

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**MALAYSIAN DIGITAL PAINTING:
AN ART HISTORICAL STUDY**

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ABSTRACT

Malaysian modern painting was established in the 1930s during British colonization. Since that period, artists applied pigments on paper and canvas, using media such as water color, oils, pastel and acrylic paint. With the advent of digital technology, local artists started using computers in their art-making in the 1980s and have become reputable since the Digital Collage exhibition in 1988. In the context of art, digital painting is an extension of the painting concept which refers to new forms involving various types of digital data including vector or raster image, text and sound. Digital painting is created through hardware and software in virtual and physical appearances. Similar to any form of art, digital painting tells about the product, the process and its nature. Although digital painting exists two decades ago, there is a lack of acceptance and understanding on the subjects. An art historical study will become a major reference for the development of Malaysian art. Consequently, this study aims to trace the chronology of the development of Malaysian digital painting. The stylistic and contextual issues including its formalistic format, media, themes and styles, and artists are also examined in this study. Using a mixed mode of research method, this study reviews related literature, observes hundreds artifacts and conducts interview sessions with prominent artists. Data for interviews were gained through a semi-structured interview format. The instrument for the semi-structured interviews was formed based on related literature and practices found in research materials. The exploration of the history of Malaysian digital painting demonstrates the growth of Malaysian digital painting, the artists, the artifacts, and other related background. Based on the timeline chart, Malaysian digital painting still continues and more young artists are involved in digital painting creations. As a result, the history of Malaysian digital painting can be summarized into several important eras namely Programming Era, Paint Program Era and Multimedia Era. Hopefully, this research will be a major reference for further study in related fields.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis is about the scenario of Malaysian art in which, local artists are challenging their approaches towards art making. The media used in local art in the pre-independent years are different with the post-independent years today. Progress in general, has enabled artists to experiment with different media in multiple dimensions based on numerous purposes. The media were applied in certain period by certain artists in different conditions. Consequently, the existence of digital technology in Malaysia also inspired artist to respond with their ideas and messages. By using digital technologies, they worked in different genres, styles, approaches and so on.

1.2 AIM AND OBJECTIVES

This research is aimed to establish a historical study of Malaysian digital art especially painting which, periodically appear in Malaysian art development. It will establish data that support documentation of the timeline or the chronology of Malaysian digital painting. Hence, this study is set to achieve the following objectives;

- i. To trace the history and chronological development of Malaysian digital painting from 1980s to 2009. The 1980s was selected as the starting period. This decade was considered as the early years of digital art exploration where the first Digital Collage exhibition was held in Malaysia. However, the exploration of the history of Malaysian digital painting will not be restricted only to that particular decade. It may expose any related materials during or earlier than that timeline. The end period of this study is at 2009 due to the limitation time of research study.
- ii. To analyze stylistically and contextually the work of Malaysian digital paintings. The artifacts, mainly digital paintings, will be the focus study for this research. In this case, the study will mainly analyze the objects from the angle of its style and its context.