

# Characteristic and Categorization of Monoprint's Among Local Artists in Malaysia

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## ABSTRACT

Monoprint is part of the technique that well established in printmaking. The characteristic and categorization of monoprint is easily recognized as a single output and different with the edition that usually created through other medium such as silkscreen, etching, engraving and others. Based from the current and previous studies that related with characteristic and categorization of monoprint, which created by local visual artists in Malaysia need more further detail information and introduction compared to the other develop countries that were established their monoprint medium. Therefore, the objective of this research is to study characteristic of monoprint artwork that explore by printmaker artists in Malaysia and to categorize the selected artworks, in order to recognize the monoprint artwork through their characteristic. This study will begin by selected artworks that show the specific monoprint characteristic that explore by printmaker artists in Malaysia. This study will be conducted by several of monoprint characteristic and categorization from experts. The results of the assessment there were 11 categorizations from two main monoprint characteristic which is creative expression and innovation technique. This study will deliver a proper instruction, guideline, knowledge, and differentiate in between edition and single expression through monoprint. This study has shown that local artist consists of different background and that local artists tried to come out with new approach and dimension in produced monoprint artworks in Malaysia.

**Keywords:** Monoprint, Characteristic, Categorization, Local Artist

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Printmaking recognized as an alternative medium in creating artworks. There are four main methods of printmaking, which is a process of duplicating images using printing. Firstly, the relief technique, where raised surfaces are inked and pressed onto paper. Secondly, the intaglio method, where incised (lowered surfaces) are inked and then print on paper. Thirdly, the stencil technique, where holes allow ink to pass through a surface onto paper (Robertson & Gormley, 1987). However, in the case of monoprint technique, the process is accomplished by producing multiples of the same pieces, which is called a print. Each print produced is not considered a "copy" but rather is regarded as an "original". Monoprint means the producing a single print of an image. It is possible with other forms of printmaking, such as etching, engraving, silkscreen, lithography and lino printing that producing an edition of identical images (Palmer, 1975). A monoprint is an individual impression, simplest and at least modified form of printmaking; such as has great appeal.

Monoprint technique was established in Europe around 1650. At that time the two artists had exploited the monoprint technique was Giovanni Benedetto Castiglione from Italy (the artwork kept in the Royal Library, Windsor Castle and the British Museum) and Edgar Degas from France is the artist who produced hundreds of monoprint artworks in 1875. However, In Malaysia, monoprint was developed since 1960 that monoprint has drawn up and gained good response from the artists of oil paint era that thought the medium monoprint have potential and easy to produce images on paper. The monoprint technique becomes popular among Malaysian oil painter artists in the 60s when the painter's exhibition from Bangkok, and Praphan Srisonta the exhibited prints in Kuala Lumpur in 1963. And the painters that involved such as Seah Kim Joo, TK Karan and many others (Beng, 1974).

The characteristics and categorization of monoprint have proposed a structure that based on the theoretical framework, which collective from the twelve (12) expertises in the field of monoprint from international and local. For instance, the names experts were Johnson (1956), Caballero (1974), Beng (1974), Palmer (1975), Rhein (1976), Mohamed (2007), Grabowski and Fick (2009), Agda (2014), Suseno (2014), and recently Abdullah and Legino (2016). The study has taken an expert opinion through a timeline from 1956 to 2016.

The methodology for this study was from an observation that includes three phases about monoprint characteristic, selected artworks of local monoprint and categorization to recognize the monoprint artwork through their characteristic. This study will contribute to the various platform either the curator, printmakers, artists, art educators across the country was able to recognize the characteristics and categorization of monoprint artworks by local artists.

### 1.1 Problem Statement

**Only-** Look in historical and technical Aspect. These issues have been discussed by Bahaman (1997) in which they also acknowledge the limitation of their research.

**Did not-** Address the aspect of local monoprints characteristic and categorization. It suggested by Ishak (2012), Karim and Muhammad (2015) and Mohamed (2007) that consequent should look into these aspects.

**Limited-** Studies and guidelines related characteristic and categorization of local monoprint. Previous researches have concentrated only misconceptions in the classification of technique and medium of local monoprint artworks by Mazlan (2011).

**Intention-** Focus on the monoprint characteristics to be able to categorize the monoprint artworks that produced by local artist in Malaysia.

### 1.2. Research Objectives

1. To study the characteristic of monoprint artwork that explore by local artists in Malaysia.
2. To categorize and recognized the selected monoprint artwork through their characteristic.

### 1.3 Research Questions

1. What is the specific monoprint characteristic that explore by local artists in Malaysia?
2. How the creative expression and innovation technique supports to categorize monoprint through monoprint characteristics?

## 1.4 Scope of Study

The scope of this study focuses on the key elements contained in monoprint characteristics and categorization of the local artworks in Malaysia. This research focuses on two characteristics of monoprint namely creative expression and innovation technique. Creative expressions there are five categorize such as like painting, drawing, colour, interesting medium and single output. Innovation technique there are six categorize such as Flat Surface, Liquid Material, Transfer Image, Printed Images, Printing Technique and Different with others printmaking medium. The characters will be used to categorize and analyse monoprint which includes every one of the art-work by 11 local artists. The artists involved are as Hamidi Ahmad Bashar, Faizal Suhif, Wong Siew Lee, Phoon Poh Wai, Tajudin Ismail, Tay Hooi Keat, Azizan Paiman, Raduan Man, Ishak Ramli and Zarinah Mashudi.

Researchers have gained relevant monoprint artworks of visual data across Malaysia through five public galleries such as the National Visual Arts Gallery (NVAG), Galeri Petronas, Penang State Museum, Shah Alam Gallery and Tuanku Nur Zahirah (GESTURZ). Three private galleries such as Segaris Gallery, eni Mutiara Gallery and the main lobby of The New Straits Times Press (M) Berhad (NSTP). The three artists' collection is a Raduan Man, Faizal Suhif and Azizan Paiman. Also, researchers have used a journal and reference library in the past, current and related studies from 1950 to 2016 to obtain comprehensive information through visual observation and collection of relevant data and monoprint in Malaysia. The aim of this study is to investigate the characteristic of monoprint that produced from the local artist from 1958 to 2016.

## 1.5 Significance of the Study

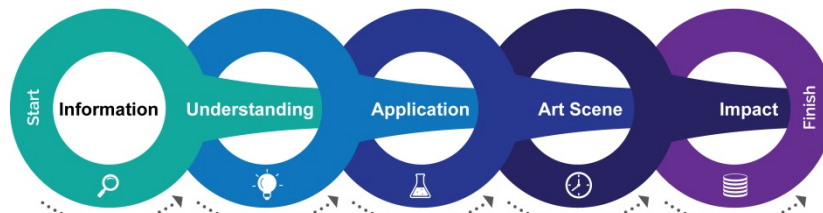


Figure 1: Research process of significance of the study

The findings from this research hopefully respond to provide new information and guidelines on the characteristics and categorization of monoprint. This finding is to provide knowledge and awareness to the curator, students, artists, art educators and artists across the country related interest to monoprint characteristics. Monoprint characteristics desirable are given a clear understanding as monoprint a relevant technique to be used by local artists to produce artworks of contemporary art. The findings of this research are significant nowadays considered as a creative force capable of creating and developing ideas for local artists when to exploit the monoprint technique. These findings also help the next generation in Malaysia to identify the characteristic of monoprint with simple and clear. Researchers also hope that this study will have a positive impact on the development of printmaking in Malaysia from 1958 until now. Indirectly, raise the prestige of the local printmaking to improved level.

## 2. RELATED LITERATURE REVIEW

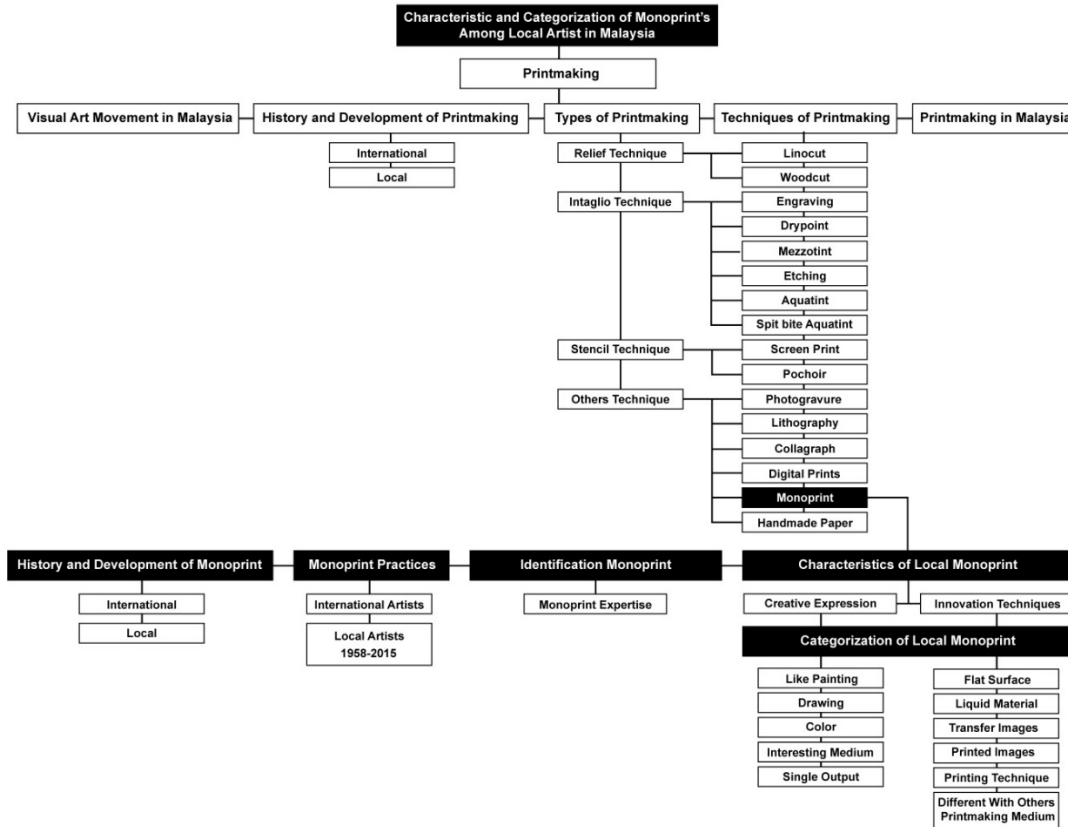


Figure 2: Flowchart process of related literature review

### 2.1. Visual Art Movement in Malaysia

Printmaking is an artistic process that local artist to use medium and technique that can be chosen for creating artwork. Besides painting and sculpture, printmaking is one of the three main disciplines in fine art. Manan and Noor (2016) conclude that printmaking was also linked to the historical and cultural development of Malaysia's history of art. Thus, it should be viewed in parallel with other disciplines as to understand the Malaysian contemporary art. Among the pioneer's artists in printmaking practices in Malaysia such as Tan Tee Chie, Abdul Latif Mohidin, Lee Joo For, Seah Kim Joo, T. K. Sabapathy, Long Thien Shieh, Ibrahim Ismail, Lee Kian Siang and More.

### 2.2. History and Development of Printmaking

In the glossary of art and meaning of art, which includes the human abilities drawing, painting and sculpture created carve and produced by talent and skills. Printmaking is a process works or producing of images same repeatedly. The outcome of printmaking artworks requires a specific process, technique and materials to produce the artwork. The replication of printmaking called edition. Ragans (2005) assert that the printmaking is a process in which an artist repeatedly transfers an original image from one prepared surface to another. Paper is a common surface to which the printed image is transferred. The impression created on a surface by the printing plate is called a print. The techniques of printmaking have four techniques such as relief technique, intaglio technique, stencil technique and other technique.

### 2.3. Type of Printmaking

The type of printmaking involves the creation of a master plate from which multiple images are made from various techniques. Typically, the artist prepares the printing plate by cutting, etching or drawing an image onto the plate. Ink is applied (in a variety of ways), and paper is

pressed onto the plate either by hand or by way of a hand-run printing press. The finished print is pulled from the plate. The types of printmaking, for example, linocut, woodcut, engraving, dry point, mezzotint, etching, aquatint, spit-bite aquatint, screen print, pochoir, photogravure, lithography, collagraph, digital prints, monoprint and handmade paper. Moreover, Linardić (2015) mention that a variety of printmaking techniques, with their specific procedures and numerous possibilities of expression, offers the artists an entire range of themes that motivate art practice to come up with and formalize their ideas. Moreover, this variety may encourage them to generate many possible solutions and develop visual forms of communication offered by types of printmaking.

#### **2.4. Technique of Printmaking**

For the past years, printmaking has grown and expanded at a furious rate. The clearest example of this increased activity is the dramatic change in popularity of the lithograph. Around the 1960s, through the Tamarind project and the opening of Universal Limited Art Editions, lithography was successfully resuscitated into an energetic and currently very lively art form because the enormous possibilities of experimentation with and application of new technology, printmaking has attracted many artists even those trained in other media. Despite this burst of activity, contemporary artists have not articulated a philosophy of printmaking, and this matter has been discussed by Van Laar (1980).

#### **2.5. Printmaking in Malaysia**

In Malaysia, art print on paper rather ordinary introduced. These are because of the absence of printmaking workshops such as "Lacouriere Atelier" in Paris and Tamarind in the United States where artists and Printmakers artwork exclusively to produce fine art prints regarding smoothness. In 1950, the British artist, Malaysia and Singapore used as an illustration woodcut prints to create a variety of functions such as posters, book illustrations, but also make it a particular political ideology propaganda network.

The first printmaking purchased by the National Art Gallery in 1959, which is a work of art produced by Lee Joo For proceedings in England to learn about printmaking. In 1963 the National Art Gallery added eight collections by purchasing works of art of printmaking art prints produced by four foreign artists as well as four other works produced by local artists namely T K Karan and Seah Kim Joo. The National Art Gallery has brought together about 18 works of art of printmaking starting from 1965 until 1970. Other foreign artists also donated eight art prints by Frank Sullivan. Besides, Peter Stuyvesant International Art Foundation also presented five Silkscreen art produced by famous artist Victor Vasarely. In a study titled The Development Guidelines in printmaking created by Ramli (2012) said, today, despite the complexity of the technology development and printmaking, printmaking artists are still struggling unsuccessfully with strong procedures to produce works of art. As a result, some of the printmaking artists have relied on their instincts and creativity to produce artwork.

#### **2.6. Definition of Monoprint**

Monoprint definition means "single edition". Technically monoprint is a smooth surface such as glass most commonly used to hold the ink smeared and put the paper on the surface of the ink to create an image. Monoprint called because after the process of printing an image on the surface of the glass made cannot print it again for the second and so on. Replicate the image, in the same way, is impossible. Therefore, monoprint referred to as the process produces only one edition. This fact agrees with an expert monoprint the Palmer (1975) describes that:

*Monoprint is a means of producing a single print of an image. It is possible with other forms of printing, such as etching, engraving, lithography and lino printing, a produce an edition of identical images.*

## **2.7. Characteristic of Monoprint**

The main characteristic of local monoprints is creative expression and innovation technique. Creative expression helps to make concepts more concrete, personalize abstractions, and affect attitudes by involving emotional as well as intelligent responses to human rights. Lusebrink (2004) suggest the application of creative expressions in brain imaging has expanded the understanding of the different functions and structures of the brain involved in information processing. The functions activated in emotional states, the formation of memories, and the processing of motor, visual, and somatosensory information. The relationship between the processes of art expressions and brain functions is approached from the viewpoint of the different thinking levels. The basic level of interventions with art media is through sensory stimulation. Visual feature recognition and spatial placement are processed by the ventral and dorsal branches of the visual information processing system. Innovation technique is defined simply as a "new idea, device, tools, material, technique or method". However, innovation technique in monoprint is often also viewed as the application of better solutions that meet new requirements, unarticulated needs, or existing process needs. This is skilled through more-effective products, processes, technologies, or models that are readily available to produce monoprint. Pace, Carù, and Cova (2017) argue while innovation is the outcome of a based process, 'innovating' is innovation in action, that is, it takes place within the normal art practices surrounding a new product or service. By engaging with a new technique, artists shape innovation. Thus, artists provide the final, essential stage in an innovation technique. Through a mixed technique can approach based on observation and introspection.

## **2.8. Categorization of Monoprint**

Grabowksi and Fick (2009) describe the "supposed that "monoprints are one of a kind, printed images. They not have been called "the painterly print" or "the printer's painting." Indeed, making a monoprint brings together ideas from both practices, as well as concern from drawing. Monoprints are also sometimes rating called monotypes. The two words are often used interchangeably, with monoprint type started in Europe since the 17th century, but there are some different views on who the artist who started this mono-printing technique".

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

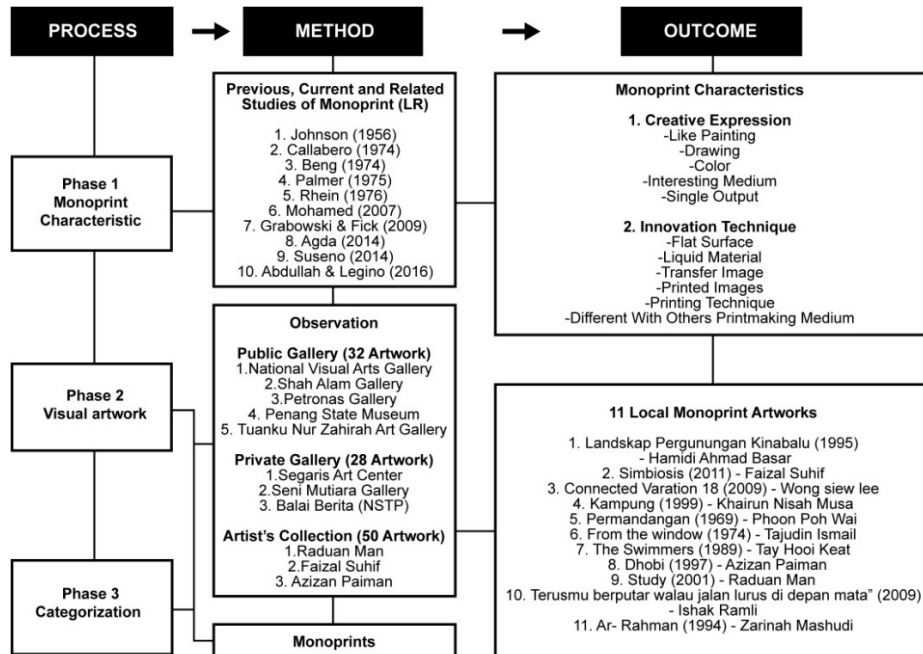


Figure 3: The methodology process for characteristic and categorization of monoprint's among local artists in Malaysia

#### 3.1. Research Site

Table 1 Data collection from 3 research site which is public gallery, private gallery and artist's collection.

1. Public Gallery					
Location	National Art Gallery	Shah Alam Gallery	Petronas Gallery	Penang State Museum	Tuanku Nur Zahirah Art Gallery
Quantity	15	3	3	4	7
Total	32 Local Monoprint Artworks				

2. Private Gallery		
Location	Segaris Art Center	Balai Berita, The News Straits Times Press (M)
Quantity	3	17
Total	28 Local Monoprint Artworks	

3. Artist's Collection		
Artists	Raduan Man	Azizan Paiman
Quantity	13	10
Total	50 Local Monoprint Artworks	



Table 2 Identification of monoprint characteristic.

No	Literature Review	Identification
1.	Johnson (1956)	Like Painting / Directness / Freedom / Spontaneity / Illusiveness / Traditional Print Medium / Artistic Expression
2.	Cabellero (1974)	Surface Printing / Sketch on Material / Liquid Material / Transfer Image
3.	Beng (1974)	Coloring / Impression Printing
4.	Palmer (1975)	Single Print / Individual Impression
5.	Rhein (1976)	Creative Process / Indirect or Direct of Produce Image
6.	Mohammed (2007)	Reprint / Single Work
7.	Grabowski & Fick (2009)	Printed Images / Printer's Painting / Drawing
8.	Agda (2014)	Printing Technique / Graphic Art / Flat Surface / Smooth / Not Easily Absorb / One Edition Only
9.	Suseno (2014)	Creative Process / One Edition / Like Painting
10.	Abdullah & Legino (2016)	Single Output / Represent the Individual Artwork / Different with Others Printmaking Medium / Transfer Creativity

Table 3 Check list categorization of monoprint characteristics and result for obtaining objective 2.

No	Monoprint Characteristic	Authors Timeline / Expertise								Remarks
		1 9 5 6	1 9 7 4	1 9 7 5	1 9 7 6	2 0 0 7	2 0 0 9	2 0 1 4	2 0 1 6	
1.	Like Painting/Printer's painting	/	/	/	x	x	/	/	x	Yes
2.	Directness/Indirect or direct of produce image	/	x	x	/	x	x	x	x	No
3.	Freedom/Spontaneity/ Illusiveness	/	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	No
4.	Traditional Print	/	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	No
5.	Artistic Expression/ Individual Impression/Represent the individual artwork/ Impression Printing	/	/	/	/	x	x	x	/	Yes
6.	Surface Print/Flate Surface	x	/	/	x	x	/	/	/	Yes
7.	Sketch on Material/Drawing	/	/	/	/	x	/	x	x	Yes
8.	Liquid Material	x	/	x	x	x	/	/	/	Yes
9.	Transfer Image/Transfer the creativity	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	Yes
10.	Coloring	/	/	x	x	x	/	/	/	Yes
11.	Single Print/ Single Work/One edition/Single output	/	x	/	x	/	x	/	/	Yes
12.	Interesting Medium	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	Yes
13.	Reprint	x	x	x	x	/	x	x	x	No
14.	Printed images	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	Yes
15.	Printing technique	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	Yes
16.	Graphic art	x	x	x	x	x	x	/	x	No
17.	Smooth	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	No
18.	Not easily absorb	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	No
19.	Different with others printmaking medium	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	Yes



#### 4. CHARACTERISTIC OF MONOPRINT

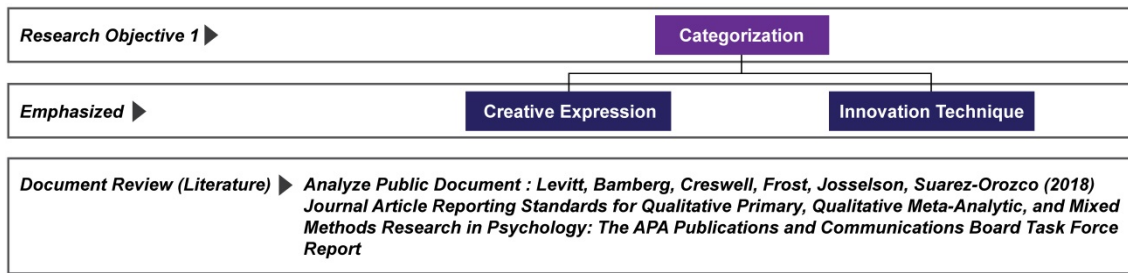


Figure 4: Finding of monoprint characteristic.

##### 4.1 Creative Expression

Creative expression can support to make concepts more concrete, personalize abstractions, and affect attitudes by involving emotional as well as intellectual responses to human rights. Although facilitators should feel comfortable using these techniques, they need not be accomplished artists themselves. These enriching techniques should not be restricted to children and or groups with limited literacy; adults, especially academics and professionals, often need ways to relate personally to human rights. It is because some participants may find non-intellectual methods unfamiliar, embarrassing, or even threatening, provide several choices of expression and be very careful to create a safe, non-judgmental situation. Although not monoprinting in the usual sense of the term, the idea in the section deals with the methods which may be used to obtain individual expression in various media. There is no doubt that there is a certain difficulty in controlling the result of some monoprint but the artworks are evidence of the possibilities of the medium in the hands of an intelligent and creative artists. The creative expressions there are five categorizations such as Like Painting, Drawing, Colour, Interesting Medium and Single Output.

##### 4.2 Innovation Technique

Innovation technique is defined simply as a "new idea, device, or method". However, innovation technique in monoprint is often also viewed as the application of better solutions that meet new requirements, unarticulated needs, or existing process needs. Theses accomplished through more-effective products, processes, technologies, or models that are readily available to produce monoprint. The term "innovation" can be defined as something original and more effective and, as a consequence, new, that "breaks into" the printmaking or monoprint. It is related to, but not the same as, invention. While a tools device is often described as an innovation, in art and other fields of practice and analysis, innovation is considered to be the result of a process that brings together various monoprint artworks. The Innovation technique there are six categorizations such as Flat Surface, Liquid Material, Transfer Image, Printed Images, Printing Technique and Different with others printmaking medium.

### 4.3 Categorization of Monoprint

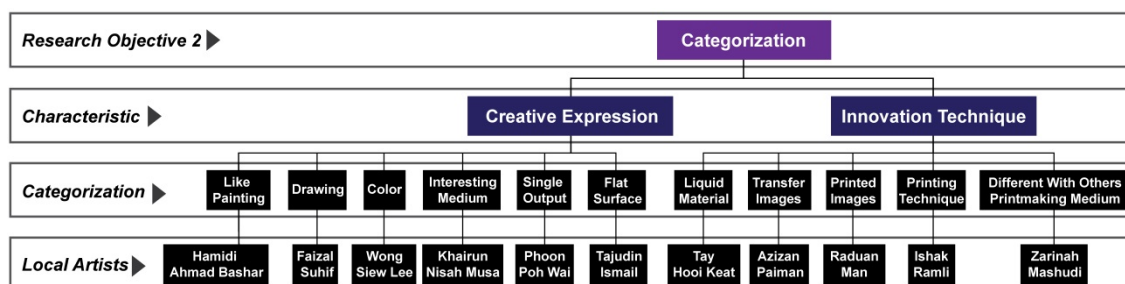


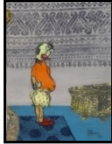

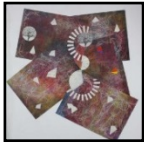



Figure 5: Finding of monoprint categorization by local monoprint artworks

Table 4 Categorization of selected artworks by local artist in Malaysia through Creative Expression.

No	Creative Expression	Monoprint Artworks	Artwork Details
1.	Like Painting		Hamidi Ahmad Basar “Landskap Pergunungan Kinabalu” (1995), Monoprint on wood, 126cm x 98cm, Permanent collection of Shah Alam Gallery, Selangor. The artwork retrieved from Shah Alam Gallery.
2.	Drawing		Faizal Suhif “Symbiosis” (2001), Monoprint, 11.8cm x 14.7cm, Artist’s collection. The artwork retrieved from artist’s collection by Faizal Suhif.
3.	Color		Wong Siew Lee “Connected Variation 18” (2009), Monoprint, 43cm x 69.5cm, Permanent collection of The New Straits Times Press (M) Berhad, Kuala Lumpur. The artwork retrieved from The New Straits Times Press (M) Berhad.
4.	Interesting Medium		Khairun Nisah Musa “Kampung” (1999) 63.5cm x 154cm, Permanent collection of Shah Alam Gallery, Selangor. The artworks retrieved from Shah Alam Gallery.
5.	Single Output		Phoon Poh Wai “Permandangan” (1969) Monoprint, 43cm x 78cm, Permanent Collection of National Visual Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur. The artwork retrieved from National Visual Art Gallery.

Table 5 Categorization of selected artworks by local artist in Malaysia through Innovation Technique

No	Innovation Technique	Monoprint Artworks	Artwork Details
1.	Flat Surface		Tajudin Ismail "From The Window" (1974), Monoprint, 47cm x 47cm, Permanent Collection of National Visual Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur. The artwork retrieved from National Visual Art Gallery.
2.	Liquid Material		Tay Hooi Keat "The Swimmers" (1989), Monoprint, 24cm x 33cm, Permanent collection of Petronas Gallery, Kuala Lumpur. The artwork retrieved from Petronas Gallery.
3.	Transfer Image		Azizan Paiman "Dhobi" (1997), Monoprint, 20.5cm x 15cm, Artist's collection. The artwork retrieved from artist's collection by Azizan Paiman.
4.	Printed Images		Raduan Man "Study" (2001), Monoprint, 36cm x 46cm, Artist's collection. The artwork retrieved from artist's collection by Raduan Man.
5.	Printing Technique		Ishak Ramli "Terusmu Berputar Walau Jalan Lurus di Depan Mata" (2009) 173cm x 173cm, Permanent collection of Tuanku Nur Zahirah Gallery, Shah Alam. The artwork retrieved from Tuanku Nur Zahirah Gallery.
6.	Different with Others Printmaking Medium		Zarinah Mashudi "Ar-Rahman" (1994), Monoprint on paper, 105cm x 82cm, a permanent collection of Tuanku Nur Zahirah Gallery, Shah Alam. The artwork retrieved from Tuanku Nur Zahirah Gallery.

## CONCLUSION

To sum up, this study is an investigation in how to recognize the monoprint characteristic in Malaysia with a particular regard to the artworks that created by local artists (printmakers) in this country. The ironical sources of ideas and expression had characterized the contemporary printmaking artworks has not been fully exploited. Although the artists are very selective with the new trends and sensitive to the media art-interventions on the production of their artworks and many artists are still carried away by strong currents conventional printmaking techniques. This research has involved an examination of monoprint artworks from several selected artworks, which analysed the creative expression as to helps the artists in developing ideas, emotions and concepts in their artworks. Indeed, the monoprint issues in Malaysia, it was stated that there are difficulties in identifying the characteristics monoprint. Therefore, the inquiry into selected artworks has focused on the two most important characteristics, which namely through creative expression (five features) and innovation techniques (six features) are represented in local monoprint artworks. The classification of selected monoprint artworks has helped to establish how monoprint medium have been explored and construct artistic artworks. However, in Malaysia, most contemporary printmaking artists bring the medium to be viewed and highlighted to the audience that society in Malaysia. There are research studies entirely clear on

some monoprint artworks in Malaysia. The gap through this study is the weakness of the understanding about the monoprint technique as a creative medium and therefore further detailed documentation on Malaysia's monoprint need to be established. The contemporary printmaking in Malaysia seems not well-promoted in term of their character included the form and content of the artworks and even the monoprint medium. The goal of this research is to propose a solution and an emphasis on the form and content of monoprint artworks it also to investigate the character monoprint's artworks in Malaysia that produced from our local artists since 1958 to 2016 that also embedded the Malaysia's identity.

There were structured of appropriate methods was choose as to meet the objectives of this study. This study began with gathered related data and identifying related monoprint artworks. Then, the formulation of monoprint characteristics that determined as a key factor and stated in the categorization of monoprint artworks. The monoprint artworks show how few artists in this country use a medium of monoprint as a new medium and sometimes the combination of the other medium as to produce creative artworks. On the hand, it has been shown that the monoprint technique in the Contemporary Malaysian printmaking can be attributed to alternative or innovative printmaking technique. Foremost, this study was an important attribute in monoprint artworks compilation that shows the local artists in this country was up-to-date with the printmaking evolution. This study also provides deeper explanations about the term of monoprint that significantly correlated with the artworks

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