

## EMPIRICAL REPORT

## 20 Centimeter Per Year: A Visual Pedagogy Method for Participatory Learning

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### ABSTRACT

Debates on alternative education and visual methods in anthropology and the humanities have questioned the dominance of text-based, classroom-centred pedagogy, highlighting instead situated, embodied, and affective forms of learning. Within this discourse, the documentary film *Legiun Tulang Lunak – 20 Centimeter Per Year* emerges as both a research process and a pedagogical experiment. Initiated to mark Hysteria's 20-year journey, the film was developed collaboratively, with the author acting simultaneously as ethnographer and director, providing funding, creative teams, and equipment, thereby shaping a particular configuration of authorship and intervention. Employing participant observation, filming, and interviews, the project examined participants' critical reflections on PekaKota Institute's environmental activism and art-based social critique. Rather than presenting positivistic findings, this empirical report from the ethnographic filming advances methodological insights: visual practice enabled situated learning, affective engagement, and critical reflection that exceeded conventional classroom or textual pedagogies. The film reveals how political awareness and knowledge transmission unfold through embodied, collective, and sensory encounters. These findings contribute to discussions on alternative education, qualitative methodology, and the role of ethnographic film as a critical research practice in the humanities.

**Keywords:** *visual methods; ethnographic film; alternative education; climate change; situated learning; critical pedagogy*

### INTRODUCTION

Conventional educational and research practices, often grounded in textual analysis, formal classroom settings, and positivistic logics of representation, remain limited in capturing the complexity of lived experience, affective dimensions, and the political imagination of subjects (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; St. Pierre, 2011). As qualitative inquiry emphasizes interpretation rather than neutrality, knowledge within such frameworks is produced through abstraction, categorization, and analytical distance that presuppose a separation between researcher and participant, as well as between the knowing subject and the object of knowledge (Giroux, 2011).

As a result, embodied, relational, and situational experiences are frequently reduced to



classifiable data, while emotions, engagement, and the living dynamics of social interaction are marginalized from both learning processes and knowledge production. In educational contexts, this condition leads to pedagogical models that frame learning as the transmission of stable and universal knowledge, rather than as a process that emerges from concrete experience and the social engagement of learners in the worlds they inhabit in everyday life (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; St. Pierre, 2011).

Critiques of such approaches have long been articulated within critical and post-positivist qualitative traditions, particularly in efforts to understand how knowledge is produced through social practices that exceed textual representation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; St. Pierre, 2011). Within this context, visual anthropology emerges as an approach that mobilizes visual media such as photography, film, and design as integral methodological tools to engage with the sensory, performative, and material dimensions of social life (Banks & Ruby, 2011; Pink, 2015). Since the early work of Margaret Mead (1975), who emphasized the importance of using the camera as a research tool to understand human behaviour in everyday contexts, visual practices have been regarded as an integral part of ethnographic work rather than merely supplementary documentation tools. For Mead, the use of visual media in anthropological research enables researchers to capture aspects of social interaction that often escape textual records, particularly gestures, bodily rhythms, and spatial relations that structure everyday life.

Within the tradition of visual ethnography, film therefore does not function merely as a tool for documenting social reality, but as an epistemological medium capable of facilitating ways of thinking and knowing that differ from written text (MacDougall, 1998; 2006). This perspective is further emphasized by Sarah Pink, who conceptualizes visual methods as multisensory and participatory research practices in which visual experience cannot be separated from other sensory dimensions such as sound, movement, and the atmosphere that accompanies social practices (Pink, 2015). In this approach, filmmaking opens possibilities for the production of knowledge that unfolds through interaction, negotiation of meaning, and affective engagement between filmmaker and participants, so that knowledge is understood as something produced collaboratively within particular social situations.

Despite these developments, in methodological and pedagogical debates visual methods are still frequently positioned as supplements or illustrations to textual analysis, which is often considered more academically legitimate (Ruby, 2000; Banks & Ruby, 2011). Ethnographic film is often treated as the “final product” of research rather than as an integral part of the research process itself. Such a view overlooks the potential of film as a methodological practice capable of integrating observation, reflection, and learning within a single, simultaneous process. In educational contexts, this approach opens possibilities for what is referred to as visual pedagogy, namely learning practices that utilize visual media as a means of critical reflection on social experience and as a medium of dialogue between learners and the realities they encounter (Ellsworth, 2005). Visual pedagogy allows learning to take place not only through verbal language, but also through visual representations that are affective and performative.

Within the framework of critical pedagogy, as articulated by Paulo Freire (2005), learning should not be understood as a process of depositing knowledge into students, but rather as a dialogical process that enables critical reflection on the social realities they face. Meanwhile, Jacques Rancière (2009) emphasizes the importance of the distribution of the sensible in the learning

process, suggesting that the ways in which we see and sense the world shape how knowledge is produced and shared. This perspective resonates with the concept of alternative education, which refers to learning practices outside formal institutions that emphasize participation, collaboration, and lived experience as primary sources of knowledge (Biesta, 2010; Giroux, 2011). In this context, filmmaking can be understood as a living pedagogical space in which the production of knowledge unfolds through direct engagement within particular social situations.

This empirical report presents the process of producing the documentary film *Legiun Tulang Lunak – 20 Centimeter Per Year*, in which the author was involved as both director and ethnographic researcher. The film emerged from Hysteria's intention to celebrate twenty years of its journey as an art collective in Semarang, Central Java. The author was approached by Hysteria to produce the film through a collaborative arrangement that included financial support, equipment provision, and human resources contributed by both parties. However, the author was reluctant to produce the film in the format of a purely representational company profile. Instead, the author proposed an approach that allowed greater narrative freedom while still situating the film within the broader framework of celebrating Hysteria's two decades of collective practice. This approach became possible through the author's involvement in a collaborative research project between the Department of Social Anthropology and Cultural Studies at the University of Zurich (ISEK-UZH) and the Department of Anthropology at Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM), which examines alternative education in Indonesia through an anthropological lens. In addition to providing research funding, this collaboration enabled the author to maintain narrative independence and to develop critical reflections on the potential of art collectives as spaces of alternative education.

One important context within this process is PekaKota Institute 2024, an alternative learning program initiated by Hysteria Collective. The program publicly opened registration targeting participants aged 18–24 years old. As a result, most applicants were active university students who spent approximately two months using their afternoons gathering and engaging in discussions outside their formal academic schedules.

Participants in PekaKota Institute were selected through a curatorial process and were required to commit to attending eighteen sessions with instructors from various disciplines. Of the total thirty-eight learning sessions organized within the program, most employed visual methods. The subjects covered include anthropology, literature, product design, visual communication design, urban planning, architecture, and spatial empowerment. Out of the thirty selected participants, only nineteen successfully reached the prototype stage. This stage was reserved for participants who consistently attended the entire series of PekaKota Institute activities, including PekaKota forum discussions, village network meetings, and classroom sessions. Up to this stage, PekaKota Institute had organized thirty-eight material classes, six PekaKota forums, four village network meetings, and ten prototype projects involving village networks and cultural communities.

These ten prototypes took the form of festivals or community-based activities carried out over the course of approximately one month, from July 4 to July 28, 2024. Each participant group, consisting of two individuals, received financial support of IDR 12,000,000 to cover workshop costs, transportation, and consumption during the implementation of their activities. Nevertheless, organizing these festivals still posed several challenges, including coordination difficulties, communication with local community, and the limited timeframe for implementation. Following the program, the author initiated an online discussion with 16 participants, including some who

had not participated in the prototype stage. The participants reflected that:

- “Sometimes the class hours are late, so they clash with college class times.”
- “The materials provided are good and relevant to my major. But even though there are so many class materials, it’s difficult to connect the materials with the prototype or prototyping.”
- “Shocked by the village collaborators who are sometimes there and sometimes not.”
- “The speakers are really cool, it’s a shame there’s only one meeting.”
- “There’s a lack of clarity on how to collaborate with local residents in the village because it hasn’t been organized well.”
- “Creating new village networks, because the proposed prototype locations have apparently never collaborated with Hysteria.”
- “Learning to cut budgets for the prototyping process.”
- “Overall, it opened up new networks for me, I learned how the direct practice and knowledge I learned in college can be applied to the community.”

From the author’s observations, the rhythm of afternoon activities at PekaKota Institute recalls the original meaning of the word school, which derives from *scholē* leisure time devoted to thinking together. In such spaces, learning does not occur through rigid curricula, but through conversation, experimentation, and reflection on experiences shared among participants.

PekaKota Institute also served as a collaborative space for collecting data for the film. The author participated both as a participant and as a guest lecturer in one of the sessions, introducing visual ethnography as a practical research method and screening one of her films to stimulate discussion. From the conversations that emerged, PekaKota Institute can be understood not merely as an educational program, but as a living pedagogical space where knowledge production unfolds through dynamic social interaction. Within this context, the filmmaking process of *Legiun Tulang Lunak – 20 Centimeter Per Year* developed alongside participants who still maintained a certain distance from the core members of the collective, thereby opening possibilities for experience-based learning.

During the production process, the author observed that the issue of climate change frequently appeared in Hysteria’s responses both intentionally and unintentionally particularly in relation to funding strategies involving donor institutions. The title “20 Centimeter Per Year” emerged as a conceptual finding during the film’s research process, referring to the phenomenon of sea-level rise that significantly affects coastal regions in Southeast Asia. In some local contexts, the rate may reach approximately 20 centimetres per year due to a combination of global sea-level rise and land subsidence in coastal urban areas (IPCC, 2022; Nicholls & Cazenave, 2010). It is not coincidental that Semarang, the city where Hysteria is based, lies adjacent to the sea and was historically designed during the Dutch East Indies period as a canal city.

Within this context, art collectives can be understood as non-hierarchical organizations built upon collaboration among individuals to create alternative spaces for the production and distribution of artistic practices outside the mechanisms of the state and the market (Yuliman, 2020; Suryajaya, 2023). Originally formed as a student study group, Hysteria has developed into a kind of social laboratory in which art functions as a medium for experimentation, learning, and even collective failure.



Figure 1. Opening scene for '20 Centimeter Per Year'.

This film project was therefore not positioned merely as documentation of collective activities, but as part of an ongoing process of learning together. The author's involvement in the filmmaking process situates the researcher not as a detached observer, but as a participant engaged in discussions, narrative negotiations, and the framing of issues that emerged during the production process. In this way, filmmaking becomes a space where research, pedagogy, and knowledge production unfold simultaneously.

From the outset, the production of this film developed alongside the pedagogical engagement at PekaKota Institute, where filming, thematic discussions, and critical reflection were intertwined within a single process. The film was not treated as an aesthetic object in itself, but as a methodological practice that enables learning outside formal educational institutions. Consequently, alternative learning spaces such as PekaKota Institute function not only as the setting of the research, but also as sources of knowledge and methodological inspiration within the humanities.

Departing from this context, this empirical report seeks to examine how ethnographic film can function as a visual research method within the context of activism, with PekaKota Institute serving as a case study. Rather than presenting findings as final results, this report offers methodological and pedagogical reflections on the filmmaking process as a form of alternative education. Specifically, the article discusses how filmmaking practices can function as collaborative spaces for experience-based knowledge production, and what methodological contributions they offer to the development of visual methods in the humanities. By examining the filmmaking process as a shared learning practice, this study highlights the potential of visual media not only

as a representational tool, but also as a research method and pedagogical practice capable of connecting lived experience, affect, and political imagination within learning processes.

This article argues that ethnographic filmmaking functions not only as a method of representation but as a situated pedagogical practice that produces knowledge through affective, embodied, and collaborative processes.

## METHOD

### Film as Methodological Practice

This research was conducted in the city of Semarang, Central Java, Indonesia, using a qualitative approach that integrates participant observation and documentary practice. The making of the film *Legiun Tulang Lunak – 20 Centimeter Per Year* functioned simultaneously as a research space and research method, recording the experiences of PekaKota Institute participants from the early classroom stage to the development of prototype projects in the urban villages of Semarang. In this approach, film production is not separated from the research process; rather, it is treated as a methodological practice in which observation, analysis, and reflection unfold simultaneously.

The conceptual framework of this research draws on John Grierson's (1926) definition of documentary as the "creative treatment of actuality." This definition emphasizes that documentary is not a neutral reproduction of reality, but the result of a series of creative decisions that mediate reality. In the context of this research, these creative decisions were not directed toward dramatization, but toward constructing a pedagogical understanding of the alternative learning process taking place within the PekaKota Institute.

Methodologically, this research employed participant observation. Led by the author, the filming process was supported by a team of four members whose film production skills complemented one another and allowed them to substitute for each other when necessary. Each team member assumed multiple roles, including production, camera operation, lighting, sound recording, and editing, while also maintaining specific primary responsibilities. The team composition was designed with consideration for the flexible demands of both the research and production processes, adapting to the dynamics of the subjects in the field. Consequently, if one team member was unable to participate in the research or filming process, their role could be assumed by another member without the need to recruit additional personnel.

The author participated in classroom activities, discussions, and field visits while simultaneously conducting visual recording. However, this involvement evolved through a complex dynamic. Initially, the focus of observation was directed toward the internal dynamics of PekaKota Institute: how participants interpreted the learning materials, interacted with local residents, and formulated prototype projects. As the process unfolded, a need emerged to accommodate the celebration of the twentieth anniversary of Hysteria Collective. As a consequence, several interviewees were not directly involved in the PekaKota Institute program, although efforts were made to connect their experiences with the program.

This situation presented both methodological challenges and new possibilities. Through the participants of PekaKota Institute, the film team was introduced to individuals who had previously collaborated or were still collaborating with Hysteria in various artistic and social initiatives. These networked relationships expanded the research context from the alternative

classroom space to a broader ecosystem of art collectives. As a result, the filmmaking process not only documented the PekaKota program but also traced the institutional memory and networks of solidarity that have shaped the collective's two-decade trajectory.

In its visual practice, this research was inspired by Cristina Grasseni's (2007) concept of skilled vision, which emphasizes that seeing is a socially learned skill embodied through lived experience. The camera thus became a tool for understanding how participants developed new ways of seeing the city, the urban villages, and the issue of climate change. Visual observation was directed toward capturing non-verbal skills gestures, rhythms of work, and spatial reading practices that are difficult to translate into textual form.

Similarly, Sarah Pink (2013) argues that video ethnography allows researchers to convey the tacit, sensory, and emotional dimensions of human experience. Video functions not only as an archive but also as a medium of reflection and communication. The use of video in interdisciplinary research further demonstrates its capacity to bridge experience and analysis (Leder, Mackley & Pink, 2013). In the context of ethnographic film, David MacDougall (1998; 2005) shows that film can build empathetic understanding through situated visual experience.

Another challenge emerged from the fluid conditions of the field: the large number of interviewees, poorly organized archives, and forms of participation that were not always continuous. Many participants joined out of solidarity or to make use of their spare time, which meant that the continuity of engagement was not always stable. Activity schedules in the *kampung* (villages) were often arranged spontaneously, requiring the four-person film team to develop adaptive strategies. In situations where the author could not be present, a participatory filmmaking approach was adopted. Participants documented their own activities, which were later analysed and, when necessary, reconstructed through collective discussion.

The selection of PekaKota exploration sites was based on accessibility, historical value, and the social significance of the *kampung*. The pilot program was implemented in areas that had long been part of their network. Learning methods included observation, interviews, literature study, and abstraction derived from interactions with local residents (Adhiguna 2024). Interventions were conducted in a limited manner, with the aim of negotiating shared realities rather than transforming local culture. This process aligns with the understanding that social categories including youth and participation are constructive and culturally evolving (Tobin & Henward, 2014).

Decisions regarding framing, rhythm, sound, and narrative structure were guided by pedagogical objectives rather than by the completeness of representation. Scenes of confusion, debate, and prototype failure were intentionally retained to demonstrate that learning unfolds through uncertainty. Analysis did not occur only after the completion of data collection, but throughout the entire production process from filming and review to editing.

Part of the shooting process took place during a political campaign period, as the team documented activities in an urban village during the prototyping festival. Hysteria had invited local government representatives to attend the festival's opening, which featured a traditional coastal ceremony. However, without the knowledge or consent of Hysteria, local residents, nor the PekaKota Institute team, one of the invited local government staffs, who was also running as a legislative candidate, introduced campaign attributes into the event. These were inevitably captured on camera, with party flags clearly visible in the footage.

As the ceremony was part of an annual community tradition and could not be repeated, this situation created an ethical and representational dilemma. The team ultimately chose to remove the campaign attributes during editing. This decision highlights that documentary film is not a neutral record, but a site of negotiation, where ethical and pedagogical considerations shape how reality is represented and interpreted.

Ethical considerations included ongoing participant consent, negotiation of authorship, and sensitivity to the politics of visibility, particularly when recording coastal areas vulnerable to ecological stigmatization. The film was positioned as the outcome of reflective collaboration rather than as a single institutional representation. In this sense, the research method affirms that film is not merely a medium of documentation, but an epistemological arena where observation, participation, analysis, and learning are intertwined simultaneously.

### **Methodological Reflection**

In the production process of *Legiun Tulang Lunak – 20 Centimeter Per Year*, the author found that film functions not only as documentation of the activities of Hysteria Collective, but also as a form of situated learning, as conceptualized by Lave and Wenger (1991). Within PekaKota Institute, the regeneration of knowledge takes place through the direct involvement of participants in classes, discussion forums, and the development of *kampung*-based prototypes. Knowledge is not transferred linearly from speakers to participants; rather, it is constructed through practical and social negotiation.

As part of the observation process, the author witnessed how students from various disciplines, including architecture, literature, anthropology, and design, interacted with local community residents and more experienced members of Hysteria. The film captures moments when participants attempt to translate theory into action, confront confusion, and learn to adjust their working rhythm to the social rhythms of local residents. The camera records fragmented dialogues, improvisation, and expressions of hesitation, emphasizing that learning unfolds through uncertainty, mistakes, and collective reflection.

The editing process also became an analytical stage. Interview transcripts from twenty-eight interviewees were grouped into several subthemes, namely: collectivity, urban history, methods, regeneration, and pedagogical praxis. The author intentionally foregrounded a “collective character” rather than highlighting particular individuals, thereby presenting solidarity as a social relationship rather than as personal ownership. This demonstrates how film can function as a collective pedagogical subject, reinforcing the idea that learning and regeneration occur through interactions situated within real social contexts.

### ***Affect, Embodiment, and the Politics of Representation***

The issue of sea-level rise in Tambakrejo becomes the central narrative node of the film. Scientific evidence, including findings from the *IPCC Sixth Assessment Report (2023)*, indicates that global mean sea level continues to rise at an accelerating rate, measured in millimetres per year. Yet during the research process, the phrase *20 Centimeters Per Year* emerged through discussions with an invited lecturer at PekaKota Institute, an urban governance scholar and practitioner, who employed the expression as a way of communicating the lived implications of coastal transformation in Southeast Asia.<sup>1)</sup> While not intended as a direct scientific measurement, the phrase became a

conceptual lens through which participants interpreted the interconnected realities of sea-level rise, land subsidence, and environmental vulnerability. The contrast between scientific data and local experience became central to the film's narrative. Statistics acquired affective meaning as the author witnessed houses gradually becoming submerged and heard the roar of the sea at close range. In this sense, the film does not simply translate scientific information into visual form; it explores how environmental knowledge is produced through the encounter between expert discourse and embodied experience.

An artistic response emerges through the practice of Yudha Fehung, an artist and collaborator of Hysteria who frequently participates as an artist-in-residence and speaker in programs initiated



**Figure 2.** Yudha Fehung's artwork in Tambakrejo.



**Figure 3.** Yudha Fehung and Wucha Wulan Dari's artwork in Tambakrejo.

by the collective. The collage of stacked ladders that he created is not merely an aesthetic object, but a symbol of the vertical adaptation strategies of coastal communities. When the author requested that the collage be printed and reconstructed on-site using piles of waste, the action became a visual intervention that brought together art, ecology, and social critique. At the same time, this moment also revealed the limits of intervention: a long-standing member of Hysteria who had maintained a sustained relationship with the residents took over the discussion, highlighting the importance of long-term engagement in building solidarity and social legitimacy, much like in ethnographic research.

The affective dimension of the film also appears in the responses of PekaKota participants to the learning process. In an online reflection forum initiated by the author after the program ended, participants expressed a range of affects, such as enthusiasm, confusion, fatigue, and pride. These forms of affect are difficult to reduce to evaluative reports, but through film, they appear visually through gazes, tones of voice, laughter, and moments of silence. Film becomes a medium through which affective experiences can be collectively revisited, expanding the viewer's empathetic capacity (MacDougall, 1998; 2006).

The politics of representation also emerges as an important theme. Some viewers considered the film's 51-minute duration and the complexity of ecological issues to be challenging, raising questions about how far the complexity of reality should be condensed for the sake of audience comfort. The author, as a director, chose to retain the structure of the film: ten minutes of collective historical flashback followed by forty minutes portraying Hysteria in the present because the pedagogical goal was to demonstrate continuity and contemporary dynamics rather than nostalgia alone.

### ***Collective Reflection through Screenings and Discussions***

Film screenings revealed that the process itself constitutes a method of research. Following Freire's (2005) dialogical pedagogy, reflection emerges from an egalitarian dialogue between filmmaker and audience. The film operates across three layers of reflection: internal reflection on collective memory and history, pedagogical reflection within visual anthropology, transnational reflection on the sustainability of art collectives.

Since the completion of production and the writing of this report, the film has been screened in 35 locations in Indonesia, 5 locations in Asia, and 1 location in Switzerland, when the author participated in the final workshop of the UZH–UGM collaborative research project. This circulation expands the function of the film from research artefact into a space for dialogue across contexts.

The first screening was conducted internally with members and collaborators of Hysteria as well as participants of PekaKota Institute. The initial responses largely consisted of nostalgia and participatory evaluation: some participants felt that many stories had not yet been accommodated. However, the author emphasized that the film functions as a trigger for collective memory, rather than as a complete historical archive.

Screenings at the University of Zurich (UZH) generated different responses. During the workshop at UZH, discussions opened possibilities for the author to further explore an initial idea concerning the moral and political transformations that participants of PekaKota Institute may experience during the program. As a author, understanding the dynamics of the PekaKota Institute, now entering its third year, still requires time, sustained engagement, and deeper reflection. A

more comprehensive analysis also requires continued closeness with participants in order to observe more clearly the kinds of transformations that may occur among the 30 young people involved in the program.

The focused discussion at UZH also revealed a perspective that the author had not fully recognized before: that the filmmaking process itself can be understood as part of an alternative educational practice emerging from personal research experience. The processes of data collection, film production, and the emergence of critical perspectives during the research formed a learning dynamic experienced not only by the participants but also by the author. The insights generated during the discussion strengthened the author's decision to frame the filmmaking process as part of an alternative educational practice within the field of visual anthropology.

Travel notes from Hysteria's team during their Asian tour screening bringing the film *20 Centimeter Per Year* reveal several interesting observations. The film also functions as a medium for exchanging experiences among collectives across Southeast Asia. At Baan Noorg Collaborative Arts and Culture in Thailand, discussions largely focused on strategies for collective sustainability: how Hysteria has managed to maintain its network for two decades and how it navigates fluctuations in youth participation (Khairudin et al., 2026).

Meanwhile, a different situation emerged in Hanoi, Vietnam. Collaborating communities there explained that establishing a collective in Vietnam can be quite complicated because it requires official permission from the government; without such authorization, collective activities may be considered illegal. This situation contrasts with Indonesia, although in recent years there have been emerging efforts by the government to gather information from online-based media, particularly those related to political issues.

These questions and experiences can be encountered through the film, which also provides references for collective communities rooted in social movements to continue sustaining their activities and practices. For twenty years, Hysteria has actively contributed to various issues through its diverse networks. This screening shows that the film functions as a transnational epistemic space. This experience offers an alternative way of imagining how a community can influence the social ecosystem around it.

### ***Simplifying Visual Methods and Alternative Education***

One important finding concerns how Hysteria consistently simplifies visual methods, from zine production to artistic recording practices. Their practice emphasizes subjective interpretation. Hananingsih Widhiasri, a sketch artist and graphic designer who joined Hysteria in 2019 as a volunteer and now serves as the coordinator of one of Hysteria's programs, ArtLab, was also a speaker at PekaKota Institute. She understands artistic recording as a process of harvesting: using all the senses to capture an object, reflect upon it, and produce interpretation. Aesthetic standards are not the primary priority; what matters is the ability of the work to help audiences understand a moment or discourse.

This approach reinforces the idea that alternative education does not need to be bound to formal standards. PekaKota Institute have become a laboratory of collaboration across generations and institutions, where local potential is prioritized and sustainable change becomes possible through the roles of each participant. Yudha Fehung's practice strengthens this principle: collage and artistic intervention not merely as visual works, but pedagogical tools that enable participants

to think critically, experiment, and interact concretely with social issues.

As an ethnographer, the author observes that film does not merely record this process; it becomes part of it. Film brings together experience, affect, and reflection within a shared space. In this way, film operates as both a visual research method and a living pedagogy, generating regeneration, building solidarity, and opening political imagination within youth-led social movements.

### ***Film as a Living Visual Pedagogy***

From these reflections, the author concludes that film in this research functions not merely as representation but as a living methodological practice. Film records situated learning, presents affect and embodiment, and creates spaces for collective reflection across contexts. The production and circulation of the film are themselves part of the pedagogical process, in which knowledge does not end with academic texts but continues through discussion, critique, nostalgia, and collective strategies. The visual pedagogy that emerges is not a fixed model but an ongoing process of negotiation. Film becomes an alternative learning space a place where solidarity, critique, and political imagination are brought together and tested collectively.



**Figure 4.** The poster film of '20 Centimeter Per Year'.

## **CONCLUSION**

The process of producing *Legiun Tulang Lunak – 20 Centimeter Per Year* highlights the complexity of the author's dual position as both filmmaker and researcher. As director, the author made narrative decisions, determined visual framing, and shaped the rhythm of editing that directly influenced the representation of PekaKota Institute participants and the trajectory of Hysteria Collective. As a researcher, the author recognizes that every creative decision carries epistemological consequences: film is not merely a passive medium for recording reality, but an arena in which the author actively interprets, prioritizes, and even negotiates participants' experiences. This awareness demands critical reflection on the limitations of the research, including the possibility of bias, the selection of particular moments, and the impact of subjectivity on the construction of collective narratives.

The collaborative process, although valuable, also revealed continuous negotiations between the authority of the filmmaker and the agency of participants. Throughout the project, the author had to balance pedagogical needs, collective expectations, and the diverse desires of participants while simultaneously responding to logistical constraints and inconsistent participation. In several instances, participants were encouraged to document their own experiences through participatory filming practices; however, the final editorial decisions ultimately remained with the author. This reflection also led to the realization that the initial methods applied as a collaborator were not always fully aligned with the participants' actual needs. Rather than simply adapting to collective agendas or the author's research objectives, visual pedagogy requires creating space for

participants to explore their own potential, articulate experiences, and construct narratives on their own terms. This tension reveals a methodological paradox within ethnographic filmmaking: the process can simultaneously empower and limit participants' voices because their experiences continue to be mediated through the positionality, knowledge hierarchy, and interpretive authority of the researcher.

At the same time, film proved capable of capturing embodied and tacit dimensions that are difficult to access through text alone. The camera and the editing process became media of reflection that bring gestures, expressions, and affect into the realm of knowledge production. The documentation of *Hysteria* demonstrates how the collective operates in flexible, adaptive, and often 'militant' ways in navigating the fluctuations of participation, while integrating artistic practice into everyday life and local environmental concerns. Film therefore does not merely record these dynamics; it also shapes collective experience through creative processes and interactions with audiences.

Ultimately, this experience affirms that ethnographic filmmaking within the context of alternative education is a simultaneous, ambiguous, and reflexive practice. It highlights the complex relationships between researcher, participants, and medium, while opening space for a critical and participatory visual pedagogy. *20 Centimeter Per Year* demonstrates that film is not simply a complement to research or education, but a generative space where learning, knowledge, and political imagination intertwine while simultaneously demanding critical awareness from the researcher regarding their own role and influence within the process. This study contributes to visual anthropology by positioning film as a site where research, pedagogy, and political imagination converge.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The author would like to express sincere gratitude to *Hysteria* Collective and the Semaya Studio team for their collaboration, trust, and support throughout the filmmaking and research process of *Legiun Tulang Lunak – 20 Centimeter Per Year*. Their openness, collective spirit, and willingness to share experiences made this research and film production possible.

The author also extends appreciation to the Department of Anthropology, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Gadjah Mada University, and the Institute of Social Anthropology and Empirical Cultural Studies (ISEK), University of Zurich, for facilitating the research process and providing the academic environment in which this work could be developed and presented.

Special thanks are dedicated to Pujo Semedi Hargo Yuwono for recommending and encouraging the author to join the bilateral research initiative on alternative education in Indonesia. The author is also deeply grateful to the mentors and supervisors who guided the research and writing process with critical insight and generosity: Thomas Stodulka, Annisa Sabrina Hartoto, Molly Fitzpatrick, and Wahyu Kuncoro. Their intellectual support, reflections, and encouragement greatly shaped the development of this study.

Finally, the author thanks all PekaKota Institute participants, collaborators, and communities who contributed their time, experiences, and trust during the fieldwork and filmmaking process.

## ENDNOTES

- 1) Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. (2023). *Climate change 2023: Synthesis report. Contribution of Working Groups I, II and III to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*. IPCC. <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/syr/>

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