

Atelir Ceremai: Identity negotiation and artists' resistance in urban collective space

Fajar Hanif Mubarak^{a1*}, Tisna Prabasmoro^{b2}, Lina Meilinawati Rahayu^{c3}

^{abc}Universitas Padjadjaran, Sumedang, Indonesia

¹fajar19009@mail.unpad.ac.id; ²tisna.prabasmoro@unpad.ac.id; ³lina.meilinawati@unpad.ac.id

<p>Article History Accepted: July 21, 2025 Revised: October 5, 2025 Available Online: October 31, 2025</p> <p>*Corresponding fajar19009@mail.unpad.ac.id</p> <p> 10.22219/satwika.v9i2.41735</p> <p> jurnalsatwika@umm.ac.id</p> <p>How to Cite: Mubarak, F. H., Prabasmoro, T., Rahayu, L. M. (2025). Atelir Ceremai: Identity negotiation and artists' resistance in urban collective space. <i>Satwika: Kajian Ilmu Budaya dan Perubahan Sosial</i>, 9 (2), 609-627. https://doi.org/10.22219/satwika.v9i2.41735</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div>	<p>ABSTRACT</p> <p>This study explores the strategies of urban art collectives in shaping collective identity through collaborative practices within social spaces. Focusing on Atelir Ceremai, an art collective located on the cultural periphery of Jakarta (East Jakarta), the research examines how contemporary artists respond to marginal urban contexts through community-based artistic production. Drawing on social constructionism, collective identity theory, and theories of spatial practice, the study examines how space, language, and group dynamics shape the formation of collective consciousness among artists. This process reflects a shift from individual creativity to a communal artistic ecosystem, from market norms to symbolic autonomy, and from personal identity to a more adaptive collective identity. Based on in-depth interviews, document analysis, and participatory observation, the study finds that this transformation is made possible through various activities, including knowledge-sharing, collective use of space and tools, and the activation of joint projects. The study concludes that art collectives such as Atelir Ceremai play a crucial role in creating spaces for artistic production while simultaneously articulating adaptive forms of identity through dialectical processes. This adaptive identity is expressed through performative language, collective decision-making, and shared labor, symbolically distancing itself from the norms and logic of the art market.</p> <p>Keywords: <i>Atelir Ceremai, art collective, identity, social space</i></p> <p>ABSTRAK</p> <p>Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi strategi kolektif seni urban membentuk identitas kolektif melalui praktik kolaboratif dalam ruang sosial. Dengan menyoroti Atelir Ceremai, sebuah kolektif seni yang berlokasi di pinggiran lanskap budaya Jakarta (Jakarta Timur), riset ini mengkaji bagaimana seniman kontemporer merespons konteks urban-pinggiran melalui produksi artistik berbasis komunitas. Bertolak dari kerangka konstruksionisme sosial dan teori identitas kolektif, serta teori mengenai praktik ruang, studi ini menelusuri bagaimana ruang, bahasa, dan dinamika kelompok membentuk kesadaran kolektif di antara seniman. Hal ini berkontribusi pada pergeseran dari kreativitas individual ke ekosistem artistik komunal, dari norma pasar ke otonomi simbolik, dari identitas individual ke identitas kolektif yang adaptif. Melalui wawancara mendalam, analisis dokumen, dan observasi partisipatif, ditemukan bahwa proses pergeseran tersebut dimungkinkan melalui sejumlah aktivitas yang merentang dari saling berbagi pengetahuan, ruang dan alat, serta serangkaian aktivasi proyek bersama. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa kolektif seni seperti Atelir Ceremai memainkan peran penting dalam menciptakan ruang produksi artistik sekaligus bentuk-bentuk adaptasi identitas yang terjadi secara dialektis. Identitas adaptif ini terartikulasi melalui bahasa performatif, keputusan bersama, serta kerja kolektif yang secara simbolik mengambil jarak dari norma dan logika pasar seni.</p> <p>Kata kunci: <i>Atelir Ceremai, kolektif seni, identitas, ruang sosial</i></p>
---	--

© 2025 This is an Open Access Research distributed under the term of the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original works are appropriately cited.



INTRODUCTION

After experiencing rapid development over the past two decades, art collectives have come to be recognized as a key representation of contemporary artistic practice. Today, a collective is no longer merely a group characterized by a higher degree of collectivism than a “community,” but also functions as a productive apparatus in its own right (Prawirosusanto & Handitya, 2019). In this context, members of art collectives work beyond the conventional role of artists; they also act as curators and organizers, collaboratively managing artistic activities (Hujatnika & Zainsjah, 2020).

The need for space initially drove the formation of many art collectives. The narrowing of public spaces due to urban development and the centralization of art institutions inspired founders to create shared spaces for gathering, creative activity, and knowledge exchange (Ridho, 2024). This explains why, before the term collective became widely used, similar groups often adopted spatially oriented terms such as 'alternative space' or 'artist-run space'. The term collective has since become more prevalent, as it more aptly captures the collaborative nature of these initiatives, particularly the need for mutual support among artists, cooperative systems, and the management of shared resources (Suryajaya et al., 2023; Wardani, 2020).

Located in Rawamangun, the Atelir Ceremai art collective is closely intertwined with the artistic ecosystem of Universitas Negeri Jakarta (UNJ). Like many other art collectives, Atelir Ceremai was initially established as a *space*. The need for a place where alumni and active students involved in the arts could gather, collaborate, and support one another served as the primary inspiration for its formation (Ridho, 2024). In 2019, Atelir Ceremai was founded as a café that functioned as a meeting point for UNJ artists. However, through the alumni network, it soon attracted a wider circle of artists and cultural practitioners beyond the UNJ art community. This development reflects a broader issue, the scarcity of accessible public spaces, which has become a pervasive concern across Indonesia, particularly in major urban areas such as Jakarta. Today, Atelir Ceremai functions as a melting pot, where artists from diverse disciplines gather to exchange experiences and knowledge (Muhammad, 2024). Beyond serving as a social space, Atelir Ceremai also manages art programs that align with Darmawan's (2010) description of the

core activities of art collectives: exhibitions, workshops, festivals, artist promotion, discussions, and other creative projects. Atelir Ceremai has evolved into a nurturing environment for emerging artists in literature, theatre, music, visual arts, and film. Their works are often produced through deeply collaborative processes, even though some artists, particularly poets such as Aldiansyah Azura, Ilman Bahri, and Willy Fahmy Agiska, continue to publish under their individual names. In personal interviews conducted by the author, these poets noted that Atelir Ceremai not only provides a space for pre-production discussions but also offers significant support in publishing and promoting their works.

Atelir Ceremai represents an example of an artistic initiative that emerged from conditions of limited resources and power. Despite its academic origins, the collective expands its aesthetic practices to engage with broader communities, resulting in artistic expressions and everyday activities that are diverse and, in a sense, “subversive.” The term subversive here refers to Hebdige's (1979) concept of subculture, and to its relationship to dominant cultural formations, expressed through practices of signification (language) deliberately constructed to mark difference and create symbolic distance.

Through the dynamics of social interaction and program organization, a distinct character emerges in how space and identity are negotiated within the daily practices of the art collective. At this stage, both the identity of individual artists and the collective identity as a whole are articulated within a dynamic and continuously evolving social network, shaped by the ways members interact and work within the spaces they inhabit. Such processes occur because social identity is, in various ways, embedded in, and communicated through, specific environments, thereby reinforcing the connection between people and place (Hummon, 1992). Berger & Luckmann (1991) emphasize the importance of social and cultural contexts in shaping individuals. Human beings do not merely develop biologically but also engage in ongoing interaction with social and cultural environments that shape their development (Berger & Luckmann, 1991). Since interaction is always mediated by shared symbols, distinctive forms of collective identity and behavior are

consequently produced (Prabasmoro & Ridwansyah, 2019).

To a certain extent, the work of art collectives aligns with Becker's (1974) assertion that knowledge and cultural production are inherently social in character and grounded in social relations. The parts of artistic work that the artist does not carry out are, or will be, undertaken by others. Thus, an artist operates within an extensive cooperative network in which each participant's contribution is equally significant to the outcome (Becker, 1974). Art collectives translate this broader concept into their smaller organizational structures. The division of tasks functions as a collaborative strategy to sustain artistic production amid often precarious economic conditions. Consequently, not all members of an art collective are individual artists in the conventional sense. Yet, they can still be regarded as "artists" from a collective standpoint—individuals whom Sholette (2011) refers to as dark matter: those who support artistic labor and often remain anonymous.

Research on the dialectical relationship between art collectives, identity, and social space is crucial for understanding how contemporary art ecosystems operate and how artists' identities are articulated and constructed today. The theoretical foundation of this relationship can be illustrated through Rivlin's study (as cited in Hummon, 1992: 259). Rivlin describes how the intertwining of identity, community, and space is exemplified by the Lubavitch Jewish community, whose strong group affiliation with their religious leader and faith practices has fostered deep social and emotional attachment to the Crown Heights neighborhood in New York. This attachment, in turn, provides its members with a sense of personal identity. A similar concept can be observed in the territorial dispute over the Ligitan and Sipadan Islands between Indonesia and Malaysia (1969), or in the rejection of relocation by the Rembang Island community (2023). In such examples, people no longer perceive territory merely as a physical structure. *Space* is more than a place; it refers to an environment that has been imbued with meaning through personal, communal, or cultural processes (Low & Altman, 1992: 5), thereby shaping the identities of individuals who inhabit it.

From this point, the study aims to elaborate on the interrelationships among collectivity, identity, and space within the context of art collectives.

Academic research examining the relationship between art collectives, identity, and space remains limited among scholars of collectivity in Indonesia. Previous studies have addressed a range of themes, including the communal, diverse, and inclusive nature

of collective life (Goltz et al., 2022; Wulandari et al., 2022; Yuliana & Lämmli, 2023; Zarobell, 2022), the educational contributions of collectives (Luthfi et al., 2020), the development of collective discourse (Suryajaya et al., 2023), and their engagement in political movements (Kent, 2022; Mansfield et al., 2024).

The studies mentioned above offer valuable insights into the workings of art collectives; however, the negotiation of identity and its relationship to space has not yet been thoroughly explored. Most of these studies do not narrate the process of identity negotiation as reflected in the deeply personal experiences of collective members. It is in this area that the present research seeks to fill the gap in collective studies in Indonesia. This study focuses on the process of identity negotiation between the individual and the collective, explored through in-depth interviews with members of the Atelir Ceremai art collective. It aims to uncover how artists' identities, collective spaces, and the dynamics of social interaction are interrelated with the resilience of alternative art ecosystems, and how these relationships contribute to the symbolic distancing they enact from mainstream art culture.

By focusing on the personal experiences of art collective members, this study offers a new perspective, demonstrating that the endurance and resistance of alternative art are not merely ideological but also performative and interpersonal—manifested through symbols, practices, and identity narratives constructed in the everyday lives of collective members.

In light of the phenomena discussed above, this study addresses two research questions: (1) How do art collectives grounded in social spaces influence the formation of contemporary artists' identities? And (2) How do art collectives such as Atelir Ceremai construct collective identity amid the dominance of commercial culture, and what are the implications of this process?

To address these questions, the study draws on theoretical concepts that connect collectivity and identity to their influence on individual behavior. Broadly speaking, the relationship among these elements can be outlined as follows: individual identity—entry into a social space—encounter with collectivity—identity negotiation—differentiation from other groups—resistance.

Although it remains unclear how communities become attached to particular places, some argue that attachment to place is merely a secondary effect of social relations. In contrast, others maintain that such attachment possesses an independent existence (Chawla, 1992). Important studies by Low and Altman

(1992) and Pellow (1992) demonstrate that, fundamentally, the shared activities of a community play the most significant role in shaping both attachment to space and the formation of collective identity. The relationship between individuals or groups and a given space ultimately shapes a distinct identity. Space thus plays a vital role in shaping the self-concept of both individuals and communities (Pellow, 1992). Attachment to shared spaces arises from the collective meanings a group assigns to a particular place, which in turn binds individuals together through patterns of action. Such territorial behavior consists of collectively accepted and enacted symbols originating in individual expressions, which are then reflected to the individual in collective form. This corresponds with Proshansky et al. (1983), who argue that there exists a dynamic relationship between individuals and their physical environment. Initially, a person shapes this environment as an expression of their “natural self.” Yet, the environment conveys specific meanings to the individual, thereby generating a renewed sense of identity or even transforming the self to some extent.

There are at least three major perspectives in the discourse on collective identity: primordialism, structuralism, and constructivism (Snow & Corrigall-Brown, 2015). The primordialist perspective typically approaches identity through elements such as race, gender, or sexual orientation. The structuralist perspective, on the other hand, views identity as a social category or a set of societal roles that define cultural commonality such as class, ethnicity, nationality, or religion. In contrast to these two, the constructivist perspective shifts attention toward the process of construction, asserting that identity is something discovered, created, or reconstructed, rather than something predetermined by biological or cultural factors (Snow & Corrigall-Brown, 2015).

A key implication of the constructivist perspective is the recognition of a tension between individual and collective identities. Consider Atelir Ceremai as a collective community composed of unique individuals, each carrying their own distinct identity. Within such a setting, the collective ecosystem provides a space for negotiation between personal identity and collectivity, either through convergence, when an individual’s sense of affinity aligns with the group, or through consolidation, when the collective integrates the individual through shared activities, goals, or missions. At this stage, the multiple identities individuals possess operate within the interplay of diverse, sometimes competing interests (Sen, 2006); the “self” continually

repositions itself in relation to the “other,” depending on temporal and spatial contexts (Hoon, 2006).

At its core, collective identity concerns a sense of *oneness* or *we-ness* rooted in shared attributes or experiences, whether real or imagined (Snow & Corrigall-Brown, 2015). This sense of *we-ness* can motivate individuals to think and act on behalf of the collective (Tajfel & Turner, 2004). As Maalouf (2003) suggests, understanding group identity can be sparked by reflective questions such as ‘Who are we according to our own self-image?’ or ‘What is it that we seek to claim?’

This study seeks to explore the dialectics of identity within spatial contexts, focusing on an art collective located on the outskirts of Jakarta, Atelir Ceremai, through a constructivist lens. By examining performative expressions that manifest through symbols, practices, and identity narratives in everyday activities, this research aims to offer both theoretical and practical contributions to contemporary art studies, particularly concerning art collectives in Indonesia, and to broaden the understanding of how social space shapes individual identity within the dynamics of artistic collectivities.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research design. The qualitative approach adopted is ethnography, an approach that requires the researcher to engage directly with the data source and to focus on interpreting the functions and meanings of human actions (Morissan, 2019). The study applies several complementary techniques, including participant observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis.

The selection of participants was conducted through judgmental sampling, resulting in eight key informants considered most representative: (1) the initiators or founders of Atelir Ceremai: Irsyad Ridho and Hamzah Muhammad; (2) the coordinators of curatorial units: Prihandini Nur Rahmah (literary curator), Fahmi Rizal Fadhillah (visual arts curator), Yohanes (technical coordinator), and Willy Fahmy Agiska (bookstore manager); and (3) artists affiliated with Atelir Ceremai: Ilman Bahri (poet and theatre performer) and Muhammad Aldiansyah Febrian Azura (poet, musician, and theatre performer). As noted in the Introduction, members of an art collective often serve as both artists and staff members. Thus, several individuals hold overlapping roles: Hamzah Muhammad is also a poet, Fahmi Rizal Fadhillah a visual artist, Ilman Bahri the head of the café, Yohanes a musician, and Muhammad Aldiansyah Febrian Azura, who is simultaneously the

head of the Atelir Ceremai collective. The diversity of roles and collective occupations among the informants reinforces one of the study's central themes: the negotiation of identity.

Meanwhile, document analysis was conducted by tracing and examining a range of textual and visual materials about Atelir Ceremai, collected from both online and offline platforms. In addition to interviews and document study, the researcher also engaged in participant observation, not merely to observe but also to *experience* the various activities organized by the collective. The observation process involved systematically recording phenomena that emerged in the research setting. As [Morissan \(2019\)](#) explains, this technique aims to understand and interpret others' social worlds by immersing oneself in their lived experiences.

The observation in this study was conducted overtly, meaning that the researcher's identity was known to the participants from the outset ([Morissan, 2019](#)). However, the researcher took the role of an observer and remained an outsider, not a member of the Atelir Ceremai collective. The observation lasted for five months. It served three primary purposes: (1) to observe and experience the ongoing social interactions, (2) to interpret the identity symbols being exchanged, and (3) to examine the extent to which the collective's programs contributed to shaping the identity of Atelir Ceremai.

The researcher's position as an external observer (outsider), who was not directly involved in the community's internal dynamics, afforded analytical distance, enabling a more objective view of patterns of interaction and identity construction. However, this limited involvement also risked reducing the depth of understanding of the members' subjective experiences. Moreover, the relatively short five-month observation period constrained the ability to capture long-term transformations in the community's social practices and identity.

The researcher acknowledges these limitations and welcomes constructive criticism regarding them. To mitigate such constraints, a data triangulation method was employed by combining findings from participant observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis to produce a more comprehensive understanding. The researcher also conducted repeated verification of the transcribed interview data, ensuring that, despite the potential for interpretive bias, the study maintained a higher degree of representational validity.

As a note, all participants and informants involved in this research have granted permission for their views to be published in an academic study. More specifically, the research process proceeded as follows:

Data obtained from the interviews were analyzed through thematic coding to identify recurring core categories. These categories include:

1. Youthfulness
2. Resistance
3. Spatial Meaning
4. Identity Negotiation

The observational findings were then compared with the themes that emerged from the interviews, particularly in examining the patterns of social interaction and recurring identity symbols within Atelir Ceremai. Subsequently, this information was contextualized through written documents such as event archives, articles, and the community's social media posts.

The interpretation was guided by several theoretical concepts grouped into three categories: space, identity, and social construction. These three concepts are interrelated and together illuminate the process of identity construction in its entirety. Space serves as the site of social interaction, shaping or constructing both collective and individual identities. At this stage, individuals begin to attribute various personal and collective meanings to the space they inhabit.

The theories of space, identity, and social construction employed in this study support the argument outlined above. These theories, as outlined in the introduction, include [Low and Altman's \(1992\)](#), concept of social space, [Hummon's \(1992\)](#), notion of place attachment and space as a shaper of identity, [Proshansky et al.'s \(1983\)](#), dialectic between the individual and space, [Sen's \(2006\)](#) and [Maalouf's \(2003\)](#), ideas on identity affiliation, and [Tajfel and Turner's \(2004\)](#) theory of identity-based action.

To analyze how identity is formed within a shared space, this study employs the social construction framework proposed by [Berger and Luckmann \(1991\)](#), which emphasizes that social reality is constructed through processes of interaction and shared meaning-making. The identity of an art community is thus understood as a product of ongoing social construction, continuously shaped through interactions among its members within their creative space. To provide a clearer understanding of the research process, see the diagram below.

Through the research flow in [Figure 1](#), this study seeks to explore how individuals construct collective narratives, create cultural practices, and negotiate their identities over time and across changing social contexts. Nevertheless, while this research aims to understand the dynamics of identity within an art community, the findings should be interpreted as representations of a

specific period rather than a complete reflection of the continuously evolving long-term processes.

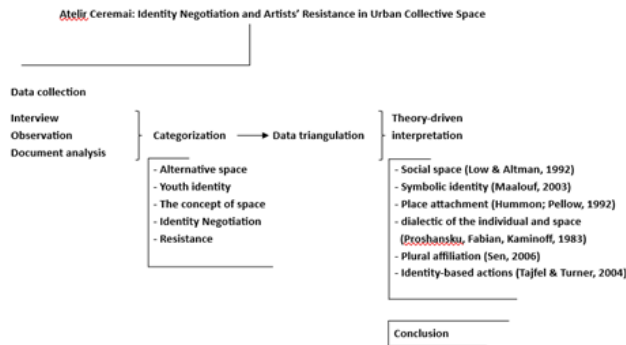


Figure 1. Research Flow Diagram

RESULTS

Collective practices in the Indonesian art scene have, in fact, a long historical trajectory. According to [Tukan \(2021\)](#), collective work has long been a distinctive feature of societal organization in the Nusantara. Citing Sukarno's speech "Lahirnya Pancasila", Tukan emphasizes the principle of *gotong royong* (communal work) as a foundational value that inspired the emergence of art collectives in Indonesia. The widespread growth of collectives in the post-reform era can thus be interpreted as a reemergence of this national philosophy in the form of collaborative work, contrasting the individualistic and centralized tendencies that dominated during the New Order period. In discussions about collectivity, the notion of *gotong royong* is often understood through the concept of *Lumbung* ([Suryajaya et al., 2023](#)). *Lumbung* is a traditional idea referring to a communal granary used to store harvests for the collective benefit of the community ([documenta-fifteen.de, accessed March 24, 2024](#)). Today, *Lumbung* serves as a metaphor for the collective preservation of memory, knowledge, and resources, both tangible and intangible, for shared use ([Budianta, 2022](#)). Within this framework, collaboration occurs not only internally within a collective but also across collectives, fostering mutual exchange of resources and support ([fixer.id, 2021](#)).

The formation of these collectives is driven by motivations that extend beyond art itself. Some are initiated based on shared goals, including the desire to accommodate, mobilize, and nurture the creative energies of individual artists. However, there are often additional motivations rooted in social activism, such as the aim to create alternative spaces that facilitate the broader dissemination of knowledge and culture,

opportunities that are frequently neglected by major government or privately-run art institutions ([Prawirosusanto & Handitya, 2019](#); [Soetomo, 2020](#)).

Focusing on the art collective *Atelir Ceremai*, the following section explores the dynamic relationships among the collective's initial ideas, its developmental journey, and the contributions of individual artists to how the collective expresses its social aspirations. Furthermore, this section examines how these relationships can (1) strengthen artists' attachment to shared spaces and (2) construct artists' identities through ongoing processes of negotiation.

From campus to alternative space

As briefly mentioned in the Introduction, the initiation of *Atelir Ceremai* was, in essence, not markedly different from the motivations behind earlier art collectives: the need for a shared space. Although it was only formally established in 2019, the origins and founding motives can be traced back to its roots within the art ecosystem of Universitas Negeri Jakarta (formerly known as IKIP Jakarta), which had been active for several decades prior.

'Gua ama Ghozi (Hamzah), ama temen-temen yang lain, itu kan sebenarnya mulanya adalah anak-anak di kampus yang berteater, atau mungkin nulis atau ikut UKM kesenian mahasiswa, atau bikin apa di kampus. Kan banyak kegiatan kaya gitu-gitu, ya, apakah dia di BEM atau di luar BEM. Nah, artinya komunitas itu sebenarnya udah muncul lama. Paling tidak sejak taun 80-an lah, sejauh yang gua alami. 80, 90-an awal, itu sudah ada di kampus, di IKIP ini, di UNJ.' (Interview with Irsyad Ridho at *Atelir Ceremai*, September 23, 2024)

(Ghozi (Hamzah) and I, along with the other friends, were initially just students on campus involved in theatre, writing, participating in student art organizations, or organizing various activities on campus. There were many such activities, whether within the Student Executive Board (BEM) or outside of it. This means that the community had actually existed for quite some time, at least since the 1980s. During the 1980s and early 1990s, these activities were already taking place on campus at IKIP (now UNJ).

Alumni who have dispersed, faculty members, and active students who remain connected demonstrate that Atelir Ceremai is essentially the next evolution of a long-established community network. This gathering serves as an ecosystem-level organization that facilitates communication and collaboration. The idea is not new but has been ongoing since buildings began to be constructed following the transition from IKIP to university status in 1999 (Ridho 2024; unj.ac.id, accessed October 11, 2024). These developments reduced the spaces where UNJ art practitioners could gather and discuss artistic work, as hangout areas were repurposed for various new facilities. From this perspective, it can be argued that the Reform period had a significant impact, aligning with Tukan's (2021) depiction of the second wave of art collectives, which he labels as Reform Era Early Art Collective (2000-2010). However, during this second wave, Atelir Ceremai had not yet been established. While many art collectives were founded during these years such as Ruangrupa (2000), Ruang MES 56 (2002), Jatiwangi Art Factory (2005), Serrum (2006), and Omunium (2007), Atelir Ceremai existed only as a concept of space discussed within the UNJ art community. According to Tukan's (2021) periodization, Atelir Ceremai, as an institution, belongs to the third wave: the Contemporary Reform Art Collectives (2010–2020).

Atelir Ceremai was initiated by three individuals: Irsyad Ridho, Hamzah Muhammad, and Adi Muhammad Miftah. In addition to responding to the increasingly limited art spaces on the UNJ campus, Atelir Ceremai was also established as a kind of melting pot for various art disciplines already present within their artistic ecosystem, including theatre, literature, visual arts, music, and film.

'Sebetulnya bikin semacam melting pot gitu lho. Melting pot di mana gua punya temen banyak selama di kampus. Gua tinggal 4 tahun di kampus, terus "Oh, ternyata temen gua ini temennya ini." Orang bawa cerita tentang diri kita, kan. Nah, Atelir memungkinkan untuk hal itu terjadi. Jadi temen-temen yang di rupa itu bisa ketemu sama musik, karena gua males ya ngerasa sendiri.' (Interview with Hamzah Muhammad at Bassura City Apartment Garden, August 18, 2024)

(It was actually about creating a kind of melting pot, where I had many friends during my time on campus.

I spent four years there, and then realized, 'Oh, it turns out this friend of mine is also friends with that person.' People bring their own stories, right? Atelir made that possible. So friends from the visual arts could meet those in music, because I didn't want to feel isolated.)

Atelir Ceremai is located near UNJ, precisely at Jl. Rawamangun Muka Barat RT 1/RW 12, Rawamangun, Pulo Gadung, East Jakarta. Previously, the site that now houses Atelir Ceremai was a closed *warung tegal* (small local eatery) situated on land owned by PJKA (now PT KAI). The founders subsequently rented the space and operated it as a collective venue, serving as a café or coffee shop. The art collective's slogan, "*kedai, kerja, kolektif*" (café, work, collective), displayed on its Instagram and X social media profiles, reflects the core concept its members continue to practice.

'Turunannya gua bikin langsung abis gua beresin nama Atelir Ceremai, gua inget banget tuh di mobil nulisnya, 'kedai, kerja, kolektif'. 'Kedai' sebagai bisnis usahanya untuk survive, terus 'Kerja' ya seniman bekerja. 'Kolektif' tuh pendekatannya, gerakan bersama. (Interview with Hamzah Muhammad at Bassura City Apartment Garden, August 18, 2024)

(I came up with it immediately after finalizing the name Atelir Ceremai. I remember very clearly writing it in the car: 'kedai, kerja, kolektif.' 'Kedai' represents the business aspect to survive, 'Kerja' reflects the work of the artists, and 'Kolektif' signifies the approach—a movement together.)

Due to the strength of its alumni network, Atelir Ceremai is no longer exclusive to the UNJ arts community. Numerous arts and cultural practitioners have received it positively across different ecosystems and cities. They come to Atelir Ceremai for various purposes that cannot easily be generalized; some to hang out, others to attend programs, or to join the collective itself. For example, the poet Willy Fahmy Agiska, now head of the Atelir Ceremai bookstore, comes from the arts ecosystem at Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (UPI) in Bandung. He joined the collective in 2022 through his friendship with the founder, Hamzah Muhammad. Fahmi Rizal Fadillah, a young visual artist and now the visual arts curator at Atelir Ceremai, was a student at STIE Dharma Bumiputera who joined in 2023 as a *ladenis* (the term used for barista at Atelir Ceremai). Yohanes,

currently the technical coordinator, is an alumnus of Universitas Sebelas Maret and became a member the same year due to Atelir Ceremai's affiliation with the theater organization he was involved in, Rawamangun Concept.

The phenomenon above indicates that the sense of lacking space is not only experienced by the UNJ arts community but is also felt by cultural practitioners from other regions or ecosystems. As a result, the melting pot envisioned by Hamzah came into being. The diversity of artists and collective members who joined subsequently created a heterogeneous space. Atelir Ceremai asserts that the collective does not adhere to a specific aesthetic; instead, it allows individual artists the freedom to choose (Azura, 2024; Fadillah, 2024; Muhammad, 2024; Yohanes, 2024). From a constructivist perspective, the identity formed through this freedom can be understood as a process of convergence, in which individual identities converge with the collective (Snow & Corrigall-Brown, 2015), facilitating unity.

As an art collective, Atelir Ceremai also organizes programs such as discussions, exhibitions, festivals, and others, spanning topics from general cultural issues to specific artistic fields. In practice, each program is grounded in certain underlying values. In this regard, the statement of Atelir Ceremai's literary curator, Prihandini Nurrahmah, appears particularly noteworthy.

'Di Atelir juga kebanyakan orang-orang atau buku-buku yang kita masukin program tuh ya bukan penulis mayor, bukan penulis yang penerbit gede-gede gitu, tapi penulis yang baru growing. Dan di mana itu tuh sejalan dengan semangat Atelir yang mau menjadi ruang sastra atau seni untuk siapa aja.... gimana kita juga harus saling bahu-membahu mendukung ekosistem perbukuan atau sastra yang kecil, kita dorong ke sini.' (Interview with Prihandini Nurrahmah at Atelir Ceremai, 04/08/2024)

(At Atelir, most of the people in our programs are not from major authors or large publishing houses, but instead emerging writers. This aligns with Atelir's spirit of wanting to be a space for literature or art open to everyone... and how we need to support each other to sustain small literary or book ecosystems by bringing them here.)

From the diversity of artistic works to programs that prioritize emerging artists, Atelir Ceremai demonstrates a clear tendency to uphold alternative

values and spirit. It is therefore not surprising that Martin Suryajaya remarked in a podcast that, despite being located in Jakarta (the center), Atelir Ceremai still conveys a sense like in regional areas/ the periphery (Ahmadi, 2020).

Youth Culture

In an interview, Irsyad Ridho stated that one of the core values shared by Atelir Ceremai's founders is a commitment to youth culture. This is inseparable from the origins of its ecosystem, which emerged from a community of UNJ students. But what kind of youth does Atelir Ceremai represent? In cultural studies, youth is often understood as an ambiguous category, associated with subculture and resistance, yet also divided into more specific identity categories such as class, gender, and race. What indicators both unify and define "youthfulness" within an art hub?

Claims to youth culture become particularly compelling when articulated by a specific art community or collective. Such claims must be substantiated through the collective's actions, which in turn define the nature of that youthfulness. This issue can be examined through the articulation of the artistic programs produced by the Atelir Ceremai collective. By analyzing how these programs are articulated, one can discern the particular form of youthfulness being represented. Some of Atelir Ceremai's programs are as follows:

1. **Tukar Pikir**
This program centers on discussions of culture in a broad sense, including philosophy, aesthetic concepts, the art ecosystem, and related topics. Some of the most recent Tukar Pikir sessions were titled "Diskusi dan Peluncuran Buku karya Penulis Muda", "Bincang-bincang Puisi Mandar", "Omong-Omong Ekosistem Sastra di Brazil", and "Penerjemahan, Otentisitas Yang Menjadi, dan Tawaran Lainnya"
2. **Bakar**
Bakar is an acronym for *Bahas Karya* (Discussing Works). Similar to the *Tukar Pikir* program, *Bahas Karya* takes the form of a discussion but focuses specifically on a single new work. Some of the most recent *Bakar* sessions were titled "Ngobrolin 'Parasit' dan yang Terpingirkan di Balik Layar", "Ngobrolin yang Jarang Kita Obrolin Lewat 'Si Bengkok'", "Cinta, Kawan, dan Negara di Malam

yang Mabuk”, dan “Akika ya Eyke! Obral Obrol Puisi Gayatri Indonengnong Eimm!”.

3. Sinema Layar Sobek

This is a film screening program, typically followed by a discussion. Some of the most recent *Sinema Layar Sobek* sessions were titled “Sinema Layar Sobek Edisi Pidio Klip”, “Sinema Layar Sobek x Edura TV”, Sinema Layar Sobek x Edura TV Menghapus Tabu”, and “Sinema Layar Sobek: Yang Muda Yang Festivalan”.

4. Pameran

Atelir Ceremai holds exhibitions in the back space, referred to as the ‘Ruang Serba Iya’. Some of the most recent exhibitions were titled “Asik Sendiri 5.0”, “Lah Iya Pameran”, and “DeRau: yang sudah belum berarti selesai”.

5. Sesuai Protokol

This program consists of small gigs or concerts held at Ruang Serba Iya. Generally, each Sesuai Protokol event is not given a specific title; however, the most recent program was titled “Nyoba-nyoba.”

6. Gibah Sinema

As its name suggests, this program consists of discussions about film. Some of the most recent Gibah Sinema sessions were titled “Omongin Macem-macem Soal Voice Acting” and “Kritik Film Harus Membangun? Membangun Apa Tuch?”

7. Mampus

Mampus is an acronym for *Malam Puisi* (Poetry Night). This program features poetry recitations and musical interpretations of poems.

8. Lingkar Panggung

This program consists of discussions on issues in the performing arts. Some of the most recent *Lingkar Panggung* programs were titled “Biografi Penciptaan ‘Spartan Phoenix’”, “Biografi Penciptaan ‘Babu-Babu’”, and “Biografi Penciptaan ‘The Killer’”.

A playful and parodic tone is evident in the naming of most programs organized by Atelir Ceremai. During several casual gatherings, the researcher also observed linguistic moments that signal a form of mischievousness, notably in the unique use of the words *semiotika* (semiotics) and *respon* (response). These terms are typically used in conversations about art programs, especially exhibitions. In general usage, *semiotics* refers to the interpretation or analysis of a work of art. In contrast, *respon* refers to responding to an artwork

through another piece of writing or art, or through media adaptation. However, collective members incorporate these words into everyday conversation in playful ways. For instance, *semiotics* is used when noticing a situation that might signify something, such as a missing matchstick. Meanwhile, *respon* is used when offering or accepting something, as in a member offering a cigarette and another replying, “gua respon, ya!” (“I respond, okay!”) This phenomenon reflects an effort to ground, or make accessible, words that are usually considered lofty.

‘Kaya (kata) “respon”, karna kita biasa ngomongin respon seni, respon karya, terus tiba-tiba kita pake di hal-hal yang di luar pengkaryaan. Contoh, “Eh, gua respon ya nasi.” Awal-awal kan dari situ tuh, terus kita ketawa, terus dipake tuh jadi segala apa pun kita pake respon. Terus kata “Semiotik”, juga sempet tuh. Sempet jadi apa-apa semua di-“Wah semiotik, tondo-tondo”. Jadi, paling beberapa kata-kata yang biasanya dipake hanya di ruang eksklusif, ruang tertentu, tiba-tiba jadi ruang publik yang bener-bener cair aja. (Interview with Yohanes at Atelir Ceremai, 25/08/2024)

(Like the word “respon.” We usually talk about responses to art or works, and then suddenly we use it for things outside of art-making. For example, “Eh, gua respon ya nasi.” That’s how it started at first, then we laughed, and after that we began using “respon” for anything. And the word “semiotik” also went through the same thing. It even became “Wah semiotik, tondo-tondo.” So, a few words that were usually used only in exclusive or specific spaces suddenly became part of a public space, really fluid and open.)



Figure 2. Gigs event at Atelir Ceremai on November 23, 2024, in collaboration with Ghita Kusuma (Source: personal documentation, 23/11/2024)

It is a fact that the members of the Atelir Ceremai collective, as well as the artists active there, are young people aged between their twenties and thirties (Figure 2). However, their youthfulness is defined more by what they envision and enact within the artistic context than by their biological age

Collective space, a place where collaboration comes into being



Figure 3. Screenshot of Ridwan Rau Rau painting the walls of Atelir Ceremai (Source: Instagram post @atelirceremai dated 16/06/2019, accessed on 11/11/2024)

From the outset, the physical space of Atelir Ceremai was designed collaboratively. Its walls are covered with murals, most painted by the artist Ridwan Rau Rau (Figure 3). In some areas, casual inscriptions can also be seen, written haphazardly by various individuals. This wall-painting process leans more toward spontaneity rather than meticulous planning.

‘Gua dulu nih desain ini, dalam pikiran gua kan ini tuh seperti kafe biasa pada umumnya. Ya ada sentuhan-sentuhan seni seadanya, gitu kan. Karna gua pikir waktu itu “Zi, kita kan bukan anak seni rupa. Kaga bisa ngelukis.” Pokoknya ya kita standar ajalah, kafe biasa. Ada bar, catnya mungkin, ya. Pikirannya begitu. Nah, Ghozi (Hamzah) kan terhubung dengan Rau Rau kan zaman itu, ngobrol di depan sini. Terus “Rau, lu terbayang mau diapain ga nih ruangan?” “Yaudah gua lukis aja.” Terus “Ini kayanya kalo semuanya seru nih!” Hahaha. Terus dibikin (story) di Instagram, dateng pada yang lain, ikutan. Lu ga bisa menghalangi lagi udah kalo udah

kaya gitu hahaha.’ (Interview with Irsyad Ridho at Atelir Ceremai, 23/09/2024)

(I originally designed this space thinking it would be like a typical café. Just some modest touches of art, that’s all. At the time, I thought, ‘Zi, we’re not visual arts students. We can’t really paint.’ So, we just kept it standard, a regular café—maybe a bar, some paint here and there, that was the idea. Then Ghozi (Hamzah), who was connected with Rau Rau back then, was talking in front of the space and asked, ‘Rau, do you have any idea what you want to do with this room?’ Rau said, ‘Just let me paint.’ And then we thought, ‘This could be really fun!’ Hahaha. Then we posted it on Instagram stories, and others came by and joined in. At that point, you can’t really stop it anymore once it gets going like that, hahaha.)

This spontaneity was also felt by Ilman Bahri, a collective member who runs an independent furniture business. The bar table, chairs, crate benches, bookshelves, and the long table in the corner of the room were commissioned by Hamzah (Figure 4). Initially, Hamzah requested an industrial design concept from Bahri, but the space’s concept evolved. One reason was that Ridwan Rau Rau wanted to paint the entire wall.

‘Bikin 2 bulan, selesai. Pas gua dateng mau ngasih tuh barang, kaget gua “muralnya kok gini?” Gua tau Rau Rau, kan. Geleng. konsepnya tadinya vintage, lebih ke industrial gitu, main-main dominasi warna coklat dari kayu, krem dari warna tembok, hitam. Industrial lah pokoknya. Nabrak banget ini. Rau Rau: “Hey, Be!” Rau gitu doang lagi.’ (Interview with Ilman Bahri at Atelir Ceremai, 25/09/2024)

(It took two months to complete. When I arrived to deliver the furniture, I was shocked: “Why does the mural look like this?” I think I know Rau Rau. I just shook my head. The original concept was vintage, leaning more toward industrial, playing with brown tones from the wood, cream from the walls, and black. Totally industrial. This clashed completely. Rau Rau just said, “Hey, Be!” and that was it.)



Figure 4. The right corner of Atelir Ceremai. (Source: personal documentation, 23/09/2024)

The room design process described above reflects involvement and symbolizes shared ownership. Although Atelir Ceremai had its initiators at the time, they did not attempt to halt the actions of Ridwan Rau Rau, nor those of the individuals who scribbled words on various parts of the walls. The meanings embedded in the spatial construction influenced its aesthetic form (Agustin et al., 2024; Budiwiyanto & Rosmiati, 2023). Such a participatory approach to space design reinforces a sense of collective ownership and embodies the collective identity (Gaha et al., 2024).

An example of how space is meaningfully interpreted among members of the Atelir Ceremai collective can be observed through their everyday experiences. One such member is Fahmi Rizal Fadillah, previously mentioned as the visual arts curator of Atelir Ceremai, who joined the collective in 2023 when Atelir Ceremai opened a position for a *ladenis*. After participating in activities for several months, he found employment outside of Atelir Ceremai. His attachment to the space is illustrated as follows:

'Kan gua udah jarang ke Atelir. Misalnya, kaya gua ngga diikutsertakan, mungkin pertimbangannya karena gua udah cukup sibuk di luar, di kantor. Gua ga diikutsertakan program atau apa, ada sedikit perasaan sedih, tapi akhirnya ya gua mikir lagi emang ga dapet waktunya. Deeply inside, gua pengen banget bantuin. Parah.' (Interview with Fahmi Rizal Fadillah at Atelir Ceremai, 29/08/2024)

(I haven't been visiting Atelir very often lately. For instance, I wasn't included in several programs, perhaps because I've been quite busy with work outside, at the office. I wasn't involved in any of the

activities, and although I felt a bit sad about it, I reminded myself that I simply didn't have the time. Deep down, though, I genuinely wanted to help.)

Fahmi's experience above demonstrates that, even though his participation in Atelir Ceremai's programs has decreased, his enthusiasm for engagement and collaboration remains strong, reflecting a significant emotional attachment. A similar sentiment is expressed by Ilman Bahri, a poet and the head of Atelir Ceremai's café. When asked how he would respond if a conflict arose during an event at Atelir Ceremai, he stated:

'Kalo sudut pandang gua sudah menganggap, "Wah ini mengganggu, nih!" Gua harus punya sikap dong? Bukan karena gua digaji, bukan. Bukan karena gua punya tanggung jawab. Memang motivasi gua adalah sebagai penanggung jawab kedai, tapi di luar itu gua udah sayang, sayang gua ama Atelir. Udah sayang gua. Meskipun ini kita nyewa di orang ini [menunjuk], tapi ini ruang tempat yang ngasih banyak hal, perubahan.' (Interview with Ilman Bahri at Atelir Ceremai, 25/09/2024)

(From my perspective, if I feel like, "Wow, this is disruptive!" I have to take a stance. Not because I'm paid, not because I have a formal responsibility. My official role as the café manager is one thing, but beyond that, I genuinely care; I care about Atelir. I already feel attached. Even though we rent this space from someone [pointing], this is a place that gives so much, a place of transformation.)

With the value of collaboration instilled from the room's initial formation, Atelir Ceremai demonstrates a sense of shared ownership. Subsequent activities also generate a degree of emotional attachment. The meaning attributed to the concept of space at this stage is twofold. What Fahmi and Bahri experience reflects a connection to an abstract sense of space, yet it still refers to the physical place where these activities occur. From this sense arises the concept of "togetherness."

From a constructionist perspective, collective identity is something that is discovered, created, or continuously reshaped (Snow & Corrigall-Brown, 2015). Similarly, the collective identity of Atelir Ceremai is never fixed. It is negotiated through a series of practices and constructed by multiple individual members. Changes, or growth, occur across various

trajectories. For instance, Andini, the literary curator of Atelir Ceremai, recounted her experience observing ideological shifts within the collective.

'Gue juga ngerasa kok dulu tuh Atelir kaya maskulin banget terus ngebosenin banget. Tapi, kemudian ketika gua ke sini, gua punya kesempatan untuk memperkenalkan orang-orang dari jaringan baru, yang ga ada relasi dengan seni-senian. Misalnya, kemarin, Mbak Wanda, yang penulis buku gakpapa perempuan untuk gak menikah itu, dia kan sebenarnya ranahnya itu aktivis perempuan. Nah, gua bisa masuk lewat jalur-jalur itu, di mana tuh Atelir bener-bener ngedorong juga kuratornya engga cuma menerima.' (Interview with Prihandini Nurrahmah at Atelir Ceremai, 4/08/2024)

(I also felt that Atelir used to have a rather masculine atmosphere and could be somewhat dull. But when I joined, I had the opportunity to bring in people from new networks, those with no prior connection to the arts. For instance, just yesterday, Mbak Wanda, the author of Gakpapa Perempuan untuk Gak Menikah, whose work centers on women's activism, came through one of those networks. Through these connections, I was able to contribute in new ways, as Atelir genuinely encourages its curators not only to receive ideas but also to engage actively with them.)

Thus, an individual's identity in relation to the sense of "togetherness" is flexible and interactive. Individuals not only adapt to the collective but also influence the direction of that "togetherness" itself. Ilman Bahri expressed a similar view, stating that the network's diverse identities foster positive change.

'Yang kaya gitu tuh jadinya, berjejaring, kan. Terus, pandangan gua terhadap berkesenian oh luas akhirnya, karna dari beberapa orang yang di luar Rawamangun tuh dateng kemari membawa obrolan, membawa produk kesenian. Nah, itu kan jadi meluas tuh. Kita kena radiasi lah, radiasi seni itu, dari mereka. Jadi gitu.' (Interview with Ilman Bahri at Atelir Ceremai, 25/09/2024)

(That kind of process creates networks. My perspective on art has become much broader because people from outside Rawamangun come here, bringing conversations and artistic works with them.)

It expands everything; we're exposed, so to speak, to the radiation of art they emit. That's how it goes.

The ever-expanding network and ongoing interactions with other collectives continue to shape Atelir Ceremai's identity as a collective institution. In an interview conducted in 2024 with Irsyad Ridho, Ridho (2024), a member of Atelir Ceremai recounted being invited by another art collective to participate in an event. When he intended to read a poem by Bukowski, however, the collective refused, citing gender-related reasons.

'Kok kita ditolak?' karna mereka anggap itu puisi-puisi yang, apa, hypermasculine, atau apa namanya, bias gender dan seterusnya kan. Ya, itu kan kemudian jadi perenungan di sini, jadi obrolan ama temen-temen di sini, kan. Apa iya? Gimana kita nafsirin Bukowski, atau posisi Atelir dalam kaitan dengan gender gimana? Gitu kan, nah itu tuh, jadi bahan obrolan kemudian jadi bahan, apa ya, mungkin kita bisa bikin program atau apa. Jadi, gua sih ngeliat temen-temen di sini tuh tumbuh.' (Interview with Ilman Bahri at Atelir Ceremai, 25/09/2024)

(Why were we rejected?" they asked, because the poems were considered hypermasculine or, as they put it, gender-biased and so on. That moment became a point of reflection here, a topic of discussion among friends at Atelir. We started asking ourselves: Is that really the case? How do we interpret Bukowski? What is Atelir's position in relation to gender? Those questions led to deeper conversations and even ideas for future programs. I can really see how people here are growing through these reflections.

However, differences also give rise to conflict. How do they respond to it? This issue will be discussed in the following subsection.

Between the Individual and the Collective: The Diversity Within the Group

At least four processes of identity construction occur when individuals negotiate their position within a collective identity. These processes are identity amplification, identity consolidation, identity extension,

and identity transformation (Snow & Corrigan-Brown, 2015). Identity amplification refers to a shift in the hierarchy of importance among one's multiple identities. For instance, when a Muslim graduate of Indonesian Literature applies for a job at a company, their identity as a literature graduate becomes more relevant than their identity as a Muslim in that particular context. Identity consolidation, on the other hand, involves adopting a composite identity that merges two previously distinct or even conflicting identities. Identity extension refers to the broadening of one's sense of self, as when a writer begins to see themselves as an artist more generally. Meanwhile, identity transformation encompasses a profound change in one's sense of identity, as often occurs during processes of conversion or joining a new group or movement (Snow & Corrigan-Brown, 2015).

When a cultural space accommodates a diversity of affiliations and ways of thinking, how do the artists within it make sense of themselves? To address this question, the notion of 'self-understanding' must first be grounded in more concrete aspects, such as shared indicators, views on art, tastes, or ideological orientations. Some members of the collective recognized similarities between Atelir Ceremai and their prior experiences, such as Willy Fahmy Agiska and Yohanes.

'Tidak jauh dari lingkungan yang pernah membentukku, maksudnya itu ada budaya diskusi, budaya memanagerial komunitas, budaya bisnisnya ada. Akhirnya kan aku mengelola toko bukunya, kan. Itu beberapa hal lah yang sejalan menurutku.' (Interview with Willy Fahmy Agiska at Atelir Ceremai, 1 July 2024)

(It's not far from the environment that once shaped me. What I mean is that there's a culture of discussion, a culture of managing communities, and even a culture of business. Eventually, I ended up working in the bookstore. Those are some of the things that, in my view, align quite well.)

'Waktu itu di Bekasi ada, gua bikin sekolah rakyat ama temen gua, Sekolah Rakyat Bekasi. Untuk yang mulainya waktu itu ada beberapa orang, tapi gua udah masuk di awal juga, cuman buah pikirannya bukan dari gua. Bikin, jenuh, ngomonginnya pendidikan, maen ah yang rada-rada sok nyeni,

teater tuh itu tadi Rawamangun Concept (RC), nongkrongnya di sini, Atelir, ama anak-anak RC. Yaudah ketemu Ghozi, ngobrol-ngobrol-ngobrol, diajakin. 'Yaudah yuk maen, maen di Atelir.' Gitu sih.' (Interview with Yohanes at Atelir Ceremai, 25 August 2024)

(At that time in Bekasi, I started a community school with a friend of mine, Sekolah Rakyat Bekasi. There were a few of us at the beginning, and I joined early on, though the idea itself didn't come from me. After a while, I got tired of always talking about education, so I thought I'd try something a bit more artistic. That's when I got involved in Rawamangun Concept (RC), and we used to hang out here at Atelir with the RC folks. Then I met Ghozi. We talked, and he invited me, 'Why don't you come and hang out at Atelir?' That's how it started.)

Both of these collective members had prior experience participating in other communities or collectives. Their shared background in artistic ecosystems served as common ground, facilitating their integration into Atelir Ceremai. However, individual identity must still be viewed through the lens of diversity. Even under a shared umbrella, each individual inevitably maintains distinctions from others. Sen (2006) describes this as the coexistence of multiple affiliations or categories within a single individual. While they may intersect in certain categories, they remain disconnected in others. The key question, then, is whether such diversity becomes visible, or is allowed to be visible. How does an individual's identity position itself when confronted with the sense of collectiveness that defines the collective identity?

With an understanding of the ongoing negotiation between individual and collective identities, it can be concluded that individuals, ideally, do not entirely dissolve into the collective identity. Yet neither is fully autonomous, as a reciprocal relationship continues. This dynamic of differing identities is also reflected in the variety of perspectives held by members of Atelir Ceremai. Yohanes, one of the collective's members, emphasized that although he is part of the group, he continues to uphold his own personal artistic vision:

'Kalo secara pandangan seni, gua ga terpengaruh dengan cara seninya Atelir sih sebenarnya. Dari dulu ya seni gua untuk rakyat. Gua masih ga setuju aja

dengan seni untuk seni gitu hahaha. (Interview with Yohanes at Atelir Ceremai, 25/08/2024)

(In terms of artistic perspective, I'm actually not influenced by Atelir's artistic approach. From the beginning, my art has always been for the people. I still can't agree with the idea of art for art's sake.)

In line with Yohanes, Fahmi Rizal Fadillah also illustrates how Atelir Ceremai does not entirely shape his artistic identity:

'Kalo untuk secara bentuk, rasa, genre, Atelir sangat tidak mempengaruhi gue. Tapi, bahkan dari sebelum gua bergabung sama Atelir, semangatnya nyampe ke gue.' (Interview with Fahmi Rizal Fadillah at Atelir Ceremai, 29/08/2024)

(In terms of form, sensibility, and genre, Atelir has very little influence on me. Even before I joined Atelir, its spirit had already been within me.)

The diversity of individual identities maintained within the collective is further reinforced by an analogy offered by Muhammad Aldiansyah Febrian Azura. He illustrates how the plurality within Atelir Ceremai allows its members to choose the roles or values that resonate with them, without feeling compelled to adopt all of them.

'Kalau dianalogikan kayak snack platter. Snack platter itu isinya ada sosis, ada kentang, entar ada calamari, entar ada onion ring. Itu kan satu nama, ya. Tapi, sebenarnya substansinya beda-beda. Satu itu macem-macem dan elu bisa milih untuk nikmatin yang mana, apakah elu mau nikmatin semuanya, atau nikmatin beberapa aja. Engga perlu lu borong jadi satu juga. Itu Atelir kaya gitu.' (Interview with Muhammad Aldiansyah Febrian Azura, Atelir Ceremai, 1/07/2024)

(It can be compared to a platter of assorted snacks. A snack platter contains sausages, fries, calamari, and onion rings, all under one name. Yet, each of them has a distinct substance. It's a mix, and you can choose which ones you want to enjoy, whether you want to try them all or just a few. You don't have to take everything at once. That's what Atelir is like.

Differences in artistic taste and style are part of the everyday reality within the Atelir Ceremai collective. Atelir Ceremai deliberately avoids formulating any artistic manifesto, as Hamzah argues that "itu akan jadi pengkultusan" (It would lead to idolization) (Muhammad, 2022). From the outset, Atelir Ceremai has also refrained from promoting a particular type or genre of art (Ridho, 2024), allowing artists the freedom to grow according to their own aspirations. In other words, rather than asserting a fixed collective identity, Atelir Ceremai focuses on supporting and encouraging young artists to create in any style they choose. Through this approach, Atelir Ceremai preserves its members' individual artistic identities and allows the collective identity to develop organically.

DISCUSSION

As Gergen stated in his lecture available on YouTube (2014), everything we perceive as real originates from relational (social) backgrounds; the same applies to the cultural entities within the Atelir Ceremai collective. The interactions, social order, and programs within the collective are products of what Berger and Luckmann (1991) describe as externalization, a phenomenon in which individuals project their worldview onto the tangible environment. It is a fact that Atelir Ceremai initially began as a project of its founders. However, as artists from other artistic ecosystems later engaged the collective, the transformation of its values became inevitable and had to be embraced. An individualistic perspective is no longer adequate to understand an art collective whose identity is articulated through a dynamic and continually evolving social network within the space it inhabits.

The collective identity of Atelir Ceremai is constructed through dynamic social networks embedded in participatory everyday practices. Atelir Ceremai creates a social space that functions not only as a site of activity but also as a locus of emotional attachment and identity formation for its members.

In cultural studies, space is understood as more than a physical setting. Humans attribute meaning to environments through personal or collective processes, thereby establishing a particular sense of attachment (Low and Altman, 1992; Rebecca, 2024). Such spaces may hold memories of the past or the shared histories of a community. This attachment to space, in turn, shapes human actions (Dalavong et al., 2024).

However, when the notion of space refers to an alternative space within the context of art, one that

serves as a site for the exchange of abstract concepts such as spirit, ideas, and creative visions, it need not be bound to a physical location. Consequently, Atelir Ceremai, like many place-based collectives, operates within two interrelated spatial dimensions. In other words, Atelir Ceremai does not necessarily have to exist in Rawamangun; it can exist anywhere, or even nowhere, such as in purely online encounters.

According to [Barker \(2004\)](#), both physical space and space imbued with particular meanings are equally significant; there is no need to privilege one over the other. This is because social interaction inherently takes place in a specific place. Social identities, in various ways, are embedded in and communicated through particular environments, thereby reinforcing the bond between people and place ([Barker, 2004](#); [Hummon, 1992](#)). What Ridwan Rau Rau and others did when painting murals on the walls of Atelir Ceremai's café was, consciously or unconsciously, an act of cultivating a sense of attachment.

The concept of participatory space manifests through interactions among individuals within continuously evolving social contexts. To understand this, the four processes of identity construction outlined by [Snow and Corrigan-Brown \(2015\)](#) are instructive. The process of identity amplification, for instance, when a member emphasizes another aspect of their identity over their responsibilities to the collective, was experienced by Fahmi Rizal Fadillah, whose involvement in Atelir Ceremai decreased due to professional commitments outside the group. However, he maintained a strong emotional connection to it. Meanwhile, identity consolidation emerges in cases such as Ilman Bahri's, who, as both café manager and artist, successfully integrates his professional responsibilities with his emotional attachment to the collective.

Identity extension, on the other hand, can be observed through the diverse responsibilities held by members of the collective. Members of Atelir Ceremai are required to flexibly expand the scope of their roles to meet situational needs. For instance, a member who initially engages in a specific task, such as art curation, may also take on additional roles, including program organization or artistic property production. This occurs because, beyond their position as coordinators of certain divisions, these individuals are part of a broader identity, the artistic collective itself. Ultimately, such overlapping roles can trigger identity transformation, not necessarily in a complete sense, but sufficiently to reshape how they

perceive themselves: they begin to see Atelir Ceremai as an inseparable part of their being, carrying its values and identity into other contexts in their lives.

In this sense, identity construction is a dynamic, ongoing process. Individual identity is never static, as it continually encounters new situations that demand negotiation and adaptation. Amid this collectivity, the processes of identity negotiation within Atelir Ceremai, manifested through mechanisms of amplification, consolidation, extension, and transformation, demonstrate that even within a collective, individuals retain the capacity to assert and shape their personal characteristics without losing their sense of belonging to the group.

Thus, an individual's identity in relation to the collective "we" occupies a flexible and interactive position. Individuals not only adapt to the collective but also actively shape and influence its direction.

What is particularly interesting about Atelir Ceremai is the progression from individual-level identity negotiation within the collective to intergroup identity negotiation. As an alternative space, Atelir Ceremai functions not only as a site for artistic activities but also as an arena that challenges formal artistic narratives and the logic of cultural capitalism dominating the contemporary art landscape. This form of resistance emerges as an extension of the everyday practices cultivated within the group. At this stage, internal negotiations among individuals evolve into spatial maintenance, while what renders Atelir Ceremai an alternative space is the external negotiation that occurs when the collective encounters dominant art groups. For example, the deliberate use of signification processes to express youthfulness has, in turn, positioned Atelir Ceremai as an autonomous artistic collective.

Youthfulness at Atelir Ceremai does not emerge from a vacuum. Viewing young people solely through the lens of biological age positions them outside of society and history ([Lesko, 2012](#)). The notion of youth as a social category arose alongside the transformation of familial roles within capitalist societies ([Parsons dalam Barker, 2004](#)). Youth represents a transitional phase, one that generates specific social expectations due to its ambiguous position between adulthood and childhood. On one hand, young people are deemed too old for childish mischief; on the other, too young for adult privileges ([Sibley, 1995](#)). In the programs and naming practices of Atelir Ceremai, as well as in the playful use

of the term *response*, as previously discussed, there exists a sense of playfulness reminiscent of children's spontaneity, serving to soften the solemn impression often attached to carefully organized artistic activities. This becomes particularly relevant if adulthood is equated with stability or establishment. The titles of these activities position Atelir Ceremai in a liminal space between seriousness and playfulness, an ambiguity that mirrors the position of youth in capitalist society. Suppose identity is a matter of symbols (Maalouf, 2003). In that case, this practice of signification constitutes a form of resistant identity, a symbolic defiance against the dominant or "adult" culture through linguistic style, one of the defining traits of subcultural expression (Hebdige, 1979), often associated with youth culture. In other words, Atelir Ceremai negotiates its position within the broader discourse of art.

One concrete example of such resistance can be seen in Ridwan Rau Rau's exhibition program titled *DeRau: yang sudah belum berarti selesai* ("What is done does not necessarily mean it is finished"), which adopted a more intimate curatorial approach through the use of an interactive response board that allowed visitors to write or draw within the exhibition space freely. The exhibition, therefore, did not position the final artwork as its primary focus. Instead, it emphasized the collaborative and creative process, inviting visitors to participate in a shared exploration of meaning (Figure 5). This approach stands in contrast to the logic of the art market, which often measures artistic value through the popularity of individual artists (Zhukova et al., 2020), as well as to large-scale exhibitions that typically prohibit audience interaction with artworks. Ridwan Rau Rau's continuous presence throughout the exhibition further enabled direct dialogue between the artist and visitors, underscoring the importance of demystifying the figure of the individual artist and dismantling the institutional mediation of exclusivity.



Figure 5. *Response board at the exhibition DeRau: yang sudah belum berarti selesai (source: personal documentation, October 22, 2023)*

This anti-commodification stance is also evident in the *Sesuai Protokol* program. The small concert or gig emphasizes sustaining art and collective experience rather than financial gain. This attitude is likewise expressed through their language. As discussed previously, words such as "response" and "semiotics" are recontextualized from formal intellectual discourse into everyday conversation. This semantic shift demonstrates how members of Atelir Ceremai ground artistic terminology, often perceived as elitist, thus creating a symbolic distance from the overly serious culture of formal art institutions. The notion of youthfulness within Atelir Ceremai can therefore be understood as a metaphorical construction of identity that merges intellectual rigor with subversive playfulness. Such practice simultaneously promotes inclusivity within the artistic ecosystem.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that identity negotiation plays a dual role in shaping social spaces. Within a collective ecosystem, identity negotiation is not merely about maintaining differences; it is a creative practice that paves the way for the emergence of collective expression. Rather than leading to homogenization, negotiation within this group encourages diversity and generates cultural forms that are unique, unpredictable, and capable of challenging the logic of dominant art spaces.

Identity negotiation is not only a mechanism of social adaptation but also a transformative practice. It is this transformative potential that enables the creation of alternative spaces as new socio-cultural configurations operating independently from the mainstream.

These findings are expected to contribute to the ongoing discussion of how art collectives in Indonesia construct social networks that facilitate the exchange of ideas, solidarity, and the formation of flexible identities, while also offering insights into the role of space in contemporary art practices.

An identity intentionally designed to be negotiated organically within a social space can protect an art collective from the rush to define itself. History shows that when a collective becomes too eager to fix its identity, it risks losing the openness that once allowed it to grow. Caution in shaping one's form or direction is therefore essential in a time when change occurs at an exponential rate. This is particularly important for art collectives that value diversity, as maintaining fluidity

and inclusiveness allows them to adapt, evolve, and remain true to their collaborative spirit.

In contrast to the view that identity conflicts may become irrelevant when confined to a single categorical dimension, this study finds that a conflict targeting one category can, in fact, influence others. This dynamic is evident in the incident involving the rejection of a poetry reading that came to represent the collective identity of Atelir Ceremai. To resolve such tensions, a series of collaborative efforts and shared understandings is required. These joint practices evolve into evaluative processes that serve to reconstruct and redefine collective identity.

At a practical level, this study is expected to offer insights for other art collectives in managing space and constructing collective identities that are both inclusive and adaptive. The findings may also serve as a reference for policymakers and art communities in recognizing the importance of social or public spaces as key factors in the sustainability of art and culture.

Future research should further explore how art collectives address long-term sustainability challenges, particularly in relation to economic conditions and generational renewal. Moreover, comparative studies with other art collectives in Indonesia could provide a broader understanding of resistance patterns within alternative art ecosystems.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

The first author was responsible for conducting interviews, observations, document exploration, and writing the manuscript, while the second author contributed as a supervisor, advisor, and translator. The third author also served as a supervisor, advisor, and mentor throughout the research and writing process.

FUNDING STATEMENT

We would like to express our gratitude to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbud Ristek) for its financial support through the 2024 Master's Thesis Research (PTM) scheme, which made this study possible. This support has been invaluable to the completion of this research. It is expected to make a positive contribution to the advancement of knowledge, particularly in the fields of art and culture.

INFORMED CONSENT

The authors have obtained informed consent from all participants.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

REFERENCES

- Agiska, W. F. (2024). *Personal interview* (F. H. Mubarak, Ed.).
- Agustin, S. A., Saidi, A. I., & Ahmad, H. A. (2024). Caring design: A multimodal analysis of woman embodiment in Kampung Halaman Foundation Design by Novi Kristinawati. *Panggung*, 34(2), 271–284.
<https://doi.org/10.26742/panggung.v34i2.3513>
- Ahmadi, D. (2020). Footnotes from JILF. In M. Suryajaya (Ed.), *Mengimajinasikan Masa Kini sebagai Sejarah*.
https://open.spotify.com/episode/7JD7TvG86k7gCqqbLORiQl?si=yDJOcmO-SGig7_Dz6-uQEQ
- Azura, A. (2024). *Personal interview*.
- Bahri, I. (2024). *Personal interview* (F. H. Mubarak, Ed.).
- Barker, C. (2004). *Cultural studies: teori & praktik*. Kreasi Wacana.
- Becker, H. S. (1974). Art as collective action. *American Sociological Review*, 30(6), 767–776.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/2094151>
- Berger, P. L., & Luckmann, T. (1991). *The social construction of reality: A treatise in the sociology of knowledge*. Penguin Books.
- Budianta, M. (2022). Lumbung commoning reflection on Kampung Network research/activism. *UNITAS*, 95(2), 348–379.
<https://doi.org/10.31944/2022950212>
- Budiwiyanto, J., & Rosmiati, A. (2023). Estetika interior rumah Jawa dalam alih fungsi menjadi restoran. *Jurnal Panggung*, 33(2), 267–284.
<https://doi.org/10.26742/panggung.v33i2.2432>
- Chawla, L. (1992). Childhood place attachments. In I. Altman & S. M. Low (Eds.), *Place Attachment* (pp. 63–84). Plenum Press.
- Dalavong, P., Im, H. N., & Choi, C. G. (2024). In what ways does placeness affect people's behavior? Focusing on personal place attachment and public

- place image as connecting parameter. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 15(1394930), 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2024.1394930>
- Darmawan, A. (2010). Memperbaiki mata rantai siklus gagasan. In A. Yunanto (Ed.), *FIXER: Pameran ruang alternatif & kelompok seni rupa di Indonesia*. (pp. 8–13). North Art Space.
- documenta-fifteen.de. (n.d.). *Lumbung*. Documenta Fifteen. <https://documenta-fifteen.de/en/lumbung/>
- Fadillah, F. R. (2024). *Personal interview*.
- fixer.id. (2021). *Building the FIXER 2021 research project, one of the goals and further elaboration are forming a common platform for Indonesian art collectives*. Lumbung Indonesia. <https://fixer.id/en/lumbung-indonesia>
- Gaha, I. S., Zorgati, I. B. Y., & Lafhaj, Z. (2024). Integrating dynamic culture and participatory design in urban spaces for sustainable futures. *Journal of Contemporary Urban Affairs*, 8(1), 212–231. <https://doi.org/10.25034/ijcua.2024.v8n1-12>
- Goltz, S., Afisina, R., Darmawan, A., & Hartono, I. (2022). Collective crafting in Post-Suharto Indonesia. *Cultural Politics*, 18(3), 430–458. <https://doi.org/10.1215/17432197-9964885>
- Hebdige, D. (1979). *Subculture: The meaning of style*. Routledge.
- Hoon, C. Y. (2006). Defining (multiple) selves: Reflections on fieldwork in Jakarta. *Life Writing*, 3(1), 81–102. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10408340308518306>
- Hujatnika, A., & Zainsjah, A. (2020). Artist collectives in The Post-1998 Indonesia: Resurgence, or a turn (?). In *International Conference on Aesthetics and the Sciences of Art*. Bandung Institute of Technology. <https://doi.org/10.51555/338617>
- Hummon, D. M. (1992). Community attachment: Local Sentiment and sense of place. In I. Altman & S. M. Low (Eds.), *Place Attachment* (pp. 253–276). Plenum Press.
- Kent, E. (2022). The history of conscious collectivity behind ruangrupa. In R. Kolb & D. Richter (Eds.), *documenta fifteen—Aspects of commoning in curatorial and artistic practices* (pp. 25–28). OnCurating.org.
- Lesko, N. (2012). *Act your age!: a cultural construction of adolescence*. Routledge.
- Low, S. M., & Altman, I. (1992). Place attachment: A conceptual inquiry. In S. M. Low & I. Altman (Eds.), *Place Attachment* (pp. 1–12). Plenum Press.
- Luthfi, B., Hujatnika, A., & Damajanti, I. (2020). Analysis of Institut Ruangrupa’s alternative art education during 2015-2018. In *International Conference on Aesthetics and the Sciences of Art*. Bandung Institute of Technology. <https://doi.org/10.51555/338078>
- Maalouf, A. (2003). *In the name of identity: violence and the need to belong*. Penguin Books.
- Mansfield, M., Nilan, P., & Wibawanto, G. R. (2024). Rebel imaginings: Street art in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. *Visual Studies*, 39(1–2), 239–253. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1472586X.2023.2237001>
- Morissan. (2019). *Riset kualitatif*. Prenadamedia Group.
- Muhammad, H. (2022). *Hompimpa Alaium Gambreng*. CV Pustaka Anagram.
- Muhammad, H. (2024). *Personal interview*.
- Pellow, D. (1992). Spaces that teach: Attachment to the african compound. In I. Altman & S. M. Low (Eds.), *Place attachment* (pp. 187–208). Plenum Press.
- Prabasmoro, T., & Ridwansyah, R. (2019). Fan culture and masculinity: Identity construction of Persib supporters. *Gender Studies*, 18(1), 163–178. <https://doi.org/10.2478/genst-2020-0012>
- Prawirosusanto, K. M., & Handitya, E. (2019). Kolektif sebagai institusi kebudayaan alternatif di perkotaan Jawa: Telaah infrastruktur sosial. *Antropologi Indonesia*, 40(2), 171–190. <https://doi.org/10.7454/ai.v40i2.13006>
- Prihandini Nurrahmah. (2024). *Personal interview*.

- Proshansky, H. M., Fabian, A. K., & Kaminoff, R. (1983). Place-Identity: Physical world socialization of the self. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 3(1), 57–83. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0272-4944\(83\)80021-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0272-4944(83)80021-8)
- Rebecca A, J. (2024). The Long Reach of Yi-Fu Tuan's Topophilia. *The Florida Geographer*, 55(55), 109–113.
- Ridho, I. (2024). *Personal interview*.
- Sen, A. (2006). *Identity and violence: The illusion of destiny*. W.W. Norton and Company.
- Sholette, G. (2011). Dark matter: Art and politics in the age of enterprise culture. In E. Leslie & M. Wayne (Eds.), *Marxism and Culture*. Pluto Press.
- Sibley, D. (1995). *Geographies of exclusion*. Routledge.
- Snow, D. A., & Corrigall-Brown, C. (2015). Collective identity. In *International encyclopedia of the social & behavioral sciences* (2nd ed., Vol. 4, pp. 174–180). Elsevier.
- Soetomo, I. (2020). *Direktori: Peta kolektif Indonesia 2010-2020*. Whiteboard Journal.
- Sposini, F. M. (2014). *Ken gergen talks about social constructionist ideas, theory and practice*. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-AsKFFX9Ib0>
- Suryajaya, M., Raseuki, N. I., & Zahrawaan, A. (2023). Kolektif dan menjadi-kolektif: Evolusi wacana kolektif seni rupa di Jakarta, 2000–2022. *Jurnal Masyarakat Dan Budaya*, 25(1), 19–34. <https://doi.org/10.55981/jmb.2023.2005>
- Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (2004). The social identity theory of intergroup behavior. In J. T. Jost & J. Sidanius (Eds.), *Political psychology: Key readings* (pp. 367–390). Psychology Press.
- Tukan, B. (2021). Pada air-tanah yang sama, musim berbeda: Perihal kemunculan kolektif seni dalam pembahasan FIXER 2021. In B. Purwoadi (Ed.), *Mengeja FIXER 2021 Pembacaan kolektif seni Indonesia dalam sepuluh tahun terakhir* (pp. 1–28). Yayasan Gudskul Studi Kolektif.
- unj.ac.id. (n.d.). *Sejarah UNJ*. Universitas Negeri Jakarta. <https://www.unj.ac.id/sejarah-unj/>
- Wardani, F. (2020). *Kolektif kita, dari masa ke masa bersama Farah Wardani*. Whiteboard Journal. <https://www.whiteboardjournal.com/ideas/art/kolektif-kita-dari-masa-ke-masa-bersama-farah-wardani/>
- Wulandari, S., Guntur, & Marianto, M. D. (2022). The ideology of RajutKejut: A collective craftivist movement utilizes digital technology in the making. In *International and Interdisciplinary Conference on Arts Creation and Studies* (Vol. 7, pp. 85–93). <https://www.scribd.com/document/823242968/The-ideology-of-RajutKejut-a-collective-craftivist-movement-utilizes-digital-technology-in-the-making>
- Yohanes. (2024). *Personal Interview*.
- Yuliana, I., & Lämml, D. (2023). Social-engaged art in Indonesia: Many in one, nurturing diversity & inclusion. *Journal of Urban Society's Arts*, 9(2), 149–154. <https://doi.org/10.24821/jousa.v9i2.8106>
- Zarobell, J. (2022). Global art collectives and exhibition making. *Arts*, 11(2), 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.3390/arts11020038>
- Zhukova, A., Lakshina, V., & Leonova, L. (2020). Hedonic pricing on the fine art market. *Information*, 11(5), 252. <https://www.mdpi.com/2078-2489/11/5/252>