

**PERSONAL EXPRESSIONS TOWARD
HOMELESS PEOPLE THROUGH MATERIAL
AND SURFACE EXPLORATION IN MIXED
MEDIA ARTWORK**

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**PERSONAL EXPRESSIONS TOWARD
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AND SURFACE EXPLORATION IN MIXED
MEDIA ARTWORK**

by

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**EKSPRESI PERIBADI TERHADAP GELANDANGAN MELALUI
EKSPLORASI MATERIAL DAN PERMUKAAN DALAM KARYA
MEDIA CAMPURAN**

ABSTRAK

Penyelidikan ini meneroka ekspresi peribadi individu gelandangan melalui penggunaan bahan dan permukaan oleh artis, dengan tumpuan untuk menyampaikan pengalaman gelandangan di Georgetown, Pulau Pinang. Objektif utama adalah untuk menentukan cara bahan yang berbeza boleh membangkitkan emosi dan naratif yang berkaitan dengan keadaan gelandangan dengan berkesan, membolehkan ekspresi peribadi melalui amalan artistik. Penyelidikan berasaskan seni digunakan, menggabungkan pemerhatian bukan penyertaan dan ulasan karya seni sedia ada. Model Panofsky, yang menekankan nilai artistik intrinsik, digunakan untuk menganalisis makna di sebalik bahan. Penyelidikan termasuk penyiasatan studio, di mana pelbagai medium dan permukaan diuji untuk menyatakan emosi dan pengalaman hidup gelandangan. Penerokaan tekstur dan gubahan membantu dalam mencari bahan yang sesuai untuk mencerminkan naratif peribadi. Kajian itu mendedahkan bahawa bahan tertentu, seperti tekstur kasar dan warna yang diredam, lebih berkesan menyampaikan kedalaman emosi gelandangan, termasuk perasaan terasing, putus asa dan daya tahan. Penggunaan bahan-bahan ini dalam karya seni membantu dalam menggambarkan secara visual pengalaman hidup gelandangan di Georgetown, Pulau Pinang, dengan cara yang bergema dengan penonton. Penemuan ini menyerlahkan peranan penting pemilihan bahan dalam menyampaikan gambaran sahih tentang gelandangan. Gabungan eksperimen bahan dan model Panofsky membawa kepada pandangan mendalam tentang ekspresi peribadi melalui seni. Penemuan menunjukkan bahawa,

dalam amalan, artis boleh menggunakan penerokaan bahan untuk mendalami ekspresi peribadi dan berhubung dengan isu sosial yang lebih luas seperti gelandangan. Untuk teori, penyelidikan ini menyumbang kepada pemahaman tentang bagaimana materialiti dalam seni bukan sahaja berfungsi sebagai fungsi estetik tetapi juga komunikatif, menawarkan pandangan baharu ke dalam aplikasi model Panofsky dalam ulasan sosial kontemporari melalui seni.

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ABSTRACT

This research explores the personal expression of homeless individuals through the artist's use of materials and surfaces, with a focus on conveying the experience of homelessness in Georgetown, Penang. The primary objective is to determine how different materials can effectively evoke emotions and narratives associated with the homeless condition, enabling personal expression through artistic practice. Art-based research is employed, combining non-participatory observation and reviews of existing artworks. The Panofsky model, which emphasizes intrinsic artistic value, is used to analyze the meaning behind the materials. The research includes studio investigations, where various mediums and surfaces are experimented with to express the emotions and lived experiences of homeless people. The exploration of texture and composition aids in finding the right materials to reflect personal narratives. The study reveals that certain materials, such as rough textures and muted colors, more effectively convey the emotional depth of homelessness, including feelings of isolation, despair, and resilience. The use of these materials in artworks helped in visually representing the homeless population's lived experiences in Georgetown, Penang, in a way that resonates with the audience. The findings highlight the critical role of material selection in delivering an authentic portrayal of homelessness. The combination of material experimentation and the Panofsky model led to profound insights into personal expression through art. The findings suggest that, in practice, artists can utilize material exploration to deepen personal expression and connect with broader social issues like homelessness. For theory, this research contributes to the understanding of how

materiality in art serves not just an aesthetic function but also a communicative one, offering new insights into the Panofsky model's application in contemporary social commentary through art.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

Art has always been a means of expression and a reflection of the society we live in. Artistic expression is displayed through effective use of color, texture, space, material in combination with good composition and principles of art. An “artist” can be defined as an independent and drawing-based personality who comments on personal and social issues through art (Hocking, 2021). This artist is using materials of painting, doing collages, or using a piece, an object to sculpt emotions and stories of homelessness. The roles of an artist do not tend to produce beautiful art pieces but also to send a number of messages by the application of different media.

Mixed media is therefore art that is created using several forms of media and which brings together different art practices (Okonkwo, 2023). It enables artists to expand a particular facet of their creativity by adding secondary characteristics of another artwork type to paintings, drawings or sculptures while adopting fabric, metal, wood, or digital materials. This term started being used as early as the twentieth century, and more famously, the cubist Picasso and Braque used the method of collage. Since then it has become an important branch of exploration in the practice of contemporary art. This is one of the greatest strengths of mixed media where surfaces and textures can be worked in ways that provoke a rewarding correlation between material and message more often than not inspiring new perspectives in the viewer (Onibere, 2024). Today mixed media is a wonderful area that seems to be subversive of the conventional

painting, sculpture and other forms of art and it provides the artist with another different language of communicating the Personal and the Social.

Art provides a voice to marginalized communities and sheds light on important social issues.(Polytechnic Institute of Lisbon,2019). The context of homeless art also extends beyond the artwork itself and often serves as a platform for advocacy and social justice. (Sk Chung, 2020) It has the potential to influence public opinion and policy, bringing attention to the need for affordable housing, support services, and systemic change. Homeless art encompasses a wide range of techniques, from paintings and drawing to sculptures and installations. Many of these pieces reflect the struggle and isolation experienced by those living on the streets. They depict scenes of despair, loneliness, and hardship, which can invoke a sense of empathy and compassion in audiences.

Homelessness drives artist to use her creativity to raise awareness, evoke awareness, evoke empathy, and challenge societal perceptions. Artist came face to face with the harsh reality of homelessness when encountered individuals huddled under tattered blankets, seeking refuge in the shadows of towering buildings. Their haunting gazes and poignant expressions etched a lasting impression on artist's heart,igniting a desire to do something meaningful. Artist felt an innate responsibility to channel these experiences and emotions into her artwork. Artist utilize various mediums and forms of visual expression, to convey the emotions.

Homelessness generally involves the lack of a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence. (Soar, 2018) In addition to this, homelessness also entails sleeping on the ground, in the street, or in villages made of insulated cartons. Becoming homeless is a

psychologically traumatic event that commonly is accompanied by symptoms of anxiety and depression, sleeplessness, and loss of appetite. Sometimes, homeless people try to "medicate" these feelings away with alcohol or drugs.(Institute of Medicine,1988)

Drani et al., (2021), separates homeless people into three categories – no roof, no house and shelter house. No roof individuals are individuals that do not have a place and roof to shelter at night and therefore sleep in the streets, recreation areas and generally roofless areas. Individuals that linger in roofless areas are therefore seen as homeless persons. No house individuals on the other hand are individuals that do not have a permanent home. They stay in abandoned buildings, cars and sidewalks. Lastly we have shelter houses for homeless people who live in shelters including rented areas allocated for homeless persons. Transit homes and temporary boarding houses. A walk around some segments of the city therefore reveals persons sleeping in on the corners or around hallways.

The streets aesthetics in these areas therefore present the homeless as part and parcel of the street (Banerjee, 2023). This makes homelessness a significant sociolect economic concern making it a prime element for expression by artists. Street aesthetics refer to the visual and sensory elements that define the character of urban spaces, particularly those areas where homelessness is visible. The presence of homeless individuals in public spaces such as sidewalks and hallways contributes to an evolving urban landscape, where their makeshift shelters and belongings become part of the street's aesthetic fabric (Popovski & Young, 2023). This visual portrayal reflects the socio-economic struggles of a city, highlighting the disparities between wealth and poverty. The positioning of homeless individuals and their interaction with urban

architecture create a raw narrative that contrasts order with chaos. From an artistic perspective, these elements serve as potent symbols of social inequality, where artists use the street's visual tension to explore themes of marginalization and resilience. The urban environment, marked by both architectural structures and the presence of the homeless, offers a powerful canvas for material expression (Guzman & Marina, 2021). This aesthetic tension, as discussed by both makes homelessness not just a socio-economic issue but a visually inescapable part of the city's identity, inspiring artists to engage with the complexities of urban marginalization through their work.

Homelessness is a worldwide subject that is constantly tackled and debated throughout all aspects, whether at the micro (interactions between individuals), meso (conversations among individuals and groups), or macro (connections among huge categories of individuals) (interaction in societies at large). Poverty has an indirect impact on an individual's mental well-being. Homeless persons may be observed throughout Malaysia's many states. These are in Kuala Lumpur, Penang, and Johor Union Territory. The prevalence of the impoverished in urban regions may be visible in locations wherever they frequently assemble in an open realm that is normally crowded. This condition, in which they are seen in public, has been documented by other researchers all around the world. "Hot Spot" areas of homelessness in Penang are around Komtar, Penang Road and Kapitan Keling Road. (Penang Monthly, 2013)

Table 1 below shows that there were 1469 homeless individuals registered in Malaysia in 2014, 988 of whom were men and 481 of whom were women. There were 1527 homeless persons in 2015, 1003 of them were men and 524 of whom were women. There were 2278 homeless persons in 2016, with 1541 men and 737 women making up the population. In Malaysia, there were 5274 homeless persons in total over the years

2014, 2015, and 2016. Of these, 1742 women and 3532 men were among them. Malaysia's three cities with the largest percentage of homeless people are Kuala Lumpur, Selangor, and Penang.

Table 1: *Homeless individuals registered in Malaysia*

Year	Total of Homeless Population	Gender	
		Male	Female
2014	1469	988	481
2015	1527	1003	524
2016	2278	1541	737
Total	5274	3532	1742

Source: Dawood and Ramli* (2019)

Penang, a vibrant state in Malaysia known for its rich cultural heritage and booming tourism industry, has become a focal point for homelessness, particularly in urban areas. Several factors contribute to the rising homelessness in Penang, making it an essential case study for understanding this social issue. According to a case study by Dawood and Ramli* (2019) in penang, 952 persons were reported to be homeless in Penang from 2014 to 2016, according to Table 02. There were 176 homeless persons listed in 2014; 143 of them were men and 33 were women. There were 280 homeless persons in 2015—196 of them were men and 84 were women. There were 496 homeless persons in 2016, 362 of them were men and 134 of whom were women. There were 952 homeless persons living in Penang in total over the years 2014, 2015, and 2016, including 701 men and 251 women. The fact that there are more homeless persons in Penang each year is evidence of this.

Table 2: Homelessness Phenomenon In George Town, Penang

Year	Total of Homeless Population	Gender	
		Male	Female
2014	176	143	33
2015	280	196	84
2016	496	362	134
Total	952	701	251

This increase can be attributed to a combination of socioeconomic challenges, including rising living costs, insufficient affordable housing, and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, which exacerbated existing vulnerabilities among low-income populations. The economic growth in Penang has not been equally distributed; while the state enjoys a thriving tourism sector that contributes significantly to Malaysia's GDP, this economic disparity leaves many residents struggling to meet basic needs. Reports indicate that most of households in Penang earn below the national median income, further highlighting the financial strains faced by the local population (Kamal et al., 2020). Additionally, Penang's strategic location as a tourist hotspot creates an environment where visible homelessness contrasts sharply with the affluence associated with the tourism industry. High tourist footfall in areas such as Georgetown and around Komtar increases public visibility of homelessness, leading to greater awareness and, potentially, public action regarding this issue. Moreover, the state's urban design and infrastructure often marginalize vulnerable populations. Many individuals experiencing homelessness are found in high-traffic areas, such as Penang Road and Kapitan Keling Road, where they are readily seen by the public. This visibility can serve both as a catalyst for social change and as a reminder of the challenges faced by marginalized communities. It is essential to address homelessness

in Penang not only for ethical reasons but also for economic ones. The state government estimates that the economic cost of homelessness—considering healthcare, social services, and law enforcement—amounts to over RM 100 million annually (State Government of Penang, 2020). By investing in social services, affordable housing, and employment opportunities, Penang could alleviate homelessness and improve its overall social fabric. Thus, the case of homelessness in Penang serves as a microcosm for broader societal issues, requiring immediate attention from policymakers and community stakeholders alike.

Through artistic inquiry such as Shaun McNiff(1998), the artist finds material and surface for the artwork that expresses the idea and emotion of the homeless in Georgetown, Penang. Artistic inquiry in fine art involves asking questions, researching, and exploring different perspectives in order to develop a deeper understanding of a particular subject. This can involve experimenting with different materials, techniques, and styles in order to find the most effective way to convey a particular message. Art as a mode of inquiry (Bochner & Ellis, 2003;McNiff, 1998) McNiff, , 2011 connects us with our sensory, embodied experiences which has the potential to open us to new meanings and ways of knowing. In the process of drawing, attention becomes both focused and receptive and the flow of time altered. (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996).

Fine art is one of the oldest forms of human expression and is considered one of the most valuable aspects of culture.It can take various forms, including painting, sculpture, music, dance, and theater. The beginning of contemporary art, which was initiated in the 1930s by a group of watercolor artists in Penang, may be found in the history of art in Penang. The East India Company's Sir Francis Light founded Penang

in 1786, which is when the city's art scene first began. Prince of Wales Island was the name given to Penang during the time. Landscapes and seascapes were popular subjects for paintings by British painters in Penang. As a result, the European Trading Company's clients were catered to in the region's artistic legacy, which dates back to 1920 and the founding of the Penang Impressionists. The most popular medium at this time was watercolors where artists groups and local talents produced significant works of art. Their works are represented in Abdullah Ariff's Coconut Plantation-Dawn or Yong Mun Seng's 1960 Small hut by the sea. Landscapes and human activity therefore present as foundations of Penang art and further influence on contemporary expression.

With art being an important facet of expressing contemporary issues artist seek to investigate hereby how these watercolors have been applied in Penang's art scene and the implication in describing the homeless state in Penang. Art is powerful because it can potentially influence our culture, politics, and even the economy.(Ansy A,2023)

From an artist's observation, Penang, with its vibrant culture and rich history, is a destination for travelers and locals alike. However, amid the bustling streets and tourist attractions, a significant issue persists - homelessness. Nestled in quiet corners, parks, and back alleys, artist observed makeshift shelters fashioned from cardboard and tattered blankets. Men, women, and even families, silently braved the uncertainties of life on the streets. Removed from the warmth of family, and the support of a community, they carry the weight of isolation. Through artist's observations, artist have witnessed the resilience, loneliness, empathy, and hope that coexist within their lives. It is essential for society to recognize and address these emotions, striving to create a more compassionate and inclusive environment.

Rawdon and Moxley (2016) elaborate on art as a powerful language, and artists can become part of activism to advocate social change: Interpreters of societal conditions may be one of the most important roles that artists as activists play in society. The Art of Social Critique makes a case for the complexity of artistic ways of “seeing” social life — observing, analyzing and portraying society — by examining the interdisciplinary nature of imagination. Artistic techniques, such as metaphor, caricature, and irony, are examined as unique methods of social inquiry, while the novelist and poet become ethnographers of social life.

In this research, a series of artworks created to convey the personal expression of the homeless through the exploration of materials and surfaces. In this study, materials and materials that can convey the artist's personal expression are used in artworks that express the ideas and emotions of homeless people in Georgetown, Penang. Artistic inquiry used to analyze and find the relationship of meaning behind the expression created in the artworks. Artistic inquiry in the fine arts involves questioning, researching, and exploring different perspectives to develop a deeper understanding of a particular subject. This can involve experimenting with different materials, techniques and styles to find the most effective way to convey a particular message. In this study, the article analyzes the use of materials, surfaces and techniques in the production of works of art in relation to the Panofsky Model which has intrinsic value through artistic art.

1.1.1 The emotions of the Homeless

Homelessness by large presents primarily from poverty and unemployment. Homeless persons therefore suffer from high stress levels due to their lack of control

over their housing situation as well as their poor living conditions (Shinn & Khadduri, 2020). In addition to this homeless people maintain distressing experiences that they may have suffered resulting in their homelessness in the first place which may include domestic abuse, breakdowns of relationships, drug and alcohol abuse as well as mental health issues. To clarify the relationship between observers and homeless people, it is crucial to acknowledge that such interactions are often based on assumptions rather than direct understanding. Observers, in most cases, rely on external perceptions shaped by societal stigmas and limited engagement with homeless individuals. Homeless people, on the other hand, may feel marginalized or misunderstood due to their experiences with poverty, unemployment, and trauma (Pudaruth, 2022). Taylor et al. (2019) emphasize that homeless people may feel isolated due to their appearance and living conditions, creating a psychological divide between them and observers, further reinforcing the emotional and social disconnect.

Taylor et al., (2019) notes interrupted sleep as a repeated occurrence for homeless persons due to noise, harassment as well as reoccurring paranoia that these disturbances are likely to occur. Lack of sleep in effect adds up to constant worry, paranoia and general anxiety (Harding, 2018). Becoming homeless is a psychologically traumatic event that commonly is accompanied by symptoms of anxiety and depression, sleeplessness, and loss of appetite. (Institute of Medicine,1988) To manage anxiety and reduce worry, homeless persons often turn to alcohol and drugs. This is worsened by the already existing stress of poverty and unemployment. The resultant fear keeps the individual isolated from their fellow homeless peers, their family and friends. They are afraid first and foremost of people taking advantage of their conditions or harassing

them. Since they live in the streets and lack access to sanitation they are in most instances dirty, present bad odors and look unkempt. People might therefore not therefore want to associate with them which results in their isolation.

Homelessness is also extremely depressing with rates of depression and suicide among the homeless being higher than in the general population based on the Canadian Health Initiative and American Psychological Association (Imagine health.ie, 2018). Severe stress and isolation adds up to exacerbated mental health conditions including the aforementioned anxiety and depression. A constant emotion of sadness and depression is therefore likely adding up to manipulative coping mechanisms including drinking, drugs and aggressive behaviors. The presented mechanisms further add to their isolation since developing a relationship with them becomes harder.

Homeless persons become pariahs in most societies including Georgetown, Penang. They are assumed to be alcoholics, drug addicts and unsanitary. Severe health conditions can cause psychological disorders such as depression, panic, and disruption of behavior change (Les et al., 2004). Capitalistic endeavors are therefore in this case treated as primary to their dignity and efforts are more on developing the streets they sleep on than helping them overcome the causal issues that resulted in their homelessness.

1.1.2 Understanding Homelessness through Materiality

Homelessness is a multifaceted social issue which is not well known, primarily caused by social, economic issues and discrimination. The elements of homelessness and materiality can function as a way by which artists address this matter, paying particular attention to the individuals' stories (Lee et al., 2021). As studies have pointed

out, formerly homeless persons face complex, multidimensional needs that include poverty in addition to mental illness and social isolation and Community rejection. Exploration of materiality as a conceptual idea within an art practice has provided a means to engage with such large complex concerns. Artists can use such things as scraps or other items that are left, as a symbol of what such individuals are usually thrown away or which are not cared for because they are homeless – to pass on a message in their artworks.

For example, artists can use objects that homeless people could possibly interact with or come across in their day to day lives and transform these objects into meaningful pieces that force viewers into acknowledging the extent of homelessness (Ozsváth, 2022). These materials can be seen as carriers of messages of survival and these same materials can and do talk about suffering and holding on to hope from a perspective of the so-called waste. Through the choice of materials, one can express oneself emotionally, and, therefore, trigger concern for homeless people in the society. The choice of the materials allows one to express not only the physical state of homeless people, but their emotional state; they feel the anxiety, fear and isolation inherent in such life.

In addition, the act of creating with such materials can raise the issue of eradicating homelessness while providing healing for the artists themselves, in regards to their conception of homelessness in the world (Margarida, 2021). This could aid in the concept of developing a bond with the object of their work thus making it beyond a simple act of observation. The stories behind these Fine Arts can therefore be subversive of the audience's perspective and provoke a reflection on the systems that maintain homelessness (Della Foresta, 2023).

1.2.3 The Emotional Landscape of Homelessness

Homelessness causes a huge strain on people's psychological state and basic well-being and happiness. Homelessness is said to have been associated with higher levels of stress, anxiety and depression due to the defined uncertainties associated with homelessness (Moschion & van Ours, 2022). All these emotions present the best chance of illustrating the internal conflict of the homeless, which cannot be easily explained physically through art. Emotional themes over which an artistic practice may work include such that relate to distress, chaos, instability, and other similar issues that could be complemented in material that responds to the reality of homelessness in all its instability. For instance, artists may paint using shredded material or use broken pieces in a message they want to convey to the audience, for instance, the scrambling nature of homeless people's lives. This choice also has another aesthetic function and touches the audience on an emotional level, forcing them to reflect on the content they receive. This is why folding personal objects, like the belongings that the individuals experiencing homelessness had, into the exhibit makes it easier for other people to connect and empathize (Makris, 2024).

Additionally, the creative process, which works as a healing process both for the artist and the audience, can become a tool for communication. When artists show work that deals with the emotional aspect of homelessness they provoke a conscious thought process because there is always an option to change the perspective (Murphy & Alexander, 2020). This investigation of emotions by way of materials, does not only expand the capacities for practice, but also augments the possibilities of engagement and change. When artists portray anxiety, depression or isolation, they can debunk commonly set stigma, which then exposes the real experience of those who are homeless, and depicts them as vulnerable people who deserve support.

1.1.4 Societal Perceptions and the Role of Art

Homelessness, as a concept, is usually surrounded by prejudice and negative bias meaning those who experience it become even more marginalized (Green, 2024). The main percept of homeless individuals is often presented as being needy, menacing or irresponsible; a perception that undermines the basic services and other support services they need to obtain, as well as the challenge they encounter in reintegrating into the community. With the intention to challenge those perceiving the homeless persons as worthless, as the outcasts of society, art can become a tool that offers specific narratives different from those that present the homeless as immoral (Della Foresta, 2023). In this way, the material exploration contributes to the extension of the control of the aesthetic production and, therefore, to the discussion of the simplistic management of homelessness, proposing a different representation of the subject. It means that art can turn what might be seen as repulsive, repelling, and uninteresting into that which generates deeper empathy and neighborly concern. For instance, use of articles such as clothes, photos, or written statements about homeless people make the audience develop an emotional feeling and easily accept the true life experiences of the homeless people. It also goes hand in hand with raising awareness not only of the audience but also helps to bring people together to fight that problem. Through the very use of different materialities in art, advocacy could therefore be used to foster policy understandings among the diverse groups in societies.

Moreover, by engaging homeless people in making art, there are possibilities to reduce the effect of stigma, as well as help those, who experience it. Artist invites participants into the artistic process and in so doing, helps to offer voice and testimonial to their narratives. Apart from fostering the appropriate badge of ownership in homeless people, this approach is defining that there was a social purpose and achievement, as

well as adding more to the narrative of the artwork. Therefore, art becomes an essential cross rather than a bridge that can be used to link two different classes or groups of people, bringing humane hearts together. Amplifying the voices of those who are often marginalized, art can play a critical role in reshaping societal perceptions, promoting awareness, and inspiring action that prioritizes the needs of vulnerable populations.

1.1.5 Towards Solutions through Artistic Practice

The solution to homelessness is complicated and involves policies, public involvement, artistic endeavors in raising awareness for the cause. Creative implementation can be the creative middle between idea and application, giving findings that are satisfactory to the members of the community as well as the key players in preventing homelessness. The literature emphasizes the need for the use of art processes through which homeless people are assisted to gain a voice in the narration and representation of their experience to society (Serpa, 2021). This is empowering and adds credibility to their lives and makes the conceptualization of Perspectives from homeless People an essential part of the solution to homelessness.

However, coming across materials that expose them to the social-economic states of affairs of homeless persons can act as a provocation to action for the target group. Thus, artists should inform the public about policies that could hold housing and mental health services for each homeless person who lost their lives to the streets and asked Congress to enact legislation that addresses the societal inequalities that cause homelessness. Introduction of materials may cause a sense of the urgency, it can show that different social groups receive different opportunities and resources. Otherwise, artists are thus capable of eliciting people's support towards interventions for the homeless via inclusion of artwork within discourses on this issue. In addition, aesthetics connected with social justice goals can help change the general culture regarding the

phenomenon of homelessness. As the material reveals, artists can promote changes from social perspectives by developing empathy and recognition among them. This can entail tangibly by participating in charity operations such as volunteers with organizations or supporting policy changes for eradication of issues such as homelessness. Ultimately, the integration of artistic practice into the conversation surrounding homelessness not only enriches the dialogue but also provides pathways for tangible solutions that empower individuals and communities alike (Sullivan, 2017; Cohen & O'Connor, 2015).

1.2 Research objectives

This study is based on the following research objectives:

1. To understand the personal expressions about homelessness through studio investigation
2. To examine and explore material that can deliver personal expression about homeless people in Georgetown, Penang.
3. To analyze and find the relationship of meaning behind the expression created in the artworks using the Panofsky model.

1.3 Research Questions

This study is based on the following research questions:

1. How to understand the personal expressions about homelessness through studio investigation?

2. What is the material that can deliver personal expression about homeless people in Georgetown, Penang?
3. What is the relationship of meaning behind the expression created in the artworks using the Panofsky model?

1.4 Limitation of Study

The limitations of this study primarily stem from its specific subject focus, the scope of research, and the material choices explored. First, while the research aims to address the personal expressions of homeless people in Georgetown, Penang, the scope of this study is geographically limited. Georgetown is chosen due to its visible homelessness issue, yet the findings may not necessarily be generalizable to other regions or contexts where homelessness is experienced differently. Furthermore, the exploration of the homeless community is confined to observational interpretations, which limits the potential for in-depth qualitative insights from the individuals themselves. Due to ethical concerns and practical challenges, direct engagement or interviews with the homeless were not conducted, limiting the study's scope to an observer's perspective. In addition the study concerns only the use of mixed media art as the main type of artwork, which not only opens wide opportunities for creativity but at the same time makes a wide circle of used materials and media more limited. The construction materials that have been used for this study like scraps and recycled materials symbolize the limitations and ration decisions connected with those who are homeless. Nevertheless, such decision may not be comprehensive to include all the possible materials which may be used in such creative evocations. Information that

could also be helpful to refine the study like contemporary media or less common forms of art were eliminated as this work was aimed at examining the multifaceted techniques using mixed media. This, in turn, limits the possibilities of its development and the range of artwork itself: Finally, the theoretical approach applied—namely, Panofsky’s model of visual analysis—may be useful for decoding semiotic messages embedded in artworks but may offer rather limited insights into the temporal and embodied experiences of homelessness. Therefore, although the framework provides a set of tools for breaking meaning from a visual perspective, it can sometimes miss sociocultural layers. Therefore, the positioned subject focus, geographical coverage, choice of materials, and theoretical framework comprise considerable restrictions for this research.

1.5 Research Significance

In this study, artistic finding on linkages between discarded mosaic tiles to the concepts of home with watercolor portrait painting of homeless elderly in Georgetown, Penang. This research discovered the possibilities of watercolor painting on mosaic tiles as an expression for artists towards specific issues. This can inspire artists to push boundaries and discover innovative approaches to their artistic practice. Exploring the possibilities of watercolor on tiles can uncover various applications beyond traditional artistic purposes. Discarded mosaic tiles that were used are unconventional mediums. It also uses reclaim material that expresses environmentalism and humanitarianism in art.

This research increases awareness of homelessness issues holds significant potential in fostering empathy, provoking dialogue, challenging stereotypes, empowering marginalized individuals, and advocating for social change. By harnessing

the emotional power of art, this research can contribute to collective efforts needed to address the complexities of homelessness and potentially promote a more empathetic and compassionate society.

The use of conventional materials in artistic creations serves two purposes - to draw upon tradition and heritage, as well as to push the boundaries of artistic expression. Artists in Penang have often utilized traditional mediums such as canvas, paint, and paper to create artwork. These materials not only provide a sense of continuity with the past but also allow artists to explore new avenues of artistic exploration. Furthermore, conventional materials have allowed artists to capture the essence of Penang city's unique social characteristic . By drawing upon traditional mediums, artists have been able to forge a connection between the past and the present, while at the same time pushing the boundaries of personal artistic expression.

1.6 Summary

This chapter presents an introduction which aims to investigate the personal expression of homeless people through material and surface exploration. The research questions and objectives are established, and they provide the guiding principles for the study. The subsequent chapter focuses on the literature review. The practice review section includes a review of the literature and works. This review serves as a foundation for the research, providing insights and understanding of the subject matter through personal and artistic investigation.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND PRACTICE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter defines and studies context related to the artwork process and content. The literature review for this study is divided into art and emotion, Social criticism in art, material and meaning and practice review. A literature review is an essential component of a research, providing a comprehensive overview of existing scholarship and knowledge on the research.

2.2 Art and Emotion

Art is used by artists as a method through which they show who they are, what they believe, what they are feeling and what they want others to believe. (Mark Leary,2020) Artists employ varied lines, forms, and colors to portray their thoughts.

Each artist creates their own colors, patterns and forms that are important for them. The artist subsequently continues to convey opinions and notions through words, color, stone, or other means.

Art has long been recognized as a vehicle for human emotion, and the relationship between the two has been the subject of much study across many disciplines. While definitions of both art and emotion may be contested, a consensus exists that they are both powerful and complex phenomena. This literature review will examine theories of the relationship between art and emotion, including the ways in which art elicits emotion, the role of individual differences in the experience of art and emotion.

One of the primary ways in which art and emotion are linked is through the emotional content of art. Some theories suggest that art is successful to the extent that it provokes a strong emotional response in the viewer. This notion has been called

"emotional contagion" or "empathy" theory (Gerger Gernot, Matthew Pelowski, Helmut Leder, 2017). According to this view, art elicits emotions through the representation of emotion in subject matter or through an artist's technique or expression. This emotional contagion can come from many differing types of art, whether visual or auditory, and may vary in intensity or type depending on the individual.

However, others have argued that emotional contagion is only one of several ways in which art and emotion interact. Some suggest that the relationship between art and emotion is based not on a shared emotion between the artist and the viewer, but on the ability of the artwork to evoke emotions through a combination of visual elements and symbolic meaning (Arnheim, 1974). According to this view, emotion in art is created by the interaction between the viewer and the object, rather than the object itself.

The role of individual differences is also a key aspect of the relationship between art and emotion. Research has demonstrated that individual factors such as personality traits, cultural background, and past experiences can play a significant role in how people experience and respond to art (Pablo P.L. Tinio, Andreas Gartus,2018). It has been suggested that people's ability to empathize with others may also affect their response to art, due to the similarity between the cognitive processes underlying empathy and artistic experience. Furthermore, some theorists argue that individual differences in emotional intelligence—a construct that encompasses the ability to

recognize, express, and regulate emotions—might be particularly relevant to the appreciation of art.

In summary, the relationship between art and emotion is multifaceted and complex. While emotional contagion is one way that art can affect the viewer, the interaction between the viewer and the artwork is also important in eliciting an emotional response. Individual differences such as personality, culture, and emotional intelligence play a role in how people experience art emotionally. Additionally, art has been shown to have therapeutic potential for treating mental health disorders, both through the act of creating art and through viewing it. Overall, this literature review highlights the importance of further study in this area, as art has the potential to unlock deep and powerful emotional responses that may benefit individuals and communities.

2.2.1 Color and Emotion

According to numerous research papers in the psychology of color, most people admit that color will affect their mood. The psychology of color arguing hereby that color comes with emotional and physical representations that trigger feelings (Contesi, 2018). Colors are split into 3 types: cool colors, warm colors and neutral colors which artists apply for expression to enhance a mood or send a message as positive or negative. Warm colors include red, orange and yellow and generally increase energy and appetites as well as irritation and anxiety. Neutral colors on the other hand include white, gray, brown and black and generally showcase purity and innocence, and compromise or peace (Hussain, 2021). Cool colors on the other hand create calm and harmonious

feelings or sadness and depressive thoughts depending on how they are applied. These include blue, green and purple.

Artists apply the use of color in their work to enhance a message with the greatest examples being the early 1900s. Picasso who painted figures in blue to enhance sadness when he was going through depression. Picasso's "Blue Period," which spanned from 1901 to 1904, is recognized for its predominantly monochromatic works in blue and blue-green tones, occasionally warmed by other colors. In addition to the suicide of his friend Carlos Casagemas, who shot himself in the right temple on February 17, 1901, at the L'Hippodrome Café in Paris, France, Picasso was also impacted by his travels across Spain. Picasso frequently depicts prostitutes, beggars, and intoxicated people in his artwork. (Sybariscollection.com, 2018)



Figure 2.1 Picasso,1903, The Tragedy, Blue Period

Brown and green were employed by Van Gogh in his paintings of agricultural laborers like the Potato Eaters to call attention to their relationship to the ground. The figures are painted in earth tones—“something like the color of a really dusty potato, unpeeled of course,” as the artist once reflected.(Correspondent, 2021)



Figure 2.2 Vincent van Gogh, The Potato Eaters, April–May 1885 Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam / Vincent van Gogh Foundation

Monochrome tone in artwork has been a significant aspect of artistic expression throughout history. In monochromatic painting, a single color is chosen as the base hue that can be changed by adding either white or black paint to it.(Neal Steichen, Christopher Muscato,2021)The absence of bold and contrasting colors allows a person's mind to focus solely on the subject matter and the subtleties within the shades of the chosen color. This focus allows for a more thorough investigation of the composition of the artwork and the feelings it seeks to arouse. This is evident in the works of Renaissance painters like Rembrandt and Leonardo da Vinci, who used monochromatic tones to produce dramatic and passionate paintings that have stayed with viewers for centuries.

Sepia. a brown pigment made from the cuttlefish's ink secretion that is used in watercolor and ink, frequently in monochrome. Before the 19th century, it was hardly ever employed. Sepia-toned photographs employ a reddish-brown tone to generate the