

## **Essence of 'Tekat' in Sculpture**

**Ahmad Fauzi Amir Hamzah, Megat Abdul Karim Megat Harun, Ramlan Abdullah Rafeah Legino**

Fine Art Department, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Shah Alam 40000, Selangor, Malaysia

[ahmadfauzi@uitm.edu.my](mailto:ahmadfauzi@uitm.edu.my), [megatkarim@gmail.com](mailto:megatkarim@gmail.com), [ramla278@uitm.edu.my](mailto:ramla278@uitm.edu.my), [rafeahl@uitm.edu.my](mailto:rafeahl@uitm.edu.my)  
Tel: 0164806084:

### **Abstract**

This project aims to discover the essential element of *Tekat* that expands into the creation of sculpture. This artwork's valuable visual data and accompanying literature have been highlighted. The researcher employed paper mache and weaving techniques in this study to create unique artwork. In particular, paper mache and weaving techniques were used to visualise *Tekat*'s essence. Additionally, the findings from this project will be used to create a collection of sculptures that capture the soul of *Tekat*. This project demonstrates how the craft of paper mache and weaving sculptures represent the essence of *tekat*.

**Keywords:** Tekat, Paper Mache, Sculpture

eISSN: 2398-4287 © 2022. The Authors. Published for AMER ABRA cE-Bs by E-International Publishing House, Ltd., UK. This is an open-access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>). Peer-review under responsibility of AMER (Association of Malaysian Environment-Behavior Researchers), ABRA (Association of Behavioral Researchers on Asians), and cE-Bs (Centre for Environment-Behavior Studies), Faculty of Architecture, Planning & Surveying, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia.  
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.21834/ebpj.v7iS19.3950>

### **1.0 Introduction**

Tekat is a gold-thread embroidery technique from Malaysia. Tekat is sometimes called suji or sulaman timbul. Abdullah Yusof (2011) says the Malacca Sultanate began using Tekat as royal furnishings and clothes in the early 15th century. The Chinese Emperor gave King Melaka a gift. Tekat is a banned garment, according to Azni Hamzah (2016). Even a wealthy person should not wear it without the king's permission. This ban relates to devaraja. Hindus view the king as having sovereignty over religion, customs, and arts and crafts. According to Mulyadi (2015), *tekat* expanded outside the palace when the younger generation began making it a hobby. This needlework was started by Malay girls, especially those who wished to get married, as a sofa decoration, pillow, bed sheets, fans, shoes, etc. Sinead Hogan (2015) says sculptures are three-dimensional artworks. The sculpture is made from permanent materials such as stone, metal, clay, ceramic, or wood. According to Liza Marziana (2016), Malaysians have unfavourable early opinions of sculpture. Sculpture became unfashionable and scarce because Islamic morals opposed its worship aspects. When the sociocultural shift impacted visual arts, sculpture's shape changed, spreading bad perception. This study explored Tekat as the art's essence. The researcher will observe Tekat learn specifics analysis. In addition, relevant material was generated to understand Tekat's art technique. Will Kurtz and Joel S. Allen are the artists researched. Other researchers include Ruzaiqa Omar and Anthony Lau. Will Kurtz and Joel S Allen use Tekat techniques like paper mache and hand-wrapped yarn in their artwork. The researcher will also use visual data to generate artwork as a new medium to develop an original body of work. Researchers will develop a new way to create artwork using wire structure in 2 layered paper to give artwork volume through the paper mache technique. Using this technique, researchers will study Tekat's essence and worth through sculpture. Contemporary artists use this method. This project uses Tekat technology to make a sculpture.

eISSN: 2398-4287 © 2022. The Authors. Published for AMER ABRA CE-Bs by E-International Publishing House, Ltd., UK. This is an open-access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>). Peer-review under responsibility of AMER (Association of Malaysian Environment-Behavior Researchers), ABRA (Association of Behavioral Researchers on Asians), and cE-Bs (Centre for Environment-Behavior Studies), Faculty of Architecture, Planning & Surveying, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia.  
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.21834/ebpj.v7iS19.3950>



## 2.0 Literature Review

The origin and use of Tekat are based on a thread, with gold thread at its core, and date back to the advent of the "Baba-Nyonya" people in the 15th century. In the palace, according to Winstedt, it is both a garment and an item of equipment (1947). Tekat must be seen and tested before being applied to the velvet's surface. Because Tekats are made by hand, the procedure takes a long time to complete. In addition to Perak, the states of Selangor Klang, Pahang Pekan and Johor with Muar are well-known for Tekat, according to Azahar Harun (2016). In Royal City, there is a synergy between these sectors. It is necessary to have many palace cutters on hand at all times, responsible for sealing royal family equipment, jewellery, and four clothes. Tuji Timbul is the alternate name for this kind of art, also known as Tekat. "To do something repeatedly or in succession" is the literal meaning of the Old Malay term "tuji." Float or appear is the etymology of the term timbul. After the task is completed, this technique is given a name. Extensively covering all of the paper's surface with threads after each pass. According to Saemah Yusof, the gold thread is wrapped around the paper (2016)

It is typical in Malaysia to see several different forms of Tekat, including Tuji Tekat and Gubah Tekat, as well as the less common varieties of Tekat Manik, Kelingkam, Bertindih, and Perada. Tuji Tekat or Timbul Tekat is the most often used Tekat. This Tekat is distinct from others in that it uses mempulur, or paper-cut structures, to create a pattern or theme. This is because of the mempulur, which makes Tekat Timbul a little stiff and unsuitable for usage on garments. As a result, it is increasingly frequently used in house furniture and décor. As Muliyadi Abdullah (2015) points out, Tekat is also practised on animal skins. Malay inhabitants in Johor Riau and South Johor are known for this. Additionally, in early India and China, there were far more embellishments and forms of motifs than the Arabs. Throughout the Perak Sultanate, Sultan Abdullah's official attire and standard equipment were manufactured from this Tekat.

## 2.1 Motif

Flora, wildlife, the cosmos, geometry, and calligraphy are examples of art motifs. Because of their specific traits, the floral motifs employed in Tekat art were selected. Plants' shapes and colours are one-of-a-kinds, motivating artists to create new works. Motifs were made from various plants, including flowers, leaves, shoots, and kudup. The motif can be depicted as a flower, with all of the plant's parts visible. Beautiful, fragrant, and strangely formed flowers are among the reasons some trees are chosen for planting. Pre-Islamic art incorporates animal and celestial imagery. In traditional Malay handicrafts, they were no longer utilised once the Malays converted to Islam. In the past, fish and birds were common motifs in traditional art, according to Muliyadi Abdullah (2015). Malay art depicts birds as symbols of strength and pride. Ancient Malay tales about birds, such as "Pertala Indera maha Sakti," have survived into folklore. Improving one's intellectual abilities is a fundamental part of Islam; hence, using geometric themes is appropriate. Much thought is required to appreciate the symbolism in these images completely. Craftsmen in the Malay archipelago have used geometric and floral themes to create work in accord with Malay culture and Islamic norms. In the archipelago, calligraphy is also on the rise. According to Saemah Yusof, it is employed as a decoration in the Quran and Malay needlework on woven fabrics such as songket and limar (2015).

### 2.1.1 Kekwa Motif

The employment of floral themes refers to the plants in the immediate vicinity. Creating natural themes, such as traditional themes, is linked to the goals of past societies, such as the value of consumption based on uniqueness, availability, medical resources and food supplies. Furthermore, the Kekwa flower has a unique shape and is visually appealing. This tree's blossom, the Kekwa, is what attracts our attention. Reproductive seed production is aided by using it as a reproductive tool. Stems, twigs, leaves, and other plant elements bloom concurrently with the flower buds (Farhana 2015). It is common for an image to serve as a starting point for developing a creative idea, according to Ismail Ibrahim (2009). A transformational process can be derived clearly and succinctly using the motif as a starting point. The more complex a form is, the simpler it can be reduced. According to him, another example of the theme is an iconic symbol with an iconic form that conveys meaning again. It is possible to see the characteristics of traditional Malay handcraft themes from the Malays' perspective.

## 2.2 Paper Mache

According to Dianne Van Der Reyden (1986), paper mache can be traced back to paper's invention. The first three-dimensional items were created in China, where the paper was invented during the Han Dynasty, which ruled from 202 BC to 220 AD. Anything made with a paper core has been labelled "paper mache" by the media. If misused, it could lead to misunderstandings. According to Dianne Van Der Reyden, there are many different ways to spell it, from French to English (1986). During the 17th and early 19th centuries, paper mache was followed by the fabrication of things made of paper fibre, which was widely employed as an architectural material in several different countries. Paper mache can be made in two different methods. Paper strips are glued together with adhesive, and then the paper pulp is made by soaking or boiling paper and adding glue. Traditional paper mache adhesive is a thick, cream-like mixture of water, wheat, or other starch. Polyvinyl acetate (PVA) or polyvinyl acetate can be used as an alternative adhesive if thinned to a similar texture. Finally, the researcher used the (PVA) adhesive and tissue paper to create a sculpture. A paper mache technique was used to create this sculpture based on the artwork titled Color Green (see Figure 2). The mediums of sculpture and drawing are combined in this piece. Since its inception, it has grown in complexity as sculpted birds and other animals, insects and vegetation, have been added.



The exquisite edifice looks to have sprung from the forest floor, meticulously put together by a seasoned hunter. According to James Morrison (2008), his artistic growth was greatly influenced by the highlands of Papua New Guinea, where he grew up. For example, his ability to blend the natural world with elements from mythology and fantasy. Figure 3 of the sculpture by Will Kurtz follows. Will Kurtz's artwork will feature paper mache elements. The collage of words and advertising in a spontaneous artistic manner is applied to the newspaper forms to reflect the mood and life of the individual. According to Will Kurtz (2021), this project focuses on creating sculptures that draw attention to the marginalised and overlooked members of society. Will Kurtz uses art to portray innocence and hilarity. Will Kurtz uses the paper mache technique to capture the facial expressions and characteristics of the figures he creates in newspapers.

### 3.0 Methodology

The subject of culture has been the focus of various investigations done by the researcher. In addition, the researcher decided to focus on Kekwa when composing the piece. Researchers also did some form-making analysis through drawing.

#### 3.1 Content

First and foremost, the researcher has chosen a cultural issue for his study. The researcher plans to commemorate his late grandmother's love of Tekat art by holding a celebration. The researcher's monologue was prompted to convey naturalist sentiments by the aesthetic worth of his grandmother's Tekat. Nature and humanity are intertwined in Tekat, which is demonstrated through kekwa and other traditional Malay flowers, such as flowers. It demonstrates the interdependence between humans and nature in today's society. Berhalus is used in Tekat's grandmother's Tekat, as well. It demonstrates my grandmother's skill in arranging and stitching the flower patterns in an intriguing arrangement. The researcher examined his grandmother Tekat and discovered the intelligence of the mempulur, a material that may be used in his artwork. In the paper mache process, layers of paper are layered on top of each other to form the golden thread's structure. One way of expressing this is by telling Prinsip Berlambang to look behind him and see who is on the other side of him, as it is written in the text. It inspires him to use his grandma Tekat as a source of inspiration.

#### 3.2 Subject

As depicted in Figure 8 by the researcher, Puteri Aminah Binti Megat Yusof, the successor to this Tekat, has been visited at Bota Kiri Perak. The Tekat belonged to the researcher's grandmother and was kept by her aunt for at least 20 years. The researcher was observing the Tekat art form during this visit. Depending on the Tekat's intended purpose, each tekak has a unique adornment. Using gold thread to weave the ornament is the most significant aspect of this art form. The velvet cloth, on the other hand, adds a striking element of modernity to this classic piece. The researcher learns how to create compositions suited for displaying decorations by paying close attention to the details. Other findings include intelligence in materials used to create artwork from mempulur or the golden thread's structural pattern. For the new form and new body of work, the kekwa flower motif in this Tekat has served as the researcher's inspiration. Paper mache, a glue and stitch method, was used to construct this edifice. The researcher gets inspired to create a piece of art based on this discovery.

The tekak produced by the researcher's grandmother is adorned with the theme of kekwa, according to the information provided by the respondent to the researcher.

The researcher's grandmother can easily manage kekwa due to their beautiful shape and easy-to-use design. Researchers are drawn to the flower motif because of the organic appearance of kekwa blooms. When examining this flower's symmetrical equilibrium, researchers can get inspiration from its form. The curved lines in the tekak give the subject rhythm and inspire researchers to think about building sculptures.

In light of Figure 10, There are layers of newspaper sheets glued together with glue using the paper mache technique of the researcher's grandmother. The researchers recognised the potential for this material to be used in the creation of art. The researcher interprets this substance as supporting the gold thread and emphasising its aesthetic value. Whatever is behind this content reflects on everything excellent that's ever happened. To find originality in one's work, researchers use the essence of tekak to gain ideas for making and inspiring techniques. Even though the subject matter is conventional, researchers believe this work of art belongs in the modern day.

#### 3.3 Visual Data

Will Kurtz created this paper mache piece based on figure 11. For his artwork, Will Kurtz employs this approach. Because of the paper's rawness, Will Kurtz is a fan of this technique. The title Evolution from Joel S Allen by Joel S Allen is based on figure 12 and was created by hand weaving. The patient had to be wrapped and dealt with specific technical challenges to employ this technique, demonstrating the level of discipline involved in art creation. In order to show the essence of Tekat's



paper mache and weaving techniques, the researcher chose both of these methods. By mimicking the kekwa flower motif in the tekak of the researcher's grandmother, the researcher will be able to construct the subject's form.

### 3.4 Form

The process of making an artwork begins with choosing the subject matter. The subject matter chosen is based on the observation of Tekak. Bunga Kekwa is the figure the researcher will exaggerate in drawing before applying to the sculpture making. After making a drawing, the researcher will choose the best form to select and define the form before starting. Several processes are implied in making this artwork. First, the researcher will set up the artwork's structure. Next, the researcher will apply the paper tape to the structure's body. For the next step, the researcher will use the paper mache technique and wrap the entire structure body. Finally, the researcher will use the knitting yarn to weave the artwork structure.

### 3.5 Ideation

First and foremost, the artwork was created by analysing the topic matter. Figures 13 and 14 depict the steps taken to create this piece. A researcher is studying the Kekwa flower. To begin, the researcher will have taken the photo and cropped the subject image on the computer with the photo app. The subject will be made larger to gain a better look into Tekak's personality. Researchers will learn more about their topic matter if they follow this procedure. The analytical drawing was done by the next researcher, looking for the form exaggerated in the artwork construction. In order to create a sculpture that can stand on its own, the researcher used a well-balanced composition. These sketches were drawn with graphite by the researcher. That is why: researchers intended to show the roughness of paper mache's character in a line. To put it another way, theoretical sketching is essential for the generation of creative concepts for art creation.

### 3.6 Process Making

Figure 15 shows how the researcher uses the wire to shape the construction following the drawing. The researcher uses cable ties to stick the joint to ensure that each construction is tight and robust during this process. As shown in figure 16, the structure masking process is carried out meticulously to ensure that the most concrete surfaces are obtained in good condition before utilising the paper mache technique. Figure 16: Detail of structure masking process Using a small brush and dissolving glue, the researcher placed layer upon layer of the paper mache technique into the masking framework, ensuring that it wrapped around the structure.

Figure 18 shows that the jute rope is used in this operation's weaving process. This application necessitates a lengthy process due to the difficulty of weaving correctly on top of the paper mache surface. This is due to the paper mache's rough surface, making it difficult to straighten the jute rope. Additionally, the researcher cuts the surplus jute rope that is not being utilised and stitches it to the surface of the paper mache with the three-second adhesive. When the process has been completed, the researcher will modify any parts that have been harmed during the process.

## 4.0 Results

### 4.1 Artwork1



Figure 19 Pangkal 1, 51x42cm, tissue, glue, wire and jute Rope 2021



Megat Abdul Karim Bin Megat Harun's Pangkal 1 is scheduled for release in 2021. (refer to figure 19). Paper mache was utilised to make the artwork, which had a finished size of 51x42cm. The term "paper mache" refers to using glue and paper as a building material. After a few hours, this approach is applied to the framed construction and hardens the frame. The kekwa flower's organic shape inspired this sculpture's organic appearance. The artwork uses white and light brown as its primary colours. This particular hue illustrates the contrast between the paper mache character and the weaving technique. In addition, the sculpture's uneven balance contributes to its originality. This sculpture depicts ancient people's reverence for the environment as an integral component of their daily lives. This piece of art shows how the artist's grandmother, a scholar, used the natural world as a source of inspiration when creating her Tekat art. The Pangkal 1 artwork includes a portion of the Kekwa flower. Finally, Tekat's soul is captured in the artwork.

#### 4.2 Artwork 2



Figure 22 Pangkal 4, 37x32 cm, tissue, glue, wire and jute Rope 2021

Megat Abdul Karim Bin Megat Harun's Pangkal 4 is scheduled to be released in 2021 (refer to figure 22). The artwork, which measured 81x39 cm, was made using the paper mache method. This sculpture's organic nature was evident in its design. This sculpture's shape is oval-shaped. The artist's primary focus is the Kekwa Flower. The weaving technique that creates the melodic line in this sculpture is the focus of attention here.

Additionally, the sculpture's rhythm gives lovely motion to the eyes of its viewers. The spectator will appraise the sculpture's high aesthetic worth by gazing at it from various perspectives based on the viewer's interpretation of this sculpture. As a result, the value of tradition in this work cultivates a new way of thinking toward the audience and generates current concepts, even though the subject matter is more old-fashioned.."

#### 5.0 Conclusion

This study's findings will depict Tekat's essence using paper Mache and weaving techniques. In addition, the findings of this study will help researchers develop a new artistic style and increase their level of originality. Additionally, the researcher hopes to improve his or her sculpting abilities by learning and practising new techniques like paper mache and weaving. Using these strategies, the researcher will be more open to seeing the material possibilities, and the viewer will also be able to recognise the technique more clearly. Additionally, the purpose is to find Tekat's essence. The researcher can gain valuable insight into Tekat, a weaving technique used to create freestanding sculptures, by gathering comprehensive data. The art of Tekat can be developed through new and modern styling without sacrificing its original character through the use of new ideas and techniques. It is possible to spread the word about tekak art by celebrating it in many forms. Finally, the researcher expects that by carrying out this investigation, these concepts and methods will be refined throughout time. To promote and popularise this form of art worldwide, the researcher wants to see Tekat's work honoured and further developed.

#### Acknowledgement

The authors would like to thank the College of Creative Arts, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Shah Alam, Malaysia, for the funding and support for the writing workshop and ReNeU UiTM, for the publication incentive provided through Program MEE 2.0.



## References

Figure 19 Pangkal 1, 51x42cm, tissue, glue, wire and jute Rope 2021

Figure 22 Pangkal 4, 37x32 cm, tissue, glue, wire and jute Rope 2021

Zakaria, I. (2012). Islam dan falsafahnya dalam kebudayaan Melayu. *Jurnal Hadhari: An International Journal*, 91-108.

Azahar Harun(2016) Personification in Marketing Communication: Case Study of Malaysian Brands. Design & Cultural Heritage 3rd ISME International Colloquium 2016, 27 & 28 December 2016, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Melaka.

Sinead Hogan(2015) What Is Sculpture. IMMA IRISH Museum And Modern Art, Institute of Art Design and Technology

Hussin, H., Hussin, H., Abu Mansor, S., Omar, R., Ismail, H., & Hassan, A. (2009). Seni, Seni Hias, Seni Reka, Reka Bentuk Dan Estetika Daripada Persepsi Umum Dan Orang Melayu: General And Malay Perception Of Art, Decorative Art, Art Design, Design And Aesthetics. *Jurnal Pengajian Melayu (JOMAS)*, 20(1), 82–98. Retrieved from <https://ejournal.um.edu.my/index.php/JPM/article/view/9669>

Rohaitulraha Abdul Rahman( 2016) Katalog Pameran Solo Ruzaika Omar Basaree, Simbiosis Keharmonian Seni Tradisional dan Seni Kontemporari, Balai Seni Negara

Yusof, Saemah and Mahamood, Mulyadi (2015) *Seni sulaman tekat tradisional dalam tekstil Melayu / Saemah Yusof and Mulyadi Mahamood*. In: ICOMHAC2015 eproceedings, 16-17 Disember 2015, Century Helang Hotel, Pulau Langkawi.

Abindinhazir, Z., Hashim, A., & Hanafi, H. (2019). Pengaruh gaya seni barat dalam arca Anthony Lau (1933-2016). *KUPAS SENI*, 7, 49-63. <https://doi.org/10.37134/kupasseni.vol7.6.2019>

Nadzirah Rahmat (2017) *Prestasi dan pencirian bunga kekwa (Chrysanthemum morifolium Ramat) di tanah rendah*. Universiti Malaysia Sabah. (Unpublished)