

AN INTERPRETATION OF FOUR SELECTED PAINTINGS  
FROM AMRON OMAR'S PERTARUNGAN

LEYLA BAJOUL KAKAHI

DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL  
FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE  
DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS (VISUAL ARTS)

CULTURAL CENTRE  
UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA  
KUALA LUMPUR

2017

**UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA  
ORIGINAL LITERARY WORK DECLARATION**

Name of Candidate: Leyla Bajoul Kakahi

Matric No: RGB120003

Name of Degree: Master of Art

Title of Thesis: An Interpretation of Four Selected Painting from Amron  
Omar's Pertarungan

Field of Study: Visual arts

I do solemnly and sincerely declare that:

- (1) I am the sole author/writer of this Work;
- (2) This Work is original;
- (3) Any use of any work in which copyright exists was done by way of fair dealing and for permitted purposes and any excerpt or extract from, or reference to or reproduction of any copyright work has been disclosed expressly and sufficiently and the title of the Work and its authorship have been acknowledged in this Work;
- (4) I do not have any actual knowledge nor do I ought reasonably to know that the making of this work constitutes an infringement of any copyright work;
- (5) I hereby assign all and every rights in the copyright to this Work to the University of Malaya ("UM"), who henceforth shall be owner of the copyright in this Work and that any reproduction or use in any form or by any means whatsoever is prohibited without the written consent of UM having been first had and obtained;
- (6) I am fully aware that if in the course of making this Work I have infringed any copyright whether intentionally or otherwise, I may be subject to legal action or any other action as may be determined by UM.

Candidate's Signature

Date:

Subscribed and solemnly declared before,

Witness's Signature

Date:

Name:

Designation:

## ABSTRACT

Amron Omar is one of the significant and talented Malay artist who has been a full-time artist for 30 years. Although Amron's works had left impressionable suggestions as his paintings creates unique identity, characters, and forms in figurative painting, which makes clearly and understandable one of the significant part of Malay culture. The aim of this study was seeking to identify and deep understanding social-cultural impacts and a relationship between the artist background and his paintings. This qualitative study drew upon to the Barrett's (1994) Art Interpretation Theory. In this regard, four selected artworks of Amron Omar during 1980-2000 have been interpreted by personal interpretation. Due to refine result of personal interpretation and prevent any researcher bias, the communal interpretation through questionnaire has been employed. These supportive data have collected from 20 Malay and 20 non-Malay art students. Regarding this exploration, it could be said; Amron Omar has exclusively focused on martial art as the main character to picture himself in his artworks which illustrate him as the warrior who defied himself. His artworks have been mirroring the endless self-challenge to get stronger, learn from his mistakes, develop his skills and never give up on his desires. Amron's artworks consciously or unconsciously were affected by his background, hometown (Kedah), the way his family (especially his father) brought him up along beside the affection of his society, culture, schooling time, friends. Subsequently, the *Silat* as the symbol of patriotism which is carrying the history and culture of Malay nation has ingrained into his spirit since the childhood. However, during 1970-1990 the announcement of national culture and revival Islam had fascinated Malay artists to illustrate their Malay identity and their culture also the artist has illustrated the *Silat* and Sarong to show his loyalty to the Islamic identity, Malay culture. Since the 1990s, Malaysian art experienced various kinds of artistic forms, visions, subject and media, and the Malay art was criticized by postmodern artists. In conclusion, Amron as loyal to his

Islamic-Malay character in his work has defined himself for new self-challenge with an aesthetic and critical perspective on his own artworks to explore the beauty of *Silat*. Conceptually, the struggle in the paintings is not between bad/evil and good or approve a winner or loser. In fact, these paintings have depicted self-challenges to develop, being better and proceed the successful.

University of Malaya

## ABSTRAK

*Amron Omar adalah seorang yang sangat signifikan dan pelukis Melayu yang berbakat serta telah menjadi pelukis sepenuh masa selama 30 tahun. Namun begitu dalam karya-karya yang telahpun dihasilkannya menggambarkan tentang satu identiti yang unik, berkearektor dan bentuk figuratif didalamnya. Keseluruhan hasil karyanya amat jelas dan penghayat dapat memahami dan ianya adalah sebagai satu signikan pada budaya Melayu. Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk mencari identiti dan kefahaman yang mendalam terhadap kesan sosio-budaya dan hubungan diantara latar belakang pelukis dan hasil karya-karyanya. Kajian Kualitatif ini, dibuat berpandukan pada Teori Intepretasi oleh Barrett (1994). Bagi tujuan ini empat karya Amron Omar dari tahun 1980 sehingga tahun 2000 telah dipilih oleh pengkaji untuk dibuat personal intepretasi. Berdasarkan pada keputusan personal intepretasi dan untuk mengelak pengkaji membuat intepretasi yang berat sebelah, communal intepretasi yang berbentuk soalan tinjauan telahpun dijalankan. Data sokongan ini telahpun dikutip dari 20 respoden pelajar Melayu dan 20 responden pelajar bukan Melayu. Berdasarkan dapatan dari tinjauan ini, bolehlah dikatakan Amron Omar lebih memfokuskan pada seni mempertahankan diri serta menggambarkan dirinya sendiri seorang pahlawan yang mempertahankan diri. Hasil karya-karya adalah gambaran terhadap Pertarungan dalam diri, mempelajari dari kesilapan, mempertajamkan kemahiran dan tidak putus asa dalam impiannya. Secara disedari ataupun tidak dalam karya-karya Amron, ia banyak dipengaruhi oleh latar belakang kehidupannya, persekitar tempat kelahirannya(kedah), dan cara didikan keluarga (terutama ayahnya) yang memberikan kesan pada dirinya disamping masyarakat, budaya, zaman persekolahan dan rakan-rakan. Sehubungan dengan itu Silat adalah sebagai simbol kepahlawanan dalam sejarah dan budaya Melayu yang menjadi pegangannya semenjak dari zaman kanak-kanak lagi. Walau bagaimanapun semasa tahun 1970 hingga tahun 1990 satu pengumuman dari budaya kebangsaan dan fahaman*

*Islam telah mengesyorkan pada pelukis Melayu untuk menghasilkan karya yang lebih beridentitikan Melayu dan budayanya. Pelukis (Amron Omar) telah memilih Silat dan Sarong untuk tujuan itu.*

*Kesimpulannya pengkaji mendapati, semenjak dari tahun 1990an lagi dalam Seni lukis Malaysia, kebanyakan pelukis menghasilkan karya dalam kepelbagaian bentuk yang artistik, kepelbagaian visi, kepelbagaian subjek, dan kepelbagaian media. Pelukis-pelukis postmoden telah menggunakan elemen-elemen ini untuk mengkritik. dalam kesimpulan, Amron yang berpegangan pada pengangan Melayu-Islam dalam dirinya telah menemui satu cabaran baharu terhadap keindahan dan satu perspektif yang kritikal untuk meneroka keindahan Silat dalam karyanya. Secara tersirat, dalam kesemua karya-karyanya adalah Pertarungan diantara watak jahat ataupun baik dan akan berkesudahan tanpa siapa yang akan menang atau kalah. Secara keseluruhan, karya-karyanya menggambarkan tentang Pertarungan dalam membentuk diri, menjadi baik dan berjaya.*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to take this opportunity to first praise God for being my strength and guide in the writing of this thesis. I am truly happy to trust in god with all my heart and lean not on my own understanding so he has guided and direct my paths. Without Him, I would not have had the wisdom, strongest to proceed successfully. This thesis appears in its current form due to the assistance and guidance of several people. I would like to offer my sincere thanks to all of them.

There are no proper words to convey my deepest appreciation to my father and mother who encouraged me and prayed for me throughout the time of my research. Undoubtedly I have not been able to endure the difficulty of these years without their unconditional trust, timely encouragement, and endless patience. Their love raised me up again when I got weary. I am also deeply thankful from my sibling, Reza, Ghazal, Niloofar who have also been generous with their love and encouragement despite the long distance between us.

I am extremely grateful to the honorable artist, Amron Omar, who dedicate his great times to me and I really benefit from his valuable knowledge and his point of view to the world and life.

I have been amazingly fortunate to have an advisor who gave me the freedom to explore on my own and at the same time the guidance to recover when my steps faltered. My sincere thanks must also go to my supervisor Dr. Loo Fung Ying who has the attitude and the substance of a genius: she continually and convincingly conveys a spirit of adventure in regard to research.

I would like to convey my deep gratitude and respect to Dr. Hanafi Jaffri for the trust, the insightful discussion, offering valuable advice, for your support during the whole period of the study, and especially for your patience and guidance during reading my reports, commenting on my views and helping me understand and enrich my ideas.

Many friends have helped me stay sane through these difficult years. Their support and care helped me overcome setbacks and stay focused on my graduate study. I greatly value their friendship and I deeply appreciate their belief in me. I am also grateful to my greatest friend, teacher, and advisor, Dr. Moshen khedri who gave me warm encouragement, thoughtful guidance, critical comments; I am deeply appreciating his wise vision and patient heart.

University of Malaya



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract .....	iii
Abstrak .....	v
Acknowledgements .....	vii
Table of Contents .....	ix
List of Figures .....	xiii
List of Appendices .....	xvi
<b>CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Research Background .....	1
1.3 Statement of the Problem.....	7
1.4 Aim of the Research .....	8
1.5 Research Objectives.....	8
1.7 Significance of the Study.....	9
1.8 Scope of the Study .....	9
1.9 Definition of Key Terms Used in This Study.....	10
1.10 Summary.....	10
<b>CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE .....</b>	<b>12</b>
2.1 Introduction.....	12
2.2 Contemporary Art .....	12
2.3 Malaysian Contemporary Art .....	12
2.4 Figurative Painting.....	17
2.4.2 Amron Omar as Figurative Painter.....	21
2.5 Silat Martial Art.....	24
2.5.1 Brief History of Silat in Malaysia .....	25

2.6	Summary.....	26
<b>CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....</b>		<b>28</b>
3.1	Introduction.....	28
3.2	Theoretical Framework.....	28
3.2.2	Principles of Interpretation .....	30
3.2.2.1	The First Principle .....	30
3.2.2.2	The Second Principle.....	31
3.2.2.3	The Third Principle.....	33
3.2.3	Theory of Interpretation on Amron Omar’s Artworks.....	34
3.2.4	Theoretical Framework Used in This Research .....	35
3.3	Research Design .....	35
3.4	The Subjects.....	36
3.5	Research Sites .....	36
3.6	Instruments .....	37
3.7	Research Process .....	37
3.8	Method of Data Analysis .....	38
3.9	Summary.....	39
<b>CHAPTER 4: FINDING, RESULT AND DISCUSSION .....</b>		<b>41</b>
4.1	Introduction.....	41
4.2	The Interpretation of the Selected Amron Omar’s Artworks .....	43
4.3	The Personal Interpretation of the Amron Omar’s First Painting .....	46
4.3.1	Main Features in the First Painting .....	46
4.3.2	Relationship between Form and Content in the First Painting.....	48
4.3.3	Socio-cultural Effects on the First Painting.....	54
4.3.4	The Reflection of Amron Omar’s Lifestyle in the First Painting.....	55

4.3.5	Conclusion.....	57
4.4	The Communal Interpretation of the Amron Omar’s First Painting .....	59
4.4.1	Participants’ Connection with the First Painting.....	59
4.5	The Personal Interpretation of the Amron Omar’s Second Painting.....	62
4.5.1	Main Features in the Second Painting .....	62
4.5.2	Relationship between Form and Content in the Second Painting .....	63
4.5.3	Socio-cultural Effects on the Second Painting .....	70
4.5.4	The Reflection of Amron Omar’s Lifestyle in the Second Painting .....	71
4.5.5	Conclusion.....	72
4.6	The Communal Interpretation of the Amron Omar’s Second Painting.....	73
4.6.1	Participants’ Connection with the Second Painting .....	73
4.7	The Personal Interpretation of the Amron Omar’s Third Painting.....	75
4.7.1	Main Features in the Third Painting.....	75
4.7.2	Relationship between Form and Content in the Third Painting .....	77
4.7.3	Socio-cultural Effects on the Third Painting .....	88
4.7.4	The Reflection of Amron Omar’s Lifestyle in the Third Painting .....	90
4.7.5	Conclusion.....	92
4.8	The Communal Interpretation of the Amron Omar’s Third Painting.....	95
4.8.1	Participants’ Connection with the Third Painting .....	95
4.9	The Personal Interpretation of the Amron Omar’s Forth Painting.....	98
4.9.1	Main Features in the Forth Painting .....	98
4.9.1.1	The Main Figure.....	99
4.9.1.2	The Second Figure .....	100
4.9.1.3	The Third Figure .....	101
4.9.1.4	A Hidden Face.....	102
4.9.2	Relationship between Form and Content in the Forth Painting .....	106

4.9.3	Socio-cultural Effects on the Forth Painting .....	117
4.9.4	The Reflection of Amron Omar’s Lifestyle in the Forth Painting .....	118
4.9.5	Conclusion.....	119
4.10	The Communal Interpretation of the Amron Omar’s Forth Painting .....	121
4.10.1	Participants’ Connection with the Forth Painting .....	121
4.11	Summary.....	123
<b>CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION .....</b>		<b>127</b>
5.1	Introduction.....	127
5.2	Conclusion toward the Aim .....	127
5.3	Implication toward Art Practice.....	131
5.4	Recommendation .....	132
5.5	Suggestion for Future Studies.....	132
5.6	Summary.....	133
REFERENCES.....		134
APPENDICES .....		140
Appendix A.....		141
Appendix B.....		144
Appendix C.....		149

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1: Amron Omar in his studio.....	1
Figure 3.1: Model of Interpretation theory on Amron Omar's paintings.....	35
Figure 4.1: Pertarungan III painting.....	47
Figure 4.2: Composition of Pertarungan III painting.....	51
Figure 4.3: Composition of archangel Michael defeating Satan painting.....	51
Figure 4.4: The milkmaid painting.....	52
Figure 4.5: Prisoner of my mind painting.....	56
Figure 4.6: The Malay and non-Malay interpretation of the first painting.....	61
Figure 4.7: Catan Diri (self-portrait) painting.....	63
Figure 4.8: Young woman reading in the studio painting.....	65
Figure 4.9: Spiral composition on Catan Diri painting.....	66
Figure 4.10: Young man waiting painting.....	67
Figure 4.11: Women in chair painting.....	68
Figure 4.12: The Malay and non-Malay interpretation of the second painting.....	73
Figure 4.13: Pertarungan painting, 1996.....	75
Figure 4.14: The fighter on the right side.....	76
Figure 4.15: The fighter on the left side.....	77
Figure 4.16: The imaginary diagonal in Pertarungan painting, 1996.....	78
Figure 4.17: Tringle and rule of third in Pertarungan painting, 1996.....	79
Figure 4.18: Feet of fighters in Pertarungan painting, 1996.....	79
Figure 4.19: Triangle shape between fighters in Pertarungan painting, 1996.....	80
Figure 4.20: Stag at Sharkey's painting.....	81
Figure 4.21: Right fighter in both paintings.....	82
Figure 4.22: Shadow and light on both fighters.....	82
Figure 4.23: The triangle form in George Bellow's painting.....	83
Figure 4.24: The triangle form in Pertarungan painting, 1996.....	83

Figure 4.25: Pyramid in Pertarungan painting, 1996.....	84
Figure 4.26: Pyramid and position of two persons.....	85
Figure 4.27: Horseshoe arch sample in Pertarungan painting, 1996.....	86
Figure 4.28: Horseshoes arch in the great mosque of Kairouan.....	87
Figure 4.29: Mihrab of the Zahir mosque.....	90
Figure 4.30: The Zahir mosque.....	91
Figure 4.31: The Malay and non-Malay interpretation of the third painting.....	96
Figure 4.32: Pertarungan drawing, 1997.....	98
Figure 4.33: The main figure in Pertarungan drawing, 1997.....	99
Figure 4.34: The second figure in Pertarungan drawing, 1997.....	100
Figure 4.35: The third figure in Pertarungan drawing, 1997.....	101
Figure 4.36: Hidden face in Pertarungan drawing, 1997.....	103
Figure 4.37: Hidden face, solarized, in Pertarungan drawing, 1997.....	103
Figure 4.38: The virgin of the rocks, painting.....	104
Figure 4.39: Hidden image in the virgin of the rocks, painting.....	105
Figure 4.40: The virgin and child, sketch and study.....	106
Figure 4.41: Hidden image in Dürer's artwork.....	106
Figure 4.42: Performance of right hand in Pertarungan drawing, 1997.....	107
Figure 4.43: Performance of left hand in Pertarungan drawing, 1997.....	108
Figure 4.44: Performance of right leg in Pertarungan drawing, 1997.....	108
Figure 4.45: Performance of left leg in Pertarungan drawing, 1997.....	108
Figure 4.46: Head movement process in Pertarungan drawing, 1997.....	109
Figure 4.47: Studies for Madonna and child, sketch.....	110
Figure 4.48: Three studies of a dancer, drawing.....	111
Figure 4.49: Figure movement #2, drawing.....	112
Figure 4.50: Study for forge in chalk.....	112
Figure 4.51: Figure study II, drawing.....	113
Figure 4.52: Vitruvian man, drawing.....	114

Figure 4.53: Hands performance in Pertarungan drawing, 1997.....	115
Figure 4.54: Hands performance in Vitruvian man.....	116
Figure 4.55: Feet in Pertarungan drawing, 1997.....	116
Figure 4.56: Feet in Vitruvian man.....	116
Figure 4.57: The Malay and non-Malay interpretation of the fourth painting.....	122

University of Malaya

## LIST OF APPENDICIES

Appendix A: A sample of the interview questions.....	141
Appendix B: The questionnaire for communal interpretation.....	144
Appendix C: A sample of the other Amron Omar's artworks.....	149

University of Malaya



## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Introduction

This study examined into interpretation of four selected artworks by Amron Omar from *Pertarungan* collection. The first chapter opens with a background to the research subject, problem statement, the significance of the study, research objectives, research question, conceptual framework and chapters outline. In the next section, an overview of the artist Amron Omar and his biography was delineated.

### 1.2 Research Background

Amron Omar is one of the Malay renown realist artists who was born in 1957, Alor Setar, Kedah, Malaysia. Amron started to paint prior to joining the school. Talent was soon discovered in the artist when he was at a mere age of three, he was able to draw some paintings duplicating figures from a storybook about Malay family's life "*Ahmad Dan Halimah*" that was a gift from his brother. It should be said that a Malay leading artist called Hussein Enas has illustrated all paintings within the storybook in watercolor.



**Figure 1.1:** Amron Omar in his studio

Amron's talent and interest soon put him into a daily routine of duplicating a diverse range of drawings that he observed in his surroundings. During his primary school in the

60s his paintings attracted the school's official's attention that led to his work *Tahan Taut* (translated as 'holding a fishing rod') as a cover page of the school's annual magazine. The work illustrated a technique of holding a fishing rod that reflects the fishmonger's strength and endurance in countering a weighty capture (Hasnul Jamal Saidon, 2012).

Later, in 1965, Blue Cross (milk board) company held a painting competition and called for people who collected the required number of labels tagged on the milk container. Amron was eager in taking part in the competition along with his supportive father, Dan Omar Bin Jaffar, who collected labels here and there so that Amron could be eligible as a participant. Along with his father's encouragement and support, Amron turned out as the first prize winner of Blue Cross's competition. Moreover, Amron's father played a major role in his life and passion for painting until he passed away in 1974 when the artist was 17 years old. It is worth to note that, Amron's father was not only a teacher specialized in Oriental studies, but also, he was great in carpentry and was known as a master of self-defense, a type of Malay martial art, although they called it 'Silat'.

Amron changed his naive style of figuring paintings and started to portray a much clearer face and other parts of the human body when he was seven years old. To this end, once his father and school board discovered his artistic talent, they attempted to encourage him to put his potentials into practice. His father took him to his uncle (Tok Cik Hasan) who was a famous poster designer in Alor Setar. His uncle instructed him two significant points relating to the figurative painting: the use of the graph/grid and the skin tones. After that, he had begun to make portraits and human figure from mass media.

When he was nine, his father suggested painting portraits of notable local people such as Malaysia's first Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman. Overall, since childhood, Amron gained a lot of knowledge and he has so far kept on learning more about art and painting. Also during the mid-1960 in his childhood, Amron was attracted to the post-

impressionist artworks by one of the greatest Netherland artist Van Gogh in an exhibition in Balai Besar, Alor Setar (Hasnul Jamal Saidon, 2012).

Probably due to inspiration from Van Gogh, Amron presented his artworks in some competition and succeeded in winning prizes. He worked heart in portraying his views about life and continue to improve himself as a painter. In the competition, Conjunction Ten Years Independence, he was winner again in 1967 at a young age of ten. A year later, he submitted 29 painting and won five prizes in art competition which organized by Esau petrol station. During this time, he learnt about Modern artist from the West such as Paul Cezanne and Pablo Picasso by reading an art book at the library at school.

As Amron approached twelve years old, the headmaster of his school, who was a relative of Ibrahim Hussein, a Malay prominent artist, recognized Amron's talent in art and paved for him the way to have a look at Ibrahim Hussein's artworks. That time Amron was on the elementary level and it was a great opportunity for him to promote his talent by comprehending famous paintings, like those drawn by Ibrahim Hussein. In short, since his childhood, praise, courage, environment, situation, and miscellaneous events have prompted him to figure out his bestowed talent (Pakhruddin Sulaiman, 2012).

In 1970, Amron focused on drawing individuals' activities and more profoundly on martial art fighters' performances, although he had never learnt martial art. Inspiration came from observing his father and brother's martial art practice. Fate called on that Amron was asked by a martial art master living nearby his home to draw step-by-step guide of martial art, for his disciples that soon paved another entry into Amron's artistic output that focuses on Malay folk art (Safrizal Shahir, 2012).

In 1974, took part in a national art competition held in Malaysia and won three prizes in three themes portraiture, scenery and competition. Unfortunately, he could not enjoy himself for such that triumph due to the demise of his father in mid-1974 right before announcing the final results before the release a result. However, through this competition

he met somebody named Anuar Abdul Rashid<sup>1</sup> who influenced his life in a great way by encouraging him to join Institut Teknologi MARA (ITM), Dungun<sup>2</sup>. Amron eventually registered as a student under the School of Art and Design at Institut Teknologi MARA (UiTM) after persuasion from his brother Omar. Amron had received advance training at the university and continue to refine his drawing of human figures. His drawing of martial arts specific Silat are notable works among other paintings during this time (Safrizal Shahir, 2012).

Subsequently in July 1977 artist moved to ITM of Shah Alam. During his time at universities, the artist changed his skills and styles dramatically and abandoned all the styles of drawing that he used to do in the past. He returned to the fundamental and seriously trained in mediums such as watercolor, oil painting, gauche, charcoal and postal. He painted many images, but there was always a sight of doubt that he felt insecure about his work. It was at this time, some of his works resemble a masterpiece and some of mediocre standard. The artist struggled to find out the reasons for his insecurity such loopholes in his paintings despite positive comments from others. His insecurity haunted him for long and after quitting his study at UiTM, he tried to intermix of the two separated facets: the characteristic in his fundamental skill and the configuration of paintings (Safrizal Shahir, 2012).

That despite his all knowledge received from studying in ITM, Amron is still of the view that his first teacher was his father who best impressed his life. It does not mean that his father taught him any principles or aspects of painting; he instead encouraged and supported his son. Looking backward to his father life depicts, that time Amron was observing his father defeated the master of *Silat* with only on strike move which was organized move and truly forceful he took lessons that a flux of self-defense, highly

---

<sup>1</sup> He was born in 1958 Langgar, Anuar Abdul Rashid is famous abstract painter from Alor Setar, Kedah. Malaysia borin in 1958, during his life until he won a prizes even in international level and he held so many group and solo exhibition in the world

<sup>2</sup> Dungun is a coastal district of the Malaysian state of Terengganu. Kuala Dungun is the capital of the district

focused and well-set discipline made his father as winner beside that his father never gave up on Amron he had faith on him and that was most valuable lecture artist. He accepted to believe in self and never give up with all attempted he has the victory (Safrizal Shahir, 2012).

He used to go Kedah to visit his village and sometime asked his friend as a model for *Silat*. In the meantime, he started to research toward a variable aspect of silent and observing a *Silat* dance which had done by a master of *Silat* in Kedah and at the end of 1979 his, he starts to create a realistic figure in *Silat* form which was based on image by performing *Silat* from a book titled '*Taman Indera*'<sup>3</sup>.

In despite of his unbearable lifetime in 1979, next year Amron still strived to submit his artworks for a major exhibition that was hold at Dewan Tunku Abdul Rahman. It was a huge exhibition until then. Among the visitors, Syed Ahmad Jamal and Redza Piyadasa as representatives of the National Art Gallery were present. Before Amron even hung his paintings, both Ahmad Jamal and Piyadasa were attracted to Amron's works and selected three of his paintings to be highlighted for the National Art Gallery collection. One of them entitled *Pertarungan III* (battle III) was exhibited in an art gallery in Festival Contemporary Asian Art Show at the *Fukuoka* Art Museum. He also received the honor of Young Contemporary Artists; Minor Award for a painting titled *Catan Diri* (self-painting) drawn in 1982. To add on, Amron received a Silver Award when presenting his artwork at Sime Darby Art Asia Exhibition in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in 1985.

These successes led Amron in leading his life as a full-time artist. He continued to be inspired with village lifestyles as an inspiration to his artwork since 1990. An event in 1992 where his village home was burnt down made him returning more with nostalgic references. However, as Safrizal Shahir (2012) remarks, "the original site (base) and artist

---

<sup>3</sup> *Taman Indera: A Royal Pleasure Ground: Malay Decorative Arts and Pastimes*, originally published: 1972 Author: Mubin Sheppard

foundation would be his hometown village that always linger in his dreams repeatedly”  
(p. 79)

In 2012, Amron had his first solo exhibition at the National Visual Arts Gallery with more than 150 works selected from the series *Pertarungan* (battle), which depicted by oil on canvas or paper, as well as 608 pieces’ paper sketches. Works on paper exhibited at Gallery 3A, while the work of oil painting (Ahmad.2012).

Amron’s works are rooted in the inherent nature of Malay tradition and culture. He creates many paintings, drawing and sketching. His visualization is very sharp and accomplished of the offering as if its quality is commendable. The artist meticulously planned and carefully delivered shapes, harmony of colors and texture with the utmost sensitivity.

Amron also established his dueling arena. He was the explorer to his own dueling arena, which helped him to look for the truth. Every response or any unusual behavior or natural processes based on mannerism on the characteristics of his own dueling either physically or emotionally. He had to challenge himself to extend higher and to achieve his dreams. Dueling is something that represents two characters that were interesting to struggle. Besides the two warriors were starving and responding in search of its rights. The artist also in his interview admits that; “these painting (*Pertarungan* paintings) are about my struggle, in every step of my life, I challenge myself”.

In Dueling, a winner will accomplish his dream and a loser who will vote out. In emotional dueling, victory and defeat are not always fixed because it will be counted until the moment of its destiny comes. In gearing up to duel, there would be winner and defeat characteristics and they are truthfulness of knowing the self. Dueling is also a struggle in opening the mysterious doors of the individual’s self, which was unknown or unaware in past (Mohd Yusri Abdul Rahman, 2012).

Apparently, Amron has been one of the most consistent artists ever to appear in a landscape of modern artistic production in Malaysia. He successfully established a high reputation in all his work. It is not easy to paint an individual who is doing struggle or martial arts performance. It is a contributing significantly to the transformation in the degree of quality in the context of the story of modern painting in Malaysia.

In general, it is a nonstop training towards 'truth' and 'justice' in art philosophy that is being managed by the vision of the artist. The purpose of artistic shaping is to expose the ego or to know self-inner's issues which relate to the perspective about life and self-truth. In this context of art, this training does not just affect artworks and artistry, but it covers the total area of the untruth itself (Parker, 2005).

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem**

This study concerns about the lack of research on the Malaysian artist, Amron Omar and especially his remarkable works for present and future generations. Such a lacuna in the literature led the researcher to demystify the concept behind the Amron Omar's figurative paintings. In addition, art students especially international students, seem to have no knowledge about Malaysian artists and their culture, religion and society, and also how Malaysian society and culture affect and shape the artworks of Malaysian famous artists like Amron.

Besides that, there seem to be an absence of documentation concerning interpretation of Amron Omar's artworks. Thus, due to the significance of Amron Omar works and lack of the studies on this topic, it appears to be relevant to explore this approach more in detail to fill a gap in the existing literature. In sum, this study explains that when one tends to lead a new generation of artist and introduce the history of civilization and art of a country and all affection on an artist, this dream can only be achieved by doing research on renowned artist and his artworks in that particular country.

#### **1.4 Aim of the Research**

The current study draws upon the Barrett's (1994) interpretation theory to so. As deliver an outcome that discusses the interpretation of the four selected paintings from Amron's *Pertarungan*. To be specific, this study aims to deliver a personal interpretation of the Omar's selected paintings from the *Pertarungan* collection based on internal and external evidences. In addition, there is a communal interpretation as supportive data based on the randomly audiences' life experience, feeling and basic knowledge to refine a personal interpretation and prevent this research from any personal bias.

#### **1.5 Research Objectives**

The objective of this qualitative research is to interpret of Amron Omar's artworks from *Pertarungan* collection. In other terms, this study tries to understand the following major issues in his selected artworks from both internal and external evidences following personal and refine with and communal interpretation developed by Barrett:

- i. To examine the relationship of form and contents in Amron's artworks.
- ii. To analysis the social-cultural context on Amron's artworks.

#### **1.6 Research Questions**

In line with the research objectives, following questions and sub-questions from the concern of the present research.

RQ. What is the interpretation of the Omar's selected artworks from *Pertarungan* collection?

RQ1: What are the main characteristics of the Amron Omar's artworks?

RQ2: What is the relationship of the form with contents on Amron Omar's artworks?

RQ3: How do socio-cultural context affect the Amron Omar's artworks?

RQ4: How do Amron Omar's artworks reflect his lifestyle?



RQ5: How do the participants (Malay, non-Malay) connect with Amron Omar's artworks?

### **1.7 Significance of the Study**

This study presents to readers both the external and internal evidences that form the basis of interpreting the selected four paintings of Amron's *Pertarungan*. The study not only makes substantial contribution to the field by giving the filling the gap in the literature (as mentioned in Section 1.3), the result may deepen art students' understanding (whether local or international) of the concept of the *Pertarungan* paintings in general and the Amron Omar's artworks in particular. Moreover, the results of this study may have somewhat global implications by giving to foreign researchers more insight into how society and culture influence figurative artworks in the context of Malaysia. Last but not least, the results may be of use for artists, especially novices, who are willing to know more about the characteristics of figurative painting in Malaysia and also, to be specific, to know more about the Malay magnificent realism artist, Amron Omar, and the interpretation of his artworks (*Pertarungan*).

### **1.8 Scope of the Study**

This study will be limited to an investigation through four artworks from Amron Omar's *Pertarungan* collection, and selected based on the artist interest. Therefore, the selected artworks will be two paintings, one drawing from *Pertarungan* painting and self-portrait painting. The researcher will focus on Amron Omar's experiences during his artistic life and the significant effect of social and culture issues in the artist's artworks and the concept of his work to respond personal interpretation. Moreover, the researcher will apply the communal interpretation as supportive and triangulate data to refine the researcher result and prevent any personal bias. In this order, the researcher will choose the randomly selected respondents (20 Malay, 20 non-Malay art students) to interpret Amron's artworks base on their feeling, basic knowledge and life experience.

## 1.9 Definition of Key Terms Used in This Study

- a. Theme: A theme referred to a subject of writing or talking and personal idea.
- b. Principle: A general a fundamental truth or law assists as the base of a system of behavior or belief.
- c. Aboutness: It is a term, which is concerned in library and information science (LSA) linguistics, and philosophy of mind. “Aboutness” was to be preferred to “subject” because it got rid of some epistemological problems.
- d. Figurative painting: Any kind of material, artwork such as oil painting, acrylic, pastel and watercolor and ...that subject is a human figure whether nude or clothed and the act or not depicting the human figure.
- e. Interpretation: This is a way to explain or illustrate the concept of something.
- f. Multiple: It refers to requiring or including numerous sections, elements, or members
- g. Endeavor: It means to attempt hard to do or accomplish something.
- h. Relativism: This theory claims that knowledge, truth and ethics exist related to society, culture or historical context are not utter.
- i. Individual: it refers to a human being as separate from a group.
- j. *Pertarungan*: This is a Malay word which means fight.
- k. *Silat*: This is a Malay word to express martial art and refers to a style of the Malay art of self-defense. Regardless, ‘*Silat*’ has varied styles; it generally falls within the two broad categories of combat and dancing in ceremony.
- l. Aesthetic: It deals with beauty and the subject area of beauty.

## 1.10 Summary

The background information in this chapter shows Amron Omar has exclusively focused on martial art as the main character in his works and attempted to show a variety of aspects of martial arts in the context of Malaysia. To date, as mentioned earlier, no research has worked on the concept of Amron’s works. In this chapter by providing the

objectives such as characterize of art elements and principle, affection of society and culture, Amron's life style and relation between form and content will fully cover the concept of his works. In this regard by drawing upon the interpretation theory by Barrett (1994) to identify, explore and understand objectives and as final result, gain the concept of Amron Omar artworks.

University of Malaya

## CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter reported on a literature review concerning the research topic that covers different areas related to Amron Omar the artist. The first section discussed past literatures on the history of contemporary art in general and the status of contemporary art in Malaysia during the 1970s, 1980s, 1990s in particular. Development of figurative paintings was discussed in general, and an overview of Malaysian figurative paintings was reported. Artists' feedback on the Amron Omar's artworks was also reviewed and in the last section, literature on *Silat*, which is the main subject of Amron Omar's artworks were looked into.

### 2.2 Contemporary Art

Contemporary/modern art is about the art's life started from the 1930s. According to Hodin (1961):

Modern art is cognition, the findings of which, often highly specialized and elaborated on an analytical basis, are organized into a new visual order. Linking up with a tradition of its own choice, of universal significance and without limitations in time and thus breaking with the chronological tradition generally acknowledged in art history, it strives for a synthesis in the work of the individual artist and through the mutual influence of its different trends upon one another; a many-faceted process moving towards a new unitary concept, a new artistic tonality, in other words style (p. 174).

### 2.3 Malaysian Contemporary Art

Contemporary/modern art began with self-taught watercolorist artists as small group in Penang during the 1930s. Earlier, it was hard to find any socio-cultural archetypes and reasoning behind artworks. Artists could simply look at their surrounding and produce their works or meticulously scrutinized how their seniors paint so that they get some experience via exposing to actual art works. Pioneers in this field can be Abdulllah-Ariff, Yong Mun Sen, Kuo Ju-Ping, Tay Hooi Kit, etc. They not only affected each other's

impressions but also, they were affected by British art given that Malaysia was colonized by Britain over that time (Redza Piyadasa, 1993).

In general, Malaysian contemporary art began and developed with a range of historical and cultural impact. Western colonials like Dutch, Portuguese and British transported western art to Malaysia. Through their influence in policies in administration, education, these effects also involved social and economic systems and art (Mulyadi Mahamood, 2007).

After 1950s, Malaysia's contemporary art movement began to gain speed it was time Chinese traders and other communities came or stayed frequently to Malaysia. That time Malaysia was facing substantial changes and growth in the scene of the social and political, in line with these events, artists get more space to display their view of life style, through these changes by their artworks. Perchance it was prominent time to present artists and their arts.

After independence in 1957, art became a symbol of the unified form of experience and Malaysian artists got rid culture barriers and could freely produce their works. Malaysian art moved away from low-profile provincialism to high-key internationalism. Afterwards, artists were responsible for developing art by depicting national concepts in their works.

Redza Piyadasa (1993) remarks that the nature of Malaysian modern art grows up and improve immature visions for the future. Likewise, one of the Malaysian most prominent painters who lived during that time believed that<sup>4</sup>:

---

<sup>4</sup> Untuk ulasan terperinci mengenai pelukis-pelukis tanah besar China sebelum Perang, rujuk: Michael Sullivan, Chinese Art in the 20th century, Faber and Faber, London, 1959 dan, oleh pengarang yang sama, The Meeting of Eastern and Western Art, Thames and Hudson, London 1973. Lihat juga: Toshiko Rawanchaikul, The Modern Arts Movement within the Chinese Community - The Activities of Chinese Artists before ww ir, essel dalam The Birth of modern art in Southeast Asia: artists and movements (katalog pameran), Fukuoka Art Museum, Fukuoka City, Japan, 1997.

*Dari wisma keramat Merdeka, era kebebasan inilah yang membuatkan pelukis membesar, hidup, bersinar, dan sedia melahirkan idea-idea berani dalam karya... telus dari kekuatan jiwanya, visinya. Merdeka bermakna kejayaan Di Malaysia yang mengghairahkan ini, pelukis tegak gagah seraya berhasrat menjadikan negaranya megah (p. 6) [From the sacred independence house was an era of freedom, which makes an artist, grew up, living, shining, and ready to produce bold ideas in the works... transparent from the strength of his soul, his vision. Independence means success in Malaysia, which this artist excitingly, as he proposes to get the country is magnificent.]*

It should be said that after several years, the situation of that time was fragile, as Redza Piyadasa (2000) mentioned the negotiations towards the formation of a new constitution require soldering another variety of dissimilar pastimes. The structure of power from generation to generation should be highlight position of the king political party and party was taught by race; exaggerated about the things that affect the mastery and equity in areas such as economic wealth, language and culture.

All of this is compressed into a mosaic that could be consolidated although the optimism and goodwill, but did not minimize or reduce the differences or sense of remoteness of each component of differences was concealed or ignored the question. This frame and destroyed in 1969<sup>5</sup>.

Meanwhile, it should be noted that *Nanyang*<sup>6</sup>, *Angkatan Pelukis Semenanjung*<sup>7</sup> and Wednesday Art Group<sup>8</sup> were the few movements that gained much popularity then. From 1970s onwards, the issues of identity and quests for a cultural unity become prevalent topics in Malaysia's political and cultural scenes.

---

<sup>5</sup> The most important events in question here is race riots 13 May, 1969, which broke out between Malays and Chinese segment of the population of the capital city Mud several hundred people were killed in three days of fighting and bloodshed.

<sup>6</sup> "The Nanyang Style refers to the use of a mix of styles and techniques from Chinese pictorial traditions and the School of Paris, which was practiced by a group of artists who featured prominently within the local cultural scene in the years after the end of the Second World War... According to Piyadasa, a Nanyang artist is an artist who is also a NAFA affiliate, teacher or student. Other artists who studied privately under NAFA teachers have also been called Nanyang artists." (Pieng, Swee, et al.).

<sup>7</sup> "this group of artists that upholds the principle that art is a medium of cultural expression is the Angkatan Pelukis Semenanjung (APS). This group was founded in Kuala Lumpur in 1956 under the presidency of Hoessein Enas, while the late Tan Sri Yaacob Latif was the first patron (ASP Catalogue, 1990, 36).

<sup>8</sup> In 1954, founded in Kuala Lumpur by Peter Harris, English painter, art educator and Art Education Inspector for the Education Ministry, this group that regarded art as a medium of self-expression produce major artists such as Patrick Ng, Ismail Mustam, Syed Ahmad Jamal and Dzulkifli Buyong. A wide range of theme and style has arisen in this group. The themes of landscape, childhood, and society (Sim, 2015).

Racial prejudices and tensions that caused 13 May riots in 1969 were very well learned. The need for a national identity of a multi-racial and multi-religious society seemed imperative and immediate (Redza Piyadasa, 1993).

The most important single factor in art is the artist, the creator. Yet the art scene in any country is comprised of not only artists but also patrons, art suppliers, organizers, gallery owners, critics, and others who help to create the mystique that surrounds the world of art. The art world of the fifties was already peopled by characters that entered and re-entered the worlds of reality and imagination, forming interweaving patterns in the fabric of contemporary culture.

The popular idioms for them are Expressionism and Abstract Expressionism, which emphasizes on emotive-subjective idioms in the process of work. The popularity of Abstract Expressionist painter focuses on the subconscious feelings, painter and respond to gestures (Redza Piyadasa, 2000). In addition, they did not effort to describe the social and political situation. The relationship between Western art and modern Malaysian art could not deny, especially in the 1960s. Local artists who went abroad to study exposed to the works of European artists and brought their influences back by incorporating it into their works. The main interest of local artists at that time was mainly in Expressionism and Abstract Expressionism (Mulyadi Mahamood, 2007).

According to Syed Ahmad Jamal (1982), the director of National Art Gallery, one of the responsibilities of artist is to sharpen our sensitivity to the world around us and within ourselves. Contemporary artists move in different directions of commitment and by drawing material from myth and legends they probe questions of identity, their culture heritage, personal cosmology, the place of religion in artistic expressions, the extension of calligraphic gestures, the physical properties of materials and the dichotomy of traditional and contemporary values.

The key development of the Malaysian contemporary art was due to public-related issues, such as the New Economic Policy as well as the Congress National Culture in 1971, which began to directly affect thinking in the field of art. For example, indigenous and non-indigenous people's social and political awareness was increased. For Malay artists, an emphasis on ethnic consciousness made them seek for revealing apparent origin and their cultural heritage. As a result, in the end 1970s and early 1980s, the artists' propensity towards portraying religious issues became greater (Redza Piyadasa, 2000).

Moreover, the 1960s-government opened ITM in order to train and develop local painters and designers. This institution targeted at updating and introducing a new generation of the Malay art in period 1970s-1980s. It was due to the point that, in one side, the revivalist painters focused on idealism and a sense of racial pride and, on the other, they were concerned about the status of Malay identity and its presence in local paintings.

In the early 1980s, the government started the Islamization program to instruct Islamic values, morals, and customs. This movement has raised concerns among non-indigenous people that, their social and cultural will be marginalization. Furthermore, several politicians want to formation of an Islamic state for the local art world. It cannot be denied that, the case of ethnic unrest like this allow certain reactions in the employment of painters among non-Malays, such as: encouraging new search within recognize "selves" vis-a-vis' the others. Whatever it was, it was interesting about the quest of ethnicity for both groups of creative people, namely Malays and non-Malays, and it is extruded direction a new focal point in modern artistic production in Malaysia (Redza Piyadasa, 2000).

The 1990s was considered a period of growth for Malaysian art. Art's enthusiasts' supporters gradually facilitated the acknowledgment and admiration of art products before the end 1990s. This development was unsurprising since such a communal



admiration was due to the economic condition of the country. By having look at other countries, including developed ones, it can be seen that there are established circles of art collectors and connoisseurs as well as art lovers that belong to different socio-economic states. In general, it can be implied that a dynamic economy is susceptible to create a platform for the invariable growth of art industry in Malaysia. In sum, as Soon (2013) quotes; “a Malaysian contemporary art suggests something characteristically unique, whether on stylistic or thematic grounds, to this nation, constituting a practice that is in essence also deeply connected to its specie historical trajectory” (p. 319).

#### **2.4 Figurative Painting**

A figure painting refers to visual artwork, with any kind of material artwork such as oil painting, acrylic, pastel and watercolor etc. The subject is a human figure whether nude or clothed and the act or not depicting the human figure. Historically, the human figure as one of the momentous subjects for paintings had reinterpreted by painters in various styles. Every creative person has one interpretation of the human physique and for some of them; the anatomy is very important but for other artists is not. In fact, all artists try to express their emotion and mood in their paintings by different way. Therefore, the figurative paintings could be in any mood of painting such as famous one realistic or abstract and Impressionism etc., (Morgan, 2000). According to Hatcher (2013),

The artist has looked to the human form for his inspiration and content. The human figure has been used to depict our narratives, adorn our, and give release to that passion for creativity in the human soul, spirit, and mind (p. 3).

Artists from Renaissance time studied on the human figure and then they render mathematical of human form. This was the standard course for artist until 1870 when the pioneer of Impressionists got permission to publish from the rigid principles of the late artist. Besides that, in French academies, the falsification on the human figure in paintings was an infection of movement from Post Impressionism to Expressionism. The figurative

painting came less realistic and it is moving on gradually of every art- movement (Hatcher, 2013).

#### **2.4.1 Malaysian Figurative Painting**

Before the 1960s, high-standing and renowned people, such as royals and celebrities, were mostly the subject of figurative paintings by Malaysian artists. Later, the artists were willing to add variety to such a painting style and to portray other subjects, including commoners, life style, nature, culture, tradition, customs, etc. They tried to move from the observed to the observer.

During the time of Malaysian independence, figures acted as an operative tool by which the artists could convey their own life experience. For example, a portrait of a Malay female symbolized the beauty of Malaysian tradition, values, and culture like dressing style, life style, etc. Most things in different domains, such as industry, economy, society, culture, changed. No doubt, such changes influenced artists and their art works. In addition, the painter displays purity of reason of the less well off; however, it is self-contained nature still. As highlight example: in ardor of 1978 election, there was image of multi-racial's women in electoral posters, which display the social context on that time. This time the realism style with the portrayal of villagers in a more rustic and romantic was purposes of artist. Somehow, it is similar to Nanyang's painters. This is a style for representational art and pursuing to depict in new social environment, (Redza Piyadasa, 2000).

By the early of 1980s, the idea of cultural and political marginalization has been featured as a serious issue among many non-Malay artists. The emergence of new developments in figurative painting can be due to need or feel directly about new issues arising out of the new condition of society. The emergence of the employment pattern of these figurative, adjusted for social commentary, is an important development. For serious artists were not successful times the newly politicized dichotomy, namely the

indigenous and non-indigenous. Perhaps even made them create the impression that non-indigenous in this country have been placed on the outskirts of the status. Due to socio-political considerations, paintings have been influenced locally, (Redza Piyadasa, 2000).

By the way, they experienced more freedom in drawing what they were eager to paint. Malaysian figurative painting increasingly grew up and preset and indispensable social issues no longer restricted artists, especially in the late 1980s. They turned to explore varied mediums, evolved them through a developmental stage, and finally could come up with new forms in the field of figurative painting that characterized societal mindsets and thinking patterns relating to culture, aesthetics, and history. Meanwhile, new post-modern awareness based on 'self' and 'other people' has emerged to dominate the consciousness of non-Malay group of artists involved in expressing issues, (Redza Piyadasa, 2000).

The shift to figuring paintings in the 1990s, as *Angkatan Pelukis Semenanjung* (APS) propagated it fifty years ago, did not at all times try to forge an idealized and coherent vision relating to a local identity. Such an attempt was somewhat informed by various post-modernist urges with the aim of engaging with art as a kind of commentary or societal criticism. Nevertheless, the typical achievement of contemporary painting during the last decade has confined the collection of numerous artists because they become enthralled in their individual achievement and focus on working wholly with the painting medium. Such a propensity has also conveyed to novice artists that have congregated so that they create works within specific forms of contemporary figuration in order to break into the market. Lucrative galleries on the receiving end of a rising attention to collection have further directed capitals to evolve an innovative generation (Soon, 2013).

In addition, the preference for the figuring painting could be as a politically driven leaning. In view of Malay artists, but not all, it stood against Islamic ideologies, beliefs and values. It indexed a hegemonic style of modernism, as mostly claimed by the UiTM art schools in the 1980s. However, non-Malay artists have viewed figuring paintings as a

visually effective tool used to recount cultural life-worlds and diversity. That seem not to be integrated to growingly vocal discourses that have wanted to create a Malaysia's self-image as a Malay Muslim-oriented setting, using particular social and cultural understandings that underscore the intricacy of lifestyle in a multiethnic context, (Redza Piyadasa, 2003).

Moreover, religion has equally affected figurative paintings. By tradition, Muslim artists believe that 'Allah' is omnipotent and the exclusive creator of the world and its creatures whether alive or non-alive ones. For that reason, they have typically evaded figuring paintings and considered it controversial. The legal age of Malaysian contemporary, artists' favor abstraction over figurative styles; they often focus on installation, performance, or conceptual works in painting. Ahmad Zakii (2007) is a Malaysian artist who has tried to elucidate this matter. He states, "The subject of figurative works has been addressed and debated for centuries by Islamic scholars with no clear consensus", (p. 1). Ahmad Zakii (2007) has added that:

My take is very simple. Does painting a Christ like figure or a Buddha make me less of a Muslim? Is my faith in my religion so easily shaken? The answer is no. I go very deeply into my religion and I find Islam to be a beautifully tolerant religion (p. 1).

However, commonly artists who portray societal themes fail to recognize the aestheticizing level that their principles and policies experience, whereby subjective beliefs are boosted and glorified via art. They make use of painting as a communicative scheme for polemical thoughts instead of finding out the probability of organizing the political in the formal and structural attributes of a prearranged medium. In turn, this confines drawing or any other artistic medium, as pertinent or beneficial provided, that it is dependent on a societal issue.

After just about a decade and a half that figuration turned out to be the prevailing form of portraying pictures - helping specific critical discourses on the matter of subjectivity

in the Malaysian context – it appears that an actual move has lately perceived Malaysian artists approach drawing from more intricate pathways (Redza Piyadasa, 2000).

#### **2.4.2 Amron Omar as Figurative Painter**

In the Malaysian modern figurative painting, Amron Omar is one of the significant artists who has been an artist from for 30 years. although Amron's work had left impressionable suggestions as his painting creates unique identity, characters, and forms in figurative painting, which makes clearly and understandable one of the significant part of Malay culture. Syed Ahmad Jamal (1982), mentioned that about Amron Omar as Malay- Muslim artist who is an expert in depict the human image or artist with talent acknowledgment for choosing suitable technique and medium. In this regard, Mohd Yusri Abdul Rahman (2012) also states that:

In the field of figurative painting Amron is one of best figurative painter who will not be forgotten and many people in the world will see his workplace but they do not receive an estimate of the personality behind these painting (p. 183).

It seems, Amron's artworks introduce him and unconsciously through his paintings the artist will be recognized. Syed Ahmad Jamal (1982) states that "Amron Omar is an artist who traces the continuity of academic naturalistic school with his superbly executed figurative painting" (p. 18).

Amron is looking for evoking of the spirit and essence of Malay culture, individuality in mainstream of local culture. To this end, Syed Ahmad Jamal (1982) considered Amron Omar as a painter who "detects conation academic naturalist genre by producing the highest quality figurative painting" (p. 18).

Furthermore, Piyadasa in the article express that "his realistic, represented rendering of his chosen themes have been enhanced by his accomplished handling of human anatomy. Amron used the tones from light to dark, including shadow to embody his idea of realism", (Cited in Liza Marziana Mohammad Noh, 2015 p. 34).

The series of *Silat* paintings was advertised in best bank art book of Museum Negara, and Amron was considered as a visual known artist who is commitment to traditional culture by martial arts (*Silat*) which an important aspect of the Malay heritage in social and cultural repetition. Moreover, the skills of Amron's human anatomy drawing is so alive, (McGovern, 2009). There is no doubt these all are reflection of the greatness, uniqueness and knowledge within Amron. In addition, Hasnul J. Saidon (2012) expresses that:

Amron presence as 'masters' (part-time lecturer invited by Fauzan Omar) when it was timely. Amron following training exercises and a gestural received from Fauzan Omar. All involving 'human figures'. The human figure is a 'text', which should be read, explored secrets. The veiled secrets behind codes that are read by the outward signs of the mind's eye, (p. 1).

It could be seen, a perfect understanding of forms and technique in painting has caused by good training, which make his artworks different and magnificent from other artists in the world. It seems, the artist has considered skillful on figure, who has high praise and scrupulous vision (Jamal, 1982). To this end, (McGovern, 2009) write about Dueling on Amron's works "the fight /duel, is an example where his skills drew the movement of the body in natural light stands out clearly" (p. 97).

From view of concept of Amron's work, the context of his work is along with society, culture and political concept, in his work he attempted to rediscover Malay heritage but with his own language. Besides that, artists all over the world carry the essence of their beliefs, the spirits of their ethnicities, their family background, ancestral heritage, spiritual insights and regional settings not necessary state policies or national political consideration.

The artworks of Amron stems mostly from the Malay tradition especially from the world of martial arts, which shows the spirit, and character of the Malay/Muslim community in the local context. Director of National Visual Arts Gallery- Mohd Yusof Ahmad (2012 ) said:

The presence of works by Amron also managed to add local inspiration, although his work is still within the framework of formation of the West. A harmonious union between the East and West has been created in his mature and impressive body of work (p. 1).

The truth is battle is symbol of fight with secular life until ones awake from this dream, so this is spiritual journey of everybody to discover their truth of self and back to their true nature. According to Pakhruddin Sulaiman (2012),

Amron works with dominant theme, normally a struggle against oneself through the images of a *Silat* fight. A scrutiny shows that the two fighter/dueling, as depicted in the painting are actually the image of one and same person, to be exact the self-portrait of artist himself (p. 63).

Also, another expert, Hasmi Hashim (2000), expresses that:

*Adalah mustahil karya bukan sebahagian daripada erti wujud diri, wujud jasad. Jasad tidak mungkin hanya sebagai perlambangan figura (mati - yang mematung itu berhala), melainkan penyaksian akan hukum dalam hakikat wujud manusia, matriks dan Maha Pencipta [It is impossible for art to be excluded from the meaning of existence of self, the being of the body, it's not possible for the flesh to function only as a figurative representation, it is but a treatment of reality of human existence, of the matrix of great creator] (p. 8).*

Facial expressions of ideas between two contradictory elements in dueling, which can be interpreted with more and deeper depth, such as between rudeness and mannerism, tiny and coarse, external and internal, far and near tight and loose, push and pull, lost and found, have been subtly shown in Amron's works.

This vision could be explained as aesthetics, but there is another aspect, which is beyond the aesthetic vision. Beyond the surface of this artwork, there is a depth meaning of life, experience, culture, and philosophy of life and the journey of the artist life. Malay aesthetic values are reinforced by a confident mannerism attributed through the conflicting principles that have accidentally created 'pressure' Principles of contradictions are personalized aspects in Malay artistry that have characterized through the element of problems to produce dynamic visual properties.

Finally, Amron's works on dueling are very intimate with Eastern tradition and aesthetic concept which even though it is at the maximum visual artistic sophistication in

form, technique and style, but as a matter of fact it emphasizes more on the totality of the performance of the creative person in his artistic rendering. Performance totality means that artists would have honorable and praiseworthy values through deeds, manners, ethics and respect. Deflection of self and artistes' habits will be reflected through his artworks, (Safrizal Shahir, 2012).

## 2.5 Silat Martial Art

*Silat* is Malay word that means art of self-defense. In other word *Silat* is martial art, which sometimes use in fight or it use dance in traditional ceremony. Regarding to Sheikh Shamsuddin (2005) about definition of *Silat*:

*Silat* is the combative art of fighting and survival believed to have originated from ancient Malaysian and Indonesian civilizations. Until recently there has been no fixed form of instruction. It has now evolved to become part of social culture and tradition and is a fine physical and spiritual training. There are various styles of *Silat* (p. 1).

There are a wide range of translation and different root for *Silat*. Sheikh Shamsuddin (2005) have noted some of these definitions; for instance, in Malay definition *Silat* means *Seni* (art) with the peacefully defend and wisely attack, another meaning *Silat* formed from the word '*kilat*' which means lightning because of characters of lightning such as sharpness, authority, speed, liquidity, and risk. Further, when someone has all these qualities can have called *Sikilat*, gradually change to *Silat*. In Arabic, language came from letter *Saad*, which means weapons. In addition; there is believed that, the word *Silat* emanated from *Silap* or *Solat*' Word by word, *Solat* has meaning of praying on god or concentration to communicate with other human kind. '*Silap*' means imprecision; that means as self- defending, he has to concentrate of mistake or inadvertency of the opposite to attack (Shamsuddin, 2005).

A '*Pencak Silat*' or '*Seni Silat*' has same meaning, *Seni* means art as Malay word but *pencak* came from Indonesian word *Pentjak*. As mentioned before, '*Silat*' has influence



Indian and Chinese. In the case *Pentjak* likely be extracted from Pen-Cha Chinese word which means avert or deflect. Sheikh Shamsuddin (2005) says:

Indonesia, the art is commonly referred as *Pentjak Silat*. *Pentjak Silat*, also spelled *Pencak Silat*, means to defend oneself. In Malaysia, the words '*Silat*' or '*Seni Silat*' are frequently used rather than *Pencak Silat*. *Seni* means art. It is internal, delicate, wise, and elegant (p. 3).

In Malaysia *Seni Silat* has great and valuable concept for person who is doing *Silat* means well-being spiritually and physically. It should be noticed that; to do *Silat* in Malay language is *BerSilati*.

There are many different styles of '*Silat*' in the world. In Malaysia, there are more than 150 famous *Silat* style. Regarding to him some of the known style of *Silat* in Malaysia is; "*Gayong, Melayu, Cekak, Bunga, Pulut, Kelantan, Lincak, Lincak Kalimah Rajawali, Burung Putih, Gayong Fatani, GayongGhaib Sendeng, Gerak Kilat, Silat Melayu Keris Lok 9*" (Shamsuddin, 2005, p. 17).

Overall, some *Silat* are more aggressive and defensive some other one have soft movement and similar to dance and some musical instruments will use during *Silat* performance. *Silat* includes some movement of hand foot. However, the principle of *Silat* is to put off violation. Every trainer will train spiritually, and mentally besides the learning how self-defense such as kicking, blocking, tumbling, striking, and agility movements. The movements are regarded as, for example, poetic movement, movement with name of animals, and metaphors. Here, some are; "*Serangan Harimau-Tiger Attack Kacip Emas-Golden Slicer, Tarian Kuda Gila-Crazy Horse Dance, Tali Gantong-Hanging Rope, Ular Sawa Berendam-Sinking, Python Timang Puteri-winding Princess, Patah Dayong Nasi Hangit-Broken Paddle Overcooked Rice Malaikat Maut-Angel of Death*" (Shamsuddin, 2005, p. 18).

### **2.5.1 Brief History of Silat in Malaysia**

There are many different theories and fiction about *Silat* origin and no doubt, the creation precise source of *Silat* is uncertain although there is some evidence that illustrate;

it created by influence of India and China culture combative. Nonetheless, there is not enough proof, as there are many styles of *Silat* and indistinctive founder. Besides that, it is difficult to find who develop the different type of *Silat*. History marks existence of *Silat* existed back to the seventh century A.D, although the form of self- defense or *Silat* it was in basic level. As the current form of *Silat* maybe it, back to fourteenth-century empires. This is time *Silat* reformed and became the particular feature for sultans in different country like the Malay Peninsula, Bali, Java, the Sulawisi, and Borno Island. *Silat* started to spread slowly as empires became weak by civil wars. From this Tim, as Malaysian people live under foreign authorization *Silat* was way to people for develop their national soul. In this line, Shamsuddin (2005) says that:

When the people living in the region were under the authority of foreign colonial powers such as the British, Dutch, Portuguese, and Japanese, *Silat* was regarded as a means to cultivate national spirit and was strictly prohibited. Because anyone caught practicing *Silat* was severely punished, *Silat* activities were continued in secrecy (p. 8).

## 2.6 Summary

The beginning time of Malaysian contemporary art dated back to the 1930s. Prior to the independence, Malaysian art were likely affected by that of colonials, especially British art as Britain colonized the country. However, the import of varied artworks to the country by Chinese traders speeded up the turn to Malaysian modern art over the 1950s. In addition, the subject of figurative painting portrayed high-positioned people, such as colonists, royals, and celebrities.

After independence in 1957, art become a symbol of the unifying form of experience, and it went beyond of culture barriers for Malaysian artists. It was moved from low-profile figures in painting became a tool to illustrate their own life experience. So, every artist had a tendency to portray other subjects, including commoners, lifestyle, nature, culture, tradition, and customs. Looking back to the 1960s, the relationship between Western art and modern Malaysian art could not deny. Figurative painter was moved from

the observed to the observer after the Congress National Culture 1971. The social and political awareness increased and it propelled the Malay artists to illustrate the ethnicity and culture heritage by the end of 1970 and early 1980.

The religious tendency was increased among Malay /Muslim community and in the first of this decade, Islamization program depicted value, morals, and customs of Islam and for non-Muslims artist, they try to attach to their culture and portrayed their custom and community. Although figurative painting also has effected by that, but it grew up increasingly and artists through their painting illustrate their social issues and more important there was not any limitation for paintings especially in the late 1980s. Later 1980 was an emergence of pioneer style of figuration as painting language. The 1990s was a period of growth for Malaysian art. Art's enthusiasts and supporters gradually improve the applause and appreciation of artworks, which was linked to the economic condition of the country before the end 1990s. During this decade, figurative painter did not have willing to illustrate a vision of figure as Malay identity. In this last decade, the most artists have focused on their own interest and their lifestyle. Looking back to the passage of time on Amron's artistic life.

View of concept of Amron's work, the context of his work is along with society, culture and political concept, in his work he attempted to rediscover the Malay heritage but with his own language. Deflection of self and artiste's habits will be reflected through his artworks. The battle is a symbol of a fight with secular life until we awake from this dream, and that is everybody's spiritual journey to discover their self until they back to their own true nature. The artworks of Amron stem mostly from the Malay tradition, especially from the world of martial arts, which shows the spirit, and character of the Malay/Muslim community in the local context.

## CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Introduction

The first parts of this chapter briefly describe the theoretical background of the study. It was followed by the research design used. In achieving an interpretation true to the artist's artworks, a documentation on interpreting the artist's selected works from the *Pertarungan* artworks and self-portrait painting, it requires approaches such as a review of secondary sources, interview, observation, and recording. Research techniques suggested by Schatzman and Strauss (1973) were employed, such as keeping journals and logs to keep track of methodological decision, observational, interviews and theoretical field notes during data collection. Detailed explanation of each approach taken in this research is discussed in the following sections; description of the applied method, research sites, subjects/samples, instruments, research process and data analysis.

### 3.2 Theoretical Framework

This study lies in the Barrett's (1994) Art Interpretation Theory. Indeed, interpretation is an indispensable and complicated part in criticism. It is the fundamental focal point of fine art, whether historical or contemporary images. When one reads an artwork, s/he makes sense of it. Thom (2000) remarks that "to interpret is to see something as representing something, or expressing something, or being about something, or being a response to something, or belonging in a certain tradition, or exhibiting certain formal features and so forth" (p. 64).

Arthur Danto in his theory of the Art Fundamental claims that an artwork is completely dissimilar from normal object. It is something that is created by people; so, it is required interpretation to be considered as an art (Danto, 1998).

Davies (1991) cited Carroll's set five propositions of this theory:

- i. A work of art is about something,
- ii. A work of art projects a point of view,
- iii. A work of art projects this point of view by rhetorical means,
- iv. A work of art requires interpretation, and the work of art and its interpretation require an art-historical context, (pp. 169-179).

To some critics, estheticians, and some artists, "art speaks for itself" or "you cannot talk about art". However, Barrett claims that even artworks seem to be simple and readable to understand. Any artworks have many interesting points that it could be hard for all viewers to understand them. He adds on that art is not simply tree, a human being, or shape of something. Instead, it is about a person who has own view or feeling and he creates something; so, there is something behind the artwork. That is, "artworks have 'aboutness' and demand interpretation. Responsible interpretations present the artwork in its best rather than in its weakest Light. Interpretations are arguments. Interpretations are persuasive" (Barrett, 1994, p. 8).

### **3.2.1 Types of Interpretation**

In the first step of interpretation, as Barrett (1994) claims, it is unnecessary to know what a purpose of an artist was because it is about the artwork not an artist. Nonetheless, it definitely helps to read the artwork, especially when an interpreter wares about the artist's background and work style. It can provide the interpreter with a wider vision of the artwork that is being interpreted.

Any artworks can be understood by two-character data: External evidence and internal evidence. External evidence refers to an artist biography, such as gender, age, lifestyle, socioeconomic level, culture, and religious affiliation, which indexes the point at which one has created the work. Internal evidence, on the other hand, deals with describing the work and exploring what is within the artwork itself. However, both types of evidence have to come along with principles of interpretation to create a great interpretation of the work.

### 3.2.2 Principles of Interpretation

The principles of interpretations are complementary rather contradictory. Although the principles claimed authoritatively, the rules are also experimental and open to rethink.

Barrett (2000) the principles of interpretation as follows:

- i. To interpret a work of art is to respond to it
- ii. Interpreting art is an endeavor that is both individual and personal, and communal and shared.
- iii. Artworks attract multiple interpretations and it is not the goal of interpretation to arrive at a single, grand, unified, composite interpretation (p. 15).

What follows presents a brief description of each of the principles.

#### 3.2.2.1 The First Principle

A closer look at any artworks creates many different emotions. Specter or interpreter feels something from what they experience. It would be a sensation of sadness, anger, laugh, happiness, etc. Whatever they experience it completely belongs to them and they tied their emotion and thought with their experience of what they catch in front. This is a job for interpreter to make meaningful grafting between though, reaction and emotion what else s/he has experienced or known before. Barrett (1989) says that in order to interpret means “to respond with thoughts and feelings and actions to what researcher sees and experience, and to make further sense of putting them into words” (pp. 23-35).

Apparently, the interpreter builds meaning of an artwork not report it by writing or telling about experience of artwork, what he /she feels or thought more or less art work what s/he see in this artwork. A dance critic, Siegel<sup>9</sup> (Meltzer, 1979, p. 55) in his press about criticism of dance says: “words are an instrument for thinking for good interpretation and make meaningful of artworks for everybody; the interpreter should tell what s/he thinks about art to other viewers. Therefore, s/he will accept the opportunity to gain from other viewers. These results could be confirmed or confounding. By the way,

---

<sup>9</sup> The Marcia B. Siegel papers (1959-1995) document Siegel's career as a dance critic, teacher, and advocate for professional dance criticism.

it does not imply it is incorrect or correct because it is based on interpreter and audience's thinking or feeling. In short, work there is not any wrong or correct interpretation, merely this is further exploring to expand understanding of the art. Regarding to the principles of interpretation advanced by Barrett (Barrett, 2000).

To interpret a work from a time and place other than our own, we must first recognize and acknowledge that it is of another time and from another place. When interpreting the art of the historical past we seek to recover what it may have meant to the people who saw it in its time. We permit historical facts and cultural knowledge to guide our interpretive search and to constrain our interpretive conjectures. We can see what knowledge and beliefs and attitudes we share with that culture and how we differ from it (p. 8).

### **3.2.2.2 The Second Principle**

Interpretation has two poles, one is individual and personal and another is shared and communal. For Barrett (2000) a personal and individual interpretation refers to "one that has meaning to me and for my life. I may have formulated it for myself or received it another and accepted it or modified it" (p. 8). In another plane, a shared and communal interpretation deals with "an understanding or explanation of the artwork that is held by a group of individuals with shared interests" (p. 8).

Interpreters attempt to understand and explore an aesthetic view of artwork this is based on internal and external evidence. Barrett (1989) cited a Gadmer<sup>10</sup> statement that interpretations target is discovering an artwork and an appropriated concept of the artwork in the life of the interpreter. This is a way to figure out a personal meaning. It is possible to go only by individual interpretation. Some aestheticians believe that the interpretation is appropriate for anyone.

---

<sup>10</sup> Hans-Georg 1900-2002, Gadamer was a leading Continental philosopher of the twentieth century. His importance lies in his development of hermeneutic philosophy. <http://www.iep.utm.edu/gadamer/>

For example, Ricoeur (1998) quoted the Hans Gadamer words about artworks “one’s own”<sup>11</sup> (p. 162). For the same reason, he states that “the requirement that the artwork has an existence of its own, and must be understood as well as appropriated” (p. 166).

Nevertheless, shared and communal interpretations are derived from a group of individuals. They write or tell about their perspective and feeling or think about same artwork. Each person has his or her own experience and different quality compared to other ones. In addition, communal interpretations are not about altering or even improving the translation. Their story or paper can be distinct or similar but each of them can throw new light of painting. That is, shared interpretation is not singular and single from all people. It is just like more light up for one painting with different looks. For that reason, there is no way to combine them or compare them. The translator has to just put them next together and let the reader get a variety of visions.

Obviously, if the interpretation is simply individual and personal, then there is a risk of being overly idiosyncratic and completely personal. Overall, a personal- and individual-oriented interpretation is one that does have shed light on the object (Barrett, 2000). On the other hand, if interpretation is made from a shared and communal perspective, then there is a risk of inconsequent to the personal interpreting. Communal interpretations lack individual experience, thought, emotion and external evidence. As such, this is not a meaningful interpretation for spectators because there is no exclusive individual idea.

An interpretation that falls with both individual and communal is an understanding of a work of art that is personally meaningful to the interpreter and relevant to his or her life. In the words of Barrett (1994), the interpreter needs to seek for a balance and harmony between both poles of the act of interpretation since one is incomplete without another. For a great and meaningful interpretation, writer has to try to understand artworks, then

---

<sup>11</sup> Hans Gadamer quoted by Ron Bontekoe from “Paul Ricoeur” Encyclopedia of Aesthetics (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988, p. 162)



shows artwork to viewers and asks for what they say. Otherwise, s/he could show artwork to the group. This is the only way to achieve a great interpretation of the artworks.

### **3.2.2.3 The Third Principle**

The role of interpretation is not to make great compound unity of individual interpretations. The varieties interpretations on same artwork which interpreter put them side by side to each other make attraction and different characteristics of the artwork. Each interpretation depicts one side of art while another interpretation, there is possibility imagining other side. The reading has to have number of viewers and from their individual degrees of opinion. This is a valuable interpretation. In this regard, Barrett (2000) stated:

It values an artwork as a rich repository of expression that allows for a rich variety of responses one critic presents an interpretation that contributes to another critic's previous interpretation. Both of their interpretations enrich our understanding of the work of art. They also enrich our appreciation of the responding interpretive mind (p. 12).

Based on principles, interpreter come to realize the intricate nature and avoid from oversimplifying of artwork. It is necessary for cognition of principles interpretation to present and discover complicated part of the artwork, which may have omitted by detecting some method. As Barrett (2000) mentioned that principles is abilities reverence to creatively and automatically invent a different of methods and decrease monotony.

In conclusion, perhaps when individuals talk honestly about their actual thinking in their mind or feeling about artwork and encourage seeing other visions of the same artwork. Unquestionably, there is a full view of the art.

Indeed, individual interpretations can expand the community's understanding of artworks. Individual interpretations and the knowledge of readers will expend diverse versions. There is no doubt that communal interpretations embrace different individual interpretations and in the same manner, they cause individual interpreters to ponder deeply. Overall, a multiplicity and mixture of interpretations had better discover various beliefs and values about art, life, society, and civilization.

### **3.2.3 Theory of Interpretation on Amron Omar's Artworks**

Following the Barrett's theory, this study considers both personal and communal sorts of interpretation. As regards personal interpretations, external evidences, namely society, culture, religion, lifestyle, and biography of the artist, will be studied. Moreover, internal evidences, such as what the interpreter sees, feels, and thinks will be considered as well. It should be mentioned that internal evidences are aligned with the researcher's personal experience and knowledge relating to the principles and characteristics in painting. In this line, Barrett (2000) argues that:

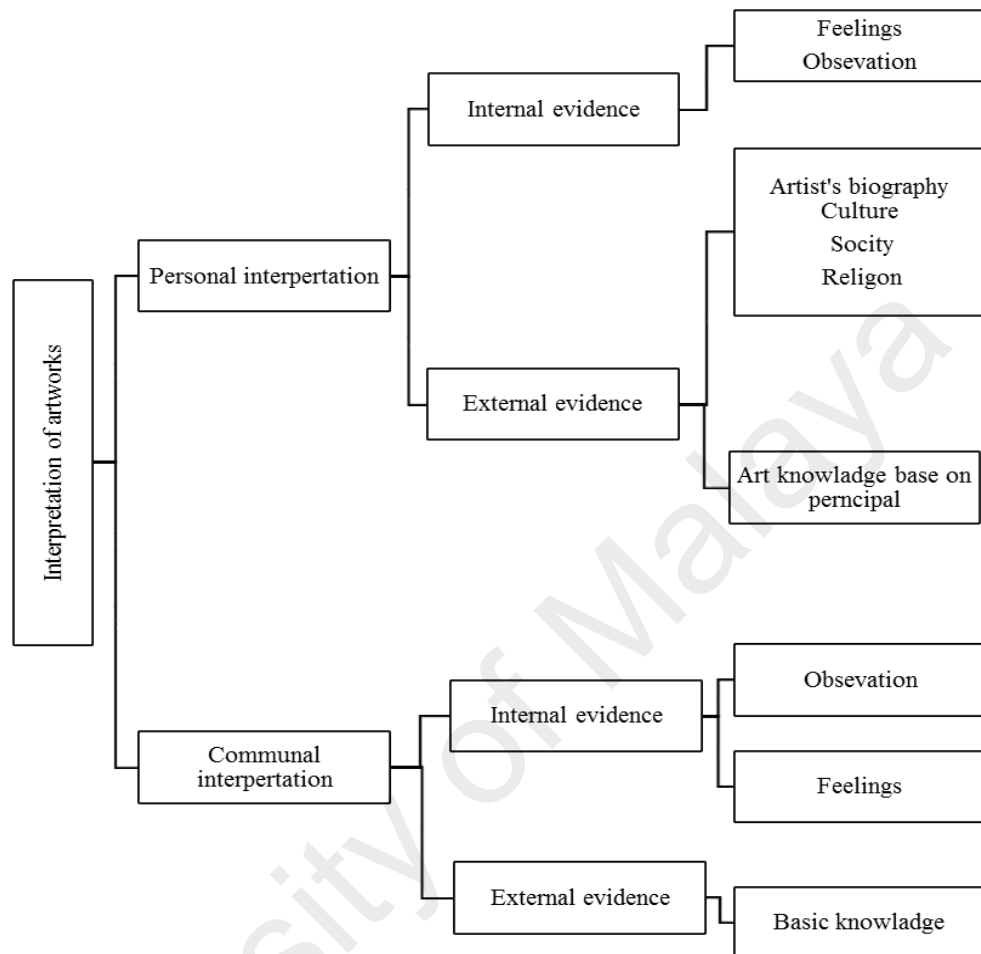
To examine the similarities and differences of a variety of interpretations of the same work, and ultimately and most importantly, to derive principles of interpretation that will enable readers to read interpretations more intelligently and help them formulate their own interpretations of works of art (p.14).

Regarding communal interpretations, following Barrett's theory, artworks will be assigned randomly to a group of audiences and they will be asked to individually interpret an artwork based on their own knowledge, opinion, feelings, and how they tie up with the painting via their personal experience. According to Barrett (2000):

When interpretive occasions with groups of learners are successful, many good things are happening. Learners are engaged in thinking and talking about art in which they are genuinely interested (p. 17).

It is noteworthy that each constituent individual interpretation in communal interpretations will not be combined, compared, and adjusted. The only possible thing to do is to put them together alongside the researcher's interpretation, Figure 3.1.

### 3.2.4 Theoretical Framework Used in This Research



**Figure 3.1:** Model of interpretation theory on Amron’s painting

### 3.3 Research Design

The present research drew upon a qualitative approach. To be specific, a case study research design was taken to gain an in-depth understanding of the case in order to comprehensively answer the research questions and fulfill the respective objectives by the use of various sources of data. Such a design is appropriate to write a scientific and professional literature about the case or sometime review or report of a case. The case study design, in the words of Bromley (1990, p. 302), is a “systematic inquiry into an event or a set of related events that aims to describe and explain the phenomenon of interest”. In addition, Yin (2003) views case studies as “an empirical inquiry that

investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (p. 23).

In any case studies, data should be collected from archival records, interviews, and documentation, individual and/or collective observation. By the same token, Yin (2003) opines “the case study’s unique strength is its ability to deal with a full variety of evidence, including documents, artifacts, interviews and observations” (p. 54).

This study employed the multiple case study type. In this regard, researcher will examine several cases to understand the similarities and differences between the cases (Yin, 2003).

### **3.4 The Subjects**

The present research studied the three artworks of *Pertarungan* collection and a self-portrait drawn by Amron Omar during 1980s (two paintings) and 1990s (two paintings). The paintings were purposefully selected based on the artist’s interest. Moreover, there were 40 randomly selected respondents, which is divided into two groups; 20 Malay respondents and 20 non-Malay respondents, who were art students. They were asked to participate in the study in order to seek for their understanding of each of the selected paintings (communal interpretation) and each respondent will have questioned just for one painting in this order every painting will be responded by five Malay and five non-Malay respondents. To this end, the participants were assigned a questionnaire containing three questions related to each painting and were asked to interpret the paintings based on their basic knowledge, feelings, and life experience.

### **3.5 Research Sites**

The research sites for this study are as follows:

- i. The artist’s studio in Wangsa Maju, Kuala Lumpur
- ii. In his studio, there is an opportunity to have an interview with artist and observation of his lifestyle and his work.

- iii. The main library of the University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur
- iv. Library and the archive of National Visual Arts Gallery, Kuala Lumpur
- v. Museum Visual Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur

In the last three study sites, researcher will gather the info, by reading book, journal and articles. As well, the observation of Amron Omar work in museum of visual art gallery.

### **3.6 Instruments**

The following instruments were used in this research to collect required data.

- i. **One-on-one interview:** The artist was interviewed for four times in his studio by asking him a set of unstructured open-ended questions regarding his personal life, feeling towards his artworks, the story or purpose behind the works, the composition of his paintings, how the sociocultural status affected himself and depicted in his drawings.
- ii. **Field-notes:** Some notes, which seem to be of significance and use for generating and supporting the results, were taken within each interview.
- iii. **Documents:** Further documents, such as books, journal articles, essays, and diaries were used to provide a greater interpretation and new vision to the Amron Omar's works.
- iv. **Audio-visual materials:** Photographs, videotapes, sound recordings were also used during data collection.
- v. **Questionnaire:** Each of the four selected paintings for analysis was given to 10 art students (five Malay and five non-Malay) and they were asked to fill in the questionnaire containing three open-ended questions. This was done in order to find out communal interpretation by exploring respondents' perception of the artwork given.

### **3.7 Research Process**

Once the data (four figurative paintings) were selected (based on the artist's interest), some studies related to Amron Omar's life style and artworks, including books, articles,

etc., were located and reviewed. Next, the artist was met and interviewed in his studio for several times. During each interview (appendix A), the artist was audio-recorded by asking him some open-ended questions to better understand his different perspectives of his artworks and to explore the effect of society and culture on his drawings. In addition, the researcher had an opportunity to observe the artist's life style and snap some pictures of the studio, the artist himself, and his artworks during the meetings.

In the next step of this research, 40 participants were randomly selected to fill in a questionnaire containing three open-ended questions related to the selected artworks in order to find out their understanding of the painting under their interpretation. These participants were students majoring in Art studying at University of Malaya. Half of the participants were Malay and the other half were non-Malay, from Iran, China, and Arabic countries.

Each participant whether Malay or non-Malay was then given one of the four selected paintings to get it interpreted individually via answering three open-ended questions related to the paintings. That is, ten individual interpretations could be finally collected for each artwork from five Malay and five non-Malay respondents. Once the whole data were gathered, they were analyzed to generate the relevant results related to the questions formulated. What follows describes the method for data analysis.

### **3.8 Method of Data Analysis**

The following procedures were taken in the present research in order to analyze the data and finally interpret the findings so that get the posed questions answered. First and foremost, regarding personal interpretation, the data collected from interview with the artist (transcribed audio-recordings and field notes), observation, photographs taken by the researcher were analyzed so as to find out and classify internal and external evidences according to Barrett's theory. For audio-recordings, for example, the transcriptions were thoroughly read and some themes were realized. It was then followed by analyzing each

of the four selected paintings by the use of software programs, such as Photoshop and Corel draw with the aim of identifying characteristics and elements.

It should be mentioned that the findings obtained from the above analytical steps were then compared with related information sourced from available documents, including articles and books. Finally, and as for communal interpretation, the data collected from the questionnaire (containing three open-ended questions) distributed to the 40 respondents were analyzed. To do so, first key words in each respondent's answer which conveyed their personal attitudes, emotions, feelings, experiences, basic understandings were identified and then categorized under five scales related to the relevant research question posed in this study. It should be noted that 20 of the respondents who were Malay filled in the questionnaire in their native language. So, the answers were turned into English and the translation was checked by an expert in the field of English language.

Then both groups of respondents (Malay and non-Malay) were compared base on research objectives for example, these key words; main characters, social and cultural element, energy, movement, artist' lifestyle. As the researcher wanted to figure out how each painting had represented it to them base on research objectives. As result, the researcher had drawn the communal it should be notice, the communal interpretation through questionnaire is kind of data triangulation to refine result of personal interpretation and finally illustrate the related results in graph.

### **3.9 Summary**

As mentioned earlier, by drawing upon Barratt's interpretation model the present qualitative case-based study looked to interpret four paintings drawn by Amron Omar to see socio-cultural effects, the artist's life style, the relationship between the form and concept of the paintings. The present chapter looked to outline the methods used to carry out the aims of the study. It discussed the overall strategy and how the instruments would be used to collect data suitable for an in –depth analysis. In addition, the researcher did

her utmost best to preclude any possible biases in data collection in order to come up with reliable and valid data for analysis. This chapter is followed by spelling out and interpreting the findings of analysis obtained in this study.

University of Malaya



## CHAPTER 4: FINDING, RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Introduction

This study attempts to interpret the four selected artworks by Amron Omar. The interpretation of each painting made from two perspectives: personal and communal interpretation. In addition, every personal and communal interpretation explores based on objective and research question. This study tries to follow the principles of Barrett's interpretation theory, and in accordance with the third principle (see Section 1.7.2), there are no comparisons, combinations, or changes.

Here before to the start of interpreting of paintings as overall, it should be noticed Amron Omar in his *Pertarungan* series painting use himself as a model of his drawings, which make his work more mystery, and interesting. Looking back at a history of painters in the world, every artist paints himself at last ones. For instead, Spanish artist, Alex Alemany had this experience in his "Painting of Himself Painting Himself" as he draws himself standing in front of his painting of himself, while he has been painted by his own painting. Apparently, looking to the hand that came out from painting shows how he has been painted by himself. Steven Segal (2015) in his book, 'Management Practice and Creative Destruction' explained this painting:

His identity and way of being from within the relationship to his work. This extended hand that is painting himself is usually hidden in our everyday activity. Thus, when painting, we do not see that our identity or way of being a painter is being formed by the painting. Yet as we are painting, we are developing the attunement, the style, the habit of practice of a painter (pp. 248-249).

In this case, also Zakaria Ali<sup>12</sup> (2010) in his book<sup>13</sup> express that, “two impulses people the artist to paint his own face: vanity and curiosity, each with varying levels of intensity in response to specific situation at a given time” (p. 290).

Zakaria Ali (2010) claims, the curiosity is to an exam what actually he sees in mirroring of himself and what his hand can do; that is how self-idealization works, which Amron did in first step. He tried to see a different aspect of himself and seeking for ideals. In addition, Zakaria Ali (2010) mentioned in his essay about Lee Cheng Yong’s self-portrait says; “The grin suggests that his geniality is just one of the aspects of who he is. To know the rest, we have to lift up this veil of self-idealization” (p. 292).

As it could be seen in Amron Omar’s work. For instance, in the *Pertarungan III* it could be seen; he has painted himself with unclear face, but as a warrior. Or another works, He was raised to test him from different positions. Because he needs to recognize himself as Carl Jung (1944) stated: “The most terrifying thing is to accept oneself completely.”<sup>14</sup> Then he also expresses that the way to know yourself; “Your visions will become clear only when you can look into your own heart. Who looks outside, dreams; who looks inside, awakes”<sup>15</sup> (Seka, 2014, p. 157). According to Butcher (2012),

In Amron’s *Silat* posturing, it is more about the inner struggle of Good versus Evil. Hence, the figures are more shadowy for a sense of movement and devoid of any physicality. He is also exploring conceptual, spiritual and philosophical aspect of portraying the human figure (p. 18).

Here there is a four-selected painting, which, the researcher divided them into two classes. The researcher’s interpretation and second an interpretation of local and foreigner art’s students. It should be notified; based on research’s theory, researchers did not permit

---

<sup>12</sup> Zakaria Ali is a Malaysian artist who is also a scholar in the arts. He is currently the Professor Madhya in the School of Art in Universiti Sains Malaysia in Penang. Born in Kampung Batu in Rembau, Negeri Sembilan in 1946, Dr Zakaria is very actively involved in the development of Malaysian arts and culture where he is known for his paintings while he is also a very popular writer. <http://www.arts.com.my/portfolio/dr-zakaria-ali>.

<sup>13</sup> Malaysia art, selected essays 1979-2009.

<sup>14</sup> This quotation by Carl Jung which was write in Everlasting Wisdom by Weis (2010, p. 39).

<sup>15</sup> This quotation by Carl Jung which was write in Life Lessons of Wisdom & Motivation - Volume IV: Insightful, Enlightened, and Inspirational quotations and proverbs by Seka (2014, p. 167).

to merge or compare the result. The communal interpretation has delivered as supportive and triangulation data.

#### **4.2 The Interpretation of the Selected Amron Omar's Artworks**

The selected paintings have illustrated the Malay martial art due to the artist's loyalty to Malay culture, his patriotism, and his lifestyle. The theme of his artworks is the fighting scene. In the first stage, since 1979 theme of his artworks was a *Silat* (self-defense) style which was not aggressive. He depicted many kinds of *Silat* style during these years. In the 1994s, he has changed the style of his theme. It could be seen the theme of his artworks still was the battle, but the style of this fight has changed from *Silat* style to Kuntaw style, which was more aggressive and strict in movement. In other words, the fighters in Amron's artworks have changed from a defensive into an offensive style. The fighters' characters on all his artworks are Malay men, half-naked and well-built bodies. In most of his artworks specially, these four selected artworks. The fighter has been wearing the *Sarong* or *Samping* which depicted the traditional clothes of Malay people. It could be said, while the artist tried to illustrate the Malay fighter. He also has emphasized that the fighters of this kind of martial arts are trained, loyal to his country and culture.

His artworks have been painted in an empty background and wooden carpet. It seems the Amron's intent was a focus on fighters rather any distraction for viewers by busy backgrounds. Moreover, it could be seen every four selected artworks has drawn in a great and different composition such as third rules, spiral, triangle or arch form, which meant to guide the viewers' eyes to a focal point of his artworks. Although the artist has used the light and shadows to emphasize the balance, rhythm, and harmony and induced spectators to engage with the fighter's sense and feel the struggle on his artworks. In these four artworks, the artist has created the contrast of light and shadow on the fighter's bodies and used the warm colors to inculcate the motion and energy sense which caused

by the struggle. Meanwhile, dull colors have created the balance and prevented from an exaggeration of the fight sense.

These paintings have depicted the artist's life journey which guided him to walk from first step until now. It seems the Martial art. He has raised in a small village by man (father) who was a master of *Silat* and founder of Kuntaw style, and until he joined to ITM, he was surrounded by many students and master of martial art. During that time, the young generation were obsessed with this kind of martial art so it was ingrained in his soul too. It could be said he has grown up with *Silat* fighters, which have affected his life and artistic vision. He has gained the wise view of the *Silat* fighter, how they act and react, how they fight.

By the looking at these artworks, it could be seen, every object in his artworks have implied the part of his childhood. For instance, the wooden carpet in his artworks has illustrated a floor's cover of the place which his father or other *Silat* fighter did practice or performed. As another example, the traditional clothes which have worn by the fighters or teacher *Silat*. Alternatively, the artist has drawn the rattan chair which he has it in his hometown when he wanted to draw self-portrait painting.

However, the impacts of society and culture on his artworks are undeniable. For intense, the new task for Malay artist was fostering and promoting the Malay art and ITM was the center of phenomena in 1971. On the other hand, the financial difficulty in 1979 which made him struggle with real life to achieve his desire. As a result, he has painted *Pertarungan III*, the struggle to gain his desire. The expression of artist about this painting was that "this painting is all of his life". This is how the artist has started his struggle in his life and chose *Pertarungan* (battle) as theme of his artworks until now. From the 1980 the new social-cultural impact has driven the artist to new steps, which was the Malay artist has been trying to find the Islamic-Malay identity in their works. At the end, Amron has done his new task by drawing the *Catan Diri* painting, and artist has

introduced successfully himself as a Malay Muslim artist. From 1990, artists slanted to move from the Malay/Islamic-focused to the postmodern style. In such as manner, regularly the Malay artist's works of art have criticized in examination the artworks of post-modern artist or the individuals who were continuing toward modernization as general, for the most part, artworks had been moving toward the western expressions. Due to this, Amron as a loyal Malay Muslim artist has been attempting to align with this flow while retaining a Malay- Islamic theme (*Pertarungan*) of his artworks. He has changed his still from *Silat* (with soft movement) to Kuntaw (more strike and aggressive movement) in 1994. As a result, he has finished another masterpiece titled *Pertarungan* in 1996. He has created a great combination of contrasts and this work was responding to all criticism of that time. Amron combined the traditional style with modern style and created the arch shape with the pose of both fighters. This arch shape, which the artist purposely has made it, was the hidden symbol of the Islamic character on his work. As it mentioned before, Malaysian art experienced various kinds of artistic forms, visions, subject and media, which was never experienced before since 1990's. Therefore, Amron also has been exploring the new and possible visions for each character. During this time, the artist has done many sketches. It could be seen, in following year he has illustrated a different momentary position of one fighter's movement, which can be done in fractional time. He has focused on the fighters' gesture to find the beauty in the character's pose. As a result, this time; Amron has had an aesthetic and critical perspective on his artworks. At the end, Amron has drawn himself as a warrior who has been struggling with own to be better of himself.

On the other hand, by looking through the communal interpretation of these artworks, it could be seen the both group (Malay and non-Malay) have diagnosed the character and they have engaged with the fighters feeling and action sense. Both group have implied the character, motion, color, energy or the intent of the artist. Although the enthusiasm

and patriotism sense were provoked within Malay group and they share out many story of *Silat* glory. In contrast, the ignorance of the style of these battle painting has guided the non-Malay students to create the connection between the artist and battle. These paintings have introduced the artist to them as fighter or who love this kind of fight, an artist who is struggling in his life, artist who came from village, simple man. However, by looking at communal interpretation, both groups have turned on a new light on the different aspects of these artworks while their interpretation also have refined the researcher interpretation. In what follows the personal and communal interpretation of each paintings are presented.

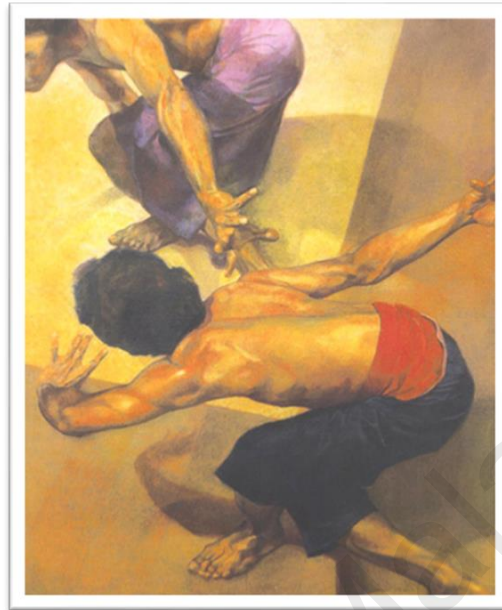
### **4.3 The Personal Interpretation of the Amron Omar's First Painting**

#### **4.3.1 Main Features in the First Painting**

The researcher has found in this painting, Amron Omar used a variety of colors to create a warm area. Therefore, he created elegantly with warm colors produce the figures as a focal point, Figure 4.1. In addition, the shadow of figures, hands position and brightness area in this painting had been created a rhythm and movement. However, using a sharp red, blue and purple in yellow background prevented the painting from monotony created Animated as well as simple background and with yellow - brown color; it makes viewers focus on figures. Looking at the background behind the left character imply the wooden cover such as parquet and using the sunset color or fawn makes friendly feeling to viewers as it related to nature .in this regard also the artist in the interview, “the ground behind this fighter made by wood”.

Moreover, there is no possibility to see the emotion of character from their face, as the right figure face had been painted unclearly and for the left ones pose from behind. Still, there is a sense of anger and motion from the pose of the figures. In another word, there is the sense of tension on figures by looking at severe contrast and potent performance of their hands, which illustrate that they are serious. Besides, these figures seem they are

trolling around each other without a shirt, to show off their energy and wisely while getting knows each other powers.



**Figure 4.1:** *Pertarungan III*, Amron Omar, oil on canvas, 182cm x 164cm, 1980, collection of National Visual Art Gallery

Furthermore, the figures placed separately in darkness and brightness zone and they had painted with a rough pose, with the half-naked and well-built bodies to emphasize powers and skillful fighter and to the end illustrate there will be struggle soon even it did not start yet. Although this painting is also obviously from artist expression and title of this painting *Pertarungan* (battle). The artist told the reporter in an interview, that the paintings are about to find ‘himself’ or his identity, which he reflected in a painting of *Pertarungan* or fight. He explained that each character in the paintings has symbolized him searching for an answer to the ever-occurring questions.

According to the expression of the artist, this painting displays an inner’s struggle of him. He was searching to for struggle himself. Therefore, there is no winner or loser as he is searching for starting a fight with himself. However, it may have called as an evil of inner vs good. But at the end, as fighters are same, so, it should be the summons starting a battle between who he is and who he wants to be. There is no doubt, human wants to

be better or stronger. From researcher's vision, the figure in darkness area at left should be he and another one brightness what he wants to be.

Finally, it is not possible to find out is there any viewer watching them or they do martial art without spectators. Therefore, it makes viewers free to judge based on their feeling.

#### 4.3.2 Relationship between Form and Content in the First Painting

To answer the research question 2, the researcher has figure out Amron Omar was attracted by the beauty of *Silat* performances, so he had finished this painting in 1980 as figurative painting who are doing a duel performance of *bersilat*<sup>16</sup> (to do fighting) to be particular it is a *Silat bahu*<sup>17</sup> However this is a serious fighting. In term of this type, they will do freestyle movements with some space apart whereas attempting to match the each other's movement. For attacking they stringent observer to find an opportunity in opening opponent's self-defense guard, without interfering of the direct force.

According to Chang (1967) "they are taught to fine point parrying or avoiding an attack by an opponent who may be armed with *keris* (Malay knife) ..." (p. 41). Looking at this painting, the positions of the bodies point toward a scene of fighting competition, they do freestyle performance with difference style. The artist by putting them in brightness and darkness zone has illustrated they do performance apart from each other. They precisely search opportunity to use opponent's mistake in defense movement.

In this regard Zakaria Ali (2010) wrote; "The strategy is to get one-step ahead of the enemy whose moves are keenly watched.it is watching these strained almost contorted muscles in action ..." (p. 274). Furthermore, *Bersilat* has many versions of self-defense.

---

<sup>16</sup> this Malaysian martial art is similar to Pentjak *Silat*, an Indonesian martial art, which it is thought to have derived from. It is a self-defense system dating from the fifteenth century. There are several schools of *BerSilat*, each with two branches, one for public display and one for combat. *Silat pulat* is a dance-like art, usually performed at weddings and other festivities. *BerSilat* emphasizes leg techniques, but punches, throws and holds are so important. Students are forbidden to divulge secrets and training is often handed down from family member to family member. The art has both a sport side and a spiritual side. The most important styles of *BerSilat* are Chekak, Kelantan, Lintan, Medan, Peninjuan, and Terelak.

<sup>17</sup> "Instructors emphasize its use as a form of self-defense. Basically, *BerSilat* exists in two forms. One, the *Silat Pulot*, is purely for exhibition at weddings and other ceremonials. The other is known as *Silat Buah* and is used for serious fighting".



Here the artist has illustrated the scene of *Bersilat gayong's* fighters. In this regard, Amron Omar also in the last interview express that “this is a *Silat gayong*”.

Now looking at the painting, the simple and natural color background has been separated with the strict line of brightness and darkness and each figure had been placed into one of the themes. Along with that, the artist expresses in his interview “the characters of this painting are me”. So, the idea is to do fight against himself, then it could not be fighting evil versus good. The artist created the great way to express his life challenge, it is a fight between good versus better it.

Moreover, the left figure is located upper center and in brightness zone of painting with curly hair and half-unclear face. The performance of his left hand depicts, he attempts to grab his opponent's arm alongside keeping his distance with the competitor. This hand with this pose (toward his opponent), guides eyes of the viewer to the center of the painting to move from one fighter to other ones. His other hand has been touching the ground and attempting to create a counterbalance although it could not see the exact performance of hand as it was hidden behind. In the other hand, the fighter has been wearing a Purple color ‘Sarong’ and has located in yellow and light background, which is created balance with the contrast of purple and yellow. In term of the concept of purple color, this color present mystery or impressive and even can be an oppressive color to use. The artist had been drawn this fighter with half body and unclear face but he had place him in brightness which made artist purposely did it. This figure has made sense of mystery and as the artist did not paint it completely and clear but he is conscious around himself.

Besides that, the other figure has depicted more aggressive as the artist had emphasized on the well-built body of the fighter or looks like a solid man. It seems more ready with his decent gesture. Obviously, it could be seen from his body positioning, this fighter has represented the positive about his situation, strengthens and confident. His face is not

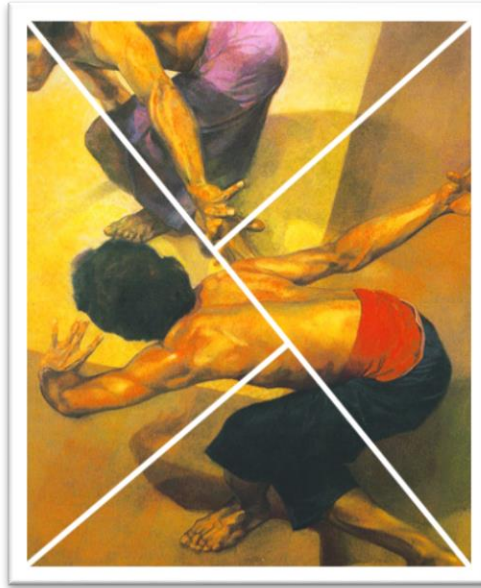
visible as the artist had drawn the figure from the back. Artistically, this figure placed almost from the midsection of the painting to the right downside. In addition, the artist divides painting to the half of which made a great and strong composition. Look at the right figure again, he had been drawn with almost sitting position and close to the ground while his feet are in X position. In addition, his hands had painted in opposite pose vertically and horizontally of each other (his left hand is facing down while the right hand is facing up to the sky) which helped the fighter to flow on the width of the painting. He had been drawn with red cloth belt '*Samping*'<sup>18</sup> on top of his pants, which represent a sense of power, intent, and strong spirit. The artist had drawn with the strong contrast of dark blue pants which could represent responsibility, strength, and reliability. There is no doubt left fighter seems to be stronger, but artist put this strong fighter into the shadow which could illustrate him as a fighter with the strong soul, but unconscious about his around or his capacity or may this fighter with the strong soul and skillful is the dark or difficult situation.

The artist had used rough lines and shadows to illustrate rhythm and action. In addition, shadows of the figures are different in intensity. For example, it seems the right Figure has strong inner as his shadow had been drawn darker and stronger meanwhile the other figure has a paler shadow. It is like the characters of the figures effects their shadows and reflects the significance of them. The composition of the painting and the figures positioning have guided the viewer's eyes to move from the shoulder of the fighter on the brightness mat and move down along the hand to the center of the painting and where the other figurer's head and shoulder are placed. This type of composition calls Golden triangles<sup>19</sup>, Figure 4.2.

---

<sup>18</sup> That is fabric cloth which fighter twisted on his waist and he can use it as weapon.

<sup>19</sup> Golden triangles divide the painting to three or four triangles, by crossing lines from one side to another and from the other side in the middle of the line 90 degrees (Knight, 2014) this type of composition was popular among 'Baroque' Painters (Lyon, 2013).



**Figure 4.2:** Composition of Pertarungan III, photoshop program

For instance, Guido Reni<sup>20</sup> in his painting titled ‘The Archangel Michael Defeating Satan’ used the same composition, Figure 4.3. By looking at the angles hands, it is clear that hands guide the viewer’s eyes from the left corner to the center of the painting, hardly the same concept in Amron Omar ‘*Pertarungan*’ III painting.



**Figure 4.3:** Composition of archangel Michael Defeating Satan, Guido Reni, 1635, oil on canvas, 293x202 cm, Baroque style, private collection

<sup>20</sup> Guido Reni was an Italian painter of High-Baroque style, 1575-1642, Bologna, Italy.

In terms of colors, Amron Omar used kind of ‘Yellow - Ochre’ base colors in the most of this painting which can refer to earth and nature. Yellow-Ochre is one of the most used colors, in traditional and classic paintings as it is close to skin color and dry and it can bring originality to the painting. Dutch painter Johannes Vermeer<sup>21</sup> uses this color in most of his painting. ‘The Milkmaid’ is one of them.

In this famous painting, Vermeer used Ochre-Yellow color for dressing the woman and for her face. Likewise, he used this color as the theme color for his background. Otherwise, these two paintings have total difference environment and but both depict the simple and village people. Artists try to link audiences to nature, Figure 4.4.



**Figure 4.4:** The Milkmaid, Johannes Vermeer, 1657–1658, oil on canvas, 45.5 cm × 41 cm, collection Rijksmuseum

As mentioned before, Amron Omar pictured himself in two different positions as fighters in a *Silat* performance. From past until now, many painters used their own characters in different positions to express their emotions, feelings and to challenge their own thought and art.

---

<sup>21</sup> A Dutch painter specialized in domestic interior scenes of middle-class life. 1632-1675, Delft, Netherlands



**Figure 4.5:** Prisoner of my mind, Alexandra Loui, 2014  
oil on canvas, 39 x61 cm, and private collection

Likewise, in another painting by American artist Alexandra Loui, there is a similar spot as an artist is sitting down on the ground and seeing herself in her own prison. The painting titled 'Prisoner of my mind' and it is oil on canvas painting express of how artist captured by herself. Alexandra in this painting is watching herself in a prison inside herself. It seems she is exploring herself and her mind. She is also putting on a red dress which is one of the primary colors in the Amron Omar painting as well and this similarity shows how artists' minds are searching inside his/her brains for a better result and better answer to self-knowledge questions.

In her conversation with the researcher, Alexandra Loui expressed that "I was searching for myself, I am a prisoner of my thought". Compare with Amron's painting, the background of both paintings separate by strong and sharp line and figure with the unclear face has been placed in the lighter zone. It seems both artists were searching the same concept with a different expression, Figure 4.5.

### 4.3.3 Socio-cultural Effects on the First Painting

When the national cultural policy was established based on Malay culture as the primary culture of Malaysia and Malay language as the first language of the nation. Also, Islam became the main religion and every policy in the culture should propose an Islamic culture and follow Islamic orders. These rules had guided the Malaysian for recognizing their own Malaysian identity (Rajendran & Wee, 2007). Therefore, since 1971 Malay artist have been starting to find their place in new Malay context and it was continuing until 1990s. As the artist in his interview state that “he was searching for himself in every step of his life”.

Looking at this painting, the performance of hands, turning in space and separation the painting background in brightness and darkness zone with sharp line have illustrated the conscious and unconscious of what a Malay identity is and what the Malay artist identity is. Although it seems same but it is quite different. Therefore, the character is same in the painting and both figures have illustrated the Malay man but different from clothes whatever both emphasized the Malay identity plus the figure in a lighter zone is incomplete and blurred. In this regard, the artist has illustrated the presses of searching for his identity as Malay artist. Undoubtedly, Amron as loyal Malay artist in this stage of his life has been trying to express his Malay identity in the context of ‘*Silat*’ performance.

To this end also Rajendran (2013) mentioned that:

The 1970s was a time of intense questioning about the state of Malaysian society, coming out of a traumatic event [the racial riots of 13 May 1969]. There was a lot of confusion, uncertainty and a very profound loss of confidence in what was Malaysian politics, and Malaysian culture . . . We were being pushed to ask “what was Malaysian culture? (p. 145).

Feather more, Malaysian artists were looking for their own concept and finding their identity. So, they had returned to their former customs and cultures to bring back and hold the picture of Malay style in artworks. So, the artworks became the combination of Islam and Malay identity during 1970 and 1980 (Muliyadi Mahamood, 2007).

In fact, Amron Omar as the young artist has started to illustrate his passion about the *Silat*, which has rooted in Malay-Islamic culture and inheritance of his folk in 1970. By the end of 1979, he has captured by *Silat* so has been starting to draw *Silat* fighters in different style and performances.

On the other hands, since the 1970s action movies particularly Malaysian and Indonesian movies with the theme of *Silat* performance and also some Kung-Fu movies by Bruce Lee performance had been popular in Malaysia. So Amron as young man also was interested in these action movies which also inspired him too (Pakhurddin, 2012).

As it has been mentioned before, the artist has studied in UiTM which was the center of foster and promoting the Islamic-Malay art since 1979s. In this regard, Sarena Abdullah (2011) stated that:

During the 1970s and the 1980s, with the proclamation of the national culture and the parallel resurgence of Islam, Malay artists began to channel their interest in Malay culture and the Islamic religion into art as ways of expounding their identity. This was especially true among the Malay artists studying or teaching at the School of Art and Design at ITM (p. 100).

Due to this explanation, it seems the studying in UiTM was the other motive for the artist toward choosing this theme for artworks. By other words, Amron as the young and Malay artist has affected and inspired by his fellow and teachers in UiTM.

#### **4.3.4 The Reflection of Amron Omar's Lifestyle in the First Painting**

This painting has been the artist expression of attachment in his indigenous society. It could be seen Amron has painted a history of his life with the enthusiasm and obsessive and particularly his interest and attachment to *Silat* which is one of the incredible symbols of heroism in Malaysia.

As it mentioned before Kedah (artist's hometown) was a palace for many masters and student of *Silat* at that time. Therefore, in his childhood, he has been observing many performances of *Silat* students, although alongside this observation, he has learned the manner of *Silat* such as discipline, concentration, courage, precision, faith and etc. Or he

was being observer of the *Silat* students who were learning from their mistake and have courage and hope to become a master. To this end, the artist in his interview expresses that, “surely if I born in other state or region maybe I never chose or paint *Silat*”. In continuing, he admits that “I grow up with *Silat* performance as my father is *Silat* master and also he practiced with my brother... I tried to follow the manner of *Silat*”.

Moreover, as artist mentioned that his father as the greatest influence in his life. It seems the artist admire his father and the way he was challenged his life. Although *Silat* for *Silat* performer, such as his father was not only training for defense or combat it was also a way for training their inner, their soul, figure out their mistakes and learn to be stronger.

Now it could be seen, the right fighter has drawn in darkness zone with strong shadow while was wearing a red belt as the intent of the fighter which illustrate artist at that time. From darkness area in this painting, it could feel, the life and his situation were difficult in him at that time. In addition, in the other perspective of the fighter in right has depicted he was intent to be successful as an artist. In contrast, the artist had drawn the figure in the left as future of the right one in brightness zone, which represent beliefs to success or brilliant future. Artist in his last interview claim that; “this painting is my beloved artworks which I painted my life from that time and what I want to be”.

Moreover, he was in his fourth and final year of studying fine art at UiTM in 1979. Unfortunately, the dark side of life challenged him. That is, he got stuck into his financial problems and the situation forced him to surmount the problems and be prosperous in life. The *Silat* was the known struggle way for him.

In short, a story that time, the National art gallery called for introduction art competition, which held once per one decade in Malaysia. There is no doubt for young, skillful and talented art student like him was difficult to ignore that. He was obsessed to attend in the competition, but his financial issues did not let him purchase supplies for his



artworks so he was frustrated, upset and emotionally unstable as he thought he may not be able to pursue his dream which was to become a professional, well-known artist. That time, Amron was devastated by all the difficulties and disappointments. He has had doubts about himself and the way to gain his dreams and abusive he could not afford the cost of the study. In contrast, from his childhood time, he observed and learned how to deal with problems, it seems so unreal and out of hand to achieve his dream.

At the end of his situation, he did not give up his dream but forced to walk away from his last year of his graduation. However, he did not stop to achieve his dream. 'Pertarungan III', for Amron Omar was not the only painting of a martial art or a Malay-Muslim cultural activity. It was an answer to all his struggles and challenges throughout difficult times in his lifetime. All his internal doubts and fights to find himself as an artist. He draws himself with an unclear face to show the unclear future for being the artist, but without any hesitation, *Silat* was a way for him to express his feeling.

In this regard, Mohd Yusri Rahman (2012) says "where there revolves question about 'duels', there will be Amron vs Amron, the struggle against the desires in the self, between the good and evil within and without to achieve objectives, of both temporal and eternal" (p. 184).

As last words, *Silat* for Amron Omar was survival skills in the first step. It taught him to get stronger and learned from his mistakes and follow his heart and aspirations. To this end also Safrizal Shahir (2012, p. 64) wrote "artworks that are created by Amron Omar is like a shadow, a process, a deflection on image to his self-dealing. Amron's artworks are about self or true self, about his experiences of the struggles in dueling".

#### **4.3.5 Conclusion**

This painting has illustrated the artist's self-doubt. In term of self-doubt, the artist has drawn his doubt about his further as an artist. Obviously, the anxiety about further is a matter to a human being. Although, Amron Omar was facing a difficult situation in his

life. As it has been mentioned before, he had done his major struggle in 1979. In one hand, he wanted to graduate from UiTM and on the other hand, he wanted to participate in a Salon Malaysia exhibition but financially he was frustrated and confused. In the other words, after four-year study, forsaking of UiTM was not the worthless thought as he had put so much effort to get on that level. In contrast, it was his desire and ambition to be approved as a recognizable artist. The Self-Doubt Subscale was designed to “capture a general sense of feeling uncertain about one’s competence” (Oleson, Poehlmann, Yost, Lynch, & Arkin, 2000, p. 500).

To this end, that was struggle time for him to overcome his doubt. Therefore, he had followed the manner of *Silat* which was ingrained inside him from childhood. As the matter of the fact in the struggle, *Silat* is the way to self-defense with wide precision and learning from a mistake. So, he should defense of his desire in the unfair struggle. Moreover, *Silat* is not only physical combat, it is part of inner training to find faith and truth. Apparently, many artists have been facing a difficult time in their life but the point is even they have overcome their issues but it has been reflected in their artworks. Self-doubt becomes manifest in different type, including the anxiety one individual about the level of his/her ability or it could establish by one’s concern about potential and strength to complete her/his performance. However, the questions of competence or worthiness are endless inquiry which is experienced by most people. For instance, when one is facing with upcoming assignment s/he will be worry of the result or fail (Oleson et al., 2000).

In the term of this painting, there are two fighters, one has been painted from his back pose with wide performance in down and darkness zone on canvas. In contrast, other ones with unclear face and but the fighter who has been drawn in upper and brightness zones. However, the both characters are one as the artist mentioned the both fighters are him, “I am struggling myself”. Therefore, the character in the dark zone has illustrated the artist at that time, plus he had drawn red cloth’s belt and wide pose for this character in the

right which all depict the intent of this figure meanwhile he was surrounded by the dark situation. This darkness zone could have implied the artist's financial problem or sadness part of chosen way.

On the other hand, the ones with purple color pants in the light zone might illustrate how Amron Omar had looked at himself in future. It seems the artist has used the purple color to represent future as a mystery or impressive and even unfair. Moreover, the character in brightness scene has been drawn with unclear face and the half of his body and face has been cut off from the frame which imaged of the unknown future and doubt. On the other hand, his right-hand performance seems to take other ones to the light which could be the symbol of the desire of artist. As a result, he used '*Silat*' fights and performances to express his inner to release himself to facing at that moment.

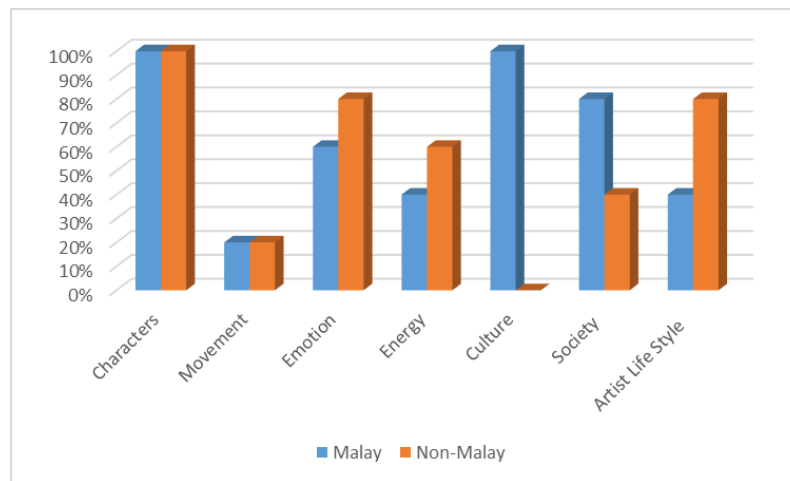
#### **4.4 The Communal Interpretation of the Amron Omar's First Painting**

##### **4.4.1 Participants' Connection with the First Painting**

Figure 4.6 illustrated that participants of both group Malay and non-Malay figured out the characters of the painting. In this order, it seems for both groups were easy to recognize the main character such as the fight between two men, fighter, or combat between two sport men, although the Malay respondent base of the culture declared that which kind of combat it is, so they had attached the painting to their society and culture and did not take heed to another character in the painting. However, the non-Malay participants had been recognized the main character through their observation of the action scenes and the relationship between other characters. For instance, "two half-naked men are fighting", "there is shadow of two men", "warm colors such as yellow, red, orange and he create harmony", "focus point of this painting is color of the trousers, "I can't see their face then I don't know which one is good man", "they don't have any viewer case of their clothes", "standing on a white area and the other one is standing in a darker area" and etc. Even a non-Malay respondent had noted a perspective artist is 45o

from up. Although a few of the Malay respondent have written about the color, but not similar the non-Malay participants scrupulously and precise vision.

Moreover, toward the movement element, even this painting capturing a movement of two worriers, but only a few of both groups have mentioned the movement sense in this painting. The Malay students who hint this point, they only had noted that their movements relive the excellent martial arts, or their motion illustrates knowledge of fighter about martial art. In the way, a few non-Malay had pointed out the painting illustrated the aggressive movement or remind the action movie or ready to fight. Unlike the movement, both groups in the high range were captured by emotion from the painting. They implied the sense of anger by looking the muscles of fighters, felt warm as it were affected by warm color. Although for the Malay respondents, the sense of pride and patriotism was evoked within them. For instance, open our mind to protect Malay culture or appealing and persuade me to learn martial arts, fight for yourself. In contrast, non-Malay students have experienced the sense of worry, terrified, aggressive and feel secure by the fighter in the left as he is in brightness zone. In the term of energy, most of both respondents have not pointed out a sense of the energy. It seems, they did not feel, as there is no any pull and push or quarrel between the fighters. However, among them, one of none- Malay participant has written that “there is two energies struggle in the air” and one Malay student has inscribed feel positive attitude from fighters.



**Figure 4.6:** The Malay and non-Malay interpretation of the first painting

Moreover, according to Malay respondents' conclusion of the main character, it could be seen they had emphasized the *Silat* as Malay heritage. In another word, Malay students have responded to this painting as part of their culture for instance, "The manner of their fight is a traditional martial art; *Silat* style", "Malay martial art is a big culture of Malay people", "it is a symbol of Malay people", "This painting illustrates ...the identity of Malaysian or Malay supremacy and deepen understanding of the martial arts". In contrast, non-Malay could not link to the culture as they were not in the context of Malay culture even they implied this is the combat between two sportsmen.

In addition, in term of society, Malay student feel more familiar with this kind of battle and specific *Silat* competition. They did not carry this symbol only Malay culture it also can link them to their society. There is no doubt, they see and live with people who is doing *Silat* or at least knowing about *Silat*. For them, it was easy to state the painting as Martial art. They have pointed to legend about famous heroes and anti-hero or the slogan of "No *Silat*, No Malay". They had written based on their feeling which connected them to patriotism, so they called the *Silat* as a power in a Malay blood and the existence of it since Malacca Empire. So obviously, *Silat* with long history inspired the sense of nationalism within them. In opposite, few non-Malay have Pointed out had the society

elements. They have claimed that the fighters are village man as strange clothes and with no shirt was weird for them.

Subsequently, as they (Malay participants) already believe *Silat* as part of Malaysia context, which is belong to every Malay. Therefore, a few of them implied that as an element of artist's lifestyle. Even this painting has illustrated the scene of the fight but to them, the artist is someone with great and positive or affectionate soul. It seems they had linked the artist as hero through the painting due to the character of *Silat* battle. In contrast, non-Malay were not familiar with culture and society, so they linked the painting to Artist's interest, background, knowledge and some saw the artist as an expert in the competition. For example, the artist is a realistic painter, loves the fighting scene or maybe he was a fighter once, skillful in this action or fight, familiar with these kinds of sports or he was part of these competitions before.

#### **4.5 The Personal Interpretation of the Amron Omar's Second Painting**

##### **4.5.1 Main Features in the Second Painting**

It could be said there is a man wearing customary pants sitting on a comfortable chair and seems too much crowded. As he wears pants which look like a traditional dress and without a shirt persuade to think he lives simply. He is precisely like somebody who woke up from a dream or suddenly sees someone or something or may find answers in his mind. Another hand makes feel that, it might be a door over there, which suddenly opened by divine guidance as the light come from (over there) to show him the way. It could be an even symbol of a door in his mind, which gives him power or hope. Besides that, Artist painted this figure and his background half-dark and half-light, which made an unsure scene. It could be seen; the man looks ready to stand up from the chair but still some hesitate to up. Possibility, this painting illustrates the unsure character in difficult and suddenly situation to decide, Figure 4.7.



**Figure 4.7:** Catan Diri (self-portrait), Amron Omar, 1982, oil painting  
160.5 x 170.5 cm, collection of National Art Gallery

As another evidence, his determined and serious face is noticeable meanwhile his body do imply to unready for standing. It is obvious by looking the left cross-leg which taken by his left hand or other legs with cramp finger. The artist in his interview also claims that: “I purposely, play with light and shadow to illustrate the man (myself) was captured by good and bad”. To this end, this man (artist portrait) implies his inner world and he is in the middle of his decision, to go or stay.

Moreover, the painter has drawn a moment of life, which made viewers interest to be curious more or less about what is exactly happening or what he is observing over there. It should be something or someone even spectators will not able to see, but still, they can feel it. Certainly, it is related to the universe of the figure and makes him stand which made the painting more legendary. This painting depicts the painter came from an unpretentious family who was influenced by his society and culture.

#### **4.5.2 Relationship between Form and Content in the Second Painting**

Amron Omar has painted *Catan Diri* (self-portrait) in 1982. This painting depicts a character of a Malay man with curly hair and a bare chest on the rattan chair with a simple

background. However, it seems the artist followed famous ratio called divine proportion or golden spiral ratio<sup>22</sup>. This ratio based on mathematic rules, which create the best composition in any artistic point. Looking at the world creation and the human body, there are many examples; which have this composition. In this case Fionn (2010) in his article expresses:

In God's creation, there exists a "Divine Proportion" that is exhibited in a multitude of shapes, numbers, and patterns whose relationship can only be the result of the omnipotent, good, and all-wise God of Scripture. This Divine Proportion—existing in the smallest to the largest parts, in living and also in non-living things—reveals the awesome handiwork of God and His interest in beauty, function, and order (p. LXXXVI).

A brief look at the artworks in past illustrates; the Fibonacci Spiral is the most aesthetically pleasing principle which also called divine ratio also use them for abiding the rule of thirds in their artworks. In this way, the artist composes and balances his artwork by thirds. Self-explanatorily, Amron Omar creates an aesthetic flow for spectator's eyes.

In other words, every painter has a focal point in his artwork; indeed, the centers of the internet exist to give pleasing to the viewer's eyes and sometimes this focal point can be a small part of the painting. For instance, artist such as Monet, Sargent, Leonardo Da Vinci, and Van Gogh applied the golden ratio to their works which remarkably pleasing to the human eye. In this regard, Willson (2002) says that:

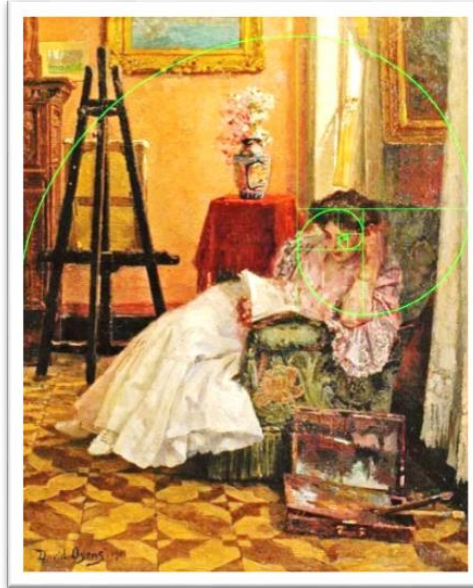
Art forms can be either static or dynamic symmetry. In static symmetry, the lines have definite measurements whereas in dynamic symmetry it is the proportioning of the areas that is given emphasis. It implies "growth, power and movement. It gives animation and life to an artist's work. Rather than the effect of stillness and quiet"<sup>23</sup> of static symmetry. This is the appeal of the golden proportion (p. ii).

---

<sup>22</sup> Fibonacci around 1200 A.D claimed that there is no doubt; all over nature seems to be kind of design which globally effective in begins life and pleasing to the human eye (Herz-Fischler.125).

<sup>23</sup> Runion, G. E. (1990). *The Golden Section*. Dale Seymour Publications, PO Box 10888, Palo Alto, CA 94303-0879, pp. 84–85.





**Figure 4.8:** Young woman reading in the studio, David Oyens, 1901  
oil on canvas 80 x 65.1cm, collection of Dordrecht's Museum

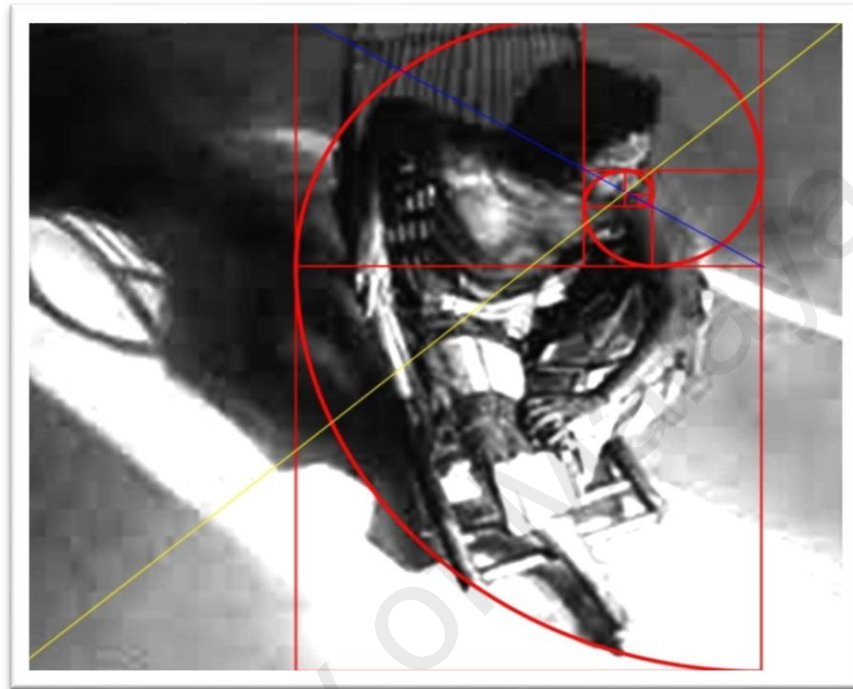
Now it could be seen, 'Young Woman Reading in the Studio' painting also has same composition. To this end, Mitchell (2015) displays:

In David Oyens Young woman reading in the studio, 1901, the Fibonacci spiral can see in the model's pose; the innermost point of the spiral is placed on her eye, lending focus to her peaceful activity. From here, it takes in the curve of her head and shoulder, with a line extending along her forearm, before sweeping out to encompass the chair, the vertical line of the window, and the angle of the easel in the background (p. 1), Figure 4.8.

Amron Omar's painting also has same explanation. There is a Fibonacci spiral composition, which covers the whole of the figure and viewer's eyes, certainly, focuses on the right side. His face and eyes as a center point persuade the viewer to notice his serious face and figure out there is something in front of him and hide from the Spectator's eyes. This is an interesting focal point of the artist. It could be seen the artist has been placed figure's eye in the line of the sweet point.

From that point, Spectator's eyes will smoothly move to his head, then the chair, which depicts he was in a calm situation, but suddenly eyes move to see the performance of his left hand, which push the chair to stand up from a comfortable chair. Then it will move alongside the pants, which hint viewer to think about the identity of the man in the

painting. At the end, eyes have been guided to his left leg with arid fingers. By incredible smooth moving, Viewer's eye craves without any distraction. That is pleasing the eyes of viewer plus empty background do not let the spectator's eyes bewildered in painting, Figure 4.9.

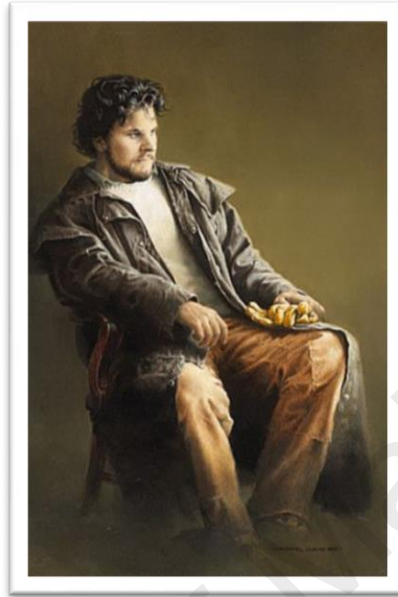


**Figure 4.9:** Spiral composition on Catan Diri

On the other hand, this is a self-portrait and realistic painting. According to the explanation above about his body poses and foremost the right hand, which is pushing the elbow on the chair indicating that he is going to stand. To this end the artist in his interview expresses that “he wants to get going”.

In terms of brightness and darkness, the artist has put a unique composition of light and shadow in his work. This painting has been drawn a parallel darkness and brightness, for instance, his hands, legs, and chest have been located half-light and half- dark. Furthermore, the artist has painted the darker shadow of the man compare to other shadows; chair's shadows or darkness zone. In contrast, there is brightness zone in front

of the man in the painting. In term of concept, an artwork of Michali Damus<sup>24</sup> titled “Young man waiting” which has done in 2003, has the same concept with Amron Omar’s painting, Figure 4.10.



**Figure 4.10:** Young man waiting, Michali Damus, 2003, 11.75 x 7.75, oil painting, private collection

It could be seen in the “young man waiting” painting light and shadow on the man’s body and background have drawn half in darkness and half brightness, which is similar to the Amron Omar’s painting. Both of the paintings have simple background also both figures are looking toward the light over there and in same time give their intent and crowded feeling to spectators. On the other hand, both paintings have hidden the portion from viewer’s eyes which reveal the mysterious scene.

Moreover, in the painting of Damus, the figure has been painted in traditional clothes as viewers can recognize the character is a simple guy who carries his culture and society same as Omar’s painting did. More addition, he also mentioned the clothes express the nature of the figure. Furthermore, looking at the figure posture of this painting, ‘Young man waiting’; depict inflexible or uncomfortable situation, meanwhile his face is similar

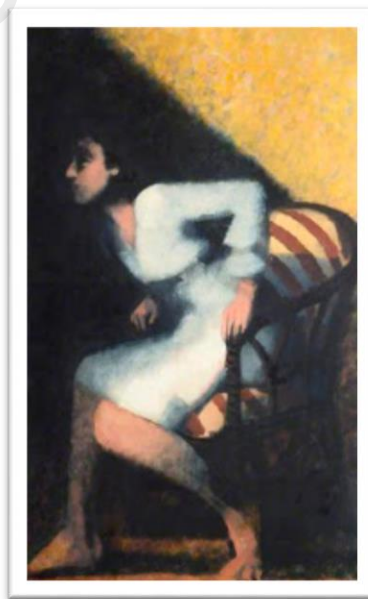
---

<sup>24</sup> realistic artist from Canada, mostly his works is realistic nature

to the one on Amron's painting. Both figures express an intent and ready to go even they seem unsure. Amron in his interview stated that "this figure wants to go and he is between a good and bad", so it could be said, the figure in Amron's painting determined that there is not easy way but still he is intent to go toward the light for being better. Michali Damus (2003) also in his interpretation of own work declared:

This young man is strongly connected to the outdoors, in his work, in his recreation, and mostly by way of a profound desire to be 'out there'. I saw him in these clothes that are so expressive of his nature, sitting there in that bent-wood oak chair, and waiting. It could be any chair, anywhere, inside, and under that seemingly patient repose is the desire to get moving. Just waiting is probably the hardest thing he could ever do (p.1).

In term of movement, Amron's painting may be able to compare another painting, titled "women in chair" painted by Bill Jacklin, Figure 4.11. This painting is famous as an artist play with light and movement repeatedly. It could be seen, there is a woman who is trying to stand from the chair, as he also mentioned, she (woman in a chair) try to illustrate an action moment of her life. In Amron's painting, he (figure in painting) try to stand which is the action moment of his life. To this end, the characters in both paintings want to go, without recognition any observer.



**Figure 4.11:** Women in chair, Bill Jacklin, 1984, 101 x 67 cm, oil on paper, private collection

From the perspective of Bill Jacklin<sup>25</sup>, figure in this painting does not involve the viewers, she (the woman in a chair) attracted to her own activates or realm. Also, characters in Jacklin paintings are not engaged or care with viewers' world (O'Hear, 1992). In likeness, the character of Amron Omar's painting also has been possessed with own thinking and his world. However, Spectator of him (figure in Amron's painting) could not discover what happened in his realm or what made him stand. It seems in both paintings, they (characters of the paintings) completely have been caught in their own world. Though Jacklin's painting has been drawn with more contrast of light and shadow but the face of the figure in Jacklin's painting same as Amron's painting has been painted with profile pose and toward a light meanwhile her shadow has been drawn darker. As a result of this point, it could be said, the characters in both paintings are going to intercept from the dark zone, which has been caused by themselves (characters). Besides that, none viewers could discover what is happening over there or in the mind of the characters to make them go. This curiosity has created legendary paintings. In this regard O'Hear (1992) expresses that:

The figures in the paintings are intentionally or directly saying to the viewer: for mostly they are unaware of being seen or uninterested in saying anything to anyone outside their world. Nor is Jacklin interested in the inner psychology or individuality of the figures he depicts, beyond the appearance, they momentarily present (pp. 1-2).

From this point, both artists have caught a connection of moments; they have depicted, the moment of intersection which be changed to another moment in their character's life. In addition, O'Hear (1992) in his written on the occasion of Bill Jacklin, *Urban Portraits 1986-1992*: "... The upshot is often rather similar, of figures half-seen and moving in and out of focus, of light and movements caught at one fraction of a moment" (pp. 1-2).

---

<sup>25</sup> Born in London in 1943, studied graphics at Walthamstow School of Art, London. He was elected a Royal Academician in 1991 and in 1993 was Official Artist-in-Residence for the British Council in Hong Kong. Jacklin presently lives and works in New York.

### 4.5.3 Socio-cultural Effects on the Second Painting

As it mentioned before, this painting is the artist self-portrait while wearing a “*Sarong*”<sup>26</sup> and sitting on a rattan armchair. It should be a remark that, during 1970-1980, the announcement of national culture and revival Islam fascinated Malay artists to illustrate their Malay identity and their culture. Indeed, Sarong as traditional clothes for Malay man has been certainly evidenced of Malay culture and identity. This painting has painted before 1982, which was the time for Malay artists to discover their art’s identity in context Malay culture. Although, the artist had begun to identify his Malay art since 1979 when he has made his masterpiece (*Pertarungan III*) after that he had changed to self- portrait and then he again went back to the previous theme in his paintings. Meanwhile, his self-portrait painting was one of the highlight artwork and carry Malay culture. Furthermore, the artist achievement in 1980, gave him an opportunity to refresh his artistic life. However, the artist was unsure and still searching to discover the theme of his artworks as identity. In this case, Artist in his interview admits that; “this is my self-portrait which stuck between good and bad, I made the decision to go for good”.

Moreover, it should be noticed during 1970- 1980, the time Amron also was a student in UiTM many artists interested in Malaysian studies and Malay cultures and UiTM was like the center of this enthusiasm. As this result, there is no doubt Amron Omar could be affected by his fellow or pioneer artists.

---

<sup>26</sup> The word Sarong is from the Malay word means "covering. The Sarong is a traditional garment of Java and the Malay Archipelago, consisting of a length of fabric wrapped and tied around the body at the waist or arms, also Sarong is an impact symbol of Malay culture with lengthy legend. Some people write it Sarung. Dawa (2008, pp. 193-194) in his writing about the structure and symbolic element in Sarung says that “Sehelai kain sarung jika ditaksirkan mengisahkan metamorphosis manusia dari awal kejadian iaitu benih, alam kanak-kanak (pembesaran) hingga kea lam dewasa”. [A piece of cloth as assessment, it is a metamorphosis human from the beginning of creation, namely seeds, natural childhood (growth) to mature man].

#### 4.5.4 The Reflection of Amron Omar's Lifestyle in the Second Painting

There is no doubt artist born and grow up in a small village, although he had moved to the big city in young age and now he is living in Kuala Lumpur<sup>27</sup>. Looking at this painting with regardless of the cultural and social impact depicts his lifestyle. He was growing up in the traditional family and also, he was surrounded by Malay people who wearing this kind of clothes (Sarong). From the history of Sarong, Malay man wears it in their home or the prayer time. In addition, the villager's clothes are mostly simple and traditional than city ones. To this end, observing people who are still loyal to their traditional clothes during his childhood until his youth makes it easy to understand how the artist could draw the clothes in details with the realistic pose. On the other hand, Sarong is strongly related to artist lifestyle due to realistic folds on that. It seems Sarong has been attached to the figure's body. To make it clearer, the artist as Malay man use to wear Sarong from his childhood until now, which has given him a wide vision of Sarong's folds. Furthermore, the character wearing no shirt illustrates, he is at home or somewhere he is comfortable to take it off.

On the other hand, the vision or idea of the rattan chair could be originated from his childhood and youth age. Besides, usage of a rattan chair does not belong to a particular nation, although it is more fashion to be used in the village unless he saw it somewhere. After looking into his background, it was obvious he had seen and used a rattan chair since his father was a carpenter alongside his teaching. In this regard, the artist in his interview claims that: "the time I was drawing this painting, I had this rattan chair in my home". As a result, rattan chair and Sarong are not only a symbol of cultural identity but also part of the artist's life, which ingrained from his childhood and youth age.

---

<sup>27</sup> Kuala Lumpur is the capital city of Malaysia.

#### 4.5.5 Conclusion

The concept of the Amron's painting depicts the self-awareness. First, it is worth to notice what the self-awareness is. When an individual has a rich vision of her/his character, as well as thoughts, beliefs, weaknesses, strengths, emotions, and motivation; s/he has self-awareness. Besides that, self-awareness as part of human's life allows any individual perceive other people, how they identify her/him including his/her perspective and responses to them in that particular time (Cruell, 2015).

It should be noticed, until the 1980s, the artist has preceded the unfair struggle with dignity to survive as an artist. However, it was not the last fight but it was a start to him for struggling himself as an artist in the art scene. This time, he was conscious of who he is, and he was recognized as the artist for himself and his society (Shahir, 2012).

In the other hand, as it mentioned before, artist similar his fellows attempted to explore the Malay identity in his works that time. Therefore, this painting has been done with new themes in excellent and incredible composition. However, this new theme was not the one that artist wanted as his artworks identity then, after all, he had changed to the previous theme. Looking back to the concept of painting, it could be seen, light and shadow on painting have been drawn in half to illustrate, he was conscious of his artistic talent and potential to draw (light) but unconscious of the theme which he wanted as his artworks identity (shadow). Furthermore, the artist has drawn darker shadow for character compare to the chair's shadow meanwhile the character looking toward the light with the pose of going. According to Edington (2014, p. 29), "self-awareness is being conscious of what you're good at while acknowledging what you still have yet to learn".

From this perspective, it could be said, the character was aware of his situation (bad, good) and all difficulty still, he wants to go and surely, he will be separate from darkness. This painting is the illustration of self- awareness of artist after he had been discovered as the artist for his own seek and society although still, he sought to choose his paintings

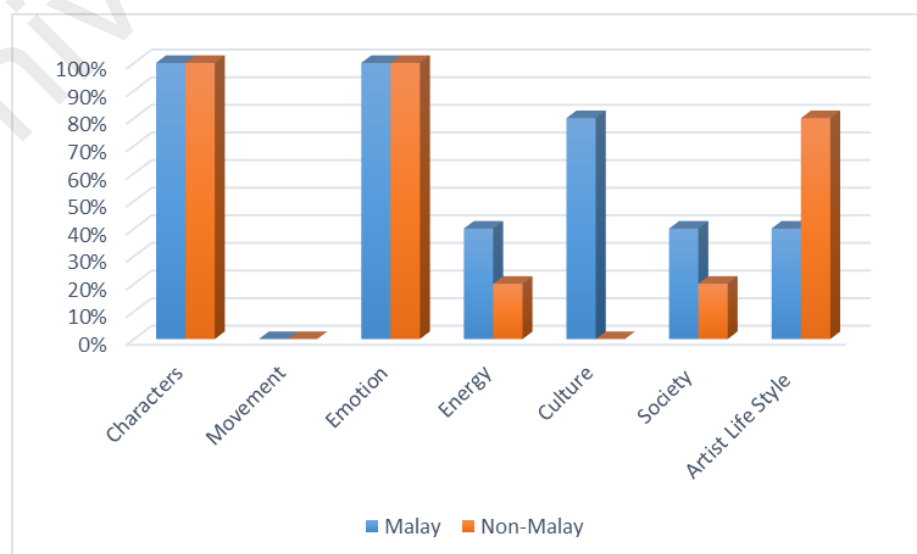


theme. The artist mentioned in his interview “this is a self-portrait which I put everything half in shadow and light I was between good and bad. I want to go for good”. He counties in other interviews “my journey as an artist is not complete yet for what I want to be as an artist I need more years and experience”. In this regard, another expert Kumar (2010) mentioned that, self-awareness is a skill which needs several years of experience, time and it will never stop.

#### 4.6 The Communal Interpretation of the Amron Omar’s Second Painting

##### 4.6.1 Participants’ Connection with the Second Painting

Figure 4.12 has shown the perspective of participants on second painting. As it can be seen, 54% of Malay and 45% of non-Malay pointed out the key words. It seems that all participants in both groups determined the characters and emotions, such as half-naked man, rattan chair, dull and muted colors, worry, annoyance, waiting and so forth. In contrast, none of the participants in the two groups pointed out elements related to movement. Moreover, the element of culture was only figured out by 80% of Malay participants. For example, they implied a man who wears *Sarong*. There is no doubt this piece of clothes has important traditional status in the Malay community and also acts as an obvious profile in art life.



**Figure 4.12:** The Malay and non-Malay interpretation of the second painting

As to the elements of society and energy in paintings, both were specified by 40% of Malay and 20% of non-Malay respondents. Regarding the diagnose of the society's element, it seems that the understanding of social elements in the painting is easier for Malay respondents compared with their non-Malay counterparts given that the artist and the Malay respondents are both from the same society. Therefore, the respondents are able to imagine issues, such as a villager man or a village house, in the painting. In contrast, as can be seen, non-Malay respondents (80%) linked the painting to the artist's lifestyle whereas only 20% of Malay respondents did so. For instance, a Malay respondent says:

Orang lelaki duduki di kerusi dengan hanya berkain pelikat pada pendapat saya, gambar ini memperlihatkan sisi tradisional orang melayu seperti berkain pelikat dan kerusi rotan itu juga merupakan suatu produk yang boleh dianggap sebagai kraft tangan. Ruang kosong di persekitaran depan saya tafsirkan sebagai kesunyian lelaki itu yang tidak mempunyai keluarga. bayangan gelap di keliling dia telah memberikan kegusaran dalam hatinya. boleh dilihat at melalui cara duduknya tidak dalam keadaan yang relaks, seperti ada sesuatu yang tidak kena. pelukis memperkenalkan dirinya dengan media warnayang digunakan oil painting. Di samping dengan teknik mewarna yang digunakan.

The respondent means that there is a man sitting on a chair wearing Sarong. This image depicts some traditional constructs in the Malay society, such as 'Sarong' and the rattan chair that considered as handcrafted. That a lonely man who has no family by looking at empty space surroundings. By dark shadows and rowlock, he feels annoyance in his heart. As the situation of his sitting is uncomfortable, it seems there is something wrong. Painter proves himself as a skillful artist in color techniques. Another example, a non-Malay respondent states that:

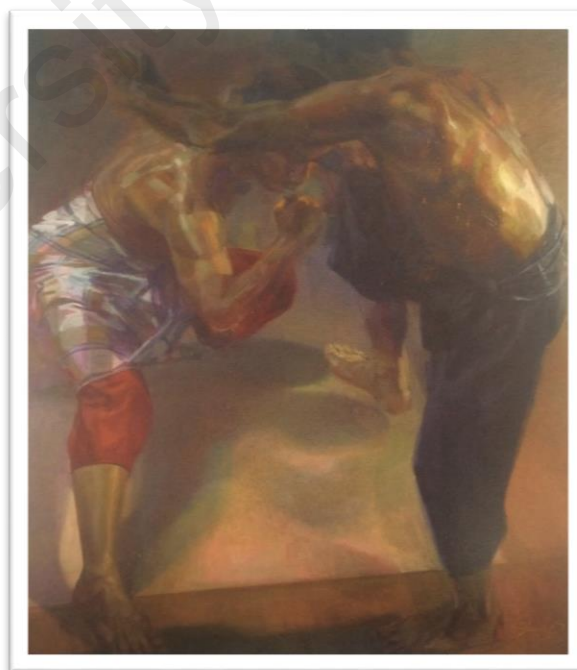
There is a man without a shirt sitting on a chair in his room. He is looking to the left and it seems he is waiting for someone or his child to punish. The colors are matt and I feel gloomy and sad. He reminds me my father when he is mad at me and he is waiting for me to come. I feel, there is difficult station, he looks upset and angry but I feel he is ready and there will be big fight or argue. To me artist is someone who was same experience and I think he draw his father as simple but strike man. His father looks all time waiting for him and has more expectation. Also, he is great artist who remember his past.

The respondent means that this painting is about a father who is waiting for someone probably his child in his room. The atmosphere of painting is gloomy and pensive as an artist use dull color. He is just like a father who is mad and upset his child and he is waiting to reprimand his child. Perhaps as a great artist has the same experience, he depicts his childhood time. He seems close to his father and his father is a strict but humble man.

#### **4.7 The Personal Interpretation of the Amron Omar's Third Painting**

##### **4.7.1 Main Features in the Third Painting**

The researcher has figured out that, this painting has illustrated two fighters wearing traditional clothes. From their attitude, obviously, it should be middle of the struggle. These fighters do not wear any shirt, one of them has worn simple pants, and other ones have put on tradition pants. Along with that, the background of this painting was drawn simple, which make sense empty room with wooden floor. Therefore, it could be say, this fighting has not represented sort of word competition, Figure 4.13.



**Figure 4.13:** Pertarungan, Amron Omar, oil painting, 1996, oil painting 140.5 x 142 cm, collection of National Art Gallery

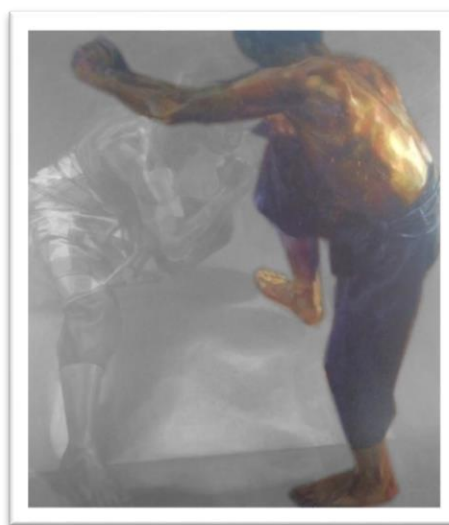
Moreover, it looks, the fight has been conducted by the blue pants fighter who is standing more forward and his head upper than other fighters on the left. Other hands the body of left fighter is more semi-erect although his pants depicted him as a powerful fighter, although due to his pose and face, which is looked down, make sense of weaker and defender and weaker fighter. By the other perspective, it seems, even he has an opportunity to punch, but he does not have a wide view of their fight.

**i. Fighter in blue pants on right**

The right figure is standing on his left foot when his right foot is going to hit the ground. His upper body has been bending slightly toward the right, the left hand's pose has been overhead, and toward his opponent, that seems he had tried to punch. To this end, his pose had depicted him as an aggressive and fast fighter.

Although there is no possibility to see his right hand, which seems has been hiding behind his body, Figure 4.14.

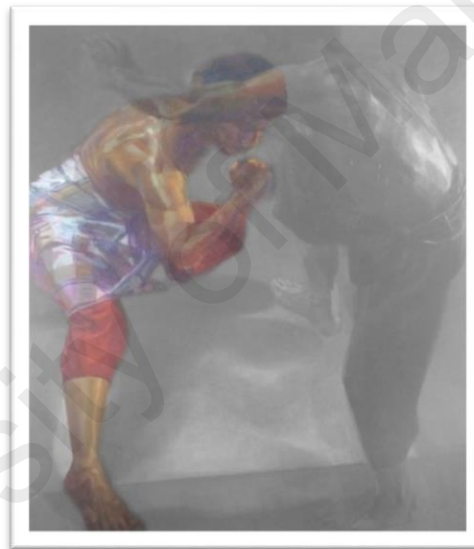
It could be inference, the right hand has been taken by his opponent's hand. in term of color, he has worn blue color pants that "it symbolizes trust, loyalty, wisdom, confidence, intelligence, faith, truth, and ..." (Edwards-Wright, 2011, p. 12).



**Figure 4.14:** The fighter is wearing blue pants on the right side in the Pertarungan painting

## ii. Fighter in red pants on left

The left figure has been drawn with a semi-erect pose, wide position of feet and unclear face. By this words, his body has been bending toward the ground while his head has turned down instead of looking at his opponent. It seems, his body has lifted and kept balance by his left legs due to the stretch out the right leg. Moreover, looked down's head and right hands with defensive pose illustrate him as self-defacer. On the other hand, he wears red pants and *Samping*<sup>28</sup> clothes. His red pants could describe anger, power, stress, action and courage along with that *Samping* as A symbol of the tradition Malay warrior, Figure 4.15.



**Figure 4.15:** The fighter is wearing red pants on the left side in the *Pertarungan* painting

### 4.7.2 Relationship between Form and Content in the Third Painting

This painting has represented the struggle between the two fighters and moreover the mixture of offensive and defensive posture in battle. From artist state; “the right figure depicts a ‘*Kuntaw*<sup>29</sup>’ warrior and the character on the left represent the *Silat* warrior”. By

<sup>28</sup> *Samping* – made from kain sarong or kain songket (a kind of fabric made by Malays) – is like a mini skirt worn by a man with a trouser under it.

<sup>29</sup> According to *Kuntaw* is an ancient Filipino Martial Art that uses both hands and feet for self-defense in its hard (closed-hand) and soft (open-hand) ways. means fist/boxing. Along with the tales handed down to present generation, were the question raised by others, theories about the word of *Kuntaw*. First, *Kuntaw*...literally means hand and foot although the word “*Kuntaw*” basically a combination of two syllable words. “KUN” and “TAW” which are derived respectively from “*kunsagrado*” meaning “sacred” and “*hataw*” means “strike” forming together “*kunsagradong hataw*” or “sacred strike” taught to Muslim royalties “*Maharlika*”. Second,

this clarification, the right fighter base on the style of *Kuntaw* has been drawn on offensive pose as also it could be seen who he attempted to punching the opponent and the left fighter has been painted in a posture of the defensive base on *Silat* style, as he has warded off the punching and made a guard with his right hand. To this end, the researcher has drawn the imaginary diagonal, horizontal and vertical lines by using the rule of third<sup>30</sup> to clarify an equipoise of the element in this painting, Figure 4.16.



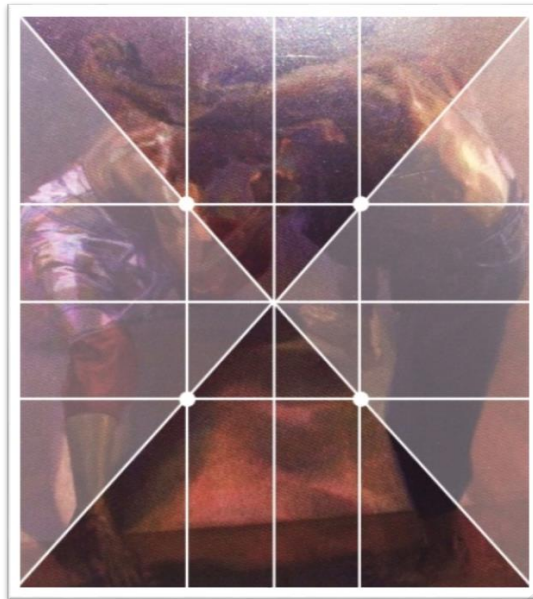
**Figure 4.16:** The imaginary diagonal, horizontal and vertical lines, the rule of third

As can be seen, the bodies of both fighters equally were placed in each triangle, for instance, the heads of both fighters and their opposite hands with contrast, pose (attacking, ward off guard) to have been painted in the upper triangle. Moreover, the opposite legs of both fighters have been drawn in the lower triangle. Although the dark, heavy and bustling atmosphere in upper painting have been compensated and balanced by light and empty in the lower zone of painting, Figure 4.17.

---

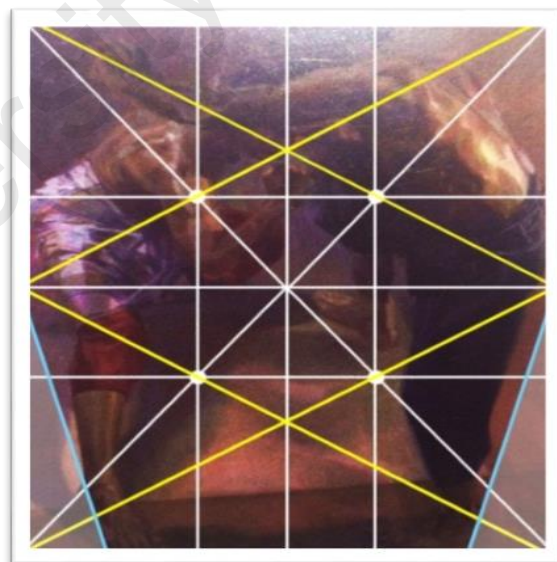
that Kuntaw came from the word KunTao, the “o” being changed “w” to better conform to local dialect of the region. With the heavy concentration of Muslims and the change in language his art became known as Koon-Tao “Fist Way” or Chinese Kun-Tao. Trading ships between the Philippines and Indonesia are presumed to have introduced Chinese Kun-Tao. The Muslims adopted and made Kuntaw a secretive art taught to Maharlika and thus Kuntaw concentrated in Mindanao and the southern Philippines, which is predominantly a Muslim region.

<sup>30</sup> The Rule of thirds is a very common composition of the old time. It is done by dividing the painting into three parts equally in vertical and horizontal, and finding the connection between the common points and connects them by crossing lines between them, (Liu, Chen, Wolf, & Cohen-Or, 2010).



**Figure 4.17:** Tringle and rule of third

Moreover, every light has placed opposite of dark zone or fighters have been taken the equatorial area of the painting. For instance, if the dark background on the left behind fighter had been balanced by lighter background on the right side. Another example, there is empty and similar space behind both figure's feet, Figure 4.18.



**Figure 4.18:** The space behind the feet of fighters

As a result, Amron has created the balance of contrasts, which has brought the sense of Parallel harmony of contradiction. To be more specific, each character in this painting such as offensive fighter, attacked pose, fashion pants, light and brightness, zone have

been balanced by the defensive fighter, ward off pose, traditional pants, shadow, and darkness zone. However, the light and shadow on the background as a symbol of good and bad or negative or positive situations have illustrated the exciting of bad or good time or state in real life but it is all about how to fight or defend or respond.

In another term of composition, the bodies of both fighters have created perfect triangle composition in the middle of the painting, Figure 4.19. The triangle composition represents a strong foundation, unity and trust whereas balance show clarity and harmony (Stemp, 2006).



**Figure 4.19:** Triangle shape between fighters

In other perspectives, the triangle has been known as a compositional shape to create peace within the painting or photography. This composition guide viewer to focus on the particular area, an object or anything on the painting, (Ray, 2014).

To clarify of this comparison, there is a painting titled '*Stag at Sharkeys*' by Bellows which has almost similar concept and pose of fighters. In *Stag at Sharkeys* painting, the space of between two fighters has created triangle composition, Figure 4.20. Adams (2008) describe this painting as boxing fight between in a private club meanwhile these



fighters have been pushing each other but neither of them could not able to move other ones. Also, Carmen (Haywood, 1988), in catalogue Bellows interpret that:

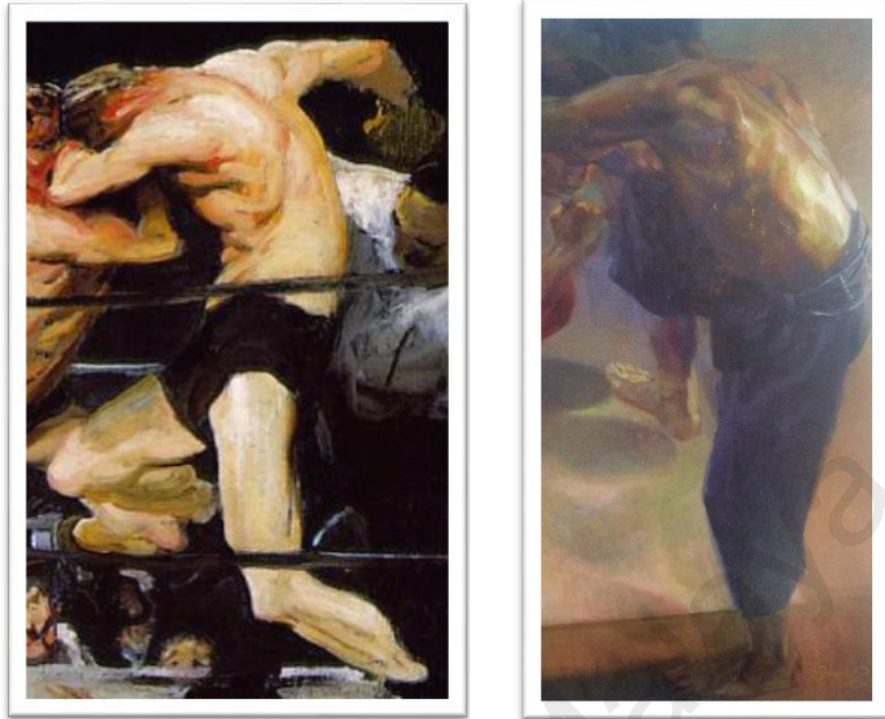
The vertically of the fighters who are in close combat at the center of the ring: the figure on the right moves inward with his left foot raised, while his opponent blocks this thrust with his arms and the tilt of his upper torso .... the fighters are literally locked in head-to-head combat, but no other parts of their bodies touch (p. 3).

There is the same expression on Amron's painting; their heads have locked together, but their bodies have not involved with each other and none of fighter could not able to move toward other ones.



**Figure 4.20:** Stag at Sharkey's, George Bellows, oil painting  
92 × 122.6 cm, 1909, Cleveland Museum of Art

In both paintings, the right fighters have depicted the stronger fighter, aggressive fighter. It could be seen, both artists have drawn the right figures with lifting a left leg toward a center to gain more power. Although on the Stage at Sharkey painting, the right fighter has been drawn with sturdier pose, Figure 4.21.



**Figure 4.21:** Right fighter in both paintings

Moreover, in both paintings, the figure in the right has been bending toward the opponent's side. Alongside that, the shadows and light on these fighters' bodies by bolding the contraction of muscles have been depicted the trained and athletic fighter, Figure 4.22.

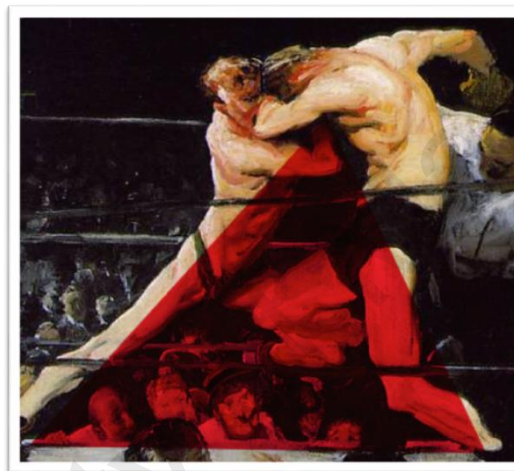


**Figure 4.22:** Shadow and light on both fighters

In the George Bellow's painting and the artist's painting, there is a triangle form which have been created by the bodies of fighters in the middle of these painting, Figure 4.23, Figure 4.24. In this case, both artist in their painting have had intention to guide the viewer

to this part painting Amron in his interview express that “in middle, I paint the repeating shadows of fighters create the energy”. Also, the intention of George Bellows was to illustrate what kind of people might be attend in this club (Schreiber, 2010). In this regard, Schreiber (2010) states that:

The paintings offer a glimpse into the entire scene of the fight, providing the viewer with a sense of what it might be like to attend Sharkey’s.... In the meantime, attending working-class spaces of leisure was the quickest way uptown men might see and bet on a boxing match. For George Bellows, boxing was a quintessentially working-class sport, and uptown spectators who came downtown were fodder for ridicule (p. 164).

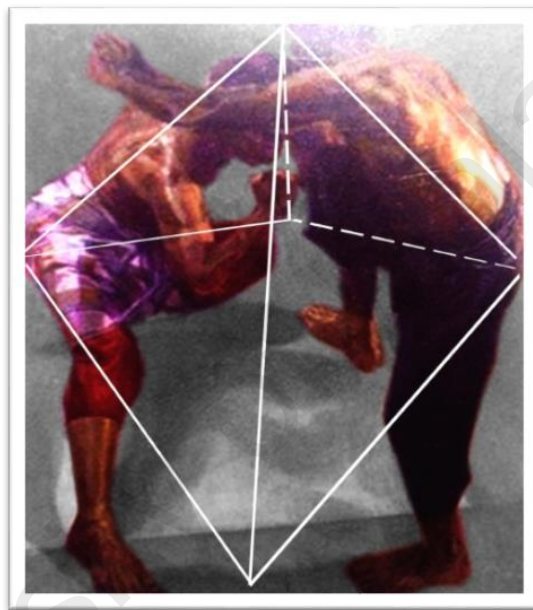


**Figure 4.23:** The triangle form created by the bodies of fighters in George Bellow’s painting



**Figure 4.24:** The triangle form created by the bodies of fighters in Amron Omar’s painting

In another perspective, the posture of fighters in Amron's painting has been created a pyramid shape in the center of the painting. To this end, the bodies of fighters have been located in square corners and other corners have been made along their legs. In meanwhile the confluence of their heads has been created the apex of the pyramid, Figure 4.25. In the same manner, Schreiber (2010) in his article about the George Bellows' painting write, "in Stag at Sharkey's, the bodies of the two boxers nearly meld into one as they form one graceful pyramid at the center of the composition" (p. 164).



**Figure 4.25:** Pyramid in the painting

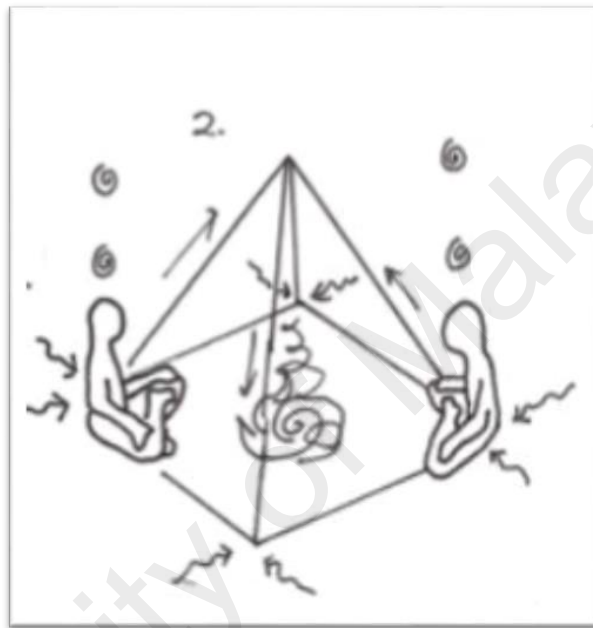
By looking at the past, the pyramid was being recognized as one of the first and elegant architect structures in the world. In terms of the energy inside the pyramid, Sievert (1977) state that:

Countless researchers — both professionals and the kitchen-table variety — have concluded independently that, when you correctly align four triangles side by side (using the proportions of the Great Pyramid itself), you create a geometric form that either produces or traps some sort of usable energy (p. 35).

To this end, there should be energy in the center of the painting, which has been caused by the postures of the fighters. In this regard the artist in his interview claims that "there

is an energy in the middle of this painting”. Moreover, this pattern has been emphasized on the existing balance and harmony in this painting.

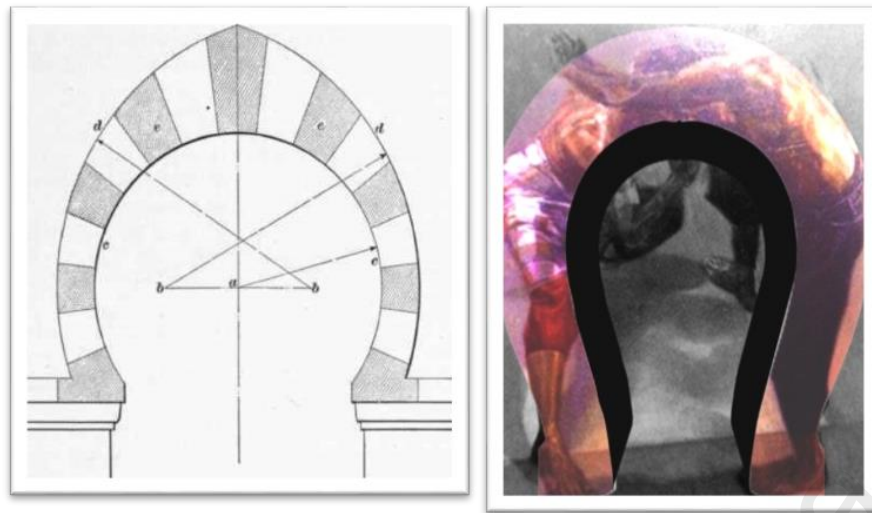
In this regard, Francisco (2014) says that “a pyramid also creates a spherical field like a 3D globe of harmonic vibrations – where the wave patterns are synchronous and rhythmic – around itself. Everything within that field will move towards the harmony” (p. 1).



**Figure 4.26:** Pyramid and position of two persons to show the energy creation

Apparently, the great harmony and balance that caused the combination of contrasts, the repeating of the shadows and the existing of pyramid shape have proven the flow of the energy in the center of the painting. However, if all of these reasons have been caused accidentally still there is undeniable evidence which artist also has confirmed it, Figure 4.26.

In this perspective, the fighters’ bodies have created an arch form. Although the artist confirmed the creation of the arch shape was purposely and his intention to illustrate the energy. However, based on the arch pattern, it should be energy which is the out coming of an interaction of upward, downward, inward and outward’s forces, Figure 4.27.



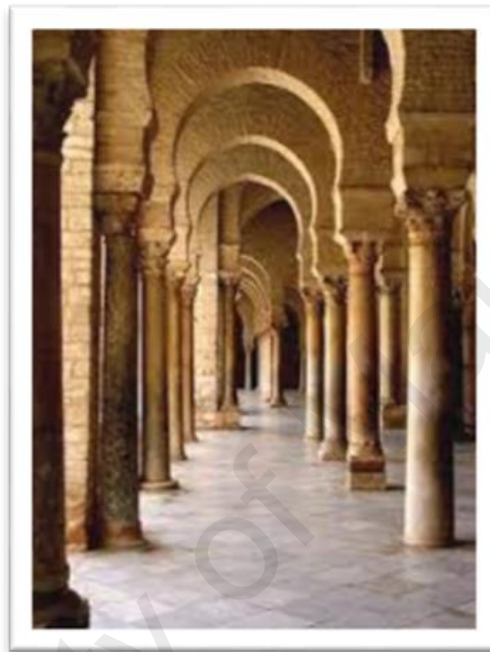
**Figure 4.27:** Horseshoe arch sample and imaginary arch in the painting

To be clarify this arch pattern, it could be seen the curve of the bodies and the posture of the legs have made the arch More detailed; a horseshoe arch in the center of the painting. Although, the Arch has recognized as one of the pattern of structure in ancient architecture and Islamic architecture, which has, been applied in diverse ways. However, a reason of the Arch stability was being detected of the four independent forces confrontation; upward, downward, inward and outward, so these forces will be meeting each other in center which create the energy (Parker, 2013). Therefore, in the Amron painting, the forces within fighters have met each other in the center, which made the flow of the energy between these fighters.

Moreover, Muslim engineers use this pattern as they have noticed sound will be gathering by the forces in middle of arch, which make it stronger and louder. So, Elsergany (2010) in his essay about the reason of to build up arc shape states that:

They knew that sound reflects on concave surfaces and gathers in one focus just like light, which reflects on the surfaces of concave mirrors. Muslim engineers used the focusing on sound technique in purposes of construction and building, particularly in larger congregational mosques. The objective was to transmit and make the orator's voice stronger during lessons on Fridays and feasts (p. 1).

Feather more, from prior time until now Arch has had a distinct role in structure, especially in term of a religious place as far as it was introduced as main element of holy places structure in any religion. It seems, the ancient architecture has gained massive successes where it was based on independently emotional which mostly related to the brooding spirit of beauty in holy places (Parker, 2013).



**Figure 4.28:** Horseshoes arch in the great mosque of Kairouan

Moreover, Parker (2013) claims the rectangular shape and line and the construction with hefty square blocks seems to be conflicting with life and beauty. For more emphasis, he mentioned the quotation of Max Dessoir<sup>31</sup> “all warmth, all movement, all love is round, or at least oval least, goes in spirals or other curved lines! Only the cold, immovable, indifferent, and hateful is straight and square.... Life is round, and death is angular” (1906, p. 396). It seems, this painting has carried the religious sense and illustrated the faith could peacefully link any conflict and create a great harmony, Figure 4.28.

---

<sup>31</sup> Translate by Ellen Key, *The Few and the Many, Aesthetik und Allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft*, book by Max Dessoir, page 396

### 4.7.3 Socio-cultural Effects on the Third Painting

This painting has portrayed an energetic performance of two fighters. Although this painting had been drawn in 1996 when the artist still has influenced by *Silat* performances and was centralized to find the master performance in his paintings.

Indeed, in context of Malaysian modern art, the subject, media and they of artworks have become progressively varied since the 1990s. Then artists had trended to shift from the Malay/Islamic-centered to the postmodern style. In this regard, often the Malay artist's artworks have been criticized in comparison the artworks of post-modern artists or those who were proceeding toward modernization. According to Sarena Abdullah (2011),

What is obvious is that Malay artists are concerned with the immediate and near future, rather than looking back or glorying the past. These artistic tendencies epitomize the challenges, divergences and even connections of perspectives that define the growing Malaysian middle class especially in the context of the construction or even deconstruction of Malaysian society (p. 97).

Furthermore, during 1990's the stage of society and economy in Malaysia has been developed and shifted to higher level so Malaysia has become more international which had affected artists' vision. They had started to experiment new media and mix materials to produce artworks (Abdullah, 2011).

To this end, obviously the Amron's paintings were involved in the critical that time. So, to align with this flow, he has endeavored to move toward a modernization while he carry on the Malay identity and theme of his works. In this painting, changing the style from the defensive pose to offensive gesture while the attacker has worn the normal or more free style pants have implied how the artist was looking forward to modernization hold on his Malay theme. According to Mohd Iruadee Husin (2012):

Amron's stylization of figures changed. From the stylized dance movements of '*Silat Minang*', he adopted the movements and strikes of '*Silat Kuntau*'. When immersed in the knowledge of '*Silat Kuntau*', the movements are mostly inclined towards strikes while the *Minang* martial arts adopt a defensive mode, (p. 154).



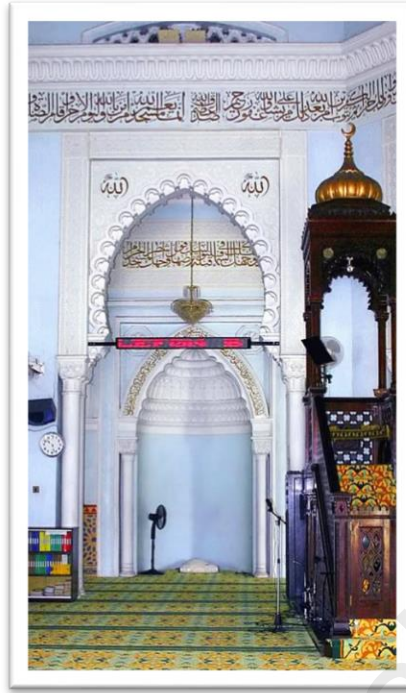
Moreover, the fighters in this painting have been created an arch shape, which is the most common form in Islamic architecture. However, Amron as Malay artist born and grow up in a Muslim country which is surrounded by many mosques and building that the common form in their structure was the arch form. Regarding the use of arch in Islamic culture, Saoud (2002) explains that:

The arch was an essential element of the architecture or early civilizations...Muslims mastered the used and design of the arch more than any other civilization...The Muslim knowledge of geometry and laws of statics most also have played a leading role in their choice of various types of arch... Their architectures use it as a major structure and decorative feature (pp. 2-4).

In addition, the creating arch form by the fighters' body has been implied that Amron has intended to depict the connection between *Silat* performance, Islamic culture which has rooted in his faith, believes, passion and Malay identity. For more clarification about the arch, Ibragimov (2011) argues that:

The direction of a prayer in Islam is this determined by a vertical vector. This explains a persistent, plain and unchallenged spirit of verticality of Christian arch as well as flat and curve shapes of Islamic arch.... Islamic forms give the impression of a ban on upward movement, (p. 85).

As a result, the creation of the arch shoes composition as Islamic symbol *Mihrab*, figure 4.29, with the traditional theme (*Silat*) has revealed that the artist as faithful, loyal and Malay Muslim artist. His works are mirrors of his life, faith, family, society, culture and experience. He is a known for his duel series for over three decades and his paintings are now part of Malay cultural symbol in Malaysia.



**Figure 4.29:** Mihrab of the Zahir mosque, Alor Setar Kedah, photo by Syed Alfandi

#### **4.7.4 The Reflection of Amron Omar's Lifestyle in the Third Painting**

The painting has been affected by Amron's lifestyle and more his childhood. It could be seen, the clothes and wooden floor which depict of the artist's life. Artist express that "from 1994 I have started my challenge and change from the *Silat* to the *Kuntaw*". As it mentioned before this painting is a Mix of the *Kuntaw* and the *Silat*, more interesting this is the *Silat Kuntaw* has been established from Kedah. Furthermore, the *Kuntaw Silat* has been introduced by five master of the *Silat* and his father was one of the founders (Mohd Yusri Abdul Rahman, 2012). Moreover, from his knowledge and observation of the *Kuntaw* and the *Silat*, artist had been aware to chosen clothes for the character of his painting as it could be seen, artist has been drawn the *Silat* warrior with the Sarong and the *Kuntaw* warrior with pants.

According to Pakhurddin Sulaiman (2012) "Amron made this change perhaps after realizing that wearing the Sarong during a '*Silat*' fight would appear awkward as the sarong will no doubt restricts the wearer's '*Silat*' movements" (p. 171).

In addition, Amron was born and grow up in a religious family so that is not extravagant sense that he put the Islamic symbol in his work. According to the explanation before, the arch shoes form has been founded by Muslim architectures also a Zahir mosque as one of the beautiful and oldest mosque has been located in Kedah (Alor Setar), Figure 4.30. This mosque has a specific Moorish architecture which is a represents Islamic architecture and it should be noticed the repetitious patterns and the arch shoes have been defined as an indicator element for this kind of architecture.



**Figure 4.30:** The Zahir mosque, Alor Setar, Kedah, photo by Syed Alfandi

According to artist interview “the performance of fighters creates the arch form same as the arch in mosque, I did it purposely with repeated shadows to deliver an energy”. There is no doubt, this knowledge or purpose has been created by his faith in Islam and his childhood. In the other words, Islam has been ingrained in his soul and as an inseparable part of his inner could be appeared in diverse forms. From other perspective, this painting has been imaged the sense of artist life as the artist mentioned it. So, changing from the defensive posture to attacking pose express that artist consciously has drawn his life challenge at that time.to this end artist in his interview express that:

My challenge was started from 1994, I change the character of my paintings from *Silat* to Kuntaw, when I wanted to challenge myself to being better artist.... my challenge still run as I want to be hyper realistic artist.

The painting of struggle between *Silat* and *kuntaw-silat* could be explained how artist has been challenged himself from old style to new style. Mohd Yusri Abdul Rahman (2012, p. 184) says that:

His transformation from '*bunga tari*' to combat movements or '*Silat pauh Minang*' to '*Silat Kuantau*' posed some challenges when dealing with changes in the '*Silat*' figures. His images move from defensive postures towards attacking mode.

To this end, He had tried to proceed the modernization of his paintings in parallel with his beliefs and Malay identity. It could be said; his artistic journey had begun to move faster and stronger while he was royal to his origin and traditional culture.

#### **4.7.5 Conclusion**

This painting has been depicted the struggle or challenge between the two fighters. Looking at their clothes; traditional and fashion pants have been implied the struggle between new style and old style. The old-style fighter, whatever stronger (traditional pants) but still has been drawn in defensive pose and new style fighter (normal pants) even Hasty has been depict the offensive posture. However, there is no way to choose one of the fighters as winner or loser as they do different style. Alongside that, the artist mentioned "all my painting is about me and I am struggling myself in this painting". So, from this point, these fighters have been illustrating two different faces artist. Artist as offensive and defensive character of this painting has been struggling himself. Therefore, there is no winner or loser.

The self-challenge could be the concept of this painting whereas nobody could not win or defeat own self-it seems, based on the critical time and modernization art, artist was challenge himself to be a better painter not to change his art's identity. This painting has been illustrated how Amron had experimented to find way for combining the old style

(pure Malay/Muslim characters with the modernization theme and object. If it was the only struggle, it should be two fighters with same style whilst it could be seen the struggle between *Silat* and *Kuntaw*. However, artist in his interview says “I started my challenge since 1994”. According to Oaks (2009), “we may have to struggle to achieve our goals, but our struggles may yield as much growth as our learning. The strength we develop in overcoming challenges will be with us in the eternities to come” (p. 27).

Obviously, the self-challenge is a path to respond to desires, questions, to step an unknown way and making the mistake then learning from them. Self -challenge is about one’s choice despite the fact that could be negative or positive choice but at the end the individual will replace, gain or combine the new skill to his/her life self-challenge has impact of individual’s life and more important challenge help to replace new skills in their life (Fox, Dunlap, Hemmeter, Joseph, & Strain, 2003).

To challenging himself, artist has attempted to gain new vision and illustrate the modernization steps through his painting while he carries his original theme. There is no winner or loser as he wanted to challenge himself, but still there is a struggle not only performing. If the artist wanted to use both figure as *Silat* fighter, which depicted two defensive figure so, he could not to image this challenge and the struggle as the *Silat* warrior doing softly movement and their aim is to defense not to attack. On the other hand, if the artist painted both figures as *Kuntaw* fighters, it should be the rough struggle, but the imaged is more aggressive and empty of his art’s work identity. As a result, Amron has created the great combination of contrasts and put everything in parallel. Indeed, this painting has depicted the mixture of softs and roughs for instance, drawing the fighters with different style (*Silat* and *Kuntaw*) offensive, defensive pose while one attacked, but missed punching other ones ward off, so none of them could be a winner or loser and long beside the traditional pants opposite the modern pants and the similarly light and shadow on the fighters have emphasized of this balance. His painting has been illustrated the so-

so or win-win struggle. In reality life, challenging, it is not about struggling in the same manner to feel fair or to be a winner it is about how to attack or defend. At the end, whatever he/she gets in her/his life, it is a reflection of his/her choice.

Obviously, the challenge has existed as part of human nature from Human creation time until now. Undoubtedly every creation, changes, and invention; new idea has been made by on one's self-challenge. It will impact and develop the one's life or universal by gaining new skills, new data find answers, and people challenge themselves in many different ways. Perhaps, every self-challenge has been started through the mind with the idea of better or stranger, easier... etc. after that, if the one has had self-knowledge and enough faith, believe in own self, it would come out with new experiment and try to exam own potential. As Safrizal Shahir (2012) wrote "His artworks are about the true self, about his experience of the struggles in dueling...dueling is also a struggle in opening secret doors of the self which prior to that was unknown or unaware of its existence" (p. 90). In this regard, Keller (1940) stated:

Security is mostly a superstition. It does not exist in nature, nor do the children of men as a whole experience it. God Himself is not secure, having given man dominion over His works! Avoiding danger is no safer in the long run than outright exposure. The fearful are caught as often as the bold. Faith alone defends. Life is either a daring adventure or nothing (pp. 50-51).

At the end, this painting has been depicted the artist's self-challenge. It could be said, he did not avoid walking in the new path as he believes himself as faithful artist. Also, he has knowledge about his art, his artistic potential and aware of the theme of his artworks. So, from this point he attempted to challenge himself to discover himself as an artist and foster his artistic vision.

## 4.8 The Communal Interpretation of the Amron Omar's Third Painting

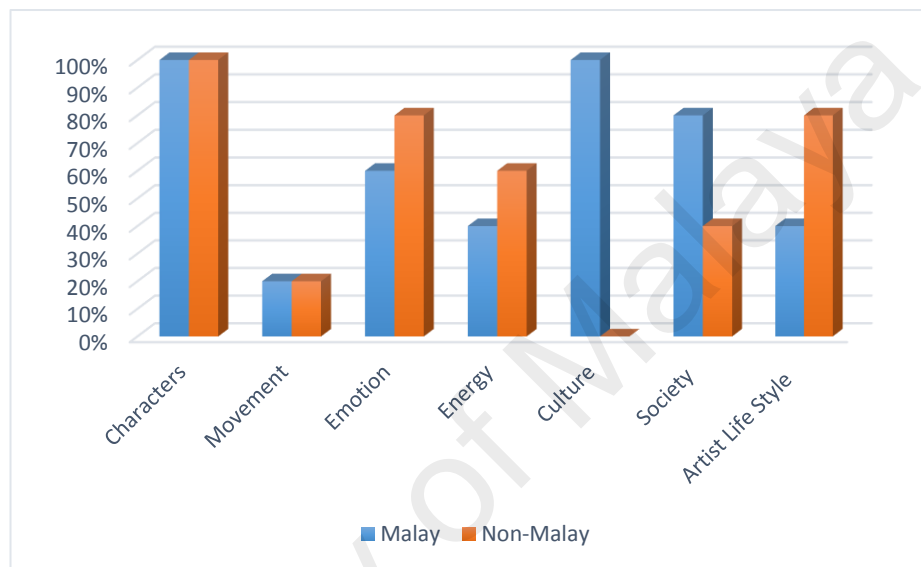
### 4.8.1 Participants' Connection with the Third Painting

As can be seen in Figure 4.31, both Malay and non-Malay participants had discovered the characteristic elements of this painting, for instance, the struggling between fighter or the balance light or shadows, the traditional or old style pants against the modern or fashion pants. However, in the term of characteristic, most non-Malay students have implied that combination of the contrast for example "he is fair because he paints a balanced painting", "I love this painting because in my eyes that is combination of contrasts", "art is soft fight is harsh" and non-Malay had concentrated on the style of this struggle for instance; "there is opportunity to look at the skill of self-defeating", "two adult males are fighting or performing martial arts", "the battle is about two warriors' fighting to show a prowess and greatness of the martial science", "they are struggling through a martial art". Although both groups had recognized the elements of character, but due to the differences culture and society of Malay and non-Malay, they had discovered in various ways.

In the term of emotion, the Malay participates have expressed the positive emotion due to their knowledge about the struggle. It seems this painting has exhibited its self as, a prowess and greatness of *Silat* or delight fighting, faithful Malay warrior, hope, Malay soul and so on. In contrast, it has played the emotion of non-Malay as the senses of fear, worry, hopeless situation, sweaty feeling, and hasty character.

Feather more, the movement elements have inscribed by the non-Malay more than the Malay participants. As they have had more focused on their observation instead of the feeling about this painting. Due to their expectation of struggle and winner, a fighter, they had mentioned the movement of the fighters or who want to attack or how the fighters move, but the Malay have impressed by the concept of this struggle. Therefore, their national prejudice about the *Silat* did not let them judge the action and only a few of them

have pointed the movements. From another perspective, 60% of both groups have indicated the sense of the energy in this painting. For illustration, they had written; “the flow of the energy between the fighter”, “they have the energy I feel that”, “or feel warm and sweaty”, “gain the great sprite”, “they put a lot of energy” and so on. The expression of the energy illustrates whatever viewers, Malay or non-Malay has been watching the painting, and they might have been feeling the flow of the energy or not.



**Figure 4.31:** The Malay and non-Malay interpretation of the third painting

In terms of culture, it could be seen, all of Malay students had found out to cultural elements which are not astonishing, although some non-Malay students had insinuated to the difference of the pants, for instance, they had inscribed; “one of them is wearing a blue pant... and another one it red pants with weird cover”, “...wears different clothes”, “One of them look like wear traditional trousers ... mighty it happened in a village”, “he wears old fashion and unusual pants and other one wears a jean”. As it could be seen, they had noticed the pants could be traditional or belong to the unfamiliar culture for them. Whereas the Malay students had written; “The figure wears a sarong, which in *Silat* reflect as a symbol of man’s strong suit”, “it is a traditional Malay martial art”, “this kind of clothes or style of wearing represents Malay people”, “it is known as *Silat*”. It could



be said this kind of pants or struggle could be the most obvious and inseparable component of Malay culture.

On the other hand, it could be seen the society infection has linked these participants to their own society. Obviously, the Malay participants had drawn the reflection of this kind of battle in their society. For example, they have written down “the martial art in Malaysia is about a courageous and resisting to enemies”, “it is a traditional martial art, which has customarily in the Malay society...”, “it is important to fend off the enemy”, “They never lose hope; they try again and have big spirits”. It could be seen Malay students have believed, this kind of struggle is about not to give up and defense. From this point, it should be said, the *Silat* not only is carrying out a cultural concept but also it is arousing the sense of patriotism in Malay people. However, non-Malay students have linked the painting to their own society, for instance “...reminds me of old Chinese movies...to watch them... tried to learn”, “that is a boxing”, “it happened in a village... it is not a competition”, “human nature that everyone has to fight for something”. However, these responses are far from the view of Malay response, but this painting had connected them to their society believe or context.

Moreover, for non-Malay participates, the incognizance of the artist’s culture and society has guided them to link the painting to the lifestyle artist which is in contrast with Malay group. For example, non-Malay participates have written; “... artist as a combatant or someone who like to be a combatant”, “artist create this work the time he was mad or maybe he has fought or unsolved problem with his brother or his father”, “he is fighting all over his life may be to gain so many things”, “he is interested to fight or competition”. However, 20% of the Malay had linked the painting to the lifestyle of an artist. However, it was more similar to appreciate of the artist. For instance, “painting depicts artist who receives a love and brave soul and sets”, “artist may also want to indicate martial art to

students who may study or are studying martial”. Therefore, it might say, for Malay student, this painting is aide-memoire of the glories of Malay civilization.

#### **4.9 The Personal Interpretation of the Amron Omar’s Forth Painting**

##### **4.9.1 Main Features in the Forth Painting**

In this painting, there are three multiple figures with different angles, but they are not well defined. As the artist draws a different position of human anatomies such as legs, hands, heads, and bodies. In another word, it is a sketch of the different performance of a man. At first look, they are unrecognizable, Figure 4.32.



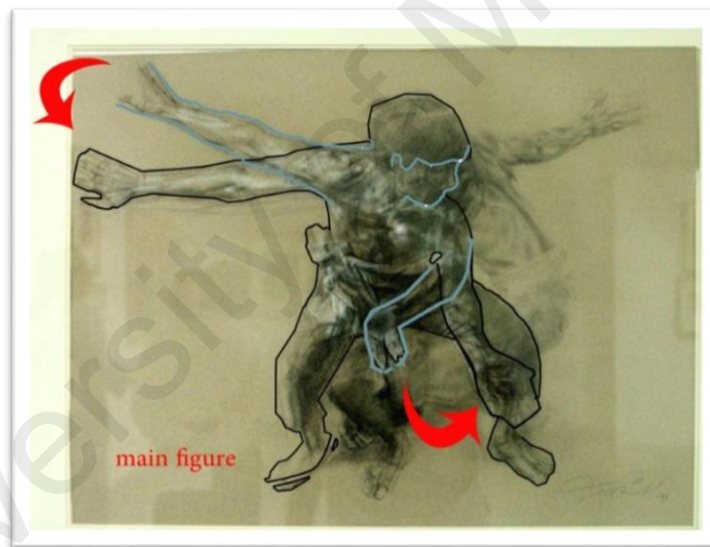
**Figure 4.32:** Pertarungan, Amron Omar, 1997, charcoal on paper, 49cm x 64cm, Collection of Pakhruddin & Fatimah Sulaiman

In the Overview, there is the main character, Figure 4.33 and another two fade’s figures, which are located in 90 angles of each other in the middle of the painting. In order to an explanation of these fade’s figures; one of the fad’s figure was placed in the right of painting with sitting position, side view of his face. It seems that it was the first two figure, which was drawn by less line so his body has vanished in other bodies, Figure 4.34. Now looking at another inconspicuous figure, which is recognizable from the view of his legs. The legs of this figure were perched between main figure’s legs. Moreover, his body has more semi-erect posture, although the middle of his body fades or mix with the main

figure's body besides his hands and the main figure is common, Figure 4.35. Eventually, by Scrutiny of the painting, a beautiful face has been manifested in the middle of the painting, which seems has appeared haphazardly and made this work mysterious and unique, Figure 4.36.

#### 4.9.1.1 The Main Figure

The main body has a side view face and semi-erect body which performing a movement. He wears pants with the cloth belt and without a shirt. His well-built body expresses that; he could be a sportsman or a fighter but his gesture does not indicate aggressive mood. In contrast, his pose display he is practicing with concentration some movements, Figure 4.33.



**Figure 4.33:** The main figure, black line

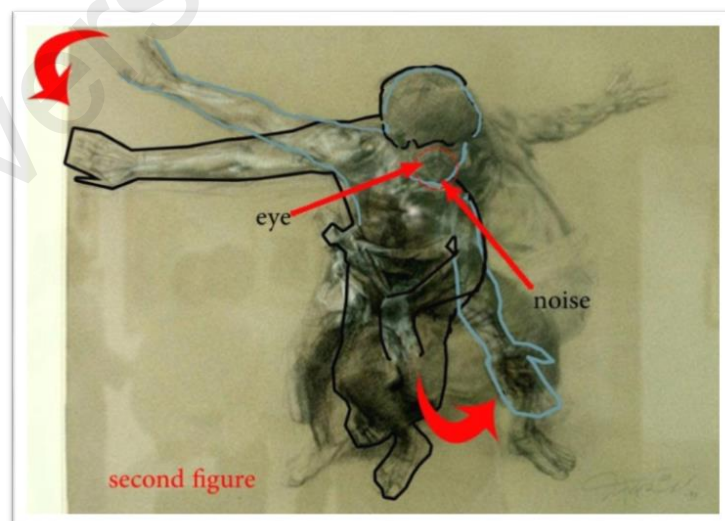
Although his face is not clear to see his emotion, but still it is picturing a serious man. The brightness and darkness along his body separate into two parts, both his possible right hands and right leg have been drawn with colorless lines and highlight by chalk this is not the case with the opposite side of the body. In other words, both two left hands and left leg have been drawn with thicker lines and bolding by charcoal. Besides that, it is obvious; Amron was observed the perspective on this figure. For instance, his right leg,

which standing front sketched bigger than his other leg. Furthermore, the right hands were located in perspective, as it seems, these are longer than normal size.

The artist with using plaster and coal simply apply the muscle of the body. Even artist for making a balance of light use with color on his waist to balance darkens part face. His left-hand starts to move and turn from the middle of his body to near his leg, beside that his right-hand moves and turn from up going to down. Nevertheless, from the size of his leg and body possible hands for him (main character) could be straight right hand and left hand, which placed near his left leg.

#### 4.9.1.2 The Second Figure

In the middle, he wears pants like the first design with fabric belt. Although the upper of his body totally fade in main one, but still it is evident, the posture of this figure has been drawn more semi-erect compare with main figure. For example, his head is more down to Three-quarters face, but it is blurring. His right hand is common with one of the right hands of main body, hands and moreover he has two possibility left hand which is common also with main figure hands, Figure 4.34.



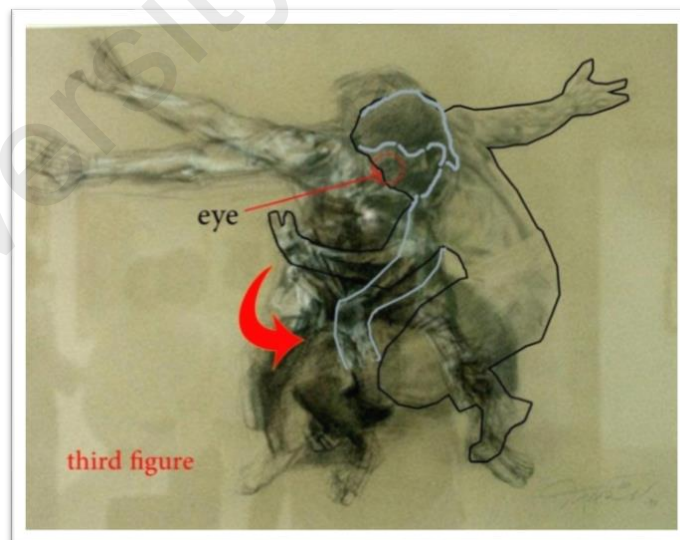
**Figure 4.34:** The second figure, black line

In addition, there is a balance of brightness and darkness of this figure; his legs have been drawn in thinner lines and bolded by charcoal to create balance with his upper body especially his face and hair.

Finally, the artist has drawn the front leg of this figure, which was crossed the left leg bigger than left ones and the legs of this figure are smaller compared with the main figure. That means; Amron abides a rule of perspective, even from this figure toward the main figure. For instance, size of hands had drawn smaller than the main character so it is more conceivable to say right hand up and left hand in the center are belonging to the second figure.

#### 4.9.1.3 The Third Figure

There is another figure that was hidden behind other two figures; with Half-sitting position and side view face. It could be seen artist draws this figure in thin and colorless lines, perhaps it was the first sketch, therefore this figure more faded in comparison with second figure and main ones, Figure 4.35.



**Figure 4.35:** The third figure, black line

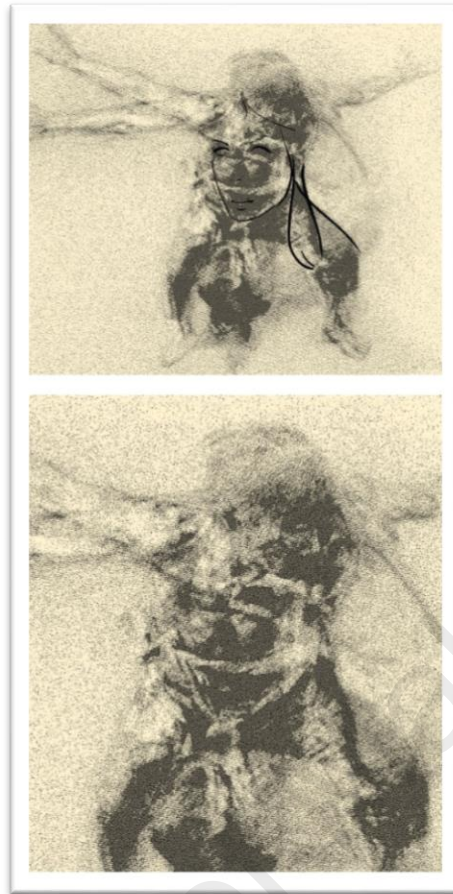
However, there is a chance to see his back and his stomach. His right hand a little twisted in the back and his left hand has two-variety positions. to this end, the first option for his left hand is head-on his face, which is not easy to recognize and another one is a

common hand with second figure and the main ones. Furthermore, His legs, especially his left leg is not clear. It could be possible the artist never did draw his left legs or from the position of the figure has hidden behind other ones. Although the easiest way to recognize his right leg was from his ankle and heel. Moreover, this leg has placed in the same position of the main figure left leg while standing on toes. Certainly, it could be seen, he wears the same pants and the fabric belt by looking his back, leg, and ankle.

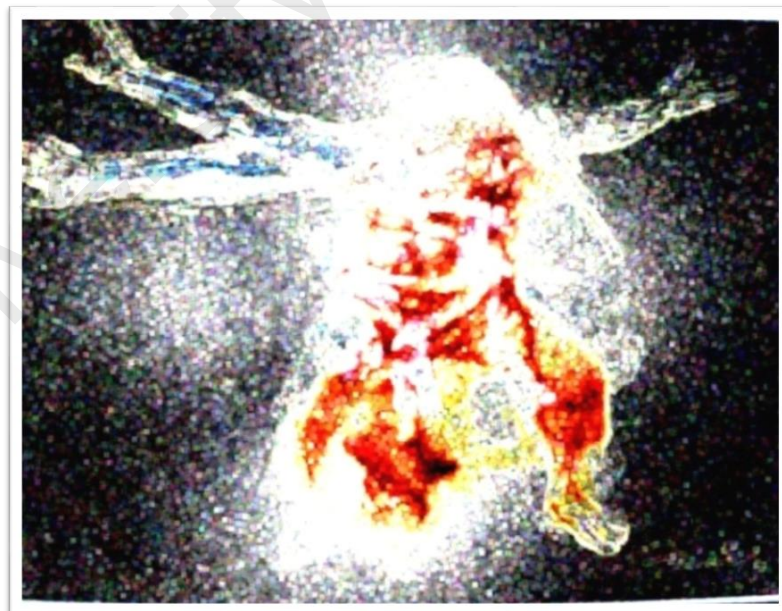
However, his head with the series and side view face has emerged and faded in the dark zone of painting but still it could be recognized. Now it should be noticed that Amron as a skillful artist observed perspective even in this figure. For example, he put his hand smaller than other figures' hands and the size of this figure's feet was similar to the leg of the main figure.

#### **4.9.1.4 A Hidden Face**

By looking into the middle of painting, there is quarter face. It seems, there is a face of a woman, which has created accidentally by brightness and darkness lines. However, this face looks so pretty and makes warm feeling. Now thinking of how could be possible exiting of face of woman in the sketch of a worrier. It could suggest from the researcher's vision; always there is a woman in heart or mind of every human being such as scientist, doctor, athletes, artist, fighter etc. However, the woman could be mother, or their beloved women. In this respect, for the researcher who already believed in artist's faith, this face could be artist's mother image as he paints by his heart, Figure 4.36, Figure 4.37.



**Figure 4.36:** Hidden face, black and white



**Figure 4.37:** Hidden face, solarized

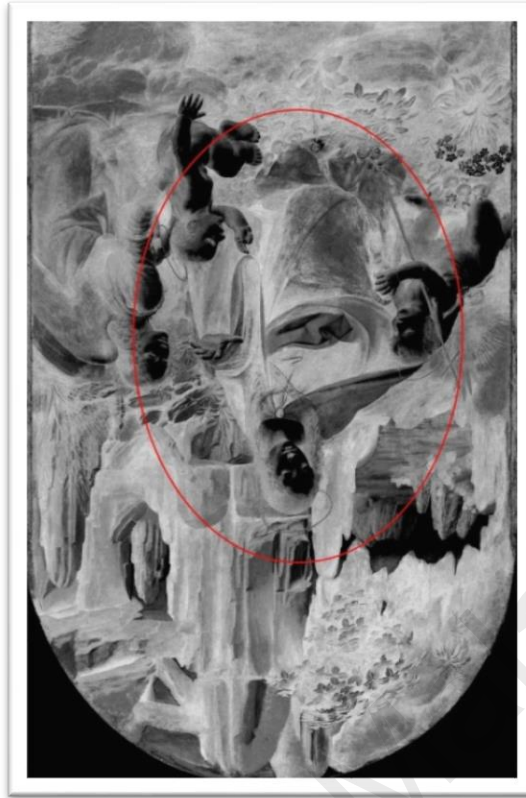
Looking closer at the artworks of other artists' works display, it will happen in many artist's artworks some time by proposing or sometimes accidentally; whatever it happened

it makes their works more interesting. For instance, according to La Jan Sanford about Leonardo Da Vinci's painting titled Virgin of the Rocks, Figure 4.38. There is a face with a mask, she turns over the painting after making negative of that, so she found a man with mask and also in black and with, without making negative also there is this guy with black mask (Sanford, 2007), Figure 4.39. Sanford (2007) expresses that "these images and illusions can be seen clearly with the naked eye once you know the "what" and "how" to finding them". Apparently, when artists create their artworks, it could be an image hidden in the context of painting, which could be by purpose, or accidentally and even they do not discover by themselves. However, even it is not the purpose of artists, but it makes their work more interesting in the viewer's eyes.



**Figure 4.38:** The virgin of the rocks, Leonardo Da Vinci, c. 1505, oil on canvas, Florence, Italy





**Figure 4.39:** Hidden image in the virgin of the rocks painting, by La Jan Sanford

In this regard, Sanford (2007) said that:

I'm personally beyond speculating as to the "why" Da Vinci may have done this other than to speculate that perhaps he did it merely as a means of amusing himself with his own creative genius. I am so amazed by what all my mind and eyes are still just trying to take in that I do not even care to think about that right now.<sup>32</sup>

Moreover, looking at another drawing by Albrecht Dürer with names 'The Virgin and Child', Figure 4.40, Figure 4.41. In this regard, Abrahams (2013) explained, the Virgin's drapery can likewise be perused as a personification face of the Dürer, a spiritual picture of himself in his creative ability, cracked and halfway. It seems he is staring upward from the Virgin's lap with the internal eye.

---

<sup>32</sup> Quote by Leonardo Da Vinci "There are three classes of people: those who see. Those who see when they are shown. Those who do not see" (Academy, 2014)



**Figure 4.40:** The virgin and child, Albrecht Dürer, 1491, sketch and study, British Museum, London



**Figure 4.41:** Hidden image in Dürer's artwork, by Simon Abrahams

#### 4.9.2 Relationship between Form and Content in the Forth Painting

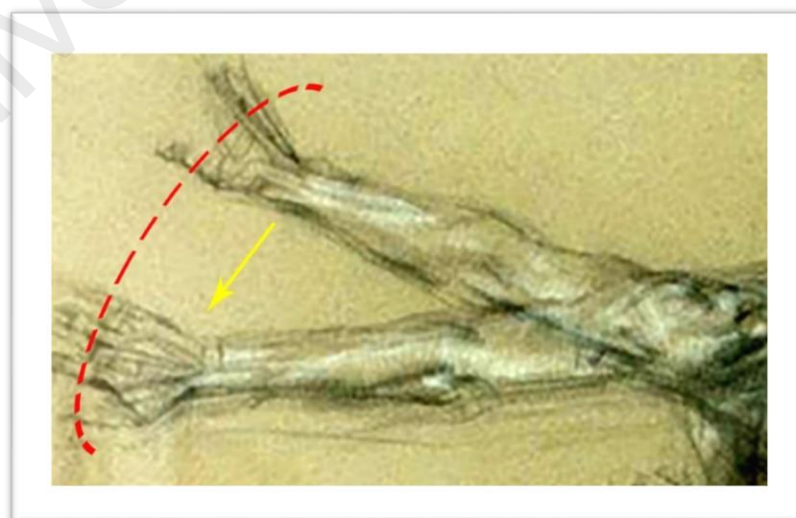
This drawing by Amron Omar is not only practicing figure which so many artists did before or still they are doing. There are different momentary positions of one fighter's life, which can be done in fractional time. Beside all outlooks to Amron's artwork, seeing a real work of any artist make great appreciation of him. This painting which starts from the figure in right with half –siting position changes to second figure more semi-erect in the middle and then go toward the main figure. He is performing '*Silat*'.

The artist even in his practice follows a structure of light and perspective. His unique artwork is a reflection of his lifestyle, culture, skillful on the painting and professorship of movement in art. In terms of colors, the artist was used simple mat colors, such as yellow or fawn. On the other hands, there is no doubt drawing movement was a challenge for Amron Omar which obviously, it is challenging for all artists in the world, to discover a new vision of their objects, find beauty and suitable pose.

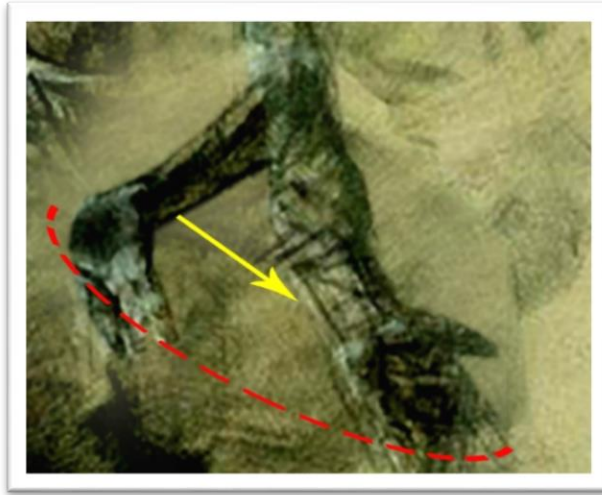
Now looking again at Amron's artwork, the left hand in the center of the drawing suggest that this position of the hand can be possible at least to three different performances of bodies.

It seems the purpose of Amron of this sketch was to finding a good posture for depicting the beauty in movement. Perhaps there is an evidence of movement in his work regarding to the right hand of his drawing, which has the possibility to move from up to straight and left hand center to the left side and face which changes from third- quarter to side view, Figure 4.42, Figure 4.43, Figure 4.44, Figure 4.45, Figure 4.46.

In fact, every artist does a sketch for finding Pleasing position in their painting, but it does not mean, they draw the position or gesture wrongly, it means, artistically they draw position or gesture, which connect with their emotions and visions.



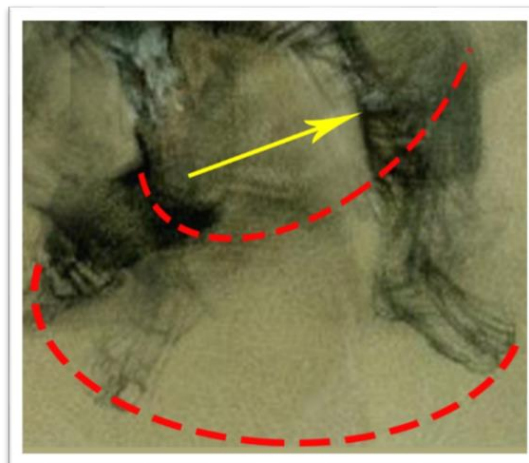
**Figure 4.42:** Performance of right hand from up to down



**Figure 4.43:** Performance of left hand from right to left

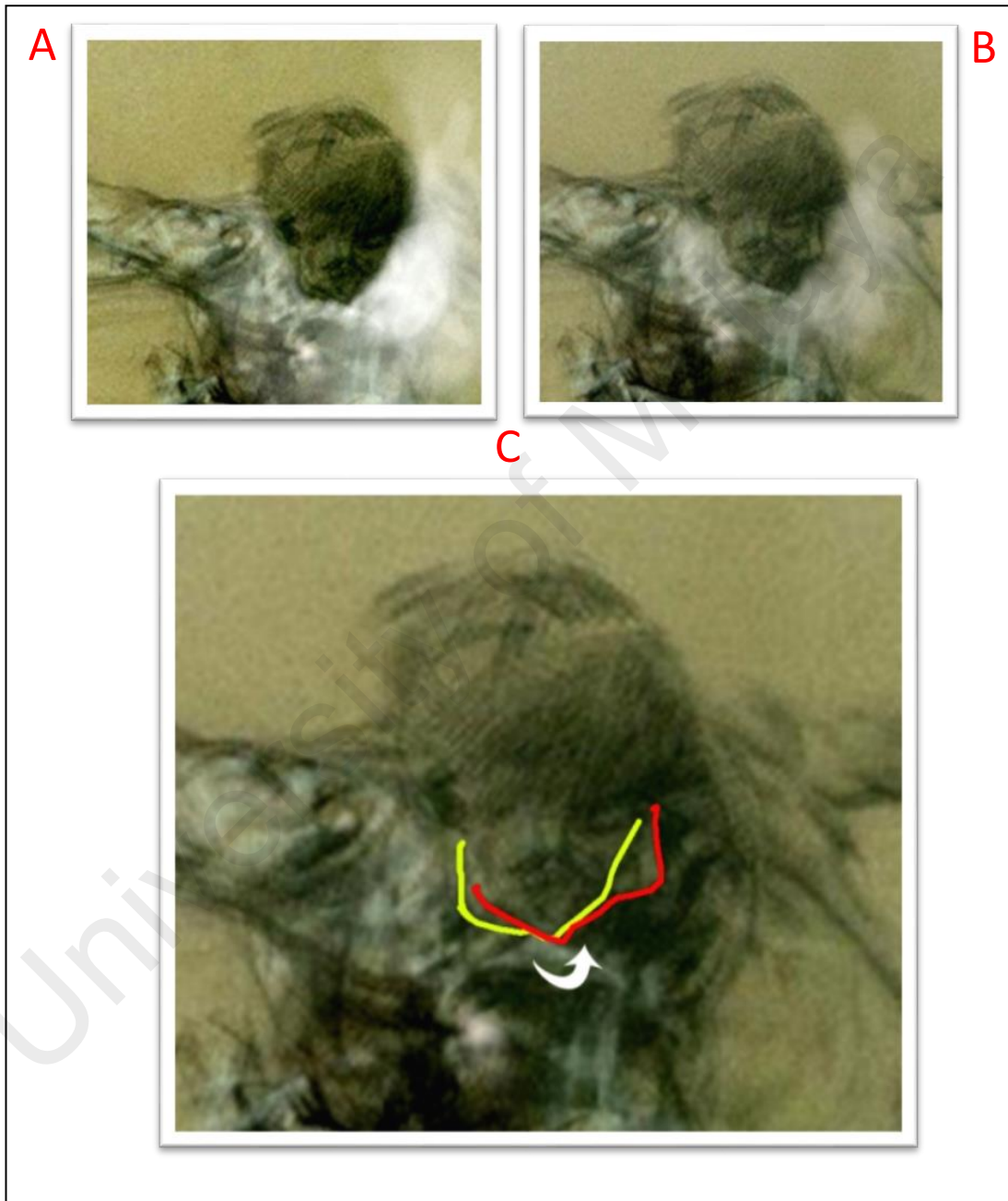


**Figure 4.44:** Performance of right leg from right to left



**Figure 4.45:** Performance of left leg from right to left

In this case, Martin (2006) in his workshop claims that “drawing is an integral part of the picture making process.... It provides the opportunity to explore variations of the subject...” (p. 2). Moreover, he concludes that “it is only through the ability to first capture life in drawings that artists are able to realize their visions” (p. 6).



**Figure 4.46:** Head movement process, figure 4.46A, 4.46B are the extracted faces of the figure 4.46C which show the head movement direction from left to right

Looking for history of sketch drawing, which back to the era of Renaissance art (1400-1530) sketch drawing became an independent type of art, even acquiring the surplus sense. It is a stand-alone artwork from the 18th and 19th century. Among painters who doing sketch drawing, there are many famous artists such as Raphael, Leonardo Da Vinci, Peter Paul Rubens, Vincent Van Gogh, Edgar Degas from the Renaissance era until the 19th century and among contemporary artists Eric James Brans by and Robert Liberace, Gary Welton.

However, they did practice on the anatomy of the body with a different position to find an artistic position, which also connects with the artist's world and figure's worlds. Review to some interpretation of their works gives a wide view of sketch drawing. For instance, the study of 'Madonna and child' by Raffaello Sanzio has described by British museum as a piece of fast studies which drawn by ink on paper. The three upper and two focal representations are a minor departure from the subject of the Virgin and Kid. The two most reduced portrayals of a kid might be studied for the tyke St John the Baptist. The drawings cover each other, affirming that Raphael did not concentrate only on one painting or theme at once. Or maybe, his thoughts for various arrangements grew at the same time. Here we see him changing the stances and signals in the same portrayal with round lines proposing vitality and development (Gere, 1962 ), Figure 4.47.



**Figure 4.47:** Studies for Madonna and child, Raphael Sanzio  
1507, 253 x 183 mm, British Museum, London

Raphael has illustrated the ordinary mother-baby minutes which gives the feeling that he knows how eager, investigating, and wriggly a youthful kid ordinarily is, in the meantime how poor, it is for his mom, and how lovely patient and adoring the mother is. It could be say, he catching numerous wriggly minutes on paper of the nature of human (Kuitenbrouwer, 2012).

Moreover, Raphael had 38 notebooks for his sketches. One of major concern for him as Degas as famous artist was analyzing a movement and gestures of the body. According to Trumps Handicap, in review of (Handicap, 2010) drawings and sketchbooks:

In his late forties when he drew *Three Studies of a Dancer* (ca. 1880), Degas might have found working three-dimensionally a more manageable way to continue his investigations into the form and movement of bodies—dancing or at rest. In this study, the artist depicted his model from three different views as a prelude to sculpting the well-known *Little Dancer, Fourteen Years Old*, Figure 4.48.



**Figure 4.48:** Three studies of a dancer, Edgar Degas, 1880  
black chalk, 475 x 628 mm, International Music & Art Foundation

Moreover, among contemporary artist, Eric Bransby as a figurative artist also has drawn the same sketch titled ‘Movement #2’ with different position although; most of his artworks are movement painting. He said in a press; “Drawing has been a continuous thing for me, like exercises for a musician ... It’s refreshing. I draw better. I paint better” (Veltman, 2015), Figure 4.49.



**Figure 4.49:** Figure movement #2, Eric James Bransby  
14.32x 6.46 cm 1969, private collection

Another famous contemporary artist who focused only on a motion on figures is Robert Liberace. He is developing his artistic view all the time by correcting or changing the position of his model and making new sketches of the body, such as the arm or legs... in the same drawing Figure 4.50, Figure 4.51. In article, 'an Update on the Masters' by Doherty (2002, pp. 22-23) stated: "I like having the suggestion of other positions of the model on the same piece of paper.... Those are especially useful when I'm making a painting and I want to consider other possibilities".



**Figure 4.50:** Study for forge in chalk, Robert Liberace,  
red chalk on paper, 2014, 19 x 13 inches, private collection



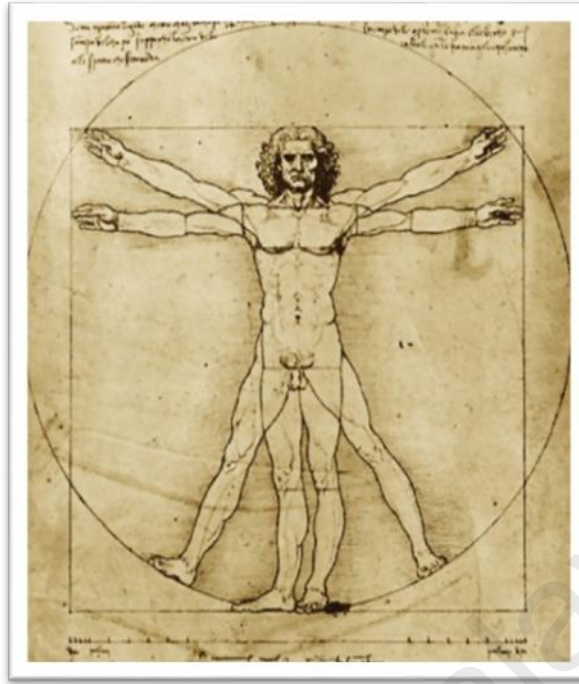


**Figure 4.51:** Figure study II, Robert Liberace, 2003, red chalk on paper, 17.75 x 14.75 inches, privet collection

Furthermore, new contemporary artist, Gary Walton, who is doing abstract painting and drawing try to observed and feel the incident without thinking on his way or how he can illustrate it later. This feeling gives him freedom and makes him a playful artist. Welton as artist seeks to release his observation, capture by feeling and experience them from his own vision. In this regard, Welton (2015) also in his official website state that:

Artists are in a constant search for a means of expression that captures the essence of human experience; that thing we all share and call life. Finding the gesture, the moment and perspective from which people can see and appreciate the beauty of life is of primary importance to me and has been my goal ever since I started making art (p. 1).

Beside all these drawings, which were evidence of movement and beauty of sketch on Amron's drawing. However, this work as unique in his own way is more similar in terms of figures and style to 'Vitruvian man' by 'Leonardo Da Vinci, Figure 4.52, a famous painter. Here in short words, there is comparison between Amron's drawing and the 'Vitruvian man' art working. This drawing had been done in a pen and ink on paper in 1487 and although it contains a scientific fact of human body (Morris, 2011).



**Figure 4.52:** Vitruvian man, Leonardo Da Vinci, pen and ink with wash over metal point, 1487-1490 34.6 cm × 25.5 cm, Gallerie dell' Accademia, Venice

First looking back to Amron's drawing, he has drawn some multiple exposures of one fighter in different positions. As it could be seen the fighter with the sarong as his traditional clothes, practicing his poses. In the terms of characteristic apart from the scientific fact, Leonardo also had drawn two figure in a different pose, but both artworks had an almost similar performance on legs and right hands. In terms of colors, the artist is following the same rules as Leonardo's drawing had observed such as using simple mat colors likes yellow or fawn's paper.

Although Leonardo in his notebook which included his drawing and writing described that this drawing (Vitruvian man) was part of his study about the principle of the human body based on 'Vitruvius2' descriptions. Nevertheless, it should be considered, this is still a masterpiece in the context of art. A description of his drawing, there are two male figures, double expose on top of each other. Legs and hands have been drawn at different angles from each other. One of these figures has been drawn with straight arms from the shoulders.

The other figure's legs were located apart from each other and his hands stretched towards above of his head. Other hands, the upper of the figures had coalesced completely to each other. This description was exactly same Amron Omar's drawing.

From the artistic view, Leonardo shows the movement of the virtual man with arms and legs. His figure has shown with curly hair and muscular body, which is Similar to Amron Omar's drawing; there are movements of the figure in multiple lines of the body. This is changing the position of legs and hands as it observed.

Looking below, hands in terms of figurative aspect are comparable. In both drawings, the hands are separate from the shoulders, Figure 4.53, Figure 4.54. It seems the hands in Amron's drawing have been separated near the elbow. Looking closer, it illustrates, these hands have placed at the same angle in Leonardo's painting as separated exactly from the elbow. There is a visual illusion which had caused by perspective in Amron Omar's artwork and semi-citric body. The movements of the hands are shown by uncertain lines around them in both paintings. Besides that, both artists use Shadows to emphasize on muscles.



**Figure 4.53:** Hands performance, Amron Omar's drawing



**Figure 4.54:** Hands performance, Leonardo Da Vinci's drawing

There is a similar movement in feet as well. Although the legs in both paintings look different in the case of performance, the front figures in both paintings have drawn with wide angle to each other, Figure 4.55, Figure 4.56.



**Figure 4.55:** Feet in Amron Omar's drawing



**Figure 4.56:** Feet in Leonardo Da Vinci's drawing

Nevertheless, in figures in Amron's painting are almost half sitting, but both figures in Leonardo's painting are straight and standing. Movement in both artworks has shown by the shadows around the legs. Regarding their backgrounds, this is an old yellow paper, which represents originality and relations between the human body and nature.

#### **4.9.3 Socio-cultural Effects on the Forth Painting**

This painting has drawn 1997 when Artists started to explore and examine their skills and abilities in new postmodern styles and they tried to walk away from the old traditional style to modern and postmodern art forms of design, which was Malaysia's first priority. It should be noticed, Malaysian art experienced various kinds of artistic forms, visions, subject, and media, which never experienced before since 1990's (Sarena Abdullah, 2011). There is no doubt, his style in this drawing was effected by examine different skill and technique.

From the view of this drawing, Amron Omar has been scrupulosity and critical to choose the pose for figure meanwhile he was loyal to Malay identity, as the character of this drawing is a warrior of *Silat*. It is worth to mention, Artworks by Malay artists become more criticizing, alarming, analytical and censorious simultaneous with postmodern movements according to Malaysia's fastest growing plan to postmodernism (Sarena Abdullah, 2011).

According to Hasnul Jamal Saidon (2011, pp. 34-35) about his observe of economic background Malaysian on artists says':

The economic setting during the eighties until late nineties in Malaysia has helped in creating competitive visual arts 'reservoir'- aggressive, progressive, innovative, thriving, heated and never short of ironies and polemics, all of which cramped within a small pool or market.

This painting has depicted the warrior practicing as it had drawn by three gestures in order, which had been created action movement. Along this, the warrior wears Sarong which illustrated the artist was still loyal to his traditions even he was experiencing the new form and vision in art. A culture, he grows up with and he was influenced by it all

his life and after all these years he still shows his interest in the Malaysian traditional fight, 'Silat', Which is about learning from mistakes and growing up. As Malaysian art in 1990's changes and new experiments, Amron Omar tries to experiment new types of figure drawings as part of his human body, nature and religion studies. According to Butcher (2012) in Malaysian Art Catalog, "... The figures are more shadowy for a sense of movement and devoid of any physicality. He is also exploring conceptual, spiritual and philosophical aspect of portraying the human figure" (p. 18).

#### **4.9.4 The Reflection of Amron Omar's Lifestyle in the Forth Painting**

Looking into the artist's life, he raised in the traditional and small village. As it was mentioned before, *Silat* is most popular Malay self-defence in Kedah. This painting depicts the Malay man is studying different performances of *Silat*. This kind of martial art has considered as physically and mentally training and learning from your mistake. Although that does not mean they had wrong performance or gesture. It means *Silat* warriors could be better or do another pose or move in front of their opponents. It could be seen same in the artist's study as he was drawing three different poses. In other words, in this drawing, there was not any wrong with those poses or primary sketches, but similar to the character of his drawing (*Silat* warrior); the artist was searching to find out the best vision to express his feeling.

That is how Amron learned from *Silat* as his background. The last and main pose of a warrior of this drawing, with confined face and more stable pose, express the manner of *Silat* warrior. In addition, the artist in his interview claims that even the model of this sketch was my father's student who was doing the *Silat* the manner but this is how I see myself too. Therefore, this drawing illustrated the character of the artist. On the other hand, there is no doubt every artist study new style and form in their works with subject or pose that seems to be more convenient and comprehensible because the artists used to experience it. Alongside that, in the late of the eighties until the late nineties, every artist

tries to exam new style and vision of their works, then Amron had chosen *Silat*, which linked to his background, and it seems palpable to challenge himself with new vision and style.

#### **4.9.5 Conclusion**

In fact, every individual life journey deals with finding the truth of themselves. Apparently, everyone has determined to figure out anything about own vision and his/her inner in this journey. In this regard, they have examined unlike situations, go through with the many selected way and at the end they have been making a mistake to discover his/her desire. If they have had enough moral to insist, not given up and attempt to find the truth of themselves automatically a self-confidence will build inside them. In short, if everyone has faith in her/ himself, perhaps s/he will build his/her confidence. No matter, how many possibility ways s/he should be examined in her/his life to find better ones. Although mostly there is not any wrong with her/him or the path of her/his life, it is all about her/his desire or being better.

Now look at Amron's drawing or even other artists' artworks, they have drawn every possibility view to get a better, gesture or a pleasing image of their objects of their artworks. On the other side, Amron has drawn himself in different vision and position of *Silat* warrior in this drawing; it seems he considered himself by sharp and up-front lines. This painting has depicted confidence and temerity by the last and main figure. Looking the thick and rough line represent the artist as confident, he did not fear to make mistakes. This drawing illustrates artist as a trainer of his inner and external world with the temerity to being better.

On the other hand, students of *Silat* should practice and study repeatedly to be fully confident and ready for the fight, so it could be said Amron had studied like *Silat* fighter and symbolize a meaning of the concept of *Silat*. Even after a decade being a full-time artist like famous artists he never stops as Amron mentioned that in his interview "when

you sketch you will gain many visions, to draw confidently.” He continues that; I knew this guy (figure) he was a student of my father and I was observing his *Silat* practicing to be more skillful and confident in the same manner I did too”. So, it could be said that one can build self-confidence by practicing and believing own, As Richards (Richards, 2011) about developing self-confidence says that “This inner being is all powerful, intelligent, indestructible and a storehouse of knowledge and wisdom. This inner core is truly who and what you are and is perpetually trying to connect with your outward self” (p. 25).

Self- confidence is about the inner part of a person who lives inside and one is capable of doing. For earning a self-confidence more posture has to test; more knowledge and information should to find about strength and weakness. In this regard, Branden (1992) says:

Parenthetically, we define self-esteem as a subjective and endearing sense of realistic self-approval. It reflects how the individual views and values the self at the most fundamental levels of psychological experiencing.... Fundamentally, then, self-esteem is an enduring and affective sense of personal value based on accurate self-perception (p. 1).

By having a closer look at this drawing, changing positions and gesture of the character has shown the artist was looking for something outside and inside himself. As it mentioned before Malaysian art was moving fast to the western style so Amron was tried to find himself as a Malaysian artist and see where he stands in this new culture.

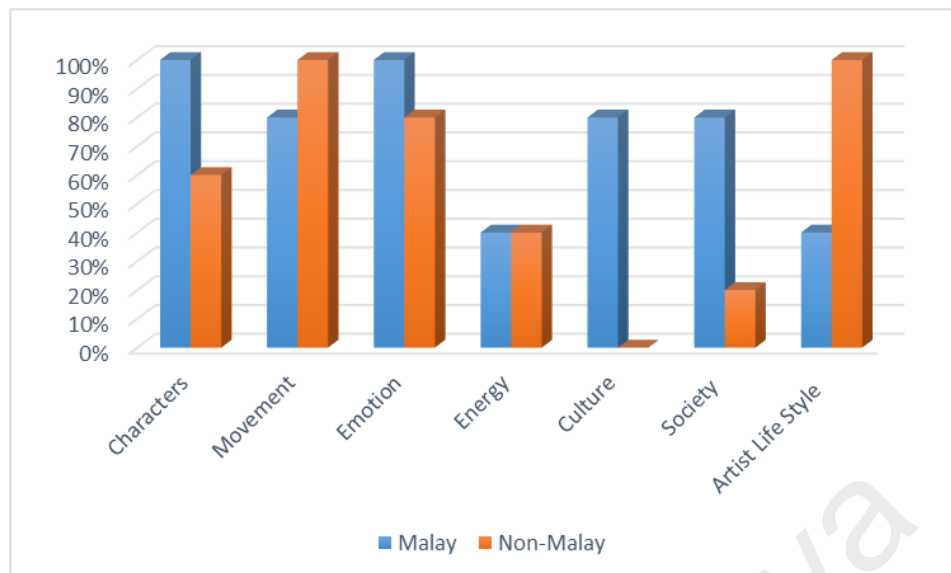
In the end, if the fighter in drawing assumes as a separate character from the artist; it appears he is trying different performances or practicing his moves. So, he is proving to do each movement better than earlier and developing his self-confidence. Like a shot looking to the fighter as artwork, this drawing illustrates the painter want to test every possibility gesture. He did not change paper because he did not have fear to make mistakes. The painting or drawing is part of artist’s life so it could be said, Amron has depicted his inners such as fear, confident, courage through his drawing.



#### 4.10 The Communal Interpretation of the Amron Omar's Forth Painting

##### 4.10.1 Participants' Connection with the Forth Painting

Figure 4.57 has illustrated that the drawing has linked to the participants (Malay and non-Malay) in different way comparison with other painting. It could be seen in terms of character of the painting, all Malay students and some of non-Malay have discerned the figure as a match man, fighter, warrior or the man who is doing the "*Silat* flower". In contrast, the non-Malay had recognized the figure as a man who is doing a performance or some slow-motion movement or sportsman, so they didn't mention about the main character. However, the highest number of both groups have identified the movement in painting. For illustration, Malay respondents had written; "painter use 3D visions to create the movement of martial art", "man is trying to make some slow movements", "This movement should have planted in the soul of every society", "artist put figures in the range of movement (motion)". Alongside with them, non-Malay participants had inscribed; "fighter in fighting move or a person being possessed", "there is active sense and a lot of movement", "Fast/ vigorous movement of person", "the man who is slowly moving around". The observation of both groups has illustrated the movement or motion of this figure in the painting could be obvious and recognizable. However, the Malay respondents could see it as a warrior or the Malay man who is doing the *Silat* practice which was based on their observation of this training. Although non-Malay have had the sense of movements through their observation.



**Figure 4.57:** The Malay and non-Malay interpretation of the fourth painting

In terms of emotion, it could be said, Malay and non-Malay had caught by a dull and gloomy surface. Although, since non-Malay students have had the knowledge of the main character so their emotion had been turning into a power, courage, soul of hero, love, believe. In contrast, non-Malay have had the sense of myth, scary, confusing or sadness which perhaps was the affection of the dull and dark colors and unawareness of the main character's concept. Feather more, equally 40% of the participants (Malay and non-Malay) have inscribed about the energy. However, the Malay respondents have been identifying the energy due to *Silat* performance and non-Malay have been detecting the energy through the motion of the character for instance, "a lot of energy as he is doing martial art", "vigorous movement" and "active person".

Indubitably, for non-Malay respondents have been difficult to recognize the culture or society elements. But It could be seen almost Malay participants had found out the element of the culture. For intense, they have written; "This painting shows the characteristic of Malay man", "That present *Silat* 's warriors", "this painting carries Malay culture", "it is a main martial art and tradition of the Malay community", "figures who wearing a sarong and a dagger (*Keris*)". More addition, some Malay respondents had admitted some legends, which were based on a passion about the *Silat* as part of their

society. For instance, one Malay respondent has written, “the Self- defense is a martial art about the enemy breakthrough. Stories like famous warrior (Hang Tuah), which also showed the existence of the martial arts during a fight between a hero (Hang Tuah) and anti-hero (Hang Jebat) ...”. Or other Malay respondent has highlighted the black color or dull theme should be the intent of artist to image the hero or heroism. It could be seen, these Malay respondents have been capturing by the origin of the *Silat* so they were written beyond their observation of the painting, they had recalled the knowledge of the *Silat* and combined with the sense of nationalism.

Moreover, it could be seen, the painting has been monitoring the artist lifestyle to 80% of the Malay and 100% non-Malay respondents. Again, in the same manner of knowledge about the character in this drawing, Malay students have linked the character of the painting to the artist’s character which means they had emphasized artist should be an enthusiastic Malay artist, such as who has great knowledge about the martial art, who was born to do something and not giving up and who knows *Pertarungan* (battle). On the other hand, non-Malay respondents have introduced artist as self-challenge, adventure person. For instance, they had written; “as an active person who likes sports and he also likes to see everything from different sides and different positions and not just normal side”, “who love challenges by using a detailed drawing”, “artist was confused so he did this mixture figure he was not satisfied with himself”. It could be said this group has connected with the artist through their observation of the sketch and motion in the drawing.

#### **4.11 Summary**

Amron’s artworks have created unique identity, characters, and forms in figurative painting to illustrate of his understanding, influence and his loyalty to Malay culture. Alongside that his artworks have suggested efficacy by his society and lifestyle which he was grown up with that. As it could be seen, he has chosen the martial art as his main

character and depicted the sense of battle or the trainer of the fight. He has selected martial art which obviously, it has rooted and ingrained inside him from his childhood since now. There is no doubt, Kedah as his town was one of the aggregation places for the *Silat* fighter. The artist was observing many performances of *Silat* or Kuntaw fighters (student, teacher) which defiantly inspired him. However, the origin proposes of this martial art was not fighting, it was training a warrior to serve and defend their country. The instruction of this martial art was a moral and spiritual training alongside a physical training. The *Silat* fighter would be guided to have discipline, concentration, courage, precision, faith, self-believe, never give up, defense of their desire, learn from their mistake, fight for a good and etc.

Moreover, his father, as master of *Silat* and one of the founders of Kuntaw had brought up his children base on these manners. Finally, the artist has been recognized *Silat* as path and gaudiness of his own life since 1979, when he was struggling with life in an unfair situation. He has chosen *Silat* battle as the theme of his artwork to illustrate his feelings, desire, curiosity, faith, and energy which hold him to struggle and challenges through difficult times in his lifetime. Besides, his artworks, mostly are Amron Omar self- picturing which he was fighting against himself. So he is the warrior of nature life and his artistic life. So, his battle artworks didn't illustrate a fight of evil versus good; these are all about the fight for self-development, self-challenge, self-knowledge to being better from inside and outside. Although it should be admitted that, his enthusiasm, obsession particularly his interest and attachment to *Silat* as one of the symbol of patriotism and loyalty of Malay people could not be denied in his life. Amron, as a loyal Malay artist has illustrated his passion about the *Silat*.

It could be seen, he has illustrated the beauty of *Silat* which undoable attached him to his society and culture. He had been impressed by the enthusiasm of Malay-artistic since late 1979 until 1990. During these years, every fellow artists and young generation

has walked toward the Malay Islamic artwork. He has tried to depict his loyalty by using the Sarong as one of the Malay-Islamic symbols through Malay martial art that could be seen in his artworks during this time such as *Pertarungan III* and *Catan Diri*. Since the 1990s, Malaysian art has experienced various kinds of artistic forms, visions, subject, and media. Artworks by Malay artists have turned out to be more criticizing, alarming, analytical and censorious simultaneous with postmodern artists who had tended to shift from the Malay/Islamic style to the postmodern style. Although Amron 's paintings were involved in the critical that time. So, to align with this flow, he has endeavored to move toward a modernization while he carries on the Malay identity and a theme of his works since 1994. For example, in *Pertarungan* painting 1996, changing the style from the character who wore the traditional pants with the defensive pose to offensive gesture while the attacker has worn the normal style pants have implied how the artist was looking forward to modernization while holding on his Malay theme. Alternatively, in the *Pertarungan* drawing 1997, Amron also has been exploring the new and possible visions for each character. Due to this exploration, the artist has done so many sketches. It could be seen, in the following year, he has illustrated a different momentary position of one fighter's life, which can be done in fractional time. He has focused on the fighters' gesture to find the beauty in the character's pose. As a result, this time, Amron has had an aesthetic and critical perspective on his artworks. As a result, Amron Omar had employed the performance and poses of the figures body, hands, face, eyes, clothes and background colors, the brightness and darkness of the scene, composition (Golden triangles), rough lines, and shadows. Fibonacci spiral composition and arches to guides the eyes of the viewer to the center of the painting. And move through fighters and induce the sense of action, rhythm, solidness, strong spirit, energy, movement, defensive and offensive pose, strong spirit, life condition of the artist and his willing which were incredibly illustrated him as skillful, passion,

faithful artist, loyal to his culture and society. At end by looking to the communal interpretation, it could be seen, Malay or non-Malay respondents have linked to painting base on their life experience and feeling. Although for the Malay respondents, the sense of pride and patriotism was evoked within them. Both groups have recognized the theme of the artworks and characters of artworks although only Malay respondents have described the main character as *Silat* fighter and they have written the movement, energy within a painting. However, the non-Malay mostly has noted that the artworks have mirrored the artist life, as they were unaware the martial arts.

University of Malaya

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

### 5.1 Introduction

The title and subject of this research is “An interpretation of four selected paintings from Amron Omar’s *Pertarungan*”. Undoubtedly, based on the research subject of this study the analyzing and dissection has considered. This qualitative study has drawn upon to the Barrett’s (1994) Art Interpretation Theory. In this regard, four selected artworks of Amron Omar have been interpreted by personal interpretation based on the objectives and research questions. Due to refine the result of personal interpretation and prevent any researcher bias, the communal interpretation through questionnaire has been employed. These supportive data have collected from 20 Malay and 20 non-Malay art students.

### 5.2 Conclusion toward the Aim

The aim of this study was to explore the characters of Amron’s painting to understand the social-cultural and the lifestyle of artist affection and the relationship between form and concept. To be specific, the researcher has delivered a personal interpretation, which was respond to identify the social-cultural, and the lifestyle of artist element and linked the relationship of these characters with the concept of his works. Moreover, the researcher had used the communal interpretation through the questionnaire as data triangulation to refine the result of personal and avoid the personal bias.

First and fundamental effect; Amron Omar was born and grow up in religious and traditional family in a small village where *Silat* has played the important role as far as it became the life manner for the people. That means the *Silat* was not only the way of self-defense or combat. It was an inner training too, which guide them to have discipline, concentration, courage, precision, faith, self-believe, never give up, defense of their desire, learn from their mistake, fight for a good and etc. father of the artist as master of the *Silat* brought up his children based on these concepts. Due to this explanation, Amron

in his interview said, “I always try to follow the manner of *Silat* in each step of the life and my artwork”. Moreover, he was observing the *Silat* warrior or student and how he is father teach them and how they improve their self.

Second affection; alongside carrying the background and lifestyle of the community, which he came from, he entered into the major community. The time, he had started to receive academic knowledge in ITM and then UiTM. Perhaps he had many difficulties during this time. He was 22 years old, full of ambition as young generation artist. His desire was to be a full-time artist who was known and accepted by own and his society. Therefore, in the first step, the artist changed his skills and styles dramatically and abandoned all the styles of drawing that he used to do in the past. He returned to the fundamental level and seriously trained, as he wanted to fulfill his dream. However, he had doubts as he did not feel secure and claim to his painting, he felt some part of his work had been missing.

The third impact, from 1971, the rule in the country had changed, the government set up the new task for Malay artist who was fostering and promoting the Islamic-Malay art and ITM was the center of phenomena. So Amron surrounded by many colleagues and fellows who were searching for their own concept and identity so some of them returned to their former customs and cultures to bring back and hold the picture of Malay style in artworks or other who wanted to just graduate and become a lecturer.

Finally, during the final year of his study in 1979, he was challenged by real life. The struggling with real life has reminded him the manner of *Silat* warrior. Moreover, He was growing up and observe many battles between *Silat* warriors for at last 20 years, which was the inseparable part of his life. He remembered the instruction of *Silat* to struggle with life for his desire. All this matter guided him to discover the missing part, which was the character of artworks. Then he recalled what he had learned from his past and brought up the *Pertarungan* as the main character and combines with his fundamental



skill and the configuration of paintings. As a result, he has painted *Pertarungan III*, the struggle for his desire. The expression of the artist about this painting was this painting is all of his life. This is how the artist has started his struggle in his life and chose *Pertarungan* as the main character of his artworks until now.

In the next step, the new door was opened for Amron, he passed the difficult exam of his life with glory. He could prove his artistic talent and received the compliment from fellow artists and government. However, from 1970-1980, there were to task for Malay artist first during this time, Malay artist as well as Amron have been attempting own concept and finding their identity, which the artist had done it, honorable. A second task was finding the Malay identity and culture in the context of artworks, which was becoming, for Amron Omar as full-time artist new task. During that time, he was confidently aware of his skill and talent and attempting to illustrate the Malay-Islamic identity of his artworks.

As it could be seen in his second and remarkable painting *Catan Diri* (self-portrait) meanwhile the character (artist portrait) wear a Sarong which is a symbol of his culture and religion (many Muslim prayer habits to wear Sarong during the praying at the mosque). At the end, the artist has been successful to introduce himself as a Malay Muslim artist. However, this character was not the *Pertarungan* or *Silat* fighter, but Amron had done the second task with proudness. Therefore, he has had two options, first chose the only Malay Islamic theme as the main character or *Pertarungan* theme and *Silat* warrior as the main character. Since 1982-1994, the artist had been painting so many artworks with the theme of *Pertarungan* and while one of the characters have been wearing the traditional clothes. From 1990, artists had tended to shift from the Malay/Islamic-centered to the postmodern style.

In this regard, often the Malay artist's artworks have criticized in comparison the artworks of post-modern artists or those who were proceeding toward modernization as

overall mostly artworks had been moving toward the western arts. Due to this, Amron as a loyal Malay Muslim artist has been attempting to align with this flow while retaining a Malay- Islamic theme (*Pertarungan*) of his artworks. He mentioned that he has changed his still from *Silat* (with soft movement) to Kuntaw (more strike and aggressive movement) in 1994. As a result, he has finished another masterpiece titled *Pertarungan* in 1996. He has created a great combination of contrasts and, this work was responding to all criticize of that time. Amron combined the traditional style with modern style and create the arch shape with the pose of both fighters. This arch shape, which the artist purposely has made it, was the hidden symbol of the Islamic character of his work. For instance, he has drawn the Kuntaw fighter with normal pants as modern character opposed a traditional style and soft fighter (*Silat* warrior) with Sarong.

As a result, this compound of contrast, such as soft and strict movement, old and modern style, aggressive and defensive pose, equally light and shadow and ...etc. have illustrated any conflict could make great balance and harmony if there is faith in God (arch horseshoe shape as a symbol of Islamic architecture). It seems Amron has imitated the harmony and balance of creation of the world by God. It could be seen, from the perception of the artist, the art modernization did not require to put aside and banned the Malay Islamic style or traditional theme as he found a way to combine them. After that, he has got confident to walk away from the critics' vision and try to explore the beauty of his artworks. As it mentioned before, Malaysian art experienced various kinds of artistic forms, visions, subject, and media, which was never experienced before since 1990's. Therefore, Amron also has been exploring the new and possible visions for each character.

Due to this exploration, the artist has done so many sketches. It could be seen, in the following year, he has illustrated a different momentary position of one fighter's life, which can be done in fractional time. He has focused on the fighters' gesture to find the

beauty in the character's pose. As a result, this time, Amron has had an aesthetic and critical perspective on his artworks. He has invited himself for a new challenge, which is finding the beauty of his works since 1996 until now. In addition, Amron expresses that "that is my challenge, I want to paint fighters like photo" which means the artist has been practicing to better paint and be the greatest artist (hyper-realistic painter).

### **5.3 Implication toward Art Practice**

This study was a guideline for the researcher and this certain study has clarified any artworks have the two faces of understanding first of the beauty of a surface toward the concept and the concept of artworks toward the beauty of the surface. Every story behind the artworks or concept of the characters in artworks will depict an artist identify. Due to the concept of artworks, there is philosophy or sociology part, which every audience base on, owns society, culture or lifestyle will connect with that. The mystery of this certain research is readers (first and mostly the researcher, students, teacher or arts' enthusiast) could comprehend the artist feeling and a situation, which the artist has been faced at that time.

Alongside everybody, same as the researcher can link the finding of the thesis through and their life experience so she did. For instance, discovering the character of the painting (*Pertarungan*) was guided her to understand the *Silat* warrior, Kuntaw fighter, the purpose of these combat, mythological heroes of *Silat* and then an impact of the *Silat* on fighters and so on. Then she did deeply study on the artist life so this was the time she recognized why the artist has chosen fight theme or why only *Silat* warrior. It was incredible for her to feel what the artist felt that time. When the artist state, "during all of my life, I am trying to follow the *Silat* manner". She could feel the artist as *Silat* fighter who is struggling to the end and never give up his desire in a scene of life. In each step of her understating about these artworks, the similarity between the painting character's life with her life became clearer.

To be specific, she was looking at her life and try to discover which step of life she was standing. How could doubt be positive and effective in life? How could she struggle in her life? So many other questions, which came, crossed in her mind. So, finally researcher has found the *Silat* as mental and physical training could guide everybody to recognize own place, never give up, never lose hope, have faith, learn from mistakes, have self-courage, self-confidence, self-believe, self-discipline, and focus on her/his dream and fight for her/his desire. She has recognized the struggle is not all the time between bad/evil and good or approves a winner or loser forever. In the real life, everybody should fight to be better, gain more knowledge or successful in life steps unconsciously. At end, everybody, researcher deserves to achieve their dream, and they should fight for that.

#### **5.4 Recommendation**

As the researcher recommends this type of study to art students, lectures and art enthusiasts who are willing to discover the concept and the story behind the paintings. This type of research is a moral vision to identify and understand an artist through his artworks. For instance, how the ups and downs of life and social- cultural impacts had guided or affected artists draw their artworks. Perhaps, this kind of study is to go beyond the surface and the aesthetic aspects of paintings. The beauty about this type of the study is that; researchers (art students, lectures and art enthusiasts) could link any paintings to their life base on their feeling, observation and life's experience. Surely there is not any wrong and right about the interpretation. In this regard, Terry Barrett mentioned every interpretation is one light on new aspects of the artworks.

#### **5.5 Suggestion for Future Studies**

In this study, the researcher has explored the four artworks, which is small among in great artworks by Amron Omar. However, his artworks could be explored from other aspects such as appreciation, analytical and critical perspective. The researcher also

strongly suggested to of art philosophy students to have looked at Amron Omar's artwork as the researcher has not totally focused on the philosophy area. There is a great opportunity for deeper understanding of the philosophy of the artworks character (*Silat*) which has a great and abysmal concept.

## **5.6 Summary**

This chapter has depicted a brief abstract of the whole of this dissertation why and how the researcher has done this study. First, the researcher has clarified the title, theory, and method, which had employed for this study. In the next step, the aim of this study and briefly description and result of finding has explained. In this part, the researcher has glanced at the result toward the research objectives. The researcher has described how the certain study could be implied toward researchers, students, teachers or arts' enthusiast. Due to clarification, she has illustrated herself experience toward the implication of this study on her life. Finally, the researcher has given some recommendation who is interested in exploring the concept of artworks and some suggestion to who are willing to continue this field based researcher's findings.

## REFERENCES

- Abrahams, S. (2013, April 11). Dürer's virgin and child (c.1491) [Blog post]. Retrieved May 18, 2016, from [http://www.everypainterpaintshimself.com/article/durers\\_virgin\\_and\\_child\\_ink\\_on\\_paper](http://www.everypainterpaintshimself.com/article/durers_virgin_and_child_ink_on_paper)
- Academy, S. (2014). *Words of wisdom: Leonardo Da Vinci*. Retrieved January 10, 2016 from <http://www.lulu.com/shop/students-academy/words-of-wisdom-leonardo-davinci/ebook/product-21728847.html>
- Adams, H. (2008). *What's American about American art?: A gallery tour in the cleveland museum of art*. Manchester: Hudson Hills Press Inc.
- Ahmad Zakii. (2007, August 15). A Malaysian artist shuns a taboo to 'distill the truth'. *The New York Times*. Retrieved July 21, 2015 from <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/08/15/arts/15iht-zakii.html?pagewanted=all>
- Barrett, T. (1989). A consideration of criticism. *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 23(4), 23-35.
- Barrett, T. (1994). Principles for interpreting art. *Art Education*, 47(5), 8-13.
- Barrett, T. (2000). Studies invited lecture: About art interpretation for art education. *Studies in Art Education*, 42(1), 5-19.
- Branden, N. (1992). *The power of self-esteem: An inspiring look at our most important psychological resource*. Deerfield Beach, Florida: Health Communications Inc.
- Bromley, P. D. (1990). Academic contributions to psychological counselling. 1. A philosophy of science for the study of individual cases. *Counselling Psychology Quarterly*, 3(3), 299-307.
- Butcher, H. (2012). *Malaysian art* (2012, May 6). Kuala Lumpur: White Box, MAP @ Publika
- Chang, C. K. (1967, September). Bersilat is like a dance... but this popular art of self defense is serious business in Malaysia. *Balck Belt*, 7(9), 40-48.
- Cruell, G. L. (2015). *The leaders character*. North Carolina: Lulu Press.
- Danto, A. (1998). *After the end of art: Contemporary art and the pale of history*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Davies, S. (1991). *Definitions of art*. Sage House, New York: Cornell University Press.
- Feller, D. (2010, December 19). Art review Degas: Drawings and sketchbooks [Blog post]. Retrieved November 18, 2015, from <http://www.deborahfeller.com/news-and-views/?p=596>
- Doherty, M. S. (2006, June). Jon DeMartin: Drawing workshops to improve paintings. *American Artist*, 2, 50-67.

- Dessoir, M. (1906). *Ästhetik und allgemeine kunstwissenschaft: In den grundzügen dargestellt*: Hamburg, Germany: F. Enke.
- Dessoir, M. (2012). Beauty in the industrial arts: Architecture. In D. H. Parker (Ed.), *The principles of aesthetics* (pp. 298-331). Boston: Silver, Burdett and Company.
- Doherty, M. (2002, April). An Update On The Masters. *American Artist*, 1, 22-31.
- Dumas, M. (2003, June 23). Realistic interpretation of nature [Blog post]. Retrieved August 5, 2015, from <http://www.natureartists.com/artists/artistartwork.asp?ArtistID=54&ArtworkID=1579>
- Edington, J. K. (2014). *1007 Ceo's confirm everything you need to learn about leadership you can learn from a pineapple*. North Yorkshire: Court yard Publications.
- Edwards-Wright, T. (2011). *Your favorite color has a meaning*. Raleigh: Lulu Enterprises.
- El-Sergany, R. (2008, April 1). Engineering in Islamic Civilization. Retrieved May 8, 2015 from <http://islamstory.com/detailes.php?module=artical&slug=engineering-islamic-civilization>.
- Fionn, D. (2010). *The world knew him not*. Raleigh: Lulu Enterprises.
- Fox, L., Dunlap, G., Hemmeter, M. L., Joseph, G. E., & Strain, P. S. (2003). The teaching pyramid: A model for supporting social competence and preventing challenging behavior in young children. *Young Children*, 58(4), 48-52.
- Francisco, C. (2014, March 31). *Studied reveal the secret power of the pyramidal shape*. Retrieved August 15, 2015 from Humans Are Free website: <http://humansarefree.com/2014/03/the-secret-power-of-pyramidal-shape.html>
- Fred Willson, M. S. (2002). Shaps, numbers, patterns, and the divine proportion in God's creation. *Acts & Facts*, 31(12), i-iv.
- Gere, P. (1962, January 21). *Raphael, studies of the virgin and child, a drawing*. Retrieved from December 10, 2014, from The British Museum website: <http://culturalinstitute.britishmuseum.org/asset-viewer/raphael-studies-of-the-virgin-and-child-a-drawing/4gHxn1mDJxGaug?hl=en>
- Hasmi Hashim. (2000, October 28). Rahsia catan diri, pertarungan. *Berita Harian Online*. Retrieved May 12, 2014 from <http://www.bharian.com.my/>
- Hasnul Jamal Saidon. (2012). Introduction. In National Art Gallery (Ed.), *Pertarungan* (pp. 140-159). Kuala Lumpur: Balai Seni Lukis Negara
- Hasnul Jamal Saidon. (2012, January 29). Amron Omar and drama 'battle' discourse in modern art in Malaysia [Blog post]. Retrieved October 11, 2014, from <https://translate.google.com/translate?hl=en&sl=ms&u=http://hasnulsaidon.blogspot.com/2012/01/amron-omar-dan-drama-pertarungan-dalam.html&prev=search>

- Hatcher, F. (2013). *Figurative painting in a contemporary art world (Unpublished Masters Thesis)*. Available from The Savannah College of Art and Design, Georgia, USA.
- Haywood, R. (1988). George Bellows's "Stag at Sharkey's": Boxing, violence, and male identity. *Smithsonian Studies in American Art*, 2(2), 3-15.
- Hodin, J. (1961). The spirit of modern art. *The British Journal of Aesthetics*, 1(3), 174-184.
- Ibragimov, I. (2011). Arch as an element of religious architecture in christian and islamic architecture. *Scientific Herald of the Voronezh State University of Architecture & Civil Engineering*, 11(3), 80-85.
- Keller, H. (1940). *Let us have faith*. New York: Doubleday Doran.
- Knight, C. (2014, August 17). *The ultimate guide to composition - part one: Just say "no" keh*. Retrieved August 17, 2015, from Fstoppers website: <https://fstoppers.com/architecture/ultimate-guide-composition-part-one-just-say-nokeh-31359>
- Kuitenbrouwer, P. (2012, December 22). Studying Raphael, Raffaello Sanzio da Urbin II [Blog post]. Retrieved August 25, 2016, from [http://renaissance440.rssing.com/chan-22261736/all\\_p1.html](http://renaissance440.rssing.com/chan-22261736/all_p1.html)
- Kumar, V. B. (2010). *Self awareness, personality development and current affairs*. Mumbai: Himalaya Publishing House.
- Liu, L., Chen, R., Wolf, L., & Cohen-Or, D. (2010). Optimizing photo composition. *Computer Graphics Forum*, 29(2), 469-478.
- Liza Marziana Mohammad Noh, Hamdzun Haron, Abdul Latif Samian, Ahmadrashidi Hasan (2015). Formalistic as an analysis method in signifying the Malay cultural symbol in Malaysian modern art of paintings. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 6(4), 30-38.
- McGovern, E. (2009). *The best collection of bank negara Malaysia*. Kuala Lumpur: National Bank Museum & Art Gallery.
- Meltzer, I. R. (1979). *The critical eye (Unpublished Masters Thesis)*. Available from The Ohia State University, Ohia, USA.
- Mitchell, M. (2015, March 12). The fibonacci sequence in artistic composition [Blog post]. Retrieved November 13, 2015, from <http://www.markmitchellpaintings.com/blog/the-fibonacci-sequence-in-artistic-composition/>
- Mohd Iruadee Husin. (2012). *Pertarungan: 'The duel'*. Kuala Lumpur: Penerbit.
- Mohd Yusof Ahmad. (2012, May 16). Pertarungan features selected works from Amron Omar: Art exhibition. *The Star*. Retrieved July 23, 2014, from <http://www.thestar.com.my/community/2012/05/26/art-exhibition-pertarungan-features-selected-works-from-amron-omar/>



- Mohd Yusri Abdul Rahman. (2012). History of the duel. In National Art Gallery (Ed.), *Pertarungan* (pp. 181-190). Kuala Lumpur: Balai Seni Lukis Negara.
- Morgan, L. L. (2000). Form and meaning in figurative painting. In S. Sherratt (Ed.), *The wall paintings of Thera. Proceedings of the First International Symposium* (pp. 925-946). Tera, Greece: Petros M. Nomikos and The Thera Foundation.
- Morris, T. J. (2011). *ACE folk life guide*. Kentucky, USA: Timely Manor Books.
- Muliyadi Mahamood. (2007). *Modern Malaysian art: From the pioneering era to the pluralist era, 1930s-1990s*. Kuala Lumpur: Utusan Publications & Distributors.
- O'Hear, A. (1992). Modern portraits. Retrieved November 18, 2014, from <http://www.bjacklin.com/essays/modernpainters.html>
- Oaks, E. D. H. (2009). Learning and latter-day Saints. *Ensign*, 39, 22-27.
- Oleson, K. C., Poehlmann, K. M., Yost, J. H., Lynch, M. E., & Arkin, R. M. (2000). Subjective overachievement: Individual differences in self-doubt and concern with performance. *Journal of personality*, 68(3), 491-524.
- Parker, D. H. (2013). *The principles of aesthetics*. Savannah, USA: Green King Press.
- Rabah Saoud. (2002). The arch that never sleeps. *Manchester: Foundation for Science Technology & Civilization*, 2, 1-9.
- Rajendran, C. (2013). The politics of difference in Krishen Jit's theatre in the 1970s: "A time of intense questioning" in Malaysian culture. *Asian Theatre Journal*, 30(1), 145-171.
- Rajendran, C., & Wee, C-L. (2007). The theatre of Krishen Jit: The politics of staging difference in multicultural Malaysia. *TDR/The Drama Review*, 51(2), 11-23.
- Ray, C. (2014, April 21). A look into triangle and diagonal composition [Blog post]. Retrieved May 5, 2016, from <https://prezi.com/m8ycxeoj4fph/a-look-into-triangle-and-diagonal-composition>.
- Redza Piyadasa. (1993). Modern Malaysian art, 1945-1991. In C. Turner (Ed.), *A historical review: Tradition and change* (pp. 134-160). Queensland, Australia: University of Queensland Press
- Redza Piyadasa. (2000). *Rupa Malaysia: Meninjau seni lukis Malaysia*. Kuala Lumpur: Balai Seni Lukis Negara
- Redza Piyadasa. (2003). Issues of culture, nationhood and identity in modern Malaysian art. *Tirai Panggung*, 6, 74-95.
- Richards, S. (2011). *Develop jedi self-confidence: Unleash the force within you*. England: Mirage Publishing.
- Ricoeur, P. (1998). *Ron Bontekoe* [Press release]. Retrieved February 7, 2016, from <https://www.amazon.com/Nature-Dignity-Ron-Bontekoe/dp/0739124072>

- Safrizal Shahir. (2012). Journy of quest for spiritual station of true self or from complete human figure to painting of self: A biography of Amron Omr. In National Art Gallery (Ed.), *Pertarungan* (pp. 73-98). Kuala Lumpur: Balai Seni Lukis Negara.
- Sanford, L. J. (2007, October 13). Da Vinci - The art of illusion. *Ezine Articles*. Retrieved April 23, 2016, from <http://ezinearticles.com/?Da--Vinci-----The--Art--of--Illusion&id=781382>from
- Sarenah Abdullah. (2011). Thematic approaches in Malaysian art since the 1990s. *Jati*, 16, 97-113.
- Schatzman, L., & Strauss, A. L. (1973). *Field research: Strategies for a natural sociology*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall Ptr.
- Schreiber, R. (2010). George Bellows's boxers in print. *The Journal of Modern Periodical Studies*, 1(2), 159-181.
- Segal, S. (2015). *Management practice and creative destruction: Existential skills for inquiring managers, researchers and educators*. Howick Place, London: Routledge.
- Seka, M. I. (2014). *Life lessons of wisdom & motivation - volume iv: Insightful, enlightened and inspirational quotations and proverbs*. North Charleston, USA: Createspace Independent Pub.
- Sheikh Shamsuddin. (2005). *The Malay art of self-defense: Silat seni gayong*. North Atlantic: Blue Snake Books.
- Sievert, B. (1977). Pyramid, Build better a mummy and world will beat a path to your door. *Mother Jones Magazine*, 2(6), 35-40.
- Soon, S. (2013). Four currencies in contemporary practice. In Nur Hanim Khairuooiin, Beverly Yong, & T. K. Sabapathy (Eds.), *Reactions – new critical strategies: Narratives in Malaysian art* (pp. 319-333), Kuala Lumpur: RogueArt.
- Stemp, R. (2006). *The secret language of the renaissance: Decoding the hidden symbolism of Italian art*. London: Duncan Baird.
- Sulaiman, Pakhurddin. (2012). Introduction. In National Art Gallery (Ed.), *Pertarungan* (pp. 35-45). Kuala Lumpur: Balai Seni Lukis Negara.
- Sulaiman Pakhurddin. (2012). A shift from dance to duel. In National Art Gallery (Ed.), *Pertarungan* (pp. 161-179). Kuala Lumpur: Balai Seni Lukis Negara.
- Syed Ahmad Jamal., & Balai Seni Lukis Negara (1982). *Seni lukis Malaysia – 25 tahun*. Kuala Lumpur: Balai Seni Lukis Negara.
- Thom, P. (2000). *Making sense: A theory of interpretation*. Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Veltman, C. (2015, January 3). For 98-year-old artist, every mural must 'Be a new adventure' [Colorado Public Radio]. Retrieved April 7, 2016, from <http://www.npr.org/templates/transcript/transcript.php?storyId=374230881>

Weis, D. (2010). *Everlasting wisdom: Your ultimate quoter eith the wittiest ever said about almost everything*. Rothersthorpe: Paragon Publishing.

Welton, G. (2015). Artist Gary Welton painter of movement [Blog post]. Retrieved January18, 2016 from <http://www.garywelton.com/bio.html>

Yin, R. K. (2003). *Case study research: Design and methods*. Thousand oaks: SAGE Publications.

Zakaria Ali (2010). *Malaysian art: Selected essays, 1979-2009*. Perak Darul Ridzuan: Penerbit Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris.

University of Malaya