

ARTWORK PROPOSAL
BAKAT MUDA SEZAMAN
2023

INSTALLATION

“The Last Lin”

Danielle Lin Xuan-En

1. Proposed Artwork

1.1 Introduction

This proposal is written for the purpose of participating in Bakat Muda Sezaman 2023. The ideas brought forward in this artwork proposal include the appreciation of generational Chinese heritage and the extinction of a specific family name.

The main intention of the artwork proposed is share to the public about how a certain Chinese family name is on the verge of extinction due to unavoidable factors such as low birth rate and cultural gender roles.

This artwork also aims to remind the younger generation to appreciate and preserve their family cultures while they still exist.

1.2 Background

Birthright and Heritage

In China, last names are a crucial part of a family's history. With just last names, through studying documentation and migration patterns, researchers are able to discover the roots and origins of Chinese clans and tribes. It is not uncommon to find a detailed family tree history book in traditional Malaysian Chinese homes, dating all the way back to their ancestors in China.

Since as early as the third millennium BC, 12,000 family names have been recorded in Chinese texts. As many as 25% are still around today, but it should be no surprise the number is steadily decreasing over time due to families naturally dying out or marrying their children off to other, larger clans.

The traditional gender roles in not just China, but almost every culture one can think of, mean that family names are passed down through their sons. Even in Malaysia, after marriage, children adopt their fathers' names instead of their mothers', except in certain situations. However, in the case of the Chinese, traditional-minded people would encourage their children to bear sons instead of daughters so that their specific family name will be passed on to the next generation. Whether by luck or intent, or simply having a longer history, surnames such as Wong, Li, Chan, Chong, Liu, Lim, Zhang, and many more have become very common Chinese surnames in the world.

Lin (凌)

The family name that will be focused on in this proposal is that of Lin (凌). Not to be confused with the more popularly used Lim (林), Lin was first used in the early Zhou dynasty (1046BC – 256BC).

While it is possible to carry out a large-scale investigation finding out every single Lin in the world, it will be a long and vigorous process that concerns too little people to be worth starting. The point of this artwork is not to become a history lesson, but to serve as a temporary showcase of the remaining Lins in my family.

Put briefly, there are only three people with this surname in the whole of Kuala Lumpur. They are me, my sister, and my father. If the search is extended to my hometown of Ipoh, there will be just one other person: my aunt, who has two sons who have taken their father's surname, Wong.

Over the recent years, through modern technology and a stroke of heavenly luck, my father managed to reconnect with his long-lost half-siblings and cousins. Seven more people were added to the total number of Lins, which gives us the whopping total of ten, and it is not a number that will increase over time. There are only four men in Malaysia who bear this surname, and the only one who has children is my father, who was blessed with two daughters. Alas, the surname ends with me, the last and youngest Lin.

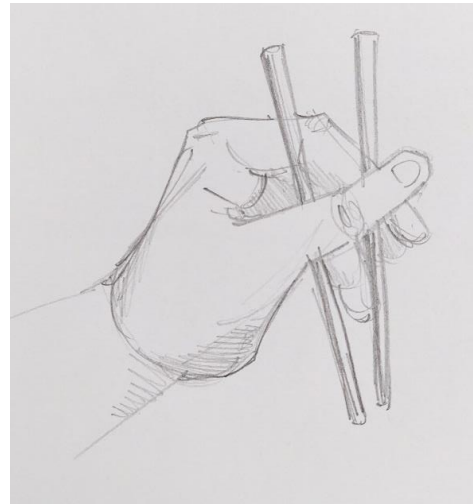
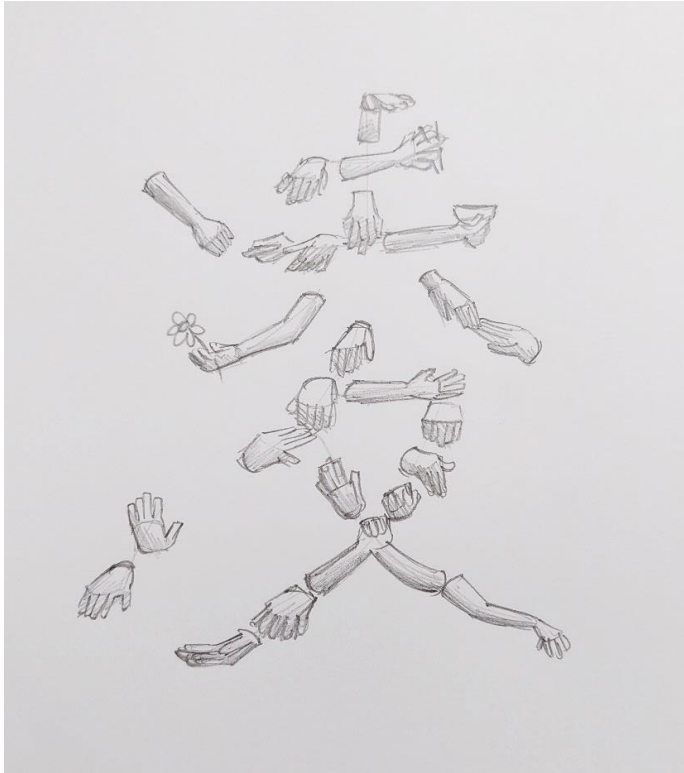
1.3 Artwork Statement

My family name, Lin (凌) has always been a dear part of me. It is an interesting topic of conversation, and a cherished piece of my heritage. However, as far as my small family goes, I am the youngest and last addition to the Lins, and since I am a woman, my children will not be given my name.

“The Last Lin” features a number of hands and arms holding or handing out objects that symbolize or are replicas of what my ancestors have handed down to me, from my distinctive features to my culture. The hands featured are cast from my remaining family members, so that the whole form of the artwork illustrates how my ancestors are handing out pieces of me, to me. I think of it as them cheering me on as the last Lin of the family. The larger picture is that I’m instilling awareness amongst the youths regarding heritage, and that no matter how out of touch we are as a modern society towards these customs, it’s still important to know where we came from and remember the people who literally made us.

1.4 Artwork Overview

Artwork Sketch



Description

On a wall, several (exact number yet to be confirmed) hands and arms extend from the wall, each holding an object that bears cultural or ancestral significance, and arranged in the shape of Lin (凌). Each hand holds an object of cultural or ancestral significance. These items will be depicted with usage of symbolism and imitations to substitute things like hair and food.

Visual References

The Chinese character of “Lin”

凌

Hands on the Wall



Cultural/Ancestral Objects

- Traditional Chinese Soup bowls
- Brunette Hair (inherited physical traits)
- Family heirlooms
- Et cetera

2. Physical Properties

2.1 Proposed Location

The location chosen to create and to showcase the artwork for Bakat Muda Sezaman 2023 is GMBB, Kuala Lumpur. The reason why GMBB has been chosen is because of its strategic location at the heart of the city centre, as well as the organizing team's support for local artists. It is a place that attracts people who are interested in art and culture, and it has a strong online presence which can help to attract visitors.

Proof of venue support

Dear Danielle,

Thank you for reaching out to us at GMBB to be your location for Bakat Muda Sezaman! We are most pleased to share that after discussion with the management, we would like to extend the following offer:

1. Event

The Last Lin is an art installation by Danielle Lin that explores her ancestry, her heritage and her identity / name as a part of the Bakat Muda Sezaman competition by National Art Gallery, Malaysia.

2. Venue Support

Venue: 1 unit to be confirmed closer to the date of the exhibition

Duration: Throughout the exhibition duration as stipulated by Bakat Muda Sezaman

Setup Date: 3 days before the start of the exhibition (setup to be done outside of mall operation hours)

Dismantle & Restoration: Within 2 days of exhibition ending

Sample of GMBB unit (not necessarily the selected unit) for artwork display



2.2 Tools and Materials

Material	Quantity	Function
Plaster of Paris	Unconfirmed	To create casted hands
Alginate	Unconfirmed	To create a mold to cast hands
Bucket	1	To fill with alginate
Wooden dowel	1	To create a hole in the cast hands
Long Screw	Unconfirmed	To secure casted hands on wall
Drywall	1	To display casted hands
Miscellaneous objects	Unconfirmed	To symbolize cultural identity being passed on to the new generation
Spotlight	1	To shine on the showcased artwork

3. Installation Manual

Casted Hands

Materials: Alginate, Plaster of Paris, bucket, wooden dowel



The hand is dipped into the alginate mixture and held still for 10 minutes

The hand is then taken out, and plaster of paris is poured into the shape created by the hands

After 4 hours, the alginate may be removed to reveal a hand cast with plaster of paris.

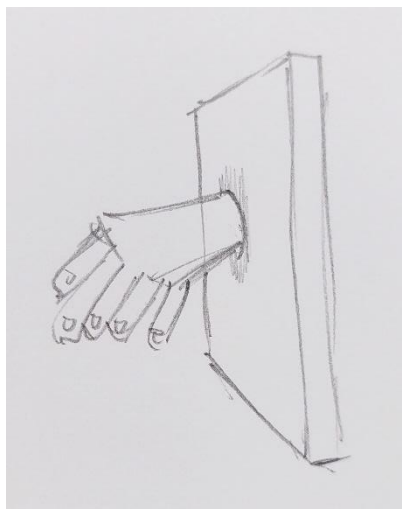
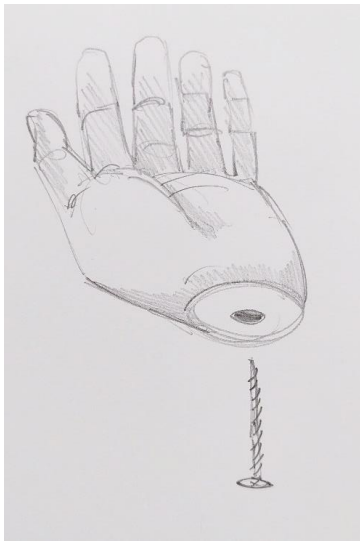
Estimated weight per hand: 800g

Estimated time to complete: 1 month

Installation

Materials: Long Screw, drywall, miscellaneous objects, spotlight

Holes will be made in the cast hands that will enable them to be hung on a screw drilled into drywall. The holes will be made by poking a wooden dowel in the plaster of paris when it is still damp. Total artwork size is not yet determined as it depends on the unit provided by GMBB.



– End of proposal –