

Applied Art and Design

Application and Appreciation
of Islamic Heritage in
Contemporary Context

Mandana Barkeshli



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APPLIED ARTS AND DESIGN

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CHAPTER NINE

THE ARABESQUE DECORATION WITH REFERENCE TO THE MALAY ARTS, AS APPLIED IN THE TRADITIONAL MOSQUES IN MALACCA

Norzalifa Zainal Abidin

ABSTRACT

In this chapter, discussion is made to highlight some components and reference in to the Arabesque decoration. This Arabesque decoration is applied in the traditional mosques in Malacca. The Arabesque decorations are commonly applied on windows, doorways and minbar of the mosques. By identifying these components further understanding is obtained to evaluate the components which were considered in the Arabesque decoration. The reference is made to the Malay Arts decoration as applied in wood carving panels or minbar designs in mosques.

[Keywords: Arabesque, decoration, Malay Arts, traditional mosque]

INTRODUCTION

There are three common decoration elements which are applied in mosques: Arabesque or Floral, Calligraphy and Geometrical patterns. Arabesque is one of the three main components in the traditional mosques in Malacca. The three typologies of decoration are linked to the same approach and typologies of the Islamic Arts Decoration. The difference is more obvious in the usage of Arabesque or Floral motifs. In the traditional Malacca mosques, the Malay Arts motifs are used and applied as part of decoration in the form of Arabesque.

Categories and Components of the Malay Arts Motif in Arabesque

There are eight (8) categories of motifs which were commonly used in the Malay arts decoration. They are:

- i) Motifs from the petal of flowers (*putik bunga*): This petal is the early stage and innocence of the maiden female.
- ii)
 - a) motif from the blossomed flowers (*Bunga kembang*): This symbolizes maturity of maiden
 - b) The '*bunga buluh*' or bamboo flower symbolizes strength and endurance.
 - c) The '*bunga caperdik*' symbolizes village maiden who is protected by the family. This flower is also used for medicinal purpose.
 - d) '*bunga melor*' symbolizes cleanliness and purity
- iii) motif from the leaves