

CHARACTER DESIGN WORK BASED ON CIREBON MASK FOR VIDEO GAMES

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Abstract: Character design in games serves not only as a visual element but also as a medium for conveying narratives and cultural values to players. This research focuses on character design that adapts cultural elements from Cirebon artifacts, specifically Cirebon masks (Panca Wanda), with the goal of creating characters with both visual appeal and profound meaning relevant to the game world.

The research methods included visual observation, interviews with mask craftsmen, literature review, and digital sketch and rendering experiments. The design process was conducted iteratively, considering aesthetic aspects, in-game functionality, and target audience acceptance.

The research results are character designs that combine the philosophy and symbolism of Cirebon masks with an anime visual style to appeal to the younger generation without diminishing the cultural values they represent. These findings are expected to contribute to the preservation of local culture through modern interactive media.

Keywords: Cirebon Mask, Character Design, Video Game, Cultural Adaptation.

1. Introduction

The gaming industry in Indonesia is growing rapidly, but local cultural adaptations in character design are still rarely utilized optimally. Cirebon masks, as a cultural heritage with profound philosophy, have great potential for integration into game character design. The Panca Wanda—the five main characters of Cirebon masks—represent the human journey from birth to adulthood and are rich in moral messages. This research aims to answer two main questions: (1) what values and philosophies are contained in Cirebon masks, and (2) how to design characters based on these philosophies to make them relevant in the modern gaming world.

2. Methodology

The research used qualitative methods with the following data collection techniques:

- Literature study: examining the history, philosophy, and function of Cirebon masks.
- Visual observation: analyzing the shape, color, and expression of the mask.
- Interviews: exploring the symbolic meaning of mask craftsmen in Gegesik.
- Visual analysis: comparing with character designs in the games Uma Musume and Azur Lane.
- Design experiments: exploring forms, sketches, color testing, and character finalization.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 The Philosophy of Panca Wanda

- Panji: symbolizing birth and purity, with the color white and a gentle expression.
- Samba: energetic childhood, pink/bright red.
- Rummyang: transition to adulthood, pale red, melancholic expression.
- Tumenggung: maturity and authority, black/dark red.
- Kelana: lust and greed, bright red, fierce expression.

3.2 Adaptation to Game Character Design

Characters are designed by integrating mask philosophy into visual attributes such as facial features, costumes, and color palettes. Anime visuals were chosen due to their popularity among Indonesian youth, ease of building emotional appeal, and flexibility in stylistic adaptation.

3.3 Comparative Study

- Uma Musume: Character creation based on horse racing
- Azur Lane: Anthropomorphizing warships with bishoujo aesthetics.

Both demonstrate that adaptations of cultures or non-human objects can be successful when combined with a consistent visual style and a strong narrative.

4. Conclusion

Character design based on Cirebon masks can be an effective medium for preserving local culture while enriching game narratives. This approach successfully combines the philosophical values of Panca Wanda with modern visual aesthetics, making it relevant to a global audience. Further development is recommended in the interactivity aspect of the game to convey cultural messages more deeply.