

DEFINING THE TYPOLOGIES OF VISUAL ARTIST WORKSPACES IN
URBAN CONTEXT OF KUALA LUMPUR

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To my beloved family and friends

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ABSTRACT

There is no fix solution to the given ideal spatial configuration of artists' workspace for both public and private purpose. In the case of the context of Jalan Sultan Ismail, Kuala Lumpur, the current emerging artists can only find affordable existing shop lot or room that they can rent for private working space where they were forced to fit in and adapt according to the existing layout. This may give negative effect to their overall performance in producing artworks. This scenario also limits the public to interact more with the artist. Defining the typologies of visual artist workspaces is crucial in order to determine the effective spatial configuration of visual art space for artist to interact with the public in local urban context. Thus, a methodology of identifying the local artist workspace typologies and relating it to the static activities pattern using space syntax analysis is carried out. To strengthen the findings, interview and literature review through case studies are carried out in order to identify the basic spatial requirement for the artist workspace. The findings suggest that overall design and architecture element of artist workspace is based on their art genre and it can influence the overall performance of the artist to produce and exhibit their artworks. Different types of visual art require different spatial configuration. The workspaces are not limited to the private use for the artist. It is also can be utilized for a commercial and social purpose even at public spaces such as plaza and street. As a result, the visual art becomes a medium for the artist to engage with the community.

ABSTRAK

Tiada penyelesaian yang tetap untuk memberi konfigurasi ruang yang sesuai bagi artis untuk tujuan aktiviti awam dan persendirian. Dalam kes konteks Kuala Lumpur, artist yang baharu hanya mampu menggunakan lot kedai atau bilik yang terhad untuk tujuan ruang menghasilkan karya seni di mana mereka terpaksa menyesuaikan diri mengikut susun atur yang sedia. Keadaan ini memberi impak negatif kepada prestasi keseluruhan mereka dalam menghasilkan karya seni yang baik. Jenis ruang kerja perlu diberi keutamaan bagi artis visual adalah penting bagi menentukan konfigurasi spatial melalui seni bina yang sesuai dalam konteks seni bina tempatan. Oleh itu, kaedah mengenalpasti tipologi ruang kerja artis dan mengaitkannya dengan aktiviti statik menggunakan analisis 'space syntax' dijalankan. Untuk mengukuhkan lagi penemuan kajian, temu bual dan kajian literatur melalui kes terdahulu dijalankan untuk mengenal pasti ruang kerja asas artis. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa reka bentuk dan elemen seni bina keseluruhan artis ruang kerja adalah berdasarkan genre seni mereka. Ini mempengaruhi prestasi keseluruhan artis untuk menghasilkan dan mempamerkan karya seni mereka. Perbezaan jenis seni visual memerlukan konfigurasi ruang yang berbeza. Ruang kerja tidak hanya terhad kepada penggunaan peribadi untuk artis. Ia juga boleh digunakan untuk tujuan komersial dan sosial dengan menggunakan ruang awam seperti plaza dan jalan. Seni visual juga menjadi medium untuk artis untuk melibatkan diri dengan masyarakat.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of The Research Problem

Kuala Lumpur has a large audience for visual art where the different abilities of contemporary visual artists are progressively increased for the creative communities in a variety of approach. Jalan Sultan Ismail is one of the busiest roads in Kuala Lumpur and rich with different urban context, ranging to high end places to the residential area of local people. It is highly accessible because of lots of public transportation available such as monorail and public buses. Thus, a lot of artist attracted to showcase their talent and set up their workspaces here due to vast audience and different environment of the street provided.

According to (O'Reilly, 2006), artist's workspace is an essential part in this success by providing support at the fundamental stage of production that helps them to maintain and evolve their practice. An important improvement make by the studio organizations and their tenant-artist also contribute for the benefit and sustainability of local communities. However, there is no single solution to the give ideal architecture environment of artists' workspace. In case of the context of Kuala Lumpur, the current emerging artists can only find affordable existing shop lot or room that they can rent. The artists were forced to fit in and adapt according to the existing layout which can affect their overall performance in producing artworks

since different type of art require different requirement for the artist to conduct their practices.

The artist's workspace not only restricted to the indoor space, it also can be establish at outdoor spaces. For instance, the local artists at Jalan Sultan Ismail use visual art as a medium to interact and engage with the audience for different function and purpose. The street eventually became livable due to hidden visual artworks and activities that bring vibrancy into the city. However, due the harsh condition at Jalan Sultan Ismail, it limits the public to interact with the art piece and the artist themselves. The public spaces along the street become lost space and it is not utilize well. Furthermore, any additional public art such as painting or sculpture is restricted on any type of urban form along the street that is set by local authorities. The artist's artwork can only survive for a day before it is been washed out by the local authorities. Most of the public spaces that utilize by the artist become loss space due to unplanned development. Thus, making the public unaware of the existence of the artist and their artworks.

1.2 Problem Statement

Each visual artist has his or her own preference for the creative environment in producing the artworks and exhibits their talent. However, the current setting of the visual art space limits the interaction between public, the art pieces and the artists. For instance, the creative space at Jalan Sultan Ismail is less explored and experiencing a dull and lifeless condition especially for public space. In addition, there is no central place for the street artists to gather and express their talent. This lead to the situation where the public unaware of the existence of the artists and their artworks. They gradually have seen as annoyance and force to move to another place.

1.3 Thesis Statement

Visual art workspace is an important architecture element that is capable to increase social interaction between the artist and the community in the urban context. The visual art workspaces not only become a platform for the artist to exhibit their product or talent, it is also a crucial place for the artist to work and for some cases, making their living. The visual art spaces also function as public space in term of physical context that are able to encourage public participation and interaction for the community in urban context. However, Jalan Sultan Ismail limits the artist to interact with the public through visual art because of the harsh condition and poor development of the street itself. The street became lost space and leads to unlively environment for the community. Thus, by defining the types of visual artist workspaces in urban context, the appropriate artist's workspace can establish according to the type of art and function. The type of visual art space used as the architecture platform can encourage and social activities and revitalize Jalan Sultan Ismail can also be determined.

1.4 Research Aim

This research aim is to define the typologies of artist workspaces used for visual art activities by encouraging public participation and consequently increases the livability of public spaces in urban context of Kuala Lumpur.

1.5 Research Objectives

The research objectives of this study are as listed below:

1. To identify spatial configuration of artist's workspace to exhibit and produce artworks to the public.
2. To investigate the visual art activities and the respective urban elements within 500m radius of Jalan Sultan Ismail.

1.6 Research Questions

It is crucial to study the types of spaces where the artists can conduct their visual art activities and architecture elements involved in urban context. Thus, the research questions are as follows:

1. What are the ideal spatial configuration of working environment that suitable for visual artists to exhibit and produce artwork to the public?
2. What is the relationship between urban elements and visual art activities that can encourage interaction between the artists and the public?

1.7 Scope of Research

There are various types of visual space which are mostly found in art gallery or at street. However, this research only focuses on the typologies of visual art space that the artists use to work and live according to the genre of the visual art. The architectural identity expression involved will be narrowed down to a certain number of visual art space typologies which are common to be found in local urban context.

The study of this research will focus only on 500m radius of Jalan Sultan Ismail, Kuala Lumpur and its vicinity where the creative space is the centralized point.

1.8 Significant of Research

This study emphasizes the expression of the spaces used for visual artists to conduct creative for both public and private function in local urban context. This includes the significant architecture element needed for the artist to produce or exhibit their works. This research also crucial in order to understand the basic spatial configuration of workspaces based on the type of visual art. A methodology of defining the visual art workspace through urban context and architecture will be produced from the research. The outcome of the research which is a part of the collaboration between the Design Dissertation and Design Thesis can be seen in Appendix B. The essential architecture element require to conduct visual art activities whether for private or public function become a fundamental guideline for designing Visual Artist Emerging Hub (refer to Appendix B).

1.9 Research Methodology

A methodology of translating essence of visual art elements through architecture will be produced from the research. Mixed method used for this study. Primary data of the research is qualitative method. The sources are collected from the observation, and interview from the target sample (artist). Literature reviews were to be studied on to understand more about the Malaysian visual art scene, the community, culture and its identity. These secondary data are collected from books,

journals, publications and internet. Case study of design was initiated as well to find the appropriate architecture approach.

Meanwhile, space syntax methodology and structured survey is part of quantitative method use to collect information for further study. The quantitative method covers the creative activities conducted at urban form, and the spatial configuration according to the artist preferences.

1.10 Expected Findings

The expected finding from this dissertation is the typologies of visual art workspaces uses for artist to conduct visual art activities in local urban context for both public and private functions. The type of workspace will be categorized according to its respective visual art. The design approaches and strategies can be established in order to form an ideal workspace for artist to conduct creative activities and thus contributing to public participation and livability of spaces in tropical urban context.

1.11 Structure of Thesis

Figure 1.1 shows the structure of this research. There are six chapters that form the whole thesis structure. Chapter 1 covers the overview of the research. This includes background of study, problem statement, aim, and objectives. Chapter 2 shows critical insight about the visual art definition and architecture elements to express the visual arts. The adaptation of art in urban context will also be explained in chapter 2.

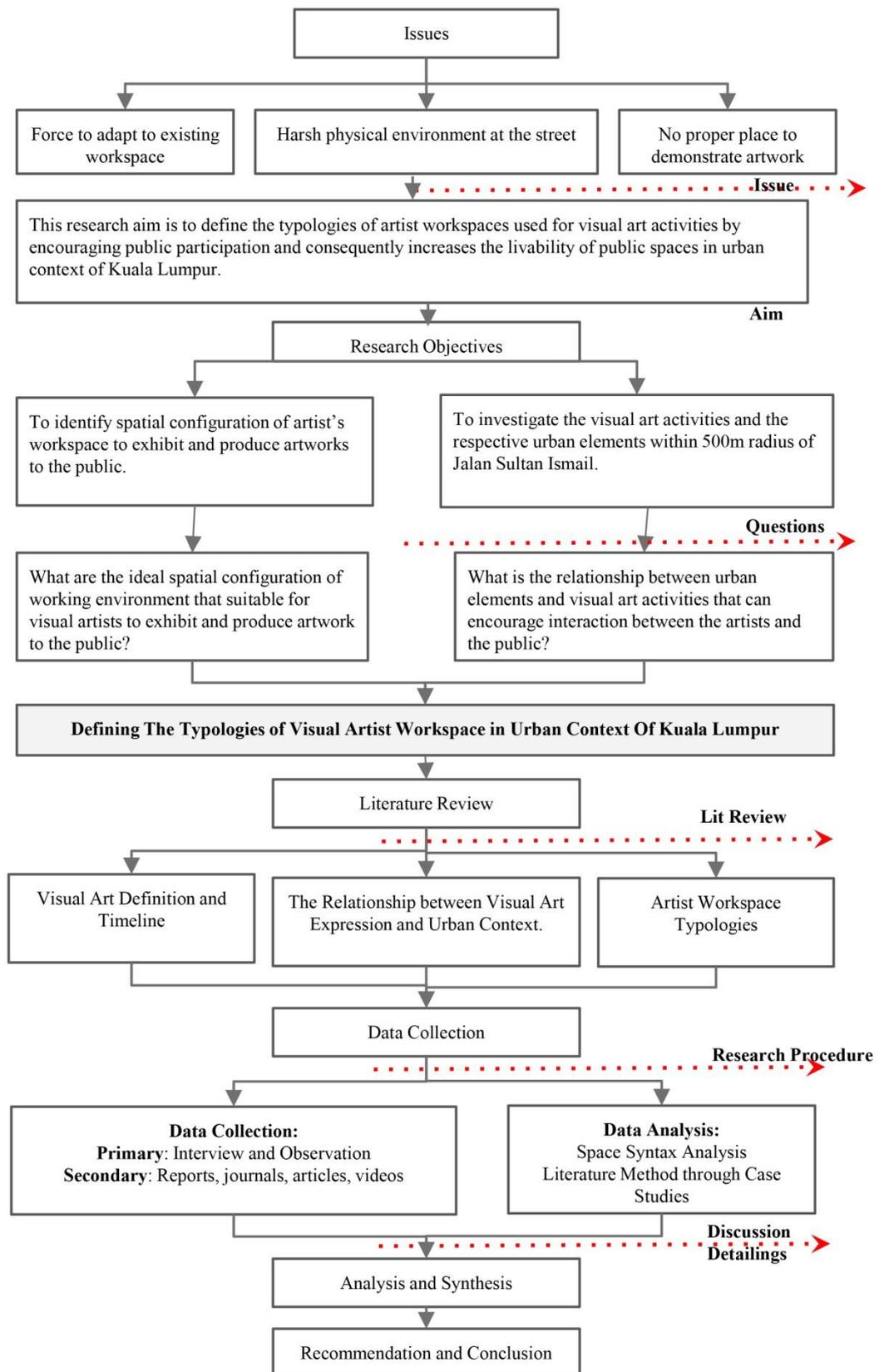


Figure 1.1: Structure of the research.

Chapter 3 discusses about the methodology use in this whereas Chapter 4 explains the analysis and synthesis from the result collected for this research. The data collected from the observation and interview will also discussed and the data collected from space syntax analysis will be analyzed, compared and tabulated. Lastly, Chapter 5 will summarizes the research and significant of this study.

1.12 Conclusion

This chapter serves as a guideline and strategies to conduct this research. The relevant approaches to define various types of spaces to conduct and express visual art in local urban context can be explored through the research. The study focus on the visual art spaces in urban context Kuala Lumpur. Moreover, a study on social activities and the respective urban elements through visual art will discussed further in this research. As a result, a different spatial configuration that suits carious types of visual art or artists can be establish and lead to the livability of Jalan Sultan Ismail.

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