

**ZULKIFLI YUSOFF'S "DON'T PLAY DURING MAGHRIB"
INSTALLATION ART : A VISUAL INTERPRETATION BASED
ON SOCIAL INTERACTIONISM**

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**CULTURAL CENTRE
UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA
KUALA LUMPUR**

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DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT
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**ZULKIFLI YUSOFF’S “DON’T PLAY DURING MAGHRIB” INSTALLATION
ART : A VISUAL INTERPERTATION BASED ON SOCIAL
INTERACTIONISM**

ABSTRACT

Zulkifli is a world class artist who can create social criticism art based on culture, education and economical stagnancy. “Don’t Play During Maghrib, Dialogue Series 2” (DPDM) is an exceptional artwork which represented him at the Venice Biennale in 1997. There is no written research about this artwork and also there are very limited references and materials on Malaysian installation art. This led the researcher to embark on this topic as a dissertation. Since, this research focuses on the installation artwork, it is appropriate to explore and study Zulkifli Yusoff’s artwork. It is qualitative research which aims at exploring the art elements and principles of his work that leads to the understanding of his style in depicting DPDM. It is also aims at understanding the social commentary according to Zulkifli’s personal views and experiences. Mead’s “Social Interactionism” approach will be used in analyzing DPDM. It is hoped that this thesis will reflect his thoughts and interpretation about Malay culture and Malaysian identity.

ZULKIFLI YUSOFF'S "DON'T PLAY DURING MAGHRIB" INSTALLATION ART : A VISUAL INTERPERTATION BASED ON SOCIAL INTERACTIONISM

ABSTRAK

Zulkifli Yusoff adalah pengkarya instalasi yang terpenting dalam perkembangan seni lukis di Malaysia. Ini kerana beliau menghasilkan banyak karya kritikan sosial yang menyelitkan isu - isu semasa di sekitar zaman beliau dan juga permasalahan sosial di sekeliling beliau. Karya "*Don't Play During Maghrib*" Siri ke - 2 (DPDM) merupakan salah satu karya yang terpenting yang menjadikan Zulkifli salah seorang artis seni lukis yang terpilih mewakili Malaysia mengadakan pameran seni berprestij di Venice Biennale pada tahun 1997. Kekurangan bahan rujukan dan pendokumentasian ilmiah mengenai karya instalasi di Malaysia antara faktor untuk pengkaji melakukan penyelidikan. Kajian yang dilakukan ditumpukan kepada penelitian terhadap karya instalasi *Don't Play During Maghrib, Dialogue Series 2*" (1996) yang dihasilkan oleh Zulkifli Yusoff. Ia merupakan kajian kualitatif yang akan menerokai setiap karya DPDM dari aspek elemen dan prinsip seni. Ia bertujuan untuk memahami gaya seni yang digunapakai oleh beliau. Ia juga bertujuan menngetahui ulasan sosial yang diketengahkan oleh beliau dari sudut pandangan dan pengalaman beliau. DPDM akan dianalisis dari segi formalistik menggunakan pendekatan "*Understanding the Contemporary Art*" yang dikemukakan oleh Terry Barret. Sebagai tambahan, karya DPDM ini juga akan dilihat dan dianalisa dari interpertasi oleh Zulkifli Yusoff. Hasil karya seni ni diharap dapat di jadikan panduan untuk memahami nilai nilai keindahan dan budaya dalam konteks kehidupan masyarakat melayu dan juga identiti Malaysia yang disampaikan oleh beliau.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Zulkifli Yusoff is undoubtedly one of Malaysia's most established contemporary artists and significant social observer on Malaysian art scene. He was the second Malaysian artist after Ibrahim Hussein to represent Malaysia in Venice Biennale, Italy in 1997. The title of his artwork 'Don't Play During Maghrib' (DPDM), is a mixed media consisting of installation and painting. This artwork depicts Zulkifli's sharp commentary and deep insights of Malay psyche based on his childhood memories. It is about warning children not to play outside during sunset. It is common in Malay families that spirits wander around during that time. Zulkifli's references are based on behavior that is typical in every Malay childhood where social responsibility begins at home.

Zulkifli Yusoff is an explorative and versatile artist who expressed his artworks through various types of media such as painting, drawing, print-making, sculpture and installation. Over the years he has been recognized both locally and internationally. He has committed himself toward exploring on historical reading materials and also on life experiences for his challenging artwork.

Zulkifli Yusoff is recognizable for his installation pieces, which create custom made environment for particular space such as theatrical setting in liberating the art with some of its elements and material used. He has created 30 installations since 1980 where he combines cultural iconography and symbolism. Most of Zulkifli's artwork, strive to use his personal view on patriotism and social awareness.

Therefore, this dissertation will focus on studying the social commentary on installation art in term of art elements and principles used in his composition. The exploration will uncover the problem in visual arts in understanding Malaysian

installation artwork. It is a qualitative study that uses the multiple data sources for validation purposes. Face to face interviews will be conducted through list of questions to document the study. The analysis uses the theory of ‘Social Interactionism’ by George Herbert Mead to reveal the importance of knowledge and perception of art-based research.

In addition, the findings of this study also present the awareness of the valuable contributions in the visual art not only based on physical object but also through the knowledge that can be developed further to enhance the communication in the art object. Despite this, several studies have documented the role that art can play as a means of personal, social, politic and cultural expression. However, the comprehension of social commentary on installation art is still lacking in a formalistic way.

1.2 Research Background



Figure 1.1: Zulkifli Yusoff (Extracted from: <http://www.theedgegalerie.com/artist/zulkifli-yusoff.>)

Zulkifli Yusoff was born in Yan, Kedah, Malaysia in 1962, He witnessed many years of disharmony in his home country. Zulkifli Yusoff grew up in Malaysia during a time of racial turmoil, (the riot of May 13 1969). The political events that occurred in his lifetime serve as the subject matter of his mixed media work. Zulkifli received his

diploma in Art and Design (Fine Art) from MARA Institute of Technology (MIT) in Malaysia and earned a Master of Arts from Manchester Polytechnic in England.

Zulkifli's father was a key influence in his formative years. A schoolteacher, the elder Yusof was seen as one of the most educated men in their village who disseminated information. He strongly advocated critical thinking, a trait he passed onto his son, along with his interest in politics and sense of nationalism. In a way Zulkifli emulates his father's work by using his art as a platform to encourage discourse and national pride, and spread knowledge to the younger generation of Malaysians¹

Much of his current work is in response to this period of time, and he works from historical readings, as well as his own experiences. Zulkifli Yusoff has been actively involved with shows and exhibitions which further enhanced his reputation as one of the leading contemporary artists from Malaysia. He started in 1987, where his works were seen at various art spaces. Entering into Malaysian Contemporary art scene in the late 1980s, Zulkifli Yusoff's practice looks at how historical texts color cultural memory and affect contemporary understanding of the self. Often arranging materials in a matrix of citation and juxtaposition. Perhaps his best-known installation to date is the mixed media work entitled "Don't Play During Maghrib (1996)".

His practice has evolved over the last two decades from a raw, slightly loose application to a super refined and intricately detailed practice, mirroring his growing confidence and recognition both internationally and locally as a vital component in Malaysia for the art he creates and its resonance within society.² The revolution of media technology offers artists a lot of possibilities to create different art forms. The artist explored and manipulated different media to give different impact in their works since modernism and post modernism period. Malaysia as one of Asian countries also committed to art development where artists explore various media in painting including installation art. In fact, installation art is still not established yet in the art development

¹ Zena Khan. "About the Artist: Zulkifli Yusoff,." Great Malaysia Contemporary Art, Malaysia Contemporaryart.

² Khan, Zena. "Zukifli Yusoff- Participating Artist in the Gmca (Great Malaysia Contemporary Art)." <http://malaysiacontemporaryart.coredesigngallery.com/2013/08/zulkifli-yusof/>.

history plot. For many years, many Malaysian artists address social commentary through the use of paintings, comics, sculptures, shadow plays, digital artworks, photography and music. According to Annenberg Foundation (2016), most artists use art to comment openly and subversively on everything. They used to poke fun at everyone without concerning others feeling starting from anonymous to the well-known and elite people.³

While Husaini Yaacob (2013), holds the view that the used of social commentary in photography is an alternative method to communicate the message for the viewers to change their perception or attitudes towards life issues of ethnical, political, moral and even religious matters.⁴ On the other hand, in spite of the use of social commentary in art, John Krich (2015) and Whang (2003) used the shadow play⁵ and digital artwork⁶ to show that style and technique are the important part to express the view about society and the political issues in different ways and forms. For Berman (2001), the comic is one of the favorite styles the artists use as a new medium to protest and also as self-expression.⁷ Social commentary has emerged as powerful platforms for artists to work with their arts. In a study conducted by Jones (2000), it was shown that installation art has become a favorite tool for social commentary in social and political surroundings that are not always encouraging.⁸

Traditionally, social commentary has subscribed to the belief that Jones's interpretation overlooks much of the historical research through the artistic protest involving political and social dissent in any form. In his limited study he only focused on the contention of cultural and different traditions between Thailand, Indonesia and Philippines, in regards to installation art of conveying social commentary.

³ Annenberg Foundation. "What Makes Art an Effective Form of Social Commentary or Political Criticism?" <https://www.learner.org/courses/globalart/compare/10/160/index.html>.

⁴ Husaini Yaacob, Mustaffa Halabi Azahari, and Adzrool Idzwan Ismail. "Visual Social Communication through Photographic Images." Paper presented at the The Asian Conference on Media and Mass Communication 2013 Osaka, Japan, 2013.

⁵ Nikkei Asian Review. "Artist Uses Shadow Play as Inspiration for Social Commentary." edited by John Kric

⁶ Whang, Eric H. "Art as a Means of Social Commentary." Tiltfactor, 2003.

⁷ Laine Berman. *Illustrating Asia: Comics, Humor Magazines, and Picture Books. Comics as Social Commentary in Java, Indonesia.* Edited by John A. Lent Vol. Consum Asian, North America: University of Hawaii Press, 2001.

⁸ Jones, Jason. "Could Installation Art Be the New Medium for Southeast Asia." *A journal of the southeast Asian studies student association* 4 (2008, July 17).

Despite this, several studies have documented the role that art can play as a means of personal, social, politic and cultural expression in societies. However, the comprehension of social commentary on installation art is still lacking in a formalistic way. Notwithstanding Malaysian artist participation in installation art since nearly fifty years ago. There is not enough knowledge for interpretation and understanding of installation artwork among artist and viewer in Malaysian art. According to Shin (2013), the knowledge of how to appreciate installation art is still in demand. Lack of references of art that use by artists to interpret and comment on their thoughts, idea, expression and experiences were the problem for the development of installation art in Malaysian art scene. ⁹ Installation art is hard to be understood by a non-art-based viewer because it appears to be in various form. There is a need to encourage more people to learn the way to appreciate it better. Among the hundreds of artists, the researcher considers to choose one of the most famous installation Malaysian artists, Zulkifli Yusoff.

1.3 Statement of The Problem

Undoubtedly, the researcher chooses Zulkifli Yusoff's artworks entitled "Don't Play During Maghrib, Dialogue Series 2" (1996). As a well-known Malaysian artist, his installation artwork is the best choice to understand Malaysian identity. According to Landi (2015), the storytelling impulse among artists in three dimensions of installation art. However, the journal does not explain how the artist creates the expression of telling stories into installation art. ¹⁰ According to Zulkifli Yusoff (2016), in an Art Talk "Bicara Sifu" on 4th June 2016; suggested, that his work should be documented as him being the painter, as well as his inspiration in visual art industry in an academic way. This shows that the lack of written and recorded documents about artists in Malaysia and specifically about Zulkifli Yusoff still needed as he stated;

⁹ Christina Kang Kher Shin. "Installation Art in Young Contemporaries Award's (Lee Kian Seng)." Senikini, 2013, 10.

¹⁰ Artnews. "Telling Stories in Three Dimensions: Installation Art Today ", edited by Ann Landi, 2015.

*Saya minta kamu sarjanakan apa yang saya cakap, saya lebih sebagai seorang pelukis, susun carta dalam bentuk akademik, cara mendapat ilham, susun dengan sebaik mungkin.*¹¹ (Zulkifli Yusoff , 2016)

The researcher chose DPDM as a study subject because the artwork requires critical thinking and experience, suitable for social criticism in the form of installation art. The researcher opines that this artwork is difficult to be reproduced, bought or sold. This art work has a high artistic value. Zulkifli is a world class artist who can create social criticism art based on culture, education and economical stagnancy. He has his own unique way of creating art. His art focuses on current social issues during his lifetime for the next generation to see so they are conscious about the past to learn from it and create a better future for the generation to come.

The research would be the most relevant to consider in understanding social commentary on installation art through Zulkifli Yusoff's perspective and specifically his remarkable works for present and future generation. Therefore, the researcher will identify the concept behind his installation art. On the other hand, art student especially international student did not have much knowledge about Zulkifli Yusoff who has focused on installation art affected by culture and society of Malaysia. So far, nobody has interpreted his installation art about "Don't play during Maghrib". Thus, due to the significance of Zulkifli Yusoff's work and the lack of studies on his topic, it appears to be relevant to explore this approach more in detail to fill the gap in the existing literature. Limited knowledge and understanding on the interpretation of installation artworks for Malaysian artist are the problem of the current research. The research would have been more relevant if a wider range of social commentary on DPDM installation artwork is explored.

¹¹ Yusoff, Zilkifli. "Bicara Sifu." By Ruzaika Omar Basaree. *Art Talk*, (2016, June 4th).

1.4 Research Objectives

1. To explore the art elements and principles in Zulkifli Yusoff's installation artwork, entitled "Don't Play During Maghrib, Dialogue Series 2" (1996).
2. To discover the social commentary in "Don't Play During Maghrib, Dialogue Series 2" (1996) according to the personal view of Zulkifli Yusoff.

1.5 Research Questions

In order to interpret Zulkifli Yusoff's DPDM work, the researcher will explore the artwork in terms of element and principles of art and describe the social commentary based on the 'Social Interactionism' by George Herbert Mead. At the same time, will also explore the DPDM work according to Zulkifli Yusoff's personal view.

1. What are the formal elements used by Zulkifli Yusoff in his "Don't Play During Maghrib, Dialogue Series 2, 1996 (DPDM)" artworks?
2. How the social commentary is interpreted according to Zulkifli's personal views in his DPDM work?

1.6 Scope of Study

The purpose of this study is about social commentary in Malaysian Installation Art. This research will focus on the installation artwork by a well-known Malaysian artist Zulkifli Yusoff. It will emphasize on the artwork entitled "Don't Play During Maghrib" (DPDM) which covers social commentary. Information will be gathered through conducting interview with Zulkifli Yusoff about his historical background as well as the narratives behind his installation artwork. The Malaysian art scene has been documented in a number of critical and historical writing, which became the main reference for Malaysian art. This research is confined to DPDM artwork from the 30 installations

produced by Zulkifli Yusoff. However, the documentation only focuses on contemporary artwork of Malaysian artist. The lack of researchers and scholars in the field of Malaysian Installation Arts create a gap in the visual arts scene in Malaysia. Written and recorded documents about DPDM artwork by Zulkifli Yusoff are needed. It is because DPDM is the benchmark of Malaysian installation art represented Malaysia for the prestigious The Venice Biennale 47th International Art Exhibition, (1997). “Don’t Play During Maghrib, Dialogue Series 2 (1996)” will be written and documented academically. The researcher will make extensive effort in documenting informations on Zulkifli Yusoff’s social commentary artwork.

1.7 Significance of Study

This study will benefit students and art lovers interested in the field of visual art. “Don’t Play During Maghrib, Dialogue Series 2, (1996)” can help viewer get a better understanding of how installation art can be used as a tool of social commentary. The study will benefit researchers, art students and Zulkifli Yusoff’s fans to familiarize themselves with his viewpoints on contemporary art in Malaysia. It also helps and facilitates young artists to guide and improve themselves in Malaysian art scene.



Figure 1.2: Don't Play During Maghrib 1996, Collection of Balai Seni Visual Negara, 1997 (Extracted from: https://www.researchgate.net/figure/zulkifi-yusoff-Dont-play-during-Maghrib-1997-mixed-media-installation-and-painting-fig14_320903312.)

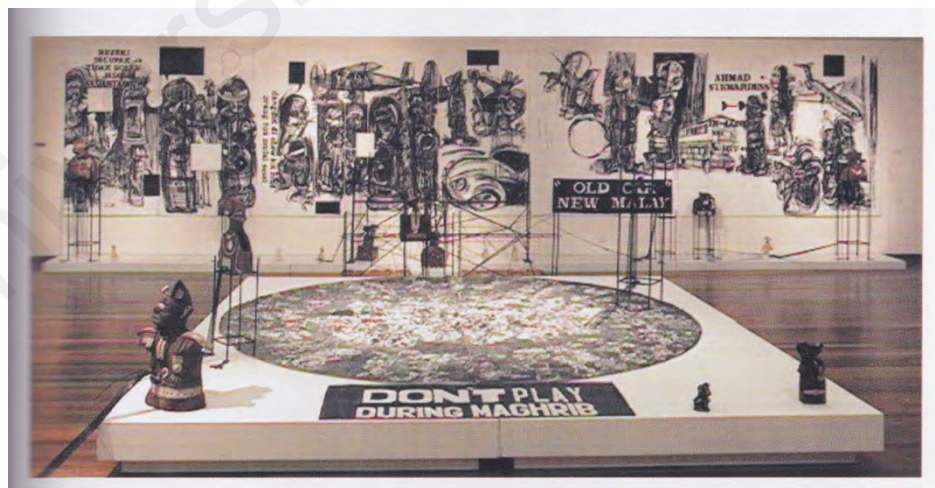


Figure 1.3: Zulkifli Yusoff, Dialogue 2 (Don't Play During Maghrib) media campuran, mixed media, 1996. (Extracted from: *Imbasan bakat muda sezaman (Young Contemporaries in Review) 1997*, 36. Balai Seni Lukis Negara, 1999.)

1.8 Background of Research Methodology

The researcher presents the research in a qualitative approach. This research design was provided to gain in depth understanding as a comprehensive answer to the research questions and at the same time fulfill the objectives of the research.

Based on the first objective, which is to explore the art elements and principles in Zulkifli Yusoff's installation artwork, "Don't Play During Maghrib, Dialogue Series 2 (1996)". The first phase, is the literature review based on the references, book, articles, pictures and online media which are related to the area of study. For instance, to revise the role of art as the tools of social commentary, installation art, to learn about Zulkifli Yusoff and his artwork Don't Play During Maghrib (DPDM). This exploration will help the researcher to find out the answer of the purpose of this study which will be based on secondary sources.

Besides that, the researcher plan to unstructured cognitive interview with Zulkifli Yusoff in order to catalogue his sights on social commentary of DPDM. The researcher will also provide the questions based on previous research as the primary sources.

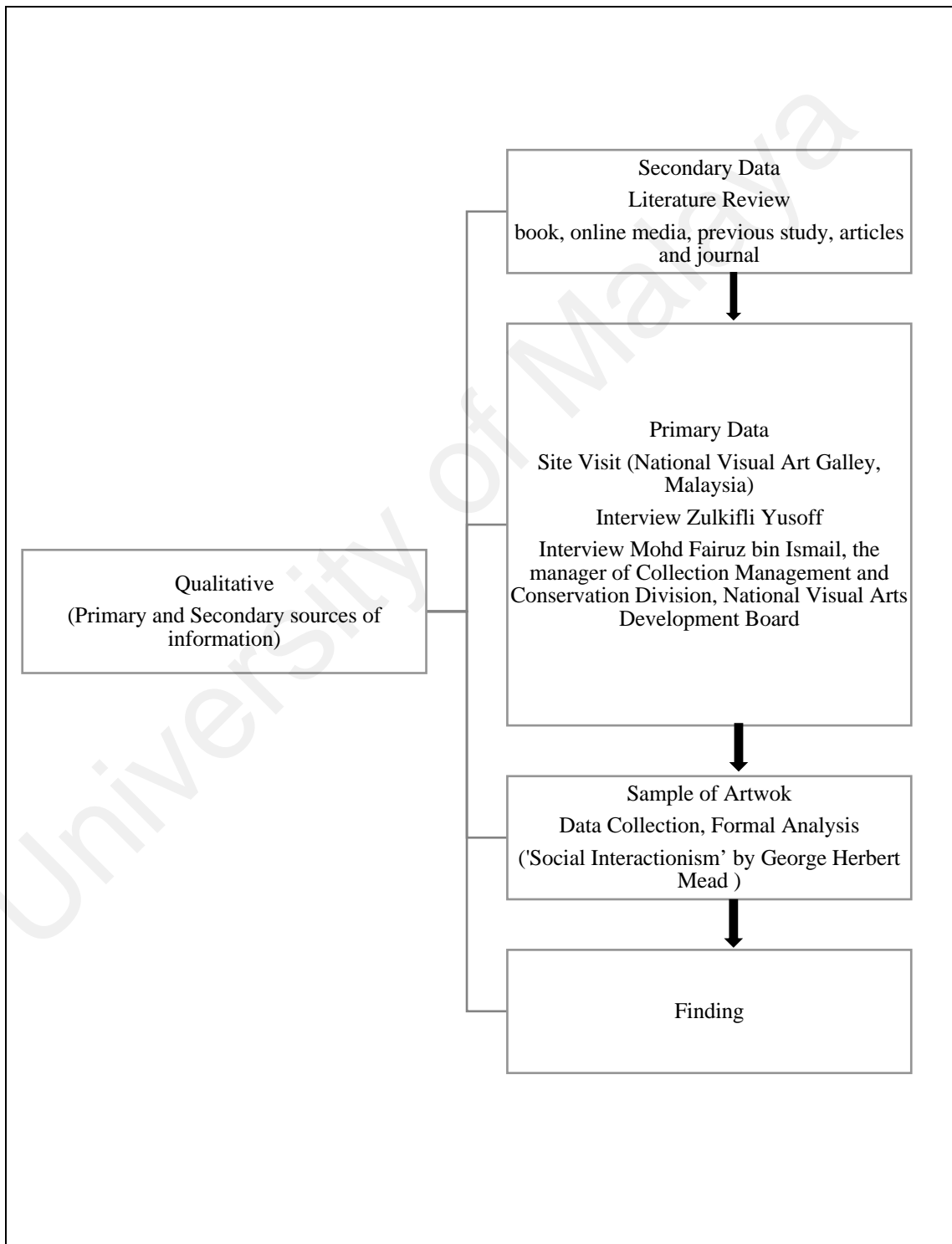
For the second objective, researcher will discover the social commentary in Zulkifli Yusoff's "Don't Play During Maghrib, Dialogue Series 2, (1996)" installation artwork according to his personal views. In the second phase, literature review is conducted based on previous review about Zulkifli Yusoff's views and experiences. The secondary sources will be analyzed from book, articles, web pages, catalogues, magazine and journal. Therefore, the other exploration is conducted by primary sources such as personal interview with Zulkifli Yusoff, art talks and interview with Art Curator of Balai Seni Lukis Negara, who managed the installation art of DPDM and general observation.

In the third phase, researcher will analyze the artwork based on formal analysis and Social Interactionism' by George Herbert Mead. Therefore, it is easy for the researcher to comprehend the content behind the DPDM artwork. This analysis is provided for the

purpose of gaining the knowledge and understanding the elements and principles of art that have been applied by Zulkifli Yusoff. Therefore, the flow chart will help the researcher to plan properly on how to collect the data.

The flow chart below as a guide in how researcher manage the research:

Table 1.1: Flow Chart of Data Collection



1.9 Background of Theoretical Framework

Social Interactionism' by George Herbert Mead is chosen as a tool for analysis on DPDM installation artwork. Researcher wants to know how art communicate the meaning based on the three categories in the process of understanding the artwork. According to Barrett (1994), there are three phases of the process to analyses the artwork. First phase is to describe the art, second phase is interpreting art and the third phase is judging the artwork.¹² In formal analysis, first is to describe about the artwork without judgments, analysis or interpreting. It answers the things that appear in front of our eyes. Which means, to describe the various elements such as form, medium, size, line, spaces and color. The main point of describing the artwork, is to tell what is internal and external of artwork looks like. 'Internal information is based on what can be seen in the work itself and can be divided into three categories: subject matter, medium, and form' and 'External information includes data about the time in which the pieces was made'.¹³

The second phase is interpreting art. Interpretation means to understand the reason artist create the artwork. To elaborate the idea and overall meaning of the artwork. In art criticism, 'interpretation of an artwork can be based on two types of information: internal evidence and external evidence. Internal evidence consist of what is in the work itself, it is drawn from a description of the work. External evidence consists of relevant information not within the work itself'¹⁴.

Judgment is the last phase of the process of analysis. Judging tends to value the aspects of the visual arts and its originality. 'It is a clear assessment of the worth of an art objects and reason for the assessment based on reasonable criteria.'¹⁵ Therefore, these three processes of analyzation help researcher to explain the expression and ideology of

¹² Barrett, Terry. "Criticizing Art: Understanding the Contemporary." Mountain View, California: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1994.

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵ Ibid

Zulkifli Yusoff about his artwork. This will help the researcher to perceive, interpret and understand the artwork.

1.10 Organization of Research

This thesis consists of five (5) chapters. The first chapter contains introduction of the topic, research background, objectives of research and problem statement. It also explains the scope of research, overview of research methodology and theoretical framework. In Chapter 2, researcher will collect information about social commentary and installation art as well as describe the overview about the artist and the DPDM artwork. This chapter will also describe the 'Social Interactionism' by George Herbert Mead as the theoretical framework in this study. In addition, the information about Maghrib and its taboo will be gathered in the literature review. This is because the issue has a connection with the content of the selected artwork. The method of study will be explained in chapter 3. While the analysis of selected artwork will be described in chapter 4. The last chapter will cover the view of the researcher about the topic of study, recommendation and its conclusion.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Literature review is useful in describing the past and current state regarding the area of study. This study uses analysis from books, articles, journals, pictures, videos, art talks and interview session with artist. It concerns the research topic that covers different area related to Zulkifli Yusoff and his DPDM artwork. The first section of the study discusses literature review based on the history of post modernism and installation art in general. The second part of this study is about installation art as a tool of social commentary, pertaining the development of installation art and social commentary in Malaysia. In studying Zulkifli Yusoff's artwork Don't Play During Maghrib, this research will also study the literature review based on Islamic teaching on why it is forbidden to play during Maghrib time. This study will explain the analysis of artwork based on George Herbert Mead's method of visual interpretation.

2.2 Post-Modernism

It is necessary here to explain what postmodernism is. It is because installation art was identified during this art movement. First noted by Parmesani (2000), who saw Post Modernism as "the term was used to describe a cultural period, started at the end of the 1970s".

It tends to go against some aspects of established modern art.¹⁶ Post modernism rejected the values of an idea, only an art itself but should be created into something special and noticeable. The development of post modernism art comes in variety of new media and new art forms. Besides, various types of performance art, installation art and

¹⁶ Parmesani, Loredana, *Art of twentieth century: movement, theorist, schools and tendencies 1900-2000*. (Milan, Skira, 2000).

conceptual art are some of the ideas practiced in this era. This thought is close to Elizabeth L. Katz, E. Louis Lankford, and Plank (1994), about ideas and artworks of post modernism which are rich in “meaning, materials, cultural traditions, and historical references.”¹⁷ According to Susie Hodge (2015), Post modernism is the term for art movement which “often works with new technologies, including television, video, smartphones, manipulating and processing imaginary”.¹⁸ While there are varieties of definitions of the term Post Modernism, this research classifiy only the “various technique, styles, and media associated with postmodernism, which are meant to be used to visualize conscious and purposeful agendas.”¹⁹. (Baigell 2001). Regarding this, installation art becomes established when the artists started to use a different kind of style, media, and presentation as a medium of art.

Postmodern approach started in Malaysia since 1970s, when the Malaysian artists produced mixed medium artworks as mentioned by Faizal Sidik (2015):

Mixed medium works in Malaysia’s modern and contemporary painting began with the influence from artist who studied abroad especially during 60s and 70s, a time of rapid development in the modern art world.²⁰

It has likewise been proven when Malaysian art has become progressively diverse in term of its approach, subjects, themes, and media. It is a sign of the changeover from a purely Malay / Islamic art tradition to a more postmodern approach. As stated in writing entitled “Malay Artist and The Postmodern Situation: Thematic Approach since the 1990 by Serena Abdullah:

¹⁷ Elizabeth L. Katz, E. Louis Lankford, and Janice D. Plank. *Themes and foundations of art, History of art*. Lincolnwood, Illinois USA: National textbook company. 1995). 247

¹⁸ Susie Hodge. 2015. *Art in minutes, the age of information*. London: Quercus, 392

¹⁹ Baigell, Matthew. 2001. *Artist and identity in twentieth-century America, Chapter 7, postscript: another kind of canon*. United States of America: Rutgers University, Cambridge University press.

²⁰ Faizal Sidik, and Nasir Baharuddin. *Conceptual Art: Mixed Medium Works in Conceptual Arts of the 1970s*. Malaysia: National Visual Arts Gallery, Malaysia, 2015. https://issuu.com/balaisenivisualnegara/docs/seni_konseptual. 1

Since the 1990s, works produced by Malay artist have taken a more critical perspective aligned with the postmodern situation or 'situasi percamoden', in accordance with Malaysia's leapfrog into modernization. Through their works. Malay artists raise concern and issues pertaining to the consequences of development and modernization, and explore themes ranging from social problems, to the environment and urbanization, and other contemporary issues, employing postmodernist in their art. What is obvious is that Malay artist are concerned with the immediate and near future, rather than looking back or glorifying the past. These artistic tendencies epitomize the challenges, divergences and shared perspective that define the growing Malaysian middle class especially in the context of the construction or even deconstruction of Malaysian society.²¹

The works of artists are in line with the postmodern situation, they interpret their works revealing issues to the consequences of development and modernization, as well as social problems, the environment, and urbanization. They are very concern with the current issue as well as the future. These art tendencies show they take it as the challenges, acknowledge the differences of opinion, and pitch their perspectives about the issues in the families, communities, nations even the world.

Among the Malaysian artist who started to explore postmodern approach were Redza Piyadasa and Sulaiman Esa as mentioned in Mixed Medium Works in Conceptual Arts of the 1970s:

In 1974, another collaboration by Redza Piyadasa and Sulaiman Esa in a significant exhibition in the Malaysian modern art movement, entitled "Toward A Mystical Reality", which developed the mystical conceptual art, opened up a new passage in its creation here.²²

Although Conceptual Art used a variety of media, it emphasized more on the concept of ideas rather than focusing on the aesthetics and the object of the material. This is also explained by Faizal Sidik (2015):

²¹ Serena Abdullah. 2013. "Malay Artist and the Postmodern Situation: Thematic Approaches since the 1990s." In Reactions: New Critical Strategies: Narratives in Malaysian Art, edited by Nur Hanim Khairuddin, Beverly Yong and T.K Sabapathy, 179. Malaysia: RogueArt.

²² Faizal Sidik, and Nasir Baharuddin. Conceptual Art: Mixed Medium Works in Conceptual Arts of the 1970s. Malaysia: National Visual Arts Gallery, Malaysia, 2015. https://issuu.com/balaisenivisualnegara/docs/seni_konseptual. 9

Conceptual art is an art which emphasizes on concept or idea in the work over the aesthetic and material tradition. Most of such works are sometimes called installation, for example the works of installation artist Sol Lewitt may be installed by anybody by looking at the sketch guidelines.²³

Unquestionably, both Conceptual Art and Installation Art were developed in Malaysia and produced many artists who were involved in constructivism art. Faizal Sidik (2015) named the earlier artists started to discover postmodern approach as below:

Among the artist and their works are Sulaiman Esa “Manusia dan Alamnya” (1973), Redza Piyadasa “The Great Malaysia Landscape” (1972), “Entry Points” (1978) and “Art Situation No.8” (1978), Lee Kian Seng “Playing Poker” (1975) and “Of Image Object, Illusion Off Series Mechanism” (1977), Nirmala Shanmughalingam “Statement 1” (1973), Ruzaika Omar Basaree “siri Dungun” (1979) and Tajuddin Ismail “Screw” (1976).²⁴



Figure 2.1: ABC - Sulaiman Esa: Manusia dan Alamnya (1972-1973)²⁵

Definitively, the researcher was impressed by the Malaysian artists who had begun to engage postmodern approaches in producing their artworks. Since then, mixed medium artworks were increasingly practiced in Malaysia. Amongst the exhibition locations that

²³ Faizal Sidik, and Nasir Baharuddin. Conceptual Art: Mixed Medium Works in Conceptual Arts of the 1970s. Malaysia: National Visual Arts Gallery, Malaysia, 2015. https://issuu.com/balaisenivisualnegara/docs/seni_konseptual. 10

²⁴ Ibid.12

²⁵ Faizal Sidik. "Abc Sulaiman Esa: Manusia Dan Alamnya, (1972 - 73)." Senikini, 2010, 4.

attract the researcher to observe, were at the National Visual Art Gallery and Art Expo Malaysia Plus.

2.3 Installation Art

It is important for the researcher to understand the meaning of the installation art because it is a part of the scope of study in this research.

The installation art movement began in the late 1970s and was inspired by the Pop art movement. It continues today in the United State and Europe. Sometimes installation art is exhibited for a short period of times, and then dismantled. In this case photographs and written commentaries document the events. Other installation art is created for a specific location in a museum, gallery, or office building and is permanent.²⁶

According to Feng, "Installation art started to become important in the 70's."²⁷ Artists began to engage actively in producing different method and style of art. In Malaysia during 1970s the "installation art" was known as "mixed media" or in Malay language as "*Bahan Campuran*".²⁸ The term 'installation art' according to Tate (2016), is a large-scale, mixed media assemblages or constructions and sometimes known as environment art.

"It often occupies the entire room or gallery space to walk through, to engage fully with the work of art".²⁹ As an example, Anselm Kiefer, who is "active since the early seventies, produced large pictures in which the paint was mixed with different materials, which expended to the point as becoming installations artwork."³⁰ David G Wilkin, Bernard Schult, and Linduf (2005), observed that "installation art is temporary, lasting only as long as the exhibition in which it is featured; it is then dismantled after being documented by photography"³¹ They pointed out that, Installation art "denies the Western

²⁶ Elizabeth L. Katz, E. Louis Lankford, and Janice D. Plank. 1994. "History of art." In Themes and foundations of art, 549. Lincolnwood, Illinois USA: National textbook company.

²⁷ Feng, Rachel. 2014. Interaction in Installation Art. Accessed June 2016.

²⁸ Christina Kang Kher Shin. 2013. "Installation Art in Young Contemporaries Award's (Lee Kian Seng)." *Senikini*, 10.

²⁹ Tate. 2016. installation art. In *Art term*, edited by Art & artist: Tate London

³⁰ Flaminio Gualdoni. 2008. *Art the twentieth century*. United Kingdom: skira

³¹ David G Wilkin, Bernard Schult, and Katheryn M. Linduf. 2005. "Analyzing installation art." In *Art Past Art Present*, Laurence King Publishing.589

tradition of the work of art as a singular static object by fashioning an environment, often temporary, within museum, gallery, or other public space.”³² Susie Hodge (2015) concludes “the term ‘installation’ as a mix media construction or assemblage usually created for a specific place and for a temporary period”³³. These key aspects of Installation art are used to define as the artistic genre of three-dimensional work. It is a mixed media construction and aimed to exhibit to the viewer for a temporary period. Space is required to display the artwork and other works specially designed for the set permanently. Therefore, interior space that combines designed material are part of installation artwork.

Ferriani and Pugliese (2013) argue that “Installation art is an extremely difficulty type of contemporary art to properly define. There is no restriction on material used, and works are created to be anything from permanent to highly ephemeral”³⁴. As noted by Christina Kang Kher Shin (2013), “Installation art is a form of art that cannot be strictly categorize; painting can be installation art, sculpture can be installation art, printmaking can be installation art, music can be installation art and event architecture too can be installation art. This certainly adds to the confusion as to what installation art really is”.³⁵ Voicing out his opinion, Bishop (2005), in his book “*Installation Art, A Critical History*” notes that, ‘installation’ has been expanded to describe the arrangement and position of any material in any space that are acceptable to practice without any limits. There is a difference between an installation of art and installation art:

An ‘installation of art’ is secondary in importance to the individual works it contains, while in a work of installation art, the space, and the ensemble of elements within it, are regarded in their entirety as a singular entity. ‘Installation art’ create as a situation into which the viewer physically enters and insists that you regard this as a singular totality.... Installation art therefore differs from traditional media (sculpture, painting, photography,

³² David G Wilkin, Bernard Schult, and Katheryn M. Linduf. 2005. "Analyzing installation art." In *Art Past Art Present*, Laurence King Publishing.14

³³ Susie Hodge. 2015. *Art in minutes, the age of information*. London: Quercus, 140

³⁴ Ferriani, Barbara, and Marina Pugliese. 2013. *Ephemeral monuments: history and conservation of installation art*: Getty Publications.7

³⁵ Christina Kang Kher Shin. 2013. "Installation Art in Young Contemporaries Award's (Lee Kian Seng)." *Senikini*, 10.

video) in that it addresses the viewer directly as a literal presence in the space. Rather than imagining the viewer as a pair of disembodied eyes that survey the work from a distance, installation art presupposes an embodied viewer whose senses of touch, smell and sound are as heightened as their sense of vision. This insistence on the literal presence of the viewer is arguably the key characteristic of installation art.³⁶

Overall, there seems to be some signs to show the chronological approach that accepts the dissimilar moment in the development of installation art, and also the similarities between disparate and unrelated artwork. There is the indirect historical development of installation art, since their influences come in various types such as “architecture, cinema, performance art, sculpture, theatre, set design, film and theater set.”³⁷ Some of the installation art engaged the viewer to the little visual stimuli of a particular sense, like for example the sense of perception, sense of touch and smell. Installation art can be present in various types, mediums and styles. Therefore, it is essential, the idea of flexibility can be applied by using any material with the combination in any of these examples. It is a challenge to use various artistic media that require extraordinary creativity process in producing installation art.

2.4 The Art of Social Commentary

The term “Social Commentary” as define in Dictionary.com's 21st Century Lexicon:

A spoken or written act of rebellion toward an individual or group; commentary on social issues or society. ³⁸

From the definition above, Social Commentary can be understood as, the act of using any style of language or technique such as spoken, written or any form of rebellion toward an individual or group. It is also used to comment the issues in a society. It is done with the idea of knowledge and experiences which are implemented based on the problem

³⁶ Bishop, Claire. 2005. *Installation art, a critical history Intorduction installation art and experience*: Tate publishing.

³⁷ Ibid

³⁸ social commentary. Dictionary.com. Dictionary.com's 21st Century Lexicon. Dictionary.com, LLC. <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/social-commentary> (accessed: October 4, 2017).

issue in society. For example, one of the famous social commentary masterpieces is Harry Potter by JK Rowling. This story brings us to understand about social justice on "how something affect society as a whole than feel its implication on an individual level. As Harry's personal struggles are what make him such an effective agent for social change. He lost his parent, godfather, and mentor all at the hands of Voldemort. Since he feels the impact of these issues so personally, it's easier for him to see how they translate into large political agendas." ³⁹ Although the story deals with magic which cannot be used to solve our moral problem.

As stated by Dr. Betty Ann Brown (2015), in modern art history, "Social Commentary Art" is described as any artwork that makes a statement about the current society. "It is about 'art' comments on society."⁴⁰ This explanation can be understood when the determination of social commentary art are implemented in the development of modern and contemporary art as defined by Madison Museum of Contemporary Art (2005):

Art as social commentary is a major theme in modern and contemporary art. The artist assumes the roles of reporter and analyst in an exploration of the nature of society. Subjects range from momentous historical events to everyday activities. Always at stake is the artist's wish to uncover the workings of society and draw conclusions for understanding it more effectively. Art that falls within this theme is often critical of political structures seen as harmful, but it also celebrates the achievements of human communities and can poeticize everyday life. Its ultimate ideals are to preserve what is good and to condemn what is threatening in hope of a better society.⁴¹

Since 1961, the art of social commentary is beginning to practice when "Some American painters such as Robert Colescott, Leon Golub, Nancy Spero, Sue Coe who immersed themselves in passionate social commentary."⁴² For example, the artworks of

³⁹ BuzzFeed. "13 Lessons About Social Justice from "Harry Potter"." edited by Krystie Lee Yandoli, 2013.

⁴⁰ Brown, Dr. Betty Ann. "What Is Social Commentary Art?". Youtube: ehov, 2015.

⁴¹ Madison Museum of Contemporary Art. "Social Commentary." Ajenda Interactive Media, (2005) <http://www.mmoca.org/mmocacollects/themes/social-commentary>.

⁴² Curtis, C. *Restless Ambition: Grace Hartigan, Painter*. Oxford University Press, 2015. 250

the painters of this married couple, Leon Golub and Nancy Spero such as “Hey Will Torture You My Friend” in 1971. “It is a classic example of protest art from the early 1970s which is one of the most influential and desirable eras.”⁴³

In the art of social commentary, artists communicate with the viewer by expressing their thoughts, feelings, and experiences in visual art forms such as painting, sculpture and installation art. According to Krich (2015), the purpose of creating the artwork is to apply an issue on our surrounding and environment. “Every artist has the responsibility to speak the truth of what they observe.”⁴⁴ This means that they used art to address the social commentary which they think important to them. As stated by Elizaberth L. Katz, E.Louis Lankford, and Plank. (1994) “A work of art can represent important social ideals or focus attention on important social issues.”⁴⁵ Annenberg Leaner (2017) also said:

Art has long been a forum for expressing opinions about the state of politics and society. Through caricature, satire, symbolism, and allegory, artists have commented both explicitly and subversively on everything from vanity and excess to corruption and greed, and poked fun at everyone from the anonymous masses to the privileged elite.⁴⁶

Artists use their artworks to express their concern of social problems, injustice, stresses of life, family problems and wars.⁴⁷ It is a human activity of using art as tools to give commentary on specific issue found in a society. For example, among the notable masterpiece of the worlds of social commentary, can be seen through Pablo Picasso's painting named Guernica. It is a story of tragic events in his native land which criticized about the cruelty of war.⁴⁸ Through this painting it can be seen that the art can also has social value.

⁴³ Artsy. "They Will Torture You My Friend.", 2018.

⁴⁴ Krich, John. 2015. Artist uses shadow play as inspiration for social commentary. Japan: Nikkei asian review.

⁴⁵ Elizaberth L. Katz, E.Louis Lankford, and Jenice D. Plank. 1994. "Social Value." In Themes and Foundation of Art 16. National textbook company.

⁴⁶ Annenberg Leaner. 2017. What makes art an effective form of social commentary or political criticism? In Compare: Annenberg Foundation

⁴⁷ Elizaberth L. Katz, E. Louis Lankford, and Jenice D. Plank. 1994. Themes and Foundation of Art National textbook company.

⁴⁸ Ibid

Besides painting, there are various works using different mediums which are related to social commentary. For example, Kenneth Tin-Kin Hung produce digital collage artwork such as “The Fast Supper” which explored the nature of digital communication while touching on issues such as identity, politics, sexuality, and power.⁴⁹ He used digital collages to comment on the society around him. In the art of photography as claimed by Mustaffa Halabi “through social commentary, photography artists produced photography artworks to represent their ideas through expressing their opinion, emotions, and sentiments for the viewers.”⁵⁰

For example, the memorable works by Malaysian famous artists such as “Nirmala Dutt Shanmughalingam and Kung Yu Liew use photography montage and collage respectively to comment on violations in the aftermath of the Operation Lalang political crackdown (1987) at the National Art Gallery’s Creative Centre”.⁵¹

As explained earlier, artists use their style and technique to express the view about society and the political view in different ways and forms. Unquestionably, it also happens in the publishing of comics, which “not only had the comic book flourished in sales and respect, it was also reclaimed by artists and activists, as a new medium of protest and self-expression.”⁵²

The comic publishing industry, has gained sales and respect by taking into account talented cartoonists. Therefore, they have succeeded in their respective works to increase awareness to society towards social issues and as a lesson, done by “M. Salehuddin, Abdullah Ariff and Idris Salam who deal with social themes in their cartoons contribution to the print media. The next generation of cartoonists are Rejabhad (Rejab Had), Lat (Datuk Mohamed Nor Khalid), Reggie Lee and Zunar (Zulkiflee Anwar Ulhaque).”⁵³

⁴⁹ Eric H. Whang. 2012. Art as a means of social commentary. Accessed 2016.

⁵⁰ Mustaffa Halabi Hj. Azahari, Husaini Yaacob, and Adzrool Idzwan Hj. Ismail. "Social Commentary Through Photographic Representation in Malaysia." International Conference on the Modern Development of Humanities and Social Science (MDHSS 2013).

⁵¹ Ooi Kok Chuen. 2011. "Social Political Trends in Malaysian Art." *Senikini*, 10 - 11.

⁵² Laine Berman. 2001. *Illustrating Asia: Comics, Humor Magazines, and Picture Books*. Edited by John A. Lent. Vol. Consum Asian, *Comics as social commentary in Java, Indonesia*. North America: University of Hawaii Press.

⁵³ Ooi Kok Chuen. 2011. "Social Political Trends in Malaysian Art." *Senikini*, 10 - 11.

2.5 The Art of Social Commentary in Malaysia

Social Commentary in art also has been practiced in Southeastern Asia, according to Guillermo (2000), "Much of the visual arts of the Southeast Asian countries from the heyday of colonization to the present reflect the changing consciousness from passive subjection to an assertive stance"⁵⁴ With this in mind, this awareness can be seen through the existence in the works of art that symbolize Malaysian identity and social issues displayed in the art galleries in Malaysia. Although, Wong Hoy Cheong claimed that "due to the lack of extremes in Malaysian history and geography, there is the general absence of Malaysian artwork which touch directly to provoke consciousness of social and political issues."⁵⁵ This does not necessarily mean the absence of social and political issues in art during the earlier decades.

Since the 1990s, Malaysian art has been dominated by artistic expressions that have sought to grapple with various social and political issues. As a result, the formalist and stylistic sensibilities that prevailed in earlier decades have been replaced by a heightened socio-political consciousness. This is not to suggest the total absence of politically and socially motivated art in earlier decades but only the paucity of such art.⁵⁶

The earliest Social Commentary artwork was produced in Malaysia during the 70s, by Sulaiman Esa. This artwork was created for a competition, organized by National Gallery of Art. As quoted by Faizal Sidik (2015):

'Manusia dan Alamnya' is the first social commentary work of its kind in Malaysia in 1972. It is the artist's reaction towards his world and is a multi-dimensional human anthropological study, which has many human physical and spiritual characteristics. Besides that, it can be an academic, social, sexual and intellectual study.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Guillermo, Aline G. 2000. "Social concern in southeast asian art." *Visions & enchantment southeast asian painting*.

⁵⁵ 1998. *Rupa Malaysia: A decade of art, 1987-1997*: The National Art Gallery of Malaysia. 33

⁵⁶ Michelle Antoinette. "Different Visions: Contemporary Malaysian Art and Exhibition in the 1990s and Beyond: Politic and Power in Art,." In *Art and Social Change: Contemporary Art in Asia and the Pacific*, edited by Caroline Turner, 239. Canberra ACT 0200 Australia: Pandanus Books, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, The Australian National University, 2017.

⁵⁷ Faizal Sidik, and Nasir Baharuddin. *Conceptual Art: Mixed Medium Works in Conceptual Arts of the 1970s*. Malaysia: National Visual Arts Gallery, Malaysia, 2015. https://issuu.com/balaisenivisualnegara/docs/seni_konseptual. 13

In 1990s, Malaysian artwork about various political and social issues slowly appeared in the art scene, which becomes a heightened socio-political consciousness.⁵⁸ There are some Malaysian artists who produce artworks on social commentary, for example.:

Subtler social commentary can be found in the work of Lai Foong Mooi's 'The San Sui Woman' and Kuo Juping 'Indian Labourers' and 'Cowherds'." while "socio-political works can be found in Dato Chuah Thean Tengs's works and "the installation of Zulkifli Yusoff, Tan Chin Kuan and Noor Azizan Paiman question socio-historical constructs.⁵⁹

Another example of Social Commentary artworks as written by Michelle Antoinette (2017):

Earlier precedents include Lee Boon Wang's depiction of Indian labourers in *Road Workers* (1955), Dzulkipli Buyung's *Tabung* (1961) recording the everyday social situation of a poor couple, Lai Foong Moi's portrait of an elderly Chinese woman construction worker in *The San Sui Worker* (1967), Chia Yu Chian's painting *Election Fever* (1978), showing a multi-racial group standing before a wall of political party advertisements, pondering their election choices, Nirmala Dutt Shanmughalingam's images of suffering caused by war such as Vietnam (1981) and Ismail Zain's painting *DOT: The De-Tribalisation of Tam binte Che Lat* (1983) depicting the cultural dislocation of an old Malay woman and her traditions in the face of urbanisation.⁶⁰

In addition, Malaysia is a unique country in terms of races, ethnicities, religions, traditions and cultures. These factors created personal experiences to every soul. For example, it has been mentioned by Redza Piyadasa in his writing through "The Treatment of The Local Landscape in Modern Malaysian Art, 1930 – 1981". There are some creative artists who concentrate on social commentary such as Nirmala Shanmughalingam who are constantly trying to produce works against social injustice. "Nirmala

⁵⁸ Serena Abdullah. 2013. "Malay Artist and the Postmodern Situation: Thematic Approaches since the 1990s." In *Reactions: New Critical Strategies: Narratives in Malaysian Art*, edited by Nur Hanim Khairuddin, Beverly Yong and T.K Sabapathy, 173. Malaysia: RogueArt.

⁵⁹ Ooi Kok Chuen. 2011. "Social Political Trends in Malaysian Art." *Senikini*, 10 - 11.

⁶⁰ Michelle Antoinette. "Different Visions: Contemporary Malaysian Art and Exhibition in the 1990s and Beyond: Politic and Power in Art." In *Art and Social Change: Contemporary Art in Asia and the Pacific*, edited by Caroline Turner, 239. Canberra ACT 0200 Australia: Pandanus Books, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, The Australian National University, 2017.

Shanmughalingam's concern with the local landscape has been marked by the production of a number of socially-oriented works which highlight issues such as pollution and urban poverty."⁶¹ Her conceptual art touched on the problems of wasted industrial and social inequality in Malaysia. Another artist is Zulkifli Ibrahim, his work on "*Sengsara* (1981) contrast the material progress of flashy cars on the highway with the images of a beggar who sits by the curb. The image of the beggar is reflected in the side mirror of a speeding car. This work is clearly socially oriented."⁶² This artwork depicts the contrast between living standards and the status of society in Malaysia.

Another interesting work of social commentary in Malaysia is about cultural identity of Lat. Lat's work depicts his attitudes and his view towards the lives of Malaysians with diverse ethnicity, culture, and race. "His portrayals of the Malaysian reality are not restricted to depictions of a "Malay" point-of view but, rather, a broader "Malaysian" perspective of the contemporary reality."⁶³ His works depict the daily activities of the society in Malaysia. It is a pure effort in enlightening the community to strengthen the society to be more positive to face multi-racial life. "And such an achievement is the result of a very conscious effort to study minute details within the landscape and note the subtle nuances in human behavior."⁶⁴

Through this sort of work, it produces the meaningful work to realize the advantages of a society which is rich in ethnic and culture. In addition, among other famous artists who highlights on the livelihood of the agricultural lifestyle community as stated by Adeline Ooi, and Beverly Yong (2012), in Yong Mun Sen's work. The distinctive style of creativity is determined when "Yong Mun Sen took pains to portray agricultural laborers, miners, fishermen and boat builders at work, sometimes in a dark, social realist mode thick with sweaty brown impasto, within the general output of his

⁶¹ Redza Piyadasa. 2015. "The treatment of the local landscape in modern malaysian art 1930 - 1981 " In *Imagining Identities: Narrative in Malaysian Art*, edited by Nur Hanim Khairuddin, Beverly Yong and T.K Sabapathy, 44. Malaysia: Rogue Art.

⁶² Ibid.45

⁶³ Ibid.50

⁶⁴ Ibid

pioneering studio”⁶⁵. While, “Chen Chong Swee, and the Equator Art Society formed in 1956, took strong stands on the social responsibility of artists to depict the truth, and the need for social relevance in art, espousing various form of social realism and genre topics”⁶⁶. This shows that most Malaysian artists have strong concern in raising the awareness of social issues of society through their respective artworks.

2.6 The Development of Installation Art in Malaysia

The pioneer artist who motivate in the establishing of the installation art, is “German sculptor Joseph Beuys (1921-1986). His work inspired a generation of artists all over the world”⁶⁷. He is not only known as a creative person, but also an educator. He was in the opinion that:

As a teacher, his guiding principle was that ‘one can no longer start from the old academic concept of educating great artists. What one can start from is the idea that art and experience gained from art form and elements of art that flows back into life.’⁶⁸

In other words, art is conveyed from every knowledge and experience of each artist. The idea is derived from the form and elements of the art which later represent their liveliness of the visible from their experience and the stage of the creative thinker. This has also been claimed by the Phaidon Press (2009) publication, about Joseph Beuys “concept of ‘social sculpture’, how our actions shape the world around us, has been an important development in contemporary art.”⁶⁹ Therefore, creative mind is one of the factors that depict a work of art which has its own value and appreciation.

A notable example of such art, which uses various media such as: drawing, sculpture, neon light, performance art, still photography, video and laser holography - was by the

⁶⁵ Adeline Ooi, and Beverly Yong. 2012 "From Paddy Fields to Fake Plastic Palm Trees: Negotiating a Changing Social Landscape." In *Imagining Identities: Narrative in Malaysian Art*, edited by Nur Hanim Khairuddin, Beverly Yong and T.K Sabapathy., 98. Malaysia: RogueArt.

⁶⁶ Ibid

⁶⁷ Hugh Honour, and John Fleming. 2005. "Into the third millenium." In *A world history of art*, 872. United Kingdom: Laurence King Publishing.

⁶⁸ Ibid

⁶⁹ Phaidon Press. 2009. *10,000 years of art*. New York: Phaidon press inc.

American artist Bruce Nauman to express a complex of philosophical, ethnical, political, social and sexual concern and positions.⁷⁰

Besides, Barbara Kruger (b. 1945) is a one of the graphic artist who used political and social issue on her conceptual art, which started in 1990, after her experiences as a graphic designer of fashion magazine *Mademoiselle* in New York.⁷¹ Her installations included of photography, video, film, audio, magnesium tiles, and projection.⁷²

Some of the artists as mentioned earlier, who practiced mixed media art often used it to raise the consciousness of social problems in society, as well as their contributions to the development of installation work. This genre of contemporary art has been practiced by some of the postmodernist artists. Jones (2008), noted previous artists such as “Christo, Claes Oldenberg, Jim Dine, Frank Stella, Jannis Kounellis, Robert Rauschenburg and Donald Judd were all fluent in the use of this medium as an interpretation and commentary on the rapidly modernizing world around them. It is the work of these artists that catapulted installation art into the global realm of artistic thought. By extension, it is generally the work of these artists that introduced the artists in Southeast Asia and throughout the world to the use of installation as a means of artistic expression.”⁷³

This evolution has a constant inspiration to Malaysian artists to create art as a means of artistic expression. They challenge their creativity using diverse media for interesting works. Through the review in *Timelines: Malaysian Art with 50 Years National Art Gallery* has explained that the core of this practice started in the 1970s. It began from painting as well as traditional style, continuously evolves from a conventional approach to a more conceptual style. It has been seen through Malaysian artists’ works such as

⁷⁰ Hugh Honour, and John Fleming. 2005. *A world history of art: chapter 22, Into the third millenium*. Vol. seventh edition. United Kingdom: Laurence King Publishing. 873

⁷¹ Ibid.886

⁷² Alberro, Alexander, and Hal Foster. 2010. *Barbara Kruger: Picturing Relations: Images, Text, and Social Engagement, Installation View*. New York: Rizzoli, 196

⁷³ Jones, Jason. 2008. "Could installation art be the new medium for southeast asia." *A journal of the southeast asian studies student association* 4.

Redza Piyadasa “A Matter Of time” (1977) and Lee Kian Seng, titled “Of Image Object, Illusion Off Series Mechanism” (1977). In 1973, Lee Kian Seng produces the sculpture “Manusia”, means human. While Ponirin Amin develops his potential on his sculpture installation titled “Alibi Catur di Pulau Bidong” (1981) where he wins the grand prize for Bakat Muda Sezaman. The transformation of the artistic style started when Malaysian artists produce their work using a variety of media.

The vibrant installations works are the most important work for Zakaria Awang and the new generation of the 1990s artists that involved Ramlan Abdullah, Zulkifli Yusoff and Tan Chin Kuan. Finally, Installation art becomes trending during the 1990s. But, still there were a number of Malaysian artists who traditionally maintain their style of work in sculpture such as Ariffin Ismail with his sculpture titled “Taming Sari III” (1987); Ham Rabeah Kamarun in “Globe” (1990) and Mad Anuar in “Pemain Rebab No 1” (1991).⁷⁴ Nowadays, installation art is welcomed in Malaysia and begin to attract people’s attention as stated in the writing by Hafizah Iszahanid (2017) " *Karya Instalasi Berjaya Pikat Hati Pengumpul Seni*”:

*Kebelakangan ini karya instalasi turut menarik perhatian. Terbaru “Takhta Perebutan” oleh Raja Shahrizan Raja Aziddin turut berada dalam senarai lelongan seni yang berlangsung di Galeri Prima, The New Straits Times (M) Press (NSTP), di sini.*⁷⁵

Installation art by Raja Shahrizan Raja Aziddin has attracted the art collectors. This artwork “Takhta Perebutan” (1997) was listed in the art auction which is held at Galeri Prima, Kuala Lumpur. According to Events Executive and Public Relations Henry Butcher, Anna Yusoff (2017), installation artworks receive a warm welcome in public art auction.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Mohammed Najib Ahmad Dawa. 2008. *Timelines: Malaysian Art with 50 Years National Art Gallery*: Balai Seni Lukis Negara. 210

⁷⁵ Hafizah Iszahanid. "Karya Instalasi Pikat Hati Pengumpul Seni,." *Berita Harian : Satera dan Budaya*, 2017, 82.

⁷⁶ Ibid

Kita boleh lihat hari ini pengumpul seni lebih berfikiran terbuka dalam memilih karya instalasi. Pandangan lapuk yang menyebut karya instalasi mengumpul habuk dan mengambil banyak ruang kini sudah berubah kerana berikutan peningkatan ilmu terhadap seni halus dalam masyarakat di negara ini.⁷⁷

The society today is wiser to value the installation, based on the improvement of their knowledge and education.⁷⁸

Sejak 1960-an nama seperti Anthony Lau dan Abdul Latiff, malah Raja Shahrman sendiri antara yang tampil dengan sentuhan magis dalam hamper setiap instalasi yang dihasilkan.....Meskipun bermula dengan figura, perlahan-lahan Raja Shahrman bermain dengan isu yang lebih besar dan berfalsafah tinggi. Selain Gembala O gembala dan Takhta Perebutan yang dihasilkan pada 1997 mengangkat Raja Shahrman sebagai artist instalasi yang punya idea tersendiri.⁷⁹

This shows that Malaysian artists are capable of producing high quality masterpieces that encourage Malaysian art collectors to support the art industry.

2.7 About Zulkifli Yusoff

In Malaysia, contemporary artists also love to experiment and take the challenge to convey their thoughts about the social issue in a medium of installation arts. The principles and elements of art guide the artists to present their view in social commentary. It is more effective to use installation art as a medium of communication in sharing their thoughts. For example, Zulkifli Yusoff is one of the famous installation artists that have been chosen by the researcher to study his excellence installation artwork which represented him at the Venice Biennale in 1997.

⁷⁷ Ibid

⁷⁸ Ibid

⁷⁹ Ibid

Conforming with Serena Abdullah (2013), “Zulkifli Yusoff produced Dialogue #2: Don’t Play During Maghrib number 38 which examined the religiously motivated restriction of children’s playing during Muslim Prayer-time at dusk (p.191;39)”⁸⁰

As stated by Ambassador Dato’ Mohd Yusoff Ahmad (2010), “Zulkifli Yusoff began his artistic career in 1987 and had the honor of being the second Malaysian to be invited to participate in the prestigious Venice Biennale. He is also a past winner of the Young Contemporaries Art Competition, Art Salon and was awarded the National Academic Award 2007 by the Ministry of Higher Education for his contributions as an educator in the field of art and creativity.⁸¹ As observed earlier in his career, Zulkifli Yusoff proves that he is one of the artistic iconic, who inspired the young artists. With such study, the process will inform on how Zulkifli's got his ideas expressed in his artwork to his followers and the younger generation.

In addition, Zulkifli is also recognized for his talents in using unconstrained materials to make his art, it is also said by Ambassador Dato’ Mohd Yusoff Ahmad (2010), “Zulkifli Yusoff’s superb compositional skills and masterful handling of materials result in a visual feast that promises to mesmerize as well as engage the intellect with semiotics.”⁸² Unpredictable, his talent not only through his experience and past studies, but he also dares to use the mixture of the media and take on various challenges to produce the impressive works.

Based on the comprehension, producing the artwork requires a comfortable space for artists based on the suitability and the process of art making. As said by Tsabri (2010), studios, workshops, or any comforting site for making art is a very special place for every artist. Zulkifli is a very concern person and always makes sure everything that he needs

⁸⁰ Serena Abdullah. 2013. "Malay Artist and the Postmodern Situation: Thematic Approaches since the 1990s." In *Reactions: New Critical Strategies: Narratives in Malaysian Art*, edited by Nur Hanim Khairuddin, Beverly Yong and T.K Sabapathy, 173. Malaysia: RogueArt.

⁸¹ Ambassador Dato’ Mohd Yusoff Ahmad. 2010. *Prakata*. In *Zulkifli Yusoff: Negaraku*, edited by Balai Seni Lukis Negara. Malaysia: Balai Seni Lukis Negara. 11

⁸² *Ibid*

for his studio is fulfilled. This is where his idea developed, produced the painting, mold the sculpture and making printing process. His studio was provided with art tools, materials, furniture, where the process of his artworks occurs.⁸³

Since he was a lecturer in one of the famous university of education, located in Tanjung Malim, Perak named Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI). Tanjung Malim is the best place for him to build his future with his family and also as studio-based for him making artworks. Tanjung Malim is located between district border of Hulu Bernam, Selangor. This place is easier for him to manage his time between three careers, as an educator and an artist as well as board members at National Visual Art Gallery, Malaysia. Most of his artwork represent his genuine personality. It's hard to make the comparison between him and others because Zulkifli owns his remarkable talent. The fame of an artist is measured based on his achievement in national and international art scenes. He has received numerous appreciations in International achievement such as at Venice Bienalle, Carnegie, Seychelles, 1st Asia pacific Triennale of Contemporary Art, Bisbane. While in national achievement he received the major awards on Bakat Muda Sezaman BSLN (1988,1989), major award on Salon Malaysia (1992), Philip Morris (1995) and Akademik Negara (AAN) award from Ministry of Higher Education.⁸⁴

Zulkifli's artworks also received reviews from some famous Malaysian art critics such as Prof. Dr Zakaria, Ooi Kok Chuen, Tengku Sabri Tengku Ibrahim, Zedeck Siew and Zainal Abidin Ahmad Shariff.

According to Chun (2000):

He was not just a mere artist but one who uses work as a vehicle for social criticism. He reminded me so much of another young artist, Dzul kifli Dahalan, whose work carried the same poignant politico-social message during the 1970s. Yet there the similarity ends. Zulkifli belongs to a different genre.⁸⁵

⁸³ Tsabri. 2010. Zulkifli Yusoff: Negaraku. edited by Arham Azmi: Balai Seni Lukis Negara.8

⁸⁴ Yusoff, Zulkifli. Negaraku. Malaysia: Balai Seni Lukis Negara, 2010.

⁸⁵ Yap Wing Chun. "Foreword." In Zulkifli Yusoff- Powerful Dialogue, 3: The Art Gallery, 2000.

In most of the opinions, the strongest achievement of Zulkifli Yusoff is his ability to produce artwork based from the surrounding society, which became his original trademark. Art critics believe every artwork by Zulkifli represents him-self and easy for viewer to comprehend his genuine work.⁸⁶ In personal view of Bingley Sim (2017), Zulkifli is one of the passionate artists who inspire all art lover and educate young artists with his soul,⁸⁷ in order for them to enjoy the artwork with pleasure.

2.8 The Social Commentary of Zulkifli Yusoff

Artworks usually depict the subject, whether about imagination or experiences, that is made to represent something. One of the views about social commentary can be included in artwork. Hence, artworks are an effective way for an artist to criticise and comment on the selected issue. According to (Zakaria Ali 2000), "Criticism means different views to different individuals. Zulkifli Yusoff as an artist takes specific issues to represent his belief in his artworks. This is the risk he had to confront with just like all other business proposals. In visual art, Zulkifli Yusoff balances two concerns between political and visual commentary. His style of works provokes more question to the viewer to answer, which is the main thrust of his criticism. "The viewer however has the right to agree with the content but disagree with the way it is delivered, or vice versa."⁸⁸

Therefore, the chosen social commentary of Zulkifli Yusoff involves his ability to select the risk of pitching an opinion, as stated by (Ian Findlay 2000), "The drama within his work is not only achieved through his willingness to take risks, but also by his ability to observe and select the elements which will carry his forceful narrative to its conclusion".⁸⁹ Some of the examples of his multimedia installations that deliver an effective narrative can be seen through *Power 1* (1992), *Immunity 1* (1993), and *Too*

⁸⁶ Yusoff, Zulkifli. *Negaraku*. Malaysia: Balai Seni Lukis Negara, 2010.

⁸⁷ Sim, Bingley. "Collecting Malaysian Contemporary Art - a-10 Year Journey." *Art Talk* (2017).

⁸⁸ Zakaria Ali. 2000. "The social criticism of Zulkifli Yusoff." In *Zulkifli Yusoff Power Dialogue*, 8. Malaysia: The Art Gallery.

⁸⁹ Ian Findlay. 2000. "Zulkifli Yusoff at NN Gallery." In *Zulkifli Yusoff Power Dialogue*, edited by Zulkifli Yusoff, 9. Malaysia: The Art Gallery.

Eager to Serve (1994), where he consistently explored the relationship of power and form of authority.⁹⁰ To enable an artist to stimulate an idea of creating an effective visual art involves a lot of research not just through witnessing what they see and read, but the artist should also explore everything that is related to the form and social commentary that they have selected. In one of Zulkifli Yusoff's views on how he found his ideas about something, has been explained in "Zulkifli Yusoff, Power 1 (1991).":

The sculptor's or artist's sensitivity toward the traditional image in surrounding is one's definitely examined (sic) and it not only refers to visual images but also to the old Malay literature. We should explore our history, which contains thousands of stories surrounding community, including cultural, economic, political and social aspect. –Zulkifli Yusoff⁹¹

Undeniably, with his exploration style of an idea, he succeeded in producing the treasured pieces of art. The "Power 1" is a one of the impressive installation artwork, which raised his name as a respected artist in Malaysia, when his work was selected by the panel of judges, among 600 works submitted from across Malaysia.

Art and artists are very important in this process; says Yusoff. "One of the reason that history is an important idea in my art is simply because we must learn from the past That is one of the reasons why I have chosen to use literature, Malay literature involves a lot of politics, economic, social, and religious ideas from different periods. These offer a comparison for people today and helps us to understand where we are. I'm not interested in whether or not the tales may be silly. They may be about ghost or devils, or family controls or darkness. I want to use them as methapors for contemporary Malaysian society."⁹²

According to (Zulkifli Yusoff 2013) in his writing on "Zulkifli Yusoff, Power 1 (1991).":

⁹⁰ Serena Abdullah. 2013. "Malay Artist and the Postmodern Situation: Thematic Approaches since the 1990s." In Reactions: New Critical Strategies: Narratives in Malaysian Art, edited by Nur Hanim Khairuddin, Beverly Yong and T.K Sabapathy, 173. Malaysia: RogueArt.

⁹¹ Yusoff, Zulkifli. 2013. "Zulkifli Yusoff, Power 1 (1991)." In Reactions: New Critical Strategies: Narratives in Malaysian Art, edited by Nur Hanim Khairuddin, Beverly Yong and T.K Sabapathy, 191. Malaysia: RogueArt.

⁹² The Art Gallery. "A Word from the Publisher." In Zulkifli Yusoff: Powerful Dialogue, 12. Malaysia: The Art Gallery, 2000.

It was also a timely choice of theme, i.e., the subject of Rulers immunity, citing the episode of Sultan Mahmud Shah II Mangkat Dijulang, of the 17th century Malaccan Sultanate's history. At the same time the nation was experiencing "royal injustice", which suddenly cast the work as the most meaningful; installation art had become the supreme media for social commentary.⁹³

With this kind of work, Zulkifli Yusoff is able to express his view as an artist, concerning the dilemma that has occurred in Malaysia. He is able to prove that Installation art plays an important role in addressing the social commentary, which often used to raise the consciousness of social problems in society. Zulkifli Yusoff is also known as an artist who is sensitive to the society's problems surrounding him, especially relating to the Malay community. As stated Mohd Johari AB. Hamid (2004):

Terdapat banyak lagi karya – karya Zulkifli Yusoff yang menyentuh isu-isu permasalahan masyarakat. Antaranya isu kekejaman pemerintahan di zaman kesultanan Melaka, isu kerakusan kuasa tokoh tokoh pemerintahan pada zaman sebelum kemerdekaan dan isu kekeringan idealism bagi golongan cendekiawan dan masalah politik Negara. Kupasan – kupasan pelukis ini terhadap permasalahan itu begitu berani dan meyakinkan. Isu terbaru yang dibawa oleh beliau ialah mengenai jati diri bangsa Melayu. Bangsa Melayu dilihat dari aspek yang luas. Beliau seolah menyeru pada bangsanya supaya berwaspada setiap tindakan yang dilakukan. Antara karya beliau yang menarik perhatian ialah "Profesor Kangkong", "professor katak", "Ahmad dan Jibul" "Penghulu" "The Power I" dan "The Power II" "Meminang Puteri Gunung Ledang" "Anjing dan bayang bayang" dan banyak lagi. Karya – karya ini dibuat dalam bentuk catan ekspresif.⁹⁴

His work discusses social commentary regarding taboos, social problems, misuse of power in Malay culture. For example, in his artwork (Ahmad Pulang Bawa HIV + ve)

⁹³ Yusoff, Zulkifli. 2013. "Zulkifli Yusoff, Power 1 (1991)." In Reactions: New Critical Strategies: Narratives in Malaysian Art, edited by Nur Hanim Khairuddin, Beverly Yong and T.K Sabapathy, 192. Malaysia: RogueArt.

⁹⁴ Mohd Johari AB. Hamid. *Falsafah Dan Kritikan Seni*. . University Pendidikan Sultan Idris, (UPSI), 2004.174

(1997) which “he narrates the plight of Ahmad, who contracts HIV from an air-line hostess”.⁹⁵

Zulkifli Yusoff’s concern that his art reflects the state of his country runs contrary to much of the work produced by his peers, dominated as it is by what sometimes appears to be a preoccupation with abstraction. He is resolute that his work has a message, but one which relies on many sources-politics, history, literature and the family – for inspiration. With such influences one might imagine the result would be bland works.⁹⁶

“As an artist, he makes artwork for society. Through the content of his work he wants to show people that they have to think beyond the yesterday.”⁹⁷ Besides that, Serena has stated in "Malay Artist and the Postmodern Situation: Thematic Approaches since the 1990s, works by Zulkifli “are deeply confrontational and disturbing to the general public. Zulkifli even displays huge expletive words across the canvases of his graffiti-like paintings.”⁹⁸ Through this understanding, his style of work firmly voices his reprimand in expressing he thought.

2.9 The Installation Art of Zulkifli Yusoff

Zulkifli started his installation works in 1988, in his third year at the ITM School of Art and Design. Since, as a Muslim, he is not permitted to depict human figures in his work, he chose chess pieces as a way of representing people.⁹⁹

Zulkifli Yusoff is a man of many parts-painter, sculptor, installation artist, and social critic. In the conversation he is spirited and plans about his work as well as observations on Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia’s flourishing capital. Yet behind his expansive nature and his broad involvement in his country’s art world, Zulkifli Yusoff is a thoroughly independent artist. His bold, colorful paintings and dynamic sculpture and installations

⁹⁵ Serena Abdullah. 2013. "Malay Artist and the Postmodern Situation: Thematic Approaches since the 1990s." In *Reactions: New Critical Strategies: Narratives in Malaysian Art*, edited by Nur Hanim Khairuddin, Beverly Yong and T.K Sabapathy, 160. Malaysia: RogueArt

⁹⁶ The Art Gallery. "A Word from the Publisher." In *Zulkifli Yusoff: Powerful Dialogue*, 12. Malaysia: The Art Gallery, 2000.

⁹⁷ Ibid

⁹⁸ Serena Abdullah. 2013. "Malay Artist and the Postmodern Situation: Thematic Approaches since the 1990s." In *Reactions: New Critical Strategies: Narratives in Malaysian Art*, edited by Nur Hanim Khairuddin, Beverly Yong and T.K Sabapathy, 160. Malaysia: RogueArt.

⁹⁹ "Extracted from Southeast Asian Art Today," In *Zulkifli Yusoff - Powerful Dialogue*, edited by Joyce Van Fenema, 10. Malaysia: The Art Gallery, 2000.

represent an uncompromising view of contemporary Malaysian society.¹⁰⁰

As stated Zulkifli Yusoff;

I must consider two major aspects: the formal and the content. The formal aspects in some ways reflect my education, my knowledge of design, awareness of space, and understanding of materials,” says Yusoff. “The content reflects my intellectual processes. That is to say, my sensitivity to my surroundings, the social and the political.¹⁰¹

2.10 Don't Play During Maghrib Installation

Some views on the DPDM work have been collected by the researcher in terms of the opinions and assessments made by critics. For Mohd Johari (2014), in his *Falsafah dan Kritikan Seni*, DPDM artwork was all about how Maghrib was viewed in the Malay community. Maghrib was considered not an appropriate time for children to play outdoors. For him, old folks believed that Maghrib was the time where evil spirits wandered around for prey because children were easily being possessed by these spirits. He agreed that the prohibition to not playing during Maghrib should be preserved within the Malay community. He viewed that in DPDM, Zulkifli also addressed the issues of Malay adults wandering around during Maghrib could lead them to immoral activities.¹⁰² While, for Hassan Mohd Ghazali (2012), in his *Seni Visual Sebagai Ekspresi Fantasi*, DPDM artwork affected him in terms of intellectual awareness and style of emotion. For him, the arrangement of objects and space of DPDM gave an impression for the viewer to think seriously about the artwork. It can be concluded that DPDM affected the viewer's perception of the three-dimensional and narrative story of the work.

¹⁰⁰ The Art Gallery. "A Word from the Publisher." In Zulkifli Yusoff: Powerful Dialogue, 12. Malaysia: The Art Gallery, 2000.

¹⁰¹ Ibid

¹⁰² Mohd Johari AB. Hamid. *Falsafah Dan Kritikan Seni*, University Pendidikan Sultan Idris, (UPSI), 2004.172

“Karya instalasi Zulkifli Yusoff bertajuk Dailog 2 ‘Don’t Play During Maghrib’ 1996 jelas melemparkan kesan intelektual dan emosi yang ketara melalui objek dan susunan ruang yang membuatkan kita berfikir terhadap karya tersebut.”¹⁰³

In the researcher’s opinion, “Don’t Play During Maghrib” is an advice from the Malay Muslim parents, to their children not to play during sunset. It is a prohibition that children are told to be back home before twilight because during that time they will be disturbed by the spirits. This review has been discuss by (Mohammed Najib Ahmad Dawa 2008), The Don't Play During Maghrib work produce by Zulkifli's is about the spirits and ghosts which is always hanging around during twilight phases. Children are advised not to play during the dusk hour. The imagination through this work manifested to the installation, which presented into an art form from the invisible subject which cannot be seen by the human eye.¹⁰⁴

Through this work, it emphasizes how important the power of advice among family members within the Malay community. According to Zulkifli Yusoff, the social system within the family is important in order to sustain the relationship of the family. This is how Zulkifli’s recall his memories with family in his artwork named Don’t Play During Maghrib (1996). This installation artwork shows the respect of Zulkifli to his father, who forbids him not to play during Maghrib. It shows how the integrity of the family existed when the gathering starts at Maghrib.

"Don’t Play During Maghrib" is the point for him to explore about himself and origins. He started to get the idea by referring to his childhood memories and by reading old books such as the Malay History, Hikayat Hang Tuah, Pelayaran Abdullah and also the history of the origin of country. The significant of his reading contributes to different definitions and meanings, in revealing and interpreting new understanding about things

¹⁰³ Hassan Mohd Ghazali. *Seni Visual Sebagai Ekspresi Fantasi*. Seni Visual: Pengenalan Seni Visual. Malaysia: Citra Grafik, 2012.

¹⁰⁴ Mohammed Najib Ahmad Dawa. 2008. *Timelines: Malaysian Art with 50 Years National Art Gallery*: Balai Seni Lukis Negara. 21

he experienced over the year.¹⁰⁵ As stated by Chuen (2002), in this era, most of young artist choose to work in installation because it gives them a chance to play with space more theatrically, cooperating with conventional tools and material to create the art. Don't Play During Maghrib displayed at the Venice Biennale in 1997, benchmark as one of well-known Malaysian artwork.¹⁰⁶

For the researcher, the picture of DPDM artwork, was all about Maghrib, where the abstract figures represented the evil spirits as depicted by Zulkifli. To the researcher, the content of DPDM represented the unseen during Maghrib which cannot be seen by the normal human eye.

After collecting all the information and interview with Zulkifli, the researcher found that every viewer has different interpretations on DPDM. The viewers understanding of the artwork were based on their knowledge, perspective and experience. The DPDM's work produced by Zulkifli did not only give an opinion about Maghrib but also addressed various social issues among Malay society based on what he got from his life experiences, novel, readings and the current issues that occurred in the 90s.

In terms of technique and style, Zulkifli in his writing of Powerful Dialogue (2000), mentioned that in the installation artwork:

...concern with textures, surfaces, form, and space, as well as themes such as power and the family, which have informed his three-dimensional work.¹⁰⁷

Besides that, his DPDM artwork combined the idea from painting into installation art, as mentioned below;

“The image comes first for me and then the composition of my work. I want to show the very close relationship between sculpture and installation and painting. For me, they go in one emotional direction. What I want to say in three-dimensional space with sculpture and installation is to represent my ideas in

¹⁰⁵ Arham Azmi. 2010. Zulkifli Yusoff : Negaraku. In Negaraku dalam doaku. Malaysia: Balai Seni Lukis Negara. 13

¹⁰⁶ Chuen, Ooi Kok. *A Comprehensive History of Malaysian Art*. The Art Gallery, 2002.34

¹⁰⁷ The Art Gallery. "A Word from the Publisher." In Zulkifli Yusoff : Powerful Dialogue, 12. Malaysia: The Art Gallery, 2000.

physical space. I do installation because I like to be involved in intellectual process and the physical aspect of it. In installation there are no boundaries, no limitation of space or materials which is understood in painting. In painting it is illusion contained within a two-dimensional surface'.¹⁰⁸

According Zulkifli Yusoff, installation art offers him a different challenge to handle the structure or form, which come from every angle and surface from the wall, the ceiling and the floor.¹⁰⁹

There are two major aspects to be considered in making his installation artwork, that is the formal and the content. "The formal aspect reflects from his education, knowledge of design, awareness of space, and understanding of materials, while content derives from his intellectual processes which come from his sensitivity towards the surrounding, the social as well as the political issues."¹¹⁰

It can be concluded that DPDM has different views from each viewer on different levels. The researcher understands that the use of various mediums in producing DPDM makes this artwork more unique and give a special impact to Zulkifli's emotions as well as the viewer.

'Art and artists are very important in this process, says Yusoff. "One of the reasons that history is an important idea in my art is simply because we must learn from the past That is one of the reasons why I have chosen to use literature, Malay literature involves a lot of politics, economic, social, and religious ideas from different periods. These offer a comparison for people today and helps us to understand where we are. I'm not interested in whether or not the tales may be silly. They may be about ghost or devils, or family controls or darkness. I want to use them as methapors for contemporary Malaysian society".¹¹¹

Zulkifli's work confers different level of appreciation. Viewers with formal art education may interpret Zulkifli's work based on past theory and previous writing about his work. While, those who do not receive formal education about art may interpret the

¹⁰⁸ Ibid

¹⁰⁹ Ibid

¹¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹¹ Ibid

artwork based on their life experiences and emotions, that reveal the honest opinion beyond the artist's awareness.



Figure 2.2: Zulkifli Yusoff, Dialogue 2 (Don't Play During Maghrib) media campuran, mixed media, 1996. (Extracted from: *Imbasan bakat muda sezaman (Young Contemporaries in Review)* 1997, 36. Balai Seni Lukis Negara, 1999.)

2.11 Maghrib

According to Prof Dr Nasaruddin Umar (2012), “in the sufis view, ‘Maghrib’ can be understood as the west, not only means by the place or geographical position, but it includes various significance through cosmology, theology, mythology, anthropology, sociology and methodology. Not less than 13 of al-maghrib words mention in the Quran. They are mentioned in the form of mufrad as in chapter Al-Baqarah 2:115, in the form of mutsanna in chapter Al-Rahman 55:17 and in the form of jama in chapter Al-Ma'rij 70:40. It is also known as *gharaba-yaghrubu* which means goes away, setting, estranged, poisonous and forming the al –maghrib which describe as west, the place of sunset, Al-musytaghrib (occidentalists). In classical interpretation of holy books, the word of al-maghrib can be defined as west in its geography, where the west is the place where the

sun disappears below the horizon, as described in QS Al-Baqarah 2:115,”¹¹²

To God belongs the east and the west, so wherever you (might) turn, in fact you turn to God. God is All-Embracing, All-knowing.” Al-Baqarah 2:115. ¹¹³

In the Holy Quran, it has mentioned that maghrib time is “*at the decline of the sun until the darkness of the night*” and it is compulsory for the ummah to do their fourth prayer of the day:

Establish prayer at the decline of the sun (from its meridian) until the darkness of the night and (also) the Quran of dawn. Indeed, the recitation of dawn is ever witnessed.

Dirikanlah olehmu sembahyang ketika gelincir matahari hingga waktu gelap malam, dan (dirikanlah) sembahyang subuh sesungguhnya sembahyang subuh itu adalah disaksikan (keistimewaannya)- QS Al-Isra 17:78

Through the verse in the QS Al-Isra 17:78, it was explained that the Maghrib started when the sunlight began to slip during sunset, known as *syafaq* (red mega) or dusk. (HR Muslim).¹¹⁴ Maghrib began from the sunset, when losing the circle of the sun on the earth and ends with the loss of *syafaq* (red mega).

In addition, (Zainol Abidin Ibrahim et al. 2013) explained: “*Shafaq* is redness light, when *shafaq* disappeared the fifth prayer of the day Isha’ appeared, quoted by al-Shaukani, (1994) *Shafaq al-ahmar* could be translated as redness at the sky due to Sun set in west. According to consensus of jurists (consisting Maliki, Hanafiyyah, Hanabilah and considered in former Shafi i’s school) the beginning of Isha’ is at the disappearance of *shafaq al-ahmar*.¹¹⁵

Dari Abdullah Ibnu Amr Radliyallaahu ‘anhu bahwa Rasulullah Shallallaahu ‘alaihi wa Sallam bersabda: “Waktu Dhuhur ialah

¹¹²Prof Dr Nasaruddin Umar. "Makna Al-Masyriq Dan Al-Maghrib." Khazanah: republika.co.id, <http://www.republika.co.id/berita/dunia-islam/tasawuf/12/04/30/m3919d-makna-almasyriq-dan-almaghrib-1>.

¹¹³ Naeem Khalid. "Al Baqarah 2:115." The Only Quran, 2002.

¹¹⁴ Drs.H.Nor Hadi. *Panduan Shalat Dalam Keadaan Darurat*. Edited by Nung Nurhasanah Jakarta, Indonesia: Ruang Kata, 2012.

¹¹⁵ Zainol Abidin Ibrahim, Nur Nafhatun Mohd Shariff, Zety Sharizat Hamidi, Amran Muhammad, and Mohd Zambri Zainudin.

"Background Theory of Twilight in Isha’ and Subh Prayer Times." *Dimensi Penyelidikan Astronomi Islam*. (2013): 121-32.

jika matahari telah condong (ke barat) dan bayangan seseorang sama dengan tingginya selama waktu Ashar belum tiba waktu Ashar masuk selama matahari belum menguning waktu shalat Maghrib selama awan merah belum menghilang waktu shalat Isya hingga tengah malam dan waktu shalat Shubuh semenjak terbitnya fajar hingga matahari belum terbit. Riwayat Muslim.¹¹⁶

Syafaq is a mega-colored, which appears after sunset at the west horizon. Then, maghrib time will end after the syafaq begins to disappear and it indicates the isha' time, as explained by Al-Asqalani (2015), which is found in hadith No.163 in the phase of '*selama awan merah belum menghilang*' which mean while red clouds have not gone yet. An article in Al Islam Magazine, Dr Mahyuddin Ismail (2011), who is the senior lecturer of the IKIP International College, refined that twilight was a transitional time between day and night. Maghrib is defined as " the west point of the horizon where the sunset begins".

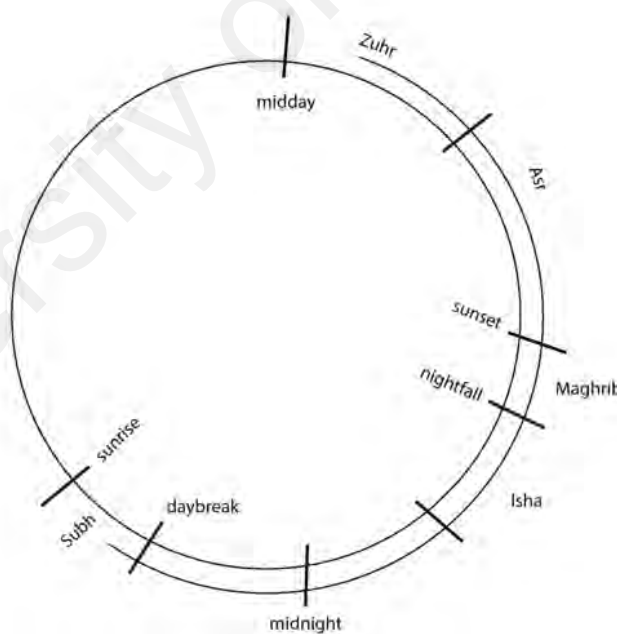


Figure 2.3: The timing of prayer times ¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ Al-Asqalani, Ibnu Hajar. *Terjemahan Paling Lengkap Bulughul Maram* Edited by Ar-Ra'uf Vol. Jilid 1, Bandung, Indonesia: Inaba Pustaka, 2015

¹¹⁷ Zainol Abidin Ibrahim, Nur Nafhatun Mohd Shariff, Zety Sharizat Hamidi, Amran Muhammad, and Mohd Zambri Zainudin. "Background Theory of Twilight in Isha' and Subh Prayer Times." *Dimensi Penyelidikan Astronomi Islam*. (2013): 121-32.

From the graphic illustration above presents the timing of prayer times for Muslims, which describe the timing of maghrib is in the period of time between sunset which means the beginning of night until all light has disappeared from the sky.

2.12 Taboos of Maghrib

According to Dr Mahyuddin Ismail (2011), in his article in Al Islam Magazine, by believing in God (Allah) it has established the specific rules for His creation between two times. Daytime is the time for humans to figure out the sustenance of their living while at night is the time to relax and sleep. Which has been mention in Quran, QS an Naba' verse 78:10 – 78:11;

“And made the night as clothing. And made the day for
livelihood.”¹¹⁸

It means, daylight is a time for people go out to seek sustenance, and livelihood then at night is the time when spirits and demons hang around to seek out their victims. Therefore, it is not surprising that nightclubs, brothels, fun fair, casinos, entertainment concerts, and karaoke clubs are active during night time. Also, with the '*rempit*' who are riding with motocyle in the immoral way and illegal car racing is active at night or early morning before dawn. Prophet Muhammad SAW reminded the Muslims with his word: “If people know what I know, they will not dare to walk alone at night.”¹¹⁹

Twilight happens during the starting time of the night. During this time, the devil and demons will go haunting for their prey. They like to be in between two situations, such as between day and night, between dark and bright, between hot and cold, between wet and dry. Prophet Muhammad SAW prohibited a person to sit between shaded spot and sunlit slopes. Likewise, it is prohibited not to play in the rain in bright sunlight

¹¹⁸ Tanzil, QuranComplex, Colin Fair, and Zekr. "The Nobel Quran." edited by Elmohafez team: Quran.com, 2016.

¹¹⁹ Dr Mahyuddin Ismail. "Rahsia Waktu Senja." *Al Islam*, 2011.

because it is believed to be susceptible by fever. Satan also likes to be in between a man and a woman (not mahram) who are not legally married sits together.¹²⁰

Besides that, the time of sunset is like the early morning for the devil and spirit. The early morning for human is the 'dusk' for the spirits. While midnight is like midday for the spirits. The most favorite time for the spirit is during dusk where they search for their prey. Therefore, patients who has problem of witchcraft are not encouraged to wander during dusk to prevent them from being more critical in their sickness.

According to Dr Mahyuddin Ismail (2011), Imam Nawawi answers the purpose of 'protecting your children' is to forbid them to go out during dusk time. While Ibn Hajar Al Asqalani in Fathul Bari said, that Rasullulah forbids the children to play outside the house at dusk in order to protect their safety from Satan's disruption.¹²¹ Suhaimi Rozali (2017) put forward the term Satan is evil spirits, in the Malay language 'Hantu' means ghost. Malay society, is afraid ghost and most of them believe the existence, such creatures.¹²² There is a chapter about Jinn (ghost in the Arabic language) in the Holy Quran. Each Jinn has its own purpose. Allah created jinn before the creation of man. Humans are the youngest creatures, who are better than jinns. The world of jinn is approximately the same with human beings. They have gender, eat, drink, work, politic and religious. Some of them eat and some don't. Jinns living in the air do not eat, while jinns who live on the land is a habitat of eating. The world of Jinn is more widespread than human for they survive in the air, ocean, and land such as in the jungle and desert. Some of their habitats are the neighborhood with humans. This is why prophet Muhammad S.A.W reminded us to make a du'a before eating because Jin will eat the food which are unprotected.¹²³ The Holy Quran, mentioned the origin of Jinn which created from fire. In Chapter 15, Al- Hijr verse 27:

¹²⁰ Ibid

¹²¹ Ibid

¹²² Sanizar Ayin, and Johan Abu Bakar. "Rupanya Itu Khurafat." In *Tanyalah Ustaz TV9*, 72 mins. Malaysia, 2017.

¹²³ R.Rajaendran. "Alam Ghaib." In *Tanyalah Ustaz TV9*, 74 mins. Malaysia, 2017.

And the Jinn race, we had created before, from the fire of a scorching wind.¹²⁴

While in Chapter Al Araf, 7 verses 27, has cited Satan or Jinn watch human from the situation where human cannot see them.

“O ye Children of Adam! Let not Satan seduce you, in the same manner as He got your parents out of the Garden, stripping them of their raiment, to expose their shame: for he and his tribe watch you from a position where ye cannot see them: We made the evil one’s friends (only) to those without faith.”¹²⁵

The actual form of Satan or Jinn cannot be seen by human eyes, except they aim to appear themselves in another form such as a dog, snake, ghost, and other form for their victims. Besides that, Jinn also has created to bear a child as his posterity to continue his mission to mislead Adam’s progeny (human). This story was mentioned in Holy Quran in Chapter 18, Al – Khafi verses 50:

“Behold! We said to the angels, "Bow down to Adam": They bowed down except Iblis. He was one of the Jinns, and he broke the Command of his Lord. Will ye then take him and his progeny as protectors rather than Me? And they are enemies to you! Evil would be the exchange for the wrong-doers!”¹²⁶

Humans are strictly prohibited to be friend with jinn, because jinn are arrogant, ego, disingenuous and misleading. They believe themselves better than humans. This is revealed in Holy Quran, chapter Al-Jinn, 72 verses 6:

“True, there were persons among mankind who took shelter with persons among the Jinns, but they increased them in folly.”¹²⁷

In fact, Jabir r.a quote the message from Rasulullah;

There is a hadith that mentioned the command of Rasulullah to every Muslim it is Sunnah to close the doors of the house at night, as a form of command to evade and against the demons, jinns and devil. Prophet Muhammad SAW said that, devils cannot open the door and open the beverage which is in favour of the name of Allah. The purpose of commanding human beings to begin every

¹²⁴ Serai Solution. "Surah Al-Hijr 15:27,," 2007.

¹²⁵ Serai Solution. "Surah Al-A'raaf 7: 27." 2007.

¹²⁶ Solution, Serai. "Al-Kahfi 18:50." 2007.

¹²⁷ Solution., Serai. "Surah Al-Jinn 72:6." 2007.

act in the name of Allah so as to protect them, their house, food and beverage from wickedness of satan and jinn.¹²⁸

As mentioned above, if the night comes, “it is sunnah to every man to cover his drinks even just putting stick on it and closing the door by the name of Allah. It is essential to every parent to protect their children inside house ”¹²⁹ Also, turning off the lights when going to bed. Mawardi Yunus (2013) quoted “Ibnu Hajar al – Ashqolari ra explained in the book of Fathul Bari, the reason to protect childrens at home during maghrib (at dusk) because demons are active during that time to find their victim. For example, kids love outdoor play on a playground because it gives them a chance to visit friends outside of the house. In this situation, kids are easily exposed to uncleanness during swinging on the cradle, running around and climbing on certain type of playground equipments. This is a part of demons and jins who love children because they like kids with full of filth.”¹³⁰

Besides that, “those who yet mumaiyiz (cannot think good or bad) have pure heart, they can feel the action of the devils. Every newborn son of Adam was stabbed on both side by devil except 'Isa ibn Maryam, the devil intent to stab him but it just affected his mom's placenta. Not surprisingly, if most babies cry during dusk or midnight because Satan intend to disturbe him. In order to prevent from this, every parent should avoid their children playing outdoor during dusk”¹³¹

The purpose every house should close the door with the name of Allah, is to protect the family inside the house from Jinn and Satan. If they protect their house with the name of Allah, Jinn and Satan cannot enter and stay overnight.¹³²

Besides that, some of the reason to protect our food with Bismillah because Jinn and Satan has ability to transform themselves in any form to enter the human body through the

¹²⁸ Malik Faisal. *Waktu Syaitan Keluar, Jampi Jelmaan Al-Quran & Hadis*. Malaysia: PTS Islamika, 2010.

¹²⁹ Detik Islam. "Waktu Jin Dan Syaitan Berkeliaran." In *Monday, January 21, 2013*. Malaysia: detikislam.blogspot.com, 2013.

¹³⁰ Mawardi Yunus. "Waktu Senja | Waktu Yang Syaitan " In *Waktu senja / waktu yang syaitan suka*. Malaysia: www.mawardiyunus.com, 2013.

¹³¹ Dr Mahyuddin Ismail. "Rahsia Waktu Senja." *Al Islam*, 2011.

¹³² Sulaiman, R., S.M.H. Rawatan, and A. 21. *Gangguan Jin - Rawatan & Pendinding*. Grupbuku Karang kraf (Karya Bestari), 2012.

pores, nose, mouth and then goes to the blood vessels. Unprotected food and drink, easily cause bacterial carrier and disease. For example, jinn are subtle creature which has ability to transform such as bacteria or virus that bring disease into human body.¹³³ Which stated in hadith, Rasullulah said, Satan and Jinn flows through the human being like blood:

“Sesungguhnya syaitan itu bergerak bebas di dalam tubuh anak Adam melalui saluran-saluran darahnya.” (HR. Bukhori Muslim)

Indeed, jinn are the subtle and invisible creatures, viruses and bacteria entering the human body either through air, drink and food then move inside blood vessels then occupy in the cells and internal organs which are causes of diseases. If anyone yawning, they should cover their mouth with their hand in order to prevent Santan entering in their body. Jinn and Satan live in drains, toilets and dustbin which made-up themselves in a form of viruses in order to seek the victims, they use insects and animals such as cockroaches, rats, mosquitoes, lizard and flies as their vehicles to transfer them on exposed food.¹³⁴

Jinn and Satan also seek their victims by seeing the naked body. It because human body is more beautiful compare to the original figure of jinn. They fall in love with human figure where some of them hide behind the genitals, hair, buttock, and breast. Therefore, Prophet Muhammad SAW reminds his followers, entering the bathroom with Bismillah because devils are not able to redeem anything with the name of Allah. Those who read Bismillah, are able to block devils' eyes from seeing their naked bodies or seeing intercourse between husband and wife.¹³⁵ When maghrib began, Muslim should protect their family because the sorcery is more powerful during this time to attact the victim.

¹³³ Ustadz Dato Shamsuri Shafie, and K. Bestari. *Kewujudan Mahkluk Halus Jin & Syaitan: Kaedah Rawatan Menurut Al-Quran & Sunnah*. Grup Buku Karangraf, 2015.

¹³⁴ Dr Mahyuddin Ismail. "Rahsia Waktu Senja." *Al Islam*, 2011.

¹³⁵ Mawardi Yunus. "Waktu Senja | Waktu Yang Syaitan " In *Waktu senja / waktu yang syaitan suka*. Malaysia: www.mawardiyunus.com, 2013.

Lord has reminded the muslim in Chapter Al Falaq, verses 1-5, to protect themselves from demons:

Say, 'I seek refuge with the Lord of the daybreak, from the evil of everything He has created, and from the evil of the dark night when it penetrates, and from the evil of the women who blow on the knots, and from the evil of an envier when he envies.'" (QS: Al- Falaq, 113 verses 1-5).¹³⁶

The Du'a above, reminds us to seek refuge with Allah SWT from all kind of danger that come in the dark night from Jinn, Satan humans with evil soul. They struggle to make defamation to destroy the relationship between each family, friend, and the unity of society. For example, Witches who intend to degrade and harm others as a result of jealousy, full of envy, hatred, and grudge.

Prophet Muhammad SAW, recommends us to turn off the light before bedtime in order to protect us from the danger that are often done by devil. One of the Satan intentions of, to burn the house, is by resembling as a mouse working to break down lamp so that they can spread the fire. Here is explanation of the following hadith:

Ibn 'Abbaas said: a mouse (or rat) came and started dragging the wick (of the lamp). It threw it in front of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), onto the mat on which he was sitting, and it burnt a hole the size of a dirham. He said, "When you go to sleep, extinguish your lamps, for the Shaytan will tell creatures like this to do something like this so that you will be burned." Narrated by Abu Dawood, 5427¹³⁷

In this hadith mentioned:

"Dari Jabir, Rasulullah Shallallahu 'Alaihi wa Sallam bersabda:" Janganlah kamu melepaskan binatang kesayangan dan anak-anak kamu ketika matahari terbenam sehingga hitam legamnya petang hari betul-betul hilang, kerana syaitan-syaitan berkeliaran ketika matahari terbenam sampai saat dimana hitam legamnya petang hilang (sampai waktu malam tiba)"(HR. Muslim). (HR. Muslim no. 2013).

¹³⁶ Sheikh Abdullah Basmeih. Surah Al-Falaq, 113 Tafsiran Pimpinan Ar-Rahman Kepada Pengertian Al Quran 30 (Juz). Vol. 11, Malaysia: Darulfikir, 2002.

¹³⁷ Aep Saepulloh Darusmanwiati. Mengintip Alam Gaib. Indonesia: Zaman, 2014.

The following hadith also recommends us to keep the children indoor after sundown, because that is the time satans begin to spread out. Not only children even animals and pets That is why shepherds protect and put their livestock inside the pens before sunset. According to Dr Mahyuddin Ismail (2011), the reason Islam prohibit animals wandering during dusk is because Satans might transform themselves as dog in order to hunt the livestock which are owned by humans.

Mawardi Yunus (2013) acclaims, "Prophet Muhammad SAW enlighten that Maghrib or dusk is the time for the emergence of Satan. According to Ibnu Qayim al-Jauzi ra, twilight is the favorite time of Jinn and Satan."¹³⁸ because Satan are stronger at night. Usually the worshipers of demons wear black clothes because it is a favorite color of Satan. Prophet Muhammad SAW also encouraged us to be more cautious with black dogs with white spots on their eyes which referred to 'devils', who are more ferocious and vicious.¹³⁹

In addition, Dr Mahyuddin Ismail (2011) discovered, Satan loves to be between two condition such as between day and night, between cold and hot, shady and sunlit. "Hadith also suggests that it is inappropriate for men and women who are not family members or not married to be alone with each other. "A male should not be alone with a female stranger, usually in such a situation the third person would always be Satan"¹⁴⁰ In his analysis, the ocean which is located between two streams is the location of demons and devils to build their palace. Scientific studies show that between two streams area are warm water and cold water.¹⁴¹ The area referred to as the Bermuda Triangle, or Devil's Triangle which has caused hundreds of planes to mysteriously disappear.¹⁴²

¹³⁸ Mawardi Yunus. "Waktu Senja | Waktu Yang Syaitan " In *Waktu senja / waktu yang syaitan suka*. Malaysia: www.mawardiyunus.com, 2013.

¹³⁹ Seker, M.Y. Beware! Satan: Strategy of Defense. Tughra Books, 2008. 47

¹⁴⁰ Seker, M.Y. Beware! Satan: Strategy of Defense. Tughra Books, 2008. 46

¹⁴¹ Dr Mahyuddin Ismail. "Rahsia Waktu Senja." *Al Islam*, 2011.

¹⁴² Staff, History.com. "Bermuda Triangle." A+E Networks, 2010.

So, in order to prevent from doing the evil plan, the holy Quran provide the knowledge to obliterate Satan, if some people forced to stay outside the house, they need to cover their head. This is because Satans poison their heart and mind through “Frontal Lobe”. Frontal Lobe is one of the part of brain, which is the centre of all the planning that intends to doing good and evil. It controls the man personality, self-regulating, confidents, honesty, behavior in making decision before the body move out according to command from brain. This explanation is found in the Quran, Chapter Al-Alaq, 96 verses 15-16:

No! If he does not desist, we will surely drag him by the forelock- A lying, sinning forelock. ¹⁴³

This is why every Muslims should avoid sleeping at sundown because satan can control the mind through bad dreams or nightmare. As a result, our body become weak and lazy to worship.¹⁴⁴ Satan also disturbe people who are in sorrow and they also incarnate themselves as ghosts such as Pocong, Pontianak, Toyol, Pelesit and Hantu Raya in order to frighten humans. As conclusion, everything that is done by Muslim even in a smallest thing will be affected by Satans. This is a huge mission of Satan to break humanity and to make sure that most Muslims will finally be driven into hell.

¹⁴³ Sheikh Abdullah Basmeih. *Surah Al-Alaq, Tafsiran Pimpinan Ar-Rahman Kepada Pengertian Al Quran 30 (Juz)*. Vol. 11, Malaysia: Darulfikir, 2002.

¹⁴⁴ Mohamad Irfan. "Dahagikan Ilmu Islam." In *Kenapa syaitan memilih senja*. Malaysia: dahagakanilmuislam.blogspot.my, 2011.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Methodology

In this study, the research design was based on the objectives of research. Using a qualitative approach, the researcher applied Interpretive research method to analyze the installation artwork of Zulkifli Yusoff. “Interpretivism takes the view that truth is constructed through an understanding of the meanings that individuals apply to phenomena in a socially constructed world,” wrote (Collins)¹⁴⁵. This practice was considered as the most relevant Interpretive research design to explore experiences, feelings, behavior and perspective that affected the process of the analysis.

3.2 Research Design

The researcher used an inductive approach, which generated the art theory to explore where previous understanding was also required. Collins noted that, “The result of this analysis would require the formulation of a theory to understand art (Saunders, 2007)”¹⁴⁶. The primary research will consist of three stages:

¹⁴⁵ Hillary Collins, *Creative Research: Managing the Research Design* (Switzerland: AVA Publishing SA, 2010), 92.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.93

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY - INTERPRETIVE



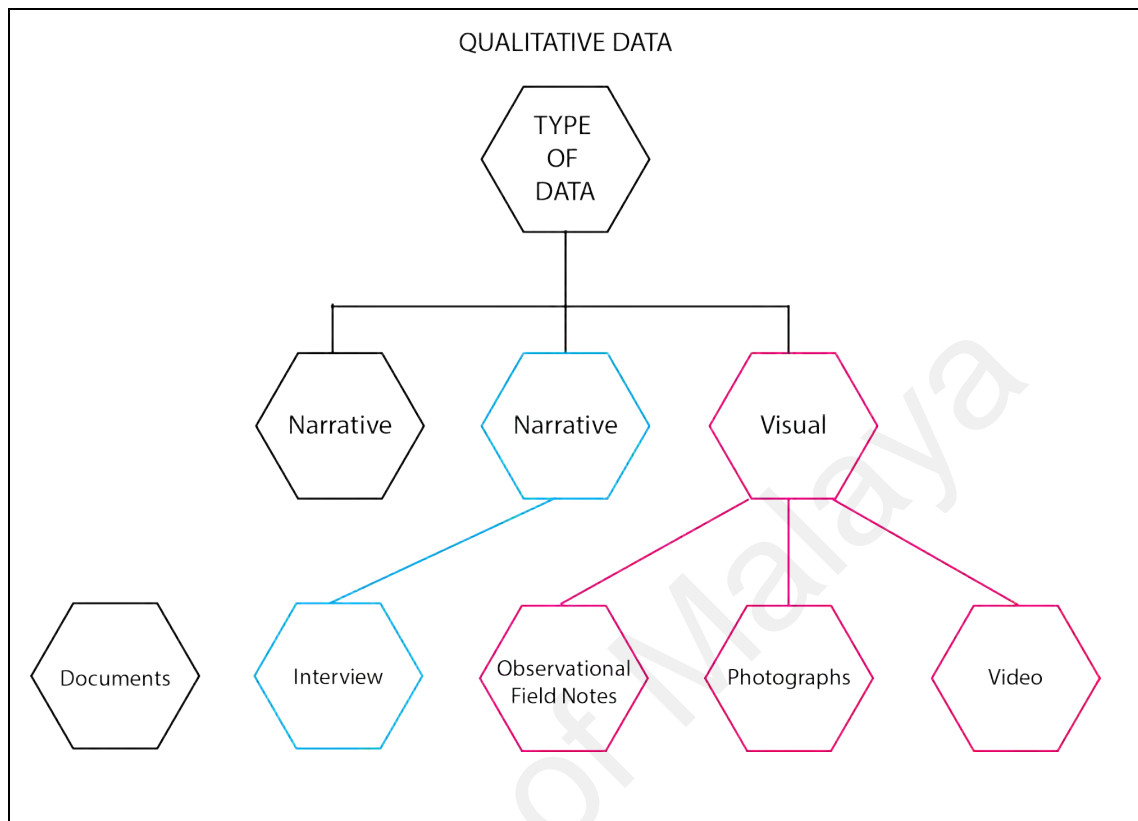
Figure 3.1: The Research Design and Methodology – Interpretive (Extracted from: Hillary Collins, *Creative Research: Managing the Research Design* (Switzerland: AVA Publishing SA, 2010), 92.)

This research practice involves three levels of interpretative study (Figure 3.1), which included. One, descriptive research about installation artwork, Second, in-depth interviews with the artists and third, exploration of the selected installation artwork. The appreciation of this work is generated from the analysis process that bring out the artist's view through his artwork. This study does not cover the problem of in understanding Malaysian installation artwork. At the same time, it intends to intensify the understanding of social commentary in “Don't Play During Maghrib”, installation art by Zulkifli Yusoff.

3.3 Qualitative Data

Qualitative research is the main approach for this dissertation. To achieve the goals of the research, the process of qualitative data (Figure 3.2) would be used to guide the researcher to interpret data collection.

Table 3.1: (Extracted from: Hillary Collins, *Creative Research: Managing the Research Design* (Switzerland: AVA Publishing SA, 2010), 168.)



This qualitative study uses the multiple data sources for validation purposes. Primary data and secondary data were collected to answer the research objectives and research questions. In qualitative data practice, the narrative was considered as the appropriate practice for primary sources to study in detail about the artist’s point of view on social comments in “Don’t Play During Maghrib”. According to Collins (2010), “Narratives are a practical source of information from which you can base an inquiry into social events or interactions.”¹⁴⁷ The collection of data is obtained from literature review and interviews with the artist. This narrative focuses on studying the artist, gathering information through the collection of stories and artist experiences. Therefore, literature review and interview help the researcher to describe the story from the artist’s

¹⁴⁷ Hillary Collins, *Creative Research: Managing the Research Design* (Switzerland: AVA Publishing SA, 2010), 142.

perspective. The Interview on the other hand enables the researcher to investigate the storytelling into identifying certain information about the artwork.

3.4 Research Method Process

Besides that, Visual data help the researcher to discover the information, which is based from the observation at art gallery and studio, as well as from the study of the photo and video. From this observation the researcher can describe the relationship between the depiction of the images represented. So as to make the method process well-defined, the strategy of data was structured in (table 3.2), (table 3.3) and (table 3.4).

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Table 3.2: Research Methodology based on Research Objective and Research Question

Research Methodology based on Research Objective and Research Question

Objective of Study	Intend of Study	Collection of Data	Action/Process
Objective 1 meet RQ 1 Phase 1	<div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 15px; padding: 10px; margin-bottom: 10px; text-align: center;"> RO: Art elements and principle on (DPDM) </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 15px; padding: 10px; text-align: center;"> RO: Social Commentary in (DPDM) artwork </div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 15px; padding: 10px; margin-bottom: 10px;"> Literature Review: Malaysian Installation Art Social Commentary on Malaysian Art </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 15px; padding: 10px;"> Interview: Interview with Zulkifli Yusoff's Focus: "Don't Play During Maghrib" Artwork </div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 15px; padding: 10px; margin-bottom: 10px; text-align: center;"> The role of installation art as a tool for social commentary </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 15px; padding: 10px; margin-bottom: 10px; text-align: center;"> The elements and principle On DPDM </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 15px; padding: 10px; margin-bottom: 10px; text-align: center;"> Social Commentary On DPDM </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 15px; padding: 10px; margin-bottom: 10px; text-align: center;"> Social Commentary of Zulkifli Yusoff </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 15px; padding: 10px; text-align: center;"> DPDM </div>

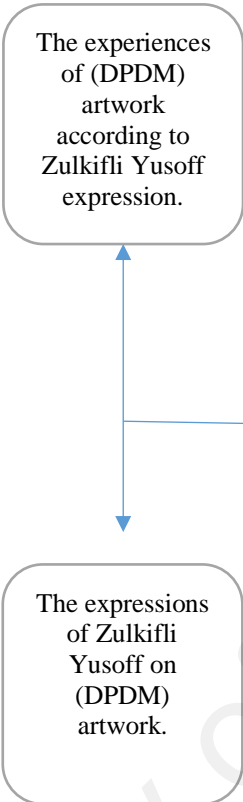

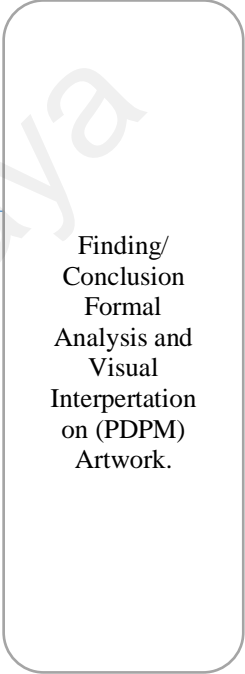
This study will provide the description in separate phases on how to analyze the artwork. Literature review will be recorded from previous study, references, book and internet sources, pictures which one related with the scope area of the study. Personal interview with the artist will be conducted through a list of questions from the researcher with the supervisor as to establish the proper ways to document the study.

Table 3.3: Research Methodology based on Research Objective and Research Question

Objective of Study	Intend of Study	Collection of Data	Action/Process
Objective 2 meet RQ 1 Phase 2	<p>Personal views of (DPDM) artwork according to Zulkifli Yusoff expression.</p> <p>The expressions of Zulkifli Yusoff on (DPDM) artwork.</p>	<p>Images of “DPDM” artwork</p> <p>Literature Review: Don't Play During Maghrib Review</p>	<p>The elements and Principles on (DPDM) artwork.</p> <p>Formal Analysis on (DPDM) artwork.</p> <p>Social Commentary on (DPDM).</p>

The observation on DPDM artwork will bring out the details from the artist’s point of view and his feelings towards the work. This will help the researcher to develop ideas and dig deeper to collect the data about social commentary on “Don’t Play During Maghrib” artwork.

Table 3.4: Research Methodology based on Research Objective and Research Question

Objective of Study	Intend of Study	Collection of Data	Action/Process
Objective 2 -meet RQ 2 Phase 3	 <p>The experiences of (DPDM) artwork according to Zulkifli Yusoff expression.</p> <p>The expressions of Zulkifli Yusoff on (DPDM) artwork.</p>	 <p>Research Methodology: Formal Analysis on (DPDM) Social Interactionism</p>	 <p>Finding/ Conclusion Formal Analysis and Visual Interpretation on (DPDM) Artwork.</p>

In the third phase, since there is no prior proper study on the installation artwork of Zulkifli Yusoff, this study documents all the data collection. Then, a case study will begin to analyze the artwork. In explaining the process of analysis effectively. The researchers will use Mead’s theory of Social Interactionism as a guide in analyzing artworks.

3.5 Social Interactionism: George Herbert Mead

George Herbert Mead is a well renowned and influential 20th century American philosopher from the University of Chicago. Though most of his ideologies are not made public, his disciples including Professor Herbert Blumer published “social interactionism”, a sociology theory established by Meads through his book “Mind, Self and Society”. Social interaction is significant in communal lifestyle and it requires symbolic interaction in individuals whilst communicating with each other.¹⁴⁸ “Symbolic Interactionism” is symbolic interaction in the sociology theory through the process of social interaction. In “*Interaksi Simbolik Dalam Wacana Kelas*” by Degita Dahur Suharsono, classified

*“Interaksi Simbolik menggunakan simbol. Rahayu (2010:99) menegaskan bahwa penekanan interaksi simbolik adalah konteks simbol, sebab disini orang mencoba memahami makna atau simbol dari suatu aksi yang dilakukan dengan yang lainnya.”*¹⁴⁹

From this perspective, it can be comprehended that it takes either two or more than one individual to create a symbol and its meaning. The meaning of each symbol is utilised by everyone to communicate with each other and facilitate individual development in the social interaction.

“.....symbolic interaction theory that came after Mead, especially with the influence of Blumer (1969), emphasized that linguistic symbols are more important than nonlinguistic signs as indicators of the conditions of human experience and as a basis of social interaction. With symbolization through shared meanings there comes into being human agency and reflection and all that follows from that.”¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁸ Morris, Charles W., ed. George Herbert Mead (Mind, Self & Society). Daniel R. Huebner, Hans Joas, ed. United States Of America: The University of Chicago Press Chicago and London, 2015.

¹⁴⁹ N.T., and suwato (editor). "Teori Interaksi Simbolik Dalam Kajian Komunikasi." In Sukaharjo. LPPM Universitas Veteran Bangun Nusantara Sukoharjo.: Widyatama, 2010.

¹⁵⁰ Lee Freese, and Peter J. Burke. "Person. Identities, and Social Interaction." 11(1994): 1-24

Symbolic interaction is a continuous form of communication through language and symbol that is used by people in conversations so much so that it moulds a person's frame of mind. A person's behavior, perspective and actions is the result of the meaning and symbol used by people he frequently communicates with in his lifetime.

“Symbolic interactionism recognizes that human being must have a makeup that fits the nature of social interaction. The human being is seen as an organism that not only responds to others on the non-symbolic level but as one that makes indications to others and interprets their indications.”¹⁵¹

The except above explains that a person should have the proper means for social interaction. Symbolic interaction is cultivated and influenced by motive, emotion, actions and personality.

“We are continually following up our own address to other persons by an understanding of what we are saying, and using that understanding in the direction of our continued speech. We are finding out what we are going to say, what we are going to do, by saying and doing, and in the process, we are continually controlling the process itself.”¹⁵²

A good social interaction can be achieved when a symbol is mutually understood by all parties involved. This would not be possible if the same symbol used has other meanings which could disrupt the interaction altogether.

“..... interaction in human society is characteristically and predominantly on the symbolic level; as individuals acting individually, collectively, or as agents of some organization encounter one another they are necessarily required to take account of the actions of one another as they form their own action. They do this by a dual process of indicating to others how to act and of interpreting the indications made by others.”¹⁵³

¹⁵¹ Herbert Blumer. *The Methodological Position of Symbolic Interactionism*. Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method. London: University of California Press, 1986.

¹⁵² Morris, Charles W., ed. *George Herbert Mead (Mind, Self & Society)*. Daniel R. Huebner, Hans Joas, ed. United States Of America: The University of Chicago Press Chicago and London, 2015.

¹⁵³ Herbert Blumer. *The Methodological Position of Symbolic Interactionism*. Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method. London: University of California Press, 1986.

People's actions and point of views are strongly influenced by the social interaction around them. This sculpts their perception on the symbols used. According to Mead (Soeprato, 2002), there are three stages of symbolic interaction:

symbol----- interpretation process ----perception¹⁵⁴

The three stages in comprehending symbolic interaction are (in order) symbol, interpretation and perception. The theory utilises three concepts; 1) mind, 2) self and 3) society. The Mind gives meaning and purpose to certain objects. It is the ability of a person to observe an object as a socially significant symbol and give meaning and purpose to it. This requires a person to broaden their minds through interactions with other people. Next, the concept of self is when a person is given a perception by other people of an object or symbol mentioned.

Last but not least, society. This involves the social interaction between a person and other people in the community. The society plays a significant role in the cultivation of Mind and Self. The formation of meaning and purpose is a mutual understanding within the society through social interaction. Meaning and purpose is significant as the interaction between humans depend on whether something is meaningful or otherwise. Communication would be ineffective if something is meaningless. In simple words, it is easier for people to communicate with each other if they speak the same language as the words they use carry the same meaning.¹⁵⁵ After going through the three stages, a person can evaluate and perceive based on his experience that would decide the symbolic interaction.

The object is known as the basis in forming any kind of communication in social interaction. An object creates a certain symbol in a person's world.

“The position of symbolic interactionism is that the “worlds” that exist for human beings and for their groups are composed of

¹⁵⁴ Suharsono, Degita. " Interaksionisme Simbolik." *Interaksi simbolik dalam Wacana Kelas.* (2016).

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

“objects” and that these objects are the product of symbolic interaction.”¹⁵⁶

People living in the same area may have different environment. Two people may be neighbors but their symbolic interaction perception could be different as they experience life differently. Hence, the term “world”. Every person is their own “world”. Not all “meanings” can describe an object as “meaning” can be altered from time to time. Symbolic interaction commences with the creation of the object, confirmation of object, alteration of object and dismissal of object. A person’s life and actions are constantly changing from time to time along with the object in their “world”.

‘... some characteristic view of George Herbert Mead, expressed throughout his work and quoted here from *The Philosophy of the Act*: “In an experience within which individual and environment mutually determine each other, the unity of the environments and its constituent objects as well as that of the individual arises out of the activity of the individual” (Mead 1938:374)¹⁵⁷

The meaning of each symbol in question would differ for different people as people come from various backgrounds. People interpret the meaning of an object based on the influence of the people they interact with. Meaning to say people learn about the meaning of an object from outside stimulus.

“Out of a process of mutual indication common objects emerge – objects that have the same meaning for a given set of people and are seen in the same manner by them.”¹⁵⁸

Based on what they have learnt, the meaning of an object are mutually agreed upon and are perceived the same way by the group of people in question.

“Several noteworthy consequences follow from the foregoing discussion of objects. First, it gives us a different picture of the environment consists only of the objects that the given human beings recognize and known.”¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁶ Herbert Blumer. *The Methodological Position of Symbolic Interactionism*. Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method. London: University of California Press, 1986.

¹⁵⁷ Lee Freese, and Peter J. Burke. "Person. Identities, and Social Interaction." 11(1994): 4

¹⁵⁸ Herbert Blumer. *The Methodological Position of Symbolic Interactionism*. Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method. London: University of California Press, 1986.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid

“The nature of this environment is set by the meaning that the objects composing it have for those human beings.”¹⁶⁰

Social interaction is deemed communicated well when an object is cultivated into the perspective of a person’s “world”. Hence, the interpretation of each person differs based on their comprehension of the utilisation of a symbol. “Social Interactionism” specifically explains languages, social interaction and reflection.

“Human group life is a vast process of such defining to others what to do and of interpreting their definitions; through this process people come to fit their activities to one another and to form their own individual conduct.”¹⁶¹

Social interaction between humans defines every signal and action based on the meaning of the definition, symbolic interaction involving interpretation or determining the meaning of an action or other people’s words and definition or giving out orders. This facilitates people to adapt their own actions with others continuously at the same time guiding them how to do an action. Human interaction is a positive cultivating process that also requires some regulation. Boundaries should be established to restrict, identify or adapt intentions, hope, emotion and actions. The evaluation of appropriate norms, values and the group’s perception on the situation are cultivated by the action of others.

The creation of meaning occurs when an idea arises that lead to an interpretation and response. An idea here is defined as a person’s inner thoughts or monologue. The interpretation of symbol by a person is sculpted and modified from his ideas. According to Najeemah Mohd Yusuf (2004), in her journal “Implikasi sosiologi pemikiran George Herbert Mead”,

“George Herbert Mead merupakan tokoh falsafah dari Amerika Syarikat yang menerbitkan kertas kerja tentang proses sosial dalam komunikasi dan masyarakat yang berkaitan minda dan

¹⁶⁰ Ibid

¹⁶¹ Ibid

individu. Menurutnya, Dalam buku Mead yang bertajuk Mind, Self and Society (1934), Mead meletakkan kedudukan masyarakat manusia paling utama dalam skema pemikirannya.”¹⁶²...kumpulan manusia merupakan asas bagi kewujudan kesedaran, akal, dunia, objek dan manusia sebagai organisma yang menguasai diri, dan kelakuan manusia dalam bentuk gagasan kelakuan”.Ini bermakna sifat seseorang individu terhasil melalui kesedaran akal yang diperolehinya, dunia disekelilingnya, objek yang ditafsirnya yang membentuk perlakuannya.¹⁶³

Mead perceives human beings as a process occurring around itself. A human must act and respond to the stimulus around him. This process is called self-instruction that is when a person instructs themselves to respond a certain way. For example, a person gives his attention towards a certain stimulus and analyze its priority. To make a decision, the person has to face the situation and respond to it accordingly.

.....” as “Mead has shown so emphatically, only by virtue of possessing a “self” Nothing esoteric is meant by this expression. It means merely that a human being can be an object of his own actions.”¹⁶⁴

A person has to be aware of his necessities and the objective of a certain situation to give an effective response. Besides that, he has to be able to be attentive and able to interpret other people’s actions. Also, one has to be capable of analyzing a situation, continuous self-evaluation, thinking one step ahead and being bold in good or bad situations. Responding well to situations require excellent critical thinking. Humans are social beings, meaning to say that they are responsive to members of their organisation or group. Joint action is a combination of actions adapting to various individual actions. It is formed when there is mutual cooperation between two people or a community. Social

¹⁶² Suharsono, Degita. " Interaksionisme Simbolik." Interaksi simbolik dalam Wacana Kelas. (2016).

¹⁶³ Ibid

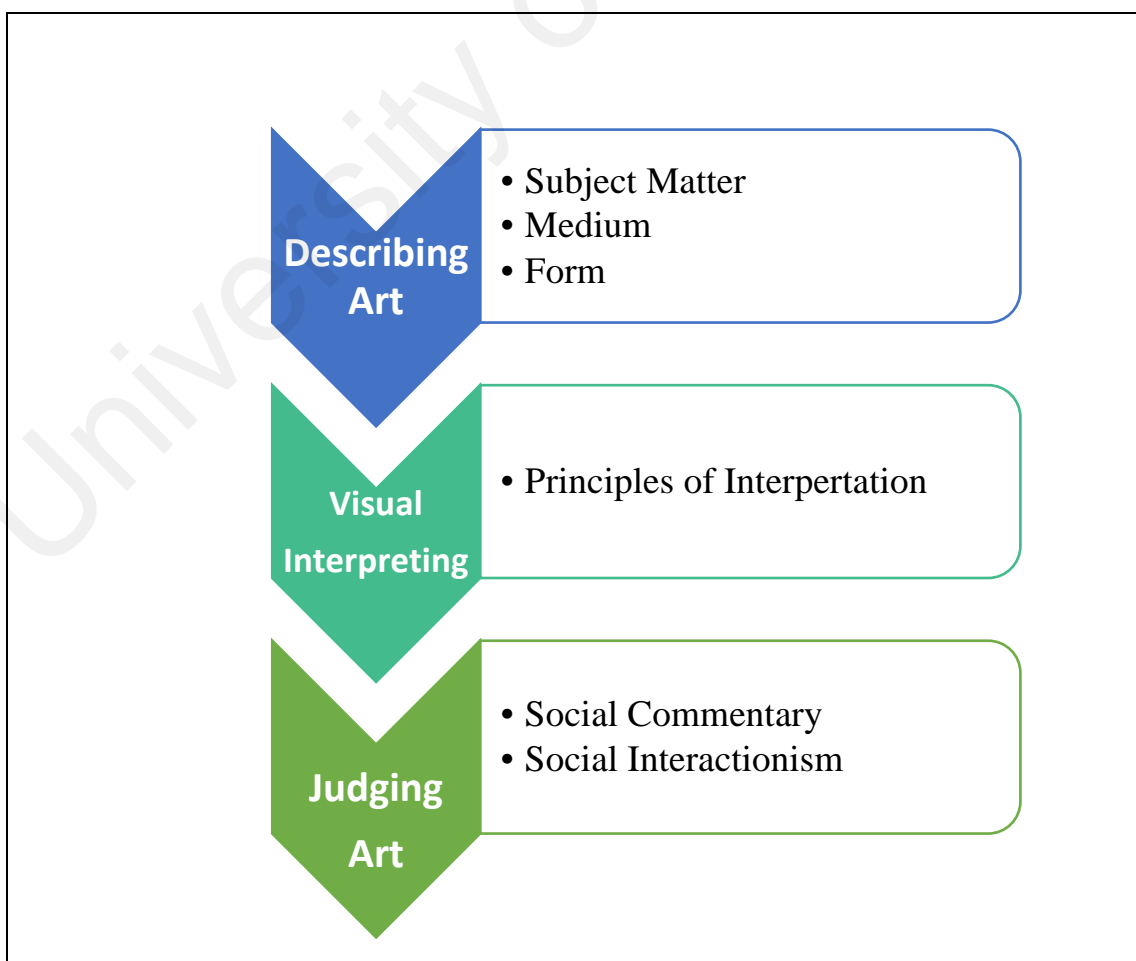
¹⁶⁴ Herbert Blumer. The Methodological Position of Symbolic Interactionism. Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method. London: University of California Press, 1986.

action is the foundation of a community. Joint action is the adaptation of all community actions.

The composition of a community is based on continuous actions. Without actions, the structure of relationship between humans would be meaningless. A society is observed and defined by their formation. The formation takes time and adaptation of actions. It depends on the events happening during a certain time of the formation. A new situation is always occurring throughout the history of mankind based on the social interaction that moulds the action of an individual and society. Human actions influences others so much so that it initiates discussions on the implementation of actions. A society is seen as an individual who went through a lot of situations based on his state.

Therefore, in this research the process of analysis based on Mead's Social Interactionism will organize the theoretical framework as shown below:

Table 3.5: Theoretical Framework



The process of formal analysis, is based on three basic categories in analyzing artwork, such as describing, interpretation and judgement. According to Terry Barret (1994), "Describing is a kind of verbal pointing a critic does so that features of a work of art will be noticed and appreciated."¹⁶⁵ It is gathering the information by listing the fact includes subject matter, medium and form. The subcategories to describe the artwork in subject matter such as persons, places, or things depicted in the work, Form such as how the work is arranged and composed, and medium such as material of the artwork is made by the artist."¹⁶⁶ There are two sources of information to describe the artwork - internal and external. "Internal sources are tending to be observe in the artwork. While external sources are knowledge not observable in the artwork, including book and internet sources. The second activity is, to visual interpret the artwork. The researcher started to figure out the issue on the artwork. Interpretation is referred to the information about the artwork. The third activity, to judge the artwork. It is the act of making a decision and providing the reasons to determine the good criteria of the work.

¹⁶⁵ Barrett, Terry. "Criticizing Art, Understanding the Contemporary (Excerpts)." (1994). http://www1.udel.edu/art/rmarquez/416/barrett_criticizing_art.pdf.

¹⁶⁶ Barrett, Terry. "Criticizing Art with Children." *Art Education: Elementary*, (1992).

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This qualitative research focuses on the *Don't Play During Maghrib* (DPDM), the dialogue Series 2 of installation artwork produced by Zulkifli Yusoff in 1996. In order to analyze the installation art of DPDM, it is essential to consider formally the exploration of this installation artwork, in terms of the art elements and principles used. The ideas and interpretations are identified, defined and demonstrated in this chapter.

As mentioned in chapter three, the approach of this study is based on social interactionism theory by Mead's. The artwork "Don't Play During Maghrib" is the collection of National Visual Art Gallery. Unfortunately, during the interview session on 5th April 2017 at 1.00 pm, the researcher could not investigate the artwork due to the protocol of the art gallery, which does not permit any artwork stored in the storeroom to be presented to the researcher. Entry into the storeroom was prohibited as it was also undergoing renovation and rearrangement under the Collection & Conservation department. However, the researcher provided close-up images of the artwork under the supervision of En Mohd Fairuz bin Ismail, the manager of Collection Management and Conservation Division, National Visual Arts Development Board.¹⁶⁷

The researcher studied the DPDM artwork according to the art elements and principles used in the work, beside interpreting the social commentary based on the personal views of Zulkifli Yusoff. In order to interpret the DPDM artwork, the researcher analyzed it based on the formal analysis and social interactionism by Mead's, was used

¹⁶⁷ En Mohd Fairuz bin Ismail, the manager of Collection management and Conservation Division, National Visual Arts Development Board.

(see chapter Three). In formal analysis journal of *Principles for Interpreting Art*, Version 47, mentioned by Barret:

Interpretation is also the most important aspect of criticism because a responsible interpretation necessarily includes description, and because a thorough interpretation of a work of art, which result in an understanding of that art, renders judgment much easier and perhaps superfluous¹⁶⁸

This theory provides criteria for assessing and interpreting artwork from a variety of sources such as, what is in the artwork; the style of the artist and his influences resulted in the artwork. The researcher believes that this framework is very suitable in understanding Zulkifli Yusoff's work 'Don't Play During Maghrib'. The first step exploring the artwork, it is a descriptive analysis, a process that provides the descriptive information about the social commentary behind the artwork through three areas of observation that includes subject matter, medium, and form. The second step is the interpretation, Finally, the third step is to examine the judgment in DPDM work.

¹⁶⁸ Terry Barrett "Principles for Interpreting Art." Vers. 47, (1994), 5

4.2 Internal Description



Figure 4.1: Don't Play During Maghrib artwork, (Photo from: Collection Management and Conservation Division, National Visual Arts Development Board, BSVN 2017)

Artist: Zulkifli Yusoff

Title: Dialogue Series 2: Don't Play During Maghrib

Date: 1996

Medium: Mixed Media Installation (acrylic on canvas, clay sculpture and metal structure)

Size: 16 x 20 x 10 meters

Collection: Balai Seni Negara, Malaysia

Price: RM 200,000 – RM 400,000

There are four important features in ‘Don’t Play During Maghrib’ which are divided in one, typography, two, sculpture, three, painting and four, metal structure. Firstly, in order to simplify the analysis process, the researcher will describe the work based on “understanding the contemporary” art theory. The study will be separated into two-parts, internal descriptive information and external descriptive information. In the internal description information, the researcher will study the three major components, such as subject matter, medium and form.

The artwork “Don’t Play During Maghrib” series of dialogue 2 was produced in 1996, which one of his interesting and famous installation artwork ever shown in Venice Biennale. The size of this work is 16 meters x 20 meters x 10 meters. This artwork is dedicated to his father. This artwork consisted of drawings and paintings, sculptures, and metal structures. In order to study the artwork, the researcher divides the work as mentioned above, in order to enable the art elements and principles clearly.

4.3 Sculpture

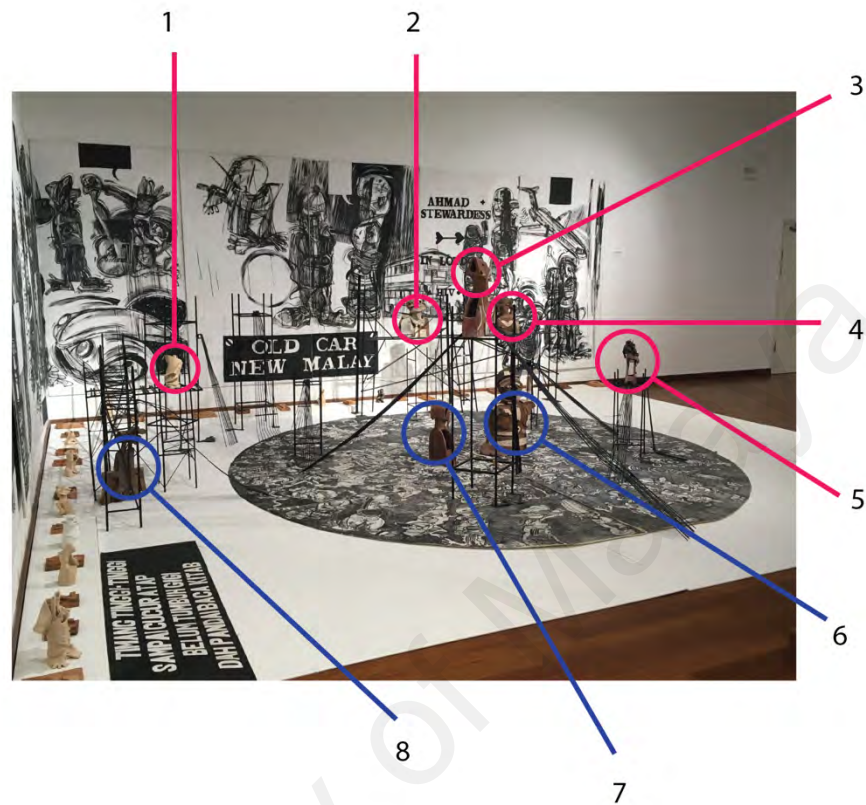


Figure 4.2: Abstract Figurative Sculptures, (Photo from: Collection Management and Conservation Division, National Visual Arts Development Board, BSVN 2017)

In figure 4.2, there are five human semi – abstract figurative sculptures in the middle floor and one towards the left side. There are also some more which are grouped with the along the base at the back and left rows of the installation. Which, consist of all together twenty-four sculptures. All these sculptures used nature tone color such as skin color of various tones like light brown, dark brown and white.

According to Zulkifli (2018), “All the sculpture use clay and terracotta clay¹⁶⁹. The process of making was made by the artist who is taught by Encik Rahim the expert in ceramic art. Only the black sculpture was spray using black pigment. The colour intensity of the sculptures look pure but dull and dim. The combination of figures and alphabets

¹⁶⁹ Zulkifli Yusoff. "Don't Play During Maghrib." By Nursyakirin Zolkiflee. Visual Art (April 2018).

are well organized on a white platform. In addition, the mental structures are to bridge and balance the overall sculptures composition.

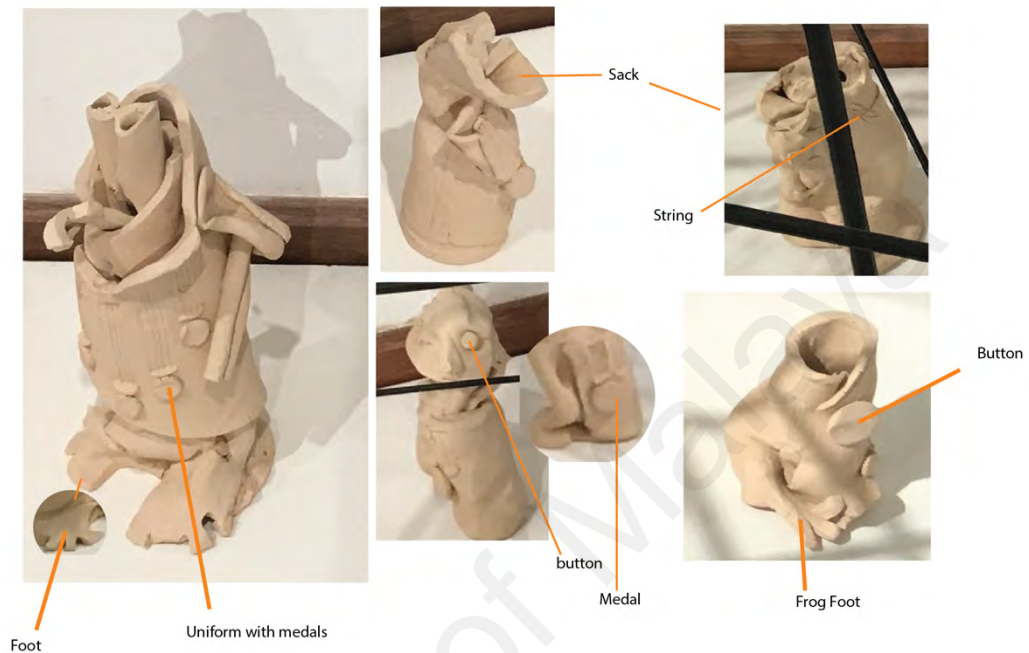


Figure 4.3: Semi-Abstract Sculptures, (Photo from: Collection Management and Conservation Division, National Visual Arts Development Board, BSVN 2017)

Figure 4.3, shows sculptures in semi- abstract form. Most of the sculptures help the researcher to describe the form, seen as unclear form which is half deliberately shown. Several sculptures portray uniform medals. Some of them are in three-finger foot like the frog foot. While some buttons are also attached on the sculptures.

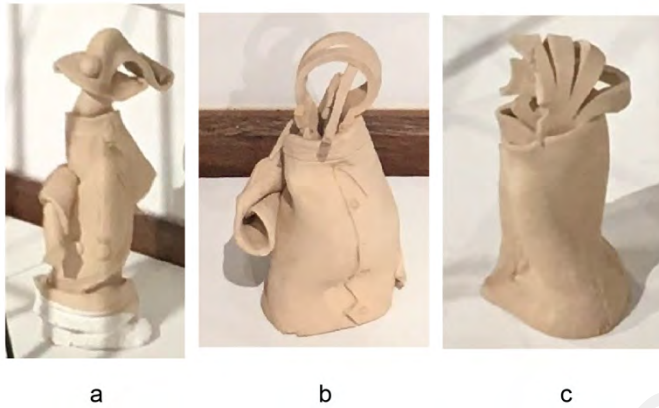


Figure 4.4: Semi-Abstract Sculptures, (Photo from: Collection Management and Conservation Division, National Visual Arts Development Board, BSVN 2017)

In figure 4.4, it shows all the three sculptures in a curvy and wavy forms. On the image 4.4 (a), the sculpture looks tall and standing on the bold base of white color, that has on its top, a long hat shape attached on it. The image 4.4 (b), shows the sculpture having a shirt without the sleeves. While on 4.4 (c), at the top of the sculpture resembles a bird with sickle feather standing on the tall base.

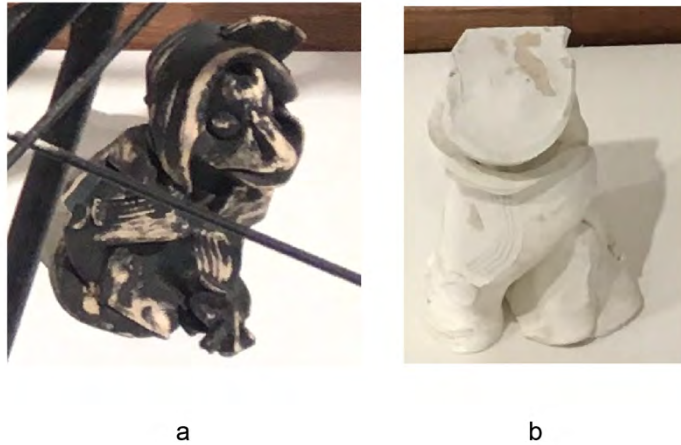


Figure 4.5: Semi-Abstract Sculptures, (Photo from: Collection Management and Conservation Division, National Visual Arts Development Board, BSVN 2017)

There are two different colors of sculptures in figure 4.5 that look as abstract forms. The sculpture on 4.5 (a), is a mixture of dark and bright colors which is contrasted between black and soft brown. The mixed color of sculpture shown a wavy texture and curvy stroke with some irregular spots. It looks creepy because on top of the sculpture it resembles an animal's face with a beak shape.



Figure 4.6: Alphabet Sculptures, (Photo from: Collection Management and Conservation Division, National Visual Arts Development Board, BSVN 2017)

Figure 4.6, show 21 alphabets sculpture, some in capital letters and some in small letters. All the alphabet sculptures are in natural color of mixed brown, light brown and dark brown with different sizes. The artist's put them on the white platform in alternate arrangement between figure sculptures and alphabet sculptures.



Figure 4.7: Abstract Human Figures Sculptures, (Photo from: Collection Management and Conservation Division, National Visual Arts Development Board, BSVN 2017)

In figure 4.7, there are seven large sculptures, which show the figures with their faces and bodies attached. These sculptures are made from terracotta clay which has the original color blend with the color tone of brown, dark brown and gray that are decorated with layer of white. The researcher realizes that each of the figure form appears to have scary faces. According to Zulkifli Yusoff (2018), behind every sculpture there is story based on social commentary.¹⁷⁰ All mould figure sculpture were presented in semi abstract human's figures.

¹⁷⁰ Zulkifli Yusoff. "Don't Play During Maghrib." By Nursyakirin Zolkiflee. Visual Art (April 2018).



a



b

Figure 4.8: Abstract Human Figures Sculptures, (Photo from: Collection Management and Conservation Division, National Visual Arts Development Board, BSVN 2017)

In figure 4.8 (a), the researcher observes that the figure sculpture is placed under the metal structure. It is the only figure sculpture that displays with arms. It has many tones of uneven dark brown color. The body of the figure is in an angular form where his head is in oval shape. On the figure 4.8 (b) image, the figure is seen like a frightening face wearing collar shirt with necktie and is clapper board with him. This sculpture is made with uneven tone of brown and white line shown on clapper board.



Figure 4.9: Abstract Human Figures Sculptures, (Photo from: Collection Management and Conservation Division, National Visual Arts Development Board, BSVN 2017)

Figure 4.9 (a), shows an incomplete brown human figure with white beard, wearing a uniform with medal, belt, white badge and hat. There is plaster on the nose, question mark symbol and the word “No” on the uniform. Figure 4.9 (b), also has an incomplete human figure with half body and face posture looking to the left. It wears a uniform with hat, accessories such as scarf on its neck. There is also a red badge, side pocket and white badge with unclear words. Figure 4.9 (c) shows a frightening creature which is well dressed. There are unclear fonts written in capital letters on the badge. There are two small buttons on the outfit and inner singlet with white bold lines collar.



Figure 4.10: Abstract Human Figures Sculptures, (Photo from: Collection Management and Conservation Division, National Visual Arts Development Board, BSVN 2017)

In figure 4.10 (a) and (b) show sculptures in different types of incomplete physical figures. The image on (a) depicts the human figure with distorted head wearing uniform with medal and belt. The figure has hand with five fingers, while the texture on the body has a parallel horizontal line. Figure 4.10 (b), has a big head with white thick lip. The singlet outline is illustrated in white thick line with one big button on the right side, where at the center of figure is attached a square badge with blurred wordings and wearing a necklace.

4.4 Typography

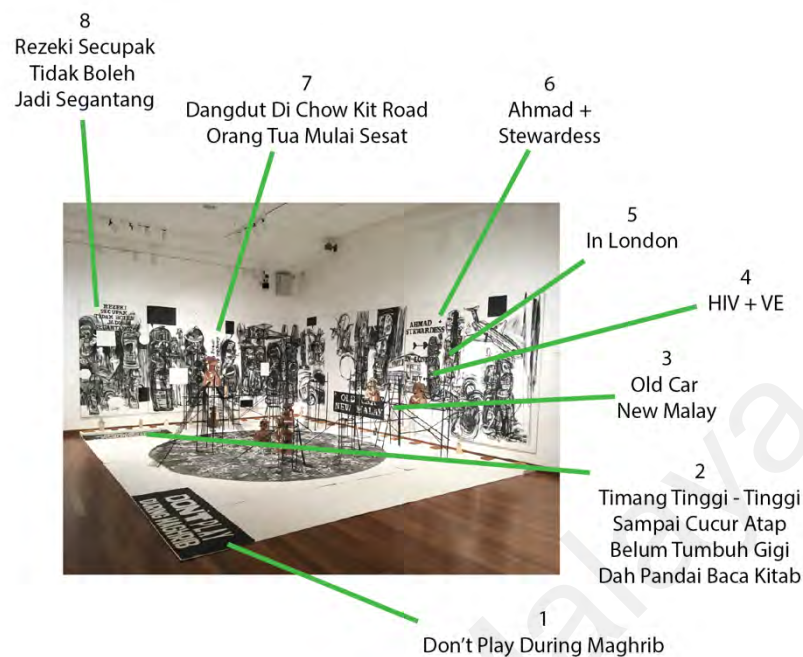


Figure 4.11: Typographies in DPDM artwork, (Photo from: Collection Management and Conservation Division, National Visual Arts Development Board, BSVN 2017)

In figures 4.11, there seven types of quotes Two quotes on the floor, four quotes at the background wall and another two quotes on the left wall. In this artwork, Zulkifli used Malay and English language to represent the quotes. These typographies were written in black and white. In the front row of this installation artwork on the right side, shows the horizontal typography written 'Don't Play During Maghrib'. While, on the left side shows the capital letters in Malay language '*Timang Tinggi -Tinggi, Sampai Cucur Atap, Belum Tumbuh Gigi, Dah Pandai Baca Kitab*'. At the background wall was shows the capital letters 'Old Car, New Malay'. There are three types of words on the illustration drawing that show in capital letters, written 'Ahmad + Stewardess', 'In London' and 'HIV + VE' which included the symbol of an arrow and heart shape. On the left wall was showed another two quotes in Malay Language. One of the Malay quote was written in small letters, '*Dangdut Di Chow Kit Road, Orang Tua Mulai Sesat*'. The last quote, '*Rezeki*

Secupak tidak boleh jadi gantang' was written in capital letters. These installations of quote typographies balance the composition.

4.5 Drawing and Painting



Figure 4.12: Drawing and Painting in DPDM artwork, (Photo from: Collection Management and Conservation Division, National Visual Arts Development Board, BSVN 2017)

In DPDM's drawing and painting, the artist used white canvas as the surface of the drawing and painting. The modeling of abstract figures is not carefully done at all. All the drawings used black and white acrylics as the medium¹⁷¹. The texture looks flat but rough in term of drawing style. In the first glance this artwork might seem a bit chaotic but looking more precisely, it is a great work representing motion, energy and movement that contains balance. The various lines would provide inspiration for his art. The characteristic of Zulkifli's brushstrokes run horizontally- on the features of the figures that sometimes seem to curve or swirl.

¹⁷¹ Zulkifli Yusoff. "Don't Play During Maghrib." By Nursyakin Zolkiflee. Visual Art (April 2018).

In figure 4.12, There is a big round painting at the center that placed the structures and sculptures. Many figures are presented in the monochrome tone. There are various art elements available on DPDM's artwork especially the element of line. There are various types of line, such hard and soft, thin and thick, short and long, curve and straight and so on. The abstract human figures that were on the floor of the circle depict the positive images, while the negative areas were made up of horizontal and vertical short lines. It is interesting but look very heavy. The researcher was amazed by Zulkifli's artistic skill, especially his attention to details and his ability to create the figurative illustration from his imagination. The line qualities of his work were very good in creating human movement that make the viewer's eyes constantly moving from one character to another. Through the floor painting, the contrast of black and white values gives the visual impact between further distance and dark space. Figure illustrations look more refined and dense.



Figure 4.13: Drawing and Painting in DPDM artwork, (Photo from: Collection Management and Conservation Division, National Visual Arts Development Board, BSVN 2017)

Generally, in figure 4.13, the artist used line as the main elements to represent objects in his painting without using many colors. Many types of lines were found in this painting such as short, straight, thick, curvy and thin. Looking at the entire sketches, the artist enjoys using freehand technique of scribble outline. Most of the broken lines affect the character movement which is almost indistinguishable but seem to appear perfectly done. The spontaneous sketches in the horizontal composition are interesting. The natural and man-made objects were found on the backdrop. There are a lot of figurative illustration of abstract humans and man-made objects such as car, bus, jet and aeroplane. The composition of various size of imperfect human figures and vehicles highlight the artist expertise in his painting. All the human figures were found in rough-hewn and amorphous shape. Some lines look interrupted and vague. It is highly interesting and unique because the great use of line in these pieces have created tones of darkness in different shades. The circular lines play great role in creating movement of treys. Some

of the controlled lines give the vibrant effect on abstract human figures. Shading effect on the abstract human figures and vehicles show the density value of the painting.



Figure 4.14: Drawing and Painting in DPDM artwork, (Photo from: Collection Management and Conservation Division, National Visual Arts Development Board, BSVN 2017)

Basically, looking at the illustration of DPDM shown in figure 4.14, all the sketches look solid, firm and strong in terms of the combination of lines. The main elements of the painting in figure 4.14 presented how the artist used different qualities of lines in his artwork. The varies thickness of lines produce the abstract human forms. There are also some straight lines on both vertical and horizontal direction. In this painting, there are also some black and white blank dialogue boxes. The artist used rectangle shape to produce the empty dialog box.

Looking at the overall drawing and painting, positive and negative spaces are reflected in this work of art. Some areas of the work seem to have different shades of gray while some others are in black and white. These variations of value and contrast in the artwork have resulted in the balance and unity of the composition. All the abstract figures seemed to represent the imperfect human figures. The painting appears to have social scenes which are happening in reality.



Figure 4.15: Drawing and Painting of man-made vehicles in DPDM artwork, (Photo from: Collection Management and Conservation Division, National Visual Arts Development Board, BSVN 2017)

In figure 4.15 above, the researcher highlights four images of man-made vehicles which are mentioned earlier such as aircraft jet, double-decker bus, aeroplane and an old car. Each of these objects are painted on the backdrop canvas which is link to the social commentary presented by Zulkifli Yusoff. The painting on the vehicle tires, jet air turbo, and aeroplane portrays the movement of objects. Double decker bus and aeroplane confronting the right direction, while the old car and jet facing the left side of the work.

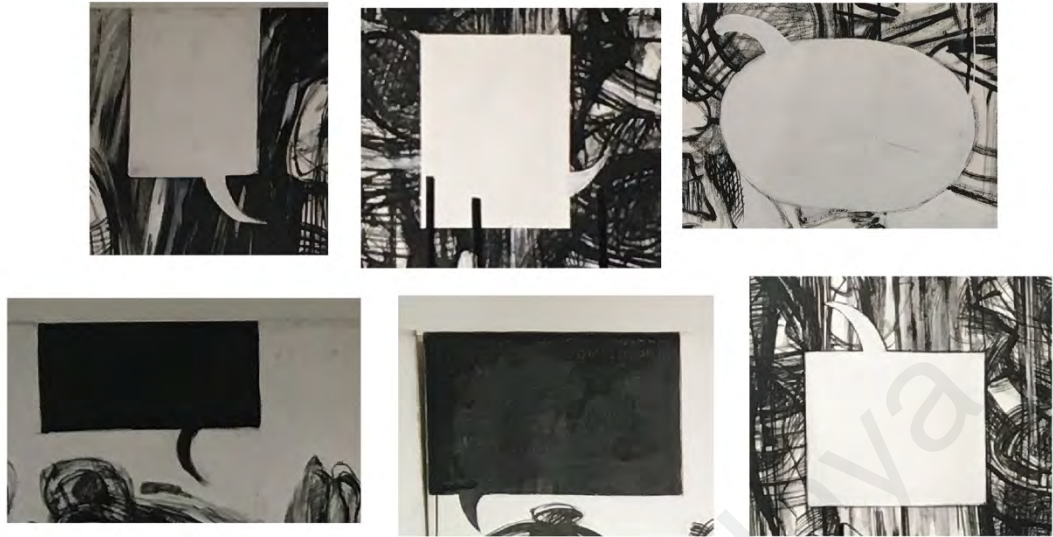


Figure 4.16: Drawing and Painting of empty dialogue boxes in DPDM artwork, (Photo from: Collection Management and Conservation Division, National Visual Arts Development Board, BSVN 2017)

Figure 4.16, is based on lots of empty dialogue boxes which overlapped on the illustrations. Each box has a square and circle shapes.

4.6 Metal Structure

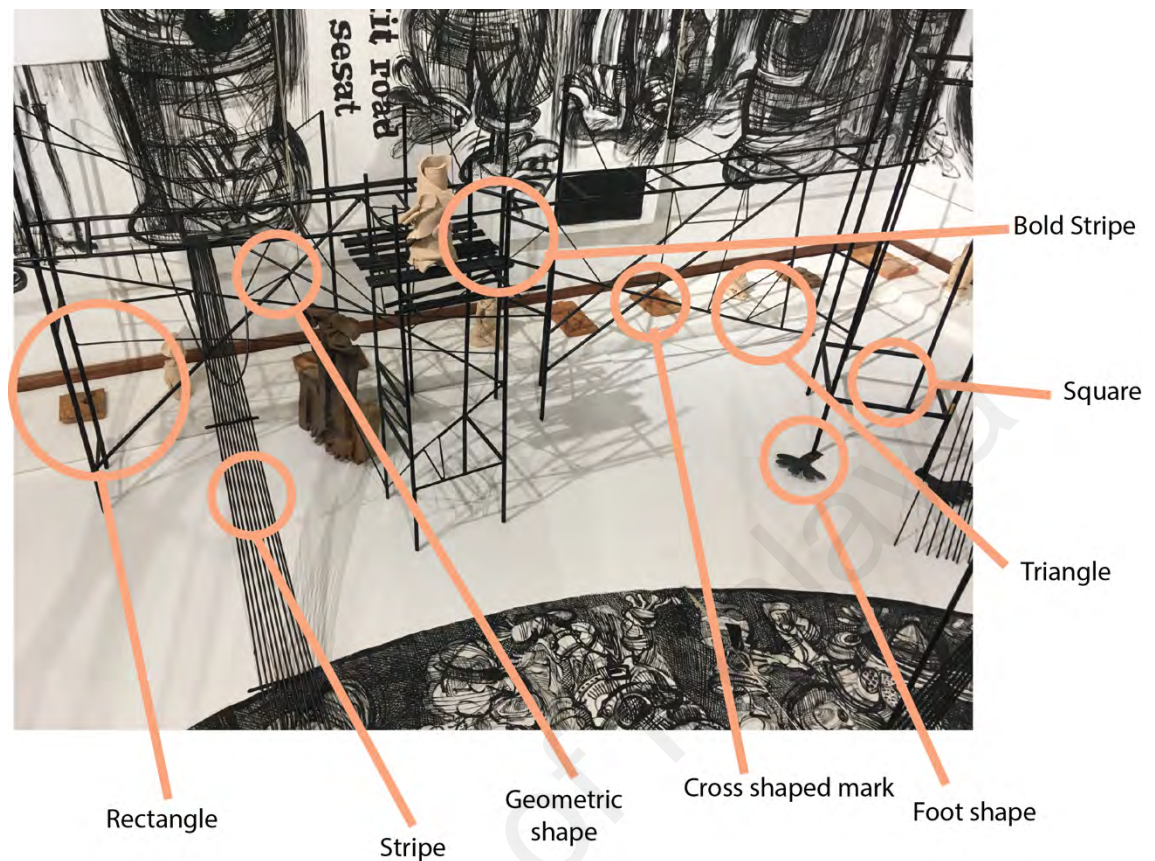


Figure 4.17: Metal Structure in DPDM artwork, (Photo from: Collection Management and Conservation Division, National Visual Arts Development Board, BSVN 2017)

All the structure metals are painted in black. Based on the metal structure, the researcher found that the artist constructed the structure by connecting various types of long cylinder metal stacks which produce the lines and forming several types of shapes which can be seen in figure 4.17. The combination of irons produces several lines. Some of them are short, long and straight. All the metal texture on the structure look flat and strong. The construction of iron cylinder combines the lines which produce geometric shapes such as square, rectangle, triangle. The structure was constructed using thin and thick line of irons creating interesting lines and cross shape marks. There are also foot shapes seen on some structures. From these organized constructions of irons, has produced a stable structure.

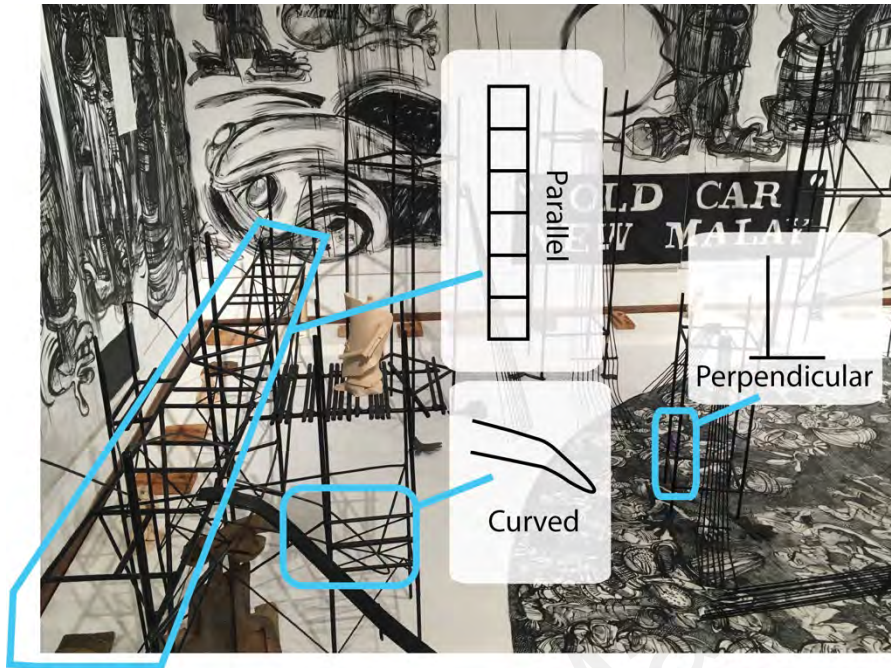


Figure 4.18: Metal Structure in DPDM artwork, (Photo from: Collection Management and Conservation Division, National Visual Arts Development Board, BSVN 2017)

There are curved and perpendicular lines in figure 4.18. Parallel lines can also be seen through the structures which are built in horizontal and vertical positions.

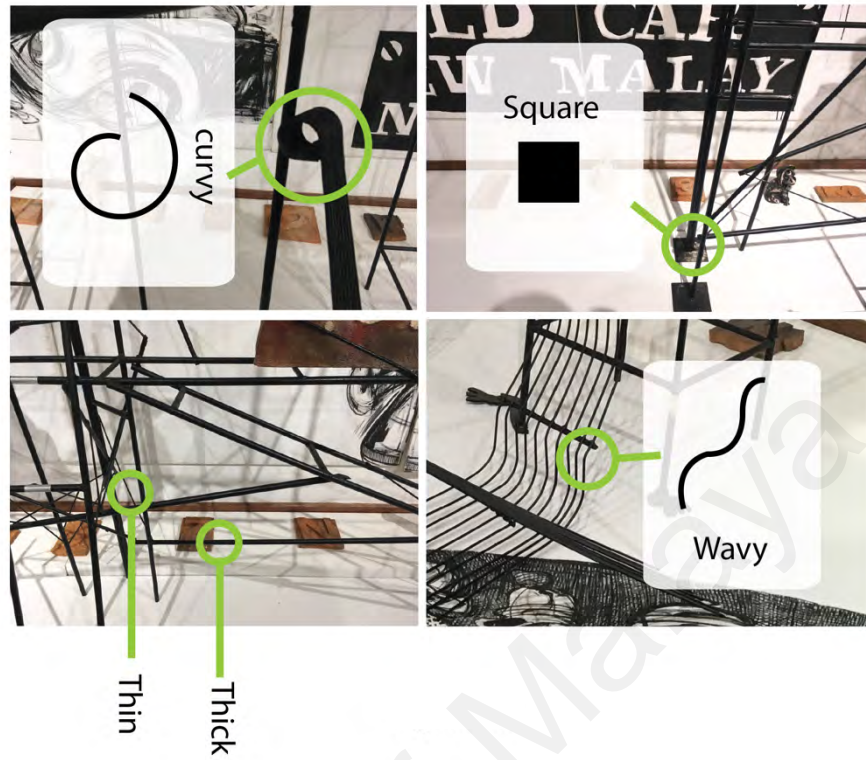


Figure 4.19: Metal Structure in DPDM artwork, (Photo from: Collection Management and Conservation Division, National Visual Arts Development Board, BSVN 2017)

Based on figure 4.19, curvy lines and wavy stripe are also seen in most of metal structures. Square shapes are also used as the structure base.

Diagonal



Figure 4.20: Metal Structure in DPDM artwork, (Photo from: Collection Management and Conservation Division, National Visual Arts Development Board, BSVN 2017)

Diagonal lines are also seen in figure 4.20, These lines help to reinforce the structure. Overall, the arrangement of each structure is intended to be used as setting arrangement for the sculpture which is placed in an unorganized condition in accordance with the balance of the whole space.



Figure 4.21: DPDM artwork, (Photo from: Collection Management and Conservation Division, National Visual Arts Development Board, BSVN 2017)

The installation work in figure 4.21 emphasizes the typography of DPDM. The size of this typography is larger than the rest of the other typographies in the artwork. It is more prominent, when the artist puts it at the forefront of the artwork. Besides that, the setting of this installation work is one of the main criteria to be considered. The researcher believes that the artist arranged the various medium based on the distribution of space. The combination of the sculpture composition from front to back division makes up the horizontal spaces. Each of the objects are interconnected to represent the visual message of social commentaries. Some of the objects displayed the same subject matter but in different medium, for example abstract human figures. Abstract human figures are not only illustrated through paintings but they are also showed on the sculptures. Similarly, the use of alphabets relief sculptures and dialogue boxes had a mutual visual relationship.

Therefore, the combination of all the painting, typography, sculpture, metal structure, alphabet and dialogue box are interconnected with each other which describe the unity in this artwork. In addition, the synchronization of contrast color such as black, white and brown shown the harmony to the artwork. From these observations, the radial of abstract human figure painting can be seen on the base of the artwork. By looking at the circle painting on the base, abstract human figures were illustrated as though it seems to show the movement.

Overall, asymmetrical balance is identified through the setting of DPDM artwork. This is because the arrangement of sculpture, structure and painting is adjusted with horizontal space. Therefore, every medium is constructed with balance features of art to give the effect of equality. Focusing on pattern style of the artwork, almost all abstract human figurative looks creepy. The mixture of the medium and the contrasting colors exposed the human figures forward.

4.7 Summary: External Information

According to Terry Barret's "external information that will enable them to better write about an artist or exhibition."¹⁷²

Zulkifli first got into the limelight in 1988 when he won the major award in the Young Contemporaries competition at the National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur¹⁷³ Daniel Chong stated that Zulkifli Yusoff, is one of the famous artists in Malaysia.

Given him fame for pioneering installation art or the quality of his expressionistic painting and sculpture, the National Art Gallery has regularly featured his work in its thematic exhibition¹⁷⁴

"Don't Play During Maghrib" the title of his artwork became the main attraction for a researcher like me. It makes the researcher curious to find out behind what is the meaning of the artwork, which is synonym to prohibit children to play during sunset.

According to Zulkifli Yusoff (2018), installation art of "dialog 1" has been destroyed. "Dialog 1" was produced for "*Persoalan Tradisi dan Kemodenan*" exhibition at National Visual Art Gallery, Malaysia on the year 2000. It was created based on sensitivity surrounding the Malaysian public towards dialogues in various issues. It is about a society being too passionate about power, and about the character of old Malay mind¹⁷⁵

The preparation of making DPDM artwork was done in Klang, Selangor, Malaysia, for the prestigious at Venice Biennale, 47th International Art Exhibition, in (1997). The second abroad exhibition was shown in Istanbul, Turkey, which featured

¹⁷² Barret, Terry. "Criticizing Art, Understanding the Contemporary (Excerpts)." (1994). http://www1.udel.edu/art/rmarquez/416/barrett_criticizing_art.pdf.

¹⁷³ The Art Gallery. "A Word from the Publisher," In *Zulkifli Yusoff - Power Dialogue*, edited by The Art Gallery, 6. Malaysia: The Art Gallery, 2000.

¹⁷⁴ Daniel Chong. "Icons: Zulkifli Yusoff." *Senikini*, 2008, 13.

¹⁷⁵ Zulkifli Yusoff. "Penyataan Karya." In *Zulkifli Yusoff - Powerful Dialogue*., edited by The Art Gallery., 74. Malaysia: The Art Gallery., 2000.

“Modernities and Memories”- Recent Works from the Islamic World, a collaboration of The Rockefeller Foundation (New York) and Bilgi University (Istanbul) ¹⁷⁶

He proved that his success was no flash in the pan by bagging the same award the next year. In 1992, he stamped his superiority as an artist to be reckoned with, when he won three awards at the 3rd Salon, taking the Grand Minister’s Prize as well as the major award and consolation prize for sculpture. The culmination of his achievement was in 1997 when he was selected to represent Malaysia at the prestigious Venice Biennale, becoming the second artist in Malaysia to be so honored; the first being Dato’ Ibrahim Hussein.¹⁷⁷

There was the momentous story throughout the journey to participate in art exhibition at Venice Biennale, Italy. He was visited by Professor A. D Pirous, who was attracted to show Zulkifli's artwork in Venice. Zulkifli Yusoff was one of the selected participants from Malaysia with other three artist from Indonesia. Venice teach him the meaning of life, and the struggle in the world of art, His artwork for the exhibition was delayed to Venice and he was so disappointed. The transportation management send his artwork to the wrong place, which is Milan before sending back it to Venice. He stayed in Venice for a month to wait for his mixed media installation work to arrive. He felt the management system of the transport company was irresponsible.

DPDM was his dedication to his parents. It’s was his philosophy and formula to create the idea for his artwork.

“The family is important. To me everything starts from the home” - Zulkifli Yusoff ¹⁷⁸

An unexpected thing had occurred during the opening ceremony, which took place during the sunset (maghrib time). During the inauguration, suddenly, the lights went off for a few seconds except DPDM's work. Although there was no explanation to what really happened, that event was unforgettable to the artist.

¹⁷⁶ Beral Madra. ““Modernities and Memories”- Recent Works from the Islamic World.” The Rockefeller Foundation (New York) / Bilgi University (Istanbul), <http://www.beralmadra.net/exhibitions/modernities-memories/>. (April 2018)

¹⁷⁷ The Art Gallery. "A Word from the Publisher," In *Zulkifli Yusoff - Power Dialogue*, edited by The Art Gallery, 6. Malaysia: The Art Gallery, 2000.

¹⁷⁸ Findlay. "Of Myth and Reality,." In *Zulkifli Yusoff - Powerful Dialogue*,. 13. Malaysia: The Art Gallery., 2000.

Suatu perkara yang agak aneh berlaku di Istanbul semasa Dialog 2 dipamerkan, tiba-tiba dewan pameran menjadi gelap kerana tenaga elektrik terputus, tetapi lampu yang menyuluh dialog 2 masih menyala. Saya masih tidak menemui jawapan tentang kejadian itu walaupun saya menggunakan akal analatikal sepenuhnya.¹⁷⁹

The price for this artwork between RM70,000 - RM100,000 in 1996. Now, the artwork price was RM300,000 – RM400,000. DPDM is in the collection of National Visual Art Gallery, Malaysia. According to En Mohd Fairuz bin Ismail, the manager of Collection Management and Conservation Division, National Visual Arts Development Board. DPDM artwork will only be exhibited based on the theme of art exhibition organized by the gallery.¹⁸⁰

4.8 Interpretation: Zulkifli Yusoff Interpretation on DPDM

Zulkifli Yusoff (2018), would love to study every theme when he visits any art exhibition. Formerly, the theme for the exhibition in Venice, Italy is related to the Islamic world inspired by the modern view towards Islamic thoughts. In this artwork, there are some social commentaries which are based on the Malay culture and society like for examples the advice from parents, the good and bad practices of Malay community that take place around the artist's life experiences.

Some of the combination of the artwork was inspired from his previous works such as "untitled 1 (1998)" and "The Power 1 (1991)". For example, it is about the Malay community that shows wrongdoings of individuals in status and power, misused of power from specific leaders like headman, police and military forces. It also concerns some

¹⁷⁹ Yusoff, Zulkifli. "Zulkifli Yusoff Sejarah Awal Hingga Kini," In *Zulkifli Yusoff - Powerful Dialogue*, 70-71. Malaysia: The Art Gallery, 2000.

¹⁸⁰ En Mohd Fairuz bin Ismail, the manager of Collection management and Conservation Division, National Visual Arts Development Board.

issues about the weaknesses in Malay community who neglected about the purpose of life in religion, race and nation. This formula is the phenomenon which seems to refer to the perfection of a country. In his DPDM art installation, the social message was about Malaysian Identity especially in Malay society.

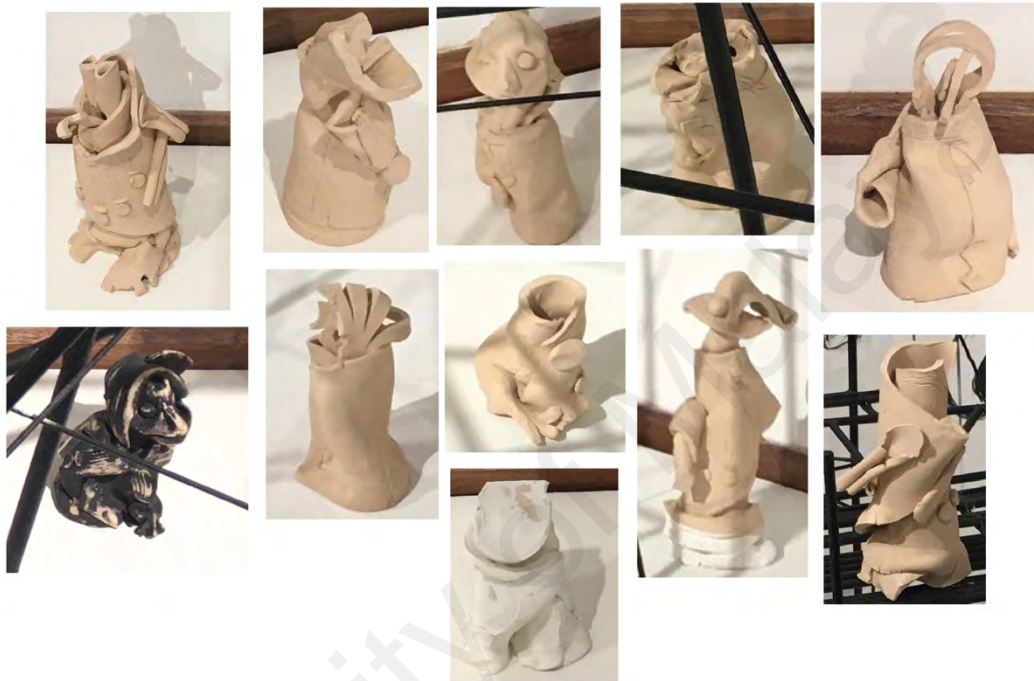


Figure 4.22: Abstract Human Figure Sculptures in DPDM artwork, (Photo from: Collection Management and Conservation Division, National Visual Arts Development Board, BSVN 2017)

All the abstract figure sculptures and drawing are created based on human characteristic. The artist customizes abstract figurative using chess pieces as the base form and develop it into human character. His lecturer, Zakaria Awang who was teaching him sculpture in UiTM, reminded him as a muslim artist, he was not permitted to depict human figures in his artwork.

From the artist point of view, the result of these abstract human figures in DPDM derived from the formation of the game of chess, the inspiration from the previous artwork such as "Tanpa Tajuk 1";

Since, as a Muslim, he is not permitted to depict human figures in his work, he chose chess pieces as a way of representing people. The arrangement of the tin chess pieces is a clear reference to the rulers, their vassals, and masses¹⁸¹

The resulting abstract human figure on DPDM work was based on the elaboration from the various characters and stories. The narrative of these forms, has opened up the researcher's mind behind the visual message of the artwork.

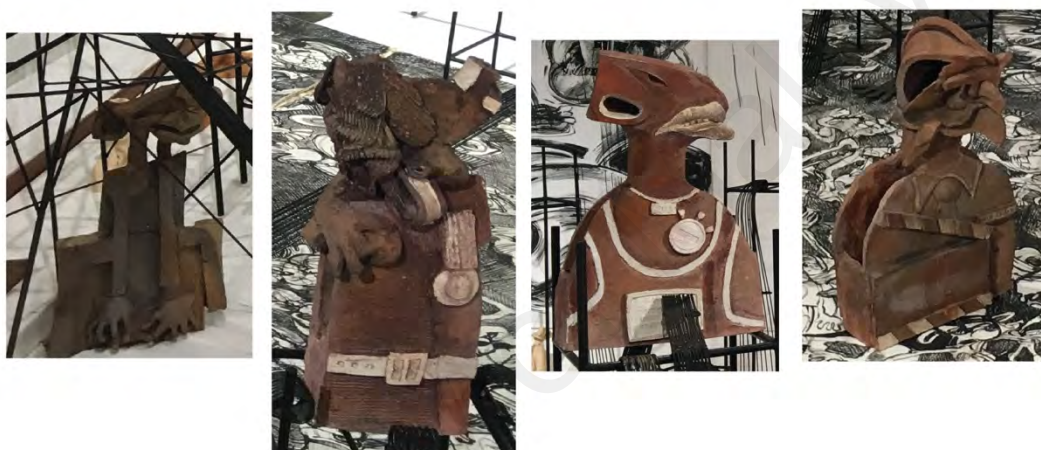


Figure 4.23: Abstract Human Figure Sculptures in DPDM artwork, (Photo from: Collection Management and Conservation Division, National Visual Arts Development Board, BSVN 2017)

Based on the sculptures figure 4.23, the artist tried to portray the various types of human nature and stories that derived from his life experiences based on his reading of the classical novels and watching Malay fairy tales. These commentaries were compiled based on Malay cultures. For example, the abstract human figures wearing uniform with medals to depict Malaysian police, military or air force characters. Social commentaries on Malay community activities such as the misuse of power, reformation era, the old

¹⁸¹ "Extracted from Southeast Asian Art Today," In *Zulkifli Yusoff - Powerful Dialogue*, edited by Joyce Van Fenema, 10. Malaysia: The Art Gallery, 2000.

minded Malays as well as his childhood memories. All things good and bad about Malays society were connected and interpreted in this work.



Figure 4.24: Human Figure Sculpture in DPDM artwork, (Photo from: Collection Management and Conservation Division, National Visual Arts Development Board, BSVN 2017)

In one of the sculptures above, figure 4.24, the artist tried to criticize the social issues among some of the politicians, officers from the police, military, air force and navy, who were always using their power for selfishness. For example, police are ordered to do things that are out of nation rules of law. According to Zulkifli Yusoff (2018), although this work was produced in 1996 before this event. This case coincidentally happened in 1998, when the national police chief punched a Former Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia in 1998. His bruised eye was symbolized as the cruelty done by the government.

It can be understood that every human has different status of life in terms of power, influences and wealth. In fact, most of the people who do not adhere to the principles of true religion, are easily trapped with deception of the devils. Therefore, the Muslims are advised to protect themselves from the temptation of the devils.

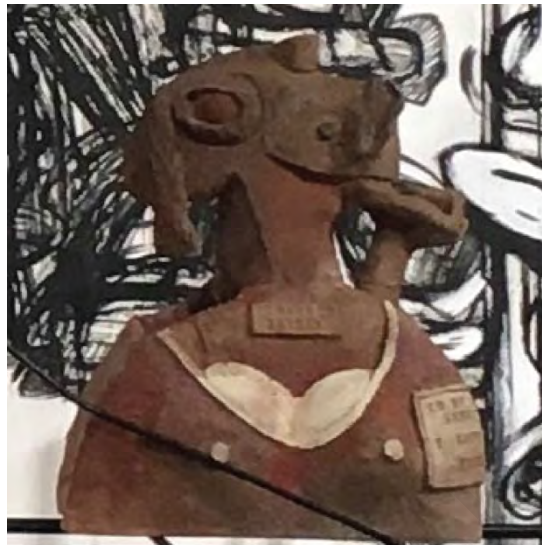


Figure 4.25: Human Figure Sculpture in DPDM artwork, (Photo from: Collection Management and Conservation Division, National Visual Arts Development Board, BSVN 2017)

Beside the social issue about the wrongdoing on power, the sculpture above is about Malay girl named Rapeah, who had a relationship with "Mat Salleh" or white man named John. She was very sexy, proud with blonde hair. She loved to show off her boyfriend to her relative and friends in her village. Being gorgeous and fluent in English is her pride. This is a typical scenario in Malay community, especially the Malays who were studying abroad. The artist tried to depict the culture shock of this Malay girl. For him, she should be showing off her Malay characteristic such as being modest, soft spoken, humble, and polite. It doesn't mean because they are from different cultures, she has to practice western upbringing.



Figure 4.26: Human Figure Sculpture in DPDM artwork, (Photo from: Collection Management and Conservation Division, National Visual Arts Development Board, BSVN 2017)

The story in the figure 4.26, was about an evil character named “Datuk Maringgih”, who was greedy and selfish. The story was inspired from the classic Indonesian novel entitled “Siti Nurbaya”. The Father of Siti Nurbaya was against her marriage to her beloved man named Syamsul Bahri. It was a way for Siti Nurbaya’s father to escape the debt from Datuk Maringgih. That was why she was forced to marry the cruel Datuk Maringgih. Datuk Maringgih was an old rich man who had many wives. He was so jealous with Siti Nurbaya’s beloved boyfriend until he defamed Syamsul Bahri with bad rumours. Syamsul bahri’s father disowned his son from the county. In the end, Datuk Maringgih murder Siti Nurbaya with poison.

The cruelty proves that someone who owned wealth, his soul was premeditated into evil spirit, to harm the others livelihood. Due to the greedy attitude, jealousy and always wanted to be looked up this would always result in destroying the family, friends and society.



Figure 4.27: Alphabet Sculptures in DPDM artwork, (Photo from: Collection Management and Conservation Division, National Visual Arts Development Board, BSVN 2017)

Figure 4.27, shows the alphabet sculptures typography, which were arranged on the long-box platform. The artist, tried to depict these alphabets as “dialogue”. The artwork DPDM is a dialogue series two, which is meant to communicate something by using words. Words come from alphabet, became spoken words. Everything started from the alphabet which create the dialogue to communicate the issues, topics, questions, explanation in explaining the message.

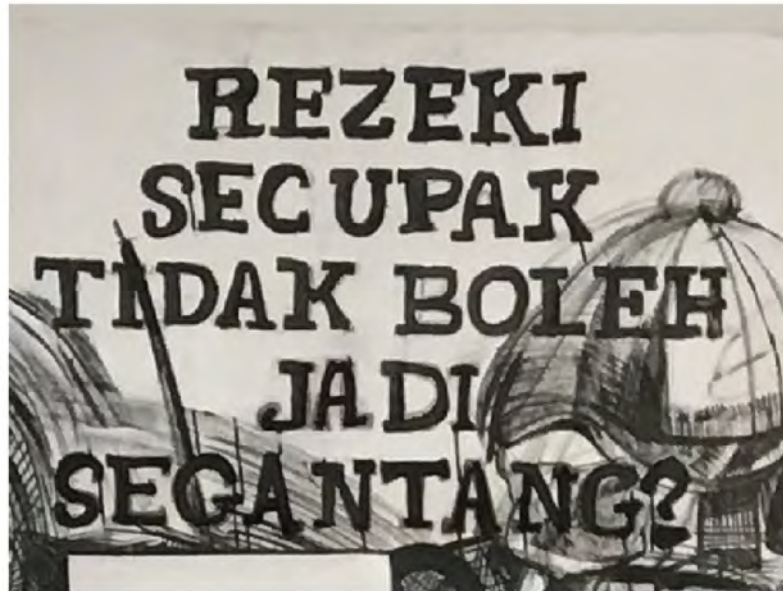


Figure 4.28: Typography "Rezeki secupak tidak boleh jadi segantang?" in DPDM artwork, (Photo from: Collection Management and Conservation Division, National Visual Arts Development Board, BSVN 2017)

According to Zulkifli Yusoff (2018) in figure 4.28, the Malay proverb "Rezeki secupak tidak boleh jadi segantang?" is related to fate. It means to accept a fate and there is no reason why we should change our destiny that had been determined in our life.¹⁸² This Malay proverb was given by Zulkifli's Mother taken from Hamka's book. Hamka is well-known Indonesian author in the 1940s. Based on this Malay Proverb, her approach is based on the concept of "Tawakal" which mean to trust the causes and effect and the rest up to trust Allah (Lord). To Hamka, people should make an effort to get something for what they want.

¹⁸² Mohamad Azmi Nias Ahmad, Mohd Aripin Amat, Azizi Hashim, and Ahmad Mazlan Ahmad Shamshudin. "Perbandingan Antara Peribahasa Melayu Dan Peribahasa Cina Mengikut Pengalaman Bangsa Di Tanah Melayu.", 96. Malaysia: ResearchGate, 2015.



Figure 4.29: Typography "OLD CAR NEW MALAY" in DPDM artwork, (Photo from: Collection Management and Conservation Division, National Visual Arts Development Board, BSVN 2017)

"OLD CAR NEW MALAY" refers to modern Malay thinking even though the Malays drive in old cars.

"Zulkifli Yusoff is proud that he belongs to the new elite Malays who are self-reliant, industrious with a strong vision for the future. In his work "My Name is Ahmad," 1996, he advocates the concept of being a New Malay who overcomes issues of corruption, vice, jealousy and materialism.

"Melayu Baru" (New Malay) was defined by Prime Minister as one who is learned, courageous in facing challenges and whose faith in Islam is unflinching. "Melayu Baru are also trustworthy, sincere, broadminded, tolerant and would not easily brand other Muslims as being unIslamic. The Melayu Baru are not alcoholics, gamblers, womanisers and do not reject Islam and Malay customs like what is being portrayed by those who wish to see the Malays backward and unable to deal with modern day challenges". (New Sunday Times, April 30, 2000). Incidentally, he said the above when opening a symposium on "Malay Identity in the 21st Century" organized by university Pendidikan Sultan Idris, Tanjung Malim, where Zulkifli is head of the Fine Art Department.¹⁸³

¹⁸³ The Art Gallery. "A Word from the Publisher." In Zulkifli Yusoff : Powerful Dialogue,, 7. Malaysia: The Art Gallery, 2000.

Zulkifli's believes that, the New Malays are not just depending on material things, but also the new way of thinking. For Zulkifli, "Ahmad" should be a positive person, open- minded, kind, intelligent, helpful, thoughtful and respectful eventhough he drove an old Volkswagen.



Figure 4.30: Typography "Don't Play During Maghrib" in DPDM artwork, (Photo from: Collection Management and Conservation Division, National Visual Arts Development Board, BSVN 2017)

"Don't Play During Maghrib" is an order that becomes a practice for every Muslim parent who forbids their children playing outside during sunset. It is one of the Muslims practices to educate their children to be disciplined and particular with maghrib time zone. Maghrib is the time for the family to pray together, had dinner and discuss about the daily routine at school and work as well as family program. As discussed in chapter two, this is the right time to avoid their children playing outside the house and prevent any bad thing happening to their children. Don't Play During Maghrib is the title given to this work. Originally, the artist wanted to name this work "dialogue" but this typography was more prominent and attractive. "Don't Play During Maghrib", has an important message for Malay society. It is an order that should be taken seriously as Muslims to understand the prohibition of the Prophet Muhammad.



Figure 4.31: Typography “dangdut di chow kit road, orang tua mulai sesat” in DPDM artwork, (Photo from: Collection Management and Conservation Division, National Visual Arts Development Board, BSVN 2017)

In figure 4.31, this quote is about one of unhealthy social activity that happened every night. Zulkifli criticized that there were a lot of nightclubs in the urban city, as compared to the Malay society living in the village, who were more sensitive about Maghrib. In the city, area, most of people entertain themselves with friends rather than spending time with family after worked. During night time a man should be spending time with his family and give attention to his wife and childrens. Muslims believe most of the unhealthy activities often occur after Maghrib, for example, entertainment at night, gambling and racing. Mostly the young society often enjoy their nightlife with friends and easily fall prey to drug addiction. These are the reason why activities after Maghrib were not encouraged. From this very reason, generations nowadays become rebellious and uncontrolled.



Figure 4.32: Typography “Timang Tinggi -Tinggi Sampai Cucur Atap, Belum Tumbuh Gigi Dah Pandai Baca Kitab” in DPDM artwork, (Photo from: Collection Management and Conservation Division, National Visual Arts Development Board, BSVN 2017)

“Timang Tinggi -Tinggi Sampai Cucur Atap, Belum Tumbuh Gigi Dah Pandai Baca Kitab”, it is about parents wishing their children to become knowledgeable and wise in reading the Quran. It is every parents desire that their children become religious, successful in education and career.



Figure 4.33: Human figures painting and drawing in DPDM artwork, (Photo from: Collection Management and Conservation Division, National Visual Arts Development Board, BSVN 2017)

The process of making this artwork takes about a few months to complete. All the characteristic of the human figures are focused on the social critique in Malaysia, especially the Malay community. This expressive painting derives from the artist's life experiences, novel and references from Indonesian, which was based on Malay social environments.

The researcher is agreeable with the opinion of Lee Joo For, about Zulkifli Yusoff as an artist. Below is the quotation of his writing:

Zulkifli's art is of such unique and dynamic proportion, that I dare to declare that very soon he will be a gigantic figure looming large on the Malaysian art scene and will constitute a credible successor to established prominent artists such as Syed Ahmad Jamal, Ibrahim Hussein and Latiff Mohidin. He has the powerful thrust of brushstrokes reminiscent of the great works of the American international artist William de Kooning, he has the wild and untrammled creativity one associates with Picasso and most of all, he does not care to produce attractive harmonious paintings which are becoming very much a fashion among art leaders in the art field and market." (For 2000, 5)



Figure 4.34: “Ahmad + Stewardess” in DPDM artwork, (Photo from: Collection Management and Conservation Division, National Visual Arts Development Board, BSVN 2017)

The other part on the right of the installation stated about Ahmad + Stewardess. Ahmad is a common Malay male name, which means praise-worthy. This work, represents Ahmad as a student who continues his study overseas. But unfortunately, Ahmad did not complete his study in the University in London. He had a cultural shock, instead he enjoyed his life with his girlfriends during his stay in London. He had a relationship with a stewardess. When he came back to Malaysia he contacted with positive HIV+Ve.

Beside this, Zulkifli also painted the vehicles images of a double-decker and an aeroplane to show the public transport that Ahmad and his girlfriend (stewardess) used in London. The symbol of love is a sign where Ahmad found his love in London. For

Zulkifli, a Muslim must obey the Islamic teaching to protect themselves from being destroyed by the uncontrolled lust.

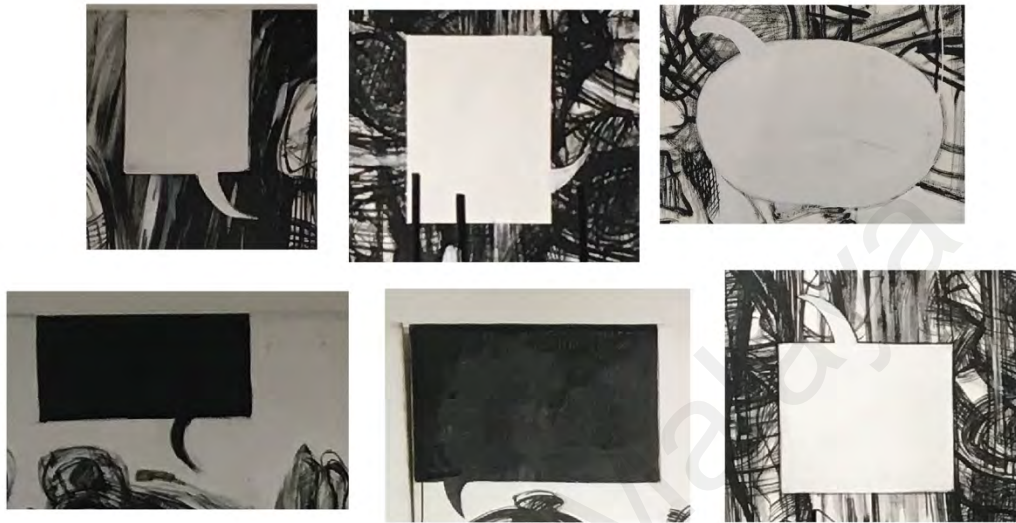


Figure 4.35: Dialogue boxes painting in DPDM artwork, (Photo from: Collection Management and Conservation Division, National Visual Arts Development Board, BSVN 2017)

The dialogues boxes were replaced with the statements of the messages the artist tried to portray. The researcher discovered that the alphabet sculptures and dialogue boxes painting were interrelated. There was a great contrast between the elements used in the artwork.



Figure 4.36: Dialogue boxes painting in DPDM artwork, (Photo from: Collection Management and Conservation Division, National Visual Arts Development Board, BSVN 2017)

The circle painting of abstract human figures was composed to balance the art elements and principles. Every human figure in this painting is about the Malaysian society in different characters, style, religions as well as culture. This expressive workmanship was praised by Ibrahim Hussein where the struggle and expression of the human figures looked special in terms of the use of lines and contrast of light and dark part.



Figure 4.37: The metal structure in DPDM artwork, (Photo from: Collection Management and Conservation Division, National Visual Arts Development Board, BSVN 2017)

The metal structure was inspired from the previous work “Tanpa Tajuk 1” (1988), as a symbol of a bridge. The metal structure was used to balance the composition of sculptures and painting. The unity of the work was shown by the combination of sculpture and painting, which combined the abstract human figures, dialogue boxes as well as typography that matched with each other.

4.9 Summary of interpretation

In terms of drawing and painting, this artwork pokes the researcher to think differently about something outside of the box. There are a lot of messages available in the installation of DPDM. His life experiences, knowledge and childhood memories contributed a lot to his social commentary. The using of black and white was inspired from the previous work “The Power 1”. For the researcher, the description of “Hitam Putih Kehidupan”, means the depiction of souls and memories about good and bad things found in Malaysian society. Although Zulkifli often used unbalanced pigments that changed lines stroke in the painting. Zulkifli’s techniques can be describes as expressionistic because the brushstrokes are applied in a loose expressive way. The clashing of the elements of lines are often used on the abstract human figures to represent social commentary. For the researcher, Zulkifli’s work displayed a good understanding of social commentary.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

5.1 Discussion

Visual images from cavemen drawings to contemporary artworks have contributed to human evolution in various perspectives by reserving and documenting the history of mankind. Different people experience their surrounding in different ways depending on their social interactions and how they adapt to changes around them. Similarly artist based on their personal experience and the social interaction they have been through may have the same interest but their thoughts, perspectives and expertise are most likely different from each other. An artist produces an artistic work based on their thought process. He would cater to issues that concerns himself or misinterpret know knowledge or maybe made a wrong judgement on the issue or even made a mistake whilst acting on an issue. It may also be a misjudgment in acting on an issue from the things that he considered. The things that he takes into consideration is all on himself. Things such as desire, emotion, mission, actions of others, expectations of others, rule of his social circle, his condition, self-concept, memories and predictions of his actions.

That said, researchers should always learn about the artist, his actions, his social interaction, materials and his collective actions. To fulfil the requirement of the study, the researcher has focused on the Zulkifli Yusoff's interpretation of social criticism in DPDM. Hence, the theory of social interactionism involving the mind, self and society by George Mead is suitable in understanding visual interpretation from the perspective of the artist. Visual interpretation analyses the society based on a subjective purpose created by Zulkifli from his interpretation from the foundation of his actions and social actions. A person would act objectively but instead act based on what he believes in. To further

support this statement, his views are his interpretation in a specific context. With this method, a researcher can observe how and artist interprets and act at his own will in the society.

It is important to know an artist's background as it identifies the factors of which influences his perception in creating a DPDM artwork. His perception in producing an artwork is almost like recording the past for the next generation to observe, so they could learn from the mistakes of people in the past. This type of artwork could educate and mould a progressive generation that is conscious of their traditions, and break bad habits of the past generation to nurture a more cultured generation.

From the findings, the researcher opines that the way Zulkifli is observant towards societal issue around him has encourages him to voice out his opinion on it. Zulkifli portrays social criticism after observing various social issue around him. Zulkifli's artwork embodies the image of his community be it social problems, thoughts and values. He also expresses his emotions towards social activities and communal culture in his art. Zulkifli Yusoff specifically uses metaphoric symbols in creating DPDM artwork. He portrays issues and events that revolves around his personal life. In this particular artwork, he visually depicts his character and opinions on his life experiences and social activities happening around him. His ideas are inspired mostly by Malay novel and proverbs that he learnt in school, newspapers, current issues, experiences and so on.

The researcher sees that Zulkifli's journey as an artist is influenced by his surrounding that comprises of a majority Malay society that emphasises on religious piousness and traditional Eastern culture that is known to focus on courtesy, morality and mannerism. The society at the time was very superstitious. The social and political situation also holds a strong influence in Zulkifli's artwork. His perception on the Malay's inadaptability to change, their vengefulness, their greed and other Malay traits are also expressed in his artwork. His social interaction originated from a village of Malay and

Muslim majority. His knowledge and perception on what is good and what is bad is based on Islamic belief and the Malay culture. The way he perceives and accepts the symbolic interaction is influenced by what his parents taught him since he was little and also his social interaction in school and university.

It can be concluded that knowledge and social interaction moulds his thoughts and evaluation of the society around him. Children are told tales to restrict them from playing outside during Maghrib. In social interaction, we start learning about life as early as childhood. Speaking of Zulkifli, his comprehension and upbringing is the most influential factor in the emphasis on the restriction of playing outside during Maghrib. However, the meaning of the object evolves through time. For example, people nowadays are not aware of the Maghrib restrictions so the symbolic interactions about the DPDM is often overlooked. People and the way they think evolve through time. The Maghrib restriction is not implemented widely as it was before. Only people who lived in the same era as the artist would understand how significant the restriction was.

Zulkifli depicts a symbol based on his actions and doings. He is an abstract artist so the humanistic values in his artwork are portrayed symbolically. DPDM comprises of other abstract figures and drawings, drawings such as buses, planes and car, Malay proverbs written on a plane white canvas symbolising daily lives in the community around him.

Based on the researcher's interpretation on DPDM, the creation and the comprehension of social meaning is an ongoing process. The visual created by Zulkifli portrays emotions, thoughts and meaning. The audience would understand the artwork in their own way depending on their knowledge of the symbol portrayed in the artwork. The symbol might be misinterpreted.

Zulkifli's view is capable of influencing the next generation with the previous generation's social interaction. Expressionism through painting and drawings with the colour black and white increases its historical value. DPDM shows that Zulkifli is committed in creating artworks focusing on societal issues. He is observant and conscious of the past and expresses memories and emotions in his artwork. He has bold and honest opinions on issues and is ready to face criticism from viewers of his artwork. DPDM challenges people to understand the symbolic interaction Zulkifli is portraying. To understand how he does social criticism, one has to witness the process of how the artwork is formed. The researcher states that to evaluate the artistic details of an artwork, one has to have prior knowledge of the artist's life experiences and his artistic knowledge. DPDM is a way for the artist to spread his thoughts on the relevant issues to the society from a different perspective that could broaden their mind and create a different point of departure for the audience.

In conclusion, every single one of us comes from different cultural background, lifestyle and social interaction. This influences the way we view DPDM. The things happening revolving the artist moulded his actions to respond to certain issues or situations. An artist's mishaps can only be evaluated and felt by the artist himself and he would respond a certain way to it whilst others might respond differently. The process of self-interaction puts an artist in a certain situation in his world. This requires him to face the situation to go through certain process. The researcher opines that the challenge of artist in creating an artwork is whether or not it could impact its viewer as comprehending an art is dependent on the viewer's level of knowledge in art. The researcher's findings offer fresh views in evaluating DPDM.

In a nutshell, DPDM showed the misdemeanors that has an impact on the social problems. In Zulkifli's view, in order for artists to produce installation art, the artwork

must be based on their views, emotion, visual experience that have the basic knowledge of art.

Zulkifli has expressed all his life experiences into his artwork and it could be regarded as a beautiful diary. This is an important message from his artwork to be delivered to our next generation. To express something that does not necessarily need to be portrayed into a poem, writing or painting. Today with the growth of technological and the digital progress, everyone can express his or her feeling and opinion through their talent, which is not limited to only one medium.

For Zulkifli (2018), social commentary work such as DPDM can inspired the next generation to develop their technique and style of artwork. The installation artwork, not just visualize through paintings and sculptures, but can also be combined from the digital media and new technologies, such as video, new medium and so on that allowed the viewers to experience the new things.

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