



Fakulti Seni Gunaan dan Kreatif

THE INFLUENCES OF MENTAL STATE IN VISUAL ARTS

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THE INFLUENCES OF MENTAL STATE IN VISUAL ARTS

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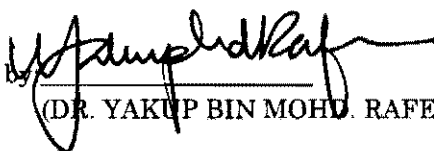
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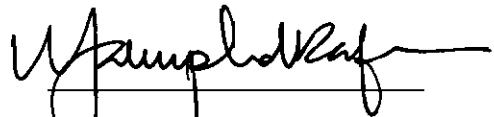
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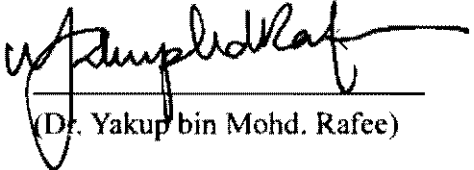
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PENGESAHAN

Adalah ini diakui bahawa saya, **TAN LAN CHING** disertai penulisan yang bertajuk **THE INFLUENCES OF MENTAL STATE IN VISUAL ARTS** sebagai sebahagian daripada keperluan untuk Ijazah Sarjana Muda Seni Gunaan dan Kreatif dalam Program **Seni Halus** diterima.

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this research is to study about the influences of individual's mental state in field of visual arts. This research is important to see the potential of individual's mental state in field of visual arts when this aspect is still limited in the scope of scientific research. The approach will be enlightened through comparison strategy, observation and referencing. This research is expected to achieve the objectives on how to identify the influences of mental state in visual arts before a systematic method will be employed to enable ones to induce themselves in unconscious and subconscious with sanity and implement the aspect of individual's mental state in the creation of personal artworks. In the end of the research, the researcher hopes that the aspect of individual's mental state will be highlighted in fine arts in order to unlock the artists' creativity and imagination during the creation of personal artworks.

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk menyelidik impak status mental seseorang individu dalam dunia seni visual. Kajian ini penting untuk melihat potensi kriteria mental individu dalam dunia seni visual sedangkan kriteria ini masih terhad dalam bidang sains. Metodologi kajian yang akan digunakan untuk penyelidikan ini termasuklah strategi perbandingan, pemerhatian dan rujukan publikasi atau laman sesawang. Kajian ini dijangka untuk mencapai objektif-objektif kajian yang telah ditentukan iaitu mengenal pasti impak atau pengaruh status mental individu terhadap bidang seni visual, menganalisis dan memilih sistem atau langkah yang paling sesuai untuk mencapai status mental dan minda yang berbeza, dan seterusnya mengaplikasikan kriteria status mental dan minda dalam pengkaryaan individual. Pengkaji berharap kriteria ini boleh dilanjutkan dan diimplikasikan dalam bidang seni visual secara meluas pada masa hadapan.

1.1 Introduction

The research is aimed to study about the influences of individual's mental state in field of visual arts. The research relies on the understanding of the role of psychology which deal with individual mental and mind state regardless of subconscious or unconscious mind in enabling ones to unlock the power of imagination and creativity.

This research is important to see the potential of individual mental state in field of visual arts when this aspect is still limited in certain scopes especially in scientific research. In fact, the potential of individual mental state can be observed when some surrealists produce great masterpieces while inducing themselves in an unconscious and subconscious state. For instances, the great surrealism painter whom produced a lots of influential masterpieces during the century of 20th, Salvador Dali. His masterpieces includes '*The Persistence of Memory*', '*The Invisible Man*', '*Rose Meditation*' and '*Swans Reflecting Elephants*'. All of these artworks are enriched with interesting component such as irrational composition of objects.

According to Minissale (2013), the application of individual's mental state are still limited among surrealists and scientists. Minissale also stated that the aspects of psychology are able to combine all of the most important developments in recent scientific research on visual perception and cognition. The implementation of ones' unconscious and subconscious mind could also forgo their previous concepts, notions or understanding of the world and reality while producing personal artworks. The application of these aspects could also enhance and enrich the content of artists' artworks by conveying or visualising their emotions, identity, messages and story through their artworks.

The approach of the research will be enlightened through theoretical framework, comparison strategy, referencing method and observation. Due to Gabriel (2008), theoretical framework can be defined as a method which used to limit the scope of the relevant datas by focusing on the specific variables and defining the specific viewpoint that the researcher will take in analysing and interpreting the data to be gathered. The researcher will uses this method to analyse and interpret all the datas collected and extract the datas which are relevant to the study on influences of mental state in fine arts. The information of the related topic also will be gathered through different kind of referencing such as published books, journals, artworks, reviews and online sources. Through these reference, the potential of individual's mental state in fine arts and the importances of unconscious and subconscious mind in order to boost ones imagination and creativity will be identified. Besides, the researcher will also used the comparison strategy in order to conduct the research. To identify the influences of individual's mental state in fine arts, the researcher will observe the artworks by Salvador Dali which includes "The Persistence of Memory", "Swans Reflecting Elephants" and "The Invisible Man". The researcher will also study some of the cases which are related to the topic studied..

In the end of this proposal, the researcher will be able to elaborate the influences of mental state in contemporary arts, to imply the aspects of subconscious and unconscious mind while producing an artwork, and discuss further about the solution or systematic method that can be applied to induced an artist in an unconscious or subconscious state in order to explore the universal in oneself without suffering from any mental illness or psychological disorder. There will be a conclusion that summarises the overall of this research on the study of the influences of mental state in the field of fine arts.

1.2 Problem Statement

Individual mental state is part of psychological study which is a broad field related to the scientific studies of the mind, cognitive and behaviour. Commonly, psychology can also be defined as the science of mind and mental states which influence the impact on one's behaviour. According to Gomez (2007), she stated that the direction of the field of human mental state should be heading in the literature of fine arts. She also said that it is important to determine the connection between fine arts and psychology. In line with Thorburn (2000), the aspect of arts and human mindset has unbreakable relationship as if arts has become less remote from science it would become less remote from philosophy as well. The potential of individual's mental state in arts can be viewed through some masterpieces created by great artist. For instance, Salvador Dalí. Dalí is one of the most influential painter that created a lot of great masterpieces during the century of 20th such as "The Persistence of Memory", "Swans Reflecting Elephants" and "The Invisible Man". Dalí was famous with his major contribution to the movement of surrealism which he develop a surreal method called the 'Paranoiac-Critical Method' and 'Nuclear Mysticism', a form of mental or psychological exercise to access the unconscious and unconscious parts of human mind with sanity in order to gain artistic inspiration and thought beyond previous notions, concepts and logical understanding. This method could also unlock ones' imagination and creativity while producing an artwork. The contribution by Dalí in connecting arts and human mind could prove the positive potential of individual's mental state in field of fine arts.

Due to Minissale (2013), there are still common perceptions among the socials that individual's mental state will only be studied and applied in the scope of scientific research and surrealism artworks. The implementation of individual's mental state has not yet been applied to the study of other artistic form. Clearly, the study of individual's mental state is still limited in the scope among scientists and surrealist while this aspects possess positive potential in field of fine arts.

Thus, this research will conduct a study on the influences of individual's mental state in the field of fine arts. This research will also analyse and choose the best systematic method that can be applied to induce an artist in an unconscious or subconscious state in order to explore the universality in oneself without suffering from any mental illness or psychological disorder.

1.3 Objectives

The general objective of this research is to study about the potential of psychology in visual arts. Besides, the researcher will also carry out the study based on some specific objectives as stated as the following:

1. To identify the influences of individual mental state in field of fine arts.
2. To analyse and choose the best method that enables ones to tap into unconscious or subconscious mind with sanity.
3. To implement the aspect of individual mental state in the creation of personal artwork.

1.3 Research Question

The study on the influences of mental state in field of visual arts will also be conducted based on the research questions as following:

1. How does individual's mental state influences in field of fine arts?
2. What is the best method to tap into unconscious and subconscious mind with sanity?
3. How to implement the aspects of individual mental state in the creation of personal artwork?

1.4 Scope of Research

The study aims to investigate the influences of individual's mental state in field of visual arts. Besides, the study also includes the scope of automatism which related to ones' subconscious and unconscious mind. The scope of this research also includes the systematic method that enables artist to induce themselves in the state of subconscious and unconscious with sanity. This research will also reveals the potential of human mental state in visual arts through different approaches.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The study on the influences of individual's mental state in field of fine arts are reviewed separately here due to the influences and potential of individual's mental state in fine arts, applicable method to tap into subconscious and unconscious and some case studies which related to human mental state in arts. In this study, these aspects will be analysed to explained the influences of ones' mental state in the creation of personal artworks.

2.2 The Potential of Individual Mental State in Visual Arts

Individual mental state is a minor study in psychology which is a broad field related to the scientific study of human mind, cognitive and behaviour. In general, psychology can also be defined as the study of mind and behaviour in relation to a particular field of knowledge of activity.

In line with Chilton (2006), individual's mental state is having an unbreakable relationship in fine art. Individual's mental state has positive potential in field of visual arts as it giving a lots of influences which contribute to a well-contented artworks. According to Gomez (2007), the direction of human mind should be heading in the literature of visual arts. Gomez also believes that the application of individual mental state in visual art is able to strengthen the evidence that art can be used as a therapeutic tool to address mental and physical wellness. This is because the artists could explore the universality in themselves

and convey their personal expression, concepts, identity, imagination and ideas through their artworks.

Besides, individual's mental state possess well potential in field of visual art as it could boost individual's creativity and imagination. In line with Breton(1924), an artist could forgo or bypass his or her reasons and rationality by accessing their subconscious and unconscious mind which led them to practice personal style while creating an artwork in terms of his strokes, composition, colours, subject matters and so on. For instance, the great surrealist whom created a lots of influential artworks in the century of 20th, Salvador Dali. Dali has develop a surrealist method which tackle with individual's mental state especially unconscious and subconscious mind while creating his own artworks. Dali believed that ones could view or thought things from different perspective when ones induce themselves in different mental state.

2.3 Applicable Method to Achieve Different Mental State

In line with Freud (1900), dreams and the inner mental state are both important as a valid revelations of human desires and emotions. There are several method which enable ones to induce themselves in the state of subconscious and unconscious. The applicable method includes paranoiac-critical method, Nuclear Mysticism and meditation.

Paranoiac-critical method is a sensibility, surreal or a way of perceiving reality developed by the great surrealist, Salvador Dali. This method is also a form of mental or physical exercise to access the subconscious and unconscious parts of human mind in order to gain an artistic inspiration and thought beyond previous notions, concepts and logical understanding. He realised that the aspects of dreams and imagination by using this

method enable him to change the real world in the way he wanted in his own surreal artwork. Generally, paranoiac-critical method can be defined as a surreal or spontaneous method of irrational knowledge based on the interpretive critical association of delirious phenomena. Dali's His well-known masterpieces includes "The Persistence of Memory", "Swans Reflecting Elephants" and "The Invisible Man". All of these artworks are enriched with artistic components such as irrational objects, optical illusions and dreamy explorations.

Nuclear Mysticism is another philosophy interpretation of Quantum mechanics which Dali loves to use in his masterpieces. This method enables him to tackle with the phenomena of personal consciousness in the creation of his artworks. Nuclear Mysticism is a broad criteria which considered as overly subjective instead of reality based on different perspectives, beliefs and observation by different individual. (Gregg, 2008)

Besides, another method that deals with individual mental state includes meditation. Generally, meditation is a method which enables ones to engage in mental exercise in order to achieve higher level of spiritual awareness. This method also has been widely used to achieve better focus on certain things or mind relaxation as well as to maintain mental wellness. Meditation can be achieve in form of yoga and vedanta.

2.4 Case Studies

The researcher decided to do some case studies on the artworks by great artists which related with the topic of the research. The artists that the researcher studied in order to gain better understanding and observation on the influences of individual mental state in field of visual arts includes Vincent Van Gogh, Kim Noble and Salvador Dali. All of these artists

has their own way to deal with their mental state, some of them were suffering from mental illness such as depression and multiple personalities.

2.4.1 Vincent Van Gogh



Figure 1: Vincent Van Gogh, *Self-Portrait* (1853), Oil painting, Art Institute of Chicago

Vincent Van Gogh was a Dutch Post Impressionist painter. He is one of the most influential painter in the history of western art movements. According to A&E Television Networks (2007), Van Gogh was a post-impressionist whom distributed a lot in the field of visual arts during the century of 20th. In fact, Van Gogh suffered from mental illness such as psychotic, highly depression, hallucination, mood disorder, metabolic disorder and delusions. His mentally illness is the major reason that leads to his bad lifestyle. For instance, Van Gogh was a heavy drinker and he did not eat properly. His unstable mentality caused him to view things differently. He tends to express and pour out all his feelings and emotions through his artworks by his own style of strokes and colours. In the early years, Van Gogh still working hard

to produce realistic artwork such as some still life or landscape as shown in Figure 2 and 3.



Figure 2: Vincent Van Gogh, *Worn Out* (1882), Pencil on Watercolour paper,

Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam



Figure 3: Vincent Van Gogh, *Still Life with Open Bible, Extinguished Candles and Novels*

(1885), Van Gogh Museum, Armsterdam

After Van Gogh suffered from mentally breakdown, his painting style started changed as well. In line with Hughes (2002). Van Gogh perceived colours as having “psychological and more weight”. Colours had become the most important part in Van Gogh’s artwork as he thought that different colours symbolised different subjects. The bold and clear lines and strokes that created by Van Gogh produced overly stylised and abstract works. Figure 4 shows the example of Van Gogh’s late masterpieces.



Figure 4: Vincent Van Gogh, *Olive Trees with the Alpilles in the Background*, (1889). Oil on Canvas, Museum of Modern Art, New York

2.4.2 Kim Noble



Figure 5: Portrait of Kim Noble (2005) Source from <https://www.telegraph.co.uk>

Besides Van Gogh, there is another artist that deal with the related topic is Kim Noble. Due to Mitchison (2011), Kim Noble has dissociative identity disorder (DID) which generally known as multiple personality. Kim Noble has 20 main personalities, and 14 of them are artists whom obtained high level of enthusiasms towards arts. In her own biography in year 2010, she mentioned that these 14 personalities never have formal art training but became interested in painting in year 2004 after spending a short period with an art therapist. Each of them have their own distinctive style, strokes, colours and themes. Their senses towards the beauty and aesthetic in field of arts. In line with Kim Noble (2011), the style of artworks by each of the artists in her body ranging from solitary deserts, sea scenes and abstracts to collages and paintings with traumatic content.