

Exploration of "Tirtha" Themes in the Communication of Waskita Rupa's Work (Bali Nata Bhuwana)

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ABSTRACT

Keywords:

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This article presents the findings of a study on the curation of visual art titled "Dharma-Tirtha-Matra," exhibited in the Waskita Rupa Exhibition. The study focuses on the significance of "tirtha," or water, in the artworks showcased by artists from various academic institutions. The research method employed curatorial practices that interconnect the meaning of water with issues of ecosystem sustainability, spirituality, and human life. The study reveals that the messages conveyed through visual art are not merely denotative but also hold philosophical meanings closely tied to culture and spirituality. Water is portrayed as a source of life, energy, emotion, and purity. The research demonstrates that artists create their works as a form of visual communication, reminding viewers of the contextual importance of water. In methodology, art curation is considered a communicative activity involving the exploration of meanings, and using curative methods requires relevance to complex themes and contexts. This study contributes to the understanding of communication processes and meanings in visual art, particularly within the contexts of Communication Science and Visual Communication Design studies.

INTRODUCTION

On October 2, 2009, the New York Times published an article titled "*On The Tip of Creative Tongues*" by Williams (2009). The article discusses using the term curation for tasks outside museums, food, fashion, and music. The word "curator," according to the article, is majestic and rarely spoken outside the corridors of exhibitions or English parishes. Curator has become a fashionable, meaningful password for aesthetically minded people.

Curation refers to a wide range of processes and products, so this activity has unlimited potential as a methodology. In this context, curating places many artifacts in dialogue with each other, exemplifying a complex set of themes and bringing out many meanings from artifacts and related narratives. Curation is similar to *multimodal content analysis*, allowing researchers to consider 'the capabilities, limitations, and relationships between the various media and modes used in contemporary forms of representation and communication (Fiske, 2011; Gschrey, 2016; Guallar et al., 2022; Mariani, 2014; Mulyana, 2019; Murchú, 2016; Ozturk, 2011; Persohn, 2021; Rios, 2016; Sakr & Steemers, 2021; Serafini & Reid, 2019; Smith, 2022; Tedesco, 2021; Voss, 2012).

Curation is a recursive process whereby researchers use inductive and deductive observations to make meaning. Curation, however, may rely on deductive thought activity, as curators build an exhibition to show viewers the path to the thematic interpretation of artifacts. Curation provides a way to place historical artifacts in their original context while identifying and explaining the evolution of ideas and themes over time.

Curation activities aim to develop a basic understanding of viewers' historical orientation towards artifacts. The application of *anachronistic points of view* can lead to misinterpretation of visual and linguistic messages. Anachronisms refer to errors in the date and period of an event or phenomenon. The implication arises from a misinterpretation or understanding of a historical event (Ozturk, 2011). Curation leads to tangible and publicly shareable products beyond academic dissemination. Curation is a methodology for identifying, refining, interpreting, and presenting social constructs around artefacts while inviting viewers to ask questions and gain interpretations about the artefacts presented (Persohn, 2021).

Waskita Rupa Exhibition 11-16 October 2022, organized by the Faculty of Humanities and Creative Industries, Petra Christian University, Petra Christian University Surabaya in Bali Nata Bhuwana program takes the title Dharma - Tirtha - Rupa. The title is a big theme that refers to the creativity of glorifying water (tirtha) in a multifaceted form (Setem, I. W. et. al. 2022). The exhibition is the result of collaboration between four universities in Java and Bali to appreciate the glory of water as artistic inspiration by pouring creative ideas into various forms of art and design.

The exhibition features artwork and design works of lecturers and students from four universities: Indonesian Institute of Arts Denpasar (ISI Denpasar), Petra Christian University Surabaya, Ciputra University Surabaya, and Telkom University Bandung. More than 200 works, both two- and three-dimensional, of art and design, product, film, and *textile* and *fashion*, participated in this exhibition. The presenters strive to communicate works expressing their interpretations and meanings of the inspiring water element. These works are not only a picture of expression and pouring of creative ideas but also a form of obligation (*dharma*) for the presenters of works, who are also the academic community, to disseminate their works to the broader community.

The works on display come from various study programs and make the meaning of water an art inspiration, and design has a wide variety of variations in each form of work on display. For example, presenters of works from product design backgrounds respond to this theme with various latest creative product designs. In contrast, presenters of works from interior design backgrounds try to convey their creative ideas with space designs or interior sketches with flowing concepts inspired by water characters.

Similarly, presenters of works with a background in visual communication design who seek to convey specific information or messages through various media with their visual language, fashion or fashion design display fashion designs with the latest contortions of shapes, colour matches, and variants of textile materials, and also from film and television productions by displaying storylines through moving audiovisual.

Fine arts and crafts display aesthetic expressions through paint strokes on canvas and 3-dimensional art products in the form of ceramics, sculptures, and tapestries. Overall, each presentation of works certainly has its way and point of view in carrying out the creative process in totality in interpreting and appreciating the theme of this exhibition.



Figure 1. Exhibiting Waskita Rupa's work at UK Petra, 11-16 October 2022

The previous research study that is relevant in the period 2010-2023 with this research topic is entitled *Curating Political Subjects: Fashion Curation as Affective Methodology* (Tedesco, 2021) where the results of his scientific work invite readers to read the material and metaphorical world of fashion to find out contemporary political conditions, in the context of global urbanization, decolonization, and other contemporary challenges to political modernity that are not certainly. While with the results of his research entitled *The Powers of Rivers* (Smith, 2022) wrote about the relationship between humans and rivers (water) in an intimate relationship since prehistoric times.

This curation uses visual representations to explore some of the many ways humans interact with geographic features. Through photographs, political maps, and line art, the author invites readers to consider the myriad and changing demands by searching for access, natural capital, territory, prosperity, and power. In contrast, the results of other curation research in Indonesia emphasize data curation analysis in the repositories of world research institutions with qualitative descriptive methods with stages of literature studies, interviews, repository system surveys, and interpreting data (Prasetyadi et al., 2019).

This study aims to explore the meaning of tirtha in the communication of Waskita Rupa's work. The goal is not to produce generalizable "truths"; readers can decide whether research findings can be applied to their own situations and contexts (transferability). In-depth understanding of a work according to the social setting from the creator's perspective. This study shows significant differences with previous research as well as *a novelty* because this study focuses more on aspects of the meaning of works with a research focus on how to explore the meaning of *tirtha* in the communication works of Waskita Rupa (Bali Nata Bhuwana) which is very contextual?

LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to understand this research study, researchers explore pre-existing theoretical ideas as a guide in helping to understand and explain.

Communication of Artwork

Communication is a transactional process in which individuals create, share and organize meaning. This statement means that communication is also a continuous process, both past, present and future. Experience in communication will provide context in the interaction process. According to Fiske (Fiske, 2011) communication is a subject of study, term for something as diverse and multi-faceted as human communication. Communication can be interpreted as

multidisciplinary and central to human cultural life. The implication is that communication studies involve the study of integrated cultures. Where underlying this assumption is the general definition of communication as "social interaction through messages" (Fiske, 2011; Mulyana, 2019).

According to Fiske, there are two schools (scientific views) in communication studies. The first view sees communication as the transmission of messages. This relates to how the sender and receiver encode (create a message) and *decode* (interpret the message) and how the transmitter uses channels and communication media. This relates to the efficiency and accuracy of communication. This view sees communication as how one person influences another's behaviour or mind. If the effect is different or smaller than intended, this view tends to speak in terms of communication failures and looks to stages in the process to find out where failures occur.

The *second* view sees communication as the production and exchange of meanings. It is concerned with how messages, or texts, interact with people to produce meaning; that is, it deals with the role of texts in human culture. It uses terms like tagging and does not regard misunderstandings as evidence of communication failures—it can come from cultural differences between sender and receiver. From this view, communication is the study of texts and culture (Turner, 2022). The primary study method is semiotics (the science of signs and meanings), and this label becomes the study to identify in this approach. So, the semiotic view tends to use linguistics and art studies and direct itself to works of communication.

Both views interpret the definition of communication as social interaction through messages in their way. The first view defines social interaction as the process by which one person relates to another or influences the behaviour, state of mind or emotional response of another, and vice versa. Semiotics, meanwhile, defines social interaction as what constitutes an individual as a member of a particular culture or society. Moreover, messages in semiotics are the construction of signs through interaction with the receiver and generating meaning. The sender, defined as the message's sender, is becoming less important. The emphasis shifts to *the text* and how it is "read". Reading is finding meaning that occurs when readers interact or negotiate with text. This negotiation occurs when the reader brings aspects of his cultural experience to bear the codes and signs that make up the text. It also involves some shared understanding of what the text is. So, readers with different social experiences or from different cultures can find different meanings in the exact text.

Art as an aesthetic expression results from an artist's inner expression that appears in art through the medium and the tools it uses. Someone who has a soul impulse or depressed condition then will try to release those feelings by doing something. Expressions mean this kind of activity. Someone who expresses verbally and non-verbally intends to convey a message to others. In this

context, expressions can be called communication activities (Yunus, 2020). Artwork in photography, sketches, designs, and even artifacts are used as text containing a communication message (Ulusoy & Onur, 2023). Where viewers can interpret the text as markers and signs (meaning) according to a cultural context, communication of Artwork to viewers becomes essential when one's creative work has meaning for the viewer (Boxman-Shabtai, 2023). Text always refers to a context that includes both external reality and the producer or reader. Producing and reading text is a parallel and dynamic process (Fiske, 2011). Moreover, By explaining the context and the artistic phenomenon, the art critic outlines the communication between artists, critics, and viewers from the perspective of the dynamics of new structures and forms of visual expression (Ștefănescu, 2022).

Waskita Rupa (Bali Nata Bhuwana)

Water is one of the earth's elements and the dominant element in the human body. Water is a source of life that provides multiple benefits for all living things' survival. Such are the benefits and importance of water so it can enter various aspects of human life. From an artistic point of view, water has aesthetic potential. It is often an inspiration, an early idea, and a creative environment with various manifestations that interest the artist and those who enjoy it. The unpredictable, sometimes calm, sometimes rumbling, flexible, and constantly flowing nature of water is a mystery that diving certainly enjoys as a trigger for artistic ideas. In its long journey, water has inspired many people to create, express admiration, personal experience, and even seek to glorify water, which has brought many benefits, including its charm in human life (Setem, I.W et al, 2022).

The theme of the Waskita Rupa exhibition of Bali Nata Bhuwana event is *Dharma - Tirtha - Rupa*, where this theme is in many ways related to the multiform creativity of water worship (Tirtha). This exhibition is a collaboration between four universities in Java and Bali to celebrate the majesty of water as a source of artistic inspiration by pouring creative ideas into various creations and art patterns. The Waskita Rupa exhibition was held in two places, namely the Villa Tea Gallery and the Look Gallery at the Faculty of Humanities and Creative Industries, Petra Christian University Surabaya. The exhibition features artwork and designs by lecturers and students from four universities: *Institut Seni Indonesia Denpasar, Petra Christian University Surabaya, Ciputra University Surabaya, and Telkom University Bandung*. In total, more than 200 works took part in the exhibition: two-dimensional and three-dimensional works, art and design, production works, film works, and textile and fashion works. The performers of the included works want to present works that express different interpretations and meanings of the inspiring water element (Setem, I.W at al, 2022).

Apart from being an expression and outpouring of creative ideas, these works also have an obligation (*dharma*) for the actors, who are also the academic community, to contribute to disseminating their works to the broader community (Setem, I.W et al, 2022). The works on display come from various study programs that interpret water as an inspiration for art and design in various works on display. For example, presenters with product design backgrounds respond to this theme with various latest creative product models. In contrast, presenters with interior design backgrounds try to convey their creative ideas through room plans or interior sketches with flowing concepts inspired by the nature of water.

Similarly, the interpreter behind visual communication design wants to convey specific information or messages through different media through their visual language, fashion, or fashion design. They also present clothes with shape distortion, color matching, and the latest textile materials. Likewise, film and television productions feature storylines through moving audiovisual media. Fine Arts and Crafts present aesthetic expression with lines painted on canvas and three-dimensional artistic products in the form of ceramics, sculptures, and tapestries. Overall, each presenter has their way and view of the entire creative process to interpret and appreciate the theme of this exhibition.

Through the Waskita Rupa exhibition, the audience can enjoy the works of different designers, academic artists, and students, and different ideas, messages, meanings, and spirits from the creation process to the visualization of works as a reflection of inspiration and appreciation of water. Thus, the majesty of water as a source of life, tranquility, protection, and happiness as the mother of the universe can continue to be supported and maintained together (Setem, I.W et al, 2022; ISI Denpasar, 2022).

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach to create an understanding of the data as a result of the analysis. Research design seeks to be responsive to the context of the situation researchers face, namely the exhibition of visual communication design works. Meanwhile, strategies are carried out to obtain data through research steps using curative methods (Gschrey, 2016; Persohn, 2021; Rios, 2016; Sakr & Steemers, 2021; Schacter, 2020). To answer research questions, which is then referred to as a curatorial process on 200 works that are sorted and selected *purposive samples* (criteria) according to the theme, especially two-dimensional artworks. After identifying the theme, the exhibition and the contextualizing narrative lead visitors to conceptualize their own about it.

The curative method steps are carried out through two stages, namely 1) through the process of collecting monumental works (images) during the exhibition (database and critical

literature search), reviewing several exhibited works that have context (locating editions); works asking permission in portraits, create folders digital named by the illustrator and the year of publication for each edition with scanned and labeling images; Arranging each image in a chart, chronologically aligning each illustrator's work (in columns) with text chapters (in rows) (organizing images and managing the data); organize data by making initial records of observations that arise from work, identify an illustration by positioning the work uniquely to facilitate the identification of thematic categories based on interpretation (recording preliminary interpretations); 2) Looking for the theme of the story and its illustrations by reading the literature that has been collected since the initial literature review, rereading the literature during the literature review process (searching for critical reviews), developing guidance around text and images based on a broad understanding of visual literacy and critical interpretation, the work may relate to other works in data collection (*close reading using illustration analysis prompt*); chronological analysis by image; thematic conceptualization of an exhibition of ideas; select specific illustrations; contextualize the illustrations; strategically arrange illustrations; interpret illustrations and themes, and curatorial findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Results

The findings of this curatorial research are based on a well-documented theme framework, which chronologically seeks to identify and select each work exhibited according to the theme (thematic). This helps channel the thought ideas of the text, as reflected in the illustration of the story. The creators of art creations take inspiration from "water" as cosmology, which presents various works according to context so that they have the allure of perception as the core of communication. A brilliant idea with each artist's artistic characteristics and visual style is unmistakable. This means that all creators respond to the theme or title of the exhibition with full awareness while retaining their characteristics. The creators sought to explore water as a mandala source of imagination, artistic attraction, and an orientation in creating works. The ideas, messages, meanings, and spirits from the creative process to the visualization of the work reflect inspiration and appreciation of water (ISI Denpasar, 2022).

Each illustrator's work offers a different perspective on the story. Identifying and selecting themes in artworks becomes a driving force in the conceptualization of the exhibition. That contextualization narratives can lead visitors to conceptualize themes. The curation process adapts content and context by collecting, organizing, selecting, conceptualizing, contextualizing, and interpreting the work. Therefore, the different ways of studying image collections demonstrate the flexibility of curation as a methodology. The following are works according to the theme that became a research study (Persohn, 2021).

The *first category* is the representation of water present directly, manifested in various stylistics of water depicted in the works.

Table 1. Comparative theme analysis worksheet snippet

<p>1 Cucu Retno Yuningsih, theme "<i>Waves</i>" 70 x 50 cm, Mix Media, 2022.</p> <p>This work revolves around the ocean waves, which are always involved in human life. Harmonious waves of water represent human life and have different life paths, sometimes up and sometimes down because that is how human life is. God created the ocean to meet human needs. Two-thirds of the land on which we stand is the ocean. Our ancestors were also people who devoted their lives to the ocean. That is why oceans, waves, and beaches can never be separated from life.</p>	
<p>2 I Nengah Wirakesuma, theme "<i>Spring Source</i>". 140 x 160 Cm, Oil Paint on Canvas. Pragmatic, hedonistic, exaggerated, and self-imposed lifestyles fuel a deep gulf between capitalism of power and arbitrariness, often at the expense of the rights of small, marginalized communities. Man must be fully aware that he is recreating the source of human survival in the future</p>	
<p>3 Ni Kadek Karuni, theme "<i>Sagara Abirupa</i>" 2022, 120 cm x 165 cm, cotton yarn.</p> <p>Various organisms, most of which are invertebrates, live around coral reefs. These animals include snails and crustaceans, sea urchins, anemones, sea cucumbers, starfish, and catfish, as well as small fish threatened by industrial waste and debris floating on the surface of the sea, which makes seawater dirty and turbid.</p>	
<p>4 I Made Suartana, theme "<i>Penglukatan</i>" 2022. 60x 80 Cm, acrylic paint on canvas.</p> <p>Water plays a vital role in Hinduism and is highly praised and sacred in everyday life and for the benefit of mental processes. The painting shows the wounding process (<i>melting</i>) in this visual work. Wounding is a process of purification with the water environment, both natural water directly from nature and water that has undergone a purification process. From the <i>Sulinggih</i> (priest), who is believed to be able to give positive vibrations to humans, especially the mind and soul abstractly, to be free from all negative things.</p>	

5 **I Putu Arya Silasana, theme "Source of Life". 2022, 70 x 80 Cm, oil paint on canvas.**

Bali is famous for the Beji Temple and its springs. The water source of Beji is known as *patirthan* and is used in the Balinese people's religious rituals. People often use Beji to cleanse their minds and souls spiritually. Of course, water plays a vital role in health, religious rituals, and daily needs, so it is essential to take care of nature, which is the water source. Life depends on the creature's behavior; water can bring blessings or bad luck to the creature's survival.



6 **I Putu Divayana, "Wash" theme 2022, 60 x 60 cm, oil paint on canvas.**

Water breeding can be found in many things, even as simple as washing your face. The washing or washing of the face can include the primary function of water. Washing your face aims to clean and nourish the face to purify yourself, the Balinese people. Visual flowers represent emotions, traits, and feelings, like the Cambodian flower, which symbolizes birth to eternity and is synonymous with Bali and closely related to Balinese religion; the *White Lily* symbolizes purity and cleanliness in Balinese society, like water.



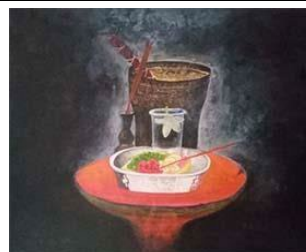
7 **I Wayan Cahya Sunarbawa, theme "The Water Of Life" 2022, 60 x 80 Cm, acrylic paint on canvas.**

Water can be interpreted as the source of life and a sign of life. Life on earth needs water to survive, so water is considered a natural liquid vital to maintaining all living things. Water availability is decreasing and depleting, and there is even a need for more water resources. Today, water resources are weakened by global warming and climate change, so future water availability is threatened.



8 **I Wayan Swantara Yoga, "Tirtha" theme 2022, 60 x 80 Cm, acrylic paint on canvas.**

The existence of Beji Temple is familiar to the people of Bali. The water source from Beji is commonly called *patirthan* and is used in religious ceremonies in Bali. People also often use beji water to hug as a cleanser of the body/soul. Beji water is often used as Tirtha. Tirta comes from the Sanskrit word Tirtha, which means purity or a drop of water, holy water, or purifying with water. In Hindu worship, water is an important medium. The whole process of Hindu worship will involve water.



9 **I Made Agus Darma Putra, theme "*Amarah Baruna*" 2022, 60 x 80 Cm, acrylic paint on canvas.**

This work explores the wrath of the rulers of the seas, specifically the god Baruna, where in Hinduism, Baruna or Waruna in the Brahmin manifestation is called the god of water, the ruler of the ocean, and the ocean. Baruna (Varuna) comes from var (Sanskrit) to lengthen or close. The word "var" then plays with the sea, as the ocean stretches and covers most of the land area. The moral to convey is "Be wise in utilizing natural resources created by God Almighty and do not be too greedy to use them.



10 **Ni Luh Sinta Dewi Srianitini, theme "*Water of Life*" 2022, 60 x 80 Cm, acrylic paint, Chinese ink on canvas.**

Glorifying water is like glorifying the mother," expressing it as a mother removing milk from her breast, which flows smoothly for life. We, as children, need breast milk to live just as living things need water. A mother who truly loves her child will surely give all her love, even almost her entire soul, to her child without expecting anything in return, just like nature provides water for life.



Source: Setem, I.W, et al. (2022)

The second category is that water is not present directly in the form but as a symbol, memory, and a meaningful narrative of various visual markers (signifiers). So water is not only a sign (signified) or a concept of visible form. As in the works:

Table 2. Excerpt from the comparative theme analysis worksheet

1 **I Wayan Gulendra, Greedy, 2022, 135 x 135 cm, Oil, acrylic paint on canvas.**

Planet Earth, torn apart by greed to exploit all human resources, has aged in its cycles due to the arbitrary use of natural resources. Deforestation, the indiscriminate destruction of land for profit, and Industry, with all its waste impacts, have damaged and polluted the water cycle.



2 **I Wayan Suardana, "Kala Dewa Ya", 2022, 75 x 32 x 22 Cm, Gintungan Wood and Celagi Wood.**

Making offerings according to custom is necessary to neutralize Bhuta Kala's unfavorable attitude. If Bhuta Kala is well taken care of and all their needs are met, they will behave like gods. It is very humane to be forced to entertain Bhuta Kala at certain times. When Bhuta Kala plays the role of a god, he gives strength and helps people's lives.



3 **I Nengah Wirakesuma, "Spring Source", 2022, 140x160 Cm, oil paint on canvas.**

A pragmatic, hedonistic, outrageous, and self-imposing way of life creates a deep divide between strong capitalism and authoritarianism, which often sacrifices the ownership of rights for small, marginalized communities. We must now fully realize the regeneration of springs for the sustainability of human life in the future.



4 **I Wayan Adi Sucipta, "Bhuwana", 2022, 120x100 cm, acrylic paint and ink on canvas.**

Nature as a reflection of the body is called Bhuwana Agung-Bhuwana Alit. The noble concept teaches humans to submit and respect the preservation of nature because nature is a reflection of humans; every element of nature is also attached to the human body.



5 **I Made Sumantra, "Neglected", 2022, 40 cm x 35cm x 30cm, terracota.**

Due to the continuous exploitation of coral reefs, serious problems arise related to the marine ecosystem environment, which is gradually becoming more polluted due to damage and pollution of coral reef habitats caused by waste.



6 **I Wayan Mudra, "Water of Life" 2018, 60cm x 26cm x 20cm, Ceramic Crafts.**

Breastfeeding is a form of a mother's sincere love for her child, without discrimination. Therefore, the child's respect for his mother must be present throughout his life.



7 **I Made Bendi Yudha, "Garuda", Dispelling Darkness, 2022, 88x80 cm, Acrylic Paint on Canvas**

Uncontrolled competition and ego make one's ambitions even more uncontrollable. This obsession becomes an endless source of conflict because everything seems fine and can be fixed. When these two great powers together build progress, they form a powerful and complete source of energy capable of dispelling any existing darkness that erodes the unity and solidarity we promise.



8 **I Nyoman Laba, "Uluka Tirtha", 2022, 55x35x35 cm, stoneware ceramic.**

In Hindu culture, owls are closely related to the goddess Lakshmi, the goddess of prosperity, luck, and purity. Owls are always active at night and sleep during the day. The goddess of luck channeled material and spiritual wealth using the means she had, namely an owl named Sang Uluka, so the owl became a symbol of good luck.



9 **I Wayan Karja, "Water Flow I", 2022, 140x160 cm, acrylic paint on canvas.**

Lakes are the upstream of water that travels through rivers, like the lifeblood of the earth that flows into vast oceans and oceans. If it is associated with one's existence, respecting water symbolizes the value of purity in life. Moreover, everything starts from a pure mind. Water carries everything; water symbolizes life's direction, from matter to the beautiful power of divine light. These silent stories made the creator wonder when visualizing the water surface upstream of the Teben River on canvas.



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- 10 **Ni Made Purnami Utami, "Color of Life", 2022, 100x100 cm, acrylic pouring on canvas.** Cambodian water comes from the mountains and flows into rivers, but not all of it reaches estuaries or oceans. Some seep into the ground, some evaporate because of the sun's heat, some humans take it, and some change color or content. The clear water turns brown and cloudy when it reaches the mouth of the river.



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- 11 **I Made Suparta, "Ksirarnawa", 2022, 40x65x4 cm, majagau wood.**

Tirta Amerta is like the source of life fought by gods and giants in the sea of milk lakes, experiencing fierce struggles and wars.



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- 12 **I Ketut Muka, "Sea Plants", 2022, 45x60 cm. clay on glaze.**

The most significant environmental threat is no longer pollution, ecosystem damage, or climate change. The big problem lies in human behavior. We must return to bhuwana meditation, which involves maintaining the sea and its contents.



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- 13 **I Gede Cahyana Putra, "Mendak Tirtha Pakuluh", 2022, 100x80 cm, fabric and bamboo fiber.**

In the context of Balinese Hinduism, Mendak Tirtha Pakuluh is a form of glorification of water whose raw materials are bamboo decorated with cloth and thread, as well as coin and "kepeng" decorations. Then, the water that is considered sacred is put into a bamboo tube and brought or carried to the temple.



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- 14 **I Wayan Widhi Adnyana, "Tears", 2022, 100x80 cm, yarn wool.**

Tears are glands produced during irrigation to clean and lubricate the eyes. In addition, tears can also symbolize the *form of* one's emotions when one feels happy, sad, and sick; that is when tears flow into people's eyes.



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- 15 **Made Wahyu Prisma Mukti, "Tirta Giri Tohlangkir", 2022, 100x80 cm, yarn and patchwork.**

Tirta Giri Tohlangkir is a symbol of life where water, earth, and air merge into one tapestry. "Tirta" itself means holy water. Holy water is used in Hindu prayers. The entire process of Hindu prayer involves water. The tirta referred to here is holy water flowing from Mount Agung. The embodiment of water is symbolized by a gradient of blue threads, while the blue and white patchwork depicts water droplets.



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- 16 **Amadea Mairina, "Home", 2022, 60x80 cm, oil on canvas.**

The sea is home to turtles and has a great influence on their survival. Just like human life, the sea also significantly impacts the sustainability of life. Humans benefit a lot from the sea. Therefore, we must protect and cherish it.



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- 17 **I Kadek Dena Ari Prayoga, "Fisheye", 2022, 100x80 cm, acrylic on canvas.**

This work is titled "Fish Eye," which means fish eye. In this work, you can see the image of a fish's eye that contains many expressions about the fish's soul. From this work, the creator wants to convey the harsh influence of fish on marine ecosystems.



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- 18 **Kadek Sangging, "Linkage", 2022, 69x69 cm, acrylic on canvas.**

Balinese people tend to use water sources from a religious perspective. Water casting is a worship of God Almighty because, by His grace, humans are given a source of life in the form of water. Water breeding is related to life in society to create harmony.



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- 19 **I Made Adi Sumarjaya Putra, "The Journey of the Soul", 2022, 60x80 cm, acrylic on canvas.**

The glory of being born as a human being is likened to a boat or ship capable of carrying humans across the vast and deep "samsara" sea of suffering. Water is a symbol of science that always guides living things in living life, sincerity, creativity, and realizing the greatness of God and karma. The soul must enter the body to attain "moksartam jagaditha" and obtain good karma.



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- 20 **Latitude Diani Putri, "Trapped Fish", 2022, 60x80 cm, mixed media on canvas.**

Humans are an inseparable part of the ecosystem in which they live. However, many people still do not understand and continue to damage nature, especially marine ecosystems, for their own benefit. Many community members need help understanding and continue to damage the sustainability of marine fish. If one of the food chain systems is broken or broken, the remaining marine fish ecosystems will also be disrupted and endangered, leading to destruction. This is very detrimental to marine ecosystems and can have adverse consequences for human life.



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- 21 **Muhammad Rafli Ramdhani Nataprawira, "Trapped", 2022, 60x80 cm, mix media on canvas.**

Water is part of human civilization and the source of life for all living things. Depending on human behavior, water can bring blessings as well as disasters to living things. This work highlights the impact of water damage in the oceans. Humans still generally cause damage to marine ecosystems. Excessive use of plastic and indiscriminate disposal lead to pollution at sea and on land.



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- 22 **Putu Durga Laksmi Devi, "Fire Burns Lake", 2022, 80x60 cm, acrylic on canvas.**

Fire was the personification of burning energy during Brahmachari's time. Water is the stationary element sent by the universe to guide the current flow of life, and lakes symbolize the conditions that occur—burning lakes, turning Water into fire, and flooding. Fire and Water are two opposing elements; they cannot be separated if they are united. Water and fire are hostile elements; Water can also extinguish fire. However, if the fire could hide behind the power of Water, it would be mighty. Water, but burning, fire burns the lake.



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- 23 **Serevina Rikel Carroland Ginting, "The Mystery of the Sea", 2022, 60x80 cm, acrylic on canvas.**

Only about 5% of the oceans have been explored. What happens if you attach surveillance cameras to the bottom of the sea? A sea monster named Kaikoura Canyon is found at an ocean depth of 1,941 meters. Times are getting more advanced, and humans have learned much about marine science. Thanks to innovations, underwater CCTV cameras are also not destroyed by high water pressure.



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- 24 **Thania Apprilia Sukendy, "Representation of the increase in jellyfish numbers and their impact on maritime life", 2022, 80x60 cm, acrylic on canvas.**

This work was inspired by the 2015 Netflix documentary Our Planet. Imagine if, in a few years, only jellyfish live in the ocean. So, the creators created this forum to spread the knowledge they have gained. This painting warns all earth creatures to maintain the cleanliness of seawater. By depicting a black background and only schools of jellyfish, the creators wanted to show the sharp increase in the number of jellyfish in our waters today.



25 **Wanda Masyita Ja'far, "Fishes", 2022, 60x80 cm, mix media on canvas.**

The preservation of the environment and water quality impacts the ecosystem of organisms that live in it. As humans, we play a role in maintaining and being responsible for the sustainability of ecosystems. Do not let what we see and feel today become a story or narrative for future generations.



Sources: Setem, I.W, et al. (2022)

Discussion

The meaning of "tirtha" in Waskita Rupa's work is conditional on the aesthetics and culture underlying the messages in images or stories. The discussion of the results of this study refers to the framework of the theme by following the idea of thought from the text as reflected in the illustration of the story. The communication message of each of the artists' "tirtha" works reminds the readers/visitors of the exhibition that the meaning of water that supports mankind on this earth is not just denotative. However, water is philosophically meaningful and closely related to nature, ecosystem sustainability (global warming, climate change, marine pollution/damage to marine ecosystems), spirituality and purity, sources of human life and harmonization, sources of energy, emotions, even related to the pragmatic lifestyle of hedonism (I. W. Setem, 2022)

The communication message of the work of "tirtha" can be interpreted as water being the source of life for all creatures on earth. Water always offers different powers and benefits for the survival of all creatures. Water is sometimes calm and sometimes turbulent, but it can flow flexibly, which is unpredictable and even a mystery (I. W. Setem, 2022). In its long journey, water has inspired many people to creatively cultivate admiration, personal experience, and even beautification efforts, bringing various benefits to human life, including its attractiveness. Water can be a sign that cognitively convinces viewers to enter a social place with different cultural connotations (Ulusoy & Onur, 2023). As Turner (2022) asserts, communication is the study of text and culture. Messages in texts are a process of production and exchange of meaning in human culture.

Smith (2022) asserts that human relations with rivers (water) date back to prehistoric times. Although it varies over time and from space to space, the social value of rivers persists for five fundamental reasons: access, natural capital, territory, welfare, and the means to project power. Even according to Smith, people relate spiritually and emotionally to water, just as bathing in the Ganges is a spiritual event for millions of Hindus. Meanwhile, it also writes that water in Balinese society has a meaning of Rema (2013) fertility, healing, purification, immortality, cycle, welfare,

and preservation. In other words, water is a material with a value or essence in the life of the Balinese people. So water is life itself.

Balinese people, who are majority Hindu, consider water important, especially in religious processes. Each process begins and ends by using "tirtha." Tirtha itself comes from Sanskrit, which means water, which has a meaning of purity, a drop of water, holy water, or purification with water (I. W. et. al Setem, 2022). The initial process begins with cleaning the mouth and hands. Then, proceed with water as holy water or tirtha. In other words, "tirtha" serves to cleanse cleansing from dirt or evil thoughts (Alessandra, 2020).

Water is a religious spirit in Balinese Hindu religious ceremonies, as mentioned, especially as cleansing and purification. However, being clean and holy are two different things from the Hindu beliefs in Bali. Clean is not necessarily sacred because it comes from religious fervor. Holy and clean water that gets mantras and prayers will give birth to "tirtha sanjiwangi." In addition, as quoted in an article, water use in Balinese society is rooted in Vedic teachings. In a sense, water symbolizes healing, fertility, purification, immortality, cycle, and preservation. No wonder in (Sudaryati & Adnyana, 2018; Warsa, 2022) the works of artists in Waskita Rupa, the meaning of water is very contextually attached to culture and spirituality, even becoming a symbol of human life itself.

The implication of this study in the field of Communication Studies is that the curatorial process of artwork in any form is a communication activity. That is, artists try to convey communication messages through real works with various themes and perspectives by exploring the meaning of their artworks (Gipson & DiDomenico, 2023). So that the communication message contained in the artwork is conveyed to readers and visitors to the exhibition gallery. Related to visual communication, the selection of photographic works or paintings also attracts visitors visually related to values, teaching, dedication to the environment, or artistic purposes. Further research is needed, such as a multimodal analysis of the physical environment, to understand better how humans interact with their environment, taking into account the unique characteristics of each individual (Ericsson, 2023).

CONCLUSION

Exploring themes in artwork must be distinct from the power of the creators' message. Each work is studied individually, its characteristics and message, while being drawn into interpretations according to themes relevant to life. The conclusion of this study is the exploration of the meaning of "tirtha" in communication by Waskita Rupa, containing the values of ecosystem sustainability (global warming, climate change, marine pollution/damage to marine ecosystems), spirituality and purity, sources of human life and harmonization, sources of energy, emotions,

even related to a pragmatic lifestyle of hedonism (I. W. et. al Setem, 2022)

This study certainly has limitations because it has to sort and choose from many artworks exhibited according to the theme. The curation process sometimes takes time because artwork as a text (artwork) is very multi-perspective and multi-interpretation, especially when related to context, where the text becomes alive and meaningful when contextual with ecosystems, cultures, traditions, spirituality, emotions, energy, and lifestyles. The use of curative methods only tries to answer the focus of research by the theme; of course, limitations are encountered, such as the depth of meaning of the accompanying myths. Therefore, recommendations for visual arts research can be made with relevant multimodal (methods).

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