

## REKA BENTUK DAN ESTETIKA TERENANG: SATU KAJIAN TERHADAP TEMBIKAR TRADISIONAL MELAYU PAHANG

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### Abstrak:

Kehilangan beberapa industri tembikar tradisional di pelbagai kawasan di Malaysia, seperti di Alor Merah, Pulau Pinang, Bukit Gantang, Lenggong, dan Krian di Perak, menimbulkan kebimbangan mengenai kepupusan potensi perusahaan tembikar tradisional Melayu di Malaysia. Kebimbangan terhadap nasib serupa bagi perusahaan tembikar tradisional di Kampung Pasir Durian, Kuala Tembeling, Pahang, menekankan keperhatian segera untuk menangani isu ini. Kajian ini memberi fokus kepada aspek formalistik dan konsep keindahan dalam tembikar terenang, dengan meneliti secara khusus reka bentuk, elemen dalam reka bentuk, teknik dan bahan, serta pemilihan motif. Kajian ini bertujuan merakam dan mendokumentasikan serta menganalisis aspek di atas menggunakan kaedah kualitatif, termasuk penyelidikan lapangan, arkib muzium, analisis visual, temu bual dengan artisan, dan kajian literatur. Dapatan kajian menyumbang kepada pemahaman yang lebih mendalam tentang reka bentuk, estetika, serta konsep keindahan dalam Islam. Kajian ini menerangkan kaedah elemen-elemen ini berhubungkait dalam penciptaan seni Melayu yang menarik secara visual dan memberikan wawasan berharga dalam pemeliharaan tembikar Melayu tradisional. Secara khusus, motif Terenang mengambil inspirasi dari sumber semulajadi terutamanya unsur flora dan fauna. Rekabentuk terenang menonjol kehalusan artistik dan pemilihan motif yang disusun secara hierarki yang memberikan keseimbangan kepada reka bentuk keseluruhan tembikar. Kajian ini berfungsi sebagai pendokumentasi menyeluruh mengenai tembikar terenang dan turut menyumbang kepada pemeliharaan budaya dan kehalusan kerja tangan tembikar tradisional di Malaysia.

**Kata Kunci:** Budaya, estetika, konsep keindahan, tembikar terenang, reka bentuk,

*Dihantar : 08 November 2023*

*Disemak : 10 Januari 2023*

*Diterbit 31 Mac 2024*

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## DESIGN AND AESTHETICS IN TERENANG: A STUDY OF TRADITIONAL PAHANG POTTERY

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### Abstract:

The decline of pottery industries in various regions of Malaysia, as observed in locations such as Bukit Gantang Alor Merah, Pulau Pinang, Lenggong, and Krian in Perak, raises concerns about the potential extinction of traditional pottery enterprises. The fear of a similar fate for traditional pottery enterprises in Kampung Pasir Durian, Kuala Tembeling, Pahang, underscores the urgency of addressing this issue. This research focuses on the formalistic aspects and the concept of beauty in Terenang pottery, specifically examining form and design arrangement, design elements, technique and material usage, and motif selection. The study aims to document and analyze these key aspects using qualitative methods, including fieldwork research, museum archives, visual examination, expert interviews, and literature review. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the intricate relationship between design, aesthetics, and the concept of beauty, guided by Islamic views. This research sheds light on how these elements converge in the creation of visually appealing Malay craft, offering valuable insights into the preservation of traditional pottery practices. Notably, Terenang motifs draw inspiration from natural sources, particularly floral and fauna elements. The Terenang style stands out for its artistic finesse and deliberate motif selection, arranged hierarchically to provide balance to the overall design of the pottery. This research serves as a comprehensive exploration of Terenang pottery, contributing to the broader discourse on cultural preservation and craftsmanship in Malaysia.

**Keyword:** Cultural, aesthetic, concept of beauty, Terenang pottery, design

*Submitted: 08 November 2023*

*Revised: 10 January 2023*

*Published: 31 March 2024*

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## 1.0 Introduction

The use of pottery in Malaysia is traced as early as the Neolithic period with the discovery of excavation in several areas of artifacts by local and foreign archaeologists. Studies from the early discovery of pottery artifacts in Malaysia including Sabah and Sarawak show the use of pottery itself as a container for daily use to store food. In the beginning, the use of this pottery did not emphasize the external decoration of the goods. Its main function is simply as a daily utility tool that facilitates human life at that time. But along with the development of time and era, in addition to creating people began to focus on aspects of beauty and beauty in their designs and creations. Not to mention if the function of the invention plays a major role in human spiritual beliefs.

The design results are tried to beautify to give a sense of satisfaction to the creator. Then, a variety of decorations to beautify the external appearance by taking inspiration from the immediate surroundings of the human being. Wray (1903) explained that traditional Malay pottery undergoes a complete manufacturing process with hand-building techniques (squeezing and spiraling) and a shaping process using penempek wood. According to Salwa Ayob (2009) and Syed Ahmad Jamal (1989), traditional Malay pottery is similar in nature to pre-historic pottery that is hand-built, grooved (polished), patterned (printed), and fired at a low temperature to maintain its porous nature. It is an art passed down through generations, with minimal alterations to both the technique and formation practices, and covers the philosophy contained in it and the identity of a Malay artist.

Aesthetics, within the realm of philosophy, encompasses the study of beauty and provides an external perspective on artistic works. Its etymology can be traced back to the Greek term 'aesthesis,' denoting sensitivity. Aesthetics, as a discipline, specifically focuses on phenomena associated with beauty. In Morris Weitz's book titled "Problems in Aesthetics" (1959), Fry's ideas are referenced concerning the concept of beauty in art. Fry contends that objects crafted to evoke a sense of beauty possess a function that extends beyond mere utility, thereby evoking pleasure and a sensation of delight.

## 2.0 Research Background

Terenang Pottery, originating from Kampung Pasir Durian, Kuala Tembeling in the state of Pahang in Malaysia, holds a significant place in the realm of traditional pottery. It is renowned for its unique design, cultural significance, and historical roots. Terenang Pottery exemplifies the artistic traditions of the region and reflects the rich heritage of Pahang. The pottery is characterized by its distinctive design elements, intricate motifs, and meticulous craftsmanship. Artisans carefully shape the clay into various forms, such as bowls, vases, and decorative items, utilizing traditional techniques passed down through generations. The skillful manipulation of clay results in objects that not only serve functional purposes but also possess a distinct aesthetic appeal.

The design motifs found in Terenang Pottery often draw inspiration from nature, featuring organic patterns, floral motifs, and geometric designs. These motifs not only showcase the artisans' creativity but also reflect the close relationship between the local culture and the natural environment of Pahang. The motifs may also carry symbolic meanings, representing aspects of local beliefs, rituals, or cultural narratives.

Terenang's design has been shaped by the influences of various communities and historical periods, including indigenous traditions, Malay culture, and the broader Southeast Asian artistic milieu. Pottery serves as a tangible link to the past, preserving the artistic techniques, design aesthetics, and cultural values that have been cherished and passed down through generations.

The production of terenang is often a communal effort, involving multiple artisans and family members who contribute their skills and expertise. The process of creating pottery not only fosters a sense of



community and continuity but also serves as a platform for the transmission of cultural knowledge and the preservation of traditional craftsmanship.

Beyond its cultural and historical significance, terenang has gained recognition for its artistic value and has become a symbol of local identity. It is sought after by collectors, art enthusiasts, and individuals interested in owning unique pieces of traditional craft. The pottery embodies the spirit of Pahang, capturing its essence through its distinctive design, meticulous craftsmanship, and cultural connections.

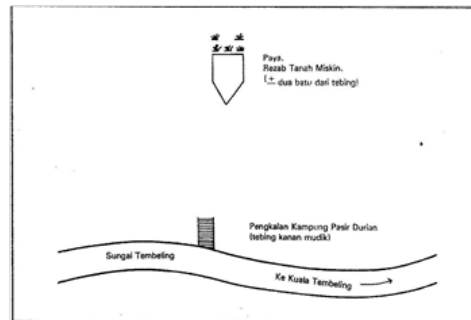
### 3.0 Research Methodology

This research adopts a qualitative approach aimed at providing a descriptive account of traditional Malay pottery produced and managed by the Malay community in Kampung Pasir Durian, Kuala Tembeling, Pahang. The study focuses on several key aspects, including the historical origins of pottery production in this region, the technological processes encompassing design, function, motifs, and philosophies, as well as the economic contributions and conservation efforts associated with this heritage craft. The method involved observation, case study, expert interviews with the artisan, surveys, and literature analysis.

### 4.0 Finding and Discussion

#### 4.1 The Serene Splendor: Exploring the Beauty of Terenang

The art of traditional Malay pottery is deeply rooted in history, with ancient techniques still being practiced and preserved to this day. One such technique that has withstood the test of time is the use of sticks and *kertuk* (anvil) fruit. Various pottery manufacturing sites across Malaysia, including Kuala Tembeling, Sayong, Alor Merah, Mambong, Pulau Tiga, and Kampung Kechur, have upheld this traditional method.



**Figure 1:** Location “Tanah Miskin”  
(Source: Mohd Mokhtar, 1979)

Kampung Pasir Durian, situated along the Tembeling River coastline, serves as a primary hub for traditional pottery production in the state of Pahang. Located approximately 25 kilometers from the town of Jerantut in Pahang via land routes, this village resides on the banks of the Tembeling River, within the jurisdiction of the Tahan State Assembly area. The village derives its name from the abundant durian fruit that washes ashore along the extensive sandy banks of the Tembeling River.

The development of the earthenware pottery industry in Kuala Tembeling is currently experiencing a significant decline. Over time, there has been a noticeable reduction in the number of skilled artisans engaged in the production of earthenware pottery within this village. During a research visit to the village, it was observed that only a few individuals were actively involved in this craft, with one notable figure being Puan Noriah Binti Mat Ali.

According to Puan Noriah, affectionately known as Makcik Noriah, who was 81 years old at the time, she had become the sole practitioner carrying on this traditional heritage in front of her residence, as the younger generation appeared to have lost interest in pursuing this craft. Makcik Noriah revered as an 'Adiguru' (master) in this field, received government support for her production of earthenware items, such as 'terenang' and 'belanga.' Despite working alone, she received assistance from fellow villagers in sourcing the raw material, clay, which needed to be excavated and transported to her residence, just a few hundred meters.

The expanse of clay-rich land, covering approximately six acres, commonly referred to as 'Tanah Miskin' had been designated as such since 1919. This designation was the result of measurements taken by Haji Othman, who was employed at the time at the Land Office of Kuala Lipis District, with the specific intention of promoting earthenware pottery production. Before extracting clay from the 'tanah miskin' area, there are several taboos that must be adhered to, especially for those excavating clay in the forest for the first time. According to Makcik Noriah, the person entering the clay extraction area must wear a coiled vine around the waist, on the hands, and around the neck. The vine referred to is a type of wild creeping plant growing in the vicinity. According to the village residents' beliefs, this taboo must be followed to ensure that the clay gatherer does not get lost or encounter disturbances from the 'guardians' or 'forest spirits.' This ritual is said to be inherited from the indigenous people of the region, who are believed to have a connection to pottery making in Tembeling.

Hand-building techniques using spiral and pinching squeezes are still prevalent. The process involves slowly circling the clay over a swivel, gradually shaping it into the desired form. Previously, a turning tool called '*badang*' was used, but it has now been replaced with a rotary iron turning plate. A '*badang*' made of bamboo is used similar to the *nyiru* tool used for rice processing but with a rounder body. Different regions have their variations in tools and materials. The traditional pottery makers in Mambong utilize a type of wood known as '*kayu pula*,' while in Sayong, an iron plate called '*ayan*' or '*capah*' is employed.

The continuation of these ancient techniques not only showcases the skill and craftsmanship of the Malay artisans but also preserves the cultural heritage and connection to prehistoric pottery manufacturing. Through the use of sticks, *kertuk* fruit, and other traditional tools, the beauty and artistry of Malay pottery continue to be shaped and celebrated in the modern era.



**Figure 2:** *Badang* is used as a slacker to turn pottery in Pahang.  
(Source: Zahirah, 2016, unpublished thesis, UKM)

However, working with the *badang* presents its own set of challenges due to the inherent characteristics of bamboo as compared to an iron spinner. Unlike a solid iron spinner, the body of the *badang*, woven from bamboo blades, is not as firm. As a result, the pottery maker must carefully balance the size of the body with the desired size of the pottery to be produced. This requires skill and precision to ensure that the pottery remains stable and well-formed during the rotational process. Despite the challenges, the *badang* was the most suitable tool available at the time, as it was easily accessible, lightweight, and manageable for rotating pottery.

The use of the *badang* demonstrates the resourcefulness and ingenuity of the traditional pottery makers in Kampung Pasir Durian. They harnessed the materials readily available in their environment to create a tool that served their specific needs. This not only speaks to their craftsmanship but also highlights their deep understanding of the art and science of pottery making. The *badang*, with its distinctive characteristics, contributes to the unique identity and beauty of traditional Malay pottery in Kampung Pasir Durian.

#### 4.2 The Artistry of Pottery Making in Kampung Pasir Durian: Embracing Ancient Techniques

In the traditional pottery manufacturing technique of Kampung Pasir Durian, the artisans employ two fundamental techniques: the pinch squeeze technique and the spiral technique, which have been passed down from prehistoric times. These techniques form the foundation of pottery shaping, with variations occurring mainly in the tools used, the *badang* and plywood, as well as the decorative motifs that evolve with changing times.

Mastering this technique requires expertise and sensitivity on the part of the pottery makers to ensure the proper thickness of the pottery walls. If the walls are too thick, it can result in heavy pots or containers, especially when filled with water. Managing such weight becomes challenging. It is worth noting that a large pot made using these techniques can hold up to 4.8 liters of water, exemplifying the craftsmanship and skill required to create functional and aesthetically pleasing pottery. Maintaining the balance between form and function is a testament to the dexterity of the pottery makers in Kampung Pasir Durian. They skillfully navigate the challenges of achieving the desired thickness, ensuring that the pottery remains lightweight and manageable while fulfilling its practical purpose. The continuity of these

ancient techniques not only preserves the cultural heritage of the community but also contributes to the unique beauty and artistic expression found in their pottery creations.

One of the key techniques employed in the traditional pottery manufacturing of Kampung Pasir Durian is the spiral technique. This technique is primarily used in the creation of *terenang* pots, which historically served as containers for storing water, often sourced from rivers or distant wells. The intricate process begins by forming the base of the pot using a lump of clay, with no predetermined size. The size of the clay base determines the overall dimensions of the pottery. Once the base is stable and satisfies the pottery maker's vision for the final product, the next step involves connecting spirals to form the body of the pot, also known as *belanga*. During this process, the potter carefully presses and molds the clay on the inside to bridge any pores or gaps in the clay. Leaving hollow pores within the pottery would compromise its stability and make it prone to leakage. This is undesirable for earthenware intended to store and retain liquids.

The meticulous attention to detail and craftsmanship in applying the spiral technique ensures that the pottery remains structurally sound and impermeable to water. By carefully pressing and connecting the spirals, the artisans create a cohesive and sturdy vessel that fulfills its intended purpose of storing and preserving liquids. This technique not only reflects the ingenuity of the pottery makers but also highlights the functional aspect of their artistry.

The preservation of the spiral technique in pottery making is a testament to the rich heritage and cultural significance of Kampung Pasir Durian. Through their skilled hands, the artisans continue to uphold and pass down this traditional technique, producing exquisite pottery that not only serves practical purposes but also embodies the unique artistic expression of the community. The hand-built spiral technique used in crafting *terenang* or *belanga* results in pottery pieces that possess their distinctiveness. Each pot showcases the creative touch and unique style of its maker. While the basic shape of the pottery may appear similar, the process of creating it, the finishing touches, the decorative motifs, and the firing methods employed all contribute to the individuality of each piece. Throughout the pottery-making process, the potter's creativity, and skill shine through. The way they manage the clay, the particular finishes they apply, the technique used for shaping and adding decorative motifs, and even the nuances of the firing process all contribute to the final product's character. Despite these differences, when the process is complete, the resulting pots bear a resemblance to one another, maintaining the recognizable form that defines them.

The uniqueness of each hand-built pottery piece is a testament to the creativity and craftsmanship of the artisans. While adhering to the traditional spiral technique, they infuse their personal touch, bringing forth variations and subtle distinctions in the final products. These variations add to the charm and diversity of the pottery, ensuring that each piece holds its allure.





**Figure 3:** Terenang from Muzium Sultan Abu Bakar and Museum Taiping  
(Source: Muzium Pekan and Muzium Taiping Perak collection, 2016 )

Appreciating the beauty and individuality within the hand-built spiral pottery of Kampung Pasir Durian allows us to recognize the expertise and artistic vision of the makers. Their skillful hands transform humble clay into functional and visually captivating vessels, preserving a cherished tradition while embracing the unique creativity that makes each piece truly one-of-a-kind. In the creation of handmade pottery, a crucial step is employed to ensure that the pottery walls are sturdy and impermeable. This method, known as '*meluru*' plays a vital role in closing the pores within the clay structure, resulting in non-shaft pottery. *Meluru* is specifically carried out on the inside of the pottery while it is in a semi-dry state when the clay is still pliable and soft.

During the process, friction and pressure are applied to the interior surface of the pottery. This technique is essential for bridging and closing all the pores present within the clay, effectively smoothing the inner walls. It is a meticulous process that requires intermittent application, taking into consideration the physical shape of the pottery, particularly the convex Terenang in the body and the concave areas like the neck. Simultaneously bridging clay linkages and the inside of the pottery becomes even more critical in the neck region. Performing both processes simultaneously ensures a thorough and uniform smoothing. If *meluru* is not done before the neck area shrinking, it becomes increasingly challenging to access and streamline the inner walls. The fingers of the potter may find it difficult to reach the recesses of the pot, hindering the desired outcome. *Meluru* technique in handmade pottery not only serves a functional purpose in sealing the clay pores but also contributes to the overall aesthetic appeal of the finished piece. By meticulously attending to the interior details, potters in Kampung Pasir Durian ensure the creation of pottery that is not only visually pleasing but also highly functional and durable. Through the skillful art of *meluru*, the potters elevate the quality of their handmade pottery, creating vessels that are both aesthetically beautiful and highly practical. This delicate process, carried out with care and precision, exemplifies the expertise and craftsmanship of the artisans, as they transform soft clay into exquisite works of functional art.

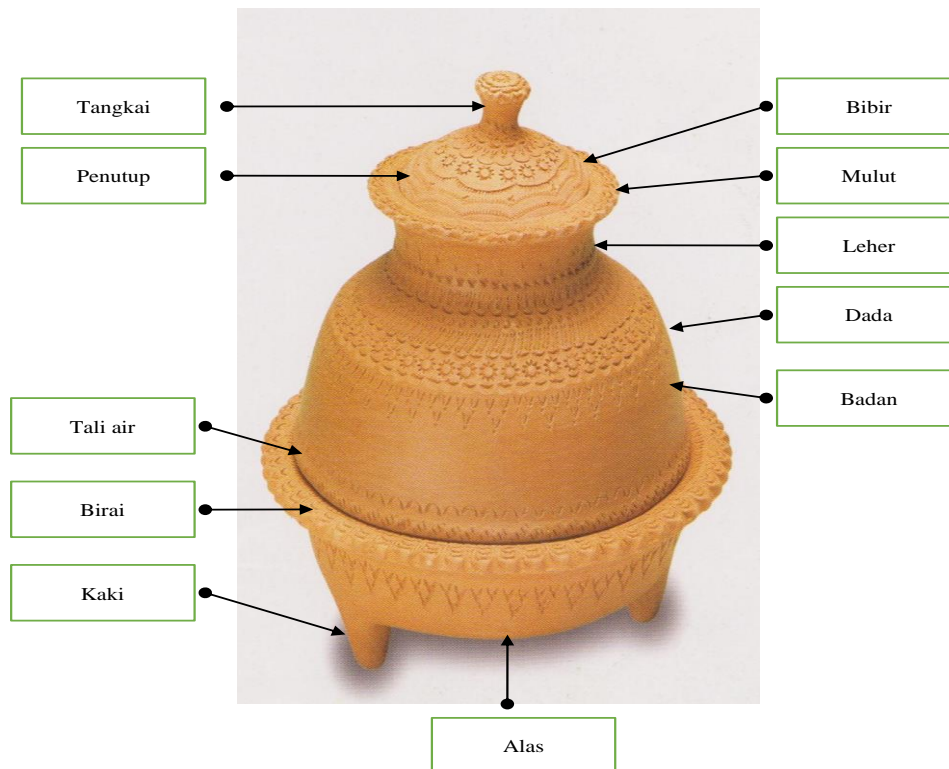
The production process of Terenang is characterized by its intricate shape, featuring numerous indentations. It can be divided into three main sections: the neck, body, and legs. Precise timing and skillful execution are crucial when connecting the narrowing neck to the convex body during the manufacturing process. Furthermore, the legs possess an elegant base floor, effectively supporting its wide and large body. Despite its seemingly disproportionate appearance, the Terenang maintains a sense of stability and grace, akin to a woman wearing high heels. This resemblance highlights its ability to achieve stability despite its unique shape. Consequently, the hand-building technique is well-suited for crafting Terenang, given the particularities of their indented structure, ensuring the preservation of their inherent authenticity.



Crafting the Terenang requires expertise and meticulousness due to its distinct shape. Achieving a balanced base is crucial, and during the semi-dry stage of the pot, the base is flipped upwards and carefully patted with a sticking stick or a kicking stick to flatten it. The tapping of the wood is executed with caution to ensure that the inclined base remains steady when completed. The art of terenang making is not easily acquired; it demands extensive training to develop the necessary skills. Not everyone can produce a visually pleasing form with a wide base and a small circle of legs, while the body is also wide but balanced by a slender neck that expands towards the lip area. The terenang's overall appearance gives the impression of interconnected segments, yet it is actually formed from a single round of clay using the spiral technique, skillfully squeezed and shaped into the lip's edge. The distinctive design of the terenang grants it a high aesthetic value. Its appeal lies in its exquisite design and meticulous sculpting process, which enhances the pottery's aesthetic qualities.



**Figure 4:** Making a traditional handbuilt Terenang in Terenang Workshop  
(Source: Zahirah Harun, 2016, unpublished thesis, UKM)



**Figure 5:** Anatomy of Terenang Design  
(Source: Zahirah Harun, 2016)

**Table 1:** Dimensions of Small and Large Terenang (Earthenware Pottery)  
(Source: Case Study, Zahirah Harun, 2016)

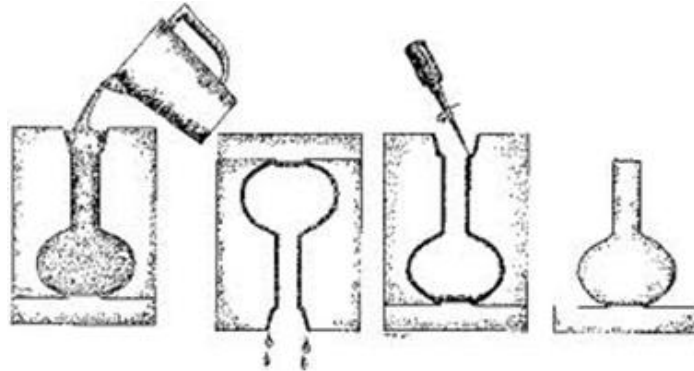
No	Dimensions		Small Terenang	Large Terenang
1	Height		15 centimeters	26.5 centimeters
2	Width		42 centimeters	74 centimeters
3	Mouth Circumference		24 centimeters	43 centimeters
4	Neck Circumference		18.5 centimeters	36 centimeters

*Note: This table provides the dimensions of both small and large Terenang, which are types of earthenware potter*

#### 4.3 Design sustainability

Preserving cultural artifacts presents inherent challenges. An effective approach to ensure the sustainability of pottery in Pasir Durian village involves transitioning from traditional handmade techniques to mold-based methods. While concerns have been raised about the potential loss of aesthetic value associated with handcrafted and traditional pottery during the molding process, this adaptation has proven instrumental in averting the extinction of the pottery tradition.

This process has successfully reduced production costs and can be produced in a short period. This is evident in what has happened to 'labu sayong' producers in Sayong and Pulau Tiga in Perak. Almost all the producers here have abandoned traditional production methods and switched to mold techniques. It has been proven by past researchers that this transformation does not damage or eliminate the aesthetic value, whether in the manufacturing process or the motifs that define the original identity of handmade clay pottery to molded ones. This transformation is a positive development that contributes to the preservation and longevity of traditional pottery.



**Figure 6:** Pottery molding process  
(Source: case study, Zahirah Harun, 2015)



**Figure 7:** Slip casting process.  
(Source: Temin Kraf Industry gallery, Jerantut, Pahang, 2019)



Figure 8: Molded Terenang  
(Source: Temin Kraf Industry, Jerantut, Pahang, 2019 )

#### 4.3 Aesthetic and Beauty

When studying a work or object, it is essential to consider various aspects, including the formal aspect, which pertains to its visual composition, and the meaning aspect, which encompasses explicit and implied interpretations (iconology). Such investigations take into account the temporal dimension, historical background, and cultural context.

Sidi Gazalba's theory of beauty posits an association between beauty, absolute truth, and goodness. It revolves around the human connection with aesthetically pleasing forms. Appreciation of artwork is enhanced when it elicits a sense of pleasantness. Ethics plays a determining role in evaluating the moral quality of a work, while aesthetics is decisive in assessing its beauty or ugliness.

Within Islam, beauty is valued and revered (as per Hadith). According to Gazalba, artwork must embody good values, or at the very least, be morally neutral. Islam does not recognize the notion of partially bad values, and it strictly prohibits the inclusion of values that could harm a Muslim's faith. If a Muslim's work incorporates values that are considered haram (forbidden) in Islam, it would be excluded from the category of Islamic art. Islam upholds and legitimizes a beauty that aligns with moral principles, rejecting beauty devoid of morality. Goodness, in turn, must be guided by the truth, with the ultimate truth being defined by Allah s.w.t. This positive value can be visualized through the following triangular diagram.

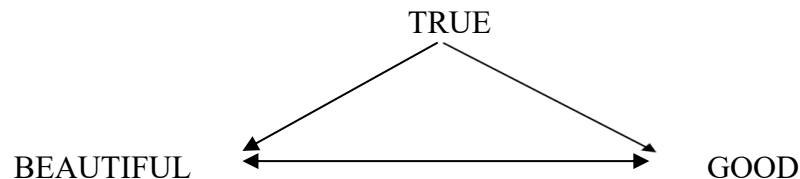


Figure 9: Theory of the Beauty of Art in Islam  
(Source: Sidi Gazalba, 1977)

According to Gazalba, pure aesthetics refers to the perception that encompasses both form and color and elicits a sense of pleasantness. It is important to note that beauty is inherently subjective, making it difficult to quantify or measure. However, there are certain characteristics that are commonly associated with beauty, such as unity, harmony, symmetry, balance, and the juxtaposition of opposites. These attributes contribute to the overall perception and

experience of beauty. When considering the metaphysical perspective, various other definitions and interpretations of beauty arise, reflecting the multifaceted nature of this concept including:

1. Beauty composed of various harmonies and contrasts of lines, colors, shapes, tones, and words.
2. Beauty is a set of harmonious relationships in an object and between the object and the audience.
3. Beauty is the unity of the form relationship found between objects perceived by our senses.

Beauty is indeed a subjective concept, and its interpretation varies significantly among individuals. The understanding of beauty is shaped by personal experiences, cultural influences, and individual perspectives. As a result, there is a diverse range of interpretations and judgments regarding what is considered beautiful. When examining different points of view and theories about beauty, it becomes evident that there are numerous subjective views on the subject. Various theories propose different frameworks for understanding and defining beauty, each with its own set of criteria and principles. These theories often reflect the philosophical, artistic, or cultural backgrounds from which they emerge. For instance, aesthetic theories such as formalism emphasize the inherent qualities and formal elements of an object or artwork as the primary source of beauty. On the other hand, theories like emotionalism prioritize the emotional response and subjective experience evoked by a particular object or artwork. Cultural relativism recognizes the influence of cultural norms and values on perceptions of beauty, asserting that beauty is culturally constructed and can vary across different societies and historical periods.

Beauty is a subjective concept with diverse understandings and interpretations. The subjective nature of beauty is evident in the variation of judgments and the multitude of theories and perspectives on the concept. Recognizing and appreciating the subjectivity of beauty allows for a more nuanced understanding and encourages dialogue and exploration of different viewpoints in the realm of aesthetics.

Al-Ghazali, a Sufi philosopher, does not prioritize physical works of art as he believes they serve only superficial purposes. However, he acknowledges the relationship between beauty and religion. According to Al-Ghazali, anything that is considered beneficial to the beholder and evokes attraction becomes a source of beauty. He equates perfection with beauty, suggesting that individuals strive for perfection in life as it leads to a sense of fulfillment. Conversely, the failure to attain perfection is seen as lacking beauty.

According to Al-Ghazali, beautiful objects serve as advocates for human existence. These objects are not only valued for their beauty, but they also contribute to the preservation and enrichment of the individual who establishes a connection with them. Beyond supporting human existence, beautiful objects can be enjoyed and loved simply for their inherent beauty. When humans appreciate the natural beauty found in elements like trees, birds, and flowers, it demonstrates how the enjoyment of nature's beauty in terms of form, color, and sound brings favor to the beholder. This perception of natural beauty instills the notion that the Creator of such beauty is truly magnificent.

Consequently, he concludes that inner beauty holds a higher degree of significance compared to external beauty. While external beauty can be readily perceived and enjoyed, the inner beauty that resonates within the depths of one's being requires a heightened level of perception and understanding. This inner beauty encompasses qualities related to the spiritual realm, morality, and the pursuit of higher truths. Thus, he emphasizes the importance of recognizing



and nurturing the inner beauty that emanates from the heart as it holds a greater value and potential for profound transformation and enrichment.

Renowned local visual arts artist, Syed Ahmad Jamal, approaches the appreciation of artwork from a perspective that considers its purpose, function, and concept while emphasizing the importance of aesthetics. According to him, the essence of a work lies in the intricate relationship between its appearance and the shape in which it is presented, capturing the thoughts and emotions of its creator. However, Syed Ahmad Jamal observes that Malay art, in comparison to other forms of art, appears to place less emphasis on the individual expression of the artist's soul. Furthermore, although Malay art may have connections to religious themes, it tends to prioritize beauty and decoration, aligning with the artistic requirements of the culture.

Syed Ahmad Jamal perceives Malay fine art as a manifestation of the natural elements, which are infused into the artistic portrayal. This portrayal arises from the keen observation, reflection, and contemplation of the artist, ultimately giving rise to dreams that encapsulate the harmonious relationship between humanity and nature.

Syed Ahmad Jamal's perspective highlights the significance of appreciating artwork through the lenses of purpose, function, concept, and aesthetics. He notes the distinctive characteristics of Malay art, which seemingly places less emphasis on individual expression and religious themes, instead focusing on beauty, decoration, and the incorporation of nature. By delving into the creator's observations, reflections, and dreams, Malay fine art embodies the inherent harmony between humankind and the natural world.

The theories of Western philosophers, such as Immanuel Kant, provide further insights into the concept of beauty. Kant, a German philosopher, proposed that objects that bring satisfaction to the observer are considered beautiful. In the evaluation of beauty, taste plays a crucial role as it is the faculty that allows us to judge and form impressions of the objects we perceive. Kant categorizes beauty into two distinct types:

1. Free/Pure Beauty: This type of beauty is found in natural objects like flowers, birds, and seashells. It is characterized by its purity, as it does not imitate any other object nor undergo any intentional alteration or stylization.
2. Dependent/Adherent Beauty: This category refers to the beauty that is associated with an object's ability to fulfil its purpose and meet its specific requirements. It pertains to the beauty that arises when an object perfectly embodies its intended functionality and usefulness. Kant's theories highlight the distinction between beauty derived from the innate qualities of natural objects and beauty derived from the harmonious fulfilment of an object's purpose. By categorizing beauty in this way, Kant offers a framework for understanding and appreciating different facets of aesthetic experience.

The concept of Malay art primarily revolves around the notion of beauty, with a strong emphasis on materials and techniques. Malays derive inspiration from nature, considering it as the foremost source of creative influence that caters to their needs and serves a practical purpose. A work of Malay art is deemed beautiful and perfect when it encompasses three key characteristics: subtlety, originality, and expediency. Zakaria Ali (1989) elucidates the aesthetic nature of Malay fine art and outlines principles that encompass subtlety, utility, symbolism, resilience, and meaningfulness. This approach can be referred to as objectivism, which posits that specific characteristics or elements contribute to the beauty and allure of a work.

The Malays' historical journey encompasses various beliefs and influences, starting from their roots in animism. Over time, they integrated fatalistic and mystical values into their way of life,



extending these principles to their artistic expressions. The natural forces and elements were revered and utilized as protectors, reflecting their efforts to establish harmony with the environment. The introduction of new religions, such as Hinduism and Buddhism, led to a transformation of animistic motifs into representations of flora and fauna. This shift brought forth a new dimension in artwork, particularly in three-dimensional art, and enriched the aesthetic value of other art forms like handicrafts. Despite the conversion of the Malays to Islam, mystical elements, figures, and symbolism still find their place in contemporary artworks. This is a testament to the enduring influence of beliefs and the cultural heritage that continue to shape the artistic production and reception within Malay society. However, with the process of Islamization, there have been efforts to refine and imbue art with a more elevated perspective. These changes reflect the evolving dynamics of art production and the desire to align artistic expressions with a sublime understanding guided by Islamic principles.

Traditional Malay art was closely tied to the feudal system and social stratification within the palace community. In the past, the existence of this system provided a platform for assigning meaning to artistic creations. The palace, being in a position of power, could act as a patron for the arts, supporting and commissioning artworks to fulfill its own needs and desires. This arrangement thrived as long as the palace had control over its financial resources. However, with the advent of colonial rule, the dynamics shifted. The colonizers gained control over the palace's funds, leading to a decline in the exclusive rights and support previously enjoyed by certain groups within the palace. The colonizers, having their own agendas and priorities, exerted influence over the arts, ultimately reshaping the landscape of traditional Malay art.

The art of the Malay people is renowned for its incorporation of natural elements. Through their high imagination and inherent creativity, Malays create artwork that features motifs inspired by nature, as well as geometric and cosmic elements. This artistic expression stems from their extensive research, observations, and experiences within their environment. To further enhance their connection with nature, Malays often name their creations after natural elements. Moreover, in the art of the look, specific parts of living beings are also emphasized, reflecting the importance placed on depicting the characteristics of limbs and body parts in their artwork. This attention to detail adds depth and realism to their creations. In addition to its aesthetic qualities, Malay art also serves utilitarian purposes. The emphasis on applied values is evident in various Malay arts and crafts, where functionality is prioritized alongside artistic elements. This practical aspect highlights the practicality and usefulness of their artistic expressions. With the arrival of Islam, the concept of Malay fine art expanded to encompass not only utilitarian and applied values but also aesthetic values, as well as moral and spiritual values. Islam's influence brought about a deeper appreciation for the aesthetics of art and highlighted the importance of goodness and truth in artistic creations. As a result, the art of the Malay people not only serves practical purposes but also carries a profound aesthetic value and reflects the values of righteousness and truthfulness.

Aesthetics, as described by Haziyah Husin et al. (2009), involves the exploration of the philosophy of beauty. The term "aesthetics" is derived from the Greek word "aisthetikos," which means sensitive. According to the definition provided by the German philosopher Alexander Baumgarten (1714-1762), aesthetics refers to the sensation or reaction that arises within oneself because of external stimuli. It is a subjective experience that occurs within an individual.

Beauty is closely associated with aesthetics, and it evokes a sense of admiration and appreciation. The concept of beauty is multifaceted and can be explored from various perspectives. Aesthetics help to elucidate and describe the nature of beauty, as well as its attributes and qualities. When confronted with something beautiful, the audience or observer is naturally drawn to it. This beautiful object is often regarded as a work of art, as it possesses qualities that captivate and inspire.

In summary, aesthetics is the study of beauty and the philosophy behind it. It investigates the subjective experience of beauty and the reactions it elicits within individuals. Beauty is a captivating and appealing quality that attracts and engages our senses. Aesthetic appreciation helps us understand and appreciate the beauty that exists in various forms, including art.

Aesthetics is indeed a subjective experience, as it is influenced by individual tastes and perspectives on beauty. Each person may have a unique appreciation and interpretation of what they consider beautiful. The perception of beauty is not solely reliant on factual aspects, as the evaluation of a work of art extends beyond its external characteristics. Art appreciation involves engaging with the artwork on an emotional and sensory level.

According to the suggestion put forth by Moore (1942), beauty can be examined from both objective and subjective angles. The objective viewpoint considers the physical elements of the artwork, such as its shape, color, size, lines, and textures. It also takes into account the ideas and combinations manifested in the artistic process. This includes the imagination, thoughts, and emotions that the artist infuses into their work, which ultimately harmonizes the physical elements with conceptual elements, resulting in a completed artwork.

In essence, aesthetics encompasses both the objective aspects of an artwork's physical composition and the subjective experience and interpretation of the artwork by the viewer. The beauty of a work of art is a fusion of its tangible elements and the artist's expressive ideas, inviting individuals to engage with it on a personal and emotional level. Indeed, aesthetics is evaluated from a subjective perspective, considering the overall outcome of the artwork. Each art appreciator brings their own understanding, interpretation, and assessment to the evaluation process, taking into account the objectives that the artist intended to convey through their work. As subjective beings, individuals may have different tastes and preferences, leading to varying judgments of beauty. Due to the subjective nature of aesthetics, it is natural for different art appreciators to have diverse opinions and assessments of the same artwork. What one person finds beautiful and compelling may not resonate with another. This individuality of perception and judgment is what allows for a diverse range of artistic expressions and interpretations. Hence, everyone possesses the right to judge beauty based on their taste. Aesthetic appreciation is subjective, and individuals are free to form their own opinions and evaluations of artworks, reflecting their unique perspectives, preferences, and experiences. This diversity of viewpoints contributes to the richness and vibrancy of the artistic world.

#### 4.4 Aesthetic and Beauty in Terenang

In the production of pottery in Kampung Pasir Durian, an aesthetic point of view is not only for the end product. Where how the artisan manages to design, to select certain motifs in a specific arrangement according to design principles. The process in the early stage of making will involve a certain cultural local understanding of intrinsic attitude gave philosophical values, meaning, and local genius of the beauty of Terenang Pottery. Clay is sourced from an area specifically designated by the sultan for pottery makers in the village. The clay here is particularly unique, bearing a specific designation that renders pottery production in this state distinctive from other states in Malaysia.

The clay excavation area is known as 'Tanah Miskin,' and its name suggests that the land is not utilized for other purposes, providing pottery makers the opportunity to extract clay without specific restrictions. The uniqueness of the clay in "Tanah Miskin" is further accentuated by enduring beliefs practiced by the village residents. The mentioned restriction involves the practice of wearing coiled creeping plants around the waist and head of the clay excavators. These coiled creeping plants, locally known as 'ulan' vines, are believed to assist clay excavators in not getting lost while searching for clay.

For the traditional Malay farmers of Pahang, selecting auspicious days for commencing specific tasks was customary. Clay extraction, carried out collectively, was scheduled for Sundays and Thursdays. All these prohibitions, tips, and taboos illustrate the pureness, consecrated to profound artistic philosophy embedded in the creation of Terenang pottery in this community.

Persistent cultural prohibitions endure in the contemporary practices of clay extraction, where menstruating women are forbidden from participating, as their involvement is believed to jeopardize the structural integrity of the pottery, leading to cracks and breakage during the firing process. Additionally, restrictions are placed on the release of gas during clay excavation, stemming from concerns about potential pottery breakage during firing.

In the context of modern ceramics, the occurrence of pottery breakage during firing is often attributed to the presence of trapped air bubbles within the clay matrix. The expansion of these air bubbles at elevated temperatures can result in structural compromise, manifesting as cracks and breakage in the pottery. This phenomenon is exacerbated when the clay is inadequately wedged and contains extraneous particles.

Historically, Terenang crafted by traditional potters was characterized by larger sizes, lightweight, lack of lids, absence of bases, and predominantly black coloration. Decorations varied, ranging from embossed flowers to simple sketches covering the surface of the Terenang. The larger size of Terenang was determined by the body board used as a turning platform during that era. The non-uniform size was left to the discretion of individual potters, as the clay was never weighed to achieve uniform weight and size. As a gesture of respect for the clay that bestowed their livelihood, the potters never measured the weight of the clay. This philosophy has endured from ancient times to the present. Nevertheless, their daily-honed skills allow them to estimate the weight of the clay in their hands and predict the size of the pottery to be crafted.

A perfect Terenang achieves balance in form, decorative patterns, and specific motif selection, and only experienced potters can consistently produce such excellence. Therefore, not all potters can create a flawless Terenang. This aesthetic beauty adds significant value to Terenang, further enhanced by a touch of mystical belief embedded in the pottery-making process. This uniqueness contributes to the distinctiveness of pottery production in this village.

The consensus among interviewed traditional pottery makers in this community affirms that each artisan exhibits distinctive characteristics, contributing to the individuality of their pottery creations. These distinctions primarily manifest in the motifs employed and their arrangement. Although utilizing motifs of a similar nature, divergences in motif arrangement impart unique identities to each vessel and Terenang, thereby highlighting the individuality of the maker.

Source of Motifs	Motifs on Terenang
<p data-bbox="407 296 602 323">Tapak Pelanduk</p> 	

## 5.0 Conclusion

Following the research findings, the production of traditional ceramics in Kampung Pasir Durian exhibits distinctive characteristics, specifically in terms of visual design aesthetics and symbolic beauty. The design aesthetics are intricately interwoven with a nuanced philosophy. The refinement of Terenang pottery is discernible throughout the entire production process, beginning with the meticulous selection of clay, exemplified by the utilization of the specific clay type known as "Tanah Miskin." This clay variant is recognized for its favorable soil density components.

From the standpoint of design conceptualization and forming techniques, several traditional methods, notably the pinching technique, have been retained to uphold longstanding practices. However, in the firing process, there is a discernible shift from traditional combustion methods, such as wood firing, to a contemporary and pragmatic approach involving electric kilns. This transition is motivated by considerations of efficiency in terms of time, quantity, and cost. Importantly, this modernization in firing techniques does not compromise the intrinsic quality of design and aesthetic value.

The selection and innovation of motifs derive inspiration from the artisan's profound connection with nature. Motifs are meticulously crafted in various sizes, guided by considerations of arrangement and adherence to aesthetic principles. The uniqueness and aesthetic appeal of Terenang pottery are further underscored by the artisan's comprehensive understanding of materials, mastery in craftsmanship, and sustained dedication to excellence. Furthermore, specific cultural beliefs and etiquette observed throughout the production process contribute significantly to the distinctiveness of this pottery.

The refinement of aesthetic values is evident not only in the external craftsmanship of the pottery but also in its internal beauty. This is exemplified by the artisan's adept observation skills that culminated in the creation of an "Art Language." This term denotes the artful manifestation of the intricate relationship between humanity, nature, and the Creator through specific design elements such as "*Tali air*", head, lips, and body. The portrayal of human anatomy in the artwork serves as a poignant reflection of the profound interconnection between humans and the natural environment.

The sustainability of pottery cannot rely on a single entity. If we aspire to preserve pottery as a cultural heritage, it is imperative that we collectively nurture and revitalize it by continuing its production. The study of the beauty of traditional Malay pottery from Kampung Pasir Durian elevates the dignity and significance of traditional pottery in Malaysia. Although the progress of traditional pottery in Kuala Tembeling may appear somewhat lackluster, the community still highly values its cultural and aesthetic values. This underscores the need for relevant stakeholders to take action in fostering and preserving this cultural artistry, ensuring its enduring legacy and continued appreciation by the public.

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