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PROCEEDING ISME

Penyunting: Ahmadrashidi bin Hasan Abd. Rasid Bin Ismail Rosli Zakaria

DITERBITKAN OLEH Fakulti Seni Lukis & Seni Reka, Uitm Melaka.



PROCEEDING ISME

Penyunting Ahmadrashidi bin Hasan, Abd. Rasid Bin Ismail & Rosli Zakaria

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Cetakan Pertama 2016

ISI KANDUNGAN

Isi K	andungan	3
Jawa	tankuasa Kolokium ISME 2016	5
1.	Creative Art Therapy Program: Case Study on Malay Muslim Inmates at Sungai Udang Prison in Melaka Azahar Harun, Rosli Zakaria, Amirruddin Osman, Ariff Ali, Hishamudin Ahmad, Haslinda Abd Razak, Meor Hasmadi Meor Hamzah	6
2.	Contemporary Islamic Art of Iraq Country: It's Appreciation Fatimatuzzaharah Mohd Kidin	15
3.	Standardizing Malaysian Vehicle Registration Number Plate M. R. Ruzalia & G. Daimin	22
4.	Using Photographic Images as an Alternative Method To Learning Process In Pre-School Level Farihan Zaharia, Fatrisha Mohamed Yussof, Nurkhazilah Idris, Aidah Alias	32
5.	A Study of The Malaysian Youth Perception Toward 'Muslim Pro' Apps Through Smart Phone in Malaysia Using Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) Hafizah Rosli & Dr Ruslan Abd Rahim	36
6.	Interactive Multimedia: HajjEdu Kiosk Ilinadia Binti Jamil & Zainal Bin Kadir	42
7.	A Visual Analysis: 3D Computer Graphic with Narrative Structure of Adhan Recitation Lili Eliana Mohd Radzuan, Wan Nur khalisah Shamsudin, Mohamed Razeef Abd Razak & Azahar Harun	50
8.	The Role of Visual Communication in Improving Images of Malaysian Secondary School Textbooks N. Yusof & G. Daimin	59
9.	The Styles of Illumination In Al-Qur'ans of The Malay World N.H.M. Din, D.H.M. Zain, M. Mokhtar	66
10.	Artistik Rhiz : Seni Rupa Kontemporari Malaysia Shahariah Mohamed Roshdi , Dr. Abd. Rasid Bin Ismail & Mohd Haniff Mohd Khalid	73
11.	Penilaian Pengunjung Terhadap Pameran Karya Seni "Travelog" Pelajar Seni Halus UiTM Melaka Amiruddin Osman, Dr Rosli Zakaria, Shahrul Munir Mohd Kaulan	80

12.	Compilation Theory Of Malay Malay Aesthetics: Concept Malay Beauty In Arts Nurkhazilah Idris, Ruzaika Omar Basaree, Fazlina Mohd Radzi, Fatrisha Mohd Yussof, Farihan Zahari & Shaliza Dasuki.	86
13.	Alam Sebagai Sumber Reka Bentuk Motif-Motif Seni Hiasan Fabrik Masyarakat	95
	Melayu Dr. Abd. Rasid Bin Ismail , Shahariah Mohamed Roshdi & Prof. Madya Dr Ahmad Rashidi Bin Hasan	
14.	Geometri dalam Rekabentuk Naskhah Dala'il al-Khayrat: Suatu Kajian Awal A. Abdullaha*dan S. Silahb	104
15.	Exploring An Art Photography Movement In Malaysia (1900-2000) Raziq Abdul Samat, Wan Nor Ayuni Wan Mohd Zain, Shafirah Shaari, Dona Lowii Madon, Aidah Alias & Mohd Fakhrul Rodzi Abd Ghapur	112
16.	Penghayatan Budaya Kebangsaan Dalam Karya Animasi Malaysia Pasca-Merdeka	116
	Shaliza Dasukia, Nurkhazilah Idrisa, Nurhasliza Abdulahb dan Norhazalen Haji Saadc	
17.	Appreciating Islamic Contemporary Art of Afghanistan Country Nurul Syazlina Bt Che Yusof, Nor Kamalia Bt Mohamed Saat, Prof. Dr. Dzul Haimi Md Zain, Dr. Mumtaz Hj Mokhtar	125
18.	Describing Advertising Approach By Ministry Of Health Malaysia For Public Service Announement Campaign: Case Study On Anti Dengue Campaign In Press Ad	130
	Norsharina Samsuri, Anith Liyana Amin Nudin	
19.	Penyimpanan Dan Pendokumentasian Karya Kreatif Di Fssr, UiTM Melaka Haslinda Abdul Razak1, Nur Hasliza Abdulah2, Azni Hanim Hamzah3, Nurul Izza Ab Aziz4, Wan Nor Ayuni Wan Mohd Zain5, Noor Hafiza Ismail6	135
20.	Stail Abstrak Arca Awam Kuala Lumpur : Refeleksi Terhadap Tegahan Agama Islam Membina Arca Berbentuk Figura Bernyawa. Dr. Rosli Zakaria	144
21.	Kartun Editorial Internet Indie Melayu: Kritikan Politik Dan Sosial Melalui Rangkaian Sosial Facebook Bertemakan Pribahasa Lama Melayu Fazlina Mohd Radzi, Shahariah Mohamed Roshdi, Nurkhazilah Idris	159
22.	Creativity and Inspiration Woven Technique By Using Excessive Plastic Bag Azni Hanim Hamzah,a , Salina Abdul Mananb , Noor Hafiza Ismaila , Nurhikma Mat Yusufa , Nurul Izza Ab Aziza	167
23.	Sustainable Furniture Design: An Alternative Approach To Enhance Learning Process In Autism Classroom 1Nurhikma Bt Mat Yusof, 2Rosaliana Bt Rahim, 3Ridzuan Adli Bin Azidin	174

JAWATAN KUASA

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Penaung

B

Penasihat 1

Pengerusi Timbalan Pengerusi

Ketua Projek Pen. Ketua Projek

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Cik Fazlina Binti Mohd Radzi Puan Azni Hanim Bin Hamzah Cik Siti Sarah Binti Adam Wan

CONTEMPORARY ISLAMIC ART OF IRAQ COUNTRY: IT'S APPRECIATION

Fatimatuzzaharah Mohd Kidin corresponding author: zaharamk@gmail.com

Abstract

The contemporary Islamic art of Iraq enhanced in art spirit of Islam especially among asian muslims. It is to understand these works one needs to define the concept of contemporary Islamic art the aesthetic and culture as well as according to its context. Consideration on the description, analysis, interpretation and judgment in the analysis of the art works is with combine it with the Islamic concept of God and His relationship with His creation. These concept components of analysis on the five artworks will show the reflection of the act of rhythm artist in their remembrance of God. With their own identities shows a unification of the western approached of art with the Iraqi culture. Hence, a reflection of using the established style found in the contemporary art in the west. This is creating and international phenomena in the development of art especially in Iraq.

Author Keywords: Islamic; Contemporary Art; Iraq; Appreciating

Introduction

Iraq as being the home to some ancient civilizations in history, where in the 8th century, became the capital of the Abbasid Caliphate and the center of the Muslim world. Thus land of Iraq had undergone a long process development for many years. The aim of this paper is to understand the contemporary Islamic art of Iraq as one of the Islamic country in Asia. The objectives are to define the concept of contemporary Islamic art, the aesthetic contextually. A method used is an art historical through observation of the five selected contemporary Islamic artworks of Iraq. Feldman and, Al-Ghazali is approach was used in the process of the analysis. This study will enlighten readers of Iraqi's artists approach in producing some contemporary Islamic art and culture of Iraq.

Methods

This study used the quantitative approach and the art historical method. The underlying theory on the analysis of the artworks is by adopting Feldman and al-Ghazali theory on the different level of knowledge. Feldman give four stages of analysis artworks: description, analysis, interpretation and judgment. The function of description is to describe the form of all five selected artworks focusing on the elements of arts: such as lines, shape and color. As for the analysis is to how the artist used their medium, inspired through their life experiences as to express their creative idea and to communicate with audience: following this is the act of interpretation based on the ontological, logical, epistemological, psychological and sociological. It is from the three processes that any judgment can be made in driving at the conclusion.

ISME COLLOQUIUM 2016 | 16

DISCUSSION

"The Hierarchy of Being" by Wafaa Bilal

Wafaa Bilal is an Iraqi American artist and at the New York University a professor. He was born in Najaf, Iraq but lived in America. The "Hierarchy of Being" is an interactive sculpture that stands 5 meters tall and includes a dome with a diameter of 10.5 meters, used a material from metal that easily dismantle and reassemble (Fig. 1). This sculpture was completed in the year of 2013-2014 which a project that acts as a platform for regional and international outdoor art projects at Maraya Art Park in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates (UAE).

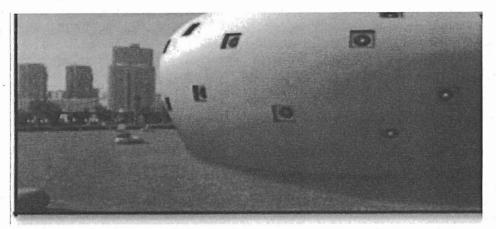


Fig. 1: The window view from outside the sculpture. Source: http://wafaabilal.com/the-hierarchy-of-being/

This sculpture consists of 17 windows, 15 of which serve as a mechanical IRIS while the remaining two are pinholes which allow light to enter. These windows open in every 10 minutes and closed every 20minutes. Based on the famous Iraqi scientist Ibn Al-Haytham's discovery of the first camera and Al-Jazari's rotary methods to produce kinetic motion has inspired the artist in producing a piece sculpture with new media technologies. The concept was to explore on visual culture based on Islamic sciences and its impact on the current thinking of the society towards art, science and Islam. Ontologically, the temporary image projected from the sculpture represents human eyes as explained in al-Qur'an (2:164). Thus, the spiritual truth in relation to the human being, nature and God, through the concept of existence (wujud), persistence in being (baqa), completeness (tamam) and perfection (kamal).

"A Perfect Formation" by Walid Siti

Walid Siti is an Iraqi Kurdistan artist, Walid Siti was born in the city of Duhok, in Iraq but lived in London. "A perfect formation" was an installation sculpture measured 300 x 450cm x 10cm, by material used of thread and nails on MDF board (Fig.2). This sculpture was completed in the year 2012. The sculpture was exhibited in two group's shows which are System & Patterns, held in the International Museum of Graphic Art Ljubjana, Slovenia on from 1st September to 12 November 2012, and 2nd October 2013 to 14th January 2013. It is a project under the Hajj through Art held at the Museum of Islamic Art Doha, Qatar.

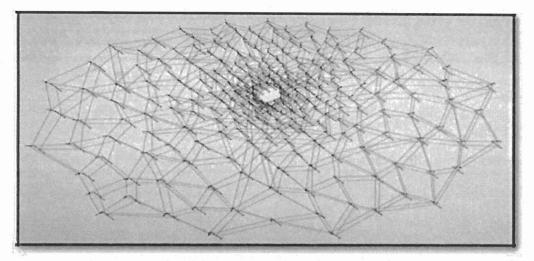


Fig. 2: The installation sculpture, "A Perfect Formation". Source: http://www.walidsiti.com/projects/ladder/.

The nails on board symbolize the pilgrim performing Tawaff. At the center a shape that looks like a stone that symbolizes energy radiates around them in a circular motion, similar to the circumambulations act performed around the Ka'aba. It gets nearer to the center, which symbolizes the sacred shapes in Islam is become one concentration force of energy. The same size nails symbolizes the pilgrims regardless race and wellbeing, the all equal in the eyes of God, they came with the same objective that is to perform hajj. The connected threads to each of the nails symbolize brotherhood while performing the Tawaff. The relationships formed the Islamic culture that reflects a stratified social structure, starting with the concept of unity of the ummah coming together as one in peace.

Hence, this repeating structure is a metaphor for the organization of society and hierarchy of power which is a beauty in the aspect of remembrance of Allah. In fact, from logical aspect on art, the material used was very strong structure that symbolized the strong relationship that Diversity celebrates the way in which Muslims from across the world are brought together for the Hajj pilgrimage.

"Al – Warqa" by Adel Abidin

Adel Abidin was born in Baghdad, in Iraq but currently lives between Helsinki and Amman. "Al – Warqa" is a mix media installation sculpture with a dimension of 190 cm height from head to leg, 600 cm width from wing to wing, and 400 cm depth from head to tail. The materials used are suspended steel structure, Acrylic, LED lights, rope and customized stone (Fig. 3). This sculpture was completed in the year of 2013, and shown at 104-Le CENTQUATRE, Paris in 2014 and at the Lawrie Shabibi Gallery, Dubai in 2013.

ISME COLLOQUIUM 2016 | 18

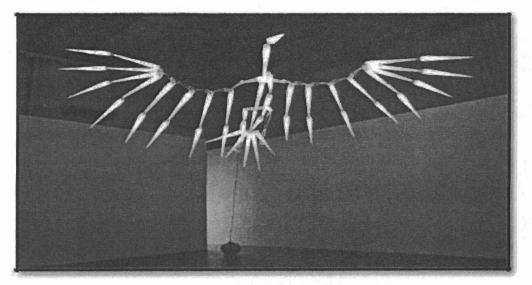


Fig. 3: The mix media installation sculpture: "Al-Warqa". Source: http://www.adelabidin.com/mixed-media/al-warqaa.

The sculpture was a stylized geometric form of a flying bird, with a wide opening wings associated with freedom. By the mere sizes of the sculpture, the artist tries to express his past experiences on the tragedy in his home land. Based on the materials itself, the suspended steel for the body structure, signify the strong character of artist. The light radiates from the white LED lights shows the bright purity soul. The artist inspired by Ibn Sina's poem which talk about the joyfulness journey of the soul to the light of a dove and the soul that represents a timeless journey towards death and the soul living the body of the fallen of the war.

From the aspect of epistemological, the artist had used familiar objects to develop it with something abstract and universally accepted. The prepositioned statements were derived from the observation from the surrounding which is the fallen Iraq. Freedom is not merely referred to this living world but also world after the death as explained in the al-Quran Surah 3:169-171.

"Barzakh" by Hanaa Malallah

Hanaa Malallah is a female contemporary artist, born in the Thi Qar Province of Iraq and now lives in London. "Barzakh" or obstacle was an installation sculpture, size of 470cm x 76.5cm x 102cm, (Fig. 4). She used antique stairs, neon lights and burnt wood. Yet to make it alive, a special effect of burning sounds being installed. This work was shown at The Park Gallery, in London.

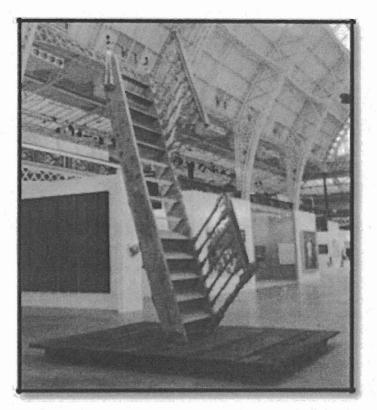


Fig. 4: The installation sculpture: "Barzakh". Source: http://hanaa-malallah.com/works/object%20art/barzakhobstacle.html.

The concept of ruins as shown in her antique brownish colors stair signifies the damage of civilian's home in Iraq after the war. The bright green of neon lights symbolized 'hope'. The black burnt wood at the base of the antique stair, symbolized uncertainty about them well being in the future. Over the years, she had experienced many things and showing developed of her works her subject matter by which observing the deconstruction as well as reconstruction. Psychologically, one will always remember the judgment day when any things of value on this earth were not sustainable. Nothing is permanent and it's in God that He can take back what He wants. One must be humble to Him, for it will enlighten ourself as stated in the al-Quran Surah 112:1-4.

"Love Garden" by Wissam Shawkat

Hassan Massoudy was born in 1974 in Basra City, Iraq. He currently lives in Dubai as a calligrapher and works as a senior designer as well as a consultant. He specialized in brand identity and Arabic typography with global branding in advertising agencies in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) as well as abroad. "Love Garden" is a calligraphy work using Soot ink and acrylic colors on paper (Fig.5). The size artwork of the work is 55 x 95 cm. This artwork was completed in the year of 2010 -2011 in the series of Letters of Love, solo exhibition was held in Reed Space, New York in the year 2012.

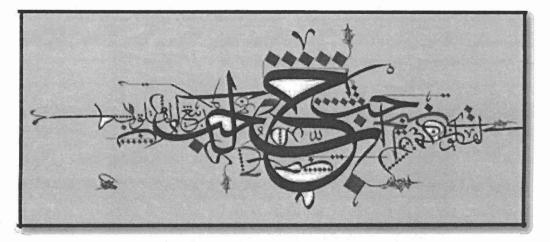


Fig. 5: The calligraphy: "Love Garden". Source: http://www.wissamshawkat.com/?page_id=17#!mg_ld=323

In the "Love Garden", the artist used repetitions of the word love in Arabic language hub or al-hubb. He used the combination of Arabic script the ha and ba in repetition. The artwork it can be seen as a deconstruction from standard type of calligraphy which is the Kufi script. The artist had experiment the script but still maintain the basic technique in constructing the alphabet using squared dots as guideline.

Nevertheless, his styles of calligraphy can be said as having some influences from the Turkish Thuluth and Kufic from Iraq. The combination of both has developed into a fresh and unique style which broadens the horizon of calligraphy itself. From the sociologically point of view, he had contributed to the global societies. Spiritually, his work brings goodness to the society, particularly the Muslims because it can be seen as a vehicle in remembering God as stated in the al-Quran Surah 68:1-4.

CONCLUSION

Contemporary Islamic art is passing his way globally. The Iraqi artist, even though their country has been devastated by the war, managed to voice out their feeling through art not in their home land but abroad. Their artworks transcend the geophysical boundaries and their nationalistic and religious feeling well expressed in their artworks. Their artworks are Islamic deriving the international language of art understood globally.

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