Public Art in the Federal Territory of Putrajaya: Questions of Value and Role

Muhizam Mustafa
Universiti Sains Malaysia

Abstract

Public art is not simply art placed outside. It is sometimes seen as a manifestation based on political and cultural aspirations that intersect with the city's beautification efforts. This paper looks at the roles and values of public art and how it is being utilised in Putrajaya. This new city best represents recent growth and interests in public art practices and also provides samples of different styles in public art development. Public art is used in Putrajaya as part of urban ornamentation which plays a crucial role in making the image of city and enlivens the environment. The use of local crafts and fauna helps to differentiate and assert a Malaysian identity. Putrajaya is a city that is inevitably a pinnacle of Malaysian political programming. The unique ceremonial space and the symbolism of the architecture of Putrajaya have drawn upon diverse influences resulting in buildings that are uniquely 'Malaysian-Islamic' in character and universal in outlook. This is part of an ongoing endeavour to re-establish Malay and Islamic pride.

Keywords: *public art, urban planning, art and architecture*

Introduction

Public art is not simply art placed outside. It is sometimes seen as a manifestation based on political and cultural aspirations that intersect with the city's beautification. In his keynote speech at the symposium on the 'Benefits of Public Art', Boys (2005) states that "…public art is a purposeful found space for instrumental action that ties the relationship between art, architecture and society". In Malaysia, the development of public art has created a richer appreciation for the value it represents as it rarely commemorates heroes or events, or symbolises accomplishments and goals. It appears to function as a community symbol or as a tool for place-making. Public art not only has commercial value but it enhances its settings culturally and aesthetically. This is often achieved with the employment of a wide variety of images, forms and elements, including materials and techniques, from everyday life, notably popular culture. Public art has not only promoted the transformation of a setting but the appreciation for the artwork. According to Harvest (2004), the Executive Director of the Arts Council England:

> Public art has an important role to play in transforming the public realm
> and contributing to the urban renaissance. The arts are animators – they can
> inspire and revitalise. Public art, taking art beyond the gallery space and
> into public spaces, can be an effective way of changing the way people feel
> about their environment.
>
> (Harvest 2004: 1)

Harvest believes that public art leads to a diverse array of activities and purposes that go beyond purely aesthetic merits. It also helps to enhance people's experiences of the environment. As Shin (1999) states:

> Public art is expected to contribute visually and experientially to the
> quality of life of those who experience it as an element in their daily
> environment.
>
> Shin (1999:12)

Shin also observes that the public art's role is to instigate a broader potential relationship between the artwork, its setting and the social environment. Shin wrote that artwork placed in public places is the main ingredient of the urban environment and it is the three-dimensional object most closely related to architecture which helps to enhance the spatial experiences of the public. Echoed by a broad range of settings, public art animates and provides the public spaces with a desired identity. Miles (1997) emphasizes that:

> An image of a city…is in part determined by the personal associations
> the image may conjure, and in part by the viewpoint from which the city
> is seen…materials of a building, or a glimpse of a familiar landmark,
> might suggest a particular place; the image gives little idea of the city
> as a whole.
>
> Miles (1997:20)

In this instance, Miles suggests that public art helps people to identify with a place and gives identity to a setting.

In Putrajaya, for example, public art is used as part of urban ornamentation which plays a crucial role in making the image of the city and enlivens the environment. The use of local crafts and fauna helps to differentiate and assert a Malaysian identity through a stylistic approach that is unique to the country. Strong visual images borrowed for public art help facilitate a memorable structure and give the city its identity. This is because the Federal Territory of Putrajaya is Kuala

Lumpur's alter ego, a city developed to represent an exercise in national celebration. It has a grand axis, monumental building arrangements, an ornamental lake and ecological displays.

In contrast to the development of Kuala Lumpur, the geography and location of the Federal Territory of Putrajaya is somewhat of a traditional notion of a utopian city – a space of order, harmony and perfection. Putrajaya, eschewing complexity and ambiguity, is a dream of the space of a new form of a nation. The Director of City Planning Unit of Putrajaya Corporation, Isace (2005:1) says that "the creation of a new Federal Government Administrative Centre at Putrajaya marks a new chapter in the development history of modern Malaysia". In achieving the utopian ideal, the planners of Putrajaya in 1993 adopted a concept termed "Intelligent Garden City". According to the Kementerian Wilayah Persekutuan multimedia technologies report (2007:5), Malaysia's Putrajaya is the first Intelligent Garden City with a sophisticated information network. The report states that "Putrajaya will become a vital developmental catalyst due to the role it will assume as a model city – as the nerve centre of the nation and an ideal place in which to live, work, conduct business and engage in sports and recreational activities".

Putrajaya is also a planned city being built according to a series of comprehensive policies and guidelines for land use. The Garden City concept is created with the guidance of three simple ideologies: 'Man and his Creator; Man and man; and Man and nature'. (Lilian, Ho and Ismail S. 2002: 2). This is reflected within the layout of Putrajaya, constructed with three different features - a formal axis punctuated with nodal features; structuring of the Core Area into identifiable precincts; and variety of informal and formal activity areas. The design of Putrajaya has also adopted an urban form that is designed to suit topography, local climate and cultural norms; the creation of an interesting cityscape; the optimisation of scenic panoramic views and spatial experiences; promoting local flora as a Malaysian landscape identity; creating a network of open spaces and finally the incorporation of intelligent buildings and infrastructural features. This is an ideal and wholesome city as Isace (2005: 4) pointed:

> In line with the Garden City concept, a large proportion of the city area is designated as parks and open space ranging from metropolitan parks to local neighbourhood playgrounds. Reinforcing these provisions are urban features such as landmarks, squares, plazas and bridges that form part of the cityscape, providing a wide range of spatial experiences that further enhance the spatial quality of the city.

This coincides with city planners Vale (1992) and Dovey (1999, 2001), who state that "Cities inevitably convey messages about the societies that produced them and are in turn reproduced by them, in their image, as it were. This is even more so in the case of capital cities". Building a new city is a monumental task requiring the input of various groups of people with diverse disciplines. Guided by the Garden City concept and aiming to achieve a strong image for the city, effort towards 'good urban design and landscape planning is achieved through the use of the Detailed Urban Design guidelines' (DUD) (Isace 2005: 5).

Apart from cultural representation, Putrajaya also represents the 're-making of Malaysia'. While spatial qualities are significantly shared by the three major ethnic groups, the diversity is not replicated in Putrajaya. The Federal Territory of Putrajaya is a civil service town and the civil servant is overwhelmingly Malay and Muslim. On one level, Putrajaya is part of an ongoing endeavour to re-establish Malay and Islamic pride and self-respect.

While Putrajaya, in a sense, is trying to escape from the diversity of the city, it is notable that the imported 'style' is not that of the *Kampungs* (Malay village), *Masjids* (mosques) and *Istanas* (Palaces) of the Malay tradition. Rather it is of an 'imagined' source. Putrajaya is both colonised by images and styles essentially Middle-Eastern and a Malay reassertion against 'an urbanism and urbanity that is essentially and simultaneously Chinese-Malaysian and cosmopolitan.' (King 2005:136).

Putrajaya at first reading is a city that is inevitably a pinnacle of Malaysian political programming. Its unique 'ceremonial' space and the symbolism of the architecture of Putrajaya have drawn upon diverse influences resulting in buildings that are uniquely 'Malaysian-Islamic' in character and universal in outlook (Mohd Ali 2006: 97). As the new administration centre of Malaysia, Putrajaya symbolises the Malaysian national identity in architecture. According to Ali, while Malay and Islamic design idioms dominate the architecture of Putrajaya, it also incorporates classical and contemporary elements that reflect the universal outlook of the Malaysian psyche.

This paper looks at the roles and values of public art and how it is being utilised in Putrajaya. The Federal Territory Putrajaya best represents recent growth and interests in public art practices and also provides samples of different styles in public art development. Putrajaya was created as a city with a memorable design by providing identity and structure to its public realm.

Public Art in Putrajaya: Questions of Value

"Public art, whether abstract or figurative, asserts moral claims to public space, concerning the history, identity, and possible future of the surrounding area". (Weber 2003:7). Public art design plays a key role in all forms of development, generating a sense of regional identity and pride. Successful public art is work that resonates with the site and context, creates an opportunity for the range of people using the site to engage with and in terms of added values it brings benefits to both the community and the environment. The employment of public art in Putrajaya by the developer (Putrajaya Holding: PjH) and the local authority (Putrajaya Corporation: PJC), for example, is seen to contribute towards critical evaluation on role of art in public and social space values. This is according to Bach (1992: 1):

> Public art can express civic values, enhance the environment, transform a
> landscape, heighten our awareness, or question our assumptions. Placed

in a public site, this art is therefore for everyone, a form of collective
community expression.

The ability of public art to meet the needs of social objectives for an inclusive society also largely depends on the quality of the built environment. In public places, there are many forms of art that enhance the space and give it character. In the case of Putrajaya, public art helps break the rigidity of building complexes and the formal outlook of its urbanscape. In general, it improves the physical environment to benefit the residents and visitors. It also helps to humanise public spaces and create meaningful places where people feel comfortable and relaxed. According to architect Andy (2006: 4) from TR Hamzah and Yeang:

> The purpose of public sculpture in Putrajaya is to create a focal point for
> people to come and appreciate this artwork set against the development
> of Putrajaya…or its function is to address the purpose of the space…for
> example the sculpture located at the main entrance signifies the formality
> of the business…It is also there to mark the city's development.

Besides adding to people's appreciation of a particular place as well as aiding orientation, public art of all kinds can be found in almost any city either representing a historic figure or expressing a style, thought or culture (see Figure 1). Andy (2006: 4) states:

> …the Millennium monument by Ken Yeang, (sic)…Generally it is there
> to create interest, to create the right atmosphere. The sculpture here (sic)
> is used to educate the public on the history of the country.
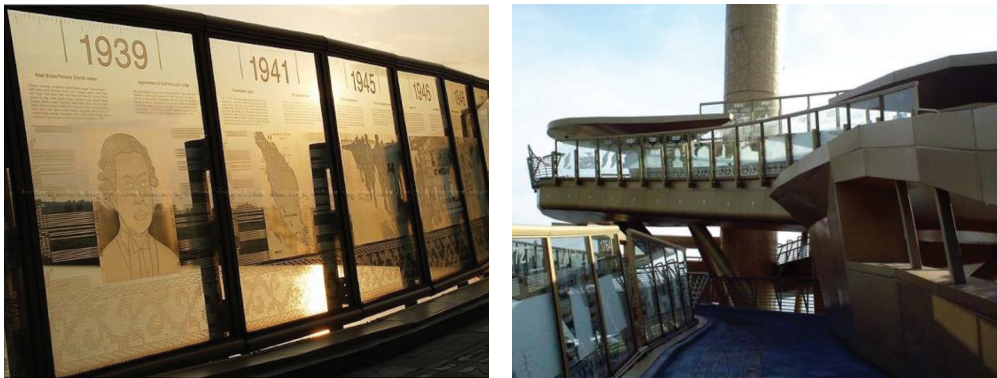
Figure 1 Millennium Monument Putrajaya

Other forms of public art like fountains celebrate the reflections and coolness of water and add white noise, drowning out the sounds of traffic (DBKL 2006: 3). In Malaysia, the water element is a major part of public art which is important as the weather is hot and humid. Water encourages 'liveability' in the community, which in turn promotes the quality of life.

The employment of public art in Putrajaya has also helped create a safer environment. With the presence of public art, public areas are better managed, well lit while streets are wider to accommodate visitors and residents. Visitors and the local community are encouraged to use the streets at night, increasing natural surveillance. As a result, fear of crime is decreased. Public art also helps to decrease vandalism and increase community pride and concern for the local environment. They allow communities to directly influence the identity of the area, encouraging greater ownership of a development or scheme. On a larger scale, public art in Putrajaya provides a community focus where the artwork in the public spaces creates a potential venue for social

events. These events can provide interactions and encourage cross-community and cross-cultural ties. It can also have a very positive effect on the urban environment, drawing the community together – bringing financial, social and environmental benefits, and broadening the cultural nature, character and identity of the area. According to Abdullah, J. (2006: 4)

> In Putrajaya, the residential developments were developed on the *Kampung* concept where no fences were allowed thus creating a village environment…it will provide and encourage interactions between the neighbours.

While good urban design and architecture affirm social values and bring coherence and order to the built environment for the benefit of the public; commissioned sculptures and integrated artworks located throughout the city, in parks, along roadways, in public buildings and in other public places help enhance urban spaces and create a sense of place. This is according to Sucher (1995):

> The urban environment can become personalised with art by demonstrating a particular style, activity, or culture. Art creates a sense of place, it reflects social theory about the place, and displays a style that is attributed to the space. Art is often used in public places to give it character, to make a space interesting, or to simply beautify it. People remember a place because of the artwork that exists in the space – the art acts as a symbol of the place.

The employment of public art in Putrajaya is a prime example of a direct response to its settings and a reflection of Malaysia's political and cultural programme, which presents a typical celebration of ornamental display intertwined with a series of administrative and political considerations.

As mentioned above, Putrajaya's development was inspired by the idea of re-making Malaysia into a modern Islamic economic power. As stated by Abdullah, J. (2006: 5):

> …religion plays a big role in the decision making especially with the local authority when they want to put public art. Firstly because they use public money, where the majority of the public is Malay Muslim and they are accountable when using this funding.

Public art is employed to display between actual and wished for identity, a vision of an ideal urban space. Public art and monuments were incorporated into Putrajaya's built environment where appropriate, to further enhance, establish and create a unique identity legitimising the political and cultural atmosphere (see Figure 2). According to Pearson (1982: 80):

> Public art is now related to cultural identity… it became 'directly political in the broader sense, since [state involvement] is wrapped up in values, decisions, attitudes and assumptions concerning people's lives.'

Figure 2 Public art in Putrajaya enhances cultural and political agenda (left to right: Mercutanda sculpture, PJC Islamic Arch sculpture)

The issue of cultural and political values both defines and is mediated by its spatial location, and as such is part of a social dynamic in which 'the processes through which a person defines him / herself in a society are not restricted to making distinctions between oneself and significant others, but extends with no less importance to objects and things, and the very spaces and places in which they are found' (Proshansky, Fabian and Kaminoff:1983).

In order to understand this, it is important to look at the distribution of public art in Putrajaya. Almost eighteen public sculptures were located and found within a radius of two kilometres from the central core zone (Precinct 1–5), which is also the administrative and financial district. Most public artwork in the administrative and financial areas carries a style to coincide with the visual language of Putrajaya's built environment. It is claimed to be Malaysian (reminiscent of Malay vernacular architecture) and an adaptation of Middle Eastern Islamic principles. Because of the Malay-Islamic style, spatial representation (the architecture and built environment) has explicitly used a peculiar form of abstract geometry (an anti-anthropomorphic tradition in Islamic decorations); which also physically influenced the public art attributes in these areas. While the usage of geometrical form helps enforce an Islamic identity, Malay carvings and Malay art style is used to help enforce the Malay cultural tradition (see Figure 3).

Figure 3 Putra Bridge and The Tepak Sireh sculpture: examples of Malay and Islamic influence residential, recreational and trade areas have very little public art, which is often attributed to the value of the space (or rather the lack of).

According to Mohd Ali (2005: 98):

> The "Peripheral Precincts" plan is based on the neighbourhood planning concept to accommodate a mixture of residential areas, local commercial activities and public amenities and it has sculptures which symbolically commemorate Putrajaya's 'Garden City' design concept.

Mohd Ali has suggested that public art in the "Peripheral Precincts" does not hold the same values as the one in the "Core Areas" (see Figure 4). If the public art in the "Core Areas" are site-specific and politically and culturally motivated; the only purpose of public art in the peripheral areas is to enhance the aesthetic values of the settings. Hence the designs in the peripheral areas are more liberal and utilise a more modern approach.
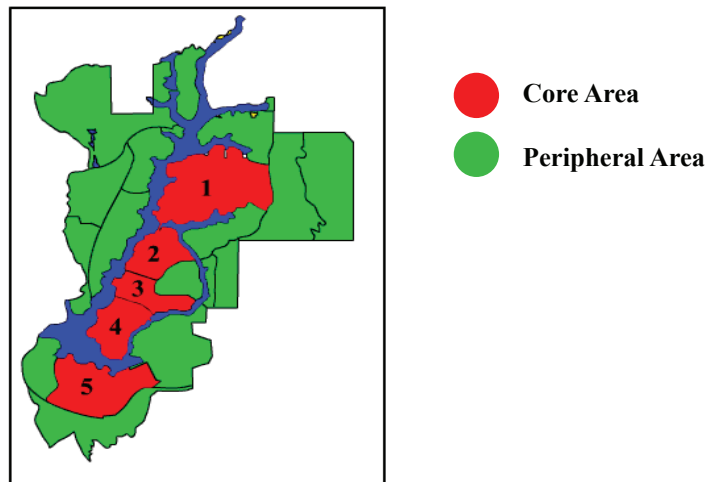
Figure 4 Zoning of areas in Putrajaya

Public art within the core areas, illustrating political and cultural values, are site-specific – symbolic of the political history of Malaysia. This is because the public realm was perceived by the ruling politicians or dictated by how they thought of the city, by way of its public space and objects. According to King (2007: 132):

> …the use of public art in Putrajaya is to help enforce a political and cultural imagery and it is the surface expression of a deeper cultural layer conveyed in design of the city.

The impact of public art goes beyond social value and identity. Public art in Putrajaya also contributes towards economic benefits. This is according to Madden (1998):

> The phrase the "economic benefits of the arts" has gained currency in arts sectors around the world, largely as a result of a new economic rationalism in public policy.

As with all areas of public policy, arts and cultural policies have come under the scrutiny of economics. Putrajaya has created a high quality public environment, which has significant impact on the economic life of the urban centre to attract investment. The presence of good parks, squares, public art and public spaces becomes a vital business and marketing tool – investors are attracted to locations that offer well designed, well managed public places and these in turn attract customers, employees and services. Public art is also used for tourism in Putrajaya. For example the *Mercutanda* monument, *Perdana Boulevard* sculpture and *Millennium* monument in Precinct 2 are examples of public art used to attract visitors.

Tourism in Putrajaya offers visitors an introduction into Malaysian cultural constructs where the mode of representation is instrumental in determining the progress of integration. According to the MalaysiaTourism Board (2007):

> …to market Malaysia as a destination of excellence and to make the tourist industry as a major contributor towards the socio-economic development of the nation. (sic)

While, according to Putrajaya Corporation (PJC), a good public landscape offers very clear benefits to the local economy in terms of stimulating increased house prices, since house buyers are willing to pay to be near green spaces. Apart from that, Putrajaya Corporation (2006: 4) states:

> The employment of public art will amplify the aesthetic value of the public
> spaces (sic) and encourage families and visitors to use such facilities.

PJC believes that the employment of public art can only mean a good quality public place and positive environment; which will attract more people to the area.

But public art values are an easy target for criticism. While the benefits of public art to the community (streetscape, street furniture, a painting or a sculpture) are not the kind that show up on the balance sheet or lead to tax rebates or go well beyond cash registers and tax revenue, it has value, both in economic and social terms. Where there is art, there is a visible difference of an active cultural community – people engaging with the environment, growth of social interactions between different cultural backgrounds, celebration of the built environment as the use of open spaces increases and reduced vandalism by encouraging a sense of pride and ownership.

The traditional reasoning is that the arts produce cultural benefits that spill over onto the general public and help to educate the public with the value of the arts. It may also culturally enrich the community and bring external prestige to their community, encourage greater cultural tolerance and diversity when the majority of the groups/community are exposed to other cultures and taste through the arts.

Public Art in Putrajaya: Questions of Role

For any meaningful understanding of public art role as an expression of culture and intellectual achievement, it must be viewed in the complex matrix in which it is conceived, commissioned, built and finally received. Recognising the important role of public art in Malaysia, is best demonstrated through the country's policy initiatives with the new urban landscape (the Federal Territory of Putrajaya for example) playing a crucial role in the transformation of Malaysian

cities from an industrial to a service-based urban economy. The new urban landscapes are just not simply an expression of broader economic and socio-cultural changes, but it also plays an active role in shaping the external and internal image of the cities. Public art is also used to promote the cultural identity of the city, through the use of a diverse range of art forms and design applications. In Putrajaya, public art is being utilised with three different roles: public art as place making, public art as social interventionism and finally public art as publicity.

Public Art as Place Making

An important purpose of public art is to make a city more memorable by giving identity and structure to its public realm (Moughtin et al. 1995:103). According to Gustin (1993: 1):

> …place making is using design talents to bring focus, importance and cohesion to public spaces; to develop images and provide experiences which reflect the historical and cultural essence of a community. It transforms spaces, giving them context and relevance, making them places of community interest and pride.

In order to understand the creation of identity it helps to look at how people's attachment to particular places requires understanding of their traditional knowledge, cultural practice, forms of communication, and conventions for remembering the past. According to Tomlinson (1999: 269):

> …before the era of globalisation, there existed local, autonomous, distinct and well-defined, robust and culturally sustaining connections between geographical place and cultural experience. These connections constituted one's – and one's community's 'cultural identity'. This identity was something people simply 'had' as an undisturbed existential possession,

an inheritance, a benefit of traditional long dwelling, of continuity with the past. Identity, then, like language, was not just a description of cultural belonging; it was a sort of collective treasure of local communities.

Tomlinson believes that public art represents the origin or shared characteristics of a person or a community, or with an ideal. Gillian Rose (1995: 87–118) expresses the same point:

One way in which identity is connected to a particular place is by feeling that you belong to that place. It's a place in which you feel comfortable, or at home, because part of how you define yourself is symbolised by certain qualities of that place.

However, there is no inherent identity to places: this is constructed by human behaviour in reaction to places. Daily practices of living and formalised rituals, commemorations, and preservation impart meaning to place and develop identities with places. Monuments, streets, neighbourhoods, buildings, and parks are all material things, but they also evoke specific kinds of meanings and serve as spatial coordinates of identity (Lynch 1972). Humans create "place-images" that become central to daily life and social practice. Material places and their representation are always ideological statements and constitute what Schein refers to as "discourse materialised" (Schein 1997: 660). Zukin (1996: 45) states:

By the 1990s, it is understood that making a place for the art in the city goes along with establishing a place identity for the city as a whole. No matter how restricted the definition of the art that is implied, or how few artists are included, or how little the benefits extend to other social groups outside certain segments of the middle class, the visibility and viability of a city's symbolic economy plays an important role in the creation of place.

Putrajaya has always been looking for an identity which promotes the way of life of its people and situates its socio-political consciousness. This 'imagined identity' – of a socially perfect setting is believed to help encourage social unity and political stability after fifty years of independence. The effort to create a perfect identity is also being reflected with the employment of visual art to help enhance the Malaysian 'cultural identity experience'– often used as a currency for socio-spatial resources, marking of symbolic boundaries and the generation of frontier effects. The search for a Malaysian identity became paramount that so many organisations were involved with its development. Government bodies like the Ministry of Heritage Arts and Culture, Malaysian National Art Gallery, local council and local authorities and even non-governmental associations lend a helping hand to encourage the development of identity. Hence the issue of identity demands to be taken seriously. As Gilroy (1971: 301) in his article, "Diaspora and the Detours of Identity" claims:

> We live in a world where identity matters. It matters both as a concept, theoretically, and as a contested fact of contemporary political life. The word itself has acquired a huge contemporary resonance, inside and outside the academic world

Gilroy supports the notion that identity has been the key issue in the broad processes of political and cultural practice in any nation whilst the use of identity in public art has symbolic tradition in which the adornment of the city focuses in an effort of place making. It is a powerful tool for the declaration of the socio-political and cultural representative of cultural tradition in a country like Malaysia. As stated by Benhabib (2000: 18):

> Culture is the context within which we need to situate the self, for it is only by the virtue of interpretations, orientations and values provided by culture that we can formulate our identities, say 'who we are', and 'where we are coming from' .

As a tool for place making, public art in Putrajaya provides the opportunity to enhance the uniqueness of identity and contemporary image of a country like Malaysia. Public art expresses local identity and distinctiveness; improving and animating public space, enhancing the local economy and developing community spirit and pride (see Figure 5).

Figure 5 Two major landmarks in Putrajaya: making the place identifiable
(left to right: Perdana Boulevard sculpture and Millennium monument)

As a post-colonial country, Malaysia's quest for a distinct identity has been clearly evident. Malaysia is on the threshold of an exploratory enthusiasm to exert a distinct identity, which becomes the driving force behind the search for recognition by an independent nation. This search is prompted by the need to overcome Western avant-garde artistic ideal that had pervaded

Malaysian Contemporary Art by the late 1970's. This also includes replacing the influences posed by the economic and political prowess of the West to a developing nation like Malaysia. Public art is employed to amplify the setting and used as a recipe for revealing the distinctive Malaysian traits to the world. The collection of public art not only improves the quality, design and perception of public space, but also celebrates and fosters heritage and cultural diversity by creating landmarks to act as natural gathering places and focus for local pride.

Public Art as Publicity

In "Public art as Publicity", Kwon (2002:1) discussed art historian Frazer Ward's 'modes of communication' (publicity) over the 'site of communication' (public sphere), encouraging a shift of thinking about the function of art as a form of publicity. To understand how public art is being employed as a tool for publicity enforced by the power of authorities, it is crucial to look at Raymond Williams's (1961) essay "Communications and Community". He proposes four modes of communicative practices which have an evolutionary development – from authoritarian, to paternalistic, to commercial, and to the democratic.

For this paper two of the four categories of the systems of communication or modes of publicity (authoritarian and paternalistic) are higlighted to help understand the ways in which public art practices in Malaysia (which includes Putrajaya) have developed in the past three decades. Kwon et al. (2002: 1) states:

> According to Williams, in an authoritarian system of communication a ruling group controls the society of the ruled, and all institutions of communication are in its control. It represses and excludes those ideas that threaten its authority. No individual or group is allowed to create its own communication system. It is a system in which there is only one way

of seeing the world, with one set of rigid values, and these are imposed
by a few over many.

Williams (1961: 22) characterises an authoritarian mode of communication as a form of ultimate
autonomy visually and physically, and it functions as a testimony to a specific form of opinion
set by the authority. This form of system dictates the context of the artwork, and it performs as
signature to a prescribed style. Public art in this mode is imposed on the public sphere, and the
context of the artwork is controlled by enforcing the ideology set by the artists or the state. The
authoritian concept implies that the artwork asserts its autonomy visually and physically, and it
is controlled by its content, judged by a series of complex legal relationships often intertwined
with a series of administrative, political and funding considerations. In Malaysia, this category
predominantly controls public art creation, often dictating the context and form of the artwork.
Abdullah, R. (2006) states:

> The whole idea about the implementation of public art goes back
> to the people (agencies, organisations or state) who financed the
> commissioning. In a way they dictate the whole situation- from the
> commissioning process, type of artwork and location)...because they
> think they hold the power to decide and choose, it finally boils down to
> them what they want (sic).

The next form of communication is known as the paternalistic mode of communication. It is
an authoritarian form of communication with a conscience – it claims to have the benefit of the
society in mind. According to Kwon (2002: 2):

> Claiming a benevolent attitude of giving guidance, education, and
> improvement to the ruled, the ruling group regards its majority of subjects

> as if they are children who do not know what is best for them. The minority that is in power is driven by a sense of responsibility and duty to do good, to provide "public service," to the majority that is seen in some sense as backward and lacking. Interestingly, the underlying presumption is that the ruling group's superiority will eventually disappear when others "grow up" to be like the adults.

The paternalistic form of communication is more exposed and vulnerable than the authoritarian system but problematic nonetheless in terms of localisation of power and control (Williams 1961). Essentially Williams suggests that paternalistic forms of communication operate upon artists and architects, as well as the sponsoring government agency. Assuming that they know what is best and what is good for the public – such efforts accommodated corporate interests keen on real estate development, too. Artists are recruited, in other words, to provide amenities that would increase the property value of certain buildings and zones of gentrification.

This mode of presentation is commonly practiced where public art is employed based upon the presumption that the authority (architect, artist and government agency) is driven by a sense of responsibility to provide the best possible purpose for the public. Its panels and committees of selected experts decide the fate of public art commissions, with the purpose of bringing the "best" accomplishments in art to a general public (Kwon, 2002: 2). Kwon later states:

> The public would benefit from the presence of great art in the spaces of everyday life, and that the government, with the aid of art experts, can function to provide such educational and elevating experiences to its people.

These two modes of communication have significantly influenced public art and form the background of all public artwork in the public spheres in Malaysia particularly in Putrajaya. Public art as publicity has not only been exploited to represent the artists' intentions and trademarks, but it has also been employed to advertise authoritarian rules and their ideology. The ruling authority in Malaysia has employed the production of public art to publicise and paint a picture of their success in stimulating the country's growth and popularity to secure further support for their agenda (see Fig. 6)

Figure 6 Putrajaya Prime Minister's Office and Residence: Overseeing the whole of Putrajaya Conclusion

Traditionally, public art has meant art in public places. The term, public art, may spawn images of abstract sculptures in the park, a bronze monument in memorial to fallen heroes, or a decorative relief on the façade of a building. But the role of public art entails so much more than just those images. While traditional works like these represent the foundation of public art, the role of contemporary public art has grown to encompass a wide range of innovative concepts, projects

and programs. It covers all aspects of involvement as they draw on the inspiration of the site and its context, colours and history as well as involving the community. Public art in Malaysia has been used as a tool to create awareness in encouraging unity amongst a socially diverse community. As Malaysia has become home to many diverse peoples, the purpose of public art is to define an approach which honours the local heritage by promoting harmony, respect and a sharing of knowledge across cultures and communities through the arts.

The analysis of Putrajaya has revealed the influence of public art in enforcing and strengthening the identity of the city. Putrajaya as the new administrative capital of Malaysia has seen the need to be distinctively outstanding in both its characteristics and development. This is because Malaysia is in the position to set an example for other Islamic countries and it sees itself as championing a successful and modern Islamic Malay state. Instead of adopting Malay vernacular architecture in its design, Putrajaya uses an Islamic architecture style mimicking that in the Middle East which enforces Malaysian resolve to move away from their colonial past and asserting themselves as a powerful Islamic bloc outside the Middle Eastern belt.

In summary, the purpose of including public art within the development areas in Putrajaya is to contribute towards positive social growth, developing a cultural identity and ensuring the economic value of each precinct. It is also being employed to engage the public in a way that contributes to their understanding of the spaces and places they inhabit; to inject places with definable qualities; to create artworks in public spaces that are site-specific and integrated into built and natural forms and places; to reflect the character of each precinct and open space by recording past and present histories, culture and ideas; and to expand public awareness of contemporary art practices outside of galleries.

References

Abdullah, J. 2006. Public Sculpture in Malaysia: A Case Study of Putrajaya, Interview with participant, Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning UiTM Shah Alam, 7 August.

Abdullah, R. 2006. Public Sculpture in Malaysia: A Case Study of Putrajaya, Interview with participant, Faculty of Art & Design UiTM Shah Alam, 23 August.

Andy, W. 2006. *Public Sculpture in Malaysia: A Case Study of Putrajaya,* Interview with participant. TR Hamzah and Yeang Architect Office, Ulu Klang Selangor, 11 September.

Bach, Penny Balkin. 1992. *Public Art in Philadelphia,* Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Benhabib, S. 2000. *Democracy and Identity in Swiss Federal Office of Culture, Humanity, Urban Planning, Dignity,* Berne Swiss federal Office of Culture Publication.

Boys, Jos. 2005. "Benefits of Public Art Symposium", Keynote Transcript, March 2000, RIBA London.

Culture, Arts and Heritage of Malaysia. 2004. A country report, Ministry of Unity, Culture, Art and Heritage, Malaysia.

Chong, Kevin. 2006. *'Mosque Week– Masjid Putra,* http://kervinphotos.blogspot.com (accessed 21 March 2008).

Dewan Bandaraya Kuala Lumpur (DBKL). 2006. *Public Sculpture in Malaysia: A Case Study of Putrajaya,* Interview with participant.

Dovey, K. 1999, 2001. "On Politics & Public Space". In: Barrett, J. & Butler-Bowden, C. (eds) *Debating the City*, Sydney: Historic Houses Trust of NSW.

Gilroy, Paul. 1997. "Diaspora and the Detours of Identity", In Kathryn Woodward (ed.), *Identity and Difference*, London: Sage/Open University.

Gustin, Mickey. 1993. *Site, Memory Reflection*: *Letter from Mickey Gustin to Gin Weathers,* Los Angeles: The Koll Company.

Harvest, Felicity. 2004. "Art Council England Agenda"*,* Art Council Southeast-England.

Isace, John Jebasingam. 2005. *Creating the Essence of Cities: The Planning and Development of Malaysia's New Federal Administrative Capital, Putrajaya*, Discussion Paper, http://info.worldbank.org/etools/docs/library/235915/S5_p22paper.pdf (accessed 26 June 2007).

Jameson, Fredric. 2005. *Archaeologies of The Future (Poetics of Social Forms).* London: Verso.

Kasturi, Hijjas. 2006. *Public Sculpture in Malaysia: A Case Study of Putrajaya,* Interview with participant, Kuala Lumpur, 24 August 2006.

Kementerian Wilayah Persekutuan. 2007. *Putrajaya*: *Intelligent Garden City.* Kuala Lumpur: Multimedia Technologies Report.

King, Ross. 2005. "Re-writing the City: Putrajaya as Representation", *Journal of Urban Design* 12(1): 117–138, February.

Kwon, Miwon. 2002. *Site Specific and Locational Identity*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Lilian, T.Y.C.1, Ho, C.S. and Ismail, S. 2002. *Some Planning Consideration Garden City Concept Towards Achieving Sustainable Development,* Proceedings of the Regional Symposium on Environment and Natural Resources 1(2).

Lynch, Kevin. 1972. *In the Image of the City.* Cambridge: MIT Press.

Madden, Christopher. 1998. *Economic Benefits of Public Art: Discussion Paper*, New Zealand Art Council.

Malaysia Tourism Board. 2007. *Promotion of Tourism Malaysia in Australia*, Tourism Malaysia Travel Board Magazine 1.

Miles, Malcolm. 1997. *Art Space and the City: Public art and Urban Futures,* London: Routledge

Mohd Ali, Noor Azizi. 2006. "Putrajaya and The French Connection", Faculty of Architecture and Planning, Paper 6. Kuala Lumpur: Universiti Teknologi Malaysia , 97–106.

Moughtin, Cliff Taner Oc and Steven Tiesdell. 1995. *Urban Design: Ornament and Decoration.* Oxford: Butterworth Architecture.

Pearson, N. 1982. "Cultural and Identity' in Urban Cultural Strategies and Urban Regeneration: A Case Study and Critique". In Basset, K 1993 (ed.) *Environment and Planning Paper*, 25(2).

Proshansky, H.M., Fabian, A.K. and Kaminoff, R. 1983. "Place-Identity: Physical World Socialization of the Self", *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 3:57–83.

Putrajaya Corporation. 2006. *Public Sculpture in Malaysia: A Case Study of Putrajaya.* Based on interview with participant.

Putrajaya Holdings. 2005. *Putrajaya's Boulevard and Waterfront Core Administration Center*. Kuala Lumpur: Putrajaya Holdings.

Rose, Gillian. 1995. 'Strangely Familiar: Narratives of Architecture and the City' (ed.) In Jane Rendell. 1995. *Art and Architecture: A Place Between*, London: I.B.Tauris.

Schein, Richard H. 1997. "A Conceptual Framework for Interpreting an American Scene," *in Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 87(4).

Shin, Dongshuk. 1999. Public Art in the City of Melbourne: Its Typology and Planning, MA Thesis, Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning, the University of Melbourne.

Sucher, David, 1995. "Reclaiming the City: Mix Use Development". In Andy Couplan (ed), London: Taylor and Francis.

Vale, L.J. 1992. *Architecture, Power, and National Identity*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Ward, Frazer. 1973. "The Haunted Museum: Institutional Critique and Publicity," (republished in Summer 1995): 71–89.

Weber, John Pitman. 2003. *Politics and Practice of Community Public Art: Whose Murals Get Saved?* California: The Getty Conservation Institute.

Williams,Raymond. 1961. "Communications and Community". In Robin Gable. 1989. (ed.) *Resources of Hope.* London: Verso, 19–31.

Zukin, Sharon. 1996. "Space and Symbols in an Age of Decline". In Anthony King. 1996. (ed). *Re-presenting the City*, London: MacMillan, 43–59.