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Curatorial Practice in Bali Kandarupa as an Arena of Knowledge Production and the Dynamics of Creative Dispositions among Traditional Balinese Artists

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ABSTRACT
Curatorial practice in art exhibitions not only determines the selection and presentation of artworks but also shapes the knowledge environment surrounding artists' creative processes. This article examines Bali Kandarupa 2021–2024 as an arena of knowledge production and the dynamics of creative dispositions among traditional Balinese artists. Adopting a qualitative approach with a reflexive ethnographic orientation, the study draws on observation, interviews, exhibition documentation, catalogues, and inductive analysis of selected works. Paul O'Neill's notion of curating as knowledge production informs the analysis of curatorial practice, while Pierre Bourdieu's concept of habitus is used to examine artists' responses through established dispositions. The findings show that curatorial themes and dialogues prompted artists to connect visual sources, collective memory, personal experience, and artistic languages with exhibition ideas, while selection, catalogues, and exhibition design shaped interpretations of their works. These processes encouraged adaptation, expansion, and development in artists' creative dispositions, opening new readings of Balinese traditional art today.

KEYWORDS
Bali Kandarupa, Curatorial Practice, Knowledge Production, Creative Dispositions, Balinese Traditional Art

Introduction

In Bali Kandarupa, an art exhibition presented as part of the Pesta Kesenian Bali (Bali Arts Festival, PKB), painters from Batuan, Kamasan, Padangtegal, Keliki, or Tebesaya are not simply asked to bring works already available in their studios. Each annual theme is introduced and discussed through curatorial dialogues prior to the exhibition, inviting artists to engage with questions of how forests, water, the sea, or human beings might be translated through visual repertoires they have cultivated over many years. Wayan Diana of Batuan, for instance, regarded this thematic approach as distinct from his previous exhibition experiences because

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it encouraged artists to expand their imagination beyond familiar modes of creation. Mangku Muriati approached the theme as an opportunity to take Kamasan wayang painting beyond the retelling of epic narratives and toward contemporary social and humanitarian concerns. A.A. Gde Anom Sukawati interpreted the 2024 theme of humanity through his spiritual experience of Tari Sanghyang, a Balinese ritual dance, while Made Mudra negotiated thematic contextualization through the disciplined techniques of Tebesaya painting, whose execution may require months of work. These experiences suggest a dynamic more complex than merely matching artworks to an exhibition theme: what happens when a curatorial structure carrying particular visions, values, and thematic ideas encounters artistic dispositions formed through family, village environments, technical mastery, collective memory, and long-term creative experience?

This dynamic marks a distinctive development in the trajectory of Balinese traditional art, particularly because Bali Kandarupa emerged from the rather paradoxical position of art exhibitions within the Bali Arts Festival. Painting, sculpture, and mask-making had been represented since the inaugural PKB in 1979, when more than two hundred works were exhibited, involving artists from various artistic centres across Bali [1]. Yet over the following decades, art exhibitions lacked a clearly defined nomenclature, a consistent curatorial system, and a position within the festival's culture of appreciation comparable to that accorded to the performing arts. Art exhibitions were even frequently grouped within the same category as handicrafts and creative-industry products. This condition was criticized, among others, by Nyoman Darma Putra and Wayan Kun Adnyana, who highlighted weaknesses in the evaluation, repre-sentation, and curatorial framework of art exhibitions within the festival structure [2], [3], [4]. A firmer institutional basis for change emerged following the enactment of Bali Provincial Regulation No. 4 of 2020 on the Strengthening and Advancement of Balinese Culture. The regulation explicitly recognizes exhibition spaces, museums, and curatorial teams as part of the infrastructure and mechanisms for cultural advancement [5]. Bali Kandarupa was subsequently established in 2021 as a dedicated PKB programme providing space for classical and traditional art, as well as their subsequent developments. From 2021 to 2024, the exhibition implemented a curatorial mechanism involving annual themes, curatorial dialogues with artists, selection through invited participation and an Open Call (introduced in 2022), catalogue production, and the presentation of works at Taman Budaya as well as several museums in Ubud, includ-ing ARMA, Neka Art Museum, and Museum Puri Lukisan [6], [7], [8], [9].

Previous studies of the Bali Arts Festival have examined the event in relation to public space, media construction, tourism, and sustainable development [10], [11], [12], [13]. Such discussions, however, have paid relatively little attention to how curatorial devices operate within the more immediate relationship between exhibition ideas and artists' creative practices. Conversely, curatorial discourse has often treated exhibitions as arenas for constructing narratives, representations, and public experience, while the relationship between curating and artists' creative dispositions—particularly among artists working within artistic traditions transmitted across generations—has received less attention. This issue is especially relevant to Balinese art, whose creative practices have developed through long histories of learning and transmission, characterized by distinctive styles, techniques, narrative structures, and sources connected to wayang, epic literature, mythology, ritual, nature, and everyday life. The development of

Kamasan, Batuan, Ubud, Pengosekan, Keliki, and other stylistic centres further demonstrates that these patterns have never been entirely uniform or static; social change, education, market forces, and various forms of cultural encounter have long encouraged adaptation and the emergence of distinctive personal artistic languages [14], [15]. Techniques, iconographies, narrative sources, and creative practices may be inherited, yet artists continually select, adjust, and reinterpret these inheritances when confronting new concerns. Curating, therefore, should not be understood merely as a final-stage process that selects the outcomes of artistic creativity, but as one of the conditions through which artists are prompted to reconsider the possibilities of their own creative practice.

In Bali Kandarupa, curatorial practice does not begin only after artworks have been completed; it is already present when themes are introduced, discussed through curatorial dialogues, and interpreted by artists within their creative processes. Curating also shapes how artworks are situated within a particular context, connected to ideas and other works, and understood through themes, selection, curatorial narratives, grouping, exhibition design, and curator–artist relations. Paul O'Neill's conception of curating as a cultural practice and a form of knowledge production [16] is particularly relevant to understanding this process, especially as curatorial practice moves increasingly closer to artistic production developed for specific exhibition contexts. In Bali Kandarupa, knowledge production occurs not only through curatorial texts or the presentation of artworks to the public, but also through dialogues that inform how artists engage with themes, visual sources, and creative possibilities.

Artists' responses to these processes, however, do not emerge from a vacuum, nor are they ever entirely uniform. Each artist brings dispositions formed through social and artistic experience: visual tendencies, inherited techniques, family and community backgrounds, locally embedded collective memories, everyday modes of working and living, and particular ways of understanding art and tradition. Pierre Bourdieu's concept of habitus [17], [18] is employed here to examine how these dispositions operate when artists encounter the curatorial apparatus of Bali Kandarupa, particularly its themes, curatorial dialogues, and selection mechanisms. On this basis, the article examines Bali Kandarupa 2021–2024 as an arena of knowledge production and the dynamics of creative dispositions among traditional Balinese artists through the formulation and articulation of themes, curatorial dialogues, selection mechanisms, and the contextualization of artworks through curatorial narratives, artwork grouping, and exhibition design. The analysis traces how artists bring these curatorial elements into relation with their existing visual sources, experiences, techniques, and creative practices. Through this interaction, Bali Kandarupa is approached not merely as a venue for displaying Balinese traditional art, but as a space in which tradition continues to grow, be reconsidered, interpreted, and reformulated through both artistic creation and curatorial practice.

Methods

This study employs a qualitative approach with a reflexive ethnographic orientation [19] to examine the curatorial practices of Bali Kandarupa from 2021 to 2024. This approach was chosen because the processes under investigation unfold through relationships among curators, artists, the organizing committee, exhibition institutions, curatorial mechanisms, and the social

contexts in which artworks are produced. The data therefore extend beyond verbal accounts to include selection mechanisms, organizational structures, exhibition catalogues, exhibition design, processes leading to the presentation of works in the exhibition space, and the artworks themselves. An ethnographic orientation enables these relationships to be observed as practices in process, while reflexivity provides a means of critically addressing the researcher's position as a participant in the operational management of Bali Kandarupa.

Data were collected through participant observation, interviews, documentation, exhibition catalogues, organizational archives, and close examination of selected artworks. Observation focused primarily on Gedung Kriya, Taman Budaya Provinsi Bali (Bali Provincial Cultural Centre), with additional contextual observation across the exhibition's multi-venue format, including Museum Puri Lukisan, ARMA, and Neka Art Museum. Interviews involved curators and artists from several creative loci, including Batuan, Kamasan, Padangtegal, Tebesaya, Kutuh, Payangan, and other areas. Artworks and participants were selected to clarify relationships among prior artistic experience, responses to exhibition themes, and curatorial processes.

For analysis, data were organized around curatorial practices most directly connected to artistic processes: theme formulation and curatorial dialogues, selection mechanisms, curatorial texts, artwork grouping, and exhibition design. Artists' responses were traced through interviews and exhibited works. Artwork analysis examined relationships among exhibition ideas, traditional visual sources, personal experience, techniques, and artistic choices, rather than assessing aesthetic success. Cases from different creative loci were compared to identify recurring tendencies and variations in how established creative practices interacted with curatorial mechanisms.

Artwork production timelines were also considered to distinguish works developed after curatorial dialogues from earlier works. Works accompanied by artists' accounts of how they responded to the themes provided stronger evidence for examining the dynamics of creative dispositions, while earlier works were analyzed through the new contexts generated by selection, curatorial texts in the exhibition catalogue, artwork grouping, and exhibition design.

Result

Themes and Curatorial Dialogues in the Creative Process

A fundamental change introduced by Bali Kandarupa was the presence of curatorial ideas before artworks entered the exhibition space. From 2021 to 2024, each Bali Kandarupa theme was developed from the overarching theme of the Bali Arts Festival (Pesta Kesenian Bali). In 2021, *Wana Jnana: Wanda, Rimba, dan Spiritualitas* responded to Wana Kerthi; in 2022, the exhibition presented *Danu Hulu Manu: Susastra Lelaku Air Cipta Rupa*; in 2023, *Prabangkara Sagara Prasiddha: Citra Paripurna Samudra Mahotama*; and in 2024, *Charma Manu Candika: Sastra Rupa Karaman Artistika*. Forests, water, the sea, and human beings were not positioned as subjects to be depicted literally. Rather, the themes functioned as conceptual propositions to be connected with the visual sources, experiences, and personal artistic languages already developed by individual artists.

Curatorial dialogues became the principal space in which these themes were introduced, elaborated, and discussed in relation to artists' experiences. Curators did more than communicate exhibition titles or general directions; they articulated curatorial visions, values, narratives, possible visual sources, and their connections to Balinese cultural experience. Dialogue between curators and artists formed an integral part of this process. Warih Wisatsana (interview, 27 May 2025) regarded it as an effort to encourage artists to revisit and reconsider tradition, while Anak Agung Gde Rai (interview, 21 October 2025) viewed the theme not as a constraint but as a stimulus for exploration. Jean Couteau (interview, 20 September 2025) emphasized that tradition itself cannot be understood as a static category, since Balinese art has long absorbed, reworked, and transformed diverse influences. These perspectives indicate that the themes were not intended to determine the final form of the artworks, but to open up questions that artists could address through different artistic languages.

By introducing themes through curatorial dialogues, curatorial practice entered a stage in which artists were still formulating creative possibilities. Artists encountered the exhibition ideas, considered them through their existing experiences and visual sources, and explored connections between the themes and their artistic choices before entering the selection process. The results did not converge toward uniformity. The exhibited works ranged from mythology and epic narratives to everyday life, from ecological concerns to personal spiritual experience, and from the continuity of established techniques to new ways of structuring narratives. Curating did not replace artists' creative decisions; rather, it introduced new questions to be negotiated through already established creative practices.

Themes and the Dynamics of Creative Dispositions

The themes gain context when interpreted through visual languages and creative practices already formed through artists' prior artistic experience. Wayan Diana, a painter from Batuan village, grew up within a painting tradition in which technique, dense composition, iconographic vocabulary, and pictorial storytelling have been transmitted through longstanding social practices. According to Diana (interview, 17 June 2024), before Bali Kandarupa, many exhibitions involving artists from his community did not require responses to specific themes; artists could select existing works or continue working within familiar pictorial conventions. Bali Kandarupa introduced a different challenge, as artists were expected to engage with ideas discussed through curatorial dialogues and explore their relationship to the Batuan artistic language they had inherited and developed. Diana observed this tendency particularly among younger artists, who increasingly explored new narratives and formal possibilities without abandoning the technical depth of Batuan painting.

Renewal within tradition does not necessarily require the replacement of established techniques or a rupture from inherited iconography. In Mangku Muriati's practice (interview, 23 May 2024), the Kamasan repertoire remains an important foundation. In Portrait (2024), however, she depicts her father, Mangku Mura, shifting from wayang figures closely associated with Kamasan painting toward a personal subject. This shift does not mean abandoning Kamasan; rather, it shows how personal experience can enter a visual practice shaped by that tradition. It also reflects her broader trajectory of extending Kamasan beyond epic retellings toward contemporary experiences and concerns.



Figure 1. Mangku Muriati, *Portrait*, 2024, 80 × 60 cm, natural pigments (pere) on canvas.
Source: Bali Kandarupa 2024 Exhibition Catalogue.

The theme could also draw artists' attention to layers of meaning that had not previously been central to their treatment of a subject. A.A. Gde Anom Sukawati grew up within the artistic environments of Ubud and Padangtegal and has frequently drawn on dance as a visual source in his practice. When Bali Kandarupa 2024 foregrounded Jana Kerthi—the human figure as one of its central points of reflection—Anom (interview, 24 May 2024) chose *Tari Sanghyang*. His interest lay not merely in the dancer's bodily form, but in the sincerity, sacredness, and communal processes through which the Sanghyang ritual takes place. Dance remained a familiar visual source, yet the theme prompted a shift in emphasis: from the form of performance toward relationships among human beings, ritual, community, and spiritual experience.



Figure 2. A.A. Gde Anom Sukawati, *Tari Sanghyang*, 2024, 90 × 70 cm, acrylic on canvas.
Source: Bali Kandarupa 2024 Exhibition Catalogue.

The introduction of new conceptual concerns did not necessarily alter the technical disciplines deeply embedded in artists' practices. Made Mudra of Tebesaya inherited a painting technique using bamboo brushes that requires a gradual working process and sustained technical concentration. Mudra (interviews, 24 May 2024 and 7 December 2025) noted that one work submitted to Bali Kandarupa 2022 took approximately eight months to complete. The exhibition theme did not replace this established rhythm and working method but had to be negotiated within them. Mudra's experience suggests that the dynamics of creative dispositions may emerge through the adjustment of ideas within relatively enduring technical practices, rather than through the replacement of established practices by entirely new modes of creation.

Responses to the theme could also emerge through a deepening of personal experience and changes in the intensity of artistic work. Ketut Sudila, a painter from Klungkung who studied for many years in Batuan, interpreted the idea of taksu through the belief that every individual possesses a distinctive personal force or potency (interview, 23 May 2024). His response shows how a concept rooted in collective life can be interpreted through individual experience without becoming detached from tradition. Nyoman Suandi of Payangan demonstrated a different form of response. He explained that preparing work for Bali Kandarupa could substantially increase the time devoted to painting because he first needed to understand the theme and determine how it related to his established style. In Suandi's case, the dynamic was visible less as stylistic change than as heightened conceptual attention, discipline, and time invested in developing the work (interview, 6 December 2025).



Figure 3. I Nyoman Suandi, *Sapuh Leger*, 2024, 60 × 80 cm, acrylic on canvas.
Source: Bali Kandarupa 2024 Exhibition Catalogue.

The creative resources brought into dialogue with exhibition themes were not limited to technique, iconography, or traditional narratives, but also included everyday experiences embedded in artists' lives. Gusti Ayu Natih Arimini, who likewise grew up within the Batuan tradition, connected exhibition themes with everyday memories, lived experience, and the domestic rhythms of women's lives. The theme provided space for her to bring experiences closely connected to her personal life into the artistic language she had already developed (interview, 23

May 2024). Arimini's experience indicates that creative dispositions are also shaped by memory, social environment, and everyday experience, all of which continue to accompany artists in their creative practice.

The diversity of these responses demonstrates that the themes did not produce a single aesthetic that could be identified as a Bali Kandarupa style. Artists connected the themes with different sources: genealogical memory, village rituals, epics, the environment, the body, spirituality, domestic life, and personal experience. They continued to work through techniques, personal artistic languages, and creative practices shaped by their previous artistic trajectories, while curatorial dialogues around the themes could prompt shifts in focus, an expansion of conceptual sources, deeper narrative exploration, or changes in the intensity of the creative process. What emerged, therefore, was not the homogenization of artistic practice, but diverse ways in which artists extended the possibilities already embedded within their creative dispositions.

Open Call, Selection, and the Expansion of the Map of Balinese Traditional Art

Selection in Bali Kandarupa did more than determine which works would be exhibited; it also became a means of extending the identification of artists, creative loci, and the diversity of Balinese traditional art practices. In 2021, participation still relied primarily on invited artists and established networks of communities and creative loci. Beginning in 2022, an Open Call was introduced alongside invited participation. This mechanism enabled curators to reach both emerging artists and those with established practices and track records who had not previously been identified within Bali Kandarupa's networks.

The Open Call broadened participation while also generating new information about artists working across different creative loci. Exhibition data recorded 113 artists from 23 loci in 2021. In 2022, 47 of 68 Open Call applicants were selected, while the exhibition involved 121 artists from approximately 30 loci. In 2023, 37 of 56 applicants were selected, with a total of 93 artists representing 27 loci. In 2024, 31 of 71 Open Call applicants were selected, while the exhibition records documented 113 participants from approximately 35 loci [20].

Table 1 Number of Exhibition Participants, Open Call Participants, and Creative Loci
Source: Idayati, 2026

No	Year	Number of Open Call Applicants	Number of Selected Open Call Participants	Total Exhibition Participants	Number of Creative Loci
1.	2021	-	-	113	23
2.	2022	68	47	121	30
3.	2023	56	37	93	27
4.	2024	71	31	113	35

This broader scope did not displace established centres of tradition with longstanding historical reputations but brought additional areas and forms of practice into dialogue with them. Kamasan, Batuan, Keliki, Padangtegal, Pengosekan, Ubud, Tebesaya, Mas, and Nyuhkuning remained important parts of the exhibition, alongside Baung–Sayan, Kutuh, Tegallalang, Payangan, Nagasepaha, Tihingan, Mengwi, and other creative loci. The diversity of media also meant that

the traditional art represented in the exhibition extended beyond painting to include prasi (illustrated palm-leaf art), sculpture, and masks. This expansion demonstrates that the traditional art practices represented in Bali Kandarupa are not centred on a single style, medium, or centre of production.

For artists working beyond established centres of institutional attention, the Open Call provided an entry point into a broader selection process. Wayan Mandiyasa (interview, 7 December 2025) described painting in Banjar Kutuh Kaja as a practice that developed without a strong formal organization, although the transmission of knowledge and solidarity among painters continued. Mandiyasa regarded the Open Call as an opportunity for village painters who had previously remained "off the radar" to bring their works into the Bali Kandarupa selection process. His experience suggests that the mapping of Balinese traditional art need not depend solely on creative loci with established reputations but can continue to develop through more open mechanisms of discovery.

The effects of selection could also extend beyond a single participation in the exhibition. I Made Teler (interview, 7 December 2025) had no previous experience of formal exhibitions and learned about the Bali Kandarupa Open Call through his child, who encountered the information on social media. After his work was selected in 2022, he continued to participate in subsequent editions, culminating in the selection of his work *Sesapan Kilap* (2024) as the cover image of the Bali Kandarupa 2024 exhibition catalogue. This trajectory shows how the selection process can open sustained connections with exhibitions, catalogues, other artists, and art institutions that had not previously formed part of an artist's creative experience.

The openness created by the Open Call also reinforces selection as a mechanism for both discovering and evaluating artists who had not previously entered Bali Kandarupa's curatorial reach. Not all submitted works were selected; applicants continued to be assessed on the quality of their work, its relevance to the exhibition theme, and the consistency of their artistic practice. The mechanism thus offered both emerging artists and those with established track records but limited prior curatorial visibility an opportunity to present their strongest work. At the same time, the status of Invited Artist was not permanent. Submitted works remained open to curatorial discussion, and declining quality or inconsistency in artistic practice could influence whether an artist was invited again. Conversely, artists who initially entered through the Open Call and demonstrated sustained quality and consistency across successive editions could subsequently become Invited Artists. The Invited Artist and Open Call pathways therefore did not constitute two entirely separate categories but functioned as an interconnected curatorial mechanism through which the discovery, evaluation, and evolving position of artists could continue over time.

Themes in Artistic Creation and the Reinterpretation of Artworks

The relationship between exhibition themes and artworks in Bali Kandarupa did not always unfold through a linear creative process. In some cases, themes were introduced through curatorial dialogues before the works were created, allowing artists to consider them during the creative process. In other cases, artworks had already been completed and were subsequently selected because they were considered relevant to the exhibition theme. This distinction is

important, as not every exhibited work can be regarded as a direct outcome of Bali Kandarupa's thematic stimulus.

For works created after the theme had been introduced, curatorial dialogues could become part of the artist's process of developing ideas. Explanations of the theme and the exchanges that followed allowed artists to consider exhibition ideas alongside their existing visual sources, techniques, experiences, and creative practices. The cases of Wayan Diana, A.A. Gde Anom Sukawati, Ketut Sudila, and several other artists show how a theme could become one consideration in choosing a subject, emphasizing a particular narrative, or reconsidering familiar sources. It is in this type of relationship that the dynamics of creative dispositions can be traced more directly.

Table 2 List of Catalogue Cover Paintings for Bali Kandarupa, 2021–2024
Source: Idayati, 2026

Year	Bali Kandarupa Theme	Catalogue Cover Artwork	Artist	Artwork Information
2021	Wana Jnana: Wanda, Rimba, dan Spiritualitas"		Wayan Diana	*Wana Kertih*, 2021, 150 × 90 cm, Chinese ink and acrylic on canvas. Source: Bali Kandarupa 2021 Exhibition Catalogue.
2022	Danu Hulu Manu: Susastra Lelaku Air Cipta Rupa"		I Made Mudra	*Tirtha Amertha*, 2021, 150 × 100 cm, acrylic on canvas. Source: Bali Kandarupa 2022 Exhibition Catalogue.
2023	"Prabangkara Sagara Prasiddha: Citra Paripurna Samudra Mahotama"		I Wayan Mandiy asa	*Pasang Surut Kehidupan*, 2021, 180 × 120 cm, oil on canvas. Source: Bali Kandarupa 2023 Exhibition Catalogue.

2024	"Charma Manu Candika: Sastra Rupa Karaman Artistika"		I Made Teler *Sesapan Kilap*, 2024, 75 × 52 cm, watercolor on paper. Source: Bali Kandarupa 2024 Exhibition Catalogue.

For works completed before the exhibition theme was introduced, the theme cannot be regarded as having influenced their creative process. Made Mudra's *Tirtha Amertha* was created in 2021 but was subsequently selected as the cover image for the Bali Kandarupa 2022 catalogue, whose theme centred on water. Similarly, Wayan Mandiyasa's *Pasang Surut Kehidupan* was created in 2021 and later selected as the cover image for the Bali Kandarupa 2023 catalogue, which was developed around the theme of the ocean. Their dates of production indicate that neither work originated as a direct response to the annual theme under which it was later presented. Rather, their relationship to the theme was established later through curatorial selection and through their placement alongside curatorial texts in the catalogue, other artworks, and the overall exhibition presentation.

This distinction demonstrates that curatorial practice can operate both before and after an artwork has been completed. Before creation, exhibition themes and curatorial dialogues may prompt artists to reconsider their sources and ideas. After creation, curating can establish new relationships around existing works through selection, grouping, curatorial narratives, and their presentation alongside other works. Knowledge production occurs in both processes, but through different forms of relation that should not be understood as equivalent causal processes.

Catalogues and Exhibition Design in Knowledge Production

The catalogue extends an exhibition beyond its temporary occurrence into a form of documentation and archive that can be revisited. Information on artists, creative loci, media, artworks, and curatorial texts brings together artistic practices dispersed across different villages and communities within a single documentary source. The catalogue therefore functions as more than an administrative supplement: it records who participated during a particular period, the themes developed, the works selected, and the ways in which Balinese traditional art was discussed through the exhibition.

The use of artworks on catalogue covers formed one aspect of the visual presentation of each edition of Bali Kandarupa. The 2021 catalogue featured Wayan Diana's *Wana Kertih* (2021); the 2022 catalogue featured Made Mudra's painting *Tirtha Amertha* (2021); the 2023 catalogue presented Wayan Mandiyasa's *Pasang Surut Kehidupan* (2021); and in 2024, I Made Teler's *Sesapan Kilap* (2024) became the catalogue cover image. These selections contributed to the visual identity of each edition while connecting the exhibition theme with works and artists included in the curatorial presentation [20].

Exhibition spaces also shaped how artworks were presented, as each venue brought its own history, function, and institutional context. In 2021, Bali Kandarupa was held at Gedung Kriya, Taman Budaya Provinsi Bali (Bali Provincial Cultural Centre), Museum Puri Lukisan, and ARMA. From 2022 to 2024, the multi-venue configuration included Gedung Kriya, Museum Puri Lukisan, and Neka Art Museum. This format enabled Balinese traditional art to be presented not only within the festival's principal venue but also in museum institutions closely connected to the historical development of Balinese art.

The history of each venue provided a different context for the works presented within it. Gedung Kriya forms part of the principal public space of the Bali Arts Festival; Museum Puri Lukisan is closely associated with the history of Ubud art and Pita Maha; ARMA brings together art collections and cultural activities through its concept of the living museum; while Neka Art Museum houses collections reflecting the development of different styles and generations of Balinese art. The grouping of artworks according to artistic tendencies, thematic relevance, spatial characteristics, artwork dimensions, lighting, and visitor circulation further indicates that venue selection involved more than simply distributing works across available spaces.

Catalogues, artwork grouping, and exhibition design thus became part of how Bali Kandarupa organized knowledge about the traditional art it presented. Artworks did not appear merely as individual objects, but were brought into relation with exhibition themes, curatorial narratives, other works, and the histories of the spaces in which they were presented. Through these curatorial mechanisms, the exhibition enabled both existing and newly created works to be reconsidered within discussions of continuity, change, and the development of Balinese traditional art.

Discussion

Curating as Knowledge Production

Knowledge production in Bali Kandarupa does not take place only after artworks enter the exhibition space. In some cases, it begins when exhibition ideas encounter artists' creative processes. Annual themes derived from the overarching themes of the Bali Arts Festival (PKB) are first developed into exhibition titles and curatorial narratives, then introduced to artists through curatorial dialogues. At this stage, artists do more than receive information about the exhibition; they begin to relate the theme to their existing experiences, visual sources, techniques, and creative practices. The process continues as works are submitted and selected, brought into relation with works from other creative loci, grouped, contextualized through curatorial texts in the catalogue, and presented through exhibition design. Knowledge production thus emerges through a sequence of processes connecting curatorial ideas, artistic creation, artworks, and the ways in which those works are subsequently presented to the public.

The involvement of curatorial practice before the completion of some artworks broadens the understanding of curating beyond selection and positions it as part of the conditions surrounding artistic production. O'Neill shows how developments in curatorial practice have brought artistic production into closer relation with selection, organization, mediation, and exhibition-making, making the boundaries between artistic creation and curatorial work increasingly difficult to

separate in absolute terms. He further suggests that, within dialogical and collaborative curatorial practices, artworks do not always enter exhibitions as entirely completed objects but may develop through negotiation, adaptation, and relationships among artists, curators, and exhibition contexts. Bali Kandarupa demonstrates a particular form of this relationship. Curators neither direct nor dictate artists' creative decisions; rather, exhibition themes and curatorial dialogues enter the artists' space of creative consideration while subjects, narratives, and visual sources are still being formulated.

The relationship between curators and artists in this process does not constitute a linear or one-directional flow of knowledge. Although the themes originate from curatorial ideas, their meanings develop through encounters with forms of knowledge already embedded in artists' practices. The theme of water, for example, could be interpreted through Dewi Danu, farmers working in rice fields, landscapes and water sources, aquatic fauna, or the issue of illegal fishing. Forests, the sea, and human beings likewise generated different interpretations according to the experiences and artistic traditions of individual artists. Curating therefore introduced shared questions, while artists produced possible responses through diverse artistic languages. This reading resonates with O'Neill's argument that group exhibitions can operate as sites of knowledge production by bringing different artistic positions into relation and reshaping how works are understood through the relationships constructed among artworks, curators, and the contexts of their presentation.

This diversity of artistic languages became a primary resource for Bali Kandarupa's curatorial practice rather than something to be dissolved in pursuit of aesthetic unity. Kamasan has pictorial structures and narrative traditions distinct from those of Batuan; Padangtegal has not developed through the same creative practices as Tebesaya; likewise, painting, prasi, sculpture, and masks involve different material qualities and modes of production. The themes of Wana Kerthi, Danu Kerthi, Segara Kerthi, and Jana Kerthi brought these differences into relation through shared concerns with forests, water, the sea, and human beings without prescribing a single artistic form. Knowledge production in this curatorial practice therefore lies not in generating uniformity, but in constructing relationships through which artistic differences can enter into dialogue within a particular thematic context.

The way curating produces knowledge also depends on when an exhibition theme encounters an artwork. For works developed after curatorial dialogues, the theme may inform the formulation of ideas, the choice of visual sources, or the emphasis placed on particular narratives. For works completed beforehand, however, the theme cannot be regarded as having influenced their creative process. Knowledge is produced differently: existing works are selected, brought into relation with the theme and other works, contextualized through curatorial texts in the catalogue, and presented through exhibition design. Selection, organization, display, and documentation are not entirely neutral acts, but form part of the processes through which meaning and significance are produced within an exhibition. This distinction demonstrates that knowledge production in Bali Kandarupa can occur both through artistic creation and through the reinterpretation of existing works, without treating the two as equivalent causal processes.

Creative Dispositions: Between Inheritance and Adaptation

Artists' responses to the themes of Bali Kandarupa demonstrate that new artistic creation always proceeds from artistic experiences with histories of their own. Artists from Batuan, Kamasan, Padangtegal, Tebesaya, and other creative loci entered the exhibition with techniques, pictorial vocabularies, narrative sources, working rhythms, social environments, and learning experiences formed long before Bali Kandarupa began. In Bourdieu's terms, these accumulated experiences can be understood through habitus as a system of dispositions acquired through the internalization of social conditions and activated in practice when individuals encounter particular circumstances. The analysis of artists' habitus therefore concerns dispositions formed through their social histories and realized through the trajectories and conditions of the fields they encounter.

The inheritance of tradition in Bali does not produce entirely fixed practices, because dispositions operate through encounters with continually changing conditions. The history of Balinese art itself demonstrates this interplay of continuity and change. Wayang traditions, narrative structures, techniques, and intergenerational modes of learning have persisted, while encounters with education, new materials, markets, Pita Maha, foreign artists, and changing village life have contributed to shifts in themes, anatomy, perspective, and the development of personal artistic languages across creative loci such as Ubud, Batuan, Pengosekan, and Keliki. Habitus, therefore, does not confine artists to repetition. Rather, it constitutes a history sedimented in ways of seeing and working that continues to encounter new conditions.

Exhibition themes and curatorial dialogues operate through these dispositions rather than replacing them. Bourdieu suggests that influences external to a practice are not absorbed automatically or uniformly, but are refracted through the history of the field and the habitus of its agents; established methods, techniques, and styles shape both the limits and possibilities of what can be thought and done. A similar pattern appears in Bali Kandarupa. Mangku Muriati could move from wayang figures toward a personal subject without abandoning Kamasan visual structures; Wayan Diana continued to work through the technical depth of Batuan painting while exploring new narratives; A.A. Gde Anom Sukawati retained dance as a visual source while redirecting attention toward the spiritual experience of Sanghyang; and Made Mudra maintained the working rhythm and technical discipline of Tebesaya while bringing his practice into relation with thematic concerns. New themes therefore did not enter an empty space, but were interpreted through artistic resources already embedded in the artists' experience.

The dynamics of creative dispositions emerged through adaptation, expansion, and development. For some artists, change appeared in the choice of different narrative sources; for others, through a shift in emphasis from form toward ritual experience, the incorporation of personal and domestic experience, heightened conceptual attention, or greater intensity in the working process. What can be observed more clearly is how established dispositions acquire new possibilities when confronted with particular curatorial questions. Habitus is therefore used here not to measure the extent to which curators "change" artists, but to explain why the same theme generates different responses according to each artist's creative history.

Differences among artists' responses indicate that creativity within tradition develops through the relationship between continuity and adaptability. Ketut Sudila could bring the concept of taksu into a more individual interpretation; Nyoman Suandi responded to the theme through increased working intensity and greater attention to conceptual formulation; while Gusti Ayu Natih Arimini brought women's domestic experience into the artistic language of Batuan. These cases show that creative resources consist not only of inherited iconography but also of continually accumulating lived experience. Creative dispositions thus carry traces of the past while providing artists with ways of engaging new experiences. This also challenges the simplified opposition between the "traditional" and the "innovative," as both can operate simultaneously within artistic practice.

Curating becomes significant within these dynamics not because it determines change, but because it creates conditions in which established artistic practices encounter questions that may not have arisen through previous exhibition patterns. Curatorial dialogues around the themes, selection, and exhibition experience provide both stimulus and opportunities for artists to reconsider familiar sources. The Open Call adds another dimension by enabling emerging artists, or those not previously within the curatorial team's reach, to enter the selection process and subsequently be reassessed through the consistency of their participation and practice. Conversely, Invited Artist status is not permanent, as artistic quality and consistency remain considerations for the curators. These processes demonstrate that creative dispositions develop not in isolation, but through repeated encounters with the social and institutional environments in which artistic practice takes place.

Rereading Balinese Traditional Art Today

Bali Kandarupa demonstrates that "tradition" acquires a fuller meaning when approached as an evolving practice rather than as a form whose transmission has already been completed. Findings from the artworks and artists' experiences show that techniques, iconography, styles, and narrative sources provide continuity, but do not determine artistic outcomes absolutely. Tradition persists because artists continually select, interpret, combine, and place new emphasis on inherited elements. The history of Balinese art reveals a similar process: shifts from religious functions toward the market, encounters with Walter Spies and Rudolf Bonnet, the development of Pita Maha, the emergence of different styles across several villages, and the increasing prominence of personal artistic languages since the second half of the twentieth century all indicate that change has long been integral to the trajectory of tradition.

Bali Kandarupa's curatorial practice also contributes to how tradition is discussed and interpreted in the present. The 2024 curatorial formulation describing the development of classical and traditional stylistic forms as genialitas mempribadi—the emergence of distinctive individual artistic expression—signals an effort to shift attention from viewing traditional art solely as collective expression toward recognizing artists' individual achievements while remaining rooted in inherited techniques and iconographies. Warih Wisatsana regards curating as an effort to reread traditions that are often considered complete or fixed, while Jean Couteau questions any rigid separation between tradition and modernity, since Balinese artistic practices have long absorbed and transformed diverse influences. These perspectives suggest that curatorial knowledge production generates not only exhibition themes, but also contributes to the vocabulary,

discourse, and interpretive perspectives through which Balinese traditional art today is discussed, understood, and reread.

This rereading of tradition does not imply that individual artistic distinctiveness emerges by separating from collective sources. The works presented in Bali Kandarupa instead show that such distinctiveness develops through relationships with creative loci, families, teachers, techniques, rituals, narratives, and shared social life. Bourdieu's concept of habitus helps explain this relationship because artistic individuality does not exist independently of the social history through which it is formed. Even when artists make highly personal choices, those choices are made through dispositions of perception and practice acquired over the course of their lives. Genialitas mempribadi can therefore be read not as artists' detachment from tradition, but as the emergence of individual distinctiveness within and through inherited resources.

Participation through the Open Call further broadened what could be recognized as practices of Balinese traditional art without claiming that the exhibition represented its entire landscape. The presence of creative loci beyond historically established centres, together with a diversity of media including painting, prasi, masks, and sculpture, demonstrates that the forms of traditional art presented in Bali Kandarupa are heterogeneous and cannot be reduced to a single form. Selection, however, continues to determine which artists and works enter the exhibition. Bali Kandarupa therefore constitutes one arena in which particular readings of Balinese traditional art are produced at a given historical moment, amid the wider dynamics of traditional artistic practices across Bali.

Taken together, O'Neill and Bourdieu make it possible to approach tradition from both curatorial and artistic perspectives. O'Neill helps demonstrate how themes, curatorial dialogues, selection, catalogues, artwork grouping, and exhibition design produce particular relationships and meanings around artworks; Bourdieu explains how artists respond to these relationships through dispositions shaped by their social and artistic histories. Viewed through these two perspectives, change in Bali Kandarupa need not be framed as an opposition between tradition and newness. What emerges instead is a process in which curatorial ideas and creative dispositions encounter and negotiate with one another, generating multiple possibilities for rereading tradition.

Balinese traditional art today can therefore be understood as a continuity in constant reformulation, rather than as an inheritance that is merely preserved or an older form that must be abandoned in order to develop. Bali Kandarupa demonstrates that such growth takes place through artists who bring their own creative histories and through curatorial practices that provide themes, selection processes, and contexts in which different artistic practices and experiences can enter into dialogue. The exhibition thus acquires significance beyond the display of artworks: it becomes a space in which tradition continues to grow, be reconsidered, interpreted, and reformulated through both artistic creation and curatorial practice.

Conclusion

The curatorial practices of Bali Kandarupa demonstrate that knowledge production within an exhibition can begin before artworks enter the exhibition space and continue through their

presentation to the public. Theme formulation, curatorial dialogues, selection mechanisms, curatorial narratives, artwork grouping, catalogue production, and exhibition design form a sequence of processes that bring curatorial ideas into relation with artists' creative experiences. For works developed after the themes were introduced, curating can enter the artists' space of creative consideration while subjects, narratives, and visual sources are still being formulated; for existing works, knowledge production occurs through selection and the contexts created by their presentation, enabling reinterpretation. This relationship is neither one-directional nor linear, as artists continue to make artistic choices through established artistic languages, experiences, and sources of knowledge. Curating therefore does not produce artistic uniformity, but constructs relationships that allow different artistic traditions and artists' experiences to engage with shared thematic concerns.

The dynamics emerging from these encounters can be understood as adaptation, expansion, and development of creative dispositions. Traditional Balinese artists enter Bali Kandarupa with histories of learning, techniques, visual sources, collective memories, personal experiences, and creative practices already formed through previous artistic trajectories; curatorial mechanisms then create conditions in which these experiences and creative resources can be reconsidered and reworked. The findings demonstrate that inheritance and renewal need not be positioned as opposing poles within Balinese traditional art. Bali Kandarupa's curatorial practice extends beyond an organizational structure or mechanism for selecting artworks by providing contexts for reinterpretation and dialogue that engage with artists' creative dispositions. This distinctive relationship indicates that knowledge production in exhibitions of traditional art takes place through encounters between curatorial ideas and artistic traditions that carry histories of their own. Tradition continues to grow as inherited elements encounter new questions, experiences, and interpretations. Bali Kandarupa therefore functions not merely as a venue for displaying Balinese traditional art, but as an arena of knowledge production in which tradition continues to be reconsidered, interpreted, and reformulated through both artistic creation and curatorial practice.

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