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# Balinese Cosmology: Study on *Pangider Bhuwana* Colors in Gianyar's Contemporary Art

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**Abstract---**Adat (custom) and religion cannot be separated in the context of Balinese culture. One of the aspects of Balinese culture is the concept of mandala, called pangider bhuwana. Based on Balinese culture and religion, the Balinese mandala, is formally known as pangider bhuwana. The main focus of this essay is to explore the way the artist expresses and visualizes, using the colors of the mandala. A comprehensive analysis was conducted on the methods that the colors of the Balinese mandala are visualized in Gianyar's contemporary painting.

**Keywords---**contemporary painting, cosmology, pangider bhuwana colors, visualization.

## Introduction

Balinese cosmology is depicted in mandala form as religious and cosmic symbology, which is used to unify the Self. Based on the Balinese Hindu beliefs and tradition, each direction of the compass embodies specific characteristics (Bandem, 1986; Cameron, 2016; Chopra & Kafatos, 2017; Casas *et al.*, 1991). The most important characteristic is color, while other characteristics include a protective entity, a script, a form of movement, and a balancing force, to name just a few. This defines the Balinese mandala, formally known as *pangider bhuwana*. This article aims to explore the way ancient cultural heritage can be viewed as a root of contemporary art. This paper/article examines the consciousness of the artists from Ubud and Sukawati districts the Gianyar regency and analyzes the process of visualization and experience of the artists using these colors.

In the Hindu belief system, it is called *Brahmanda* - the concept of integration between humans and the universe which has occurred since the beginning of our civilization. In Hinduism, it is believed that the Mahenjo Daro and Harapa Valleys of India, were the sites where Balinese cosmology originated. One of the books that explained these human and cosmic relationships is the Hindu sourced *Vastu Purusha Mandala*. The concept of Hindu cosmology is also contained in the *Bhuwana Kosa Text*. The Hindu cosmology can be equated with the term *Virat Vidya*, (*Virat* means the cosmos or the universe, and *Vidya* means knowledge). The development of artistic awareness took place in two large groups, northern Sisvakarma, and southern Maya, both on the Indian subcontinent.

The process of visualization in contemporary abstract painting is an attempt to visualize the invisible. As Paul Klee explains: "Art does not render the invisible, rather it makes visible" Read Herbert (1968). The point being that art can reveal the invisible, making it tangible.

According to Ngurah Nala (1996) the colors used in the *pangider bhuwana*, called *Dewata Nawa Sangga*. It symbolizes the nine gods that guard the eight wind directions within the eight directions of the compass, with one God at the center of the circle, of the mandala. The eight Gods are namely Iswara – which is white, symbolizing the east, Dewa Maheswara – is pink symbolizing the southeast, while Brahma is red in the south, Rudra is orange to the

southwest, Mahadewa is yellow in the west, Sangkara is green in the northwest, Vishnu is black in the north, and Sambu is gray-blue in the northeast. Shiva is multi-colored at the center.

Sashikala (2016) states that “the science of arts and crafts is an ancient umbrella for Hindu religious texts” which explains the arts, crafts, and standards of principle. Sonal Kamlesh Puri (1998) agrees with the opinion that art is closely related to the existence of the universe, astronomy and astrology explained in '*Vastu Purusha Mandala*' called "cosmic man." Cosmology is the science of nature or the world.

According to Sumartono (2000) “some who use the term “contemporary painting” do not differentiate between modern painting and contemporary painting”. Jim Supangkat (1997) in Caroline Turner (1994) “*Tradition and Change: Contemporary Art of Asia and the Pacific* explains, “contemporary art in developing countries has grown in the international circle. Slowly but surely, the pluralism principle has gained in influence”.

## Result and Analysis

Visualization of *pangider bhuwana* colors in Gianyar contemporary painting involves the concept of balance, of harmony, and the interweaving between art, religion, and culture. Contemporary painting is generally defined as art that is developing today (Couteau, 2003; Donder, 2007; Sachari, 2002). The theoretical foundations are phenomenology - (Martin Heidegger) who suggests "being here" as a theory that departs from social facts that are objective about what appears in plain sight. Semiotics theory discusses the structures used to compile meaning from the colors of *pangider bhuwana*, created in contemporary painting. Hermeneutics theory is the process of interpretation far more general than just searching for the meaning of a text. The color of *pangider bhuwana* is closely related to the cosmology and mandala.

On January 29, 1936, the artist's group, Pita Maha was founded on the principles of high art and creativity. Although its membership spread throughout Bali, Ubud has remained its center of development. The aim to advance and develop Balinese art, improve the quality of art and disseminate the work of members so that it could be enjoyed by the community. The *de Medaile d'Argent* silver medal in Paris was won by Ida Bagus Kembeng (1897-1952) and Ida Bagus Gelgel (1908-1937), both early members of the Pita Maha in 1937. The achievements continued, especially noticeable in the flowering and growth of painting in Ubud and surrounding villages being influenced by the Pita Maha group.

Four Western artists (Walter Spies (1895-1942), Rudolf Bonnet (1895-1978), Antonio Blanco (1926-1999), and Arie Smit (1916-2017) who lived in Ubud, joined together, participating with local artists, influencing the dynamics of modern painting. The era of modern painting within Gianyar combines the strengths - of the roots of local art plus the influence and techniques of the West. The Pita Maha group included many of Bali's most renowned painters including the famed I Gusti Nyoman Lempad (1862 or 1875-1978), Ida Bagus Made Poleng (1915-1999), Anak Agung Gede Sobrat (1912-1992), I Gusti Made Deblog (1906-1986), I Gusti Made Baret (1920-2012), I Gusti Ketut Kobot (1917-1999), Anak Agung Raka Turas (1917-1992), Ida Bagus Nadera (1915-1998), Ida Bagus Rai (1915-2000), and others.

In 1950 Karsa Maha was established to continue the work of Pita Maha. Arie Smit helped to develop a young artists' group, assisted by the Malaysian art collector and architect Datuk Lim Chong Keat (born 1930). This group has also met with much success. The impact of formal art education in Bali starting in the 1980s resulted in a transformation of the concept of painting. Traditionally Balinese painting was a group effort usually used for temple decoration - individual work was not recognized. The simplification, modernization, and reduction created new directions. The result was that all elements of art became very simple, and the minimal concept came into play – a new direction for Balinese art.

The term “contemporary” started being used in Indonesia during the 1970s, when the New Art Movement began (Ibanez, 1984; Chapline & Gibbons, 1984; Kofman & Linde, 1987). As a large mainstream movement at the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century, contemporary painting has spread to all corners of the world. Painting developed in Bali from the early 1930s until now in tune with the development of tourism. Tourism opens relationships between nations that can bring many new opportunities in the development of contemporary painting. The visualization of *pangider bhuwana* colors are based on philosophy, theology, artistic, and aesthetic concepts, combining with social and culture, tourism, and economic factors. The Divine has three qualities: *satyam* (existence), *sivam* (goodness), and *sundaram* (beauty).

Regarding visualization in the book of the Hindu *Sama Veda*, it explains that the teachings of *tat twan asi* (you are Brahman), indicates that the meaning of visualization is based on the concept - "you are me." Humans describe a God likened to human forms, "God created humans following His image." The painting was created depicting human existence and the universe, which is referred to as the cosmic man. The relationship between "*Atman-Brahman*,"

human beings and the universe, is a reflection of the Divine aspects of truth, holiness, and beauty (Lazarides & Shafi, 1991; Kofman & Pogosyan, 1988).

The imagined relationship between the macro and microcosmos bridges the human visualization between the Higher Self (*Atman*) with the spirit of the universe (*Brahman*). In contemporary paintings, there are three major steps of transformation, namely: visual narrative, symbolism (*saguna rupa*) and supreme sublimation transcendence or (*nirguna rupa/padma hredaya*). The contemporary painter visualizes from the real form of narrative, the form of symbol/fantasy, and pure colors as the spirit of color itself. In "Concerning the Spiritual in Art", Kandinsky asserts that "there are external and internal-external and inner values. In terms of aesthetic, color becomes the main element in the embodiment of the work".

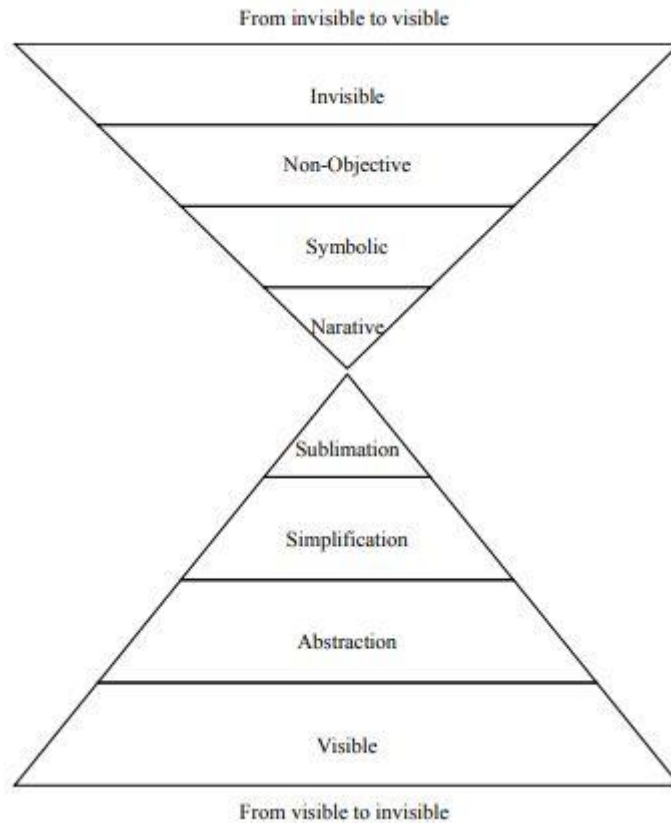


Figure 1. From invisible to visible

The visualization of the colors of *pangider bhuwana* contemporary painting utilizes the arrangement of color to become therapeutic and relate to the most basic emotions and human feelings. For that reason, art can be used as a primary therapeutic tool in connection with inner healing (Turner, 1993; Linde, 1991; Holman *et al.*, 1984).

Inner wounds can be healed by balancing the emotions using color therapy. Color has material and spiritual properties, and these two properties will create the third characteristic, therapeutic. In addition to the use of *pangider bhuwana* colors are used symbolically, related to the local cultural beliefs, and cultures. Color also has its spirit. "The wave is not the water, the color is not the force, but through the color, we can feel the force, the force is the Creator." The point is that the waves are not water, color is not strength, but through color, we can feel that power, that power is the Creator.

The visualization of *pangider bhuwana* colors in contemporary Gianyar painting consists of implications for religious life (Sobur, 2004; Sudarsana, 2001; Suka Yasa, 2006). Color becomes the symbol and signs of awareness of the laws of the balance of the universe. The human cosmos emphasizes the concepts of harmony and harmony with the colors of *pangider bhuwana*. Color becomes the main inspiration - the foremost commander among other visual elements. Color becomes the main aesthetic element in Balinese contemporary painting. The presence of the *pangider bhuwana* colors concept becomes something essential and philosophical compared to the previous style of paintings, the majority of which were executed in linear form (Sahdev, 1984; Maggiore & Riotta, 1999).

Allusions for the socio-cultural life are individual relationships with the community which can be made by understanding the power of color, based both individually and collectively, on a variety of human traits and characteristics. The variability of life is reflected by the degree of understanding of color. Color is power.

Consequences of the development of tourism, the rise of the development of tourism in Bali, including in the Regency of Gianyar holds the sources of traditional arts, religion, customs, and culture as strong pillars in increasing the attractiveness of tourism, inhuman, and universal understanding. The consequences for therapy, the colors of *pangider bhuwana* is believed to have a universal psychological impact. For this reason, people from diverse cultural backgrounds from all over the world can relate inner and spiritual interests with colors and be affected by its power.

These colors become important for spiritualists who see Gianyar as one of the centers of yoga, meditation, and spiritual development. It affects economic life, understanding the color of *pangider bhuwana* increases balance, and harmony in life. In various forms of expression, the color of the mandala art can be used as a commodity for buying and selling works of art that are economically valuable.

## Conclusion

*Tat Twam Asi*, "you are me" gives an image of visualizing, meaning "to God and the Divine", visualized in human form. *Pangider bhuwana* visualized in the east-west directions - east is to the top, unlike the Western compass, (north-south, with north at the top at the chart). The visualization from concrete to abstract is a process of conceiving from the visible to the invisible, with symbols and non-symbols.

In other words, the process of visualization from abstract to concrete is an interpretation where concrete objects become abstract, the objective becomes subjective, with abstraction, comes simplification, and sublimation. The colors of *pangider bhuwana* have therapeutic functions. Art and color can affect human psychology. Cosmic man is a human who visualizes something sublime, who can awaken the aura of light and colors that are balanced and harmonious with the universe. The circumnavigation of the mandala correlates the color of light with time, namely in the east the white light at 06:00, in the southeast pink lights at 09:00, in the south red light of noon, in the southwest the orange color at 15:00, in the west color yellow 18:00, in the northwestern color green 21:00, in the north the black of midnight 24: 00, in the northeast gray at 3:00, and in the middle is the *brumbun* a combination of multi-colors from the principal directions of black, white, red, yellow, and the center of the rotation time 0:00.

The *pangider bhuwana* colors as the compass of life is a way of life that must continue to be utilized to contribute to the values of global awareness. As an artist, don't avoid the process. The process is a very significant part of the art. Religious education, arts, customs, and local culture need to be disseminated internationally, by using the latest information technology as capital in the creative economy. Material that has not been touched in this study is expected to be further researched in a more detailed and comprehensive manner.

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