

Kancil Attributes (KA) in Studio-Based Visual Art Research: An Autoethnographic Reinterpretation of Sang Kancil Folktales

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the transformation of Sang Kancil folktales into studio-based visual art practice through the development of Kancil Attributes (KA) as an emergent conceptual framework. It is grounded in practice-based research informed by autoethnography (Chang, 2008) and iconographic theory (Panofsky, 1972), with interpretive support from visual culture discourse the research adopts iterative studio phases of analysis, interpretation, and reflection to generate visual knowledge through practice. Findings indicate a clear progression from literal narrative representation to symbolic and conceptual abstraction, where anthropomorphic characters and everyday objects are reconfigured to express themes of power, intelligence, manipulation, and social hierarchy. Four KA attributes are identified: Description, Investigative Identification, Symbolization of Knowledge, and Stylization of Knowledge. The study positions KA as a structured methodological model for visualizing folklore into contemporary visual and critical art discourse.

Keywords: Malay folktales, autoethnography, practice based, Sang Kancil



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1 INTRODUCTION

Folktales, myths, and oral literature operate as living organisms that grow, alter, and adapt to meet a teller's aim or delight a certain audience. Within Southeast Asian lore, the animal trickster tales of *Sang Kancil* (the mousedeer) serve as prominent repositories of satire, local wisdom, and moral lessons Muhammad Nabil Kamaruddin et al. (2024). However, oral narratives are historically prone to *tokok* (embellishments or alterations during transmission), and their preservation has frequently been restricted to animation or storybooks. This leaves a distinct gap in contemporary visual arts documentation (Zuriati M.S. et al., 2023).

This study establishes a systematic, practice-based epistemology that repositions the narratives of *Kumpulan Cerita Sang Kancil* within visual arts. By utilizing wet and dry media specifically pencil, charcoal, and acrylic on canvas alongside digital applications like Augmented Reality (AR), this paper details how traditional texts are re-storied to structurally address modern social, cultural, and political issues.

2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

To guide studio practice and contextual integration, this study refers two fundamental objectives:

- i. To analyse and visually comprehend Malay folktales through the content, allegory, anthropomorphic characters, and messages delivered by *Sang Kancil* stories.
- ii. To explore the expansion of interpretive drawing practices and establish *Sang Kancil* tales as direct reflective symbols for current human behaviour, cultural structures, and social issues.

3 ADAPTATION OF LITERARY TO VISUAL ARTS

Folklore remains a relevant storytelling medium in contemporary visual culture, particularly through animation and digital platforms. Studies have shown that folklore-based animations continue to engage audiences while preserving moral values and cultural narratives despite their fantastical and anthropomorphic elements (Fytullah Hamzah, 2020). In Malaysia, *Hikayat Sang Kancil* animation 1993, written by Hassan Abd Muthalib, exemplifies how anthropomorphic characters such as Sang Kancil, Sang Sempuh, and Sang Bedal communicate metaphorical meanings and cultural lessons to viewers (Azahar Harun & R.R., 2010). The adaptation of the *Sang Kancil dan Buaya* narrative into an augmented reality (AR) storybook further demonstrates the potential of digital technologies to revitalize folklore and attract younger audiences (Ramli et al., 2012). Although rapid technological development has contributed to the decline of traditional folklore engagement, technology can also serve as an effective tool for cultural preservation and dissemination when appropriately applied (Hanapiah, 2017). Similarly, interactive motion graphics have been identified as an innovative approach to increasing youth interest in Malay folklore while maintaining its cultural significance (Norfarizah M.B. et al., 2018).

3.1 Empirical Data of Sang Kancil

This study employs content analysis (Rose, 2007) and compositional interpretation (Fisher, 1996) to generate empirical data. Similar approaches were used by Azhar Harun and R.R. (2010) in their analysis of *Hikayat Sang Kancil*, where deconstruction and compositional interpretation were applied to examine the animation directed by Hassan Abd Muthalib. Their findings highlighted the paradox of kindness versus cruelty in human nature, while the allegorical elements of the narrative were found to communicate significant didactic and moral messages (Mahalingam & Daniel, 2024; Muliyadi, 2001).

Table 1 Data collection by Zuriati based on Azhar Harun, & R.R. (2010)

	(i) Deconstructed (extracted)	(ii) Compositional interpretation
Data collection methods	Narrative / Content	1. Visual illustration
	Message	2. Allegorical Didactic Message
	Illustration	3. Metaphorical Visual

3.2 Content And Messages in Sang Kancil Stories

The selected *Sang Kancil* stories portray the mousedeer as an intelligent and resourceful character who frequently overcomes stronger opponents through wit and strategic thinking. In narratives such as *Sang Kancil Membilang Buaya*, *Seruling Buluh Perindu*, *Gong Raja Sulaiman*, and *Tali Pinggang Raja Sulaiman*, Sang Kancil escapes danger by manipulating the greed, curiosity, arrogance, or gullibility of other animals. Meanwhile, stories such as *Sang Kancil Menolong Kerbau* and *Sang Kancil Mendamaikan Kambing dan Harimau* emphasize justice, gratitude, mutual respect, and peaceful coexistence. In *Sang Kancil Syah Alam di Rimba* and *Sang Kancil Mengalahkan Gajah*, themes of power, leadership, deception, and the consequences of arrogance are highlighted.

Collectively, these narratives communicate moral lessons concerning wisdom, critical judgment, humility, gratitude, social responsibility, and respect for others. The stories also caution against greed, blind trust, misuse of authority, envy, and self-interest. Through anthropomorphic animal characters, the folktales function as allegorical narratives that reflect human behaviour and ethical values within Malay society. Consequently, *Sang Kancil* serves not only as an entertaining folklore character but also as a vehicle for moral education and cultural transmission across generations.

3.3 Visual Allegory and Composition

This section examines the visual allegories and compositional strategies embedded in selected *Sang Kancil* narratives. Through visual analysis, illustrations are interpreted not only as narrative representations but also as carriers of symbolic and didactic meanings. The compositions consistently position Sang Kancil as the focal character, emphasizing intelligence, adaptability, and leadership despite his small physical stature.

Across the narratives, visual elements such as scale, spatial arrangement, colour, posture, and character interaction function as metaphors for human behaviour and moral values. Large subjects, including crocodiles, tigers, elephants, trees, and pythons, symbolize power, danger, obstacles, or authority, while Sang Kancil's strategic positioning signifies wisdom and problem-solving abilities. Elevated viewpoints and central placements often convey influence and leadership, whereas unstable poses and close confrontations communicate fear, conflict, or vulnerability. Example of analysis conducted.

Table 2 Visual Composition of *Sang Kancil Membilang Buaya* (Zuriati, 2023)

Illustration	Allegorical Didactic Message	Metaphorical Visual
 Illustration 1	The illustration of <i>Sang Kancil</i> the primary character is clearly placed in the centre as a focus to illustrate the story's starting point, where it is drinking to quench thirst and reduce hunger.	The position of the character in the centre emphasizes the focus and significance of the story.
 Illustration 2	An illustration of the water apple tree situated on the other side of the river. The image of the tree's leaves looks lush and thick because of the dark colour tone. It is defined as a huge, eye-catching tree that produces plenty of fruit to satisfy an empty stomach.	It indicates that anything that appears incredible and magnificent might be useful to others.
 Illustration 3	The water apple in the illustration shows a reddish color to define the tastiness of the fruit.	Bright colours are used to imply achievement and a brighter future.



Illustration 4

Illustration of the Crocodile biting the *Sang Kancil*'s leg at the riverbank. The size of *Sang Buaya* is large half of the composition and dashing. *Sang Kancil* was in an unstable position to visualize fright.

The subject's unstable position could represent fear or a tough situation.



Illustration 5

This illustration shows the scenario of *Sang Kancil*'s jumping onto each crocodile pretending to do the counting. The image of rhythmic crocodiles creates space to visualize the big river.

All calm crocodiles show obedience to *Sang Kancil* who carries King Sulaiman orders.

3.4 Anthropomorphic Characters

This research examines the anthropomorphic characteristics of animal characters in *Sang Kancil* folktales using a hermeneutic approach that emphasizes interpretation and understanding of meaning within narrative contexts (Gadamer, 1996; Jardine, 1992). The analysis reveals that each animal character embodies specific human attributes, serving as allegorical representations of social behaviour and moral values.

Sang Kancil emerges as the central character, characterized by intelligence, cunning, courage, ambition, leadership, helpfulness, and manipulative tendencies. Through wit and strategic thinking, he consistently overcomes physically stronger opponents and resolves conflicts. In contrast, *Sang Buaya* (the crocodile) represents obedience and opportunism, often exploiting the kindness of others for personal gain. *Pak Belang* (the tiger) embodies naivety, cowardice, and disobedience, making him vulnerable to deception. *Sang Kerbau* (the buffalo) symbolizes sympathy and generosity, while *Mak Kambing* (the goat) reflects trust and compliance. *Sang Gajah* (the elephant) represents arrogance and excessive self-confidence, ultimately leading to failure.

Collectively, these anthropomorphic characters function as allegorical devices that communicate ethical lessons and social values. Their interactions reflect human virtues and flaws, enabling the folktales to serve as vehicles for moral education, cultural transmission, and reflections on human behaviour within Malay society.

4 METHODOLOGY

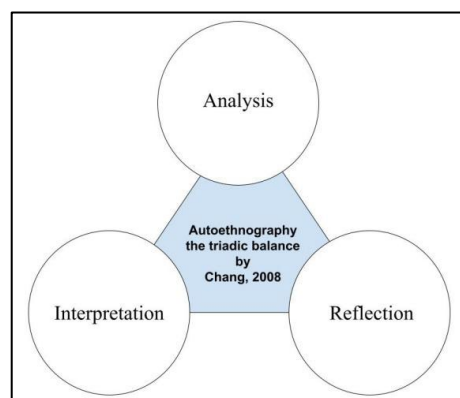


Chart 1 Chang's representation of the autoethnography method

The development of the artworks was informed by a systematic analysis of narrative content, moral messaging, visual allegory, compositional strategies, and anthropomorphic character representations. These findings were translated into studio practice through Chang's (2008) autoethnographic framework, which emphasizes cyclical processes of analysis, interpretation, and reflective practice.

5 ANALYSIS

The analysis of the findings from the practical study that was carried out in the studio with the research methodology that has been presented in the artwork form. The analysis was made through a framework that was developed which refers to the analysis of the works, as well as the method of developing the artworks. Effectively, the persistence of developing this analysis framework was to determine the significance of the works produced in anticipation of responding to the research question. Keith Moxey (1986) stated that Panofsky (1972) has identified three levels or strata of subject matter or meaning for the analysis of the work which includes description, iconography, and the tertiary or intrinsic iconographical. Each level is divided into three elements consisting of the subject of analysis, operation, and required knowledge. Based on the outcomes of research conducted in the studio using Chang's (2008) method, three key components of the work process have been identified which include analysis, interpretation, and reflection. The rationale of the working technique and analytical phases and approach are provided in the figure below.

Table 3 Analysis framework by Zuriati 2023
adaptation from Chang (2008), Keith Moxey (1986) Panofsky (1972)

No	The Autoethnography Method by Chang (2008)	Triadic balance in producing artwork			
		i) Analysis (Empirical data of <i>Sang Kancil</i> Tale)	ii) Interpretation (Understanding of the allegory of <i>Sang Kancil</i> Tales that receptive to surrounding)	iii) Reflection (Response to current and cultural issues)	
	3 strata of Panofsky's (1972) analysis		Subject of Analysis	Operation	Required Knowledge
1.	Level 1 Primary or natural	Pre-iconographic	Analysis of representational meaning.	Visualization	Experience and general knowledge
2.	Level 2 Secondary or conventional	Iconographic	Description and first interpretation of the meaning of an object.	Identification and description.	Specific knowledge of the subject and specific form.
3.	Level 3 Tertiary or intrinsic	Iconographical	Study of an object through the origin, literary sources, and particular interpretation and relations between remaining objects. Importance of symbol as comprehensible representation.	Contextualization	Thorough understanding of society and culture

5.1. Phase 1-Analysis of Textual Info from the Literature of *Sang Kancil* Tales

This pre-iconographic analysis is at level 1, which is the primary or natural stage. It is the analysis of representational meaning, the visualization of *Sang Kancil* literature, and the experience and general knowledge gained from the understanding of how the artworks are made. The description of the analytical approach of this work can be referred to as the research conceptual framework that has been developed based on the analysis framework by Zuriati (2023).

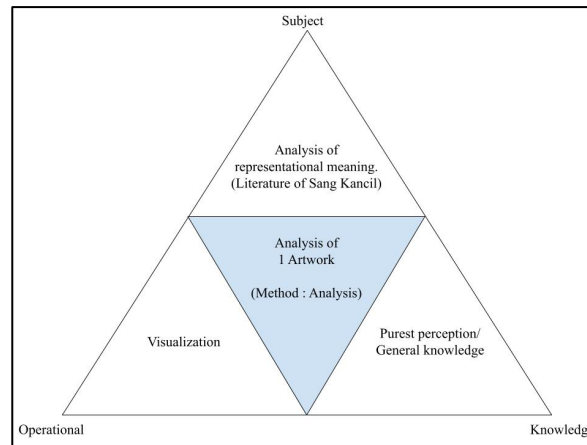


Chart 2 Analysis Framework (Analysis Method) by Zuriati 2023.

The study at this stage employs an autoethnographic approach as the primary analytical method. A series of artworks was produced through this process, representing the early phase of research in which empirical data collection is still ongoing, and the epistemological framework has not yet been fully established. The visual development consists of foundational drawings that function as direct translations of *Sang Kancil* literary narratives. The following table presents a detailed analysis of the artworks.

Table 4 Phase 1 Analysis by Zuriati 2023

Phase 1			
The Autoethnography Method by Chang (2008) (i. Analysis)			
Level 1 Pre-iconography	Subject of analysis	Operation	Required knowledge
1. Series of <i>Sang Kancil Membilang Buaya</i> (2021)	Representational meaning of the Story of <i>Sang Kancil Membilang Buaya</i> . -Content -Allegory -Anthropomorphic characters	Visualization of the characters and story. Online interactive exhibition.	<i>Sang Kancil Membilang Buaya</i>

Artwork	Descriptive Analysis
 Figure 1 Title: Series of <i>Sang Kancil Membilang Buaya</i> Media: Pencil, charcoal on canvas Size: 59 cm x 46 cm x 10 pcs Year: 2021	The <i>Sang Kancil Membilang Buaya</i> series employs an analytical method using pencil and charcoal on canvas. Comprising ten panels, it visually reconstructs the narrative sequence through selected scenes, translating text into composition while preserving the original storyline. Emphasis is placed on allegorical and expressive depiction, particularly the facial expressions and eye contact between Sang Kancil and Sang Buaya. The series maintains narrative integrity; however, the tenth panel proposes an alternative resolution, suggesting cooperation between both characters to achieve mutual benefit rather than exploitation.

5.2. Phase 2-Interpretation of the Allegory *Sang Kancil*

This analysis of Phase 2 is a continuation of the acquisition from Phase 1. Iconography analysis is the second level or conventional approach to evaluating developed artworks adapted from the interpretation methods. Analysis was made based on the established framework as below:

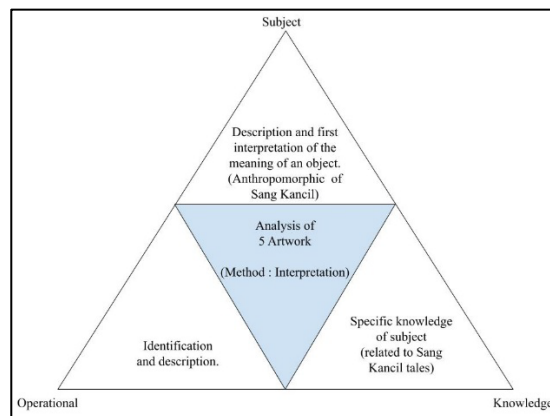


Chart 3 Analysis framework (Interpretation Method) by Zuriati 2023.

A total of five artworks were produced, namely *The Remote*, *The Toy*, *Manipulator*, *Angkuh Sang Gajah*, and *Malang Sang Kerbau dan Pak Belang*. At this stage, the researcher translated *Sang Kancil* folktales into visual form through personal observation and experiential interpretation. This process aligns with Bishop (2021), who asserts that autoethnography is not a fixed or rigid method, but rather a fluid, contextual, and interpretive approach to understanding lived experience. The table below demonstrates a detailed analysis of the work.

Table 5 Phase 2 Analysis Framework by Zuriati 2023

Phase 2 The Autoethnography Method by Chang (2008) (ii. Interpretation)			
Level 2 Iconography	Subject of analysis (Anthropomorphic)	Operation (Identification and description of:)	Required knowledge (Specific knowledge of a subject (related to <i>Sang Kancil</i> Tales))
1)The Remote	Manipulative and Obedient	Remote control and puppet string.	Power and control
2)The Toy	Manipulative and Obedient	Crocodile toy and crocodile's prodded and dragged snout.	Beneficial of deceptiveness
3)Manipulator	Manipulative and Obedient	Horned chair and table written with the word boss. Chessboard and crocodile puppet string.	Manipulation and persecution.
4) <i>Angkuh Sang Gajah</i>	Arrogant Genius	Chair and <i>Sang Kancil</i> in suit.	Wisdom beat arrogance.
5) <i>Malang Sang Kerbau dan Pak Belang</i>	Helpful Courageous sympathetic Naive	Sad expression of a buffalo, a tiger facing back, and a chair.	Survival and recognition.

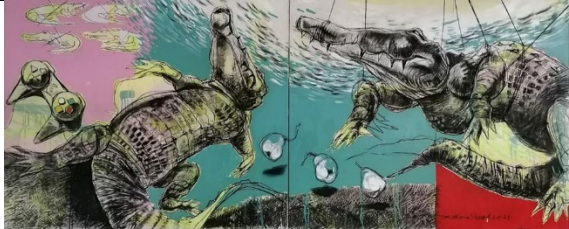
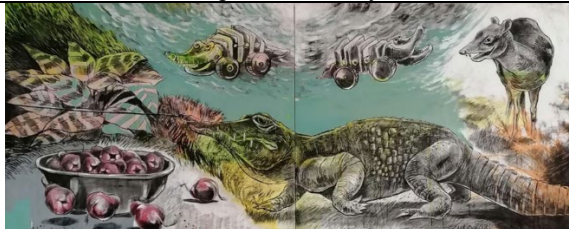
Artwork	Descriptive Analysis
 Figure 2 Title: The Remote Media: Charcoal & acrylic on canvas Size: 228 cm x 96 cm Year: 2021 <i>*Download Artivive apps and scan this painting for augmented reality.</i>	“The Remote,” based on <i>Sang Kancil Membilang Buaya</i>, represents an early analysis of the anthropomorphic relationship between Sang Kancil and Sang Buaya. The work employs the metaphor of a remote control to signify manipulation and control. Crocodiles are depicted as tethered and obedient, resembling puppets directed by a puppeteer, reflecting Sang Kancil’s influence. The river scene, where crocodiles line up for counting, reinforces deception and blind obedience. Overall, the composition symbolically illustrates Sang Kancil’s strategic use of authority, particularly through reference to King Sulaiman, to manipulate and mislead others for personal advantage.
 Figure 3 Title: The Toy Media: Arang, akrilik atas kanvas Size: 228 cm x 96 cm Year: 2021 <i>*Download Artivive apps and scan this painting for augmented reality.</i>	This early-stage research interprets the anthropomorphic characters of Sang Kancil and Sang Buaya, identifying manipulation in Sang Kancil and obedience in Sang Buaya. <i>The Toy</i> visualizes this dynamic through a toy crocodile metaphor, representing control, submission, and exploitation. A smiling Sang Kancil signifies satisfaction after deception. The concept of <i>mempermainkan</i> (Kamus Dewan, 2016) reinforces the idea of treating others as objects for personal gain. Overall, the work highlights deception, control, and unequal power relations within the folktale narrative.



Figure 4 Title: Manipulator
Media: Charcoal and acrylic on canvas
Size: 177 cm x 82 cm
Year: 2021

This work, based on *Sang Kancil Membilang Buaya*, highlights Sang Kancil's manipulative behaviour through allegorical interpretation. The string puppet metaphor represents control over others, with crocodiles deceived for personal gain. Visual symbols such as a "boss" chair, horned chair, and chessboard reflect authority, power imbalance, and strategic domination within hierarchical systems. Overall, the work demonstrates how intelligence and authority enable manipulation, as Sang Kancil exploits King Sulaiman's name to control crocodiles, resulting in entrapment and exploitation.



Figure 5 Title: Angkuh Sang Gajah
Media: Charcoal, acrylic on canvas
Size: 121 cm x 128 cm
Year: 2022

Angkuh Sang Gajah is adapted from Sang Kancil Mengalahkan Gajah and focuses on Sang Gajah's arrogance and Sang Kancil's intelligence. The composition centers on Sang Gajah to express pride and overconfidence, while Sang Kancil, depicted in a suit, symbolizes strategic intelligence that overcomes physical strength. The central chair represents shifting authority, where Sang Kancil ultimately gains influence over other animals in the forest. The work illustrates the downfall of arrogance when confronted with wisdom, as Sang Gajah, despite his physical superiority, is defeated by a smaller but smarter opponent. It emphasizes that effective leadership depends on wisdom rather than strength.



Figure 6 Title: Malang Sang Kerbau dan Pak Belang
Media: Charcoal, acrylic on canvas
Size: 121 cm x 121 cm
Year: 2022

Malang Sang Kerbau dan Pak Belang adapts *Sang Kancil Menolong Kerbau* and *Gong Raja Sulaiman*, focusing on Sang Kancil's helpfulness, Sang Kerbau's sympathy, and Pak Belang's naivety. The composition merges a natural river and forest setting with a domestic interior to link traditional narrative and contemporary interpretation. Sang Kerbau is shown in a sorrowful posture, while Pak Belang is depicted from behind to signify curiosity and gullibility. A chair motif represents Sang Kancil as rescuer and observer, integrating themes of deception, rescue, and moral reflection.

5.3 Phase 3-Reflection of *Sang Kancil* on Culture and Social Issues

The third and final level of analysis is iconographical which is a continuation of the preceding level. This is the intrinsic or tertiary level. The following analysis diagram has been constructed for the purpose of analyzing work produced by utilizing the reflection method.

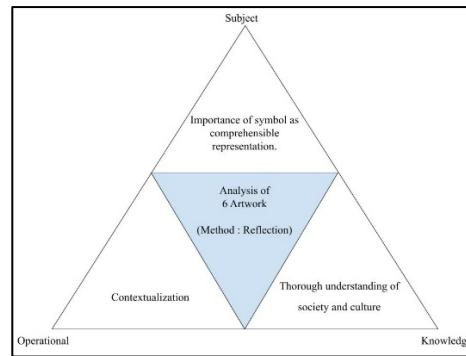


Chart 4 Analysis Framework (Reflection Method) by Zuriati 2023

Throughout this method, a total of six artworks have been constructed. The work's title is as follows: 1) *Siakap, Buaya dan Sikap Manusia*, 2) *Akur Sang Buaya*, 3) *Siri Shah Alam di Rimba*, 4) *Kerusi Syah Alam di Rimba*, 5) *Sang Kancil* and Rabbit I & II and 6) *Kancil Mati di Tengah-tengah*. The table below demonstrates a detailed analysis of the resulting artworks.

Table 6 Phase 3 Analysis by Zuriati 2023

Phase 3 The Autoethnography Method by Chang (2008) (iii.Reflection)			
Level 3 Iconographical	Subject of analysis (Symbol:)	Operation (Contextualization:)	Required knowledge (Thorough understanding of society and culture:)
1) <i>Siakap, Buaya dan Sikap Manusia</i>	Sea bass: Manipulation Crocodile: Victim	Sea bass and crocodiles at a store with a payment counter.	Viral issue
2) <i>Akur Sang Buaya</i>	Chair: Position <i>Sang Kancil</i> : Struggle Crocodile: Victim	<i>Sang Kancil</i> with a bow tie on a sofa surrounded by crocodiles.	Political issues
3) <i>Siri Syah Alam di Rimba</i>	Chair: Position/contribution in life	Chair and 3D-related components	Culture and society
4) <i>Kerusi Syah Alam di Rimba</i>	Animal legs chair: Wisdom/achievement	Anthropomorphic chair and 3D-related components	Malay custom
5) <i>Sang Kancil dan Rabbit</i>	Malay rattan chair/ Chinese-chair: Malay and Chinese tricksters	The chairs represent the difference between the two cultures.	Malay and Chinese Culture.
6) <i>Kancil Mati di Tengah-tengah</i>	Stylized mousedeeers: Manipulative and genius Crocodile: obedient	Mousedeeers and a crocodile to reflect the adaptation of local wisdom	Discussion on covid 19 vaccine

Artwork	Descriptive Analysis
 Figure 7 Title: <i>Siakap, Buaya dan Sikap Manusia</i> Media: Charcoal, acrylic on canvas Size: 138 cm x 100 cm Year: 2021	The study emphasizes symbolic interpretation in visual practice, drawing on Panofsky's (1972) framework to derive deeper meanings from representation. <i>Siakap, Buaya dan Sikap Manusia</i>, based on <i>Sang Kancil Membilang Buaya</i>, uses siakap to symbolize manipulation and crocodiles to represent those being manipulated. The work reflects exploitation in everyday life and extends themes of deception and control. It also references socio-economic issues such as price manipulation in Langkawi and inflationary pressures (The Malaysian Reserve, 2023), highlighting ethical concerns in consumer and business practices.



Figure 8 Title: Akur Sang Buaya
Media: Charcoal, acrylic on canvas
Size: 121 cm x 128 cm
Year: 2022

Akur Sang Buaya, based on Sang Kancil Membilang Buaya, reinterprets its allegory within Malaysia's 15th General Election context. Sang Kancil and a chair motif symbolize political dominance and leadership struggle, while crocodiles represent the public as victims of manipulation. The composition merges river landscape and domestic interior to connect folktale allegory with political reality. Sang Kancil on a sofa signifies manipulative leadership, while turbulent waters reflect electoral tension. The work critiques unethical campaigning, misinformation, and voter exploitation in digital politics.



Figure 9 Title: Series Shah Alam di Rimba
Media: Mixed on canvas
Size: 28 cm x 24 cm x 2 pcs, 30 cm x 30 cm x 12pcs
Year: 2022

The *Syah Alam di Rimba* series interprets selected *Sang Kancil* stories through a 14-panel composition, using the chair as a central symbol of individual roles, status, and social contribution. Each panel reflects everyday experiences derived from folktale allegories. Three-dimensional elements such as toy animals, tree models, and framed images enhance contextual engagement. Referencing Haris Abadi's *Pohon* (2018), the series emphasizes composition, colour, and materiality. Anthropomorphic characters function as mirrors of human behaviour shaped by cultural values and social practices (Zuraidah, 2007).



Figure 10 Title: Kerusi Syah Alam di Rimba
Media: Mixed on canvas
Size: 90 cm x 90 cm
Year: 2022

Kerusi Syah Alam di Rimba interprets the chair as a symbolic object formed from animal limbs, representing wisdom, strength, and achievement. The four-panel work combines drawing and three-dimensional installation, referencing Sang Kancil Mendamaikan Kambing dan Harimau. The hybrid chair with tiger and crocodile elements signifies Sang Kancil's intelligence, survival, and leadership within a dangerous environment. The work reflects ideals of social order and leadership aligned with customary systems. As Embi Husin et al. (2004) note, customs regulate communal behaviour toward harmony.

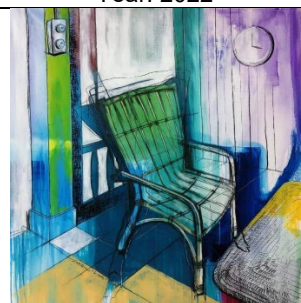


Figure 11 Title: Sang Kancil dan Rabbit I
Media: Mixed on canvas
Size: 121 cm x 121 cm
Year: 2023

Sang Kancil (Malay trickster) and Rabbit (Chinese trickster) explores cultural parallels through two rattan chairs representing Malay and Chinese traditions. The work compares distinct cultural forms while highlighting shared trickster narrative structures. Developed using augmented reality, it enables animated experiences of both characters within their cultural contexts. The composition examines similarities in storytelling, where weaker but intelligent protagonists outwit stronger animals. Malay tales feature Sang Kancil defeating crocodiles and tigers, while Chinese stories portray the Rabbit as clever yet innocent (Qi Fu, 2011; H. P., 2016).



Figure 12 Title: *Sang Kancil dan Rabbit II*
Media: Mixed on canvas
Size: 121 cm x 121 cm
Year: 2023



Figure 4.13 Title: *Kancil Mati di Tengah-tengah*
Media: Mixed on canvas
Size: 121 cm x 121 cm
Year: 2023

This artwork stylizes two deer and a crocodile to represent obedient, genius, and manipulative characteristics. Based on the Malay proverb “*Gajah sama gajah bergaduh, kancil mati di tengah-tengah*,” it illustrates how conflicts between powerful parties often harm ordinary people. The concept is reinterpreted through the Covid-19 vaccine context, where pandemic responses created uncertainty and risk. Government measures such as movement control orders and vaccination raised concerns over safety, necessity, and compensation (Mohd Zamre et al., 2022). The work reflects public anxiety and vulnerability amid health and policy conflicts.

5.4 Contribution of Research Practice and Method

The output of this research and studio practice is primarily developed through drawing using both wet and dry media, which constitutes the core methodological approach employed throughout the study. The sustained exploration of drawing has generated new conceptual strategies and expanded methodological possibilities, thereby contributing to contemporary art practice and presentation.

A critical ontological engagement with the research context positions the Anthropomorphism Exhibition as a platform for re-storying *Sang Kancil* narratives through visual interpretation informed by personal experience, environmental observation, and socio-cultural concerns. Conducted within a structured studio-based research framework, the study contributes to Fine Art discourse by advancing both practice-led inquiry and the progressive development of artworks.

Furthermore, the research establishes drawing as a significant and autonomous artistic mode, comparable to other visual disciplines such as painting, printmaking, and sculpture. It may also be integrated with other media to extend formal and conceptual possibilities in artmaking. While folktales are conventionally disseminated through animation and illustrated texts, this study introduces digital and online strategies as alternative platforms for re-storying *Sang Kancil* within contemporary visual art contexts.

In addition to developing artworks by adapting characters and allegories, the researcher has developed images and symbols resulting from the interpretation and reflection of the anthropomorphic characters and allegories found in *Sang Kancil* stories through this study. The results of the investigation are presented in Table 7.

Table 7 New Image and Symbol Resulted from Research.

No	Image and symbol	Meaning
1	Remote control	Manipulative
2	Puppet string	Obedient
3	Crocodile toy	Manipulative
4	Crocodile's prodded and dragged snout	Obedient
5	Horned chair and table wrote with the word boss	Manipulative
6	Chessboard and crocodile puppet string	Obedient
7	Chair	Arrogant
8	Sang Kancil in suit.	Genius
9	Sad expression of a buffalo	Sympathetic
10	A tiger facing back	Naive
11	Chair	Courageous
12	Sea bass	Manipulation
13	Crocodile	Victim
14	Chair	Position
15	Sang Kancil	Struggle
16	Crocodile	Victim
17	Chair	Position/contribution in life
18	Animal legs chair	Wisdom/achievement
19	Malay rattan chair	Malay trickster
20	Chinese-chair	Chinese trickster
21	Stylized mousedeer	Manipulative and genius
22	Crocodile	Obedient

Based on the conclusion of the research analysis, the researcher has developed four Kancil Attributes (KA) for a reference of the artwork formation established on the adaptation of literature. These attributes correspond to findings at the three levels of analysis (Panofsky, 1972) that explored the production of works through three methods: analysis, interpretation, and reflection (Chang, 2008). The attributes identify four essential components, consisting of i) Description. The forming of artworks that demonstrate the representational meaning of literature. The intention is to provide the audience with a comprehension of the subject being discussed. ii) Investigative identification. The fabrication of artworks by analysing the identity of the subject of reference. The meaning of the image is given by the artist by referring to the significance of the literature. iii) Symbolization of knowledge. Artists create works based on their understanding of the subject and their reflections on their experiences and surroundings. The images developed serve as a translation of the metaphor intended to be communicated. iv) Stylization of knowledge. The production of images in the work has been simplified and abstracted in order to convey the descriptive subject, the interpreted meaning, or both at once. KA is essentially derived from the developed research and working process in the studio that is answerable to the research question and objectives. Artists and researchers could consider KA as a reference when creating works. The use of any attribute, or any combination of attributes, is adaptable. Chart 1 is the diagram for KA.

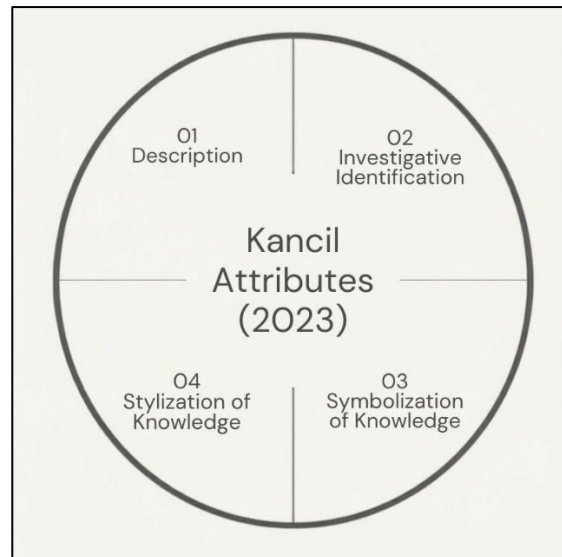


Chart 1 Kancil Attributes (KA), 2023 by Zuriati

6 DISCUSSION

This research demonstrates that drawing, through wet and dry media, functions not only as a technical process but also as a critical and conceptual tool for re-storying *Sang Kancil* folktales. The studio-based practice, structured by a research framework, enabled the transformation of literary narratives into visual interpretations grounded in ontology, personal observation, and socio-cultural reflection. Within the Anthropomorphism Exhibition, the artworks extend beyond illustration, functioning as visual discourse that connects folktales with contemporary issues and lived experiences.

The study also confirms that drawing can stand as an independent and hybrid art form, comparable to painting, printmaking, and sculpture, while also integrating with other media to expand formal and contextual expression. In addition, the adoption of digital and online presentation methods further repositions folktales within contemporary visual culture, moving beyond traditional formats such as animation and storybooks. Through this process, new visual symbols and meanings emerged, translating anthropomorphic characters and allegories into contemporary visual language.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research contributes to Fine Art practice by establishing a structured method of interpreting *Sang Kancil* folktales through studio-based drawing and visual experimentation. The study generated a set of new visual symbols and meanings, later categorized into four *Kancil Attributes (KA)*: description, investigative identification, symbolization of knowledge, and stylization of knowledge. These attributes, derived from Panofsky's (1972) levels of analysis and Chang's (2008) interpretive framework, provide a systematic approach for translating literature into visual art. KA offers a flexible reference model for artists and researchers, allowing adaptation or combination of attributes in future creative practice. Ultimately, the study reinforces the role of visual art as a medium for preserving, interpreting, and reactivating oral traditions within contemporary and digital contexts.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares no potential conflict of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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