



## **ANALYZING COLLAGE AS A COMMUNICATION ACT IN THE DIGITAL AGE BASED ON THE DADAISM RENEWAL MOVEMENT'S SPIRIT**

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### **Abstract**

Collage combines the semiotic tradition of Roland Barthes, the phenomenological tradition of Edmund Husserl, the critical tradition of Karl Marx, and the point of view of Jurgen Habermas in visual communication. The collage technique creates trans-aesthetic elements and double codes, a Dadaist method of encoding signs. Building on previous research, this study explores collage art as a communication act and its process in the digital era. Digital photography technology and computer software facilitate quicker and easier creation of collage art, emphasizing the fundamental concept of "paste." This pasting-sticking process mirrors the communication process of art and design in the digital era, illustrating cyclical communication capable of transcending space and time. The research has several conclusions. (1) By enhancing visual communication strategies and efficiency based on the spirit of the Dadaism renewal movement, unique collages can be created as a personal sign of message(s). (2) Collages as communication act in the digital era represent dialogue in trans-aesthetics code. (3) On the other hand, with the spirit of Dadaism that contains a free mind, open creation, and emphasis on social-cultural issues, collages as a communication process are also possible to frame messages and create fallacy.

**Keywords:** collage, communication, Dadaism, digitalization

### **Introduction**

The history of collage began in prehistoric times when flower powder, shells, feathers, and butterfly wings were used as the basic material for making it. The discovery of paper in China around 200 BC started collage works using paper. Japan, following in the 13th and 14th centuries, artists in Eastern Europe produced many works of a religious nature that took materials from rocks, elastic fibers, relics, and precious metals which were combined in new media such as walls and sky Church ceilings, castle walls of kings and nobles. Dutch artists in the 17th century produced silhouettes from pieces of paper. In the 19th century, collage developed into a popular work, because at this time collage was only used as a hobby or pleasure for people but rather as a form of art. In the 20th century,



collage became a technique in creating modern works of art with the synthetic cubism of Pablo Picasso, and continues to develop over time, starting from the Dadaism movement in Zurich, Switzerland, which uses a lot of collage art as a protest of their ideology, until today Collage art has been widely used for commercial purposes (Gotz, 1993).

According to the Dictionary of Modern Art, A Collins—Larousse Concise Encyclopedia, collage is a branch of fine art that includes the activity of attaching pieces of paper or other materials to form a certain image or design. For example, assembling and gluing paper, wood, metal, used items, and even trash into wall decoration media. Likewise, all the painting media that were added were attached with accessories in various shapes according to the original. In fine arts, even though collage art is the opposite in nature of painting, sculpture or printing, and other craft arts, that is, the resulting work no longer shows the original form of the material used in painting, for example, from a white canvas to a colorful painting.

Collage has a long history as an ancient cultural form before finally appearing to re-emerge as a contemporary art form at the beginning of the 20th century. In fact, traces of this collage technique - before it was given the name "collage" - were already known in China around 200 BC when paper was first discovered, but its use was not widespread, until the 10th Century in Japan when calligraphy artists began to attach text with glue to write poetry. The new collage technique emerged in central Europe in the 13th century as a form of folk craft to decorate their homes. In past cultures in Europe, Asia, and America, all kinds of materials commonly found in everyday life were often combined and transformed into symbolic objects as keepsakes or even just used as decoration as purely aesthetic elements.

The collage technique began to be applied in Gothic Cathedral churches in the 15th and 16th centuries. In the 18th century, examples of collage can be found in the work of Mary Delany, and in the 19th century, this collage method was also used by people with pieces of memorabilia to decorate photo albums and children's story books Hans Christian Andersen and Carl Spitzweg (Leland & Williams, 1994). In the early 1900s, the avant-garde adopted collage techniques as a medium for their work, making it an integral part of the evolution of contemporary art, as well as the desire of most artists to create works that could be produced more easily or in other words using ready-made materials.

Collage is starting to be of interest to many fine arts practitioners, both professional and amateur artists. It is because collage succeeds in representing something more personal and spontaneous in exploring materials that are easily found every day. These materials are turned into compositions that are very different from each personality until finally arriving at a theory that the creative possibilities that can be created when working with collage are endless (Dewi, 2019).

Collage has become a popular medium among artists due to its unique appearance which demands high creativity. Artists Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque, Hannah Hoch, Kurt Schwitters, Marcel Duchamp, Raoul Hausmann, Max Ernst, and Henri Matisse are famous for their work using collage techniques of paper, fabric, and various other objects. The use of foreign media outside of conventional painting materials caused a lot of criticism and controversy in the eyes of people in the early days of its application (Gotz, 1993). This also influenced Dada artists

who used collage techniques as one of the weapons widely used in the Dada movement as well as an expression of anti-establishment art. Regarding the possibility of collage techniques representing popular culture with its parody nature, Piliang explains this in a discussion of the aesthetic language of postmodernism. One of these aesthetic languages, according to Piliang, is parody, which is a composition in a work of literature, or art in which the typical thought tendencies and expressions of an author, artist, architect, or certain style are imitated in such a way as to make it humoristic or absurd (Piliang, 1998). With the possibility of combining various materials through collage techniques, humorous or absurd effects usually result from distortions or puns on existing expressions (Yunus, 2020). Although parody is a form of imitation, it is imitation characterized by ironic tendencies. Parody is the reuse of signs from the past that are filled with critical space, which emphasizes criticism, satire, and condemnation, as an expression of dissatisfaction or simply to explore a sense of humor from serious reference works. Parody elements in a two-dimensional work of art, through collage techniques, are very likely composed of signs of 'established' subcultures that have found new meanings with presentations that seem ironic, contradictory, lose the core meaning, and prioritize surface meaning (Piliang, 2004).

The Dadaism movement was a rebel movement that rejected the way of thinking that "art is something high, expensive, serious, complicated and exclusive." They reject this frame of mind because this kind of art belongs to the upper middle class who have pseudo-aesthetics. In this phenomenal Dadaism movement, many works of fine art once again emerged with the dominance of clearer, bolder, and more demonstrative collage techniques, which then moved to encourage the birth of three-dimensional assembly techniques (assemblages) for the presence of found objects in works of fine art (Clement, 1958). This research aims to analyze, as a tangible object, and as an intangible idea how the communication process of art and design occurs in collage as an art movement that became the foundation of many Dadaist artists, so that it becomes an immanent space that breeds many transcendent signs, trans-aesthetic codes that often cause "noise" in the appreciator's "decoding" process; also, to find possibility analysis model that can figure special pattern that communicates this technique in the process of creating art, thus making it a technique that is significantly assumed to be able to "encode" a "message", a stimulus for the public (Stephen & Foss, 1996). This research can produce a logical explanation of the communication process of art and design in the digital era—based on collage as a case study focused on the spirit of the renewal movement in the Dadaism era.

## **Method**

This interdisciplinary research will rely on a Cultural Studies approach, using text analysis. The way Cultural Studies works is related to the concept of signs. Signs are often structured as codes that are determined by implicit and explicit rules by members of a culture (Barker, 2011). Code as a cultural text implies a variety of social attitudes contained in cultural artifacts so that it always becomes a forum where the code articulation process takes place. "The concept of articulation refers to the formation of a temporary unity between elements that do

not actually have to be combined" (Barker, 2011); so in articulation, there is a process of combining or unifying certain elements (Piliang, 1998).

The term "text" refers to more than just written words; it also encompasses a variety of meaning practices that are embodied in other elements, such as sounds, images, objects, and activities. The functioning mechanism is comparable to language because each of these components is also a marking system (Barnard, 2005). A deeper understanding of meaning is necessary to comprehend how the articulation process, which is characterized by the creation of a new code, can cause differences in understanding between creators and audiences. It is quite possible for there to be a double coding or an expansion of the sign's meaning during the articulation process (Eco, 1976 in Noth, 2006). Qualitative text and image data will be obtained using Documentation Analysis in the form of images taken from archives and other recorded images related to collage art.

This research was divided into two stages; the first stage was collecting visual data representing collages in the Dadaist era, and the second stage was conducting text analysis using related literature studies and qualitative data generated from related references, and drawing synthesis from the text analysis. In this case, as told in the previous before, the text can be in the form of writing, images, or even multimedia data. This research was conducted in several places; observations were made by visiting a gallery that has a strong relationship with samples of collage artwork. The research objects were limited to collage art in the Dadaist era, and Dadaist collage art in the area of fine arts and design today; and positioned as pre-research based on the data inventory stage—which means, that through triangulation of data sources (Dwiyanto, 2023)—there is still potential to produce and/or develop more specific research related to Dadaist-based collage as an act of communication in the digital era.

## **Findings and Discussion**

### ***Collage art as a reform movement in the era of Dadaism***

The Dadaism movement was a rebellious wave that rejected the notion that "art is something elevated, expensive, serious, complicated, and exclusive." They opposed this conventional way of thinking, as such art was perceived to belong to the upper middle class and possessed a superficial aesthetic. Within this phenomenal Dadaism movement, numerous works of visual art emerged, prominently employing the collage technique with more distinct, assertive, and demonstrative characteristics (Mitchell, 1994). This movement also later led to the emergence of the three-dimensional assemblage technique, incorporating found objects into artworks.

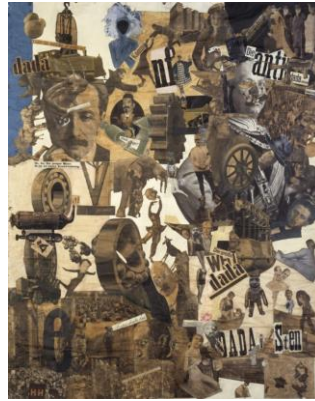


Figure 1. Hannah Höch, *Cut with the Kitchen Knife through the Beer-Belly of the Weimar Republic, 1919*, collage of pasted papers, 90 x 144 cm  
(Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hannah\\_H%C3%B6ch](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hannah_H%C3%B6ch))

Collage was seen as a technique capable of representing Dadaist ideas that deviated from established artistic norms, simultaneously aligning with the message of the artwork meant to respond to and critique the socio-economic and political conditions of the time, amidst the turmoil of World War I. In its creation process, the art of combining images can be categorized into three techniques: assembling, montage, and collage. Assembling involves creating a tri-material work by arranging or assembling specific objects into an artwork, similar to what is seen in "nirmana tri-matra." Some significant artists of that era who worked with the collage technique and whose works form the foundation of analysis in this paper include Kurt Schwitters, Hannah Hoch (Berlin Dadaism), and Robert Rauschenberg (Neo-Dada) (Gotz, 1993). The term "montage" originates from the French language, meaning "assembly" or "putting together." "Montage was first used by Soviet filmmakers like Sergei Eisenstein in the 1920s to describe the process of editing and assembling film images—however, it quickly found its place among Berlin Dadaists like Hannah Hoch for her 'photo montages'" (Gotz, 1993).

In contrast to montage, collage works are generally perceived through touch, while montage presents a smoother integration, akin to a single photo print. "Collage originates from the French word 'coller,' meaning to paste or stick, it is a technique of adhering elements such as newspaper clippings, ribbons, images, or other artistic creations onto a surface to create a unified work" This can be observed in the collage and assembling works of Kurt Schwitters.

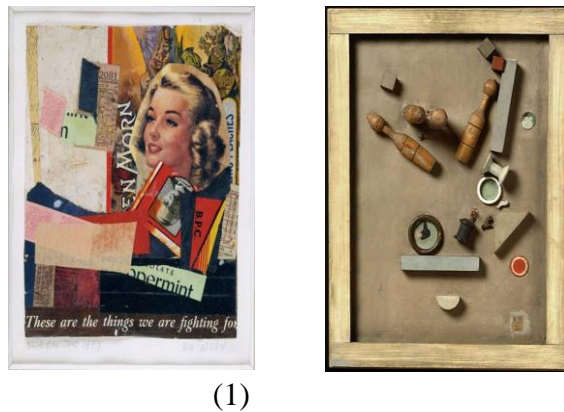


Figure 2. (1) Kurt Schwitters, En Morn (1947); (2) Kurt Schwitters, Merz Picture 46 A. The Skittle Picture (1921)

Source: [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/david-galenson/kurt-schwitters-art-of-re\\_b\\_3102921.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/david-galenson/kurt-schwitters-art-of-re_b_3102921.html)

Collage, born alongside the Dada movement, gradually experienced a decline. After a period of dormancy lasting several years, collage resurfaced in the 1960s. Some artists associated with the pop art movement began using photographs and magazine clippings to create collage forms to convey their ideas. One notable figure in this resurgence was a neo-Dada exponent, Robert Rauschenberg, who employed popular objects and items as subject matter and engaged with the material imagery of everyday life within his artistic technique.

Several artists associated with the pop art movement began to use photographs and magazine writings to create a form of collage to convey their ideas, one of which was an oft-discussed exponent of neo-dada, namely Robert Rauschenberg, who used objects that are popular as subject matter and related to material images in the everyday environment in his work techniques.



Figure 3. Robert Rauschenberg, Canyon (1959)

Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Robert\\_Rauschenberg%27s\\_%27Canyon%27,\\_1959.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Robert_Rauschenberg%27s_%27Canyon%27,_1959.jpg)

Robert Rauschenberg was more varied in his work and carried out transformations. After experiments with minimalism, Rauschenberg began to move towards painting or combination painting, a creative method in which the painted surface is combined with various objects added to the surface. Sometimes

the paintings appear three-dimensional. Rauschenberg is often referred to as a Schwitters who has gone through abstract expressionist experiences.

***The communication process of the collage art-based-renewal movement in Dadaism***

Collage as a technique for packaging the "message" of the artist, often raises themes that can be divided into at least 2 (two), namely themes that are social and political in nature, and themes that are personal in nature. In the Dada movement, although it was full of political enthusiasm, not all of its activists included political themes in their works. Unlike Hannah Hoch, whose collage works are very political, Kurt Schwitters and Robert Rauschenberg often raise themes that are very personal in nature, even seeming absurd (Clement, 1993).

Double codes and trans-aesthetic codes arise from the "obscurity" of the various signs that appear through collage techniques as a Dadaist way of "encoding" their signs. A signifier is not a sign if it does not have a signified; otherwise, it means nothing. However, a signifier is necessary for a sign to be conveyed or captured; the signified, on the other hand, is a sign in and of itself and is therefore a linguistic factor. Like the two sides of a piece of paper, the signifier and the signified are the same.

Semiotics comprises three areas of study: communication semiotics, which examines signs as a component of communication. Here a sign is only considered a sign as intended by the sender and as received by the recipient. The second one is connotation semiotics, which studies the connotative meaning of signs. In human relations, it often happens that the signs given by someone are understood differently by the recipient. The relationship between texts and the cultural and personal experiences of their users, as well as the relationship between textual conventions and the conventions that users experience and anticipate, is emphasized by Roland Barthes' Connotation Semiotics. The "order of signification" is the term used to describe Barthes' theory, which includes denotation—the dictionary's actual meaning—and connotation—a double meaning derived from cultural and personal experience (Kurniawan, 2001). In the communication process of collage art as a renewal movement in the era of Dadaism which gave rise to works with a tendency toward trans-aesthetic codes, communication semiotics can be used to analyze works related to the identification of material signs used as subject matter in the work. Meanwhile, connotation semiotics is used in the analysis related to the relationship between signifier and signified in the overall interpretation of the work (Dominic, et al., 1993).

On the other side, the phenomenological communication tradition which concentrates on personal experience includes the part of individuals who share their experiences. Phenomenology is a way that humans use to understand the world through direct experience (Stephen & Foss, 1996). The concept of a person's experience in interpreting a phenomenon makes it a guide for understanding the concept of other phenomena that occur in front of him. Communication is seen as a process of sharing experiences between individuals through dialogue. Therefore, the phenomenological tradition relies heavily on people's perceptions and interpretations of their subjective experiences. Expert in the phenomenological tradition, According to Maurice Merleau-Ponty, all

knowledge—including scientific knowledge—comes from a variety of global experiences. Stanley Deetz identifies three fundamental tenets of phenomenology: knowledge is derived directly from conscious experience; the significance of an object is derived from its influence on an individual's life; and language serves as a medium for meaning. Each person defines and expresses the world through the language they use to experience it (Stephen & Foss, 1996).

### ***Discussion***

As a phenomenon of the renewal movement in the era of Dadaism, based on its historicity, collage art can be analyzed using the phenomenological approach of Edmund Husserl who uses the term phenomenology to show what appears in our consciousness by allowing it to manifest as it is without attaching the categories of our thoughts to it or according to expressions. Husserl: *zuruck den sachen selbst* (return to reality itself). In contrast to Kant, Husserl stated that what is called a phenomenon is reality itself which appears after our consciousness has become fluid with reality. Husserl's phenomenology aims to find the essential or *eidōs* (essence) of what is called a phenomenon. The method used to search for the essential is to let the phenomenon speak for itself without being accompanied by prejudice (pre-suppositionlessness) (David, 2007). For this, Husserl uses the term "intentionality", namely the reality that appears in individual consciousness or intentional consciousness in capturing "phenomena as they are".

This approach is of course different from the neuroscience approach, which seeks to understand how human consciousness works in the brain and nerves, namely by using an observer's point of view. Neuroscience views the phenomenon of consciousness as a biological phenomenon. Meanwhile, phenomenological descriptions look more at human experiences as they experience them, namely from a first-person perspective. Even though it focuses on first-person subjective experiences, phenomenology does not stop at just describing sensory feelings (David, 2007). Sensory experience is only a starting point for arriving at conceptual meaning, which is deeper than sensory experience itself. Conceptual meaning can be in the form of imagination, thoughts, desires, or specific feelings when people experience their world personally and then communicate these experiences through collage art (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006).

Both the scope of interpersonal communication and media communication that is expected collage to act as a tool for societal transformation (Dewi, 2020), possible to explain through the critical tradition. This tradition views the communication process from a critical perspective. Communication is considered to have two opposing sides, where on the one hand it is characterized by the process of domination of strong groups over weak groups of society. On the other hand, communication activities should be a process of articulation of the interests of weak social groups. Critical theory also pays great attention to the means of communication in society. Communication, according to the Critical Tradition approach, is a result of the pressure between individual creativity in providing a message framework and social constraints on that creativity. In this tradition, the communication process of collage art can be analyzed through post-structuralist ideas in the critical tradition, which views reality as something complex and always in the process of becoming. Reality is not as seen by structuralists who see it as orderly, orderly, and structured. Reality is a process of formation that takes



place continuously involving many groups with their respective identities. What stands out is the process of articulation from each group (David, 2007).

In the digital era, a spirit of rebellion similar to the parody of Dada's movement against established structures is demonstrated through the incorporation of images from sources usually protected by intellectual property rights—with the possibility of combining various materials through collage techniques, humorous or absurd effects usually result from distortions or puns on existing expressions using digital application.

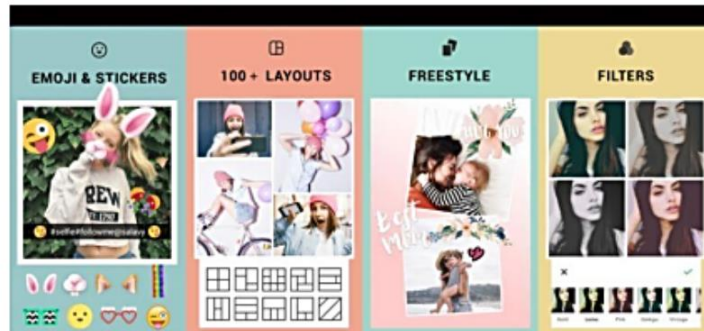


Figure 4. One of the digital applications that accommodates the practical creation of collage works

Although parody is a form of imitation, it is imitation characterized by ironic tendencies. Parody is the reuse of signs from the past that are filled with critical space, which emphasizes criticism, satire, and condemnation, as an expression of dissatisfaction or simply to explore a sense of humor from serious reference works. The element of parody in a work of collage art, is very likely composed of signs of an established subculture that has found new meaning with an exposure that seems ironic, contradictory, loses core meaning, and prioritizes surface meaning, the emergence of "novelty", "dual codes" which opposes the industrialization of the mind which is built through media penetration (Dewi, et al., 2020); to give rise to a uniform feedback tendency from the public using the Critical Tradition which can be analyzed through Karl Marx's approach regarding the commodification of art and Jurgen Habermas' approach in one of his works "Modernity: An "Incomplete Project" (1988), states that the principle of "something new" (...) is a principle that reflects modern humans' longing for beauty and authenticity (Piliang, 1998).

Then, referring to Harold Lasswell's Communication Model, in collage art as a renewal movement in the era of Dadaism, a cyclical process occurred which was in line with this model, namely "Who – Says What – In Which Channel – To Whom – With What Effect". In this cyclical process, it appears that there is a communicator and message domain that is dominated by the Intrapersonal Communication context; an "In Which Channel" domain that is dominated by the Interpersonal Context which overlaps with the Small Group Communication Context, and a To Whom - With What Effect domain that is dominated by the context. Mass Communication (Media Communication) intersects with the context of Intercultural Communication (David, 2007).

The creation of collage art involves an understanding of 'images,' 'imagery,' and 'thoughts,' encapsulating a broad spectrum of contemplative signs from the artist (Tabrani, 2005). At a particular stage, the process of crafting collage art within the framework of Intrapersonal Communication can be perceived as a means of self-control (imagining) by the artist over the impressions garnered from their environment (Rakhmat, 2002). Collage art often becomes an icon, an index, and occasionally even a symbol—a constellation of signs conveying connotative and/or denotative meanings that are subjectively constructed as avenues for exploration and a realm of contemplation. In this context, the collage artist as a communicator engages in an internal dialogic process to construct an array of imagery that is eventually released into a more expansive space for appreciation.

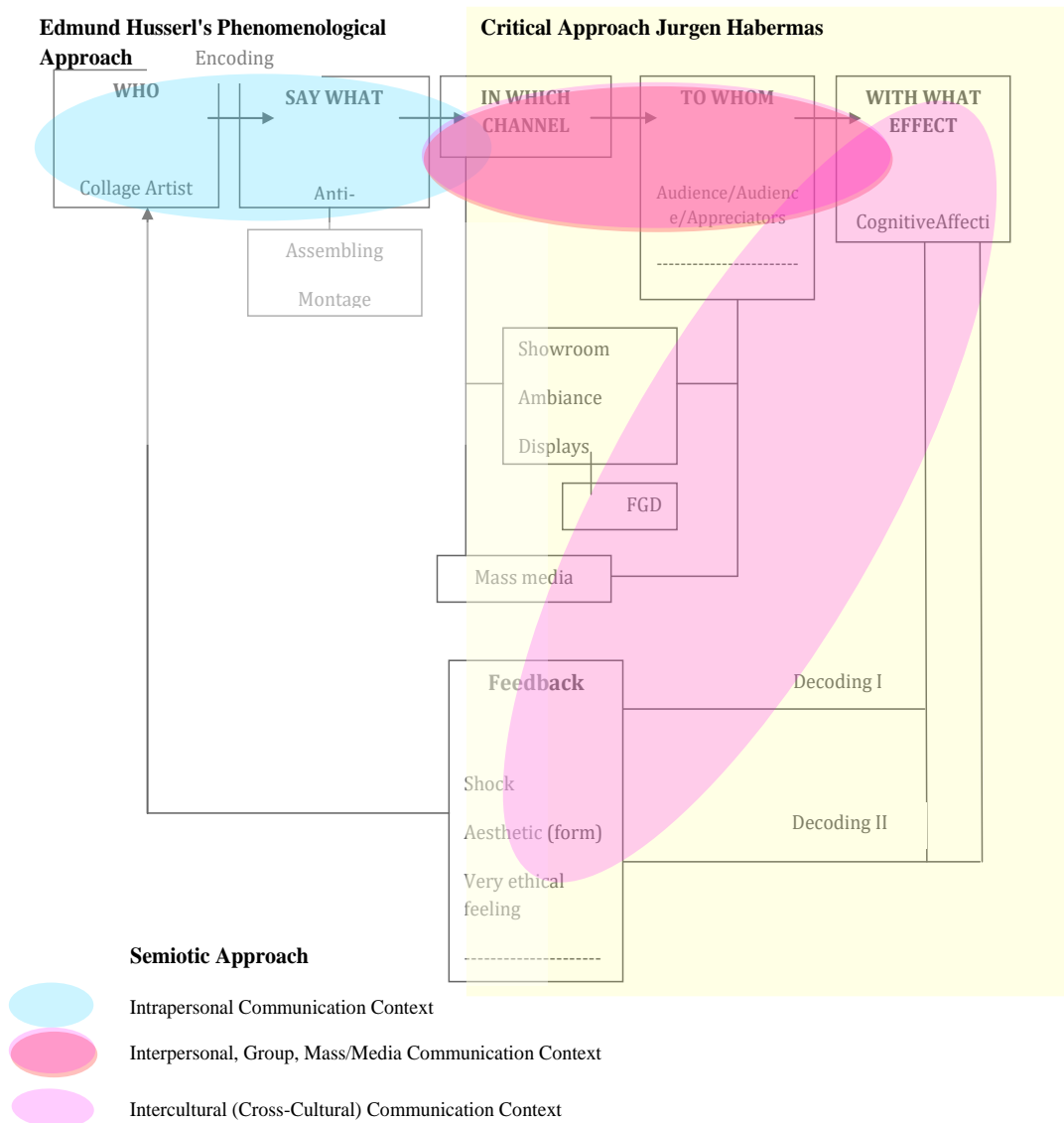


Figure 5. The model that represents analysis collage as a communication act based on spirit renewal Dadaism (Dewi, 2023)

Within the Interpersonal Context, during the process of communication through collage art in the Dadaism era, a parallel can be drawn to when an individual communicates their thoughts to others. For instance, Hannah Hoch communicated her ideas to the public regarding the application of collage art in her works through verbal expressions. Within this scenario, the collage artist is likely engaged in a process of artistic communication concerning their work, which intersects with the context of Small Group Communication and/or Mass Communication/Mediated Communication. In this setting, the encoding phase of collage art from the Dadaism era can be profoundly subjective, personal, and rife with signs referencing self-identity, bearing an immanent character (closer and confined to the artist's personal experience) (Reed, 2004).

These artworks can trigger various transcendent ideas; ideas that lie beyond the boundaries of normalcy, knowledge, and human capacity; extraordinary ideas that might be deemed unfitting, inappropriate, sparking controversy, evoking contradiction and polemics, and even capable of engendering unforeseen dialogues within the creative process (David, 2007). This encoding communication process undoubtedly gives rise to a series of effects that target various cognitive, affective, and/or psychomotor aspects of the audience as communicants as multimodalities (Dewi & Levita, 2004). The feedback that emerges could take the form of questioning, negation, or any form of reaction towards the "decoded" (or decoding) artwork—potentially discussing or classifying the collage art as entertainment or assessing its worth as an artistic creation for the public (Zaenal, 2015).

Regarding the content of the message, collage artists engage in an encoding process that significantly invites the public to explore the integrity and intensity of creation rooted in issues of vulnerability. Often, the artist's aesthetic concerns, drawn from various signs in social reality, emerge as a set of indices that frequently (although sometimes subjectively; "double-coded messages," "trans-aesthetic codes," "arbitrary codes") contribute symbols and/or disrupt symbols within the doctrine of cultural elements, integrating into the consciousness schema regarding their statement about the collage art itself. This statement, which may take the form of (self-distribution) integration of text, images, shapes, and found objects, could potentially give rise to feedback in the form of criticism among fellow collage artists. The process of collage art communication, in the end, becomes cyclical, and it could potentially birth a realm of immanence that fosters numerous transcendent ideas, which can subsequently be openly appreciated.

Striving for the search for both meaning and a new means of expression, the subsequent resurgence in the utilization of collage in Europe is closely linked to the anti-nuclear political movement of the 1980s. Numerous works were designed for use in banners or posters for the anti-nuclear movement demonstrations. Peter Kennard and Klaus Staeck are two names that can be mentioned in connection with the revival of collage art in the 1980s. Both have produced numerous politically charged collages. Klaus Staeck can even be considered as carrying on the tradition of Heartfield's collage from the Dada movement, as many of his collages take the form of single images with accompanying politically critical captions.

Based on the above discussion, to address the underlying questions that prompted the analysis of the collage art communication process as a renewal

movement in the Dadaism era in the Introduction, the author presents an analytical model developed from the Lasswell Communication Model concerning Communication Traditions and Contexts (Figure 5). Collage, as a technique to convey the "message" of the artist, often addresses themes that can be categorized into at least two distinct categories: social and political themes, and personal themes. Within the Dada movement, although imbued with political fervor, not all activists incorporated political themes into their works. Unlike Hannah Hoch, whose collages were strongly political, Kurt Schwitters and Robert Rauschenberg often leaned towards exploring highly personal themes, even bordering on the absurd.

When looking back to the early days of collage's inception, distinct characteristics emerge in the spirit of the messages conveyed by collage works:

1. There is an urge to constantly bring about change by collecting images from different sources and attempting to unify them on a single surface. This imparts a strong sense of the process of creating something new from something old—an eagerness to dismantle old structures and rejuvenate them.
2. A spirit of rebellion against established structures is demonstrated through the incorporation of images from sources usually protected by intellectual property rights. In collage, these sources are playfully inverted by the collage creator, who takes them and combines them with other images that might also be protected by copyright laws. This spirit of rebellion also involves dismantling the barriers that separate artists from non-artists, erasing distinctions between those deserving the title of "artist" and those who are not. Through this breaking down of barriers, collage "seems" to exhibit an artistic communication pattern that suggests everyone is an artist, capable of easily producing their artwork without prior education in art school or formal art courses. In this context, G. Jula Dech once commented that collage holds political significance due to its emphasis on technical elements in an attack on bourgeois aesthetics, and it serves as a technique that can be learned, especially by the general mass of amateur artists.
3. There is a celebration of pluralism or the celebration of diversity to forge something new or better. In collage, various objects sourced from different origins are brought together to form a new meaning. Shapes with distinct original backgrounds are united or harmonized to achieve something both unique and beautiful. The diversity of the sources of image fragments that are then amalgamated strongly conveys the spirit of celebrating diversity toward achieving something beautiful (Sears, 1998). Dual codes, trans-aesthetic codes, are created by the "ambiguity" of the various signs created by the collage technique as a Dadaist method of "encoding" their signs.

Collage art, within the realm of art communication in the digital transformation era, becomes a process that gives birth to works of art with dual codes, some of which are highly likely to be arbitrary codes. According to this concept, meaning arises when there is an associative or in absentia relationship between the "signified" and the "signifier" (Kurniawan, 2001)—which gives rise to works with tendencies toward trans-aesthetic codes.

Meanwhile, phenomenology is a way humans understand the world through direct experience. The concept of one's experience in interpreting a

phenomenon serves as a guide to understanding other phenomena that occur before them. Communication is seen as the process of sharing experiences between individuals through dialogue. Therefore, the phenomenological tradition heavily relies on people's perceptions and interpretations of their subjective experiences. Although focusing on the first-person subjective experience, phenomenology does not stop at describing sensory feelings alone. Sensory experience is only a starting point to reach conceptual meaning, which goes beyond the sensory experience itself. This conceptual meaning can involve imagination, thoughts, desires, or specific feelings when individuals experience their world personally and then communicate that experience through collage art.

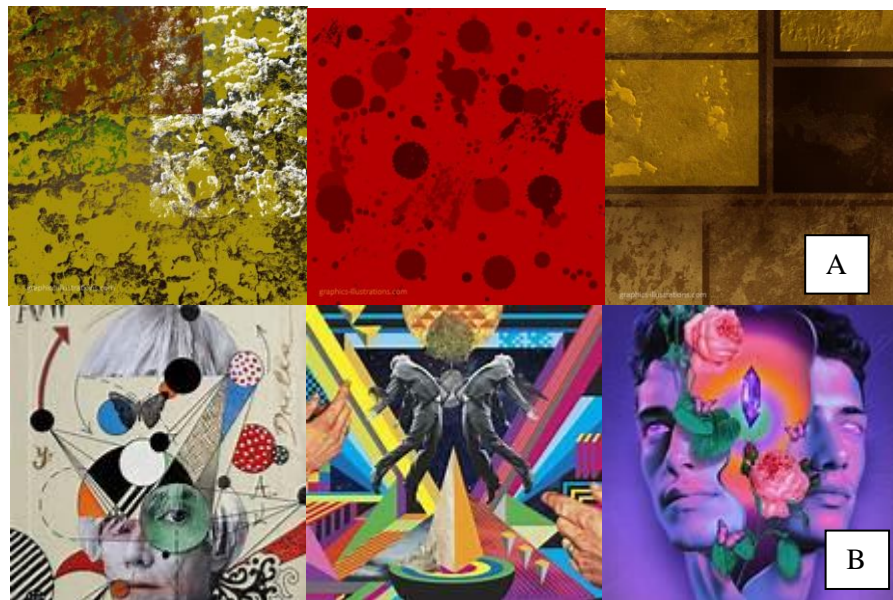


Figure 5. (A) The Collage Design Trend: A Nostalgic Twist in 2024's Art World (Graphics-Illustrations, 2024), retrieved from <https://graphics-illustrations.com/collage-design-trend-crafting-nostalgia-in-2024s-creative-landscape/>; (B) Collage Art: 50 New Artworks to Fuel Your Creativity (Indieground, 2024), retrieved from <https://indieground.net/blog/collage-art-50-new-artworks/>

Digital transformation opens up opportunities for colleges to become a broader communication act (Husain, 2022). In the sense that, using artificial intelligence, visual elements can be combined in a more expressive, emotive way, going beyond the limits of what could be done in the Dadaist era. However, with the openness of collage to become a communication act in the era of digital transformation, it should have the potential to strengthen the spirit of the Dadaist era--which optimizes collage as a form of art and design that functions as social criticism.

The no-boundaries space created by the digital era could make collages view the communication process critically. Communication is seen as having two opposing sides: on one hand, it's marked by the dominance of powerful groups over weaker societal groups, and on the other, communication activities should ideally serve as a process of articulation for the interests of weaker societal groups. This means the Dadaism Renewal spirit is in line with critical theory that also

pays significant attention to communication tools within society. Communication becomes results from the tension between individual creativity in framing messages and social constraints on that creativity. Reality is a continuous formation process involving many groups with their distinct identities. What stands out is the presence of articulation processes from each group.

Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that the potential of multi-literacy in art and design using collage as a communication act during the era of the digital transformation, in its process, can give rise to designs with double meanings in their codes, which fundamentally aims to study how humanity interprets things. Interpreting (to signify) in this context cannot be confused with communicating (to communicate) (Dewi, 2019). Multimodalities acknowledge that communication extends beyond a singular mode, encompassing a combination of modes to enhance the richness, engagement, and effectiveness of conveying information and meaning (Dewi & Levita, 2024). This idea holds particular relevance in our contemporary digital and interconnected environment, where diverse forms of media and communication intersect and interact. Interpreting means that objects not only convey information but also constitute a structured system of signs. This means that one of the multi-literacy competencies in design that should be achieved in higher design education is the ability for conceptual understanding.

### **Conclusion**

As feedback emerges from the cyclical process of collage art communication, especially in the era of advanced technology today, particularly for parties operating in industries that cannot detach themselves from image-related issues, collage art has become almost mandatory. The development of computer technology, such as Photoshop software, has made collage art increasingly intricate and beautiful. From television commercials to music videos and even fashion, various forms of collage have been widely adopted. Collage art once considered an anti-art movement, deemed messy and laden with blasphemy against the divine, with its lengthy "communication" process built through dialog between collage artists and/or their works with the public, has eventually become inseparable from the societal fabric it inhabits.

However, subsequently, the impacts of societal development do not always provide an influence that "strengthens the character" of collage artworks. One of the feedbacks from modernity is revealed by Peter Kennard, a collage artist, who stated:

....."There's a problem with collages now, you can see them anywhere because of digital technology. Too many images are altered, [but] among those who receive the formed image, they don't question its meaning. I think my work lost its impact because of that."....

This statement seems to point towards a "noise" in the communication process of collage art in its role as an artwork and/or technique and/or concept.

It means that collage art communication can be analyzed both in its process related to artworks as tangible objects and/or the technique and/or concept, as well as its approach as both a "message" and a "creation" itself. It

can also examine its dissemination to a broader group of individuals through interpersonal and/or mediated means, including the feedback it generates. This model, then, is very possible to apply (in extended analysis) to the creation process collage as a communication act in the digital transformation era.

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