

THE IMAGINATION OF SOLO THE SPIRIT OF JAVA IN UPCYCLE'S DENIM CREATIVE WORK

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ABSTRACT

Solo has the slogan of The Spirit of Java. This slogan can be interpreted as Solo is the spirit of Javanese development culture. The influence of modern culture in the socio-cultural life of the Solo community affects the existence of Javanese culture that is currently developing. One of this modern culture is manifested in the consumptive culture of denim clothing. Henceforth, resulting in used denim clothing. The existence of used denim clothing encourages artists to explore them into innovative denim upcycles, which have aesthetics, economics, and cultural values. The denim upcycled works produced by the artists imagine and represent the Javanese cultural practices that exist in Solo nowadays. Solo the Spirit of Java as the creative spirit of upcycle denim works that are contextual with the values of the daily life of the people in Solo by keeping abreast of global cultural developments.

Keywords: Imagination, Solo the Spirif of Java, Creativity, Denim Upcycle.

Introduction

Cultural practices in the Solo's social life are based on Javanese cultural values aimed at the values of harmony in life. This is in line with Supadjar's (1993:255) point of view that the concept of social harmonization is part of the concept of total harmony according to the Javanese way of life. The concept of living in harmony of Solo' people is currently faced with the influence of modern culture which has contributed to shaping the lifestyle of today's society. The Javanese culture that developed in Solo continues to grow and synergize with modern culture so that it is different from the old Javanese culture.

The culture of individualism and consumerism as part of modern culture influences the lifestyle Solo's people. Every individual has the authority to choose and determine his lifestyle. The lifestyle choices in dressing as one of the lifestyles that continue to change and develop following trends. Gerritsen (2016:228) states that fashion products made from denim are an inseparable part of human civilization, because it contains historical values, psychologies, sciences, technologies and arts. The existence of fashion products affects people's lifestyles in various part of the world. Denim material as a fashion material that never goes out of style.

Sanstosa (2017:214) stated that based on Gt-nexus survey, more than 1 billion denim fabrics are sold every year. The percentage of consumption in North America is 39%, Western Europe is 20%, Japan and Korea are 10%, and the rest including Indonesia is 31%. Indonesia is one of the largest exporters of women's jeans. The number of denim product's user in Indonesia which is quite a lot, produces used denim fabric waste. This waste requires handling so as not to pollute the environment.

Townsend (2011: 90) states that denim is a traditional fabric derived from cotton. Cotton is a very subtle plant. Denim Manufacturers have found a new and more sustainable material options. Wool denim is denim made from wool. Wool requires 70% less water than cotton to produce the same amount. Wool denim offers a longer life. Designers and consumers need to adopt sustainable fashion by reducing dependence on traditional denim and increasing demand for wool denim.

Denim fabric waste has the potential to be made into artworks that have high aesthetic and economic value. Denim artwork's is a contextual solution to the problem of denim fabric waste that threatens human environment. This condition in line with Soetrisno's (2006:86) statement, that art is a creative expression of the artist's response to the life of his/ her community. Zainuddin (2010: 46) places art closely related to the way people put attributes on objects called art. These attributes are not concerned with their specific function but rather their visual and interpretative properties.

Artworks in the process of their creation cannot run away from the problems that exist in society. The existence of denim waste is a stimulant for artists to create denim upcycles that are in accordance with the contemporary spirit. Opportunities for creating denim upcycles when linked to the context of Javanese culture in Solo, thus Javanese culture can be a source of inspiration and imagination that is interesting and challenging.

Solo with its slogan of Solo the Spirit of Java gives a message that Solo is a spirit for the existence and development of Javanese culture. In the context of the development of visual culture in Solo, Javanese culture is an inspiration for artists in creating creative and innovative art works. Pepperell (2009:176) stated that objects of art are commodities traded in the art market, while aesthetic objects are commodities that are appreciated for their aesthetic qualities. Something can be both an object of art and an aesthetic object at the same time. Artists in Solo in creating denim upcycles are expected to produce aesthetic objects that can enrich artistic values for the appreciation of the wider community.

Artists in creating artworks are based on imagination which can be obtained from observations and experiences in everyday life. The produced artworks represent various values that are relevant to the daily realities of social life. The imagination about Solo the Spirit of Java produces various concepts, views and thoughts about Javanese cultural practices, both past and present. Various cultural products mentioned are architectures, traditional foods, sculptures and various traditional batik motifs in Solo can be a source of imagination in the creation of denim upcycle.

In addition, through their creativity, artists can explore various used denim clothes into innovative denim upcycles artwork. Solo The Spirit of Java work as the spirit of creativity in the creation of upcycle denim artworks. The denim upcycles produced represent the latest Javanese cultural values that are present in the socio-cultural life of the Solo people. The people of Solo are always and continue to be open to foreign cultural influences by sticking to Javanese cultural values which continue to process in order to adapt to the existing global cultural developments.

Based on this background, the research problem can be formulated as follows: a) What is the method of creating denim upcycle works imagining Solo the Spirit of Java? b) What kind of imagination takes place in the denim upcycle works?

Theoretical Review

The process of creating denim upcycle works requires theoretical foundations related to denim materials, upcycled principles, and imagination. Studies on these aspects can be described as follows:

Santoso (2017:214) states that denim is a popular material from the past until now. American Fabrics magazine states that denim is one of the oldest materials in the world and is still widely known nowadays. Denim was first made in the 1560s in Genoa, Italy, for the purposes of gold miners. The characteristics of denim are strong and not easy to tear. Zahra (2017:266) states that denim, which is known to be stiff and old-fashioned, has transformed into trendy clothes for young people. In the 1930s cowboys started wearing jeans. In the 1950s denim was growing rapidly. Young people who have a spirit of going against the rules wear denim as an expression of freedom and rebellion. The existence of denim fabric thus has a spirit of resistance against established fabric materials.

The existence of cloth in the context of social life cannot be separated from the culture of dress or fashion. Gerritsen (2016: 244) stated that fashion and consumer culture are about consumption, representation of the fashion industry, and social class. Fashion is not just imitating, but being in fashion, capturing the mood and fashion of the times. Thus, with the adjustment of fashion discourse, consumers produce personalized fashion narratives by expressing their rejection of consumer cultural norms in general. From fashion, young people have consumed and influenced what manufacturers, marketers and retailers offer them.

Chao (2019:1) noted that in the last few years have shown an increase in environmental protection through the application of the concept of sustainable fashion. The spinning, weaving, dyeing and finishing processes, into fashion design, garment manufacturing, use and disposal, strive to reduce material consumption and environmental pollution. The embodiment process is through the upcycling method of fabric materials. Recycle fabrics to promote sustainable fashion and reduce the fashion industry's impact on the environment.

The existence of denim fabric waste raises human environmental problems. Santoso (2017: 214) stated that the idea of using used denim fabrics as complementary products for fashion and interior elements comes from the remnants of make-up jeans, leftover garment production, and clothing made from used denim. The leftover and used denim fabrics were chosen because they were plentiful and not many people were willing to process them. Responding to the problem of denim fabric waste for the manufacture of useful products by applying denim stiffening, bleaching, paint, and burn out techniques.

Nabila (2019: 39) stated that the application of hand painting techniques on used denim jackets is due to the increasing popularity of products that apply hand painting techniques. The consideration of hand painting techniques application because it is easy to do, the results can add aesthetic value and product selling value. The motifs applied are flora, inspired by Indonesia's tropical weather which produces various types of beautiful flora. Han (2017:2) programmed to increase the value of post-consumer textiles by implementing upcycling for fashion products using used materials. The advantages of this program are not only environmental, but also economic and social, thus creating an innovative and sustainable business model. It can be seen in the fashion industry that utilizes

textile waste to create innovative works based on the principle of sustainable recycling of clothing.

Githapradana (2020:25) stated that the fast fashion industry produces large quantities of waste that has a negative impact on the environment. Efforts to process waste into new products with upcycling techniques is to maintain a longer life cycle. This effort is able to provide an alternative for the fashion industry development in applying the concept of sustainable slow fashion in order to minimize the negative impact on the environment.

The rapid change in trends and the high level of market consumerism have resulted in the pace of fashion production moving rapidly. The demand to meet market demand encourages retail players to be able to meet the demand appropriately in a relatively short period of time. Upcycling is the process of recycling products into different or similar products as a design strategy to extend the product's consumption life. Jean's waste can be used to make alternative products as a solution to reduce jeans waste.

Nabila (2019:39) stated that upcycle as a way to reuse waste materials into new products with better value and quality. The younger generation and the community can participate in environmental care by utilizing used goods change into new products. Used clothes can be reprocessed into another products, thus it will slowly changing the consumptive lifestyle of young people who often buy clothes. Consumption patterns are changed into productive patterns by turning used clothes into products that have selling value by applying upcycle techniques.

Various approaches can be applied in realizing upcycle denim works. Zahra (2017:268) applied a DIY (do it yourself) approach as an activity to make, repair, and modify something done by yourself without the help of someone who is an expert in the field. This culture first appeared around the 1970s and developed along with the hardcore and punk. The spirit of DIY was born from the anxiety of the younger generation against the domination of popular culture which later became a resistance movement against consumptive culture. DIY movement pose as a culture of resistance to other cultures.

The process of creating denim upcycle artworks requires creative imagination so that the resulting works have a high creative content. Regarding imagination, Halliwell (2002:234) stated that the results of human sensing will produce an abstract, namely imagination. Imagination is an idea in the form of an image or picture so that it gives birth to the concept of knowledge. From Hellenistic to postmodern times, various understandings of imagination have been formed from various scientific points of view.

Kind (2016: 249) stated that the reproductive imagination according to Kant is a traditional empirical imagination that involves mental representations of objects/events that are not in the senses. On the other hand, productive imagination is unrestricted, involves fast/free play and transcends concepts and language. Productive imagination is the spirit of genius, animates the artistic mind and provides new material for cognition, material that cannot accept strict conceptualization. Jones (1994:7-8) classified two mental powers of imagination, they are imagery and creativity. Imagery is the production of images like sensory experiences, coming from the mind itself, not external stimuli. In addition, imagery is the main sense of imagination as evidenced by the way we talk about people imagining scenes and faces.

Darmawan (2007:146) stated that the idea of an object is an idea that is constructed when a person knows what he or she wants to get, even though it is abstract/imaginary in the mind. Furthermore, the image is then embodied into the idea of an object. During this process there is contextualization called the placement of visual objects and the ideas into the boundaries of space and time. In addition, there is also spiritualization, which is an effort to insert certain values through symbols, meanings, messages. The process of inserting the soul into a visual object is to made the resulted products have values that are identical to the creator, the time of manufacture, a certain lifestyle.

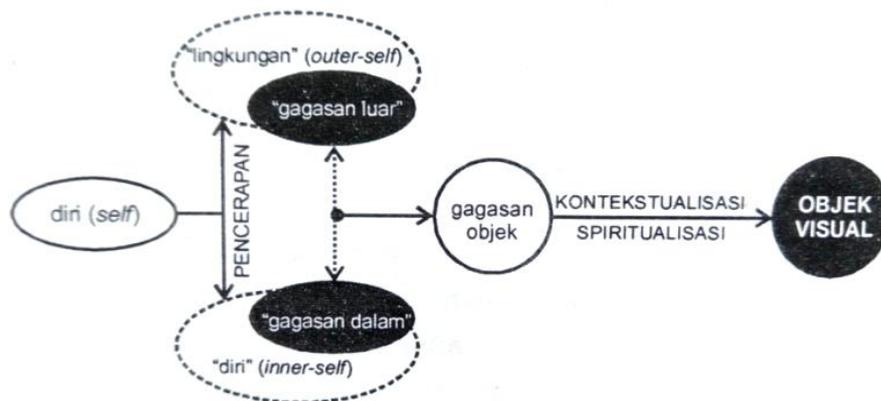


Diagram 1: Visual Object Creation Process

(Source: Darmawan, 2017:146)

Imagination is an important aspect in the creation of an artwork, because it is the basis of its creation. The imagination produced by the artist is the integration of inner ideas with outer ideas as an inseparable whole. Artists can insert personal values that are manifested through contextualization and spiritualization so that the message is conveyed to the appreciator.

Results and Discussions

Denim Upcycle Creation Method

Methods for creating denim upcycle works are as follows:

1. Exploring ideas, carried out by imagining various Javanese cultural practices in the daily life of the people in Solo. The various imaginations produced are used as the basis for the concept of each work.
2. Sketch exploration is done by making various sketches of the work according to the artwork's concept. The sketches made can be functional or decorative artworks. Sketches were selected as the basis for the preparation of materials and the application of techniques.
3. Procurement of materials is carried out by visiting used clothing stores and selecting denim materials that suit the needs of the artwork. The denim material found consists of various types with various characters and colors.



Figure 1: Procurement of raw Materials for Denim Upcycles

(Source: Nanang Yulianto Documentation)

4. Experiment, product formation processes are patterning, cutting, and sewing. After the work is formed, then it is painted using the hand painting technique. The themes of the paintings include: various types of food, traditional batik motifs, make-up of Javanese friends.



Figure 2: Exploration of Denim Upcycle

(Source: Nanang Yulianto Documentation)

The resulting artworks are pillows, bags and pants. These artworks have different characteristics when viewed from the aspect of form, function, color and painting style according to the taste of each artist. Analysis of artworks based on visualization and representation can be described as follows.



Figure 3: I Love Solo, Acrylic Paint on Denim, 100 x 60 x 200 cm, 2021

(Source: Nanang Yulianto Documentation)

The materials used consist of denim fabric, dacron and acrylic paint. Techniques used are sewing and hand painting. Denim colors are brown, gray, black and blue, while the colors in the painting are green, blue, brown, white, yellow and orange. Love symbols pillows are made in various sizes (small, medium and large) thus, it seems dynamic. Imagination of paintings about typical Solo foods such as: tengkleng, klepon, serabi and selat. The tengkleng and klepon containers use banana leaves to strengthen the image of tradition. Another object is traditional batik motifs (kawung motifs). The choice of love pillow objects that are painted with various objects that represent the culture in Solo represents the love for Solo that provides comfort, enjoyment and pride. Solo with its various cultures has provided a unique, personal experience that is not found anywhere else.



Figure 4: Paes (The Beauty of Javanese), Mix Media, 40 x 150 cm, 2021

(Source: Nanang Yulianto Documentation)

Figure 4 is about a bag made of woven agel fiber which is covered with a white cloth. The denim upcycle is applied to the outside of the bag in a circular fashion. The techniques applied are sashiko and hand painting techniques. The bag is light brown according to the original color of the material, while the color of the denim fabric is light blue, dark blue and brown. In addition, the colors in the painting consist of green, light yellow, black, brown, orange. Imagination of painting about marriage is as a symbol of women's maturity in Javanese traditional culture. After marriage, women have a position as their husband's life partner. At the wedding ceremony, the bride is made up with special make-up called "paes". A woman with paes exudes an aura of beauty, especially the spiritual beauty that radiates from her personality.



Figure 5: *Ote-Ote Ngligo Mete-Mete*, Acrylic Paint on Denim, 35 x 70 x 27 cm (3 objects), 2021
(Source: Nanang Yulianto Documentation)

Figure 5 are pants which made from denim pieces then sewed into pants. The artwork consists of three types of pants, trousers, knee-length pants, and shorts. The manufacturing technique applies is sewing techniques. The color of the denim material is blue, black, light blue, light brown. The colors on the painting are white and red. Imagination of artworks based on the cultural practice of dressing in Solo, especially men's dress styles. Men can dress in ote-ote, mete-mete and ngligo styles. The habit of dressing casually is intended for the benefit of being able to ngisis or just to get fresh air. This dressing habit is casually intended for the benefit of being able to ngisis or just to get some fresh air. If this style of dress is associated with a modern dress style, then the ote-ote, mete-mete and ngligo dress styles are influenced by modern culture which tends to be freer and more open.

Discussion

The process of creating denim upcycle artworks begins from the process of extracting ideas and then proceeds to making sketches. The sketches of the next artwork are selected then the selected sketches detailed into designs. The selection of sketches is based on creativity. Furthermore, the process of preparing materials according to the needs of each artwork. After the material is available, patterning is carried out according to the shape and size of the design. The next stage is cutting and sewing. After the artwork is formed, the process of painting is continued on the part of the artwork according to the design. The painting process begins with a sketch, then coloring and detailing or finishing. The stages of creating a denim upcycle can be made with the following schemes:

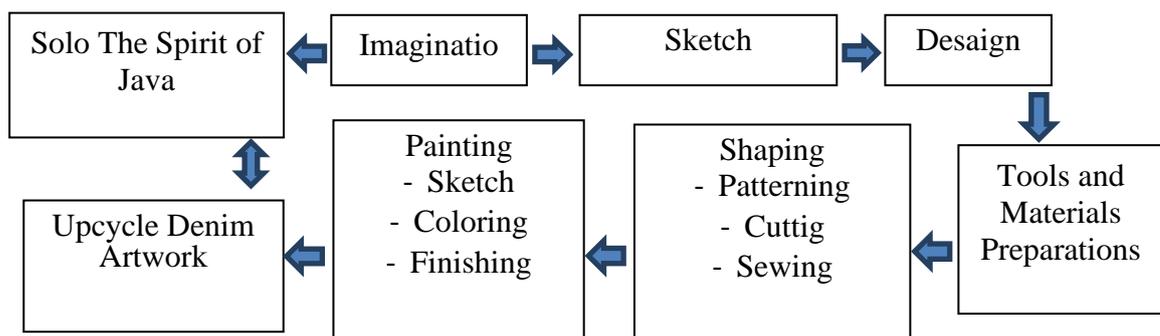


Diagram 2: Denim Upcycle Work Process

Denim upcycle artworks done by imagining the practice of the socio-cultural life of the Solo people. Solo became a battlefield between Javanese culture and modern culture that produced syncretic cultures. Javanese cultural practices in Solo in the past were different from nowadays. The people of Solo in the past still underwent traditional Javanese cultural practices, whereas nowadays this condition is difficult to find due to the influence of modern culture in all aspects of life. Modern culture has eroded the existence of Javanese culture and enriched the practice of consumerism.

The imagination of denim upcycle artworks represents the syncretic Javanese culture that is developing in Solo nowadays. The imagination expressed in the artwork is a manifestation of the game of imagery and creativity. Playing with imagination has stimulated artists to play with imagery and creativity through the colors, shapes and symbols in the artworks created. This is reinforced by the view of Jones (1994:7) who classifies two mental powers of imagination, they are imaging and creativity. The imagination in denim upcycle artworks is not only influenced by the socio-cultural environment of the community, but also driven by the need for internalization. The internalization process intersects is with the process of contextualization and spiritualization. Both processes can strengthen the identity of the artist which is manifested in their artwork. Darmawan (2007:146) stated contextualization as a limitation of space and time, and spiritualization as the insertion of values in

the form of symbols, meanings, messages. The denim upcycle artworks created by Solo artists are framed in a personal and distinctive contextualization and spiritualization, representing the cultural values that exist in Solo.

Imagination in denim upcycle artworks is a reproductive imagination because it is based on the existence of objects found in everyday life. Paintings about traditional food, bridal makeup, and dress styles are present in the daily life of the people of Solo. Kind (2016: 249) consider reproductive imagination as an imagination that involves mental representation of objects/events that are not in the senses. Artists' imaginations have a close relationship with the objects and daily realities of the people of Solo.

The creation of denim upcycle artworks is basically driven by the problems of the human environment which are polluted by denim waste. Githapradana (2020:25) stated that large quantities of fashion waste have a bad impact on the environment. Efforts to process waste into new products to maintain a longer life cycle. Artists must have a concern for these conditions. Artist's efforts can be done through work by applying a do it yourself (DIY) approach. Artists play a personal or communal role. Zahra (2017: 268) interprets the Do It Yourself approach as an activity to make and modify something independently without the help of someone who is an expert in the field. Upcycle artwork with a do-it-yourself approach can be practiced independently or communally aimed at increasing community participation.

The process of creating denim upcycle artworks is able to increase community participation in caring and managing the environment, because it can slowly reduce denim fabric waste. Public awareness of the potential of denim fabric waste for making creative works is also increasing. This is in accordance with Nabila's statement (2019:39) that people have environmental concerns by using used goods as artworks. Society becomes more productive through the creation of creative and innovative denim upcycles.

Environmental problems are basically the shared responsibility of all elements of society. Artists as part of society are required to be able to contribute to solving these problems. Thomas (2015:525) confirms this explanation about the role of artists in developing ideas about artworks that can deal with environmental problems. Artist's participation can be done by creating artworks as problem solving. The creation of upcycle artworks as a tangible manifestation of the artist's contribution in reducing environmental problems affected by denim fabric waste.

Upcycle's artworks express the cultural values that developed in Solo in order to strengthen Solo's identity. This effort is a cultural strategy in strengthening local values to be known by the global community. These efforts have similarities with Gerritsen's (2016:244) struggle in the context of fashion, which places fashion culture not only to imitate, but also to capture the mood and culture of the times. Thus, it was personalized adaptation of cultural discourse by expressing rejection of consumer culture in general.

The choice of denim upcycles artwork technique by applying hand painting has a good reason, because hand painting is currently increasingly popular and its visualization can increase its aesthetic and creative value. This reason can be seen in the custom jacket products used by young people who apply hand painting with various themes. Nabila (2019:39) also applies the hand painting technique when exploring the application of hand painting techniques on used denim jackets. Nabila's choice is due to the increasing popularity of upcycle denim products that apply hand painting techniques. This technique is easy to do so that it can encourage people to be involved by expressing themselves according to their respective abilities.

Conclusion

The process of creating denim upcycle artworks can be carried out through various stages, including: extracting work ideas followed by the process of making sketches, preparing raw materials for denim waste, cutting, sewing and painting processes. The realization of these stages can be done independently by the artist or communally by applying a Do-It-Yourself approach. Through this approach, the community will be able to participate in creating denim upcycle artworks as a solution to the community's environmental problems.

The denim upcycles artwork created by artists in Solo represents Javanese cultural values that are developing in Solo nowadays. Javanese culture still continues to fight and synergize with modern culture which is manifested in everyday life. Solo's slogan The Spirit of Java is the foundation as well as a source of imagination for artists in exploring and expressing the latest Javanese cultural values through the visualization of creative denim artworks. The themes of paintings about Solo food, Javanese wedding makeup, and Solo culture. Those are clear evidence that Solo has a local culture that is different from other regions, as an identity that can be raised and introduced to the global community.

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