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The Transformation of Tonyraka Art Gallery in Ubud, Bali: Repositioning Institutional Governance Through the Establishment of An Art Lounge

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ABSTRACT

The transformation of art galleries into hybrid spaces that combine art and social activities reflects a significant shift in contemporary arts governance. Tonyraka Art Gallery in Ubud, Bali, offers an illuminating example: initially established as an art gallery focused on exhibitions and collections, the institution later added an Art Lounge as a dining and gathering area directly connected to the gallery and garden. This article aims to analyse how the establishment of the Art Lounge repositions Tonyraka's governance, while simultaneously reshaping its social role as a creative public space. The study employs a qualitative case study approach, drawing on an analysis of institutional documents (website and official materials), media coverage, and online audience traces. The analysis is conducted through three lenses: (1) a "before-after" timeline of the Art Lounge's establishment; (2) a spatial mapping of the gallery-garden-lounge configuration; and (3) an interpretive reading of institutional narratives and audience narratives. Preliminary findings indicate that the Art Lounge functions not merely as an additional business unit, but as a governance device that broadens the composition of the audience, extends the duration and intensity of engagement, and negotiates aesthetic and market logics within the framework of Balinese local values. This study offers a conceptual contribution to debates on arts governance in the Global South by highlighting the role of small-scale hybrid art spaces in shaping practices of creative public space and audience engagement models rooted in everyday life.

Introduction

The transformation of arts institutions over the past few decades shows a shift from relatively closed, representational entities toward spaces that are more fluid, participatory, and networked. Galleries and museums increasingly combine exhibition functions with social, educational, and economic roles within a single spatial configuration. This change is closely linked to the rise of the creative city discourse, in which art and culture are positioned as drivers of innovation and urban dynamism. Within this conceptual framework, art spaces undergo a redefinition, shifting from mere containers for exhibitions to dynamic arenas for governance experiments and the

negotiation of social relations. This approach is reflected in analyses of the relationship between cultural spaces, policy, and everyday urban practices in various creative cities [1].

The concept of cultural governance examines how cultural policy, institutions, and non-state actors jointly shape the arts ecosystem at the urban level. Issues of institutional legitimacy, resource distribution, and public participation in metropolitan contexts constitute essential elements that cannot be separated from broader debates on cultural governance. Art spaces are not only subject to artistic logics, but are also bound up with policy logics, economic imperatives, and shifting societal expectations. This perspective requires that arts institutions be read as nodes within networks of power and value, rather than as autonomous entities. Such an approach is elaborated comprehensively in studies that explore the entanglement of cities, cultural policy, and governance [2]

The development of audience engagement studies has shifted the orientation from an emphasis on visitor numbers toward the quality of audiences' engagement with the arts. This shift entails an understanding that audiences are no longer viewed as passive spectators, but as partners in processes of meaning making and artistic exchange. A range of terms such as audience development, participation, and collaborative creation has been used to describe this spectrum of engagement. However, the literature also notes conceptual ambiguities between "engaging audiences" as an institutional strategy and "audience engagement" as a lived experience on the part of visitors. Critical analyses of the engagement paradigm underscore the need for more context sensitive readings of how arts institutions relate to, and build relationships with, their audiences [3].

Audience engagement is strongly shaped by the ways in which art is presented in space, whether in enclosed venues or in public settings. Studies of art in public space emphasize that artworks are not only visual objects, but also triggers for conversation, encounter, and the negotiation of meaning among visitors. Spatial design, the placement of works, and the presence of other activities around art play a crucial role in determining whether opportunities for interaction are opened up or constrained. Art spaces that make room for everyday activities such as eating, talking, or working have the potential to broaden these forms of engagement. Public art can therefore be read as a conversation piece that connects artwork, space, and audience across different scales [4].

Bali, and Ubud in particular, is often positioned as a key example of a cultural landscape shaped by the convergence of tourism, art, and creative practices. The area is known as a meeting point between local traditions, spirituality, and contemporary art, sustained by a steady flow of international visitors. Within the framework of the

creative city, Ubud can be understood as a space where creative industries, including art galleries, grow alongside the everyday cultural practices of local communities. Art spaces in Ubud serve not only collectors, but also tourists and local residents who seek both aesthetic and social experiences. Studies on the application of the creative city idea in Asia emphasize that the relationship between creative industries, local culture, and everyday life is always contextual and cannot be reduced to a single, uniform model [5].

Tonyraka Art Gallery in Ubud has emerged as an example of an arts institution that has undergone a layered process of transformation. Originating from a family practice in woodcarving and craft, Tonyraka gradually developed into a gallery presenting modern and contemporary Indonesian art. In response to the dynamics of tourism and the art ecosystem in Ubud, the gallery later added an Art Lounge as a dining and gathering space that is visually and physically connected to the exhibition rooms and the garden. The addition of the Art Lounge marks a significant shift: visitors can experience art not only through formal exhibitions but also through the presence of artworks within a relaxed, everyday atmosphere. This representation is clearly evident in a number of international profiles that highlight how Tonyraka weaves local heritage together with a more open and accessible art space experience for diverse visitors [6]. The transformation of Tonyraka from a gallery into a gallery with an Art Lounge raises important questions about the repositioning of arts governance within the institution. The addition of dining and meeting areas is not merely a physical change, but also a shift in how the gallery organises its programmes, manages its audiences, and understands its role within Ubud's cultural ecosystem. The Art Lounge broadens the visitor base by attracting individuals who are initially drawn to the atmosphere and food rather than to art itself. At the same time, this development requires new negotiations between the gallery's artistic orientation and the need for organisational sustainability. Critical studies of the creative city have shown that tensions between cultural logics and economic logics are a defining feature that must be read carefully in each local context [7].

Although the literature on creative cities, cultural governance, and audience engagement has grown rapidly, there are still relatively few studies that examine the transformation of small family run galleries in the Global South into hybrid art spaces that combine art and relaxed social environments. Much of the existing work focuses on major museums or institutions in global cities in Europe and North America, while examples of galleries in Southeast Asia such as Tonyraka tend to fall outside academic attention. Yet these cases offer distinct perspectives on how art spaces negotiate tourism, local culture, and everyday practices. This article seeks to address that gap by positioning Tonyraka as a case study of governance transformation, read through changes in spatial configuration and modes of relating to audiences. The need for more

context sensitive readings of audience development strategies in arts institutions has been identified as a key agenda in recent waves of research on engagement [3].

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative approach with a single case study design, focusing on the transformation of Tonyraka Art Gallery in Ubud, Bali, into a hybrid art space through the establishment of an Art Lounge. This approach was chosen because it allows for a detailed and contextual reading of the transformation process, including shifts in the institution's role, ways of managing audiences, and the meanings attached to space. A case study design is considered appropriate when the researcher seeks to answer "how" and "why" questions in situations where the phenomenon under investigation cannot be clearly separated from its context. Tonyraka is understood as a node situated at the intersection of art, local culture, and tourism in Ubud, which calls for a comprehensive analysis. These methodological considerations are in line with qualitative case study guidelines that emphasise depth and richness in the description of context [8]

The primary data sources for this study consist of institutional documents, media coverage, and online audience traces related to Tonyraka Art Gallery and the Art Lounge. Institutional documents include texts on the official website, descriptions of the vision and mission, historical information, and published programme materials; media coverage comprises profile articles in tourism portals and lifestyle magazines; while online audience traces include visitor reviews as well as posts and comments on social media. All textual and visual materials are treated as narrative traces that record how the institution presents itself and how visitors recount their experiences. The material was gathered through a systematic search using targeted keywords, followed by archiving of relevant pages and noting sections that relate to themes of transformation, space, and audience engagement. The use of digital materials as primary sources is consistent with the growing practice of digital observation and ethnography in contemporary cultural research [9]

The collected data were analysed through repeated close reading and the writing of reflective notes in order to identify patterns, contrasts, and recurrent elements in both institutional and audience narratives. This process generated a set of themes related to the chronology of transformation, the spatial configuration of the gallery, garden, and lounge, and the repositioning of Tonyraka's social role and governance. These themes were then brought into dialogue with the theoretical frameworks of arts governance, audience engagement, and creative public space to formulate an argument about the role of the Art Lounge as a catalyst for the repositioning of governance. The credibility of the findings was supported by cross checking multiple sources (official documents, media coverage, and audience voices) and by providing a transparent account of the analytic steps undertaken. Ethical considerations were addressed by

relying solely on publicly available data and by avoiding the disclosure of specific individual identities [10], [11].

Results and Discussion

Temporal Transformation: From Gallery to Hybrid Art Space

The first set of findings relates to the temporal dimension of Tonyraka's transformation, from an art gallery into a hybrid art space that integrates an Art Lounge. Institutional narratives and media coverage indicate a relatively clear sequence of phases: an initial phase as a family enterprise in woodcarving, a consolidation phase as a modern and contemporary art gallery, and an expansion phase through the establishment of an Art Lounge connected to the gallery and the garden. This change is not merely an addition of commercial functions, but signals a shift in how the institution positions itself within Ubud's art and tourism ecosystem. Whereas in its early phase Tonyraka was more oriented towards collections and art networks, in the subsequent phase it began to articulate itself as a space intended to be more widely accessible to diverse visitors. This gradual pattern resonates with the view that cultural institutions in creative cities tend to undergo functional evolution in response to changing social and economic contexts [2].

Transformasi temporal tersebut terlihat pula dalam cara lembaga mendeskripsikan misinya dari waktu ke waktu. Pada narasi yang lebih awal, fokus Tonyraka terletak pada upaya mengangkat seni modern dan kontemporer Indonesia dalam konteks Ubud sebagai pusat seni. Pada narasi yang lebih mutakhir, khususnya terkait Art Lounge, muncul penekanan baru bahwa seni adalah bagian dari kehidupan sehari-hari dan tidak seharusnya terbatas pada ruang pamer formal. Perubahan diksi ini mengindikasikan pergeseran orientasi dari galeri sebagai ruang representasi seni menuju galeri sebagai ruang hidup di mana seni, makanan, dan pertemuan sosial saling berkelindan. Dimensi 'dulu-sekarang' tercermin tidak hanya pada infrastruktur fisik, tetapi juga pada perubahan wacana kelembagaan yang menyertai reposisi tersebut [12].

Spatial Configuration and Patterns of Audience Engagement

The second set of findings concerns the spatial configuration of the gallery, garden, and Art Lounge, and its implications for patterns of audience engagement. Visual documentation and official descriptions show that the gallery, garden, and Art Lounge are arranged as an interconnected whole rather than as separate units. Visitors can move relatively freely from the exhibition space to seating areas in the garden or to the dining area, and back again. This configuration generates a non linear trajectory of experience: a person may arrive to eat and then become interested in exploring the artworks in the gallery, or conversely come for an exhibition and then extend their stay

in the Art Lounge. Such circular patterns of movement open up possibilities for longer and more layered forms of engagement than those typically associated with traditional gallery visits [4].

In terms of audience engagement, this spatial configuration encourages a shift from brief, transactional encounters of coming, looking, and leaving toward a form of attachment that more closely resembles dwelling within an art space. Visitors are no longer positioned solely as spectators facing artworks, but as users of the space who sit, converse, eat, and move intermittently between artworks and other activities. Engagement with art may occur in an intense mode, for instance when someone deliberately comes for an exhibition, or in a more implicit mode when a person initially drawn by the atmosphere and food gradually begins to notice the surrounding works. From an engagement perspective, this situation generates a spectrum of experiences ranging from fleeting contact to reflective and emotional involvement. This aligns withthe idea that engagement encompasses phases of anticipation, immediate experience, and post visit aftereffects [3].

Tonyraka's spatial configuration also illustrates how the boundary between art space and everyday space can be negotiated in subtle ways. The gallery area, often perceived as serious, and the more relaxed lounge are not rigidly separated, but connected through a gradient of atmospheres that allows visitors to move from one ambience to another. The presence of artworks around seating and dining areas situates art at the centre of conversation and routine activity, rather than solely as an object visited on a special occasion. This reinforces the notion of the hybrid art space as a form of small scale creative public space, where aesthetics, conversation, and everyday embodied presence intersect. The spatial arrangement in this case is consistent with arguments that design and spatial layout function as important instruments for activating the creative and social potential of cities [13].

Art Lounge as a Device for Repositioning Governance

The third set of findings concerns how the Art Lounge functions as a device for repositioning governance at Tonyraka. From an institutional perspective, the Art Lounge broadens the categories of actors who interact with the gallery, encompassing not only artists, curators, and collectors, but also local families, tourists seeking ambience, creative workers using the space to work, and communities gathering for small events. This expansion of the audience base demands new ways of thinking about programming, opening hours, communication, and spatial use. Governance no longer deals solely with exhibition cycles and the sale of artworks, but also with the rhythms of daily visits, visitor experiences beyond formal exhibition moments, and more spontaneous forms of presence. Such dynamics illustrate that the governance of arts

institutions increasingly operates at the intersection between artistic aspirations and demands for openness to the public [2].

The Art Lounge also reshapes how Tonyraka articulates value and legitimacy in the eyes of the public. Through its official narratives, the institution emphasises that art is presented as part of everyday life and the warmth of Bali, rather than as something separate and exclusive. This narrative shifts the image of the gallery from a space potentially associated with collector exclusivity to one that is more welcoming and accessible to a wider range of visitors. At the same time, Tonyraka's reputation as a gallery consistently committed to contemporary art is maintained through its exhibition programmes and artistic networks. The Art Lounge thus plays a role in managing the tension between maintaining artistic quality and expanding the institution's social and economic support base, a dynamic widely noted in studies of arts organisations in the era of the creative city [14]. The Art Lounge also reshapes how Tonyraka articulates value and legitimacy in the eyes of the public. Through its official narratives, the institution emphasises that art is presented as part of everyday life and the warmth of Bali, rather than as something separate and exclusive. This narrative shifts the image of the gallery from a space potentially associated with collector exclusivity to one that is more welcoming and accessible to a wider range of visitors. At the same time, Tonyraka's reputation as a gallery consistently committed to contemporary art is maintained through its exhibition programmes and artistic networks. The Art Lounge thus plays a role in managing the tension between maintaining artistic quality and expanding the institution's social and economic support base, a dynamic widely noted in studies of arts organisations in the era of the creative city [15].

Hybrid Art Space as a Family-Scale Creative Public Space

The combination of temporal transformation, spatial configuration, and governance repositioning portrays Tonyraka as a family-scale hybrid art space that functions as a creative public space. In contrast to many studies that focus on major museums or city-led initiatives, this case shows how a family-run gallery gradually responds to the dynamics of tourism and the creative economy by developing a more open and layered form of space. The Art Lounge helps manage the tension between the need to maintain artistic quality and the desire to broaden the institution's social and economic support base, a dynamic widely noted in studies of arts organisations in the era of the creative city [14] This rearticulation gives Tonyraka a distinctive position among art spaces in Ubud, namely as a place where contemporary art practice, local heritage, and visitors' everyday lives intersect. Examples such as this enrich our understanding of the diversity of creative public space models beyond the context of Western cities [14].

From a broader perspective, the findings of this study indicate that the transformation of a gallery into a hybrid art space cannot be reduced to a mere act of

commercialisation. Rather, the creation of a space such as the Art Lounge can be understood as a governance strategy that seeks to maintain social relevance, extend audience reach, and respond to economic conditions without entirely sacrificing artistic commitments. Tonyraka demonstrates that such a strategy can operate at a micro scale, with resources and a history that differ markedly from those of larger institutions that often dominate the literature. This case study opens up new possibilities for interpreting how art spaces in the Global South develop creative forms for managing the relationship between art, the economy, and everyday life. The findings also reaffirm the role of art spaces as arenas that function not only aesthetically, but also socially and economically, and underscore the need for further empirical research onhybrid art space practices in diverse local contexts to enrich debates on arts governance and creative public space. [16].

Discussion

The findings of this study affirm that the establishment of the Art Lounge at Tonyraka is not merely an addition of supporting facilities, but a means through which the institution repositions its governance within Ubud's art and tourism ecosystem. The decision to introduce a dining and meeting space clearly alters how the institution organises its programmes, structures the rhythm of visits, and shapes its relationships with audiences. This reinforces the view that cultural governance does not operate only at the level of policy and organisational structures, but is also enacted through spatial design and the orchestration of visitors' everyday experiences. The Tonyraka case shows that artistic logics and economic sustainability are not present as a simple dichotomy, but are negotiated through a hybrid spatial form that brings art into the midst of ordinary activities. In doing so, the study extends discussions of art governance that have hitherto relied heavily on examples drawn from large museums and institutions in global cities [2].

Creative public space as exemplified by Tonyraka shows how a family scale gallery can function as a lived public space rather than simply a site to be visited. The configuration of gallery, garden, and Art Lounge turns a visit to Tonyraka into a sequence of movements, conversations, and pauses that are not rigidly separated between "looking at art" and "enjoying the atmosphere." This condition is aligned with the idea that a city or place becomes creative when it provides room for encounters, imagination, and social experimentation, not merely physical infrastructure for cultural consumption. In Tonyraka's case, however, these dynamics unfold at a micro scale and are rooted in the history of a family enterprise rather than in top down municipal initiatives. The study thus suggests that models of creative public space are not confined to the level of city policy, but can also emerge from the everyday decisions of local cultural actors [13].

Another important contribution of this study lies in the field of audience engagement and audience development. The findings show that pathways into an art space do not always begin with an interest in the artworks themselves, but may also stem from an interest in ambience, food, or social recommendations. In this context, the Art Lounge functions as a side entrance that enables people who initially come to relax to gradually develop a sense of closeness to art and to the gallery space. This pattern reinforces the argument that engagement is best understood as a spectrum, ranging from brief contact to repeated involvement, shaped by how institutions design the trajectories of audience experience. Tonyraka demonstrates that expanding an audience base does not always have to rely on formal educational campaigns, but can also be achieved through the careful orchestration of spatial experiences that invite spontaneous and repeated visits [3].

Empirically, this study addresses a gap in the literature, which has rarely examined the transformation of family scale galleries in the Global South into hybrid art spaces. Many studies of hybrid art spaces and creative hubs are based on institutional examples from Europe or North America, so the experiences, strategies, and constraints of actors in Southeast Asia remain underrepresented. As a case study, Tonyraka provides evidence that local practitioners develop their own governance models and creative spatial forms in response to the pressures of tourism, economic conditions, and changing audience tastes. The conceptual novelty of this research lies in reading the Art Lounge as a governance device that mediates the shift in the gallery's role from an exhibition space to a creative public space that is inhabited in everyday life. This contribution opens up possibilities for reinterpreting many other "gallery cafés" not merely as commercial strategies, but as part of the politics of space and arts governance [17].

The use of three micro lenses namely time through a before and after comparison, space through the configuration of gallery, garden, and lounge, and narrative through institutional and audience accounts offers a methodological reading that can be useful for similar cases. Rather than placing emphasis on formal coding techniques, this study relies on repeated close reading and the writing of analytical narrative to map patterns of transformation and role repositioning. This strategy demonstrates that digital data such as promotional texts, media coverage, and visitor reviews can be transformed into rich material for reflection on governance and space, provided they are analysed systematically and brought into dialogue with appropriate theoretical frameworks. Such an approach has the potential to be further developed in other studies of art spaces in the platform era, especially when direct field access is limited. Tonyraka thus exemplifies how ethnography and spatial analysis can begin with careful reading of the digital traces left by an arts institution [9].

At the same time, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of this study so that readers do not overgeneralise its findings. Reliance on online data means that certain voices for instance visitors who are not active on review platforms or social media are likely to be underrepresented. In addition, in the absence of in depth interviews, the motives, considerations, and dilemmas of the managers can only be inferred in an indicative way from public narratives rather than from more complex personal reflections. Follow up studies could therefore enrich this picture through fieldwork, participant observation, and interviews with owners, staff, artists, and different categories of visitors. This article is best understood as an initial framework for examining Tonyraka's transformation, rather than as a final description that closes off other possible readings [11].

Conclusion

This article has shown that the establishment of the Art Lounge at Tonyraka Art Gallery constitutes a key moment that drives the institution's transformation from an exhibition gallery into a hybrid art space inhabited in everyday life. This transformation is marked not only by the addition of new spatial functions, but also by changes in how the institution understands its mission, presents itself, and cultivates relationships with its audiences within Ubud's art and tourism ecosystem. The temporal dimension of before and after the Art Lounge reveals a shift from an orientation centred on collections and exhibitions toward one that places encounters, conversation, and co presence within the space as integral parts of the art experience.

The configuration of gallery, garden, and Art Lounge positions Tonyraka as an example of a family scale creative public space, in which the boundary between looking at art and simply being in the space in a relaxed way is not rigidly separated. The way the space is arranged allows visitors to enter into art through multiple doorways: through interest in exhibitions, in ambience, or simply in the desire to be in that place. This pattern expands understandings of audience engagement, from short and formal encounters to layered and recurrent relationships shaped by trajectories of movement, conversation, and the collective memory of visitors. Within the framework of arts governance, the Art Lounge can be read as a repositioning device that helps Tonyraka negotiate the need to maintain artistic quality alongside demands for openness and social and economic sustainability.

Conceptually, the study contributes by reading the Art Lounge not merely as an additional facility, but as part of a governance strategy that shifts the gallery's position within networks of art and everyday life in Ubud. Empirically, the Tonyraka case amplifies the voices of family scale galleries in the Global South, which remain underrepresented in the literature on hybrid art spaces and creative cities. The limitations of this research, particularly its reliance on online data and the absence of

direct fieldwork, open up opportunities for follow up studies that combine participant observation and in depth interviews with managers, artists, and diverse categories of visitors. The interpretive framework of time, space, and narrative employed in this study allows for an in-depth understanding of the perspectives of managers, artists, and diverse categories of visitors. This analytic framework can also be applied to other art spaces in Indonesia and Southeast Asia to enrich scholarly debates on arts governance and the emerging forms of creative public space.

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