

## From the Editor

# Reassembling Meaning: Art, Mediation, and the Politics of Contemporary Cultural Practice

Contemporary art today resists containment. It no longer sits comfortably within fixed categories of medium, discipline, or function. Instead, it unfolds as a network of relations—between bodies and identities, systems and values, technologies and memories. To engage with art in the present moment is therefore to confront a set of ongoing negotiations: how meaning is constructed, how it circulates, and how it is shaped by forces that are at once cultural, economic, and technological.

Across this shifting terrain, several key concerns emerge. The first is the centrality of the body—not simply as a medium of expression, but as a site where identity, power, and knowledge are actively produced. The second is the persistence of cultural meaning, often encoded in gestures, forms, and practices that carry philosophical and social values across time. The third is the growing entanglement of art with systems of production and circulation, where creative work must constantly navigate between autonomy and external pressures. Finally, there is the expanding role of mediation—where technologies, platforms, and narrative systems reshape how art is experienced, remembered, and understood.

Taken together, these conditions suggest that art today operates less as a stable object and more as a process—one that is relational, contingent, and continuously in flux. The contributions in this issue can be read within this broader context, each offering a distinct entry point into these concerns.

The article “Order or Chaos? Examining the Expression of Aesthetic Value of the Harmonic Materials in Razak Abdul Aziz’s *Etude No. 5 for Piano Solo*” by Mohd Fairuz Zamani and Hairul Hafizi Hasnan reconsiders the nature of musical structure. Through careful analysis, the authors reveal that what appears chaotic in post-tonal composition is underpinned by a hidden logic, prompting a reconsideration of how aesthetic value is perceived.

In “Cultural Values in Motion: A Semiotic Interpretation of Joget Serampang Laut,” Mohd Firdaus Mohd Herrow, Nur Zaidi Azraai, and Noriah Ahmad demonstrate how traditional dance operates as a living archive. Through semiotic analysis, movement is revealed as a carrier of Malay philosophical values, bridging aesthetics and cultural continuity.

A sharper critique emerges in “Transmedia Storytelling as a Cultural Industry Pacification Strategy of Generasi 90an Series,” where nostalgia is examined as a constructed and commodified narrative. The article highlights how memory can be repackaged within media systems, raising questions about ideology and cultural consumption.

Delfin Febriansyah and Wahyu Novianto, in “Body Transformation through Transvestism in Raminten Cabaret Show, Yogyakarta,” position the body as a site of contestation. Their study reveals how gender identity is actively performed and negotiated, exposing the complex dynamics between marginality, visibility, and power.

In “Discursive Culture in Industrial Design: Entrepreneurial Initiatives of National University of La Plata Graduates (2009–2019),” Enrique D’Amico and Federico Del Giorgio Solfa explore design as a negotiation between creativity and economic reality. Their notion of “discursive culture” captures how designers construct coherence between values, practice, and survival within contemporary creative industries.

The review article “Shaping the Future of Music with Augmented Reality: A Systematic Literature Review on Future Trends and Innovations” surveys the evolving intersection of music and technology. It points to both the promise and the uneven development of AR, suggesting that its integration into artistic practice remains a work in progress.

Finally, “Spatiality of the Balinese Legong Topeng Dance Ritual: A Thematic Literature Review” by Seruni Kusumawardhani and colleagues shifts attention to space as an active dimension of meaning. The study frames spatiality as something produced through ritual, movement, and cosmological alignment, rather than as a passive backdrop.

Taken together, these articles reflect a shared understanding: that art is not fixed, but continually shaped by the conditions in which it exists. It is within these shifting relations, between body, system, and meaning that its relevance continues to unfold.

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