

GRAPHIC

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*The Creative Process  
of Undergraduate  
Final Year Projects*

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Azahar Harun and  
Mohd Zaki Mohd Fadil

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# GRAPHIC PHILOSOPHY

*The Creative Process of  
Undergraduate Final Year  
Projects*

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Azahar Harun and  
Mohd Zaki Mohd Fadil

College of Creative Arts  
Universiti Teknologi MARA  
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# Graphic Philosophy: The Creative Process of Undergraduate Final Year Projects

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# Dondang Sayang Board Game Design

## introduction

The Board Game Design project started with how every project starts, which is defining the problem. In the book *Managing the Design Process Concept Development* by Terry Lee Stone, this step is in the Preparation step in the Process of Design. The problem being how the awareness of Dondang Sayang has been decreasing from generation to generation. Director of the State Department of Culture and Arts (JKKN), Ezlina Alias acknowledged that the continuation of dondang Sayang in the Peranakan community is now at a critical juncture. She said that not only is the issue of the absence of legacy connectors among the new generation, but the decreasing number of existing pioneers due to the passing of the dead is also troubling. (Utusan Malaysia, June, 2021). According to Utusan Malaysia, a report on June 6 2021, stated that , the oldest ethnic Chetti for Dondang Sayang public figure zin the state, G. Meenachi, 91years old, died at Melaka Hospital.

*“Dondang Sayang has been recognised by the United Nations’ Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) as an intangible cultural heritage of humanity. “*

*- New Straits Times, 2018*

This singing, which originally was the singing of royalties from the Malacca Sultanate Era in the 15th Century has been recognised by UNESCO as stated in the reported news in 2018. According to the Minister of Tourism, this recognition is crucial for the country as it will give advantage in terms of protection, promotion and the opportunity in highlighting the identity of our country. In a way, this also will attract more tourists to watch our cultural traditional art from up-close.

The Figure 1.0 shows a sample of how a Dondang Sayang performance. Dondang Sayang is a traditional Malay art still practiced in Melaka by 4 communities: the Malay, Baba Nyonya, Chitty and Portuguese communities. The practice combines elements of music such as violins, gongs and tambourines or the tambour, songs and chants, and features beautiful melodic strains of poetry



Figure 1.0 Dondang Sayang Performance

## objectives

- To identify the concept, storyline and elements needed in creating this traditional art form: Dondang Sayang board game.
- To create suitable illustration design for this board game that will attract the younger generation.

## preparation process

Thus, through consultation with the supervisor of this project, a research and project proposal has been made. From here, the brainstorming of creating a board game started. The first stage of game design is exciting but at the same time challenging. As turning an idea into a playable game does feel so overwhelming that at a certain point it does feel easy to simply leave the ideas in the heads.

*"Art takes time, don't rush it"*  
-En.Rafuzan bin Jaafar

Motivated with En Rafuzan Jaafar words during one of his consultation classes, the project proceeded.

Therefore, the best thing to do is simply get the ideas out of our head. Every idea that comes up, has been written down without holding anything back without much organizing or critiquing the ideas.

The theme, mechanism, storyline and concept was brainstormed. A few options of ideas came to mind and were jotted down in a mindmap in a progress portfolio book for this project. Questions such as who the game is for, how should the players feel, what makes the game different, what are some possible mechanisms that line up with the desired player experience, what are players trying to accomplish, and how do they win and what is player count, play time, and age range should the game have.



Figure 1.0  
Design Process of Portuguese  
Ethnic Character

From here, the answers such as how does a Dondang Sayang board game work could be visualized. There are plenty of other questions but the main thing is to be clearly intentional about where the fun is.

## incubation process

Next, the project proceeds with Incubation process, where all of the sketches of ideation begin. Starting with the main item, the board game itself, were visualized with a few ideation options, such as, a maze concept and snake & ladders board game concept. Other than that, all other elements are being sketched out, such as the details of illustration elements in the board game, its players, cards and packaging.

A few details of illustration that are included include Players characters, Portuguese (Figure 1) , Baba Nyonya, Malay and Chetti ethnic, tile pattern from the stairs of 'Rumah Melaka' (Figure 2), instruments that are used in Dondang Sayang, which are 'Rebana', 'Gong' and 'Violin'. Through all of these sketches each idea was being consulted with the supervisor as they refined all good ideas into great ones.



Figure 2  
Tile Pattern  
Design

Figure 2  
Tile Pattern  
Design

Plus, one of the most crucial items that wasn't forgotten is the Instruction book of playing the Dondang Sayang board game. It is a player's manual as to how to play along and have all the fun of the board game without the help of the creator or designer of the game being in the scene.

## illumination

Afterwards, all of these sketches were turned from manual sketches into a digital one. Colors, Artstyles, Layout Design, Tyopgraphy, Composition, Packaging and every single detail there is. Comprehensive and Semi-comprehensive progress is being develop. Every details are then being consulted with the supervisor and being refined and amend until it is ready to be the best version of its design.

## implementation process

In the same time a prototype of Dondang Sayang Board Game is being produced. The purpose of creating a prototype is to make sure all of the ideas that are being designed do actually work. In the prototype, all of the mechanisms and concepts are clear enough so that the playtesters can play the game effectively. Then, through testing, feedback is being taken on ways the board game can be changed and improved. Published games that are on the market that are quite similar to this project are being taken as references to improvise moreand make refinement of design on the board game.



Figure 3  
Compilation of Designs for the Dondang Sayang Board Game

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“Every great design begins with  
an even *better* story”

- Lorinda Mamo

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