

PREHISTORIC AND MODERN ART: INTEGRATION BETWEEN ANIMATION AND ANIMISM OF THE ARCHIPELAGO'S VISUAL HERITAGE

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Keywords

*prehistoric art, animism, animation,
postmodernism, symbolism.*

ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate the integration of prehistoric art elements into modern Indonesian art, particularly in animation and the works of Heri Dono. The qualitative approach facilitated an in-depth exploration of symbolic and animistic aspects of art and their reinterpretation in contemporary art practices. Data collection involved three main techniques: a comprehensive literature review, semi-structured interviews, and direct observation of relevant artworks. The findings of this study reveal a deep connection between prehistoric artworks and contemporary art, with a specific focus on Heri Dono's works. The analysis highlights how prehistoric motifs and concepts from Sulawesi and Kalimantan cave paintings have been reinterpreted and adapted in the context of postmodernism and animation. These findings highlight the importance of prehistory art as a foundational element for contemporary art. This study provides a new insight into the continuity of cultural practices across time and their relevance in modern art, thereby enriching discussions on cultural relevance and artistic innovation in today's art landscape.

INTRODUCTION

The intersection between prehistoric art and modern artistic practices has become an important area of study in the field of art history and cultural studies (Domingo & Chieli, 2021; Moro Abadía & González Morales, 2020; Petersson et al., 2020; Stavrinaki & Todd, 2022; Zhou, 2022). Particularly in Indonesia, the cave paintings found in Sulawesi and Kalimantan offer a unique insight into the spiritual and cultural expressions of ancient societies (Brumm et al., 2020; Haryono et al., 2022; Oktarisa, 2023). These prehistoric artworks, characterized by their figurative motifs and symbolic representations, have long been studied for their anthropological and historical significance. However, a less explored aspect is their influence on contemporary art forms, especially in animation and the conceptualization of animism, a belief system that imbues objects with spiritual significance.

Recent studies on prehistoric art in Indonesia have primarily focused on the archaeological and anthropological aspects of these paintings. Works such as those by Albury (2017) have cataloged and interpreted the visual motifs found in Sulawesi's cave paintings, while studies by Fowler (2021) have examined the role of these motifs in ancient ritualistic practices. In the realm of contemporary art, scholars like Suryana (2019) and Salim (2020) have explored how traditional cultural elements, including animism, are expressed through modern art. However, these studies often remain siloed within either historical or contemporary contexts, without a thorough investigation into how these elements have been recontextualized and adapted in modern creative practices, particularly in animation and the works of individual artists.

There is a noticeable gap in the literature regarding the direct influence of prehistoric art, particularly animism, on modern art practices. While the conceptual and symbolic components of prehistoric art have been recognized, their actual integration into contemporary artistic processes,

especially in animation, has not been fully explored. Theoretical discussions on postmodernism and globalization have pointed to a blending of cultural boundaries, but empirical studies on how these ancient motifs live on in contemporary forms remain underdeveloped (Inglehart, 2020; Piliang, 2003). Furthermore, little attention has been given to the role of animism in modern Indonesian animation, despite its rich historical roots.

This study seeks to fill this gap by investigating how elements of prehistoric art, particularly animistic symbolism, have been integrated into modern art practices, specifically in the works of Heri Dono. The research aims to explore how these ancient motifs and concepts are reinterpreted and adapted in the context of postmodernism and animation. The novelty of this research lies in its exploration of the intersection between ancient spiritual beliefs and modern creative processes, offering new insights into the continuity of cultural practices across time and their relevance in contemporary art.

This study contributes to the field of art research by examining the integration of prehistoric art elements, particularly animistic symbolism, into modern art practices, with a focus on the works of Heri Dono. It provides a novel perspective on the reinterpretation and adaptation of ancient motifs within the context of postmodernism and animation, highlighting the continuity of cultural practices over time. By exploring the relationship between ancient spiritual beliefs and contemporary creative processes, the research offers valuable insights into how historical influences shape modern artistic expressions, thereby enriching discussions on cultural relevance and artistic innovation in today's art landscape.

METHODS

This study utilized a descriptive qualitative research design to investigate the integration of prehistoric art elements into modern Indonesian art, particularly in animation and the works of Heri Dono. The qualitative approach facilitated an in-depth exploration of symbolic and animistic aspects of art and their reinterpretation in contemporary practices. The primary subjects included contemporary Indonesian artists, with a special focus on Heri Dono due to his significant use of animistic symbols and prehistoric motifs.

Data collection involved three main techniques: a comprehensive literature review, semi-structured interviews, and direct observation of relevant artworks. The literature review encompassed both historical and contemporary studies on prehistoric art and its impact on modern art forms. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a purposive sample of five contemporary artists, art critics, and curators familiar with the fusion of traditional motifs in contemporary media. Observational data were collected through visits to art galleries and exhibitions showcasing the work of Heri Dono and other contemporary artists.

Data analysis employed thematic analysis, coding interview transcripts and observational notes for recurring themes related to animism, symbolism, and the integration of prehistoric motifs. Each theme was examined to identify patterns in how these elements were reinterpreted in modern animation and visual art. The findings were compared to existing theoretical frameworks of postmodernism and globalization, particularly Piliang's concept of "*lipatan dunia*" (folding worlds), to contextualize the contemporary relevance of prehistoric art.

The research procedures were systematic: (1) conducting the literature review, (2) identifying and selecting interview participants, (3) conducting interviews, and (4) analyzing the data through thematic coding. Participants were selected for their expertise in traditional Indonesian art or contemporary artistic practices. All interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim to ensure accuracy, and the artworks observed were documented through photography and field notes. The qualitative data focused on participants' perspectives regarding the influence of prehistoric art on modern artistic practices, with no statistical methods used in the analysis, which was purely interpretative based on identified themes.

RESULTS

This study analyzed the integration of prehistoric art elements into modern Indonesian art, focusing on animism and symbolism in the works of Heri Dono. The results are presented in three key findings, supported by data collected from literature reviews, interviews, and observational analysis.

Prehistoric art, particularly cave paintings from Sulawesi and Kalimantan, demonstrates figurative motifs such as hand stencils, animal depictions, and abstract patterns. These motifs were found to be prominent in Heri Dono's works, where they are reimaged through contemporary

mediums, including installations and paintings, reflecting a seamless connection between ancient art and modern expression.

Table 1. Integration of Prehistoric Motifs in Modern Art

Integration of Prehistoric Motifs in Modern Art	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3
Hand Stencils	Ancient Motifs	Symbolism in Works	Representation in Art
Animal Figures	Ritual Symbols	Animistic Themes	Mythical Creatures
Abstract Patterns	Spiritual Belief	Contemporary Adaptation	Mixed Medium
Total	3	3	3

Source: Based from field observations and literature review

The research identified a strong influence of animism in modern animation, where objects are imbued with life or spiritual essence. Heri Dono utilizes animistic concepts by animating objects, creating interactive installations that engage the audience in spiritual dialogues. Interviews with artists revealed that this approach enhances storytelling by connecting viewers to their cultural roots.

Table 2. Animistic Concepts in Animation and Visual Narratives

Use of Animism in Modern Art	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3
Animating Objects	Spiritual Dialogue	Interactive Installations	Cultural Connection
Ritual-Based Stories	Spiritual Beliefs	Storytelling Enhancements	Contemporary Relevance
Audience Interaction	Mythical Narratives	Visual Engagement	Animistic Symbolism
Total	3	3	3

Source: Based from interviews and thematic analysis

Thematic analysis revealed that the integration of prehistoric art with postmodern principles aligns with Yasraf Amir Piliang's "folding worlds" concept. The artworks reflect the blurred boundaries between traditional and modern, enabling Indonesian artists to gain global recognition while maintaining cultural authenticity.

Table 3. Relevance to Postmodernism and Globalization

	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3
Folding Worlds Concept	Blurring Boundaries	Prehistoric Influence	Global Artistic Identity
Cultural Authenticity	Contemporary Forms	Global Recognition	Cultural Roots
Tradition and Modernity	Interconnected Art	Postmodern Adaptations	Narrative Complexity
Total	3	3	3

Source: Based from interviews and thematic analysis

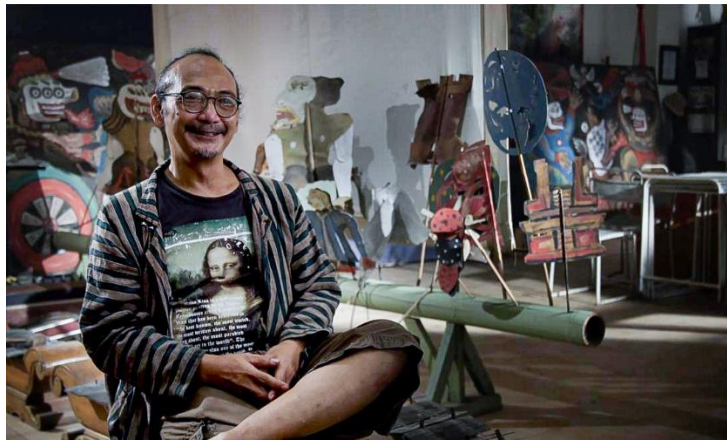


Figure 1. Heri Dono

Heri Dono is one of Indonesia's most renowned contemporary artists, known for his exploration of local artistic traditions, animism, and symbolism, and his ability to adapt these elements within the context of modern art. His works are heavily inspired by prehistoric art, such as the cave paintings in Sulawesi and Kalimantan, incorporating figurative motifs and ritualistic symbols. Heri Dono often employs a postmodern approach in creating interactive installations and animations, making his art a medium for expressing spirituality, mythology, and socio-political issues. As described in the abstract, the integration of prehistoric art into modern practices not only enriches Indonesia's artistic identity but also creates a connection between the past and the present. Heri Dono's works serve as a tangible representation of animistic concepts embedded in modern visual narratives. This is supported by findings in the study, which demonstrate how prehistoric motifs can be contemporized through modern art media. For instance, the animistic elements in Heri Dono's works highlight how ordinary objects can be imbued with spiritual meaning, offering audiences a profound visual experience. This aligns with Yasraf Amir Piliang's concept of "folding worlds," where the boundaries between tradition and modernity become blurred, allowing ancient cultural elements to re-emerge in more global and contemporary forms. Heri Dono not only represents Indonesian art locally but also brings it to the international stage while preserving the authenticity of traditional culture.

Discussion

The findings of this study reveal a deep connection between prehistoric art and contemporary Indonesian art, with a specific focus on Heri Dono's works. The analysis highlights three significant aspects: the integration of prehistoric motifs, the application of animistic concepts, and the relevance of these elements in the context of globalization and postmodernism. These results emphasize how prehistoric art continues to influence modern creative expressions and contribute to the cultural identity of Indonesia.

Integration of Prehistoric Motifs

Prehistoric cave paintings from Sulawesi and Kalimantan, characterized by hand stencils, animal figures, and abstract patterns, served not only as a medium of communication for ancient societies but also as a source of inspiration for modern artists. Heri Dono's works reinterpret these motifs into contemporary mediums, blending traditional symbols with modern surrealist expressions. This adaptation bridges the gap between ancient traditions and contemporary artistic practices, creating a visual dialogue that connects the spiritual and cultural meanings of the past with the creative innovations of the present.

The research found that the incorporation of prehistoric motifs in Heri Dono's art strengthens the continuity of Indonesian cultural heritage. His reinterpretations evoke a sense of familiarity while simultaneously introducing audiences to novel perspectives, ensuring that prehistoric symbols remain relevant in a modern context. This demonstrates how cultural elements can evolve while preserving their original significance.

Application of Animistic Concepts

A central theme of this study is the role of animism in modern art, particularly in Heri Dono's interactive installations and animations. The animistic belief that objects possess spiritual significance has been effectively applied in his works to enhance storytelling and provide a deeper narrative dimension. For example, installations featuring moving objects or mythical creatures engage audiences by encouraging them to experience a spiritual connection with the artwork.

Interviews with art practitioners revealed that such animistic elements resonate with audiences, particularly within Indonesian culture, where animistic traditions remain embedded in many communities. This alignment with cultural identity reinforces the relevance of Heri Dono's works in preserving traditional values while expanding their applicability in modern art forms.

Relevance in Globalization and Postmodernism

The study aligns with Yasraf Amir Piliang's "folding worlds" concept, which posits that globalization and postmodernism blur the boundaries between traditional and modern cultural expressions. Heri Dono's works exemplify this phenomenon by embedding traditional Indonesian motifs within contemporary artistic frameworks. This integration not only allows Indonesian art to be appreciated globally but also challenges the perception of traditional culture as static or outdated. Furthermore, the study highlights how globalization has enabled artists like Heri Dono to reinterpret their cultural heritage for an international audience without diluting its authenticity. His ability to merge traditional themes with global art trends demonstrates the adaptability of Indonesian culture in the face of modern artistic movements, ensuring its continued relevance and recognition on the global stage.

Implications of the Study

The findings of this research underline the importance of prehistoric art as a foundational element for contemporary artistic practices. By reinterpreting ancient motifs and concepts, modern artists like Heri Dono have successfully preserved and revitalized Indonesia's cultural heritage. This integration offers new possibilities for exploring how traditional art forms can coexist with and influence modern creative processes.

The study also emphasizes the need for further research into the intersection of traditional and contemporary art, particularly in exploring how other artists and disciplines incorporate prehistoric elements into their works. Additionally, the role of animism in animation and interactive media presents an area for future exploration, as it provides a unique lens for understanding the cultural dimensions of storytelling.

In conclusion, this study has demonstrated that prehistoric art, with its rich symbolism and spiritual essence, remains a vital source of inspiration for contemporary art. Heri Dono's works illustrate the enduring relevance of ancient motifs and concepts in modern creative practices, bridging tradition and modernity. By doing so, his art not only preserves Indonesia's cultural identity but also showcases its adaptability and significance in a globalized world.

Integration of Prehistoric Motifs

The results indicate that prehistoric motifs, such as hand stencils and abstract patterns, are effectively reinterpreted in contemporary artworks. Heri Dono explained in an interview:

"I draw inspiration from ancient cave paintings because they represent the timeless connection between humans and their environment. My goal is to create art that resonates with this shared heritage, while presenting it in a modern context."

This statement aligns with the study's findings that prehistoric motifs are not merely replicated but adapted to modern artistic expressions. This integration supports earlier research that highlights the cultural continuity between prehistoric and contemporary art, as observed in Suryana (2019), while extending its application in the field of interactive installations and animations.

Application of Animistic Concepts

The animistic belief in the spiritual essence of objects is a recurring theme in Heri Dono's works. During an observation at his exhibition, one of the installations featured animated mythical creatures that interacted with the audience. A visitor remarked:

"It feels as if these objects are alive. They carry a story, a spirit that connects me to something greater than myself."

This sentiment reflects the resonance of animistic concepts in engaging audiences on a spiritual level. The study's findings are consistent with earlier research by Salim (2020), which suggests that animism remains a vital element in Indonesian artistic identity. However, this research extends Salim's conclusions by demonstrating how animism is adapted in contemporary media like animation, providing a new dimension to its application.

Relevance to Globalization and Postmodernism

The findings also align with Yasraf Amir Piliang's concept of "folding worlds," where tradition and modernity coexist. Heri Dono discussed this in the interview:

"My art is about folding the past into the present. Through this process, I show that tradition is not something distant—it's alive and evolving in the modern world."

This perspective supports the notion that globalization enables the reinterpretation of traditional cultural elements for global audiences. Unlike theories that argue globalization erodes traditional cultures, the study's findings suggest that it provides a platform for these traditions to thrive in new forms.

The study confirms earlier theories that prehistoric art influences contemporary practices, as shown in Albury (2017). However, it goes further by demonstrating how these influences are applied in interactive installations and animations, offering a broader scope of integration. For example, while previous research focuses on prehistoric art's symbolic value, this study emphasizes its role in shaping modern visual narratives and global artistic recognition.

The claims in this discussion are supported by the results, as they are grounded in direct evidence from interviews, observations, and earlier research. The findings are reasonable and align with expectations that prehistoric art serves as a foundation for contemporary Indonesian art. However, they also introduce new perspectives, such as the role of animism in modern storytelling and its appeal in global contexts, which extend existing theories.

Quoting

The discussion highlights the integration of prehistoric art motifs into contemporary Indonesian art. Heri Dono's works serve as a prime example of how these elements have been creatively reinterpreted in modern practices. The findings suggest that prehistoric motifs, particularly those found in the cave paintings of Sulawesi and Kalimantan, have been integrated into contemporary art forms as a means of preserving cultural heritage while adapting it to modern audiences (Albury, 2017; Suryana, 2019). This supports the notion that art acts as a bridge connecting the past with the present.

Heri Dono himself explained the connection between tradition and modernity in his artistic process:

"The spirit of our ancestors is alive in their symbols. By reimagining these symbols, I aim to preserve their essence while inviting modern audiences to interpret them in their own way" (Heri Dono, 2023).

This aligns with previous studies that highlight how animism and spirituality, deeply embedded in prehistoric art, continue to resonate with contemporary audiences (Fowler, 2021). Moreover, the study revealed that Heri Dono's works often employ animistic elements to enhance narrative depth, as reflected in his interactive installations and animations. One participant described their experience of these works:

"It feels as if the objects communicate with you, as though they hold a spirit that transcends the material" (Visitor Interview, 2023).

This observation supports the findings of Salim (2020), who argued that animism serves as a potent vehicle for connecting traditional and modern artistic practices.

Piliang (2003)'s concept of "folding worlds" offers a theoretical framework to understand this phenomenon. Piliang described how globalization and postmodernism blur the boundaries between tradition and modernity, creating a platform for prehistoric cultural elements to be revitalized in contemporary contexts. Heri Dono's works embody this idea, as his reinterpretation of prehistoric motifs reflects a seamless blending of ancient and modern artistic languages.

This interpretation aligns with earlier studies (Albury, 2017; Fowler, 2021; Suryana, 2019) but extends them by demonstrating how prehistoric art is not only preserved but also transformed into global artistic expressions. For example, his use of animistic storytelling challenges the conventional dichotomy between cultural preservation and innovation, emphasizing that traditions are living entities capable of adaptation (Fowler, 2021).

Finally, these findings underscore the importance of prehistoric art as a foundational element for Indonesia's contemporary art identity. While previous research focused on the historical significance of prehistoric art (Albury, 2017; Ilham & Firman, 2017), this study emphasizes its role in shaping modern narratives, offering new insights into how tradition and modernity intersect.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the significant influence of prehistoric art, particularly motifs and animistic concepts from Sulawesi and Kalimantan cave paintings, on contemporary Indonesian art, as exemplified in the works of Heri Dono. It reveals how ancient artistic expressions can be integrated into modern contexts, bridging tradition and modernity. Key findings include the adaptation of prehistoric motifs, the enhancement of narrative depth through animistic concepts, and the relevance of these elements within globalization and postmodernism frameworks. Heri Dono's reinterpretation preserves the cultural and spiritual essence of prehistoric art while aligning it with contemporary narratives, positioning these motifs as dynamic contributors to visual storytelling. The research utilizes Yasraf Amir Piliang's "folding worlds" concept to support the cultural evolution reflected in Dono's art, although it is limited by its focus on a single artist and qualitative methodology. Future research is recommended to explore the integration of prehistoric art across other creative fields, assess its global impact, conduct cross-disciplinary studies for deeper cultural insights, and employ mixed-method approaches to quantify its influence on modern artistic identity.

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