SYNTHETIC LOVE

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ABSTRACT
In this century, women have a big tendency to dislike their natural appearances; some of them decide to undergo plastic surgery to get a perfect body shape.

Rather than develop a form of prêt-a-porter or Haute Couture, conceptual costume for the stage, sculptural fashions or similar creative approaches to fashion are more of the aim of my artwork. My costume is designed to give a special experience on the stage, in ceremony, or as an art object within a gallery context. It functions as fashions object or fashion performance and as a fashion based sculptural installation object.

The costume that I made is intended to express the unusualness and the weirdness of costumes; it’s potential to inspire and to feed the imagination. A costume is not experienced as a creative artwork in everyday life, which reflects an approach through commercialized designs. I used fashion as a medium of social critique to express my point of view about certain phenomena or issues in nowadays society. With a bold conceptual approach to art, fashion design and pop culture, I explore themes such as love and lust, which contain foreign influences on Indonesian culture and mass consumerism.

Keywords: women, commodity and fashion
I. INTRODUCTION
‘Synthetic Love’ costumes express neither romance nor the true glory of love; they express something ironic and extreme through the use of the color of overwhelming pink.

I have been using pink color since 1988, and I make it as a signature. I have worked quite consistently with pink since the beginning of my career as a fashion artist in 1998. It has been my signature to use this brilliant color in my art to assign eccentric sensation since pink is known to be a girly, kitsch, synthetic color & the material I used mostly with pink plastics and synthetic fur.

Ideas, Inspiration & Purpose

My performance has two meanings. It is not only to criticize how some people think about women and some women see themselves but also to entertain people through my eye catchy costumes and through my fashion performance which unique and kitschy to attract people’s imagination, so that it will be easy for people to remember.

In my artwork ‘Synthetic Love’, I was developed and focused more in a metaphor of fake implantation of boobs and bums on the body. My underlying thought was how would people react when they see a lot of boobs everywhere in the body? This is referring to the needs of women to get a lot of attention from men.

I choose fake love as a theme for my project to express my philosophy of ‘Synthetic Love’ concept to the audience through the costume and its performance as a medium to express my social critique, where I describe about women's efforts to improve her through various physical manipulations to get more attention on the environment. This trend has been happening around the world and many women spend huge of money to achieve this goal. I go into this project by making fashion exhibitions and
performances as well as a few workshops in various countries; for 3 months artist residency at the Fukuoka Asian Art Museum in Japan in year 2005 and Blackburn Museum & Art Gallery and the Action Factory in Blackburn England in year 2006.

II. BACKGROUND

Women’s body has been treated as commodity

The women’s body has been treated as commodity since long time ago, for example: the French actress whale bone constricting garment which shaped an idealized ‘hourglass’ body will be the starting focus; the Indonesian kebaya and its modest shaping and accentuation of the female form will be considered along with its ritual and domestic forms in Indonesian society and the glamour corset, externalized as a fashion item by fashion icons such as Madonna and Kyle Minogue will demonstrate the cycle in which the corset moves from a restricting garment of suppression to one which celebrates the idea of female sexuality.

![Picture 1: Mrs. Ratna Sari Dewi wearing Indonesia kebaya](image1)
![Picture 2: Polaire (1879-1939) was a French actress with a waist of approximately 14 inches.](image2)
![Picture 3: Kylie Minogue wearing corset](image3)
![Picture 4: Madonna wearing corset](image4)

There are some statements that sharpen that women are commodities:

“The western fashion is based on the difference of how male and female perceived the image of feminity within the community. The more dominant male strictly rules women. Therefore, women
wear what men considered as appropriate that made them the object of desire and pleasure and defined the term felinity”\(^1\).

“I know there are people out there who point to corsets as a symbol of female oppression, but in this day & age, in a relatively civilized society I’d say “bollocks”! A few hundred years ago I’m sure it was a different story. Women wear corsets today because they want to, they’re not forced into it, it’s a choice & that in itself is empowering. I hope that corsetry will only get more decadent & more popular. I’m actually looking for a corset that would work well when singing with my band, a rock ‘n roll corset range would be very cool!”\(^2\)

Corset was seen as female oppression in the old days, but in this modern day, corset is seen, as one of a choice for it is self-empowering. But still women’s body has been treated as commodity.

More extreme examples where women operated on her to obtain a champion as Miss BumBum in Latin American countries, which ended tragically, after suffering an infection as a result of the implants in the buttocks.

“Fashion has become a means of representing the female body as a display to satisfy male sexual desires. This condition has created habitual role-play in women's life that their love and obsession of

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\(^1\) Craik, The Face of Fashion: Cultural Studies in Fashion, 46-47

fashion and has highlighted a new female image: narcissistic and materialistic. Eventually, the circle of fashion gives birth to capitalism that has been feeding female addictive consumerism.\textsuperscript{3}

“The term feminity evolves throughout the centuries mostly affected by the changing idealism and fantasies of the influential women role models, such as aristocrats, beautiful women, television stars, models and popular musicians. It is the product of determination and commitment supported by the media that promotes ideal images and icons of feminity for the purpose of profitable promotions and tradings.\textsuperscript{4}

These paragraphs assert really clearly that women’s body has been treated as commodity.

III. RESULT

I related that kind of situation through my exaggerated costumes to express my critical view about the artificial physical appearance of the women in the TV shows we watch in this century. For my fashion performance I wore costume with big breasts and big bums by storming on to the pitch through a parody about the way society encourages women to sexualize them. I did this by parading on to the pitch in the mocking costumes with another model and by using cynical costume to emphasize the weight the society puts on ‘perfect’ appearance at Blackburn Rovers’ home football match against Aston Villa on the 11th March 2006. Then I explained the theme: ‘Synthetic Love’ for an audience of 30.000 hysterical football fans.

I want to criticize woman who have big boobs and also to criticize the women who think that having big boobs as a valuable asset.

\textsuperscript{3} Craik, The Face of Fashion: Cultural Studies in Fashion, 46
\textsuperscript{4} Craik, The Face of Fashion: Cultural Studies in Fashion, 47
The long fake penis and big boobs was designed to express my opinion about fake ness. The message that I want to deliver to the audience is that those artificial implantations or fake things only give temporary happiness. It is because the love which they will receive will be as artificial as their implantation. After being shown in England (2006), followed again shown in Indonesia (2007) and in Australia (2011).

Picture 7: Synthetic Love Performance on the Book: the Indonesian Women Artists; the Curtain Opens, p#234-238

Picture 8: Synthetic Love Performance in the half-time draw at the football match between Blackburn Rovers against Aston Villa on the 11th March 2006.
The Pink Performance reported in Lancashire Evening Telegraph Newspaper (Wednesday, March 8, 2006)

Synthetic Love installation reported in Lancashire Evening Telegraph (March 23, 2006)

The article about ‘Synthetic Love’ parade at Högskolan I Borås was written on Borås Tidning newspaper.

‘Synthetic Love’ performance for the Final Exam at the Högskolan i Borås, Sweden


Serial Synthetic Love Painting, the 12th International Visual Art Workshop & Exhibition @Poh-Chang Academy of Arts, Rajamangala University of Technology Rattanakosin (RMUTR), Bangkok – Thailand, 2016, p#39
After I did my MA project ‘Synthetic Love’ in year 2004-2006 with big boobs and bums costume, there was a woman from Tampa, Florida, Alisha Hessler a.k.a. Jasmine Tridevil (23 years old) had reportedly shelled out $20,000 to have a third breast surgically added to her chest in year 2014. It means that my thesis research about the woman who likes to seek attention from enlarging her breasts even having three breasts have actually happened in the real world.

![Picture 15: Alisha Hessler a.k.a. Jasmine Tridevil before the boobs operation](image15.jpg)

![Picture 16: Alisha Hessler a.k.a. Jasmine Tridevil with her three boobs](image16.jpg)

IV. CONCLUSIONS

This ‘Synthetic Love’ has been the basic concept behind all my artwork. The form and the material of my costume are meant to give a different perspective on how fake the world of beauty is.

I emphasize my ‘Synthetic Love’ project beyond the fake world and not intensely to the matter of discussing some feminist issue; the feminist issue are related to this project as an illustration. It is resilient act as a confident woman in view of the fact that there is also a peripheral feature so as to dominated women’s world. The thing is how to break out the hegemony thought in the society especially through the media such as television, for example: the concept of inner beauty.
V. PICTURE CREDITS


P8. Digital Photographs – Tiarma Sirait


P12. Digital Photographs – Tiarma Sirait


P14. The 12th International Visual Art Workshop & Exhibition @Poh-Chang Academy of Arts, Rajamangala University of Technology Rattanakosin (RMUTR), Bangkok – Thailand, 2016, p#39


VI. REFERENCES

