

Batik and Performing Arts, An Analogy and Meaning

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Abstract

One of the most important words in art is beautiful. That beauty can move a feeling of pleasure. Art is not only beautiful and pleasurable, but also a means of communication of human feelings. Through this feeling communication can see batik art and performing art in Indonesia. This paper presents a series of reflections that distinguish between batik art and performing art, as both have an analogy and meaning in the life of Indonesian society. Batik art is one of fine arts that is a manifestation of human's work that contains elements of beauty in the visual sense. The medium for batik art is color. As a part of the visual arts, batik has a time (moment) at any time in which in the sense of batik art has a definite and permanent form. While the performing art is a combination of human's works performed in a show, such as dance, drama, and gamelan music. Medium of motion and sound is clearly showed in the performing art. Performing art have a limited time (moment). Performing art has a form that is not fixed and stable. Both batik and the performing arts have the same meanings, namely expressive, psychological, and spiritual meanings.

Keywords: batik, performing art, analogy, meaning.

1. Introduction

Every individual has a freedom to interpret an art based on his/her interpreting ability. For example, art is interpreted as any kinds of beauty created by human. This interpretation can be found in various arts, such as: karawitan, puppetry, dance, music, carvings, paintings, sculptures, batik, and so on. In order to see the beauty, for example, in the musical arts we can find that a combination of the sound of gamelan instruments is wonderful and enjoyable. Similarly, in dance, we can find that a combination of gestures, from head, hands, feet, and the body itself, is beautiful and enjoyable. Of course, it also happens in puppetry, carvings, paintings, batik, and other arts. All of these arts show that art is a product of beauty. Its important that the beauty of art can also bring enjoyment. Therefore, any human activity that can bring that sense of beauty and enjoyment is called as art. Art belongs to everyone, regardless the social status whether he/she is rich or poor. In reality, not only government / educational institutions, and the capital owners (businessmen) who are able to invite the shadow puppet groups with famous puppeteers Ki Anom Suroto and Ki Manteb Sudarsono that are expensive and prestigious, but also the non-rich people are also to invite them. For example, Mujiono, a driver assistant (kernet) for public transportation in Blora, could invite a group of kethoprak theatre in January 2011 for a day and night. Likewise, a beggar from Sragen (Tempo, 1985), was able to invite a group of tayub art for his son's wedding event. A farmer from Sukoharjo was also able to invite a puppet show group with a famous puppeteer Ki Anom Soeroto, in today's standard fee (2016) that the fee for a show can reach up to 120 million rupiahs. We obtained the information about the fee from the committee of Anniversary of Yogyakarta State University that had ever invited the puppet show group of Ki Anom Soeroto for the event.

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The fee for Ki Manteb Sudarsono is higher than for Ki Anom Soeroto, but he has more inviters than. Both of the famous puppeteers show that despite the high fees, they still have many public inviters. The father of Indonesian Education, Ki Hajar Dewantara, had also worked on the definition of art as a product of beauty, and that can drive the sense of beauty for those who see it. Therefore, due to its ability to drive the feelings, it means that it can also generate the enjoyment, so that it is sought and enjoyed by many people. According to him, art is all humans' actions arising out of from their feelings and is beautiful, so that it is able to drive human's feelings (Soedarso, 1988: 4). In this definition, there is a thing that is not contained yet in the previous definition, namely the transfer of feeling. A feeling about beauty in an artist can be transferred to people who view his/her work(s). Thus, according to this definition, art is not just something beautiful and magnificent, but also means of communication of humans' feelings. The latter is in line with the definition of art by Leo Tolstoy, who is famous as a figure related to the transfer of feeling. Similarly, what happened in batik art, with all of its motives, genres, characteristics, and creativity, has been able to drive humans' feelings. Batik art belongs not only to the producing regions and its supporting communities, but also to the world, since batik has been recognized as a cultural heritage by UNESCO in 2009. Upon the recognition and legitimacy from UNESCO, it seems that many Indonesian and foreign people both Eastern and Western, have loved batik art.

In Indonesia, a new social phenomenon has appeared due to the obligation for teachers and students to wear batik in several decades. Likewise, civil servants and private employees are also required to wear batik in certain days. In some sectors of community activities, many people wear batik such as in religion lectures (pengajian), hospital visits, events, Independence Day contemplation (tirakatan), festivity (kenduri), celebrations (syukuran), guest welcoming, gathering, and so on. Even nowadays, both foreign and domestic visitors, are required to wear batik sarongs before entering Borobudur Temple area. Reviewing from the form of expression, batik has more free and diverse motives. This is due to the creation of the drawing is based on instinct and mind of the artist (Hengky, 2014: 125). Some motives are usually found in plants, animals, stars, moon, sun, neem leaves, gorek basi, and the combination of other forms based on the creativity of the artist. In its development, the motives from a region have richer repertoire of the heritage of this country. There are many different motives found in a region, while Indonesia has some regions that produces batik. Recently, there is a phenomenon of the various elements of society that has many activities to promote the use of batik uniform. It can be seen in the instruction to wear batik on some fields such as: education, government, community group, and tourism. The social phenomena will give meaning to the various parties who have been utilizing batik as a part of the supporting elements in life. The social phenomena indicates a number of issues that from the example of expression of batik art and the performing arts can be seen for its each form of expression that can be assessed for its meaning.

2. Expressive Meaning

A dance work by Miroto entitled "Kembang Sampah (Trash Flower)" describes a sadness for many massacres. Visually, the dance contains a scene of white-robed priests who carry and mount on humans skulls in a grassland. Due to the very expressive feeling, the work touches the hearts of the audiences, because it is known that the work is a social critique on the regime that conducts many massacres. The expression of art contains human's feelings, such as happiness, sadness, disappointment, melancholy, and so on (Langer: 2006: 17). The expresiveness of the work speaks (imagines) that how ruthless the regime against the people, including the innocent people.

Figure. 1. The Performance of Reog in Klaten, Central Java, Indonesia (2015).



Figure. 2. Rama on Stage, Ramayana dancedrama: a performing arts at Prambanan temple, Indonesia



It seems that an artist does not longer look at the simply beautiful and enjoyable artwork, but as a medium to criticize the lame socio-political issues in Indonesia, which often bring bad or agitated feelings to the audiences. Even the audiences have intrigued mind to enjoy the artwork. Thus, a choreography by Sardono W. Kusumo "Hutan Plastik (Plastic Forest)" that presents two dancers in mud is a form of dance work that is considered to be not beautiful but enjoyable by some people. The dance is used as a criticism to the illegal logging issue that is happened in almost all forests in Indonesia. The forests are now barren and will result in erosion, floods and landslides any time. Sardono work that is presented in the 1980s predicted that the forests in Indonesia would be deforested illegally that would have an impact on natural disasters. In the 1980s, when the natural disasters were not as much as nowadays, were able to be predicted by a choreographer. Moreover, in this case, with the presence of other modern artworks that are now emerging around us, there is something else that we will be demonstrated on something that does not look beautiful and is unsightly. It is also accommodated by some painters, choreographers and other artists who are now rarely seeing their arts as a project of beautiful creations but sometimes as unsightly creations. However, their artworks look very expressive. Their expressiveness clearly implies that can be used as a way to solve the raising social problems.

Figure. 3. Batik Sekarjagad from Central Java, Indonesia



Figure. 4. Batik Sekarjagad from Yogyakarta, Indonesia



The paintings by Affandi (a painting maestro in Indonesia) are many about poverty, squalor, and sadness. Some examples of his paintings are "Pengemis (Beggars)", "Seorang Anak Menuntun Ayahnya yang Buta (A Child Guiding His Blind Father)", and many others. Affandi often made paintings about poverty and sadness that are related to the conditions of surrounding as a reflection of his feelings that are touched by the situation. In these works, he did not put any impression of beauty at all, even certain people feel uncomfortable to see paintings that depict squalor. Nevertheless, his works still look expressive and full of meaning. Similarly, the emergence of batik arts, mainly from various regions, such as Solo, Yogyakarta, Pekalongan, Banyumas, Cirebon, Lasem, Bantul, Sleman, and Borobudur, show its own impression. Various patterns and motives shown in batik expression of each region to reflect the meaning behind the expression itself. On a piece of batik cloth can be found about the meaning of a harmonious relationship between human and God, human and nature, and also human and other humans. Moreover, batik motives have also local wisdom of a particular society. Therefore, this heritage must be preserved, including Sekar Jagat batik. This pattern has also meaning and philosophy that contains moral knowledge to guide humans toward majesty (keluhuran).

Originally, Sekar Jagad motif is from Jogjakarta and Surakarta. Symbolically, Sekar Jagad motif contains a symbol of map of the world in its white-cloth background. The word "Sekar" comes from a Dutch word "kar" that means map, while the word "Jagad" comes from the Javanese word that means world. The essence of the meaning conveyed in Sekar Jagad pattern is diversity, both in Indonesia and worldwide. Then, this batik motif also shows the meaning of beauty and magnificence. The diversity is realized in repeated geometric patterns that are paired symmetrically. It has a meaning of beauty and majesty of world living. Sekar Jagad batik usually has a nuance of flowers with color variations on each part. The development of this motif began in the 18th century and is still maintained until now due to its beauty and appeal (<http://batik.or.id/makna-dan-filosofi-batik-sekar-jagad>)

3. Psychological Meaning

Slightly different from the above expression, Everyman Encyclopedia states that art is everything that is done by people not for their basic needs, but solely for the willingness to luxury, pleasure, or spiritual needs. Hoe is made to meet basic needs, that is to produce food. Then, hoe is not an art based on the definition. So do hundreds of other items such as houses for shelter, clothes to cover nakedness, and syringes, books, tables, chairs, flower pots, motorcycles, cars, knives, waste baskets, dishes, spoons, forks, shoes, bags, etc. However, one that should not be forgotten, for example, clothes to cover nakedness and cover from cold is not art, but due to the addition of accents and accessories that are often considered having no benefits except to beautify, then clothes become an art. Such clothes not only meet the basic needs, but also needs for enjoyment. Different to the attitude of a puppets carver who just glue the finished puppers on the leather, then scratch the contours using a needle tip, and also carve it. Maybe, he can whistle while carving, although he is carving a terrible giant figures. If he had been able to come to feel, he may be not only an ordinary carver, since he can paint a Heroine puppet character with a firm character such a Srikandi .

(woman heroine). Therefore, there is a question arises whether shadow puppets is an art or not. And of course, we will regret when such a beautiful work is not categorized as an art. Apparently, this limit is less provide place for the less expressive arts. Finally, a view from Thomas Munro, an American philosopher and art theorist, that art is a man-made tool to cause psychological effects on other people who see it. The effects include responses in the form of rational and emotional observation, recognition, imagination. This view clearly emphasizes the spiritual activity on the side of the recipients; art must be taken seriously, with all of the functions of the existing soul. So it is not it is incorrect that in reacting on a landscape painting we are only quite satisfied for knowing the depicted object, for example, a deforested of Merapi mountain scenery. Our response should be on how our attitude towards that object, what experiences we felt that are related to the object, for example, watcing the panic people who were pursued by the cold lava of the mountain, and so on. From the above discussion it can presumably to draw a tentative conclusion about the psychological meaning of batik and the performing arts. In this case, batik and performing arts are the human works that communicates the inner experiences of the artist. The inner experiences are presented beautifully or interestingly that stimulate the inner experiences of other humans. The experiences are not only driven by a desire to meet the basic human needs, but rather an attempt to complement and enhance the degree of humanity, and meet the spiritual needs. From the above conclusion, we can get an illustration that art is not important, because it does not meet the basic human needs but of human psychology. But remember about the humans' dignity, that is highly necessary for the modern humans. Indeed, if we look at the life of primitive humans, we will find that their whole life just to meet their basic needs to survive. To what we called as their artworks, for example, the shields of Asmat ethnic group or hudok mask of Dayak Kenyah ethnic group, were actually made to meet their primary tasks. However, it is different from the way of living of modern humans who have able to spare their time and attention to other things. The more free from the effort to survive, the more needs for arts; and nowadays, if we pay attention on everything on our surroundings, we can realize that arts are in everyting, so that arts are inseparable from them (Soedarso, 1990). Starting from morning when awaken, until night, humans need for arts.

4. Spiritual Meaning

Creating batik and performing arts is the emotions channelling. If it is in a quiet psychological condition, then the results will be better. In contrast, if it is in an upset psychological condition, the results will be poor. Quiet in creating batik and performing arts depends on the spiritual meaning, the meaning which brings the artists towards their beliefs. Spirituality contains a relationship with God Almighty, depends on the individual's belief. Some experts have studied it systematically, among others, according to Burkhardt (1993) spirituality includes the following aspects: 1). Associated with some thing that is unknown or uncertain in life, 2).

Finding the meaning and purpose of life, 3). Recognizing the ability to use the resources and strength in self, and 4). Having a sense of attachment to the self and to The Almighty. Concretely, based on the concept, the spiritual sense can be associated with the following words: meaning, hope, harmony, and belief systems (Dyson, Cobb, Forman, 1997). Creating batik and performing arts is a sense of hope in humans' life that leads to prosperity. According to Adler, humans are conscious beings, which means that they are aware to all reasons their behavior, conscious of their inferiority, ability to guide their behavior, and realization on the full meaning of their behavior and then to self-actualization. (In Mahpur and Habib, 2006: 35). Spirituality is directed to the subjective experience from what is existentially relevant to humans. Spirituality is not just whether life is precious or not, but also focus on why the life is precious. Being spiritual means having association to the spiritual or psychological things than the physical or material. Spirituality is self-awakening or self-enlightenment in achieving the purpose and meaning of life. Spirituality is an essential part of the entire of health and prosperity. (Hasan, 2006: 288) Explicitly, Piedmont views spirituality as a series of motivational traits, a general emotional power that encourages, directs, and chooses a variety of individual behaviors (Piedmont, 2001: 7). Furthermore, Piedmont defines spirituality as an individual's attempt to understand a broad sense towards personal meaning in an eschatological context. It means that as humans, we are fully aware to mortality. Thus, we will hardly try to build some understanding on the purpose and meaning of the life that we are living. (Piedmont, 2001: 5). Spirituality in creating batik and the performing arts is a different dimension from individuals differences. As a different dimension, spirituality opens the gate to expand our understanding on humans' motivations and goals, as a creature, and pursuing and trying to satisfy themselves.

5. Analogy of Batik and Performing Arts

There are various divisions in fine arts, including: paintings, wood carvings, sculptures, pottery, batik, and the similar. In performing arts, there are also various divisions, including: music or sound art, dance art, literature and theatre arts. The divisions have its own medium in expressing humans' experiences, such as music with an arrangement of tones using voices or sounds coming from the human's voice and musical instruments, dance through the body movements of the dancers, and fine art is a branch of arts that expresses the humans' artistic experiences through the two and three dimensional objects that take place and are long lasting. The long-lasting characteristic is the advantage of fine arts compared with performing arts (Moersid, 2013: 121). The paintings created by the painters thousands years ago can still be enjoyed by people now in a relatively same condition as at the time of creation. Though a song of Sheila on Seven is very nice and sounded in the air will then be vanished into the night wind, and when it is played in other time, moreover, if the song is played by another band, not by Sheila on Seven, in fact we've been dealing with other artwork. The problem is that each time playing a song, each player has a different interpretation. Although the branches of arts have their own medium and are different from one to another, but they have general rules that can be applied to all of them. We've often heard that there is a rhythm in music, but in the different realization of fine arts, it also has a different rhythm. In contrast, the composition that we often hear in arts, is also appeared in musical arts, and so on. It's not surprising that our good introduction to a branch of arts will help us to understand other branches of arts. The languages are different, but the grammars are similar (Soedarso, 1990). If we now direct our view to batik art, then it also has a lot of variety of media and techniques. Batik art also has some branches, such as paintings, printings, crafts, visual communication and decorative arts. Furthermore, each branch still also has several technical categories. To have a little knowledge about the classes, it needs to discuss it one by one slightly deeper (Soedarso, 1990).

To find out the differences between batik and performing arts can be followed as follows. A batik's collection in Batik Museum of Yogyakarta is Sarung Panjang Soga Jawa that was made in Yogyakarta between 1920-1930. This batik has a pattern of boketan adu jago with a plain background that is very fascinating to those who see it. everytime or anytime, Tourists can see the batik. Someone who is in Yogyakarta, when he/she wants to watch the batik, he/she can see it for 20 or more times. In 30 years from now, or even in a century, if the batik is still showed in the same space, someone can see the same batik. It indicates that the batik artworks (fine arts), once made, just need a space to show them off. Due to this nature, batik artwork is a durable or long-lasting art. The durability of a batik depends on care and the materials used. For example, Sarung Panjang Soga Jawa batik that has a pattern of boketan adu jago is made from the sufficient materials as well as the care to the batik that has a high cost. Evidently, the batik art that was made in the 1920s is still able to survive until now. Instead, the durability does not apply to the performing arts.

When the performing arts such as music, drama, dance are presented, then once the shows are over, those are over for the whole range of performances. As if there are no traces, since the shows can not be repeated exactly similar to when these were shown for the first time. For example, on May 21, 2016, a ceremony for the 52th Anniversary of Yogyakarta State University (UNY) in UNY auditorium. In order to enliven the ceremony, a ballet was shown by the Department of Dance Education of FBS UNY. There were 15 dancers who danced with a duration of 15 minutes. This ballet performance was from 09.20 a.m. until 09.35 a.m. If any of the invited guests arrived late at time, for example, he/she arrived at 9:40, he/she was still able to see the ballet for 5 minutes. But if any of the invited guests arrived at 10.00, obviously he/she would not be able to see the ballet. Whereas, the ballet was only shown once, only in the ceremony of UNY Anniversary.

It shows that the performing arts for audiences, not only require space as the fine arts but also the time specially allocated by the audience. However, what is called as time is the limited performing time. In that sense, when the show (performing time) is finished, the show is no longer available. Performing arts are vanished (passed) along with the end of the performing time. Therefore, performing arts often called a moment of arts, or the non-durable arts. People often shake their head while watching a wonderful performing art, but it only lasts a moment. Whereas there is a high production cost to support performing up, that can be up to billions of rupiah. For example, a musical performance by a maestro, Michael Jackson, the cost to set the stage along with the lighting can reach up to billions of dollars. Likewise, a leather puppet show with a famous puppeteer Ki Anom Suroto, the cost can reach up to 120 million rupiah. It's a pity if it is only performed once through a limited stage / space and time.

Reviewing the issue of the duration of the performing arts, through technology, people start thinking about how to make each performing art can be documented through a recording media, such as vinyl records, cassette tapes, films, videos, compact discs, laser discs, and so on. The non-durable or temporary performing arts that usually disappears after being performed, can now be recorded. The recordings can be played many times. Here, then the recording arts appear.

6. Conclusion

Batik art is one of fine arts that is a human's work contains the elements of beauty. Its beauty is absorbed by the sense of sight. The pleasure is caused by the integration of elements of the form of batik artwork, such as a variety of colors, alternating lines, various forms of the fields, similarity of the shape of the objects described in its paintings, the expressed thematic aspects, uniqueness, textures, and so on. The beauty in a simple sense is something that gives pleasure to the people who see it. The pleasure of is due to the beauty of the work itself, not to other interests that made the pleasure. The medium of batik art is the color. Fine arts involve two elements, namely space and audience. The time (moment) is at any time. Fine arts have a definite and permanent form. As a batik art created in 1920-1930, now is still intact. While performing arts is a human's work that is performed to the audience. Almost all types of arts are integrated into a performance, like a dance accompanied by gamelan instruments music as a medium of motion and sound that is very clearly in the performing arts. Performing arts involves four elements: space, time, artist, and audience. Time determines the duration of the performance. If a ballet is performed in a different place and time, then it will have a different reality. Moreover, when the ballet is performed by different dancer(s), it will also have a different result, due to the different interpretation of every dancer. Performing arts have an uncertain and unfixed form. As a show in the ceremony of Yogyakarta State University (UNY) 52th Anniversary in UNY Auditorium 2016, ballet, if it is performed in different places and time, it will have a different result. Despite the different expression, both fine and performing arts have the expression of meaningful values.

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