

# Fine Art Photography: A New Perspective in Documenting Architecture

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## ABSTRACT

*Nowadays, our environment surrounded by thousands of images. Images are essential in human communication then, it can be viewed from a verity of form and style. Thereby, this research intended to explore the perspective of fine art photography in documenting the architecture. Masjid Ubaidah, Kuala Kangsar was selected as the case study to implement this new perspective of photograph specifically. This study was conducted using qualitative research where the design process was involved in visual research analysis. The structure observation was carried out to identify the common style used by photographer in producing the images of Masjid Ubaidah, Kuala Kangsar and how the creativity and aesthetic value can be built by injecting the fine art approach. This research found that the potential for fine art approach as a new method in documenting Masjid Ubaidah, Kuala Kangsar by establishing the diversity of creativity in aesthetic discussion.*

**Keywords:** Architectural Photography, Fine Art Photography

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Today, the development of modernity has raised the art of photography. Photography is a universal language, and it exists in a variety of the form and styles. It contains meaning, feeling and emotion, and brings out an unwritten message to be conveyed through it. Therefore, it is used as an inspiration for our daily life. According to Mustafa Halabi (2015), photography includes social, medical, industrial, education, economics, architecture and culture. The power of photography could be seen everywhere, applicable to everyone and difficult to forget. There are difficulties in defining the meaning of fine arts in photography. According to Andralis (2015), it is complicated or hard to appreciate works of fine art in photography. This is the nature of fine art photography has no limits. It only requires imaginative of the photographer to assimilate the ideas that can be established to become a real masterpiece. A selection and use accidental subject in fine art photography allow objects that exist on can be captured or used as subjects. Architectural photography in the context of fine arts is one of the most important elements for documenting the architectural heritage on the buildings. Documenting and recording the images through photography is part of history. According to Gilloch (2002), each of the resulting images is history. It shows the time of the original image that existed in the past to a time where it could see today.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEWS

### 2.1 History of Photography

At the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the invention of photography was discovered by the obscure camera. Obscura camera came from the Latin words, mean the 'dark room' and used to trace the image projected by light through a small hole on it. In photography, light is fundamental in producing the photographs or images. Photography is a trend of sciences and art. Marien (2002) stated that

photography started in Europe, early 18<sup>th</sup> century and the 'term of photography' was used on August 19, 1839. Photography is well known to the world after they join the Congress of the Academy of Science and the Academy of Fine Art in Paris. The basic of photography is the tight box, lenses and light-sensitive materials such as films and paper. Marien (2002) has cited that William Henry Fox Talbox said that photographic drawing is a photography technique where this technique used light-sensitised paper to produce negative from any number of positive prints could be made. The light patterns show or emitted from the objects recorded into sensitive medium or storage chip through a time exposure. This process founded by Nicephore Niepce in the first photograph recorded in the year 1826. The history of the first photograph has been made to fit into the widely accepted nation. The invention of the photograph is regular and progressive, with the every of experiment build in an orderly successful way, on the achievement of the past.

## 2.2 The Role of Architecture Photography

The architecture was one of the first models portrayed in the history of photography. Niepce created the first architecture photograph in 1826 by record his own lawn yard. Later, the invention of architecture photography serves as a voice to express the artistic stances of the architecture photographs nowadays. Architecture photography takes an additional step to interpret architecture in several ways. Julia Morgan (2015) concluded that architecture is a visual art. Swee (2015) stated that the fine art approach has used to be a solid impression of the structure has continuously developed into different aspects to introduce the impressive elements of a single structure. The art of photographing architecture can make from many forms such as line, repetition, contrast, etc. Besides that, the photographs of architecture also can be recorded the exterior or interior.

## 2.3 The Fine Art Photography

Andrialis (2015) stated that fine art photography is no conclusive explanation or a precise definition. This is because the resulting photograph from the fine art techniques is not clear or is too apparent. Normally, the resulting photographs from fine art approach are the result of active and creative thinking of the idea of photographers who have a vision much for the pictures produced. Creative ideas behind the fine art images are that they are not simply capture elements of reality, but as a photographer, it should aim to produce images that think out of the box. Thus, it had to produce images of high aesthetic value.

## 3. METHODOLOGY

The selection of the research method is very important to ensure the objective of the research can be achieved. Sulaiman Shamsuri (2006) has stated that all the information can be gathered accordingly and systematically by using the suitable research method, thus, making the analysis task easier and efficient. The researcher used qualitative research as a method to get the data where in this study researcher has to observe and to document *Masjid Ubudiah, Kuala Kangsar* using art approach.

## 4. DATA ANALYSIS

### 4.1 Questionnaire

Table 1 below has shown that 58 respondents contributed to answering preliminary questionnaire given. The questionnaire was distributed to local people and visitor to obtain preliminary feedback regarding the *Masjid Ubudiah, Kuala Kangsar* photographs. 72.41% knows that architecture photography, while 27.58% repudiated. However, 81.03% do not know the fine art photography even though it exists. Only, 18.96% said that know about fine art photography from the internet. 39 out of 58 respondents, which is 67.24% agreed to implement fine art photography in architecture photographs, while 32.75% disagreed to implement it. This has proved, maybe fine art photography can be one of

the styles in capturing architecture photographs.

**Table 1: Questionnaire**

Questionnaire	Yes	No
Do you know what is architecture photography?	72.41%	27.58%
Do you know what is fine art photography?	18.96%	81.03%
Do you think that fine art photography can be implemented in architecture photography?	67.24%	32.75%

## 4.2 Observation

The important part of this study is to identify trend and style in architecture photography of *Masjid Ubudiah*. The structure observation and analysis for the architectural photography of Masjid Ubudiah were conducted by focusing on the scenery around/nearby the building and the structure of the building itself. The previous study has used this method, Collier (1913) in his book *Visual Anthropology: Photography as a Research Method*. In this study, the researcher found that most of the photographs were produced this image as a commercial purpose, shown in (Figure 1). Architecture photography started in 1827 when the invention by Nicephore Niepce uses a few hours of exposure to the asphalt-coated plate to photograph the landscape from the window. The resulting image of her experiment is in the form of heliograph and the image includes the picture of architecture. Architecture image captured incidentally finally recognised as the first architectural photograph. According to Adrian (2012), the selection of the image as the first architecture photograph is due to practical reasons rather than the aesthetic aspect. Thereby, architecture photography should not only focused on commercial, but it also can be dealt with aesthetic, where just directing a camera at a building and shooting away. As a building, the structure cannot deliver the emotions like a human subject, however, researcher implement fine art as a new approach to documenting architecture photography of *Masjid Ubudiah* for more dynamic by exposing some of the building's environment by choosing interesting angles that show off element and principle of art such as line, form, shape, repetition, etc.



**Figure 1:** Masjid Ubudiah in Kuala Kangsar (Extracted form Laman sesawang Majlis Perbandaran Kuala Kangsar)

## 4.3 Interview

Based on the interview, the majority of the respondents are exposed to architectural photography of *Masjid Ubudiah* as a commercial approach rather than the fine art approach. The photography of *Masjid Ubudiah* does not infuse creative elements and aesthetic value. Most of the respondents, want to perceive the architectural photographs that have an element and principle of art such as line, pattern, texture symmetry, etc.

## 5. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### 5.1 Documenting

Fine art photography is one of the genres in photography fields. However, in architecture photography, fine art is more on the style. Thus, it allows photographers who have a creative mind to produce images of architecture *Masjid Ubudiah* using fine art approach. The imagination of a photographer is needed to digest an idea about architecture photography and to shape it into a work of creative and aesthetic. Documenting architectural heritage of *Masjid Ubudiah* through fine art approaches plays an important role in delivering a message to viewers, how beautiful the architecture *Masjid Ubudiah* in development of a visual identity for future generations. The great of visual become the most powerful medium to give an impact in visual communication and a mode of visual impressions. Besides that, it can help to build knowledge among viewers, which is shown in photographs that portray the diversity of elements and principle of art.



Figure 2: Fine Art Architectural Photography I



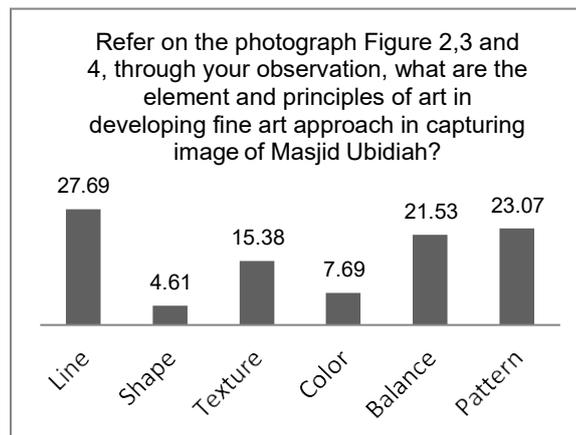
Figure 3: Fine Art Architectural Photography II



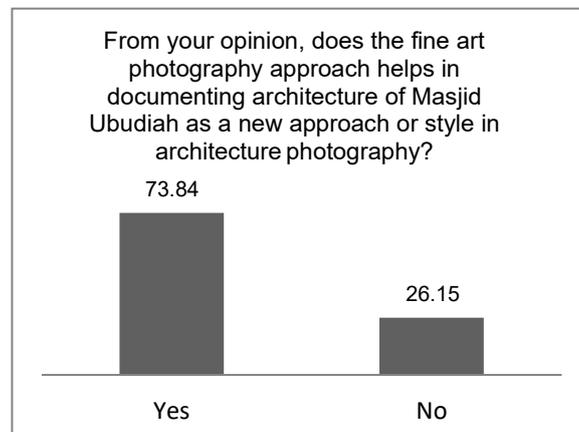
Figure 4: Fine Art Architectural Photography III

## 5.2 Results

Based on the data analysis has been done, researcher documenting *Masjid Ubudiah* by using fine art photography approach shown in Figure 2,3 and 4. Table 2 below shown 65 respondents gave responses on the evaluation process to gain opinion and feedback on the photographs that have been developed. Based on the percentage, 27.69% chose line as the attractive elements, while 23.07% chose the pattern, 21.53% chose balance, 15.38% texture, 7.69% chose the colour, and 4.61% chose shape as the element that attracts their attention on the photographs of Masjid Ubudiah. Table 3 shows 73.84% agreed that fine art photography approach or style is useful in enhancing creativity and aesthetic value in documenting the architecture of Masjid Ubudiah while 26.15% disagreed. This data indicates a strong reference on the reliability of fine art photography into the architecture photography.



**Table 2:** Element and Principles of Art



**Table 3:** Fine Art as New Approach or Style

## 6. CONCLUSION

Generally, the main ideas of this study are to explore the role of fine art photography in documenting architectural images. The implementation of fine art approaches can be seen as a good step in enhancing the architectural photographs. It is agreed that fine art approaches can attract attention viewers and appreciate the aesthetic value of the structure on heritage building. By documenting the buildings, our next generations can make it as reference material to sustaining the Malaysian heritage architecture for the next time. In addition, a photographer must have creativity in organising the fine art elements rather than recording simple and straightforward architectural photographs. The creative photograph that incorporates aesthetic values will be more appreciated by viewers thus; the message will be received by them. Therefore, the implementation of the fine art approach will spread, illustrate and enhance the architectural photographs.

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