

Intermedial Practices of Lacquer and Oil Painting: Symbolic Fusion and Material Innovation in Sino-Malaysian Kite Cultures

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Abstract: This study investigates the integration of traditional Chinese lacquer painting techniques with contemporary oil painting, focusing on kite imagery as a vehicle for expressing symbolic fusion and material innovation in Sino-Malaysian cultures. Grounded in the theoretical framework of Cultural Hybridization, the research examines how techniques such as eggshell mosaic, mother-of-pearl inlay, and lacquer piling can be combined with oil painting methods to create a new visual language that bridges Eastern and Western artistic traditions. A studio-based, iterative research approach was employed, involving systematic material experimentation, self-critical reflection, and regular contextual reviews. Digital pre-production techniques were also used to deconstruct and reassemble traditional kite motifs from both Malaysia and China, ensuring balanced compositional integration. The findings reveal that the hybridization of lacquer and oil painting techniques not only enhances the tactile and chromatic qualities of the artworks but also enriches their symbolic depth. Artworks such as Dialogue of Kites No.1 and Dialogue of Kites No.2 demonstrate that the interplay between the reflective, layered textures of lacquer and the dynamic color gradations of oil paint produces a “temporal duality” where historical craftsmanship coexists with modern artistic innovation. The research confirms that such intermedial practices effectively convey cross-cultural narratives, positioning kites as transcultural symbols that embody themes of aspiration, freedom, and identity. This study contributes to expanding the material lexicon of contemporary painting and offers a replicable model for integrating traditional techniques with modern media. The insights gained not only underscore the transformative potential of material innovation in art but also provide a framework for further exploration of mixed-media practices in globalized cultural contexts.

Keywords: Lacquer Painting, Oil Painting, Cultural Hybridization, Kite Imagery

1. Introduction

The integration of traditional craftsmanship with contemporary artistic innovation has emerged as a transformative force in redefining the boundaries of visual expression. In recent decades, mixed-media practices have increasingly challenged the conventional separation between historical and modern techniques, opening new avenues for material experimentation. This study investigates the intermedial practices of lacquer and oil painting—two distinct yet complementary artistic traditions—with a specific focus on their application to kite imagery. Kites, as cultural symbols, hold profound historical and aesthetic value in Chinese and Malaysian traditions, and their integration within a hybrid medium serves as an exemplary case of cross-cultural dialogue. By synthesizing the tactile richness of lacquer with the chromatic versatility of oil painting, this research seeks to create artworks that transcend cultural binaries while preserving the integrity of both traditions.

Lacquer painting, rooted in East Asia with a history spanning over 8,000 years, is celebrated for its layered textures, luminous surfaces, and techniques such as mother-of-pearl inlay, eggshell mosaic, and lacquer piling (Guo, 2021). These methods, historically reserved for imperial artifacts and religious objects, emphasize meticulous craftsmanship and material depth. In contrast, oil painting, originating in Renaissance Europe, has dominated Western art through its adaptability, vibrant color dynamics, and capacity for nuanced light manipulation. The convergence of these mediums—one steeped in ritualistic precision, the other in expressive fluidity—presents a fertile ground for reimagining cultural narratives through intermedial innovation.

This research focuses on kite imagery as a cultural and aesthetic nexus. In Malaysia, kites such as Wau Bulan (Moon Kite) and Wau Kucing (Cat Kite) are emblematic of communal identity, embodying aspirations of freedom and harmony with nature (Idris, 2024). Similarly, Chinese kite traditions, exemplified by Banyao kites, integrate motifs from folklore, agrarian symbolism, and Daoist cosmology, reflecting a dialogue between human creativity and natural order (Cao, 2022). By hybridizing these divergent traditions through lacquer-oil techniques, the study aims to forge a visual language that bridges historical reverence and contemporary abstraction.

The theoretical framework of Cultural Hybridization (Pieterse, 2020) underpins this exploration. Rejecting notions of cultural homogenization, Pieterse argues that globalization catalyzes the emergence of “third cultures” through dynamic exchanges of symbols, materials, and practices. Applied to art, this framework illuminates how lacquer and oil painting—each bearing distinct cultural DNA—can coalesce into innovative forms that transcend their origins. The hybrid artworks produced in this study are not mere aesthetic amalgamations but active negotiations of identity, memory, and globalization.

Despite growing interest in material innovation, a significant gap persists in systematic studies on integrating lacquer techniques with oil painting, particularly within transcultural contexts. Prior research has focused on preserving traditional lacquer methods (Teke, 2018) or expanding oil painting’s material lexicon (Meyer, 2019), yet few address their synergistic potential. This study bridges this gap by interrogating three core questions:

How can traditional lacquer techniques enhance the conceptual and aesthetic dimensions of contemporary oil painting?

What technical strategies enable the harmonious fusion of lacquer and oil mediums?

How does kite imagery, as a cultural symbol, mediate Sino-Malaysian hybridity in these intermedial practices?

To address these questions, a studio-based methodology was employed, combining iterative material experimentation with critical reflection. Techniques such as eggshell inlay and lacquer piling were tested alongside oil painting’s direct brushwork, while digital tools (e.g., Photoshop) facilitated the deconstruction and recombination of kite motifs. Regular critiques with scholars ensured alignment with cultural and theoretical rigor.

The study’s significance lies in its dual contribution:

Material Innovation: Demonstrating how lacquer’s textural vocabulary—its capacity for layering, polishing, and embedding—can expand oil painting’s expressive range.

Cultural Synthesis: Positioning kites as transcultural metaphors that articulate shared human themes of aspiration, freedom, and connectivity.

The resulting artworks, such as *Dialogue of Kites No. 1* and *No. 2*, exemplify this synthesis. By embedding lacquer’s tactile heritage within oil’s chromatic fluidity, they evoke a “temporal duality”—where ancient craftsmanship coexists with modernist abstraction. Viewer feedback highlights the interplay of lacquer’s reflective depth and oil’s luminosity as evoking narratives of migration and identity, resonating with Pieterse’s vision of hybridity as a site of creative renewal.

This research positions lacquer-oil hybridization as a transformative practice in globalized art. It challenges the dichotomy of tradition versus modernity, proposing instead a dynamic continuum where cultural symbols are continually reinterpreted. Future directions could explore digital extensions (e.g., AR/VR) or applications to other symbols, such as textiles or architectural motifs. Ultimately, this study advocates for art as a living dialogue—one where material innovation and cultural memory converge to redefine contemporary expression.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Cultural Hybridization: Theoretical Foundations

The concept of Cultural Hybridization, as theorized by Jan Nederveen Pieterse (2020), provides the foundational framework for understanding the fusion of lacquer and oil painting techniques within Sino-Malaysian artistic contexts. Pieterse argues that globalization does not homogenize cultures but instead generates “third cultures” through active, reciprocal exchanges of symbols, materials, and practices. This process of hybridization is neither a passive blending nor a hierarchical imposition but a dynamic negotiation that creates new cultural forms while preserving traces of their origins. In art, this framework illuminates how traditional techniques like lacquer painting—rooted in East Asian heritage—can intersect with Western oil painting traditions to produce innovative visual languages. Pieterse’s theory aligns with contemporary discourses on transcultural art, where hybridity is celebrated as a site of creativity rather than a dilution of authenticity (Le et al., 2019).

The relevance of Cultural Hybridization to this study lies in its capacity to reframe the integration of lacquer and oil painting as a deliberate act of cultural dialogue. By merging Malaysian Wau and Chinese Banyao kite motifs—each laden with distinct historical narratives—the research positions hybrid artworks as embodiments of cross-cultural connectivity. This approach challenges Eurocentric narratives of art history, which often privilege Western mediums like oil painting, by elevating lacquer’s material and symbolic significance as an equal partner in the creative process.

2.2 Lacquer Painting: Historical Legacy and Modern Revival

Lacquer art, with its origins in Neolithic China (Guo, 2021), represents one of humanity's oldest continuous artistic traditions. Archaeological discoveries, such as the 8,000-year-old lacquer bow from the Kuahuqiao site and the Hemudu lacquer bowl (Su Guowei, 2022), attest to its early mastery as both a utilitarian and decorative medium. Traditional techniques—including mother-of-pearl inlay, eggshell mosaic, and lacquer piling—were refined over millennia, culminating in sophisticated artifacts like the Northern Wei Dynasty lacquer screens (484 CE) and Ming-Qing dynasty lacquerware (Guo, 2021). These works exemplify lacquer's unique material properties: its ability to achieve luminous depth through layering, its durability, and its capacity to integrate diverse materials like metal foils and organic substrates.

The modernization of lacquer painting began in the early 20th century, driven by artists such as Shen Fuwen and Lei Guiyuan, who studied in Japan and France, respectively. Shen Fuwen's integration of oil painting aesthetics into lacquer compositions (Feng & Zhao, 2016) and Lei Guiyuan's introduction of chemical lacquers and eggshell inlay techniques marked a departure from lacquer's decorative role toward its recognition as an independent art form (Qiao, 2000). Contemporary practitioners like Su Xiaobai and Vincent Cazeneuve have further expanded lacquer's possibilities. Su's abstract works, such as *Cloud Dream* (2004), use lacquer's viscosity and translucency to evoke meditative landscapes, while Cazeneuve's fusion of French modernism with Chinese lacquer craftsmanship (He, 2023) exemplifies globalization's impact on material innovation.

Despite these advancements, lacquer painting remains underrepresented in global contemporary art discourse. Its labor-intensive processes and cultural specificity often relegate it to the margins of mainstream art practices—a gap this study seeks to address by integrating lacquer into the more globally recognized medium of oil painting.

2.3 Oil Painting: Material Evolution and Cross-Cultural Adaptations

Oil painting's dominance in Western art stems from its unparalleled versatility. Emerging in 15th-century Europe, it revolutionized artistic expression through its slow drying time, rich pigmentation, and capacity for photorealistic detail (Meyer, 2019). Artists like Titian and Rembrandt exploited its chromatic depth and textural malleability, establishing oil painting as the preeminent medium for capturing light, emotion, and narrative complexity.

In the modern era, oil painting underwent radical transformations as artists began experimenting with mixed media. Gustav Klimt's incorporation of gold leaf (*Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer*, 1908) and Antoni Tàpies' use of shredded paper, sand, and tar (*Grey and Green Painting*, 1957) expanded the medium's material lexicon, challenging its traditional boundaries (Rogasch, 2022; Antich, 2020). These innovations paralleled broader movements like Cubism and Neo-Expressionism, where artists such as Picasso and Anselm Kiefer incorporated non-traditional materials (e.g., lead, straw, ash) to evoke historical trauma and existential themes (Cui, 2022).

In Asia, oil painting's adoption during the 19th and 20th centuries catalyzed a dialogue between Eastern and Western aesthetics. Chinese artists like Shang Yang reimagined oil painting through indigenous perspectives, blending Western post-impressionist techniques with traditional ink-wash sensibilities (*Dong Qichang Plan—42*, 2012). Similarly, Malaysian artist Amron Omar merged oil painting's realism with Malay silat (martial arts) symbolism, creating works that interrogate cultural identity (Abdullah et al., 2020). These adaptations highlight oil painting's adaptability as a transcultural medium—a quality this study leverages to integrate lacquer techniques.

2.4 Kite Imagery: Cultural Symbolism and Artistic Potential

Kites occupy a unique position in both Chinese and Malaysian cultures as symbols of freedom, spirituality, and communal identity. In Malaysia, the Wau—particularly Wau Bulan (Moon Kite) and Wau Kucing (Cat Kite)—is deeply intertwined with agrarian rituals and Malay cosmology. The intricate floral and geometric patterns adorning Wau kites reflect a harmony between human creativity and natural order, while their flight symbolizes aspirations for prosperity and spiritual elevation (Idris, 2024). Historically, Wau competitions during harvest festivals reinforced social cohesion, with designs often encoding regional myths and values (S'harin Mokhtar, 2024).

In China, kite traditions date back to the Warring States period (475–221 BCE), where they were used for military signaling before evolving into artistic and philosophical objects. The Banyao (板鹞) kite of Nantong, adorned with whistles that produce harmonic sounds in flight, embodies Daoist principles of balance between wind (feng) and earth (tu) (Cao, 2022). Similarly, imperial kite designs during the Qing Dynasty incorporated motifs from folklore and nature, such as dragons and peonies, to convey cosmological and social hierarchies.

Despite their cultural significance, kites have rarely been examined as subjects of intermedial art. Previous studies have focused on their historical or anthropological dimensions (e.g., Teke, 2018; Zhou, 2023),

overlooking their potential as vehicles for material and symbolic hybridization. This research fills that void by reimagining kites through the fusion of lacquer and oil painting—a process that amplifies their cultural resonance while introducing new aesthetic dimensions.

2.5 Material Innovation in Hybrid Art Practices

The integration of diverse materials in contemporary art has been a hallmark of 20th- and 21st-century practices. Manolo Valdés' mixed-media portraits, which deconstruct classical European imagery through collages of burlap and metal (Solana, 2008), demonstrate how material juxtapositions can critique historical narratives. Similarly, Anselm Kiefer's use of lead, ash, and organic matter in works like *Black Flakes* (2006) transforms raw materials into metaphors for collective memory and trauma (Phillips, 2014).

In Asia, artists like Rosy Keyser and Chen Xiangjun have pioneered material-driven approaches. Keyser's tactile abstractions, combining oil paint, seaweed, and industrial debris (*Medusa Elegy*, 2021), challenge conventional definitions of painting, while Chen Xiangjun's lacquer works integrate medical manuscripts and aluminum foil to interrogate traditional Chinese knowledge systems (*Chinese Medical Books* Tuina, 1996). These practices resonate with this study's objectives, particularly in their emphasis on materiality as a carrier of cultural meaning.

However, few studies have systematically explored the technical and conceptual synergies between lacquer and oil painting. Liao (2016) compared their material properties but stopped short of proposing integrative methods, while Zhang (2022) examined mixed-media oil painting without addressing lacquer's unique potential. This research builds on these foundations by developing a replicable framework for combining lacquer's textural rigor with oil's chromatic fluidity—a contribution that advances both mediums' expressive capacities.

2.6 Methodological Precedents: Studio-Based Research

Studio-based research, as articulated by Sullivan (2009), emphasizes the interplay between creative practice and critical reflection. This methodology aligns with Erwin Panofsky's iconographic analysis (1983), which advocates for a tripartite examination of artworks: (1) primary formal elements, (2) symbolic and cultural references, and (3) underlying ideological contexts. In this study, Panofsky's model informs the interpretation of hybrid artworks, ensuring that material experiments are grounded in cultural and theoretical rigor.

The iterative studio process—documented through sketches, material tests, and contextual critiques—mirrors the approaches of artists like Vincent Cazeneuve, whose lacquer works blend digital design with traditional craftsmanship (Zhao, 2019). By adopting a similar methodology, this research not only produces innovative artworks but also generates insights into the technical challenges of intermedial practices, such as reconciling lacquer's slow curing time with oil's faster drying phases.

2.7 Gaps and Contributions

While existing literature addresses lacquer's historical significance (Guo, 2021), oil painting's adaptability (Meyer, 2019), and kite symbolism (Idris, 2024; Cao, 2022), no study has systematically explored their intersection. This research bridges these silos by:

- Developing hybrid techniques that merge lacquer's material depth with oil's expressive range.

- Positioning kites as transcultural symbols capable of mediating Sino-Malaysian cultural hybridity.

- Providing a methodological model for studio-based research in intermedial practices.

By situating its findings within Pieterse's Cultural Hybridization framework, the study contributes to broader discourses on globalization, materiality, and cross-cultural art—a timely intervention in an increasingly interconnected world.

3. Methodology

This study adopts a studio-based research approach to investigate the integration of traditional lacquer painting techniques into contemporary oil painting for the representation of kite imagery—a cultural symbol deeply rooted in both Chinese and Malaysian traditions. The primary goal is to develop a hybrid technique that combines the textural richness and reflective qualities of lacquer with the chromatic versatility and expressive depth of oil painting, thereby creating artworks that embody symbolic fusion and material innovation.

Drawing on the theoretical framework of Cultural Hybridization (Pieterse, 2020), this research views the merging of these two distinct media as a creative negotiation between historical craftsmanship and modern artistic expression. Rather than treating lacquer and oil painting as isolated traditions, this study explores their potential synergy to articulate a complex cultural narrative through the lens of kite imagery.

The research design is inherently experimental and iterative. At its core, the methodology involves a cycle of material experimentation, self-critical reflection, and contextual reviews. In the initial phase, various

traditional lacquer techniques—including mother-of-pearl inlay, eggshell mosaic, and lacquer piling—are applied to prepare the underlying texture and decorative patterns that will serve as the basis for kite imagery. For example, in some trials, a base layer treated with eggshell mosaic is allowed to fully cure before oil paint is applied, ensuring that the delicate texture of the lacquer is preserved. In other instances, the researcher experiments with intermingling lacquer and oil paint directly, adjusting solvent ratios and application sequences to achieve optimal adhesion and compatibility.

Throughout these experimental phases, each trial is meticulously documented through high-resolution photographs, detailed sketches, and comprehensive process notes. This documentation is critical for tracking the evolution of the material interactions, noting both successful outcomes and technical challenges. Issues such as differences in drying times, material adhesion, and surface compatibility are systematically addressed by modifying the formulation of lacquer binders and adjusting the sequence of media application. For instance, careful polishing during the lacquer piling process and controlled layering of oil paint have proven essential in creating a seamless transition between the two mediums.

Self-critical reflection plays a vital role in refining the creative process. After each round of experimentation, the researcher engages in a thorough review of the outcomes, drawing on Erwin Panofsky's iconographic model as a guiding framework. This reflective practice involves evaluating the visual impact, symbolic clarity, and technical execution of the hybrid artworks. By assessing the artwork at multiple levels—from the physical properties of the materials to the cultural meanings embedded in the kite imagery—the researcher identifies areas for improvement and adjusts subsequent experiments accordingly.

Regular contextual reviews further enhance the methodology. Work-in-progress is presented to academic advisors, peers, and experts in mixed-media practices to obtain constructive feedback on both technical execution and conceptual clarity. These reviews ensure that the evolving artworks not only meet rigorous aesthetic and technical standards but also effectively convey the intended cross-cultural narratives. Feedback from these sessions is systematically incorporated into the iterative process, enabling continuous refinement of both technique and composition.

The integration of lacquer and oil painting presents several technical challenges, primarily due to the inherent differences in the properties of the two media. Lacquer, with its slow drying time and sensitivity to environmental conditions, requires precise control over application and curing processes. Oil paint, while offering flexibility and vivid color dynamics, demands careful layering to prevent over-saturation and loss of detail. To reconcile these differences, the researcher experimented with varying the curing periods of lacquer layers and optimizing the application methods of oil paint. Such adjustments not only addressed issues of adhesion and texture but also enhanced the overall visual harmony of the final artworks.

Ultimately, the iterative nature of this research—characterized by repeated cycles of experimentation, reflection, and external critique—has enabled the development of a robust methodology for hybridizing lacquer techniques with oil painting. This approach not only expands the material lexicon of contemporary painting but also provides a replicable framework for exploring the integration of traditional art forms into modern practice.

In summary, this methodology chapter outlines a studio-based, iterative process that combines rigorous material experimentation with self-critical reflection and regular contextual reviews. By systematically addressing the technical challenges of integrating lacquer with oil paint, the study establishes a solid foundation for the creation of innovative artworks that capture the rich cultural symbolism of kite imagery. This intermedial practice, informed by Cultural Hybridization theory, not only revitalizes traditional techniques but also opens new avenues for cross-cultural artistic expression in a globalized art context.

4. Case Studies – Hybrid Kite Artworks and Analysis

This chapter presents a detailed analysis of the final oil painting artworks that integrate traditional lacquer techniques with contemporary oil painting to reinterpret kite imagery—a potent cultural symbol in both Chinese and Malaysian traditions. Focusing exclusively on kite artworks, this case study highlights how material innovation and symbolic fusion are achieved through the hybridization of these two distinct media, thereby embodying the core themes of Sino-Malaysian cultural hybridity.

The development of these artworks began with an in-depth exploration of traditional kite motifs. In both Chinese and Malaysian cultures, kites have long served as expressions of freedom, aspiration, and community identity. In Malaysia, kites such as Wau Bulan and Wau Kucing are celebrated for their intricate geometric patterns and vibrant colors, while in China, kites—like the Banyao kite—often incorporate natural motifs and mythological symbolism. Recognizing the shared yet distinct cultural heritage, the research sought to fuse these divergent traditions by employing a combination of lacquer painting techniques and oil painting methods.



Figure 1. Wau Bulan & Wau kucing



Figure 2. Banyao Kites & Swallow Kites



Figure 3. Using Photoshop to get the design

"Dialogue of Kites NO.1" and "Dialogue of Kites NO.2" juxtapose Malaysia's Wau Bulan and Wau kucing with China's Banyao Kites and Swallow Kites in one picture. Through the combination of lacquer painting techniques and oil painting expression methods, they present the exchange and collision of the two kites in form and culture.

In the creative process, the author first designed it through Photoshop, juxtaposed and reorganized the kite patterns, and explored the symmetrical beauty and visual tension in different arrangements. The final design reflects the decorative characteristics of the two kites. The design of "Dialogue of Kites No. 1" shows Wau kucing and Swallow Kites. The kite is a bilaterally symmetrical design, so the author kept the non-repeating half of the kite, which can retain the elements of each kite to the greatest extent, and also symbolizes the balance and equality of the two cultures, corresponding to the theme of "dialogue". The removed half of the two kites vaguely dissolved behind or in front of the other kite, also symbolizes the fusion of cultures.

The Wau Bulan on the left of "Dialogue of Kites No. 2" shows the elegance of traditional Malaysian handicrafts with its exquisite patterns and curves, while the Banyao Kites on the right show the power and stability of Chinese kites with their simple and majestic shapes. Cao Nan (2022) wrote in his research: "Nantong Banyao Kites provide a basis for the self-identity, group identity and even cultural identity of the people in Nantong, from behavior to spirit, from external to internal, from source to future, and many other levels of "identity", making identity construction and formation changes everywhere with its vivid presence, becoming an emotional bond that gathers the local accent and local feelings and connects Nantong people at home and abroad, allowing descendants around the world to find the "way home.""

In this work, the kite is not only a visual symbol, but also a symbol of two cultures. The juxtaposition of the two kites on the screen forms a dialogue relationship, symbolizing the exchange and resonance between different cultures. This creation is not only a modern reproduction of traditional crafts, but also attempts to explore how to promote cultural understanding and respect through artistic expression in the context of globalization.

In order to be able to use various lacquer painting materials and techniques smoothly, the author chose to stretch the canvas on an oil painting frame with a wooden backboard. Each oil painting frame is 100cm×100cm in size.



Figure 4. Oil painting frame with backboard

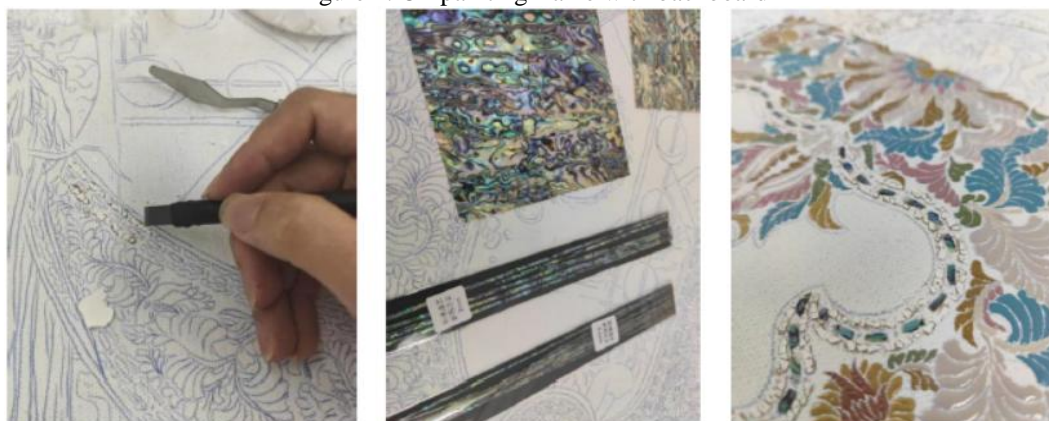


Figure 5. Eggshell & Mother-of-pearl inlay & Effects

In the selection of materials and techniques, the author used techniques such as lacquer piling, inlaying mother-of-pearl and eggshell in lacquer painting to bring the patterns and textures of the two kites to life. In lacquer painting creation, the inlay of eggshell and mother-of-pearl is usually the first step. The author used it on the lace of the kite, so that the pattern details show a soft luster under the light, symbolizing the elegance and refinement in traditional Malaysian art.

In "Dialogue of Kites No. 1", the pattern on the waist and the white part of the eyes of the swallow kite on the right are also expressed through eggshell inlay techniques. In "Dialogue of Kites No. 2", the large area of white on the kite kite on the right is expressed through eggshell inlay.

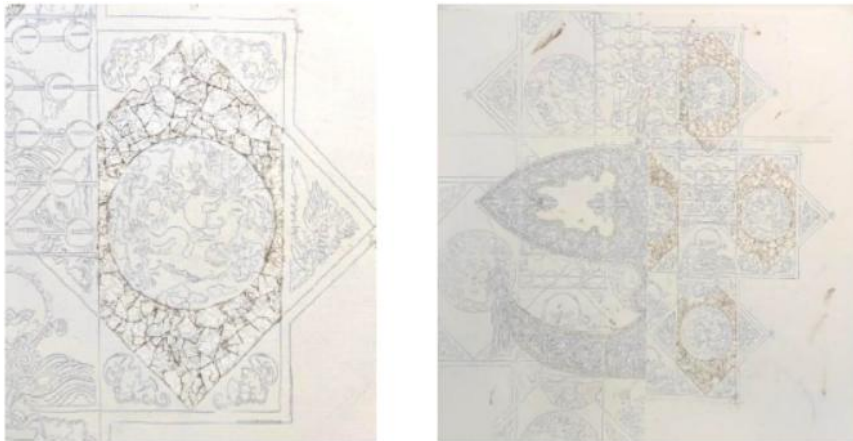


Figure 6. Photo of the finished eggshell inlay



Figure 7. Partial photos of the painting process



Figure 8. After the paint stacking technique is completed

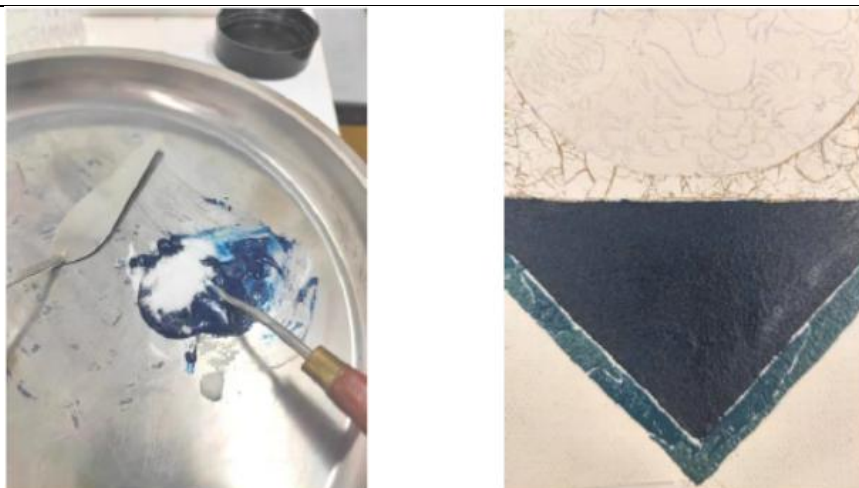


Figure 9. Adding Quartz Sand to Lacquer Pigments & Effects

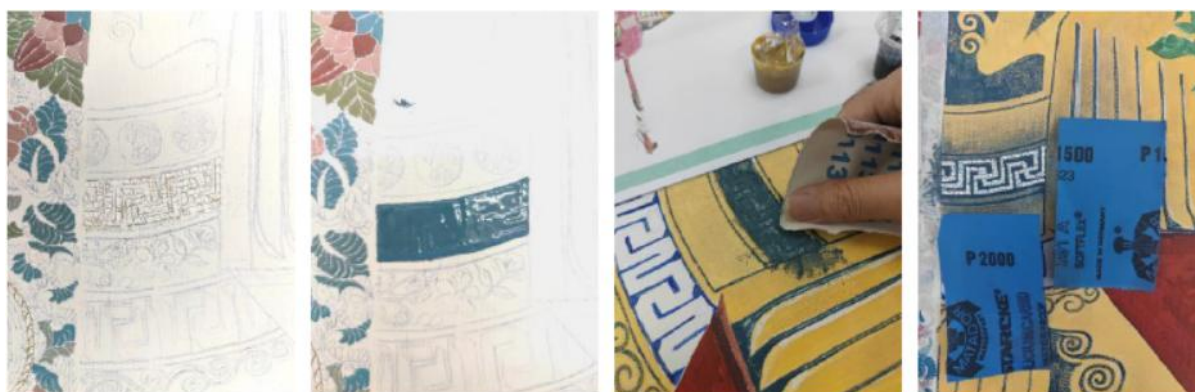


Figure 10. Painting and sanding

The Wau Bulan and Wau kucing patterns in the two works use the lacquer piling technique, which makes the texture more three-dimensional and enhances the decorative effect. Tang Zhiyi (2021) wrote in the book: "Piling refers to the method of using lacquer ash or lacquer to pile up patterns and then apply decorative lacquer on this basis." The blue part of the Chinese kite on the right side of the two works uses the lacquer piling technique, highlighting the heavy beauty and profound cultural heritage of the Chinese kite.

In the creation techniques of traditional lacquer painting, the lacquer piling technique also adds materials such as tile ash. The author tried to add quartz sand to the lacquer to increase the thickness of the pigment and get a unique texture.

There is an eggshell pattern pasted on the waist of the swallow kite. Here the author apply a very important technique in traditional lacquer painting, which is "lacquering and grinding". Tang Zhiyi (2021) wrote in the book: "Lacquering and grinding is currently the most common technique for grinding lacquer painting." "Through this series of action processes, a process from addition to subtraction is completed. The completely different visual texture and artistic beauty formed by lacquer painting made of natural materials and other types of paintings such as oil painting and Chinese painting are fully revealed."

After the pasted eggshell pattern was covered with two layers of lacquer paint, the author used sandpaper to grind out the eggshell pattern, and then polished it with fine sandpaper.

After using the lacquer painting techniques in these two works, the author began to enter the oil painting stage. There are two reasons why lacquer painting materials and techniques are used before oil painting. First, lacquer painting pigments are not easy to adhere firmly to oily materials. Second, lacquer painting materials and techniques are more suitable for making various unique textures, while oil painting pigments have more advantages in detail painting.

For example, on the kite kite on the right side of "Dialogue of Kite No. 2", the author used the direct painting method of oil painting to paint the auspicious patterns of phoenix, Chinese dragon and bat on the part where the lacquer painting pigments made the texture. The unique whistle on the kite kite was also completed with oil painting techniques, and the three-dimensional sense of the whistle was shaped. The kite kite in the

background on the left was also completed with oil painting, which made the work more visually rich. The color of oil painting and the texture of lacquer painting merged with each other to form a unique artistic effect.

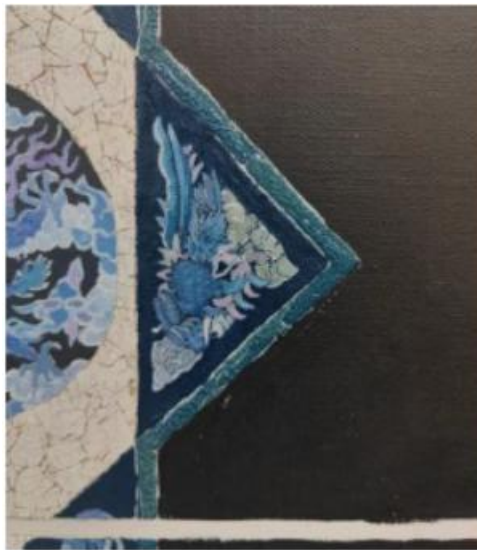


Figure 11. Phoenix pattern made of oil painting



Figure 12. Dialogue of Kites No.1
Media: Linen, Wood, Lacquer, Oil paint, Eggshells, Mother-of-pearl
Size: 100× 100cm

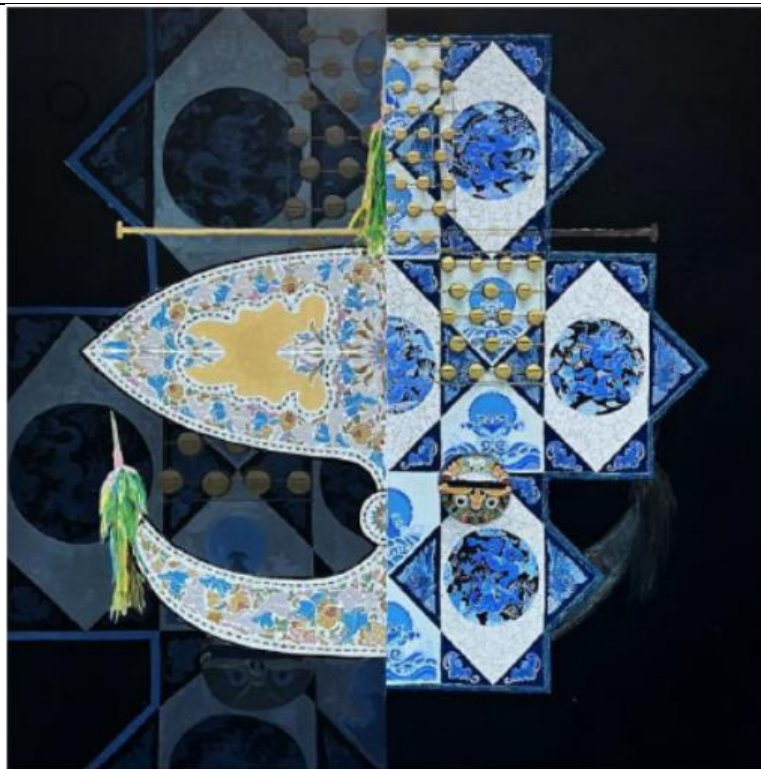


Figure 13. Dialogue of Kites No.2
Media: Linen, Wood, Lacquer, Oil paint, Eggshells, Mother-of-pearl, Quartz sand
Size: 100× 100cm

As Panofsky's iconographic analysis points out, every artistic symbol has multiple layers of meaning (Panofsky, 1983). In this work, the image of the kite is both a presentation of a specific object and a symbol of cultural identity. Through the left-right symmetrical composition and the contrast and integration of techniques, the author hope to achieve a "cultural dialogue" effect on the screen, allowing viewers to feel the beauty of the symbiosis of Chinese and Malaysian cultures in their differences.

5. Conclusion

This study set out to explore the integration of traditional lacquer painting techniques with contemporary oil painting, with a specific focus on kite imagery as a medium for expressing Sino-Malaysian cultural hybridity. By investigating how methods such as eggshell mosaic, mother-of-pearl inlay, and lacquer piling can be synergistically combined with the rich color dynamics and expressive versatility of oil painting, this research has demonstrated that traditional materials can be revitalized to create innovative visual languages that bridge cultural divides.

One of the central contributions of this study is its demonstration of how material hybridization can expand the expressive potential of contemporary painting. The integration of lacquer techniques with oil painting not only enriches the tactile and visual qualities of the artworks but also creates a multilayered narrative that speaks to the deep cultural heritage shared by China and Malaysia. Through the careful experimentation with techniques, the research has shown that the reflective and textural properties of lacquer can be successfully incorporated into oil paintings, resulting in works that maintain the integrity of traditional craftsmanship while embracing modern aesthetics.

The case studies, focusing exclusively on kite imagery, have been particularly illustrative of this hybrid practice. In the "Dialogue of Kites" series, for instance, the artworks reveal how the meticulous application of eggshell mosaic and mother-of-pearl inlay—techniques that historically evoked luxury and refined detail in lacquer art—can be integrated with oil paint's ability to capture vivid, luminous colors and subtle gradations of light. The resulting compositions not only highlight the decorative details inherent in both Malaysian and Chinese kite traditions but also articulate a visual balance that symbolizes the harmonious convergence of these two cultural narratives. This approach has effectively demonstrated that traditional cultural symbols can be reinterpreted in ways that resonate with contemporary audiences, thus providing a new framework for cross-cultural dialogue.

Furthermore, this research has addressed several technical challenges inherent in the fusion of lacquer and oil painting. Differences in drying times, adhesion properties, and material compatibility were significant hurdles that required an iterative experimental process to overcome. Through systematic adjustments—such as varying solvent mixtures, extending curing times, and refining layering sequences—the study successfully established a set of best practices for integrating these media. This technical innovation not only ensured that the final artworks achieved both aesthetic and structural integrity but also contributed to the broader discourse on mixed-media practices in contemporary art. The iterative process, coupled with continuous self-critical reflection and external contextual reviews, provided a robust methodological framework that can be replicated and extended in future research.

The theoretical framework underpinning this study, Cultural Hybridization, has proven invaluable in framing the artistic and material integration process. As articulated by Jan Nederveen Pieterse, cultural hybridization does not result in a simple fusion of elements but rather in the creation of entirely new cultural forms that emerge from the active interplay between diverse traditions. In the context of this research, the synthesis of lacquer painting techniques and oil painting has given rise to artworks that embody the concept of “third cultures” — artistic expressions that transcend traditional boundaries while retaining elements of both Chinese and Malaysian heritage. This not only validates the theoretical perspective but also illustrates how globalization can serve as a catalyst for innovative artistic practices that challenge and expand conventional cultural narratives.

Moreover, the findings of this study have broader implications for contemporary art practices. The successful blending of lacquer and oil painting techniques opens up new avenues for material experimentation, encouraging artists to look beyond traditional limitations and explore the full potential of mixed media. The hybrid approach detailed in this research provides a replicable model for integrating historical craftsmanship with modern techniques, thereby offering a new paradigm for artists working in a globalized context. This research underscores that innovation in art is not solely about the creation of new forms but also about the reimagining of traditional methods in ways that reflect the complexities of modern cultural identities.

Looking forward, several future research directions emerge from this study. First, the hybrid techniques developed here could be extended to other traditional materials beyond lacquer, such as ceramics or calligraphic inks, potentially enriching the material vocabulary of contemporary painting even further. Second, the integration of digital technologies—such as augmented reality (AR) or virtual reality (VR)—with mixed-media practices could create immersive experiences that deepen audience engagement and broaden the interpretive scope of hybrid artworks. Third, comparative studies examining audience reception across different cultural contexts would provide valuable insights into how material hybridity is interpreted globally, further informing the development of culturally responsive artistic practices.

This study has affirmed that the integration of traditional lacquer techniques into contemporary oil painting can serve as a transformative practice that bridges historical craftsmanship and modern artistic innovation. By focusing on kite imagery—a culturally rich and symbolically potent motif in both Chinese and Malaysian traditions—the research has demonstrated how material hybridization can generate a new visual language that reflects the dynamic interplay of cultural identities in a globalized world. The artworks produced in this study not only exemplify technical innovation and aesthetic sophistication but also function as visual mediators for cross-cultural dialogue. As globalization continues to reshape artistic practices, the intermedial approach presented here offers promising avenues for future explorations into the fusion of traditional and modern techniques, ultimately contributing to the evolution of contemporary art.

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