

# Applied Art and Design

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Application and Appreciation  
of Islamic Heritage in  
Contemporary Context

**Mandana Barkeshli**



**IIUM PRESS**

INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA

# **APPLIED ARTS AND DESIGN**

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**Mandana Barkeshli**



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## CHAPTER SIX

### COMPOSITIONAL VARIATIONS OF *AWAN LARAT* IN TRADITIONAL MALAY WOOD CARVING: DIVERSITY AND UNITY IN THE EXPRESSION

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#### ABSTRACT

This paper presents a discussion on the compositional concept of *awan larat* (meandering cloud) within a configuration of complete pattern regulated according to the shape, size and layout of the elemental wood carvings and its different forms of positional layout. Theoretical review on related literatures and documents of old wood carving and examination on works produced by the present generation of woodcarvers provides insightful information on the underlying concept of the meandering pattern. Architectural components of the houses like walls, doors and windows ventilation panels and gable ends were equipped with *awan larat* carvings in different layout of patterns with distinctive features and visual orders including horizontal, vertical and mixed arrangement. Various elements of a plant with different types of central motif especially a flower, a flower vase and flower seed has become the nomenclature of the compositional order. These are great merits of visual information which shows the reader, in a modest way, the variety of *awan larat* patterns.

[Key words: Wood carving, *awan larat*, ventilation panels]

#### INTRODUCTION

One of the chief objects of interest in Malay traditional wood carving is the motif used as part and parcel of its compositional element. This is especially in the carving composition with *awan larat* pattern (meandering cloud pattern) as a result of creative inspiration from nature. Notwithstanding with meandering pattern, the presence of natural plant as focal element that has been transformed into dynamic floral motif make the wood carving one kind of a Malay arts. This is especially apparent in the carvings with complete pattern that consist motifs of growing plants that flow in intertwining and overlapping character. A growing plant is an important source for design pattern employed in Malay woodcarving (Farish and Eddin, 2003). Complete pattern consists of combined elements forming one complete carving that usually gives more emphasis to plant elements because of its gentle character and could be easily arranged in a specific composition (Abdul Halim, 1987). The distribution of carved design sec-