

Traces of Art as a Reflection on Women's Trauma

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Abstract. A person may experience trauma due to threatening and dangerous events, both psychologically and physically. Utilizing art as a medium for reflection can be a form of representation of trauma scars embedded in the memory and body. This study aims to obtain some information through female artists in Indonesia. This research uses the method *literature review* by collecting and studying data on articles and works by artists to obtain information on the art trail method as a reflection of their trauma through female artists in Indonesia. Choosing female artists because, in Indonesia there are still some issues of trauma to women which are considered taboo and difficult to discuss openly. Of the three female artists, namely Lucia Hartini, I G.A.K Murniasih and Nia Gautama relatively have something in common with regard to past traumas represented through works of art as a way of reflection. The conclusions from the results of this study are female artists who have experienced past trauma, how they overcome their trauma through making art so that artwork can become a trace of reflection on their trauma.

Keywords: *reflection; trauma; women.*

1 Introduction

There are various psychological aspects that play a role in artistic creativity, one of which is trauma. The word trauma is used to refer to events that cause excessive stress. 1Giller, (1999) said "An event can be called traumatic if the event causes extreme stress and exceeds the ability of the individual, trauma is caused by events that are so negative as to produce a lasting impact on the mental and emotional stability of the individual". According to American Psychiatric Association from a cognitive perspective, memories of traumatic events can trigger feelings of anxiety, excessive fear, and feelings of depression. In addition, as previously mentioned, a person can experience trauma both because of events

¹ E, Giller. 1999. What is Psychological Trauma? The Sidran Institute. Retrieved October 2, 2020, from <https://www.sidran.org/wpcontent/uploads/2019/04/What-Is-Psychological-Trauma.pdf>

that are threatening and dangerous, psychologically and physically. ²Gunars (1992) stated that in cathartic psychology known in Freud's counseling process, trauma is emotional and psychological pressure in general due to unpleasant events or experiences related to violence. (p. 106). Catharsis as part of the storyline or representation of a work or as an experience that leads to the creation of art as a medium for catharsis or release of anxiety. Term "*catharsis*" in *Indonesia Dictionary* (KBBI) has a definition in the form of self-purification which brings spiritual renewal and release from tension. Channeling emotions does not have to be done in a real way with words but can be done with a cathartic method through creating art. The release of pent up emotions plays an important role for people who are in emotional trouble. So that this aspect of art is an aspect that is very human in nature, art can unite humans in the same experience.

Individuals who view obstacles, can express themselves not only through verbal processes but also non-verbal processes. To overcome individuals who experience obstacles in expressing themselves verbally, an individual can express himself through their works. This reflection is from the barriers of self-expression that they are not able to express verbally. ³Cahyono (2018) states "Reflection comes from the Latin, *to reflect* and *I reflected* which means turning back. Self-reflection is the human ability to introspect and the willingness to learn more about human nature, purpose and essence of life. (p. 36). ⁴Stating "Reflection is defined as a deep and meaningful learning process, which shows a cycle of discovery in achieving goals in finding solutions to the problems raised" (Moon, 2000). ⁵Kolb (1984) stated 'Reflection is placed as an important part of the learning process *'experiantal learning'*'. ⁶Morrow (2009) states "Reflection is a learning model that prioritizes thinking processes on the basis of self-reflection, past experiences and future expectations". According to the author, reflection in the sense of reflecting on oneself is examining. In Eastern philosophy, especially the Japanese and Korean Zen traditions, the word reflection has an additional meaning, reflection is the act of seeing the situation here and now as it is, without the slightest prejudice or assumption. In a general sense, reflection is a characteristic of the human mind, namely the mind which is like a mirror. Reflection activities can be done anywhere and anytime because working in the human mind whatever is experienced by us or others on a daily basis will be

² Mrs. Y. Singgih D. Gunarsa and Singgih D. Gunarsa. Jakarta, Mount Mulia. 2007. ISBN 979-415074-6 978-979-415-074-0. Indonesia. Print 16

absorbed and then processed into their own views. Utilizing reflection can be a form of representation that leaves scars like trauma and is embedded in the memory and body.

Art is one of the roles that acts as a reflection, the value of social life in its track record has never been separated from the figure of a woman. Making works of art as effective resistance, which visualize the various sufferings of Indonesian women. As a woman, the writer cannot escape from the experience of the roles of women artists who have such a big impact on the good of art in the future. Female artists store and give a myriad of images, ideas, ideas and themes to be adopted in works of art, dance, literature, film, photographs to cultural products on television. How do the values of reflection, social life, and women's suffering become the desires of images, ideas, ideas and themes to be adopted in art?

Related to these problems in this research, we look at the phenomenon of existence in several works by female artists, namely Lucia Hartini, I G.A.K Murniasih and Nia Gautama.

2 Method

This study uses an approach *literature review*. Research conducted by collecting data on scientific writings in the form of articles and works of artists is then studied and identified in more depth to obtain information related to research which is then directed at *literature review* on visuals. Article data sources and visual data obtained from relevant sources.

⁷(Denney & Tewksbury, 2013) states the following:

Literature review States that literature review is a comprehensive overview of the research that has been done on a specific topic to show the reader what is already known about the topic and what is not known, to seek rationale for research that has been done or for ideas for further research.

⁸Based on Mustain (2015) This research also uses a visual interpretation approach that is qualitative in nature related to the communication representation of a

⁷ A.S, Denney., & R, Tewksbury. (2013). How to Write a Literature Review. Journal of Criminal Justice Education. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10511253.2012.730617>

⁸ I, Mustain. (2015). Ability to read and interpret graphs and data: A case study of an 8th grade junior high school student. Sciantiae Educatia: Journal of Science Education, 4(2).

configuration of ideas, which may require a repetition of the idea into a new configuration of the interpreter's thinking.

The author examines in such a way from 3 samples of female artists through the methods used and sees how they reflect on trauma through the visualization of their work by analyzing form, visuals, symbols, colors and so on.

3 Results and Discussion

In some of the discussions above, the author describes 3 female artists, namely Lucia Hartini, I G.A.K Murniasih, and Nia Gautama. The three female artists found one thing in common, namely that there are works that focus on trauma from past experiences and go through it in a reflective manner, as they overcome their trauma through creating art, so that the artwork becomes a trace of reflection on their trauma.

1. Lucia Hartini

(a) Heroine



Figure 1 Canvas, Oil paint. 1993 (Source: IVAA Archives)

(b) Umbrella 2000

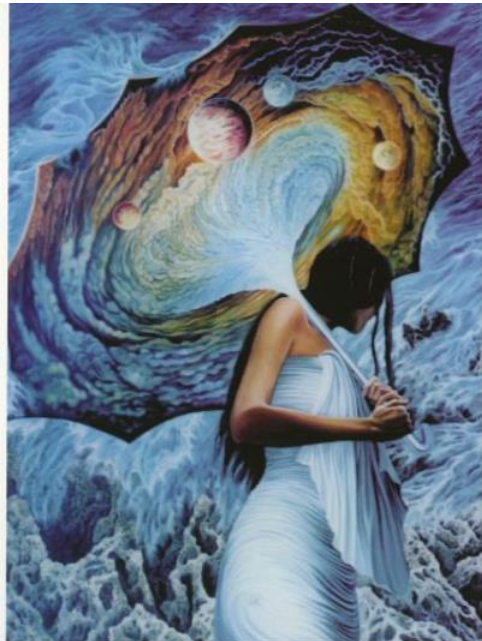


Figure 2 Canvas, Oil Paint. 1996 (Source: IVAA Archives)

(c) Cakra from Soul



Figure 3 Canvas, Oil Paint. 2001 (Source: IVAA Archives)

⁹According to the book from *Yogyakarta Surrealism* writer M. Dwi Marianto, "The female artist Lucia Hartini mostly shows a realm of imagination that overlaps with her hopes and dreams. The clouds and water waves that often wrap around his objects become symbols of the subconscious that is piled up with his thoughts."

From the examples of the 3 works by the female artist Lucia Hartini, the theme is related to her life journey as a woman. Past, present and future meld into one which often gives rise to the symbol of reflection vision. Then, it shows the symbol of a realm of imagination that overlaps with its hopes and dreams, clouds and water waves that often wrap around its objects, a pan that looks thin on the side that displays bubbling water waves that seem to disguise the existing reality. Based on this explanation, it can be seen that the artist Lucia Hartini shows how to overcome her trauma through creating art.

2. I G.A.K Murniasih (1966-2006)

(a) Trauma II

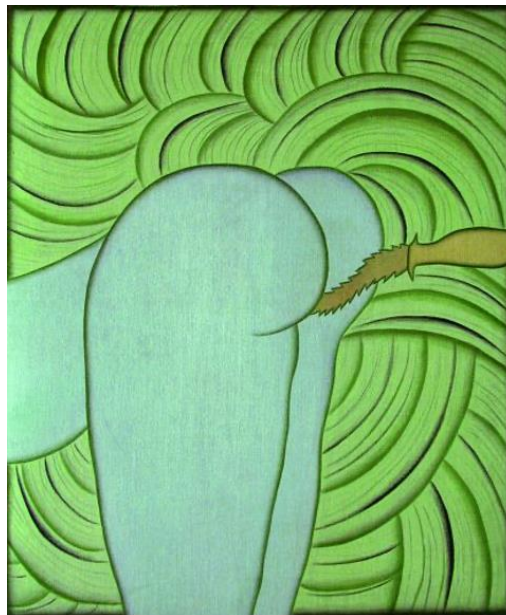


Figure 4 Acrylic Paint, Canvas. 1994-2004 (Source: IVAA Archives)

⁹ Marianto. (2001). *Yogyakarta Surrealism* (Cet.1) Merapi Publishing House.

(b) Unknown 2



Figure 5 Acrylic Paint, Canvas. 2000 (Source: IVAA Archives)

(c) My world



Figure 6 Acrylic Paint, Canvas. 1994-2004 (Source: IVAA Archives)

¹⁰According to a journal source from the authors Hardiman and Luh Suartini entitled *Reading the Body of Gusti Ayu Kadek Murniasih: Representation of Sex, Violence and Male Power*, "Female artist I G.A.K Murniasih has sexual issues driven by the reality of her biography who experienced physical violence against her body. An act of violence that positions women as sexual objects for men."

Based on 3 examples of works by female artist I G.A.K Murniasih, the theme is intertwined with her life as a woman. The artist expresses sexual issues in the sense of having different experiences due to the trauma of physical violence against her body. From this, it can be seen that the artist I G.A.K Murniasih is related to the symbol of the visual elements of feminine colors and straightforward shapes depicts the female body in a surrealistic way, the elements of the female body with solid and bold colors, the thick surrealistic concept comes from the visualization of fragments of her trauma memory. Based on the explanation above, it can be seen that the artist I G.A.K Murniasih shows how to overcome his trauma through creating art.

3. Nia Gautama

(a) The Raped Love



Figure 7 Mixed Media Installation and Interactive Performance (Source: Biography of Nia Gautama)

¹⁰ Hardiman, & Luh Suartini. (2013). Reading the Body of Gusti Ayu Kadek Murniasih: Representation of Sex, Violence and Male Power. *Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 2(1) <https://doi.org/10.23887/jish-undiksha.v2i1.1407>

(b) Surviving The Ideal



Figure 8 Mixed Media Installation and Performance (Source: Biography of Nia Gautama)

(c) The Sacred Scream

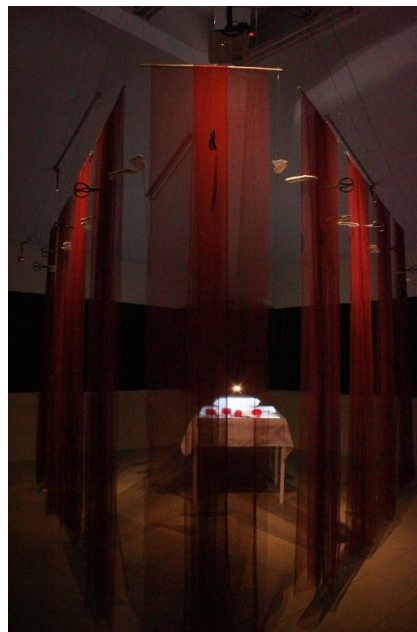


Figure 9 Bone China, Fabric, Scissor Installation, Performance (Source: Biography of Nia Gautama)

¹¹ According to the source of the article from the *Konde.co* writer who interviewed the artist Nia Gautama, the title of the article is *This is my past: It takes a long process to open up to Traumatic sexual harassment*. "From that experience, I learned that one way to release trauma is to have the courage to share the trauma. As a process of healing inner wounds, I apply it to works of art that are about the body, that women's bodies belong to women themselves."

Based on the 3 examples of the work above, the artist Nia Gautama is an artist who expresses the representation of works through the female body. The body is represented by artists who talk a lot about women's issues as subjects and objects, their anxieties, their feminine strength, their rights, their roles and their bodies. Based on this explanation, it can be seen that the artist Nia Gautama showed how to overcome his trauma through creating art.

4 Conclusion

Reflection are barriers to self-expression that they are unable to convey verbally. This is shown through the presence of marking expressions, involving the artist's personal expression, subjective; because the artist involves aspects that are present in his life, the involvement of externalization in the process of expression through the creation of an object from the artist's experience, the artist's subjectivity is manifested in the formal aspects of the object, the dialogue between the artist's subjectivity and its externalization in the form of works produces new formal aspects and creates a unique experience , even to a degree where the artist may not be aware of it.

This research resulted in collecting data on scientific writings or forms of works by artists, the artistic processes and forms of work by women artists that have been described, then examined from 3 samples of female artists through the methods used and saw how they reflected trauma through the visualization of their works by analyzing them in the form , visuals, symbols, colors and so on. Therefore, related women artists, as they overcome their trauma through creating art, so that the artwork becomes a trace of reflection on their trauma. Self-reflection can be a form of representation that leaves scars like trauma and is embedded in the memory and body. Art can unite humans in the same experience,

¹¹ Konde. co. (2021, September). This is my past: it takes a long process to open up Traumatic Sexual Assault. <https://www.konde.co/2021/09/ini-masa-lalu-saya-perlu-proses-panjang-membuka-sesuatu-yang-traumatik.html/>

life experience and everything becomes an evaluation that brings new values, to a better way of life to find the true meaning of life.

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