



Miss Tjitjih Arts Building as a Center for Cultural Expression and Empowerment of the Betawi Arts Community

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Abstract. The Miss Tjitjih Art Building is a historic structure with high cultural and aesthetic value. As a symbol of Betawi art, this building integrates traditional elements with modern technology in its material concept and architectural expression. Its establishment was motivated by the large number of artists in the surrounding area and aims to preserve local art while improving the community's quality of life. The building provides a space for artistic expression, appreciation, and empowerment through its functional design. As a cultural hub, it encourages social and economic growth based on the arts community. This research employs a descriptive qualitative method, collecting data through observation, literature study, and documentation. The objective is to investigate the quality of life of the community around the Miss Tjitjih Art Building. The findings reveal that the presence of this art building has the potential to improve both the quality of life and the economy of the local community, as most artists and residents depend on income generated from these artistic activities.

Keywords: Miss Tjitjih Arts Building; architecture; community empowerment

I. Introduction

Indonesia, as a country rich in cultural diversity, has a significant responsibility to preserve and safeguard its traditional arts heritage. Amidst the increasingly rapid flow of globalization and urbanization, various local art forms are beginning to face challenges in maintaining their existence. One traditional art form that holds high historical and cultural value is Betawi art. As an ethnic group native to Jakarta, the Betawi people possess a unique cultural richness, ranging from dance, music, folk theater such as Lenong, to traditional architecture. However, rapid urban development and modernization have marginalized spaces for local cultural expression [1]. The Miss Tjitjih Arts Building is one such historic building that bears witness to the development of traditional performing arts, particularly Lenong Betawi. Built in the early 20th century, this building serves not only as a performance venue but also as a space for expression and gathering for the traditional arts community in Jakarta. As a symbol of Betawi art [2].

The Miss Tjitjih Building not only holds aesthetic and historical values, but also holds great potential in improving the quality of life of the surrounding community. Through the spatial arrangement of the building's interior, exterior spaces, and the concept embodied in the building, many artists depend on the artistic activities that take place in this building for their livelihood. The building's architecture also plays a significant role in conveying local cultural values. With its neo-vernacular architectural theme, the Miss Tjitjih Building reflects the spirit of cultural preservation that adapts to the times. It serves not only as a place of preservation but also as a means of social and economic empowerment for the community. This research not only highlights the architectural aspects of the Miss Tjitjih Arts Building, but more broadly discusses the construction of this building, focusing on how its presence directly impacts the quality of life, economic activities, and the strengthening of the social identity of the surrounding community. Thus, this research is conducted not only as a study of the physical

object, but also as an effort to understand the relationship between cultural space and community dynamics within the community environment [3].

Using a qualitative-descriptive approach, this study aims to determine the extent to which the Miss Tjitjih Arts Building contributes to establishing a sustainable cultural ecosystem and improving the welfare of the surrounding community, both in terms of social, economic, and cultural identity. This is important to understand how historical buildings function not only as passive monuments but also as active entities that facilitate local community dynamics.

2. Methods

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach. Qualitative research is a method grounded in the philosophy of postpositivism and is used to investigate objects in their natural conditions, where the researcher serves as the key instrument. The selection of data sources is carried out through purposive and snowball sampling techniques. Data collection employs triangulation, while data analysis is conducted inductively. The results of qualitative research emphasize meaning over generalization [4][5]. This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study method focusing on the Miss Tjitjih Arts Building as the main object. This approach was chosen to explore the relationship between the arts building as a cultural, social, and economic space for the surrounding community. Data collection was conducted using several techniques, namely:

2.1. Direct Observation

Researchers conducted direct observations of activities taking place in and around the Miss Tjitjih Arts Building. Observations focused on social interactions, arts activities, and the use of space by the community and the arts community. Furthermore, observations highlighted how the building's design and function reflect and support the preservation of local culture, particularly Betawi traditional arts. The building's architecture and layout are seen as playing a crucial role in creating a conducive atmosphere for traditional arts performances, while also serving as a platform for representing local cultural identity.

2.2. Unstructured Interviews

Informal interviews were conducted with several artists, building managers, and local residents. The interviews aimed to explore their experiences, perceptions, and the building's role in supporting arts activities and community life.

2.3. Study Literature

A literature study was conducted to strengthen the theoretical foundation regarding cultural spaces, preservation of traditional arts, and community empowerment. Data sources were obtained from scientific journals, reference books, archival documents, and articles related to the history and development of the Miss Tjitjih Building.

2.4. Documentation

Documentation was conducted by collecting activity photos, building plans, and other visual documents related to the building's activities and physical condition. These were used as supporting data to strengthen the observation results.

The data obtained were analyzed descriptively using an interpretive approach to identify patterns and meanings related to the social and cultural function of the Miss Tjitjih Building within the context of urban society.

3. Results and Discussion

Art certainly does not emerge on its own; the influence of several aspects is undoubtedly very important in the process of creating a work of art. These influences are not only internal but also external. External factors that can affect the process of creating a work of art include

humans, space, and time. Both musical and architectural artworks are greatly influenced by these three external factors in the processes of planning, designing, and implementing their ideas [6].

The Miss Tjitjih Arts Building is not only a physical structure for performing arts, but also serves as a center for cultural activities that can improve the quality of life of the surrounding community. By preserving traditional Betawi arts such as Lenong and local drama, this building opens up economic opportunities through arts activities, cultural preservation, and educational tourism. Its neo-vernacular architecture not only strengthens local identity but also provides a space that adapts to the social and economic needs of the community amidst Jakarta's modernization [7].

3.1. Space Functions and Artist Activities

Each space in the building is designed to meet the specific needs of the artists [8]. The practice rooms are spacious and feature wooden floors for comfortable use in dance or theater [9]. The art studios feature natural lighting from skylights to ensure accurate colour reproduction.



Figure 1. Natural Lighting from Skylights

Circulation between spaces is kept simple and flowing, creating comfort and supporting the transition of atmosphere from the creative process to performance or social interaction [10].

3.2 Architectural Character of Buildings

In expressing a work of art, it must go through strict rules and can be analysed rationally, by detailing based on various elements, such as: points, lines, planes, proportions, scale, harmony, unity, function, and so on. In creating a work of art, the emotional factor should be the main factor in realising an idea into the desired visual form. Besides emotions, instinct also plays an important role in realising a work of art. However, this does not mean that all artistic activities always disregard the factors of intellectual activity. On the contrary, in various fields of knowledge, understanding aesthetics still refers to and is related to intellectual factors.[11] whereas the character of architecture is a logical consequence of a holistic design approach, where fundamental elements such as form, space, and order are not viewed as standalone entities, but rather as interconnected components within a complex system. Careful design decisions regarding proportions, materials, colours, and spatial configurations synergistically shape the distinctive visual quality and spatial experience, so the character of a building is essentially a reflection of the integration between the designer's intentionality and the response to the surrounding context—both physical and cultural.[12]

3.2.1. Form

Function can be categorized as a determinant or guide toward form. It indicates the direction in which form should be sought. Both function and form are necessary to explain architecture, but they are not sufficient on their own (necessary but not sufficient). Therefore, form is often very difficult to separate from function because in many cases, form is based on function, although not all forms are derived from function. A form can be recognized through its visual characteristics, including shape, dimension, color, texture, and position [13].



Figure 2. The facade of the Miss Tjitjih Arts Building

The facade of the Miss Tjitjih Arts Building displays the symmetry typical of traditional architecture, with a central main door, neatly arranged windows, and wooden ornaments such as louvers and simple carvings reminiscent of traditional Betawi houses. These elements not only reinforce local identity but also reflect the Betawi social values of openness, balance, and togetherness.

3.2.2. Colour



Figure 3. Material Colours in the Miss Tjitjih Arts Building

The use of colours in the Miss Tjitjih Arts Building—white, brown, and black—not only reinforces aesthetic and cultural values, but also creates a welcoming and open atmosphere for all. White reflects social openness, brown emphasizes closeness to local culture, and black gives a strong impression as a symbol of steadfast identity. This combination creates an inclusive space, encouraging community participation in arts and cultural activities, which ultimately can open up creative economic opportunities and improve the quality of life for the surrounding community.

3.2.3. Ornaments

The ornamentation of the Miss Tjitjih Arts Building emphasizes traditional elements through the distinctive Sundanese Kawung Rambutan batik motif cut into dark brown metal plates, as well as locally patterned wood carvings on the ceiling. The use of these simple yet meaningful techniques not only reinforces cultural identity but also opens up opportunities for local artisans to participate in the building's construction and maintenance. This involvement encourages cultural preservation while also having a positive economic impact on the surrounding community, contributing to an improvement in their standard of living.



Figure 4. The ornamentation of the Miss Tjitjih Arts Building

3.2.4. Rhythm

The rhythm of the Miss Tjitjih Arts Building's expression is reflected in the repetitive pattern of the pillars and the balance of the design, with rhythmic variations on the left side of the building remaining orderly, creating a sense of harmony and serenity. This rhythm not only shapes the visual aesthetic but also represents order and harmony in the community's social life. By presenting a comfortable and structured spatial atmosphere, this building encourages inclusive artistic activities while creating social and economic opportunities that can improve the quality of life of the surrounding community.



Figure 5. The rhythm of the Miss Tjitjih Arts Building's

3.3 Community Economic Empowerment

Grodach (2010), in his study of art spaces in the Dallas–Fort Worth, Texas region, revealed that art buildings have the potential to create economic synergy with surrounding businesses. This concept stems from the understanding that art spaces do not stand alone as isolated entities, but rather are part of a broader environmental ecosystem. When someone decides to attend an event at an art building, that decision is often influenced by the presence of other activities in the same area. Visitors come not only to enjoy performances or exhibitions, but also to eat at restaurants, drink coffee at cafes, or shop at nearby stores. This is what Grodach refers to as "clustering of compatible activities" [14].

The arts activities at the Miss Tjitjih Arts Building have a direct impact on the local economy through the involvement of MSMEs such as food vendors, traditional costume providers, artisans, and other supporting services. The presence of this arts building creates a creative economic ecosystem that empowers local communities, providing them with space for entrepreneurship and expanding their income networks [15]. Thus, art is not only a cultural expression but also a means of improving living standards, making this building a center for culture-based economic empowerment in the city center.



Figure 6. Miss Tjitjih Arts Building

4. Conclusions

Miss Tjitjih Art Center is a tangible example of how a cultural space can function not only as a venue for performing arts but also as a center for local cultural preservation and community economic empowerment. By promoting traditional Betawi arts such as Lenong and local theater, the building has successfully maintained cultural heritage amid the wave of modernization in Jakarta. Its neo-vernacular architectural design reinforces local identity through traditional elements such as symmetrical facades, wooden jalousies, and locally inspired ornaments, while also creating an adaptive and user-friendly environment for both artists and the general public.

Each space within the building is functionally designed to support creative processes, performances, and social interaction. The presence of rehearsal rooms, art studios, and smooth spatial circulation transforms the building into an artistic ecosystem that fosters collaboration and productivity. The use of colors, ornaments, and rhythmic design not only enhances its aesthetic value but also carries symbolic meanings that reflect the character of the Betawi people—open, harmonious, and strongly rooted in their cultural identity.

Beyond that, Miss Tjitjih contributes significantly to improving the livelihood of surrounding communities through active involvement in creative economic activities. Regularly held art performances create opportunities for local small businesses such as food vendors, costume providers, artisans, and other supporting services to thrive. The involvement of local craftsmen in architectural elements further extends economic benefits while preserving traditional practices.

Thus, Miss Tjitjih Art Center stands as a representation of a cultural space that is not only aesthetically pleasing and functional but also strategic in building an empowered, cultured, and identity-rich society. This building proves that cultural preservation and socio-economic development can go hand in hand through an architectural approach that is contextual, participatory, and sustainable.

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