

# THE ERA OF THE RECONSTRUCTION OF MEANING AND SENSORY EXPERIENCE OF ART IN VIRTUAL SPACE

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## Abstrak

Pandemi Covid 19 yang melanda di seluruh dunia, menimbulkan wacana baru yang signifikan terhadap kebutuhan juga dalam roda perputaran ekonomi pada medan sosial seni rupa. Lukisan-lukisan yang butuh untuk diapresiasi, karya-karya “*performance art*” yang harus dipentaskan, karya-karya patung instalasi dan juga karya dengan media-media baru seperti *video art*, *video mapping* yang dapat dinikmati, diberi makna dan dialami lewat interaksi dan pengalaman pancaindra yang hanya dapat dirasakan langsung dengan kehadiran tubuh para pengunjung yang berhadapan dengan objek karya seni tersebut. Beberapa media sosial seperti Instagram, Facebook, Podcast, Youtube Live, dan Zoom Cloud Meeting terpilih untuk dijadikan podium ruang-ruang maya untuk mewartakan berbagai kebutuhan tersebut. Namun tidak dapat dipungkiri, proses pemberian makna terhadap sebuah karya seni pun menjadi terkonstruksi, ruang-ruang maya memberikan jarak tatkala pengalaman tubuh dan inderawi tergantikan dengan ruang gawai yang sempit. Tujuan penulisan penelitian ini untuk membaca fenomena saat ini yang sedang berlangsung dalam mencari formula alternatif dalam bentuk penyajian sebuah program kesenian. Dengan menggunakan dua metode riset untuk mengamati fenomena ini, yaitu metode kuantitatif dan observasi terhadap para partisipan yang aktif mengikuti berbagai event seperti penyelenggaraan pameran-pameran karya seni rupa, tour seni dan diskusi-diskusi kesenian yang diselenggarakan secara daring dan partisipan dari para seniman peserta pameran tersebut. Ruang maya yang dilengkapi dengan fitur siaran langsung dari program kesenian yang sedang berjalan menjadi pilihan terbaik untuk tetap menjaga keselamatan partisipan dan keberlangsungan dari kebutuhan medan sosial seni.

Kata kunci : Karya Seni, Pengalaman Indrawi, Pandemi, Covid 19, Rekonstruksi Budaya, Ruang Maya

## Abstract

The global COVID-19 pandemic has given birth to a new discourse that is important to the needs as well as economic constellation of the social fields of fine art. Paintings that need to be appreciated, performance art that must be performed on stage, sculpture installations and creations that use new media such as video art and video mapping that are appreciated, given meaning, and interpreted through interactions and human sensory experiences that can only be felt by physically standing in front of and seeing the art objects directly. Several social media such as Instagram, Facebook, Podcast, YouTube Live, and Zoom Cloud Meeting have become alternative virtual platforms to accommodate these needs. However, the process of giving meaning to a fine art creation have undoubtedly become constructed, because virtual spaces have created distances when the body and its senses are replaced by narrow gadgetary spaces. The objective of this research is to analyze this on-going phenomenon and to try to find an alternative formula in presenting an art program. This analysis used two research methods, quantitative and observation, toward active participants of art events such as exhibitions, art tours, and online discussion forums, and the artists who participated in the exhibitions. The virtual space that used live features of on-going art programs became the best alternative in maintaining the safety of participants and the continuity of the needs of social - art world.

Keywords : Art Works, Sensory Experience, Pandemic, COVID-19, Cultural Reconstruction, Virtual Space

## INTRODUCTION

Major investments in paintings in Indonesia have passed through several periods. Sanento Yuliman observed the market boom of paintings in Indonesia in his book, “Between Image and Treasure: The Boom of Paintings” (1990 “*Antara Citra dan Harta: Boom Seni Lukis*”)[5], that discussed an increase in social art-world activities around 1989-1990 marked by the increase in commercial galleries, frequencies in art exhibitions, followed by increased interest in paintings and the number of painters, collectors, and companies that sponsor these exhibitions. However, the boom of the 2000s was the one whose impact is still felt to this day.

Statistically, BEKRAF (Agency for Tourism and Creative Economy) and Central Statistics Agency recorded the export results of creative economy between 2010-2016 from fine art sub-sector, acknowledging creative economy as a reliable strategy in economic and industrial development beside manufacturing and services. Other industries based on idea, technology, art, and intellectual property were spread throughout major Indonesian cities such as Bali, Jakarta, Jogjakarta, and Solo, and have contributed to an annual average foreign income of US\$ 7.3 million.[1]

The positive impact on artists’ economy is that it has given them the freedom to develop each of their own creative ideas in creating multi-appreciative art creations. Aside from visual means, there are also pieces that use new media and medium for direct interaction by exhibition visitors to experience the esthetics that are expressed through those creations.

The roles of collectors have also given confidence to artists to continue expressing themselves through any kinds of appreciations to their arts, whether physical or immaterial such as perfor-

mance art and installation interactives, or videos and experimental films.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### The Era of The Reconstruction of Meaning

An American art critic mentioned in his article titled “Jerry Saltz’s 33 Rules for Being an Artist” that one of the rules of becoming an artist is to understand that “Art is not about understanding. Or mastery. It is about doing and experience.”[3] This issue on experience and participation on an art piece was also affected by the perceptual awareness written by Ludwig Wittgenstein in 1964. Human perception is built on the simple idea of what an experience is, and has the tendency to involve interactions with its surroundings.[2]

There is a flow of communication on an art works and its link to the social art world, on how the meaning of a creation was developed based on social interaction.

Performance art is an art form that does not involve any material except for the body of the artist and the experience the artist presents in their performance to their audience at an exhibition. Communication that is built in a specific situation of presenting a masterpiece becomes whole, whereas visitors attend and experience it themselves.



Chart 1. **Flow of communication on an art works and its link to the social art world, on how the meaning of a creation was developed based on social interaction.**

(Source: Writer)

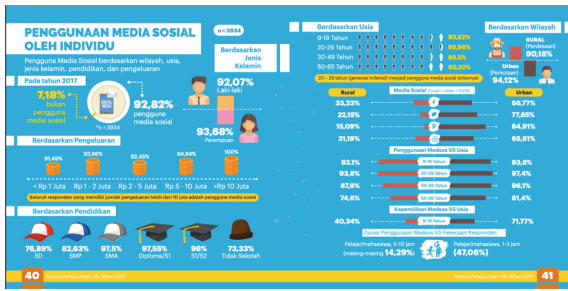


Fig. 1. Statistical data from a 2017 report on the use of information technology and communication in social media.

Photo: Ministry of Communication and Informatics

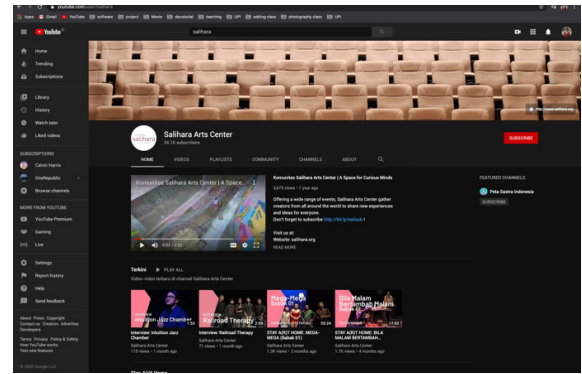


Fig. 3. Salihara uses YouTube for its educational programs.

Photo: Writer

**Art Events in Virtual Space**

Since March 2020, Indonesia and the entire world have been shocked by the COVID-19 pandemic, completely halting humans from their activities. In the world of art, this situation became a stimulant to the creation of alternatives to replace art events without diminishing the opportunity to interact, to participate in the experience of a creation in online programs. Various platforms are available, whether free or paid, such as Instagram, Facebook, Podcast, YouTube Live, and Zoom Cloud Meeting.

In 2017, Indonesia’s Ministry of Communication and Informatics conducted a survey on

the use of technology and information in social media,[4] whose data proved that virtual space is no longer an unfamiliar platform to replace institutional spaces. In this regard, in the case of the need for social art space, virtual spaces are used to substitute for art events that cannot be held offline.

**CONCLUSION**

The phenomenon of actively using social media provides some freedom in accessing any kind of art events without having to weigh in factors such as our health during the current pandemic.

Various applications and softwares try to offer this lost experience. But will this type of platform

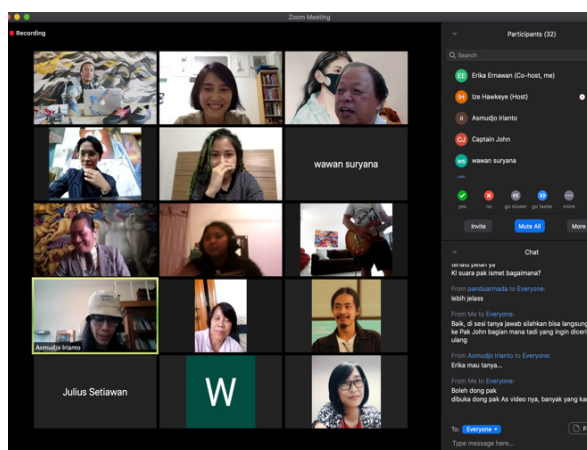


Fig. 2. An art discussion on “Melawan Corona dengan Karya” in a series of art exhibitions for a COVID-19 fund raising event at Maranatha Art Space on July 18, 2020, using Zoom.

Photo: Writer

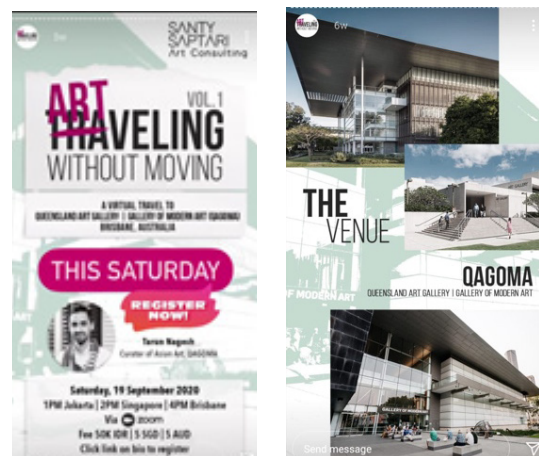


Fig. 4. Santy Saptari, an art consultant, offers online art tours using Zoom and Instagram Live to visit and see collectors’ exhibitions in Qagoma, Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane.

Photo: Santy Saptari Art Consultant’s Instagram

survive? Or will it create a domino effect related to the function of institutional space and the development of managerial knowledge in art? Nevertheless, most importantly, is this kind of virtual space a sufficient substitute for lost experience in understanding the meaning of an art works? What about the flow of communication that highly depends on internet signal capacity?

It will be interesting to observe how this develops after we survive this pandemic.

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