Use of Municipal Solid Waste and pigment fluorescent as a medium painting

I P Wiguna*, A I Yeru, A P Zen, C R Yuningsih and S Kusumanugraha
Telkom University, Creative Arts Department, Jl. Telekomunikasi no. 1 Bandung, Indonesia

*iqbalpw@gmail.com

Abstract. Currently the balance and sustainability of nature is an often discussed issue in contemporary art. Artists trying to increase awareness, responsibility and action for the nature and the environment through their works. Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) is a form of waste that is increasing every year. These wastes are the garbages that comes from our daily lives wastes. they are usually plastic bottles, product packaging, food scraps etc. Most of this materials such as plastics, styrofoam or other materials derived from synthetic polymers if not handled properly it will become a waste that endangers the environment. The purpose of this paper is to analyze and study the possibility of the Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) especially those made from inorganic materials such as plastic, aluminium cloth etc. into a medium for a painting. The idea of painting as expanded field has opened up the possibility of using found object materials as a medium that represents the idea of a painting. By adding fluorescent pigment as coloring pigment to turn the waste material color to be more vibrant and contrast to the eye. The expected outcome of this paper is how the process of using environmental issues and the concept of recycling into a work of art that increases awareness for the sustainability of the nature.

1. Introduction
Painting and the environment actually have quite a long history, like the history of art itself. Nature as a subject always inspires artists to create artworks, whether it responds to the beauty of nature by making nature its object or using nature as a signs to convey certain messages [1].

In the Classical period, Renaissance artists made nature as objects and symbols, this is because of the movement is transition from thoughts that were previously dominated by religious dogma, eventually returning to classical philosophy and science that originated in the old Greece. Before the Renaissance, the image of nature was usually only placed as a complement in medieval drama, human life became the main theme and the function of art was spreading the words of God.

The humanism movement and the development of science changed the position of nature. Painting in this period developed towards a realist approach because of the discovery of the depiction of the vanishing point or perspectives by Brunelleschi [2]. As a result, the representation of nature changes. The ability to depict natural forms close to the origin allows artists to play with the idea of representation and make nature as a sign that has a certain message or meaning.

In the modern period of painting, it was marked by the movement of impressionism, derived from the word impression, this movement depicts nature by playing with colors. Being brave and reject the previous style of its predecessor, impressionism offering novelty in the meaning and technique in painting. Nature here is an impression but it is investigated more profound. An impressionist Manet, a
The painter who is famous for his waterlily flower paintings is not only a painter but he is also a botanist who often breeds hybrid plants such as dahlias and irises for his research in painting and also for pleasure [3].

The post-modern period or the period after modern art, is marked by the Pop-art. The tendency of fine art to use popular and everyday objects such as soup cans and cardboard as objects of art, making the idea that any object can become an object of art. This thinking was actually beginning from its predecessor period, popularized by artist Marcel Duchamp who lived in the Dada era, changed how art is defined and how the medium can originate from any object because the function of the medium is to serve ideas [4]. The terms ‘readymade’ and ‘found-object’ refer to disposable objects that were previously manufactured objects and everyday objects redefined by the artists.

Pop-art artist whose later his name synonymous with the movement is Andy Warhol. Warhol is an artist as well as a celebrity. His works are a form of his obsession with popular culture, especially celebrities. The images shown are everyday objects, portrait celebrities, and other popular culture. The technique of how his work is produced uses manufacturing techniques that can be reproduced. This is because of the idea of consumptive and mass popular culture. Warhol did not use paint on his canvas, he replaced it with a screen-print technique, a brilliant and precise technique with the idea of mass production and popularity in his time.

![Andy Warhol “Campbell’s Soup Can”](https://www.moma.org/collection/works/79809)

In Pop-art works, nature may not be the main theme, it can be said that Pop-art adopts secular, every day and superficial themes, only the “surface”, but some critics argue that by doing so, they indirectly raise philosophical values that apply to many audiences because the audiences are given a sign or symbol that they easily recognize and then the meaning is more profoundly created by the artist to convey their ideas.

Ideas about nature or the environment exist indirectly. It becomes a subtle idea; the idea of consumerism ultimately leads us to the idea of alienated nature. This is interesting because the development of the city and its inhabitants as well as the instant fabrication process demands the opening of land and factories. Pop artists talk about nature by presenting the artificial images or ideas.

Nowadays some Contemporary artists create natural themes in the way they use materials that are not usual for an art medium. For example, Vic Muniz. he uses domestic waste or Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) as a medium to portray portraits. Vic muniz paints with rubbish to convey his opinion about the MSW effect to the nature, the environment and the humans. This paper will discuss the opportunities to use MSW as a portrait of a painting. It is hope that by describing in the form of digital sketches how
MSW can be used as a medium of painting, the same process can be developed to make more art forms that use MSW to create works that could help improve the recycling and environmental issues.

2. Methods

Basically, this paper will examine objects that are no longer in use or everyday rubbish, known as Municipal Solid Waste, as a medium for art-based practice in Contemporary art. This paper will use samples of Contemporary artists who use a similar tendency of using waste as an art material. The artist is Richard Wentworth an English artist and Vic Muniz a Brazilian artist who uses the idea of the environment through trash as an image with photographic techniques. A qualitative approach is used to examine the relationship between the medium and the concept of artists. Furthermore, through the hypothesis obtained by the study, the MSW will be use as a medium of art.

This paper also discusses how the medium in painting developed from its ideas and mediums. According to Mark Titmarsh in his book ‘Expanded Painting’, the historical development of painting has 5 stages. The first stage is the ability to imitate and representations being sued here. The example is Cezanne, whose work becomes a ‘bridge’ from the reality that we perceive towards abstraction. The second stage, is the flat surface of the painting which becomes a three-dimensional illusion on a flat surface. This stage is exemplified by the painting of synthetic cubism and the use of readymade objects combined with a two-dimensional image of a painting. The third stage is the position where the painting is displayed. This stage of the painting is challenged as to how it is displayed in a "white cube" display or the gallery. For example, the work of Robert Rauschenberg, who plays with this idea through his works. The fourth stage of the painting ignores flat surfaces and shapes that use frames and so it invaded space. At this stage, it actually refers to Sol de Lewitt's works where he uses a conceptual art approach for his installation works. The fifth stage is the final stage, where the painting ignores the materiality and emphasizes more on experience, this stage is the tendency of fine art after the conceptual art where the work is dematerialized and temporary so that things come from ideas and experience [5].

From these five stages the work that using MSW will refer to the second stage, where the flat surface of the painting developed and the three-dimensional illusion on the flat surface is combined with the readymade form.

3. Results and discussion

Trash or junk created when human start to sort out which can be reused by those and which are no longer necessary. This process eventually develops and uses more of various category, whether this waste is organic waste or industrial waste (that cannot or is difficult to recycle). The categories are also including is the industrial objects clean or not? toxic or not? [6].

Municipal Solid Waste is a trash that comes from human daily activities, it can be in the form of plastic bottles, egg shells or newspapers that no longer being used. Every year there is an increase of the number of MSW [7]. In the end, there was a concern about how this trash should be handled, because most of this trash was industrial rubbish which was difficult to recycle.

One artist who has an interest in this issue is Richard Wentworth. Wentworth is an artist from England who is famous for sculpture, photography and installation. His work uses everyday objects that he changes in its function so that it changes our perception to the object. Through his sculptural photography, Wentworth focuses on the political and political narratives of trash and waste objects in his city [8]. His work invaded urban space and eventually became a form of criticism of the people and their cities intelligently and poetically.

Another contemporary artist who combines the idea of trash as a medium for sculpture photography and its installation is Vic Muniz. Vic is an artist from Brazil, the country that is known as a third world country with all its problems. Vic's work becomes very interesting not only because the medium but also how he uses his work politically. He is known to fight for the rights of the lower classes (the poorer) in Brazil, his work is very large in scale because it uses garbage originating from the electronic waste disposal center in Rio. So sometimes it needs a high enough distance to see his work as a whole. Muniz's
work reminds us not only on environmental issues but also the consumptive power behind it that leads us to political issues and economic inequality in Brazil [9].

Figure 2. Vik Muniz Marat (Sebastião), from “Pictures of Garbage” series, 2008.

Through these two contemporary artists works that use waste as a medium, the writer uses the same method, by using readymade from MSW. The difference is that the writer uses the idea or narration of the painting. Especially the idea of ‘expanded painting’. Through the concept of work that uses MSW as the main medium, the writer wants to create a concept design that can later be made by anyone, but in the next project that include participatory. For now, the idea of MSW and painting is to raise awareness of daily use of waste, especially those that are difficult to recycle.

Figure 3. Digital Sketch of The MSW Painting.

The frame of the painting can be made of wood or rectangular stainless measuring at least 70 x 70 Centimeter which has a volume of 15 Centimeter, the frame will be used as a container, containing
MSW that has been cleaned and given a *meni* or base paint. Then MSW will be painted using fluorescent pigment. The choice of fluorescent pigment is because the idea of fluorescent is often used in industry and is known to have strong colors, which can attract attention quickly [10]. This character is suitable for displaying ideas about industry and fabrication as well as rubbish that were often overlooked before finally becoming the center of attention.

Then the work is painted using a brush. This process can actually use other media such as airbrushes or spray. The image used is portrait, the concept is how the waste generated is a personal mirror of the owner of the trash. Furthermore, the work will be presented like a painting.

4. **Conclusion**

Through daily trash or Municipal Solid Waste, we can talk so many issues, starting from environmental issues, economic inequality issues, political issues, to cultural issues. This is because garbage itself is like a ‘portrait’ of the humans who have used it. The impact of pollution and waste on the environment that continues to rise every year and the issue of global warming in the 21st century at least makes us inevitably alarmed to the environment. Starting from where we live, how we regulate our lifestyle so that the term eco-friendly will eventually form a new consumptive society that cares about its environment.

**Acknowledgment**

This work would not have been possible without the financial support of the Telkom University.

**References**

[1] Sam R 2019 *Art and Form* (Pennsylvania State University Press) 77-93
[2] Bolton R 2013 *A brief history of painting: 2000 BC to AD2000* (Hachette UK)
[3] Giovanni A 2018 *Botanical Speculation* (Cambridge Scholar Publishing UK) 24-29
[4] Edwards S and Woods P 2013 *Art & Visual Culture 1850-2010: Modernity to Globalisation* (Tate Enterprises Ltd.)
[5] Mark T 2017 *Expanded Painting* (Bloomsbury Academic UK) 7-10
[6] Gillian W 2011 *Junk Art and The Politic of Trash* (I.B. Tauris) 16-18
[7] Kiesel A C, Rudolph R and Natalie 2017 *Understanding plastics recycling economic, ecological and technical aspects of plastic waste handling* (USA: Hanser Publications) 1-8
[8] Hawkins H 2010 *Turn your trash into... Rubbish, art and politics, Richard Wentworth's geographical imagination* *Social & Cultural Geography* **11**(8) 805-827
[9] Schmidt C 2017 *Vik Muniz’s Pictures of Garbage and the Aesthetics of Poverty ARTMargins* **6**(3), 8–27
[10] Michael R 2019 *The Republic of Color Science Perception And The Making of Modern America* (University of Chicago Press)