

# NYIMAK

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## Journal of Communication

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## Media Landscape Subculture in the Society 5.0: Case Study on Indonesia Urban Toys Scene

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### ABSTRACT

*This research examines the development of digital media, which has significantly changed the media landscape in subcultural groups. This study identifies a gap in research rarely discussed by communication experts, who typically focus more on mass culture and logic of mainstream media or popular culture, with less attention to subcultural groups. This serves as the background to the research problem, which focuses on observing the subcultural media map. Existence of subcultures, although underground, but they are developing massively in using various media. The subcultural scene that is currently a conversation phenomenon in the online world and chosen as multiple-case study is the Indonesian Urban Toys scene. The objectives of this study are: 1) Mapping media landscape among the Urban Toys subculture. 2) To determine the interaction patterns of subcultural members in the use of various media. 3) To examine the implications of the media landscape. This research using the Digital Diffusion Subcultural Theory and methodology used is qualitative. The results has shown: 1) Landscape media subcultural has 4 layers. 2) Interaction patterns are changing, blending with parent culture, pop culture, and mass culture. 3) The implications of using a variety of digital media can add value to subcultural development or even erode authentic subcultural values, when the artists concept must meet with commercial negotiations.*

*Keywords: Digital, subculture, media, urban toys, scene*

### ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji perkembangan media digital cukup merubah lanskap media yang digunakan oleh kalangan subkultural. Penelitian ini melihat celah kajian yang sedikit dibahas oleh pakar komunikasi, dimana biasanya mereka lebih banyak melihat pada peta dan logika media mainstream atau budaya populer, sedikit atensi pada kelompok subkultural. Hal ini menjadi latarbelakang permasalahan penelitian yang berfokus mengamati peta media subkultural. Hal ini juga ditandai adanya subkultural meskipun bersifat bawah tanah namun mereka berkembang massif dalam menggunakan media digital. Skenario subkultural yang saat ini menjadi fenomena percakapan didunia daring dan dipilih menjadi objek kajian analisis multi kasus adalah skena Urban Toys Indonesia. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah: 1) Untuk memetakan lanskap media di kalangan subkultural Urban Toys. 2) Untuk mengetahui pola interaksi anggota subkultural pada penggunaan ragam media. 3) Untuk mengkaji Implikasi lanskap media subculture Urban Toys. Penelitian ini membawa Teori Digital Diffusion Subkultural. Methodology penelitian yang digunakan kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi kasus. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan: 1) Lanskap media subkultural memiliki 4 lapisan, yang setiap lapisannya menggambarkan nilai dan rasa subkultural yang berbeda. 2) Pola interaksi di kalangan subkultural Urban Toys mengalami perubahan, dapat berbaur dengan parent culture, pop culture dan mass culture. 3) Implikasi penggunaan ragam media digital dapat memberi

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nilai tambah perkembangan subkultural atau bahkan melunturkan nilai otentik subcultural yakni pada gagasan artis harus bertemu dengan dengan negosiasi komersil.

Kata Kunci: Digital, subkultural, media, urban toys, skena

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## INTRODUCTION

The development of digital media provides a clear phenomena of the changing media landscape used by subcultural groups. Open access to various digital platforms has made culture and communication interactions increasingly complex and intertwined (Beverly, 2006). Previously, subcultural groups used more community media that was quite specific and niche according to their subcultural circles (Simones, 2016). This research identifies a gap in research and a problematic gap in the context of conceptual and theoretical studies that are rarely discussed by communication experts, who usually focus more on the map and logic of mainstream media or popular culture, with little attention paid to subcultural groups (Ulusoy, 2018). This serves as the background to the research problem that focuses on observing the subcultural media map. This is also marked by the existence of subcultures, although underground, but they are developing massively in using digital media (Sharmien, 2024).

The complexity of this development is also in line with the condition of subcultures that have become fluid and moving in the era of digital society or currently known as society 5.0 (Murniati, 2023), namely a condition where humans are nothing more than digital media, social media and also changes in media logic that have implications for their communication interaction activities (Zhang, 2025). Some of these phenomena make subcultures change into digital subcultures (Macarthur, 2008), the symptoms of which are seen in the existence of new media usage maps, the use of various digital media platforms, social media to digital subculture media that are specific only to that subculture (Corzine, 1991). The change from physical society to society 5.0 (digital society) has resulted in a new diffusion in the subcultural realm in the use of media that previously used a lot of community magazines, offline events, to using more digital media that gathered in online communities (Jia, L. 2022). One of the problems that is also seen in this new era is the effects of recreation of subcultures on social media, which forms inter-subculture communities and intra-subculture community individuals change (Bhoj, 2024). This is part of the identification of research problems that the era of network society can change media usage patterns and media usage can change subculture interaction patterns into digital subcultures (Solea, 2025).

Observing the development of how subcultures transform into digital subcultures (Mamedove, 2025) in this era of network society, it is interesting to study one of the

subcultures that is thriving in Indonesia. Of course, the rise of this subculture is in line with the influence of the use of various digital media used by subculture members as in previous research which also provides an illustration that subcultures are very fertile with the existence of social media which according to (Liang, 2018) in his research subculture also changes when broadcast versus viral spreading: The structure of diffusion cascades and selective sharing on social media. In the context of Indonesia, what is interesting to study is the urban toys subculture, as if it is not so booming in mainstream media, but in fact this urban toys subculture has penetrated very large members, fans and consumers in the network society (in digital media). Urban Vinyls, Art Toys or finally widely known as Urban Toys” this is a new artistic and design movement that has grown widely and developed with the help of Web 2.0 at that time and was formed with the exchange of information and production through electronic media so that this lowbrow work began to attract a lot of attention (Atýlgan, 2014). Currently on a large scale the Urban Toys scene itself is divided into two types based on the area, namely: Eastern Vinyl designed by artists from Asia and Australia and Western Vinyl designed by artists from North / South America and Europe (Steinberg, 2010). Urban Toys have now become much sought after collectibles, some of which are even worth thousands of dollars and have become a kind of movement in the creative industry, which has become a global phenomenon with various communities coming from all over the world (Benedictus, 2019). Urban toys are not just works and lifestyles but as a form of identity among subcultures that are full of social, economic and political criticism (Priyantoro, 2018).

In the early years of entering Indonesia namely 1999-2000, Urban Toys artists were still few in producing their works, some of the artists stated that they made them by hand and were limited to certain circles who bought or were considered to understand the ‘concept’ of their work. However, now since the development of digital media, changes have emerged where currently Indonesian Urban Toys artists are starting to target and seek producers, both domestic and foreign producers (Oktaviani, 2019). Another change is that previously Indonesian Urban Toys artists were more likely to display/sell their works within the community, street events, or through community media, but now they have begun to move into social media, e-commerce, websites, large pop culture events, hype beast events which are quite different in terms of circles, segmentation and different classes (Oktaviani, 2018). In line with these changes, it is interesting to examine the landscape of media usage among subcultures, namely the urban toys subculture as the chosen case study, as well as what the members of the urban toys subculture do with the various digital media used and how much the subculture members rely on digital media engagement to expand their community (McCracken 2017). Therefore, this research is important and urgent to be studied not only to understand changes in media consumption patterns but also the need for Interpreting

Meaning in Social Criticism related to changes in subcultural groups (Parani, 2023). This research provides framework of the diffusion of urban toys subculture, using Digital Subcultural Diffusion Theory, that illustrate on Post-Subcultural Theory and the processes normalisation in the context of digital social media. both from the aspect of mapping what media are used, how they normalize using digital media, and also the form of spread or diffusion and dissemination subculture (Solea, 2025).

Referring to the explanation of the conceptual background, the scope of the research an the problem assumptions, the symptoms of post-development digital media, and changes in subcultural activities and behaviors in the urban toy scene, this research, using a constructivist perspective, aims to examine in depth (1) How is the media map and landscape of the urban toys subculture in the 5.0 era? (2) How are the interaction patterns of the use of various media within the urban toys subculture in Indonesia contex? (3) What are the impacts and implications for the existence and authentic value of the urban toys subculture in Indonesia?

Based on the background of the problem that has been described, the following are the objectives of this research:

- (1) To map the media landscape among the Urban Toys subculture in Indonesia.
- (2) To determine the interaction patterns of subcultural members in the use of various media in the Urban Toys subculture in Indonesia.
- (3) To examine the various implications of the media landscape of the Urban Toys subculture in Indonesia.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

### **Research Design**

This research uses a qualitative approach with a multiple case study method. By using a constructivist perspective, this research aims to reveal how the object of research, in this case the *Urban Toys* scene, understands and constructs the experiences of the parties involved in the scene, especially in the use of various media. This dissertation uses a multi-case research method or strategy, where the determination of this strategy is also built based on a conceptual framework that is determined as the object of study, namely the subcultural scene. In studies that discuss the scene, not only involve groups/members of subcultural groups, but also the parties involved (Gerring, 2007). Yin (2003) explains how multiple case studies can be used to, (1) predict similar results (literal replication) or, (2) predict contrasting results but for predictable reasons (theoretical replication). This type of design certainly has advantages and disadvantages. Yin (2003) and Stake (2006) use different terms to describe

various case studies. This research refers to the case studies proposed by Yin who categorizes case studies as explanatory, exploratory, or descriptive.

This study collected data based on the operationalization table developed through the Diffusion of Digital Subcultures theory as follows:

**Table 1. Operationalization Matrix Concepts**

Key Concepts	Study Focus	Analysis Categories	Empirical Indicators	Data Sources
<b>Diffusion of Digital Media Subcultures</b>	The process of spreading subcultural practices and values through digital media	Digital media channels	Platforms used by communities (Instagram, marketplace, forums, Discord, etc.) to share urban toys information	Interview, Social Media Observation, Digital documentation
		Community communication patterns	How community members interact, discuss, and share information	Community member interviews, online conversation analysis
		The role of key actors	The presence of influencers, senior collectors, or creators who influence the spread of urban toy trends	Interviews, social media content analysis
	The process of subcultural adoption	Motivation to join	Reasons why individuals are interested and start using media to show their urban toy work	Community member interviews
		Participatory practice	Involvement in community activities (online discussions, exhibitions, buying and selling collections)	Community member interviews
		Content production and distribution	Member activities in creating content related to urban toys	Community member interviews

Transformation in the era of Society 5.0	Integration of digital technology	The use of digital technology in community activities and urban toy trading	Interview, Social Media Observation, Digital documentation
	Community network dynamics	The relationship between local communities and global networks in the urban toys ecosystem	Interview, Social Media Observation, Digital documentation

Source : Processed Data by Researchers 2025

**Data Source**

This research takes several sources from several Urban Toys communities in Indonesia, as part of a multi-case strategy as follows:

**Table 2. Name of Community Urban Toys**

No	Community	Location
1.	Indonesia Art Toys (IAT)	Jakarta
2.	Self Original Toy (SoToy)	Bandung

Sources: (Primary Data 2025)

The reason why this study took these two communities is to identify that one is the Jakarta community which also represents a large group, namely the national one which carries the values of Indonesian ideas, while the Bandung community was chosen to represent a community that is more local in nature. This is to provide a picture of the media context that is more indicative of the regional context.

Meanwhile, in selecting sources the following are Patton’s criteria and recommendations in qualitative research (Patton, 2015):

- (1) Determine selection based on source criteria.
- (2) During the interview, ask each interviewee for suggestions about people who have similar or different perspectives. This will create a chain of interviewees based on familiar people who will be good sources related to the focus of the investigation.
- (3) Another caution is to assess source saturation, so a more diverse range of sources is needed.

Referring to the criteria for selecting informants in qualitative research, this study interviewed several informants within the research focus area, as follows:

- (1) **The Chairperson and Members of the Indonesian Urban Toys Community, as mentioned above:** The community leader plays a role in managing the community, managing media and also as an admin in various community media channels.
- (2) **Several Senior Artists within Indonesian Urban Toys:** These informants were selected because they are pioneers in the development of the Urban Toys subculture in Indonesia, and therefore able to provide insights into their experiences in using media and the changes occurring within the scene.
- (3) **Consumers, Fans, and Collectors of Urban Toys:** This was done to observe how Urban Toys works have their own unique value and operate within a niche market. These informants also identified changes and practices in media use.
- (4) **Media reviews:** This was done to examine their interactions in media use.
- (5) **Brands/Companies:** These were conducted to determine the extent of the media social oriented nature of the offers and the types of negotiations they have with the artists and the Indonesian Urban Toys community.
- (6) **Toy Galleries and Museums:** to explain how the scene has characteristics, added value, differentiation in studying subcultural.

### **Data Collecting Technique**

The data collection technique in this study also refer based on at previous research, referring to Thornton (1995) in conducting his research on subcultures that uses a series of data collection such as using information obtained from interviews, textual analysis, and the latest from research related to subcultural capital analyzed based on interviews, textual analysis and streaming data (Cassidy Best, 2017). Secondary data collection was carried out using document analysis in the period of Urban Toys development in Indonesia and which has undergone changes in the movements period. In this secondary data collection, the observation method was used on the Website, social media, digital media of Urban Toys artists in Indonesia so that this can also be a form of cross-check between the data and the interview results.

## Data Analysis

This research use data analysis proposed by (Stake, 2006), which suggests steps for analyzing multiple case studies. This is a comparative, chronological, and effective data analysis process for constructing and developing theories and concepts, as follows:

- (1) Rationale
- (2) Reading the Collected Reports
- (3) Cross-Case Procedure
- (4) Expected Utility of Cases and Ordinarity of Situations
- (5) The Grounds for Assertions
- (6) Track I: Emphasizing Case Findings
- (7) Track II: Merging Case Findings
- (8) Track III: Providing Factors for Analysis
- (9) Cross-Case Assertions
- (10) Triangulation across Cases

This data analysis combined with data credibility or “truth value” or Triangulation of data sources, data types, or researchers is a key strategy that can be used and will support the principle in case study research that phenomena are viewed and explored from multiple perspectives. Triangulation is an effort to ensure that correct information and interpretations are obtained. So in this research it is hoped that it can lead to confirmation that observations and ideas about how observations can be interpreted differently by different people. Through the view and the need for triangulation, then in conducting this research applying several triangulations, multi-case itself is a case triangulation process, so that it can be used as a comparison between cases in this case is studying between communities and between interview data and the results of secondary data research studies. The form of triangulation of interview data sources is to study from several sources both to artists and community members, but also outside the community such as to Collectors, Media, Producers, Brands that collaborate with Urban Toys artists.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### The Use and Landscape Media of Indonesian Urban Toys Subculture

Based on the research results of two communities as case studies, the sustainability and development of the Urban Toys scene in Indonesia is also an implication of the development of new technology media in the era of digital society or what we currently call society 5.0, not only social media but they use several alternative new technology media as a communication network media both internally and outside the community or other subjects in the scene. The use of new technology media is not only on social media but they are also active in the use of other digital and physical media.

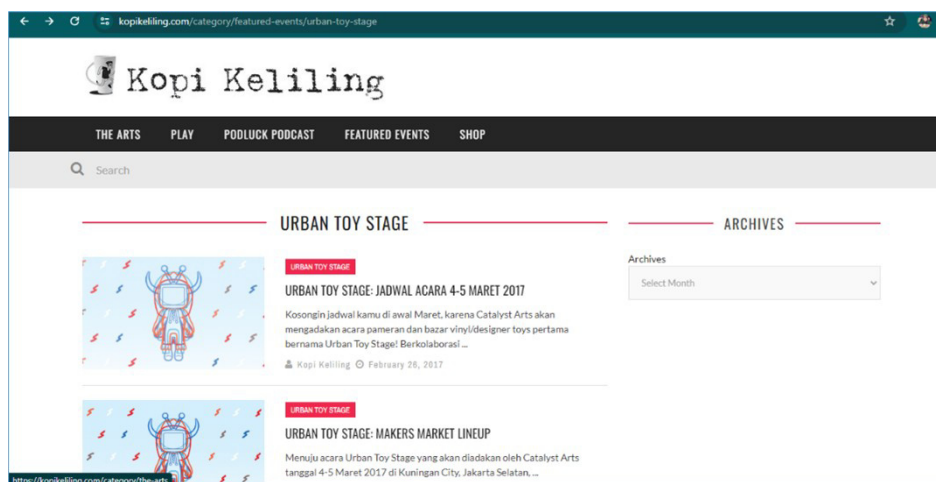
The emergence of Urban Toys in Indonesia is actually also an impact of the existence of the internet where in 2005, several international Urban Toys artists were quite active in displaying their work through the internet such as Twitter and Facebook and also several review media such as Toys Cronicle, Toys Are Revil which at that time boomed discussing the work of foreign artists namely the work of Kaws from America and Michael Lau for Asia. This information entered Indonesia and was received as an inspiration for creative work that was accepted and finally developed until now. This is as conveyed by one of the senior Indonesian artists as follows:

*“Yes, in my opinion, a community exists in one scene or in one culture, so uh, the culture was already formed first, since when Michael Law was born in 2005, which means, if I’m not mistaken, it continued to develop until now” (NSJKT03).*

While the development and rise of Urban Toys in Indonesia itself began in early 2010, at that time the media information related to Urban Toys was still predominantly using several forms of offline media only. The offline media in question was through exhibitions, direct community gatherings or community collaboration events at that time many joined Street Events. Then the digital media that had begun to be used at that time were Twitter and Facebook, with different functions: Twitter was more for promotion or display of works, while Facebook was intended for building community and collector networks. In addition, at that era there were still print media that periodically discussed updates on Urban Toys in Indonesia, although over time this print media also slowly disappeared from circulation at that time the magazines that always discussed updates about Urban Toys were Babyboy magazine and Play magazine. Furthermore, this scene developed widely in line with the development of digital media with various types of digital media platforms.

Besides magazines, the Urban Toys scene itself does not have a specific media outlet that serves as a news channel, as it largely develops from community networks. However,

there are several alternative online media outlets that frequently cover news and events within this scene. Some online media outlets that appear quite active in presenting news about this scene are usually local or urban media outlets such as kopikeliling.com, fanboy channel, popup media. Some of these media outlets are online media that cover art, lifestyle, and fandom. The Urban Toys scene in Indonesia is also included in this media segment, so some of its activities are also frequently covered, and sometimes it is not uncommon for other scenes discussed in these media to also be present at various events or lead to collaborations between scenes. The following are examples of Urban Toys coverage in several online media:



**Image 1. Kopikeliling Online Media Covers Urban Toys Events in Indonesia**  
**Source: (Kopikeliling.com, 2023)**

Based on interviews with two Urban Toys communities in Indonesia, the sources stated that the growth of this scene, and the increasing interest in joining, is largely due to the presence of social media. Almost all sources reported consistent use of social media in this scene, stating that Facebook, Instagram, Twitter (X), and now TikTok have also been added. Each of these social media platforms has its own function, so artists and communities don't choose a single platform but rather integrate them.

Instagram is currently the most dominant use in the Urban Toys scene; almost all artists and followers are connected to each other on Instagram. According to several artists, Instagram is a highly effective medium for displaying work, explaining concepts through captions, building networks with other artists, and using algorithmic searches and hashtags to disseminate information about Urban Toys works. What's unique about this scene is that Instagram is primarily used by Urban Toys artists for the following purposes:

**Tabel 3. Benefits of Using Instagram Media Among Urban Toys Artists**

No	Media	Functions and Benefits
1.	Instagram	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Building artist branding</li> <li>2. Building fan communities for each artist through Instagram</li> <li>3. Storytelling their work</li> <li>4. Building engagement with collectors</li> <li>5. Serving as an artist's namecard and portfolio</li> <li>6. Serving as a promotional medium and providing event updates</li> </ol>

**Source: (Primary Data, 2025)**

Meanwhile, collectors and enthusiasts use Instagram primarily to find information about artists, trends, and updates on Urban Toys, but they don't use it solely as a platform to publish their collections. This differs significantly from mainstream/fabric toy enthusiasts, who typically use Instagram not only as a community platform but also as a platform to showcase their toy collections. Instagram's presence is also seen as providing an opportunity for artists to build their own fan bases.

Furthermore, the social media platforms that have been used for quite some time in this scene are Twitter and Facebook. Initially, the scene was more active on these two platforms. Twitter served as a forum for online gatherings within the Urban Toys scene, bringing together those with similar hobbies and interests, and providing a platform for sharing and reviewing toy creations. Facebook, on the other hand, is more of a networking platform for building community groups, sharing common interests in the types of Urban Toys they enjoy. Interestingly, within the Urban Toys scene, Facebook has emerged as the most resilient and robust social media platform compared to Instagram. Several artists from the IAT and SoToy communities have reported that Facebook remains the platform with the highest levels of online forum and community activity. This is as conveyed by one of the senior artists who was a resource person who stated the following:

"Facebook is really alive for this community, who knows, Instagram has started to see less engagement, but Facebook is getting better with forums, so it's really alive. That's why you have to check Facebook often, especially since FB is still strong because of its network. Then, if you like it, you can see updates on art toy culture on Instagram" (NSBDG01).

The post-pandemic scene has also been influenced by the presence of TikTok. Several artists and communities, such as IAT, have also used TikTok, but its role is limited to artists promoting their work or providing brief reviews of Urban Toys. According to several artists, TikTok is now being used for live sales by resellers or sellers selling their personal collections.

So far, artists and communities in Indonesia have not optimized TikTok's use and instead believe it is primarily used by resellers for live toy sales or auctions.

The presence of another digital medium, YouTube, is seen as having different implications for the Urban Toys community in Indonesia. According to several Urban Toys artists, some collectors or fans simply view works displayed on Instagram, while others prefer to view artists' work on YouTube, which features more video reviews.

In addition to using social media, artists and community members also build relationships through WhatsApp groups, both business and non-business. The IAT Community even has two WhatsApp groups to manage its community. IAT already has a significant membership of over 500 people. They have created two WhatsApp groups: the premium group for active members and artists who are also core members, and the regular group for artists and other members who are not core members. These groups serve different purposes. The premium group serves several purposes, including:

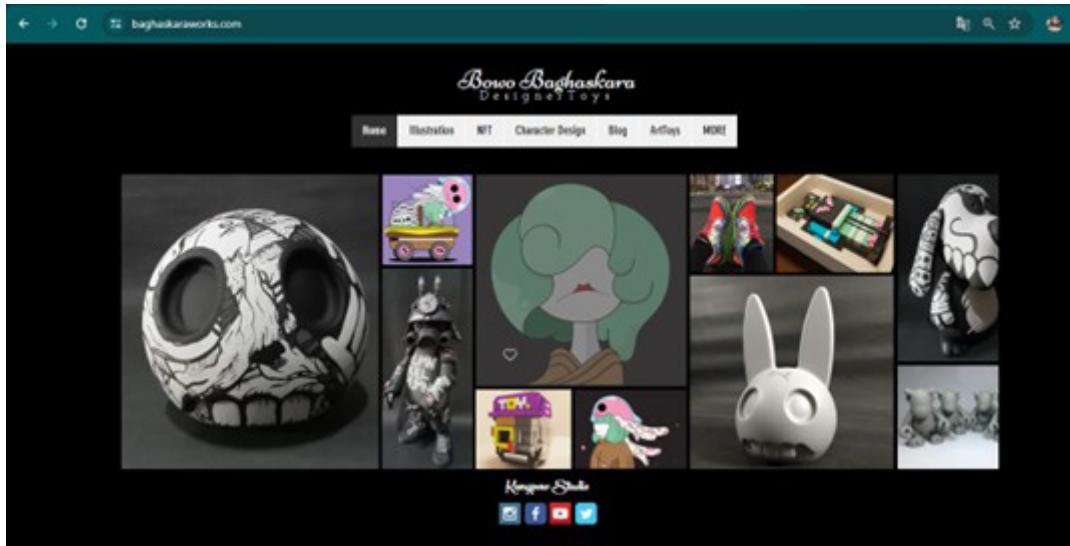
- (1) It has membership dues, which are used to fund regular meetings and register for events or exhibitions. Members who join this group are prioritized, but they are also actively involved as core members who contribute to the community's operations.
- (2) It serves as a dedicated platform for information on international event invitations.
- (3) It offers opportunities for collaborative events among community members.

Typical community WhatsApp group (WAG) is used for discussion, conversation, buying and selling of works, as well as appreciation of works among community members or fellow artists within the group.

In this scene, digital media that also has a fairly effective influence is when artists create websites to display and provide an overview of their toy creations. Through a website, artists gain a good reputation, and the influence of a website with a global character can have a significant impact on the artist's reputation. The opportunity to own an artist website not only attracts fans both domestically and internationally but also opens up opportunities for collaboration with toy manufacturers. Some artists strive to own and manage their own websites so they can also penetrate the global market and gain recognition from collectors both domestically and internationally. Here's a statement from a senior artist in the SoToy community who has a website as a promotional tool and also for building their reputation:

"Yes, I currently only have a website for selling. Actually, in my opinion, managing it is difficult. It's like we're still doing it ourselves, we still have to manage the website ourselves, so we use free e-commerce links like Big Cartel" (NSBDG02).

In line with the existence of websites owned by Urban Toys artists, they are usually also integrated with sales prospects. Therefore, some of these websites are integrated with e-commerce. Here's a look at one of the websites owned by an Indonesian Urban Toys artist:



**Image 2. Sample of an Indonesian Urban Toys Artist Website**

**Source: (Baghaskaraworks.com, 2024)**

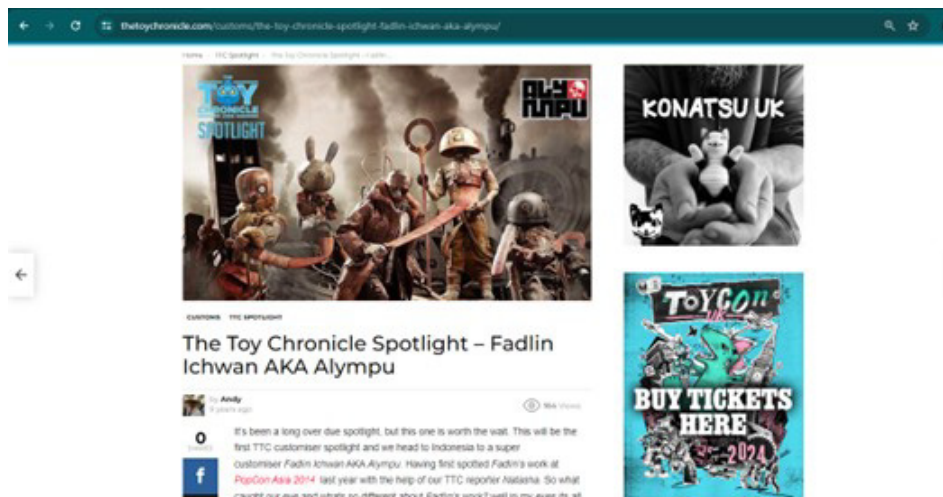
Besides websites, the development of other digital media, such as marketplaces/e-commerce, has undeniably impacted the sustainability of this scene. Artists and fans can meet at Urban Toys sales events on e-commerce platforms and continue to follow each other on Instagram. Of course, this e-commerce platform isn't one-way, with artists promoting their work, but also connecting fans and collectors with Urban Toys, connecting them within a network of communities.

Interviews also revealed that BigCartel, the e-commerce platform most frequently used by artists, is its more global reach in the creative industry. Furthermore, artists who have collaborated with producers typically access their work through BigCartel. One source stated that the reason more artists use BigCartel is because they have partnership agreements with producers to use the platform.

*"Yeah, like, I don't care about the collaboration with Mike Jeks, Mike Jeks produces, Mike Jeks sells, usually in their big cartel. Yeah, so they produce, they market, they sell, they deliver, basically everything, eh, shipping, everything, they do it all (NSJKT02).*

Other e-commerce platforms used include eBay and Tokopedia, though less frequently used locally. Tokopedia is primarily used for local buying and selling of Urban Toys merchandise, such as t-shirts, tote bags, hats, and so on. This unique aspect of Urban Toys' promotion among local audiences is that it doesn't utilize local e-commerce platforms like Tokopedia, but instead promotes directly on Instagram via Direct Message (DM).

The buying and selling process and reviews of toys in Indonesia are inextricably linked to the reputations built by the artists. As previously mentioned, Urban Toys' work relies heavily on the artist's reputation. The more reputable the artist, the more recognized they become within the community and even the general public. Therefore, the role of media reviewers in this scene is also crucial. Media reviewers in this scene are blogs dedicated to reviewing urban toys. Not all artists are selected for coverage by media reviewers; they are curated by the media reviewers. Review media itself also has a level of exclusivity. Some media are quite easy to review toy works and artists, but others are very difficult to get covered or reviewed by the media. So far in Indonesia, there are still relatively few review blogs such as Fanboy and Kungpow Room. Meanwhile, foreign review media that also frequently review the work of Indonesian artists are Spangky Stokes, Toys Cronicle, Toys Are Revil, Stormy Fauld. The existence of these review media also has an impact on the publication of works and reviews of our work concepts from third parties, this will further help in building the image and reputation of artists from the perspective of fans and collectors. Interestingly, these review media cannot be covered by sending press releases like mainstream media, so in the eyes of fans and collectors, they have high credibility.



**Image 3. Media Review and Blog Review of Urban Toys the Toy Chronicle**  
**Sources: (Thetoychronicle, 2024)**

Another review media that is currently developing as a publication of works is the Urban Toys Podcast. This scene has also begun to expand into review media in the form of Podcasts, in a question and answer forum Podcasters invite artists, community leaders, or collectors to discuss Urban Toys. In Indonesia itself, there is also a Podcast that specifically discusses Urban Toys and is also affiliated with the Kungpow Studio Blog. The existence of Podcasts that are also broadcast on YouTube is also a form of review media that is carried out two-way between Podcasters and scene members unlike media review Blogs that focus on reviewing their toy works only. The impact of the emergence of this Podcast is enough to develop this scene among young people who are interested in Urban Toys works and even attract new young artists who will enter this scene.

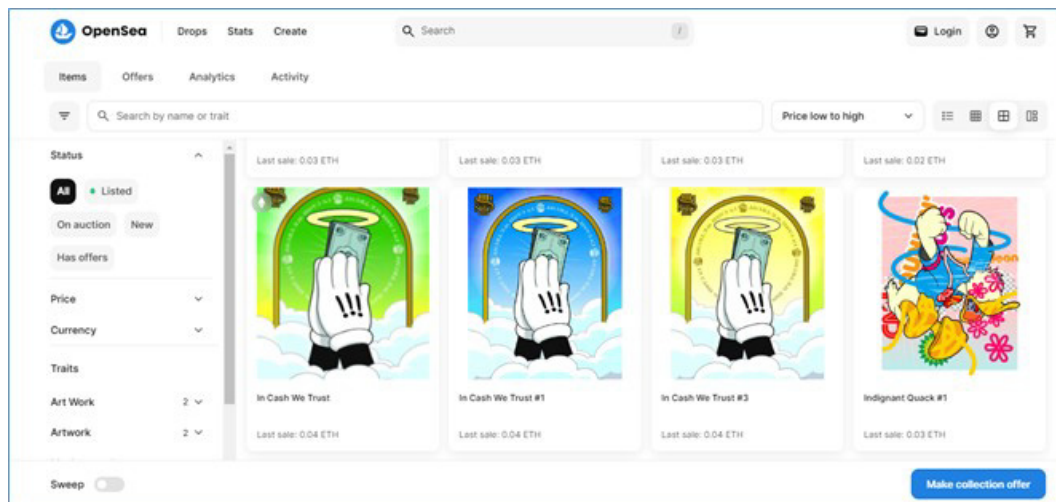
The existence of podcasts, especially those created by Indonesian Urban Toys artists, has also contributed to the widespread popularity of this scene among the younger generation, especially the Zenennial generation. According to several sources, podcasts also allow artists and scene members to convey concepts, ideas, and aspirations in a more informative manner. On the one hand, the impact of podcasts is also part of public education and inspiration for the public about Urban Toys. The following is an excerpt from an interview with Podcaster Kungpow Studio, who stated that through podcasts, it is hoped that they can be more than just creating works, but also a form of communication of inspiration.

The existence of podcasts also demonstrates that while subcultures once thrived in limited and even underground media, the proliferation of digital media has now allowed subcultures to flourish through various channels. In the Urban Toys scene, podcasts serve not only as a medium for presenting works but also as a way to explain their concepts. This is what makes subcultures distinct in today's era.

Digital media, which has also influenced the growth of the Urban Toys scene in Indonesia, is the emergence of Blockchain, a new technology used by several Indonesian Urban Toys artists to popularize their work. Through visual products (Non-Fungible Tokens), NFTs are digital tokens containing information recorded on the Blockchain, representing digital assets linked to the token. NFTs are also considered a form of evolution in asset ownership, shifting from physical goods to non-physical (digital) ones, such as toys, statues, images, songs, videos, and so on. Artists and collectors are also engaging in this arena. An interesting and distinctive finding is that NFTs by Urban Toys, which were originally physical three-dimensional (3D), transform the toy into a digital two-dimensional (2D) image when placed inside the NFT space.

According to several artists, they stated that there is no reduction in the essence and differentiation of their work's concept, except that it is not a tangible, tangible form, but

rather a two-dimensional form created in a digital archive. Meanwhile, the implications are quite noticeable from the perspective of fans and collectors, who feel a slight lack of feel and style when the work's concept is expressed in two-dimensional form or motion video. Here's a preview of the publication of Urban Toys' work, which has been converted into an NFT:



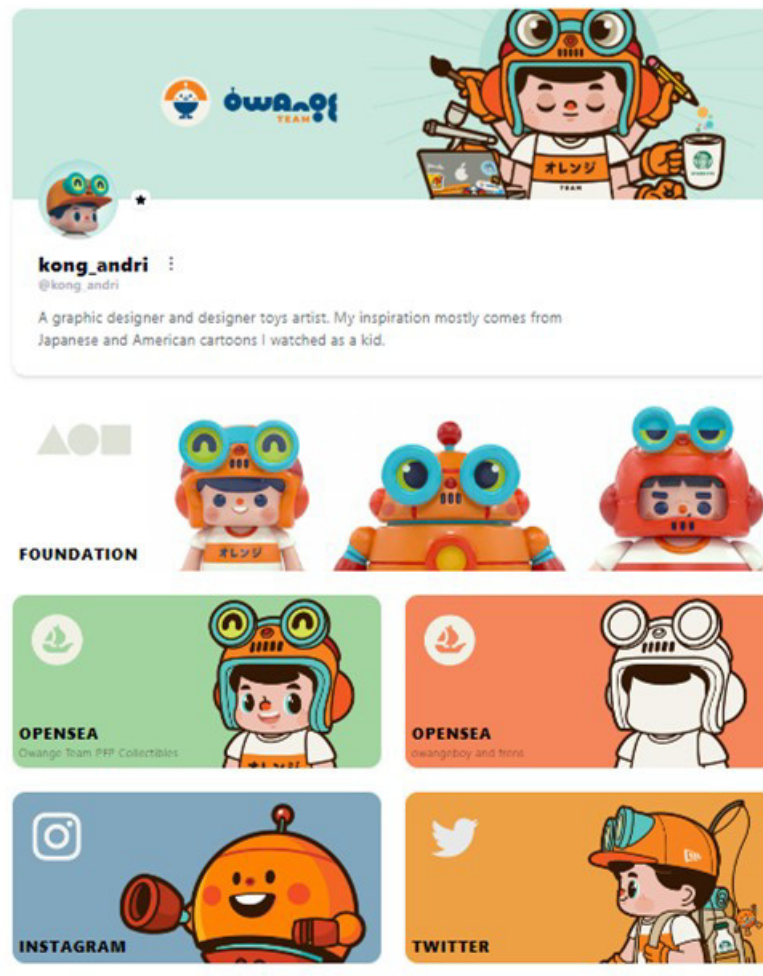
**Image 4. NFT of Indonesian Urban Toys Artist on Opensea Blockchain**  
**Source: (Abeloctovanopensea, 2023)**

However, considering the development of this scene in the Blockchain space, it's quite vibrant and widespread because NFTs can expand the market. Urban Toy collectors, who initially genuinely enjoyed real-world toys, can expand into enthusiasts of creative works through NFTs. The spread of the Urban Toy scene on the Blockchain is also inseparable from the existence of online communities that support each other and promote (and nurture) which toys to promote, so that the toy concept will be designed to be popular with many NFT users. The entry of this scene onto NFT platforms accelerated during the COVID-19 pandemic, which forced many artists to dive into NFT projects.

On the other hand, NFTs are also considered lacking in terms of taste. This, in subcultural terms, is what is known as a shared taste. NFTs have their own characteristics, where the artist and fans are unknown, a key difference from the concept of Urban Toys in the real world. The artist's presence and reputation are the hallmarks of this scene, as the taste of Urban Toys works is closely tied to the artist and how they package and brand their work. NFTs, however, lack the familiarity of the artist and fans, so publishing and selling works sometimes requires a propaganda element. This platform's implications for some artists are

considered a drawback and less suitable for NFTs, although commercially, it offers considerable promise.

To address these shortcomings, some artists have also integrated platforms, combining NFTs and social media. They build their reputations through social media channels but also sell on NFT platforms, typically through Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, Reddit, 2Chan, and 4Chan, which can serve as a window into fans' NFT experience. Through social media, they showcase their work, explain the concept, create branding, and build the artist's reputation. They then include an NFT access link. This way, when fans access the NFT, they'll know the toy concept belongs to the artist. The following is a look at how the artwork is published through the integration of social media and NFTs.



**Image. 5 Integration of Urban Toys Indonesia Artist's Website, Social Media, and NFT**  
 Source: (Digitalplatform Kong Andri, 2023)

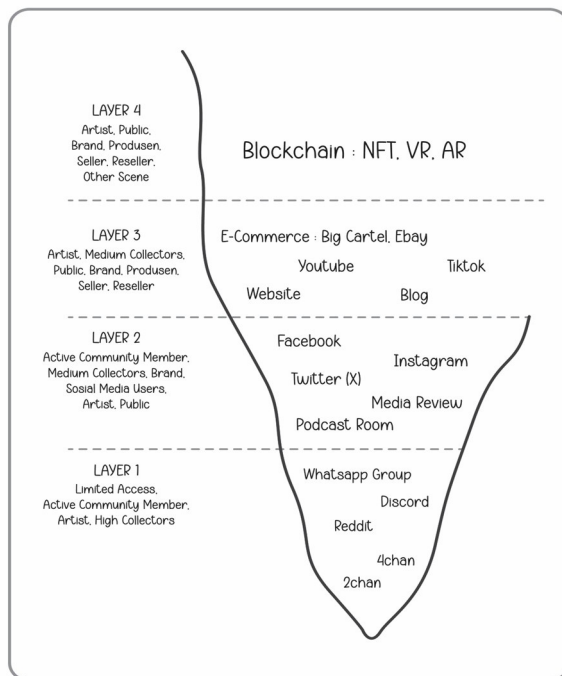
Here are some Indonesian Urban Toys artists who have also jumped on the NFT platform:

**Table 4. Urban Toys Artists Using Blockchain with NFT Platforms**

No	Artis	NFT Category
1	Kong Andri	Opensea
2	Bowo Bagaskara	Rerible & Opensea
3	Abi Ebi	Opensea
4	Abel Oktovan	Opensea
5	Craig	Opensea
6	Arkiv	Opensea
7	Darbot	Rerible & Opensea
8	MOT	Rerible & Opensea

Source: Primary Data, 2024

Based on the explanation of usage among artists, fans, collectors and also the functions and benefits of using media, the media landscape of the urban toys subculture in Indonesia can be mapped as follows:



**Image 6. Media Landscape Urban Toys Subculture**

Source: (Processed Research Data, 2025)

**Table 5. Media Usage Interactions in the Indonesian Urban Toys Scene**

<b>No</b>	<b>Indentification Media</b>	<b>Interaction Subculture</b>
1	Instagram	Display, Branding, Storytelling, Engagement with Fans & Collectors, Promotion
2	X (Twitter)	Branding, Storytelling, Community Networking, International Artist Networking
3	Facebook	Display, Individual Artist Network, Urban Toy Community Network, Online Buying and Selling, Auctions, Community Support
4	Tiktok	Buy and Sell, Reviews and Auctions
5	Youtube	Window Displays, Reviews, Reputation,
6	WAG Private	Gathering and Discussion Forum, Information Updates
7	WAG Business	Discussion Forum, Information Updates, Event Updates, Special Promotions,
8	Website Artist	Artist Portfolio, Display, Artist Reputation,
9	Podcast	Education, Artist Exposure, Sharing, Reviews, Recommendations
10	Blockchain	Urban Toys Media Transfer, Community Networking, Community Collaboration, Promotion & Sales
11	E-commerce	Online Buying and Selling, Auctions,

12	Blog & Media Review	Reviews, Curation, Reputation, Recommendations, Buy and Sell,
13	Media Online	Covering Events or Exhibitions, Toy Reviews, Artist Reviews, News,
14	Galery	Toy Curation, Discussion & Sharing, Displaying, Reputation,
15	Exhibition	Buying and Selling, Displays, Offline Networking between Artists and Producer Community Members, Artist Meet-and-Greets with Collectors, Signing Sessions, Lotteries, Launches, Special Drops, Secret Drops,
16	Majalah	Reviews, Recommendations, News Exposure
17	Discort	Discussion Intensity, Community Support, Concept Sharing, Original Character Building, Meaning and Visuals, Global Community Network, Production Discussion,
18	Reddit	Discussion Intensity, Community Support, Sharing Concept, Original Character Building, Meaning and Visual, Global Community Network, Production Discussion, Discussion Intensity, Community Support, Sharing Concept, Original Character Building, Meaning and Visual, Global Community Network, Production Discussion,
19	2Chan (Japan Version) 4Chan (English Version)	Discussion Intensity, Community Support, Sharing Concept, Original Character Building, Meaning and Visual, Global Community Network, Production Discussion, Discussion Intensity, Community Support, Sharing Concept, Original Character Building, Meaning and Visual, Global Community Network, Production Discussion,

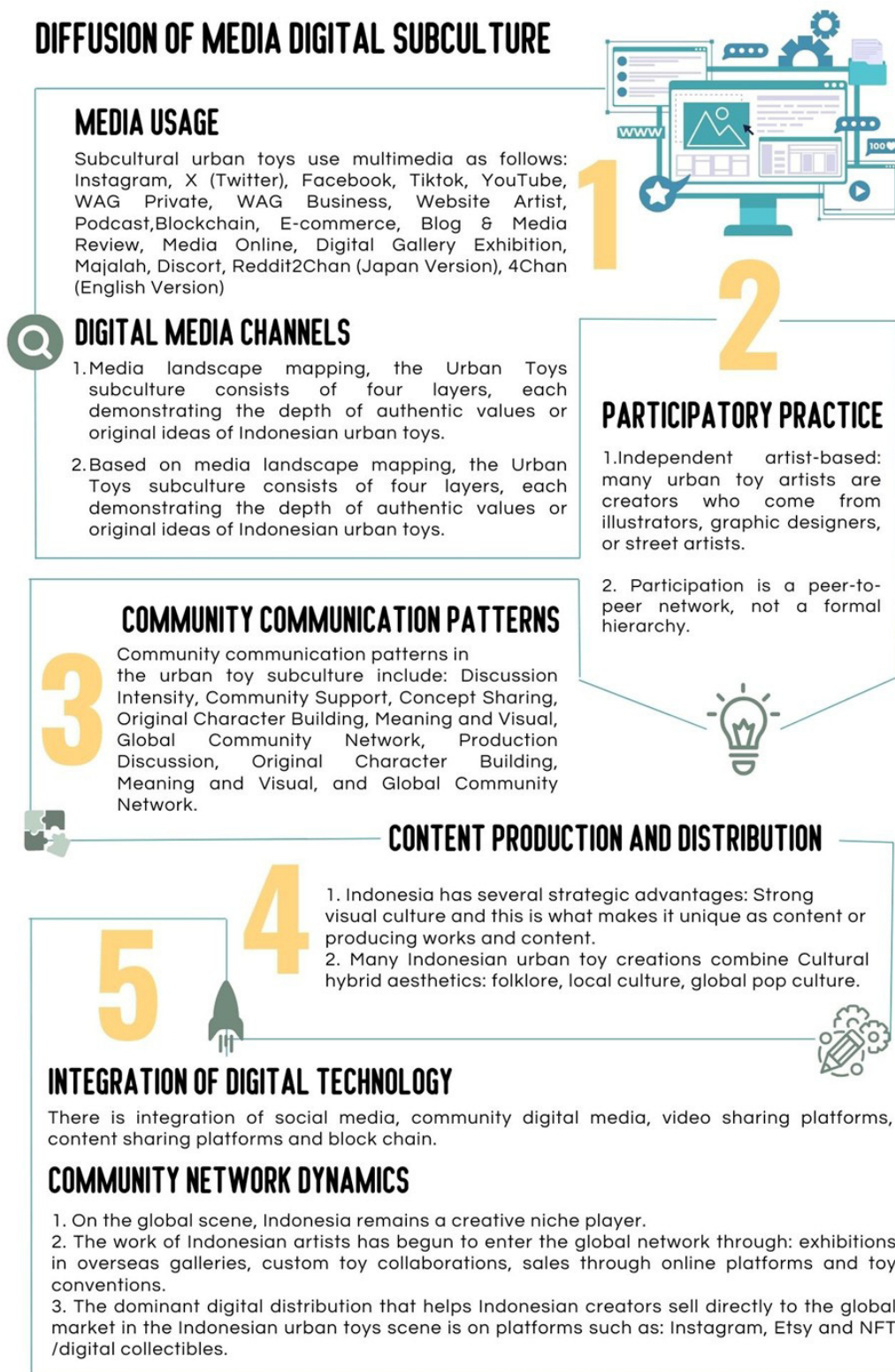
**Source: (Primary Data, 2025)**

## DISCUSSION

Media digital diffusion in subculture and the phenomenon of Indonesian urban toys can be understood as the relationship between how alternative cultures are formed, developed, and spread through digital media. This is in line with what is shown in the study of subcultural development which also emphasizes the suitability of digital diffusion theory to subcultures (Solea, 2025). The spread of subcultural media use in this scene has a landscape that depicts social groups that have values, styles, symbols, and cultural practices that differ from the dominant culture (street arts) media use is also part of subcultural knowledge (Zhang, 2025).

Urban toys are not just toys, but a medium for artistic expression and community identity that diffuses into various media channels for artistic expression and community identity. In the digital era and network society 5.0, this process is called digital diffusion, namely the spread of culture through digital platforms. The community of artists and collectors creates alternative visual styles through urban toys, which are then transferred to various digital media. Digital diffusion Social media also accelerates the spread of these works to the global community. From a subculture theory perspective, urban toys show that: Subcultures are no longer limited to local spaces. The internet accelerates the transformation of subcultures into global niche cultures (Jia, 2022). Community identity is formed through visual symbols, collections, and digital interactions. Through the roles of several actors in the community, digital media enables subcultural expressions that were initially small to become global trends in art, design, and collector culture.

## DIFFUSION OF MEDIA DIGITAL SUBCULTURE



**Image 7. Research Findings Media Landscape Subculture of Indonesia Urban Toys**  
 Source: (Primary Data 2025)

The changing landscape of subcultural media demonstrates the development of media usage and proves that in the era of Society 5.0, subculture not only utilize community media accessible to subcultural group, but can also open access and various use it. This has implications for providing opportunities for artists and communities to develop toy production by opening up collaboration opportunities, where both individually from “artist skills” or “community contributions in proposing artists” open opportunities for producers, galleries, brands, or industries from other scenes as new subculture capital (Jensen, 2006). On the one hand, this is sufficient evidence that subcultural in this case Urban Toys scene is not only able to display differentiation but also creates economic opportunities for artists and communities. This is in accordance with previous study media can create economic benefit (Hagel, 1999).

Another implication is this research shows that the subcultural strength of the Indonesian Urban Toy scene in its authentic style, characterized by the uniqueness of how artists embrace ideas and showcase local culture, as well as critiques of Indonesian socio-cultural practices. However, with the development of digital media, the key element of “original character” typically displayed by artists is slowly fading due to widespread access and the abundance of references available on digital platforms. This leads to artists becoming swept away by the current, often adopting generic themes and lacking strong concepts and ideas. The strength of this subcultural scene in the fact that they not only create toys but also exchange ideas within the community. This is fostered through discussions among individual artists, collectors, and artists, ultimately leading to the exchange of information and information about toy buying and selling (Hare, 2017) The impact of displaying works on social media and other digital platforms has led to members of the subculture choosing to follow trends, ultimately leading to the loss of their subcultural identity.

Media access and the use of digital media, rather than community media, have had implications for urban toys, which should represent urban subcultural values, and are beginning to shift toward market and consumption dominance. This is also evident in toy creations, which ultimately lead to market preferences no longer being artisanal (which is the hallmark of original artists), but rather focusing on what kind of toy will sell quickly. As a result, the essence of authentic work in this scene is diminishing (Miller, 1998)

Another implication of digital media is how digital media channels can lead subcultural movements toward popular culture. Digital Subcultural Diffusion Theory, related on Post-Subcultural Theory and the processes normalisation in the context of digital social media (Solea, 2025). both from the aspect of mapping what media are used, how they normalize

using digital media, The Urban Toys community, which over several decades has been able to build subculture value, leading to rapid community growth, even to the point of being able to convert it into economic capital, is now experiencing a decline and ultimately merging into popular culture or transformation culture (Jancovic, 2002). This movement is actually an activity that is sometimes subtle and goes unnoticed by community members (artists and collectors), indirectly eroding the essence and value of subcultural existence.

## CONCLUSION

This research maps the media landscape of society 5.0 by identifying four layers, each with distinct media management and community actors. The first layer still features strong subcultural interactions, as these are primarily comprised of pure members. The second layer, with access to social media, allows for the involvement of people outside the community, but remains relatively segmented. The third layer has expanded its reach, leading to a mix of popular and mass culture interactions. The fourth layer has embraced digital media, significantly changing the platform for urban toy creations, potentially eroding the essence of subcultures.

This study also concludes that subcultures can thrive with open access to digital media, particularly. However, this has a dual impact: on the one hand, it can expand the subculture's presence, while on the other, it can also erode its values and sense of community, even blending it with popular culture (Johannson, 2017). Urban toys, often imbued with authentic, subversive, and critical ideas, can become commercial toys or become conceptually mass product.

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