

The Personality of Bapang Jaya Sentika in the Movements of the Bapang Mask Dance as a Dynamic Visual Expression

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Abstract

This research is motivated by the visual and symbolic diversity of the Bapang Malangan Mask Dance, especially the character of Bapang Jaya Sentika who has a firm, dominant character, and is full of inner conflict, but until now the personality of the character has not been fully represented through conventional visual documentation that tends to be static. The explosive, rhythmic, and energetic movements of the Bapang Mask Dance contain psychological dimensions that can only be understood through visual representations that are able to capture the dynamics of time and the flow of movement as a whole. This research aims to reveal, represent, and visualize the personality of the Bapang Jaya Sentika Character in the movements of the Bapang Mask Dance as a dynamic visual expression through the creation of art photography works. The research methodology uses a practice-based research approach with the I Made Bandem art creation model which includes the stages of preparation, elaboration, synthesis, realization, and completion, where the process of exploring dance movements, experiments with long exposure photography techniques, and visual reflections are the main sources of research data. The results of the study show that the long exposure photography technique is able to represent the personality of Bapang Jaya Sentika more expressively and symbolically through light trails that depict ego, inner struggle, self-control, and character determination. The six resulting photographic works prove that a dynamic visual approach is able to present new meanings to the movements of the Bapang Mask Dance while enriching the documentation and preservation strategies of traditional performing arts in the digital visual era.

Keywords: Long exposure photography; bapang mask dance; dynamic visual expression



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INTRODUCTION

The Malangan Mask Dance is a traditional East Javanese performing art form that has evolved through a long historical, social, and cultural process. The existence of this dance cannot be separated from its original function as a ritual, a means of moral education, and entertainment for the local community. In several Malangan Mask Dances, several masked figures display distinctive characters and possess strong symbolism within the dramatic structure of the performance. One of the most prominent figures, narratively and visually, is Bapang Jaya Sentika, a figure known for his strong, expressive personality, and rich symbolic meaning. This character is seen not only as an antagonist or protagonist, but also as a reflection of the inner conflict between noble impulses and evil in Javanese tradition. Therefore, understanding the personality of Bapang Jaya Sentika is a crucial aspect in the study of traditional dance, especially when examined from a perspective beyond the purely dramatic dimension.

Visually, the Bapang Mask Dance emphasizes a combination of agility, assertiveness, and physical strength. Many of the movements utilize foot stamping, wide arm swings, and dynamic body movements. Movement patterns such as sabetan, gedruk, dhodhog, and ngigel are distinctive features that shape the visual identity of this dance. The intensity of these movements not only emphasizes physical character but also reflects the psychological energy of the character being played. The mask worn by Bapang depicts a stern face, sharp eyes, a strong jaw, and an aggressive expression. Furthermore, Bapang is depicted as a character at a crossroads between nobility and arrogance. Therefore, the aspect of personality is crucial in understanding how this character is conveyed through the dancer's body movements.

In the context of performing arts, dance movement functions as body language to convey messages, emotions, and identity (Hanna, 1979). A dancer playing Bapang Jaya Sentika not only performs movements but also brings the emotional sensitivity and expressive capacity of his own body. Movement represents the intensity of energy, the rhythm of space-time, and the body's presence in the performative space. Therefore, the quality of a dancer's interpretation is a primary source of shaping the character's personality. This interpretation is not fully captured in conventional visual documentation, as standard photographs or videos often only capture the final state of a gesture or a glimpse of a pose. In fact, the dancer's bodily experience in the reality of a performance involves movement shifts, moments that are not clearly visible through static image documentation.

In the context of performing arts, particularly dance, visual documentation is often limited to static representations that only show the final position of the movement (Rahmawati, 2022). This documentation fails to visually or artistically represent the dynamic dimensions of movement. This situation indicates a gap in the visual approach that can capture the essence of dance movement in its entirety, including rhythm, energy, and expression. Meanwhile, in the current context of globalization and digitalization, traditional performing arts face a major challenge: the risk of losing authentic and representative documentation. Static visual documentation is no longer adequate to convey the richness of movement, aesthetic value, and philosophy inherent in traditional dances like the Bapang Mask Dance. If not addressed promptly with a more relevant and engaging documentation approach, this cultural heritage risks further losing its appeal and emotional connection with the younger generation.

In response to these issues, a more relevant and innovative visual approach is imperative. One potential approach is the use of long-exposure photography as a medium for dynamic visual expression. Long-exposure photography allows the camera to capture a span of movement within a single frame, resulting in a recording that captures not only the final state of a movement but also the flow of the movement itself. Long-exposure photography provides an alternative visual representation capable of capturing the flow of movement more fully and expressively. Several studies have shown that long-exposure photography can enhance the

effectiveness of performing arts documentation and appreciation of local culture. This aligns with research conducted by Setiawan (2023), which states that the use of innovative photography techniques can enhance appreciation of dance, making it more relevant in today's digital age.

Photography as a visual art medium function not only as a documentation tool but also as a medium of expression that shapes how humans understand reality (McLuhan, 1964). Technological developments have expanded the function of photography, so that it is no longer merely a passive documentation medium but also a space for visual expression that can reveal ideas, tempo, energy, and emotion. This technique can display the dynamics of time and the energy of an object, making it effective for representing the aesthetics of movement (Prabowo, 2020). In the context of the Bapang Mask Dance, this technique provides a unique opportunity to bridge the performative dimension of dance and the visualization of the character's personality through imagery that is not merely documentary, but artistically expressive.

The concept of dynamic visual expression underpins this research approach. Visual dynamics can be achieved through elements of line, color, shape, and compositional rhythm, which convey the impression of movement and energy (Mubarat, 2021). In the context of the Bapang Mask Dance, this dynamic is supported by the character, costume, mask, and the philosophy of movement. Therefore, the use of the long exposure technique is considered appropriate as a visual interpretation medium that captures traces of time, bodily energy, and the symbolism of the dancer's movements.

Previous studies have contributed to the development of visual documentation in the performing arts, but still have limitations when related to the focus of this research. Suwanda (2024) emphasized the use of visual techniques in documenting Sundanese dance performances with an aesthetic approach and qualitative analysis, but did not specifically apply long exposure techniques in the context of traditional dance. Meanwhile, Setiawan (2023) highlighted the importance of innovative approaches in art photography to increase public appreciation, but his focus was more on the development of dance visuals in general, rather than technical exploration of movement. Research by Sari & Hidayati (2021) emphasized the important role of photography in capturing the expression of dance movement, but the study was limited to a documentary approach without placing visual traces of movement as a central element of the study. These three studies open up important spaces related to visual documentation in the performing arts, but have not explicitly addressed how the complex personalities of figures, such as Bapang Jaya Sentika, are captured through photography, which is able to present the dynamic dimension of movement.

Unlike previous studies, this study places the personality of the Bapang Jaya Sentika figure in the movements of the Bapang Mask Dance as the main object of study, represented through dynamic visual expressions using long exposure techniques. This study not only proposes an aesthetic approach that differs from conventional dance documentation, but also integrates visual exploration of the dancer's movement flow as a trace of time in a single photo frame. This research has strong relevance in the context of cultural preservation in the digital era. With technological advances and changes in the visual preferences of the younger generation, a more experimental and artistic photographic approach can be a new strategy in introducing the Bapang Mask Dance in a more interesting and modern way. This research not only contributes to the field of art photography, but also in efforts to enrich cultural documentation through innovative visual perspectives. Thus, the exploration of long exposure techniques in recording the Bapang Mask Dance is expected to prove that photography has power beyond mere documentation. In addition, it can also be a medium of expression that revives traditional performing arts in a more dynamic and contemporary format.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a practice-based research approach, one that positions creative practice as the core process for generating artistic knowledge. In this approach, the process of creating long-exposure photography works serves as both the primary data source and the research method. As explained by Candy and Edmonds (2018), practice-based art research prioritizes investigation through creative action and visual reflection. The scope of the research includes an exploration of the Bapang Mask Dance movement as a visual object, the long-exposure technique as a method of motion representation, and the overall process of creating the work.

The process of creating this photographic work utilizes the I Made Bandem creative model. This creative model has five stages: preparation, elaboration, synthesis, realization, and completion.



Figure 1. Art creation by I Made Bandem (in the technical instructions for thesis on fine arts creation, 2018)

Based on the diagram of the stages of creation according to I Made Bandem above, the following is a description of the stages in creating this photographic work:

1) Preparation Stage

At this stage, the researcher formulated an idea that stemmed from the creator's interest in the characteristics of the Bapang Mask Dance that could serve as life lessons. This stage resulted in the discovery of information about the personality of the Bapang Jaya Sentika character through observations that yielded the following ideas, themes, and objects:

- Idea

The first stage in the preparation process was to develop an idea for the creation. The idea arose from the creator's interest in the character of Bapang Jaya Sentika, who, in the Bapang Mask Dance tradition, is known for his courage, assertiveness, strength, and self-control. This personality is seen as possessing philosophical values that can serve as life lessons. This interest developed into the idea of presenting Bapang's personality in a visual form that can depict human nature. Therefore, the main idea in this creation is how Bapang's character and traits can be reinterpreted through the visual language of photography.

- Theme

After formulating the idea, the next step was to determine the theme that would guide the creation. The theme chosen was "The Personality of the Bapang Jaya Sentika Character in the Movements of the Bapang Mask Dance." This theme was chosen because it allows for in-depth exploration of character values, bodily expression, and the meanings inherent in each dance movement. Through this theme, the photographic work serves not only as documentation of the dance movements but also as a medium of reflection, presenting human traits through the symbolism of Bapang's movements.

- Object of the Work

The final stage of preparation was determining the object of the work that would serve as a visual representation in the creative process. The chosen object was the movements of the Bapang Mask Dance, particularly those that possessed symbolic power and held specific meaning. Each movement was seen as a representation of the traits or characteristics inherent in the Bapang character. Through long exposure photography, these moving objects were transformed into dynamic visuals that revealed the traces of time and the rhythm of the dancer's body. In this way, the photographic work was expected to deliver an artistic expression that not only displayed the form of movement but also conveyed a deeper meaning regarding human nature.

2) Elaboration Stage

The elaboration stage involves developing an idea into a more mature concept. This stage involves analysis, generalization, and the determination of the work's basic concept. This concept focuses on the assertive and dominant character of Bapang Jaya Sentika. Through these observations, the researcher formulated Bapang's personality and depicted it in a visual exploration using long-exposure photography techniques.

3) Synthesis Stage

The synthesis stage of this research aims to integrate an understanding of the personality of the Bapang Jaya Sentika character with the visual design of long-exposure photography. At this stage, the researcher prepared the poses, movement directions, and body dynamics of the dancers that best represented the character of Bapang. Preparation of the shooting space, lighting, and direction of the dancers were then carried out so that the quality of the mask's movements and expressions emerged strongly and consistently. All performative and technical elements were aesthetically packaged to produce a realistic, emotional, and dynamic visualization of movement, allowing Bapang's character to be powerfully revealed through the photographic recording of movement traces.

4) Realization Stage

The realization stage in this research was carried out by implementing the visual concept of the Bapang Jaya Sentika character's personality into the process of creating long-exposure photography. This stage began with preparing the shooting location, photography equipment, and standard operating procedures (SOPs) to ensure safety and technical consistency during the movement recording process. The lighting, direction of the dancers' movements, and shutter speed settings were then designed so that the recorded movement traces could represent Bapang's assertive, energetic, and dominant character. After the photography session, the stage continued with the selection of works and conceptual editing of the photos to strengthen the visual dynamics and essence of the movements, so that the selected works were worthy of being presented as visual representations of Bapang's personality in the form of fine art photography.

5) Completion Stage

Completion is the final stage in this research, where the entire process of creating long-exposure photographs depicting the personality of the Bapang Jaya Sentika character is realized into a final visual form. At this stage, the photographs, which have undergone selection and editing, are refined to achieve the desired aesthetic and technical quality. Each photograph is then accompanied by a written description explaining the concept, movement dynamics, and interpretation of the Bapang character as represented through its visual traces. The presentation of the works and their descriptions aims to provide deeper meaning for the audience and provide a new visual experience that emphasizes the relationship between the movements of the Bapang Mask Dance and dynamic visual expression in photography.

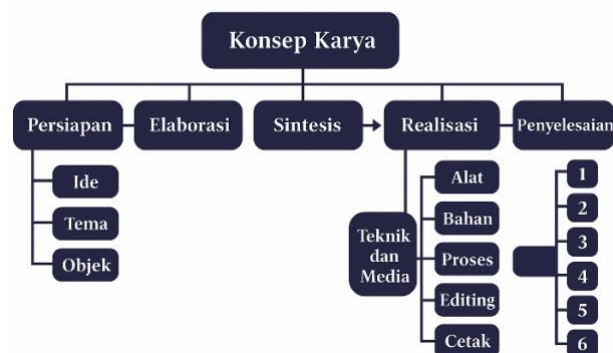


Figure 2. Adaptation of the creative method from I Made Bandem Seni & Desain (2018)

The I Made Bandem method outlines how a work of art is created. It includes the stages of preparation, elaboration, synthesis, realization, and completion.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Creative Results

The results of this creative research are six long-exposure photographic works that capture the dynamic movements of the Bapang Mask Dance as a dynamic visual expression. Each work is the result of a process of movement exploration, camera technique experimentation, and interpretation of the personality of the Bapang Jaya Sentika character through light trails and visual rhythms. The long-exposure technique allows for layered recording of movement timescales, resulting in images that not only display the final position but also the flow of the dancer's body energy within a single frame.

Overall, the works demonstrate how the bold, rhythmic, and aggressive movements of the Bapang Mask Dance can be depicted in dynamic and symbolic visuals. Light trails, body direction, hand rhythms, and the dancer's movement patterns are key elements that shape the meaning of each work. The six works represent the emotional journey and personality of the Bapang character, from ego, lust, self-control, to determination.

1) Preparation

The preparation stage is the initial step in the process of creating this photographic work. At this stage, the creator formulated a conceptual idea based on a personal interest in the character of Bapang Jaya Sentika in the Bapang Mask Dance. This interest arose from the photographer's experience frequently interacting with traditional performing arts, as well as recognizing the challenges of capturing the complexity of dance movements through conventional photography.

In this context, the creator began the process by conducting in-depth observations of Bapang Jaya Sentika's philosophy, character, and movement dynamics. This figure is known as dashing, ambitious, and domineering, yet simultaneously harbors an inner conflict between ego, lust, and self-control. Understanding this personality served as the basis for the creator to formulate visual requirements that could convey the character's emotional journey through movement representation. Therefore, the preparation stage focused not only on determining the subject but also on exploring the philosophical meanings contained within the choreography of the Bapang Mask Dance.

Based on these observations, the creator then determined the appropriate visual approach to represent the dynamics of the character's movement. Long-exposure photography was chosen because it captures the span of movement within a single image plane, allowing not only the final pose to be visible, but also the flow, intensity, and transformation of the dancer's movements. This technique was deemed most relevant for displaying movement traces as a dynamic visual expression that could reinforce the symbolism of Bapang Jaya Sentika's personality. Long exposure allows the camera to "paint" the dancer's movements with light, resulting in a visual that presents a blend of physical representation and emotional interpretation.

This preparation stage also included the process of identifying ideas, establishing a theme, and determining the object of the creation. The idea for the creation developed from the realization that Bapang's personality is not only present through masks and costumes, but primarily through the quality of his body movements. The theme of the creation was then determined to be "The Personality of Bapang Jaya Sentika in the Bapang Mask Dance Movement as a Dynamic Visual Expression." This theme provides a clear conceptual direction, indicating that the photographic work is not intended simply as documentation, but rather as an interpretive medium that depicts the inner conflicts and bodily energy of the character.

The object of creation focuses on movements that possess symbolic power in the Bapang Mask Dance, such as the sabetan, gedruk, dhodhog, and other movement patterns that emphasize Bapang's character. These movements are mapped as expressions of ego, lust, self-control, and determination, allowing them to be visualized through long exposure techniques as light trails depicting the character's emotional journey.

Thus, the preparation stage provides a solid conceptual foundation for the elaboration and realization of the work. All ideas, philosophies, and visual direction have been mapped out in accordance with the primary goal of the creation, namely to present a representation of Bapang Jaya Sentika's personality through dynamic, artistic, and meaningful movement visualizations. This stage ensures that the resulting work possesses conceptual depth and strong visual coherence as part of practice-based research in the art of photography.

2) Elaboration

The elaboration stage is the process of deepening ideas and strengthening visual concepts before the work is realized. At this stage, the creator develops the initial ideas formulated in the preparation stage into a more focused design, both technically and artistically. The main focus at this stage is translating the personality of the Bapang Jaya Sentika character into a visual strategy that can be realized through long exposure photography techniques.

The initial step in elaboration was carried out by reviewing the movement structure of the Bapang Mask Dance. The creator identified the movement parts that had the strongest emotional intensity, symbolic power, and visual potential when recorded with a long shutter duration. Hand, head, and upper body movements were of primary concern because these three elements are central to the expression of dominance, assertiveness, and ego in the Bapang character. An in-depth analysis of movement qualities such as rhythm, direction, speed, and dramatic value was conducted to determine which movements could create representative light trails.

The next stage was visual exploration by mapping the possible forms of light trails that would be created during the photography process. The creators designed how specific movement flows could be translated into light patterns that symbolized Bapang's personality. For example, the wide arm swings were designed to create spiraling light shapes as a metaphor for ego expansion, while the crossed movements in front of the chest were designed to create intersecting light patterns symbolizing the inner struggle between self-control and violent impulses. This mapping process helped the creators understand the relationship between the philosophical meaning of the dance movements and the visual potential that emerged through the long exposure technique.

This in-depth study aligns with the idea that photography, in the realm of traditional art, can be an interpretive medium capable of strengthening symbolic communication and cultural values through a creative visual approach. This aligns with the findings of Desyanti and Aulia (2023), who stated that appropriate visual strategies can enhance the effectiveness of photography in capturing the essence of movement and the cultural values it embodies. Furthermore, the creators also determined the artistic approach to be used to build the visual atmosphere of the work. The contrast between the dancer's frozen body and the moving light trails was chosen as the primary symbolic element. This contrast serves to depict the duality in Bapang's personality, namely the firm and stable body being a representation of self-control, while the dynamic and expanding light trail is a metaphor for the expression of ego, ambition, and inner turmoil.

3) Synthesis

The synthesis stage is the process of combining all ideas, analysis, and visual designs

into a concrete, ready-to-be-realized work concept. At this stage, the creator combines an understanding of the personality of the Bapang Jaya Sentika character, the dynamics of the Bapang Mask Dance movement, and the technical potential of long-exposure photography to produce a visual work that conveys meaning clearly and communicatively. All visual decisions made at this stage are aimed at effectively translating the character, energy, and symbolism of Bapang's movements through light trails in the photographic medium.

In the synthesis process, the long-exposure technique is positioned as the primary method for emphasizing the expression of movement through the light patterns created during photography. These light trails serve as a visual representation of the dancer's bodily energy, emotional intensity, and Bapang's assertive, dominant, and dynamic character. This aligns with Scale's (2021) view that long exposure captures the rhythm and flow of movement as optical lines that can serve as a visual narrative. Thus, the synthesis of Bapang's character and the long-exposure technique provides a more comprehensive interpretation of movement than conventional photographic approaches.

Before the photo shoot, the creator develops a detailed concept for the visual work to determine the direction of movement, pose, body angle, rhythm of movement, and the composition of light to be used. This concept is formulated through a sketching process as part of the design development. Wahyudi (2022) explains that in art practice-based research, sketches play a crucial role as an initial visual medium that serves to test the form, composition, and possible representations of movement before being realized into the final work. Therefore, the sketch in the synthesis stage not only depicts the dancer's body position or movement form but also estimates how light trails will be formed through the dancer's movements during the shoot. The following movements will be used to create the Bapang Mask Dance photography work.

Table 1. Concept of the Work

Link Video https://youtu.be/vwbkdN9eXY4?si=fJo5TxUTYYWjH1r				
No	Minutes	Description Movement	Philosophical Meaning Dance	Visualization Long Exposure Photography
1	1:10 – 1:20	The body leans backward, arms spread wide to the sides, then quickly bows forward.	This depicts the peak of arrogance that leads to regret or downfall.	The rising and falling spiral of light forms a visual metaphor for the downfall of human arrogance.
2	2:12 – 2:16	The head turns quickly to the right and left accompanied by a jerk of the shoulders.	Symbolizes anxiety and uncertainty of direction due to the urge of lust.	The path of light on the head area produces a vibrating effect that indicates inner turmoil.
3	2:20 – 2:25	The dancer bends his knees and crosses his arms in front of his chest.	A protective gesture, indicating resistance to temptation and an attempt at self-control.	The crisscrossing light trails form a defense symbol, showing an effort to reject negative impulses.
4	4:23 – 4:35	The dancer stops for a moment then raises his right hand up and his left hand down with his head turned sharply.	The movement symbolizes self-control and awareness of the limits of one's power.	The diagonal composition of light emphasizes the balance and self-control that is ultimately achieved.
5	5:05 – 5:15	Move slowly to an upright position with your arms open forward.	The meaning of acceptance, Bapang is depicted as beginning to understand the meaning of self-control and wisdom.	The light that spreads in front of the body is a symbol of enlightenment after the inner journey.
6	5:35 – 5:43	The final pose is upright with the mask facing straight ahead.	Symbolizes steadfastness and self-awareness after going through the struggle between lust, arrogance, and courage.	The dancer's figure is sharply displayed amidst the mist of light, signifying the final spiritual balance point of the visual transformation.

Thus, the synthesis stage serves as a bridge between the conceptual idea and the actualization process. At this stage, all elements, including narrative, symbolic, technical, and visual elements, are combined into a well-thought-out design ready for application in the photography process. This synthesis provides a strong foundation for the realization stage, where the entire concept is realized in the form of a long-exposure photographic work that represents the personality of the character Bapang in a dynamic visual expression.

4) Realization

The realization stage is the technical implementation process of the photography based on the overall visual concept, motion mapping, and aesthetic planning developed during the elaboration and synthesis stages. At this stage, the creator focuses on implementing the established visual strategy so that the concept of the personality of the Bapang Jaya Sentika character can be concretely realized through long-exposure photography. To achieve optimal results, all technical preparations are carried out thoroughly, including selecting a studio, arranging equipment, developing standard operating procedures (SOPs), and selecting dancers with movement competencies appropriate to the character of the Bapang Mask Dance. The dancers are selected not only based on their technical dancing abilities but also on their understanding of the psychological and expressive character of the Bapang character. This is important because the dancer's bodily energy, rhythm of movement, and inner expression are the main factors in creating light trails in the long-exposure technique.

a. Photography Stage

The photography was conducted entirely in the studio to ensure all lighting variables and spatial conditions could be controlled. Long exposure techniques were employed as the primary method to capture the dance movements over a specific timeframe, creating light trails that serve as visual metaphors for the energy and character of the Bapang character. The creators combined the use of long shots to capture the entire body movement pattern, as well as wide shots to emphasize the expressions of the upper body, such as the hands and head, which are the core of the dramatic expression in the Bapang Mask Dance.

Spotlight lighting was placed directionally to emphasize the dancer's body shape and maintain contrast between fixed body parts and the movements. Radomskyi (2024) emphasized that directional lighting in motion photography sharpens visual perception of the body's dynamic dimensions, allowing for regular adjustments in lighting placement and intensity throughout the shoot. In addition to spotlights, additional low-intensity lighting was used as fill light to maintain the texture of the costumes and masks while the primary focus was on the light trails.

The shoot was conducted in several sessions with varying rhythms to explore the intensity of the dancers' movements. Some sessions utilize fast motion to produce long streaks of light, while others utilize slow motion to create thick, dense light shapes. In both sessions, the creators also considered the desired philosophical meaning. For example, fast motion was used to depict Bapang's explosive ego and ambition, while slow motion was used to depict the process of self-control and inner balance.

All photography was done with a Canon EOS RP camera and a 50mm prime lens. The camera was set manually with a shutter speed between 2 and 6 seconds to capture the full range of motion, an aperture of $f/10$ to $f/22$ to maintain depth of field, and a low ISO (100–200) to minimize noise. These settings were chosen to ensure the resulting light recordings remained crisp, unbroken, and in keeping with the desired visual character. The shoot took place over two days to provide ample exploration for the creators and dancers in finding the best movements and visuals.

b. Image Selection Process

After all photography sessions were completed, the creators entered the photo selection or artwork selection stage. The wide variety of movements and lighting captured made the selection process crucial, as not all long exposure shots were able to optimally capture the meaning of Bapang's personality. Photo selection was based on several aspects, including visual composition, clarity of light lines, the strength of the dancer's bodily expression, light intensity, and the alignment of the movement's meaning with the established philosophical concept.

Photos with undirected light trails, unbalanced compositions, or lighting that was too strong or too weak were eliminated. The creators also considered the balance between visual aesthetics and the intended message. To ensure objectivity, input from other parties, such as lecturers, professional photographers, and performing arts observers, was also taken into account. These opinions provided additional perspectives on the aesthetic value, technical quality, and accuracy of the cultural representation reflected in the artwork.

The following is a description of the selection process for the resulting photographs.

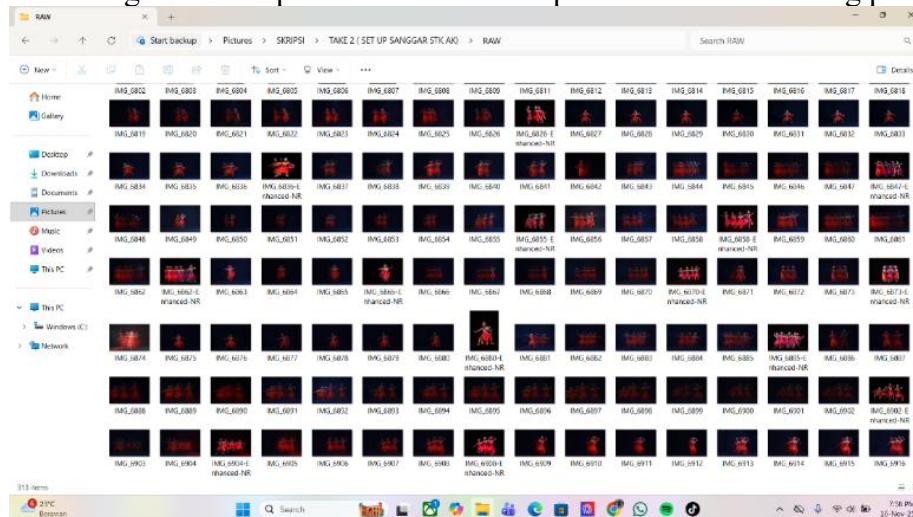


Figure 3. Artwork selection process

The final result of the selection process was several works deemed to best meet visual and conceptual standards. These were photographs that not only depict movement but also convey layers of meaning concerning ego, ambition, inner conflict, rejection, self-acceptance, and the determination of the Bapang Jaya Sentika character.

c. Editing

The photo editing stage is a visual refinement process to ensure each work maintains maximum aesthetic quality. The editing process is carried out using Adobe Lightroom, using tonal correction steps such as adjusting highlights, shadows, exposure, contrast, clarity, and vibrance. Editing is carried out gradually and carefully to avoid altering the visual essence of the movement captured using the long exposure technique.

According to Lisawati (2022), photographic editing should be done to emphasize the character of the image without losing its original identity. This principle is applied by the creator in the editing process: improving aesthetics without changing substance. Light lines are clarified through clarity and tone curve adjustments, while the colors of costumes and masks are stabilized to harmonize with the overall visual composition.

After tonal editing is complete, the creator arranges the layout to ensure each work has a balanced layout when displayed in the exhibition. This stage ensures the visual relationship between the works looks harmonious and supports the narrative flow conveyed through the series of photographs.



Figure 4. The process of editing the work

5) Completion

The completion stage concludes the entire creative process, including printing, writing a work description, organizing the exhibition, and evaluating the work. This stage is crucial because it marks the final stage of the visual presentation for public consumption.

a. Printing

The artworks that have gone through the selection and editing process are again tested for visual quality before being printed. Printing is done on 80 x 60 cm silky paper, chosen for its ability to display maximum detail. This type of paper has a smooth surface and high color clarity, making it suitable for displaying long exposure effects. The large size is chosen to allow the audience to clearly see the light trails and the dancers' bodily expressions.

After printing is complete, the artworks are prepared for display according to the exhibition plan, including the installation of frames and mountings to ensure the artworks are ready for display at their best quality.

b. Description of the Work

Each work is then given a narrative description that serves to explain the visual context and philosophical meaning contained within the photograph. The description includes the recorded dance movements, the shape of the light trails that appear, the interpretation of the meaning of Bapang's personality, and the symbolism of movement within the context of Malangan culture.

According to Sarjono et al. (2024), description is an important part of conveying a photographic work because it helps the audience understand the visual message objectively. This description does not provide excessive interpretation, but rather guides the viewer to understand the relationship between movement, light, and the meaning of the characters.

c. Exhibition

Exhibitions are a crucial stage in introducing works to the public. At this stage, the arrangement of works takes into account room lighting, display height, ideal viewing distance, and the flow of visitor movement to ensure a comprehensive viewing experience. The exhibition is designed to provide an immersive visual experience, with each work placed in a narrative sequence, from ego expression and inner struggle to rejection and self-acceptance, to perseverance. This allows the audience to understand the symbolic journey of Bapang's character.

Gabriele (2014) states that exhibition arrangement must be designed as part of an artistic communication strategy, so that each visual element reinforces the creator's ideas and creates an emotional impact on the audience.

d. Appreciation

The appreciation stage is a crucial part of assessing the public acceptance of a work.

Appreciation is received from various parties, including exhibition visitors, academics, photographers, and cultural observers. Feedback in the form of comments, criticism, and awards serves as evaluation material for the creator to develop future works.

According to Wimba (2015), photography appreciation is not merely an aesthetic assessment, but also a process of interpretation in which the audience attempts to read the visual and symbolic messages within a work. Through this appreciation process, the creator can understand how the audience interprets the representation of Bapang's personality through long-exposure photography.

Discussion

After completing the stages from preparation to creation, the researchers presented six long-exposure photographs capturing the movements of the Bapang mask dance as dynamic visual expressions. The authors' works emphasize that every human movement is a manifestation of ego and self-control. Through these works, the authors seek to emphasize the idea that courage without wisdom will lead humanity to destruction.



Figure 5. The first work “When the Ego Starts to Rise”

Table 2. Table of the first work “When the Ego Starts to Climb”

When the Ego Starts to Rise	
Media	Silky
Shutter Speed	4 Second
ISO	100
Aperture	f/13
Camera	Canon EOS RP
Lens	Canon RF 50mm f.18 stm
Angle	Eye Level
Technique	Long Exposure
Size	100 cm x 80 cm
Year	2025

Description:

Layers of movement extending backward present a visual depiction of a peaking ego. The dancer's figure appears to be stepping forward, yet simultaneously being dragged along by the current of her own energy. The rising, curving, and then descending light trails create a metaphor for the arrogance that always leads to collapse. This photograph depicts the moment when the strength of the body and the ego meet at a critical point.

Analysis of the Work:

In this work, a long exposure is used to capture Bapang's body's movement as it leaps backward before quickly crouching forward. This technique creates an ascending and

descending light path, as if tracing the trajectory of a developing ego. The movement, which actually occurs in a matter of seconds, transforms into an elongated timeline, demonstrating how arrogance grows slowly but surely.

By slowing down the visualization of time, the long exposure allows the viewer to see a process that is usually invisible: how the peak of ego is always followed by a fall. The light that peaks at the top and then descends is a symbolic representation of how uncontrolled, evaporating ambition always leads humans away from the center of self-awareness.

This work serves as a reminder that arrogance is not an explosion, but rather an unconscious ascent, and the long exposure technique is the perfect medium for fully revealing that downward trajectory.



Figure 6. The second work “Shakes of Lust”

Table 3. Table of the second work “Shakes of Lust”

The Shock of Lust: The Self Torn by Desire	
Media	Silky
Shutter Speed	4 Second
ISO	100
Aperture	f/20
Camera	Canon EOS RP
Lens	Canon RF 50mm f.18 stm
Angle	Eye Level
Technique	Long Exposure
Size	100 cm x 80 cm
Year	2025

Description:

The dancer's body is fragmented into multiple layers, creating a vibrating and unstable image. This long exposure effect captures Bapang's anxiety when faced with the urges of desire and uncertainty of direction. Overlapping poses depict a split mind, between wanting to move forward, persist, or retreat. It's a visual depiction of uncertainty and turbulent psychological dynamics.

Analysis of the Work:

In this work, the long exposure technique creates overlapping layers of the face and shoulders. The rapid movements of the head turning left and right are depicted as flickering

flashes of light, creating a fragmented image of the mind.

Technically, the long exposure captures all phases of movement in a single frame, so Bapang's anxiety is not only visible but also occurs simultaneously before the viewer. This is a visual that is impossible to achieve with conventional photography.

This layered effect serves as a powerful metaphor for the divided human being amidst the pressure of desire. When the mind is filled with uncontrollable urges, life's direction becomes blurred, identity becomes unclear, and thoughts shift in many directions without a truly definite direction.

Through long exposure, this anxiety is transformed into a concrete visual form. The lines of light quiver around the head serve as an emotional note of the instability of the self. This work invites the audience to realize that the most difficult battles actually occur within, when unfulfilled desires begin to shake one's identity.



Figure 7. The third work “Movement to Reject”

Table 4. Table of the third work “Movement to Refuse”

The Movement of Refusal: Awareness that Emerges from the Limits of the Self	
Media	Silky
Shutter Speed	5 Second
ISO	100
Aperture	f/22
Camera	Canon EOS RP
Lens	Canon RF 50mm f.18 stm
Angle	Eye Level
Technique	Long Exposure
Size	100 cm x 80 cm
Year	2025

Description:

The crossed hand gesture creates a bold diagonal pattern of light, resembling a symbol of protection. This photograph captures the moment when Bapang attempts to control his passionate desires through a protective gesture. The regular path of light represents an attempt to build boundaries, a defense against negative impulses that test his awareness and inner strength.

Analysis of the Work:

The crossed light pattern in this work is the result of the hand movement quickly closing to his chest. The long exposure captures this path and transforms it into a solid cross symbol, representing rejection, protection, and the courage to restrain oneself.

Technically, the light that forms the cross is created by the rapid movement of the hand in the extended frame. Thus, the viewer sees not only the final pose, but the entire dynamic of

the path leading up to it. This visual demonstrates that self-control is not a sudden movement, but a series of layered efforts. The philosophical meaning is very strong: the moment when Bapang begins to realize the danger of blinding temptation. His protective gesture symbolizes the birth of awareness.



Figure 8. The fourth work “Between Power and Control”

Table 5. Table of the fourth work “Between Power and Control”

Between Power and Control: Finding the Balance of Energy Within Yourself	
Media	Silky
Shutter Speed	2 Second
ISO	100
Aperture	f/22
Camera	Canon EOS RP
Lens	Canon RF 50mm f.18 stm
Angle	Eye Level
Technique	Long Exposure
Size	100 cm x 80 cm
Year	2025

Description:

The hand positions, which alternate between the top and bottom, create a strong diagonal composition. Layers of light emphasize the journey toward self-mastery, as if the dancer's body is dividing the space between strength and tenderness. This photograph symbolizes an awareness of the limits of human power, and how true control arises from balance, not domination.

Analysis of the Work:

In this work, a long exposure emphasizes the diagonal composition formed by the upward movement of the right hand and the downward movement of the left hand. The light trails that follow the direction of the movement create stable diagonal lines, indicating that the body's energy is now beginning to be organized and no longer chaotic as before.

Technically, the long exposure captures the harmonious rhythm of the movement; the light no longer breaks, vibrates, or collides. This indicates that Bapang has found a new pattern for managing his power. His movements are more controlled, and this photographic technique conveys this stability through clean, clear lines of light.

Philosophically, this work depicts the phase when humans begin to understand the limits of their power. Balance is not created from domination, but from the realization that power must be accompanied by control. Long exposure becomes a metaphor for time that shows the journey towards balance, because peace is never born from a single movement, but from an inner rhythm that has been slowly arranged.



Figure 9. The fifth work “Accepting Yourself”

Table 6. Table of the fifth work “Accepting Yourself”

Accepting Yourself: Light Born from Inner Sincerity	
Media	Silky
Shutter Speed	4 Second
ISO	100
Aperture	f/22
Camera	Canon EOS RP
Lens	Canon RF 50mm f.18 stm
Angle	Eye Level
Technique	Long Exposure
Size	100 cm x 80 cm
Year	2025

Description:

The dancer's movement toward an upright position with both arms open is captured as a cshaya extending in front of the body. This visual signifies a phase of acceptance, the moment when Bapang begins to understand the meaning of wisdom after overcoming inner conflict. The trail of spreading light creates the impression of an aura emerging from within, symbolizing spiritual enlightenment after a long journey.

Analysis of the Work:

The slow movement toward an upright position with arms open forward is captured as a widening, soft, and bright stream of light. The long exposure captures the slowness of this movement and translates it into an aura of enlightenment that envelops Bapang's body.

Technically, the long exposure allows the light to spread smoothly, so that the transition of movement appears as a frame that unites the beginning and the end. The light that forms the space in front of the body is a sign that Bapang no longer rejects but accepts.

After a struggle between ego, desire, and control, humans finally reach a point of accepting themselves as they are. This work emphasizes that enlightenment is not an external gift, but is born from a sincere acceptance of oneself. The long exposure serves as a means of presenting this enlightenment as a truly visible light.



Figure 10. The sixth work “Constancy After the Storm”

Table 7. Table of the sixth work “Constancy After the Storm”

Resilience After the Storm: The Reunited Self	
Media	Silky
Shutter Speed	6 Second
ISO	100
Aperture	f/22
Camera	Canon EOS RP
Lens	Canon RF 50mm f.18 stm
Angle	Eye Level
Technique	Long Exposure
Size	100 cm x 80 cm
Year	2025

Description:

The sequence of movements, arranged in a forward motion, displays the dynamics of the body as if moving together in a single, ego-like harmony. Each layer of movement does not stand alone, but forms a sequence depicting a journey filled with ambition, defense, and serenity. The dominant red light emphasizes the passion, energy, and emotional drive of Bapang's character. This work is the most complete representation of the ego's journey in a single visual sequence.

Analysis of the Work:

This work shows Bapang's figure at its most stable and clearest compared to all his previous works. His upright pose with a firm face contrast with the surrounding mist of light, signifying traces of the past. Technically, the long exposure allows the small movements during the final pose to remain as mist, while the moment when the dancer stops is recorded more sharply. This creates a powerful visual effect, and stability emerges from the storm of light.

The long exposure, in this context, functions as a spiritual metaphor; the long, moving time suggests that steadfastness is not born from the absence of turmoil, but from successfully overcoming it all. This signifies the culmination of Bapang's inner journey from ego, desire, defense, balance, and acceptance. The now upright figure symbolizes a human who has returned to himself, with a more complete consciousness and a subdued ego.

The long exposure technique has proven effective as a method of representing ephemeral dance movements, as it is able to capture traces of time and bodily dynamics that are invisible to direct observation. This finding aligns with the view of Sarjono et al. (2024), who stated that visual description can clarify cultural messages in photography, especially when imaging techniques are used to deepen the symbolic meaning of a movement. Long exposure captures not only the dancer's final pose but also the entire movement process, which is usually

overlooked by the eye. As Akcay (2021) explains, the extended exposure time allows the camera to capture the rhythm of movement as a flow of light. In the context of the resulting works, it appears that each photograph successfully achieves its visual target of representing ego, desire, control, and balance. The transformation of movement into visuals is achieved through elongated light patterns, overlapping layers of recorded movement, and bodily fragmentation that form an emotional narrative. This demonstrates a strong link between theory and results, where the aesthetic principles of dance movement harmoniously blend with an experimental photography approach.

In terms of contribution, this research offers a new visual alternative in the documentation of traditional performing arts that not only records the form, but also presents the temporal and emotional experience of dance movements. This approach is a relevant cultural preservation strategy for the digital visual generation who tend to appreciate more creative and interpretive forms of presentation. Furthermore, this research strengthens the understanding that photography is not just a documentation tool, but also a medium of artistic interpretation that can reveal the inner dimension through the process of creation (Smith & Dean, 2009). Overall, the results of the study show that the long exposure technique is able to display the dynamics of Bapang's body as a physical and emotional timeline, so that each work functions as an aesthetic interpretation of the inner journey of the character represented.

Exhibition Publication

The works created were then exhibited to the public. The exhibition ran for three days, December 3-5, 2025. It took place on the second floor of Building D18, Faculty of Letters, State University of Malang. This opportunity provided a space for communication between artists and audiences. This exhibition ultimately led to appreciation and evaluation of the works.



Figure 11. Exhibition Activities

Exhibition Critiques and Suggestions

Based on the exhibition's implementation from March 3-5, 2025, visitors expressed various responses after observing and appreciating the photographic works on display. These critiques and suggestions provided important input for the creators to evaluate the creation process and presentation of the works to optimize them for future exhibitions.

Various criticisms arose from both technical and presentation aspects of the works. The first criticism concerned the choice of black displays, which they felt made the photographs less prominent as the center of attention. The black background on the displays actually obscured the visual details of the works, thus reducing the desired point of interest.

The next criticism concerned the dramatization of the visual interpretation, which was considered quite good, but still felt less than optimal and not fully emotive. Visitors noted that the exploration of movement in the long exposure technique seemed somewhat restrained, possibly due to concerns that the objects would not be fully captured. However, according to some visitors, the incompleteness of objects in long exposure works can actually be an exploratory element that enriches the visual feel, dynamics, and emotion of the works.

Furthermore, several visitors criticized the exhibition space layout, which they considered too crowded. The spacing between works was considered too close, disrupting visual comfort when enjoying each work individually. This makes the flow of appreciation less fluid and diminishes the spatial experience for visitors.

Another criticism concerns the use of glass in the frames, which causes reflections of light and shadows, obstructing direct visibility of the works. These reflections make some visual details less visible, even though the work is overall very well-presented.

In addition to criticism, several constructive suggestions were also made by visitors. They suggested the use of warm lighting to further highlight the shimmer, refraction, and details of the dancers' accessories and costumes, helping to create a stronger dramatic atmosphere. Furthermore, they suggested that the artist not hesitate to explore the overlapping abstract shadows of each movement, as this has the potential to create a more expressive visual harmony.

Another suggestion related to spatial arrangement was to reduce unnecessary works to create a more spacious exhibition space and focus visitors' visual focus. Meanwhile, to address the issue of glass reflections in the frames, visitors suggested finding alternative protection for the works that remains safe but does not interfere with viewing, such as using anti-reflective glass or other framing methods that are more friendly to the exhibition space's lighting. Overall, the responses given by visitors showed appreciation for the creativity and concepts carried out in the exhibition, while also providing valuable input to improve the quality of the presentation of works on future occasions.

CONCLUSIONS

This study demonstrates that long-exposure photography is an effective artistic method for visualizing the dynamic essence of the Bapang Mask Dance. This technique transforms temporal motion into visual traces that articulate the dance's emotional and symbolic dimensions. The six resulting works demonstrate how ego, inner drive, self-control, balance, acceptance, and steadfastness can be represented through motion traces and layered exposures.

The long-exposure technique expands the communicative capacity of dance photography by revealing movement processes that are invisible to the human eye. Beyond its technical achievements, this method offers a contemporary visual approach to the preservation of traditional culture, making the Bapang Mask Dance more accessible and engaging for modern audiences.

This study contributes to the fields of fine art, cultural preservation, and dance documentation by presenting an innovative model that combines traditional performing arts with experimental photography techniques. Future research could explore movement analysis through digital layering, multi-exposure compositing, or interactive visual installations.

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