Aesthetic Aspects of Moulded Clay Pitcher

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Abstract: The making of Labu Sayong has now adopted the use of molds, or also known as Labu Acu. This new innovation is able to manufacture commercial products and more productive than the old ways. This innovation is also regarded as a solution towards protecting the industry from extinction as the products are relevant to current needs of the consumers in terms of aesthetics. However, an important question arises regarding the aesthetical characteristics of modern Labu Acu. Does the Labu Acu able to maintain the intricacies of the traditional Labu Sayong? Based on the qualitative analysis, the author has found that changes in ways of production had an indirect impact on the aesthetical values of Labu Acu. Thus, the aim of this paper is to discuss the ways in which the aesthetical aspects of Labu Acu can be observed. The paper starts with the definitions of aesthetics and intricacies; followed by a focused discussion on the intricacies of forms and patterns of Labu Acu. In conclusion, the author argues that the transformation in the technology of Labu Acu Sayong making has not only resulted in higher productivity, but it also changes the aspects of forms and patterns of traditional Labu Sayong. Interestingly heritage can still be maintained up to now.

Key words: Labu Sayong • Labu Acu • Aesthetics • Moulded

INTRODUCTION

Perak has the biggest industrial center of the traditional Malay pottery in Malaysia. Two major centers of pottery production are at Sayong and Pulau Tiga, located in the district of Kuala Kangsar. Traditional Malay pottery from Perak is the most popular because of its identity in design and patterns. Among the popular pottery still produced at Sayong is a black clay pitcher in a shape of a gourd called Labu Sayong. The clay pitcher is produced by hand-pinching technique and the result has an aesthetic value of its own. It is used by the Malays to store drinking water that has its own special features. The water stored inside the clay pitcher is colder than regular water and it is believed to refresh the body when consumed. As such it is also a symbol of Malay intellectuals in the past.

Now, the traditional Labu Sayong making has been transformed to modern ways. Originally produced using a pinching technique, it is now changed to a moulding technique by using plaster of Paris. The history started in 1986 when a Japanese ceramic researcher from Standards and Industrial Research Institute of Malaysia (SIRIM) Berhad visited Koperasi Kg. Kepala Bendang. He introduced and demonstrated the Labu Sayong slip casting technique to the traditional Labu Sayong entrepreneurs. After the visit, there were several traditional Labu Sayong entrepreneurs used moulding technique as a way to produce Labu Sayong in large quantities. They found out that the new technique is easier to learn and productive than the old ways. From then onwards, traditional Labu Sayong entrepreneurs have moved towards enhancing the quality of the moulded clay pitcher.

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Throughout the efforts of improving the quality of Labu Sayong manufacturing technology, a question arises; is there any implications on the aesthetic value of Labu Sayong resulting of the technological innovation? When these changes happened, does the new entrepreneurs in the district of Sayong preserve the aesthetic value of the traditional Labu Sayong or the other way round. Based on the research, researchers have found that indeed there is an improvement in the aesthetic from the aspect of design and patterns. However, it is normal that we often get served with documentational descriptions of the aesthetic value of the traditional Labu Sayong.

What Is Aesthetic?

Aesthetic or in Malay word ‘estetika’ is one of the knowledge disciplines. The word was created in the mid-18th century by one of the German philosophers Alexander Baumgarten (1714-1762). Aesthetic is derived from the Greek word aethesisis which means sensation. It is defined as a feeling inside a body as a reaction that occurred outside the body. He stated there's a feeling in aesthetics that is difficult to interpret and known as beauty. In fact, before the word aesthetic, the word beauty has been used to analyze the concept of beauty. Beauty has been used in analyzing various types of arts such as visual arts, literature, architecture, music, dance and drama. Therefore, aesthetic is the same as beauty, the same word that refers to related matters of beauty in arts [1].

In Islam the aesthetic concept that refers to beauty is recorded in the Hadith of Prophet Muhammad narrated by Imam Muslim rahimahullah in his Sahih which means:

“No one with an ounce of arrogance will enter Paradise.” Then there was one who ask, “What if a person who likes to dress well? Then he said, “Allah is beautiful and loves beauty, arrogance is rejecting truth and looking down on others.”

Based on the above hadith it is clear that in Islam, beauty should not conflict the values and principles of Islam.

A German archaeologist Johann Joachim Winckelmann who studies a lot of classical Greek art states that a person cannot feel the aesthetic if they are not interested to know and understand what is beauty. For example, a painter who teach an individual who does not like painting, the individual is likely unable to feel the beauty of his own painting. On the other hand, if the painting was introduced to those interested and talented in this area, they will definitely feel the aesthetic of the work produced by them. Therefore, aesthetic is a feeling that should be expressed by a good imagination translated in 2-dimensional (painting) or 3-dimensional (sculpture) [2].

Therefore, one of the most important aspects in assessing the appearance of an art work is form. This is because through form, observer can build a sense of aesthetic thus appreciates the work. There are two things that can be studied in a work according to [3].

“………but the form of art as a whole from the standpoint of aesthetic perception does include not only the directly presented images but also the portion of its suggestive content which is most definitely demonstrate on basis of cultural usage.”

It means that in appreciating overall aesthetic, the art form is not only an image that can be seen directly but also its indistinct content. This is the basis of a culture. Based on that opinion, the art form is divided into two parts, the real form and the implicit form. The real form is a form that can be seen with the naked eye and implicit form is the other way round. It is also the content to be presented by the artisan through design or pattern. Aesthetic experience and skills in working with the materials is important to create the real and implicit form. Once the real form has been completed, it can actually translate the fineness of the design of a work.

The first thing to consider in the process of creating a work is the medium such as clay, metal, cement, wood, canvas etc. The medium to produce an artwork can actually affect the fineness of a work. This is because the structural look of a form is depending on the characteristics of the chosen medium. For example, a sculptor began to work with a lump of clay in his studio. The soft clay is kneaded, pulled or pushed with specific techniques of forming. In the forming process, clay can also be added or removed using tools, hand and fingers. Then, the form is determined to be either curved, concave, convex or hollowed. In visual art, the process of structuring a form from a lump of clay to a final sculpture is called ‘plastic element’[4].

The fineness of the design and the use of medium is also said as the wise principle of the traditional crafts designer. The wisdom of Malay handicrafts makers in showcasing the beauty of songket can be seen through their high skills. The skills can be seen during the process making, the efficiency of using the natural medium, the perseverance in completing the work and the elegance of
Table 1: Definition of Fine.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Other definition of Fine</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>berhati-hati (cautious)</td>
<td>- doing something cautiously and with full attention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>seni (art)</td>
<td>- works created with talents, abilities and efficiency to create something beautiful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>bilis (anchovy)</td>
<td>- little</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>cermat (careful)</td>
<td>- careful, patient, full attentive, clean, neat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>comel (cute)</td>
<td>- interestingly cute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>elok (good looking)</td>
<td>- smart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>kecil-kecilan (small)</td>
<td>- light and neat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>klimis (smooth)</td>
<td>- smooth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>lenah-lembut (gentle)</td>
<td>- flexible and graceful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>sama rata (even)</td>
<td>- even and balanced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>tersembutyi (hidden)</td>
<td>- implicit</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

the person who wears the songket. All those were translated to the fineness of traditional Malay handicraft [5].

WHAT IS FINE? Obviously, fineness is one of the rules in assessing the aesthetic of a work. In general, the fineness in art is something that can be seen, heard, touched and felt instinctively by each individual appreciator. For example, the fineness of various Malay traditional arts can be evaluated in many ways. The fineness of Malay traditional dance can be seen through the graceful movements of the dancers. The rhythm of Malay traditional music also has its own subtle value. When the traditional instrument is played, it will produce the finest sounds of music presented alongside the poetic lyrics and melodious voice of the singer. The inclusion of these aspects makes the melodies of the original Malay song more beautiful and delightful to be heard and to be appreciated thoroughly. Similarly in visual arts such as painting, it is also capable in delivering the artist’s imagination. Imagination is delivered through images of forms resulting from the careful mixture of different colors that successfully conveys the subtle and implicit meanings.

How do we interpret fineness in handicrafts? When we look at the Malay traditional handicrafts such as carving, weaving or pottery, sometimes we will say 'how fine the carving/weaving/pattern are'. This sentence is like a benchmark of aesthetic value in the handicrafts that can be seen and felt instinctively by the observer. Therefore the word 'fine' coming out of our mouth when looking at artwork is actually our own aesthetic evaluation on the work without us realizing it. Inner feelings stimulation occurs when we like or enjoy seeing something subtle yet beautiful. This will in turn prompted the word 'fine' coming out of our mouths. It is the easiest and spontaneous expression in evaluating the aesthetic of an artwork. Based on this statement it can be said that the words 'fine' seems synonymous with Malay as a response when seeing a work of art.

However, do we understand the meaning of fine especially for the crafts that we see including Labu Sayong? Therefore it is sensible for the researchers to analyse the meaning of fine in Labu Sayong at present. As an introduction, fine is first translated as a basis for the elaboration of 'fineness' in Labu Sayong. From Spell it Right Dictionary (1997 ), fineness is a derivative of the word fine carrying 11 meanings according to certain situation as can be seen in Table 1.

Based on the above description, researchers will elaborate what fineness is to Labu Sayong and how the characteristics of fineness are successfully displayed by Labu Sayong makers as the impact of modern technological innovations in manufacturing Labu Sayong at present.

The Fineness of Labu Sayong Design: What is the fineness aspect existed in clay pitcher after experiencing technological changes? There are two aspects to be studied are the fineness of design and pattern. The fineness of Labu Sayong has been existed since it was produced traditionally and it has been described by Syed Ahmad Jamal (1979:64) as follows;

“……..The clay pitchers were decorated with embossed vertical and long lines, embossed decoration of Gelang Puyuh motif encircling the body and imprint Bunga Renek motif arranged in neatly order. All were decorated with care and subtlety, creating a collected piece of work”

Based on the statement, aesthetic value is actually intermingle with the fineness of clay pitcher that can be presented through the use of clay, the skill of designing.
Pic. 1: There is an apparent difference between moulded clay pitcher and pinched clay pitcher in terms of neatness. The joining of the convex and concave part of the pinched clay pitcher looks messy. The form of the clay pitcher, the decorative motifs and the color itself. The surface is decorated with various kinds of lines and imprint technique in a balanced manner. This decoration has succeeded in producing detailed patterns, neat and fine thus making the observer at peace. Therefore it can be said that traditional pandai labu is well suited at providing the basic means of creating surface decoration as a guide to new generation to diversify the ideas and aesthetics of Labu Sayang.

In discussing the fineness of pottery design, once again Syed Ahmad Jamal (1979:59) is using the word 'smart' as a language to translate the design features found in Malay traditional pottery as follows;

"... The Malays accept the unglazed ceramic, enjoying the smart design and in elaborate decoration, but emphasizes the authenticity...... Malay Vase has a smart design, a nice balance of size and limited use of decoration..."

According to him, the design and pattern of the Malay traditional pottery that is Labu Sayong, Terenang and Mambong is very simple. 'Smart' and 'good looking' refers to the amalgamation of a balanced form and the moderate surface decoration.

Pandai Labu succeeded in maintaining the originality of Labu Sayong adapted form of a fruit. The arrangement of motifs is also limited so that the authenticity of the smooth surface clay pitcher stands out. Design patterns is not applied on the whole body to enable the observer appreciating the overall design of Labu Sayong distinctly. The balanced form of Labu Sayong managed to create a sense of peacefulness to the observer. According to [3] on balance, there are actually many art writers including those trained as psychologists are of the opinion that balance is the requirement needed for an arrangement to satisfy aesthetics.

In the district of Sayong particularly Kg. Kepala Bendang, the production of pinched clay pitcher is still learned by some younger generation. But unfortunately the 'smartness' has lessened because they are no longer making the clay pitcher seriously as in the past. They produced clay pitcher at leisure, not as side income but just for gaining knowledge to ensure that a new generation knows how to make clay pitcher. When the clay pitcher is not being produced every day, it lacks the 'smartness' and fineness. Based on the author's observation, molded clay pitcher is more outstanding in terms of fineness and plastic element, an impact of the use of modern technology (Picture 1)

'Smart' and 'good looking' as described by Syed Ahmad Jamal is actually being referred to the moulded clay pitcher. Researchers found out that moulded clay pitcher is 100% more balanced or symmetrical. This is because the jolly jigger machine can produce a clay pitcher model with accurate measurement and it is more neat. The 'plastic elements' characteristics of Labu Sayong is more outstanding. It can be seen in the smooth joining of the concave and convex parts. Using the slip, water is being absorbed by the plaster of Paris and leaving a layer of clay on the wall that structuring the perfect clay pitcher. Therefore, the Labu Sayong form is more accurate and balanced. The concave and convex wavy surface shown the soft characteristic of Labu Sayong. The use of mould can produce hundreds of uniform clay pitcher. Labu Sayong looked visibly 'smart' and of high quality when arranged in rows as seen in Picture 2.

Besides maintaining the forms of traditional clay pitcher, there are also entrepreneurs who create new forms such as Labu Terung. But the form is not much different from the Labu Gelugor. According to the creator Zamri Pandak Ahmad, the shape is similar with Labu Gelugor but with a circle around the bottom part and the bulbous part is slightly smaller. Therefore it is named as Labu Terung because it resembles an eggplant. By using moulding technique, the curved lines is more neat and of similar size. Repetition of circle has highlighted the fineness quality of the Labu Terung (Picture 3).

There is a Malay proverb, ‘pipi licin bagai pauh di layang’ in which means the smoothness and delicateness of a lady’s facial skin. The lady is not only beautiful but captivating the audience as well. Smooth or shiny and clean is the fineness aspects emphasized on Labu Sayong
Pic. 2: Labu Sayong and its lid looks 'smart' and 'good looking' when arranged in rows upon rows.

Pic. 3: Labu Terung shows the fineness of curved lines on the body.

Pic. 4: Labu Sayong surface after taken out from the mould.

Pic. 5: Neatly trimmed Labu Sayong.

Surface to attract the eyes of beholders. Defects on moulded clay pitcher occurs when the moulding line can be seen after the clay pitcher dried. If the line is clearly visible, it would be detrimental to the quality of the moulded clay pitcher.

The smooth surface of clay pitcher without the moulding lines indirectly showing the neatness of the clay pitcher itself. To produce a smooth surface, potter’s wheel and wet sponge are used. It can be seen in picture 4 and 5. In picture 1 we can also see a visible difference between the moulded clay pitcher and the traditional Labu Sayong. When it went through the smoothing process, the shape and the pattern of the moulded clay pitcher looks more outstanding.

The fineness of Labu Sayong which has gone through the technology transformation can be seen not only from the outside but in the meanings it implied.
The almost similar weight of the body because of the uniformity of the clay wall also shows the implicit aspect of fineness. The clay thickness around 5mm to 8mm has managed to produce Labu Sayong in almost the same average weight. Although the weight aspects of Labu Sayong seems trivial, through an observation there’s a buyer’s needs that must be addressed by local clay pitcher entrepreneurs (Picture 6 and 7).

Other than analyzing the fineness quality of Labu Sayong, some buyers prefer to weigh the clay pitcher by hand just to pick the one which is lighter. The reason they choose lighter clay pitcher is because the heavy clay pitcher plus the stored water makes it difficult to handle when pouring out the water. Hence, the weight aspects of clay pitcher is actually the fineness aspects of Labu Sayong implied without us realizing it.

Modern technology is also able to produce the fineness of Labu Sayong in new dimension. If other entrepreneurs use potters wheel to smoothen the moulding lines on semi-dried Labu Sayong, one lady entrepreneur do it differently. Marjenah Sulaiman managed to create a unique clay pitcher and of high-value fineness using potters wheel and her creation is named Labu Beranak.

The writer’s focus on the fineness aspect of Labu Beranak is on the miniature clay pitchers or ’Anak Labu’ on the body. The uniqueness has differentiate itself from the existing clay pitcher produced around the district of Sayong. An appreciation towards the lady’s effort in producing the miniature clay pitcher using potters wheel is felt when the writer himself witnessed the lady at work. The miniature clay pitchers were produced when she was stressed out or tired after a long period of producing the moulded clay pitcher. Producing the miniature clay pitcher is like a stress reliever for her. The more the stress is, the smaller the size become.

She took 10 years of practice to become a highly skilled maker of the miniature clay pitcher using potters wheel. Various sizes of miniature clay pitchers were produced measuring between 1 and 3cm high. Once she finished making about 30 to 35 miniature clay pitchers in 20 minutes, the clay pitchers are left to dry for about half an hour. Only then she arranged the miniature clay pitchers on the surface of the main body. A small part of the miniature clay pitcher is cut, scored and attached to the main body using clay slip that acts like glue. The cutting and arrangement is done with care because of the small size and the various arrangement of its position might damage the form of the miniature clay pitchers.

The aesthetical aspects of fineness successfully displayed by the creator of Labu Beranak is through the miniature clay pitchers. Although the size is small, she managed to form it perfectly. The fineness is evident especially in the concave and convex part of the clay pitchers. The part is formed using fingers with full attention, patient and passion. This trait is a perfection of miniature clay pitchers, similar to the normal size Labu Sayong. When the group of miniature clay pitchers arranged randomly on the body of Labu Sayong, a beauty is displayed thus attracts the attention (Figure 8 and 9 pictures).

Variety of creative clay pitcher lid can also be made using the potters wheel. Through picture 10, we can see the cute and fine lid that gives a variation from the traditional lid design. The fineness of workmanship can be seen and felt through the top spiral part. A pointy piece

Pic. 8: Producing miniature clay pitchers (anak labu) using potter's wheel.

Pic. 9: Pieces of ’anak labu’ arranged randomly on Labu Beranak.

Pic. 10: Spiral lid

Pic. 11: The use of potter's wheel has succeeded in producing miniature clay pitcher with similar ratio of the original Labu Sayong.

Pic. 12: Various clay pitcher lids in the form of miniature Labu Sayong successfully produced with full attention

of wood is used as a tool to create the spiral with care and caution to avoid it snapped in two. The same technique of application has also successfully produced a mini Labu Panai look alike lid in perfect form. Both the lids are impossible to be made by using traditional pinching technique (Picture 11 and 12).

Labu Pagoda which is also one of Marjenah’s creation, once again showing her prowess in using potters wheel when creating unique new forms of Labu Sayong. The source of idea came from traditional Labu Sayong form that is Labu Kepala Tiga. The head is made using throwing technique at one try. The fineness can be seen through the balance of size of the three tiers head of the clay pitcher. The arrangement of the head from big, medium to small is made meticulously and carefully to create a sense of stability naturally when viewed by an observer. There is also a gentle wavy part as a separation of each tier (Picture 13).

The Fineness of Design Motif and Pattern of Labu Sayong: When talking about Labu Sayong, we will visualize a beautiful piece of pottery decorated with geometric or organic motifs. Decoration on the pottery
surface is a key point of perfecting the form and adding to the aesthetic value. According to Vinigi L. [6], decoration or ornament is a motif of the artwork produced in repetition to reflect the idea of the artist. The feature, shape, line and color are the element of art that are often being used to accentuate decoration. Adding these decorations will indirectly make a work more interesting thus giving a sense of awe to the observer.

As said by Dewitt H Parker [7]. The amalgamation of understanding and the experience of the creator and the observer is important to unite the two. As a result the observer can understand and internalize the ideas and imagination of the creator. The same thing also happened for the creation of Labu Sayong. Labu Sayong entrepreneurs at present are still maintaining the traditional pattern design on the surface of the blackish clay pitcher. Besides that, they also applied carving technique which is synonymous with Malays as a surface decoration of Labu Sayong. Indirectly, the fineness of wood carvings commonly observered is applied to the surface of the clay pitcher in its own way. It is to some extent making the observer accepting the idea of wood carving being applied on clay pitcher.

Traditional decoration technique such as stamping is still retained even though the clay body is now produced using moulding technique. Traditional design motifs and pattern is used on blackish clay pitcher while new motifs and design pattern is used on decorative clay pitcher. The traditional motifs is arranged horizontally, rows upon rows in repetition on the neck and the top part of Labu Sayong. Some of the traditional decorative motifs still used are pucuk rebung, bunga tanjung, bunga pecah tiga, daun pucuk paku, bunga kedudut and dotted lines. The systematic and disciplined repetition is successfully represents the refined soul and work ethics of the pattern maker who is patient and careful (Picture 14).

Now, cut out carving is one of the popular decoration techniques at the district of Sayong. According to Zamri Pandak Ahmad, embossed floral carving techniques once carved on traditional clay pitcher is not applied on the clay pitcher at present which use cut out carving. The reason a carved Labu Sayong wasn’t that popular some time ago was because in order to carve a Labu Sayong, the person must have experience in carving on wood surface. The clay pitcher wall must be thick enough. Problems frequently faced was the existence of fine cracks on the carving motifs. The cracks occur because the cut out technique takes a long time to complete and while doing it, the clay body has begun to dry up.

Today, it’s on the contrary; the cut out carving technique is most favored by the clay pitcher entrepreneurs because of its own subtlety. As we know, the wall of the moulded clay pitcher is more dense, it has even thickness and looks more neat with cut out design. Furthermore, the weight is lessen because of the cut out design itself. The raw material can be saved because the clay excess from the cut out can be used again as slip. However, not all entrepreneurs have the carving skill and can produce a fine carving design motifs and pattern. To produce a fine carving, one needs to have a high level of perseverance and patience while doing it to achieve success in the creation.

It is undeniable that with full attentive, aesthetic of fine motifs and patterns can be achieved. But what is the factor that might create this attentive aspect inside a creator-self? As has been said by Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1850), aesthetic involves three things: accuracy, quality and quantity that can be created by using the senses, mind and inner human emotions. However, those can only exist if the person has a strong interest towards the arts he/she is involving. With interest, the artisan will try to learn and create something that has aesthetic value based on the
experience and education obtained [8]. Therefore, the factor of interest is a fundamental to explore, understand and produce the aesthetic value on works of art.

In the district of Sayong there is an artisan who managed to produce a fine motif and pattern as a result of his interest. He is Mohd Fadzli Zulyadin, a highly skilled carver of Labu Sayong and most popular with his cut-out carving technique. His passion in art motifs of traditional Malay wood carving and his five years experience in the field made him successfully adapting the beautiful wood carving motif on the surface of clay pitcher. According to him, carving on a clay surface is more satisfying than carving on wood. This is because the carving on clay can produce immediate result when compared to wood carving that takes a long time to complete. Careful attention is needed while carving on clay because if making a mistake, the clay pitcher body is considered defective. The technique introduced by him has becoming a popular trend among the other carvers, but his own identity can be seen through the fineness and the graceful carving lines.

According to him again, the motif has a fineness of its own which emphasizes on the malleability or plastic elements on the arrangement of patterns and the detail of the motifs. The malleable concept pattern arrangement means the produced motifs looks flowy or in movement and there is a continuity between the motifs. Full attention to carving is the key factor to produce a fine pattern with the gap between the motifs looks incredibly similar and the flows of the pattern looks natural. The applied concept of movement is either descending or horizontally (Picture 15).

Undoubtedly at the beginning of his trial, the pattern looks quite rigid and flat. Then, he uses tracing method where the pattern drawn on the tracing paper is applied on the clay surface and then carved using a sharp blade. The flow of the lines is restricted because of the tracing paper. Nevertheless after six months of practicing, he managed to produce a pattern without tracing and he began to carve in spontaneous manner. Unlike Marjenah Sulaiman, Mohd Fadzli Zulyadi is badly in need of a peaceful mind and not tired while carving. If he himself in stress, the carving looks crude and mistakes keeps happening, thus the carving will stop because he needs a break.

Based on the writer’s observation, the hand movement while carving was done spontaneously. Nevertheless, the arrangement of pattern is well planned and looks uniformed. The uniformity can be seen significantly in the principle of design movement and elements of fine art. Principles of movement took place in the arrangement of the pattern while the fine art is on the carved motifs. It is proven that to get a fine and subtle design pattern, emotion of the carver is combined with the carved motifs. The motifs are repeated until it becomes a pattern composition with high aesthetic values (Picture 15) [9].

We already know that in traditional Malay carving, patterns like kerawang8 is describing the curls & twists of plants motifs which fill up the surface of a carved wood. The pattern shows an arrangement of motifs that starts from a point and then spreads out using motifs of curly tendrils, with its elegant movement and blooming flowers with pliable pleated leaves. Based on the characteristics described above, it is obvious that the ornate pattern can represent its own softness. Therefore, to obtain the motif that can represents the characteristics of softness, Mohd Fadzli chose the traditional Malay wood carving motifs including the modified Langkasukan motifs to fit as a decoration on Labu Sayong (Picture 16 and picture 17).
Another Labu Sayong entrepreneur, Zaidul Hisham Kamaruddin also uses traditional Malay carving motifs as patterns on the surface of clay pitcher. Awan Larat motifs is his main choice because the curls & twists of plant motifs that encircling the Labu Sayong body is able to create a different perception in every corner of the clay pitcher. He agrees with Mohd Fadzli, the fact that the thickness of the clay wall is even and the shorter time in producing the clay body made him more confident to carve rather complicated motifs (Picture 18).

There is also traditional motifs produced using imprint techniques made to cut out carving. But the original motifs is modified to suit the technique. When the original motifs is modified, it looks a little softer and indirectly displays the characteristics of fineness. Based on the analysis on Chart 1 and 2, it can be said that the new modified motifs of bunga kedudut and bunga padi looks softer than the original motifs. The fineness of motifs can be seen through the curls and coils at the end of the motifs. It is deliberately produced by the carver as an adaptation of the characteristics of softness and subtlety in the traditional Malay carvings motifs. Both of these motifs were a modification of the original feature of bunga senduduk and bunga padi (Picture 19 and Picture 20).

The use of slip trailing9 also succeeded in producing a fine motifs. This decoration technique able to produce the spreading and encircling motifs of bunga sekentut. The fineness is noticeable in the similarity of lines and the movement of the motifs looks connected to each other. The use of engobe10 as the background color helps to accentuate the fineness and the pattern
features on the surface of Labu Sayong. Once again potter’s wheel is used to get an even and neat engobe surface. The process is done before the motif is drawn on the surface of the clay pitcher. The clay pitcher is placed on the potters wheel and then the intended part is painted using a paint brush. A flat layer of color produced and allowed to dry for a while before it is carved with patterns [10].

CONCLUSION

Those are among the aesthetic implications of Labu Sayong manufacturing process which have gone through some technological innovations. Obviously there are positive implications that successfully adding to the aesthetic values of Labu Sayong. The advantages of using new technology are certainly promising the creativity of entrepreneurs in enriching the designs and patterns of Labu Sayong. Based on that, an affirmation can be made; the fineness is not only images that can be seen to the naked eye, but it represents the experiences and emotions of Labu Sayong maker as well. Fineness is the presentation of thoughts and feelings of Labu Sayong maker. The birth of a new dimension Labu Sayong nowadays is indirectly enriching the existing aesthetic value of traditional Labu Sayong.

Notes:

- **Plaster of Paris** is a gypsum stone processed into powder and also known as gypsum plaster
- See Sahih Muslim, Kitab al-Iman
- ‘Plastic Element’ is a compulsory element applied consciously or unconsciously by the artist and it is related to the aesthetic value in producing a perfect and a fine artwork. Based on the statement of ‘plastic element’, it is clearly an element that can soften a form which can display the fineness of an artwork. The soft elements can perfecting an object. No matter what form of works be it sculpture, painting, landscaping, building, tableware etc., it needs ‘plastic elements’.
- **Pandai labu** is a nickname of expertise producing Labu Sayong using pinching technique.
- **Jolly jigger** is a spinning machine for producing certain types of pottery.
- **Slip** is clay in liquid form processed in a plunger.
- **Throwing** technique is a way of producing pottery using potters wheel.
- **Kerawang** is the name of motifs used by entrepreneurs of clay pitcher at Sayong to replace the name of ‘awan larat’. Awan larat is described as wind-blown clouds moving beautifully in the sky. The change of name is right because in traditional Malay carvings, awan larat patterns is produced using motifs of flower petals, blooming flower, leaves, twigs and tendrils; the motif starts at one point and then spreads out to fill up a specific area (Farish & Eddin, 2003:142-143). Therefore, although the pattern of tendrils motifs on the surface of Labu Sayong is connected and continuously, it can’t be said as awan larat pattern because it does not start from a single point.
- **Slip trailing** is a technique of producing embossed flower by drawing on pottery using engobe.
- **Engobe** is a clay slip mixed with oxide. It can be applied on pottery surface in two ways. Firstly, the engobe liquid is inserted inside a rubber syringes. Secondly is by using a brush. Engobe is suitable to be applied on semi-dried clay surface because the water inside engobe doesn’t absorbed by the clay surface too fast.

REFERENCES