



The Canadian Society for Asian Arts in Vancouver, British Columbia, in collaboration with the Institute of Ethnic Studies (KITA) and the National University of Malaysia, presents the exhibition:

B A T I K

EXPRESSION OF IDENTITIES

The exhibition tells the story of the emergence of batik textiles in Malaysia and the transformation of traditional art and design forms from the 1960's to the present day. Techniques and diverse styles created by ethnic groups in Kelantan, Langkawi, Malacca, Sarawak, Selangor and Terengganu in Malaysia are explored.

Opening Reception: Sunday, October 30th at noon

*The exhibition continues until December 9th, 2016 (closed on Mondays)
at the Chinese Cultural Centre of Greater Vancouver: 555 Columbia Street Vancouver, BC,
Canada V6A 4H5 Phone: 1-604-658-8880*



Canadian Society
for Asian Arts



KITA
INSTITUT KAJIAN ETNIK
INSTITUTE OF ETHNIC STUDIES





MALAYSIA



BATIK

EXPRESSION OF IDENTITIES

Chinese Cultural Centre
of Greater Vancouver, B.C., Canada

30 October – 9 December, 2016

By Janet Tee Siew Mooi

AN INTRODUCTION

Batik is a resist dyeing process in which hot molten wax or rice paste is applied to the surface of fabric.

The wax or paste acts as a resist to the dyes to form undyed areas of pattern. The resist is removed after dyeing by boiling, melting or scraping, thus creating intricate patterns and designs on the fabric.

Amongst the popular techniques to make batik are batik canting (hand drawn), batik cap (hand wax-stamping) and batik sutera saring (silk screen).

Malaysia's batik production has developed from the traditional method of using the block technique to that of using machines, known as the Integrated Computer Aided Tjanting System (I.C.A.T.S) alongside the introduction of chemical colouring.

Modern technology has enabled more efficient batik production of lasting quality, and has turned batik into one of Malaysia's more viable commercialised products.

HISTORY OF BATIK IN MALAYSIA

The development of batik in Malaysia originated from the period of the Srivijaya kingdom in the 15th century.

During the reign of Sultan Zainal Abidin II, the third Sultan of Terengganu, a royal weaver named Minah Pelangi produced the kain pelangi, or 'cloth rainbow,' sometimes referred to as batik pelangi, using the tie-dye method. Tie-dye is a non wax-resist process influenced to some degree by the Indian trade textile, the bandhana.

Patterned textiles followed, such as the Kedah Batik and Kotak Batik, brought into the country by Indian and Chinese traders. Both were the same cloth and shared the same technique of production, that of using a wooden block as the tool to print a design on fabric. This wooden block is known as sarang bunga (floral nest) or sarang kayu berukir (engraved wooden nest).

The process of batik-making using wax was influenced by Java and was introduced into the state of Terengganu in 1913. Metal blocks of copper or brass were eventually introduced, replacing the use of wooden blocks and indirectly giving birth to finer design patterns. At the same time, Terengganu also saw its techniques, application processes and colours undergo development. Meanwhile in Kelantan, the use of wax in batik-making began in Lorong Gajah Mati, Kota Bharu, where it was introduced by Haji Che Su in 1921.

In the early years of the batik industry, in the 1920s, the states of Kelantan and Terengganu in the east coast of Peninsular Malaysia were foremost involved in its development. As the industry grew, it attracted entrepreneurs from other states in Malaysia, leading to the spread of batik production on the west coast and the setting up of batik ateliers in urban centres.

Batik printing was a home-based backyard cottage industry employing family members as well as skilled labour from the surrounding area. Batik was largely produced for the domestic market, but was exported to nearby countries in the early 1950s.

By the 1960s, innovation and diversification of batik production, from the traditional two-yard length of batik sarong to batik wax-stamped fabric in yardage created an immense boost to batik makers. Yardage production created a vast opportunity to market the new batik product like any other textile cloth used to create fashionable clothing for everyday use.

The development in the next two decades from the 1970s -1980s, in terms of technical innovation in the use of canting, the process of using a copper stylus filled with melted wax, as well as product and design development was important and inspiring. Experimenting with different types of cloth, techniques of colouring and introducing the application of special effects such as the use of air-brush, created a distinctive new hand-drawn style of Batik Malaysia.

However, the economic downturn of the late 1980s affected the batik industry and called for drastic measures to revive it. With the rising cost of raw materials and keen competition from machine-printed batik imports, batik makers in the 1990s turned to creating wearable batik art and the production of exclusive hand-drawn batik, the unique one-of-a-kind wearable batik art aimed at the higher end of the market. This idea and concept created interest and received a positive response from the discerning consumer, thereby prompting batik makers to produce one-of-a-kind batik products, using different fabrics and styles to suit market demand.

Today, batik is generally regarded as a symbol of national identity. Producers are conscious of the fact that Malaysians are better informed about batik, appreciate good design, quality, colour combinations and the craftsmanship that distinguishes it, as a truly handcrafted Made-In-Malaysia product. Batik Malaysia has evolved from being a traditional folk art form to a contemporary batik textile and visual art.

BATIK: EXPRESSION OF IDENTITIES

EXHIBITION SPONSORS



Canadian Society
for Asian Arts

The Canadian Society for Asian Arts (CSAA)

The Canadian Society for Asian Arts was founded in 1969 as a non-profit multicultural organization by a diverse group of volunteer scholars, connoisseurs, collectors and other individuals who shared a passion for Asian arts and cultures.

The CSAA is uniquely pan-Asian in its mission, its program focus, its membership, and its governing Board. The purpose of the Society is to promote the appreciation and understanding of the arts of Asia by bringing quality programs, exhibitions and publications to interested groups and individuals in Canada and by exploring links among the cultures of Asia.

Since 1969, the CSAA has presented hundreds of events on Asian arts and cultures.

SUPPORTERS

The Canadian Society for Asian Arts' (CSAA) programs are realized through generous donations of time and resources.

First and foremost, the Society acknowledges the financial assistance of the Province of British Columbia. Committed members and friends ensure program success and include:

The Consulate General of Malaysia, Dr. Chan and Mrs. Peggy Gunn, Anthony Phillips, the curatorial team from Malaysia under the leadership of Assoc. Prof. Salmah Abu Mansor, and the curatorial team from the CSAA, led by Sam Carter, Prof. Emeritus, Emily Carr University of Art and Design, Sheila Hall, Emily Carr University of Art and Design, and Margo Palmer, CSAA Co-President.



KITA
INSTITUT KALIAN ETNIK
INSTITUTE OF ETHNIC STUDIES

Institute of Ethnic Studies (KITA), University of Malaysia

Founded in 2007, KITA is the only full-fledged research institute in Malaysia focusing on 'ethnic studies'.

It has adopted an inclusive approach in its work and involves public, private and community sectors in its initiatives. KITA aims to support the development and creation of Malaysian artistic and cultural heritage within a regional and global environment.

It is committed to serve as a resource for those who are engaged in the arts, design and craft through research, exhibitions and public programs. Assoc. Prof. Salmah Abu Mansor has been called upon to assist public institutions with her research findings and curatorial expertise.

The Society expresses its gratitude to volunteers Sharon Davis and Beng Gunn, curatorial supporters Ray Hartley, Toni Zhang McAfee, Museum Manager, Chinese Cultural Centre of Greater Vancouver, and the Zandra Rhodes Foundation for their invaluable assistance with exhibit installation.

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BATIK

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