

The Aestheticization of *Saung* as a Sundanese Cultural Resilience Space

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Abstract

This article theorizes the aestheticization of *Saung*, a traditional Sundanese shelter, as a strategy of cultural resilience rather than commodification. The research examines how the *Saung* is experienced, negotiated, and transformed by diverse social actors in contemporary Sundanese restaurants. Drawing on phenomenology, constructivism, and Bourdieu's theory of practice, the research utilizes a quadrant model of design processes and a matrix of actor intentions. The research demonstrates that the *Saung* operates as an allegorical and affective space where embodied feeling (*rarasaan*), symbolic representation, material ecology, and adaptive design converge. Aestheticization is theorized here as counter-reification, a process through which tradition proliferates without becoming fixed. The article advances a second, theoretically distinct analysis by shifting the focus toward the mechanisms through which vernacular space endures. It argues that resilience is achieved through transversion, understood as the adaptive re-materialization of cultural codes, and through embodied affect that sustains cultural coherence amid contextual transformation.

Keywords:

Saung;
aestheticization;
phenomenology;
cultural resilience;
Sundanese design

INTRODUCTION

In the urban landscape of Bandung, the *Saung* has re-emerged as a prominent spatial icon in Sundanese-themed restaurants. Often framed as nostalgic or decorative, its presence invites deeper questions: What does the *Saung* signify? How is it experienced by different actors? And how does its aestheticization reflect broader cultural negotiations? This study argues that the *Saung* is not merely a commodified object but a living allegory, a space where tradition, identity, and affect are co-created. By combining phenomenology and constructivism, and grounding the analysis in Bourdieu's theory of practice and Svašek's work on the aestheticization of objects, the research develops a new framework for understanding vernacular design as a site of cultural resilience (Austin, 2018).

The issue is significant because aestheticization has often been discussed in critical theory as a process of image production, commodification, or stylization that risks emptying cultural forms of their original meanings. In this view, vernacular forms incorporated into commercial environments are frequently interpreted as fixed cultural symbols repackaged for consumption. Yet this perspective does not fully explain why certain vernacular spaces remain affectively powerful and socially meaningful even when their material composition, users, and contexts change. The *Saung* is a compelling example of this problem. In Sundanese restaurants, it is not merely seen; it is inhabited, felt, negotiated, and remembered. Its endurance suggests that aestheticization may function not only as commodification but also as a process through which cultural forms are reactivated and made resilient.

Previous studies on vernacular architecture and interiority have provided important foundations for understanding the cultural dimensions of built environments. Research on traditional buildings has often emphasized typology, morphology, and local wisdom, showing how vernacular forms encode collective values and environmental adaptation. Studies on atmospheres and interiority have further demonstrated that spatial meaning emerges not only from material form but also from sensory and affective experience. Meanwhile, scholarship on aestheticization has examined how everyday life, urban spaces, and commercial environments become infused with aesthetic value, sometimes as a result of neoliberal consumption or image-oriented branding. These studies are valuable, yet they often leave a conceptual gap when applied to vernacular interiors such as the *Saung*: they either privilege formal classification, treat aestheticization primarily as surface stylization, or underexplore the embodied and negotiated dimensions through which cultural meaning persists.

This gap is particularly evident in the case of the *Saung* in contemporary Sundanese restaurants. Existing research has not sufficiently explained how a vernacular form can undergo significant contextual transformation while maintaining cultural coherence. Nor has it adequately addressed how different actors, such as consumers, restaurant owners, designers, contractors, and cultural practitioners, contribute to the ongoing re-signification of vernacular space. In addition, the affective dimension of spatial experience, expressed here through the Sundanese notion of *rarasaan*, has rarely been positioned as an analytical core in discussions of aestheticization and cultural resilience. As a result, the *Saung* is often interpreted either as a nostalgic replica or as a commodified symbol, rather than as a dynamic and lived cultural space.

This study responds to that gap by arguing that the *Saung* should be understood not as a static artifact but as a negotiated and affective space of cultural resilience. Drawing on phenomenology, constructivism, and Bourdieu's theory of practice, and engaging with Svašek's thinking on aestheticization, this research develops an alternative framework for reading vernacular design in urban contexts. Rather than focusing solely on form, the study shifts attention to the processes through which spatial meaning is co-produced through embodiment, memory, social interaction, symbolic intention, and adaptive material practice. In this sense, the *Saung* is approached as a living allegory whose meanings are continually re-enacted rather than simply preserved.

The novelty of this study lies in several interrelated contributions. First, it introduces *rarasaan*, or embodied affect, as a central category for analyzing how vernacular space is experienced and sustained. Second, it develops an analytical quadrant model to map the aestheticization of the *Saung* across different orientations of place, feeling, image, and function. Third, it proposes the concept of transversion to explain how cultural forms maintain coherence through adaptive re-materialization rather than through fidelity to an original fixed form. Through these conceptual tools, the study reframes aestheticization as counter-reification: not the freezing of tradition into a static image, but the proliferation of tradition through participation, adaptation, and lived experience.

The urgency of this research lies in the broader challenge of cultural continuity in rapidly changing urban contexts. As cities transform under pressures of commercialization, tourism, and modern design, vernacular forms risk being either erased or reduced to superficial identity markers. Understanding how cultural resilience operates within such transformations is therefore essential, not only for architectural and interior design theory but also for cultural

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practice more broadly. The *Saung* offers an important case for examining how vernacular space can endure through reinterpretation, and how local identity can remain meaningful without being fixed or *museumized*.

Accordingly, this study aims to examine how the *Saung* is experienced, negotiated, and transformed in contemporary Sundanese restaurants, and to analyze how its aestheticization functions as a strategy of cultural resilience rather than mere commodification. More specifically, the research seeks to explain how affect, symbolic representation, material ecology, and actor intentions converge in the production of *Saung* space, and how these dynamics allow vernacular identity to remain adaptive and coherent across changing contexts.

The benefits of this study are both theoretical and practical. Theoretically, it contributes to discussions of vernacular architecture, design theory, soma esthetics, and interiority studies by offering new concepts and analytical tools for understanding culturally embedded spaces. Practically, it provides insights for designers, architects, restaurateurs, and cultural practitioners in approaching vernacular forms not as templates for replication, but as adaptive systems of meaning that can be recontextualized without losing cultural depth. In doing so, the study supports the development of context-sensitive, culturally grounded, and affectively resonant design practices in contemporary urban environments.



Figure 1. *Saung* at Paddy Field (*Saung* at Sumedang, Purwakarta and Cicalengka. West Java)
Source: Field documentation by the author, 2023



Figure 2. *Saung* at Restaurant (Ponyo, Gedong 55, Ampera. Bandung. West Java)
Source: Field documentation by the author, 2023–2025

RESEARCH METHOD

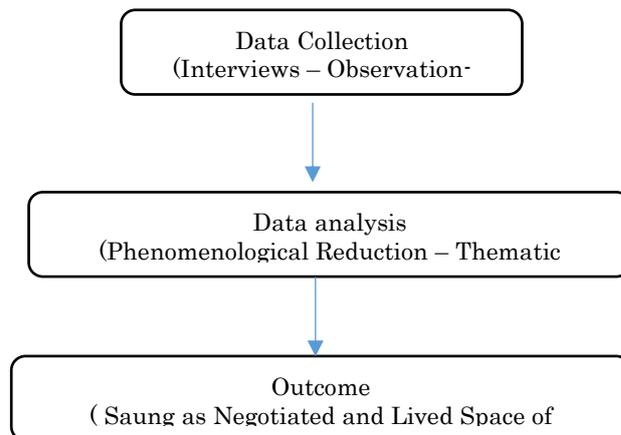


Figure 3. Methodological flow

Source: Developed by the author, 2025

Figure 3. This diagram outlines the methodological trajectory of the research, beginning with a constructivist epistemology that frames meaning as socially co-constructed. Phenomenology serves as the primary approach, focusing on lived experience and embodied perception, while ethnography provides the strategic orientation for engaging actors in situ. Data collection was conducted through interviews, field observations, and visual documentation, followed by phenomenological reduction and thematic coding. The outcome of this process is an interpretive account of the *Saung* as a negotiated and lived space of resilience, situated between material practice, affective experience, and cultural meaning.

Research Design and Approach, this study adopts a qualitative research design informed by phenomenology. The phenomenological approach enables an inquiry into how the *Saung* is experienced (Husserl, 1964) (Moustakas, 1994), embodied, and interpreted in everyday contexts, moving beyond surface representation to the affective and sensory dimensions of spatial practice. The research is situated within a constructivist paradigm (Creswell 2014), which assumes that meanings of tradition and space are not inherent but co-constructed through social interaction, negotiation, and cultural reinterpretation. This position aligns with the study’s central argument that the *Saung* is not a fixed or commodified object but a dynamic allegory whose meanings shift across actors and contexts. A participatory ethnographic orientation underpinned the research design. Ethnography allowed the *Saung* to be approached not merely as an architectural form but as a lived practice that involves multiple stakeholders’ designers, restaurant owners, contractors, farmers, and consumers. Participation in dining and observation of everyday activities provided insight into how spatial practices and affective experiences unfold in situ.

Data Collection

Data were gathered through three complementary methods: In-depth interviews with diverse actors, including restaurant owners, interior designers, contractors, farmers, and consumers. The interviews explored not only aesthetic and functional considerations but also affective experiences, personal memories, and symbolic associations of the *Saung*. Field

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observations conducted in multiple Sundanese-themed restaurants across Bandung. Observations recorded spatial arrangements, material selections, and everyday uses of the *Saung*, capturing both intentional design strategies and emergent practices. Visual documentation in the form of photographs, sketches, and spatial mappings. These visual records supported comparative analysis across sites and helped trace design variations, symbolic elements, and material ecologies.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed through a process of phenomenological reduction and thematic coding. Phenomenological reduction helped identify recurring motifs of perception, embodiment, and affect (*rarasaan*), while thematic coding organized data into analytical categories aligned with the theoretical framework such as habitus, capital, aestheticization, and affect. A constructivist interpretive lens was then applied to examine how different actors co-construct the meanings of the *Saung* in relation to social structures and cultural negotiations.

Methodological Contribution

By combining phenomenology, constructivism, and ethnography, this methodology enables a multi-layered reading of the *Saung* as a material structure, as an affective environment, and as a cultural symbol. Such an integrative approach ensures that the *Saung* is not reduced to either nostalgia or commodification but is theorized as a negotiated and lived space of resilience.

Object Biography and Processual Relativism

To analyze how the *Saung* transforms across contexts without losing cultural coherence, this study draws on Kopytoff's concept of object biography (Kopytoff, 1986) and Svašek's processual relativism (Svašek, 2007). Kopytoff's insight that cultural objects have "social lives" characterized by phases of meaning-making provides a framework for understanding how vernacular forms sustain significance while adapting to new functions. Svašek's processual relativism extends this by examining how meanings emerge through ongoing social encounters (Maihoub, 2015) rather than existing as fixed properties. This approach reveals cultural authenticity not as essential characteristic but as relational quality emerging through contextual negotiations.

Analytical Framework: The Aestheticization Quadrant

Conventional architectural analysis often employs what can be termed a centripetal perspective a gaze that pulls inward towards the object itself. This perspective prioritizes the formal qualities of the *Saung*, its typology (classification based on form and use) and its morphology (structure and composition). While valuable for cataloging, this centripetal gaze is inherently reifying. It unconsciously treats the *Saung* as a static object, freezing its meaning within its physical boundaries and divorcing it from the lived experience that gives it life.

A phenomenological analysis, guided by the vernacular expressions of Sundanese participants, reveals a centrifugal perspective. Within this framework, the *Saung* is not experienced as a mere collection of objects but as a catalyst for specific outward-oriented activities and states of being. These states encompass Sundanese aesthetic expressions such as *waas* (Jamaludin, 2022) (the state of being captivated by a view or nostalgic memory), *nyawang* (the contemplative act of gazing outward), and *nineung* (to reminisce or feel a sense of longing). Additionally, the space facilitates vital communal and restorative practices, including *balakecrakan* (feasting and communing passionately), *ngiuhan* (the act of seeking

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physical shelter), and *niis*, a state of mental or affective sheltering that provides a felt sense of calm, safety, and emotional relief experienced within the *Saung*. Collectively, these centrifugal experiences define the aesthetics of *rarasaan*, emphasizing the *Saung*'s capacity to generate a multi-sensory connection to memory, community, and the natural world

Crucially, the value of these activities is measured by the quality of sensory engagement they facilitate, defined by two key concepts, *Tiis Ceuli* (coolness/clarity of the ears), This refers to the auditory clarity and pleasant ambiance experienced within the *Saung*, the sound of streaming water, the chorus of *tonggeret* insects, the wind, and the gentle friction of branches. It signifies an acoustic environment that is calming, sharp, and immersive. *Herang Panon* (clearness of the eyes), This describes the visual clarity and expansive vista, the unobstructed view of green fields, landscapes, and mountains. It signifies a visual field that is open, soothing, and aesthetically pleasing.

These concepts are the genesis of *rarasaan* (embodied feeling). They demonstrate that the *Saung* is recognized not by its architectural features, but by its capacity to generate a specific, multi-sensory, centrifugal experience of place and memory. This experience is defined by a refined clarity of perception (*tiis ceuli*, *herang panon*) that facilitates a profound connection to the natural world and community.

This fundamental shift from a centripetal to a centrifugal understanding is what necessitates our model of 'space follows context.' We are no longer categorizing an object, but cornifying a space, understanding it through the consciousness and activities it generates. The *Saung* is thus defined by its context-dependent ability to produce *rarasaan*. This is the mechanism of counter-reification: by tying its essence to an experiential outcome rather than a formal input, the *Saung* can proliferate infinitely in form without losing its cultural coherence. Its authenticity becomes un-fixated, participatory, and resilient.

A critical theoretical refinement emerges from this study: aestheticization, as a process, can be understood as the privileging of inertia. The lived, centrifugal experience of a cultural space, such as the activities of *nyawang* (gazing outward), *nineung* (reminiscing), and *balakecrakan* (conversing) that generate *rarasaan* is a dynamic, kinetic force. Similarly, the centripetal impulse to classify and define is an active force of categorization. However, what becomes visible and is often commodified is not the force itself, but its inertial moment, the formal style, the material choice, the visual iconography that remains as a trace of the lived practice. Aestheticization occurs when this inert moment is mistaken for the phenomenon itself. It is the reification of the echo, rather than participation in the sound.

This research demonstrates that the *Saung* remains resilient precisely because, for its users, it has never been just an inert object. It is a catalyst for centrifugal experience. Its aestheticization in restaurants becomes an act of counter-reification only when it successfully triggers those same outward-oriented practices and states of being. When it fails to do so, it risks becoming a mere shell pure inertia, a reified image emptied of its centrifugal potential. This framework provides a new lens for analyzing cultural resilience, not just in vernacular architecture, but in any domain where tradition and modernity intersect."

Building on processual relativism, this study develops a two-axis framework for analyzing cultural transformation. The horizontal axis represents the reification process - movement from traditional forms toward modern standardization through capitalization and rationalization. The vertical axis represents cultural significance - the relationship between

symbolic meaning and functional utility. This creates four relational positions: Traditional-Functional (TF), Traditional-Symbolic (TS), Modern-Symbolic (MS), and Modern-Functional (MF). Rather than fixed categories, these represent dynamic positions that reveal how objects undergo what this study terms "transversion" - contextual mutation of values while maintaining cultural coherence.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Aestheticization Quadrant in Practice. Application of the theoretical framework to 20 *Saung* cases reveals how the two-axis model operates in practice. Each quadrant position corresponds to a distinct aesthetic orientation - what we term "space follows context" rather than the modernist "form follows function":

Table 1. Processual relativism matrix:

Theoretical Dimension	Transversion line	Integration to Quadrant
Cultural Significance	Symbolic–Functional	TS (Traditional Symbolic), MS (Modern Symbolic)
Cultural Dynamics	Traditional–Modern	TF (Traditional Functional), MF (Modern Functional)

Source: Developed by the author based on Kopytoff (1986), Svašek (2007), and research analysis, 2025

Conventional frameworks for analyzing vernacular design, such as typological or morphological classification, are inherently reifying. They prioritize the fixed, physical attributes of an object, often treating form as a carrier of static meaning. This approach struggles to account for how a structure like the *Saung* can remain culturally significant even as its materials, scale, and context radically change. To overcome this, we developed a model (Figure 4) that shifts the analytical focus from form to space. We argue that the essence of the *Saung* is not located in its morphology but in the specific type of affective space it produces, a space that evokes *rarasaan* (embodied feeling).

The horizontal axis (Cultural Dynamics) traces the process from traditional building practices to modern, standardized construction. The vertical axis (Cultural Significance) captures the shift from purely utilitarian function to rich symbolic meaning. Together, these axes create four quadrants where any *Saung*-like space can be situated based on how it was made and what it means."

The power of this model is that it reveals a path of transversion. A space can move from the Traditional-Functional quadrant (a farmer's rest hut) to the Modern-Symbolic quadrant (an urban restaurant pavilion) while still being universally recognized as a *Saung*. This is because its authenticity is anchored in the reproducible experience of *rarasaan*, not in a fixed blueprint. The model thus provides a tool for tracking how tradition is proliferated through adaptation a visual map of counter-reification in action. Each quadrant correlates to a different design intention 'space follows place,' 'feeling,' 'image,' or 'function.' This shows that there are multiple, equally valid strategies for achieving the same goal: creating a space that feels authentically like a *Saung*.

The concept of 'transversion' is adopted from biological discourse to describe the mutational process of cultural adaptation. This term is deliberately chosen to distinguish the phenomenon observed in the *Saung* from the processes of 'transit' and 'transition' described by

Maruška Svašek. While Svašek's framework expertly tracks how a single, fixed object (e.g., a relic, artefact or artwork) transitions across contexts and accrues new values, the *Saung* presents a different dynamic. It is not a single object traveling through time, but a cultural code or DNA that is constantly being expressed anew. Each *Saung* is an original, authentic instantiation of this code, adapted to its specific context. The 'mutation' does not happen to the object itself, but to the context urbanization, modernity, gentrification, restaurant design. The cultural 'code' of the *Saung* mutates in response, producing a vast proliferation of diverse yet authentic forms.

Transversion as a Mechanism of Cultural Resilience

Transversion is conceptualized here not as a descriptive pattern of transformation, but as a mechanism of cultural resilience. Unlike transit or transition, which presuppose a stable object moving across contexts, transversion describes a generative process in which cultural coherence is maintained through adaptive re-materialization. What persists is not the object itself, but a cultural code that is repeatedly re-expressed through different material, spatial, and social configurations.

In the case of *Saung*, transversion explains why formal variation does not result in cultural dissolution. The *Saung* survives not because it retains an original form, but because it continues to activate embodied practices such as *nyawang*, *balakecrakan*, and *rarasaan*, that counteract the fixation of meaning.

Therefore, 'transversion' does not describe the journey of an object, but the generative process of a cultural form. It explains how authenticity is maintained not through fidelity to an original template, but through successful, adaptive replication in new environments. This is why the *Saung* continues to generate meaning and proliferate even under the pressures of modernity: its resilience is evolutionary, not preservation.

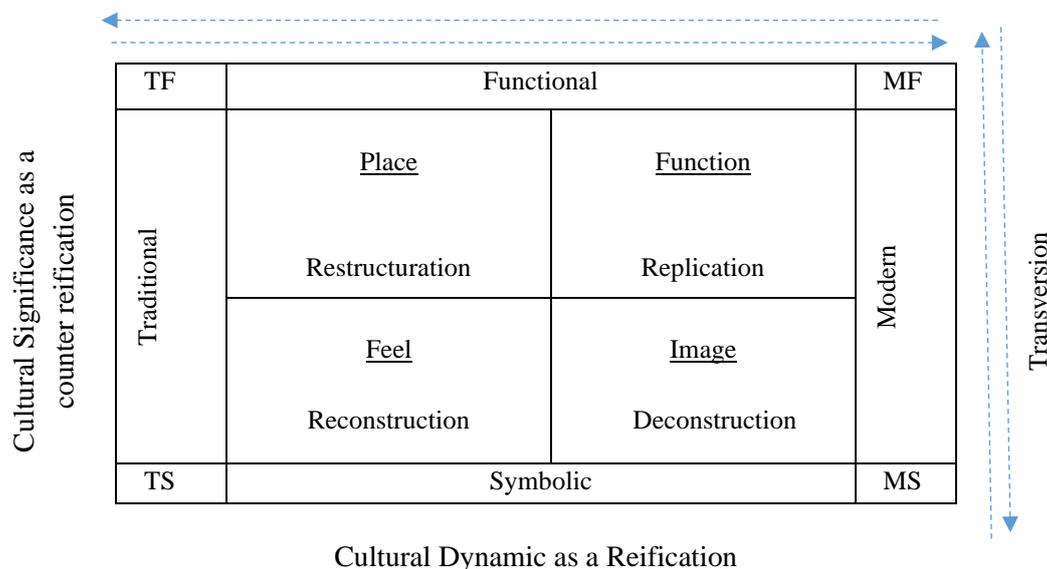


Figure 4. Aestheticization Quadrant as Space follow context Concept
 Source: Author’s conceptual framework and analysis, 2025

Quadrant Model of Design Processes

The research identifies four design processes in the aestheticization of the *Saung*:

Table 2. Quadrant Model of Design Processes

Process	Spatial Context Orientation	Description
Restructuring	Space follows place	Memory-based rebuilding
Reconstruction	Space follows feel	Experimental reassembly
Deconstruction	Space follows image	Visual mimicry
Replication	Space follows function	Adaptive reuse

Source: Author’s analysis, 2025

The actor–intention matrix constitutes a central empirical finding of this study, demonstrating that cultural resilience is not inherent to the *Saung* itself, but emerges from collective negotiation among actors mobilizing different forms of capital.

Actor Matrix

Table 3. Actor Matrix

Actor	Intention	Aestheticization Form	Capital Type
Consumer	Embodied affect (<i>rarasaan</i>)	Organic experience	Social, symbolic
Restaurant Owner	Cultural representation, nostalgia	Visual narrative	Economic, symbolic
Intellectual	Cosmology, ethnography	Symbolic space	Cultural, symbolic
Farmer	Practical use	Functional space	Social, cultural
Contractor	Material ecology	Sustainable design	Economic, technical
Designer	Tradition-modern mediation	Reflective adaptation	Cultural, aesthetic

Source: Author’s analysis based on field interviews and observations, 2025

Empirical Findings and Analysis

The empirical data collected from interviews, observations, and visual documentation reveal how the *Saung* is differently experienced, interpreted, and adapted by various actors. Rather than functioning as a static, commodified symbol, the *Saung* emerges as a transversal space of negotiation, where affective resonance, symbolic representation, and material adaptation converge.

Voices from the Field

Consumer

“Whenever I dine in the *Saung*, I feel a sense of calmness, almost as if I were back in my village. It is not only about the food, but also about the atmosphere of being close to nature.” (Consumer, Bandung, 2023). This illustrates *rarasaan* (embodied affect) as central to the experience of the *Saung*. Here, aestheticization functions as space follows feeling, re-humanizing space through affective immersion.

Restaurant Owner

“For us, the *Saung* is a marker of identity. Guests expect it when they come to a Sundanese restaurant. Its presence immediately communicates who we are.” (owner Sundanese Resto, 2025). → The *Saung* operates as symbolic capital, embodying both authenticity and branding. This aligns with space follows image, where aestheticization communicates cultural identity while resisting reduction to a mere decorative commodity.

Designer / Contractor

“Traditionally, the *Saung* was built with bamboo and thatch. In the city, however, we need to combine them with durability material. The real challenge is how to retain the traditional atmosphere while adapting to urban demands.” (Designer, 2024). → This perspective demonstrates reflective adaptation: balancing ecological tradition with urban pragmatics. It reflects space follow function, where aestheticization enables continuity without collapsing into inert reification.

Farmer / Cultural Practitioner

“In the rice fields, the *Saung* was simply a shelter for resting. Today, people use it for dining in the city. The function has changed, but the spirit remains the same.” (Farmer, 2022) → The farmer emphasizes continuity of cultural meaning. Despite shifting functions, the *Saung* retains its aura and symbolic resonance. This reflects space follows place, demonstrating how tradition adapts without losing authenticity.

Synthesis in Systematic Form**Table 4.** Synthesis in Systematic Form

Actor	Representative Quote	Interpretation	Relation to Quadrant / Actor Matrix
Consumer	<i>“Whenever I dine in the Saung, I feel a sense of calmness, almost as if I were back in my village.”</i>	Emphasizes <i>rarasaan</i> (embodied affect); immersive and restorative experience	Space follows feeling / Embodied affect (social & symbolic capital)
Restaurant Owner	<i>“For us, the Saung is a marker of identity. Guests expect it, it tells them who we are.”</i>	Mobilizes <i>Saung</i> as cultural branding and identity marker	Space follows image / Visual narrative (economic & symbolic capital)
Designer/ Contractor	<i>“We combine bamboo with durability material, but try to keep the atmosphere.”</i>	Negotiation between tradition and modernity; ecological and technical concerns	Space follows function / Reflective adaptation (cultural & technical capital)
Farmer	<i>“In the rice fields it was for resting, now in the city it’s for eating, but the spirit is the same.”</i>	Affirms continuity of cultural meaning despite changing context	Space follows place / Functional space (social & cultural capital)

Source: Author’s analysis based on field data, 2025

The *Saung* emerges not as a static artifact but as a transversal space, one that is continually negotiated across actors, intentions, and materialities. Its aestheticization does not signal the commodification or dilution of tradition, but rather the proliferation of authenticity through processes of co-creation. This dynamic aligns with Bourdieu’s notion of the field,

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where diverse forms of capital are mobilized, and with Svašek's emphasis on the affective reworking of cultural forms. Within this interplay, the *Saung* operates simultaneously as material structure, symbolic representation, and affective milieu.

The quadrant model reveals that spatial meaning is never singular nor fixed, but always relational and contingent. It arises through shifting orientations, whether rooted in memory (space follows place), adaptive function (space follows function), representational imagery (space follows image), or embodied feeling (space follows feel). These modes do not compete but overlap, producing layered interpretations that allow the *Saung* to remain relevant across contexts, from farmers' huts to urban restaurants. Seen in this light, aestheticization becomes a form of counter-reification, a refusal to freeze cultural meaning into rigid categories. Instead, it keeps tradition alive by circulating and transforming it in response to new social, economic, and ecological conditions. Counter-reification resists the museumification of culture and instead frames tradition as living practice, accessible and adaptable without erasing its roots.

This process also illuminates the role of *rarasaan*, embodied affect, as a mediating force between design, memory, and experience. Through *rarasaan*, users encounter the *Saung* not merely as visual décor but as a space that resonates with familiarity, intimacy, and belonging. In this sense, the *Saung* sustains cultural resilience, bridging past and present, rural and urban, symbolic and material. It provides a framework for understanding vernacular architecture not as an essentialized relic but as a negotiated commons where meanings are co-produced by consumers, owners, designers, and broader cultural imaginaries. Theoretical Implications, this study extends Bourdieu's practice theory by demonstrating how vernacular architecture can function as an allegorical field, in which material practices intersect with affective and symbolic capital. It also advances Svašek's framework of aestheticization by showing that aestheticization can be read not as commodification but as counter-reification, a process that multiplies cultural meanings instead of fixing them. Furthermore, by foregrounding *rarasaan*, the research contributes to soma esthetics, emphasizing the embodied dimension of authenticity in spatial experience.

Practical Implications. Practically, the findings suggest that designers and cultural practitioners should approach vernacular forms not as templates for replication but as adaptive systems open to reinterpretation. The *Saung* shows that tradition gains resilience when treated as context-sensitive design practice, responsive to ecological materials, social rituals, and affective atmospheres. For urban spaces, this indicates that local heritage can be sustained not by preservation alone but by creative recontextualization that engages users' embodied experiences. Such an approach opens avenues for culturally rooted, ecologically sustainable, and socially resonant design methodologies.

Research Limitations and Future Directions. This study is limited in several respects. First, its empirical scope is situated within Bandung, where Sundanese identity is both dominant and institutionally supported. The findings may therefore differ in regions where the *Saung* is a minority or peripheral cultural symbol. Second, the focus on restaurants highlights a specific mode of urban vernacular adaptation, but other contexts, such as residential spaces, tourism facilities, or public parks, may reveal different negotiations of meaning. Third, while this study foregrounds phenomenological and ethnographic perspectives, it does not fully address the economic or policy dimensions that also shape the aestheticization of tradition.

Future research could address these gaps by exploring: Urban and public space applications, investigating how vernacular traditions can inform design for public infrastructure, community spaces, or sustainable housing. Policy and economic dimensions, analyzing how government regulations, tourism industries, and market forces intersect with cultural resilience. Transnational perspectives, considering how the *Saung* or similar vernacular forms are represented in diaspora contexts, potentially reframing identity through global cultural flows. By acknowledging these limitations and opening new directions, the study reinforces the value of seeing vernacular design not as static heritage but as a living, adaptive practice, a practice whose resilience lies precisely in its capacity for reinvention. Resilience, in this sense, is not resistance to change, but resistance to fixation.

CONCLUSION

This study offers a new framework for interpreting vernacular design as a living, negotiated practice rather than a fixed cultural artifact. By integrating phenomenology, constructivism, and practice theory, it demonstrates that authenticity is not a static inheritance but an enacted process, produced and reproduced through embodied experience, social negotiation, and adaptive transformation. The *Saung*, in its many reconfigurations, affirms that tradition is not a relic to be preserved in isolation but a rhythm of cultural life, felt, shared, and continually reimagined across contexts. Its persistence in contemporary Sundanese restaurants illustrates how vernacular forms can move fluidly between rural and urban settings, mediating between memory and modernity, function and affect, material ecology and symbolic representation. By reframing aestheticization as counter-reification, the study challenges dominant views that see aestheticization solely as commodification or superficial replication. Instead, it shows that aestheticization can act as a strategy of resilience, enabling traditions to circulate, adapt, and sustain meaning without being reduced to rigid symbols. Counter-reification resists cultural fixation by keeping traditions open, relational, and participatory, capable of absorbing new layers of meaning while retaining affective depth. Theoretically, the research contributes to soma esthetics by highlighting *rarasaan*, embodied affect as a central mode through which authenticity is experienced and sustained. It also extends Bourdieu's theory of practice by positioning the *Saung* as an allegorical field where different forms of capital intersect, and it deepens Svašek's concept of aestheticization by demonstrating its potential as a tool for cultural resilience rather than erasure. Practically, the study invites designers, architects, and cultural practitioners to treat vernacular forms not as nostalgic replicas but as adaptive systems of design. The *Saung* demonstrates that resilience lies in flexibility: in its capacity to be reconstructed, restructured, replicated, or deconstructed in response to shifting social, ecological, and aesthetic conditions. Such an approach offers pathways toward culturally grounded and context-sensitive design practices that can sustain heritage while engaging with contemporary needs. Ultimately, this research reaffirms that the endurance of tradition depends not on its preservation as a static monument, but on its ability to move, transform, and resonate across generations. The *Saung* stands as a testament to Sundanese cultural resilience: a space where memory, affect, and design converge, and where authenticity is continually enacted in the rhythms of everyday life.

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