

Vortex

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This project by Muhamad Huzaimi is about reinterpreting the notion and perception of culture as the symbol of a national identity. The meaning of 'national identity' in relevance to a culture is given a new perspective and dimension not by altering or changing the roots but by re-understanding the roots itself. In doing so, it will alter the physical as well as the spiritual experiences in giving a new but genuine and authentic interpretation and reinterpretation of the character and images of culture and national identity.

The design objective aims to fill the niche, vacuum and gap of what is interpreted or misinterpreted as a national image. Instead of looking into what is Malaysian and not-Malaysian—in literal and physical manners—Muhamad Huzaimi gives us an alternative dimension in re-interpreting the meaning of national identity for both landscape and architecture. Culture, being a structural component of design, is given new but not pastiche nor ersatz meaning.

Though the physical form of the buildings seems to be prejudiced to the 'cultural form', the semiotic of it is taken to the fullest advantage in portraying a dynamic and energetic 'culture' as opposed to suppressed and static cultural symbol. It became a vehicle to express meaning beyond the form. The landscape is designed in such a way that it portrays not only the energetic form of the culture but most importantly, the meaning behind its very existence. The chosen plants are of native origin resembling the authenticity besides representing the 'cultural value'. Both landscape and architecture are given equal role and importance as both are vital components in the portraiture of identity. The national theatre or *Panggung Negara* is designed sympathetically to its immediate surroundings. The shape of the building represents the core of energy that is preserved in the 'vortex'. This energy is kept and preserved but also is a catalyst and impetus to the roots and culture. The national art gallery is created to resemble the movement of vortex in which arts and design are always moving and developing in parallel with the zeitgeist.

Vortex, the metaphor for this design project, is derived from the movement and formation of its turbulent flow. Vortex is a spinning and often turbulent flow of fluid. The speed and rate of rotation of the fluid are greatest at the centre but decrease progressively with distance from the centre. As with its architecture, the synaptic in definite form allows change, alteration and even restoration (a static value). It can also absorb additions, subtractions and modifications without disturbing its essential order and authentic value.

