Toxic Beauty Standards for Women as an Idea for Painting Art Creation

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Abstract. This study is a type of art creation research. This research aims to create artwork with ideas originating from an actual phenomenon of toxic beauty standards which is especially experienced by women. Judgmentalism and the doctrine of irrational beauty standards for women are the reasons why this topic is chosen to be further processed into art creation. The data is obtained through documents and literature studies. This research used practice-based research method. This research produces a two-dimensional painting that is representational-deformative and has symbolic meanings. This creation is useful as a medium of criticism and as a medium of education to society related to the phenomenon or topic of beauty standards. This phenomenon should be aware of and must be fixed immediately to reduce the negative impact that is prejudicial to its victims.

Keywords: toxic beauty standard, woman, painting

1 Introduction

The emergence of a standard beauty stigma that beauty is fair-toned skin is indeed a problem for some Indonesian women. This happened with the establishment of the mass media and the invasion of foreign cultures. Global culture through advertising, media, and industry is constructing prescriptive beauty standards that must be achieved by all women around the world. This is how people with dark or brown skin feel insecure. According to Wolf [1, p. 134] although the women's emancipation movement is making waves, women's subconscious minds are still dominated by their feelings about their physical condition, their obsession with beauty.

The existence of standardization among women has led to the marginalization of certain groups because they do not conform to standards established by those around them [2, p. 2]. Some people's understanding of these standards are influenced by the power of the "media" in constructing beauty. Images of women with ideal bodies are formed in the media, portrayed as healthy and happy, and perpetuated by capitalist industries by constructing concepts of beauty and ideal bodies. Women compete to be beautiful, with beauty standards that are actually biased in society. This creates a social construction in Indonesian society that a beautiful woman must have a slender body with white skin, a slender body, and a symmetrical face [3, p. 111].

Such a perspective gradually became a habit and even became a culture in society. Thus a social norm will be formed about the ideal standard and body size in society [4]. In addition, Wilcox and Laird [5] found that media exposure is one of the factors that can mediate a person's internalization of the concept of ideal beauty. Women are subject to social constructions and factors. The construction of beauty that spreads in society then leads women to polish their visuals to match the standards in society. It was not uncommon for women to have to go through various "battles" in order to have a beautiful body justified in line with the beauty ideals of the time. Women are generally insecure about their dark skin and then opting for facial treatments such as vitamin C injections and lasers, and using fake face creams and medications [6, p. 68]. After slim figures became the standard of beauty, many women suffer from anorexia and bulimia. Women are ultimately victims of beauty culture suppression and the construction of beauty itself [7, p. 3]. The construction of beauty standards has forced women to do various things that are painful or life-threatening, such as white injections, fillers, and plastic surgery many times.

Various procedures to change woman's appearance so that they can look beautiful according to the beauty standards in that society can trigger various ongoing problems in the future. These ongoing problems can take the form of damaged skin (breakout), internal organ malfunction, depression, and death. This problem is caused by the use of counterfeit drugs, beauty clinics without professional certificates, and excessive surgical procedures. But most importantly, these problems arise because of a lack of public education on the topic of beauty in diversity and self-respect or self-love. The proliferation of toxic beauty standards in the surrounding community is a social problem that is very difficult to change or eliminate. An understanding of the definition of "beauty" which is not quite right in society often brings disaster to someone.

The disappointment with a society that always gives judgment and forces their thought or doctrine of irrational beauty standards on women and the concerns about the body and mental health of victims (especially woman) who are discriminated against for the existence of toxic beauty standards in their social environment are the reason this "irrational beauty standard" topic was chosen. A person (especially woman) is always labeled for how they look visually. A woman nor a man should not get labeled as "beautiful-ugly". The community perspective of beauty is limited to physical appearance only, such as having white and clean skin. As mentioned by Worotitjan [8, p. 8], changes in the standard of beauty from time to time are a form of reaction to social, economic, and political conditions. Beauty standards are also influenced by patriarchal culture which expects women to achieve certain standards of beauty. The existence of women has always been objectified, this is one of the impacts of patriarchal culture which has long been integrated with the social life of Indonesian society. There is a lot of negative stigmas that puts women in a lower position than men. This is because the female body is seen as an adornment for male satisfaction [9, p. 66].

Based on this, the topic of beauty standards really needs to be voiced. The artistic and cultural approach can be a way of voicing problems in society. Visual language can move someone's heart easily because visual media can provide an aesthetic experience that will be connected to the knowledge or life experience of the audience. Therefore, the author wants to contribute to raise public awareness about the actual phenomenon of beauty standards through art creation. The theme of this creation is the rejection of the society. The concept of its creation is to visualize ideas with various representational visual reviews as well as with symbolic meanings. This artwork has a function as a social critique and education for society that the provision of beauty standards is a discriminatory act against a certain group, someone should not be labeled

for its visuals. People need to broaden their perspective in looking at the definition of beauty itself so that it can increase awareness about the negative impact of toxic beauty standards.

2 Research Methods

The method used to create this artwork is a combination of two methods, namely the practice-based research method and the practice-led research method. Creation by using practice-based research methods in general, the art creation produces new insights which are in the form of painting. Meanwhile, in practice-led research methods, artists process and create the artwork first, then explore different meanings and interpretations to find new facts and understandings through subject practice. The art creation process in this method produces new insights about practice. According to Candy [10, p. 21] if the research direction is primarily for new understandings of practice, then the research is practice-led research In addition to conducting research and observation, the author also conducts library research methods on works published in books and journal articles.

This painting creation also uses L.H. Chapman's creative process to make an artwork. L.H. Chapman was known as a woman working in the field of art education. This particular creative process was chosen because it is easy to understand, apply and develop the stages of the art creation process. Creating a work of art requires a few steps. According to L.H. Chapman, the creative process takes place in three stages, those are: (1) the inception of the idea, (2) elaboration and refinement, and (3) heention in a medium [11].

2.1 The Inception of The Idea

At this stage, it's all about finding ideas that can also be a source of inspiration or ideas. Sources of inspiration can come from anywhere, for example from the environment or emerging issues in the state. Sources of inspiration can come from anywhere, for example from the environment or current issues in Indonesia. The idea of this creation departs from gender issues which are issues of objectification of women, patriarchy, and toxic beauty which are still rife in Indonesia.

2.2 Elaboration and Refinement

In the refinement phase, efforts are made to develop and integrate initial ideas. The refinement stage means developing the idea into a visual or tangible form. The idea is processed creatively into a pre-visual form by considering the themes, concepts, elements and principles of fine art.

2.3 Heention in a Medium

This phase refines the visual concepts and ideas of the painting medium using specific media (tools and materials) and different techniques. The author has considered several aspects while creating this work, hoping that the ideas and feelings of this work will be conveyed to the audience. Art exists as a visual language that serves as a communication tool or medium for artists to express their feelings and thoughts to an audience, producing psychological impact in the form of aesthetic experiences. This artwork uses acrylic paint on canvas as media.

3 Result and Discussion

3.1 Creation Process

Many aspects had to be considered when creating the paintings, including media, visual concepts and techniques. The process of creating this painting is not separated from various auxiliary aspects before realizing the artwork itself. A work of art is the transformation of an idea into a visual form, so an artwork cannot be visualized without techniques, concepts and media in the form of tools, materials and media. These are the key aspects that were used to create this painting:

Visual Concept. The concept of this creation is to visualize ideas with various representational visual views or with symbolic meanings. There are several objects that are the main focus in the creation of this painting, the representations of victims of beauty standardization and a toxic society whose close-minded and thick with patriarchal culture. The main object is processed creatively with a representational-deformative style, which means the author will materialize the object with exaggerated visualization.

Transforming the concept of an idea into a work of art requires a process of visualization, and the transformation of an idea into a visual form that is representative or symbolic meaning can make it easier for the viewer to describe the meaning of the work. Figure representation in a painting means that object figures are still related or identifiable to the natural form of real objects, even though the object figures have been transformed through simplification and stylization. When viewed from its visualization, representational painting uses the form of objects or figures that have been abstracted, deformed, distorted, and refined.

The theme of this painting is the the rejection of the society as the impact of toxic beauty phenomenon on the employment sector and is visualized in a surreal pop style. The main character in this painting is a woman chosen to represent the victim of toxic beauty in the workplace. And the other main character is a hybrid monster made from a combination of several things such as a duck, a ship's propeller, and two scissors in his hands. The figure of the victim in this pose was chosen to show how to help the victims of this problem, and an indication of the injustice experienced by these women is visualized from the figure of a woman who has wings but is cut off by a monster figure. .

This painting uses pastel colors, but with low intensity so it looks dull. The background is colored with a value tint and the object has a color with a value shade so that it looks contrasted and the focus will be on the main object. To outline objects, the writer uses solid or real lines, namely lines that are produced through direct hand strokes and can be tangible but not shaped.

Media. An artwork is a visual transformation of an idea that is processed creatively by considering themes, techniques, elements of art, etc. Making works of art cannot be separated from the existence of media in the form of tools, materials, and art medium. The choice of media is very important because this aspect functions as a support for optimally conveying the message or meaning of the work. The media used in making this painting are canvas, A4 paper, pencils, erasers, tablets, acrylic paints, poster paints, wall paints, various brushes, and black pens**.**

Technique. Ideas are best explored when creative people master the art techniques. Mastering different painting techniques gives the opportunity to develop ideas further into visual form. Techniques used in this painting art creation are plaques, color gradation, and shading techniques to enhance the quality of the work. The plaque painting technique is a layer of paint that is applied in a concentrated, viscous state. The color gradation technique is a color transition technique from dark to light areas. Shading techniques are used to shape and enhance the light

and shade of shapes and objects. In creating the hatching technique, the author uses the black ink pen tool.

Sketch. After the concept idea has been 'transformed' into a visual concept, the next step is to create a rough sketch and create a final sketch based on the idea which has been processed into a previsual form. The sketch of the work is drawn on A4 size drawing paper and visualized with a pencil of HB code thickness. Then the final sketch is visualized on the tablet. Below are preliminary rough sketches and final sketches of the artwork:

Fig. 1. The pravisual form of the painting creation

Fig. 2. Rough sketch.

A rough sketch is made on A4 paper with an HB pencil and then bolded using a black pen. This sketch is not final yet, and there is potential for it to be changed again to get the perfect final sketch.

Fig. 3. Final sketch.

A rough sketch was created using a digital drawing tool in the form of a drawing tablet. A digital drawing application called Procreate was used to create this final project sketch. This application is being considered to make the sketching process more time efficient.

3.2 Final Result

Fig. 4. String Along, Arum Wilis Kartika Ayuningtari (2022)

Title   : STRING ALONG
Year   : 2022
Media   : acrylic on canvas
Size   : 70 cm diameter

The title of this painting art creation that was made in 2022 is "String Along" it means to deceive or follow something. The media that used to make this painting is acrylic on canvas with a 70 cm diameter round shape. This artwork's theme is the rejection of the society. The rejection is one form of the beauty standard impact that disadvantage and experienced by women (as victims of gender discrimination and as objectification victim) that their potential does not have space to be developed, so it is wasted.

This artwork has two main objects, a hybrid monsters and a women. This hybrid monster is in the form of a deformed duck that looks like it has two long arms and has scissor blades on the hands, the tail is using shape of ship's propeller, this object also wears an office worker's tie and has a brain that can be seen dangling from a hole in the duck's rump. Then the female object is shown wailing above her wings which were crushed by the monster object.

This artwork theme is the rejection of society. The author criticizes cases that are often encountered in the workplace such as the point of "attractive appearance" for work. Ironically, these points are often found in job vacancies at work fields that are irrelevant to the need for appearance as a supporter. The author describes it with the object of a woman whose wings were cut off by a monster. Wings are a representation of the potential that this woman has. Then the monster is described as a duck which is a representation of the society that seem to give up just flowing like water in deciding something or establish their perspective. The duck object was chosen because of its nature which often follows something in front of them and the habit of the duck which always makes sounds which is then represented as a person who likes to ridicule other people.

This painting aims to criticize the phenomenon of visual discrimination in job vacancies which results in people with decent potential being excluded. This topic really needs to be raised because it results in a lot of great potentials being wasted because job positions are filled by unqualified human resources (unprofessional in that field) because companies or workplaces are only concerned with a person's visuals rather than abilities. The message of this painting is not to judge someone from their outer appearance, it could be that someone we take for granted has great potential in their work. By wasting that person, all that will be gained is sheer loss. Losses for the company or workplace as well as losses for the prospect or future of the toxic beauty victim.

4 Conclusion

Research on this art creation that departs from *an actual phenomenon of toxic beauty standards which* is expressed representationally and symbolically in the visual form of paintings. This work is a form of personal expression of this phenomenon which is manifested in paintings using acrylic paint on canvas. This work describes the dangers or impacts of the phenomenon of toxic beauty, gender inequality, patriarchy, and especially woman objectification which kills women's potential to develop and obtain their rights. This artwork was created as a medium of criticism and education for the public as the audiences, especially for members of the company or workplace who underestimate the potential of women and just seeing them visually as their value. All women are obliged to obtain their rights such as the right to work or be employed, not judged only by their visual appearance, but based on their abilities. Because a woman is not a displayed object that has aesthetics but is a human being who has great potential within them.

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