

AESTHETIC VALUE OF CONTEMPORARY BATIK WORKS WITH URBAN AND OUTER SPACE THEMES

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The artists who express their work in fabric media with batik and collage techniques in this paper are Wendy Sibarani and Dina Vitalienitas Lestari, both of whom have interesting visual images and creation processes that can be studied because they have distinctive characteristics and self-concepts that are influenced by the impulse of memory, imagination, and creativity that have an impact on the image that describes itself. The method used is qualitative research, the theoretical study used in this research is related to the theory of the illustration analysis process, in this case using the theory of fine art review, comparative descriptive. Ideas always exist in every work produced by an artist, such as personal reflection, social expression, expression of memory individual experience of the artist, and other aspects. In Wendy Sibarani's work, The Expression of Urban Society, she displays the beauty of the city of Jakarta because of the artist's personal experience of seeing many people living in Jakarta who have difficulty living in a big city with all its problems. Dina Vitalienitas Lestari's work is also a reflection of her fondness for extraterrestrials, aliens, and UFOs, as an expression of individual experience and expressed in the work with the artist's personal language aesthetic value.

Keywords: Aesthetic, Batik, Urban and Outer Space Themes

INTRODUCTION

Art today is created in a variety of media and expressions. The advancement of science and technology has an inevitable impact on art, both in terms of media, materials, techniques, and functions. Working on fabric media is associated with craft art, one of the branches of fine art that grows dynamically and adapts to the context of the times. The artist objects that express works in fabric media with batik and collage techniques in this paper are Wendy Sibarani and Dina Vitalienitas Lestari, both of whom have interesting visual images and creation processes and can be studied because they have distinctive characteristics and self-concepts that are influenced by the encouragement of memory, imagination, and creativity which have an impact on the image that describes itself. About the concept of self that is interpreted as self-expression in artists, it is explained as behavior that acts to satisfy one's abilities, or interpreted as behavior that reveals one's identity. (Adriati, 2010 : 39).

Wendy Sibarani, a batik artist based in Sentul, has a background in Architecture does a lot of expression work on batik media, and is visualized in various fashion designs. His trademark is to display cityscapes, atmosphere, and symbols/identity of a region. Dina Vitalienitas Lestari, who has a background as a lecturer at a university in Jakarta, has a visual characteristic of combining the atmosphere of outer space, with cultural

elements of the archipelago in her work, and both display a touch of culture with different narratives, and visual languages.

This paper will discuss the background, motivation, and process of visual creation, exploring the signature that can distinguish the artist's work from others to the individual image of the characteristics of the work. In the self-concept theory of Carl Rogers (1902-1987), it is explained that the driver of the self-actualization process is the urge to progress, which begins with an awareness of self, a self-concept formed since childhood, and is influenced by family and the surrounding environment. In general, people who can adjust themselves have a self-concept that is consistent with their thoughts, experiences, and behavior, remains flexible, and can adapt to new experiences and ideas.

(Adriati, 2010: 40).

Two female artists with backgrounds in design and architecture are considered because these backgrounds give different self-expressions in the visual language imaged. The method in this writing is how to see the aesthetic value of the work produced, as well as whether there is a social-cultural value reflected in the aesthetic value of the karay made by these artists, and what encourages both of them to do self-expression through the characteristics of works with fabric media and contemporary batik techniques.

The method used is qualitative research, the theoretical study used in this research is related to the theory of the illustration analysis process, in this case, using the theory of fine art review, descriptive comparative, as well as providing identification of the character and visual variety found in works with batik techniques, where visual aspects, layout, color and aesthetic elements will be discussed by providing a cultural and historical approach to parse the aesthetic value of the artist's work reflected in batik media.

ILLUSTRATION AND SELF-EXPRESSION

The visual language is one of the symbol systems that come along with human civilization, in addition to verbal, gestural, ritual, and artifact languages. Visual language is reflected in various media, has different ways of reading, and must be read in total to capture its meaning. Human footprints leaving their existence have started since prehistoric times, where in ancient caves many incisions were found that were thought to be a way of communicating, as well as an aesthetic reflection of a creator. Visual language is a primordial language, rather

than verbal language, because seeing something that is visual existed before words were born, and the purpose of the drawings in the rock cave is a medium of communication, not a pure work of art (Tabrani, 2005 95-110).

Associated with visual language in the form of illustrations and depictions of various elements serves to explain, explain, beautify a text, the goal is that readers or audiences can feel directly the nature, impression, scene, and movement that is built, in addition to captivating the eyes of the viewer. (Rohidi, 1984:87).

These two artists, Wendy Sibarani and Dina Vitalienitas Lestari, have different illustration styles, but they have similarities in reflecting cultural elements, with narratives of urban space and space in space. So it is necessary to do a classification process, including naturalist style, decorative illustration style, cartoon, caricature, illustrated story, fantasy illustration, or fantasy. This classification process will help the author to analyze and get results to interpret the data that has been made. (Soedarso, 2014: 566).

The discourse on self-expression in history is mentioned as part of the art education process that has been going on since the Greek-classical period, where the purpose of art education at that time was to preserve the Greek classical tradition, and the self-expression approach was born as a reaction to the teaching of art exercises in drawing from nature, and one of the figures in the teaching of drawing in the school, Pestalozzi, wanted to develop students' perceptual abilities in drawing activities with a shifted approach towards development or self-expression. (Efland, dalam Salam, 2001:2-3).

Self-expression generally comes from many interesting, enjoyable experiences that encourage the artist to be more aware of the environment, memory, and individual experiences of the artist. Childhood experiences (the past) are important and influence the formation of self-expression. Behavioral life, success, ability to face challenges, and the pressures of life are strongly influenced by an individual's perceptions, concepts, and evaluations of himself, including his perceived image. (Adriati, 2010: 42).

With the presence of experience, attitude, memory, and the shaping environment, the expression born by the artists becomes a way of narrating the way of expression through the medium of artwork with the medium of batik, because of the presence of memory and imagination, where in the process there is a process of each sense experiencing sensations-perceptions-images, and every human being has three types of images, namely pre-images, concrete images and abstract images. (Tabrani, 2006:145), and it is this process that gives birth to a variety of visuals with their characteristics and signatures in the medium of work.

Batik works produced by artist Wendy Sibarani can be categorized as contemporary works, referring to the meaning of works that have the concept of now or modern, in Yustiono's writing (1994) it is stated that the presence of post-modern works in Indonesia is present

without realizing it, because it is a logical result of the historical cultural relationship between the world of modern Indonesian art and modern art in the West. So in the process of reading the works of these two artists in batik media, it must be with post-modern glasses so that it can be placed in a broader context, both from the object, media, and technique mix, as well as the influence of social dynamics, issues of the artist's daily life, thinking about the surrounding situation and other aspects that can be read from the aspect of aesthetic value contained in it.

URBAN AND OUTER SPACE IN THE WORK

Space is defined as a container that includes land space, ocean space air space, and space outside the area above the vacuum of air space, space and its contents the moon and celestial bodies are part of space and are spaces outside air space. Land space is a unit of territory where humans and other creatures live and maintain their survival, while space in outer space is believed by various experts to be a place for other creatures and objects that do not live on Earth.

The work depicting 'space' produced by Wendy Sibarani displays various kinds of public spaces that are present as representations of urban society.



Fig. 1. Batik painting titled 'Panorama of Jakarta', (Sources: Batik Marunda, 2023)

In batik Figure 1. Shows a panoramic view of Jakarta, the theme raised by Wendy Sibarani is the cityscape of Jakarta which is adorned with many skyscrapers and other icons of Jakarta, such as bridges that cross Jakarta's human activities and other elements.

Two approaches can be seen in the expression, from the aspect of social problems and the personal approach of the artist in the context of living an urban life. The work shows a row of towering buildings, taken from buildings in Jakarta's business districts, such as in the Thamrin-Sudirman-Kuningan area, with lush trees framing them on

some sides, and a full moon in the center with a bright sky above the building area. The colors used are deep, black, with white lines forming the objects in the batik.



Fig. 2 Batik painting titled 'Panorama of Jakarta', (Sources: Author, 2023)

The method of placing the works seems to follow a photographic technique, which is like taking a photograph by placing the arrangement neatly and orderly. There is a strong vertical red line at the edge as if framing a panoramic painting. This work shows how the artist depicts the city where he works, an area or region that has become an 'oasis' for many people, an ideal, and a destination for many people. However, there is no human figure depicted in the work, which can be interpreted that there is a message he wants to convey, that the city of Jakarta is a place that is indeed promising in making a living, but not necessarily in human life.

Placing buildings in a row from left to right as if they were fortresses, strong, massive, and impenetrable, is a message that Jakarta is hard and only people with a strong mentality can conquer Jakarta and its life. The harshness of Jakartan life is often reflected in various narratives and events, as well as the life experience of the batik artist, where he chooses not to go out much, choosing to live aside from the crowds of Jakarta, because he feels tired of all the congestion and traffic on the city streets, but he still has to fight in his way to revive the economy of the assisted people in the North Jakarta area, as a form of responsibility and participation as part of the city community. The work in this batik does not feature many ornaments, and the artist focuses on the object of the building in front of him.

The picture of shady trees on the right and left sides reflects a shady, comfortable, cool atmosphere at night, with the full moon in the middle of the office building which is the main object of the work. The idea to be conveyed seems to show a personal reflection to show the social expression felt by Wendy Sibarani as an urban community, where she displays the beauty of the city of Jakarta, as felt by other people who dream of 'being able' to live in Jakarta because of its charm and attractiveness. The interesting thing is that the human figure is not shown, possibly because of the personal experience of the artist, who sees that indeed many people living in Jakarta are struggling to be able to live in a big city with all its problems. Through her work, Wendy can record people's

imaginations about Jakarta with its beauty and charm of panoramic beauty and all its glitter.

The space created by Wendy in her work represents a 'space' of imagination for the eyes that see and create imagination and a sense of admiration that creates a sense of wanting to enjoy and be part of the luxury through the arrangement of objects of beautiful building scenery with all its luxuries accompanied by shady trees that provide a sense of comfort and peace.

Dina Vitalienitas Lestari presented the next batik work titled 'Fibonacci Deity', this work uses batik and collage techniques, with the visual element seen is a female figure, in traditional clothing, wearing a crown, with a background like a curved object, floating in a galaxy, above space, with a sprinkling of stars and moons.



Fig. 2 Batik painting titled 'Fibonacci Deity' (Source: Dina Vitalienitas Lestari, 2023)

In Figure 2, a female figure is extending her hand towards a figure resembling an extraterrestrial/alien, with elongated ears resembling a snail on a spherical spaceship in a seated state. The two of them are interacting while holding a spherical object, looking at the position of the alien's hand above, showing the Alien receiving the sphere from the female figure. Around them are objects of green curved lines in several areas around them.

The concept of the work is that the female figure is Dewi Saraswati, the goddess who symbolizes knowledge, has a sacred meaning, and always provides beauty in herself. She is a goddess who transmits knowledge to human beings that is useful for themselves, society, nation, and state to live life. The figure of this Goddess is also a protector and an abundance of knowledge, which provides awareness or vidya and literature, so thanks to the grace of Dewi Saraswati we all become civilized and cultured humans in living life. The Alien figure in the

concept is mentioned as an object of speech, which is used as a symbol in conveying information, questions and statements to be conveyed to the Goddess. The work titled 'Fibonacci Deity' is closely related to the concept of Fibonacci numbers, which according to scientists, this sequence is proof of the existence of God, so it is called the sequence of God, because with this sequence humans find the fact that many things in nature follow the rules of the Fibonacci sequence in the composition, process, formation and occurrence of many elements on earth and also in the world of art and design found in the world.

This expression is a form of thing that the artist likes and unconsciously encourages individual memories and experiences to be poured into the work, and strongly shows the work with a personal language. The placement of the symbolic figures of Dewi Saraswati and Alien is important to read the narrative to be conveyed, where there is an event depicted by Dewi Saraswati giving a blue sphere associated with a Fibonacci number symbol, to be used as a guide in human life while continuing to solve various secrets of the universe.

In the works produced, there is a tendency to depict the figure of an alien object and interact with other objects, where the alien figure 'seems' not a foreign figure, he is depicted interacting with humans as in general. However, the difference is that it is still depicted with a shape that is by the characteristics known by the public, such as a round-shaped alien figure, a large head, large eyes, and other shapes.

The figure of Dewi Saraswati is indicated as a goddess of knowledge generally depicted in white, but in this work is shown in green, with a long shawl that extends in all directions, as if symbolizing a wide and comprehensive spread that touches all directions and directions. At the back is an object resembling a seashell, with large dimensions in yellow. This object is a symbol that represents the evidence of Fibonacci and one of them is manifested in a conch shell, which is referred to as the most obvious example of a spiral-shaped fractal composition having the length of the frontmost spiral line whose result is 1,618 and becomes an element that is displayed large in the work object, in a large position and occupying 50% of the work field area, with a striking golden yellow color. In the back area, there is also a horizon area with a sprinkling of stars and the moon, depicting the horizon and the universe in a bright condition and welcoming the momentum or event.

The imagination of the artist is depicted quite carefully in each visual element, although the objects depicted are unreal, mythological figures and alien objects visualized based on references and literature references and not from personal experience of seeing these figures. The presence of the two figures in a 'give and take' position means that there is an awareness of the responsibility to give and continue to explore all the secrets of knowledge, whereas the artist is an educator who has the awareness to continue to share and explore his potential to be responsible for his noble task, namely providing good knowledge for students.

The vibrant color composition gives a symbolic meaning that this situation is something that is expected and becomes an encouragement, not an obstacle in the process of exploring knowledge more broadly. The image of infinite space reflects how vast the secrets of God the creator of the earth are, and humans continue to explore, search, and not get tired of solving the secrets stored in the universe by learning and continuing to share with others with the presence of science.

CONCLUSION

Ideas are always found in every work produced by an artist, such as personal reflection, social expression, the artist's expression of memory and individual experience, and other aspects. In Wendy Sibarani's work, you can see the expression of urban society, where she displays the beauty of the city of Jakarta because of the personal experience of the artist, who sees that many people living in Jakarta are struggling to live in a big city with all its problems. The work of artist Dina Vitalienitas Lestari is also a reflection of her fondness for extraterrestrials, aliens, and UFOs, as an expression of individual experience and expressed in the work with the personal language of the artist. The symbolic figures of Dewi Saraswati and Alien become the narrative to be conveyed about the number of Fibonacci in human life and at the same time continue to solve various secrets of the universe.

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