

# Zine “Satu Darah Juang” as an artistic practice to reconstruct Ambon family memories: a practice-led research approach



Ardiles Akyuwen <sup>a,1,\*</sup> , Inovensius Hugo Bima Wicaksana <sup>a,2</sup>, Rezki Gautama Tanrere <sup>a,3</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Universitas Multimedia Nusantara, Tangerang, Banten, Indonesia

<sup>1</sup> ardiles.akyuwen@umn.ac.id\*; <sup>2</sup> hugo.bima@umn.ac.id; <sup>3</sup> rezki.gautama@lecturer.umn.ac.id

\* Corresponding Author

## ABSTRACT

“Satu Darah Juang” is a photography zine work produced through artistic practice based on research, or commonly called practice-led research, which explores religious and cultural values in the family of Petrus Mailoa (the author’s grandfather), who lives in Ambon City, Maluku. Based on a collection of family photo archives, this zine reconstructs collective memory and local spirituality through a process of selecting photo archives, recalling conversations with Opa Petu, Oma Bo, Mama Nel, Aunt Poppy, and Aunt Noor, sequencing stages, digital collage, to creating illustrations analogously. This process produces a photo narrative that is effective, visual, and historical, and creates a dialogue between the personal realm and communal culture. The practice-led approach functions to integrate visual experience with the concept of visual communication (the concept of punctum Barthes), cultural psychoanalysis (Freud & Lacan), and visual anthropology. This work is a visual artifact, has the function of being a medium for introspection, a space for dialogue between the private and the public, and then becomes a form of expression beyond the limitations of conventional documentary photography. “Satu Darah Juang” has gone through exhibition curation and audience interaction; this process is the answer that there is potential for cultural communication and social reflection. Therefore, this research provides a clear affirmation of the position of art practice as a valid research method to record, transform, and then inherit cultural values through an interdisciplinary approach.



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## Article History

Received 2025-03-04

Revised 2025-05-16

Accepted 2025-06-06

## Keywords

Photography zine,  
Artistic practice,  
Ambonese family,  
Spirituality,  
Visual  
communication,  
Interdisciplinary  
practice.

## 1. Introduction

Zine is a visual medium that, in contemporary art practices, continues to evolve into reflective, critical spaces, and is even considered slow journalism: emphasizing the practice of broadcasting and distributing in non-real-time and emphasizing the reflective side of its content. In accordance with his writing, Le Masurier [1] states that slow journalism is a form of narrative that supports pauses, depth, and contemplation when conveying reality. If we look at the context of eastern Indonesia, especially Ambon City, visual expressions based on family life experiences and spirituality are still rarely the focus of scientific studies. The same study has been conducted on the Dayak Kanayatn community, who use art as a form of collective spirituality. The exploration is relevant to the Ambon context regarding the exploration of spiritual values based on collective experiences through visual expression [2]. This research departs from the desire and need to document and reinterpret Ambon's collective memory visually. In this case, the family of the author's grandfather, whose full name is Petrus Mailoa, and his wife Hendrina Paays Mailoa, whom the author usually calls Opa Petu and Oma Bo. The author also did this in order to remember Oma, Opa, and almost all the uncles and aunts who have returned to His bosom. Using an affective, reflective, and contextual artistic approach in order to accommodate the documentation.

The starting point of the visual exploration began with a personal experience that the author considered an aesthetic experience. Starting from a short chat with Opa Petu in 1999 about education and prayer, stories from the author's mother, who is often called Mama Nel, and her younger siblings, Aunt Poppy and Aunt Noor, about their experiences. In addition, the author's early experience of interacting with family photo archives, religious values, and the tension between tradition and modernity also colored the birth of this project. A portrait of Opa Petu's extended family in Borobudur in 1984, an overexposed photo of Opa and Oma with a cross in the background, became a symbol representing the story of identity, prayer, education, and local spirituality of the archipelago. All of this enriched the context of the personal narrative and then became the foundation of the *Satu Darah Juang* zine. "*Satu Darah Juang*" is not only an artistic work, but more than that, it is the result of artistic research based on the practice-led research approach [3], where the process of creating a zine is integrated and becomes the main part of the production of knowledge. Each creative stage, starting from the selection of photo archives, recalling conversations with Opa Petu, Oma Bo, Mama Nel, Aunt Poppy, and Aunt Noor, the sequencing stage, digital collage, to the creation of illustrations in an analog way, is a methodology that is equivalent to the process of collecting and validating data in qualitative research.

The author uses Barthes' punctum concept [4] to see and understand visual elements that affectively "pierce" the sense of emotion, becoming a kind of trigger for personal reflection in the artistic process. Visual autobiography is a concept that can be read as being used in the work of Robin Lewis' photobook entitled *To the Realization of Perfect Helplessness* [5], there is also the concept of autoethnography [6], which the author uses to compile and rearrange personal experiences into a critical narrative form that can then be enjoyed by the public. From a theoretical perspective, this study is also based on the idea of collective memory [7], revealing that personal memory is an important part of the social construction of a community. In line with Rowsell's thinking [8] regarding the shifting meaning of family photo archives when moving from the private realm to the public realm. There is also a study conducted by Indira Ismail (Ismail, n.d.) on the narratives of first and second generation Maluku women in the Netherlands, which were formed based on diaspora trauma and visual memory since the departure of Maluku people to the Netherlands around the 1950s. Visual criticism by writer Fredric Jameson [9] about postmodernism also influenced "*Satu Darah Juang*" which criticized how cultural capitalism reproduces meaning in images and visual consumption, in accordance with reading the context of this zine which is a form of resistance to dominant and homogeneous historical narratives. There is also a writer named Mitchell [10] who also contributed thoughts related to the relationship between images and discourses that become socio-political forces. In the context of Ambon, the reinterpretation of the Petrus Mailoa family archive through photos and illustrations is in order to challenge the dominant visual discourse which sometimes ignores local spirituality, family trauma, and minority identity.

The collective visual practice of Taring Padi provides thoughts on how art functions as a medium of resistance and the formation of lower-class identities [11]. However, in "*Satu Darah Juang*", resistance is carried out in a personal domestic space, expressing spirituality and family trauma as important issues that are missing from the representation of the dominant culture. It can also be interpreted from the context of the social system by Sevanen *et al*, art can have a function as a subsystem that can give birth to new communication in addition to the dominant system [12]. Decolonial thinking [13] emphasizes this in this study, that local voices are important as alternative narratives in the production of visual knowledge. Based on the various backgrounds above, "*Satu Darah Juang*" can be said to be a visual artifact and the result of artistic research, which presents the complexity of Ambonese family identity in the cycle of spirituality, history, and education. Thus, through this research, the goal achieved is to explore how zines can become an indie visual medium in representing spirituality, trauma, and the identity of Ambonese families. The artistic approach used is decolonial, affective, and then reflective. Thus, the main problem formulation emerged, namely: how the practice of photography zines is able to reconstruct family memory, as a form of visual knowledge that is contextual and critical of the dominant historical narrative.

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## 2. Method

### 2.1. Artistic Practices

The *Satu Darah Juang Zine* was created based on the author's anxiety as part of an Ambonese family living at the crossroads between Christian religious heritage and local culture that is slowly being pushed aside by the currents of modernity. Modernization changes the way of life, also weakening the sustainability of cultural values that have been inherited through spiritual practices, community narratives, and life experiences from generation to generation [14]. In accordance with Li *et al.*, modernization and urbanization have become serious challenges to the preservation of local wisdom [15], in various regions of Indonesia, including in practices such as *subak* in Bali [16] and *sasi* in Maluku [17], which are now threatened with loss if not integrated into development policies that respect the socio-cultural context of the local community. This anxiety prompted the author to re-read the family photo archive as a space for reflection, not only on personal memories, but also on the changes in values that occur in the space of the home, body, and tradition. Then it becomes a foothold for the author to re-explore the meaning of family archives, which are considered as visual documentation, but also a space for argument, a space for critical thinking, between personal memories, local spirituality, and the pressures of modernity.

The anxiety or restlessness is rooted and begins with personal experiences with family photo archives that the author considers as aesthetic experiences. Visual documents that initially function personally, but store and contain complex spiritual, educational, and historical stories, as seen in Martina Zanin's photobook entitled *I Made Them Run Away*. Her intimate and reflective visual narrative reveals how relational wounds in the family can become a contemplative space to understand trauma, spirituality, and historical memory more deeply [18]. When the archives are opened, told, and reinterpreted through the artistic process, anxiety arises about the possibility of shifting meanings, shifting feelings, distortion of context, and even breaking the collective memory that has been passed down from generation to generation. Similar to the photo with a red background, entitled *Oma Bo and Opa Petu* before going to Papua, the author's grandmother and grandfather were full named Hendrina Paays Mailoa and Petrus Mailoa. The portrait was taken before leaving for Papua as a Protestant Christian missionary. In the artistic process, the author added a red background to depict the color of the Alifuru tribe, the author's tribe, the early inhabitants of Seram Island, Central Maluku. The interpretation was carried out in order to show the dualism of beliefs that exist in the family, the *Samawi* and *Tete Nene Moyang* (ancestors).

Through a photobook entitled *To the Realization of Perfect Helplessness*, Robin Coste Lewis places and then brings her family archive photos found in her grandmother's suitcase into a new interpretation so that a new dialogue emerges with a poetic and reflective approach [5]. During the artistic process, Lewis revives personal memories, then questions how the visual history of the African-American family that has not been found in official archives can be recreated and reread as a major part of spiritual history, migration, and collective identity that is vulnerable to threats so that it can become a new construction that is vague or even unclear. Her work shows that when family archives move from the private realm to the artistic public, there is always a risk of a shift in meaning, but there is also the possibility of restoring neglected memories in a more effective and subjective way. The use of reinterpreted family photo archives is part of a critique of the dominance of visual narratives that often only reflect one perspective, especially in the context of marginalized families and cultures. The same thing, the author tries to create with the addition of an illustration in the form of Jesus praying in the Garden of Gethsemane, there is a picture of wool yarn. The author tries to evoke memories of Oma Bo's knitting work with the same story and decorating Opa Petu's living room. Similar images also appear in many Ambonese family rooms as spiritual decorative elements. At the bottom of the illustration are black and gray abstract scribbles, a story about the author's spiritual crossroads, choosing Christianity or Alifuru, or both.

Therefore, artistic practice becomes a way to renegotiate the boundaries between personal and public space, between tradition and modernity. Relevant to the visual approach in *Salvage* [19], Jackie Nickerson presents portraits of individuals whose faces are hidden by consumer

objects such as food packaging and used plastic, as a form of criticism of how personal identity can be distorted by the logic of materialism, which not only forms a relationship between the body and commodities symbolically, but also creates social representations that distance individuals from their affection and spirituality [20]. This tension is also reflected, seen in the life of Ambonese families, when local and religious values are forced to negotiate with the visual and social norms brought by modernity. This study also focuses on how Ambonese families, especially Petrus Mailoa's extended family, experience a shift between tradition and modernity in their lives. Seen in the photo with Opa Petu's family when Aunt Poppy graduated from law school around 1976. This photo is a kind of symbol for the author, that Opa Petu drew a strong, firm boundary about education (western version) amidst the hustle and bustle of the harsh life of the Batugantung area of Ambon City, where he lived. Aunt Poppy proved to be a professor and remained a part of Batugantung, never leaving her local roots, staying and contributing. The portrait is a symbol of affirmation about values, struggles, and identity in the vortex of social change.

The anxiety about the shift is not individual in nature, but rather reflects broader social tensions, as reflected in Tania Franco Klein's *Mercado de Sonora* [21], which, through absurdist-style portraits and a sense of alienation, illustrates how social pressure and psychological uncertainty drive artistic expression as a response to collective crisis. Fredric Jameson and W.J.T. Mitchell emphasize that art and images are reflections of collective anxiety in modern capitalism, where Jameson views postmodernism as a capitalist strategy to maintain capital accumulation through cultural production and mass consumption [22], while Mitchell emphasizes the relationship between images and texts as media that shape social and political realities in modern visual culture [10], [23]. In the context of Ambon, this social anxiety can be seen in the tension between existing local values and the currents of modernity that are changing the social and cultural structures there. In the context of Indonesia, the Taring Padi art group brings art to life as resistance by using socialist realism to voice popular issues. However, in this study, the resistance is questioned in a more personal and local space, especially in the context of family, spirituality, and education in Eastern Indonesia. In the portrait photo of young Mama Nel (the author's mother), which the author artistically processed into a visual appearance of a photocopy, there is an additional illustration of a highway under the neck. This portrait is a memory of the issue of migrating to get higher education, about studying well, not following the mainstream in Batugantung which is tough, while not forgetting to pray. Mama continued to selectively persuade me to become a good individual in accordance with western-based education but framed in the locality and spirituality of the Ambonese family.

This study raises the extended family of Petrus Mailoa as the starting point for exploring religious and cultural values in Ambonese society. Visual archives of the family such as portraits of the author's grandfather (Petrus Mailoa) and his wife Hendrina Paays, who are Protestant Christian missionaries, or aunt Poppy (the author's mother's sister) who is highly educated but lives under social pressure in the Batugantung area of Ambon City, become a gateway to understanding spiritual narratives that are not represented in the government's historical archives. This family photo archive is not only a visual documentation, but also a means to re-question the historical narrative that has been dominated by the mainstream, dominant point of view, especially in the depiction of Ambon history. As explained by Pierce, family photo archives have the potential to experience a transition of meaning when moving from the private, personal to the public realm [24]. This is in line with Halbwachs' theory of collective memory, that social memory is formed and negotiated in the context of the community [7]. Indira Ismail's study illustrates this through a study of the dynamics of collective memory of Maluku women in the Netherlands, which shows how personal and collective memories interact in shaping the identity of the diaspora community. Therefore, this *zine* project seeks to explore the collective memory of the family through artistic practices that allow the author to negotiate with personal memories told by the author's mother, aunt, grandmother, and the wider social context. This concern about the loss of context and original memory is what prompted the birth of "*Satu Darah Juang*", a photographic *zine* that reconstructs memory artistically and reflectively. This study aims to explore how *zines* can be an alternative visual medium in representing the spirituality, trauma, and identity of Ambon families through an artistic approach that is



decolonial, affective, and reflective. "*Opa seng tahu papa deng mama ator ose bagemana, opa seng tahu pergumulan dolo waktu ose mulai kuliah su syukur akang ka balom, tapi sudah, opa tetap sombayang for ose,*" said Opa Petu when I passed the entrance exam for the Indonesian Institute of the Arts in Yogyakarta in 1999. The expression was like a silent but sincere prayer, which intuitively became the spiritual basis in the visual archive of the family. A family photo during an outing to Borobudur with Van Gogh-style color strokes on top, then a portrait of Opa and Oma in overexposed lighting complete with an illustration of a yellow cross, were explored as artistic parts of spiritual values, cross-generational love, and collective memory. The position of Borobudur was reinterpreted as a symbolic space, a meeting between ancestral heritage, education, and national identity, which helped shape the story of Opa Petu's family.

## 2.2. Practice-led Research

The methodological approach used is Graeme Sullivan's practice-led research [25], where the process of creating artwork becomes an inseparable part of the production of knowledge, as explained by Martyastiadi and Budiawan in their study of reflection on life experiences as the basis for artistic research [26]. In this approach, subjective experiences and creative processes are not only the objects of study but also the main means of building artistic knowledge. This *zine* was formed through a process of selecting photo archives, recalling conversations with Opa Petu, Oma Bo, Mama Nel, Tante Poppy, and Tante Noor, sequencing stages, digital collage, to the creation of analog illustrations that are combined intuitively. This process refers to Roland Barthes' concept of *punctum*, namely, visual elements in photographs that emotionally "pierce" and open up a space for personal contemplation [27]. The practice-led research approach places emotional experiences and personal reflection as an integral part of the creation of artwork as the production of knowledge, which is evident in the study of Martyastiadi *et al.* [28] on the interpretation of the Borobudur Temple relief in a three-dimensional format based on visual experience, where visual elements are able to trigger deep affective responses similar to *punctum* in the experience of seeing. This approach allows the *zine* to become a more personal and introspective space, where each visual element elicits a deep emotional response from the viewer. In this case, the affective experience does not only emerge from the photos, but also from the narrative structure that is autoethnographic in nature, as explained by Ellis and Bochner, where personal experience becomes the main source of exploration of knowledge and meaning [6]. This approach is expanded in the context of fine arts in Indonesia, Adams *et al.*, asserts that autoethnography opens up space for the subjective experiences of artists to be articulated reflectively in the form of works, so that the process of creation itself becomes a legitimate affective and epistemological means in artistic practice [29]. This study aims to explore how *zines* can be an alternative visual medium in representing the spirituality, trauma, and identity of Ambonese families through an artistic approach that is decolonial, affective, and reflective.

In essence, the *zine* production process refers to the concept of practice-led research, which emphasizes the artistic process as a method of producing knowledge based on personal aesthetic experiences and visual reflections. The selection of photo archives is done through family memories, then arranged narratively through sequencing, digital collage, and finally manual illustration. This method is enriched by the concept of *punctum* in order to capture visual elements that are effectively evocative. It is also equipped with a visual autobiography, which is a reflective method to re-arrange personal memories into a shared narrative. Finally, there is validation of meaning through re-interpretation with the artist's family and friends, as an affirmation that this *zine* is a visual artifact as well as a form of meaningful research. In conclusion, informal interviews to trigger memories and reflective discussions are considered by the author as data collection. Meanwhile, reading the work with the author's family and fellow artists is part of the validation. Furthermore, this work is also inspired by Sophie Calle's visual approach in *L'Hotel*, which shows how archives and documentation can become a form of subjective narrative that touches the boundary between reality and imagination [30]. Through this approach, spiritual experiences in the local context are presented as something real and have a space to exist in art. This approach is also seen in Flores Vitae [31], where visual documentation of life in Flores is processed into a subjective narrative that blurs the boundaries between reality and imagination, while reflecting personal experiences in the local cultural

landscape. This project also aims to reintroduce the spiritual dimension in the lives of Ambonese families that are often marginalized in dominant narratives, while presenting a more humane and personal visual representation. In this framework, the art of photography is not only a visual representation, but also a field of interpretation that is psychologically and spiritually deep, as explained in the study of Akyuwen & Martyastiadi [32] on the portrait of Ki Manteb Sudarsono which combines figures and images as a storytelling strategy that is affective, historical, and cultural.

In essence, the *zine* production process refers to the concept of practice-led research, which emphasizes the artistic process as a method of producing knowledge based on personal aesthetic experiences and visual reflections. The selection of photo archives is done through family memories, then arranged narratively through sequencing, digital collage, and finally manual illustration. This method is enriched by the concept of punctum in order to capture visual elements that are effectively evocative. It is also equipped with a visual autobiography, which is a reflective method to re-arrange personal memories into a shared narrative. Finally, there is validation of meaning through re-interpretation with the artist's family and friends, as an affirmation that this *zine* is a visual artifact as well as a form of meaningful research. In conclusion, informal interviews to trigger memories and reflective discussions are considered by the author as data collection. Meanwhile, reading the work together with Berthy, the author's eldest sister and fellow artist, is part of the validation. Meanwhile, the meaning of the body and identity in the photos is also read within the framework of Freud's psychoanalysis [33], where the ego plays a role in negotiating social reality and subconscious drives contained in the family's visual archives. Meanwhile, Lacan's psychoanalytic approach, as explained by Akyuwen *et al.* [34] in *Suara dari Masa Lalu*, highlights the dynamics of desire, emptiness, and the process of signification that continues to shape identity and body representation in the context of traditional culture, enriching the understanding of the complexity of the relationship between reality and the subconscious in photographic works. In this context, spirituality is not only interpreted as religious belief, but also as a deep contemplative expression as explained by Komjathy [35] in a cross-cultural contemplative study, and also emphasized in the Sufi study in the Journal of Spiritualita [36] as a psychic response that touches on the affective dimension and self-awareness in facing mental crises and social realities. In a cross-cultural contemplative study. This approach seeks to combine psychoanalytic understanding with local Ambonese spirituality that emphasizes life values, not just religious rituals. This approach is combined with the author's version of the aesthetics of comfort, namely a visual strategy that emphasizes affection and emotional closeness, as a response to modernist aesthetics, which tend to be objective and cold.

### 2.3. *Zine* as a Form of Resistance

*Zine* was chosen as the main medium because it is independent, easy to reproduce, and provides a large space for subjectivity. In the Indonesian context, *zines* have long been a tool of visual resistance, such as *Terompet Rakyat* by Taring Padi [37]. This practice is in line with the findings of Umam and Manurung [38], which show that *zines*, in subcultural communities in Semarang, function as an alternative literacy medium and collective expression that grows from the need to voice identities, social criticism, and ideas that are often marginalized by the mainstream. Currently, *zines* are back in trend because of their attractive and communicative appearance for the younger generation [39]. "*Satu Darah Juang*" takes this position to fill the void of visual representation of the Ambonese family in the dynamics of modern society. In addition, this project also challenges the dominance of Western visual narratives through a decolonial approach. As Omodan [40] and Zembylas [41] expressed, decolonial projects are about dismantling the dominance of Western epistemology that marginalizes local knowledge and spirituality of marginalized communities. In this case, "*Satu Darah Juang*" is not only a visual artifact but also an alternative epistemological medium that provides space for "the unrepresented" to speak up. In addition, this project also challenges the dominance of Western visual narratives through a decolonial approach, which, according to Mignolo [42], aims to free itself from Western epistemology and build local knowledge based on community experiences [41]. In line with that, Spivak emphasizes the importance of alternative spaces such as *zines* to give voice to subaltern groups that have been marginalized, said the writer named Das Dipto.

*"Satu Darah Juang"* not only acts as a form of visual resistance art, but also as an effort to deconstruct historical narratives that often ignore the voices and experiences of Ambonese families, as well as communities outside the mainstream domination. The main contribution of this research is the development of a visual model based on autoethnographic practices and local spirituality that can be used to critically archive collective family memory, as well as introducing a decolonial visual approach in contemporary art practices in Eastern Indonesia. Through this approach, this research offers a visual model based on experience and self-reflection that can be used to document, represent, and transform religious and cultural values in a more critical and participatory framework. *"Satu Darah Juang"* is not only a family archive, but also a symbolic medium of resistance against the homogenization of values that ignore the complexity of local traditions and hereditary spirituality in Eastern Indonesia.

### 3. Results and Discussion

#### 3.1. Sequencing and Arranging Photos: Bringing Memories to Life through Visual Narratives

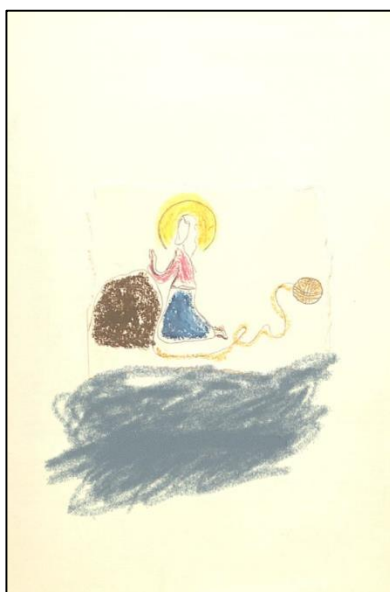
In the creative process of the *Satu Darah Juang* zine, the arrangement and sorting of photos were carried out based on the main themes: religiosity, local culture, and the social dynamics of Ambonese families. This theme not only functions as a visual grouping system but also as a narrative strategy that allows readers to see the relationship between images effectively and symbolically. This approach is in line with the concept of punctum, namely a visual element that arouses emotions personally and deeply. The sequencing and grouping process of *"Satu Darah Juang"* is a form of visual narrative arrangement that emphasizes the importance of structure in creating visual meaning. In the practice-led research approach, this kind of artistic process is not only about technical matters, but also about reflection. Thus, the creation of meaning takes place simultaneously with the creation of visual forms. This practice shows that art is not just an object of results, not just an end result, but also a source of situational and embodied knowledge. One significant example is a photo entitled *Oma Bo and Opa Petu* before going to Papua, a black and white portrait processed with a bright red background (Fig.1). The color red in the context of this project is not just an aesthetic choice, but a symbol of courage and cultural identity of the Alifuru tribe, the author's ancestors from Seram Island, Central Maluku. In the framework of color semiotics, red becomes a cultural code that implies their spiritual strength and social mission as Protestant Christian missionaries. This portrait becomes a sharp punctum because it successfully connects personal memory with communal history, while also presenting a deep affective dimension for the author.



**Fig 1.** Oma Bo and Opa Petu before going to Papua

### 3.2. Intersection of Faith: Visualization of Gethsemane and Knitted Memory

The illustration of Jesus praying in the garden of Gethsemane (Fig. 2), with red wool thread under his body, which becomes a support, reactivates the author's affective memory of Oma Bo's knitting that used to hang in the living room of Opa Petu's house. This motif is common in Ambon family rooms, not merely as decoration, but as a domestic spiritual symbol. In this context, the illustration acts as an *ars memoria*, a space of memories that is reconstructed through visual study. At the bottom of the illustration, there are abstract scribbles in black and gray gradations. Telling about the representation of the author's spiritual struggle between two spiritual models: Christian belief and ancestral spirituality (*Tete Nene Moyang*). The abstraction creates a productive space of ambiguity, reflecting the author's position as a subject who is between the Samawi faith and the roots of Alifuru spirituality. In practice-led research, the process above reflects the practice of visual autoethnography, where emotional and symbolic experiences are processed into forms of artistic expression that are full of meaning. The concept of *punctum* also emerges through this illustration because the personalized image of Gethsemane is able to evoke deep affect. Visual spirituality like this also functions as a reflective method in spiritual research.



**Fig 2.** Jesus Praying in the Garden of Gethsemane

### 3.3. Education, Struggle, and Social Identity in the Family Room

The family photo at Aunt Poppy's graduation in 1976 became an important marker in the narrative of educational values in the Mailoa family (Fig. 3). The portrait photo below was taken in the Batugantung area, Ambon, a location known for being socially tough, and became a symbol of how Opa Petu drew a firm line that Western education was a way to go beyond the structural boundaries of the environment. Aunt Poppy, wearing a *toga*, became a symbol of symbolic vertical mobility as well as the continuity of educational values. However, this value did not bring a break from local roots, because she remained in Batugantung and became a professor. The portrait shows that education is not an escape, but rather a way to strengthen and live out local identity. In the practice-led research approach, rereading this family's visual archive becomes part of interpretive reflection, a process in which personal experiences and cultural values are reconstructed in the form of visual symbols.





**Fig 3.** Aunt Poppy during her Bachelor's Graduation

### 3.4. Journey, Prayer, and the Road: Visualization of Trauma and Hope

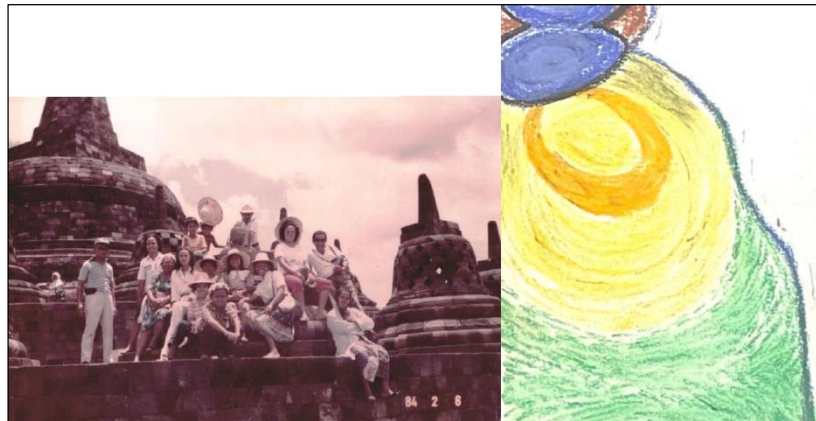
The portrait of young Mama Nel, the author's mother, is manipulated in a visual style resembling a photocopy, with the addition of an illustration of a road under her neck (Fig. 4). This manipulation marks the theme of journey for education, as well as a mother's hopes and worries about her child's future. The road under her neck symbolizes a complex life journey, both geographically and spiritually. Mama's portrait also conveys an important message from a mother: study well, don't follow the harsh mainstream of Batugantung, and always pray. This visual manipulation forms a strong affective layer, which in affect theory and practice-led research, is a form of externalization of inner experience through visual media. This is a way to convey trauma, hopes, and family values in one reflective and critical visual frame.



**Fig 4.** Mama Nel When Young

### 3.5. Borobudur Portrait: Ancestral Heritage and National Symbol

Family portrait photos during a trip to Borobudur are artistically processed with Van Gogh-style color strokes and overexposed lighting (Fig. 5). This style creates an impression of collective memory, while connecting personal space with national symbols. Borobudur is read not only as a tourist attraction but as a symbolic space where ancestral heritage, spirituality, education, and national identity meet. In the practice-led research approach, places and memories are often presented again through visual symbols combined with personal experiences. This process is an affective-cognitive form to build a new narrative that goes beyond individual experience to become a collective discourse.



**Fig 5.** Family Portrait During a Trip to Borobudur

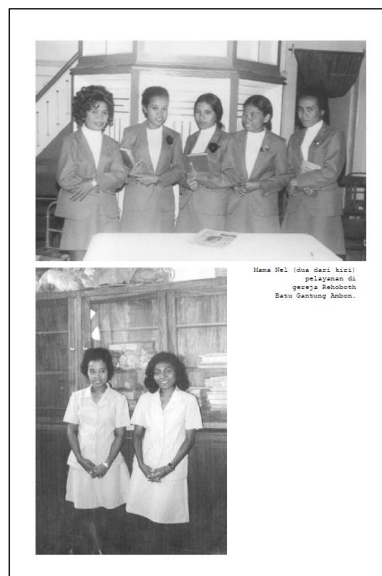
### 3.6. Zine in the Discourse of Indonesian Visual Culture

The *Satu Darah Juang Zine* is not just a personal publication, but a visual artifact that is aware of the history of Indonesian visual culture. Through the adoption of the *Aktuil* magazine format from the 1970s, such as size, retro typography, and the selection of book paper, this work can build visual intertextuality between family archives and national pop culture. In the decolonial visual research approach, the strategy above is a form of dismantling the dominance of Western aesthetics and an effort to rebuild local visual narratives. "*Satu Darah Juang*" positions itself as an aesthetic and epistemological critique: art as epistemic disruption, which rejects the dichotomy between high art and popular art such as. The decision to exhibit the *zine* as a work of art, rather than simply being disseminated like conventional *zines*, strengthens the claim that artistic practices can be a legitimate part of the production of academic knowledge and local culture. It further emphasizes that the *zine* not only functions as a medium of expression but also as a medium for research, cultural communication, and socially relevant spiritual meaning. The entire process of creating this *zine* not only relies on visual archives and creative intuition, but is also supported by intense informal conversations with family members such as Mama Nel who always reminds us to continue praying and relying on the Almighty, then Aunt Noor who continues to talk about hard work and praying, about returning home and loving the *Negri* (Village). These conversations become triggers for memories as well as a means of collecting data based on collective memory, which is then processed visually through a reflective approach. Within the framework of practice-led research, this informal interview is a form of embodied inquiry: exploring knowledge that is inherent in personal relationships and living emotions. In addition, the process of validating meaning is carried out participatory way through reading and discussing works with the author's family and artist colleagues. One of the emphases that Berthy (the author's eldest sister) repeatedly conveyed after seeing the *zine* was the importance of placing the position of Alifuru on the national political map (Fig. 6). Berthy reminded us that Seram Island, where the Alifuru tribe lives, has been recorded in *Negara Kertagama* and is one of the places mentioned by Gajah Mada in the *Palapa Oath*. Because Seram Island in the past was known as a producer of nutmeg and cloves, and is one of the regions of the archipelago that practices local spirituality.



**Fig 6.** Zine Cover Whose Entire Contents Are Interpreted by Berthy in One Emphasis on Alifuru's Political Position

One of the artist friends named Mozart also revealed that the layout of the photos and text in "*Satu Darah Juang*" could be developed to be more dynamic (Fig.7). For example, the photo work can be formatted according to the anatomy of the photo subject's body, the typeface can be developed in a model like manual handwriting that is scribbled, in addition to the text layout that is developed according to certain patterns, not just in the form of static boxes. Validation of the above is an important part of the research process, which not only verifies the meaning produced, but also confirms that this *zine* is a visual artifact that has affective, spiritual, and cultural values, as well as a legitimate and meaningful form of research.



**Fig 7.** Mozart's Commented Photo and Text Layout Style

#### 4. Conclusion

This research shows that the *zine* titled *Satu Darah Juang* is not just a form of personal artistic expression, but also functions as a means of reconstructing collective family memory, local spirituality, and cultural identity in Ambonese society. Through a practice-led research approach, the *zine* combines family photo archives, spiritual experiences, and reflective narratives into a visual form that is affective, critical, and contextual. This creative process has proven to be able to present a new space for dialogue between personal memories and

communal culture in an unconventional form. In addition, the validation process of the work has so far been limited to the circle of family and artist colleagues, so it has not involved wider stakeholders, such as educators, cultural activists, or policy makers. This is a challenge as well as an opportunity to develop a similar approach in the context of other communities in Eastern Indonesia. Therefore, several steps are suggested for the future: (1) Cross-Sector Collaboration. Future *zine* development should involve collaboration with educational institutions, local arts communities, and cultural institutions to expand its social and educational impact; (2) Format and Distribution Development. Further exploration is needed on the visual form and distribution of the *zine* to make it more communicative, interactive, and easily accessible, including the possibility of integration with digital platforms; (3) Comparative Cultural Study. *Zine* as a visual documentation method also has the potential to be applied in other communities with different cultural contexts, thus allowing for comparative studies of the representation of spirituality and family memory in various regions. Through consideration of these limitations and potentials, the artistic research of the *zine* “*Satu Darah Juang*” provides an initial contribution to viewing *zines* as a valid artistic practice in local visual and cultural studies. Not only as an aesthetic expression, but also as a field of study that opens up new possibilities in the production of visual knowledge that is based on marginalized experiences, spirituality, and cultural identities.

### Acknowledgment

The authors would like to express their gratitude to Universitas Multimedia Nusantara, Tangerang, Banten, Indonesia, for the support provided, and our thanks go to all individuals and communities who contributed to the development of this research, especially the families in Ambon, whose personal stories and memories formed the basis for this research.

### Declarations

- Author contribution** : AA designed and conducted the research, developed the theoretical framework and methodology, and produced the *zine* artwork using a practice-led approach. Inovensius HBW and RGT contributed to the refinement of the visual methodology, literature review, and the academic writing and editing of the manuscript.
- Funding statement** : This research was supported by Universitas Multimedia Nusantara under Rector’s Decree No. 111/SK-R/II/2024. No specific project number is associated with this funding
- Conflict of interest** : The authors declare no conflict of interest.
- Additional information** : No additional information is available for this paper.

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