



Getting the Multicultural Concepts from Malaysian Modern Pewter Craftwork

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Abstract: Traditional pewter craft in Malaysia has a development history more than 100 years and achieved success in the modern market, comparison with a recession in the original countries of traditional pewter manufacturing, such as China, British and other Euro-American countries. This article studies the multicultural features in Malaysian modern pewter craft works, which is one of the main factors for the success. The evaluation method is based on judgmental or purposive sampling on part of a large collection of pewter craft works from main Malaysian pewter companies and local pewter craft workshops. The article reveals a cultural exchange of the multicultural elements combined in Malaysian modern pewter craft works, and offers artists and designers the way of getting multicultural design awareness. A series of practical and special steps inspire designers the creative combination between the production of traditional craftwork and different cultural elements, which is effectively beneficial to develop traditional cultural crafts in contemporary markets. The findings of this study are expected to be useful in culture-based design, expanding the cultural vision of monocultural designers based on the way of cultural thinking and rule of the cultural inner evolution.

Keywords: multicultural concepts; modern pewter craftwork; cultural exchange; traditional crafts; culture-based design

Introduction

How to make craftwork or traditional craftwork accepted by international markets, this is not easy thing for designers who come from monocultural countries. The reason is complicated, among them, the broad cultural horizons, the successful experience of developing traditional craftwork and adapting to the needs of modern markets are main causes. The article through an analysis of multicultural features in Malaysian modern pewter craftwork from cultural elements, which can reveal a way of cultural exchange and use in art and crafts, and a wide cultural sight in design of pewter craft works. Different cultural elements are changed or adapted to various shapes and patterns of the pewter craftwork, which makes various traditional cultural elements show a new appearance in modern time. The application of the design awareness is one important factor the success, which is a good reference to other traditional crafts and techniques how to make a healthy development in modern societies, especially in monocultural countries (Ivana Spasic 2001, 135). Basis on the course, the article analyzes and concludes the main methods of the rich cultural elements combination with local pewter craftwork, which can give an effective way to traditional craftwork designers getting the multicultural concepts in their creative works. There aren't many articles about the revival traditional crafts and how to get multicultural design cognitions from ready-made examples and Malaysian modern pewter craftwork before. Some thesis and books are mainly focus on tin mine industry or the development history of traditional pewter craft. Governments try their best to develop and revive own traditional cultures now (Roxann Prazniak 2001, 155). But, if only sticking to own cultures and keeping far away from other different cultures, which isn't benefit to traditional cultural renaissance, but also not benefit to a progress of the whole society. Born in the late 19th and early 20th centuries the modernist design (Laura Forlano 2019, 256), Raising the flag of function first high, its design works all are in pure geometric shape, no feelings and cultural orientation in order to cater to function and mechanical mass production. After more than half a century of development and bringing human being to an abundant material world, its style characteristic is wearied by people of the world finally, for this kind of tedious and simple geometrical shapes. Going into postmodernism, respect experience of customers, individual feeling, concrete condition and different cultures, which became the mainstream of modern design styles (Perez de Cuellar 1996, 25). The contact among different cultures is easy to make a cultural exchange and development, different cultural elements absorbed and incorporated each other in shape and pattern of Malaysian pewter craftwork is a common phenomenon, even in local other traditional crafts and arts, such as Batik, traditional architecture, interior ornaments, gold and silver craftworks etc. The multicultural features are one important element of one company or product can go into international market well, satisfying needs of world markets. Following is a narrative of the history and achievement of Malaysian modern pewter craftwork in modern time.

Purpose of Research

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Through a detailed analysis of Malaysian modern pewter craftwork, the purpose of this article is to get the multicultural design cognition and design method. In the course of designing craftwork, designers or artists can understand the cultural exchange and get a confidence in theory and thinking in the face of different cultural features. From the features of a series of judgmental samples, the article concludes a series of practical steps about the way of designers combining different cultural elements in their design works for satisfying the need of modern markets.

Methodology

The study uses case analysis of the qualitative research methods, from numerous Malaysian modern pewter craft works; this article samples a series of representative cases for observation and comparison. The sampling process complied with random sampling. Firstly, author collects over 500 pieces as much as possible from modern pewter craft works of Malaysia 1990 – 2010, without personal bias, preference and standpoint so on. Secondly, author selects 80 pieces according to the market share of major pewter companies, the rate of ethnic population, cultural types and common pewter classification. Finally, the ten pewter samples are identified as detailed research objects depending on the main research purposes and length of the article, excluding other secondary factors such as material, function, size etc. The sampling can basically reflect the main appearance of Malaysian modern pewter craftwork from cultural features.

Reference to theories of iconography and semiotics, first the article gives a objective narrative about source of craftwork, appearance, structure, artistic style etc. Then the article analyzes the inner cultural elements, changing, and regulation. Finally the study finds the method of combining multicultural elements in pewter craft works the Malaysian modern designers have done, and concludes a series of practical steps the designer who comes from monocultural societies get the multicultural design concepts and methods.

Literature Review

It is known that modern pewter craftwork, textile weaving, Kris (Edward Frey 2003, 7), traditional kite making and woodcarving are regarded as representative traditional crafts in today's Malaysia. Among them Malaysia modern pewter craftwork have a good reputation in modern market of the world due to its rich style, delicate design and exquisite fabrication. Relative to traditional making-pewter countries as China, British, and France etc. "The history of Malaysian making-pewter is not long, only more than 100 years. In the history of world in use of pewter goes back to ancient times and the oldest piece of pewter on record is the pilgrim's bottle of Abydos in Egypt, which dates back to about 1500BC. In Asia, pewter was first used in China, more than 2,000 years ago; afterwards, it is distributed to Malaysia about 19th century AD by a Chinese family." (Chen May Yee 2003, 21) From that time, the traditional making-pewter was rooted in Malaysia, and achieved prosperity in modern time basis on local special conditions.

Malaysia is located at the intersection of the East and West, adjacent to the strategic maritime channel - the Strait of Malacca, which is easy for global trade and exchanges of various cultures. The culture of Malaysia is influenced mainly by Indian, Chinese and Southeast Asian cultures since ancient time. There is a long time of Malaysian, Chinese, Indian, Southeast Asians living together, which is different with those modern immigrant countries, such as America, Canada, and Australia etc. Malaysia was once a British colony in 19th century, a wave of immigration of Chinese and Indian workers came to Malaysia due to the need of colonial economy. So, the multiculturalism and multi-ethnicity are the basic social characteristics in modern Malaysia. Different cultures intertwine and exchange each other, which provides an inexhaustible inspiration and driving force for the development of local crafts and arts.

Among Malaysian local main making-pewter companies, the Royal Selangor is the biggest and oldest making-pewter company, its creator is one Chinese, and a young pewter smith sailed from the southeastern Chinese port of Shantou to Malaya about in 1885 (Chen May Yee 2003, 16). Other main pewter companies were opened basically by Chinese people or a closed relationship with Chinese pewter companies. Taking Royal Selangor for example, developing over three generations, the pewter company has a majority of Malaysian pewter craftwork market shares and turnovers, and wins many domestic and international designs or creative design awards. For example, the Sovereign Collection works of Royal Selangor pewter craftwork won a New and Improved Product Development Award in 1981 from the Federation of Malaysian Manufactures and a Gold Medal in the Excellence in Quality and Design category at the Leipzig International Fair in Germany in 1984 (Chen May Yee 2003, 87). Tableware pewter works from the EM range won a Design Plus Award at the Frankfurt international Gift Fair in 1989 and a EM hipflask won a Design Plus Award in 1991 (Chen May Yee 2003, 88). A tankard from the Classic Expressions range of table ware and desk accessories works won second place in the Manufacturer / Professional Category of the American Pewter Guild Design Competition in 1994 (Chen May Yee 2003, 90). Wine accessories won the Gift of the Year Award in the Licensed Gifts Category from the Giftware Association of the United Kingdom in 1997 (Chen May Yee 2003, 91). In 2003, the wine funnel work garnered a "red dot" award for product design from the North Rhine-Westphalia Design Centre in Essen, Germany, a bronze Industrial Design Excellence Award in the consumer products category from the industrial Designers Society of America, and a G-Mark Good Design Award from the Japan Industrial Design Promotion Organization etc (Chen May Yee 2003, 92).

In 1986, the company organized an exhibition in the National Museum Art Gallery in Singapore, under the title "Pewter in Southeast Asia". "Selangor Pewter acquired Englefields, a 300-year-old London pewterer and maker of Crown & Rose pewter in 1989." (Chen May Yee 2003, 109) "The company acquired London silver company Comyns,

including some 35,000 historic silver designs dating back to the 17th century in 1993.” (Chen May Yee 2003, 110) Royal Selangor began collaboration with the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. The partnership resulted in several ranges over the next few years under the names "the Inspired" and "William Morris"; and acquired Seagull Pewter of Canada, which had a range of over 2,000 pewter products. (Chen May Yee 2003, 116) The acquisition of between Malaysian pewter companies represented by Royal Selangor and other countries, especially European and American traditional pewter companies, which showed The Royal Selangor had been one international pewter company with important global presence.

In contrast to traditional making-pewter countries, China, British, France etc. These countries have a long history to produce and use pewter craftwork. Using pewter craftwork in China is over several thousand years, but in modern time traditional pewter craft wasn't revived and re-prospered, the reason is complex. These traditional making-pewter countries are monoculture or one main culture-based society, the whole country shows a main cultural aesthetic direction, so does pewter craftwork in these countries. The design thought of pewter-making craftsmen is always limited in traditional design styles or procedures, and don't get out of a preset model. Moreover, with the development of craft materials and technologies, appearance of new materials like resin, glass, plastics, the traditional making-pewter industries faced a recession or depression in these countries (Vanessa Brett 1981, 7).

The analysis of Malaysian modern pewter craftwork samples

Pewter is made primarily from tin metal; the fourth most precious commercially traded metal after gold, silver and platinum (Cosi Tabellini 2022). The pewter craftwork encompasses the majority of all categories, e.g. living, dining, celebration, and so on, in the light of the habit of modern pewter crafts industry and author's record and collection, referring to the number of crafts amount to about over 500 pieces. There is a detailed analysis of ten judgmental Malaysian modern pewter crafts which are chosen from these craft works collected.



Plate 1: The different cultural features of the Malaysian modern pewter craft works.

From plate 1, the multicultural features is apparent in Malaysian modern pewter craft works. In the light of core research question and limitation of the length of article, the ten samples are common features, reference to the main religions or cultural isms in the world.

Plate 1.(1), the pewter statue is produced from Royal Selangor Co., Ltd. 1992, name is celestial wisdom Confucius replica. The statue should be Confucius who is creator of Confucianism, one of main Chinese traditional philosophies. Confucius is one of Chinese ancient sages, greatest educator. In fact, there isn't a real image about Confucius in Chinese history, all Confucius images in different dynasties were composed by descendants according to records or documents (Pan Xiao qiao 2006). The traditional Confucius image looks serious, because the thought of Confucius advocates etiquette in people's interaction and class or order in social living, and guides people has a spirit of jointing or participating in real social living positively (David S. Nivison 1996, 82). This Malaysian pewter Confucius who looks so kind and benevolent, dressed in so loose clothes, not a little bit serious look, which is close to another Chinese traditional sage's spirit, Lao Tzu (Ursula K. Le Guin 2019), the creator of Taoism philosophy.

Plate 1.(2). The pewter teapot is designed by Royal Selangor Co., Ltd. 2002, name is Five elements teapot. The body of Malaysian pewter teapot is a bamboo shape, similar to a piece of bamboo from its outline and structure. There are many small abstractive Five elements patterns decorated on the most area of the pewter teapot's surface. The Five

elements theory is one of main traditional philosophies in Chinese cultures, which influences every common Chinese worldview and values deeply, as academic study, career, social life, marriage etc. In fact, there is not any concrete icon or symbol that is used to show or express Five elements theory in Chinese history (Jean Haner 2020, 39). It always is an abstractive conception about various relationships between person and person, person and society or other things etc. Plate 1.(3). This pewter plaque is selected from Royal Selangor Co., Ltd. 1990, name is Wayang Kulit (Beth Osnes 2010) Plaque. The plaque is used commonly to decorate and beautify people's living environment. Among this Malaysian pewter plaque, three pewter characters are conspicuous images, combination with a dark wood board and outer frame, a golden abstractive snow pattern background. From their costumes and postures, complicated patterns on costumes, wearing special crowns and traditional jewelry, they are the characters of Hikayat Seri Rama (V.I. Braginsky 2022), a Malay traditional opera. The opera also is an adaptation of Indian historic epic – Ramayana; it is one of important legends of Hinduism in Indian traditional cultures. The Ramayana epic story spread into Southeast Asia, combination with local folk cultures and stories, its forms and aesthetic connotation are conserved and accepted by local people.

Plate 1.(4). The pewter craftwork is from Tumasek pewter Co., Ltd. 1993, name is Aromatic Oil Diffuser-Grape. In India, the most of traditional diffusers are made of stone or marble, the feature of Indian diffusers are referenced directly by this Malaysian pewter diffuser on shape and structure. The diffuser is made of pewter and ceramics, ceramic diffuser body with no decoration and keeping a simple and smooth surface, its belly hall and pedestal are pewter material with complicated pewter decoration of grape, vines and leaves. It is known that the history of India in use of aromatic plants can be traced back to about 4000 years ago (Amos Mathe & Irfan Ali Khan 2022, 343). Initially, the aromatic plants were used in religious rituals and noble hobbies, the altar should be incensed to increase the solemn atmosphere, later appearance in common people's foods and daily necessities.

Plate 1.(5). The pewter caddy is produced from Royal Selangor Co., Ltd. 1996, name is Warrior Tea Caddy. From the decoration pattern of this caddy surface, there is a human face pattern, which is surrounded by other related decoration patterns. The pattern is similar with pattern of English Anglo-Saxon helmet on shape, pattern and structure. In order to show cultural background, the designers of Malaysian pewter caddy made it close to a helmet shape, which can adapt to characteristic of Anglo-Saxon helmet. It is known that the Anglo-Saxons came to and resided in England from the 5th century, they originally were belonged to people of Germanic tribes, their descendants' habits, language and culture became the main one of cultures of today British groups, even modern English language involved almost half of its words (Nicholas J. Higham & Martin J. Ryan 2013, 284). So, the Anglo-Saxon is regarded as one of main roots and symbols of English cultures.

Plate 1.(6). This pewter plate is a work of Royal Selangor Co., Ltd. 1996, name is Batik Stacking Plates. The plate is divided two parts, the left is made of pewter and engraved by Batik patterns, the right is made of wood as a background, simple, no pattern, two parts forms a contrast on visual effect. Its pattern absorbs directly from the pattern of traditional Batik in Southeast Asia, which is the most representative pattern of the head part of Batik craftwork. The Batik as an folk craft has a long history in Southeast Asia, it is made with wax resistant dye on fabrics. Diverse patterns are influenced by a variety of cultures, and getting a high level at motifs, technique, and the quality of workmanship. In history, there was a set of rule to use and make Batik in a rich cultural meaning. For example, infants were carries in batik slings decorated with a special symbol designed to bring the child luck, the brides and bridegrooms had their certain batik patterns (Rudolf G. Smend 2013, 12).

Plate 1.(7). The pewter clock was produced from Royal Selangor Co., Ltd. 1991, name is Mantel clock. From its shape, structure, decoration and pattern, the Malaysian pewter clock is similar to the feature of European traditional clock in 17th ~18th century. The upper part of pewter clock is a dome shape that references to the arch structure of European church's arched door. The body of pewter clock is similar with pillars of traditional architectures in Europe, its four pedestals are European classic plant and flower shapes, one simple style of clock situates on upper of the clock's front. It is a new feeling that one traditional clock is made of pure pewter material, which can increase some modern feeling away from stereotyped and old-fashioned traditional style.

Plate 1.(8). The pewter plate was designed from Tumasek Pewter Co., Ltd. 2000, name is Islamic Plate. The plate is one common craftwork in different social cultures, but the obvious feature on this Malaysian pewter plate is the decorative patterns of the Islamic words and geometrical plants. Using words as patterns to decorate and beautify craftwork or living environment isn't strange thing in different cultures or nations. The Islamic words is designed to be decorative patterns on various Islamic craft works, which is one unique aesthetic form due to one perfect combination between strokes of words and pattern (Yasmin Hamid Safari 1979, 29). Islamic words can be deformed freely according to different shapes and structures, other languages are not easy to be adapted in term of a concrete shape or pattern. Moreover, the Islamic orthodox school strictly prohibits idolatry, which opposes the depiction of concrete animals and human figures (Christine Humid Dodge 2009, 226).

Plate 1.(9). This pewter dish is a work of Royal Selangor Co., Ltd. 1990, name is Savoy Dish. The pewter dish consists of upper and lower parts, the lower part is a pewter pedestal, the upper part comprises a circle of repeating short and curved arcs that are alternately wide and narrow. Although the structure and shape of this pewter dish is made up of geometric shapes, from its entire feature, it hasn't a relationship with Western modern crafts art style. On the contrary, the design inspiration is from oriental religions, the shape of pewter dish is similar with a flower or lotus that is a shape

of pedestal of Buddha statue in Buddhism, only an abstraction design on basis of concrete lotus pedestal shape. Lotus flowers have a special meaning in East and Southeast Asian cultures and religions. A lotus often represents a meaning in purity, earth's richness, fertility and beauty due to growing in mud (Gene Reeves 2008, 159).

Plate 1.(10). The pewter box was produced from Royal Selangor Co., Ltd. 2006; name is The Admiral Line Box. The design of the Malaysian pewter box is influenced by Western modern design style. Geographic and simple shape, not concrete decoration pattern, keeping the original colors of the pewter and wood, paying attention to practical function, no clear cultural and personal features, the design style shows modern design thoughts adaptation to need of industrial mass production(David Raizmn 2003, 136). The pewter body of box was designed to fit strictly with outer wood shell through several rectangular interspersed structures. Round box mouth and cubic body form a contrast, which is connected smoothly by sleek and rounded edges. A big cubic body includes many small rectangular structures; a big round mouth involves several small round or circle shapes, which generates an appealing rhythm.

Except for those main religions and cultural isms, there are various Malaysian, Chinese, Indian, European and other traditional features showing in Malaysian modern pewter craftwork. From the cultural features of each pewter craftwork, its shape, pattern and connotation are general and not special, but from Malaysia pewter craftwork, one country, even one pewter craftwork company, so rich or different cultural features, which is not common phenomenon, comparison with pewter manufacture in other monocultural countries.

Finding

Every culture is from the process of interaction between human beings and nature, society, also the crystal of human living experiences and wisdom. Culture is generated from a special time and space, has a cultural subject or body, and a set of action model, social consensus, which is an important opinion in book of Jorgen Dines Johansen who is Denmark modern famous philosopher of cultural semiotics (Jorgen Dines Johansen 2003, 180). Here reference to his view, giving a further qualitative analysis of how to get the multicultural concepts in Malaysian modern pewter craftwork from the theory of cultural inner evolution. It is apparent that Malaysian pewter craftsmen can't be proficient in so many kinds of cultures and cultural elements, but only regard various cultural elements as decorative elements for beautifying and promoting merchandise's cultural additive values. As previous narrative, the reason not only includes special natural and social conditions in Southeast Asia, but there is a cultural concept analysis, no matter whether Malaysian pewter craftsmen design pewter craftwork incorporation into various cultural elements with intention or no intention. The following (Figure 1) is a figure about the process of combination between different cultural elements and pewter craftwork, which can reveal a design thought of Malaysian modern pewter craftwork from a rational and cultural angle.

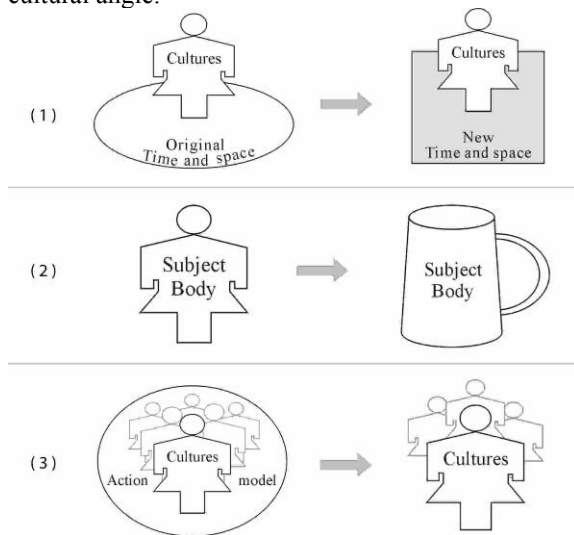


Figure 1: The cultural evolution step charts.

Figure 1.(1), the cultural time and space. Every culture stems from a special period of time and an environmental condition, which is the consequence of a contact between social persons and nature, and the transforming course between natural things to social things. In origin, one new thing or new cognition in front of people's face at a special time and space, it may be not consecutive, which only is felt by minorities of people who contact the alienation in a casual condition, or with an explorative way (Jorgen Dines Johansen 2003, 153). At that time, the cognition is sporadic and discontinuous, which isn't perceived by the majority, though the new thing have entered human world. Next step, the minority spread their experiences and cognitions to other people, the frequency of appearance of this special time and space increased gradually, which results the new thing or cognition in a stable status. People can contact

the new thing frequently. The level of knowledge about the new thing also gradually deepens from the surface to the essence. At last, people begin to master the regulation of new thing appearance in the special time and space. In order to getting the new thing and cognition for better living or some benefits, people even create the condition about related essential time space that could promote an appearance. So, one culture must be a result of human being accumulating experience and sense step by step, from a discontinuous condition to a continuous or stable status about a new thing or cognition. In other words, every perceivable culture is from a continuous time and space, which can make people understand its meaning, otherwise, the culture will be forgotten in human history, as those ancient words, patterns, and cultural icons so on.

The various cultural elements are absorbed in design of Malaysian modern pewter craft works due to local artists and craftsmen taking advantage of the attribute of cultural time and space as aforementioned. If one cultural element is extracted from its original and continuous condition in time and space, and appearance in new or exotic social

environment, even combination with new cultural features in new time and space. This culture either is taken out its intrinsic connotation, only leaving its external forms, as shape and pattern, or is integrated harmlessly into local cultural environment. In new social conditions, local people can't understand rightly the original meaning of these foreign cultural elements, which avoids a direct or serious cultural collision and taboos occurrence.

(2), the cultural body or subject. The body and subject are a carrier loaded the whole cultural contents. It is known that the culture includes intangible and tangible cultures; the carrier of two types of cultures is inseparable from people. It is easy to understand that the entire course of cultural birth, development and mature needs people's engagement. People accepted a new thing or generated a new cognition during the course of labor or production, and intercourse among people. The material valuation or function in a culture has a meaning for a person, because the material meaning was generated for satisfying people's some needs. People can improve a cultural material function among the time use it for production, which makes it more effective and its exterior more beautiful, even developing to become a sign in symbolic and indexical meaning are easy for exchange, use and enjoyment. After that, a culture will influence more people for material function, which finally formed social function to influence people psychology(Jorgen Dines Johansen 2003, 164). Relative to intangible culture, the material form of tangible culture is also one important carrier except for the factor of people, especially the traditional crafts are from the history of human development, including rich cultural information and elements from shapes, patterns and other details. The figure 1. (2) is that Malaysian modern pewter crafts have happened a change on cultural original carrier, the properties of pewter crafts, material and form are promoted to be a main position.

In Malaysian modern pewter craftworks, various cultural elements are transformed to be shape and pattern, according to different features of pewter craft works. All cultural elements are adapted around the need of pewter craftwork design rather than cultural original connotations. The moment, the cultural body or subject is mainly pewter craftwork itself, not people. Because different cultural features of the Malaysian modern pewter craftworks have left their native people, only leaving a pewter craft as a carrier showing silently multicultural features. Pewter craftwork itself hasn't thought, sense, cognition, same time, no contradict, conflict and disharmonies. This is an effective way to avoid the contradiction among different racial people due to different cultural cognition system, which also is one of main reasons various cultural elements the Malaysian craftsmen dare borrow in design of pewter craft works.

(3), the cultural action or action model. A culture grows in some societies for a long time, which can form a set of action or action model gradually. The kind of action or action model will show in a way of habit, fashion, signal, ritual, ceremony, and convention. These cognition forms are also common sense in a special people group, which deeply are existed in a racial or religious people who have done conforming to it unconsciously. The collective sense becomes the action model step by step, which restricts people's words and behaviors, and apparently express a series of behavior norm that is transcended from generation to generation in a same race(Jorgen Dines Johansen 2003, 168). With the global economy development, it is an effective way to verify what race a person is belonged to according to the cultural action model though the conversation and contact in different racial people is closer. There is easy to happen a conflict between different races or religions when they contacts or living together in a same area due to different cultural action models in front of one same thing.

This is also one main reason why the designers of Malaysian pewter craftwork can take directly different cultural elements. When some culture is shown in exotic environments, this moment, the culture has left its original social condition and the common sense of some people group. A social action models the culture caused has disappeared, in new social community, it can't cause an extensive reaction similar to original social influence. Maybe some social identity the culture brought, which is result of grafting on and basis on the condition of local cultures, and shows less conflict status. The multicultural elements in Malaysian modern pewter craftwork are symbolized basically to be a shape and pattern for the need of showing, decoration and design, no need to pursue a real or orthodox cultural connotation. So, except for local cultural elements, different and exotic cultures can't cause extensive social common sense and action models, which are an important basis for design freely in Malaysian pewter craftwork with various cultural features.

Firstly, after the narrative of about three aspects change of the multicultural elements in Malaysian modern pewter craftwork, which can be proved strongly the different cultural elements can be regarded as design elements absorbed in traditional craftwork by artists and designers. The cultural inner feature is weakened, connotation can't be accurately expressed, and can't cause an extensive react in new social environment, even cultural shapes and patterns aren't shown proficiently in local craft works. This isn't important, in eyes of Malaysian designers, various and different cultural elements are seen as an exotic shape and pattern, which become rich sources of design thought and forms in pewter craftwork. So, the craftsman, designer, and artist should know and contact different cultures as soon as possible with an equal standard away from politics and social ideology. Maybe the multicultural features in Malaysian modern pewter craftwork is for satisfying different racial or religious people, which still is difficult for those artists and designers who live in monocultural societies. Aforementioned analysis shows that every culture is changing over time, from its three aspects culture has a big tolerance than our imagination. If the designers can accept different cultures, aesthetic bearings and styles with a normal peaceful mindset, different cultures will be transferred to be different elements in their art works as same as cultural elements in above Malaysian modern pewter craftwork, shape, structure, pattern and connotation.

Secondly, combination with the ten pewter samples, which can show four basic ways how the different cultures are absorbed in Malaysian pewter craftwork. In addition, the complement of textures among different materials, different functions and design purposes are also important causes the Malaysian pewter craftsmen draw on different cultures.

1. The different cultural elements will be re-designed according to modern aesthetic feature, retaining cultural main characters, removing cultural details in traditional forms. The style of combination between traditional shapes and western modern style or modern practical utensils, which is a common way of pewter design. Five elements teapot, Batik stacking plate, Savoy dish are belonged to this category. The modern aesthetic feature is the aesthetic direction of people who live in modern society, is influenced by modern industrial production and design style. Its feature is simplified, exaggerated, rhythmic and contrasting, compared to initial cultural appearance. Craftsmen or designers do some exercises of modernization of traditional cultures, from local or native to exotic or foreign traditional crafts art forms. It is common that traditional crafts can't be appropriate to modern aesthetic direction without a modern redesigning (Kathryn B. Hiesinger 1950, 138). The course of modernization can make designers find out a regulation and experience, which riches their design inspiration from different cultural elements.

2. The second, the adaptation through a combination between different cultural elements and local cultural forms. Reference to other cultural forms for expressing the connotation of local cultures, this is belonged to cultural mix over a long time, such as Wayany Kulit plaque, Islamic plate. Different cultural elements are transformed to be different forms of cultural appearance, as shape, pattern, structure etc. Combination with local cultural connotation, which is similar to the course of plant grafting, but it is natural and harmony than grafting. The kind of combination is based on the acceptance of local people to different cultures. This combination is one common way in modern market those famous international companies sell products at different countries, the culture of brands and the content of products always have been transformed or absorb local cultural elements, which can be accepted naturally by local customers(G. Rusten 2009, 93). This aspect of design exercise is interesting; the same cultural motif is shown in different forms with different cultural elements, which is a effective way to broaden the cultural vision of designers in production. Different cultural forms express one same motif properly and accurately, which is not one easy thing, if designers cannot understand cultural connotations with a equal and just identification.

3. Copying directly different cultural elements is also common method. Celestial wisdom Confucius replica, Aromatic oil diffuser, Warrior tea caddy, Mantel clock are designed on this way. Different materials show different textures and visual senses. Superficially, the shape of many Malaysian modern pewter craftwork copies directly from other traditional craftwork, in fact, it is a course that the Malaysian craftsmen explore and experiment the texture expressive force of pewter metal and pewter combination with other materials. The combination among pewter, glass, wood, bamboo, ceramics and other materials, which can show a different senses and aesthetic qualities Malaysian pewter craftsmen created in their craftwork. One old shape of traditional craftwork shows a new appearance with a new materials combination. The material of traditional craftwork is eternal topic in crafts art, which is worth craftsmen while to research for realizing a revival of traditional craftwork in modern market (Barry Bergdoll 2009, 266).

4. Different cultural elements are incorporated into pewter craftwork through the way of combining pattern, shape and connotation of different cultures. The multicultural elements will be transformed into rich forms of pattern, shape and connotation, and are combined together creatively according to certain primary and secondary principles. Following are three samples can give a specific explanation.



(1)



(2)



(3)

Plate 2: The three samples of Malaysian modern pewter craft works.

Above three pewter craft works cannot be classified to some culture entirely. Plate 2(1), it is a pen holder which is designed from Tumasek pewter Co., Ltd. 1995. The

pen holder is a square geometric shape with two layers inside and outside. The geometric shape is influenced by Western modern design style clearly. The inside layer is designed to be dark wood material; the outside layer is pewter material, which forms a contrast for embodying the Chinese traditional philosophy of Yin and Yang. The surface of outside layer is decorated partly with one Islamic abstract pattern. Plate 2(2), it is a tea set which is designed from KL pewter Co., Ltd. 1991. The shape of pewter teapot is inspired by the shape of Chinese traditional purple clay teapot. Its handle is designed to be an image of a Chinese Han Dynasty dragon. The surface of the teapot is decorated with a group of elephant patterns. Elephants have a special meaning in Asian, Indian traditional and religious cultures. Plate 2(3), a coffee set, the shape of coffee pot references European traditional coffee pot, its surface is decorated with Malaysian local plant patterns. Six small coffee cups are porcelain material, which forms a contrast between pewter and porcelain materials. The contrast shows a connotation about the Chinese traditional gold inlaid with jade. The shape of the square tray is inspired by the Chinese traditional lacquer ware. So, from the three Malaysian pewter craft works, the shape is their core cultural images, patterns play a decorative role, connotation is concealed among shape,

pattern, structure and function. For example, the pen holder, the abstractive Islamic pattern matches abstractive geometric shape and Yin Yang philosophy. The tea set, the concrete elephant pattern is combined with real shape of Chinese traditional teapot and special teapot function. The coffee set is in same way to combining different cultural elements. Through the four basic methods, the multicultural features make Malaysian modern pewter craftwork be rich shapes, patterns and motifs in designing catering to the need of different cultural and religious people.

Thirdly, avoiding the cultural taboos is one important principle in the course of absorbing and combining different cultural elements. As a narrative in book of Jorgen Dine Johanson, When three aspects of cultures, space and time, subject and body, action and model, are changing spontaneously, among different cultures and people will generate contradiction, even conflict and war (Jorgen Dines Johansen 2003, 197-198). It is not difficult to find out that local designers put a lot of effort, technique and wisdom to make craftwork don't touch cultural taboos. For example, rich cultural elements are transformed to be various shape, pattern, decorations, which are simplified or changed, appearance in part, not in full image, focusing on superficial decoration and beautifying effects, not cultural orthodox meanings etc.

Discussion

In general, the multicultural features is noticeable in Malaysian modern pewter craftwork, which provides a rich resource of design inspiration. Through previous analysis, the multicultural design cognition artists and designers can get through the following main steps:

1. Studying the inner regulation of cultural development and exchange, every culture is changing over time; different cultural elements can be absorbed and combined in designing of craftwork theoretically and rationally.
 - a. Space and time (Cultures are generated in a special space and time).
 - b. Subject and body (Cultures have a cultural carrier or loader).
 - c. Action and model (Cultures have a set of social customs and actions).
2. There are four basic ways of multicultural elements absorbed in Malaysian modern pewter craftwork.
 - a. The multicultural elements are re-designed according to modern design styles.
 - b. A combination between multicultural forms and local cultural connotations.
 - c. Copying directly multicultural elements by different materials of the pewter craftwork.
 - d. Different cultural elements are transformed to be shape, pattern and connotation for incorporating in each craftwork.
3. Avoiding the cultural taboos in the process of the designing pewter craftwork.

The above steps are a basic way of designers to get the multicultural concepts, the multicultural features Malaysian modern pewter craftwork shows is complex more. The article only discusses core themes due to the limitation of article length. The basic ways provide a effective reference to designers, after a rational thinking and targeted design training, the multicultural concepts will be set up, which assists designers to create craftwork meeting the need in world markets. In fact, the course of designers getting multicultural concepts mainly experiences three phases. The first, designers actively study different cultural elements for some special purposes or the need in their designing works, curious and fresh feelings are main features. The time designers can't understand these different and exotic cultures well, the unnatural combination between different cultural elements often show in design works. The second, designers can understand different cultural elements, and consciously apply, combine and graft multicultural elements by different methods and thoughts, but the effect of the multicultural elements is far less vivid than homegrown cultural elements in design works. The time, the level of multicultural applying designers understand is mainly focus on studying the surface and external form of different cultural elements. The last phase, the multicultural concept has been rooted in designers' works, designers can choose and combine different cultural elements freely, and understand the connotation of different cultural elements deeply. The designers can obtain inexhaustible design inspiration and thoughts from different cultures, and vividly or creatively explore the best expression form by choosing and combining different cultural elements according to different design demands.

The study provides designers a method for solving the design of traditional craftwork in contemporary markets. The designer can analyze design problems with different cultural stands and thinkings, and get rid of preset cultural limitation for free creation. The cultural feature has been one of core elements of modern product design, the consuming cultures has become a trend in modern societies. The thinking of this study is beneficial to the exchange among multicultural elements for a promotion and progress. The cultural conversation and education meanings are apparent, which promotes designers receive different cultural stands and aesthetic bearings, and have a sensitive insight to various cultural icons and forms. Essentially, every person born from a special culture and society, on the surface, persons buy some merchandise from market, getting its function and service, but in essence, persons choose some cultural properties in some merchandise, in which involves some same or similar properties with the customer has in the course of consumption(Ernest Mandel 2002, 7). So, the multicultural feature is beneficial to broaden the market of product and attract attention of consumers more, which is an important condition for a company of healthy development in modern market of the world.

Conclusion

The article takes ten judgmental samples of Malaysian modern pewter craftwork for example, giving a narrative from their provenance, shape, pattern to a basic cultural feature. Showing a great success the ancient traditional craft achieves in contemporary markets, which is worth thinking and conclusion seriously related experiences and regulations. The reason is complicated and multi-aspects. Apparently, the multicultural features is one of main factors, which gives local designers rich inspiration and inexhaustible design resources. If artists and designers want to master the multicultural concepts well, the ways discussed in the article is a basic clue, every steps need to be given a more endeavor. Specifically those who come from monocultural countries, breaking the preset cultural and thinking model is one difficult course in designing. Moreover, getting multicultural concepts is one re-creating working rather than simply summing up different cultural elements in production. In addition, the designers' preference, personality, special social environment, cultural background and the feature of new era, which make the study become different and complex. So, these problems need a further observation and analysis. At the same time, the multicultural concepts also is beneficial to social development and peaceful contact among countries in contemporary world in front of the racial conflict, the gap between rich and poor, the difference in national systems and the environment pollution so on.

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