An Analysis of Artists' Practice in Hybrid Art and the Challenges Toward Malaysian Art Scene

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Abstract – Living in today's era, artists' practice in creating artwork is different from those practiced 20 years ago. With the existence of digital art followed by electronic art in the local art scene, the presentation, style and approach have evolved. Back in 2005 and 2007, some exhibitions brought hybrid art concept into an art exhibition. One of the shows was 'Hybrid+ism' which highlighted in various disciplines, media, applying unlimited processes and medium. The purpose of this paper is to study the artists' practice in the hybrid art based on selected artworks. The artworks are selected based on some criteria ranging from experimental, mixed media, multi-disciplines, integration and technology as well as culture aspects. This paper is discussing the hybrid art practice among artists in the Malaysian art scene and the challenges to creating awareness on hybrid practice among audiences.

Keywords: Awareness, artists' practices, challenge, hybrid in art

Introduction

The advancement of technology and computational tools has encouraged new possibilities in the creative process. This causes a shift to a new kind of media in producing artworks. Our local artworks practically work as a mirror to our contemporary art timeline. Furthermore, we should consistently question about the current phenomenon of contemporary art, in order to keep the local art alive. Art is about embracing and appreciating the development of personality, thoughtful information and self-consciousness (Buono, Capece and Vaccaro, 2011). Based on this point of view, it shows that art is about embracing character, evolution, knowledge and awareness of the surrounding. These will keep the development of art practices.

Since art has developed widely, there are art practitioners interested in fusing art with different genres. This has created no limitation in art making, and the boundaries become even blurry. The artists started sharing ideas which then created collaboration among designers, photographers and industrial. This idea leads to the term 'Hybrid' in the making of artworks. An art group named 'Hybrid Art Group' had organised two exhibitions in 2005 and 2007. The idea of the exhibition was about their very own interpretation of 'hybrid', which was based on their fields such as fine art, graphic, textile and fashion, cinematography and design technology. Most of the artworks were conventional painting mixed with digital, sound art mixed with installation, sculpture, experimental toward fabrics, video, light and cultural issue. It was not about technological media alone as there was still engagement with the old media. Thus, this eventually generated hybridity in an artwork. The 'Hybridism Concept of Manifesto' was contributed by these artists and they were academicians from Universiti Malaysia Sarawak. In this hybrid's manifesto (Figure 1), the integration highlights the embracing culture of origin, supporting the

combination activity, the value of creative minds, cross disciplinary or multidisciplinary, media and technology convergence, unlimited process and experiment that created hybridism in art.
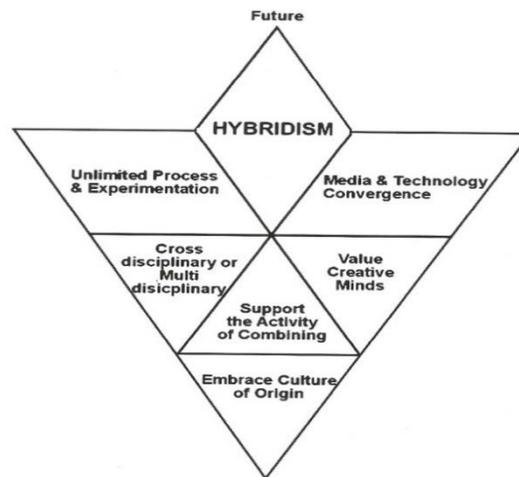

Figure 1: Hybridism Concept of Manifesto (Rahman, 2007).

According to Rahman (2007), hybrid art is something of diverse formulations or structures, having two or more components that produce an outcome of so-called leaded creation – or 'integralism'. The idea of this manifesto is to integrate multidisciplinary that can be interpreted and understood in relation to various fields and freedom in doing exploration context for contemporary art.
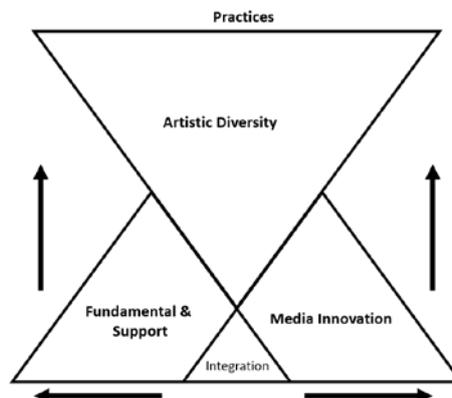

Figure 2: Model of Hybrid Art Practice (Michael, 2010).

Indeed, in the other study like Michael (2010), the Model of Hybrid Art Practices (Figure 2) is the involvement of fundamental supported by integrating mediaa innovation. In this case, thethe reflection is made possible by achieving the artistic diversity. Moreover, this artistic diversity concept is about encouraging art integration with different discipline, media, technology, science, cultural and tools. All these embraces of experimentation and exploration depend on the artists' depth of awareness of their ideas and creativity. On the other hand, today's art welcomes a variety of media and areas to offer more than what ancient art and method did. Furthermore, hybrid in art concerns on the differences of borderline that represent attributable aesthetic category and method (Whitham and Pooke, 2010). Based on this view, the artists' awareness of art transformation and their curiosity challenge them to explore more than what was expected. For instance, the "1st Electronic Art Show" in 1996 was a successful initiative in organising an e oflectronic media exhibition as there was a strong foundation on the existence of history in electronic media in Malaysian art scene. At the same time, this exhibitian on was aimed to see the reactions of artists with regards to their enthusiasm and challenge with electronic media in the 21st century (Rajah and Saidon, 1996).

Artist's Practice in Hybrid Art

The aim is to study the practices of other artists besides the members of "Hybrid Art Group". In writing about the placement of hybrid art in our local art scene, an analysis of selected artworks was conducted. Every keyword related to the hybrid concept in art practice and based on Hybridism Concept of Manifesto. The researcher selected 14 keywords which then named as attributes. The purpose of these attributes is to serve as the criteria in the artist's practices.
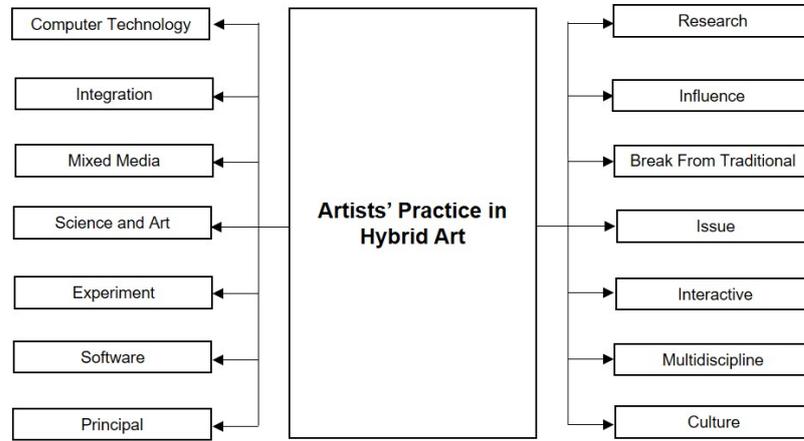

Figure 3: Artist's practice in Hybrid art attributes

Platzer (2012) stated that 'discipline' and 'computer technology' method might bring out the compassionate hybrid complex. The advancement of technology influences the growth of the artist's creativity in manipulating new technique to produce artwork. The attribute such as 'experimental' is based on non - art media that the artist applied in the artwork and how they manipulated it. On the other hand, 'mixed media' represents the diversity of media such as the old and new media, high-tech media and old media, or a mixture of new media from the different disciplines. According to Snir and Regev (2013) stated that by exploring the media, it was an outcome of the collaboration of the character of the media, the artist's identity and remembrance of former experience with the media. Another attribute is 'science and art' which focuses on involving and applying new technologies and broadening interest and knowledge in science and technology. According to Edmonds, Weakley, Candy, Fell, Knott and Pauletto (2005) stated that the emergence of technology and advance equipment had extended the opportunities for innovative application, so this cooperation had expanded the knowledge from science into art practices. Besides, attribute like 'culture' is still important because it reflects the local identity and the content of the old folks' songs, motif, history and daily culture. For an artist whose attentiveness is on 'culture' element, it becomes an extra artistic ability featured in his artwork. Next, 'integration' attribute highlights on the combination of different fields and media to produce a hybrid artwork. Hence, hybridity in hybrid practice has developed various integrations in the media, discipline, process and performances. 'Principal' represents the broadening language of principals as a hybrid concept is injected into the artwork. 'Interactive' is also part of the attribute as some artworks rely on the audience's reaction to the artwork. The 'interaction' here refers to the audiences participating in the artwork. Another important attribute is 'research' which refers to the artist creating a new kind of direction over motion, beat or even calculation. Research goes beyond media, tools or discipline. For example, research on the environment, machine, sense or even smart devices. According to Coemans, Wang, Leysen and Hannes (2015) stated that the 'research' of aesthetic practice with other disciplines would widen the attributes in the art study. 'Influence' attribute also causes the artist to study more about other attractions from the artist's reference, objects, concept et cetera. Besides, Molderez and Ceulemans (2018) stated that artists were critics of the 'issues' happen in the surrounding by combining the complicated issues then all of the knowledge distributed to the community. It turns out that 'issue' play an important part in art making. This attribute may reflect and affect the artists' artwork production. 'Multidiscipline' attribute focuses on the combination of field diversity to reflect the artists' creative ideas. An instance of this attribute is an artist who creates artwork by combining 'software' which involves the relation of code, calculations, algorithms and developer in the creating process. The 'break from traditional' attribute also offers an opportunity for the artists to innovate the production and

presentation of artworks. Nowadays, artists can actively participate in various research practices, so they have the chance to integrate both the old and new methods and even traditional and new media.

Hybrid Artworks Example

Table 1: 10 selected artworks with the element of hybrid art practice.

Artwork: Midin Series in Hologram Artist : Khairul Aidil Azlin	Artwork: Kobong Series Artist : Sylvester Weilding Jussem	Artwork: Sound From Outer Inner Space Artist : Kamal Sabran	Artwork: Bising - Bising Artist : Syafiq Samat	Artwork: Salam1Jepun:Laksamana Doremix Artist : Fairuz Sulaiman
Artwork: Jupiteraya Artist : Muid Latif	Artwork: Soundscape Artist : Sudarshan Chandran Kumar	Artwork: Not our fight Artist : Muhammad Colmann	Artwork: Transcendence Artist : Fadly Sabran	Artwork: Golden Shaft Artist : Liu Cheng Hua

Most of the selected artworks have the elements of experimental, sound, performances, cultural, multidiscipline, research and media. All these do not only involve technology medium, but they are also from various disciplines such as painting, animation, sculpture and experimental sound. There were ten artworks had been identified. Most approaches practised by local artists are 'experiment', 'computer technology', 'integration', 'principal', 'break from traditional', 'research', 'influence', 'issue' and 'multidisciplinary'. For example, 'experiment' showed that most artists are interested in experimenting with different media and tools, in order to discover more possibilities in art. This is possibly due to the fact that they are eager to see the potential of certain media in the process of producing artworks. Besides, it is understood that the advancement of technology offers freedom to the artists in their artistic exploration.

Apart from that, an 'integration' offers constructed relationships that can be used in the process of creating art (for example the study of media, knowledge, practice and even theory) that enhance the artists' understanding of integration in representation. These different spectrums in hybridism have made the principles broader and relevant to the art practices. For example, the work of Kamal Sabran entitled "Sound from Outer – Inner Space" experimented with the interplay of sound waves from Jupiter and the sound of the musical instrument. Thus, the artwork engaged with speed, waves and calculations. As the artist wanted to make sure the work is significant, there were audiences and experts were invited to test with the work, making the work more entertaining. So, the use of technology functions as a form of knowledge to understand the strength of technology and its integration in artistic processes. 'Technology' also affects the process and outcome of an artwork. Apart from applying technology in the presentation of artworks, the artists need to study the characteristics of technology such as computer technology, high technology tools, hardware and software. One example is fusing different media from other fields followed by the creation of contemporary form. The media could be from engineering and laboratory field, fused with a visual image or computer technology fused with kinetic sculpture. This eventually helps artists to construct and develop meaningful artwork creatively.

Based on the artworks in *Table 1,* artists like Muid Latif, Kamal Sabran and Khairul Aidil Azlin are investigating different ways to share the idea of 'culture' information. The 'culture' element is disclosed in visual images and animation, applying the software and computer technology in order to reflect the idea. Another example, the work of Fairuz Sulaiman entitled "Salam 1 Jepun Laksamana Doremix" uses 'wayang kulit' concept (puppet shadow play) to project the idea of Doremix story. The images shown are the three main characters representing Malaysia namely Do, Re and Mi; the characters representing Japan are Pikachu and the street (as a background of the scene). The artist wanted this performance to fuse both the analogue and digital ways of presentation interactively. By adopting the concept of puppet shadow play, the artist and his team showed that by adding sound effect and tracking colour animation, the artist became the performer of the characters (he controlled the characters/puppets) and storytelling (by adding Japanese and Malaysia popular culture) (Sulaiman, 2013). Through the whole process, the project showed that there were live performances, experimentation, sound, culture, computer technology, interaction and the involvement of the audience. Therefore, this made it a hybrid project in art. Another example is the artist's interest in developing combination painting and digital approach; Khairul Aidil Azlin's painting, 'Midin Series in Hologram' is seen by the audiences as an abstract painting which focuses on red and blue colour. The attraction is moving images projected on the painting. The audiences are able to experience this art by wearing Chroma depth google spectacle where they see 3D moving images on the painting. The images projected also focus on red and blue colour as the Chroma depth google can only detect these two colours. The artist intends to encourage the audiences to view painting not just in 2D, but in 3D too.

Other than that, attributes like 'issue', 'experiment', 'multidiscipline' and 'mixed media' also affect artwork make. For instance, Fadly Sabran's work "Transcendence" uses the combination of light, time, motion, sound and space which is put into a responsive holographic video installation. His work was reflected in an innovative way of motion, performance, artistry and communication. The artist aimed in creating an interactive experience where the audiences experienced gallery viewing and discussed the artwork, and at times used the sense of touch (hand or virtual touch), hearing (sound surrounding) and view (projected images and smoke). In fact, this went beyond artwork experiences' boundary. The artist was involved in science, art and software minimally, some examples of artists are Sylvester Weilding Jussem, Sudarshan Chandran Kumar and Liu Cheng Hua.

The Challenge of Hybrid Art in Malaysia Art Scene
The challenge of hybrid art practices is a collaboration between the artist and other practitioners. Based on the researcher's point of view, in today's art scene, there are no fields conquering or heading the presentation. Although it is a project, experts and artists should develop mutual understanding and courageous enough to work with hybrid artworks. Acceptance of critiques, provocation and comments is the best way to explore the possibilities in engaging art and scientific knowledge. Although the artist's work with science and technology in the process and technical part, limited information and expert is still a problem for the artist. Previously, the artists approached the researcher expecting to study science. However, the scientist became more enthusiastic and searched for an aesthetic device to strengthen their experiment (Gewin, 2013). Sometimes, the artists have the opportunity, but the openness in collaborating with another field is still unfavourable. Thus, the idea of collaborating is still a dilemma and challenge to our artists.

The most crucial range of support is the existence of research on the whole process of artwork from the beginning to the outcome. The research may include the technique, media, tools and discipline. Artists who are interested in encouraging the integration of art, philosophy, science, technology, history, social and the like should conduct further investigation on the function and diverse viewpoint of contemporary art growth in the local art scene. The connection between a method and a study can be collegial when an increasing figure of experts who possess academic study and knowledge are joined together with the art and science experts (Gray, 1996). This is due to the fact that hybrid artworks demand communication and discussion with philosophers and academicians from different practices. Besides, another crucial part of this research is multidisciplinary where the relationship of different disciplines applied in particular forms and functions as part of artistic expressions. From the perspective of an innovative method as exploration, the purpose and advantage of the connectional interpretation developed a

comprehensive debate on the improvement of contemporary intelligence (Hamilton and Jaaniste, 2010). As a result, artists must consider the relevance of multidisciplinary and describe diversity in their aesthetic engagements. Yetisen, A. K., Coskun, A. F., England, G., Cho, S., Butt, H., Hurwitz, J., et al. (2016) mentioned that in order to develop an artistic realm, a combination among scientists and artists must be conducted so that both experts are able to see the working process in diverse angle in terms of interrogation and finding. They also mentioned that the collaboration of the bureaucratic, private and institution could inspire dialogues so that it can be delivered to the community. For example, when there are sponsorships and support from the gallery or private investor along with the readiness of the art groups and other practitioners, this project will be made possible. Similarly, Niedderer and Reilly (2010) stated that multidisciplinary emerges from art and overlay with varieties of range especially in practices like science, technology, communal, reaction and performance. In 2011, The DAM (Digital Arts Media) group had organised the DA+C Festival for the first time. It was a festival of culture and heritage – inspired festival where it featured animation, video, design, computer programmer and music. There was another festival named 'KLEX Festival' featuring work of improvised music and performance since 2014. In this festival, there was a screening of short film, animation, video, experimental sound and vocal improviser.

Another exhibition was conducted by the Faculty of Design and Architecture (UPM) which encouraged collaboration between science and art since 2012. This exhibition "NYAWA" welcomed experts involving in science like neuroscientists, biotechnologists, physiotherapists, architects and engineers. Science interpreted art recognition in the sense of identifying the possibility and fictitious aspect of intelligence or domination and expulsion implicit in the intelligence system (Busch, 2009). It does not include science mechanism as science, but it is about the impartiality. The collaboration between art, science and technology has influenced today's art where science researchers need encouragement for art philosophy, and so, the artist engages with the broad-minded by recognising the shifting intention (Wilson, 2010). It is not a short-term program to organise an exhibition of the hybrid concept as the organiser should think of the experts in charge, the artists' hybrid work, display space as well as target audiences to participate. Besides, technology involvement, collaboration with fields such as social science, philosophy, traditional culture as well as historical incline to be received in a different view where these would become our identity in representing hybrid art in Malaysia.

Another challenge is to create awareness among audiences. The audiences may not understand the hybrid concept of presenting works. When a real innovation is offered, this creates awareness, education and perception of the relevance of art diversity in today's contemporary art (Khairuddin, 2016). For example, an exciting exhibition featuring indoor and outdoor exhibition space to display a variety of artworks such as painting, printmaking, installation, interactive art, live performance, experiments of science – art and talk. This exhibition helps explain what hybrid art is about. The intention of art making is about the significance of art in the past, position and exhibition while the psychological reaction is the audiences' assessment component (Tröndle, Kirchberg and Tschacher, 2014). Audiences are able to take part in the activity, interact with the artworks, have dialogues and provide valuable responses to artists. The surrounding itself has built a hybrid art environment. According to Jacucci, et al. (2010), the tools or machines that we used in everyday life actually lead to art production; this was expressed through the interrogation of the artists, audience's act and the broadening barrier among actual and simulated, synthetic and ingenious, movement and presentation, show and result, collaboration and meaning. Sulaiman (2013) also mentioned that artists are enthusiastic about applying item or gadget in a procedure or method form while the audiences are required to capture the experimental relation featured in an artwork. In this contemporary era, artists must be committed to challenging themselves to create new knowledge and probabilities in artwork production. Therefore, the way the artists deliver the messages to the audience plays an important part today. Through this, they will understand and appreciate the function, objectives and mission of organising this hybrid event.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this article had analysed the artist's practice in their artwork and discussed the collaboration among art practitioners as well as the awareness of the audiences. The impact of today's technology advancement has given an opportunity for our artists to explore and experiment more on

every level. However, there is another challenge when it comes to knowledge contribution, for instance on acknowledging the most contributor to a project or artwork. The outcome of interdisciplinary experimentation might differ, and not every researcher can celebrate the results unless the team is ready to recognise the input. As artists and practitioners understand their practice and develop the knowledge of hybrid art, the integration would be flexible and accessible. The impact is to educate the art community to understand hybrid practices and at the same time, create awareness among the community. Essentially, the artwork reflects the timeline in the contemporary art scene.

Acknowledgement

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