



## Visual Perception and Artistic Stage Design: A Cognitive Perspective on Contemporary Indonesian Performing Arts

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### Abstract

This study explores the application of Carolyn Bloomer's cognitive theory in analyzing artistic stage design at the 2025 Post-Creation Festival held at the Indonesian Institute of Arts in Surakarta. Bloomer's theory of visual perception is used to understand how visual elements such as stage design, lighting, costumes, and the performance space influence the audience's cognitive and emotional experiences. The research uses a descriptive qualitative approach, gathering data through direct observation, interviews, and visual documentation. The results show that artistic design serves not only as an aesthetic element but also as a form of visual communication that stimulates perception and meaning. From a cognitive perspective, each visual element activates mental processes such as attention, association, and symbolic interpretation, thereby connecting visual experiences to meaningful awareness. Through conceptually designed artistic staging, the 2025 Post-Creation Festival becomes a space for dialogue between artists and audiences, where visual perception develops into a reflective and meaningful aesthetic experience.

**Keywords:** *Cognitive Theory; Visual Perception; Artistic Design; Post-Creation Festival; Carolyn Bloomer*

### Introduction

Artistic design in a performing arts production plays a vital role by unifying visual elements, space, and atmosphere to support the narrative's flow and concept. It reinforces character traits, brings the story to life, and creates a new experience for the audience aligned with the artistic vision of the work. Elements such as costumes, makeup, props, lighting, and stage composition serve as media for translating the artist's creative ideas to art enthusiasts (Tinio, 2013).

A crucial aspect of artistic design is stage design. It determines how the performance space is used and influences how the work interacts with the audience. Different stage setups, such as proscenium, arena, or open space, provide a variety of experiences. The choice of stage shape is always related to the

concept of the work, as stage design is not just a venue for performance but also an integral part of conveying artistic messages.

The application of artistic design to the 2025 Post-Creation Festival at the Indonesian Institute of the Arts in Surakarta is essential. With the overarching theme “An Artistic Innovation Sanctuary: Dari arsip tubuh Nusantara menuju ruang pengetahuan global” it highlights the significance of artistic innovation spaces rooted in the cultural archives of the archipelago, while also encouraging closer

engagement with the community. This festival showcases 16 remarkable works across performing arts, visual arts, media arts, and performative orations (show brain), all crafted with artistic and stage design exploration as a key part of the creative approach. Therefore, the festival's central theme is not just a slogan but is genuinely embodied through the artistic practices exhibited.

Artistic design in artistic performances results from a complex visual perception process, where the audience not only observes physical forms, colors, and lights, but also interprets their underlying meanings. According to Carolyn Bloomer in *Principles of Visual Perception* (1976) (Abulafia, 2015), visual perception is a cognitive process that involves thinking, experience, and visual memory, shaping a person's understanding of a work of art. This indicates that the aesthetic experience in a performance is not solely due to the beauty of the form but also to the interaction between visual stimuli and the audience's cognitive framework.

In the context of the artistic design of the 2025 Post-Creation Festival at the Indonesian Institute of the Arts in Surakarta, Bloomer's cognitive theory offers an essential foundation for understanding how visual elements, such as stage design, lighting, costumes, and props, shape a comprehensive perceptual experience. Each aspect serves not only as an ornament but also as a visual sign system that guides the audience toward specific meanings and emotions. Therefore, artistic design functions as a cognitive medium that connects the artist's ideas with the audience's interpretation.

This cognitive approach demonstrates how the audience processes the visual experience of a performance through perception, attention, and symbolic association. Through this process, works of art are not only seen but also deeply “understood” and “felt.” Therefore, this study analyzes the artistic layout of the 2025 Post-Creation Festival by applying Carolyn Bloomer's cognitive theory as a framework for exploring the relationship between visual elements and the audience's perceptual experience.

## **Method**

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive methodology. The qualitative method was selected because it is well-suited for examining the dynamic, complex, and symbolically rich phenomenon of performing arts. Using this approach, researchers can thoroughly explore the artistic elements, stage design, and audience experience at the 2025 Post-Creation Festival.

This study employs a qualitative method with a descriptive-analytical approach, grounded in Carolyn Bloomer's cognitive theory of visual perception. This approach was selected because it helps researchers understand the audience's aesthetic and mental experiences regarding the visual elements in the performance (Prameswara & Siswanto, 2016).

Data was collected through direct observation of performances at the 2025 Post-Creation Festival, which included various art forms such as theatre, fashion shows, dance, film, and exhibitions. Researchers noted and documented visual aspects related to artistic design, including lighting, costumes, stage composition, and the use of space. Additionally, interviews were conducted with artists and audiences to explore how they interpreted these visual experiences (Muh. Rijal et al., 2024).

Data analysis was performed by integrating empirical findings with Bloomer's cognitive concepts, such as visual perception, attention, organization of visual elements, and meaning-making (Rodrigues da Silva & Da Consolação Dias, 2024). The analysis stages included:

1. Identify the main visual elements that influenced the audience's perception.
2. Analysis of the perception and interpretation process, specifically how the audience understood the meaning of the artistic design presented.
3. Synthesizing cognitive meaning, specifically exploring the connection between visual experience and conceptual understanding of the festival theme.

Theoretical Aspects	Key Concepts	Explanation in the Context of Research
<b>Visual Perception</b>	Sense of visual elements	The initial stage is where the audience captures visual stimuli from the performance, such as colour, shape, light, space, and texture.
<b>Attention</b>	Focus on specific visual elements	The audience selects visual information that is considered interesting or dominant from the overall appearance of the show.
<b>Organisation of Visual Elements</b>	Arrangement and structuring of visual elements	The brain processes organise visual elements into a meaningful and harmonious composition.
<b>Meaning-Making</b>	Interpretive process of visual experience	The stage at which the audience interprets and gives meaning to what they see, based on their cultural context, experiences, and personal emotions.

Thus, this research method not only explains the technical aspects of artistic arrangements but also describes how visual perception acts as a cognitive process that shapes the audience's aesthetic experience.

The data collection method involves observation, specifically by experiencing the performances firsthand at various festival sites with different displays. The researcher participates as an audience member, which helps them observe the details of the performance atmosphere, lighting, stage setup, clothing, music, and the interaction between performers and the audience. Being present as an art enthusiast allows the researcher to gain authentic experience while naturally recording the audience's reactions. Additionally, the researcher interviewed one of the artists involved to gather more information about the works on display (Supartono, 2019).

Additionally, the researcher documented the field through recording, photography, and brief audio clips to support the analysis. The collected data were then examined in relation to relevant literature, including artistic arrangement theory, stage setup, and contemporary performing arts studies.

This method not only describes the technical and aesthetic aspects of the performance but also reveals the meaning behind the artistic choices and their connection to the festival's overarching theme, "An Artistic Innovation Sanctuary: Dari arsip tubuh Nusantara menuju ruang pengetahuan global."

## Results and Discussion

### A. Festival Events Series

The Post-Creation Festival will be held again at the Indonesian Institute of the Arts Surakarta in 2025, with the theme "An Artistic Innovation Sanctuary: Dari arsip tubuh Nusantara menuju ruang pengetahuan global" harmonizing the sensory, intellectual, and spiritual aspects through exhibitions and

performances by Post-Master's and Doctoral students. This festival features 16 outstanding works, divided into four main categories: Performing Arts, Fine Arts, Recorded Media Arts, and Show Brain, a performative oration meeting space that brings together scholars, artists, and thinkers with notable speakers. The Postgraduate Cipta Festival is organized not only by postgraduate students of ISI Surakarta but also includes contributions from several Indonesian art institutes, such as ISI Yogyakarta, ISI Bali, and the Jakarta Institute of the Arts (IKJ).

This festival acts as a platform for exploration, innovation, and inspiration, enabling the community to connect directly with artists through their work. Featuring a unique art presentation and backed by extensive research and exploration, it offers an exciting opportunity for further study. To fulfill the assignment of the Artistic Discipline Course, the author will review several performances in the Post-Creation Festival 2025.



Opening Ceremony of the Pasca Creation Festival  
Source: Research Team, taken on September 7, 2025

The festival will take place from September 7 to 9, 2025, featuring a series of consecutive events at various locations on campus, including ISI Surakarta's Teater Kapal, Teater Besar, Teater Kecil and Pendopo. The Opening Ceremony was held at the Ship Theatre, beginning with a report from the performative committee by Dr. Eko Supriyanto, M.F.A., and Dr. Wahyu Novianto, M.Sn. This was followed by the launch of the musical work 'Gender' by Prof. Dr. I. Nyoman Sukerna, S.Kar., M.Hum, and a dance performance from SONOSENi by the Dance Study Program and the ISI Surakarta Inquiry Study Program. The MC began the stage interaction by screening the teaser video for 'An Artistic Innovation Sanctuary,' followed by remarks from Prof. Dr. I. Nyoman Sukerna, Rector of ISI Surakarta, S.Kar., M.Hum. The gong was struck to officially open the event, which was presided over by the Mayor of Surakarta, Respati Achmad Ardianto.

This festival features a diverse array of exhibitions and performances that are open to the public. Heny Purnomo (2018) explained that performing arts are a form of art that emphasizes the aspect of "spectacle" and is always linked to complex issues. The presence of exhibitions and performances at the Post-Creation Festival acts as an interactive space that brings together academics, artists, and the community in a shared experience.

Teater Kapal is one of the venues that hosts the first arena-style performance. The audience sat in a neat, circular arrangement around the stage. In addition to the live performance, a curved videotron was positioned at the junction across the front of the small theater, serving as a medium for live performers on the event stage for those who could not see the stage due to crowded seating. Besides its aesthetic value, the videotron also acts as a promotional tool, attracting visual interest from passersby and encouraging their interest in the festival.



Videotron Live Stage

Source: Research Team, taken on September 7, 2025

Following the opening ceremony, a fashion show titled "Sativa" by Vivian Aprida Syafira, S.Sn, M.Sn, was held. The work conceptually reinterprets Dewi Sri, also known as Dewi Padi, a figure associated with Indonesia's agrarian community culture. The clothing process is approximately 90% handmade, utilizing natural raw materials, specifically Sansevieria fibers, also known as Lidah Mertua.

The choreography displayed by the talents from the FS Model Agency created a unique presentation that amazed and captivated the audience; it became like a 'spectacle' at this fashion show. The models, who moved to the music with energetic movements while pausing at several points, effectively highlighted the details of the fashion, such as the motifs made of straw. This provided a visual experience for the audience, not only allowing them to watch the fashion show and observe the details being showcased, but also offering an aesthetic experience of a performing art that combines entertainment and educational value (Litter, 2022).



Fashion Show by Vivian Aprida Syafira, S.Sn, M.Sn

Source: Research Team, taken on September 7, 2025

Adding a stage tongue to the arena-shaped stage brings it closer to the audience's line of sight. The fashion models took turns walking onto the stage, subtly telling stories about food production in farming communities through scenes of farming, land clearing, and rice harvesting (Santosa, 2013). By incorporating entertainment that resonates with the audience, the fashion show feels familiar rather than distant. The calm atmosphere, visually expressed through predominantly blue lighting, creates a dramatic mood and is enhanced by a lively musical tempo. Together, these elements offer an audiovisual experience that blends seamlessly into a cohesive and compelling presentation (Ribeiro et al., 2014).



Fashion Show Stage By Vivian Aprida Syafira, S.Sn, M.Sn  
Source: Research Team, taken on September 7, 2025

Dewi Sri, or Dewi Padi, as a symbol of fertility, is depicted carrying rice in her left hand. A straw skewer serves as a condiment skewer. The concept of natural corrective makeup, the use of rice as a hand tool, and fashion props that walk gracefully without footwear convey the impression of Dewi Sri as the Dewi Padi or the Goddess of Fertility in Indonesia's rural community life, which is simple and grounded. The conceptual approach that emphasizes local cultural values can offer insights into the nature of Indonesian agrarian society itself. The artistic whole, encompassing details such as fashion, makeup, lighting, and choreography, becomes a cohesive unit, delivering an epic fashion show presentation (Böhme, 2020).

The fashion show concluded, and the audience was invited to attend the next performance at the Teater Kecil, featuring a traditional music and art performance by Yenny Arama, S.Sn., M.Sn. Additionally, there was a photography exhibition at the Teater Besar by Nova Wulan Priyandani, S.Sn., M.Sn., titled "Efek Kaca Prisma pada Busana Masyarakat Prismatic" and Dr. Sn. Muhammad Fajar Apriyanto, M.Sn., with the presentation "Memotret Potret Diri".



Photography Exhibition "Efek Kaca Prisma pada Busana Masyarakat Prismatic"  
by Nova Wulan Priyandani, S.Sn., M.Sn.

Source: Research Team, taken on September 7, 2025



Photography Exhibition of Dr Sn. Muhammad Fajar Apriyanto, M.Sn., "Memotret Potret Diri".

Source: Research Team, taken on September 7, 2025

The event lasted until the third day, featuring an intermediate screening of the fictional film *Ramo' Bucu'* with *Kejhungan* and *Gendhing Madura*, as well as presenting real fiction in the movie into a theatre, by Alif Septian Raksono Putra, S.Sn., M.Sn. In the work, *Ramo' Bucu'* tells the struggle of Toha, a father who fights desperation to get water for his son. A touching, symbolic, and meaningful cross-media performance about hope, sincerity, and resistance to the rigours of life (Schino, 2020).





Opening and reading of the synopsis of the film *Ramo' Bucco'* by Alif Septian Raksono Putra, S.Sn., M.Sn.  
Source: Research Team, retrieved September 9, 2025

*Ramo' Bucco'* comes from the Madura language, which means rotten root. The film addresses the issue of life, where water, which is supposed to bring hope, can also be a test due to scarcity and injustice in distribution. This film highlights that Indonesia, rich in natural resources, still struggles to support its community due to the unfairness of regional rulers.



Dramatic scene of the character of Toha with his son & *Kejhungan dan Gending Madura* by Alif Septian Raksono Putra, S.Sn., M.Sn.  
Source: Research Team, retrieved September 9, 2025

This film features fashion and makeup that genuinely reflect the life of the village community. However, in several emotional scenes, contrasting colors are used, such as orange and yellow for example, in the scene where Toha's friend's body was found, when Toha cried with her child, and when she wore an orange dress as she was about to jump into the water channel. The use of these vibrant colors helps to draw visual focus, highlight the characters and their inner emotions, and guide the audience's attention to key moments (Supartono, 2019).

In addition to beautifying the look, colour contrast also creates visual depth and conveys Toha's emotional message more powerfully. Shifting towards the visual of the stage order adapted to this performance by removing scenes from the film, placing the bed right next to the film screening, and positioning the actors *Kejhungan* and *Gendhing* opposite each other. Toha's performance is showcased in real theatre art, giving the impression of a deeper approach to the audience. The arrangement of light, which provides warm, brighter spotlights on the characters, keeps the audience focused on the theatre performance (Wolf & Dick Block, 2014). However, the placement of dim lights in the area of the scene strikes a balance (Kurniawan et al., 2021).

This film event concluded with a question-and-answer session, after which the audience was directed to move to the following performance location, specifically the *Malulo Halu Oleo* dance, located at the *Teater Kapal* site. At the *Teater Kapal*, the audience was immediately welcomed by the MC as the director of the event.

*Malulo Halu Oleo* by Dr Sukrin Suhardi, S.Pi, M.Pd., is a representation of the diversity of marine and terrestrial communities in Southeast Sulawesi Province. This work reminds me of the hero figure who unites the local tribes, including the Buton, Muna, Wakatobi, Moronene, and Tolaki tribes, among many others. *Pahlawan Halu Oleo* unites the culture of the marine community (maritime) with the culture of the land community (agrarian).

Malulo Halu Oleo was previously performed openly at Batu Gong Beach, Southeast Sulawesi, with 200 dancers. At this festival, the Malulo Halu Oleo Dance was performed by 12 dancers, including Deky Darmawan, S.Sn., M.Sn, and Bade Arsyid dancers from Aceh, who collaborated with the dance studio 8 Art Sultra. The Maluo Halu Oleo dance is now featured as one of the events at the Post-Creation Festival, presented in a new format. Dancers also adapt the choreography to the shape of a circular stage or an arena stage. Some choreography is created by dividing dancers with different dance moves.



The audience participated in the Malulo Halu Oleo dance by Dr Sukrin Suhardi, S.Pi., M.Pd.  
Source: Research Team, retrieved September 9, 2025

The clothes worn by the dancers are designed with a combination of army and white colours, featuring an asymmetrical silhouette that adds an artistic impression. There is layering on the pants as an accent when the dancer moves. There are three different designs with the same look and feel. The makeup used is a natural look, and braided hairstyles are suitable for female dancers and children. There was one dancer who was present as a centre dancer, using traditional men's clothes of the Tolaki tribe.

The performance takes place in the afternoon, making the stage lighting less visible than it would be at night. The brightness of the lights doesn't significantly affect the overall visual because natural light from the environment still exists. However, lighting still plays a role, especially when combined with smoke effects. The smoke used during parts of the show acts as a reflection medium for the light, highlighting the spotlights and creating a dramatic visual illusion (Rahayu & Pratama, 2019). This adds a lively and dynamic feel, enhancing the performance's aesthetic and atmosphere, aligning with the artistic intent (Wibowo, 2025).

Towards the end of the performance, the dancers moved towards the audience area and invited some to participate in the melulu dance. They form a circle, holding each other's hands, which creates direct interaction between the dancer and the audience. At the same time, the music shifts to a different genre, creating a lighter atmosphere that contrasts with the previous dance parts, which have a tense nuance (Ulfah, 2020).

The next performance was "Sudut Hati Terpercik Api" by Luna Kharisma, S.Sn., M.Sn., which was staged in the Lobby of the Teater Besar ISI Surakarta in the evening. In this performance, there is no permanent stage like in other performances. The audience was directed to approach the theatre area to watch the performance from different vantage points.



Portrait of the theatre performance "Sudut Hati Terpercik Api" by Luna Kharisma, S.Sn., M.Sn.  
Source: Research Team, retrieved September 9, 2025



Reporting from Instagram fest, following the creation of "Sudut Hati Terpercik Api" a performance and exhibition featuring utopian imagery sourced from the archives of Api Kartini magazine (1959–1963), which S. Rukiah and other female figures curated, several Api Kartini magazine archives were displayed before the performance. These featured covers and contents have an old-fashioned and worn look, dating back to the festival's inception.



Display of Magazine "Api Kartini"  
Source: Research Team, taken on September 7, 2025

Like the other displays, the stage opened with the MC reading the synopsis of the work. The theatre began to show the background of a shabby office, with many piles of old magazines and dim lighting. The theatre opened with a discussion in the newsroom, which was presented through five plays, featuring four women and one man, each with distinct fashion styles. In the debate on the topic of women's emancipation, a poem performed by one of the plays in green with a red bandage, which resembled the editor-in-chief, emphasized the point. The scene was closed with a choreography that resembled a dance performed by one of the actors, accompanied by instruments and songs to enhance the atmosphere (Wicaksandita & Wicaksana, 2025).



Theatre show "Sudut Hati Terpercik Api"  
Source: Research Team, retrieved September 9, 2025

The scene shifts to a group of mothers from the Mak ompreng gang, played by the same actors but with a different style. What makes this scene unique is that a vegetable vendor with his cart suddenly pushes through the audience, accompanied by loudspeakers. The scene creates a different atmosphere from before, blending comedy and a fashion style that is arranged in a complex way, typical of mothers in general.

Vegetable carts witness conversations between complex mothers and vegetable vendors. The discussion covers a variety of topics, from light-hearted, comedic chats to intense debates on social issues, political concerns, human rights violations, workplace safety, and women's protection. As the scene becomes more tense, critics appear and ask challenging questions, all set to gripping music and slightly dimmer lighting.

Judging by the artistic arrangement of the costumes, which maintained a bright and colorful palette similar to the previous outfits, the cast changed costumes behind the booth, stacking clothes in this scene. Scene changes can easily restore costumes on stage to their original style (BEZRUCHKO et al., 2024).

In the next scene, the stage shifts to a different side of the lobby, accompanied by cheerful music, signaling the transition to the new scene. The cast walks across the row of spectators as a sign that the stage is moving, and the committee guides the audience to shift accordingly to the stage's new position. In this scene, gender issues are addressed, and the focus shifts back to the newsroom, where discussions center on political and historical topics. Several actors enter the stage in a monologue, with red spotlights enhancing the audience's experience.

At the end of the scene, the stage shifted again, and the actor changed costumes into a kebaya kutu baru, standing in front of a screen displaying Api Kartini magazine. The actor read several quotes from the magazine's content, as if inviting us to feel nostalgic, accompanied by music with an old-school vibe.

After the theatre performance ends, the audience is directed into the Teater Besar to watch the next show. The next performance features puppet art by Dwi Suryanto, S.Sn., M.Sn., who is also known as Dhalang Gendut Berijazah. This post-performance festival presents the story of "Anoman Sang Terpilih" in an unusual puppet form, specifically, wayang terawang.

Wayang terawang differs from traditional puppet shows in its presentation. Instead of using a solid backdrop, it employs a transparent cloth, a piece of fabric that separates the puppeteer from the audience, allowing for the creation of shadows with special lighting techniques, which produces a unique shadow effect. This performance merges traditional puppet concepts with modern lighting technology. The stage for this puppet show is a proscenium stage, a standard setup where the audience is seated on only one side, specifically at the front. This type of stage is the most commonly used (Botella et al., 2018).



The show of the puppet show "Anoman Sang Terpilih" by Dwi Suryanto, S.Sn., M.Sn.  
Source: Research Team, retrieved September 9, 2025

The presentation of this puppet creates an aesthetic through the reflection of its shadow, which moves in accordance with the storyline of "Anoman Sang Terpilih," accompanied by the play of light and live music. The music features traditional sounds, including sinden, as well as modern music used as background music.

In the romantic scene, the music is sung by a woman with a melodious voice, creating a peaceful atmosphere that highlights the puppet show's movements, complemented by dim lighting that enhances the romantic mood. Similarly, the battle scene between Hanoman and Ravana features music with a faster tempo, and the louder sounds generate a tense feeling with an increasingly intense light background.

This puppet show is exciting, blending tragedy, romance, and comedy with relevant gimmicks that reflect viral societal trends, making it a unique attraction. Dhalang Gendhut Berijazah, who holds several diplomas, also interacted with the audience and even invited everyone to participate. The performance was very entertaining; the audience appeared very enthusiastic and responded to the puppeteers' signals, making tonight's event a lively stage. The show ended with applause, and the MC returned to close the event and invite everyone to enjoy the next performance.

From the many performances presented by this post-creation festival, the author can conclude that art is not limited to what we see today. Postgraduate students discover many new things that enable them

to create art that is different from what already exists. The breadth of science, based on research and refined by talented artists through a complex process, yields a masterpiece that we can enjoy with infinite value. This festival not only introduces culture but also provides an experience for the audience, inspiring and encouraging the community to continue innovating and creating in accordance with the theme of the post-creation festival, namely "Dari arsip tubuh Nusantara menuju ruang pengetahuan global; an Artistic Innovation Sanctuary.

## **B. Carolyn Bloomer's Cognitive Perspective**

The 2025 Post-Creation Festival offers a rich visual experience through various performances and exhibitions. Each piece explores artistic arrangements that not only delight the eyes but also influence the audience's perceptions and emotions. From Carolyn Bloomer's cognitive theory perspective, the experience comes from a visual perception process that involves the interaction between visual stimuli (what is seen) and cognitive structures (how the brain organizes and interprets what is seen). Therefore, each audience member not only "sees" the performance but also mentally "interprets" and "experiences" it.

### **Visual Perception and Organising Elements of Artistic Arrangement**

According to Bloomer, visual perception is an active process where the eye and brain collaborate to interpret visual information based on experience, context, and prior expectations. At the Post-Creation Festival, the arrangement of visual elements — such as color, shape, lighting, and space — plays a crucial role in shaping perception. For example, the arena-shaped stage layout at Vivian Aprida Syafira's *Sativa* show creates a sense of closeness between the model and the audience. The circular stage design allows viewers to view the outfit details from various angles, while also dynamically capturing their visual attention (Sarajar, 2021).

In Bloomer's theory, visual attention is drawn to elements that stand out most or differ significantly from their surroundings. The cool blue lighting used in *Sativa* creates a striking atmosphere, emphasizing the texture details of *Sansevieria*'s natural fibers. This process enhances the viewer's cognitive experience, allowing them not only to appreciate the beauty of the material but also to interpret the ecological and cultural values it represents. Here, artistic arrangement acts as a means of conveying visual meaning to the audience's cognitive understanding.

### **Cognitive Association and Emotional Experience**

Bloomer emphasized that visual perception is always linked to cognitive associations, especially the connection between visual images and memories or emotions experienced. In the film *Ramo' Bucco'* by Alif Septian Raksono Putra, this association is evident through the use of fashion colors and lighting. The orange and yellow hues in emotional scenes evoke a warm yet tense feeling. Cognitively, these colors are related to energy, conflict, and struggle.

Through this visual setup, the audience not only observes Toha's struggle but also experiences the character's inner tension. This demonstrates that artistic design plays a transformative role, turning visual imagery into a profound emotional experience. In Bloomer's terminology, this experience is part of the meaning-making process—the process by which aesthetic meaning emerges from the relationship between sight, thought, and feeling.

### **Visual Interaction and Collective Perception Space**

In the *Malulo Halu Oleo* dance performance by Dr. Sukrin Suhardi, an arena-shaped performance space is used to emphasize the closeness between the dancers and the audience. In the final stages of the performance, the dancers invite the audience to join them in a dance, forming a large circle that blurs the boundaries between performers and spectators. From Bloomer's perspective, this experience shows that visual perception is not purely individual but can develop into a collective perceptual skill.

When the boundary between the observer and the observed object disappears, perception shifts into participation. The audience no longer merely observes the visual form but becomes part of the visual system itself. This shift confirms that the artistic arrangement in the festival setting creates a dialogical space where visibility serves as a means of social and emotional engagement.

### Visual Narrative Structure and the Formation of Symbolic Meaning

Luna Kharisma's Teater Show Sudut Hati Terpercik Api, demonstrates how artistic arrangements can create symbolic meaning through spatial placement and costume design. By using the Teater Besar's lobby space without a permanent stage, audiences experience a fluid and interactive visual display. The stage's changing orientation encourages the audience to actively shift their gaze, a type of visual search that Bloomer describes as part of the dynamics of perception.

The actors' costumes change quickly, with bright colors in the comedy scenes and red lighting in the conflict scenes, emphasizing the thematic message about women's struggle and freedom of thought. From a cognitive perspective, these changes in visual elements capture attention and help viewers construct a layered structure of meaning, transitioning from a purely visual experience to a more social awareness. Therefore, artistic arrangement not only enhances the stage's appearance but also acts as a symbolic language that expresses human values.

### Integration of Perception, Knowledge, and Aesthetics

Overall, the study's results show that understanding the aesthetic experience at the Post-Creation Festival requires considering the audience's cognitive processes. The visual perception created by artistic arrangements sparks a sequence of mental activities, including recognizing forms, interpreting symbols, relating experiences, and deducing meaning. This process is what Bloomer describes as the connection between "what we see" and "what we know."

Through innovative artistic arrangements, the festival successfully creates a multisensory experience that engages the senses, intellect, and spirit. Each visual element acts as a gateway to a deeper, conceptual, and emotional understanding. In other words, the 2025 Post-Creation Festival is not only a celebration of aesthetics but also a laboratory of perception, demonstrating how art can influence the way humans perceive and experience the world.

### An Analysis of the 2025 Post-Creation Festival Event Series Based on Carolyn Bloomer's Cognitive Perspective

The 2025 Post-Creation Festival features a series of cross-disciplinary art activities, ranging from opening ceremonies and exhibitions to fashion shows, films, dances, theatre performances, and contemporary puppet shows, all of which can be viewed as representations of how visual perception works in a cognitive context. According to Carolyn Bloomer in *Principles of Visual Perception* (1976), visual perception is not only related to the ability to see but also to the mental process of organizing, interpreting, and giving meaning to visual experiences. Therefore, all activities in this festival can be understood as a visual communication system that gradually and interconnectedly forms the audience's cognitive expertise.

### Opening Ceremony and Videotron: Visual Perception Director

At the start of the festival, the curved videotron in the Teater Kapal area played a key role in drawing visual attention, a central idea in Bloomer's theory. The videotron, which displays documentation and an introduction throughout the event, acts as a focal point that helps the audience understand the overall context of the festival. According to the cognitive framework, large, dynamic, and fast-moving visual elements attract selective attention and create an initial perception of what will be presented.

Bloomer explains that visual attention is the first step in cognitive processes, where the brain begins to organize visual information into meaningful patterns. Therefore, the opening ceremony functions not only as a ceremonial event but also as a cognitive orientation, guiding the audience's awareness toward the festival's main theme and activating their mental readiness to interpret the visual symbols that will appear in the next performance.

#### Fashion Show "Sativa": Visual Association and Ecological Memory

The show features natural Sansevieria fiber fabrics in neutral colors, complemented by soft blue lighting. In Bloomer's view, the visual experience that Sativa provides involves cognitive associations, which are the connections between visual images and the audience's memory. Fashion shapes that resemble leaf textures and cool lighting evoke ecological memory and reinforce the harmony between humans and nature.

This perception not only activates visual senses but also triggers reflective mental processes. The audience interprets the work not only as an aesthetic experience but as a cognitive message about ecological awareness. This illustrates how visual elements can direct the viewer's thoughts toward values and meaning, aligning with Bloomer's principle that visual perception is always grounded in one's experiences and cultural context.

#### Photography Exhibition "Efek Kaca" – Nova Wulan: Reflective Perception and Visual Illusion

This exhibition explores imagery through reflection and transparency. According to Bloomer's theory, this type of work creates perceptual ambiguity, a state where perception interprets an image as not singular. The effects of reflections and layers of glass expose the viewer to visual distortion, prompting them to adjust focus and reorganize the image they see.

This process explains the relationship between what is seen and what is perceived. The viewer not only observes the image but also engages in a thought process to interpret the meaning behind the visual ambiguity. Cognitively, this experience deepens the audience's visual awareness of how the artistic medium can influence perception.

#### Photography Exhibition "Memotret Potret Diri" – Dr Muhammad Fajar Apriyanto: Self-Perception and Visual Awareness

The exhibition, titled "Memotret Potret Diri," invites viewers to see themselves through visual imagery. In relation to Bloomer's theory, this pertains to self-perceptual awareness, which is self-awareness developed through visual representation. Photographs showing fragments of identity and personal expression encourage visitors to reflect on themselves through the perceptions of others.

Cognitively, this experience shows that perception is both external and internal, primarily how a person interprets images of themselves. This exhibition becomes a space for dialogue between the subject and the visual object, between the photographer and the audience, and between reality and constructed perception.

#### The film "Ramo' Bucco": Emotional Response and Visual Narrative

In the film *Ramo' Bucco* by Alif Septian Raksono Putra, the use of warm colors and light intensity serves as a visual element that guides the audience's perception. The colors orange and yellow evoke a warm feeling that is psychologically associated with passion, struggle, and conflict. According to Bloomer, color variations and visual contrast can trigger specific emotional responses because the brain interprets them as meaningful stimuli.

The audience not only follows the film's storyline but also goes on an emotional journey shaped by the artistic arrangement. Therefore, the film demonstrates how visual perception collaborates with the narrative to create a profound emotional and mental experience.

#### "Malulo Halu Oleo" Dance: Collective and Participatory Perception

The Malulo Halu Oleo dance, performed by Dr. Sukrin Suhardi, emphasizes the shape of the arena and the direct interaction between dancers and the audience. Ultimately, the audience is encouraged to dance together, forming a large circle that blurs the lines between performer and observer. According to Bloomer's theory, this represents a shared visual experience, where collective perception becomes a communal social experience through visual interaction.

The audience no longer plays a passive role; instead, they become part of the visual structure of the show. This process shows that perception can extend from individual consciousness to shared community awareness, making the performing arts a way to foster empathy and a sense of belonging.

#### Theatre "Sudut Hati Terpercik Api": Perception Dynamics and Structure of Meaning

The theatre performance "Sudut Hati Terpercik Api by Luna Kharisma" demonstrates how artistic arrangements shape symbolic stories through the use of space, color, and costume. The change in the stage's location encourages the audience to actively look for a new perspective, a kind of visual search, as Bloomer explains. Red lighting and costume changes represent shifts in emotions and meanings, prompting the audience's interpretive process.

This theatre demonstrates that visual perception is not fixed, but rather dynamic and reflective of the individual's experience. Through shifting visual stimuli, the audience learns to interpret symbols and connect them to broader social messages, such as the fight for women's freedom of thought and expression.

#### "Api Kartini" Magazine Exhibition: Symbolic Perception and Gender Representation

The Api Kartini magazine exhibition showcases visual archives and stories related to feminism within Indonesian history. From Bloomer's cognitive perspective, the display of texts and images in old magazines acts as a visual trigger that sparks cultural memory—a shared memory that influences societal views of women.

The audience not only reads the text but also interprets visual cues, such as layouts, illustrations, and typography, as representations of women's struggles in the past. Through this process of perception, the exhibition works serve as a bridge between visual experience and ideological awareness.

#### Wayang Terawang "Anoman Sang Terpilih" – Dwi Suryanto: Traditional and Modern Perceptions

Dwi Suryanto's Wayang Terawang performance blends traditional shadow techniques with digital projection. According to Bloomer, this type of work stimulates two layers of perception: retinal perception (the physical perception of light and form) and conceptual perception (the symbolic interpretation of stories and characters).

The blend of tradition and technology creates a visual experience that challenges traditional perception boundaries. The audience not only observes the shadows but also interprets the connections between myths, symbols, and moral values conveyed through innovative visual forms. This demonstrates how cognitive perception can evolve in response to media innovations without losing its cultural depth. The entire sequence of events from the 2025 Post-Creation Festival illustrates the application of Carolyn Bloomer's cognitive theory in real-life contexts. Each performance delivers a visual stimulus that engages the audience's attention, associations, memory, emotions, and interpretations. Through different lighting techniques, colors, spaces, clothing, and digital imagery, this festival becomes a space for interaction



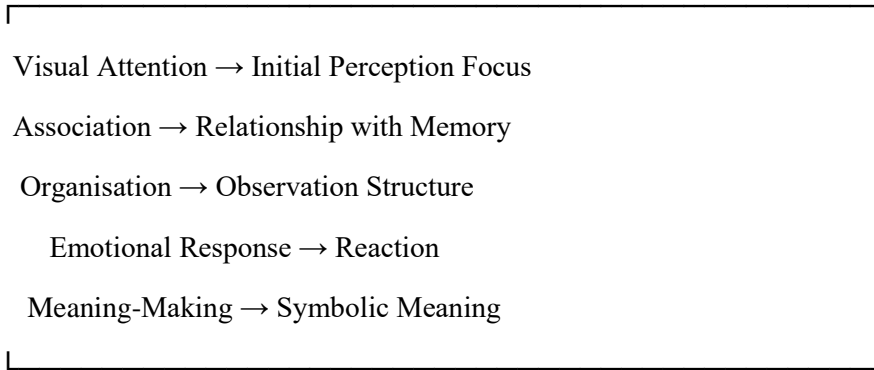
between what we see and what we know. In this context, the analysis reveals that contemporary Indonesian performing arts are shifting toward a realm of reflective perception: art is not only perceived but also thought about and mentally experienced. Artistic arrangement transforms into a cognitive language that connects the artist's ideas with the audience's awareness, making the Post-Creation Festival not only an aesthetic event but also a space for learning about cultural perception and understanding.

The following table and chart provide a comprehensive analysis of all events at the 2025 Post-Creation Festival from the perspective of Carolyn Bloomer's cognitive theory. This analysis demonstrates how each artwork stimulates the viewer's visual perception through the use of color, light, shape, space, and motion, which are subsequently cognitively interpreted as aesthetic and cultural meaning.

No.	Activities / Works	Key Visual Elements	Bloomer's Cognitive Theory Concept	Cognitive Perception and Meaning Processes
1	Opening Ceremony & Videotron (Teater Kapal)	Curved videotron, dynamic display, intense light	Visual Attention – focus attention on contrasting and moving stimuli	Draws the viewer's focus and forms mental readiness to receive the next visual stimulus, becoming the initial gateway for cognitive perception.
2	Fashion Show “Sativa” Vivian Aprida Syafira	Neutral colour, natural texture, blue lighting, arena stage	Cognitive Association – the relationship between visual imagery and cultural memory	Stimulating ecological association and harmony with nature, the audience interprets ecological symbols through fashion forms and colours.
3	Photography Exhibition “Efek Kaca” – Nova Bulan	Reflection, transparency, glass distortion	Perceptual Ambiguity – perception of double imagery and visual illusions	Challenges visual perception; the audience actively interprets blurry and layered images, facilitating a visual thinking process.
4	Photography Exhibition “Memotret Potret Diri” – Dr Muhammad Fajar Apriyanto	Portraits, personal expressions, soft lighting	Self-Perceptual Awareness – self-awareness in visual perception	Inviting self-reflection through the image of others; Internal perception is formed as a cognitive process towards self-representation.
5	Ramo’ Bucco’ Movie – Alif Septian Raksono Putra	Orange and yellow colours, dramatic light intensity	Perceptual Response – an emotional reaction to a visual stimulus	Warm colours evoke emotional resonance and reinforce the narrative of struggle; visual perception leads to affective experiences.
6	“Malulo Halu Oleo” Dance – Dr. Sukrin Suhardi	Arena space, circular motion, audience interaction	Shared Visual Experience – collective and participatory perception	Perception changes from individual to social; The audience is part of the visual system of the show.
7	“Sudut Hati Terpercik Api” Theatre – Luna Kharisma	Changes in space, light colours, and costume changes	Visual Search & Organisation – active focus settings	The audience actively sets the focus of the view, establishing a symbolic meaning about the struggle and freedom of thought.
8	Exhibition of “Api Kartini” Magazine	Visual archives, old text, magazine typography	Cultural Memory & Symbolic Perception – perception of historical representations	Fostering gender awareness through visual reading of feminist archives; building relationships between history and social perception.
9	Wayang Terawang “Anoman Sang Terpilih” – Dwi Suryanto	Shadows, digital projection, contrast, light	Retinal & Conceptual Perception – the relationship between physical vision and symbolic meaning	Bringing together traditional and modern perceptions, the audience processes myths and morals through contemporary visual media.

**STIMULUS VISUAL**

(Light, Colour, Shape, Space, Motion, Media)

**COGNITIVE PROSE (BLOOMER)****COGNITIVE EXPERIENCE**

Individual ↔ Perceptions of Collective Perceptions

**AESTHETIC AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE**

(Ecological, social, gender, traditional, spirituality awareness)

The table and chart above demonstrate that Carolyn Bloomer's cognitive theory can be applied comprehensively to reading the artistic structure and perceptual experience of the audience. Each work in the 2025 Post-Creation Festival serves as a visual stimulus that activates mental processes, ranging from attention and association to the formation of meaning. Thus, the festival is not only an aesthetic space, but also a space of perceptual learning where art serves as a cognitive language that connects sensory perception with cultural awareness.

***Conclusion and Suggestion***

Based on the analysis of the entire series of events from the 2025 Post-Creation Festival through the cognitive perspective of Carolyn Bloomer, it can be concluded that the aesthetic experience in this festival is the result of a complex and layered visual perception process. Each work, whether in the form of performances, exhibitions, or films, presents a visual stimulus that leads the audience to think, remember, and interpret. This demonstrates that perception in art is not merely a visual activity, but also a mental and emotional process that shapes both aesthetic and social understanding.

This festival shows how Bloomer's cognitive theory can be applied concretely in the context of contemporary Indonesian performing arts. In the opening stage, visual attention is built through the power of digital media, such as Videotron, which creates a collective orientation of perception. In fashion shows, films, and dance, visual associations and emotional responses are at the core of the audience's experience, connecting visual forms with ecological, social, and cultural values. Meanwhile, in theatre and photography exhibitions, cognitive processes manifest in the form of reflection and symbolic interpretation, enabling the audience to understand the meaning behind the presented visuality.

The overall activities in this festival demonstrate that artistic arrangement serves as a cognitive language. This visual communication system facilitates the relationship between what we see and what we know. The viewer becomes not only the recipient of visual information but also an active processor of meaning, building an aesthetic experience through the interaction between perception and knowledge. Thus, the 2025 Post-Creation Festival is not only a platform to showcase creativity but also a space for perceptual learning that fosters reflective awareness about art, culture, and life.

From a theoretical perspective, this study expands our understanding of the relevance of Carolyn Bloomer's cognitive theory in local contexts. The mental perception approach has been proven to be effective in explaining the dynamics of the visual experience of Indonesian audiences who live between tradition, modernity, and technology. Contextually, these findings suggest that contemporary Indonesian performing arts are moving in an increasingly conceptual direction—art that is not only seen, but also mentally contemplated and understood. Thus, the application of Bloomer's theory makes a significant contribution to the study of aesthetics and artistic design in Indonesia, particularly in the effort to establish an art paradigm grounded in visual, intellectual, and cultural awareness.

### ***Suggestion***

1. For academics and art students, Carolyn Bloomer's cognitive theory is a key approach to understanding and creating visual and performing arts. This method helps recognize that aesthetic experience happens not only through form but also in how the mind processes and organizes visual information.
2. For art practitioners and stage designers, this study highlights the importance of understanding audience perception when creating artistic arrangements. Every visual element, from color to lighting, composition, and space, influences how the viewer experiences the work. The harmony between the concept and visual strategy can strengthen the meaning and enhance aesthetic memory.
3. For festival organizers and art education institutions, the Post-Creation Festival can continue to develop as an artistic research space that blends creativity, perception, and scientific reflection. Incorporating cognitive perception theory into creative practice can open up new opportunities for more meaningful and emotionally impactful visual exploration.

Through this understanding, performing arts not only become a momentary aesthetic event, but also a means of forming the cognitive awareness and visual culture of society.

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