

Galeri Tiga Hari: Action of Participatory Art

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Abstract

A city as a physical entity and symbolic construct uses advertising to expand its presence amongst its inhabitants. Meanwhile in some spaces, the city is enriched with various forms of expression such as graffiti, which has become urban symbols. However, the city government banned graffiti presence all around the city. Which leads to the question, how do graffiti artists, and its audience respond if presented with a blank canvas in a gallery environment? A work is a process which involves the cooperation of several parties and therefore, the methodological approach used in this study is phenomenological paradigm approach. Gallery Tiga Hari which is a gallery within a gallery provides a blank canvas like the walls of the city to facilitate messages that can be conveyed to its citizens and in effect provides a participatory art which engages the artist and the viewers in one space. The exhibition managed to engage visitors by visualizing the artist's work in a participatory manner, by participating in the graffiti act themselves. The gallery is no longer the exclusive property of established artists, but as a means to reclaim the city spaces for residents of the city itself.

Key word: Graffiti, space, expression and townspeople.

Preliminary

Modern cities are marked by the towering presence of its skyscrapers and as if symbolized by its inhabitants, supported by spaces occupied for blocks of settlement complexes and transportation systems below. Space has long been considered in two ways: on one hand, at the macrocosmic level, is a large container where everything is put into it and on the other hand, at a microcosmic level, as the gap between various things, which as if divides them (West- Pavlov, 2009: 16). Space is absolute because it is not defined in terms of anything other than itself (Turner, Turner, Davenport, 2009: xvi). Modern cities also exist as a physical entity and can be a symbol of general community growth, city border expansion, infrastructure development, and the tearing down of old buildings to lay anew. Jakarta for example, grows and blooms, shaping the vision and concept of dominant symbolic spaces including protecting the economic and social importance of the private sector and capital owners. The capital owners economically develop symbols of the city which is an extension of the economic and political value of the various groups in a variety of interests, including maintaining the status quo and promoting their vision befitting a city where one of which is an advertising activity.

Advertising plays a role in the delivery of business messages and regulate social relations in urban spaces using both verbal and visual languages. Not only for the selection of the products or services that may be perceived as part of the needs of urban communities, advertising can be directed towards promoting destinations, i.e., such as Jakarta being promoted as a tourist spot. The use of popular brands, culinary, financial services, and convergence of shopping, entertainment, culinary, education and culture actually make Jakarta part of the world. With global communication networks that have created a global culture of worldwide symbols and images (de Mooij, 1994: 3). Thus, public advertisements in a city have become one of the integral visual elements to identify a city, not just by being a standalone element. The language of advertising has been described as a 'functional dialect', a term that describes the product of a process whereby language is chosen and used for a particular purpose (hence, 'Functional'), and consequently becomes a variety (hence, 'dialect') of its Because It Becomes own associated with this particular function (Kelly-Holmes, Helen, 2005: 8). The words and visuals, which are delivered in printed advertisements, recorded, and uploaded are there for a purpose and is generally encouraged as a commercial discourse in city spaces. Ads are displayed on billboards, banners and affect the community to become a consumer based society of the products being advertised.

Not everything in a city is formed through calculated infrastructures and geometries. In certain, usually overlooked, places such as residential buildings, overpasses, parking lots, there exists various forms of visual constructs such as graffiti which defines urban symbols. The symbol, as a sign, represents a referral of agreements or cultural conventions. These urban symbols have become a phenomenon and become an

increasingly common sight and draw upon each person attention at the time of entering the spaces of the city. Those who explore the city will find these various symbols interesting as they find meaning by themselves according to their own understanding and will share it by their own acknowledgement. Find and share (Richmond, 2009: 117). Thus, graffiti is a medium that can share the visual aspect of wishes in the community.

This phenomenon transforms the existing building into a virtual canvas and takes over as public communication symbols. Messages in graffiti text depict symbols which convey the dynamism and expectations of society. These creations of art can be define as an integrated entity, and has delivered so many "stories", which can only be found and realized at the level of urbanism in the cities. These "Stories" which are presented at some of the main entrances of the city or on the way to popular places tells a tale of the current condition through the eyes of its creator. It imparts the creator's feelings and opinions, be it objective or subjective and can be found in many places such as pillars, parking lots, doors and even on vehicles.

In the end, the city becomes a space to practice art, even though there are those who may be indifferent in this case, they still consider street art as an autonomous function of art as a way to express their aspiration. This condition leads to unity of urbanism, the use of the arts to contribute to the composition of an integrated environment in the spaces of the city and become a means of communication by itself.

These works of art are processing elements inside segregated spaces, which together, in the concept of 'integration' create a harmonious environment of urban space. Geometrically the visual elements connect the dots with colorful visual diversity, and ultimately provide a sequence of interpretation for its viewers. The order of interpretation between objects forms a visual system that may act as the central message of space as a whole, determining the meaning of the relationship of elements in a space between its creator and its viewer.

The meaning between these elements is transformed into a set of unified geometric properties (distance, angle, area). These properties define a space in a social reference, in the sense of everyday social interaction, which is dominated by a combination of visual input in the work of graffiti.

In Jakarta, graffiti artists not only create art in media which is generally known by the public. They also practice their art on public spaces such as vacant walls and do this with speed and given time constraints as to elude the clutches of government officials. It is observed how the creative process looks effortless, and carries much meaning while being executed swiftly. The medium used for the work are spaces that have a high degree of difficulty to access with a high degree of visibility.

Regardless how valuable the works of art or how effectively it conveys messages, opinions, desires, and the creator interest in the form of street art, graffiti is a much misunderstood form of art. The Government of Indonesia, for example, in April 2013, implemented a maximum penalty of 60 days in jail and/or a fine of Rp 20 million (\pm US\$ 1,550.-) as a punishment for individuals or companies, who write, illustrate, pasting pamphlets or posters on the walls in public places. This decision has become a regulatory implementation of Article 21 of Regulation No. 8/2007 on Public Order.

Nevertheless, the Governor of Jakarta has declared the issuance of permits for aspiring artists to beautify the capital with their artwork. The Jakarta administration will support the artist to paint in a given spot in the city but only if prior permission has been granted. However, graffiti artists, accustomed to the freedom of expression and in it, the freedom to choose wherever they deem fit does not necessarily back the idea. The idea of a given space gives the notion of a work to order mentality which artists moved away from the first place.

As part of the visual mix of the city, graffiti has lost its legality to exist, regardless of the function and benefit it is considered as destroying the beauty of the city and graffiti artists consider that this regulation prevents citizens' access to spaces in their own city.

Issue

A work of art is an aesthetic expression of an idea, formed by human skills through the use of a media. When talking about art, the audience usually refers to dance, drama, music, literature, and the visual arts. Each is a unique type of human activity, and each produces a form perceived by human senses in a different way. Therefore, the work of art has become a mean to expand human consciousness, which has the power to transform human relationships with objects and events, and to help people understand the essence of life. Art helps people appreciate and explore the mysteries of life (Peble, Peble, 1985: 4).

The resulting artwork turns into a spectacle that is free and open to everyone who views it in their own space. They have the freedom to enjoy or communicate about the implicit message of these works, especially in official art galleries around the city, which exhibits curated and sanctioned arts. However, works displayed in the gallery, are perceived as works that have been worth showing off after going through the curatorial process by a renowned curator. Without the curating process a work might not be deemed good enough to be exhibited. Since art is the expression of emotions and ideas of the artist, the gallery as an exhibition space limits the true expression of artists.

Art is a distinct human activity and is a product of these activities. Art is one way where society can form and express the interests and values of the society (Smith, Wilde, 2002: 17). The theory of art can now be understood as something which, in a certain position, changes little by little in response to the interests of particular groups and is always fragmented or activated by opposing forces (Smith, Wilde, 2002a: xix).

Regardless of the differences of opinion about graffiti, it now brings the spirit of urbanism that reflects its important role in the city's cultural landscape and awareness. The practice of graffiti has become one of the signs of city life whereby it represents a portrait of the city, messages, emotions, and even the outpouring of the heart. Walls, streets, billboards and all kinds of structures that make up the city were ushered into the visual realm of urban life, as a sign of the street art movement. In some cities, graffiti even becomes an iconic tourist attraction of the city, like in Georgetown, Penang and Amsterdam.

Unfortunately, this has not happened in Jakarta., The city government has banned graffiti in public spaces as it is deemed an act of littering the city. While the graffiti artists argue the contrary, whereby graffiti is an attempt to reclaim the citizens' access to spaces within the city itself, including an effort to fight against the commercialization of public spaces, and whereby every citizen has the right to express his views about anything for the good sake of the city.

An interesting scenario would be what if graffiti artists along with viewers take part in an art exhibition in a gallery space? Where viewers engage a graffiti artist in their process of creating art, and where an art displayed without any curative process. If given the space, would graffiti artists immediately start pouring their ideas onto these empty spaces? Or will the audience themselves start engaging the empty spaces and start creating their own?

Theoretical Studies

Works of art relates to the process of understanding and is an interpretation of space. It touches the dimensions of perception, subjective assessment and experience of the artists applied to the spaces through street art. Therefore, the approach used in this study uses the concept and approaches of phenomenological paradigm.

Phenomenology refers to the visible appearance of an object, event, or a condition. Therefore, phenomenology is a way humans use to understand the world through their direct conscious experience involved in this phenomenon. The data interpretation process involves conscious experience, analysis, testing the perceptions and feelings towards a phenomenon. Interpretation is the process of determining the meaning of experience. Interpretation in phenomenology usually forms what is real for someone. One cannot separate reality from interpretation (Littlejohn, Foss, 2008: 56).

The Sociology of Art is strongly associated with space, with a variety of shapes. It explores the fitment of art in text, context and the media. A work of art by Howard S. Becker (Tanner, 2003: 84-94) must go through a process which involves cooperation of several parties. This means that works of art cannot occur independently. Any artist would need help of others. They cannot create their own paint or produce their own glue. They need to purchase or acquire their tools of the trade in some ways. In the end, works of art are the result of a networked effort. They need to work together in a repeated cycle, on a regular basis, in the same way to produce similar work. The total of the sum makes collective action simpler and inexpensive in terms of time, energy and other resources.

Art is a social activity and compatibility between forms of social action and style of artistic creativity. This suggests that art, in the sense of social network, is created by various individuals. These individuals, even though working together, act differently and each brings a different framework, but still compatible to each other. This alignment allows the distinction of collective action, mediated by convention, acceptable and newly developed together to build a collective action. These meanings are created in the language that people use both to

communicate with others and with themselves (or their own personal thoughts). Language allows people to develop a sense of self and to interact with others in a community. Language is a mean to express their opinions and wishes of people (West, Turner, 2007, 95-131), especially when it unites experience and social interaction in the study with communication in art activities.

Humans are social creatures where they tend to socially interact and build mutual relationships. The better the connection, the more positive the social interactions. In building these relationships and social interactions, communication plays a very important part in the expression, formation, and personal development. This includes all aesthetic systems starting from personal experience that would raise typical emotions. Visual arts, especially paintings, have certain powers to bring a person into contact with the world (Parry, 2011: 3). If a work on display gives rise to a feeling or emotion, the work is a form of communication, which reflects the artist's aesthetic emotion.

Aesthetic emotion has a different meaning between one person to another. However, the various emotions of different aesthetics are similar in each character. The emotional experience caused by these arts is subjective and the meaning depends on the 'taste' of each subject. Characteristics of the resulting aesthetic emotion are the result of catching the various relationships between various elements of shape, color, and lines.

As such, aesthetic emotion as a causal result of an assessment of a work of art is subjective. Although everything is based on the taste of the subject judging a work, the resulting emergence of aesthetic emotions is different. There is the general quality of the underlying distinctive aesthetic emotions, namely in the form of significant or meaningful forms in works of art.

The ability to communicate is central to the human behavior that emphasizes an interactive approach to art and creativity. The approach to art and creativity focuses on individual subjectivity when perceiving the work, as well as to exchange or manipulate symbols of various forms of real or abstract objects, especially in contemporary society. Knowledge, communication and creativity in their many forms are among the great obsessions of contemporary societies. Indeed, life in human societies has always called upon knowledge, communication and invention (Sales, et.al., 2007:1).

Discussion

With the passion that reflects the city's cultural life and urban wisdom, Gallery Tiga Hari opened its exhibition at Galeri Cipta 3, Taman Ismail Marzuki, Jakarta Art Center, Jalan Cikini Raya 73, Jakarta, from February 12 until February 14. As a contrast to galleries that showcase existing artwork gallery Tiga Hari only provides blank canvasses prepared with the likeness of city walls that are ready to be interacted with by its attendees. Gallery Tiga Hari means Three Days Gallery and was derived from the concept of having the exhibition open for three days.

To further signify the presence of Gallery Tiga Hari, the gallery's "Cipta 3" signage was replaced with "Tiga Hari" using graffiti styled writing.



Figure 1: Gallery Tiga Hari

The attendees were expected to jointly participate and collaborate to visualize, any ideas, messages, and feelings, in the form of sketches, drawings, wheat paste, posters, stickers, tagging with the acrylic paint, crayons and markers provided.

This exhibition was totally different from the exhibition in a mainstream gallery, where the attendees are not allowed to leave comments directly on the work. In this exhibition, visitors may leave a comment or doodle; they are expected to be active, not just watching the works that have been made in the "past".

The attendees are urged to be active in the gallery as this exhibition theme is "interaction", where visitors can take part. If they want to paste something, draw a line, draw a flower make graffiti on the empty "cavass", they are open to do so. The exhibition was expected to alter the pattern of one-way communication of mainstream galleries, providing two-way communication between art and its viewers. It also became a laboratory for observing the attitude of the visitors, when given the broadest freedom to work. This gallery presents the truest form of freedom of expression, without any restrictions and as a place to be truly creative.

As a catalyst for the audience and to incite the desire to participate, selected areas in the gallery had canvasses that were already designed like walls in a city, which were filled with old flyers as part of a realistic advertising display.

Through Gallery Tiga Hari, the exhibition showcases participatory art, which eliminates the boundaries between the artist and the audience. The attendees, as active participants were observed to switch their roles and become artists themselves. There was no difference between the "artist" and the "audience", where each took turns to contribute to the scene. Those who challenge the idea of an "audience" would now say it needs to be redefined and in the future, viewers can also take a stand that is more expressive and more creative.



Figure 2: audience response

This exhibition was presented in a space previously "owned" by a renowned artist. However, now, it is now publicly owned and 'protected' from any disfranchised party, and has incorporated elements of direct activity, which may have previously been considered non-artistic or too elaborate in performance to put in a permanent art installation. The works displayed are not just kinetic, but involves an active human element as part of the work itself.

Public art is one activity of the participatory arts. A work of art is presented by a group of people collaborating with other members of the community in order to create a large-scale work of art.

In a performance, there is distinct involvement between what is known and what is unknown. A stage actor showcases his acting skills and while the spectators observe his skills, generates a new context among other spectators. Most of the audience participate in this context would interpret the actor's actions through their own observation and would define the meaning of his action. This leads to the audience becoming a member of the collective work of art happening on the stage.

To garner response, the exhibition was announced through digital and physical means such as Facebook, Instagram, and leaflets two days ahead of the opening. More than a hundred people from various backgrounds and of different ages, attended the opening of this exhibition. When the attendees entered the gallery, the action was swift as attendees started to write words, placing stickers, putting up posters, pasting paper paste wheat, and also drawing murals. There were even those who responded with performance art, i.e., with dances, even Disc Jockeying with a mobile audio system. There were those who were confused about the exhibition, but this is to be expected as the nature of the event was beyond any mainstream art activity. More often than not, attendees who were not engaging directly to create art took their phones and starting taking self-photos and posting them on social media.

Dozens of teenagers were preoccupied with acrylic paint, markers, or crayons, either drawing or just writing their name on the wall. They manifested their aspirations and showcased their own adventures. Adventures that did not require the audience to participate because the audience themselves played an active role in developing their own story. They became an emancipated part of a unified community.



Figure 3: samples of artwork

The situation at the gallery was very busy. At the corner of the gallery was a mobile speaker playing pounding hip hop music. A visitor drew a figure of Mother Teresa cupping her hand together with a quote "It's not how much we give but how much love we put into giving". In another corner, there was a drawing of John Lennon and Yoko Onno, with a "War is Over" slogan. Paintings are not just the name of art work, it was the name of the presentation system of a visible art form (Ranciere, 2009: 23).

All the graffiti in the exhibition showed that a medium affects its viewers directly. Beyond just being a gallery, the event also became a place to discuss graffiti. During the exhibition, on Friday (13/2) at 08:00pm and Saturday (14/2) at 03:00pm, a two hour event was being held to discuss the role of graffiti in an urban setting. The discussion focused on how graffiti has a role in giving meaning to freedom of expression. The discussion was also on how graffiti revolved around social issues, humanity, and also the environment.

Of the many different artwork and graffiti at Gallery Tiga Hari, the underlying message was that people wanted their voice to be heard and each work of art contained a message for a particular social issue.

One graffiti artist who attended the exhibition praised it, as the exhibition continues the tradition of the graffiti community which are friendship and sincerity. These are thought processes that are considered small in the current rigid structure of society. As friends came together and created an artwork, it turned out that to make a statement the space became not just as means of expression but also to meet and to communicate. In his view, society requires spaces like these in order for individuals to express themselves as part of a community by interacting and communicating mutual activities and communication.

To gain clarity about space, the required objective measurements revolved around spatial space, where measurements are directly observed and inferred primarily in the physical space. While in the conceptual space, the agreements between concepts are often different. The difficult task is to combine several conflicting concepts, particularly with regard to understanding the orientation and interactions which influence behavior. However, for some reason, as space intensifies and certain regional centers are created, the more intense the chamber is connected to a private area of humans (Alexander, 2004: 22).



Figure 4: Discussion on Graffiti

An art critic gave input about the exhibition, proving that through graffiti, a sense of belonging of owning the city can be heightened. With this sense of belonging, each individual can participate in solving various problems

in the city today. For example, to eliminate negative attitudes like littering, artistic graffiti on the river-banks, as well as the wall near a wall drainage can be made to give warning. If this campaign progresses, it can evoke the spirit of togetherness that sensitizes the public disallow littering and in turn avoid floods and increase the health of the city.

Understanding these interactions will give unity that defines space as a social reference in the sense of everyday social interactions. This social reference is dominated by a combination of visual graffiti input in the area immediately affected. Creating and interpreting the meaning is not purely a mental problem as traces of language are used in the process. Art is created through the creative effort of combining different pieces of language by stating the alternative, changes, perfects, mixes, interpretations, and accommodates everything to capture the real message of its creator (Gasparov, 2010: 3). Thus, the meaning of art depends on the intention of the artist more so than the work itself. Artist's intentions are more relevant to match the meaning of their works of art, not the meaning of their works (Lopes, 2004: 160).

Another interesting point in this exhibition is that everyone wants to express themselves; giving comments ranging from personal problems to social issues. Social issues such as who is the best president, criminal events, to personal problems like saying happy Valentine's day to a love interest. As such this experimental exhibition has proven the notion stated above.

For a stencil graffiti artist, Gallery Tiga Hari is a good event. This exhibition, in his opinion, was a pure statement art exhibition where in contrast it would usually only be the domain of a few. Attendees cannot touch or interact with the work on display, let alone bring their own work and place it in the same exhibition.

As the spirit of freedom inspires graffiti and as the idea would be to take back the space dominated by advertisements as an extension of economic interests, gallery Tiga Hari provides a medium for all to aspire their feelings and opinion through a free open space.

Conclusion

The idea behind Gallery Tiga Hari is to capture the participatory response from graffiti artists when given a space like those dotting the city spaces. On the other side, the gallery visitors who most often passively enjoy the work, are now able to express their own definition of graffiti art. The graffiti artists and the visitors are able to place themselves as the subject of the gallery itself, interpreting the process, or even applying their own definition of art without any curation process. Thus, the process creates a positive interaction and provokes the people who have visited the gallery.



Figure 5: drawing on the floor

When the gallery was open, it only displayed blank canvasses. However, this was only for a short while, as graffiti artists and onlookers immediately engaged the canvasses and the whole gallery began filling up with a plethora of images. There were no spaces left in the gallery and even the floor was getting attention where it became a media for some of the attendees to draw images too.

Gallery Tiga Hari became more than just a meeting point, where it brought together the human elements of arts as friends. Children and even parents who happened to stop at Taman Ismail Marzuki, Jakarta Art Center, engaged the gallery with vigor. To those whom had no significant drawing skills posed creatively with the existing images drawn and uploaded the images to social media, creating within itself a spontaneous form of art.

The gallery managed to make the visitors feel part of the artist's collective work, and even taking over the gallery if they so wished. Thus, in this concept, an art gallery is no longer the exclusive property of established artists, but has also become the right of citizens to interact and be creative themselves. The gallery itself has become a means to voice the interests and feelings of the community. Through what was written and drawn, the walls bear witness to the spirit of freedom which expresses concern about various issues around the city; including issues of social, humanitarian and the environment, which consequently may affect the behavior of the citizens of the city.

An open space to voice the interests and feelings of the community seems necessary, especially in any city that does not allow any form of graffiti in public spaces. If possible, these types of activities can be done in other galleries as ongoing events, such as the National Gallery, and other commercial galleries. This will also retain the concept as a means of channeling community aspirations. Continuing this gallery concept will open up more opportunities for residents in various cities to express and channel their ideas for the good of the environment and local communities. These galleries will serve as a venue to reclaim the city spaces for the good of the city's residents.

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