

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**FORM, FUNCTIONS AND MEANING
OF MALAY *TEPAK SIRIH*
IN MALAYSIA**

SITI HAJAR BTE MAIZAN

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Art History & Cultural Management

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CONFIRMATION BY PANEL OF EXAMINERS

I certify that a panel examiners has met on 5th January, 2015 to conduct the final examination of Siti Hajar bte Maizan on her Master of Art and Design thesis entitled “Form, Functions and Meaning of Malay *Tepak Sirih* in Malaysia” in accordance with Universiti Teknologi MARA Act 1976 (Akta 173). The Panel of Examiners recommends that the student be awarded the relevant degree. The Panel of Examiners was as follows:

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this thesis/ dissertation was carried out in accordance with the regulations of Universiti Teknologi MARA. It is original and is the results of my own work, unless otherwise indicated or acknowledged as referenced work. This thesis has not been submitted to any academic institution or non-academic institution for any degree or qualification.

I, hereby, acknowledge that I have been supplied with the Academic Rules and Regulations for Post Graduate, Universiti Teknologi MARA, regulating the conduct of my study and research.

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ABSTRACT

Tepak sirih is one of the objects of the cultural heritage of the Malays that are still being used as a medium during a ceremony among the Malay community including proposing, engagement and marriage, as well as used, in official and royal ceremonies. Aim of this research is to study the form, function and meaning of Malay *tepak sirih* in Malaysia using theory by Meyer Schapiro (1953). This research started with describing the form and function form each *tepak sirih* that been studied. Samples were collected from six different museums in Kuala Lumpur and Melaka. To gain better understanding, interview with the curators and academicians were conducted. The result of this study showed that *tepak sirih* has varieties of forms and motifs such as floral and fauna elements were significantly found at most of the Malay *tepak sirih* designs and rectangular-shaped. It has been used in official ceremonies such as meeting Sultan and unofficial ceremonies such as starting a conversation during proposing or engagement event. The meanings for each *tepak sirih* are different and most of it are related with the Malay philosophy. However, the modernization has transferred the design of *tepak sirih* to a very simple form and decoration, which are more minimal and plain. Finally, from the study concluded that Malay *tepak sirih* need to be preserved in term of the form, function and meaning so as retaining the customs and tradition of Malay sense could keep the traditional things like *tepak sirih* can be sustained and valued by the future generation. Other than that, Malay community by not only follows the tradition but the appreciation and an interpretation for the *tepak sirih* that can be practice today.

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