

**THE DEVELOPMENT OF 'MAKING
GEORGETOWN' WALL SCULPTURE AND ITS
ROLE IN THE AESTHETIC GENTRIFICATION
OF GEORGETOWN**

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**CULTURAL CENTER
UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA
KUALA LUMPUR**

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AESTHETIC GENTRIFICATION OF GEORGETOWN**

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**DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT
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**THE DEVELOPMENT OF ‘MAKING GEORGETOWN’
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate the development of *Making Georgetown* wall sculpture and the role of its aesthetic gentrification in Georgetown, Penang, Malaysia. The data of this study is collected through interviews with international tourists, local residents and artists in Georgetown. Meanwhile the mainstream Malaysian newspapers, such as Nanyang, Guanghua and Sinchew, provided much reliable information about the timeline of the project. This research examines the three waves of aesthetic gentrification in Georgetown by adopting the concept of aesthetic gentrification from Chang's (2016) research for Little India in Singapore, since Georgetown shares many similarities with Little India in terms of multi-cultural, multi-racial and heritage features. This research also examines the emotional connection between residents and sculptures adapt from concept of peacemaking, and investigate the sense of belongings and historical memories of residents. The findings show that after the nomination of Georgetown as World Heritage Site by UNESCO, aesthetic gentrification was initiated in Georgetown. From 2008 to 2017, the wall sculpture can be seen being produced in three stages, which are the planning phase, the preparatory phase and the installment phase. The wall sculptures are designed under government sponsorship for the preservation of Georgetown's heritage and to boost the tourism industry. Today, there are 52 extant wall sculptures on the street. The findings also reveal the actual processes that took place during the three waves of aesthetics gentrification in the development of wall sculptures, featured the Georgetown style art gentrification. Policy-driven sponsorship changed the artistic atmosphere from traditional trade-oriented to art tourism-oriented. It attracted many artists to resettle in the heritage zone. The previous residents who relied on the low cost of rents and

livelihood started to be replaced by a new upper-middle class. This resulted in conflicts among their these new neighborhoods, as some of the previous residents and the new immigrants intensely debate on the identities of art. During the last stage of art gentrification, the competition for space occurred in the heritage zone, since residents' living space become extremely limited by the artworks occupying the street space and the foreign capital purchasing the old buildings.

Keywords: Wall sculpture; Aesthetic Gentrification; Placemaking; Heritage; Georgetown

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PERKEMBANGAN ARCA DINDING ‘MAKING GEORGETOWN’ DAN PERANANNYA DALAM ESTETIK GENTRIFIKASI GEORGETOWN

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji perkembangan pembuatan arca dinding di Georgetown dan peranan estetik gentrifikasi di Georgetown, Pulau Pinang, Malaysia. Data kajian ini dikumpulkan melalui temu bual dengan pelancong antarabangsa, penduduk tempatan dan artis di Georgetown. Akhbar-akhbar utama di Malaysia seperti Nanyang, Guanghua dan Sinchew memberikan maklumat yang tepat untuk rakaman masa. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji tiga gelombang gentrifikasi estetik di Georgetown dengan menggunakan konsep gentrifikasi estetik dari penyelidikan Chang (2016) untuk Little India di Singapura, memandangkan Georgetown mempunyai banyak persamaan dengan Little India dari segi kepelbagaian budaya dan kaum serta ciri-ciri warisan. Penyelidikan ini juga meneliti hubungan emosi antara penduduk dan seni arca daripada konsep penampakan, dan menyiasat rasa kepunyaan dan kenangan sejarah penduduk. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa gentrifikasi estetik di Georgetown bermula selepas dicalonkan sebagai tapak warisan dunia oleh UNESCO. Dari tahun 2008 hingga 2017, arca dinding telah dihasilkan dalam tiga peringkat, iaitu fasa perancangan, fasa persiapan dan fasa ansuran. Melalui sumbangan kerajaan, arca dinding dibuat demi memelihara warisan agar terus tersebar serta demi menjaga industri pelancongan di Georgetown. Hari ini, terdapat 52 karya seni yang ada di Georgetown. Penemuan ini juga mendedahkan proses sebenar yang berlaku semasa tiga gelombang estetik gentrifikasi dalam pembuatan arca dinding, ciri-ciri gentrifikasi seni gaya Georgetown. Penajaan yang didorong dasar dalam penghasilan seni telah mengubah suasana artistik dari ciri perdagangan tradisional kepada suasana yang dipacu oleh pelancongan seni. Ia telah menarik artis untuk berpindah ke zon warisan. Sebelum ini, penduduk hidup dalam persekitaran yang miskin dan hanya membayar kos sewa yang

rendah, namun ia telah digantikan dengan kelas pertengahan baru. Ini telah menyebabkan berlakunya konflik di kawasan kejiranan yang baru ini, di mana sebahagian daripada penduduk terdahulu dan pendatang baru telah berdebat mengenai identiti seni. Semasa peringkat akhir gentrifikasi seni, telah berlaku persaingan untuk mendapatkan ruang dan persaingan ini berlaku di zon warisan; pemodal asing membeli bangunan-bangunan lama yang dipenuhi dengan karya-karya seni menyebabkan ruang untuk penduduk sangat terhad.

Kata kunci: Arca Dinding; Gentrifikasi Estetik; Penampakan; Warisan; Georgetown

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

UNESCO	:	The United Nations Educational, Scientific And Cultural Organization
UM	:	University of Malaya
USM	:	Universiti Sains Malaysia
GTWHI	:	Georgetown World Heritage Incorporated
GTF	:	Georgetown Festival Committee

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This dissertation examines the development of *Making Georgetown* wall sculptures and its impact on the aesthetic gentrification in Georgetown, Penang - the heritage zone. Wall sculpture in Malaysia is part of a youth urban art movement and it is strongly related with environment art and street art. It can be considered as a development that has evolved as a hybrid form of graffiti (Masemann 2010,8). In this sense, the wall sculptures are also considered as public art (Riggle 2010). Therefore, it plays an important role for placemaking in the urban environment of Georgetown.

Aesthetics gentrification has occurred in Singapore, Los Angeles and many other countries. Georgetown Malaysia shares some similarities with those cities as they have a combination of factors such as strong cultural identities, art movement, heritage background and old urban environment. The evidences of gentrification has been documented in government report and Malaysia newspapers. The concept of placemaking can help the writer to understand the role of wall sculptures in the aesthetic gentrification of Georgetown, because its strength to change the urban landscape and revive the memories of community. It can also enhance cultural identities and old urban art (Lin and Hsing 2009). Placemaking creates an emotional connection between residents and place. In the process of emotional connections, a sense of belonging of residents attract new immigrants.

Therefore, this dissertation focuses on the wall sculptures in Georgetown heritage area. This dissertation first documents those wall sculpture artworks, and examines the effects of wall sculptures, and then understand the role of aesthetic gentrification in the Georgetown heritage area.

1.1 Research background

This study is mainly based on visual data gathered in the heritage zone of Georgetown City, the capital of Penang state, Malaysia. Understanding of the location and the history of Georgetown helps us to know the significance of the wall sculptures and its role of aesthetic through comprehending Georgetown's identity.

Penang is located in the northwest of the West Malaysia peninsula. Georgetown, the second largest city in Malaysia, is located in the northeastern of Penang Island (Map 1.1). The population of Georgetown in 2010 is 708,127, including three main races Malays, Chinese, Indians and a minority of Thais, Burmese, Eurasians, Japanese, Koreans and various expatriate groups (Majeed 2012). The diversity of ethnic groups brought in various religions, making Georgetown a multi-cultural historic city. The official religion is Islam, but according to Malaysian laws, other religions, such as Buddhism, Taoism, Catholicism, Protestantism, and Hinduism also exist.¹

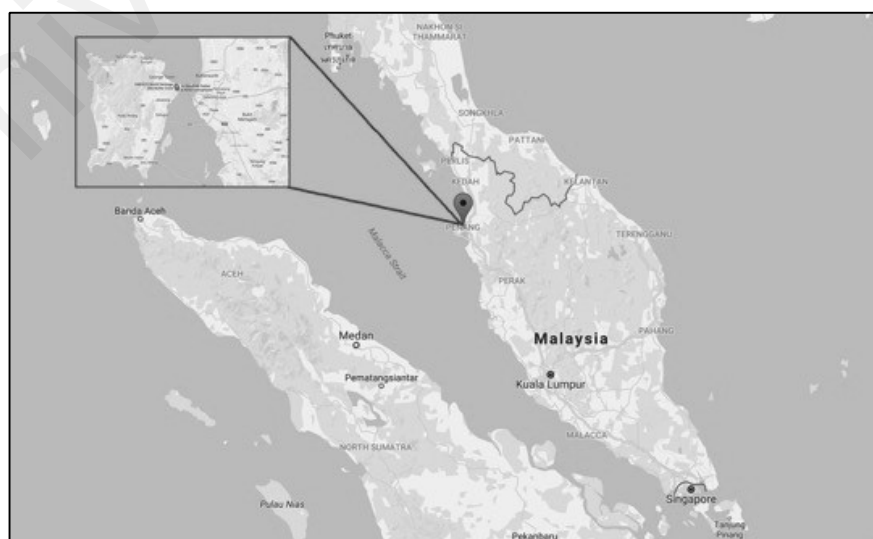
The colonial history of Georgetown Penang began in 1786, which was established by Captain Francis Light of the British East India Company. It was one of the first settlements established by British colonizers in South-East Asia. Contributing to its multi-racial and multi-cultural strait history, Georgetown had been nominated as world heritage site by UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) in 2008 (Richard 2009). Based on the review from UNESCO official website², we can take a glance to understand the identity of Georgetown heritage and historical background of wall sculpture. UNESCO divided heritages into Cultural heritage and Natural heritage and set six criteria for culture heritage nomination. In 2008, Georgetown fulfilled three criteria and was announced to be a cultural heritage,

¹ This information is retrieved from: My Penang. Climate, Language and Religion. http://mypenang.gov.my/pagefull-55-climate_language_religion.pgt

² This information is retrieved from: UNESCO. <http://en.unesco.org/>

together with Malacca. The traditional townscape, multicultural trading and architectures are the most important factors of the UNESCO criteria (Mohamed and Abidin 2015). With the internationalization and popularity of Georgetown, there are numerous number of artworks appeared on the street, including wall sculpture, murals, graffiti and shop house, etc. Culture, history, conventional social life of Georgetown have been used as critical subject matters involved in the creation of those artworks (Stephen 2016).

However, this multi-cultural and multi-racial trend has been challenged by the irreversible gentrification, which was a hot issue mentioned by the local and international media, such as *China Daily*, *Sinchew Daily*, *Nangyang Daily*, and *Guanghua Daily*. And Chang (2014) points out that Georgetown was suffering gentrification caused by the art transformation and the art-driven tourism after its heritage nomination. Middle class as the new comers entered the heritage zone. The destruction of traditional houses, renewal of cultures, and changes of the population composition had largely damaged Georgetown's cultural heritage (Fun 2014, 6).



Map 1.1: Location of Penang and Georgetown³

³ This information is retrieved from: <https://www.google.com/maps/search/Georgetown+heritage+zone>

1.2 Definition of ‘Making Georgetown’ artwork

This writing uses the term ‘Sculpture’ to define a series of *Making Georgetown* artwork since those artworks adopted the characteristic of sculpture. However, in the statement recorded in newspapers, tourist brochures and websites, the item “installation” is more common. Referring to the news reported by *Sinchew daily* at 28, October 2012, the author described the artwork as wrought iron art installation.⁴ According to the creator of artwork, Tang Mun Kian, the *Making Georgetown* series artwork was called art installation. But, Tang also admits that “As part of installation – these wrought iron structures also adopts the characteristics of sculpture.”⁵ The use of the word ‘Installation’, therefore, is merely used as a technical term to denote the way the structure is affixed to the wall. All structures are installed on the walls permanently and are not moved from one place to another.

In the context of fine art, the terms ‘sculpture’ and ‘installation art’ are defined differently. ‘Sculpture’ is the art produced through carving, modeling, welding or other figurative or abstract concept to put the artwork in three dimensions, as in relief, intaglio, or in the round (Nicholas 1993; Alistair 2017). On the other hand, ‘installation art’ refers to an arrangement of structures in three dimensional space by using found or constructed objects, often emphasizing the immersive experiences of the viewer within the artwork and sometimes include hi-tech and multi-sense instruments of sound, light and smell (Stogner 2011,3).

In this thesis, although there are many different terms used on *Making Georgetown* wall sculpture, this thesis will employ the term ‘wall sculpture’ to refer to the *Making Georgetown* series.

⁴ This information is translated from: <http://www.sinchew.com.my/node/1291031>

⁵ This information is interviewed with the Artist.

1.3 Problem statement

Heritage-related street arts, such as mural arts, installation arts and graffiti, have already become a part of new identity of Georgetown and enriched the content of Penang contemporary arts (Rahman 2015, 24). However, *Making Georgetown* wall sculpture in Georgetown appeared within a decade. It is considered a new phenomenon in the academic field of Malaysia contemporary art history.

Sculpture as a public art is an important element of the urban place making and beautification of urban landscape (Matthew2010). Previous case studies show that sculpture as public art arouses the liveliness of public spaces and engages people's sociability (Anderson et at. 2017). Besides, it often complements the aesthetic qualities of buildings and enhances the image of a place (Andrew 2001, 99). On the other hand, sculpture is also a spatial and social phenomenon with the ability to produce intense emotions in audience and provoke thoughts or opinions (Mansor and Shaibatul 2016). However, there is limited research to examining the effects of sculpture in public on the thoughts, place making, urban renovation and gentrification in Georgetown.

Generally, *Making Georgetown* wall sculpture has been benefited from the support of tourism policy. This sculpture has been positively introduced in mainstream media as a public series of works that informed the local or foreigner tourists about the history, culture and heritage of Georgetown. It is also posited as a project that has met the purpose of preserving the heritage and developing tourism (Emmanuel 2016). In a survey by Rahman this sculpture was ranked as one of the top ten popular street arts in Georgetown (Rahman and Abdullah 2015). However, those articles merely reveal the positive effects of the project but do not examine the negative effects, for instance urban gentrification.

Previous studies (Chang 2015; Palermo 2014; Lee 2014) show a strong relationship between art and aesthetic gentrification. This thesis examined the role of *Making Georgetown* wall sculpture in aesthetic gentrification and its development to understand Georgetown art and its urban artistic transformation. This will fill the gap on the research in Georgetown style aesthetic gentrification.

1.4 Research objective

The research objective of this paper is:

- I) To document and critically evaluate the emergence and development of *Making Georgetown* wall sculpture in the Georgetown Heritage area.
- II) To examine the Georgetown style aesthetic gentrification under the impact of wall sculptures.

1.5 Research questions

The research objectives are guided by the following questions:

- I) What is the developmental process of *Making Georgetown* wall sculpture?
- II) How does wall sculptures impact aesthetic gentrification of Penang Georgetown?

1.6 Scope of research

1.6.1 Delimitation of study

This research only investigated Georgetown heritage city, which include several well-known spots on Penang map such as Love Lane, Lebu Cannon, Chulia Lane and Stewart Lane. Other cities have the similar artworks on streets in Malaysia such as Ipoh, Taiping, Malacca, Kuala Lumpur, and Shah Alam but they were not included in this research. Although Malacca is also the Heritage city announced together with Georgetown by UNESCO, in the heritage area, there is few street arts. Therefore,

Malacca is either not included in this study.

In Georgetown, art in shop house, gallery, art installations and other street artworks composed of the diversity of Georgetown art form. But this study only aimed at *Making Georgetown* wall sculptures because it is quite new and it is a huge series of artwork involved for expressing the current Georgetown heritage to visitor. It was authorized and installed by Penang Government in 2010.⁶ Moreover, this research links other types of artwork, for instance *Mirror Georgetown* art and Lousi Gan Murals, but merely in terms of assisting the investigation of the developmental process of *Making Georgetown* wall sculpture in Georgetown and its impacts. Some of them are not completely established or removed because of limit of the governmental budget of government.

The primary data (interview with artists, visitors and local residents) and digital record are the most significant resources of this research, which documents the emergence and development of Georgetown wall sculpture, as it has not been written before. The artist Tang Mun Kian involved in the creation of those artworks was interviewed. His personal answer and feedback is the main evidence of documentation since the artworks were created under his personal experience and understanding of policy requirements. Secondary sources such as the literature of historical record, newspapers, official website, videos tourists' interview and local residents' interview are the reliable information regarding the reception of the work. Besides, the aesthetics is a way to understand Georgetown style gentrification, but gentrification of urban study is not discussed in this writing.

⁶ This information is translated from: Sinchew daily. *The old house is transformed into an art center by drawing lines. Zeng Qinghua Tang Mun Kian takes away 10,000 yuan in cash.* Sinchewdaily.com.my, 2010-04-01 17:08

1.6.2 Limitation

A lot of visual data of artworks and interviews had been done in order to arrange and record the wall sculpture in Georgetown. However, for the most of time, the artists that are involved in the interviews are staying in overseas. Under this circumstance, interviews with these artists are conducted via using email or phone.

Furthermore, the emergence of the *Making Georgetown* wall sculpture is short time, yet, the artworks are almost created at the same time. Thus, this writing only provide the estimated time but not the exact time of the existence of each artworks.

Due to the sculpture artworks that are discussed in this writing are mostly related to the local residents' life, there are lots of overlapping messages and a shortage of official information and research papers. So, interviews with local citizens, newspapers, journals, website messages, tourism brochure, and personal blog articles were used as references in order to support this research.

Furthermore, a few wall sculpture artworks has been removed and destroyed by local authority for the need of refurbishment of old buildings. Photo of these removed wall sculptures are downloaded from the Internet.

Last but not least, the development of Penang urban area continuously impacts the features of Georgetown heritage to some extent, so the time should be considered as the limitation for this research. Therefore, this research only focuses on the wall sculpture that were produced between 2008 and 2017, in order to ensure the effectiveness of the final result.

1.7 Significance of Research

Various studies have been carried out on sculpture and street art. However, it is lack of research focusing on the wall sculpture in heritage zone of Georgetown Penang Malaysia.

Georgetown wall sculptures have recently become popular heritage-related landmarks and one of the heated topics in art research. It does not only bring significant tourist profits to the Penang State, but also flourish the arts in Penang. Some foregone studies have already proved the gentrification process occurring in Georgetown due to tourism and art movement. Based on the previous studies, this writing aims to future understand the role of wall sculptures in aesthetic gentrification.

This thesis records the *Making Georgetown* wall sculptures in Georgetown Heritage Area, and reveals its function in the gentrification process of Georgetown through placemaking. Due to the duration of existence of this art is short, this article clearly states the process according to the timeline of art development. Also this thesis provides an authentic and systematic research data towards the Georgetown Art in the field of sculpture studies. Besides, this will be evidence of proving the significant role of art in the process of heritage urban development.

1.8 Definition of art term

1.8.1 “Sculpture”

*The art of making figures or designs in relief or the round by carving wood, moulding plaster, etc, or casting metals, etc.*⁷

⁷ This information is retrieved from: Dictionary.com. Collins English Dictionary - Complete & Unabridged 10th Edition. Harper Collins Publishers. <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/sculpture> (accessed: April 11, 2018).

1.8.2 “Heritage”

Heritage is defined as, “The evidence of the past, such as historical sites, buildings, and the un-spoilt natural environment, considered collectively as the inheritance of present-day society.”⁸In this thesis, heritage refers mostly to historical and cultural sites and buildings.

1.8.3 “Gentrification”

“The buying and renovation of house and stores in deteriorated urban neighborhoods by upper-middle income families or individuals, raising property values but often displacing low-income families and small businesses.”⁹

1.8.4 “Aesthetic Gentrification”

The process of conforming to an upper-or middle-class lifestyle, or of making a product, activity, etc., appealing to those with more affluent tastes.”¹⁰

1.9 Summary

Wall sculptures have been a part of the landscape of Georgetown Malaysia in the first decade of the 21st century. The aim of this research is to expand the knowledge of “wall sculpture” by investigating its development in Malaysia. The result of this examination on selected wall sculptures from the area of the Georgetown heritage area could be used in the future for the purpose of comparison with other locations all over the world where wall sculptures are present. This study also aims to determine what are, if any, specific features of wall sculpture in Georgetown heritage area.

⁸ This information is retrieved from: Online Etymology Dictionary. Douglas Harper, Historian. 15 Mar. 2017. <Dictionary.com>.

⁹ This information is retrieved from: Dictionary.com. Collins English Dictionary - Complete & Unabridged 10th Edition. Harper Collins Publishers. <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/gentrification> (accessed: February 18, 2018).

¹⁰ This information is retrieved from: Dictionary.com Unabridged. Random House, Inc. <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/aesthetic-gentrification> (accessed: February 18, 2018).

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents a review of previous studies on art gentrification in the view of the waves of gentrification. Researches on both Asian cities and Western cities are also reviewed, in order to look at the role of art in the process of gentrification. This is followed by a review of aesthetic gentrification theory of the urban development. Moreover, previous studies which share similarities with Georgetown heritage are reviewed in this chapter.

2.1 The studies on the role of art in urban gentrification

Glass (1964) originally created the term gentrification used to define the phenomenon of urban changes taking place in 1950s' London. Ruth explained gentrification as middle-class developers and house owners rehabilitated working-class communities in the core area of the city. Thus the rich communities reinvested capital in the city and replace original residents step by step. Glass's theory is used to examine the process of gentrification in other places in various ways, such as New York, Spain and Latin America. Their studies illustrated that gentrification is initiated with many reasons, such as the growth of commerce, aging of population in the communities (Wyly and Hammel 1999), art transformation of old neighborhood, emergence of new trade mode and policy-supporting "brownfield" transformation (refers to areas where new houses can be built after old houses in the city are cleared) (Michael et al. 2014).

Besides, many previous studies elaborated the role of art in gentrification by focusing on the effects of art in the regeneration of culture, social and economic change in the process of gentrification. In the views of Luca (2014), Smith (2005), Rhonda (2004) and Goodey (1994), art was increasingly involved in processes of, but not only, the revitalization of declining urban spaces, the changes of lifestyle, the Renaissance of

culture, the redevelopment of urban, the stimulation of urban economies and the improvement of alteration of urban appearance.

Plenty of studies mostly focus on the role of street art in urban gentrification. In order to understand the relationship between art and changes of lifestyles, Israel (2017), Roland (2015) and Reinhard (2014) installed *Videogames*, *Solar Pink Pong*, a sound generator called *Urban Cricket* on the street. According to their studies, spectators could play with artwork in a physical and realistic environment, and it involves in individuals' daily life and enhances the realistic sense of art. Hence, artwork gets social meanings which artwork in gallery cannot acquire. The social meanings expanded the interaction from limited space in galleries to the whole city, from a certain spectator to everyone in the city (Israel and Tosca 2017). Their experimentation of street artwork tries to enhance the awareness of those disappeared natural experience in urban daily life (Roland and Kwanmuang 2015). Also it revives the memories of traditional culture and childhood (Reinhard and Kaltenbrunner 2014).

Previous studies showed that placemaking shares an indirect relationship with gentrification. There is a conflict between recent creative placemaking policies intended to promote positive neighborhood development through the arts and the fact that the arts have long been cited as contributing to gentrification and the displacement of lower-income residents (Illushka, 2016). In many cases like Detroit, Brooklyn USA and Melbourne, placemaking is an act that is conducive to the beautification of the city and promote the development of tourism. However, These places have suffered different levels of gentrification (Montgomery, 2016; Kellie, 2019; Shaw, 2014). This thesis offers an interesting example of the development of Georgetown and reveals that when placemaking is driven by policy and not genuinely developed through community

engagement, this process results in gentrification.

As the stated above, previous studies illustrated that street art has stronger impact on changing individual life; hence it is more efficacious for the regeneration of living culture, because it is involved in the various sense and it is quietly integrated into our life. According to Katarzyna (2016), Kelly (2010) and Huang (2015), their studies reveal that the rejuvenation of old life style benefits from interaction between street art and residents, since street art can comprise of traditional and non-traditional media, and more trend to use various sense with natural sounds, smell, flavor, touching and light, rather than only visual or optical sense. Furthermore, lots of researchers think that dimension is also a critical element, such as Petersen (2015) and Sidik (2010). Artwork on the street with the realistic space is in four dimensions - Time. The long-term duration of artwork and uninterrupted viewer's participation will continuously influence the residents' way of thinking and the urban landscape.

Discussion thus far has been focusing on art as a role to awaken the resident's past lifestyle. Markusen (2010) and Richard (2002) examined the function of art in revitalization of declining urban spaces and economies. In their case studies of gentrification in Vieux Carre Heritage District New Orleans, Wicker Park Chicago and Hobart Tasmania, art and art-driven tourism are the main methods to promote the economic growth, to rejuvenate the use of old buildings and to enhance the middle class mobility (Markusen et al. 2010). Although Vieux Carre Heritage District is dissimilar in the process of art gentrification to the other two, Vieux Carre's style art gentrification initiated mostly through the art-driven advertisement and entertainment industry (Richard 2002).

With respect to this thesis, Georgetown shares similarities with Vieux Carre, Wicker

Park Chicago and Hobart Tasmania in term of its heritage, historical characteristics, and art and art-driven tourism. According to Chai (2011) and Rahman (2015), the tourism lays on heritage identities of British colony, multi-cultural street murals (Chai 2011). Wall sculptures recomposed of the urban landscape and the trade mode of Georgetown (Rahman and Abdullah 2015). The above studies lay a solid foundation for the exploration in Georgetown.

2.2 The studies on the waves of Aesthetics Gentrification

Aesthetics Gentrification gradually becomes a global issue nowadays. In this section, the cosmopolitan studies on aesthetics gentrification are reviewed. Moreover, the studies of the aesthetic gentrification waves based on studies of the urban gentrification waves are also reviewed. This section discussed respectively those waves of aesthetic gentrification based on Chang's (2016) research in Singapore and the cases of Hoxton, Beijing, Los Angeles and Malian.

According to Neil (2002), there are three waves of gentrification: the first wave of gentrification is that the middle class occupied the old urban; the second wave of gentrification expanded to the whole city, resulting in the establishment of urban hierarchy. In this process, middle class became culprit. The third wave of gentrification is related to broader systems of capital accumulation and globalization.

As an important factor of gentrification, aesthetic is discussed on the art and its effects on urban development in prior study. According to Chang (2016) and Luca (2014), "Aesthetic Gentrification" is a concept providing a suggestive frame to explore the form and outcome of urban change, as well as its contestations when new arts and cultural activities occupy historical buildings (Chang 2016). Individual artist is an important

agent in the initiation of gentrification process (Luca 2014).

2.2.1 The first wave of Art gentrification: Policy Sponsorship and Artist

The initiation of the first wave of art gentrification was caused by policy sponsorship and artist resettlement. There are many previous studies shows the first wave of aesthetic gentrification in different styles. (Chang 2016; Andrew 2012; Currier 2008) Chang's (2016) research analyzed process of gentrification in Little India Singapore through the aesthetics perspective. In his view, the gentrification initiated in Little India went through three stages, which is similar to Neil's (2002) research about three waves of gentrification. The first wave of arts gentrification started with policy sponsorship. National Art council (NAC) and Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) actively attracted artists by giving rental subsidies to promote the renaissance of arts and culture in Little India.

According to Andrew (2012), the first wave of aesthetic gentrification in Hoxton London has a different characteristics from Singapore. London's central government provided approximately £1 million of grants funded Dalston City Challenge, which was specifically channeled to investors in order to develop Hoxton's stock of derelict buildings and disused land for cultural and artistic transformation. Hoxton case was also benefited from policy sponsorship. Comparing with Singapore, the first wave of aesthetic gentrification in Hoxton was impacted by art movement, rather than direct financial support, which was used to attract artists to settle down in the old city. Similar to Hoxton, besides, the same factors of gentrification can also be witnessed in 798 Art District, Beijing (Currier 2008).

The first wave of art gentrification contributes to the policy sponsorship. In this process, artist's incursion is a critical factor (Moskowitz 2015). According to the studies by Ley (2003), Markusen (2009) and Cole (1987), artist can be considered as an expeditionary force urban to gentrify the old city, and as the 'advancing or colonizing arm' of the middle classes (Ley 2003). Meanwhile, those artists as a creative middle class are new immigrants in the old city, and also political protagonists and beneficiary in policy-led gentrification (Markusen 2009). The artists' incursion could be categorized into two types of art gentrification as referred by Cole: the lower rents and living cost attracted artists to move into the old city, so the artists start to revive the art in the neighborhood; the existing art-driven commercial district and stronger artistic atmosphere attract artists to re-enter the old urban area for seeking the higher income livelihood (Cole 1987).

2.2.2 The second wave of Art gentrification: Residents and Neighborhood

For the second wave of aesthetic gentrification, prior studies examined the relationship among the art, residents and neighborhood. According to Grodach (2014), labors and residents show obvious distinctness towards the awareness of art and art-led commercial activity. The adaptability of transformation in culture and art, in some ways, determined the potential neighborhood and its quality of lifestyles (Grodach et al. 2014).

Lee (2014) illustrated that the two groups of residents involved in the gentrification are opposite: As wealthier residents flew back into once low-income, often the minority of neighborhoods, long-time residents can be priced out.

Lin (2008) elaborated the characteristics in aesthetics perception of the new immigrants (wealthier) and the expelled (low-income). Referring to Lin's research on the aesthetic gentrification of Chinatown, LA, USA, the availability of low commercial

rents and property values as well as the appeal of an eclectic or “edgy” neighborhood quality, drew many artists and investors to open studios, galleries, and shops in these locales. As result, those poorer, less educated, less acculturated residents are threatened with displacement by gentrification. It is similar to the assertion of Vigdor (2002): the universality of characteristic towards the banished residents and neighborhood is those residents who have limited artistic pursuits, lack of awareness of arts and culture and only to meet the basic needs of living expenses and family education. But for middle-to-upper classes, their needs are the quality of living environment, aesthetic environment, which are similar to the taste of social groups in gentrified urban landscape (Giovanni 2011).

2.2.3 The third wave of Art gentrification: Spatial competition and Social conflicts

The third wave of aesthetic gentrification is considered to be caused by the spatial and social conflicts. From the viewpoint of Jason, the particular characteristics of the third wave of gentrification are the influx of private or organized capital (Domestic and international) which aimed at the investment of old buildings. Based on these investments, the artistic renovation rapidly started (Jason and Smith 2001).

According to Gernot’s (1993) methods to study spatial aesthetics, atmosphere can be identified as the connection between environmental qualities and human aesthetic states. This connection takes effects every day in gentrified middle class. These led the private and public intentions to refurbish and even sanitize the specific zones of central neighborhoods, in order to make them qualify the tastes of the middle class (Julier 2005). As Diappi (2006) illustrated, the style changed in Malian in 90s: industrial buildings were transformed according to upper-middle class taste to make them

harmonize with the modernized spaces for the emerging creative activities (Diappi and Bolchi 2006).

2.3 Studies on gentrification of Georgetown

Gentrification had been witnessed in Georgetown. Prior studies show that arts, heritage and its tourism are inextricably linked to Georgetown's gentrification. According to Beng (2016), the promotion of art-culture-based tourism is an extrinsic factor of gentrification, but the changes of culture and art are main factors. The Georgetown now undergoes the danger of becoming a tourist town. Foreign new immigrants are the main force of gentrification. The primary impetus of Georgetown tourism, first, is the augmentation of art production and cultural heritage production (Musa and Thirumoorthi 2016). Besides, the government is a “pushing hands” in the process of gentrification since it targets to make profit for the Georgetown (Schulman 2012).

This situation resembles Azila's (2017) research, which says that tourism indeed increased the income of Penang Government. The artistic transformation in urban area of Georgetown after the nomination of heritage site indeed increased the number of tourists, 68% of which are international tourists.

According to Marafa (2016), the tourism-driven urban development had already changed the types of residents and the functions of historical buildings in Georgetown heritage zone. Traditional shop houses were gradually replaced by voguish coffee, bar, hostel and art souvenir shop. The walls of heritage buildings were brushed by incompatible and colorful images. Similar to Teh's (2016) view, tourist's activities and seasonal tourist movements indeed changed the streetscape in Georgetown historical area, which can also be reflected by the fact that leisure or entertainment industries

replaced the traditional trade in Georgetown. High rents have forced people to move away from the heritage core zone. Thus, a new multicultural community formed in the heritage zone (The and Yoh 2016, 10).

According to Rahman (Rahman and Abdullah 2015), the role of street art in Georgetown has been examined as it is a critical approach to expand the tourism and to transform the urban landscape. It also reveals the history and disappearing culture heritage. Paradoxically, street arts, which were created to preserve cultural heritages, changed the styles of cultural heritages themselves.

2.4 Summary

This chapter presents a number of previous studies on aesthetics gentrification by discussing its characteristics and three waves of gentrification. Moreover, the research on actuality of gentrification of Georgetown is also reviewed in this chapter. As the author's view, there are two shortcomings of the previous studies. First, most of these studies focus on art in general, but have not really penetrate into the role of wall sculpture on aesthetic gentrification.

Second, although there are studies focusing on the connections between gentrification and art-based tourism, but the relations of street art and tourism are discussed respectively. There are limited studies that explore the role of wall sculpture development in the process of aesthetic gentrification. Although, there are a few researches on gentrification and street art in Georgetown, they mostly focused on a different aspects, such as tourism and murals. Therefore, there is a need for this study on the role of wall sculpture in aesthetics gentrification of Georgetown.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter first presents the description of the research design and researched location applied in the study. Next section is the description of the research flow, interviewee and tool used in the research. This is followed by four predominant sections of the methodology, the research instruments, the research procedures of data collection and data analysis.

3.1 Research Design

The methods employed in this research included a series of qualitative approaches. Qualitative method is beneficial for data collection. It enriches the information and knowledge, and explain the facts and profundity. In this study, it is suitable for managing and guiding the information collection, as it will gather the data as accurately as possible from the individual perspective, interpretation, recognizing, conception, sense and meaning towards the Georgetown wall sculpture. Strauss (1990) stated the below in the book *Basics of Qualitative Research 1990*.

The term 'Qualitative research' can be refer to research about personals' lives, lived experience, behaviors, emotions and feelings as well as about organizational functioning, social movements, cultural phenomena, and interactions between nations (Strauss and Corbin 1990, 24).

Danzin share the same views:

Qualitative research involves the studies use and collection of variety of empirical materials – case study; personal experience; introspection; life story; interview; artifacts; cultural text and productions; observational, historical, international, and visual text – that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals' lives. Accordingly, qualitative researchers deploy a wide range of interconnected interpretive practices, hoping always to get a better understanding of the subject matter at hand (Denzin and Lincoln 1994, 56).

Based on those theories, the tools and methods will be used in this research such as interview, observation, site-visit, film record, photography and so on that provided a

method to arrange and explain the data.

There are data, which can come from various sources such as interview, observations, documents, records, and film. Second, there are the procedures that researchers can use to interpret and organize the data (Strauss and Corbin 1990, 40).

The above theory gives the reasonable and suitable factors of using qualitative methodology in this thesis since it is closely related to experience, heritage observation, and creative thoughts, which belong to artists of Georgetown wall sculptures. Furthermore, it is also a good method to understand the residents' views when suffering from the urban gentrification. Gathering the information from a number of artists and residents will provide a rich database to achieve the academic objectives in my further analysis.

3.2 Research location

This research aims to study the wall sculpture at Georgetown, trying to find out its relationship with aesthetic gentrification in Georgetown heritage zone. In order to know where the most concentrated area of Georgetown heritage is, the writer refers to *Historic Cities of The Straits of Malacca: Melaka and George Town Towards World Heritage Listing*. It has clearly marked off the core and buffer zones of Georgetown heritage site. The core zone is a place which mixes historical buildings, traditional cultures, social lives and trading cultures. Also it is a congregation area of street art, street installation art, graffiti etc. The buffer zone is a belt between new urban area and heritage core zone, It is a region which has the characteristics of old and modern Georgetown. Tourism in buffer zone is not as developed as that in the core zone, so there only exists a few artworks in this belt (Negara 2008).

3.2.1 Core zone of the historic city of Georgetown

The Heritage City of Georgetown covers 109.38 hectares. The core zone of heritage conservation area is bounded by the Straits of Melaka on the north-eastern cape of Penang Island, Love Lane (Lorong Love) to the North-West and Gat Lebu Melayu and Jalan Dr Lim Chwee Leong to the South-West corner. In the Core Zone, there are more than 1700 historic buildings on four main streets of Lorong Love, Pengkalan Weld, Jalan Masjid Kapitan Keling and Lebuh Pantai. Moreover, several perpendicular streets consist of Lebuh Light, Lebuh Bishop, Jalan Tun Syed Sheh Barakbah, Lebuh Gereja, Lebuh China, Lebuh Chulia, Lebuh Armenian, Lebuh Pasar and Lebuh Aceh. (Map 3.1)



Map 3.1: The core zone of the historic city of Georgetown

3.2.2 Buffer Zone of the historic city of Georgetown

Surrounding the core zone, the buffer zone in Georgetown is 150.04 hectare in size. It is bounded by stretch of sea area around the harbour, Jalan Perangin to the South-West

corner and Jalan Transfer to the North-West corner. (Map 3.2)



Map 3.2: The buffer zone of the historic city of Georgetown

3.3 Source of Data

Data consist of primary and secondary sources in this research. In this study, the main focus will be laid on the primary sources. The secondary sources will be supplemental. Specifically, primary sources include interviews with artists, tourists and relevant residents, record of oral histories, documents and photographs.

3.4 Data collection

This thesis collects primary and secondary data. The fieldwork is important for collecting the primary data. Interviews and questionnaires are also important for data collection as visual documentation of wall sculpture artwork.

Moreover, published sources such as books, journals, newspapers, and Internet sources

are used as secondary sources.

3.4.1 Fieldwork

For this dissertation, fieldwork is conducted for collecting the first-hand sources - present status of Georgetown wall sculpture. Observation of artworks was carried out between the periods of 13, February 2016 to 20, September 2016.

The fieldwork mainly included four parts of work: interview of local residents and tourists, observation of the artworks and their contexts, digital data recording by photography and GPS software, and documenting information of streets or lanes.

Observation and recording had been done for twice respectively. In the early morning, the writer evaded the pick hour of visitors in order to record the picture of intact artwork. In the afternoon, the writer took picture again to show that the wall sculptures are surrounded by visitors, in order to reveal the effects of tourism.

3.4.2 Library research

Library research was done in the main library of University of Malaya, Library of University of Science Malaysia and National Library in Kuala Lumpur. Paper-version publications (journals, books, newspapers) and digital resources (UM database, online journals, digital newspapers, and e-books) are critical in the library research. For the historical background of wall sculpture and their culture, library research is an effective and reliable approach. The most generally used online database and journals were Science Direct, Research Gate, Taylor & Francis, JSTOR, and Scholar Works.

Wall sculpture artists are active on the Internet nowadays. On the other hand, internet promotes the information broadly, so it is easy for officials to propagandize the tourist significance of Georgetown wall sculpture. Therefore, the secondary data collected from the virtual space is another effective approach.

Furthermore, Malaysian newspapers provide significant portal for researchers to understand the development of wall sculpture in Georgetown, such as *Nanyang Daily*, *The Star* and *The New Straits Times Newspaper*.

3.4.3 Digital camera and Fotoplace App for recording the location of artworks

For geographic data, Fotoplace App had been considered as the best software based on Apple IOS system. Fotoplace App catches accurately the GPS coordinates and street address of wall sculpture artworks and shows those on the digital map at the same time. Weeny errors of observation by eyes can be corrected through this tool, which makes this dissertation more precise.

Canon 550D is the instrument for recording the facts of present extant wall sculpture artworks on the street of Georgetown. Because of natural and artificial damage, and the tourism consumption, details of wall sculpture could not be clearly observed to some extent. Hence, a camera with good resolution like Canon 550D is a good choice.

3.4.5 Interviewee Participants

This study involved one main artist of wall sculpture, Mr. Tang Mun Kian, in this project about his idea of art designs. Furthermore, tourists who participated in the interviews include both international and local. It is important to capture their views and feelings of the art installation. The local residents include Malay, Chinese, Indian and

other races of immigrants. The diversity of local residents guarantees a hybrid and balanced perspective. Local residents are living in the heritage area, and their houses or working places are near to the wall sculptures. This research used those local interviewees' answer to evaluate the role of wall sculpture in their city life during the gentrification. Their feelings, complaints and statements help this research to understand the change of local residents' life after the emergence of wall sculptures.

3.5 Visual analysis

This writing adopts visual analysis of artwork in order to study the style, subject matter and its effects on the urban imagination, buildings renovation, increase of property values, cultural and art diversity and residents aesthetic.

This visual analysis categorize the artworks based on the subject matter or content, such as the old trading mode, resident's life style, personal histories, urban landscape.

3.6 Conceptual framework

3.6.1 Conceptual framework of gentrification aesthetics

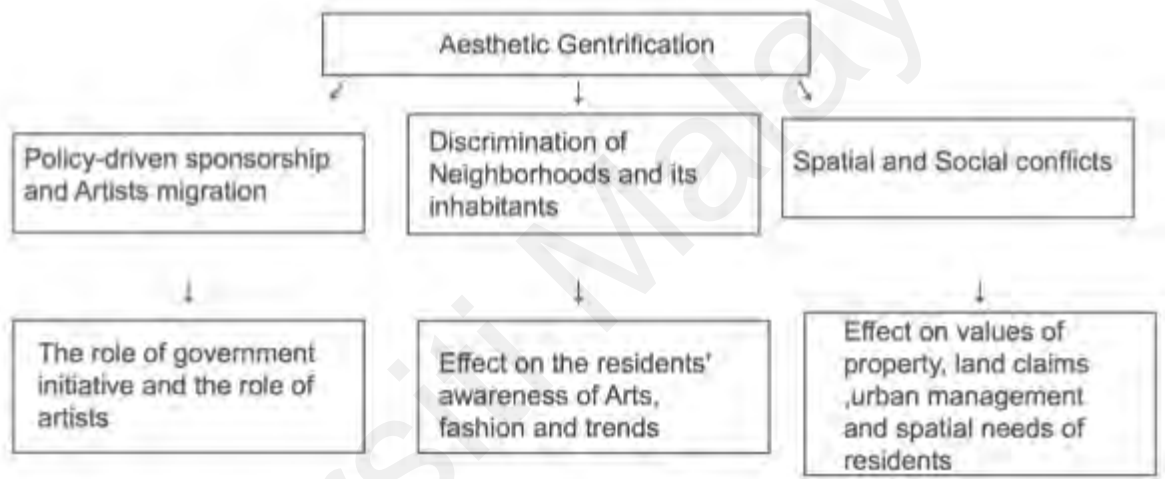
In order to examine the role of aesthetics in gentrification process in Georgetown, Chang's (Chang 2016) finding and methodology used in Little India Singapore provided a reliable theoretical frame for this research.

Chang's three key points in interrogating Singapore style gentrification are as follows: First, Artists' Incursion and Policy Sponsored; Second, Discrimination of neighborhoods and its inhabitants; Third, Spatial and social conflicts (Chang 2016, 53).

Based on his study, three key points were used to investigate the Singapore style gentrification. He elaborates three points as:

1. Artists as first wave gentrifiers were drawn to the city because of the urban aesthetic but also precipitated by state sponsored schemes;
2. Gentrification aesthetics as a way to set apart a neighborhood (and its inhabitants) as trendy and culturally vibrant;
3. Gentrification as giving rise to spatial and social conflicts between people of different values, land claims and aesthetic inclinations within the city.

Table 3.1: Conceptual Framework of Aesthetics Gentrification



3.6.2 The concept of Placemaking

This writing understands the role of wall sculptures in aesthetic gentrification of Georgetown through the concepts of Placemaking. Placemaking lies between the concepts of transforming a space into a place and the roles of community in participatory processes for future urban planning (Hamdi 2010). Moreover, place making can be defined as the act or process of creating great places that possess an emotional connection with its users (Bertsche 2013). This emotional connection affects both residents and their urban social life. Emotional connections of placemaking give the users the sense of belonging, and the cultural and historical memories are considered as the critical ways to cultivate this sense of belonging (Fleming, 2007). In public

environments, sculptures always resonate with some viewers. This resonance is based on the user's lifestyle, memory, emotion, or even personal preferences. It provides users with the sense of belongings or cordial feeling (Markusen, 2006). Hence, artworks and users can coexist in a community. The sense of belonging from residents in some ways are important factors when choosing a place of settlement (Florida, 2005a). Since the content or the subject of wall sculptures are based on the heritage of Georgetown, this thesis will examine whether this created a sense of belonging for its original residents. In this thesis, placemaking of wall sculptures is a way to understand the role of art in the process of Georgetown aesthetic gentrification.

3.7 Research Flow

Phase 1 - Location visit, Observation of site and digital record

Phase 1 involved in location visit, observation of site and digital image record of wall sculpture.

Phase 2 - Newspaper review and official information collection

Based on Phase 1, Phase 2 explores the certain timeline of artwork procedure and its aftereffect of the urban development.

Phase 3 – Interview

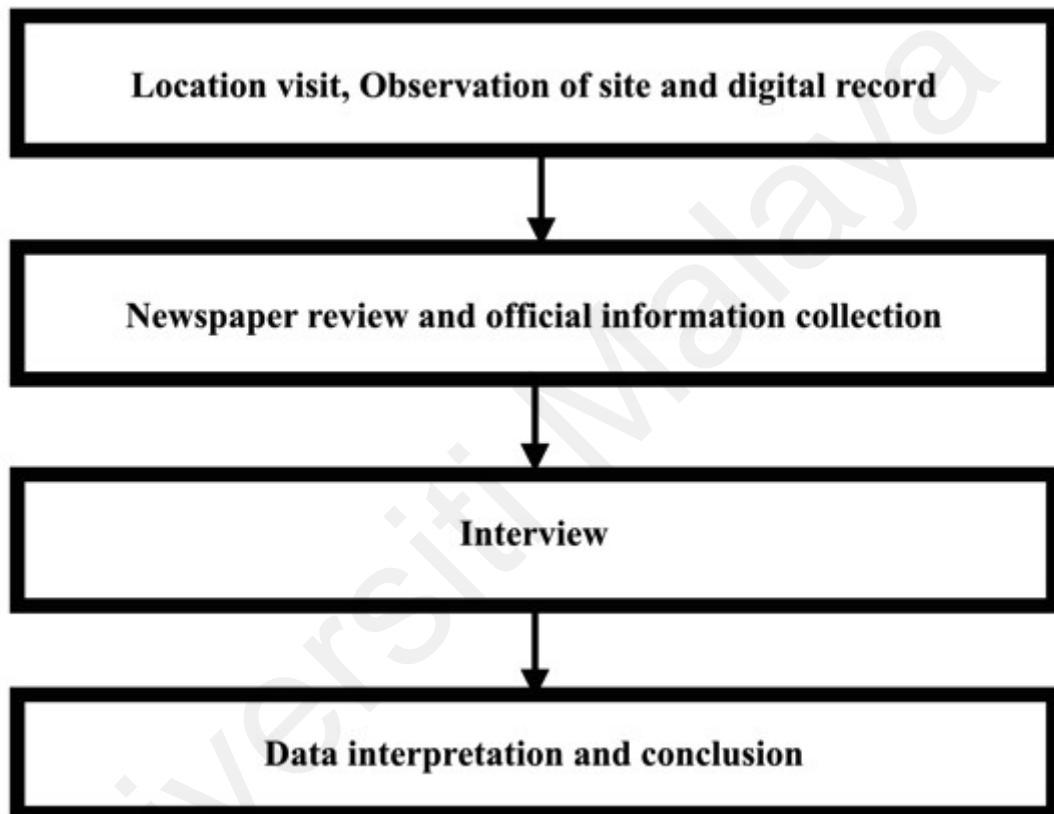
Phase 3 collects the primary source of viewpoints and feelings from artists, residents and tourists through interviews. The author asked questions to investigate the individual perspective during the creation of artwork and its effects on aesthetic gentrification.

Phase 4 – Data interpretation and conclusion

Phase 4 analyzes the role of Georgetown wall sculpture in each development stages of

aesthetic gentrification, and then compared the aftereffects. Next, the author finds out the most aesthetic gentrified area in heritage zone and summarizes the residents' views and actions of aesthetic gentrification. In the end, categorizes photography of artworks in the writing.

Table 3.2: Research flow



3.8 Summary

This chapter illustrated the research methodology designed to explore the development of wall sculpture and its role in aesthetic gentrification of Georgetown by interviewing 1 artist, 6 residents and 2 international tourists in Georgetown heritage zone. The research location is only focused on heritage zone. The main instruments involved in the study were GPS location software, digital recording, website information collection and newspaper reviews. The theoretical framework is adopted from the Change's research in

Singapore. Chang's three keys of aesthetic gentrification are important in this study. Lastly, the data and interview record is analyzed qualitatively in order to answer the research question.

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CHAPTER 4: GEORGETOWN WALL SCULPTURE

Chapter four aim at documenting the *Making Georgetown* wall sculpture and analyze its role in the gentrification process of Georgetown heritage city. Firstly, by following the timeline, the author recorded the background, artists, emergence, process, method, tools created, art style, materials, and current situations. Secondly, the author recorded *Making Georgetown* wall sculpture as photography documentation in main streets of core zone, heritage core zone and buffer zone, and included description with producer's names, titles and locations.

Besides, the author investigated aesthetics roles of wall sculptures in gentrification process of Georgetown by adopting Chang's concepts of gentrification aesthetics from the study of Little India Singapore. The Little India in Singapore shares some similarities with Georgetown Penang. For example, they both share the characteristics of heritage identity, multicultural background and aesthetics gentrification progress. However, Georgetown is still different from Little India at some points, such as population, races and Chinese culture. Furthermore, by observing the interactive relations between wall sculpture and its environment, the writer explores the changes of the wall sculpture and its surrounding environment in Georgetown.

Through the investigation, the writer found that the wall sculpture artworks are spread out over the entire Georgetown heritage zone. It is not difficult to find out that the wall sculptures are closely related with the development of urban changes.

4.1 The first wave of aesthetic gentrification in Georgetown heritage zone

Gentrification of Georgetown heritage zone was accompanied by the influx of the

middle class occupying the low-cost residences, since the rise of rents gradually expelled the original inhabitants out of this area. Also, the aesthetics as a critical factor changed the artistic environment and building's function of the heritage zone, facilitating the process of the gentrification. After the Georgetown was nominated as world heritage site, an indisputable fact is that the restored Georgetown old city has become a fast-growing city. The gentrification ineluctably began to take effects.

In Little India Singapore, the first wave of aesthetics gentrification is considered as a certain phenomenon that relies on policy sponsor and artist's incursion. For Georgetown's case, those two keys are also adopted for analysis.

4.1.1 Policy-driven sponsorship

The first wave of aesthetic gentrification in Georgetown did not take place suddenly, but was gradually triggered by a number of reasons. One of the factors is policy sponsorship. Besides, before the start of the first wave of the aesthetic gentrification, Georgetown's international status, as well as the cultural heritage nomination, had laid a solid foundation for the development of aesthetics gentrification.

UNESCO declared Georgetown as a world heritage site on 07 July 2008, and one year later on 07 July 2009, Penang State Government hosted an Annual Ceremony to celebrate Georgetown as World Heritage Site. Lim Guan Eng, Chief Minister of Penang state Government, announced the 07 July to be the Georgetown Heritage Day (Perisytiharan George Town sebagai Tapak Warisan Dunia) and established Georgetown World Heritage Incorporated (GTWHI), in order to conserve the heritage. During the Heritage Day, an exceptional committee names Georgetown Festival (GTF) host series

art and culture activities to celebrate the Heritage Day for every year.¹¹ For the first annual ceremony, an art challenge competition called Making Georgetown - An Idea Competition for UNESCO World Heritage Site, which aimed to enhance the fame of Georgetown heritage culture and tourist finance income, as well as to preserve the heritages - was held. This Making Georgetown project then became a long-term policy.

The establishment of the Penang Heritage Day and the GTWHI and Georgetown Arts Festival were successful at the outset. Among these projects, the art design competition was most conspicuous.

Making Georgetown: An Idea Competition for UNESCO World Heritage Site, co-hosted by Penang government, GTWHI and Royal Institution of Surveyors Malaysia, started on 7 September 2009. This competition was divided into two phases. After the first phase of registration, the first design blueprint can be submitted. The first phase of the competition will be held after a month and end on 15 November 2009. This competition continued for five month, the deadline for registration was on 15 October. Finally, the committee of competition received a total of 138 manuscripts from all around world. A total of 64 participants come from Spain, France, the United Kingdom, Bangladesh, Singapore and Australia.¹²

The first phase of the game aims to identify innovative design concepts to build the city of George City World Heritage brand while preserving the heritage zone of the world's remarkable universal value. In the first stage finalists will receive a bonus of 10000 Malaysia ringgit on December 29, 2009 and will receive another 10000 Malaysia ringgit in the second phase. Eventually design works from the Sculpture At Work won the

¹¹ This information is translated from: <https://dapmalaysia.org/cn/statements/2010/07/06/2230/>

¹² This information is retrieved from: <http://sculptureatwork.com/2010/10/sculptureatwork-wins-competition/>

game out of a hundred participants in the second phase.

Furthermore, the goal of this art competition is to enhance the understanding and conservation of Georgetown heritage, as Chef Minister Lim Guan Eng and the manager of GTWHI Maimunah Mohd Sharif statement when they attended the competition promotion conference.

“We need to awaken people's awareness of the arts and the protection of heritage to understand our cultural background and the environment. In addition, art is the best tool for a person to express the meaning of heritage to them, and their understanding of heritage.” Lim Guan Eng added: “Through the so-called cultural heritage, can let us know a place, know themselves and the evolution of society. Heritage can only be a person to appreciate, can also be a part of identification and characteristics of group of people.”¹³

Specifically, the mission of Making Georgetown: An Idea Competition for UNESCO World Heritage Site can be summarized as: 1. To clearly show the characteristics of Georgetown at each entrance of the heritage zone. 2. To develop unique and specific identity of heritage. 3. To give a clear sense of indigenoussness. 4. To involve local communities and encourage visitors in exploring heritage. 5. To lay the foundation for the future design work and policies of the heritage zone.¹⁴

4.1.2 Policy constraints and artwork design shows the heritage-conservation principle

The government made the rules and missions for competition in order to protect the heritage. It still needs participants to follow the principle. Therefore, art designers should also be considered as one of the factors for the first wave of aesthetic gentrification.

¹³ This information is translated from: <http://www.sinchew.com.my/node/754645>

¹⁴ This information is summarized and translated from: <http://www.sinchew.com.my/node/782402>

In Making Georgetown Idea Competition, a Malaysia art institute called Sculpture At Work presented the proposal of wall sculptures and finally won as champion. Their artworks, no matter from the theme, inspirations, technology, materials or subject matters are closely following the principles of heritage protection. In the competition, their artwork's theme is "Voices from the people". In the limited area of their workshop, every single steel diorama was bent and shaped to bring stories and inspiration to life. Tang Mun Kian, the leader of the team, presents the inspiration to *Star Daily*.

The streets of George Town were named after the trades, people and events, which means every street has its own unique story. With the rising rental, many of the original inhabitants moved out and with them, the stories as well. So, the idea is to put the stories back into the city.¹⁵

By interviewing with Tang Mun Kian through Email, he kindly shared the slides presented in the Making Georgetown Idea Competition with the writer. According to those slides, the researcher could clearly collect data of Making Georgetown wall sculpture in preparatory phase. Besides, reviewing those slides let this writing explored the other wall sculptures of Making Georgetown program, even though they are unpublished and uninstalled.

Actually, "Voice from People" consists of four art designs, including Wall sculpture, Phone booth, Floor plaque, Bus and Bicycle Stops. Wall sculpture is one of the projects and the first phase to achieve.

Sculpture At Work officially presents the function and the inspiration of wall sculpture as:

Utilization of empty wall space as a background for voices to be heard. Simple fun and humorous drawing in metal rod with descriptions that portray the history of the

¹⁵ This information is retrieved from: <https://www.thestar.com.my/>

street, the people or the building itself. Engage artists, cartoonists, and designers to participate and contribute their ideas to make Georgetown a creative city. A simple guide is produced for visitors to discover the history of the street as well as to enjoy the fun and humorous wall sculptures.¹⁶

The wall of heritage buildings as the background provides the place to install the artwork. It is not only an element of sculpture, but also a source of inspiration. However, the wall sculpture are not merely randomly fastened on the walls. It normally needs viewer's points in order to play the effective role.

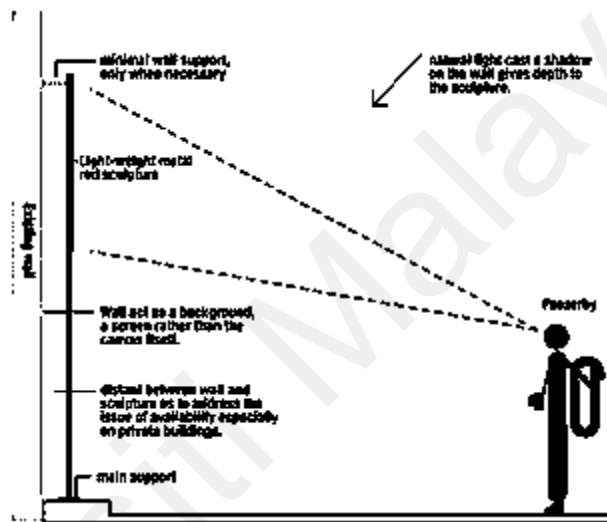


Figure 4.1: Viewpoint of visitors for wall sculptures¹⁷

The book *Penang Transitions – Making Georgetown and Rifle Range Renewal Competition* published by Malaysian Institute of Architects records the viewpoints of passerby. As showing in Figure 4.1, the main body of the wall sculpture is placed at a certain distance from the wall, mainly with the bottom of the screw to be fixed. While the wall sculpture is too large, artist will set up a fixtures behind the artwork to keep it stable. Because of natural light and the gap between the walls and the viewers, the works on the wall forms a certain depth of the shadow, so that the environment, the main works of art and the choice of viewpoint commonly decide of the final effects of

¹⁶ This information is translated from: <http://sculptureatwork.com/2010/10/sculptureatwork-wins-competition/>

¹⁷ This picture shared by Artists Mr Tang Mun Kian

artworks. In addition, the role of the gap is important to protect the ancient buildings and private buildings.

Through a long period of observation, the author learns that the production process of Georgetown wall sculpture is quite complex, because the art design and creation is limited by the heritage conservation purpose.

In order to express the real heritage in the artwork, artists of Sculpture At Work team of Georgetown wall sculpture did lots of autoptical research; they walked every street and lane of Georgetown. As Tang said:

*“We were outdoors being when we had to do research, site recce, taking photos and installments.”*¹⁸

Besides, for the purpose of keeping the intactness of old buildings and minimize the damage of walls, the artists used the especial materials and methods to produce the artwork. Georgetown wall sculptures are not made of rusty iron cast, but wrought iron bent from processing. First of all, based on locations and their restrictions, the environment determined the proportion of artworks in design manuscripts and size of artworks in real. Then they use high-strength steel to bend machine cast iron wire. Smaller parts are hand-made with iron pliers. After the completion of the various parts of the molding, the parts welded together. (Figure 4.2)

¹⁸ This information collected by interviewing with Tang Mun Kian, 2016-05-12



Figure 4.2: Artist was making the artwork by using electro-welding¹⁹

At the bottom of the wall sculpture, the welding of the iron plate and the steel bar facilitates the wall sculptures to be fixed vertically on the wall. After completing the initial styling, in order to eliminate the protuberance after welding and enhance the aesthetic and overall effects of the artwork, the artist grinds the welded interface with grinder and sandpaper, so that the connection looks smoother and more natural (Figure 4.1.4.2).

Next, the artist stripped the rust from surface of the artwork, making it easier to paint for the next step. The main body of the wall sculpture was painted black, but several wall sculptures were painted colorfully to make the work more vivid. After the paint is dry, the last stage of the work is to install the artwork on the wall of the design site with screws and welding (Figure 4.3). In addition, considering the environmental characteristics of the sculpture site and the design of the artwork, the artist takes into account the problems associated with the inherent material in the wall sculpture

¹⁹ This picture shared by artist Mr Tang Mun Kian.

environment, making the artwork more harmonious with the location.

In an interview with Tang Mun Kian at Timeout Penang, he answered questions about why a great deal of black and cast iron was used to finish the artwork. Tang said candidly:

“Why no color? No budget, is it? Oh, it’s a wire, not some scribbling on the wall.”

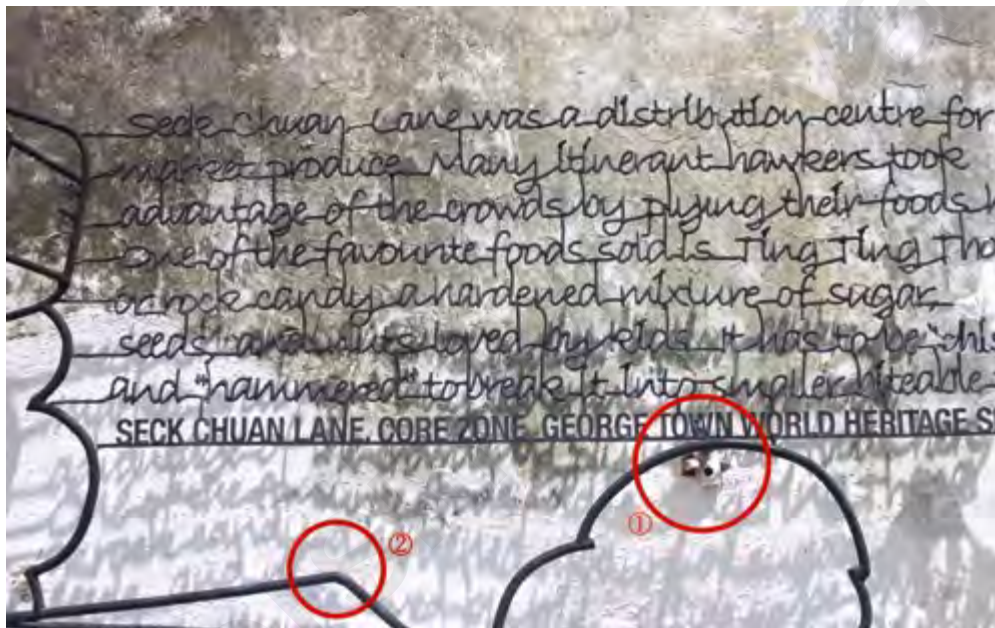


Figure 4.3: The screws and welding for fasten and the ground weld²⁰

4.1.3 Role of artists during the first wave of aesthetic gentrification

The reason for the first wave of aesthetic gentrification was not only because of the support from the government’s art policy, but also the artist's incursion. In this case, an artist admitted that his artwork did indeed affect the heritage zone, but denied the artworks’ influence on the first wave of aesthetic gentrification.

Cao: “Do you still live in Georgetown? Does your art studio choose to be in Georgetown?”

Tang: “I am from Penang, but I have not lived in Penang for a long time. My company, sculpture at work now in Kuala Lumpur, I am living in Kuala Lumpur also.”

²⁰ ①: Screws and welding for fasten ②: Ground weld

Cao: "Do you think your wall sculptures in some ways changed Georgetown?"

Tang: "Em...I don't know, but I agree. Of course, it changed Georgetown. People can earn more money from tourism and it helps the tourists better to understand my hometown. I think it's so good."

Cao: "So, do you think the artistic tourism of Georgetown raised the rent and life cost, let so many Georgetown resident's quality of life reduced, and even let them move out from the original place. They rent the house to others to get higher income?"

Tang: "Yes, for sure. I know what you mean. The gentrification happened in Georgetown, but I don't think it is all artworks' fault, but the wall sculpture indeed effect on this problem."

Cao: "What do you think, as an artist should you also take responsibility for the changes?"

Tang: "everything has advantages and disadvantages, we just do our job, we are not the main reason of the city changes. But our work, supported by the government. So, we cannot take control of the changes."

The changes of artistic atmosphere had begun to affect Georgetown. Many artists started to enter the Georgetown heritage sites. Among them, graffiti artists, handicrafts artists and painters had rented old houses and set up art workshop in Georgetown.

Mr. Leung and Ms. Lam are Chinese couples who rented an old house in Love Lane and opened their own gallery. In the gallery, Mr. Leung's daily work is selling a variety of handicrafts and hand-drawn postcards. The couple also teaches painting at the same time. Mr. Leung said:

More and more people are traveling to Georgetown. I originally own a drawing training institute in Kuala Lumpur. However, the business is not good. Georgetown's artistic atmosphere is getting stronger and stronger. After the city became a World Heritage Site, I came here with my wife, selling hand-painted postcards, my paintings are some of Penang's scenery and streets, tourists like it very much.

Mr. Ngo Thy Aun is a Chinese artist living in Georgetown currently. He and his uncle managed a postcard and bicycle shop. He is famous since his hand-drawn postcards record the local culture and Georgetown heritage in watercolor painting. He moved back to Georgetown after he graduated.

Ngo: I study painting for so many years, my uncle drew these postcards mostly. I think it's so interesting. So, I decided to stay here and manage this shop.

Cao: Do you rent this shop? Is it expensive?

Ngo: Nope, this is my uncle's house. It was a bicycle shop. But now, we sell hand-drawn postcard as well

Cao: You lived in this house since your childhood.
Ngo: Nope, I lived in Gelugor before.

In the above interview, there appeared two kinds of artists' invasion of Georgetown's heritage area. The first is artists emigrate from other places, and the second is the local artists return back to Georgetown and revamped the old house into art function.

In summary, although the government has imposed restrictions on the design of artworks in the protection of cultural heritage, it hardly intervene in the artist's personal residence decision. The artist's invasion still ineluctably occurred and has been witnessed in the first waves of aesthetic gentrification.

4.2 The second wave of aesthetic gentrification in Georgetown heritage zone

The second wave of aesthetics gentrification, which was initiated by wall sculpture in Georgetown heritage zone, showed up in the conflicts of cultural and artistic perception of the residents. This wave gradually started during the installment of wall sculpture artwork, as reflected by the facts that the numbers of wall sculptures increased on the street, Georgetown's art atmosphere is stronger, residents' awareness of art and culture is gradually clear. In the process, conflicts of thought will inevitably arise. Some residents agree with this art transformation, while the others disagree.

4.2.1 The first phase of installment of artwork signaling the initiation of art tourism

The assemblage of Georgetown wall sculpture is divided into four stages. Four months after the results of the competition are announced on 31 March 2010, the first stage of the three artworks was completed in July 2010, they are *Cheating Husband* of Love Line, *Mr. Five Foot Away* of Jalan Transfer, *Wrong Tree* of Lorong Pasar.

After the first phase of installment, the number of tourists in Penang shows the obvious increase by comparing the data of total tourists since the first quarter of 2005 to the fourth quarter of 2010, based on the statistics of the Penang institute. Before the third quarter of 2008, the average number of tourists' arrivals is 0.72 million. In the third quarter of the year, however, the number of visitors exceeded 0.8 million for the first time, and the average number has been maintained around 0.85 million until the second quarter of 2010. Surprisingly, in the third quarter of 2010, the number of tourists reached 0.952 million, which broke the highest record in history.

Table 4.1: Penang: Estimated Total Visitor Arrivals, 2010 (Q1-Q4)²¹

	2010	2010	2010	2010
Estimated Total Visitor Arrivals for the State	0.840 mil	0.882 mil	0.952 mil	N/A
Estimated Domestic Share	46.7%	55.0%	37.4%	45.3%
Estimated International Share	53.3%	45.0%	62.6%	54.7%

Furthermore, the table above shows that the percentage of international visitors is twice as domestic tourists in the third quarters of the year. Thus, the art-driven tourism started to be popular, and then enhanced Georgetown's international status.

4.2.2 The second phase of installment of artwork promoting art diversity of Georgetown

The rapid development of art tourism and its huge commercial potential have fostered Georgetown's art diversity, which would also make greater economic benefits. The second phase of installment of artwork livened the art atmosphere and led to a change in the aesthetic awareness and preference of the inhabitants.

²¹ This information is retrieved from: Socio-Economic & Environmental Research Institute. Penang statistic Quarter 4, 2010.22-23. Penang Institute. 2011. https://penanginstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/jml/files/quarterly_penang_statistics/2010/Penang-Statistics_2010Q4.pdf

The second phase finished on June 2011, and involved a total of 8 artworks in it, including *Labourer To Trader* on Jalan Kuala Kangsar, *Escape* on Lebuah Aceh, *One Leg Kick All* on Lebuah Muntri, *Too Hot* on Pengkalan Weld, *Cow & Fish* on Lebuah Melayu, *Bullock Cart Wheel* on Pitt street, *Waterway* on Gat Lebuah Prangin, *Limousine* on Lebuah Carnarvon. However, in order to further invigorate the tourism economy on the basis of *Making Georgetown* wall sculpture plan, the local government invited a foreign youth painter, Mr. Ernest Zacharevic, to create a mural named *Mirror Georgetown* plan. This series of murals used the wall of Georgetown old house as a canvas and reflected the lives of Georgetown residents.

Georgetown's street art began to get out of control and many local artists frantically painted on the walls of old buildings. Among them, Mr. Louis Gan, the painter of Penang, attracted the most attention because of its similar style to Ernest Zacharevic. However, Mr. Louis' painting violated the principle of protecting the heritage buildings. He used corrosive oily pigments and improper painting techniques, resulting in an emergency stoppage by the Penang government. However, there are still so much illegal graffiti on Georgetown Street.



Figure 4.4: Sister and Brother on Bicycle by Ernest Zacharevic



Figure 4.5: Brother and Sister on Swing by Louis Gan



Figure 4.6: The Boy by unknown artists

4.2.3 The second wave of aesthetic gentrification, discriminating neighborhoods

Art diversity of Georgetown and the strong artistic atmosphere bring huge sums of money. However, not all people recognize the artistic transformation of the original heritage city. Social contradictions began to emerge. The contradictions were caused by the differences in aesthetic needs, preferences and artistic awareness among local residents. Furthermore, the artistic transformation changed the emotional connections of residents and the place, and it reduced the sense of belongings of original residents.

4.2.3.1 The visual analysis of wall sculptures and categories of content

The *Making Georgetown* Wall Sculpture has a strong contemporary style of sculpture in terms of materials, techniques, themes, and context. According to John (1967) and Kreijn (2014), the use of more diverse materials is a characteristic feature of contemporary sculptures. Materials are no longer stone and wood. Plastics, metals, and fabrics are all used in contemporary sculptures (Kreijn et al. 2014). The 52 wall sculptures were all made of wrought iron, and they were created by using the technique

of electric welding. Most middle-class new immigrants love the wall sculptures since it makes the street more fashionable and modern.²² The combination of contemporary sculptures and traditional shop houses is a cultural conflicts in Georgetown, since there are different viewpoints on beauty.

The style of wall sculptures appears in a form of a comic strip illustration, showing the history in a relaxed and humorous way. On the one hand, this form can increase the attractiveness of artworks; on the other hand, it also has a good decorative effect on the urban environment.

*“They are low-key artworks erected along the street. A series of comic strip made of wrought iron lines tells the story of various street history that have gradually been forgotten. Avoiding the baldness of the text affects the tourist's interest and simply brings out historical and cultural stories. They are not serious history textbooks. They are humorous and have a strong historical and cultural background. It will be more interesting to learn while having fun.”*²³

In order to make artworks fully express cultural heritage, artists followed UNESCO's cultural heritage criteria of Georgetown to carefully select the content of wall sculptures and design artworks. First, Georgetown is a multi-cultural trading town; Second, it has living multi-cultural heritage and tradition of Asia and European colonial influences; Third, it has unique architecture, culture, and townscape (an exceptional range of architecture of shop-houses and townhouses) (Mohamed and Abidin 2016). Therefore, the content of *Making Georgetown* wall sculptures can be categorized into three types. In the category of Multi-trading Mode, those artworks show three main traditional trading modes among Chinese, Malay, and Indians. There are 13 sculptures, which illustrated the Chinese trading on the basis of the content of traditional food retail, transportation and handicraft. A total of 8 sculptures show Indian trading in the content

²² Interview with Nick.2016-05-19

²³ This information is retrieved from: Sinchew.com. New member of Georgetown brings out culture, wrought iron installation says street story. <http://www.sinchew.com.my/node/835979>

of agriculture and labor market. There is only one sculpture showing the Malaysian trading. Moreover, there are 9 sculptures that can be classified under “traditions of Asia and influences of European colony”. The content of 7 of them mainly illustrated the practices related to Chinese religion, Chinese tradition, and Chinese immigration during World War II. The other two refer to the influence of European colony. In addition, there are 14 sculptures showing Georgetown’s unique architectures, cultures, and townscapes. There are 6 sculptures showing the cultural phenomena and townscapes, which now still exist in Georgetown, while other 8 sculptures show some townscapes and cultures that has disappeared now. The categorization is shown in the table below:

Table 4.2: Categories of wall sculpture

	Title	Artist	Location
	Chinese Trading		
	Jimmy Choo	Baba Chua	Jalan Muntri
	Three Generation	Baba Chua	Lebuh Kimberley
	Ting Ting Thong	Baba Chua	Lorong Seck Chuan
	Win Win Situation	Lefty Kam	Jalan Muntri
	Ironsmith	Reggie Lee	Lorong Tok Aka
	Duck	Tang Mun Kian	Lorong Che Em
	Gold Teeth	Tang Mun Kian	Lebuh Queen
	High Counter	Tang Mun Kian	Lebuh Carnarvon
	Beca	Tang Mun Kian	Lorong Chulia
Multi-cultural trading mode	Mr. Five Foot Way	Tang Mun Kian	Jalan Transfer
	Same Taste, Same Look	Tang Mun Kian	Lebuh Cintra
	Kopi-O	Tang Mun Kian	Lebuh Kimberley
	Tok Tok Mee	Tang Mun Kian	Jalan Masjid

		Kapitan Keling
Malay Trading		
Then & Now	Tang Mun Kian	Lebuh Armenian
Indian Trading		
Too Hot	Reggie Lee	Pengkalan Weld
Roti Benggali	Tang Mun Kian	Lebuh King
Double Roles	Tang Mun Kian	Gat Lebuh Chulia
Too Salty	Tang Mun Kian	Jalan Green Hall
Wrong Tree	Tang Mun Kian	Lorong Pasar
Untrained Parakeet	Tang Mun Kian	Lebuh King
Kandar	Tang Mun Kian	Lebuh Ah Quee
Labourer To Trader	Tang Mun Kian	Chowrasta Market
Multi-cultural trading		
Budget Hotels	Reggie Lee	Lebuh Chulia
Waterway	Reggie Lee	Gat Lebuh Prangin
Retail Paradise	Reggie Lee	Lebuh Campbell
Pilgrims	Baba Chua	Gat Lebuh Acheh
No Plastic Bag	Tang Mun Kian	Lorong Prangin
Rope Style	Tang Mun Kian	Jalan Pintal Tali
Shorn Hair	Tang Mun Kian	Jalan Sungai Ujong
Title	Artist	Location
Traditions of Asia		
‘Yeoh’ Only	Baba Chua	Gat Lebuh Chulia
Spy	Reggie Lee	Lebuh Cintra
Limousine	Tang Mun Kian	Lorong Carnarvon

Tradition of Asia and European colonial influences	Procession	Tang Mun Kian	Lebuh Armenian
	Temple Day	Tang Mun Kian	Lorong Muda
	Chingay Procession	Tang Mun Kian	Pengkalan Weld
	One Leg Kicks All	Tang Mun Kian	Lebuh Muntri
	European colonial influences		
	Quiet Please	Reggie Lee	Lebuh Gereja
	No More Red Tape	Lefty Kam	Jalan Transfer
Unique architecture, culture, and townscape	Title	Artist	Location
	Existing		
	Narrowest Five Foot Way	Lefty Kam	Lebuh Stewart
	Main Street	Lefty Kam	Lebuh Chulia
	Cow and Fish	Reggie Lee	Lebuh Melayu
	"Ah Quee?"	Reggie Lee	Lebuh Ah Quee
	Mahjong Bird	Tang Mun Kian	Lorong Stewart
	Rotan	Tang Mun Kian	Lebuh Chulia
	Past		
	Property	Lefty Kam	Lebuh Victoria
	Born Novelist	Tang Mun Kian	Lorong Lumut
	Cannon Hole	Tang Mun Kian	Lebuh Cannon
	Cheating Husband	Tang Mun Kian	Love Lane
	Escape	Tang Mun Kian	Lebuh Aceh
	Too Narrow	Tang Mun Kian	Lorong Soo Hong
	Bullock Cart Wheel	Reggie Lee	Jalan Masjid Kapitan Keling
	Gedung Rumput	Reggie Lee	Lebuh Queen

Obviously, the artist did not choose to express the history of Georgetown along the timeline of history but chose to display the cultural heritage of Georgetown from all aspects of the residents' life. This is consistent with the government's original intention to spread and protect the heritage of Georgetown.

The wall sculpture of the first part of the category shows the multi-cultural trading in food, transportation, cloth, handicraft, service jobs and finance in the last century. Those contents of wall sculptures are very representative, covering all aspects of resident's life. There are 6 wall sculptures illustrating the special food of Georgetown. For instance, *Ting Ting Thong* (Appendix A.4), *Wrong Tree* (Appendix D.49), *Tok Tok Mee* (Appendix D.46), *Too Hot* (Appendix C.20), *Roti Benggali* (Appendix D.42) and *Kopi-O* (Appendix D.34) respectively show the traditional Chinese rock nuts candy, alcoholic beverage Tuak, hawked Chinese noodle, spicy Indian noodle Kelinga Mee, Indian burrito and black coffee made of local coffee beans. These foods composed of the daily culinary habits of local residents of Georgetown and still continue into the present. Besides, all the designs of the people's characteristic in sculptures based on the certain ethnic cultures, the features of traditional costume in the artwork is very common, such as Baju Kebaya for Malay, Dhoti for Indian, Kasut Manek and Baju Panjang for Nonya and Tang suit for Chinese. And there is another sculpture made by Baba Chua showing the story of a famous shoes designer Jimmy Choo (Appendix A.1). Moreover, special jobs and service are also shown through the wall sculptures. For example, *Untrained Parakeet* (Appendix D. 22) illustrated that an armomancy was popular within Indian community. *Labourer To Trader* (Appendix D. 52) illustrated a special phenomenon that the traders of Chowrasta was an Indian prisoner. The wall sculpture artwork *Double Roles* (Appendix D. 28) illustrated that the Indian police also serve as firefighters due to the shortage of firefighters.

According to the second part of categories “tradition of Asia and European colonial influence”, those wall sculptures show the imported religion, such as Chinese Taoism and Christianity. For instance, *Limousine* (Appendix D. 35), *Procession* (Appendix D. 40), *Temple Day* (Appendix D. 51) and *Chingay Procession* (Appendix D. 27) illustrated the Chinese sacrificial activity of Taoism and Buddhism. Islamic practices were not represented since the arrival of Islam took place during the 12th century. Whereas the Making Georgetown initiative was based on the UNESCO criteria which focused on the colonial history of Georgetown, starting from the late 18th century. Besides, there are four sculptures expressing the unique historical phenomenon and events of modern Georgetown in the last century, such as ‘*Yeoh*’ *Only* (Appendix A.5), *One Leg Kicks All* (Appendix D.39), *Spy* (Appendix C.18) and *No More Red Tape* (Appendix B.7). Those sculptures respectively show the Chinese domestic servants, Japanese spies, and Chinese Yeoh communities for new immigrants of Yeoh families, and the replacement of jurisdiction from Indian office to Colonial office. Based on the analysis above, it could be observed that the Georgetown had become a modern city and had been strongly influenced by Chinese immigrants during early European colonization and the Second World War.

The third part of category, “unique architecture, culture, and townscape”, illustrated the narrow street, shophouse, disappeared street view of bull carts and sparrows, and celebrity’s stories of building. There are 9 sculptures to delineate the street view of Georgetown, including *Cannon Hole* (Appendix D.25), *Narrowest Five Foot Way* (Appendix B.8), *Rotan* (Appendix D.41), *Mahjong Bird* (Appendix D.36), *Too Narrow* (Appendix D.47), *Bullock Cart Wheel* (Appendix C.14), *Gedung Rumput* (Appendix C.15), *Main Street* (Appendix B.9), and *Cow and Fish* (Appendix C.11). These wall sculptures depict the streetscape of Georgetown before modernization when using

trishaw and bull cart as a main transportation. The bull cart as a major transportation vehicle was packaged in Georgetown. It passed through the narrow streets and transported goods to various places. Among those streets, Chulia Street is the most important transportation road, which was called “Main Street” by local people due to the continuous falling of grain seeds during transportation, a large numbers of birds were attracted. Therefore, a large number of sparrows often gathered around the houses in Georgetown. However, with the modernization of Georgetown, these streetscapes are no longer exist. The narrow streets were widened, limousines have replaced the bull carts, and the view of swarms of sparrows also disappeared.

Furthermore, there is an interrelationship among those category. For example, *Rope style* (Appendix D.50), *Bullock Cart Wheel* and *Gedung Rumput* show that the Unique environment and transportation in the early 19th century. Penang is an island, so fresh water is scarce. Indian traders took water from waterfalls at the foothills and sold it to Georgetown. Under this circumstance, at the beginning of the last century, bull carts were very popular in Georgetown. Because of the large number of ropes required to fasten the water containers, there were many shops of woven straw ropes at Jalan Pintal Tali. Moreover, because Penang's external transportation basically depends on shipping, as shown by *Pilgrims* (Appendix A.2), it also enlarge the demand for straw ropes. Furthermore, the narrow streets and potholes on the road made manpower as a more convenient way of transportation, which was known locally as Beca, as shown as *Beca* sculpture (Appendix D.23).

To sum up, this category of content of wall sculpture reflects that the design of the artworks mainly was attributed to the cultural background of foreign immigration. such as Chinese and Indian cultural backgrounds. It also highlights the European colonial

influence. The contents of these sculptures cover the aspects of food, clothing, housing, and transportation of Georgetown residents, and completely expressed the characteristic of Georgetown as a commercial city. The theme of wall sculptures tended to express that Georgetown is a city with multiple foreign cultures. The overall theme of the wall sculpture, “voice from the people”, more specifically expresses the lifestyles of the residents of Georgetown, and then reflects the historical changes from the perspective of the resident’s life. It does not describe history in a textbook way, but indirectly represents the history of Georgetown by choosing a specific period of culture phenomenon or life style.

4.2.3.2 The role of wall sculptures

Sculptures as an approach of placemaking should be explored together the environment. Scholars should not only explore the way of decoration of environment, but also reveal the characteristics of the environment, historical culture, residents' memories, and urban landscape where the sculpture is located. The sense of belongings was based on residents’ historical memories in Georgetown. The old buildings, landscapes, street images and lifestyles can enhance this sense. To the contrary, the changes of trading mode, living environment and styles of buildings will possibly result in the loss of the sense of belongings of residents.

Wall sculptures are creatively involved in the architectures of Penang, making the buildings part of the expression and meaning of the sculpture. Sculptures and architectures interact and coexist. In other words, components the architecture, such as windows or doors, become incorporated into wall sculptures. The artworks comprises not only of the wall sculpture but also the building itself and the residents daily lives within it. This meets the preferences of the middle class for their pursuit of artistic

surroundings. For example, in *Escape* and *Cheating Husband*, the designer fully used the historical background of the environment and combined the sculpture with the historic building to vividly express the theme of the artwork.



Figure 4.7: Escape on Lebuah Acheh



Figure 4.8: Cheating Husband on Love Lane

Escape is located at Lebu Acheh where was the jail building in 1805 but now is used as a godown by the old Acehnese community. Compared to the other buildings in Georgetown, its walls are thicker and windows are smaller. For tourists or the new generation, the sculpture *Escape* vividly shows the historical context of the building in a simple way. The entire artwork is shaped as a rope that extends from the window to the ground. The narrow window and 'rope' together expressed a subject matter - jailbreak. These two elements are indispensable since a single sculpture cannot show the meaning of escape. Moreover, there is no extra textual descriptions on the whole work. Through the combination, this artwork conveyed an abstract meaning to the viewers.

Wall sculpture *Cheating Husband* is similar to *Escape*, since both of the two sculptures were created by Tang Mun Kian. *Cheating Husband* is installed at the entrance of the Love Lane through Lebu Chulia. This sculpture is relatively high and is not easy for

tourists to discover. The entire sculpture is the same with *Escape*. The shape of the rope extends from the window to the ground, together expressing the subject matter: the escaping man hiding out by the window. Artist taking full consideration of the historical background of Love Lane try to hint at the living conditions of old residents in the past. Love Lane was a place where wealthy businessmen hid their mistresses, who lived in the second floor of these shophouses.

However, also in the Love Lane, another sculpture named *Budget Hotel*, which is located in the place two meters away from *Cheating Husband* sculpture, expressed a completely different story.



Figure 4.9: Budget Hotel at Love Lane

At the turn of the last century many shop houses at Love Lane were changed into cheap hotels for backpackers, businessmen and low-income workers. This phenomenon presented by this sculpture is not common in all 52 sculptures. The backpacker

presented in the content is closer to the present image. However, just over a decade later, this situation changed. The budget hostels began to move to the edge of Love Lane, and the original buildings became bars, cafes and souvenir shops. These shops are avant-garde and fashionable, so it attracts a large number of tourists.

Two functions of a building that experienced different periods of time still exist in Georgetown and have become a unique architectural feature of Georgetown. The *Budget Hotel* and *Cheating Husband* sculptures show the process of this historical development and original residents' memories.



Figure 4.10: Café, Bars at Love Lane

Part of the wall sculptures shows the urban outlook and traditional events of ancient Georgetown. These wall sculpture artworks have played a very good role in conserving the memories of the Georgetown urban landscape which is now disappearing. For instance, *Chingay Procession* and *Narrowest Five Foot Way*. The two sculptures show

the narrow streets of the Old Georgetown and the traditional activities of acrobatics. With the development of tourism, these traditional activities and urban features are difficult to see. However, local Chinese community still adheres to traditions. In each Lunar Year of the Tiger, the Penang Chinese will hold a float parade and a ceremony to celebrate the important festival of Taoism. The sculpture *Procession*, which reflects the Chinese culture, is still prevalent in Georgetown, reminding tourists and local residents that this is an important cultural heritage that should not be forgotten.

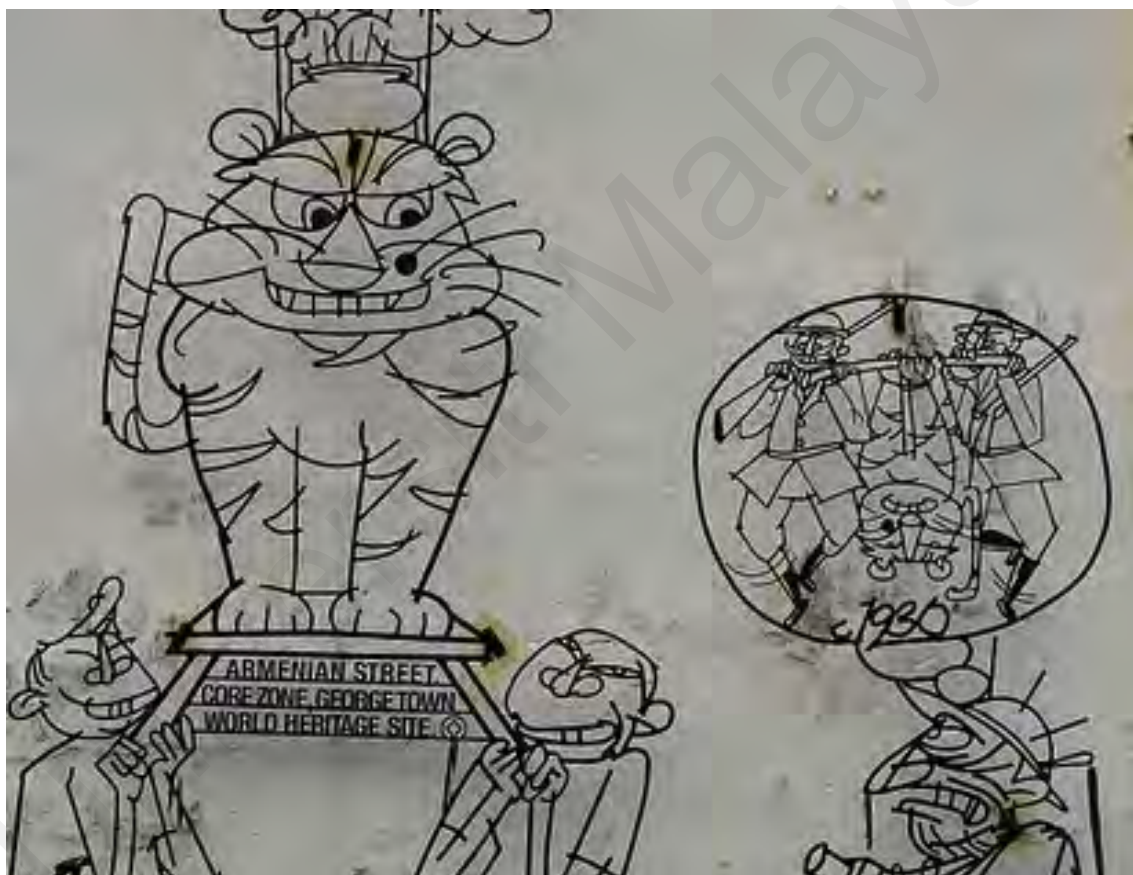


Figure 4.11: Procession



Figure 4.12: The Tua Pek Kong Hneoh Grand Float Procession

Georgetown was born with many world-famous celebrities, and Making Georgetown wall sculptures also fully expressed this. Those sculptures details Georgetown's celebrity story, Such as Jimmy Choo, Ting Ting Dong.



Figure 4.13: Jimmy Choo wall sculpture by Baba Chuah

However, most of the traditional trade methods exhibited by these works have disappeared and replaced by a new tourist industry based on art culture.

Due to the emergence of new tourist industries, old handicraft workshops and businessmen have gradually lost market advantage and competitiveness of in the Georgetown heritage area. Because of the rising of goods prices and housing costs, these traditional handicrafts are difficult to survive. Due to the messy environment of family workshop production methods, a large number of shops are no longer able to meet the demands of tourists for clean and tidy streets in the world cultural heritage area. Under this circumstance, many of them gradually moved to the edge of the city.

For example, Lebu Armenian, where *Then and Now* are located, according to the text in the wall sculpture, the street was original place of well known bronze shops, but by now, the street has become a place of recycling shops, which collect used newspapers, cans and plastic bottles. However, according to writer's observations, Lebu Armenian has now become a popular tourist destination. Museums, restaurants, cafes and galleries have replaced the traditional shops in recycling waste. As shown in the Map 4.1, the state of sculpture presented has already become the past.

Now Lebu Armenian has become an upscale area that meets the aesthetics of the middle class. The house was repainted and the street was clean. Only this sculpture still tells the history of the past.



Figure 4.14: Then and Now sculpture



Map 4.1: Café, Museum, Galleries, Shops at Lebuah Armenian

4.2.3.3 The differences of aesthetic preference towards residents

The wall sculptures of Georgetown changed the appearance of the city, reflecting the growing demand for tourism and the aesthetic changes of residents. In this process,

there is some aesthetic contradictions, since not all residents recognize and accept this change.

However, residents' aesthetics has already been changed after seeing the transformation of urban landscape. This is a change from pragmatism to aesthetics. The low-income workers and the middle to upper class all have a different aesthetic preference.

The author interviewed the inhabitants, and found that low-income workers' attitudes towards the artistic placemaking and wall sculptures are always negative. Alice is a waitress from Philippines who works for a budget hostel near to the *Tok Tok Mee* wall sculpture on Lebu China.

Cao: "Would you stop for reading the words on the artwork? Do you know what those artworks are talking about?"

Alice: "I have not read it yet. They are around me, every day I passed by it but I don't interest. I think, only those people interested in that artworks will read it, the locals do not read it. We are busy for work and earn money. I think it may talks about the history of Penang."

Cao: "How do you feel about living in such an artistic and cultural heritage city?"

Alice: "These artworks bring a lot of tourists; my business has become very good. But my salary is still too low, and the cost is too high, the food, the transport, every month I cannot save money. I rented a room in Georgetown, but now I prefer to living in this hotel (where she is working for) to save money. Now so many cheap hotels around here, and the decoration are very beautiful, so fashion, backpackers always chose the clean and art hotel. We had to lower the price to attract more guests to pay the rent."

Cao: "why do not you decorate your hotel again to attract more guest? I saw lots of people change the house into a very artistic and stylish look."

Alice: "of course we would like to make our hostel more beautiful, cos tourist prefer, but, Government forbidden."

Cao: "really?"

Alice: "Georgetown old buildings are cultural heritage, you cannot change the appearance and inside also. Yes, sometimes you can, but you need to apply first. But government always reject. It so difficult, so... we don't have choice, and we still need money to decorate hah."

Cao: "How do you know?"

Alice: "I heard from my boss."

Cao: "so how about your idea, you don't like those stylish and artistic hostel, right?"

Alice: "No I like, and its necessary for your future business, but so far, cannot."

But Nick, a Chinese owner of the Noob hostel, next to the artwork *Iron Smith* on Lorong Toh Aka, gives a different answer. Nick shows his interests in art and wall sculptures, and he also decorates his own old shop house into a fashionable budget hostel.

Nick: I have read, every time I passed by I would stop to read it, but some of those words are not clear. When my foreign friends come to my hostel and ask me where is interesting in Penang, I introduced those wall sculptures, but if I don't know about it when they asked me what those artworks talked about. I feel very embarrassed, cos I'm the local, how come I don't know my hometown. Now many tourists will ask me this question also, I can answer a little, I think it is helpful to my hostel business. In my hostel, as you can see, there are many decorative elements of the Georgetown cultural heritage, and I didn't change the structure and the use of this old house, but with decorations only. I took those pictures (Photo of Georgetown wall sculptures) by myself. I think Georgetown's cultural heritage and artistic atmosphere is very important, and those artworks tell the people even the local people the history and heritage of this place, and more attractive to customers, and make this city more beautiful. I think that why people came to Penang and that's why I like to live here, cos I am that one who loves culture and arts.

Residents strongly disagree with the changes in the arts and culture, resulting in the change of the composition of population. Residents who identify and follow this artistic change began to stay in Georgetown, such as Nick. At same time, there are also steady influx of immigrants who had the common view, such as Alice and Ngo. But those who disagree or are unable to adapt to such changes have started emigrating outside of Georgetown. For example, Chan Eason was a Georgetown resident study in University of Malaya. His family and he have already moved to Butterworth in 2013. Chan's parents leased their old house in Georgetown and bought a bigger house in the Butterworth. When the writer asked why he moved out of Georgetown, Chan replied:

“Georgetown is fast developing now and there are plenty of opportunities. But now more and more tourists, more and more noisy, my parents are ordinary office workers, they cannot engage in art and other travel business. So, if we stay in Georgetown, our living cost will be too high. I prefer to rent out the house and use rents to improve the quality of life. For our family, what we need is income, not art stuff on the street.”

Obviously, in the second wave of aesthetics gentrification in Georgetown, the divisions

of inhabitants in artistic conception led to a change of the composition of residents. The old city is continuously occupied by fashionable and artisanal residents. The visual analysis of the wall sculptures shows that the artistic atmosphere created by the sculpture, the aesthetic experience, and the revival of the cultural atmosphere of Georgetown are not attractive to the low-income class. Rather, the artistic atmosphere became a barrier for some low-income people to make a living there. But for the middle-upper class, the cultural renaissance and artistic change in Georgetown accords well with their aesthetic preferences. This divergence brought the hidden danger of spatial and social conflicts in the third wave of aesthetics gentrification.

4.3 The third wave of aesthetic gentrification of Georgetown

The third wave of aesthetic gentrification began to emerge in the ever-intensifying aesthetic contradictions of residents. During the first two phases of the installment of wall sculpture, the contradictions broke out during the wall sculpture of the third and fourth phases. It has become a social issue of competition for land and space, and cultural and aesthetic discourse.

4.3.1 The third and fourth phase of installment of artwork, intensifying social conflicts

Until 22 July 2012, Georgetown had already set up 24 wall sculptures. During the third phase, 13 artworks were installed. Including *Three Generations* on Lebuh Kimberly, *Jimmy Choo* on Lebuh Leith, *Rope Style* on Jalan Pintal Tali, *Procession* on Lebuh Armenian, *Property* on Lebuh Victoria, *Beca* on Lorong Stewart, *Born Novelist* on Lorong Lumut, *Budget Hotels* on Lorong Chulia, *Cannon Hole* on Lebuh Cannon, *Chingay Procession* on Gat Lebuh Prangin, *Double Role* on Lebuh Chulia, *Gold Teeth* on Lebuh Queen, *High Counter* on Lebuh Carnavon.

Because of the establishment of *Making Georgetown* wall sculpture, the street has already been changed. This change triggered the snatch of space between residents and artworks. Remarkably, cars, advertisement post (Figure 4.15) and sidewalk food store blocked the artworks. Different from those street elements involved in the recreation of artwork, those cars, post and food store hid the artwork and obstructed viewer's sight. Tourists are hard to find the artworks even if they are guided by wall sculpture tourist map. Zhang Xuemei is a Chinese tourist from Mainland China. She feels upset when she cannot find the artwork when walking for a long time. She feels sad that the Georgetown residents has realized the importance of artwork protection but never take action. They even to some extent damaged the heritage and art tourism identity, in order to reduce the satisfaction of Penang art tourism. It is absolutely not beneficial for the sustainable development of Georgetown tourism and heritage conservation. As she said:

"I walked for whole afternoon to find the artwork (Making Georgetown wall sculptures) guided by the tourist map, but when I arrived at the location I cannot find these artworks. Some artworks were blocked, I want to take a picture but I cannot close to it only saw a small part of the art. Some artworks were used as a flag shelf, and some were blocked by garbage in front, it's very smelly. There is a piece of wall sculpture, a candy shop actually opened in front of it, many people simply cannot find this piece of work, let alone promote the cultural heritage of Georgetown. That wall sculpture has been rusty. I think this does not respect the artist. This makes my experience of Penang travel greatly discounted, but some foreign painters' murals are still very attracting me."

This situation Ms. Zhang described actually occurred. A street dessert store had occupied the location of *Same Taste Same Look* (Figure 4.16). Even though the writer used a tourist map, it is still hard to find. However, the owner of the store rejects to answer if they are authorized from government of the street occupation. Moreover, another artwork called *Progression* is planted flags as Ms. Zhang said (Figure 4.17). It is easy to find they illegally damaged the wall sculpture artworks and occupied the street where should be installed with this artwork.



Figure 4.15: Advertising Post in front of the Main Street wall sculpture



Figure 4.16: Store in front of the Same Taste, Same Look wall sculpture



Figure 4.17: Progression wall sculpture was planted flag

Adam, a Germany tourist tramped in front of the *Main Road* wants to find the best angle to take a photo of the whole artwork, but finally he gave up. He said:

“I don't know why there is a huge advertising post. It's so ridiculous. Nobody knows the artwork had been covered behind the post.”

“I am a fine art teacher in primary school, I fly 12 hours from Berlin because I know Georgetown has plenty of murals and street art. I made a plan to spend my holiday in Penang since I know Ernest Zacharevic painted some Murals here. But, as you know, Malaysian seems does not care about street art, they did not protect it at all.”

“Maybe just this artwork is blocked, you can find more wall sculpture in Georgetown.”

“So many artworks I cannot find, not only this one. Sometimes when I find it, it is in the car parking. So funny.”

The most frequent situation is that car blocks tourists' views. The author had walked around Georgetown heritage area and found the parking management in Penang is not organized well. In order to protect the old buildings and keep the original environment of Georgetown, car parking in the heritage area is hard to satisfy the demand of regulation. Thus, cars occupied the narrow streets. (Figure 4.18 and Figure 4.19)



Figure 4.18: Cars blocked the wall sculpture



Figure 4.19: Cars blocked the wall sculpture

In addition, in August 2, 2016, Pokémon game came into the Malaysia made situation of Georgetown wall sculpture worse. The originally crowded streets, due to the influx of Pokémon players, become much more crowded. In order to attract players, the game designers set the Pokémon base in popular places. Georgetown cultural heritage zone has become the hardest hit. Not only that, there are places where high popularity of the

murals and wall sculptures located become Pokémon capture stronghold, where a lot of people wandered. According to the official Pokémon capture map of Georgetown provided by Pokémon Company (Map 4.2), Pokémon positions completely cover all the wall sculptures' set points. Players completely blocked visitors' sights. Moreover, most players riding a motorcycle to the capture stronghold and caused serious traffic jam, thus worsening the travel experience of foreign tourists. *Cannon Hole* that is located in Lebu Cannon is the most affected by Pokémon (Figure 4.20).

Firman Hanie is a Georgetown inhabitant for 24 years and he is also a Pokémon player. When the writer asks him about the influence of the Pokémon game on wall sculptures and tourism, he said:

“I grew up in Georgetown, I have a Malaysian pickle shop, with my mom. Those wall sculptures bring to Georgetown great changes. Georgetown became a beautiful city, so many foreigner tourists in Georgetown. After the Pokémon came into Malaysia, the streets became particularly crowded; I know it was crowded already. Especially at peak hour, after get off work, many people will choose Pokémon to pastime. Actually, those artworks are often the place where is the Pokémon base, and people stay in there completely blocked the streets. Tourists are impatient to squeeze into the people to see artworks. But too many people there, they cannot take pictures. And nobody can read the words of the Georgetown history and culture. I mean the words on the artwork. I think visitors will not come again if it gets worse. It is too bad.”



Map 4.2: The Pokémon Map



Figure 4.20: The Pokémon Player and cars as obstructers in the way of artworks

The last phase ended on 04 June 2013. All 52 Georgetown wall sculptures are installed (Map 4.3). The last 28 artworks are *Iron Smith* on Lorong Toh Aka, *No More Red Tapes (Happy Hours)* on Jalan Transfer, *No Plastic Bag* on Lorong Prangin, *Quiet Please (Street Fighters)* on Lebuah Gereja, *Retail Paradise* on Lebuah Campbell, *Rotan* on Lebuah Ah Quee, *Roti Benggali* on Lebuah King, *Same Taste Same Look* on Lebuah Cintra, *Shorn Hair* on Jalan Sungai Ujong, *Spy* on Lebuah Cintra, *Temple Day* on Lorong Muda, *The Main Street* on Lebuah Chulia, *Then & Now* on Lebuah Armenian, *Ting Ting Thong* on Lorong Seck Chuan, *Tok Tok Mee* on Jalan Masjid Kapitan Keling, *Too Narrow* on Lorong Soo Hong, *Too Salty* on Green Hall, *Untrained Parakeet* on Lebuah King, *Win Win Situation* on Lebuah Muntri, *Yeoh Only* on Gat Lebuah Chulia, *Ah Quee?* on Lebuah Ah Quee, *Gedung Rumput* on Lebuah Queen, *Kopi 'O'* on Lebuah Kimberly, *Mahjong Bird* on Lorong Stewart, *Narrowest Five Foot Way* on Lorong Stewart, *Kandar* on Lebuah Ah Quee, *Duck* on Lorong Che An, *Haj Pilgrimage* on Gat Lebuah Acheh.



Map 4.3: The layout of Making Georgetown wall sculpture

After the last phase of installment of artwork, the number of street art in Georgetown is saturated, except the Making Georgetown wall sculptures, Mirror Georgetown Murals and Louis Gan's Mural. A plenty of illegal murals and artwork rapidly occupied every corner of Georgetown. This situation was out of control and it initiated the social conflicts among local artists, government, local residents and foreign artists.

In order to control the number of street art and preserve Georgetown's heritage, government ordered to remove all of the illegal and undeclared street art pieces. However, local residents and local artists opposed to it. The residents thought that artworks which were painted or installed on they own house, government has no right to interfere. Besides, local artists protested the government, advocating that Georgetown belonged to the Penang residents whose heritage is reflected, so the government should

allow the artworks made by local artists, instead of those produced by foreign artists.

There are two authoritative newspapers witnessing this social conflict. *Nanyang Daily* post the article shows:

“Qiu Wufeng (邱武丰): Although his (Ernest Zacharevic) works are popular, but it also attracted the dissatisfaction of some local painters, they brought discontent with murals to protests against local artists’ artworks were ignored. This has caused a lot of thoughts: Is Ernest’s murals called murals? Local painter’s murals can not be called murals?”

In addition, there was a group of local Malay boys pointed that there is lack of local culture and community emotion in Ernest murals, so that they launch The Silent Figure Project with the help of the Lebuah Aceh Interpretation Center. Thereby arousing the awareness of self-identification of local people and those potentates. They said: We do not need outsiders tell us what is local feelings, they cannot do. There is not necessary for foreigners to teach us what is our culture and art.”²⁴

And *Sinchew Daily* post the local artist painted the murals to against:

The mural, which is made by local artist, which is less than 50 meters away from Boy Ride Motorcycle at Lebuah Ah Quee. On the wall, the artist painted the head of an ancient woman wearing a crown, the half face of which was painted with gorgeous makeup of Beijing Opera, and the other half was a shaggy skull with a bold and vivid color. And the artist autograph on the side of artwork is attracting: “Our Art is Dying (我们的艺术文化正在消亡).” The message of the whole work is clear, it is directed at the Lithuanian painter Ernest, and metaphor that facing foreign artists, local art can only quietly die.²⁵

²⁴ This interview is translated from: <http://www.enanyang.my/news/20140314/>

²⁵ This interview is translated from: <http://www.sinchew.com.my/node/890378>



Figure 4.21: The mural Our Art Is Dying

In addition, the increase of tourists led to that residents unable to live normally, so local residents also fought for their living rights. They deliberately undermined the murals painted by local residents on their own house. The painter Chen Shou Quan (陈首铨) is a local resident living in Chew Jetty. He painted a Grandmother And Child on the wall of his own house, but his artwork had been sprayed brown paint three days after finished. In the end, he had to sweep away his artwork. He expressed his dissatisfaction:

"I chose to paint this work after the government's approval. However, some neighborhood told me that tourists often take pictures in front of the murals and make noisy has caused the troubles to nearby residents. I also think that this approach is very uncivilized, but I also do not want to cause inconvenience to others or cause more unpleasant events. Therefore, it is better to remove it by myself than others destroy."²⁶

²⁶ This information translated from: <http://www.sinchew.com.my/node/890378>



Figure 4.22: The mural by Chen Shou Quan was sprayed paint

4.3.2 Intensification of spatial conflicts by incoming of foreign capital and renovation of heritage buildings

The social conflicts among local artists, foreign artists and local residents on the identification of local culture and arts, and the conflicts between the residents and the artworks that snatched their living space are initiated in the third wave of aesthetic gentrification. However, the entry of foreign capital intensified the spatial conflicts.

In February 2013, the wall sculpture *Labourer To Trader* was removed due to the Chowrasta Market Renovation Program. The progress of renovation continued for 4 years. During this time, on Georgetown, only 51 artistic wall sculptures were exhibited for tourism. Until January 2017, with completion of reconstruction, the artwork had been re-installed on the front wall of new Chowrasta Market complex. For this issue, the team leader felt optimistic and agreed with that Georgetown wall sculpture artworks should follow the heritage, and live with heritage. Tang says:

*Street art is exposed to the elements. It'll fade, get vandalised and what-not. In a way, it's renewable. If the owner decides to renovate and repaint the wall, the sculpture or the wall mural has to go. Which is also good, we'll get to see new work, new thinking.*²⁷

Tang' View shows that artworks have to follow the changes of the heritage and the old buildings of Georgetown, as the remove of artwork in renovation of Chowrasta market. This case shows Georgetown residents successfully take back living spaces from artworks. But it also means the heritages and old buildings started to vanish.

In response, local residents and heritage protectors pointed out that this action has completely destroyed Georgetown's cultural heritages. Even if the old Chowrasta Market has not been used, it is still part of the cultural heritages. However the renovation of the Chowrasta Market is vandalistic, as shown as follows:

*“Built in 1890, Chowrasta Market has a long history of more than 100 years. The reason why Chowrasta Market is famous since there was large number of hawkers operating around and thus formed a cultural heritage. The government should retain and take care of such a precious cultural heritage, or I am afraid it will be denounced again by UNESCO. About 30 hawkers hold remonstrations posters and strongly opposed to the renovation plan. They bombarded the Penang government attempts to stifle their livelihoods and precious cultural heritage of Georgetown.”*²⁸

Furthermore, foreign investors found the huge lucrative benefits of Georgetown's art-tourism, so they participated in the battle for spatial grab. The investors' participation facilitated the process of aesthetics gentrification.

According to the *Guanghua Daily* on 25 October 2015, a listed company Aspial from Singapore spent 200 million Malaysia Ringgit to buy 100 old buildings in Georgetown. In the company's report, all the old houses that they purchased will be transformed or rebuilt into commercial apartments. Unfortunately, all of these old buildings are located

²⁷ Interview with Tang Mun Kain 2016-5-12.

²⁸ This information is retrieved from:
http://penangmonthly.com/article.aspx?pageid=4028&name=chowrasta_market_undergoes_change

in the Georgetown heritage buffer zone.

“The company is in the process of renovating a row of 12 shop houses located between No. 134 and No. 156 in the Georgetown buffer zone, known as Rope Walk Piazza. The facade is painted in black and white, It will be rented out after completion at a price of RM7,000 per unit for hire. RM4,500 is the rent for downstairs and RM2,500 is for upstairs, which is higher than the market rent. As for the Bahari Parade, a total of 7 old buildings in a row from No. 69 to No.81 have also been renovated. Other sold old buildings are from No. 32 to No. 54 shop houses at Bricklin Road, No. 190 to No. 208 shop houses at Noordin Street and No. 2 to No. 10 at Ceti Lane, 47 buildings in total. As for Shop house No. 237 to No. 243 at Magazine Road, 2G, 2H, 2I at Bricklin Road a total of 7 shophouses; Shop houses No. 170 to No. 196 at Jalan C.Y. Choy (14 houses) and No. 1 to No. 7 at Lebuhr Macallum (4 houses), No. 50 to No. 66 at Cecil Street (9 houses), in total just about 100 houses.”²⁹

Those old buildings were surrounded by a large number of wall sculptures. These artworks have raised the commercial value in the neighborhood, so the foreign consortia were all willing to buy them. For instance, around Rope Walk Piazza, there are four wall sculptures, *Three Generations*, *Same Taste, Same Look*, *Rope Style* and *Retail Paradise*.

(Map 4.4)



Map 4.4: The wall sculptures around Rope Walk

²⁹ This information is retrieved from: <http://www.kwongwah.com.my/?p=36269>

As a result, residents strive for the living space from the wall sculpture at the beginning of third wave of the aesthetic gentrification. With the economic growth because of the art-driven tourism, foreign consortia, new immigrants and the middle class all participated in the contentions of spatial and land resources in the heritage zone. The local inhabitants gradually lost their original lands and houses, and then were driven out of Georgetown's heritage area.

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CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

The data collected through the interview with artists, tourists and residents, and observation and analysis have been done by adapting previous studies, hence, results and conclusions were made. This chapter presents a summary of the findings of development of *Making Georgetown* wall sculpture and its role in aesthetic gentrification of Georgetown based on the research questions that the writer asked above.

5.1 The development of 'Making Georgetown' wall sculpture in Penang

Research question 1: What is the development process of *Making Georgetown* wall sculpture?

This study initially aims to trace back the process of *Making Georgetown* wall sculpture. The findings from the previous chapter reveal that the history of *Making Georgetown* wall sculpture began in 2008 and continues to the present.

The findings shows Penang government is the sponsor for *Making Georgetown* wall sculpture design. The design of wall sculptures totally involved five artists, including Tang Mun Kian, Baba Chua, Reggie Lee and Lefty Kam. Among them, Tang Mun Kian designed most of the sculptures, in a total of 31 sculptures; a total of 11 sculptures were designed by Reggie Lee; Baba Chuah and Lefty respectively designed five sculptures.

The development of *Making Georgetown* wall sculptures is fast and went through three phases, which are planning phase for competition preparation, competition as preparatory phase for creating the wall sculptures and the installment phase of artworks. Besides, there is a Remove – reinstall phase besides the four phase of installment. With

the renovation of Chowrasta Market, the sculpture *Labourer To Trader* was removed until completion of rebuilding new Chowrasta Mall, and then it was re-installed on the wall.

The growth rate of wall sculptures from the first phase to the fourth phase was gradually accelerated. During each phase of installment, the numbers of wall sculpture are 3, 8, 13 and 28 artworks. In just three years, there are 52 wall sculptures that have been created and installed on the street of Georgetown. Moreover, for the distribution of wall sculptures, there are 20 sculptures in the heritage core zone and 32 sculptures in buffer zone. Most of these sculptures are concentrated around Lebu Cannon and Lorong Chulia.

The content of *Making Georgetown* wall sculptures is diverse, but they can be roughly categorized into three types by referring to the criteria of Georgetown heritage illustrated by UNESCO: there are almost a half of the total wall sculptures, namely 22 sculptures, illustrated multi-cultural trading mode of Georgetown. Nine sculptures illustrated the traditions of Asia and European colonial influence, while a total of 14 sculptures illustrated Georgetown's unique architecture, culture and townscape. Moreover, Chinese trading, religion and lifestyles are the most popular subject matter. There is only one sculpture showing Malay trading. *Making Georgetown* wall sculptures can be considered as a depiction of urban transformation during the late 18th century to early 20th century, and these sculptures were closely related with resident's life in food, cloth, transportation and religious activities.

5.2 The role of 'Making Georgetown' wall sculpture in aesthetic gentrification

Research question 2: How does wall sculpture impact aesthetic gentrification of Penang

Georgetown?

The role of *Making Georgetown* wall sculptures was analyzed by using Chang's (2015) concept of aesthetic gentrification, which broke down the process into three waves. Generally, this analysis shows that there is a strong relationship between the *Making Georgetown* wall sculptures and the prosperity of tourism and immigration of artists.

This finding suggests that Penang government was the main factor of the gentrification process. The first phase of installment of wall sculpture rapidly increased the number of tourists. Artists who were attracted by potential commercial values based on wall-sculpture tourism start to immigrate into Georgetown by opening their workshops and galleries. The artists as middle class started to replace those low-income residents. This phenomenon can be considered as the first wave of aesthetic gentrification initiated by *Making Georgetown* wall sculptures.

Second, *Making Georgetown* wall sculptures changed the residents' aesthetics and discriminated the neighborhood as a trendy or traditional, hence accelerated the replacement of residents by middle class who could adapt to the new artistic environment and the increase of the living cost. This development took place because of the changes in emotional connections; the historical memories presented by wall sculptures make some residents feel a strong sense of belonging. However, the development of tourism and the changes of living environment made some residents lose this sense of belonging. Placemaking thus brought both positive and negative changes. Next, wall sculptures promoted other artistic activities in Georgetown. It stimulated graffiti, murals and other street art, and provoked renovation of the old urban buildings to accommodate the aesthetic preferences of tourists and middle-class

residents of Georgetown. This marks the second wave of aesthetic gentrification initiated by *Making Georgetown* wall sculptures.

And, through this visual analysis of wall sculptures, the distinction of aesthetic preference is based on the understanding of traditional cultural revival through place making by wall sculptures. The memories of the trade mode, urban image and lifestyles that had disappeared were awakened by wall sculptures. The awareness of heritage conservation has been enhanced by some residents. Placemaking is important for the middle class whereas the placemaking is less meaningful for those who originally lived in Georgetown. Originally being an ancient trading port, Georgetown has become a historical and cultural city that is favored by the middle class. Gradually, low-income people were gradually expelled from the old town of Georgetown. This marks the second wave of aesthetic gentrification of Georgetown.

Third, *Making Georgetown* wall sculptures enhanced the value of properties. Social conflicts and spatial conflicts have gradually been escalated. The requirements of space for the low-income residents and for wall sculptures and other street arts unavoidably caused traffic jams. The reconstruction of old buildings took away the method of livelihood of small traders. Foreign capital discovered the commercial values of the heritage zone and began to purchase large quantities of cheap old buildings. The living space of local residents was compressed. In addition, a large number of the street artworks by overseas artists appeared and provoked protest from local artists and residents. This is a cultural competition among local artists and overseas artists, leading to a large number of illegal protest graffiti in Penang. This stage is considered as the third wave of aesthetic gentrification of Georgetown.

5.3 Summary

In conclusion, we can examine how the wall sculptures ironically created a sense of belonging for the new middle class rather than its original residents through the concept of placemaking. The wall sculptures presented the historical heritage and urban transformation of the city in a way that appealed to the younger generation because it created connections to the past. It was a way for them to remember the past. However, it did not resonate with the original residents who did not understand the content and viewed the wall sculptures as tourist gimmicks which interfered with their ways of living.

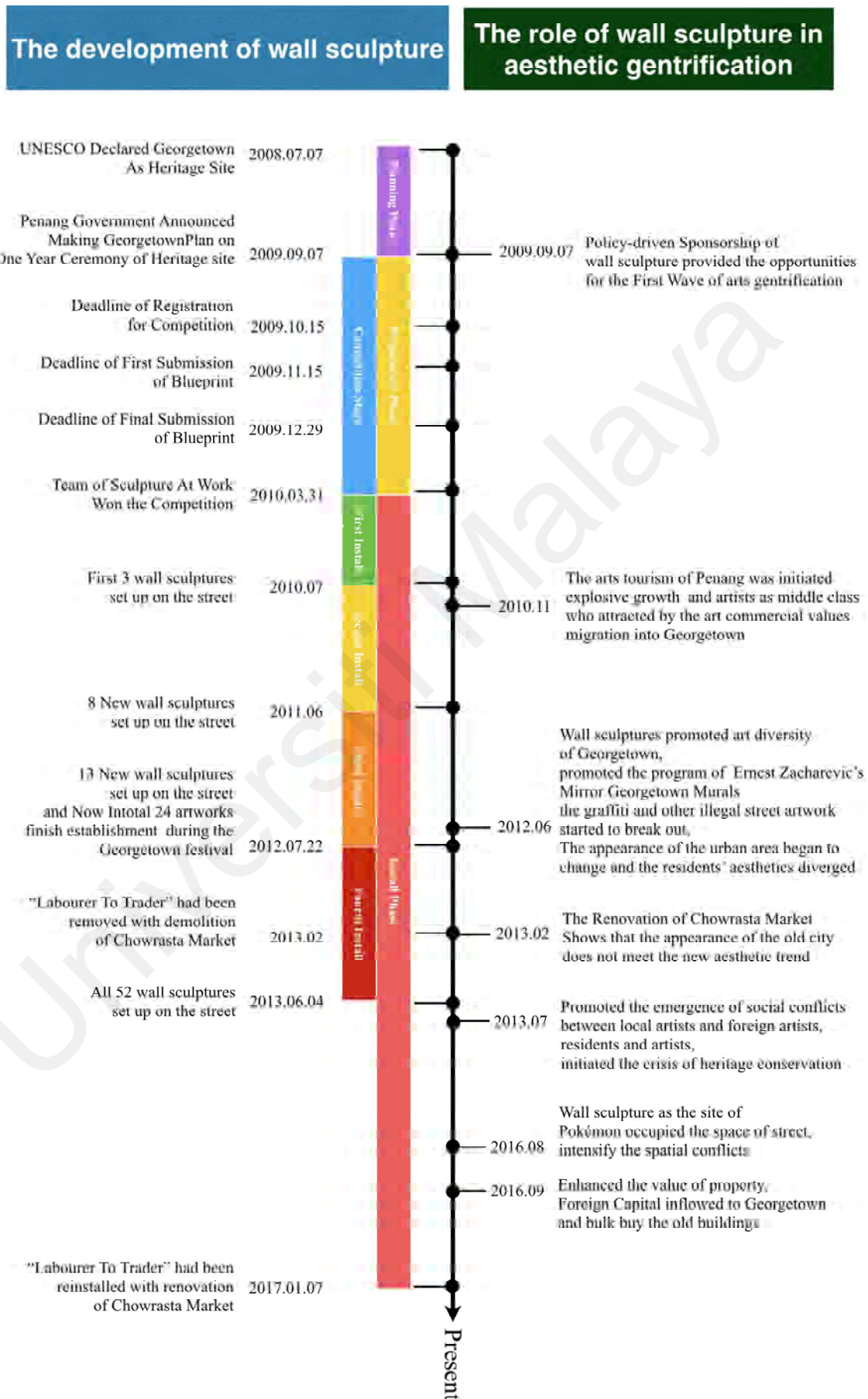
While this research has analyzed the period between 2008 and 2018, the full impact of the gentrification process still needs more explorations. However, this research shows that wall sculptures were the starting point for the gentrification process in Georgetown. The wall sculptures form an important series of work that captured the socio-cultural and economic transformation of the city of Georgetown during the colonial period. They will continue to play an important role in placemaking of Georgetown by its inhabitants, as a long-term reminder of a particular period in history.

As mentioned in Chapter four, the gentrification process resulted in both positive and negative effects in formation of the socioeconomic landscape in the city. While most researches have emphasized the positive aspects of economic growth that have taken place due to the gentrification process, this research has highlighted the socio-cultural conflicts and negotiations that arise due to this process. The increase of the value of properties and the foreign investments resulted in emigrations of local residents and caused more conflicts in the city. The transformation of the ownership of the city to foreign investors continues to be problematic, and it has important socio-cultural

implications. Subsequently, the gentrification process has resulted in the influx of foreign artists to Georgetown. As mentioned in Chapter five, this is also a primary cause of conflicts between the local artists and foreign artists. Local residents always feel that the local culture cannot be authentically represented by those foreign artists. This is an important issue that could be investigated in future studies.

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Table 5.1: Timeline of the development of wall sculpture



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