

## VISUAL CONSERVATION OF PAGAN MELANAU CULTURAL ART FORM AND ITS PRACTICES

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This project focuses on the collection of information and visual especially about the cultural objects of Pagan Melanau in Sarawak by using visual ethnography method. This is extremely important because a large part of the Pagan Melanau cultural objects such as 'bilum', 'sariheng' and 'rabung' are currently extinct or nearly extinct. Apart from collecting data and visual documentation, the research will also focus on the history and cultural rituals of Pagan Melanau itself. This project focuses primarily on the study of cultural objects and its current development in the Melanau community from researcher observer's point of view, following several site visits to Dalat and Mukah covering Kampung Telian Tengah, Kampung Klid, Kampung Medong, and Kampung Plajau where rituals of paganism are still practiced. The findings were obtained through visual ethnographic methods to assess the effectiveness of visual analysis in ethnographic research and study the relationship between behavior and visual observation at the site. It is hoped that this research provides an opportunity for all to see the possibilities that could be explored in preserving the dying art form of the Pagan Melanau community. In conjunction with Universiti Malaysia Sarawak and Majlis Adat Istiadat Sarawak, this project aims to create a foundation for further investigation, exploration, and visual conservation of cultural objects in Sarawak.

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Figure 1: Two remaining 'Bilum' carvers from Kampung Klid, Dalat.



Figure 2: The making process of 'Rabung', one of the cultural objects in Kaul Festival at Kampung Klid, Dalat