



Faculty of Applied and Creative Arts

ADAPTATION OF 2D ANIMATION ON IBAN AJAT

Tang Hung Moi

**Bachelor of Applied Arts with Honours
(Design Technology)
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TANG HUNG MOI

This project is submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the Degree of Bachelor of Applied Arts with Honours
(Design Technology)

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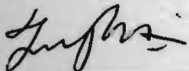
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Received for examined by:



(Mr. Azwan Abidin)

Supervisor

Design Technology Department

Date: 16/8/12

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the arts of Iban *Ajat* and to study the basic elements of arts, the lines, forms and communication through animation. Inspired by the famous artist, Ryan Woodward, it is the researcher's aspiration to form up a piece of art out of figure drawing, traditional animation and the Sea Dayak's *Ajat*. Besides fulfilling personal satisfaction, the intention of this study is also an effort to attract local youth's attention toward our priceless Borneo culture. Therefore, they would appreciate the arts that represent our own identity rather than blindly following the outsider's influences.

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini mengkaji tentang seni Ajat Iban yang juga merangkumi kajian tentang elemen-elemen asas dalam seni seperti garisan, bentuk, dan komunikasi dari aspek animasi. Cetusan inspirasi kajian ini diperolehi secara kebetulan dari seorang artis terkenal iaitu *Ryan Woodward*. Karya beliau telah mengilhamkan penyelidik untuk menghasilkan sebuah hasil seni campuran lukisan figura, animasi tradisional dan Ajat Iban. Selain memenuhi kepuasan peribadi, tujuan kajian ini juga merupakan satu usaha untuk menarik perhatian golongan belia tempatan kembali ke budaya ternilai kita. Justeru, diharap golongan tersebut akan menghargai seni yang mewarisi identity kita dan elakkan daripada membuta tuli mengagung- agungkan budaya asing.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Overview

Adaptation of 2D Animation on Iban *Ajat*

This chapter will discuss the introduction of Iban *Ajat*, emphasis on *Ajat Nyubok* and *Ajat Bujang Berani* aslo known as *Ajat Bebunuh*. Also, background of this research will be inserted in this chapter and followed by the problem statement, objectives, limitations, and the scopes of this research.

It is always the researcher's aspiration to carry out a research in animation having Sarawak local content as the subject matter. Inspired by a very successful storyboard artist, Mr. Ryan Woodward, the aim of this research is to investigate Sea Dayak's *Ajat* dance through 2D animation to bring a new visual experience to the audience.

1.1 Research Background

According to State Planning Unit Sarawak 2002, Sarawak also known as the Land of Hornbill is one of the 13th states and the largest state in the Federation of Malaysia. It covers an area of 124,450 square kilometers in North West of Borneo, which is almost 37% of the total size of the whole of Malaysia. It is bounded by Brunei on the north, Sabah on the northeast and Kalimantan Indonesia on the south, all in Borneo, the third largest island in the world. Sarawak

enjoys an extensive coastline of 720 km along the South China Sea. Based on Buku Harian 2011, the Iban also known as Sea Dayak is the majority race in Sarawak.

Ajat is a traditional dance practiced among the local tribes in Sarawak (Kunjak, 2010). She further added that *Ajat* is very famous among the Iban, Bidayuh, Kenyah, Kayan and the Land Dayaks.

The term '*Ajat*' or also known as *Ngajat* is refers as the indigenous traditional dance by the native people of Sarawak and it's famous among the Dayaks and the Orang Ulu (Kunjak, 2010).

According to Thomas (2011), Iban *Ajat* can be divided into male performing category (*Ajat Laki*) and female performing category (*Ajat Indu*). There are several kind of *Ajat* and each of it is performs with different stroke or '*Bunga*' in Iban term.

William Awell (2011) stated that *Ajat Bebung* (*The Killing Dance*) also known as the Iban Warrior Dance had been renamed to *Ajat Bujang Berani* in 1984 for a more friendlier term. Thomas (2011) also added that *Ajat Lesong* or mortar is performs to appreciate the paddy God in the past and *Ajat Nyubok* is created based on the act of the Iban hunters during observing the prey before performing the blowpipe to kill. There are 6 strokes that can be perform by the male dancer. The strokes are: *Bunga Peniki/ Pengelalu*, *Bunga Ngerandang Jalai*, *Bunga Nyubok*, *Bunga Nimang Jalung*, *Bunga Jarau* and *Bunga Bebung*. The *Ajat Indu* (*Lady's Dance*) is referring the female performer in *Ajat*. Stroke like *Bunga Titi Papan* is always performs during

festival celebration events (Thomas, 2011). During an Iban traditional wedding ceremony, *Ajat Indu* will be dance to entertain the guesses and to give honor to the brides and their families. This *Ajat* is considered to be socializing type due to no limitation in the ages and numbers of the dancers. Guesses are all invited to dance together during the event (Kunjak, 2010).

As cited in The Encyclopedia of Iban Studies (1998), '*ngajat*' (*dance*) in Iban term has been a favorite form of entertainment of Iban community. Most Iban are quite skilled in the performance of *Ajat*, and some develop specialties, for example in some of the more demanding forms of war dances. Dances are judged on the appearance of effortless grace as they nimbly bend and contort their bodies, moving arms and legs in perfect synchrony.

(Kunjak, 2010) in her article published in Dewan Budaya stated that *ngajat* dance of the Iban and Bidayuh people are highly revered as dance of courageous men, their forms displaying skills of warfare and dexterity of movements. The dance involves dramatic leaps and jumps. This dance is very famous and mostly practices among the Iban, Bidayuh, Kenyah, Kayan and Land Dayak community. The dance concept created based on the element of nature which is slow in motion, and each dance step was designed based on the believes toward nature, spirits, and animism.

The wears of '*sirat*' is a form of fabric in red tied from the waist until the knee level and a hat that decorated with hornbill's feathers which symbolize courage and fighting spirit. Nowadays, Iban communities performs *Ajat Lesong* just for entertainment and ritual purpose (Kunjak, 2010)

Each type of the *Ajat* represents a different meaning and performs according to the suitability of the celebration. *Ajat* plays an importance role in Iban sociality, as it is the dance that represents this local community.

(Denslow, 1992) stated in his study entitled 'What is Animation and who needs to know?' stated that animation has variation of meaning and each of them are somehow vary from each other. Depends on many reasons, including the historical development, production and marketing requirements moreover aesthetic preference. However, he suggested that the most obvious source of this definition is of Webster, who defines it as a motion picture made by photographing successive position of inanimate objects. In the same light, he said that the technological changes the definition of animation itself.

According to (Furniss, 2000), that animation can be categorized into 2 main types: the one that fulfill industrial requirement for widely market purpose and independent animations. From his study, he also stated that individual makes independent or experimental animation and it utilized techniques other than traditional ones and alter media.

Also, the biggest different between this 2 types of animations is industrial animation is made by artist from dominant social groups and reflect their contents compare to experimental that made by artist from marginalized social groups and reflect their contents.

1.2 Problem Statement

According to Sather (2001) stated in Dayak Studies, Dayak communities today is facing major challenge in maintaining their cultural institutions and identities. He added that in the world of rapid change nowadays, some part of our culture are in danger of being lost.

1.3 Objectives

In this research, there are four objectives:

1. To identify *Ajat* strokes and the purpose of performing it.
2. To analyze the challenges that local *Ajat* practicers are facing.
3. To create an animation of *Ajat* to enhance visual understanding of the dance.
4. To validate the effectiveness of using classical method in animation.

1.4 Hypothesis

The motion from this animation is able to enhance the audience's understanding about the emotional expression through lines movement in performing *Iban Ajat*. After viewing this animation, the audiences are able to appreciate the art of *Iban Ajat*.

1.5 Research Scope

According to (Awell, 2011) that each of the *Ajat* strokes were created inspired from the daily life routine activities such as daily work at the paddy field, the farm work and the walk on the bridge.

While according to (Kunjak, 2010), stated that *Ajat* of Iban community is popular among several group of native community in Sarawak. This research only focuses on the *Bujang Berani* and *Nyubuk* strokes. The storyline carried out in the animation is created based on half fact and half myths and applied in the story with metaphor element.

There is a statement made by (Rahman & Hui, 2005) in their research of Viewing Habits and Preferences of Malaysian Children towards Local and Foreign Animation, an interesting storyline is the key to have the respondents like or remember the animations.

The reason the researcher chosen the idea of combining a traditional dance with classical animation is because based on the preliminary research done, out of 20 interviewees, 17 stated

that their emotion were touched by watching the animation created by Ryan Woodward- 'Thought of You'. Therefore, it is researcher's priority to apply the same solution in order to grab audience's attention.

Data collection and analysis has been conducted within the first 2 months of this research. The process has been carried out among the local *Ajat* expert and the *Ajat* choreographer of Dayak Cultural Foundation in Kuching, Sarawak.

1.6 Limitation of research

It is a great challenge for researcher to search for information regarding *Ajat* because it is lack of proper research conducted regarding the subject matter and therefore publication regarding *Ajat* is hard to be identified.

1.7 Summary

As the researcher was inspired by a successful animator, Ryan Woodward of one of his tremendous art piece entitled 'Thought of You', the end product of this study is not a straight forward propaganda strategy simply promoting the *Ajat* to the youngsters. It aimed to first attract the attention of our youngsters to the beauty of *conté* animation and followed by inspiring them to step in the world of our culture by growing an appreciation thought in their mindset. Instead of giving a little good impression, it's better to educate the youngster to appreciate the arts of our own. The researcher believes by touching into their emotion is the key to plant the seed of arts appreciation.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

Literature review of this research will be focus on the information from encyclopedia, magazine and websites. Each of the regarding phrases and article will be taken into analyze, understand and identify purpose.

2.1 *Ajat*

According to Vinson and Joanne Sutlive, both as the general editors of *The Encyclopedia of Iban Studies* (2001), *Ngajat* or *Ajat* is the Iban term for dancing.

Ajat is the traditional warrior dance of the Iban tribe in Sarawak. This dance is usually performed during the festival of Gawai Kenyalang- the celebration after the harvesting season of the year. In the past, the warrior of the tribe is said to be among the most devilish headhunters in Sarawak, celebrated Gawai Kenyalang with this dance. Male warriors will performs the dance with a very fast-pace movements while wearing a long traditional hat and holding a carved long shield. (<http://pmr.penerangan.gov.my>, n.d.)

Kunjak (2010) in her article said that *Ajat* is the traditional dance of the native people in Sarawak. She further added that the dance idioms of the *Ajat* are inspired by the hornbill. The