

## ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN OF INDONESIAN CULTURAL BACKGROUND ON CREATIVE DESIGN INCUBATION OF “LEGACY OF MOKSHA”

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**Abstract:** Indonesia has an almost countless number of cultures, making it one of the countries with thousands of cultures and their diversity. Seeing this fact, it is quite unfortunate that Indonesian people at this time do not respect their own culture, and far prefer culture from abroad. This is due to the existence of globalization which makes it easier for information to enter rapidly, especially in the field of creative media and entertainment which is one of the negative effects for Indonesian culture, namely local culture which is shifted by foreign culture. It is hoped that this project will be able to compete with this problem by creating a creative concept based on Indonesian culture, to introduce and re-creating love for Indonesian culture, through a more interesting and creative video game concept. Therefore, a plan to create a creative concept that will be the base for creating a creative media, that is expected to attract Indonesian people's interest in their own culture. Some methods such as literature study, documentation study, and surveys are used, which are based on several sources such as literature books, articles, journals, and the results of past research that has been done before. The data obtained will be a guide for making a concept book, which will be the final result of designing the Legacy of Moksha game concept.

**Keywords:** indonesian; culture; intellectual product property; concept art; environment; design.

### Introduction

Indonesia is well-known of its culture counts, with population reaching more than 270.203.917 on 2021 alone and counting (UN, 2021), it is rightly so that the number of cultures in Indonesia reflects on that number respectively. Unfortunately, even with the seemingly infinite amounts of cultures Indonesia has, the same could not be said about the number of enthusiasms of the people. Some

of the main threats came from the thing that also unifies us as a human being, globalization. For every edge of technology, there are always a drawback on it, globalization helped us to gather faster information, and this includes outer countries cultures, news, even gossips. The problem came in when the native Indonesian began to thought that outside cultures are far more interesting than the one's they have in their own country (Yoga Agustin 2014), and this led to Indonesian own

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culture slowly being forgotten by their own people. This fact is concerning as one's culture are critically their identity, a culmination of what a nation has stands and proud of (Nanang, 2019), are being replaced, especially by the new trends and foreign cultures. One of the most effective ways to both re-introduce and to further increase the interests from the masses, is to implement elements mentioned earlier into video games (Kaban & Syahputra, 2021).

One of the key aspects in video games concept design is the environment design, as environment will be the gateway towards the players for them to know and also introduce them to the world of the game, the world building (Christopher Marlow, 2013). This is why the design of “Legacy of Moksha” concept arts will try and hopefully be a future guide to those who also have the same visions to further re-introduce Indonesian culture to the masses. The design of contents for this intellectual property to feature more Indonesian culture from their buildings, mainly the traditional houses, landscapes, history, and the mythology from the corresponding references, to the drawing table.

The main discussion that will be presented on this paper is going to focus on how an environmental design could produce an exciting, fresh, and of course an intriguing design, in which would come from each corresponding element of the said environmental designs, from the perspectives, colour, structure, and inhabitants. By the guidance of Rob Alexander and his books, “Drawing & Painting Fantasy Landscapes & City shapes: Create Your Own Mythical Cities, Planets, and Lost Worlds” and “How to Draw and Paint Fantasy Architecture: From Ancient Citadels and Gothic Castles to Subterranean Palaces and Floating Fortresses” would be the guide on how and why does an environmental design would have a significant impact towards the whole world building

of an intellectual property, in which the main factor is to combine both fantasy and realism on a balanced aspect, hence creating something so creative yet still believable (Alexander, 2010).

The story of “Legacy of Moksha” is about an heir of throne, who is forced to explore and restore the world with the help of the Goddess of Wisdom, Malea. As the world fall into chaos and destruction, they need to defeat the corrupted Kings, and restore Malea's power so She could finally revert the world back to its origin state. The story will feature mainly of 4 cultures, reflected on their Kingdoms based on Indonesia's most notorious and also less known historically accurate Kingdoms, whilst also put a twist in its design to further increase its attractiveness, as an environmental design and world building (Alexander, 2006).

The kingdoms are based off several significant Indonesian Kingdoms that have a massive impact on their respective cultures and Indonesian history. The research at hand hopefully able to create a resurgence for Indonesian culture's towards Indonesian society, and for those who are yet interested from a foreign country or culture, to be able to become the bridge for them to learn about Indonesian culture.

## Methodology

The methods used for this paper are literature studies, documentation studies, and also survey as a backing support for the conducted researches. Starting from literature studies, the first thing that is really important in designing a good visual design, especially for an environmental design, is to determined how the universe works, what are the natural law? What world settings does one have in mind when creating and design the said environments? As knowing these aspects

would help significantly on designing a believable yet intriguing design.

### **Environmental Elements**

According to Alexander (2010), one of the best approaches to make an intriguing environmental design is to give them a fantasy twist, working on the known elements such as mountains, forests, waters, clouds, even snow and sands. By combining both the realism and imaginary, as simple as a floating mountain, a glowing forest, one can achieve an out of world design, while the viewer still being able to process on what they are seeing, thus making the design more interesting. As the merit of designing a fiction design is that we, as an artist could done what is impossible on the real nature, and adding them as one of the focal points of our designs, albeit balance is still key to designing such subjects in matter.

Moving on from the design of environmental fantasy design, another important thing to also keep in mind is that some aspect of space could affect some design significantly. Namely the balance between negative and positive spaces, as space occupation is also important as they shall determined what the environment would convey from their lifestyle, characteristic, and atmosphere. For example, a massive space could mean a spatial freedom, but could also be a mystery, as a massive empty space could hide some small things we won't realize. Continuing on space placement, a good environment should have a "bridge" for it, or it is called the space between, as a clear indication of each space occupation is important to make it clear for the user and watcher whether it is the inside, or the outside of some spaces (Hristina, 2016).

### **Voice of the masses**

Additionally, documentary research was also conducted to support the recent problems Indonesia have, as according to research conducted by Agustin (2011), has shown the decline of Indonesians towards their own culture, as globalization spreading out, people tend to follow outside trends and culture, as caused by a lot of peer pressure and also their curiosity that has led them on this path of trend seeker. Rest assured, it is not quite a bad cause or behavior, as curiosity is deep dwelling in human nature, and the problem started when they started to fully abandoned their own culture in seek of clout, fame, and also recognition from others that does the trend as well.

Furthermore, a series of survey was conducted to test the knowledge and also the preference of current students, mainly those aged between 17 to 20 years old, and also to specify the main reason on why Indonesian culture always ruled out in terms of preference, this survey gathered around 100 people as a basis, and as a result more than half of the applicants, around 54% does not feel proud about their own culture, and 70% admitted that they did not have much interest and knowledge about local culture, and finally, in a given option for cultural clothing and design, only 13,3% chooses Indonesia's culture as their design of choice (Self documentation, 2022). The data shows that not only there are a little passion and curiosity on locals to learn about their own culture a lot of them quite frankly outright feels that Indonesian culture is simply, boring.

This is why an attempt was made to create a gateway for those who finds Indonesian culture unappealing, as one way to grab people's attention towards a certain culture are from video games, a media that is well known and also a worldwide hit, and are deemed effective to introduce

said culture and media as in 2021, around 38% of the active video games player base are aged 18 to 34 years old, and they spend around 20 hours per week spending their time playing video games based off a research conducted in 2018 (Clements, 2021).

This is why a conceptual IP named "Legacy of Moksha", would be created to hopefully increase Indonesia's cultural appreciation, whilst presenting and also re-introducing Indonesia's culture from a concept that represents Indonesia culture in a way most people would get interested. Mainly from a fantasy setting, mixed with historically accurate architecture, mythology, and geographical elements from Indonesia, whilst also applying some elements found in classical and modern architecture.

The first step is to determine a keyword to help the flow and structure of the design archetype and genre. To achieve the main keywords for that matter, a brainstorming session is conducted to achieve the most compatible keywords for the whole design choices and feel for the concepts. First of all, post-apocalyptic is the first main word that will help in making an interesting world for the conceptual game design, as seen in Fig. 1, is the brainstorming process on concluding the most effective synonym and thus, becoming the keyword.

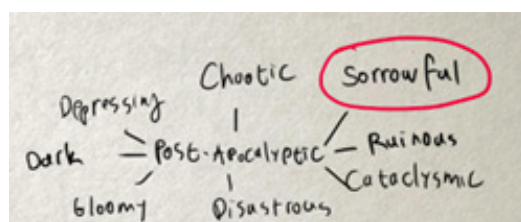


Figure 1. The process of refining the first keyword for "Legacy of Moksha".  
(Source: Personal documentation)

The word "Sorrowful" is chosen to amplify the mood settings from the sad driven story of our protagonist, as a way to hope-

fully attracts the players and watchers to immerse themselves in the story through the sympathy for our heroes. As their struggle and thorny path of their journey would generate a support from watchers and players to try and keep helping them through their hardships through playing the game, and automatically attracts more players to play and also, learn a thing or two origins and design factors from the stories as well.

The second step on finding the keywords came from the word "Folklore", to represents the wondrous world of Indonesian fairy tail, myth, and legends, as most of if not all Indonesian tale are filled with mythical elements, such as magic, wonder, superstition, and fantasy in a way. That is why on Fig. 2, is the process on what is the perfect word to encapsulates the magic in Indonesian folklore to further emphasize the keywords on the designs itself.

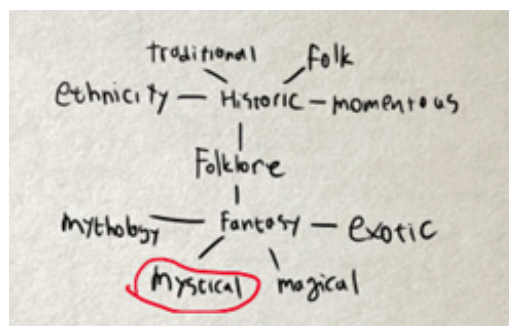


Figure 2. The process of refining the first keyword for "Legacy of Moksha".  
(Source: Personal documentation)

Finally, the word "mystical" is chosen to represents all the factors of what represents the gimmick and characteristic of Indonesian Folklore the best. Mystical itself means the unnatural feel or meaning that is neither apparent nor obvious to intelligence (Webster, 2022) in which would be represented from the mood painting and characteristic more on the environmental design, and some on the



story.

From the steps of researches conducted before, the final steps into making this conceptual design are 2 keywords that has been anointed as a guide to how the final product would look like, and by that, the keywords “mystical” and “sorrowful” are chosen. These keywords are to be implemented by various means, from their colour choices, lighting, visual effects, and scenery. Each of these keywords carried an aspect they will help into making these conceptual designs, as mystical will help to bring out the folklore side of Indonesian culture, as a lot of mythology and historical stories in Indonesia do carries a lot of mystical elements to them. Sorrowful is to drive the mood from the audience, as it is hoped that some levels of empathy from the turbulence and problems served in the overall mood. This is implemented to help players and watchers to get invested more into the stories, making them rooting more for our stories and of course, the protagonist’s struggle in their journey, as sorrowful meant a feeling of dread, loss, or even a distress caused by a loss (Webster, 2022).

## Result

The study on environmental designs has helped quite a ton of few for the creation of this IP, there are many supporting elements of landscapes design, and some of these helped in the decision making to create the world of Legacy of Moksha.

### World Building

The creation of the overall world is the first pinnacle point into making an interesting world to show and serve to to-be-players. That is why one of the first creation in Legacy of Moksha is the outline of the world, as seen in Fig. 3. The overall map and settings are set combining a geo-

graphical sense for the kingdom’s size and also their corresponding point of interest, matching their source of references, while also implementing a believable path of our heroes’ journey.

From the look of the map, the protagonist would start at Yujara, at the top left of first island, and have no choice but to cross into the other edge of the island in order to defeat the final boss. As the water between the starting area and the final area are filled with dangerous creatures, and would prevent the players and the protagonist of the story to proceed on the early part of the story, making it an adventure and also a gradually increase in both difficulty and power level for it.



Figure 3. The world map of Siadonna, the world of “Legacy of Moksha”.  
(Source: Personal documentation)

Another key aspect about the world building and rules is that the world of Siadonna would take place in ancient times, reflecting from several source materials, and has been established as the settings of the stories and gameplay concept, as seen on Fig. 3. The shape of the building derived from Indonesian traditional house, called “Rumah Limas” as can be seen in Fig. 4, combined with stone architecture that came from an ancient era, specifically the gothic kingdoms, to amplify the fantasy settings, and the grim dark setting the stories would take place.



Figure 4. Abandoned castle of Yujara, inspired by “Rumah Betang & Limas”, the world of “Legacy of Moksha”.

(Source: Personal documentation)

### Setting up the mood

Another thing that will make a long-lasting impression towards the player, is to make an effective mood towards the players. One of the main points on the second kingdom is an abandoned home of one of the residents of Grohono Moro, the first kingdom our protagonist would encounter, and this scenery happens when our protagonist stumbles upon their first destination on their adventure. The place known as Grohono Moro, and the land fell into ruins as the king now thinks that flesh is a weakness to his cause, as his people died from a mysterious cause from diseases, and determines to turn all organic beings, both animate and inanimate into a metal, as for his mind is willing, but his flesh, is weak.



Figure 5. Abandoned civilian house, the world of “Legacy of Moksha”.

(Source: Personal documentation)

As shown in Fig. 5, the building showing the hopelessness and ominous feeling of the first area, in which used to be the harbinger of what’s to come to our hero, and showing how the world is left in ruins.

The mystical part again come in the form of lighting, showing a ray of light, and the two elements working together making a mood that represents a lonely, yet ominous place, as if something was wrong, and uneasy stillness, a calm before the storm. Differently, the mood that are set in Gamoh Murko, the next kingdom in our journey, having a much lighter and warmer tone, focusing more on the keywords mystical than sorrowful, although some still peeks through the rotting leaves and also the deserted gateway temple as seen in Fig. 6 below.



Figure 6. the entrance to Gamoh Murko, the world of “Legacy of Moksha”.

(Source: Personal documentation)

### The Elements of Landscapes

The elements of the environmental design came in a lot of shapes and variants. The elements involves around things we encounter in nature and places, such as buildings, mountains, forests, water, and some of it are even animals that inhabiting said places. Some of the elements are visible through previous discussions, such as trees in Fig. 5 and Fig. 6, that both become the filler for vast spaces and also some foreground for dimension purposes. As a spatial room is really important to take account of, as it could add many

layers of design message and also gives a smooth transition on contrasting types of environment design (Hristina, 2016) in which the trees and building now act as a “bridge” of said design. On the other hand, Fig. 7 shows a more prominent elements of landscapes.

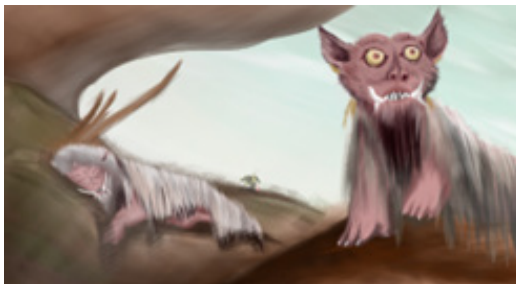


Figure 7. Barong in their natural habitat, the world of “Legacy of Moksha”.  
(Source: Personal documentation)

As we can see, the mood drawing seen on Fig. 7, depicts on how lives other than humans still thrives, although albeit much lesser than they used to be, but their presence works together as a unity to represents us a lively environmental design. Things such as the vastness of Rocky Mountains could resemble sturdiness and immovable, and their wide range also provides a massive space of movement, giving the feeling of freedom and wild. This prove further the resilience for these creatures inhabiting them despite the world dying, they still thriving and have their freedom undisturbed by the events happening to them, providing an interluding irony.

### **The Balance**

The combination of fantasy and realism in a design could make or even break the designs itself, unless there are a different goal on what to achieve with the said designs, as seen in Fig. 5. The fantasy and realism design are on the same strength, enough to make the viewer immediately know what they are looking at, but also in-

trigues a new question on several aspects, why is the sky purple? Why is the building and some rocks looks metallic?. These small questions that would lead them into seeking more answer from the stories of the game, and those who is unfamiliar with the structure design and at the same time seek answer for the structure’s origin. Some aspect could be re-balanced for different purposes, just like the final area, the final frontier of the stories, as seen in fig. 8. The scene depicts the final area for the conceptual game, the most dangerous place hosting some of the most vile and horrific creatures unknown to men, that is why the weight on the balance scale are heavier on the fantasy side, more notably an eldritch horror approach of fantasy.



Figure 8: Dorohengkara, the final frontier, the world of “Legacy of Moksha”.  
(Source: Personal documentation)

The imbalance of the scenery is on purpose, making those sees the scene could see some “structures” hiding behind the grotesque flesh and horror mood scenery. This approach would make the scene felt uneasy, unfamiliar, and one thought would always show up on everyone who sees this place as a red flag, either the player or even the character in the story that “this place, is not safe”. As the place is ruled by a king fallen beyond his humanity, and the grandeur of the horrors are meant to be an everlasting impression on the players as a finisher of the stories, a giant feel of achievement towards the

players as a reward.

### **The problem's at hand**

To create such an intriguing designs and IP, a good meaning is also necessary to improve and also put a strong remark on people's mind, as every design choice would have a deeper meaning besides to invest the viewers and players. As every world on Siadonna are representatives of what Indonesia's problem based off the background on why the research was conducted in the first place. The first one is Yujara as we seen on Fig. 4, a dying country that just have been abandoned by their citizens and king, that represents the dying enthusiasm of Indonesians towards their own culture, as the world is slowly dying, and the result of Yujara is what could have been if we did not properly uphold our own culture.

The next kingdom, Grohono Moro, represents on how the technological culture now overshadows the traditional, as the king of Grohono Moro only found weakness in His own flesh, his origin, to replace it with metal, or so be said, technology. This choice represents how technological advancement if not handled well, would overwrites the traditional cultures. If a lot of people favors the modern advances simply just because the practicality of advancements, thus forgetting their own roots of what shaped their silhouette.

The third Kingdom of Gamoh Murko represents of what happens when one did not nurture their own nature properly, the place just become an empty husk of what it should be, granted there are still some structural standings, but what is seen is not the same as their glory days. This kingdom represents on how many Indonesians overlook their own culture, and did not try to improves the subject at matter, leaving their culture unimproving and hiding beneath the light.

The last Kingdom, Dorohengkara, has fallen into ruins and powers beyond human comprehension, a monster of a Kingdom that is now full of unidentified structures and king who is more monster than he is mortal. The eldritch nature of Dorohengkara represents the exaggerated measure of what could happen if one's culture are fully abandoned and left behind, they became forgotten, unidentifiable, and we won't know what they once were. The extinction of a culture, would lead to a grim future, where no one could able to tell the stories of a culture, to see a historical event and structures, and are left with ruins and speckle of what they once were.

All of these were not blatant, but would create a subtle message to the viewers and players to subconsciously learn and hopefully would become the spark to lead a better cultural appreciation, in a form of modern ways to attracts those who have not seen it and reattracts those who wants to learn more about the origin of such cultural richness, packed in interesting and attractive way that adapted to the modern era of the world.

### **Discussion**

All of the previous points provided a strong and effective feature on what makes an interesting environment design, but one should make an understanding to considerate how many of these elements would fit in on the said scene and places. The most important part of designing a fantasy environment is the balance between what's real and what's not, as too much would clutter the scene and making the place incomprehensible to people, and too little will make it fall off from the fantasy route. This will make the designs appeal more and make those who plays it would draw interests in their origin, thus making them indirectly learn about the cultures behind the designs they are in-



terested in. That is why an effective and interesting design would be much beneficial and important as a window and doorway for those who have not yet known some culture and other source materials, thus flourishing and enriching the knowledge of a culture behind the designs and IP.

## **Conclusion**

Making a good environmental design is one of the pinnacle points to attract more people to your IP designs, creating a massive and intriguing opening gateway for those who wanted to learn more and exposed themselves to the basis of what's the inspiration behind them. Balancing the aspects of the designs really helps in achieving a good and effective environmental design to be eye catching and elevate the scenery in the world inside the IP. As every aspect said in the making of “Legacy of Moksha” conceptual designs use a lot of design elements, mood characteristic, and specific scenery perspective altogether to create an effective environmental design, emphasizing on the fantasy aspects, and their grim aspects.

Finally, some of the important aspects is that the grim and dark fantasy would help a lot to attract audiences from their empathy to root for the protagonist that have to withstands all the trials and nightmares they have to endure in order to bring salvation to the world. This is reflected from the environmental designs that have been carefully chosen and cooked to have their respective aspects, from the balance, and the representation itself.

Furthermore, this combination would be one of the more effective ways to effectively, and strongly emphasize the atmosphere, and thus made the Intellectual Properties and world much deeper and also visually more appealing to the user, and also the player.

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