

An Interpretive Study of the Development of a Great Local Artist: Tan Wei Kheng

by

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ABSTRACT

This study is an interpretive study of the development of an artist who specializes in portraits of indigenous people. The findings were documented in an E book entitled "Discover Sarawak" produced by Pustaka Sarawak. The theoretical framework is Interpretivism. Collection of data was done through video taped interviews, video taped travels and document investigation. Video clips of interviews of collectors and the artist himself were included in the E book. Document investigation included the digital reconstruction of an exploration route which the artist took in traveling into the interior. Document investigation also included making digital records of paintings, newspaper cuttings, art brochures, art books and photographs. Data analysis was done using a "Three Step Method": protocol writing, hermeneutics and phenomenology. The findings indicate that the art works are a historical record of ethnic culture. The E book can be a resource in art education, sociology and Malaysia studies.

INTRODUCTION

This study explores the development of a great local artist who specializes in portraits of various indigenous people who live in the interior. His works are master pieces and have the added quality of being a historical record of a life style that is not easily experienced because the people he paints live deep in the interior.

Background

As an artist myself I was intrigued by Tan Wei Kheng as his paintings had a quality that I never experienced in other paintings. His humility and youthfulness made this even more remarkable. His paintings seemed to express part of his own personality that is his patient nature and simple lifestyle. The fact that he is self taught made me realize that he was gifted.

As I studied more and more of his paintings it dawned on me that they were historical documents of a way of life that will soon vanish in the face of modernization. Was it a mission to enable people to see what beauty lies within the Rainforest? This study helps us to address this question.

The Significance of the Study

There is a sense of urgency in sharing the talents of this great artist as well as bringing to light the hidden enchantment of people who live in remote locations in Sarawak. Words could not do justice to an artist. The e book that will be produced from this study will give the reader a visual experience. However, there is nothing like the real thing: looking at Tan Wei Kheng's paintings

face to face and meeting the artist. You will be able to get this experience in Pustaka Miri as there is a sizable collection of his works on display. Tan Wei Kheng lives in Miri. You may be able to meet him by enquiring with the staff in Pustaka Miri.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In my literature review I have focused on the following:

- 1 Style In Art
- 2 Primitive Art And Modern Art
- 3 Art In Sarawak
- 4 The Impact Of Training Overseas
- 5 The Development Of Style
- 6 The Emergence Of Tan Wei Kheng
- 7 List Of Exhibitions
- 8 Cultural Heritage

Style in Art

Muliyadi Muhamad states that in the history of art, style refers to the value in forms that express meaning (Muliyadi, 1991, in Nicholas 1999). Forms and meanings reflect the approach of an artist.

Otto G Ocvirk defines stlye as

“The specific artistic character and dominant trend of form noted during periods of history and art movements style may also refer to artists’ expressive use of media to give their individual work character”

(Ocvirk , 1988)

In studying style we need to consider the historical frame. A work of art is intrinsically linked to the culture of the society. Tan Wei Kheng grew up in Marudi and was fascinated with the ethnic people who visited Marudi. His style reflects his skill as a photographer and his early efforts to teach himself by studying pictures in books which capture the effect of light and dark. He is a realist and yet he goes beyond realism in the sense that he moves the heart. His collectors express an affection for the people featured in the paintings they collected.

An art historian, Fredrick Antal emphasises that art does not exist in a vacuum. Style has its foundation in the society where the art work emerged. This is true of Tan Wei Kheng, he feels for the people in the interior. Hendrick Nicholas has pointed out that Tan Wei Kheng is interested in saying something about the people.

“He is trying to tell us that these people exist. He is saying something about who they are.”

(Interview with Hendrick Nicholas, 25.7.06)

When changes occur in society, an artist may express his concern in his art work. Tan Wei Kheng has spoken of his sadness that there is a migration from the interior to other places. Some of the elderly people move to stay with their children in the urban areas. Some even go to other countries.

“I think of them. I wonder if they are well. When I go to the long houses, sometimes it’s empty.”

(Interview with Tan Wei Kheng, 22.7.06)

This could be a motivating factor in urging him to capture the beauty he sees in the ethnic people before the movement of time changes their lifestyle. In some cases modernization brings forth new forms of art. Yet, in Tan Wei Kheng’s case he has developed his own style which I call “passionate realism”. This is because he is passionate in traveling into the interior to live with the people, to relate with them, to photograph and to translate his experience into art. The art he creates is more alive than any photograph. It seems that he makes time stand still and has mastered the art of making us see that the people are really there with us. We experience their presence and their identity.

Another art historian, Meyer Shapiro states that historical events affect style. Thus we note that artistic style emerges in relation to changes in culture, society and significant events. In the case of Tan Wei Kheng, the impact of modernization on the people of the interior has been a catalyst to his focus on portraiture of ethnic people in the interior. He has brought me attention to the one of his favourite model, an elderly Penan man who makes his own beads accessories.

“Look at all this.. (pointing to the beads) .. He made them himself. Now the young people don’t want to make this.”

(Interview with Tan Wei Kheng, 22.8.06)

Thus we note that Tan Wei Kheng appreciates the skill of the elderly people in making bead accessories and his concern about the lack of interest in this area among the younger generation. From this, I see that he may be highlighting the fine handicraft that is part of the lifestyle of the interior people. His portraits often feature the people holding baskets and wearing elaborate adornments such as earrings made of deer teeth, hornbill carvings and fine rotan bracelets

We also note that the equipment that supports his art is related to modernization. Hendrick Nicholas noted that Tan Wei Kheng has a very close relationship with his camera. He has developed his skills at capturing ethnic people in their natural surroundings at an angle where light enhances the features and expressions on their faces.

Primitive Art and Modern Art

Tradition and modernization are concepts that express opposite movements in the development of creative work in civilization. In a universal sense it has been observed that as cultures develop, art forms evolve. It is interesting that in this Millennium we have a passionate modern realist who documents the traditional art forms in his paintings of ethnic people in the interior. We are witnessing the interaction of three factors in Tan Wei Kheng’s art: the traditional art forms of the interior people, the role of photography and the emergence of a style that is meticulous and infuses life-like experiences into art.

Primitive art reflects supernatural concepts in that they may be designed as representations of divine concepts such as supernatural beings. However, we note that this element seems to be absent in the art of Tan Wei Kheng. He focuses on the relationship of people with each other and with animals and the environment. He expresses positive values in his paintings. Many of his paintings help us to value the love in the family and to respect the elderly people. For example, paintings of grandmothers carrying grandchildren make us realize the extent to which the older generation has cared for their families. Indirectly we also realize the contribution of elderly people in general. We want to be like Tan Wei Kheng and be able to see beauty and character in the aged.

It has been suggested that there is a continuum in art. Primitive art has an affinity with Modern Art. I see this continuum in Tan Wei Kheng. Through his own medium, he has made us see the master pieces that the ethnic people have created, whether it be a rotan basket or a hunting knife. The art form can even be in the form of a tattoo or warrior dance. Tan Wei Kheng has documented these art forms which make us realize how rich the ethnic culture is. We often see dances performed in events in modern vicinities. Yet, he helps us to see what is hidden in the interior.

In terms of modern art, chronological context is one way to consider a work of art. Another way to consider modern art is that of discovering something new and doing something new that has never been done before. Tan Wei Kheng is a modern realist as he has come up with a unique form of art. The uniqueness includes the process of creating his artwork. This includes traveling into the interior, living with ethnic people, taking skilful photographs and painting in a style that highlights the texture of the skin and perfection in lighting. We could never do justice to his paintings with mere words. One has to experience his painting. Stand and look at his painting and feel it. That makes Tan Wei Kheng a modern passionate realist.

Art in Sarawak

In the context of West Malaysia, modern art began in the 1920s and was centred in Penang. The English Colonial influence is evident in its development. The artists who were active in that period include Abdullah Ariff, Yong Mun Seng, Tay Hooi Keat dan Kuo Ju Ping. In Sabah modern art began in the 1930s spear headed by Datuk Simon Yew. Most of the well known artists comprised of school teachers. In Sarawak artists became active after 1945 after the Second World War.

The Chinese community is related to the British administration in Malaysia. The Chinese arrived to fulfill the economic needs in the 1820s. This phenomenon had a long term impact on the development of art in Malaysia. In Sarawak the development of art was initiated and nurtured by educators. This is consistent with the pattern that emerged in W Malaysia and in Sabah. This is reported by Heidi Munan in her article: "Sarawak: Artists and Artisans:

"There is now an aging generation of Sarawak artists, almost without exception, school teachers."

(Chin, 1991)

Thus, we can see the link between education and the development of art. Most of these exponents of art received formal education in art. This is an important point to note because Tan Wei Kheng did not have formal education in art. He is a self taught artist who left school at the age of 16. He taught himself by observing pictures in books. He even documented the development of his paintings meticulously by photographing the paintings at various stages of completion. This indicates that Tan Wei Kheng is an analytical person with outstanding naturalistic intelligence. He is able to use what he finds in his environment to create masterpieces which not only have an aesthetic value but also has sociological, historical and emotive impact.

Chai Horng Chung had a strong impact in the development of Sarawakian art. At the end of the 1940s he was very active. He received his formal education in art in The Shanghai College Of Fine Arts, China. After the Second World War, he returned to Sarawak. In 1948 he had a solo exhibition in Madrasah Melayu (now the Kuching Education Department). He used the Chinese style of painting to paint local landscapes in sarwak and scenes from everyday life in Sarawak. This indicates that early artists combine Chinese techniques in painting with local landscapes. This appears to mirror the development of Tan Wei Kheng. His subjects are almost wholly Sarawakian, in particular, the ethnic people who live in the interior. He uses a number of techniques including water colour, pastels, charcoal and acrylic. He has expressed a preference for acrylic, stating that the colour does not fade when he sprays the fixative. For Tan Wei Kheng, the Ethnic people were like "moving art". He had the desire to capture this moving art.

"I see that the people are like moving art. I had an idea. I want to take this moving art and put it on paper."

(Interview with Tan Wei Kheng, 22.7.06)

The first group exhibition was held on 9 and 10 Julai in Madrasah Melayu, Kuching. The artists who took part in this exhibition were Jee Wu, Chai Horng Chung and Khoo Hood Poh. Most of the paintings used water colour and Chinese ink. The paintings were focusing on local landscapes. We note here that there appears to be a striking difference in the experience of Tan Wei Kheng. As a boy he grew up with ethnic around him in Marudi. Thus, he may have had an affinity with them. They became his passion and his main focus as an artist. Tan did not use Chinese ink. However, he is skill full in water colour, pencil, charcoal, pastel and acrylic.

In West Malaysia the art institute that emerged included The Specialist Teachers Training College, Cheras in 1960. The study of art was introduced in the Mara Institute of Technology in 1967. In 1968 The Academy of Fine Arts was established in Kuala Lumpur. In 1972, Fine Arts was introduced in Universiti Sains Malaysia. In the 1990s courses related to art was introduced in Universiti Malaysia Sarawak. This development had an impact on the art scene in Sarawak. Artists graduating with this formal education in art became active both as full time artists or part time artists. It is interesting to note that Tan Wei Kheng did not have such formal education and yet he is a full time artist. This may explain the originality in his style, the process he charts for himself and the impact he has on us.

The Impact of Training Overseas

The role of Art Institutes in other countries had an impact on our local artists. Many of our local artists aspire to be trained in America, Australia, England, Taiwan and Singapore. The Nanyang Academy of Art in Singapore was established in the 1930s.

Our local artists trained there include: Pang Ling (1959) , Bong Choo Chew (1960s), Poh Bee Yong (1974) and Lucy Liew (1980s) . Raphael Scott Ah Beng received his formal education in art in 1964 in the Bath Academy Of Art, England. As I ponder on this, I wonder if this was a blessing for Tan Wei Kheng. He has a very meticulous style which may have emerged as a consequence of a patient nature and an unhurried life style. Formal training overseas may have come in the way of his self discovery and his originality.

The Development of Style

The style of artists can be influenced by changes in their environment. The values in the society, the impact of technology, politics, education, economics and technology have an impact on the style of an artist. An artist does not exist apart from his environment. An art historian, Frederick Antal, has stressed that the style of an artists in an expression of the society he comes from. This is very interesting in the case of Tan Wei Kheng. He expresses his identity as a Sarawakian in his paintings. He has an affinity with the indigenous people he paints.

Tan Wei Kheng's paintings reflect a way of life that exists in the interior. He captures this unique lifestyle and cultural elements, which may be lost with time. Thus, he is documenting history and sociology through his art.

Tan Wei Kheng is part of a generation of artists who are distinctively aware of their cultural identity. A portrait artist that comes to mind is Mohamad Hoessein Enas. He too derives his inspiration from his identity as a Malaysian. Among his work is a "portrait of YTM Tunku Abdul Rahman" dated 1996 and "girl pounding padi" dated 1959. (Khoo, 2003)

The Emergence of Tan Wei Kheng

Leanard Yiu has described Tan Wei Kheng as a star.

"They say a painting paints a thousand words. I believe a painting is first and foremost a visual experience. In my mind a "good painting" is one that strikes you immediately..." (Yiu, 2003). Tan Wei Kheng specializes in portraits of people from diverse indigenous communities. A striking feature of his art is his eye for detail and his ability to make people come to life on canvas.

His portraits make us ponder on the qualities he portrays: people full of character.

"One would think only an experienced master could paint such beautiful portraits."

(Ee-Tan, 2003).

Carolyn Pohowsky played an important role in bringing Tan's talents to be enjoyed by the community. She helped to facilitate his early joint exhibition with renowned Sarawakian artists Ramsay Ong, Raphael Scott Ah Beng and Sylvester Wielding (Borneo Post, 1992). He is interested in promoting Sarawak and its culture locally and internationally (Borneo Post, 1993). He takes approximately two weeks to complete a painting. One painting featured in a local newspaper in conjunction with his exhibition shows a Kayan grandmother carrying a child in a traditional baby carrier (Berita Harian, 1994). He primarily works from his own photographs and the photograph serves as an inspiration to develop an idea (Pohowsky, 1991).

List of Exhibitions

The following are the exhibitions that Tan Wei Kheng has participated in.

- 1991 - Miri Boat club
Wisma Pelita Tunku, Miri
- 1992 - Hilton Hotel, Kuching
 - National Art Gallery, Dayabumi Kuala Lumpur "Legacy of Sarawak" Exhibition
 - Crown Princess Hotel "Malaysia Art Week"
 - Boat Club, Miri
- 1993 - Holiday Inn, Miri
 - Kuching Hilton "Mystery of Sarawak"
- 1994 - Rihga Royal Hotel, Miri
- 1995 - Miri Boat Club
- 1999 - The Wyvern Theatre (Harlequin Bar), Swindon. "United Arts Presents Malaysia & Borneo" Exhibition
- 2001 - Hornbill House, Miri
- 2002 - Pustaka Miri
- 2003 - Art House Gallery, Kuala Lumpur
- 2004 - Panaga Club, Burnei
 - Dewan Suara, Miri. "Gawai Dayak Miri Artist Exhibition"
- 2005 - Galeri Petronas, Petronas Art Collection: series 3, Kuala Lumpur
- 2006 - National Art Gallery, Exhibition of Sarawak Artist, Kuala Lumpur
- 2006 - Miri Boat Club "Living Legends of Sungai Asap"

METHODOLOGY

This study will adopt a theoretical approach guided by a constructivist research paradigm. The theoretical framework behind this design is interpretivism. In the constructivist research paradigm reality is perceived to be socially constructed within the minds of the individuals. The research product is created as the result of the interaction between the researcher and the phenomenon being studied. In this case the phenomenon is the emergence of an outstanding artist who documents through portraiture the people in the interior of Sarawak. How does he become transformed as an artist as he focuses on the people in the interior and responds to the various influences on his life? How does photography and technology affect his development as an artist? To seek answers to these questions, data will be collected in the form of interviews, the study of his photographs of his paintings and the study of documents such as newspaper cuttings on his exhibitions.

Theoretical Perspective

The term theoretical perspective refers to the philosophical stance lying behind the methodology. This study draws its theoretical perspective from interpretivism and critical theory. Interpretivism emerged as a contradistinction to positivism in attempts to understand social reality. Crotty (1997) points out that positivism seeks control and predictability through a process of value-free observation that attempts to identify universal features of humanhood. Many theorists now recognize that these claims to certitude cannot be sustained. On the contrary interpretivism looks for culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the life world.

Critical theorists tend to direct research to questions pertaining to social, political, historical, gender and economic forces (Garman, 1994). This research is critical in the sense that we explore the process of unlocking thinking and studying the processes that support and impede the emergence of an artist

The Research Design

The design used a three dimensional approach. The paintings were documented in relation to a map he used as his path into the interior. Interviews to elicit the feelings of the artists were conducted.

The second dimension is the documentation of his impact on others. Interviews were conducted with collectors and people who played a role in bringing his art work to the public, thus creating a national treasure and heritage.

The third dimension is a journey into the interior recorded in the form of a video clip. This will be a rare opportunity for us to see the people that Tan Wei Kheng paints and to discover the relationship that the artist has with the world within.

The Setting and the Participants

The setting is in Miri. Two collectors traveled to Miri from Brunei to participate in interviews. The participants are the artist, the collectors and the people who helped him develop.

Data Collection Procedures

Interviews, documentation investigation and study of photographs of paintings were used in collecting data. I was guided with the following concerns:

1. How did Tan Wei Kheng develop his skills?
2. What makes him choose to focus on the interior people of Sarawak?
3. What can we learn about the interior people from his paintings?
4. What can we learn about the interior people of Sarawak when we follow him into the interior?
5. What are the perceptions of others of Tan and his work?
6. How has he changed over the years?
7. What is the deeper message he wants to convey in his art?

Analysis of the Data

I used the "Three Step Method" (Vaz, 1998) to analyze the data. This is described in Table 1.

Table 1. Three Step Writing Method

Steps	Type Of Writing	Focus
Step One	Protocal Writing	Interviews and field notes
Step Two	Hermeneutics	Emerging themes
Step Three	Phenomenology	Revisit the phenomenon

The findings that emerged contributed to the design of the presentation of the research in the e book.

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

After studying the Protocol writing I use Hermeneutics to interpret the data. I then revisit the phenomenon and categorized my reflections using Fruits for Collaborative Action Thinking (Vaz, 1998).

Fruits for Collaborative Action Thinking

Fruit	Focus Of Thinking
1. Star fruit	Strengths
2. Papaya	Direction Of Growth
3. Pineapple	Outstanding practices
4. Bananas	Strengths of the team
5. Grapes	Learning from others
6. Figs	Sharing your own understanding (YOU)

In the third step of the Three Step Writing method I revisit the phenomenon using phenomenology. That is, I draw on the insights that come to me as I reflect on the interviews, the study of documents including paintings of the artists and I shall use a technique called bracketing to mark off my own internal dialogue or stream of consciousness as I undertake this process. Bracketing is a technique used by Max Van Manen to mark off prevailing understanding. I use it to mark off my inner dialogue. This enables me to move to a new understanding and move beyond current and prevailing understandings. This is a feature in using phenomenology in research.

Star fruit: Strengths

Tan Wei Kheng's strengths are both in his skill as an artist as well as his friendly personality and his ability to acquire 21st Century skills such as networking, using a good camera and computer skills in developing himself as an artist. His style is incomparable when it comes to the texture of the skin and the uncanny feeling that his people actually come to life as portraits. He does not benchmark himself with any artists but is guided with a desire to capture the beauty he sees in the people he so feels for. In his profound concern for them he undertakes long journeys into the interior to be with them.

Papaya: Direction for Growth

Many collectors expressed concern for more opportunities for Tan Wei Kheng to be known internationally. This may be where the E book can make a contribution. Tan himself is very interested to have a chance to exhibit overseas.

Pineapple: Outstanding Practices

Tan has created a special feeling for his art by the fact that he actually travels deep into the interior and captures the beauty of the people in their various situations, be they dressed formally or informally. He is thus able to make us realize the natural charm of the many ethnic groups and value their way of life. This is particularly significant, as modernization will take away this way of life in time.

Bananas: Strengths of the Team

Team work is supportive of Tan Wei Kheng's success. He has a good relationship with his traveling companion Stanley Liew who shares his passion for the beauty of the ethnic people. The collaboration between Pustaka, Impact the digital partner in this research and the collectors have all given a multifaceted understanding of the artists and the culture that he documents.

Grapes: Learning From Others

One collector provided a perspective, which we could learn from. Sue Aire suggested that we have a television expose for Tan Wei Kheng. I believe this may be the next step for us to take to bring him to the world stage.

Figs: Sharing Your Own Understanding

Tan Wei Kheng looks at the people he paints with unique eyes. I have grouped his painting into categories to indicate what I see he seems to be focusing on. Yet I am aware that these categories only reveal what is external. I believe he also captures what is within. Several collectors refer to this dimension as the "essence" of the people. While he has his own understanding we who look on his painting are also moved with our own understanding of the people. This contributes to how we Discover Sarawak.

Cultural Heritage in His Paintings

In the E Book there is a contemplative journey through his paintings moving from one cultural feature to another. As each feature is described there is a hyper link that calls up the paintings that have this feature. When the user clicks on the words the paintings will appear on the screen.

A journey through Tan Wei Keng's paintings fills us with awe. We see that which is hidden. He has opened our eyes to the beauty of the people who live in the interior of Sarawak: the Penans, Kenyah, Kayan, Kelabit, Saban, Iban, Bidayuh. His paintings reflect the wealth of our multi ethnic society. As we look at his paintings we are celebrate the cultural heritage that he has documented. The e book also includes a video of his journey into the interior.

Tan Wei Keng is a self-taught artist who developed his skills by reproducing artwork he saw in books. The earliest painting in this collection is a 1989 piece using pencil (No 9). It shows how he studies the effect of light. The turning point was his meeting with Ramsay Ong who advised him to buy a camera and photograph people. He chose people in the interior because he was fascinated by their practices such as having long ear lobes (No 44, No 38). When he traveled into the interior he found that the people in the long houses were very old. This marked the beginning of his study of ancient faces and as he photographed and painted he was documenting sociological practices and moments in time that would vanish if they were not recorded. His paintings bring people to life. This gifted artist captures the beauty of the people, their ornaments, their and their way of life with vivid sensitivity.

In the E book, each of these dimensions is a link to many paintings that carry this feature. I have included an example of the contemplative journey that a user would take in discovering the cultural heritage in his paintings.

Fascination with long ear lobes and ear rings

His early studies on women featured Orang Ulu women with long ear lobes. He would photograph the emergence of his own painting. His own record shows that he focuses on the face and then completes the rest of the picture. I have found that his subjects look into my eyes and the eye-to-eye contact almost brings them to life. Such is the impact of Tan Wei Keng's work on people. They can be felt. One can almost feel the softness of their skin and the wetness of their eyes.

Hornbill earrings and necklaces featuring bead and tusks of animals

He also drew portraits of men. His artwork documented the intricate carved ear rings made from the horn of the Hornbill. Necklaces with the tusks of the wild boar.

Tattoos

He also documented the use of tattoos. We note that his portrait of an Iban man with tattoos show that Ibans do not practice using earrings that stretch their ear lobes.

Children

Tan Wei Keng has an uncanny ability to capture the vulnerability of children. This is shown in his works featuring babies being carried in traditional baskets decorated with beads and coins.

His paintings highlight beauty of the bead art used to decorate the baby carrier. They also fill us with a sense of awe as we ponder on the bond of love that exists between the baby and the mother. Often it is the grandmother who is carrying the child.

He sometimes explores different backgrounds and different media for the same subjects. Notice the difference between the background in these two paintings. One is done in acrylic on canvas. The other one is done in acrylic on paper.

Headdress

Tan Wei Keng's artwork documents various types of headdress, from less formal rotan headbands to elaborate beaded headdress with feathers.

Tan Wei Keng's ability to capture the designs on sarongs helps to give us a new realization of the beauty in way the ladies carry themselves.

The Majesty of the Elderly People

Tan Wei Keng has an eye for the majesty implicit in the lifestyle of the elderly people who are close to nature. This is seen in their ceremonial attire, their personal ornaments, and their body art.

Hunting Lifestyle

I have included the following as an example of how the information is documented in the e book. A link will reveal paintings with the following information.

The lifestyle of the people in the interior who got into the jungle to hunt is reflected not only in the weapons they carry but their physique. The artist has an eye for their muscles.

(No 711. Penan man with blowpipe. Long Akah. 2002. Acrylic on canvas.)

(No. 725. Penan man No 49. Long Dalo. 2003. Acrylic on canvas.)

(No. 726. Kenyah man. No 7. 2003. Long Sela'an. 2003. Pencil.)

(No 707. Penan man. No 48. Long Tuteng. 2002. Acrylic on canvas.)

(No. 677. Penan man. No 41. Long Luteng. 2001. Acrylic on canvas.)

(No 799. Penan man. No 58. Long Dalo. 2005. Acrylic on canvas.)

(No 791. Penan man. No 55. Long Dalo. 2004. Acrylic on canvas)

(No 820. Penan man. No 62. Long Dalo. 2006. Acrylic on canvas.)

Besides the above, the following features are documented in the E book:

Table 3. Cultural Heritage in His Paintings

Number	Cultural Features
1	The Dance Of The Warrior
2	The Hairstyles
3	The Sarong
4	The Bracelets
5	The Pets
6	The Musical Side
7	The Many Cultures
8	The Togetherness

This is a visual documentation of the cultural patterns of a lifestyle that may disappear with modernization.

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A research on an artist is necessarily visual in nature. The E book provides an encounter with the paintings that will say more than this report could express. Furthermore, the interviews of the artist himself and the collectors reveal how the artist feels and how his collectors feel towards his paintings.

I wish to recommend that this E book be used as a resource for art education and for developing techniques in researching artists, artists and performing artists. In so doing we will document our national treasures as well as our cultural heritage. Research that leads to the production of a digital resource will support the development of fine arts education.

CONCLUSION

This is a new beginning for artists. This research suggests a path that will lead us towards the documentation of the achievements of the artists in this region. This is our patriotic duty to Malaysia. With Vision 2020 we want to build a balanced society that enhances the potential of Malaysians. This is one area in which we have heroes. Let us tell the inspiring story of our artistic heroes and in so doing they will be a catalyst to art in Malaysia and we, as a nation, will find our place in the world of art. May I express my heartfelt gratitude for the support of Pustaka Sarawak and our digital partner Impact for their meaningful collaboration for this artistic encounter.

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