Bandung Creative Movement 2024

The Creation Process of Nyoman Nuarta's Monumental Works

Didit Widiatmoko Soewardikoen,[1*] Ardiles Klimarsen,[1] Mochammad Sigit Ramadhan[1]

[1]*Telkom University, Bandung, Indonesia*

*Corresponding email: widiatmokodw@gmail.com

Abstract

Nyoman Nuarta, a sculptor born in Tabanan, Bali, has created several monumental works that carve the history of Indonesian art, which contain construction and technical calculations. The creative process involves a series of stages that enable the transformation of ideas and inspiration into monumental works. This research aims to examine the process of creation, from the translation of ideas to the execution of the work. Data was collected through direct observation of the studio, interviews with the artist and his staff, and a literature study of the documentation of the works and video presentations.

Keywords: Nyoman Nuarta, creation process, monumental art

Introduction

Creativity is often perceived as the result of a process that is difficult to explain in detail. Designers can produce unique and successful solutions or works without being able to provide a detailed or systematic explanation of how they achieved it. In the contemporary design era, the exploration of designers' creative processes is at the core of art and design development. Design methods not only affect aesthetic aspects but also play a key role in achieving functional sustainability (Semprebon, 2023). In the creative process, after finding an idea, modification becomes a means of developing the artist's expertise, combining experience and learning to improve their skills (Yokochi & Okada, 2020). In the creation of art, there is a creative process carried out by the artist to produce a work of art, a unique way that involves the artist's thoughts, understanding, habits, and history (Locher, 2010). To create a monumental work, the artist must work collaboratively, in this case involving the abilities of experts from other fields of science under the coordination of the artist.

Method

Instrument information was based on observations and interviews through a phenomenological approach (Creswell, 2007). The main goal of phenomenology is to summarize various individual experiences of a phenomenon into a description of the universal essence, which can be regarded as the "essential core" of the phenomenon (van Manen, 1990). Documentation of the various stages in creating a work of art, including initial design, selection of materials, and execution techniques. Interviews are an exploration of the experiences of people who

experience an event that seeks to describe the meaning that individuals give to their life experiences related to a particular concept or phenomenon (Soewardikoen, 2021). In addition to interviews, observation of the documentation of the artwork process helps to complete the data about the creation process.

Result and Discussion

Ideas and planning. In the early 1990s, the Governor of Bali, Ida Bagus Oka, initiated the construction of a 5-meter Garuda statue at Ngurah Rai International Airport. This idea evolved into a plan to develop a cultural park area with the Garuda Wisnu Kencana (GWK) statue as the prominent landmark. To comprehensively manage the funding and design of the GWK area, the Garuda Wisnu Kencana Foundation was established in 1993. The design of the Vishnu and Garuda statues began at Nyoman Nuarta's studio in Bandung in February 1996. The groundbreaking of GWK took place on June 8, 1997, at Ungasan Hill in Bali. However, the 1997 monetary crisis that hit Southeast Asia slowed down the construction of this project. After a long wait, funding from investors in 2013 became a turning point in the completion of the GWK monument, which was finally completed after 28 years.

Socialization and Funding Challenges. Although the GWK concept had been conceived by Nyoman Nuarta since the 1990s, it took eight years to gain public support. Skeptical views on the project's benefits and purpose were a major obstacle. Nuarta attempted to convince the public that GWK would have positive economic impacts, including job creation and increased income for the local community. Using his own resources and financing, Nuarta successfully started the GWK project in 1997 (Nuarta, 2013).

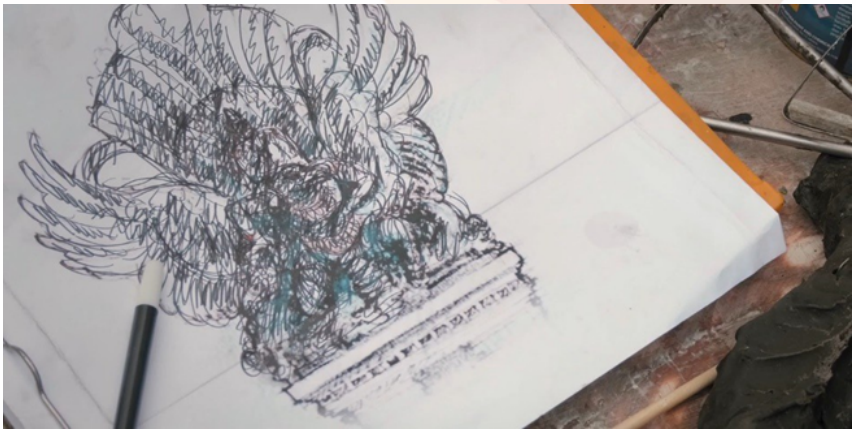

Figure 1. GWK sketch
Source: Nuart Sculpture Park archives

Traditional approach to development. Between 1994 and 1996, the construction of GWK was mostly done manually with simple tools. Landscaping art began to be applied at the project site. The use of heavy machinery was limited to specific areas, as the project emphasized a traditional and manual work approach in creating this monumental work of art. Nyoman Nuarta, as a renowned sculpture artist, started his creation process by exploring ideas from various sources, such as mythology, history, culture, and nature. These ideas are then translated into more concrete visual concepts through sketches, drawings, and three-dimensional models. Nuarta often conducts in-depth research to ensure the accuracy and depth of meaning of his works. Once the visual concept is mature, Nuarta will collaborate with a team of experts, including engineers and designers, to develop a detailed and comprehensive work plan.

Large monumental sculptures are not only works of art, but also require complex engineering. To realize this project requires careful calculations from engineers under the coordination of Nyoman Nuarta. They will analyze the strength of the materials, the stability of the structure, and environmental factors such as wind and earthquakes. These calculations are crucial to ensure the sculpture's long-term safety and durability. In addition, the engineers will also design efficient and safe construction methods, including the use of advanced technology such as 3D scanning and computer modeling. Nuarta's creation process is a blend of art and engineering, as an artist brings artistic vision and profound meaning to his works. At the same time, engineers ensure they are physically realizable and safe. This collaboration results in monumental works that are not only aesthetically beautiful but also sturdy and functional (Liliek, 2023).

Figure 2. Supporting steel framework and installation of the GWK "skin"
Source: Nuart Sculpture Park archives

The process of creating the GWK monument statue was a large-scale project that involved significant engineering and logistical challenges. The statue's parts were produced separately in Bandung by hundreds of workers, then cut into smaller parts for easier transportation. These parts were then sent using hundreds of trucks to the project site in Ungasan Hill, Bali, where they were reassembled into a complete statue. This delivery and assembly process shows the large scale and complexity of this project. With impressive dimensions, namely 64 meters wide and a total height of 125 meters (including the 75-meter-high statue and 50-meter-high base), the GWK statue is one of the largest statues in the world. Located 146 meters above ground level (263 meters above sea level), the statue is made mainly of copper and brass, with an estimated weight of 3,000 tonnes. To ensure the statue's resistance to earthquakes, wind, and extreme weather conditions, Nuarta collaborated with architects, civil engineering structural experts, and engineering physicists to carry out careful analysis and calculations (Nuarta N. , 2023).

Monumental sculptural construction: supporting frame and artistic "skin". Nuarta's monumental sculpture was built using a construction technique involving two main components: a supporting frame and an artistic skin. The supporting framework, which is composed of a concrete structure combined with a steel frame or other strong materials, serves as an internal structure that provides strength and stability to the statue. This steel framework was carefully designed by engineers to withstand the weight of the statue, gusts of wind, and potential earthquakes (Nuarta N. , 2023).

The artistic "skin," which is the outer layer of the statue, is made of materials such as copper, brass, or bronze. The skin is not just a simple geometric shape, but is a visual representation of Nuarta's artistic concept, which is often inspired by the naturalistic style of Bali. Artistic skin consists of many complex, curved, and twisted modules, which must be assembled with precision and held together with a supporting frame. This assembly process requires special skills and high precision to ensure harmony between the artistic form and the internal structure of the statue (Nuarta T. , 2013).

Construction of the foundation of the Garuda Wisnu Kencana (GWK) statue was carried out with great care and precision. This foundation is designed to optimally support the structure of the GWK statue, considering its large size and weight. The construction process involves the application of advanced techniques and materials, such as the use of high-specification reinforced concrete. The team of construction engineers carried out careful calculations to ensure this foundation meets strict safety and strength standards, so that the GWK statue can stand firmly in the long term (Liliek, 2023).

Conclusion

Nyoman Nuarta's personal experience is an important basis for his creative process. Starting from his childhood to his development as a sculptural artist, every stage of his life influenced the works he produced.

The process of creating monumental works of art, such as the Garuda Wisnu Kencana (GWK) statue, involves a long journey from the initial idea formulation (brief) stage to conceptual design and project implementation. This journey required great dedication and resilience from all parties involved, given the project's complexity and large scale.

Monumental art designers must be able to work collaboratively, not only in designing the art object itself, but also in considering the influence of the surrounding environment. This collaboration involves various disciplines, including fine arts, architecture, civil engineering, and project management. The success of a monumental project such as the GWK depends largely on the designer's ability to integrate artistic vision with technical and environmental considerations.

References

Creswell, J. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry & research design, second edition.* Nebraska: Sage Publication.

Liliek. (2023, August 6). Perencanaan Kawasan GWK. (Klimarsen, Interviewer)

Locher, P. (2010). How does a visual artist create an artwork? In *The Cambridge Book of Creativity* (pp. 131-144). NY: Cambridge University Press.

Nuarta, N. (2023, December 21). Perencanaan Monumen GWK. (D. Widiatmoko, Interviewer)

Nuarta, T. (2013). *Project Report Archive.* Bandung: NuArt Sculpture Park.

Semprebon, G. (2023). The Aesthetic Dimensions of Sustainability in Design Culture. *Open Edition Journals*, 83-99.

Soewardikoen, D. (2021). *Metodologi Penelitian Desain Komunikasi Visual.* Yogyakarta: PT Kanisius.

van Manen, M. (1990). *Researching Lived Experience: Human Science for an Action Sensitive Paedagogy.* Ontario, Canada: The University of Western Ontario.

Yokochi, S., & Okada, T. (2020). The Process of Art-making and Creative Expertise: An Analysis of Artists' Process Modification. *Journal of Creative Behavior*, 532.