

SENI PERHIASAN SUREALIS KARYA MÉRET OPPENHEIM DAN SALVADOR DALÍ: REPRESENTASI BENDA-BENDA FETISH

SURREAL JEWELRY ART OF MÉRET OPPENHEIM AND SALVADOR DALI: REPRESENTATIONS OF FETISH OBJECTS

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ABSTRACT

*In the 20th century, developments in the style of jewelry art were marked, among others, by the emergence of surrealism. The two vanguards who could be held responsible for such a movement were Méret Oppenheim and Salvador Dalí. Surrealism, as a movement in art and literature was heavily influenced by Sigmund Freud's study of the unconscious. In the views of its founder, André Breton, it must contain dream analysis, free association, and an attempt to liberate the imagination. Additionally, fetishism is a term that refers to the assumption that all objects made by humans are imbued with more force than just their inherent functions. In an essay entitled *Fetishism* by Sigmund Freud in 1927, fetishism is associated to the realm of the subconscious which contains sexual instincts. This qualitative research which employs visual analysis examines jewelries, which are named *Sugar Ring* and *Fur Bracelet* created by Oppenheim, as well as *Ruby Lips with Teeth Like Pearls*, and *The Royal Heart* created by Dalí, based on their association to elements of surrealism and fetishism as described in Breton's views published in an article written by Malt (2004). The results of this study indicate that the four works contain elements of surrealism and fetishism since they fulfill the elements of juxtaposition, the presence of hair-like objects, the presence of images of incomplete body organ as manifestations of a castration experience, and magical or non-representational impressions.*

Keywords: *Dali, Fetishism, Jewelry, Oppenheim, Surrealism*

ABSTRAK

Pada abad ke-20, salah satu perkembangan gaya perhiasan ditandai dengan munculnya aliran surealisme yang dua garda depannya dapat ditunjuk pada Méret Oppenheim dan Salvador Dalí. Surealisme sangat dipengaruhi oleh kajian Sigmund Freud tentang alam bawah sadar. Surealisme, dalam terang pandangan penggagasnya, André Breton, mestilah mengandung analisis mimpi, asosiasi bebas, dan usaha-usaha untuk membebaskan imajinasi. Selain itu, terdapat istilah fetishisme yang menunjuk pada anggapan bahwa segala benda yang dibuat oleh manusia, dianggap memiliki kekuatan lebih daripada sekadar fungsinya yang inheren. Dalam esai berjudul *Fetishism* yang ditulis oleh Sigmund Freud tahun 1927, fetishisme ditarik ke wilayah alam bawah sadar yang mengandung insting seksual. Penelitian kualitatif dengan analisis visual ini mengkaji perhiasan berjudul *Sugar Ring* dan *Fur Bracelet* yang dibuat oleh Oppenheim, serta *Ruby Lips with Teeth Like Pearls*, dan *The Royal Heart* yang dibuat oleh Dalí dengan dikaitkan pada unsur-unsur surealisme dan fetishisme dalam pandangan Breton yang dimuat dalam artikel yang ditulis oleh Malt (2004). Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa keempat karya tersebut mengandung unsur surealisme dan fetishisme karena memenuhi unsur jukstaposisi, keberadaan objek menyerupai-bulu (*hair-like*), terdapatnya citra organ yang tidak lengkap sebagai manifestasi pengalaman kastrasi, serta kesan magis atau non-representasional.

Kata kunci: *Dali, Fetishisme, Oppenheim, Perhiasan, Surealisme*

INTRODUCTION

In historical chronology, jewelry was not originally created by Homo erectus, but by Neanderthals who lived in Europe. Historical records show that the first jewelry was found in the form of shells around 115,000 years ago in the Cueva de los Aviones, a seaside cave in Spain. Then in Kenya, in Enkapune Ya Muto, jewelry made from ostrich shells was discovered and was estimated to be 40,000 years old. Signs of the use of bronze in jewelry began to appear about seven thousand years ago. And the oldest gold jewelry is thought to have appeared around 4,600 BC to 4,200 BC and was found in Europe, at the Varna Necropolis site, near the Black Sea in Bulgaria (Tait, 1986).

Meanwhile jewelry began to appear around 1,600 BC in the Greek civilization in the forms of gold and precious stones which became a sign of classical or antique era. In the Middle Ages, jewelry was developed and created by artisans of the Celts and Merovingians (Somerville, 1993). Entering the modern era, especially in the West/Europe, jewelry is characterized by art nouveau and art deco styles. Art nouveau jewelry which has its origin in France in the period between 1895 and 1910, is characterized by flowing lines and curves, with women and nature as the main subjects (Texier, 2012).

In the following period, just before World War I, art deco jewelry which is characterized by sharp angles and geometric shapes emerged. Art deco jewelry usually exhibits straight lines and angles, such as rectangles, triangles, and octagons. Modernist jewelry emerged in the early 20th century responding to changes in technology and society; its clean and simplified lines replace ornamentation (Tait, 1986). In and since 20th century, especially in the post-World War II period, jewelry expressions have become more diverse and denote individual expressions rather than specific stylistic schools.

In this era the development of jewelry style was renowned by the emergence of surrealism. Influencing art surrealism is a cultural movement that started in the early 20th century. The term "surrealism" itself was coined for the first time by a writer and playwright from Poland, Guillaume Apollinaire. World War I was one of events that triggered the emergence of surrealism (Kuščević, & Brajčić, 2022; Hopkins, 2004: 5). André Breton, the instigator of surrealism, wrote a manifesto which defined surrealism as a pure automatism of the pure soul which is used to express in verbal, written or other ways, a real function of the mind which is not controlled by any form of preoccupation related to reason, aesthetics, and morals. Surrealism is heavily influenced by Sigmund

Freud's study of the unconscious. According to Breton, surrealism must contain dream analysis, free association, and attempts to free the imagination (Prayoga & Karyono, 2025). Another key idea in surrealism is juxtapositioning, a kind of comparing two very different things within a one frame, one property, producing "illogical" forms (Forcer, 2019; Breton, 1972).

Surrealism apart from being embodied in works of art, especially fine art, is also manifested in the form of jewelry. One of the famous surrealist jewelry artists is Méret Oppenheim who hailed from Germany and was born in 1913. Oppenheim became interested in the idea of the subconscious through the writings of Carl Jung who was introduced by his father in 1928. Oppenheim's interest in Jung's thoughts, especially that which was related to the theory of the animus-anima, made him reminisced routinely on his own dreams and transcribing them in detailed writings. Oppenheim then declared her line of works as "feminine art" and adopted Jung's concept of "androgynous creativity" which made her works contain masculine and feminine aspects as well (Stronciwilk, 2023; Mifflin, 1986). Her association with Breton, Marcel Duchamp, Max Ernst, and Man Ray further gave surrealist perspectives in her works (Burckhart & Curiger, 1996). Oppenheim consistently produced works with surreal nuances involving everyday objects that depict female sexuality and exploitation by the opposite sex (Bühler & Oppenheim, 2013). One of her best-known surrealist works is *Object (Le Déjeuner en fourrure)* [*Object (Breakfast in Fur)*] (1936). In this work the *Object* pieces are teacups, stirrers, and spoons covered in deer hair. *Object* was influenced by her conversation with artist Pablo Picasso and his girlfriend, Dora Maar, at the Deux Magots Cafe (Eipeldauer, 2013). According to Oppenheim, she created *Objects* to free stirrers, teaspoons, and teacups from their original function of being mere objects for consumers. Apart from *Object*, Oppenheim had created other well-known surrealist works such as *The Bless: Beauty Hairbrush*, *My Nurse*, and *Sugar Ring*.

Another artist other than Oppenheim, who was strongly tied to surrealism, was Salvador Dali. Dali was from Spain and was born in 1904. Unlike Oppenheim whose surrealism ideas were heavily influenced by Jung, Dali was more influenced by the thinking of Sigmund Freud's (Nema, 2017; Gibson, 1997). Dali's well-known works include *The Great Masturbator* (1924), *The Persistence of Memory* (1931) and *Soft Construction with Boiled Beans (Premonition of Civil War)* (1936), all of which explored themes such as sexual anxiety and subconscious desire (Kim, 2025; Gibson, 1997). In addition to focusing on painting, Dali also developed his artistic exploration in installation art, sculpture, and jewelry. Several of his non-painting works include *The Bust of a*

Retrospective Woman (1933), *Lobster Telephone* (1936), and various pieces of jewelry, one of the most famous of which is *The Royal Heart* (1953) (Rentzou, 2018).

This research studies the jewelry created by Oppenheim and Dali in the light of a fetishist perspective. Fetishism is generally interpreted as the view that certain objects have supernatural powers. In a narrower sense, it can be said that fetishism is the assumption that all objects made by humans are considered to have more force than just their inherent function. In an essay entitled *Fetishism* written by Sigmund Freud in 1927, fetishism is connected to the realm of the subconscious which contains sexual instincts. According to Freud, fetish behavior stems from a boy's trauma when he realizes that his mother doesn't have a penis like him. The boy is scared and worried that the same thing would happen to him. This fear is carried over into adulthood. In Freud's conclusion, fetishism in this case is disavowal as well as acceptance (affirmation) of castration of the penis (Nema, 2017; Freud, 1927).

When a person experiences a fetishism for women's shoes, he sees this desire as acceptance of female genitalia, but also fears that women as living beings will pose a threat to his penis (he is afraid of being "castrated"). People who experience fetishism will be more aroused to see women's shoes and are not too interested in the real woman. Certain inanimate objects seemed more attractive than living things to the persons (Nema, 2017; Freud, 1927).

Fetishism does not only involve inanimate objects, but it may also be associated with certain parts of a person's body. However, the concept still applies: what is desired is not a personal person, but only parts his or her body as "inanimate objects". A fetishist may be highly aroused by breasts, legs, or even the armpits. Following Freud's argument above, people who experience fetishism encounter a clash in their subconscious; they desire a sexual interaction but are apprehensive should it happen fully; it reminds them of "castration trauma". Jacques Lacan confirmed Freud's theory by saying that fetishism is a form of a person's inability to enter deep social relations. Through fetishism, he feels that he has power over other people, even though it is shown through the symbolization of objects (Gemerchak, 2008).

Objects of surrealism can be explained as a form of fetishism in the sense that first, surrealism is a representation of a desire which is expressed through the depiction of objects, especially objects that depict human in an incomplete form (as a form of castration or castration experience) and secondly, communicated through the presence of hair objects, hair or anything resembling it (since the experience of castration is connected with the experience of seeing pubic hair) (Malt, 2004).

This research is qualitative research employing a visual analysis approach utilizing data collection techniques in the form of literature studies (Akbar, 2025). Qualitative research is the composition, organization, and systematic interpretation of textual materials which are derived from interviews or observations. It is employed to explore the meanings of social phenomena as experienced by individuals in a natural setting (Malterud, 2001: 483).

According to Edmund Feldman (in Soewardikoen; 2020), visual analysis is carried out in accordance with the following four stages, namely (1) description, the stage of identifying works with the aim to get clues regarding the meaning of the work. At this stage the researcher describes objectively, one by one, without prior interpretation the visual elements in the work; (2) analysis, the stage of applying theory or theories in the discussion of the visual elements. The relationship between the displayed visuals is described and then given interpretations, comments, and arguments; (3) interpretation, a continuation of the two previous stages, description and analysis, to develop logical arguments in affording an interpretation. The interpretation under reference is the provision of a statement on the concepts behind the work, supported by certain theoretical basis; finally, (4) assessment (judgment), the opinions, valuation based on the preceding description, analysis, and interpretation (Akbar, 2025). The integration of the analyzed elements is intended to be the overall meaning of the visual work.

Literature study is defined as a series of activities related to methods of collecting reference data, reading, taking notes, and processing the materials. According to Daniah and Warsiah (2009: 80), literature study is research conducted by a researcher by finding and collecting referral books, magazines related to the problems and objectives of the study. This technique is carried out with the aim of disclosing various theories which are relevant to the problems under study and will be used as references in discussing the research results. The literature selected in this research includes ideas about surrealism, fetishism, and types of jewelry, especially those created by Oppenheim and Dali.

The objects chosen in this study are the jewelry pieces created by Oppenheim and Dali; two objects each are selected, namely:

Table 1. Oppenheim and Dali Jewelry Objects

Object Code	Jewelry Visual	Artist/ Creator	Remarks
(1)		Méret Oppenheim	This work entitled <i>Sugar Ring</i> was created in 1936 and re-editioned in 2015 by Swiss Jewelry Company Gems and Ladders, Uster, Switzerland. The <i>Sugar Ring</i> consists of a gold ring in the center of which is a cube of sugar.
(2)		Méret Oppenheim	This piece of jewelry, called the <i>Fur Bracelet</i> , was made in 1936 from 18 carat gold and is covered with deer fur.
(3)		Salvador Dali	The jewelry piece, in the form of a brooch was created by Dali entitled <i>Ruby Lips with Teeth Like Pearls</i> , was made in the 1980s from 18 carat gold and 6 carat diamonds.

			Currently, <i>Ruby Lips with Teeth Like Pearls</i> is a collection in Leah Gordon Gallery, The Manhattan Art & Antiques Center.
(4)		Salvador Dali	Dali's work entitled <i>The Royal Heart</i> was made in 1953 with a composition of 18 carat gold and several precious stones such as rubies, gems, beryls, diamonds, peridot, amethyst which manifests into the shape of a crowned heart with an image of the heart in it.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The first step in visual analysis is to describe, describing objectively one by one the visual elements of the work, without prior interpretation. The description on each jewelry object in Table 1 is as follows:

(1) *The Sugar Ring* appears like a golden ring and has a sugar cube on top. The exact size of this piece is unknown but based on its stereotypical function the Sugar Ring is probably relatively small and sufficiently small to be worn on the finger as a ring. (2) *Fur Bracelet* looks like a gold-colored bracelet covered with fur with a diameter that is quite proportional to an adult's wrist. (3) *Ruby Lips with Teeth Like Pearls* appears like an

open mouth image with red lips and white teeth. Both lips and teeth, look shiny. Based on the stereotypical function of a brooch, *Ruby Lips with Teeth Like Pearls* is probably relatively small and quite proportionate to be worn as an ornament on clothings. (4) *The Royal Heart* looks like an image of a heart with a crown on it and inside is a red heart. The next study stage is analysis. The analysis on the visual works presented in Table 1. is as follows:

(1) Oppenheim gives a functional contradiction, the image of sugar and a ring. Sugar as food will dissolve quickly and change its shape; the two forms are never juxtaposed in a single property in everyday life. (2) Oppenheim had the gold bracelet coated with hairs, by so doing the essence of goldenness of the bracelet is obscured. The presence of hairs renders the gold bracelet to be invisible concealing the value it highlights the most. Gold and hairy bracelets in everyday world have never been juxtaposed as a single property. (3) Dali created an image of an open mouth with red lips and white teeth as an object that tends to be realistic in the sense that they can be directly perceived as images that represent real objects. Even so, Dali kept it less representational by creating specks around the lips which are the effects of a collection of precious stones. (4) Dali created a vivid image of a heart and a crown following their stereotype forms but he was quite unrealistic when it came to depicting a heart-like image within a heart. In addition, positioned above the heart is a crown whose relationship between the two is unrealistic.

The interpretation stage is further carried out, linking the visual works that have been analyzed to certain theoretical frameworks which in this case relates to surrealism and fetishism. Referring to Malt's (2004) article entitled *Obscure Objects of Desire: Surrealism, Fetishism, and Politics*, objects of surrealism are basically dream-like objects. However, this description is disputed because these dream-like objects can vary widely. On that basis, Breton formulated that dream-like objects could be (1) found-as-is (found objects), (2) unrealistic images or (3) juxtaposition side by side two or more opposing objects in a variety of ways. Fetishism is considered as a derivative of surrealism because it exists in the realm of the subconscious. In the same Malt's article (2004), fetishism in art objects is characterized by (1) the presence of incomplete body organ images as a manifestation of castration experience, (2) the presence of things that resemble hair (hair-like), and (3) exist in the form of something magical and has a non-representational element. Based on the description of the characteristics of surrealism and fetishism, the objects listed in Table 1. are interpreted as follows:

(1) *Sugar Ring* contains an element of juxtaposition as one of the characteristics of surrealism by juxtaposing sugar and a ring, two entities which are not only different,

but contradictory in terms of their nature and use. Each of these objects (sugar and ring) are both representational, but when the two are combined, the object becomes non-representational and so it can be classified as a fetish object.

(2) *Fur Bracelet* contains elements of juxtaposition because it juxtaposes fur and gold bracelets in one entity. The two elements are often displayed side by side in certain dresses, but not combined in a single object. In addition, the presence of something which is hair-like fulfills the requirements of a fetish object according to Malt (2004). Thus, the *Fur Bracelet* is an object of surrealism as well as fetishism.

(3) *Ruby Lips with Teeth Like Pearls* seems difficult to classify as a work of surrealism because of its representational forms, namely the image of a mouth with red lips and white teeth. However, an observer still finds that juxtaposition is present because there are specs originating from precious metal and stones. In addition, the aspect of fetishism is also present in form of depiction incomplete of body organs. The mouth is a solitary mouth, removed from the context of a person's face. (4) *The Royal Heart* generally contains a juxtaposition of three objects, namely the crown, external heart and the internal heart, all of which are placed as a single property. Although the external heart and internal heart are about organs of the human body, the placement of the heart within the heart is a juxtaposition that makes *The Royal Heart* surreal. The objects are also considered fetish because they portray organs that are incomplete, they are detached from the context of their bodies and give a magical or non-representational impression in the play of the three juxtaposed objects.

Following the interpretation stage, the objects shown in Table 1. which contain the selected works by Oppenheim and Dali, all of them are considered works of art that hold aspects of fetishism as derivative of surrealism.

CONCLUSION

Based on results and discussion, it could be concluded that the jewelry art pieces by Méret Oppenheim, which in this study are represented by the *Sugar Ring* and *Fur Bracelet* encompass elements of surrealism and fetishism because they fulfill elements of juxtaposition and hair-like objects. Meanwhile, Salvador Dali's jewelry works, which in this study are represented by *Ruby Lips with Teeth Like Pearls* and *The Royal Heart* embodied elements of surrealism and fetishism because they demonstrate elements of juxtaposition, the presence of incomplete body organ images as manifestations of castration experiences, as well as magical representation or non-representational.

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