

Visual Contemporary Painting Based on The Visual Appropriation of Abhimanyu's Death

Ida Bagus Rekha Bayutha¹, I Wayan Karja², I Wayan Mudana³
Institut Seni Indonesia Denpasar

Nusa Indah Street, Sumerta, Denpasar, Bali 80235

¹rekhabayutha@isi-dps.ac.id, ²wayankarja@isi-dps.ac.id, ³wayanmudana63@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The concept of visual appropriation involves using elements borrowed from others to create a work of art. In this research, appropriation entails utilizing images and narrative context from various sources to depict Abhimanyu's death on the 13th day of the Bharatayuda war. This article explains the method for creating the visual appropriation of Abhimanyu. The process of creating visual appropriation is based on exploring, designing, and realizing craft arts, incorporating digital sketching, manipulation, media and technique discovery, *imprimatura*, collage, cropping, coloring, and finishing. The creation process involves identifying visual forms and their relationship to current phenomena and adding new meanings that alter the original context. The aim of creating contemporary painting is to make young people aware of the challenges or obstacles of the current situation and the need to develop strategies to deal with them. Resulting works aim to juxtapose visual references to provoke thought and reinterpretation of their meaning for the audience.

Keywords: Appropriation, Abhimanyu, Contemporary, Juxtaposition

INTRODUCTION

The role of local values in the post-modern context has led to a re-evaluation of traditional values in light of the modernity we embrace today. There is a tendency to revisit narrative elements, techniques, and philosophical values from traditional sources. Artists are not only capable of reinterpreting these values but can also challenge established myths and transform their meanings to create new works of art. This artistic practice is commonly known as appropriation. According to Robert S. Nelson (in Effendy, 2007), appropriation involves "taking over" existing elements. In Western art, appropriation often involves the use of borrowed imagery, drawings, and styles from art history or popular culture, as well as materials and techniques

from non-art domains (Effendy, 2007). Appropriation in art refers to the practice of reinterpreting existing objects or paintings with new concepts and ideas. This term, often associated with "equalization," is frequently discussed in the context of fine art as well as contemporary culture (Wibowo, 2019). Appropriation not only encompasses visual borrowing but also historical aspects and the context of the era. For example, this can be seen in the works of artists such as Banksy, who appropriated Monet's painting "Japanese Footbridge and the Water Lily Pool, Giverny" (1899) similarly, Made Muliana's painting "Bayak" titled "Bali Legacy" (2015) addresses the degradation of contemporary culture by using plastic materials and silhouettes of Balinese dancers in his work. In conclusion,

the definition of appropriation in the arts requires revisiting its origins, as Mix (2015) discusses in "Appropriation and the Art of the Copy." The book offers a broader context for the postmodern phenomenon of appropriation by tracing the history of copying, from its roots in academic artistic education to its modern interpretations. It provides a framework for understanding how art history, criticism, theory, and practice have documented the evolving role of copying, transitioning from an educational technique for academically trained artists to a conceptual tool and, potentially, an activist intervention. It is also important to note that the concept of appropriation discussed here is distinct from cultural appropriation, which is related to the misuse or misrepresentation of cultural elements. Cultural appreciation involves something that 'already exists,' meaning that the appreciation carried out is intended to record the artistic characteristics of an object without having to evaluate it and is related to anything that already exists on the object (Cattien & Stopford, 2022). Fauzi (2023) also explains that cultural appropriation is both inevitable and tied to cultural politics. This cannot be separated from the processes of assimilation and exploitation of marginalized and colonized cultures, which involve the survival of subordinate cultures and their resistance to the dominant culture (Fauzi, 2023). Other articles, like Abdurrahman (2018), confirm that the process of cultural appreciation may include the introduction of forms of dress or jewelry, music, art, religion, language, or social behavior. These elements are 'removed' from the original culture, and what is attached is a transformation of meaning that is significantly different from what it was when it first came into existence (Abdurrahman, 2018). The use of

visual appropriation in later works is not driven by a desire to appropriate a specific culture or its distinct characteristics. Nor is it merely an attempt to represent something preexisting, such as an expression of appreciation, as previously explained. Instead, the appropriation involves drawing from traditional painting imagery while simultaneously incorporating the narratives of the epic figures portrayed in the story.

Based on the explanation above, the idea for creating painting art was born in the form of "Visual Appropriation of The Death of Abhimanyu as a Basis for the Creation of Contemporary Painting." The creation of the painting art that will be carried out will be based on several visuals that tell the story of Abhimanyu's death based on stories from the epic Mahabharata and Bharatayuda's *kekawin*. In Indonesia, epic tales are often presented through puppetry, specifically in the form of *wayang kulit*. Unlike the Indian version, Indonesian wayang incorporates an expansion of the main narrative known as *carangan*. One notable example is the story of Abhimanyu's death, which has been adapted into a special performance in Indonesia titled *Abhimanyu Ranjab*. This play is part of the Javanese wayang series Bharatayudha and focuses on Abhimanyu's tragic demise during the conflict between the Pandavas and the Kurawas (Alfiyah, 2024). Briefly, the story of Abhimanyu's death is told on the 13th day of the Bharatayuda war, namely the war between the Kauravas and Pandavas, where Abhimanyu entered a war formation called *chakrabyuha* or *padmabyuha* to protect his uncle and future king of Hastinapura, Yudistira. However, unfortunately, Abhimanyu did not understand how to get out of the formation, and when he managed to enter the core of the formation,

Abhimanyu encountered a group attack by many knights. Even though Abhimanyu is said to have continued to fight and even succeeded in defeating several knights, in the end, he was still helpless in resisting the continuous attacks, and it ended with the young knight falling into tragic circumstances.

Appropriation is used as a visual language to re-narrate the story of Abhimanyu's death to make young people aware of the challenges or obstacles of the current situation and the need to develop strategies to deal with them. Therefore, several news references are used to explain the global challenges faced by young people today and how this creation offers a look back at past stories through visuals of Abhimanyu's death to extract values by packaging them in a perceived context relevant. Especially because the position of young people today as the vanguard is still being implemented, as stated by Hidayatullah (2021), "Respon dan Peran Generasi Muda Dalam Agenda Perubahan Iklim" that the young generation is often said to be an agent of change. This is meant because of how big the contribution of the young movement is in an incident. The younger generation, which has a large number of members, should be able to contribute to helping improve the climate change that is currently occurring. Through expression, the work is expressed in postmodern visual language, namely using idioms related to pastiche, as stated by Jameson in *Postmodernism and Society* (1998), is a term such as parody, imitation of a typical style, idiosyncratic, the use of linguistic masks, or speech in a dead language. The use of this idiom is based on the tendency to display visuals that are appropriate in the desired context. In the design stage, image stitching or montage

is used with the help of technological methods. In the final work, the montage is based on the concept of juxtaposition, comparing visuals by artists such as Pan Seken and Ida Bagus Gelgel with opposing or different visuals. The goal is to convey double meanings and provoke questions about the purpose of the images. These visuals are meant to give the audience space to contemplate and reinterpret the visual presence and its surrounding meaning.

METHOD

The creation of art involves a necessary method that serves as a bridge to guide the artist through the process of becoming. A method can also be interpreted as a way or a series of steps taken to solve a problem that has been formulated, according to Patriansah & Yulius (in Alsah et al., 2024). Patriansah describes methodology as the study of the methods or steps used to analyze something new (Patriansah et al., 2021). In this article, the attached method refers to a creative process that encompasses specific stages, each containing essential information and techniques required for the production of a painted artwork. This creation method is based on Gustami SP. theory, as described in "Butir-butir mutiara estetika timur : ide dasar penciptaan seni kriya Indonesia" (2007). In the methodological context, Gutami explains three stages of art creation: exploration, design, and realization, which can be further broken down into six steps: exploration, exploring the theoretical basis, designing, visualization of ideas, realization, and assessment or evaluation. The author develops stages that align with their work process and are influenced by the techniques and work processes of other artists. For instance, the coloring process may be inspired by traditional



Balinese artists, and identifying the spirit of today's era may be inspired by the process of translating current phenomena into a visual language used by artists like Mangku Muriati. These stages become characteristics in later creations but are tailored to the author's process. The process involves stages such as exploration, including (1) extracting reference sources, (2) personal experience, and (3) identifying the Spirit of Today's Age. In the design stage, the process involves (1) sketching and digital manipulation, (2) discovering the medium and technique, and the forming process including 1. *imprimatura*, 2. collage, 3. cropping, 4. coloring, and 5. distressing/finishing.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

The appropriation process in the work involves visual language as a reference object and critical reflection used as a reference in displaying current conditions. The visual here is intended as an appropriated reference object; therefore, this visual object is related to the visual of Abhimanyu's death. The process involved in this article is as said by Ariyanti & Astawa (2023): Appropriation painting itself is a painting that borrows the work of other artists to be used as an example in creating a new work. Therefore, the process of imitation is not done by copying the work of other artists but rather by adding something different and latest according to personal characteristics. In addition to adding something new and different, critical reflection is carried out to find correlations and interpret the spirit of the times as it relates to the reference object of appropriation and the theme to be raised. See Table 1, which explains the objects used as references and the interpretation of these objects in the spirit of today's era.

Table 1. Abhimanyu Appropriation Scheme

| Visual | Critical reflection |
|--|--|
|  <p data-bbox="818 544 1075 705">This visual object is intended as an object to be appropriated. One of the works used is Pan Seken's (1930s) <i>The Death of Abhimanyu</i> which is understood from a narrative and figuration perspective.</p> |  <p data-bbox="1086 544 1358 750">Critical reflection here is intended to explore meanings that are in accordance with the spirit of the times rather than appropriated visual references. Events such as war and violence are seen as having a correlation with the visual of Abhimanyu's death from Pan Seken's work.</p> |

Visual Critical reflection

This visual object is intended as an object to be appropriated. One of the works used is Pan Seken's (1930s) *The Death of Abhimanyu* which is understood from a narrative and figuration perspective.

Critical reflection here is intended to explore meanings that are in accordance with the spirit of the times rather than appropriated visual references. Events such as war and violence are seen as having a correlation with the visual of Abhimanyu's death from Pan Seken's work.

Visual sources used as references for appropriation draw from traditional Balinese paintings with their puppetry style. The distinctive characteristics of these visuals are, of course, still based on the narrative power of the *kekawin* stories often sung during ceremonies in Bali, which greatly influence each painter's interpretation in their visual form. Therefore, the process of visual manifestation heavily depends on how painters understand the existing narrative, as conveyed by Purwita (2021) through "Ngedum Karang, Jajar Wayang, and Ceraki." During the work process, Kamasan puppet painters face a flat surface. Narrative paintings are created when the painter comprehends the plot of

a text; by understanding the storyline, the painter sorts out the parts one by one to distill the core of the story, which is usually complicated, to preserve the philosophy or *tattwa* of the core narrative. Understanding characters and characterization, along with grasping the story and its philosophy or *tattwa*, are essential requirements for a Kamasan puppet painter. Thus, the complexity of Balinese artists' minds emerges, prioritizing not only visuals but also the alignment between visuals and philosophy following creative ideas. Through the approach of contemporary painting, the author can explore various approaches that are indeed different and unique, as contemporary painting is generally recognized as a form of art evolving in the present. Understanding contemporary painting involves studying its history and development; broadly, contemporary painting evolves according to its era and is also seen as a form of art that dissolves the boundaries between artistic expressions. Certainly, this creation involves a method with a series of stages that must be followed to produce a painting based on the visuals of Abhimanyu's death. The following explains each stage that needs to be navigated.

A. Exploration

The Exploration Stage is the initial step in the creative process. This stage involves a series of lengthy processes and does not happen quickly. It requires persistence in conducting various investigations and discoveries related to the subject of study. At this stage, the process begins by formulating reasons for revisiting and appropriating the story of the Abhimanyu death. This involves studying the narrative and its relationship with the context and references to visual sources used as points of reference. Activities include exploring

the sources of ideas, making observations on the sources of creation, and studying the prevailing spirit of the times in the reference source compared to the current situation. The creation of this painting work involves the Visual Appropriation of Abhimanyu's death because of the correlation between the story and the current situation faced by the younger generation. Many obstacles that today's young generation encounters are not problems they created themselves but rather an accumulation of issues such as regeneration problems, environmental problems, and a corrupt system that have persisted for years. These problems are starting to have an impact now, burdening many young people with the responsibility of making things better. Reflecting on this, the context of the narrative in Abhimanyu's death finds similarities with the younger generation being involved in a war as a result of decisions made by their parents and uncle, a burden they do not necessarily have to bear. To determine the next steps in the creative process, a search for reference sources is conducted to observe and scrutinize them to find possibilities for their future appropriation.

1. Extracting Reference Sources

The process of searching involves seeking reference sources related to visual form, theme, origins, background, and various elements related to the theme content. Initially, we focused on finding paintings related to the story of Abhimanyu's death, primarily in classical wayang forms such as Kamasan. We also came across numerous fan art pieces representing the same story, created by fans of the original work of fiction. Our initial step involved categorizing various works of art that could be directly observed, whether in museum collections, private collections, or virtually, with the

assistance of the painting's custodian. For example, the Neka Museum in Ubud, Bali, Indonesia, houses an iconic 19th-century painting of the death of Abhimanyu by an anonymous creator, which is easily accessible for direct observation through online searches. However, works such as Pan Seken's "The Death of Abhimanyu" (1930s) and Ida Bagus Gelgel's "The Death of Abhimanyu" (1936) are held in foreign museums, namely the Australian Museum in Sydney, Australia, and the National Museum van Wereldculturen in Leiden, the Netherlands. To access visual data from these pieces, we would need to contact the museums via email. In addition to conducting visual searches, observations were also made on commonly found news related to global issues. This news often appears on Instagram social media feeds and is updated daily. Some of the news sources in question include an article submitted by Unicef entitled "Prolonged conflict, climate crisis, increasing mental health disorders, and online misinformation among the biggest emerging threats to children" (2019). The article explains various problems such as prolonged conflict, pollution and the climate crisis, decreased mental health, mass migration, citizenship, future skills for future jobs, data rights and online privacy, and misinformation online. The information obtained in the article is used to develop the context of the visual narrative that will be presented later. Additionally, there is also a reference from the CNN article "Humanity just lived through the hottest 12 months in at least 125,000 years" (2023) regarding global warming and its impacts that are starting to be felt. There are also articles uploaded via the Whiteboard Journal open column, such as "Ceasefire Never Was a Solution: Palestine Has to Be Free" (2023) regarding the genocidal conflict in Palestine.

2. Personal Experience:

The author's personal experiences greatly influence their creation. This encompasses empirical and aesthetic experiences encountered throughout life, particularly moments dealing with various career, opportunity, luck, and anxiety-related challenges. Mental states also contribute to shaping perspectives on the subject of study, allowing for the portrayal of varied viewpoints on anxiety within the work. Initially apathetic and indifferent to their surroundings, the author's outlook evolved with age, particularly upon witnessing the growth of a new generation – namely, the nephews and nieces of their relatives. This provoked a sense of concern for their future, stemming from the belief that the current life experiences are heavily influenced by parental decisions or the involvement of previous generations who may sometimes be unwilling to provide understanding about fate, life goals, and critical thoughts on future social and environmental issues. The author perceives this situation as a challenging and burdensome terrain due to the weight and repetitiveness of the journey. Consequently, the appropriation performed results in the inclusion of numerous contradictory perspectives compared to the original stories and narratives used as references.

3. Identify the Spirit of Today's Age

To understand today's era, it is important to collect and identify data that is relevant to current conditions and circumstances. The data collection process involved using a camera, downloading images from the internet, searching on social media platforms like Instagram, and examining works by Balinese artists and other appropriate paintings. After collecting the material, the data was selected and connected to find new options

that are similar to or different from the original reference. Visual data in the form of appropriated paintings and aspects of the phenomena were identified based on their relevance to traditional and classical themes. The visuals displayed tendencies similar to narrative aspects from the Bharatayuda or Mahabharata story texts. Interpretations of the image data were made to correlate with the context of the collected phenomena.

In many visual depictions, Abhimanyu is shown during a battle, bombarded with arrows. For example, a painting by Pan Seken from the 1930s, housed in the Australian Museum, shows Abhimanyu surrounded by opposing forces such as Drona, Duryodana, Sakuni, Sarabasa, Jayadarata, Karna, Burisrawa, and Dussusana. In the painting, Abhimanyu is wielding a chakra and fighting against a rain of arrows. This visual is done in the style of Kamasan puppet painting, closely related to wayang kulit, with puppets displayed in a row and a long text in the middle explaining the battle. Depicting Abhimanyu during a battle by being harassed by the enemy conveys courage and represents the struggle to face challenges. It offers an opportunity to reinterpret the struggles of young people and the obstacles they must overcome to achieve success in life. This description is one of several visuals that illustrate the relationship between sources and analysis.

B. Design

1. Sketching and Digital Manipulation

The design stage involves exploring different visual styles that are suitable for the object being created. This stage may include identifying a theme or deconstructing visuals to generate an idea or concept, which can then be developed further in the embodiment stage. It's

a process of combining emotions and thoughts to create a visual representation that captures the intended messages. The design process is crucial, especially when working with existing visual elements that need to be processed and interpreted from various perspectives to convey specific connotations. During this stage, thumbnail sketches are created to explore and represent different ideas. Details from the reference object are closely observed, including composition, shape, color, and other artistic elements such as lines, planes, light, and darkness. These observations are then transformed into the final designed artwork. Additionally, concepts or design sketches may be refined through various experiments before being realized in a digital final design. When creating digital sketches, the first step is to reference images collected during the research phase and from the exploration process. During this stage, there are many potential ideas to explore, although not all of them can be brought to life. This is largely determined by the subsequent process, which involves discovering the appropriate mediums and techniques to represent the ideas developed in the design.

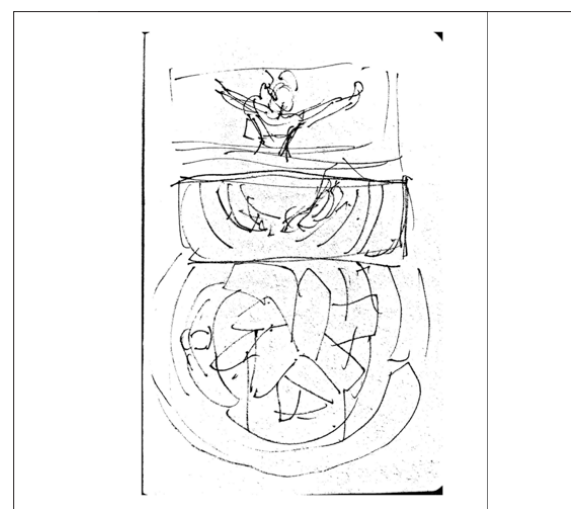


Figure 1. Thumbnail sketch on A6 notebook
(Source: I.B. Rekha, 2024)

2. Discovery of Medium and Technique

This phase aims to explore materials or media that can be used for painting. The choice of media is heavily influenced by past experiences and is related to the references gathered during the research stage. At this stage, contemporary artistic discoveries play a crucial role by introducing combination techniques, as highlighted by Adnyana in "Multinarasi Relief Yeh Pulu Basis Penciptaan Seni Lukis Kontemporer" (2018). This multi-technique approach involves applying various mediums within a single canvas, meaning that each painting is constructed using multiple mediums and techniques simultaneously. This distinguishes contemporary artistry from the modernist approach, which predominantly relies on mono-disciplinary techniques within each canvas (Adnyana, 2018). Therefore, the focus is on finding tools or materials that are relevant and supportive of the intended creative direction. Experiments have been conducted to visualize character shapes, followed by experiments with materials for painting. Canvas, for example, is used as a creative medium because it is affordable and stronger than traditional Kamasan cloth. It has been tested, and if the surface is well-prepared, it is ready to accept any medium. Another material used is sand texture gel, which will be mixed with acrylic for experimentation. Additionally, before painting on the canvas, *imprimatura* is carried out using acrylic ink or a mix of coffee and tea to act as a surface base. This is combined with experimenting with scraping techniques, pen drawing, dry brush, collage, spray, cracking, and distressing to achieve artistic effects and find uniqueness in using these materials. Each technique's suitability for combination depends on the message's needs and the context to which the idea adheres.

C. Forming

The formation process is a series of three stages of creation, after exploration and design. The formation process requires means to realize ideas and ideas so that they can be realized well. Therefore, material preparation is primarily about collecting suitable tools or materials when the experimentation process is a necessity. The materials that have been collected and tried are then ready to realize the idea of creation with the theme of visual Appropriation of Abhimanyu's death. The formation of the painting in the design plan functions as a guide in determining which objects are deemed important to appear and which objects will not be emphasized too much. In this case, the influence of technology plays a very important role in helping realize ideas and concepts, such as several parts of the collage functioning as backgrounds and accents through the digital printing process before being transferred to canvas media. The paintings contained in the design use canvas, acrylic paint, acrylic ink, drawing pens, pencils, brushes, palette knives, and various mediums that can manipulate structure rather than acrylic paint. The first step in formation is to prepare the canvas structure that is used to stretch the canvas. This canvas that has been stretched is a finished canvas. However, some canvases are deliberately re-coated using gesso because the quality of the canvas has been left for a long time, and the coating has yellowed. The formation process can then be divided into several sections that summarize the work processes implemented in several works.

1. *Imprimatura*

The *imprimatura* process involves applying a base color, which is often a neutral, brownish tone to the canvas. Sometimes, staining is done at the same time as applying the base color. The purpose of

imprimatura is to modify the white or off-white color of the canvas to a more neutral shade, making it easier to achieve the desired color combination. This also makes it easier to apply to block colors using the Sigar Mangsi technique subsequently. Additionally, *imprimatura* allows the canvas to better accept these colors, and any areas not fully covered will not be negatively affected by the underlying white base color. Another goal of *imprimatura* is to replicate the color elements in classical paintings as a reference. It's intentionally done expressively to mimic the aging and natural color changes that occur in old paintings.



Figure 2. *Imprimatura* using a coffee/tea mixture with splashes of acrylic ink
(Source: I.B. Rekha, 2024)

2. Collage

The process of creating this collage involves digitally attaching printed images to canvas media. In addition to the technical aspects, the collage process also entails separating various reference elements and arranging them on the canvas to achieve unity. The composition of the collage is based on the design prepared at the earlier stage. The image references are in the form of paintings, serving as references for appropriating Abhimanyu's death theme or other images added to convey special meaning. It is important to note that the use of collage from the original work is

done to fulfill conceptual requirements and is primarily used as a background. The collage will be further enhanced through the use of scraping techniques, applying gesso base colors, and adding distinctive accents to achieve a beautiful, aged appearance. This approach aims to avoid duplication and plagiarism. The collage is attached using acrylic matte gel medium, which is a colorless acrylic material that serves as a diluent or adds transparency but can also be used as a collage adhesive. It is applied by spreading it onto the canvas, specifically on the areas where the image will be placed. Once dry, the medium becomes invisible, but the image will be transferred to the canvas surface.



Figure 3. Pasting the collage on the canvas
(Source: I.B. Rekha, 2024)

3. Cropping

Cropping is a method of focusing on certain parts of an object to change the overall connotation of the complete image. Selecting specific reference materials, this process is important because not all objects need to be highlighted to convey specific meanings. For example, in Pan Seken's painting "The Death of Abhimanyu" (1930s), focusing on one part changes the context of the original representation. While cropping is commonly used in digital design, it is also applied manually, such as in the collage process, where unnecessary parts are cut out.

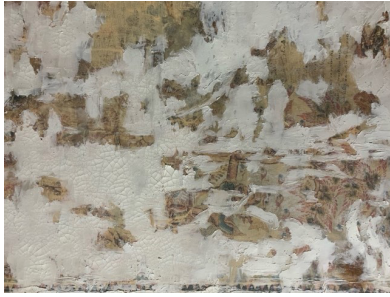


Figure 4. Example of cropping with the crackle paste application in an image collage
(Source: I.B. Rekha, 2024)

4. Coloring

Coloring is a painting technique that involves combining various methods to create a unique use of color. It is closely linked to traditional coloring techniques such as *sigar mangsi* and the *ngabur* technique but with a more streamlined approach. For example, colors that will receive gradations are first mixed and then applied in blocks. To achieve a blurred effect, plaque colors are applied using two paintbrushes: one to block the surface and the other to smooth the blurred impression. Additionally, colors are applied in stages, layer by layer, rather than all at once. Blocking, which involves blocking an area with specific colors, is also a part of this technique. This is done in stages to ensure that the adaptation of traditional paintings remains true to the original techniques. Later on, the exploration of coloring techniques using spray paint will also be included.

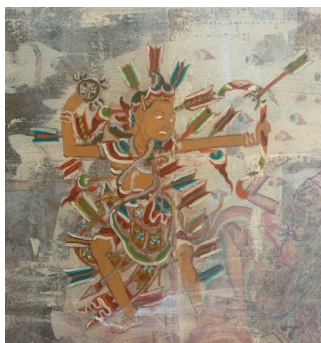


Figure 5. Coloring process
(Source: I.B. Rekha, 2024)

5. Distressing/Finishing

The final process is distressing or finishing. In this stage, the process of destruction occurs or gives the impression of imperfection, aging, use, and weathering. This technique is adapted from the impression of damage and deterioration that usually occurs in classical furniture or ancient paintings with poor maintenance. The technique is divided into two approaches: the first stage uses brush strokes, and the second uses real textures in the form of gesso and acrylic medium, which are then sanded or scraped to reveal the areas beneath. The first approach is used in paintings by blurring or melting colors, aiming to make the painting more interesting and give the impression of dimension. The second approach is to highlight the impression of imperfection and support the discussion and theme of the ideas.



Figure 6. The distressing process
(Source: I.B. Rekha, 2024)

In addition to this process, it's important to note that this approach may not be evident in all artworks, but it's necessary for certain pieces. The final stages of the painting process involve blending the color edges, adding highlights with white, and blocking the sides of the canvas for a clean representation. After going through the creation process stages, the outcome consists

of a written article report and the resulting artwork mentioned previously. The method of presenting art creation explained above involves a trial-and-error process, and certain aspects may not be feasible due to factors like experience, expenses, and time. The artistic approach stages outlined above are not all simultaneously used in one piece; rather, each piece incorporates 2 to 3 combinations of these applications from the presented process.

Discussion

The process explained above represents an appropriation process that does not align with the concept of cultural appropriation as described by Rogers, who outlines it through four categories: 1) cultural exchange, which involves reciprocal exchange between cultures; 2) cultural domination, the imposition of a dominant culture on a subordinate one; 3) cultural exploitation, the use of elements from a subordinate culture for the benefit of a dominant culture; and 4) transculturation, the blending of various cultures to the extent that they can no longer be identified with their original forms, resulting in cultural hybrids (in Sitindjak, 2020). The process of painting described above highlights that appropriation is not the same as forgery, as emphasized by Alfrough (2024). Returning to past works and intentionally adapting them to a new format or context serves to develop fresh concepts and express new ideas, ensuring that the resulting work is original rather than a forgery. Unlike counterfeit artworks, which are designed to deceive the audience, such appropriated works are created transparently and do not aim to mislead. The author's appropriation applies two approaches, namely, taking traditional painting images and simultaneously using the narrative of the epic figures depicted in the story.

The purpose of such appropriation is to produce works that question the challenges and modern problems currently faced by the current generation, in addition to aiming for reflection through layers of metaphors from old cultures. The type of visual that the author wants to display is also influenced by several characteristics of the techniques and visual language of appropriation like copy-paste, remix, and Juxtaposition. Therefore, in compiling the concept, the author does not only use one reference or one visual object but allows the presentation of related objects that follow the story's narrative.

The position of contemporary painting in this creation is intended as a way to convey an issue or phenomenon that is plural to then be expressed through a visual language that concerns the author's identity. The transformation of the tradition that is the root of identity as part of Balinese society is inevitable, but the changes in question reflect new values that are seen in the spirit of the work. This is in line with Nugroho & Himawan's (2014) view that the development of modern art today, often referred to as contemporary art, is deeply interconnected with the social, economic, and cultural systems of society. At the same time, it possesses a unique ability to showcase aesthetic expressions and reflect values that critically examine the economic, social, and cultural systems that support it (Nugroho & Himawan, 2014). Meanwhile, the tradition reflected in the visuals in this creation is related to how tradition itself is directly involved in the development of contemporary art, as the management label adopted in it provides a forum for local thoughts to be transformed in its new context. However, there is a challenge because mapping the period of a nation's tradition is significant when measured

against the development of traditions in the West. Have we (in Indonesia) inherited a mapping of traditions like what was inherited in the West by their predecessors? Then, how do we respond to what is developing in Indonesia because it is undeniable that Western influence is very strong in developing countries like Indonesia? (Sudirana, 2019). In general, the eclectic visual language style, juxtaposition, and satire are keywords in this result; contemporary tendencies that are not limited to binary opposition are also beneficial in exploration, meaning that the author does not necessarily think about the position of techniques and media in a hierarchy. This is achieved through the application of the method, which contains a series of several stages that have been explained above.

Pan Seken's work in the form of *The Death of Abhimanyu* (1930) takes a bullying scene that follows the story in the text used as a reference in this creation to be appropriated. Not much is known about the background of this painting or Pan Seken's life other than the fact that he was part of the Pitamaha group, which was founded in 1936. Pan Seken himself had an important role in the Pitamaha group, namely as part of the management and also including the position of *kelian* (regional chairman), who coordinated artists in the mapped area. Pan Seken himself was trusted as the representative of the Kamasan (Klungkung) area (Adnyana, 2015). The reason for using Pan Seken's visual of the fall of Abhimanyu is because the author sees honesty in the visualization of Pan Seken's work, such as presenting the reality of Abhimanyu's death, whose story source comes from old texts like *kekawin*. Pan Seken presents a bloody, cruel, and sophisticated beating scene from a classic Kamasan painting.

Exploration of the concept of juxtaposition is also applied in the visual work to display the comparative state between how past representations are relevant to the present. Especially in the aspect of reflection in the form of Abhimanyu's state in the story, who refuses to give up even though he is being bullied by great knights. The author sees an opportunity to highlight the attitude of the character Abhimanyu, who is standing in the middle of the enemy in the painting and then replaces the forms of antagonistic characters in the original painting with current conditions or problems. Abhimanyu's attitude of spreading his arms reflects an attitude of resistance and trying to fight. The reading of Abhimanyu's character is then transferred into the context of the discourse that the author is trying to convey, namely resistance to current problems regarding changes, especially the increasingly bad environment and surrounding life today.

D. Description of The Work



Figure 7. *Fighting for Existence I* (2024), Ida Bagus Rekha Bayutha, Medium: Collage, Ink, Acrylic paint, dimensions 105 cm x 80 cm (Source: I.B. Rekha, 2024)

Features a fragment of Pan Seken's "*The Death of Abhimanyu*" (1930s), positioned according to the representation in the original painting. Among the prominently displayed figures of Abhimanyu, the

background still shows, which is a collage from Pan Seken's work. The form has faded and is covered by the objects above it. The objects are Kamasan trees depicted in an opaque manner with fire accents typical of traditional paintings. Several forms of butterflies can also be seen among the chaotic composition of trees and fire. The colors predominantly imitate fading and deterioration by displaying neutral colors in the form of ocher and brownish. Abhimanyu is positioned as a material subject, but his presence seems to be interrupted by the objects of trees, fire, and butterflies. The painting is presented through various color aspects, such as the dominance of ocher, used to support the idea, which talks about the change in narrative context from initially talking about war referring to Pan Seken's work to environmental destruction. This change is symbolized by the form of butterflies composed in each part of the painting. The visual of the tree shown burning aims to convey an atmosphere of decline related to phenomena such as natural damage and deforestation carried out by humans. The main issue described in this work is environmental change as a problem faced by young people. The enemies of Abhimanyu, as represented in Pan Seken's original work "The Death of Abhimanyu" (1930s), were removed and replaced with modern problems. The form of the second work is influenced by the real texture created using the scraping technique, applying gesso base paint over the collage gradually until it becomes thick and then scraping it off using a sharp tool, causing a deterioration effect. Curved and horizontal lines dominate the shape of the painting due to the effect of the scraping technique, creating a peeling impression and forming a contrast between the collage in the background and the form

of the painting above. The uniqueness of the technique also plays a big role in creating rhythm in the painting because the repetition of the scrapes connects tree objects that are depicted separately and in a mess into one composition that seems complete and harmonious.

CONCLUSIONS

Visual appropriation of Abhimanyu's death is a work of painting by taking over visuals of works with similar themes which tell the story of Abhimanyu's death on the 13th day in the Mahabharata storyline. The discovery of ideas and concepts in creation begins with looking at the phenomena and challenges faced by young people today, such as the climate crisis, disasters, and war. Then, through critical reflection, namely finding the spirit of the times contained in the story of Abhimanyu's death, a correlation was found that the figure of Abhimanyu could represent the position of young people because it resonated with the conditions faced by young people, such as situations of urgency, repeated attacks, and cheating. The element of appropriation that is applied is in the form of taking images and then simultaneously involving aspects of the narrative being presented. Contemporary tendencies that do not limit themselves to binary oppositions are also beneficial in the exploration process so that in drafting concepts, it not only provides the possibility of using just one artwork or one visual object but also makes it possible to present various objects that are assembled and following the narrative of the story. In general, the visualization process What has gone through is a series of trials and errors, which include exploration by digging up sources of reference and then relating them to personal experiences and the spirit of today's times. And through the design process by making

sketches through digital manipulation and then finding the characteristics of the media and techniques. Apart from that, the findings show that techniques are applied to create their characteristics in the form of: 1. *Imprimatura*, 2. Collage, 3. Cropping, 4. Coloring, 5. Distressing/finishing. The visuals presented then have a tendency towards juxtaposition, namely making a comparison between the visual "Abhimanyu death" created by artists such as Pan Seken or Ida Bagus Gelgel and other artists with visuals that are opposite or different from the first visual. Through several stages, five paintings with different but related themes discussed the challenges of the current situation and the need to develop strategies to face them.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abdurrahman, D. I. (2018). Apropriasi Transkultural Pada Konfigurasi Karakter Son Goku Dalam Manga Dragon Ball. *Ideology Journal*, 3(2), 3-10.
- Adnyana, I Wayan. (2015). Arena Seni Pita Maha: Ruang Sosial dan Estetika Seni Lukis Bali 1930'an. *Panggung*, 25 (3), 249-263. <https://doi.org/10.26742/panggung.v25i3.22>
- Adnyana, I. W., Remawa, A. R., & Sari, N. L. D. I. D. (2018). Multinarasi relief yeh pulu basis penciptaan seni lukis kontemporer. *Mudra Jurnal Seni Budaya*, 33(2), 249-255. <https://doi.org/10.31091/mudra.v33i2.372>
- Afrough, M, (2024). The Approach of Appropriation Art in a Selection of Visual Examples of Hand-Woven Iranian Carpets. *Kimiya-ye-Honar*, 13(50), 99-121. [10.22034/13.50.99](https://doi.org/10.22034/13.50.99)
- Alfiyah, R. (2024). Kajian Tekstologi Lakon Wayang Abimanyu Gugur Via Youtube Kedatangan Abimanyu ke Peperangan-Gugurnya Sumitra. *CaLLs (Journal of Culture, Arts, Literature, and Linguistics)*, 10(1), 152-169. <http://dx.doi.org/10.30872/calls.v10i1.13558>.
- Alsah, S., Akbar, S. M., & Patriansah, M. (2024). Studi Kasus Pelanggaran Kode Etik Dalam Desain Komunikasi Visual. *VisArt: Jurnal Seni Rupa dan Design*, 2(1), 88-99.
- Ariyanti, A., & Astawan, I. K. Y. (2023). POTRAIT OF GRIET: Sebuah Kajian Seni Lukis Apropriasi Karya Dadang Rukmana. *Imajinasi: Jurnal Seni*, 17(2), 21-28.
- Cattien, J., & Stopford, R. J. (2023). The appropriating subject: Cultural appreciation, property, and entitlement. *Philosophy & Social Criticism*, 49 (9), 1-18. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01914537211105951>
- Effendy, Rifky. (2007). Pengantar Kuratorial, Dalam Apropriasi Spektrum Praktek Apropriasi Dalam Seni Rupa Kontemporer Di Indonesia. Indonesian Visual Art Archive.
- Fauzi, E. P., & Prasetyo, K. (2023). Pemaknaan Apropriasi Budaya Pada Video Make A Wish. *Jurnal Komunikasi Global*, 12(1), 98-121. <https://doi.org/10.24815/jkg.v12i1.28489>
- Gustami SP. (2007). Butir-butir mutiara estetika timur: ide dasar penciptaan seni kriya Indonesia. Prasista, Yogyakarta.
- Hidayatullah, Ari Dhika. (2021). Respon Dan Peran Generasi Muda Dalam Agenda Perubahan Iklim. *Sosio Religia*, 2 (1).

- Himawan, Willy & Nugroho, Budi. (2014). Visual Tradisi dalam Karya Seni Lukis Kontemporer Sebagai Wujud Artistik Pengaruh Sosial Budaya. *Journal of Urban Society's Arts*, 1(4), 99-109. <https://doi.org/10.24821/jousa.v1i2.791>
- Jameson, F. (1998). *Postmodernism and Consumer Society. Selected Writings on the Postmodern 1983-1998*. Verso, London.
- Mix, E. K. (2015). Appropriation and the Art of the Copy. *Choice*, 52(9), 1433-1445.
- Patriansah, M., Prasetya, D., & Aravik, H. (2021). Kegiatan lomba mendongeng sebagai pembentukan karakter siswa sekolah dasar di kota Palembang. *SELAPARANG Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat Berkemajuan*, 5, 149-156. <https://doi.org/10.31764/jpmb.v5i1.4881>
- Purwita, Dewa Gede. (2019). Ngedum Karang, Jajar Wayang, Ceraki Membedah Kerja Desain Pada Seni Lukis Wayang Kamasan. *SENADA*, 2, 209-215.
- Sitindjak, R. H. I. (2020). Apropriasi Rumah Tradisional Batak Toba pada Arsitektur Gereja Katolik Pangururan di Samosir. *Biokultur*, 9(2), 87-100. <https://doi.org/10.20473/bk.v9i2.23118>
- Sudirana, I Wayan. (2019). Tradisi Versus Modern: Diskursus Pemahaman Istilah Tradisi dan Modern di Indonesia. *Mudra Jurnal Seni Budaya*, 34 (1), 127-135. <https://doi.org/10.31091/mudra.v34i1.647>
- Wibowo, C. P., Ahmad, A. S. E., & Ds, M. (2019). Apropriasi Karakter Plastic Man Dalam Penciptaan Karya Seni Lukis. *Jurnal Seni Rupa*, 7 (3), 118 - 125.