

## The Art Expression of the Prisoners 'Paintings in Class IIA Narcotic Correctional Institution, Yogyakarta

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### Abstrac

Expressing art is one of people's aesthetic needs, no exception the prisoners of class II A narcotics penal institution, Yogyakarta who fulfill their aesthetic need by doing painting activity. This is quite interesting because in the life full of freedom limitation, the citizens of the institution are still able to enliven the activity to express their aesthetic needs through painting in the prison environment. Therefore, the aim of this research is to analyse the influence of the penal institution environment toward the art expressions of the institution assisted citizens' paintings, their painting process, and the characteristics of their paintings seen in the perspectives of visual elements and principles, and in the perspective of psychoanalysis towards the painting themes. The research conducted applies qualitative and anthropology interdisciplinary approaches, aesthetics, and art psychology. The research design used is case studies. The data of the research are collected by conducting observation technique, interview, and documentation study. Then triangulation technique is used to check the validity of the data collected. Data analysis technique is conducted through reduction, presentation and verification. The results of the analysis show that, first, the environment of the penal institution has influence on the psychological stress of the prisoners which gives impact on their painting ideas, themes, and visuals; second, their creation process in various limitations do not stop their productivity in painting; and third, the visual characteristics of the prisoners' paintings have their own uniqueness which can be seen through the perspectives of visual elements and principles related to the Id, Ego, and Superego drives in psychology which produce two categories of painting themes, i.e. political and personal themes. Both themes indicate the influences of environment, stressor, and the prisoners' life background factors. Painting activity can be a fulfillment to the need of expressing aesthetics of every prisoner in Class IIA Narcotic Correctional Institution, Yogyakarta.

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## INTRODUCTION

The prisoners of a correctional institution is a group of society who has different backgrounds of age, education, social, and environment, but is staying together and undergoing a certain period of punishment and development. According to Pujileksono (2017:129) a prisoner is a person, a member of society who is separated from his society and for a certain period he or she is processed in a definite environment with a correctional purpose, method and system.

Various interactions emerge in the life of a correctional institution. Therefore, correctional institution culture, containing patterns, behaviours, values, beliefs and knowledge relating to the people who live in the institution, is shaped. This is like what Malarsih, et al said (2017: 137) that social system is related to the behavioural pattern of the people who live in it. The life of the prisoners is of course not free because living in the prison forces them to obey all rules regulated by the institution. This indirectly gives psychological impacts to the prisoners who are undergoing a time of development. Consequently, prisoners seek ways in order that they can express all their experience, suffering, and complaints.

The prisoners of Class IIA Narcotic Correctional Institution have an idea to form an art community as a place to express themselves through painting activities. Talking about expression (*ekspresi*), the term expression (*ekspresi*) in Indonesian Dictionary, KBBI (Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia, 2016) is stated that *ekspresi/eks•pre•si/ /ékspresi/* or expression is an exposure or a process to state, to show, or to deliver a purpose, an idea, feeling. Art expression in Rondhi's opinion (2017: 9) is an activity to create a work of art or often called as an expressive or creative activity through an art media. This relates to a person's aesthetic and expressive need, a need which is universal in nature and is indirectly needed by all people of any social strata. It happens as a result of the using of art in people's daily life. As what is stated by Maslow (1987: 79) that actually a man

has an instinct toward the need for beauty, and this thought of beauty makes person healthier and more positive. The opinion of the importance of beauty for human life gives positive impacts which is reflected in person's behaviour when they interact with each other and their environment. This is in agreement with Triyanto's point of view (2016:7) that art has a very important function as a vehicle to develop aesthetic awareness or sensitivity, to develop the power of creation or creativity, and to be a way for a child to express themselves and their environment. It is relevant with Maslow's statement (1987: 78) that aesthetic needs have a strong correlation with someone's self-picture. That gives an impact that an art has a role as a positive energy transference in human life which gives impacts on human psychology. The statement is confirmed by Malchiodi (2005: 16) who said that a scientific research which is conducted by drawing can influence the level of human emotion, thought, and behaviour, and by doing drawing, painting, or other art activities may cause a connection of human brain with human body which results in individual health, immunity and decreasing level of stress.

Class IIA Narcotic Correctional Institution of Yogyakarta has been chosen as the research location not only because Yogyakarta residents have high activity of art, but also because there is a prison in which the prisoners have an idea to develop an art community named "Tiyang biasa", and have high-level of enthusiasm to do with a work of art despite their limitation for freedom. It is like what is said by Jazuli (2014: 37) that all forms of art works are always tied to a certain condition of a society and of a culture. In the context of a society, any arts produced are influenced by the idea and the society that support them. This is in line with Triyanto's statement (2017:53) that an art is one of human needs which do not recognise place, time, and status. From the statement, it can be concluded that an art is universal in nature and is every human's need, and its existence is actually an expressive symbol of a culture. A work of a culture is identical with its society, as conveyed by Endri Sintiana., Rohidi, Tjetjep

Rohendi., & Syarif, Muh. Iban (2016:159) that if there is a local society's need with a typical cultural pattern, there will be a cultural practice in a form of an act to produce a cultural product as a symbolic cultural expression of its society. In agreement with that, Putri, Rimasari, Pramesthi., Lestari, Wahyu., & Iswidayati, Sri (2015:5) stated that the symbolic expression reflected in an art work can also be found in a cultural outlook of a group on life that can be seen in some symbolic expressions which are full of life values. This makes the writer want to study further on how the creation process behind the prisoners' fully restricted life is in Class IIA Narcotic Correctional Institution of Yogyakarta, and on their action in relation to their art expression and the transferring process of their aesthetic need.

## METHODS

The research uses qualitative descriptive method focusing on the influence of the prison environment toward the art expression of the prisoners' paintings, painting process, and the characteristics of their paintings in the perspectives of visual elements, visual principles and psychoanalysis on the themes.

The analysis process is conducted by using a controlled observation on the prisoners' painting process. Then, the visual of the work is analyzed using Feldman theory which contains visual elements and principles to know the characteristics of the prisoners' paintings. Freud psychoanalysis theory is also used to know the meaning of the painting by classifying the themes of the painting, political and personal

themes. Meanwhile, the data collection techniques used are observation method, interview, and document study. Data validity technique used are data triangulation, source triangulation, and triangulation method. Data analysis technique used is interactive model data analysis technique which is consisted of three activities, that are data reduction, data presentation, and verification.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### The Environment of Class II A Narcotic Correctional Institution, Yogyakarta

A punishment decided by the State must be obeyed by individual who conducts a crime. One of the punishments is to live in jail, and the institution which becomes the place for punishment and rehabilitation known as a prison or correctional institution. Prison or correctional institution, according to Pujileksono (2017:13) is a correctional and social rehabilitation institution which has histories in giving punishment in a form of restricting freedom and independence of individuals who did violation. Class II A Narcotic Correctional Institution, Yogyakarta has some facilities to meet the prisoners' needs, such as rehabilitation facility, working facility, spiritual facility, and domestic facility. One of the institution facilities is sewing unit which is worked on by prisoners devoting to sewing activity. Products produced by this unit are bags, bedsheets, pillow and bolsters cases sold to other prisoners, staff of the prison and people outside the prison. The institution facility in a form sewing units can be seen in photo 1.



**Photo 1.** A prisoner working on the sewing unit Facility

Photo 1 shows that there is a sewing activity conducted by a prisoner in sewing unit. Beside working facility, there is spiritual facility in a steril area (special area for prisoners and staff). There are Mosque, Church, and Vihara.

The mosque in this prison named At-Taubah is usually used by the prisoners and the staff to do five time prays, jumuah pray, and other Islamic activities. The Mosque in the prison can be seen on photo 2.



**Photo 2.** Religious Facility, Mosque or Masjid

Photo 2 shows one of religious buildings in the institution, that is Mosque for muslim prisoners. All facilities provided by the institution have function to rehabilitate prisoners, to guide, to provide facility, and to cultivate working result, to give social and spiritual guidance for the prisoners, to maintain the institution security and orderliness, and to do the domestic affairs. The facilities provided by the institution is one of the institution purposes to make the prisoners become complete men, realize their mistakes, improve themselves, and maximize their potentials in order to be accepted by the society when they get back to their social life.

Of course, it is not easy to undergo life in a very tight regulation, and in a place for a long period of time in line with the sentence they must receive. It is stated by Iswidayati (2007:180) that a culture as the abstraction of human experience which is dynamic in nature and tends to develop along with the development of its supporting society. Each prisoner experiences a drastic phase of environmental transition, the free life in the past can not be found in prison. The institution has a big influence on the prisoners' life. This is in line with Amaliah's statement (2013:39) that a room becomes an important part in a building. The room will give benefit and reflect the behaviour

of its inhabitant which certainly can not be separated from the aspects of norm, culture and psychology.

Prison or Correctional Institution according to Pujileksono (2017:13) is a correctional and social rehabilitation institution which has history in giving punishment in a form of freedom and independence restriction to an individual who did violation. Based on that statement, all forms of restriction performed by the institution may cause prisoners' stress symptoms or stressor driven by rules, duties, prohibition, and the environmental structure of the correctional institution or prison as a result the individual prisoner feels mentally and physically isolated.

The result of the interview with doctor Danang, the doctor of Class IIA Narcotic Correctional Institution in Yogyakarta on February 3, 2018 stated that some factors as stressors in the institution are : (1) the Arrest (2) the Law Case (3) the Lawsuits (4) the environmental change (5) Regulated Life (schedule to go out of a room, limited food, the institution rules) (6) Jobless (7) Family's demand (Divorce) (8) the social environment (seniority) (9) Environmental Adaptation. The many factors triggering stress, the influence of the life in prison, are visualized in the prisoners' works

of art. Self-expressions are reflected in their works of painting. As said by Maran (2007: 22) that culture is a communal way of life, human typical way to adapt himself or herself to the natural environment, and is human strategy in meeting his or her life needs. A work of art will follow its supporting society. It is in agreement with the point of view of Suparti, Triyanto, and Cahyono, Agus. (2017: 116 ) that an art in a community owned by a society is closely related with the values and the norms prevailing in the middle of the society who supports it. Environmental adaptation performed by the prisoners reflected in their works. The works of art in the prison include painting, mural and 3 dimensional works which abundantly decorate and beautify the prison rooms. This changed the terrifying impression of the prison into beauty. This is in line with what is said by Arisyanto, Cahyono, and Hartono (2017: 75) that an art should be developed by adding new element in order to be more dynamic and give new meaning. The adaptation works of art in the prison created by the prisoners can be seen in the following picture 1.

### The Painting Process of the Prisoners of Class II A Narcotic In Yogyakarta

The spread of knowledge about visual art among the prisoners of Class IIA Narcotic Correctional Institution was obtained from the prisoners who were artists (painter, sculptor) and designer. Since that the spread of visual art began, more or less it influence the artistic behaviour of individuals in the prison. This is in

line with Triyanto's point of view (2015:3) that unintentionally young generation will see, observe, imitate, and comprehend, and do something based on what is seen and felt by the older generation. This is supported by Fitriani, Hartono, & Triyanto (2018:181) that the next purpose of an art is not only to keep the tradition alive but also to develop it. The spread of painting activity was explained by Aulia Muhammad (Ucok) on January 23, 2018 as follow:

“... I began learning to paint from my fellow artists here, one of them was from mas Kholik. I sat and saw my friend painting, and I also often asked about how to use the painting media.”

The knowledge about painting art taught by other prisoners adequately gives the others who learn a motivation to paint and to free themselves in the choosing of color, the style tendency, concept, and themes according to their own habits. It is relevant to Wadiyo's statement (2006 : 66) that an art is used as a tool to fulfill the need of expression as a form of social and cultural expression. Similar to that Soedarso (2001 : 59) stated that a work of art created by its artist must reflect his personality because it is his creation which is based on his own observation, media cultivation, and typical expression. The painting media used in a controlled observation include: (1.) Acrylic paint, (2.) canvas, (3.) Pencil, (4.) Charcoal Stick, (5.) Brushes, dan (6.) Plastic palet knife can be seen in the following photo 3.



**Photo 3.** Painting Media



Painting activity is one of creative activities through painting media, moved by a concept or idea, such as in Triyanto's statement (2017:64) that creative activity is the complex process of creation through various steps beginning from intuition or imagination, construction of ideas into a concept or idea, later exposing it through the art media skill into a visible work of art. Wallas in Damajanti (2013:23) said that creative process is divided into four stages; first, *Preparation* is preparation or proposing stage; second, *Incubation* is incubating stage; third, *Illumination* is inspiration stage; and fourth, *Verification* is the stage of examination or verification.

The Wallas's stages of creative process are relevant to the result of the field observation.

The prisoners begin by preparing painting media, such as choosing the color of the paints and the painting tools. Then, they begin to pour their ideas and concept in a vague visual form, in the form of expressive pencil or brush sketch. Some of them are consistent with the first form, and some others change the forms until they get the visual elements to express themselves. Their painting process can be seen in the following photo 4.

The above photo 4 shows the painting process done by the prisoners which begins from media choosing until the stage of completing the painting. Painting activity inside the institution is enthusiastically welcomed by the fellow citizen and the prison staff.



**Photo 4.** The prisoners painting process

#### **The Analysis of the Prisoners' Paintings**

The prisoners chosen to participate in collective activity of painting have produced various paintings with varied visual uniqueness. To get visual clarity a deep analysis of the painting visual elements and principles is needed. As stated by Feldman (1967:222) that visual elements comprise of: line, shape, space, color, texture and half-tone. The arrangement of visual elements in the paintings created by ten prisoners in the institution look to have characteristic and have different visual between one and another adjusting to each of their own skills and knowledge about visual arts.

In accordance with Feldman theory about visual elements, the choice of line, shape, form, texture, color, half-tone in the prisoners'

paintings, for example in Ari Kholik's painting, some vertical and horizontal lines link to each other to create pseudo-lines on each side. Ari tried to mix the primary colors in order to have tertiary color as he wanted to be. As a whole his painting is in a form of geometric expression, by arranging the square shapes from the small form into the big one. The texture created from Ari's sketches is adequately expressive. Therefore, the visual texture created tends to be rough and dynamic. The dark element in Ari's work is used almost in the whole of his work as outlines with adjusted thickness. The explanation of visual elements in Ari's work can be seen in picture 1.

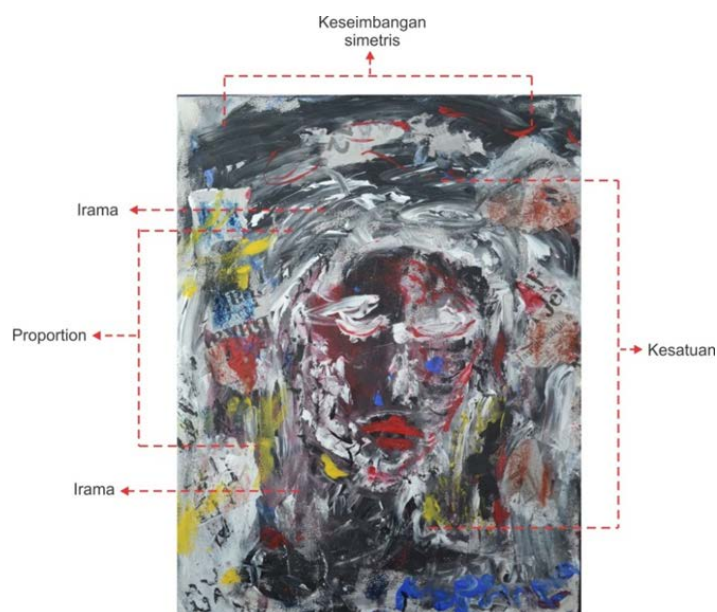
Constructing visual elements need visual principles in the implementation. The implementation of visual principles in designing

visual elements has a purpose to create a solid unity between one visual element to another. This is in accordance with Feldman statement (1967:259) that visual principles are divided into four parts: unity, balance, rythm, and proportion. For example the analysis of visual principles in Aulia Muhammad's work, it shows the unity element referring to the choosing of lines, shape, texture, and halftone of his work. Aulia's painting focuses on its main visual, i.e. the man face. The balance principle he used is symmetrical balance, the left and right parts, and

the upper and bottom parts are identical. The rythm movement in Aulia's painting has progressive and dynamic movements. In line with Feldman theory about visual principles, the proportion in his work can be seen in the shape or expression posed in the middle surrounded by dynamic line sketches. Surrounded by bigger expressive sketches, but it does not reduce the proportion of human face expression as the main object of the painting. The explanation on visual principles in Aulia's work can be seen in picture 2.



**Picture 1.** Graphic Info on the Visual Elements of Ari Kholik's work Title: "Your Office is not Mine"



**Picture 2.** Graphic Info on the Visual Principles in Aulia Muhammad's work

Related to the creation of art works by the prisoners, every individual who creates a work will shape the basic idea into a theme. Theme also becomes the bridge to know the meaning contained in the visual elements applied by the prisoners. The characteristics of the prisoners' painting in Class IIA Narcotic Correctional Institution, Yogyakarta have varied visuals among each other. From the theme chosen, it can be divided into to categories: political and personal themes. The two themes are used as a bridge to know what drives become the backgrounds for creating the paintings by applying psychoanalysis theory.



The painting works of the prisoners are read by applying Freud psychoanalysis theory which is expressed by Damajanti (2013:90) that this theory carries a reading method of an art work in which the choosing of painting object and the life of the artist can be revealed by seeing Id, ego and superego drives. It is known that eight prisoners who create painting works have conscious creative drive tendency, that is a condition when the Id can be fully controlled by the ego so that the ego can maximize the superego which contains structured visual

elements and is full of ideas and concepts. Meanwhile, two of the prisoners have unconscious creative tendency, that is a condition when the subconscious works actively in the artistic process. So, it can be concluded that painting activities of the prisoners are collections of psychological drives to fulfill their aesthetic need and self-expression as a result of the influence of and the pressure or stressor from their environment.

Table 1 shows the explanation of the themes in the prisoners' paintings which are later analysed using psychoanalysis method. It is known that the *id* drive of the prisoners in expressing themselves through paintings was controlled by *ego* which in the end results in aesthetic works adapting to their psychological need as a self-expressions covered with political and personal themes. The difference of the two themes lies on the creative consciousness in expressing painting

concepts. In the painting with political theme, the correlation between its visual element and its concept is tight. Meanwhile, the painting with personal theme tends to be expressive and intuitive.

**Table 1.** Psychoanalysis Matrix of the prisoners's paintings

| No. | Artworks  | Theme    | Psychoanalysis   |  |   |
|-----|---|----------|--|--|---|
|     |   |          | <i>Id</i>  | <i>Ego</i>   | <i>Superego</i>   |
| 1   |  <p>Ari Kholik's Painting<br/>Title: "Your Office is not Mine"</p> | Politic  | Ari's expression of impreferece, anger, criticism and dissapointment with an office in an institution of a State or country. | The controller to his <i>Id</i> so that his feelings which cope his thought can be refined.  | Produces a unity of visual elements arranged aesthetically with a visual of an office building representing Ari's idea. |
| 2   |  <p>Aulia Muhammad's Painting<br/>Titel: "Untitled"</p>            | Personal | Intuitive, not planning a concept. <i>Id</i> as expression of aesthetic need by responding to the environment.               | <i>Id</i> drive with a support from Aulia's very high <i>ego</i> seen in his bravery to mix paints, brush color, form expressive fields. | Produce a visual unity which is still able to be accepted by the society in a form of expressive painting.              |



## CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion, it can be inferred that the prison environment has influenced the ideasto the painting visual chosen by the prisoners as seen in the art works in the institution environment. The stage of each prisoner's artistic creative process is adequately varied as seen in the choice of the painting idea, media, and visual element. The limitation experienced by the prisoners does not hinder them from producing works of paintings. The Implementation of psychoanalysis theory on the prisoners' paintings expresses their Id drives which are realized in their passions to express their experience, life in prison, life regrets, life defense in prison, past memories, criticism, and freedom which are later controlled by ego which has a role as a bridge to realize an idea into an aesthetic work of painting art (superego).

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