ways that ordinary people participated in, and contested the dominant terms of, Indonesian public life.

Given that images embodied both the aspirations and the anxieties accompanying democratization, it is no wonder that Indonesia's post-Suharto public sphere has frequently been convulsed by image-events that ultimately

became referendums on democracy itself. As noted above, an "image-event" is a political process in which an image (or a constellation of related images) crystallizes otherwise inchoate and dispersed imaginings within a discrete and mobile visible form that becomes available for scrutiny, debate, and play as it circulates in public.[11] More readily than texts, images traverse social, linguistic, and other barriers, and thus are capable of drawing the shared attention of people who may occupy very different social positions and spheres of discourse. As images circulate among people from different interpretive communities, they accumulate "symbolic density" and iconic value, becoming the tangible terrain on which people contest the boundaries and character of their political communities.[12]

The image-event proceeds from the ways the figural and material properties of an image are activated and transformed in relation to the genres and discourses in which it is framed and the publics it addresses and calls into being.[13] In the cases examined in this book, I ask how the affordances and "hazards" of different media channels condition the extension and efficacy of image-events.[14] As images move across and through different media forms, they acquire claims to authority, modes of address, circulatory pathways, and temporal rhythms and durations distinctive to those media.[15] These ideological and material specificities profoundly shape what an image makes visible, to whom, and to what effect. They also condition the grounds on which that image can be contested.

Image-events are not an entirely novel political phenomenon. But as new technologies facilitate the ease, speed, and scale at which images are produced and circulated, the import, prevalence, and unruliness of image-events has greatly increased. Particularly within hegemonic formations of democratic politics that conflate political recognition with publicity and visibility, it is hard to imagine any political event that is not also an image-event.[16]

UNDERLYING MY CONCEPTUALIZATION of the "image-event" as a political process is an argument for considering *all* images "events" of varying intensity, duration, and scale. This is the second sense in which I use the term "image-event." Highlighting mutability and "performative efficacy,"[17] this approach to images seeks to overcome a tendency to treat them as static, fixed "things" that are embedded within but conceptually apart from a "context" or "frame" of political discourse and historical events.[18] Rather, each iteration of an image transforms the time and space of its emergence. Conceptualizing *all* images as unfolding events enables us to see them as contin-

gent and politically consequential processes in their own right. It leads us to ask not what images "mean" or what they "want," but how they happen and with what effects.[19]

This approach is counterintuitive because we are accustomed to thinking of images—especially photographs—as static objects plucked from the dynamic flux of events-in-time. Photographs, as André Bazin famously put it, "embalm time."[20] For John Berger, the "static photograph" is "like a fixed post in a flowing river."[21] Opposing photograph and event, he noted, "A photograph arrests the flow of time in which the event photographed once existed."[22] Yet this common understanding, which emphasizes the fixity of images and their essential remove from events, neglects the ways that images themselves are eventful in that they are always *taking place* and *open-ended*. Rather than epiphenomenal to the unfolding of history, the appearance of an image is among the minute, and sometimes even the monumental, happenings that transform the world.[23]

The advent of a specific, materially embodied image is a historically contingent event, an "irreplaceable and irreversible empirical particular."[24] At the same time, the image, like any sign, is a repeatable mark that even at its most indexical remains detachable and reproducible and thus can never be definitively "enclosed" within a context.[25] For photographs, we can point to a distinct moment of social encounter when a shutter is closed; but, as Ariella Azoulay argues, this "event of photography" is only a setting in motion (and to the extent that any photograph recalls previous similar or related images, the photograph is always already part of an ongoing, dialogic conversation among images).[26] For repurposed image-texts like the "How's it going?" stickers and T-shirts or the "Refuse to Forget" posters, moreover, pointing back to a singular point of origin for the image becomes a futile exercise. It is the eventful trajectory of the image, the effects of its proliferations and reverberations, that must demand our attention.

The apparent tension inherent in the image as simultaneously unique "event" and iterable "sign" dissipates once we take full account of the processual nature of both signs and events.[27] Arguing against "a tendency to cauterize events," Robin Wagner-Pacifici emphasizes the "ongoingness of events, the ways they are restless and the ways they are subject to continuing oscillations between bounding and unbounding as they extend in time and space."[28] Signs, too, refuse to be fixed; they "grow" through use and experience, continually giving rise to new signs.[29] The image as event unfolds as it moves through multiple social encounters and takes on different material embodiments. Reverberating across space and time, it is an open-ended "vi-

bration" that resonates with and gives rise to other, related images and texts, deepening certain tones and deafening others.[30]

The image-event is thus much like Michel Foucault's notion of the statement/event, which "emerges in its historical eruption":

> What we try to examine is the incision that it makes, the irreducible—and very often tiny—emergence. However banal it maybe, however unimportant its consequences may appear to be, however quickly it may be forgotten after its appearance, however little heard or badly deciphered we may suppose it to be, a statement is always an event that neither the language nor the meaning can quite exhaust . . . *like every event, it is unique yet subject to repetition, transformation, and reactivation.*[31]

Understood in this way, the boundaries of the image-event—where it starts and where it ends—become impossible to determine in anything but a provisional, heuristic way.[32] "Watching" images as moving targets that refuse to hold still restores to images "dimensions of time and movement," of eventfulness, that have been denied in our dominant models of thinking about them.[33]

The echoing variations of the "How's it going?" image of Suharto—itself a collage of an informal photograph dating to the New Order era and humorous, colloquial Javanese text—exemplify how an image provokes new images that respond to it, some by reiterating its claims, and others by dialogically countering and extending them. By approaching the Suharto image and its iterations appearing on billboards, stickers, T-shirts, and memes as an unfolding image-event, we turn our attention away from a singular author or viewer (or a singular context of production or reception) as the points of origin and destination that might fix meaning. We turn toward mediating processes by which images move and multiply and, as they do so, generate and remake environments for thought and action. Recognizing images as world-making events, our task is to trace their prehistories, track their radiating reverberations, register the stirrings of affect they leave in their wake, and attend to the future horizons towards which they open.

Public Visuality

When people inscribe urban walls with images of Munir and the message "Refuse to Forget," they put the slain human rights leader before an imagined public eye. Such image-texts make demands of the publics they address: demands to counter amnesia, to contest Indonesia's ingrained culture of im-

punity, to pressure the state to bring Munir's killers to justice. Each appearance of Munir's face heightens the visibility of his unresolved murder and reinforces his iconic status as both hero and victim. And each act of posting a Munir image in public pragmatically enacts the ideal of a democratic public sphere as an arena where citizens freely make their concerns visible to each other and to their government.

Both the importance of "visibility" within ideological conceptualizations of the public sphere *and* the actual work of images in contemporary public communications demand that we take public visuality seriously. By "public visuality," I mean the ways that material images, historically constituted ways of seeing, discursive figures and frames, and "infrastructures of representation" shape the public sphere as a zone of contested visibility and invisibility.[34] Public visuality sets the terms for political visibility (and invisibility), but it also can be subject to intervention and transformation through the work of images.

It is crucial to recognize that "the public sphere" is both shorthand for an actual, diffuse arena of communicative activity and simultaneously a potent ideological figure of the democratic imagination.[35] Ideally conceived as a forum of open debate accessible to all, in practice the public sphere is an arena "articulated by power,"[36] in which the question of which images and texts, and whose interpretations of them, will appear, circulate, and prevail is always a matter of political struggle. The public sphere is not, moreover, a free-floating—or free-flowing—arena of discourse but one underpinned by an infrastructure of media technologies, institutions and commercial entities, laws, and conventional genres and practices, all of which exert their own limits and exclusions. That which appears in public is thus always the outcome of political contestation, material constraints, and historical contingencies. The gap that exists between the ideal of the democratic public sphere and the messy and circumscribed ways images and texts actually circulate in public is, then, best thought of as a constitutive tension.

That notions of visibility are deeply embedded in the very concept of "the public" was implicit in Hannah Arendt's evocative description of the public realm as a "space of appearance" where people are, ideally, enabled to see and be seen, recognizing each other's perspectives on matters of common concern.[37] The idea of democracy has historically entailed a "scopic paradigm" envisioning a state "fully visible" and "transparent" to a public made up of critical citizens.[38] Awareness that the public sphere is, in actuality, an arena of concealment, where screen images and strategic blind spots render some actors and processes unseen, only serves to animate the ideal of democratic vis-

ibility.[39] "The public," conceived as a collective agent embodying the sovereign people, pursues this elusive ideal, challenging the state's power to determine the bounds of the visible not only by asserting its right to know, but also by exercising its own independent powers to confer and demand recognition.[40]

Achieving this recognition has long depended upon mechanisms of publicity, on becoming visible to the proverbial "public eye." But that public eye is increasingly pluralized and distracted by the sheer volume, speed, and diversity of circulating messages diffused across multiple, intersecting channels.[41] This busy profusion of images flitting in and out of public view threatens to reduce signal to noise, figure to blur. Under these conditions, the struggle for visibility as the precondition for entry into the realm of the public intensifies as recognition becomes more elusive and ephemeral.

Bids for inclusion and redress within democratic public spheres are thus necessarily dependent on media forms that promise to generate visibility—not always, but often, through the work of images. The pursuit of public visibility as a route to political recognition and inclusion contains its own pitfalls, of course, including the requirement of acceding to normative modalities of communicative practice and appearance. Nor is visibility necessarily benign, as is understood all too well by those who find themselves rendered hypervisible while denied the ability to participate equally in the production and circulation of their own images.[42] It is precisely negotiating the terms of visibility and invisibility (including the right *not* to be seen, as well as the ability to determine *how* one is seen) that constitutes the crucial work of images in public.

"Visibility" ceases to be a merely metaphorical concept when actual images such as the Munir and Suharto posters come into view as battlegrounds in struggles over authenticity, memory, political recognition, and national envisioning.[43] Recent scholarship on public images has emphasized their role as an "imaginative resource," providing people with "a repertoire of images that mark out the borders of political possibility."[44] Iconic images circulate as charged signs of belonging, providing mechanisms of identification and affective attachment that bind people to larger collectivities and histories.[45] Supported by ideologies of the camera's impartial and faithful recording, photojournalistic and documentary photography iteratively produce and reproduce formulaic representations of people and places. As Zeynep Gürsel argues, these "formative fictions" powerfully shape how people envision themselves, the collectivities to which they belong, and the broader worlds in which they live.[46]

My emphasis on the image-event builds on these interventions, which situ-

ate images centrally within analyses of the public sphere, but seeks to move from a static notion of image repertoires to a more processual account of how practices of image making, circulation, and repurposing generate political imaginaries and cultivate political subjects.[47] As I hope to show, it is often through engagement with specific images that broader conditions of public visuality are objectified, negotiated, contested, and transformed.[48] Analytic emphasis on the *happening* of images helps to reveal the public sphere as a zone of ongoing contestation and historical contingency in which people envision and remake the worlds in which they live.

Media Ecologies after Authority

The liberalization of the media along with new freedoms of expression that followed in the wake of the Reformasi movement yielded the vibrant and tumultuous public sphere that is my focus in this book. Indeed, the transformation of the public sphere is the most iconically visible sign of the coming of democracy to Indonesia after 1998. Democratization brought other significant changes, too, of course, including decentralization (granting more autonomy to regional governments and economies), reforms to the party system and the electoral process, and the removal of the military from its formal role in the government. Alongside these changes in the conduct of formal politics, the establishment of national commissions and independent bodies monitoring human rights, violence against women, elections, the press, and corruption, despite their many weaknesses and setbacks, have been steps toward the more transparent government and just society envisioned by Reformasi activists and their supporters. The "political aperture" brought about by the reform movement also made room for the expression of forms of sexuality and gender and modes of cultural creativity that were repressed under the New Order state.[49]

Many of these changes have been matched by the resurgence of old authoritarian reflexes and by new challenges to a pluralistic and participatory democracy, which also feed on the more open media ecology of the post-authoritarian period. One can point to the relatively unbridled power of political and economic elites, the ongoing corrosion of legal institutions, and continuing disrespect for human rights as evidence that the reform movement's demands have largely remained unmet. Despite the prevalent spectacle of corruption's exposure (discussed in chapter 3), Indonesia remains among the most corrupt nations in the world.[50] Past human rights

abuses—most notably the anticommunist purges of 1965–67—have yet to be officially redressed, and anticommunist paranoia remains a rhetorical weapon wielded by both civilian groups and the state.[51] Decentralization and the relaxation of state controls have been accompanied by virulent horizontal conflicts with a religious cast in various parts of the archipelago. Forms of hardline political Islam, seeking to occupy the shoes left empty by the authoritarian state, present themselves as the source of moral authority and arbiter of proper comportment for the national community (see chapter 4).[52]

My aim is not to evaluate the gains and failures of the first fifteen years of democratization.[53] I am sensitive to calls for a "post-post-Suharto" scholarship that neither reads 1998 as a radical rupture nor views the persistence of authoritarian practices, corruption, and elitism as "legacies" of the New Order that impede the realization of an idealized democracy.[54] Nor do I want to suggest that all aspects of the contemporary Indonesian media ecology and its forms of public communication should be attributed to the post-authoritarian condition—as noted, many of its features (neoliberal economies and corporate media ownership, the coexistence and interpenetration of a multitude of media platforms, the ideological power of "transparency") are globally widespread phenomena.[55]

Yet I don't think we can understand the first decade and a half of democratic transition apart from the efforts of ordinary citizens to grapple with the authoritarian past, to live within a present marked by the precipitous absence of strong, centralized rule, and to envision desired futures. Abidin Kusno eloquently evokes the uneasy atmosphere that prevailed after the fall of Suharto on Java, Indonesia's main island (where the nation's capital and the majority of its population are located, and the place where my own research is focused):

> There is a sense among the population that the center is no longer there, fixing, watching, and ordering their conduct. The vanishing of the center has created a sense of disorientation and the creation of smaller centers that coexist uneasily with each other. The state is still there, but it has been perceived as merely one center among others, each looking for opportunities to gain more wealth and power.[56]

Particularly in Java, where authoritarian power was most firmly entrenched, Indonesians have found themselves in a state "after authority," an anxious temporal and political condition characterized by the lingering afterlife of authoritarian ideologies and practices and by a search for new forms and

sources of authority and authenticity. Media freedoms and the explosion of new media forms have played a key role in both articulating and exacerbating this state of unease.

My understanding of the public sphere that emerged after 1998 out of the confluence of new technologies, neoliberal economics, and democratization takes into account Jodi Dean's critical assessment of the rise of "communicative capitalism."[57] Given the conflation of liberal democracy with ideals of transparency and communicative freedom, she argues, a techno-festishistic logic makes the ever-expanding and intensifying circulation of messages enabled by new, networked technologies appear to signal the arrival of genuine deliberative democracy. In fact, Dean suggests, this form of political "participation" merely enhances the power of corporations that capitalize on the sheer abundance of communicative messages, regardless of their content.

While compelling in its broad strokes, Dean's account risks affirming the very hegemony it critiques. Certainly, as I will argue in this book, the postauthoritarian Indonesian public sphere falls far short of realizing the democratic aspirations articulated in the Reformasi movement (which were themselves reformist rather than revolutionary). There remains a significant disconnect between the heated debates of the public sphere and the actual conduct of politics as business as usual. But the more granular, ethnographic approach taken in this book insists on recognizing that politically consequential "events" (however limited) can and do take place in the congested domain of public communication. Images like the Munir and the Suharto posters, and struggles for visibility and recognition in the public realm more broadly, cannot be reduced to mere "chatter" that obscures (and unwittingly strengthens) the real workings of power. The communications of the public sphere shape political subjectivities and imaginations, and thus their potential to contribute to the unraveling as well as the consolidation of power must be taken seriously.

In any case, it would be hard to overstate the symbolic import of the return of press freedoms enacted shortly after Suharto's resignation. People invested their hopes for transparency in the newly open public sphere.[58] The idea of a free press as the essential institutional underpinning of a vital public sphere has long been central to visions of democracy in Indonesia, as it has been elsewhere.[59] Since the late colonial period, the press as an institution has been closely aligned with Indonesian aspirations for a modern, national community.[60] The 1994 banning of four Indonesian news magazines, moreover, was a pivotal point in the final years of the New Order, at once displaying the regime's resort to brute power and revealing its fragility.[61]

In 2002, Andreas Harsono, founding member of the Alliance of Independent Journalists and today a prominent human rights activist, optimistically hailed a "new era in Indonesia" that began in 1998 with the relaxation of press controls:

> It became a time when people could publish a newspaper without worrying about government licenses. Journalists could write what they judged fit to print. No longer did cameramen need to hide their videos when dealing with their nervous editors. And readers did not have to improve their ability to read between the lines—a skill very much valued in the preceding years.[62]

The lifting of state controls over the press and public discourse coincided with a proliferation of outlets for public communication in the form of print, electronic, and internet-based media. This more diversified and dynamic media landscape itself resulted from two convergent currents: a historical trajectory of deregulation and privatization that began in the late 1980s and intensified under International Monetary Fund pressure after the economic crisis of 1997, on the one hand, and a range of technological innovations that have been global in scope, on the other.[63]

Alongside a florescence of privatized print and electronic media, an explosion of "small," decentralized, and unregulated media technologies such as cell phones, the internet, scanners, digital cameras, and video compact discs made possible new forms of popular and amateur practices of documentation, representation, and protest. These media technologies facilitated the inclusion of once excluded voices—those of former political prisoners, Islamists, and Chinese Indonesians, to mention a few—within national debates. They have played a vital role in people's efforts to rewrite history, grapple with the uncertainties of the present, and stake claims to new futures.

Yet the proliferation of voices and vehicles for their dissemination in the aftermath of the Suharto regime also contributed to a climate of uncertainty about what constitutes reliable evidence, who legitimately speaks for the nation, and when and how information flows should be regulated or controlled. The increasingly commercialized corporate press has also been implicated in the dangers associated with the absence of centralized state control, whether in relation to the inflammation of horizontal religious and ethnic conflict, the circulation of pornography and emergence of a sensationalized celebrity media culture, or the divisiveness of political partisanship. Civil society leaders, politicians, and ordinary citizens often lament the viral spread of fake news or "hoax" sites as evidence of an excess of freedom, of "out of

control democracy" (*demokrasi kebablasan*). Media technologies have thus served not only as the material *means* for political communication, but also as important *symbols* of both the liberating possibilities of democracy and the dangerous threat of obscured power, porous national borders, immoral promiscuity, and terrorizing rumor.

These alternately utopian and dystopian imaginings of a democratic public sphere circulate amid shifting institutional, economic, and technological conditions, which shape the Indonesian mediascape. Anticipating trends that became more pronounced after 1998, already in the late New Order era the pressures of liberalization and the expansion of media markets were undermining the state's censorship regime, and media organizations were becoming market-driven, profit-oriented corporate entities.[64] One of the most striking features of the media landscape in the years following Suharto's resignation was the rapid proliferation of private media outlets, from tabloid magazines to private television channels.[65] The media landscape became crowded and highly competitive, as "news" acquired commodity value in the quest for market share. This proliferation of mass media publications and broadcasts has fostered the growth of niche markets, of which those oriented to Islamic publics have been the most marked development.[66] The result is a public sphere that is at once more expansive and more fissured, more inclusive and more driven by profit motive.[67]

Despite this profusion of media outlets, the economic liberalization of the Indonesian media sphere has ultimately led to an unprecedented corporate consolidation of the organs of mass media. By 2012 all of Indonesia's radio, television, and print media were essentially owned by twelve corporate groups, most of which were closely tied to political parties or figures with links to the old regime.[68] Thus centralized state control over the press has to some degree been replaced by a remarkably tight oligarchical media regime whose control over media content is masked by the apparent profusion of media vehicles and channels.

The press freedoms promised by the relaxation of state censorship, moreover, have been threatened and significantly limited by new forms of decentralized and "civil" censorship. These limits are both external, coming from civil society in the form of legal and physical harassment and intimidation,[69] and internal, in the form of tacit or overt involvement of media owners in editorial content and lingering habits of self-censorship among journalists.[70] As the Alliance of Independent Journalists, a group committed to promoting freedom of the press, has argued, lack of fair pay has undermined jour-

nalists' ability to resist the old "envelope culture" (*budaya amplop*) in which journalists routinely receive money from sources in exchange for coverage.[71] Told from this vantage point, the story of the postauthoritarian mediascape is one of ongoing lack of independence. In this narrative, the centralization of state power under an authoritarian regime has given way to an oligarchy of political elites and private corporate interests who monopolize and profit off of the circulation of information, thereby treating the media as a means to further their economic and political interests.[72]

This sobering account is not the only story to be told about the Indonesian media ecology, however. Without underestimating the detrimental effects of corporate consolidation within the mainstream organs of the press, if one looks at "media" both more broadly and in a more fine-grained way, one finds a far more variegated picture. Independent film (documentary and fictional) has flourished in the more open atmosphere of the post-Suharto period, as has book publishing.[73] Radio has offered a means for communities to produce locally relevant news and programming, as well as forums for "metajournalism" (reporting about the media that promotes media literacy).[74] Most staggeringly, internet use in Indonesia jumped from two million users in 2000 to 55 million in 2012, and Indonesians are now among the most active participants in social media sites such as Twitter and Facebook—mostly accessed through cell phones.[75] By 2015 cell phone subscriptions had increased to 132.4 per 100 people, up from just 1.8 in 2000.[76]

A range of "demotic" or "horizontal" media, such as blogs and social media sites, amateur videos, documentary films, political stickers, and street art, circulates both outside of and through the mass media to address a wide array of messages to varied publics. Decentralized, unregulated media are particularly important in processes of democratization, Debra Spitulnik argues, because they enable people to "create meaningful communicative spaces," providing "vital and pervasive undercurrents and reservoirs of political commentary, critique, and potential mobilization."[77] While horizontally produced and distributed media come with no democratizing or progressive guarantee, they often occupy a privileged place in democratic imaginaries precisely because they appear to operate outside of traditional and established media channels.[78] In practice, media channels intersect and feed into each other, bringing into contact publics of different orientations and scales: transnational, national, and regional publics, as well as more micro-publics and even personal networks. Images and texts that may originate in subterranean or small-scale alternative media forums, for instance,

often find their way into more mainstream media as objects quoted, derided, or otherwise discussed. Movement goes in the other direction as well, as alternative media provide forums for parodic commentary, critique, and amplification of more mainstream media messages.

Tracking the unfolding of image-events reveals the variously competitive, symbiotic, and parasitical relationships between mass media channels and the unregulated, decentralized media technologies that facilitate the efforts of ordinary people to become producers, transmitters, and consumers of political messages. In several chapters, I draw attention to a tension between "evidentiary" and "ludic" modes of image making and reception. The "evidentiary" mode of documentary photographs as authoritative, indexical records remains important in Indonesia's post-Reformasi moment, as it does elsewhere, especially in arenas such as journalism, law, and human rights. Evidentiary images promise to ground public truth claims in a technological guarantee of transparency.

Yet many of the images considered here—fine art, graffiti, cell phone selfies, campaign stickers, memes circulating on social media—adhere to nonevidentiary generic and aesthetic conventions and operate according to quite different semiotic logics and forms of authorship, circulation, and reception. What I call "ludic" images deploy remediation, repurposing, and reworking to generate new constellations of truth and modalities of revelation on the surface of the image.[79] Like the Suharto and Munir images described at the opening of this introduction, ludic images often seem to have no singular point of origin, no definable moment of inscription; they emerge, as one op-ed put it, "like mushrooms after a rain."[80] These are "poor images" whose efficacy results from their "velocity, intensity, and spread."[81] Their authority as signs of popular sentiment derives not only from their explicit content, in other words, but also from their anonymous production, viral proliferation, and circulation via informal or "alternative" media channels.

As I argue throughout the book, the work of image-events in generating political imaginaries cannot be understood independent of the media ecology that forms the public image's "habitat."[82] Watching the image-event brings into view the protean and unpredictable nature of political communication in an age of neoliberalism, democracy, and complexly mediated public spheres.

Ethnography of and in the Public Sphere

More than four decades ago, Benedict Anderson called on scholars to "throw a rather different light on Indonesians' conception of their politics" by attending less to formal political discourse and more to what he called "symbolic" political communications.[83] Yet Anderson also recognized the difficulty of the task. Writing of visual forms like political cartoons, he noted,

> The grammar may be perplexing, the relationship of form and content at once more salient and ambiguous. More than printed speech, these visual condensations of significance find their meanings shift, deepen, invert or drain away with time. Since their audiences are necessarily fleeting and anonymous, context is all, yet singularly problematic to the would-be interpreter.[84]

As Anderson's comments suggest, the public sphere is an inherently elusive ethnographic site. Undergirded by media infrastructures, institutions, and ideologies, legal and regulatory frameworks, and communicative norms, its images and texts are nevertheless fundamentally open-ended and underdetermined, resisting reduction to fixed social locations and stable meanings.[85] Images, so open to multiple uses, diverse engagements, and ongoing mutations, are especially difficult to locate definitively.

This book is an answer to Anderson's call; tracking the image-event is my response to the analytical and methodological challenges it poses. I have argued that image-events demand our attention because they are particularly important political processes within complexly mediated public spheres, especially those in which democratic ideals of visibility, publicity, and transparency have significant ideological purchase. I want to argue further that image-events offer a way to engage the public sphere ethnographically, allowing us to go beyond an exercise in reading or interpreting public texts to a more dynamic account of the shifting, emergent, and contested processes by which political imaginations and subjectivities take form.

Tracking image-events is something like conducting a diagnostic test that follows a molecule through the arteries and blood vessels in order to trace circulatory flows and areas of inflammation, blockage, and heightened activity. I use the eventfulness of images as a methodological tool to bring into view the lines of fracture, connective tissues, and zones of sensitivity that animate the Indonesian public sphere. Each movement and mutation of an image is the outcome of decisions by various people—some known and some who remain anonymous—to design, to look, to click, to buy, to repro-

duce, to deface. These actions may emerge from affective arousal, thoughtful reflection, animated debate, or some combination thereof. The ways images mutate, move, and multiply, and the affective and discursive responses they precipitate, moreover, are prefigured and made possible by the material and visual features of the image itself and by the media technologies that channel and constrain the interactions between people and images. We can follow the itineraries, densities, and scales of circulation of images as effects that have effects, as events that precipitate further events.

An ethnography of and in the public sphere thus asks us to treat images and texts untethered from obvious authors or fixed communities of production or reception as primary interlocutors. It calls for a form of inquiry that remains immersive and positioned, without being grounded in a particular physical field site or relying primarily on individual, embodied human subjects. It requires learning to "hang out" in an arena of communication characterized by stranger sociality and the swirl of restlessly moving, ephemeral images and texts circulating through multiple media channels.

Much of traditional ethnography remains essential to this endeavor. Attending to the mediating work of images builds on anthropology's longstanding attentiveness to the mediated quality of *all* aspects of human social life. As with any kind of research site, doing ethnography in the public sphere depends on spending enough time in a social world to be able to discern pattern and distinguish the durable from the fleeting. It relies on the ethnographer's attunement to the taken for granted and the unsaid, to the commonsensical and the unremarked. Bringing an ethnographic sensibility to bear on the public sphere means attending to the implicit rules and assumptions that structure and regulate the circulation of images and texts, to the material technologies and practices that make up its infrastructure, and to the histories and social formations that shape its uneven terrain.[86] Following image-events as they unfold, the ethnographer must move nimbly among the pages of newspapers, websites, television screens, Facebook pages, Twitter feeds, the offices of newspapers, activist hangouts, film discussions, gallery openings, streets, cafés, and homes. This is, in many respects, less a departure from the expansive mode of inquiry that has long characterized ethnographic research than an extension of it into new domains. As in other recent developments in anthropological methods and theory, it requires a decentering of the human as the primary object and source of authentic ethnographic knowledge. Yet such a decentering, in fact, brings us into closer relation to how people inhabit and remake their worlds today.

The chapters that follow trace the resonances and reverberations of a particular image or constellation of related images that became focal points of attention and debate at different moments in the first fifteen years after authoritarian rule collapsed in Indonesia. I have chosen image-events that I think are particularly revealing of the arc of this period of democratization, though they, of course, also reflect my own partial and situated vision, shaped by the history of my engagement with Indonesia and my focus on Java. I have drawn on both formal and informal interviews with key figures in the circulation of images—journalists, artists, activists, filmmakers, writers, historians, bloggers, and other cultural producers—as well as casual conversations with a wide range of people, mostly from the city of Yogyakarta, and my own observations of the visual and political environment based on extended stays in 1998–2000, 2004, and 2013.[87] (Time spent in Indonesia in the late 1980s and mid-1990s, during the New Order, also informs my understanding of the post-Suharto period.) The press—newspapers, news and tabloid magazines, television, and online news sites—social media such as Facebook and Twitter, and various blogs and websites, provide much of the material for the chapters. Rather than simply mining these varied media channels for their content, however, I attend to their ideologies, materialities, and social conventions.

I invite the reader to approach the text of *Demanding Images* as an extended series of commentaries on the images here presented. As anthropologists, we have been conditioned to treat images in ethnographic monographs as illustrations, usually buttressing the authority of the ethnographer or supporting a point made textually. My choice to present this largely visual material in the form of a book reflects the continued privileging of writing and reading (and book publishing) in the production and recognition of our disciplinary knowledge. Although practical considerations place limits on the number and presentation of the book's images, I have tried, nevertheless, to encourage through the book's design a different mode of reading than that to which we are accustomed. A short photo essay-montage brings together images from all the chapters and is intended to juxtapose different visual objects and genres, reflecting the variety and vibrancy of the everyday image-scape. Printed in color, the photo essay allows the viewer to appreciate the ways that color demands attention and affects tone, intensity, and mood. The images in the rest of the text constitute a second, more extensive visual essay. The images are placed at the top of the page so that the reader can view them by flipping through the book, revealing relationships among images that might be obscured by viewing them only in relation to

their textual surround. To this end also, captions appear at the bottom of the page, rather than immediately under or beside the images. The images are not, for the most part, presented as gemlike objects of aesthetic appreciation, reflecting the fact that many are "poor images" never intended to endure or be treated with reverence.[88] For this reason I have not sought to elevate and isolate them as objects of contemplation (as one might find in a traditional art historical monograph) but rather have tried to capture in the book's design a sense of repetition, movement, and the heterogeneity of contemporary Indonesia's image-scape.

Outline of the Book's Chapters

The chapters that follow bring into view the doubts, tensions, and hopes attending a decade and a half of Indonesian democratization. Although the chapters do not form a linear narrative, they are organized in a loosely chronological manner. The first two chapters correspond to the early years of euphoria and crisis immediately following Suharto's resignation (1998–2000), during which the authoritarian state continued to cast a threatening shadow over the aspirations of the moment. Political elections and the free press were sites of intense expectation during this period, and the dominant media channel for images remained photojournalism. Images produced and manipulated via photocopying, digital photography, and scanning also began to play a prominent role in public visuality, offering challenges to more mainstream and official images. In the first chapter, "Face Value," I track reworked versions of the 50,000-rupiah bill with Suharto's face on it, as they appeared in campaign stickers, political cartoons, street protest, and art. These bills became vehicles for commentary on corruption and for popular visions of a more authentic politics; their very circulation as reworked state signs signaled the achievement of Reformasi.

The second chapter, "The Gender of Transparency," addresses public debates about claims that ethnic Chinese women had been raped in the unrest that immediately preceded Suharto's resignation in May 1998. Focusing on the conflation of "proof" and photographic visibility, I argue that when photographic images become the currency of political recognition, sexual violence, unpictured, remains trapped in the uncertain status of "rumor." In the context of the period's widespread circulation of images of male-on-male violence, I read the rape debate as an image-event characterized by the demand for absent images. As an early test of the Reformasi "dream of transparency," the debate revealed the ethnic and gendered limits of this political

ideal in practice. The debate also showed that dream to be haunted by the threat of fakery and "manipulation."

Chapters 3 and 4 are temporally located several years later and address moments of tension around the free circulation of images and the (lack of) regulation of the media and public discourse by the state. Debates about laws regulating internet communications and criminalizing pornography, the first two pieces of legislation to place limits on the freedoms of expression won after Reformasi, form the backdrop for these chapters (both laws ultimately passed in 2008). These chapters also register a shift in the media ecology, as cell phones and blogs came to the fore in the increasingly busy economy of images. In chapter 3, "The Scandal of Exposure," I examine a media genre in which the revelation of various improprieties hinges on a photograph, video, or audio recording. The "authenticity expert," who parses the "authentic" image from the "manipulated," emerges as a new figure of authority in a public sphere obsessed with the revelation of secrets and anxious about the reliability of appearances and the credibility of truth claims.

Chapter 4, "Naked Effects," focuses on a controversy prompted by an artwork condemned as pornographic by hardline Islamists. The remediation of the image as it circulated beyond the rarefied atmosphere of the art gallery and into the public domain fueled the controversy, as art morphed into "pornography." In debates that pitted hardline Islamists against artists and progressive groups, each side deployed competing semiotic ideologies of the image to promote their respective visions of the postauthoritarian public sphere.

In the final chapter and the conclusion, which address events in 2013 and 2014, social media (especially Facebook and Twitter) have become crucial channels for the circulation of political communications; yet I emphasize the ways that these media platforms operate in tandem with the more traditional public arenas of the street and the mass media. Chapter 5, "Street Signs," examines debates about urban inscriptions—street art, advertising, graffiti, and political banners—as the concrete ground for materializing a democratic public sphere. The proliferation of urban inscriptions, I argue, became emblematic of both the possibilities and the dangers of democratization, with utopian visions of an open arena of public participation posed against a dystopian vision of "democracy out of control" and the threat that popular forms may be ventriloquized by those seeking a return of authoritarian power.

The book's conclusion analyzes the work of images in the 2014 presidential election. Through a discussion of images of supporters of presiden-

tial candidate Joko Widodo, and of crowdsourcing efforts to secure fair and transparent elections, I reflect on the neoliberal democratic ideology of "voluntarism" by which many Indonesians imagined themselves as political actors a decade and a half after the end of authoritarian rule.

The images considered in these chapters pose a set of critical questions to their Indonesian publics: What is the afterlife of authoritarian rule? What does an authentic politics look like? What are the limits of recognition in an age of "transparency"? If "freedom" and "openness" are the aspirations of a democratic public sphere, what controls should be placed on the circulation of images? Are these aspirations in fact desirable? And who speaks in the name of the public? *Demanding Images* explores image-events that register a widespread crisis of authority in the aftermath of authoritarian rule, which often played out in heated debates about the reliability, truthfulness, and dangers of images. These debates also reveal the aspirations and fears attached to particular media technologies—and to the necessary but troubling process of mediation itself—within a democratizing public sphere. Telling a story about the promises and the deferred dreams of Indonesian democracy, this book is also about new ways people practice political agency. Increasingly, they approach images not as passive consumers but as experts and critics for whom images are malleable artifacts to be manipulated, unruly objects to be tamed, common resources to be shared, and visible claims to be made and questioned.

NOTES

Preface

1. Chudori, *Pulang*, 1–5; for an English translation of the novel, see Chudori, *Home*.

2. Following Independence, Indonesia experienced a tumultuous period of democracy between 1949 and 1959, when President Sukarno initiated "Guided Democracy" (Demokrasi Terpimpin), a political system that significantly centralized power and curbed dissent. The Sukarno era was followed by General, and later President, Suharto's "New Order" (Orde Baru). Suharto seized power after an event that became known as the 30th September Movement/Indonesian Communist Party (G30S/PKI), in which six rightist generals were assassinated by members of the Presidential Guard in the early hours of October 1, 1965 (a first lieutenant and the five-year-old daughter of a general who was targeted but escaped were also killed). These events were subsequently framed as a coup attempt, which was blamed on the Communist party and became the pretext for a massive purge of suspected Communists and leftists led by the military. Between 1965 and 1966, an estimated 500,000 to 1 million people were killed and hundreds of thousands imprisoned. See Roosa, *Pretext for Mass Murder*. For recent accounts of the killings, see Melvin, *The Army and the Indonesian Genocide*; Robinson, *The Killing Season*.

3. See Strassler, *Refracted Visions*, chapter 3, for a discussion of the identity photograph as both sign and practice of state power in the New Order era.

4. Chudori, *Pulang*, 138, 145; translation by the author.

5. Chudori, *Pulang*, 252; translation by the author.

6. On May 12, 1998, military forces shot at protestors at Trisakti University, killing four student protestors. The mass demonstrations and "rioting" that followed resulted in the deaths of more than one thousand people as well as violence against the ethnic Chinese minority in Jakarta, and led to President Suharto's resignation on May 21, 1998. I place "rioting" in quotes because there is strong evidence that the looting, violence, and burning of buildings was not a spontaneous expression of popular discontent but was actively orchestrated by factions of the New Order regime. See chapter 2.

7. Strassler, "Currency and Fingerprints."

8. Chudori's novel is itself a product of the vibrancy of the postauthoritarian public sphere and the circulation within it of formerly taboo historical narratives. The

novel's publication prompted public discussions, as well as reviews and interviews in the mainstream print media, spurring conversations about the 1965 killings and the stigma faced by those associated with "Communists."

9. On post-Suharto documentary film production, see Heryanto, *Identity and Pleasure,* chapters 4 and 5. See also Thajib and Juliastuti, *Videochronic*.

Introduction

1. All translations of Indonesian texts are by the author, unless otherwise noted.

2. On the rehabilitation of Suharto's image, see "Mimpi Menciptakan Soeharto Baru," *Detik*, March 18–24, 2013.

3. Other political campaign images referenced the "How's it going?" meme in more self-evidently approving tones. See "Baliho Hanura: Harry Tanoe, Wiranto dan Soeharto," Tempo.co, June 2, 2013, https://nasional.tempo.co/read/485120/baliho -hanura-harry-tanoe-wiranto-dan-soeharto. By contrast, a meme also appeared on Facebook showing Suharto's wife, Ibu Tien, with a "quote" in which she used informal Javanese to insist that her husband's era was *not* better than the present.

4. The movement to flood Twitter with Munir avatars was said to be the idea of Dandhy Laksono, a documentary filmmaker, whose goal was to put two million Munirs into circulation. "Foto Aktivis ʜᴀᴍ Munir Merebak di Akun-akun Twitter," Lazuardibirru.org, September 4, 2012, http://www.lazuardibirru.org/berita/news /foto-aktivis-ham-munir-merebak-di-akun-akun-twitter/ (accessed March 14, 2013); "Julia Perez Pasang Foto Munir di Twitter," Tempo.co, September 7, 2012, http://seleb .tempo.co/read/news/2012/09/07/219428049/julia-perez-pasang-foto-munir-di-twitter; "Slain Activist Gains Younger Fans on Twitter," *Jakarta Post,* September 5, 2012, http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2012/09/05/slain-activist-gains-younger-fans -twitter.html-0 (accessed March 14, 2013).

5. "Butet Ajak Warnai Munir," *Surabaya Tribun News*, November 19, 2012, http:// surabaya.tribunnews.com/m/index.php/2012/11/19/butet-ajak-warnai-munir; Yatim-jul Ainun, "Tolak Lupa, Kota Batu Dipenuhi Gambar Munir," Kompas.com, November 19, 2012, http://nasional.kompas.com/read/2012/11/19/18090819/Tolak.Lupa.Kota .Batu.Dipenuhi.Gambar.Munir.

6. The artist was Djoko Pekik, who was imprisoned from 1966 to 1972 for his affiliation with Lekra, a leftist group of artists and writers. Hayu Yudha Prabowo, "Semprot Gambar Munir di Kaos Walikota," *Surya Images*, December 2, 2012, http://www .suryaonline.co/images/semprot-gambar-munir-di-kaos-walikota/#.VovN6Mb59JM (accessed March 14, 2013).

7. John Pemberton argued that what marked the distinctive style of New Order Indonesian politics was a cultivated sense of ritual order in which nothing ever happened. See Pemberton, *On the Subject of "Java."*

8. See Klima, *The Funeral Casino.*

9. I use the notion of a "transition" to "democracy" advisedly, aware of the teleological assumptions of a natural progression from socialism (or, here, authoritarianism) to liberal democracy in the discourse that Katherine Verdery calls "transitol-

ogy" (Verdery, *What Was Socialism?*, 16). Like Verdery, I treat central terms of this discourse, including "transparency," "the public," "public sphere," and "democracy," skeptically, asking what they come to mean in this context, rather than assuming that they are given and stable concepts.

10. On conceptual overlaps between neoliberal economics and a narrowly procedural form of democracy equated with the free circulation of information and the ability of citizens to make informed "choices" in elections, see Hetherington, *Guerrilla Auditors*, 3–4. I, too, treat the logic of transparency as a "social fact," one that profoundly conditions the visual politics of Indonesia's postauthoritarian public sphere. While the critical role of documents identified by Hetherington for Paraguay (8) is evident in Indonesia as well (see Strassler, "Documents as Material Resources"), here I emphasize the importance of visual images, and public visuality more broadly, to transparency's politics.

11. The image-event is closely related to the "media event," an event that takes place within media and is indistinguishable from its mediation (Doane, "Information, Crisis, Catastrophe"; see also Papailias, "Witnessing in the Age of the Database" and "(Re)sounding Histories"). The term "image-event" has been used more narrowly to refer to a form of staged protest particularly designed for visual apprehension and media dissemination (Delicath and DeLuca, "Image Events, the Public Sphere, and Argumentative Practice"). My use of the term, however, highlights not crafted performances for the camera but often unpredictable viral circulations that generate political effects. See also Deluca and Wilferth, Foreword to "Image Events."

12. On the "accretive symbolic density" of iconic images achieved through iteration and circulation, see Ghosh, *Global Icons*, 45.

13. Meg McLagan and Yates McKee put it well, arguing that accounting for how images "mak[e] things public" requires attending to "the political fields constituted by images, the practices of circulation that propel them, and the platforms on which they are made manifest" (McLagan and McKee, introduction to *Sensible Politics*, 9).

14. On the "hazards" of materiality, see Keane, *Signs of Recognition*.

15. See Gershon, "Media Ideologies: An Introduction."

16. As Lina Khatib writes of the Middle East, "The image has claimed a central place in the processes through which political dynamics are communicated and experienced. . . . The image is at the heart of political struggle, which has become an endless process of images battling, reversing, erasing and replacing other images" (Khatib, *Image Politics in the Middle East*, 1).

17. On the performative efficacy of images, see Jain, *Gods in the Bazaar*; Mazzarella, *Censorium*.

18. The goal here is not to overlook the materiality of images, as they are always embodied in some form (Belting, *An Anthropology of Images*), but rather to move from a focus on singular images to recognition that an image's many iterations (and material embodiments) are moments in its trajectory as an open-ended event. It is also to avoid assimilating images to a single, defining historical context that putatively explains or determines them (for a critique of this tendency, see Pinney, "Things Happen").

19. In line with approaches that highlight the social "agency" of images, I am interested in the efficacy of images as objects *in* the world (rather than representations *of* it). But treating images as agents risks implying a kind of stability and coherency to the image across time, rather than attending to the dynamic and emergent qualities of images themselves as they enter into novel relations and ramify in new iterations. My invocation of their eventfulness is intended to foreground the contingent, multidirectional "taking place" of images propelled by their unpredictable pathways and reverberations. Approaches to images as agents are informed by Bruno Latour's Actor-Network Theory (Latour, *Reassembling the Social*), by Alfred Gell's Peircian *Art and Agency*, and by the biographical approach to material objects (Kopytoff, "The Cultural Biography of Things"). On images as life-forms, see Mitchell, *What Do Pictures Want?* For a relevant discussion of the recent anthropology of photography, see Edwards, "Objects of Affect."

20. Bazin, "Ontology of the Photographic Image," 8.

21. Berger, "Appearances," 103.

22. Berger, "Appearances," 86; see also 91. See also Jay, "Photography and the Event."

23. As John Tagg wrote, "Photographs are never evidence of history, they are themselves the historical" (Tagg, *The Burden of Representation*, 65).

24. Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 50.

25. Derrida, "Signature, Event, Context," 9.

26. The "photographic act," notes Azoulay, "is in fact a new beginning that lacks any predictable end" (Azoulay, *Civil Contract of Photography*, 137). But even the idea of a "beginning" or a linear trajectory forward in time is problematic, as an image is always conditioned by what has come before and changed by what comes after it; as Jacques Rancière puts it, an image "is always an alteration that occurs in a chain of images which alter it in turn" (Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectator*, 94). On the "event of photography," see also Pinney, "Crisis and Visual Critique."

27. My approach to signs draws on a Peircian semeiotic, in which signs are not fixed elements of a closed system but always open-ended, continually giving rise to new signs. In Alfred North Whitehead's processual philosophy there are no things, but only events. That which appears as an object is, in fact, a continually emerging event or multiplicity of events; to endure, an object must continually recreate itself (see Shaviro, *Without Criteria*, 18–19). An event is actually a nexus or a temporal series of occasions, a multiplicity of becomings linked through "historic routes" or "routes of inheritance" (25, n. 7).

28. Wagner-Pacifici, *What Is an Event?*, 5. In line with my argument here, Wagner-Pacifici suggests that objects that apparently represent an event are "only provisionally congealed moments of the events themselves, with variable shaping impacts on them" (6).

29. As Kaja Silverman argues, a dynamic "impulsion toward a further self-development" inheres within any image (Silverman, *Miracle of Analogy*, 60).

30. In "What Is an Event?" Gilles Deleuze writes: "The event is a vibration with an infinity of harmonics or submultiples, such as an audible wave, a luminous wave, or

even an increasingly smaller part of space over the course of an increasingly shorter duration" (Deleuze, *The Fold*, 1).

31. Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, 28 (my italics).

32. I think here, for example, of work on the Abu Ghraib torture photos as "after images" of lynching photographs: Smith, *At the Edge of Sight*, 195–212; Raiford, "Lynching, Visuality, and the Un/Making of Blackness."

33. Azoulay, *Civil Contract of Photography*, 14.

34. Zeynep Devrim Gürsel uses the term "infrastructures of representation" to address the technological affordances and social processes that determine which images circulate and how they circulate (Gürsel, "The Politics of Wire Service Photography"). The term "visuality," notes W. J. T. Mitchell, indicates both the social constructedness of vision and "the visual construction of the social" (Mitchell, *What Do Pictures Want?*, 356). For a concise review of recent approaches to the visuality of political communication, see Parry, "Visibilities and Visualities." Alongside visibility, ideas of the "voice" also play a key role in ideological imaginaries of the democratic public sphere (see Kunreuther, *Voicing Subjects*). Sonic and discursive media forms can be used both with and against visual images to intervene in public visuality.

35. Charles Taylor defines the public sphere as a "common space in which the members of a society are deemed to meet through a variety of media . . . to discuss matters of common interest; and thus to be able to come to a common mind about these" (Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries,* 83). This definition carries within it the aspirational quality of the public sphere as an (impossible) ideal of liberal democracy. Nancy Fraser offers a pluralized understanding of the public sphere as an arena in which multiple, overlapping publics coexist in an agonistic and unequal field of discourse (Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere"; see also Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*, and Rajagopal, *The Indian Public Sphere*). Scholars in an array of fields have critiqued the Habermasian theory of the public sphere for its assumptions about the primacy of verbal communication and print media, rational-critical debate, secularism, disembodiment, and a clear divide between private and public. For important early critiques, see Calhoun, *Habermas and the Public Sphere*. For a review of recent anthropological work on publics (but one that notably omits consideration of their visual mediation), see Cody, "Publics and Politics."

36. Asad, "Religion, Nation-State, Secularism," 184. Habermas's theory entailed the idea, as Craig Calhoun puts it, that "a public sphere adequate to a democratic polity depends upon both quality of discourse and quantity of participation" (Calhoun, *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, 2). Yet, as many critics have noted, this conceptualization does not sufficiently address the structures that determine who is enabled to participate and what kinds of discourse count as public discourse.

37. Arendt's model of the public realm privileged face-to-face interactions rather than the mediated communications of the modern public sphere. For Arendt, the public was a space in which a multiplicity of distinct perspectives came together to form a "world in common," which she saw as fundamentally threatened by mass mediation (Arendt, *The Human Condition*).

38. Ezrahi, "Dewey's Critique of Democratic Visual Culture," 315. Michael Warner

calls this "the principle of supervision," arguing that "the optic and spatializing metaphor of supervision became in eighteenth-century America the dominant way of conceptualizing the public" (Warner, *Letters of the Republic*, 52).

39. Hochberg, *Visual Occupations*, especially part 1.

40. Dean, *Publicity's Secret*, 17–18. For Azoulay, photography's ultimate political import lies in its potential to yield forms of civil recognition beyond the sovereign state (Azoulay, *Civil Contract of Photography*).

41. Kevin DeLuca and Joe Wilferth argue for replacing the Habermasian public sphere with the image-centered "public screen," characterized by speed, distraction, and glances rather than rational debate (DeLuca and Wilferth, Foreword to "Image Events," 5).

42. On hypervisibility, see Fleetwood, *Troubling Vision*, chapter 3. Krista Thompson draws on Ralph Ellison's term "un-visibility" to describe how hypervisibility creates conditions of blindness (Thompson, *Shine*, 3). See also hooks, "In Our Glory."

43. In a range of contexts, scholars have argued against a Habermasian privileging of texts. Habermas's formulation of the public sphere treated the growing prevalence of public images as symptomatic of the erosion of an idealized public sphere of reasoned, disinterested, and disembodied debate. Echoing other Frankfurt School theorists, he argued that the corporate mass media and image-based entertainment transformed the engaged citizen of the bourgeois public sphere into a manipulated spectator and a passive consumer (Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, chapter 6). Images, in this model as in earlier social theory, are a primitive and dangerous medium, triggering affective, embodied responses, and pre-rational, concrete "picture-thinking," in contrast to reasoned debate about matters of common concern (see Le Bon, *The Crowd*). The tendency to demonize images within accounts of the public sphere arguably stems from an anti-ocular bias with a deep history in Western philosophy (see Jay, *Downcast Eyes;* Stafford, *Good Looking*; W. J. T. Mitchell, *Iconology*).

44. Pinney, "Civil Contract of Photography in India," 25. On theorizing the public sphere through "the viewer of images rather than the reader of texts," see Patricia Spyer and Mary Margaret Steedly, introduction to *Images That Move*, 29. Drawing out the power of images to shape the ways people inhabit and imagine their worlds, Roland Barthes wrote that "we live according to a generalized image-repertoire" (Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 118), while Sekula traced the nineteenth-century emergence of a photographic "shadow archive" mapping the hierarchical arrangement of society (Sekula, "The Body and the Archive").

45. See Hariman and Lucaites, *No Caption Needed*, especially 13–14; Ghosh, *Global Icons*; Sturken, *Tangled Memories*; Khatib, *Image Politics in the Middle East*; Wedeen, *Ambiguities of Domination*; Mazzarella, *Shoveling Smoke*; Strassler, *Refracted Visions*. Attention to public images as critical media of social identification, affective engagement, and cultural memory aligns with scholarship giving theoretical attention to affective and sensory dimensions of public communication. See, among others, Berlant, *Cruel Optimism*; Hirschkind, *The Ethical Soundscape*; Kunreuther, *Voicing Subjects*; Mazzarella, *Censorium*.

46. Gürsel, *Image Brokers*. See also Poole, *Vision, Race, and Modernity*; Kratz, *The Ones Who Are Wanted*; Lutz and Collins, *Reading National Geographic*; Smith, *American Archives*; and Raiford, *Imprisoned in a Luminous Glare*.

47. On Cornelius Castoriadis's notion of the social imaginary and its relationship to theories of the public sphere, see Gaonkar, "Toward New Imaginaries." The social imaginary, he writes, is a "generative matrix" that is "expressed in images, stories, legends, and modes of address" (10); see also Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries*. I use the term "political imaginaries" here and throughout this book to describe the ways that people imagine a horizon of political possibilities and envision Indonesia as a political community. I understand imaginaries to be always under construction and emergent, and thus not only generative but continually generated through the public circulation of images.

48. See, for example, Klima, *The Funeral Casino*.

49. Paramaditha, "Wild Child's Desire," 8. Recent attacks on LGBT Indonesians show just how fleeting that opening may have been.

50. The decentralization of politics may have led to an increase in corruption, as more regional elites compete for the spoils of political power. On corruption, sorcery, and the imagining of democracy in North Maluku, see Bubandt, "Sorcery, Corruption, and the Dangers of Democracy."

51. In July 2012, Indonesia's National Commission on Human Rights (Komnas Ham) delivered a report to the country's attorney general finding that gross violations of human rights occurred in 1965–66 and naming some of the military officers responsible. In November 2012 the Office of the Attorney General officially rejected the report.

52. "Liberal" and moderate Islamic groups tend to see democratization as broadly consistent with an Islamic agenda, whereas extreme hardline groups reject liberal democracy as a Western, secular import (while taking advantage of new communicative freedoms to further their agenda). As Suzanne Brenner argues, "debates over what constitutes Islamic morality and efforts to have such moral values instituted as basic principles of the nation have played a significant role in the democratization process" (Brenner, "Private Moralities in the Public Sphere," 479).

53. On ethnographic approaches to the subject of democracy and democratization, in contrast to more normative political science accounts, see Paley, "Toward an Anthropology of Democracy."

54. See Bubandt, *Democracy, Corruption and the Politics of Spirits*. I also do not wish to overstate the power of the authoritarian state prior to 1998 (see Steedly, "The State of Culture Theory," for a critique of this tendency). Even at the height of the New Order, activists, artists, ordinary citizens, and a press that often pushed the bounds of licensed discourse expressed dissent, often at great risk and cost to those involved. The time frame covered in this book (1998–2014) is also not necessarily best conceived as a single period. As this book charts, initial optimism about the potential for significant changes—particularly during the short-lived presidency of Islamic leader and democracy activist Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) (1999–2000)—gave way to increasing cynicism about the possibility of effecting

such change. One could argue for a periodization that identifies the 2004 election of General Susilo Bambang Yudoyono as the beginning of a "post-Reformasi" period, marked in part by increased efforts to regulate the media and public expression.

55. Baulch and Millie, "Introduction: Studying Indonesian Media Worlds." See also Sen, "Re-forming Media in Indonesia's Transition to Democracy."

56. Kusno, *The Appearances of Memory*, 36. On the sense of abandonment by authority in a non-Javanese location, see also the forthcoming book by Patricia Spyer, *Orphaned Landscapes*. On the persistence of idealism alongside disillusionment among Reformasi's key actors—youth activists—see Lee, *Activist Archives*.

57. Dean, "Communicative Capitalism."

58. Passed during B. J. Habibie's transitional presidency following Suharto's resignation, Press Law No. 40/1999 (and later Broadcasting Law No. 32/2002) created a legal framework establishing freedom of the press. Human Rights Law No. 39/1999 also established citizens' rights to information and media. On these laws, see Steele, "Making of the 1999 Indonesian Press Law." In 2000, President Abdurrahman Wahid eliminated the Department of Information, which had been the central vehicle of state censorship and propaganda (a Department of Communication and Informatics, or Kominfo, was later established in its place but without the same powers). For an assessment of media policy, see Nugroho, Siregar, and Laksmi, *Mapping Media Policy in Indonesia*. On late and post-Suharto media, see, among others, Sen and Hill, *Politics and the Media in Twenty-First Century Indonesia*; Sen and Hill, *Media, Culture and Politics in Indonesia*. Ross Tapsell's *Media Power in Indonesia*, which came out as this book was going into publication, offers an in-depth analysis of the postauthoritarian media industry and digital media ecology in line with my characterization here.

59. In Ghana, according to Jennifer Hasty, "The press summons the hidden, obscure operations of power into the critical light of the public sphere, providing the primary means for popular representation and the participation of citizens in political discourse while holding the state accountable to the public good" (Hasty, "Sympathetic Magic/Contagious Corruption," 339–40).

60. Keane, "Freedom and Blasphemy," 47. See Anderson, *Imagined Communities*; Siegel, *Fetish, Recognition, Revolution*.

61. After it was shut down, *Tempo* went underground and began to operate through what was then a new medium unregulated by the state, the internet. See Goenawan Mohamad, "Surviving Suharto's Repression," *World Press Review* (1999), http://www.worldpress.org/editor99.htm (accessed March 8, 2004). *Tempo* reemerged in print (with an online presence as Tempo.co) in October 1998. The banned magazine *Detik* also resurfaced online as Detik.com. On *Tempo*'s importance during the Suharto years, see Steele, *Wars Within*.

62. Andreas Harsono, "Journalists Confront New Pressures in Indonesia," NeimanReports, June 15, 2002, https://niemanreports.org/articles/journalists -confront-new-pressures-in-indonesia/.

63. For a recent account of this trajectory, see Baulch, "Mobile Phones: Advertising, Consumerism and Class."

64. See Sen and Hill, *Media, Culture, and Politics in Indonesia.*

65. In 1997 an estimated 7,000 Indonesian journalists worked "for fewer than 300 print outlets, the state radio broadcaster, and a handful of TV networks owned by Suharto's children or cronies." By 2010, there were "30,000 journalists, more than 1,000 print publications, 150 TV stations, and 2,000 radio stations." Pintak and Setiyono, "Mission of Indonesian Journalism," 2.

66. Since 1998 various Islamic publics mediated by Islamic print publications and television programming have emerged and flourished; this important dimension of the post-Suharto public sphere is more amply addressed in the fine work of other scholars. On the Islamic press, see Irawanto, "Riding Waves of Change." On Islamic publics more broadly, see Hoesterey, *Rebranding Islam*; Hasan, *The Making of Public Islam*; Hefner, *Civil Islam*. On women, religion, and the public sphere, see Jones, "Materializing Piety"; Rinaldo, "Envisioning the Nation." On Islamic social media see Slama and Jones, "Piety, Celebrity, Sociality."

67. On how events are framed and interpreted differently at different scales of media (local, national, and international), see Aragon, "Mass Media Fragmentation." See also Spyer, *Orphaned Landscapes.* On media in West Papua, see Hill, "On the Border."

68. See Lim, *@crossroads: Democratization and Corporatization of Media*; see also Lim, "The Internet, Social Network and Reform in Indonesia"; Haryanto, "Media Ownership and Its Implications"; Nugroho, Siregar, and Laksmi, *Mapping Media Policy*; Tapsell, *Media Power in Indonesia.*

69. The Alliance of Independent Journalists (Aliansi Jurnalis Independen, henceforth AJI) reported "40 violent acts against Indonesian journalists in the twelve-month period ending in July 2010" (cited in Pintak and Setiyono, "Mission of Indonesian Journalism," 2). In addition to physical attacks on journalists and media outlet offices, legal harassment, particularly defamation suits filed by business and political figures accused of corruption in the press, has become a key means of intimidation. As a number of journalists related to me, today's civil censorship creates a more precarious and uncertain situation for journalists in comparison to the censorship of the New Order, when the line between what could and could not be said was more clearly drawn and the source of repression more obvious and therefore more predictable. On the case of Tomy Winata against *Tempo* magazine, see Kakialiatu, "Media in Indonesia." On post-Suharto censorship, see Haryanto, *Ketika Sensor Tak Mati-Mati.*

70. Journalists I spoke with generally felt that these internal factors were greater threats to press freedom than more spectacular but sporadic forms of "civil" censorship. They described regularly practicing self-censorship when reporting on sensitive issues such as ethnic and religious conflict, sexuality, and local corruption. Discussion at AJI Yogyakarta branch office, May 3, 2013. On editorial interference by media owners, see Darudoyo, "Editorial Dependence." Ucu Agustin's film *Di Balik Frekwensi* ("Behind the Frequency," 2013) addresses both the corporate consolidation of the media and the weak position of journalists. On journalism after 1998, see Steele, "Indonesian Journalism Post-Suharto."

71. Interview by the author, Bambang Muryanto (former head of the Yogyakarta branch of AJI), February 11, 2013. On journalist pay, see Nurhasim, "Upah Layak Jurnalis Pemula di Jakarta Rp. 5.4 Juta," Tempo.co, April 30, 2013, http://www.tempo.co/read/news/2013/04/30/173476996/Upah-Layak-Jurnalis-Pemula-di-Jakarta-Rp-54-Juta.

72. A 2012 Gallup Poll found that for both rural and urban Indonesians, television was by far the most important medium and source of news, although internet and social media access via mobile phone was increasingly significant, especially among the young ("Media Use in Indonesia: Mobile Use Soars but Television Still Dominates," Gallup and Broadcasting Board of Governors Research Series, 2012, https://www.bbg.gov/wp-content/media/2012/10/gallup-indonesia-brief.pdf). On television, see Kitley, *Television, Nation, and Culture in Indonesia*.

73. On film, see Heryanto, *Identity and Pleasure*; and Paramaditha, "Wild Child's Desire." On video, see Jurriens, *Visual Media in Indonesia*.

74. On radio, see Jurriens, "'Radio Active'" and *From Monologue to Dialogue*; Birowo, "Community Radio"; and Henschke, "Power to the People."

75. Dibley, "New Social Media as a Tool for Activism."

76. Baulch, "Mobile Phones," 39. On digital media, see Jurriens and Tapsell, *Digital Indonesia*.

77. Spitulnik, "Alternative Small Media," 177, 179.

78. Literature on "small media" of several decades ago assumed clear distinctions between formal and informal, official and unofficial, and mainstream and alternative media. Small media stood in opposition to the mass media as "participatory, public phenomena, controlled neither by big states nor big corporations" (Sreberny-Mohammadi and Mohammadi, *Small Media, Big Revolution*, 20). Such binarisms are untenable in contemporary media ecologies, in which both "mass" media and social media platform ownership is privatized and corporate media holdings are diversified in pursuit of niche markets, and in which images and texts move fluidly across interpenetrating media channels.

79. Often relying on new digital technologies and platforms, such images suggest pleasures in artifice that have long been noted as characteristic of Javanese aesthetics. See, for example, Siegel, *Solo in the New Order*.

80. See, for example, the op-ed by Muhammad Fahmi, "Piye Kabare, Enak Jamanku Toh?," Bernas.id, June 26, 2016, https://www.bernas.id/17092-piye-kabare-enak-jamanku-toh.html.

81. Steyerl, "In Defense of the Poor Image."

82. Mitchell, *What Do Pictures Want?*, 198.

83. Anderson, "Cartoons and Monuments," 153.

84. Anderson, "Cartoons and Monuments," 155–56.

85. Public discourse is "public" by virtue of its imagined potential to address anyone; one can become a member of a public simply by overhearing or giving attention to a message (Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*). This open-ended mode of address means that public texts and images are never reducible to a specific civil society institution or bounded social group. As Rosalind Morris writes, anonymity

of address "enables a public whose membership cannot be known in advance—even when exclusionary limits are constitutive of its domain" (Morris, "Mediation, the Political Task," 124).

86. For a model of bringing an "ethnographic sensibility" to bear on nontraditional anthropological sites and materials, see Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain*.

87. Yogyakarta is a city in Central Java of approximately 3.5 million people. It is sometimes called the "city of students," because of its many institutions of higher learning; it is also sometimes called the "city of art" and "city of culture," because of its many artists, prominent art school, and heritage as a center of traditional Javanese culture. The city still has a sultanate, and the current sultan also serves as the governor of the Special Region of Yogyakarta. Yogyakarta's Special Region status comes from the previous sultan's active support of the Indonesian National Revolution of 1945 to 1949. The city served as the Indonesian capital from 1946 to 1948 and was a center of student activism during the Reformasi movement.

88. "The poor image is a copy in motion. Its quality is bad, its resolution substandard. As it accelerates, it deteriorates. It is a ghost of an image, a preview, a thumbnail, an errant idea, an itinerant image distributed for free, squeezed through slow digital connections, compressed, reproduced, ripped, remixed as well as copied and pasted into other channels of distribution" (Steyerl, "In Defense of the Poor Image").

1. Face Value

1. See "Jadi Presiden Gampang, Cuma Bayar Rp 1.500," *Bernas*, June 24, 1998; and "Kapok Jadi Presiden, Takut Digebuki Tukang Pos," *Bernas*, June 25, 1998. See also the series of prints by FX Harsono titled "Republik Indochaos" (1998), which imitates the appearance of enlarged postage stamps. One shows the official portrait of Suharto with the word "Lengser" (Stepped Down) written across it: https://artsand culture.google.com/asset/republik-indochaos/BQGVq9kJfes3tQ.

2. See Pemberton, *On the Subject of "Java."*

3. Following the collapse of the Thai baht against the dollar in July 1997, the rupiah and other Southeast Asian currencies came under pressure. Despite the apparent strength of the Indonesian economy in the years preceding the crisis, the rupiah was particularly vulnerable because of "the huge foreign debt burden of the private Indonesian corporations . . . [and] the fundamental weakness of the financial and banking sector," which was plagued by reckless and corrupt lending practices (Sharma, "Indonesian Financial Crisis," 90).

4. Before the crisis, in June 1997, the value of the rupiah was 2,400Rp to the US dollar; at the crisis's peak, it fell below 15,000Rp to the dollar. By the end of 1998 the exchange rate had stabilized to 8,000Rp to the dollar, and it hovered at 8,000–10,000Rp in the period covered in this chapter (1998–2000). Skilled laborers (carpenters, for example) often made as little as 7,000Rp a day; *becak* (pedicab) drivers in Yogyakarta made about 10,000Rp on a busy day.

5. In October 1999, the key instrument of government censorship and propaganda, the Department of Information, was shut down.