

## Aesthetics Of Wayang Symbols On The Ceiling Of Graha Sahid Surakarta Building: Cultural Influence In Interior Design

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### ABSTRACT

*This research explores the use of wayang symbols in the ceiling design of Graha Sahid Surakarta and its impact on cultural aesthetics in interior design. Wayang as a traditional Indonesian art has symbols with deep cultural and philosophical meanings. The purpose of this study is to analyze how wayang symbols are applied in ceiling design to create a balance between cultural heritage and modern architecture. The research methodology uses qualitative which includes literature study, observation and interviews with building designers and building users. The findings of this study show that the application of wayang symbols on the ceiling of Graha Sahid Surakarta not only enhances the aesthetic value but also strengthens the cultural identity of the building. The integration of wayang motifs in the ceiling design shows how cultural elements can be combined with contemporary aesthetics to produce a unique and meaningful space. This research highlights the importance of understanding and applying cultural symbols in interior design to enrich the experience of space and strengthen cultural connections in a modern context.*

### KEYWORDS

*Aesthetics  
Wayang symbol  
Interior design  
Cultures*

*Building*

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## 1. Introduction

Culture plays an important role in shaping a community's identity and contributes to the creation of unique aesthetic values. One of the richest manifestations of culture is traditional art, which in this context is represented by wayang symbols. Wayang as an intangible cultural heritage that has been recognized by UNESCO contains symbolic meanings that are full of meaning and have high aesthetic value. Besides being used in art performances, puppets are also adapted into various forms of design including interior design. Puppet symbols not only act as decorative elements, but also reflect philosophical, ethical and moral values that are passed down from generation to generation. One of the efforts to preserve the art of wayang is by integrating the symbolic values contained in it into interior design. This step not only has a positive impact on the development of the interior design world, but also contributes to the preservation of traditional Indonesian art and culture (Darmayanti et al., 2022). The uniqueness of a society's culture changes over time, known as cultural transformation. Aesthetic value can be seen from the shape, rhythm, balance, and harmony in ornaments or symbols. Aesthetics is also reflected in the choice of colors used in each ornament or symbol (Khalisha & Ischak, 2023).

Traditional art, especially wayang, symbolic values represent life, human relationships with nature, and spiritual aspects with greater power. Such as material symbols that are symbols that can be felt through the five senses, such as the spatial arrangement and shape of the building, building design patterns, material selection, and ornaments in it (Nafisha, 2024). In the scope of interior design, the use of wayang symbols is not only important to maintain cultural heritage but also serves as an element that strengthens the aesthetics of a space. Aesthetics in interior design not only includes visual beauty, but also involves harmony and balance between

the elements in the space. Aesthetic harmony involves the right balance between visual elements, including the use of materials to create a beautiful and attractive space. In architectural research, aesthetic harmony analysis often examines concepts such as color theory and visual design principles (Al Mohgny & Raidi, 2024). The choice of colors in interior elements, the suitability of furniture and the comfort of the space can contribute to creating interior conditions (Thenius et al., 2019) in (Seftianingsih & Rifai, 2024).



**Figure 01.** Ceiling of Graha Sahid Surakarta

Interior design as a field that combines aspects of art and function, is strongly influenced by the cultural context in which it develops. Graha Sahid Surakarta, the object of this research, is a concrete example of the application of local cultural elements in its interior design. The ceiling of the building is decorated with wayang symbols full of philosophical and aesthetic meanings that reflect the influence of culture in space design. The use of these symbols not only enriches the visual appearance of the building's interior but also creates an atmosphere that elevates local cultural values. The puppet characters chosen to be applied to the ceiling of Graha Sahid Surakarta have different characters that can be revealed philosophically through a deeper analysis. There are six handles of beauty from Sad-angga, one of which, Rupabheda refers to the difference in form, where each form must have a characteristic that is easily recognizable and different from one another. This principle is similar to the way we recognize characters in wayang, where each character has unique characteristics that distinguish it from the others (Widayat, 2010).

This research aims to show how the wayang symbols in Graha Sahid Surakarta can create a visual harmony that is in line with the concept of space and function of the building. By analyzing the interaction between local cultural elements and contemporary design this research is expected to illustrate how cultural heritage can be effectively integrated into modern design without compromising the essence of tradition. The results of this research are expected to not only contribute to the development of interior design theory, but also provide practical inspiration for architects and designers in creating works that prioritize cultural preservation.

This research will answer questions such as: how are wayang symbols selected and applied to the ceiling design? Do the symbols have a relationship with certain cultural values? How does the visual appearance and symbolic meaning affect how people perceive the beauty of the space? This analysis is expected to contribute to the study of interior design aesthetics based on culture as well as increase knowledge about the incorporation of traditional art in modern design.

## **2. Research Methodology**

The research uses a qualitative descriptive method with an ethnographic approach. The ethnographic approach is related to elements that discuss culture in the natural life of a community (Endraswara, 2006) in (Istikomah et al., 2024). Additionally, the ethnographic approach can identify how people think, live, and behave in their social life. This enables the researcher to capture unique aspects that are rarely encountered by the general public. In this research, the researcher directly observes the scope of social life activities in a natural setting (Moleong 2017) in (Istikomah et al., 2024). According to Lofland and Lofland, the data sources are natural actions, with the rest being documents (Moleong 2017) in (Istikomah et al., 2024). This study uses a qualitative approach with the aim of exploring the aesthetics of wayang symbols applied to the ceiling of Graha

Sahid Surakarta and assessing the cultural influence on its interior design. The qualitative approach was chosen for its ability to explore the deep meaning of cultural symbols and analyze complex aesthetic aspects. The following steps and methods will be applied in this research:

**Literature study:** the initial stage of the research involved collecting relevant literature on wayang as a cultural symbol, interior design aesthetics and theories related to traditional art in architecture. The literature collected includes books, scientific articles, journals and other documents that build a strong theoretical foundation. The literature review also includes works that discuss the influence of local culture in interior design.

**Observation:** conducted at Graha Sahid Surakarta to document the wayang symbols on the ceiling of the building in detail. The researcher will record the shape, pattern and composition of the wayang symbols as well as the context in which they are placed in the space. Observation also includes analyzing the interaction of the symbols with the overall design of the space and their impact on the ambience and aesthetic perception of the space.

Interviews were conducted with parties involved in the design and construction of Graha Sahid Surakarta. The purpose of this interview is to obtain information about the background of the use of wayang symbols, the process of selecting certain symbols and the cultural and philosophical meanings contained in these symbols. In addition, interviews with building users were also conducted to understand the impact of these symbols on their aesthetic perceptions.

**Data analysis:** data collected from observations and interviews were analyzed using an interpretative approach. The researcher will evaluate the symbolic meaning of each wayang symbol found on the ceiling of the building and how it reflects local cultural values. The analysis also includes the visual and aesthetic influence of the wayang symbols on the overall interior design of Graha Sahid Surakarta.

**Documentation:** photographs of the ceiling and the wayang symbols will be taken to support the descriptive analysis. This visualization serves to provide a concrete picture of the application of these symbols on the ceiling and their contribution to the ambience and aesthetics of the space.

**Data triangulation:** done by comparing results from various methods (observation, interviews and literature studies). Data from various sources will be examined and strengthen the researcher's findings. After the data is analyzed, the researcher will draw conclusions that examine the relationship between the aesthetics of wayang symbols and the interior design of Graha Sahid Surakarta in the context of local culture.

This research method is expected to provide a comprehensive understanding of the role of wayang symbols in creating the aesthetics and ambience of space in Graha Sahid Surakarta as well as the contribution of local culture to the overall interior design.

### 3. Result and Discussion

In terms of aesthetics and artistic atmosphere, wayang symbols in the ceiling of Graha Sahid present a distinctive visual beauty with unique and diverse shapes. The visual style offered by wayang characters can provide an interesting artistic touch, creating a comfortable, elegant and impressive space for users. The ornament details and color assertiveness displayed by the wayang symbol on the ceiling can enrich the atmosphere of the space and give a dramatic and majestic impression. It is also relevant with (Thenius et al., 2019) in (Seftianingsih & Rifai, 2024) that explains whether the choice of colors in interior elements, the suitability of furniture and the comfort of the space can contribute to creating classroom interior conditions that support learning programs according to children's needs, so that their development can take place optimally.

The results of interviews with various sources such as building managers and space users produced several results, namely: The use of wayang symbols on the ceiling of Graha Sahid Surakarta is related to respect for cultural heritage. Puppet symbols are often seen as symbols of wisdom, philosophy of life and important traditional values in Indonesian culture. The placement of wayang symbols on the ceiling can be a way to preserve culture as well as introduce and remind visitors of the rich cultural roots that exist. In the field of interior design, the wayang symbol can serve as a marker of local identity, emphasizing between the building and the culture of the surrounding community. This gives Graha Sahid Surakarta a distinctive character and sets it apart from other buildings. The use of wayang symbols in public spaces can create an emotional

closeness with visitors who feel their culture is represented in the space. Wayang has a strong story and life philosophy in every aspect of it. However, today, wayang is starting to be forgotten by the younger generation. One way to preserve wayang is through interior designers, who are expected to play a role in helping to rekindle the younger generation's love for wayang, which holds educational and moral values. (Mulyati & Sudiana, 2022)



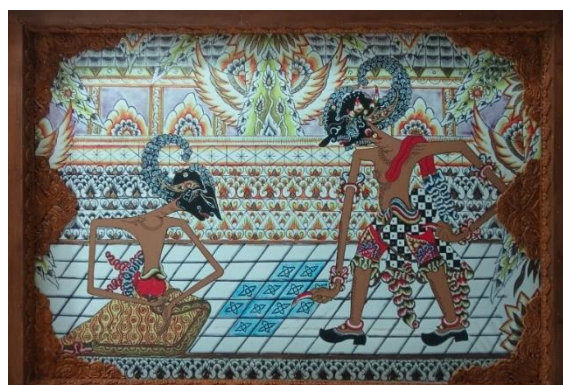
**Figure 02.** Detail of wayang symbols ornament on the ceiling of Graha Sahid Surakarta

The selection and application of wayang symbols in the ceiling design of Graha Sahid Surakarta was done through several important steps. Firstly, the wayang characters were chosen based on the philosophical value and message to be conveyed in the space, such as characters depicting wisdom, courage or the balance of nature. Then the design and shape of the symbol is adapted to fit the overall aesthetic of the room, creating a balance between traditional and modern elements. The application of symbols also pays attention to technical aspects such as proportion, scale and lighting to ensure the symbols are clearly visible and aesthetically pleasing without compromising the function of the ceiling as part of the building structure.

The effect of the visual appearance and symbolic meaning of wayang on the user's view of the space:

- 3.1. Visual appearance: wayang has distinctive visual characteristics such as striking shapes and colors and intricate details. The wayang symbol applied to the ceiling of Graha Sahid Surakarta can enrich the aesthetic appearance of the space and add a dimension of beauty through the diversity of shapes, patterns and colors so that the building ceiling becomes more artistic and visually appealing.
- 3.2. Symbolic meaning: each puppet character has a symbolic meaning that reflects certain cultural, moral and philosophical values. The application of wayang on the ceiling of Graha Sahid Surakarta not only provides an interesting visual element but also adds meaning and cultural context to the space.
- 3.3. Influence on the atmosphere of the space: by applying wayang symbols on the ceiling can enrich the aesthetic experience and increase the beauty value of the space with a unique appearance.

### **Bima and Arjuna Ceiling Picture**



**Figure 03.** Bima and Arjuna

Bima (Werkudara) is the son of the King of Hastina Prabu Pandudewanata with Dewi Kunthi (Museum Basoeki Abdullah: 2016). Bima has a role in the Mahabharata narrative as one of the five Pandhawa knights who has a very high honest nature. Werkudara has the principle that good will be rewarded with good and those who do evil will certainly be rewarded with evil, indiscriminately. Werkudara is a symbol of strength. When he was still in the form of a wrapper, he was able to destroy the Kuravas who wanted to disturb him. The transformation of Bratasena's form into Werkudara's is during the play Dewa Ruci. Not only physical strength, but also inner strength that will not be shaken when he has the intention to study with Resi Durna. Although all his siblings disagreed, even his mother Dewi Kunthi forbade him, Werkudara still held firm to his stance. Entering the ocean, which according to many people is a foolish act, turns out that Werkudara gets kasampurnan knowledge, and as a sign of someone who has been able to master kasampurnan knowledge, his hair was originally loose to be in the supit urang coil. In Baratayuda Werkudara had managed to kill thousands of enemy soldiers, many Kurawa brothers died by him, Dursasana was destroyed by his body for a vow from Dewi Drupadi to wash his hair with Dursasana's blood. Duryudana was destroyed with his weapon Gada Rujakpolo.

Arjuna (Janaka) is the third knight of the Pandavas in the Mahabharata story who is the favorite character of the Javanese people (Rina et al., 2017). Arjuna is characterized as a superior warrior who is good at fighting, never stops seeking knowledge, is weak and soft at heart, good at speaking, and has many wives. Arjuna's name appears in traditional ceremonies conducted by the Islamic community of coastal Java along with the names of characters in the holy Qur'an (Syam, 2005). (Woodward & Salim, 2004) also wrote that Arjuna is considered an ideal representation of a warrior by the Javanese community. Although Arjuna has lost several fights or died, he is always revived in the story until the time he dies with the other Pandavas. In picture 01, Arjuna is depicted manekung (manambah kang linangkung) to Bima. It can also be described as a student who is being given advice by his teacher, where Bima is the older brother of Arjuna.

The placement of the Bima puppet symbol on the ceiling of Graha Sahid Surakarta can create an impression of strength and courage so as to create an atmosphere that motivates or inspires space users. The Bima puppet representation can also symbolize protection and strength which is relevant for this type of building in an educational environment. Then the Arjuna symbol on the ceiling adds elements of intelligence, justice and intelligence. This symbol can influence the perception of space by giving the impression of elegance and wisdom. The presence of Arjuna puppets on the ceiling can create an inspiring atmosphere and emphasize moral and intellectual values that are very suitable for spaces related to education, research and formal meetings such as Graha Sahid Surakarta. Overall, the wayang symbols applied to the ceiling of Graha Sahid Surakarta are not just decoration, but also part of the Javanese cultural narrative conveyed through the wayang characters, creating an atmosphere that enriches the visual and emotional experience of space users (Rendell, 2006).

### Dewa Hastabrata



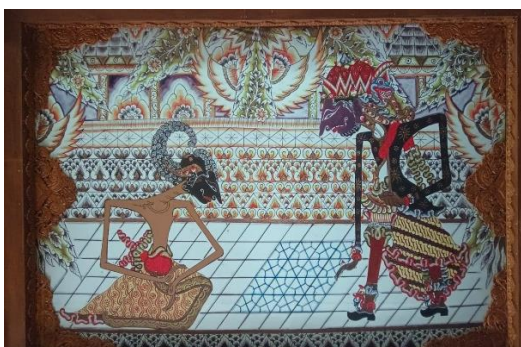
Figure 04. Eight of Dewa Hastabrata

Power is something that most humans crave. Power provides honor or prestige. On the other hand, power also always demands responsibility. This is where power becomes not easy. This is because power cannot be seen as just a stage where power holders can show off their greatness. Power must basically

provide benefits to the people it leads. The power possessed by leaders must be used to provide welfare. Figure 03 is a symbol of the Hastabrata Gods, which are 8 traits that must be possessed by leaders. Surya (Sun), which means that leaders must be able to motivate, spirit, life force, and provide strength to all the people they lead. Candra (Moon), which means that every leader must be able to please, attract and give light in the darkness to all the people he leads. Kartika (Star), which means that a leader can give instructions, directions, and guidance so that his subordinates are able to complete their tasks properly. Bayu (Wind), which means that every leader can act carefully and thoroughly and does not hesitate to go directly to the community to find out the real conditions. Geni (Fire), which means that a leader must be able to act like fire, meaning that he must be firm and fair indiscriminately. In addition to being firm, a leader must have consistent principles and be able to restrain emotions or control themselves. Banyu (Water), which means having a broad view, evenly distributed, capable, able to accept various kinds of problems and should not show favoritism and hatred towards any group. In addition, a leader must have a big heart that is willing to forgive the mistakes of others. Bawana (Earth and All), which means that a leader must be able to be like the earth, which is steadfast and always able to give grace to anyone who is meritorious to the country and nation. Mendhung (cloudy), which means that a leader must be able to maintain authority by being honest, open and all of his programs can benefit his subordinates and others. (Fatmawati, 2020) .

Each dewa in the Hastabrata symbolizes important concepts such as justice, strength, wisdom and peace. The application of Hastabrata puppet symbols on the ceiling of Graha Sahid Surakarta creates a balanced and harmonious atmosphere that reflects the goal of achieving well-being and stability within the space. The Hastabrata puppets provide motivation and inspiration to the users of the space by highlighting the positive values and characteristics they represent and can strengthen the identity of the building which functions as an educational institution and cultural center.

### **Begawan Kesawasidi and Arjuna**



**Figure 05.** Begawan Kesawasidi and Arjuna

Begawan Kesawasidi who lives in the hermitage of Argajati, is one of Arjuna's teachers when trying to get the knowledge of the revelation of Makutarama. In the story of Wahyu Makutarama, it is explained that Prabu Suyudana (Doryudana) sent Duke Karna, Patih Sengkuni and the Kurawas to Mount Kutharungu or Swelagiri Hermitage. He got a message in his dream that whoever can have Makuta Sri Batarama, then he will become magic, and will bring down the kings of Java. While on the Pandawa side, Arjuna was also looking for Makutharama who was accompanied by the Punakawan. On his way to Kutarungu, he was stopped by giants who disturbed him. But finally, Arjuna can defeat them. Luckily for Arjuna, when he arrived at Swelagiri, Panembahan Kesawasidi had finished meditating and had just given advice to Anoman who he considered a little presumptuous in carrying out his duties. Anoman was then ordered to go to Kendhalisada to meditate and beg for forgiveness for his mistake. Arjuna then met with Kesawasidi, and explained the purpose of his visit. Begawan Kesawasidi explained that actually Makutharama was not an item, but the knowledge of the perfect king's character or the teachings of Astabrata. Begawan Kesawasidi then conveyed the teachings of Astabrata to Arjuna.

The Begawan Kaswidi puppet symbol is known as a wise and knowledgeable figure. The use of the Begawan Kaswidi puppet symbol on the ceiling of Graha Sahid Surakarta can add values of wisdom, knowledge and learning. The Arjuna puppet symbolizes intelligence, courage and heroism. The Arjuna symbol on the ceiling of the building can reinforce friends about intelligence and courage in learning. The integration of the Begawan Kaswidi puppet symbol and the Arjuna puppet strengthens the cultural identity of the building

by depicting wisdom and courage which can improve the image of the building as an institution that supports and promotes pending values in education so as to increase positive perceptions of the institution's commitment to quality education and character development.

The use of ethnic cultural elements in modern design not only aims to beautify the space, but also as a strategic step in preserving and representing cultural identity in the midst of the times. In the context of Graha Sahid Surakarta's ceiling, the application of wayang symbols enriches the interior design by adding a strong dimension of culture and ethnicity, serving as a reminder of the importance of traditional values of Javanese culture in the modern era (Margolin, 2015). The wayang symbol on the ceiling not only acts as an attractive visual ornament, but also as a medium of expression that is full of meaning, conveying cultural messages, philosophy of life, and deep spirituality. Through this wayang symbol, the noble values of Javanese culture are preserved and live on in the context of modern design, enabling a harmonious relationship between traditional heritage and contemporary innovation. This integration confirms that local culture can not only survive, but can also thrive and make a significant contribution in the increasingly globalized modern design landscape.

### 3. Conclusion

This research shows that the wayang symbols on the ceiling of Graha Sahid Surakarta do not merely function as aesthetic elements but also reflect deep cultural and spiritual values. Wayang symbols that depict life, human relationships with nature and spiritual aspects are incorporated into the interior design to strengthen local cultural identity and create meaningful spaces. The influence of Javanese culture, especially from the traditional art of wayang, is proven to give a unique character to the interior design of Graha Sahid Surakarta. The use of these symbols also creates an aesthetic balance between visual elements and spatial functions thus enhancing the user experience by combining visual, emotional and spiritual aspects. The preservation and application of cultural symbols in interior design is very important to preserve cultural heritage and strengthen aesthetic meaning in the world of design. The strong influence of local culture in interior design reflects the relationship between tradition and modernity. By integrating traditional elements such as wayang into a modern context, designers seek to preserve tradition while adopting innovation in design.

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