

In The Name of “Like This”: The Appropriation of Artwork In Digital Age

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Abstract

The rapidly growing and massive information age in digital media platforms has created and introduced cultural ramifications on various aspects of human life. The ongoing era of globalization of the twentieth century has fuel the capability in digitizing and manipulating information during traffic. Cultural growth in the new age includes: “cultural preservation as the main ingredient of the ordinary”; the proliferation of electronic visual images; and the construction of a multifaceted and the individual identity or social imaginary. The artwork currently is glorifying so many appropriations practices. All the art creations in the code of conduct are suitable for one aspiration, and that is the digital aesthetic market. It is now customary to gather on the variety of artistic creations from different cultures that are appropriated as new and authentic artwork. Thus, this article discusses the appropriation for the artwork in the rise of the digital media platform era. This paper is an anthropological study that refers to the interpretive-reflexive paradigm as the analysis of path-work. Digital media is the unit of analysis in this study.

***Keywords:** digital information age, artwork creation, cultural appropriation*

INTRODUCTION

It has been a very long time since information and technology expert predicts that “Information explosion” is a necessity that will happen. Information explosion is a phenomenon in the globalization era that is marked by information flows moving from around the world in various forms and content, rip off space and time limitation or bureaucracy. Marshal McLuhan (1964) at the beginning of the 1960s in his book entitled “Understanding Media: Extension of a man” even had introduced the concept of Global Village. Marshal analogizes the human being world as a universal village called the global village. The universal village is a

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terminology phrase that reflects the development of internet-based communication and technology connecting human being from around the world.

The people being connected with the others through the use of the internet and website world. Through the internet communication network, a human being can communicate intensively and extensively without limited by space and time. An observer of information technology and communication development from Canada, Don Tapscott (1996), in his book entitled *The Digital Economy: Promise and Peril in the Age of Networked Intelligence*, stated that economic world development has shifted. Tapscott (1996) states that the world economic mode moves from a manufacture-based industrial society into a new economic dynamic that is formed by information management. The management of the information-based economy is involving the development of computer technology and internet communication network.

Prediction and Analysis of Alvin Toffler (1980) states that the humanity era is divided into three main eras, namely the agrarian society era, industrial society, and current information society. It is common to be recognized that human being has lived in the information era. Understanding and accessibility toward information massively place power as logical consequences. They who can access and control information have a chance to be world economic ruler group. The human being in this era is the human being who is up-to-date with information. The usage of modern technology influences all modern life fields. Social and economic life becomes impossible without fast information, relevant, high quality and on time. Information era pushes human being to be responsive and tough toward information development defining importance value in all life aspects (Castells, 1996).

The spreading of media technology has led to a new media culture in society. The culture is divided into two main flows: First, culture symptom that is marked by media consumption in functional meaning (utilitarian), entertainment and lifestyle; Second, practicing new media for art purpose, artistic expression and critique toward technology and mainstream culture (see Simanowski, 2016). No wonder if the art world also becomes one of life field that is hard to be neglected has been controlled by sophisticated information.

REFLEXIVE METHOD

Methodologically, the critical discourse approach appears in our chain of analysis based on the assumption that the relation of the artwork and digital media is always intertwined. Then it will reveal the configuration of “radical hermeneutics” interpretation can produce a review that is very different from the interpretation with a construct that tends to be stable (see Barker, 2008).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Life and digital culture flow through human activities through network, platform, and digital devices such as a laptop, tablet, smartphone, and other digital tools that are connected to daily activities. We use a smartphone and other digital devices to catch and curate daily activities experience, filled with digital interaction (Krajnovic, Sikiric & Bosna, 2016). Digital space nowadays is a place where we spend a big part of our time, and curate life that is mediated digitally.

As time goes by, life presenting us with too many options to hold, too many things to choose, and sometimes this thing started to feel great. An activity that must be easy, easy and fun and feel like being pumped to work fast when there are many things to be evaluated and decided (Bennett, 2008; Castells, 1996). Technology somehow, imagination and inspiration in getting the daily decision as well as exploring new ideas.

Expression media and live interaction is curate digitally on the global stage. Digital technology may the global condition that is changed. Exceeding information value from free and open access toward the making and using of information. Social media is one of widening media and network explosion of traditional word of mouth (Fingers & Dutta, 2014). Words from mouth to mouth always be an effective and reliable way to spread information. With technology skills, everyone who has internet access and has argument can be a part of digital social media (Simanowski, 2016). This culture shifting is a power that must be calculated in the digital era.

The Artwork and Digital Experiences

Digitalization is one way or process transferring conventional work into various styles and forms become electronic or digital works. This digital work can be created through transfer media which is by reproduction and scanning. Digitalization process that is converted from hardcopy or manual into a digital form called the digital note. Thus, digitalization is transferring process, without changing, decreasing and adding a form or physical thing and content of information from that note. While the main activity that is done in digitalization are defining purposes, deciding what should be digitalized, recommended technical specifications, choosing plan and management, preparing document, taking pictures, capturing metadata, quality control of storage and preservation from digital picture and metadata, access, and usage (Roberts, 2008:408). Every note that is written whether in picture form or chart that contains information about an object (main problem) and events, is made to help people's memory (Barthos, 2012:1).

Digitalization is increasingly developed with the concept of diverting tacit knowledge, namely a personal knowledge, specific, and commonly is hard to be

formalized and communicated with other parties, become explicit knowledge which is the knowledge that has been formulated, served in writing form. Explicit knowledge is manifested in documents that are managed well using the helping of technology, information, and communication. The knowledge that is documented is a process of information and knowledge transferring that is expected become learning material between the generations (Bennett, 2008).

Shifting of cultural spaces from physical into virtual as information transfer also reaches out to a shift in real art space that has been transformed into a digital art space. Art is delivered in various forms that can open the possibility that has not to happen before and change the way art is consumed. How digital technology influence art consumption? Digitization and digitalization affect the shifting into widening accessibility and digital art distribution through the internet. In Business Directory (2013) is found a definition of digitization as follows:

“conversion of analog information in any form (text, photographs, voice, etc.) to digital form with suitable electronic devices (such as a scanner or specialized computer chips) so that the information can be processed, stored, and transmitted through digital circuits, equipment, and networks.” (Business Dictionary 2013).

Thus, art digitalization is a technology development that is used to convert real artwork into digitalization projection or other virtual forms. Digitalization creates a digital art space that representing real art space. Digitalization points out the usage of digital technology and digital media integration into art (Collin, 2013). Hence, art digitalization is the usage of digital-physical content in virtual reality that is more complex from real art reality. Knowledge about how digital technology integration into art creation technology need involvement, participation, and different experience with real art object (see Simon, 2013).

The usage of Facebook, Twitter and other website application in organizing art enable to continue online creation process. Consumption toward art is a communicative act that socially planted into mutual interaction (Boorsma, 2006). Mutual communication through social media increases the inclusivity of real and community that can facilitate collaboration between creator and public (Padilla-Meléndez & del Águila-Obra, 2013; Dye, 2000; Goldenberg, Libai, and Muller, 2001). Art is currently grown through social media marketing that is defined as word-of-mouth electronic (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011:254). Thus, art is very possible to be promoted with a chance of exponential penetration through social media communication (Martin & Lueg, 2013).

In the art world, “internet link” becomes a feature of art performance which captured digitally and curate not only by the artist but also by everyone who can access it in the various platform of digital social media. Our culture

becomes more visual. Photo and video sum that we take every day have developed fast, pushed by the usage of smartphones, cheaper camera, better quality, picture-based social network, and better connection speed.

Work that expresses feeling and emotion is produced and served digitally seems in the intersection of art and information. Through computer software as a creative tool shows the limitation of information and artistic expression is blurred. Along with it, the improvement of artificial learning techniques that fast enables computer technology to read the human being world. Picture whether in photo form, video or code is now can be defined and interpreted accurately. Image introduction is now enabling new input information form for a computer that is arranged to release the service innovation wave.

Online art can be defined as the practice of internet usage as a participative platform to involve the public directly in creating visual artwork, musical, literature, even drama, with purpose showing the relationship between collective imagination and individual artistic sensitivity from the public. As stated by critics over the past two decades, contemporary art is continuously experiencing important shifting toward art object that has not been the main focus of artwork creation (Beech, 2010:20).

Artwork Appropriation in Digital Media

Artwork development enthusiasm through social media cannot be separated from mistakes that are portrayed through digital technology with different motivations (see Padilla-Meléndez & del Águila-Obra, 2013). Consequently, critical voices lead to hesitation about real communication value of social media and symptom of appropriation toward artwork in digital media. The artwork in online digital media has created a participative artistic practice that tries to blur the limitation between artist and audience, producer and consumer, actor, and subject. This thing question or even challenge limitation of the basic prerogative right of contemporary art and participative art position.

According to Beech (2010), the emerging of participative art reflects cultural and social shifting in final capitalism and that is a response toward erosion that is felt from the social relationship, experience modification in the digital world. Nowadays, the artist tends to work using participative art practice: activation (by stimulating the empowerment and individual and collective agents), authorship (or termination of authorship to make the artistic process more democratic and egalitarian), and the community (through the recovery of lost or weakened social ties). Artwork now relies heavily on artistic contributions from an open collection of participants. This radical democratization of the artistic process is said to be contrary to the traditional way of creating art (Bilton, 2011).

Old opinion about art as an individual expression from one person's vision, and artistic sensitivity developed through social media. This ideology conflict has significant implications for the artist's role as well as the public's role. Is the artist still the main author of artwork and become the artistic content creation? And are contributors— participant, collaborator, or artist itself artistic content producer? Art for the sake of art seems to have faded. Nowadays, the artist chooses the digital device to make art that is related to an internet network with the art public in digital media. Visualization landscape of artwork that fills various digital sites has widened the artist's reach goes beyond various galleries to various digital displays. We see the world of art has developed with artists and their work that is growing exponentially.

Artist intertwines digital media and physical for installation and art show that is framed by social meaning that is delivered in digital sites. Digital art has changed from traditional art simulation time-based with the socio-cultural expression that is shown in various digital sites such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Blog, website, and others. Various narrations that are spread in the media site transformed into interesting digital artwork. Even so, art in the digital information era is now a frontier for the imperative will of digital art lovers. Artwork that is disseminated in digital media to accelerate popularity is now at risk of being dragged into economic pragmatism. The up-to-date features that characterize the information era encourage behavior that is similar to the artwork recently. Conditions like this encourage neglect of the content of a work of art.

The main concern in this article is the meaning of art creation, especially as an index of the distinctiveness of humanity. Focusing on comparisons between art creators and art connoisseurs, the interaction between parties of artwork in digital media has very different aspirations in showing the essence of the productivity of an artwork. The argumentation here is next in the two main points: first, a dichotomy between creators and art connoisseurs showed through indirect action and appropriative action, and this brings us into a perspective about the artwork as only an artistic technique collage. As an appropriative action, artwork creation is reduced become the mechanical work of a serving system under a certain technical setting that is controlled by media digital system and the logic of the accompanying update.

The influence of art connoisseur in digital media that wants productive works of art that are up-to-date so that works of art are like commodities of commerce. Besides the pragmatism tendency of art becomes a cultural product that only emphasizes art as a technical chain. The dominance of the art of the will of the end of the art is a symptom of appropriation which results like art as symbolic wealth now having two forms: namely the appearance of the meaning/value and appearance of commodities.

Appropriation symptom place artwork in a liminal condition, namely artwork as a cultural product that abides by art connoisseur in digital media that expect updates; and artwork as a reaction toward artwork co modification of artwork that is more directed to symbolic appropriation. In the first condition, with update logic, the artwork is treated like trading stuff that prioritizes selling or appreciation of art connoisseur in digital media.

That appreciation can be in the form of accumulation of "thumb" (*like this*) that is found in digital social media application "Facebook", the sum of "viewer" and "subscriber" in YouTube; and "Follower" in "Instagram". Appreciation through emoticon that is deeply related to digital communication through smartphones and another digital device that is functioned as a new symbolic language. Appreciation emoticon-based can be understood universally in delivering gestures, feelings, and emotions that increase the textual meaning. Emoticon appreciation (hyper-mediated) is a part of the aestheticization of digital artwork.

The innovative use of emoticon appreciation as a digital symbolic language shows that new modes of digital expression change the way we define art, and how art and information are closely related to the current wave of digital creativity. Even so, art content in these conditions tends to be ignored. The tendency of institutionalizing art to become a cultural product cannot be separated from the co-modification of art (art as a commodity). The presence of works of art only intends to answer the market's will that defines the social image of the audience. Imagery that builds the order of perception, appreciation, and the expression of the latest art without artistic content as symbolic appropriation.

Different from the art configuration as symbolic appropriation, in this case, the artwork is an effort of values recognition without self-interest and rejection toward market appropriation that expect short-term commercialization. Symbolic appropriation expects the creation of art that thinks long-term in the framework of the accumulation of symbolic capital. This type of art creation is very concerned with the content of an artwork.

Appropriation (market) of art connoisseur with update logic toward artwork is the aspiration representation in consuming signs such as prestige, social status contemporary as a reflection of power. Thus, appropriation of artwork can be understood as an effort to organize, manipulate, control, and determine the most economical, productive, up-to-date artwork. Appropriation is manifested in the material (see Robert, 2008: 105), namely through the art that is displayed and expresses attitudes and lifestyle choices.

As stated in Widagdo's opinion (2008) about the pre factum (creation concept) and post-factum (the form of his art), appropriation of artwork has happened in those two fields. The first field relies on aesthetic products such as

social context, culture, belief, environment, economy and another thing that becomes the base of artwork creation. In the post-factum field, the fulcrum is on art objects and their connection with the creator and the community. The existence of an artwork cannot be separated from the aspects that underlie its existence, namely the purpose of creating works of art that will underlie the choice of manifestation with various aspects of its dimensions.

CONCLUSION

The existence of artwork can be considered as up-to-date when it is spread massively, and it happens in digital media. Digital creativity center from artwork creation process between art creator and art connoisseur is the critical crossing that forms the objectivity of digital art. Appropriation toward artwork that develops in digital media now can be said that has sued the authorities reflecting the experiences and feelings and thoughts of the art creators.

Artwork as a type of creation that is influenced by the factors that exist in the art creator, such as experience, the conditions of the surrounding environment, and the factors that influence his work, is now very determined by the tastes of the audience. An artist not only visualizes every moment that happens but how to catch a reality and put it into the work with the up-to-date demand. Digital media reality becomes a creativity patron for artists. The reality with various expressions as well as various digital art connoisseur aspirations.

Thus, digital literacy skill in the information era is something important that should be understood; thus, there is no appropriation practice for the existence of artwork in digital media. Digital literacy expected to equip the public with understanding skills, selecting, and getting back (to retrieve) information in the middle of the information overflow that happens (see Kurnia and Astuti, 2017). Digital literacy directed to mediation between technologies with the public to practice the digital technology productively. The purpose of this digital literacy the same, even though the activities are various as follows:

“A digitally literate person: (1) Possesses a variety of skills – technical and cognitive – required to find, understand, evaluate, create, and communicate digital information in a wide variety of formats; (2) Is able to use diverse technologies appropriately and effectively to retrieve information, interpret results, and judge the quality of that information; (3) Understands the relationship between technology, life-long learning, personal privacy, and stewardship of information; (4) Uses these skills and the appropriate technology to communicate and collaborate with peers, colleagues, family, and on occasion, the general public; and (5) Uses these skills to actively participate in civic society and contribute to a vibrant, informed, and engaged community.” (ALA Digital Literacy Taskforce, 2011).

Digital literacy skill is an absolute thing in using digital media. Various appropriation practices are started from the messy management of information in digital media because there is a lack of digital literacy skills. The synergy of all parties in spreading digital literacy understanding is very needed to prevent appropriation practice that violates creation rules and the spreading of artwork in the digital era.

Appropriation as "heuristic terminologies" is a symbolic device from everything materialistic, behavioral, and ideational. Especially in the digital art context, appropriation reflects the relation between human beings and artwork with a background of interest of its digital media. Appropriation translation digitally places his analysis spans the symptom of a change in the will of "global-local" art creation, along with a "transitive-intransitive" network of appreciation. The appropriation of digital works is a feature of cultural reflection that has historical contingencies and is politically contested in up-to-date digital information.

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