



# The role of art director in film artistic style before, now & then (Nana) fourcolors film production

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## ABSTRACT

### Keywords

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"Before, Now & Then (Nana)" is the first Sundanese language movie in Indonesia. The film won the best artistic director award at the Indonesian Film Festival (FFI). The movie has a setting in West Java around the 1960s which is adapted from the Autobiographical novel Jais Darga Namauku by Ahda Imran. This research aims to identify the role of art director in the artistic layout of the film "Before, Now & Then (Nana)". The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative. Data collection techniques include interviews and documentation. This research uses three stages in analyzing data, namely data reduction, data presentation and conclusion drawing. In testing the validity of the data, researchers used source triangulation which means comparing rechecking data from more than one source to ensure whether the data is correct or not. The results of this study indicate that in creating a setting (setting, costumes, makeup and lighting) of course there are things that are done by artistic stylists in the pre-production to post production stages. In the pre-production stage, the art director is responsible for the creative design aspect, designing the overall artistic concept of the movie. At the production stage the art director is responsible for all the sets or properties used. In the post-production stage, the art director evaluates all divisions within the artistic department. It can be concluded that the role of the artistic stylist or art director in this film plays an important role in building the 60s era in the film so that it can influence the truth or belief in the eyes of the audience through the artistic layout created.

## 1. Introduction

Film is an audio-visual communication medium to convey a message to a group of people gathered in a certain place. Movies are also considered a powerful mass communication medium for the masses it targets, because of its audio-visual nature, movies are able to tell a lot in a short time (Angga, 2022). Movies have the ability to play with time and space, expand and shorten them, move them forward or backward freely. Thus, film is both a high art and the most important art of this century. But ironically, we never question how a movie goes through its process to become a movie product that is ready to provide us with messages, information, entertainment and lessons (Msn, 2017).

A quality movie has many factors that influence it, starting from the screenplay, directing, sound system, music system, artistic system, light, camera, editing and so on. Like the artistic factor that plays an important role in creating the world in the movie, of course according to the director's wishes. In creating artistic arrangements, of course there is an artistic stylist who plays a role in it, the artistic stylist must also pay attention to what is in the frame, everything is designed according to the angle of shooting so that there is no redundant construction or property leveling (Aningtyas et al., 2019).

Shooting becomes a process to give the impression and artistic atmosphere in the movie to make it look more attractive. In this condition, the audience is invited to feel like they are in that place (Wijaya, 2021). Artistic arrangement means the arrangement of everything that is behind the movie story, which is related to the idea of setting (the place and time of the story in the movie). The film artistic department is one of the important divisions in the world of cinema because this team will

create its own impression on a movie, the success in a filmmaking is also one of the help of the role of the artistic division (Antelope, 2023). The success carried out by the artistic department certainly has an important role in it, the head of the artistic department or commonly called the art director.

An art director is an artist who is solely responsible for the design, concept and look of a movie by incorporating elements such as; individual sets, locations, furniture, props and costumes. An art director works closely with the director and director of photography for the visual execution of a movie. The work of an art director is more conceptual and the physical look of the movie (Capredio et al., 2020).

Artistic in a movie aims to make a movie more artful, this includes the design of a classy scenario or script. Artistic arrangement in a movie also involves several elements including: stage, lighting, music, makeup, and fashion. The stage is related to the arrangement of the display or scenery that is adjusted to the scene so that it can help bring the atmosphere to life. Everything that is located in front of the camera that will become a picture is usually called *mise-en-scene*, in a movie the *mise-en-scene* element certainly does not stand alone and is closely tied to other cinematic elements (Pratista, 2008). *Mise en scene* is understood as an act of placing something in the event that is made, *mise en scene* consists of background sets, costumes, makeup and lighting (Anton & Irwandi, 2022).

A movie with an elegant and unique use of *mise-en-scene* can be seen in the movie *Roman Sejarah*. Set in the 1870s, the movie uses a performance stage with a setting that always changes according to the scene. The elements of *mise-en-scene*, along with the cinematographic aspects, combine perfectly to form a unified and harmonious whole (Pratista, 2017). Artistic arrangements that can give an impression and atmosphere can also bring the audience into the era of the film. A movie with a strong and interesting artistic style can be seen in a movie entitled "*Before, Now & Then (Nana)*", a movie set in the 1960s in West Java.



Fig 1. Movie Poster (*Before, Now & Then (Nana)*, 2022).

"*Before, Now & Then (Nana)*" is a historical drama indie film produced by Fourcolors Film and Titimangsa Foundation. The film, directed by Kamila Andini, is set in West Java in the 1960s and adapted from Ahda Imran's autobiographical novel *Jais Darga Namauku*, published by KPG in 2018 (Zita, 2022). The movie "*Before, Now & Then (Nana)*" tells the story of Nana (Happy Salma) as a character who lost her husband to kidnapping. She is forced to run to save herself and continue her life. The film had its international premiere at the Berlin International Film Festival on February 12, 2022. In the festival, the film was nominated for the Golden Bear Award for Best Film. The first Sundanese language film in Indonesia successfully qualified for the 2022 Berlin International Film Festival, and there are still many awards won from the film "*Before, Now & Then (Nana)*" one of which is the best artistic stylist award at the Indonesian Film Festival (Kurniawati et al., 2022). In creating the setting (the place and time of the story in the movie), of course many things are done by the artistic stylist. Vida Sylvia Pasaribu is an artistic stylist or art director of the film "*Before, Now & Then (Nana)*" who plays an important role in building the 60s era in the film, of course in accordance with the wishes of the director.

The first research conducted by Luh Kade Anggun Yulandari, Nyoman Lia Susanthi with the title *The role of artistic concepts in the film "Kelangen"* this research aims to provide an aesthetic touch

supported by aesthetic theory as the main theory and mise en scene theory to strengthen it, the two theories are a complementary unity to build artistic taste or beauty (Yulandari et al., 2018). The second research with a similar title was conducted by Randi Ramadhan, with the title Artistic Function of Ujang Palasu Film by Kareta Production. revealed that the tasks and artistic functions of Ujang Palasu film are close to the existing theory or art elements. Where the art in Ujang Palasu movie has setting, costume, makeup, lighting that is still standard or what it is (Ramadhan, 2020). The third previous research conducted by Budi Suberkah entitled Artistic Arrangement in the Production of Short Film "Kos Istimewa" (Setting and Property Stylist) explains that artistic stylists focus on setting up the setting and property to achieve the atmosphere according to the script (Suberkah, 2017). Previous research focused on the study of building the taste and beauty of settings and properties through artistic arrangement. In contrast to previous research, this study will examine the role of art director in the artistic arrangement of the film "Before, Now & Then (Nana)".

## **2. Method**

The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative, which is a form of research based on the facts and properties of the object under study by combining the relationship between the variables involved in it, then interpreted based on theories and related literature (Albi A, 2018). This research was conducted in South Tangerang with the research subject is the film crew "Before, Now & Then (Nana)" which is the art director and assistant art director. Data collection techniques using primary and secondary. The research techniques used were interviews and documentation.

To process data, researchers need to analyze the data that has been obtained. Data analysis is the process of systematically searching and compiling data obtained from interviews and documentation, by organizing data into categories, breaking it down into units, synthesizing, compiling into patterns, choosing which ones are important and which ones will be studied, and making conclusions so that they are easily understood by oneself and others (Rijali, 2019). This research uses three stages in analyzing data, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing.

In qualitative research, researchers must try to obtain valid data. In this study, researchers used triangulation to test the validity of the data. Triangulation is a data validity checking technique that uses something other than the data for the purpose of checking or comparing the data. In testing the validity of the data, researchers use source triangulation, which means comparing and rechecking data from more than one source to determine whether the data is correct or not (Ramadhan, 2020).

## **3. Result and Discussion**

### **3.1 Realization of Work**

The process of realizing the work in the film "Before, Now & Then (Nana)", especially the artistic stylist, cannot be separated from the stages of pre-production, production and post-production.

#### **1) Pre-production**

The author conducts interviews with artistic stylists related to properties, costumes, makeup, lighting that will be used related to the setting taken in West Java in the 1960s. According to the artistic stylist of the film "Before, Now & Then (Nana)", the pre-production stage is a discussion about the film between the director and producer regarding the color palette, which way the mood tone will be taken, then participate in detailing the script to adjust to the location and be involved in the screenplay design even though not completely. According to Vida as an artistic stylist, her main task is to design the look according to the movie. In order to make it easier for the artistic team to find and create the properties needed during production, the artistic stylist makes an artistic breakdown according to the finished scenario. Then start looking for references and researching in detail related to the periodic concept that will be raised in the film. Approaching production, an artistic stylist must read the script and understand the script and have an idea of the movie script. The artistic stylist discusses the results of his interpretation with the director and other crew members in order to get the same vision for this movie.

## 2) Production

Artistic stylists must be responsible for all artistic aspects such as background sets, costumes, makeup and lighting. In the production process, artistic stylists are assisted by crews such as makeup and costume artistic stylists must be responsible for all makeup and costumes, while the property artistic stylist crew is responsible for all properties during the shooting process. In the production process, artistic stylists are assisted by assistant art directors, artistic department crews and other crews. Then it must be able to respond or improvise, for example the jumping scene at the Masigit waterfall, the jumping point during recce can change when weather conditions or locations cannot be predicted during production.

## 3) Post-production

The post-production stage of the artistic stylist writer collects properties that are rented or borrowed during production, the rest of the post-production stage is the last stage, namely editing, in the post-production stage does not play an active role, and does not participate directly in editing but communicates via online such as telephone or chat because it is related to color grading according to the design from the beginning.

### 3.2 Discussion of Work

Vida Sylvia Pasaribu is an Indonesian film art director. In the film "Before, Now & Then (Nana)" which emphasizes the interior arrangement of the 1960s. As a historical drama indie film that uses Sundanese, of course this film is very different from other films (*Lembaga Sensor Film*, n.d.). The artistic concept that will be displayed in every setting, costume, make-up and lighting in this film is a past setting that depicts the 60s era, using the theory of mise en scen in each scene. Mise-en-scene is understood as an act of placing something in the event that is made, mise-en-scene consists of (Anton & Irwandi, 2022). In movie production, the role of the art director is to prepare the set, costumes, makeup and lighting.

#### A. Setting

This aspect includes not only the setting but also all the props that are to be displayed on the set. Properties in this case are all stationary objects such as furniture, doors, windows, tables, chairs, lamps, trees, and so on. The setting used in a movie is generally made as real as possible according to the context of the story (Pratista, 2017:98). The artistic stylist initially held several discussions with the production team regarding the details of the script that would be raised in the making of the film "Before, Now & Then (Nana)". After the script is compiled and considered final, the artistic stylist and the team make several location observations and get a location that matches the script, then the artistic stylist begins to research and design the properties that will be used to further support the story according to the script that will be realized.



**Fig 2.** The home setting used for the movie "Before, Now & Then (Nana)" (*Bstation*, n.d.).

The setting in (Figure 2) is able to give meaning and atmosphere to the storyline. Part of the setting, namely the property that plays an active role in the character's acting. Setting the location of Raden Darga's house used in this scene, where in the home setting there is a living room which was originally an empty room of the chosen house. The artistic stylists and the team arranged or decorated this room according to the design that was previously made. As said by the art director, the process of making a set like this takes approximately one week to create the look that is in the picture, where the installation

of additional properties such as tables, chairs, carpets, books, lamps, jars, plates, glasses, wall clocks, paintings and wallpapers according to the period of the film. All the properties in the living room are to add a distinctive atmosphere in West Java coupled with the strains of the flute and harp properties.

### B. Costume

Anything worn by actors and actresses along with all the accessories. Costume accessories include hats, jewelry, watches, glasses, shoes, canes, and so on. Then in a costume not only as a body covering, but also has several functions in accordance with the context of narrative storytelling. Costumes can determine the period (time), region (space), and personality of the character (Marlina, 2019). In the movie "Before, Now & Then (Nana)", costumes play a very important role to show the situation, time and circumstances as shown, we can see how important the role of costumes is as a character identifier of each character role in this movie. costumes worn by ordinary people, must be different from the costumes worn by conglomerate families. The difference in costumes in each role can create a contrast in each character scene. This is so that the audience has the knowledge to distinguish which character plays a role in each scene. In this movie, we can clearly distinguish which ones play as ordinary people and which ones are conglomerates. A very striking difference can be seen from the costumes they wear, from just looking at the clothes they wear, the audience can have various perceptions. Starting from the thought of his background, his economic condition, social status in his society, to the personality of the character playing in the movie.



**Fig 3.** Scene of the cast wearing West Javanese traditional clothing accessories on every costume worn (*Bstation*, n.d.).

Seen in (Figure 3) the costumes worn by the actors describe the social background and place in the movie, the creators and the team describe the atmosphere in West Java in the 1960s and the costumes that the creators use for the players adjust to support the atmosphere. Costumes can symbolize an era, country, culture, or social status of a character. The costume accessories used here are in accordance with West Javanese customs such as shawl, konde, tusuk konde, plain pattern kebaya, kebat dilepe cloth, earrings, rings, bebur and rocking flower decoration on the head. In the picture that can be seen are the actors from the figure of Nana who is the main character and mothers from respected families. Nana is the wife of Raden Darga, Nana's husband is famous for his wealth and honor as the village head. Nana is seen with a cornered expression by the mothers who say she must be smart to take care of herself and her husband. The kebaya costume used by Nana has a different color from the other actors, the color green in daily life and conversation, the color green is more euphemistic or associated. The phrase 'still ijo', 'kanak ijo' has the meaning that someone is still not professional, or does not have many advantages or certain skills, almost the same as 'kanak beak' for the color red (Suhandra, 2019).

### C. Make-up

Makeup in general has several functions, namely to show age, depict non-human faces (monsters, animals, and others), as well as to display wounds, duplicate other people's faces, and so on. Makeup is decoration done directly on the surface of an actor's skin, either for artistic or cosmetic purposes (Zoebazary, 2010).



**Fig 4.** Scene at the market showing the makeup of actors Nana and Mrs. Seller (*Bstation*, n.d.).

The makeup used in the movie "Before, Now & Then (Nana)" is corrective and character makeup. Corrective makeup is perfecting the face to cover the flaws on the face. In this movie all the players use corrective makeup. Perfecting what the creator means is to form the impression that this player is a community living in rural West Java around the 60s. Seen in (Figure 4) the makeup used on the actor Nana supports the formation of the impression or difference in character with other actors, by polishing the faces of the players with colors that are somewhat darker or lighter than their original skin. Nana's makeup looks lighter while the seller's mother looks darker and shabby, clearly showing the difference between ordinary people and the wife of a conglomerate in this movie.

#### D. Lighting

Lighting in film can be grouped into four elements, namely, light source, light intensity, light direction, and light color. These four elements greatly affect the lighting in creating the atmosphere and atmosphere of a movie (Dwiyani, 2016).



**Fig 5.** Scene at home shows actor Nana painting her husband's hair (*Bstation*, n.d.).

In (Figure 5), there are two actors in this scene. The female actor as Nana is standing and the male talent as Raden Darga is sitting on a chair. In terms of shooting angles, this scene uses a type of long shot with an eye level angle to display the existing reality. In terms of lighting using available light (sunlight) and using artificial light lighting (studio lights), sunlight or available light is used as a key light. Studio lamp 1 is in the right position of the actor to produce fill-in light and studio lamp 2 is in the camera position room then the light intensity on studio lamp 1 is lower than studio lamp 2 so as to form a dimension and distance between rooms in the picture. In addition to the main light, the key light is in the position behind the actor as a back light to provide illumination to the actor so as to form a dramatic dimension. In accordance with the concept of three point lighting where the position of available light as key light and back light, studio 1 lights as fill-in light and, studio 2 lights as fill light. The indoor shooting location requires us to use fill light for additional light when sunlight is used as key light and back light. To produce good lighting, of course, we must adjust the position and direction of the light we want. In this scene the direction of the sunlight is behind the object so as to produce a good back light effect and the actor is still slightly visible. In order for the actor to look a little bright, a tool that can reflect light is needed which is called a reflector. The addition of two reflectors from behind the actor's right that function as fill in light makes the lighting even more perfect.

#### 4. Conclusion

From the results of the description, discussion and analysis in the previous chapter about the artistic system of the film "Before, Now & Then (Nana)", the author can conclude that each supporting element of the creation of a film has its own role in making a quality film. In the process of making a movie, of course, many things are needed to produce a good movie and as desired. The process of making film works with good and quality results certainly requires many things to make it happen. Like an artistic stylist who plays an important role, one of which is designing the artistic concept of the film "Before, Now & Then (Nana)", the application of artistic concepts which include background sets, costumes, makeup and lighting starts from the pre-production stage by determining the direction of this film. Then the production stage is responsible for all artistic aspects and the post-production stage plays a role in coloring or color grading during film editing.

The application of setting and property in the movie "Before, Now & Then (Nana)" with the concept of setting the past 1960s which shows elements of the daily life of people in West Java. The clothing used on all characters uses traditional clothing that will use kebaya and batik cloth. The makeup and clothing are applied to present the subject in a work as it appears in everyday life with the background of West Java in 1960. Then viewed from the light source, the movie "Before, Now & Then (Nana)" uses available light (natural light / sun) and artificial light (artificial light / studio lights) because it uses two locations, namely out door and in door.

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