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**STUDY OF MURAL ART STYLE IN PUBLIC SPACES OF THE HYSTERIA COMMUNITY IN SEMARANG  
2024**

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**Info Artikel**

*Article History:*  
Accepted: 12/11/25  
Approved : 18/ 11/25  
Published : 12/26/25

*Keywords:*  
mural, Hysteria, public  
space, semiotics, social  
education

**Abstract**

This study aims to analyze the style, values, meaning, and educational function of the mural works of the Hysteria Community in public spaces in the city of Semarang, while also examining the public's acceptance of the social messages conveyed through these murals. A qualitative approach was used through observation, interviews, and documentation of two major works: "Tulang Lunak Bandeng Juwana" (2024) and "Doa Kuat!" (2025). Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis was used to interpret denotative and connotative meanings, while John Fiske's theory assessed how visual elements work at the levels of reality, representation, and ideology in shaping public understanding. The results of the study show that Hysteria utilizes local cultural symbols, visual metaphors, and color compositions to present communication that is not only aesthetic but also educational through a process of social awareness (PSR). Messages about adaptation, resilience, solidarity, and self-reflection are presented to encourage public engagement in understanding the dynamics of the city and the social issues that are inherent to it. Both murals serve as a medium for social learning that strengthens Semarang's cultural identity and builds a dialogical relationship between artists, the community, and public spaces.

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ISSN 2252-7516  
E-ISSN 2721-8961

## INTRODUCTION

Mural art in public spaces has increasingly become a form of visual communication that conveys social, cultural, and urban issues rather than merely serving decorative functions. Despite its growing presence in Indonesian cities, mural art is often still perceived superficially as urban ornamentation or visual noise, without sufficient attention to its meaning-making processes, stylistic strategies, and educational potential within public spaces. This condition creates a gap between the visual presence of murals and the public's understanding of the messages they carry.

In Semarang, mural practices have developed alongside the emergence of creative communities that actively engage with urban space. However, studies on murals in this city tend to focus on visual identity or aesthetic aspects, while in-depth analyses of mural style, meaning, and public reception—especially from the perspective of semiotics—remain limited. As a result, the role of murals as a medium of social education and public communication is not yet fully articulated.

One of the communities that consistently utilizes murals as a communicative and reflective medium is the Hysteria Community. Their murals not only occupy public spaces visually but also embed local cultural symbols, social critiques, and collective narratives that respond to the dynamics of urban life in Semarang. Nevertheless, the distinctive style, value construction, and strategies through which Hysteria's murals communicate with the public have not been systematically examined.

Therefore, this study addresses the need to clarify how mural art functions beyond aesthetics by analyzing the style, meaning, and educational values of Hysteria Community murals in public spaces. Through a semiotic approach, this research seeks to reveal how visual elements operate as signs, how meanings are constructed, and how public spaces become sites of dialogue between artworks, artists, and the community.

Research on mural art in public spaces is gaining attention as a form of artistic expression that can convey cultural, social, and aesthetic messages to the wider community. Murals as a form of visual art in public spaces not only offer

visual beauty but also serve as a medium of communication that fosters social interaction and strengthens the cultural identity of a city. A study conducted by Lembayung and Chusna (2015) in Semarang City shows that murals can reflect local culture while also serving as a medium for education and aesthetics for the community, despite challenges in understanding the meaning of the symbols used (Lembayung & Chusna, 2015).

In addition, research conducted by Diah and Lubis (2023) in Medan revealed that mural art has the potential to develop a city's visual identity and become a powerful tool in raising awareness about social, environmental, and cultural issues through its strong visual appeal (Diah & Lubis, 2023). This demonstrates that murals play a strategic role in contemporary urban and cultural studies, serving as a form of public art that is widely appreciated by the community.

Through previous studies, we can gain an understanding of how the cultural phenomena of a city can be understood through the development of its mural art. This study is relevant because it continues and complements previous studies that highlight the role of murals in visualizing local cultural values, enriching aesthetic experiences, and strengthening the social identity of communities in public spaces.

This study aims to analyze the value and meaning of the mural artworks created by the Hysteria Community in Semarang and to examine the public's acceptance of these murals. This research is based on the understanding that each mural not only functions as a visual expression but also as a medium of communication that reflects social, cultural, and urban issues. Through the identification of these values, meanings, and acceptance strategies, this research is expected to reveal the relationship between artworks, public spaces, and community responses to mural art in the city of Semarang.

Before exploring the context and meaning of the murals created by the Hysteria Community, it is necessary to first understand the essence and character of mural art as a form of visual expression that exists in public spaces. Murals are a branch of fine art, specifically painting, which uses walls or large flat surfaces as its main medium. Not limited to walls, murals can also be created on ceilings, iron boards, or fabric, both in

exterior and interior spaces. The word "mural" itself comes from the Latin word murus, which means wall (Fahmi et al., 2023). Furthermore, murals are a form of street art that serves as a medium for community expression and aspirations. Through paintings that are rich in social criticism, information delivery, and messages of togetherness, murals are able to bridge the emotional connection between artists and the community (Iswahyudi & Rahmawaty, 2022). Additionally, murals are one of the oldest art techniques used by humans to connect behavior with the surrounding environment. These expressions are then manifested on wall surfaces as a medium of representation (Yohana, 2021). Thus, murals not only serve as aesthetic works of art, but also as a medium of social, cultural, and historical communication that remains relevant to this day.

In addition to their aesthetic value, murals serve as an effective medium of communication for conveying and expressing messages in public spaces (Razali et al., 2023; Santoso et al., 2023). These visual works allow the community to communicate their aspirations, raise awareness of social issues, and provide a medium for artists to express their ideas, thoughts, and personal reflections (Santoso et al., 2023). This shows that the presence of murals in public spaces means that murals are not only visual works of art, but also a bridge of communication between artists and the community. Artists need to consider public values, norms, and interests so that the messages conveyed not only represent the artists' expressions, but also serve as a bridge of communication between individuals and the community through public spaces.

Public space essentially arises from and for the community, so its existence is not controlled by individual interests, certain groups, or government interference. The essence of public space is democratic values that prioritize the common good (Noor, 2012). Habermas views public space as a communication network that enables the exchange of information from various perspectives. This flow of information is then filtered and summarized to form a distinctive public opinion in line with the issues at hand. Through this understanding, public space is not only interpreted as a physical place, but also as an arena for social interaction that provides

space for artistic expression, including murals, to convey aspirations and foster collective awareness.

Public space is a space that has direct relationships and interactions with the public and can be created as a vehicle for serving complex communities in social activities (Athian, 2018). From a broader perspective, public space also acts as a means of mediation between the community and the state. Throughout its existence, public space is able to facilitate the emergence of values that reflect public conditions, while also providing an ideal platform for both government policy and social communication. On this basis, public space is not just a meeting place, but also a medium that bridges the community's aspirations with policy, and strengthens the role of public communication in community life.

Mural art has developed as a form of contextual painting that adapts to its surrounding space and situation. This is due to its close connection to the realities of people's lives, especially young people, who live in a daily dynamic full of ideas, dreams, and aspirations that they want to realize (Wiratno, 2022). There are many branches of visual street art, including installations, stickers, stencils, graffiti, murals, posters, wheatpaste, and others. One of them is murals, which are a form of street art that serves as a medium for the aspirations of the community through works that are critical in nature, convey information about events, and serve as a means of uniting the conscience of artists and the community. (Ramadani et al., 2018). Another example is graffiti, an art form that involves scribbling on walls using color compositions, lines, shapes, and volume to produce works in the form of words, symbols, or specific sentences (Risa Azahro Wanis et al., 2023). Thus, mural art is part of contextual painting that arises from the dynamics of society, especially among young people, and functions as a medium for aspirations and social criticism. Unlike graffiti, which focuses more on scribbles and symbols, murals are a branch of street art that combines aesthetic value with social messages, thereby serving as a bridge of communication between artists and the community. The development of mural art is in line with the emergence of various creative communities that play a role in building the art and

space ecosystem. One of the prominent communities in this dynamic is the Hysteria Community, which serves as a collaborative platform for artists and creative activists to develop art practices in public spaces.

The Hysteria Community was established on September 11, 2004 as a collaboratory that emphasizes creativity to build a healthy, prosperous, and sustainable art ecosystem in the city of Semarang. As a creative impact hub, Hysteria facilitates cross-disciplinary collaboration between artists, academics, and the community in discussing issues related to art, community, youth, and city life. The community uses murals as a medium of visual expression that is rich in social, educational, and cultural meaning, making it a means of communication between artists and the public. Hysteria's mural works often raise social and environmental themes, such as in the work "Udan Salah Mongso" which addresses the issue of climate change, or in the "Lebaran Karya" program which displays visual metaphors about urban community resilience. Through activities such as "City Canvas" with the theme "Murals as a Space for City Residents to Speak," Hysteria positions murals as part of urban lifestyle as well as a public dialogue space that reflects the social dynamics of society.

In addition to producing artwork, Hysteria also actively assists residents in maintaining murals in thematic villages and documents its activities through Instagram @grobakhysteria. Strong visual characters and themes rooted in social reality make Hysteria's mural artwork a representation of the relationship between art, society, and public space that is relevant to study through a semiotic perspective (Hysteria, n.d.).

This study uses a semiotic analysis approach to reveal the style and meaning contained in the mural artworks of the Hysteria Community in Semarang. Semiotic analysis was chosen because it is able to decipher the signs, symbols, and visuals used in the murals so that the relationship between form, style, and the message to be conveyed can be understood. Through the reading of these visual signs, this study not only examines aesthetic aspects, but also the social and cultural meanings and the public space context behind them. On that basis, semiotic analysis becomes an important tool for explaining how Hysteria's murals function as a medium of communication and representation of

ideas that are close to the people of Semarang.

Semiotics is the study of signs. One of the figures who developed semiotics theory was Roland Barthes. Barthes divided his theory into two parts, using the terms "two orders of signification" (denotation, connotation) and "myth." To read a work semiotically, one needs an understanding of denotation and connotation. Visual and verbal signs have both implicit and explicit meanings that play an important role in ensuring efficient communication (Nofia & Bustam, 2022).

Denotation can be understood as the basic or literal meaning of a word, which is the main meaning that generally corresponds to what is listed in a dictionary or other literary sources, without containing additional or hidden meanings (Seba & Prihandini, 2021). Meanwhile, connotation refers to a second level of meaning that is implicit, uncertain, or metaphorical, and often relates to psychological aspects, feelings, and beliefs. Finally, myths are seen as a form of language or meaning that varies according to the influence of the social and cultural context and the views that develop around them (Septiani & Tawami, 2024).

After examining Roland Barthes' theory discussing the concepts of denotation and connotation in analyzing the meaning and value of the Hysteria Community mural, the author also uses John Fiske's semiotic theory as a basis for examining the strategy of accepting the mural in public spaces.

John Fiske views semiotics as the study of signs and meanings in the sign systems that exist in society. He divides the process of meaning formation into three main levels: the level of reality, which links signs to real objects or phenomena such as colors, shapes, and images in murals that represent the real world; the level of representation, which emphasizes how these signs are conventionally arranged to form certain narratives, ideas, or emotions; and the level of ideology, which views signs as part of a system of values, power, and ideology that influences the process of creating works (Firzatullah & Pebrianty, 2024). When applied to the Hysteria Community mural, John Fiske's semiotic theory shows that visual elements not only function as art forms, but are also sign systems that carry real meaning at the

level of reality, construct narratives at the level of representation, and convey ideological messages at the level of ideology. This approach facilitates understanding of how murals reflect the social and cultural dynamics developing in society.

This research needs to be conducted because, to date, studies on the style of mural art in the public spaces of the Hysteria Community in Semarang are still very limited. In fact, this community plays an important role in shaping the city's visual landscape and enlivening public spaces through its mural works, which are rich in social, educational, and cultural values. By understanding the values, meanings, and communication strategies applied by Hysteria, this research aims to fill the knowledge gap regarding the role of mural art, which is not only an artistic expression but also a means of public communication and a shaper of the city's cultural identity.

Academically, this research is important because it enriches the study of fine arts, visual communication, and urban studies in Indonesia by providing a new contextual perspective on murals as a socio-cultural phenomenon. Meanwhile, in practical terms, this research can serve as a reference for artists, creative communities, local governments, and policy makers to develop more participatory, sustainable, and community-oriented strategies for managing public spaces and mural art. Therefore, the results of this research are expected to not only broaden theoretical understanding, but also have a real impact on strengthening the ecosystem of art and creativity in public spaces.

## METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach to explore the mural art style of the Hysteria Community in public spaces in the city of Semarang. According to Saleh (2017), a qualitative approach is an investigative process that aims to understand social or human issues in depth by collecting descriptive and narrative data through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation, thereby providing a complete picture of the characteristics, meanings, and perceptions of the research subjects (Saleh, 2017).

The research focuses on analyzing the values, meanings, and strategies of the community so that their murals are accepted by the public. Data was collected through field observations, in-depth interviews, and documentation of Hysteria murals.

Observations were made by directly observing the murals and the community's response to them. The data obtained was then analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive analysis model, which consists of three main stages: data reduction (selecting and simplifying data to focus on relevant information), data presentation (organizing findings in the form of descriptive descriptions, tables, and visual documentation).

The study uses Roland Barthes' semiotic theory to examine the meaning of murals through two levels of meaning, namely denotation and connotation, in order to reveal the messages and values implied in the visual elements of murals. Furthermore, John Fiske's semiotic theory is applied to analyze the strategies of how these murals are received in public spaces.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Kolektif Hysteria is an arts and culture-based creative community founded on September 11, 2004, in Semarang by a group of students from the Faculty of Literature at Diponegoro University, which later opened its doors to the wider community. This community evolved from publishing zines and literature into an art laboratory that focuses on issues related to cities, youth, communities, and collective creativity (Hysteria, n.d.). Hysteria's vision is to create a healthy, prosperous, and sustainable ecosystem of art and creativity. Their mission includes: establishing an independent institution, developing resilient and empowered creators, facilitating community and platform development, and fostering human resources who understand cultural values, local wisdom, and diversity of cultural expression (Hysteria, n.d.). As a public art practitioner, Hysteria often presents mural projects, installations, village festivals, and other creative programs that reach public spaces and urban youth communities. These practices demonstrate their commitment to making art a medium for public dialogue, not merely an aesthetic discourse. Hysteria's two decades of existence show that an art community can grow from a small platform to become an important actor in the urban creative landscape—one that not only creates works but also builds creative networks and ecosystems at the local, national, and international levels.

### Mural "Tulang Lunak Bandeng Juwana" (2024)

This subsection discusses the analysis of the values and meanings in the Hysteria Community mural, namely "Tulang Lunak Bandeng Juwana" (Soft Bones of Juwana Milkfish). To facilitate

reading, the author first compiled a summary of the results of the study of the mural "Tulang Lunak Bandeng Juwana", measuring  $16 \times 4$  meters, created in 2024 on the Jatingaleh Underpass Wall, into a table. The table contains a description of the denotative and connotative meanings, as well as the values that emerge based on Roland Barthes' semiotic theory and an analysis of public reception using John Fiske's framework. The table is designed so that the process of reading, mapping symbols, and drawing meaning can be carried out in a structured manner before moving on to the narrative analysis in the next section.

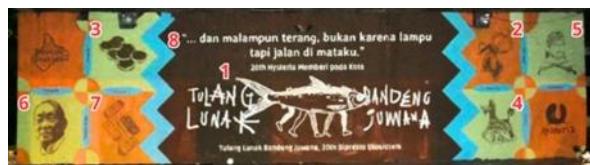


Figure 1. Karya Tulang Lunak Bandeng Juwana

The mural "Tulang Lunak Bandeng Juwana" is a large-scale work ( $16 \times 4$  m) in the Jatingaleh underpass designed by Hysteria to reflect the resilience, flexibility, and survival mode of the Semarang art community. The title is derived from the iconic Bandeng Juwana and various other Semarang cultural symbols, which are actually constructions of the modern city as a "showcase city" that adopts and reassembles its cultural identity. Visually, this mural combines strong colors and local cultural icons to display a spirit of togetherness. However, on a connotative level, this work is a critique of the stagnation of Semarang's art ecosystem: like soft-boned milkfish, the community and artists are required to be adaptive amid pressure and a lack of support. Within Roland Barthes' semiotic framework, the visual signs move from the denotation of cultural icons to the connotation of social criticism, to the myth of the need for collective consciousness and participatory public spaces. For Hysteria, this mural is not merely a city decoration, but a manifesto that affirms that art can be a medium for dialogue, reflection, and a catalyst for change in society.

**Table 1.** Analisis Nilai dan Makna Karya Mural "Tulang

*Lunak Bandeng Juwana" ukuran 16 x 4 meter (2024)*

N o o Artwork	Mural Artwork	Denotative Meaning	Connotative Meaning
1		Tulang Lunak Bandeng Juwana Image of a white milkfish with five human-like legs and writing	This logo is inspired by the Juwana Milkfish Soft Bone Manifesto, depicting flexibility, 'palugada', and movement towards an adaptive local ecosystem.
2		Dancer Gambang Semarang A dancer dressed in traditional attire with graceful hand movement	Hysteria features dancers not merely to honor tradition, but as a reflection of the community's creative attitude: able to dance in various social contexts, adjusting their steps without losing rhythm
3		Wingko Babat Visual of a slice of coarse-textured round cake, arranged	This element implies the courage to perform, as well as the awareness that the

4		Warak Ngendho	An image of a mythological animal with a dragon's head and a goat-like body, at the bottom right of the mural.	Connotatively, this figure symbolizes Hysteria's position as an intermediary entity: not a formal institution, but also not a fringe group.	7		Lumpia	Illustration of several pieces of spring rolls, a specialty food of Semarang City, with various batik motifs, in a simple drawing on the left side of the mural.	This symbol shows Hysteria's ability to adapt to various environments and cultures without losing its local flavor.
5		Mahesa Jenar	A visual representation of a blangkon with a face known as Mahesa Jenar.	Along with two crossed keris beneath it.	This figure represents the courage to continue to exist despite facing limitations in funding, space, and public attention.	8		Warm colors for the season 2024	Color: 1. Apricot Crush (#db7b42): This color is associated with energy, enthusiasm, and creativity.
6		Oei Tiong Ham	A male figure known as the richest businessman in Southeast Asia, born in the city of Semarang.	In the mural, this figure is not merely a representation of wealth, but a reflection of Hysteria's ability to simultaneously manage various social, cultural, and creative economic	Color: 2. Matcha Green (#84af5a): This color refers to elegance and tradition.	4. Pale White (#fffff)	Color: 1. Apricot Crush (#db7b42): This color is associated with energy, enthusiasm, and creativity.	Color: 1. Apricot Crush (#db7b42): This color is associated with energy, enthusiasm, and creativity.	
					Color: 2. Matcha Green (#84af5a): This color refers to elegance and tradition.	5. Milky White (#f0e6c4)	Color: 2. Matcha Green (#84af5a): This color refers to elegance and tradition.	Color: 2. Matcha Green (#84af5a): This color refers to elegance and tradition.	
					Color: 6. Baby Blue (#5ea5cf)	Color: 3. Deep Brown (#342603): associated with natural elements such as wood and earth (a sense of	Color: 3. Deep Brown (#342603): associated with natural elements such as wood and earth (a sense of	Color: 3. Deep Brown (#342603): associated with natural elements such as wood and earth (a sense of	

closeness to nature). A representation of gratitude to nature.

4. Pale White (#fffff): colors with minimal softness and presence. Representation of acquired effort, resilience, and longevity.

5. Milky White (#f0e6c4): A neutral color that is easy to mix and match with other colors.

6. Baby Blue (#5ea5cf): an impression of openness and freshness.

Mural "Tulang Lunak Bandeng Juwana" bringing together various visual symbols ranging from ikan bandeng human legged, dancer Gambang Semarang, cut wingko, Warak Ngendhong, blangkon Mahesa Jenar, sosok Oei Tiong Ham, up to the motif lumpia batik each carrying both a literal meaning and a deeper social message. Denotatively, these elements display icons characteristic of Semarang in a simple and easily recognizable form; but connotatively, each symbol reflects the identity, work ethic, and attitude of the Hysteria community: flexible and adaptive like "soft bones," able to dance between social dynamics,

daring to appear and show their existence, becoming a bridge between various cultural realms, continuing to survive despite limitations, and deftly managing various programs, such as the figure of Oei Tiong Ham, who represents economic ingenuity. The batik spring roll motif and warm colors for the 2024 season, All of these elements reinforce the atmosphere of energy, tradition, closeness to nature, resilience, openness, and creativity. These elements combine to make this mural not just a collection of local icons, but a visual reflection of the character, adaptation strategies, and collective spirit of Hysteria within the city's art ecosystem.

### Mural "Doa Kuat" 2025

This subsection discusses the analysis of the values and meanings in the Hysteria Community mural, "Doa Kuat" (Strong Prayer). To facilitate reading, the author first compiled a summary of the results of the study of the mural "Doa Kuat!", measuring 3 × 5 meters, created in 2025 in the Kepodang Alley Area, Kota Lama, into a table. The table contains a description of the denotative and connotative meanings, as well as the values that emerge based on Roland Barthes' semiotic theory and an analysis of public reception using John Fiske's framework. The table is designed so that the process of reading, mapping symbols, and drawing meaning can be carried out in a structured manner before moving on to the narrative analysis in the next section.



Figure 2. Mural Artwork "Doa Kuat"

Mural "Doa Kuat" Created to celebrate 20 years of the Hysteria Community's journey in Semarang's art ecosystem. Wina, as the lead designer, conceived this mural by reviewing Hysteria's long journey and drawing inspiration from the mythology of Sisyphus, a symbol of a never-ending struggle that is nevertheless

endured together. Visual elements such as interdependent human figures, a megaphone head, a yellow sun representing cultural burdens, white smoke symbolizing emotional outbursts, and blue hues signifying the 20-year journey embody collective effort, exhaustion, resilience, and the fragile yet enduring dynamics of Semarang's art scene. This mural was created in the Kepodang Alley area of Kota Lama, involving several members of Hysteria, and is part of the activation of the space leading to Rumah Pohan. This work is not intended for commercial purposes or specific public reception strategies; it is more of a pure expression of the condition of Semarang's contemporary art ecosystem. Choice of title "Doa Kuat" It is hoped that Hysteria can continue to survive after two decades of difficult journey. Until now, public response has been limited due to the mural's high and inconspicuous location, but its power lies in its resonance with people, especially artists who continue to struggle in uncertainty, like Sisyphus pushing his boulder uphill.

of the red field. It is located in the most visible area. community strength is created through prayer, solidarity, and spiritual awareness. Not passive prayer, but prayer that "empowers," bonds, and calls forth social energy.

N	Karya Seni	Deskripsi Visual	Makna Denotatif	Makna Konotatif
1	Mural		Matahari	The bright yellow circle at the top of the composition is positioned as the focal point of the blue figure's movement. A symbol of hope, purpose, enlightenment; a shared vision for the future. In the context of Hysteria: a sign of the community's "shared purpose" after 20 years of work and continued growth.
2	Writing		"Doa Kuat!"	White/containing bold text in the center. Collective call.

3.		A group of blue human figures	A group of figures form a pyramid, supporting each other, raising their hands toward the yellow circle.	Solidarity and teamwork. Symbols of social cohesion, hysteria, and a mutually supportive urban community. Blue = calmness, maturity, and solidarity. Their gestures = a journey upward toward hope.
4		The blue container is emitting white smoke.	A blue container with thick white smoke billowing upward.	Symbols of spirituality: prayer, ritual, clean energy, collective intention. Container = community roots; smoke = expression rising into public space.

Indicating that social power is not only action, but also inner life and reflection.

Overall, the four main elements in the mural "Doa Kuat!" working as a unified symbol that represents the collective journey, spiritual strength, and social solidarity of the Hysteria Community. The sun is a sign of hope and shared goals; writing "Doa Kuat!" emphasizes spiritual energy that is empowering, not passive. The blue human figures represent collective work, mutual support, and the upward journey toward a better future. Meanwhile, the blue vessel with white smoke symbolizes the spirituality of the community that social power is born from reflection, prayer, and inner depth.

#### **Study on Public Acceptance of Murals "Tulang Lunak Bandeng Hysteria" and "Doa Kuat!" Based on John Fiske's Theory**

Public reception of the two Hysteria murals "Tulang Lunak Bandeng Juwana" and "Doa Kuat!" can be analyzed through three layers of meaning in John Fiske's semiotic theory: the level of reality, representation, and ideology. These three levels help us understand how the two works function as a medium of communication between Hysteria and the people of Semarang.

##### **1. Reality Level**

At the level of reality, murals "Tulang Lunak Bandeng Juwana" featuring various cultural icons of Semarang, such as Warak Ngendhog, Gambang Semarang dancers, and Oei Tiong Ham. Through an interview, Purna Cipta explained that these visuals were chosen to emphasize the city's identity while also showing Hysteria's closeness to its social environment. He also emphasized that the choice of location at the Jatingaleh Underpass was a conscious strategy: vehicles slowing down at the curve and tunnel give the public a chance to see the mural in more detail. This approach demonstrates Hysteria's efforts to open up direct access to art through easily accessible public spaces.

Meanwhile, the mural "Doa Kuat!" displaying simple

visual elements such as blue human figures, the sun, white smoke, and text "Doa Kuat!" as a reflection of the social experiences they encounter every day. The upward composition and contrasting colors depict the urge to survive and rise together. This mural emerged from Hysteria's internal concerns about the pressures of young people's lives and the need for collective strength in facing social realities.

##### **2. Representation Level**

In terms of representation, both murals display Hysteria's distinctive visual style: body symbols, contrasting colors, and reflective text to reinforce the message. The mural creation process "Tulang Lunak" also showcases collaboration between artists. Tri Aryanto, through his signature small lines, zigzag patterns, and decorative circles, provides a dynamic visual identity. Meanwhile, other members of Hysteria, including Hana, help formulate meanings and symbols that represent the community's 20-year collective journey.

On the mural "Doa Kuat!", Solidarity is represented through faceless human figures supporting each other, depicting collective strength as the core message of the mural. The placement of this mural at the entrance of the Hysteria secretariat is also strategic, serving as a welcome to the space and a visual reminder of the value of togetherness in community activities.

##### **3. Ideology Level**

At the ideological level, the mural "Tulang Lunak Bandeng Juwana" affirms Hysteria's view that art is a medium of social communication born from research, interaction, and community assistance. Through interviews, Purna mentioned that this mural is not only a celebration of Hysteria's two decades, but also a reflection of their journey as a collective that is integrated with city life. The public response was enthusiastic, although some misinterpreted the mural as a promotion. "Bandeng Juwana" shows how artworks can open up dialogue about identity and the role of art in public spaces.

On the mural "Doa Kuat!", The prevailing ideology is the belief that social power arises through togetherness, not individuals. Prayer is positioned not as a passive act, but as collective energy to face the pressures of life. The figure of a human being

without personal identity represents equality, while the billowing white smoke depicts social spirituality, which is an important value in the practice of Hysteria.

Overall, the two murals not only serve to beautify the city space, but also become social texts that bridge Hysteria, society, and public space. Through Fiske's three levels of meaning, it can be seen that these works function semiotically to present identity, construct narratives, and convey social values that exist within society.

## CONCLUSION

This research shows that the Hysteria Community is an important actor in the public art landscape in Semarang, with creative practices rooted in collective work, local knowledge, and sensitivity to the city's social dynamics. Since its establishment in 2004, Hysteria has grown from a small zine and literature-based community into an active art laboratory that produces works, community programs, and public space interventions. Their vision and mission are clearly reflected in their mural projects, which serve not only as aesthetic expressions, but also as a medium for dialogue, criticism, and social reflection.

Analysis of the mural "Tulang Lunak Bandeng Juwana" (2024) shows that this work combines various cultural symbols of Semarang, ranging from milkfish, Gambang Semarang dancers, Warak Ngendhong, to Oei Tiong Ham, to build a narrative about flexibility, adaptation, and survival strategies of the art community in the midst of a stagnant ecosystem. Denotatively, this mural presents icons of the city; however, connotatively, it serves as a social critique and ideological statement about the importance of collective awareness, participatory public spaces, and the courage of communities to continue to exist in their own way. Warm colors and local motifs reinforce the message of creative energy, closeness to culture, and resilience.

Meanwhile, the mural "Doa Kuat" (2025) Reflecting on Hysteria's two-decade journey through simple symbols such as the sun, blue human figures, white smoke, and the words "Doa Kuat!" (Strong Prayer!), this work emphasizes the values of solidarity, emotional resilience, and spiritual awareness present in collective work. Inspiration from the mythology of Sisyphus

affirms that Hysteria's long struggle is not merely a burden, but a rhythm that is lived together. Although public response to this mural has been limited due to its non-strategic location, its power lies in the depth of its message and its connection to artists who continue to struggle in uncertain conditions.

Through John Fiske's semiotic theory framework, these two murals are proven to have different yet complementary public reception strategies. At the level of reality, both works incorporate the daily experiences of the community and the visual identity of the city. At the level of representation, both show consistency with Hysteria's visual style based on body symbols, contrasting colors, and collaboration. At the ideological level, the murals affirm Hysteria's position as a community that draws strength from togetherness, social spirituality, and a commitment to inclusive public spaces.

Beyond its social and educational functions, this study highlights the artistic and conceptual significance of the Hysteria Community's mural works as a form of contextual public art. The murals demonstrate a deliberate visual language that integrates local cultural symbols, metaphorical imagery, and compositional strategies to construct layered meanings within urban space. Artistically, Hysteria's murals reveal a strong stylistic consistency characterized by symbolic body forms, contrasting color palettes, and narrative-driven visuals that distinguish their work from purely decorative or spontaneous street art practices.

Conceptually, the murals function as reflective texts that respond to the realities of urban life, collective struggle, and community resilience. Works such as *Tulang Lunak Bandeng Juwana* and *Doa Kuat!* articulate critical perspectives on adaptability, solidarity, and sustainability through visual metaphors rooted in local identity. These conceptual frameworks position mural art not merely as visual intervention, but as a medium of dialogue that bridges artistic expression, public space, and social consciousness.

Therefore, the artistic and conceptual value of Hysteria's murals lies in their ability to transform public walls into meaningful cultural narratives, reinforcing mural art as an important practice within contemporary visual art and urban cultural discourse. This reinforces the role of mural art as both an aesthetic and intellectual contribution to the development of inclusive,

reflective, and culturally grounded public spaces.

Overall, this study concludes that Hysteria's mural art is not only a visual work, but also a social communication strategy that strengthens the relationship between artists, the community, and urban spaces. Through the symbols, colors, and narratives they construct, Hysteria successfully presents murals as a medium that reflects the cultural identity of Semarang, critiques the condition of the art ecosystem, and expresses hope for a stronger, more collective, and sustainable future.

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