



Rubber Duck Toy as a Happy Metaphor in the Creation of Painting Artworks

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ABSTRACT

This art research explores rubber duck toys as a metaphor for happiness, representing childhood memories and positive emotions evoked by simple things. The objectives of this art creation are: (1) to elaborate the concept of happiness through the symbolism of rubber duck toys, (2) to develop creative ideas as artistic expressions in painting, and (3) to explore techniques and concepts that enhance the visualization of artworks. The urgency of this project lies in uncovering the potential of everyday objects to convey philosophical and aesthetic meanings that can be universally appreciated. The method employed is exploration, which includes gathering references, developing ideas, and creating artworks using oil paint on canvas. The exploratory process involved observing the shape, color, and characteristics of rubber duck toys and transforming them metaphorically within the context of happiness. This creation resulted in seven paintings of various sizes, emphasizing aesthetics, narratives, and emotions. The outcomes of this project, represented by paintings, introduce the aesthetics of rubber duck toys, provide insights into painting based on everyday objects, and inspire appreciation for the simplicity of often-overlooked happiness. Beyond being a medium of expression, these artworks serve as a reflection of childhood memories for the audience.

Keywords: rubber duck; metaphor; painting art; creating.

I. INTRODUCTION

Children's toys are objects that tend to be unique in shape, as well as educational, interesting, and have their own charm for children. Children's toys are generally used to distract children to learn or to make them laugh and happy. For adults, children's toys invite a sense of nostalgia, where if you see toys that were often played as a child, someone will indirectly feel memories of happiness from childhood memories that used to be experienced. Happiness is a concept that is closely related to various human life experiences, and in life it is often considered the highest goal (Siswadi, 2024).

Subject matter lies in exploring the potential of everyday objects as deeper symbols in art. In modern life full of complexity, happiness is often forgotten or obscured by social demands and life pressures. Therefore, through this art creation, it is hoped that a simple object such as a rubber duck toy can be elevated to a more universal representation of happiness, reminding the audience of the importance of appreciating the little things in life.

Humans conceptualize the world and reflect their behavior and understanding through metaphorical expressions. Metaphor in art planning has a role as an inspirational supposition on objects (Suteja, 2019). In this case, metaphor is not only limited to linguistic expression, but also the result of human mental mapping. An anxiety that is faced with the problems faced by



humans in their daily lives with the universe is a connection that cannot be separated. Using a form of conversation or writing that is full of symbols and meanings, metaphors such as using analogies as a way of processing real to abstract thoughts.

The urgency of creating this art when the visual of rubber duck toys today is only a memory of the past, the visual form of rubber ducks that are attractive in terms of color, shape, and elasticity invites positive energy that creates comfort and happiness. The solution plan is to transform the aesthetic subject matter of rubber duck toys visualized in a metaphorical scope and give birth to new aesthetic values with a number of past memories as a deep empirical experience.

The rubber duck doll provides a creative trigger and childhood imagination for most of childhood life, the rubber duck as a subjectmatter is then transformed in the space of imagination and as a metaphorical part to personify memories, happiness, and certain values for the artist. The main objective is to transform the form into the content of painting expression inspired by the subject matter of rubber duck toys into visual expression of painting art that makes it a metaphor to interpret happiness and various different caprodypts that are not just rubber duck toys, but have meaningful philosophical values.

II. NOVELTY OR INNOVATION

Rubber ducks are popular, and today they are still considered as children's toys (Afifyah, 2018). Rubber ducks are children's toys that have a unique element in the round shape through stylization. The uniqueness of this rubber duck toy also lies in its bright yellow color and its ability to float. This rubber duck toy is generally used to accompany children to play, either when bathing or used by adults to comfort children when crying. The selection of the dominant yellow color on the rubber duck gives the impression of cheerfulness and optimism, while the background with contrasting colors is used to strengthen visual appeal and direct the audience's focus. The impasto technique is used in some parts to create textures that strengthen the three-dimensional impression, so that the rubber duck object appears more alive.

A metaphor is something that is applied to an object, and is only intended with objects (Wiratno, 2018). Metaphor is one of the rhetorical tools used in language to provide a description or understanding of a concept or object that has a similar character or nature. Metaphors allow one to express complex ideas or feelings that are difficult to explain.

In terms of meaning, each work not only represents happiness in general, but also invites the audience to reflect on how simple happiness is often forgotten in modern life. Each element in the paintings is constructed with visual legibility and emotional connection between the artist and the audience in mind. Happiness as part of the fragmentation of past experiences through the most memorable forms of toys as a metaphor for a special feeling that evokes its own memorial.

Metaphor is a medium that serves as a source of inspiration to express deep emotions or feelings and as an expressive language tool (Maisaroh et al., 2024). The happiness metaphor



is a depiction of happiness that occurred in the past with an object that is felt to depict that happiness. The author was inspired by a childhood toy in the form of a rubber duck that has a striking color, simple shape, and attractive appearance. The author tries to associate the object with the emotion of happiness. Happiness, in this context, can be generated through simple things such as the shape produced by the rubber duck toy which, although simple, is able to bring a feeling of joy. The bright color of the rubber duck attracts attention, making it not only an object of play but also a "friend" when playing. In addition, the flexible nature of rubber is considered a representation of elasticity in social communication that can bridge relationships between individual humans.



Figure 1. Rubber Duck Toy
(Source: Cllauvitra Rheyna's documentation, October 23, 2024)

Complex ideas can come from diverse human life experiences, which can be the foundation in the creative process of art creation, where each experience shapes the thoughts and ideas realized in a work. The rubber duck toy was chosen as an object in the painting because it holds the memory of childhood happiness, illustrating how personal experience and social context. Bourdieu asserts that habitus is not the result of a free will or is determined by structure, but it is created by an interaction between time: dispositions that are both shaped by past events and structures (Susanto et al., 2019). Individual experiences and social contexts influence the creative process and affect artistic expression. This toy, with its pliable rubber nature and bright yellow color, symbolizes simple happiness that is rarely found in adult life.

Happiness is a concept that is closely related to various human life experiences, and in life is often considered the highest goal (Siswadi, 2024). Happiness is an emotion of pleasure, contentment, and gratitude, especially that felt while playing with a rubber duck toy, which creates happy memories even if they are temporary. These emotions are intangible, but the author wants to capture these happy memories through art, using the rubber duck toy as a metaphor.

III. METHOD



The artistic exploration method is used in this project to understand the characteristics of rubber duck toys and translate them into painting. This process includes observation of shape, color, and texture, as well as exploration of techniques to create a visual impression that supports its metaphorical meaning. The result is seven paintings of various sizes that emphasize aesthetics, narrative, and emotion.

3.1 Exploration Stage

This stage is the stage of searching and developing the ideas and concepts that have been chosen, to be studied and researched more deeply regarding their relevance. The artist will observe all aspects that have a correlation to the foundation of creation, namely the rubber duck toy, which is a metaphor of happiness. The exploration stage includes several parts that will be carried out, namely:

- 3.1.1 Exploration of Ideas, The author finds ideas on the characteristics of rubber duck toys from simple shapes and raw materials as well as other objects around the author's environment to be developed as a metaphor for happiness in the creation of artworks, so that the results of the design produce works of art that contain philosophical value and aesthetic value.
- 3.1.2 Concept Exploration, The author determines the concept of a painting that creates a metaphor of happiness through the object of a rubber duck toy and personal experience, with visualizations that respond to happy events from the source of ideas. The visualization process is carried out with a focus on the rubber duck toy as the main symbol, supported by other objects that strengthen the happy atmosphere, as well as taking inspiration and insight from previous artists' works to explore and develop creative ideas.
- 3.1.3 Shape Exploration The author emphasizes on the overall object of the rubber duck toy, where the artist tries to create a strong visual narrative by connecting the rubber duck toy with other elements such as vinyl records, swings, slides, flowers, food, and other objects, to create a happy atmosphere. The use of rubber duck toy textures is also used to give a realistic impression.
- 3.1.4 Media Exploration The author uses a standard canvas textured with thick canvas fabric to achieve a quasi-plastic texture. The author also explored different types of paint, choosing oil paint for its high saturation that allows for bold, vibrant colors and slow drying for the revision of the work. Flat, flat and small brushes were chosen for use in accordance with the painting technique, adding aesthetic value with frames that protect and display the paintings.
- 3.1.5 Technique Exploration, The author discovers techniques to be used in the creation of artworks, including under painting techniques that simplify and stabilize colors on canvas, as well as plaque techniques that involve thick strokes of color to create dense and close painting results, supporting the realization of the desired plastic texture. Brushes are used throughout the painting process.
- 3.1.6 Aesthetic Exploration, The author explores this aesthetic by choosing striking colors for the main object such as the rubber duck as the center of attention, by paying attention



to harmonious supporting colors, maintaining balance, and considering the layout to create works that have aesthetic and philosophical value, making artworks not only pleasing to the eye but also providing deeper meaning.

3.2 Design

The design of the work begins with a visual exploration of the shape and characteristics of the rubber duck toy, which is then developed through sketches and color studies. Initial sketches were done to determine the composition, perspective, and balance between the main object (rubber duck) and other supporting elements. In addition, various experiments with oil painting techniques were conducted to create textures and visual effects that could strengthen the expression of happiness in the work.

3.3 Visualization

The visualization process of the work is based on the stages of the design of the work that has been determined, from the sketching stage, the selection of the best sketch, the preparation of media and materials, the application of the design of the selected sketch, the underpainting stage, the visualization of the shape, the detailing process, and finishing. At each stage of the painting process, it is still monitored from the initial plan and concept that has been set. Then the author stages the process through various stages of exploration (ideas, concepts, media, techniques, and aesthetics) to obtain compatibility between design and visualization and until the work is worthy of presentation.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Children's toys, with their unique shapes and charm, not only make children learn or laugh, but also bring up nostalgia among adults, reminding them of memories of childhood happiness, such as when bathing with rubber ducks floating in the bathtub. In this art creation, the author uses a rubber duck toy as the main basis of the work, inspired by human emotions such as happiness, and seeks a correlation between the two. References from previous artists such as Jeff Koons and Robert C. Jackson assisted the author in creating pseudo-textures and color brushstrokes resembling rubber and depicting the fantastic atmosphere of fun, combining ideas into new unique creations in the creation of paintings.

Painting is an expression of a beautiful feeling that becomes an interpretation in response to an object (Kurnia et al., 2022). Painting is a more complete development of drawing, with an activity called painting with a two-dimensional medium or the surface of an object that has three dimensions (Imroni & Sami, 2024). Art creation produces works that have aesthetic value that can affect the perception and emotions of the viewer. Art creation is born due to the artist's need to convey the experience of fantasy, contemplation, fondness, love, aesthetics, and so on, which comes from problems from the environment supported by experience, intellect, technique, and ideas (Tjokropramono, 2017).



In the process of realizing artworks from the happy metaphor of rubber duck toys, the exploration stage is carried out. This stage is a stage of searching and developing the ideas and concepts that have been chosen, to be studied and researched more deeply regarding their relevance. The author created a painting that uses a rubber duck toy as a symbol of happiness, combining everyday objects and inspiration from other artists in a playful composition. Canvas and oil paint are chosen for texture and color, with under painting and plaque techniques.

- 4.1 Preparation of tools and materials, Preparation of tools and materials is the core preparation in the process of creating a painting. In preparing them, the selection of quality tools and materials is important in order to maximize good results in painting. The tools needed consist of acrylic palettes, brushes, colored pencils, crayons, fabric pullers, and gun trackers. The materials needed are canvas, spanram wood, oil paint, wall paint, medium oil, and thinner.
- 4.2 Embodiment, The embodiment of the artwork is the final stage after the design, where the sketches that are deemed optimal are transferred to the canvas. The process includes: designing initial sketches with crayons on paper for seven works, transferring the sketches to canvas with colored pencils, coating the sketches with spray clear to protect the strokes, underpainting for color base and composition balance, painting with the desired colors, refining the details for final evaluation, and covering the painting with varnish as a final protection.
- 4.3 Presentation of the work, In the creation of the final project of art creation, the author presents the work in verbal and visual aspects. In the verbal aspect, it is explained about the author's presentation in conveying ideas and notions, as well as explaining in depth related to the basic concept to the practical application in the work.
- 4.4 This explanation aims to generate new ideas and help realize a work that is rich in meaning and aesthetics. On the visual aspect, the realized works were then presented to the public through an exhibition held in a public space, where the seven paintings created were displayed. These paintings use oil paint and canvas media, with various size dimensions, reflecting the visual interpretation of the happy concept inspired by rubber duck toys.

The Creation Process, will present documentation of the steps regarding the process of making one of the works, starting from sketching to the realization of the artwork. The following are the stages carried out during the process of creating the seventh work, which has the title "Ferris wheel":



Figure 2. (a) Sketching process on canvas, (b) spray process for underpainting, (c) underpainting process 1.



Sketching process on canvas. The artist draws a sketch using colored pencils with a choice of colors according to what will be realized with oil paint. Spray process for underpainting, this process is the coating of the sketch on the canvas using spray clear, the aim is to prevent the sketch from changing or disappearing during underpainting. This stage is to adjust the color of the painting in the next process.



Figure 3. (a) Underpainting Process 2, (b) Painting Process, (c) Detailing Process
(Sumber: Cllauvitra Rheyna)

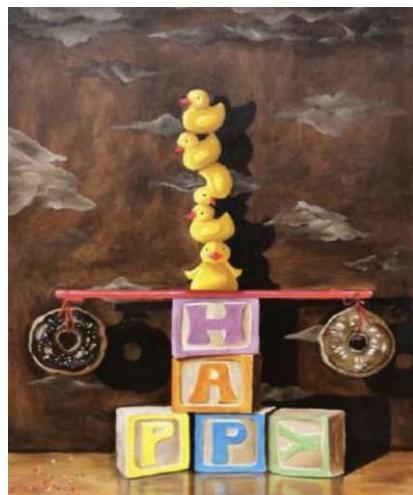


Figure 4. *Keseimbangan*, Oil on Canvas, 145 x 109 cm, 2024), Cllauvitra Rheyna
(Sumber: Cllauvitra Rheyna)

Underpainting process 2. This process is a stage to determine the darkness of light and facilitate sketching with the shadows created by underpainting. Painting process. This process starts painting starting from the basic or light color, then moving to the dark light color. Detailing process. This process is done by detailing the work that is lacking and perfecting it. Varnish process. This process is done so that the painting is coated and protected, because the color of the oil paint becomes pale after drying. The varnish process also serves to bring out the color of the oil paint to make it shinier.

The work has the title "Balance". The title was chosen because the work departs from complaints about the problems of every human's life, where the problems or obstacles are symbolically depicted through several toys that are piled on top of each other and seem to balance each other. This is a metaphor of human effort in balancing life's problems and happiness, which should be able to walk hand in hand with the problems faced and a sense of joy. Such an attitude will foster gratitude in a very fertile manner. The work created has various



toy objects. The objects are a rubber duck toy, wooden alphabet blocks, and a board hanging two donut toys. The main object of the rubber duck toy is depicted with yellow color and red beak, and has eyes. The objects depicted visually consider various elements and principles of art. The artist considers lighting, dark and light colors, texture, contrast, and balance principles. This third work has a message that various kinds of life problems and obstacles, each individual human being always tries to balance life problems with feelings of happiness. The problems of life in humans are depicted with various toys piled up, while the feeling of happiness is conveyed through the object of a rubber duck on top of a pile of other toys.

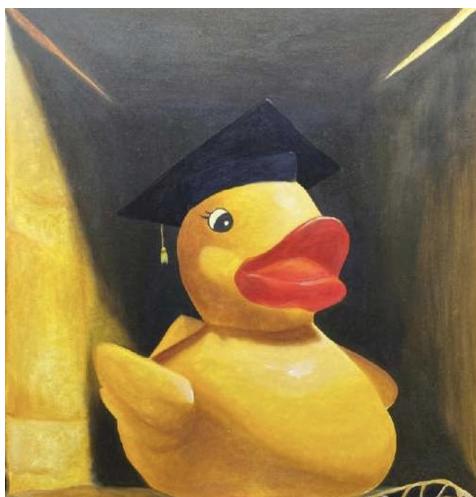


Figure 5. Graduation, Oil on Canvas, 96 x 96 cm, 2024, Clauvitra Rheyna
(Source: Clauvitra Rheyna)

This work has the title "Graduation". The title represents the content of the painting created, namely happiness obtained from the fruit of patience in the learning process which then exits the comfort zone gallantly and happily, which is depicted by a duck standing tall and getting out of the cardboard box, to live the life ahead. In the work created, the main object is a rubber duck toy wearing a toga. The rubber duck is depicted in yellow and has a red beak, and is wearing a toga. The duck is seen standing straight out of a large cardboard box. The duck created in the work has large dimensions, with contrasting art elements that are clearly visible because it comes out of a cube-shaped cardboard box and has space, making the lighting arrangement more complex. The inside of the cardboard looks darker indicating a deeper space that symbolizes a long process. This work symbolizes happiness and pride in the achievement of the learning process. Through the rubber duck toy wearing a toga and standing tall, this work depicts the struggle and patience in the learning process. The contrasting visual composition between the duck and the cardboard creates a dynamic and bold impression.



Figure 6. *Bianglala*, Oil on Canvas, 100 x 100 cm, 2024, Clauvitra Rheyyna
(Source: Clauvitra Rheyyna)

The title “Ferris wheel” is taken because of the rotating system of the Ferris wheel and depicts a wheel and the dynamics of life that are sometimes at the bottom, and sometimes at the top. Although there is a feeling of fear to play the rides, there are joys that arise that can be obtained. From this description, it can be interpreted that we must remain grateful and happy in any situation, just like we ride rides in the playground. In the work, we can see the Ferris wheel, festival tents, candy statues, and the main object of rubber duck toys that create a cheerful atmosphere. The Ferris wheel in the work is depicted with large dimensions, painted in dark blue, and the levers are painted in a lighter blue color. At each end of the Ferris wheel there is a rubber duck toy depicted with dimensions that are not too large.

Then on the festival tent, three tents are depicted, in front and behind, and beside the Ferris wheel. On the rubber duck toy, it is depicted spreading on the playground. Some are walking, riding a small merry-go-round, and others are just looking around. This artwork is a metaphor of a dynamic and changing life. By depicting a Ferris wheel as a symbol of the wheel of life, dark and light blue colors on the pole symbolizing harmony and happiness, this work becomes an invitation to continue to be grateful and happy in all situations.

V. CONCLUSION

Rubber Duck Toy as a Metaphor of Happiness in Painting as a final project at Sarjanawiyata Tamansiswa University, is a proof of innovation and learning from a long artistic process. Departing from personal experiences and reflections on how happiness can be present through simple things. The rubber duck was chosen as a symbol because of its distinctive shape and is often associated with pleasant childhood memories. This work aims to develop ideas, techniques and concepts through in-depth exploration. The creation process involves stages ranging from personal phenomena, literature study, to exploration of ideas and aesthetics, followed by design, realization, and presentation of the work. The result is seven paintings of various sizes, using oil paint and canvas, which are exhibited in a public space to provide the benefits of knowledge and happy memories and show the aesthetics of rubber duck toys.



The creation process starts from the observation of personal phenomena, literature review, exploration of ideas, to the design, realization, and presentation stages of the work. Through this artistic exploration, the artist tries to develop concepts, techniques, and visualizations that can depict happiness in the form of painting. The paintings were presented through an exhibition to bring the artworks together with the art public in an open way, so that they can share their experiences and fond memories of childhood with their favorite games. The result is seven paintings of various sizes created using oil paint on canvas. These works were exhibited in a public space with the hope of bringing back memories of simple happiness, as well as providing insight into how everyday objects can be processed into meaningful works of art.

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