IDEALOGY JOURNAL INFORMATION

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Rumah Kutai Perak in Watercolor Painting

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ABSTRACT
This study is done to write an article related to the art exhibition for "Kami SI + SA" entitled Rumah Kutai Perak and identify the systematic process of artwork making. This artwork's process is based on the theory and practice of Ocvirk, Stinson, Wigg, Bone, Cayton (2009) who stated that an artwork contains three basic parts, namely subject, form and content. Subject refers to a person, a thing or an idea while form refers to elements and principles of design that produce equal unity. On the other hand, content is a message or emotion in work, statement, expression or feeling desired by the artist and read by the observer. As a result of Rumah Kutai Perak artwork, an "Artwork Making Process Flow" has been identified. The process flow begins with identifying the subject and idea, followed by capturing the subject through photography. Photography record involved four important factors, such as viewpoint, light and shadow, focal point, and photo quality. These four factors are important because they will affect the final work. The next process is to paint and draw. The elements such as technique identification, colour value application, medium choice and reference artists served as guides for the researcher throughout the artwork making process. After the work is completed, an artist statement was written to describe the artwork. This artist statement informs the message to be conveyed through the artwork, a brief description of the making process, the sources of ideas, and the elements and principals in the artwork's processing. It is hoped that this work process can be used as a reference for other artists to produce artwork in the same context.

Keywords: Rumah kutai Perak; watercolor painting; artwork making process; form and content.

1. INTRODUCTION

Rumah Kutai Perak is essentially an artwork which carries a landscape theme that features a traditional Malay house as the main subject. An age-old traditional house, Rumah Kutai has become the source of inspiration. Pictures or images of the traditional house in this artwork were taken at Bota Kanan district in Perak. Owned by Puan Hajjah Habsah Binti Nordin, the house was previously declared as part of ITM Perak Campus' 'Rumah Angkat' program on November 15, 1997. Its distinctive features have contributed to an interesting perception and perspective, particularly when rays of sunshine touch the roof of this magnificent house: it is an enticing visual which exudes rustic charm and serenity. From the perspective of SISA, this Rumah Kutai is unoccupied. Based on research, Rumah Kutai itself is facing an impending ruin. Today, Rumah Kutai, the oldest Malay traditional heritage, is gradually disappearing from the local scene (Zahratulhayat Mat Arif, 2019).
Due to its rich historical background and elements of Perak, Malay tradition, Rumah Kutai is preserved as a monument and a source of reference for Malay architecture history that can be appreciated by researchers, traditional house enthusiasts and the general public. Rumah Kutai or also known as 'Kotai' has value and uniqueness. Kamarul Syahril (2007) stated that the distinctive features of Rumah Kutai could be found in its intricate carvings found on windows, doors, and walls along with various joints or 'tanggam'. Other unique features that differentiate this traditional house with others are the structure of its roof, floor arrangements and woven wall panels or 'tepas' which decorate the house.

Two influential factors in this artwork are the location and its surrounding area. Personally, the researcher is a member of UiTM Seri Iskandar Campus alumni who pursued her studies in bachelor's degree and masters in UiTM Shah Alam and returns to join the academic team. It is common knowledge that an individual's surrounding affects their artwork (Pallant House Gallery, 2020). Based on observation, the residential area in Bota Kanan, close to the researcher's area, has unique and priceless traditional Perak. According to Mohd Sabrizaa Abd Rashid (2019) from the latest findings, there are no less than 40 Rumah Kutai that is still sturdy along the Perak River especially in Kuala Kangsar, Bota, Lambor and Pasir Salak. He added that Rumah Kutai could be identified through several characteristics such as roof designs, architectural shape, interior spaces, construction technology, construction, decorative elements, and materials.

This Rumah Kutai Perak artwork is presented in the form of landscape painting with watercolor as the medium. Generally, landscape painting refers to artwork with visuals of sceneries. Landscape paintings portray images of nature such as the jungles, valleys, mountains, farms, beaches and human-made structures and humans (Blumberg, 2020). Rumah Kutai's artwork features a rustic rural landscape focusing on traditional Malay house as the main subject. Selection of good landscape artwork involves identifying a focal point in the painting as a visual attraction. A focal point is an important element in an artwork composition to draw the viewer's attention to one section of the painting (Lamp, 2020). In this artwork, Rumah Kutai, the main subject is the focal point. The researcher has focused on Rumah Kutai by applying various colors and giving it a realistic portrayal.

In terms of medium, this artwork uses watercolor paint which is water-based and translucent. Hence, if watercolor paint is applied thickly, it could produce an opaque effect. Watercolor paint contains pigments and binders such as soluble glue or gum arabic. In the past, artists added honey or sugar, which was mixed with the paint to dissolve it, and today, glycerine is used for the same purpose (Sanderson, 2017). Watercolor is an interesting material since it is easy to use and transparent. Its advantage is that watercolor paint produces unpredictable and unplanned effects. When watercolors are mixed, they produce captivating tones and texture.

2. ARTISTS OF REFERENCE

The researcher had chosen Haron Mokhtar as an artist of reference in creating this artwork. Selection of an artist as a reference in this artwork is done to obtain his valuable experiences in idea, theme, medium, technique, color, composition and others. Haron Mokhtar's artwork is used as a reference since he had used traditional house and composition as a subject in Two Malay Girls which was completed in 2005. In this artwork, Haron Mokhtar had portrayed his main subject, a traditional house that he painted in detail while the use of light and shadow had resulted in the principle of contrast. Based on the researcher's observation and analysis, the Two Malay Girls is a form of artwork that contains cultural and societal values. Like Haron Mokhtar who portrayed the visual of traditional Malay house in Malay Girls, the researcher would like to depict Rumah Kutai in an artwork entitled Rumah Kutai Perak by applying a realism approach with an emphasis on the structure of the house such as the windows, walls, and roofs.
In the aspect of watercolor technique and materials, the artist used as a reference is Thomas Wells Schaller, whose painting is entitled *Chesneys Bridge Northern Ireland*, painted in 2014. Thomas's artwork has its distinct values due to his emphasis on light and shadow effects. Thomas Wells Schaller focuses on interaction and tension between the sun and the shadow of an object or scenery. Subjects such as architecture, landscapes and bridges interact with the surroundings and nature, inspiring him to create a watercolor artwork. Thomas Wells Schaller's use of colors is mainly warm and cold hues by mixing primary and secondary colors to get the third color. The artist tends to apply the wash technique, wet-on-wet and wet-on-dry, all basic watercolor techniques.

*Figure 1:* An artwork by Haron Mokhtar, *Two Malay Girls* (2005), Acrylic on canvas

*Figure 2:* An artwork by Thomas Wells Schaller, *Chesneys Bridge Northern Ireland* (2014), Acrylic on canvas, 38 x 58 cm
3. METHODOLOGY

The watercolor artwork in this painting is based on theories and practices of Ocvirk, Stinson, Wigg, Bone dan Cayton (2009) who highlighted that artwork has three basic parts namely subject, form and content. According to the researchers, the subject refers to people, things, or idea. People and things are objective and tangible, while an idea is more subjective. Form refers to elements of art and principles of design. In an artwork, the artist will put together art elements such as lines, shape, value, texture, and color. In the principles of organization, harmony, variety, balance, proportion, dominance, movement, and economy create space and later, they obtain unity. Content is made of messages or emotions in an artwork, statements, expression, or feelings that the viewers read, hoping that the meaning is in line with the artists' needs (Ocvirk et al., 2009).

To look at a subject, form and content easier, Ocvirk et al. (2009) has produced a diagram which shows the interconnectivity among subject, form and content. The diagram is shown below:

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 3:** Diagram by Ocvirk, Stinson, Wigg, Bone, Cayton (2009) illustrates the interaction between subject, form and content.
4. ARTWORK MAKING PROCESS

To produce Rumah Kutai Perak artwork, the researcher has identified a workflow that begins from the first process generating ideas to write a statement on the artwork. In this artwork process flow, other than the identified elements that form the main process flow, the researcher has identified supporting factors contributing to the main processes.

The chart below presents the process flow for the artwork.

Figure 4: Artwork Making Process Flow
4.1 Subject Selection and Idea Generation

The source of inspiration in this artwork is the uniqueness of Rumah Kutai Perak. These traditional houses are only found in Perak, especially in the Hilir Perak District, Perak Tengah District and Kuala Kangsar. Rumah Kutai is a traditional house built by the locals and located on the Perak River banks. Rumah Kutai as featured in this artwork was shot at Perak Tengah. It belongs to Puan Hajjah Habsah Binti Nordin, and the house was declared as 'Rumah Angkat' by ITM Perak branch on November 15 1997. Making this artwork began by visiting the location to obtain the main data and observing Rumah Kutai as the main subject.

4.2 Photography

Photography is the simplest and fastest way to record visual data, and it enables the image for research subject to be captured in detail. According to Hodge (2008), photography is the best method to gather a lot of information quickly. He added that photography could assist in composition and focus on the research subject as required by the artist.

Several issues must be considered to get a high-quality photo to be used as references such as the photo's quality, focal point, space and lighting. Focus and resolution in a photo are crucial to ensure that each part of the house and details can be seen. In terms of space, the balance between positive and negative must also be considered. The researcher had taken different shots of Rumah Kutai from various angles by moving from one corner of the house to another to ensure all interesting angles and viewpoints were covered. Pictures of parts of the house, such as the door, stairs, and windows with intricate designs and landscapes, were taken with a close-up shot.

These are the pictures taken from the location, and they are chosen as they have interesting viewpoints:
Figure 6: Viewpoint 2

Figure 7: Viewpoint 3
4.3 Final Selection of Picture for the Artwork

From these four pictures, the visual from Viewpoint 4 was selected as a reference for the artwork. It was chosen because that picture fulfilled a good photograph’s characteristics in terms of its quality, focal point, space, and lighting. Lighting plays an important role to produce an attractive, high-quality picture. Light and shadow effects contribute to the principles of contrast in a painting. Natural lighting is effective in illuminating enticing landscapes other subjects' colors in the same surroundings. The ideal time to take a picture of a landscape is at 10 am when the sunshine is at its best quality for such purpose. Morning light produces a balance between subjects and their shadows. Under this light, the shadow appears longer than the one at noon. Hence, it is not suitable to take a picture at noon when shadows are short since the sun is right above the head, and the brightness is too much.

4.4 Draw and Paint

Having chosen the best picture as a reference for this artwork, the researcher began with sketching. A pencil was used to create perspective and ratio. At the same time, some unnecessary elements were removed. In this artwork, the structure of the house was drawn to match the image in the photograph. Nevertheless, the background was given a touch of the researcher's imagination which came in the desired landscape. The researcher added several images of houses that appeared at a distant perspective to bring about deep space. Trees and clouds were also added in this artwork to portray a landscape element.
4.5 Color Value Study

A color value study is the amount of combination between colors to produce light and dark effects. Before applying the desired colors, the researcher had studied colors since they were crucial to an artwork's visual attraction. Therefore, color value research was conducted since the light, and dark contrast is the basis of good composition.

The image below indicated the color value study that the researcher carried out by using numerous types of colors from both categories of warm and cold colors.

![Color Value Study](image)

**Figure 9:** The researcher produced this color value to examine the brightness or darkness of a color.

4.6 Completed Artwork

The image below is the completed artwork.

![Completed Artwork](image)

**Figure 10:** An Artwork by Siti Humaini Bt Said Ahmad, *Rumah Kutai Perak* (2020)
Watercolor on paper, 93 x 71cm
Rumah Kutai Perak artwork uses watercolor paint on paper. Watercolor paints are colors based on water, transparent and come in the form of tube and pans. In this artwork, the researcher applied watercolor paint in tubes. As for the paper, the material comes in varying thickness and texture. If the artist wishes to use wash technique, 300gsm paper and above is suitable for this task to ensure that water can be well-absorbed. For better details, an artist requires a paper with medium texture and slightly smooth surface. The researcher chose cold press paper with 300 gsm of weight and various sizes of brushes: more round brushes were used compared to the flat ones.

In terms of technique, the researcher applied wet-on-wet and wet-on-dry techniques. Wet-on-wet was used to depict the sky and clouds in this painting using cobalt blue, ultramarine blue, and mineral violet. Moreover, the the-wet-on-dry technique was mainly used on the main subject - the house. Warm color such as the mixture of lemon yellow, deep yellow, vermilion red dan burnt sienna were used on the sides touched by warm light. For the shaded area, colors such as burnt umber, mineral violet, prussian blue, crimson lake dan cobalt blue were applied. Subjects such as trees and grasses were given various green hues such as sap green, yellow-green and viridian.

5. ARTIST STATEMENT

Rumah Kutai Perak is an artwork which features a traditional Perak house that has rich historical and traditional values. From the perspective of SISA, it refers to something that is no longer in use and incomplete. In Rumah Kutai as a subject, it fits into that description since the house is unoccupied. This artwork is created based on the landscape painting category in which the focal point is the main subject – Rumah Kutai. Located in Bota Kanan, the house is featured in detail by emphasizing the house's structure, intricate wood carvings on windows and the effects of light and shadow. Watercolor and paper were selected as the medium, while both wet-on-wet and wet-on-dry techniques were applied. The color value was determined to achieve the bright and dark contrast that is the basis of any good painting.

For the researcher, this painting is a form of documentation: it recorded one of the historical traditional architectural heritage in Perak, known as Rumah Kutai. Based on research, Rumah Kutai is slowly diminishing from the local scenes. Hence, it is chosen as the subject to be featured in the form of a painting. Moreover, its unique architectural charm beckoned the researcher to choose the gradually forgotten treasure as a subject. Perak traditional house, Rumah Kutai is a testimony of a high degree of craftsmanship and carpentry skills among the Malays in the past (Muhammad Pauzi Abd Latif, 2019).

6. CONCLUSION

From this article, a complete document is produced through a scientific study and presented in detail, the process of creating an artwork entitled Rumah Kutai Perak. It is a scientific study which is based on a suitable methodology. Consequently, the study has successfully identified the artwork's process flow which is hoped to serve as a reference for other artists producing artwork in the same context.

There are several processes involved in creating Rumah Kutai Perak artwork: they began with choosing a subject and generating idea. The next step was to take photographs of the subject, and four main factors must be considered: viewpoint, lighting and shadow, focal point and photo quality. These four influential factors were crucial for the finished artwork.

After that, the process of draw and paint involved elements such as identifying the right technique, applying color value, selecting medium and reference artists. This particular process was the source of guidance throughout the whole process of the artwork. Upon completing the painting, the researcher wrote an artist statement that contained the intended message, brief making process, source of an idea, and elements and principles behind the artwork.
REFERENCES