

IMAGE OF BAJAU KUBANG *SUNDUK* IN OMADAL ISLAND

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ABSTRACT

The pattern on the *sunduk* results from the high adaptation and observation by the *sunduk* maker of nature and its environment as well as the history of the person's life. The *sunduk* maker has such a high level of creativity that it is able to translate every element of nature around it into a form and pattern that is so unique and able to be conveyed visually to the community. The unique elements of life and beauty are translated through geometric and organic patterns engraved on each of the *sunduk* planes. The pattern on the exterior carving is used as a decoration and has an implicit meaning and can be understood through visual research. The effectiveness of the patterns is manifested when it is able to stand up for itself and tell a story without a voice. Patterns from the elements of the daily objects are also able to reinforce the story to be conveyed such as *tasbih*, *keris*, *bujak* and the crescent emblem as well as other decorative accessories. As a result, the *sunduk* maker cannot be different from the elements of manhood and femininity because the *sunduk* through life and her story as a man and woman will go through the twists and turns of her life as a woman. It is the twists of life that will adorn the *sunduk* through a pattern engraved on its plane.

Keywords: *Bajau Kubang*, *Sunduk*, interpretation, design, decorations

INTRODUCTION

The extent of the painter's ability to work in exploiting visual images always because an issue. That element of creativity and creativity needs to be appreciated and applied by a painter to successfully lift his artwork. This statement actually stimulates the painter to be more enthusiastic and lifts the ability of the painter to pursue ambitions in the work.

The painter is more creative than other people and if it is true that the painter is a creative person, how do they acquire that creativity? There are works produced through the way the painter thinks of something that is beyond the mind of habit. For example, the use of forms from the original object turns into another object with the concept of metamorphosis. The painter in his work sees the original image in another form. His imagination to produce original forms of real originality turns similar to other forms.

Picture and imagination is an out-of-the-ordinary appearance and is considered a creative work born by a creative person. The conclusion to us as ordinary observers would

assume something is wrong while the painter changes about anything that should happen to a new discovery that requires change. Both produce twists to show each other's personalities.

This article discusses several sketch works by Mohamad Azareen Aminullah who tried to find a twist through the question behind metamorphosis and the use of various lines and shapes. These works invite us to think that the authenticity of creativity is something that is reversed from the norm.

His scholarly research has documented the identity and artistry of the Bajau Kubang community which is highlighted through the various forms of *sunduk* that have been produced. The flat and wide shape of the *sunduk* depicts the symbol of the women, while the cylindrical-shaped *sunduk* is a symbol that refers to the men. The variety of sizes of the *sunduk* is to show the age of the deceased, while the variety of carvings found on it is intended to convey the identity of the deceased to those who are still alive.



Figure 1 *Sunduk*

Source: Warisan Seni dan Budaya: Masyarakat Kepulauan Pesisir Sabah , Ibrahim et al., 2013

Figure 1 is a *sunduk* that serves as a sign of the body of the deceased. For the Bajau Kubang community, *sunduk* is one of their ways to remember and honor the deceased. *Sunduk* is a sign for a cemetery and is a prohibited place because the Bajau community believes that the cemetery is scared place.

LITERATURE REVIEWS

Sunduk is a landmark of a deceased person. The *sunduk* of the Bajau Kubang community stands out and is dominant with icons on the *ukkil* pattern. Male *sunduk* use geometric motifs called *langrai* and a combination of organic motifs called *bongkok-bongkok*. Most women's *sunduk* are based on *bongkok-bongkok* motifs. The patterns carved on the *sunduk* are so complex and meticulous for the purpose of honoring the deceased on the glasses of the society.

In Sarawak, the Iban community has also produced a death monument as a sign of a place to rest. Nazri Mambut et al. (2018) argues that the *sungkup* is a burial hut that serves as a representation to the deceased. This *sungkup* also applies traditional motives to represent

the qualities of the deceased. In this context, *sungkup* with floral motifs symbolize the personality of a woman.

Today, most artists develop their work in a variety of styles that are effective and of good quality in visual language terms. Although it does not depend very much on appearance and shape, it is still able to strengthen the work through an image approach.

Liu Xiang and Lilian Lee Shiau Gee (2022) explained that the production of Chinese calligraphy that adorns the watercolor paint gives a '*form*' or shape to the image to be conveyed by the painter. Mohamad Azareen Aminullah's drawing features a sketch style with a note explaining the features of the *sunduk* he drew.

Issarezal Ismil *et al.* (2022) reveals that the resulting figure no longer represents a representation of the subtlety and external beauty of the human body but is more likely to be used as symbols to represent the situation of society and culture of a society. In the context of this drawing, the *sunduk* is a representation of the human physical figure depicted in the drawing of Mohamad Azareen Aminullah.

Through images, observers and critics who are sensitive to the images easily recognize and make interpretations that can be translated as a result of the existing work. This is an easy way for the audience to understand its meaning and the artist to find it and to enhance its own strength in the development of art.

Rosiah Md Noor and Mohd Zahuri Khairani (2019) explained the importance of understanding the art of appearance in the context of interaction and communication through art. He added that the meaning can be understood through statements and expressions through subject which are processed and organized by the foundation of the art of design as well as through the materials and techniques used.

When the image, identity and styles are evolved and consistent, the way the image is applied is extended through the style of expressionism, abstract, realist and so on. This involves more focus and control in the artwork. For example, through style, the production of artworks will be consistent and explode with the awe of artworks according to personal style.

In this context, the painter transferred his research results in a form of drawing sketches that clearly show the design and variety of decorations produced by the Bajau Kubang community in the production of *sunduk* in Omdal Island, Sabah.

METHODOLOGY

Artwork becomes a space to be harmoniously manipulated. The harmonious effect in art is closely related between the individual who produces it and the resulting object. As an artist individually, his work carries influence and exerts an impact on the environment. Harmoniousness in art occurs with the observance inherent in the convention. Through it, rules are created and appropriate techniques are learned and the established principles are observed.

Imagination helps a lot in reality in the form of quite mysterious symbols, metaphors, allegory and subconscious elements based on stacked manifestations. The ideas of the painter

are quite perfect in the presence of techniques in the processing. The technique became so friendly and close to the painter that there was a time when the public could easily recognize the identity of the artist. Here, the sign of the beginning of the episode honors the work of art and directly finds harmony in its beauty, a fresh and new aesthetic effect.

The discussion of the artwork and the process of its creation will be more interesting when followed by a talk that reveals the secrets of oneself through visual images. To the extent that we carefully interpret the works with their vivid images, there are still hidden things that are difficult to understand in a work. Such a thing will remain a 'secret'. If the images are too blurry, there may be a lot of secrets left behind.

***SUNDUK* DRAWING ANALYSIS**

The features of media exploration in the works are desirable to encourage anyone to interpret it in a new definition. From time to time people await the presentation of more challenging ideas, which demand that the painter more diligently highlight new ideas and formulas.

It may be true to the interlocutor that for some opinions, in order to be a creative person, it is necessary to come up with something new. This means that the painter has to create a work other than it once existed. The painter tries to build a perception so that the eyes and mind of the audience are open.

In the reality of life, the discussion of representation is expanded as well as in the production of art. There are those who bring the representation to something more expressive by placing representations present in many directions, behind the birth of the object itself. Just looking at objects and symbols associated with reimagining is what should be seen to be true, through meaningful rules.

Mohamad Azareen Aminullah explained that the cylindrical shape that is the basis of the male *sunduk* is an interpretation of the genital shape. It conveys a concept that is related to the question of dignity. In the Bajau Kubang community, the dignity of a *lelkai* depends entirely on the power of internal energy for the purpose of growing many offspring. Therefore, it is important to maintain and maintain their internal energy in order to remain until the end of life.

Conceptually, the male *sunduk* translates the shape of the human body that includes the limbs of the head, neck, shoulders, body, waist and legs. The sculptor needs to understand the basic concepts of the division of this segment. The upper segment consists of the head and neck. The middle segment consists of shoulders up to the waist and the lower segment consists of the buttocks to the legs as shown in Figure 2.

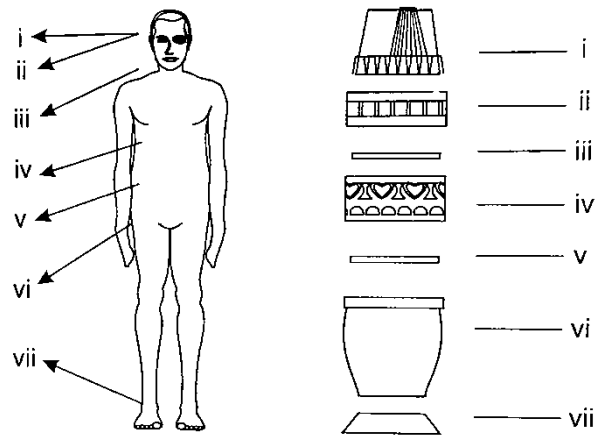


Figure 2 Segment of the Shape of the Male *Sunduk*

Source: *Warisan Seni dan Budaya: Masyarakat Kepulauan Pesisir Sabah*, Ibrahim et al., 2013

Figure 2 is the fraction of the *sunduk* by segment. Figure 2 (i & ii) is the upper segment consisting of the Kelada part and Figure 2 (iii) is the neck part. Figure 2 (iv) is the middle segment that shows the body part. Figure 2 (v) is the waist and as a separator between the middle segment and the lower egmen. The lower segment consists of the buttocks and legs as in Figure 2 (vi & vii).

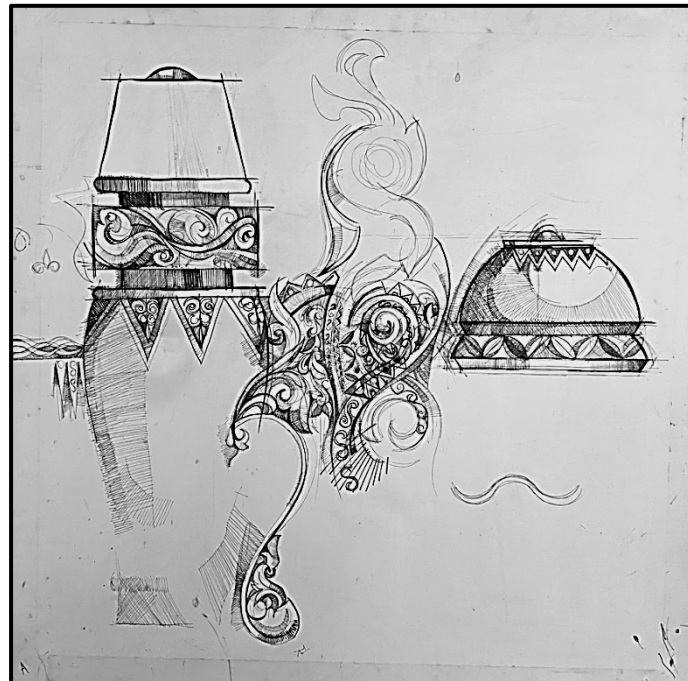


Figure 3 Sketch of Men's *Sunduk I* Drawing (3 feet x 3 feet)

Source: by Mohamad Azareen Aminullah, 2013, drawing, Datuk Yaman Gallery, ASTIF, Universiti Malaysia Sabah

Figure 3 matches the shape of the upper segment of the *sunduk* called the head of the *sunduk*. *Sunduk* has a variety of decorations to symbolize the status and hierarchy of the deceased during his lifetime. The shape of the segment in Figure 3 is inspired by the shape of a *tarbus*, while *songkok*, *turban* or *ketayap* is used to cover the head of the Bajau Kubang men.

When a representation on an object, matter, and meaning, the object itself is a representation of matter, while meaning is the material used. The meaning of representation is also associated with language, music and painting to lead to a beautiful, beautiful and joyful effect and is expressed through dramatic, narrative and descriptive.

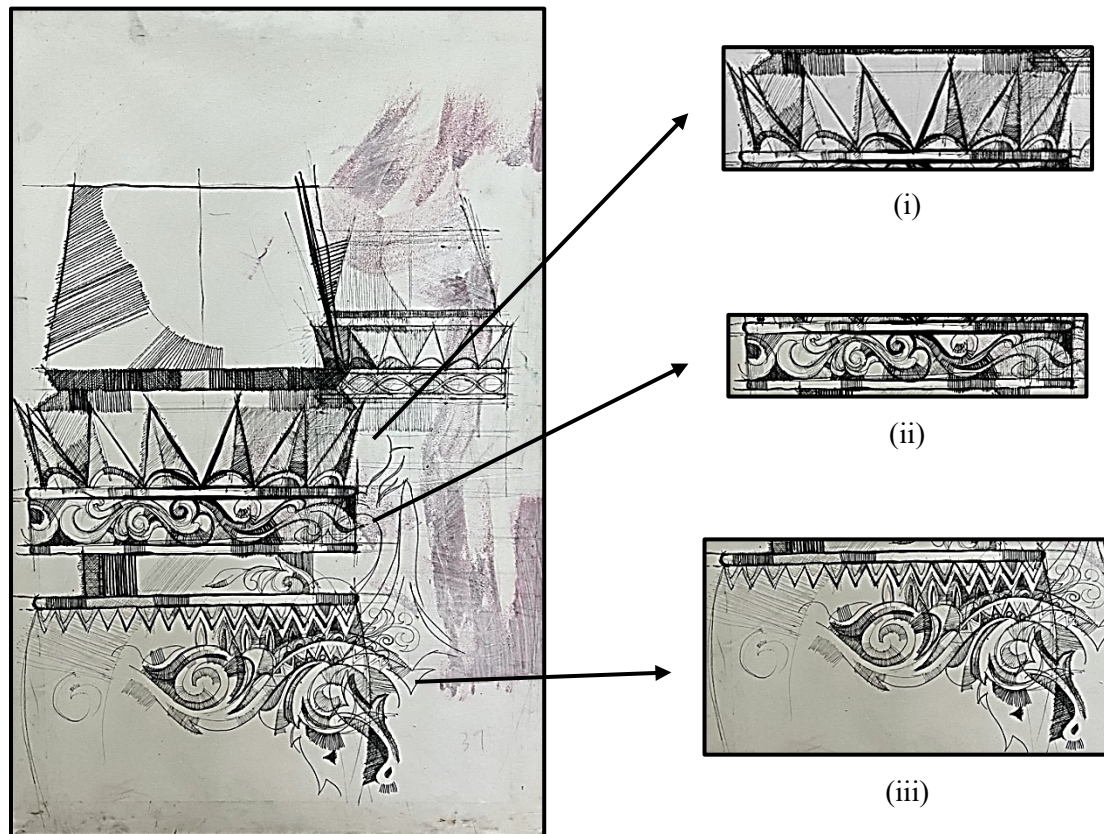


Figure 4 Sketches of *Men's Sunduk II* Drawing (3 feet x 2 feet)

Source: by Mohamad Azareen Aminullah, 2013, drawing, Datuk Yaman Gallery, ASTIF, Universiti Malaysia Sabah

Figure 4 shows the middle segment of the *sunduk* which is an integral part with a variety display of shapes decorated with organic and geometric motifs. This segment symbolizes the clothes and types of clothing that the deceased styled during his lifetime. The multi-level variety of shapes on this segment symbolizes the status of the deceased during life. The decorative variety on the middle also depicts as if the deceased were given clothes such as jackets and shirts. The icon also looks like a person who once received the rank of greatness.

Figure 4 (i) shows the central part that breaks the circumvention of the use of the cylindrical shape on the *sunduk*. This form is an adaptation of the epaulette form that symbolizes the receipt of the award of the rank of greatness. Such a variety of forms is very rarely found in burial sites because the devolution of the rank of greatness is limited to certain individuals only. *Sunduk* with this variety has a large size and is dominant. In the sketch Figure 4 (ii), it features organic motifs on the middle segment known as creeping tree-themed humps. It refers to clothes that are worn intermittently without a jacket.

Figure 4 (iii) is a motif from a creeping forest tree which is among the sources that are often applied as carving motifs on the *sunduk*. This climbing and creeping tree inspires the *sunduk* maker to feel comfortable with the naturally produced line circle.

Painters looking for images and going through the problem of image solving will go through one stage to a stage. Experimenting with color is a stage process and makes it a rule. The colours in the paint help to further highlight the *sunduk* image even though the resulting paint has no look and shape and no visual objects to the point that there are no borders, but the painter controls the color not to be left free. For example, Dato' Sharifah Fatimah Syed Zubir who produces 'color smell' in each abstract work of his expressionism puts the sense that the colour image has personified many people.



Figure 5 Sketches of *Women's Sunduk* Drawing (2 feet x 3 feet)

Source: by Mohamad Azareen Aminullah, 2013, drawing, Datuk Yaman Gallery, ASTIF, Universiti Malaysia Sabah

Figure 5 shows the basic shape of the female *sunduk* in contrast to the shape of the male *sunduk*. Women's *sunduk* showcases the physical beauty of women who are decorated with various accessories to further highlight the beauty and beauty of a woman. The beauty according to the maker of the *sunduk* is not limited to the external shape of the *sunduk*, but also includes the nature and conscience of a woman.

In the female *sunduk* sketch shows a variety of Princess *Igal-Igal*-themed motifs complete with dresses and decorations. The engraving pattern features a combination of geometric and organic. The organic and geometric pattern is an adaptation of the décor worn by an *igal-igal* dancer complemented by a shirt called *badjud alal worry* and complemented by decorations such as *janggai* (*salingkuku*), scarf, *mahakuta* (*jabbang*), *kambbot* (belt), a necklace and a pair of earring to look elegant while dancing.

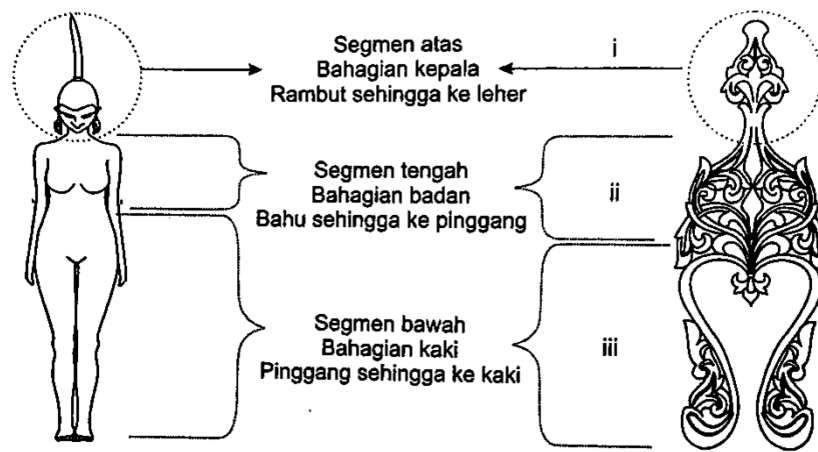


Figure 6 Segment of the Shape of the Female *Sunduk*

Source: Warisan Seni dan Budaya: Masyarakat Kepulauan Pesisir Sabah, Ibrahim et al., 2013

The female *sunduk* segment in Figure 6 (i) is an adaptation of the head part consisting of hair and ears. The pointed shape pointing up is an interpretation of the hair while the pointed shape that is engraved towards the right and left sides represents the ear and its accessories. The plane that connects to the bottom of the ear is the emblem for the neck. Figure 6 (ii) is the middle of a woman's *sunduk* which translates the body parts of a woman. This part starts from the shoulders to the waist. Figure 6 (iii) shows the lower part of the *sunduk* depicting the waist to the extremities. The shape of the *sunduk* is according to the suitability and nature of a woman whose waist is slender, the hips expand slightly and contract slightly on the extremities.

Women's *sunduk* are more striking with soft embossed carvings as a result of impressive lines. The lines that produce the pattern are symmetrically arranged on the plane of the surface and each *sunduk* is carved with its own pattern. Soft lines symbolize the tenderness and modesty of a woman. The even balance of the pattern between right and left means the human life cycle, there are good and there is bad that lies in one of the same plane. The sculpted patterns and motifs translate the situation of a person from the segments found on the plane of the *sunduk*.

Sunduk stores a variety of implicit meanings. Each decorative variety is full of aesthetic values that translate through the gender, age, living history and rank of the deceased during his lifetime. The community of Bajau Kubang managed to convey information visually and as a recording of the civilisation of their community.

For the artist, the representation is in the realm and the imitation of shapes and colours translates as a style that always carries the difference between the media and the genre. It is as an imitation of nature and life, embodied through visual language and making it harmonious, and man as his copywriter performs his duties responsibly. The representation should be in order or according to clear rules, giving birth to something new in its own form.

CONCLUSION

The carved motif variety found on the *sunduk* is the result of the imagination, experience and influence around the *sunduk* maker. The passage of time also influenced the makers of the *sunduk*. As the age increases, the skill of making *sunduk* will be passed on to the next

generation. The variety and motives of the *sunduk* have also changed in accordance with the times. The younger generation began to make a little reform of the motives and patterns on the *sunduk*.

There are images borrowed and carried by the artist on the initial stages of the artist looking for an identity. Until then the artist will stop borrowing and then create his own style. The early features of borrowing images occur a lot among our artists and the final stages of others who borrow from it. Until the end, the question of the image will lift the dignity of the painter with distinctive features of individualism. The way the artist highlights that assertion by repeating images such as themes, clusters of colours, shapes, and cultural images will position itself in the nature of individualism.

Another method in the solution of the image can also go through the title calculated one way the painter puts the image of their stand. Believed through the title, images involving themes are strongly supported with the environment. The age of the painter using the title to lift the image continues to thrive and part of the title is expressively emphasized in the paint that produces serial works.

All these influences are logically absorbed as a personal style. Techniques and forms of fulfillment are implemented in accordance with expressivism. The translucent color effect that is a contemporary idea is trying to be highlighted as a new style in formalistics. Obviously, all the characteristics in the formalistic have undergone changes. Importantly, the struggle to uphold the art continues as long as there are creative and observant artists who are interested in appreciating the artwork.

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