

From the Editor

This issue highlights alternative ways of looking at and investigating the arts. The first two articles show that specific art movements in Malaysia might have started following the styles and concepts emerging from the West, but have become localized due to the different historical and cultural contexts.

In their essay entitled “The Calligraphic Subject: The Body and Social Power in Malaysian Abstract Expressionism”, Izmer and Elham look at the development of abstract expressionism in Malaysia since the 1960s. For them, the body gestures of local Malay artists such as Syed Ahmad Jamal, for instance, are inspired by the movements and forms of Islamic calligraphy and by Malay nationalism.

In turn, Sarena traces the development of installation art in Malaysia in her article on the “Changing Approaches: Installations Produced in the Malaysian Art World”. She links the transformations in installation art to the emergence of two- and three-dimensional works and the Young Contemporaries Award in the 1970s, and of site-specific installation art in the 1990s in Malaysia.

The following three essays in this volume apply different methodological approaches to present data about the performing arts. In her manuscript, “Move in Time: Male Dancers of Indian Classical Dance in Malaysia,” Premalatha uses a non-linear style of writing history through personal recollections of performances to explore the emergence of male Indian dancers who are known for their technical abilities and innovative choreographies in Malaysia.

Nur Afifah employs Schechner’s performance theory to exemplify the function and architecture of the proscenium-staged building in the *bangsawan* performances of Sarawak in her article entitled “Peranan Bangunan Berpentas Prosenium dalam Tradisi Persembahan Bangsawan di Sarawak”. As the title of their manuscript shows, Jinky Jane et al. present thick descriptions of the dance music and traditional musical instruments of the Lundayeh community in Sabah.

The section on Methodologies opens up discourses on alternative methods of analysing and creating art works. Eddy and Sarena provide a useful tool of analysis using Panofsky’s theory of iconography and iconology to describe the artworks of nyonya Sylvia

Lee Goh. Their article, “Iconological Analysis of the Peranakan Intimate Lifestyle: A Case Study of Sylvia Lee Goh’s *Woman Oh! Woman Series*,” shows the relationships between the four paintings in the series that are centred on Sylvia’s friend, Maimun, and her own Peranakan culture.

In contrast, Farhad and Zainurul’s study of the “Impact of Photography on the Representation of the George Town Heritage Site in Penang, Malaysia” illustrates how enlarged photographs of the weather-beaten walls of George Town that are hung on the same walls as works of art, can draw public attention to sections of the World Heritage Site that have been neglected. By comparison, Fauzi’s essay “Drawing Insects and Phenomenology” uses the concept of phenomenology to describe his own logic of aesthetics in his paintings and explain why he is attracted to drawing Insects.

Finally, the issue ends with two reviews of art exhibitions in Kuala Lumpur and Penang. Cheryl looks at the question of female sexuality in her review of three exhibitions *Love Me in My Batik*, *FACETS* and *My Story My Strength*. Safrizal explores the relationship of the rice fields and the farmers in Chen Wei Meng’s solo exhibition entitled *Pameran Sekinchan: Land of Fertility*.

We are glad to announce that audio files for the Jinky Jane et al. are available in the online version of Wacana Seni

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