

AESTHETIC STUDY OF THE PAINTING STYLE OF JELEKONG ART VILLAGE

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to formulate the aesthetic characteristics and painting style of the Jelekong art village in Baleendah District, Bandung Regency, West Java, and to examine how commercial orientation and the inheritance of the painting tradition shape visual uniformity among its painters. Jelekong has a painting tradition passed down from generation to generation that serves as a livelihood for some of its residents. This qualitative study applies an aesthetic approach (form, content, and presentation) combined with an analysis of the elements and principles of fine art, using observation, interviews, and a survey of paintings sold online. The results show that Jelekong paintings are dominated by a romanticism–Mooi Indie style adapted with local characteristics, namely imaginary landscapes, the sponge technique, and rapid production. Visual uniformity is formed through informal learning based on observation and imitation as well as market-driven orientation. Commercial orientation does not simply eliminate artistic value, but shifts the function and context of appreciation of the paintings from a means of expression to a market product, while repetitive production patterns produce a distinctive visual character in the Jelekong painting style.

Keywords: Jelekong village; aesthetics; painting style; visual culture; painting tradition

INTRODUCTION

Painting is one of the branches of visual art that has been practiced by humans for a long time. It involves applying paint or pigment onto a particular medium, such as paper, canvas, or walls. Painting continues to develop over time, with its purposes ranging from serving as a medium of communication and information delivery to expressing emotions and ideas, and it is now used for various purposes. Painting is a specialized field that contributes to the development of visual art, a development that cannot be separated from the role of artists in creating new innovations (Salam et al., 2020, p. 57). One of the purposes of painting is to produce commercial objects with economic value. Painting is a product of fine art that serves as a medium for an artist's expression; however, when paintings are produced for sale, their function and context of appreciation shift from a means of personal expression to market-oriented products. This shift does not necessarily eliminate artistic value but gives rise to different forms of artistic practice.

During the period of classical visual art, commercial systems in the arts differed considerably from those of today, as artists themselves were the primary objects of commercial patronage. Artists were employed by institutions or governments to produce works of art. During the modern art period, paintings began to be treated as objects for commercial

exchange. The use of paintings as commercial objects continues and has become even more widespread today. For some artists, painting has become a means of livelihood. As living expenses become increasingly demanding, artists have begun selling their works to earn income. In Indonesia, many artists use their artistic works as a source of livelihood, including by selling paintings. Paintings are sold in art galleries, art studios, workshops, souvenir shops, art stores, and even traditional markets.

In the context of art as a commercial commodity, one example in which commercial painting has developed into a regional tradition and culture is Kampung Seni Jelekong. Jelekong is an urban village located in Baleendah District, Bandung Regency, West Java. It is one of the cultural villages in Bandung with distinctive traditions. Jelekong has an intergenerational tradition in painting and wayang art. Some residents earn their livelihood by selling art-related products, including paintings, wayang, and raw materials for visual art. The artistic activities that particularly characterize Jelekong are wayang and painting. Jelekong wayang involves production houses and performances, commonly known as Giri Harja. Meanwhile, Jelekong painting refers to paintings produced in a distinctive style characterized by similarities among Jelekong painters. Despite being situated in the postmodern-contemporary era, artistic activities in Jelekong continue to this day. Although they experienced a decline during the COVID-19 pandemic, artistic activities in Kampung Seni Jelekong have now resumed.

To examine the painting style of Jelekong more deeply, it is necessary to understand the development of modern Indonesian painting that has been popular across different periods, as the aesthetic preferences and painting styles of Jelekong refer to existing visual references and current market trends. Historically, modern painting in Indonesia began to gain popularity in the nineteenth century, pioneered by Raden Saleh Sjarif Boestaman, commonly known as Raden Saleh. He initiated the modern art period in Indonesia by introducing European painting styles to the country, thereby contributing to the emergence of modern Indonesian visual art. Since this development, Indonesian art history has become increasingly modern, marked by the adoption of European styles following Raden Saleh's return to Indonesia.

Raden Saleh's paintings influenced subsequent generations of artists, although later artists eventually challenged his painting style. Raden Saleh's style is categorized as Romanticism. According to Baudelaire, Romanticism does not refer to a particular stylistic treatment but depends on the selection of subject matter, with its essence lying in human perspectives, behavior, and emotions (Desmiati et al., 2013). Romanticism is part of realism and naturalism and is characterized by a beautiful, majestic, and picturesque impression, which became a distinctive feature of painting during that period (Utari, 2020). Romanticism was an artistic, literary, and intellectual movement that originated in Western Europe in the eighteenth century during the Industrial Revolution (Damayanti, 2019). Raden Saleh's paintings depicted the natural beauty of Indonesia, including mountains, rice fields, valleys, trees, and other natural elements. These paintings presented the beauty of the Indonesian landscape through Western pictorial conventions, which later became associated with the concept of *Hindia Molek* or *Mooi Indie* (Shabiriani, 2022). The history of *Mooi Indie* subsequently became one of the foundations of the painting style adopted by Jelekong artists, as *Mooi Indie* emphasized the aesthetic presentation of Indonesian landscapes. This became a characteristic of local painting because the subjects depicted in both Jelekong paintings and *Mooi Indie* refer to the natural environments of various regions in Indonesia.

The aesthetic characteristics of Jelekong painting can be understood through an aesthetic framework that considers both its visual appearance and the meanings and practices underlying its production. This study refers to Djelantik's (1999) concept of aesthetics, which states that every artistic object or event contains three fundamental aspects: form, content, and presentation. Form (*wujud* or *appearance*) refers to the concrete reality that can be perceived and consists of form and structure. Content (*bobot* or *content*) refers to the meaning conveyed by the work, including atmosphere, ideas, and messages. Presentation (*penampilan* or *presentation*) concerns how the artwork is presented and involves talent, skills, and means or media. These three aspects provide a framework for examining Jelekong paintings not only in terms of their visible characteristics but also in relation to their meanings and modes of production.

To examine the visual form of the paintings in greater detail, this study considers the elements of visual art, including line, shape, color, space, and texture, as well as the principles governing their arrangement within a composition (Dharsono, 2007). Painting techniques are considered part of the presentation aspect because they demonstrate how the artist's skills and media are applied in producing the work. Through this framework, the visual characteristics of Jelekong paintings can be identified systematically through their recurring treatment of visual elements, composition, and technique.

The concept of style is also important in understanding the characteristics of Jelekong painting. Schapiro (1953) defines style as a relatively constant form and, in some cases, the constancy of elements, qualities, and expressions within the art of an individual or group. Based on this understanding, the Jelekong painting style in this study refers to recurring similarities in the visual characteristics of works produced by Jelekong painters, rather than constituting an assessment of whether the works are good or bad. The similarity of visual characteristics is therefore understood as a phenomenon that can be analyzed in relation to the artists, their learning processes, references, production practices, and market conditions.

The relationship between aesthetic characteristics and the commercial orientation of Jelekong painting can also be understood through theories of cultural production. Adorno and Horkheimer (2002) argue that industrialized cultural production tends toward standardization. This perspective is relevant for examining the repeated patterns of themes, techniques, colors, and compositions that emerge within commercial painting production. Meanwhile, Bourdieu (1984) explains that aesthetic taste is shaped by social conditions and habituation, or *habitus*. In the context of Jelekong, this perspective helps explain how aesthetic preferences and recurring visual patterns can be transmitted and reinforced through the social environment in which artists learn and produce their works. These perspectives are used analytically to examine the influence of the market on recurring patterns in Jelekong painting.

Commercialization in this study is not understood as the disappearance of artistic value but as a shift in the function and context in which artworks are appreciated. In this context, a painting may retain its visual and technical qualities while its primary function shifts from personal artistic expression toward a product intended for market consumption. This distinction is important because the commercial orientation of Jelekong painting should not simply be interpreted as a reduction in artistic value, but rather as a transformation in the context of production, distribution, and appreciation.

In addition, the visual culture approach proposed by Mirzoeff (1999) is used to examine Jelekong paintings as part of the practices through which images are produced, viewed, circulated, and consumed within society. This approach is particularly relevant to the

contemporary distribution of Jelekong paintings through digital markets, where visual references, aesthetic preferences, and consumer demand can circulate beyond the immediate physical environment of Jelekong. The interaction between visual culture, market demand, and established artistic practices consequently becomes an important context for understanding the development of the Jelekong painting style.

This study examines the aesthetic aspects and painting style of Jelekong artists. The topic was selected based on the observation that nearly all Jelekong painters share similar aesthetic standards and painting styles, making the Jelekong style a distinctive visual identity. However, the stylistic similarities among artists generate both positive and negative perceptions within the field of visual art: on the one hand, they function as an identity, while on the other hand, they may be perceived as monotonous. Therefore, an examination is needed to formulate these aesthetic characteristics and identify the factors that shape them.

Based on this background, the research questions are: (1) what are the aesthetic characteristics and painting styles of Jelekong paintings across the themes produced; (2) how is the Jelekong painting style formed through the intergenerational transmission and informal learning process; and (3) what factors contribute to visual uniformity among Jelekong artists, particularly their market orientation and use of similar references? Accordingly, the objective of this study is to formulate the distinctive aesthetic characteristics of Jelekong paintings and identify the factors that shape them.

The contribution of this study lies in formulating the aesthetic characteristics of Jelekong paintings comprehensively through visual indicators and relating them to the context of production and transmission. Previous studies have examined the relationship between Jelekong paintings and *Mooi Indie* (Shabiriani, 2022), techniques used in Jelekong still-life paintings (Dewi, 2018), and the sponge technique (Alya, 2021). This study complements those works by formulating the distinguishing characteristics of the Jelekong painting style and examining their relationship with market orientation and the transmission of the painting tradition.

METHOD

This study aims to identify the aesthetic standards and painting styles of Jelekong painters. Field research was conducted in Kampung Seni Jelekong through observations and interviews with selected informants. Previous studies were also used as references to support the research. In addition, supporting samples were obtained from Jelekong paintings that were sold or promoted through online platforms.

Data were collected through observation and non-probability sampling. Several samples were selected as subjectively representative sources of information. The initial observation was conducted by examining paintings displayed and sold along the roads in Kampung Seni Jelekong. Interviews were subsequently conducted with selected informants, accompanied by direct observation of the works they produced. Direct observation was also carried out while artists were producing commissioned paintings or works prepared for stock.

In addition to field observations, an online survey was conducted to examine Jelekong paintings offered through digital marketplaces. The collected samples were then analyzed in terms of their aesthetic characteristics and painting styles through visual observation and information obtained from the informants.

The scope of the study covers the themes identified through field observations and online marketplaces. These themes include landscape painting, which encompasses

Romanticism–*Mooi Indie*, Naturalism, Impressionism, and sponge painting; abstract painting; figurative painting; animal-themed painting; and still-life painting. These categories were selected because they were considered representative of the overall production of Jelekong painters.

Images of paintings obtained from marketplaces and popular websites were used as supporting visual data. These images were not used as theoretical references. The theoretical foundation of this study was derived from scientific literature and books.

The qualitative data analysis was conducted in four stages. First, the paintings were visually classified according to their themes and styles. Second, the visual elements of line, form, color, space, and texture were identified, along with the principles of composition and painting techniques. Third, the findings were interpreted using Djelantik's concepts of form, content, and presentation, supported by information from informants concerning the production process, references used by the artists, and market demand. Fourth, the findings were used to formulate visual indicators that distinguish the Jelekong painting style.

The results obtained from observations, interviews, and online surveys were then compared to examine the consistency of the information and identify recurring visual characteristics. This process was used to formulate the aesthetic characteristics and painting style of Jelekong based on the relationship between visual form, artistic production practices, and the context in which the paintings are marketed and consumed.

Several previous studies are relevant to the discussion of Jelekong painting and provide a foundation for the present study. The first study, entitled “Representasi Mooi Indie dalam Lukisan Jelekong” by Uzda Nabila Shabiriani (2022), employed a qualitative approach in the field of cultural arts. The study found that Jelekong paintings contain visual elements that represent the *Mooi Indie* style. These paintings are generally imaginary works in which the artists visualize natural landscapes outside Jelekong or create images based on Western (European) landscape paintings. The study specifically focused on the relationship between Jelekong painting and the earlier *Mooi Indie* art movement, with detailed findings concerning the visual elements shared by the two painting styles.

The second study, entitled “Kajian Lukisan Still Life Jelekong” by Belinda S. Dewi and M. A. Rahim (2018), also employed a qualitative approach in the field of cultural arts. The study found that *still life* is a relatively less prominent subject within Jelekong painting. The objects selected generally include flowers or fruits. The *still life* style in Jelekong painting is inspired by European *still life* paintings introduced by the Dutch during the colonial period. The study primarily focused on the techniques employed by Jelekong artists when producing paintings with *still life* themes.

The third study, entitled “Lukisan Pemandangan; Teknik Spon Dalam Karya Seni Lukis Jelekong” by Shopia Himatul Alya (2021), used a qualitative approach in the field of cultural arts. The study found that *Mooi Indie*, introduced by the Dutch, had a significant influence on the development of art in Indonesia, particularly in Jelekong. Both *Mooi Indie* and Jelekong painting depict natural landscapes as their primary subject matter; however, they differ in their conceptual approaches. Jelekong painting is characterized, among other things, by the use of the sponge technique in the production of landscape paintings.

These previous studies demonstrate that research on Jelekong painting has examined several specific aspects, including its relationship with the *Mooi Indie* style, the characteristics and techniques of *still life* painting, and the use of sponge techniques in landscape painting. The present study complements these studies by examining the broader aesthetic

characteristics and distinctive painting style of Jelekong artists, including the factors that contribute to stylistic similarities among artists, particularly through informal transmission, shared visual references, and market orientation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Jelekong Painting

This discussion presents the results of literature observation and field research conducted in Jelekong. Jelekong is an urban village located in the southern part of Bandung, specifically in Baleendah District, Bandung Regency, West Java. Within the area is a village known as Kampung Seni dan Budaya Jelekong (Jelekong Art and Cultural Village). The village has a distinctive characteristic that differentiates it from other villages, namely the presence of local arts and cultural practices that continue to be maintained to this day. Kampung Seni Jelekong is a village with traditional artistic and cultural activities covering both visual and performing arts. Visual art, particularly painting in Jelekong, operates within a commercial sphere, in which artworks are produced with the purpose of being sold.

Historically, the painting culture of the Jelekong community was initiated by a community figure named Odin Rohidin. He was a well-known figure in Jelekong and became the pioneer of the distinctive painting culture that developed in the area. Odin Rohidin possessed painting skills and used them as a livelihood. Residents of Jelekong who observed his activities subsequently began to follow his example and pursue careers as painters. The painters who followed Odin's path then passed their painting skills on to their children and grandchildren, a process that continues to this day. Combined with the strong interest of children in artistic activities, the tradition of painting in Jelekong has continued to develop.

Jelekong painting refers to paintings produced in the Jelekong area with a distinctive style that has become part of the community's identity. These styles are formed through the visual experiences of the artists. Jelekong painters are generally trained in drawing and painting from childhood, allowing their technical skills to be developed from an early age according to their own standards. Based on interviews with several informants, the transmission of artistic practices within the Jelekong community begins by encouraging children to observe and imitate painters, which gradually develops their interest in artistic activities. One informant further explained that some children are specifically encouraged by their parents to become artists, based on their individual abilities and the continuity of artistic skills within the family, particularly when they demonstrate greater aptitude for painting. Consequently, becoming a Jelekong painter can be considered an accessible profession for them. Becoming an artist is also one of the employment alternatives available to Jelekong residents because artistic activities in the area are well supported. This is facilitated by the extensive availability of art equipment in the area.

The process of transmission naturally involves a learning process between artists and their prospective successors. Although this learning process does not take place within formal educational institutions, prospective artists can still learn how to create artworks through observation and imitation. Based on the interviews, children are encouraged to observe how artists work, beginning with the observation of painting techniques, including how artists use brushes, palettes, and paint. This observational process is followed by imitation, in which children are encouraged to reproduce what they have observed. These processes are carried out continuously until a new generation of prospective artists is formed to continue the

painting tradition. The process through which the Jelekong community develops and refines its artistic skills can be represented as follows: Observation → Adaptation → Mastery of Technique → Mimesis

This informal learning process based on observation and imitation creates stylistic uniformity across generations through three mechanisms. First, prospective successors learn techniques from the same sources, namely preceding artists, so that the methods of using brushes, palettes, and paint are transmitted together with the painting style. Second, the imitation stage makes the works of previous artists and commonly used references an initial standard for evaluating paintings, allowing aesthetic standards to be carried from one generation to the next. Third, learning takes place within an environment where paintings are produced for sale, meaning that work patterns and market orientation are absorbed at the same time. Thus, informal transmission in Jelekong does not merely transfer technical skills but also forms relatively uniform visual preferences, in line with Bourdieu's (1984) concept of *habitus*.

The creative process in Jelekong painting does not simply involve artists drawing directly without guidance or references. Artists also need to develop their visual experience in order to establish aesthetic standards in painting. Initially, artists imitate available references, either from existing paintings or from other references found on the Internet. The process of “imitation” develops and strengthens their technical mastery, allowing their painting skills to become increasingly refined through practice. This process enhances both technical mastery and visual experience, eventually enabling artists to paint without directly observing a reference. Nevertheless, paintings based on imitation continue to be produced according to the preferences of the artists and the demands of the market.

Jelekong painters possess aesthetic standards that are intuitive rather than theoretically formulated because their aesthetic standards are strongly influenced by market preferences and the references they use. This occurs because Jelekong painters generally do not receive formal art education, and only a small proportion study visual arts formally, including aesthetics. Their standards therefore rely on visual experience and personal taste rather than theoretical formulations of art and aesthetics. Consequently, the quality of their work is judged according to what they see and feel. Jelekong painters have their own individual artistic orientations, but all of them ultimately remain oriented toward the market preferences of a particular period. Their painting styles therefore follow what is requested and favored by the market.

Because Jelekong painters are oriented toward the market, they need to master various techniques and painting styles in order to adapt to market demands. Through painting skills that have been developed and repeatedly practiced, Jelekong painters can reproduce a reference as a painting within a relatively short period. They can also produce a large number of paintings within a given period.

Jelekong Painting Style

Based on observations of Jelekong paintings, it can be seen that their painting styles are similar to one another. This similarity may result from the fact that they learn to paint through similar methods and use similar references. Consequently, their painting styles demonstrate visual similarities.

Jelekong artists also teach painting by guiding their students according to the styles and techniques they themselves use. Children begin creating artworks from the sketching

stage through to completion with considerable enthusiasm. This activity establishes similar habits, namely the practice of painting using similar references, techniques, and aesthetic preferences that are transmitted across generations. As a result, the distinctive Jelekong painting style continues to exist today.

The painting styles of Jelekong artists can be described as diverse yet similar. Although Jelekong painters may employ different concepts, techniques, and references, the resulting works nevertheless strongly demonstrate the characteristic Jelekong painting style. Distinctive characteristics can be observed directly in both the process and the final results of their paintings.

One of the most recognizable characteristics of Jelekong paintings lies in their composition. The composition of typical Jelekong paintings has distinctive characteristics in several aspects. In terms of color selection, Jelekong artists tend to determine colors based on personal taste and references rather than on specific color theories. Consequently, the color schemes of their paintings vary considerably, ranging from highly harmonious combinations to strongly contrasting ones.



Figure 1. Jelekong Painting
Source: INews.com, 2023

In addition to color, the perspective composition of Jelekong paintings generally employs a one-point perspective, resulting in a relatively uniform spatial arrangement across works. In terms of technique, Jelekong artists possess well-developed skills; however, within the context of production, these skills are directed toward efficiency and speed rather than technical experimentation. Jelekong artists tend to paint for production and sale, meaning that artworks are treated as market products.

This production orientation generates repeated references, techniques, colors, and compositions, creating patterns resembling a “template.” Because paintings are completed within a short period to meet production targets, the character of the brushstrokes and the level of detail in Jelekong paintings reflect a rapid working tempo.

Within the Jelekong Cultural Village, many painters are distributed throughout the area. Each painter has an individual painting style, although visually their works ultimately demonstrate similar characteristics. Individual painters tend to emphasize particular stylistic preferences. For example, some Jelekong painters focus on landscape paintings, while others work primarily with abstract paintings or other themes. These preferences distinguish individual painters within Jelekong.

Mastery of different painting themes cannot be separated from the influence of market trends and the preferences of regular or popular consumers at a particular time. Jelekong painting follows stylistic orientations according to what is popular in the market, resulting in a wide range of paintings, including landscapes, portraits, still life, and abstract works. According to one Jelekong artist who served as an informant, although Jelekong painters may imitate one another in terms of concepts and forms, each painter has their own market segment. Therefore, they do not need to be concerned about whether buyers are available despite similarities in concepts and forms.

The relationship between commercial orientation and the visual characteristics of Jelekong paintings can be observed through several aspects. In terms of subject selection, artists adapt to themes favored by the market, resulting in the production of landscapes, portraits, still life, and abstract works. In terms of technique, the demand to complete painting stock within a short period encourages the use of efficient techniques, such as palette-knife impasto in small-sized paintings.

In terms of color and composition, the use of similar references and repeated production patterns results in relatively uniform color schemes and spatial arrangements, such as the use of one-point perspective in landscape paintings. In terms of production patterns, the ability to reproduce references within a short period enables artists to produce large quantities of paintings simultaneously. Meanwhile, labels such as “minimalist abstract painting” used in online markets indicate that market preferences also influence how artworks are named and recognized.

Thus, commercial orientation does not necessarily eliminate artistic value but shifts the function of painting from a means of personal expression toward a market product and changes the context in which it is appreciated. The visual characteristics that emerge therefore need to be understood as the result of this production context.

Jelekong painters employ numerous themes in their paintings, and each theme has its own references, including classical paintings that are widely known and familiar to the public. To explain the painting techniques and styles used by Jelekong artists, the discussion is divided according to the types of themes employed by Jelekong painters, in accordance with the scope of the study described in the research methods section.

Landscape Painting

a. Romanticism–Mooi Indie Style

The most widely recognized paintings from Kampung Budaya Jelekong are landscape paintings. Landscape painting depicts the surrounding environment across a broad visual field. It encompasses extensive areas around us, particularly natural environments, and presents them through a realistic painting style.

In the works of Jelekong artists, references to nineteenth-century Romanticism, particularly Mooi Indie, are frequently used. Mooi Indie refers to a painting tradition that presented the beauty of the Indonesian archipelago during the Dutch East Indies period. A previous study on Mooi Indie by Uzda Nabila Shabiriani, entitled “Representasi Mooi Indie dalam Lukisan Jelekong,” explains in detail how Jelekong paintings strongly represent the Mooi Indie style.

The study found that Jelekong paintings depict characteristic subjects commonly found in Indonesian landscapes, particularly in Java and Bali. The representation of Mooi Indie is

carried out indirectly by the Jelekong community and can be identified through visual elements resembling Mooi Indie paintings.

In general, Jelekong artists paint landscapes based on compositions derived from their visual experiences. These visual experiences are formed through observing surrounding landscapes, landscape photographs, landscape paintings, and imaginative visualizations of landscapes. Some Jelekong paintings found in the field are not directly based on an actual location but are instead imaginary paintings spontaneously created by Jelekong artists.

This occurs because their experience of viewing landscapes or landscape paintings enables them to become accustomed to visualizing impressions associated with natural scenery. Such visualization can be performed imaginatively, allowing them to produce distinctive works based on their own imagined representations of landscapes.

When compared with Mooi Indie, Jelekong paintings adopt several elements, including the selection of Indonesian natural subjects such as mountains, rice fields, valleys, trees, and rivers; the harmonious presentation of natural beauty; and references to Western Romanticism.

Meanwhile, the local characteristics of Jelekong can be observed in three aspects. First, the imaginary landscapes are spontaneously created from visual experience rather than from specific locations. Second, distinctive techniques are used, such as sponge techniques and palette-knife impasto. Third, repeated production patterns are employed in large quantities according to market demand. Thus, Jelekong painting does not merely reproduce Mooi Indie but adapts this reference to local production contexts and techniques.



Figure 2. Example of a Jelekong Painting in the Romanticism–Mooi Indie Style
Source: Kompasiana, 2015



Figure 3. Example of a Jelekong Painting in the Romanticism–Mooi Indie Style
Source: Facebook Marketplace, n.d.

b. Naturalism

Naturalism refers to accepting “natura,” or nature, as a whole in a realistic manner. The term natura is used in philosophy to refer to things that are natural or forces originating from nature. Naturalism is an artistic movement that emphasizes similarity to the depicted object so that it appears natural and realistic, resembling its appearance in nature (Putriani, 2019).

The beauty of nature in Naturalism encompasses natural objects outside human-made environments, such as mountains, trees, valleys, hills, rivers, rice fields, and others. In accordance with the principles of Naturalism, Jelekong Naturalist paintings share a similar focus but employ a particular thematic context, namely the depiction of the beauty of natural landscapes in West Java.

In the Naturalist works of Jelekong artists, references influenced by classical Western artworks can be clearly identified. The visual presentation emphasizes the beauty and attractiveness of the surrounding natural environment. The difference between ordinary landscape paintings and Naturalist works lies in their conceptual approach, degree of similarity, and level of detail. Naturalist paintings place greater emphasis on detail and resemblance to the original object. The emphasis on resemblance in Naturalism aims to create a natural impression so that the painting appears visually lifelike (Beberapa Aliran dalam Seni Lukis, 2023). Conceptually, Naturalist works place greater emphasis on natural elements found in the environment. Visually, Jelekong Naturalist works demonstrate a high level of detail and resemblance to their subjects.

The Naturalist works of Jelekong visually demonstrate a level of detail and resemblance to their subjects that differs from classical Naturalist works. This difference can be understood from their production context, in which Jelekong artists primarily paint as a means of livelihood rather than as a medium of personal expression. Consequently, the impression produced is simpler than the grandeur and degree of realism found in classical Naturalist works. Nevertheless, some Jelekong artists adopt a Naturalist painting style.

In Jelekong Naturalism, the level of detail presented in the paintings is not as extensive as that found in Western Naturalist works. However, compared with typical Jelekong landscape paintings, Naturalist paintings demonstrate considerably greater detail and a closer resemblance to their visual subjects. Similar to ordinary landscape paintings, Jelekong Naturalist paintings are inspired by the Mooi Indie style, combined with a more realistic and detailed approach.



Figure 4. Example of a Jelekong Naturalist Painting

Source: Bukalapak.com, n.d.

c. Impressionist Style

Some Jelekong artists employ a painting style that places greater emphasis on impression, generally accompanied by more detailed technical treatment. However, the majority of artists employ a painting style that prioritizes completing works to meet their daily painting stock, in which the impression conveyed by the painting is emphasized more than the details and actual form of the depicted object.

The techniques used by each artist vary. However, one commonly used technique, particularly for small-sized paintings, is impasto using a palette knife. Impasto is a painting technique that creates a deeper texture through the application of paint onto the painting surface and is commonly used when working within a short production time (Hertzman, 2002). The landscape paintings discussed here use a palette knife to create texture in the paint applied to the canvas, producing a raised or three-dimensional impression.

Based on this explanation, the stylistic treatment found in Jelekong landscape paintings tends toward Impressionism. Impressionism was initially a term associated with the works of French realist painters. The term refers to Monet's work, whose catalogue included the title "Impressionism, Rising Sun" (Haryono, 2016). By the end of the nineteenth century, the term had come to be regarded as a modern painting movement. Impressionism introduced a new approach to painting by prioritizing the impression of a moment, object, or place rather than pursuing strict realism.

In Jelekong landscape painting, the majority of works produced are original variations. During the painting process, Jelekong artists develop repetitive patterns that gradually establish their own aesthetic standards. Consequently, when painting a landscape, they no longer require references to the same extent because repeated practice of painting similar subjects has become an established habit.

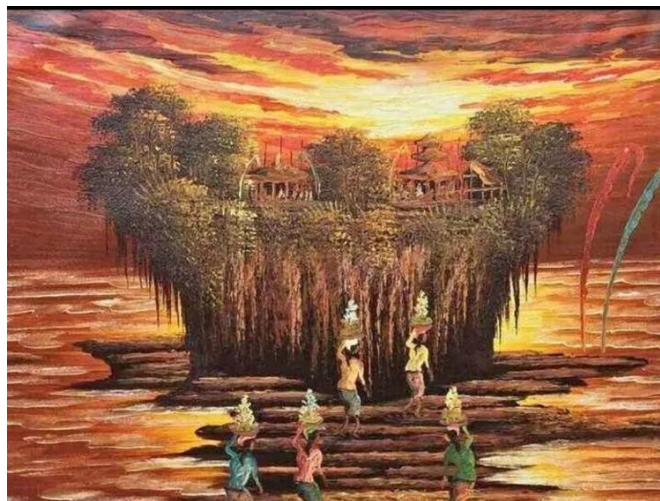


Figure 5. Example of a Jelekong Painting in the Impressionist Style
Source: Facebook Marketplace, n.d.

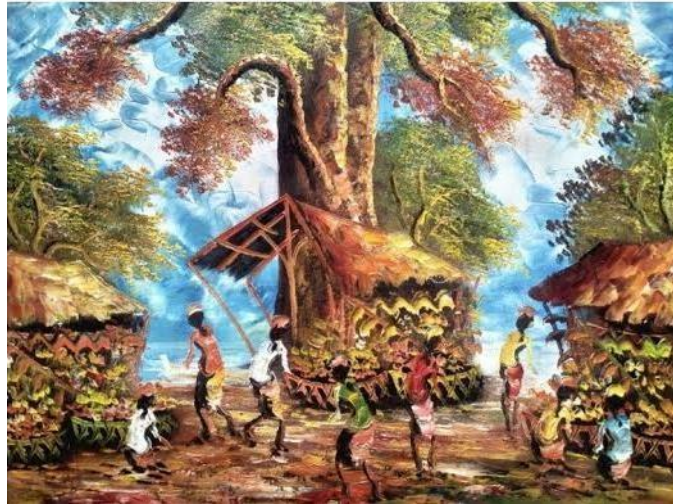


Figure 6. Example of a Jelekong Painting in the Impressionist Style

Source: Blibli, n.d.

d. Sponge Painting

In addition to following conventional styles and techniques found in Mooi Indie, Romanticism, and other classical styles, Jelekong painters also employ alternative media in painting, particularly the use of a sponge. The sponge technique was developed through experimentation by one of Jelekong's prominent painters, Mr. Kusmana. This technique contributes a distinctive identity to Jelekong painting, particularly in its depiction of natural beauty (Alya, 2021).

The sponge technique uses foam rubber cut into a slightly pointed shape and is then used to create Naturalist paintings (Dewi et al., 2008). The sponge is made from used materials, one of the commonly used sources being discarded flip-flop sponge. The sponge painting technique differs from conventional painting. The canvas is first coated with a layer of oil paint, after which the sponge is used to create impressions of shadows, mid-tones, and highlights.

Sponge painting has become a distinctive identity of Jelekong painting and can be regarded as an experimental painting technique and style originating from Jelekong. In terms of visual character, the use of a sponge over layers of oil paint produces gradations of shadow, mid-tone, and highlight through the marks left by the pressure of the sponge. As a result, the surface texture differs from that produced by brushstrokes or palette-knife impasto.

This difference in texture influences the aesthetic character of the paintings because the Naturalist impression of natural objects is created through masses of color and texture rather than through lines and detailed rendering. From the perspective of cultural identity, the sponge technique demonstrates local creativity because it originated from experimentation by Jelekong painters and utilizes readily available materials, namely used sponges.

The technique has become a distinguishing marker of Jelekong painting in comparison with Mooi Indie landscape paintings produced using conventional techniques (Alya, 2021).

Abstract Painting

Abstract art is a manifestation of art that is considered to most strongly justify its values in accordance with the spirit of its time. In accordance with one of the principles of modern visual art, namely the autonomy of art, modern visual art through abstract art is capable of demonstrating new aesthetic principles that had not previously existed (Gozali, 2019). Abstract painting is a manifestation of modern Western visual art. Its distinctive characteristic is the absence of formal forms, as the forms found in abstract art are random. Historically, abstract painting began to gain popularity in Indonesia in the 1960s, after leading figures at the Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB) continued their art education in the Western world. According to several visual arts lecturers at ISBI Bandung, abstract painting represents the final stage in an artist's artistic journey because, through abstract art, an artist has freed themselves from established artistic conventions, resulting in works characterized by greater expression and new styles and aesthetics.

Based on the explanation above, abstract art may appear to be an easy activity. In essence, however, abstraction is complex and difficult to understand. Abstract art is often regarded as trivial by the general public because, visually, it does not have definite forms or clear concepts. Within the field of visual art, however, abstraction represents an artist's liberation to express their artistic expression to the fullest extent. In the postmodern era, abstract art has become increasingly popular in the art market because it indirectly provides a new aesthetic experience, in which beauty does not necessarily have to emerge from formal forms.

The increasing market interest in abstract art has inevitably influenced the entire art field, including artists in Jekekong. Jekekong abstract painting is strongly influenced by existing market preferences. References for Jekekong abstract art are taken from abstract artworks available on the Internet, which are subsequently developed into distinctive characteristics of Jekekong abstract painting. Jekekong abstract paintings have diverse visual characteristics and employ a wide range of colors, unlike the abstract paintings of fine artists, who generally have their own distinctive color palettes.

However, when compared with abstract art practices within fine art, Jekekong abstract painting has a different orientation. Jekekong artists generally do not go through a process of developing artistic ideas in depth until they reach abstraction. Instead, they produce abstract paintings to respond to market demand. This difference demonstrates a shift in the orientation of the artwork, from the freedom of expression that forms the basis of abstract art toward products adapted to market preferences.

Behind the difference in orientation between abstract art within fine art and Jekekong abstract painting, there are various factors that contribute to the distinctive character of Jekekong abstract works. The composition of Jekekong abstract paintings has its own characteristics compared with other abstract paintings, particularly through a concept that can be described as simple yet elegant. The aesthetic qualities presented in Jekekong abstract paintings are closely related to the artists' aesthetic experiences in observing abstract paintings available in the art market.

Because non-academic artists in Jekekong learn abstract art from market references rather than from theoretical studies, a unique visual taste has developed among them, determining the aesthetic standards of their abstract paintings. These standards prioritize works that are simple and pleasing to look at. Many Jekekong paintings sold in the market use

the label “minimalist abstract painting,” as this label has become characteristic of Jelekong abstract paintings, namely works that are simple, minimalist, and elegant.



Figure 7. Example of a Jelekong Abstract Painting
Source: Tokopedia, n.d.



Figure 8. Example of a Jelekong Abstract Painting
Source: Tokopedia, n.d.

Figurative Painting

Figurative painting in Jelekong is primarily produced in response to commissions, as a model or visual reference is generally required. Some artists also produce figurative paintings depicting public figures, including presidents, religious figures, celebrities, and other well-known personalities. Figurative paintings produced by Jelekong artists generally employ a realistic style, characterized by smooth brushstrokes that form facial structures and other details of the depicted figure. This type of painting is relatively popular among art enthusiasts who wish to have portraits of themselves or their favorite figures reproduced in painted form. The demand for figurative paintings demonstrates that portraiture in Jelekong is closely connected to the preferences and needs of the art market.



Figure 9. Example of a Figurative Painting of a Public Figure by a Jelekong Artist
Source: Ayo Bandung, 2017.

Animal Painting

Animal paintings are also relatively popular among Jelekong artists. These works generally demonstrate a high level of painting technique and emphasize realistic visual representation. In addition to being appreciated as artworks, animal paintings are also sought after as decorative objects.

The animals selected as subjects vary, but several recurring subjects include koi fish, tigers, running horses, and roosters. In terms of visual style, these works tend to combine elements of Romanticism, Realism, and Photorealism. The selection of animal subjects and the manner in which they are rendered demonstrate the artists' efforts to create visually appealing works that correspond to market preferences.



Figure 10. Example of a Koi Fish Painting by a Jelekong Artist
Source: Tokopedia, n.d.



Figure 11. Example of a Tiger Painting by a Jelekong Artist
Source: Tokopedia, n.d.



Figure 12. Example of a Horse Painting by a Jelekong Artist
Source: Tokopedia, n.d.

Still Life Painting

Charles Sterling explains that a painting can be categorized as a still life when the painter makes a fundamental decision to select and arrange objects as the primary subject of the work, resulting in a coherent visual composition. In Indonesian, the term *alam benda* is commonly used to refer to still life, in which inanimate objects serve as the main subject of representation.

According to Dewi (2018), still life can also reflect historical and social developments. The objects depicted may symbolically represent particular ideas, circumstances, or

characteristics of an era. Thus, still life is not merely concerned with depicting objects but may also convey meanings through the selection and arrangement of those objects.

In Jelekong, however, still life paintings are generally produced as commercial products intended for sale. Consequently, the meaning and purpose of these works differ from still life paintings that are primarily created as expressions of personal ideas or conceptual explorations. Jelekong artists tend to emphasize the aesthetic appeal of the composition, which is developed based on visual references, imagination, or accumulated visual experience.

The development of still life painting in Jelekong is influenced by classical European still life traditions, particularly those associated with Romanticism. Similar to Romanticist still life, Jelekong still life paintings emphasize the visual beauty of objects. The arrangement of objects and the intensity and direction of light are carefully considered to produce a dramatic visual effect.

In some works, this dramatic effect is achieved through strong contrasts between light and shadow. This technique is commonly associated with *chiaroscuro*. According to Britannica (2023), the term *chiaroscuro* derives from the Italian words *chiaro*, meaning “light,” and *scuro*, meaning “dark.” It refers to a visual technique that emphasizes contrasts between light and shadow to create the impression of three-dimensionality in depicted objects.



Figure 13. Example of a Jelekong Still Life Painting
Source: Tokopedia, n.d.

Aesthetic Characteristics and Visual Indicators of Jelekong Painting Style

Based on the analysis of each painting theme discussed above, the aesthetic characteristics of Jelekong painting can be formulated into a set of visual indicators. These indicators are grouped according to the elements of visual art and are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Visual Indicators of Jelekong Painting

Aspect	Visual Indicators in Jelekong Paintings	Found In
Themes and Subjects	Reflect market preferences; local landscapes such as mountains, rice fields, rivers, forests, and houses; portraits; specific animals such as koi fish, tigers, horses, and roosters; still life; and minimalist abstract paintings.	All themes

Aspect	Visual Indicators in Jelekong Paintings	Found In
Forms and Lines	Realistic-naturalistic forms with varying levels of detail; smooth brushstrokes used to construct facial and animal structures; and simple forms in abstract paintings.	Naturalism, figurative, animal, and abstract paintings
Color	Determined primarily by artistic taste and visual references rather than by specific color theories; may range from harmonious to contrasting combinations. Light–dark contrasts or chiaroscuro are used in still life paintings.	All themes; still life
Space and Perspective	One-point perspective and broad visual fields are commonly employed.	Landscape painting
Texture and Technique	Palette-knife impasto is used particularly in small paintings, while sponge techniques are employed to create shadows, mid-tones, and highlights.	Impressionist and sponge painting
Composition	Romantic Mooi Indie-style landscape arrangements, spontaneous imaginary landscapes, repeated “template-like” arrangements, and dramatic lighting effects in still life paintings.	Landscape and still life paintings
Production Patterns	Repetition of visual references, techniques, colors, and compositions; rapid production to meet targets or maintain stock; and mass production.	All themes

The indicators presented above demonstrate that the distinctive style of Jelekong painting is not determined by a single visual element. Rather, it emerges from the combination of themes that are popular in the market, relatively similar approaches to visual elements, distinctive painting techniques, and repeated production patterns.

Viewed from Djelantik’s aesthetic framework, these characteristics can be understood through the dimensions of form (*wujud*), content (*bobot*), and presentation (*penampilan*). In terms of form, similarities can be observed in the use of color, spatial organization, and composition. In terms of content, Jelekong paintings generally emphasize the beauty and harmony of natural scenery or objects rather than the communication of highly personal artistic ideas. In terms of presentation, the artists’ technical skills are developed and utilized primarily to achieve speed and efficiency in the production process.

The similarities among Jelekong paintings can be explained by the artists’ shared visual references, informal learning processes, and market-oriented production practices. The distinctive identity of Jelekong painting therefore emerges not simply from the themes depicted but from the combination of several characteristics, including adaptations of Romanticism and *Mooi Indie*, imaginary landscape compositions, the use of sponge techniques, and repeated production patterns.

These characteristics indicate that the aesthetic identity of Jelekong painting is closely connected to the social and economic context in which the artists work. The visual style develops through continuous interaction between artistic experience, informal knowledge transmission, available references, and market demand. Consequently, the aesthetic characteristics of Jelekong painting can be understood as the result of an ongoing process in which visual experience, technical adaptation, and commercial considerations interact with one another.



Figure 14, Example of a Jelekong Still Life Painting.
Source: Sopian_Art, n.d.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study and the discussion presented above, it can be concluded that Jelekong painting has distinctive aesthetic characteristics that have developed through informal learning processes, shared visual references, and market-oriented production practices. The visual style of Jelekong painting is not formed solely by individual artistic expression but also by the social, cultural, and economic environment in which the artists work.

The aesthetic characteristics of Jelekong painting can be identified through several recurring visual elements. These include the selection of themes and subjects that correspond to market preferences, the use of realistic and naturalistic forms, relatively consistent approaches to color and composition, the use of one-point perspective in landscape paintings, and distinctive painting techniques such as palette-knife impasto and sponge painting. Repetition of references, techniques, colors, and compositions also contributes to the formation of a recognizable visual identity.

The various painting styles found in Jelekong include landscape painting influenced by Romanticism and *Mooi Indie*, Naturalism, Impressionism, sponge painting, abstract painting, figurative painting, animal painting, and still life painting. Although these styles differ in subject matter and visual treatment, they share a number of characteristics associated with the working practices of Jelekong artists, particularly the use of visual references, informal transmission of painting skills, and adaptation to market demand.

From Djelantik's aesthetic perspective, the characteristics of Jelekong painting can be understood through the dimensions of form (*wujud*), content (*bobot*), and presentation (*penampilan*). The form is reflected in recurring visual elements such as color, space,

composition, and technique. The content is generally expressed through the depiction of natural scenery, objects, figures, and other subjects that possess visual appeal. Meanwhile, presentation is closely related to the artists' technical abilities and their capacity to produce paintings efficiently according to market demand.

Therefore, the aesthetic identity of Jelekong painting can be understood as the result of continuous interaction between artistic experience, informal learning, visual references, technical adaptation, and commercial considerations. The distinctive character of Jelekong painting lies not only in the visual appearance of the finished works but also in the production practices and social environment that continuously shape its development.

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