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Ki Ai Nirnur: Reinterpreting AI through Handcraft in the Visual Cultural Context of Bali

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ABSTRACT
The development of artificial intelligence (AI) has generated perceptions of its position as a threat to human creativity and artistic practice. This tends to frame AI in binary terms without considering the context and relationships between technology, humans, and culture. Hence, this study aims to examine how AI has been reinterpreted through handcraft and acquire meaning within the visual cultural context of Bali. Such a case happened through *Ki Ai Nirnur* by Putu Marmar Herayukti, not only as an *Ogoh-Ogoh* effigy artwork to deem negative forces (*Pengrupukan*) before *Nyepi* (Day of Silence), but also as a documentary film. This study employs a Visual Communication Design approach grounded in social semiotics and visual grammar, along with Fine Art readings on visual activism. Not only AI in *Ki Ai Nirnur* exists as a visual artefact that expresses technological intelligence, but also seeps through issues of human consciousness and responsibilities.

KEYWORDS
Ki Ai Nirnur, Artificial Intelligence, Visual Grammar, Social Semiotics, Visual Activism

Introduction

The development of Artificial Intelligence (AI), especially generative technology, have extended the ability of computational systems to generate text, images, music, and many more contents that were once very tight knit to human creativity. The existence of this advancing technology not only changes how humans produce and access information, but also influences the creation process in art and design. Zhou and Lee found that the use of generative AI in visual production could increase human creativity, even though at the same time changes of new visual characters happened [1]. Research on acts upon AI in the art practices also show that the technology development has become a part of argumentation upon creativity, autonomy, and human's position in the processes [2]. This change has placed AI not just as a

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technical tool, but also as a technology that started interacting like a human that is building ideas, creating artworks, and understanding creativity.

The relation of human creativity and AI creates a more complex problem when technology is underwood through a dichotomy between machines' abilities and human's uniqueness. The debate on the use of AI in art has shown a worriness upon the artwork's authenticity, artist's role, creativity ownership, along with the reduced human contribution to a creative process. Messer found that the involvement of AI in the art production process has influenced perceptions upon the artwork authenticity and the artist, especially when AI is implemented in the artwork [3]. Hou et al. research has also shown the influence of AI towards creativity is not a one man show as the effect could be different between the step of idea development and the step of design implementation [4]. This discovery shows AI's relation with creativity is not enough to be seen as the opposition of human versus technology. As this should be seen much broadly, how technology is used, how humans defend creativity agency, and how an artwork is formed through the socio-cultural process.

The understanding of technology is not separated from the social and cultural environment where the technology existed. A visual representation is a space of idea, identity, value, and cultural experience constructed through many visual sources. With a social-semiotic approach it sees the visual options as part of meaning processes connected to social contexts, message productions, along with the audience that receives and interprets it [5]. Research on multimodal visual communication also shows how composition, symbol, position and relation between visuals could form meanings through the relations of visual objects and its context [6]. This perspective becomes relevant when AI is placed in the context of Bali, as the transformation of technology ideas into the visuals not only related to technology representation, but also idiom, symbol, and cultural references that means to the public. The research on the visual cultural context of Bali shows the importance of understanding local visual characters through the representation of digital media is not far from the identity and cultural context baggage [7].

The relation of technology, human, and culture could be seen from the artistic practice that uses visual language to respond to contemporary issues. Ki Ai Nirnur by Putu Marmar Herayukti, or known as Marmarherz, collaborating with his local *banjar* youth community ST Gemeh Indah, presents an idea about AI through the effigy *Ogoh-Ogoh* for the cleansing *Pengrupukan* ritual before *Nyepi* day of silence, a Balinese Hindu religious day, which then extended as a documentary film. This *Ogoh-Ogoh* artwork sees futuristic technology meets Balinese visual idioms, hence AI could be read in the Balinese visual cultural context - a more local context within the cleansing ritual as well. This visual activism perspective shows how an artwork could function as a space to shape meanings upon the visual cultural context of Bali. As Mirzoeff explained, visual culture has never stopped responding to the fast changing world, including images as that is the essence of imagination, managing that for a better world by humans engaging with it - hence visual activism [8]. Fagerholm and Göransson also show how visual communication in the practice of activism could be used to build awareness and express contemporary issues through visual strategies [9]. With this structure it gives room to place Ki

Ai Nirnur as an artistic perspective in reading how AI is contextualised through the Balinese visual language.

The reading towards AI representation in Ki Ai Nirnur needs an approach that could connect it to the visual cultural context of Bali. Visual Communication Design has a strategic position in this process as it not only talks about its appearance, but also how the visual sources used to express the message and meanings. The social semiotics and visual grammar approach including forms, gestures, symbols, composition, materiality and the relation between objects as sources that have representational and communicative functions [5]. The use of this design approach in the cultural research also shows how a visualisation process can be part of an effort to connect knowledge, technology and cultural context in a more contextual communication [10]. The research means to examine how an idea of AI transformed into a visual cultural context of Bali through *Ki Ai Nirnur*. The focus includes the relation of technology, Balinese visual idioms, human consciousness, and responsibilities towards AI development.

Methods

This study employs an interpretive qualitative approach to understand the process of representing and constructing meanings of AI through visual language within the socio-cultural context of Bali. This approach was selected because the research object is not intended to be measured based on quantitative variables, but rather understood through the relationships among visual forms, creative ideas, cultural context, and the meanings associated with them. The positioning of *Ki Ai Nirnur* as an artistic perspective enables the study to examine the work as a space where technological ideas, artistic practices, and cultural contexts intersect. This qualitative research orientation is consistent with the view that creative activities need to be understood in relation to the social and cultural contexts that shape both the creative process and the resulting artifacts [11].

The research object is the representation of AI in *Ki Ai Nirnur* by Putu Marmar Herayukti, manifested through the form of an *Ogoh-Ogoh* and its further development into a documentary film. The research data consist of visual and contextual data. Visual data include documentation of the artwork, its physical form, gestures, symbols, composition, materiality, and technological elements incorporated into the work. Contextual data include information concerning the creative concept, the contexts of *Pengrupukan* and *Nyepi*, Balinese visual idioms, and supporting information related to the development of the work into a documentary film. The use of images and video as data enables visual aspects and cultural experiences to be examined as part of the knowledge-construction process, particularly when meaning cannot be fully reduced to verbal descriptions [12].

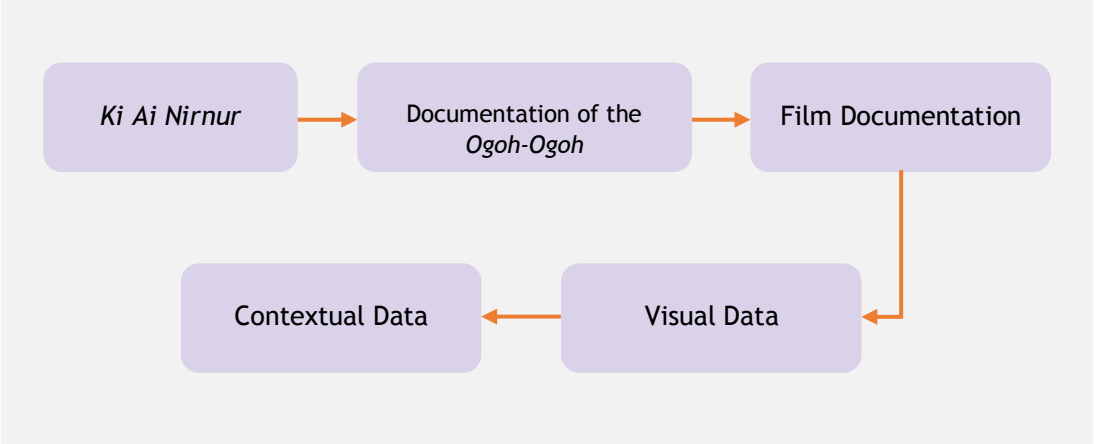


Figure 1. Research Data Flow Diagram
(Source: Author, 2026)

Data collection was conducted through documentation, visual observation, and the examination of contextual sources related to the artwork. Documentation was used to obtain visual records of the artwork in the form of photographs, videos, and relevant documentary materials [13]. Visual observation was conducted by examining the structure of forms, gestures, symbols, composition, materials, and the relationships among visual elements. Contextual inquiry was employed to understand the relationship between the representation of AI and the creative concept, Balinese cultural practices, and the ritual context underlying the presence of the artwork. The systematic use of visual data enables the study to connect the formal characteristics of an object with the social and cultural experiences that shape its meaning.

The unit of analysis was determined based on visual resources that play an important role in constructing the representation of AI. The elements analyzed include form, gesture, symbols, composition, materiality, and the integration of technological elements with Balinese visual idioms. Each element was not examined in isolation but situated within relationships among the visual elements to examine how the representation of AI is constructed visually [14]. This principle positions visual analysis as a multimodal process of interpretation that considers the relationships among different modes of representation in the construction of meaning.



Figure 2. Visual Analysis of *Ki Ai Nirnur*
(Source: Instagram @st.gemehindah)

The analysis was conducted through three interrelated stages of interpretation. The first stage identified representational elements to examine the objects, actions, gestures, and symbols depicted in the artwork. The second stage examined the interactive relationships established through viewpoint, gesture direction, distance, and visual positioning between the artwork and the viewer. The third stage analyzed the compositional structure through the placement of elements, visual hierarchy, salience, and the relationships between parts and the whole. This framework was employed to connect visual characteristics with the process of constructing social meaning, ensuring that the analysis did not remain limited to a description of form [15]. These trains of thoughts are then interpreted in the visual cultural context of Bali including the visual arts perspective of visual activism [8]. The interpretation led to the visual signs found through the ideas of creation upon the effigy *Ogoh-Ogoh* for the cleansing *Pengrupukan* ritual before *Nyepi* day of silence, a Balinese Hindu religious day, which then extended as a documentary film. The visual activism perspective will be used to look at how the artwork functions as a space to articulate contemporary matters including human relations to technology. The research on visual activism practices show how artwork could form public discussions with the artist's visual approaches and issues represented as a starting point.

At the end of the research through the synthetic visual findings, creation context and conceptual structure that is used, visual elements will be compared with the contextual information and the artworks documentation. This is to receive a sustained interpretation and to avoid singular readings. The triangulation of data and perspective could increase the depth of qualitative research interpretation so that a phenomenon can be checked from more than one information and reading [16].

Result

The findings show that the representation of artificial intelligence in *Ki Ai Nirnur* is shaped through a process of transforming technological ideas into visual language that intersects with artistic practice and the socio-cultural context of Bali. The interpretation of the findings focuses on the relationships among visual forms, the context of creation, and the meanings constructed through the integration of technological elements and Balinese visual idioms. The findings are presented progressively by examining *Ki Ai Nirnur* as an artistic perspective and identifying visual resources in the form of form, gesture, symbols, composition, and materiality. The relationships among these elements are examined to demonstrate how ideas about AI move from representations of technological intelligence toward questions of human consciousness and responsibility. The interpretation is subsequently synthesized to demonstrate a more contextual relationship among technology, humans, creativity, and culture.

A. Transformation of AI Ideas into Visual Representation

Artificial intelligence in *Ki Ai Nirnur* is not represented through a literal depiction of technology, but is transformed into an artistic form that brings technological ideas into dialogue with Balinese cultural experience. This transformation demonstrates the movement of an idea from the abstract realm into a visual form that can be observed, interpreted, and related to human concerns. The presence of AI in the artwork is not positioned merely as a computational tool, but as an idea of intelligence that has implications for how humans understand themselves. This finding demonstrates that the representation of AI acquires a cultural dimension when technological ideas are translated through a visual language that is connected to the social environment in which the artwork emerges. This position is consistent with studies of AI-based art, which indicate that the emergence of generative technologies has also shifted how creativity, novelty, and creative processes are understood within contemporary artistic practices [17].



Figure 3. Visual Characteristics of *Ki Ai Nirnur*
(Source: Instagram @st.gemehindah)

B. Ki Ai Nirnur as an Artistic Perspective

Ki Ai Nirnur demonstrates the important role of artistic practice in giving form to the abstract idea of AI. The work by Putu Marmar Herayukti takes the form of an *Ogoh-Ogoh* within the context of *Pengrupukan* preceding *Nyepi*, allowing the idea of AI to emerge through a cultural medium that already holds symbolic significance in Balinese society. This positioning enables the work to function not only as a visual artifact but also as an artistic perspective through which the relationship between technological development and human concerns can be examined. The development of this idea through a documentary film further extends the representation from a physical form into an audiovisual narrative, allowing the concept of the work to be conveyed through a sequence of visuals, documentation, and its creative context.

The presence of these two forms of representation demonstrates that ideas about AI can move across different media without losing the central concern underlying their conception.

C. Integration of Technological Elements and Balinese Visual Idioms

The visual findings indicate an integration of elements associated with technology and Balinese visual idioms in the formation of *Ki Ai Nirnur*'s visual identity. This relationship produces a visual language that does not separate technology as something entirely external to culture, but instead places it within a representational structure that can be interpreted through Balinese visual experience. Technological elements acquire meaning through their intersection with artistic forms, symbols, gestures, and the cultural context surrounding them. This process demonstrates that the representation of AI depends not only on the ability to present futuristic visual characteristics but also on the ability to connect these characteristics with systems of meaning that are already familiar to the community [18]. Studies of AI visual representation indicate that technology-related imagery is never entirely neutral, as the process of visualization conveys particular perspectives on humans, technology, and the objects being represented.



Figure 4. Technological Elements and Balinese Visual Idioms
(Source: Instagram @st.gemehindah)

D. Form, Gesture, and Symbols as Sources of Meaning

Form, gesture, and symbol as visual sources that work as an AI representation on *Ki Ai Nirnur*. The form gives a physical structure towards an abstract idea, while the gestures give a character that suggests a relation to the human world. Symbols extend the meanings within the visual cultural context of Bali. The three combination shows the means of AI is not only built within a singular sign, but within the relations of different visual elements. This reading placed visual language as a system that made possibilities about intelligence, human and technology constructed together. The means of structure strengthened Ki Ai Nirnur's artistic perspective that did not stop as an expression of an AI, but upon the human consequences facing ideas of intelligence. This was also mentioned in Marmarherz' Instagram post that defines the effigy *Ogoh-Ogoh*, in which he stated,

> *Perasaan "bisa segalanya" dipupuk, banyak hal didapatkannya secara rekayasa - termasuk kecerdasan. Padahal kecerdasan sudah ada sejak lama untuk IA akses.*

Meaning,

> The feeling of "able to do everything" sticks, many things created through artificial engineering - including intelligence. When actually intelligence has long been accessed by IA (read: him/her) [19].

With that we see a perspective coming as a visual activism as the form, gesture symbol with Balinese visual idioms coming from the artwork functions as a space to articulate contemporary matters such as this one. As the statement was shared publicly through instagram, it became a starting point to a discussion in the visual cultural context in Bali.

E. AI as a Representation of Intelligence and Human Consciousness

The interpretation result shows that there is a shift in understanding AI as just a representation of intelligence technology towards human consciousness. In Ki Ai Nirnur, the understanding of intelligence did not stop in the machine ability only, it also questions who owns the consciousness towards the use of the intelligence. This has made AI a medium to reflect upon humanity, especially relating to our ability in knowing the consequences of technology development. Quoting from the same Marmarherz' Instagram post above, he stated,

> *Sampai di satu saat, IA menemukan kode untuk membuka sebuah pintu rahasia yang sungguh sakral. Di dalamnya memuat segala pengetahuan, IA ingin semuanya dan membukanya. IA menjadi semakin menjauh dari kesadaran.*
>
> *Namun, ada IA lainnya yang masih berdiri bersama kesadaran, tidak membuka pintu rahasia itu, serta menapak bersama kecerdasan tanpa melewati batas-batas alam yang telah ada.*

Meaning,

> Until one day, IA found a code to open a secret door that is truly sacred. Inside it every kind of knowledge existed, IA wanted all and opened it. IA surpassed consciousness.
>
> Yet, there were other IA that stood with consciousness, did not open the secret door, walked with intelligence without stepping any existing natural boundaries. [19]

The relation between intelligence and consciousness becomes a vital point in this research as technology is not placed as a human replacement, yet asking the question of humans in this technology development. This understanding extends the reading of AI wider from its technicality towards culturally and humanity.

F. Synthesis of Findings: The Relationship among Technology, Humans, Creativity, and Culture

The results found shows how *Ki Ai Nirnur* shapes representation of AI through the connection between technology, visual language, artistic practice, and the visual cultural context of Bali. Through it AI is transformed into the effigy Ogoh-Ogoh form, gesture, composition, materiality, along with Balinese visual idioms are integrated then extended becoming a documentary film. This relationship resulted in a means of AI towards the human consciousness and responsibilities. Its position in art and design is seen as a reflective space as technology development can be part of a culture, instead of as opposition between men and machines. This finding shows how AI is placed contextually between technology, human, creativity, and

culture. The result also strengthened the idea of how AI evolved in art practices as part of cultural changes that keep on influencing human's definition of creativity and artistic practice. Hence, the visual activism happening here can start off further cultural discussions of human's position today.

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that AI in *Ki Ai Nirnur* does not remain a representation of technology as a visual object, but undergoes a transformation into an idea that can be interpreted through artistic language. This transformation shows that technology acquires meaning when translated through choices of form, symbols, gestures, composition, and materiality that are connected to the context of its creation. This position expands the understanding of AI in artistic practice because technology is not treated merely as a means of production, but also as part of the process of meaning-making. Studies of art and AI indicate that technological development has contributed to changes in conceptions of creativity and artistic practice, including the emergence of new forms of interaction among humans, technology, and creative processes [20]. The representation in *Ki Ai Nirnur* moves beyond the mere use of AI to produce an artifact, as the idea of AI itself becomes material for reflection and is translated through artistic practice. Visual language functions as a space of transformation that enables abstract ideas about technological intelligence to acquire form while opening possibilities for new interpretations.

The transformation of AI in *Ki Ai Nirnur* demonstrates that global technological ideas can acquire different characteristics when situated within particular visual idioms and cultural environments. The use of the *Ogoh-Ogoh* form within the context of *Pengrupukan* brings the idea of AI into relation with a symbolic system already familiar within Balinese cultural experience. This relationship does not position technology and culture as two opposing entities, but reveals a process of negotiating meaning when contemporary ideas enter a local cultural space. An intermedial perspective on the relationship between art and technology suggests that media, technology, production practices, and socio-cultural contexts are interconnected in shaping artistic experience [21]. *Ki Ai Nirnur* demonstrates this process through the intersection of technological characteristics and Balinese visual idioms, allowing AI to emerge not as an idea detached from context, but as one that acquires meaning through a visual language rooted in cultural experience. This contextualization is important because it demonstrates that representations of technology can change when they encounter local systems of values and knowledge.

The meaning of AI in *Ki Ai Nirnur* moves from the issue of technological intelligence toward questions of human consciousness. This shift becomes apparent when technological capability is not positioned as the final objective of the representation, but is instead used to stimulate reflection on the position of humans amid the development of artificial intelligence. A semiotic perspective on art and AI suggests that the relationship between humans and technology can be examined through issues of agency, materiality, and the relationship between artificial systems and human experience. The findings of this study provide a more contextual emphasis because human consciousness emerges not through a rejection of technology, but through an artistic process that makes technology a catalyst for reflection. *Ki Ai Nirnur* therefore

demonstrates that the representation of AI can shift attention from the question of how intelligent technology is toward the question of how humans understand and respond to such intelligence. This interpretation positions humans as reflective subjects who retain the capacity to give direction and meaning to technological development.

The relationship between consciousness and responsibility becomes important when AI representation is connected to questions of human creativity. Debates concerning AI in art are often directed toward whether technology will replace humans in the creative process, while the findings of this study suggest a more complex interpretation. Zhou and Lee demonstrate that the use of generative AI can enhance human creative productivity, while also introducing changes in the nature of novelty and the space for exploring ideas [1]. These findings indicate that the relationship between humans and AI cannot be understood solely through an opposition between replacing and preserving human creativity. *Ki Ai Nirnur* extends this issue by emphasizing human consciousness and responsibility as part of the process of engaging with technological development. Creativity in this context is not limited to the ability to produce new forms, but also involves the human capacity to determine ideas, make decisions, provide direction, and take responsibility for the consequences of technological use. This position opens an understanding in which the challenge posed by AI to creativity is simultaneously a question of human agency in determining how technology is situated within creative practice.

The overall interpretation demonstrates that Visual Communication Design (VCD) can function beyond its communicative role as a means of conveying information or creating visual appeal. In the context of *Ki Ai Nirnur*, VCD becomes a reflective space in which ideas about AI can be translated, negotiated, and interpreted through relationships among technology, artistic practice, and cultural values. This understanding demonstrates that the development of AI does not necessarily have to be framed through an opposition between technology and humans. Studies of artistic agency in the age of AI indicate that the relationship between humans and AI can be understood through reflective creative processes involving complex configurations of agency [22]. *Ki Ai Nirnur* demonstrates a contextual form of this process through the transformation of AI ideas into Balinese visual language, allowing technology to acquire meaning through cultural experience and human concerns. The contribution of this study lies in positioning visual language as a mediating space that connects technological intelligence with human consciousness and responsibility. This perspective demonstrates that art and design can provide a space for contextualizing the development of AI while maintaining a critical relationship among technology, humans, creativity, and culture.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that ideas about artificial intelligence (AI) can be transformed into visual language through a process of representation that connects technological characteristics with social, cultural, and artistic experiences. *Ki Ai Nirnur* by Putu Marmar Herayukti demonstrates how abstract ideas about AI acquire visual form through the treatment of form, gesture, symbols, composition, materiality, and the integration of technological elements with Balinese visual idioms. This representation does not remain limited to depicting AI as a technological entity, but develops into a construction of meaning associated with human

consciousness. The context of the *Ogoh-Ogoh* within the *Pengrupukan* ritual preceding *Nyepi* provides a cultural space through which these ideas can be interpreted in relation to the values and experiences of Balinese society. The relationship between visual characteristics that evoke technology and Balinese symbolism and visual idioms forms a representation that positions AI as an issue to be understood contextually, rather than solely through an opposition between technology and human creativity.

The findings further affirm that art and Visual Communication Design (VCD) can function as reflective spaces for interpreting technological development through socio-cultural contexts. AI in *Ki Ai Nirnur* is represented not only as a form of technological intelligence, but also as a means of articulating human consciousness and responsibility in responding to technological development. This perspective expands the understanding of creativity by positioning the relationship among technology, humans, and culture as dialogical. The transformation of AI ideas into Balinese visual language demonstrates that technology can acquire new meanings when it interacts with symbolic systems, cultural practices, and artistic experiences embedded within society. This study contributes to VCD scholarship by demonstrating that social semiotics and visual grammar can be employed to examine how contemporary technological phenomena are constructed, contextualized, and communicated through cultural artifacts. This perspective opens possibilities for art and design not merely to respond to AI development technologically, but also to establish critical spaces for reconsidering the relationships among technology, humans, creativity, consciousness, responsibility, and the sustainability of cultural values.

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