



□ Dominik: Digital Media Artist □

Dominik calls himself a digital media artist. What, you may ask, is that? Well, it's someone who produces amorphous entities like CD-roms, videos, photographic images, websites and other digital products. It is an emerging breed of artist which enhances traditional fields through computer aided manipulations.

Dominik and his kind are steeped in the culture of computers, information technology and virtual reality. No trees are harmed in this business which zips data through the air or stores it in invisible binary notations.

Austrian by birth, over the past 13 years Dominik has seamlessly adapted to life in Indonesia, even to the point of giving up the famous frothy brew of his homeland for Indonesia's bitter pilsner, Bintang. As for his choice of cigarette, he smokes the brand of the person sitting closest to him.

His wife, employees, eating and dressing habits are all Indonesian and, like most Indonesians, he uses just one name. Actually, he prefers to be called simply "D" and insists for some mysterious reason that it be written with an exclamation mark.

Bali was the first place in Indonesia Dominik visited, taking immediately to the island and its inimitable lifestyle. Though

it would take another 10 years before he would reach his goal, it was on Bali where he first dreamed of designing and building his own home.

For three years he traveled all over Indonesia, visiting a total of 20 out of Indonesia's 27 provinces. He embarked on an exhaustive 800-kilometer bicycle journey through Sumatra, at one point becoming lost in the jungles of Lampung.

I first met him two years ago during a shoot on the vast estate of the textile giant Texmaco in the industrial hinterlands of east Jakarta. I was assigned the job of providing content for a website under construction, while Dominik had the task of designing and marketing the website. I was struck by his energy and powers of persuasion. Pacing to and fro, I saw him transfix a room of executives with his intense green eyes and fluent Indonesian spoken with a broad Jakartan accent.

During a 7 year stint as the IT Manager for a large multinational chemical firm in West Java, he frequently visited Bali where his circle of friends grew and his search for land on which to build widened. Although he liked the fixed income, he eventually became bored with the monotonous working hours and resolved to somehow combine his computer technology skills with his creative urges to make his own living.

In the year 2000 Dominik founded his digital services company and started building his home on Bali. Surviving the dot-com crash when similar companies all around him were failing, Dominik over the next several years propelled his firm, bd-zok (www.bd-zok.com <<http://www.bd-zok.com>>), into the top rank of Indonesia's multimedia and digital art houses.

His company caters mainly to multinational clients, predominantly industries such as textiles, chemical and mining. Industrial photography is particularly challenging.

"I love making an old rusty factory look slick and high-tech. There are no rules. You have to create images that a client wants or needs rather than just taking technically competent or artsy pictures. Photos must communicate a defined purpose, a sales message. Every situation requires a different approach."

Over the last several years Dominik has been concentrating on commercial and advertising photography, having been commissioned by such businesses as Bali Deli, Animale, Kuni's Japanese Restaurant, Khaima Moroccan Restaurant and Hotel Tugu. He claims he can guarantee 20-25 publishable shots because he shoots literally hundreds for seven or eight hours straight.

Although these provide his bread and butter, his real passions are the creative aspects of the business. Dominik still spends considerable time in his studio and even released a ambient music CD "re:compilations" under the spacey RHYTHMSCOPE label in 2002, created entirely on computers.

With uncharacteristic modesty, Dominik does not wish to publicize his musical achievements ("I don't want to expose myself as a musician."). Perhaps it is for this same reason that he doesn't want people to know where he lives, choosing to remain a cyber entity living in his secluded villa on the coast of southern Bali.

When in Bali he spends most of his time roaming the island on his motorcycle in search of the next big shoot or relaxing at home with his family. Rather than swaying lazily in a hammock in the garden, you will more often find him working on his notebook computer at poolside, interrupting himself now and again to talk urgently on his handphone.

True to his contrary nature, the extravagant circular wood and stone structure in which he lives is closer in appearance to a geodesic dome or a Mongolian yurt than it is to any architectural style existing in the archipelago.

Like the offbeat house and one-of-a-kind business he has built, there is nothing ordinary about this energetic European émigré who resolutely grafted his dream and his work firmly onto Balinese soil.

Dominik can be reached by contacting dominik@bd-zok.com. His company's website is www.bd-zok.com <<http://www.bd-zok.com>> and his photographic portfolio can be seen at www.bd-zok.com/photo/ <<http://www.bd-zok.com/photo/>> .