
iNVENTX Creative Exhibition

SUSTAINAISSANCE IN PRACTICE: Quiet Materials, Loud Meaning

Terlaksana

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Abstract

Terlaksana draws inspiration from the Malay proverb “Hutan sudah terambah, teratak sudah tertegak”, a poetic affirmation that a task has been thoroughly and beautifully completed. This piece embodies the spirit of mindful creation, celebrating not only the final result but also the process, patience, and harmony needed to bring vision into form. Constructed using aluminium composite, granular texture epoxy, and medium-density fibreboard on a blackboard coated with clear matte epoxy, the layered composition echoes the complexity of forest ecosystems: vibrant, interdependent, and full of hidden mystery. Each abstract shape and vivid colour represents the biodiversity and fragility of the natural world, reflecting how nature and culture intertwine across generations. By embedding this traditional wisdom within a contemporary sculptural medium, *Terlaksana* becomes a visual metaphor for sustainable living, serving as a reminder that true progress must align with respect for the environment. Just as the proverb implies thoughtful completion, sustainability demands a balance between innovation and preservation. This work invites viewers to reflect on their role in protecting what has already been built, including forests, homes, and the cultural wisdom that binds them.

Keywords: Sustainability; Malay proverb; Nature; Visual metaphor; Environment; Preservation

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Artwork Information

Artist: Syafiq Hariz

Title: Terlaksana

Medium: Aluminium composite, granular texture epoxy, medium density fibreboard on Blackboard Coated with Clear Matte Epoxy

Size: 123 cm x 98 cm

Year: 2023



Figure 1. Terlaksana (2023). Aluminium Composite, Granular Texture Epoxy, Medium-Density Fibreboard on Blackboard Coated with Clear Matte Epoxy. 123 cm × 98 cm. Artwork by Syafiq Hariz Mohamad Sakor.

Concept and Theme

The inspiration behind *Terlaksana* (Figure 1) stems from the Malay proverb “Hutan sudah terambah, teratak sudah tertegak”, which translates to “the forest has been cleared, the hut has been erected”, a poetic affirmation that a task has been completed thoroughly and beautifully. This proverb becomes a

metaphor for ecological completion and sustainability, suggesting the idea of building a future while remaining mindful of cultural and environmental foundations.

Relating to the theme *SUSTAINAISSANCE: Emotion, Expression, Identity*, the artwork bridges indigenous wisdom with contemporary materials and visual language. It explores the interconnectedness of nature, culture, and human emotion through layered and vibrant forms, capturing how sustainability must be emotionally resonant, deeply expressive, and culturally rooted. Identity emerges from this layered complexity, as nature is presented not only as a setting but as a source of self-definition and belonging.

Approach and Process

Terlaksana was created through a meticulous process of sketching, digital modelling, and hand-layered construction using cut and painted elements. The fusion of traditional motifs and organic forms with industrial materials aims to capture the tension between preservation and innovation.

A mixed-media approach was adopted, combining durable and recyclable components such as aluminium composite with textural granularity provided by epoxy. These material choices were made not only for aesthetic reasons but also to reflect long-term durability, mirroring sustainability in both form and message. The sculptural layering technique creates physical depth that metaphorically evokes layers of ecological and cultural memory.

The use of colour was guided by emotional intent, shifting from tranquil blues to urgent yellows and bold magentas, to suggest both the beauty and the precarity of natural ecosystems.

Meaning and Impact

At its core, *Terlaksana* is a meditation on what it means to build without erasure, to create without destroying. It suggests that sustainability is not a technical goal alone but a cultural and emotional journey. The work invites viewers to reflect on their role in the ecological narrative and to consider sustainability as an act of identity preservation, especially within Southeast Asian contexts where heritage and environment are deeply entwined.

Through abstraction and materiality, the piece encourages emotional reflection, not only on environmental degradation but also on renewal, completion, and hope. It aims to move the conversation from crisis to care, and from anxiety to stewardship.

Materials and Techniques

The materials used in *Terlaksana* include aluminium composite, granular-textured epoxy, medium-density fibreboard (MDF), and a matte epoxy coating applied on a blackboard base. The techniques employed consist of multi-layer cut assembly, hand-painting, and digital sketch-to-physical translation. The choice of industrial yet durable materials such as aluminium speaks to ideas of sustainability and permanence, while the handcrafted layering of organic shapes connects the synthetic with the natural. The matte finish offers a tactile and softening quality that encourages close viewing.

Artistic and Design Influences

This work draws heavily from traditional Malay proverbs and indigenous cosmologies, which often reflect a deep respect for nature as both physical space and spiritual presence. The proverb guiding this piece represents the wisdom of balance, of knowing when to stop, preserve, and honour what has been built.

Artistically, *Terlaksana* is influenced by contemporary Southeast Asian visual language, including the sculptural works of Yee I-Lann (2021) and the ecological installations of Tan Zi Hao (2022), both of whom incorporate heritage and sustainability into their practices. The abstraction and chromatic layering are also informed by the expressive tendencies of modern environmental art, which aim to evoke ecological urgency through visual storytelling (Gabrys, 2016).

Conclusion

Terlaksana reflects a moment of completion, not just of an artwork but of an intention. It embodies a sustainable ethos through both concept and craft, merging cultural identity with environmental responsibility. In doing so, it proposes a future where tradition and innovation co-exist, and where emotional expression becomes a tool for ecological change.

This work encourages future explorations into how heritage practices and materials can inform sustainable design, and how art can serve as a form of environmental advocacy that speaks both to the mind and to the heart.

References

- [1] Yee I-Lann, "Projek Borneo Heart," 2021, <https://yeeilann.com>
- [2] T. Z. Hao, "The Ghost in the Machine: Southeast Asian Contemporary Ecological Art," *Journal of Contemporary Art Studies*, vol. 5, no. 2, pp. 45–59, 2022.

[3] L. Gabrys, “Program Earth: Environmental Sensing Technology and the Making of a Computational Planet,” Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016.

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Authors’ Bio

Syafiq Hariz bin Mohamad Sakor (b. 1986, Muar, Johor) is a multidisciplinary Malaysian artist whose practice merges cultural storytelling, layered abstraction, and satirical narrative. Investigating the moral depths of Malay proverbs, his visual language blends vibrant, pop-illustrative forms with mixed media to probe contemporary social issues rooted in traditional wisdom. He earned a Master in Fine Art & Technology (2023) from UiTM, supported by the Faculty Post-Graduate Award, and holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Hons.) majoring in painting from the same institution. This academic grounding led to his solo exhibition “Moral, Kini dan Dulu” at Core Design Gallery, Subang Jaya, where he reinterpreted Malay proverbs through mixed-media works that examine ethics, satire, and pop-cultural influence. Syafiq’s accolades include the Gold Award at SPACE: Emotion. Expression. Identity, iNVENTX Creative Showcase 2024, alongside Honorable Mentions at the Asia Illustration Collections in 2018 (Shanghai) and 2017 (Taipei) — achievements that highlight his growing influence across Asia. Through his art, Syafiq challenges viewers to revisit cultural narratives and their moral relevance in a globalised world, using humour, colour, and layered composition to provoke reflection and dialogue.