



# Getting the Method of Reviving Traditional Crafts from Malaysian Modern Pewter Craftwork

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**Abstract:** It is a common sense that every country pays attention to protecting and developing own traditional crafts, as one component of traditional cultures which can benefit to protect national memory, unite people, promote cultural confidence, and economic progress. How to develop and revive one traditional craft in contemporary markets is not easy thing for every country due to be difficult for traditional crafts adapting to the new social conditions, and not many successful examples referenced effectively. The traditional pewter craft as one ancient craft has a long history in China, Britain and other traditional making-pewter countries, but in modern time, there is a revival and success in Malaysia. The Malaysian modern pewter craftwork gets many important domestic and international awards; the Malaysian pewter companies acquire many famous traditional making-pewter companies in the world. This article takes the case study of research method and references the theories of iconography and cultural semiotics, which tries to analyze the reason of the success Malaysian modern pewter craftwork achieved in modern markets, and reveals and concludes the effective methods and experiences of developing healthily a traditional craft in contemporary markets. It is a culture-based education and referential meaning to designers for getting a set of practical and effective methods of designing and reviving traditional crafts in contemporary conditions, this way can make traditional craftwork attracting and satisfying more customers in the world markets.

**Keywords:** traditional culture, reviving traditional crafts, modern pewter craftwork, traditional crafts design, culture-based education;

## Introduction

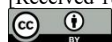
The article takes the Malaysian modern pewter craftwork for example, and gives a comprehensive analysis of the reason why the ancient craft can make a great success in modern markets, relative to a recession in traditional making-pewter countries, as China, British, and France etc. From the inner regulation of cultural development, classifying main reasons and historical nodes, the analysis concludes the method of artists and designers who can design and revive the traditional crafts effectively in contemporary markets. There are not many articles about the question by ready-made role models, among them the majority are sporadic and non-systematic comments basis on irrational experiences before. Now, countries pay attention to the development of own traditional crafts and cultures, especially those countries that have a long history and rich sources of traditional crafts, due to the huge progress of technologies and productive forces, the change of modern societies, the traditional crafts are difficult to developing well in modern societies. Governments pushed out actively many policies to protect and prompt the healthy development of traditional crafts, but the result is not always up to original purposes. Many traditional crafts are still in a status of recession, depression, even being forgotten. The UNESCO <sup>[1]</sup> made up a list of countries' cultural heritages to save and protect human cultural memories. The article borrows main theoretical views of Denmark modern famous philosopher - Jorgen Dines Johansen, in his book, Sign in use, an introduction to semiotics. Looking beyond the superficial phenomenon, deepening in cultural inner characteristics, the article analyzes systematically the different features and achievements in the development course of Malaysian modern pewter craftwork. It is can find out a set of effective steps about revival traditional crafts in contemporary markets, and analyzes the relationship and concepts among them, designers how to understand its inner meanings, how to get the design concepts and thoughts, it is also a good reference to the design education of revival traditional crafts in contemporary conditions.

## Purpose of Research

The purpose of this article is that getting the systematic methods and structure of reviving traditional crafts from the angle of cultural semiotic and evolution of the Malaysian modern pewter craftwork, which is beneficial to healthy development of the traditional crafts in contemporary societies. From theoretical and practical angles, the article let designers and companies get the integrated thought of designing and innovating traditional craftwork for satisfying the need of modern markets.

## Literature Review

Now every country pays attention to protecting and reviving traditional cultures and crafts, the reason includes mainly three aspects. Firstly, the traditional cultures and crafts are common spiritual legacy of the whole national existence and development. The spiritual legacy is beneficial to unite people, forming a common dream, and beneficial to cultural



confidence, promoting national presence in the world. Secondly, to protect and exploit traditional cultures and crafts is beneficial to job creation, promoting social economic development, especially in cultural creative industries. Thirdly, the traditional and national culture has become one of main national strengths, which plays an important role in the competition among countries, and increases a country's external influence as same as other country's strengths like politics, military and diplomacy. So the protecting and developing traditional crafts is a hot academic issue, taking keywords – Protect traditional craft; Revive traditional crafts; Develop traditional handicrafts for searching document in main academic websites as Web of Science, Scopus, Science Direct, Google Scholar and so on, the most of articles are main focus on some concrete aspect or angle, as technique, craft, cultural features, inheriting, innovation, modernization etc, failure to discuss the problem from the perspective of the whole cultural development laws, especially from the cultural semiotics. For example: Designing for Revitalization of Communities through New Business Models for Traditional Arts and Crafts, authors are Tao Huang and Eric Anderson, published by journal of Art and design review, Vol.07 No.04 (2019). The article analyzes revitalizing traditional crafts from commercial points. The Social Constraints on the Preservation and Sustainable Development of Traditional Crafts in a Developed Society, by Wojciech Polec and Daria Murawska, Sustainability 2022, 14(1), 120. Traditional arts and crafts, by Kiri Schultz, Museum International, 54:1-2, 56-63. Etc.

The traditional making-pewter craft 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 pewter-smith family [2][21]. In Europe, the history of making-pewter craft is over many centuries, as British, France, Germany and Italy [3]. Except for Malaysia, other traditional making-pewter countries faced a recession of pewter industry in modern time. The causes are multifold, for example, making-pewter craft always is limited in level of traditional technique, style, motif, shape and design. The exploration of tin metal property doesn't get a new progress and improvement, the mode of operation of traditional pewter industry is not suitable to modern business, new materials emergence and popularization, like glass, porcelain, stainless steel, resin etc. In addition, some government policy hinders the development of pewter industry; Chinese government prohibited all forms of transactions about tin metal and pewter alloy due to the priority to meet needs of national defense industries in the 1950s and 60s. But in Malaysia, the traditional pewter craft gets a great success; Malaysia modern pewter craftwork has a good reputation in modern market of the world due to its rich styles, delicate design and exquisite fabrication. After more than one hundred years development, Malaysian modern pewter craftwork wins many domestic and international designs or creative design awards, and acquires many traditional making-pewter companies in Euro-American countries, and earns a widespread reputation and admiration.

## **Methodology**

The study uses case analysis of the qualitative research methods, from the development history of Malaysian pewter industry and the modern pewter craftwork of the Malaysian main pewter companies. The history is the development course of Malaysian modern pewter industries from an exotic traditional craft to a local representative craft in modern time. The modern pewter craftwork means that 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 series of 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 function, size, color etc. The sampling can basically reflect the main appearance of Malaysian modern pewter craftwork from the technical and cultural features.

Reference to theories of iconography and semiotics, the iconographic analysis is a method that explains the meaning of artworks through historical affinity, which refers to the time when the work was produced. In the different event, place or time, artworks will deal with the different connoisseurs. Each one has its own unique facts and will make different assumptions. Therefore, the recommendation in accordance with iconography will always rely on historical evidence to back up the construction of data, interpreting and giving a meaning. The article gives a classification and organization of all features and experiences while the objective narrative about the historical course and features of craftwork's appearance, structure, artistic style etc. The semiotic analysis is a method that explains the cultural meaning of the rich design elements included in artworks deep, especially the theory of cultural semiotics from Denmark Jorgen Dines Johansen is well known for analyzing the course of cultural generation, development and evolution laws. Through the study, it can find the reasons of reviving traditional pewter craft in modern Malaysia, and concludes the method of the healthy development of traditional crafts in contemporary markets.

## **The analysis of Malaysian modern pewter craftwork features**

In fact, the traditional pewter craft as a foreign craft is rooted in Malaysian special conditions over 100 years, from its history and developing course, there are many experiences and features worth other countries' references. In order to avoid sporadic, messy and verbose narratives, so, the article borrows the main conceptions of Denmark Dines Johansen who is the modern famous philosopher about cultural semiotics, and selects and categorizes judgmental or representative features and nodes for narrative. Every culture and traditional craft is from interaction between human being and natural or social environment, basis on an accumulation of human living experience, from unperceived thing to perceived thing,

surroundings to surrounding world [4]. Every culture has three basic traits: the first, Space and time, cultures or traditional crafts is generated from a special space and time, it provides indispensable social and natural conditions for existence and development. The second, Body and subject, cultures have a carrier that carries its entire cultural elements and information. The third, Action model, cultures have or cause a set of words, behaviors and customs in a special society. The following is a qualitative analysis of the collections from three aspects involving apparent characteristics in the course of the Malaysian modern pewter craftwork development.

## 1. Space and time.

The aspect gives a conclusion of the main natural and social conditions, which are requirements for the success achieved by Malaysian modern pewter craft.

Firstly, there is rich tin mine resource in Malaysia, "Tin is found in Malaysia in the "Western Tin Belt", stretching along peninsular Malaysia through the Kinta and Klang valleys. It is estimated that these rocks are between 1300-1700 Ma, the crust being Phanerozoic [5]. It is deposited within alluvium, which is a deposit of sand, silt, clay and gravel by rivers usually in floodplain areas [6]. Tin is contained within an ore, which is a mineral or rock from which a metal (or mineral) can be extracted for profit [7]. In this case the ore is the mineral cassiterite [8]." "Malaysia used to be one of the main exporters of tin; in fact, in 1979 Malaysia's tin exports accounted for 31% of the total global tin output. Tin has contributed largely to Malaysia's economy, and was also behind the establishment of Kuala Lumpur by Chinese workers searching for the metal [9]." Local rich tin mine resource gives a material basis for developing tin metal industry and pewter craftwork. Secondly, Malaysia locates at Southeast Asia, a tropical rainforest climate, and the intersection between Eastern and Western cultures. Warm weather is beneficial to tin metal making, good extensibility and storage, avoiding the tin plague or tin pest [10]. The pewter craftsmen or designers in Malaysia are easy to get various design thoughts and inspiration from different cultures due to its special location and history. Thirdly, it is known that Malaysia is a multi-ethnic country; Malay, Chinese and Indian are main races, other minorities as Southeastern Asian, Middle Eastern, European etc. Different racial people lives together more than one thousand years, differentiation with those modern immigrant countries, like America, Canada, and Australia etc. Local people is used to this kind of multi-cultural society, Malaysian modern history is basically stable relative to other Southeastern Asian countries, which is a foundation of all social undertakings. Fourthly, Local transportation is convenient, for example, "as early as 1886, a railway line from Kuala Lumpur to Klang was completed, cutting the journey from an entire day to just 43 minutes. The railway made it possible to transport tin from Kuala Lumpur to the port in Klang four times a day." (Chen May Yee 2003, 18) In addition, Malaysia paid attention to the development of local tourism; the tourism has become Malaysian third largest economic pillar and the second largest source of foreign exchange earnings. One of main development strategies of Malaysia's tourism industry is the building tourism culture brand, among it, including revitalizing traditional cultures and crafts. So, the making-pewter craft as a traditional craft has merged into the earth of local society environment, its shape, pattern and connotation are different with other traditional making-pewter counties [11].

## 2. Subject or body.

Making traditional crafts is adaptable to new social environment by improving cultural carriers' conditions. The traditional pewter craft as one kind of tangible culture, the pewter craftwork is an important carrier of traditional pewter craft. Improving the property of pewter material, art forms and craftsmanship, which are keys for the healthy development of Malaysian modern pewter craftwork in contemporary markets.

### a. Improving the property of pewter material.

It is known that the purity of any metal can't be up to 100% in smelting, tin metal is also included, and close to 99.99% it can be called pure tin. Although tin metal is easy to be smelted relative to other common metals, the pure tin metal has a special property, the more beating or hammering it, the softer tin metal showing, to a certain extent, it not only isn't easy to be made in shape, but also easy to be cracking. In traditional making-pewter craft, adding a small amount of lead to form alloy, it can make tin soft and not easy to crack, which also is an important component in bronze metal. The pure tin is silvery white with slightly pearly color, tin ingot, lower hardness; it can be cut by a small knife, soft quality, and low melting point and easy to smelt. The pure tin metal itself is non-toxic, stainless, moisture-proof, acid-resistant, alkali-resistant, chemically inactive etc. The lead is poisonous to human body and will cause damage to the human nervous system, organ system, hematopoietic system, digestive system and other systems. This is one of main causes the traditional making-pewter craft went down in modern time in front of new materials as glass, stainless steel, porcelain, resin etc.

Around the world, traditional pewter craftsmen tried their best to remove lead from pewter products, relying instead on small amounts of non-toxic copper and antimony to counter the softness of tin. "In 1968, Malaysian Royal Selangor pewter company changed the pewter alloy components, completely eliminating lead, its pewter products are composed of 97 percent tin, 0.5 percent antimony and 2.5 percent copper [2]75." This kind of material changing makes consumers buy pewter craftwork with confidence, no worrying healthy problem, broadening pewter product market; it is a distinctive characteristic comparative to traditional pewter.

### b. Improving the making technique of traditional pewter craftwork.

Malaysian pewter craftsmen innovated the method of making-pewter and increased productivity. For example, “the pewter alloy was heated to 350 degrees Celsius and the molten liquid poured into a mould. The mould was draped with a wet cloth or sprayed with water to help the pewter cool and solidify. The mould was then opened and the pewter object extracted. The new process was not just faster, it also allowed for intricate profiles and textures to be cast from the mould [2]75.”

In traditional pewter craftwork, the pewter is the main or unique material; all craft and design are beneficial to showing the pewter’s character. But in Malaysian modern pewter craftwork the combination among different materials is a common form, different materials as pewter, wood, glass, ceramics, bamboo, complementing each other, which broaden the expressiveness and design thought of traditional pewter craftwork. There are four representative samples came from many local pewter craft works, which can show this feature with a further description.



Plate1: The Malaysian pewter craft works of the different materials combination.

Plate1.(1), the pewter craftwork is from Tumasek pewter Co., Ltd. 1993, name is Aromatic Oil Diffuser-Grape. The shape of diffuser is designed to be Indian diffuser directly, the majority of Indian traditional diffuser is made of stone and marble, which has a long history in Indian religions and noble hobbies. The Malaysian diffuser is made of pewter and ceramic, body is ceramic, pewter pedestal, its body hall, around smokehouse is pewter with complicated decoration, a bunch of grapes, leaves and vines. Two materials keep a uniform color tone, a contrast of shape, the crispness of ceramic and the sturdiness of pewter alloy. Plate1.(2), the pewter craftwork is designed by Tumasek pewter Co., Ltd. 1993, name is Pewter teapot. The teapot is made of three different materials, pewter, porcelain and bamboo. Its pot body is pewter, porcelain embedded cover and a bamboo handle. Three materials form harmonious color matching, light pewter, dark porcelain; the color of bamboo is just an intermediate color. The pewter pot body is sturdy for bearing high temperature, acid or alkali liquids and using. The porcelain cover plays moisture-proof, heat insulation and no reaction with other materials, chemical stable. Plate1.(3), the pewter craftwork is designed by Royal Selangor pewter Co., Ltd. 2001, name is whale decanter. The shape of decanter is one upturned tail whale, its tail and top funnel are made of pewter, the body of decanter is glass. The wine is stored in the glass body of whale decanter after pouring through top funnel. The glass body of decanter is easy to observe the capacity and quality of wine, the pewter upturned tail and top funnel are comparative sturdier for using in long time. Two materials not only make the whale decanter look vivid, but also make it get a good and reliable function. Plate1.(4), the pewter craftwork is from Royal Selangor pewter Co., Ltd. 2001, name is modern box. The material of this modern box is pewter and wood, abstractive geometric shape, its cubic pewter body is wrapped by wood shell, inner and outer intersperse each other at four vertical cubic edges through three rectangular strips of equal length, equal width and equidistant every edge.

From the several representative samples, Malaysian pewter craftsmen have broken through the limitation of material in traditional pewter craftwork. Different materials are coordinated and combined according to different shapes, structures, functions and visual effects, which is a clear characteristic different with other traditional making-pewter countries.

c. The multicultural features in pewter craftwork.

Relative to traditional making-pewter countries, Malaysian modern pewter craftwork shows rich cultural features. The various cultural elements are from the East and the West, from the traditional forms to modern styles. It is a apparent feature of Malaysian modern pewter different with pewter of those monoculture countries. Different cultures can inspire rich design thoughts of Malaysian pewter craftsmen, different cultural elements, shape, patterns and crafts are a common phenomenon in Malaysian modern pewter craftwork, which satisfies the need of different national people.



Plate2: The Malaysian modern pewter craft works of the different cultural features.

Plate2.(1), the pewter craftwork is produced from Royal Selangor pewter Co., Ltd. , name is Savoy Candle stand. The Candle stand is designed to be a shape of abstractive flower, the upper part is petal structure, similar to a bowl that is composed of a circle of arcs arranged uniformly from center upward, which is the main function part, the candle will be set in its center. The bowl shape looks like a flower, chrysanthemum or a lotus, both have a rich meaning

in the East traditional cultures, specially in Buddhism and Hinduism religions. Plate2.(2), the pewter caddy is designed by Tumasek pewter company, name is dragon tea caddy. It's surface is decorated with Chinese classic dragon and related patterns, golden dragons representing a special meanings, power, nobility and wealth in Chinese cultures. Plate2.(3), the pewter jug is from Tumasek pewter company, name is elephant head bear jug. The most obvious feature is its jug handle, a elephant head shape, a realistic shape of elephant head, contrast to a succinct jug body without any decorative pattern. The elephant image has a auspicious meaning in Eastern countries as China, India. Plate2.(4), the pewter caddy is designed by Royal Selangor pewter company, name is warrior tea caddy. From its name and surface decorative patterns, the human face pattern is similar with the image of English Anglo-Saxon helmet. It is known that the Anglo-Saxons came to and resided in England from Germany and Europe in 5th century, their descendants' habits, language and culture have become the important components in British cultures [12]. Plate2.(5), The pewter plate is from Tumasek Pewter Co., Ltd., name is Islamic Plate. The obvious feature on this Malaysian pewter plate is decoration pattern by Islamic character and geometrical plant patterns. Islamic character is designed often to be decorative patterns on various Islamic craft works, which is one unique aesthetic bearing due to one perfect combination between text and pattern [13], Islamic orthodox school strictly prohibits idolatry, which opposes the depiction of concrete animals and human figures [14]. Plate2.(6), the caddy is designed by Royal Selangor pewter company 1993, name is Batik tea caddy. The decorative patterns on surface of the pewter caddy borrow directly from the representative patterns of local traditional Batik. The Batik has a long history acculturation in Southeast Asia in an art form made with wax resistant dye on fabrics. Plate2.(7), the pewter clock is designed by Royal Selangor pewter company, name is Corinthian Table Clock. Its name and feature, the shape of clock is designed directly to be the feature of Greek classical architecture-Athens temple. Plate2.(8), The pewter box is from Royal Selangor Co., Ltd., name is The Admiral Line Box. The design of the pewter box is influenced by Western modern design style. Geographic and simple shape, no clear cultural feature, this is adapted to modern production [15].



Plate3: The Malaysian pewter craft works of the modern and popular cultural features.

d. Studying the Western modern design styles.

The designers of Malaysian modern pewter craftwork didn't stick to the traditional shapes and cultural elements of pewter craftwork; they studied the Western modern design styles and techniques which represent the trend of modern designs, industry and markets. In the style, the designer expresses one thing by geometric and abstract shapes, no pursuing realistic details and clear cultural characteristics, which is beneficial to modern mass production, and accepted by modern markets [16].

Plate3.(1), the sculpture is designed by Royal Selangor, name is Hornbill Sculptura. The Hornbill is one local bird in Southeast Asia, it is called as national bird in Malaysia. The bird image is designed to be a table sculpture by several smooth curves, only remaining main shape features, which can show a vivid image of the bird without more realistic details. Plate3.(2), The pewter trophy is from Tumasek pewter company, name is flame trophy. The trophy has two

parts, the upper is generalized to be a simple geometric shape according to the shape of burning flame, the lower is a small cylinder with small top and big bottom. Plate3.(3), the sculpture is produced by Royal Selangor pewter company, name is peacock pewter sculpture. In the same way, it is designed to be a geometric peacock shape by several long curves, the back is decorated with gradient diamond patterns, which highlights the main features of peacocks. Plate3.(4), the bowl set is designed by Royal Selangor, name is 4 Erosion Bowl Set. The bowl set is only the combination of pure abstract geometric shapes, no any concrete and realistic images. Their design thought is the result of the connection of different geometric shapes and parts.

e. Getting the characters and motifs from movies, cartoon, films and television works.

In modern society, film and television works, popular songs, cartoon and animation works etc. have become a important component of people's spiritual life. Singers, movie stars, media stars, protagonists and anime characters are sought after and loved by the public extensively. The love sometimes has reached the point of mania, which prompts the designers of Malaysian modern pewter craftwork to seek cooperation with film and television and media companies, designing pewter craft works and expanding sales basis on the motifs of media popular cultures.

Plate3.(5), the figurine is designed by Royal Selangor pewter company, name is Steamboat Willie Figurine, Limited Edition Mickey Mouse of the Mickey 90th Anniversary. The pewter craftwork is based on the character of American cartoon Mikey Mouse, one popular cartoon for children. Plate3.(6), the pewter figurine is from American comic character, Hulk Marvel, a limited treasury edition. Plate3.(7), the figurine is designed to be the character of Iron Man in American

superhero film, a representative posture with full details. Plate3.(8), the pewter table ornament is based on the protagonist of American movie Spider-Man, it is a mini and cartoon version of the Spider-Man figurine.

f. Customizing the design and products for customers.

Customizing design and products according to different needs of customers, this can provide a personalized service and satisfy the interest of a small, specialized section of the population. Plate3.(9), (10), (11), (12), the four pewter craft works are all trophies for different sports competitions and designed by Royal Selangor pewter company. From the history of Malaysian Morten pewter craftwork, the customizing design and product for exclusive Golf competition by cooperation with sports competition organizing committees, which won a good reputation and profits for Malaysian pewter companies. Plate3.(9), it is a champion trophy, an elaborate vintage-style trophy, for occasions requiring something a little more ornate. Plate3.(10), name is Ronald Cameron Golfer Trophy. Plate3.(11), the name of trophy is Engraving available - Hole In One. Plate3.(12), the tablet trophy is appropriate to commemorate milestones or achievements, this tablet-shaped trophy affords several customization possibilities. Either of the upright panels can be finished in a paint color of your choice, to reflect gold, silver or bronze placings, or corporate colors.

### 3. Action model.

A culture grows in some societies for a long time, which can form or represent 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. The part content can show that Malaysian modern pewter industry pays attention to the influence of traditional pewter crafts, and set up a positive and social action model, and make traditional pewter craftwork become a part of local cultures and regional features, not only commercial action and handicrafts.

a. Participating actively in various influential design competitions.

Winning awards in various mainstream design competitions can quickly expand the popularity of companies and products. Participating design competitions is a precious way to study excellent works and peers. Winning awards in famous design competitions can get more resources beneficial to the development of companies, and promote self confidence. Taking the products of Royal Selangor pewter company example, the Sovereign Collection works of Royal Selangor pewter craftworks 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<sup>[2]87</sup>. 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<sup>[2]88</sup>. 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<sup>[2]90</sup>. Wine accessories won the Gift of the Year Award in the Licensed Gifts Category from the Giftware Association of the United Kingdom in 1997<sup>[2]91</sup>. In 2003, the wine funnel work garnered a "red dot" award for product design from the North Rhine.

b. Acquisitions of domestic and foreign traditional handicraft companies.

Acquisitions between companies are also one effective way to expand the popularity of companies, and get quickly resources. For example, the Royal Selangor Pewter acquired Englefields, a 300-year-old London pewterer and maker of Crown & Rose pewter in 1989.”<sup>[2]109</sup> “The company acquired London silver company Comyns, including some 350 historic silver designs dating back to the 17th century in 1993.”<sup>[2]110</sup> 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 etc.<sup>[2]116</sup> The acquisition of between Malaysian pewter companies represented by Royal Selangor and other countries, especially European and American traditional pewter companies, which makes The Royal Selangor become one international pewter company with important global presence.

c. Getting authorization from local government.

Due to the prestige and success of Selangor pewter company in modern markets, the Sultan decided that the pewter company should have royal status in 1979, he conferred a royal warrant on Selangor Pewter. After that, he insisted that every pewter piece he bought be engraved with the words: "By royal appointment to his Royal Highness the Sultan of Selangor." When the Sultan celebrated 25 years on the throne, he commissioned Selangor Pewter to make small pewter badges with his portrait sculptured in relief. He ordered 350,000 badges and gave them to every schoolchild in the state of Selangor. For VIPs, the Sultan ordered medals with his portrait on one side and his official crest on the other. In 1992, in recognition of the royal warrant, the company officially changed its name to Royal Selangor<sup>[2]106</sup>.

d. Building company visitor center.

In 1992, in recognition of the royal warrant, the company officially changed its name to Royal Selangor. In late 2003, Royal Selangor unveiled a new visitor centre at its headquarters in Setapak Jaya, on the outskirts of Kuala Lumpur<sup>[2]118</sup>. Here, visitors from across the globe learn about the company's origins, the history of pewter in the world and the story of tin mining in Malaysia. There is a Hall of Artifacts housing a collection of traditional tools and antique pewter from around the world. An interactive gallery includes a Chamber of Chimes, where visitors hear the bell-like chime of cast

pewter when struck, and a Hall of Finishes, where visitors run their hands along the many varieties of pewter textures to appreciate the material's malleability. At the popular School of Hard Knocks, visitors try their hand at hammering a sheet of pewter into the shape of a bow as pewter-smiths did centuries ago.

Moreover, launching company interactive websites in 1998, hosting various business themed events according to different traditional holidays, participating actively in social welfare activities etc, these also expand the social influence of the enterprise.

### **Finding**

Through the previous analysis about the features of the modern pewter crafts in Malaysia, standing on public and popular views, the analysis may seem messy and general, but from the three aspects of the cultural semiotics, and from the regulation of the development in culture itself, these features and experiences can be classified into the three aspects-time and space, body or subject, action model. The three aspects form a whole, which can explain the course of the revival of the modern pewter craftwork in Malaysia clearly, and conclude the method of reviving traditional crafts in modern markets, avoiding sporadic, messy and isolated cognitions.

1. From the time and space of the cultural generation and development, the Malaysian pewter crafts industry pays attention to explore and protect the environment traditional pewter crafts existed. It includes the material conditions, such as natural resources, special climate and various resources in physical forms. The social elements, such as social stable order and social awareness, feeling, system, memory etc about traditional pewter craft. The municipal infrastructure, as municipal service system, convenient utilities, transportation, administration etc. The plan of government development. Local government pays attention to and makes a development plan of traditional crafts, cultures, tourism and related industries, etc.

2. From the body and subject of the cultural carrier in existing. The Malaysian pewter craftsmen gave a big endeavor on promoting and improving the property of the carrier of traditional pewter craftwork. The traditional pewter crafts generated from past time, showing a special form with past aesthetic styles different with it in contemporary time. Its form needs to be improved according to modern aesthetic styles from inner materials to outer shapes. Such as Improving the material property of traditional crafts. The way makes materials beneficial to be produced and healthy, and explores the combination between different materials, which enrich shape, structure and forms. Improving the making techniques of traditional crafts. Exploring different materials design language and improving processing techniques, which can make the shape of traditional crafts be appropriate to its cultural meanings. Absorbing different cultures diversifies and enriches the design thoughts. Satisfying the people with different cultures and religions. Reference to the western modern design styles. The design style is the consequence of modern technology and aesthetic direction, which is beneficial to cut costs, and satisfy the need of the majority of people. Getting the design inspiration from films and television works, popular elements. Following the popular elements, this can expand the recognition and influence of traditional crafts. Customizing products for special customers. Satisfying the needs of special or small number of people, etc.

3. From the action and action model of the cultural influence, the Malaysian pewter crafts industry values promoting and improving the social recognition of traditional pewter crafts. Enriching cultural connotation, establishing cultural image, which achieves a transformation from a pure traditional craft to national cultural sign, promoting cultural additional values, and making people consume a cultural consumption of traditional craft other than only getting a handicraft or ornament. Such as Getting awards from influential design competitions at home and abroad. Expanding quickly the influence of traditional crafts in society. Cooperation and acquisition with domestic and foreign peers. Getting more development resources and customers of the modern markets. Getting the support, acknowledgment and authority from local governments. It is beneficial to get policy supports and establish brand image or culture. Constructing the brand and company cultures. According to the development regulation of modern company, establishing brand cultures of traditional crafts, which can improve the development of companies, etc.

### **Discussion**

In fact, the features of the Malaysian pewter craft is more than the points mentioned in this article. All are results of the wisdom and hard working of the Malaysian pewter designers and craftsmen. The success of Malaysian pewter craft in modern time is precious, and a good example for developing other traditional crafts. But the method can't be copied directly by other traditional crafts due to different conditions and environments. Retrospect the whole course of Malaysian modern pewter, the creation and innovation is the main melody, which is a common way in improving pewter material quality, changing the making-pewter method, absorbing different cultural elements etc. Relative to traditional pewter techniques in traditional pewter-making countries, they still stick to the fixed design thinking and styles. Although as launching a website, building a cultural visitor center are common things from the angle of contemporary time, it still needs a commercial courage and a big investment ahead of its time. In general, through a analysis and conclusion of the method in Malaysian modern pewter craft development history, which can give a further analysis of getting the general rule of reviving traditional crafts in contemporary time.

First of all, paying attention to studying the environment and requirements for the existence of traditional crafts, which is the basis of one traditional craft healthy development. Including studying the reason for emergence and prosperity of one traditional craft in history from reliable, real and judgmental proofs and documents. Giving a careful comparison between past and present development conditions of one traditional craft, after which can get a clear cognition about one traditional craft in contemporary time. And making a plan to protect and create the requirements for traditional crafts rationally from the conditions of the contemporary markets.

Secondary, improving continuously the material property and craftsmanship of one traditional craft can satisfy the need of contemporary markets. Such as: Improving the property of traditional crafts' materials according to the design concepts, as health, green, environmental protection etc. Enriching the design inspiration of traditional crafts and exploring various expressions through different functions and absorbing different cultural elements. Promoting the ability of traditional crafts' design and production by taking advantage of modern technology. And cultivating a large number of traditional crafts designers who have a wide cultural vision and art and craft creativity.

In addition, creating brand cultures, realizing the transformation from commodity trading to cultural consumption. Including publicizing traditional crafts by various forms and methods, which expends and enhances the foundation and recognition of the masses. Refining the cultural connotations and creating the cultural signs in contemporary markets. And encouraging the masses to participate in the cultural construction and interaction of traditional crafts, which can find out the need of consumers in time.

## Conclusion

The article analyzes the features of Malaysian modern pewter craftwork, these features and experiences can be classified into the three aspects of the cultural semiotics from Jorgen Dines Johansen after an iconographic narrative. The study gives an effective perspective of reviving and revitalizing traditional crafts in today's societies. From the law of the cultural development, the success of Malaysian modern pewter craft isn't occasional, the reason not only includes Malaysian inherent advantages, but also the way Malaysian designers chose and endeavored. The method of modern designers how to revive traditional crafts is concluded under this analysis. The method can't be copied simply by other traditional crafts, because there are many uncertain elements in the course of revival one traditional craft in contemporary markets, as different crafts, time, environments, conditions, technologies, cultures and designers etc. the difficult problem is that how to develop one traditional craft in the different environment of the contemporary markets. As previous analysis, the cultural three aspects all have changed, which needs a further analysis according to concrete elements and conditions the modern designers meet. The course of every traditional craft development can't be preset accurately, continuous exploration and innovation in the process of revival is requirement and a hard working. The designers should experience the concluded method with different conditions of every traditional craft, and find a appropriate way to achieve the revival which not only means a big commercial benefit but also a real cultural revival of one traditional craft in contemporary time, as the Malaysian modern pewter crafts industry has done.

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