

A Study of Patriotism on Mural Art in Ipoh, Perak

Mohamad Quzami An-Nuur bin Ahmad Radzi^{1,*} Shahrnizam Sulaiman²
Muhammad Nor Razin Mhd Nor³ Nur Hisham Ibrahim⁴ Abu Zaki Hadri⁵

¹ Faculty of Art and Design, Universiti Teknologi Mara, Perak Branch, Seri Iskandar Campus, Perak

² Faculty of Art and Design, Universiti Teknologi Mara, Perak Branch, Seri Iskandar Campus, Perak

³ Faculty of Architecture, Planning and Surveying, Universiti Teknologi Mara, Perak Branch, Seri Iskandar Campus, Perak

⁴ Faculty of Art and Design, Universiti Teknologi Mara, Perak Branch, Seri Iskandar Campus, Perak

⁵ S'kaki Studio and Art Gallery, Taman Sri Rampai, 53300 Kuala Lumpur, Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur

*Corresponding author. Email: quzami@uitm.edu.my/quzami@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This research paper focuses on visual aspects of mural art located in Ipoh, Perak, Malaysia. It invokes themes and aspirations of patriotism. Both qualitative and quantitative methods are used, with the former primarily in relation to visual details. Hence, it will be supported by expert opinion, and both textual and visual references, which are used to help define and investigate the characters and elements of patriotism. The quantitative method then focuses more on the implication of these mural arts and how they garner the feeling of patriotism in perception of the public mind. To guide this study, selections of art and design theories also been used.

Keywords: mural, mural art, patriotism.

1. INTRODUCTION

A Mural is defined as a drawing on a wall. It is more commonly referred to be a part of the street-art subgenre. Most murals are drawn and are on display in publicly accessible walls. These public spaces are areas that are easily seen by the general public. Twark [1] mentioned graffiti art can also be referred to as a type of mural art.

In Malaysia, there are several places where mural art can be found. The Alliance Building in Kuala Lumpur being one of them. According to Tan [2] the mural on the aforementioned building was painted with visual elements intended to remind its audience (local citizens of Kuala Lumpur and nearby areas) of their hometown. Georgetown, Penang, a UNESCO world heritage city is also the home of another mural which has incorporated local historical elements as its main visual theme [3]. Similarly, mural art in the city of Johor Bahru has also used visual elements of various ethnic groups in Malaysia in promoting patriotism [4].

Beyond historical and ethnic elements, iconic figures in Malaysia are also common subjects for mural art. One example of this can be seen with one of the former Prime

Ministers of Malaysia being the centrepiece of mural art in the state of Kedah [5].

In Ipoh, the murals located on Jalan Sultan Iskandar and Jalan Masjid in the middle of the town of Ipoh were found to have been created by a group of artists [6]. Researchers have identified that these murals incorporate multiple themes and values that need to be examined further.

1.1. Patriotism

In general, various forms of media are capable of promoting a certain feeling. A great example can be seen in the form of poems such as Tanahairku, a poem penned by Datuk Usman Awang that invokes feelings of patriotism to its readers, and also the Malaysian National Principles or *Rukun Negara*, which helps promote this spirit among Malaysians [7][8].

In the same vein, a well-renowned Malaysian cartoonist known as Datuk Mohammad Nor bin Mohammad Khalid or more popularly known as Datuk Lat, issued a statement where he says his cartoons carry a message of good will [9]. He adds that they also promote unity, spirit, traditional values, friendship,

language, and culture. These values have also been known to have influenced and may also be implemented by other types of visual art.

For mural art, previous studies have also determined that murals have been known to have been used by politicians in Egypt, where the visual elements were manipulated to create and spread propaganda. Specifically, in order to protest the ruling government at the time [10]. This opines that murals have the power to disseminate information to those who view them.

2. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

It always has been an issue on the lack of patriotism in pursuit the national unity in Malaysia despite the creation of social agreements. According to Zain [11], an example of this issue can be seen in a mural that included a visual representation the King of Malaysia, which was vandalized by an unknown individual. Hence, it displays that there is still deficiency of concern and respect about patriotism or nationalism among Malaysians.

In addition, less programs that been organised allied to national unity also can contribute to the problem of a patriotic spirit. Although there are plans that discussed and managed by the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) about intervention in order to foresee these efforts, the embarking of visual art may also can facilitate to achieve the national goal [12].

3. METHODOLOGY

This study employs both qualitative and quantitative research methods in order to make sure that a high quality of data is significance. The qualitative research method was design in order to gain knowledge and thoughtful regards to patriotism in Malaysia. Moreover, the method of the quantitative research that been used also to determine and ratify data obtained from the qualitative method. The researchers conceived four stages and phases that is a conceptual research framework in order to obtain a clear view in relation to the methodology activity. In first stage, the study focused on collecting suitable visual and textual data. Then, the second stage focused on obtaining clarification and opinions from experts. Subsequently, the third stage focused on development of a questionnaire. Lastly, fourth stage is the distribution on the questionnaire, data collection and the analysis.

3.1 Research phases

Phase 1 (Visual and textual data)

Researchers used visuals and texts, based on this research paper study. Previous studies and theories of art design conducted by scholars and researchers were referred in order to complete first phase. Thus, the visual

data from the selected research area was also considered as another based data for this study.

Phase 2 (Define patriotism)

To identify elements of patriotism in mural art, interviews session were conducted with selected experts. These experts were chosen from various areas from the field of art and design. Set of interview questionnaires were given to experts. These questions consist of semi-standard questions and ask the experts to identify the best mural art that represents and upholds patriotic values. They asked to justify these decisions with the statement about the appropriate chosen murals respectively.

Phase 3 (Data collection)

After the interview session, a set of questionnaires were developed. These will have the same structure as that used to query the experts. The mural art unanimously chosen by the experts that the best was used and shown to participatory members of the audience and collated together as the main source of data for this research. Incidental sampling is implemented for this data collection process. This questionnaires are disseminated at selected study area.

Phase 4 (Questionnaire analysis)

Then, the researchers advanced to analyse the data from the questionnaire. Software on data analysis was employed in order to complete this phase. Derived from the data analysis, the researchers will append all information and provide a findings outcome as a result.

4. PATRIOTISM IN MURAL ART

Researchers have discovered, entitled, labelled and categorised mural art's location in Ipoh, Perak. Several themes were identified which were based on visual references and content analysis as summarised in Table 1 Mural Art Themes.

5. CONCLUSION

Mural art known as one of a visual communication device is efficient to convey message on promoting unity in popular places in Ipoh, Perak. As for instance, the mural of 'Tanah Tumpah darahku' and 'Nelson and The Ceremony' were identified to consist patriotic themes. Established from the previous data collected, mural art in Ipoh also incorporates additional themes such as the 'Heritage' theme and 'Togetherness' theme to name a few.

Table 1. Mural Art Theme

Name of mural	Themes	Reference visuals
Rip mh17	Togetherness	Aircraft
Future gate	Technology	Gate
Durian time	Togetherness/heritage	Children and food
Nelson	Patriotism	Human figure and text
Utc Ipoh	Symbols of Malaysia	Buildings and text
Ipoh Building	Symbols of Malaysia	Buildings and text
Perak Food	Symbols of Malaysia	Food
Tourism Perak	Symbols of Malaysia	Animal and text
Children with animal	Traditional	Children and animals
The tourist	Symbols of Malaysia	Buildings and text
TanahTumpah Darahku	Patriotism (Type)	Text and lines
Sport Legends	Togetherness	Text and human figure
Taiping Zoo	Symbols of Malaysia	Text, props and animals
Raya Overnight	Heritage/traditional	Human figure and ketupat
Dragon Boat	Heritage/traditional/symbols/togetherness	Traditional ship (texture) and children
Dayak and Children	Heritage/traditional/symbols/togetherness	Children and Bumiputra figure
Hide and Seek 2	Togetherness	Children
Friends Forever	Togetherness	Children
Skipping with Friends	Togetherness	Children and skipping
Wayang kulit	Heritage/traditional/symbols	Whole performance
Chinese opera	Heritage/traditional/symbols	Whole performance
Thaipussam	Heritage/traditional/symbols	Whole performance
Happy Deepavali	Heritage/traditional/symbols	Text and hand visual
Hide and Seek 1	Togetherness	Children
Father and Son	Togetherness	Human figure
Betta Fighting	Traditional	Fish in jar
Lion Dance	Heritage/traditional/symbols/togetherness	Whole performance
Lantern Fest	Heritage/traditional/symbols/togetherness	Lantern and human figures
Drummer Boy	Heritage/traditional/symbols/togetherness	Human figures and music instruments
Malay Dance	Heritage/traditional/symbols/togetherness	Whole performance
Indian Dance	Heritage/traditional/symbols/togetherness	Whole performance
Chinese Dance	Heritage/traditional/symbols/togetherness	Whole performance
Mom's Love	Togetherness	Set of moments
Bijih Timah	Heritage/traditional/symbols/togetherness	tin ore mining
Bubble Balloon	Togetherness	Balloon shape and children
Rubber Workers	Heritage/traditional/symbols/togetherness	Rubber trees and human figure
Pottery industry	Heritage/traditional/symbols/togetherness	Pottery making
The Ceremony	Togetherness/patriotism	Whole visuals
Lemang Time	Heritage/traditional/symbols/togetherness	Food and human figure
Pre-school at Ipoh	Heritage/traditional/symbols/togetherness	Whole visuals
MH Home	Togetherness	Aircraft
Bruce Lee	-	-
Albert	-	-
Evolution	Heritage/traditional/symbols	Whole visuals
Trishaw	Heritage/traditional/symbols	Whole visual
Hummingbird	Symbols	Bird
Kopi "o"	Heritage/traditional/symbol	Coffee
Girl	-	-
Paper Plane	Heritage/traditional/symbols/togetherness	Children and paper plane
Old Man with Coffee	Heritage/traditional/symbols	Cup of coffee and human figure

The murals that consist heritage themed, used the images of traditional dances and music, cultural celebration and food. It has the potential to remind Malaysians about the importance of heritage stemming from a diversified culture and is also capable of uniting Malaysians through understanding and tolerance. The Togetherness theme is a slight variation of similar visual style as the Heritage theme. Researchers also noticed that

most murals depicting patriotism, heritage and togetherness themes incorporate words and human figures as their main elements. In future, that further research can be carried out into different cities or towns throughout Malaysia. This will broaden the context of mural art on promoting unity in diversified culture of Malaysia.

The results as shown in table 1 may be further researched upon in the future. The themes highlighted by this study may help in the development and analysis of future research papers which may also highlight other equally fascinating issues that deserves further study such as additional mural themes, visual elements and references.

Besides this, future research papers may benefit from using more relevant and stronger research methodologies. The methodology used in this study can be recreated and enhanced in the pursuit of better developing, defining, and analysing even more visual art, especially, but not limited to, art found in murals. For example, the inclusion of more experts.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

1, 2, and 3 discussed on the presentation of ideas, developing the ideas and verified analysis. 4 and 5 contributed the findings. The final manuscript is provided by authors.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Finally, thanks god for giving us strength and wellbeing for completing this research paper. Our gratitude and thanks goes to the faculty of art and design, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Perak Branch, Seri Iskandar Campus. This research paper also could not be completed without the encouragement from the faculty members and the management of UiTM.

REFERENCES

- [1] J. Twark, *Envisioning social justice in contemporary German culture*. London: Camden House, 2015.
- [2] C. Tan, "Giant village mural in KL", *The Star Online*, 2014. [Online]. Available: <https://www.thestar.com.my/news/community/2014/05/24/giant-village-mural-in-the-city-painting-on-wisma-allianz-building-the-biggest-by-lithuanian-arti/>. [Accessed: 17- Nov- 2020].
- [3] S. Sadatiseyedmahalleh, S. Rahman and A. Abdullah, "Analyzing Street Art to Present the Heritage of George Town, Malaysia", *International Journal of Multicultural and Multireligious Understanding*, vol. 2, no. 4, p. 24, 2015. Available: 10.18415/ijmmu.v2i4.17.
- [4] Y. Yun, "JB Merdeka murals reflect Malaysian life", *The Star Online*, 2015. [Online]. Available: <https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2015/08/24/jb-merdeka-murals-reflect-malaysian-life/>. [Accessed: 17- Nov- 2020].
- [5] O. Eng, "Imprints of Kedah's pride", *The Star Online*, 2020. [Online]. Available: <https://www.thestar.com.my/Metro/Community/2015/07/14/Imprints-of-Kedahs-pride-Bureau-commissions-murals-to-transform-heritage-areas-and-woo-tourists/>. [Accessed: 17- Nov- 2020].
- [6] M. Kaur, "A trail of murals in Ipoh Artwork painted on walls of old buildings", *The Star Online*, 2014. [Online]. Available: <https://www.thestar.com.my/news/community/2014/12/24/a-trail-of-murals-in-ipoh-artwork-painted-on-walls-of-old-buildings/>. [Accessed: 17- Nov- 2020].
- [7] C. Lim, "Art that promotes peace", *The Star Online*, 2014. [Online]. Available: <https://www.thestar.com.my/news/community/2014/09/16/art-that-promotes-peace-street-art-project-instills-patriotism-and-interaction-among-youths/>. [Accessed: 17- Nov- 2020].
- [8] Mat Zin Mat Kib, Worrnan Haji Kabul. and S. Salahudin Suyurno., *Hubungan etnik di Malaysia*. Shah Alam: Pusat Penerbitan Universiti, Universiti Teknologi MARA, 2008.
- [9] JH. Ibrahim, "Terap mesej perpaduan", *HM Online*, 2015. [Online]. Available: <https://www.hmetro.com.my/mutakhir/2015/10/84451/terap-mesej-perpaduan>. [Accessed: 17- Nov- 2020].
- [10] A. de Ruiter, "Imaging Egypt's political transition in (post-)revolutionary street art: on the interrelations between social media and graffiti as media of communication", *Media, Culture & Society*, vol. 37, no. 4, pp. 581-601, 2015. Available: 10.1177/0163443714566901.
- [11] R. Md Zain, "Kecewa mural diconteng [METROTV]", *HM Online*, 2020. [Online]. Available: <https://www.hmetro.com.my/mutakhir/2020/07/601876/kecewa-mural-diconteng-metrotv>. [Accessed: 17- Nov- 2020].
- [12] N. Sanusi and N. Ghazali, "The Creation of Bangsa Malaysia: Towards Vision 2020 Challenges", *The Malaysian National Economic Conference, Malaysia*, no. 9, pp. 185-850, 2014. Available: https://www.ukm.my/fep/perkem/pdf/perkem2014/PERKEM_2014_5D1.pdf. [Accessed 17 November 2020].