

**THE DEVELOPMENT OF ORNAMENT IN MALAYSIAN ARCHITECTURE  
FROM 1950 TO 2000**

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## ABSTRACT

Architecture is seen as a form of public art that creates a dialogue between place, society and culture. Hence it impacts the identity of its built environment. This poses the question 'How can conceptualizing, designing and building architecture reflect a meaningful Malaysian identity'? Observations of recent Malaysian architecture have revealed the widespread use of ornaments as a cosmetic tool to reflect identity. This practice has resulted in the usage of ornaments that are of no relevance to their cultural and physical context. It is common to see ornaments from Western classical influence used widely to decorate public buildings with no consideration to its proportion, context and meaning. It is very alarming that this lack of understanding has resulted in the usage of ornaments at a very superficial level. As we search for Malaysian architectural identity, it is imperative that we understand the usage of ornaments in the context of our diverse cultural heritage. A study on the development of ornaments in Malaysian architecture is necessary to provide a basis for discourse towards the search of a Malaysian identity. Ornament is an important element in giving meaning to architecture. It has implications on its cultural, social and political context than just merely beautifying a building. This research aims to record the chronological development of ornament in Malaysian Architecture from 1950 to 2000. Approached from cross-disciplinary reading and analysis surrounding the subject of ornament, architecture and identity, it serves as a descriptive documentary study that encompasses the role of ornaments in architecture. Specifically it identifies the different thoughts and ideas that have generated the forms and function of ornaments in Malaysian architecture. Finally, this research culminates in the development of a timeline illustrating five decades of Malaysian architectural ornament development accompanied by referenced thoughts and ideas that have promoted its' continued use.

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Senibina adalah dianggap sebagai suatu bentuk seni yang mewujudkan dialog diantara tempat, masyarakat dan budaya. Justeru, ia mempengaruhi identiti alam bina persekitarannya. Dengan ini, maka wujudlah persoalan apakah konsep rekabentuk senibina yang mampu mencerminkan identiti senibina Malaysia? Tinjauan keatas senibina Malaysia baru baru ini telah memperlihatkan penggunaan ornamen sebagai suatu elemen kosmetik untuk membayangkan identity. Amalan ini telah menyebabkan penggunaan onamen yang tidak mempunyai perkaitan dengan konteks budaya, masyarakat and politik setempat. Tidak hairan jika kelihatan penggunaan ornamen bercorak senibina klasikal barat digunakan keatas bangunan bangunan awam tanpa pertimbangan terhadap skala, konteks and pengertian ornamen tersebut. Adalah dikuatiri masalah kekurangan kefahaman subjek onamen ini akan menyebabkan penggunaanya hanya bersifat luaran sahaja. Kefahaman penggunaan ornament didalam konteks warisan pelbagai budaya adalah penting didalam usaha untuk mencari identiti senibina Malaysia. Kajian perkembangan ornamen senibina Malaysia adalah perlu sebagai satu dasar bagi perbincangan kearah identity senibina Malaysia. Ornamen adalah elemen yang penting dalam soal penyertian senibina. Fungsinya tidak hanya terhad kepada mengindahkan sesebuah bangunan sahaja, tetapi ia mampu menunjukkan unsur-unsur budaya, social and politik setempat. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk merekod kronologi perkembangan ornamen senibina Malaysia dari tahun 1950 sehingga 2000. Perlaksanaan kajian ini adalah berdasarkan kaedah pendekatan deskriptif dokumentasi yang merangkumi bahan bacaan dan analisa pelbagai disiplin keatas subjek ornamen, senibina dan identiti. Secara khususnya, kajian ini mengenal pasti pemikiran dan idea yang mempengaruhi bentuk dan fungsi ornamen senibina Malaysia. Akhir sekali, kajian ini diulaskan dengan satu jadual-masa perkembangan ornament senibina Malaysia selama lima dekad beserta rujukan pemikiran dan idea yang telah mengutarakan kewujudannya.