

## ART GALLERY AS A REPRESENTATION OF CULTURAL IDENTITY IN MALANG CITY THROUGH A MODERN ARCHITECTURAL APPROACH

Patrik Bagasseta Satria Pambudi <sup>1\*</sup>, Erlina Laksmiani <sup>2</sup>, Agus Sukandar <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Architecture Study Program, Faculty of Engineering, Universitas Merdeka Malang*

<sup>2</sup>*Final Project Advisor, Architecture Study Program, universitas Merdeka Malang  
Jl. Puncak Jaya 36, Malang, 65146, Indonesia*

<sup>3</sup>*Email of Corresponding Author: ptrkbagas@gmail.com*

### **ABSTRACT**

---

Malang is a major cultural and educational center with strong potential for art and tourism development. However, local cultural values particularly the traditional of Topeng Malangan remain underrepresented in modern public spaces and face challenges such as declining young practitioners and limited facilities. This study aims to design an art gallery that represent the city's cultural identity through a modern architectural approach emphasizing functionality, contextuality, and sustainability. Using an empirical descriptive qualitative method, the research includes literature reviews, field observation, site and cultural analyses, and precedent studies of Selasar Sunaryo Art Space, Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, and Ulen Sentalu Museum. The findings highlight architectural principles that integrate local cultural values with modern design. The proposed design accommodates exhibition, education, conservation, and social space while preserving the symbolic meaning of Topeng Malangan culture. Emphasizing spatial openness, flexibility, natural lighting, and a blend of local modern materials, the gallery is envisioned as an exhibition, educational, and social hub. Ultimately, it serves as a physical representation of Malang's cultural identity and supports sustainable tourism and creative economic growth.

**Keywords:** Art Gallery; Cultural Identity; Topeng Malangan; Modern Architecture; Malang City

---

### **INTRODUCTION**

Malang is widely recognized as an educational and creative city with a dynamic growth of art communities. Visual art activities, cultural discussion, performances, and workshop continue to develop, however, existing facilities remain partial and lack integration. This condition creates a need for a space capable of accommodating the entire creative process from production to public appreciation. The main issue lies in the absence of a representative space that integrates exhibition areas, production studios, art education facilities, and discussion rooms within a cohesive spatial system. Moreover, may existing galleries have not yet provided interactive experience between artwork, artist, and visitors. Therefore, an architectural design is required that functions not only as an exhibition venue but also as an open creative hub adaptive to the tropical climate and capable of strengthening the identity of the surrounding area.

## LOCATION DESCRIPTION

The selected site is located on Jalan Lembah Dieng, Sumberjo Village, Kalisongo, Malang, within the Taman Wisata Lembah Dieng area designated as a tourism and recreational zone. The total site area is approximately  $\pm 122,770 \text{ m}^2$ , with an effective development area for the gallery of  $\pm 68,175 \text{ m}^2$ , while the remaining area consists of an artificial lake and natural vegetation. The large scale of the land and its natural landscape context provide opportunities for developing modern architecture integrated with green open spaces. The site is surrounded by residential areas, tourist facilities, a main road, and a shopping center, offering diverse environmental support.

Administratively and physically, the site borders Villa Puncak Tidar Housing in the north, Jalan Lembah Dieng in the south, the Lembah Dieng Swimming Pool tourist area in the east, and Mall Elpico in the west. This context reflects a blend of residential, tourism, and commercial zones that potentially support the gallery's function as a cultural public space.

In terms of regulations, the development follows public and cultural building provisions, including a Building Coverage Ratio (30–60%), a maximum Floor Area Ratio of 2.0, a minimum Green Coverage Ratio of 30%, a Building Setback Line of at least 10 meters, and a maximum building height of four stories. These parameters form the basis for determining building mass proportions and open space allocation.

Site accessibility is supported by two main access roads: Jalan Lembah Dieng ( $\pm 9 \text{ m}$  wide) on the south–southeast side and Jalan Villa Puncak Tidar ( $\pm 7 \text{ m}$  wide) on the west. These dual access points allow for separated circulation between visitors and service areas, while enhancing overall accessibility. With clear regulatory guidance and technical parameters, the site is considered strategic for developing a contextual, representative, and accessible art gallery.

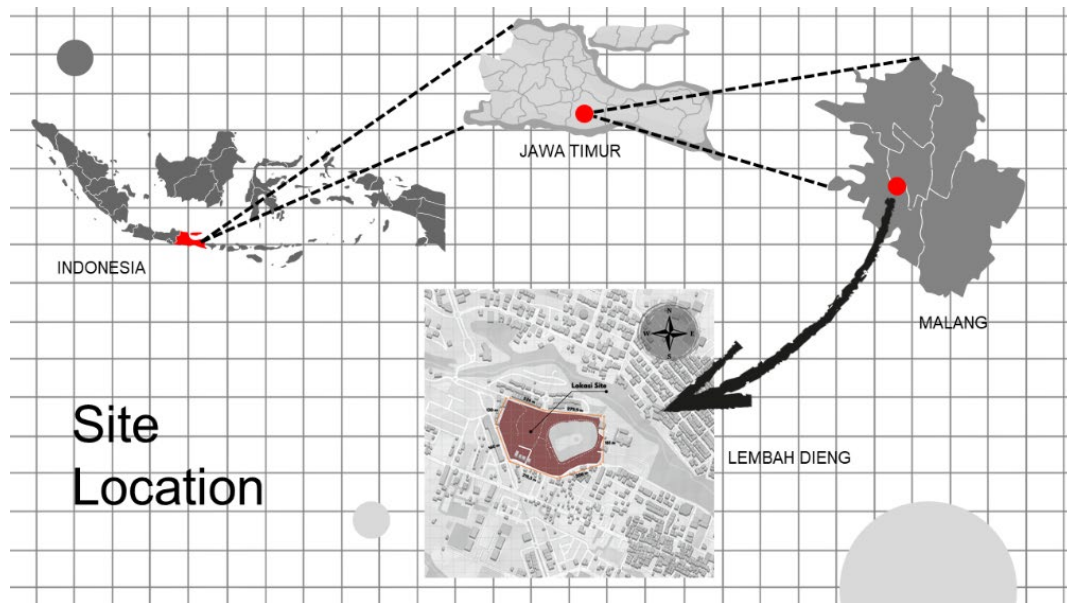


Figure 1. Site Location (source: Author)

## THE SITE ANALYSIS

The site analysis for the design of the Art Gallery in Malang was conducted comprehensively to identify existing conditions, potentials, and various challenges influencing the design process. This stage serves as the foundation for formulating contextual and environmentally responsive design strategies. Through an environmental linkage analysis, the relationship between the site and urban infrastructure, surrounding land uses, and activity dynamics was mapped to support the gallery's role as a cultural public space.

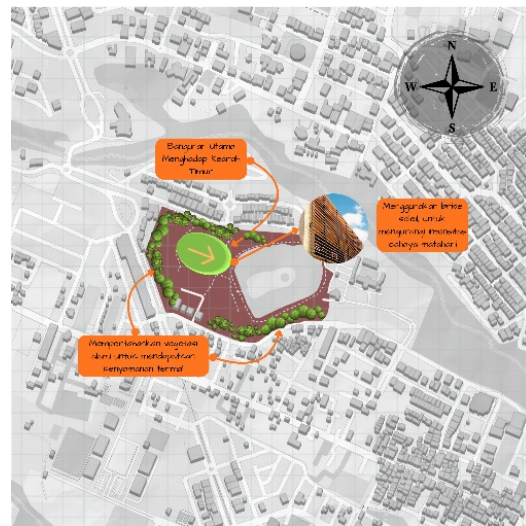
Both external and internal visual analyses were carried out to assess view quality from and toward the site. This evaluation aimed to identify visual elements that could be optimized as added design value, while also determining aspects requiring specific treatment to avoid disrupting spatial experience. Accordingly, building mass orientation and spatial function placement were organized more strategically.

Accessibility and building approach were analyzed to ensure ease of access and efficient circulation for visitors, management, and service functions. Considerations of topography, drainage systems, and land morphology informed strategies for mass arrangement, contour treatment, and flood mitigation. In addition, climatic factors including temperature, wind movement, and solar intensity were examined to support the application of sustainable design principles that enhance thermal comfort and energy efficiency.

Noise levels and potential environmental pollution were also evaluated to anticipate disturbances that might affect interior spatial quality. All findings were synthesized as the basis for final zoning development. Through this approach, an integrated and sustainable spatial system was established, harmonizing exhibition, educational, commercial, and social functions within a unified architectural framework.



**Sun Path Identification**



**Sun Path Respons**

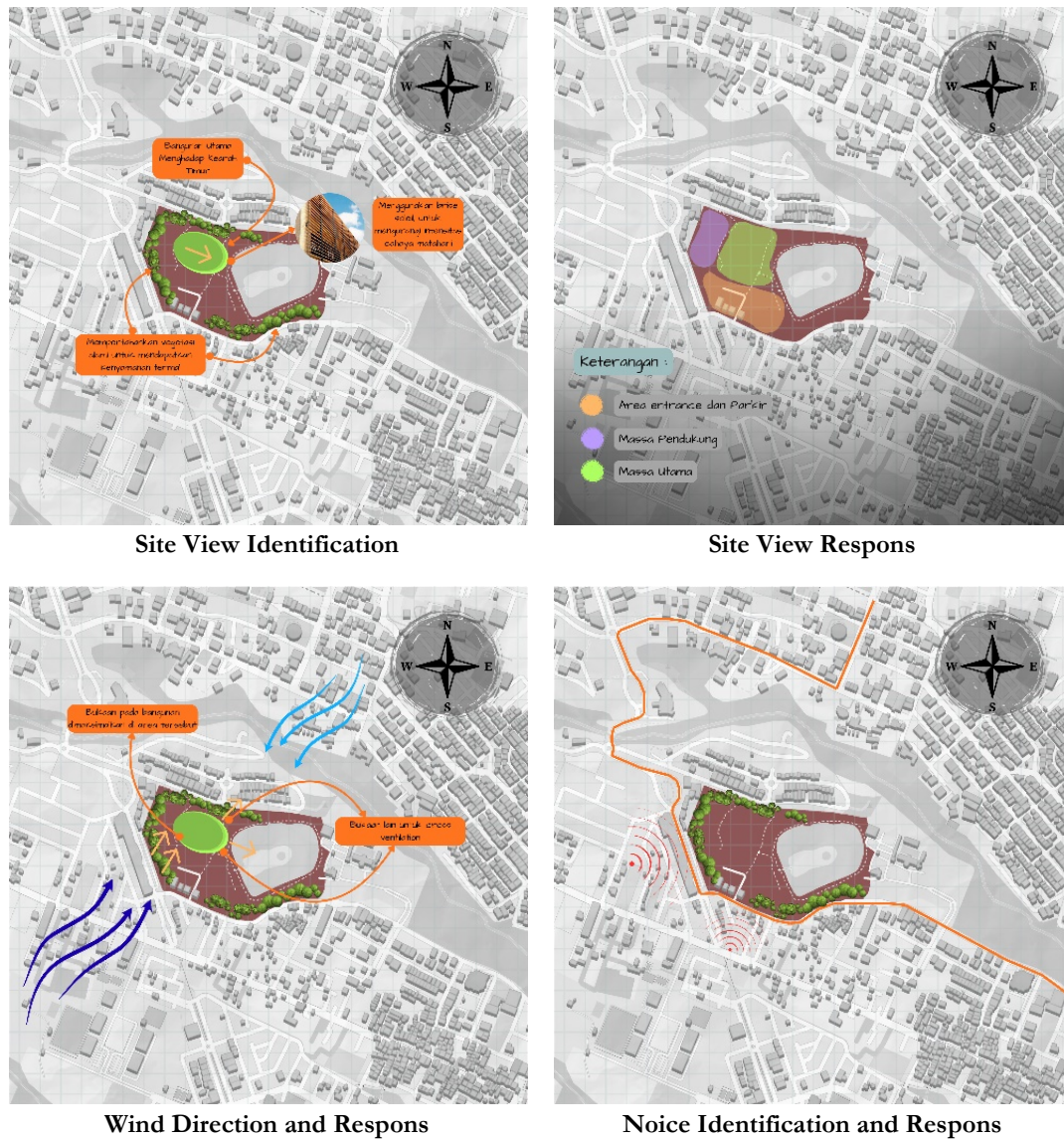


Figure 2. Site Analysis (source: Author)

## CONCEPTUAL APPROACH AND WARFARE THEME

The conceptual approach refers to the principles of modern architecture, emphasizing functional efficiency, simplicity of form, and honesty of materials as proposed by Le Corbusier (1927). These principles are implemented through flexible, open, and functional spatial designs that accommodate various artistic activities, including exhibitions, workshops, performances, and public interaction. In addition, the gallery design maximizes visual connections between interior and exterior spaces to establish a strong relationship with the surrounding environment, particularly the natural landscape of Lembah Dieng as the project site. The use of natural materials such as stone and local wood is maintained to reinforce Malang's identity while preserving a modern and efficient character. Sustainability principles are also applied by optimizing natural lighting, cross ventilation, and vegetation as shading elements and microclimate regulators.

Theoretically, the design is grounded in several relevant frameworks. First, Modern Architecture theory by Le Corbusier (1927), which underpins the creation of functional, rational, and efficient design. Second, Cultural Identity theory by Stuart Hall (1990), which asserts that cultural identity is dynamic and continuously shaped through social processes. Third, the theory of Art and Architectural Representation by Ardian Trushaj et al. (2025), explaining the role of galleries and museums in shaping the cultural landscape of cities through exhibition, documentation, and public engagement. Together, these theories form the foundation for designing an art gallery that is not only visually modern but also culturally meaningful.

Furthermore, several academic journals support this theoretical basis. Research by Tuna Ultav et al. (2020) in *ICONARP Journal of Architecture and Planning* highlights the importance of interiority in shaping public space identity. A study by Purnama et al. (2021) in *DIMENSI Journal* emphasizes cultural identity representation through traditional architecture, serving as a reference for integrating local values into modern design. Ivanka et al. (2025), through *JOURNALS*, underline the role of art and cultural centers in preserving local architectural heritage. Meanwhile, Huan (2024) in the *American Journal of Arts and Human Science* stresses the relationship between museum design and sustainability principles. Collectively, these references reinforce the idea that an art gallery can function as a modern space rooted in local cultural values while remaining ecologically sustainable.

## **DESIGN THEME**

The design theme of the Art Gallery adopts a modern architectural approach, based on the idea that architecture does not merely create physical space but also serves as a medium to construct, interpret, and strengthen a community's cultural identity. In the context of Malang, traditional arts such as Topeng Malangan represent expressions of local wisdom, morality, and spirituality. However, amid globalization and modernization, the existence of this traditional art form has increasingly been marginalized due to the lack of spaces for expression and representative facilities. Therefore, the presence of an art gallery is expected to function as a platform for preserving and revitalizing local culture through a modern architectural design approach that continues to respect its traditional roots.

Philosophically, this theme is grounded in the reconciliation between tradition and modernity. Modern architecture is not perceived as a threat to local culture, but rather as a means of transforming traditional values into spatial forms that are more relevant to contemporary life. The art gallery in Malang is envisioned as a meeting point between the historical values of Topeng Malangan and the creative spirit of younger generations, fostering a dynamic cultural continuity that adapts to the progression of time. Thus, the gallery building functions not only as an exhibition space but also as a symbol of the community's collective awareness of its cultural heritage.

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF CONCEPT IN DESIGN**

The building mass concept in this design adopts a radial layout pattern inspired by the dynamic movements of Topeng Malangan dancers. The radial configuration represents energy radiating from a central point, similar to a mask dancer who becomes the focal point while performing at the center of a circular performance space. In architectural terms, the primary function is positioned at the center of the site as the main axis of activity, while supporting masses are arranged systematically around it to create a harmonious, directed composition with strong visual connections to the core.

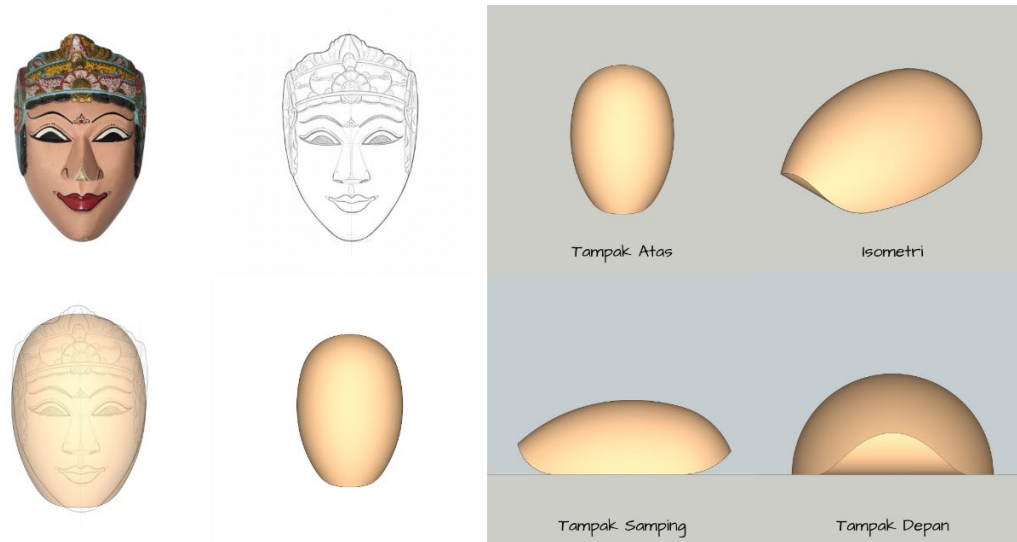
This approach not only reflects a balance between functional requirements and symbolic meaning but also generates a fluid and participatory circulation pattern, inviting visitors to follow a spatial sequence reminiscent of the dancer's movement within Malang's cultural rituals. Consequently, the massing arrangement is not merely functional; it becomes an embodiment of local cultural expression interpreted through contemporary architectural language, establishing harmony between form, meaning, and cultural context.



**Figure 3. Mass layout pattern (source: Author)**

The concept of the main building mass originates from the fundamental form of Topeng Malangan as a cultural identity element that serves as the primary inspiration for the design. The mask form is then contextually transformed through a process of reduction and adaptation, particularly by trimming or modifying certain parts to create better accessibility and more functional spatial connectivity.

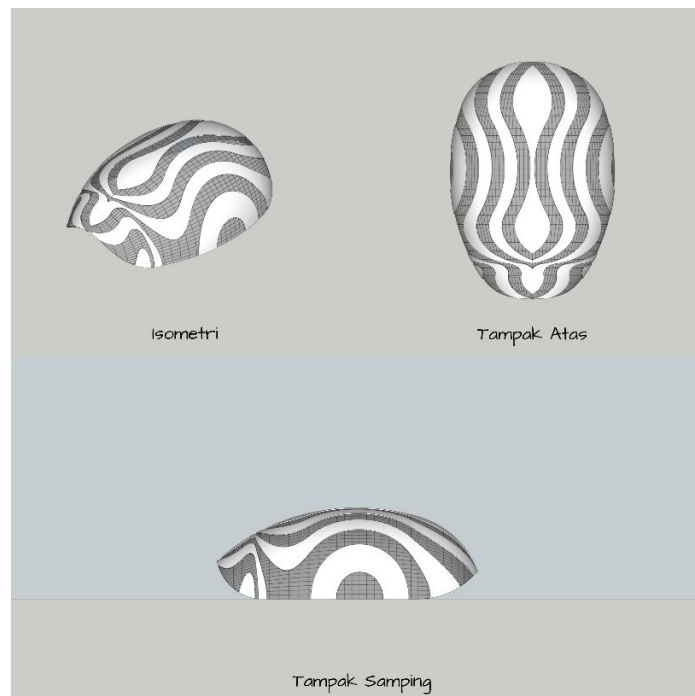
This approach preserves the symbolic character of the mask as a representation of the expression and philosophy of the people of Malang, while translating it into a dynamic architectural composition responsive to user needs and site conditions. As a result, the main building mass embodies a harmonious integration of traditional values and modern design principles, simultaneously emphasizing function, aesthetics, and cultural meaning.



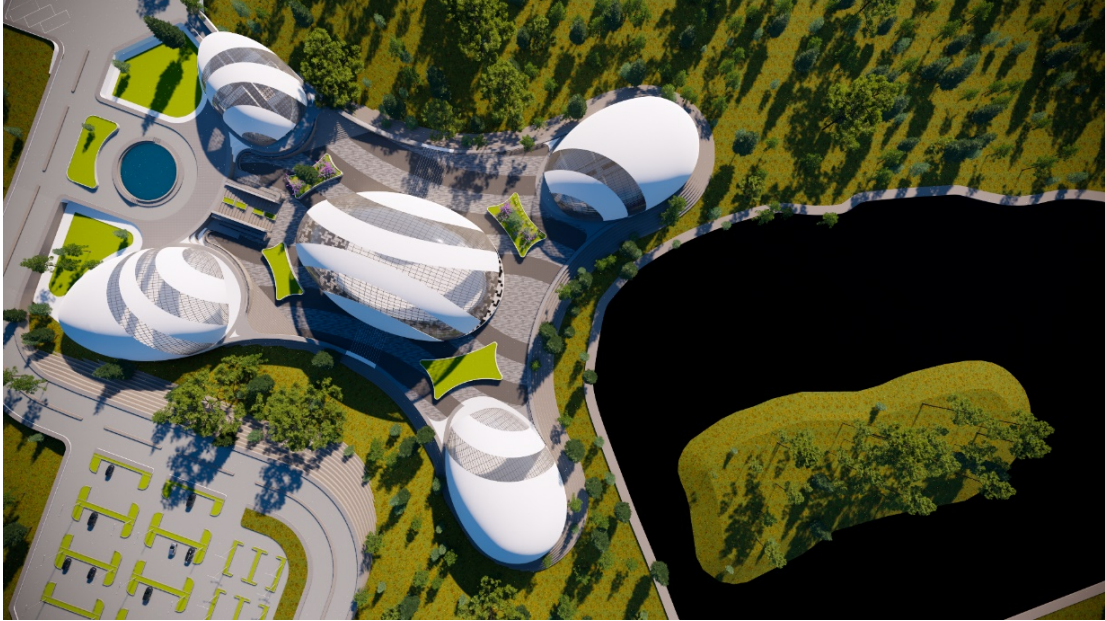
**Figure 4. Mass concept (source: Author)**

The façade is designed with a dynamic form featuring flowing organic curves across the building surface, inspired by the expressive contours and carvings of Topeng Malangan that symbolize movement, expression, and local cultural character. The wave-like patterned lines create a vibrant visual rhythm, evoking the energy of art that continuously moves and transforms.

In terms of materiality, the façade incorporates perforated aluminum panels as an outer skin to achieve a modern and lightweight appearance. This panel system also functions as a double-skin façade, helping to control sunlight intensity and heat gain within the gallery spaces while allowing natural air circulation.



**Figure 5. Façade concept (source: Author)**



**Figure 6. Site Layout (source: Author)**



**Figure 7. Site View (source: Author)**



**Figure 8. Interior gallery 1 (source: Author)**



**Figure 10. Interior gallery 2 (source: Author)**

## **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS**

The design of the Art Gallery in Malang City demonstrates that modern architecture can function as an effective medium for representing and revitalizing local cultural identity. Through a comprehensive site analysis, contextual evaluation, and theoretical grounding, the project establishes a design strategy that integrates functionality, sustainability, and symbolic meaning within a unified architectural framework.

By adopting principles of modern architecture emphasizing rationality, spatial efficiency, openness, and material honesty the gallery accommodates exhibition, education, conservation, and social interaction within flexible and adaptive spatial configurations. At the same time, the transformation of Topeng Malangan into massing concepts, radial spatial organization, and façade articulation ensures that cultural symbolism remains embedded in the architectural expression. This approach reflects a reconciliation between tradition and modernity, where local values are not replicated literally but reinterpreted through contemporary design language.

Furthermore, the integration of sustainable strategies, including natural lighting optimization, cross ventilation, vegetation use, and environmental responsiveness, reinforces the building's ecological responsibility. The gallery is therefore positioned not only as a cultural facility but also as an urban catalyst that strengthens Malang's identity as an educational and creative city.

Ultimately, this design confirms that an art gallery can transcend its role as a mere exhibition space. It becomes a cultural landmark that fosters creative interaction, preserves intangible heritage, and contributes to sustainable cultural tourism and the growth of the local creative economy.

## REFERENCES

- Corbusier, L. (1927). Towards a New Architecture. *Art Education*, 24(3), 30. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3191562>
- Hall, S. (1990). Cultural Identity and Diaspora. *The Postcolonial Studies Reader, Third Edition*, 497–501. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429469039-101>
- Purnama, D. H., Mulyanto, M., & Yulasteriyani, Y. (2021). Representation of Cultural Identity in Limas House Palembang. *DIMENSI (Journal of Architecture and Built Environment)*, 48(1), 47–54.
- Tuna Ultav, Z., Ballice, G., & Asadollahi Asl Zarkhah, S. (2020). The Evaluation of Interiority in the Identity of Public Spaces. *Iconarp International J. of Architecture and Planning*, 8(2), 567–590. <https://doi.org/10.15320/iconarp.2020.127>
- Trushaj, A., Almakuchukov, K., Akhmetov, U., Solovei, I., & Zhamitova, A. (2025). The Role of Museums and Galleries in the Formation of Cultural Landscapes and Tourism. *Treatises and Documents, Journal of Ethnic Studies*, 94(1), 227–263. <https://doi.org/10.2478/tdjes-2025-0009>
- Ivanka, T., Avenzoar, A., Arsitektur, P. S., Arsitektur, F., & Nasional, U. P. (2025). *J.AUR (Journal of Architecture and Urbanism Research) Identifikasi Identitas Lokal pada Bangunan Pusat Seni dan Budaya sebagai Upaya Pelestarian Arsitektur Local Identity Identification in Cultural and Art Building as an Effort for Architectural Preserva.* 9(1), 206–216. <https://doi.org/10.31289/jaur.v9i1.14471>