



Investigating the Role of Cultural Innovation and Creativity in the Kitakyushu Art Festival for Sustainable Living

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Abstract. The Kitakyushu Art Festival tries to represent SDGs points through works of art from various artists. The connection between the Kitakyushu Art Festival and the SDGs raises a question, how do artists present innovative works of art that represent SDGs values at the Kitakyushu Art Festival. The purpose of this research is to highlight the innovations and contributions of the Kitakyushu Art Festival to support sustainable living aspects and how the festival presents SDGs values in the artwork. This research uses qualitative analysis methods and cultural representation theory and provides insight into how art and cultural festival can be agents of change. The result of this research show that through the Kitakyushu Art Festival, art can be a driving factor to support all SDGs points. This is supported by art that does not require a particular language to be understood; just by looking at it, people can understand the meaning of artwork. It is intended that this research can help develop cultural research regarding sustainable traditions and can become a reference for similar research.

Keywords: Kitakyushu Art Festival, Kitakyushu, SDGs, Art

1 Introduction

Art is considered a form of expression for artists and has different meanings depending on how society views the work. Art creates beauty, and since a long time ago, beauty has been something that humans have sought [1]. Without realizing it, art has made a significant contribution to protective factors that create resilience, such as a sense of belonging, identity, connection with other people, mental health, and so on. With this large contribution, art can become a tool to help promote global programs, one of which is the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

SDGs have become a hot topic discussed by society in this global era[2]. There are 17 goals represent the as orations for world development through 2030. With the various languages and diversity in the world, it is quite difficult to continue promoting the SDGs without an intermediary. One intermediary that can promote a global agenda is art. Art and the SDGs have a strong connection because art is a universal medium that can summarize various kinds of expressions in one work and connect various thoughts from different individuals [3]. In other words, art is a global language that has the ability

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to convey a message without writing. One way that is quite effective in promoting culture and works of art is through festivals.

Arts and cultural festivals are a form of state effort to enrich the social, economic, and cultural life of society. Apart from that, a festival has a big role in promoting cultural diversity in a country. The Kitakyushu Art Festival is an effort to promote the SDGs through works of art, with the idea that art can draw people's attention to the future of sustainability and offer a better future [4]. The Kitakyushu Art Festival introduces various types of art: art made from waste, art related to nature and medicine, art that expresses the diversity of society, and art that introduces technology.

Kitakyushu is a city located in Fukuoka Prefecture, Japan, which is one of the "SDGs Pilot Model Cities" and is the first city in Asia to become an official SDGs promoter. In 1960, Kitakyushu solved the problem of water and air pollution independently by relying on the community and government. With these efforts, Kitakyushu continues to operate in the environmental sector and has a strategy called 'Kitakyushu's Green Growth' [5]. This strategy targets the benefits of balancing the environment with the economy as well as promoting international scale in terms of global warming and striving to become a zero-carbon city.

With the emergence of many art festivals, many innovations always emerge and bring new colors to the global art world. However, not all of the innovations brought include SDGs as a theme. The theme of art for the SDGs is a challenge for global artists to promote sustainable living for a better future. The connection between the Kitakyushu Art Festival and the SDGs raises a question, how do artists present innovative works of art that represent SDGs values at the Kitakyushu Art Festival. This research uses cultural representation theory to understand how the artists at Kitakyushu Art Festival present art that represents SDGs values. Cultural representation theory, as developed by Stuart Hall, is a framework that examines how cultures and individual represent themselves to others [6].

2 Methods

This research is descriptive qualitative research and uses literature review data methods. The phases of research include of collecting and analyzing data as well as presenting the results. Research data is in the form of secondary data, such as articles, website, and books about waste and the SDGs. The data analyzed was the works on display and some information about the Kitakyushu Art Festival that obtained through the official website of the Kitakyushu Art Festival.

3 Result and Discussion

At the SDGs point, cultural aspects are often ignored even though they have great potential to connect issues, primarily through works of art. Art as a universal language can be the key to achieving the SDGs because everyone can understand it without language barriers. The local government manages the Kitakyushu Art Festival and aims to promote SDGs through works of art from various national and international artists. Global and national governments must work together effectively for the SDGs to be implemented successfully[7]. The works of art exhibited at the Kitakyushu Art Festival are mostly made from used goods, which are processed into works that depict the problems we are currently facing, such as extinction, air pollution, and so on.

3.1 Innovation at the Kitakyushu Art Festival

3.1.1 Medical Herberman Cafe Project

This artwork was created by Eiki Danzuka, who traveled to various regions to research medical herbs. In several areas he visited, he opened a cafe that served herbal tea made from his own herbal tea garden. The project emphasizes the importance of health. Health can be achieved by using existing natural resources rather than modern medicines that can also have a negative impact on the environment. Medical herberman is also related to the global of SDGs Point 13, which is to reduce the risk and impact of climate change. This project shows how we may help improve environmental management and lower the danger of climate change by using materials found in the local area and reducing waste. Good Health and well-being is one of the goals raised under the SDGs, so the herbal teas and dishes served at the cafe during the exhibition are meant to raise awareness of nature and the body [8].



Fig. 1. Herberman (Source: Studio International Website, 2021) (Accessed: May, 18 2024)

3.1.2 Kitakyushu Dodo and Tasmanian Tiger

The dodo and Tasmanian tiger are two large extinct animals. Hideaki Shibata, who goes by the name of Yodagawa Technique addressed issue global waste and made a statue form plastic waste. With help from the locals, Yodagawa Technique collected the

plastic waste from the coast of Aino Island. The artist has assembled the colorful discarded plastics in a playful manner, showing how waste can be turned into taste, but also drawing attention to the impact humans have on the environment, eventually driving rare animals to extinction [8]. The dodo and Tasmanian tiger that are used as statue in this work symbolize endangered animals. One of the reasons that are endangered is due to extreme climate change and their natural, which is transformed into an inhabited island. Since there was no natural predator of the dodo on the island of Mauritius, the bird was an easy prey for humans that arrived on the island, but human introduced invasive species that outcompeted the dodo for food[9].



Fig. 2. Dodo and Tasmanian Tiger Statue

(Source: Studio International Website, 2021) (Accessed: May, 18 2024)

3.1.3 Bio Sculpture

In this work project, METACITY and Hiroya Tanaka works together to explore the potential of 3D printing technology to create new ecosystem forms. Through this, they try to deal with climate change and natural disasters that continue to occur throughout the world. This project is linked to SDGs 12 and 13 goals on raising awareness of the importance of natural resource management and reducing climate change risks. By using 3D technology, METACITY and Hiroya Tanaka show the public the importance of awareness of natural resource management. Seeing the natural disasters and climate change that occur, we must find ways to reduce the risk due to these disasters, on of which is Bio Sculpture. The group transplants soil components collected from deep in the forest onto the urban space and tries to visualize its potential in this new environment, which they call a new ‘vessel’ [10].



Fig. 3. Bio Sculpture (Source: Studio International Website, 2021) (Accessed: May, 18 2024)

3.2 The Kitakyushu Art Festival's Contribution to Supporting Sustainable Living Aspects

Kitakyushu Art Festival, which is themed on sustainability, aims to enhance understanding and appreciation of art and culture while promoting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through various artistic expressions. The festival features work from 30 artists and is displayed across seven venues in Kitakyushu. Artists who participate in this festival display simple works and have deep meaning regarding current issues. The festival also includes artwork by artists with disabilities, such as Chisato Minamura, who lost her hearing at a young age; he created works that explore the intersection of sound and silence. Disability arts is an umbrella term that refers to the creative work of PWD (persons with disabilities), which reflects their experience of disability, reconstructs disability as a valuable human condition and provokes the existing social construction of disability [11]. This representation challenges attendees to consider the perspective of individuals with disabilities, fostering a greater appreciation for diversity and the importance of accessibility in art and culture.

The festival fosters collaboration among artists and local communities promoting a responsibility to address the SDGs [12]. Hideaki Shibata, also known by his artists name Yodagawa Technique, encourage locals of Ainu Island to collect the plastic waste from the coast and turn it into a state of extinct animals: dodo and Tasmanian tiger. This type of engagement encourages attendees to think critically about the SDGs and their role in achieving a sustainable future. Yodagawa's work could help in educating people about the concept of zero waste. The goal of zero waste is to manage waste in a way that inspires the community particularly on Ainu Island to prevent the trash that mounts up on the coast and keep it from mounting again. Zero waste concept can stimulate sustainable production and consumption, recovery and recycling and restricts incineration and landfilling[13].

This festival offers more than just art exhibitions, it also provides interactive experience that let visitors engage with the artwork or take part in artwork that are exhibited digitally. The 25-meter herbman that created by Eiki Dantsuka encourages people to interact with the nature and think about how human activity affects the ecosystem. This type of engagement encourages attendees to think critically about the SDGs and their role in achieving a sustainable future.

In addition to art exhibitions, this festival offers seminars and workshop that offer new perspectives and deeper understanding of the SDGs and their responses to current issues. Seminars helps to renew motivation, earn new technologies, and expert in knowledge generation and reaches to overall personality development[14]. By holding this activity, the everyone is able to actively participate in conversation and work together to develop new innovations that will advance the SDGs.

Most festivals only end in a matter of days, and it will be forgotten once the festival is over. With technological developments, the Kitakyushu Art Festival uses digital accessibility by offering virtual 3D tours, allowing participants worldwide to see the artwork on exhibit. Virtual tour systems have better capabilities for interaction and comprehension of digital objects at their actual size [15]. The 3D virtual tour is still accessible on the Kitakyushu Art Festival's official website, even though it was held a few years ago. We need adaptability, flexible action tools, and to interrelate between policies and the public; thinking outside of the box also allows us to innovate and use new tools to confront global challenges [16]. Digital accessibility can increase enthusiasm for the SDGs while reaching a wider audience.

4 Conclusion

Based on the research, it can be concluded that through the Kitakyushu Art Festival, art can be a driving factor supporting all SDGs points. It is supported by art that can be understood simply by looking at it; one does not need to speak a specific language to comprehend it. A few artists also employ recycled waste in their creations, which are displayed at the Kitakyushu Art Festival. People from all over the world can see the SDGs values when they are presented in artistic creations and integrated with technology. Currently, language and space can only prevent the promotion of SDGs points.

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