



Documentation Approach in the Design of a Wayang Kamasan Visual Archive Book as an Effort to Preserve Bali's Traditional Visual Identity

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Abstract

Wayang Kamasan painting is one of the traditional Balinese painting forms that possesses significant historical, philosophical, and artistic values, and serves as an important part of traditional visual identity. However, visual documentation of Wayang Kamasan artworks remains limited and has not yet been systematically organized into a sustainable visual archive. The lack of structured documentary media has caused the visual records, visual conventions, and distinctive characteristics of Wayang Kamasan to be at risk of degradation and the loss of their authentic values. This study aims to apply a qualitative visual documentation approach in the design process of a Wayang Kamasan visual archive book as an effort to preserve traditional visual identity. The method used employs experimental stages with a documentation approach that includes the systematic collection, recording, and processing of visual data. Data collection was conducted through visual observation, interviews with artists and cultural practitioners, literature studies, and direct photographic documentation of artworks located in museums, art studios, and private collections. Through this documentation approach, the visual archive book is expected to function not only as a medium for storing visual data, but also as a strategy for preserving the traditional visual identity of Wayang Kamasan so that its existence can be maintained and passed on to future generations.

Keywords: wayang kamasan, visual book, documentation, editorial design, cultural preservation.

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1. Introduction

Indonesia is a country characterized by its diversity of ethnicities, cultures, and religions. This diversity serves as both a source of pride and a challenge in preserving, maintaining, and passing cultural heritage on to future generations [1]. One of the regions in Indonesia that possesses a strong cultural heritage is Bali.

Bali is widely known as the Island of the Gods, renowned for its rich traditions and cultural heritage. The arts and customs that develop within Balinese society function not only as cultural identities, but also as guiding principles that are highly respected by the community. In addition to its natural beauty, these cultural elements contribute to Bali's distinctive appeal and strengthen its position as one of the world's cultural tourism destinations [2].

The development of Balinese culture cannot be separated from the historical dynamics that shaped it.

Balinese art is deeply rooted in Hindu traditions and religious practices embraced by the majority of its people. Since its early development, various forms of art have been created to support and complement religious rituals and ceremonial activities. In this context, traditional painting holds an important role, particularly in ceremonies and the decoration of sacred spaces throughout Bali. Paintings function not only as aesthetic elements, but also as media of spiritual expression and representations of philosophical values that have been passed down through generations [3].

Over time, Balinese culture has undergone processes of acculturation influenced by societal needs and interactions with external cultures. Balinese visual art, as part of this cultural development, is dynamic and adaptive to environmental changes as well as the progression of the modern era. Click or tap here to enter text.[4]. Nevertheless, amid the increasingly strong influence of globalization, traditional arts are facing serious challenges. Globalization has the

potential to encourage cultural homogenization, in which local cultures are gradually eroded by the dominance of global culture [5]. This impact can be observed not only through changes in people’s lifestyles, but also through the decline of traditional practices and appreciation for local cultural heritage.

The phenomenon of overtourism in Bali further intensifies these challenges. The significant increase in tourist arrivals each year has indeed contributed positively to the economic sector; however, on the other hand, it has also generated negative impacts on the social, psychological, and cultural aspects of local communities [6]. Pressure on cultural spaces has resulted in shifts in values and changes in the functions of traditional culture. This condition indicates that tourism development that is not balanced with preservation efforts may threaten the sustainability of cultural heritage.

Kabupaten/Kota	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Kab. Jembrana	591,346	675,711	828,046	1,038,371	946,771
Kab. Tabanan	911,255	897,066	991,864	1,397,417	1,920,249
Kab. Badung	1,947,336	2,260,548	4,631,992	6,606,807	6,745,502
Kab. Gianyar	918,217	1,057,811	1,271,999	1,759,141	2,193,135
Kab. Klungkung	576,157	694,888	764,254	1,037,433	1,037,570
Kab. Bangli	753,697	764,282	922,264	1,486,887	1,079,658
Kab. Karangasem	863,036	1,066,839	1,319,339	1,916,732	1,972,943
Kab. Buleleng	1,167,720	1,308,959	1,545,531	2,063,981	2,270,462
Kota Denpasar	1,090,766	1,259,006	1,984,425	3,526,734	4,478,649
Provinsi Bali	8,819,530	9,985,110	14,259,714	20,833,503	22,644,939

Figure 1. Data on the Increase of Tourist Arrivals in Bali

One of the Balinese art forms affected by these conditions is classical Balinese painting, particularly Wayang Kamasan painting. This traditional art developed in Kamasan Village, Klungkung Regency, which is widely recognized as the center of the Wayang Kamasan tradition [7]. Wayang Kamasan possesses distinctive visual characteristics, marked by figurative wayang forms, decorative patterns, and strong narrative compositions. Historically, these paintings played an important role in religious contexts, particularly as visual media used to reinforce symbolic meanings in Hindu ceremonies in Bali [4].

In its practice, Wayang Kamasan follows strict artistic conventions that include visual rules, cultural norms, and values passed down through generations. The creation process also utilizes natural materials such as traditional cloth, pigments derived from minerals and plants, and manual techniques that reflect local wisdom [4]. Therefore, Wayang Kamasan is understood not merely as an artwork, but also as a representation of the harmonious relationship between humans, nature, and spirituality within Balinese culture [4].

Historically, the existence of Wayang Kamasan has been recorded for centuries, as evidenced in ancient manuscripts and inscriptions dating from the 9th to the 11th centuries. Its earliest forms appeared as reliefs and illustrations on lontar leaves (prasi), which later

developed into classical Balinese painting traditions [8]. This tradition became increasingly established and concentrated in Kamasan Village around 1686 AD [9]. Despite its high historical value, the existence of this traditional painting is currently facing a decline in public interest, placing it at risk of being neglected.

Various preservation efforts have been undertaken, one of which is through the role of museums as institutions that collect, preserve, and exhibit artworks to the public. However, visual documentation of Wayang Kamasan remains limited and has not yet been systematically organized or made widely accessible to the public. Most collections are still scattered across museums, studios, and private collections without an integrated documentation system. This condition has resulted in the lack of media capable of continuously recording and preserving its visual memory.

Based on these issues, a documentary medium capable of recording, managing, and presenting visual information on Wayang Kamasan systematically is needed. A visual archive book is considered a relevant solution, as it can integrate aspects of documentation, information, and design into a structured medium. Therefore, this study focuses on the application of a documentation approach in designing a visual archive book of Wayang Kamasan paintings as an effort toward cultural preservation. Through this approach, the resulting book is expected not only to function as an informational medium, but also as a means of preserving the visual record and cultural identity of Wayang Kamasan amidst the dynamics of contemporary cultural development.

2. Methods

This study applies a qualitative visual documentation approach in the design process of a Wayang Kamasan visual archive book as an effort to preserve traditional visual identity. In general, documentation can be defined as a collection of information arranged in visual or written forms to descriptively represent an object, activity, or particular process [10]. Documentation also functions as a medium for recording and storing information in order to create sustainable records of data [10]. In the cultural field, documentation plays an important role not only as a storage medium, but also as a form of preserving cultural knowledge through visual and textual archiving processes.

The research process began with the data collection stage, which was conducted through several methods, including literature studies on traditional visual arts and visual archive books, existing studies on similar publications, direct observation of Wayang Kamasan painting collections in museums, and preliminary interviews with stakeholders, artists, and cultural practitioners. This stage aimed to obtain foundational data that would support the design process.

Subsequently, the research entered Experimental Stage 1, which focused on developing the big idea, formulating the initial concept, and creating preliminary visual drafts in the form of moodboards and aesthetic design directions. This stage aimed to establish a conceptual foundation aligned with the visual characteristics of Wayang Kamasan. The results of this stage were then evaluated through the first depth interview conducted with stakeholders and expert informants to obtain feedback regarding the suitability of the concept and visual direction.

The next phase was Experimental Stage 2, which involved a more detailed design development process, including moodboard revisions, book layout arrangement, illustration and visual element creation, cover design, and organization of the book structure. After this stage, a second depth interview was conducted to validate the content, particularly regarding the historical aspects of Wayang Kamasan. The research then continued to Experimental Stage 3, which focused on refining the design based on previous evaluations. At this stage, material exploration, production cost analysis, and overall design finalization were carried out. To ensure the quality of the final output, a third depth interview was conducted involving stakeholders, professional designers, and printing and material experts to assess both technical and aesthetic aspects.

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In addition, the selection of Wayang Kamasan paintings used as documentation objects was conducted through a purposive sampling approach based on the objectives of the visual archive book design. The documentation objects consisted of Wayang Kamasan painting collections owned by Museum Puri Lukisan. According to museum records, a total of 23 Wayang Kamasan paintings served as the primary source of visual documentation in this study. The selection of these objects was carried out through

coordination and discussions with Museum Puri Lukisan, particularly with the Collection Restoration and Conservation division, to ensure their relevance to the design objectives. All 23 paintings were utilized as documentation sources to obtain a more comprehensive representation of the visual characteristics, narrative structures, forms, and ornamental elements found in the Wayang Kamasan painting tradition. Through this approach, the documentation process was expected to comprehensively record the visual identity and traditional visual conventions of Wayang Kamasan as part of cultural preservation efforts.

3. Results and Discussions

3.1 Documentation Approach in Cultural Preservation

The documentation approach in designing the visual archive book of Wayang Kamasan paintings was used as the foundation for the processes of recording, collecting, and organizing visual information related to this traditional artwork. Documentation is not merely understood as a process of data storage, but also as an effort to record various forms of visual information that contain cultural, historical, and artistic values. In the context of this design, documentation plays an important role in preserving the visual record of Wayang Kamasan paintings through a systematically organized archival medium.

In the design of the Wayang Kamasan visual archive book, the documentation approach was implemented through the direct collection of visual data from artworks found in museums, art studios, and selected collections. The visual archive book documents museum collections of Wayang Kamasan paintings as part of an effort to visually archive artworks that are still preserved today. The documentation process involved recording detailed visual elements of the paintings, including wayang figures, ornamental patterns, visual compositions, colors, and narrative structures contained within the artworks.

In addition to documenting the artworks as a whole, the documentation process was also carried out more deeply on the visual conventions of Wayang Kamasan. This documentation was conducted through detailed depictions of each character component, such as the form of the *gelung* or head ornament, facial features, character expressions, body positions and poses, clothing attributes, and decorative ornaments found in the paintings. This approach was intended to record the visual identity and distinctive characteristics of Wayang Kamasan that have been passed down through generations within the tradition of classical Balinese painting.

3.2 Design Process Flow of the Book

The design process of the Wayang Kamasan visual archive book was carried out through several systematically arranged stages using an experimental approach. This method was implemented to support the process of visual exploration, concept development, and gradual design evaluation in order to produce a book design that aligns with the objectives of documenting and visually archiving Wayang Kamasan. Each stage of the design process was conducted continuously through experimentation, validation through interviews, and design revisions based on observations and feedback from informants and related stakeholders.

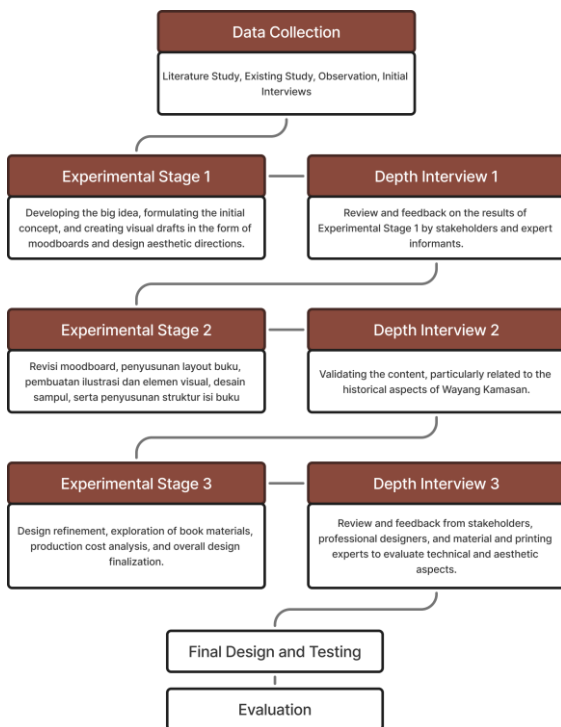


Figure 2. Book Design Process Flow

Through this design process flow, each stage was carried out progressively and iteratively to ensure that the visual archive book would not only systematically organize the visual documentation of Wayang Kamasan, but also represent its visual identity, cultural values, and distinctive characteristics within a structured book medium.

3.3 Structure and Organization of the Book

The structure and organization of the Wayang Kamasan visual archive book were developed based on the anatomy of a book as the fundamental system for arranging visual and textual information in a structured manner. According to [11], book anatomy refers to the basic structure that composes a book as a whole, both in terms of content and presentation system. In general, a book consists of three main sections: the front matter,

the body text or main content, and the back matter. Each of these sections has a different function, yet they support one another in delivering information systematically and in an organized manner.

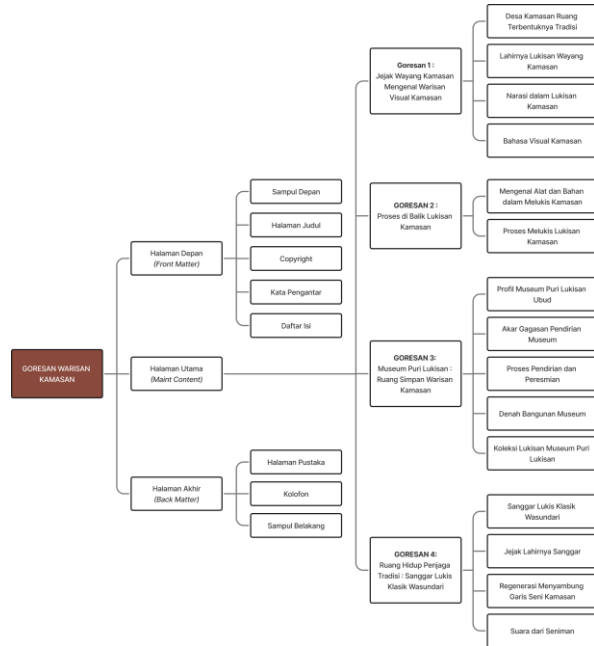


Figure 3. Book Content Structure

In the design of this visual book, the front matter functions as the opening and introductory section that presents the initial information of the book. This section consists of the front cover, title page, copyright page, foreword, and table of contents. The arrangement of the front matter aims to provide the identity of the book while helping readers understand the structure of the information presented within it. In addition to serving as an introduction, this section also becomes the beginning of the reader's visual experience before entering the main discussion of Wayang Kamasan.

The main content or body text serves as the core section for delivering information in the Wayang Kamasan visual archive book. The content structure is organized into several sections under the title "Goresan" as a representation of the visual journey of Wayang Kamasan. The content is arranged sequentially to build a systematic flow of information, beginning with the introduction to the history and visual identity of Wayang Kamasan, followed by the painting process, museum documentation, and documentation of art studios as spaces for practicing traditional painting.

Meanwhile, the back matter functions as the closing section of the book, consisting of the bibliography page, colophon, and back cover. This section serves to complement supporting information while providing the final identity of the book. Through the application of this book anatomy structure, the arrangement of visual and textual information within the Wayang

Kamasan visual archive book can be organized more systematically and coherently, thereby supporting the book's function as a medium of visual documentation and cultural preservation.

To reach readers from various backgrounds, the visual book presents information using formal, simple, and easily understandable diction. Narrative sentences are used to explain the history and construct the storyline regarding the development of Wayang Kamasan. In addition, descriptive sentences are applied to explain visual forms, artistic characteristics, painting processes, and stages related to Wayang Kamasan painting. This language approach is intended to ensure that the visual and cultural information presented in the book can be communicated more effectively without reducing the academic and documentary value of the content [12].

3.4 Grid and Layout

The layout design of the visual archive book was developed based on its primary function as a visual documentation medium, where the artworks serve as the main focus of presentation. Therefore, the layout structure was designed to support information readability while preserving the visual prominence of the Wayang Kamasan paintings presented throughout the book.

The book employs a multi-column grid system consisting of two columns per page, which is applied consistently across most sections. This grid system was selected to create a more organized reading flow while dividing textual content into manageable segments, thereby improving readability and facilitating information comprehension. In addition, the two-column structure provides greater flexibility in arranging the relationship between text, images, and captions within a single page composition.

In its implementation, the layout is not applied rigidly but is adapted according to the specific requirements of the content. Pages containing narrative information utilize the grid structure to maintain consistency and establish a coherent visual rhythm. Conversely, pages dedicated to artwork presentation allocate larger visual spaces to images, allowing readers to observe the details, composition, and ornamental characteristics of the paintings more clearly.

To further enhance the visual experience, several pages incorporate full-page image layouts, particularly within section-opening spreads. This approach creates visual pauses within the reading sequence while emphasizing the aesthetic value of the artworks. Through the combination of a structured grid system and flexible layout compositions, the book is designed to balance informational clarity with visual appreciation, supporting its role as a visual archive and cultural documentation medium.

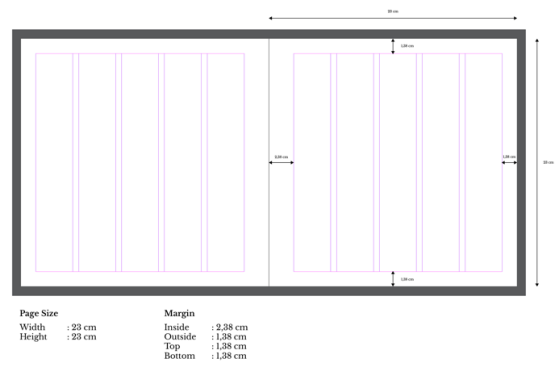


Figure .4 Multi-Column Grid Layout Used Throughout the Book Design

3. Conclusions

Based on the results of the research and design process, it can be concluded that the qualitative visual documentation approach was effectively applied in the design of the Wayang Kamasan visual archive book as an effort to preserve traditional visual identity. This approach enables the processes of recording, collecting, and archiving visual information to be carried out systematically and in a structured manner, allowing various distinctive visual elements of Wayang Kamasan, such as figure forms, facial characteristics, attributes, and decorative ornaments, to be well documented as part of Bali's visual cultural heritage.

The implementation of experimental stages in the design process contributed significantly to the development of an adaptive and sustainable design outcome. Through stages that included problem identification, data collection, concept exploration, editorial design development, stakeholder validation, and finalization, the design process was able to produce outcomes that were conceptually and visually relevant. The gradual validation process also ensured that the resulting design aligned with the documentation needs and cultural context presented in the study.

In addition, the application of a systematic book anatomy structure, consisting of front matter, main content, and back matter, supported the presentation of information in a coherent, informative, and communicative manner. The arrangement of content based on a documentation flow, beginning with history, artistic processes, collection documentation, and the existence of art studios, strengthened the function of the book not only as a visual archive medium but also as an educational medium.

Therefore, the designed Wayang Kamasan visual archive book functions not only as a documentary medium, but also as a strategy for cultural preservation capable of recording, storing, and maintaining the continuity of traditional visual identity. This research is expected to contribute to the development of visual

documentation practices in traditional art and to serve as a reference for designing similar media in the context of cultural preservation in the future.

Acknowledgements

The author declares no conflict of interest.

Author Contributions Statement

Name of Author	C	M	So	Va	Fo	I	R	D	W
inayaka Putri	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Dwitasari Rabendra	✓	✓						✓	✓
Yudistira Alamin Sayatman		✓						✓	✓

C : Conceptualization I : Investigation
 M : Methodology R : Resources
 So : Software D : Data Curation
 Va : Validation W : Writing - Review
 Fo : Formal analysis

Conflict of Interest Statement

Authors state no conflict of interest.

Data Availability

The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request. The research data consist of visual documentation, observation results, and supporting design data used as part of the research and development process of the Wayang Kamasan visual archive book.

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