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## **Fine Arts Photography As A New Approach Sustaining Natural Heritage**

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### **Abstract**

The natural heritage nowadays is no longer limited to great monuments and iconic archaeological sites, but also compasses a much larger array of culturally significant places, such as living rural areas, seascapes, sacred forests and mountains. It reflects and symbolises the relationship to human communities within their own and the value in order to sustain and improve the quality of life. Maintaining the natural heritage is important in addressing risks relating to natural and man-made disasters. For this reason, the opportunities of combining knowledge and skills in photography, can itself be considered a contribution to human wellbeing. Photography is a method of communication, although not necessarily used to communicate a direct message. It has played an important role in forming and maintaining national identity and continues to help form our perceptions and identity. The objective of the study is to explore the impact of fine arts photography in providing content and facilitating towards the awareness of sustaining and preservation natural heritage. The photographs focus on places, landscapes and land uses that exemplify principles and practices of sustainability. This research has its own strong approach and consistency in the collection and analyses of data whereby qualitative methods of data collection were principally involved. Documentation in fine arts photography is the main important role to achieve the objective of this research. This study is important on creating awareness about the natural heritage that we should preserve for the next generation to appreciate. It functions not as an instrument self-powered and alone, but as a simple motivation to plan and manage change towards sustainability. In conclusion, fine arts photography demonstrates the diversity of thinking and promoting thinking about sustainability natural heritage.

*Keywords:* Fine Arts Photography, Sustaining, Natural Heritage, Documentation

### **1. Introduction**

Photography is a universal language. It contains meaning, feeling, and emotion and brings out unwritten message to be conveying through it. Images contain powerful capacity in perception and thinking ability. We are living in technology that runs very fast and our nature has been developed rapidly. Our natural heritage cannot be lasting forever due to nature phenomenon, but to keep the view sustain is we need to document it. According to Hussaini (2013), a photograph can improve social issues related to human life and to protect the nature environment. By using fine art photography as an approach, it is an effort to sustain our natural heritage that can be demolished one day. Therefore, in order to produce a specific message, the artist starts the issue from himself with his camera, about how he sees the situation and how he wants to convey the message to reach other people in his surroundings (Idzwan, 2010). It is believed, via photographs, sometimes it is also captures sentiment issues and perhaps can change people perception or understanding.

The process of documenting natural heritage using fine art photography method require a deep observation to portray the beautiful visual image for the public to appreciate. The natural heritage nowadays is no longer limited to great monuments and iconic archaeological sites, but also compasses a much larger array of culturally significant places, such as living rural areas, seascapes, sacred forests and mountains. It reflects and symbolizes the relationship to human communities within their own and the value in order to sustain and improve the quality of life. Maintaining the natural heritage is important in addressing risks relating to natural and man-made disasters.

The primary question of this study is; how can the relationship between the fine arts photography and natural heritage sustainable development is articulated? Supporting question included; how exactly do fine arts photography contributes to the awareness of natural heritage? The objective of the research is to explore the impact of fine arts photography in providing content and facilitating towards the awareness of sustaining and preservation natural heritage. It is hope that by focusing on the functional and directly communicative aspects of fine arts photography as medium tools, viewers, in addition to experience the aesthetic appeal contain within an artwork, would also experience and gain factual information from a picture to clarify an intellectual concept. Without these sustaining awareness effort, the familiar of our landscape, the traditions and particulars way of life inherited from our ancestors would be hard to imagine.

## 2. Literature

In these modern age digitization has various possibilities in keeping our natural heritage, converting into electronic forms and this could be an organize manner to preserve. Natural heritage has their own symbolic meanings that value for the current and future generations that may affect the forming of the identities. In this research photography is the medium to preserve. In contemporary culture, photography presents an extraordinary rich medium in which social words are presented, made sense of and negotiated by both makers and viewers. Sol Worth (1997) has stated; “Understanding that photos and films are statements rather than copies or reflections forces us to ask how the statements were made. In what context? For what purpose? Under what rules, conversations and restrictions? It enables us to look...at various ways of picturing the world”.

Photography plays an important role in our daily life which its can be labeled as an universal language. According to Mustaffa Halabi (2011), every image delivers its message with different purposes such as to inform, educate, promote, entertain and persuade. Photography used in visual presentations could portray better stories rather than words alone. Through this research, the act of sustaining the natural heritage via fine art photography going to be the concept in relation that strongly connected to environmental, cultural and economic concerns. Photography turns the reality into the form of art and requires viewers to interact and explore the message inside the images.

The concept of heritage that gives a definition was found in the International Charter of Venice (1964) as the first document. In the introduction, the first definition of heritage is given, “Imbued with a message from the past, the historic monuments of generations of people remain to the present day as living witnesses of their age-old traditions. People are becoming more and more conscious of the unity of human values and regard ancient monuments as a common heritage. The common responsibility to safeguard them for the future generations is recognize. It is our duty to hand them on in the full richness of their authenticity is found”. This becomes an innovative platform to implement the purpose of this

study and value the subject as preservation. It enabled communication and exchanges among people, and sharing of knowledge, information and ideas, especially for new generation to experience life in natural environment that are maybe already gone. Through photography technology, natural heritage today can be seen from any places, so people become aware of the natural heritage diversity.

### 3. Methodology

This research has its own strong approach and consistency in the collection and analyses of data whereby qualitative methods of data collection were principally involved. These include semi-structured interviews with local people and tourists, field observation and the most important part is the photographic documentation. This research carried out in three operational stages; i) background of research, ii) gathering primary data and final part iii) documentation and report writing.

#### i) Background of Research

Documenting natural heritage using fine arts photography require a deep observation to portray the beautiful visual image for the public to appreciate. It reflects and symbolizes the relationship to human communities within their own and the value in order to sustain and improve the quality of life. Maintaining the natural heritage is important in addressing risks relating to natural and man-made disasters.

Location: Mossy Forest, Cameron Highlands Pahang Darul Makmur.

Briefly, Mossy Forest is a natural environment that grows only at the highest elevations of Cameron Highlands and other mountain ranges across Malaysia. At such heights, low-level clouds in the sky driven by winds, blanket the forests with constant mist and moisture - creating an ideal biotope for moss, ferns, lichen and orchids. This moist tropical evergreen forest is also a rich repository for a varied set of montane creatures, encompassing insects, snakes, frogs, birds and mammals unique to this chilly atmosphere.

Below is the top view of the Mossy Forest in Cameron Highlands in Google Maps.

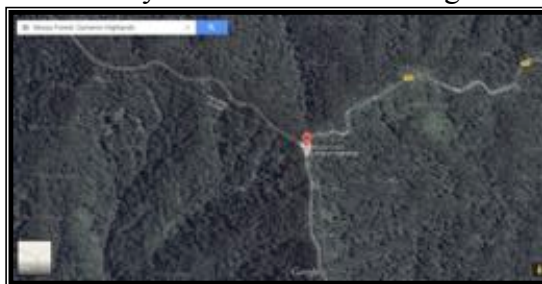


Figure 3.1: Mossy Forest in Cameron Highlands (Extracted From Google Map)

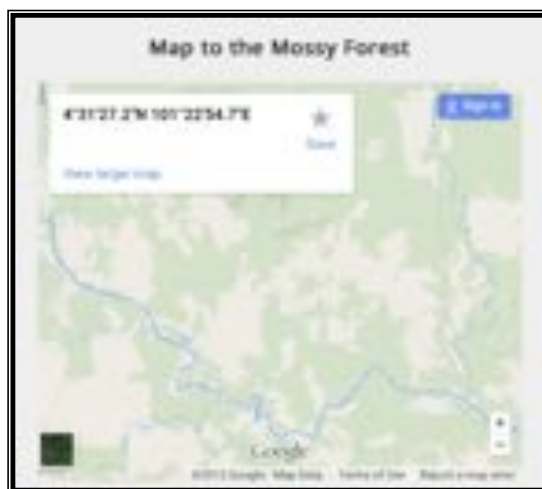


Figure 3.2: Map to the Mossy Forest (Extracted From Google Map)



Figure 3.3: Entrance of the Mossy Forest

## ii) Gathering Primary Data

### **Observation**

The important part is to identify area in Mossy Forest, Cameron Highlands that need to be documented. Overall, this is a pure nature lover's track that is full of flora and fauna. Researchers need to climb up to Gunung Brinchang about 2032 meters from the starting point which is the north part of Brinchang Town. From this part there is another Trail to Gunung Irau at about 2090 meters that approximately takes around three to four hours one way. Mossy forest is beautiful often described as a fantasy forest that completely covered in moss with low hanging moss and haunting aura.

### **Interview**

Based on the interview, local people and visitors insisted development planners to refrain from coming up with plans or projects that would lead to the further destruction of the Mossy Forests. Reacting in a recent forum on disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation, region has a vast mossy forest, which is a very important eco system in climate change. Hitting for the protection and conservation of the remaining mossy forests in the province, different agencies and the local government units play a critical role as they should craft their local development plans or projects in a way that it would not further threat the mossy forest and documentation also involved an important responsibility in preserving.

### iii) Documentation

Fine arts photography is one of a genre in photography. It allows anyone with a creative mind to express the ideas without being bogged down with the technique. Message is always the first and foremost idea that relate with this type of documentation. Sustaining natural heritage through this medium plays an important role in conveying the message to the audience on how important to maintain the present for future generations. More significantly, the visual informations can create emotional and psychological feelings that may provide awareness through audience's eyes. The skills, techniques and equipments on the image-maker give angle of view more interesting and alive through photographic readings. This is a suggestion of how photography may possibly become significant by the deep unity of its method with those of any art. It would see tools as the untrained human eye could not, it could instruct the human eye and mind and finally it could produce healthy art form. By the use of certain lenses, the proportions appear right quantitatively, and by fine arts feeling for relation for rhythm and for space, it can obtained results which are rare and dignified.



Figure 3.3: Documentation Process by Researcher



Figure 3.3: Mossy Forest 1



Figure 3.4: Mossy Forest 2



Figure 3.5: Mossy Forest 3



Figure 3.6: Mossy Forest 4



Figure 3.7: Mossy Forest 5



Figure 3.8: Mossy Forest 6



Figure 3.9: Mossy Forest 7



Figure 3.10: Mossy Forest 8



Figure 3.11: Mossy Forest 9

## 4. Conclusion

In this section, two subsections are included.

### 4.1 Conclusion

The main theme of this paper has been to review the idea of using fine arts photography to sustain natural heritage. It is evident that the technology required to further the documentation process is going to exist. Using photography in only one part of the documentation and recording process, which in itself is only one part of natural heritage preservation. Photography plays an important role in assigning the message through these small awareness contributions, it is relates to the powerful of images will persuade people to appreciate our natural view and also responsible for the development and prosperity of the nature. For optimal results in the long term, technology in fine arts photography needs to be incorporated into an integrated governmental, institutional and social policy on natural heritage conservation.

### 4.2 Citation

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