

# MUJARAD AS A MANIFESTATION OF ONENESS OF GOD (TAWHEED) IN THE MODERN ISLAMIC ART OF MALAYSIA AND INDONESIA

Roslina Ismail\* & Dzul Afiq Zakaria\*\*

First author\*, corresponding author\*\*

Visual Arts and Culture Studies, Faculty of Creative Arts  
Universiti Malaya

(roslina\_i@um.edu.my, dzulafiqzakaria@gmail.com)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22452/jati.vol27no2.5>

## Abstract

Islamic art is a subgenre of contemporary art popular in Muslim-majority Southeast Asian countries such as Malaysia and Indonesia. Due to Islamic art's unique position within this genre, it is widely assumed that the aesthetic challenge of Islamic art can be traced back to a fundamental Islamic precept. However, as several academics have pointed out, there is no agreement on what the term "Islamic arts" means. In this study, we aim to describe Islamic art and show how its aesthetic qualities (its "spirituality") reflect the dominant worldviews at the time it was created (its "zeitgeist"). Some Malaysian and Indonesian artists' works depict culturally significant symbols as visual representations of their ideas as well as the aesthetic and cultural values of their time and place. Our findings from the content analysis show that the visual manifestation of the Islamic religion (Tawheed) is a synthesis of Islamic aesthetic principles and Western creative abilities. When Tawheed is at the heart of the creative process, every attempt to decipher the work's meaning becomes a quest for absolute truth. We conclude that the Tawheed philosophy embodies knowledge of the essential nature of things through the concept of *Mujarad* and is reflected in the artist's visual representation by elucidating the spirituality that connects religious faith to the field of visual art. We can offer a novel interpretation of the characteristics of Islamic art from Malaysia and Indonesia by understanding art from an Islamic aesthetic standpoint based on culturally meaningful symbols.

*Keywords: Mujarad, Tawheed, visual arts, Islamic arts, spiritual experience*

## Introduction

The contextualisation of Islamic art terminology is widely reported and extensively explored in the literature by prominent scholars from the past until

contemporary times; in particular, findings by Ismail Raji al-Faruqi (1986) and Sandos Baslouh (2020) insisted it is based on philosophical ideas stemming from traditional Islamic philosophy and religious thought based on the teachings of Quran and hadiths. Alternatively, another view on Islamic arts refers to Muslim culture, contending that individuals of other religions, including Christians, Jews, and others, have also contributed to the development of Islamic civilisation (Oleg Grabar, 1973; Michon, 1985; Nasr, 1987).

In the framework of Malaysian modern art practices, the interest in Islamic art is evident; Piyadasa (1980, p. 330; 1993, p. 171) stated that neo-nationalistic and Pan-Islamic tendencies, or what he called "Malay-Islamic revivalist", emerged from the middle of the 1970s to the 1990s. At this juncture, it is important to recognise that most of the artistic output emanating from the most populous Islamic region in the world—Indonesia, Malaysia, and parts of the Philippines, Thailand, and Myanmar—are, by the most basic definition, examples of Islamic art. When viewed in this light, it is obvious how the core principles of religious faith are equally entwined with and connected to many forms of creative expression. Compared to western religious art, which is often created for religious purposes, Islamic art serves no purpose and lacks a coherent aesthetic theory and educational framework. The appreciation of God's blessings is often linked to an appreciation of beauty, which is what "aesthetics" means in this context. If aesthetics is crucial, then the worshiper has to produce works of Islamic art that are aesthetically pleasing. This can be used to address concerns about beauty in the context of Islamic moral teachings and to shed light on the role and definition of beauty in Islam. Therefore, the extent to which art and Islamic values interact in the production of contemporary art is determined by the extent to which religion influences the development of contemporary art and the extent to which artistic expression does not conflict with religious life. Unfortunately, little research has been conducted on contemporary Islamic art in Malaysia and Indonesia. The tendency to view the phenomenon uniformly has been a consistent factor throughout all previous research. The purpose of this study is to provide a novel interpretation of contemporary Islamic art in Malaysia and Indonesia, drawing on the core of Islamic value in contemporary art as well as a postcolonial theory concerning otherness and hybridity. This will be accomplished by tracing the historical origins of contemporary Islamic art in these two countries and analysing the conditions that led to its emergence and hybridity.

In this work, the researchers discovered that contemporary Islamic art in Malaysia and Indonesia share similar hybridity in which Islamic aesthetics and western aesthetics are combined as a type of Tawheed, the visual manifestation of the Islamic faith, as a visual representation. By examining it from a different angle

and by seeing it from an Islamic aesthetic standpoint anchored in Islamic philosophy, we can generate a novel interpretation. This will allow us to compare our findings to those of previous research. Throughout the time in which Islamic art publications were issued in Southeast Asia, there were periodic shifts in the subjects covered, such as calligraphy, abstraction, nature, the link between people and their deities, surrealism, Sufism, and local and global culture. Contemporary Islamic art in Southeast Asia is defined by cultural hybridity on the one hand and self-interest on the other. This is because certain people who lived throughout the colonisation era tended to embrace some of their colonists' values and habits. Contemporary Southeast Asian Islamic art seems to be a form of identity politics on the part of some Muslims in the modern, highly globalised world we live in and is shown through the use of new ideas and innovations

## **Literature Review**

### **Malaysian and Indonesian Phenomena**

Islamic art encompasses not only religious works of art but also any and all works of art created by the numerous and diverse civilisations within Islamic societies. In many instances, it contains elements that are deemed forbidden by various Islamic scholars, in addition to secular elements. The practices and customs associated with Islamic religious art differ from Christian religious art. The term acquires religious connotations in art because figural representations are frequently regarded as forbidden in Islam. This is demonstrated by the centuries-old practice of calligraphic inscriptions, which serves as an illustration of this custom. In one of the hadiths, it is reported that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, "Angels will not enter a house that is decorated with dog pictures." According to Al-Nawawi, the concept of interpretation is limited to the Western tradition of interpreting colourfully painted animal drawings or naturalists.

Calligraphy and the ornamentation of manuscripts are two examples of Islamic art that spring to mind. It is crucial to study the Quran because the word gains both religious and artistic importance, and calligraphy remains, even in the present period, the most conspicuous indicator of Islamic spirituality. In addition to calligraphy, Islamic mysticism is also present in abstract works of art. The most prominent instances of this phenomenon are the works of Muslim artists, which nearly usually have a religious tone. This spirituality, which conforms to the ideals of the religion's founder, has its roots in Islam. It is often thought that Islamic art may take on any conceivable shape. In the preface of exhibitions that feature more than only calligraphy, it is customary to mention the Islamic taboo on showing live

things. This is followed by the claim that Muslims are becoming more moderate and tolerant of a wider range of artistic expressions. In general, they believe creativity is a question of self-renewal (*ijtihadiah*) that does not require legal formality constraints (*fiqh*). *Ijtihadiah* frequently refers to an effort or difficulty in doing a task. Artistic expression and creativity are not specifically interpreted in the Quran and Hadith but rather from *ijma'* (scholars' consensus) in general without distinguishing any specific persons.

In the exhibition titled *Wajah Seni Islam Indonesia*, Yustiono (2005) wrote, "An Islamic identity may take on a range of aesthetic expressions, especially in the 20th century". These lovely forms can be seen in a number of contexts. When the artists were younger, *ulama* were much less receptive to ideas that went against what the sharia forbade. It is true that *ulama* have traditionally been less open, but things are changing. The way human and animal life are depicted in nature is comparable to how these things are portrayed in works of art. Artists in the fine arts are free to express themselves through any of three distinct styles: ornamental, abstract, or representational. This established openness, however, does not give the impression that there are no limits and that the artist can do whatever he wants. Practising today, Muslim artists have an obligation to show that the Islamic path to creation is comprehensive. Artist Hardi agrees with this assessment, saying, "Those who believe Islamic painting should be abstract in order to avoid representing humans or other living things are entitled to express that view" (Yustiono, 1995). Additionally, in the *Istiqlal Festival II*, curatorial display Yustiono (1995) noted, "The choice of style is not limited to calligraphy and abstract formalism, but also includes expressive, symbolic, and instrumental genres (realism and surrealism)."

Some works in the style of geometric abstractions, such as Middle Eastern ornaments and decorations inspired by calligraphy by illuminating one or two well-described verses, were deemed to constitute Islamic art. From this view, there are concerns that the faith and monotheism of the Islamic *ummah* can be tempted and their faith shaken by associating partners with Allah SWT simply by viewing life images found in works of art. On the other spectrum, works containing themes and freestyles, as well as depictions of nature, natural, realist, and expressionist style, also shows that Islamic art is not only indispensable in terms of its form and imagery, but it also serves as a representation of Islam. One of the most important parts of Islamic art is the setting for depicting the Islamic faith.

In Malaysia and Indonesia, Islamic art emerged through various techniques laden with religious connotations. However, it is up to the artist to add Islamic symbolism through other suitable artistic techniques and mediums

regarding intention, style, and subject matter. In other words, Tawheed has been integrated into the composition. As a symbol of continuous dhikr, artists use geometric patterns that repeat along any axis of the piece. It is up to the artist whether he works in a classic or contemporary style, so long as he adheres to sharia and prioritises remembering Allah SWT.

## **Methodology**

As mentioned by Bryman, the research technique is the backbone of a good study, and a study that is properly constructed may provide the reader with the most knowledge. In this study, the researchers have chosen qualitative research with content analysis. It focuses on gathering and interpreting written texts, which are historical and contemporary sources of information or documents such as writing materials on artists and their works, as well as writing biographies and exhibition catalogues published by galleries or curators. Materials of art criticism, whether on the painter or his work, pieces from periodicals, scientific and academic literature, relevant books, journals, and seminar papers, are also quite beneficial to this investigation. We focused on written materials from two Malaysian abstract artists, Yusof Ghani and Awang Damit.

Yusof Ghani's visual universe and ideas demonstrate with amazing congruence that he is an artist inspired by abstract expressionist aesthetic principles. In addition, a number of remarks clarify that Yusof Ghani's approach, which included spontaneity, accuracy, urgency, and aggressive activity verging on rage, was crucial in defining the material foundation and practical idea. American Abstract Expressionist artists often use this characteristic's roots as one of their methods. Yusof Ghani derives inspiration for his paintings, often from natural occurrences and human turmoil. Yusof Ghani is one of the few artists whose work is continuously inventive and prolific. More so in a visually appealing huge format. With his many diverse series, he is among the most published artists in Malaysia, with themes that transcend national boundaries.

Awang Damit often incorporates obvious and tacit references to his experiences into his works. Explicit experiences can be seen, touched, and felt, while implicit experiences occur in the mind and heart. The painter's recorded experiences collide with the viewer's experiences throughout the process of appreciation. This sharing of memories sparks new experiences triggered by art, including the revival of former experiences, which is a sentimental experience for Awang Damit. Awang Damit Ahmad's creative endeavours are significantly influenced by his childhood and adolescent experiences. The ups and downs of his life become a topic that reflects his history as the son of a farmer and fisherman and incorporates elements of traditional culture and the natural world. Written

and implicit experiences strengthened and developed him, and his artworks are shown via the visual language of *Mujarad* and art-Mujarad in order to communicate with his art audiences.

This coding phase of this content analysis essentially transforms the obtained data into a conceptual component. The subsequent stage included further references to texts and ideas since instances from the referred-to theories were retrieved once the coding was completed. For instance, common notions and considering how each thought might be related to a bigger and more inclusive concept. Strauss and Corbin refer to this phase as open coding (open code), while Sharma refers to it as early coding (early code). The fundamental objective of the theory is to identify the circumstances that lead to some action or interaction associated with the phenomena and its outcomes. Only specific circumstances may be generalised. It is more systematic and thorough, more diverse, and may be identified and arranged with other theories, making it more prevalent. This includes a strategy of continual comparison and occurs throughout the development of fundamental theory till the completion of the theory in order to take notes (memos) and comprehend the theory.

## **Analysis**

### **Art as Practice and Manifestation of Tawheed**

It is commonly stated that, in the view of Islam, art is a kind of worship and an expression of Tawheed (the assertion of Allah) (affirmation of Allah). Typically, the discourse quotes the *hadith*, which asserts that Allah is the most beautiful and adores beauty. Therefore, creating art is an attempt to become closer to God. Islamic art is considered an expression of Tawheed since its objective is worship, not art itself, as is customary in contemporary Western art. It is correct to claim that al-Tawheed is the ultimate Islamic paradigm, as this is standard use. To a significant extent, however, it is important to broaden and contextualise the concept and meaning of Tawheed. Individual human endeavours encompass their relationship with God, interactions with the environment, and fellow humans. According to experts, monotheism can establish Islam's most comprehensive structural foundation. Kuntowijoyo relates specifically to the phrase "deep structure", which refers to a system of ideas and practices comprising religion, worship, morality, Islamic law, and the Muamalah (Kuntowijoyo, 2004). This may be seen in the archipelagic region of peninsular Southeast Asia, where Islam has played an important influence in the development of permitted performative traditions exhibiting a diverse spectrum of multi-ethnic and multicultural creative expressions that are tolerant and moderate. It demonstrates

that the majority of Muslims in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei adhere to the Sunni sect of the Shafi'i school of fiqh or jurisprudence (Md. Nor, 2009).

This discourse is also connected to the discourse of modern Islamic art, which is open to any form so long as its emphasis is on Allah's worship and unity with Him. Wisoyo Yudoseputro (1986) argues in his piece for the Istiqlal Festival that the emergence of Islamic art for religious purposes does not give a full philosophy or lesson on the link between art and aesthetics. In this context, aesthetics is generally associated with the purpose of beauty, which is frequently viewed as being intrinsically related to expressing appreciation to God for his benefits. If beauty is a necessity, then the production of beauty through the arts is likewise a religious responsibility. Therefore, the nature of the relationship between art and Islam in the production of modern art depends on the amount to which religion contributed to the formation of contemporary art or the extent to which artistic expression did not compete with religious life (Yudoseputro, 1986). Further more, arts have a certain context or communal reference point. A work of art, such as a painting, will be subject to evaluation. It exists in the forms in which society expects the artist to create art. Undoubtedly, knowledge can influence the evolution of thinking. In addition, art is a mirror of the audience's state of mind and how they perceive it, as well as how it evolves into a new experience. In other words, the function of artwork, such as a painting, is to give "voice" through interpretation in the framework of the right theory, such that the final result reveals their story, i.e. the entire body of knowledge (Junaidi & Hamuddin, 2019).

Amri Yahya (2000) argues that aesthetic appeal is not the only factor that should be considered when assessing a work's value in accordance with modern art ideas. When a work of art serves to solidify an idea and makes God more tangible, its beauty can be multiplied. Art is used for more than just what it's supposed to do in a purely aesthetic context; it's also a tool for play. The artistic process and the quest for the Most Beautiful Divine are so intrinsically intertwined that they are nearly impossible to disentangle. (Yahya, 1995). Hardi further claims that modern Islamic art is predicated solely on monotheism, reducing the issue's complexity by making the *nawaitu* (intention) of creation the result of this Tawheed (monotheism). It is not hard to understand, but it relies on both sides, limiting these Muslim artists' expression. The beauty of Islamic art is the most important feature of Islamic art, and the beauty comes from the Qur'an and hadith.

This beauty is complemented by the views and fatwas of academics that support the concept that Islamic symbols are not restricted to spoken symbols alone but are also represented in Islamic paintings as visual symbols (Hadi, 2016) Hadi continued by stating that, in Islamic tradition, the practice of art is seen as a kind of prayer. Every form of devotion contains the realisation of monotheism as

the One. The beauty of the Creator's names can be mirrored in the heart of a Muslim artist if that artist has an overflowing appreciation for beauty and truth. This one point, the genesis of all forms, may be traced back to the origin of all forms. Because Islamic art intends to guide its audience on an inward journey from "the many" to "the one", Islamic aesthetics may be referred to as the aesthetic of ascent, namely towards the One. Moreover, Islamic art is a manifestation of *dhikr* and *musyahadah*, which are actions of bearing testimony to and contemplating the reality that God is One (Hadi, 2016)

Understanding the conceptual analysis of the Islamic performative aesthetics of Tawheed is crucial for delving deeper into this issue, which has recently sparked renewed interest among various Islamic states in Southeast Asia. A number of Southeast Asian Islamic countries have recently given Tawheed a newfound interest. Performative aesthetics in Islam are deeply rooted in the religion's underlying philosophies, such as scholastic theology (*kalam*) and doctrinal Sufism. Aesthetically speaking, Islamic art revolves around the essential concerns of abstraction, stylisation, and repetition. At the heart of Islam is the belief in al Tawheed, which holds that Allah (SWT) is the One and Only, the ultimate and transcendent Creator, the Lord and Master of everything that is. This central belief has been internalised through these widely recognised creative forms (Al Faruqi, 1982). As a result, the ideal Islamic concept of tawheed in Islamic art, based on the pious idea of God's transcendence, stylised and depersonalised realistic images by abstracting the essence of realistic portrayals. The word "Mujarad" is used to describe this level of abstraction. When arabesque patterns are abstracted, geometry and rhythm can reveal Tawheed as the foundation of aesthetics.

In our interpretation, the natural world is depicted in Yusof Ghani's paintings; he provides a panoramic view from above and below and serves as a metaphor for the highs and lows of human experience. Yusof Ghani believes he chooses these topics for his satisfaction and to share his beliefs with the public about the connection between God and the natural world. Seeing God's creation's beauty in the human form, the human stage, and the environment as a whole motivated him on his voyage. The works of Yusof Ghani are a sensory record of his life experience, and the artist is more interested in helping the spectator appreciate the work by allowing them to uncover the message for themselves. His preferred method of experiencing the "energy" and "light" captured in his painting goes beyond the more conventional means of public presentation. Pure works emerge from a more or less unadulterated image, with recognisable natural forms giving way to natural forms that are only really evident when there is light, and the colour splashes represent the natural light he encountered.



Analysing his "Siri Topeng" (Mask Series), as seen in Figure 1, the viewer will experience mystic emotions, threats, and danger when viewing the series' works, as seen in his painting in Figure 3. This is due to the fact that the series of masks reflect the indigenous culture, particularly in Borneo, Sabah, and Sarawak. In actuality, his other painting in Figure 2 from "Siri Hijau" (Green Series) is an application of spiritual principles through nature or the natural landscape. Hijau is an exhibition of paintings displayed at the Petronas gallery in 2002, presenting a succession of works by painters who followed the same formalistic principles but had diverse subject allusions, focusing on the greenery of nature, life, and ecology. Yusof Ghani reveals the natural world that provides a broad perspective, both above and below, as well as the metaphor of the valley of life as a mountain.



**Figure 1: Siri Topeng Jerantut, 1995, Oil on canvas, 93 x 85.5 cm**  
(Extracted from "Yusof Ghani (B. Johor, 1950)" [n.d.] )



**Figure 2: Hijau Series "Serkat", 1998 , Oil on canvas , 122 x 90 cm**  
(Extracted from "Lot 63 | 8 November 2020" [n.d.] )

As for Awang Damit noted that he frequently relates to his upbringing by reincarnating familiar imagery and cultural items, particularly as a farmer and a fisherman. Seagulls, krill, anchovies, reeds, kilong, baskets, and nets are among the images frequently treated in Awang Damit's works. This is evident in his work; all of these works may be stated to be a direct connection to Sabah culture, which is the life of farmers and fishermen. His early experiences inspire Awang's visuals as a fisherman and farmer, which are frequently represented in his works. The Intipati Budaya Series arose from a variety of experiences he had; it was a bittersweet encounter that left a lasting mark on him. Those events directly stimulated mental maturity and self-awareness. According to him, the basis of self-realisation and maturity is directly dependent on his childhood experiences, adventures, and intellectual encounters. Through it, he attempts to translate the realisation that is concealed deep inside the spirit into something tangible, which is his activity.

The 1985 production of "Siri Intipati Budaya" (Essence of Culture, EOC) was an attempt to examine village life from the perspective of the family of a fisherman and a farmer. According to Awang Damit, during the 2016 bio-retro exhibition held at his private gallery, Pantau Iraga Artspace. He stated that his childhood experiences as a fisherman and farmer are frequently reflected in his artwork, as seen in Figure 3 and Figure 4. The Essence of Culture Series was born from a variety of bitter and sweet experiences; it was a mixed experience that left him with a strong sense of nostalgia. These experiences directly stimulated mental development and self-awareness. According to him, his self-realisation and maturity were directly influenced by his childhood experiences, adventures, and intellectual experiences. Through it, he attempts to materialise the realisation that is buried deep within the soul; this is his work.



**Figure 3: Awang Damit Ahmad, EOC Series "Sinumandak" 1988, Acrylic on canvas, 89 x 79 cm**  
(Extracted from "Lot 20 | 8 November 2020" [n.d.] )



**Figure 4: Awang Damit Ahmad, *Saging dan Pucuk Paku (EOC Series)*, 1992, Mixed, media on canvas, 106 x 91.5 cm**  
(Extracted from "Lot 26 | 20 February 2022" [n.d.] )

In this research, we have selected these two artists because of their prominence and have been established as icons of abstract art based on biographical information and their active participation in art. Yusof Ghani and Awang Damit Ahmad are two prominent figures in the area of abstract art in the country who are proficient at creating abstract works. In terms of formalistic qualities, these two figures have various abstract styles; the movement of the lines from the brush effect, the shift in colour that generates space, and the touch of texture from the experiments with materials influence the translation. As far as the basic understanding and knowledge of art based on formalistic elements are unable to translate abstract works, it can be seen that formalistic elements are unable to translate their abstract works by evaluating them from a deeper perspective and examining the exhibited psychological angle. This is where the role of eastern aesthetic appreciation and philosophy comes into play, revealing the religious and cultural content of Malay artists' abstract works.

## **Findings and Discussion**

### **Abstraction of Reality: Concept of *Mujarad***

*Mujarad* is an abstraction from reality that is considered to exist along a continuum that aims to achieve the highest possible degree of verisimilitude. This concept originates from the Arabic language. When it comes to figurative or representational creative expression showing imagery of an embodiment of Tawheed, the concept and foundation of Islamic religion that declares one's unity with God, abstractions are mathematically excluded from Islamic aesthetics. This is because Tawheed, the Islamic religion's fundamental belief, says one is one with God. In this sense, Islamic art is based on the belief in God and his transcendent presence (Md. Nor, 2012). According to Terry Allen (1988), Muslims are aware of and accept this representation of *Mujarad*, which abstractly depicts *Mujarad* using vocabulary from many ethnolinguistic traditions that may be mutually inclusive or regionally restrictive. To some extent, they are linked with the mystic concepts associated with the various Sufi traditions in many cases. The distinctive components of Islamic abstract art are representations of the eternal and universal shapes that may be found in geometrical structures. In Islamic abstract art, the circle, square, and triangle are used to depict the underlying foundation that supports the local interpretation of abstractions. An endless flow of interconnecting curvilinear forms and structures represents this foundation.

Lois Ibsen Al-Faruqi (1975) derived *Mujarad* as the most notable qualities of the Islamic aesthetic form, regardless of the medium, and is characterised by "the fact that it does not develop, in addition to the conjunct and disjunct motions that comprise its arabesque" an Islamic work of art is non-developmental in the sense that it does not depict a steady ascent to a single apex of aesthetic tension; rather, an Islamic work of art includes several centres of tension, and multiple succeeding segments, and each is of equal importance. Each of these figures or parts is closely related to the one that came before it, but it does not "organically" emerge from the one that came before it (Al-Faruqi, 1975).

In Islamic culture, the notion of "aesthetics" did not exist, and traditional Islamic civilisation did not employ the term "aesthetics" or any other phrase with a similar connotation. The current Arabic name *jamaliya*, which means "beauty science", was taken from the West and is now known as "ilm al-jamal", which translates to "science of beauty". The Quran and the traditions (sunna) that the Prophet Muhammad left behind do not mention art. On the other hand, Muslims have no trouble drawing their own conclusions based on any sources. "God is Beauty, and He loves beauty", remarked by the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh),

which is widely regarded as the foundational text of Islamic aesthetics, which dates back to the beginnings of Islamic aesthetics (Hadith Muslim).

The hadith reveals that Allah, who is lovely in and of Himself, respects beauty and is also beautiful in and of Himself. Our eyes will not be able to appreciate Allah's beauty in this life fully, but we can do so in three other ways: by His qualities, through His creation, and through the divine light. Allah's qualities are extensively explored in both the Qur'an and the Hadith, exposing the countless facets that contribute to His unique essence and unsurpassed beauty. Consider a few of his qualities that you admire the most. His various names include Al-Salam, which means "the wellspring of peace and tranquillity", Al-Wadud, which means "the loving", and Al-Muhaymin, which means "the ultimate protector and guardian". No sin is unforgivable in His sight since He is the compassionate One, whose love stretches to all of creation and no one can be separated from Him. He is the most benevolent of all people, as well as the custodian of wisdom and the one who bestows it, and he watches over and protects those who seek to make the world a better place.

While Allah is completely independent and distinct from His creation, with no overlap, the beauty of Allah's creation reveals the depth of Allah's own divine beauty to anybody who takes the time to observe it. Nature's awe-inspiring beauty and all of its marvellous creations, such as verdant meadows, gushing streams, blossoming flowers, snow-capped mountains, and immense seas, are difficult to explain accurately. All living creatures, from the smallest insect to the greatest polar bear, are aesthetically intriguing, whether moving on the ground, moving through the water, or flying through the air. Even something as basic as a sunrise or a cloud formation in the sky may be stunning in the eyes of certain individuals. We are continuously reminded of Allah's unparalleled magnificence as we gaze upon the gorgeous environment. Allah created all of these wonderful sceneries. He is the one who created them. This aspect of His beauty may be recognised by simply studying His suggestions, which is exactly what we will do today. The Islamic civilisation, which provided the potential for such a creation, enabled the construction of autonomous aesthetic criteria that were influenced by Islamic faith. The beauty of the universe, as emphasised in the Quran, as well as the literary characteristics of the Qur'anic text itself, were considered as strong proof of the existence of a divine hand in the natural world by the creative history of Islam (Khoiri, 2002).

From our analysis, we found that abstract work for Malay artists is not only transforming their creative spirit into an idea that alters the composition and gives their work significance. The abstract work of Malay painters is also seen as a reflection of the artist's spirit, which contributes to his self-cultural consciousness

as a Malay painter. This is due to the fact that their labour entails the incorporation and comprehension of God, nature, and life, which profoundly touches their psyche. In addition to transforming the form of an item into something meaningful, abstract painting is also a reflection of the artist and their culture. Malay artists' abstract works tend to be more adventurous and organised than western abstract works, which emphasise material experimentation and emotional expression. In *Mujarad* and semi-*Mujarad* styles, the meanings of Malay artists' abstract works continue to centre around nature, mankind, and the divine, despite their experimentation with numerous mediums and materials. In work, there is not just a wonderful and lovely picture. In truth, it also demonstrates the artist's knowledge, wisdom, and faith in his profound sense of existence as a painter and as a testimony to the oneness of the various surfaces of nature. Abstract works created for the goal of communication or as a reflection of spiritual appreciation place an emphasis on form and color. For Malay artists, in particular, topics and concerns play an important role in the composition of their works, which often reflect the painter's personal status, background, and local environment and traits. Indirectly, this is seen as an abstract version under the influence of the post-independence environment in which the artists search for their qualities and an identity that represents the location in accordance with the national culture policy of 1971.

This discussion centred on Malay art from various scholarly perspectives, particularly those of Nakula and Sulaiman Esa. The art of the nation is founded on the National Cultural Policy of 1971 and the continuance of the Islamisation Policy. To the Malay artists, abstract art is not only a shift of hue without sound, nor is it merely a reckless scribbling without meaning; rather, the link between the soul, nature, and its Creator is reflected in the work's abstract style. Western and eastern perspectives demonstrate that abstract style is clearer in promoting visual languages as a conduit between the artist's spirit and the viewer. Islamic art transcends mere aesthetic appraisal. In truth, it is also a conduit for direct communication between the viewer and the artist's brain.

We posit two focus that leads to the following of two logical conclusions: First, there is no one Islamic aesthetic notion that can be utilised as a basis for evaluating all forms of Islamic art and applied to all forms of Islamic art. Second, there is total freedom of expression and the acceptance of any notion or aesthetic aspect within Islamic Fine Arts, so long as they do not contravene the sharia. In this sense, "Islamic philosophy" refers to the belief that Islamic art and faith are inextricably intertwined and interconnected. Artists are granted considerable creative freedom to develop original works of art while complying with strict rules. Because Islamic art serves a spiritual purpose and is intimately connected

to the form and content of the Islamic revelation, any possible connection between it and the Islamic revelation cannot be reduced to a simple comparison with the sociopolitical changes brought about by Islam, as some individuals have suggested. Islamic art has a spiritual purpose and is intricately connected to the form and substance of Islamic revelation. In conclusion, examining one's faith is the only way to uncover the answer.

The discourse often views the Islamic tradition as avoiding the depiction of living creatures because Muslims are uninterested in the tangible aspects of their faith, not because Muslims are forbidden to do so. This method of discourse generally asks, "What is the essence of beauty according to Islamic philosophies?" in an attempt to distinguish Islamic aesthetics from Western aesthetics, which perceive beauty as a distinct feature. Since its origin, Islamic art has been defined by a selection process that accords greater weight to specific themes and forms. This has been the case from the beginning of artistic creation. This process was the artists' responsibility; as a result, they met not only with the newly established ethical and aesthetic standards but also with the requirements of the new patrons, to whom art was bound to adhere from that point forward. The requirement to attend religious services was highly important among these requirements. The construction of mosques and other places of worship is one of the first instances of how Islamic art modified pre-existing aesthetic traditions to suit its scope and requirements.

In the preface to the Islamic Fine Arts Exhibition (2004), Abdul Hadi WM states, "Three fundamental philosophical schools have influenced the style of Islamic art from its inception in the history of Islamic civilisation." The three schools of thought are Mashsha'iyah, also known as the Peripatetic philosophy, Hikam Al-Ishraqiyah, also known as the Illumination philosophy, and Sufi philosophy. The Mashha'i school influenced the calligraphy, arabesque, and geometry arts. Ishraqi's concept of the Mithal Realm or Khayyal Realm (The Imagination Realm) inspired the aesthetic foundations of Persian miniature painting. This notion explains the link between the Upper and Lower Realms. Al-Ghazali, Fariduddin 'Attar, Ruzbihan Al-Baqi, Jalaluddin Rumi, and Abdul Rahman Al-Jami are the primary sources for Sufi or Sufism. The aesthetics of figurative paintings with a propensity towards realism are related to the writer's perspective on their spirituality (Hadi, 2004). Abdul Hadi provides a comprehensive analysis of several Islamic classical painting schools. In conclusion, he stated that he did not believe that the works of the artists included in the exhibition had a direct relationship with the mentioned thinkers. This was included in the last paragraph. The presentation he authored was intended to widen people's perspectives on Islamic art and broaden their horizons. In



addition, he supports the idea of liberating artists from the constraints of the "limited sense". Possible reference to the prohibition on depicting live things, which transforms contemporary Islamic art into calligraphy.

According to Ibn Sina and Ibn Rushd, the concept of beauty in Islamic philosophy is not dependent only on sensory effects. According to Rizky A. Zaelani (2011), there is no study on the "sense of beauty" equivalent to the Western aesthetic tradition that is separate and independent. Consequently, the value of beauty is not considered direct evidence of the results of our senses about the current world (visible) but rather as a component of how we experience reality as a whole. The pinnacle of this type of learning is when we have a heightened awareness of the numerous evidences of the Creator as the source of perfection and beauty (Zaelani, 2011). During its earliest stages, art in the Muslim world was developed by applying a new language and semantic order to a previous visual structure. By integrating these two elements, this work of art was made; for Muslims, the outcome was the result of a synthesis of their own experience and knowledge, with specific alterations made on the Muslim side. This mutually beneficial relationship between the Muslim world and the cultures that came before and after it has been preserved throughout history. Establishing a mutually beneficial link between reason and intellect might pave the way for creating a guide that eventually leads man to the maximum conceivable degree of "knowledge". A Muslim can get this "knowledge" by making or just admiring Islamic art. This is true whether the Muslim participates actively in the artistic process or merely appreciates its aesthetic worth.

From a spiritual and ethical stance, the Qur'anic message is the fundamental source of inspiration for Islamic art. Through the use of geometric forms, Islamic art attempts to transfer the concepts of the Qur'anic Message onto the plane of physical shapes. Every visible representation has an unseen internal quality, and this hidden interior truth completes and complements the representation. The outer form, also known as the *dzahir* (expression), emphasises the mathematical and physical aspects of the notion, making it easily identifiable and easy to grasp. The basic, qualitative feature is the hidden or *batin* (interior) element that is present in all beings and things and exists in all things. All creatures and objects share this characteristic. To properly understand and know a thing, one must seek knowledge and understanding of its outward and temporal actuality and its intrinsic and interior corporeality. This is because the everlasting beauty of any object lives inside its fundamental and core corporeality. When it comes to compositions, the practitioner understands their rationale, whilst the unlearned can only appreciate them for their aesthetic quality. According to

Islamic aesthetics, this interpretive concept is the most important philosophical component of Islamic aesthetics.

The following Hadiths (sayings) of the Prophet Muhammad, in the opinion of the Muslim artist, serve as the philosophical foundation of Islamic aesthetics. "God has written beauty onto all things", "God demands that if you do anything, you perfect it", and "God has inscribed beauty upon the hands of those who create". Two of the most common religious sayings are "work is a kind of prayer" and "God is beautiful, and He loves beauty". Picasso exemplifies how following one's faith and the principles it promotes may make it simpler for an artist to fulfil the commitment and religious obligation that comes with making their work more attractive and well-made while still having a purpose. If the artist is dedicated to their religion, this is something that they can easily do. Islamic artists were constantly on the lookout for new sources of inspiration and methods in the hopes of discovering ones that would allow them to pursue their fascination and obsession with beautifying all aspects of life while also keeping the practice of taking pleasure in the beautiful aspects of life as a persistently private activity.

### **Local Knowledge as Inspiration in Malay Art**

In 1972, Sulaiman Esa and his colleague Redza Piyadasa presented a series of seminars entitled "Toward the Mystical Reality" at the Writer's Corner, organised by the Language and Library Council. This exhibition establishes a polemical conversation on the issues of space, matter, and mass via the use of commonplace items and writings as a mental experience that denotes location, time, and motive. In the field of Malaysian art, this is a novel notion. Instead of leaning toward Western influences, it was the 1971 Malaysia National Cultural Congress's resistance against Western art theory that led to the emancipation of Malaysian artists. Using the mental, spiritual, and mystical perspectives found in Asian philosophy in conjunction with Taoism and Zen practice, they construct a new vision of art as a scientific study by combining Eastern and Western cultures. "Towards Tawheed" was the title of an exhibition held at Sulaiman Esa's gallery in 1984, and the artist was responsible for its organisation.

"Ke Arah Tauhid" (1983) in Figure 5, which are in the collection, are two of his most significant works that successfully fused the concepts of Malay Traditional Art and Islamic Art. The series "Kearah Tauhid", broadcast at the Australian High Commission and the Language and Libraries Council in 1984, surrounded by controversy after controversy, was one of his most significant achievements. Sulaiman Esa will initiate a more in-depth investigation of Islamic art practice's history in general, using this work as a starting point. He elevated the art of the archipelago, namely Malay craftsmanship, to the present level of

artistic expressiveness seen in the West. Intending to present the faces of the region, he learned textile techniques such as songket and batik, as well as other crafts such as weaving and wood carving. Tauhid's reality and viewpoint are centred on himself when defining what painting is and what comprises art. According to Islamic art scholars, the spiritual core of a piece of art is determined by a more logical grid, which interacts with the mathematical system to generate arabesque and geometric patterns (Sidik, 2012).



**Figure 5: Sulaiman Esa, 'Ke Arah Tauhid' (1983), Campuran, 161 x 230 cm, (Koleksi Balai Seni Negara, 1983.006) (Extracted from Faisal Sisik's blog [2017].)**

When talking about deriving inspiration from nature, Ruzaika Omar Basaree's work illustrates the Malay people's reverence for Allah's creations and the importance of flora and vegetation to the Malay way of life. Within this context, Islam instils in the Malay people a sense of appreciation for Allah's creations of nature which embeds the work of art within culturally profound images, including craftsmanship which displays Malay culture and the guiding principles of Malay-Islamic philosophy (Yatim, 1989). Other forms of symbolic representation, such as Sulaiman Esa's warp and weft of textiles, may remind Muslims of the vertical and horizontal ties that bind God and humankind, as well as humanity to humanity and the way the fabrics are knitted (Coombes, 1995).

We found that each Muslim artist derives artistic inspiration from the Qur'an, which is believed to have an inexhaustible supply of spiritual notions.

They present their works in a manner that enables people to study the works' underlying meanings. Muslim audiences already possess the essential interpretive framework for the works. They will be aware of the Qur'anic inspiration that aid in crafting and guiding their responses and appreciation towards the artist's work. However, for non-Muslim audiences, the underlying interpretation of the spiritual context in these works needed a well-written commentary to appreciate Islamic-influenced art for more than its beautiful arabesques and Arabic calligraphy.

### **Ras Islami Principal in Indonesian Art**

During the 1970s, Islamic principles began to impact the development of Islamic-influenced modern art in Indonesia, starting in Jakarta. This new movement, which saw the incorporation of Islamic elements such as Islamic calligraphy and the use of abstract art forms, as well as the general acceptance of Islamic characteristics, was motivated by the previously described modern Islamic art. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the prevalence of this movement increased substantially, drawing a considerable number of younger artists into the bandwagon. Similarly, the style possibilities accessible in Islamic calligraphy and contemplative abstraction are limited to expressive, symbolic, and instrumental forms, not the reverse (both realism and surrealism). During Soeharto's administration, the Istiqlal Festival was held in Indonesia from 1991 to 1995. It is a festival that attempts to contextualise several aspects of Islamic culture and art in Indonesia, and it was held during those years. It should not come as a surprise if people attempting to promote Indonesian Islamic culture draw inspiration from other names or parts of Indonesia's diverse culture.

Suharto himself viewed the Istiqlal Festival in October 1991 as both a benchmark and a reflection on how Islamic culture should be seen in the context of Indonesia. At least two essential components are associated with it, including the Islamic spirit of "Ras Islami" and the Indonesian spirit. Both of these elements are necessary. The movement is founded on the Islamic ethos of "Ras Islami", as well as the message of peace, mercy, and fraternity among all people. These ideas serve as the movement's cornerstone. Because Islam is a religion for the whole human race, it teaches its adherents globally applicable precepts so that different social and cultural contexts may embrace it with adjustments without altering its core principles. Calligraphy, arabesque (also known as plant ornamentation), geometry, and other types of geometric design are among the modern art styles included in the Istiqlal Festival I and II exhibitions. Other types of geometric design are also possible. Thomas W. Arnold, an expert in orientalist Islamic art, believes that Islamic art is generally concerned with calligraphy, arabesque, and

geometry, among other topics (Arnold, 1965). The Istiqlal Festivals, on the other hand, featured a vast array of Islamic works of art in various artistic mediums and genres, such as realistic or semi-realistic paintings of humans and natural environments. Moreover, it was discovered that a handful of them displayed characteristics associated with impressionists and expressionists. In actuality, not all of them may be recognised as forms of aesthetic expression in Islamic art, but they all reflect the diversity of Islamic aesthetic concepts at the heart of their production.

The subjects shown in contemporary Islamic artworks from Indonesia are as diverse as the artists who produce them. Due to the fact that the great majority of contemporary practitioners of Islamic art, both artists and curators, believe that Islam permits any form of expression so long as it does not clash with the teachings of Islam, it is essential to mention the following: Calligraphy is one of the most commonly seen Islamic art genres in current Indonesian Islamic art. Other types of Islamic art may also be found there. Numerous exhibits, particularly those whose only concentration is calligraphy, reveal the impact of Islamic culture. Due to the fact that the Quran was revealed in Arabic, the Arabic script gradually became the official language utilised in Islamic liturgical practices. Because of this, there is always a religious undertone whenever Arabic symbols are employed, and this is especially true when writing Qur'anic passages, not only in "post-calligraphy" works that use Latin letters rather than Arabic ones.

### **Triangle as a Form of Visual Manifestation of Tawheed**

In the 1970s, there was a trend known as "meditative abstraction", according to Yustiono (2005). This trend was widespread in the United States and consisted of abstract works that inspired contemplation and had spiritual implications. In addition, abstract works are ideal for Islamic art since they are not obliged to portray living animals in any manner, shape, or form. Abstract paintings are the pinnacle of current Western art during that time, as well as the pinnacle of modern Western painting. However, many Muslim artists prefer to express themselves in this manner because they believe it best reflects their identity. According to historical documents, the first contemporary Islamic painters were abstract artists. Therefore, this must be completed due to the nature of its creative origins. Due to the fact that abstract painting does not show any living images, it is exempted from the restrictions imposed by *fiqhiyah*, which is uncommon in the art world.

Agoes Neogroho's 1991 artwork *Khat Alif Lam Mim Surah Al-Baqarah: 1* features a triangle with the words *alif-lam-mim* inscribed above its apex. Calligraphy and a variety of other elements have been incorporated into what is essentially an abstract piece of artwork. On the other hand, the triangle-shaped

object that dominates the foreground of this image warrants additional research. This motif appears regularly in the work of modern Islamic artists from throughout the globe. The works of A.D. Pirous, Yetmon Amier, and Bambang Ernawan, among others, have several variations of this style. Similarly, Malaysian painters such as Syed Ahmad Jamal frequently employ the triangular shape in their work, although the triangle has no symbolic significance in Islamic culture. On the other hand, considering the inclination of artists to adopt this form as a phenomenon explains both their spirituality and the Islamic influences on their work.

In "Soul, Spirit, and Mountain: Contemporary Indonesian Painters' Preoccupations" by Astri, the mountain is an important symbol of the spirituality of the archipelago, particularly in Malaysia and Indonesia. Mountains have been a metaphorical theme for thousands of years, even before Islam and throughout Hinduism and Buddhism (Wright, 1994). Some say that the arching form indicates attaining spiritual enlightenment. Mountains serve as both a metaphor for the interactions in the cosmos and a source of inspiration in Hindu mythology. Even though the mountain is important in the natural world and is depicted in the Quran as a stake for the earth, Islam does not recognise the mountain as a spiritual symbol. As a result, it is clear that the mountain's symbolic significance as a symbol of spirituality dates back to the archipelago's pre-Islamic culture. In fact, the *gunungan* theme (also known as mountains) is a one-of-a-kind example of syncretism, also known as blended reality, that can only be seen in Indonesian art. By depicting mountains, Indonesian artists have entered a hitherto uncharted region of Islamic philosophy, regardless of whether the mountains are based on the faith itself. Despite its beginnings in civilisations other than Islam, the name *gunungan* has been given a new connotation consistent with Islam's spiritual ideals. In other words, the *gunungan* or triangle is "stripped" of its pre-Islamic origins and "given" or "returned" to a universal meaning that does not have to be Islamic. This denotes spiritual enlightenment. The appearance of three vertical planes emphasises this transcendence, with the "upper" plane suggesting an accent "above" or, in his Islamic conception, "the one". Agoes' work, which may be classed as abstract art, exemplifies the complicated interaction between modernity, local community traditions, and Islam. Whether or not Agoes Neogroho is aware of it, the fact that *gunungan* was utilised to separate local customs from calligraphy to identify Islam exemplifies the artist's use of hybridity. This hybridity develops as a result of Agoes Neogroho's usage of *gunungan*.

Another work by A.D. Pirous has raised whether it includes any elements of Islamic morality. Pirous is a skilled artist noted for his calligraphy and abstract paintings. He emphasises Islamic ideals as well as social critique through these

two modes of artistic expression, which have earned him widespread praise. In one of his paintings titled "Mandate to the Leader", Pirous created a triangle space as seen in figure 2. A vertical gold line truncates this area, dividing the artwork into two equal halves. This artwork's title is also triangular. Pirous positioned the Koran calligraphy such that it was the main point of the composition. At the very top of the page is a crimson circle with the look of a seal. The calligraphy, particularly verses 26 and 27 from Surah Ali Imran of the Quran, is the masterpiece's most obvious characteristic. It is especially relevant to the social environment in 1995, when this piece was created, when there was a break with President Soeharto's New Order, because it reflects discontent with the regime. This work was completed in 1995. In this artwork, which functions as a critique, the current condition of affairs is viewed through Islamic and social ideals. Most formalist abstract painting is associated with a condition of aesthetic purity known as "when a painting is just a painting", which happens both when a painting is simply a painting.

Finally, as a result of this transformation, the forms and colours become uncontaminated and have no meaning. This is the widely accepted understanding of the history of art in Western civilisation. Pirous, on the other hand, deviated from the historical norm. Pirous created a "against history" subversion by affixing Qur'anic writing to his clothing. Pirous' work challenges the traditional notion of formalist abstract art, defined solely by the composition of visual components, and substitutes it with a new interpretation. The employment of this method does not eliminate ambiguity in the sense that "double power" implies. Pirous was skilled in both calligraphy and abstract painting, and he mixed the two in his work. This demonstrates how Islam may develop connected to modern art and how Islamic ideas and characteristics remain constant. Similarly, it is argued that the triangle form is so common in Malay civilisation classic designs that is perhaps a representation of the natural beauty that surrounds this Southeast Asian region as a manifestation of the beauty of The Creator. The mythological world of Princess Gunung Ledang's narrative in Syed Ahmad Jamal's Ledang series cited Islamic philosophy as the inspiration that symbolises the supreme spiritual direction in one's life. The prevalent triangle form in many of his works emerged from the fact that Mount Ledang is a fertile area, supporting the idea that it should be seen as a symbol of fertility. The tree of life and the flower of the spirit, both representations of the natural beauty that surrounds this Southeast Asian region, are like the triangle motif, according to the author, who also claims that this is because both the tree of life and the flower of the spirit can be found in this area.

This also demonstrates that the Malay community has a hierarchical knowledge of nature that may be studied according to the hierarchy of particular

sources. Two realities comprise natural existence: the microcosm (the self) and the macrocosm (the environment and the supernatural). The natural world and the spirit realm are distinct in the hierarchy of existence. Humans can obtain all the necessary information about the natural world from the proper sources. Aside from the essence of God and the Holy Spirit, the universe can be comprehended by reason, whereas the unseen realm can only be partially grasped by revelation (scientific study), (Abd. Rahim et al., 2013).

### **Conclusion and recommendations**

Modern Islamic art in Malaysia and Indonesia combines Islamic and Western styles to convey Islam visually. We propose that in *Mujarad* is where the ideal notion of Tawheed in Islamic art can be found, founded on God's transcendence and stylised and depersonalised genuine visual by abstracting His essence. We conclude that the following aspects characterise Islamic art and illustrate the presence of these features (spirituality). These aspects consisting of the concept of *Mujarad* as a form of abstraction during the art making while utilising local knowledge as part of the artistic inspiration. Where else in Indonesia, the impact of "Ras Islami" and the Indonesian spirit reflected how the Islamic culture could be seen in Indonesia. Finally, the prevalent presence of the triangle as a manifestation of Tawheed, captured the essence of spirituality as the artists expressed in their works through culturally relevant symbols. These symbols are visual representations of Malaysian and Indonesian artists' views, reflecting the aesthetic and cultural values that characterise their surroundings and historical moment. The work's interpretative meaning is an attempt to impart the highest level of knowledge, which is called wisdom when spirituality was visually formed as an interpretation in the Islamic faith. By understanding the essence of things, as articulated by the concept of Tawheed as the pinnacle of Islamic knowledge, Islamic art links the worlds of religious faith and visual art. Profoundly, the soul is affected by this in the form of an awareness that everything in this existence is harmonious and complete. This is a sign of spiritual experience, just as an intuitive understanding of the One's presence is.

### **Acknowledgements**

We acknowledged the funding from GPF 002G-2018. We would like to express our gratitude and honour for sitting and conversing with these artists, Mr Yusoff Ghani, Professor Dr Awang Damit Ahmad, Mr Warli Haryana and Mr Ardiyanto from Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, for their knowledge sharing on the art ecosystem of Malaysia and Indonesia.



## References

- Al-Faruqi, L. I. (1975). Muwashshah: A Vocal Form in Islamic Culture. *Ethnomusicology*, 19(1), 1-29.
- Al-Faruqi, I. R. (1986) Cultural Atlas of Islam. New York: MacMillan.
- Al-Faruqi, I. Raji. (1982). *Islamization of Knowledge: General Principles and Workplan*. International Institute of Islamic Thought.
- Allen, T. (1988). *Five Essays of Islamic Art*. Manchester, Mich.: Solipsists Press
- Arnold, T. W. (1965). *Painting in Islam: A Study of the Pictorial Art in Muslim Culture*. New York: Dover Publication.
- Abd. Rahim, R. Affandi, Nor, R. Md, Md Dahlal, N. Hayati, & Abd Hamid, N. (2013). Islam dan Kearifan Tempatan Di Alam Melayu: Analisis Kritikal (Islam and Local Wisdom In The Malay World : Critical Analysis). *JATI-Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, Vol. 18(1), 223-245.
- Baslouh, S. (2020), Latency, Light, and Void: Key Concepts in Contemporary Islamic Art, *WIT Transactions on The Built Environment*, Vol 197, 187-199.
- Coombes, H. A. (1995). *The Islamic Spirit: Social Orientations in Contemporary Malaysian Art*. International Islamic University Malaysia.
- Faisal Sidik's blog. (2017, 11 May). Retrieved from <http://faizalsidik.blogspot.com/2017/05/negaraku-ke-arrah-tauhid.html>
- Grabar, O. (1973). The formation of Islamic art. London: Murray Printing Co.
- Hadi, W.M. (2016). *Cakrawala Budaya Islam: Sastera, Hikmah, Sejarah dan Estetika*. IRCISOD.
- Junaidi, & Hamuddin, B. (2019). *The Construction of Malay Civilisation Through Malay Paintings*. *JATI-Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 24(1), pp243-269.
- Kuntowijoyo. (2004). *Islam sebagai Ilmu: Epistemologi, Metodologi dan Etika*. Jakarta: Mizan Media Utama.
- Khoiri, I. (2002). *Telaah Wacana Seni Rupa Modern Islam di Indonesia (1970-2000)*. Bandung: Institute Technology Bandung
- Lot 20 | 8 November 2020. (n.d.). KL Lifestyle. Retrieved from <https://www.kl-lifestyle.com.my/lot-20-8-november-2020/>
- Lot 26 | 20 February 2022. (n.d.). KL Lifestyle. Retrieved from <https://www.kl-lifestyle.com.my/lot-26-20-february-2022/>
- Lot 63 | 8 November 2020. (n.d.). KL Lifestyle. Retrieved from <https://www.kl-lifestyle.com.my/lot-63-8-november-2020/>
- Md. Nor, M. A (2009, 28 November-1 December). Presenting Islamic Representation in the Dances of Maritime Southeast Asia. Paper presented at Re-Searching Dance: International Conference on Dance Research, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Dance Alliance India, and India International Centre, New Delhi, India.

- Md. Nor, M. A. (2012, 30 April). Aesthetics of Tawheed in the Performing Arts of Muslim Societies. *The Halal Journal*. Retrieved from <https://thehalaljournal.wordpress.com/2012/04/30/aesthetics-of-tawhid-in-the-performing-arts-of-muslim-societies/>
- Michon, J.-L. (1985). The Message of Islamic Art. *Studies in Comparative Religion*, 17(1 & 2). Retrieved from [http://www.studiesincomparativereligion.com/public/articles/The\\_Message\\_of\\_Islamic\\_Art-by\\_Jean-Louis\\_Michon.aspx](http://www.studiesincomparativereligion.com/public/articles/The_Message_of_Islamic_Art-by_Jean-Louis_Michon.aspx)
- Michon, J. -L. (2008). Introduction to traditional Islam: Foundations, art and spirituality. Indiana, USA: Word Wisdom Inc.
- Nasr, S. H. (1987). Islamic art and spirituality. New York: State University of New York.
- Sidik, F. (2012). *Sulaiman Esa: Pertemuan Timur-Barat dalam Karya*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.
- Wright, A. (1994). *Soul, Spirit and Mountain: Preoccupations of Contemporary Indonesian Painters*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Yahya, A. (2000). "Unsur-Unsur Zoomorfik dalam Seni Rupa Islam" dalam *Jurnal Al-Jami'ah* (Vol. 5). IAIN Sunan Kalijaga.
- Yatim, O. M. (1989). *Artistic Heritage in Islam*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.
- Yudoseputro, W. (1986). *Pengantar Seni Rupa Islam di Indonesia* [Introduction to Islamic Art in Indonesia]. Bandung: Penerbit Angkasa.
- Yusof Ghani (B. Johor, 1950). (n.d.). KL Lifestyle. Retrieved from <https://www.kl-lifestyle.com.my/yusof-ghani-b-johor-1950/nggALLERY/page/5>
- Yustiono. (1995). Indonesian Contemporary Art and the Wave of Postmodernism. *Journal of Fine Arts*, Vol 11, 57-62
- Yustiono. (2005). *Intepretasi Karya Ahmad Sadali dalam Konteks Modernitas dan Spiritualitas Islam dengan Pendekatan Hermenetiuk*. Bandung: Institut Teknologi Bandung.
- Zaelani, R. (2011). *Pengantar Kuratorial BAYANG, Indonesia Islamic Art*, Galeri Nasional.

How to cite this article (APA):

Roslina Ismail, & Dzul Afiq Zakaria. (2022). *Mujarad* as a manifestation of Oneness of God (Tawheed) in the modern Islamic art of Malaysia and Indonesia. *JATI- Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 27(2), 101-126

Date received: 1 October 2022

Date of acceptance: 24 December 2022