



Community Response to the Existence of Mural Artwork in Gampong Peunayong, Banda Aceh City

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ABSTRACT

Mural art is a work of fine art that is depicted on a large, flat medium, such as the wall or ceiling of a room. Murals first appeared as a means of aspiration during the Indonesian war for independence. At that time, the street walls were covered with various kinds of critical and satirical murals. This research activity was carried out in Gampong Peunayong, Banda Aceh City. This research aims to find out how traders and the local community react and respond to the existence of murals on the walls of Gampong Peunayong buildings. In terms of examining research objects and subjects, researchers use qualitative research methods, which discuss descriptively the entire data obtained during the research. As a supporting tool, researchers used Clive Bell's Form Theory to examine the shapes in the murals in Gampong Peunayong briefly. The research method used is qualitative research. This research aims to find out how the local community that lives around the murals exists and examine information about the murals depicted on the walls of Gampong Peunayong. Based on the results of research in the form of explanations and responses from the community regarding the existence of murals in Gampong Peunayong, some people accept and are happy with the presence of murals in their environment, especially traders at the Peunayong market. However, some others did not like the visual mural that was presented. The impact of murals on the economic growth of traders at Peunayong Market is also not really felt; whether or not there are murals, traders still have customers.

Keywords: mural; Gampong Peunayong; community response.

I. INTRODUCTION

Mural art is a work of art that is poured into the wall media, which individuals or groups make with the aim of expressing creativity and attracting the attention of people around to see it. Mural art has existed since ancient civilization, which is since 30,000 years BC. At that time, the media used was the walls of caves such as those found in Lascaux, South of France. The drawings depict animal species and hunting actions, so this is often referred to as the early form of mural art (Sudarti, 2020). Mural is an alternative media in the form of street visual art that functions as a forum for feelings, thoughts, and criticism of society towards socio-political information through paintings with critical nuances, as well as a means of unifying conscience between artists and society (Sari, 2019).

Mural artwork itself is made not only outdoors, but murals can also be made indoors, for example on the ceiling, but murals like that usually do not contain a message, only aesthetic



elements. Realizing this, a mural has become a big painting that is made to support an architectural space. Once again, murals are actually inseparable from the building, namely the wall. Similarly, the wall is not only seen as a room divider or just one of the elements in a building. However, the wall is also used as a mural media.

The development of murals in Indonesia is very high because, to protest against the Indonesian government, you do not have to go down to the streets while cheering and causing much harm to the local community. Making a mural on an empty wall can slowly respond to the government. The pros and cons that occurred in the development of murals in Banda Aceh after the 2004 tsunami were that Acehese youths issued creative ideas to make murals and graffiti as they could. Many walls and roadside public facilities are filled with murals, one of which is in Gampong Peunayong. Gampong Peunayong is part of the old city centre of Banda Aceh and is a cultural heritage area developed to preserve historical values. The Peunayong area is often referred to as the Chinese area of Banda Aceh City because the majority of people in this village are of Chinese descent.

Every activity carried out by humans has, of course, the goal of achieving happiness or success. Every human being carries out happiness by using various methods without having to pay attention to the good and bad values in order to achieve the desired goal. This starts with a principle, which is a concept that cannot be observed, felt, or touched and has no scope limits (Djamal, 2017). Ideally, da'wah is carried out with lectures equipped with psychological knowledge, thus making da'wah more interesting and attracting the attention of listeners (Ibrahim et al., 2023). However, da'wah can also be applied through mural art.

The community in Gampong Peunayong embraces the diversity of mural art, which can be found in various locations, such as the Peunayong market, the walls of residents' houses, and the walls of shops. These murals, each with its own unique images and shapes, provoke different responses and perspectives from viewers. One particularly intriguing mural is located in Peunayong Market on Jl. Twk. M. Daudsyah.

Shape, as one of the physical elements of fine art, can be in the form of points, lines, fields, and figures (Salam, 2020). The following are the various meanings of shapes from various fields of science, according to Muhammad Reza Al F (Reza, 2023). Form (physioplasic) and Content (ideoplasic) in Fine Art: Ideoplasic is a spiritual component of art that comes from the artist himself in the form of aesthetic experiences, opinions, emotions, ideas, and imaginations/fantasies that are non-sensory. Some call the ideoplasic element extrinsic value, namely ideas that are composed of thoughts or ideas that underlie a creation and theme. Meanwhile, physioplasic is also called intrinsic value, which is the physical element of the work of art itself, which is sensory and involves technical problems, and visual elements such as lines, colours, textures, fields, and other visual elements of art. Meaningful Form and Representational Form: Meaningful form is a form that is free from the context of daily life, social and cultural.



The quality of this kind of form can be found in transcendental abstract (non-representational) artworks that are able to move emotions aesthetically. For example, the meaningful form found in the painting entitled Abstract by Heyi Ma "mun (1990). In Mimesis and Imaginative Forms, Plato argues that a painter who paints a table actually mimics (mimesis) a table (reality) that imitates the idea of a table that exists in the world of absolute-universal eternity. A table refers to a mere external form, something dead, that can be brought to life in art through the power of the artist. Art must be an expression of the essential form of the nature of goodness and beauty (Sumardjo, 2000). There are several mural images with the theme of trade and then use colours that make the image more alive, for example, such as people who are cooking and trading, Acehnese and Chinese people who are sitting in a coffee shop, and ethnic Chinese who trade, and Acehnese people become one of the buyers. In addition, many murals depict Chinese themes.

Education in Indonesia has undergone many changes, from the K-13 curriculum to independent learning. The government prepared the independent learning curriculum with the aim of creating a happy atmosphere for teachers, students, and parents (Saleh, 2007) through the Pancasila learner profile, which is contained in 6 dimensions: cooperation, independence, creativity, critical reasoning, diversity, faith, and piety (Setyaningrum, 2023). In an interview conducted by researchers with Mr. Zul, an artist who is one of the muralists in Gampong Peunayong, he explained that through murals, information about education could also be conveyed to the public in a visual form, for example, through mural themes about the history of an area, health themes, nature themes, traffic, or socio-political themes. Thus, a mural is a medium for conveying information that is worked out visually in order to attract the attention of the public and try to understand the meanings contained in the paintings presented in the mural. So that ordinary people can understand how important education is in our lives.

In this case, murals can also be used as educational media and other means of disseminating information. Therefore, the researcher aims to study information about the murals that are drawn on the walls of Gampong Peunayong. The researcher also conducted interviews with the surrounding community about the existence of murals in that place. The researcher's interest in the murals is about the response of the community to the existence of murals in that location, whether the murals that are made are disturbing or whether the community feels that the place is getting better with the murals. The responses, reviews, and responses of the community about the good or bad of mural artwork will be explained completely in the research report so that the results of this research can be correction material and additional information about murals in the eyes of the community, especially the people of Gampong Peunayong.

II. THEORY

Types of Response

Response in communication is a communication activity that is expected to have results or in a communication called an effect. Communication is a communicative response to the



message sent by the communicator. According to Steven M. Chafe, the response can be divided into three, namely:

Cognitive: A cognitive response is a response that is closely related to a person's knowledge, skills, and information about something. This reaction occurs when people's understanding changes.

- a. Affective is a response that relates to emotions and attitudes and assesses people towards something.
- b. Conative (psychomotor) is a response related to real behaviour, which includes actions or habits.

The responses, according to Agus Sujanto, are related to real behaviour, which includes actions or habits, namely:

- a. Responses according to the senses that observe, namely:
 - Auditive responses, namely responses to what they have heard, both in the form of sound, power, and others.
 - Visual response, a response to something you see
 - Feeling response, which is a response to something he experiences.
- b. Responses according to their occurrence
 - Memory response, which is a response to something that is remembered,
 - Fantasy response, which is the response to something imagined.
 - Thought response, which is the response to something that one thinks about.
- c. Responses according to the environment, namely:
 - Object responses, which are responses to objects that approach or are nearby.
 - Response to words, which is a response to words that he hears or sees.

III. METHOD

The type of research used in this research is a type of qualitative research with data collection methods of observation, interviews, documentation, and analysis of reading sources or previous research. According to Sugiyono (2016: 9), qualitative research is a type of research that describes the results of research with descriptions or sentences. *Qualitative research* is a study that describes the results of a study or the findings of a particular study using a sentence-shaped narrative (Thabrani, 2019). The results of qualitative research are in the form of explanations, narratives, or descriptions of the conclusions and results of the analysis of the answers to the questions that the researcher previously described. In every study, the selected population must have a close relationship with the problem to be studied. The population of this research is the people who do activities around the existence of murals in Gampong Peunayong. The number of samples taken is 11 people, namely 10 ordinary people and 1 mural artist in Gampong Peunayong. The sample was taken using a sampling technique, which is a sampling technique from the population. This means that the sample is part of the population itself. The research was conducted in November–December 2023 in Gampong Peunayong, Banda Aceh City, in several places in the area, namely, in Peunayong Market and residential houses.



IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Another statement from an informant explained, "As I remember, the mural was made around 2018 or 2019. At that time, there was an artist who suggested that painting on the wall could beautify the city; he said, so what is the name? Then, the community agreed to do the activity that you mentioned." Brother Nuar explained the statement (Interview Results, 2023). This is in accordance with statements from other informants. Moreover, in accordance with the information that researchers obtained through articles informing AntaraNews.com, which became one of the media documentations of the news when the activity took place.

In an interview conducted by researchers with one of the artists involved in making murals in Gampong Peunayong, the artist, whose full name is Zulkiefli Muhammad Sani, interviewed on Saturday, January 6, 2024, explained that the existence of murals in Aceh has existed since he first came to Aceh in 2013. Furthermore, it is increasingly growing with the support of the government and society. Although some pros and cons occurred in the development of murals in Banda Aceh after the 2004 tsunami, the youth of Aceh came up with creative and brilliant ideas to make murals and graffiti with makeshift tools and materials. Mural itself has actually existed since the colonial era, and in Banda Aceh, mural is used as a medium to criticize the existing social and political phenomena.

The party that organized the activity wanted Banda Aceh to have other places, such as the existence of murals, which, when uploaded to social media, made people immediately know that the place was located in Banda Aceh. This mural was installed in 32 spots in the Peunayong area. It involved 30 muralists, coordinated by senior Acehnese painter Zul MS (Yusuf & Lestari, 2019).

In July 2019, the people of Gampong Peunayong jointly beautified their area by drawing and colouring walls (Mural Art) featuring the history of the City of Serambi Mekkah. The mural-making was divided into three zones: the city with the theme of diversity, the suburban area of the Peunayong area, and the riverbank area with the theme of the cleanliness campaign.

A statement explained, "As for the development of the market economy, it does not have much impact. Because, like now, the only people who visit my stall are the people here who already come often. Whether or not there is a mural, the visitors at this stall remain the same. Because, some tourists who come and are interested in the mural do not necessarily come and stop by this stall or buy goods at the market. (interview result, 2023). Statements from other traders also explain the same thing, that the presence of these murals only affects the economic improvement of Peunayong market traders.



Figure 1. Mural in Peunayong Banda Aceh
(source: Nindi Aulia 2023)

4.1 Community Response to the Existence of Mural Artwork in Gampong Peunayong

According to Steven (Nusroh et al., 2022), responses can be divided into three, namely:

- a. Cognitive: What is meant by cognitive response is a response that is closely related to a person's knowledge, skills, and information about something. This reaction occurs when people's understanding changes.
- b. Affective is a response that relates to emotions and attitudes and assesses people towards something.
- c. Conative (psychomotor) is a response that relates to real behaviour, which includes actions or habits. In this study, the researcher conducted interviews with people who live around the location of the murals to find out how their responses and responses about the existence of these murals. The following are the results of interviews that have been conducted with several informants.

(1) Community Cognitive Response

The cognitive response of the community comes from its knowledge about something. In this research, the community answered questions that led to their knowledge about murals in Gampong Peunayong. This refers to question points 1 and 5 on the research instrument.

- (a) The first point: How did the existence of mural art in Gampong Peunayong begin? "Oo, so this is it. In Aceh, we often have a little sentiment of different races, religions, and ethnicities. That is one of the facts that makes us have to understand the differences between us, which is called tolerance. So even though we are different, we must get along. From the mural, people know that in Aceh there are also many other ethnic diversities, not only Acehnese, but there are also Chinese people. The mural was made



with the agreement and cooperation of the local community and the government. I am not do not know how it was done at that time, but certainly, the mural was made around three or four years ago. (interview result, 2023)

- (b) Fifth point: Has the mural ever been visited by foreign tourists visiting Aceh? "Sometimes there might be visited by foreigners, but not often and not many if local tourists are many and often take photos on the banks of the mural (interview result, 2023). Some informants answered that, of course, they have because it is located in the middle of a market that many people visit for shopping. It is not uncommon for the people in the market to be foreign tourists, such as Caucasians. The tourists also took pictures in front of the murals. However, some of the informants did not know and were not sure about the presence of foreign tourists who had visited the location of the murals.

(2) Community Affective Response

The community's affective response relates to emotions and attitudes and assesses the community's attitudes toward something. In this case, the community's affective response relates to points 2 and 6 on the research question instrument.

- (a) The second point is how you respond to the existence of mural artworks around you. Some informants answered that they felt normal and even did not feel disturbed by the existence of the mural. "Frankly, it is against the Sharia law in Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam. Because the paintings on the walls have pictures of Chinese people, therefore, it is contradictory in Aceh because Aceh itself implements Islamic sharia. In other areas, such as Jakarta, it is common and may be different. I am disturbed by the murals. However, I do not speak out sparingly because other people may not have a problem. However, this is my personal opinion; I do not like it. (interview result, 2023). The murals that are presented in the murals do not reflect Sharia, according to this informant. However, even though he feels disturbed by the existence of the mural, he realizes that he is probably only one of the few people who do not like the existence of murals, so he still accepts the existence of murals around his residence. The community's affective response relates to emotions and attitudes and assesses the community's attitudes toward something. In this case, the community's affective response relates to points 2 and 6 on the research question instrument.
- (b) The sixth point, What do you think about the existence of the mural in the middle of the market? Some informants answered that it is very good considering that the market is a place where people pass by; the presence of the mural keeps market visitors entertained, and not infrequently, some of them approach the location of the mural and take a selfie. "Oo Alhamdulillah, it has a good impact, visitors who come sometimes like to spontaneously shop here. Though initially, it was just a photo on the mural, other traders, I do not know (interview results, 2023). The informants themselves admit that the mural is good and adds to the beautiful impression of the market location in Gampong Peunayong. Some others also admitted that sometimes visitors who were interested in the mural stopped by to buy their merchandise, which was quite profitable and fun. However, others argue that it is normal and does not really affect the atmosphere of the market.



(3) Community's Conative Response

The community's conative (psychomotor) response relates to real behaviour, including actions or habits. This refers to question points 3 and 4 on the research instrument.

- (a) Point three: Are there factors that influence you towards the mural artwork? "People who come to this shop alone without using cellphones can smile at themselves because they see the pictures on the mural. There is a sense of admiration and pleasure when looking at the mural because it looks like real life. Sometimes, it makes people wonder why it looks like a real person. People who visit this shop also sometimes make the mural a topic of conversation because they feel amazed and wonder why it can be that similar. During the leadership of Sultan Iskandar Muda, Banda Aceh grew as a maritime trade centre, especially for pepper commodities, which were in high demand at the time (interview result, 2023). Romi conveyed this statement while pointing to the mural depicting a grandmother who was guarding her shop. Another factor that influenced the community to be interested in the existence of the mural was that creative street children made the mural. Hence, the background of some of the mural makers made other Acehnese youths in Gampong Peunayong have a more open mind and actively become creative people. Therefore, not a few people eventually became fond of the world of fine arts, such as this mural. Moreover, some of them deliberately joined the art community to improve their talent and knowledge in the field of fine arts. One of the informants also answered that the choice of mural locations is also a factor that influences their interaction with murals. This is because the location of the mural is easily accessible and seen by the eyes of road users.
- (b) The fourth point is: Does the image on the mural located in Gampong Peunayong have a good impact on the economic development of the surrounding market/shop? (interview results, 2023), "For my coffee shop, which is located close to the mural, quite often the people who stop by are people from outside Aceh who are on vacation, then they are impressed to see the mural and when they are tired, stop by this shop, order a drink, order a cake. So, the presence of the paintings has quite an impact". So, even though few are interested in buying, some visitors come to take pictures with the mural; not many are willing to ignore the merchants and end up buying their merchandise. Others also believe that the murals are quite influential on their income, especially the merchants who sell food, drinks and accessories or cute trinkets.

4.2 Factors that Influence Public Knowledge of Mural Art Works in Gampong Peunayong

4.2.1 Supporting Factors

From the explanation of the points above, the factors that influence public knowledge are as follows.

- a. The social conditions of the Gampong Peunayong community, with the differences in race, ethnicity and religion in the area. The government and society agree to tolerate each other, respect each other. This unique approach of using murals as a medium for education and



- strengthening ties of brotherhood by presenting images that were appropriate to the environmental conditions in the area, contributes to the harmony in society and religion.
- b. The history of Aceh as a trade center during the reign of Sultan Iskandar Muda, this made the local community agree to make murals as a medium for conveying the history of how people of Chinese, Indian or Arab ethnicity could settle in Aceh. The murals, as a work of fine art that uses large media, play a significant role in disseminating history and culture. The historical themes raised in the mural are quite good and can educate children and ordinary people indirectly. Apart from that, the issue of tolerance conveyed is also good for reducing the growth of racist attitudes between cultural and religious communities.
 - c. Mural placement location. The community also recognized this as one of the factors that made people interested in the existence of the mural. The strategic location choice was easy to reach, seen, and touched by road users and the surrounding community, especially people around Peunayong market. The mural created can be easily seen by road users passing through the area.

4.2.2 Inhibiting Factors

- a. The implementation of Islamic law in Aceh has made some people feel unfamiliar and do not agree with the existence of murals. Islam itself prohibits the existence of murals that resemble living creatures created by Allah SWT. Therefore, public knowledge about this branch of fine art is less organized and is often underestimated. Some like it and are comfortable, but some are annoyed by the existence of the mural. However, murals should instead be a medium for propaganda that broadcasts useful information.
- b. The lack of public understanding of the painting themes presented in murals is a significant factor. This ignorance often leads to hatred and criticism towards those who create murals. Therefore, it's crucial to enhance public knowledge and awareness about the significance of these themes.
- c. There are irregular artists who carelessly scribble on walls on streets or unused buildings, damaging community facilities. This makes some people look down on artists.

4.3 Dampak keberadaan mural terhadap usaha masyarakat Gampong Peunayong di sekitar mural tersebut

From several interviews conducted by researchers, it was found that the murals did not have a negative or positive impact on the development of community businesses around the murals. Some visitors who attend and are interested in the existence of the mural do not necessarily stop by and buy the goods of the traders at the market located around the mural; however, for the people themselves, the existence of these murals is good and can add to the impression of beauty in the area where they live. Apart from that, the presence of tourists visiting the area where the mural is located is enough to make the local community proud. This shows that their area is becoming more famous and will most likely be crowded with other tourists. Some traders also admitted that the mural had enough impact to attract their customers. Some travellers visited the city of Veranda of Mecca to take selfies at several points where the murals were, and some spontaneously bought food and drinks from the



traders when they felt hungry or thirsty. This is only believed by a small number of traders, and in conclusion, the mural has little impact, either positively or negatively, on people's businesses. However, the mural has had quite a good impact on the tourism sector, starting from increasing knowledge of people outside Aceh through posts by people who visited the mural to increasing regional funding from visits by foreign tourists.

According to Pak Zul himself, as an artist, the mural created at Peunayong market has had a very positive impact on the surrounding community. Suppose we imagine something in a dirty area. In that case, we give it a touch and even have a picture that sometimes has elements of humour, humour, or a message that will indirectly or even directly add value to where the mural is located. For example, in the mural program that raises anti-drug issues, cleanliness and other issues that can campaign for government programs in public spaces. Making a mural is not just a painting, but in terms of form and visuals it can provide benefits from the information broadcast in the painting that is created. As for the negative impact, it may only be technical when the mural was created. For example, in the market, with the materials and supplies that artists have, they have to move the stalls of the traders who are at the point where the mural will be made.

V. CONCLUSION

The results of the researcher's observations regarding the response of the Gampong Peunayong community around the mural show that the mural has its advantages and disadvantages depending on the people who see it. Some people are amazed and happy with the existence of this mural because its visual form is beautiful and looks real. However, others were disturbed by the murals which depicted people of Chinese ethnicity. This is normal because everyone has their own opinion. However, in general, many people like the existence of these murals because the themes raised are very real and full of history.

Factors such as the implementation of Islamic law in Aceh are things that influence the public's liking for murals. Some informants do not like murals because they are believed to be contrary to Islamic law. However, others believe that art itself is the best gift from God. The social conditions of the local community are also a factor that influences public knowledge about the existence of murals. Because the Acehnese people in Gampong Peunayong actually live side by side with people of Chinese ethnicity. The history of Aceh as a trade centre during the reign of Sultan Iskandar Muda and the location where the murals were made can influence people's knowledge and interest in murals. The community believes that the presence of murals in their midst can add historical life to their place.

The existence of the mural itself does not have much of an impact on the progress and development of community businesses in the market or around the mural. Whether or not there are murals at these locations, markets and businesses will still be visited, even if there are few buyers. Some traders admitted that their goods still sold even though no tourists were visiting the mural. However, others also admitted that there were also mural visitors who bought their wares, although only a few.



Thus, the researcher concluded that the mural did look beautiful and attracted many visitors to see it. However, the existence of this mural is still a matter of pros and cons between happy people and those who are not happy with the existence of this mural. However, the images in these murals still have visual beauty and the meaning behind them. The community hopes that in the future, the current generation can be more creative and active in building and strengthening ties of brotherhood through other artistic media such as music, dance and so on.

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