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SUFISM IN THE CONTEMPORARY ART OF MALAYSIA

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Abstract

This paper disclosed some artists who observed to express Sufism, both ideological and experiential. It discussed the content analysis of their artworks on aspects like image, subject and their meaning from the perspectives of Sufism and also the formalistic aspects which involved the style and visuals. Artists appeared to use the implicit manifestation of expression which involved metaphorical and abstract representation. It is established that there are artists in Malaysia who expressed the ideology of Sufism or expressed the beauty of the spiritual experience of the Sufism.

Keywords: Sufism; Sufistic Expression; Explicit Manifestation; Implicit Manifestation; Spiritual Expression

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Sufism (*Tasawuf*) is regarded as one of the highest order of Islamic '*ilm* (knowledge) (Al-Ghazali, 1999:604). The knowledge (*'ilm*) of Sufism can be described broadly as the intensification of Islamic faith and practice, or to strive for a personal engagement with the Divine Reality (*wajib al wujud*). The term 'Sufi', which is Arabic, had been defined with variations over the past centuries both by proponents and opponents of Sufism. The diversion of the interpretations of Sufism was due to the sources of understanding, primary and secondary sources. For those who practiced Sufism, the primary sources, interpreted Sufism as living the spiritual (*akhirah*) dimension in the worldly life. For some, they perceived Sufism as a movement that engaged 'Islamic mysticism' or 'Islamic esotericism.' Such terms are vague and often imply a negative value judgment and sometimes discourage people not to fit into the preconceived concept of Sufism.

The birth of Sufism was concomitant with the birth of Islam. Since, the first revelation of Verses (*Āyah*) 1 to 3 of Surah Al-Iqra, (A. Yusof Ali, 1983:1760) the Jibril, the angel of revelation, idea of Sufism is already incorporated.

*Iqra Bismirabika al-ladzi khalaq
Khalaqakal insāna min 'alaq*

Proclaim! With the name of your Rabb who creates
Creating Man from the '*alaq*

The two main matters revealed here is the *Rabb*, the creator which is the essence (*Dzat*), and the created (*khalaqa*) which is the manifested (*tajalli*). The *Rabb* or the creator is spiritual (*akhīrah*), and to know (*makrifah*) Him must be through the path of spiritual wisdom, or Sufism (*tasawuf*). The knowledge regarding the created or the worldly being, and to lead the life of worldly wise, is the knowledge of jurisprudence (*fiqh*).

Islam is made up of two elements as proclaimed in the witnesseth (*syahādah*):

*Asyhadu a(n)lā-ilāha-illaha
Asy-hadu anna Muhammadar-rasūlullah*

I bear witness there is no *illah* except Allah
I bear witness Muhammad the messenger of Allah

The essence of the proclamation that there is no *illāh* except Allah is the knowledge (*‘ilm*) of the state of the spiritual (*ākhirah*) or non-existence (*ghaib*). It deals with the non-existential (*ghaib*) beliefs (*iktiqād*) that involved thought (*fikr*), psyche (*qalb*), and the self (*nafs*). *Tasawuf* is the path (*tariqah*) to enjoy the knowledge of spiritual dimension and hereafter. The proclamation of Muhammad as the messenger of Allah is the practice (*amāl*) in the worldly life. The knowledge of the practice (*hadith*) of Muhammad or jurisprudence (*fiqh*) guide Muslims to enjoy the worldly life. The outcome of upholding both feature of life enjoys the heavenly life on the earth.

Islam is constituted by two main factions, the manifested practice (*amal zahāriah*) and the spiritual practice (*amal ākhirah*). The manifested practice (*amal zahāriah*) which is worldly practice concerns with daily life affairs such as politics (*siasah*), community (*jamā’ah*), rituals (*amāliyah*), practices (*mu’āmalah*), birthright (*farā-id*), matrimonial (*munāqahah*) and other aspect of life activities. The spiritual practice, which is termed as *tasawuf*, constitutes the spiritual dimension of life which involved the inner sense (*bathin*), the mind (*hāl*), unity (*tawhid*), and hereafter (*ākhirah*).

Along these lines, the Prophet (pbuh) was the model of spirituality for the world. His God-consciousness, deep spirituality, acts of worship, and love for Allah were preserved and propagated by an Islamic science called *Tasawuf*. The aim of the scholars of this science was purification of the heart, and development of consciousness of Allah through submission to the *syari’ah* and *sunnah*.

Studying the life of the Prophet (pbuh), the scholars who propagated the science of *tasawuf* understood that a requisite for approaching Allah was abandonment of the common pursuits of the world. They often wore wool because of its simplicity and low cost. In Arabic the word for wool is *suf* and thus, those who wore it became known as the Sufis. Another possible derivation of the word comes from the root word *safa* (nil), which means "to clean" because the scholars of *tasawuf* focused on cleansing the heart, they later became known as the Sufis.

Traditional Islamic scholars have accepted *Tasawuf* as an important branch of Islamic learning, so long as it remains within the guidelines of the Divine Law (*syari’ah*) and emphasizes following the tradition (*sunnah*) of the Prophet (pbuh).

In understanding the ideology or philosophy of *tawasuf*, according to Sufi scholar in interview sessions, the writer was insisted to read three major early writings by Malay Sufi scholars. One is ‘Ad-Darunnafis’ by Al-Banjarie, ‘Kasyaf al-Asrar’ and ‘Al Hikam’ by Ibnu Atho’illah. Among the earliest writing in the Malay World (*Dunia Melayu*) regarding Sufism was written by Al-Banjarie* (dates unknown). The writing was believed the earliest because the book (*Kitab*) entitled *Ad-Darun Nafis* had already been used as references in the early Malay/religious school (*sekolah pondok*) in the Malay Peninsula as early as the 1700’s.

Al-Banjarie explained the basic practice of *Tasawuf* is to understand the truth (*haqiqah*) of the proclamation (*asy-Syahadah*). The *asy-Syahadah* is a proclamation to deny (*nafy*) divinity (*ilah*) other than Allah. The ‘*ilm*’ of the *asy-syahadah* is to submit (*raji’un*) and to ascertain (*isbats*) that Allah is in all creations and whatever transpires (*wajib-al-wujud*). In order to achieve this state, one has to undergo the process (*salik*) of the destroyance (*fana*) of the existence of the self (*nafs*) and achieve the transcendence state of omni-presence (*baqa*).

To achieve this state of spiritual wisdom, one has to practice of being oneness (*wahid*) or in unity (*tauhid*) with the Essence of Existence (*Dzat wajibal wujud*). There are four elements of unity which are:

1. Unity in name (*Tauhidul asma’*)
2. Unity in character (*Tauhidul sifat*)
3. Unity in action (*Tauhidul Af’al*)
4. Unity in dzat (*Tauhidul Dzat*)

The state of unification (*wahdahniah*) is the stage where one could see that any creations and occurrences (*kun*) are all the manifestation of Allah, the Essence (*Dzat*). Being transcended into such state than one would imply to witness unity in multiplicity (*syuhudul wahdah fil kastrah*) to witness and multiplicity in Unity (*syuhudul kastrah fil wahdah*) or to witness the Essence in every being and to witness every being is the Essence.

Ibnu Atho’illah As-Sakandari in his Book of Wisdom (*Kitab Al Hikam*)[†] (1739) wrote about the practice of the inner sense (*bathin*) in witnessing the worldly life through the inner eye (*nazhar*). His writings were actually

suggestions, in the form of aphorisms, on methods and means to look at the worldly world from a transcendent state. Analyzing his aphorisms, Ahmadrashidi Hasasn (2010) concluded that for one to be in the state of spiritual wisdom (*hikmah tasawuf*) should witness the worldly being with 6 principles which are:

1. Spiritualization (*akhirah*)
2. Powerlessness (*Idhtirari*)
3. Completeness (*ikmali*)
4. Balance/in pair (*As-sawa-i*)
5. Chosen (*ikhyari*)
6. Certainty (*iktimadi*)

These principles were compliance with what was suggested by Al-Banjarie but with a focus on the action and practice rather than the understanding and ideology.

HOK Rahmat (1983: 154) in interpreting Al Maudidi's suggestion explained that all practices of Islam, daily practices and rituals, are constituted by two main elements, jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and the inner sense or spirituality (*ar-ruh*). He added that jurisprudence (*fiqh*) concerns the manifested (*zahir*) practice and *Tasawuf* signify the concern of the inner sense (*ar-ruh*). He explained, in the case of prayer (*solat*) as an example, that jurisprudence (*fiqh*) concerns upon no other than what makes a prayer (*solat*) accomplished from what can be perceived by the senses. This included elements like the movements (*fi'li*), the recitation (*qauli*) and the order (*tertib*). But what is important for *Tasawuf* is the state of the inner sense, the spiritual dimension, while doing the prayer (*solat*). This concerns the state of the cleanse (*ikhlas*), subservient (*tawadhu'*) and converge (*khusyu'*).

He signified that there are, at times, *Tasawuf* had been misunderstood. This happened due to the effort of certain Muslim scholars who merge other un-Islamic thoughts with the idea of *Tasawuf*. Since *Tasawuf* dealt with the spiritual dimensions, there are efforts to instate the idea of mysticism into *Tasawuf*. Mysticism, though unseen (*ghaib*), is not spiritual but state of matters which is imperceptible. *Ar-ruh* of Islam refers to one's transcendence from the worldly (*duniawi*) state into the spiritual (*akhirah*) state whereas mysticism is contained in the worldly beings of the imperceptible. The instatement of mysticism into Sufism created a new thought which disoriented with the practice and rule of Islam. This effort somehow created bad implication on Sufism.

According to Rice, the name Sufi was adopted for it was started by the Abbasids Ruler, Saufi Ad-Din, who implied the teaching of Sufi as the formal teaching of his rule. When Syria (Damascus) fell to the rule of the Umayyids (650), after the assassination of Ali (*karamallahu wajhah*), the descendants of Muhammad (pbuh) escaped into exile in Persia (Baghdad) and form the minor rule of the Abassids. It was during the rule of the great religious master, Saufi Ad-Din, a religious concept to differentiate the one practiced by the Umayyids the doctrine was implied in Persia (Baghdad) and named Sufi after the leader. It was this teachings that brought rise to the Abbasids which 80 years later brought to the rise of the Ummayyids in Damascus and ruled the entire Middle East and North Africa until the 14th C.

In general, Sufis have looked upon themselves as Muslims who take seriously God's call to perceive his presence in the world and the self. They generally stress inwardness over outwardness, contemplation over action, spiritual development over legalism, and cultivation of the soul over social interaction. Theologically, Sufis speak of God's mercy, gentleness, and beauty more than of the wrath, severity, and majesty that play defining roles in both *fiqh* (jurisprudence) and *kalām* (apologetic theology). Sufism has been associated with specific institutions and individuals as well as with an enormously rich literature, not least poetry.

Given the difficulty of defining Sufism, it is not easy to discern which Muslims have been Sufis. Being a Sufi has nothing to do with the Sunnī-Shī'īte split, nor with the schools of jurisprudence. It has no special connection with geography, though it has played a greater role in some locations than in others. There is no necessary correlation with family, and it is common to find individuals who profess a Sufis affiliation despite the hostility of family members, or people who have been born into a family of Sufis and consider it an unacceptable form of Islam. Men and, less commonly, women, become Sufis; even children participate in Sufis ritual activities, though they are seldom initiated formally before puberty. Sufism has nothing to do with social class, though some Sufis organizations may be more or less class-specific. It is closely associated with popular religion, but it has also produced the most elite expressions of Islamic teachings. It is often seen as opposed to the state-supported jurists, yet jurists have always been counted among its devotees, and Sufism has frequently been supported by the state along with jurisprudence. The characteristic Sufis institutions—the “orders” (*ṭarīqah*)—do not begin to play a major

role in Islamic history until about the twelfth century, but even after that, Sufis were not necessarily affiliated with an order.

1.2. Research Objectives

The basic requirement of this research is the need to understand Sufism, its philosophy, concepts, theories that underlies and its elements. Sufism and art, including visual art, poetry or music had been seen as having relationship since the birth of Sufis. These were evidence for there were a great numbers of art works, manuscript painting, poetry and literature in the Islamic world it can be seen expressing the Sufis elements. In order to carry out a comprehensive study of Sufis element in works of art, one needs to understand the theoretical concepts and principles of Sufism.

Since the 1980's, Muslim artists in Malaysia were very productive in producing works of art with Islamic themes. The period between 1983 until 1998 can be seen as the most successful and highest achievements of Islamic art because between the duration, more than 15 Islamic themed art exhibitions were held involving not less than 125 Muslim Artists and a total of 670 painting were exhibited. Islamic art appeared to be the mainstream of art movement in the country and according to Ahmadrashidi (2010) this period can be said as the resurgence of Islamic Art in Malaysia. In addition to such development, there were artist who claimed that not only their art works were Islamic, in fact, some stated that their artworks were of the Sufism style. Since there were some misunderstandings regarding Sufism or Sufis art style, this research entails to identify artist who were truly Sufis of their works.

This research also entails to identify visual elements that expressed Sufis concepts in the Malaysian Contemporary works of art. The concept of Sufi or the dimension of the spiritual wisdom is regarded as the highest form of knowledge in Islam. The concept is very abstract and concerns the non-existential dimension (*ghaib*). The research will try to identify how artists visualized the abstract expression of the knowledge (*'ilm*) or spiritual experience.

The development of art in Malaysia witnessed a drastic progress in the 90's. The progress led to the creation of pluralistic art forms and styles. There are artists who admitted that their works as art of Sufism. The admission somehow created some confusion among the artists and art historian because there are no criteria that identify a Sufis art works. This research will try to identify Malaysian artists that can be categorized as Sufis or who truly expressed and manifested the idea of Sufism.

1.3 Research Significance

It is important to identify artists and artworks that can be categorized as Sufis. Most importantly is to respect and to conserve the idea of Sufism so that it is not confused with other concepts or understanding. To date, there is already confusion regarding the idea of Sufism in art. There are artists who blindly admitted that their works were Sufis while close examinations ruled out that it is not. This situation also had led to some conflict between artists and writers regarding the categorization of the artworks. This research hoped to find solutions on how such conflicting matters can be resolved and, of course, deep and comprehensive research had to be carried out on the matters. Sufism had to be understood thoroughly and comprehensively before its manifestation in art could be discussed.

Whatever transpires in the world of art today will be an art history in the future. It is important to define clearly the line that separates the styles of art so that whatever transpires, art historian has apparent understanding in the categorization of Islamic art.

This research involved a number of selected artworks by profound artists as research samples and art analysis was carried out methodically on all these artworks. The report on the analysis was prepared systematically and comprehensively and it can be an important reference for future researches and writers.

1.4 Methodology

The research observed the qualitative research methods. The overview of the research is to categorize or to classify selected samples that belonged to the 'style' of Sufis Islamic art. The term 'style' is loosely defined as works of art that contained the element of Sufism. This was performed by close analysis and observations on the artworks to identify what were the elements such as ideology, images, texts, feelings and practice, manifested Sufism.

Prior understanding about Sufism is vital for the research. Sufism is not merely regarding what is presented in the work of art. It is a doctrine or an ideology and Sufis artworks are actually the manifestation of the doctrine. It involved the 'ilm (knowledge) of spiritual (*akhirah*), which is transcendent, and Sufis artworks should be an idea of manifesting the experience of being transcendent.

To some extent, Sufism, which is regarded as exclusive, were sometimes misunderstood by the common Muslims. The intense ideology they practiced is sometimes found impracticable to the common Muslims and when such situation happened they were ruled out as 'out of the Islamic practice' group of the Muslims. Therefore, the researcher understands the importance of prior understanding of Sufism. In order to acquire the comprehensive understanding of the 'ilm of the Sufis, the researcher, other than performing desk researches, interviewed figures that had been known as Sufis practitioners. The researchers had to have sound and trustworthy understanding about the idea of Sufism before departing to any other process of the research. The researcher interviewed three Sufis practitioner to possess the sound knowledge of Sufism.

Since the research is on art, particularly visual art, a number of artworks were selected as samples. Samples were selected from a population of 280 artworks exhibited in exhibition with Islamic themes. The exhibition ranged from 1975 until 2009 comprise of art forms including painting, sculpture, installation and e-art. The selection of samples is performed by close observation on the works and to justify whether the art work possessed any Sufis element. Purposive Judgmental Sampling method was carried out on the population and the outcome only 25 paintings were selected as research samples.

Content Analysis was performed on every each of the samples to identify and justify association with Sufism in the artworks. Among the substances the researcher tried to identify were particulars like images, metaphors, texts, aphorisms, Qur'anic verses, colors, feelings or any 'sense' of presentation that could be related to Sufism.

With the analysis, the researcher drew findings regarding Sufism in Malaysian contemporary art. The main category is the categorization of Sufis works of art. This categorization dealt with as to whether the art works falls under the category of Sufis or the reciprocal. Categorization was also made on the methods of expression whether it is in abstract of naturalistic form. Images represented were also categorized in order to find out the images used by artist to express the idea of Sufism.

1.5 Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions were drawn out from the research and among the important findings included the elements of Sufis art, artists involved in the Sufis artwork and the manifestations of Sufism in artworks. Recommendation focused mainly on the categorization of artists and artworks so that only genuine artists with genuine ideas of Sufism can be named as artists of the Sufis art styles.

1.6 Findings and Conclusions

The research revealed that there are artist in Malaysia that expressed the element of Sufism in their works of art. These artists have basic idea and understanding regarding the philosophy and principles of Sufism. Expressions were made in various styles and approaches and a variety of subjects were selected by the artists to get across their expressions.

1.6.1 Approaches of Expression

It can be concluded that there were two approaches of Sufis expressions:

a. Expression of the knowledge ('ilm) of Sufism

Sufism concerns with the knowledge ('ilm) of the spiritual dimension[†] (*al-akhirah*) of Islam and therefore, it deals with the understanding of knowledge of the unseen (*ghaib*) the Essence (*Dzat wajibal wujud*). It deals with the uplifting the understanding of spirituality (*ar-ruh*) and at the same time practicing the spirituality in the physical world. The philosophy of Unity (*tauhid*) and its principles were already established by the early masters of Sufism.

In acquiring the knowledge, Sufi masters established the path (*al-tāriqah*) or methods (*kaifiyah*), theoretically (*hāl*) and practically (*ʿāmal*). These paths and methods had been passed over from generations and those who intended to acquire the knowledge of Sufism, somehow or rather had to adhere to these paths. There are artists who have the idea of the knowledge (*ʿilm*) and intended to express the knowledge (*ʿilm*) through works of art. Sulaiman Haji Esa, for example, expressed al-Banjarie's Sufis knowledge of '*syuhūd al katsrah fi al wahdah, syuhūd al wahdah fi al katsrah*' when he painted 'Convergence and Divergence'. Zaim Durulaman engaged the fishing boat to reminisce Hamsah Fansuri's '*Syair Perahu*' in 'Yesterday and Tomorrow'. Nasir Baharuddin evoke al-Banjarie's Sufi's idea of the '*qalam*' and the hand in his work 'al iqra'. Ponirin Amin engaged broken planks or fence to bear in mind Ibnu Atho'illah's obstruction (*al-hijab*) in his painting 'Yāsīn'. Fatimah Chik expresses the Sufis fourness, the interlocking squares, in her painting entitled '*Subuh, Zuhur, Isya*'. Ruzaika Omar Basaree meddles with Sufis concept of doors and windows in her 'Dungun Series'.

b. Expression of the Abstract Spiritual Experience

There are also artists who tried to express the spiritual experience. The ultimate aim of Sufism is to experience the spiritual dimension, to acquire the spiritual wisdom and to perceive the worldly life spiritually. There are those are blessed with these experience and these artists intended to share the beauty of the spiritual experience.

Those who have not experience the situation can never imagine and will never be able to imagine the experience. The popular Sufi sayings said that

'Man Lam Ya zauq, lā adri'
Those who don't experience, never know

For those who had sincerely practice Islamic rule (*ʿāmal syāriah*), cleanse (*ikhlās*) and transform (*at-tajrid*) from the worldly existing (*wujūd*) self (*nafs*) to the non-existence (*ūdum*) and experience the unity (*tauhid*) with the essence of all existence (*dzat wajibal wujud*) they will be blessed with the life of spiritual (*al-ākhirah*) and, therefore, will experience (*syahādah*) the world from the view of spirituality. There are artists who tried to express and to share the experience.

The artists expressed this experience in few ways. Most of them engaged the spiritual expression through the formalistic expression of the beauty of tranquil, quiet, serene, still, peaceful, composed, calmness, and comfort. These expressions were employed by Syed Ahmad Jamal in '*Embun Kabus*', Awang Damit in '*Dari Fajar ke Maghrib*' and Ahmad Khalid Yusof in '*Jawi and Nature 13*'.

Sharifah Fatimah expressed this experience quite differently from the others when she used meaningful colors to express her spiritual experience. Most of her works engaged that methods such as 'The Meeting 13974' and Mindscape.

1.6.2. Sufis Style

The researcher concluded that there is no specific style that can be referred to as the style of Sufism. Sufism is a knowledge practiced. Those who practiced Sufism led the ordinary life of man but with strong submission of the self (*nafs*) to the God. Sufism does not bear any dissimilar form of lifestyle.

There is no particular formalistic style that could be termed as Sufis Art style. Sufism can be express in any existing styles of art, however, due to their strong attitude or standpoint (*maqām*) it is found that the appear to limit their expression to few styles. Among the styles engaged by the artists are:

a. Naturalistic

Artists falls into this category is Zaim Durulaman. He engaged the naturalist style to depict the images of fishing boats and this was done because he needed to boat to be clearly perceived by his viewers to enable him to deliver the message of Sufism.

b. Decorative

There are artists who employed the Decorative Art style as their painting style. These artists behold to the concept of 'Allah is Beauty and Loved Beauty'. The whole idea of the artists is to express the feeling of

beauty and to share the beauty with the viewers. Along with the beauty the artists also expressed elements of Sufism. Khatijah Sanusi and Fatimah Chik employed this style to express their ideas.

c. Expressionism

The idea of the style of the abstract-expressionists was engaged by some artists as ways and means to express the abstract spiritual substance of Sufism. Instead of expressing emotive expressions, these artists expressed their spiritual experiences. Awang Damit, Syed Ahmad Jamal and Sharifah Fatimah Syed Zubir were among the artists who engaged to such expression.

d. Conceptual

Sufism is conceptual. It deals with the very abstract (*tajrid*) knowledge ('*ilm*) of the spiritual dimension. It placed one on a level (*maqām*) of spiritual paradigm, a level not only to know but to feel (*zauq*) and to experience of a spiritual way of life. There are artists who expressed these concepts and they selected the style of the Conceptualist to get across their expressions. Sulaiman Haji Esa and Mohd Nasir Baharuddin were among them.

1.6.3. Content

There were various subjects selected by artists to enable them to express the idea and content regarding Sufism. Among the subjects were:

a. Metaphoric Images

The Sufis community is very familiar with the idea of exemplar (*tamsil*) in getting across the knowledge or the spiritual experience and feelings. Therefore, exemplar (*tamsil*) is very popular in the knowledge of Sufism. There are artists who selected these exemplars as subjects of their paintings. When these subjects were presented in paintings, they obviously associate with the idea of Sufism. Among the subjects were boats, doors, walls and garden.

b. Spiritual Expression

The spiritual paradigm is an abstract (*tajrid*) station (*maqām*). It is non-existence (*ghaib*) and deals with the inner sense (*bāthin*). The worldly (*dunia*) life is seen by the Sufis as a manifestation (*tajalli*) of spirituality, termed popularly by the Sufis as *al-Haq* (The Truth), *an-Nur* (The Light) and *Dzat* (The Essence). Sufism is the process of transcendence from the worldly life to the spiritual paradigm. To express these experiences, artists came up with various abstract expressions. Among the popular expressions included the sense of calm, void, peaceful, tranquil, still, serene and quiet.

c. Sufis Terms

The farer (*Salik*) of Sufism engaged a long journey of path (*tāriqah*) of knowledge to reach the various levels of stations (*maqām*). To achieve this, the farer has to have knowledge and understanding of every station. A farer has to be very familiar with the knowledge ('*ilm*) of the station and to enable this there are terms to associate them. There are many terms and some of these terms were in regards with the Sufis knowledge, apart from terms of the Qur'an. These terms were used as texts represented on canvases to denote and connote Sufis elements. Terms like '*iqrak*' were used by Mohd Nasir Baharuddin and 'Convergence and Divergence' was used by Sulaiman Esa. Ponirin depicted the first 4 verses of '*Yasin*' to express the idea of Sufism.

CONCLUSIONS

Art and Sufism appeared to be a very interesting area of research. It enables to uplift the knowledge and theory of art in Malaysia. Islam had been established in Malaysia for centuries and it had been seen as the moving and generating factor of development in Malaysia, economically, socially and physically. In terms of knowledge, Sufism in art appeared to explain the development of Islamic thoughts of Muslims in Malaysia. Research in this area will be very interesting and will be able to enoble art and art activities in Malaysia.

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