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arte

Art and Expression

ART + COMMUNITY

**SOCIAL
HUMANITY**



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INTRODUCTION

ARTE: Art and Expression is a biannual book chapter, published under collaboration of Department of Fine Arts, Faculty of Art & Design, UiTM Perak Branch with Galeri Al-Biruni under the supervision of Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia. 'ARTE' is an amalgamation of english word 'Art', and malay word, specifically Perak slang 'Ate' which translate as conversation starter. 'ARTE' uses the concept of book chapter that platform art enthusiasts to express their inner-creativity in the form of literacy conjecture

VISION

Art and expression as aspiration towards stylistic and artistic practices

MISSION

- To enhance the culture of research and academic publication among academician and artist for international recognition
- To promote intellectual, cultural and knowledge sharing through artistic expression
- To celebrate the diversity and differences in arts practices thus creating and intellectual platform for artist to express their interest in art

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MALAY LITERACY IN PAINTING

a chapter by

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Abstract

Art plays a significant role in promoting heritage and sense of belonging. Hence, visual art and Malay literature not only reflect cultural values and aspirations but also as a communication tool for spiritual feedback to society. Research has been done to explore the form and content of Malay literature in paintings. This paper derives from an in-depth study of paintings using Feldman Theory of art criticism. The artists successfully interpreted the philosophical values, aesthetic and creativity of Malay literature in their artworks. It is hope that this research will inspire young artists to take part in using Malay literature and culture as a medium of ideas and further promoting our heritage to the society.

Introduction

Art and literature both have ideological, historical and cultural values related to each other. Since the beginning of human civilization, art and literature have become an important part of culture and society. Ibn Khaldun states that the success of ancient civilizations was reflected by their achievements through art and literature (Zaid Ahmad, 2009).

The purpose of art and literature is quite similar since visual art and literature are open to different interpretations by its viewers. Although their message seems vague, they are able to communicate with the audience outwardly and emotionally depending on the audience's interpretation on the objects used, whether it is visual object or text.

Malay literature plays the major influences in our own culture and heritage. Sajak, pantun, gurindam, syair, seloka, hikayat and others shown

the beauty and aesthetic spectrum of the Malay literature. According to Mulyadi Mahamood (1995), the art and literature born from society, created by society and will be appreciated by the society. Therefore, people need to appreciate and celebrate the art and literature as a way of communicating ideas within the society. Each artwork has their own interpretation. Every visual art form can convey a thousand 'words' which the audience could read, interpret and analyze via their own lenses and perspectives.

Literature should be a branch to engage with other artistic disciplines. Young artists should have shown courage and creativity by using literature as a source of inspiration for their artwork. The involvement of young artists in Malay literature as a medium of idea in painting is quite limited. Therefore, this study is significant as to encourage the use of Malay literature among the young artists.

Methodology

This qualitative study uses observation and document analysis. Data were collected through art criticism. The art criticism in this study includes description, analysis, interpretation and judgement. The sampling for this study is selected from four artists with experience in art scene more than 10 years. Researcher analyse the paintings based on Edmund Burke Feldman theory. The Feldman theory is a theory of art criticism that organized approach for studying a work of art (Rosalind Ragans, 2000) It is sequential approach for looking at and talking about art. The importance of aesthetic value of work of art depends on the critic and own interpretation and personal interaction with a work of art as the primary data for this research.

Literature Review

“.. Maka ditulis oleh Hang Nadim pada kertas bunga yang seperti kehendak hatinya. Telah dilihat oleh penulis Keling yang banyak itu, maka sekaliannya hairan tercengang-cengang melihat kelakuan tangan Hang Nadim menulis itu. Telah sudah ditulis oleh Hang Nadim, ditunjukkannya pada segala penulis itu, katanya, ‘Demikianlah bunga yang hamba kehendaki’

(Sejarah Melayu: 163)

The statement above was made by Tun Seri Lanang in *Sejarah Melayu*. These show the scenario of creativeness by Hang Nadim as an ‘artist-writer’. According to Mohamed Ali (2000), Hang Nadim, the Malacca admiral, was sent to place called Kalinga in India, by the 8th and last King of Malacca, Sultan Mahmud Syah (1488-1511). Hang Nadim was sent there as to order cloth for his king. The interesting part is when Hang Nadim was not satisfied with all the designs done by the Kalinga’s designer. Therefore, he asked for paper and inks and drew the floral motif as he wanted. It happened that when the Kalinga designers saw his work then they were astounded. And, their hands shook as they beheld his draughtsman. The creativeness of the Malay art is also stated in few chapters in *Sejarah Melayu*. Since the fifteenth century ago, the occasion proved that the Malay literature and visual art is existed and functioning in the daily life (Mohamed Ali, 2000).

According to Syed Ahmad Jamal (1979) in his book *Rupa dan Jiwa*, the basic approach toward art is awareness, not only through the materials used, but also the meaning that exist underneath the canvas. In fact, he emphasizes that every artifact can be appreciated through various dimensions. Visual art and Malay literature is the reflection of material culture. Malay literature and visual art is not only as an entertainment but more than that; it symbolized of thinking and philosophy in cultural heritage (Siti Zainon, 1989).

Research Findings

Four paintings from four artists were selected for this research. These paintings were inspired by

the Malay literature. Researcher use four steps of art criticism for each artwork. The first painting was created by Siti Zainon Ismail. She is known as an active poet and also a painter. She has published more than 50 works of Malay literature (short story, novel, poem, syair and gurindam) and paintings. Most of her painting were inspired from her own poem.

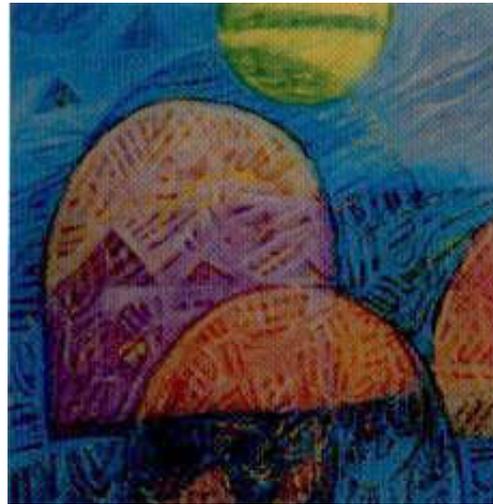


Figure 1: *Gelora Gelombang Jugra* by Siti Zainon Ismail
 51 cm x 54 cm, Pastel, 1997

Source: <http://zainonabdullah.blogspot.com/>

In this painting, the artist used geometrical shapes and harmony colours in presenting *Gelora Gelombang Jugra*. The pastel media successfully used as to convey the image of turbulence feeling of overlapping strokes. There are lyrical rough lines, yellow circle and three dome filled the painting. The colour used in this painting are blue, purple, orange, yellow and green. The used of orange colour in front of the blue background, give the contrast in a way of adaptation the theme. Over layering lines on the dome create a visual texture give the impression of floating in the roughness of the sea. Overlapping domes on the blue background and hanging half circle give the feeling of depth.

Gelora Gelombang Jugra is a meditation of the artist that was made in a tone of silence. She drew lyrical rough lines with pastel media to develop a sense of calm in a night mood. The painting is not only conveying the poem she wrote but she creates this painting as to ponder and appreciate the sign of Allah’s creation. We as human being who is a khalifah of Allah will not escape to any

test. The test will come to all groups of people, whether small or large, old or young, Muslim or infidel, rich and poor will all be tested. We have to face every obstacle with patience, contentment and gratitude for all the blessings that Allah has given.

She successfully portrays the painting in a decent way of formalism. She used semi abstract style of painting and successfully carried the meaning of the poem.



Figure 2: *Sidang Roh* by Syed Ahmad Jamal
198 cm x 168 cm, Acrylic on canvas, 1970
Source: <http://artklitique.blogspot.com/>

This is an abstract painting by Syed Ahmad Jamal. The images in this painting are unrecognisable objects. The combination of the colours used in this painting is harmony. The brush strokes are spontaneous but in controllable manner. The colours used in this painting are primary and secondary colour which give the contrast. The gradient colour of blue, purple and red in the background create the feeling of openness in space and depth. Negative and positive space were balanced in which the triangular form placed almost in the middle of the canvas. The curve lines and oval shape is located on top of the painting. The used of red, yellow and orange created a feeling of excitement and power. In addition, the used of warm and cool colours indirectly show the spirit of the theme itself. Green triangle in this artwork portrays as a believe or religion. While the other were the world of materials and power.

Syed Ahmad Jamal adopted the poem of Sidang

Roh by Kassim Ahmad (1960). The abstract images are vibrant and dynamic, reflecting the effort of the artist to convey the message of the poem. He successfully applies the formalism that emphasizes all the elements and principles of art.



Figure 3: *Kelahiran Inderaputra* by Anuar Rashid
244 cm x 306 cm, Oil on canvas, 1978
Source: <https://www.thestar.com.my/>

Kelahiran Inderaputra is an abstract painting painted by Anuar Rashid. The artist applies the glazing techniques by overlapping layers of colours. He manage to show the composition of interest through the effect of deliberate stroke of colour on canvas. He used cool and warm colours to reflect elements of contrast. The rough brush stroke, background, the swirling stroke and turbulent motion gives the sense of movement.

The artist portrays the atmosphere and the power exist during the births of Inderaputra. Indeed, the births of a prince in those days were very long-awaited and portrayed as a unique and a very special occasion. Inderaputra has being told in Hikayat Inderaputra have a great characteristic as a prince during his birth.

This painting is among the greatest painting in Malaysia history. The artist successfully applied the formalism of art and magnificently creates the painting of *Kelahiran Inderaputra* based on *Hikayat Inderaputra*.



Figure 4: *Pisang Emas dibawa Belayar* by Zaim Darulaman
167.5 cm x 167.5 cm, Mixed Media on canvas, 2010
Source: <http://www.homarttrans.com/p/blog-page>

This painting shows the image of a boat, two human figures and bunches of bananas. The composition of the painting is symmetrical balance as the boat is in the centre at the bottom of the painting. The weight of bananas also balances between left and right. The artist uses repetition of bananas using print techniques with overlapping white silhouette which create texture. He uses primary colour, dominated by blue and black with some yellow, red and green. The yellow colour in this painting gives contrast. The image of boat which applied the value of colour give the visual of forms. There are vertical and horizontal lines in the boat image. The artist emphasizes a banana by making it in big size compare to the other image of bananas.

According to the title of the painting, the artist uses pantun in creating this artwork. This artwork shows the sacrifice of a father as a family breadwinner. A father selflessness in raising his children cannot possibly be repaid with wealth. Pisang emas or golden banana easily could be found in the Malay world. In Malay history, Malays sailed to many parts of the world with ship or jong. Through out the long voyage, pisang emas is choose as a food to be taken in the long journey because of its nature characteristic, it will rip one by one which took quite a time to consume. This shows the uniqueness of pisang emas which symbolised as gold. Although gold is an expensive and precious material which can be paid or buy, but if we are in debt with people kindness, it will remain until we died. That is the great metaphor of *Pantun Budi*.

The artist successfully applied the formalism of art in this painting. The images show in this painting reflect the implicit meaning of the pantun.

Conclusion and Recommendations

It can be concluded that, this study is very important to encourage the young generation to use Malay literature as a medium of ideas to produce creative art. Arts plays a significant role in supporting national consciousness and sense of belonging. Therefore, the art form, not only reflects the values and aspiration of the culture, but also as a mean of communication to the society. Based on the study, the artists successfully interpreted the philosophical values, aesthetic and creativity of the Malay literature in their artworks. The effort in dignifying our heritage and culture is applaudable. But in recent Malaysian Art scene, we seldom see the participation among the young artist. Malay literature is being neglect and rarely use as a medium of ideas for their artwork.

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Saya yang menjalankan amanah,

SITI BASRIYAH SHAIK BAHARUDIN
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Setuju.

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