

TRIDHATU ALBUM: 'DAMALUNG BLUEPRINT' AS INSPIRATION FOR INSTALLATION ARTWORKS

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Abstract. This study project aims to produce interactive installation artworks that represent the local wisdom values of Damalung, including spirituality, social harmony, peace, cultural preservation, and divinity. Inspired by the experimental music album Damalung Blueprint by the group Tridhatu, the works reinterpret 400 years of historical and cultural transformations in the Merbabu region. Through a creative process involving research, material experimentation, and conceptual reflection, five multisensory installations were developed. Each piece engages audiences through visual, auditory, tactile, and symbolic elements to foster reflection and dialogue. The results demonstrate that this approach effectively conveys cultural meaning while offering a profound aesthetic experience. Audience enthusiasm toward the interactivity and atmosphere of the works serves as an indicator of success. This project contributes to the discourse of contemporary art by exploring installation art rooted in local wisdom.

Keywords: Tridhatu, Damalung Blueprint, Interactive, Local Wisdom, Contemporary, and Installation Art

1. Introduction

Visual art does not merely function as a medium of aesthetic expression; it also serves as a space for reflecting on cultural identity, spirituality, and collective memory. In contemporary practice, cross-media and interdisciplinary approaches are becoming increasingly prominent, including collaborations between visual art and experimental music. One compelling strategy is transforming musical compositions into conceptual foundations for visual installations. Music, in this context, functions not only as background accompaniment but as a powerful trigger for emotional, symbolic, and spiritual engagement in artistic creation (Merriam, 1964; Fitri, 2024).

The experimental album Damalung Blueprint by Tridhatu exemplifies this interdisciplinary dialogue. The album stems from a cultural research project centered on Mount Merbabu, historically referred to as Damalung in ancient Javanese manuscripts (Noorduyn, 1982). This mountain holds deep cultural and spiritual significance as a site of ascetic practice, religious learning, and manuscript production (Sumarno, Anjani, & Agusta, 2020). Tridhatu interprets this cultural landscape through sound, utilizing traditional instruments such as the karinding, didjeridu, and layur, as well as field recordings and experimental techniques to construct meditative and contemplative sonic environments (Perkumpulan Seni-Budaya Tridhatu, 2023).

This project responds to the increasing detachment of younger generations, especially Generation Z, from spiritual and cultural heritage. Globalization and digitization have reshaped cultural consumption patterns, distancing society from traditional forms of spirituality and philosophical grounding (Khoiriyah & Sinaga, 2017). In response, installation art was chosen as the most appropriate visual medium for this project. Installation offers a multisensory platform that combines visual, auditory, tactile, and interactive elements to bridge contemporary experience with ancestral values (Rosenthal, 2003).

The five installation artworks created in this project translate the auditory experience of the album into visual and spatial environments, designed to immerse the audience in reflective encounters. These installations are not passive objects but interactive, dynamic spaces that call for audience participation. As Bishop (2005) emphasizes, installation art invites viewers to enter physically and psychologically into the work, turning spectators into co-creators of meaning. Through the use of sound, light, motion, incense, and spatial design, the artworks transform exhibition spaces into sites of contemplation.

Each artwork conveys a distinct but interconnected narrative inspired by Damalung's core values, spirituality, preservation, peace, divinity, and social harmony. For instance, the piece *Rinuwat Rawat* utilizes a transparent mountain form, embedded with video art and symbolic imagery of water, hands, and growing flora, to represent a journey of spiritual purification and cultural care. Other pieces employ visual metaphors such as distorted Javanese script to signify the erosion of ancestral knowledge and the urgency of cultural reconnection (Sumarno et al., 2020; Susanti, 2017; Wiryamartana, 1993).

Aesthetic considerations in this project emphasize the primacy of conceptual strength and audience interaction over decorative form. As Mujiyono, Haryanto, & Fiyanto, (2024) argue, aesthetics in contemporary art extend beyond formal beauty into experiential and critical domains. This is in line with further analysis by (Mujiyono & Haryanto, 2025), who describe intellectual aesthetics as those that prioritize discourse over visual beauty and emphasize the role of innovative ideas in opening new horizons of understanding.

Material selection further deepens the conceptual foundation. Recycled wood, plywood, soil, paper, pipes, LED light, and recorded sound are deliberately chosen to symbolize the interconnection between humans, the natural world, and spiritual consciousness. Visual design principles, unity, balance, contrast, proportion, and emphasis, are employed not merely for composition but to reinforce each piece's symbolic and emotional resonance (Mujiyono, 2021).

By integrating Tridhatu's experimental music with contemporary installation strategies, this project proposes a transformative art experience that reactivates the cultural and spiritual legacy of Damalung in the present. The installations function not only as aesthetic objects but as cultural artifacts, offering alternative spaces for contemplation, reconnection, and meaning-making in an era of rapid change.

The method applied in this artistic creation project follows the Artistic Creation approach proposed by Kartika, (2016), which consists of four main stages: exploration, experimentation, reflection, and realization. Each phase was conducted in a systematic manner to produce

interactive installation artworks that reflect the noble values explored through the Damalung Blueprint research project by Tridhatu.

1.1 Exploration (Etic and Emic Research)

Two research approaches were applied:

- **Etic Approach:** A literature review was conducted on the Damalung Blueprint album and book, as well as other texts that explore the values of Damalung, local Merbabu mountain traditions, and associated visual languages.

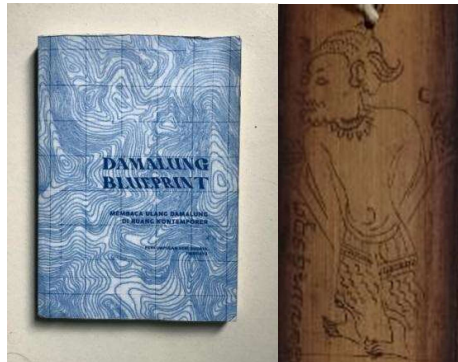


Figure 1. Reference Library

Source : Author's Documentation (2024)

- **Emic Approach:** In-depth interviews were carried out with relevant cultural practitioners and artists, including Andy Sueb and Aristyakuver (from Tridhatu), Denni Apriyanto (artist), and Davy Raka/Birdpeace (Javanese street artist). Field observations were also conducted across eight cultural sites listed in the Damalung Blueprint publication to enrich contextual understanding.



Figure 2. Interview with Tridhatu

Source : Author's Documentation (2024)

1.2 Experimentation

This phase involved testing materials and tools such as PVC pipes, plywood, plastic mica sheets, ink, and electronic components (LEDs, guitar pickups, and contact microphones). These experiments focused on technical feasibility, visual aesthetics, sound interaction, and lighting design to construct a reflective atmosphere characteristic of Damalung narratives.

1.3 Reflection

Conceptual metaphors and aesthetic elements were explored through iterative sketching and design development. Multiple artwork prototypes were produced, evaluated, and refined. The most

suitable designs based on thematic consistency, visual coherence, and audience engagement, were selected for final realization.

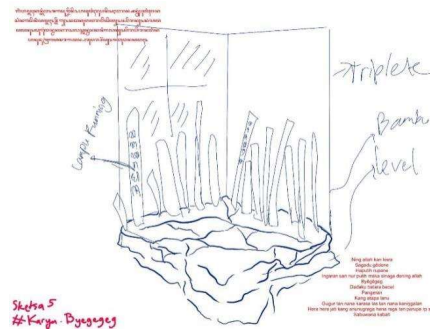


Figure 3. Final sketch of the work "Byegegeg"
Source : Author's Documentation (2024)

1.4 Realization

The final phase involved three major sub-stages:

1.4.1 Materialization

Main materials such as PVC pipes were shaped using heat (candle), inscribed with transliterated Javanese characters derived from Damalung song lyrics, and perforated using mini grinders or electric drills.



Figure 4. Materialization
Source : Author's Documentation (2024)

1.4.2 Detailing

Pipes were base-coated with black paint to reduce light leakage, and frosted mica sheets were inserted to soften and sharpen the projected text. Lighting positions and structural details were thoroughly adjusted to ensure aesthetic precision.



Figure 5. Detailing

Source : Author's Documentation (2024)

1.4.3 Finishing

Artworks were assembled on their respective bases, cable management for LED systems was arranged, and the overall installation was tested to ensure full interactivity, coherence, and intended narrative experience.



Figure 6. Finishing

Source : Author's Documentation (2024)

2. Description and analysis of works

The Results and Discussion section presents a systematic analysis of the artwork, starting from the visualization (photos), followed by technical specifications (title, year, media, dimensions), comprehensive visual description (appearance, elements, subject, style, technique, aesthetic organization), to the interpretation of the meaning of "Damalung" in the work. A detailed explanation and classification of the aspects of the installation works produced will be presented in this section.

2.1 Artwork 1



Figure 7. Artwork 1 *Rinuwat Rawat*
Source : Author's Documentation (2024)

Artwork Description:

Title : *Rinuwat Rawat*
 Size : 110 x 65 x 80 cm
 Medium : TV, Plywood, and Plastic
 Year : 2024

The installation artwork titled *Rinuwat Rawat* features a transparent mountain form that symbolically represents Mount Merbabu as a spiritual space and a focal point for contemplation. This installation is constructed from wood, plywood, and frosted plastic mica, shaped to resemble the silhouette of Mount Merbabu and placed on a black pedestal. Inside the mountain is a television screen displaying a video art piece accompanied by the song *Hangruwat Hangrawat* by Tridhatu. The video presents a sequence of visual elements such as crashing waves, raised hands, a mother's hand holding a baby's hand, swaying grass, distorted Javanese Kawi script, and blooming flowers, all arranged into a poetic and symbolic visual narrative. The combination of sound and imagery forms an immersive experience that invites the audience into a meditative and reflective atmosphere.

Visually, the work does not portray the mountain in a realistic manner; instead, it appears as a semi-transparent form with a hazy effect that evokes a spiritual and imaginative impression. The mountain serves as a symbol of memory and energy, a repository where cultural values are stored, forgotten, and potentially revived. The blurred surface of the mountain functions not only as a visual aesthetic but also as a metaphor for cultural heritage that is becoming obscure and forgotten over time. The distorted Javanese script reinforces this narrative, illustrating a generational disconnect and lack of understanding of ancestral heritage when it is not presented within critical and reflective spaces.

From an aesthetic standpoint, this work emphasizes the importance of ideas and critical thinking in art. The visual is not the final goal, but a medium to convey ideas about nurturing culture, spirituality, and the erosion of noble values. The aesthetics are contemplative and subtle, not aiming for visual grandeur, but rather offering a space for silence, pause, and reflection. The atmosphere is created through dim blue lighting and ambient sound that harmonizes with the spatial setting.

In terms of audience participation, *Rinuwat Rawat* does not feature direct physical interactivity, but rather builds emotional and intellectual interaction. The audience is invited to engage mentally, interpreting the symbolic meanings of the visual and auditory elements presented. For instance, the crashing waves at the beginning of the video depict the process of "letting go" as part of an individual's spiritual journey toward inner peace. Raised hands symbolize hope, the mother and baby's hands represent care, while blooming flowers convey new hope following phases of awareness and acceptance.

The distorted script becomes a symbol of cultural values fading due to the loss of context and understanding.

Overall, this artwork functions as a space of *ruwatan*, a spiritual process to cleanse, nurture, and restore lost values. The mountain, as the central form, symbolizes strength and tranquility, while also serving as a reminder that culture can “dissolve” if not preserved. Thus, *Rinuwat Rawat* delivers a message to society, particularly those living around Mount Merbabu, that the noble values of local culture are not only worth remembering, but also must be cared for, re-examined, and revitalized to remain relevant in the face of changing times.

2.2 Artwork 2

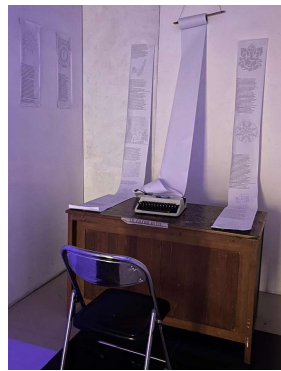


Figure 8. Artwork 2 *Seperti Diiris-iris*
Source : Author's Documentation (2024)

Artwork Description:

Title	: <i>Seperti Diiris-iris</i>
Size	: Variable Dimensions
Medium	: Typewriter, Paper, Contact Mic, Guitar Effect, Speaker
Year	: 2024

The installation artwork *Like Being Sliced* features an old typewriter placed on an office desk complete with a chair, creating an inviting atmosphere for viewers to sit and engage directly. A white paper roll hangs from the wall, threading into the typewriter and flowing down to the floor. The machine remains functional, producing sound with each keystroke. On either side of the typewriter are two sheets of paper containing writings and symbols derived from the ancient Javanese prose *Kunjarakarna*. Additionally, a roll of paper approximately 20 meters long is provided for the audience to use, allowing them to write directly making this an interactive and participatory piece.

Visually and structurally, the work adopts a minimalist yet symbolically rich approach. The vertical lines formed by the hanging paper evoke a spiritual and contemplative impression, suggesting a connection between the higher and lower realms between the transcendent and the everyday. The typewriter, placed at the center of the installation, serves as the axis or “spiritual pivot” of the reflective experience, where the act of writing becomes a gateway to self-exploration. The purplish-blue lighting adds a sense of silence and intimacy, deepening the contemplative atmosphere.

The title *Like Being Sliced* serves as a conceptual entry point, evoking the slow yet painful process of self-discovery akin to peeling away layers of ego, wounds, and social constructs. Each keystroke not only generates text but also symbolizes inner excavation. In this context, the typewriter’s

sound becomes an auditory marker of reflective moments. The work comments on contemporary social phenomena, where people tend to know and judge others more than they know themselves, as seen in social media behavior.

Interactivity is not merely a visual addition but an integral conceptual element. The audience is invited to write as a contemplative ritual, engaging with spiritual values and wisdom echoed in Kunjarakarna. The text emphasizes that liberation from suffering cannot be attained solely through surface-level good behavior, but through wisdom and deep understanding of the self and the universe. Here, writing becomes a tool for enhancing self-awareness, managing emotions, and evaluating personal strengths and weaknesses.

By combining ancient text, the typewriter as a symbolic object, and audience participation, this piece transcends the role of a visual artifact. It becomes an active space for reflection, challenging viewers to ask: Do we truly know ourselves, or are we merely projections of others' expectations and judgments? Like *Being Sliced* emerges as a spiritual and intellectual space, where silence holds power and writing becomes a path toward personal liberation.

2.3 Artwork 3



Figure 9. Artwork 3 *Maha*
Source : Author's Documentation (2024)

Artwork Description:

Title : *Maha*
Size : Variable Dimensions
Medium : Ink on Paper
Year : 2024

This third installation consists of eight sheets of paper measuring 60x500 cm, suspended vertically to form a spatial configuration reminiscent of a portal or visual altar. Each sheet features illustrations of human figures (deities) and mythological animals drawn from Javanese cultural traditions. The illustrations are rendered in ink: two in red, two in blue, and four in black. In addition to the drawings, the work incorporates Javanese script that has been visually distorted, symbolizing the fragmentation of traditional knowledge. At the bottom of the piece, there are clay incense holders (*kendil*) and candles that serve as lighting accents, reinforcing the sacred and contemplative ambiance.

The vertical arrangement of the sheets directs the viewer's gaze and movement, constructing a meditative path within the gallery space. These five-meter-long paper fields go beyond being visual

mediums, they become narrative artifacts that carry traces of myth, prayer, and Javanese spiritual legacy. The use of dim blue lighting and the scent of incense creates a multisensory experience, engaging both sight and smell while evoking a deep emotional response.

The transformation of Javanese script into unfamiliar but visually resonant forms represents the erosion of cultural knowledge in modern society. Figurative depictions of deities and mythological creatures serve as symbols of interconnectedness within the Javanese worldview, emphasizing the unity between all aspects of existence. Rather than prompting direct physical participation, the work relies on psychological engagement, inviting viewers to read, interpret, and feel. The visual narrative encourages reflection on spiritual and cultural values as a form of reverence for ancestors and a way to preserve heritage.

Overall, this piece invites the audience to contemplate the meaning of interconnectedness among humans, nature, and spirituality. Through its calming blue lighting and the mystical presence of incense, the work offers a contemplative space, prompting a return to essential values amidst the rapid and transient nature of modern life.

2.4 Artwork 4



Figure 10. Artwork 4 All *Damalung*
Source : Author's Documentation (2024)

Artwork Description:

Title	: All Damalung
Size	: Variable Dimensions
Medium	: Plywood, LED, Plastic
Year	: 2024

The All Damalung installation presents an immersive multisensory environment constructed through three vertical panels arranged to form an inward-facing corner in a darkened room. Each panel is filled with glowing Javanese characters, lit from within using LED lights against a black backdrop to create strong visual contrast. The central panel, which serves as the focal point, features a yellow light combined with blue lighting from a rotary lamp, producing a dynamic moving glow that enhances the spiritual atmosphere. Complementing the visual elements, sound compositions from Tridhatu play in the background, reinforcing the magical and emotional tone of the installation. Through the fusion of

light, color, sound, and ancient texts, the work creates a deeply reflective experience that invites introspection and cultural appreciation.

Aesthetically and conceptually, this piece responds to the loss of the Ngadoman (Damalung) inscription, a cultural artifact taken during colonial times over two centuries ago. This loss becomes a metaphor for the erosion of knowledge, moral values, and spirituality. The installation reimagines the artifact in a contemporary form that is not just visually compelling but also emotionally and intellectually engaging. The angled arrangement of the panels creates symmetrical balance, while the repetition of script and the motion of light establish a rhythmic visual flow. The central panel, with its distinctive yellow lighting and dynamic rotary beam, acts as the main point of interest, drawing the viewer's attention first.

The contrast between blue and yellow light goes beyond aesthetics, symbolizing the tension between past and present. The yellow light at the center reflects decay and forgetfulness, referencing the lost Damalung inscription, while the rotating blue light represents a vortex of energy, spirituality, and knowledge, ever-turning and seeking renewal. This swirling light also symbolizes the movement of Tridhatu as a gesture of cultural revitalization in a modern context. The use of recycled plywood materials signals a message of sustainability, reinforcing the notion that this installation serves not only as an artistic expression, but as a medium for cultural preservation and deep spiritual reflection on humanity's connection to nature, ancestral values, and our role in a constantly changing world.

2.5 Artwork 5

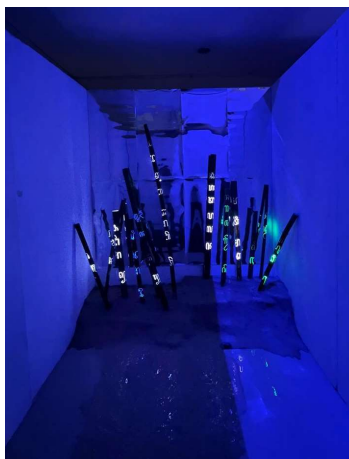


Figure 11. Artwork 5 *Byegegeg*
Source : Author's Documentation (2024)

Artwork Description:

Title	: <i>Byegegeg</i>
Size	: Variable Dimensions
Medium	: Pipe, LED, Styrofoam, Soil
Year	: 2024

The installation piece *Byegegeg* features a vertical arrangement of bamboo poles inscribed with glowing Javanese script. These poles, varied in height and spaced closely on a soil-covered base, are illuminated from within using colorful LED lights, producing a rhythmic and immersive visual field. The contrast between the dominant black color of the bamboo and the vibrant neon light enhances the sense of presence and intensity in the dimly lit exhibition space. Uniquely, the piece invites direct audience interaction, when visitors stomp their feet or shout, the bamboo responds with bursts of light,

creating a dynamic, multisensory experience.

Formally, *Byegegeg* aligns with contemporary installation aesthetics by emphasizing concept and audience participation over mere visual spectacle. The interactivity is not just a gimmick, it becomes a metaphor for spiritual resilience: even when shaken or disturbed, the light of faith within remains unextinguished. The vertical presence of the bamboo symbolizes strength, adaptability, and spiritual endurance. The inscriptions, composed of Islamic quotes written in Javanese script, anchor the work within a spiritual narrative, while also broadening its interpretive openness beyond any single religious framework.

The piece draws inspiration from Tridhatu's experimental music track of the same name, which incorporates Islamic textual themes. This installation translates those sonic and lyrical messages into a spatial-visual experience, emphasizing that spiritual conviction should remain unshaken by external pressures or the shifting tides of time. The glowing bamboo represents the human form: despite being jolted, it remains lit from within by faith. Writing sacred text in a local script like Javanese bridges traditional values and contemporary expression, inviting viewers to reflect on the fusion of faith, culture, and modern identity. In doing so, *Byegegeg* resists dogma and instead offers a contemplative, inclusive space where each participant may derive personal meaning, exploring how light, body, tradition, and belief intertwine in today's shifting spiritual landscape.

3 Conclusion

The study project entitled "Tridhatu Album: 'Damalung Blueprint' As Inspiration For Installation Artworks" resulted in five interactive installation artworks inspired by the local wisdom values of Damalung, combined with the experimental musical compositions found in the Tridhatu Album: Damalung Blueprint. These works explore philosophical, spiritual, and ecological themes, realized through immersive installations that invite direct audience engagement via sound, light, and movement.

Beyond serving as a medium of aesthetic expression, the installations offer contemplative spaces that reflect on humanity's relationship with nature and the pressing need to preserve local heritage in the face of modern pressures. Utilizing materials such as wood, soil, plastic, pipes, experimental sounds, and lights, the artist has crafted a multisensory experience that is both reflective and evocative. The creative process uncovered various technical and artistic approaches, including conceptual mapping based on the album's musical narrative as a structural and thematic foundation.

This study demonstrates the potential of installation art as a cross-disciplinary medium that bridges music, tradition, and interactive technology within a dynamic discursive space. These artworks aim to foster deeper appreciation for Damalung's cultural heritage while opening broader dialogues between art, spirituality, and local wisdom in contemporary society.

As an artist, the writer recommends continuous innovation by exploring new materials and technologies such as sound-responsive lighting or interactive projection mapping to enrich the multisensory dimensions of audience experience. Expanding into public spaces and collaborating with musicians or other artists could lead to more complex, multidisciplinary works that offer profound artistic impact.

For appreciators, it is encouraged to engage fully with installation art by activating all the senses, sight, hearing, touch, and even smell, for a deeper and more holistic understanding. This immersive interaction can serve as a space for personal reflection, both emotionally and intellectually.

To researchers, an interdisciplinary approach that bridges visual art, music, and technology is highly recommended to deepen the understanding of installation art. Comprehensive documentation, including photography, video, and academic publications, is vital for the preservation and scholarly development of such works. Future research is expected to contribute meaningfully to academic discourse in contemporary art, especially in the context of installation art rooted in local wisdom.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors state that there is no conflict of interest in the publication of this article

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