

## Conference Paper

# The Domination of “Street Art Culture” in the Interior Design of Cafés in the City of Malang

Femi Eka Rahmawati and Mayang Anggrian

Fine Arts, Faculty of Culture Studies, Brawijaya University

## Abstract

The street art culture continues to flourish after the Reformation in Indonesia. Its development has not only been in the public space, but also in the field of interior design in certain segments. The high rate of consumerism has triggered a shift in the artistic function of street art, from street decoration to becoming part of the interior design of a café. The method of qualitative research with data collection techniques of interviews and direct observation was used in this research. Data was validated using data triangulation. Research results show that the development of street art used as a part of interior design in principle plays the role of communicating messages to the public. These messages serve as a way of conveying social issues and personal expressions of the artist. Murals in interior design communicate messages of aesthetics, sponsor, commerce, illustrations, and a “new lifestyle” that supports the concept of themes in a space. Street art murals that are used as a part of interior design have experienced a conceptual shift, but in regard to technique and motif are still the same as street art in general. The types of street art murals used in public spaces do not use only one mural motif; instead, they use a combination of several styles. Trends of street art murals di Malang include hand lettering, illustration, and character murals.

Corresponding Author:

Femi Eka Rahmawati  
femi\_eka@ub.ac.id

Received: 23 January 2019

Accepted: 26 February 2019

Published: 17 March 2019

Publishing services provided by  
Knowledge E

© Femi Eka Rahmawati

et al. This article is distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution License](#), which permits unrestricted use and redistribution provided that the original author and source are credited.

Selection and Peer-review under the responsibility of the International Seminar on Language, Education, and Culture Conference Committee.

**Keywords:** street art mural domination, café interior, Malang

## 1. Introduction

The aim of this article is to find out types of interior decoration trends of cafés in the City of Malang that are styled as street art murals and the reasons for their creation. Street art is a kind of visual art that is expressed in public places, including on streets, as a form of global creativity and an act of resistance in responding to dynamic conditions in the environment. Fundamentally, street art has the tendency of being alternative, illegal, anonymous, temporary, secretive, and anti-mainstream. Its role is inescapable from the public space as a medium of expression of street artists in delivering their aspirations. The public space is often utilized as an alternative medium to change the ways of thinking of the people regarding the issues that are brought up by the street artist. Their artistic presence becomes a representation of the people’s conditions; as



explained by De Nora (2000), art is a practice in life that is composed by social, cultural, political, and economic conditions wherein it is created. According to Rachman, M.A (2012), types of street art include mural, graffiti, stencil graffiti, sticker art, wheat pasting or street poster art, guerrilla art, and street installations. Murals become much of the distinctive product of street art that develops in Indonesia.

The development of street art in Indonesia began to be prevalent in the late 1990s and continued to spread in the 2000s. The peak of street art culture heightened during the era of governance by the New Order regime. At the end of the 1990s, this kind of art was still a small and sporadic movement that was not massive in scale and only done as a kind of “guerilla” activity. However, in current industrial developments in Malang, murals are found not only in public spaces, but also as a part of interior design. Interior design, according to Suptandar (1995), is a system or method of arranging enclosed spaces that is able to fulfill the prerequisites of comfort, safety, and fulfillment of physical and spiritual needs for its users without ignoring the factor of aesthetics. Thus, interior design requires considerations of the psychology of users and the aesthetics of spaces. From a psychological standpoint, the artistic experience of a person is called the visual perception. This is understood as the capability to translate what is seen by the eyes, which is light falling into the retina of the eyes. It is these various psychological components that involve sight, which in their entirety is called the visual system. The formation of perceptions in human cognition is affected by factors of prior reference, background, and mental experience. In line with the opinion of Petrus Gogor Bangsa (2017), perceptions that are formed for each individual may be different from one to another. In the practice of sensation and perception, perception occurs because of sensation (stimulation). According to Couto (1998:1), objects that are seen by people can be divided into three viewpoints: 1) the object as an image, as the formation of an impression that people take in as they perceive things (forms, voices, sounds, sensations, and so on); 2) the object as a psychological phenomenon, which is the object being responded as a psychological reaction of people; and 3) the object as a marker that is given certain meanings, as an object that is linked with the world of social and cultural relationships.

The linear relationship of visual perception and culture to the product of street art murals in cafés in Malang is used for analysis. The approach of this research is qualitative, using the primary data sources of documentation of street art murals in the interior design of cafés, the café owners, and the café visitors. Secondary data cover books, journals, documents, and other materials related to the theme. Data collection techniques involve observation, interviews, and documentation. Data analysis was conducted to find an understanding of the presented data. From the collection of data, patterns and

relationships can be taken and then synthesized in order to draw a conclusion inductively.

## 2. Discussion

As the second-largest city in East Java, Malang is known as one of the leading education destination cities in Indonesia. Because of this, Malang becomes a city that is populated by various newcomers. This dynamic and progressive demography of the people of Malang has the potential for the growth and development of the economy of the city. Places of education, shopping centers, hotels, restaurants, and lifestyle locations continue to develop and appear each day. The same is true of cafés, coffee shops, and coffee stalls that continue to improve and offer new concepts to the people of the City of Malang. Public spaces that are personal in nature continue to appear and their presence has become a venue for strengthening societal actualization and existence, in particular of youths.

The existence of these personal public spaces is inescapable from the function of the spaces. It is known that the function of interior space is in general highly related to the supporting aesthetic elements such as murals. The style of murals in every public space are of different kinds, depending on the tastes of the owners of personal public spaces, with their selection and classification structure being based on the selected interior concept. Of the 30 public spaces (cafés, coffee shops, restaurants, and hotels) which had been observed, the visual appearance of each street art mural that is contained in those public space are classified according to their visual typology.

Based on their types, the visual form of street art murals can be classified as these types: 1) decorative doodling, 2) comic mural, 3) naturalist mural, 4) vignette mural, 5) illustrative mural, 6) character mural, 7) stencil mural, 8) hand lettering, and 9) graffiti mural. Of the 30 sample objects that were examined according to these types, only two places have street art murals of a single type, which are Ibis styles hotel and Jobo Omah café. The other 28 places used more than one type of street art mural style in their installations. Overall, murals of the hand lettering and illustrative types are the murals that are most attractive for owners of personal public spaces. Hand-lettered murals were found in 18 places, while illustrative murals were found in 13 places. It can then be said that the tendency of trends and selections of owners of personal public spaces to communicate the concepts of their interior design are represented by murals of the hand lettering and illustrative types. Murals of the hand lettering type are the most contemporary type of murals and are quite suggestive of the styles of

urban youths, while illustrative murals are murals that are distinctively simple in regard to visual communication of leading products, and thus these two types of murals become trendsetters, outdoing other types of murals as included in the interior design in places in the City of Malang.

The domination of selected street art mural styles from the results of research on cafés can be regarded as a trend in visual culture. According to Sachari (2007), there are three viewpoints that can lead to critical analysis in understanding the presence of a visual object. These three viewpoints are 1) the functional viewpoint, 2) the value viewpoint, and 3) the understanding viewpoint. The three viewpoints as described may also be comprehended through diachronic observation, linear understanding, or through a variety. The study of street art as visual objects not only considers its physical form or aesthetics, as other factors such as activist motifs, sociopolitical phenomena, economy, lifestyle, tastes, and the psychology and sociology of the people as well as their development become considerations in the interpretation of visual culture. When traced from the trend of street art mural styles in the City of Malang through the approach of visual culture analysis, the influence of the domination of the hand lettering and illustrative types of murals tends to be based on their functions, which is to enhance the icon of the café through a mural depiction that is easily understood and can be directly seen by visitors. Murals of the hand lettering and illustrative types are mostly used in cafés in Malang.



Figure 1: Hand-lettered murals.

Hand-lettered murals are a combination of two disciplines of art, which are calligraphy and lettering. The application of hand lettering in the design of interior murals in Malang are also quite diverse and varied; in addition, the results and techniques that are used

are also diverse. However, based on visuals and content, the themes are still relevant and related to the profile of the place or attraction.



**Figure 2:** Illustrative interior mural at Warung Kopi Konco Lawas. (Location: Jl. Joyo Suryo, Merjosari, Lowokwaru Sub-District, City of Malang.)

Murals with the illustrative style become the second-most frequently encountered. This is because murals with the illustrative style are murals that can best communicate the impressions and icons of what is offered in the personal public space. As an example, the Konco Lawas coffee stall, which offers coffee as its primary commodity in the course of its business, uses a mural depicting a very large cup of coffee. In addition, 11 other personal public spaces including cafés, coffee stalls, hotels, and even car wash places use interior murals with the illustrative style.

Understanding the meaning of objects is a kind of interdisciplinary observation that is guided by theoretical conception and aesthetical overview. Similar to the way that analyzing art does not only consider just the physical form or aesthetics, there are considerations of historical background factors, sociopolitical phenomena, economy, lifestyle, tastes, and psychology and sociology of the people and their developments in the interpretation of visual culture. The appearance of these two kinds of street art murals that dominate cafés in Malang have the value that murals can provide an environment and support the concept as well as theme that is utilized by the owner of the space to deliver visual messages. Seen from an understanding viewpoint, street art murals of the hand lettering and illustrative types are more representative and evocative of the visual imagery that business owners wish to convey in providing and presenting services to customers. This may be considered an alternative reference for entrepreneurs in the café industry as a consideration for the interior design management of a café space, in combination with a variety of street art murals.

### 3. Conclusion

Street art murals as art products in visual culture gives greater influence to the appeal of a space. Murals can provide an environment and support the concept as well as theme being promoted by the owner of the space to deliver visual messages. By utilizing a mural, the environmental conditions of an interior will appear more aesthetically pleasing. Anyone present in the space of the mural will be supported by a colorful background. Interior street art murals support youths in their interest to take “selfies”, providing a background for the activity. The imagery of the murals tends to have the intent of delivering messages to customers according to the target market and concept of the business. Meanwhile, street art murals in their position as architectural expressions in interior space play a role as the medium for communicating messages to the public. Street art murals in interior design are more directed to aesthetic, sponsored or commercial, illustrative, and lifestyle messages that purely support the concept of a theme in a space.

### References

- [1] Bangsa, G.P. 2007. *Persepsi Visual*. Dalam Buku Irama Visual, Dari Toekang Reklame sampai Komunikator Visual. Tim Penulis Program Studi Desain Komunikasi Visual, FSRD ISI Yogyakarta dan Studio Diskom
- [2] Couto, N. 2007. *Dasar konsep dan Prinsip Visual (jilid II): untuk Seni Rupa, Arsitektur dan Desain*. Padang: UNP Press.
- [3] DeNora, T. 2000, *Music and Everyday Life*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [4] Rachman, M.A. 2012. “*Perilaku Mengakses Situs Tembok Bomber Di Kalangan Komunitas Street Art Semarang Terhadap Pengetahuan Tentang Seni Graffiti Dan Mural*”. Thesis: UNDIP
- [5] Sachari, A. 2007. *Budaya Visual Indonesia*. Jakarta: Erlangga
- [6] Suptandar, P. 1995. *Manusia dan Ruang dalam Proyeksi Desain Interior*. Jakarta: UPT Penerbitan Universitas Tarumanegara