

THE DEATH OF MAMMALS AT THE EDGE OF EXTINCTION: A CRITIQUE OF EXPLOITATION IN DRAWING ART

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Abstract. Mammals constitute an important component of biodiversity within the Kingdom Animalia and possess distinctive characteristics that enable them to occupy a wide range of habitats. However, each year, mammalian species face unavoidable threats from hunting, illegal trade, and habitat scarcity, all of which endanger wild populations. In addition, the lack of public literacy regarding protected mammal species has become a major contributing factor to the decline of their populations. This art project aims to (1) produce digital drawing artworks that emphasize the artist's expression of concern regarding mammalian deaths on the brink of extinction. The method employed is the exploration of ideas through the creative process of digital drawing. Data were collected through observation of social phenomena, literature review, artwork analysis, and personal reflection on issues related to animal extinction. The central idea established in this project highlights the strong correlation between illegal hunting, land conversion, and the lack of conservation efforts, which collectively contribute to the extinction of various endangered species in Indonesia. The outcomes of this art project consist of eight digital drawing works that visualize several endangered mammals native to Indonesia. Hatching techniques and soft brush strokes are applied to create a realistic atmosphere that reflects the animals' natural habitats. The conclusion of this art project indicates that realistic digital drawing is an effective medium for representing endangered animals in Indonesia, as it is capable of conveying comprehensively the various factors contributing to their threatened status. The resulting artworks are expected to encourage audiences to actively participate in the preservation of wildlife throughout Indonesia.

Keywords: Mammals, Critique of Exploitation, Drawing Art

1. Introduction

Mammals are vertebrate animals characterized by the presence of mammary glands and the growth of hair, either covering the entire body or partially. Mammals reproduce by giving birth and nourish their offspring through lactation (Ardyansyah, 2023). Mammals constitute an integral component of biodiversity within the Kingdom Animalia and possess several distinctive characteristics, particularly in terms of physiology, neural structure, and levels of intelligence. These attributes enable mammals to inhabit a wide range of environments and achieve extensive geographical distribution. Indonesia is home to approximately 515 mammal species, of which 36% are endemic to the country. Within the primate order, mammals play a vital role in sustaining ecological balance in forested areas (Putri et al., 2021). Furthermore, mammals hold significant roles in food chain systems across almost all ecosystems and support ecosystem stability within conservation areas (Zulkarnain et al., 2018).

Based on body size, mammals are classified into small and large mammals. Small mammals are defined as species with a maximum body weight of less than five kilograms, while the remaining species are categorized as large mammals (Putra et al., 2022). The presence of

mammals in natural environments can be identified through various signs, including footprints, feces, food remains, traces of body rubbing or tusk sharpening, scratch marks, bodily fluids, and wallows, which indicate their existence in the wild (Zulkarnain et al., 2018).

The issue of mammalian scarcity must not be ignored, as it threatens wild populations, while endemic mammal species represent a form of natural heritage that must be preserved. The lack of public literacy regarding protected mammal species has become a major factor contributing to the decline of these animals in the wild. This condition serves as the primary motivation for the author to respond to these issues through a personal approach, namely the creation of digital drawing artworks. Amid this sense of absence, hope invites us to reconsider the relationship between humans and nature, fostering an awareness that conservation is not a choice but a collective responsibility.

In expressing this concern, the author translates their ideas into artistic works that represent the threats of mammalian extinction in the wild, with the hope of providing meaningful educational value and serving as a positive contribution to efforts aimed at conserving endangered mammal species in Indonesia.

2. Results and Discussion

2.1 Babirusa (Babyrousa)

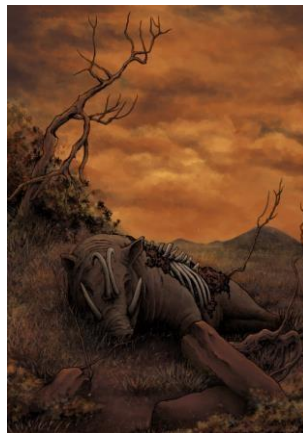


Figure 1. Babi Rusa

Source: Personal Documentation, 2025

2.1.1. Artwork Specifications

Title	: Babi Rusa (Babyrousa)
Media	: Digital Art on Print
Size	: 59,4 x 84,1
Year	: 2025

2.1.2. Artwork Description

This artwork represents a babirusa (Babyrousa) lying dead in the middle of a grassland near a forest that appears silent and desolate. The body has begun to decompose, with skeletal remains visibly emerging from the animal's back. The surrounding trees appear lifeless, and several fragments of decaying wood are scattered across the area. The grassland looks withered and arid, while the evening sky enhances the overall visual harmony of the composition.

2.1.3. Formal Analysis

Line elements are present across various objects in the artwork, including the carcass of the babirusa, dead trees, wooden logs, dried grass, and the mountainous background. Lines of varying thickness are employed to create diverse textural effects on different objects. Lines function to define forms and establish spatial depth within the composition. Color serves to distinguish objects from the background, thereby generating a sense of dimensionality within the artwork.

The babirusa is rendered using its natural mammalian coloration through a monochromatic color scheme. The sky background employs analogous colors closely related hues such as dark red, brown, orange, and cream. Environmental elements such as mountains, forests, and grasslands are depicted using monochromatic brown tones with varying levels of brightness. The mountains are rendered in brown with subtle orange gradations, the forest utilizes brown with orange shading, and the grassland features a brown base with yellow gradations. To intensify the dramatic impression of death, dominant cream tones are applied for highlights and shadows. Dark tones and shadows are emphasized through highly contrasting lighting effects, allowing the main subject to stand out as the primary focal point of the artwork.

2.1.4. Message analysis

The artwork titled Babirusa portrays a babirusa depicted as dead and reduced to a carcass within an arid grassland in a forest setting. The depiction of carcasses or dead animals has frequently been employed in visual art, particularly drawing, as a reflective expression by artists to remind viewers of life and mortality inevitable realities of existence. The essence of the babirusa in this artwork serves as a reminder of the importance of protecting biodiversity, especially endangered mammal species in Indonesia. The babirusa represents an invaluable natural heritage whose existence enriches life on Earth; losing them would mean losing a vital component of the ecosystem itself.

2.2. Sumatran Tiger (*Panthera Tigris Sumatrae*)



Figure 2. Sumatran Tiger

Source: Personal Documentation, 2025.

2.2.1. Artwork Specifications

Title	: Sumatran Tiger (<i>Panthera tigris sumatrae</i>)
Media	: Digital Art on Print
Size	: 59,4 x 84,1
Year	: 2025

2.2.2. Artwork Description

This artwork depicts the skeletal remains of a Sumatran tiger (*Panthera tigris sumatrae*) lying between two rocks and surrounding bushes within a grassy area, with only small traces of skin and flesh remaining on its back. Nearby, several scattered bones from other individuals of the same species are visible. Beneath the subject lies arid soil, while above it stretches an evening sky at dusk.

2.2.3. Formal Analysis

Line elements are present in various objects within the artwork, including the carcass of the Sumatran tiger, dried grass, taro plants, and rocks in the background. Lines of varying thickness are employed to create diverse textural effects across different objects. Lines function to define forms and establish spatial depth within the composition. Color serves to differentiate objects from the background, thereby creating a sense of dimensionality in the artwork.

The artwork employs the natural coloration of the tiger through a monochromatic color scheme, utilizing a single dominant hue orange to enhance realism by adjusting variations in brightness according to the artist's intent. The sky background features closely related colors

such as dark red, brown, orange, and cream. Environmental elements, including rocks, dried grass, and taro plants, are rendered in monochromatic brown tones with varying degrees of brightness. The rocks are depicted in brown with subtle orange gradations, the taro plants in brown with orange shading, and the dried grass in a brown base with white gradations. To intensify the dramatic impression of the tiger's carcass, dominant cream tones are applied to the bones for highlights and shadow effects.

2.2.4. Message analysis

The artwork titled *Sumatran Tiger* portrays a deceased Sumatran tiger reduced to a carcass near rocky terrain, accompanied by sparse grass and taro plants. The depiction of carcasses or dead animals is frequently employed in visual art particularly in drawing as a reflective expression by artists to remind viewers of the inevitability of life and death. The essence of the Sumatran tiger in this artwork underscores the importance of protecting biodiversity, especially endangered mammal species in Indonesia. As an extremely rare and invaluable animal, the Sumatran tiger enriches life on Earth; its loss would signify the disappearance of a crucial component of the ecosystem.

2.3. Sun Bear (*Helarctos Malayanus*)



Figure 3. Sun Bear

Source: Personal Documentation, 2025

2.3.1. Artwork Specifications

Title	: Sun Bear (<i>Helarctos malayanus</i>)
Media	: Digital Art on Print
Size	: 59,4 x 84,1
Year	: 2025

2.3.2. Artwork Description

This artwork depicts two sun bears (*Helarctos malayanus*) lying dead with their bodies still intact. One figure is positioned sideways, while the other faces forward. The bears are situated among dense bushes within a forested area. Surrounding them are trees that remain standing but appear dry and lifeless, with their leaves completely absent.

2.3.3. Formal Analysis

Line elements are present across various objects in the artwork, including the carcasses of the sun bears, dead trees, dried grass, and the forest background. Lines of varying thickness are employed to create diverse textural variations across the objects. Lines function to define form and establish spatial depth within the composition. Color serves to distinguish objects from the background, thereby generating a sense of dimensionality in the artwork.

The artwork employs the natural coloration of the sun bear through a monochromatic color scheme, using a single dominant hue to enhance realism by varying levels of brightness. The evening sky background utilizes analogous colors closely related hues such as dark red, brown, orange, and cream. Environmental elements such as forest trees and grasslands are rendered in monochromatic brown tones with differing brightness intensities. The forest trees feature brown tones with subtle orange gradations, while the arid grassland incorporates brown with white

gradations. To intensify the dramatic impression of death, dominant cream tones are applied for highlights and shadow effects. Dark tones and pronounced shadows are created through highly contrasting lighting, allowing the primary subjects to emerge as the focal point of the composition.

2.3.4. Message analysis

The artwork titled *Sun Bear* portrays two sun bears depicted as dead and reduced to carcasses within an arid grassland in a forest environment. The representation of carcasses or deceased animals is frequently employed in visual art particularly drawing as an expressive reflection by artists to remind viewers of the inevitability of life and death. The essence of the sun bear in this artwork underscores the importance of protecting biodiversity, especially endangered mammal species in Indonesia.

2.4. Javan Rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros Sondaicus*)

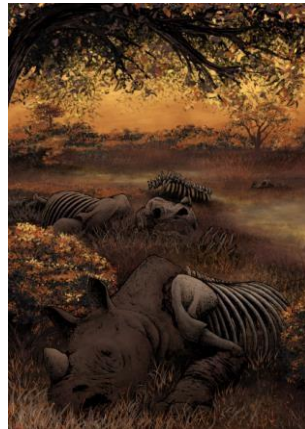


Figure 4 Javan Rhinoceros

Source: Personal Documentation, 2025

2.4.1. Artwork Specifications

Title	: Javan Rhinoceros (<i>Rhinoceros sondaicus</i>)
Media	: Digital Art on Print
Size	: 59,4 x 84,1
Year	: 2025

2.4.2. Artwork Description

This artwork depicts a Javan rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros sondaicus*) lying dead, with its decomposing body retaining only skin from the head to the chest, while the remainder consists solely of skeletal remains. Additionally, four Javan rhinoceros carcasses are portrayed as reduced entirely to bones. These carcasses are situated within a savanna grassland area, with several trees growing nearby. The grass, shrubs, and trees appear withered and yellowing, while the sky reflects an evening dusk atmosphere.

2.4.3. Formal Analysis

Line elements are present across various objects within the artwork, including the carcasses of the Javan rhinoceroses, trees, shrubs, and arid grasslands. Lines of varying thickness are employed to create diverse textural variations across the objects. Lines function to define forms and establish spatial depth within the composition. Color serves to differentiate objects from the background, thereby generating a sense of dimensionality in the artwork.

The artwork utilizes the natural coloration of the Javan rhinoceros through a monochromatic color scheme, employing a single dominant hue to enhance realism by adjusting variations in brightness according to the artist's intent. The evening sky background features analogous colors closely related hues such as dark red, brown, orange, and cream. Environmental elements including trees, shrubs, and grasslands are rendered in monochromatic brown tones with varying brightness intensities. The trees are depicted in brown with subtle black gradations, shrubs in brown with yellow gradations, and the arid grassland in brown with white gradations. To intensify the dramatic impression of death, dominant orange tones are applied for highlights and shadow effects.

2.4.4. Message analysis

The artwork titled *Javan Rhinoceros* portrays three Javan rhinoceroses, depicted either partially covered with remaining skin or reduced entirely to skeletal remains, situated within an arid grassland environment. The representation of carcasses or dead animals is frequently employed in visual art particularly drawing as an expressive reflection by artists to remind viewers of the inevitability of life and death. The essence of the Javan rhinoceros in this artwork underscores the importance of protecting biodiversity, particularly endangered mammal species in Indonesia.

2.5. Javan Banteng (Bos Javanicus)



Figure 5. Javan Banteng

Source: Personal Documentation, 2025

2.5.1. Artwork Specifications

Title	: Javan Banteng (Bos Javanicus)
Media	: Digital Art on Print
Size	: 59,4 x 84,1
Year	: 2025

2.5.2. Artwork Description

This artwork depicts two Javan banteng (*Bos javanicus*) lying dead across an expanse of dry grassland. One figure is portrayed with its body largely intact, although skeletal elements have begun to emerge in the abdominal area, while the other banteng is depicted as reduced entirely to skeletal remains. Both carcasses are situated within their natural habitat grasslands surrounded by mountainous terrain under an evening dusk sky.

2.5.3. Formal Analysis

Line elements are present across various objects in the artwork, including the carcasses of the Javan banteng, the surrounding mountains, and the arid grassland. Lines of varying thickness are employed to create diverse textural variations. Lines function to define form and establish spatial depth within the composition. Color is utilized to distinguish objects from the background, thereby generating a sense of dimensionality within the artwork.

The artwork employs the natural coloration of the Javan banteng through a monochromatic color scheme, using a single dominant hue to enhance realism by varying levels of brightness in accordance with the artist's intent. The evening sky background features analogous colors closely related hues such as dark red, brown, orange, and cream. Environmental elements, including mountains and grasslands, are rendered in monochromatic brown tones with differing brightness intensities. The mountains are depicted in brown with subtle orange gradations, while the arid grassland features brown tones with white gradations. To intensify the dramatic impression of death, dominant orange tones are applied for highlights and shadow effects. Dark tones and shadows are produced through highly contrasting lighting, allowing the primary subjects to emerge as the focal point of the composition.

2.5.4. Message Analysis

The artwork titled Javan Banteng portrays two Javan banteng depicted as deceased one partially retaining its skin and the other reduced to skeletal remains situated within an arid grassland in a mountainous area. The depiction of carcasses or dead animals is frequently employed in visual art, particularly drawing, as an expressive reminder of the inevitability of life and death. The essence of the Javan Banteng in this artwork emphasizes the importance of protecting biodiversity, especially endangered mammal species in Indonesia.

2.6. Sumatran Elephant (*Elephas Maximus Sumatranus*)

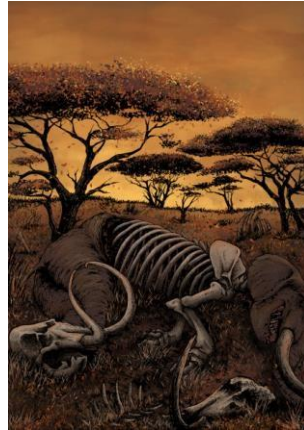


Figure 6. Sumatran Elephant

Source: Personal Documentation, 2025

2.6.1. Artwork Specifications

Title	: Sumatran Elephant (<i>Elephas Maximus Sumatranus</i>)
Media	: Digital Art on Print
Size	: 59,4 x 84,1
Year	: 2025

2.6.2. Artwork Description

This artwork portrays a Sumatran elephant (*Elephas Maximus Sumatranus*) that has died and decomposed in the middle of a bleak and arid grassland. Several elephant bones are scattered across the area, and one elephant is depicted with its body still intact, although skin remains only on the head and rear portions. Within the grassland, several trees continue to grow, some bearing relatively fresh leaves while others have begun to yellow. In the background, an evening sky appears in shades of yellow, orange, and brown.

2.6.3. Formal Analysis

Line elements are present throughout various objects in the artwork, including the elephant carcasses, trees, and arid grassland. Lines of varying thickness are employed to create diverse textural variations across the objects. Lines function to define form and establish spatial depth within the composition. Color is utilized to distinguish objects from the background, thereby creating a sense of dimensionality in the artwork.

The artwork employs the natural coloration of the Sumatran elephant through a monochromatic color scheme, using a single dominant hue to enhance realism by varying degrees of brightness according to artistic intent. The evening sky background features analogous colors such as dark red, brown, orange, and cream. Environmental elements, including trees and arid grassland, are rendered in monochromatic brown tones with differing brightness intensities. Trees are depicted using brown with subtle black and orange gradations, while the dry grassland incorporates brown with white gradations. To intensify the dramatic impression of death, dominant orange tones are applied for highlights and shadow effects.

2.6.4. Message analysis

The artwork titled Sumatran Elephant depicts two Sumatran elephants portrayed as deceased one partially retaining its skin and the other reduced to skeletal remains situated within an arid grassland surrounded by forest vegetation. The depiction of carcasses or dead animals is frequently employed in visual art, particularly drawing, as an expressive reminder of the inevitability of life and death. The essence of the Sumatran elephant in this artwork emphasizes the importance of protecting biodiversity, especially endangered mammal species in Indonesia.

2.7. Bawean Deer (Axis Kuhlii)



Figure 7. Bawean Deer

Source: Personal Documentation, 2025

2.7.1. Artwork Specifications

Title : Bawean Deer (Axis Kuhlii)
Media : Digital Art on Print
Size : 59,4 x 84,1
Year : 2025

2.7.2. Artwork Description

This artwork depicts a lifeless Bawean deer (*Axis kuhlii*), represented by a remaining head and several surrounding bones. Additional skull fragments of the same species are also visible. The deer's head lies among rocks within a dry and arid grassland, with fallen tree logs resting above it. In the background, the evening sky gradually fades, transitioning toward night.

2.7.3. Formal Analysis

Line elements are present across various objects in the artwork, including the deer carcass, rocks, tree logs, and arid grassland. Lines of varying thickness are employed to create diverse textural variations across the objects. Lines function to define form and establish spatial depth within the composition.

The artwork employs the natural coloration of the Bawean deer through a monochromatic color scheme, using a single dominant hue to enhance realism by adjusting brightness levels according to artistic needs. The evening sky background features analogous colors such as dark red, brown, orange, and cream. Environmental elements including rocks, tree logs, and arid grassland are rendered in monochromatic brown tones with varying brightness intensities. Rocks are depicted in brown with subtle black and orange gradations, tree logs in brown with yellow gradations, and the arid grassland in brown with white gradations. To intensify the dramatic impression of death, dominant orange tones are applied for highlights and shadow effects.

2.7.4. Message analysis

The artwork titled Bawean Deer portrays three Bawean deer depicted as deceased some partially retaining their skin while others are reduced to skeletal remains situated within an arid grassland and rocky environment. The depiction of carcasses or dead animals is frequently employed in visual art, particularly drawing, as an expressive reminder of the inevitability of life and death. The essence of the Bawean deer in this artwork emphasizes the importance of protecting biodiversity, particularly endangered mammal species in Indonesia.

2.8. Bornean Orangutan (Pongo Pygmaeus)

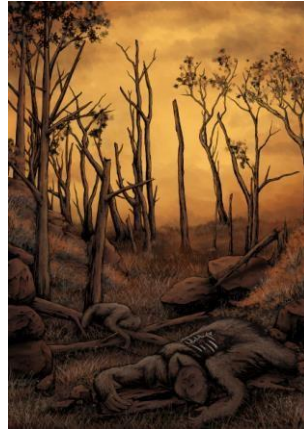


Figure 8. Bornean Orangutan

Source: Personal Documentation, 2025

2.8.1. Artwork Specifications

Title : Bornean Orangutan (Pongo Pygmaeus)
Media : Digital Art on Print
Size : 59,4 x 84,1
Year : 2025

2.8.2. Artwork Description

This artwork depicts two Bornean orangutans (*Pongo pygmaeus*) lying dead atop fallen tree logs within a grassland area near a forest. One figure faces forward, while the other faces backward. Surrounding them are scattered rocks, standing and fallen trees, as well as trees that appear to be dying. In the background, the evening sky gradually darkens, signaling the transition into night.

2.8.3. Formal Analysis

Line elements are present across various objects in the artwork, including the orangutan carcasses, rocks, dying trees, and arid grassland. Lines of varying thickness are employed to create diverse textural variations across the objects. Lines function to define form and establish spatial depth within the composition.

The artwork employs the natural coloration of the Bornean orangutan through a monochromatic color scheme, using a single dominant hue to enhance realism by varying brightness levels according to artistic intent. The evening sky background features analogous colors such as dark red, brown, orange, and cream. Environmental elements including rocks, dying trees, and arid grassland are rendered in monochromatic brown tones with varying brightness intensities. Rocks are depicted in brown with subtle black and orange gradations, dying trees in brown with orange gradations, and the arid grassland in brown with white gradations. To intensify the dramatic impression of death, dominant orange tones are applied for highlights and shadow effects.

2.8.4. Message analysis

The artwork titled Bornean Orangutan portrays two Bornean orangutans depicted as deceased, with portions of their skin still intact, situated within an arid forest environment marked by numerous dying trees. The depiction of carcasses or dead animals is frequently employed in visual art, particularly drawing, as an expressive reminder of the inevitability of life and death. The essence of the Bornean orangutan in this artwork emphasizes the importance of protecting biodiversity, particularly endangered mammal species in Indonesia.

3. Conclusion

Based on the outcomes of the project entitled "Mammalian Death on the Brink of Extinction: A Critique of Exploitation in Drawing Art," which resulted in the creation of eight digital drawing artworks, the following conclusions can be drawn:

The author has successfully produced drawing artworks that visually represent endangered mammal species in Indonesia, along with their environments that have been exploited by human activities. In describing the artworks, the author employs two analytical approaches: visual analysis and message-oriented analysis. In the visual aspect, the discussion focuses on the artwork itself, visual elements, principles of visual art, and the harmonious use of color. The author explores a variety of endangered mammal species found in Indonesia. In the message-oriented aspect, the author analyzes and narrates representations of mammals depicted as dead or as carcasses, with the intention of expressing sorrow, despair, tragedy, and death experienced by endangered mammal species in Indonesia. This dramatic portrayal reflects the ongoing decline of their populations caused by daily practices of hunting, trade, and environmental exploitation carried out by humans.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author states that there is no conflict of interest in the publication of this article.

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