



THE TABUT FESTIVAL OF BENGKULU AS AN IDEA FOR A PAINTING WORK

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Abstract

Bengkulu is a province in Indonesia. This province also has a tradition that has developed into a highly valued cultural festival called the Ark Festival. This festival was initially held to commemorate the heroic story of the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH, namely Husein Bin Ali Bin Abi Thalib, who died in battle in Padang Karbela, Iraq. This tradition then continues to develop into a cultural festival, but the value of tradition is still maintained and implemented. The purpose of creating the Bengkulu Ark Festival painting is an idea for creating paintings to fulfil the desire for expression. In addition, to develop the creativity of ideas and painting techniques. Then, to find a personal style. So that the general public can enjoy the art in the form of paintings. Finally, to create a sense of love for Indonesian culture and to preserve it.

In creating the final project, instead of a thesis, the method of creation used is Gustami SP's approach. The three stages of the creation method used are exploration, design, and realization of artworks. This method is appropriate in the process of creating the artwork. The artworks created are all based on the theme of the Bengkulu Ark festival. The primary medium used is canvas, which is the same size as 100 x 100 cm. Up to the realization of the work and accountability, the design process is carried out in a structured manner.

Keywords: Ark Festival, Bengkulu, Creation Ideas, Works, Painting

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is an archipelago in southeast Asia crossed by the equator. It consists of 17,504 large and small islands, about 6,000 of which are uninhabited, and they are scattered around the equator, which causes a tropical climate. The territory of Indonesia consists of Sabang in the west, Merauke in the east, Miangas in the north and Rote in the south, which have various ethnic groups, religions, beliefs, and languages. (Antara & Vairagya, 2018: 1) Indonesian society is empirically a society that lives in groups. In Furnival's study (Hefner, 2007: 16, Nasikun, 2007: 33), this group-living society (popular society) is a society whose life consists of two or more elements or what is also called a social order that lives close together, but merges or merges into a single political unit.

In addition, (Hefner, 2007) adds to Furnival's previous opinion by describing a challenge to cultural pluralism that exists in Indonesia more prominently and is also recognized as a classic locus for forming societies that live in groups or side by side. Furthermore, Clifford Geertz (1996), as written (Hardiman, 2002), also considers that it is ~~described~~ to describe the shape of the Indonesian state similarly. The Indonesian archipelago is not only multiethnic (including Kutai, Bugis, Dayak, Sunda, Java, Batak, Flores, Bali, Aceh, Bengkulu, and many more). Not only that, Geertz describes the Indonesian state as several "nations" with diverse sizes, meanings and characters from one another through grand narratives that have religious, ideological, historical, or similar properties that are then linked into shared economic and political structures. (Arif, 2013: 1)

From the amount of diversity that exists in Indonesia and to strengthen unity and foster a sense of love for the Indonesian homeland, it is bound by a motto that can guide people in their actions, namely the National slogan, “Bhineka Tunggal Ika”, which means that although different but still one too, which means that the diversity of ethnicities, beliefs/religions, languages, and traditions that later formed the Indonesian state. (Antara & Vairagya, 2018: 2)

The cultures that exist in Indonesia are very diverse. When translated into Sanskrit, culture is taken from the origin of the word *Buddhayah*, which is the plural form of the word “Budi” (reason). Based on the views of the Father of National Education of the State of Indonesia, Ki Hajar Dewantara, who argues that culture is the result of the community's struggle against nature and also the times that prove the freedom and triumph of life of the community in responding to or fighting difficulties and obstacles to achieve liberty, safety and happiness of life. (Astuti et al., 2015: 8)

If culture is reviewed in art studies, both have a close relationship and complement each other with the meaning of the characteristics and religious values in culture and the aesthetic value of the generated art. Art cannot be separated from the culture that accompanies therein; the culture cannot be separated from man as the creator of culture, the idea of culture is a human being, and man is the creation of God. Humans create the culture for the sake of man himself; among creatures of God's most perfect, humans have a sense, initiative, and creativity (Work). (Suardana et al., 2019: 1282)

Of the many cultures that exist in Indonesia, Bengkulu province has a culture that can also be known, namely the Ark Festival, which was initially and historically this festival was held in honour of the death of the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. Namely Husein Bin Ali Bin Abi Thalib when he was detained and then died in the battle at Padang Karbela by the army of Yazid Bin Muawiyah. The Ark Festival is related to the development of Shi'a Islam in Bengkulu Province. The traditional Ark was initially brought by people who worked for the Shi'a Islamic faith from Madras and Bangali in southern India, who were then carried by British troops to build Fort Marlborough in 1713-1719. They then married into the community where Marlborough Fort was built and continued the Ark tradition to their children and grandchildren. (Culture & Islam, n.d., 2014: 49).

The Shi'ah Muslims carried out the tradition of the Ark ceremony to commemorate the death of Hussein Bin Ali Bin Abi Thalib; after the Sipai people or the Ark family separated from the teachings of Shi'ah Islam, the Ark ceremony was held only as an obligation of the Ark family to be able to carry out the will of their ancestors. However, recently, in addition to carrying out the will of the ancestors, the tradition of the Ark ceremony also aims to participate in the participation of the Sipai people (Ark family) in the development and growth of culture in the Bengkulu region.

Thus, there is a shift in function from the Ark ceremony to the Ark Festival. The Ark Festival is also carried out in several kinds of ritual processions carried out from the 1st to the 10th day of the beginning of the month of Muharram as in the calculation of the Hijri year through 9 rituals that must be carried out, such as: (1) *mengambik tanah* (taking soil), (2) *duduk penja* (washing fingers), (3)

menjara (testing), (4) meradai (fundraising); (5) arak penja (parading fingers); (6) arak serba (parading turban); (7) gam (quiet/mourning); 8) arak gendang (taptu akbar); 9) Tabut terbang.



Figure 1. Arak Gendang Arak (Source: <https://turisian.com/2022/08/03/festival-tabot-bengkulu-dibidik-menjadi-event-internasional-kapan/>)

In line with the progress of the times, the Bengkulu Province Ark tradition has undergone a process of change that is not just a tradition. Efforts are made to keep this tradition alive by preparing a cultural strategy to finally pay attention, predict, and respond to the Ark culture's development. The plan is also realized in the festival, an added event that is also an attraction for Bengkulu tourists. So, in the end, when the Tabut festival took place, all the art acts of the culture were played, such as dol, Tabut dance and telong-telong, held as a form of entertainment attached to the series of Tabut traditions. Tourism is a vital sector that supports the increasing growth of the economy for the provision of employment. It is also a socio-cultural development that promotes the tourism image to foreign nations. (Barriyah et al., 2019: 641) The Bengkulu Tabut Festival event became one of the attractions and tourist destinations for people visiting Bengkulu at the time. Of course, this adds to the economic income of the local community.

Playing dol music or dol instruments is a supporting aspect of the Ark ceremony. The beginning of the existence of dol is in line with the beginning of the Ark tradition. For the first time, dol music was known from Indian Muslims who entered Indonesia, brought in by the British colonial government, which established Fort Malborough then. After that, the Indian Muslims eventually married Bengkulu natives, and their descendants are known as the senpai people (Ark family).

In the 1970s, dol music was only allowed to be played by people related to the blood of the Ark family. The dol shape resembles a drum made from various sizes of cowhide. This traditional music from Bengkulu province comes from the bongol of coconut fruit, commonly called jackfruit trees. (Dianingasih et al., 2019: 2). Syukri in Syielvi Asril et al. (2018: 143) said that the Ark dance is a creation dance made around 1987. The creation dance was created because it was inspired by the rituals in the Ark tradition as a cultural event, namely the development of Bengkulu traditional dances called the seven dances contained in the bimbang gedang. In addition, the Ark dance also contains aesthetic value. The purpose of the realization of this dance is as a form of artist contribution to the Ark customs

that have become a tradition. The thing that underlies the creation of this dance was originally due to the emergence of a feeling that wanted to introduce the Ark culture, namely with dance. (Febrianty et al., 2020: 145) Clothing is a cultural symbol that marks the development, acculturation, and distinctiveness of specific cultures. Clothing, including traditional clothes, can also be a marker for people's thinking. (Na'am et al., 2019: 652)

Ark dancers wear distinctive clothing. The clothing used is the development of Bengkulu traditional clothing, namely shirts and long pants based on Islamic law, at the waist using ornaments from the tassel, which is the development of Bengkulu pucuk rebung ornaments. The head uses the creation of the Ark shape. For men's clothes, they use Malay and detar garments, a combination of Bengkulu cultural elements. Along with the times, the creations of clothes and headdresses are increasingly diverse and colourful.

Telong-long is an exciting and eagerly awaited event for the people of Bengkulu at the Ark festival performance. Telong-long is a giant lantern made with colourful oil paper. These are not just like the shape of lamps in general but are made as enjoyable as possible, such as resembling the shape of animals, including white horses, dragons, and eagles. In addition, some resemble cartoon characters such as SpongeBob, upin-ipin and many more. The Ark Festival includes two values at once, namely the value of tradition with its ritual processions and artistic actions, which certainly have their own creative and philosophical values that support the Ark tradition.

The tradition is fascinating for the author to visualize in a painting because, in addition to the author's ability to visualize the beauty of the attributes used in this tradition, the author's painting also has a deep meaning about the Bengkulu Ark tradition. In addition, in the arts, there are dol musical instruments, dance creations, and telong-telong, which have characteristics and uniqueness to be expressed in the author's Final Project painting, starting from the movements in the art performance and also the attributes used with a variety of art decorations that are thick with regionalism.

METHOD AND PROCEDURES

In an academic environment, especially in art making, a person or writer is responsible for scientifically evaluating the artwork they have made. The exact nature also applies to the use and development of a model and method of creation that will be applied to the case of art making. It needs to be considered because in art making, the work created will not have value if there is no narrative behind the creation of the work. This story contains many things, including stories, data, notes, results of experiments, and explorations that support the creation of artworks. (Nuning. W., 2015: 23)

The artwork will remember the creation of artists or artists as the creator of a work. The artist has an idea that becomes the basis of creation, known as an idea/idea/concept. The artist creates the idea of the artwork with several steps. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the technique of making, which an understanding of related art theory must also support. Methods in the field of art creation are

very possible to develop because this process is related to exploration, which can be turned into experiments.

Techniques that can be used in art making are research-based practices. Creation is also essential and needs to be considered to ensure that the results obtained are more planned, systematic, and programmed. As for the creation of the final project, the author uses the art creation approach, according to Gustami (2007: 229-331). In the methodological context, it has three stages of creation: exploration, design, and realization. Then, the three stages of creation can be broken down into six steps that must be taken. The six steps in the exploration stage include 1) Describing the soul of field observation and extracting sources of reference and information to find themes or issues; 2) Control of theoretical foundations, sources, references, and visual references, which can be used as analysis material.

Furthermore, the design stage is divided into two parts: 1) Pouring ideas or ideas from verbal descriptions of the results of the analysis carried out into the limits of two-dimensional design, and 2) Visualization of ideas from the sketch design into a model form. The embodiment stage includes 1) The embodiment stage, whose implementation is based on a model considered appropriate, including the completion, and 2) Conducting an assessment or evaluation of the results of the completed realization. From the explanation of the method, the creation of the author's final project painting with Gustami's approach is as follows: Exploration Exploration is a method used to find ideas and concepts needed to create new works. In the exploration, the author made observations to get information about the materials and tools to create the artwork, looked at the surrounding environment, and searched for various sources about the Bengkulu Province Ark Festival.

1. Idea Exploration. The Bengkulu Ark Festival is one of the cultures with high traditional, artistic and cultural values for the people of Bengkulu. However, this culture has not been widely recognized by the people of Bengkulu, let alone outside Bengkulu province, so this potential tradition is unfortunate if it does not make an attraction for tourists, especially until the culture fades and is not preserved, so the author is inspired to make this festival a concept for making final project paintings. While exploring ideas, the author read journals and books about the annual Bengkulu Ark festival, including the origin of the festival, the ritual process, and the artistic acts performed.
2. Concept Exploration. In the exploration of this concept, it was raised from observations and the results of the author's eyesight which then the author finally found the problems that existed from the perspective of the local community regarding the value of tradition, art and also the cultural values contained in the Bengkulu Ark festival. After finding the existing problems, the author also studied the Ark festival more deeply. The author also searched for meaning (aesthetic) and artistic value in this festival.
3. Shape Exploration. The form of exploration that the author did started by observing the activities in the Ark festival. After that, it continued with creative and innovative thinking in developing objects

that will be visualized in the media for painting. The author's efforts in exploring this form also include looking for various other sources of inspiration to combine the main object of the Ark festival with other supporting objects/elements. The author does not visualize the painting by directly transferring the reference, but the author modifies the object of the work created by either reducing or exaggerating the existing form.

4. Media Exploration. The media used is important in producing a painting that is in accordance with this final project. The media that the author chooses and uses is the media that has been considered correct by adjusting the painting media and the tools used. Media exploration is also carried out by considering economic value and durability or quality. The basic media that the author chooses include canvas, brushes, acrylic paint, palette, pencil, eraser, and water glass.
5. Technique Exploration. Each artist uses different techniques to create a painting. The author also conducted several explorations by looking for various sources of reference for the techniques used, either on the Internet or by looking at works of art in exhibitions. The author also observed in one of the artists' studios and with art friends.
6. Aesthetic Exploration. Aesthetic exploration is no less important because the final result of a work of art must form a beautiful job. The value of beauty is an interwoven element related to the aspects of usefulness and characteristics of the physical and social environment (user community groups). (Rachmadi et al., 2019: 660) To produce artistic works, the author conducts explorations by observing and analyzing other artists' paintings.

In the aesthetic exploration stage in the painting with the title "Bengkulu Ark Festival as an Idea for Painting Art Creation", namely by developing forms/objects and events that occur at the Bengkulu Ark festival into a visualization form that looks more artistic.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the process of creativity, a quest for the meaning and nature of life arises due to the struggle of manifesting forms felt and experienced by humans. The creation and realization of this art involve the mind and experience of the creator. The creation of art in the works of painting is the result of struggles in the artists' lives that are expressed through symbols of forms and events from the artists' behaviours. (Purwantoro et al., 2019)

The creative process carried out by the author in the creation of painting artworks includes a long process, starting from the design process to the creation of painting artworks. In the planning process carried out by the author in making paintings, the first thing to do is to design the painting by making observations, or observations first, either through the internet, journals, books, or other information media. Then, the author develops and refines the initial ideas or ideas that the author has thought would be sketched later. This sketch gives an idea of the Ark festival that will be visualized. Making this sketch helps the author, provides boundaries, and offers a simple description of the work that the author will later create. The sketch itself has several purposes, including:

1) Developing an idea that will be used in the future, 2) Recording objects and the atmosphere seen by the artist, 3) Sketches are also used just for expression. The author takes the stages by making rough sketches on canvas media or on the framework of the object that the author has chosen before. Then, the author applies colour, colouring the objects/elements, making details or accentuation until the finishing process. At this stage, the author previously looked for objects based on the ideas and concepts the author wanted to create. In designing and building this work, the author prepares more than one image from observation, the internet, journals, and books for reference when making sketches. The next step is the colouring stage until the finishing stage of the painting.



Figure 2. Sketch of Work 1 Ark Building (Source: Dea, 2023)

Sketch on canvas of work one entitled “Ark Building”. For sketching the author's work, the stages that the author carried out were the first stage of searching for various photo sources from the internet. Then, after the images were obtained, the most suitable ones were selected. Then, the author combined the reference images into a photo editing application. After that, in the second stage, the appropriate image is made into a grid with the proper size on the canvas media, which is 100x 100 cm. In the last stage, the author sketches the objects or elements he wants to paint onto the canvas media using a pencil. The sketch object the author made in work 1 is the Ark building. In work two, entitled “Taking the Land of the Ark”, the sketches are started by combining reference images using photo editing applications and rough sketches on paper; various rough sketches are made to produce sketches by good composition and proportion as well as the harmony of the main object in the background. After that, the next step in sketching the second work is to make a grid. Sketching on canvas uses pencils and other tools such as rulers and erasers. In the sketch, the object created is about the most important tradition in the Ark Festival: picking up the Ark's soil. The object that is prioritized in this painting is the activity of picking up the soil.

The sketch of work 3 with the painting title “Ark Dance” that the author made is the same as the sketches of the previous works, starting with contemplating the object to be sketched. After finding the proper object, the author combines the objects by making rough sketches on paper. This activity is done to get a better sketch suitable for the painting object's composition, proportion, and beauty later. After combining all the objects used in one painting, the following process is to make a grid on the main

object. After that, I was sketching with a pencil on canvas. The object created is about the Ark creation dance, and the object that wants to be prioritized in this sketch, which will then be painted, is the Ark Dance. Other objects are supporting.

The picture above is a sketch of work four entitled "Telong- telong." The sketching activity begins with contemplating the object to be sketched; then, after finding the proper object, the author combines the correct objects into one painting through a photo editing application to adjust the composition and proportion of the image. After that, the next step is to create a grid on the canvas media. Then, proceed with sketching on canvas media with a pencil. The object created is about one of the entertainment objects presented at the Bengkulu Ark festival and is highly anticipated by the public, namely Telong-telong. They can be called giant lanterns because of their large size.

The fifth artwork in the sketch above is "Dol Music Game." In the early stages, before sketching on the canvas, the author conducted various searches on the image of the Dol music game. After that, the author found suitable references and made rough sketches to combine several photos into one work. Then, after the rough sketch was deemed appropriate, the author's next step was to edit the photo into one image, after which the author edited the grid. The next step is for the author to make a grid on the canvas by adjusting the size and editing it using a ruler and pencil. The last step of this sketch is that the author sketches on the canvas using a pencil until it is finished. The main object in this sketch is the action of playing dol.

After all the work process is completed including the final evaluation of the work, a work of art with the theme of the Ark festival is created as the final project of painting creation. Artworks originate from human imagination, including the author who creatively explains, understands, and enjoys life-based on humans' unique ability to understand symbolic meaning. An artwork is a unique form that is directly given to perception. It also has a distinctive form because it exceeds the actual visual form, meaning that without being a practical object like the original, it presents to its audience more than its factual arrangement. (Hendri, 2013: 3). A work of art is created by a human co, mainly known as an artist or artist in the art world. A work of art has various purposes. Some create works of art to enjoy their beauty alone, and some make them to fulfil needs and beauty. However, because the work that the author created is a work of painting, of course, it does not aim to be used but to enjoy its beauty. In addition, the audience can also gain knowledge about painting and also about one of the cultures in Indonesia.

The process of creating a final project painting takes a long time. The author must realize and understand this process correctly. The process that the author does is divided into 3, namely 1) Preparation, which includes physical preparation, mental preparation, place preparation, and preparation of tools and materials; 2) Embodiment of artworks, which includes sketching, basic colouring process, visualization of objects on canvas, visualization and accentuation of background elements, detailing process until finishing, 3) Result of the work and its description. From the process of creating the final project painting with the title "Bengkulu Ark Festival as an Idea for Painting Art

Creation”, the results of the works created are as follows: In the first painting, entitled "Ark Building", using acrylic on canvas painting media made in 2023 as the first painting work of the final project that the author created.

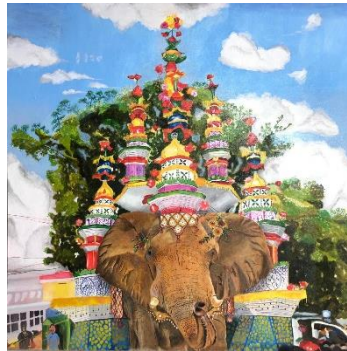


Figure 3. Ark Building Media: Acrylic On Canvas Size: 100 x 100 cm, 2023

The concept idea of this work is based on the author's knowledge and experience in seeing and finding references about the Bengkulu Ark festival building. The Ark itself is a tradition, but the tradition and meaning of the name of the Ark itself are symbolized by a multi-storey building made during the month of Muharram and shown during the procession of the Ark night. This Ark building has various names/types, such as the Ark of Development and Sacred Ark., The Ark of Development, is only made and displayed during the Ark festival as a competition and object of public photography. Meanwhile, the sacred ark is displayed during the Ark night. The arrangement of the holy ark fulfils the elements of the arrangement of the building from the bottom to the top of the peak.

The background in painting one is made by the environment that appears when the Ark is carried. The background is made with various elements, such as trees with shady leaves, crowds of people, buildings, and the sky with blue clouds. This painting of the Ark building is drawn in portrait format. The length and width of the canvas are 100 cm. The object or point of interest in this painting is the Ark building, which uses bright colours.



Figure 4. Picking up the Ark's Land Media: Acrylic on Canvas Size: 100 x 100 cm, 2023

The second final project was a painting entitled “Mengambik Tanah Tabut” with acrylic on canvas painting media. In this painting titled Ark taking the LandLand, a portrait is made. With a canvas size of 100x 100 cm. Mengambik Tanah Ark is the most important ritual performed during the 10 Muharram. Mengambik Tanah is performed by the Sipai family (the Ark family) and is chaired by the oldest shaman or person from the Ark family. Taking the LandLand is done at night, with various requirements for tools and materials provided and also with a prayer procession. The Bengkulu Governor and the community also witnessed the taking of the Ark land. The Ark family wears all-white clothes. The ritual of taking the Land of the Ark is right on the 1st of Muharram.

The background of this *mengambik tanah* painting is made to create a night atmosphere, with the aim that when the audience sees this painting, they also get an idea that the traditional activities of the Ark festival are carried out at night. In the background are also added various elements such as the Ark umbrella and fingers with multiple colours; of course, the addition of these elements is not only to fill the background of the painting but also to display the attributes used by the Senpai family (Ark family) in the Ark tradition processions. Elements in the background the elements in the background are made with light colours so that the elements in the background do not break the focus on the point of view of the main object of the painting.

CONCLUSION

The creation of works of art can be an appropriate medium to convey ideas or ideas that we have to the public or art audience. As in the intention that the author conveys in the form of paintings, which can later become a medium of communication to art audiences. From the results of observations and research that have been carried out in the creation of the final project painting entitled “Bengkulu Ark Festival as an Idea for Painting Art Creation”, the conclusions are:

1. Creating paintings with the Bengkulu City Ark festival theme will allow the author to introduce the traditions and culture of Bengkulu Province to the wider community. This includes the ceremony commemorating the death of Husen Bin Ali Bin Abi Talib and also artistic actions that have high potential, which are realized in the form of paintings that are large enough to be known and enjoyed by the public anytime and anywhere through the internet and social media.
2. From the creation of this painting, the author hopes that the cultural tradition of the Ark festival can be better known and appreciated by the wider community. In addition, with the creation of this painting, the author hopes that the author's work can be a new inspiration for artists in creating art.

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