Malaysian lands are very rich in natural resources especially Shale and Lateritic rocks. The transformations of colored rocks to colorants for artwork can give a huge impact for the government, industries and consumer. This research project aimed to process and produce natural colorants from shale and lateritic rocks into two sizes which are in micrometer and nano size range. X-Ray Fluorescent (XRF) was carried out to identify element content in each rock whilst Field Emission Scanning Electron Microscopy (FESEM) was performed in order to determine the sizes of the rocks after grinding accurately. Two grinding methods were carried out, which were by using jar mill and planetary mono mill. The rock colorants were applied to cotton, linen and polylax based canvases. All of the rock colorants were mixed with acrylic medium and then applied on canvas by nylon flat brush. The applications on canvases were divided into three stages which are single colour application, tint and shade and the colour mixing. The painted samples (single colour application) were then evaluated based on fastness to light. All of the painted samples in micrometer and nano sizes colorants exhibited excellent results of light fastness testing. The ranges of colours that are available when converted to colorants are not wide but enough to be used as a substitute colorants beside synthetic colorants.

This research entitled Islamic Calligraphy in Contemporary Art of Malaysia contribute to the most neglected area in the development of the history of art of Malaysia. The combination of three different traditions – Islam, Malay and Western traditions had made significant marks on the form, content and context of the Islamic calligraphy in the Contemporary Art of Malaysia. The objectives of this study are firstly to document contemporary art works of Malaysia that constitutes of Islamic calligraphy. Secondly, is to establish the styles through formal analysis, in terms of its size, medium, techniques, orientation, shape and type of calligraphy. Thirdly, is to uncover the themes of the calligraphy, the sources of quotation and its meanings. Fourthly, is to discover the underlying factors and forces that influence the production of these art works; and finally, to discern the spiritual manifestation from the art works. This study, which covers contemporary art works of Malaysian artists since 1940’s until 2005, managed to give a better picture on aspects that have been neglected by the art historians regarding Islamic and Western impact on the art of Malaysia. In doing so, the researcher is inclining to the theory of Iconology proposed by Erwin Panofsky that covers three levels of analysis, i.e. the pre-iconographical description, iconological analysis and iconographical interpretation. Since this research deals with the content and context of the Islamic art, the Panofsky’s approach has been evaluated within the classification of knowledge by al-imam al-Ghazzali. A new level of interpretation that deals with spiritual dimension was introduced in the theory of iconology. The findings highlighted that the educational background determines the major styles of Islamic Contemporary Art of Malaysia. The style was expressive, if the artists were trained in western-educational system, whereas the traditional calligraphers tend to produce hard-edged calligraphy adhering to the rules of writing calligraphy. Within these styles, there was a fusion of these two traditions that made Malaysia as a melting pot. Artists of different races practice Islamic calligraphy in their art works as a manifestation of cultural integration and realization of political policies. The external forces, such as Islamic resurgence had been one of the main factors that increase the production of art works. On the other hand, internal forces and personal motivation based on spiritual drives and inner consciousness had become a major factor that drives the artists to commit themselves with this art throughout their lives. Finally, the findings of this research formulated five main categorizations of Islamic contemporary calligraphy, based on two main considerations: meaning and style. They are Traditional Calligraphy, Rudimentary/Modern Calligraphy, Abstract Calligraphy, Marginal Calligraphy and Gestural/Pseudo Calligraphy. These findings are so meaningful, as they enlighten future area of studies pertaining to the History of Islamic Art in Malaysia as well as the South East Asia regions.

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