



THE EXPLOITATION OF POVERTY IN THE VIRTUAL ERA AS AN IDEA FOR CREATING PAINTINGS

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ABSTRACT

The exploitation of poverty that occurs in the virtual space of social media is an act dehumanization of digital culture. The condition of the poor people who are less empowered is used as a weapon to gain wealth and popularity through various social media content. This painting is intended to describe the meaning, stages, and visual results with the theme of the phenomenon of poverty exploitation in the virtual era. The creator uses a creation method that broadly refers to the creation method discovered by Hawkins, consisting of three stages, namely exploration, improvisation, and forming. The characteristics of the six works created are seen in the use of thick textures, anatomically deformed objects, and colors that tend to be contrasting, unique, spontaneous, and simple, in order to display an emotional and dynamic impression. The visualization of the work applies a variety of techniques, such as the wet on wet technique, the paint melting technique, and the plaque technique. Through this work, it is hoped that all people, especially the lower middle class, will gain equality and be appreciated for their existence, both in social and cultural activities. In addition, the creator also persuasively invites the public to use social media wisely and creatively through the art of painting.

1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a developing country with millions of people, which gives rise to various problems the must be faced, one of which is the problem of poverty. Poverty is a condition where basic needs that are a



requirement for individual welfare are not met [1]. The complexity of fulfilling life's needs creates competition between humans in achieving ideal lifestyle standards. Poverty can cause someone to be physically weak due to lack of food, malnutrition, susceptible to disease, vulnerable to emergency or urgent situations because they do not have wealth, and someone becomes helpless because they lose their welfare and have a low position [2]. These factors make poor people vulnerable to exploitation by irresponsible rulers, by promising rewards or fulfillment the basic needs of the poor. Exploitation of the poor has been going on for a long time, such as the many underage children who beg/busk at red light intersections. The virtual era of the internet and digital has resulted in a shift in the pattern of exploitation of poverty, which was initially carried out in real space, now shifting to cyberspace. Someone can make money quickly and easily through social media such as *Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, X, WhatsApp* [3]. The various social media content do not all contain positive things, some of them are actually negative, such as content on begging, charity, social experiments that exploit vulnerable individuals/groups such as the elderly, children, people with disabilities, which depict irony and suffering, instead of focusing on the ability and persistence of the subject in fighting poverty [4]. These contents can be classified as acts of exploiting poverty to be used as valuable commodities. In this context, exploiting poverty is defined as exploiting the helpless conditions of poor individual/groups packaged in the form of advertisements, photos and videos, with the aim of exploiting the conditions of the poor people, gaining reputation, provoking emotions, obtaining donations or support for the certain purposes, material gain or simply entertainment [5]. Poverty exploitation content at first glance seems correct and commendable. However, in reality, this content only provides temporary solutions, not offering sustainable solutions related to effectively eradicating poverty [6]. This content actually ignores moral and ethical boundaries, and creates a negative stigma that poor individuals are passive, helpless, and dependent on donations from other individuals. In fact, poverty is a systematic obstacle caused by unequal education, limited job vacancies, and limited access to physical and mental health. Poverty cannot be eradicated simply by portraits of people crying or begging. The phenomenon of poverty exploitation has increased massively over time. Content creators are racing achieve virality in the order to maximize the number of viewers and likes [7]. Virality can be achieved at least accompanied by polemics, or arouse emotions. This nature is what makes the phenomenon of poverty exploitation a sustainable trend [8]. The phenomenon of poverty exploitation in the era of virtual has created negative emotions, namely anger, anxiety, and sadness in the author, which are then poured into the painting [9]. The focus of the idea of creation depicts poor individuals/groups as 'victims' of poverty exploitation on social media on the canvas. The creation of the painting is intended as a form of criticism of the increasingly widespread virtual exploitation of poverty. The author hopes that this painting can renew the perspective of the wider community, about how to view other individuals, especially the poor, as dignified creation of God, so that in the future, there will be no more poor people exploited anywhere or by anyone.

2. METHOD

Method is a way that must be done to overcome something [10]. Thus it can be concluded that the method is a systematic procedure or way to find out or obtain something desired. The author in this chapter describes the systematic stages used to support ideas/concepts until the realization of artwork. Creation also means an act or process, a way of creating or the ability to create something new as a manifestation of creative dreams [11]. The method of creation artwork is a description of the process of creating artwork starting from getting ideas, conducting experiments, to the stage of realizing the artwork. The method of creation used comes from Alma. M. Hawkins in her book entitled "Creating Through Dance". Which explains three stages of creation namely exploration, improvisation, and forming.

2.1. Exploration

Exploration includes the process of seeing, feeling, and responding to phenomena that occur in the universe, which are then manifested into paintings, using both hands [12]. Basically, exploration is the stage of exploring ideas that come from the results of observations and interviews. At this stage, observations are made on literature studies and visual research, both from journals, newspapers, social media, and photo documentation related to poverty exploitation [13]. Through these observations, reference sources can be obtained in order to understand the relationship between poverty exploitation and social media. After that, field studies were conducted by visiting art studios, art exhibitions, and art festivals. This stage is important to do in order to bring up ideas/concepts, innovations, forms, and techniques. The author also conducted online and offline interviews with the surrounding environment, such as artist, friends, and people who have an understanding or experience related to poverty exploitation.

2.2. Improvisation

Improvisation in the creation of works is defined as the activity of combining all elements of exploration into a good combination [14]. Improvisation is an experiment that is carried out repeatedly by combining the results of exploration into a good and artistic form [15]. Improvisation that is carried out routinely by getting used to designing sketches every day, is able to bring up the possibility of unique forms and train the flexibility of the creator's hand [16]. At this stage, experiments are carried out in the form of making digital sketches of deformative figures, while still paying attention to the composition and proportions of the object. Various experiments with mediums and techniques are also carried out to obtain the desired texture variations, such as technique of using textured paint and palette knives, melting techniques, and wet on wet techniques. The technique of using textured paint can produce a prominent impression like 3 dimensions. The use of this technique provides space for the creator to form unique and dynamic patterns. The paint melting technique is done by spilling a mixture of water and acrylic paint on the canvas, then lifting one side of the canvas to direct the flow of paint to a certain side, thus creating interesting effects. Meanwhile, the wet on wet technique is a technique of applying paint strokes to a previously wetted canvas area, in order to create a soft colour effect.

2.3. Formation

Forming is the stage of realizing the experiments that have been carried out previously, by considering harmony, complexity, intensity, and others [17]. At this stage, it provides an opportunity for change in shape due to the emergence of psychic impulses in the form of instincts and instincts spontaneously so that renewal of object forms is created [18]. This stage begins with the installation of the canvas on the stretcher. Then continued with the creation of an abstraction-style background with the wet on wet technique. After that, the creator responds to the spontaneous forms produced on the background with anatomical deformation figures that have been designed in previous digital sketches. by creating a background using an abstraction style with techniques obtained from experimentation. After the painting is considered complete, the creator applies varnish to protect the painting from exposure to the surrounding environment and repaints the edges of the canvas so that the painting looks neat and clean.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Identification of Works

The visualization of this painting is based on the memory of experience and observation of the phenomenon of poverty exploitation that is rampant in the virtual space of social media. Which has

awakened the creator's instinct so that it is poured into the visual of the artwork [19]. This idea/ concept was developed by conducting various experiments to find the right meaning, techniques, and mediums in visualizing the painting. In realizing the work, the creator uses a deformative anatomical painting style and abstraction, while still considering elements of fine art such as lines, colours, textures, space, and shapes [20]. The aims to display expressive, unique, spontaneous, and simple figures and colours [21]. The creator also applies three painting techniques, namely the wet on wet technique, the plaque technique, and the paint melting technique.

3.2. Discussion



Figure 1. Exploitation of Hunger Edema
[Source: Yusnita, 2024]

Media : Acrylic on canvas
Size : 90 x 70 cm
Year : 2024

Work description:

The painting "Exploitation of Hunger Edema" was inspired by a streaming video of fundraising (donations) for children with malnutrition on the TikTok application, showing the condition of malnutrition children who appear to be suffering. This action is included in the violation of privacy and ethics because it has shown something personal and intimate. This painting is dominated by ochre and black colors that appear contrasting, as the caste difference between the rich and the oppressed poor. The object of a woman holding a cellphone is depicted strikingly in yellow as a symbol of luxury. Meanwhile the objects of malnutrition children are depicted in brown and black colors meaning suffering. While behind the woman's figure there are number of primitive-shaped eyes as a symbol of the audience who enjoy the exploitation content.



Figure 2. Online Motorcycle Taxi Prank
[Source: Yusnita, 2024]

Media : Acrylic on canvas
Size : 90 x 70 cm
Year : 2024

Work description:

This painting was inspired by online motorcycle taxi prank content in the form of fictitious orders, canceling orders, where the creator content tries to lure online motorcycle taxis to tell their life's suffering, then deliberately recording the situation to be uploaded to the Youtube channel. This is an effective way to arouses the audience's sympathy so that they watch the show repeatedly. This painting shows a man in an online motorcycle taxi costume sitting with a pile of food boxes beside him. On the other side of the canvas there is a green and white rectangle with the word cancel written on it as a symbol oh the chat feature of the online motorcycle taxi application. In addition, there are blue and yellow circles depicting the destination location map feature on the online motorcycle taxi application.



Figure 3. Online Begging
[Source: Yusnita, 2024]

Media : Acrylic on canvas
Size : 90 x 70 cm
Year : 2024

Work description:

The painting “Online Begging” measuring 90 x 70 cm features a main focus of a person crying while holding a small bowl as a place to store coins. The image is a visual of the poor person begging. Another object is an ocher-colored mouse holding a stick equipped with a cellphone, as a symbol powerful person who like to record and use the poor as a means to gain financial gain. This painting combines yellow, white, and black into one harmonious whole. The melted blue paint serves to give a dramatic impression to the painting.



Figure 4. Mud Bath
[Source: Yusnita, 2024]

Media : Acrylic on canvas
Size : 100 x 100 cm
Year : 2024

Work description:

The painting "Mud Bath" was created using several media, such as acrylic paint, pastes, textured paint. The painting was inspired by one of the contents on social media, namely the mud bath content. The content exploits the elderly by pouring water on their bodies via live streaming to get rewards in the form of gifts given by the audience. The female object in this painting is a symbol of the exploited elderly. Then the bag with the dollar symbol represents the benefits obtained from the content. The combination of ocher, black, brown colors to represent slum and poor conditions.



Figure 5. Social Experiment
[Source: Yusnita, 2024]

Media : Acrylic on canvas
Size : 90 x 70 cm
Year : 2024

Work description:

This painting is inspired by social experiment content involving people with mental disorders as its objects. People with mental disorder as its objects. People with mental health disorder are included in the poor community because the majority of people who experience mental disorders are caused by economic and social factors [22]. This painting shows a naked woman being doused with water. Above the woman's head are various emojis, as a symbol of a mentally ill woman with various emotions. Beside her, there is a human holding a hose, as a symbol of a content creator who exploits the woman by bathing her. If you look closely, you can see small human figures holding cellphones, which are the group that recorded the event. The use of texture aims to fill the empty space in the painting.



Figure 6. Online Begging
[Source: Yusnita, 2024]

Media : Acrylic on canvas
Size : 100 x 100 cm
Year : 2024

Work description:

This painting shows a goat-like human with one hand holding rice and the other holding a rope, which ties the necks of three human figures holding mobile phones. It is depiction of a politician campaigning by distributing rice, accompanied by a team that records the activity to be uploaded to social media. Alms that were originally good, are instead used as an image space to attract public attention so that they vote for them in the upcoming election. In addition, there is a human figure crying, symbolizing the poor. The use of line shapes in the painting describes boundaries, light and dark, color, and texture.

4. CONCLUSION

Exploitation of poverty that is rampant in the virtual space of social media, involving vulnerable groups such as the elderly, children, disabilities, must be sought for preventive measures, so that there will not be more content like this in the future [23]. In this case, our role as Indonesian citizens is to no longer enjoy content containing poverty exploitation on social media and switch to watching other educational content [24].

Visualization through the research and experimentation stages as described above, in order to stimulate the creator's mind to realize the painting work to the maximum [25]. The ideas obtained related to the phenomenon of poverty exploitation that occurs in social media are poured into abstraction-style works, using symbols and anatomical deformation forms to represent the meaning of each painting. The use of symbols and deformation forms to prevent elements of exploitation of the suffering of the poor and add aesthetic value to the painting. The appearance of the form and symbol is realized by applying thick texture

techniques and melting acrylic paint and gouache paint to create a dramatic, emotional, active, and close impression, so that art lovers can also feel the creator's anxiety regarding the phenomenon above.

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