

Themes and Trends of Art Collective in Malaysia Contemporary Art from 2000-2020

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To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBS/v14-i1/18338>

DOI:10.6007/IJARBS/v14-i1/18338

Published Date: 09 January 2024

Abstract

This research delves into the evolution of art collectives in Malaysia spanning from 2000 to 2020, illuminating their profound influence on the nation's contemporary art scene. The significance of this investigation lies in its capacity to document more than two decades of artistic progress, mirroring the cultural, social, and technological shifts that have moulded Malaysia's modern art landscape. These art collectives act as vital channels for artistic expression, playing a pivotal role in enriching Malaysia's art and culture. Utilizing a qualitative research approach, this study primarily relies on secondary research methods, meticulously scrutinizing an array of published materials such as invitation cards, catalogues, articles, books, and newspaper clippings. Employing the thematic analysis method, these diverse data sources are curated and synthesized to construct a comprehensive chronology and timeline of art collectives during the specified period. This research methodology facilitates a detailed exploration of the emergence and activities of these collectives, ultimately unveiling their contributions to Malaysia's contemporary art realm. The major findings of this study identify key themes and trends that characterized Malaysia's art scene during the 2000-2020 period. In the 2000-2010 era, some art collectives emerged as pioneers, focusing on foundational identity, exploration of alternative spaces, local and cultural engagement, and collaborative networking. In the post-2010 era, art collectives expanded their horizons, embracing diversity, sustainability, environmental concerns, digital and virtual engagement, and conceptual exploration. These findings pave the way for further research avenues, including the examination of art collectives' societal impact, the intersection of technology and art in Malaysia, international collaboration among collectives, and the sustainability of these artistic networks over time. This research stands as an indispensable resource for scholars, artists, and cultural enthusiasts intrigued by the multifaceted evolution of art collectives in Malaysia.

Keywords: Art Collectives, Themes, Trends, Malaysia Contemporary Art, 2000-2020

Introduction

Spanning over 90 years, the trajectory of art development in Malaysia encapsulates its pioneering era and extends beyond the vision of 2020. This historical timeline not only involves early artists but also embraces the emergence of young artists, whether university graduates or self-taught talents.

From the turn of the millennium, a surge of art collectives has surfaced, profoundly reshaping the landscape of Malaysia's contemporary art scene. These collectives function as fusion points for shared platforms, ideas, goals, interests, and artistic themes. Artists congregate in these groups, often united by educational backgrounds, artistic styles, or socio-political concerns, pooling their efforts for collaborative projects, exhibitions, and events.

Central to these collectives is the provision of an environment conducive to artist support, creative dialogue, resource-sharing, and the birth of innovative concepts. Through collaborative endeavors, these groups defy conventional artistic norms, confront societal issues, and enrich Malaysia's cultural and intellectual panorama.

Critical components underpin the success and functionality of an art collective. Among these are the cultivation of a communal spirit and the fostering of an affable disposition among members. This nurturing atmosphere thrives on values like mutual respect, cooperation, and transparent communication. Moreover, the collective must embody a shared vision or artistic direction that guides its pursuits, empowering the assembly to present a coherent artistic lineup and generate impactful creations. Lastly, a streamlined organizational framework is indispensable, featuring defined roles, well-structured decision-making procedures, and mechanisms for resource sharing and project management.

The evolution of collective identity within Malaysian art collectives is a result of shared experiences, artistic exploration, and cultural interchange. Collaborative undertakings such as projects, exhibitions, and workshops facilitate the exchange of ideas, techniques, and perspectives among collective members. Gradually, this joint engagement has played a pivotal role in molding a distinct artistic identity that mirrors Malaysia's fusion of culture, history, and contemporary issues. Further reinforcement of this collective identity stems from the collectives' interaction with the local community, fostering a sense of belonging and shared ownership. This reciprocal relationship enriches both the artistic expressions and the societal bonds nurtured by these art collectives.

Literature Review

"Collective" is commonly employed as a comprehensive label encompassing diverse manifestations of social structures, including clusters, societies, entities, masses, assemblages, or congregations. The concept proposed in this context envisions the collective as possessing a distinct structure, albeit one that is delicate and represents a momentary phase of fluid equilibrium in the shared emotions and self-perception of the participants engaged in this configuration (Slaby & Von Scheve, 2019: 267-278).

According to Moore (2007), collectives are integral to post-modern visual art creation, introducing complexities related to aspects such as defining artistic practices, organizing exhibitions, establishing sales systems, managing publicity and critique, and even influencing artistic style and subjects. The aim of an artist collective is founded on the initiative to collaborate within a single space, sharing a studio, equipment, ideologies, aesthetics, and even living arrangements like an extended family (Berahim et al., 2022).

The initial progression of modern art in Malaysia was impacted by three key factors: British colonialism, the movement of 'traders', and the state of education (Mahamood, 2004:

1). Throughout the course of Malaysian modern art's evolution, the formation of different painter groups, clubs, and associations from the 1920s onward was fundamentally motivated by painters' aspiration to collaborate in a communal environment (Khairuddin, 2016: 179). Additionally, numerous artists in Malaysia embarked on their artistic journeys within art collectives (Bongsu & Legino, 2018: 477).

The essence of modernism in the visual art tradition of Malaysia hasn't been genuinely realized, except when it's merely about superficial aesthetics and form (Shahir, 2004). The evolution of modern Malaysian painting can be observed by examining the progression of local painting associations and collectives. This exploration centers on artists, artworks, objectives, artistic styles, guiding philosophies, symbolism, and undertaken initiatives. This progression inadvertently facilitated the cohesion of the nation's painters' associations and groups, contributing to the advancement of the art scene in Malaysia (Mahamood, 2004).

The Penang Impressionist collective stands out as an early example of art associations. The contemporary Penang Impressionists could serve as a potential model for the creation of other art groups. The subsequent formation of the Penang Chinese Art Club can be interpreted as a response to the exclusionary practices of the Penang Impressionists, who didn't admit local individuals as members (Chuah, 2012: 55).

During the subsequent years, the Selangor Art Society was founded in 1954. It convened weekly at Methodist Boy's School in Kuala Lumpur on Thursdays, engaging in activities such as body and portrait painting, drawing, and sketching on weekends and holidays. This society ceased its operations in 1970. Likewise, the Thursday Art Group emerged in Penang in 1957, with notable members including Abdullah Ariff, Tay Hooi Keat, Kuo Ju Ping, Lee Joo For, Lim Tong Juan, and William K.K. Lau (Jamal, 2016). Subsequently, the Penang Water Color Artist group followed suit.

The history of Nanyang artists traces back to a small cluster of painters who aimed to elevate and nurture the art of painting in Malaya during the British colonial era. This group, part of the wave of Chinese migration to Southeast Asia in the 1920s and 30s, played a role in the region's artistic development (Ong, 2012: 61).

In 1952, the Wednesday Art Group (WAG) was established in Kuala Lumpur by Peter Harris, an English painter, art educator, and Art Education Supervisor for the Ministry of Education. The group operated as a hub for painting-related activities, providing Harris with the chance to interact with skilled art teachers and enthusiasts during his assessments of local art school curricula (Piyadasa, 2012: 32).

Angkatan Pelukis Semenanjung, a collective that upholds the belief that art serves as a medium for expressing cultural values, is significant. Launched in Kuala Lumpur in 1956 and led by Hoessein Enas, a painter from Java who received training at an Indonesian portrait art academy, the group's creative philosophy revolves around the concept of 'art of the nation's values.' This philosophy is deeply intertwined with the struggle for national independence (Mahamood, 2004).

The period spanning the 1970s and 1990s can be characterized as a vibrant era of growth and transformation in shaping the visual and distinctive aspects of the advancement of modern Malaysian art (Shahir, 2013). The tradition of modern 2D artworks is seen to be more open and bolder with the emergence of new works in terms of style and approach, while 3D artworks have been seen to broaden the understanding and practice of the reality of space, volume, void which was previously understood conventionally.

Anak Alam, a segment of APS formed in 1974, can be acknowledged as Malaysia's inaugural artists' collective. Comprising artists who initially advocated for diverse artistic

practices, they were pioneers. During the 1980s, the Five Arts Center and Centerstage Performing Arts further elevated the significance of autonomous spaces, championing a multidisciplinary approach and a focus on contextual relevance. Starting from the 1990s, artworks by Malay artists have adopted a more evaluative standpoint that corresponds with the postmodern context or '*situasi percamoden*,' coinciding with Malaysia's rapid transition into modernization (Abdullah, 2011), and early 2000s witnessed a swift expansion of venues established by artists themselves, driven by their critical perspective on both bodies and institutions (Khairuddin, 2016).

The shift to the term "contemporary" has led to the dispersion of discussions about present and innovative art in different avenues. This change has created the circumstances for evolution and the presence of diverse avenues for artistic creation and contemporary artistic expressions up to the present time. Four primary currents that delineate extensive circulation trends within both local and global settings, enabling us to meticulously extrapolate the distinct methodologies of each artist into an ecological domain, encompass internationalism and emerging regionalism, the novel lexicon of painting: establishing or portraying figurative painting, and unconventional approaches that deviate from the norm (Soon, 2013).

Methodology

The research employs a qualitative approach predominantly based on secondary research methods. To achieve this, the researchers rely on a variety of published materials, effectively utilizing them as data sources. The primary aim of the study is to establish a chronological overview of the themes and trends of art collectives in Malaysia contemporary art from 2000 to 2020. The data collection process involves meticulous examination of diverse documents, such as invitation cards, catalogues, articles, published books, and newspaper clippings. By systematically analyzing these materials, the researchers extract factual information pertaining to the emergence and activities of art collectives. The collected references, drawn from a wide spectrum of publications, are then synthesized to construct a comprehensive chronology and timeline. This process is further enhanced by the inclusion of artists' biodata, which aids in identifying their roles and contributions to these art collectives. In essence, the thematic analysis method (Braun & Clarke, 2006) revolves around curating and organizing existing information from varied sources to depict the developmental trajectory of art collectives in the given time frame.

Findings

This study emphasizes the paramount importance of creating a comprehensive list of art collectives as a testament to their evolution within the Malaysian art scene. The investigation is geared towards meticulously chronicling the establishment of a multitude of art collectives, commencing from the early 2000s and spanning until the conclusion of the 2020 era.

The establishment and collaborative endeavors of these art collectives serve to enrich and invigorate the landscape of local contemporary art. Their invaluable contributions to the advancement of the local contemporary art realm are both indisputable and undeniable. The impact of their exhibition activities and thoughtfully curated programs resonates distinctively, leaving an indelible mark on the progression of the domestic contemporary art industry.

The analytical findings stemming from this research can be thoughtfully segmented into several sub-discussions, each aligned with the established timeline for individual collectives, as outlined below

2000-2010 Era

Studio Dikala Jingga emerged as a collective comprising a cohort of young artists who graduated from Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM), Shah Alam, in the realm of Fine Art back in 2000. In its initial stages, the collective consisted of five members: Zulkiflee Zainul Abidin, Ali Nurazmal Yusoff, Suddin Lappo, Uzaini Amir, and Haris Hamsani. Post-graduation, they took the bold step of establishing an art studio, leasing a shop lot in Alam Megah, Shah Alam. Their collective ethos revolves around the concept of a dedicated space or studio to foster their artistic endeavors. In the third year of their journey, Khairina Khairuddin joined their ranks, thus further enriching the collective's composition. Remarkably, the seeds of this collective were sown during their third semester at UiTM, signifying a shared passion, an unwavering commitment to producing exceptional works, and an aspiration to achieve the pinnacle of artistic excellence, emulating the example set by their predecessors. Their creative predilections are predominantly inclined towards realistic and figurative works, a testament to their genuine fascination and admiration for this artistic approach.

Komuniti Jalan Kempas, founded by Shaifuddin Mamat@Poodien, Aisyah Baharuddin, and Intan Rafiza Abu Bakar, started as a group of young artists who tried to create a new space among other growth and formation of the Malaysian art movement. This collective, located in the residential area of Jalan Kempas, Shah Alam, started in 2000 and dissolved in 2006. Among their objectives is to take practical action on issues that are considered problematic in local art practice. They try to achieve this objective by forming an organically inclusive alternative space and encouraging the exchange of ideas and collaboration with similar art collectives, with the aim of strengthening artistic development, awareness, and change.

Rumah YKP, established in 2002, was also supported by friends of YKP such as Hasnul J Saidon, Kamal Sabran, Amirul Fakir, Rahmat Haron, Ise, Fairus Ahmad, Syed Omar, Fathullah Luqman, Meor Yusof Aziddin and many others. Its founders are Raja Ahmad Aminullah and Nur Hanim Khairuddin. The purpose of its existence is as an informal hub for art activists including painters, poets, musicians, filmmakers, and so on.

Rumah Air Panas (R.A.P) was first established in 1997 as a studio space, and in 2003 became known as an art collective. RAP began as an independent art space run by an art activist, serving as an artist studio and space for exhibitions, slide presentations, and dialogue sessions. The aim is to explore and combine visual arts and other cultural practices through collaboration in exhibitions and projects, as well as to document and exchange ideas through discussion. RAP was founded by Chai Chang Hwang, Chan Tham Choy, Chong Kim Chiew, Chuah Chong Yong, Liew Teck Leong, Ooi Kooi Hin, Phuan Thai Meng, Wong Tay Sy, Yap Sau Bin, Liew Kwai Fei, Low Yi Chin, Ng Swee Keat, Lim Koh Teong, Hew Wei Yong, Chong Cheong Mine, and several other associate members. RAP members always support the practice and discourse of alternative art, with full awareness and an integrated approach, with the aim of involving the artistic community and the art community.

Lost Generation Space (Lostgens), founded in 2004 by Yeoh Lian Heng, Tsuji Lam, Joseph Teo, and Analiza Mohd, aims to create a multicultural art environment. Its current members include Yeoh Lian Heng, Tsuji Lam, Jyen See Yee Wen, Eva Chan Lai Kuan, and Ng Boon Chong.

Alongside being a gathering place for artists, it serves as a platform for the dynamic growth of diverse arts and culture.

Parking Project and Superfriends stand as dynamic catalysts, propelling an extensive network that transcends artistic boundaries. Initiated by artist Roslisham Ismail, also known as Ise, in 2004, these collectives, with their superlative hospitality, not only offer a warm embrace to fellow artists but also lay down the essential groundwork for a remarkable exchange of ideas and cultural fusion. These initiatives, underscored by the twin pillars of art and camaraderie, extend an invitation to artists from diverse backgrounds and artistic convictions, through a blend of artistic experiences, culinary delights, and lodging provisions. These collectives extend an open invitation to their artist-friends visiting Malaysia, acting as guides through the tapestry of the local artistic scene.

Spacekraft was initially founded by Ahmad Fuad Osman, Chang Yoong Chia, Chuah Chong Yong, Ena Hadzir, Gan Sing King, Jiji Ishak, Simon Loke, Tham Chee Chong, and Wong Tay Sy in 1999, and Tan Sei Hon was also a member. Since 2005, they began to be known as Doorman. Their existence is to create and operate an independent platform for artists and designers to be able to showcase their work and explore their fields of interest. Additionally, they provide support to individuals and groups who have an interest in art and art-related projects, in addition to expanding networks and collaborations.

SiCKL- Studio in Cheras, Kuala Lumpur was founded in 2006 by Kok Siew Wai, Yong Yandsen and Aziz Ali. This collective is also joined by members such as Paco Machelson, Chew Win Chen @ OkuiLala, Azmyl Yunor, Ronnie Khoo, Tham Kar Mun and Yeo Yin Pin. As an independent collective in Kuala Lumpur, they have a mission to create an open platform for alternative and avant-garde art. They also encourage and promote bold art through experimentation and improvisation, facilitating learning, friendship, and collaboration among local and international independent art communities.

Matahati Art Group expanded their efforts in 2007 by creating the House of Matahati (HOM), which is now recognized as HOM Art Trans. This organization and its physical venue were established to assist artists in need and foster emerging talent. With a focus on aiding the growth of the country's visual arts, this independent art space also aims to facilitate connections with friends from Southeast Asia.

Studio Sebiji Padi, a collective of fine artists, is based in a studio space. Producing artwork is their main focus, supported by a group of graduate students from the Department of Fine Arts, Faculty of Art and Design, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), Shah Alam in 2007. At its establishment, this space was founded by Suhaimi Ahmad, Razif Rathi, and Hazmi Shoroin. Later, it was carried on by young artists like Samsudin Wahab, Ruzzeki Harris, Azam Aris, and Zul Husni. Situated in Seksyen 27, Alam Megah, Shah Alam, Selangor, the space shifted a few blocks from its original location after undergoing several phases, along with an increase in its membership. The addition of new members, including Haslin Ismail, Meor Saifullah Lulaed, Safwan Ahmad, Hery Zain, and Hafiz Yusof, expanded its reach. Sebiji Padi functions as a production space, engaging in various activities, and serves as a hub for art discourse among local artists.

Rajawali Art Studio Internationale is an artist workspace in Kuantan, Pahang that was established in 2007. Born from a gap identified in the support structure for artists living and working in Pahang at the time, Rajawali described their mission as bringing together as many artists as possible under one roof and helping artists based on individual needs – from supplying materials for production, studio space, to accommodation. In providing a space for artists to interact freely, Rajawali fosters critical discourse and intellectual engagement in

Pahang. It can be seen as an important component in the development of critical contemporary art on the East Coast of Malaysia. This collective consists of Abdullah Jones, Abdullah Hamdan, Abu Yusof, Abdul Malik Maliki, Nur Najihah Lee Abdullah, Bert Ramli, Azizi Md Zain, Munif Md Nor, Hj Zakaria Adam, Nazri Chot, and many other artists in Pahang.

Findars, founded in 2008 by Wong Eng Leong, Wong Min Lik, Tey Beng Tze, and Lim Keh Soon, is a combination of a group of local painters, photographers, filmmakers, and musicians. They share the passion and influence of alternative art and music locally and internationally. Very active in developing and promoting contemporary art, Findars brings events, projects, and exhibitions closer to the community. Their focus is on multimedia and cross-disciplinary exhibitions that present the latest creative experiments and possibilities through methods such as the "quartet approach," "collective creation," and "media fusion."

Tindakan Gerak Asuh @ T.I.G.A was established by Aisyah Baharuddin, Intan Rafiza Abu Bakar, Azliza Ayob, and also supported by Farhana Mohd Tajali and Mohd Idham Ismail in 2008. This collective is a dynamic non-profit art collective consisting of three core members that are actively involved in the organization of art activities. They believe there are many ways for artists to contribute to society.

The Best Art Show In The Univers @ BASITU was established as a result of a somewhat discordant and humorous response to the beautiful Malaysian art world. Conceived in 2009 by Simon Soon, Munkao, Chi Too and Dill Malik, these collective aims to convey enlightenment and truth through works of art that are capable of triggering intellectual thought.

Go Block is a group of practical printmaking artists who were gathered together in an exhibition in 2009. The first group consisted of artists such as Juhari Said, Zulkifli Yusuff, Izan Tahir, Kim Ng, and Shahrul Jamili. In 2018, located at Gallery G13, Go Block presented the title 'Potilombus Wayahinik Pinogumu - The Expanded Contemporary Printmaking', retaining only Juhari Said and Shahrul Jamili from the initial lineup. Continuing the aspirations of the print art struggle, Juhari Said introduced Samsudin Wahab and Faizal Suhif as part of the latest Go Block, thus upholding the principles and concept of the group.

Buka Kolektif is a performing arts collective made up of Rahmat Haron, Shaifuddin Mamat @ Poodien and Sahron Chin, which was established in 2010. The purpose of this establishment is to elevate performing arts as a strong and easily appreciated form of expression by all members of society. They also want to create awareness of the performing arts within the arts community itself, and place audience development and participation as equally important.

Cracko Art Group is a group of artists from Sabah who want to create a platform for artists and gain attention in the creative field. Established in 2010, the group wants to make Sabah the art hub of Borneo. They fully appreciate artistic freedom in the creation of artwork. CAG was founded by Crig "Cracko" Francis and Andy Romeo Dulait. It is supported by Harold "EGN" Eswar, Aks Kwan, Lybby, Nofie J, Chris Pereira, Phey, Aye Ax, Ashly Nandong, Alex Fong, Teo Zye Keun, April Tsen, Flanagan Bainon, Irwan Azman Awang, Adam Kitingan, Eleanor Goroh, Rezo Leong, Vivi Kartini, and Taco Joe.

Pangrok Sulap, a Sabah-based collective established in 2010 by Rizo Leong, Gindung McFeddy, and Jerome Manjat, is committed to uplifting marginalized communities through art. Comprising artists, musicians, and social activists of Dusun and Murut heritage, Pangrok Sulap's name, a blend of "Punk Rock" and the Dusun word "Sulap," signifies their origin and purpose. Under the name "V For Volunteer," they initially engaged in charity work, aiding local villages with donations and motivational activities. Pangrok Sulap's current focus is

Street Art, employing murals and stencils akin to Banksy's style. Their artistic efforts expanded after a pivotal shift when they encountered Indonesian Punk band Taring Babi and the activist collective Taring Padi in 2013. Venturing into wood carving, they embraced a DIY ethos, which is reflected in their woodblock prints, handmade items, and more. Around 2017, Pangrok Sulap transitioned from Ranau to Kota Kinabalu and established a studio near Universiti Malaysia Sabah, further bolstering their artistic endeavors. Pangrok Sulap strongly supports the DIY (Do It Yourself) concept, as seen in their slogan that is always chanted, 'Jangan Beli, Bikin Sendiri'.

Post 2010 Era

Projek Rabak is a collective of artists from Ipoh that functions as a counter culture collective. It was founded by Mohd Jayzuan in 2011. In addition to acting as a curator, Rabak also organizes festivals, programs, exhibitions, forms artists, ecosystems and connects networks. Throughout Rabak's involvement in the arts, several efforts have been made with the creation of a book publishing house, Rabak-Lit (2012); alternative space, Khizanat (2013); Rabak Studio (2013); Rabak Gallery Project (2015); contemporary art festival, Ipoh Creative (2015); bed & breakfast library, Treasure House (2016); networking room, Ipoh Embassy, Jakarta (2019) and Hiroshima (2020); and many more.

DAM (Digital Arts Media) Interactive, established and founded by two brothers Suzy Sulaiman and Fairuz Sulaiman in 2012, aims to explore ways to bring Malaysian cultural heritage and tradition into the current society. The establishment's goal is to ensure the sustainability of culture and creativity, by creating a platform or way that can encourage cross-disciplinary practice in a collaborative manner.

Cetak Kolektif is a movement of young artists who love the culture of the discipline of print that was started by Samsudin Wahab and Faizal Suhif in 2007, which brings together new artists from various institutions in Malaysia. Officially in 2014, this movement started during their first exhibition 'Test Print-Opening' which gathered a number of young artists in the print discipline. At the 'TP II' exhibition, they were joined by artists such as Sabihis Md. Pandi, Hazul Bakar, Fadhli Ariffin, Agnes Lau, Mark Tan, and Toh May Xuen. Both of these exhibitions take place at HOM Art Trans.

Aftermath Thinker Art Collective, founded by Mohd Razif Mohd Rathi (Fine Art), and supported by Clement Anak Jimel (Graphic Design) and Zaidi Wasli (Ceramics), consists of five individuals who have different artistic backgrounds but share the same interest in exploring recycling culture through art appreciation. Growing up in an environment where consumer waste is a big issue makes them take proactive steps in raising this issue. They are very interested in the environment and sustainable issues, educating the community about the importance of recycling through art. Later, they expanded expertise in the collective through the addition of Dr Muhammad Fauzan (Graphics, Digital Media and Augmented Reality) and Dr Valerie anak Michael (Hybrid Art). All of these members have their own expertise and are shared through the works and studies produced.

Bukan Seni-Man is a collective made up of seven artists namely Amir Amin, Khairul Ehsani, Khairani Zaquan, Aliff Iqmal, Ezwa Hasin, Kamal Sazali, and Nazrul Hamzah in 2016. They are individuals who believe that art can be brought in any forms as well as ideas, and are also not bound by absolute definitions. Their main focus is highlighting questions about art itself (nature of art) and creating possibilities to say something is art. They have held a collective exhibition that emphasizes the process of generating questions, arguments, and premises of ideas about art. In addition to giving meaning to an 'object' or 'subject', they also

want to highlight how this 'object' or 'subject' is lifted as a work of art.

Studio Chetak 12 (SC12) was established by three Malaysian contemporary artists – Bayu Utomo Radjikin, Samsudin Wahab, and Faizal Suhif – all alumni of Mara University of Technology. The seed for this print-focused group was sown by Faizal Suhif, and with the combined efforts of Samsudin Wahab, they forged ahead to make this vision a reality. Located in Ampang, Selangor, SC12 functions as a printmaking studio for fellow artists, showcasing traditional techniques. Officially founded in 2018, SC12 is dedicated to preserving and celebrating printmaking. They achieve this by conducting workshops, offering a space for artists to create, and providing art consultation for printmaking-related matters. Organizing traditional printmaking workshops and exhibitions has been a core aspect of their endeavors, both within their members' circle and by inviting Malaysian print artists for support. They've also established international connections, particularly in Asia, to bolster the SC12 brand. The year 2021 witnessed SC12's transition from Ampang to a new space in Melawati, known as Chetak 17. This relocation marks a fresh chapter, allowing them to flourish as a print art center in Malaysia. In this new space, they've invited additional artists to contribute and support printmaking activities.

Tumbuktikus is a virtual side project that focuses on exploring the web as an art platform. Adhering to the concept of 'playful but responsible' makes the platform an open stage to do various activities and network in and out of the country. Founded in 2020 by Fadly Sabran, Shahrul Hisham, and Haris Abadi, the platform sees the potential of new art forms, fresh aesthetic exploration, digital space intervention, animation, net.culture, low-brow, and cyberpunk aesthetics. Some virtual exhibition projects such as 'Looping Through The Sunken Glory - Shahrul Hisham Ahmad Tarmizi,' 'Behind The Veil - Ain Rahman,' 'Algorithm Of Perception - Banung Grahita,' 'Never Seen Works of Seen Videos - Fuad Arif,' 'Eyes Shut – Shakir Hashim,' and 'Fragments {a study} – OffShoot' are from the Philippines.

Amidst the artistic landscape, both preceding and subsequent to the 2020 era, a host of collectives have also come into being. These groups unite artists through shared spaces and collaborative activities. While information about them may be limited, their presence is nonetheless significant and deserves recognition.

Themes and Trends

From the collective descriptions provided in the two eras (2000-2010 and post-2010), several overarching themes and trends in the Malaysian art scene can be observed:

2000-2010 Era

1. **Foundation and Identity:** Many collectives from this era emerged shortly after completing formal art education, highlighting a desire to establish themselves and create a space for artistic expression outside academic institutions. This period saw the formation of groups like Studio Dikala Jingga, Komuniti Jalan Kempas, and Rumah YKP, indicating a need for a dedicated platform for artistic endeavors.
2. **Exploration and Alternative Spaces:** The collectives during this era were pioneers in exploring alternative spaces and approaches to art. They often established their own studios, art spaces, or even houses to cultivate a conducive environment for artistic experimentation and collaboration. These spaces, such as Rumah YKP and Studio Sebiji Padi, served as hubs for discussions, discourse, and creative interactions.
3. **Local and Cultural Engagement:** Many collectives in this era emphasized engaging with local communities and culture. They aimed to address societal issues, cultural

heritage, and local narratives through their art. Initiatives like Parking Project, which offered a blend of artistic and culinary experiences, reflected this emphasis on local engagement and cultural fusion.

4. **Collaboration and Networking:** Collaborative spirit was a key driving force behind many collectives of this era. They often worked together, shared ideas, and created platforms to connect with both fellow artists and the public. The emergence of collectives like Studio Dikala Jingga and Studio Sebij Padi showcased the power of collaboration in fostering creativity.

Post-2010 Era

1. **Expansion and Diversity:** The collectives from this era demonstrate a wider range of interests and approaches to art. They explore digital platforms, cross-disciplinary practices, virtual exhibitions, and new aesthetics. This expansion showcases a response to evolving technologies and changing artistic landscapes.
2. **Sustainability and Environmental Concerns:** Some collectives, like Aftermath Thinker Art Collective (ATAC), place a strong emphasis on environmental sustainability and recycling culture. This reflects a heightened awareness of ecological concerns and a desire to use art as a medium to advocate for positive change.
3. **Digital and Virtual Engagement:** The emergence of collectives like Tumbuktikus and DAM Interactive highlights a growing focus on the digital realm. These collectives explore the possibilities of web art, virtual exhibitions, and digital interventions, indicating a keen interest in utilizing technology to push artistic boundaries.
4. **Conceptual Exploration and Challenging Definitions:** Collectives like Bukan Seni-Man engage in conceptual art, challenging traditional definitions of art and inviting discussions around the nature of art itself. This suggests a growing inclination towards thought-provoking, intellectual discourse within the Malaysian art scene.

Table 4

Themes and trends of the arts collective from 2000-2020

2000-2010 Era	Post-2010 Era
Foundation and identity	Expansion and Diversity
Exploration and alternative spaces	Sustainability and Environmental Concerns
Local and cultural engagement	Digital and Virtual Engagement
Collaboration and networking	Conceptual Exploration and Challenging Definitions

Conclusion

In summary, both eras exhibit a strong commitment to collaboration, exploration of alternative spaces, and engagement with local culture. However, the post-2010 era introduces a wider range of practices, including digital art, sustainability advocacy, and more conceptual explorations, reflecting the evolving trends and technological advancements in the global contemporary art landscape.

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Themes and Trends	2000-2010 Era	Post-2010 Era
1. Foundation and Identity	- Emergence of collectives post formal art education	- Diverse range of artistic interests and approaches
	- Desire to establish a dedicated platform for expression	- Exploration of digital platforms and virtual exhibitions
	- Formation of groups like Studio Dikala Jingga, Komuniti Jalan Kempas, Rumah YKP	- Response to evolving technologies and changing landscapes
2. Exploration and Alternative Spaces	- Pioneering exploration of alternative art spaces	- Emphasis on sustainability and environmental concerns
	- Establishment of studios, art spaces, and creative hubs	- Advocacy for recycling culture and ecological awareness
	- Studios like Rumah YKP and Studio Sebiji Padi	- Engagement in digital art, web art, and virtual exhibitions
3. Local and Cultural Engagement	- Hubs for discussions, discourse, and collaboration	- Utilization of technology to push artistic boundaries
	- Focus on engaging with local communities and culture	- Conceptual art, challenging traditional definitions
	- Addressing societal issues, cultural heritage, narratives	- Intellectual discourse within the art scene
4. Collaboration and Networking	- Initiatives like Parking Project combining art and culinary experiences	- Collectives like Bukan Seni-Man pushing boundaries
	- Collaborative spirit among collectives	- Growing inclination towards digital and virtual art
	- Shared ideas and platforms for connections	- Thought-provoking and intellectual discourse
	- Examples: Studio Dikala Jingga, Studio Sebiji Padi	- Collectives like Tumbuktikus, DAM Interactive
	- Fostering creativity through collaboration	- Engagement with evolving artistic definitions