

***Kanca Wingking*: reinterpreting the identity of Javanese women through video installation art**

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Abstract The identity of Javanese women has long reflected constructions by patriarchal cultural narratives, with the concept of *Kanca Wingking* confining them to domestic roles and subordinating them to men. This study investigates how video installation art represents and deconstructs that discourse. The research examines how visual, auditory, and interactive elements challenge the gendered symbolic order by employing a qualitative approach that integrates Julia Kristeva's semiotic theory and Foucauldian discourse analysis. The researcher collected data through a literature review and visual documentation of Javanese cultural representations. The findings demonstrate that video installation art not only symbolises patriarchal control, through elements such as the puppeteer's voice and the manipulation of women's expressions, but also subverts it by turning the audience into active participants in exposing and questioning those norms. From a Foucauldian perspective, the work reveals how domestic spaces and bodily representation function as instruments of discipline and surveillance, yet simultaneously open discursive space for agency and resistance. The study concludes that video installation art serves as both an expressive and political medium, offering critical interventions into the cultural construction of Javanese womanhood.

Keywords: cultural representation; identity; Javanese women; *kanca wingking*; video installation art

INTRODUCTION

Video installation is a contemporary art form that integrates video technology with installation practices to craft immersive and spatially engaging experiences for viewers, transforming traditional modes of spectatorship into dynamic, interactive environments (Gosse, 2020). Typically exhibited in galleries or public spaces, it expresses complex social, political, and cultural narratives. This research aims to understand how Javanese women's identities are depicted and interpreted through the perspective of a video installation artwork titled *Kanca Wingking*. People interpret *Kanca Wingking* as a figure who plays an essential role in supporting the family in a way that is invisible to the broader community. Society often positions women in domestic roles that shape their identity as supporting figures from behind (Mahmudah et al., 2023). The trajectory of feminism, exceptionally liberal feminism, has been influenced by the construction of modernity, which emphasises individual rights and rational progress. This branch of feminism historically reinforced women's roles in education and public participation, aiming to integrate women into structures of modern civil society while challenging certain traditional cultural constraints (Selbin, 2024). Javanese women's desire to unionise, as identified by (Widyastari et al., 2020), reflects a collective strategy to resist structural subordination within patriarchal society. This act of resistance demonstrates an awareness of unequal power relations and forms the basis for exploring how these dynamics take shape through symbolic and cultural representations. Therefore, this study adopts Julia Kristeva's semiotic approach to critically

examine how signs, meanings, and discourses surrounding gender roles are constructed and represented within video installation art, particularly in the context of Javanese culture. Javanese culture has a lot of symbols and uses to communicate many noble values (Benedictus et al., 2024).

Previous studies have examined how media such as painting, literature, and film portray Javanese women. For instance, through symbolic codes in visual art, *Wening* reflects traditional feminine values (Handayani & Marianto, 2024). Literature like *Entrok* presents women as morally strong and resistant to patriarchal norms (Nabila et al., 2022). In film, *Bumi Manusia* reconstructs women's roles as resilient and equal to men (Anggun Mayanti & Haryono, 2023). However, none of these works have explored how video installation, as a spatial and multisensory medium, might offer a new way of challenging patriarchal discourse. The power relationship between men and women has led to unilateral and hierarchical domination (Arowolo, 2020). Such phenomena in specific systems of power relations are closely related to global hegemony and power interests (Medie & Kang, 2018).

Javanese royal cultural contexts echo these insights, where tradition, ritual, and court culture have played roles in sustaining symbolic gender norms (Nugroho et al., 2024). Thus, this study tries to explain the position of women subordinated by patriarchal discourse and then mediated through installation art using videography media entitled '*Kanca Wingking*'. Theoretically, this research employs feminist theory, particularly semiotic feminism, which explores how signs and symbolic structures shape female subjectivity and cultural identity. This approach enables a deeper understanding of how Javanese women experience and negotiate patriarchal power through symbolic representations within their cultural context. The patriarchal discourse is built on a historical dimension that defines inequality between men and women through cultural and social norms that evolve, creating gender inequality that is deeply rooted in social history (Cameron, 2020). This patriarchal concept was born in the discourse of feminism, which aims to understand the inequality of relationships between men and women and systemic problems (Adisa et al., 2019). However, feminism that discusses patriarchy is not singular but tends to be plural because it is always conditioned based on the historical context involving femininity and masculinity (Myrntinen, 2019). Thus, this study seeks to reflect critically on the power relationship between women and men. Theoretically and conceptually, power relations are a discursive strategy for defining the relationship between men and women (Leff, 2017).

The position of the Javanese woman *Kanca Wingking* in the installation art video shows a patriarchal discourse that is considered ideal for Javanese society. In the Javanese context, women systematically seek to affirm their status as not only *Kanca Wingking* or Spouses under male domination but also struggles that must be pursued continuously in the family and society (Dewi, 2017). The concept of *Kanca Wingking* is starting to change in contemporary Javanese society (Setyawan, 2024). The dynamics of women's struggle for equality are recorded integrally as part of the cultural strategy. This strategy happens through grants and continues to gain relevance in the historical context. The battle reveals the myth of *Kanca Wingking* that seems essential or underestimated. Cultural signs build myths or discourses (Adiprabowo, 2018). Because of its cultural position, *Kanca Wingking* is open to criticism or prosecution in such a mythological context. The definition of mythology is a critical attempt to oppose or counter the dominant discourse in the history of power relations between men and women (Downes, 2018). This narrative resembles the myth of racial purity, where the colonial and New Order regimes governed Indonesia (Sarwoto, 2020). In Indonesia, one of the cultural products that depicts the inequality of women's position can be found in the novels *Bawuk* (1970) and *Sri Sumarah* (1973). Umar Kayam, the story's author, presents a woman who finds happiness by devoting herself entirely to the environment and her husband. In addition to Umar Kayam, such a female figure is depicted in Linus Suryadi AG's novel *Pengakuan Pariyem* (1981). The story tells how a woman sees and understands herself as a loyal servant to a noble family. These two works prove that a literary work can also discuss social phenomena. This social phenomenon requires contextualisation and a holistic view when discussed in art (Fu, 2020). The local community's environment reproduces social phenomena (Wiedemann, 2018). This social phenomenon in creating and developing new media art shows gender inequality in Javanese society.

As the central figure who inspired the creation of this installation art video, Javanese women are the basis on which the projected work provides social criticism of the patriarchal discourse in Javanese culture. People understand this gender perspective as a systemic

suppression mechanism (Pech et al., 2020). Reflective evaluation of gender perspectives is needed as a mainstreaming strategy (Amri et al., 2024). In addition, the strategic challenge relates to how power relations are studied in an intersectional analysis (Kantola & Verloo, 2018). Thus, regarding field observations, artworks about women and women's issues have not been critically studied, especially the veil of power relations. This study seeks to fill the void of critically motivated installation video artwork. This conceptual framework informs the installation work and contains a critical discourse on the forms of patriarchy that have formed in Javanese culture. Critical discourse is the basis for this research, as it dismantles the inequality of power relations seen as being taken for granted by the general public (Y. Choi, 2019). The installation video artwork studied in this study offers a critical discourse on gender perspectives in Indonesia in general and Java in particular.

The urgency of this research lies in the need to deconstruct the cultural narrative about Javanese women as *Kanca Wingking* and reframe women's position as individuals with power and rights in society. Using video installation art as a medium, this research utilises alternative spaces to explore Javanese women's identities beyond traditional boundaries. Identity is part of social status, which allows one to express one's abilities in society. As a contemporary art form, video installations provide the freedom to create visual discourses critical of traditional gender roles (Adiprabowo & Widodo, 2023; Wagner, 2019). The representation of Javanese women in this installation art is not only as *Kanca Wingking* in domestic life, but as a figure with the voice and power to criticise the inequality of power relations they experience. This study examines how video installation art can serve as a means of artistic expression and a platform for social criticism to question and unravel the concept of *Kanca Wingking*.

This research aims to make a meaningful contribution to understanding the position of Javanese women in the patriarchal discourse and to open a new space for dialogue about Javanese women's identity through contemporary art as a medium of social reflection. Through video installation art, this research presents a critical discourse highlighting gender inequality in Javanese society. It offers a new perspective on Javanese women's identity in the context of culture and gender representation.

METHODOLOGY

This research employs a qualitative approach that integrates Julia Kristeva's semiotic theory with Foucauldian discourse analysis. The researcher uses this combined framework to critically examine how signs, meanings, and discourses surrounding the role of Javanese women are constructed and represented in video installation art. The semiotic perspective draws upon Kristeva's feminist theory, which explores the symbolic dimension of language and how it shapes female subjectivity and cultural identity. Meanwhile, Foucault's discourse analysis provides tools to investigate how cultural narratives and practices embed power, knowledge, and social control.

The researcher collected data in this study through a literature review and documentation of visual materials relevant to the representation of Javanese women. Sources include academic writings, artworks, and media portrayals that reflect the construction of the *Kanca Wingking* concept. The analysis focused on how patriarchal values are expressed and maintained through symbolic forms and how critical visual representation can deconstruct these values.

The semiotic analysis identifies key signs, codes, and symbolic structures in the video installation work, particularly those related to femininity, domesticity, and resistance. Kristeva's theory of intertextuality is employed to trace how meanings are shaped through cultural references and sign systems, highlighting the instability and multiplicity of female identity in Javanese culture.

The discourse analysis follows the Foucauldian framework (Kendall & Wickham, 1999), involving four main steps: (a) examining how the discourse of *Kanca Wingking* is historically produced and legitimised in Javanese society; (b) identifying the limits and exclusions within the discourse, especially regarding women's roles beyond the domestic sphere; (c) uncovering potential discursive openings for women's agency in public domains; and (d) linking discursive representations to material and everyday practices that reinforce or resist gender hierarchies.

With this approach, this research focuses on understanding the existing discourse and the process of social change that allows Javanese women to redefine their roles in the domestic

and public spheres while changing patriarchal values. This approach enables research to unravel power dynamics and provide insights into women's adaptation and resistance processes within prevailing cultures and social norms.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study focuses on the practice of Javanese women who are assumed to be in a relationship with men to give birth to the discourse of *Kanca Wingking*. The term *Kanca Wingking*, literally 'companion in the back', reflects the deeply rooted patriarchal values in Javanese society, where women are confined to domestic spaces and subordinated under male authority. It is part of traditional expectations, such as *macak*, *manak*, and *masak* (*dressing up*, *bearing children*, and *cooking*), which frame women's identity within marriage (Rukwanda, 2023). Cultural rituals like *tata wicara* in Javanese weddings further reinforce these traditional norms, particularly through speech acts such as *atur pasrah* and *panampi*, which symbolically reaffirm patriarchal values and embed female submissiveness into public discourse (Listiyani & Amirudin, 2020).

Seeing the different ways women are present in their daily lives, both in dressing, dressing up, communicating, behaving, and more, makes the author interested in researching further. This creation seeks to dismantle one's view of the literal use of sex through a critical gender-based approach. In Javanese marriage, the term *Kanca Wingking* positions women as friends in the kitchen, objects of male sexuality, and only takes care of household activities. The term *swarga nunut*, *neraka katut* (if a man enters heaven, the woman will follow, and the same applies if a man enters hell—a woman also follows him) also describes the position of a weak Javanese woman as a wife. In addition, the term wife as a *sigaraning nyawa* (soul mate) adds to the following patriarchal discourse, which is not only a winging partner but also provides an overview of a parallel and more egalitarian position towards Javanese women.

There has been a shift in class and gender relations in Javanese society. The study also shows that shift. This explanation indicates that the role and position of women here are still considered biologically and viewed based on social constructions that generally believe women to be weak and subordinate and need to be maintained by men. However, on the other hand, women can become independent bodies and tend to be separated because the emancipation of women challenges patriarchal constructions and influences this shift. Thus, researchers must place the problem within the dimensions of history, culture, and power relations that condition it. The initial stage of idea development is to process the basic idea of creation into the shadow embodiment of the video artwork of the *Kanca Wingking* installation, which the artist continuously explores to become a whole core idea in the following narrative. The author conducts experiments to find materials related to basic concepts at the design stage, both from drawings and writing. Javanese women represent a part of the mannequin, exhibited through a particular discourse.

In the implementation stage, the author creates videography works by photographing facial expressions that the author will display on tube monitors and projector screens. The video recording of the Javanese woman's facial expression only used one shot and one point of view. Then, the shooting of visual symbols projected onto the wall is carried out at night and in crowded places to get a beam of light from motorised vehicles passing on the road. The author used a tripod for shooting dynamic images. The researchers voiced the monologue in the editing process, but the monologue concept led to a dialogue between the voice actors and the visuals. This dialogue is about a message from a wise man who gives his wife a moral lesson.

From a Foucauldian perspective, static imagery, vocal manipulation, and spatial limitation reflect a disciplinary mechanism over the female body. The woman's face, shown from a single angle on a monitor, symbolises surveillance and constraint, echoing Foucault's theory of panopticism, where visibility becomes a trap (Amal et al., 2023). From the sound, if people don't see the visuals, only the sound gives the impression that there is a puppet show. However, if the audience sees the visuals and hears the sounds together, then this is what the author will present as an alternative and innovative experimental work. Another sound effect provided is the fading sound of *gamelan*, which causes a mood effect from the visuals in the work. The sound in the head replacement tube monitor contains the sound of the reaction of a woman's expression, which, when touched, will cause different sounds, such as moaning, pleasure, sadness, and happiness.

The filming process is complete; the next stage is the editing stage. Editing is composing an image to cause traumatic stress from the resulting story. Editing does not generate meaning from stand-alone shots but through a sequence of shots cut cleanly and realistically. The images are selected, processed, and assembled into a series of units at this stage. In this case, the editing compiles the results of the recording of symbols, facial expressions, and dances, and rearranges them into an engaging visual narrative with basic ideas. Speaking of editing, it will also talk about manipulation. Such manipulations can co-occur with composing the image.

The editor will combine the diegetic voices from female characters with non-diegetic voices created during editing. It makes the impression that the key message reaches the audience. In addition, the voice also encourages the emotions of the audience. The sound in the room is a sound that consists of six channels. The sound that emerges from the dance is the sound of *gending* mixed or colliding with other *gending* sounds from each dance video. The voice of a Javanese woman that, if touched, makes a sound that becomes her feelings, then the voice that emerges from outside the inner space of a Javanese woman is the voice of the puppeteer.

The author intended the male puppeteer's voice for his impression. Such a voice explains that the pressure arises from the puppeteer's voice, which the visuals do not manifest. The puppeteer's voice displays voice pressure, with content consisting of orders or messages conveyed to the Javanese female figure to comply with the demands of the male figure. Society positions women as people who must obey what a man wants. The puppeteer's voice appears as a background and a response to a woman's visual feelings. This arrangement of unseen male authority and emotionally reactive female sound mirrors Foucault's idea of how power circulates invisibly, not by force, but through accepted norms and behaviours. The work translates the microphysics of power into multisensory form, sound becomes command; facial expression becomes surveillance data; and the *gamelan* becomes ambient control (Aryal, 2025).

In Foucauldian analysis, *Kanca Wingking's* discourse can be seen as a product of power relations formed from generation to generation and has become part of the structure of Javanese society. Discourse is an instrument of power that regulates what can be said and what society must hide (Kendall & Wickham, 1999). In the case of *Kanca Wingking*, women's domestic roles become something that is accepted and taken for granted, while women's aspirations to break out of these boundaries are often denied or ignored. Through this artwork, the discourse is critiqued intellectually and deconstructed sensorially, creating an aesthetic resistance through audiovisual fragmentation. Against this backdrop, *Kanca Wingking's* video installation work seeks to visualise these restrictions through visual and sound elements that reveal the inner experiences of Javanese women under patriarchal control.

Patriarchal discourse in the concept of *Kanca Wingking*

Video's history is inseparable from photography's development in the 19th century, which continues in the 21st century through digital formats (Orrghen, 2020). Art videos generate awareness of today's human rights and reflect on the ethical, aesthetic, and political issues around people (Laanes, 2020). Therefore, *Kanca Wingking's* installation video artwork is an experimental work born from creative ideas inspired by reality in society. The installation art video discusses gender issues inspired by the Javanese women's phenomenon. Visual arts, including video installations, can critique social norms and gender roles by visually conveying feminist perspectives and local culture (Manresa & Caldarola, 2020). This approach allows installation videos to serve as a medium of artistic expression and as an advocacy tool that brings gender issues into the public sphere, challenging traditional perceptions of women's societal roles.

Javanese women in the locus of patriarchal culture are always placed as caregivers in any form (Smith-Hefner, 1988; Widiana et al., 2020). This consideration forms a work of art with the theme of inequality in the relationship between men and women. However, the work moves beyond simple representation by incorporating mechanisms of interaction, such as buttons, sound response, and mannequins, as metaphorical devices that not only discipline but also produce the female body, echoing Foucault's theory of microphysics of power, where dispersed, normalised practices exert control rather than overt force (Erlenbusch-Anderson, 2020). The mannequin, with a projected female face responsive to touch, symbolises the fragmented subject under surveillance, where the body becomes both object and medium of control. The audience's pressing of buttons to trigger sound responses enacts the internalisation of

command, aligning with Foucault's notion that modern power operates through accepted norms rather than physical coercion. This interactive and symbolic control concept aligns with the idea that modern power no longer relies on overt physical coercion. Instead, it operates through ongoing surveillance that promotes self-regulation (Fensi, 2025).

Through symbolism, colour, and composition, this artwork invites audiences to explore, assess, and question the norms contributing to societal inequality, thus opening a dialogue for social change. Kristeva's semiotic theory further deepens the interpretation by viewing the emotive sound elements, such as moans, cries, and laughter, as expressions from the chora (semiotic space), disrupting the symbolic order traditionally silencing women (Kristeva, 1980). These affective soundscapes resist the rigid linguistic structures of patriarchy and serve as forms of embodied protest. In this way, the combination of technology, interactivity, and symbolism does not merely illustrate gender inequality but performs it in a sensory, participatory format that implicates the viewer as part of the disciplinary network. The video contains the expression of the Javanese female phenomenon, consisting of a woman's facial expression that functions as a head replacement for the mannequin. As in the image below, the system will move or activate the visual expression if the viewer's response touches or presses it.



Figure 1. The combination of technology with a mannequin
Source: Author (2015)

From Figure 1 and watching the show, the audience can interactively select the video option through the buttons provided. The button invites the audience into the inner world of a Javanese woman depicted in a visual narrative. However, this interactivity is deceptive; it simulates agency while reinforcing the idea of the female body as a site of control and response. The viewer presses the button to see what response the woman's face will present. The concept follows what installation art video artist Nam June Paik initiated about the nature of one-way television media. The mechanism focuses on electronic reproduction in body form and sound, simultaneously criticising the position of television (Barker, 2017). Media, especially television and film, use technology to isolate and organise voices and bodies in narratives (Bayramoğlu et al., 2024).

The installation projects visual shapes on monitors and buttons. Provided next to it shows the tranquillity of confined women according to the discourse of domestication. This tranquillity, however, is artificially maintained, an ambient control akin to panopticism, where the aesthetics of peace masks the internalised discipline imposed on women's expressions and affect (Leib, 2017). In addition, the buttons describe how society controls the female body's strength. Controlling a woman's body to conquer it will prevent her from behaving productively (Zhuwawo & Sibanda, 2020). In doing so, the installation video allows the audience to interact directly with the concept of domestication, showing the limitations of the traditional roles imposed on women in domestic spaces. The interactive nature of the installation creates a reflective experience for the audience, as the work invites them to question and understand how social systems direct and control women's expression and role in society.

Visual and sound elements to reveal patriarchal power relations

There is a change in gender views in Javanese society, marked by a shift in traditional values towards a more egalitarian direction. The discourse of orientalism and women's emancipation began to enter the fabric of society, allowing Javanese women to change their views on the role of *Kanca Wingking*. Although patriarchal values are still influential, Javanese women are

beginning to define themselves beyond traditional domestic and social boundaries by adopting modern values that promote gender equality. These findings show that although the patriarchal system remains, society is beginning to be open to the new role of women, where Javanese women participate in various public spheres without having to leave their cultural identity. The blend of traditional values and modernity allows Javanese women to maintain their cultural identity while adopting the value of gender equality beyond domestic boundaries (Nurahmawati, 2024). This change shows a cultural adaptation recognising women's right to autonomy in personal and social decisions. Based on literature analysis and observations, the author directs this plan to create a space for Javanese women to express their distressed experiences in the patriarchal system and for the audience to understand and question gender boundaries in Javanese culture.

The visual design, such as the female mannequin with a monitor for a head, interactive buttons, and the voice of a male puppeteer, functions as a semiotic field that reflects how women's identities are discursively constructed and regulated. According to Foucault's concept of surveillance, the monitor represents a panoptic device where women internalise control and modify their behaviour accordingly (Foucault, 1995). The monitor replacing the head illustrates how norms dictate women's identities, reducing them to externally programmed representations. This artistic approach also reflects Kristeva's notion of the semiotic chora, where the woman's body and identity are repressed and restructured by symbolic (masculine) authority (Kristeva, 1984).

This stage implements four basic principles in the context of Foucauldian discourse analysis. First, *Kanca Wingking's* discourse was created by repeating cultural values that place women as male supporters. Here, the visual element (monitor as head) symbolises how discourse materialises in bodily representation, illustrating the internalisation of disciplinary norms. Second, what can and cannot be said is often governed by invisible mechanisms of discipline. The interactive buttons, which control the mannequin's facial expressions, visually signify how women's emotional displays are shaped by external patriarchal forces, acting as a form of soft surveillance that aligns with Foucault's microphysics of power, wherein subtle, everyday mechanisms exercise power rather than overt coercion (Capodivacca & Giacomini, 2024). The audience's ability to manipulate these expressions mirrors disciplinary structures that define normative emotional behaviour, reinforcing Foucault's claim that power constrains bodies and constructs identities through surveillance and self-regulation (Liu, 2024). This symbolic control of expression also resonates with Julia Kristeva's semiotic theory, where emotional expression (*jouissance*) is fragmented under the symbolic law, reflecting how language and cultural codes suppress the full articulation of feminine subjectivity (Borg, 2022). Third, how can space for new statements be created? This work opens up a new space for alternative narratives about *Kanca Wingking* by giving the audience control so that they directly experience how societal structures control women's roles. This interactive experience allows the audience to reflect on the gender inequality they may not be aware of. Fourth, materialising discursive and material practices. The puppeteer's voice, male, authoritative, and disembodied, represents the *logos* in Kristeva's theory: the linguistic and patriarchal order that structures subjectivity. The disconnection between body and voice symbolises how the dominant discourse ventriloquises women. This conceptual framework aligns with Foucault's notion of power/knowledge, where symbolic domination manufactures the 'truth' about women's roles (Foucault, 1980).

Thus, this planning stage composes the artwork as a visual object and an interaction space that allows for criticism of gender discourse. Through the available buttons, the installation gives audiences the experience to interact directly with the boundaries that women face, creating an emotional and reflective experience. Through each choice, the installation invites the audience to question the values they may have previously accepted without question. This process will raise awareness and open a broader discussion about women's societal roles and challenges. Ultimately, this experience is about understanding women's stories and testing the audience's beliefs about the norms that society has formed. Narrative-based approaches, such as contextual drama or audio, can influence public perceptions of social norms, including gender norms (Arias, 2019). This narrative-based technique engages the audience emotionally, creating an acceptable, immersive experience that encourages individuals to reflect and revisit their embedded beliefs.

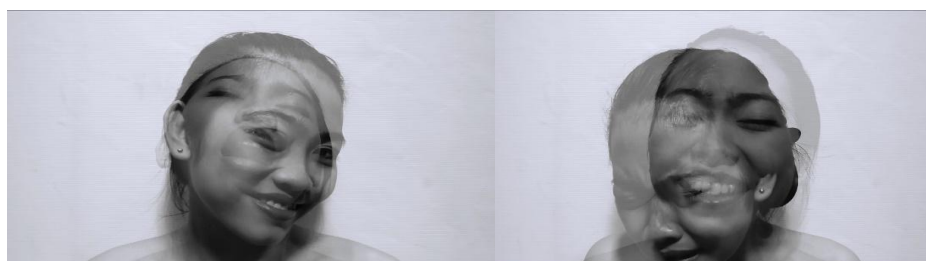


Figure 2. Some facial expressions in the head replacement tube monitor
Source: Author (2015)

The expression in the figure 2 shows the emotional picture women feel. The multi-screen setup mediates the expression. Forms of expression include sadness, happiness, pleasure, and combinations. These three combinations of expressions are expressions that women want to convey, both explicitly and implicitly. In particular, a phrase describing a woman crying can mean two different things. It indicates signs of sadness or happiness. On the one hand, emotional expressions, such as affection, are greatly influenced by social norms and gender differences, which shape emotional responses and how individuals respond to the emotions of others in social situations (Messina et al., 2021). Emotional settings displayed in the video format have a visually positive effect (Bi & Tang, 2020).

Meanwhile, the installation then positioned the audience as a Javanese female role figure. The installation conditions the spectator by providing specific stimuli to generate a reaction. These features show the dimension of women's femininity operated by external authorities in marital relations and other patriarchal activities (Salem & Yount, 2019). Thus, the installation deliberately conditions the audience so that the atmosphere draws them into the expression it evokes. The expressive form displayed brings an ironic, happy laughter effect: the installation stirs the audience's expressive feelings with sadness and happiness at the same time. Therefore, some of these considerations are central to the creation process. The works displayed can mediate the researcher's primary goal in describing women's deepest feelings.

Video installation artwork as a social and discursive critique

Video installation artwork, through visual expression, became an alternative means of critiquing patriarchy. Video art remains essential for re-examining women's representation and identities with a new feminist aesthetic approach (Leuzzi, 2023). These findings suggest that the art of video installations serves not only as a passive representation but also as an active critique of gender role stereotypes, where the artwork presents women as powerful subjects capable of facing patriarchal pressures. *Kanca Wingking's* video installation artwork features a female mannequin, and the artist replaces her head with a monitor and buttons that control her facial expressions. In this context, the visual element is a material embodiment of the concept of patriarchal discourse, where women in Javanese society can often only express their emotions or feelings through social expectations. Javanese women are usually trapped in traditional roles limited by patriarchal values, expecting to conform to and serve the family according to applicable social norms (Mawaddah et al., 2021).

The choreography and bodily expressions shown in the four-screen video are not merely descriptive but function as a visual critique of disciplinary practices. According to Foucault, the body is a site of power inscription where repetitive training and surveillance produce docile bodies (Foucault, 1995). The female performers' subtle, fractured, or reversed movements symbolise resistance to this disciplinary regulation, challenging the normalised scripts imposed on women's behaviour. The reversed orientation of body parts in the footage, such as swapping the head and feet, actively deconstructs the dominant symbolic order and gestures toward the disorientation experienced under gendered discipline (Stanciu, 2024). This visual strategy also resonates with Julia Kristeva's semiotic theory, where the symbolic order of language and law suppresses affective and pre-linguistic expression (*jouissance*) (Kristeva, 1984). The fragmentation of movement and rupture in bodily rhythm visualise this repression of female subjectivity, creating a semiotic rupture that allows the audience to experience the silenced emotions of women. These expressions break through the symbolic law that governs what women can express or articulate, thus making the video expressive and subversive. This disruption of structured meaning through aesthetic expression aligns with Kristeva's notion of

the semiotic disrupting the symbolic in feminist expression, allowing suppressed subjectivities to emerge through aesthetic forms (Alhemeedawi & Basim Saadoon, 2023).

The following four screens visualise the choreography where the performers show the emotional expression of the role of a Javanese woman. This interpretation of aesthetic movement is similar to understanding dance as a mirror of people's values and beliefs, making it an essential means of understanding social and cultural expressions in different communities (Ramesh, 2023). These ideas include aesthetic and technical displacement, changes in the transmission of dance exercises, and consumption mediated by video. The bodily gestures in the dance function as both representations and interventions, reproducing social scripts while simultaneously exposing their fragility. In this context, every movement, rhythm, and gesture of the body becomes a symbolic element that expresses a veiled narrative about women's roles, identities, and power in Javanese society. By utilising video as a medium of transmission, dance can expand accessibility and strengthen the meaning of the choreography presented, bringing discussions about the role of Javanese women to a broader public space and stimulating more critical interpretation. Choreography is converted based on interaction through installation formats and audiovisual techniques (Djebbari, 2019). Therefore, the installation mediates the constructions of sad emotions and joy through dance.



Figure 3. Video installation art *Kanca Wingking*
Source: Author (2015)

The placement of the four video screens in Figure 3, intentionally positioned under a bed, visually references the marginalisation of women in domestic spaces and symbolises their relegation to positions of subordination. This spatial arrangement materialises the metaphor of being 'beneath' male dominance, a recurring feature in patriarchal discourse. Feminist artist Tara Abdulla similarly used domestic symbolism in her large-scale installation by stringing thousands of clothing items belonging to survivors of gender-based violence along a central city street, actively confronting patriarchal norms embedded in private and public spaces (Alizadeh et al., 2021).

The position of the video screen expresses the emotions of women who are under pressure when placed below. This spatial arrangement does not merely depict emotion; it symbolically reinforces the discourse of subordination in domestic spaces, where women are often positioned 'beneath' men both physically and structurally. In Foucauldian terms, this spatial subordination visualises how power operates at the micro level, through the arrangement of bodies and their environments, to normalise gendered hierarchies and produce what he calls 'docile bodies'. Recent scholarship highlights how such disciplinary power works subtly through everyday interactions, aesthetics, and spatial design to shape feminine bodies into compliant, self-regulating subjects (Abdulzahra et al., 2021). This trend shows how society often positions Javanese women behind men, reflecting persistent gender bias. Therefore, gender bias does not occur naturally. Still, social and cultural systems construct it to position women in traditional or supportive roles that reinforce stereotypes and place them in a subordinate position (Crawford et al., 2024).

As supported by (Alizadeh et al., 2021), feminist spatial strategies in installation art often challenge the public/ private divide and reveal how patriarchal power infiltrates domestic settings. In addition, society has always legitimised gender bias through the common belief that women's work belongs in the domestic sphere and is considered less significant than male-dominated occupations. This understanding reinforces stereotypes about women's traditional roles, which has an impact on their limited opportunities to thrive in the professional sector. As

a result, women are often positioned in underappreciated roles in society, so gender inequality continues and affects social balance in various areas of life. The spatial placement of video screens below bed height further evokes the visual logic of surveillance and submission. According to Foucault, this bodily positioning is not incidental; it's a disciplinary technique that organises bodies in space to sustain hierarchical power (Foucault, 1995). The placement represents how women are considered subordinate in patriarchal discourse, further visualised on figure 4.

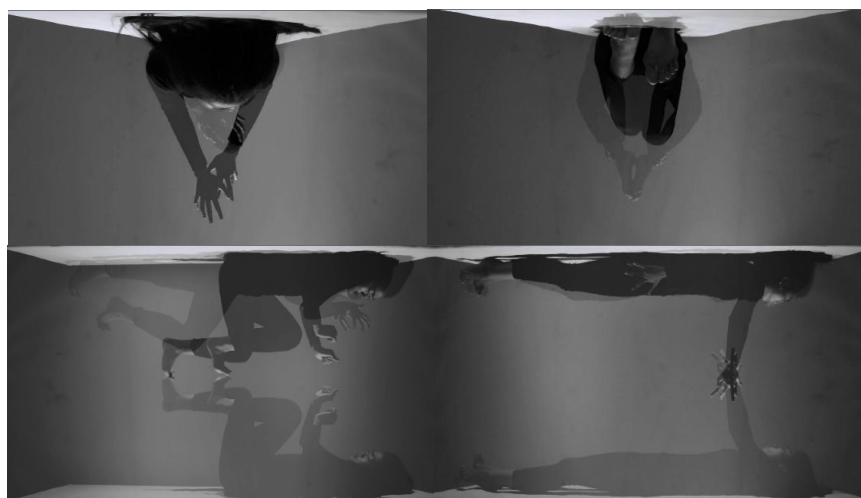


Figure 4. Dance video *Kanca Wingking*
Source: Author (2015)

The four visuals shown above show the unity of the artwork of the *Kanca Wingking* installation. First, two body parts in the video, the head and the feet, are inverted, presenting a conscious disruption of bodily norms. This inversion is a rhetorical and visual strategy to critique embedded power structures within gender discourse, aligning with feminist utopian methods of symbolic resistance (Paul, 2020). Second, the two lateral sections (left and right) represent a woman's internal conflict when negotiating gender-biased norms in her cultural context. Viewers can read these choreographic sequences through Foucault's notion of disciplinary power, where repetition, rhythm, and constrained gestures condition the body to conform. Yet, the fractured and unstable movements in this video also offer a form of resistance, interrupting the rhythm and reasserting feminine subjectivity, as choreographic acts of resistance often emerge through non-linear, disjointed, and emotionally charged performances that challenge dominant power structures (Zami, 2021). Thus, this choreography video represents the art of stature based on rhythm, movement, and gestures that are interrelated with the researcher's ideas. That is why dance is an aesthetic communication medium representing the choreographic emotions that carry it. Dance can also play an essential role in social criticism.

Kristeva's theory of the semiotic is also applicable here, where the pre-linguistic and affective energies (*jouissance*) emerge in movement and gesture, often repressed under the symbolic law of patriarchy (Wu, 2019). The video's embodied expressions, fragmented, repeated, and sometimes incoherent, break through the symbolic order that governs what women can articulate, aligning with feminist film theory that views disordered corporeality and fragmentation as modes of resistance to the symbolic constraints imposed on female subjectivity (J. Choi, 2024). Each choreographic style becomes a medium through which dancers articulate personal and social expressions shaped by prevailing gender norms, as contemporary dance often reflects and challenges projected gender bias in its movement vocabulary and thematic structure (Gong, 2024). In the visual form shown above, the series of stories contains a woman who knows men and builds a household to realise how women experience personal anxiety over male subordination that occurs during marriage. Thus, the choreographic narrative becomes a site of embodied struggle, where performers negotiate identity, agency, and resistance in visual and affective terms. The dance presented by the video seeks to expand the scope of its performance, which is not only one-time but can also be repeated and performed according to the needs of the following work.

Unravelling the power relationship in *Kanca Wingking's* work

The *Kanca Wingking* installation reveals the hidden power dynamics embedded in gender interactions and traditional Javanese culture. The work critically exposes how rigid patriarchal narratives continue to define the roles and positions of Javanese women, frequently marginalising their voices. A key manifestation of gender subordination lies in the belief that one sex is inherently more important than the other (Widayati et al., 2019). Such gendered role separation has led to unequal opportunities for women's participation in the public sphere. By incorporating elements of performance art, particularly the puppeteer's voice, the work functions not merely as artistic expression but as a symbolic tool for challenging repressive social structures. Traditionally, the puppeteer controls the storyline and directs characters in a shadow puppet performance. However, his voice assumes a new role in this piece: not as master over passive female characters but as a foil to their visual self-expression. Women respond not through words but through facial expressions, revealing their internal states and asserting agency.

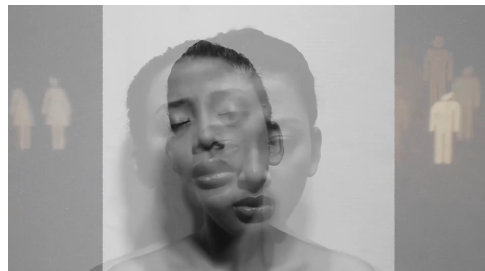


Figure 5. Mix video *Kanca Wingking*
Source: Author (2015)

Figure 5 illustrates the intersection of video art and traditional performance styles. The puppet has an excellent potential to continue to exist and develop if positioned as an entertainment and educational medium, especially in character formation based on wisdom and local values (Adiprabowo, 2024). The puppeteer's voice appears across multiple video channels, offering narration and reaction to the inner emotions of the female characters. This audible presence acts as a form of symbolic power, subtle yet controlling, demonstrating how male authority continues to shape female embodiment even without physical dominance. The women, by contrast, communicate through visual expression, making their bodies sites of discipline and resistance. This mode of embodied resistance echoes Ana Mendieta's feminist art practice, where the body becomes a poetic medium that conveys and subverts control systems (Rajcinovska-Pavleska, 2021).

The installation also incorporates other symbolic elements. First, the artist strategically uses the male and female toilet symbols to visualise the institutionalised nature of gender construction. Second, a female figure carrying a handbag symbolises resistance, suggesting that women can occupy the same public and professional roles as men. These visual cues reflect choreographic logic, representing the constructed gap between masculine and feminine spheres. The kitchen, well, and mattress are key visual metaphors within the work, anchoring the female figure in the domestic sphere. In Javanese cultural discourse, these three locations traditionally define women's duties: cooking, cleansing, and reproduction. Foucauldian analysis helps us understand how such spaces become instruments of discipline, organising women's bodies and activities to reinforce hierarchy and docility. (Ajie et al., 2023) Demonstrate this through the documentary *Wido*, where the filmmaker shows how domestic space both constrains and enables the fluidity of gender roles, thereby illustrating how individuals negotiate docility rather than passively accept it.

Drawing from Kristeva's semiotic theory, these domestic objects also serve as symbolic sites of repressed feminine energy. Although the symbolic order confines women to these roles, the jouissance expressed through non-verbal gestures, repetition, and fragmentation in the video challenges this constraint. The fragmented yet affectively charged female body breaks through patriarchal structures that govern what women can express or articulate (El Bakal, 2024). Furthermore, the cultural ideal of feminine beauty, often linked to physical attractiveness and inner virtues such as patience and diligence, is another form of soft control. The video installation directly critiques this ideal by placing traditionally feminine symbols within unsettling contexts,

reframing beauty not as virtue but as constraint. In doing so, *Kanca Wingking* does not merely represent social critique; it performs it, reclaiming the female body as a site of visual, theoretical, and political resistance. This work actively repositions the female body from a passive aesthetic object into an empowered discursive agent that confronts and destabilises patriarchal norms. By embedding gestures of resistance within domestic and symbolic codes, the artwork invites the audience to question normalised gender roles. It creates space for counter-narratives that embody feminine subjectivity and agency.

CONCLUSION

Kanca Wingking's video installation artwork reveals and critiques gender inequality reflected in the patriarchal discourse of Javanese culture, primarily through the concept of *Kanca Wingking*, which positions women as male supporters within domestic roles. This study critically interprets the symbolic and discursive construction of female subjectivity and power in Javanese culture by employing a qualitative approach that integrates Julia Kristeva's semiotic theory with Foucauldian discourse analysis. The analysis shows how visual and auditory components, such as monitors replacing women's heads, interactive buttons that manipulate emotional expressions, and the puppeteer's voice, not only materialise patriarchal control but also subvert it by exposing its mechanisms and limitations. These artistic strategies deconstruct the dominant discourse by enabling audiences to engage in a reflective, participatory experience that foregrounds the micro-operations of power, as theorised by Foucault. In particular, the ability of viewers to control female expressions symbolises how patriarchal systems normalise gendered behaviours through surveillance and regulation. At the same time, Kristeva's semiotic lens reveals how fragmented, affective expressions of the female body challenge the symbolic order that limits women's articulation, opening space for fluid and subversive identities. Among the elements analysed, visual fragmentation, spatial symbolism, interactive control, and sound emerge as dominant tools in undermining the gendered hierarchy of traditional discourse. These components turn the installation into a dialogic site where viewers reflect upon, resist, and redefine disciplinary norms. This work thus functions as both artistic expression and critical platform, effectively deconstructing the *Kanca Wingking* discourse by dismantling the normative assumptions embedded within cultural narratives and visual signs. Theoretically, this study expands Foucauldian and Kristevan frameworks within Southeast Asian cultural contexts. Practically, it demonstrates how contemporary art can serve as a critical tool for gender discourse and social awareness. Future research should continue exploring visual and discursive deconstruction in other patriarchal cultural settings and examine how increasing interactivity can enhance the audience's critical engagement with embedded gender power relations.

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