

BUILDINGS

ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE: BUILDINGS OF SARAWAK

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The design of buildings and structures in Sarawak are deeply rooted in Sarawak's diverse cultural heritage, historical influences and local environment. Architectural design should prioritize cultural sensitivity, ensuring that new buildings respect and incorporate local traditions and heritage to preserve their unique identity.

The traditional buildings featured in the artwork by Datin Halima Amin, Ts. Noraziah Mohd Razali and Clement anak Jimel are the Rumah Melanau, Rumah Orang Ulu and the Baruk structure. The longhouse, a distinctive traditional structure symbolises Sarawak's rich cultural heritage. These are communal homes that are elongated wooden structures raised on stilts. The Rumah Melanau and Rumah Orang Ulu is designed to house multiple families while the Baruk structure is used as a meeting place where cultural ceremonies are held for this commune.

During the British colonial era, the traders and immigrants from Chinese community moved to Sarawak and established settlements, leaving a significant mark in the region's architectural identity. As highlighted in the artwork by Merrylove G. Albert, this period saw the rise of shophouses, which featured decorative elements and traditional roof designs that blended both local and Chinese influences, adding a distinct dimension to Sarawak's urban environment.

Trade and interaction with Muslim merchants and explorers contributed to the spread of Islam in Sarawak. Today, Islam is the official religion of Malaysia. Hence, the Islamic architecture in Sarawak is prevalent. Emil Elmariz Bin Johny's artwork incorporates a collage of city photographs that prominently feature mosques. Mosques often feature classic Islamic architectural elements such as domes, minarets, and decorative calligraphy. These mosques' designs incorporate traditional Islamic features and local architectural styles, reflecting a blend of influences.

The Sarawak State Legislative Assembly building or Dewan Undangan Negeri (DUN) of Sarawak is one of the latest iconic building structures along the waterfront of the Sarawak River in Kuching, the capital city of Sarawak. The artwork by Dr. Valerie Anak Michael, Emil Elmariz Bin Johny, and Nathaniel Subil features the DUN building's architectural layout as a prominent nine-pointed star, symbolizing the unity of Sarawak's nine divisions. Drawing inspiration from the past, the building's roof design honours Sarawak's architectural and cultural traditions. Its intricate details reflect the unique blend of cultures that define Sarawak's heritage.

The evolution of building design in Sarawak illustrates a dynamic interplay between tradition and modernity. From the traditional longhouses and colonial influences to contemporary buildings, Sarawak's architectural future promises to honour its rich heritage while embracing innovation and environmental stewardship.



Ts. Noraziah Mohd Razali

Title: Orang Ulu Longhouse

Year: 2024

Media: Mixed media- Chinese Ink, Acrylic, Graphic Pen

Size: 42cm x 59.4cm

Price: RM 1,700

The Orang Ulu longhouse, elevated by 30 feet, is a remarkable architectural creation made exclusively from robust ironwood and *belian* wood. This structure is distinguished by its ornate paintings and sculptures that embellish the stilt poles, showcasing the community's artistic heritage. In an effort to depict the distinctiveness of Sarawak, the artist employs a mixed-media composition that emphasises the intricate motifs adorning these stilt poles. This artistic approach highlights the rich cultural heritage and unique architectural style of the Orang Ulu, capturing the essence of the tribal group's traditional craftsmanship and aesthetic sensibilities.



Clement anak Jimel

Title: Baruk

Year: 2024

Media: Mixed media- chinese ink and acrylic

Size: 40cm x 60cm

Price: RM 1,600

The *baruk* offers serene harmony, where lush greenery and traditional structures blend seamlessly.



Dr. Valerie Anak Michael

Title: Kita Serumpun

Year: 2024

Media: Mixed-Media painting

Size: 42cm x 59.4cm

Price: RM 1,800

The Dewan Undangan Negeri Sarawak is renowned for its modern design mixed with traditional Sarawakian and the elements of contemporary aesthetics. Meanwhile, Tugu Monas is an iconic monument located in Jakarta, Indonesia. The inspiration for this artwork is highlighting the famous landmarks in Kuching and Jakarta. Other additional subjects are included, namely, the traditional motifs and Rafflesia, which are also part of the “Serumpun” symbolic elements. The technique applied in this artwork is mixed media.



Datin Halina Amin

Title: Serita Tho Sabe

Year: 2024

Media: Mixed-Media Painting

Size: 40cm x 60cm

Price: RM 2,000

"Serita Tho Seba" is inspired by the Melanau literature that draws from folktales passed down through the ages. This notion persists to this day, caught between the realms of myth and fact. The Melanau dwelling, a water serpent, and a big jar that collects rainfall are the three primary elements of this artwork. To heighten its air of mystique, the serpent is shown in a hazy manner. Sketching methods that emphasize a diversity of lines to generate form are employed extensively in this work. The use of mixed-media, including coloured pencils, acrylic, pen, and ink gives the artwork an extra dimension.



Merrylove G. Albert

Title: Intangible Threads That Connect

Year: 2024

Media: canvas printing

Size: 40cm x 30cm

Price: RM 470

Kuching blends historic shophouses and colonial remnants from the Brooke Dynasty, creating an eclectic charm. The Sarawak River, dividing the city into South and North, was once bustling with *Penambang* boats. Its cultural and commercial alleyways offer a rich heritage, making Kuching a welcoming home for all.



Emil Elmariz Bin Johny

Title: Fraction of a Friday in Kuching City

Year: 2024

Media: canvas printing

Size: 40cm x 30cm

Price: RM 350

The artwork reflects a Friday evening through a collage of city photographs. The dark blue symbolizes the feeling of calmness and serenity, while touches of red represent passion and love for Kuching, blending tranquillity and vibrancy in this evocative portrayal.



Nathanael Subil

Title: Whispers of Sarawak: A Journey Mapped in Ink

Year: 2024

Media: canvas printing

Size: 40cm x 30cm

Price: RM 220

The Dewan Undangan Negeri Sarawak symbolizes governance, culture, and identity. Featuring its iconic '*payung*' roof and majestic facade, the sketch is encircled by abstract geometric patterns. Monochromatic tones highlight Sarawak's rich heritage and global aspirations, with a warm background evoking history and continuity.