

desember Keeping Culture in Conversation: An Analysis of Design and Visual Art in Social Media Content on Riau's Local Culture

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Abstract

Digital platforms have become one of the most influential spaces for cultural communication, shaping how local traditions are visualized, circulated, and interpreted by global audiences. This study examines how elements of visual design and fine arts are used to represent, negotiate, and sometimes transform the cultural identity of Riau one of Indonesia's most prominent Malay cultural regions within social media environments. Using a qualitative approach that integrates visual semiotic analysis, digital ethnography, and aesthetic evaluation, the research analyses colour symbolism, ornamentation, typography, and compositional strategies found in widely shared cultural content on Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube. The findings reveal three major dynamics: first, designers and cultural actors selectively adapt traditional Malay visual systems such as the canonical colour palette, motifs like *pucuk rebung* and *selembayung*, and Arabic-Malay typographic forms to fit the fast-moving aesthetics of contemporary digital media; second, these adaptations increase visibility and engagement but often simplify cultural depth, creating tension between authenticity and virality; and third, viral phenomena such as the widespread circulation of *Pacu Jalur* videos demonstrate how local traditions can achieve global resonance while simultaneously facing risks of decontextualization. The study argues that visual design plays a decisive role in sustaining cultural continuity in algorithmic environments, positioning designers as cultural mediators whose creative choices shape public understanding of heritage. This research contributes to ongoing discussions on digital heritage, cultural sustainability, and visual communication by offering evidence-based recommendations for ethical design standards and

institutional strategies to strengthen the representation of local cultures in social media.

Keywords: Riau culture, visual communication, digital heritage, social media design, semiotics, cultural identity.

INTRODUCTION

The development of digital platforms has changed fundamentally the way culture local produced, disseminated, and interpreted. Shift from room culture physique going to digital space governed by algorithms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube make visual representation becomes center in the communication process culture. In the context of said, identity culture No Again present only through practice traditional or artifacts physical, but realized through system customized colors, shapes, typography, and visual aesthetics with pattern consumption digital. This put visual design as an important mediator in guard sustainability narrative culture in the middle competition attention on social media.

For areas that have riches culture like Riau, changes This bring opportunity at a time challenges. Research show that social media can expand visibility culture local and supportive tourist based culture ; however Thus, the digitalization process also has the potential simplify symbol culture so that weaken context history and meaning philosophically (Sundari & Farid, 2021). Malay motifs, colors traditional, until form Arabic- Malay typography often undergoing a process of commodification when adapted become digital content, design templates, and visual elements in short videos. Phenomenon This cause question important about authenticity, negotiation process aesthetics and sustainability identity culture in the digital era.

Latest studies confirm that analysis visual semiotics is approach important in understand How symbol culture get meaning new in the digital environment. In social media, colors, shapes, and motifs are not only become marker identity, but also communicative strategies shaped by the characteristics of digital platforms. In line with that, research digital ethnography reveals that content viral culture often circulating globally without context history complete, so that cause *context collapse* or collapse context. Situation This looks in various phenomenon Indonesian culture, where elements aesthetics more dominant than context mark when enter ecosystem algorithmic.

Temporary study about Malay visual culture during This Lots focus on form textiles, architecture, and ornaments traditional, only A little studies that discuss How elements the reconstructed in digital media. In addition, although the role of social media in distribution culture has Lots discussed, integration between analysis visual design, semiotics, and digital ethnography in understand transformation meaning culture Still limited. This matter shows existence emptiness study about How aesthetics digital design forms, changes, or strengthen identity culture.

This study present emptiness the with analyze use element design and art appearance in social media content about culture local Riau. This study examine: (1) how symbol color traditional, Malay motifs, and shapes typography adapted to in digital visual format; (2) how the re-contextualization process the influence representation and meaning culture; and (3) what the implications to preservation culture, perception audience, and economic strategy creative. With combine analysis visual semiotics and digital ethnography, article This offer contribution important for study sustainability culture in the digital space as well as give recommendation for practice ethical visual design for guard continuity identity culture Malay.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Digitalization Culture and New Cultural Spaces

Digitalization culture has open opportunity new for preservation and transformation culture, allows decorporation tradition from room geographical to virtual space. As example, study latest show that social media and digital platforms democratize access to inheritance culture, allows community local and diaspora for follow represent culture they share memory collective, and building narrative identity in a way participatory. On the other hand, digital technologies such as visual-interaction design also contribute give form new for experience culture intangible, combining element interactivity, embodied cognition, and interpretation contemporary.

In accordance with framework theoretical for modern heritage management, integration of social media and digital heritage management is seen as a “co-creation space” and “heritage co-production” that allows public contribute direct in preservation and dissemination culture. For example, in study conceptual latest, use of social media for heritage crisis such as disaster natural or threat damage show that community can in a way fast documenting, mobilizing, and responding heritage conditions through collective digital practices. This is show that digitalization No just documentation passive, but room active creation and preservation culture.

With Thus, digitalization culture must understand No only as a transposition medium tradition, but as a new arena where heritage culture negotiated reset, turn on back, and contextualized for the present and the future.

Representation Culture, Authenticity, and Commodification in Social Media

Transformation culture to social media platforms bring consequence significant to method culture represented and consumed. Systematic studies on social media and heritage tourism show the existence of an “authenticity challenge”: a tendency representation culture change for power visual appeal, engagement, and logic platform algorithms often sacrifice depth mark. In the context of this, social media No just a medium of distribution, but agent active that forms repeat meaning culture, control visibility, and influence perception public towards heritage.

Study local support perspective this. For example, analysis semiotics to content culture on the TikTok platform shows that visuals, audio, and platform formats influence method tradition understood and interpreted, sometimes simplify symbolism traditional for effectiveness narrative. In addition, the transformation mark culture through social media has observed: media not only spread culture, but also change values social and cultural in modern society. *Combine these observations*, representation culture on social media operating at the level of aesthetics, economics, and ideology make it Medan negotiation identity, not just reproduction tradition.

Communication, Design, and Translation Aesthetics

Visual design through color, typography, motif, composition, and shape holds role key in How A culture communicated to audience extensive, especially in digital media. Digital advertising studies show that element like color, symbols, layout, and typography form very strong visual meaning, directing perception, fishing emotions, and determine How audience read A content. In the context of culture, things This means that visual design is not only question aesthetics, but also representation identity culture and narrative symbolic.

Research in the field of heritage and digital media shows that representation of heritage through social media and digital content must notice aspect embodied experience, namely How viewer feel and appreciate the heritage, right? only visually, but sensually and emotionally. This study emphasizes that heritage narratives in digital media are necessary combine

visual aspects, interaction, context, and experience No just static image for representation culture still alive and meaningful.

Combination between visual design, representation culture, and this digital experience relevant for study culture local like Riau Malay: how traditional motifs, palettes color distinctive, and symbolic culture translated to in social media content without lost meaning historical and cultural.

Empirical Study about Culture Local & Social Media in Indonesia

A number of research in Indonesia has review how social media and digital media become means for regeneration culture local. For example, research about convergence culture in social media highlight How community local using digital platforms to spread and strengthen identity culture they, even though sometimes happen distortion or homogenization. Another study shows that utilizing social media as an information medium can help preservation language and traditions local to generation young through familiar means for they.

More Far again, research that examines impact of social media to arts and culture in a way general find that platform algorithm works as a “digital curator”, determines context distribution, visibility, and value symbolic content art and culture so that the art scene and culture popular changed follow digital. Findings This show that digitalization culture in Indonesia is not just trend while, but part from dynamics culture contemporary influences How tradition managed, distributed, and understood generation Now.

Even though however, still A little research that is special focus on the use of design graphics and art appearance in social media content for culture local in Riau or Malay. Therefore that, research This present as effort fill in emptiness the with combine analysis semiotics, visual design, media studies, and studies culture local in a way comprehensive.

METHODOLOGY

Study This use approach qualitative with design *digital ethnography*, namely method research that studies activity culture, practice representation, interaction social, and production meaning in digital . Digital ethnography was chosen Because culture Riau Malays on social media No only appear as visual content, but also as practice communication, interaction social, and curation process ongoing culture in a way continuous approach This allows researchers For observe How symbol culture, visual motifs, and narrative tradition negotiated in dynamics of platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube. In addition, the design study This integrate *visual communication analysis* and

semiotic reading to element design color, typography, layout, Malay motifs, and other visual aesthetics that influence method culture represented in digital media . With Thus, the design study This multimodal, combining digital ethnography, visual analysis, and study culture For understand How culture Riau Malay reproduced and communicated to digital society.

Research data obtained from three social media platforms main: Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, because all three is the most dominant medium in distribution related visual content culture local in Indonesia. The technique of taking sample use *purposive sampling*, namely choose relevant content based on criteria certain: (1) lifting culture Riau Malay, (2) contains element explicit visual design such as motifs, colors, or typography culture, (3) published in two years final For ensure relevance contemporary, and (4) have adequate amount of engagement (likes, comments, views). This purposive approach general used in study digital culture because allows researchers identify production representative symbols .

In addition to visual content, researchers also collected additional data, in the form of captions, comments, *hashtags*, and other metadata that can be explain construction narrative visual design culture and strategy. Final dataset consists of of 60 digital contents representing four categories: (1) Riau Malay visual motifs, (2) rituals and traditions, (3) art performances and festivals, and (4) elements art appearance and design contemporary adaptation culture Malay.

Data collection was carried out through three stage systematically. First, the researcher do mapping initial (*digital mapping*) of account creator culture, institutions government area, community art, and social media users who active publish content about culture Riau Malay. This step aim For identify pattern distribution content and actors involved in production digital culture. Second, researchers do *content capturing* to the main visual (fig or video), elements graphics and narrative accompanying text uploads. Every content Then stored, cataloged, and classified based on category cultural and visual. Third, all content analyzed use multimodal framework, namely merger visual, text, and context analysis platform . Documentation and data collection were carried out throughout period three month, so that researchers can observe change pattern representation and dynamics virality.

Data analysis was performed use approach multimodal discourse analysis (MDA) and visual semiotics. The MDA framework is used For identify How meaning culture built through combination element linguistic (captions, comments), visual (color, shape, composition), and symbolic (traditional motifs, cultural icons). Meanwhile that, *semiotic analysis* help interpret

connection between visual signs and meaning contextualized culture through digital . Analysis done through three stage: (1) *describing* main visual elements, (2) *interpreting* meaning symbolic based on context culture Riau Malay, and (3) *explaining* connection between visual design and construction identity culture in social media.

For strengthen validity research, researcher using *triangulation* strategy between visual data, narrative users, and context more culture wide as recommended in study qualitative digital . done in a way iterative, allowing researchers formulate reflective and consistent findings with framework theoretical.

Study This comply ethics digital research with No reveal user's personal identity except account public institutions or organization. Analyzed content is content public (open-access), and all quote text and visual cut only used For objective academic in accordance principle *fair use* for study scientific .

RESULTS

This section serves results research that has been obtained through the data analysis process systematic. For give greater understanding structured and in - depth findings the described to in a number of subsections based on category emerging themes during analysis. Approach This No only make it easier reading, but also allows researchers display connection inter-theme in a way more clear, so that every findings can understood in their respective contexts. With thus, the part This become base main for further discussion area in the section furthermore.

Domination Cultural Color Palette Riau Malay in Social Media Content

The results of the visual analysis show that social media content themed Riau culture in general consistent use three palette color Dominant: Golden Yellow, Emerald Green, and Maroon. Golden Yellow is the most common color. appear, especially in content institutional, traditional events, government branding area, as well as campaign education culture. Use yellow functioning as status marker, identity aristocratic Malay, and symbols honor in harmony with mark customs Malay which means yellow as color glory.

Emerald Green looks dominant in related content with Islam, institutions education, activities spirituality, and the design you want describe impression spirituality. Green color used in a way stable especially on content Ramadan themes, mosques, Al-Quran verses, as well element culture Malay roots strong on identity Islam. Meanwhile that, Maroon appear in festival content, dances, and visuals that emphasize energy, courage, and charm aesthetics Riau Malay. Third color This consistent become deep visual

foundation content Riau culture, strengthening traditional visual identity in the digital space.

Transformation Ornamen Malay: Selembayung, Pucuk Bamboo Shoots and Flora Motifs in Digital Format

Selembayung Motif looks the most used in content in the form of posters, reels, and visual identities for cultural events. This motif experience digital transformation through line simplification, sharpening curve, modulation symmetrical, and sometimes used as *watermark* or *digital frame*. Shape stylization This still maintain mark philosophical the shimmering as symbol wisdom and honor, but in a sleeker, easier modern version used.

Shoot Shoot Motif, which symbolizes growth and moral advice, a lot found in the content education culture, documentary videos short, and visual identity generation young. The analysis results also found use Malay flora pattern (roots intertwined, buds, and petals geometric), but in form *vector seamless pattern* that makes it easy Application to carousel and reel content. Use of traditional floral motifs This show that Malay visuals has adapt with digital aesthetics: modular, scalable, and compatible with design contemporary.

Crisis & Adaptation Arabic- Malay Script Typography in Social Media

The data shows existence gap big between use Arabic- Malay script with ability digital creators for explore it digitally. No Arabic- Malay fonts found stable special used; mostly content use combination Reem Kufi, Aref Ruqaa, Nastaliq, or generic Arabic fonts. This causes variation inconsistent aesthetics.

In addition, the use of Arabic- Malay script Lots nature decorative, such as title, frame, or *header*, however seldom There is explanatory content method reading, pronunciation, and its history. This shows the existence of a " crisis" digitalization typography that makes script Malay Not yet get proportional space in content Riau digital culture.

Content Format Dynamics: Combination Education, Entertainment, and Virality

Content Riau culture analyzed show use three main formats:

- 1) Education - Visual: Posters, carousels, infographics culture, history short, facts symbolic.
- 2) Entertainment-Culture: TikTok videos, memes, parodies culture, content humor local people who use symbol Malay.
- 3) Documentation & Festivals: Videos of Pacu Jalur, Zapin, silat, traditional events official.

Study find that content the most powerful education visually, whereas content The fastest viral entertainment. Festival content has the highest engagement Because contain element movement and sound.

Combination of Fine Arts & Graphic Design in Build Riau Digital Identity

Content Riau culture uses approach art digital forms such as:

1. illustration,
2. vector ornamental,
3. sketch contemporary,
4. composition symmetrical typical Malay.

Aesthetics design This stand out in content creator local that combines Malay motifs with flat design style, minimalism, and modern visuals. This shows the process of “re-culturalization” in which culture Malay No only maintained, but also created repeat in a new, relevant format for digital generation.

DISCUSSION

Color Digitalization as Marker Visual Communication Identity and Strategy

Use palette color Riau Malay emerged in findings study like yellow golden, green emerald, and red maroon show that color No only functioning as element aesthetics, but also as marker identity culture that is undergoing a digital negotiation process. Referring to the theory of digital heritage , color is one of the elements that experience *recontextualization* when culture move to digital space. On social media, colors This used repeat as symbol culture, but in a better way structured and strategic: for example, yellow golden often used in formal content for mark honor and authority culture, whereas green more often used For emphasize mark Islam is inherent in culture Riau Malay.

Phenomenon This show that digital community does not only adopt color in a way traditional, but use it as part from purposeful strategic *visual language* strengthening cultural branding Riau Malay. If associated with draft *heritage co-production* from , social media audience participate become actor active in choose, like, and share content colored typical Malay, so that color the functioning as symbol collective that continues updated through digital interaction. With thus, the color culture Malay No Again become static symbol, but symbol life that continues produced republished by the digital community conscious and unconscious aware.



Figure 1

The image above display palette color traditional Riau Malay which consists of from yellow golden, green emerald, red maroon, blue old, black, and white along with meaning symbolic. Palette This show that every color own mark specific cultures, such as glory and authority in color yellow, harmony with green, and courage in red maroon. In a digital context, the colors the experience adjustment to more RGB or HEX formats bright and solid so that can function optimally in design social media content. Visualization palette This confirm that color No only become element aesthetic, but also work as marker the visual identity of Riau Malay remains maintained although undergoing an adaptation process in digital environment.

Modernization of the Selembayung and Pucuk Motifs Bamboo shoots as Practice Visual Negotiation

Transformation of the selembayung motif, pucuk bamboo shoots, and Malay flora in digital content shows How aesthetics traditional processed repeat become a more modular and adaptive form. In the context of this, digitalization of motifs is not can understood only as “ change form ”, but rather as an aesthetic process that is heavily influenced by the needs of social media platforms like must scalability, readability, and visual flexibility. This in harmony with view , that production meaning in digital environment is *multimodal*, namely depends on the combination text, visuals, colors, and symbols.

If the motif is selembayung understood in a way traditional as symbol wisdom, then in digital format of the motif experience simplification to make it more compatible with modern design. Simplification of lines, use of *gradient*,

and smooth vectorization is form adaptation culture on the visual logic of the platform. This supports draft *cultural hybridity* which is called , that culture on social media No appear in form pure, but through mixing between mark traditional and digital aesthetics.

Interestingly, some analyzed content No only displaying the motif as decoration, but as main visual identity for example as video background, as a content frame, or as element former composition symmetrical. This shows that conscious digital creators that Malay motifs own mark differentiation strong that can strengthen audience visual interest.



Figure 2

The image above show comparison direct between traditional motifs Malay Riau like *shoots bamboo shoots and celery* with digital version that has been undergoing a process of stylization and vectorization For social media needs. On the other hand traditional, visible motifs has organic details, textures complex, as well as palette colors that reflect values culture like glory, steadfastness, and harmony. While that, the digital version shows more forms simple, more lines clean, and customized solid colors with visual aesthetics of digital platforms. Comparison This confirm that the visual adaptation process does not remove structure symbolic, but change the way the motif is communicated to be relevant with content format contemporary, at the same time maintain identity culture Riau Malay in digital space.

Crisis The Digitalization of Arabic- Malay Script and the Loss of Embodied Meaning

Findings about instability use of Arabic- Malay fonts reveal more challenges big: nothingness system established digital typography For script

Malay. Findings this is very appropriate with draft *embodied meaning* from , which emphasizes that meaning culture No only live on symbols, but on methods symbol That experienced visually, sensorially, and historically. When the Malay font replaced with generic Arabic font, the embodied meaning is lost No only in a way aesthetics, but also in a emotional and cultural.

In addition, the use of script Malay as ornaments show that part big digital creators yet see script as a medium of communication, but just symbol decorative. This is can understood as form commodification culture , where the elements culture selected and customized based on potential viral, not based on depth meaning. Situation This confirm the need development digital typeface special Riau Malay so that the script No only survive, but also gain room meaningful representation on digital platforms.

The Dynamics of Education, Entertainment, and Virality in Representation Digital Culture

Research result show existence three category content: education, entertainment, and documentation culture. Division This describe How culture Riau Malays adapt with demanding social media ecosystem content No only informative but also interesting in a way emotional and visual. , digital platforms such as TikTok encourage context culture For represented through a short, dynamic format that prioritizes entertainment. So no surprising If content entertainment culture often have level virality highest although in a way substance No always the most profound.

Content education precisely Lots display visual and aesthetic power design, especially in poster, carousel, and infographic forms. This is in line with findings (Musliadi et al., 2025) that visual language has strength great persuasion in digital communication. Meanwhile that, content documentation of festivals such as Pacu Jalur and Zapin show How culture Riau Malays take advantage of visual motion For awaken emotion audience, according with draft experience-rich heritage in npj Heritage Science (2024).

Third type content This form ecology mutually reinforcing digital culture complete: education give depth, entertainment give range, documentation give visual authenticity.

Designers, Creators, and Artists as Guard Culture

Discussion important appear from findings that creator content, designer graphic, and digital artists today hold role new as *culture keepers* guard narrative culture in the digital space. If deep context traditional perpetrator culture is elders custom, art maestro, or leaders society, then in

the digital era the position the shift to those who are able produce quality visual content. This in accordance with draft , that representation culture on social media No only involving community local, but also actors creative who has ability technical and aesthetic.

Creator who combines digital illustration with Malay motifs basically currently do practice *multimodal meaning-making* . They No only display culture, but interpret repeat values culture through choice color, shape, and typography. Even in a number of case, aesthetics contemporary like *flat design*, *outline art*, and *vector minimalism* used For create new visual identity Riau Malay a form innovation potential aesthetics expand Power pull culture to generation young.

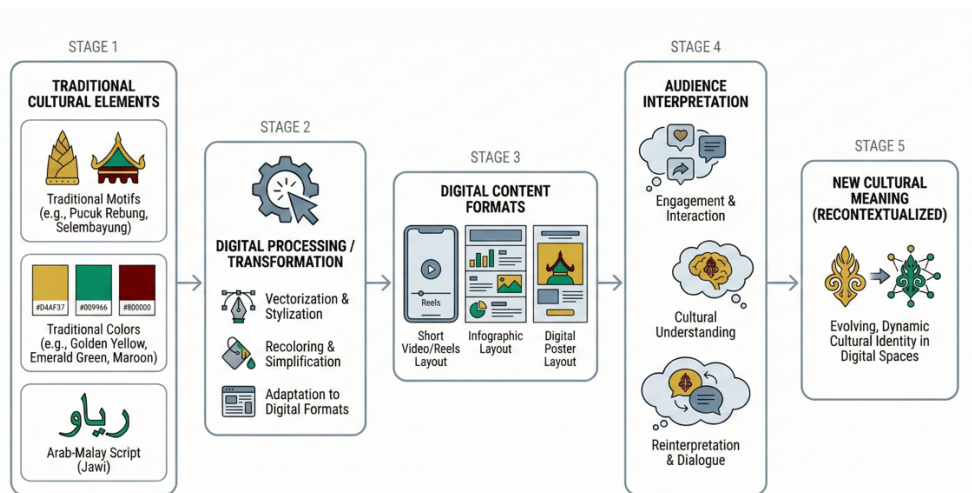


Figure 1. The Transformation of Malay Riau Cultural Symbols from Traditional Forms to Digital Perception and Recontextualization.

Figure 3

The image above describe channel transformation culture Riau Malay from form traditional going to digital representation and finally to stage interpretation audience. This model show that symbol culture such as motifs, colors, and letters initially rooted in values tradition, then undergoing a digitalization process through stylization, vectorization, and customization aesthetics in accordance social media platform character. Stage next visualize How elements the packed to in digital content formats, such as posters, reels, or illustrations, which make it easier distribution and increase visibility culture. At the end flow, audience No only accept content in a way passive, but also forms meaning new based on digital experience, preferences aesthetics and dynamics algorithm. With Thus, this diagram confirm that social media functioning as re- contextualization space culture, place identity Riau Malay negotiated repeat and interpret return in more forms dynamic and adaptive.

Identity Riau Malay as Digital Identity on the Move

Overall findings show that culture Riau Malay does not is at in static position when appear on social media, but become fluid identity This formed by three factors:

1. Adaptation digital aesthetics (color, motif, composition)
2. Dynamics algorithms and patterns platform consumption (engagement, virality)
3. The role of the creator as agent representation culture

Condition This confirm argument (Ayu & Bela, 2023) that identity culture on social media nature hybrid born from meeting between tradition and technology. In the context of Riau, culture Malay No just maintained, but also talked about, moved, and “ brought to life” repeat ” through continuous visual production develop.

CONCLUSION

Study This show that representation culture Riau Malay on social media is a complex transformation process, in which values tradition negotiate with digital aesthetics and platform mechanisms. Visual analysis of color, motif, typography, and composition reveal that culture Riau Malay does not only reproduced visually, but also interpreted repeat to keep relevant in digital ecosystem. Traditional colors and motifs such as *selembayung* and *pucuk bamboo shoots* experience stylization and vectorization, allowing adaptation to modern content formats without release meaning symbolic.

Social media also plays a role as room negotiation authenticity culture, where the content culture Riau Malay is present in form educational, documentary, and entertainment that follows logic virality. This in line with draft *authenticity challenge*, which explains How culture influenced by algorithms and aesthetics popular. However, digitalization Arabic- Malay script Still weak, so that required development digital typography that can guard function literary at a time identity the visuals.

In a way overall, digital creator, designer graphics, and artists play a role as guard culture in digital ecosystem. Through ability they process symbol tradition to be visually appealing and contextual, they help expand range culture Riau Malay and strengthen its relevance for generation young. Social media with thus functioning as *living cultural space* that allows formation identity culture More Malay dynamic and adaptive.

Study This give contribution for study communication culture, visual design, and digital heritage, all at once confirm that preservation culture in the

digital era requires appropriate visual and narrative strategies platform character. Research advanced required for digging into the creative process creator local, response audience to representation culture, as well as development of digitalization models script More Malay comprehensive. With Thus, efforts guard culture Riau Malay remains live and continue discussed can realized through collaboration between technology, art appearance and community culture.

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