



Fakulti Seni Gunaan dan Kreatif

**CREATING EMOTIONAL PAIN IN ARTWORK BASED ON
COMPARATIVE STUDIES THROUGH FORMAL
ANALYSIS**

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**Bachelor of Applied Arts with Honours
(Fine Arts)
2019**

**CREATING EMOTIONAL PAIN IN ARTWORK
BASED ON COMPARATIVE STUDIES THROUGH FORMAL ANALYSIS**

NURHIDAYAH BINTI SALIM

This project is submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Applied Arts with Honors
(Fine Arts)

Faculty of Applied and Creative Arts
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SARAWAK
2019

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Supervisor

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to identify the factor, the characteristic and the meaning behind of the chosen artwork that is based on emotional pain from paintings of selected artists (Master artists and Contemporary artists). There are artists who seldom reveal the meaning or the story behind their artworks but by using formal analysis (the elements and principle of art) and a detailed comparative study, this will help to identify the meaning of the artworks. In conclusion, the outcome for this research was to come up with a painting based on emotional pain and implement all the study research into a personal artwork.

ABSTRAK

Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk mengenal pasti faktor, ciri-ciri dan maksud disebalik karya yang melambangkan emosi yang dipilih dari tokoh seniman barat dan artis kontemporari. Terdapat artis yang jarang mendedahkan maksud atau cerita di balik karya mereka akan tetapi dengan menggunakan analisis formal (unsur-unsur dan prinsip seni) dan kajian komparatif terperinci, ini akan membantu untuk mengenal pasti makna karya seni tersebut. Kesimpulannya, hasil kajian ini adalah untuk menghasilkan lukisan berdasarkan kesakitan emosi dan mengadaptasikan semua penyelidikan kajian ke dalam karya seni peribadi.

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.0 Introduction

For this research, the researcher would like to identify the meaning behind selected painting that shows emotional pain created by both the Masters and Contemporary artists which are Vincent Van Gogh, Frida Kahlo, Edvard Munch, Alyssa Monks, Margarita Georgiadis and Antoine Stevens. The research included using formal elements and principles of art to analyse and also to conduct a comparative study of the chosen paintings.

Whilst collecting the data information of the six chosen artists, especially on their paintings, the researcher found that the information of the chosen Master artists and as well their painting are available and can be obtained from sources such as internet, articles and books. However, for the chosen Contemporary artists, especially on their paintings, information was very limited and there were times when there was no information at all.

For the methodology, the researcher observed and studied the chosen artwork by breaking down and analysing using formal elements and principles of art (visual analysis) and compare each Master artists (Vincent Van Gogh, Frida Kahlo, Edvard Munch) and Contemporary artist (Alyssa Monks, Margarita Georgiadis, Antoine Stevens) paintings. The chosen paintings emphasized on expressing emotional pain and the researcher did a comparative study based on the similarities and differences of how the artist convey their

inner pain into artwork. The six artists have suffered from some form of emotional pain and this was why their paintings convey a strong message to the viewer.

All the negativity that the artists felt, whether it was depression, isolation, physical or emotional abuse, the artists took these personal experiences as a motivation factor and also as an outlet, to create original artwork which could be anything from painting to sculpture or installation. Whatever the medium or media the artist used, the result was always the same, and that is that the artwork carries a very strong personal story of the individual's experiences. According to Allison (2013), Art is made for many reasons: to celebrate beauty, to convey a specific message, to tell a story, to express ideas and feelings without words, or even to simply earn a living. For example we can feel the pain and loneliness portrayed in Van Gogh's painting (figure 1.0.2), we can feel the confusion and anger of Francis Bacon's (figure 1.0.4) artwork and even the excruciating physical pain and feelings of betrayal of Frida Kahlo's (figure 1.0.6) oil paintings.



Figure 1.0.1: Picture of Vincent Van Gogh

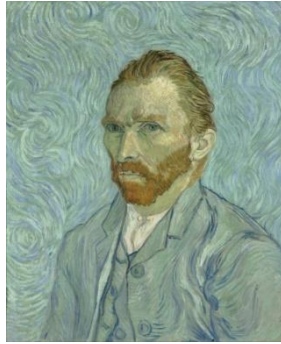


Figure 1.0.2: Self Portrait (1889), by Vincent Van Gogh



Figure 1.0.3: Picture of Francis Bacon



Figure 1.0.4: Portrait of Michel Leiris (1976), by Francis Bacon



Figure 1.0.5: Picture of Frida Kahlo



Figure 1.0.6: The Wounded Deer (1946), by Frida Kahlo

The findings for this research was to understand more about visual analysis on how to analyse and breakdown the selected paintings through all the resources from articles, journals, books, and any first-hand information of artists who suffer from emotional pain and at the same time to get the data about the artworks and how the artists express their emotions.

The outcome for this research was to show how important using formal elements and principles of art when creating an artwork. A certain type of line or brushstrokes used, a certain type of colour or texture used, all these convey a story or a meaning of an artwork. After all the findings and the data collection is completed, the researcher will apply it into a personal painting which will be an expressive painting.

1.1 Research Problem

The problem for this research was getting more detailed information of the meaning behind the paintings especially the chosen contemporary artist. Through literature review, the researcher found that most of the information are about the artists' background (chosen Master artists and contemporary artist). Which some information about their artistic background such as their technique and skills, who the artists were inspired by, where the artist got their inspirations from but there was none or hardly any information with regards to the meaning of their artwork. This was mostly for the contemporary artists and their artworks.

Based on the researcher data collection, on contemporary artist like Alyssa Monks, most of the information are about the artist's background (Alyssa Monks website), from an interview in Artophilia. Mostly its about the artist's skills (hyper-realistic painter), why the artist chose the subject matter, who inspired the artist itself, but again there was no information about the specific meaning of the artist paintings. This statement can be supported in 'Interview: Photorealistic Oil Paintings Capture Intimate Portraits of Human Vulnerability' (2015), where the author interview Alyssa Monks and the artist said that 'My intention is to transfer the intimacy and vulnerability of my human experience into a painted surface. I like mine to be as intimate as possible, each brush stroke like a fossil, recording every gesture and decision.'

It was the same with the other chosen contemporary artists, Margarita Georgiadis and Antoine Stevens, where there were only basic information of the artist's background but very limited information of the artist artworks.

Here are the paintings that are based on emotional pain by the chosen contemporary artist. There may not be much information or details of these paintings but just by looking at the paintings, one can see that it is all about some form of pain or loss.



Figure 1.1.1: Loss (2014), by Alyssa Monks



Figure 1.1.2: Pendulum (2012), by Margarita Georgiadis

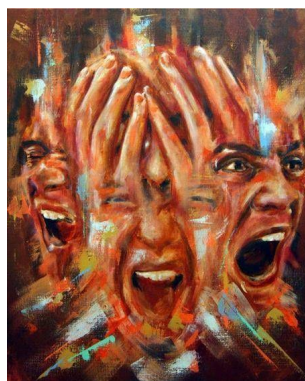


Figure 1.1.3: Antoine Stevens painting

1.2 Research Question

1. What was the meaning of the chosen painting by both the Masters and contemporary artists? Does the painting show emotional pain?
2. How to conduct a study on these painting to understand more on the meaning of the painting?
3. How to implement the final findings from analysing and comparing the chosen painting and apply it to the researcher's personal painting with the theme of emotional pain as the main subject matter?

1.3 Research Objectives

1. To identify the meaning/ message behind paintings including to interpret and judge the paintings by analysing using the formal elements.
2. To analyse and compare the selected paintings based on the art theories of the elements and principles of art through the compositional ideas, subject matter and many more to understand further about the paintings.
3. To implement the understanding and appreciate the values, the aesthetic and the creativity to the artist to express their inner thoughts.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

Emotional pain is something that cannot easily be put in words (Eleven, 2017). It is an emotion that brings our mood or feeling down or bringing us to the negativity side which can affect our life. For example stress, frustration, depression, low self-esteem, de-motivation, being bullied where the emotion takes away all our spirit and passion away from us. According to Fogel (2012), for emotional pain, an analgesic will help us temporarily but it won't take away the unresolved feelings that never got seen or expressed or really felt. The emotional pain is the most common emotion that happens to all people and when all those bad negative situations happen, one will definitely become depressed. According to Christensen (2013), from a macro perspective, depression typically leads to a lack of motivation (often motivation to eat, exercise, or do much of anything) and can lead to thoughts of suicide.

It is different with physical abuse and it is not the same with verbal attack, where we can feel the pain physically. While emotional pain is something that we cannot see physically, it affects us and can even ruin our life. As stated in the article of 'The Emotional Connection between Art and Pain' (2017), emotional pain, while felt internally, is caused by outside sources, many of which are uncontrollable.

Pain, of course, is always both a physical and an emotional experience (Fogel, 2012). Pain is one of the most heart-rending of human emotions/ feeling. As mentioned by Eleven (2017), much like the contrasting emotions of love, pleasure, and happiness, our

brains have powerful mechanisms in place to let us know what they want, and what they do not want. There are two conditions of emotion, either happiness or otherwise, positive or negative. However, emotion is something that we cannot see but we can feel it through our inner feelings, thought, mood, instinct that connect to our behaviour.

Therefore, in this case, people who suffer from emotional pain, they choose to remain silent. Some sufferers have described the unbearable pain like a life sentence of prison life where they feel there are no way out from the pain they being through. Some prefer to remain silent for fear that people will think they are being over dramatic or just simply making up stories and then there are some who contemplate death as a solution. However, there have a variety options to heal emotional pain and one of them is using art to express our emotions with different way. There are no limits to creativity when it comes to art, perhaps that is why this mode is the most effective for expressing one's emotions (Gabb, 2018).

2.1 The Expressive Emotion into Artwork

Many people who have been abused find it very difficult to express their feelings of hurt, anger, confusion, desire for revenge and pain (Riggs, 2013). Some victims prefer to remain silent because there have been cases where people do not believe the situation there are in. Other than that, sometimes it is because of the fear where the victims feel insecure and fear to open up. So in this case, some of them use their own way to express their emotional pain.

As the researcher mentioned before, there are various ways of expressing emotional pain. By using art and creativity is the best way to express our emotional pain. According to Kent (2015), art has been the medium for many people, both artists and non-artists alike, to express themselves. It may come as no surprise to you to learn that art can be one of the most effective tools to portray your inner feelings (Kent, 2015). Because they believe by doing this, they feel better when expressing their emotional pain or any negative feelings/ inner thought and transform or transfer that emotion by creating expressively into the artwork. According to Kent (2015), mentioned that psychologists as well as art experts believe that artistic self-expression improve people's conflict and problem resolution skills, develop good interpersonal skills, manage and regulate behaviour, reduce anxiety and stress, boost self-esteem, and develop self-awareness.

The advantages of art can be used in several ways. According to Riggs (2013), art is useful in a number of ways: firstly, it enables expression and it communicates. Secondly, it is a slow and gentle process. It does not overwhelm participants but does give them a way to see and feel what has often been hard to name. Once express through an art object, participants find they are more able to understand then communicate through words. Many feel a sense of release – and also pleasure in being able to “do what I have always wanted to do” without causing harm.

In addition, art has been used throughout history as a way for people to convey emotions, communicate thoughts, and even record history (Kent, 2015). This is why for artists (and even some amateur artists), they use their own creativity and art to express their inner thoughts and emotional pain either through painting, sculpture, installation or any creativity based on the artist skills/ potential. For them, by

expressing emotion and feeling on to the artwork, it is more likely we release and heal the pain that is kept in or even feel free while painting. Even simply being around art can make people measurably happier (Eleven, 2017). With pain as a source of inspiration and motivation, by creating interesting composition ideas, subject matter, texture and the choice of colour to express their inner thoughts and feelings. As mentioned by Mills (2014), after all, it is one of the most wonderful aspects of Art and other forms of creativity, that negativity can be used to create something of great beauty and power. This results in artwork that carries a very strong meaningful message.

During the modern age, art is more open about emotional expressionism than the previous years (Gabb, 2018). In addition, we all know the history of master artists such as Van Gogh, Edvard Munch, Pollock, Michelangelo, Gauguin and many more who have suffered some from of pain or abuse in their lives. Throughout the history, the artists use colours, representing certain scenes or communicating symbols that work on a subconscious level and each work of art is to convey a message to the viewer as seen through the eyes of the artist (Mitch, 2014). Even at present, artists of this generation continues this inspiration of expressing pain or torment by creating art, some have gone through the same suffering and some get the inspiration of victim's suffering and create artwork with a powerful meaningful message. Many artists have used their work to convey a sense of their physical condition and to demonstrate the torture of their pain in a far more effective way than language alone (Mills, 2014).

2.2 The Connection between Emotion and Art

Interestingly enough, there are strong evidence that there is a connection between emotions with art. Many people associate imaginative genius with emotional problems, higher creativity is, in fact, linked to the sort of emotional self-awareness that allows artists and other innovators to ride the ups and downs of the creative process (Jacobs, 2018). As we know, before the start of creating an artwork, we need to find ideas or inspiration. So in this case is getting the idea and inspiration from our inner thoughts and feelings. Pain is one of our most strongly and deeply felt emotions, and therefore makes for the most authentic and resonating works of art (Eleven, 2017).

In producing an artwork, the creativity, focus and concentration are important. When all the elements of art is applied in the artwork, combined with the emotion and inner thoughts, a unique individualistic creativity occurs in the artwork. Creativity is all about thinking, so it only makes sense that all of that thinking would lead to manic episodes of feeling hopeless, alone, or like a failure (Christensen, 2013).

When the creativity combined with the emotional pain or any negativity, it strengthens the idea and the message of the artwork whether the emotion is about. This is what art is about: the portrayal of a person's innermost thoughts and feelings (Kent, 2015). After all, according to Jean Norvy, "Art is an infusion of inner feelings and thoughts executed in an original style." (Kent, 2015).

Talking about creativity, the creative person, who spends his or her time ruminating on thoughts is likely to suffer from major depression (Christensen, 2013). Because creative people tend to be highly conscious, reflective and aware, it seems