

BUATAN-TERSEDIA: PEMBENTANGAN SENI DALAM KONTEKS METAFORA DAN PSIKOLOGI DALAM SENI

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Abstrak

Penyelidikan ini merangkumi pemahaman metafora melalui perkaitan objek perwakilan dengan seni untuk meningkatkan nilai dan estetika dalam memahami karya seni. Karya seni dapat didefinisikan dalam dua bentuk format iaitu representasi dan bukan representasi. Kedua-dua bentuk format ini menekankan modenisme. Penyelidikan ini membincangkan objek yang dijumpai mewakili kiasan 'kepercayaan' serta memiliki ciptaan seni sambil mencerminkan sejarah, fungsi dan dikontekstualisasikan dalam Karya Seni 2D. Konsep siap pakai diperkenalkan pada tahun 1917 ketika Marcel Duchamp memperkenalkan idea untuk menjelaskan kemampuan sifat fizikal, refleksi psikologi, dan adanya ideologi untuk meniru simbol, dan metafora sebagai akar dalam paradigma baru dalam praktik konseptual. Bahan-bahan 'berbicara' dengan sendirinya dalam mewakili 'realisme' sebagai keputusan untuk memperkuat persepsi objektiviti dan mempersoalkan tradisi praktik perwakilan di era modernisme. Kualiti idea ini membawa kepada pengabstrakan dan pemahaman yang kompleks tentang bahasa dan komunikasi seni. Penyelidikan ini menerangkan dua metodologi dalam merujuk objek dan subjek dalam seni visual. Metodologi ini metafora dalam pendekatan semiotik dan psikoanalitik dalam perspektif. Dalam semiologi, metafora melibatkan dan memerlukan satu cara penting iaitu 'penanda' di mana ia merujuk kepada subjek utama (literal) dan juga dinyatakan dalam subjek sekunder (kiasan).

Kata Kunci : buatan-tersedia, seni rupa, metafora, karya seni, semiotik

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READY-MADE: THE PRESENTATION OF ART IN THE CONTEXTS OF METAPHORS AND PSYCHOLOGY IN ARTWORKS

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Abstract

This research covers the understanding of metaphor through the association of representational objects to art to enhance the value and aesthetic in understanding artworks. Artwork can be defined in two forms of format which are representational and non-representational. These two forms of format emphasise modernism. This research discusses the found objects which represent the metaphor of 'belief' as well as possess artistic creation while reflecting history, functionality and being contextualised in 2D Artworks. The concept of ready-made was introduced in 1917 when Marcel Duchamp introduced the idea of explaining the capability of physical properties, psychological reflection, and the existence of ideology to imitate symbol, and metaphor as a root in the new paradigm in conceptual practises. The materials 'speak' by itself in representing 'realism' as a decision to reinforce perception of objectivity and questioning the tradition of representational practice in the era of modernism. This quality of ideas leads to abstraction and complex understanding of the language and the communication of art. This research explains two methodologies in referring to objects and subjects in visual art. These methodologies are metaphor in semiotic approach and psychoanalytic in perspective. In semiology, metaphor involves and needs one mode of significance which is the 'signifier' in which it refers to the primary subject (literal) and also expressed in the secondary subject (figurative).

Keywords: ready-made, fine art, metaphor, artworks, semiotic

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1.0 Introduction

The history of ready-made and found object in visual art emerged in the 20th Century and could be divided into two main categories which are figurative and non-figurative. Ready-made objects are also reflected as sculptural works, and this was suggested by Analytical Cubism founded by Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque in 1912. In the first beginning, Picasso used pieces of newspaper and cardboard to produce an ambiguous composition through references to still-life objects. (Frank & Preble, 2002)

The excitement of western art changed in mid-1970s. During this era, an artist named Carl Andre used 120 building brick as installation pieces in his geometrical arrangement at Tate Gallery in London. Carl Andre changed the perception of ready-made object into precious possibilities in a creative manner leading to endless possible perceptions of “brick” which is commonly used in architecture and building defying the original narrow perception of object. Ready-made object which is commonly only related to object and material has become an inspiration to artists in which in their mind. They see the beauty and come out with their own personal expression. (Ingledew, 2011)

Herbert (2013) stated that Marcel Duchamp suggested the idea of ‘language of possibility’ and his idea envisions ready-made object in a new avant-garde. This idea is reflected in his artwork “*Bicycle Wheel*” in 1913, where by simply getting it to rotate, a complex meaning and interpretation to celebrated object in every life living can be observed. (Herbert et al., 2013)

Juxtaposing trash, wire, plastic, paper, metal and others instead of sculpting, carving and casting in conventional sculpture turns mass industries material into what is regarded as ‘high art’ in the art world. (Vergine, 2007)

2.0 Psychology in artworks

Psychology in art is an interdisciplinary concept which consists of perception, understanding, art characteristics and its production (Moosa & Nader, 2012). This concept reflects human behaviours such as forgiveness, excitement, happiness, sorrow, emotions and motivation (Moosa & Nader, 2012).

Carl Gustav Jung declared that human psychology appears from our imagination, perception and thinking as he reviews human mind as a “Quantum Phenomenon” forcing us to think of “Quantum Physics”. These factors serve as the basic in explaining that the material world is actually non-material consisting of ‘thing’ or ‘matter’ in where it acts in the non-material form due to the ability of psychology to form potential reality and ambiguity (Ponte & Schäfer, 2013).

Material plays an important role in art. It provides endless possible interactions and interference even on molecular level. An example would be of atom and neuron which speak to artists and viewer naturally about the manner of reality while suggesting the consciousness which is related to psychology (Ponte & Schäfer, 2013).

The idea of ‘therapy’ was introduced through psychology. Therapy, or a conditioning to make one feel better or stronger as defined by Cambridge University is reflected in the conditioning phenomenon for example in consumer products. The question of what makes who feels good is a debateable aspect in production thus leading to the



uniqueness of interrelating and speculating 'thing' or 'matter' which becomes an argument and a mixture of reality. Besides being placed to make it desirable in the view of consumer properties, it was placed in the view of producers' properties for functional purposes. Andy Warhol produced 'Brillo Soap Pads Box' from painted wood and screen-print portraying the intervention of material in new order and it reflects the psychological phenomenon of general products where they are desirable due to the artistic touch however, in actuality, they are only everyday objects.

3.0 Methodology

This research studies the representation of ready-made object in the context of metaphor via methodologies related to semiotic approach and psychoanalytic perspectives.

Metaphor is seen as a form that gives comparison status through the word 'similar' or 'like' and this is related to the form of understanding symbol such as semblance in Peirce theory which explains this via signifier and signified. Semiotician agreed that the essence of metaphors involves one signified which can also stand-in as a signifier. Metaphors are expressed as a form of abstraction to link primary subject (tenor) to secondary subject (vehicle). However, we can also relate metaphor to symbolic properties related to imagination and experiences (Chandler, 2002). In visual language, visual metaphor function is to transfer certain meaning from transition sign into another meaning. This is explained by Judith Williamson. Metaphors are associated with social status, ethnical value, culture, semantic language, and religion (Williamson, 1978).

To associate metaphor in interpreting objects in art context, we must consider psychoanalytic perspective. Freudian emphasises on consciousness and unconsciousness aspect to pursue the attribute of symbolic significance to refer to object as art. In relocating ready-made object and transforming it into valued found objects and labelling it as artwork, the tendency of employing psychoanalytic method has a strong relation to identity and outlining life objects into another term of aesthetic (Camic, 2010). The new interpretation of ready-made objects discovers the value of aesthetic being engaged with emotion. Psychological cognitive responds to complex symbolization as 'being' not only to describe art but to express the achievement of life development from primitive attribution to humanity appreciation (Gascoyne, 1935).

4.0 Research analysis (interpretation and finding)

In this chapter, the researchers interpret and analyse four art pieces to re-contextualize found object in Malaysia contemporary art.

4.1 Sulaiman Esa's self-Essential

Malaysian contemporary art nowadays which is shifting from traditional to modern had a vibrant development between mid 60's to early 70's. Malaysian artists who are looking into identity and cultural belief responded to the National Cultural Congress (NCC) in 1971. Sulaiman Esa and Redza Piyadasa are two prominent artists in the field of identity and artist conflicts. Influenced by Marcel Duchamp, they formed '*Toward a Mystical Reality*' (TMR) which was marked as the most significant exhibition in Malaysia (Nur Hanim Khairuddin, 2014).





Figure 1: Sulaiman Esa (1973) *Man and His World*

In psychological perspective Sulaiman Esa's artwork, *'Man and His World'*, represents his personal belongings (ready-made objects) arranged, reflecting the early point of life in his career. *'Man and His World'* was marked divergent and self-essential. This work can be related to psychoanalysis in which it allows *Ego* to be the authority and existential as indicated in Figure 1.

4.2 Tengku Sabri's sentimental value art

Malaysia's very own visual artist Tengku Sabri Tengku Ibrahim is one of those whom actively produces artworks with found object since 1980s. This ITM graduate is heavily influenced by his father's craftsmanship in wood carvings hence most of his early artworks were based on wood and mixed with wire and other found objects as alternative choices as illustrated in Figure 2.



Figure 2: Tengku Sabri Tengku Ibrahim (2012) *Autobiografi #3 - Nenek & Perhiasannya*

In ***Autobiografi #3 – Nenek & Perhiasannya*** (Autobiography #3 – Grandmother’s decorations) (Tengku Sabri Tengku Ibrahim, 2012), Tengku Sabri deliberately used materials which are close to him especially wood and wire combined with other objects. By using standard colonial wood frame, he composed this 2 dimensional art with layered colours and some personal objects before finishing by layering it over with wire installation. Tengku Sabri tried throwing back his childhood memories especially those with his late grandmother. Psychologically, it is quite emotional since the two found objects belonged and were used by his late grandmother. All the memorable times with her during his childhood have taught him to be independent and responsible. Although it might only reflect the artist’s memories emotionally, the sentimental feel is evoked by referring to the two found objects which are rare and valuable. This brings back sweet memories especially with beloved ones either still breathing or already passed away.

4.3 Ahmad Shukri’s Sarcastic Freedom

Ahmad Shukri’s Cabinet Series is an epitome of NCC 1971. Ahmad Shukri is among the generation that appeared during the pluralist era in 1990’s. The Cabinet Series explain the Sarawakian culture. Found object can be observed through the use of cabinet wood, farmer hat, vase, animal’s skull and Iban’s traditional shield. Ahmad Shukri composed these found objects by dividing into small partitions creating an asymmetrical balance layered with striking colours as illustrated in Figure 3. The repetitive motive helps the audience to appreciate the artwork through traditional culture. Ahmad Shukri tried to impress the audience through colours and repeated images. The red colour in his artwork represents anger felt by the Ibans towards their government that abuses the ethnics through rapid developments in Sarawak.





Figure 3: Ahmad Shukri Muhammed (1992), *Secret Box*

4.4 Suhaidi Radzi's Time Capsule

Suhaidi Radzi, who is in his mid-career as an artist in Malaysia contemporary art scene played with mass objects and ready-made objects as illustrated in Figure 4. 'Secret Box' represents his mind portraying psychological theme. Framed, alienated and bio centric lead the viewer to think about the misunderstanding of ambiguity in our life. Bruce Conner stated that artist collects objects or things for their own purposes by adding them to their work of art (Munroe, 2009).



Figure 4: Suhaidi Radzi (2016) *Cabinet Series*

Conner refers to art objects as meditation, also as the experience of misery, which are reflected in mental and sensory awareness in our daily life as philosophical negotiations (Munroe, 2009). *Secret box* describes a traveller's luggage contemplating his biographical atmosphere and reflected him as being born in a farmer family and also a traveller. Suhaidi composed small objects while intervening them with dark colours portraying silence and emotion. This remarks the monologue in his artist life and social surrounding.

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendation

As a conclusion, the fundamental rules of art-making changed as the act of choosing materials have become the artwork itself. In 1913, Marcel Duchamp's "Bicycle Wheel" was seen as first work that started to change the trend in art scene and became referential work for the birth of 'conceptual art' in the late 60s. The idea of "ready-made" art can be associated with the inception of new chaos as it was seen as a controversial medium, even in the fine art landscape that give birth to surrealism art movement. Hence, our discussion on "ready-made" object considers three main factors on how artists created their work.

First, the act of screening, choosing and separating widely accessible ready-made object (junk) as part of creative process. This process can be determined as a borrowed process from our experiences in life where the act of choosing physical properties such as form, shape and texture in ready-made object are considered sub-conscious activities. Second, by removing, extracting, and screening the functionality of the particular object as art pieces can be classified as creative process as well. This process might explore the artistic inquiry of our emotions and meaning making. And the last process, by presentation of the object, as description like title medium, and the ways it present in the gallery space, give a new possibilities of transcendental reality through perception. The experiences signified new context of seeing, looking, feeling in connection between artist and audiences become archetypal meaning and dimensions.

Visual art and psychology both basically work as important aspects in creating human's

natural behaviour and emotions. These can be visible through the use of colours, fonts, image and found objects relating them to human emotions such as anger, love, upset, sorrow, happy, excited, and sensation. But more importantly, it is also due to the same reason art can be used to evoke and counter these humanly emotions and used as therapy. Creating artworks through found object can be an act of art therapy to overcome our fear and encourage us to be peaceful and positive.

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