



Mapping the Spectrum of Nusantara Architecture: A Critical Reading of Modern Classicism Approach

Khusnul Hanifati¹, Multazam Akbar Junaedi^{1*}, Dhamira Saffana¹, Nadia Salwa Syaharani¹

¹Department of Architecture, Institut Teknologi Sepuluh Nopember (ITS), Surabaya 60111, Indonesia

akbar.junaedi@its.ac.id

Abstract. Nusantara Architecture is a contested field of identity, resistance, and interpretation, long framed by colonial and anthropological discourse as “traditional.” Prijotomo (2014) reframes it as a “classic” architectural grammar: an autonomous, regionally grounded system of spatial order, material logic, and environmental intelligence. Yet it remains unclear how this grammar can be operationalized for reading contemporary projects beyond folkloric, image-led interpretations, and for distinguishing transformation from replication or theming. In dialogue with critical regionalism, this paper treats Nusantara as a way to mediate universal demands through endogenous architectural logic without slipping into nostalgia. Drawing on Robert A.M. Stern’s modern classicism, it proposes a spectrum-based analytical approach and tests it through comparative case analysis of three projects that resist singular classification: Masjid Said Naum (Jakarta), Pasar Johar (Semarang), and Efteling’s *Huis van de Vijf Zintuigen* (the Netherlands) as an external comparator. Our findings indicate that while such categorization clarifies how Nusantara architectures transform, it cannot be compartmentalized into five rigid types; it must be read as a flexible, overlapping spectrum. Across the cases, projects occupy overlapping positions and combine multiple logics at once, supporting a flexible spectrum reading and offering a diagnostic lens for interpreting contemporary Nusantara works beyond rigid categorization.

Keywords: Nusantara, Architecture, Critical Regionalism

1 Introduction

1.1 Background and Problem

Over the last century, discourse on Nusantara Architecture has moved from a colonial–anthropological framing of “tradition” toward a post-19th century understanding of Nusantara as “classic.” This re-canonization positions Nusantara not as nostalgia, but as a living architectural grammar with its own spatial order, tectonic reasoning, and environmental intelligence that can inform contemporary practice (Prijotomo, 2014). In parallel, Stern’s modern classicism shows how principles of type, order, proportion, and hierarchy can be recomposed for modernization without collapsing into imitation

(Stern, 1988). Together, these lenses suggest that contemporary Nusantara-related works should be read not only by what they resemble, but by how inherited rules are transformed under present constraints. Yet many projects combine continuity and reinvention, quoting recognizable elements while reworking operative logics, which makes image-led or identity-first interpretations insufficient. Existing discussions still favor rigid taxonomies and leave key issues under-specified, including type/grammar, performance, tectonics, and continuity. What is needed is a fluid interpretive approach that can map overlapping positions and translate the “Nusantara-as-classic” proposition into legible criteria for critical architectural reading.

1.2 Aim

This study develops a fluid, multi-dimensional framework for reading Nusantara Architecture through the lens of modern classicism. In addition, treating classicism as an adaptive grammar rather than a fixed style. It aims to (1) map how architectural projects operate across key multiple design dimensions beyond visual identity, and (2) differentiate processes of transformation from acts of replication or pastiche, without constraining works within rigid or singular classifications.

1.3 Research Questions

This study addresses three interrelated questions:

1. How can modern classicism be translated into a spectrum-based mapping framework for reading contemporary Nusantara Architecture without forcing singular classifications?
2. How does treating Nusantara Architecture as a “classic” grammar help distinguish transformation of inherited rules from replication in contemporary works?
3. How do contemporary projects occupy overlapping positions across the spectrum when evaluated across multiple design dimensions?

Together, these questions reposition Nusantara Architecture not as a static identity marker, but as a dynamic field of interpretation shaped by negotiations between heritage, performance, and modernity.

2 Shifting Paradigm in Arsitektur Nusantara: From Traditionalism to Latent Classicism

The term Arsitektur Nusantara is increasingly popularized by the Indonesian government and architect as a representation of Indonesian architectural identity. The term Nusantara itself has now taken on heightened political significance, being adopted as the official name of Indonesia’s new capital (IKN). While this paper does not focus on Nusantara architecture in the context of IKN, it is important to acknowledge that the discourse surrounding it is becoming increasingly complex and politicized. Rather than treating Arsitektur Nusantara as a static identity, this chapter conceptualizes it as a contested and layered field of theory, ideology, and design shaped by epistemic ruptures

(Sudrajat, 2018), institutional power (Purwaningrum, 2019), and attempts at re-rooting Indonesian architecture beyond Eurocentric tradition (Pangarsa, 2020)

2.1 Breaking the Eurocentric Frame

Indonesian vernacular architecture was framed as “traditional” (Scheffold et al., 2003), a category produced through colonial anthropology that positioned local practices as static, folkloric, and inferior to the “universal” modern architecture of the West. In another way, Indonesian traditional architecture presented as curated cultural spectacles (Hanifati, 2024), reinforcing a traditional, modern dichotomy and positioning local forms as artifacts as both exotic and subordinate within a colonial, modern narrative (Lukito, 2016). In response, colonial authorities undertook widespread demolition of these vernacular structures, replacing them with Western, style dwellings constructed from bricks and corrugated iron, equipped with improved ventilation and sanitation facilities (Cobban, 1974; Columbijn, 2013).

Josef Prijotomo challenged this framing by reclassifying *Arsitektur Nusantara* as a form of “classic” architecture, a system of order, proportion, and spatial logic parallel to Western classicism. This shift reclaims epistemic authority, transforming indigenous architecture from a museum object into a theoretical foundation for modern design. From Josef Prijotomo’s thoughts in *Ideas and Forms of Javanese Architecture* (1988), *Petungan* (1995), *Arsitektur Nusantara: Menuju Keniscayaan* (2004), *(Re)Konstruksi Arsitektur Jawa* (2007), and his 2008 inaugural lecture, he reframes Nusantara as “arsitektur klasik” (post, traditional, post, 19th, century), grounded in indigenous spatial orders, tectonics, measures (*petungan*), and meanings. He opposes Western teleologies by theorizing Nusantara as architecture of *perteduhan* (shade) and “*liyan*” (otherness) or an autonomous epistemic field rather than a stylistic appendix. Galih Widjil Pangarsa’s anchor in *Merah Putih Arsitektur Nusantara* (2006), articulates the twin values of *kesetempatan* (placeness) and *kesemestaan* (universality) as the Nusantaran way of reconciling the particular and the shared. His “*kisah arsitektur*” (architectural narratology) reads buildings as texts authored within local cosmologies, pushing the discourse beyond typological catalogues toward endogenous theory.

2.2 From Identity Symbol to Critical Regionalism

In the post-independence era, *Arsitektur Nusantara* was mobilized by the state as a symbol of national identity, often reduced to stylized roofs or ornamental references in public buildings. Critics such as Abidin Kusno and Gunawan Tjahjono note how these gestures served political representation more than architectural innovation. From the 1990s onward, however, scholars like Iwan Sudrajat, Maria Sudarwani, Hidayatun, and Galih Widjil Pangarsa advanced a more nuanced view: Nusantara architecture as critical regionalism, an architecture rooted in environmental response, socio-cultural patterns, and local wisdoms (*kearifan lokal*), while simultaneously engaging with global modernity. This marked a move from symbolic essentialism to contextual reinterpretation.

With the rise of critical regionalism, Indonesian scholars and architects began engaging with Nusantara Architecture not only as memory or symbolism, but as a way of designing in context that responsive to climate, culture, material, and social structure. Nusantara can guide regionalist architectural strategies, arguing for the need to move beyond symbolic roofs and embrace spatial, cultural logic such as hierarchy, orientation, community function (Hidayatun et al., 2014). Building on this discourse, Maria Sudarwani introduces the concept of *mengkini* (contemporizing), which advocates for the reinterpretation rather than replication of Nusantara architectural principles within modern contexts (Sudarwani, 2017). From this standpoint, *Arsitektur Nusantara* emerges as a dynamic negotiation between global technological advancements and enduring local wisdoms, embodying a productive dialogue between tradition and modernity.

2.3 Nusantara in Contemporary Practice

More recently, *Arsitektur Nusantara* has entered a phase of reinterpretation through the lens of modern classicism, resonating with Robert A.M. Stern's notion of latent classicism where classical grammar provides a flexible framework for contemporary expression. Prijotomo's idea of Nusantara architecture as "classic" finds continuity here: rather than replication or nostalgia, Nusantara forms and typologies serve as latent structures, adaptable to modern needs while retaining cultural resonance. At the same time, as Purwaningrum points out, the government's appropriation of "Nusantara", particularly in naming the new capital (IKN), has made the discourse more complex and politicized, underscoring the tension between genuine architectural exploration and state, driven branding. Within this paradigm, *Arsitektur Nusantara* is best understood not as a fixed style but as a living spectrum of regional modernities, critically negotiated between past, present, and future.

Josef Prijotomo's proposition of Nusantara as classic naturally bridges to latent classicism: Nusantaran types and measures (*petungan*) function as generative structures to be re, scaled, recomposed, hybridized rather than copied. The "roof, to, floor" construction sequence, *perteduhan*, based sizing, and non, wall, centric enclosure become rules of formation for modern briefs. Galih Widjil Pangarsa's supplies the interpretive engine: use *kesempatan/kesemestaan* to decide which latent types endure and how they transform, e.g., from stilt, house airflow logics to mid, rise cross, ventilation; from communal veranda to mixed, use collective thresholds; from craft jointing to engineered timber and hybrid composites. *Arsitektur Nusantara* today is best understood as a living spectrum of regional modernities an endogenous classic tradition (Prijotomo) continuously narrated and situated (Pangarsa), practiced as critical regionalism, and expressed through latent classicism rather than replication.

3 Analytical Framework and Methods

3.1 From Classic to Modern Spectrum

In this study, “classic” does not refer to the Greco-Roman canon. Following Prijotomo, it denotes an endogenous architectural grammar rooted in Nusantara vernacular traditions and spatial logics. To operationalize this for contemporary readings, the study brings it into dialogue with Robert A.M. Stern’s modern classicism, using his five positions as reference points rather than rigid stylistic categories, as outlined below:

1. Canonic Classicism.

Canonic Classicism emphasizes a strong commitment to an established architectural canon. It is grounded in the disciplined study of classical precedents such as Vitruvius and Palladio, and it applies principles of form, proportion, and order to contemporary programs. The approach reads as “textbook” because it follows compositional rules and clear spatial sequencing. In a Nusantara context, this may appear as prescriptive public-to-private hierarchies, canonical roof pitches and tiering, and fixed threshold and proportional relationships. Its strength lies in clarity and continuity. However, it can become curatorial if contemporary program needs, climatic standards, and accessibility requirements are not actively reworked.

2. Fundamentalist Classicism.

Fundamentalist Classicism is a traditionalist stance defined by strict commitment to historical precedents, seeking authenticity through the careful replication of classical forms, proportions, and ornamental detail. In practice, revival becomes literal reproduction with minimal reinterpretation; in Nusantara contexts, silhouettes and motifs may be copied, sometimes using modern materials disguised as “traditional,” while older spatial or structural logics are transplanted into new programs. The result is visually legible and easily branded, but it is vulnerable to pastiche when the work operates as surface “skin” rather than an operative architectural system.

3. Modern Traditionalism.

Modern Traditionalism represents an architectural approach that aims to harmonize modern design sensibilities with traditional forms and principles. It seeks to reconcile historical continuity and cultural context with contemporary program, technology, and construction, reinterpreting classical or vernacular elements rather than reproducing them. Recognizable types such as markets, mosques, or stilt-house logics remain legible, while structure, services, and safety standards are fully modern; climate-responsive features like verandas, deep shading, cross-ventilation, and lifted floors are retained and adapted. This approach suits contexts that require both identity and technical performance, but it can stall as a visual compromise if transformations in section, use, and environmental strategy are not developed beyond surface continuity.

4. Latent Classicism.

Latent Classicism incorporates classical principles without stylistic mimicry, allowing proportions, symmetry, hierarchy, and even ornament to operate in an abstract or understated way. In a Nusantara reading, the grammar is present but quiet: type, proportion, and threshold choreography function as generative rules that shape new forms in service of contemporary performance. Design decisions may be driven by operative

logics such as shading depth, ventilation paths, and structural grids and spans, while materials and tectonics are expressed candidly through modern systems (e.g., engineered timber, bamboo laminates, steel) rather than masquerade. The result can achieve strong climatic and social performance with deep continuity, although its logic may remain invisible to stakeholders unless the carried-forward rules are clearly articulated.

5. Ironic Classicism.

Ironic Classicism deploys classical elements as playful quotation, acknowledging historical reference while treating it with self-aware irony in contemporary settings. Rather than operating as an underlying grammar, motifs function primarily as signs within a visual narrative; in Nusantara terms, elements may appear as applied “skins” or clips without corresponding spatial, tectonic, or climatic logic. This can be highly communicative and effective for themed or recreational projects, but it risks reducing architecture to surface spectacle, where meaning and performance diminish once the applied layer is removed.

From the explanation above, we can conclude different aspect and purpose of each of the spectrum below (see Table 1).

Table 1. Different aspect and purpose of Nusantara Architecture spectrum

Canonical Classicism	Ironic Classicism	Modern Traditionalism	Latent Classicism	Fundamentalist Classicism
Rooted in classical orders and proportion; timeless and formal.	Playful reinterpretation of classical motifs; self-aware and witty.	Blends classical discipline with modern needs; practical craftsmanship.	Subtle reinterpretation of classical form with modern sensitivity.	Critical reintegration of classical essence; ideological yet interpretive.
Upholds order, symmetry, and harmony; architecture as timeless ideal.	Embraces irony and contrast; challenges classical seriousness.	Marries tradition with modern comfort and technology.	Balances continuity of classical ideas with restrained innovation.	Treats classical forms in a contemporary way, seeking what is essential in tradition.
Authentic, natural materials like stone and marble expressing permanence.	Mixes traditional and modern materials for expressive contrast.	Combines craft, quality materials with modern construction.	Uses modern materials refined with classical restraint.	Prefers traditional, enduring materials to reinforce purity and continuity.
Careful, purposeful detail; supports overall harmony.	Exaggerated or ironic use of classical details; visual playfulness.	Ornament expresses human craft and care.	Subtle detailing that conveys quiet elegance.	Uses parts of ornament as an expression of classical integrity.
Strict adherence to classical proportion; balance and clarity.	Deliberate distortion or recontextualization of symmetry.	Maintains harmony while adapting to functional needs.	Proportion refined for balance and calmness.	Refined geometric order and essential proportional logic.
Honors classical heritage and urban context.	Blends classical motifs with pop culture or contemporary life.	Integrates design with local community and environment.	Reflects context through nuanced adaptation.	Applies classical principles universally, reinterpreting them across contexts.

If the spectrum is mapped into a classical to modern spectrum, then the following is an illustration of the spectrum (Figure 1).

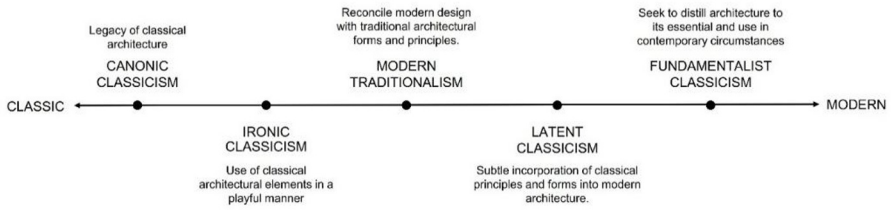


Fig. 1. From classics to modern spectrum

3.2 Case Selection and Data

This study uses comparative qualitative case analysis. Three cases were selected because they resist singular placement within Stern's spectrum and provide clear contrasts in how "Nusantara" operates as grammar, performance strategy, or representational sign. The cases are Masjid Said Naum (Jakarta), Pasar Johar (Semarang), and Efteling's *Huis van de Vijf Zintuigen* (the Netherlands), which is included as an external comparator to sharpen the boundary between operative transformation and symbolic quotation/theming.

The parameters for selecting study cases are (1) the case is not an indigenous building, so it is not Nusantara Architecture according to Prof. Josef, (2) the case was built by local and non, local authors, (3) consideration of the local context of the study case. The three case studies, Masjid Said Naum in Jakarta, Pasar Johar in Semarang, and Efteling in the Netherlands, are deliberately chosen to represent distinct positions within a conceptual spectrum. Masjid Said Naum explores the grammar of Nusantara Mosque architecture within the context of contemporary worship practices and climatic responsiveness. Pasar Johar investigates a form of market hall modernism that achieves renewal through conservation, embodying the idea of continuity through transformation. In contrast, Efteling functions as a comparative foil, where the use of classicized theming amplifies architectural semiotics while simultaneously testing the boundaries of regional authenticity and performance.

Case selection was informed by comparative literature analysis on Stern's modern classicism and Nusantara architectural discourse, which helped distill recurring analytical dimensions (typology, materiality, symbolism, and spatial organization). The study then applies a multi-dimensional coding and spectrum-mapping procedure by extracting observable indicators from drawings, photographs, and textual descriptions, including spatial sequencing, passive ventilation, structural legibility, applied motifs, and conservation strategies. Each dimension is positioned along Stern's spectrum (canonic, fundamentalist, modern traditionalist, latent, ironic) based on how rules operate through grammar, performance, and tectonics rather than appearance alone, and each placement is justified with explicit evidence to produce a traceable audit trail. Dimension-level profiles are synthesized within each case and compared across cases to identify patterns of hybridity, clarify transformation versus theming, and evaluate the limits of Stern's five-part taxonomy for Nusantara readings.

4 Case Analyses

4.1 Masjid Said Naum (Jakarta)

Masjid Said Naum is in Tanah Abang, Central Jakarta (Jl. Kb. Kacang 9) and was designed by Adhi Moersid (Atelier Enam) after winning a 1975 design competition held by the Jakarta Municipal Government; it was completed in 1977. Built on a 15,000 m² site, the mosque integrates a prayer hall, ablution facilities, parking, and landscaped open space within a dense urban-commercial setting. Conceived to serve Jakarta's growing communal and spiritual needs during rapid urbanization, the project has been recognized internationally through the Aga Khan Award for Architecture (1984–1986) (Aga Khan Award for Architecture, n.d.; PARSIKA, 2019).

An examination of Masjid Said Naum through Robert A.M. Stern's classical classification spectrum reveals that it defies singular categorization, exhibiting a hybrid identity that straddles modern traditionalism and latent classicism due to its complex interplay of inherited and innovative elements. The modern traditionalism aspect is evident in the mosque's adept integration of craft-quality materials with contemporary construction techniques, aligning with Stern's framework where traditional forms are revitalized for modern contexts (Stern & Gastil, 1988). The structure utilizes traditional Javanese materials, load-bearing brick walls, smooth plaster finishes, warm timber accents, and intricately laid clay tiles, crafted with artisanal precision, reflecting the joglo house's vernacular aesthetic, while incorporating advanced engineering through a concealed steel framing system that replaces saka guru columns with wide, span beams (Moersid & Enam, 1986; PARSIKA, 2019) (Figure 2). This synthesis supports a 15x15, meter prayer hall accommodating over 500 worshippers, enhancing spatial inclusivity and natural ventilation via roof, tier gaps, embodying a critical regionalist approach that negotiates universal architectural principles with environmental and cultural needs (Figure 2), as supported by Prijotomo's (2014) fluid spectrum of *Arsitektur Nusantara*, which resists rigid typologies (Prijotomo, 2014).

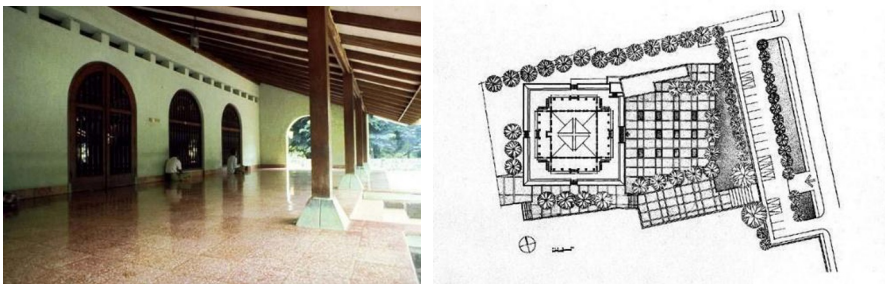


Fig. 2. (Right) Structural System of Joglo (source: Darab D, 1986); (Left) Masjid Said Naum Floor Plan (source: Moersid A, n.d.)

The latent classicism of Masjid Said Naum further underscores its hybrid classification within Stern's spectrum, reflecting a nuanced interplay that defies clear delineation between categories due to its adaptive transformation of classical principles. This classification is manifested in the mosque's refined proportions, where the symmetrical

synthesis, negotiating universal ideals with Nusantara’s cultural heritage, challenging rigid typologies and enriching postcolonial design discourse (Aga Khan Award for Architecture, n.d.; Prijotomo, 2014a).

4.2 Pasar Johar (Semarang)

Pasar Johar in Semarang is a major colonial-era market designed by Herman Thomas Karsten in the 1930s and completed in 1939 as part of a modern urban plan integrating the city’s social and economic life. Responding to tropical conditions and market practices, it was conceived as a hygienic and efficient public facility and became one of the largest modern markets in Southeast Asia at the time (Widiaswara et al., 2025). Architecturally, it is defined by a reinforced-concrete flat-slab system and octagonal mushroom columns that enable wide (Figure 4), beam-free space, modular regularity, and effective daylighting and ventilation. After the 2015 fire, revitalization largely retained the original form, proportions, and structural logic (Figure 5) while upgrading circulation and sanitation systems, including ramps, stairs, drainage, and service improvements (Kiswari et al., 2023). This combination of structural rationality and disciplined spatial order supports a dual reading within modern classicism, positioned between Fundamentalist and Latent Classicism.

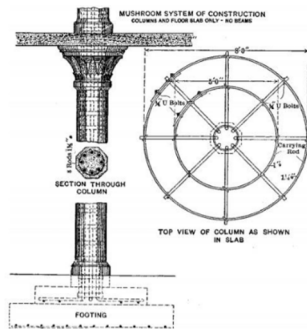


Fig. 4. Mushroom Column (source: Purnomo et al., 2021)



Fig. 5. (Left) Pasar Johar in 2007; (Right) Pasar Johar in 2022 (source: Kiswari et al., 2022)

In the context of Stern's (1988) theory of Modern Classicism, Pasar Johar can be categorized as a representation of Fundamentalist Classicism. This spectrum is rooted in a tradition of architectural reform that aims to refine Classical principles into essential geometric forms and structures, such as cubes, cylinders, and triangles, emphasizing

clarity and structural reliability. Karsten applied these principles through the rationalization of space and function: replacing traditional materials such as wood and bamboo with more durable and hygienic reinforced concrete and formulating the basic principles of modern markets to create good lighting and air circulation, convenience of cleaning, protection from the weather, and efficient circulation of shoppers (Roesmanto, 2018). The flat slab structural system and mushroom columns that he used are not only reflective of technical efficiency, but also an aesthetic element that emphasizes constructural honesty (Figure 6). The octagonal cross, section of columns and flat roof signify the simplification of classical forms into pure geometry, while the modular layout with a central void to organize circulation reveals the hierarchy and order of Classicism (CDIA Consultant Team, 2014; Rukayah et al., 2021) (Figure 7). Through this approach, Karsten succeeded in realizing the ideals of modern social and functional reform in a rational and structurally clear architectural expression, becoming a typical manifestation of Fundamentalist Classicism.



Fig. 6. Flat Slab Structural System and Mushroom Columns (source: Rukayah et al., 2020)

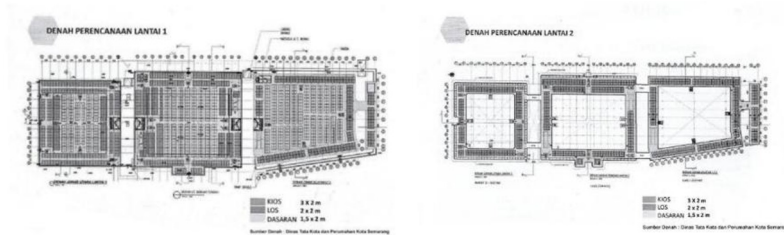


Fig. 7. (Left) Pasar Johar's 1st Floor; (Right) Pasar Johar's 2nd Floor Plan (source: Yassin & Sukawi, 2020)

At the same time, however, Pasar Johar can also be read as a representation of Latent Classicism, where Classical principles that emphasize order, rhythm, and sequence, are implicitly presented in a functional modern architectural language with no explicit ornamentation. This latent character emerges through the rhythm repetition of the mushroom columns, resulting in a harmonious visual rhythm and regularity of the facade that asserts the structure as an aesthetic element (Purnomo et al., 2021; Yassin & Sukawi, 2020). The rational layout centered on the central void shows a modern interpretation of Classical symmetrical composition (Figure 8), while the use of reinforced concrete and andesite stone shows the honesty of the materials and the emphasis on

durability, cleanliness, and construction efficiency (Kiswari et al., 2023) (Figure 6). In this case, Classicism does not emerge through decorative forms, but through rationality, proportion, and spatial order sublimated into modern logic. Therefore, Pasar Johar's position is difficult to classify within a single spectrum of Modern Classicism. It stands between Fundamentalist and Latent Classicism, combining rational structural and functional reforms with latent expressions of classical order and harmony, making it a unique example of the synthesis of modern and classical values in the context of Indonesian tropical and urban architecture.



Fig. 8. (Left) Pasar Johar's Facade Post-revitalization; (Right) Pasar Johar's Material Interior (source: Yassin & Sukawi, 2020)

4.3 Efteling (Netherlands)

Huis van de Vijf Zintuigen, the main entrance to Efteling in Kaatsheuvel, the Netherlands, was designed by Ton van de Ven and completed in 1996 after construction began in 1994. Conceived as a multifunctional gateway to replace the park's earlier entrance and accommodate rising visitor numbers, it developed from a 1988 concept for a "Dorpsstraat" leading to a central "Brink" that would concentrate hospitality, retail, and entertainment functions (Efteling, 2023a, 2023b; Eftepedia, 2023). Built by Van Wijnen Zuid with technical oversight by Hans Roosen (Adviesbureau Tielemans), the 43 m-high structure is defined by its 4,500 m² thatched roof, recognized by Guinness as the Netherlands' largest wooden thatched building, and framed within Efteling's Pardoes narrative of the five senses (Eftepedia, 2023; Melancong Kebukittinggi, 2023).

This examination positions *Het Huis van de Vijf Zintuigen* within Robert A.M. Stern's classical classification spectrum, proposing a dual categorization encompassing ironic classicism and modern traditionalism, reflecting its hybrid architectural identity that defies singular placement. The ironic classicism classification is substantiated by the structure's playful appropriation of traditional forms without substantive cultural engagement, aligning with Stern's framework where classical or vernacular elements are repurposed with postmodern detachment to offer satirical commentary on heritage (Stern & Gastil, 1988). The roof's five gonjong-like peaks, directly borrowed from the Minangkabau Rumah Gadang of West Sumatra, symbolizing buffalo-horn strength and matrilineal lineage, are redeployed as a decorative motif for Efteling's Pardoes tale of sensory harmony among five princes, embracing irony and contrast by stripping the form's original meaning for thematic whimsy, challenging classical seriousness with a superficial exotic appeal (Eftepedia, 2023; Milena & Oest, 1996) (Figure 9). Van de Ven's 1995 admission that the shape was chosen for its "dramatic sweep" rather than Minangkabau depth exemplifies this detachment, as the interior, housing Gastenservice

counters and Efteling Radio, prioritizes operational functionality over reflective critique, embodying a critical regionalist negotiation of universal motifs with particular narrative needs, as per Prijotomo's (2014) fluid spectrum of *Arsitektur Nusantara* (Prijotomo, 2014a).



Fig. 9. Minangkabau Inspired Roof (source: Matthew Wells, 2009)

The modern traditionalism of *Het Huis van de Vijf Zintuigen* further complicates its classification within Stern's spectrum, exhibiting a hybrid essence that overlaps with ironic classicism due to its adaptive transformation of traditional elements. This classification is evident in the structure's refined blend of classical discipline with modern needs, where the symmetrical layout and proportional thatched roof, featuring five peaks evoking ordered ascension, integrate vernacular craftsmanship with contemporary engineering, aligning with Stern's advocacy for contextual continuity (Stern & Gastil, 1988). Constructed with 800 Bavarian spruce trunks forming 331 nodes connected by concealed steel plates, the design employs artisanal thatching by J. de Gouw for the 4,500 m² roof, reflecting practical craftsmanship in its near-vertical slopes for rain deflection and insulation against Brabant's climate (Figure 10), while hidden reinforcements ensure seismic and fire safety via sprinklers (Milena & Oest, 1996; *The Roofing Index*, 2025). This synthesis supports operational efficiency for 5.4 million annual visitors, with deep verandas and a circular balcony fostering communal flow akin to traditional pavilions, embodying a critical regionalist approach that negotiates universal architectural principles with environmental imperatives, as articulated in Prijotomo's (2014) spectrum of transformed typologies (Prijotomo, 2014).

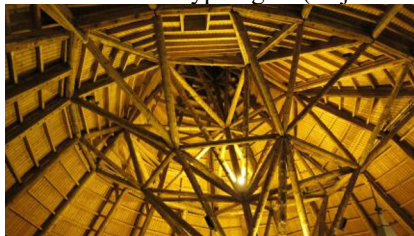


Fig. 10. Tectonical of Efteling Roof (source: Willem Van Der Oest, n.d.)

In conclusion, *Het Huis van de Vijf Zintuigen* reflects a hybrid identity, oscillating between ironic classicism and modern traditionalism in Stern's framework (Stern & Gastil, 1988). Its ironic classicism is evident in the superficial adoption of Minangkabau *gonjong* peaks for exotic appeal, stripped of cultural meaning for the Pardoes legend, challenging classical seriousness with postmodern play (Eftepedia, 2023; Milena & Oest, 1996). Modern traditionalism manifests in the blend of classical symmetry and proportional thatch with practical steel framing, ensuring functionality for 5.4 million visitors (Eftepedia, 2023; The Roofing Index, 2025). This tension highlights a critical regionalist approach, sparking debate on cultural borrowing versus authenticity in postmodern design, as it prioritizes aesthetic innovation over heritage fidelity (Priyotomo, 2014a).

5 Comparative Findings & Discussion

5.1 Stern's Spectrum in Nusantara Architecture

Applied to the three cases, the mapping demonstrates how spectrum positioning becomes meaningful only when anchored to these variables. The following case summaries show how each project distributes its operations across the spectrum and why none can be reduced to a single placement.

1. *Masjid Said Naum* aligns between Modern Traditionalism and Latent Classicism because its tectonic and material strategies reconcile craft traditions with contemporary structural demands, while proportional discipline and threshold sequencing operate as latent rules rather than stylistic quotation.
2. *Pasar Johar* falls between Latent and Fundamentalist Classicism as it maintains a disciplined structural-spatial order and modular rhythm that preserves a "classical core," while post-revitalization interventions selectively update circulation and services without erasing the building's operative logic.
3. *Efteling's Huis van de Vijf Zintuigen*, included as an external comparator, occupies the overlap between Ironic Classicism and Modern Traditionalism: it combines craft and contemporary construction discipline with vernacular motifs that function primarily as semiotic quotation and theming rather than as operative grammar.

Overall, these results show that Stern's spectrum is useful for naming continuities in type, order, proportion, and compositional logic, but it is insufficient when treated as a purely stylistic taxonomy. The framework becomes robust only when paired with dimension-level criteria that capture performance, semiotics, and continuity, which explain why cases sit between positions and how a single project can distribute different operations across the spectrum. In this way, modern classicism shifts from a typological label into a mapping tool that avoids singular classification and makes hybridity legible across cases.

5.2 Cross Case Results

The cross-case analysis addresses the study's core gap: image-led or identity-first classification tends to flatten hybridity and obscure the difference between transformation

and replication/theming. To avoid this limitation, the study applies Stern's spectrum through three analytical registers derived from the framework and used consistently across all cases:

- Type and grammar: how axes, hierarchy, proportion, and roof/threshold sequencing organize the relation between parts and whole.
- Regional performance and tectonics: how climatic logic, construction intelligence, and material/structural decisions shape space beyond appearance.
- Meaning, politics, and continuity: how identity claims, symbolism, theming/branding, and conservation/adaptation strategies operate across time.

Read through these registers, the framework serves as a practical diagnostic. Transformation is indicated when inherited rules operate as an operative system across type/sequence, climatic performance, and tectonic logic. Replication or theming is indicated when representational motifs dominate while spatial and climatic rules remain weakly connected, reducing Nusantara to surface quotation. Across the cases, this explains why singular classification is rarely adequate: spectrum positions shift by dimension, and tectonic modernization can coexist with semiotic quotation.

5.3 Theoretical Synthesis

The study shows that contemporary projects occupy overlapping positions across Stern's spectrum because their "classicism" does not operate uniformly. Instead, it is distributed across multiple design dimensions that may point to different spectrum operations at the same time. Building on the three analytical registers introduced earlier, this study refines them into six evaluative elements that function as the variables for mapping hybridity:

1. Genealogy & Actors (who framed the "tradition," key decisions, timelines)
2. Type & Grammar (axis, hierarchy, proportion, roof/threshold sequencing)
3. Regional Performance (shade/ventilation/rain; social choreography)
4. Tectonics / Material Culture (local craft re, coded; legible assembly)
5. Semiotics / Politics (identity/theming/branding vs grounded meaning)
6. Continuity / Conservation (heritage renewal; codes; post, occupancy)

Evaluating projects across these elements shows that overlap occurs when different dimensions operate in different modes at once. Type and proportion may work as latent or modern-traditionalist rules, while semiotics functions through quotation and display. Conservation can also preserve a disciplined "core" that reads as fundamentalist, even as performance-driven adaptations shift the work toward latent operation. Overlap is therefore not a classificatory error, but an empirical condition produced by uneven alignment among grammar, performance, tectonics, and meaning. The key design elements are compared across the three case studies (see Table 2).

Table 2. Comparative Analysis of Key Design Elements Across Three Case Studies: Masjid Said Naum, Pasar Johar, and Efteling

	Masjid Said Naum	Pasar Johar	Efteling
(G1) Genealogy & Actors	Contemporary Indonesian architects who sought	Designed by Dutch architect, whose	Originates from post-war Dutch

	to reinterpret mosque architecture within the cultural and environmental framework of Nusantara traditions	modernist yet contextual approach has been reactivated through recent conservation efforts	designers who integrated storytelling, and architecture to create a themed environment rooted in cultural imagination
(G2) Type & Grammar	adapt the archetypal mosque typology through climatic responsiveness, utilizing open, air circulation, deep overhangs, and layered thresholds that reflect the logic of traditional <i>rumah panggung</i> and <i>pendopo</i>	hybrid of market, hall modernism and vernacular logic. Its open plan, modular bays, and hierarchical organization of space reflect both modernist efficiency and Javanese spatial order	borrows from European classicism, medieval vernacular forms, and mythic references, blending them into theatrical compositions that evoke nostalgia
(R1) Regional Performance	adaptation to tropical conditions through passive ventilation and shading, which create comfort while reducing mechanical dependence	building's natural ventilation, daylighting, and roof geometry respond effectively to the tropical climate, ensuring functionality and comfort	manifests through climate, adapted design that considers northern European weather conditions
(R2) Tectonics / Material Culture	employs local materials such as timber and brick in modern construction systems, producing a tactile synthesis of tradition and innovation	the project's structural renewal integrates reinforced concrete with traditional roof forms	craftsmanship and material expression are central, with brick, timber, and plaster
(S1) Semiotics / Politics	can be read in its balanced expression of religiosity and cultural identity, asserting an Indonesian Islamic modernity that resists Middle Eastern stylistic dominance	a civic space, symbolizing economic resilience and community continuity within the city's heritage district	more complex narrative, where classical and vernacular symbols are employed for emotional and thematic effect rather than authentic regional identity
(C1) Continuity / Conservation	evolving architectural continuity, translating Nusantara principles into contemporary forms	represents conservation as transformation, maintaining historical authenticity while revitalizing social and economic activity	represents a curated continuity, where heritage and myth are continually reinterpreted to sustain cultural memory

6 Conclusion & Implications

6.1 Key Conclusions

This paper argues that contemporary Nusantara-related works are best understood by using modern classicism as a diagnostic spectrum applied across multiple design dimensions, rather than as a single stylistic label. Across the three cases, spectrum positions overlap: Masjid Said Naum falls between Modern Traditionalism and Latent Classicism, Pasar Johar between Latent and Fundamentalist Classicism, and Efteling's Huis van de Vijf Zintuigen between Ironic Classicism and Modern Traditionalism. This pattern shows that the transformation–replication boundary becomes clearer when

inherited rules operate as an operative system across grammar, performance, and tectonics, and it weakens when Nusantara is reduced to representational motifs detached from those logics. The study therefore contributes a flexible spectrum reading that makes hybridity comparable across cases and supports more critical interpretations of Nusantara beyond image-led identity claims.

6.2 Key Implications

This study contributes a spectrum-based, multi-dimensional mapping procedure that makes hybridity legible and reduces image-led bias in contemporary Nusantara readings. However, translating Stern's modern classicism into Nusantara contexts remains challenging because cultural, spatial, and political nuances can produce uneven classifications if criteria are not explicit. By operationalizing the spectrum through synthetic analytical elements, the study offers a more flexible and context-responsive lens for reading Nusantara modernization beyond predefined categories. Future research should test the framework on broader samples and refine it through complementary perspectives such as postcolonial regionalism, environmental humanism, and local epistemologies to strengthen robustness across contexts.

Disclosure of Interests. The authors have no competing interests to declare that are relevant to the content of this article.

References

1. Aga Khan Award for Architecture. (n.d.). Said Naum Mosque. Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN). Retrieved September 23, 2025, from <https://the.akdn/en/how-we-work/our-agencies/aga-khan-trust-culture/akaa/sa%C3%AFd-naum-mosque>
2. CDIA Consultant Team. (2014). Project Preparation for Livable Cities in Asia: PFS on Climate Proofing and Revitalization of Pasar Johar Executive Report CDIA Consultant Team CDIA Consultant Team 1!
3. Cobban, J. L. (1974). Uncontrolled urban settlement: The kampong question in Semarang (1905 - 1940). *Bijdragen Tot de Taal-, Land- En Volkenkunde*, 403–427. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27861425>
4. Columbijn, F. (2013). Housing in the Kampong; The Contest between dwellers and the Government. In *Under Construction* (pp. 181–227).
5. Efteling. (2023a). About Efteling: Fairytales and designers. About Efteling: Fairytales and designers.
6. Efteling. (2023b). About Efteling: History. <https://www.efteling.com/en/about-efteling/history>
7. Eftepedia. (2023). Huis van de Vijf Zintuigen. Huis van de Vijf Zintuigen.
8. Hanifati, K. (2024). Koloniale Tentoonstelling Semarang as an Industrial Tourism Destination. *Ruang*, 11(1), 140–152.
9. Hidayatun, M. I., Prijotomo, J., & Rachmawati, M. (2014). *Arsitektur Nusantara Sebagai Dasar Pembentuk Regionalisme Arsitektur Indonesia*. Seminar Rumah Tradisional - Transformasi Nilai-Nilai Tradisional Dalam Arsitektur Masa Kini, 1–9.

10. Kiswari, M., Yuliasuti, N., & Sudarwanto, B. (2023). The Image of the New Johar Market – Aloon-Aloon District, Semarang. *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science*, 1218(1). <https://doi.org/10.1088/1755-1315/1218/1/012001>
11. Lukito, Y. (2016). Exhibiting modernity and Indonesian vernacular architecture: Hybrid architecture at pasar gambir of batavia, the 1931 Paris International Colonial Exhibition and Taman Mini Indonesia Indah. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-11605-7>
12. Melancong Kebukittinggi. (2023, October 28). Het Huis van de Vijf Zintuigen (The House of the Five Senses). <https://melancongkebukittinggi.wordpress.com/2023/10/28/het-huis-van-de-vijf-zintuigen-the-house-of-the-five-senses/>
13. Milena, & Oest, W. van der. (1996). *Het Huis Van De Vijf Zintuigen (The House of the Five Senses)*. Weebly.
14. Moersid, A., & Enam, A. (1986). Said Naum Mosque Project Brief.
15. Pangarsa, G. W. (2020). *Kebersahajaan Dalam Arsitektur Nusantara: Merangkai Jejak Pemikiran Galih Widjil Pangarsa (Antariksa, W. I. Rukmi, & A. M. Ridjal, Eds.)*. Maha Karya Pustaka.
16. PARSIKA. (2019, May 13). Masjid Said Naum, peraih penghargaan Aga Khan Award. Arsitur Studio.
17. Prijotomo, J. (2014a). *Eksplorasi Desain Arsitektur Nusantara*. Kompas Gramedia, Jakarta.
18. Prijotomo, J. (2014b). *Eksplorasi desain arsitektur Nusantara: 35 karya pilihan Propan sayembara desain arsitektur Nusantara*. PT Prima Info Sarana Media.
19. Purnomo, S., Suryanto, J., Darma, I. S., & Ardiyanto, A. (2021). STRUCTURE INVESTIGATION OF THE CULTURAL HERITAGE BUILDING JOHAR MARKET AT SEMARANG. *AGORA: Jurnal Penelitian Dan Karya Ilmiah Arsitektur Usakti*, 19(2), 114–126. <https://doi.org/10.25105/agora.v19i2.9849>
20. Purwaningrum, D. A. (2019). Perplexing Discourse of Indonesian Architectural Identity: An Understanding of Contemporary Nusantara Architecture. *International Journal of Architecture and Urban Studies*, 5–18.
21. Rizqa, H. (2024). *Pesona arsitektur Masjid Said Naum*. Republika. <https://republika.id/posts/52479/pesona-arsitektur-masjid-said-naum>
22. Roesmanto, T. (2018). Resilient design in the conservation of Johar market heritage building. *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science*, 99(1). <https://doi.org/10.1088/1755-1315/99/1/012008>
23. Rukayah, R. S., Sardjono, A. B., Abdullah, M., & Etenia, A. (2021). The Conservation of Old Johar Market Building. *Asian Journal of Environment-Behaviour Studies*, 5(17), 49–62. <https://doi.org/10.21834/ajeb.v5i17.375>
24. Schefold, R., Nas, P. J. M., & Domenig, G. (2003). *Indonesian Houses: Tradition and transformation in vernacular architecture (illustrated, Vol. 1)*. KITLV Press.
25. Stern, R. A. M. (1988). *Modern Classicism*. Rizzoli.
26. Stern, R. A. M., & Gastil, R. (1988). *Modern Classicism*. Thames and Hudson.
27. Sudarwani, M. M. (2017). *Pendalaman Pengetahuan Arsitektur Nusantara. In Pelatihan Sertifikat Tenaga Ahli (SKA) Arsitek Muda*.
28. Sudrajat, I. (2018). *Membangun Landasan Filosofis Bidang Studi Arsitektur Nusantara. In Kawruh Nusantara: Bunga Rampai Pemikiran Arsitektur, Persembahan untuk Prof. Josef Prijotomo*.
29. The Roofing Index. (2025, May). *Amazing roofs: House of Five Senses, Efteling*. <https://theroofingindex.co.uk/2025/05/amazing-roofs-house-of-five-senses-efteeling/>
30. Widiaswara, R. A. S., Sihotang, J. H. Y., & Wirakusumah, I. A. (2025). Transformasi Arsitektur Pasar Johar Semarang: Pra-Pasca Kebakaran. *JURAL RISET RUMPUN ILMU TEKNIK*, 4(1), 594–610. <https://doi.org/10.55606/jurritek.v4i1.5229>

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.

