



1 Residents were introduced to the use and brief history of batik and how batik painting emerged.



2 Residents combining and matching personal drawings with artist's templates on white cloth.



3 The artist demonstrating wax technique and safe methods of batik making.



4 First layer of wax on the motifs done and ready to paint.



5 Dye painting of motifs first layer, creating the background of the artwork. Dyes are applied after the wax-resist application.



6 The painted cloth is sandwiched between old newspapers and ironed off to flatten the wax. This process comes before applying batik fixer.



7 After ironing, residents poured a solution "batik fixer" to lock the colours to the fibre of the cloth before boiling the cloth.



8 Tracing the portraits on to the ready fabric with the help of a lightbox.



9 Waxing again to create a resist for the final layer before painting the portrait silhouette.



10 Painting with black dye on the final layer which forms the portrait silhouette after applying second wax resist.



11 Finally, re-apply batik fixer on to the portrait silhouette.



12 Phototaking at the end of the engagement sessions.

Of Motifs and Movements by Taman Jurong residents and artist Fajrina Razak

Of Motifs and Movements is a culmination of a four-month Community Arts Residency project from September 2019 to January 2020 where 45 Taman Jurong residents explored motifs, both traditional and contemporary, within their living environment, inspired by the idea of recreating iconic motifs that could represent the nation.

Led by artist, Fajrina Razak, over four workshops, the artist engaged residents from the age of seven to 86 years old from Taman Jurong community groups, in collective recreation and batik making of local motifs that are synonymous within Taman Jurong locality and Singapore. Residents were led through the multi-layered processes in step by step techniques of batik making: brainstorming ideas on motifs, apply wax-resist using the traditional tool 'tjanting', dye painting, applying fixer solution, photography session and writing their post-process thoughts.

In the initial session, the residents were introduced to batik making and the significance of motifs to various ethnic groups, giving them an idea of what inspired different motifs. Through the sessions, residents have created various motifs, from motifs found in nature such as flora and fauna to organic shapes found in Merlion's scales and water waves to geometric shapes found in concrete buildings. The residents have produced and/or reproduced the chosen motifs in their own unique ways, juxtaposed with portrait silhouettes of their movements and gestures within the living environments to inject their individuality in the artworks.

This paper documents the workshops, the processes, photography sessions, post-workshop quotes and conversations between the residents and the artist during the engagement sessions.

About the Artist

Fajrina Razak is a visual artist and art educator based in Singapore whose practice concerns the notion of individuality and cultural identities, while being driven by the aspects of emotions and spirituality. Her practice layers through findings of traditional and contemporary motifs when working primarily with batik medium. Her works are also translated across mediums such as photography and text-based art. Recent projects include curation of exhibition Of Wax, Dyes and Labour at Malay Heritage Centre and Pneuma: Of Spirituality in Contemporary Age at Stamford Arts Centre.

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