

Archive as silent witness: A study of *Jeprut* annual exhibition

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Abstract

This research examines the Archival Exhibition: 1st Annual Jeprut Permanen 2014, which showcases documentation and artefacts from the performance art of the Jeprut group in Bandung. This exhibition is interesting to analyze due to its unconventional presentation of archives, resembling contemporary art installations. Though detailed descriptions of the exhibition and analysis based on archival theory, this research aims to examine the status and display format of archives in the exhibition. The method used is descriptive qualitative of archive study. The results show that although the presentation resembles installation work, the exhibited objects still meet the criteria of archives as records of performance events. This exhibition expands the understanding of the form and presentation of archives in contemporary art, demonstrating that archives can function not only as historical documents but also as artistic mediums. The archival exhibition approach successfully makes archive the main object while presenting them in a visually appealing form, showing the potential of archives in the context of art galleries.

Keywords: *archival exhibition; performance art; artefacts*

Introduction

An art exhibition is an event that presents or displays artworks to the public in an exhibition space or art gallery. The exhibited works vary from conventional paintings and sculptures to contemporary works like installations, sound art, video art, and even performance art. During the exhibition opening, performance art is typically conducted by the artist, often supported by props or costumes. As the exhibition continues, the artist's supporting equipment, such as props or costumes, is stored in the gallery space to be exhibited alongside photographs or video documentation of the performance. The documentation process involves repetition and reproduction of the original performance, allowing audiences to experience the event again (Cavaliero, 2016; Faisal, 2019; Zaeri & Roozafzai, 2024; Djatiprambudi & Sampurno, 2023). Furthermore, the use of digital technology in exhibitions enables the dissemination and reproduction of performances, adding layers of meaning and sustainability to the archival process

(Zaeri & Roozafzai, 2024; Mingyue & Shaw Chiang, 2022).

The documentation results are exhibited as archives in the form of documentary photographs arranged in a particular manner when displayed. Additionally, there is often a screen showing video documentation and artefacts displayed on a rack or in a vitrine. Performance art became known in the 1970s as a form of resistance against established art forms like paintings and sculptures that were always exhibited in galleries (Hollledge, 2023). Performance art began to emerge in the early 20th century with the advent of the avant-garde movement, rooted in the Dada movement that performed outside exhibition spaces. In a 1909 manifesto in Paris, a group of cross-disciplinary artists introduced a new art form presented in video format, which was the beginning of video performance or performance documentation (Francksen & Smith, 2024). Throughout the 20th century, performance was seen as a non-traditional creative process where artists displayed physical movements within a limited time as an alternative to static paintings and sculptures. After the world war period, performance merged with conceptual art due

to its 'intangible' form (Mazlan, Abdullah, & Hashim, 2025).

In the visual art world, artists, performers, or even audiences can convey messages through works in the form of film, video, photography, or installation (Grüny, 2025). Performance art uses the body as the main medium in the work. Nowadays, performance can be used to convey the context of social reality specifically in space and political identity. Artists bring art to public spaces, from the side of the road to the center of the crowd. The creation is very conceptual, and artists improvise. In performance art, there is the term *happening* to refer to a one-time event or art event that only takes place once and is usually carried out in an open public space so that the audience can become participants in the event at the request of the artist. This *happening* event can take place anywhere. From public spaces to exhibition spaces such as an art gallery. The Fluxus method is close to the term *happening* because it offers a dematerialization of art that creates an openness and closeness to the public. Fluxus is a group of artists founded in Germany in 1961. They offered an avant-garde movement that rejected the market forces of art inspired by the earlier Dada movement (Tenti, 2025).

Presentation without rehearsal and inviting the public audience to participate in taking part in their art, makes the boundaries between art and everyday life dissolve. Performance art in Indonesia was started by artists FX Harsono, Arahmainani, and Eddie Hara in the 1970s-1980s during the New Art Movement. It was still the same as the movement in Europe because it rejected conventional art and could also be criticized in the political realm. It became popular around the 1990s and when there were festivals such as JIPAF (International Performance Art Festival) and Bandung Performance Art Festival. Some performance art figures in Indonesia include FX Harsono, Arahmaiani and Eddie Hara in the 1970s. This was followed by other performance artists such as Melati Suryodarmo, Isa Perkasa, Willem Christiawan, and Tisna Sanjaya.

Methods

In general, archives are always synonymous with research activities, especially historical research (Fadiansyah et al., 2024; Zuhdi et al., 2024). Archives can be displayed and accessed by the public for reading. As an object, an archive is always imagined as a collection of documents stored on shelves, in libraries or museums. Brakell in Pradipta, et al. (2020) thoughts on archives (1) offered some popular definitions of archives. The impact of the development of the idea of electronic document archiving is that the word 'archive' became a verb, which means: (1) to keep historical records or documents in an archive; and (2) in computing, storing electronic information that no longer needs to be used regularly. 'Archive' can also be a noun, with the definitions (1) a collection of historical records relating to a place, organization or family; and (2) a place to store historical records. So, archive is a verb that means to store historical records or documents in the form of archives and computerization, storing archives in digital form when they are no longer in regular use. Archives can also be a noun meaning a collection of related historical records of a place, organization or family, a place to store historical records.

In Pradipta, et al. (2020), there are several divisions of Archives Exhibition, one of which is Archives Exhibition - Archival Works. From the observation of archival exhibitions in the Indonesian art scene, the involvement of archives in several exhibitions is divided into two types. Firstly, an "archival exhibition" is a type of exhibition with the main content of the archive as a whole. Archives become the main object on display. This type presents archives as a discourse brought by the exhibition curator. In some archival exhibitions, curators usually treat archives as documents that provide information. Secondly, archives become part of the artist's artistic discourse. As part of the artist's medium of expression, the archive becomes a work of art. When it becomes a work of art, the information aspect of the archive is not always the main discourse of the artist. Even the presence of information in the archive is not fully emphasised - it is based on the artist's concept. This paper will use the method descriptive qualitative of archive study.

Recent studies also reflect the diverse ways in which archives are incorporated into art exhibitions. For example, technology-enhanced art and sustainable discourse practices have been explored, which address the intersection of technological innovations with archival art (Zaeri & Roozafzai, 2024). Additionally, art discourse in modern fine arts in Surabaya has been analyzed, showcasing the complex relationships between historical context and contemporary art practices (Djatiprambudi & Sampurno, 2023). The impact of artificial intelligence on aesthetics and art criticism has also been a significant focus, underscoring how these evolving technologies shape our understanding of archives in artistic expression (Nurveda, Nursalim, & Masitoh, 2023). Similarly, recent studies on traditional dance aesthetics also highlight the interplay between archives, cultural heritage, and artistic criticism (Hera, Cahyono, Malarsi, & Sugiarto, 2023). Finally, the innovative design of illustrations to support cultural narratives such as Sichuan opera has been examined, which further exemplifies how archival materials can bridge emotional elements and cultural content (Mingyue & Shaw Chiang, 2022).

Findings and discussion

Jemprut and Performance Art

“Jeprut is resistance, it can be as nuance as that, for example, Jeprut is experimental or *sejeprut* is a leak.”

To begin the explanation of Jeprut, the author quotes from the book *Jeprut Permanen*. Jeprut is related to the political context of the authoritarian, repressive militaristic regime, and the context of oppressive, constrained social conditions, which triggered the spirit of resistance from Jeprut art. Jeprut as a way of making art turns out to have an experimental spirit when dealing with the “modernists.”

In 1980, there were several ITB art students whose approach to work was experimental, including Tisna Sanjaya, Isa Perkasa, Marintan Sirait, and Andar Manik. They did this movement because they

were rebelling against the established and conventional approach to art making. So, they could not explore further. They were motivated to push the boundaries of other conventional branches of art and incorporate multidisciplinary arts. So, they collaborate with artists from the fields of music, dance, theatre, etc.

In its early days during the 1980s, Jeprut was often compared to the “happening art” phenomenon driven by activists of the “Dada” movement that began in the 1950s, presented with the realisation that the performance was staged. So, they still choose the space, setting, stage and lighting arrangement so that it seems deliberate. Meanwhile, the characteristics of Jeprut tend to be more banal. They can be present in dimly lit places maybe even in the dark, or in wet places such as rivers and other places that do not need spatial arrangements.

Jeprut's performance process is like the Fluxus movement because Jeprut is relatively very open, not only a place for those with fine arts, theatre, music, dance and others but also open to anyone with different backgrounds to participate in the Jeprut performance process. The principle of “being present” in Jeprut's method of work automatically encourages each artist to intersect with society and the environment. This encouragement gives rise to the next principle, namely “Everyone is an artist”. This art event becomes very emancipatory, becoming open to any group outside the art profession, even open to the involvement of the general public.

Siregar in Pradiptan and Rizky (2015) wrote that not only inviting audience participation in social, political and environmental issues, many of Jeprut's artists works show a ritualistic tendency that opens the celebrant to magical, mediative and even heretic dimensions. Jeprut has always managed to break free from its bonds and freely dismantle its barriers through performance art, installations, rituals, paintings, drawings, happenings, and more.

Jeprut became popular when its artists protested against the Bandung government's decision to release the YPK building (Yayasan Pusat Kebudayaan) to a state-owned company in 1996. Quoting from Dimiyati's writing in (Pradiptan and Rizky, 2015) When the incident occurred, young Bandung artists did things that seemed strange, unusual, and a bit “crazy”. Some were bathing and brushing their teeth

incessantly until their molars hurt while sitting on a highchair; some were rolling around while moaning and mouthing incoherent words; some were wrapping themselves in bandages and isolates; some were frying chicken; some were making a pond in the middle of the contested building; and some were mumbling back and forth while measuring the road. This was done every day, for almost a month.

From the beginning of its formation, Jeprut has always worked with the performance method. Sometimes their performances use costumes, property, and other artefacts as support when they perform.

Archive Exhibition Description

The Jemprut archive exhibition showcases documentation of performances that have been carried out by artists during the Jeprut Permanent celebration in public spaces in Bandung every day. The Jeprut artists spread their performances across several spots in Bandung. There were 13 events created by Jeprut artists from 31 October 2014 to 8 November 2014. The event was kicked off by Nanu Muda & RSB at the doorstep of Gedung Sate Bandung. The opening of the Jeprut Festival was held at Sanggar Olah Seni (SOS) Babakan Siliwangi. Then the artists performed in several places, such as Wawan Husin at Hulu Cai Cikapundung, Taman Hitan raya Dago; Herry Dim & Ine Arini; Isa Perkasa at Bandung Zoo, Jl. Taman Sari; Rahmat Jabaril at the doorway of Gedung Sate Bandung and Jl. Dago - Tamansari; Diyanto at Jl. Jajaway 37 - Dago Tea House; Yusef Muldiana at Taman Fotografi, Jl. Anggrek & Rumah Smile Motivator, Jl. Kemuning; Marintan Sirait at Jl. Dalem Wangi, PPR-ITB Complex, D10, Dago Bengkok; Tita Rubi at Monumen Perjuangan, Jl. Dipatiukur; Ke'ruh at Sanggar Olah Seni (SOS) Babakan Siliwangi; Nandang Gawe & Invalid Urban who travelled from South Bandung to North Bandung; and finally Arahmaiani. The festival was then closed with a 24-hour Jeprut Discussion event held on 8-9 November starting at 4 pm at Babakan Siliwangi, Jl Siliwangi No. 7. The Jeprut festival poster included an exhibition at YPK Building from 28 November - 12 December, but unfortunately the author did not obtain the data.



Fig.1 The 1st Annual Jeprut Festival Poster

Archive Exhibition: 1st Annual Jeprut Permanen 2014 opened at Soemardja Gallery, Jeprut artists performed Cultural Oration in turn before visitors were allowed to enter the gallery. The Permanent Jeprut Archive Exhibition was held at Soemardja Gallery ITB on 26 December 2014. The exhibition displays archives, artefacts and documentation of the performance actions that have been carried out by the Jeprut group since the end of October 2014 in the city of Bandung. Before the exhibition opened, Jeprut performers gave speeches in sequence, starting with Nandang Gawe, Iwan Ismael, Rahmat Jabaril, Isa Perkasa, Marintan Sirait, Ine Arini, Nanu Muda, Diyanto, Wawan S. Husein and Heri Dim. Then, it ended with an oration by Tisna Sanjaya.



Fig.2 The 1st Annual Jeprut Exhibition Poster

The introductory text of the exhibition was written by Tisna Sanjaya, in which Tisna expresses

his gratitude for working with Jeprut and the organizing team to make the festival and archive exhibition possible. There is also a little explanation about Jeprut and Jepruter. There is also a hope that this festival will be held every year and that the Jeprut event will bring blessings.

The exhibition features many photographs documenting the performance of each artist. In addition to photo documentation, there are also artefacts on display. These artefacts are costumes or props worn by the artists during their performances to support the concept that the artists represent. What is interesting about this exhibition is the way the artefacts, archives and documentation are displayed by the organizers. The author had an interview with one of the organizers or the management team, who stated that Tisna, as the curator, helped and monitored the installation of the artefacts. From the author's point of view, the artefacts displayed in this exhibition look like an installation of found object compositions. Although some displays look like museum displays. There are quotes pasted on almost every display area between artists.



Fig.3 Jeprut Permanen Book Cover

The author will explain each of the archives, artefacts and documentation exhibited in the gallery. Yusef Muldiyana displays four pieces of documentation in the form of photography and artefacts used during the performance. The artefacts are a wooden rolling board, a bucket, a dipper, and a red and white flag. The rolling board, flag, and dipper are stored on the base while the rolling board and black bucket are stored on the floor and there is a bucket installed on the shelf.

Invalid Urban displayed three pieces of photo documentation and an artefact in the form of a cart that they use when performing complete with its contents. The documentation was taken when the members of Invalid Urban were travelling from Buah Batu to Kebun Seni while pulling/pushing the cart. Due to its large size, the cart was kept in front of the documentation photo a little bit to the center.



Fig.4 Invalid Urgan Artefact

Diyanto posted four photo documentation of him walking with a white sack, interacting, and performing with an orange mattress. Next to the photo documentation is a collection of 34 small cushions that have been written by the public when collaborating with Diyanto's performance. In the display area, artist Wawan Setiawan Husin displays two documentation photos.

The artefacts are in a glass-enclosed vitrine. Inside the vitrine are two red candles, a button-up shirt with a brown vertical stripe pattern in which there are folds of white and red fabric and a piece of paper with the words "Everyone is a Jerpruter." Then there is a collection of stones arranged into the word "art" on top of a *nyiru* and a twisted green cloth.

The Kampret Syndicate group only displayed two photographs of stencils in public spaces and their artefacts in the form of modular stencils that they used. There are two stenciled figures on an ochre-colored wall and a grey base on top of which is a pile of modular stencils that have been used. Between the two figures are the words "Here Will Be a Standing Pee Park".

There are the words "Only Men and Transvestites Pee Standing Up", logos, and human figures on the surface of the base.

Rahmat Jabaril, Walhi & Gerbong Bawah Tanah displayed four photos of documentation, a green and black umbrella, and the writing of the West Java Regional Regulation, two printouts of presentations from the West Java Government bound in red on a base and a patch.

Ine Arini displayed four photos of documentation and a photo of a newspaper article. She also displayed props in the form of a cloth tied to a tree branch, a collection of wire and rusted iron rods, a jug, offerings, and a pile of brown objects. The headpiece of the costume she has worn is displayed by hanging it. The artefacts displayed by Isa Perkasa are three photographs documenting him interacting with a person wearing a monkey mask and holding a book with a white cover with the words "JEPRUT." In front of him was a table covered with a white cloth. On the table were bananas, a hat, and a plastic glass filled with water.

Another photo shows him standing on the edge of a river and sitting while reading. The artefacts on display are the props and costumes he wears when performing: two monkey masks, an unfilled globe balloon and a collection of meter ropes hung together. There was a table covered in black and white cloth on which a banana was left to rot during the exhibition, as well as a white chair. Books with white covers are stored on a pastel green base.

Marintan Sirait exhibited only three photos documenting the performance atmosphere. The *Ke'ruh* group sharpened three photo documentation of a performance at Babakan Siliwangi with the configuration of two photos arranged on the left and one photo on the right. In the middle of the photos are five black suits with white shirts and ties of different colours. In front of it is a vitrine containing the tools used and taken as artefacts during the performance and a collection of small plastic jars with the words "TPS Baksil flies."

Photo documentation of Nanu Muda and friends is installed as many as four photos of the performance process. The artefacts on display are the properties used during the performance in front of Gedung Sate. There is a collection of pottery shards next to the documentation photos arranged into the word "Ritual = Kapital" under the word "Kapital" there are two offering pots at both ends of the ambalam with a collection of pottery shards in the

centre. On the floor, a collection of properties for ritual processions used during performance are arranged in such a way. Offerings such as flower petals, coconuts, etc. are left to wither or decay in the exhibition space.

Exhibition Analyses

The Way the works are displayed, in this context we refer to them as artefacts and documentation, in the Jeprut archive exhibition is like exhibiting installation works. Because the artefacts displayed in this exhibition are quite massive and the objects displayed tend to be large and numerous. Moreover, we are now in the period of the contemporary art scene and there is also a type of found object work. In this period, almost any object, if there is a context, can be considered a work, especially if the object is stored in an exhibition space such as an art gallery. Although there is no set rule on how to specifically exhibit the archive other than the condition of the artefact. As an example of the artefacts stored by Iren Arini, when viewed through the lens of fine art, the artefacts appear as installation works because they are displayed to control the space and arranged in such a way that the impression of an installation work appears. The display of the Kampret Syndicate group's artefacts is like a new work. Because they did not move the artefacts, they made a new work in the gallery by painting the walls yellow plus a new stencil made in the exhibition space. It became a site-specific work.

However, if we look at the theoretical basis, an archive is a collection of historical documents (in any media) then, it can be said that these artefacts are also classified as archives because they are called in any media. According to Sue Brakell, the archive is a verb that means to keep historical records or documents in the form of archives. The artefacts on display are historical traces of an event that has occurred. It can also be said that the artefacts on display are silent witnesses to the performance that has been carried out. The characteristics of the performance only happened once, so the meaning of the word 'once happened' is that the event has finished taking place and is not repeated. Like historical events that have passed.

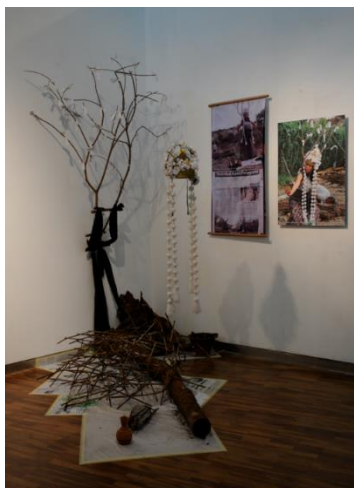


Fig.5 Iren Arini Artwork

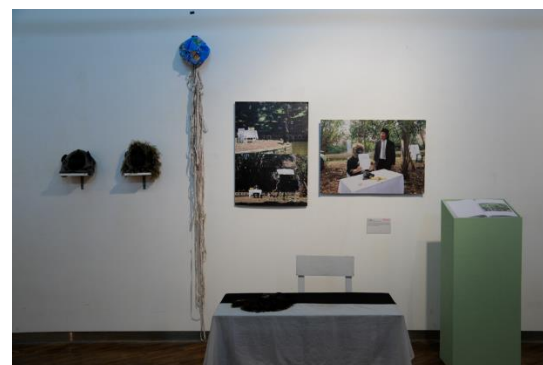


Fig.6 Isa Perkasa Artefact



Fig. 6 Kampret Syndicate Artwork

Usually, when we mention the word archive, we think of paper documents or photographs. If we look back at the Theoretical Foundation section on the definition of an archive, then the artefacts displayed in the Jeprut exhibition are a form of archive of an event that was recorded and then the results of the recording are stored and then displayed in the form of an exhibition. Although the display procedure is different from archives in the form of paper documents. However, in this period of the contemporary art scene, archival exhibitions are familiar. The most prominent form of archive in this exhibition is photo documentation. If not assisted by photo documentation, many people would think that the artefacts on display are installation artworks if they do not read the context of the exhibition. The

Archive Exhibition is a form of archival exhibition. It features archives as the main object on display. The archive includes the artefacts and their documentation.

Conclusion

The “1st Annual Permanent Jeprut 2014 Archive Exhibition” challenges traditional notions of archives by presenting them as three-dimensional artifacts rather than just paper documents or photographs. While resembling an installation, the objects on display still serve as archival records of past performance art events. Curated by performance and installation artist Tisna Sanjaya, the exhibition showcases how archives can function as both historical documents and artistic expressions, highlighting their potential to be appreciated in art galleries. This approach emphasizes the role of archives as “silent witnesses” and artistic mediums in contemporary art.

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