

## Acceptance Letter

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## **Female Figures in the Children's Drawing Competition "Spirit in a Pandemic Period" at the Basoeki Abdullah Museum**

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### **Abstract**

The smallest group in society is the family, in a family the woman becomes the main figure, the role of women is often represented in various perspectives, in social, economic, psychological, political, cultural and religious dimensions. In the field of art activities, the female figure is also often the subject of interesting discourse, there are many points of view on how women are placed as objects in visual works. and this is reflected in the visual works produced by junior high school students in a drawing competition held at the Basoeki Abdullah Museum, in the period last July 2021. The method in analyzing the work uses a descriptive art review approach, while at the same time providing identification of the visual characters and visual variety found in the object. Visual aspects, layout, color and aesthetic elements will be discussed by providing a cultural and socio-historical approach, visual style, composition, layout and narrative built on the figure. It is interesting to study, that the subconscious of the participants in the work produced, the existence of a mother figure is still strong. This impression indicates that the female figure who is associated as a mother in this work provides a marker that the visualized figure also has a relationship with a momentum and event, and visual language is able to record the details of the event nicely, whether consciously or not by the artist.

### **Preliminary**

"Women are at the forefront of efforts to prevent Covid-19, if women are protected and healthy, then all family members will be healthy," said the Minister for Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (PPPA), I Gusti Ayu Bintang Darmawati, SE, M. Si, the expression was made in a press release at an event, that the presence of women in the pandemic era played an important role, especially in the family sphere. The smallest group in society is the family, in a family each individual has its own role and function. The father figure is a man, as a leader or head of the family, symbolized as a breadwinner, and a woman is a mother figure, which is symbolized as an individual who takes care of all the needs of a family, as well as educates, ensures the availability of food and others.

The role of women is often represented in various perspectives, even though Indonesia is a country that adheres to a patriarchal culture, namely a structure that places men as the sole, central ruler and dominates general areas such as economics, social, politics, and psychology, even including the institution of marriage. However, from the perspective of Islam, as the majority belief in the territory of Indonesia, women are placed as figures who are attached to the meaning of glory and are implied in the hadiths and verses of Al-Quran.

In the field of art activities, the female figure is also often the subject of interesting discourse, there are many points of view on how women are placed as objects in visual works. Quoted in Hardiman's writings (2009:14) that the female body or figure is often a problem, the female body in works of art is related to things that are socially and culturally constructed in their roles and functions. The female body is then positioned as something hegemonized by the dominance of the male body and desires. Many artists, both male and female, visualize women in their works, with various reasons and narratives, such as personal problems, gender issues, sexual issues, and the reality of women's roles and others.

In this paper, we will discuss how the female figure appears in the work and its relation to the pandemic period. The work that is used as the object is a drawing competition at the Basoeki Abdullah Museum with the theme "Spirit in the Pandemic Period" which will be held in July 2021. The Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 began to spread and forced the government to make several provisions on mobility and community activities to be limited, and this is very influential in many elements of people's lives, such as patterns of life, behavior and other habits. The majority of human interactions are at home, all activities are carried out at home, of course, and relationships between individuals are increasing in various perspectives, both in aspects of communication, emotion, psychology, physical, health, economic and many other things. Quoted on the page <https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/vert-fut-54808663>, Steven Taylor (University of British Columbia) author of *The Psychology of Pandemics*, argues that 10-15% are affected by minorities, who feel life is not will return to normal because it affects mental well-being.

Participants in the competition in this activity were children at the lower secondary education level (SMP) who came from all provinces in Indonesia. There is something interesting and important to analyze, namely the presence of female figures in the work. The majority of the works produced place

female figures, regardless of the gender of the participants. These figures are placed in the main position, in various activities as well as story companions. The discussion will be carried out using visual language analysis, which will be discussed in terms of themes, ways of speaking, composition, and other aspects that can be described and become study material. The presentation is described descriptively using qualitative methods, and comparisons are made, so that conclusions can be drawn in this paper.

The method in analyzing the work uses a descriptive art review approach, while at the same time providing identification of the visual characters and visual variety found in the object. Visual aspects, layout, color and aesthetic elements will be discussed by providing a cultural and socio-historical approach, visual style, composition, layout and narrative built on the figure. In Rohidi (1984: 87) it is explained that illustrative images are related to the depiction of various elements, whose function is to explain, explain, beautify a text, in this case it is a work of images produced, and the reader or audience can feel directly the nature, impression and scene built.

### Women Figure as Objects in Fine Works

The placement of female figures as objects has been found since prehistoric times, and has continued visually figuratively and decoratively since the development of culture and the kingdom. In modern times, there are many paintings that show the visuals of women in their works, including works by Basoeki Abdullah, Affandi, Soedjojono., Jeihan where the female figure is depicted as a representation of a subject that contains beauty, beauty and the meaning of her presence, in prehistoric times a statue of Venus De Wilendorf was also found , who is referred to as the Goddess Venus associated with the concept of beauty and fertility. the Renaissance era, a phenomenal work was born from a painter Leonardo Da Vinci, namely Monalisa, which until now there are still many critics analyze the figure and try to explore the figure of its existence.



Figure 2. Figures of women have been found since the royal era as depicted in reliefs in temples found in several areas in Indonesia.

(Source: Google, 2021)

The modern world, the placement of women's figures continues in various media, in films, advertisements, photography, contemporary works, where the appearance of women is growing and developing in various styles. It can be said that female figures are often used as objects, this is strong with the meaning of women in cultural construction. Women often become ideas because they are visually closely associated with the meaning of beauty, tenderness, femininity, beauty and a compassionate mother figure or *welas asih*.

In the context of patriarchal culture, the existence of women is identical with domestic activities, and men as money producers. But in practice, a shift occurs, where women today are starting to do things outside of domestic activities, as money earners, and do other things that men do. The shift in meaning to the existence of female figures in the work moves according to cultural constructs, in Hardiman's notes (Junal Imaji, Vol. 2/August/2009) that the female body is related to things that are socially and culturally constructed in their roles and functions, and in this function, women's bodies are then often positioned as something hegemonized by the dominance of the body and men's desires. Now the existence of a woman figure is no longer an object of desire but has become a marker or symbol for more complex values.

The female figure also appears in children's works, in various visuals, there are those of mothers, teachers, friends, or a profession. From a psychological point of view, in an interview with

Mrs. Tia Rahmania., M.Psi, she explained that a mother is a role play figure, a figure who is often present in every family activity, there is even a term that a mother is a child's madrasa. The main figure in personality formation, parenting, education and matters relating to the child's personality. Likewise, in the work that was used as the object of research, where it was found that the majority of women were present in the students' work.

### **Placement of Female Figures in the Children's Drawing Competition "The Spirit in the Pandemic Period"**

To examine the classification of works and the elements illustrated in the work, it is necessary to have a point of view related to the visual style produced by the participants, and the illustration style dominates the object, the classification according to Soedarso (2014: 566) is divided into several classifications including: naturalist style, style decorative illustrations, cartoons, caricatures, picture stories, fantasia illustrations. The classification is used for interpretation and analysis. It takes a 3 aspect approach in the analysis, from aesthetics, and visuals and visual storytelling.

The object of this research is the work produced at the age of 11-13 years, categorized in the classification of the golden age of creative expression, which is defined as the peak period of children in drawing, imitating real shapes, towards the realist period, color exploration, expression. This phase is also often called the crisis period, because there is a "war" between the incipient senses of the eye and the other senses, so that visuals often appear in his work, images of overlapping and overlapping spaces appear (Tabrani 2015:4)

The works produced by the participants in this drawing competition are interesting to discuss and analyze, considering that from 220 entries, the theme relates to the pandemic situation, almost female figures, mothers, in all ages, various professions and activities can be seen in the works and all the works carried out analysis and discussion.



Figure 3. Works No. 1 and 2  
(Source: Basoeki Abdullah Museum, 2021)

In the process of creation, in general, every individual consciously and does not go through a creative process in realizing the work, as well as what happened to the participants of the competition. When they understand the theme in question, namely "Spirit in the Pandemic Period" the participants will go through the stage of the creation process, which generally begins with (1). The preparation stage, a stage where someone conducts research to deepen the theme, data, collect facts, ideas. , and others, It is done with the aim of solving a problem. (2). Incubation stage, where ideas mature, sort, reduce and arrange visual elements that will be presented in the work and contain novelty d (3). The stage of enlightenment, is the stage where inspiration and ideas are increasingly enriched and (4). The proof stage is to realize the idea from the previous process. The elements that will be analyzed in the work include aspects of the classification of the work, visuals, elements, story/narrative/composition, color

and will be interpreted related to the themes and concepts in the resulting work. Below is a description of the work:

In the work (1) of Meredith Guinevere Langelo, SMP Santo Bernardus Madiun, it shows a male object in the front, seen as a traditional toy seller, and there is a female figure wearing a headscarf behind her, holding hands with a boy. In the background, you can see simple, non-permanent buildings, such as tarpaulins, which seem to show their residential houses. The pandemic condition is shown with the faces covered by masks on the 2 main figures. Associated with the theme of spirit during the pandemic, the picture shows the gaze and position of the female figure who is associated as a mother, holding her child's hand, meaning that her child will be kept safe as long as the father works to earn a living, depicted by holding the child's hand. The female figure here is formally interpreted by the creator of the work that the mother will be present and always accompany the child and guard from the noise of the pandemic situation, which has an impact on many aspects, depicted by the father who is the breadwinner selling traditional toys, which of course is affected, where his toys are shown. still piled up in quite a lot, but the mother seemed to give strength by holding the child and was able to get through the difficult conditions faced.

The work of (2) Callysta Putri Wilcahyani, SMPN 1 Bandar Lampung, using the same space-time-dimensional drawing, it appears that there are 3 panels depicted. In the first panel, the background is in an open location, there appears to be a shop/warung, and sitting in a child's chair with his mother. He was seen wearing a school uniform and his mother was accompanying him. In the second panel, there are 2 locations, the figures of 2 children holding school equipment, showing the condition of being in online school indoors and outside the room, there are figures of a father and mother, who are seen exercising, as can be seen from the clothes and movements they make. The third panel shows a situation that shows the atmosphere in a hospital, where there are nurses and doctors wearing PPE. Throughout the panels, there are scattered images of viruses that surround human activities that are used as objects. The placement of female figures is always present on the three panels, in school activities, mothers as companions at home, and women as nuns. Shown in the female figures depicted are the activities and interactions with the depicted children. The pandemic marker is shown on the 3rd panel which depicts the situation of people being treated.



Figure 4. Works No. 3 and 4  
(Source: Basoeki Abdullah Museum, 2021)

The work (3) is owned by Fathin Ahmad Fauzan, SMP Negeri 3 Pontianak, the way the image is produced has various dimensions-space-time, as a whole the picture shows a variety of activities, including the interaction of mother and child in making cooking videos, activities of mothers and children during cooking. accompanying online school activities, and a mother figure taking care of the plants in the yard. On the other hand there is a picture of men riding bicycles, and walking and helping with the planting process. From this picture, female figures dominate and interact in many daily activities, the pandemic condition is shown by the use of masks for outdoor activities, namely farming and cycling.

The work (4) is owned by Angelique Chloe Azali, SMP BHK, Cibubur, in the resulting image has a similarity to the previous image, by showing the space-time-dimensional image in 1 frame. It can be seen that the main figures placed at the front are 2 health workers using PPE, even though they don't look gender, but from their attitude and body position it shows they are female health workers. In some visuals, it can be seen that the figure of a woman/mother is seen in various activities and interactions.

At the top you can see the figure of a mother with her husband, some are vaccinated and undergoing swab/PCR tests, and the pandemic atmosphere is very thick because the majority of figures are shown wearing PPE and masks on all the figures visualized.

Table 1. Figures of women/mothers in the work



Source: Processed by the author 2021

From the description above, several in-depth analyzes can be made of the existence of the female figure associated in this work is the mother figure. The assumption that women are mothers is seen in the activities carried out on the figures presented, such as cooking, accompanying school, studying, cooking and others. It is interesting to analyze that in the theme that describes the pandemic atmosphere, the mother is strong and present in every activity, it shows what children see in their daily lives in the position of "mother" who is there and is present, meaning they are comfortable around them, and shows their strong presence. they are in a pandemic.

Source: Processed by the author 202 In the visual, various professions are shown, from housewives, chefs, health workers and others. In an interview conducted with a psychologist from Paramadina University, Mrs. Tia Rahmania., M.Psi, it was explained that "the condition of staying at home feels more boring for children/teenagers where their age is a very active age to explore and not able to be silent. Children because the activities they do need friends to play or gather to channel their explorations. For them, school-age children, playing or hanging out with their peers can relieve boredom, of course this can only be done outside the home but with the pandemic the conditions are rather difficult/limited". Therefore, it is appropriate in such conditions that children at that age must be supported by their enthusiasm, especially by the smallest environmental unit, namely the family, and in it is the one who is closely related to their daily activities, namely the mother figure. So the mother figure is very dominant in their activities and is unconsciously recorded in the subconscious memory and appears in the visual, which shows that their mother is involved in every important situation, especially during a pandemic like this.

Referring to the view of the stages of human development, it is stated that the age of 10-12 years and above is adolescence or called adolescence. This is the period of transition from childhood to early adulthood and ends generally at the age of 18-22 years. Psychologically, this early adolescence is characterized by rapid physical changes, accompanied by a process of searching for self-identity, and where the desire to be free, and the desire to spend time outside with friends, also affects the way of thinking that has begun to be abstract, idealistic, , as well as logical.

Under normal conditions, visual depictions or mother figures are also often displayed, but in pandemic conditions, where the mother is present and closely involved in children's activities during early adolescence, who generally spends a lot of time with their friends, now they must be at home and interact closely with their friends. her mother figure. This indicates that the presence of the mother is

still important for the process of mental and psychological growth and development in children at that age. The female figures presented in the work about the spirit of the pandemic can be concluded to represent a lot of things and activities of women or mother figures by nature, namely being a housekeeper, although in the work it can be seen that there are several female/mother figures displayed in various professions. It is interesting to study, that the subconscious of the participants in the work produced, the existence of a mother figure is still strong. This impression indicates that the female figure who is associated as a mother in this work provides a marker that the visualized figure also has a relationship with a momentum and event, and visual language is able to record the details of the event nicely, whether consciously or not by the artist. .

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