

Nurturing the Creative Industries in Brunei Darussalam as a Form of Cultural Studies

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Abstract

Ideological motifs set the tone and language of a country's attitude and stance for its political policies; cultural policies stemming from various nations are also unique and tailor-made in much the same way. Like cultural studies, the creative industries of any country can be examined to see how they evolved through policy setting discourse and trending global movements. This paper will focus on the cultural importance of how the creative industries are emphasized as part of the art and creative technology (ACT) programme at the University of Brunei Darussalam (UBD). Using the ACT programme as a case study, the nodal policy of the creative industries as it was first developed in Britain, and latter disseminated to Anglosphere Nations, and finally passed to Southeast Asia will be discussed before the direct benefits of the ACT programme's contributions to Brunei creative industries are presented. Presented in this paper, among the highlights which have contributed to the creative industries as a means for fostering economic growth both directly and indirectly are: the establishment of a business by ACT students to provide quality art materials for the Bruneian market; and the employment of students at other art institutions as instructors, industrial design entrepreneurs, free-lance designers and photographers/videographers, and muralists/artists. Finally, an overview of the creative industries projects developed by the ACT faculty for innovative teaching of this topic through lectures, exhibitions, conference papers and publications will be presented.

Introduction

All creative industries require supportive education and sustainable training of some kind if they are to contribute to the local economy. The creative industries education at the University of Brunei Darussalam (UBD) started in late 2009 through the pilot programme, Art and Creative Technology (ACT), at the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS). Using the ACT programme as a case study, this paper focuses on how its imperfect, but still effective, art and design education modules have thus far fostered the creative talents of ACT graduates, and provided for the development of the creative industries in Brunei Darussalam. The first part of this paper will begin with a brief overview of international policies for creative industries and then show how they were interpreted and integrated into the ACT programme and later put into practice by ACT graduates working in various creative job capacities in the Bruneian community. The second portion of this paper will discuss research undertaken by ACT faculty for promoting Bruneian creative industries.

The dynamics of global cultural markets and their intricacies to include how culture is distributed, marketed and even creatively reused is a subject that Flew (2012) gives a comprehensive account of. Creative industry regulations and policies have been developed by the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nations Commission on Trade, Aid and Development (UNCTAD). However this account is beyond the scope of this paper. Still, because so much emphasis has been placed on ACT, along with the university in general, to produce students that are either graduating with a product ready to use in the market place, or a skill that will earn them a job in the creative market workforce, a definition of what the creative, or cultural industries are, as defined by UNESCO, needs to be addressed. Flew also felt it necessary to quote directly from UNESCO so that he

too could provide a foundation for understanding the importance of the mission of their creative industries policy.

UNESCO has defined the cultural industries as 'industries which combine the creation, production and commercialization of creative contents which are intangible and cultural in nature', and 'generally include printing, publishing and multimedia, audiovisual, phonographic and cinematographic productions as well as crafts and design'. The creative industries include the cultural industries as well as 'those [industries] in which the product or service contains a substantial element of artistic or creative endeavor and include activities such as architecture and advertising' (Flew, 2012, p. 53).

Art and Creative Technology Programme Structure

The ACT programme is a relatively new applied visual art programme established in 2009 as one of the ten major programmes under the UBD GenNext 1.0 undergraduate curriculum offered by FASS. The GenNext programme is a kind of liberal arts curriculum designed to provide broad-based knowledge and to develop students' general intellectual capacities as opposed to professional or vocational training. As described in UBD:

The GenNext degree ensures that students emerge from UBD with a high quality education that is catered for their individual needs, as well as the needs of a constantly changing world environment. Multidisciplinary programmes under the GenNext degrees allow students to choose from a variety of disciplines. Breadth modules offer students an opportunity to explore interests outside their chosen academic discipline, allowing them to develop as well-rounded individuals (UBD, 2016a, para. 2).

Unique to Brunei Darussalam, the ACT major programme offers students general or rather non-specific education in art, design and creative technology. As Prof. Kong Ho described the aim of the programme in the web page for the ACT major:

The ACT major programme explores the thematic relationships among the visual and applied arts through a combination of theoretical study and experiential learning. Students are exposed to a full array of creative art making concepts from various cultures as part of their college experience. Students are guided through modules that are designed to give them the tools they need for developing their own creative language and style (Ho, 2012, para. 1).

ACT majors receive hands-on experience and conceptual theories from 19 ACT modules, including 8 technology related modules, 4 art history and theory related modules, 5 studio art modules and 2 capstone project related modules. In order to graduate as a single major in ACT, students are required to have successfully completed a minimum of 64 modular credits and a maximum of 72 modular credits within 4 to 6 years studies at UBD. The detailed structure of the 19 ACT modules is listed in Table 1.

Even though the ACT programme cannot bear the burden of expenses to offer other augmented learning opportunities, such as field trips, seminars, workshops or art exchange activities with other universities, the ACT teaching programme uses creative resources, such as materials from the natural environment, to prepare students for the commitment of developing the creative industries in Brunei Darussalam. This commitment includes teaching art at all levels, entrepreneurship, graphic design, photography, audio-visual production, and studio art.

Level	Module Code and Name
1000	AR 1201 Introduction to Visual Art AR 1202 Design Studies I AR 1203 Painting I AR 1204 Creative Art Technology
2000	AR 2201 Graphic Design AR 2202 Art History AR 2203 Motion Graphics AR 2204 Sculpture and 3D Design
3000	AR 3301 Introduction to 3D Animation AR 3302 Advanced Painting AR 3303 Digital Photography & Videography AR 3304 3D Animation & Digital Illustration
4000	AR 4201 Directed Study AR 4302 Mixed-Media & Multimedia Art AR 4303 Design Studies II AR 4204 Capstone Project AR 4305 Ceramics & Product Design AR 4306 Creative Industries & Cultural Study AR 4307 Bruneian Traditional Art & Crafts

Table 1. Art and Creative Technology programme structure

ACT graduates are often highly motivated, creative and energetic individuals who have developed good communication skills in visual arts and applied art. Those who have completed their ACT four-year education generally report new self-confidence in their abilities to apply creative ideas and practical technology skills in any creative industries area that they have encountered. Also, they have developed an ability to work well under pressure and to be flexible. Such skills are highly valued in and transferable to the creative industries in Brunei Darussalam. For the past three years, most ACT graduates have become employed in specialized careers in art and design; these positions include that of art director, art entrepreneur, art teacher or lecturer, photographer, videographer, graphic designer, exhibit designer, event management director, textile designer, gallery curator, muralist, illustrator/ animator, product designer, set designer, game designer, and visual artist. It is important to note that in addition to art majors, the ACT programme also offers Master of Arts in Art and Ph.D. in Art degrees. These degrees are both research-based endeavours.

ACT Graduates Working in Brunei's Creative Industry Sectors

This section will profile the creative industry activities of several recent ACT graduates working in the major career categories of art entrepreneurship, art education (both in the public schools and at the college level) and freelance art and design work (both professional work for exhibitions and commissioned projects).

Providing quality art and design education has been the focus of the seven-year old ACT programme at UBD. As described in *Discover UBD*, Issue 18, under the featured article "Transforming Passion into Purpose":

Across the start-up sector in Brunei Darussalam, a growing number of young entrepreneurs are building their own businesses, creating and providing jobs and contributing to economic development in the nation. Whether it has been through the innovative curriculum, Discovery Year programme, alumni network or entrepreneurship workshops, a number of Brunei's young entrepreneurs [have] earned their degree in UBD (UBD, 2015, p. 18).

The article just quoted from featured two UBD alumni, shown in Figure 1, Amirul Jazli bin Jali, class of 2013 and an ACT major; and Haziq Sahminan, class of 2014 a Professional Communication and the Media (PCM) major. Both of them are the co-founders of "Ministry of Moment and Visionary Project" (MOMVP), a private sector business specializing in photography and videography. These young Bruneians are examples of the success of the ACT and PCM programmes that nurture students to become professionals equipped with a wide range of practical skills and knowledge, including leadership, innovation and entrepreneurship. These three major traits emphasize UBD's GenNext curriculum. Amirul said, "Once you are doing something that you like, if you are passionate about it, it won't feel like work" (UBD, 2015, p. 19).

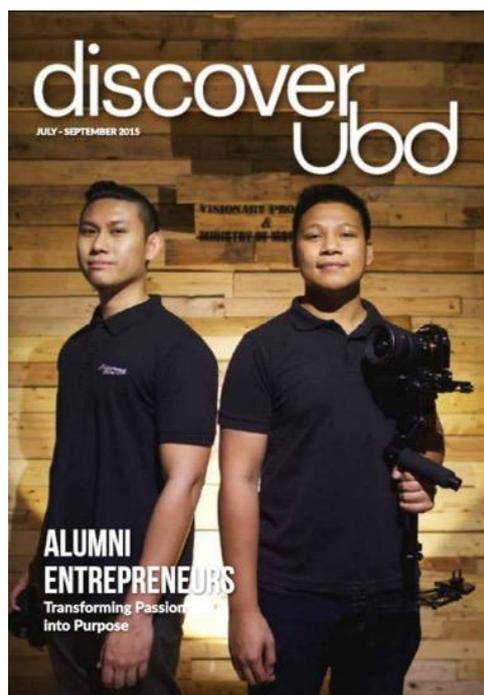


Figure 1. Front cover of *Discover UBD*, Issue 18, July-September 2015, featured Amirul Jazli and Haziq Sahminan as alumni entrepreneurs.

Amirul Jazil bin Jali, shown in Figure 2, founded his enterprise, Visionary Project, in 2013, the same year he graduated from UBD. Later, he collaborated with Haziq Sahminan, and co-founded the Ministry of Moment and Visionary Project in 2014. Starting from the fall of 2016, MOMVP has offered internship opportunities for ACT majors as part of their way of passing on their knowledge to students during their Discover Year at UBD. Amirul said in his email interview that:

I have involved myself with UBD because I want to continue learning from people, especially the students, in order to improve my skills. By doing so, at the same time I can lead and motivate the young generations to pursue and nurture their passions. Doing things that we love is the foundational key to success.

Before Amirul became an ACT major, he studied chemistry under the Faculty of Science at UBD. His trans-disciplinary background in art and science has shaped his flexibility to explore his potential in photography and videography. Also, Amirul has a passion towards his photographic work and video production, which is a driving force that motivates him in his business enterprise and mentoring young ACT majors.



Figure 2. Amirul Jazil (left) directing the shooting at his studio in Gadong, Brunei Darussalam.

Probably the most ambitious example of students joining together to form a design and art supply company is the story of Zairah Art Supplies. According to Dr. Martie Geiger-Ho and Prof. Kong Ho:

Three major factors brought about the formation of Zairah Arts Supplies: first and foremost was the need by students at UBD and elsewhere in the region for good quality art supplies; next came the opportunity for entrepreneurship on the part of several students who realized that if they could start a trading company, they would be able to work and contribute in several ways to Brunei's fledgling creative arts industry; and lastly, Prof. Ho and his wife Dr. Martie Geiger-Ho (who became employed at UBD in June 2012) were putting together a large community mural proposal for submission to the United States Embassy for sponsorship that, if approved, would require a substantial order of acrylic paints, gesso, gel medium and other supplies (Geiger-Ho & Ho, 2014, pp. 159–160)

Obtaining a grant for the mural project seemed almost to assure an order for the company that the students wanted to establish and provided the inertia needed to push one ACT former student, Affizah Rahman, to ask her father and her elder sister, Dr. Noor Affizan binti Pg. Haji Abd Rahman, to invest in a trading company with a retail store outlet that she and her ACT friends, including Nuriskandar Hasnan, Nazreen Amin, and Amirul Jali, would be able to run as a business.

Nuriskandar Hasnan, shown in Figure 3, worked as a graphic designer for Zairah Enterprise in 2012 and was promoted to manager in 2013 to restructure the business. Nuriskandar is currently a PhD in Art candidate under the FASS graduate programme at UBD and he is writing his dissertation about Brunei Darussalam's changing skyline. At the beginning, the business of Zairah Enterprise composed of three major concentrations, including art supplies, design and video production, and event management.



Figure 3. Nuriskandar Hasnan (middle) working as designer and manager at Zariah Art Supplies store from 2012 to 2015.

However, with limited manpower and few marketing resources, Nuriskandar got support from Affizan, owner of Zairah Enterprise, to eliminate both event management and design production business and to focus on an art supplies retail store, shown in Figure 4. This decision was proved to be a right move because the art supplies business offers sustainable profit for the Zairah Enterprise while other two business directions kept losing money. Nuriskandar claimed that the art administration experience learnt from the ACT modules, including Directed Study, Capstone Project and Creative Industries and Cultural Study, helped him in managing the Zairah Enterprise business, especially in budgeting, marketing, branding, and understanding of business products. Also, students gained practical working experience from the Spectacle 2013 Graduation Exhibition Committee, which is a committee formed by ACT majors during the Directed Study and Capstone Project semesters to organize a large-scale art and design exhibition at the end of four years ACT studies.



Figure 4. Zariah Art Supplies store located in an interior plaza area in Beribi, Brunei Darussalam.

Nuriskandar served as a committee director to lead other students while organizing the first *Spectacle 2013: Art and Design Graduation Show*, at the Art Gallery of UBD Chancellor Hall in April 2013. The Capstone Project requires students to have art administration, marketing and exhibition design experiences in organizing the large-scale art and design exhibition to showcase individual art and design talents. Students learn how to budget the exhibition cost, to apply for donations and sponsorship from Ministry of Home Affairs, to write a project proposal, to prepare a marketing plan, to conduct fundraising events, to organize an exhibition opening event, to connect with the mass media, to set up the exhibition, and to conduct guided tours and gallery talks. Students are guided through these last two ACT modules that are designed to give them the skills and knowledge they need for bolstering their portfolios and getting ready in their future creative careers.

Hajah Nurul Erne Azlina binti Haji Zainal, shown in Figure 5, an ACT graduate of 2015, founded Artrtralia Enterprise in 2011 with eight of her former classmates of Katok Sixth Form Centre, a high school well-known for its art education. Erne registered Artrtralia Enterprise as a private mural painting enterprise in January 2012. According to Erne Zainal, the enterprise name "Artrtralia" is an abbreviation for "Art Attract Belia (Youth)" and its tag is "We aim to be different". Since then they have painted more than 20 commissioned murals for various organizations, companies and property owners in Brunei Darussalam.



Figure 5. Erne Zainal (1st on the left) posing with His Majesty during his visit to the Artrtralia booth at the National Youth Day in Brunei Darussalam in 2011.

Artrtralia Enterprise employs freelance artists for some of their large-scale commissioned mural projects and offers hands-on training to volunteers who are seeking practical skill and knowledge in professional mural painting. Erne is currently studying for her Masters in Management degree under the School of Business and Economics, UBD. At the same time, she continues to work as a freelance muralist and promotes public art in Brunei Darussalam, shown in Figure 6.



Figure 6. Erne Zainal painting her portable mural at her studio in Brunei Darussalam.

Zakiyah Zani, another ACT alumna, has just graduated with her Master of Teaching degree from UBD this year and she is featured on the UBD in the September 2016 website front page Highlights, shown in Figure 7, about her fashion entrepreneurship. Zakiyah started working on her textile design for headscarf collections after she graduated in 2014. Her ZZ Scarf has turned her into a successful fashion entrepreneur in designing a popular brand of Muslimah fashion for women in Brunei Darussalam. According to the featured article *Realizing Dreams Through Discovery Learning* on the UBD website:

Zakiyah unveiled her designs to a much wider audience with her capstone project at UBD's annual Spectacle Graduation Art Show. Given a 6 by 6 ft. space to exhibit her work, Zakiyah created an art installation of a dream boutique [titled *Lollapaloosa: Fashion Boutique*, shown in Figure 8] selling her own designed clothing collection. Her exhibition received a flurry of positive responses and flared the idea of starting her own "entrepreneurship reality". Her scarf designs have recently been nominated to join the Seoul International Gift Show in South Korea in September this year (UBD, 2016c, para. 7).



Figure 7. Zakiyah Zani featured on the UBD website front page under the Highlight of *Realizing Dreams Through Discovery Learning*.



Figure 8. Zakiyah Zani's capstone project *Lollapaloosa: Fashion Boutique* showcased during the *Spectacle 2014: Art and Design Graduation Show* in UBD Chancellor Hall.

Noor Affizah binti Pg Haji Abd Rahman, shown in Figure 9, is teaching the diploma in digital media, including principles of design and digital graphic design, under the School of Information Communication and Technology at the Politeknik Brunei, the only polytechnic in Brunei Darussalam, since 2014 after she graduated from UBD in 2013.



Figure 9. Affizah Rahman (5th from the right) posing with her students at the Politeknik Brunei, Brunei Darussalam.

Affizah applies her art and design knowledge in teaching her students to explore their creativity through digital design and hand drafting. She also stated that "I also like to give them exposure towards public speaking by exhibiting their produced work in class on the walls. This is to let them polish their confidence of selling themselves to the audience more effectively" (A. Rahman, personal communication, October 10, 2016). She expressed her feeling towards her four years studying ACT at UBD posted on the ACT webpage under student testimonials:

Throughout the 4 years of learning the course of Art & Creative Technology, I've gained a lot of insights about its beneficial application towards creative young individuals as well as one of the ways to contribute the growth of the society's developments. Art & Creative Technology

exposes the idea of incorporating other subjects of science, business, mathematics and many more, as this can be seen to how we were learned the basic idea of interior design, stage designing, art installation, product designs as well as how to market with specific designs, multimedia art, and other varieties of diverse art forms. Most of the mentioned subjects can be applied in propelling the market of creative industry in Brunei in a lot of ways with such convenience to uplift our employment rate towards the local creative individuals. (FASS Art & Creative Technology, para 10)



Figure 10. Affizah Rahman's students setting up their design works in the classroom of the Politeknik Brunei, Brunei Darussalam.

Affizah's capstone project, titled *Victim of Commercialization*, was displayed at the first *Spectacle 2013: Art and Design Graduation Show* at the UBD Chancellor Hall in April 2013. Her mixed media installation reveals her talents in digital medium and art installation plus her sensitivity towards unfair trade, commercialization and greedy international corporations.

Both Ijjoji bin Nordin and Susannah Sitai Liew, 2014 ACT graduates, are teaching visual arts and multimedia design as art lecturers at the KOLEJ IGS Brunei Darussalam, in collaboration with Limkokwing University of Creative Technology (LUCT) in Malaysia, after graduating from UBD in 2014. KOLEJ IGS offers diploma in graphic design, advertising, animation and multimedia design under the Faculty of Arts and Humanities. Ijjoji, shown in Figure 11, is currently teaching diploma in graphic design, advertising and multimedia broadcasting, animation and multimedia design, and interactive multimedia design as well as curating the annual VIBE Graphic Design Exhibition at KOLEJ IGS. He described his thoughts of ACT programme in his testimonial:

Four years of study in UBD major in Art and Creative Technology has made me understand art more. Studying art does not make me an artist but it has made me an individual who learn to use art as a medium to convey messages through art. I can express my thoughts through my artworks. Then I realised that art can be used to preserve anything we care about. Thus, I understand that art is a way to identify who we truly are; culture and identity.



Figure 11. Ijjoji Nordin (2nd from the left, front row) posing with his students at the 2016 VIBE Graphic Design Exhibition at KOLEJ IGS, Brunei Darussalam.

Ijjoji studied two semesters at Winchester School of Art (WSA), University of Southampton, in United Kingdom during his Discover Year Study Abroad Programme. Studying fine art at WSA opened his mind about contemporary art and new media. He applied his understanding of conceptual art in his capstone project, titled *Silver Lining*, showcased in *Spectacle 2014: Art and Design Graduation Show* in UBD Chancellor Hall in April 2014. His multimedia installation explored the relationship between natural lines and conceptual linear structure. He combined photography, digital art, sculpture and music in his final art project.

Susannah, shown in Figure 12, is currently teaching illustration, design studies, creative studies, history of art, life drawing and introduction to art under diploma programmes in graphic and design technology, animation and multimedia design, interactive media and design plus certificate in art and design. She also serves as the head supervisor to the KIGS student council and ECA committee. Susannah Sitai Liew painted four self-portraits for her capstone project, titled *Beauty of Diversity*, displayed in *Spectacle 2014*. Susannah applied her painting skill in illustrating four cultural backgrounds embedded in her own identity. Her art background helped her in teaching visual art related subject at KOLEJ IGS.



Figure 12. Susannah Sitai Liew (standing one at the back) teaching her students at KOLEJ IGS, Brunei Darussalam.

The ACT programme has successfully nurtured several in-service teachers for the past seven years. The Ministry of Education has sponsored some in-service teachers to study ACT at UBD since 2009. After they have graduated from UBD, the in-service teachers return to their schools and take up major art and design teaching. Muhammad Alinormin bin Haji Omarali, shown in Figure 13, is a successful in-service teacher. He serves as the art and science teacher at Sekolah Rendah Binturan Tutong, Cluster 5 in Tutong. Also, he is the art coordinator/chairperson of Cluster 5 Primary Art Teachers Committee in Tutong District. The committee regularly offers art workshops and organizes exhibitions and gallery visits for 24 participating school teachers. His mixed media installation capstone project, titled *The Life of a Pensioner*, was selected by Fukuoka Asian Art Museum and displayed in the Fifth Fukuoka Asian Art Triennale in Fukuoka, Japan, in September 2014. Alinormin was the only Bruneian emerging artist to participate in this well-known international art triennale. His selected art installation explored cultural and social issues in Brunei Darussalam with a focus on the life of retired people.



Figure 13. Alinormin Omarali (3rd from the left) teaching his art class at Sekolah Rendah Binturan Tutong, Cluster 5, Tutong, Brunei Darussalam.

Mimi Farahyahida Haji Omarali, shown in Figure 14, is another exemplar of an in-service teacher. She is teaching Year 9, 10 and O Level students at Sekolah Menengah Sufri Bolkih in Tutong. She is also a professional face painter. She described her feeling about the ACT programme in her testimonial:

I have learnt and gained lots of knowledge and experiences throughout my four years of studying and majoring in Art and Creative Technology in UBD. All the art modules being offered were highly interesting. The Discovery Year Programme during the third year also gave me an opportunity to study Islamic and Traditional Arts in Prince School of Traditional Arts, one of the most prestigious art schools in London...

The final year's Directed Study and Capstone Project was quite challenging, but my Discovery year experience of studying Islamic Art helped me to implement it into the final project. It was also one of the best bonding years for final year art students, because we worked together day and night to ensure the success of our final year graduation show. Also, this work helped us to prepare ourselves for our future art careers (UBD, 2016b, para 9).



Figure 14. Mimi Farahyahida Haji Omarali (2nd from the left) teaching her art class at Sekolah Menengah Sufri Bolkih in Tutong, Brunei Darussalam.

Mimi's capstone project, titled *A Glimpse of Sacred Art*, displayed in the *Spectacle 2014: Art and Design Graduation Show* in April 2014, explored the sacred and traditional Islamic art. Her interest in Islamic geometry and arabesque motifs has driven her in creating a spiritual space divided by portable panels and scroll painting. She has continued teaching art and design at her school after graduating from UBD in 2014.

Yann Martel, author of *The Life of Pi*, claims that, "If we, citizens, do not support our artists, then we sacrifice our imagination on an altar of crude reality and we end up believing in nothing and having worthless dreams" (as cited in Obalil & Glass, 2005, p. ix).

Bruneian Creative Industries Research Undertaken by ACT Faculty

The authors of this paper, Prof. Ho and Dr. Geiger-Ho, participated as ACT faculty in the Creative Industry Research Cluster (CIRC). This tenth research cluster at UBD was established in May 2011 with the mission to launch innovative research projects in creative industries and to meet the needs of Brunei's nation building in the areas of culture, economic diversity and human capital. *Visions of Brunei Digital Hybrid Mural*, shown in Figure 15, created by 24 local artists, ACT faculty and students, was the first public art practice-based research in Brunei, which originated as an individual research project led by Prof. Ho under the CIRC. This research was only partially granted by the University Research Committee (URC) of UBD for the sponsorship of the production cost of digitally printing the mural. According to Ho (2014):

The major reasons why it was not fully supported by the URC was that the mural project was not traditional quantitative research and the value of community art or public art was not recognized. However, this first digital hybrid mural became the center of interest during a four-day 2012 Creative Industries Festival in Brunei. This was not only on account of its large scale but because of its unique impact on the community" (Ho, 2014, p. 34).

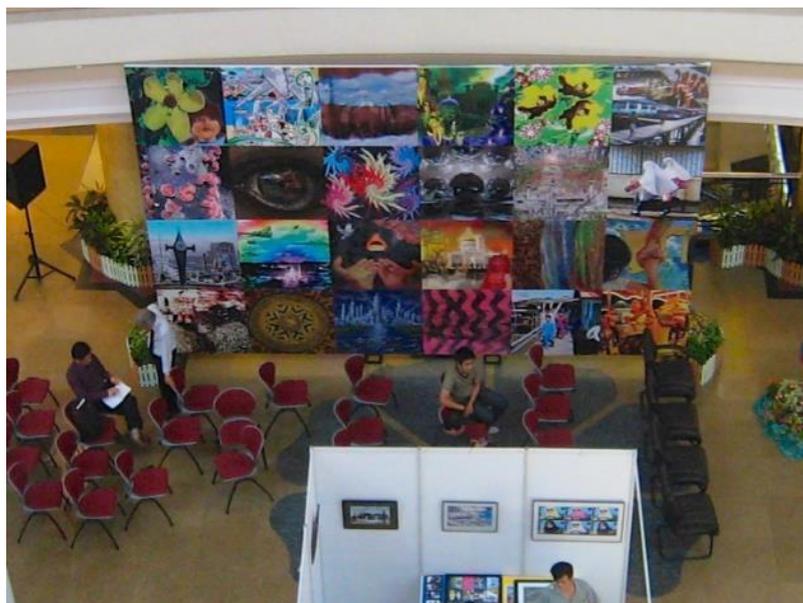


Figure 15. *Visions of Brunei Digital Hybrid Mural* displayed during the 2012 Creative Industries Festival in The Mall, Gadong, Brunei Darussalam.

The second creative industries related research project, *Transcending Culture and Space: A Community Art Project*, shown in Figure 16, was sponsored by the U.S. Embassy in Brunei Darussalam through the Overseas Federal Assistance Award and led by Dr. Geiger-Ho and Prof. Ho. The project was launched in 2012. Ho (2014) states, "The whole community art project included fifteen mural painting workshops and a two-part traveling multimedia art exhibition in two different locations. The final 30-foot long by 6-foot high transportable mural showcases the community art endeavor of 238 participants" (p. 28). Public art can be a key to developing domestic creative and cultural industries and tourism. These two public mural research projects set the tone for more creative industries research in Brunei Darussalam.

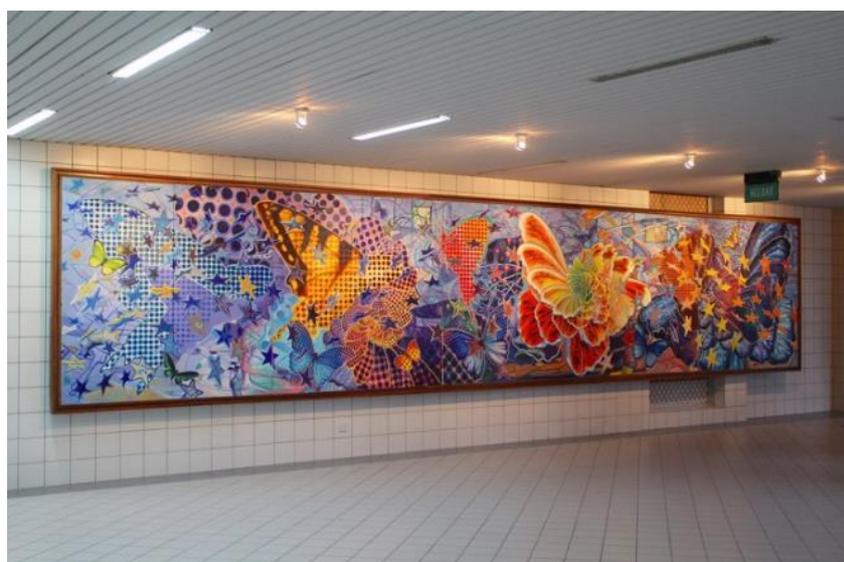


Figure 16. *Transcending Culture and Space: A Community Art Project Mural* collected by UBD and displayed at the ground lobby of Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences Building, UBD.

Other UBD funded Bruneian creative industries related research projects led by Prof. Ho and Dr. Geiger-Ho include: *A Slice of Light: A Stroke in Time*, shown in Figure 17, a

collaborative artistic research project by two authors in digital art and photography in 2015; *Practice as Research: Artefacts and the Exegesis*, shown in Figure 18, a qualitative art research project in Brunei's ceramics by Dr. Geiger-Ho in 2015; *Creative Arts Research: China from the South China Sea*, a study based on critical engagement and reflection on studio-based research by Dr. Geiger-Ho in 2014; *Digital Memoir of the South China Sea*, an artistic research in conceptual art through digital photography and imaging by Prof. Ho in 2014; and *Transfiguration of Space: Ongoing Studio-Based Research in Art*, a studio-based research project in painting, digital photography and video installation by Prof. Ho in 2013.

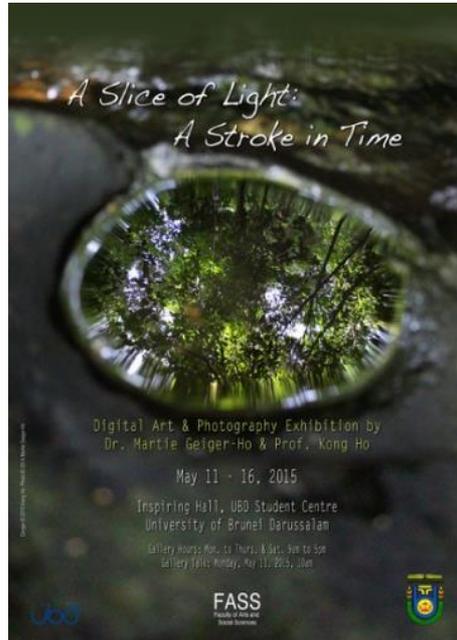


Figure 17. *A Slice of Light: A Stroke in Time* exhibition, held at the Inspiring Hall, UBD Student Centre in May 2015.

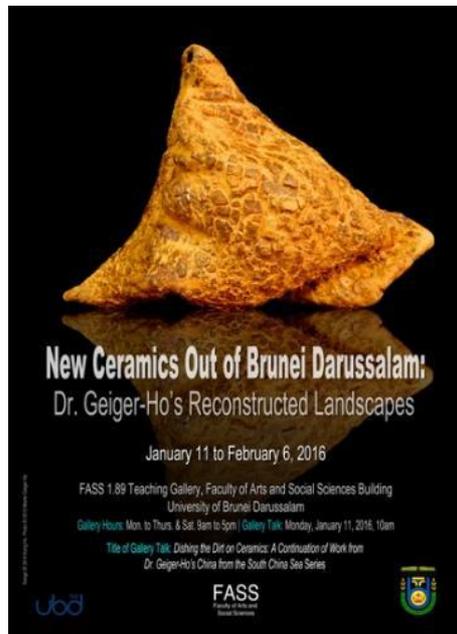


Figure 18. *Practice as Research: Artefacts and the Exegesis* research related exhibition, *New Ceramics out of Brunei Darussalam*, held at the Teaching Gallery of the Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences Building in January 2016.

Conclusion

The authors of this paper believe that they have clearly shown that UBD's ACT graduates have demonstrated a deep predilection for either locating or creating their own freelance art and design positions that fit within Brunei's goals for a creative industry that will help foster and nourish the country's cultural needs.

Based on research into current successful art and design school models coupled with the input of related teaching staff with expertise in art and design higher education, it is important to evaluate the ACT programme. The nature of studio art pedagogy emphasizes idea development and constructivist learning augmented with experimental learning and practice. Art and design students learn not only to solve certain art and design problems creatively, but also to explore different ideas, materials, and expressions, plus test the constructivist theory through 2D and 3D thinking.

According to Barkley, Cross, and Major (2005), art education in the twenty-first century should allow learners to generate knowledge and meaning through their hands-on experience. Studio art learning is based on the epistemological assumption of social constructivism. They also explain that "Learning to listen carefully, think critically, participate constructively, and collaborate productively to solve common problems are vital components of an education for citizenship in the twenty-first century" (Barkley et al., 2005, p. xii). In modern cognitive theory, as described in Neisser (1967), an educator must be actively engaged in learning. Neisser further suggests that there is no way to transfer art knowledge from teachers to learner minds efficiently and accurately. Instead, learners engage in learning by making connections and organizing learning into meaningful knowledge.

Ute Meta Bauer (2009) addressed the incursion of the creative industries market into art schools and the effect that a need to have ready-to-sell art products for show and sale at graduate art exhibitions has on students and their future outlook as creative culture professionals. She weaves an interesting essay together about the current challenges facing today's students and their support for art education schools when faced with the allure of learning to be an almost instantly commercial success as a career artist. The opening sentence to her essay sets the tone for assessment of the pros and cons of preparing students for the creative industries art market. "Art schools and university studio art programs, previously free and open zones for experiments, have found themselves pulled further and further into the orbit of the art market" (Bauer, 2009, p. 220).

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