



# “PUGUH KESED” Virtual Photography Exhibition: Photo Study Using the Third Meaning

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**Abstract.** Photography has experienced rapid development, one of which can be seen from advances in the use of technology at photography exhibitions that are held virtually. This research concentrates on examining photographic works in virtual photography exhibitions. This research uses a literature review method in the form of explorative descriptive. While photo studies use the third study of meaning, which places more emphasis on the subjectivity of the researcher's immersion experience when witnessing the sensation of light and form in photographs. It then spawns a story in itself and has nothing to do with the visual photos being reviewed. It is hoped that this research can broaden knowledge about the third meaning, the idealistic meaning, in addition to the true meaning of photographic works. In addition, it is hoped that the interpretation of the photo through the third meaning will be able to persuade viewers.

**Keywords:** Exhibition, Photography, Virtual, Third Meaning.

## 1 Introduction

Exhibitions of works of art are generally open to anyone and to many groups. In art exhibitions, the public usually functions as a participant who observes and admires the work. The Covid-19 pandemic that occurred a few years ago triggered many art collectives and institutions to create online digital exhibitions (as a forerunner to virtual exhibitions), without outdoor activities. These exhibitions provide flexibility for anyone to participate and respond to the displayed works [1].

The impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic has made technology increasingly developed, in this case the use of technology in organizing exhibitions. Therefore, the concept of a photography exhibition can adapt to a virtual form without leaving the public's point of view on the essence of the exhibition. Virtual photography exhibitions can create interactions with viewers so that they can better enjoy and understand the works displayed [2]. The photo exhibition which was held virtually titled Puguh Kesed was also present during the Covid-19 pandemic to build interaction with viewers. These interactions are useful in triggering certain sensations in order to understand a photographic work. Through interaction, the visual aesthetic of the photo can change which makes the

viewer experience immersion. In the end, various understandings emerge, even understandings beyond the literal meaning of photographic works, usually understandings based on aesthetic experience, which are divided into three. First, the experience of immersion when viewing visual works that are affected by the sensation of light, the sensation of darkness and light or contrast. Second, the experience of immersion when witnessing visual forms. The third is the immersion experience which is triggered by activities that involve interaction processes, such as playing games [3].

Prasetyo, expressed his opinion when studying Susan Sontag's book *On Photography*. Prasetyo stated that photographs can be studied from the perspective of photographic works in contexts that can change the reality in them. Like beautiful colors that have different contexts, differ between the reality in the photographs and the actual reality, which can be seen in photographs of natural disasters and damage caused by war or portraits of the faces of people in suffering [4]. The side of photographic works in different contexts and realities is known as the third meaning which in its explanation places more emphasis on the researcher's interpretation and is very subjective [5].

The application of the third meaning in the study of photographic works has a function of visual communication. It contains pillars of persuasion related to the field of visual communication design. Photo works exhibited in a virtual space titled *Puguh Ked* offer a variety of sensations. From these various sensations it can be studied so as to produce meanings with different realities, which of course can influence the audience on many things. The sensation that arises from seeing photographic works in exhibitions with this model is what researchers are researching: how to examine photographic works based on the immersion experience when viewing photographic works which are influenced by the sensation of dark and bright light or contrast and the immersion experience that occurs when witnessing the forms of photo works.

## **2 The Third Meaning of Photo Works**

The researcher focuses on studying photo works by using the third meaning. This study at least involves the aesthetic experiences of the researcher. Often researchers witness and are in the process of art from a young age, which helps build aesthetic experiences. Such as witnessing the making of typography, drawing portraits, watching the manufacture of wood crafts, watching poetry readings, participating in choir competitions, and staging Christmas plays. In addition, the creative processes that are still being carried out determine the formation of these aesthetic experiences. Because, while in the process of making photographs, researchers encounter various visual forms, encounter many forms of works of art. Fine art, design, performing arts, and other recorded media arts such as film and animation. In addition, aesthetic experience is also formed from experiences processing various issues and problems that occur in society to become stories when creating.

The above background has succeeded in internalizing visual sensations within oneself which become provisions when studying. This means that researchers will easily be triggered to understand visuals beyond their true meaning. When experiencing the experience of immersion that occurs because of the sensation of form in a photograph.

The immersion experience seems to whisper new meanings that are subjective and personal according to the aesthetic experiences that the researcher has experienced.

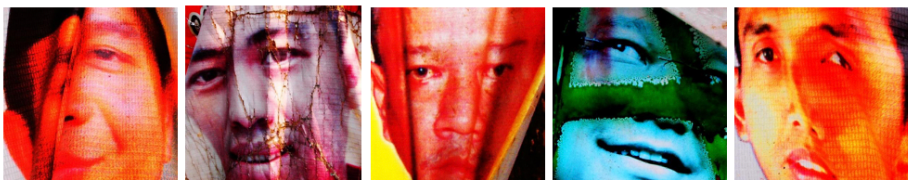
"Third meaning" is a definition of the interpretation of photo works beyond the literal and very personal meaning expressed by Sunardi [6]. The third meaning of Sunardi's version describes satori which frees the aesthetic experience of the examiner from the analysis of signs and the meaning of images [7]. The third meaning study conducted by Martyastyadi supports the theory above, that visual reading by researchers is more emphasized on subjectivity that comes from imagination and then creates its own story and has nothing to do with the visual being studied. Therefore, the third time no longer has a relationship with visual objects, but produces its own rhythm according to the personality of the researcher who refers to aesthetic experiences [8].

Susan Sontag in her book *On Photography*, expresses a statement similar to the third meaning, that photography is a way to explore yourself. Sontag's opinion does not only apply to photographers but can also be used by researchers. That is, the person studying must be in detail and really "see" the things that are important to him. Because these moments are opportunities to be able to capture the magic and joy of life today like children. Sontag thinks that this way of "seeing" must satisfy each other's minds [9].

Seno Gumira Ajidarma through his book entitled *The Story of the Eyes* emphasizes what Susan Sontag conveyed. One photo work does not describe reality according to the visual appearance that represents the object photographed. However, in its contingency, the photographic work is in a condition of multiple interpretations according to the subject who views it. Photo works are no longer in the position of who and what the object is, but how the subject perceives and interprets the photo. It can also be said that a photograph is based on the meaning of the subject or based on the awareness of I am the Subject. This view is called idealism [10].

### 3 Research Methods

This research begins with a literature review in the form of descriptive exploratory. Therefore, the search for data sources is based on primary or secondary data. The primary data comes from the photographs in the virtual photography exhibition entitled *Puguh Kesed* as shown in Figures 1 and 2. While the secondary data comes from the emergence of an immersion experience when viewing the sensation of contrasting light on a photo image and an immersion experience when viewing the form of a photographic work.



**Fig. 1.** The photo work on display is titled *Our Faces* (Source: <https://nusakara.umn.ac.id/puguh-kesed-pre-exhibition/>).



**Fig. 2.** The photo work on display is titled *The Sin of You, Me or Him* (Source: <https://nusakara.umn.ac.id/puguh-kesed-pre-exhibition/>).

The researcher begins the research by collecting data and then proceeds with the study. Starting from exploring and describing primary data, secondary data, then conducting an assessment using the third meaning method. Primary data was obtained from visiting a virtual photography exhibition entitled *Puguh Kesed*. Then he chose two photographs entitled *Our Faces* and the one entitled *Sins of You, Me or Him*. These two photographs were chosen for the reason that, in terms of light and shape, they can give rise to the experience of being immersed. It is followed by examining photographic works through the third method of meaning.

## 4 Results and Discussion

The study of photographic works begins with the identification of contrasting light sensations, identification of the sensations of forms in the photographic works, and identification of the activities carried out between the researcher and the photographic works in a virtual space. The study process is continued by identifying any immersion experiences that arise from the above sensations. The whole process ends with telling the idealistic meanings/third meanings that appear in the researcher's imagination while in a state of immersion.

### 4.1 The Third Meaning in the Photographic Work Entitled *Our Faces*

When viewing a photograph entitled *Our Faces* exhibited in a virtual space (see Fig. 3 below), the researcher witnessed a sensation of contrasting light. This sensation gives rise to complementary colors such as green, yellow and red. These colors, although opposite each other, are harmoniously side by side in a dynamic presentation. The immersion experience that is felt from the color of red, psychologically, as a symbol of the strongest character that dominates, has power, and is antagonistic. Meanwhile, the green color ignites an immersion experience that provides serenity as the protagonist. The immersion experience above made the researcher's imagination lead to the film *Gladiator*, starring Russel Crowe, released in 2000.



**Fig. 3.** Photograph entitled *Our Faces in Virtual Space* (Source: <https://nusa-kara.umn.ac.id/puguh-kesed-pre-exhibition/>).

In one of the scenes, Hispano Roman General Maximus Decimus Meridius (Russel Crowe) is against Commodus's (Joaquin Phoenix) orders as the new emperor. As a result, the general's entire family was killed by the emperor's minions. The general was plunged into the arena of gladiator fights. However, even though he was in a weak state, slowly, the General was able to rise from his slump and win battle after battle so as to get the title of gladiator. The life story between the strong and the defeated, of course, often happens around us, doesn't it. This proves that in living life, we can be in a position to win as well as lose. So that life can always be more passionate, try to stay happy in any situation.

In addition to the sensation of contrasting light, researchers also feel the sensation of form in terms of the scale of the size of the photographic work in its presentation. There are those that appear in large size, at the front (closest to the audience), and distorted, there are medium-sized ones that are in the middle, and small-size photographs that are located at the back, as if they are moving away. The sensation of large, small sizes or the sensation of far and near contributes to the emergence of new imaginations as immersion experiences. Imagination is in the form of the presence of a perspective that researchers often see and feel the sensation of when they are in a motorboat and look towards the front or back. While traveling back home to Negri (Village) Rumahkay which is on Seram Island, Central Maluku Regency. This immersion experience that emerged succeeded in reminding researchers of the advice of the Ancestors that was passed down from generation to generation. His advice goes something like this: if it's difficult in someone else's land or Java, don't forget to remember your village so someone will come to take care of you. This advice, if interpreted, contains a message to us that if we feel trouble overseas, it is enough to remember Rumahkay Village, our Ancestors will send a kind of spiritual power that can accompany and make us stronger.

This ancestral heritage often reminds researchers to always respect and try to maintain Indonesian traditional culture.

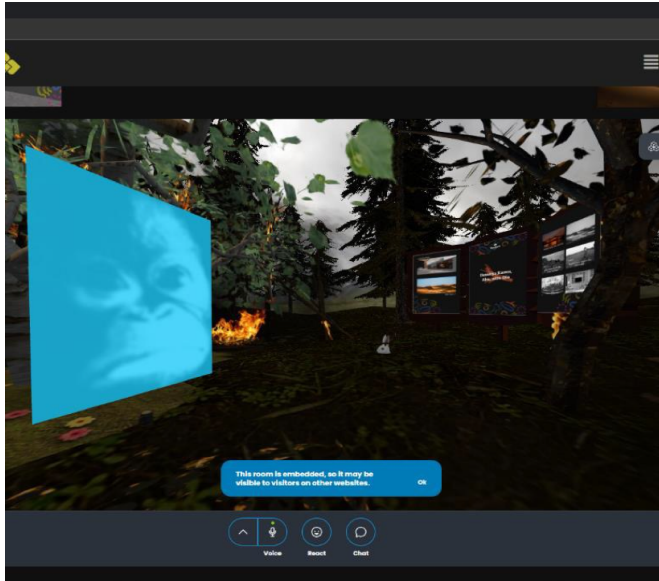
The next form sensation can be felt through the forms of draperies that adorn almost all of the photographic works. The forms of draperies make the figures in the photographic works change their form to become distorted faces. It is this sensation from the drapery that triggers the immersion experience for the researcher. There is a sense of humor, anger, sadness that appears alternately. The feeling of sadness is dominant and takes the researcher down a time tunnel to the religious-based riots that happened in Maluku in 1999. Where the sound of gunshots, the sound of crying, and the sound of electric poles are something that usually happens around the city of Ambon. In the background of the sounds, the researcher smelled burning, fishy smell like blood, felt the black and red color that roared, making sick sounds. This sinking situation has become a kind of reflection to understand the plurality of life in the Indonesian Archipelago. Reflecting on the riots in Ambon, researchers are increasingly convinced that we are children of different nations but still one. The photo work presented on the back (left) depicts the sensation of the shape of the turtle's mask and mouth.

Triggers a feeling of immersion then brings the imagination back to childhood. At that time, researchers still lived in Ambon. One of the most beautiful and unforgettable times. One of the things that makes it beautiful is watching a movie with the title Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. This film is broadcast every week, making researchers aspire to become ninjas, to become superheroes. Ideals that at that time were still taboo to convey, let alone tell. It could be that the Ninja Turtles were one of the triggers that made researchers always want to be different compared to their other siblings. Like choosing to have long hair, tattoos, being childfree, etc. Because, according to researchers, the more we are exposed to various perspectives on one thing, the more we are established to appreciate differences.

#### **4.2 The Third Meaning of the Photograph Work Entitled Sins of You, Me or Him**

The photo work with the title Sins of You, Me or Him is presented in a virtual space that can be accessed by researchers. When accessing this space, researchers can interact with photographic works. One of the things that can be done when interacting is to shift photo works in a virtual space which changes the object of the photo, from a square ratio to a perspective shape (see Fig. 4). This shift in shape distorts the baby orangutan's face. Researchers can conclude that the sensation of this distorted form of an orangutan child evokes the immersion experience. The feeling of immersion triggers thoughts towards policy changes from one leader of the Indonesian nation to the next. The change was made, apparently without seeing whether the previous policy could be continued or not. In the end, society also feels the consequences. This pattern of change does not only occur in the central government of this nation, but also in the smallest government. Even the same pattern can be found in campus organizational structures, community organizations, etc. The sensation of a slightly blurry shape on the figure of an orangutan cub starts a feeling of immersion towards the nine dogs. All the researchers' dogs rescued from the street. Some were rescued from uninhabited houses, from the side of one

of Jakarta's main roads, from the edge of the railroad tracks. There are also those who are adopted from homeless people, relatives, and neighbors who are no longer able to care for them. Also, some were rescued from the bamboo forest, from living in a shop-house, and some were rescued by researchers from a ditch after being dumped by their previous owner. It is inconceivable how their lives would have been if they had not been reunited with us (researchers and their wives) by their living owners. This is where researchers learn about the true function of love, namely, sincere love for all sentient beings.



**Fig. 4.** Photograph entitled Your Sin, Me or Him (Source: <https://nusakara.umn.ac.id/puguh-kesed-pre-exhibition/>).

Another shape sensation that the researchers encountered in the photographic work entitled Sins of You, Me or Him is the form of texture on the face of an orangutan child. It is the form of texture that presents the experience of immersion to the researcher. This experience gave rise to imagination towards the earthquake that occurred in Yogyakarta in 2006. The earthquake devastated Yogyakarta and Central Java and left trauma to this day. This trauma has a positive impact because it makes researchers alert and easily feel when an earthquake is about to occur. In addition, this earthquake is one of the valuable stories in the eyes of the author about the city of Yogyakarta. A city that has taught many things. A city that fosters a sense of continuing to create, continues to create. Yogyakarta teaches a relaxed attitude, patience, caring, rebellious attitude, and especially caring attitude towards diversity. Therefore, Yogyakarta is a city that can immediately rise from the material and social downturn caused by the earthquake.

The sensation of the light blue color that becomes the background of the photo with the profile of an orangutan child conveys a feeling of being immersed, deep down towards the humanist figure, Jesus Christ. The longer you see that color, the more the

figure of Jesus appears through your imagination. Its presence is like snippets of movie scenes, like scenes arranged in a storyboard. The scenes depict the stories of the researcher's meeting with this loving figure. Jesus is present in the symbol of blessings at every crossroads of problems. Such as the blessing of inner and outer strength in dealing with work, the blessing of being patient in undergoing long-distance romantics, the blessing of being patient when facing waiting for answers to grow in a new home, the blessing of being relaxed when dealing with brother and sister relationships in the family, and the blessing of continuing to establish love with all living things. Through blessings and troubles, this great figure teaches about the attitude of love, surrender, *nrimo* (accepting reality as it is). Matches the quote in the film *Finding Nemo* which was released in 2013; "Just Keep Swimming". This quote basically teaches you to never give up in the face of any challenge.

## 5 Conclusion

Photographs release multiple perspectives for every viewer. Observations made by connoisseurs of photographic works can be very subjective depending on aesthetic experiences and events that have been experienced. There is only a sensation of light and shape in a photographic work that is able to build a subjective immersion experience for every viewer. It is this subjectivity that ultimately builds the rhythms of its own meaning for each audience.

In addition, the study of photographic works using the third meaning method can increase knowledge about meanings other than the literal meaning of photographic works in addition to persuading audiences. An analytical model like this can be a contribution to the study of commercial photographic works in order to find stories that are in accordance with the psychographics of the people who are the target audience for certain advertisements.

Advice from researchers to researchers who will use this research as a source of literacy is to use subjectivity such as stories around us, personal experiences, aesthetic experiences as the main part of telling stories about photographic works.

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