

## **Music and Dance Performing Arts Building in Gunung Sitoli City with a Neo-Vernacular Architecture Approach**

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**Abstract:** Performing arts are an important part of culture that continues to develop from time to time. The development of art cannot be separated from the involvement of artists who also take part in it. In the city of Gunungsitoli, quite a lot of art practitioners and fans are gathered in studios and communities. The city of Gunungsitoli, Nias, which is said to be rich in arts and culture, should have proper performing arts building facilities capable of accommodating various types of arts activities, especially music and dance. Apart from that, the performing arts building can be used as a cultural and tourism node so that in the future it can support the economic growth of Gunungsitoli City. The music and dance performance building that will be designed uses Neo-Vernacular architecture. This performance building will be designed with a combination of vernacular architecture and contemporary architecture. Neo-vernacular is architecture that has the principle of considering the role of local culture in community life, rules, the environment and nature. By using a Neo-Vernacular Architecture approach which incorporates local cultural and architectural principles, the design of this performing arts building will support the preservation of arts and culture and adapt to current developments without losing the original characteristics of a region.

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Indonesia is a country with a vast diversity of ethnic groups and cultures, each region possessing its own unique cultural heritage. According to the Center for Data and Information Technology of the Ministry of Education and Culture in 2020, Indonesia has 1,086 intangible cultural heritage items categorized into five groups: Oral Traditions and Expressions, Community Customs, Rituals and Celebrations, Knowledge and Habits Related to Nature, Performing Arts, and Traditional Skills and Crafts.

As part of this cultural wealth, the arts, particularly performing arts, hold an essential and evolving place. The development of the arts is inseparable from the contributions of artists actively involved in preserving and advancing culture. Artists play a unique role in cultural preservation, as they can adapt to cultural realms with greater

flexibility and respond to changing times.

Gunungsitoli, a city on Nias Island in North Sumatra Province, is known for its civilized and culturally rich society. The arts in Gunungsitoli, especially traditional music, modern music, and dance such as Tari Moyo, reflect this cultural heritage. Over time, the city has continued to preserve its traditional music and dance while also embracing modern developments in these arts. According to data from the City Government of Gunungsitoli (PEMKO) and the Department of Tourism and Culture of Gunungsitoli, large-scale cultural performances have been held in the city since 2016. In 2017, the Mayor of Gunungsitoli officially launched the city’s cultural performances. From April to November 2017, these monthly events featured not only Nias culture but also dances and music from other regions, including Aceh, Chinese, and Minang ethnic groups, and even international participants such as performers from Sri Lanka.

In 2018, the Gunungsitoli City Festival of Arts and Culture was inaugurated, taking place every three months for three consecutive days and continuing to this day. In 2019, Gunung Sitoli’s art scene grew even livelier in preparation for Sail Nias, a series of annual yacht rally events initiated by the Indonesian government. This event provided an important tourism opportunity to introduce the art and culture of Nias. From late 2019 to 2020, however, the COVID-19 pandemic led to a decline in cultural performances due to restrictions on gatherings. In 2021, cultural events resumed with renewed enthusiasm from the people of Gunungsitoli. Since 2022, the city has continued to host arts and culture festivals, introducing new events such as the Ethnic Music Competition, Osale (Open Stage Art Live Event), Traditionaland, and the Festival of Art and Cultural Creativity. Additionally, art performances are frequently presented to welcome prominent guests like the President, Ministers, and Governors.

Gunungsitoli, with its rich artistic and cultural heritage, needs a suitable performance hall to accommodate various forms of art, especially traditional Nias art. The design of such a facility should consider the local wisdom of the community, making the building's functions more accessible and valued by its users (Negoro & Nuraini, 2022; Nuraini, 2019; Nuraini, 2024). Therefore, the construction of a “Music and Dance Performance Hall” is planned in Gunung Sitoli to support cultural infrastructure in the arts and to honor the cultural heritage of Nias. This performance hall can also serve as a cultural and tourism center, ultimately contributing to the economic growth of Gunung

Sitoli.

Based on the background explanation above, the design problem is formulated as follows: “How can the design of the Music and Dance Performance Building in Gunung Sitoli City be developed using a Neo-vernacular architectural approach?”

The purpose of this design project is to create a Music and Dance Performance Building in Gunungsitoli City, utilizing a Neo-vernacular architectural approach.

## DESIGN METHODS

1. **Design Location.** The selected location for this music and dance performance building is on Jl. Tetehosi Afia, Afia Village, North Gunungsitoli District. This location was chosen based on the spatial and regional plan (RTRW) of Gunungsitoli City, as it is identified as a strategic area for socio-cultural and economic activities.

Gunungsitoli City is the largest and oldest city in the Nias Islands, elevated from a subdistrict to an autonomous city under Law No. 47 of 2008. It is located on Nias Island, about 85 nautical miles from Sibolga (a city in North Sumatra Province). Gunungsitoli lies on the equator, geographically situated between 1°5' - 1°25' N latitude and 97°28' - 97°41' E longitude. Its boundaries are: North Nias Regency to the north, Nias Regency to the south, the Indian Ocean to the east, and Nias Regency to the west. Gunungsitoli City consists of six districts: Gunungsitoli Idanoi, Gunungsitoli Selatan, Gunungsitoli Barat, Gunungsitoli, Gunungsitoli Alo'oa, and Gunungsitoli Utara. The design location is shown in Figure 1.

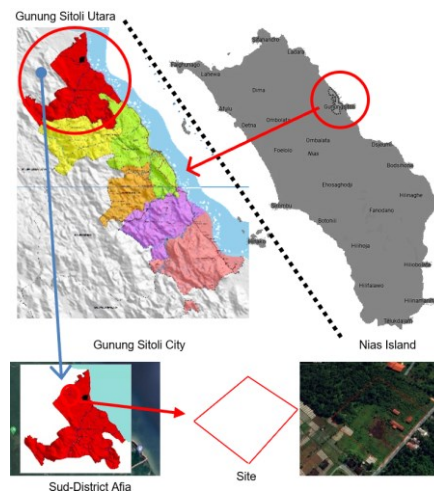


Figure 1. Site Location

(Source: Processed by the author based on Google Maps and PEMKO Gunungsitoli Administrative Map, 2023)

**2. Design Process.** To achieve the intended objectives and functions, several methods or approaches are used, including data collection methods, literature review, site location survey, data analysis, and concept design formulation. The stages or process of the design can be seen in Figure 2.

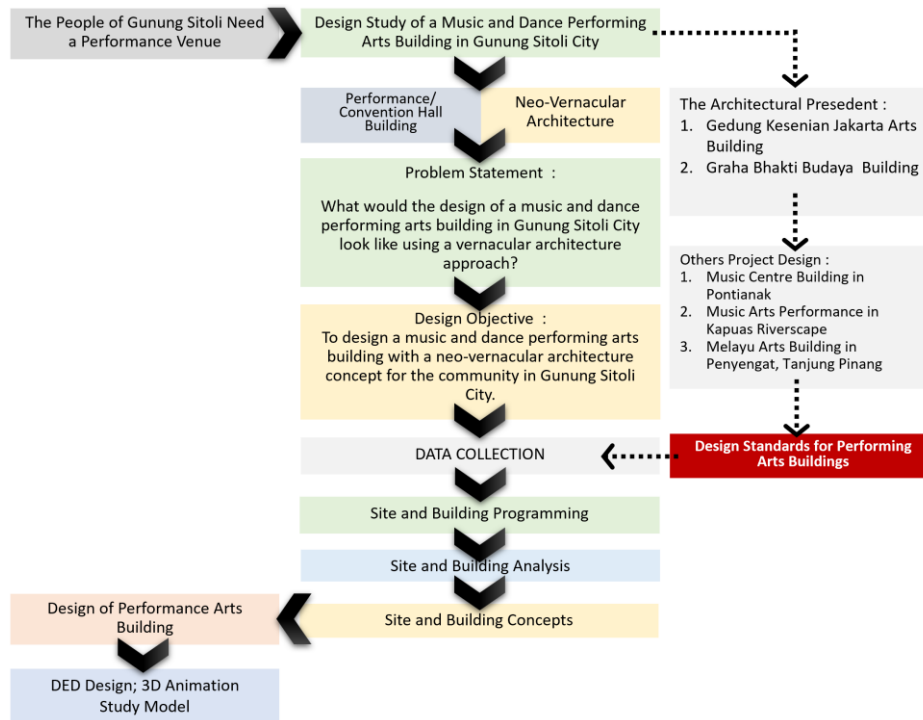


Figure 2. Design Process  
 (Source: Author's Construction, 2024)

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Neo-Vernacular Concept

Neo-Vernacular is an architectural concept that emerged during the Postmodern era. This concept arose in the mid-1960s, as Postmodernism was born from architects' protests and criticisms against the monotonous patterns of the modern era, which often featured box-like buildings. As a result, new concepts, including Postmodernism, emerged.

According to Tjok Pradnya Putra (2013), the concept of Neo-Vernacular Architecture derives from the term "Neo," originating from the Greek language, which means "new." The term "NEO" or "NEW" signifies something new or recent, while "vernacular" comes from the Latin word vernaculus, meaning "native" or "original." Thus, neo-vernacular architecture can be defined as the indigenous architecture of a

specific region, constructed by local communities using native materials, incorporating cultural or traditional elements, and integrated with a modern touch that enhances the value of the vernacular style itself (Nuraini & Thamrin, 2018).

Neo-vernacular is an interpretation of vernacular architecture blended with modern architectural styles. Neo-vernacular architecture is influenced by the application of cultural elements, environmental considerations—including the local climate—as well as non-physical aspects such as cultural mindsets, beliefs, and spatial arrangements based on macrocosmic principles, among other factors. Today, the neo-vernacular architectural concept is presented in a more modern form but retains the traditional elements unique to a region within its building designs. Although the construction process and materials used may involve modern materials, these buildings still preserve the traditional characteristics of the area.

### **Conceptual Foundation**

The conceptual foundation in this design serves as the basis or explanation of the design concept, encompassing analysis of aspects such as function, form, structure, utility, and circulation. In the initial stage, the analysis involves identifying the function of the performance building. The primary function of the performance hall design is to provide a space for showcasing music and dance performances, both individual and group, while incorporating regional architecture, local materials, traditional elements, and cultural values. In addition to being a venue for art performances, this building also serves supplementary functions by providing a food court, exhibition spaces, and a cultural gallery.

The conceptual foundation of this Performing Arts Building is inspired by the traditional house design of North Sumatra, specifically the Nias Barat traditional house. The hallmark of this traditional house is its oval floor plan, oval roof, and tapered façade with smooth curves on all sides. It features slanted walls with numerous ventilation openings and large columns as the foundation. The Nias traditional house is a stilt house constructed without nails, making it highly earthquake-resistant. The house is elevated from the ground and was originally built for defensive purposes, as the people of Nias frequently engaged in wars in the past. In addition to the Nias traditional house shape, the building also draws from the aerial view of Nias stone jumping. Stone jumping is a

distinctive cultural element of Nias, historically used as a measure of a man’s maturity if he could successfully jump over it. The process of transforming these design elements into the performing arts building is illustrated in Figure 5 below.

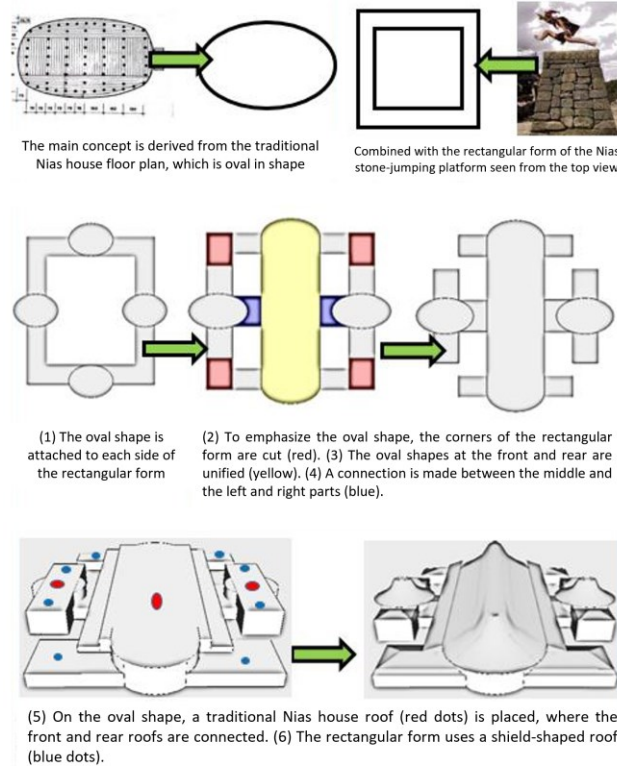


Figure 5. Transformation Process of Form  
 (Source : Authors, 2023)

### The Music and Dance Performance arts Building in Gunung Sitoli

The music and dance performance building is constructed on a 23,700 m<sup>2</sup> plot of land, measuring 154 meters by 154 meters. The main road width is 7 meters, with a building line setback (GSB) of 10 meters and a building coverage ratio (KDB) of 50% x Land Area = 23,700 x 50% = 11,850. The site plan can be seen in Figure 6a. In terms of site circulation, vehicle circulation surrounds the building, starting from the site entry route, proceeding to the drop-off lane, leading to parking, and then to the site exit lane. This layout is shown in Figure 6b.

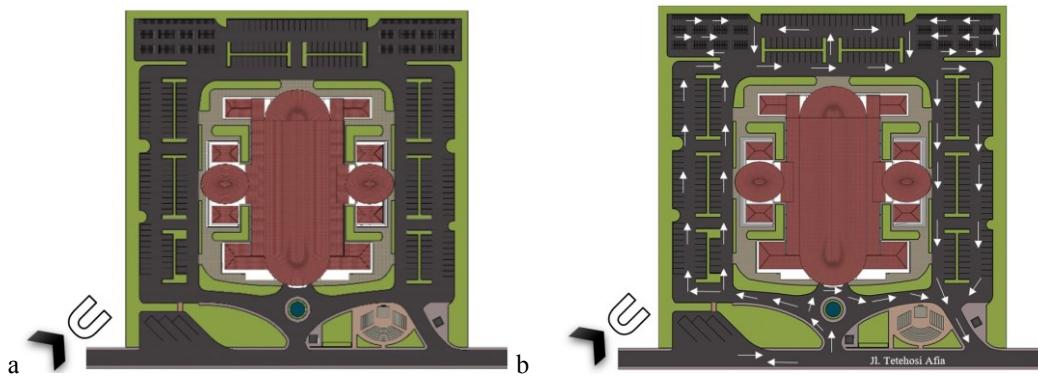


Figure 6. a. The Site Plan; b. The Layout Plan  
(Source : Authors, 2023)

The Music and Dance Performance Building is designed for performing arts activities, including both indoor and outdoor performances. Other activities provided in the facility include a mini gallery, exhibition space, and a food court, as shown in Figure 7a. The first floor contains several spaces, including a visitor lobby, wristband ticket counter, auditorium, performer lobby, dressing rooms, food court, exhibition stands for promotions, souvenir shop, and service area. The auditorium seats 768 audience members, which is aligned with the local population size of the area, approximately 136,000 residents. The second floor houses the management office, music and dance practice rooms, and a mini gallery, as depicted in Figure 7b.

The building’s structure features a foundation using footplate construction, a reinforced concrete column system for the middle structure, and a steel pipe truss roof structure, as shown in Figure 8. The span of the auditorium is 30 meters, requiring the use of steel pipes for the roof frame and also to achieve the transformation of the Nias traditional house roof shape, extended to the back.



Figure 7. a. First Floor Plan, and b. Second Floor Plan  
(Source : Authors, 2023)

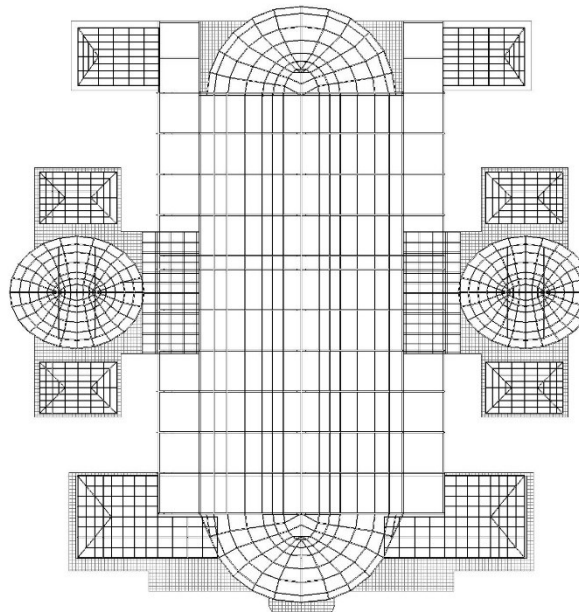
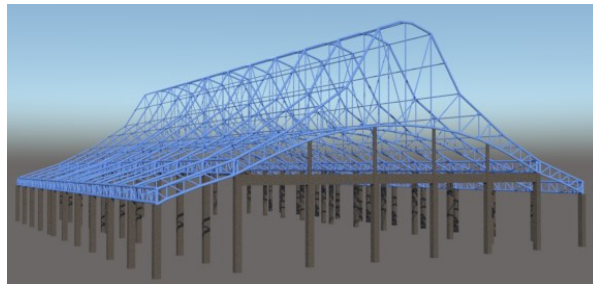


Figure 8. Roof Structure Plan  
(Source : Authors, 2023)

The appearance of the building for the Music and Dance Performance Hall shows distinctive regional characteristics combined with contemporary architectural forms, visible from all sides of the building, as shown figure 9. On the site, some existing trees are preserved as boundary markers. In addition to marking the site boundary, these trees help minimize noise and pollution from the main road, Tetehosi Afia, as shown in Image 15.







Figure 9. a. Front view, b. Back View, c. Right Side View, d. Left Side View  
(Source : Authors, 2023)



Figure 10. The Perspective of The Music and Dance Performing Arts Building in  
Gunung Sitoli City with a Neo-Vernacular Architecture Approach  
(Source : Authors, 2023)

## CONCLUSIONS

The people of Gunungsitoli, who possess significant artistic potential but face challenges in musical and dance performances, now have a proper venue for such artistic activities. The use of neo-vernacular architecture in the building, specifically applying the typology of Nias traditional houses and Nias ornaments, integrates Nias architectural systems with local materials and contemporary architectural styles. The Music and Dance Performance Building in Gunungsitoli must be in harmony with the environment, cultural elements, and the needs of its users.

With this performance building, the preservation of local arts and culture will be enhanced, alongside the development of modern art forms. It will also contribute to the city's infrastructure, support the local economy and regional income, and boost public enthusiasm for arts and culture, both for artists and art enthusiasts.

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