

PARALLELS AND CONTRASTS BETWEEN INDONESIAN AND HUNGARIAN CONTEMPORARY ART (CONSIDERING THE HISTORY OF ART)

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Abstract

Comparing different cultures can give us a new perspective on how we look at the world we see and the art within it. Author research is about the differences and similarities between Hungary and Indonesia, both in the personal fields and in national aspect. After experiencing the reception and creation of art in both countries, the author can draw conclusions and use author's experience in her further works. In the following pages, the author contrasts not only two distant cultures but very different contemporary art through the works of well-known artists. However, another important part of the research is to find the similarities and the phenomenon that connects these two particular civilizations. The questions arise in the author as to whether it was possible to find aspects that could be found in both places. Art is global, the aim is the same. What is the purpose of art? Each country and each individual finds the answer to this central question on its own. What provided the foundations for contemporary art in Europe? Is sacredness present in art nowadays?

Keywords: contemporary art, Indonesian, Hungary, cultures, comparison

Abstrak

Membandingkan budaya yang berbeda dapat memberi kita perspektif baru tentang bagaimana kita memandang dunia yang kita lihat dan seni di dalamnya. Penelitian penulis tentang perbedaan dan persamaan antara Hungaria dan Indonesia, baik dalam aspek pribadi maupun dalam bidang nasional. Setelah mengalami resepsi dan penciptaan seni di kedua negara, penulis dapat menarik kesimpulan dan menggunakan pengalaman penulis dalam karyanya selanjutnya. Di halaman-halaman berikut, penulis mengontraskan tidak hanya dua budaya yang jauh, tetapi juga seni kontemporer yang sangat berbeda melalui karya-karya seniman terkenal. Namun, bagian penting lain dari penelitian ini adalah menemukan persamaan dan fenomena yang menghubungkan dua peradaban tertentu ini. Timbul pertanyaan dalam diri penulis, apakah mungkin menemukan aspek-aspek yang dapat ditemukan di kedua tempat tersebut. Seni itu mendunia, tujuannya sama. Apa tujuan seni? Setiap negara dan setiap individu menemukan jawaban atas pertanyaan sentral ini sendiri. Apa yang menjadi dasar bagi seni rupa kontemporer di Eropa? Apakah kesakralan hadir dalam seni saat ini?

Keywords: Seni kontemporer, Indonesia, Hungaria, budaya, perbandingan

A. Introduction

Every culture is unique on its own. It comprises a language that includes verbal or written cues for any sort of communication within the culture. However, the communication does not end here. The language of a culture is a concept that that allows members to embody an unique identity of their culture, but also meet on common grounds with other cultures. This is primarily one of the reasons one human can belong

to different cultures. They express their identity or identity culture through the way they speak, the way they dress, the food they eat, as well as the art, architecture and politics that appeals most to them.

The reason I am so preoccupied with this topic was my arrival to Indonesia. After the expected culture shock, I inadvertently began to observe the differences and similarities. For the time being, there seems to be less of the latter. Probably this gives the longing for the unknown and the magic of Indonesia. There is a section of artistic minds that love to admire art and the meaning hidden within. The best way to do so is to visit an art exhibition. I especially like the culture of visiting galleries in this country, I will explain later how such an event happened based on my usual routine so far. In essence, art is the way of expressing emotions in a non-generic way. Not just that, art has always been a source of earning for talent heads over the years. This is why curators, art historians, artists, as well as contemporary critics for art have always found art exhibitions as a way to discuss and know more about a particular art form.

I consider it important to mention sacredness, because it largely determines the operation, art and everyday life of a culture. In general, many differences can be observed here as well, as Hungary is a country based on Christian culture, and Indonesia operates according to the largest number of Islamic norms.

Sacredness has always been well defined and has played a central role in the creative arts. Within contemporary art, however, it is very the concept of sacred art can be interpreted broadly. It is not clear today which of the contemporary works of art can be considered sacred or profane. In the present age, we can no longer consider only the art of the temple to be sacred.

Both cultures have vastly different historical backgrounds, which largely defines contemporary art as well. As in any other country, artists draw inspiration from current events, everyday life, political events, religion, and many other aspects.

To recognize the role art plays in understanding different cultures, it is vital to look at a number of different factors. For starters, we can understand human nature and culture by reading works of art historians throughout the years. Contrastingly, we can also delve into the visual images and illustrations of a specific culture, concentrating on the artistic features, such as style, size, date of creation, physical location etc.

The importance of artistic features contributes to the overall creation of art. While the artist is to be credited for their masterpiece, the inherent motivations and

influences stem from their culture, community and the way they perceive their surroundings (<https://www.markhumes.gallery/blogs/mark-humes-gallery-magazine/cultural-differences-in-abstract-art>).

With all this in mind, dissecting the questions, we must come to the conclusion of what the purpose of meeting two cultures is and what benefits my Indonesian experience in my creative work as a person and the lessons I convey to the perceived world around me may have.

I will take into account well-known artists and their creations, ask questions and get answers through their works. As I mentioned earlier, each country individually finds its own national identity as they experience culture, both in terms of art.

Visiting the galleries actually gave me a familiar feeling, as if I felt like I had come home. After experiencing cultural differences, I experienced something in the galleries that I used to feel at home. Clearly, I have visited a lot of galleries in Hungary, our goal is the same for us when we go to an exhibition: to gain new experience, to find out how artists who create at the same time as us share their thoughts with the audience, to get in touch, to discuss about our ideas, to motivate each other, to learn.

B. Discussion

What are the main differences between Hungary and Indonesia? What provided the foundations for contemporary art in Europe and Indonesia? What is the purpose of art? What is the purpose and importance of an art exhibition? In the course of my research, these questions have occupied me, for which I am looking for answers both from my experience and from the phenomena I have seen so far. In terms of differences, I first present the two countries mentioned earlier through sacredness, as this is a defining point in terms of a culture and art that creators always look back on and use in their works. Is sacredness present in art nowadays? How does religion define a culture?

1. Sacredness in European art

Works of art dealing with the sacral or looking for the sacral can also be classified here, whether they are displayed in a consecrated space, in an urban public space, or in a secular museum or gallery. A work of art is considered sacred if it radiates the power of holiness and the exaltation that causes us to turn to ourselves, to ponder, and to be purified. In fact, of course, these are the criteria for all real works of art, so in a broader sense, all works of artistic value are also sacred.

However, from the creator's point of view, it is questionable whether reverence alone is sufficient to create such a sacred work. According to some opinions, the creative activity itself is a kind of prayer, and if it meets the artistic needs in the quality of the work of art, it can be rightly called sacred.

Apparently not all highly talented artists create sacred work, just as it cannot be said that a mediocre creator is incapable of creating a work with a very elevated sacral charge. There are many world-famous works in art history that have been created by non-believers, yet they function as sacred works for the viewer or even the believer.

By the end of the twentieth century, attributes had disappeared which the artist could have used as before, when they could be clearly interpreted and readed by everyone. Nowadays, the artist develops his own visual language and symbol system and creates in that medium. However, it is even more important whether the viewer is captured by this individual view, is able to process the information, and on the other hand is able to interpret it according to its place and its function.

The result of quiet contemplation is the entry into the spiritual space of the work and the true wonder of art; the image may open a window on the transcendent. This creates a kind of connection between the creator, the work, and the observer, in which the viewer becomes a co-author during the process of interpretation and acceptance.

In the case of sacred works, the phenomenon of theophany is not uncommon either, which is a deep and intimate experience for the viewer. This state is best described by the words of the parish priest of Sopron, Ferenc Bindes, who said that "in such a time we can bathe in the radiance of God". In the sacred, contemporary art of a sacred nature, we have to think of depicting non-biblical scenes in most cases. These have been realized in many works over the past two thousand years. We need to think much more about meditative, contemplative works. These complementary creations create inner silence, are deeply spiritual in nature, and in many cases provide an opportunity for the viewer to experience the prayer of contemplation as a dialogue with the Creator .

Whether a work carries a sacred message that can be interpreted by the viewer once it has been completed and made public is always a secret. It is never really possible to predetermine in the process of creation whether it will be a sacred work or not. Planned intent often leads to failure or manners. During the creative activity, the artist himself may enter a state of transcendent consciousness, which also appears in his work, but the sensitivity and vision of the receiving party, the viewer, their intuitions,

association, and empathy are needed for the sacred message to reach its goal. In contemporary arts, sacredness has moved away from traditional symbol systems, their realistic representations, the focus has shifted to a kind of inner vision, and the goal is to display and convey images of the inner vision. Through the work, the confrontation with the transcendent experience is realized, which in many cases can cause a very deep catharsis from the observer. There are very few abstract representations in churches and church buildings, which may be due to the fact that although today's art employs an abstract visual representation, today's recipients are much more attached to figural representation. Artists think quite differently about displaying the sacred projection than the vast majority of believers. Believers in the larger, historic churches are still strongly attached to their traditions and to the traditional, figural display of sacredness.



Illustration 1

Ivó Kovács Neo-Baroque II. 'Omni-space', light projection, 2020.
(lighthub.net)

The question may arise for many: is there contemporary sacred art at all? Religion and religious works have played a major role in Western art history, but from the second half of the twentieth century onwards, artists may seem to be moving further and further away from sacredness. The depiction of angels, saints, and biblical stories has been replaced by images of abstract forms, popular culture, and the figure of the postmodern man. Yet it would be wrong to claim that sacred themes have disappeared from contemporary art.

By this we can think of works of art that have a specifically liturgical role: frescoes, icons, chalices and other objects of church use. At the same time, sacred art also refers to works based on the individual beliefs of individual artists. Religious

iconographies played a central role in the development of European arts. Most of the works in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance were sacred objects. The figurative depictions of Jesus and the images of the saints all served to give a visual, pictorial language to the inner life of religion. And how is the contemporary manifestation of sacredness different? Although postmodern artists are often characterized by experimentation and rethinking of traditions, religion continues to emerge strongly in the lives of many creators. At the same time, now many times abstract from traditional belief systems, they try to grasp their metaphysical reality, directing our attention specifically to our inner vision. The works are not related to specific religions, but to beliefs or supernatural categories.

Just as colors can have an underlying, sacred content, so light can be a means of sacredness. In Hungarian contemporary art, too, we can often find light installations that capture the spiritual quality of light. One such work is the Kovács Ivó 2020 Neo-Baroque II. His installation, 'Omni-Space', was made space-specifically for the Lighthouse Light Art Association's group exhibition ON.

The installation was made on the ground floor of the Csokonai Theater in Debrecen, a resting place, which the artist resembles a one-person place of worship. The half-domed light projection transforms the space into a meditation space where the center of the projected image has been adjusted to the perspective of the visitors, keeping the light in constant view. Biblical themes and religious motifs also return in the installations of the artist:

ERIK MÁTRAI

The form of his works is characterized by restraint, but at the same time they deal with considerable issues such as the mixing of religious and scientific narratives, eternity, resurrection, or immortality. Such is the 2019 Vitruvian Orb installation, which magnifies Leonardo da Vinci's study of Vitruvius and places it in a sphere of light. The "ideal man" becomes alive in space, yet floating in the light acts as unearthly. Nor can we go into how the silhouette of the Vitruvian study resembles the figure of Jesus crucified.

**Illustration 2**

Erik Mátrai's Vitruvian Orb installation, 2019, paper, yarn, black light, diameter: 190 cm.
(erikmatrai.com)

2. Sacredness in Indonesian art

It is quite difficult to define Indonesian art, since the country is immensely diverse. Indonesia also has experienced a long history, with each period leaves distinctive art. From prehistoric cave paintings and megalithic ancestral statues of Central Sulawesi, tribal wooden carving traditions of Toraja and Asmat people, graceful Hindu-Buddhist art of classical Javanese civilization which produced Borobudur and Prambanan, vivid Balinese paintings and performing arts, Islamic arts of Aceh, to contemporary arts of modern Indonesian artists. Both Indonesian diversity and history add to the complexity of defining and identifying what is Indonesian art. I begin the comparison with facts and historical background regarding the sacredness of Indonesia. Indonesian architecture has been shaped by interaction between indigenous customs and foreign influences, including Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam. Buddhist art in Indonesia reached its golden era under the Sailendra dynasty of the Sri Vijaya Empire between the 8th and 13th centuries. Golden age under the Majapahit Empire (1293–1500), during which a large number of Hindu–Buddhist brick temples were built, characterized by tall, slender-roofed red brick gates and a strong geometrical quality.

By the 15th century, Islam had become the dominant religion in Indonesia, and local mosques reflected both indigenous and Islamic influences. They lacked the Islamic dome and had tall timber -tiered roofs similar to the pagodas of Balinese Hindu temples. The culture and art of Indonesia has been shaped by interaction between local indigenous customs and multiple foreign influences. Situated on the ancient maritime trading routes between the Near East and the Far East, Indonesia was exposed to a multitude of foreign

cultural practices and religions, including Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam. The result is a complex fusion of many different customs, expressed in Indian art forms.

Indonesian painting has been shaped by a myriad of cultural influences, including Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and colonial forces. Under the influence of the Dutch colonial power, a trend toward Western-style painting emerged in the 19th century. In history, due to the Dutch colonization, we can find points of connection between Europe and Indonesia.

3. Persagi and the Modern Indonesian Painting Identity

The first opening of Batavia Kunstkring (Batavia Art Circle) in 1914 was crucial in the development of modern art in the Dutch Indies. This institution acted as the center of *Nederlandsch Indische Kunstkring* (the Dutch Indies art circle). It was founded in 1902 with a mission to promote Western modern art in the Dutch Indies especially in major cities such as Jakarta, Bandung, Surabaya also other major cities in Java and Sumatera. The gallery's space displayed a number of European artists' works. Around 1935-1940, there was an exhibition of artworks by important painters such as Vincent van Gogh, Pablo Picasso, Paul Gauguin, dan Marc Chagal from the collection of PA. Regnault, an owner of a paint factory in the Dutch Indies at the Batavia Kunstkring. This exhibition did not only get a positive response from art public in Batavia but also gave a great influence for rsive painters. At the latter half of the 1930s, S. Sudjojono (1913-1986) emerged as a native painter who criticized the trend of landscape paintings also beautified ladies and officers/aristocrats paintings as presented by Basoeki Abdullah, a native painter who just returned to Indonesia from his study in the Netherlands. According to Sudjojono, those beautiful paintings were only souvenirs serving for the Dutch expatriates' interest and ignoring the daily realities. Sudjojono cynically criticized this tendency as "Mooi Indie" (beautiful Indie). There was no clue where Sudjojono took this term, but Frederics Jacobus van Rossum du Chattel once published an album of water colour paintings entitled "Mooi Indie" in 1913. Criticism towards paintings in the Dutch Indies was once also voiced by J.E. Jasper who quipped Du Chattel with his sentence "De opzet verraadt het gevoel voor Indisch moo'" and Johannes Tielroey who in the article "Indie in De Schilder-en Teeekenkunst" (1930) brought up the terms "Souvenirs van Indie". Around April 1938, judges of a steleng (exhibition) held at the *Bataviasche Kunstkring*, who some of them were Jan Frank and Charles Sayers, selected Sudjojono's painting entitled "Kinderen met Kat" (Children and the Cat) to join the exhibition. His painting even

became an illustration for the front cover of the exhibition's catalogue. Previously, it was very difficult for native painters to exhibit their works at the Kunstkring, if there were any, only landscape painters would get the opportunity. After Sudjojono's success, under the initiative of Sudjojono, Agus Djaya and other native painters, the first painters union in Indonesia was founded on 23 October 1938 namely Persatuan Ahli Gambar Indonesia (PERSAGI) - the Union of Indonesian Painters. The foundation of this union was inseparable from the growth of modernism and nationalism discourses which were already a discussion among intellectuals since the establishment of Budi Oetomo (1908), Taman Siswa Institute and the Youth Pledge event (1928), the publication of Fikiran Ra'jat newspaper (1932) and Pujangga Baru Magazine (1936), also the Polemic on Culture in 1935 (Krishbie & Margono, 2019).

4. The Japanese Occupation in Indonesia

The life in Indonesia changed drastically when the Japanese military invaded in 1942. The Japanese dismissed all the Dutch colonial's cultural institutions. They consigned the Dutch citizens and army living in Indonesia in concentration camps. The Japanese occupant tried to draw the sympathy of artists and culturalists by establishing a Cultural Center or Keimin Bunka Shidoso on 1 April 1943 to create political stability in the government. Keimin Bunka Shidoso had a development program for visual art, music, literature, and performance art (Krishbie & Margono, 2019).

Agus Djaya who was once the chairman of Persagi was appointed as the Head of the Department of Visual Art. Some painters who joined Keimin Bunka Shidoso were Otto Djaya, Basoeki Resobowo, Kusnadi, Bahanuddin Marasutan and others. Besides Bandung, Keimin Bunka Shidoso also had divisions in other cities such as Surabaya, Malang, and Semarang. Its activities were exhibitions, publishing, training, teaching, and research. On 16 April 1943, the Japanese government also established an organization namely POETRA (Posat Tenaga Rakjat) or the Central of People's Power by recruiting Soekamo, Mohamad Hatta, Ki Hadjar Dewantara, and Kai Haji Mas Mansjoer as the leaders. The purpose was actually to mobilize any Indonesian potential support in their war effort against the Western Allied Force. POETRA consisted of several divisions covering education, propaganda, health, welfare, and culture. S. Sudjojono led the culture division. A number of joining artists were Affandi, Hendra Gunawan, Mochtar Apin etc. In 1944, the Japanese army dismissed POETRA. The three-and-a-half year Japanese occupation period had a significant role in building the nationalism aspiration in encouraging the

independence as well as in founding its cultural base. At this period of time, the Japanese occupation government provided spaces of expression to develop art and cultural activities such as visual art, drama, music, and dance (though censorship was still applied in visual art and literature). In visual art, there were many group as well as solo exhibitions held so that the atmosphere of visual art was so alive. Keimin Bunka Shidoso was assumed to be dismissed prior to the end of the World War II. On 15 August 1945, Japan surrendered after the Allies dropped the atomic bomb over Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It then ended the Japanese occupation in Indonesia.



Illustration 4

S. Sudjojono, Tjap Go Meh, 1940, oil on canvas, 173x52 cm
(Galeri Nasional Indonesia)

This painting is expressing Sudjojono's boisterous emotions depicting the vibrant atmosphere of a celebration of a Chinese tradition, Cap Go Meh. It also presents an irony about social injustice, related to the colonial government's increasing oppression on nationalists. Sudjojono's idea of "jiwa ketok" (the visible soul) manifests itself clearly in this painting- the visual elements show a high level of spontaneity. The deformity of the people in the parade and the strong colors are supporting the expression of the celebration. I can see sacrality in the concept of this painting, also it has ritual mood at first sight.

5. Ancient Painting Materials in Asian perspective

Paper and cloth, in the miniature paintings of India are mainly used. However, by looking at the whole continent Asia or watching the Eastern countries, the ancient painting materials for sculpture designs were lapis lazuli, soft limestone, sandstone, calcite, and schist. Harder stones such as quartzite, diorite, granite, and basalt were also used for large projects. For painting statuary, elements such as wood and metals were used. Metals consist of copper, copper alloys (such as bronze), gold, and silver. Asian artists also used a variation of woods in their artwork, including the native acacia, tamarisk, and sycamore fig as well as fir, cedar, and other conifers introduced from Syria. Artificers shone at mystifying composed minor, unequal bits of wood and attached them into place to make statuary, coffins, boxes, and furniture. Most pigments in Asia were derived from homegrown reserves. White was regularly made from gypsum, black from carbon, reds and yellows from iron oxides, blue and green from azurite and malachite, and bright yellow (representing gold) from orpiment. These raw materials were ground and then assorted with a plant or animal founded glue to style a medium able to assign to the fortifications. They could be used as a solitary plane, but were also covered to generate understated belongings and supplementary colors, for example pink or gray. The techniques, symbolism and culture surrounding hand-dyed cotton and silk garments known as Indonesian Batik permeate the lives of Indonesians from beginning to end: infants are carried in batik slings decorated with symbols designed to bring the child luck, and the dead are shrouded in funerary batik.

Batik is dyed by proud craftspeople who draw designs on fabric using dots and lines of hot wax, which resists vegetable and other dyes and therefore allows the artisan to colour selectively by soaking the cloth in one colour, removing the wax with boiling water and repeating if multiple colours are desired. The wide diversity of patterns reflects a variety of influences, ranging from Arabic calligraphy, European bouquets and Chinese phoenixes to Japanese cherry blossoms and Indian or Persian peacocks. Often handed down within families for generations, the craft of batik is intertwined with the cultural identity of the Indonesian people and, through the symbolic meanings of its colours and designs, expresses their creativity and spirituality.

For a long time I thought the batik technique was only used to decorate clothes, I later went to a gallery where the batik technique was used as a contemporary artwork. It is incredible for me how many possibilities there are in this technique.



Illustration 5

Bagong Kussudiardja, Bunga dan Matahari, 1963, batik on fabric, 72x92 cm
(Galeri Nasional Indonesia)

6. Ancient Painting Materials in European perspective

In the western world, preferably recognized for European nations, the painting supplies were highly regarded. Just like Leonardo da Vinci, an Italian painter used oil and he designed new collection of painting stuff, Greek pitch, for which he was given eighty-nine pounds and eight ounces, dated April 30, 1505. The paintings which were made from wooden materials are very rare and in small quantity. The reason behind this is that the western painters used perishable woods to design a painting. Therefore, a erratic number of paintings (by wooden material) are available now. However, people do have duplicated and saved the ancient paintings from getting lost.

Pigments crushed in slow aeration oils like linseed oil might be used in a assortment of traditions. To start with, layers of oil and varnish-thinned glazes could enrich the rather dry surfaces of tempera paintings on pane deprived of overwhelming their clear-cut, sculptural outlines. This was the over-all exercise of the fifteenth century Flemish painters, and was sustained in Italy, chiefly by painters in Florence and Rome.

Canvas originated into in sixteenth century Venice as a pounded upon which to smear oil paint. Earlier that period, oil painting has been done mainly on wooden panels. Though, in the moist weather of Venice, wood panels inclined to decline. The result was to paint on a light, flexible material for instance canvas. Nevertheless, this, too, offered complications. Oil paint desiccates by corrosion; this organic variation bouts organic fibers; so, canvas must be sized to defend it from the oil. It was appended to stretchers for sizing, and these sized, overextended canvases rapidly exchanged wood panels.

Let me introduce the Hungarian „kékfestő” textile dyeing technique which is really similar to Indonesian batik technique. The predecessor of ‘kékfestés’ was textile dyeing and textile printing, the technologies having been present from the 16th century. The so-called festőcsüllenger (*Isatis tinctoria*), the indigenous dyeing plants being grown in huge areas in Thuringia and France, were used to get the colour of blue. The indigo (*Isatis indigofera*) was taken from India during the geographical discoveries in the 17th century. The colouring material produced from the colouring plant is fadeless, more concentrated and has better quality so its usage has spread quickly in cloth and linen dyeing.

At that time, due to the geographical discoveries the patterned eastern clothes appeared in bulk in Europe alongside with the cloth dyeing technics called reserve printing. ‘Perzellan Druck’ meant the blue-white colour effect of the porcelain similarly to the reserve printing kékfestés in the 18th century. The expression of kékfestés appeared in the correspondence of István Bengely first in the 1770s.

The production of kékfestés consists of two work phases: the first one is the patterning with the insulating mass and the second one is the dyeing in cold indigocsáva. The insulating mass, the so-called ‘priest’, was put onto the pre-prepared white linen with the help of famintázó (English: wood pattern) (in other words nyomódúc) as a first step. After being dried it closed the patterned surface from the paint. After that the cloth was dipped into the festőcsáva made from the mixture of indigo, lime, iron vitriol and water. After the cloth was drawn into the air it became oxidised indigo blue. The different shades of the blue cloth are the results of several immersions and airings. The insulating mass was soaked from the linen prepared in this way was in acid bath and then the blue colour was fixed. The final result was the beautiful cloth patterned with white (in some cases colourful) on blue base.

To apply the designs onto the cloth, practitioners use hand-crafted blocks that are up to 300 years old, featuring regionally-inspired patterns as well as generic designs or Christian motifs. The representation of local flora and fauna is interrelated with the local culture of the regions. The traditional method involves preparing the raw material and spinning, weaving, finishing, printing and dyeing them (Csűrös Z & Rusznák I, 1964).



Illustration 6 and 7
Indigo fabric dyeing studio in Hungary
(Blue-Dye Museum, Pápa, Hungary)

Today, the revival of traditional methods in all areas of folklore has seen the resurgence of eight workshops across Hungary. Using traditional as well as modern pieces, these workshops are keeping alive the art of blue print in Hungary.

The blue painting workshops that still operate today are presented to the public with various collections, partly based on the traditional patterns of the workshop or presenting elements of folk art adapted to their region, and partly with prestigious exhibitions. Several of the blue painters have also received state awards for their artistic work. Special mention should be made of the activity of Irén Bódy, a textile artist and academician, who has a permanent exhibition at the Blue Painter Museum in Hungary. The blue dyeing textile is used in most cases to sew clothes like jarik jawa in Indonesia.

7. Sacrality in contemporary art

Fortunately, I have had the opportunity to visit many galleries in Yogyakarta and in Jakarta as well. Thanks to our different cultures, I had many pleasant surprises while visiting the exhibitions. Art based on a different religion, a different outlook on life, a different mentality can often shock you. Indonesian contemporary artists draw inspiration from what is happening around them, just as other artists do in other countries. This fact itself was not shocking, surprising but that I was able to gain insight into the everyday lives of local people through the artworks. Every time I went to a gallery, it had a special aura. The exhibition space was filled with some new atmosphere that I had not yet experienced.

First of all, let me talk about famous Indonesian contemporary artists, as I did with Hungarian artists in the light of sacredness. Spirituality inspires many of Indonesia's contemporary artists, before I started writing this article, in the orientation phase, I found

an Islam-inspired artist, Ahmad Sadali. The National Gallery of Indonesia describes Sadali's style as follows:

"As a pure abstract painter, Sadali has indeed been separated from the representation of natural forms. However, in visual language all the forms presented by the artist can be read with various levels of interpretation. In the age of existing civilization, humans have been awakened unconsciously by signs that can universally evoke a certain spirit. Bold colors, dots and holes, and strokes on the plane can recall images of mystery, antiquity, and mortality. Triangular sign, pyramid construction gives the image of religiosity. Furthermore, molten gold and calligraphy strokes of the Koran can radiate Islamic spirituality. All of these signs are present in Sadali's painting, so the expression that appears is the crystallization of contemplation of religious values, mystery, and death (Vickers, 2021)."

A highly representative work from the artist's most significant body of works exploring texture. The work reveals a highly textured surface which the artist has developed into an expansive surface for the incision of marks and the addition of other media, forming a meditative abstract landscape that evokes a range of tactile and viewing sensations. In my opinion, he has created extremely interesting surfaces, the possibility of experimentation and the well-thought-out concept make this work interesting.



Illustration 8

Ahmad Sadali, Emas Tersisa, 1972, mixed media on canvas, 110x100 cm
(www.christies.com)

I noticed a particular similarity between Europe and Indonesia. It is probably the conclusion that both cultures draw ideas from each other. I went to the Indonesian National Gallery, where I saw a painting that was visually very similar to the work of Dutch painter Hieronymus Bosch. They also have the same concept. Freedom, humanity, delights.

" The Flare Up of Reformation " is the impression of the painter inspired by people delight of reformation movement in Indonesian in 1998. Symbolically this painting describes the movement of the delighted people to be free from the oppression. The painting fantastically depicts a bizarre world with various writhing figures, leading to an upward hurricane-like movement. In the foreground, various figures in a scene of torture in a space with a crown on its peak. Beside it, a mass of people are ushered along the hallway of a fort, passing by a castle's dome and a tower shaped like a scale that represents justice.

In the front ground various figures underdo suffering set in a room of a building with a crown. Then, the figures are driven through the hall of the building, passing castle crown and tower in the form of scales symbolizing justice. With bright colour, complex details, passionate rhythmic movements, this painting reminds us of the surrealistic feature of Hieronymus Bosch at the and of Gothic era.



Illustration 9

Hening Purnamawati, The Flare up of Reformation 1998, oil on canvas, 150x200 cm
(Galeri Nasional Indonesia)



Illustration 10

Hieronymus Bosch, The Garden of Earthly Delights 1503.–1515., oil on wood, 2,2 m x 3,89 m
(www.archief.ntr.nl)

Bosch's overarching message here—and the intricate, sneaky symbolism that powers it—is decidedly more complex. Themes of sin, punishment, and Hell also permeate the masterpiece. For centuries, the artist's radical creativity and imaginative iconography has sparked rowdy scholarly debate and provocative spinoffs.

All of Bosch's surviving artworks are religiously themed and glutted with biblical (i.e., moralizing) allusions. Yet, he also exhibited a whimsical weirdness that was previously unheard of in devotional art, which typically presented fairly rote depictions of good and evil, virtue and sin, and Heaven and Hell, writer Becca Rothfeld has explained. With *Garden of Earthly Delights*—and to a lesser extent in some of his other paintings, like *The Haywain Triptych* (c.1516)—Bosch exploded preconceived formulas by injecting references to heady dreams and nightmares into his vision of Eden, earthly pleasure, and Hell (Teal, 2020).

One of the most famous Indonesian contemporary artist is Heri Dono. He studied at the Indonesian Art Institute in Yogyakarta, where he is based until now. For almost forty years, Heri Dono has developed a fantastical world of dichotomies in his paintings. Humorously juxtaposing reality with imagination, folk with contemporary art, politics with fiction, the tension between these opposing forces create narratives that cut across a complex, multi-layered system of ideologies. Having lived through the struggle against oppression by the Indonesian regime in the 1980s, and later the 'reformasi' in 1998 that spawned from the end of Suharto's regime and developed into the neo-liberal globalization of Indonesia as it is today, Heri Dono's artistic methodology re-examines power structures through satirical illustrations of humans versus the Other, man versus

machine, offering a kind of passage for others to survive real life transitions during challenging times (Damajanti & Piliang, 2015).

He is known for his uniquely contemporary, Javanese style inspired by traditional Wayang Kulit (puppet theatre). Through his construction of thoughtful layers in his work, he is able to emphasize the more serious, underlying reflections on and criticisms of social and political issues such as military intervention, political corruption, and environmental destruction, allowing easier engagement with often difficult concepts.

Dono's elaborate sculptural installations take inspiration from these puppets, bringing them into the contemporary world of machines, robots, and television. Often featuring unusual juxtapositions of motifs, a variety of moving parts, and sound and video components, these multi-media works make powerful statements about political and social issues as well as the often jarring interrelationship between globalization and local cultures. With his paintings, Dono creates fantastical worlds of strange, hybrid creatures and oblique narratives, inspired by the colorful characters and stories of wayang, as well as contemporary issues.

Heri Dono's artistic journey did not stop there. He became interested in the Indonesian puppet theatres, and, again, drew controversy. For the Javanese, the puppet theatres — especially that of the leather puppets — are masterpieces that cannot be further developed. The leather puppet theatre is a form of art whose shapes and symbols are full of religious meanings; some are believed to be mystical and sacred. Therefore, the puppet show is no mere entertainment. The show invariably contains moral values and has political power. It was thus understandable that people reacted to the changes that Heri Dono had made. There were controversies, because the puppets he created revealed intricate visual patterns. "When I was exploring the world of the puppet theatre, I realized that the audience of the traditional puppet shows actually gained complicated sensations. I then corrected my understanding of art expressions, which had been focused on the fine arts. Suddenly, I felt the need to develop other sensibilities aside from that of sight. I realized that the puppet theatre is an artistic expression knowing no boundaries between the visual arts, music, theatre, and the literary arts," he explains.

Heri Dono says, "All the problems within my works are the problems of beauty. In exploring the world of beauty, I immerse myself in the sensibility that enables me to seek spirituality, a collective phenomenon. In this realm, I'm forced to articulate my views on the reality which have been influenced by others' views." According to him, such a

process does not present a rational awareness; instead, it brings to the fore a cultural awareness that accommodates unpredictable matters. “In Yogyakarta, there are many small workshops repairing transistor radios for re-sale. I invite the technicians to work with me creating works of art, because I think their work carries signs of art that are closely related with the traditions and the culture,” he says. He views such radio technicians and craftsmen as creative and innovative people. They create toys and utensils from Coca-Cola cans, used cardboards, packaging boxes and discarded broken objects. Heri Dono thinks that the sensibility of such technicians and craftsmen is the sensibility to perceive beauty as has been craftsmanship developed in the world of traditions. “Their works reveal innovations,” he says. “The objects they make aren’t perfect, indeed, but innovations are never perfect anyway. Perfection is merely a continuation of an invention having no innovative contents anymore” (Spielmann, 2017).



Illustration 11
Heri Dono, *Born and Freedom*, 2004
Mixed media, 35 x 65 x 90 cm
(galeri-nasional.or.id)

The work “Born and Freedom” (2004) is an installation consisting of an array of five humanbird couples on the wall, joined together by a chain to animals in front of them. On the chest of the human-bird is a machine and colour of the body that gives off a dull archaic expression. The animals, with the same expression, have wheels affixed to their hind legs. These hybrid figures were born as mythological beings, combining the past world with the present technology, at the same time challenging the liberties of the present world.

For aspiring artists who want to have an international career, Heri advises them to have a deep understanding of not only global issues but also history, culture and the country’s traditions. “To go international, we do not need to change our identity. If we have character, we will be seen as unique by artists from other countries, because we do

not try to imitate them,” he said. “We should stop thinking that [Indonesia] is always being left behind and that other countries are always better. We are great because we have a rich culture” (Ulung, 2018).

8. What is the purpose of art?

The purpose of art is to allow people, both individually and in group settings, to express emotions, commemorate history, expose injustices, overcome obstacles, and gain an understanding of the world around them. At its center, art is a form of self-expression, empowering the artist to capture, show, or otherwise express themselves through their medium of choice. Art can also teach others history, compassion, and empathy. Ultimately, art exists to preserve humans in their most pure and raw forms.

Art can uplift, provoke, soothe, entertain and educate us and is an important part of our lives. At its most profound level, it takes us from the everyday to a place of introspection and contemplation, to see the bigger picture of the human condition. Art also has a diverting or pleasurable purpose, both for the creator and the spectator or listener and can be a comfort in times. This is exactly what we all use art for, regardless of country. It can be Indonesia and also Hungary.

C. Conclusion

As far as it is concerned, the comparison has its major outcomes. Each community has given a unique role in the development and understanding of art. We have come to know to some major facts that were very rare, by studying and analyzing the both Asian World Art and Western World Art. Rather than preferring cultural assets, there are quite low difference between Eastern and Western artists. But if we recognize and watch out social values, the plot of both sections is different. As, Asia and Europe has different community and moral standards (<http://scholarsindex.com/articles/difference-between-asian-art-and-western-art>).

Europeans are more individualistic; they like to motivate themselves, instead of being motivated by other people. Asians are more focused on group dynamics; they share success and failure among each other, and let everyone know they belong to a community. Asia didn't metabolize Europe's. At the gilded age most European art absorbed Asian and African features such as flatter depth, color experiments, and some tribal figuration. Earlier Europe had a duller palette with stuffy tableaus of aristocrats, and prosaic landscapes. However by the former time luminaries like Matisse thoroughly

espoused works from Asia; namely Hokusai and Hiroshige. This marriage in Europe precipitated modern art as we know it. Asian art tends to be about an idea, a single item that holds more than one, a drop of water that contains the universe. Look at impressionist art by Van Gogh and how they don't end. While they are different they have more in common with each other and their different eras. Asia even had a "blue" period.

So to end, western art has historically been more of a closed statement and eastern art has been an open ended question. These both will ask a question however one will lead towards a general way and the other is more encompassing. Mutually the artist tries to focus out the cultural aspects. However, a few depicted their own distinct interests. Western artists mostly described only one religion while Eastern artists showed different beliefs. Expansions in Western art factually equivalent those in Eastern painting, in wide-ranging a few centuries far along. African art, Islamic art, Indian art, Chinese art, and Japanese art individually had a noteworthy impact on Western art, and, in due course, vice versa.

The most dominating religions in both Western and Eastern world are Christianity, Islam and Hinduism. Western painters practice refrains and images from only one origin Christianity. Most Western Christian artists use or have used painting to around level, while several have had solid oppositions to roughly forms of spiritual image, and there have been chief eras of iconoclasm inside Christianity. Metaphors of Jesus and account scenarios from the Life of Jesus are the most communal focuses, and sections from the Old Testament perform a share in the painting of most quantities. Paintings of the Virgin Mary and saints are much odder in Protestant paintings than that of Roman Catholic.

Painting materials has a common role in the contrasting the both European and Asian art, as it also changes the realistic mode of paintings which includes calligraphy, sculptures, murals, etc. The analysis shows mostly the terms of ancient art between both group of artists, Eastern and Western. The Asian depictions are more closed to the reality while the Western or European art refers to the context of imaginary sciences. We could easily evaluate the difference if we are concerned with the ancient art of both groups. We're just comparing the items found in Western art and Asian art, not telling which one is better. But we can easily say that most of the Asian painters were only painters and not more than this while European artists were not just painters but among them there were scientists, mathematicians, physicians, etc. Considering the difference between Eastern

and Western pictures supports us assess each other with an appropriate point; the representation and realism.

Modern art cannot be easily defined and differentiated because in this era of technology, there are different fine artists are available and have almost the similarities mostly. If we start writing on that subject, then it will be necessary to publish a book on this topic. We just have calculated the major differences between ancient Asian art and Western art in the above article.

D. Kepustakaan

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