

Transforming the Erau Ritual Series into Visual Narratives for Video Mapping and Living Heritage Preservation

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ABSTRACT

The Erau Festival of Tenggarong, East Kalimantan, signifies the living cultural heritage of the Sultanate of Kutai Kartanegara Ing Martadipura that still plays an important role in serving both the social and spiritual functions of its society. Under the impact of modernization forces and the needs of the younger generations and international tourists who require a visual, immersive, and interactive experience of the culture, this research explores the potential of using video mapping as a digital visual medium to present the process of Erau rituals in an ethical way that does not represent them in their full literal meaning. The goals of this research are to understand the significance of Erau rituals, to structure the stages of rituals as a visual story, and to develop an audiovisual video mapping concept as a means of preserving the living cultural heritage. The research has been conducted by using the methodology of visual ethnography that included participant observations, semi-structured interviews, the analysis of existing literature on the topic, and the analysis of 13 Erau rituals. Data collection involved coding and interpretation of ritual stages and meanings of visual symbols. This research revealed the 13 stages of Erau ritual from Titi Bende until Merobohkan Tiang Ayu along with symbolic meanings of their different elements including rice arrangement, dragons, and offerings. These ritual stages have been interpreted in terms of visual storytelling through coding, creating a storyboard, and producing flat designs and motion graphics that respect the sanctity of the ritual. The outcome of this research was the development of a video mapping prototype that visualizes Erau rituals and thus contributes to the advancement of visual communication design technology in preserving living cultural heritage.

KEYWORDS

Living Heritage, Erau, Video Mapping, Visual Narrative

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INTRODUCTION

Living Living heritage is a part of cultural identity because it holds history, community and belief systems that keep getting passed on from one generation to the next. Living heritage is not just something that people get from the past. It continues to have meaning because communities still practice, interpret, and give meaning to it in the present. Indeed, in this respect, the living heritage not only creates a connection between the present and its historical past but also operates as a cultural resource in future community developments (Safitri & Ikaputra, 2024). A good example of a living heritage that has been preserved up until now with great importance to society is the Erau Festival in Tenggarong, East Kalimantan. It has not only been preserved as a cultural heritage but also as something that has been socially and spiritually significant to the community itself.

The Erau Festival is a centuries old tradition associated with the Kutai Kartanegara Ing Martadipura Sultanate. The word "Erau" comes from the Kutai language and refers to a festive or

lively celebration. Historically, the ceremony was performed in connection with important events within the sultanate, including the coronation of a sultan. Following the end of the sultanate's political role, the Erau Festival was discontinued in 1965. With support from the local government and permission from the sultanate, the festival was revived in 1971. Since then, Erau has continued to develop as an important means of maintaining the cultural heritage of the sultanate and has grown into a cultural event with national and international significance (Soetoen et al., 1979). This continuity illustrates that Erau is not merely a historical tradition but a cultural practice that continues to find its place in contemporary society.

Nevertheless being a living heritage does not mean that the Erau Festival is free from challenges. Technology is changing quickly. The ways people experience culture are also changing. This has created both chances and difficulties for practices. The festival has to keep its identity while also trying to meet the needs of people today who enjoy culture through pictures, activities and experiences (Taufiq et al., 2023). Efforts to grow and protect the Erau Festival have also helped the local government make money. This shows that keeping culture alive is now tied to tourism and money making (Fiquyah, 2022). Similar changes are happening with traditions in the Kutai Kartanegara area. Cultural practices are changing in what they do. What they mean as they become more linked with tourism (Indriani et al., 2022). At the time digital media is opening up new ways to share cultural traditions with more people. This is done through videos showing what happens during the festival and using social media to spread the word especially with young people (Agus, 2018). These changes make an important question arise: how can digital media help the Erau Festival be easier to reach and more interesting, without making the meaning of the rituals just about looks and shows?

One possible response to this challenge is the use of video mapping as a form of digital visual mediation. Video mapping enables moving images, graphics, and sound to be projected onto three-dimensional architectural surfaces. In this study, the medium is applied to a prototype of the Mulawarman Museum facade so that the Erau narrative can be communicated through a dynamic visual experience. The purpose is not to reproduce the ritual literally or replace the tradition with technology. Instead video mapping is presented as a tool that interprets and shares meanings in a modern visual form. In this manner video mapping technology enables audiences to experience the story and values of Erau while keeping a distance from ritual elements that may hold cultural or sacred limits.

This research builds upon existing scholarship regarding cultural sustainability and digital technology. "Living heritage" is understood as a dynamic entity continuously nurtured by its community, where cultural authenticity is preserved precisely through ongoing interaction (Safitri & Ikaputra, 2024). Video mapping expands the boundaries of artistic expression, harmoniously blending music and visuals within performances (Safitri & Ikaputra, 2024). Visual and digital media can support the preservation and communication of cultural heritage by transforming traditional visual elements into accessible forms (Halawa & Kholida, 2022) and communicating cultural practices and values through visual narratives (Gainer et al., 2025).

Digital media offers an approach, to cultural heritage preservation yet digital media must be used with careful technical and ethical thought (Dwi Putra et al., 2023). In this situation storytelling helps shape the narrative flow ensuring that every visual presentation gives important meaning (Li et al., 2022). This whole process of meaning-making and cultural interaction can be understood through ethnographic research, using observation, interviews, and visual data collection to examine cultural contexts and their visual representations (Taruan et al., 2020). Digital media, cultural heritage preservation, storytelling, visual ethnography, meaning-making and cultural interaction all play a role.

The studies together make it clear that there is already a link, between cultural heritage, visual storytelling, digital preservation and video mapping. The research problem is not that video mapping has never been used to show heritage. Previous studies have shown its ability. The real problem is how cultural meaning is turned into choices. For example when a ritual has parts how should each part be chosen and put together into a visual story? Which symbols should be. Which should not be shown? How can the meaning of an action, an object, a color or a movement be changed into a visual

image without losing the cultural meaning? These questions matter because just putting symbols into a video mapping display does not mean the story that comes out shows the culture the right way.

This is the research gap addressed by the study. Previous research has discussed video mapping as a way to show and keep culture. There is still little detail about how to turn the meaning of a live ritual into a video mapping story that respects culture. In words we still need a stronger link, between the cultural material and the final visual design. We must understand the ritual spot its meanings and symbols arrange those meanings into a story and then turn them into parts, motion and projection. This difference matters because the visual form must stay tied to the meaning it shows. The study therefore looks at the transformation process not at video mapping as a new way to preserve culture.

The novelty of this study comes from combining these stages using an ethnographic and narrative transformation approach. First visual ethnography is used to examine and understand the process, symbols, gestures, artifacts and meanings tied to the Erau ritual series. Second the insights gained are turned into a narrative. This narrative links the order of events to a storyline includes symbolic images follows a visual rhythm and uses careful scene composition. Third this narrative is adapted into a video mapping idea for the Museum Mulawarman facade. In this way visual design is not about decoration. It becomes a way to interpret culture. The transformation aims to balance appeal clear storytelling, the physical features of the projection surface and a deep respect, for the cultural values of the Erau tradition.

Accordingly, the objectives of this study are threefold: (1) to identify and interpret the values, symbols, meanings, and stage structure of the Erau ritual series through a visual ethnography approach; (2) to formulate the stages of the Erau ritual into a visual narrative structure consisting of storyline, symbolic representation, and visual composition; and (3) to formulate and produce an audio-visual video mapping concept as the visual embodiment of the Erau ritual narrative and as an applicable medium for communicating and supporting the preservation of living heritage. The third objective is therefore understood as the result of a traceable transformation process, beginning with cultural understanding and ending with a site-responsive visual narrative, rather than as a general claim to develop a video mapping product without a clearly explained design process.

METHOD

This study used an approach with visual ethnography, as the main method. I chose ethnography to explore the cultural meanings, visual characteristics, spatial settings, movements, objects and ritual sequences of the Erau Festival. Visual ethnography lets me combine field observation, interviews and visual documentation to understand practices through their visual expressions. In this work colors, costumes, motifs, gestures, objects and spatial arrangements were treated as meaningful visual signs. The study was carried out in Tenggarong, Kutai Kartanegara, East Kalimantan during the 2025 Erau Festival. Observation covered all 13 stages of the Erau Festival: Titi Bende, Atur Dahar, Beluluh Awal, Menjamu Benua, Mendirikan Tiang Ayu, Opening Ceremony, Beluluh Sore, Merangin, Bepelas, Beseprah, Seluang Mudik, Mengulur Naga and Merobohkan Tiang Ayu.

Data Sources and Collection

Four complementary data collection techniques were used in this study: the review of literature and historical documents field observation, semi-structured interviews and photo and video documentation. Previous studies on Erau, cultural heritage and visual representation were used to set the conceptual context (Janah et al., 2017; Purba et al., 2025; Ramadhaniel & Afdhal, 2025; Sutarya & Winata, 2025) .

Participant observation was carried out by being present and engaging with the setting during 13 stages from September 21 to September 28 2025. The researcher watched the activities, the participants, the objects, the gestures, the movements, the colours, the costumes, the offerings, the spatial arrangements the architectural settings and other visual elements. Participation, in this setting means being and observing not acting or changing the sacred ritual. This field observation was supported by photo and video documentation. To learn more about the rituals of the Kutai Kartanegara Sultanate things that could not be fully seen by looking a semi-structured interview was done with Raden Awang Agus Darmawan on September 27 2025. As someone who knows a lot he

shared a lot about the order of the rituals the history behind them and the values that are part of the traditions. The interview was. Then written down exactly as it was said. To make sure the information was correct different sources were compared. These included the interview, what was seen in the field, videos and books. This helped to tell the difference, between what could be seen on the surface and what really meant in the culture.

Data Analysis and Visual Transformation

a. Stage-based coding.

Observations and documentation were arranged by the 13 stages. For each stage the observations and documentation were coded for activities, objects, gestures, spatial arrangements, colors, movements and other visual characteristics.

b. Cultural Interpretation and Triangulation

The codes were interpreted by comparing field observations with interview accounts and literature to identify the functions and meanings of the codes. The interpretive process follows the idea that ritual objects, movements, colors and spatial arrangements can serve as meaningful visual signs as noted by Yasa et al. (2023); Zahra & Mansoor (2024); Lestamega (2024).

c. Visual Symbol Analysis

Significant visual elements were. Analyzed for their possible symbolic and narrative functions. Elements such as Tiang Ayu, ritual offerings, circular movements, rice scattering, architectural spaces and other recurring visual characteristics were viewed not as objects to be reproduced but as sources for visual abstraction. This approach matches studies that highlight the role of representation, in communicating cultural identity and heritage as discussed by Najib & Fiyanto (2025) .

d. Visual transformation.

The selected cultural and visual elements were transformed into a video-mapping narrative. The transformation followed the sequence:

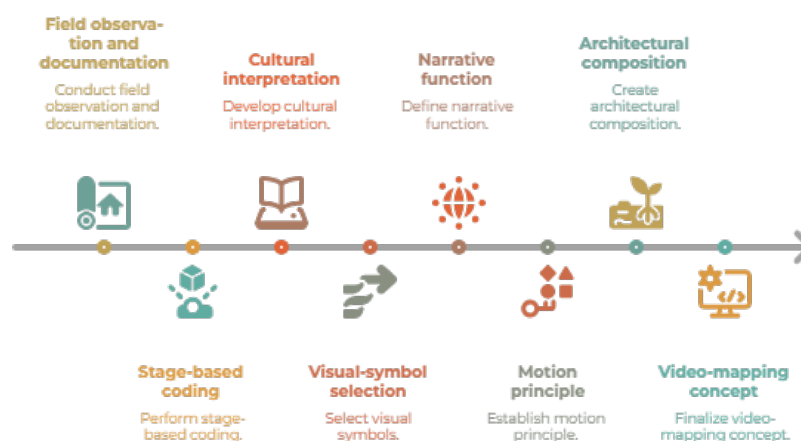


Figure 1. Stages of Transforming the Erau Ritual into a Video Mapping Visual Narrative
 (Source: Author, 2026)

The change involved looking at choices and simplifying things, colors, moving parts when things happen over time how things are placed in space and how it fits with the building of the Mulawarman Museum. So the things that happen in rituals were shown as stories of just copying real things exactly. How long each part lasted was decided based on what the story needed and what looked good not because there was a time that was proven to work. Sound and pictures were also connected in a way by thinking about the sounds that are part of the rituals like the sound of a gong used in Titi Bende and other moments when things change. These sounds were used as signs to know when to change what was being shown. This connection was part of the video-mapping plan. Was not checked

by asking people what they thought. The way everything worked was used to make sure there was a link between the real culture what it means and how it was shown visually.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Identification of the Erau Ritual Sequence

The unit of analysis in this study was the complete sequence of the Erau ritual. The observation was conducted in Tenggarong, Kutai Kartanegara, East Kalimantan, during the 2025 Erau Festival, covering the ritual sequence over the period of 21–28 September 2025. The observation documented 13 ritual stages: (1) Titi Bende, (2) Atur Dahar, (3) Beluluh Awal, (4) Menjamu Banua, (5) Mendirikan Tiang Ayu, (6) Opening Ceremony, (7) Beluluh Sore, (8) Merangin, (9) Bepelas, (10) Beseprah, (11) Seluang Mudik, (12) Mengulur Naga, and (13) Merobohkan Tiang Ayu.

Participant observation took place by being involved in the ritual activities. The researcher watched the order of the procession the things that were seen the items the way people moved their bodies how space was used and how people interacted during the event. This observation was also supported with pictures and videos. Also an interview that was not fully planned was done on 27 September 2025 with Raden Awang Agus Darmawan, a person who knows a lot about the Erau ritual from the Kutai Kartanegara Sultanate. The interview was. Written down exactly as it was spoken by the researcher. Because one main person was involved the information, from the interview was used to understand the context and give meaning to the ritual instead of showing what all the people involved thought.



Figure 2. Interview with Raden Awang Agus Darmawan, a cultural informant of the Kutai Kartanegara Sultanate.

(Source: Author, 2025)

Reconstructing the flow of the ritual relied on cross-referencing field notes interview transcripts, visual records and relevant literature. This analytical approach requires a boundary between field observations and researcher-led interpretations. The empirical category captures only what was directly witnessed or stated the sequence of activities, physical artifacts, spatial dynamics and informant explanations. Cultural interpretation applies an analytical lens reading meaning into these facts by placing them alongside contextual sources. Finally design interpretation addresses how these cultural insights guide stylistic choices, such as visual abstraction, narrative flow, motion and spatial layout.

For example during the “Atur Dahar” phase field records documented the layout of food and offerings whereas their deeper association with respect, readiness and permission emerged from the interview and literature. Similarly the Tiang Ayu was recorded as a central visual fixture on-site. Its function, as a primary ritual milestone was derived from cultural context. Maintaining this distinction ensures that subsequent design decisions are not misconstrued as empirical evidence.

Looking at the sequence as a whole shows that there is a connected way the story unfolds instead of just a collection of separate events. The way things happen has a pattern—starting with early steps then moving to cleaning rituals then people getting involved then something symbolic

being let go and finally the event ending officially. For how the story's shown visually this way of organizing things is very important; each part gets much of its meaning because of where it is in the whole ritual story. These ideas are based on work by Janah et al. (2017) about looking at culture in context and Sutarya & Winata (2025) about telling stories with digital tools for heritage content. Of looking at one item or one part of the process on its own as a visual subject this research uses the whole ritual from start to finish as the starting point, for how the story is told.

2. Transformation of Ritual Stages into Visual Narrative

The analysis showed that the 13 Erau ritual stages hold symbolic, spatial and narrative pieces that can be turned into a single flowing story. Of turning each part of the 13 Erau ritual stages into a straight picture the work looked for parts that are important to the culture and, for their stories and then made them into visual signs, movement and space designs that fit video mapping. This work linked the way each of the 13 Erau stages feels with the visual words that tell its meaning.

a. Stage-Based Coding and Triangulation

The initial coding was organized according to the 13 ritual stages. Each stage was examined in relation to its observable activity, visual elements, cultural context, and potential narrative function. For example, the Atur Dahar stage was coded from the observed presence of food and offerings. The empirical evidence was categorized as an offering-related element, while its contextual interpretation was associated with preparation, respect, and permission. The resulting visual translation did not reproduce the ritual literally but selected the offering as a symbolic visual element representing the opening and preparation of the narrative.

The results of the coding process, up to the determination of the visual translation, can be seen in the following table 1.

Table 1. Coding Results and Visual Translation of Erau Ritual Elements

No.	Kutipan Wawancara	Kode
1.	"Yang ayu yang layu itu maksudnya... atur dahar." ("The ayu that becomes layu refers to... Atur Dahar.")	Atur Dahar
2.	"Besoknya maka berdirilah tiang layu..." ("The next day, the Tiang Layu is erected...")	Mendirikan Tiang Ayu
3.	"Sorenya dilaksanakan beluluh sultan." ("In the afternoon, the Sultan performs Beluluh.")	Beluluh Sultan
4.	"Makna beluluh... membersihkan diri sultan, menghalau energi negatif." ("The meaning of Beluluh... is to cleanse the Sultan and ward off negative energy.")	Pembersihan Diri
5.	"Malamnya sultan melaksanakan Bepelas." ("That evening, the Sultan performs Bepelas.")	Bepelas Sultan
6.	"Itu berulang besok harinya, kecuali malam Jum'at." ("This is repeated the following day, except on Friday night.")	Pengulangan Ritual
7.	"Kalau malam Jum'at tidak ada ritual sebelas... maulid berjanji." ("On Friday night, the Bepelas ritual is not performed... instead, Maulid Berjanji takes place.")	Pengaruh Islam
8.	"Kesultanan juga sudah corak Islam." ("The Sultanate has also adopted an Islamic character.")	Corak Islam
9.	"Besoknya tetap beluluh karena malam Sabtu ada sebelas." ("The following day, Beluluh continues because Bepelas is held on Saturday night.")	Keberlanjutan an Beluluh
10.	"Ada acara tambahan... menyisik lembus, wana seluang modi, belibur beras." ("There are additional ceremonies... Menyisik Lembus, Wana Seluang Modi, and Belibur Beras.")	Ritual Tambahan

(Source: Author, 2025)

Triangulation was conducted by comparing four sources of evidence: field observation, interview data, visual documentation, and literature. Observation provided evidence of what occurred in the ritual setting; the interview provided contextual explanation from a knowledgeable cultural informant; visual documentation supported the identification of objects, forms, and spatial relationships; and literature provided contextual and comparative understanding. When an interpretation was not sufficiently supported by these sources, it was treated as a design interpretation rather than presented as an established cultural fact.

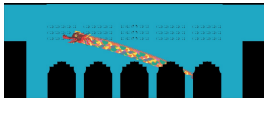
This process strengthens the credibility of the transformation because visual elements were not selected solely on the basis of aesthetic preference. Instead, selection considered cultural relevance, empirical occurrence, contextual meaning, and visual transformability.

b. Analysis of the Transformation Process

Table 2 demonstrates that the transformation of ritual stages into visual narratives is not a one-to-one conversion. A ritual activity does not necessarily become a literal visual reconstruction. Instead, cultural evidence is abstracted according to its semantic and narrative function.

Table 2. Sequence of Erau Ritual Stages and Their Transformation into Visual Narrative for Video Mapping

Ritual	Meaning	Visual Symbol	Narrative	Motion
Titi Bende	The striking of a gong as an official announcement of the start of Erau to the community and nature.	Symbol of sound and visual movement spreading outward; two yellow-red flags combined with a gong, drum, and the sultanate's gamelan ensemble.	The opening scene marking the start of the Erau series, uniting social and spiritual dimensions in a single opening moment.	
Atur Dahar	An offering of food to the spirit world as a form of respect and a request for permission so that Erau may proceed smoothly and in balance.	A space within the palace featuring a food symbol in the form of fruit as a representation of the offering.	Symbolizes the offering of food as a form of respect and communication with the spirit world before the main ritual is carried out.	
Beluluh Awal	The first purification for the King as spiritual preparation; cleansing from worldly influence and affirmation of the King's role.	The Bamboo Hall and the Tiang Ayu as symbols of the sacred purification space.	Represents the initial purification procession of the King before Erau fully begins.	
Menjamu Banua	A notification to the spirit world and territorial guardians that Erau has begun; affirming the connection between humans, nature, and the spiritual world.	The sun symbol as a metaphor for communication and cosmic interconnection.	Visualized as a notification to the spirit world, marked by a visual symbol of cosmic interconnection.	
Mendirikan Tiang Ayu	The official marker of the start of Erau according to custom; the Tiang Ayu as a symbol of the axis of the world and the center of the ritual series.	The Tiang Ayu displayed as the main symbol and center of the visual composition.	Depicts the Tiang Ayu as the main symbol marking the official start of Erau according to custom.	

Ritual	Meaning	Visual Symbol	Narrative	Motion
Opening Ceremony	A non-ritual stage serving as the public opening of the celebration for the community and visitors, marking the start of public cultural activities.	The transition from ritual space to public space, presented through dance visuals.	Marks the transition from ritual space to public space, signifying the start of the Erau celebration for the people of Tenggarong.	
Beluluh Sore	Purification of the King's body and soul before sunset; maintaining spiritual balance throughout the course of Erau.	The procession of purifying the King's body and soul as part of maintaining spiritual balance.	Depicts the procession of purifying the King's body and soul before sunset.	
Merangin	Performed by the Belian people circling a young coconut-leaf swing; invoking and strengthening spiritual energy, purification, and protection.	Silhouettes of the Belian people moving in a circle around the young coconut-leaf swing at the center of the composition.	Visualized through the silhouettes of the Belian people moving circularly as a symbol of the purification and protection ritual.	
Bepelas	Cleansing the palace grounds of negative elements; ensuring the environment where Erau takes place remains spiritually clean and harmonious.	Ritual movement and dance as a symbol of the cleansing of the space.	Depicted as the procession of cleansing the palace grounds through symbolic movement and ritual dance.	
Beseprah	A communal meal between the King and the people of Tenggarong; the values of togetherness, equality, and the close relationship between leader and people.	Silhouettes of a shared meal as a symbol of social closeness.	Depicts the communal meal as a symbol of togetherness and closeness between the King and the community.	
Seluang Mudik	The mutual throwing of yellow rice as a symbol of joy and gratitude for the successful completion of the entire Erau series.	Yellow rice scattering outward as a marker of joy.	Visualized through the symbol of scattering yellow rice as Erau approaches its end.	
Mengulur Naga	Releasing the dragon symbol into the Mahakam River; the return of sacred elements to nature and the closing of the ritual connection with the spiritual world.	The dragon directed toward the Mahakam River as a symbol of the return of sacred elements.	Depicts the dragon being directed toward the Mahakam River as a symbol of returning sacred elements to nature.	
Merobohkan Tiang Ayu	The official marker of the end of the Erau Festival; a symbol of the community's return to everyday life.	The Tiang Ayu is laid down as a marker of the closing of the ritual series.	Visualized as the marker of the official end of the Erau Festival according to custom and the closing of the ritual series.	

(Source: Author, 2025)

Three transformation patterns can be identified. First, concrete ritual evidence is transformed into symbolic visual abstraction. Food, rice, Tiang Ayu, and the dragon, for example, can function as visual signifiers without requiring a literal reproduction of the entire ritual. Second, motion is determined by the narrative function of each visual element. Elements associated with emergence

are translated through vertical movement, while elements associated with release can be represented through outward movement. Third, visual symbols are selected according to their cultural relevance, empirical support, and capacity for visual transformation.

This approach is different from showing cultural objects using digital media. Ramadhaniel & Afdhal (2025) for example show how visual media can share information. This study adds a step that directly links cultural evidence to coding, interpreting, symbolic thinking, storytelling and movement design. Because of this the designers job is not just to copy images. Instead the designer works to turn information into a clear visual communication system.

This change also shows that cultural accuracy does not always mean showing things exactly as they're. Instead accuracy can be kept by keeping the order the connections, between things, important symbols and the way the story works. At the time the way things look can be changed to fit what video mapping needs.

c. From Ritual Meaning to Motion

Motion is a part of the story being told visually not something that looks nice. The study found some links, between how ritualsre told and how movement works. You can show the start of something by having things appear slowly or grow bigger. You can show something being set up by having it come up from below. You can show things going on by repeating movements in a controlled way or moving in circles. You can show people working together by having them come together or gather. You can show something ending by having things move away or go in a direction. You can show the end by making things smaller moving down or disappearing slowly.

These links are ideas that researchers came up withang, not things that are set by culture. This is important because the group that does the ritual might not see moving up spinning or moving particles as fixed meanings. These are ways to show parts of the story.

Based on these relationships the 13 ritual stages can be grouped into visual narrative categories: opening and permission (Titi Bende–Atur Dahar) ritual establishment and purification (Beluluh Awal–Beluluh Sore) ritual and social continuity (Merangin–Beseprah) and release and closure (Seluang Mudik–Merobohkan Tiang Ayu). These groupings do not take the place of the 13-stage sequence. Instead they act as a way to understand how the ritual can be shown through pictures.

The research shows that the order of the stages helps create a rhythm. Than creating each part on its own the story moves forward and this helps develop movement, visual energy and changes between scenes as part of a single cultural story. This makes the link, between showing the story and the way time is used in living traditions.

d. Designing the Video Mapping

The visual change was created to be shown on the wall of the Mulawarman Museum. The buildings look was not just used as a place to show images. As something that plays a role in the story being told. This meant that the cultural symbols and the way things move had to fit the way the building was built.



Figure 3. Museum Mulawarman and the scale model used in the projection-based visual exploration.

(Source: Author, 2025)

The Tiang Ayu for example can be placed along the vertical line of the wall to make it stand out more. Big cultural designs can take up more of the buildings space and the way the dragon moves can match the slanted parts of the wall.

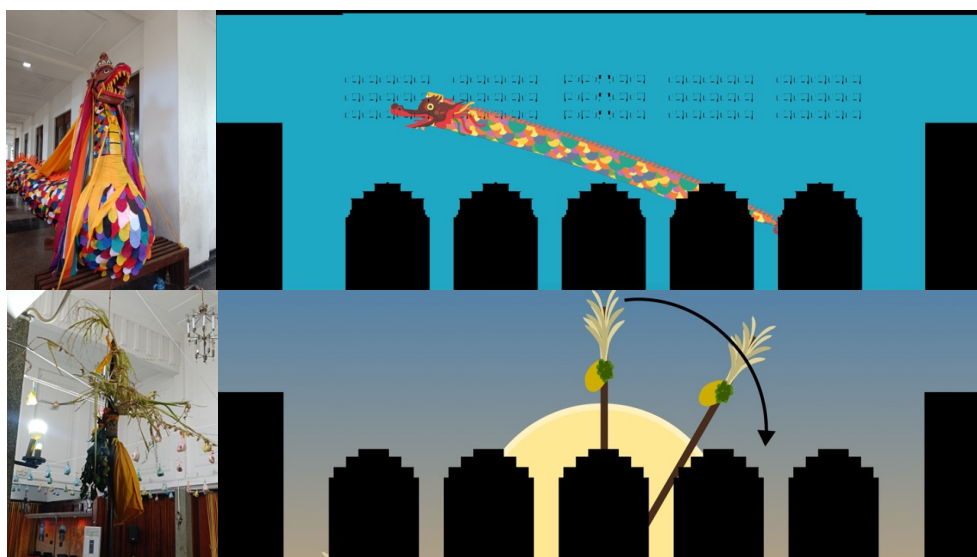


Figure 4. Comparison of the original Tiang Ayu and Naga with their motion-graphic visualizations.

(Source: Author, 2025)

This way of changing the look makes video mapping different, from moving pictures on a screen because the building helps create the meaning. Color selection was also based on observed features and how colors are used in specific cultures instead of assuming how colors make people feel in general. This way of choosing colors matches what Zahra & Mansoor (2024) said. They said that the meaning of color depends on the situation. So color is part of the cultures way of showing things. It is looked at along with shapes, symbols, where things are placed and the order of the story.

The way architecture moves follows a 13-step process. So the amount of excitement is not just about being flashy. It depends on what the story needs at each step. The outside of the building can slowly show more, change get bigger get smaller or go back to being more calm as the ritual goes on. This way the building can tell a story visually. The building takes part in sharing a story.

Audio and visual parts of the design are connected. For example the sound of a gong that goes with Titi Bende can start the part or show a change in the story.. This connection between sound and sight is still just an idea, in the design. It is not something that has been tested with people or checked for how well it works technically. The study did not test how people react or how the technology performs.

e. Cultural Representation and Design Implications

Than looking at video mapping as a separate way to keep living heritage alive it's better to see it as a way to show things visually. Living heritage needs people in the community to be involved. It needs cultural leaders and the sharing of knowledge from one generation, to the next. Digital mapping can definitely show symbols, stories and cultural patterns.. It can't take the place of the real social activities that help cultural traditions really stay alive.

Therefore the work of this study is, about showing how cultural material can be changed into a visual communication process without making the ritual just look like separate decorative symbols. This sequence makes the designer act like a person who connects cultures. The designer moves between facts and visual communication changing cultural meanings into shapes that fit modern media while keeping the connections to the original context. In this way the idea of transformation found in the Erau case can be called honesty without showing exact pictures.

The discovery adds to Visual Communication Design by showing that telling stories through visuals about culture can be created by connecting cultural evidence with design choices. This goes along with research on how culture is shown visually and through digital media (Purba et al., 2025; Putri et al., 2024; Ramadhaniel & Afdhal, 2025) by focusing on the middle part of the design process where cultural facts turn into a story. The contribution is not about making a formula that works everywhere but, about explaining a special way to change cultural facts into a story. This way is based on the sequence of the Erau ritual.

For digital heritage, the implication is that digitization can move beyond documentation toward contextual visual mediation. Digital media can communicate cultural sequences and relationships when the transformation process remains traceable to cultural evidence. However, such transformation must remain sensitive to cultural context and should not be assumed to have the same validity when applied to other cultural communities or ritual systems.

The study also has limitations. First the interview included one key informant so the study findings do not show the views of all cultural actors involved in Erau. Second even though the observation covered all 13 stages of the ritual the level of detail and how easy it was to see the visual documentation may have been different at each location and activity. Third the coding and interpretation were done by the researcher with no independent coding or tests of inter-rater reliability. Fourth the visual transformation created by the study was not checked by the community or by experts and there was no audience evaluation, usability test, learning-outcome check or long-term assessment of cultural impact. Finally the technical parts of video mapping such, as audio-visual timing and how well the projection works need more testing during production.

Thus the proposed transformation should not be taken as a model that works everywhere or that can be copied exactly. The proposed transformation is better understood as a structured framework for transforming cultural evidence into visual narrative, which can inform future research and design practices. We believe that future studies should bring in cultural informants seek validation from the community or cultural experts evaluate the audience's reaction test the technical aspects and compare the proposed transformation, with other living heritage contexts.

CONCLUSION

This study looked at the sequence of the Erau ritual using visual ethnography and how it became a visual story for video mapping. The results found 13 ritual steps that are connected and showed that the order gives both a cultural structure and a story foundation for visual communication.

The main result is a process that connects evidence step-by-step coding, understanding the context abstracting symbols creating a story using movement and building with architecture. This process shows that keeping the culture true doesn't mean copying activities exactly. It can be done by keeping the relationships between selected parts. The contribution, to Visual Communication Design is placing the designer as a mediator who turns real-life observations into modern visual stories.

The way this approach works is best seen as a system for changing things, based on the Erau example. It's not a method that has been proven to work or can be copied exactly. The research also shows that video mapping can help share and talk about living heritage.. It doesn't prove that video mapping is good for keeping heritage safe. Whether it really works in preserving heritage needs study with people, communities and, over time. This kind of study was not part of what was done

Future studies should include people who know about culture check with communities and experts ask people what they think test the technology and use the method in different places where living heritage exists. These steps are needed to see how well the system works and how much it can help in heritage and Visual Communication Design.

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