

expectation confirmation

an art exhibition of galang kangin together with friends

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Tony Raka Art Gallery
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Expectation Confirmation

By Thomas U. Freitag

I.

First, proceed with this caution: No piece of art can be "assigned" a function, either in essay form or in casual conversation, if it isn't first considered within the proper context. Trying to classify function *depends* on context.

Ideally, one can look at a piece and know (approximately) where it came from and when. The best-case scenario includes identifying the artist, as well, because he is half of the contextual equation (i.e.: What was the artist thinking at the time he created this?). You, the viewer, are the other half (i.e.: What does this piece of art mean to you, living right now?). These are all factors that should be considered before thinking about functions. Taking anything out of context leads not only to misunderstandings but to wild expectations.

Functions of art are normally divided in three categories. These are social, personal or physical functions. These categories can, and (often) do, overlap in any given piece of art. The physical functions of art are most easily dealt with. Works of art that are created to perform some service have physical functions. A Japanese *raku* bowl is art that performs a physical function in the tea ceremony. Conversely, a fur-covered teacup from the Dada movement has no physical function.

The personal functions of art are the most difficult to explain in any great detail. There are many of them, and they vary from person to person. An artist may create out of a need for self-expression (I Wayan Naya Swantha), or gratification. He might have wanted to communicate a thought or point to the viewer (Agung Putra Dela). Perhaps the artist was trying to

provide an aesthetic experience, both for self and viewers. A piece might have been meant to "merely" entertain others. Sometimes a piece isn't meant to have any meaning at all.

On a slightly more lofty plane, art may serve the personal functions of control. Art has been used to attempt to exert magical control over time (Alfairuzha), or the seasons or even the acquisition of food. Art is used to mention order to a messy and disorderly world. Conversely, art can be used to create chaos when an artist feels life is too staid and ordinary (I Made Sudana). Art can also be therapeutic - for both the artist (IB Punia Atmaja) and the viewer. Yet another personal function of art is that of religious service (Askanadi). Finally, sometimes art is used to assist us in maintaining ourselves as a species (I Wayan Paramartha).

You, the viewer, are half of the equation in assigning function to art - as mentioned earlier. These personal functions apply to you, as well as the artist. It all adds up to the social functions of art when it addresses aspects of (collective) life, as opposed to one person's point of view or experience. For example, public art in 1930s Germany had an overwhelming symbolic theme. This art exerted a great influence on the German population. Political art (skewed to whatever message) always carries a social function. The fur-covered Dada teacup, useless for holding tea, carried a social function because it protested World War I (and nearly everything else in life).

Art that depicts social conditions performs social functions. The Realists figured this out early in the 19th century. Many photographers often photographed people in conditions we'd rather not think about. Additionally, satire performs social functions.

I Ketut Teler went this route, with varying degrees of success at enacting social consciousness. Sometimes having specific pieces of art in a community can perform the social function of elevating that community's status. A Cokot sculpture, for example, can be a community treasure and point of pride.

Under certain circumstances art can be viewed under the influence of a special branch of the social philosophy, the *Expectation Confirmation*.

II.

People in general tend to search for evidence that confirms expectations and previously existing beliefs. This tendency helps simplify social experiences, but it also distorts our worldview by causing us to accept inconsistent information. Expectation confirmation also contributes to stereotypes about social groups, since people only look for information that confirms their attitudes about these social groups like painter groups, for example.

Our perception of ourselves in relation to the rest of the world plays an important role in our choices, behaviors, and beliefs. Conversely, the opinions of others also impact our behavior and the way we view ourselves. There are some basic aspects of social behavior that play a large role in our actions and how we see ourselves. For example, the functioning of the *adat* system is based on this.

Concentrating on Expectations we have to look at the broader field of social behavior. First of all it is goal-oriented. Our interactions function to serve a goal or fulfill a need. Some common goals or needs include the need for social ties (I

Made Supena), the desire to understand ourselves and others (Didik Widiyanto), the wish to gain or maintain status or protection (I Made Budiadnyana), and to attract companions. Hereby the interaction between the individual and the situation determines the outcome (Nanang Kusharyanto). In many instances, people behavior very differently in various situations. The situation plays an important role and has a strong influence on our behavior.

Artists like everybody else spend a great deal of time considering social situations. Our social interactions help form our self-concept and perception. One method of forming self-concept is through a *reflected appraisal process* in which we imagine how other people see us (I Nyoman Ari Winata). Another method is through a *social comparison process* whereby we consider how we compare to other people in our (painting) group. We also analyze and explain the behavior of those around us. One common phenomenon is *expectation confirmation*, where we tend to ignore unexpected attributes and look for evidence that confirms our preexisting beliefs about others. This helps simplify our worldview, but it also skews our perception and can contribute to stereotyping.

Mostly in the case of uncertainty, expectation is what is considered the most likely to happen. An expectation, which is a belief that is centered on the future, may or may not be realistic. On one hand a less advantageous result gives rise to the emotion of disappointment. On the other if something happens that is not at all expected, it is a surprise. An expectation about the behavior or performance of another person, expressed to that person, may have the nature of a strong request, or an order.

According to Richard Lazarus (1) people become accustomed to positive or negative life experiences which lead to favorable or unfavorable expectations with regard to present and near-future circumstances. Lazarus notes the widely accepted, philosophical principle that "happiness depends on the background of the psychological status of the person - that is, the overall pattern of expectations and existential mood - and cannot be well predicted *without* reference to" one's expectations.

Also with regard to happiness or unhappiness, Lazarus notes that "people whose objective conditions of life are those of hardship and deprivation often make a positive assessment of their well-being," while "people who are objectively well off... often make a negative assessment of their well-being." Lazarus argues that "the most sensible explanation of this apparent paradox is that people develop favorable or unfavorable *expectations*" that guide such assessments.

Enjoying the exhibition *Expectation Confirmation* can enrich our understanding of ourselves and of the world around us. The participating artists were selected according their momentary works which confirm the expectations of the audience or not. In case the painter presents a work in the tradition of his carrier the audience will be at least not surprised, may be bored. On the other hand if he presents a work which is completely different in its appearance the audience will be at least uncertain if not bewildered. In both cases it will start an interaction – either between the viewer and the painting or between viewers and painters or painters with painters – which will – again - enrich our understanding of ourselves and of the world around us.

(1) Lazarus, Richard S.: Emotion and Adaptation. New York: Oxford University Press 1991

Karya Artworks



I Wayan Setem (1972)
wayansetem@yahoo.com

Manunggal. 2008
 Acryl on canvas
 140 x 200 cm

Konfirmasi Ekspektasi

Oleh Thomas U. Freitag

I.

Pertama, dimulai dengan peringatan ini: Tidak ada karya seni yang dapat “diberi” fungsi, baik dalam bentuk esai atau percakapan biasa, jika tidak dipertimbangkan dulu dalam konteks yang tepat. Upaya menggolongkan fungsi bergantung pada konteks.

Idealnya, orang dapat memandang sebuah karya dan mengetahui (kira-kira) dari mana asalnya dan kapan. Skenario terbaik mencakup tindakan mengidentifikasi senimannya pula, karena sang seniman adalah separuh dari rumus kontekstual itu (yakni: Apa yang dipikirkan sang seniman ketika menciptakan karya ini?). Anda, para pemirsa, adalah separuhnya lagi (yakni: Apa arti karya seni ini bagi anda, yang hidup sekarang?). Inilah seluruh faktor yang harus dipertimbangkan sebelum berpikir tentang fungsi. Melepaskan apapun dari konteks bukan saja menimbulkan kesalahpahaman, tapi juga ekspektasi ngawur.

Fungsi seni lazimnya dibagi dalam tiga kategori, yaitu fungsi sosial, fungsi personal dan fungsi fisik. Kategori-kategori ini dapat, dan seringkali memang, bertumpang-tindih dalam sebuah karya seni. Fungsi fisik seni paling mudah dipahami. Karya seni yang diciptakan untuk memberikan layanan tertentu memiliki fungsi fisik. Sebuah mangkuk *raku* Jepang adalah seni yang menjalankan fungsi fisik dalam upacara minum teh. Sebaliknya, sebuah cangkir bulu dari gerakan seni Dada tidak memiliki fungsi fisik.

Fungsi personal seni paling sulit dijelaskan secara terperinci. Ada banyak fungsi personal seni, berbeda-

beda pada tiap orang. Seorang seniman mungkin menciptakan karya seni untuk mengekspresikan diri (I Wayan Naya Swantha), atau memuaskan diri. Dia mungkin ingin mengomunikasikan pemikiran atau maksud tertentu kepada pemirsa (Agung Putra Dela). Barangkali sang seniman mencoba menawarkan pengalaman estetis kepada dirinya sendiri maupun pemirsa. Sebuah karya mungkin “sekadar” dimaksudkan untuk menghibur orang lain. Kadang sebuah karya tidak dimaksudkan untuk memiliki arti apapun.

Di tataran yang agak lebih tinggi, seni dapat menjalankan fungsi personal mengendalikan sesuatu. Seni telah digunakan dalam upaya pengerahan kekuatan magis untuk mengendalikan waktu (Alfairuzha), atau musim, atau bahkan perolehan pangan. Seni digunakan untuk menata dunia yang kacau-balau. Sebaliknya, seni dapat dipakai menciptakan kekacauan, ketika seniman merasa bahwa kehidupan terlalu tenang dan biasa-biasa saja (I Made Sudana). Seni juga bisa memberi terapi – mengobati sang seniman (IB Punia Atmaja) maupun pemirsa. Fungsi personal seni lainnya adalah memberi pelayanan religius (Askanadi). Akhirnya, kadang seni dapat dipakai membantu kita melestarikan diri kita sebagai spesies (I Wayan Paramartha).

Anda, para pemirsa, adalah separuh dari rumus memfungsikan seni – seperti disebutkan di atas. Berbagai fungsi personal tersebut berlaku pada anda, juga pada sang seniman. Semua fungsi personal itu bergabung menjadi fungsi sosial seni ketika ditujukan pada aspek-aspek kehidupan (kolektif) yang berlawanan

Acknowledgement

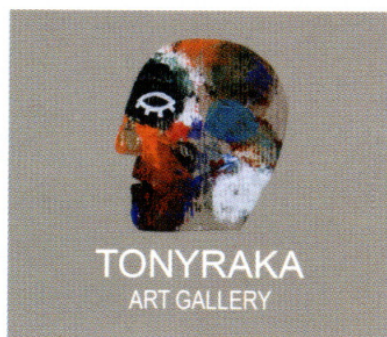
Artists	Agung Putra Dela Alfairuzha Askanadi Didik Widiyanto Hong Sekchern Ida Bagus Punia Atmaja Ketut Susena Ketut Teler Made Ardika Made Budiadnyana Made Galung Wiratmaja Made Sudana Made Supena Nanang Kusharyanto Nyoman Ari Winata Putu Wirantawan Wayan Naya Swantha Wayan Paramartha Wayan Setem
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