

Documentary Video as a Media for Preserving the Tunduak Tradition in Solok City: A Visual Design Approach to Increase Awareness of Tradition and Symbolic Meaning for the Digital Generation

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Abstract

This research focuses on designing a documentary video as a medium to preserve the Tunduak tradition in Solok City. Using a visual design approach aimed at the digital generation, the study seeks to strengthen awareness and understanding of the tradition's social, philosophical, and symbolic values, which are increasingly shifting due to modernization. Through literature review, interviews, and field observations, the documentary was developed to represent the Tunduak tradition narratively and symbolically. The outcome shows that documentary video can effectively raise cultural awareness among the younger generation while serving as a sustainable visual archive for local heritage preservation.

Keywords: Tunduak tradition, documentary video, visual design, symbolic meaning, cultural preservation, digital generation.

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1. Introduction

The Minangkabau people adhere to a matrilineal kinship system, where descent follows the mother's side. Children born to a daughter become part of her mother's tribe, while married sons have children who follow their wife's lineage. After marriage, the couple typically resides in the wife's home. Therefore, children's marriages are initially largely regulated by the mother's family. However, the father's family still plays a role in the marriage ceremony.

In the Minangkabau view of life, marriage not only unites two individuals, but also forms a new kinship relationship, according to the saying "nikah jo parampuan, nikah jo niniak mamak" [1]. This expression illustrates that marriage does not only involve an agreement between the groom and the bride (nikah jo parampuan), but must also go through the approval and deliberation of the niniak mamak or traditional elders from both parties (kawin jo niniak mamak). This emphasizes that marriage in Minangkabau tradition is a matter of the extended family and traditional community, not merely a

personal matter. Women have a high social position, not only as the successor to the lineage, but also as the guardian of moral values and family dignity. The ideal woman in Minangkabau is identified with Bundo Kanduang, who is likened to the limapeh rumah nan gadang or the main pillar of the rumah gadang [2], that women are the main support in the family and society, like the supporting pillars of a building that keep the rumah gadang sturdy. If the pillar is lost or fragile, the family structure will collapse. In a matrilineal family, the one who holds power over property and lineage is not the husband, but the wife's brother. This system provides protection and respect for women, both morally and materially.

One of the unique traditions that still survives in Solok City is the Tunduak tradition. This tradition is performed by the bride and her female relatives to visit her in-laws' house after the wedding ceremony. The group usually consists of nine or eleven women, walking in a line, carrying baskets or black ketiding (traditional Javanese traditional baskets) on their heads. Their presence has symbolic significance: the groom is likened to a king, and the bride is obligated to "Tunduak," or pay her respects to him.

The Tunduk tradition has several essential elements, such as participants, attire, location, time, and props. However, over time, things have changed. Previously, this tradition was performed immediately after the wedding reception, but now it's often held three days later, depending on the agreement between the two families. In terms of participation, the enthusiasm of the community, which once flocked to watch the procession, has waned, partly due to the lack of knowledge among the younger generation about this tradition.

The clothing and props used are imbued with meaningful symbols. The traditional attire worn by the bride and her entourage serves not only as decoration but also as a symbol of honor, nobility, and the family's cultural identity. The colors, motifs, and manner of wearing traditional attire reflect the social status, aesthetic values, and philosophy of life of the Minangkabau people, who uphold tradition and the dignity of women. Props such as the basket or ketiding carried on the head are also fraught with symbolism, serving as a form of respect for the husband's family and as a symbol of the bride's readiness to enter married life.

Seeing the changes and decline in interest in the Tunduk Tradition, the author raised a study entitled "Documentary Video as a Media for Preserving the Tunduk Tradition in Solok City: A Visual Design Approach to Increase Awareness of Tradition and Symbolic Meaning for the Digital Generation". Audio-visual media was chosen because it is able to convey information clearly and interestingly through a combination of images, videos, and narratives. The digital generation who are familiar with technology will more easily understand and be interested when traditions are introduced through a format that suits their media consumption habits. [3] in Multimedia Learning Theory, learning or conveying information will be more effective if it uses a combination of text, images, and audio because it utilizes multiple cognitive channels, so that the message is easier to understand and remember. This is in line with the view [4] that "the medium is the message", which emphasizes that media characteristics also shape how cultural messages are received and interpreted by the audience. In the context of cultural preservation, [5] emphasizes that digital media can be an important means for the documentation, dissemination, and regeneration of intangible cultural heritage. Thus, documentary videos not only serve as educational media, but also as digital archives that ensure traditional information can be accessed anytime and anywhere, while also being an effective strategy in maintaining the sustainability of local cultural identity in the digital era.

2. Method

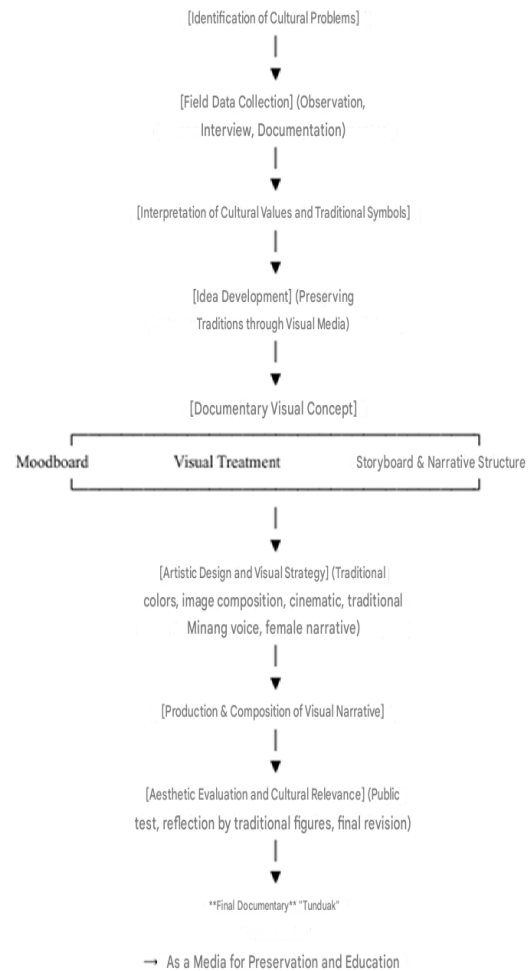


Figure 1. FlowchartSS

2.1 Data Collection

Data collection in this study employed a qualitative approach based on visual ethnography and documentary design. The goal was to record and understand the symbolic meaning and cultural values of the Tunduk tradition in Solok City and translate them into visual documentary media as a means of cultural preservation. Data collection techniques included observation, interviews, literature review, and documentation.

2.2 Design Planning Methods

The design method in this research adopts the Practice-Based Research (PBR) approach, which was developed in the context of art, design, and visual media. In this approach, the design practice itself becomes an integral part of the research process, not just the final product. The researcher acts as both a designer and a cultural observer, constructing an understanding and representation of the Tunduk tradition through the creative process of making a documentary film. In general, this method consists of several main stages: Exploration of the Context and Design Problems,

Conceptual and Artistic Design (Design Ideation), Prototyping and Media Exploration, Production and Compilation of the Final Work, and Evaluation and Reflection of the Design.

2.3 Visual Exploration

Visual exploration in the production of the documentary "Tundak" is a crucial stage aimed at designing and creating an aesthetically pleasing and meaningful form of cultural representation. This process is carried out by considering the distinctive visual elements of Minangkabau, which symbolically and philosophically strengthen the documentary narrative as a medium for preserving tradition. In this stage, the researcher uses a visual semiotic approach to examine the meaning behind colors, shapes, and symbols in Minangkabau culture, as well as a visual anthropology approach to understand cultural expression through imagery [6].

The exploration begins with identifying the visual elements that best represent the Tundak tradition, such as clothing, traditional colors (red, black, gold), the shape of the traditional house, and ritual equipment such as the siriah and traditional house carvings. These elements are not merely presented as complements, but are cinematically processed to form a strong and authentic visual communication. The framing technique uses a symmetrical composition approach and symbolic close-ups, aiming to highlight the details and sacredness of traditional symbols in each scene. The resulting visuals take the audience into a cultural depth that is not only displayed but also felt emotionally.

The visual color selection follows the traditional Minangkabau palette of red for courage and honor, gold for glory, and black for steadfastness. These colors are composed in soft natural lighting to maintain the authentic atmosphere of the procession. Lighting techniques such as ambient lighting and low key lighting are used to create a sacred and reflective atmosphere, especially in scenes that record ritual moments. Camera movements such as dolly-in, slow pan, and handheld close-up provide an intimate impression, as if the audience is also present in the traditional space, as suggested in the participatory documentary approach [7].

The visual exploration in this documentary is also closely linked to the selection of a narrative script (storyline), which serves as the basis for creating the visual structure and dramatic flow. In designing the storyline, a thematic-reflective narrative approach was used, constructing the story based on the theme of preserving tradition, complemented by personal narratives from cultural figures and local residents.

The script was compiled through field research, interviews, and literature review of Minangkabau culture, then processed into a five-act structure:

opening (cultural prologue), explanation of tradition, depiction of symbols and processions, conflict or challenge of tradition, and reflective closing. This structure refers to the principle of documentary narrative explained by, namely that ideally, a documentary presents reality in the form of a narrative that allows the audience to experience, understand, and reflect on the socio-cultural meaning of the events shown.

Exploration was also conducted on the sound and visual graphics aspects. The soundscape is composed of elements of Solok's natural sounds, the tinkling of talempong, the strumming of rabab, and community chatter, all recorded live in the field. These sounds not only form the audio background but also strengthen the sense of local space and time. Meanwhile, the graphic and typographic elements were designed, taking inspiration from traditional Minangkabau carvings such as pucuak rabuang and kaluak paku, which are applied in the form of lines, background ornaments, and chapter titles. The typography uses a modified classic serif typeface to convey a traditional yet modern feel and be accessible to a wide audience.

2.4 Design Realization Process

The design realization process in the production of the documentary "Tundak" is the implementation stage of all visual, narrative, and artistic concepts that have been formulated in the previous stage. At this stage, all design elements, both symbolic, technical, and aesthetic, are actualized through structured and continuous audio-visual production activities. This design realization refers to the practice-based research approach in media design [9], where the creative process is part of the research method that produces practice-based knowledge. The production stages are divided into three main parts: pre-production, production, and post-production.

3. Results and Discussion

Symbolic Representation Through Documentary Film Visuals

In the documentary "Tunduak," a visual culture approach is used to present Minangkabau cultural symbols in a structured and meaningful manner. Referring to Ferdinand de Saussure's theory, a sign consists of two main elements: the signifier, which is a visual form such as clothing, color, motif, or sound; and the signified, which is the meaning contained behind the form. For example, the visual of Minangkabau women wearing red and gold traditional clothing while carrying siriah (a traditional offering) in the Tunduak procession symbolizes the values of honor, purity, and women's role as guardians of tradition.

Analysis of the results or manifestation of the documentary film “Tunduak”, the creator applies a Visual Culture approach to the elements of the film:

Bow down

In the Tunduak tradition that lives among the people of Solok City, signifiers are present in various visual and ritual forms that contain deep symbolic meaning. Signifiers can be recognized through sensory elements that appear clearly in traditional processions, such as traditional clothing, ritual movements, ceremonial instruments, traditional sounds, and the positioning of traditional actors. For example, the use of traditional Minangkabau clothing by female figures such as Bundo Kandung, which consists of a baju kurung, salempang, and tingkuluak, is a marker of cultural identity and social status of Minang women. The clothing is usually decorated with distinctive colors such as red, gold, and black, which visually signify courage, nobility, and steadfastness of tradition.



Figure 2. Tunduak Tradition

Source: Sherly Permata Sari, 2024

Another signifier appears in the form of songket motifs, such as the tassels on the kapalo, which symbolize Minang women, like the coconut trunk, which implies perseverance and steadfastness in life's principles. In the Tunduak procession, siriah, which is used as a means of respect or symbolic submission, also becomes an important signifier in intergenerational communication. The visual of the submission of siriah in the documentary is shown using close-up techniques and frontal framing, emphasizing the event as a symbol of inherited values. [10]



Figure 3. Tassels on Kapalo in Traditional Procession

Source: Sherly Permata Sari, 2024

The cross-legged sitting, bowing of the head, and the arrangement of the participants in a circle or symmetrical rows also serve as markers of the hierarchical yet egalitarian social structure of Minangkabau tradition. Furthermore, the sounds of traditional musical instruments such as the rabab and talempong serve as acoustic markers, reinforcing the sacred and emotional atmosphere of the procession. All of these elements are cinematically represented in the documentary "Tundaak," conveying cultural values to the audience both visually and emotionally.



Figure 4. The Cross-legged Sitting Movement in the Tunduak Tradition

Source: Sherly Permata Sari, 2024

Thus, the signifiers in the Tunduak tradition do not stand alone, but are interconnected as a sign system that shapes collective meanings of Minangkabau customs, identity, and spirituality. This documentary weaves together all these signifiers to strengthen cultural representation in a communicative and educational way.

The meaning of clothing

The traditional clothing worn in the Tunduak ka Rumah Mintuo procession is an important part of Minangkabau cultural symbolism, which is full of philosophical, social, and spiritual meaning. In the context of the Tunduak tradition that developed in Solok City, clothing is not only an element of outward appearance, but an integral part of traditional communication that conveys the values and social status of the wearer. This clothing is worn by women, especially by the sumando, bako, and anak pisang from the anak daro (bride) side, during the procession of bringing baban nasi to the mintuo (in-law's) house during the baralek (wedding party) in the Minangkabau traditional structure. This moment is part of the Tunduak traditional procession, which signifies respect, humility, and acceptance of the new family structure within traditional values.

This outfit consists of a satin head covering (tengkuluk) sewn with gold thread (banang ameh). The tengkuluk serves not only as a complement to a woman's appearance but also as a symbol of honor,

maturity, and wisdom. The shape and direction of its pleats reflect her social status and role in traditional society. The gold adorning the tengkuluk signifies the nobility and high value of women in traditional culture. The top is a basiba blouse (kembar) made of satin in the color sirah manggih (bright red), which in Minangkabau tradition is interpreted as a symbol of courage, zest for life, and a woman's readiness to carry out the mandate of tradition and family. This color is not chosen purely for aesthetics, but also contains deep emotional and spiritual meaning, signifying strength and honor in carrying out the role of anak daro or bearer of tradition in the extended family.

The bottom of the dress uses a saruang cloth (songket sarong) typical of Pandai Sikek, a famous songket-producing region in West Sumatra. The songket motifs used, such as pucuk rabuang and kaluak paku, symbolize the values of growth, flexibility, and steadfastness in community life. A sandang cloth or bajaik shawl serves as an additional layer draped over the shoulders, adding a graceful and sacred impression, and reminding women of their role as guardians and protectors. Women in the Tunduk procession also carry singguluang baban, a rolled sarong placed on their heads to carry baban rice, a symbol of devotion, responsibility, and physical and spiritual readiness to build a household based on traditional values.

In addition, this outfit is complemented by traditional jewelry such as dukuah pinyaram (a large necklace resembling the shape of a pinyaram cake), galang gadang (a large bracelet), galang ketek (a small bracelet), and rings worn on the fingers. These jewelry are not only accessories, but also symbols of a woman's status, prosperity, and maturity. Each element has a symbolic value that is closely related to the traditional identity and philosophy of life of the Minangkabau people. Equally important, in this procession are also carried ceremonial equipment such as ka diang nggi hitam (a rice container covered with black cloth), tuduang saji (a food serving cover), and dalamak (a dowry container), which are material markers of the woman's sincerity in upholding tradition and respecting the man's family.



Figure 5. Traditional Tunduk Procession Clothing

Source: Sherly Permata Sari, 2024

This attire was specifically worn by Bundo Elfia Rainir, Advisor to Bundo Kandang of Solok City, as a representation of the authority of indigenous women in the Tunduk procession. In the documentary "Tundak", this attire is presented with a cinematic approach through detailed shots (close-ups) and compositions that emphasize the texture, color, and meaning of each element. This visual representation aims to highlight the symbolic narrative of clothing as part of the Minangkabau cultural identity that is still alive and meaningful. Traditional clothing in this procession is not only a visual medium, but also a space for cultural interpretation that strengthens the message of preserving tradition, especially in the realm of visual education and collective awareness across generations.

Property

In the Tunduk ka Rumah Mintuo tradition, traditional props and properties play a crucial role, not only as accessories for the procession but also as cultural symbols that convey messages of values, intentions, and respect between families. The props in this tradition are not merely material objects, but rather visual media that represent the Minangkabau customary structure and the harmony of social relations between two families united through traditional marriage. In the documentary "Tundak," these props are visualized as an integral part of the visual narrative to reinforce the symbolic meaning displayed. Some of the main props used include:

1. *Black catfish* In the Tunduk ka Rumah Mintuo tradition in Solok City, one of the properties that plays an important symbolic role is the black katidiang, a container for offerings or baban nasi covered with black cloth. This container not only functions as a place to carry the dowry, but also symbolizes respect, sincerity, and the genuineness of intention from the woman's family to the man's family in the context of Minangkabau traditional weddings. This property is specifically carried by the janang, who is tasked with carrying out the custom and acting as induak bako, a key figure in the Minangkabau matrilineal kinship structure derived from the bride's mother's brother.
2. *Janang* The choice of Janang as the bearer of the black katidiang is not without significance. As the induak bako, she has a social and moral responsibility to protect, represent, and uphold the family's dignity in all traditional events, including weddings. The katidiang itself symbolizes the burden of responsibility, family expectations, and recognition of traditional values in the process

of handing over a daughter to her husband's family. The black color covering the katidiang symbolizes steadfastness, sincerity, and deep respect for the man's family. It also reflects a humble attitude and sincerity in undergoing the process of uniting two families through noble Minangkabau values.



Figure 6. The Janang Who Carries the Black Ketidiang

Source: Sherly Permata Sari, 2024

Visually, the black katidiang in the documentary "Tundaak" is presented with shots that emphasize slow-motion elements and natural lighting, as well as low-angle framing to reinforce the sacred and honorary meaning in the scene. In visual culture, objects such as katidiang become signs (signifiers) that represent the symbolic meaning (signified) of the traditional philosophy itself, namely that every object and role has a position and value in the social structure. This application shows that documentary is not just a means of documentation, but also a reflective medium that leads the audience to understand the depth of cultural meaning through symbolic representation.

Documentary Film Design in Revealing Symbolic Meanings

The documentary film "Tundaak" (Tundaak) was designed as a medium for preserving traditions in Solok City to uncover the symbolic meanings inherent in Minangkabau cultural elements, particularly those manifested in the Tundaak ka Rumah Mintuo procession. The documentary's visual approach was strategically designed to present a cultural representation that is not only informative but also reflective of local values that are beginning to erode over time. The design process encompassed conceptual, artistic, and technical stages, grounded in visual design methodology and semiotic theory.

In this context, symbolic meaning is not only displayed verbally through the narratives of traditional figures, but also visualized through the selection of aesthetic elements such as traditional clothing, props, body gestures, colors, traditional sounds, and the structure of traditional processions. For example, the tengkuluk, black katidiang, and Pandai Sikek songket cloth worn

by cultural actors not only appear as objects of documentation, but become part of a meaningful visual sign system. Every detail such as the red and gold colors in the clothing, the sounds of the talempong and rabab, to the steps and formation of the line carrying the baban nasi are analyzed visually as cultural signs that indicate identity, social hierarchy, spirituality, and honor in Minangkabau tradition.

The visual design of this documentary uses a narrative structure based on visual ethnography, where the recording is done by emphasizing the authenticity of space, time, and subject. The camera is allowed to "observe" the event with an observational technique following the subject in a natural flow without much intervention so that the audience is invited to understand the meaning of cultural symbols through context, not only through explicit explanation. Cinematographic techniques such as close-ups are used to emphasize texture and symbolic details (for example, songket motifs or the expressions of traditional actors), while wide shots are utilized to capture the composition of space and relationships between subjects, such as the arrangement of the rice carriers bowing towards the in-laws' house.

The narrative script used in this documentary was developed from interviews with traditional figures, direct observations, and previously reviewed ethnographic data. The storyline selection process took into account emotional and visual flow, ensuring not only information but also an empathetic experience for the audience regarding the cultural values conveyed. The use of narrative by traditional female figures such as Bundo Kanduang also strengthens women's position as guardians and expounders of cultural symbols in Minangkabau tradition.

Through this approach, the documentary "Tundaak" serves not only as a means of documentation but also as a medium for rereading meaningful traditional symbols through visual language. This design serves as a cultural communication strategy that transcends age, background, and knowledge boundaries, as the visualized symbols possess transformative power to reawaken awareness and pride in local traditions.

The design of the documentary film "Tundaak" as a medium for preserving traditions in Solok City aims primarily to uncover and represent the symbolic meanings contained in local cultural practices through visual design and visual ethnography approaches. This film is designed not only to document cultural facts, but also to convey messages of cultural values and identity visually, aesthetically, and communicatively. Therefore, the design process is carried out systematically by combining visual semiotics, visual ethnography, and participatory visual communication design approaches.

A visual semiotic approach is used to analyze and represent cultural signs, such as traditional clothing, gestures, ceremonial tools, traditional musical sounds, and symbolic colors. Referring to the theories of Ferdinand de Saussure and Roland Barthes, each visual element in the documentary is considered a signifier that refers to a certain signified (meaning), such as the tengkuluk as a symbol of the dignity of Minang women or the black katidiang as a sign of the sincerity of traditional intentions. This analysis helps the production team to create a visual structure that is not only aesthetic but also culturally meaningful [11].



Figure 7. Visual Semiotic Approach

Source: Sherly Permata Sari, 2024

The visual ethnography method is applied as the basis for the documentary approach, with the principles of participatory observation, authentic direct recording of cultural events, and in-depth interviews with traditional figures, such as Bundo Kandang, janang, and local cultural actors. Visual ethnography provides space for the cultural subjectivity of the community itself to appear in the narrative, not only as an object, but as a subject that forms meaning. In this context, the documentary not only displays culture, but also records how the community understands, maintains, and passes on traditional symbols [12], [13]



Figure 8. Visual Ethnography Method

Source: Sherly Permata Sari, 2024

Meanwhile, participatory visual communication design is used throughout the visual design process, from moodboards and visual treatments to storyboards and production strategies. This approach actively involves cultural figures and local communities in determining appropriate, ethical, and authentic forms of representation. This participation is crucial to avoid diminishing cultural meaning and ensuring that symbolic values are conveyed contextually. Visual elements such as framing in shots, dominant colors in costumes, and the rhythm of movement in the procession are all designed to create a reflective and empathetic viewing experience.

The combination of these three approaches produces a documentary structure that is narratively strong and visually rich. The film "Tundaak" is constructed in a flowing visual structure, from cultural introductions and traditional processions to reflections on symbolic meaning. By prioritizing a meaning-based visual approach, this documentary is not only a media product but also a medium for cultural preservation and education that can strengthen awareness of tradition in an increasingly modern society.

4. Conclusion

The research and design conducted in the documentary project entitled "Documentary Video as a Media for Preserving the Tunduak Tradition in Solok City: A Visual Design Approach to Increase Awareness of Tradition" shows that visual media, especially documentary films, have a strategic role in communicating symbolic and hereditary cultural values to the wider community. The Tunduak ka Rumah Mintuo tradition is one of the Minangkabau traditional rituals rich in symbols, social structures, and philosophical values that regulate relations between families in the context of marriage. However, with the development of the times and the dominance of popular culture, understanding of the symbolic meaning of this tradition has begun to fade, especially among the younger generation.

Through a structured and conceptualized visual approach, this documentary is designed not only as a documentation tool, but as an interpretive medium capable of revealing the symbolic dimensions hidden in traditional elements, such as traditional clothing, gestures, ceremonial properties, music, and oral narratives. The use of a visual semiotic approach allows for analysis of the meaning of the displayed cultural signs, while visual ethnography ensures that the filming process is carried out with attention to the social context and authenticity of tradition. Coupled with a participatory visual communication design approach, this creative process involves traditional leaders, local communities, and cultural practitioners to ensure the accuracy of representation and the

preservation of visual ethics.

The results of this design show that the documentary "Tundaak" successfully packaged traditional values into a communicative, educational, and aesthetic visual narrative. This film not only presents an image of Minangkabau culture, but also invites the audience to understand the philosophy behind each symbol displayed, such as the black katidiang as a symbol of respect and responsibility, or the baju kurung basiba as a symbol of women's dignity in tradition. This representation is strengthened through the use of cinematic image composition, dominant traditional colors, traditional background sounds, and a narrative structure that is sourced from the direct experiences of cultural actors.

Thus, it can be concluded that this documentary has great potential as a cultural preservation medium that adapts to developments in media and technology. The documentary "Tundaak" is able to bridge noble traditional values with a presentation that is relevant, engaging, and easily accessible to the younger generation and the general public. This design also demonstrates that visuals function not only as an aesthetic form, but also as a means of conveying meaning and cultural identity.

The contribution of this work extends to both society and academia. For society, especially younger generations, the documentary provides an engaging and reflective medium to rediscover and appreciate Minangkabau identity, supporting sustainable cultural preservation and strengthening intergenerational communication. For academia, this research offers a model of how visual semiotics, ethnography, and participatory design can be integrated into documentary production as a methodological framework. It contributes to the fields of cultural studies, communication, and visual design by demonstrating how visual media can serve as both a preservation tool and a medium for critical interpretation of tradition.

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