

# Sentani Lake and The Papua Sea in Art: Representation, Abstraction, and Their Meaning in Papuan Society

I Dewa Ketut Wicaksana<sup>a</sup>, Yulini Rinantanti<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Program Studi Seni Musik, Jurusan Seni Pertunjukan, Institut Seni Budaya Indonesia Tanah Papua,

<sup>b</sup>Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Universitas Cenderawasih

## ABSTRACT

This article investigates the representation of Sentani Lake and the Papua Sea in the traditional art of the Papuan people, aiming to uncover their cultural significance and implications. The study aims to identify the embedded meanings in artistic depictions of these natural elements and to understand how these representations reflect the cultural understanding and local wisdom of the Papuan community. Utilizing a qualitative approach, the study collects data from primary sources including cultural rituals, performing arts, and visual arts. Aesthetic theory is used to analyze the portrayal of the two bodies of water within the cultural context, while semiotic theory is applied to interpret the symbolic elements and socio-aesthetic meanings within the Sentani coastal culture. The research findings indicate that the artistic representation of Lake Sentani and the Papua Sea encompasses profound symbolic meanings beyond their visual depictions. These representations convey spiritual concepts, abundance, and the intricate relationship between humans and nature, reflecting a deep understanding of ecosystems and local beliefs. The article emphasizes the vital role of art in preserving the cultural and natural significance within the Papuan society, emphasizing the profound connections between humans, Sentani Lake, the Papua Sea, and their natural environment within the rich and diverse cultural context of Papua.

## KEYWORDS

Sentani Lake, Papua Sea, art representation, abstraction, meaning of art.

## Introduction

Papua is a province that has extraordinary natural and cultural riches. The Papua region is known for its natural beauty, including Sentani Lake and the Papua Sea. As part of local community life, these two water elements have become an integral part of the culture and religious ceremonies of the Papuan people. Administratively, Sentani lake is located in Jayapura Regency, with an area of 245,000 ha, in where this lake is located on the slopes of the Cycloops Mountains which borders Jayapura City as a source of life for around 5000 families [1]. It was also written that the area had been designated as a nature reserve in 1995, as a center for research and scientific development. From the existence of this wealth of natural resources, in the context of research regarding the representation, abstraction and meaning of works of art inspired by Sentani Lake and the Papua Sea, there are several things that will be observed in this research, namely, the importance of water in the lives of the Papuan people; ecology and conservation in Papua; where ultimately these values are manifested in the form of art as a medium of communication and cultural expression .

Water has a central role in the lives of Papuan people, both as a source of life, a means of transportation, and in spiritual contexts and traditional ceremonies. The Papua region is known for its high biodiversity, including Sentani Lake and the Papua Sea, such as the Arafura Sea which is part of the Papua Province. As stated by Pranowo, et al in Anang [2] the Arafura Sea is surrounded by several islands which have different water characteristics, causing the Arafura Sea to have potential marine resources in the form of sharks, rays, pelagic fish, demersal fish, squid, shrimp, crab and shellfish. However, the natural environment in this region also faces challenges due to development and human activities. As Dahuri said in Tebay [3], apart from its resource potential, it is also necessary to realize that coastal areas have potential problems, including environmental degradation, where it is said that over the last two decades the coastal environment has been degraded as a result of ecosystem damage. Pressure on the coastal environment also comes from forest and river watershed (DAS) management activities that are not environmentally sound. In this case, art takes a role as a form of medium that reflects the role of culture through artists in communicating ecological and conservation values in human relations with these two water elements, namely lakes and seas, as well as how art can play a role in environmental awareness and protection.

Art has an important role in Papuan culture as a medium of communication, cultural expression, and embodiment of community values. In the context of this research, the background can explain how art is a means of representing and abstracting the beauty, deep meaning and symbolism contained in Sentani Lake and the Papua Sea. Based on previous research by Pradanta and Mudra [4] regarding sources of inspiration and meaning of body motifs Paidido ethnic painting in Papua, by knowing three important aspects that are interrelated, namely: visual style (form/morphology), visual concept (concept of use) and philosophy concept (philosophical meaning), it is known that the source of inspiration is the body the painting (body painting) that usually aesthetically decorates the bodies of the Paidido tribe comes from their inspiration for local wisdom values to ensure that the sources of these motifs can continue to be preserved, such as sea snails, monitor lizards, sailfish and other living creatures and moral values. as a guide for the younger generation as stated in the philosophical values of each body painting motif which is a message from the ancestors. Quoted from CNN Indonesia [5] accessed 13 October 2023 that American artist Curtney Mattison, has created a fine art installation using coral and coral reef materials, the work was later named "Coral Universe Semesta" or in English it is called Coral Universe This ceramic work of art similar to coral reefs has dimensions of 18x2.5 meters. This work is also firmly displayed in the outdoor part of the Center For Marine Conservation (CTC) Marine Conservation Center Building located in Sanur, Bali. It is written that this combination of works of art is said not only to be enjoyed in the form of art but also to educate and introduce marine conservation to the general public. Mattison admitted that this idea was inspired by how rich Indonesian waters are with various types of coral reefs scattered under the sea.

It was further said that the Coral Reef Universe Installation itself consists of six continuous spiral circles, this shape itself, according to ceramic artist Ricko Gabriel, who helped create this installation, is a symbol of the six countries that are part of the coral triangle. The six countries are Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Solomon Islands and Timor Leste. The design indeed underlines the interconnectedness and importance of the role played by these six countries in protecting the world's coral reefs.

This research can refer to previous works of art representing Sentani Lake and the Papua Sea, both in traditional and contemporary art. The background needs to reflect an understanding of how previous art has depicted and interpreted these two water elements, and how this research will provide new insights into those representations and abstractions. By explaining these aspects in the background, this research will have a broad and deep basis in understanding the complexity and value of the representation, abstraction and meaning of Sentani Lake and the Papua Sea in art. This can also provide a more comprehensive insight into

the relationship between humans and the natural and cultural environment in the Papua region, as well as how art can be a relevant medium in exploring and conveying important cultural and ecological messages.

## Method

In this research, qualitative research methods are applied by collecting data that is not in the form of numbers or statistics, but focuses on an in-depth understanding of the arts and culture of the Papuan people. Researchers used interviews, observations and direct interactions with artists and local communities. Through interviews, they heard stories and views from people involved in the creation and appreciation of Papuan art. Active observation also allows researchers to observe works of art and artistic practices in the field. In this way, qualitative research helps researchers to understand the cultural meaning, artistic techniques, and social context behind the art they research, which is then outlined in scientific articles to provide an in-depth understanding of the topic.

In this research, Aesthetic Theory is used as a framework to analyze forms of art that represent the existence and essence of Lake Sentani and the Papua Sea in the cultural context of the Papuan people. Aesthetic Theory helps researchers understand how this art reflects beauty, expression and creativity in the creation of works of art, as well as how this art contributes to the Papuan people's understanding of their natural environment. In this case, aesthetic theory helps reveal the elements that make this art interesting and important in a cultural context. On the other hand, Semiotic Theory is used to analyze symbolic elements and meanings that are built from a socio-aesthetic perspective within the scope of Sentani coastal culture which is presented in the form of art. This theory helps researchers decipher how symbols in art, such as shapes, colors, or special motifs, communicate deeper cultural messages. Apart from that, semiotics helps in understanding how the meaning and interpretation of this art is influenced by the social context, history and values held by the Papuan people. With this approach, research is able to dig deeper into the socio-cultural aspects of Papuan art and culture which are revealed through visual arts.

## Discussion

Visual art has always had the power to reflect the beauty and power of nature, and in the context of Papuan society, Lake Sentani and the Papua Sea have become very important subjects in artistic representation. In this sub-discussion, we will explore how Papuan artists represent and depict the existence and essence of Sentani Lake and the Papua Sea through their works of art. We will explore the techniques, styles, and visual elements used by artists in their efforts to transmit a sense of wonder and deep connection to the natural world around them.

Abstraction in art is a further step in exploring the existence and essence of its subject. In this sub-discussion, we will investigate how Papuan artists combine representative elements with abstraction, creating works of art that inspire the imagination and provide new perspectives on Sentani Lake and the Papua Sea. We will detail the various art styles, techniques, and creative processes used by artists to create abstract works of art that captivate and enrich our understanding of this natural environment.

Art not only has aesthetic value, but also carries deep cultural meaning. In this sub-discussion, we will discuss how artistic representations and abstractions of Sentani Lake and the Papua Sea contain rich and deep cultural meaning in the context of Papuan society. We will explore how this art is used to communicate cultural values, myths and stories, as well as how it influences the Papuan people's understanding of the natural environment and the concept of

sustainability in their culture. In this way, we will gain deeper insight into the close relationship between art, culture and the environment in Papua.

As explained in the introduction, art is an important means for the Papuan people to reflect and appreciate the existence and essence of Lake Sentani and the Papua Sea. So the analysis is carried out by presenting sub-discussions, namely first, 'representation of Sentani Lake and the Papua Sea in the form of art', namely where the analysis focuses on the world of visual art which is used to represent these two natural elements. Second, 'the abstraction of Sentani Lake and the Papuan Sea in an exploration of style, technique and creative process, this sub-analysis goes deeper into the world of more experimental and abstract art with inspiration from natural objects, namely Sentani Lake and the Papuan Sea. Third, 'cultural meaning in the representation and abstraction of artistic creativity from Sentani lake and the Papuan Sea', where in this analysis the cultural meaning embedded in this art will be examined. It is important to understand the way this art is used to communicate cultural values, myths and stories in Papuan society, as well as how this art influences people's understanding of the natural environment and the concept of sustainability in Papuan culture.

### 1. Representation of Sentani Lake and the Papua Sea in the Form of Art

Visual art in Papua is a form of deep expression of the relationship between humans and the natural environment and culture of the Papuan people. Representation in this visual art reflects several very important aspects. Sentani lake and the Papua Sea are sources of artistic inspiration, where the forms of art that emerge represent how strong the spiritual and cultural connection is between the Papuan people and these two natural elements. Local symbols and motifs are used in works of art as a means of communicating cultural beliefs and values that have been passed down through generations. This creates a deep connection between art and local culture, and visual art becomes a form of respect for nature and their cultural heritage. One of them is a representation of the Sobey tribe's decorative boat motif.



Figure 1. Lobster Decoration Motifs on Sobey Tribe Fishing Boats  
[Source: Reference [6]]

It is said that the lobster motif engraved on the body of the boat serves as a reminder or sign for fishermen to be careful when going to sea, where philosophically in the life of the Sobey tribe, fishermen must learn from lobsters, when conditions are safe, lobsters move forward. When conditions are dangerous, the lobster moves backwards as quickly as possible [6].

Researcher from the Papua Archaeological Center, Hari Suroto, said that usually the carvings on traditional Sobey tribe boats include motifs of coral reefs, marine fauna, birds and mythological animals related to the stories of their ancestors Papua Earth Team, 2021, [6]. The participation of the northern coastal communities of Papua is quite large in implementing a conservation system based on community perceptions of the concept of nature. First, it is based on the basic concept of society's view of nature which is symbolized as a mother, resources as breast milk or likened to a mother or woman. Second, the practice of marine customary rights carried out by the community has a social function [7]. In the context of art, this motif is adaptively categorized as a form of abstractive representation of the manifestation of nature which is based on the traditional ecological knowledge of coastal communities which expresses the community's sense of connection with nature.

The use of color in visual arts also has a central role in depicting the natural beauty of Papua. The combination of natural colors such as sea blue, forest green and flower colors creates eye-catching works of art that reflect a diverse and rich ecosystem. Apart from aesthetics, colors and motifs in art are often used to represent the form and richness of coastal nature, especially seas and lakes. Such as the motifs of various biota and sea blue colors in batik which represent the natural beauty of the coast and maritime in the Raja Ampat region in Batik Raja Ampat by Chanry Andri Suripati and Adriana Imelda Daat in 2011. Such motifs and representations of colors and motifs can be seen in following picture,

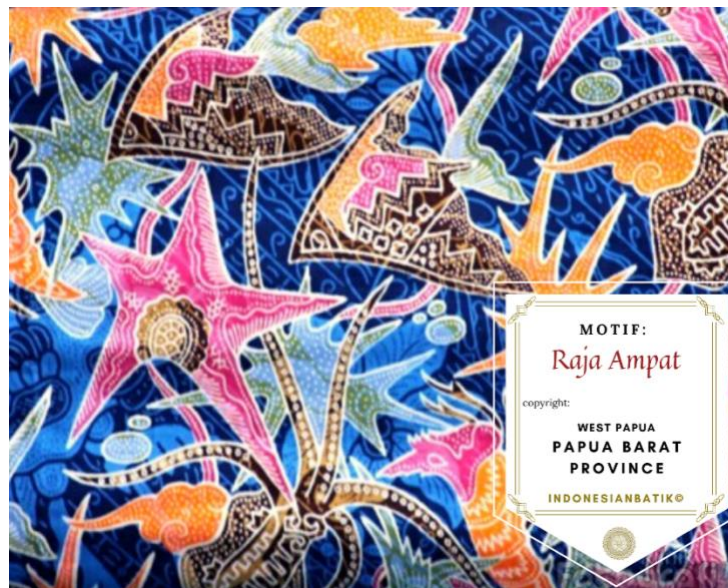


Figure 2. Stingray, Squid, and Starfish motifs dominated by sea blue  
As a visual representation of Raja Ampat's marine environment in Raja Ampat Batik  
Works by Chanry Andri Suripati and Adriana Imelda Daat  
[Source: Reference [8]]

It is known that Raja Ampat is a tourist destination famous for its underwater beauty which attracts many travelers throughout the world. White sandy beaches, the beauty of the blue sea, coral islands, and the diverse marine flora and fauna are certainly the characteristics of the charm of this group of islands in the bird's head of Papua Island. As one of the unavoidable diving tourist destinations, that's where the inspiration for making Raja Ampat batik came from. It is written that, based on the desire to preserve Raja Ampat art, husband and wife couple Chanry Andri Suripati and Adriana Imelda Daat have been trying to develop Raja Ampat batik since 2011 [9] accessed 13 October 2023.

Over time, visual art also reflects environmental changes and the influence of social change in Papuan society. In more contemporary works of art, the influence of climate change, the decline of natural resources, and environmental issues are reflected in the themes and elements used. Artistic representations are a reflection of environmental changes and their impact on Papuan people. As was done by the Biak Karon community who held a festival entitled "Munara Beba Byak Karon Festival " in Werur Village, Bikar District, Tamberauw Regency, Southwest Papua on Wednesday, March 22 2023. Quoted from Kompas.id Biak Karon community dancing and singing all day long to celebrate a big party of togetherness, from young to old mingling in one goal, namely protecting their culture and sea [10] accessed 13 October 2023.



Figure 3. A number of young people danced the Wor dance to mark the start Munara Beba Byak Karon Festival in Werur Village, Bikar District, Tamberauw Regency, Southwest Papua  
[Source: Reference [10] accessed 13 October 2023]

The Wor dance can also be interpreted broadly as a dance for payment of dowry (ararem), food transactions (fanfan), as well as traditional dances. The Wor dance has the value of strengthening human relationships with the Creator or the relationship between humans and nature [10] accessed 13 October 2023. While dancing, it was written that, with great joy, the song "Kampungku Weruri" was sung by the Keret Yappen community in Werur Village, Bikar District, Tamberauw Regency, Southwest Papua. There are those who clap their hands a little, there are those who hold their children, and there are also those who move their bodies left and right.

*"... My village is Weruri, which I love/The sand is black and clean.  
Coconut leaves wave/Call us home.  
Return home/What time are we going home?  
I saw from afar Mount Tamberauw terpele/Is it time for us to go home... "*

Weruri Village Song  
[Source: Reference [10]]

This song also seems to be a sign of the success of the fishermen returning home after half a day at sea. No half-hearted, a medium-sized wooden boat is almost full of tuna, each of which can weigh three to four kilograms. Sea products are one of the main commodities for the Werur people, apart from plantation products.

From the Sentani Lake object, there is an annual festival which is a representation of cultural values and unity between tribes, where the festival highlights local wisdom values,

namely the Sentani Lake festival. The Sentani Lake Festival is one of the annual activities which is the government's effort to realize tourism development that relies on the natural and cultural riches of the local community. Apart from being the government's effort to realize tourism development in Jayapura Regency, the festival, which was originally created as a people's party in 2008, has become one of the festivals that has an influence on improving the economy of the people living around Lake Sentani. [11, p. 1]. The representation of the diversity, cultural and economic values of Lake Sentani in the form of art at the Lake Sentani Festival event is a rich and deep expression of the cultural heritage of the communities around the lake. This festival is not only a platform to promote the natural beauty of the lake and its cultural richness, but also an important platform to strengthen awareness of the importance of cultural and economic diversity in the local community.

In its 13th implementation in 2023, the Lake Sentani Festival will take place for three days from 5 to 7 July 2023, opening with the Isosolo Dance performed by around 250 dancers from 10 villages consisting of two East Sentani Districts and eight Sentani Districts, Jayapura Regency. . Different from other regional dances, the Isosolo Dance is performed on a decorated boat. This dance is usually carried out on the orders, blessing or instructions of Ondoafi or the original Sentani traditional leader [12] accessed 13 October 2023.



Figure 4. Documentation of the Isosolo Dance in the Opening "XIII Lake Sentani Festival 2023"

[Source: Reference [12] accessed 13 October 2023]



Figure 5. Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy Sandiaga Salahuddin Uno (green dress) when opening the event "Lake Sentani Festival XIII 2023" which takes place on the shores of Lake Sentani, Jayapura Regency, Papua, Wednesday 5 July 2023  
[Source: Reference [12] accessed 13 October 2023]

At the Sentani Lake Festival event, the diversity of local communities is reflected through art, dance and music performances representing the various tribes that live around Sentani lake, such as the Sentani, Dani, Yali and other tribes. This artistic performance depicts harmony and diversity between various ethnic groups, highlighting the importance of tolerance, respect and appreciation for cultural differences. The art displayed at this festival is a reflection of the rich local culture that has been passed down from generation to generation. Through traditional dances, theatrical performances, painting and typical handicrafts, this festival is a means of preserving and promoting local wisdom and the unique cultural identity of the people around Sentani Lake. The Sentani Lake Festival also provides an opportunity for local communities to showcase their creative economy products. Through handicraft exhibitions, art markets and other local economic performances, this festival not only promotes cultural values, but also contributes to the economic empowerment of communities around the lake. This includes promoting local products, increasing tourism and opening up new business opportunities for local residents.

In the Sentani Lake Festival event, an inclusive and participatory arts approach can increase global awareness about the cultural and natural riches that Papua has. Through the promotion and development of local culture, this festival not only promotes the values of diversity and cultural richness, but also plays an important role in raising the standard of living and economic awareness of local communities. Overall, these representations open the door to the importance of art in strengthening people's connection to their natural environment and culture. Papuan visual art is a form of cultural expression that is very meaningful and important in preserving cultural heritage and upholding the natural beauty of Papua, especially the lakes and sea.

## 2. Abstraction of Lake Sentani and the Papua Sea in Exploration of Style, Technique and Process of Artistic Creativity

A work of art is a manifestation of dynamic expression that will exist and develop in the midst of a society of cultural actors, where the form of art that emerges refers to the natural interaction resulting from the sensory perception of cultural actors which is visualized abstractively in their efforts to understand the cultural values that exist with them. Analyzing how artists as cultural actors in Papua explore natural elements, such as Sentani Lake and the



Papua Sea, through various techniques, styles and creative processes in their artistic works directs the discussion to natural forms embodied abstractively in the form of art.

The analysis then refers to activities that express more experimental and modern art, creating a fresh perspective on the relationship between art and the natural environment and Papuan culture. This activity is made possible by the existence of institutions that encourage efforts to understand further the values of local Papuan cultural wisdom through artistic creativity, such as public lectures, seminars and cultural performances to welcome certain moments related to art. One of them was carried out by the academic community of the Indonesian Arts and Culture Institute of Papua Land through a public lecture entitled “Ekologi Seni dalam Cipta Ruang Kreatif” (Art Ecology in Creating Creative Spaces) on Wednesday 13 September 2023 at the Horison Abepura Hotel Building .



Figure 6. The Chancellor of ISBI Tanah Papua together with resource persons and the entire academic community consisting of educational staff and students in a group photo session at the Public Lecture activity entitled "Art Ecology in Creating Creative Spaces" 2023  
[Source: Reference [13] accessed 13 October 2023]

In this public lecture held in the Odd 2023/2024 academic year, ISBI Tanah Papua invited 2 ( two ) guest lecturers from outside the ISBI Tanah Papua campus as resource persons. The first resource person was Fitriya Ali Imron, M.Pd. (Lecturer at the Bone State Institute of Religion) with material on the Creative Process (Arts Education), S. Sophiyah K., M.Sn. (Art Practitioner) with material on the Potential of Artistic Research and Ecologically Based Participatory Performances. Apart from guest lecturers, this public lecture also presented lecturers and staff from ISBI Tanah Papua as resource persons, namely Dr. Yunus Wafom, S.Pd.M.Sc. as WR II ISBI Tanah Papua brought material "5S Smile, Greetings, Greetings, Polite and Polite", as well as resource persons from the ISBI Tanah Papua PPKS Task Force Yanes Koyari, M.Sn (Lecturer in Art Crafts) and Gustina T. Lubis (Tendik) with the material " The Role of the PPKS Task Force to free campuses from sexual violence, especially within the ISBI Tanah Papua environment" [13] accessed 13 October 2023.

Further regarding the relevance of these activities in building students' understanding of the integration of Papuan arts and culture, in his speech, the Chancellor of ISBI Tanah Papua, Dr. I Dewa Ketut Wicaksana, SSP., M.Hum, said that "Art Ecology in Creative Space Creation" is a concept that connects art with the ecology and social environment around it. This concept creates an understanding that art is not an isolated entity, but is part of a larger ecosystem that includes culture, environment, society and nature. Also pressed, why is this important? Because ISBI Tanah Papua has a unique responsibility to care for and advance arts and culture in the Eastern region of the archipelago. ISBI Tanah Papua is a cultural custodian, who, through art, celebrates the natural richness and extraordinary cultural diversity around us. In creating our creative spaces, we enable the continuation of this culture, bringing it to life, and inspiring future generations to continue it.

At different times and places, as many as 14 young musicians participated in the Music Arts Gathering in Papua, including 4 young Papuan musicians who performed so well, stunningly and compactly, presenting contemporary musical compositions performed in the midst of the community and the beautiful natural panorama of Puai village on the edge. Lake Sentani, Jayapura, Papua.



Figure 7. Young musicians perform musical collaborations at Lake Sentani, Jayapura, Papua  
[Source: Reference [14] accessed 13 October 2023]

This activity was also organized by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology through the Directorate of Film, Music and Media, the Directorate General of Culture held an Arts Gathering which took place in the city of Jayapura, Papua from 11 to 17 July 2022 (MediaIndonesia, 2022 accessed 13 [14] accessed 13 October 2023). It was further written that during 5 days of creativity in laboratory and discussion sessions, 14 musicians who had different musical genre backgrounds and received direction and guidance from facilitator and cultural expert Sutanto and ethnomusicologist Joko Suranto collaborated on musical compositions in groups. Comments from the resource person at the Art Meeting, Prof. Dr. Djohan said that the compositions presented by the young Temu Seni musicians were conceived in just a short time when they met, discussed and collaborated.

On this occasion, one of the coordinators of the arts community, namely "Community Action Papua", Markus Rumbino, M.Sn said, Temu Seni was a good hope and a trigger for the first steps to not only develop and innovate music in Papua based on local wisdom material, but also can open national and international relations for Papuan artists and musicians. "The Action Papua community was born because of one common way of thinking, namely action. Apart from that, we have a 'traditional boat' philosophy whose spirit binds us to continue to 'row' forward together in situations of waves and strong winds. We must face every challenge together," [14] accessed 13 October 2023.

In exploring art styles, artists often dare to take abstract steps. They use a variety of techniques to simplify or abstract natural elements, stimulate the audience's imagination, and provide new perspectives on Lake Sentani and the Papua Sea. This abstract work of art invites the viewer to actively participate in interpreting the meaning, and reflects the artist's creative experiments in viewing the natural elements they love from a unique perspective. As is done by the Alyakha Art Center by holding an art exhibition entitled Romiyea Phuklah on 10-11 September 2021 at open nature, right on the river pier with a river and trees in the background.



Figure 8. Abstract art works displayed in the art entitled *Romiyea Phuklah* [Source: Reference [15] accessed 13 October 2023]

Based on an article written by Arsida Elisabeth title " Stories from the Edge of Lake Sentani, Preserving Art Traditions while Protecting Nature" (2021) it is known that the art exhibition is entitled *Romiyea Phuklah* means human life is inseparable from nature. This exhibition was initiated by a Papuan arts community in the form of artistic activities called the *Alyakha Art Center*, an art movement initiated in 2019 by a music composer and teacher at the Indonesian Cultural Arts Institute (ISBI) Tanah Papua, namely Markus Rumbino with Irma Awoitauw. Markus Rumbino, M.Sn., a music composer and lecturer at the Indonesian Arts and Culture Institute (ISBI) in Tanah Papua. Through the *Alyakha Art Center* and these activities, a work of art was created that was inspired by an understanding of the philosophical values and activities of local residents on the shores of the lake, namely a collaborative work by artists in the form of a sculpture installation in the middle of the Jaifuri river. It is written that the statue is made of bamboo, this statue resembles a child looking towards Lake Sentani with a net hanging from his shoulders. The net contained rubbish [15] accessed 13 October 2023.



Figure 9. Statue Installation in the Middle of Jaifuri River [Source: Reference [15] accessed 13 October 2023]

From these various works of art, it can be seen that the art style used in this exploration also includes various elements, ranging from shape, color, texture, to visual composition. In some works of art, artists may choose to use a more expressive and striking style, while others choose a more subtle and abstract approach. This stylistic exploration creates diversity in the

interpretation of natural elements, enriching the meaning of art and providing opportunities for artists to express their feelings freely.

The creative process as outlined above allows us to see how Papuan artists create works of art. They often engage in deep thought processes and intense reflection about the natural elements they study. This process involves technical experimentation, the search for cultural meaning, and the creation of meaningful works of art. Thus, the exploration of artistic styles, techniques and creative processes is an intellectual and emotional journey that reflects the natural beauty and cultural heritage of Papua. This sub-discussion takes us into the world of experimental art and creates a deeper understanding of how visual art is a very personal and meaningful form of expression about the natural environment and culture of the Papuan people.

### 3. The Meaning of Culture in Representation and Abstraction of Art Creativity from Sentani Lake and the Papua Sea

The cultural meaning in the representation and abstraction of artistic creativity from Sentani Lake and the Papua Sea symbolizes the rich and deep heritage of the Papuan people who are rich in local traditions and wisdom. The art produced from this area is not only a beautiful visual manifestation, but also contains in-depth stories about daily life, mythology, and spiritual ties to the natural surroundings. Like one of the folk tales that developed among the Papuan people. Folklore for social life in Papua is very multifunctional, where it is said that one of the functions of folklore is as a source of information that tells the origins of the life of a tribe [16]. It was further explained that, the origins of descent or the mythology of common ancestors are the stories told in Papuan folklore, where the characters told are often leaders or founders of the community who are considered the forerunners and sacred by their descendants. .

In the oral tradition conveyed by a local traditional figure, Hans Mambrasar (64), as quoted by Arlinta in Kompas.id [10], there is a tradition that also has a good meaning that was taught by the ancestors, namely the *chassisen* tradition . This tradition is carried out by closing and prohibiting people from taking marine products in a traditional area for a certain period of time. The aim is to ensure that protected marine resources can reproduce well. This tradition is the same as the concept of marine area conservation.



Figure 10. Six keret (clan) heads from the Biak Karon indigenous community pray for *Sasisen* tradition on Pulau Dua, Bikar District, Tambrau Regency, Southwest Papua. [Source: Reference [10] accessed 13 October 2023]

Still in celebration of the Munara Beba Byak Karon Festival , there are artistic performances that represent the cultural forms and magical beliefs of the local community, such as performances of the Wor Dance and Apen Bayeren. The Wor dance can also be interpreted broadly as a dance for payment of dowry ( *ararem* ), food transactions ( *fanfan* ), as well as traditional dances. The Wor dance has the value of strengthening the relationship

between humans and the Creator or the relationship between humans and nature [10] accessed 13 October 2023. As explained further, there is also another typical Biak dance which is rarely performed, namely *Apen Bayeren*. *Apen* means burnt stone, while '*bayeren*' means agreement. This dance is performed to unite the differences in frequency between humans and coal. When everything is no longer different, the coals you step on will no longer feel hot. In this attraction, a number of traditional figures will recite neno-neno which means praise. This dance has a philosophy as an offering from humans to God.



Figure 11. Traditional figures from the Biak Karon indigenous community walk on coals in the *Apen Bayeren* attraction in Werur Village in a series Munara Beba Byak Karon Festival [Source: Reference [10] accessed 13 October 2023]

Representation of the meaning of rituals and beliefs not only reflects the enchanting natural beauty of Papua, but also reveals the deep symbolic meaning of culture that is closely embedded in the daily life and worldview of the local people. By paying attention to these aspects, a deeper understanding of the importance of protecting and promoting Papuan cultural heritage in a global framework becomes increasingly important.

Visual art in Papua not only depicts natural elements, such as Sentani Lake and the Papua Sea, but also conveys deep cultural meaning. This sub-discussion opens up insight into how art is a powerful means of communication in conveying cultural values, myths and stories heard by the Papuan people to the younger generation. Visual arts in Papua often embrace the cultural values of the community. They use local symbols and motifs that refer to their beliefs and cultural traditions. This visual representation creates awareness about the importance of culture in the lives of the Papuan people and serves as a means of keeping their cultural heritage alive and relevant.

Apart from representation, artistic abstraction also plays an important role in conveying cultural meaning. Abstract works of art often become a platform to convey cultural myths and stories in a more symbolic way. Through the use of abstract shapes and colors, the artist creates space for deep interpretation. This gives the viewer an opportunity to reflect on the cultural meaning contained in the work of art. Dance and visual arts also reflect the Papuan people's connection to nature and the concept of sustainability in their culture. The cultural meaning in the representation of Sentani Lake and the Papua Sea includes the idea of balance between humans and nature as well as a deep appreciation for nature. In several works of art, we see that natural elements are often considered as subjects that have very important spiritual character and power.

Visual arts in Papua are often very strong cultural expressions. Artists tend to use local symbols and motifs that refer to their cultural beliefs and traditions. Through visual representations rich with these symbols, artists create narratives about the culture of the

Papuan people. For example, the motifs found in the typical musical instrument of the Sentani region, namely Kelambut .



Figure 12. Kelambut Patterned Musical Instrument  
[Source: Reference [17, p. 51]]

In his book entitled *Kelambut Music: Papuan Ethnic Identity in Sentani* (2022/ I Wayan Rai S. states that some Sentani Kelambut are made plain or without ornaments, some are also decorated with certain ornaments. Ornaments are decorations or decorative elements in the form of motifs related to beliefs, for example myths about tribal origins, beliefs in ancestors, animals, plants, mountains, water, clouds, rocks, the natural environment, sometimes also imaginary motifs. . With ornaments like that, they really believe and believe they will receive protection from the Almighty and their ancestors. The ornaments, which are an important part of the Kelambut, are sometimes depicted in their entirety, or can also only be depicted in certain parts as symbols. What is clear is that the ornaments on the Kelambut are not only intended to add aesthetic value, but there is an important hidden meaning behind it.

The Sentani tribe has distinctive ornaments and is their identity they. This ornament is called *yonikhi*. *Yonikhi* consists of the words 'yo' which means village, and '*nikhi*' which means traditional rules [17]. The presence of *yonikhi* ornaments on the Kelambut means that they pray to God Almighty for success in their work and also ask their ancestors to always receive protection, especially when facing danger. Apart from that, the *yonikhi* symbol also serves as an indirect warning so that residents always obey existing customary rules even though the rules are not written. These traditional rules are transmitted orally from one generation to another through certain myths or folk tales



Figure 13. Yonikhi Motif On Papuan Batik Cloth  
[Source: Reference [17, p. 54]]

These symbols serve as a reminder and transmit cultural values to the younger generation and create awareness about the importance of cultural heritage in an increasingly modern Papuan society. Apart from representation, abstraction in art is also a means of conveying deep cultural meaning. Abstract works of art often become a platform to convey cultural myths and stories in a more symbolic and metaphorical way. Abstract shapes and creative use of color create works of art that invite the viewer to reflect on the cultural meaning contained in each stroke and composition. Abstract art creates a wider space for interpretation, inviting viewers to become involved in the process of deciphering hidden cultural messages.

## Conclusion

Based on the study outlined above, an important conclusion can be drawn that art plays a very important role in representing Sentani Lake and the Papua Sea, as well as in conveying the cultural meaning contained in these works of art. First, in the sub-discussion "Representation of Sentani Lake and the Papua Sea in the Form of Art," visual arts and dance in Papua show the deep connection between Papuan people and these natural elements. These representations reflect cultural values, and artists use a variety of techniques to create diverse depictions of Sentani Lake and the Papua Sea, strengthening humanity's connection to nature. Second, in the sub-discussion "Abstraction of Sentani Lake and the Papua Sea in the Exploration of Style, Technique and Process of Artistic Creativity," artists in Papua show creative experiments that create diverse and modern works of art. The exploration of this artistic style creates a fresh perspective on humanity's relationship with nature, inviting the viewer to actively participate in the interpretation. Third, in the sub-discussion "Cultural Meaning in the Representation and Abstraction of Artistic Creativity from Lake Sentani and the Papua Sea," visual art in Papua is a strong medium for conveying cultural meaning. Visual representations and artistic abstractions reveal culture, myths and cultural stories to the younger generation, bringing to life and maintaining Papua's cultural heritage.

Overall, this study shows that art is a strong medium for communicating with nature and culture. Art in Papua reflects the close relationship between humans, nature and culture. They not only create aesthetic beauty, but also express deep values, beliefs and appreciation for nature as an integral part of Papuan people's culture. Thus, art in Papua is an important means of maintaining and celebrating the continuity of the relationship between humans, nature and culture in a rich and meaningful society.

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