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### Transcultural Memory and the Troostmeisjes/Comfort Women Photographic Project

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# Transcultural Memory and the Troostmeisjes/Comfort Women Photographic Project

## Abstract

In 2008 and 2009, a Dutch photographer, Jan Banning, and an anthropologist, Hilde Janssen, traveled around Indonesia to document, with photographs and testimonies, survivors of militarized sexual abuse by the Japanese military during the three-year occupation (1942-1945) of the former Dutch colony, the Netherlands East Indies. We argue that the resultant photographic project can best be understood within the framework of the "politics of pity" and the associated genres of representation. The project creators anticipated a cosmopolitan audience that might be moved to action to support the survivors. Yet, as the project was exhibited in different sites, the women's memories were interpreted through local knowledge systems and mnemonic practices. We analyze the reception of these photographs in diverse local contexts.

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# Transcultural Memory and the *Troostmeisjes/Comfort Women* Photographic Project

KATHARINE MCGREGOR AND VERA MACKIE

[*History & Memory* 30 (1): 116–150]

In 2008 and 2009, a Dutch photographer, Jan Banning, and an anthropologist, Hilde Janssen, traveled around Indonesia to document, with photographs and testimonies, survivors of militarized sexual abuse by the Japanese military during the three-year occupation (1942–1945) of the former Dutch colony, the Netherlands East Indies. We argue that the resultant photographic project can best be understood within the framework of “the politics of pity” and the associated genres of representation. The project creators anticipated a cosmopolitan audience that might be moved to action to support the survivors. Yet, as the project was exhibited in different sites, the women’s memories were interpreted through local “knowledge systems” and “mnemonic practices.” We analyze the reception of these photographs in diverse local contexts.

*Keywords:* militarized sexual abuse; Asia-Pacific War; survivor memory; photography; Indonesia; Japan; Netherlands

## THE PHOTOGRAPHS

From April to August 2010, the Kunsthal Museum of Rotterdam presented an exhibition of photographs depicting elderly Indonesian women in their eighties or so. The photographs were in portrait style, showing head and shoulders, slightly larger than life, with the subjects posed against dark backgrounds. The photographic quality was excellent—one could see details like individual grey hairs standing out against the dark backdrop, wrinkles etched on faces, moles and liver spots on skin, cataracts in eyes. In one case, the camera had captured a fly resting on a woman’s hat. This suggested a moment frozen in time, but also evoked a hot climate where flies moved sluggishly. The plain, dark background reduced historical and geographical specificity, but the sight of the fly, ready to fly off at any moment, suggested a whole world outside the photograph.

All of the women have a front-on orientation to the camera and a direct gaze. The similar pose, orientation and size of the photographs suggest that the women have something in common, that they have a similar relationship to the camera, to the photographer and to the viewer. These positionings also suggest careful staging on the part of the photographer. Some women wear *sarong kebaya* and some wear a *jillbab* or other head covering. Each distinctive style of dress suggests regional differences or membership in particular ethnic, religious or cultural communities. There is a tension between seeing each woman as one of a group with common characteristics and seeing each woman as an individual.

Each woman looks directly at the camera, without smiling. Their gaze may be read as accusatory by audiences because these are not just *any* elderly Indonesian women. They were sought out and photographed because they are survivors of the enforced military prostitution/sexual slavery system perpetrated by the Japanese army and navy in the Asia-Pacific War of the 1930s and 1940s.

Photographer Jan Banning and anthropologist Hilde Janssen spent two years traveling around Indonesia in 2008 and 2009. They drew upon activist networks to track down survivors and then interviewed and photographed 120 women. The exhibition, under the title *Troostmeisjes/Comfort Women*, displays photographs and profiles of 18 of the 120 women they interviewed.<sup>1</sup> The catalogue and exhibition provide briefer profiles of a larger number of survivors, also drawing on accounts from nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

At the time of writing, the photographs have been displayed across the world. We analyze how the women's memories are translated as the photographs move across different geographies and mediums of memory. To capture this process of the translation of memories Astrid Erll has proposed a new focus on the "transcultural" and "localized" dimensions of memory. The term "transcultural memory" attempts to capture the fluidity of memory and its "continual 'travels' and ongoing transformations through time and space, across social, linguistic and political borders."<sup>2</sup> The process by which memories become "localized" refers not to a process by which memories simply move into "another culture," but instead one through which they are "reconstructed as complex constellations of intersecting group allegiances, mnemonic practices, and knowledge systems."<sup>3</sup> In this largely theoretical article Erll, however, does not provide extended examples of transcultural or localized memory.

Since this 2011 essay, Erll and other authors have begun to apply these concepts to case studies. In a 2015 special issue of *History & Memory*, Geoffrey White and Eveline Buchheim adapted Erll's ideas on traveling memory to consider the ways in which memory is, in their words, "transited," rather than sited in one place.<sup>4</sup> The issue presented discrete case studies of traveling war memory as individuals moved across borders to confront difficult memories. In a more recent essay Erll has examined how three films address the transculturality of memory in Europe by engaging with multiple forms of border crossing.<sup>5</sup>

In this essay we provide a detailed case study of the transcultural and localized dimensions of memory at work in the *Troostmeisjes* photographic project as it traveled across the world. We assess how memory informs the exhibition from the point of production to the display of the photographs across different geographical borders and in different mediums. In order to analyze the transcultural and localized dimensions of memory at work we consider the different audiences that this exhibition potentially engaged with, including transnational cosmopolitan communities and communities that might have been more challenged by the exhibition's content. We also consider how the memories presented in the exhibition were reinterpreted according to local mnemonic practices and knowledge systems.

The life portraits featured in this exhibition have qualities that place them somewhere between documentation and art. Artistic representations of the survivors of militarized sexual abuse have become increasingly common in the last two decades and include novels, paintings, art installations, animation, statuary, memorials and museums.<sup>6</sup> There have been some critical reflections on the work, for example, of Korean American artistic engagement with this past.<sup>7</sup> Scholars have not yet fully considered what happens to memories of violent pasts when they are communicated and translated for diverse audiences. Before we consider this movement of memory we introduce our methodological approach to the photographs as visual sources and our reflections on the politics underpinning the project.

## PLACING IMAGES AND TEXTS IN HISTORY

Photographs can be read in several ways: through an engagement with the properties of each photograph as an isolated image, through its juxtaposition with text and

paratext, through its serial placement and juxtaposition with other images, through intertextual links with other images and texts that the viewer is familiar with, and in a longer genealogy of similar representations. Each representation or group of representations also needs to be placed in history. The experience of looking at a photograph is different depending on whether it is viewed as a small photographic print which can be held in the hand, in a book, reproduced in a magazine, on the internet, in a frame, or as an exhibit on a museum wall.<sup>8</sup>

As the photographs have circulated across the globe spectators have viewed them in galleries, museums, in printed form and on the internet. In this article we theorize how these photographs are positioned to address diverse audiences with different historical connections to the Japanese occupation of Indonesia and with different allegiances. We trace how memories of the women's experiences are reconstructed along the way.

Following Gillian Rose's methodology for analyzing visual images, we consider the production of these images, their composition and how they are "seen by various audiences."<sup>9</sup> In doing so we reflect on the people behind the exhibition, the particular genre of photography used and the women captured in the photographs and captions. We pay particular attention here to how the women's memories and experiences have been framed in the brief life stories provided.

The *Troostmeisjes* photographic project canvasses one of the most sensitive topics in histories of war and genocide, that of sexual violence. It is not the first photographic or documentary project to do this. In 2008, the Israeli photographer Jonathan Torgovnic produced an exhibition and accompanying documentary called "Intended Consequences," focusing on mothers and their children born of rapes during the Rwandan genocide of 1994.<sup>10</sup> The *Troostmeisjes* project focuses on Indonesian women's experiences of sexual violence by Japanese soldiers and their contemporary despair or resolve, depending on how the project is interpreted. What purposes then do photographs of survivors of sexual violence serve?

In order to consider this question it is useful to place this project within a long-standing philosophical debate on the "politics of pity." In her contribution to this debate Hannah Arendt pointed to the distinction made between those who suffer, and those who do not, and the related focus on the spectacle of "the unfortunate."<sup>11</sup> Building on her work, Luc Boltanski<sup>12</sup> and Lilie Chouliaraki<sup>13</sup> have each considered the ethics and efficacy of visual representation in contemporary art and news media.

They have identified several modes of address in the representation of suffering. The genre of political denunciation aims to stir up feelings of anger vis-à-vis the evildoer who inflicted pain on the sufferer; the genre of philanthropy aims to activate feelings of tender-heartedness and actions to comfort the sufferer; the mode of sublimation prompts reflection on the conditions of human misery.<sup>14</sup> As we trace the movement of memory across different iterations of this project we ask: what is the mode of address of this particular collection of photographs? Is it denunciatory, philanthropic or sublime; or perhaps a combination of all three? How does this mode of address frame our response to the gaze of the women who gazed at the camera, and who now appear to gaze at us from the walls of the museum or the pages of a book? In order to contextualize these images, we begin by briefly surveying the history of enforced military prostitution/ military sexual slavery as it played out in the Netherlands East Indies.

## BACKGROUND

The history of the enforced military prostitution/sexual slavery system is intimately entwined with the history of imperialism in East Asia. Even before Japan's formal and informal empire was established, Japanese entrepreneurs set up brothels in Southeast Asia staffed by emigrant Japanese women (known as *Karayuki-san*) from around the 1870s.<sup>15</sup> A licensed prostitution system was established in Japan in the late nineteenth century, and later in the colonies of Taiwan and South Korea.<sup>16</sup>

Some see this system as a response to the criticism Japan had received over the sexual violence perpetrated during the Nanjing Massacre of 1937. This, however, elides the fact that the Japanese military had been engaged in the management of soldiers' sexuality throughout the modern period and that the first military brothels were set up well before 1937.<sup>17</sup> By 1945, Japanese armed forces had captured territory in the Pacific, South Asia, Southeast Asia and East Asia and they set up military brothels wherever they advanced. Some facilities were directly managed by the military; some were managed by private entrepreneurs but regulated by the military; some were privately run but catered to soldiers.

Perhaps 100,000 women were enslaved in these military brothels—some estimate 200,000 or more. It is likely that the majority of these women were from the

colony of Korea or from China, but everywhere the Japanese army advanced, local women were captured, enslaved and transported from one battlefield to another.<sup>18</sup> Women from other parts of Asia were transported to the Netherlands East Indies and Timor while Javanese women were transported to other parts of the Netherlands East Indies or third countries.<sup>19</sup>

Japan invaded the Netherlands East Indies in late 1941 and occupied the country from March 1942. During the occupation an estimated 22,000 local women were sexually assaulted by Japanese soldiers, including those in so-called “comfort” facilities.<sup>20</sup> An estimated 200–300 Dutch or mixed heritage women were “recruited” into the system of enforced military prostitution.<sup>21</sup> There are very few empirical studies focusing on the Netherlands East Indies, so we have only a basic outline of the system, which included movie theaters, bars, restaurants, hotels and so-called “comfort stations.”<sup>22</sup> The most detailed records concern the Dutch and mixed heritage women taken from internment camps to serve in “brothels” in Semarang.<sup>23</sup>

In the colony there had been a long-standing trend of Dutch men forming relationships with local women as concubines. In the colonial era women laborers in plantations often supplemented their very low wages through prostitution. Both local and Dutch women (and some *Karayuki-san*) engaged in various forms of prostitution catering for both local and Dutch men.<sup>24</sup> On the invasion of Indonesia the Japanese recruited first from among those already engaged in sex work. Women were also coerced or duped with promises of becoming performers, getting an education or training as nurses.<sup>25</sup> The expectation of financial gain motivated some locals to hand over women to the Japanese.<sup>26</sup> Militarized sexual abuse took several forms from isolated incidents of sexual assault to enslavement in military brothels.

After the end of the Asia-Pacific War the Dutch held local military tribunals. Although Indonesian, ethnic Chinese and mixed heritage women detained in the same facilities were interviewed, only crimes against “Dutch” victims were prosecuted.<sup>27</sup> This immediately marked out Dutch survivors as somehow different from Indonesian women or other women across Asia who have never been vindicated in an official trial of those responsible.<sup>28</sup>

Almost fifty years after the wartime events—in 1991—South Korean survivor Kim Hak Sun (1924–97) was the first to speak out in her own name in the context of a campaign for redress.<sup>29</sup> Kim’s testimony prompted Jan Ruff O’Herne, a survivor of Dutch origin, now resident in Australia, to speak out. She is now the most famous

survivor from the Netherlands East Indies due to her public activism and her memoir, which has appeared in English, Indonesian and Japanese.<sup>30</sup>

Several Indonesian women, such as Mardiyem (1929–2007) and Emah Kastinah, also chose to speak out in the 1990s.<sup>31</sup> They became global activists on this issue. They were supported by human rights activists and Indonesian former soldiers who had served as auxiliaries in the Japanese military who documented survivors' experiences as they sought compensation and apology from the Japanese government.<sup>32</sup> They received little support from the Indonesian government during the military-dominated Suharto regime (1968–98), though. The survivors and their supporters were disappointed when the Indonesian Minister of Social Affairs accepted a deal in 1996 to receive funding from the controversial semi-private Japanese organization, the Asian Women's Fund. The funds were used to build nursing homes in several cities for the elderly and surviving women rather than directing compensation to individual survivors.<sup>33</sup>

Four Indonesian and two Dutch women participated in the Women's International War Crimes Tribunal on Japan's Military Sexual Slavery in Tokyo in 2000.<sup>34</sup> This people's tribunal (hereafter, the Women's Tribunal) indicted the Emperor of Japan, ten high military officials and the Japanese government. The judgment, handed down in December 2001, found that the Japanese Emperor, the Japanese government and the other accused individuals were liable for criminal responsibility for crimes against humanity committed through the system of sexual slavery.<sup>35</sup> It is the individual histories of the Indonesian survivors that Banning and Janssen explore in their project, as we discuss below. Yet it is not only the history and memories of the women photographed that motivated this project.

#### TESTIMONIES AND PORTRAITS

Photographer Jan Banning has a personal connection to the Dutch colonization of the East Indies and the Japanese occupation of the Netherlands East Indies, for both of his parents were born in the former Dutch colony. Following the Japanese takeover in 1942 his father and grandfather were recruited as forced laborers (*rōmusha*). Several years prior to the *Troostmeisjes* collection, Banning showed an exhibition entitled *Sporen van oorlog: Overlevenden van de Birma- en de Pakanbaroe-spoorweg* (Traces

of War: Survivors of the Burma and Sumatra Railways). It featured upper body portraits of former Indonesian and Dutch *rōmusha*, including his father, in an effort to raise awareness of this shared history in both countries. Banning, who is trained in economic and social history, has explained, “[y]our choice of subjects, at least in my case, starts from the heart and from there you work on with your mind.”<sup>36</sup> For Banning, then, the *Troostmeisjes* project evolved from a sense of joint victimhood between the Indonesians and the Dutch at the hands of the Japanese, but also a sense that Dutch society had not yet sufficiently acknowledged Indonesian suffering in this period. Hilde Janssen also recognized that, except for the Semarang case, the fate of women from Indonesia had been ignored in the postwar trials and treaties.<sup>37</sup>

The Japanese occupation of Indonesia is remembered, particularly amongst the “Indies community,” whose families had once lived in the Netherlands East Indies, as a bitter time not only because of personal experiences of internment and forced labor, but also because it represented the beginning of the loss of the former colony and homeland.<sup>38</sup> There has been Dutch advocacy for compensation from the Japanese government for survivors of prisoner of war camps and of forced labor, through groups such as the Foundation of Japanese Debts of Honor (Stichting Japanse Ereschulden). The memory of the Japanese occupation of the abandoned colony is marginalized in the Netherlands, in comparison to memories of the German occupation of the Netherlands.<sup>39</sup> In presenting this past to Dutch audiences Banning and Janssen were thus reminding them not only of the Dutch connection to Indonesia but also of Indonesian suffering. What is elided in these memories, however, is the Dutch colonial relationship with Indonesia. In many ways the Dutch and the Japanese had parallel relationships with the Indonesian people: as colonial rulers for several centuries on the part of the Dutch, and as military occupiers for a few years on the part of the Japanese. The antagonistic wartime relationship between the Dutch and the Japanese, however, obscures this parallelism.

While in Indonesia Hilde Janssen learned about the survivors there. In the catalogue to the exhibition, she reports that she and Banning wanted to “record these women’s personal experiences through portraits, in pictures and in text. Before it’s too late.”<sup>40</sup> By displaying these photographs they hoped they could assist in the long-term struggle of survivors for compensation from the Japanese government. They hoped that the project would “contribute to the prevention of future atrocities” and

framed it in the context of ongoing patterns of militarized sexual violence.<sup>41</sup> That is, one impetus for the project was a philanthropic one.

With the assistance of Indonesian activists and networks Banning and Janssen traveled around the Indonesian islands of Java, the Moluccas, East Kalimantan, North Sumatra and West Timor in search of survivors.<sup>42</sup> This included assistance from advocates for Indonesian survivors, the feminist lawyer and researcher Nursyahbani Katjasungkana who served as the Indonesian prosecutor in the 2000 Women's Tribunal, as well as staff from Indonesian Legal Aid (LBH), the organization that drove activism in the early 1990s. Janssen, who is fluent in the Indonesian language, first conducted an interview with each woman in her home to record her testimony of the occupation and her life after the war. She then escorted each interviewee to a makeshift studio nearby to be photographed by Banning.<sup>43</sup> The intention was that the women would be "in the same state of mind, thinking about what had happened to them" and that this would show in their faces.<sup>44</sup>

In an interview with an Indonesian researcher Janssen revealed that she and Banning debated which women would be included in the exhibition.<sup>45</sup> In the 2010 book published by Janssen, which consisted mostly of the women's testimonies, she focused on factors such as whether each woman had an interesting story that perhaps represented one kind of experience of the survivors of the system. She also prioritized interviews with women whose stories had not been told before.<sup>46</sup> Meanwhile, for the exhibition and accompanying catalogue Banning made selections based on the photographs that in his view best captured each "woman's spirit."<sup>47</sup> In a documentary about the process of photographing the women, Banning comments on the photograph of Paini, "I think she is very disarming on [sic.] the photograph. There is something funny. The wildness of her hair almost suggests some sort of desperation."<sup>48</sup> Banning was thus trying to capture a particular representation of each woman—a trace of trauma, perhaps—that he believed matched their stories. The photographs were thus supposed to convey the women's suffering. In commenting on Paini's beauty Banning also situates this photograph in the discourse of the sublime. It is the portrait of one individual with a specific history, but it is also something "beautiful" that might be appreciated for its aesthetics.<sup>49</sup> In this sense the photographic project also addresses a broader community of persons interested in art and aesthetics.

This process raises questions about the women's consent to participate in the project. Even if they did explicitly provide consent, we might reflect on the dynamics

of the relationship between the first world photographer and anthropologist and the third world women. Were the photographic subjects in a position to refuse participation?<sup>50</sup> On one occasion the husband of an intended subject became angry with Janssen and Banning for not asking his permission first and then demanded payment of two million rupiah (approximately 150 US dollars) in return for his wife's participation. Janssen responded that they did not have any money—adding that in her view paying for the women's stories would have been offensive to the women.<sup>51</sup>

There were several outcomes of their research: the exhibition of photographs with some contextual information about the survivors, a catalogue which largely reproduces the content of the exhibition, with an introduction by Hilde Janssen and text in Dutch and English, a feature in a Japanese photojournalism magazine which largely reproduces the content of Banning and Janssen's catalogue, the substantial book by Janssen on her interviews, and Frank van Osch's documentary film which follows Janssen as she interviews the survivors. By late 2017, the exhibition had been shown in many locations across the world.<sup>52</sup> Below we survey selected iterations of the book and exhibition. We consider where different modes of address were used, how the women's memories were "localized" and how some audiences responded to the images. We focus on the Netherlands, Indonesia and Japan.

## THE EXHIBITION

The first iteration of the *Troostmeisjes* exhibition was at the Kunsthal museum in Rotterdam in 2010. It provided very limited historical context—a short introduction and the photographs accompanied by captions indicating the women's given names, where the women originated from and where they had been detained. In the book produced to accompany the exhibition further context is provided by what the authors call the "list of coercion and violence," which draws on information from Janssen's interviews as well as information collected by a Dutch NGO (Project Implementation Committee of the Netherlands).<sup>53</sup> The list includes both Dutch and Indonesian women, identified only by their first initial to ensure their privacy. The experience of each woman is described in a brief sentence, with information from the NGO source and Janssen's interviews. Other details such as the place they were taken are changed

to further disguise the stories: “J. Taken from camp Moentilan and forced into prostitution. As a result has been unable to bear children.”<sup>54</sup>

A select number of Janssen’s Indonesian interviewees, whose portraits appear in the exhibition and book, are named and there is a brief description of their fate in captions in the book and the exhibition:

Dominggas. 1928. Empiawas. Babar. South Moluccas.

A Japanese retaliatory action on October 5, 1944, in the village of Empiawas resulted in a mass slaughtering. In the process, about 800 villagers were murdered, including Dominggas’ parents and four younger brothers and sisters. She was taken as the spoils of war and as a 16-year-old girl forced into prostitution for almost a year in the military brothel along with 12 other village girls.... She lost her first child soon after giving birth and never got pregnant again. She adopted two children and now has 10 grandchildren and a few great-grandchildren. “The family is starting to grow again.”<sup>55</sup>

Paini. 1930. Igoo. Getasan, Central Java.

From age 13, Paini performed forced labor at a local barracks.... In the evening, after work, she was taken from home to the barracks and raped repeatedly.... A second arranged marriage, with an older widower, failed after only five months. After that, she worked for a while as a maid before she started a family with her third husband. “I told him that I had been ‘used,’ but he liked me anyway. We experienced a lot of joy together. That’s why I have a lot of children now and grandchildren.”<sup>56</sup>

Umi. 1930. Igso, Sukabumi, West Java.

Umi was 13 when two of her sisters were taken to a brothel by Japanese soldiers. She, too, was taken there after a few months. Her two sisters were abused for five months, until that became impossible because of internal injuries. “My sisters were very pretty. The Japanese lined up for them. They protected me, because I was so young. They would say ‘Leave my little sister alone, just take me.’ I was taken, too, but not so badly. I still was able to have children.” Umi married at a later age, to a family member because no one else wanted her. She had four children....<sup>57</sup>

Given that the brief testimonies are presented in English and Dutch, there has obviously been an extensive process of distillation, editing and translation. The summaries are each of similar length and tone. Nevertheless, although the captions emphasize the women's suffering, even these brief extracts from their testimonies indicate that for many of the women, their stories of children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren take their lives beyond historical trauma. Saniken, after recounting her experiences, reflects that, "I don't want to think about the past, which I have buried under good memories."<sup>58</sup> Similar themes appear in the testimonies of other survivors. Even for those who could not bear their own children, some adopted children or gained a family through marriage to a widower with children. By choosing to remember these experiences, the women's lives are taken away from the historical categories of (former) so-called "comfort woman" or "survivor" and demonstrate that they have other identities as wife, mother, stepmother, grandmother and community member.

Hilde Janssen presents a composite picture of the women's feelings.

The women in this book nevertheless were willing to break the silence to have their history recorded. They don't want new generations of women to become the victim [*sic*] of sexual violence. And they want to be acknowledged, not only by apologies but also through the financial compensation that advocacy groups have promised them for years. From such motives, they draw the strength to conquer their shame and look the world in the eyes.<sup>59</sup>

Janssen's comments reflect the tension that Boltanski observed in invocations of the "politics of pity" whereby there is a need to convey individual suffering, to invoke pity and at the same time to convey generalizations about a group of people in order to make the case for political action.<sup>60</sup> In the process of assigning a generalized framing of survivors' lives as traumatic, however, the women's own framing of their life stories is elided. The brief extracts above suggest the women's resistance to seeing themselves as defined solely by this historical experience of suffering.

In her critique of how expert historians and lawyers represent the testimony of South Korean survivors Hyunah Yang argues that researchers should follow the "map of memory" that each survivor uses rather than inserting survivor memory into their

own framing and making the women “passive recipients of the final text.”<sup>61</sup> Yang reflects on the very process of collecting testimony. She shows how testimony is shaped through the encounters between the individual who witnesses and the interlocutor who records the testimony, and then through processes of editing and translation.<sup>62</sup>

Audience responses to photographs are also shaped by context and framing devices. Rose reminds us that photographs reflect three modalities: “technological, compositional and social.”<sup>63</sup> In the Kunsthal Museum exhibition, the photographs are slightly larger than life. One could stand in front of the photographs with the illusion of staring directly into each woman’s eyes as the photographer had done. The size and positioning of the photographs created the feeling of looking up at, rather than down on, the women. Walking around the museum looking at portrait after portrait was quite overwhelming.

In light of histories of colonialism and war, Sontag<sup>64</sup> and Chouliaraki<sup>65</sup> have each offered vigorous critiques of Eurocentric representations of the suffering of distant others, often from Asia and Africa, especially in the context of war journalism. Sontag argues that the photographer’s hidden assumption is often that “the other, even when not an enemy is regarded only as someone to be seen, not someone (like us) who also sees.”<sup>66</sup> Yet, unlike wartime photography, Banning took the photographs long after the infliction of harm and apparently with the women’s consent.<sup>67</sup> Furthermore, he asserts that his photographs gave the women the opportunity to “look back” to the world. He explains that he wanted to capture a “feeling of intimacy[,] of being so close to someone [because] basically you, as the people who look at the photograph, are virtually just as close as I was with the camera.”<sup>68</sup>

Each woman has been photographed against a plain greyish-blue background, which is reminiscent of the black background that has become a convention for the documentary filming of testimonies.<sup>69</sup> This produces a sense of cohesion across the photographs but also signals intertextual links with other documentaries and testimonies, suggesting how the photographs are to be read. This is different to the documentary, where we see each woman in a domestic setting, surrounded by homely items.

In the museum, the photographs are juxtaposed with wartime propaganda posters. This tells us that the women are being positioned with reference to their experience in wartime. They are being placed in history. They were born in the colony

of the Dutch East Indies; suffered occupation by the Japanese military in the 1940s; and are now citizens of the independent nation-state of Indonesia. The authors explain that the “posters show the male, heroic and violent side opposite to the reality of the violated women.”<sup>70</sup> This suggests a particular gender order, of male perpetrators of violence and female victims. This is not just a matter of gender, though. The women were positioned in the crosscurrents of Dutch and Japanese colonialisms, and their memories and histories are refracted through another seventy-odd years of history. Like the *rōmusha* laborers, internees and prisoners of war, they share the experience of violence and exploitation by the Imperial Japanese Army and Navy, but the memories of these different forms of abuse are remembered along gendered lines.<sup>71</sup>

From its first iterations in the book and exhibitions, there was an implied audience. The first implied audience was perhaps those who might empathize with victimized persons, based on concepts of shared humanity that extend beyond ethnic, political or national identification. In this sense, then, the exhibition addressed members of an undefined cosmopolitan audience who might regularly engage with “globally produced memories of failures to address human rights abuses.”<sup>72</sup> Apart from the exhibitions mentioned above Banning has compiled photographic exhibitions dealing with human rights issues such as the repatriation of former Moluccans from the Netherlands to Indonesia; poverty in Malawi; the effects of Agent Orange in Vietnam; homelessness in the American South; and on socially excluded migrant workers in the Netherlands.<sup>73</sup> Banning is thus motivated by the goal of social criticism and links this to social change. He noticeably anticipates audiences with a shared sense of outrage at cases of human suffering. He firmly believes, then, that a form of transnational solidarity that extends beyond one’s national identity is possible. By adding English captions as well as the original Dutch they were also addressing a wider international audience.

Yet there also seemed to be a process of the localization of memories as the exhibition traveled to different countries and as Banning, Janssen and the local organizers with whom they worked anticipated certain subnational audiences. In the Netherlands there was an awareness that Dutch audiences, although diverse, may have shared connections to this history based on family experience of colonialism and the more prominent remembrance of Dutch women survivors of the system. In Indonesia and Japan, however, the exhibition acquired different meanings according to specific local cultural and historical context.

## THE INDONESIAN TOUR

The Indonesian version of the exhibition included the same content as the Dutch exhibition, but with captions in Indonesian. It premiered at Erasmus Huis, the Dutch Cultural Centre, in the capital city of Jakarta in August 2010. The collection then traveled around the island of Java until early 2012, showing in Semarang, Yogyakarta, Surabaya and Malang, all of which had been locations of the military facilities.<sup>74</sup> The women featured in the exhibition came from Central and West Java and the South Moluccas.

What difference did it make that the same exhibition that had toured Europe was now on display in Indonesia? Instead of spectators from other countries looking upon the faces of Indonesian survivors as distant others it was now fellow Indonesians looking upon them and being asked to revisit something that had occurred in their history. The styles of dress that the women wore would be immediately recognizable and could potentially be matched with the women's local ethnic groups. Audiences may thus have felt a closer identification with these women than, say, Dutch audience members who did not have personal connections to the former colony, not to mention international visitors to the museum. Yet Indonesian audiences were also separated from the women by the long passage of time since the war. They were potentially also distanced by class. Most of the survivors lived in fairly humble circumstances while most attendees at the exhibition were likely to have been university students or other members of Indonesia's urban middle class. These audience members, like other cosmopolitan international audiences, perhaps shared an interest in history and human rights or in art more broadly.

Many of the host Indonesian organizations held public discussions at the exhibition venues. The women whose photographs appeared in these exhibitions did not, to our knowledge, accompany the exhibitors to talk about their stories. In these discussions the Indonesian hosts chose to link this historical case with broader patterns of violence against women. Drawing on local knowledge systems to make sense of the exhibition, they also referred to the issue of repressed histories: a sense that Indonesians were still only beginning to gain access to more complex histories of their country due to the New Order's tight control of history.<sup>75</sup> The exhibition was

interpreted, then, through the new mnemonic practice within Indonesian civil society of creating spaces for repressed histories.

The exhibition at Erasmus Huis was organized in conjunction with the National Commission on Violence against Women. In 2009 the Commission published a major report on the history of violence against women in Indonesia, including brief coverage of the enforced military prostitution/military sexual slavery issue, before dealing with Indonesian military violence against women such as rape in the disputed provinces of East Timor—now Timor Leste—Aceh and West Papua.<sup>76</sup> A discussion aimed at opening up the history of violence against women was held at the launch of this exhibition.<sup>77</sup> The National Commission of Human Rights hosted a second exhibition in Jakarta. This reinforced the recommendation in its 2010 report that the Indonesian government should uphold the human rights of the survivors.<sup>78</sup> The exhibition content and the photographs of individual women were thus localized and framed within a broader context of raising awareness about cases of violence against women, rather than simply a denunciation of the actions of the Japanese Imperial Army and Navy.

In the Semarang and Yogyakarta exhibitions there was a strong emphasis on the exhibition as a form of remembrance. In Semarang the Soegijapranata Catholic University hosted the exhibition in October 2010. Donny Danardono, a lecturer at the university, commented that by remembering the women, audiences would indirectly contribute to the women's struggle.<sup>79</sup> The Yogyakarta exhibition, hosted by Langgeng Art Foundation in April 2011, included a discussion entitled "A Movement to Reject Forgetting." Alit Ambara from the Institute of Indonesian Social History commented that Banning's strategy of using very focused facial portraits was to encourage the desire for dialogue, to create empathy from those who were looking, as well as to create the desire to know who they were, who was behind the face being presented. This was the first step to attract the public's attention to the issue of militarized sexual abuse which had been silenced in historical discourse.<sup>80</sup> This reflects an awareness that audiences should go beyond just looking. Feminist activist Ita Nadia suggested that the photos could be used to build a collective memory, especially in relation to sexual violence. She commented, however, that the photos seemed to be just objects in the exhibition. She argued for the need for more context to help evoke the atmosphere of the time this occurred.<sup>81</sup>

Banning and Janssen presented the Indonesian survivors as part of a forgotten history. They were primarily addressing the people of a nation that had direct experiences of the Japanese occupation—even though most of the audience members were young people with perhaps only shared family memories or “postmemories” of the period.<sup>82</sup> Indonesians connected the topic to other cases of repressed and contested history such as ongoing national debates about how to remember the 1965 anti-communist killings in which approximately 500,000 people died.

When the photographs traveled to Japan they were addressing members of a nation where memories of the Asia-Pacific War have been hotly contested.<sup>83</sup> While Japanese feminist and leftist activists seek to remind Japanese publics of wartime violence against women, Japanese war veterans and politicians seek to downplay this history. In Japan, there was a combination of approaches: translating much of the content of the book for a Japanese photojournalism magazine; using Banning’s photographs in one of the exhibitions of the Women’s Active Museum on War and Peace; and mounting the exhibition at the Okinawa Prefectural Peace Museum.

#### *DAYS JAPAN*

In October 2014, the photojournalism magazine, *Days Japan*, featured a selection of Banning’s photographs.<sup>84</sup> *Days Japan* was established on the first anniversary of the Iraq war in 2004. Based on “a distrust of conventional media,” it is dedicated to photojournalism that “tackles topics such as discrimination, oppression, starvation and crimes by men against women.”<sup>85</sup>

The compelling photograph of the survivor Wainem appears on the front cover of the magazine (figure 1), as she had done on the cover of Banning and Janssen’s catalogue. The cover of the original book is relatively sparing in wordage. The title of the book in white lettering in English and Dutch and the names of Banning and Janssen appear in the top left corner, against a black background. The color of the text harmonizes with the off-white shade of Wainem’s hat. On the cover of *Days Japan*, however, there is a series of headings and headlines, conveying information about the volume as a whole. On the top edge, a banner of white text against a green background proclaims “Ichi mai no shashin ga kokka o ukogasu koto ga aru. Foto Jānarizumu Gekkanshi” (A photograph can move a nation. Photojournalism Monthly

Magazine). Underneath this the title of the magazine, *Days Japan*, appears in bright red roman script, standing out against the pale color of Wainem's hat. Beneath this, along the right edge, the concerns of the special issue are declared in slightly smaller red script in Japanese: "Tokushū: 'Ianfu' ga mita Nihongun: Filipin, Indoneshia, Nihon no Kōbunsho" (Special Issue: The Japanese military seen by the "Comfort Women": Official documents of the Philippines, Indonesia and Japan). In the bottom right corner a diagonal band of reddish-brown color bears the words in white lettering "Hitobito no Ishi ga Sensō o Tomeru Hi ga kanarazu Kuru" (The day will certainly come when the will of people will bring an end to war). Although these photographs are just one of the special features in this issue of the journal, they are given prominence by the size of the bright red text and the placing of Wainem's photograph on the front page, which position them as the "cover story." There is no Japanese book version of the original *Comfort Women/Troostmeisjes*, but this special issue provides much of the content of the original book to an audience of Japanese-literate readers. *Days Japan* does not reproduce the propaganda posters, but does provide other context.<sup>86</sup>

Fig. 1. Cover of *Days Japan* 11, no. 10 (Oct. 2014)

Inside the magazine, fourteen pages are devoted to the cover story: six pages on Indonesia based on Banning and Janssen's book, four pages on a quilt and a picture book produced by a survivor from the Philippines, and six pages on extant Japanese-language documents which incriminate the Japanese military.<sup>87</sup> The inclusion of documentary evidence of the system in this magazine would seem to preempt potential responses for there are some members of Japanese society who continue to challenge activism on this issue based on the conservative and denialist view that there is insufficient evidence of coercion.<sup>88</sup>

Inside, a close up of Umi's face covers a double-page spread which introduces the issue. Paini and Mastia each have a full page. The next page has portraits of twelve of the survivors arranged in a 3 x 4 grid (figure 2). Extracts from the short biographical paragraphs from the original book have been translated into Japanese and appear under each photograph. At times additional details have been added. The next page is a brief text by Banning and Janssen, translated into Japanese. It seems to

have been produced for this magazine rather than being a direct translation from the book.<sup>89</sup>

Fig. 2. Portraits of survivors. *Days Japan* 11, no. 10 (Oct. 2014): 16.

When viewing the original exhibition and the associated book, the viewer encounters each woman as an individual. As one walks around the exhibition, it is only possible to concentrate on one of the (slightly larger than life-size) photographs at a time. Similarly, in the original catalogue, each woman's photograph takes up one page, the opposite page blank except for the woman's name in small print. In *Days Japan*, however, the arrangement of twelve of the women's photographs on one page has the effect of constituting them as a group.

In this context, the gaze of the women in the photographs may now be seen to be directly addressing readers and viewers from the perpetrator nation of Japan. Furthermore, the headline, "The Japanese Military Seen by the 'Comfort Women,'" suggests a reversal of the gaze. For much of their history, the victims and survivors of the system have been the object of bureaucratic policies, military orders, military interrogations, the subject of soldiers' reminiscences and fictional narratives, the object of research and the subjects of photographs. By suggesting that they, too, were looking at the Japanese military, we see that the gaze actually operated in multiple directions. During wartime, the women had little opportunity to document their experiences. They had nowhere to record their stories in writing, no cameras to document what they were seeing from their point of view. From the mid- to late twentieth century, however, survivors have been interviewed by military interrogators; have responded to requests for oral history interviews; have recorded their memoirs (often with the assistance of supporters);<sup>90</sup> have depicted their experiences in paintings; and (in the case of the Filipino woman featured in *Days Japan*) produced a pictorial quilt and picture book.<sup>91</sup> Nevertheless, in many cases these accounts have been mediated by interviewers, editors and translators.

A note at the end of the special feature advertises an exhibition at the Women's Active Museum on War and Peace, "Tokubetsu-ten chūgakusei no tame no 'ianfu' ten +" (Special Exhibition: "Comfort Women" Exhibition for Middle Schoolers +), held there until the end of November that year (2014). This exhibition, like other attempts to commemorate the history of the military prostitution/military

sexual slavery issue, aroused controversy – this time about its appropriateness for high school students.<sup>92</sup> Thus, in Japan the book and exhibitions were placed in the context of the contested history of the Asia-Pacific War, which is the subject of disagreement both within Japan and between Japan and its East Asian neighbors.

#### THE WOMEN'S ACTIVE MUSEUM ON WAR AND PEACE

The Women's Active Museum on War and Peace (WAM) is dedicated to preserving the memory of survivors of the enforced military prostitution/military sexual slavery system.<sup>93</sup> On the heels of the controversy about the middle-schoolers' exhibition, WAM assisted in displaying Banning and Janssen's exhibition off-site at the Kid Ailack Art Hall in Tokyo in October 2015. WAM's objectives include the goal to "create a pro-active people's network to enable a world free of all forms of violence."<sup>94</sup> WAM is located in the buildings of the Waseda Hōshien complex in Tokyo, which houses several Christian civil society organizations. The museum and the Asia-Japan Women's Resource Centre build on the work of the late journalist Matsui Yayori (1934–2002) and the Asian Women's Association which she co-founded.<sup>95</sup> In order for visitors to encounter each survivor's individual life, WAM makes "testimony panels" for each survivor which show the position of sexual violence in her whole life. The panels are written in the first person, in order to give visitors the feeling that they are listening to testimony. Through these "testimony panels," visitors can encounter the life of each individual woman, from before the war, to her experiences in wartime and on through the postwar years when "she broke her silence and took a stand for truth and justice."<sup>96</sup>

At the launch of the exhibition at the Kid Ailack Art Hall, Banning referred to his parents' and grandparents' experiences of the war as interned persons and forced laborers and stated that he expected visitors to this exhibition to "look these women in the eye," so as "to see and share their suffering." Meanwhile the feminist activist and director of WAM, Watanabe Mina, stated that "visitors to the exhibition must feel as if they are watched by the 16 women, rather than watching them."<sup>97</sup> The exhibition then traveled to the Okinawa Prefectural Peace Museum in November 2015.

WAM also used many of Banning and Janssen's photographs and testimonies as part of their first exhibition on the experiences of Dutch and Indonesian victims

and survivors. The exhibition followed previous exhibitions on Korean, Filipino, Chinese and East Timorese women. *Under the Guise of Asian Liberation: Indonesia and Sexual Violence under the Japanese Military Occupation* ran from mid-2015 to mid-2016. Presented entirely in the Japanese language, the exhibition challenged the positive views of the occupation presented by some Japanese veterans and politicians.<sup>98</sup> As in Banning and Janssen's exhibition, Japanese wartime propaganda was shown, but here it was juxtaposed with illustrations of the most oppressive aspects of the occupation, including forced labor and starvation.<sup>99</sup> One photograph, for example, showed malnourished Indonesians in a hospital at the conclusion of the war. The exhibition mainly focused, however, on the stories of the most prominent Dutch and Indonesian activists, including Jan Ruff O'Herne and Mardiyem.

A striking feature of the WAM exhibition was the map of Indonesia titled "Sexual Violence by the Japanese Army in Indonesia" (figure 3). Below the map appeared photographs of survivors and of the military facilities with testimonies organized by each island. The exhibition drew on the work of a small number of Japanese activists and historians who have collected testimonies from Indonesian survivors since the 1990s.<sup>100</sup> The most important sources of information for the exhibition were the photographs and testimonies collected by Janssen and Banning. Fifty-three of the seventy-three photographs and short testimonies used in the memory map were sourced from the *Troostmeisjes* project.

Fig. 3. Sexual Violence by the Japanese Army in Indonesia. Courtesy of Women's Active Museum on War and Peace.

In the WAM exhibition the photographs were slightly larger than a passport photo. Each portrait appeared on the same plaque as extracts from the individual woman's testimony. Here the hierarchy between the image and text was reversed such that the women's stories, rather than their faces, were emphasized. In this exhibition, as in the mini-profiles of the women in *Days Japan*, the display of all the women on one wall of the museum positioned them as part of a collective. Furthermore, the pink plaques featuring the women's stories were placed alongside white plaques featuring soldiers' stories, extracted from their memoirs, but with no photographs. According to museum curator Yamashita Fumiko, the purpose was to highlight the large gap between survivor and soldier interpretations of the system. On one side the system

was seen as an unproblematic source of sexual pleasure, on the other the cause of immense suffering.<sup>101</sup> Within this activist museum, targeted at the Japanese public, the photographs were thus used to promote a particular kind of memory of the war which denounced the injuries inflicted by the Japanese army on women in occupied territories.<sup>102</sup>

## CONCLUSIONS

In this essay we have analyzed the transcultural and localized dimensions of memory at work in the *Troostmeisjes* photographic project. We have assessed how memory informed the exhibition from the point of production to the display of the photographs across different geographical borders and different mediums of display.

Photographer Jan Banning and anthropologist Hilde Janssen envisaged that the project would expose the injustices suffered by Indonesian survivors of wartime military sexual abuse. By taking the women's photos, recording their stories and presenting these to the world they hoped to rescue a history that they thought was in danger of being forgotten without this new retelling. They anticipated that the striking portraits would increase awareness about this past and possibly prompt forms of redress for these women, albeit through unspecified mechanisms.

Despite these aims photographs have limits as a mode of communication. According to Susan Sontag, although photographic knowledge “can goad conscience, it can, finally, never be ethical or political knowledge.”<sup>103</sup> To create ethical or political knowledge requires a greater contextual understanding of the factors that led to the system and to the initial failure to recognize the ways in which the system contravened human rights. Photographs need to be placed in history.

As we have argued, the intended mission of this project can be understood through debates about “the politics of pity”—an emphasis on creating feelings of pity for an “unfortunate” other. The three genres of political denunciation, philanthropy and sublimation described by Boltanski<sup>104</sup> and Chouliaraki<sup>105</sup> are present across different aspects of this artistic and documentary project. Debates about the politics of pity, however, tend to assume one audience and do not account for what happens to projects such as these when they are displayed in different cultural and geographical contexts. We have shown how multiple audiences, and thus framings, of one memory project are possible—particularly as a project moves across cultures or subcultures.

With respect to the portraits and testimonies, we argued that the surviving women's experiences were framed in terms of their victimhood, despite the fact that some of their brief testimonies suggested alternative identities. This is related to the politics of pity, which requires a generalized message directed at audiences. Janssen thus instructed audiences that the survivors "don't want new generations of women to become the victim [*sic*] of sexual violence."<sup>106</sup> Another complexity is that the photographs suggest features of human suffering which transcend the story of any one individual, while the narratives in the text restore each woman's individuality.

The assumed audience of the first exhibition in Rotterdam was a Dutch or international cosmopolitan audience concerned with human rights issues, historical issues and art or photography. Banning, as a moral photographer in a philanthropic mode, anticipated audiences with a shared sense of outrage at cases of human suffering. Yet he also aimed to produce beautiful photographs to move audiences, thus endowing the photographs with sublime characteristics.

When the exhibition traveled to Indonesia a local cosmopolitan audience was anticipated. This is made clear by the fact that it was largely middle-class institutions such as universities and art galleries that hosted the exhibition. In this case, however, the history of Indonesia was presented to people who had either shared family memories or other knowledge frameworks through which they interpreted the exhibition. Indonesians reinterpreted the women's memories in the context of local trends, including an emphasis on repressed histories in Indonesia and the broader message of opposition to violence against women.

When the Japanese photojournalism magazine *Days Japan* reworked and represented material from the exhibition in magazine form, using smaller pictures and including alternative materials, a Japanese-literate audience was being addressed. In both this magazine and in the next iterations of the exhibition in Japan, sponsored by and presented within the Women's Active Museum on War and Peace, the tone taken by Banning, Janssen and the Japanese sponsors was closer to denunciation directed at the Japanese government. The curators used the memories presented in the exhibition to add weight to memory struggles within Japanese society—especially in opposition to those who would seek to gloss over or play down Japanese war responsibility. This was a direct response to activist perceptions that no form of redress to date has been sufficient and that denial of the victimhood of the women is on the rise in Japanese

society. In Indonesia and Japan, then, the memories presented in the exhibition were reinterpreted according to local mnemonic practices and knowledge systems.

By combining an analysis of the visual and written texts that accompanied each iteration of the project, we have drawn attention to multiple and complex threads within the photographic project. One thread that we believe requires more careful consideration is the role of the survivors of sexual violence in this and indeed any other artistic or photo documentary project. If indeed the politics of pity best defines what is at work here, then in the end how does the project contribute to the women's lives? What responsibilities are the women expected to bear to educate the world about this historical case or about the ongoing occurrence of sexual violence worldwide?

#### NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> There is no one accepted term for this system or its survivors. Many avoid the euphemism "comfort station" except in quoted material. The phrase "enforced military prostitution" emphasizes the institutionalized nature of this system; others refer to "military sexual slavery." Although "comfort women" is the most readily understood term, many reject this euphemism. Some refer to "sex slaves." In many parts of East Asia, the elderly survivors are referred to as "Grandmothers" as a term of respect. In Indonesia, the Japanese term *jūgun ianfu* (military comfort woman) is still used. *Troostmeisjes* is a direct translation of "comfort women" into Dutch.

<sup>3</sup> Astrid Erll, "Travelling Memory," *Parallax* 17, no. 4 (2011): 14.

<sup>4</sup> Geoffrey M. White and Eveline Buchheim, "Introduction: Traveling War: Memory Practices in Motion," *History & Memory* 27, no. 2 (2015): 5–19.

<sup>5</sup> Astrid Erll, "Travelling Memory in European Film: Towards a Morphology of Mnemonic Relationality," *Image and Narrative* 18, no. 1 (2017): 5–19.

<sup>6</sup> Some prominent examples include Nora Okja Keller, *Comfort Woman* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1997); Chang-rae Lee, *A Gesture Life* (New York: Riverhead Books, 1999); the 2011 art installation project called "Comfort Women Wanted" by Korean American, Chang-Jin Lee ([http://www.changjinlee.net/cww/cww\\_spaces/index.html](http://www.changjinlee.net/cww/cww_spaces/index.html)), accessed 21 December, 2017; and photoessays in *positions: east asia cultures critique* 5, no. 1 (1997), and in Elaine Kim and Chungmoo Choi, eds., *Dangerous Women: Gender and Korean Nationalism* (New York: Routledge, 1998). See the discussion in Chunghee Sarah Soh, *The Comfort Women: Sexual Violence and Postcolonial Memory in Korea and Japan* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2008), 52–55; Vera Mackie, "One Thousand Wednesdays: Transnational Activism from Seoul to Glendale," in Barbara Molony and Jennifer Nelson, eds., *Women's Activism and "Second Wave" Feminism: Transnational Histories* (London: Bloomsbury, 2007); Sharon Crozier-De Rosa and Vera Mackie, *Remembering Women's Activism* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, forthcoming).

<sup>7</sup> Laura Hyun Yi Kang, "Conjuring Comfort Women: Mediated Affiliations and Disciplined Subjects in Korean/American Transnationality," *Journal of Asian American Studies* 6, no. 1 (2003): 22–55.

<sup>8</sup> Vera Mackie, "Putting a Face to a Name: Visualising Human Rights," *Cultural Studies Review* 20, no. 1 (2014): 213–36.

<sup>9</sup> Gillian Rose, *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to Researching Visual Materials* (London: Sage, 2007), 13.

<sup>10</sup> Jonathon Torgovnik, *Intended Consequences* (New York: Media Storm, 2009).

<sup>11</sup> Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (New York: Viking Press, 1963).

<sup>14</sup> Luc Boltanski, *Distant Suffering: Morality, Media and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 115; Lilie Chouliaraki, *The Spectatorship of Suffering* (London: Sage, 2006), 81.

<sup>15</sup> Bill Mihalopoulos, *Sex in Japan's Globalization, 1870–1930: Prostitutes, Emigration and Nation Building* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2011).

<sup>16</sup> Mark Driscoll, *Absolute Erotic, Absolute Grotesque: The Living, the Dead and the Undead in Japan's Imperialism, 1895–1945* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010); Ruth Rogaski, *Hygienic Modernity: Meanings of Health and Disease in Treaty-Port China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 9.

<sup>17</sup> Mark Driscoll, “Seeds and (Nest) Eggs of Empire: Sexology Manuals/Manual Sexology,” in Barbara Molony and Kathleen Uno, eds., *Gendering Modern Japanese History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Asia Center, 2008), 191–225.

<sup>18</sup> Yuki Tanaka, *Japan's Comfort Women: Sexual Slavery and Prostitution during World War II and the US Occupation* (Oxford: Routledge, 2002), 77–79; Yoshimi Yoshiaki, *Comfort Women: Sexual Slavery in the Japanese Military during World War II*, trans. Suzanne O'Brien (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002); Jan Ruff O'Herne, *Fifty Years of Silence* (Sydney: Editions Tom Thompson, 1997); Soh, *The Comfort Women*. Qiu et al argue that the number may have been as high as 400,000. See Peipei Qiu, Su Zhiliang and Chen Lifei, *Chinese Comfort Women: Testimonies from Imperial Japan's Sex Slaves* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

<sup>19</sup> Gabrielle Kirk McDonald, Carmen Agibay, Christine Chinkin and Willy Mutunga, “The Judgement of the Women's International War Crimes Tribunal for the Trial of Japan's Military Sexual Slavery,” Case No. PT-2000-1-T, The Hague, December 4, 2001 (corrected January 31, 2002), 25; Yoshimi, *Comfort Women*, 80–81, 87–88, 127–28.

<sup>20</sup> Forum Komunikasi Ex-Heiho [Ex-Heiho Communication Forum], *Kompensasi jugun ianfu* [Compensation for comfort women] (n.p.: Forum Komunikasi Ex-Heiho, 1996), 10.

<sup>21</sup> “Report of a Study of Dutch Government Documents on the Forced Prostitution of Dutch Women in the Dutch East Indies during the Japanese Occupation,” unpublished translation of the original Dutch report (1994). NIOD Library Amsterdam, Netherlands.

<sup>22</sup> Budi Hartono and Dadang Juliantoro, *Derita Paksa Perempuan: Kisah Jugun ianfu pada Masa Pendudukan Jepang, 1942–1945* [Forced suffering: The stories of Jugun Ianfu from the Japanese Occupation 1942–1945] (Jakarta and Yogyakarta: Pustaka Sinar Harapan and LBH Yogyakarta, 1997); Bradley William Horton, “Comfort Women,” in Peter Post, William H. Frederick, Iris Heidebrink and Shigeru Sato, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Indonesia in the Pacific War* (Leiden: Brill), 187–92;

McDonald et al., "The Judgement"; Mayumi Yamamoto, "Whispers and Gazes: A Postscript to the Semarang Comfort Women Incident," *Journal of Asia-Pacific Studies*, 18 (Mar. 2012): 193–201.

<sup>23</sup> Horton, "Comfort Women," 188, 190.

<sup>24</sup> Susan Blackburn, *Women and the State in Modern Indonesia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 174–75.

<sup>25</sup> Hartono and Julianoro, *Derita paksa*.

<sup>26</sup> Koichi Kimura, "Brutal Abuse of Young Girls as Military Sex Slaves," *Asia Tsushin, English Edition*, December 4, 1996; McDonald et al., "The Judgement," 77.

<sup>27</sup> The attribution of ethnicity and nationality was complex in the Dutch East Indies, as Robert Cribb explains: "The term 'Dutch' in this context is ambiguous. The Netherlands Indies used a legal system of racial classification, which divided the population into 'Europeans,' 'Natives' and 'Foreign Orientals' following the paternal line of descent. What this meant was that some 'Europeans' had a high proportion of indigenous ancestry and some 'Natives' had significant European ancestry. During the occupation, however, the Japanese authorities generally treated people according to their physical appearance, rather than their official ethnic status." Robert Cribb, "Avoiding Clemency: The Trial and Transfer of Japanese War Criminals in Indonesia, 1946–1949," *Japanese Studies* 31 no. 3 (September 2011): 156–62; Ann Laura Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995); Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

<sup>28</sup> Survivors have attempted litigation in the Japanese courts, but unsuccessfully. Some have also tried to litigate in the United States, where the US Alien Tort Claims Act allows litigation where human rights abuses have occurred, even if the events did not occur in the United States. The Japanese government was tried in the Women's International War Crimes Tribunal on Japan's Military Sexual Slavery in 2000, but this carried no legal weight.

<sup>29</sup> There had been some interviews with survivors before then. See, for example, Yamatani Tetsuo, *Okinawa no harumoni: Dai Nihon baishun shi* [An old woman in Okinawa: A history of prostitution in Greater Japan] (Tokyo: Banseisha, 1979).

<sup>30</sup> O’Herne, *Fifty Years of Silence*; Jan Ruff O’Herne, *Rintihan dalam kebisuan* [Suffering in silence] (n.p.: Progress, 2003); Jan Rafu-Ohān, *Oranda-jin “ianfu” Jan no monogatari* [The story of Jan: Dutch “comfort woman”], trans. Watanabe Hiromi and Kurasawa Aiko (Matsumoto: Mokuseisha, 1999).

<sup>31</sup> Eka Hindra and Kimura Koichi, *Momoye: Mereka memanggilku* [They called me Momoye] (Jakarta: Erlangga, 2007).

<sup>32</sup> Katharine McGregor, “Emotions and Activism for Former So-called Comfort Women of the Japanese Occupation of the Netherlands East Indies,” *Women’s Studies International Forum*, no. 54 (Jan.–Feb. 2016): 67–78.

<sup>33</sup> Soh, *The Comfort Women*, 44; Asian Women’s Fund, “Memorandum of Understanding between the Department of Social Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia and the Asian Women’s Fund Concerning Promotion of Social Welfare Services for Elderly People in Indonesia” (1997), available at Digital Museum: The Comfort Women Issue and the Asian Women’s Fund, <http://www.awf.or.jp/e3/indonesia-00.html>, accessed December 21, 2017; “Comfort Women Continue to Suffer,” *Jakarta Post*, March 30, 1997; “Comfort Women Fight for Rights at Home, Abroad,” *ibid.*.. The full title of this organization is the Asian Women’s Friendship and Peace People’s Foundation (Josei no tame no Ajia heiwa kokumin kikin).

<sup>34</sup> Kim Puja, “Global Civil Society Remakes History: ‘The Women’s International War Crimes Tribunal 2000,’” trans. Hideko Mitsui, *positions: east asia cultures critique* 9, no. 3 (2001): 611–20.

<sup>35</sup> McDonald et al., “The Judgement.”

<sup>36</sup> Jan Banning, “Portraiture Lecture.” Lecture at Erasmus Huis, Jakarta, 2010, August 14, 1, [https://ruimages.files.wordpress.com/2010/09/intakes\\_1\\_jb.pdf](https://ruimages.files.wordpress.com/2010/09/intakes_1_jb.pdf), accessed 5 February, 2014. See Jan Banning, *Sporen van oorlog: Overlevenden van de Birma- en de Pakabaroe-spoorweg* [Traces of war: survivors of the Burma and Sumatra railways] (London: Trolley Books, 2005)

<sup>37</sup> Jan Banning and Hilde Janssen, *Comfort Women/Troostmeisjes* (Utrecht: Ipso Facto, 2010), 4.

<sup>38</sup> An English-language example of the expansive memoir literature on this period is Diewuwke Wendelaar Bonga, *Eight Prison Camps: A Dutch Family in Japanese Java* (Athens, OH: University Center for International Studies, 1996). Scholarly works on Dutch experiences of the occupation include Louis de Jong, *Collapse of a*

*Colonial Society: The Dutch in Indonesia during the Second World War* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2002); Elsbeth Locher-Scholten, "After the 'Distant War': Dutch Public Memory of the Second War in Asia," in Remco Raben, ed., *Representing the Japanese Occupation of Indonesia* (Zwolle: Waanders, 1999), 55–71; Mariska Heijmans-van Bruggen and Remco Raben, "Sources of Truth, Dutch Diaries from Japanese Internment Camps," in *ibid.*, 163–82.

<sup>39</sup> Locher-Scholten, "After the 'Distant War.'"

<sup>40</sup> Banning and Janssen, *Comfort Women*, 5.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 2, 5.

<sup>42</sup> Although the title of the exhibition is *Troostmeisjes/Comfort Women*, some of the women photographed and interviewed were subjected to different forms of sexual violence that did not always involve forced detention. This, as noted above, reflects the continuum of sexual violence during the occupation of the Netherlands East Indies.

<sup>43</sup> See the film about the making of the exhibition. Frank van Osch, *Omdat wij mooi waren* [Because we were beautiful] (2010).

<sup>44</sup> Banning, "Portraiture Lecture."

<sup>45</sup> Anna Mariana, "Pragmatisme Kekuasaan dan Kegagalan Sistem Jugun Ianfu: Wawancara dengan Hilde Janssen" [Pragmatism of power and the failure of the Jūgun Ianfu system: An interview with Hilde Janssen], *Etnohistori*, July 5, 2011, 9, <http://etnohistori.org/pragmatisme-kekuasaan-dan-kegagalan-sistem-jugun-ianfu-wawancara-dengan-hilde-janssen.html>

<sup>46</sup> Hilde Janssen, *Schaamte en onschuld: Het verdrongen oorlogsverleden van troostmeisjes in Indonesië* [Shame and innocence: The suppressed war past of Comfort Women in Indonesia] (Amsterdam: Nieuw Amsterdam, 2010).

<sup>47</sup> Mariana, "Pragmatisme," 9.

<sup>48</sup> van Osch, *Once We Were Beautiful*. The photograph of Pains can be viewed on the website (*Jan Banning Photographer*, <http://www.janbanning.com/exhibitions> (accessed June 30, 2017) and on the cover of the book, *Schaamte en onschuld*.

<sup>49</sup> Chouliaraki, *The Spectatorship of Suffering*, 81.

<sup>50</sup> The documentary by Frank van Osch, *Once We Were Beautiful*, provides further insights into the context in which the interviews took place and in which the photographs were taken. It is clear that the women sometimes had to be repeatedly

coaxed by Janssen to reluctantly disclose experiences of sexual violence. In the opening interview with Kasinem, for example, Janssen probes, “Did they [meaning she and the soldiers] do what married couples do?” When this is not answered she asks, “Why did soldiers come to you?” Then she follows with “Did they sleep in the same bed as you?” After which Kasinem finally responds with clear discomfort also holding Janssen’s hand “I was afraid I would be sinful.”

<sup>51</sup> Mariana, “Pragmatisme,” 9.

<sup>52</sup> This included the Kunsthal in Rotterdam; Erasmus Huis in Jakarta; Kineforum Film Center in Jakarta; Museum Bronbeek in Arnhem, the Netherlands; the Centre Culturel et de Cooperation Linguistique (CCCL) in Surabaya; the Gallery Ken Arok in Malang, Indonesia; Verkadafriek, ‘s-Hertogenbosch; the Festival Images Singulières in Sète, France; the Stadthaus in Ulm, Germany; the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam; Kid Ailack Art Museum in Tokyo; partially at the Women’s Active Museum on War and Peace in Tokyo; the Okinawa Prefectural Peace Museum, and at the Fullerton Museum Center in California. Website of *Jan Banning Photographer*, <http://www.janbanning.com/exhibitions> (accessed June 30, 2017). The exhibition was shown at the Seoul Museum of History from July 3 to 15, 2017. “[Photo] Special Exhibition of Comfort Women Art,” *Hankyoreh*, July 1, 2017, [http://english.hani.co.kr/arti/english\\_edition/e\\_international/801036.html](http://english.hani.co.kr/arti/english_edition/e_international/801036.html) (accessed 21 December, 2017).

<sup>53</sup> This group had successfully advocated for compensation from the Asian Women’s Fund for survivors who held Dutch citizenship at the time of the war. Marguerite Hamer-Monod de Froideville, *Geknakte bloem: Verhalen van Nederlandse troostmeisjes* [Broken flower: The stories of Dutch comfort comen] (Delft: Uitgeverij Elmar BV, 2013).

<sup>54</sup> Banning and Janssen, *Comfort Women*, 85.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 88.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 87.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>60</sup> Boltanski, *Distant Suffering*, 12.

<sup>61</sup> Hyunah Yang, "Finding the 'Map of Memory': Testimony of the Japanese Military Sexual Slavery Survivors," *positions: east asia cultures critique* 16 no. 1 (2008): 80–107.

<sup>62</sup> Hyunah Yang, "Revisiting the Issue of Korean Military Comfort Women: Questions of Truth and Positionality," *positions: east asia cultures critique* 5 (1997): 51–72; Yang, "Finding the 'Map of Memory,'" 84–99.

<sup>63</sup> Rose, *Visual Methodologies*, 13.

<sup>66</sup> Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (New York: Farrar Straus and Giroux, 2003), 72; Chouliaraki, *The Spectatorship of Suffering*.

<sup>67</sup> We can also ask whether the women understood that their testimonies and images would be made widely available in the international and national media, on DVDs and the internet. Janssen, for example, comments in the exhibition catalogue that "[a]t times it helped because we were foreigners; because they didn't have to fear that their neighbors would see or read the whole story in the local media the next day." Banning and Janssen, *Comfort Women*, 5.

<sup>68</sup> Banning, "Portraiture Lecture."

<sup>69</sup> Noah Shenker, *Reframing Holocaust Testimony* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015), 28.

<sup>70</sup> Banning and Janssen, *Comfort Women*, 2.

<sup>71</sup> Sonya Ryang, "Inscribed (Men's) Bodies, Silent (Women's) Words: Rethinking Colonial Displacement of Koreans," *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*, 30 no. 4 (Oct.–Dec. 1998): 3–15.

<sup>72</sup> Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider, *Human Rights and Memory* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010), 16

<sup>73</sup> The titles of these exhibitions are *Pulang: Back to Maluku*; *Agent Orange: Children of the White Mist (Vietnam)*; *Down and Out in the South*; *The Face of Poverty (Malawi)*; *Renovation of the Rijksmuseum: The Workers*. For further details of these and other Banning exhibitions including sample photographs, see [www.janbanning.com/gallery](http://www.janbanning.com/gallery) (accessed February 26, 2015).

<sup>74</sup> Horton, "Comfort Women," 187–92.

<sup>75</sup> The New Order (1966–98) was a military-dominated regime that came to power after brutal repression of the political left. The military carefully controlled the narration of history but since 1998 it has been possible for Indonesians to reexamine

many aspects of history which were previously off limits. Katharine McGregor, *History in Uniform: Military Ideology and the Construction of the Indonesian Past* (Singapore: National University of Singapore Press, 2002).

<sup>76</sup> Komisi Nasional Anti Kekerasan terhadap Perempuan, *Kita Bersikap, Empat Dasawarsa Kekerasan terhadap Perempuan dalam Perjalanan Berbangsa* [Taking a stand: Four decades of violence against women in the journey of the Indonesian nation] (Jakarta: Komnas Perempuan, 2009).

<sup>77</sup> Marissa Anggie Ariani, “Fotografer Belanda singkap wajah wanita penghibur” [Dutch photographer captures the faces of Indonesian comfort women]. *Liputan6.com*, August 1, 2010, <http://gayahidup.liputan6.com/read/291197/fotografer-belanda-singkap-wajah-wanita-penghibur>, accessed 5 February, 2014.

<sup>78</sup> Johdi Yudono, “‘Jugun Ianfu’ dipamerkan lewat potret” [Jūgun Ianfu displayed via portraits] *Kompas.com*, October 14, 2010, <http://oase.kompas.com/read/2010/10/14/02115698/Jugun.Ianfu.Dipamerkan.Lewat.Potret>, accessed 18 February, 2014.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> F. Widya and Anna Mariana, “Membongkar kebisuan: *Jugun ianfu* Indonesia (catatan diskusi)” [Breaking the silence on Indonesian *Jugun Ianfu* (discussion notes)], April 9, 2010, <http://etnohistori.org/membongkar-kebisuan-jugun-ianfu-indonesia-catatan-diskusi.html>, accessed 5 February, 2014.

<sup>82</sup> Marianne Hirsch, “The Generation of Postmemory.” *Poetics Today* 29 no. 1 (2008): 103–28. The term “postmemory” refers to the effects of traumatic memory that carry across the generations.

<sup>83</sup> Phillip Seaton, *Japan’s Contested War Memories: The Memory Rifts in Historical Consciousness of World War II* (Abingdon, Oxon.: Routledge, 2007).

<sup>84</sup> “Tokushū: ‘Ianfu’ ga mita Nihongun: Firipin, Indoneshia, Nihon no Kōbunsho” [Special Issue: The Japanese Army seen by the ‘comfort women’: Official documents of the Philippines, Indonesia and Japan], *Days Japan* 11, no. 10 (Oct. 2014): 12–25.

<sup>85</sup> *Days Japan*, undated, available at <https://www.daysjapan.net/e/news/050912.html>, accessed 21 December, 2017.

<sup>86</sup> For previous coverage of this topic in an English edition of the magazine, see “‘Ianfu’: 100nin no Shōgen” [“Comfort Women”: 100 testimonies], *Days Japan* 4, no. 6 (June 2007): 21.

<sup>87</sup> These include some of the documents from the Japanese military archives revealed by historian Yoshimi Yoshiaki in the early 1990s. Yoshimi, *Comfort Women*; Watanabe Mina, “Nihongun ‘ianfu’ seido no jijitsu ni mukiau,” [Facing the reality of the Japanese military “comfort women” system], *Days Japan* 11, no. 10 (Oct. 2014): 22–25.

<sup>88</sup> Seaton, *Japan’s Contested War Memories*.

<sup>89</sup> Jan Banning and Hilde Janssen, “‘Ianfu ni sareta shōjotachi’” [The girls who were forced to be “comfort women”] *Days Japan* 11, no. 10 (Oct. 2014): 17.

<sup>90</sup> O’Herne, *Fifty Years of Silence*; Hindra and Kimura, *Momoye*. Maria Rosa Henson, *Comfort Woman: Slave of Destiny* (Manila: Philippine Centre for Investigative Journalism, 1996); Graceia Lai, Wu Hui-ling and Yu Ju-fen, *Silent Scars: History of Sexual Slavery by the Japanese Military*, trans. Sheng-mei Ma (Taipei: Shang Zhou Chuban, 2005).

<sup>91</sup> “Tokushū: ‘Ianfu’ ga mita Nihongun”: 18–21.

<sup>92</sup> In another controversy in 2012, the Nikon Photo Gallery succumbed to pressure and canceled a planned exhibition of photographs on the so-called “comfort women” issue. In December 2015 the courts ruled that the photographer, Ahn Se Hong, should be compensated. “Nikon Ordered to Pay Damages for Aborting Comfort Women Photo Events,” *Japan Times*, December 25, 2015.

<sup>93</sup> On other museums dedicated to this issue, see Crozier-De Rosa and Mackie, *Remembering Women’s Activism*.

<sup>94</sup> About Us, Five Principles, Women’s Active Museum of War and Peace, <http://wam-peace.org/en/aboutus/five-principles/>, accessed December 21, 2017.

<sup>95</sup> Mina Watanabe, “Passing on the History of ‘Comfort Women’: The Experiences of a Women’s Museum in Japan,” *Journal of Peace Education* 12 no. 3 (2015): 236–46. On the Asian Women’s Association and its journal, *Asian Women’s Liberation*, see Vera Mackie, *Feminism in Modern Japan: Citizenship, Embodiment and Sexuality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 202–3.

<sup>96</sup> Watanabe, “Passing on the History,” 241.

<sup>97</sup> Keiji Hirano, “Photo Exhibition Shows Pain of Indonesian Former ‘Comfort Women.’” *Japan Times*, October 19, 2015.

<sup>98</sup> Ethan Mark, “Suharto’s New Order Remembers Japan’s New Order: Oral Accounts from Indonesia,” in Remco Raben, ed., *Representing the Japanese*

*Occupation of Indonesia: Personal Testimonies and Public Images in Indonesia, Japan and the Netherlands* (Zwolle: Waanders, 1999), 72–84.

<sup>99</sup> Paul Kratoska, *Asian Labour in the Wartime Japanese Empire: Unknown Histories* (Armonk, NY: Sharpe, 2005); Pierre van der Eng, *Food Supply in Java during War and Decolonisation*, MPRA Paper, no. 8852 (May 25, 2008): 8–25, [https://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/8852/1/MPRA\\_paper\\_8852.pdf](https://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/8852/1/MPRA_paper_8852.pdf), accessed 21 December, 2017.

<sup>100</sup> Kawada Fumiko, *Indonnesia no “ianfu”* [Indonesia’s “comfort women”] (Tokyo: Akashi Shoten, 1997); Kawada Fumiko, *Ianfu to yobareta senjō no shōjo* [Girls in the battlefield, who were called “ianfu”] (Tokyo: Kōbunken, 2005); Kimura, “Brutal Abuse.”

<sup>101</sup> Yamashita Fumiko, “WAM dai 13 kai tokubetsu ten, ‘Ajia kaihō no bimei no motoni: Indonnesia, Nihon gun senryōka deno seibōryoku” [The 13th Special Exhibition at WAM, under the glorious guise of “Asian liberation”: Indonesia and sexual violence under Japanese military occupation], *WAM Newsletter* 30, no. 4 (2015): 4.

<sup>102</sup> On denunciation, see Chouliaraki, *The Spectatorship of Suffering*.

<sup>103</sup> Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (1979; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1980), 23–24.

<sup>106</sup> Banning and Janssen, *Comfort Women*, 5.

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