

A Criticism Analysis of Creative Project Made During the Covid-19 Crisis: ASEDAS2020 Virtual Exhibition

Juaini Jamaludin¹, Siti Fairuz Ibrahim²
{juaini@uitm.edu.my¹, fairuz628@uitm.edu.my²}

Liberal Studies Department, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Cawangan Kedah,
Kampus Sungai Petani, 08400 Merbok, Kedah Darulaman, Malaysia¹,
Graphic Design & Media Digital Department, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Cawangan
Kedah, Kampus Sungai Petani, 08400 Merbok, Kedah Darulaman, Malaysia²

Abstract. This article acknowledges the Covid-19 pandemic to be a global tragedy that has claimed many lives. In the midst of these tragedies, Malaysian artists enhanced their adrenaline creativity, offering the subject matter on about how to protect themselves, the invitation to wear masks, guidelines on how to wash their hands, and a variety of other themes when working from home. Correspondingly, the ASEAN Digital Art Society or ASEDAS has made a project that is known as the Virtual Digital Arts International Exhibition, which has been organised in 2020 based on the theme of Covid-19. Thus, this research is to study the visualisation of the artist-created artwork. For this research, the theoretical framework from Edmund Feldman which is the four-step structure of criticism consisting of description, analysis, interpretation, and judgment will be used. The result of the work highlights many unique local potentials and is involved in enhancing creativity in a time of pandemic.

Keywords: covid-19, digital art, pandemic, analysis

1 Introduction

As at the time of writing, there have been 173,005,553 confirmed cases of Covid-19, with 3,727,605 deaths that have been recorded by the World Health Organisation (WHO). A coronavirus, as defined by Pathak (2020), is a kind of virus that causes an illness in your nose, sinuses or upper throat; the first report on the unknown viruses that are causing an increase in the number of pneumonia cases in Wuhan, China. The results of this report have been presented by the World Health Organisation's (WHO) on December 31, 2019 as have been stated by Reynolds and Weiss (2020). After the tragedy, the coronavirus has spread rapidly throughout the country.

The world is facing an unparalleled global health, social, and economic crisis as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. The Malaysian Prime Minister has issued four phases of Movement Control Order (MCO) to contain the virus as the projected number of Covid-19 cases continues to rise.

Artists are similarly impacted by the MCO, with exhibitions that have been delayed or are even cancelled, galleries and art centres closing, and no performance or presentation that are taking place (Azalea Azuar, 2020). Since then, the lively world of art has become deadly quiet. Museums, where art engages, must close, and this occurs practically everywhere in the world.

Thousands of galleries, dozens of international art fairs, symposia, conferences, and auction houses have to cease or terminate their operations. Art fairs, galleries, and even the smallest independent studios are all closed.

In order to turn the corona virus crisis into an opportunity, it may be essential to take a step back and consider some ideas. As artists and educators, we must consider how to deal with these dismal circumstances.

ASEAN Digital Art Society (ASEDAS) is one of the Asian organisations that promotes digital artists' awareness. The collaboration was established in April 2020 as a response to an online communication between the founder Assoc. Prof. Ahamad Tarmizi Azizan from Universiti Malaysia Kelantan, Malaysia and Dr. Ariesa Pandanwangi from Universitas Kristen Maharta, Indonesia. Through the collaboration, a project which was known as the Virtual Digital Arts International Exhibition was organised in 2020 with the theme of COVID 19. The exhibition has been received by 34 countries worldwide and is to be selected and exhibited by ASEDAS through a virtual media platform, which is to develop connections and link the art community with its audiences, the exhibition has made use of cutting-edge technology, along with the communication media and virtual interaction through technology networks such as the internet. As part of an effort to pursue an understanding of the creative ideas from several participating artists in the first international virtual digital art ASEDAS 2020, this virtual exhibition focused solely on participants' artwork from the Asian region, where it was dominated by ten Asian countries and one from Africa.

Although the impact of the coronavirus in many fields of business around the world is huge, during the pandemic people are able to share their experience through the online exhibitions' platforms (Moreno-Almeida, 2020), where art exhibitions activity or which is commonly called by the art activist as artwork presentation, are shown. The finished artwork is presented in an exhibition room and is ready to be shown to and appreciated by the public. As suggested by the exhibition practices in the book *The Exhibition: Histories, Practices, Policies, Baiao, Leonor* (Martins, 2019), the term exhibition is usually the idea of presenting something to the world and in conveying it.

Everything changed when the government in Malaysia announced the coronavirus pandemic as a national disaster. For this reason, the government has stipulated social restrictions for working and studying from home. This appeal has also applied to other social activities including art activities such as art exhibitions. Several online art exhibitions begin to be held on social media and websites, where artworks are displayed on internet-based media.

2 Objectives

The objectives of this criticism analysis in this selected artwork named *Insyallah Kita Mesti Menang* was produced by Fariz Azmir Bin Mohd Ghazali in 2020. This research to study the visualisation of artist-created artwork during the pandemic Covid-19 in Malaysia.

3 Methodology

For this research, the researchers have used the critical process by Edmund Feldman which is the four step structures of criticism consisting of description, analysis, interpretation, and judgement.

Table 1. Edmund Feldman theories (1993).

No	The Critical Process by Edmund Feldman	The Critical Process
1	Description	Make a note of the work's obvious and instantly noticeable visual aspects. "What do you observe in the artwork?" scholars believe. "What else?" says the narrator. In representational works, this comprises substance and subject matter; in nonrepresentational works, this includes abstract aspects.
2	Analysis	Concentrate on the formal features of art elements, design principles, and other formal considerations such as exaggeration, composition, and so on. "How does the artist establish a focal point?" "What effect does colour have on the painting?"
3	Interpretation	Propose evidence-based proposals regarding probable meaning. The art is imbued with the viewers' emotions, feelings, and intentions. "Can you tell me what you believe it means?" "What was the artist attempting to convey?" "What evidence do you have that backs up your claims?"
4	Judgement	Final stage of evaluation of criticism is the evaluation of whole works of art, this sort of judging may seem presumptuous or perhaps it is downright foolish.

4 Data Analysing. The critical process in creative project made during covid-19

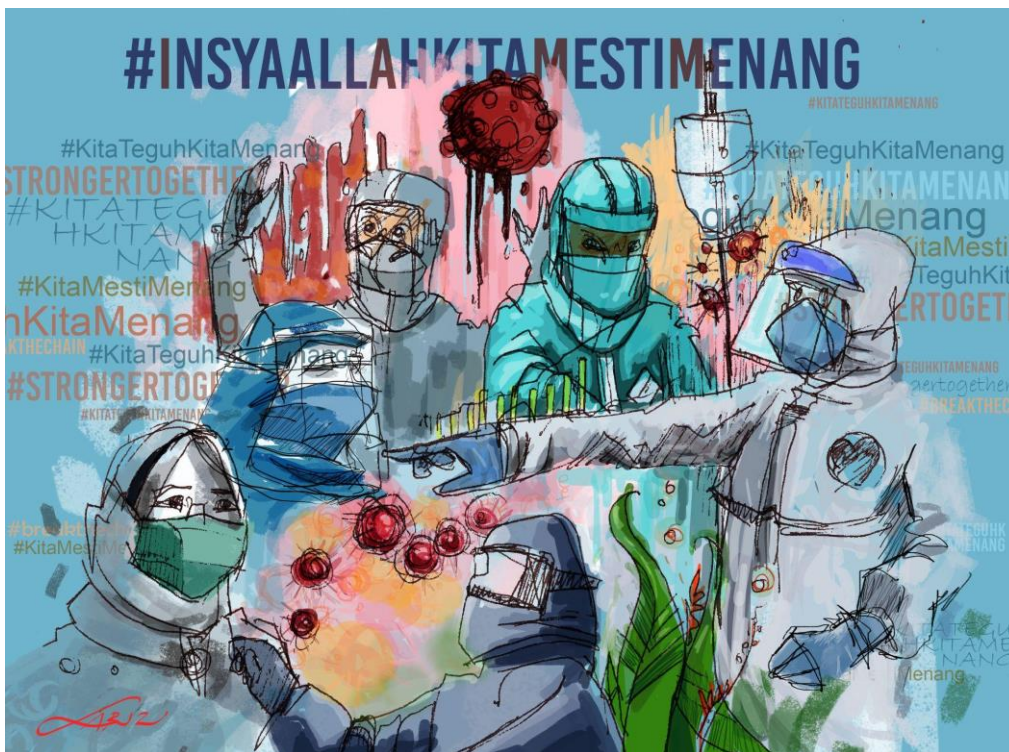


Fig. 1. Insyallah Kita Mesti Menang

Description

The first step in analysing is description; naming and describing the facts. *Insyallah Kita Mesti Menang* was produced by Fariz Azmir Bin Mohd Ghazali in 2020. The size was 28.5 x 21cm and using digital art technique. The materials are sketches with digital manipulation. This artwork was submitted to the ASEAN Digital Art Society or ASEDAS2020 under the 1st International Digital Art Exhibition with the theme Fight Covid-19. The location of the *Insyallah Kita Mesti Menang* artwork is on page 74 in ASEDAS2020 Virtual Exhibition.

Analysis

The second step in analysis; dealing with visual evidence. It is an advanced type of description. Fariz Azmir Bin Mohd Ghazali in his *Insyallah Kita Mesti Menang* has applied illustration art with diverse artistic medium. The artwork itself shows the aesthetic media with a variety of digital techniques. The applied colour is a cool colour like blue or green, which is predominant

in this artwork. This colour is based on hospital colour codes, which show that blue indicates a medical emergency and green indicates an emergency activation. A white colour has also been used in this piece of artwork. There are also various warm colours that the artist has selected so as to enhance the attractiveness of this work, these are red and yellow.



Fig. 2. Tropical plant

The artist has applied organic shape or human figure to address doctors and nurses which clearly represent as frontliners working extremely hard, wearing PPEs, face masks and to fight the virus. The colors of the PPEs were made differently to refer to the PPEs that were used by other countries. At the bottom of the artwork the artist has applied green leaves with the attractive tropical plant that is known as the Heliconia flower.

The typography in this poster has a function in addition to being used as information, is also worked out in such a way that the composition typography becomes a unique visual and aesthetic element. The word #INSYAALLAHKITAMESTIMENANG (1), #KitaTeguhKitaMenang (13), #STRONGERTOGETHER (4), #KitaMestiMenang (4), #BREAKTHECHAIN (3).



Fig. 3. Typography

Interpretation

The crucial third stage of art criticism is the point at which our search for meaning reaches a climax. The theme of this painting is the response to the novel coronavirus disease in 2020. Fariz Azmir Bin Mohd Ghazali created an unexpected and unwanted situation. Doctors and nurses are fighting with the unseen virus. The frontliners are working extremely hard, wearing personal protection equipment or PPEs, face masks and fighting the virus. The colors of the PPEs were made differently to refer to the PPEs that were used by other countries. This is to demonstrate that Malaysia was not alone in confronting the pandemic.

The typographic word from *InshaAllah Mesti Menang* is intended to magnify the digital painting in this artwork. From the popular hashtag *Kita Mesti Menang*, the artist placed *InshaAllah* at the beginning. In his artwork, Fariz Azmir Mohd Ghazali has reiterated that the only hope as Muslims is to seek from Allah.

Allah, the Exalted, states in Surah al-Baqarah: And We will surely test you with something of fear and hunger and a loss of wealth and lives and fruits, but give good tidings to the patient, Who, when disaster strikes them, say, "Indeed we belong to Allah, and indeed to Him we will return." Those are the ones upon whom are blessings from their Lord and mercy. And it is those who are the [rightly] guided. [Quran 2:155-57]

From this surah, Allah has warned us that the purpose of *dunya* is to test us. Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, many people are scared, anxious and insecure. Some have hoarded supplies, which is contrary to our religion as it is based on selfishness and excess, although we are taught otherwise. *InshaAllah* means with Allah's will; hashtag *InshaAllah Kita Mesti Menang* expresses that we must be patient and steadfast through this pandemic. Other words such as

KitaTeguhKitaMenang, STRONGERTOGETHER, and BREAKTHECHAIN are reflecting the Malaysian people to be strong, and to fight the Covid-19 together, as is mentioned by Noor Hisham Abdullah “*Berat sama dipikul, ringan sama dijinjing*” in his facebook on 31st August 2020.

The illustration of flora at the bottom of the artwork effectively represents a glimmer of hope that our lovely Malaysia will soon conquer the war in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic; the Heliconia or lobster claws or false bird of paradise, as the brightest tropical flower, it represents hope from Malaysians, and someday, things will turn out to be beautiful again.

Judgment

The final stage of evaluative criticism is the evaluation of the whole works of art, this sort of judging may seem presumptuous or perhaps it is downright foolish. The first obvious manifestation of this artwork is to bring the principle of design emphasis to focus on the frontliners, of doctors and nurses. Furthermore, the coronavirus image on the artwork is painted in blood red with dripping blood to heighten the danger that it is posing. The motif of the Heliconia flower with green leaves is representing that the world will be beautiful again after the COVID-19 outbreak.

5 Finding

The critical analysis on the creative project that was made during the covid-19 *InsyaAllah Kita Mesti Menang* was produced by Fariz Azmir Bin Mohd Ghazali in 2020, which revealed that the art practitioners, art educators or arts academicians can carry out creative activities despite the pandemic of Covid-19. The findings of this study can be summarised as follows:

Table 2. Finding and Discussion

No	Finding	Meaning
1	Artist style and concept	Illustration of art with a diverse artistic medium. The artwork shows the aesthetics of the media with a variety of digital techniques. The styles that are used are quiet, diverse, there are those that bring out realist, cartoon, and illustrative. Even though it is not made with tense colors, the representing images are a soothing reflection of the wishes of the good hopes and optimistic sense of the artist.
2	Typography	The typography in this poster has functioned as information or to convey a message by the artist. The typography supports the illustration as a media propaganda. This needs not be questioned because the theme of this illustration is against Covid-19.

3	Figurative illustration	The facial expression, the front-liners with full PPEs, which is a mandatory equipment to protect an individual from the disease. The physical and emotional toughness of the healthcare workers who serve the country must be respected and admired.
4	Heliconia flower	An indication of hope, and someday, things would be beautiful again.

5 Conclusion

The critical analysis on the creative project that was made during the Covid-19 *Insyallah Kita Mesti Menang* was produced by Fariz Azmir Bin Mohd Ghazali in 2020, which revealed that the art practitioners, art educators or arts academicians can carry out creative activities despite the pandemic of Covid-19. Even though life is being quarantined, there should be no reason not to be creative in creating art. Although art does not directly affect results and benefits life, in time, history will record the inspirations and traces that will show human life during the coronavirus pandemic that is sweeping the world.

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