

The Development of Guidelines in Printmaking

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ABSTRACT

This paper reports a study which aimed to produce useful guidelines for producing artwork for printmaking artist. Employing the content analysis approach as the main research method, the study develops printmaking guidelines for artwork which consists of two critical components, namely definition and characters. The definition components is further broken down into "matrix", "transferring" and "by product" while the character components are divided into "multiple", "duplication" and "mass product". The developed guidelines should be useful to not only contemporary printmaking artist but also higher learning institution and the general public.

1. Introduction

Today, despite of the advancement and sophistication of the printmaking technologies, the printmaking artists are still struggling with the unavailability of solid guidelines for producing artwork. As a result of that, some printmaking artists have been dependent upon their own instinct and creativity in producing artworks. Others would be heavily relying or referring to the 'winner' or 'champion' in the printmaking industries. It is because of this reason, the printmaking artist have become very anxious in finding new ways and possibilities, termed as alternative printmaking. Unlike the traditional printmaking, the alternative printmaking is seen to shed new lights and insight, bringing all brand new spectrum and manifesto in the world of artwork production. As noted in the literature, the definition of printmaking is always open to redefinition and reexamination so as to search for another meaning in interpretation [1]. Such effort is also seen critical in ensuring that printmaking will and always be relevant with the contemporary art. In the context of

Malaysia, several attempts have been made to address this gap by researchers, however, they are dwarfed for not having theoretical grounding [2]. To this effect, this paper reports a study which aimed to produce useful guidelines for producing contemporary artwork for printmaking artist.

2. Literature Review

A. Overview of Printmaking

Printmaking has a very wide definition. Understanding its definition is important for understanding the language and the guideline of printmaking. In essence, the term 'print' conveys the idea of impressing a design or image, of transferring it from one surface to another. [3]. Figure 1 below presents the language used for defining the term "printmaking". The main criteria for show differentiate between art of printmaking and others are the design on top of the block, by product, and "the language of printmaking" which is the process of transferring.

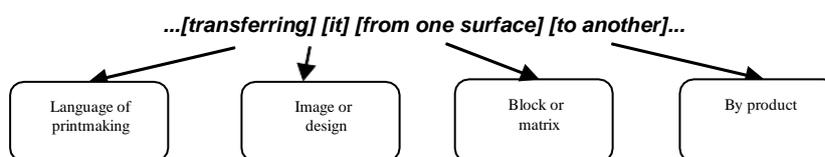


Figure 1: Printmaking Definition

There are few elements that should or must exist in printmaking based on the traditional movement as depicted in Figure 2 [3]. Melot explained about the elements in printmaking; a design or pattern for show the subject and the

content; a plate or block is a must in a process of making artwork; and a more pliant ground on which it is to be impressed for producing by-product base on mark making.

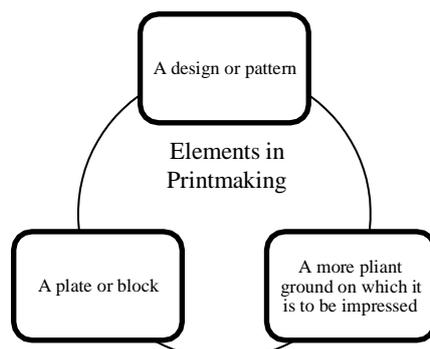


Figure 2: Elements in Printmaking

Figure 3 illustrates the character that should appear in printmaking [3]. Melot proposed the printmaking character is light and ready handling. The second component of character in printmaking is the possibility of duplication and the third component should changes hand easily when buyers decide to possess the art of printmaking from seller. Other component is it can be lends to industrial production and can be multiplied and distributed. Melot argued that characters that he identified in

printmaking are appropriate towards mass production of artworks [3]. It is for this reason, the researcher argue that the character guidelines as suggested by Melot [3] are appropriate to be used for the development of guidelines in printmaking. Hence based on these characters and coupled with the definitions and elements in printmaking as identified by Melot [3], printmaking evaluation criteria as discussed in subsequent is proposed.

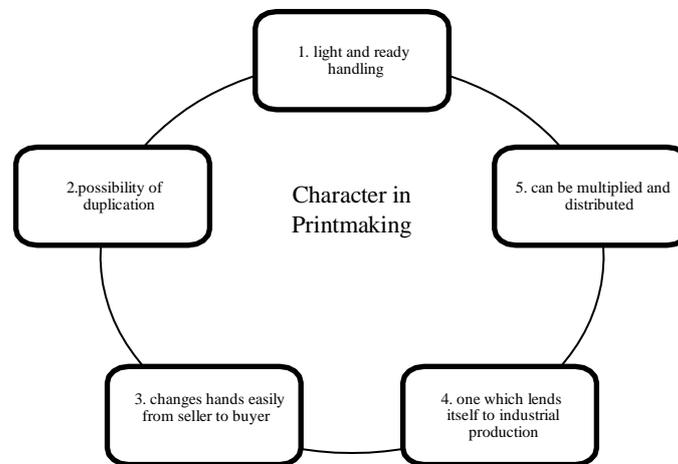


Figure 3: Character in Printmaking

B. Research Framework

According to Weisberg [4], when it comes to printmaking research, one should identify critically on the language used in printmaking, hence based on the discussion on definition of printmaking, elements of printmaking and character of printmaking, the printmaking evaluation criteria as showcased in Figure 4 is developed. The framework consists of six stages, namely (i) block or matrix (ii) design (iii) duplication (iv) multiples (v) by product and (vi) mass product. The first stage in

the printmaking evaluation criteria is the block or matrix whether tangible or intangible. The second stage of producing printmaking artwork is the design making on the top of block or matrix. The third stage is the block should have possibility to duplicate and the fourth stage is the printmaking medium enough endurance for process of multiplication. The fifth stage is the block can be producing a by-product which is mark from block or matrix. The last stage of evaluation process is the by-product should full-fill the mass product criteria.

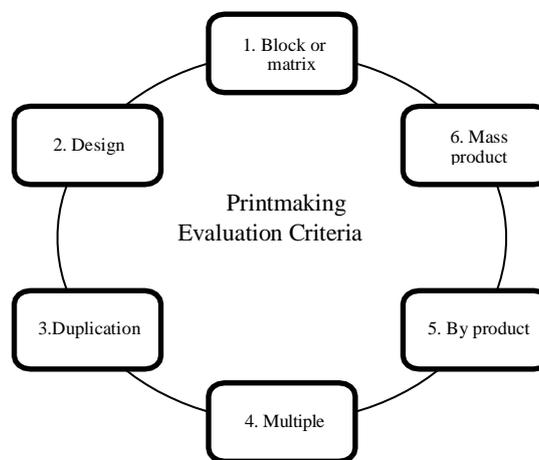


Figure 4: The Printmaking Evaluation Criteria

3. Research Methodology

The design of the study consists of several activities. The first activity involved literature survey which was conducted with the aim of identifying the research gap and formulating research objectives. The next stage of the study involved the development of evaluation criteria which used as the main research framework. Based on the literature review, the

framework as shown in Figure 5 was developed. The framework was later used against the data collected from six festivals and exhibition focuses on printmaking as show in Table I. Content analysis was employed in analyzing the data [5]. Following Feldman, the content analysis involved four steps of analyzing which are description, analysis, interpretation, and judgement [6]. The result of the analysis

was later validated by an independent expert in printmaking. Based on the developed evaluation criteria and the findings obtained from the assessment exercise, a guideline for

printmaking in artwork was developed and later applied in artwork.

TABLE I. FESTIVALS AND EXHIBITION ANALYZED

Year	Name of Festival	Category
2010	Philagrafika	International
2009	Samudera	Local
2009	Go Block	Local
2007	Okir	Local
2005	British In Print, Print In Malaysia	Local
1995	Alternative Printmaking	Local

4. Results

Table II below displays the results of the content analysis done by the researcher upon the six festivals and exhibition based on the developed evaluation criteria discussed earlier. Four out of the six analyzed festivals and exhibition fully fulfilled all the six criteria as outlined in the framework. Specifically, the four festivals and exhibitions are *Philagrafika 2010* [7]; *Go Block 2009* [8]; *British In Print, Print In*

Malaysia 2005 [9] and *Alternative Printmaking 1995* [10]. The remaining two festivals which are *Samudera 2009* [11] and *Okir 2007* [12] only fulfilled two out of the six criteria evaluated. The researcher argue that, in these two festivals, the block or

matrix has been defined as by-product, hence inconsistency with the researcher’s expectation. That means, if the block has been defined as a by-product, the festival or exhibition does not have the process of duplication, multiplication, and mass production and hence marked as X in Table I. Following the analysis on the festival and exhibition, printmaking artwork by selected Malaysian artist was also analyzed using the developed framework and the results are shown in Table III. The results suggest that, except for one, all other artworks fulfilled the six specified criteria. The one which does not fulfill all the criteria is because block has been defined not in line with definition specified in the framework.

TABLE II CONTENT ANALYSIS IN THE FESTIVAL AND EXHIBITION

Exhibition / Guideline	Philagrafika 2010	Samudera 2009	Go Block 2009	Okir 2007	British In Print : Print In Malaysia 2005	Alternative Printmaking 1995
Block / Matrix	/	/	/	/	/	/
Design	/	/	/	/	/	/
Duplication	/	x	/	x	/	/
Multiple	/	x	/	x	/	/
By Product	/	x	/	x	/	/
Mass Product	/	x	/	x	/	/
Remarks	Extend the potential of printmaking to the public space	Block as a by product – wrong definition	Format- from tradition to installation	Block as a by product – wrong definition	Measurement as a block – extended the definition to new possibility	Extend the definition of printmaking – tradition to alternative

TABLE-III CHECKLIST CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF MALAYSIAN PRINTMAKING ARTWORK

Artist / Guideline	Ponirin Amin	Juhari Said	Zulkifli Yusoff	Shahrul Jamili Miskon	Choong Kam Kow
Block/Matrix	/	/	/	/	/
Design	/	/	/	/	/
Duplication	/	x	/	/	/
Multiple	/	x	/	/	/
By Product	/	x	/	/	/
Mass Product	/	x	/	/	/
Remarks	Extend definition of block or matrix from tangible block to intangible block	Wrong definition – block or matrix as a by product	Transformation format from tradition to installation	Extend definition of block or matrix – “Time” consider as a block By product – from tangible to intangible by product (sound [4D] – by product)	Extend definition – paper cast as a print and pulut panggang as a by product (some fold)

5. Guideline Development and its Application

Based on the findings on the assessment on “printmaking definition” and “printmaking guideline” discussed above, a guideline for printmaking for artwork is proposed as shown in Figure 5. The guideline combines both “the character” and “the definition” as noted by Melot [3]. In a nutshell, the guidelines suggest the creation of printmaking should embody both definition and character regardless of its tradition aspect or concept. The definition component consists of the sub-

components which are block, transferring and by product. The character component is broken down into multiple, duplication and mass product. In applying the framework, one should first concentrate on the definition. In other words, the three aspects of the definition must be fully adhered, irrespective of the types of arts produced, either tangible or intangible. Nonetheless, with regard to the character requirements, the printmaker has the liberty to either fulfill all the specified aspects or just only one aspect.

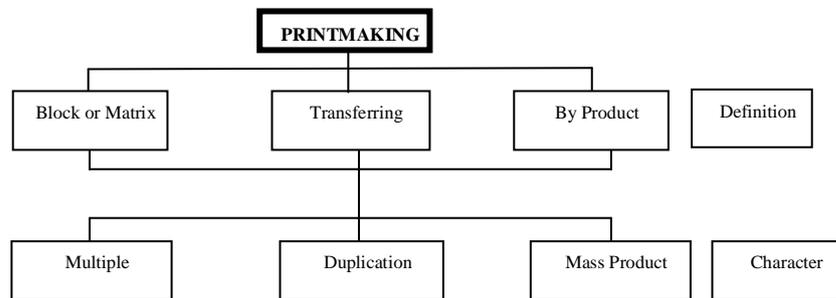


Figure 5: Guideline For Printmaking in Artwork

In order to validate the applicability of the proposed guideline, one Malaysian printmaking expert was consulted. He suggested that the developed guideline should be applied in the context of the Philagrafika 2010 Exhibition. Following his suggestion, the researcher extracted the following statement from the exhibition catalogue so as to apply with the proposed guidelines: “Our components: a matrix, a transfer medium, and a receiving surface...The matrix stores the necessary

information to reproduce; the medium transfers that data, and the support, in turn, receives it. All kinds of contingencies can alter the outcome of the process and often enrich the results” [7]. In this statement, the words “matrix”, “transfer” and “receiving surface” relates to the “by product” as indicated in the guidelines. Upon further analysis on Philagrafika 2010 based on the developed guidelines unveiled the results as shown in Figure 6

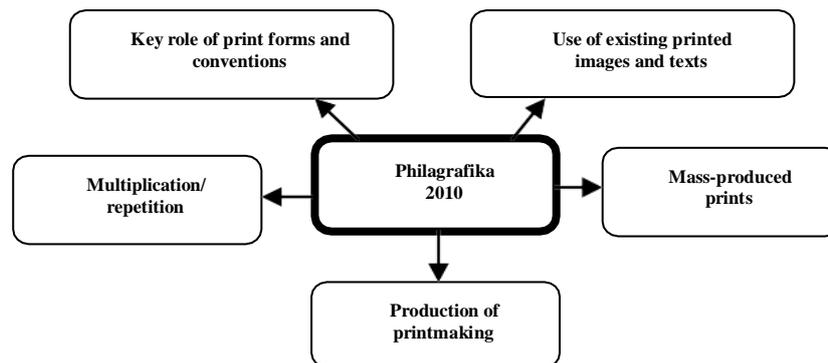


Figure 6: Findings of Philangrafika 2010 Analysis

The findings as shown in Figure 6 suggest that “key role of print forms and conventions” can be associated with the technical and definition of printmaking. On the other hands, the “use of images and texts existed” can be related to the printed-images. With regard to the three characters, the supporting findings are “multiplication/repetition” and “mass- produced

prints”. “Produced” and mass production is the same thing. This guideline will be used for the artwork production process.

To further translate the framework into practice, the researcher applied the framework and produced one piece of artwork as shown in Figure 7. The analysis of the artwork is shown in Table IV below while Table V presents the results of the evaluation criteria.

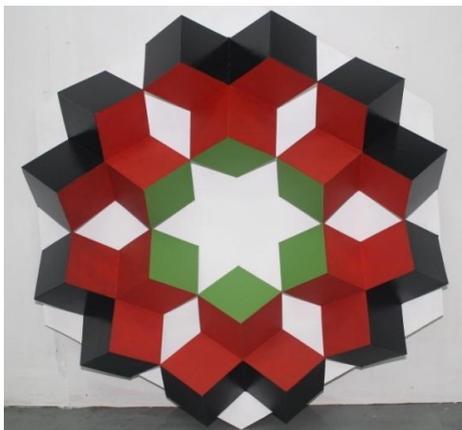


Figure 1. Cube I, Mixed media, 75 x 90 cm, 2011

TABLE IV. PROFILES OF ARTWORK

Theme	Search new possibilities in printmaking
Style	Islamic geometric design (Six Extrapolated)
Form	Base on table of guideline Block: measurement Transfer: on board By product: board same size(4 x 4 inch/2 x 2 inches)
Subject	Using cube
Content	Measurement can claim as a "block" for producing printmaking

TABLE V. CHECKLIST FOR DEVELOPMENT OF ARTWORK

Guideline	Remark
Block or Matrix	The cube production is by using "measurement" block
Transferring	From "measurement" drafting process
By Product	Every cube produce could multiply
Multiple	Could multiply / produce more cube
Duplication	The artwork could be duplicated
Mass Product	Could be produced in mass quantity

6. Conclusion

The conduct of this study has been for developing guideline for printmaking in artwork. The developed framework should be of interest to various parties. Firstly, learning institution offering programs in printmaking can use the guidelines in devising the curriculum contents. Secondly, printmaking artist can used this guideline as a reference when producing artwork. Thirdly, the general public can also employ

the guidelines to better understand and appreciate artworks. Just as in other studies, the conduct of this study is not without limitation. Firstly, is the limited number of exhibition or festival involved in the evaluations. Secondly, the number of expert to evaluate the framework was also limited to one. Future studies on this topic should consider avoiding these limitations so as to produce more reliable and accurate findings.

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