
An Indonesian Experience

by Wahyu Handayani

L'auteure décrit les expériences particulières qui sont le propre des personnes handicapées en Indonésie.

I realized that I was different from the others in elementary school. After school hours it was the custom for students to shake hands with their class teacher and say "good afternoon." One day my fifth class teacher did not allow me to shake her hand. I thought hard along my way home about why she did not want me to do that. Was it because of my bad hand? My right hand has a normal thumb but the fingers have been amputated. When I was a year old, I put my right hand into boiling water.

I did not understand. She was a nice teacher and she was very kind to me. When I grew older I understood. An Indonesian woman who is pregnant worries about meeting a person with a disability because they are afraid their baby will become disabled too. I remembered my class teacher was pregnant at that time.

The main thing is that I have a good family. My father supported me in every way. He told me many stories about peo-

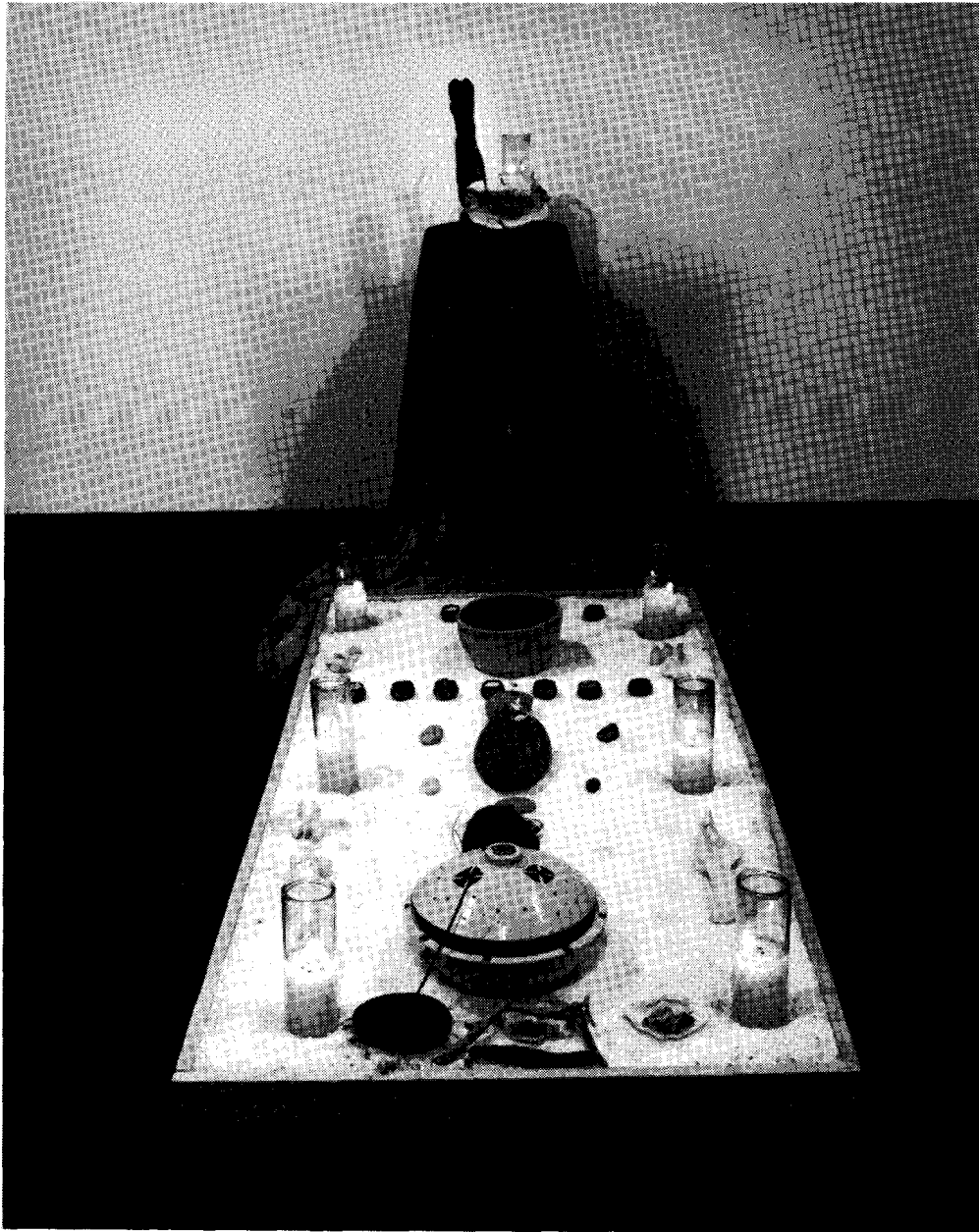
ple with disabilities and their successes. My father gave me my spirit.

When I'm looking for a job, I find many times I am rejected because of my disability. Although I meet difficult situations like this I never stop trying. As my father said, "Where there is a will, there is a way."

One day I was called for an interview. I felt that as usual I would not be a success but I was very surprised. I met a person who is a great supporter of people with disabilities. He hired me and said there is no special consideration for me as a person with a disability because if I have the ability to do the job, I am the same as the others. Thank God there are those who give spirit and support to people with disabilities.

Wahyu Handayani works for cuso in Jakarta, Indonesia.

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Winsom, "Imani (Faith)," *Head Above the Water—Four Aspects*, 1993. Multimedia Installation.

My Life is my Art—my Art is my Life. Keeping my head above the water involves the four aspects that I use in living my life: Matumaini (Hope), Imani (Faith), Furaha (Joy) and Kutakata (Be Clear—Clarity). They usually intertwine or hopscotch around. I am always Hoping for things to change—the world, my life/art, etc. I have Matumaini in the children and myself. My Imani never leaves me, sometimes it gets off course, but it's always there with me. I believe in the Great Spirit and that I am part of that spirit and that the Great Spirit is part of me and the universe. My Imani in the Ancestors and this universe keeps my Altars alive and living. There is no doubt that if it wasn't for the Furaha my Art would be dead thus I would be too. The Furaha my children and other children give to me is endless. Kutakata of my mind's eye is essential for my work, my life. Keeping a clear mind helps me to see ways of making sure that I keep producing Art as a Black woman.

Winsom's work has been installed and included in numerous exhibits across the continent. She also sits on Advisory Committees on Race Relations, participates in forums, teaches art to young people, and sits on art juries.