



Fakulti Seni Gunaan Dan Kreatif

**SYMBOLISM OF CHINESE NEW YEAR TRADITION INTO  
INSTALLATION ART**

**Lai Woei Hann**

**Ijazah Sarjana Muda Seni Gunaan dengan Kepujian  
(Seni Halus)  
2017**

**SYMBOLISM OF CHINESE NEW YEAR TRADITION INTO  
INSTALLATION ART**

LAI WOEI HANN

Projek ini merupakan salah satu keperluan untuk  
Ijazah Sarjana Muda Seni Gunaan dengan Kepujian  
(Seni Halus)

Fakulti Seni Gunaan dan Kreatif

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Final Year Project Report

Masters

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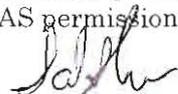
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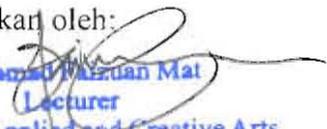
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## PENGESAHAN

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## ABSTRACT

Chinese New Year festival has been celebrated over a thousand years. Behind the festival, there are a lot of knowledge and value within the festival that can be appreciated and practiced by people in this new generation. Apart from that, Chinese New Year festival is also a sign of identity to the Chinese ethnicity but has been influenced by the western culture. Young people these days are no longer very appreciative of this traditional festival where they focus more on western festivals. Due to the influence by the western culture and lifestyle, this traditional festival has now become just a holiday or like every other day to the new generation without understanding the true meaning or value for celebrating. The main purpose of this study is to remind or refresh the new generation to remember the importance of Chinese New Year festival.

In this study, the methods used to collect data were quantitative and qualitative. Besides, document study and observations were also interpreted in this research. All the research data are important in this study because all the statistics and the analysis are very helpful in exploring the ways to present the artwork.

Installation Art method has been used in the presentation of the artwork because it is able to interact with the audience and let them feel the mood of Chinese New Year festival. This research also aims to create the awareness of the Chinese people to preserve the meaning, culture and value of Chinese traditional festival.

## ABSTRAK

Perayaan Tahun Baru Cina telah diraikan oleh kaum Cina lebih seribu tahun dahulu. Kepentingan nilai dan pengetahuan sejarah tujuan perayaan Tahun Baru Cina ini hendaklah diamalkan dan difahami oleh lapisan orang yang muda masa ini. Dengan lain kata, Perayaan Tahun Baru Cina ada juga disifatkan sebagai satu tanda simbolik kukuh golongan Cina tetapi sedihnya dicerobohi dengan serba sedikit pengaruh oleh kebudayaan Barat. Orang muda generasi hari ini tidak lagi berpegang kukuh perayaan yang turun-menurun ini dengan ikhlas tetapi sebaliknya sukakan mengalu-alukan perayaan-perayaan dunia Barat. Dengan meentingkan pengaruh kebudayaan dan cara hidup dunia Barat, Perayaan Tahun Baru Cina sekarang hanya dianggap sebagai hari cuti umum sahaja atau hari biasa oleh golongan orang mudah tanpa memahami erti yang tulen sejati atau nilai yang mendalam merayakan Tahun Baru Cina. Dengan yang demikian, tujuan yang utama untuk kajian hari ini adalah untuk mengingatkan balik atau menyedarikan pemikiran generasi baru supaya mereka sedarkan kepentingan dan pengertian perayaan menyambut Tahun Baru Cina.

Dalam kajian ini, cara-cara atau langkah-langkah yang digunakan untuk memperolehi data-data ialah cara 'quantitative' dan 'qualitative'. Selain daripada itu, pengajian dalam dan memperhatikan segala dokumen-dokumen yang berkaitan juga diutamakan dalam pengajian kali ini. Kesemua data yang dijumpai amatlah mustahak sebab semua butiran dan penganalisis data ini tetap berguna dan berfaedah dan akan membantu semasa memperkenalkan pengajian kesenian halus.

Cara-cara "Installation Art" juga dipergunakan semasa memperkenalkan kerja seni halus. Dengan cara ini, penonton semua akan mudah memahami erti meraikan dan senang merasai keseronokan perayaan Tahun Baru Cina ini. Pengajian kali ini juga akan mencungkil kesedara percintaan dan kesedaran kaun Cina supaya terus mempertahankan kuat pengertian penilaian dan kebudayaan perayaan yang turun menurun ini.

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.0 Introduction

Based on the studies conducted, symbolism art is using artwork to communicate with others. Symbolism is used in order to tell the viewer a message or even a story. Besides, most of the symbolism artwork brings a deeper meaning than the visual look. Based on the study, researcher realizes that symbolism art is an effective way to bring the message to the audience.

According to Moréas (n.d.), symbolism was symbolists thought that art should express more absolute truths which could only be accessed indirectly, using metaphorical imagery and suggestive forms containing symbolic meaning. Researcher will do research on what symbol that can be used in the Chinese tradition festival that can represent Chinese New Year. This research will search for the most suitable symbol that can bring out the symbolism of the important of the Chinese New Year.

Contemporary art is the art in our time which is derived from postmodern. However, it does not mean that contemporary artists are only concerned on the present. They always study the history of art in order to search for knowledge and creative inspiration (Claudine, 2013). Based on researcher understanding, contemporary artwork can

present in any form or size. Researcher will plan to present a symbolism artwork in contemporary form.

At the end of the research, researcher will refer to some artwork or artists to get more inspiration and idea as the guide or reference. Therefore, researcher will present an artwork based on the study and aimed to solve the issue realized by researcher

## 1.1 Problem Statement

According to Xion (2013), tradition festival is important to be celebrated because it is the culture heritage and identity of the races. Without the tradition festival, there is no identity among the races. In other words, celebrating tradition festival is to show the identity and respect to the ancients or religion.

According to “Traditional Chinese culture is important” (2010), nowadays, many young people prefer to celebrate Western festivals such as Christmas, Valentine's Day, Mother's Day and other festivals more than celebrate Chinese traditional festivals such as Chinese New Year Festival, Lantern festival, Qing Ming festival and Mid-autumn festival. This is because they can show their love and caring to others in Western festivals. For instant, they can show their love and caring to mother during Mother's Day. However, Chinese traditional festivals lack of this element because the preparation works are tiring.

Zhou (2016) had proposed that Chinese New Year celebrations and activities are changing. A change in attitude to the festival has occurred especially among China's new generation. Most of young people nowadays prefer surfing the Internet, playing with smartphones, video games and spending time with friends to celebrate with their extended families even sleepovers.

From above, it had shown that the tradition festival has been less concerned by the new generation. This is because of the lifestyle and influences from the western culture.

Based on the research, researcher strongly agrees that Chinese tradition festival must be more concerned so that it can be passed down through generation.

As the result, researcher will carry out the **challenge to bring the symbolism of Chinese New Year tradition into installation art** with the concept to call attention to the new generation that the chinese tradition festival is important.

### 1.2 Research Question

1. What are the traditional symbolisms that can represent Chinese New Year (CNY)?
2. What are the most suitable symbolisms that can be used to present the important of Chinese New Year (CNY)?
3. How to bring the tradition symbolism of CNY in contemporary art?

### 1.3 Research Objective

1. To identify the traditional symbolisms that can represent Chinese New Year (CNY).
2. To analyse the suitable symbolisms that can be used to present the important of Chinese New Year (CNY).
3. To produce the tradition symbolism of CNY in contemporary art.

#### 1.4 Research significance

There was two potential research significance for the following:

1. To reduce the problem of tradition festival become history or be oblivion.
2. To present the Symbolism of Chinese New Year in contemporary art.

#### 1.5 Scope of the research

To look for or identified the symbolism that can represent Chinese New Year.

#### 1.6 Expected results

The expected results from the researcher expected to come out an artwork in a contemporary form that can bring out the idea or message that able to recall the public on the important of tradition especially to the new generation viewers.

#### 1.7 Conclusion

In conclusion, tradition festival is important to be celebrated because it is the culture heritage and identity of the races. Without the tradition festival, there is no identity among the races. In other words, celebrating tradition festival is to show the identity and respect to the ancients or religion. As a result, tradition festival must be more concerned so that it can be passed down through generation. In the end resecher will come out an artwork in contemporary form that can bring out the idea or message that able to recall the public on the important of tradition especially to the new generation.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0 Introduction

A Literature review is an important part of the research because the data, information and references that found or collect will help in the researcher in the whole process of the project. Researcher will be using the source from online reading, book and more. By thronging the literature review will help researcher found the support data that show the reason that why researcher is doing the research. Besides that, researcher will be more focus on why Chinese New Year was not same on this generation. On the other hand, researcher will research about what item or symbol that can be represent Chinese New Year and also some reference from artist and artwork.

## 2.1 What is Symbolism Art

Symbolism was started at French in 1880s until 1910s. Symbolism gaining popular credence from the public when Jean Moreas manifesto his work *Le Figaro* in 1886. Myers (2007) stated that, symbolists' exclusion of naturalism and narrative in favour of the subjective delegation of an idea or emotion would have a compelling effect on the artwork of the twentieth century, especially the formulation of German Expressionism and Abstraction.

According to Edward (1993) symbolism art are symbol as a means of visual communication. The rise of abstract art, in particular, has tended to focus our attention upon the work as a thing in itself, wholly identified with the art process. Besides that, any art which can described as symbolist must necessarily reject such an attitude. Symbolism was both an artistic and a literary movement that suggested ideas through symbols and emphasized the meaning behind the forms, lines, shapes, and colors (The Art Story, 2016). Behind those elements of art there is always something else, another realm, another order of meaning. According to Moréas (n.d.), symbolism was symbolists thought that art should express more truths which can only be indirectly accessed, using metaphorical imagery and suggestive forms containing symbolic meaning. Besides that, symbolism art until now still elusive, but for the observation from researcher symbolism art is like using the principal of art such as form, line, texture, colour and shapes to represent the concept or idea of an artwork. According to "Symbolism" (2016), most of the work by artist in Symbolism is related or emphasis on feeling, ideas, emotion, and subjectivity rather the realism. Symbolism

artist belief that artist's power to reveal truth, because of that their work are personal and express their own ideologies.

### 2.1.1 Types of Symbolism

Symbolism art is using an object or a word to represent an abstract idea. Every action, person, place, word, or an object can have a symbolic meaning. Beside, artists can also using symbolism to express their feeling, emotional or certain mood, rather than just blatantly saying it ("Example of Symbolism", n.d)

#### 2.1.1.1 Symbolism in literature

According Saaris (2015), Symbolism in literature is something that can represent something else. Symbolism in a literature can transform the work into more richness, vivid and also make deeper meaning to the work. Besides, in a literature symbolism can also help to describe the work be more attract.

#### 2.1.1.2 Metaphors

Sheridan (2004) stated that, the mean of metaphors is visual or auditory. Metaphors as symbolism is use to compares two different item but actually it do have something in common. In metaphor, there is a deeper meaning or multiple meaning to a word. This makes it an example of symbolism. For example, "Life is a roller-coaster" this is symbolic because it indicates that in our life there will be ups and downs at every moment of our growing process.

### 2.1.1.3 Allegory as symbolism

Garcia (2016) proposed that allegory in art is related to visual work in which the literal work, for instance, the figures in a painting, stand for an idea that suggests a deeper or parallel meaning. The word allegory is originated from the Greek words which mean “other” and “to speak in public.” Apart from that, allegory is sometimes a work of art that communicated through the use of symbolic figures or other symbols. The conjunction of the allegorical figures or symbols with other elements in the work will occur in the mind of the viewer and subsequently pass on a meaning beyond the literal representation.

Allegory is commonly being used in artistic representation. For example, statues of “Justice” is the allegorical symbol that is frequently used in work. The abstract idea is illustrated by a robed woman which is blindfolded, symbolizing impartiality and justice for anyone seeking it. She holds a pair of scales symbolized that the justice entails weighing the facts and evidence before can make a fair conclusion.

### 2.1.1.4 Symbolism in poetry

Poetry is one of the literary art form which correlated with a whole array of ideas and emotions. Many poets in the far and near history have integrated their political views and their personal opinion through the use of poetry and this trend continues. In general, poems about life have set off the interests of many people from all over the world and this also continues to happen through poetry today. Many poems in art have also been composed to portray the feeling one gets from taking in a particularly stunning piece of

artwork. The creation of art through poetry can bring a sense of self accomplishment and pride to the poetry creator besides can set free of many worries of everyday life. A main concern that people may have when it comes to the art of poetry is the source of ideas. It is critical to become conscious of the ideas for visual art and poetry can come from virtually any place or past experiences. Creating art through poetry doesn't needful to think very hard or rack the brain to find the best words to describe any particular thing but it should flow naturally from the feeling at any particular moment in time. Encompassed in the nature could be a great way to get a feel for poetry about life. It all depends on how you express yourself best. By thinking in such a way that how your world is different from that of others can be a good way to do in order to find an idea to create poetry or art and just run with it ("Poetry is an Art Form" 2016).

## 2.2 What is Chinese tradition

Tradition is the existing knowledge that had lasted for a long time, passed from our ancestors. For a tradition to last, it has to be passed on from older people to the young generation. Tradition contributes a sense of comfort and belonging among the social. Besides that, tradition reinforces values of faith, personal responsibility, strong work ethic and the value of being selfless. Furthermore, tradition serves as an avenue for creating lasting memory of our ancestors to our generation and next (Temple, 2010).

Chinese tradition has included religion, language, food, traditional art and celebration. China has been a multi-religion country since the ancient times. For example,