

JOURNEY TO INDONESIA'S HOLY CITY: KUDUS CITY SQUARE AS THE EPICENTER FOR FOLKLORE STREET ART AND CREATIVE PLACEMAKING

Aisyah Baswedan¹, Aris Ryant Kurniawan², dan Revianto Budi Santosa³

¹Architecture Study Program, Universitas Islam Indonesia

¹E-mail: 21512053@students.uii.ac.id

ABSTRAK: *This research explores the use of mural art in Kudus City, Indonesia, to deliver different perspectives of Hindu and Islamic versions of the construction story of Kudus Tower. The city, with its rich history and culture, implanted it in local folklore. The study aims to understand the differences in these stories, assess the impact of murals on locals and tourists' understanding of the city's history, and determine the suitability of Kudus City Square as the mural installation. Drawing insights from literature on creative placemaking, the research emphasizes community involvement, collaboration, and evaluation methods. Books like "The City Creative" by Carriere provide a principle for understanding how creative placemaking transforms urban spaces. Moreover, the study integrates alternative approaches like Street Art Hunting and considers historical context from sources like "Kudus, Kota Suci di Jawa" by Ashadi and local mural initiatives. The methodology involves a literature review, historical analysis, a comparative study between conventional and unconventional placemaking, and 'space syntax' method to assess Kudus City Square's suitability for mural installation. The results confirm the city square as an ideal location, validating mural art's potential to engage the community and tourists, promoting deeper understanding of Kudus City's cultural heritage.*

Keywords: city square, creative placemaking, folklore, kudus, murals

INTRODUCTION

Background

Mural art is a form of visual art that is increasingly being used as a tool to convey messages and tell relevant stories. In the middle of the rapid development of arts and culture, Kudus City in Indonesia stands out as a holy city of Indonesia that is not only rich in history but also its unique cultures. The city has been home to various folktales and legends that are deeply rooted in local culture. One of the legendary stories that is very famous in Kudus City is the story about the origins of the construction of the Kudus Tower. Creating murals that depict both versions of this story offers a perfect opportunity to bring these old stories back to local people and tourists. It's not just about captivating visual art, but also about the depth of the message to be conveyed. These murals can be a window for people to understand the history, beliefs and culture that developed in the Kudus City. In this process, it is important to promote the understanding that there is no right or wrong version in interpreting this history and culture. Rather, each version reflects different views and beliefs, all of which are a valuable part of the city's cultural heritage.

City squares provide a perfect canvas for creating murals, enhancing the urban experience in many ways. By introducing colorful and meaningful artwork, these public spaces become more visually appealing and inviting, developing a sense of belonging. Kudus Square, which is located in the heart of the city, has potential to be a perfect spot for folklore murals. These murals can work to educate both locals and tourists about the history of Kudus from various perspectives. Therefore, the aim of this research paper is to understand whether the Kudus square is an ideal location for displaying this mural's folklore based on the theory of Creative Place-Making.

Problem Statement

1. Could the Kudus City Square be an ideal location for the installation of the murals?

2. Between conventional and unconventional Creative Placemaking method approaches, which contributes the best for the murals folklore in Kudus City Square?

Research Purpose

1. Assess the suitability of Kudus City Square as a potential site for the placement of the mural, considering its potential impact on the city's cultural landscape and the engagement of the local community and tourists with the artwork.
2. Make a comparative study between conventional and unconventional Creative Placemaking.

Research Boundaries

1. Measuring the impact of murals only through surveys and interviews with a number of local community respondents and tourists.
2. Not investigating in depth the technical aspects of making murals, such as choosing certain materials and painting techniques.

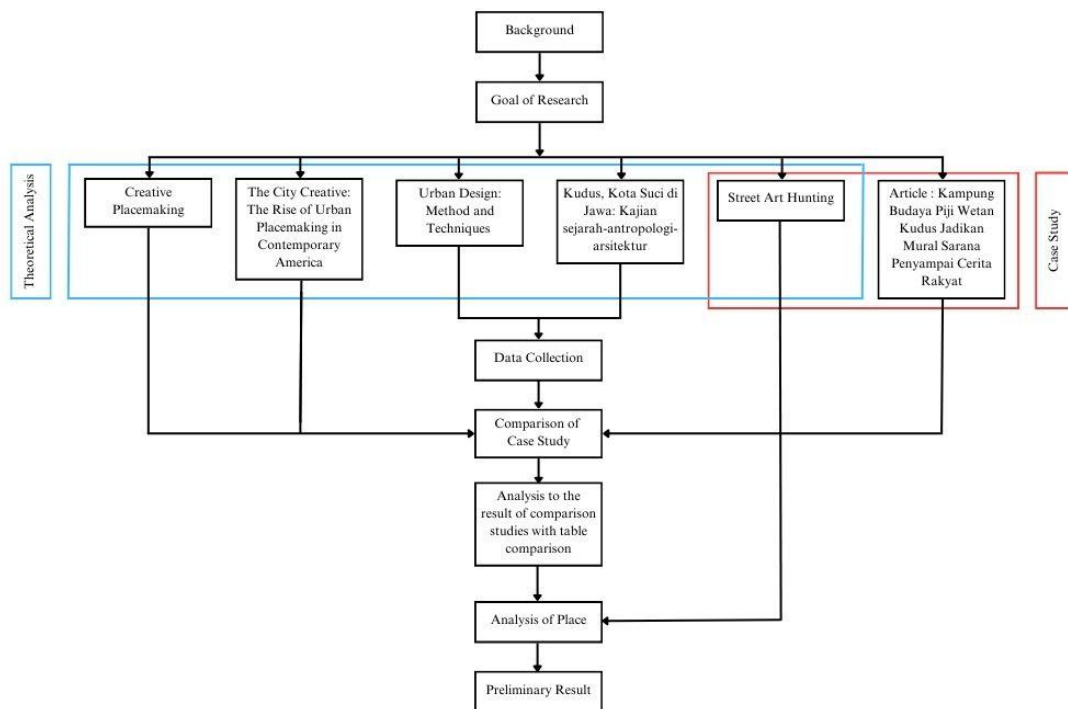


Fig. 1 Theoretical Framework

LITERATURE STUDIES

Murals and Tourism : Heritage, Politics, and Identity

The concept of "murals tourism" introduced and highlights the significance of outdoor murals as a form of public art. It explores the diverse motivations behind mural creation, including personal expressions, political messages, and the improvement of tourist appeal. The town of Chemainus, Canada, serves as an example, showcasing how murals transformed the community and attracted tourists. The book emphasizes that murals are not limited only to gallery spaces, but offer a unique accessibility to a broad audience. It also discusses the various meanings murals convey, touching on heritage, politics, and identity.

In the heritage theme area, it emphasizes how murals become symbols of local identity and expression of community heritage. The example of Belfast's political murals is used to illustrate how these artworks can be both spontaneous expressions and deliberate tools for economic development through tourism. The book also highlights the role of heritage in

place-making for tourism and the power of narrative in shaping destinations, particularly in the context of mural tourism.

Strengthening Community Sense of Place through Placemaking

The article explores the concept of strengthening a community's sense of place through placemaking, emphasizing community involvement in the planning and development process. Sense of place refers to the connections people form with their environments, involving various perspectives such as anthropological, environmental, geographical, historical, and sociological.

Placemaking, as defined by Project for Public Spaces, involves creating public spaces that act as community centers, aiming to fulfill physical, cultural, and social objectives. The key to placemaking is the active engagement of community members in the planning process, leading to a mutual transformation between the community and its environment.

The article discusses Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation, highlighting the importance of moving beyond tokenism to genuine citizen control in fostering a sense of place. It proposes a range of placemaking techniques, the most successful of which is locals control in developing a strong sense of place in the host community. Community engagement and participation in placemaking vary based on factors like history, types of activities, and community members' motivation. This article proposes that varying levels of community involvement, from involvement in design planning to local community control, contribute to strengthening community relations and developing a sense of community.

Creative Placemaking

Creative Placemaking, explained in the book "Creative Placemaking" (Markusen-Nicodemus, 2010), is a collaboration involving government, artists, and local residents to enhance a place through arts and culture. The key focus is on community involvement, highlighting the importance of including local residents in decision-making. The book explains the necessity of interdisciplinary collaboration across fields like art, government, city planning, and business for effective Creative Place-Making. This approach centers on a community's assets, utilizing artists, cultural sites, history, and traditions to improve the environment. The strategies include establishing cultural districts, showcasing public artwork, and hosting festivals (Markusen-Nicodemus, 2010). The book shows the need for thoughtful evaluation methods and discusses how governments can support these efforts through funding, law enforcement, and other actions.

The City Creative: The Rise of Urban Placemaking in Contemporary America

Another concept of Creative placemaking, based on the book "The City Creative: The Rise of Urban Placemaking in Contemporary America" (Carriere-Schalliol, 2021), is compared to a dynamic puzzle, aiming to make urban spaces more vibrant and engaging. This collaboration involves artists, local residents, community groups, and governments working together to transform the look and feel of a place.

Consider a neglected area of a city as an example of creative placemaking. The community initiates conversations with residents and local businesses to gather ideas for revitalization. This feedback directs the project and ensures that it meets the needs of the community. Artists then contribute by creating murals, sculptures, and public art that depict the area's history and culture, enhancing its attractiveness and preserving a sense of heritage. The process also involves organizing events and festivals, to foster community bonds. As the area becomes more appealing, new businesses emerge, developing the neighborhood economy (Carriere-Schalliol, 2021). The researchers monitor the impact, such as visitor numbers and economic indicators, ensuring creative placemaking aligns with community aspirations. Ultimately, creative placemaking transforms forgotten spaces into thriving

urban hubs, demonstrating its ability to infuse life and culture into urban areas and forge strong community connections.

Street Art Hunting : Instagram And The Gamification Of Creative Placemaking

According to the paper "Street Art Hunting" (Foushee, D., 2020), Creative Placemaking can take on a unique and spontaneous form through social media platforms like Instagram, as demonstrated by Street Art Hunting. Unlike conventional Creative Placemaking that typically involves formal planning, Street Art Hunting transforms the experience into a joyful and game-like expedition, connecting people and artists without large organization.

The paper highlights how Street Art Hunting fosters a sense of connection to communities by linking artists and their fans without the involvement of large organizations. By exploring the history and meaning of street art, often created by individuals with limited power as a form of self-expression, this unconventional approach contributes to a dynamic sense of place. The example in the paper, focusing on Street Art Hunting in Phoenix, Arizona, emphasizes the city's cultural diversity and rich street art scene. The paper argues that Street Art Hunting, with its inclusive nature and ability to create a sense of belonging, stands out as a more effective way to build community and place than traditional Creative Placemaking.

Kudus, Kota Suci di Jawa: Kajian sejarah-antropologi-arsitektur

In Ashadi's book on the Kudus Tower, two distinct beliefs surround its construction. The first belief connects the tower to ancient Kudus history, suggesting ties to the original name Tajug, which refers to structures in tombs and mosques. Geological origins hint at Muria, Central Java, raising speculation about links to a pre-Islamic Hindu or animist community. The second belief draws from inscriptions on top of the mosque, citing names like Al-Aqsa and Al-Manar, indicating the tower's existence during the mosque's founding in 1549 AD. The Qibla-oriented tower, lacking creature decorations, supports its role in Islamic worship, sparking a debate between the two beliefs, one suggesting Hindu or animist roots and the other claiming its role in Islamic history in the region.

Kampung Budaya Piji Wetan Kudus Jadikan Mural Sarana Penyampai Cerita Rakyat

According to an article on tribunjateng.com, the "Spray your Folklore" (SYF) initiative in Kudus is reshaping the way murals convey cultural stories. Unlike traditional murals, SYF goes beyond criticism, focusing on revitalizing public spaces and culture. This initiative transforms Sunan Muria's folklore into street art, prominently displayed in the heart of communities, such as Sendang Kamulyan and village intersections. With writers as curators and community involvement, SYF guarantees the clarity in mural ideas and cultural meanings. These murals become an integral part of daily life for locals, engaging communities and transforming public spaces into storytelling places.

Inclusive Creative Placemaking Through Participatory Mural Design in Springfield

The Fresh Paint Springfield mural festival in 2019 showcased a successful approach to creative placemaking. By engaging the community in a collaborative mural design process, the festival strengthened community bonds and built a sense of ownership. The key factors contributing to its success were meaningful engagement, active participation of artists and locals, and the designs that show the identity of the community.

Initiated by the nonprofit organization CommonWealth Murals, the festival faced challenges in the previous attempt to install a mural in downtown Springfield. By adopting a more comprehensive approach and securing support from various stakeholders, including building owners, the festival successfully installed 10 large murals over 15 days. The selection of artists and designs aimed at representing the rich history and cultural diversity of Springfield.

The festival's centerpiece, a mural by GoodSpace Murals, employed a paint-by-number approach, allowing people of all ages and abilities to contribute. These changes from conventional mural creation models gave a sense of ownership to participants and showcased the locals themselves, strengthening pride and a sense of ownership.

Commonwealth Murals documented the impact of the festival through interviews with sponsors, funders, and building owners, as well as locals involved in the process. Findings revealed that locals felt a strong connection to their community and saw the murals as empowering symbols of positive change. While acknowledging the project's success, the authors noted limitations, such as the findings being based on a specific event and a limited number of interviews. They hope future evaluations will include a broader range of participants to identify any gaps in community engagement.

Therefore, the Fresh Paint Springfield mural festival exemplified how inclusive and participatory creative placemaking can strengthen communities, create a sense of pride, and cultural ownership among locals. Institutional stakeholder support and breaking down the power differential between artists and the community were crucial elements in the project's success.

Shaping Places Through Art : The Role of Creative Placemaking in Philadelphia

Focusing on the Mural Arts Program in Philadelphia, this paper explores the role of creative placemaking in reshaping urban environments. Art and cultural activities are examined as tools for revitalization, creating creativity, and transforming communities. The research employs multidisciplinary literature studies and a detailed case study of the Mural Arts Program, revealing its significant impact on the city's appearance and social dynamics.

The Mural Arts Program in Philadelphia, initiated in 1984, has developed into a well-known public art organization, contributing to social, economic, and spatial transformation. This case study explores the program's history and its role as a catalyst for change in a city facing challenges such as poverty, violence, and racism.

Philadelphia, once an industrial city struggling with economic decline and population loss, discovered a method for urban regeneration through the Mural Arts Program. The city's history of population decline between 1950 and 2000 underscores the need for innovative approaches to revitalization. The program's start as a summer youth initiative in 1984 grew into a significant public-private partnership. Founded by artist Jane Golden, the program redirected mural artists' energy towards constructive public art projects, initiating a powerful tool for generating public dialogue and community empowerment.

The paper presents examples of projects from the Mural Arts Program, such as "No Place like Home" and "Philly Painting." These projects showcase how art can address social issues, including teen homelessness, and engage the community in creative goals.

The Mural Arts Program has not only aesthetically transformed Philadelphia but has also influenced social and economic aspects. While critics question its long-term economic impact, creative placemaking, as demonstrated by the program, proves effective in urban revitalization (Rembeza, 2016). Murals in Philadelphia have become symbolic, attracting artists, locals, and tourists, directing physical, social, and economic change. The program has successfully employed art as a means of shaping places and addressing complex urban challenges (Rembeza, 2016).

Urban Design: Method and Techniques

The book "Urban Design: Method and Techniques" introduces two key research methods. The first method, historical analysis, involves delving into a location's past to comprehend its development. This includes studying historical urban layouts through old maps, exploring significant buildings, conducting archaeological research, and examining planning

documents and underutilized ideas. Recognizing the roles of second designers and supporting contributors in urban development is crucial, emphasizing the need to understand historical influences to shape better cities (Moughtin, C., 1999).

The second method, townscape analysis, centers on three core aspects. "Legibility" concerns how easily people can recognize a place, "permeability" focuses on navigability and decision-making within a location, and "visual analysis" involves a comprehensive examination of visual elements in urban design. This includes scrutinizing urban spaces, facades, pavements, rooflines, street sculptures, and other visual details. By understanding how individuals perceive and interact with the environment, these analyses contribute to creating urban spaces that are not only functional but also visually appealing, reflecting the community's identity and values.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study applies a literature review method to identify and critically evaluate relevant research, by collecting and analyzing data. The process was confirmed by the discovery of 10 journals relevant to the theme of creative placemaking in Kudus City. The sources were identified using the keywords 'creative placemaking,' 'Kudus,' 'folklore,' and 'street art.' The next step involves the collection of data through historical analysis. This process requires exploring into the historical evolution of Kudus City, involving a research of its history to understand its current form and functionality.

The next step is to involve a comparative study between conventional creative placemaking and unconventional creative placemaking methods. Conventional creative placemaking involves analyzing factors such as visitor numbers, the local economy, and community satisfaction with the changes. This approach ensures that creative placemaking aligns with what the community wants. On the other hand, the unconventional placemaking method is more a spontaneous approach that encourages direct dialogue between the locals and artists, eliminating the need for structured planning. This approach allows artists to engage with their audiences without requiring organizational involvement, while also offering a platform for everyone to express themselves.

The final step using the 'space syntax' method to determine whether Kudus City Square is the ideal location for the mural folklore. This involves using the 'depthmapX' application to assess road density and to find out the people's perspectives within the environment. This analysis will support in understanding the spatial dynamics of the city square and its suitability for placing the mural.

Table 1 Parameter

No	Parameter	Fixed Variable	Control Variable
1	The Murals Placement	Visibility	Pedestrian
			Vehicle Driver
2	Kudus Square as the point of interest in the city	Element	Path
			Edges
			Districts
			Nodes
			Landmarks
		Density	People
			Vehicle
3	Impact of the Murals	Intervention	Visual
			Action
			Surrounding Attraction

RESULT

Table 2 Comparison Study of Conventional and Unconventional Creative Placemaking

No	Aspect	Conventional Creative Placemaking	Unconventional Creative Placemaking (Street Art Hunting)
1	Approach	Systematic and structured	Spontaneous and unplanned
2	Key Focus	Analyzing visitor numbers, local economy, and community satisfaction	Fostering joyful engagement, spontaneous interactions, and artist-audience connection
3	Community Alignment	Ensures alignment with community desires and preferences	Allows for abstract expressions, not rely on community input
4	Planning Process	Involves organized planning and analysis of various factors	Minimizes structured planning, relies on artistic freedom
5	Organizational Involvement	Often requires organizational support and collaboration	Artists and community play primary roles
6	Freedom of Voices Expression	May or may not provide a platform for disadvantaged voices	Offers a platform for disadvantaged voices to express themselves
7	Engagement with Audiences	Structured engagement through planned events and installations	Spontaneous engagement through street art discovery and interactions
8	Flexibility and Adaptability	Might be less flexible due to limited plans and goals	Flexible and adaptable to changing circumstances and artist initiatives
9	Impact on Public Spaces	Intentional transformation with specific goals and outcomes	Transformation occurs naturally, contributing to the unpredictability of public spaces
10	Joyful Engagement	Focus may be more on aesthetic appeal and economic impact	Emphasizes the joy and surprise of discovering street art in public spaces

Given the rich cultural heritage and folklore associated with Kudus, a combination of conventional and unconventional creative placement methods can provide the most impactful results. Starting the process with conventional methods, such as community consultation and systematic planning, can provide a strong foundation for a folklore mural project. This will ensure that the mural is aligned with the cultural values and aspirations of the community. At the same time, an unconventional Street Art Hunting approach brings flexibility and joy, allowing freedom for artists creativity and providing a platform for diverse voices.



Fig. 2 Kudus Square (view), 2023
 Source: Researcher, 2023



Fig. 3 Kudus Square (vista), 2023
 Source: Researcher, 2023

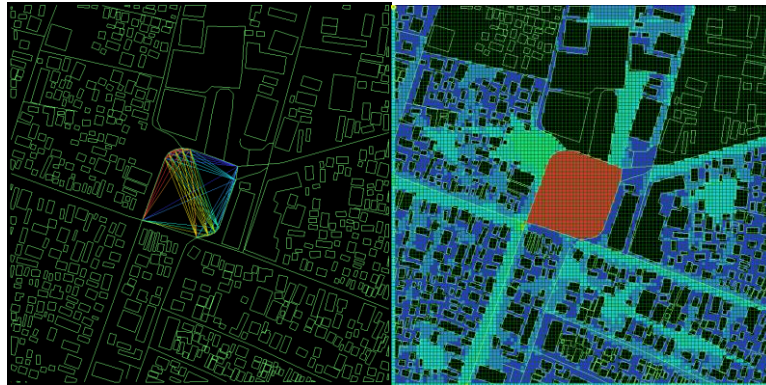


Fig. 4 Visibility Analysis

Fig. 5 Axial Map Analysis: Connectivity

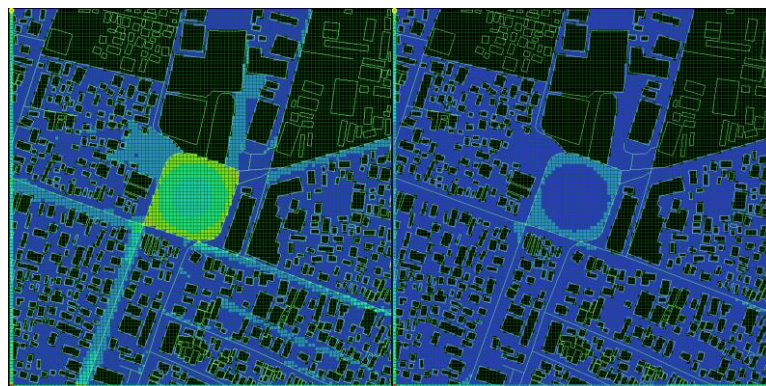


Fig. 6 Axial Map Analysis: Point 1st Moment

Fig. 7 Axial Map Analysis: Point 2nd Moment

The space syntax analysis conducted using 'depthmapX' provides important detail into the dynamics of Kudus City Square. Blue to red represent lower to higher street integration. The simulator shows the consistently high density of roads surrounding the square, primarily attributed to heavy vehicular traffic and the presence of numerous commercial buildings. This dense road network emphasized the square's central importance as a major hub within the city, facilitating accessibility for both locals and tourists.

Furthermore, the concentration of commercial establishments near the square underscored its role as a vibrant economic and social center. The commercial activities and an entry of large numbers of people indicated the square's significance as a social hub. Considering its high density and dynamic atmosphere, the square appear as an ideal location for the mural folklore, providing a platform to effectively deliver Kudus's historical and cultural narratives. Overall, the space syntax analysis confirmed Kudus Square as the optimal site for the mural folklore. Its central position, accessibility, and vibrant social and economic activities align with the research's emphasis on utilizing public art, particularly mural art, to engage with the community and enhance understanding of the city's history and cultural heritage.

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The results indicate that a combination of conventional and unconventional creative placemaking methods offers the most impactful approach for the mural folklore in Kudus Square. Utilizing the strengths of both methods ensures community engagement and contributes to a vibrant and culturally rich urban community. Kudus Square, with its central position, accessibility, and dynamic atmosphere, appears as an ideal site for the installation of folklore murals. The space syntax analysis supports the research's emphasis on utilizing public art to engage with the community and enhance understanding of Kudus City's history

and cultural heritage. This research contributes valuable insights to the field of urban design and creative placemaking, showcasing the potential of murals to connect communities with their heritage and transform public spaces into storytelling places.

The findings of the study on Kudus City Square's suitability for folklore murals can significantly contribute to townscape improvement and placemaking. The strategic placement of the mural art has the potential to strengthen its identity and develop a sense of pride among locals. Moreover, the central location and atmosphere of Kudus Square can develop tourism by attracting visitors interested in exploring the city's rich heritage. In terms of community engagement, placing folklore murals in this highly accessible and socially dynamic space encourages locals and visitors to interact with the art, promoting a sense of community ownership and cultural exchange. On top of that, the concentration of commercial establishments near the square indicates its economic significance, and integrating folklore murals could further increase the economic growth of the area. The transformative nature of the mural folklore project turns Kudus Square from a functional urban space into a storytelling place, making it a destination for people to gather, learn, and appreciate the city's history.

Researchers in urban design and creative placemaking are recommended to replicate similar studies in cities with rich cultural histories to assess the potential impact of folklore murals in different urban settings. Local authorities should adopt a community-centric approach in future placemaking projects, prioritizing local perspectives and values. Recognizing the complementary nature of conventional and unconventional methods in creative placemaking is crucial, with systematic planning and community consultation building a strong foundation, while unconventional approaches add flexibility and inclusivity. Establishing mechanisms for the long-term maintenance and preservation of public art is essential, ensuring that the historical narratives shown on the murals continue to contribute to the town's identity over time. Finally, researchers and local authorities should establish frameworks for monitoring the social and economic impacts of placemaking initiatives, providing feedback and criticism to improve future projects and maximizing its positive impacts on the city.

REFERENCES

- Abdurrohman, K., Nashirudin, M., Umma, F., & Nanang Dwi, P. (2021) Potential of Kudus as a New International Pilgrimage Destination in Indonesia: Halal Tourism Optimising Local Wisdom. *International Journal of Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage*: Vol. 9: Iss. 1, Article 9.
- Anisa, A., & Lissimia, F. (2020). The Influence of Historic Buildings Existence on Economic Development and Regional Arrangement: A Case Study of Menara Kudus Area, Indonesia. *2020 IOP Conf. Ser.: Earth Environ. Sci.* 452 012018.
- Ashadi. (2019). Kudus Kota Suci Di Jawa : kajian sejarah-antropologi-arsitektur. *UMJ Press*, 93-109.
- Carriere, M. H. (2021). *The City Creative: The rise of urban placemaking in Contemporary America*. UNIV OF CHICAGO Press.
- D, R.A. (2023) Kampung Budaya Piji wetan kudus jadikan mural Sarana Penyampai Cerita Rakyat. *Tribunjateng.com*.
- DepthmapX development team. (2017). depthmapX (Version 0.6.0) [Computer software]. [Github.com/SpaceGroupUCL](https://github.com/SpaceGroupUCL).

- Dimililer, R., & Akyuz, U. (2017). Towards a Multi-Disciplinary Approach in Urban Design Education: Art and Software (Depthmap) Use in Urban Design of Public Spaces. *EURASIA J Math Sci Tech Ed*, 2018, Volume 14, Issue 4, 1325-1335.
- Ellery, P. J., & Ellery, J. (2019). Strengthening Community Sense of Place through Placemaking. *Urban Planning. ISSN: 2183-7635, Volume 4, Issue 2, 237-248.*
- Foushee, D. (2020). Street Art Hunting : Instagram And The Gamification Of Creative Placemaking. *Arizona State University.*
- Furtano, L. S., & Payne, J. M. (2022). Inclusive Creative Placemaking Through Participatory Mural Design in Springfield (MA). *Journal of the American Planning Association, Vol. 89. No. 3.*
- Jerding, D.F., & Stasko, J.T. (1998). The Information Mural: a technique for displaying and navigating large information spaces. *IEEE*, 257 - 271.
- Jones, C.B., Jones, K.D., Lindsay, P., & Moore, R.D. (1991). Mural: A Formal Development Support System. *Springer-Verlag, London.*
- Koutsolampros, P., Sailer, K., Varoudis, T., & Haslem, R. (2019) Dissecting Visibility Graph Analysis: The Metrics and Their Role in Understanding Workplace Human Behaviour. *12th International Space Syntax Symposium (12 SSS) Volume: 12.*
- Markusen, A. R., & Gadwa, A. (2010). Creative placemaking: Executive summary. *Markusen Economic Research Services and Metris Arts Consulting.*
- Moughtin, C. (1999). Urban Design : Method and Techniques. *Architectural Press.*
- Rembeza, M. (2016). Shaping Places Through Art : The Role of Creative Placemaking in Philadelphia. *3rd International Scientific, Vienna, Austria.*
- Ruhilla, N. M., Ramadhan, B. G., & Alallah, M. A. (2023). SEJARAH ARSITEKTUR ISLAM TERHADAP ARSITEKTUR HINDU PADA BANGUNAN MASJID MENARA KUDUS. *Journal of Art and Architecture. Vol. 1 No. 2, 75-88.*
- Skinner, J., & Jolliffe, L. (2017). Murals and Tourism: Heritage, Politics, and Identity. *Routledge, New York, 1-75.*
- Suwondo, T. (2021). CERITA RAKYAT JAWA TENGAH KABUPATEN KUDUS DAN JEPARA. *Balai Bahasa Jawa Tengah, 101-103.*
- Tutuko, P., & Bonifacius, N. (2021). The Spatial Pattern of a Kampong Area in Malang City using a Space Syntax Approach. *Jstage, 102-115.*