



The Practice of Intuitive Painting Navigates Changes in Socio-Cultural Reality

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the concept of intuitive painting, emphasizing its cognitive and philosophical dimensions through the works of Indonesian artists Nashar, Srihadi Soedarsono, Ahmad Sadali, and Mochtar Apin. Intuitive painting is rooted in Henri Bergson's philosophy, which posits intuition as a deeper, more direct form of understanding compared to rational analysis. By examining these artists' intuitive approaches, the study highlights how their works reflect Bergsonian principles, capturing the fluidity and continuity of existence. Recent advancements in neuroaesthetics reveal how the brain processes art, supporting Bergson's theories. Research by Semir Zeki and V.S. Ramachandran underscores the active construction of aesthetic experiences by the brain, aligning with the spontaneous nature of intuitive art. This interdisciplinary perspective demonstrates how intuitive painting engages complex cognitive processes, eliciting profound emotional and cognitive responses. The study also discusses the impact of cultural and technological influences on intuitive painting in Indonesia, comparing Eastern and Western approaches to highlight universal and unique aspects of artistic intuition. The findings suggest practical applications for artists and educators, advocating for the integration of intuitive methods to enhance artistic creativity and viewer engagement. Overall, this research underscores the transformative potential of intuitive painting in modern art, bridging cognitive science, philosophy, and artistic practice.

Keywords: Artistic Expression, Bergson, Cognitive Process, Intuitive Painting, Visual Representation

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Introduction

Intuitive painting in modern art represents a sophisticated fusion of cognitive processes and aesthetic appreciation. Modern art, characterized by diverse individual styles and innovative conceptual frameworks, provides fertile ground for profound aesthetic experiences [1]. At its core, intuitive painting seeks to transcend the rational and deeply engage with the artist's inner experiences and external observations. This artistic approach is significant for its ability to evoke strong emotional and intellectual responses, rooted in the perceptual and affective processes underlying art appreciation [2].

The significance of Henri Bergson's philosophy of intuition in understanding the artistic process cannot be underestimated. Bergson, a prominent French philosopher, argued that intuition offers a deeper and more direct method of understanding than rational or intellectual analysis. His work, particularly "Creative Evolution," emphasizes the harmony between biological processes and the spontaneous creative drive inherent in life and art. Bergson's concept of *élan vital*, or the creative force driving all life processes, reflects the inexplicable spark of artistic innovation. This philosophical foundation suggests that intuition allows artists to penetrate beyond surface reality and access a more profound continuity, providing a new lens for viewing the creative process [3].

In Indonesian art, intuitive painting is vividly embodied in works that are not monolithic but possess diverse characteristics. For example, artists like Nashar paint using natural intuition, making themselves one with nature, where nature is a part of them and they are part of nature. Meanwhile, Srihadi Soedarsono, with a background in Javanese cultural traditions and a life immersed in the arts of dance and batik, brings an intuitive cultural awareness that is integral to his being, despite his Western cultural education at ITB and in America. This cultural unity within his time and self becomes an intuitive culture articulating social, political, and scientific realities. Unlike painter Ahmad Sadali, whose Western art education at ITB and in America reflects his intuitive contemplation in the modern world, strengthening his Islamic spirituality as a devout Muslim, he navigates the social and cultural realities with strong works imbued with his religious values. He creates the beauty of Islam in abstract paintings and calligraphy, articulating complex life with his intuitive artistic touch. The artistic journey of graphic artist Mochtar Apin brings art language to the awareness of creating art with calculations that become meta-mathematics in strokes and techniques, not just precise calculations but intuitive formations that strengthen the soul.

These artists have harnessed the intuitive process to depict complex social, political, and cultural narratives, offering unique perspectives on modern art. Nashar's abstract forms, for example, can be seen as visual manifestations of Bergsonian duration, a continuous

flow of intuitive consciousness that captures felt moments rather than merely seen ones. Similarly, Srihadi Soedarsono's dynamic compositions intuitively combine traditional motifs with contemporary abstraction, bridging cultural heritage and modernity.

Ahmad Sadali's paintings, marked by spiritual and meditative qualities, evoke the sublime and invite viewers to experience a reality beyond the visible. This approach aligns with Bergson's assertion that intuition can reveal deeper layers of existence, transcending direct perception. Mochtar Apin's blend of surrealism with abstract expressionism challenges viewers to explore the fluid boundaries between reality and imagination, engaging with the subconscious in ways rational analysis cannot [4].

Overall, the importance of intuitive painting in modern art lies in its ability to transform perceptual experience into deep cognitive and emotional engagement. It exemplifies the intricate relationship between cognitive processes and aesthetic appreciation, highlighting the role of novelty, typicality, and affective discrimination in art evaluation [5],[6]. By integrating Bergson's philosophical insights with practical artistic approaches, intuitive painting offers a comprehensive framework for understanding the depths of artistic creativity, enriching both the visual representation of subjects and the audience's engagement with art [7],[8].

Literature Review

A. The Philosophical Foundations of Intuition in Art

Intuitive painting as an artistic practice is deeply rooted in philosophical foundations, particularly those laid by Henri Bergson. Bergson's theories on intuition emphasize a more direct and profound understanding than rational or intellectual analysis. Bergson's concept of intuition considers it a way to grasp the essence of life and reality, transcending the limits of analytical thought [2]. This philosophical perspective forms the core of intuitive painting, where artists rely on innate perception to create art that resonates on a deeper cognitive and emotional level.

Bergson's seminal work, "Creative Evolution," is highly relevant to artistic creativity. In this work, Bergson introduces the idea of *élan vital*, or vital force, which he describes as the driving impetus behind all life processes, including artistic creation. He argues that intuition, in harmony with this *élan vital*, allows for a more holistic and continuous understanding of life, starkly contrasting rational thought's fragmented and static nature. This theory posits that the creative process in art is an extension of the inherent dynamics of life, where intuition plays a crucial role in the artist's ability to innovate and capture the fluidity of existence.

Several key differences emerge when comparing Bergson's ideas with other philosophical perspectives on intuition. Philosophical intuition, which serves as evidence in various domains, is influenced by cultural, educational, and socio-economic factors [9]. This variability highlights how intuition, including art-related, can differ significantly among individuals based on their backgrounds. In contrast, Bergson's notion of intuition is more universal, rooted in the intrinsic nature of life and creativity. While other philosophers may view intuition as subjective and context-dependent, Bergson sees it as a fundamental cognitive process that transcends individual differences.

Interdisciplinary collaboration between art and science further illuminates the role of intuition in artistic practice. Artists often explore the rules of perspective, color, and visual illusions, which parallel scientific studies of vision [10]. This interaction highlights the interconnectedness of art and science, demonstrating that intuitive painting not only influences but is also influenced by scientific inquiry. This reciprocal relationship enriches our understanding of how intuitive processes function in both domains, revealing a shared cognitive foundation of artistic and scientific endeavors.

Moreover, intuitive painting involves complex cognitive processes involving the artist and the viewer. It goes beyond mere emotional expression, stimulating associations and imagination in the viewer, thus creating a more profound emotional resonance [11]. This suggests that intuitive art engages the audience on multiple levels, making the cognitive interaction between the viewer and the artwork an integral part of the artistic experience.

Analytical approaches to understanding art, such as information-based metrics, have uncovered hidden patterns and relationships in artworks [12]. These findings highlight the intricate structures underlying artistic creation, providing insights into the complexity of intuitive painting. By analyzing these patterns, researchers can better understand the depth and richness of intuitive artistic practice, reinforcing Bergson's idea that intuition captures the continuous flow of life.

Overall, the philosophical foundations of intuition in art, particularly through Bergson's theories, offer a profound understanding of intuitive painting. This approach integrates cognitive processes, interdisciplinary insights, and the complex relationships between the artist, artwork, and viewer. By delving into these philosophical foundations, we gain a deeper appreciation of intuitive painting as a vital form of artistic expression that transcends rational analysis and connects directly with the essence of human experience.

Since the world of painting is shaped by mechanical materialism, the production system aims to achieve pragmatic life capitalization. Therefore, there needs to be a model of intuitive creation, which has always been part of life but has not been presented as an

understanding, thought, and knowledge model in painting art. It represents human values with sincerity between individuals, portraying a harmonious and beautiful natural life as part of human nature created by Allah.

William Kandinsky, an abstract painter and a teacher at Bauhaus, an art college in Germany, spoke about spirituality in art. Each spiritual era corresponds to a new spiritual content, which the era reveals in new, unexpected, surprising forms, and in this way, very aggressively. We are approaching a time of rational and conscious composition when painters proudly declare their work constructive. This will contrast with the claims of the impressionists that they could explain anything and that art descended to them through inspiration. Before the age of creation, we had new awareness and spirit in painting that would go hand in hand with the spirit of thought towards a significant era of spirituality.

The development of the concept of intuitive painting as an element of painting can be seen as natural intuition, cultural intuition, and religious intuition. The development of intuitive painting elements is seen as part of reality as art from continuous life. Life with the natural environment influences and colors everyone's life.

Since nature is indeed part of human life, not everyone understands, realizes, and has thoughts about living with nature as an idea in art, especially painting. Similarly, as behavior and life are actualized in one's life, culture becomes a reality of life as a practice and creation in painting as an integral part of one's life. Religion, belief, and faith in Allah become a painter's life.

Therefore, painting and art as a continuous unity in life is expressed in the artwork, the values of life, worshipping Allah, as done by painter Ahmad Sadali. It becomes interesting in the life of science and digital technology 5.0, with all kinds of systems that connect art in the form of profound uniqueness in the reality of social life.

We realize that the reality of urban social culture shows a pattern of individualism as part of material instrumentalism, objectified in the reality of social culture. This happens because it is formed in an education system, social interaction culture, social media culture, and industrial product development to gain satisfaction and life reality recognition.

As a lifestyle patterned in urban culture mechanisms, it involves mechanisms formed in life capitalization because the reality of social culture is packaged as a branding and marketing product of industrial information technology development.

The world of painting becomes a stimulus to a reality of status and life capitalization in social interactions and urban life models. Similarly, sculptures decorate public spaces, recreational areas, hotels, villas, and private homes. It becomes an articulation of urban whirlpools that enhance personal life as a value of dignity for a better life. However, it loses

the essence of cultural life in the value of humanity and togetherness as a peaceful and harmonious unity. Because art is reduced to an object of art rather than a work, it is an economic product more profitable than a luxury car, whose price depreciates over time. Meanwhile, art follows the development and changes of the times, increasing in price, not because the painting is good and expensive, but due to the reality of the systems and mechanics that bring unexpected results.

The standard of life is not comfort and pleasure but the desire to channel uncontrolled desires into something unusual, aligning with the reality of art seeking a path in life, making art not merely an artistic process and creation, although physically practicing art, but not as an artist's ability, but as a reality of life as an artist in the art production whirlpool of industrial information technology mechanics. Not as a life is calling as a journey that is not eternal, for we will leave this worldly life. The art world will no longer exist and will not be repeated in one's life.

This life reality picture shows that art is not merely a personal life but a conditioned life outside of art and humans, which humans created to confine humans in a production, trade, and economic system and mechanics. Art becomes exclusive and luxurious as a modern, wealthy, and established individual's image. The exclusivity of art in life aligns with social culture's development of reality, where life patterns and social culture's reality are intertwined. Artwork shows rationalism in society's life as an advanced society with various information technology capabilities. Demonstrating modernism leads to rational instrumental thinking. Everything follows a mechanism, a production system, and is pragmatic in its view.

Art becomes practical as a mass mechanism, making art part of society's fashion. It aligns with the pragmatic mechanical life of information technology production, in a society that prioritizes materialistic, pragmatic, and instrumentalistic appearance as a lifestyle of hedonism. It places art and artwork within the reality of art knowledge and information production, experiencing transformation, a mirror of reality as artificial art. The concept of artificial art does not exist in art reality but in the reality of social culture that has been objectified.

In art reality, one will find artwork that is not art, not as craft art, not as functional art, and not low art. Artificial art is a reality emerging in art reality as an art discourse and knowledge. That an artwork exists in artificial art reality, objectified and produced in a capitalist economic system and intense information imaging. Art or artwork becomes an object in a pragmatic production mechanism, an instrumental materialization value as a reality requiring unity in urban society's life within an anonymous life. This can be seen in

the thoughts of the Frankfurt School, Germany, namely Horkheimer's views on nature and life, that a new concept of the natural world as a manipulation arena of human control related to the same concept of humans as objects of domination. Although this view, before Horkheimer, was explained by Machiavelli, whose political instrumentalism was used to serve, thus raising the bourgeois state.

B. Neuroaesthetics and Cognitive Processes

Neuroaesthetics, a burgeoning field at the nexus of cognitive neuroscience and aesthetics, delves into the biological underpinnings of aesthetic experiences. It aims to elucidate the neural mechanisms underlying perceptual, affective, and cognitive processes contributing to aesthetic responses such as emotions, judgments, and preferences [13],[14]. This field provides critical insights into how the brain processes art, specifically focusing on the cognitive and emotional mechanisms that foster aesthetic experiences [15]. Understanding these processes is particularly relevant to intuitive painting, an artistic practice deeply intertwined with emotional expression and cognitive engagement.

Key studies in neuroaesthetics have significantly advanced our comprehension of intuitive art. For instance, research indicates that negative emotions in art can evoke intense emotional responses, capturing attention and enhancing memorability as crucial elements in the effectiveness of artworks [16]. This suggests that intuitive painting, which often involves the spontaneous expression of a wide range of emotions, can profoundly impact viewers by engaging their cognitive and emotional faculties.

Zeki [17], a prominent figure in neuroaesthetics, has extensively studied the brain's role in art perception. Zeki's research highlights how the brain's visual areas process various elements of art such as color, form, and motion, contributing to the overall aesthetic experience. His work reveals that the brain's response to art is not just a passive reception but an active construction, where the viewer's brain interprets and assigns meaning to the visual stimuli [17]. This aligns with the principles of intuitive painting, where the artist's spontaneous and internal processes are mirrored by the viewer's active cognitive engagement with the artwork.

Similarly, Ramachandran [18] has significantly contributed to understanding how the brain perceives art. His theory of the "eight laws of artistic experience" posits that certain visual principles are hardwired into the brain, influencing how we perceive and appreciate art. These principles include grouping, symmetry, and contrast, often intuitively employed by artists to evoke specific aesthetic responses [18]. Ramachandran's work underscores the idea that intuitive artistic practices tap into fundamental neural processes, making them universally resonant.

The intersection of cognitive science and intuitive painting reveals how artistic practices engage complex cognitive processes. Creating art involves generating new concepts, exploring thematic variations, and executing creative decisions, all requiring sophisticated cognitive functions [19]. Furthermore, the cognitive processes involved in art-making are not solely about emotional expression but also about stimulating audience imagination and association, leading to deeper emotional connections with the artwork [11].

Neuroscientific research also explores the relationship between art and concepts of volition and free will. Studies on neural circuits involved in behaviors related to will and volition provide insights into the intentional aspects of artistic creation [20]. This is particularly pertinent to intuitive painting, where the artist's decisions are often driven by spontaneous, subconscious processes rather than deliberate planning.

In addition, the impact of art on understanding the human condition, such as its role in addressing complex psychological states like depression, underscores the broader significance of artistic practices [21]. Intuitive painting, by engaging with deep emotional and cognitive processes, offers unique insights into the psychological and neurological aspects of human experience.

To sum up, neuroaesthetics provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the cognitive processes involved in intuitive painting. By examining the brain's response to art, researchers like Zeki [17] and Ramachandran [18] highlight the intricate interplay between visual stimuli and cognitive functions, offering profound insights into how intuitive artistic practices resonate with viewers on both emotional and intellectual levels. This interdisciplinary approach enriches our understanding of art's cognitive and emotional dimensions, bridging the gap between neuroscience and the arts.

C. Intuitive Painting in Indonesian Art

Intuitive painting in Indonesian art is characterized by spontaneous and instinctual creation, emphasizing the artist's inner feelings, emotions, and subconscious thoughts. This practice diverges from traditional forms such as painting, sculpture, and graphics, seeking new avenues of artistic expression and challenging established norms in the Indonesian art scene [22]. Historically, intuitive painting in Indonesia has been influenced by the nation's rich cultural heritage, traditional arts, folklore, and indigenous motifs [23]. This cultural backdrop provides a unique context for the development of intuitive painting as an artistic practice.

Prominent Indonesian artists such as Nashar, Srihadi Soedarsono, Ahmad Sadali, and Mochtar Apin have exemplified the principles of intuitive painting in their works. Nashar's abstract forms reflect a continuous flow of intuitive consciousness, capturing moments felt

rather than seen, which aligns with Bergsonian intuition. His works are spontaneous expressions of his inner vision, showcasing the essence of intuitive creation. Similarly, Srihadi Soedarsono's dynamic compositions blend traditional motifs with contemporary abstraction, reflecting an intuitive engagement with cultural heritage and modernity.

Ahmad Sadali's paintings, characterized by spiritual and meditative qualities, evoke the sublime and invite viewers to experience deeper realities. This approach resonates with Bergson's [3] assertion that intuition penetrates the surface of reality to reveal its more profound continuity. Sadali's works illustrate the transformative power of intuitive painting in conveying profound existential themes. Mochtar Apin's blend of surrealism with abstract expressionism challenges viewers to explore the boundaries between reality and imagination, engaging deeply with the subconscious.

Technological advancements have also influenced intuitive painting in Indonesia. Digital painting trends have introduced new possibilities for artists to integrate engineering, aesthetics, and cultural elements in their creative processes [24]. This integration reflects the ongoing modernization and national identity in contemporary Indonesian art practices [25].

Intuitive painting in Indonesian art exemplifies the fusion of cultural, historical, and technological influences. It reflects the unique socio-cultural dynamics of Indonesia and underscores the role of intuitive processes in artistic creation, enhancing both the aesthetic experience and emotional engagement of the audience. This practice not only preserves traditional elements but also embraces modern techniques, highlighting the evolving nature of Indonesian art in the global context.

D. Comparative Analysis of Eastern and Western Approaches

Intuitive painting as an artistic practice showcases a fascinating intersection between Eastern and Western artistic traditions, each influenced by their respective socio-political and cultural contexts. The cultural disparities between Eastern and Western approaches to art are deeply ingrained in cognitive processes and aesthetic preferences [26]. Eastern art, exemplified by Chinese landscape painting, emphasizes context and the harmonious fusion of elements. In contrast, Western art, particularly post-Renaissance, prioritizes central perspective and prominent objects, reflecting a more structured and analytical approach to composition [27].

These distinctions are mirrored in neural responses, with Western paintings eliciting more activity in visual and sensory-motor brain areas among Europeans than Eastern paintings [28]. This suggests that the cognitive engagement with art is influenced by cultural conditioning, leading to different aesthetic experiences and interpretations.

The convergence of Eastern and Western paintings in the era of globalization has spurred new creative ventures, blending conventional elements with contemporary influences [29]. This fusion reflects a global artistic dialogue that enhances the understanding of universal and unique aspects of intuition in art. For instance, incorporating Western watercolor techniques into Chinese art demonstrates how artistic methodologies can be exchanged and transformed across cultures [30].

Research on aesthetic preferences further indicates that cultural identity significantly influences visual art approaches, with Westerners and Easterners displaying distinct preferences [31]. The use of big data and artificial intelligence has facilitated a more profound comprehension of these distinctions, providing insights that foster artistic innovation [32]. Additionally, combining traditional Chinese culture with Western watercolor painting successfully integrates diverse cultural elements, creating a richer, more diverse artistic landscape [33].

In conclusion, the comparative study of intuitive painting in Eastern and Western contexts reveals universal mechanisms and unique cultural influences shaping artistic expression. The interplay of cultural, socio-political, and technological dynamics in intuitive art underscores the importance of understanding these factors to appreciate global art practices' depth and diversity fully.

Results and Discussion

Intuitive painting, exemplified by Indonesian artists Nashar, Srihadi Soedarsono, Ahmad Sadali, and Mochtar Apin, provides profound insights into art creation and appreciation's cognitive and emotional dimensions. Each artist's work serves as a case study in how intuition drives the artistic process, capturing deeper existential themes that resonate beyond the limits of rational analysis.

Nashar's abstract forms embody Bergsonian duration, representing continuous flows of intuitive consciousness that transcend static moments. This approach aligns with Henri Bergson's concept of *élan vital*, suggesting that artistic creativity extends life's inherent dynamics. Srihadi Soedarsono's dynamic compositions blend traditional and contemporary elements, reflecting an intuitive synthesis that engages cultural heritage and modernity, thereby challenging traditional rationalist interpretations of art.

Ahmad Sadali's spiritually infused paintings invite viewers to experience a sense of the sublime, engaging with deeper realities through an intuitive lens. This resonates with Bergson's idea that intuition penetrates the surface of reality to reveal its continuous, underlying nature. Mochtar Apin's surrealist and abstract expressionist works encourage

viewers to explore the fluid boundaries between reality and imagination, demonstrating how intuitive art can evoke profound psychological responses by tapping into the subconscious.

The psychological impact of intuitive painting on both artists and viewers is significant. Intuitive art goes beyond mere emotional expression, stimulating cognitive processes that include association and imagination, creating deeper emotional resonances. This indicates that intuitive art engages viewers on multiple levels, enhancing their emotional and cognitive interactions with the artwork. Through an intuitive and profound approach, artists can capture the nuances and complexities of life that are often missed in more conventional representations. This makes intuitive painting an invaluable tool in exploring and understanding an ever-changing world.

Recent neuroaesthetic findings have shed light on how the brain processes art, supporting Bergson's theories. Studies reveal that aesthetic experiences involve complex neural mechanisms, with distinct brain activity patterns associated with different artistic styles and cultural contexts. Semir Zeki's research highlights how the brain's visual areas process elements like color and form, actively constructing aesthetic experiences rather than passively receiving them. V.S. Ramachandran's principles of artistic experience suggest that specific neural responses to visual principles are hardwired, which intuitive artists instinctively harness to evoke specific aesthetic reactions.

Intuitive art engages different cognitive pathways than analytical art, often resulting in more immediate and visceral responses. This engagement aligns with neuroaesthetic findings that intuitive art can evoke stronger emotional responses and deeper cognitive engagement, as it connects with viewers on a more fundamental level. Analytical approaches to understanding art, such as using information-based measures, have uncovered hidden patterns within artworks, highlighting the intricate structures underlying intuitive creations.

The practical applications of these insights for artists and art educators are substantial. Understanding the cognitive and emotional impacts of intuitive painting can help artists develop techniques that enhance viewer engagement. For art educators, integrating the principles of intuitive art into curricula can foster a deeper appreciation of artistic creativity and its psychological effects. By embracing intuitive methods, artists and educators can promote a more holistic approach to art that transcends rational analysis and connects directly with the essence of human experience.

The discussion of intuitive painting through cognitive, cultural, and philosophical lenses provides a comprehensive understanding of its significance in modern art. By integrating Bergson's [34] philosophical insights with contemporary scientific research, we

gain a deeper appreciation of how intuition shapes artistic creativity and viewer engagement. This interdisciplinary approach underscores the transformative potential of intuitive painting, bridging the gap between rational analysis and profound emotional experiences, offering a holistic view of human creativity and perception. Thus, the practice of intuitive painting not only reflects changes in socio-cultural reality but also actively navigates and shapes our understanding of those changes.

Conclusion

This study illuminates the profound impact of intuitive painting on both artists and viewers, underscoring its significance in the broader context of modern art. By examining the works of Indonesian artists such as Nashar, Srihadi Soedarsono, Ahmad Sadali, and Mochtar Apin, we see how Bergson's philosophy of intuition, particularly his concept of *élan*, drives their creative processes. These artists harness intuition to capture the continuous flow of existence, transcending rational analysis to evoke deeper emotional and cognitive responses.

Recent neuroaesthetic findings support this intuitive approach, revealing that aesthetic experiences involve complex neural mechanisms. Research by Semir Zeki and V.S. Ramachandran highlights how the brain actively constructs aesthetic experiences, resonating with Bergson's theories that emphasize the dynamic and holistic nature of intuitive understanding. This interdisciplinary perspective enriches our understanding of how intuition shapes artistic creation and viewer engagement.

Intuitive painting engages different cognitive pathways than analytical art, often resulting in more immediate and visceral responses. This engagement enhances emotional resonance and stimulates cognitive processes such as association and imagination, making the interaction with art a multifaceted experience.

For artists and educators, these insights have practical implications. Artists can leverage intuitive methods to deepen viewer engagement, while art educators can integrate these principles into their teaching to foster a richer appreciation of creativity. By bridging cognitive science, philosophy, and art, this study highlights the transformative potential of intuitive painting, offering a holistic view of artistic expression that connects deeply with human experience.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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