

Original article

ADVERTISING IN THE DUTCH EAST INDIES IN SEARCH OF A TROPICAL STYLE

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses advertising in Indonesia in the first half of the twentieth century. A period in which modern life started to emerge and when advertising professionalized. The Dutch colonizer was prominently involved in advertising and founded numerous advertising agencies. Dutch illustrators travelled to the Dutch East Indies to work as advertising artists. Under influence of the Indonesian arts and crafts, and the tropical surroundings they developed a specific Dutch-Indonesian style.

Keywords: Indonesian poster design, advertising history, illustration, colonial period

1. INTRODUCTION

In the first half of the twentieth century advertising in colonial Indonesia had a major impact on the outward appearance of cities. Jakarta for instance, changed dramatically in the twenties and thirties. Numerous posters, enamel plates, painted wall-ads and other signs changed the city and made it more vibrant and colorful. Moreover, the trams, trains, movie theatres and even swimming pools all bore signs of a new and modern world, filled with colorful, luxurious consumer goods.



Figure 1. Pasar Baroe Batavia. 1920-36
Source: Royal Tropical Institute of the Netherlands

This was also the period modern life began in Indonesia. Life became faster, with the introduction of new ways of transportation, such as bicycles, cars and trams. Luxuries became readily available, with cigarettes affordable for all, movie theatres and bars to go to and household appliances and products that made domestic life. Advertising emphasized this modern life, not only by depicting the new modern products, but also in the

way it depicted these products. The style that advertising illustrators used, especially the art deco style, was a very modern one. But in the advertising posters we can also see Indonesia's cultural heritage. The influence of traditional crafts such as batik is very visible in the poster art of this period.

In the prewar period, advertising professionalized. Under the influence of the United States and other western countries, especially the Netherlands, the way newspaper ads, posters and enamel plates looked changed. But not only westerners influenced the style of Indonesian advertising. The unique composition of the society of colonial Indonesia, with its western, Indo-European, Indonesian and Chinese inhabitants (to name only a few), made a special mark on advertising posters as well.

This article sheds light on advertising in the first half of the twentieth century. Who were in charge of advertising? Who were the illustrators of the advertising posters? How did they adjust their advertisements to the different cultural groups living in the Dutch East Indies. Was there a specific Indonesian style?

2. ADVERTISING AGENCIES

Around the turn of the century, special advertising agencies were founded in the Dutch East Indies. These agencies originally started with organizing

advertisements in newspapers for their clients. Over time they expanded their activities and in the 1920's these agencies were in charge of whole advertising campaigns. They hired copywriters and illustrators; they arranged newspaper ads, made poster campaigns, imported enamel plates and made radio commercials.

The advertisements that these agencies placed in the newspapers of the Dutch East Indies changed dramatically over the course of the twentieth century. When we look at the newspaper ads from 1900 and compare these with the ads from the 1930's, we can easily see that a lot has changed. The advertisements at the start of the century contained more or less only text, in the 1930's new printing techniques allowed the advertising professionals to introduce illustrations, and sometimes even color.

Advertising agencies were mainly run by the Dutch. But the Indonesians, Indo-Europeans and Chinese also played an important part in this process. There are several Chinese advertising agencies, for instance those of Yap Goan Ho, TjonkHok Lange, Lauw Advertising Bureau Djin, and Liem Thjang & Co. The indigenous Indonesians are also actively involved in advertising. At the start of the century Raden Mas Tirtodisoerjo opens his agency; other agencies are NV Hardjo Soediro, NV Soesman, Clear and NV Doenia Bergerak [1]. Those run by the

Dutch are named Albrecht & Co, Excelsior, De la Mar, N.V. De Reclame, Litjen's Reclame Bureau, and the Soerabaiasch Administratieen Reclame Kantoor. Even the Americans are present in the Dutch East Indies, in 1930 J. Walter Thompson opens an office in Batavia, probably without much success, the office closes only a year later [2].

The Dutch merchants that want to advertise in Indonesia can also use one of the Dutch advertising agencies. Most of the big agencies in the Netherlands had a specialized 'Indië-afdeling', an Indonesia department. But using one of these in Holland based agencies is risky, the advertising press warns. The text, the illustration or the overall atmosphere of a newspaper ad or poster can easily show whether it was made in the Dutch East Indies, Europe or America [3].

The best known advertising agency in the Dutch East Indies was Aneta, Algemeen Nieuws-en Telegraaf- Agentschap (General News and Telegraph Agency). It was founded in 1917 as the first news agency of the Dutch East Indies by the flamboyant Indo European business man and media tycoon Dominique Beretty. Aneta provided numerous newspapers and other organizations with news that he obtained (among others) from the captains of the steamboat company KPM. In the Netherlands, newspaper De Telegraaf used Aneta's Indonesian news for its news section.



Figure 2. Aneta office building. Early 1930's
Source: Voskuil R.P.G.A. Batavia. Beeld van een stad. Purmerend: Asia Minor; 1993.

During the Japanese occupation Aneta had to close its doors. Later, in 1954 it reopened as Persbiro Indonesia, and in the 1960's Aneta merged with its rival news agency Antara.

Three years after the foundation of this news agency, in 1920, Beretty added another branch to his business and starts an advertising agency with the same name. Aneta now also focused on advertising for various companies and soon almost had a monopoly in the advertising business [4]. Customers of Aneta are amongst others: Stoomvaart Maatschappij Nederland (SMN), de Koninklijke Paketvaart Maatschappij (KPM), de Java-China-Japan-Lijn (JCJL), Goodyear, General Motors, Philips, Regnaults Verffabrieken, Kolff and Hotel des Indes.

Beretty was a man who dared to explore new forms of advertising. In February

1920 for instance, he hired an airplane and personally threw hundreds of thousands of little cards from the skies of Jakarta. One side of the card said in translation: *'Aneta, a publicity agency that in a short time has taken a tremendous flight and has brought the Indonesian coverage at a higher level'*. On the other side: *'Aneta, the advertisement king above all others.'* This was a unique and very modern way to put Beretty's new company in the spotlights [5]. And Beretty's trick worked. The whole Indonesian press talked about his advertising stunt.



Figure 3. Dominique Beretty
Source: Biografisch Woordenboek Nederland
<http://resources.huygens.knaw.nl/bwn1880-2000/lemmata/bwn6/beretty>

Two years later, in 1922, Willem Grollenberg arrived in Batavia. He started the Indonesian branch of De la Mar, one of the big Dutch advertising agencies. De la Mar soon became Aneta's biggest competitor [6]. Clients of De la Mar were among others Dutch companies that Grollenberg took with him from the Netherlands, such as Wybert, Philips and Coöperatieve Condensfabriek Friesland. De la Mar was active in the same

advertising branches as Aneta, such as newspaper ads, poster campaigns and even advertising films.

3. TYPES OF ADVERTISING

The advertising agencies were not only in charge of the copywriters and illustrators; they made sure advertising was everywhere, not only in newspapers and on posters.

Public transport was for instance an excellent place to show off your product. Advertisements appeared on the outsides of the trams, in train carriages, as well as on walls, stations, viaducts, platforms and railway crossings. The menus in the restaurant carriage and even the railway guide carried adverts [7]. A photograph from the 1920's or '30's even shows advertising posters in the swimming pool.



Figure 4. Posters in a swimming pool.
1920-30

Source: Royal Tropical Institute of the
Netherlands

Hotels contained advertising posters and they let large companies sponsor their menus as well. Merchandising, like the much used advertising calendars (In 1900 Simplex bikes already distributed one of these calendars drawn by Antoon Molkenboer in the Dutch East-Indies [8]), printed coasters, matchboxes and the inescapable ashtrays were popular advertising-means. Swiss company Nestlé emphasized its heritage with a printed Swiss clock and the Italian firm J. Serravallo placed an advert for kin a wine on the back of a hand mirror [9].

Cinema visits were very popular in this period, especially amongst the Indonesian population. Before World War One the movies that were shown were mostly French, after the war most movies came from Hollywood [10]. Because of its popularity cinemas were a great place to advertise. According to magazine *Meer Baet* (the magazine of advertising agency De la Mar) cinema-advertising should be in Malay, because of the high number of Chinese and Indonesian visitors to cinemas. To also appeal to possible illiterates adverts should contain lots of illustrations and especially cinema-adverts should be funny to underline the festive character of a cinema-visit [11].

De la Mar headed his own advice when in 1933 the agency created an Indonesian version of the comical advertising film *De lotgevallen van Ko, de lachendeKoe* (transl. The ups and downs

of Ko, the laughing Cow) for condensed milk from Tjap Bandera (FriescheVlag) from Leeuwarden. This was the only time that a specific version of a Dutch commercial was made for the Dutch-Indonesian market though. Other famous commercial-films in Indonesia, like *Pietje Palleenzijn Gazelle* for Gazelle-bikes (shown in shop-windows) and *Doornroosje* (transl. Sleeping Beauty) for Philipsradio's were initially made for Dutch consumers and it was this version that was shown in the Dutch East Indies [12].



Figure 5. Film still from *De lotgevallen van Ko, de lachende Koe*. 1931
Source: EYE. Amsterdam

4. THE INDONESIAN ADVERTISING PROBLEM

Dutch companies such as Philips lights, Heineken beer, Verkade biscuits and Van Nelle tobacco sell their products in the Dutch East Indies and therefore need good advertising campaigns. But who buys these products? The Indonesians, Chinese, or the westerners? And how to reach these target groups? What

language to use? In which newspaper to advertise? What sort of illustration to use?

The presence of so many different groups with each a different language and culture makes advertising in colonial Indonesia a lot more difficult than in the Netherlands. The Dutch advertising professionals do a lot of research on this subject, they write about it in various magazines on advertising and refer to this issue as 'the Indonesian advertising problem' [13].

Depending on which group the ad man wants to reach he has to use a different language. Chinese, Malay, Javanese, Arabic, English or Dutch, the advertising professional has to determine which group he wants to address. This situation is very different from for instance advertising in the United States or the Netherlands. Moreover, more than 50 % of the Indonesian populace is illiterate in this period. Even more so than in the western world the image of the advertisement becomes more important than its words [14].

So Verkade biscuits use different ways to reach specific groups. For the same biscuits the company creates different campaigns for different groups. Verkade uses the expertise of advertising agency De La Mar and its main illustrator Frits van Bommel.

In 1929 Van Bommel makes an advertising

poster voor Verkade Biscoewit. It depicts a young man with a petji, a typical Islamic hat. The text reads (translated): *'Biscuits of the brand 'The four boys' are fully halal and are for every muslim safe to eat'* [15]. With this poster the company tries to reach a specific Indonesian moslem group.



Figure 6. Frits van Bommel, advertising poster. 1929

Source: Grafisch tijdschrift (9) 1929; June.

But a few years later the same company makes an advertising campaign directed at the Dutch living in the Dutch East Indies. Now Verkade focuses not on the fact that the biscuits are halal, but on the fact that the biscuits are '*From the motherland*'. Illustrator Van Bommel draws a typical Dutch boy, in traditional clothes from Volendam (a fisherman's

town in Holland). The text says that these biscuits taste just as good as those in Holland [16].



Figure 7. Frits van Bommel advertisement.
1932.

Source: De reclame (11) 1932: March.

With the boy in traditional Dutch clothes and the text *'From the motherland'* the advertising professionals try to reach the Dutch society in colonial Indonesia. This specific Dutch product will be extra appealing to them because of its Dutch origins. With this campaign Verkade follows the advice from the advertising press that to reach the Dutch group, who feel a little homesick in the tropics, one should focus on the Dutch origins of a product. Moreover, focusing on the Dutch origins will give the companies from Holland a head start to companies from Australia, the United States and

Britain. The Dutch consumers that live in the Dutch East Indies are more likely to buy products from their home country, so companies such as Verkade should emphasize this aspect; the advertising press suggests [17].

To appeal to the Indonesian populace the ad men use various typical Indonesian scenes. For Dobbelman tobacco the Indonesian illustrator T. Roesjan for instance depicts a *slematan*, a feast meal. The text reads (translated) *'After a feast meal, you smoke Dobbelman'*. But also *'djempol'*, the typical Indonesian 'thumbs up', used for 'great', 'fine', is used in advertising.

For Van Nelle tobacco the Dutch illustrator Menno van Meeteren Brouwer makes a series of advertisements with various typical scenes from colonial Indonesia. These are scenes from daily life, such as a scene in a shop, students smoking, a soccer game and work on the *sawa's*. All very recognizable scenes for everybody living in the Dutch East Indies.

5. STYLE

From the start of the twentieth century illustrators from the Netherlands travel to the Dutch East Indies to stay and work there for a short period, or sometimes to stay there indefinitely. Some of them, such as Simon Admiraal, Dirk Homberg and Isidorus van Mens are artist and create paintings, next to their work as

advertising illustrators. Others, such as Menno van Meeteren Brouwer and Frits van Bemmelen combine their advertising work with work as political illustrators for newspapers or magazines.

These illustrators don't all work in the same style. We can roughly distinguish three different styles in the advertising illustrations. Some, such as Menno van Meeteren Brouwer and Frits van Bemmelen use more or less realistic scenes. Others, such as Pieter Ducro, base their advertisements on the specific Indonesian batik art. The third style, with Jan Lavies as its main representative, is more stylized, art deco, and distinguishes itself by the use of bright, tropical colors.

4.1 Realistic style

Menno van Meeteren Brouwer (1882-1974) arrives in 1910 in Medan. He becomes well known because of his political illustrations and his drawings of daily life. His work is published in Dutch/Indonesian magazines such as *Nieuws van den Dag*, *De Indische Post* and *De Zweep*. Van Meeteren Brouwer also works as a painter; he illustrates children's books and publishes his own books, such as *Indische Penkrabbels* (1912). His work is considered typical 'Indisch', depicting life in the Dutch East Indies as it was. He stays in the Dutch colony for 11 years, during which he travels and paints on Java, Sumatra and Bali. After his return to the Netherlands in 1921 he continues to make

illustrations of daily life in the Dutch East Indies [18].

In his advertising work, especially the illustrations he made for Van Nelle tobacco, his drawings of daily life are very successful. The Van Nelle series is still very much sought after by collectors of historic advertisements. But in his lifetime these illustrations were considered a success as well. In the Dutch advertising press, the work of Van Meeteren Brouwer is highly praised for his capability to capture typical and recognizable Indonesian scenes [19]. Realistic illustrations from daily life are a very good means to reach the Indonesian populace; the advertising press argues [20].



Figure 8. Menno van Meeteren Brouwer.
Advertising poster. 1930's

Source: Van Sabben Poster Auctions. Hoorn

Frits van Bemmél (1898-1981) can also be considered as a representative of this realistic style in advertising. Van Bemmél lives in Batavia (current Jakarta) and

works for the advertising agency Aneta, where he is head of the illustration studio. Next to his work in advertising Van Bemmél makes political illustrations for magazines *De Revue*, *De Zweep* and *d'Oriënt*.

As an advertising illustrator van Bemmél creates illustrations for the Pasar Gambir, the Jaarbeurs (annual fair) in Bandung, he illustrates for the steam boat company Rotterdamsche Lloyd, for Verkade, Wajang Thee and Ford motors. When he returns to the Netherlands in 1932 he continues to work in advertising and becomes an illustrator for De la Mar, the Dutch branch of Aneta's big competition. In Holland Indonesia is still on his mind. Van Bemmél illustrates Indonesian school plates, and *Tjoklatsagen*, a children's book with Indonesian fairy tales of the Swiss chocolate company Tjoklat. He is also responsible for the famous Tjoklat girl, an Indonesian girl holding cocoa-fruits, that is depicted on all chocolate boxes of the company [21].



Figure 9. Tjoklat chocolate box
Source: Private collection

4.2 Tropical style

For some of his advertising posters Van Bemmél uses a more colorful, more stylized style. For instance is his advertising poster in 1926 for the Pasar Gambir, the annual fair that is held since 1906 at the Koningsplein in Batavia. For the design of this advertising poster in 1926 a competition is held. Thirteen illustrators send their designs and four of these are awarded a prize. Among the designs is one of Simon Admiraal (1903-1992), a teacher in drawing, illustrator and advertising illustrator, who after World War II founded the University for Art Teachers in Bandung (the later ASRI). Admiraal made a poster with motto, 'Eendrachtmaaktmacht' (Unity gives power). His design is awarded the first prize. Two figures, an Indonesian and a western farmer, symbolize the collaboration between east and west. The jury is enthusiastic and considers the poster a good design, very visible and understandable from a distance. It is fiercely drawn, the white letters Pasar Gambir come forward and the blue brings color and life in the background. But there's also critique, there are no western farmers that work on the land themselves in the Dutch East Indies [22].

But the winning design of Simon Admiraal is not executed and put into print. The jury thinks it is not good enough for the whole advertising campaign. The jury explains that it was a difficult decision, but they consider

Admiraal's design better suited for an exhibition on agriculture, then for the Pasar Gambir, which is meant to give an image of the indigenous industry of Indonesia [23].

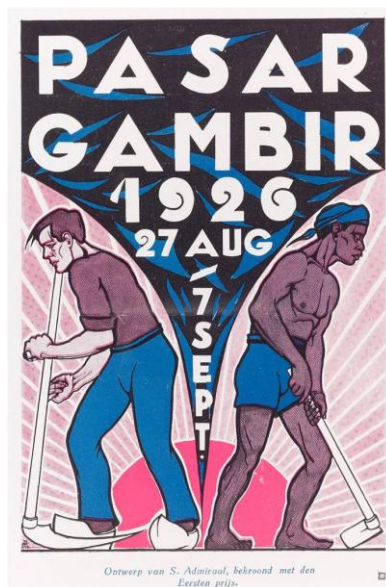


Figure 10. Simon Admiraal. Poster design. 1926.

Source: Grafischtijdschrift. (6) 1926; October.

Moreover, the jury decides to take none of the designs from the competition into production and asks advertising agency Aneta to create a completely new design. Aneta-illustrator Frits van Bemmél makes a new design that is approved by the jury and incorporates both the festive element of the Pasar Gambir as its focus on the artisanal crafts of Indonesia. The Dutch press is very positive about the design, with its striking color, and mysterious silhouettes [24].



Figure 11. Frits van Bemmelen. Advertising poster. 1926

Source: Stadsarchief Rotterdam

Both designs, the one of Admiraal and the one of Van Bemmelen can be considered drawn in the third style of illustrating in the Dutch East Indies, which is more stylized, more art deco. But the most prominent advocator of this style would be Jan Lavies. He is considered the best illustrator in the Dutch East Indies in this period.

The 23-year old Jan Lavies arrives in the Dutch East Indies in 1925. He starts working in Batavia as an advertising illustrator for General Motors, various hotels, different steamboat companies and consumer products. His style is colorful, humoristic and very recognizable.

The advertising press is very impressed by his work and they write a lot about Lavies and his work in *Het Grafisch Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsch - Indië*, a magazine founded in 1917 for people working in the printing business. The magazine is two-linguaged, with articles

in Dutch and Malay.

The Dutch advertising press considers Lavies' work very well suited for the tropics because of his use of bright colors. The bright tropical sun makes even brighter colors necessary. Moreover, bright colors are especially appealing to the Indonesian populace; writes *Het Grafisch Tijdschrift*. They also appreciate humoristic advertisements, an element that the work of Lavies also incorporates [25]. G. G. van der Kop writes on this matter in the colorful language of his day in *De reclame*:

'In het algemeen is de inlander (...) van huis uit artistiek aangelegd en (...) is hij zeer gevoelig voor kleuren en tevens voldoende kinderlijk om het pompeuze en schitterende te appreciëren.

Begrijpelijkerwijze is vooralsnog naturalistische voorstelling der dingen voor hem gewenscht, aangezien de zeer moderne tendenzen die in de Hollandschereclameteekeningen dikwijls tot uiting komen boven zijn bevattingsvermogen gaan.' [26]

[translation: 'In general the indigenous person is naturally artistic and very sensitive to colors, yet childlike enough to appreciate the bombastic and shining. Understandably for now a naturalistic performance of matters is needed, because the very modernistic tendencies in Dutch advertising perhaps go above its understanding.]

The work of Jan Lavies gives a clear example of Van der Kops advice. Lavies uses bright colors and typically Dutch-Indonesian scenes [27]. His work is stylized, but still naturalistic and understandable. Moreover, Lavies' work was appealing to all people living in the Dutch East Indies, the bright colors and well-painted illustrations were as attractive to the westerners as to the indigenous Indonesian populace.



Figure 12. Jan Lavies. Advertising poster. ca. 1931.

Source: Collection Martijn Le Coultre

4.3 Batik style

The advertising illustrators don't just adjust their art to the Indonesian market by depicting typical Indonesian scenes and using bright tropical colors. They also use batik in their poster designs. The main proponent of this style is Pieter

Ducro, a Dutch artist who has been interested in batik since 1902. His teacher, the Dutch designer and painter Chris Lebeau has introduced Ducro to batik. Lebeau has been working with batik for a longer time and has made several book covers in batik. The most famous, or artistic of these is his cover for Louis Couperus' *De Stille Kracht* (1900). A story in the Dutch East Indies about the magical forces that haunt a Dutch family on Java.

After Lebeau has introduced his student Ducro to batik, Ducro is invited by Boeatan, a shop in The Hague specialized in the Indonesian arts and crafts, to travel to the Dutch East Indies to study the art of batik and help to import batik products to the Netherlands. Ducro makes the trip, imports various products for an exhibition of Boeatan and works with batik producers in the female prisons of Semarang and Djokja [28].

Ducro also receives an invite of the Dutch architect P.A.J. Moojen to design furniture in Batavia. Working there further results in more commissions, not only for furniture, also for graphic work in which the influence of batik can easily be detected. Ducro designs book and magazine covers, certificates, bank notes, labels and advertising posters, all in his distinctive batik style [29]

The advertising press notices his work and is impressed by his graphic designs. Ducro is not the only Dutch illustrator

using batik. We can see the batik influence for instance on an advertising poster designed by Wiemans for a convention of the Java Institute in Soerabaja in 1926, but also on the packaging and advertising calendars of the Java Cigarettes in the same year. The director of this company, A. Mac Gillavry, explains that he wants to give the brand a certain cachet and considers the batik motive in different colors most suited. The advertising press is very enthusiastic about this idea, since batik is an indigenous art that all Indonesians, young and old, literate and illiterate know and understand [30].

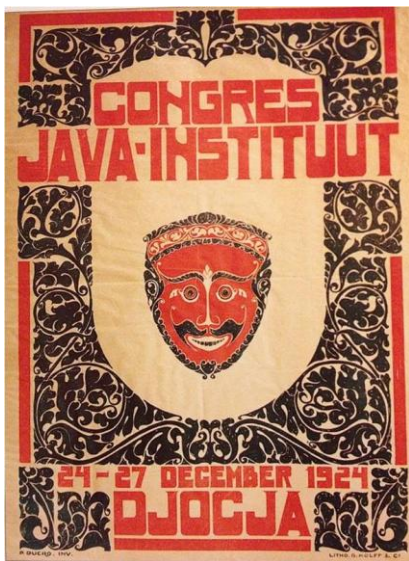


Figure 13. Pieter Ducro. Advertising poster. 1924.

Source: Collection FransHelling

But batik is also appealing to the Europeans that have been living for some time in the Dutch East Indies. Since the 1850's Dutch and Indo-European women

have been interested in batik and have opened their own batik studio for European customers [31]. One of these women is Suze Beynon, a painter, advertising illustrator and book cover designer [32].

Later, in the 1920's modern European ladies practice batik using modern patterns. Batik has now become 'fashionable' advertising magazine *Het Grafisch Tijdschrift van Nederlands-Indië* concludes in 1926 [33].

Batik is also influential in the Netherlands, amongst advertising artists as well. N.P. de Koo and Samuel L. Schwartz for instance occasionally use the Indonesian crafts as a source of inspiration. For the design of the advertising poster for the colonial exhibition in 1914 Albert Hahn Sr. uses the Indonesian arts and crafts as well. For this design Hahn uses a photo of a Javanese bride by Kassian Céphas, the Javanese photographer who worked at the court of the Yogyakarta Sultanate.

Hahn was one of three advertising artists that were asked to make a design for this poster. The other two were Antoon Molkenboer and Jan Rotgans. The design of Hahn was selected and put into print. Moreover, it was very well received by the advertising press and chosen as he best poster design of the year [34]. The journalists are impressed by the Javanese bride, because she personifies on the one hand the old traditional Indonesia,

but on the other also (from a business point of view) the new Indonesia for whom the future has a lot in store [35].

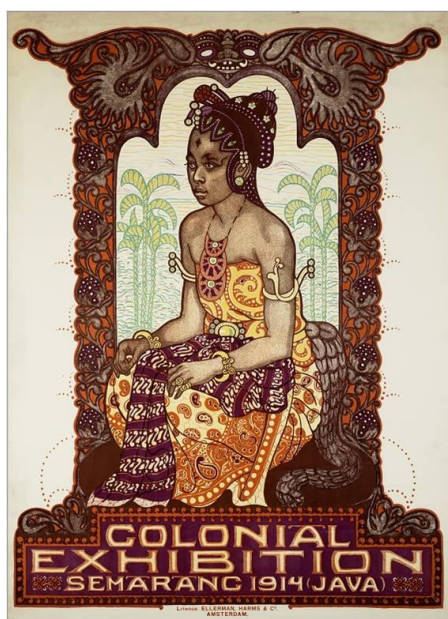


Figure 14. Albert Hahn sr. Advertising poster. 1914.

Source: Reclamearsenaal

The poster is printed in a circulation of 40.000 and distributed in the whole archipelago, but also in the Netherlands and Europe [36]. Next to the advertising poster, Hahn designs several other advertising materials, such as an advertising booklet. This design also emphasizes different aspects of the Indonesian arts and crafts, such as batik, wayang and the masked dance.

The colonial exhibition gave an overview of life in the Dutch East Indies and focuses on colonial management, agriculture, trade, crafts, traffic et cetera. Not only the government was involved,

also the businesses, the crafts and cultural life were represented at the exhibition. For a period of three months (20 August – 22 November 1914) people could visit the exhibition stands in Semarang, they could visit the exhibitions, buy various products, and eat, drink and dance.

6. CONTACT BETWEEN EAST AND WEST

The posters that were made for the steamboat companies, and later, for the airlines have a special place in the Indonesian landscape of poster design. Most of them are not specific Indonesian and follow the usual design that was used for such posters, in effect, depicting a big boat or airplane and showing the route of travel. Cassandre introduced some effects, such as depicting the large steam pipes of the boats that other artists repeated.

In the early twentieth century the shipping company would introduce a new ship with a small model that gets a prominent place in the offices, on exhibitions, fairs, etc. Moreover, the new ship was also painted on canvas. This portrait of the ship was usually the basis for an advertising poster [37]. The 1910 poster of the Stoomvaart Maatschappij Nederland (Steamboot Company of the Netherlands) for instance, depicts the ship SS Rembrandt. It shows the shiny white vehicle in full ornate on sea, navigating through the rough waves, with a bunch of seagulls accompanying

the ship. An advertising poster from 1931 from J.A.W. von Stein also has a prominent place for the ship 'Si bajak' from the company Rotterdamsche Lloyd, as is the same case on the poster for the SMN ship 'Oranje', made by Jean Walther in 1939.



Figure 15. Anonymous. Advertising poster.
1910

Source: Van Sabben Poster Auctions. Hoorn.

Not only the ships are depicted, the route they take also plays an important role in the advertising poster. We can see this on the poster that Jan Lavies made for the Verenigde Nederlandsche Scheepvaartmaatschappij (United Dutch Steamboat company) in 1938. It shows the route the ship will take on the globe. Lavies had designed the poster in a way that allowed the company to draw in other routes and to change the letters in the reflection in the water, so the poster became multifunctional [38].

The steamboat advertisements follow with their focus on ship and route the same design as Europe and elsewhere. Typical for colonial Indonesia are the advertising posters for different target groups, such as the Chinese. These advertisement posters follow the same design, albeit in a different language. An advertising poster of the Java-China-Japan-Lijn (Java China Japan Line) for instance focuses on the passenger ship Tjitjalengka (a ship that was later used by the British as a hospital ship in the war years).



Figure 16. Anonymous. Advertising poster.
ca. 1939-40
Source: KITLV

In the late thirties the steamboat companies introduced special tour tickets that stayed valid for 100 days.

These were especially targeted at tourists, more specifically for family visits [39]. In 1938 the Dutch illustrator Jean Walther created an advertising poster for a 100 day tour ticket of the SMN. On the poster he combined several elements: the ship, a European couple, and a wayang doll, trying to visualize the purpose of the visit of the couple.

Printing for tourism incorporated a lot more Indonesian influences. For instance the brochures that Von Stein illustrated for the Rotterdamsche Lloyd in 1940. But also Jan Lavies made numerous brochures, suitcase labels and other designs for the steamboat companies and hotels in his specific colorful style. The use of bright colors and iconic buildings of Indonesia (such as the Borobodur or the Sumatra stilt houses) were very charming and persuasive.



Figure 17. Jan Lavies. Brochures for hotels. 1925-30.

Source: Martijn Le Coultre

When flying between the Netherlands and the Dutch East Indies and within the Dutch East Indies became possible (starting with the first flight in 1924) the

KLM and the KNILM started to compete with the steamboat companies. As did the steamboat posters, the advertisements for airplanes followed the same plan and depicted large airplanes, and/or the route they had to take. A good example is the advertising poster made by Emile Gaillard in 1931 for the KLM. It shows the globe with the route the plane had to take, almost halfway around the world.

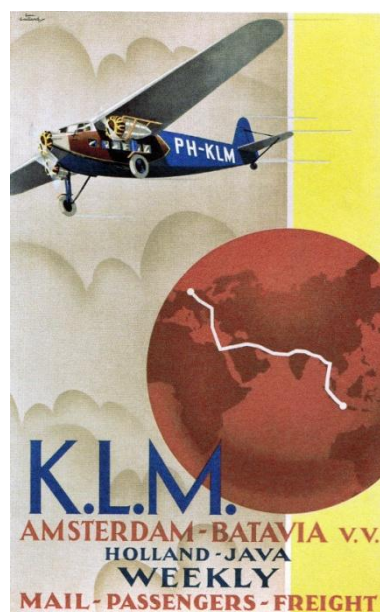


Figure 18. Emile Gaillard. Advertising poster. 1930-35

Source: Reclamearsenaal

The advertising posters for the KNILM are a lot more Indonesian than those of the KLM. Jan Lavies depicts colorful tropical Indonesian landscapes. He worked a lot for this company, but when the KNILM found the illustrator to

expensive, Lavies was satisfied with the offer of flying for free as payment [40]. Contact between the Netherlands and the Dutch East Indies did not only take place by plane and steamboat. From 1928 onward it became possible to make phone calls. These calls at first had to be made from a special telephone studio in the Hague, later different 'cells' became available in the larger cities of the Netherlands and from 1930 it became also possible to make phone calls from your own house [41].

For this new service advertising played an important role on both sides of the world. Most of the time the advertising poster visualized the connection itself and the distance it had to make. Indonesian elements were used frequently, but also the globe was a prominent means (just as in the steamboat and airplane advertisements) to emphasize the distance between the Netherlands and its colony.

The advertising poster of Leo Visser is different. In a collage-type way he combined various typical Dutch and typical Indonesian elements. On the left side we can distinguish tulips, a wind mill, a cow and a church tower. On the right side a wayang doll, palm trees, Indonesian houses and a crocodile. The radio tower that made it possible to communicate between the two worlds has a prominent place in the center.



Figure 19. Leo Visser. Advertising poster.
1933

Source: Van Sabben Poster Auctions. Hoorn.

7. CONCLUSION

There is a lot of contact between the Netherlands and the Dutch East Indies. Various Dutch artists move (for a shorter or longer period) to the Dutch East Indies to work there as an advertising illustrator. Moreover, Dutch advertising agents and other advertising professionals consider the Dutch colony a good opportunity to do business. Dutch brands such as Verkade, Heineken and Philips invest a lot of money in advertising campaigns for the Indonesian public.

In the advertising press, the Indonesian advertising problem is discussed at large. A lot is written on this subject, and the advertising journalists clearly struggle with the difficulty of such a culturally diverse society. The advertising professionals turn this problem around and treat it with tremendous creativity and artistry. Advertising for the

Indonesians, for the westerners and for the Chinese is sometimes done in one single poster, on other occasions the illustrators focuses on one of these groups. This results in a very diverse advertising landscape, not only because of the different languages used, but also in the scenes that were depicted by the artists.

The styles in which the illustrators work vary, and we can discern more or less three different styles. The realistic style is used by Menno van Meeteren Brouwer and Frits van Bommel. They depict realistic and typical Indonesian scenes with which the Indonesian populace, but also the westerners that live and work in the Dutch colony, can identify.

The batik style incorporates typical Indonesian arts and craft elements in its designs. Pieter Ducro is the main proponent of this style and himself a practitioner of batik. Batik was not only popular amongst the indigenous Indonesians, but also 'fashionable' for western ladies and therefore attractive to both target groups.

The colorful art deco tropical style used by Jan Lavies, may still today be the most attractive one of these three. Lavies is considered the best illustrator in this period, and with the amount of work he produced he has made a real mark on advertising in the Dutch East Indies.

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