

Nadiyah Tunnikmah

Faculty of Visual Art and Design, Indonesia Institute of the Arts Yogyakarta

From Margins to Algorithms: Mediatization of Yogyakarta Visual Art on Instagram

Abstract: This research explores the mediatization of Yogyakarta's fine arts scene on Instagram, analyzing how algorithmic mediation influences artistic interaction, representation, and professionalization. Through ethnographic and netnographic methods conducted between October 2021 and April 2023, this study examines five Yogyakarta-based artists with varying career lengths (15–30 years) and follower counts (5,000–38,000). The findings reveal that Instagram serves not only as a distribution channel but also as a transformative space that reconfigures artistic practices, challenging traditional exhibition paradigms while reinforcing algorithm-driven visibility. The study contributes to a deeper understanding of digital mediation in contemporary art, highlighting both the opportunities and limitations imposed by the platform.

Keywords: mediatization; Instagram; Yogyakarta visual arts; digital art practices; social media algorithms.

The emergence of modern art in Indonesia during the Dutch colonial period indicates that its presence was marginalized from the outset. Historical studies document early art activities before Indonesian independence, when European artists, especially Dutch painters such as Adriannus Johannes Bik, Antoine Payen the Younger, and Hubertus Nicholas Sieburgh, were commissioned to document archaeological sites and local life.¹ Art institutions such as the Reindwardt Commission and the Bataviaasch Genootschap Institute played a significant role in this effort, which later developed with the establishment of a commission in 1901 that focused on Javanese and Madurese antiquities.

The increasing presence of foreign painters in Batavia led to the emergence of galleries and exhibition spaces, such as the Bataviasche Kunstkring, Kolff & Co., and the Hotel des Indes. The Kunstkring held particular influence over the Batavian art world, despite offering less favourable sales terms.² The Dutch East Indies Art

¹ Helena Spanjaard, *Cita-Cita Seni Lukis Indonesia Modern 1900-1995: Sebuah Kreasi Identitas Kultural Nasional*, trans. Iswahyudi Iswahyudi (Ombak, 2018), 30–32.

² M. Agus Burhan, *Perkembangan Seni Lukis Mooi Indie Sampai Persagi Di Batavia, 1900–1942* (Galeri Nasional Indonesia, 2008), 24–25.

Association, founded in 1902, with seven regional branches, including Yogyakarta, further institutionalized modern art through exhibitions and drawing meetings, democratizing access to art across social strata. These activities not only familiarized the public with modern art but also constructed a social space that validated and legitimized artworks, embedding modern art into the fabric of Indonesian culture.

After 1945, the artistic activities of indigenous artists became more widespread. In the newly independent Indonesia, art changed from mere decoration to a tool for awareness, social justice, and nationalism. The function of art in the early days of Indonesian independence differed from its role in the pre-independence period. It later influenced the development of the art world in Indonesia.

In the early 2000s, the development of digital technology in Yogyakarta was visible, marked by the presence of print shops. The ease of accessing digital printing technology brought many new ideas to visual arts in Yogyakarta. The acceptance of artworks created through digital printing can be seen at the Indonesia Art Award 2003. Most artists working with traditional fine art media, such as painting, sculpture, and graphic arts, are not significantly impacted by advances in digital printing technology. Many did not adapt digital technology or digital printing in their artistic process. The increasingly pervasive development of digital technology in everyday life has begun to influence Yogyakarta's visual arts, not in production, but rather in consumption within exhibition spaces. Selfies with works of art have become increasingly commonplace at art exhibitions. Selfies with artworks such as paintings, sculptures, and graphics uploaded on Instagram often did not include the artist's name in the caption, partly because many artists did not have Instagram accounts at that time.³

A massive change was observed when the pandemic, which limited outdoor activities, prompted artists to turn to social media as part of their artistic process and activities. Many artists who are active on social media share images of their artwork and document their creative process. Several artists consistently upload updates, from the initial design concept and working stages to the final display of their works in the gallery. Among the various platforms, Instagram remains the most commonly used, due to its primary focus on sharing visual content.⁴ This raises the question of how and why the mediatization of Yogyakarta art occurs on Instagram. Using ethnographic and netnographic methods, this study is based on the Instagram activities and interviews of five Yogyakarta visual artists who actively engage with the platform for artistic expression and networking. Applying mediatization theory, this study highlights how these artists navigate the interplay between self-promotion, algorithmic constraints, and global artistic discourses. While Instagram disrupts traditional gate-keeping mechanisms, it also reinforces an aesthetic driven by engagement, hard work in building one's brand, and digital creation, which subtly reshapes the structure of

³ Nadiyah Tunnikmah, "Instagram Selfie Di Pameran Artjog," *Ars: Jurnal Seni Rupa Dan Desain* 21, no. 2 (2018): 116–32.

⁴ Nadiyah Tunnikmah, "Impact of COVID-19 on the World of Fine Arts; between Online Exhibitions, Virtual Exhibitions in Cyberspace Appreciation," in *Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference on Interdisciplinary Arts & Humanities (ICONARTIES)*, 2020, 149–158.

artistic recognition. By analyzing the interplay between digital exposure and ongoing marginalization, this paper contributes to a broader understanding of the evolving position of art in the digital era. It challenges the notion that digital platforms automatically democratize art, revealing instead how mediatization produces new layers of inclusion and exclusion in the contemporary art world.

Algorithm

An algorithm is a fundamental concept underlying software development. Computation is known to be linguistic, formal, and syntactic; at a certain level, it consists entirely of numerical arrangements. Computer programming is conducted using specialized languages, which are ultimately reduced to sequences of numbers. Even at a more abstract level, algorithms are defined linguistically through various logical formulations.⁵

Instagram employs algorithms to suggest accounts, moderate content, and organize the Explore section, though the mechanisms behind these processes are often invisible to users. These algorithms embed cultural assumptions and social norms that may reinforce inequalities. In addition to the automatic dissemination of content by the algorithm, users can increase the reach of their posts by adhering to its rules, such as using hashtags. Instagram also considers factors like usage frequency and activity duration within the app. Although the shift to an algorithm-based timeline initially received criticism, users eventually adapted and developed strategies to optimize the system.

Instagram's algorithmic guidance for each user is based on three core categories:

1. Interest: Based on prior interactions with similar content.
2. Recency, how new is the post.
3. Relationship: The closeness between the viewer and content producer, determined through likes, comments, and tags.⁶

Instagram is neither the first nor the most widely used photo-sharing platform on social media, but it possesses unique characteristics, as it was initially designed as a mobile application. This aligns with the logic of speed and mobility inherent in smartphone usage. Instagram has also reframed the production and display of visual content, making it easier for anyone to create and share visually engaging content, thus giving rise to a new visual culture. As a constantly evolving platform, Instagram's boundaries are often fluid, functioning as a channel for various types of content and user behaviours. The combination of its technical logic, impact on visual culture, and inherent complexity makes Instagram a compelling subject of study.⁷

⁵ Paul A. Fishwick, *Aesthetic Computing* (MIT Press, 2006), 34–35.

⁶ Tama Leaver, Tim Highfield, and Crystal Abidin, eds., *Instagram Visual Social Media Cultures* (Polity Press, 2020), 30–31.

⁷ Lachlan MacDowall and Kylie Budge, *Art after Instagram: Art Spaces, Audiences, Aesthetics* (Routledge, 2022), 13.

Interaction on Instagram is reflected in artists' posts through captions, comments, and other features, shaping both the meaning of their artworks and their self-image. Comments, likes, and shares not only facilitate communication but also create a virtual community that influences the appreciation of art. The interpretation of artworks on Instagram occurs through captions, visual analysis, and discussions in the comment section, all of which are shaped by cultural symbols and meanings. The use of Instagram has driven changes in artistic practice, shifting from the production of artwork to digital distribution and interaction. One significant change is the publication of the artistic process itself, where posts featuring videos or photos of the creative process generate greater engagement compared to posts that solely display the final artwork.

Traditionally, the operational domain of an artwork has followed a linear trajectory: once a piece is completed, it is distributed for consumption (Figure #1). However, Instagram allows unfinished artworks to be both distributed and consumed during the production process. This means that the artistic process no longer follows a linear path but instead involves repetition (Figure #2). This process is further supported by the use of hashtags such as **#wip** (work in progress). The realm of distribution plays a crucial role in bridging production and reception, structuring the aesthetic experience in particular ways, and thereby enabling the realization of artistic value.

Interactions on an artist's Instagram account enable the repeated distribution of a single artwork, unrestricted by time. As long as the content remains on the account, it can be accessed at any time and by anyone. Posting an artwork is an act of distribution, meant for consumption, not only to be viewed but also to receive likes, be reshared (thus redistributed), and generate further interactions. The act of uploading an artwork, even if it is unfinished, marks the beginning of its distribution, which inherently involves consumption as well. An artwork can be distributed multiple times, but this also means that what is being distributed is not just the artwork itself, but also the artist's self-image. Table #1 shows the differences between production, distribution, and consumption in the art world and Instagram.

The processes of production, distribution, and consumption on Instagram provide artists with the opportunity to showcase their creative processes while simultaneously taking on roles traditionally held by curators, art dealers, and galleries. Yogyakarta artists, renowned for their independence, have long been involved in distributing their works, including through collective exhibitions. When another account posts an artwork, it can function as a form of distribution and reproduction, although it also carries the risk of copyright infringement. However, interactions on Instagram, such as tagging artists in posts by exhibition visitors, can help mitigate this risk. Beyond serving as a distribution tool, Instagram also has the potential to be an educational medium about the artist's profession and creative process. However, its effectiveness depends on maintaining an engaging and sustainable account. Successful interaction on Instagram is not only determined by visually appealing posts but also by supporting narratives that ultimately foster art appreciation in exhibition spaces.

Methodology

This study employed a mixed ethnographic and netnographic approach to examine Instagram usage among visual artists based in Yogyakarta. The ethnographic method was chosen to observe the characteristics of the research subjects and interaction patterns formed through social relationships between the research subjects within Yogyakarta's visual arts field and the Instagram platform. Overall, ethnographic research is expected to provide a rich and detailed picture of how Yogyakarta artists' interactions on Instagram shape Instagram users, and how and to what extent Instagram influences the visual arts field in Yogyakarta. Therefore, this research employs netnography to examine how artists interact with Instagram social media users and the mediatization of Yogyakarta visual arts on Instagram. Data collection was conducted between October 2021 and April 2023.

Initial observation focused on Instagram accounts actively used by practicing visual artists residing in Yogyakarta. The research population consisted of visual artists living and working in Yogyakarta who maintained Instagram accounts. From an initial survey of 100 artist accounts, five artists were selected based on the following criteria:

1. Public accounts with professional art-related content;
2. Active usage: minimum two posts per week;
3. Professional relevance: posts featuring artworks or career-related activities (exhibitions, studio visits, artistic processes);
4. Local engagement: active participation in Yogyakarta's visual arts scene;
5. Medium specificity: focus on conventional media (painting, sculpture, printmaking);
6. Career diversity: varied career lengths (10-30 years) to capture different stages of professional development.

Until the end, it consisted of 5 artists who actively use Instagram, live and work in Yogyakarta:

1. Putu Sutawijaya, 5,000 followers, approximately 30 years of career;
2. Dedy Sufriadi, 8,000 followers, approximately 25 years of career;
3. Ronald Apriyan, 7,000 followers, approximately 20 years of career;
4. Oky Rey Montha, 25,000 followers, approximately 15 years of work;
5. Seruni Bodjawati, 38,000 followers, approximately 15 years of work.

Data collection and analysis:

Data collection employed a four-stage process: (1) systematic evaluation of 100 Yogyakarta artist accounts using quantitative metrics (follower count, posting frequency, engagement rates) and qualitative criteria (content relevance, professional activity); (2) intensive netnographic observation of the five selected artists' digital practices, documenting interaction patterns and online community dynamics; (3) semi-structured interviews exploring artists' motivations, strategies, and experiences with Instagram; and (4) longitudinal tracking of content evolution and platform adaptation strategies. This multi-method approach captured both observable behaviours and subjective experiences across varied career trajectories and engagement levels within Yogyakarta's professional art community.

Analytical Framework:

Analysis employed a three-tier coding system addressing core research dimensions. Account Management examined the strategic use of platforms, including account objectives, content curation decisions, audience targeting, performance monitoring, and professional self-presentation tactics. Platform Interaction investigated the bidirectional communication dynamics between artists and users, analyzing comment patterns, direct messaging practices, and the effects of community engagement on artistic visibility and reception. Instagram's Artistic Impact assesses the platform's influence on professional practice, including the significance of followers for career development, challenges in representing artwork within platform constraints, and the relationship between digital metrics and offline artistic success. This framework enabled a systematic analysis of how Instagram functions simultaneously as a distribution channel, a professional tool, and a cultural mediator within Yogyakarta's contemporary art ecosystem.

Mediatization

Social media, based on digital communication technologies, operate with complexity in connecting spaces, intervening, and mediating all processes that inherently involve distance. Each platform has specific technological characteristics that shape how users interact and communicate with one another. Joshua Meyrowitz emphasizes in his Medium Theory that every medium has unique technological rules that shape media experiences, rules often overlooked in studies focused solely on content. He highlights how the technological characteristics of a medium play a role in restructuring social and cultural life. The use of media as a communication tool is not a new phenomenon. Still, each medium has a unique capacity to shape social structures, demonstrating that technology is not just an intermediary but also an agent of change in human interaction.⁸

⁸ David Crowley and David Mitchell, eds., *Communication Theory Today* (Polity Press, 1994), 50–73.

Media development is influenced not only by technological innovations such as the printing press, telegraph, electricity, and the internet but also by political, economic, cultural, and social factors. This process is bidirectional; media both shape and are shaped by society. The concept of mediatization highlights long-term transformations that affect various aspects of life, including art, culture, and politics. The emergence of new media does not necessarily replace older media; instead, it interacts with and coexists alongside them. Media are interconnected and collectively shape communication environments, much like how social media create spaces for social interaction. As digital media continue to evolve, media studies can no longer be limited to seeing media as mere message conveyors. However, they must recognize them as active elements that shape social and cultural structures.⁹

Every technology carries an inherent message related to its original purpose. This also applies to social media platforms, such as Instagram, which was initially designed as a social media platform specifically for sharing photos among friends. As a medium, Instagram has specific technological characteristics, often referred to as its features. These features create a universe governed by Instagram's own "grammar" of technology, which its users understand and appreciate. The unique character of each medium ensures that every medium carries its implicit message.

Marshall McLuhan¹⁰ explains that "the message" conveyed by any medium or technology lies in the changes it brings to the scale, speed, or pattern of human activity. Media have the capacity to shape the structure of human relationships and behaviours, both in private and public interactions. Social media technology, for example, has the ability to erase spatial and temporal boundaries, thereby altering social dynamics. Mediation in social media is not merely the transmission of information but also a process of constructing meaning within a specific cultural context. Even before information is delivered, media already play a role in shaping a version of reality through the interpretation of content producers, such as artists or Instagram account owners. Although users have control over their accounts, social media platforms still impose rules and interests that influence this construction of meaning. Thus, mediation in social media involves not only technological aspects but also how meaning is formed, interpreted, and influenced by various external factors.

When examining mediation, three key aspects come into play: the producer, the text, and the audience. The institutional concept of mediation focuses on viewing the producer of meaning as an institution, emphasizing the crucial roles played by various actors and institutions in shaping meaning within an information-rich society. In this institutional sense, producers operate within economic and political interests, where media institutions actively shape the mediation process. The reality constructed by media institutions cannot be separated from these economic and political interests, such as profit-making and reinforcing political influence.¹¹

⁹ Asa Briggs, Peter Burke, and Espen Ytreberg, *A Social History of the Media. From Gutenberg to Facebook* (Polity Press, 2001), 21.

¹⁰ Douglas Kellner and Meenakshi Durham, eds., *Media and Cultural Studies: Key Works* (Blackwell, 2006), 107–16.

¹¹ Nancy Thumim, *Self Representation and Digital Culture* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 58–59.

Mediation is both a technological and social phenomenon. This concept becomes even more profound as social actors increasingly rely on media-supplied meanings and public interpretations of the world to understand themselves and their place in it. Mediation has significant consequences for how the world appears in everyday life. Mediated appearances, in turn, provide a framework for defining and shaping human relationships, especially with distant others, individuals who exist primarily within media representations.¹² Today, the significance of mediation is closely linked to its dual nature, both as a technological and social phenomenon. This duality symbolizes the evolving relationship between individuals and media, which has transformed the way societies perceive and interact with the world. As society becomes increasingly dependent on media as the primary source of meaning and interpretation, the implications of this dependency are vast and complex.

Dependence on media as a source of meaning highlights a fundamental shift in how humans process information and construct their understanding of the world. With the advancement of digital technology and the widespread availability of information channels, society has become increasingly accustomed to seeking news, knowledge, and entertainment through digital media platforms. As this dependency grows, the media play a crucial role in shaping human perception, interpretation, and response to the world around them.

Mediatization, on the other hand, involves long-term structural changes in the relationship between politics and media, resulting in new conditions for communication and interaction.¹³ The concept of mediatization is valuable in defining the role of media in transforming society and stimulating analysis of the transformational processes it facilitates. Four key processes represent mediatization: (1) extending human communication capacity, (2) substituting social activities and institutions, (3) integrating non-media activities, and (4) accommodating media logic.¹⁴ The expansion of communication capacity has led to the emergence of diverse platforms, changing how people exchange information and share ideas. Traditional social activities and institutions have been replaced by digital structures, affecting societal order. The integration of non-media activities has blurred the boundaries between media and non-media domains, altering how individuals perceive and interact with the world. Mediatization provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the profound impact of media on contemporary life and societal transformations.

Mediatization demonstrates the expanding influence of media in shaping social structures, cultural norms, and individual behaviours. It refers to a broader social process in which media technologies become integrated into various aspects of life, affecting how people perceive reality, engage with information, and construct their self-identity. Mediatization encompasses macro-level transformations brought by

¹² Roger Silverstone, "Complicity and Collusion in the Mediation of Everyday Life," *New Literary History* 33, no. 4 (2002): 761–780.

¹³ Caja Thimm, Mario Anastasiadis, and Jessica Einspänner-Pflock, eds. *Media Logic(S) Revisited: Modelling the Interplay Between Media Institutions, Media Technology and Societal Change* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 71.

¹⁴ Rachel Esner and Sandra Kisters, eds., *The Mediatization of the Artist* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 3.

media in society as a whole, as well as micro-level changes in everyday practices and experiences. Its significance lies in recognizing media as a force that not only reflects but also actively shapes social reality.¹⁵

Mediation, as a dialectical process, circulates symbols within society, shaping meaning and social interactions. While media can construct these meanings, individual engagement and power dynamics remain significant factors. Mediation, both technological and social, affects perception and interaction, ultimately influencing how people relate to the world around them. It is important to distinguish between mediation and mediatization: mediation functions primarily as an intermediary in communication processes, whereas mediatization examines the broader structural and institutional changes resulting from media's integration across various domains of life. Media systems prioritize audiences' everyday realities, shaping both perceptions and actions. The increasing influence of media technology on human perception and daily navigation demonstrates how mediation has become a defining feature of contemporary communication. Through this process, media technology not only influences daily routines but also provides frameworks through which individuals make sense of an increasingly complex world.

Mediatization of Yogyakarta visual art on Instagram

Mediatization in fine arts is not a new phenomenon. Artists have long used mass media to shape specific images and narratives. The mediatization of artists in mass media illustrates the evolution of the artist's role, marked by the emergence of artistic autonomy and new media, reflecting how media is used to gain visibility and control the interpretation of artworks.¹⁶

Instagram algorithms mediate artists' access to global audiences, with engagement metrics determining visibility more than artistic merit. While Seruni Bodjawati's 38,000 followers demonstrate algorithmic success, artists like Putu Sutawijaya, despite 30 years of artistic achievement, remain constrained by lower engagement rates that limit platform-driven exposure. Before the advent of social media, the interaction and promotion of artworks primarily occurred through galleries and physical exhibitions. Instagram has replaced some of these functions by providing a digital platform where artworks can be promoted and sold. Artistic activities that once took place outside the media are now integrated with social media. The creative process, exhibitions, and audience interactions have become part of Instagram's digital ecosystem. Artists adapt their content strategies to accommodate Instagram's media logic, including algorithms that determine content visibility, the use of hashtags, and visually engaging aesthetics.

From an institutional perspective, artists continue to engage with art institutions such as galleries and curators while navigating the rules of digital platforms

¹⁵ Thimm, Anastasiadis, and Einspänner-Pflock, eds. *Media Logic(S) Revisited*, 71.

¹⁶ Esner and Sandra Kisters, eds., *The Mediatization of the Artist*.

without entirely disconnecting from the conventional art world. Mediation operates both technologically and socially, shaping meaning and interactions in everyday life. This dependence on media transforms how artists understand and navigate the art world, requiring them to adjust to platform dynamics. Mediation on Instagram has become a crucial aspect of artistic communication, shaping the meaning and reality constructed by artists. The interplay of technology, aesthetics, and institutional structures creates a digital art ecosystem that broadens artistic reach while preserving professionalism and artistic value.

Mediation in artists' Instagram activities involves algorithms that influence the production, distribution, and consumption of art content. This mediation not only shapes interactions between artists and audiences but also impacts perceptions of the world and daily life. Mediated artistic activities create social relationships within digital spaces, reflecting the interconnectedness of technology and social aspects. Artists act as content producers, posts function as texts, and Instagram users serve as recipients, illustrating how the platform operates within the art world. Different media forms coexist and operate simultaneously, creating a social media environment that expands interaction and shapes cultural experiences. The proliferation of digital media further deepens the understanding of media as more than just a communication tool; it is an evolving part of social construction.

Instagram mediates visual art by transmitting content through its technology, connecting artists with a broader audience. The role of artists on Instagram has evolved, transforming them not only into creators but also into managers of interaction through the platform's features. Through strategies such as maintaining an engaging profile and using hashtags, artists construct a professional image through visual storytelling and carefully crafted captions.

Mediatization reveals how the media shape and construct social reality. Instagram mediates audience perceptions of art and artists, creating a version of reality shaped by algorithms and digital interactions. This mediated reality refers to meanings constructed by both media and content producers. Mediatization transforms artistic practices and the professional identity of artists. Today, artists must integrate artistic skills with digital and social media competencies to expand their networks. The identity of a professional artist is now closely linked to online presence and engagement on Instagram. Mediatization extends artists' professional networks, enabling connections with galleries, collectors, and audiences worldwide. This shift alters power dynamics and relationships within the art world, where artists active on social media often gain a competitive advantage.

The mediatization of visual art on social media, particularly on Instagram, occurs when artists upload photos of their artworks and artistic activities to their social media accounts. This represents a direct method of distribution, bypassing intermediaries. The visual consumption of artworks happens through mobile screens, where a three-meter-wide artwork is viewed at the size of a phone display. Consequently, captions accompanying each post serve as additional information that aids

the consumption process. Captions containing details such as the title, year of creation, and medium become essential. Additional text can enhance the appreciation experience for followers or viewers of the post. Furthermore, text can serve as an educational tool, providing insights into the artist's work.

The mediatization of art on Instagram is evident from the increasing number of artist accounts and posts featuring artistic activities. Instagram has become an institutionalized platform for artists to share their work, interact with audiences, and connect with the art community. The frequent use of Instagram by artists and the involvement of other art industry players, such as galleries, art dealers, and collectors, highlight this process of mediatization. Communication and interaction with fellow art practitioners, which previously occurred via email, now commonly take place through Instagram direct messages, becoming an accepted norm.

Mediatization in artists' Instagram accounts implies that the platform has a social impact, shaping how artists communicate, promote their artworks, build their self-image, expand their networks, and reach new audiences. On an artist's Instagram account, mediation involves the individual artist's choices and actions in presenting their work. At the same time, mediatization extends beyond individual posts to consider the structural, institutional, and social impact of Instagram on the art world.

Mediatization, though a process, can also be viewed as a framework for gathering observations.¹⁷ It results from changes in communication practices, an ongoing mediation process that takes time. However, mediatization within social media occurs rapidly due to the high intensity of social media usage. Mediatization is a long-term process that transforms social and cultural institutions and interaction patterns due to the growing influence of media.¹⁸

The mediatization of art on Instagram is evident in the increasing number of artist accounts and their artistic content. Instagram has become an institutionalized platform for artists to share their work, engage with audiences, and connect with the art community. Putu Sutawijaya positions Instagram as supplementary to traditional art institutions, maintaining the platform at the margins of his professional practice, primarily for promotional purposes. In contrast, Ronald Apriyan, Oky Rey Montha, and Seruni Bodjawati have moved from the margins to embrace algorithmic mediation, integrating Instagram as a central component of their artistic careers through promotion, distribution, and collaborative networks. Dedy Sufriadi demonstrates a hybrid approach, extensively utilizing algorithmic distribution while maintaining connections to traditional non-virtual art networks.

Each artist's engagement illustrates the spectrum from margins to algorithms in contemporary art practice. Some artists have fully integrated algorithmic mediation into nearly all career aspects, while others selectively adopt digital tools while preserving traditional distribution methods. The widespread adoption of Instagram

¹⁷ David Deacon and James Stanyer, "Mediatization: Key Concept or Conceptual Bandwagon?," *Media, Culture and Society* 36, no. 7 (2014): 1032–44.

¹⁸ Stig Hjarvard, *The Mediatization of Culture and Society* (Routledge, 2013), 19.

by artists, galleries, art dealers, and collectors demonstrates the platform's algorithmic influence on Yogyakarta's art ecosystem. The normalization of Instagram direct messages for professional communication, replacing traditional email correspondence, exemplifies how algorithmic platforms reshape artistic interaction patterns. This mediatization process reveals Instagram's role in moving artistic practice from institutional margins toward algorithm-dependent visibility and professional networking.

The degree of mediatization through Instagram usage among artists varies depending on the extent to which social media integration influences different aspects of their artistic practice, public engagement, and self-image management. There are 3 Levels of Artist Mediatization:

1. Low-level mediatization

Artists create accounts and upload content with minimal strategic optimization. Putu Sutawijaya (5,000 followers, 30-year career) exemplifies this approach, maintaining a basic Instagram presence by posting finished paintings weekly but continuing to rely primarily on traditional galleries for sales and professional communication. His posts feature completed works without accompanying process documentation, and he responds to comments sporadically, lacking systematic engagement strategies.

2. Medium Level mediatization

Artists actively optimize engagement through platform analytics and strategic audience interaction. Dedy Sufriadi (8,000 followers, 25-year career) exemplifies this level by utilizing Instagram's insights features to determine optimal posting times, adapting his sculptural works for mobile viewing through multiple angles and detailed shots, and maintaining consistent interaction with followers. Ronald Apriyan (7,000 followers, 20-year career) similarly analyzes audience demographics to tailor content, uses strategic hashtags for discoverability, and documents his art process to increase engagement beyond finished work presentations.

3. High-Level Mediatization

Artists are integrating Instagram's algorithm into core business operations, replacing traditional professional intermediaries. Oky Rey Montha (25,000 followers, 15-year career) reports that Instagram direct messaging is now part of expanding interactions and networking. Seruni Bodjawati (38,000 followers, 15-year career) uses Instagram not only to showcase her work but also to build strong professional and social relationships, manage her professional image, and serve as a primary platform for communication with fans and collectors. This demonstrates a high level of integration of social media into all aspects of her career.

Mediatization through Instagram has significantly transformed artistic practices, with some artists utilizing the platform for nearly all aspects of their careers. In contrast, others still incorporate certain traditional elements into the distribution and consumption of their artwork. The routine use of Instagram by artists, alongside the participation of other art industry players such as galleries, art dealers, and collectors, exemplifies the ongoing mediatization. Communication and interaction among art practitioners, which were previously conducted via email, are now commonly carried out through Instagram direct messages, becoming a standard practice. The mediatization of artists' Instagram accounts indicates that the platform has a social impact, shaping how artists interact and engage within the art world.

Conclusion

The use of Instagram by artists in Yogyakarta has redefined power dynamics in the art world, enabling them to directly manage the recognition and distribution of their works. This platform extends the reach of art beyond geographical boundaries and has become an integral tool for career development and building a professional identity. Mediatization through Instagram has created a virtual art world, altering how artists interact with audiences, distribute their works, and engage in artistic practices as a whole. Instagram functions not only as a promotional tool but also as an extension of the artist's studio practice – a space for interaction, idea development, and management of the commercial aspects of their art.

Interactions on Instagram shape a virtual art community that influences the perception and appreciation of art. The platform allows artists to share not only finished works but also their creative processes, fostering a more dynamic and continuous cycle of artistic production and distribution. With its global presence, Instagram encourages artists to adapt to media logic, build their self-image, expand their networks, and interact with both the art community and the wider public.

Instagram has emerged as a new space for visual art, distinct from traditional exhibition venues. The experience of presenting and consuming art on Instagram is mediated by mobile phone screens, creating unique interactions. This mediatization process highlights that artists' Instagram accounts are not merely extensions of the existing art world but also contributors to the formation of a new artistic landscape, one that intersects with established art practices while introducing new contextual dimensions.

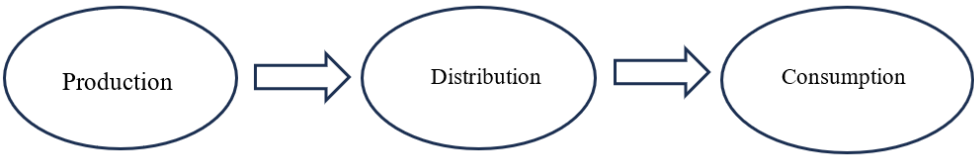


Figure #1: Flow of Production, Distribution, Consumption of Art Works in the Art World

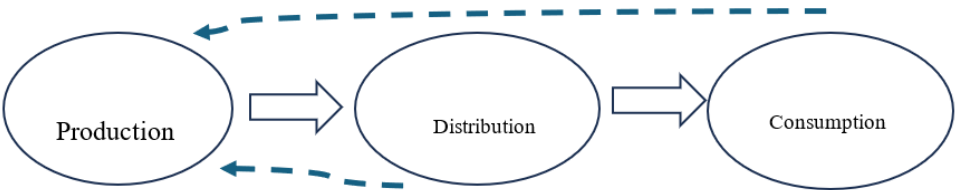


Figure #2: Flow of Production, Distribution, Consumption of Art Works on Instagram

	Art World	Instagram
Production	The artworks (finished) by the artist	- The artist finishes the work - Work is being made (in the process of completion) by the artist
Distribution	An intermediary provides the exhibition space	- Instagram by the artist or other account users - resharing of the artist’s content regarding the process of making the work or the artwork by other users
Consumption	Exhibition visitors can view the artwork in the exhibition space or collect it on display.	- Other Instagram users give likes, comments, direct messages, and reshare uploads.

Table #1: The differences between production, distribution, and consumption in the art world and Instagram

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