

# Art Merchandise as a Medium of Public Communication for Illustrator Martcellia Liunic through the Art Label *Liunic on Things*

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## ABSTRACT

Public communication in art means a process where artworks are not only enjoyed as aesthetic objects, but also to be interpreted and responded to by public audiences. In its development, technology has contributed to the expansion of the art medium to the realm that allows art to be conveyed closer to people's daily lives, one of which is through the concept of art merchandise. Through a case study of the art label *Liunic on Things*, this research aims to examine the creative strategy of art merchandise as a public communication of illustrator Martcellia Liunic to expand awareness of the identity of her work and image. The method used is case study qualitative research, through observation and literature study. The analysis in this research using Maurice Barrett's perspective theory approach *The Nature of Art* as a basic reference to observe how conception, operation and synthesis in the realization of art merchandise works by the art label *Liunic on Things*. The results show that *Liunic on Things* utilizes illustration art as the basis of its products creation, with bright and imaginative visual style characters applied to various daily products mediums, such as fashion, accessories, and decorations. This wearable art medium is not only a medium of aesthetic expression, but also a persuasive communication tool to build connections between artists and the public. In addition, art merchandise also functions as a medium for the extension of meanings and symbols that represent the artist's personal values, as well as a strategy to expand the accessibility of art to public spaces as well as creative economic opportunities. Through the analysis of visual elements on the surface of the product, it was found that the harmony of shape, color, and composition is the main key in presenting a consistent and communicative visual message.

## KEYWORDS

Merchandise, Art Communication, Visual Identity, Illustration, Martcellia Liunic

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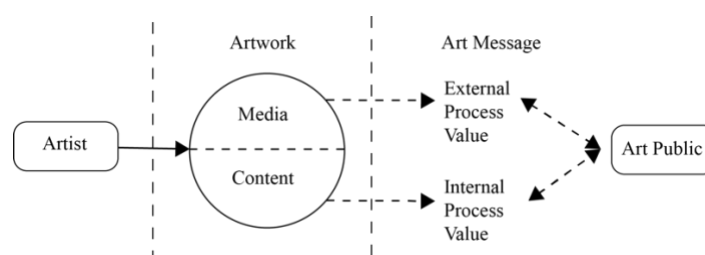


## INTRODUCTION

Art is omnipresent, it exists in various of life as part of human civilization which acts as a form of expression. Artworks emerge from human activities, whose existence is influenced by the presence of others who are expected to appreciate and enjoy the work (Yunus, 2020). The process of communication also occurs in the world of art as a process of seeking meaning within a work. The combination of various elements of fine art becomes the initial process of artistic activity, involving the artist, the artwork, and the art public. Aesthetic communication within a work can take place

through a personal dialogue between the artist and the characters within the artist's soul, creating a visual narrative that reflects inner experiences (Yasa, Gunalan, & Haryono, 2023).

Referring to the contexts of art communication, when entering the realm of fine art, particularly illustration, it is important to consider public concepts, where art events or works can be exhibited in forms that are more accessible and appreciated by their respective audiences (Jaeni, 2024). As part of the process of transferring meaning, it establishes a relationship between three components; the artist (sender), the medium, and the appreciator (receiver/art public). The medium also has its specific functions for the creator and for the receiver. For the artist, the medium has a function as a tool to transmit the value of art, while the function of the medium for the art public is to be able to see the picture of the formation of the value of art (representation) to be concrete (Irianto, 2018).



**Figure 1.** Value of external and internal processes.  
(Source: Irianto et al, 2018).

Through a medium that is attractive to the public, the mass communication created by an artist will get many responses in the form of appreciation (Juanitasari, 2020). In the medium of art merchandise, which is a form of media fusion that combines aesthetic value, product innovation and commercialization as well as creative economic opportunities. Art merchandise aims to bring art from the exclusive gallery space into everyday life through the wearable form, which is form that can be worn and allows the audience to own a piece of the artist's work in a more affordable and functional form. In addition to making art more accessible, this approach allows artists to expand the reach of their work and create a closer connection between art and society. The art merchandise process involves a systematic series of steps, from artwork selection, design adaptation, material selection, to production and marketing. Each stage aims to maintain the integrity of the artwork to ensure that the resulting product remains aesthetically and functionally relevant (Freshmindmag, 2024).

The concept of Art Merchandise allows audiences to express themselves through what they wear, creating an emotional connection through similarity of image or inner fulfillment with the artwork they wear. It indirectly becomes a visual communication medium in spreading the art narrative to the public. One artist who practices the art merchandise approach is illustrator Martcellia Liunic. Through the medium of the *Liunic on Things* art label, Martcellia wants to create art for everyone, and for her, this wearable art medium has a wider appeal that can be accepted by everyone. Often the products issued by the *Liunic on Things* brand are worn and characterize Martcellia Liunic's own self-image. It also becomes her tool to communicate to the public about the identity of her work through her personal image and the ideas she wants to convey.

Martcellia Liunic is an illustrator known for her bright and bold color palette and doodling style that combines abstract organic shapes with non-formal lines, animal figures and imaginative female figures. As a medium in communication strategy, a brand will be more recognizable if it has a visual identity, which is the result of a narrative representation of the organization of visual elements. The important elements in fine art are line, shape, color, texture, space and volume (Bahari, 2017, p. 98). Principles of composition: harmony, contrast, repetition and gradation (Kartika, 2017, p. 51). Each element has its shape, type and character so that it can be organized into a collection of symbols that have meaning and value. It is this symbol that makes it a tool for the extension of the artist's thoughts and value relations in public art communication.

Previously Fitriani and Rosandini (2024) conducted research on merchandise products for several museums in Jakarta, including Museum MACAN, Fatahillah Museum and Bank Indonesia Museum. Fitriani and Rosandini concluded that it is important in making merchandise to adjust the design style with the museum's visual identity through design principles such as; balance, unity, visual hierarchy and design elements including; line, shape and color characters in an effort to create merchandise products that are visually appealing and able to attract visitors' attention.

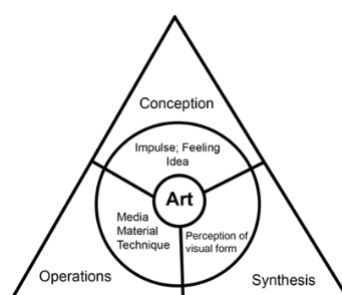
Similar research was also conducted by Asri Radhitanti (2023) describes the pattern of organizing graphic elements as a visual identity in the accessory products of the Tulisan brand, where visual identity has an important role in creating brand differentiation. The organization of graphic elements has a role in shaping visual identity and has an impact on brand awareness and brand association.

Ifthinan Juanitasari (2020) examines the relationship between personal branding of artists and artist merchandise in the process of work. It concludes that the importance of awareness, activeness and style characteristics can increase existence to support personal branding. Art Merchandise is one of the artist's media, the purpose is because they want "low budget" fans to be able to buy in a more affordable form and the media is also more diverse.

This research focuses on examining the creative strategy of art merchandise as a medium of public communication by illustrator Martcellia Liunic through the Liunic on Things art label. It aims to explain how products from the Liunic on Things art label function as a medium for conveying messages through shape symbols in visual identity, expanding the accessibility of art into everyday life through wearable forms as well as creative economic opportunities, and building awareness of her personal branding.

## METHOD

This research uses a qualitative research method with a case study approach. Where art merchandise becomes a creative strategy for artists in expanding the marketing of their work and personal branding to the wider community. The research instruments used include observation of documentation and literature studies, as well as similar research related to the research topic. The analysis refers to the three basic elements of the structure of the realization of visual works according to Maurice Barrett's perspective "The Nature of Art": Conceptual in the form of encouragement of ideas and narrative concepts, Operational in the form of realization of ideas through mediums and techniques, and Synthesis of the results of the presentation of the work performed, including the organization of visual elements and symbols of meaning (Hendriyana, 2019).



**Figure 2. The Nature of Art**  
(Source: Maurice Barret.1982, Hendriyana 2019)

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### 1. The concept of realizing Art merchandise through the *Liunic On Things* art label

According to Martcellia in her interview with Womantalk, *Liunic on Things* means Liunic's drawings on things (Womantalk, 2018). According to the official website profile [liuniconthings.com](http://liuniconthings.com), *Liunic on Things* is an independent art label and design studio specializing in the creation of wearable art, including fashion items and accessories. The illustrations are inspired by everyday life, human relationships, nature, and a penchant for all things cute with a melancholic touch. *Liunic on Things*

develops its unique, energetic style and is made for the connoisseur of cute and adorable things (Liunic on Things, n.d.).

*“Liunic on things is a such dopamine dressing, its all about trinkets, cute lovely things, semua itu ada personal journeynya, and i just wanna tell that stories”* (Liunic, n.d.). From an interview with artand\_id (Artand, 2024) this art label becomes a “dopamine dressing”, a concept that focuses on enhancing mood, confidence, and happiness by choosing clothes, colors, or styles that match personality and give comfort. The narrative contains persuasive messages that are reflected in the symbolic form of the character shapes of strong visual elements and bright vibrant colors. These visual elements can affect psychologically, which makes the audience feel like they want to own the product because being cute and adorable will give a feeling of happiness. According to Jalaludin Rahmat, persuasive communication is one of the communication techniques that emphasizes the process of influencing people's opinions, attitudes and actions by using psychological manipulation so that the person acts like his own will (Dewi & Handriyotopo, 2021).

## 2. Medium and technique of realization of the *Liunic on Things* art label

Medium is a general physical category of artwork and also a term to identify specific materials used by an artist or art creator. Through art merchandise, the brand conveys that art is something that can be owned, touched and felt by everyone. Some of the products from the Liunic on Things brand can be seen in the following image:



**Figure 3.** Variety of product types of the *Liunic on Things* label  
(Source: <https://www.instagram.com/liuniconthings/>)

In Figure 3, it can be seen that the products produced by the *Liunic on Things* brand are quite diverse, such as: Fashion products (T-shirts, shirts, sweaters, etc.), accessories (pins, trinkets, tote bags, etc.), stationary (notebooks, journals, postcards, etc.), decorations (posters, pillows, etc.), stickers, cell phone cases, drinking bottles, cutlery and many others. *Liunic on Things'* mission is to empower local talent and produce products that are in demand by a global audience. All products are made in independent workshops in limited quantities to minimize waste and launch products based on schedule and capacity capabilities rather than following trends (Liunic on Things, n.d.).

In the realization of the product is made through digital illustration techniques using digital applications or software, then applied to various forms of products with digital printing techniques (Digital Printing). Digital printing has opened up new opportunities for artists, designers, and illustrators to express their creativity infinitely. Digital printing is one of the methods in the world of modern printing that involves digital techniques as a transfer medium between material to printing media. More generally, the definition of digital printing can be summarized as the process of printing images that have been designed onto physical materials or media (Barus, Ibrahim, & Azis, 2022). Digital printing technology has essentially become not only a tool of production, but also a new medium for artistic expression. Fabric Printing now serves as a modern canvas, allowing everyone, without limitations, to share their stories and creativity with audiences.





**Figure 4.** Screenshot of the process of drawing illustrations using the digital procreate application, then applied to *Liunic on Things* fashion products.


(Source: <https://www.instagram.com/liunic/>).

### 3. Analysis of visual elements in illustrations on *Liunic on Things* product surface

The realization of art, as a whole work, can be an expression that has individual, social, and cultural dimensions, which contains content as the substance of expression that refers to various themes, interpretations, or life experiences of the creator (Bahari, 2017, pp. 105-106). To analyze the character of the identity, three illustration samples from different product collection series were taken, namely: Series *Not Growing Up* (2023), *Touch Grass* (2024), and *Inner Child* (2024).

**Table 1.** Analysis of visual elements in illustrations on *Liunic on Things* product surface

(Source: <https://liuniconthings.com/>).

Product Series	Visual element analysis
<b>1. <i>Not Growing Up</i></b> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The theme “Not Growing Up” implies a message that is critical of the concept of adulthood that seems to be full of the burdens of life. It shows a message of freedom, spontaneity, or childhood nostalgia.</li> <li>Figurative shapes bordered by organic lines symbolize imaginative visuals such as smiling flowers and sun, and human-headed butterflies representing life and transformation.</li> <li>The high color contrast against the background of two versions of black and white, both of which highlight each visual element, creates a strong impression. Yellow symbolizes brightness and pink symbolizes femininity, happiness and hope. The combination of these colors reinforces the message of joy and creative energy.</li> <li>Typography “Not Growing Up” becomes the center of interest. This pattern creates a dynamic visual rhythm, the distance between elements is quite dense but there is still a fairly regular grid, filling in the gaps so as to provide a harmonious unity.</li> </ol>
<b>2. <i>Touch Grass</i></b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The phrase “Touch Grass” is a critique of excessive online or screentime behavior, and calls for outdoor physical activity and experiencing nature.</li> <li>Fields formed by color represent images of animals, plants, the sun, rainbows and also a combination of various images such as butterflies with human heads and legs. The organic figurative shape gives an imaginative impression, as if these creatures can interact like humans, in accordance</li> </ol>



with the message to be conveyed, which is to invite people to play and get closer to the natural environment.

- c. The colors used are cheerful, energetic, and playful, which makes it the main character of this illustration. The neutral beige background provides a soft contrast to the bright colors of the main field elements. The blue symbol gives the impression of calmness, while the green color of the plant reflects life.
- d. These small objects are composited evenly distributed throughout the space, creating visual balance despite the zigzag rhythmic pattern. Visual rhythm is also created through the repetition of matching figurative elements and the choice of color palette. It can be seen that some figurative elements such as the sun, flowers, or animal characters appear repeatedly but in different variations of form, creating a pattern that is both repetitive and varied. In addition, the distance between the objects, although spaced, does not leave significant empty space.

### 3. Inner Child

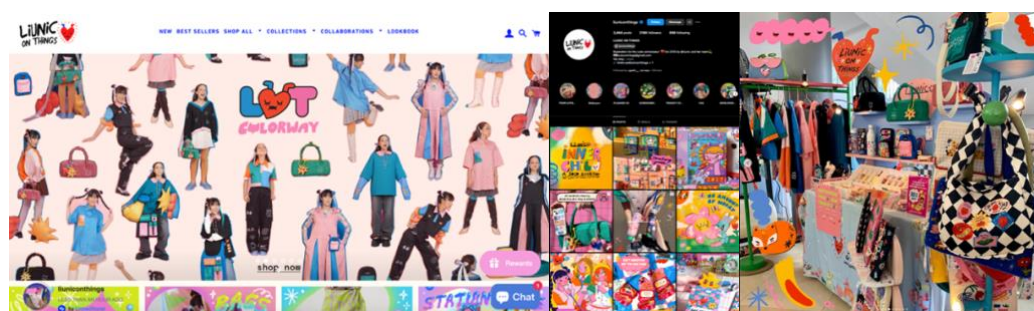


- a. The “Inner Child” series is about the joy of childhood as well as a reminder of the human need to return to the honesty and innocence of childhood. It invites us to reconnect with the “child” within.
- b. The field in this illustration is dominated by imaginative figures. Each figure can stand alone so that it can be interpreted as an icon. Organic fields without rigid line boundaries create icons that seem light, funny, and expressive. Various figurative fields of characters and abstract non-figurative elements give the impression as if this dynamic life is full of freedom, which can be interpreted as a representation of the limitless world of children's imagination. Symbolic forms of visual elements such as plants with eyes, and imaginative animal characters create an atmosphere of whimsy or fantasy.
- c. The combination of bright, vibrant field colors against a black background creates a high color contrast and emphasizes each visual element creating a strong impression. The majority of the colors used are adapted to the subject matter imagery, such as orange foxes and red and green flowering plants, but even so there are organic strokes of color that give a sense of freedom.
- d. The focal point is the large size of the field. The distance between fields is quite dense, looks random and asymmetrical. Typography acts as an anchor point for information on Martcellia's solo exhibition merchandise series. Graphic elements, such as the big eyes and expressions on the character's face, become an attractive center of attention. The overall composition is filled with large fields and bright colors, representing the freedom of a “child” in creating, without boundaries or hierarchy.

The three illustrations of Not Growing Up, Touch Grass and Inner Child have many similarities, including: 1) Bright vibrant color palette, 2) Imaginative organic figurative fields, 3) The presence of eye imagery creates all shapes into imaginative creatures. The similarity is a proof of the consistency of the visual style of the element processing to form a visual identity. Where visual identity can be a communication tool to convey the quality and differentiation of the brand.

#### 4. *Liunic On Things* art label marketing

In the marketing process, *Liunic on Things* was initially carried out independently, utilizing a network of family and friends. Starting in 2015, *Liunic on Things* actively participated in various creative market events both locally and globally. In 2018 Martcellia and her friend started to build a team to help develop the brand, including; production team, design team and content team. As part of the attempt to expand the brand, *Liunic on Things* markets the products through the official website and collective E-commerce platforms and can ship worldwide and seek partnerships in various regions. Social media platforms are also the main basis for its marketing, especially Instagram. According Muliawati (2024) Digital communication tools have a role as a facilitator of two-way communication between businesses and consumers, therefore many people utilize them to strengthen the reach of a wide and unlimited audience. So that the *Liunic on Things* brand is also a medium for Martcellia Liunic to be recognized by the public more widely to the global realm. Here's an example of the *Liunic on Things* brand art merchandise marketing media:



**Figure 5.** Screenshots of *Liunic on Things*' online marketing and art market participation.

(Source: <https://liuniconthings.com/> dan <https://www.instagram.com/liuniconthings/>).

#### CONCLUSIONS

As a communication tool, the art merchandise approach aims to bring artworks from exclusive gallery spaces into everyday life through wearable forms, expanding the reach of artworks, creating creative economic opportunities and allowing audiences to own a part of the artist's work in a more affordable and functional form. This has similarities with the context of public communication, where the presentation of work is exhibited in a form that is more accessible and appreciated. *Liunic on Things* art merchandise not only functions as a commercial medium, but also as a means of communication to convey narratives in the form of messages, stories, and personal emotions that are creatively processed through distinctive styles, creating a visual identity that will be appreciated by the public. This strategy can also strengthen Martcellia Liunic's personal branding as an illustrator and also make art more inclusive and relevant in society.

In the implementation of this research, there were several obstacles encountered, such as limited time and access to conduct in-depth interviews, so that supporting information was mostly obtained through observation of documentation, social media and digital platforms and related literature studies.

As an effort in developing this or similar studies, in-depth observations can be made to get a more personal perspective from artists and brand management teams, especially in the creative process and communication strategies.

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