

Reconstructive and Innovation of Local Subject in Daily Life towards Extended Replica

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Abstract

This research highlighted interest about three (3) dimension forms in researcher daily life. The reconstruct and innovate the real object to become something new is a delightful thing in researcher's life experiences. By referring to the researcher's prior study, a sculpture has three (3) dimensional objects that have characteristics of volume, length, width, thickness, and complete physical properties.

According to William Tucker (1974) [1], a sculpture was a separate thing, as was the easel picture, but it did not require a wall like a picture. It did not even need a roof. It was an object that could exist on its own, and it was to give the entire character of a complete thing about which one could walk and look at from all the sides. From the researcher's everyday experiences, travelling from Machang to Kota Bharu and sometimes visiting other districts, the researcher realised that there are significant number of three (3) dimension forms along the road. The forms are in the shape of daily objects, which are finely produced and based on the theme of realist. The shapes are quite familiar to the locals and the new version of sculptures that have been created by the local authority for public has automatically improved the prestige of sculpture. When it is closely examined, it is a new wave of street art that has been rebranding which is only looks pleasing to the eyes.

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1 INTRODUCTION

The researcher's observation on these replicas has triggered on the question whether they are arts or they are only

products from the exceeding budget that created to ornament the local scenery and why they only used cement to make it? The replicas that decorating at the Kelantan

districts made him recalled his childhood experiences as they are the objects or form of daily objects which is easier for him to bear them in his mind.

As a village boy who never had a chance to get any toys and the hardship during his childhood spurred him to create it by himself. In fact, the replication process occurred all the times during the process of making his toys by himself. The first toys that created by him were a fighter and a tanker. These toys creation were triggered by the Gulf War which was a breaking news during that time.

During that time the villagers were realists and it triggered them to create the toys that look like the original version. When there were artworks from the neighbouring country, like Thailand people would buy them because they were beautifully painted and look like the original one even though they were only based on the artist's imagination. Based on researcher's perspective, this is called as a "*Estetik Orang Kampung*" (Malay Conservative Aesthetics in which they only love the original and recurring patterns).

According to Malaysian artist, the replica term is referring to three (3) dimensional daily objects for instance flora, fruit and et cetera that used cement to make them and display them at public. In fact, some replicas were upgraded and became monument due to their more monumental form. By referring to Redza Piyadasa and Sulaiman Esa (2002) enunciated that [2];

"Pada amnya ketiadaan penglibatan dalam seni arca selama ini dalam kalangan seniman kita, pasti menunjukkan bahawa mereka itu, selama ini, tidak berapa minat dalam dimensi realiti yang pelbagai itu,

tidak seperti mana dalam penghasilan gambar-gambar molek yang akan digantungkan di dinding."

Based on the above statement, it can be concluded that there were less artists who want to contribute in public sculpture and they preferred to do artwork painting which is called as a two dimensional artwork. This phenomenon happened during the late 70s and today it has changed as there numerous of young artists who started to sculpt and create the 3D artworks. As artists by inserting the contemporary approach it leads them to feel comfortable in exploring and fabricating the artworks that beyond the norms.

In relation to the sculpturing issue, it triggered the researcher to ask the expert opinions from the scholars in this field. Based on a discussion with a member of *Persatuan Seniman Arca* via Facebook social media it gave the researcher some explanations about the term, the problems and the future of the public art. As studied by Langer (2009) [3]; mentioned that, a sculpture that was copied from a real object is an artwork, because it has significance in submission aesthetic contact. The replica can be presented as a public art but currently it shows the lethargic enlightenment on the significance in aesthetic and the visual language is lacking on ideology or axiom as what we have been practicing before. In relation to this, when the researcher is looking at the sculpture meaning and compares it to replica definition it can be concluded that, there is similarity between them. According to Rosli Zakaria (2011) [4] in his writing about replica and did mentioned that,

'I have discussed and calculated (if can be counted) about this 'Stupid Public Sculpture'... before that I really impress according Tengku Sabri notes about "Arca awam yang bodoh" was pronouns for replicas form that was found in many locations in Malaysia... and not a public sculpture in right producing contact which based on public sculpture knowledge itself.

By referring to this excerpt, Rosli Zakaria is totally opposed Tengku Sabri Tengku Ibrahim's perspective about replica as a stupid public sculpture. Tengku Sabri Tengku Ibrahim (2009) [5] who is an artist, a sculptor, a lecturer and an art writer said that, this phenomenon happened due to the district councils fault. Thus, based on the above excerpt, it can be concluded that the public sculpture (replica) does not have the art value and it is a waste of public fund.

Basically, the characters of form that are represented directly or indirectly for instance logo, kris (*keris*) or any objects erected in a public space are not necessarily can be considered as a public sculpture. In researcher's opinions it is a form of straight-furniture of urban design elements or landscape architectural of decoration even though it is represented in three dimensionality of given space to a certain degree of aesthetic appearance. The emergence of such phenomenon does not portray any kind of substance or expression in constructing meaning and aesthetic mainstream. This confusion is reflecting the public's thought about this issue. In this scenario, it is a matter of overlapping understanding and perception about the subject itself. The question is about what should we call the form? Can the form sit together with public sculpture? Why the

forms exist such as that? And to whom should we put the blame on? All of this questions surround artists especially sculptors.

2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND OBJECTIVES

In this research, there are two (2) research questions that need to be answered namely:

- 1) How to create visual interaction concerning real and manipulated object?
- 2) How to find out, redefine reconstruct selected subject matter in creating an extended replica?

In this research, it covered two (2) research objectives which are:

- 1) To create visual interaction concerning realistic and manipulated object.
- 2) To redefine and deconstruct selected subject matter in creating an extended replica.

This research is based on observation and understanding on the question of arts as well as the perception of society on this issue. In fact, working as a tutor in fine department drives the researcher to contribute the arts knowledge to the students as well as the art scene. In relation to this, it is the students' ideas in creating the artworks are based on their own perspectives or they are applying the knowledge that they have gained in classes? This is due to the visual hints from researcher's memories, history, life experience, interest in realist, scale, huge size and replicated influence, the quest for local identity were shown in several parts of the final artworks. In fact, in creating the artworks every process is a result of constant act of application and reflection.

Indeed, the researcher strongly believes that the knowledge in arts is very

beneficial to the society as the sculpture or monument is close to them. Apart from that, by increasing the society understanding on the sculpture or monument, it is a valuable contribution in this field. The extended things have obviously dominated the researcher's life in most aspects and as an artist it is a great need to philosophically understand it, gain advantage from the situation and re-define ourselves in the present context.

3 OVERVIEW OF EXTENDED REPLICA AND REFERENCES

Essentially, for thousands of years a sculpture has played many roles in human life. In line with this, the earliest sculpture was created because the society during that time believed that it is a magical which could help the hunters. Then, after the civilization hit the society, statues were used to represent Gods. The ancient kings, possibly in the hope of making themselves immortal, had likenesses carved, and portrait sculpture was born. The Greeks made statues that depicted perfectly formed men and women. The early Christians decorated churches with demons and devils, as a reminder to show the presence of evil for their churchgoers who were illiterate.

The original object as the subject matter was taken a reference by several artists. The question lies on how the message is delivered. Would it be direct or indirect? Artworks by Claes Oldenburg for example, used daily object as his subject matter to depict the Industrial Revolution that occurred during his time. Almost all of his pieces were not altered. He had just resized his pieces to a larger size.

Marcel Duchamp has prompted the sculpture expression by having a 'uriner'

tank into gallery as one of his artworks. This piece was tried to challenge the original purpose of the object which is a popular issue during that time. The different perception and understanding on the object would appear when the 'context' is considered. The gallery as the context here is used to illustrate another meaning of the piece.



Figure 1. Marcel Duchamp's (Fountain), 1917.

In this contemporary era, the use of daily objects as subjects of artworks is still continued by some artists and they are using the different techniques to provide an impact to the audiences. The artists like Ron Mueck, Maurizio Cattelan, Damien Hirst, Jamie Salmon, John De Andrea, Marc Sijan and Petricia Pichinini were passionate in creating their realistic artworks which are in a big sized and they are using the daily objects as their subject matters.



Figure 2. Maurizio Cattelan's (Untitled), 2007

Taxidermied Horse, 300 x 170 x 80 cm, Installation View.

The history of public sculpture in Malaysia has started in middle of 1800s. According to Rosli Zakaria claimed that, the history of public sculpture in Malaysia was separated by three (3) eras. The first era was the introduction phase-colonial eras (1857-1957), the next was development phase-independent eras (1957-1990), and finally, the development contemporary eras (1990-present). During the colonial era, the monuments (sculptures) were built to remember people or event. Then, after Malaysia got independence in 1975, the abstract expressionist, expressionist and pop influence have a great impact on our sculptures. These elements were influenced by the young artists who continued their studies at overseas. In fact, one of the dominant public sculpture that was built in Malaysia after independence is Tugu Negara. It was built in 1966, by British sculptor Felix de Weldon.



Figure 3. Felix de Weldon's (Tugu Negara), 1966.

Currently, the public sculpture has been established in Malaysia by government and Ramlan Abdullah has created a few public sculptures and it was so interesting because our prime minister, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad has an attractive luminous thinking and ideas about artworks including public sculpture.

In Malaysia, most sculptors are prone to abstract style due to several factors. The first is due to the first education that the

artists gained. Here, these artists were taught on the alteration from the subject matter until it is transformed into a more abstract piece. The ideas were dug and adapted into western oriented pieces which are influenced from sculptor such as Brancusi. Another factor would be the religious factor and they were taught that realistic and 3D sculptures are forbidden as it could be considered as idols.

From this observation, the researcher remembered that the town that live in was then full of golden antelope statues with water coming out from their mouth that decorating the round-about. Yet, when the state was taken over by another political party, Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party (PAS) – a political partial that concerns about Islamic teaching, then it had changed all the statues with replicas of Al-Qur'an. So, Al-Quran is a new trademark to decorate the Kota Bharu Islamic City whereas in other municipals they used the local fruits replicas and monuments.

4 THEME

During the primary school, the researcher got his education at the Bachok Kelantan. It was a “naïve” place where the walls were made from wood and the development of a new building was carried out next to it. The learning process was always disturbed by a sound of something falling onto the roof and hitting the wall. During the recess, the students will go to the nearby rubber farm to search for the “*biji getah*” (rubber seed). They will duel using the “*biji getah*” to see who had the best “*biji getah*”.



Figure 4. Rubber seed and rubber pod (fruit).

The researcher went to his father's hometown at Tanah Merah, Kelantan and on the journey, he saw there were the rubber plantations and farms everywhere including the one that owned by his family. This is the place where he played and collected the rubber seeds. The researcher was curious about the origin of the rubber seed and thoughts they came from the rubber trees. Then, the researcher saw the rubber pods scattered everywhere. The researcher tried to see where these seeds came from. One day, the researcher saw a fallen rubber tree and then learnt about the origin of rubber seeds and how they actually looked.

The history of rubber plantation in Malaysia dates back to 1877. It was one of the nation's remunerations due to the blooming use of natural rubber in tyre manufacturing. Most Malaysian who lived in rural areas planted rubber as their source of income. During 1980's the price of rubber started to be inconsistent due to the introduction of synthetic rubber.

The rubber seeds are unique and have a high value to the researcher's eyes. The growth process of rubber fascinates him. When it matures, the pod will explode spreading the seeds growing into a new tree. Zulkifli Yusof (installation artist) explained about his artwork by using rubber seed as an icon where it portrays freedom and independence. The explosion spreads the seeds everywhere and they will grow without any barrier.



Figure 5. Zulkifli Yusoff's Installation Art. (Merdeka at 57), National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur.

5 RECONSTRUCTIVE AND INNOVATION PROCESS

The first step taken was by identifying the form and thorough observation on the rubber fruit. The observation process happened through the sketches of ideas and issues. The researcher created sketches and drawing that depicting the rubber seed as subject with the early title of 'Recapturing the essence and absence of duality in modern replicas'. At that point, the researcher only wants to do some modifications on existing replicas. Although the concepts and ideas were still not clear, but the researcher started to create the artwork by using fibre glass casting technique and plan to merge it with mechanical parts like what researcher did in previous artwork which is "Mechanical banana".



Figure 6. Ideation: Drawing and Sketches.

Then, the researcher constructed the model by using metal structure and wrapped it with wire mesh. Next, the researcher covered it with a plaster and carved into the desired form. The resin and fibre mat were applied on the surface to get the form of the rubber seed as the researcher wanted the same form and modification is only to be

made on the size. For this artwork the researcher wanted to create the larger size. In the process of making this artwork, when the top was done, turn it to other side and then cut it to several pieces.

In the meantime, the researcher continued the mechanical part by using welding technique. The parts from car were used and turned into an object that fits and suitable for artwork and matches with the idea. When all the processes are finished, the touch up process was carried out by using a sandpaper machine. The first artwork that creates is texture on the surface. The inner side was polished to make it resemble the original object. The car paint was used to paint this artwork and the colour also resembles the original.

For the second artwork, the researcher polished it and painted it with the camouflage pattern as we seen on soldier's uniform. This is related to the researcher's observation that the rubber pod is quite hard to be seen as the colour resembles to the leaves colour as if it camouflages itself between the leaves. The mechanical parts were installed as the stem. The third artwork which is also a part from the pod (which was made from the cut part from the first work) was constructed by using zinc layered in the inside. The researcher used glue and rivet technique to get even and neat touch.

6 VISUAL ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS



Figure 7. Extended Story: Born to be new, 2013.

“*Buah*” (fruit) is a daily object known to the public which it tells story of others – experiences and memories. The story of fruit itself represents life cycle where this cycle starts when the “*buah*” was still in the “seed” form evolving into trees and produces new seeds to perform or start a new life cycle and ending with the “death” of the tree itself. Rubber tree in Malaysia was once and still one of the sources of the nation's economy. Machinery, motors, and mechanical parts are also one of the aspects that play a vital part in generating the economy. In daily contemporary life, we need these to help to make our life better.

The artwork actually seeks to pose the issue of “extended” where it is the understanding of a daily object “extended” into something new. This artwork depicts an object inspired by replicas that the researcher has seen throughout his life. The “rubber fruit” emerged into my mind with some artistic manipulations. Installing the mechanical parts into the artwork serves two (2) purposes. First, it portrays human life where we need energy to move our parts to do physical chores, breath, and to do our “human” activities. This is to illustrate our body as a machine that undergoes the process of living. The metal parts are also installed as the stem represents the recent daily life that depends a lot on it. The next purpose served is to illustrate the subject as the economy generator of the nation. The use of colour is the same as the original ones to make it easy to recognise although the size is increased. This depicts that the life as growing but the core remains the same with the social problem and technology remains as the critical parts of life and we, the human beings always want to “extend” things.

In the theory of form, Plato had splits up existence into two (2) realms: the material realm and the transcendent realm of forms. In this theory, he stated about the ethical problems and the problems of Permanence and Change. According to Plato mentioned that, a form is an abstract property or quality. Take any property of an object; separate it from that object and consider it by itself, and you are contemplating a form. For example, if you separate the roundness of a basketball from its colour, its weight, etc. and consider just roundness by itself, you are thinking of the form of roundness. This concept of the understanding of 'form' by Plato has also been applied in the artwork, representing the story concerning the daily life. The originality of the object itself has its own aesthetic. The original form of the "rubber fruit" which seems "oval" and exists without any additional elements.



Figure 8. Extended Story: Camouflage, 2013.

"Art is not what you see, but what you make others see.(Almendra 2016) [6]

Edgar Degas stated that art is not what we see but what we do for others to see. For example, would be the creation of stool, which is for the use of public but created with critical thought of art in mind. It serves not only as a functional artwork but also as an art work that can be observed the aesthetic as well as the functionality.

Extended Story: Camouflage, a continuation of the researcher first work

where the process is still the same as well as the size but differ in the use of mechanical parts as well as the colour. Identical to the first work, the stem is also installed by using mechanical parts. The researcher tried to depict the original object undergoing the life process of how it grows and how it receives all the nutrients needed. This is similar to how machines need the "juice" to perform its task.

'Colour is the place where our brain and the universe meet. (Thompson 2003) [7]

The researcher painted the surface by using the camouflage pattern. This represents my curiosity on the "rubber fruit" itself. From the historical perspective, rubber is the symbol of the country economic defends similar to how the army wears the same pattern protecting the country.

Simplicity is not a goal, but one arrives at simplicity in spite of oneself, as one approaches the real meaning of things. (Price 2001)[8]

It is easy to understand a simple object or artwork however, the meaning might be different. The researcher tried to turn the subject matter from his childhood and the experience surrounding it into a work of art which is easy to understand and full of meanings. If the artwork is only about how the observation of the artist itself, then it is a great artwork. However, when the artwork is added with other element, it is a masterpiece. The researcher increases the size of the artwork to provide a greater impact to the audiences.

Technologies and daily objects are two (2) different things but they also work well together. It is how we see them cooperate differently. Take an example of how a tree that grows with the help of biotechnology and does not grow in a natural way. Without

we realising it, this shows the manipulation of things that turn something into a new thing. What is important is how we look and think.

'The hardest thing to see is what is in front of your eyes. (Conrad 2016) [9]

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