THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ABSTRACT AND FIGURATIVE PAINTING IN CONTEMPORARY INDONESIAN ART IN A NEW WAY

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ABSTRACT

In my article, I will dissect the problem of the relationship between abstract and figurative painting in contemporary Indonesian art in a new Hungarian approach and position. The article is based on my own experience, research and studies, in which I will discuss the Hungarian parallels that I noticed during my time in Indonesia. The research refers to personal experiences gained by visiting the fine art galleries seen in Yogyakarta. The aforementioned and seen galleries and the works of art seen therewith will be presented. As a main element, the importance of discovering the Hungarian-Indonesian relationship examined in contemporary art appears, and we can also delve into the differences in the detail of abstract painting, figurative painting. This abstract-figurative relationship will be examined both in the Hungarian contemporary art aspect and in the Indonesian contemporary art aspect. The gesture management, color analysis and surface treatment of abstract painting are contrasted and examined with the detail, space management and conceptuality of figurative painting. Several different local works will be analyzed, which can be found in the galleries listed later.

Keywords: fine art, contemporary art, Indonesian, Hungarian, abstract painting, figurative painting.

ABSTRAK


Kata kunci: seni rupa, seni kontemporer, Indonesia, Hongaria, lukisan abstrak, lukisan figuratif.
A. Introduction

In contemporary painting, paintings can be divided into two main groups based on visual thematics: abstract painting and figurative painting. Distinguishing these two sectors is an important aspect of the analysis of a work, since both genres approach the work from different points of view. Raising the problem raises questions about how can two of these different sectors be compared? Because their test base is based on completely different methods. During the visual examination of an abstract image, the main aspect is the examination of colors, proportions, quantities, gestures, surface treatments, the relation of surfaces to each other. While in the examination of a figurative image an important aspect is the presence or direct neglect of human anatomy, the problem of light-shadow, the richness of detail, the relationship of colors, the composition, the discovery of the interest center. One of the main aspects of Hungarian art is that art will have some kind of social reputation: art is in the public interest and has a public voice, its aim is to educate a wide range of society. This creates a strong parallel between Hungarian art and Indonesian art. Here we can talk about the importance of historical painting, in which national historical events and national consciousness are captured, which results in a decisive individual identity for each nation. This phenomenon can be found in both Hungarian and Indonesian art. Every social impact that affects artists is presented as a final product. The processing of each nation's own personal events is manifested in different methods and can be compared with each other, which can be drawn from identity similarities. “Thus, to view today’s art scene in Indonesia we need a different way of thinking about the categories of modernity and contemporaneity. It should consider the different stages of development, the influences of the West and on the West, the history of the country and the processes of the formation of nationality and identity, their anchoring in cultural and religious traditions, and finally also the scene’s relation to the international scope of the art market. All of this is difficult to subsume in the Western-determined concept of a globally acting contemporary art, which often resembles colonialism by other means and which strives for global control of the market. (Spielmann, 2017) The functioning of the art scene as an industry raises questions, on what basis does the artist-loving class, who invest in artistic works, see the given works realistically? This can also be raised as a problem, how much the viewer counts as a competent person and how much this affects the attitude and identity of the artist. “This recontextualization is not only about the presence of the Other, of the indigenous in the here and now. It is also a subtle criticism of the empty standstill reached by Western contemporary art, which, after its postmodern interlude, is pressing further into the sensational and spectacular, well armed to conquer the global market with a capital-led strategy of art as luxury commodities. This global art is priced beyond the financial capacities of museums, and thereby enters the realm of pure investment. It lacks ambitious content—especially since the purchasers are usually mostly interested in return on investment and are not knowledgeable about art. Art production in postcolonial countries like Indonesia is countering this tendency with a powerful orientation toward identity and the self-assertion of its own understanding of art.” (Spielmann, 2017)

Contemporary art reflects the social and other problems of the living and present, so as a living and active problem, how does artistic inflation affect the artist and how can it connect in two completely different countries? The answer is simple: both the Indonesian and the Hungarian artists are subject to the same market impulses. This problem determines what the viewer needs from the artist, that is, there is a tendency to update a trend of what kind of artwork the recipient needs. This need refers to the form of interpretation they like, that is, at the moment it is more the abstract form of wording or the figurative-realistic visual form. And on what basis can the market niche be found from the art-
ist's point of view, what does the receiving, paying crowd need, what is it open to? This trend is constantly on the move, and overtime it can be viewed periodically which sector people were currently open to: abstract painting or figurative painting. As an example of post-Painterly Abstraction in the 1964-1970s, One of the American artists Frank Stella launched a new examination of abstract painting with the peculiar expression technique of geometric hard-edge. The concept of post-scenic abstraction was invented by “American art critic Clement Greenberg for a 1964 exhibition in Los Angeles that he organized at the Country Museum of Art.” (Dempsey, 2020) “Frank Stella's unique creation consists of black lines drawn with free hands, among which you can see the uncollected canvas. With this procedure, he combined geometric abstraction with gesture painting, mocking both: “cleaning” gesture painting and “dirtying” geometric abstraction.” (Dempsey, 2020)

On the contrary, as a current trend in hyperrealism (from 1965 to the present day), “its trend, also called photoreal-

ism, became of paramount importance in the 1970s and flourished primarily in the United States. In defiance of the fashions of abstraction, minimalism and conceptualism, its practitioners have consistently created realistic images and sculptures, often based on photos and plaster castings. Chuck Close, for example, took poster-sized portraits of himself and his friends with spray paint guns and minimal paint to create a photo-like smooth surface.” (Dempsey, 2020)

In conclusion, the aim of the article is to recognize, explain, reflect on each other and draw parallels between the problems in the Indonesian and Hungarian art scene.

B. Discussion

When we talk about contemporary painting, illusion creation derails the hands of artists, so it is necessary to reinterpret what the essence of painting is. After modernism, the revision of linear art history, the illusion of a single authentic narrative is dispelled, so it is no longer possible to mention isms that can be classified on the basis of stylistic features. For this reason, contemporary art is characterized by the presence of parallel narratives, the absence of formal stylistic features. But this is not the same as the concept of present-time (not contemporary, which is related to an already closed discourse). It can be stated

1.diagram
Frank Stella-The Marriage of Reason and Squalor II. 1952.
(https://www.flickr.com/photos/48609457@N02/4560415655)

2.diagram
(https://www.reddit.com/r/Photorealism/comments/1ir8u2/chuck_close_mark_1978/)
that this form of contemporary painting is based on self-reflective, meta-linguistic moments, new questions are constantly being asked, what to do with the new situation if the previous concepts are not applicable? This results in a continuous search for identity. We are constantly exposed to new and new influences, and thus a collective and a personal identity are layered in us at the same time, which puts objects in a new position, thus recontextualizes them. The personal inner world of every artist creates the final image that forms a bridge between everything: artist-work of art, art-viewer, identity culture, religion-politics, old-young, etc. "Artists, those who mediate art, feel precisely that they are enriching the spiritual goods of the present, because if they do not, they can, they will forever lose all that is human. They believe and know that art can connect us to eternity, because the work of art spans centuries, thousands of years, it is valid in all times. With contemporary art, we send a message to the future, to the children of our children, thousands of years in advance. Artists, if they feel definitively vulnerable, do not receive the necessary attention and respect, they turn to the heavenly ones. " (Peter, 1971)

By meeting several inner worlds, we create the main subject of this conversation and any conversation. There are disagreements and counter-arguments, because there are common points and distant differences.

This idea is also a projection of the current Indonesian-Hungarian parallel, as many points are observed in matches and, of course, opposites. This is a complex issue, because the differences ultimately overlap and become similar, by which I mean that Indonesia, for example, has an infinitely rich culture. Its peculiarities make it colorful: "We know that Indonesia is rich country with traditional fine arts consisting of artifacts that can be seen visually, and are a legacy of ancestors that still remains sustainable in certain areas. Indonesian traditional fine art has distinctive features and has potential to be appointed as the future art, because it contains many religious values with distinctive and high quality artistic. Indonesian traditional fine art needs to be studied further, and adjusted according to the needs and support of the times. The aesthetic existence of traditional art is considered as a source of contemporary aesthetics. Traditional aesthetics has form or symbols that appear differently, however, the spirit, soul, or essence is still oriented to mystical, magical, cosmic, and religious culture. The presence of contemporary art with a traditional aesthetic background that represents the past art reflects activities that are based on the appreciation of life in universe, both for physical and non-physical needs. The previous artworks were created based on a good awareness of depth function, aesthetics and symbolism which were mixed in a harmonious blend." (Suardana, 2020)

These listed features can also be found in Hungarian culture. But of course, due to the cultural difference, they are embedded differently and draw from a different source. For example, Hungary’s religious basis provides the created worldview through Christianity. Which can be communicated through Christian iconography, Pieta depictions, Biblical themes, and, in addition, sacral and traditional evaluation in modern terms. Professionalism is an expression of transcendence. This phenomenon can be experienced as a liturgical sacral image and not as a liturgical sacral image. Certain works use Christian symbols to express the suffering of the individual, or the questioning of these symbols is the subject. As the main symbol type, the appearance of a feeling of suffering can be observed, thus referring to the sufferings of Christ. Non-liturgical images, which do not draw from faith, are reinterpreted and questioned by artists, creating a provocative character. In addition, the resurrection is a symbol exploited by power, since the presence of Christ purifies everything. Churches are the main place of appearance of liturgical sacral images, and artists also draw from individual experiences of faith. Where they do not seek divine representation, but rather to represent the personal transcendent experience. The main manifestation of
this transcendent experience is the representation of light. Since light shows the act of creation, the divine light, the divine presence. This type of symbol system can be visually displayed in an infinite way, since the subject can be displayed in an abstract and visual way in one.

Hungarian artists feed on the Catholic faith, creating a new visual handle and resulting in a freer formality and material handling. In certain representations of Christ, the crucified Jesus becomes an object, which has a great tradition in Hungarian art. In addition, the main motif is the representation of the sphere, since the sphere is the symbol of wholeness, of all existing, of the cosmos, all the points of which are equal, located at a uniform distance from each other. Possession of the sphere is synonymous with owning the land, which can manifest itself in the representation of “kingdom apple” or “Christ with Gloria”. In contemporary trends on the Hungarian scene, I would like to mention the work of Erik Mátrai, as he processes the spherical form in his installations. While the first version was made up of a paper sphere illuminated by UV light. The next version, which was exhibited in Eger, was only a hemispherical, under which a pool complemented the shape. It was replaced in Venice by a semicircular pool. Erik Mátrai’s works can also be linked to the creation of light art and light installations. In addition, Tamás Szvet combines art and science, it is extremely conceptual. He uses technology and artificial light, but as with Erik Mátrai, the works do not exist outside the exhibition in the actual physical sense.

During my time in Indonesia, I was able to see and embrace local contemporary Indonesian art through local galleries. The galleries I visited were: Bale Banjar Sangkring (Sangkring Art Space), Jogja Gallery, Langgeng Art Foundation, Gajah Gallery, Srisasanti Gallery, RuangDalam Art House, Pendhapa Art Space, Indie Art House. In the galleries I saw both abstract and figurative paintings and works of art. The new perspective of the artists has started a line of thought in me, how do environmental active impulses change our vision. Where does the point of interpretation begin where I understand the work without knowing its backstory? How can the work communicate without talking? I feel that these suggestions can be at the root of the interpretation of art when a culture reveals itself through a work of art. At this point, language barriers no longer matter, or economy, religion, politics, or that an image is abstract or figurative since the work clearly and purely communicates and conveys. “Modern art also promises answers to the ontological questions of spiritual liberation, liberation, if you will, but they also offer individual freedom in the social sense to the creator, and perhaps also to the recipient.” (Szegő, 1997)

In my personal opinion, in the listed galleries I could see projections of many, many inner worlds. It is believed that an image does not lie, since every little millimeter of a painting reveals an inner state, position, opinion. By seeing each painting and installation, I was able to get an insight into the innermost world of the creators. To receive this, the fullness of empathy must be present, since fine art is self-discovery, and if the artist has made this sacrifice to reveal his innermost thoughts. Then the minimal gesture on the part of the viewer
is to look at him and receive a momentary feeling, an idea. "The mixing of work and life leads us into the paradigm of person-ality. After all, masterpieces of personal arts such as Edvard Munch's Scream (1893), in which he captures one of the Norwegian master's panic attacks, or Frida Kahlo's Broken Spinal Column (1944), in which the Mexican female painter undergoes spinal surgery condenses his cosmic sufferings into a harrowing metaphor, art and life are inextricably intertwined." (Gerevich, 2018)

"According to the legend published by Giorgio Vasari, artistic activity is also brought to life by a personal motive. In mythical prehistory, a young girl, butad's daugh-ter, fell into great sorrow because her love had abandoned her. He tried to resolve his sorrow by drawing the contour of the man's shadow on the wall (quoted by Kry-stof, 2002, pp. 48-50). It follows from this story that the purpose of art is to satisfy personal needs, to express oneself; Art is brought to life by a personal motive. This motif is made lifelike by the self-confession of Piroaska Reichard, who lived between the two world wars. In her diary, she recorded dialogue with Margit Kaffka, who, when publishing her second book, congratulated her with these words: "Very sad, but very beautiful." He added that it is not life that is important, but what has become the work. Reichard replied, "I would give this book and everything else without momentary thinking, if I could eliminate the reason that became all this" (quote: Judit Szilágyi, page 241). The works, as a kind of substitute act, arise from the unhappiness of the artist's personal life." Thus, the artist conveys an inner state that has only been lived by him, which creates the dimension of personality, which is the main pillar of self-expression.

In my opinion, this personal parallel, which is at the heart of the investigation, leads to complex suggestions. Since we all have a background that essentially determines the foundations of our personality. As an example, the basis of my personal background and past is that I am Hungarian from abroad. Which means that I was born in Romania, but I am Szekler-Hun-garian. With these basics and knowledge, I examine the world, in this case Indo-ne-sia. I examine what I saw in Indonesia from a cultural and religious background, what I learned in Transylvania. As an example, my home gallery experience is very different from the ones here. This proves the richness of Indonesian gallery culture, as this medium is much more accessible from a system point of view.

In Indonesia, galleries are more open to outside observers based on my experience. For example, the small detail of being able to provide your contact details upon entry provides a more intimate relationship, as they maintain the opportunity to visit you, either administratively or for the purpose of establishing a personal relationship. What makes the gallery visit even more personal, focusing mainly on the small galleries, is that quite often the artist also appears at the exhibition, thus providing an opportunity for deeper interpretation of the art. A common problem in the 21st century is that the concept of a creation is not clear to the viewer. People find it difficult to understand what they see, and this opportunity provides an extremely good solution to this problem. Another advantage of the Yogjakarta gallery visits, which I did not experience at home, is that the gallery visit is here, not a short afternoon program of a few minutes. Here the concept of time changes, now if I plan to visit a gallery I know that if possible a deep discussion can follow the viewing of the exhibition. In these deliberations I can get to know the backstory of the work and the artist even better.

Another refreshing experience was when I was able to attend an exhibition opening at the Kinoko Art gallery at the solo exhibition of Sutjipto Adi. An open conversation could be heard next to the exhibition. During which we could hear a lot of additional information about the artist's inner world and his process of evolution, how he got from the world of figurative painting to abstract painting. His technique and visual speech form are very refreshing, and with this background information, how his painting style has changed even more en-
joyable. The atmosphere of the exhibition and the conversation is inspiring for the soul. The gathered people could sit around the artist and ask questions and listen to the conversation with an open mind next to a cigarette. At the end of the discussion, there was an opportunity to engage with other artists and students present. These kinds of impulses, which are locally received in different galleries, are all noticeable in an interesting common point or common feeling. Perhaps it can be attributed to the same point of identity, but the simplest description of feeling is a warm feeling of welcome comfort. All this was created by simultaneously opening new dimension gates and allowing me to remain in my safe sphere. This new sense of totality is also characteristic of my everyday life here. As I experience all the new foreign things with courage, because I feel the security that Indonesia provides. I would venture to say that Indonesia is fundamentally shaping my personality and attitude to fine arts.

Based on the reporting of another experience, I visited the Srisasanti Gallery, where I could see and receive the works and concept of Atreyu Moniaga. The atmosphere of the gallery is modern and well structured. Another surprising thing for me was that almost every gallery also has a café section, thus ensuring a longer immersion. After booking a seat, it was possible to view the exhibition, which ensures an even more undisturbed experience. The visual experience of the exhibition offered a wide spectrum due to the techniques seen. Atreyu Moniaga presented his concept using several techniques, which confirms the magnitude of his contemporary thought process. He built a fictional world in which he saw different characters and identities with his peculiar visual formation. These identity forms, stories, insights into the worldview were shown in the form of paintings, sculptures, installations, interactive prints and fashion items. This kind of way of thinking is very much integrated into contemporary tendencies, since it proves that the artist does not need to, he limits himself and his concept to an art technique. The artworks had a strong indent, immersive atmosphere, specifically for interactive prints. With this technique, that he digitized the prints and they were moved by using a filter, he gave us an even deeper insight into his world. Our gaze was consciously guided into the gallery, based on a concrete structured plan. Based on conscious order, we were invited deeper and deeper through the works of art. During the exhibition, after, before we could sit down for a coffee to discuss our position and opinion. In addition to the huge sphere eye installations, we have created new small worlds in the great existing by mixing the received and our outlook.

I may be biased towards abstract painting because I would be an abstract painter. But I am also open to other visual formations. If I had to summarize the trends and artists who influenced me and I could start with these impulses, that is, it was aprecurso to my own aspects: patterns in archaic art (e.g. Greek vases), suprematism, geometric abstraction, metaphysical painting, concrete art, art informel-lyrical abstract painting, abstract expressionism, post-color field-painting abstractism, and op-art. I conduct my studies on the representatives of these artistic movements on the basis of the order listed above, and I have highlighted them. All of whom I men-tion, on the basis of my personal attitude. As the most significant effect, I would like to mention certain details in the archaic use of Greek and Roman vases. On them you can discover lines that either represent the wave itself or the undulating ornamentation created by the line system.

In a deeper interpretation, the geometric abstraction of suprematism began to initiate my personal form of processing. It was the "elaborate pure geometric abstraction" (Dempsey, 2020) of Kazimir Malevich and El Lysicky that understood with me the essence of the experience of pure, stripped-down form and color. "At first he painted simple black, white, red, green and blue shapes, then he incorporated more complex shapes, applying more colors and shadow to his images, creating the effect of space, as if the elements of the composition were
floating in front of the canvas.” (Dempsey, 2020) I have taken from the main essential definitions of metaphysical painting. Forms of insight that are largely intended to emphasize mysterious spaces, bizarre perspectives, dreamlike atmospheres and geometric figures in my paintings. The painting tendency itself was the exact opposite of futurism, that is, instead of dynamic and loud, the state of silence and immobility can be perceived. “Metaphysical painters believed in the visionary power of art and the ability of the artist to reveal the real reality behind appearances in moments of enlightenment.” (Dempsey, 2020) Although Carlo Carrà and Giorgio de Chirico were figurative Italian painters, I found the spatial handling and bizarreness of the works itself inspiring.

Under the concrete art, I began from the geometric abstraction of César Domela and Ben Nicholson. The defining principle of the trend is that pure geometric abstraction is determined by regular shapes, smooth surfaces, which are universally understandable and conscious. “Sometimes they started from scientific, mathematical formulas. Their work is dispassionate, calculated, impersonal and accurate.” (Dempsey, 2020) The presence of these enumerations is less typically found in my painting. But what is all the more decisive: the movements in space, a dimensional shift in the plane, which I trace back to the work of Ben Nicholson, citing as an example the image of the oil “1934 (relief)” on mahogany.

The flu of geometric abstraction as a phenomenon in the work of Fernando García Ponce is suggestive. Art informel, also known as lyrical abstraction, has a strong influence and meaning. It is easiest to describe with these words: expressive, spontaneous, raw, built from color spots, using unusual and mixed materials. “Abstract gesture painting, but some of its branches have also been called lyrical abstraction, material painting, and Tasism.” (Dempsey, 2020) I open up a great deal of space for this endeavor, since the composition, the use of color is approached by a deeper intuitive form language. It provides a formal freedom, but it feeds on itself. Through these key elements I build the structure of my works, it does not follow a predetermined system of form. But rather I create intuitive room for manoeuvre, “only expressing its own feelings in a non-figurative form.” (Dempsey, 2020) Key representatives for me are Pierre Soulages, Hans Hartung, Jean Messagier. The gestures, abstract form language and the structure of their line techniques gave me new feelings and sympathy. Pierre Soulages-Untitled; Jean Messagier-The uniformity of the beautiful weather; Hans Hartung-T1965-H31.
Mark Rothko and Willem de Kooning. With Rothko, I respect the manifesto reflecting on the manifestation of the power of color, and I really like the powerful brush treatment of Kooning’s non-figurative era. “Some of their features and painting techniques are related to abstract expressionism, but they did not share transcendental ideas of art.” (Dempsey, 2020)

Here, opuses by Frank Stella, Morris Louis, Kenneth Noland, Jules Olitski and Dan Christensen opened up new dimensions for me. Just as much as the optical-filled disorder of op-art. “It interferes with the usual process of perception.” (Dempsey, 2020) In these works, the “rhythmic distortion effect”, the vibration of the images, the moiré effect create the atmosphere that creates a strong source of inspiration and foundation in the execution of my works. Bridget Riley created the whole vibrating movement of the concept of wave, on which I based my research on the form in which this type of motif appears in abstract art.
In hungarian terms, among the Hungarian artists, I would like to draw parallels with the art of István Nádler, József Bullás, Ilona Keserű, László Lakner and Judit Rei-gl. "He connects the components of Ilona Keserű's images in such a way that they cut a delimited space for themselves from the universe, from the void. If we want to examine how the artist, with his courage and determined originality, brings indifferent matter to life with some kind of "primordial mover", then we must explore the visual connections of the visual reality of his works. In his early works, the dominance of the representation and the objectlessness of the non-figurative abstract are alternately characteristic. His painting discovery is the connection between the Möbius space form and the infinite color sequence. With his compositions in the subject, he points out the inexhaustible possibility of individual processing of variants."

C. Conclusion
At this point, it is not possible to proclaim a winner between abstract and figurative painting, let's say there was never a competition, but comparing the two styles with each other raises the idea, but this kind of pure communication that we are talking about does not allow this boundary to be crossed. For understandable reasons. Indonesia has given me things and teachings that I can't thank enough for. Both from an artistic point of view and on the basis of the processing of personal identity. One gets positive and negative from life, but this is where the point of balance is. This balance takes effect in all areas, but at the moment, if we touch on abstract and figurative painting, it can be concluded that we are still working to find this balance while creating a visual work of art.
D. Literature


