

Various Images of Contemporary Women in Popular-Culture Perspectives on Luna Dian Setya's Painting

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Abstract: The study aimed to examine the variety of contemporary women's body images in the perspective of popular culture on Luna Dian Setya's paintings. The study was conducted at Luna Dian Setya's painting studio, Jl. Jayawijaya 55 Mojosongo Jebres Surakarta in April - July 2018 using qualitative methods. The data sources used informants, places and events, and documents. The data collection techniques used observation and in-depth interviews. The sampling technique used purposive sampling. The data validity used source triangulation and informant review. And the data analysis techniques applied the flowing model. The results of the study can be explained that Luna Dian Setya does create her art products in a contemporary society that provides space for freedom in interpreting every reality of life. The atmosphere of popular culture that Luna lived in, formed her view of female figures that were often used as subject matters in paintings. She presents various images of women as an effort to express her views and beliefs about women. The images presented include women who are gentle, calm, motherly, sometimes also the image of women who are strong, powerful, lost, and submissive. The image of women that Luna shows in her paintings is dynamic and various, along with a shift of the values of contemporary life.

Keywords: *image, women, painting, popular culture*

Introduction

The practice of contemporary painting has increased the visual diversity of the work of painting which represents the freedom and creativity of its painters in expressing the intuition based on observations and life experiences. The lives of some contemporary Surakarta society who drifted and dissolved in the atmosphere of popular culture, made the painting produced by many painters arise the issues of popular culture.

Popular culture according to Ibrahim (2007: xxiii) is interpreted as the culture of most people, not only means being widely distributed, mainstream, dominant, also artifacts and styles of human expression develop from the creativity of the majority and circulate among the people according to their interest in taste and their preferences. Painting produced by painters with a personal style approach and contextual value content with society are now one of the popular cultural products.

Luna Dian Setya as one of the young painters in Surakarta in her work raised a lot of issues about women's bodies as subject matters with various constructions of meaning and images. Regarding with women as objects in paintings, Wicandra (2007: 32) explained that stereotypical views of women as visual objects as a form of exploitation of women. Women are only placed as socially unimportant figures and even in some paintings new women are portrayed as important figures only because of their appearance as women or in other words as mere sweeteners.

The stereotype of women's image as an object of painting that is displayed vulgarly strengthens the practice of popular culture. Cultural practices that are characterized by the thinking in terms of appearance rather than substance, celebrating the surface rather than the

depth, prioritizing pleasure rather than knowledge, ways of thinking shortcuts, conditioning anti-thinking. Popular culture shapes our way of thinking and acting in everyday life (Pilliang, 2018: 171).

The painting practice which is done by Luna does not necessarily dissolve in the atmosphere of popular culture, she continues to work in expressing her critical views on women in a diverse circle of images. She places the female figure not as a woman who is always merges in popular culture, but women who still promote the values of eastern culture.

This was done by digging inspiration from female characters in folklore whom he studied critically and then visualized into paintings adapted to the context of contemporary women.

Methodology

The study was conducted at Luna Dian Setya painting studio located at Jayawijaya street number 55 Mojosoongo Jebres Surakarta in May - July 2018 using qualitative descriptive research methods. Moleong (2010: 6) explains that research intends to understand the phenomenon of what is experienced by a research subject, such as behavior, perception, motivation, actions, etc., holistically and in a way of description in the form of words and language, in a specific natural context and by utilizing various natural methods.

This research uses critical social research with qualitative methods. The realities cannot be generalized, the relation between subject and object are one entity. The findings are in form of relative and subjective opinions (Ratna, 2010: 58). The research approach uses case studies (Yin, 2014: 46). Pendekatan penelitian menggunakan studi kasus (Yin, 2014:46). The source of data is, the informants, places, and events, archives or documents (Moleong, 2009: 132). The sampling technique used was purposive sampling (Sutopo, 2002: 56). Data collection techniques used are: ordinary observation, the researchers do not need to be involved in emotional relationships with the research's target; in-depth interviews and documents are in the form of the collections of documents and any archives in the form of paintings, artifacts, exhibition documents (Rohidi, 2011: 182). The data validity technique used is in form of source triangulation, it means that the researcher compares the data obtained with data or other sources to be able to complete and informant's review; re-examine the data that has been compiled with the informants to get the accuracy of the compiled data (Sutopo, 2002: 35). The analysis technique used is an interactive model that consists of three components, they are: data reduction, data presentation and drawing conclusion.

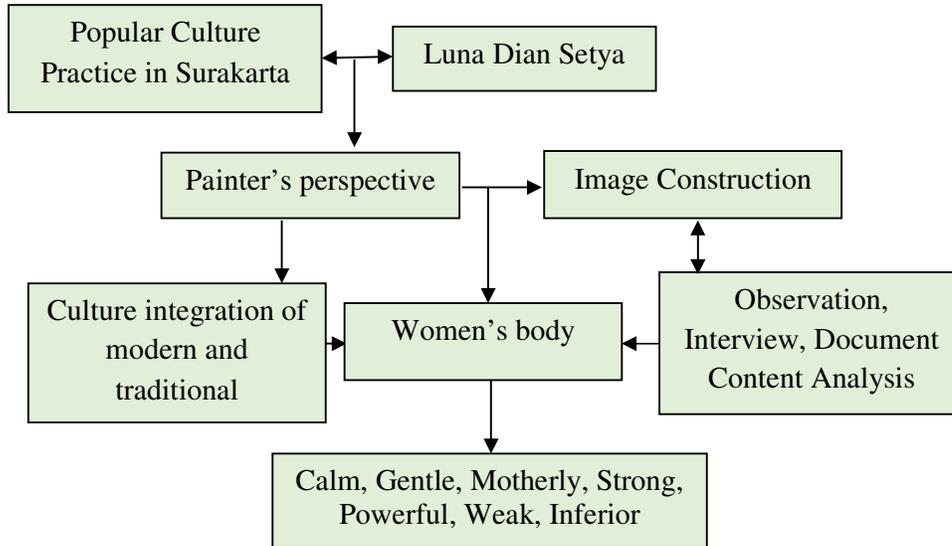


Figure 1. The flow of the research problem solving framework

Result and Discussion

Result

Luna Dian Setya and the paintings produced are basically an integrated study. In order to study Luna's paintings, it is necessary to understand Luna as a painter. Luna was born in 1993 in Surakarta, graduated from the Fine Arts Program, Faculty of Art and Design, Sebelas Maret University in 2015. She began to love drawing since her childhood, having aspirations as a painter in elementary school. He really likes to draw in the empty part of the notebook so he often gets a reprimand from the teacher who he considers dirty. Often interested in fairy tales, myths, history, and poetry as narratives, so that his work sometimes borrows the narrative as parables, or borrows parables in these narratives and begins a new, more personal and subjective narrative in visual work.

The artworks produced are mostly in the form of paintings, drawings and art performance although it does not rule out the possibility of trying other techniques or forms. Several art exhibition events and performance art that have been conducted include in Surakarta, Jakarta, Surabaya, Yogyakarta, Jember, and Kediri. Until now, he still continues to process in creating his works in the studio as well as his house in Mojosongo, the area north of Surakarta which continues to develop into an urban area.

The study was conducted by reviewing several paintings by Luna, the results of the study can be described as follows:



Figure 2. *Angel Of War*, mix media, 70 x 70 cm, 2015

The visualization of the painting consists of a female object sitting in a long green cloth that is unraveled, using golden yellow kemben, wearing headdresses. The right hand holds a light blue skull, on the back of the body are several long-barreled rifles arranged like wings. At the bottom, there are human skulls and bones.

The woman represents an angel of war, a woman who should represent subtlety, tenderness, patience can change into the opposite when she is unable to fight with her in managing her desires and ego. When that happens, a woman can become a cold-blooded murderer who has no mercy. In the painting the woman presented portrayed a woman who was angry, selfish, emotional.



Figure 3. *Matara*, Oil on Canvas, 100 x 100 cm, 2015

The visualization of the painting consists of female objects with reddish brown skin color, part of the upper body is naked, long hair decomposed, sitting cross-legged, she has closed eyes, and she is breastfeeding her child. On the back there is smoke dangling up and above the smoke there is a pig's head bone. The fabrics that partially cover a woman's green body are left unraveled on the ground.

The woman is a symbol of compassion that is manifested through the struggle of a mother in raising her child. The body gesture of a mother whose right hand sincerely supports the baby's body while cramming her breasts into the baby's mouth as a form of sincerity and sincerity in providing milk in her body for the growth and life of her child. Her facial expressions with closed eyes are a form of expression of appreciation for the reality that is being lived, faces that are full of submission, calmness and sincerity.

Triangle-shaped painting fields aim to build the image of spirituality. Triangular peaks as if representing a human journey which will eventually lead to one point, namely death, then death

leads to eternal life. Spiritual values are also realized by painting visualization that presents a symmetrical balance between the right and left as a symbol of life balance that must balance the relationship with fellow human beings and the relationship with God. The presence of the female body in the painting portrays a woman with great compassion, sincerity, calm and surrender to her destiny as a mother for her child in the frame of spirituality.

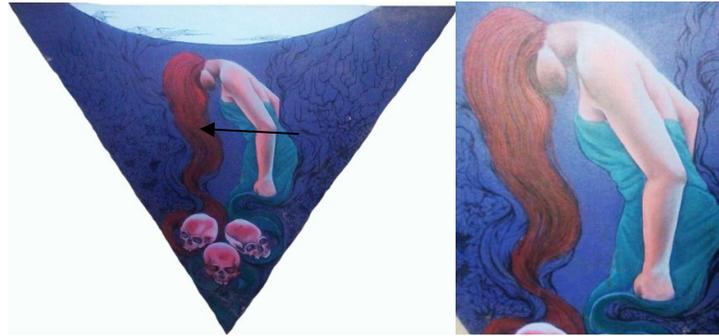


Figure 4. Nandak, Oil on Canvas, 100 x 100 cm, 2015

The visualization of the painting consisted of female objects with reddish brown skin, leaning forward body gestures lowering his head so that his long blackish hair was broken down to the ground, with a green cloth on his body. At the bottom of the painting there are 3 red-colored human skulls, the background of the painting in the form of a cliff and a moon that is shining so that the upper object looks bright.

The gesture of a woman's body that bows her head down represents destruction, disappointment, lethargy as a result of her failure to fight with worldly things. The woman is unable to defeat the ego in her so that she is carried away by the ego to fall into the abyss of destruction and disappointment. A downward expression on his face showed that she was getting farther away with the bright moonlight above him. The grip of the hand on the cloth that wrapped his body was a form of deep expression of disappointment, as if she would soon move and take revenge for the defeat she suffered. The woman is portrayed as a woman who is irritable, emotional, selfish, disappointed, defeated, helpless in facing the challenges of life.

Discussion

Luna is one of the female painters in Surakarta who is quite intense working on women's subject matters in her paintings. Both women are figures in folklore and women they meet in everyday life. According to her, women is a source of inspiration that must be explored, because in them, it is hiding various values that continue to grow and develop along with the context of contemporary life. The values in the past women with women are now certainly different, because indeed the presence of values is always in line with the cultural values that gave birth to it. Luna is a young painter who continues to learn and process by reading books or reading the reality of life as a source to build her confidence in all the values of life that she believes.

Regarding to the values and images in women, she believes that the image contained in a person is dynamic, not stagnant. In this context, Luna tries to react to it by working on the same subject matters of women, but the images raised in the work vary. The overlapping image in women is an interesting field to be raised in a work, with the aim that various images within women can be presented as a medium of reflection, transformation, or media to fight the

hegemony of male painters who often place women's bodies in in sensual, erotic, sexy images, etc.

In her works, Luna has a clear vision, which is to read and construct the image of women contextually. The existence of women in the paintings is a representation of the women she found in the socio-cultural life where she lived her life. This is in line with Sugiharto's opinion (2015: 87) that our perceptions and appreciation of the body are indeed constructed by various parties outside us, consciously or unconsciously. But the internal and personal experience of the body itself is what ultimately determines the meaning of the body. There is a time for personal experience and then pushes back the essence of body.

Women who have the fighting for power for life, women with maternal images, gentle, patient, are images of Luna's dreams, so that women are not portrayed as complementary or men's follower, but women who have existence and contribute in building positive values and objective in life. Luna, through her work, always wants to remind that a woman is a sentient being, therefore she as a woman also wants to place women in their proper place. A place that can improve the dignity of women as social beings and religious beings, although popular culture has dragged some women into commodities that can be commodified.

In the perspective of popular culture, the dignity of women is not something that is considered important, but a woman's body that can be commercialized as something that is prioritized. Luna as a young painter who does not and can free herself from the influence of popular cultural practices. She tried to integrate the traditional values of women with the values of women today. Luna's paintings try to portray both, traditional women who are at the same time modern. Luna's interest in *Calon Arang's* folklore as a female character encourages her to deepen it by studying the libraries about Calon Arang. She hopes to find her subjective conclusions about *Calon Arang*. Luna, through her paintings, reconstruct the image of *Calon Arang* based on her belief, she is not subject to the image of *Calon Arang* in the library texts.

The visualization of the female body in Luna's paintings with various gestures and expressions of the body represents values and images related to worldly dimensions and dimensions of spirituality. The body of women who are strong, strong, emotional, selfish, side by side with the image of women who are gentle, patient, compassionate, motherly.

Conclusion

The presence of the female subject matter contained in Luna's paintings was driven by Luna's desire to fight for women's values which were believed to be in accordance with her inner voice. The visualization of women with various gestures, poses and expressions on Luna's paintings is a representation of various values of daily life as long as she associates with fellow women such as mothers, relatives, and friends. Luna's painting is an honest expression of language in speaking out the contextual reality of life in order for the painting to has an actual and contextual meaning in the spirit of its era. The women presented are expected to be a medium of reflection and transformation for the dynamics of contemporary women's self-image. Women who are faced with various problems in various dimensions of life, but they must continue to exist, and to be critical in responding the life, thus it is beneficial for life.

According to Luna's opinion, women are not merely an object of painting who is always oppressed by the interests of popular culture that indulges a populist image, but women in which settles souls that emit images of tenderness, motherhood, affection, strength, might. The image of women who are always able to uphold local cultural values, thus they are not eroded by global culture that offers different values. The desire to continue in developing women's values based on Javanese culture is initiated by Luna through her painting's visualization which

mostly present women in various images as an effort to place a women subjects in the dynamics of contemporary culture.

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