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

# EXPLORING AN ART PHOTOGRAPHY MOVEMENT IN MALAYSIA (1900-2000)

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#### ABSTRACT

Photography lives between art and sciences. Photography has been developed since 1827 when Joseph Nicephore Niepce who invented the first permanent image in a world entitled 'A View From Windows at Le Gras'. After the achievement of creating permanent image, there are several enhancement of experiments has been done image such as Dagguereotype (1839), Calotype (1841), Wet Collodion (1851) and many more. The widespread of photography to the world started in 1888 when George Eastmen introduced Kodak box camera with dry plate of roll film. Along this achievement it created a job and also a photography movement. There are several an art photography movement in 19th century started with Pictorialism, Russian Constructivism, Dadaism, Surrealism, Straight Photography, California Modernist, Abstract Photography Post WWII and Post Modernist. Objectively this research paper is to explore an art photography movement in Malaysia which of these movements was influenced Malaysian art photographers from 1900 to 2000.

Keywords: History of Photography, Malaysia, 1900 to 2000

## INTRODUCTION

Photography is a component which difficult to clarify either an art or sciences. The usage of optical principle on the camera obscura and lucida showed the photography as an important tool to measure the subject matter in 15th century. The principle of camera obscura (a small hole in the wall of a darkened box that would pass light through the hole) which using the concept of drawing using a light, make the scientist compete each others in making light sensitive material. There several experiment of light sensitive material has been done such as Johann Heinrich Schulze, Thomas Wedgewood and Humphry Davy. Unfortunately, their experiments were unsuccessful. In 1827, the Frenchman scientist, Joseph Nicephore Niepce invented the first permanent image in a world entitled 'A View from Window at Le Gras' using Heliography process. This successful of this experiment means it giving a birth of photography in a world. Then, there are several experiments has been done to enhance the result of the permanent image such as Dagurreotype, Calotype, Wet Collodion, Cyanotype and many more.

### TIMELINE OF PHOTOGRAPHY MOVEMENT: 1827 – 1975 (WORLD)

According to Eileen Raferty, photography can be described either as an art or sciences. The photograph could document reality or to be an artistic form of self-expression. There are timeline of an art photography movement in a world.

1827 – Photography invented

1902 - Pictorialism (Photo Secession) rejected point & shoot approach

1913 – Russian Constructivism Dadaism Surrealism
1916 – Straight Photography
1931 – California Modernist Abstract Photography Post WWII
1975 – New Social Landscape Post-Modernist

Photography, intensifying the impact of facts, could perhaps provide the novel means to gain sympathetic and immediate political attention. Photography was considered to be a truthful record, an independent eye viewing an undeniable reality. For several decades in the mid-to late 19th century, painting and photography seemed to have converged on the same paradigm by translating the scenic view in two-dimension image. The subject matter was often peasant life and landscapes.

Along in 1880s, photography began to open up to the masses with the first Kodak cameras from George Eastman. The Pictorialists strove to go beyond the clinical, focused detail of the photograph, beyond the "snapshot" to invoke feeling, a mood or an atmosphere in the print (Laura, 2007). They copied the compositions of modern paintings and manipulated the print. The movement lasted almost 40 years. Pictorialism has move at the last decades of 19th century and Henry Peach Robinson, the most advocate of artistic photography in 1870s and 1880s, illustrated it. It was emerging out of the amateur movement under the leadership of Alfred Stieglitz (Coleman, 2008).

There is a clarity and directness to the images that is astonishing, whether he's photographing a fishing village on the Gaspe in 1929, a portrait of Stieglitz in 1939, or one of his wife in 1922 (Enright, 2000). Constructivism in relation to artistic and architectural movements commenced in Russia before the time of the October Revolution in 1917 and became most influential afterward. The movement dismissed "pure" art in favor of art used as an instrument for social purposes, specifically the construction of a socialist system, and it encouraged mechanical art as a new dynamic (Michael, 2008). During the period from late 1921 to early 1924, some of the constructivists tried-largely in vainto turn themselves into something called production artists (Douglas, 2006). In art and architecture, the important features of Constructivism included geometric abstraction and bold graphic design. In photography, a reflection of the photographer might be included in the subject matter, or a shadow of the photographer holding the camera might stretch toward the center of the picture (Michael, 2008). Dada began in Zurich and became an international movement. Dada was a literary emerging out in Europe at a time when the horror of World War I. Due to the war, a number of artists, writers and intellectuals, especially French and German nationality found themselves having come together at Zurich (Buelens, 2006). It was then spread to the American country which was dependent on the example of European Dada from 1915-1923 (Foster, 1995). Abstraction and Expressionism were the main influences on Dada, followed by Cubism and, to a lesser extent, Futurism. All things from geometric tapestries to glass to plaster and wooden reliefs were being used, by assemblage, collage, photomontage and the use of ready made objects all gained wide to use in Dada art.

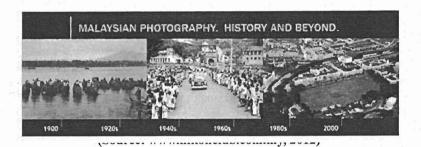
The Surrealist movement began as a literary group strongly allied to Dada, emerging in the wake of the collapse of Dada in Paris (Simon, 2006). Breton, who is occasionally described as the 'Pope' of Surrealism, officially founded the movement in 1924 when he wrote "The Surrealist Manifesto." However, the term "surrealism," was first coined in 1917 by Guillaume Apollinaire when he used it in program notes for the ballet Parade, written by Pablo Picasso, Leonide Massine, Jean Cocteau, and Erik Satie.

Straight or "Pure" Photography movement was first publicized in the early 1900's through a note by The New York Times on an exhibition in New York with photographs by Alvin Langdon Coburn,

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Gertrude Kasebier, Clarence H. White and many others. is creating an image that objectively portrays the reality of the world without manipulating the photograph after it has been produced. The Straight photography process strived to encourage photographers to experiment with the limits of the camera and developing process to create abstract and unique photographs instead of manipulating the image with a brush after it had been printed. Some contemporary photographers believe that straight photography is documentary and limited to showing "reality" exactly as it might be seen on an ordinary day as you or I walk by it.

## BRIEFLY THE DEVELOPMENT HISTORY OF PHOTOGRAPHY IN MALAYSIA



From the figure 1: Malaysia photography, history and beyond by Alex Moh and Li-en Chong (2012) the development of Malaysian photographer started in 1840s. Photography been used as documentation purpose for expeditionary purposes, to gather information and provide visual records. Among of the pioneer photographer in Malaya and Singapore are G.R. Lambert, JFA Mc Nair, J. Newman and Ernst August Kaulfuss. Among of the group of four pioneers' photographer in Malaysia are the late HRH Tuanku Ismail Nasuriddin Shah (1907-1979), the late Dato Loke Wan Tho (1915-1964), The late Wong Ken Foo (1916-1998), Koh Eng Tong (Ming Chua, 2003). The late HRH Tuanku Ismail Nasuriddin Shah (1907-1979) was one of the Royal that are very talented photographer; his style of images can be classified as social documentary work (Zhuang Wubin, 2013). The late Dato Loke Wan Tho (1915-1964), was the Chairman of the Malaysian Airways, an active and welfare worker and a Director of the National Art Gallery during 1960s (Ming Chua, 2003). Therefore, this paper is to explore and gather more on the development of the art photography movement in Malaysia from 1900-2000 because of lacking in terms of reference and books for photography practice in Malaysia.

#### CONCLUSION

Now, photography has yet to possess proper acknowledgement as a serious art form in many photographs in Malaysia and the South East Asian region. In together were found the fact of the beginning of photography is the successful experiment led to the existence of photography in the world with several experiments were carried out to enhance the result of permanent images such as Dagurreotype, calotype, Wet Collodian, Cynotype and etc. The movement of art photography shows the development of ideology of the reign or country same as Malaysia. These paper aims to explore and to discover the influence of art photography movement in Malaysian photography from 1900 to 2000. However, documentation and studies of photography movement has been understudied in Malaysia despite the extensive photographs have been recorded to capture the Malaysian history and also because of lacking in terms of reference and books for photography practice in Malaysia.

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