



ARTISTRY, CULTURAL MEDIATION, AND THE GLOBAL PROMOTION OF BALINESE ARTS: THE CASE OF I NYOMAN WENTEN

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the role of I Nyoman Wenten in the development and promotion of Balinese arts in the United States. Using a qualitative descriptive-analytical approach, the study draws on interviews, observations, documentation, and literature sources to analyze Wenten's artistic trajectory and cultural activities. The findings show that his artistry was shaped by Balinese cultural traditions, family influence, and formal artistic education. As an artist, educator, innovator, and cultural mediator, Wenten has contributed to the global dissemination of Balinese arts through performances, workshops, cross-cultural collaborations, and arts education in academic and community settings. He also adapted traditional performances to non-Balinese audiences while maintaining essential cultural values. This study concludes that Wenten plays a significant role in sustaining and promoting Balinese arts internationally by bridging traditional artistic practices with transnational cultural exchange.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Art is an inseparable part of culture and functions as a medium through which societies express values, identities, and collective experiences. In the context of traditional arts, artists play a central role not only as creators but also as cultural mediators who sustain and transmit cultural knowledge across generations and social environments [1], [2]. In Bali, traditional performing arts such as dance and gamelan continue to develop through processes of preservation, adaptation, and innovation in response to changing social and global conditions [3].

The globalization of culture has created both opportunities and challenges for traditional arts. On one hand, globalization enables wider international recognition and cross-cultural exchange; on the other hand, it places traditional arts within complex processes of adaptation, commodification, and cultural negotiation [4]. In this context, the promotion of Balinese arts increasingly involves educational institutions, international collaborations, workshops, performances, and transnational artistic networks [5]. These processes position artists not merely as performers, but also as educators, innovators, and cultural ambassadors who mediate local traditions within global cultural spaces.

Several previous studies have discussed Balinese performing arts, cultural preservation, and the globalization of traditional arts. Soedarsono [3] examines the development of Indonesian performing arts in the era of globalization, while Dibia [6] emphasizes the importance of artistic transmission and cultural continuity in Balinese performing arts. Other studies have also explored innovation in traditional performances and the contextualization of the arts in contemporary society [7], [8]. However, studies specifically examining I Nyoman Wenten's artistry, cultural mediation, and strategies in promoting Balinese arts in the United States remain

limited. Existing discussions tend to focus more broadly on Balinese arts or Indonesian cultural performances without addressing Wenten's specific role in transnational artistic dissemination and cross-cultural education.

I Nyoman Wenten is recognized as one of the prominent Balinese dance and gamelan artists who has contributed significantly to the international dissemination of Balinese arts through performances, workshops, academic teaching, and intercultural collaborations. His activities at institutions such as the California Institute of the Arts (CalArts) and the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), as well as his involvement in international cultural missions, demonstrate his important role in introducing Balinese arts to non-Balinese audiences. In addition to preserving traditional forms, Wenten has also adapted artistic presentations to broader cultural contexts through educational approaches, collaborative performances, and innovative performance strategies.

Research on I Nyoman Wenten is important for several reasons. First, it contributes to the documentation of artistic history and the preservation of knowledge related to Balinese performing arts. Second, it enriches scholarly discussions on transnational cultural promotion, cultural mediation, and the sustainability of traditional arts in global contexts. Third, it provides insight into how traditional arts can remain relevant through adaptive strategies without losing their cultural foundations.

Based on this background, this study examines the artistry of I Nyoman Wenten in relation to the development and promotion of Balinese arts in the United States. The study focuses on three main aspects: (1) the artistic formation that shaped I Nyoman Wenten as an artist, (2) the forms of artistic development and innovation he carried out, and (3) the strategies used in promoting Balinese arts within transnational cultural and educational contexts.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative biographical study design to examine the artistic trajectory and cultural contributions of I Nyoman Wenten in the development and promotion of Balinese arts in the United States. A qualitative approach was selected to obtain an in-depth understanding of Wenten's artistic experiences, creative processes, educational activities, and strategies of cultural dissemination within transnational contexts. The research was conducted primarily in Los Angeles, United States, where I Nyoman Wenten has actively engaged in teaching, performing, and promoting Balinese arts through academic institutions and artistic communities.

The main subject of this study was I Nyoman Wenten, while the formal objects of the study included artistry, artistic development, and strategies for promoting Balinese arts in the United States. Informants were selected using purposive and snowball sampling techniques [9], [10]. The primary informant was I Nyoman Wenten himself, supported by several additional informants consisting of family members, students, fellow artists, academics, and members of Balinese gamelan and dance communities who were directly involved in or familiar with his artistic activities and cultural contributions.

Data were collected through non-participant observation, semi-structured interviews, documentation, and literature review. Observations were conducted during artistic activities, performances, workshops, and educational programs involving I Nyoman Wenten. Semi-structured interviews were carried out to explore participants' experiences, perspectives, and interpretations regarding Wenten's artistic practices and cultural roles. Documentation techniques included the collection of photographs, performance archives, audiovisual recordings, institutional documents, and related publications. Literature review was conducted to examine previous studies, theoretical frameworks, and scholarly discussions related to Balinese performing arts, cultural promotion, and artistic dissemination.

To ensure data validity, this study applied source triangulation and technique triangulation [11]. Interview data were cross-checked with documentation materials, performance archives, academic publications, and statements from different informants to enhance the credibility and consistency of the findings.

Data analysis employed an interactive analysis model consisting of data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing [12]. The analysis process was conducted continuously before, during, and after fieldwork. The collected data were coded and categorized based on several thematic aspects, including artistic formation, artistic development and innovation, promotion strategies, cross-cultural adaptation, challenges, and sustainability efforts in promoting Balinese arts. Thematic interpretation was then used to understand how I Nyoman Wenten functions as an artist, educator, innovator, and cultural mediator within global artistic contexts.

This study also considered research ethics throughout the research process. Interviews, observations, and documentation activities were conducted with the consent of the informants, and personal information was used only for academic purposes relevant to the study.

3. RESULT AND ANALYSIS

Promotion Strategies and the Scope of Balinese Performing Arts Promotion

The promotion of Balinese arts carried out by I Nyoman Wenten was primarily realized through educational and performative activities that functioned as spaces for cultural transmission and cross-cultural interaction. In the context of performing arts, promotion strategies involve systematic efforts to introduce artistic values, build audience understanding, and expand public appreciation through appropriate communication channels [13]. In Wenten’s artistic practice, these strategies were implemented through workshops, academic teaching, performances, and community-based artistic activities that enabled direct engagement between audiences and Balinese artistic traditions.

One of the main findings of this study indicates that education became a central strategy in Wenten’s transnational promotion of Balinese arts. Through teaching activities at institutions such as the California Institute of the Arts (CalArts) and the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), Wenten introduced Balinese dance and gamelan not only as performance practices but also as cultural knowledge rooted in Balinese social and spiritual values. In workshops and classroom settings, participants were first provided with explanations regarding the historical background of Balinese arts, the development of gamelan traditions, and the cultural meanings embedded within performance practices before engaging directly in artistic activities.

This educational approach demonstrates that the promotion of Balinese arts was conducted through experiential learning processes that emphasized direct participation and intercultural understanding. Workshops and performances functioned not merely as entertainment activities, but also as communication channels through which artistic knowledge and cultural values were disseminated to non-Balinese audiences. Within Rogers’ diffusion of innovation framework [14], these educational activities can be understood as mechanisms of cultural diffusion that facilitated the transmission of Balinese artistic practices through sustained interaction, practical engagement, and artistic regeneration.

The findings also show that Wenten’s educational and performative strategies contributed to the emergence of broader transnational artistic networks. Students and participants who were involved in workshops and academic programs later developed deeper interests in Balinese arts, including participating in artistic residencies, joining gamelan communities, and pursuing further study in Bali. This condition indicates that educational activities functioned not only as promotional media but also as long-term cultural mediation processes that supported the sustainability of Balinese arts beyond their original cultural context.

Furthermore, performances played an important role in strengthening public visibility and intercultural reception of Balinese arts. Through performances, collaborative productions, and demonstrations of dance and gamelan techniques, audiences were introduced to Balinese artistic aesthetics in forms that remained grounded in traditional values while also being accessible to international audiences. This strategy reflects Wenten’s role not only as an artist and educator, but also as a cultural mediator who actively bridged Balinese artistic traditions with global cultural spaces.

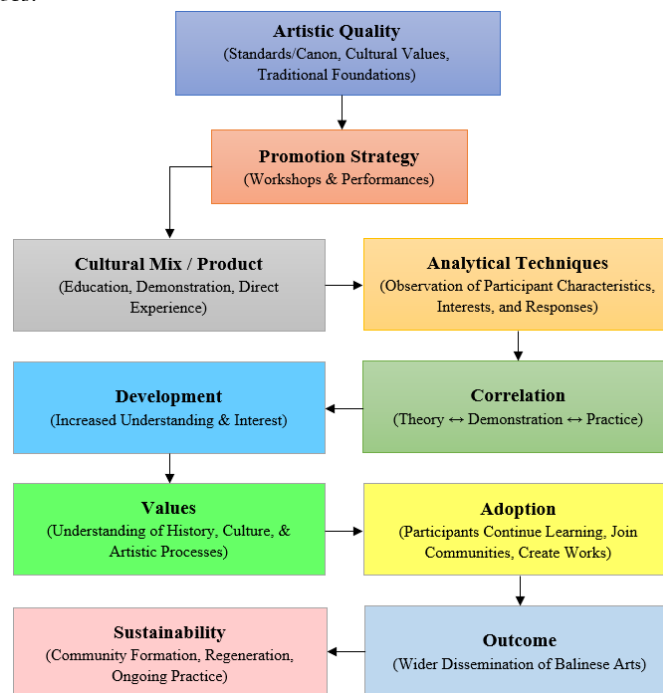


Figure 1. Flowchart of I Nyoman Wenten’s Art Promotion Strategy

Promotional Media and the Role of I Nyoman Wenten as an Ambassador of Balinese Arts

The promotion of Balinese arts carried out by I Nyoman Wenten was realized through educational and performative activities that connected artistic practice with cross-cultural learning spaces. One of the main findings of this study indicates that education functioned as a primary strategy in Wenten's transnational promotion of Balinese arts. Teaching activities enabled the systematic introduction of Balinese artistic traditions by providing participants with an understanding of the historical background, performance structures, and cultural values embedded within Balinese dance and gamelan practices. Through this process, participants gradually developed a broader understanding of the social and cultural contexts underlying the artistic practices. Interaction between instructors and participants within educational settings also fostered deeper engagement, which contributed to the development of participants' interest in studying Balinese arts more seriously [15].

In addition to formal educational activities, Wenten also promoted Balinese arts through workshops that emphasized direct participation and experiential learning. Participants were actively involved in dancing, playing gamelan, and understanding performance structures through practical engagement rather than solely theoretical explanation. This direct involvement strengthened participants' comprehension of Balinese arts because empirical experience created stronger cultural understanding and artistic attachment [16]. Workshops therefore functioned not only as training activities but also as spaces of cultural mediation that connected artistic knowledge with lived artistic experience.

From the perspective of Rogers' diffusion of innovation theory [14], educational activities and workshops operated as communication channels through which Balinese artistic traditions were disseminated to non-Balinese audiences. The combination of theoretical explanation, practical experience, and sustained interaction enabled the transfer of artistic knowledge while simultaneously encouraging the emergence of new practitioners and artistic communities outside Bali. This indicates that Wenten's promotion strategy extended beyond artistic presentation and functioned as a long-term process of cultural dissemination and artistic regeneration within transnational cultural contexts.



Figure 2. Teaching Activities of I Nyoman Wenten
Documentation: I Nyoman Wenten, 2014



Figure 3. Performance Activities by I Nyoman Wenten
Documentation: I Nyoman Wenten, 2010

The promotional media and platforms used can be summarized as follows:

- a. Teaching activities in formal and non-formal educational settings
- b. Art workshops as spaces for direct practice
- c. Classical art performances
- d. Modern art performances
- e. Demonstrations of dance and gamelan techniques in educational contexts
- f. Direct interaction with participants and audiences as a medium of communication
- g. Performance venues as platforms for artistic promotion

The series of promotional media and platforms demonstrates that educational activities hold a central role in the dissemination of Balinese arts. Through intensive interaction, the educational process enables the gradual development of interest, encouraging participants to explore Balinese arts more deeply within a broader context. In educational and training settings, the promotion of the arts occurs indirectly through the learning experiences provided. The interest that emerges during this process often develops into a desire to deepen understanding, including direct engagement with the cultural environment where the art originates. In this regard, I Nyoman Wenten frequently encourages students who show strong interest to visit Bali and study the arts firsthand. Several students who have participated in this learning process have traveled to Bali, and their experiences have left positive impressions while strengthening their understanding of the art forms studied. Direct experience within the original cultural context becomes a crucial element in fostering a deeper connection between participants and the cultural practices they engage with.

This condition indicates that educational activities function as a bridge connecting initial exposure with real-life experience, thereby expanding the reach of promotion through direct individual involvement. Through this process, Balinese arts are understood as lived experiences that can be fully engaged and appreciated. The following discussion will elaborate on how this promotional effort develops into a broader role, including the involvement of I Nyoman Wenten as a representative of Balinese arts on a larger scale.

The Role of I Nyoman Wenten as a Cultural Ambassador (Ambassador of the Arts / Cultural Ambassador)

I Nyoman Wenten's involvement as a cultural ambassador began early in his artistic journey, marked by participation in interregional art performances around 1963–1964. During this period, he was part of an art troupe consisting of students and teachers from KOKAR, touring various cities in East Java. In these activities, I Nyoman Wenten performed as a dancer with the aim of introducing the identity of the art institution while expanding the reach of Balinese culture beyond its region of origin. The tour also extended to Lombok Island, covering both West and East Lombok. This activity demonstrates that from the outset, artistic engagement was directed as a means of cultural representation in a broader context.

This role continued in 1965 when I Nyoman Wenten was selected as a member of a cultural mission to the Presidential Palace of the Republic of Indonesia during the administration of President Soekarno. The mission aimed to foster international relations through cultural exchange while strengthening cultural diplomacy. The delegation consisted of various art groups from different regions of Indonesia, including Central Java, West Java (Sunda), Sumatra, Kalimantan, and Sulawesi. During tours to several Asian countries Cambodia, Japan, Thailand, the Philippines, North Korea, and the Republic of China I Nyoman Wenten served as both a dancer and a gamelan musician. The delegation was led by the Minister of Culture, Mr. Priyono, with performance agendas directed toward heads of state, ministers, and official guests. The entire series of activities lasted approximately three and a half months, reflecting the active role of the arts as a medium of diplomacy and cultural representation for Indonesia.



Figure 4. Participation of I Nyoman Wenten in President Soekarno's Cultural Mission
Documentation: I Nyoman Wenten, 1971

I Nyoman Wenten's international involvement continued to expand through various invitations from educational institutions and cultural organizations abroad. In 1971, he was invited to the California Institute of the Arts (CalArts) in Valencia, California, United States, as an instructor in the Summer School program for eight weeks. In this program, he taught Balinese dance and karawitan, while Javanese karawitan was taught by the renowned artist and composer Kanjeng Pangeran Haryo Notoprojo. In addition to teaching activities, performances and concerts were also held in several cities across California. After completing the residency period, the program continued by bringing participants to Bali, specifically to the Campuan area in Ubud, for a two-month advanced study program. The program concluded with a performance opportunity for participants at the Ubud wantilan, featuring both Javanese and Balinese music and dance. In 1972, I Nyoman Wenten received another invitation through the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Mexico City to participate in the world

dance festival (Mundial del Folklore) as a representative of Indonesia. In this event, he collaborated with I Made Bandem, Swasti Wijaya Bandem, and Nanik Wenten as part of a cultural mission promoting Indonesian arts at the international level.

Table 1. Summary of the Scope of Roles as a Cultural Ambassador

No	Activity	Region	Description
1	Art tour with KOKAR (1963-1964)	East Java, West Lombok, East Lombok	Served as a dancer to introduce KOKAR and Balinese arts and culture outside Bali
2	Presidential Cultural Mission (1965)	Cambodia, Thailand, North Korea, Republic of China, Japan, Philippines	Member of a multi-regional Indonesian delegation; served as dancer and gamelan musician; led by the Minister of Culture; performed for state officials; duration ±3.5 months
3	CalArts Summer School Program (1971)	Valencia & various cities in California, USA	Instructor of Balinese dance and <i>karawitan</i> ; collaboration with KPH Notoprojo; 8-week residency; followed by a 2-month study program in Ubud
4	Advanced study and performance program	Ubud, Bali, Indonesia	Brought international participants for further study; performances of music and dance at the Ubud <i>wantilan</i>
5	World Dance Festival “Mundial del Folklore” (1972)	Mexico City, Mexico	Invitation from the Indonesian Embassy; represented Indonesia with I Made Bandem, Swasti Wijaya Bandem, and Nanik Wenten in international cultural promotion

Adaptation of Performance Presentation for Non-Balinese Audiences

Non-Balinese audiences refer to viewers from cultural backgrounds outside the Balinese tradition who do not have prior understanding of Balinese arts; therefore, the packaging of performances becomes a crucial factor in building their acceptance. I Nyoman Wenten adapts the presentation while maintaining classical structures, but modifies performance elements to be more communicative in a cross-cultural context, such as using English in bondres performances and incorporating humor relevant to local contexts. In addition, innovation is realized through the creation of new mask characters that are closer to audience references, such as the “Miss LA” mask with dynamic expressions and “Mr Kisser” with a comical character. These innovations reflect efforts to introduce renewal without abandoning the fundamental function of bondres as a medium of communication and entertainment.



Figure 5. Innovative Bondres Masks (Miss LA and Mr Kisser)
Documentation: Marcoluna, 2025

The development of masks in I Nyoman Wenten's works also involves collaboration with traditional Balinese artisans, such as Ida Bagus Anom from Mas Village, demonstrating that innovation remains rooted in local craftsmanship. These specially commissioned masks were used in international performances, including in Hong Kong through cross-cultural collaboration with Beijing Opera actors and local artists. The performance was inspired by the Western opera *The Magic Flute* by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, which was adapted into a Balinese artistic framework. In this production, I Nyoman Wenten portrayed the character Tamino, while Pamina was performed by Ni Ketut Nanik Wenten, supported by international musicians who enriched the structure and dynamics of the performance.



Figure 6. Masks by Ida Bagus Anom (Mas Village) for Performance in Hong Kong
Documentation: Marcoluna, 2025

Through the development of mask characters and cross-cultural collaboration, the adaptation of Balinese arts by I Nyoman Wenten occurs in a directed manner, both visually and conceptually, enabling interaction with various cultural systems without losing its fundamental identity. Performance packaging is also adjusted in terms of duration and structure, such as in Legong, by condensing certain sections to make them more accessible to new audiences while maintaining core principles. Additionally, the use of technology plays an important role in presentation, such as visual projections and the addition of sound effects beyond gamelan to enrich audience experience. This aligns with the view that technology can support performance presentation in a modern context (Sugita & Pastika, 2021:348). Overall, this strategy demonstrates a systematic effort to introduce Balinese arts to wider audiences through adaptive approaches grounded in traditional values.

Challenges and Sustainability Efforts in the Transnational Promotion of Balinese Arts

The findings of this study indicate that the transnational promotion of Balinese arts carried out by I Nyoman Wenten encountered various cultural, educational, and social challenges that required adaptive and sustainable strategies. In the context of traditional arts promotion, challenges and sustainability efforts are closely interconnected because the emergence of challenges often stimulates the development of new strategies aimed at maintaining artistic continuity in changing social environments [17], [18]. From the perspective of Rogers' diffusion of innovation theory [14], the sustainability of artistic dissemination is influenced by communication channels, social systems, time, and the readiness of audiences to adopt new cultural experiences.

One of the primary challenges identified in this study relates to differences in cultural backgrounds and varying levels of audience understanding regarding Balinese artistic traditions. Non-Balinese audiences often lacked familiarity with the symbolic meanings, performance structures, and philosophical values embedded in Balinese dance and gamelan. These conditions created difficulties in transferring artistic knowledge, particularly in educational contexts involving participants with limited prior exposure to Balinese arts. To address this issue, Wenten adopted adaptive educational approaches by simplifying complex musical patterns such as *kotekan* structures, while simultaneously emphasizing historical, cultural, and philosophical explanations to strengthen participants' understanding of the arts.

This challenge was also emphasized by I Made Lasmawan, who stated that the promotion of Balinese arts depends on the ability of artists to translate traditional values into broader cultural contexts without losing their essential meanings. This statement demonstrates that cultural adaptation functions as an important strategy in sustaining traditional arts within transnational environments. In analytical terms, the adaptation process reflects Rogers' concept of innovation, where modifications in artistic presentation and communication methods enable broader acceptance among audiences from different social and cultural backgrounds.

The findings further show that sustainability efforts in the promotion of Balinese arts were carried out through long-term educational commitment, cross-cultural collaboration, and the development of artistic communities. Wenten's continuous involvement in teaching activities at institutions such as CalArts and within community-based artistic networks demonstrates the importance of sustained interaction in the diffusion process. As stated by Lasmawan, "From that time until now, Pak Wenten and I have remained committed to playing roles

as mentors and disseminators of Javanese and Balinese arts in the United States.” This statement indicates that the dissemination of Balinese arts relied not only on performances, but also on mentorship, regeneration, and the formation of long-term cultural networks.

In addition, the study found that Wenten’s adaptive strategies contributed to broader cultural impacts, including the emergence of gamelan communities, increased interest among foreign students in studying Balinese arts directly in Bali, and the sustainability of Balinese dance and gamelan practices outside Indonesia. These developments demonstrate that educational activities, workshops, and performances functioned as communication channels that facilitated the emergence of new adopters and practitioners of Balinese arts within global cultural spaces. Thus, the sustainability of Balinese arts promotion depended not only on preserving traditional forms, but also on the capacity to mediate cultural differences through adaptive, educational, and collaborative approaches.



Figure 7. I Nyoman Wenten Demonstrating Kendang Technique
Documentation: I Nyoman Wenten, 2005

The challenges in staging Balinese arts abroad are not only related to technical aspects, but also to regulations and local socio-cultural conditions. In the United States, performances must comply with regulations regarding crowd control and noise levels, which affects the flexibility of event organization. In addition, differences in the cultural backgrounds of audiences also pose challenges, as not all communities have an understanding of or openness toward Balinese arts; in some cases, there are even attitudes of rejection or racism. This situation requires adaptive presentation strategies, such as incorporating local humor in bondres performances or creating mask characters that are closer to the audience’s daily experiences, without losing the fundamental identity of Balinese arts.

On the other hand, challenges also arise in maintaining the interest of younger generations in Balinese arts, which is often hindered by time constraints due to individual busyness. This affects the consistency of participation in training and performances, thereby influencing the sustainability of art communities. In general, the challenges include the complexity of artistic material that is difficult for beginners to understand, performance regulations abroad, cultural differences that affect acceptance, and limited youth engagement. These aspects indicate that the promotion of Balinese arts takes place within a dynamic context that requires adaptive and sustainable strategies.

Sustainability Efforts in the Promotion of Balinese Arts in Response to Cultural Differences and Global Developments

The findings of this study show that the sustainability of Balinese arts promotion carried out by I Nyoman Wenten depended on continuous educational engagement, artistic regeneration, and adaptive cultural strategies. Sustainability efforts became an essential component in maintaining the existence of Balinese arts within transnational cultural contexts, particularly amid differences in audience backgrounds and the influence of global cultural developments [18]. In practice, Wenten’s promotion of Balinese arts was not limited to performances, but also emphasized long-term transmission through teaching activities, workshops, mentorship, and the development of artistic communities.

One of the main findings indicates that educational activities functioned as sustainable mechanisms for the regeneration of Balinese arts practitioners outside Bali. Through continuous involvement in performances and learning activities, Wenten created participatory spaces where students could experience Balinese artistic traditions directly. This process encouraged participants not only to study the arts temporarily, but also to establish independent gamelan and dance communities within their own social environments. As a result, the dissemination of Balinese arts developed through a chain effect in which former students became new practitioners, instructors, and promoters of Balinese arts in broader international contexts.

From the perspective of Rogers' diffusion of innovation theory [14], these sustainability efforts demonstrate the importance of communication channels, social systems, and adopter categories in maintaining long-term artistic dissemination. Educational institutions, workshops, and artistic communities functioned as social systems that facilitated the diffusion process, while students and artistic participants became new adopters who contributed to the continuation of Balinese artistic practices outside Indonesia. This indicates that the sustainability of Balinese arts promotion relied not only on preserving traditional performance forms, but also on the ability to create regenerative cultural networks through participatory learning and sustained interaction.

The study also found that Wenten responded to global cultural developments through adaptive approaches that maintained traditional values while increasing accessibility for international audiences. Adjustments in teaching methods, performance structures, and cross-cultural communication enabled Balinese arts to remain relevant within contemporary global contexts without losing their cultural foundations. In analytical terms, these adaptive strategies reflect forms of cultural mediation in which traditional artistic practices were continuously negotiated and communicated across different cultural settings. Consequently, the sustainability of Balinese arts promotion emerged not merely from preservation efforts, but from the capacity to balance cultural continuity with innovation and transnational adaptation.



Figure 8. Certificate of Art Community Fostered by I Nyoman Wenten
Documentation: Marcoluna, 2025

I Nyoman Wenten's efforts in addressing cultural differences and varying levels of audience understanding are carried out through adaptive approaches that bridge Balinese arts with the experiences of local communities. This strategy is realized by adopting elements familiar to audiences, such as the use of local humor in bondres performances and the creation of mask characters aligned with audience references, such as Miss LA and Mr. Kissner, while still presented within the framework of Balinese arts. Through this approach, the introduction of Balinese arts becomes more communicative and accessible, transforming cultural differences from barriers into strategic tools for strengthening connections between the arts and their audiences.

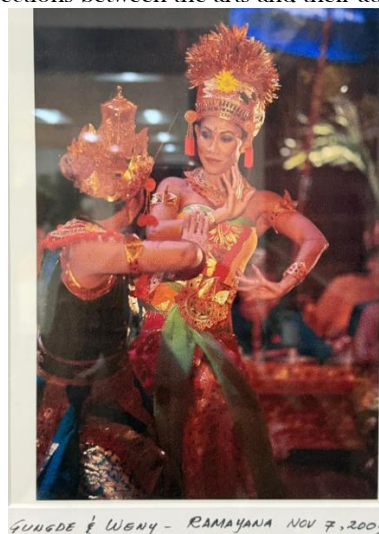


Figure 9. Costume Adaptation of I Nyoman Wenten in Performance
Documentation: I Nyoman Wenten, 2009

The sustainability efforts in promoting Balinese arts by I Nyoman Wenten are directed toward positioning the arts within the flow of technological and global cultural developments without abandoning traditional standards (*pakem*) as the primary foundation. He emphasizes the importance of balancing the preservation of traditional values with adaptation to contemporary developments, including the use of technology and adjustments in presentation methods to remain relevant to modern audiences. This is reflected in his statement: “Balinese arts must remain grounded in their traditional standards, but in practice I use flexible approaches that follow the development of the times... the most important thing is that the foundation and meaning of the arts are preserved... so that Balinese arts continue to live and can be passed on to future generations.” This approach shows that sustainability depends not only on preservation but also on the capacity for directed adaptation.

These efforts also serve as responses to various challenges, including the complexity of artistic material, performance regulations, cultural differences, and youth engagement. The strategies implemented include simplifying materials to enhance accessibility, adjusting technical aspects of performances to comply with local regulations, applying adaptive approaches through the integration of local cultural elements, and fostering continuous development through art communities. Furthermore, I Nyoman Wenten’s personal qualities as an educator and artist play a significant role in building cross-cultural social relationships, making the process of artistic acceptance more open. This is reinforced by Adam Wayan Berg’s statement: “My most memorable thing about Pak Wenten is his strong ‘taksu’ and how he can bring people together...,” highlighting Wenten’s role as a connector in expanding the reach of art promotion.

From the perspective of Everett M. Rogers’ Diffusion of Innovation theory, the practices carried out by I Nyoman Wenten reflect a systematic process of disseminating the arts through innovation, communication channels, time dimensions, social systems, and adopter categories. Innovation is evident in the adaptation of performance forms and the use of technology, while communication occurs through workshops, education, and live performances. Temporal continuity is reflected in consistent activities across decades, while social systems are formed through academic networks and international art communities. The success of this promotion is demonstrated by the emergence of individuals and groups who independently develop Balinese arts outside Bali, indicating that the diffusion process extends beyond appreciation to active practice and global regeneration of the arts.

4. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study show that the artistry of I Nyoman Wenten was shaped by family influence, Balinese cultural traditions, formal artistic education, and long-term involvement in national and international artistic environments. These experiences formed an artistic identity that remained grounded in Balinese traditional values while also being open to cross-cultural interaction and artistic adaptation.

The study also demonstrates that Wenten contributed to the development of Balinese arts through various forms of artistic innovation and cultural adaptation. These efforts included the preservation of classical Balinese dance and gamelan traditions, the adaptation of performances for non-Balinese audiences, the innovation of *bondres* mask characters, the adjustment of performance duration and presentation structures, the use of English in performance contexts, and cross-cultural artistic collaborations. Such developments indicate that Balinese arts can remain relevant within global cultural contexts without losing their traditional foundations.

In promoting Balinese arts in the United States, Wenten employed educational and performative strategies through teaching activities, workshops, performances, gamelan communities, artistic residencies, academic networks, and international collaborations. These activities functioned not only as artistic presentations but also as processes of cultural mediation that enabled the dissemination of Balinese artistic knowledge to broader international audiences. The study further shows that these strategies contributed to the formation of artistic communities, increased interest among foreign students in studying Balinese arts, and supported the sustainability of Balinese dance and gamelan practices outside Indonesia.

Academically, this study demonstrates that the sustainability of traditional arts in global contexts depends not only on preserving traditional standards (*pakem*), but also on the ability of artists to function as cultural mediators who adapt, communicate, and transmit artistic values across different cultural environments. Through this role, I Nyoman Wenten has contributed significantly to the transnational promotion and sustainability of Balinese arts in contemporary global society.

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