

THE FESTIVAL OF JRAI PEOPLE

BY
CAO DUY LINH

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Fine Arts Program in Visual Arts
at Mahasarakham University**

October 2012

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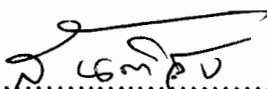


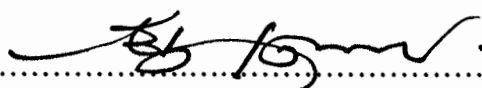
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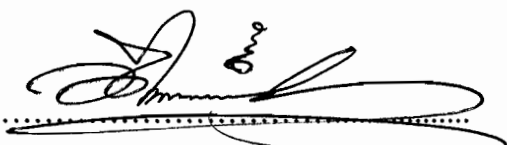
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Cao Duy Linh



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ABSTRACT

Main information about Jrai tribe

Other name of Jrai tribe is Gior Rai, Grai, Cho Rai, Tơ Buăn, Hobau, Hrung, that belongs to the language group of Malayo-Polynesia. It is called Gia Rai, Draï, Yorai by Vietnamese writers, Ede, and French scholars, respectively. Jrai, Grai or Draï all mean fall. Jrai is an ethnic tribe that usually live near the falls which are the most sacred and effulgent symbol to this tribe.

Festivals play an important role in spiritual life of Jrai tribe in particular and Western Highland tribes in general. In every festival, gongs are vital instruments which are considered to be the soul of that festival. Gongs is a symbol of high community spirit, musical and artistic value, customs and habits and economic power.

I myself want to show my feelings about these original and humane festivals of Jrai through the concept “The Festival of Jrai people”. My initial idea is building all images of Jrai’s Festivals under different views and aspects. However, after the first semester when my professor instructs me to explore the images of young men and women’s dancing, playing music, my works focus on this important point.

The images of young men and women who are dancing are profound and focused. This image is always consistent in this works. Contributing to the consistency of the topic. For the selected theme, to fully express content of the works, author must be the one who actually get involved. It also shows deep insights into customs and practices of the Jrai, empirical observation of ceremony practices, as well as how the Jrai organize activities during the ceremony, etc.



Scope of forms of a work is defined as arrangement of practical images in a simply way and order of the layout to highlight the focus of a Gong Festival clearly. By observation, and practical experiences of vivid nature, I try to transfer into lines and atmosphere to the work in order to create a clearer picture of the Festival.

Main techniques and materials used are oil paint and acrylic materials with the assistance of glue mixed with powder to reflex thickness and thinness to create effects of difference highlighting. Scenes in paintings are close to reality, in a simplified form and evocative. Using of colors such as purple, blue and reddish brown expresses nature of the Festival.

Results of creativity has been successful in expressing the images festival of Jrai people with the language of fine arts. This is also the result of art creating and a thinking process which combines true feelings coming from life and the relationship between contents and forms of works.



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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Primary Inspiration

Main information about Jrai tribe

Other name of Jrai tribe is Giơ Rai, Grai, Cho Rai, Tơ Buăn, Hơbau, Hrug, that belongs to the language group of Malayo-Polynesia. It is called Gia Rai, Draï, Yorai by Vietnamese writers, Ede, and French scholars, respectively. Jrai, Grai or Draï all mean fall. Jrai is an ethnic tribe that usually live near the falls which are the most sacred and effulgent symbol to this tribe.

Jrai people live mostly in Gia Lai which partly reflects this province's name. Jrai people are divided into 5 main groups with 10 big families: Rchom, Nay, Rơ Ô, Siu, Rma, Kso, Rahlan, Huc, Kpă, Pui. Jrai is the tribe that has the second highest population (only lower than Kinh tribe) among 36 ethnic tribes in Gia Lai and the tenth highest among 54 Vietnamese tribes. Population of Jrai is 350 thousand people. They live mainly on kaingin cultivation and rising in which plain rice is their main food crops. In the past, Jrai people were nomads who practiced nomadic farming and rotation of crops but recently, they can built village to lead a stable live and practice fixed farming thank to the government's financial support. Because of "Animistic Beliefs" Jrai tribe holds a lot of festivals. Every things relating to human, life, production must be asked for approval from YÀNG in a thanksgiving ceremony after which public rules must be followed to satisfy YÀNG. Afterward, there have been many rituals and festivals which can be divided into 3 following main groups:

1. Rituals and festivals according to Farming calendar.
2. Rituals and festivals according to life cycle.
3. Rituals and festivals according to community relationship.

These 3 types all satisfy spiritual demand of 2 major groups (the whole community and individual family). They have a rich and unique cultural life with deeply human civilization.



Gongs in Jrai's festivals

Festivals play an important role in spiritual life of Jrai tribe in particular and Western Highland tribes in general. In every festival, gongs are vital instruments which are considered to be the soul of that festival. Gongs is a symbol of high community spirit, musical and artistic value, customs and habits and economic power.

With Jrai people, Gongs is not only a kind of instrument, a symbol of wealth in each family, a symbol of power for each village but also a cultural and spiritual symbol of the tribe. Gongs are so bound up with daily life of villagers from birth to death that they become the soul of this tribe.

An imposing Western Highland with high mountains and rolling immense forests, white and over falls as well as many mysterious and bewitching legends is a high and large highland overflowed by sunshine, wind and red dust of Bazan; a religion of festival last forever with rhythm of gongs and drums and the Xoang xpands by the flickering fire during the night which is an unending source of inspiration for the poets, writers, painters, and sculptors, etc to create masterpieces.

The original specialty of Western Highland gongs' culture (with the significant contribution of Jrai people) recognized by UNESCO to be an orally transmitted and intangible masterpiece of human kind in Nov, 15, 2005 is the proud of this fully legendary highland. It is also the highland where I am living and working; the place where keeps images of Jrai people's daily life for my own feelings and accordingly, gives me a great inspiration to my paintings.

Concept

Speaking about Jrai's gongs is speaking about Xoang figure with echoing and urging sound of gongs and drums and joyful, boisterous bass like a magic appealing to people's hearts. Gongs sound urges people when a war rages between tribes or when the ferocious beasts destroy kaingin and village. Those are the urges of the young men to be self-sacrificing for the sake of their communities. After victory, villagers contributes meats and wines to celebrate a ceremony of welcoming victory. The gong music is also played in the bustling and joyful ceremony of "Buffalo-stabbing".



It is conceived by the Jrai people that there are always 2 worlds (world of the living and the dead or the real world and the world of deities) existing together. Therefore, gongs is the language connecting human world with the supernatural and spiritual world. Among the customs and habits, gongs play a highly important role. Gongs is played in all festival and rituals. From the ceremony of “blowing the ear” for a newborn child with hilarious, joyful gong sound to a ceremony of death with slow, sad and heavy gong sound. Village’s festivals and rituals cannot be held without gong sound. In RONG house, Gia Lang worships the Deities before the festival’s opening with the drum sound kept pace with by the gongs band’s rhythm. Young people in their festival’s costumes dance, play music and drink Can wine together. Group after group replace each other to play by the warm and flickering fire during the festival which lasts over night to next morning. That the whole village gathers to play and dance while the young couples find each other improves solidarity and brings villagers close together to overcome difficulties in their lives.

I myself want to show my feelings about these original and humane festivals of Jrai through the concept “The Festivals of Jrai people”. My initial idea is building all images of Jrai’s Festivals under different views and aspects. However, after the first semester when my professor instructs me to explore the images of young men and women’s dancing, playing music, my works focus on this important point.

The main topic through my creating process is the festival with image of gongs in immense space of Western Highland - Bazan religion where honest, rustic Jrai people are living. The jars of Can wine increase and decrease together with exciting and upsetting melody which is a source for inspiration for the creation.

Purpose of Creation

From the above source of inspiration, I study further the acts of beating the gongs and drums as well as Xoang figures following the rhythm of player to express the spirit of Jrai’s Festival. In this consistently generalized topic, young men and women are symbols of a spiritual culture who want to talk to the supernatural world through figures and gong sound. The selected images of Jrai’s plain and truthful beauty in the



works clearly show the objective of the topic. The title of the composition is the generalization of the topic carrying the spiritual and cultural symbols of Jrai tribe.

In this composition, I use the reductive shaping technique which does not focus too much on details, and just maintain the most important parts of dancer's body when dancing. The images of tools relating to festivals, daily life of Jrai people and immense and imposing space of Western Highland with red of Bazan with local people make harmonization of human and land.

Through the works, I would like to convey the image of gongs that are closely associated with sacred, unique festivals of this tribe. In order to clearly convey the notions, make a deep impression on sight, and find a suitable method with the works' content, I use simply shaping materials and techniques. The oil paint, acrylic and other substances reflex thickness and lumpiness are combined to draw a picture that is more impressed and more closed to the topic.

By painting with combination of oil paint, acrylic and other mixed media on canvas, I want to study and create an image of "The Festivals of Jrai people" in an impressing, emotional and way.

The final result is creating an artistic painting of realism that can show the festivals' spirit.

Scope of creation

1. Content

For the selected theme, to fully express content of the works, author must be the one who actually get involved. It also shows deep insights into customs and practices of the Jrai, empirical observation of ceremony practices, as well as how the Jrai organize activities during the ceremony, etc.

Through obtained empirical sketches and collected data from news, magazines and Internet, the painting layout shows in-depth knowledge of using and choosing images which are the most suitable and universal. Using lines, shapes, and motifs decorated appropriately for costumes of the Jrai in a certain relationship creates a certain way connecting with main theme of the works.



Shape of dancers, music and concrete decorative patterns through lines, colors are shown in an imbued atmosphere of the Festival. With a layout spread horizontally and some special features such as circles whose focus are made of a Neu tree, Jrai girls and boys join hands happily in the harmony of Xoang - the traditional dance. During the Festival, sound of gongs expresses main spirit of the Ceremony. Jrai people entrusted their joy and sadness through sound of gongs, and drum beats.

In some countries such as Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar, Malaysia or Indonesia, etc, people also use gongs, however, scales, rhythm, performance, beat, percussion and clapping of each nation bear different meanings. To Jrai people, these things create their own unique, and make ethnic identity for them. One more special thing is that Jrai people are not the one who produce gongs but buy them from the Kinh or some other neighboring countries. Then, they make some adjustments¹⁵ to make gongs' sound more suitable and use. Nevertheless, no matter where gongs are made, they share some similarities that are basic elements such as shape, structure, and bronze – the main material to make Gongs.

Within the scope of contents, I tried to figure out the in-depth nature and significance of the Festival in line with the importance of gongs to the spiritual life of the Jrai people through Festivals and ceremonies held in Gia Lai. Through these images, and music which create a different and unique style of Jrai people. It is not duplicated with any of other people's voice, identity. However, success of the work still depends much on the attempt made to find out appropriate ways to express meaning of the work.

2. Forms

Scope of forms of a work is defined as arrangement of practical images in a simply way and order of the layout to highlight the focus of a Gong Festival clearly. From collected materials of many different sources, along with personal understanding and actual experiences, I myself have made every effort to grasp an outline to the work. By observation, and practical experiences of vivid nature, I try to transfer into lines and atmosphere to the work in order to create a clearer picture of the Festival.

Within this scope, I take use of specific shapes and motions of the dancer's body when dancing, music and usual objects to create a unique space for the Festival. It is body's contours of Jrai young man and women, or high roofs of Rong houses, or the pattern lines on the costume they are wearing, or the musical instruments played in the



Festival. Images of Jrai girls wearing baskets filled with water or heavy bearer of dry wood reflect a vivid picture of Jrai from many angles shown the bustling and excited atmosphere of the Festival. The painting is decorated with scenes of small groups of three characters or scenes of larger groups with five to seven characters which outnumber almost other scenes.

The Festivals are often held on the area in the front yard of Rong house where all activities for the whole community. Also, the ceremony could be held near Grave house or in a House-on-stilts when a family celebrates its own. Architectural art of Jrai are shown by images of carved Neu trees or skillfully carved patterns, huge roofs with decorative patterns, roofs of believe. Roofs of House-on-stilts, or wooden statue carved to send to the dead in a grave ceremony also bear unique features of Jrai's art. In the paintings, images of human, objects and plants are arranged similar to the real space create favorable conditions for the viewers to feel the main theme. At the same time, colors used in paintings are close to the real ones in nature reinforce images of the Festival.

3. Techniques

Main techniques and materials used are oil paint and acrylic materials with the assistance of glue mixed with powder to reflex thickness and thinness to create effects of difference highlighting.

Operation of the creation

1. Data collection

1.1 Source of Inspiration

From the source of iinspiration with the theme that I chose to study, I collected data from various channels such as: practical research, taking photograph or camera as materials or collecting through newspapers, magazines, Internet the documents which are related to the content of research. Thereby, it inspires me to this theme and makes the documentary more plentiful.



An important part creating inspiration in me: It was the working process here, getting in touch with people here through festivals held by villages and in the mission to the village I had chance to learn more about the cultural activities of the Jrai community. It inspired me to make this topic.

1.2 Documentary data

During the study, the fact is a very important factor, it leaves in the mind of every witnesses unforgettable impression. After many years living and working with Jrai people in Gia Lai province, I was impressed by the lively image of the gong festival here. The celebrations, exuberant dance, the exciting sound of gongs. The image of artists drumming, playing gongs, Trung, Ting ning, Krong-put, which are the instrument, associated with the spiritual life of Jrai. The sorrowful festival, the plaintive sound of gong, desultory rhythm that shows the sadness of alive people when they farewell the dead ones to go to another world. The Jrai almost dance, sing from young childhood to old until they no longer can dance any more, do they stand outside the festival. The resources of data about the scene of activities in gong festival are collected through different angles of photographer, and cameraman. Studying some articles, pictures in some magazines, local newspapers and on the Internet, from which I can enrich the research resources.

1.3 Influence from creative work

The work which has great influence on the choice of my subject is the works of old painter - Xu Man, Bahnar ethnic. His real name is Siu Yong, he died in 2007. Xu Man artist drew his nation in the festivities with the simple lines but it was very Bahnar. My topic is also influenced by some painters who paint the Central Highlands, as well as festival of people living here.

Some works of the painter drawing about the Central Highlands.

1.4 Fine arts experiments

Quickly finding the movement shape of people drumming, playing gongs, and drafting the layout in pencil, pen nib and watercolor in the process of researching data to complete the draft, the ungroup people playing music and dancing, but still keep the topic content. Summarize all sketches in many different angles on the topic of gongs festival, filter images, and arrange the layout chose. Layout should be tested in many different angles, placement of objects, background to create reasonable.



2. Data analysis

2.1 Analysis for clarity of story, theme and concept

Summarized from the documents, images collected with the experience, the sketch, I analyze and rearrange the layout in the way I think it should be. Find the specific and compact shape of young men and women dancing in Jrai festival with strong moves while drumming and playing gongs to highlight the atmosphere of the gongs festival.

Images of the youth dancing with musical instruments such as gongs, drums combined with the high mountains atmosphere, and house in stilts standing by communal house. Images of Neu tree, the long line of wine with many curved stems, heavy bearer of water bottle or dry wood to make a fire in festival at nightfall. All the above images aim to highlight the spiritual nature of the gongs festival in Jrai life. Since ancient times, in Dam San epic, gongs and sound of gongs referred to as power.

“..... Heat the gongs

Gong vibrates softly

Heat softly for draught on ground

Heat resoundingly throughout the forest

Vibrate for the sound blowing through the mountain

Make monkeys forget to catch the tree

Make ghost forget to harm people

Make mouse, squirrels forget to dig hole

Make snake pass out of nest

Make stags, deers forget to eat grass

Make the world only know

Listen to gong of Hơ Nhi – Hơ Bhi...” (Quoted in the Dam San epic)

In writing, my works are about gong festival, the key images are always Jrai young men and women in gong festival. They play music, dance with joyful faces in Happy Festival to share the win or sadness in the sad festival for farewelling someone to another world. They all carry a common meaning: Gong is a musical instrument and it is close to the life of the Jrai, is the most important soul in all of the important ceremony of this ethnic group. From a small festival to big festival, gong is their voice,



is their confidence sending to their gods. The sound of gong is the ways to help people in the community understand each other, son, and daughter find each other to show the love.

With the idea of highlighting the significance of the gongs festival in Jrai life, I myself always search on the layout as well as color and expression in order to show the heart of the highlighted topic.

2.2 Analysis for form and symbols

Shaping factor in the work is used with lines, natural shapes which are simple, reduce what is not necessary and emphasize on suggests, describes the movement of the human body through the dance, playing music. Using lines, shapes and motifs, patterns in a relationship and make certain way relate to the subject matter of the work.

In work, the main image is Jrai young men and women dressed in festival clothes dancing happily. I find specific characteristics creating the shape as well as the body movements and colors of their traditional costumes to highlight the topic. With green, purple dress and red-brown color for skin and ground, other items close to daily life, I try to convey feelings when coming to the Jrai gongs festival.

By the feeling of my own, the way to show works is to choose the most prominent factors, the most genuine through line, color, light and dark and the main areas in layout to highlight that idea. Not focus on details but only describe broadly with simple form, pay attention to the gestures of people drumming, playing gong. Based on the practical research through actual access to see the inner depth of Jrai when holding gong festival.

With the layout which sometimes crop a small corner of the festival with several typical movement of the people playing gong, and several young women dancing. At the airy, wide open spaces vast plateau with blurry distant mountain ranges and toddlers under the roof of houses close dear. Time in the picture with many different moments of the festival as well as Jrai festival takes place any time of day. Early in the morning with the rising dawn, sunset in the brilliant sunset or at night beside the fanciful flames.



Lines, shape and color of the main characters in the painting are fused with the surrounding space to emphasize the harmony between man and nature. The Can wine bottle, the papoose full of gourd filled with water and the image of Neu tree as a symbol, etc. creating unique characteristics for the work.

2.3 Analysis for techniques

Materials used in my work are oil paint and acrylic, and additives to produce thick, thin is the solution to finish the picture on time. If using oil paint as normal work, it takes time to wait for oil paint drying, it could not catch up with the lesson schedule. It is the most limited when using oil paint in my work.

To explore, study to treat material surface treatment which offers high expressiveness to show the meaning of the subject content and to be on time, I have used many different materials to test as: ATM glue mixed with colored powder or Lac white color and then fill, spread to the face painting to produce roughness, thickness. After trying many times, I use oil paint as normal drawing, the background color, combined with acrylic to sweep up after the creating the thickness. There will be new research in the use and testing of materials in my work in the future.

3. Creation of works

From these data, along with my understanding on the subject, through deep thinking about the visual elements such as lines, forms, arrays, texture, material, etc. I conduct outlined for work

1. Step 1: Sketch the lines pencil and pen nib on paper.
2. Step 2: Select among those drafts the most suitable one for the subject matter, as well as suitable with the methods of expression.
3. Step 3: From the sketches chosen, proceed to enlarge the sketch follow the frame rate.
4. Step 4: Apply thick substance, thin as intended. When this layer dries, using oil paint, acrylic to paint.
5. Step 5: Edit the image and complete the work.



Definition of Terms

Explain some local terms

Gia Lai : A northern provinces of the Central Highlands, at an altitude of 600 m. – 800 m. from sea level, with two clear seasons. The rainy season is from April to October in the year, where most of Jrai live. There is some documentation show that the name of Gia Lai is resulted from the word Jrai by Kinh People.

Belief "animatism" : according to Jrai concept, all things have gods in it. The Mountain god is in the high mountains, Water God is in the waterfall, abyss. Rice god is in ice, etc.

Yang or Yang adai : is God or the gods in heaven.

Village : Jrai call Ploi, Bon or Buon.

Xoang : a characteristic dances of Jrai, usually female dance team, the team create circle along with the gongs team.

Buffalo-stabbing : the Jrai festival, the sacrificed Jrai is usually buffalo (with the big festival). After Chief of village spray God, the buffalo will be killed to sacrifice; so Kinh make mistake to call it "Buffalo-stabbing" Festival. Essentially, if the economy of the village is good, every festival has buffalo-stabbing.

Communal house : where the community organizes festivals, extremely important for mental and spiritual life of the Jrai. A normal communal house has background approximately 100m² large, curved roof, more than 10 meters high (some is 20 m. high). The entire wooden frame of the house is made of good wood with thick roof.

Gia Lang : also known as The Village owner, is an old man, the most prestigious person in the village, who give the most decisions in the community.

Can wine : the wine is fermented with corn, rice, millet or cassava (manioc) in the jaw. This wine is not distilled but fermented approximately 7 to 10 days, when drinking mixed with water.

Jaw : Jaw, also known as Che, Choe is made of ceramic (earthenware), used for brewing Can wine.



Pthi : also written as Po thi is a great ceremony of Jrai, Kinh call the tomb-abandonment ceremony. The aim of the festival is to farewell the spirit (new ghost) to ancestral world, to "old ghost". Only after the “tomb-abandonment ceremony” the dead could go to the ancestral world, to end all ties between the living and the dead. In the past, this ceremony usually lasts up to 7 days, now only 4 days.

Neu Tree (the pole) : which to tie animal sacrificed for God (usually buffalo) is also place to put offerings after the ceremony finished. During the festival there is always Nêu tree, they called "Gung" or "Gong" is a large wood being carved carefully, and sophisticatedly decorated, sometimes simply a bamboo with top.

Ke Khan : in the festival, eating and resting is usually at night. At this time, people gathered to hear Gia Lang tell the village history of the village with heroes fighting bravely and sacrificed themselves for the survival of the villagers in the battle with wild beasts, with animal cruelty in the legend or the enemy, etc. or the love story, the history of mountains, waterfalls where the villagers live.

Season "eat years drink months": duration from late October to early April the following year in the spring season, also known as rest season of Jrai called " Nong Ning "as the festival season. Festivals are held throughout the season.

Pleiku : the central city of Gia Lai province. Pleiku in French, Jrai is Ploi, Ploi Ku mean Ku village.

Lake Sea : in Jrai is T'nung lake which is the crater millions of years ago.



CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

According to the purposes of the creation, this thesis study focuses on “The festival of Jrai people”. To support the study purpose, the framework of process is selected accordingly. This chapter reviews related literature, covering the following topics.

1. Source of Inspiration
2. Documentary data
3. Influence from creative work
4. Fine arts experiments
5. Conceptual Framework

Source of Inspiration

The reality of this life has created a source of inspiration in my mind when I chose this topic. Originated from the extremely copious and diversified spiritual life of Jrai people, their human life has spreaded along with the Festivities: from birth, the community performs some procedures to welcome their new member with the “Blowing ears” ceremony from 3 months to one year old and many other ceremonies such as “Making bracelets” at the age of 3 and “Youth”, “Filing teeth”, “Aspising to health” and so on; when they pass away, the “Seeing off” ceremony is solemnly celebrated to send the dead to the world of Gods – the afterworld by the monumental Pthi ceremony which lasts from four to seven days. In Jrai people’s thinking and festival celebrating, the Gong is the voice, the confidence of their joy and sadness to the God (Yang). They express all their feelings to Yang to hope for their community or individual family’s wants. Their faith in Yang is private, mysterious and unique.



On studying the Cong Chieng festival of Jrai people, I was increasingly attracted by their simple, plain but magical concepts. There are some Gong sounds that are meditative, sorrowful, and plaintive in this ceremony but bustling and exciting with joy in another, which shows the talents of Jrai artists. The musical instrument was not made by Jrai people. They bought it from another place to adjust (to adjust the Gong or tune the Gong strings) the sounds in accordance with the tone to use.

The Gong came to Jrai people by different means: Chiêng Joăn casted by Kinh people was delivered to exchange buffaloes, oxen, horses, goats and so on; Chiêng Kur from Thailand, Cambodia, or Laotian Gong from Laos (it is said that the Laotian Gong is really casted by Myanmar through trade exchange to Central Highlands, to Jrai people). However, the Gong has become the great spiritual material attached to their whole life.

When the Gong resounds with the bustling drum-beat around the forest and the yellow wild sunflowers bloom everywhere, the Festive season of Jrai people begins. The season “Eating and Drinking all year long” of the highland village begins first. All people in the highland villages in the Central Highlands are excited with the Gong season. In festive season, the village patriarch, the fortune-teller, the magician discuss together to choose a date for celebrating a festival for the village. After discussion, men will be assigned to repair and clean the communal house. The young men go to the forest to collect trees for making New Year’s tree. Everybody gathers together in the communal house, wearing new beautiful skirts, loin-cloths, bronze or silver necklaces, bracelets. Valuable Gongs or big drums in every house will be collected to join in the fun.

The festival will take place after the village patriarch and the magician get the ceremony done. The village patriarch and the magician pray with Yang, talk to the buffalo (the buffaloes here are often used for sacrifices, no other use): for the rights of the community, the Buffalo is used to show our sincerity to God for the peace, abundant crops, full of pigs and poultry... then the Buffalo-stabbing festival. The head and the tail of the buffalo are put on the stage of worship. The buffalo’s flesh is equally shared to the families, both the old and the young are the same, the remainder is reserved in the



communal house for making own food of Jrai. In common mealtime, the magician prays and makes obeisance's again after setting the table. The village patriarch drinks first and then the others do. When the wine is down, everybody becomes more excited, the Gong sounds more bustling. Boys and girls hold their hands in the rhythm; when the wine is down, it will be filled; anyone who is tired will take a rest and who is hungry will eat; the food will be provided when it is off. Therefore, the festival lasts along with the Gong sounds.

The following are some pictures of Jrai people's festival.



Figure 1 Young Jrai males and females in festival traditional dress.





Figure 2 Jrai people's festival



Figure 3 Jrai people's festival



Figure 4 Jrai people's festival



Figure 5 Jrai people's festival





Figure 6 Jrai people's festival



Figure 7 Jrai people's festival



Figure 8 Jrai people's festival



Figure 9 Jrai people's festival





Figure 10 Jrai people's festival



Figure 11 Jrai people's festival



Figure 12 Jrai people's festival





Figure 13 Jrai people's festival





Figure 14 Jrai people's festival



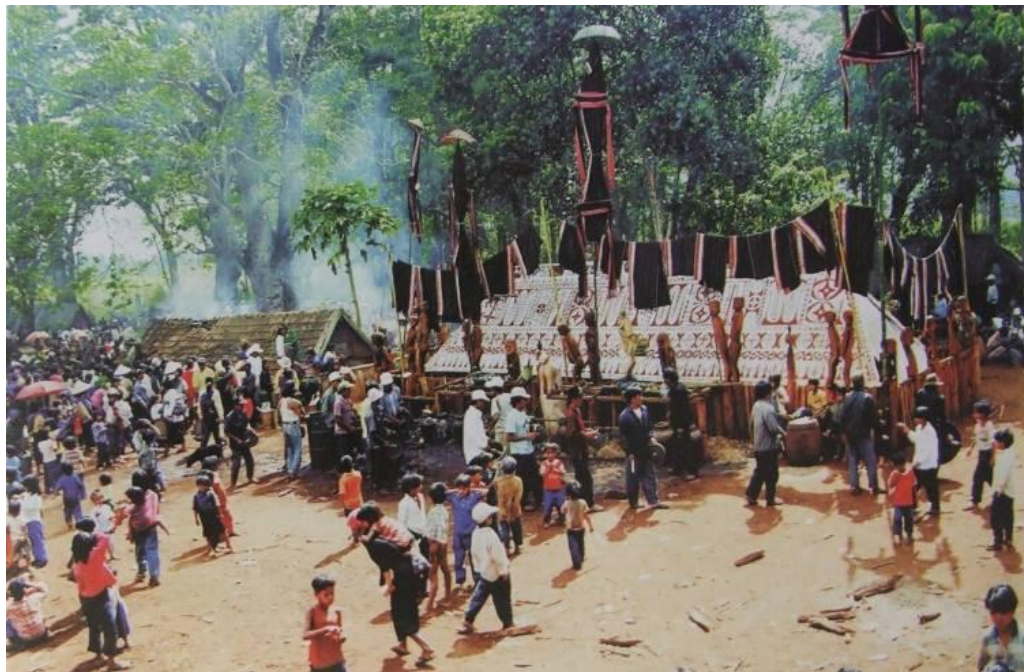


Figure 15 Jrai people's festival



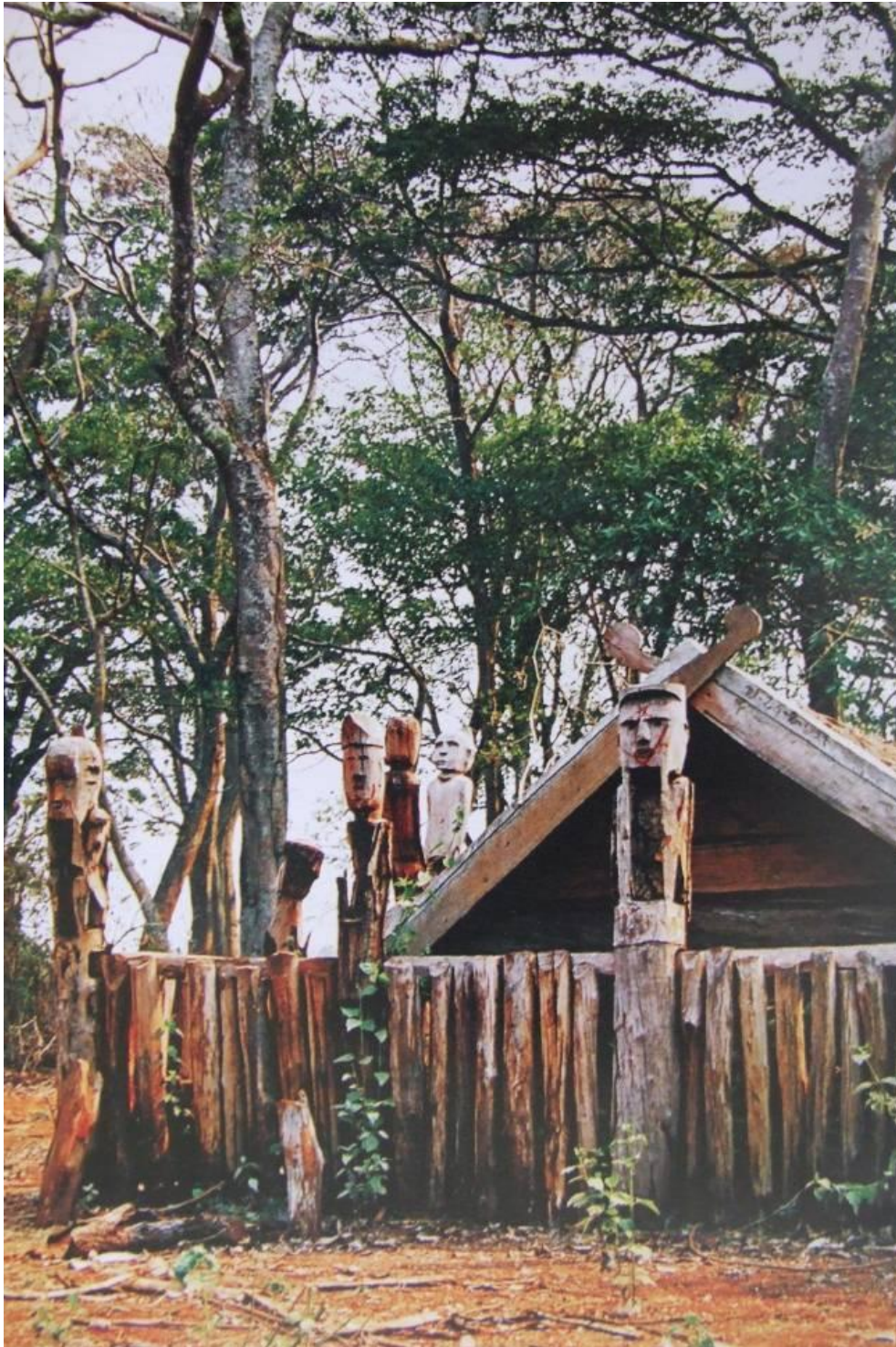


Figure 16 Jrai people's festival



Documentary Data

From the above source of inspiration, I collected and studied related information from the reality as well as the newspapers, the specialist magazines, and the Internet on the basis of the documentation and pictures together with the studies about the customs, the living habits and culture of Jrai people in order to build a picture layout and do the thesis.

During the study, I participated in Jrai people's festivals, observing and recording by my emotion, sketches, cameras, video cameras and so on to have the real pictures of their life. These factors encouraged me to conduct a study about "Festivals in the life of people Jrai", helping me with true feelings when composing the works in my way of perceiving with the breath of Jrai compatriot.

Influence from creative work

The factor which has a great influence on my creativity is the daily activities and religious culture of Jrai people. They have an extremely copious spiritual life. However, within the limited time of study, some other aspects of Jrai people's festival were not studied.

The festivals of the Jrai people are celebrated to hope for the joy, the happiness, the peace, or the sorrow and bad luck release in their life. The joy of abundant crops, new communal houses and marriage, the sadness of bad crops or other sorrows are sent to Yang. The good is sent to have the better one and the bad for the good. Through the festivals, the village patriarch and the respected village elders educate descendants on the living in harmony and solidarity to overcome difficulties in life. The joy and sorrows will be shared to have an increasingly wealthy life.

The image of vigorous healthy young men with Gongs beating drums rhythmically with beautiful young girls in the melody is the unique image of Jrai people's festivals. The image has created great works by many poets and composers.

The song "The melody night in the Central Highlands" by Nguyen Cuong seems to lead us to a festival night in enormous highlands with dancing flame, jars of Can wine and lissome Jrai girls in the melody.



“The feet, the bare feet, naked feet
 Noisily and restlessly step
 The howling flies over streams and hills
 Awakens the Gong
 Pure night, pure night!
 The communal house in dancing flame
 Ruou can , the glaze in girls’ eyes

Young men pull down the pipes without drinking
 In the rhythmical melody, the fluctuated stream of people
 Being afraid of losing each other
 E he...! The communal house in dancing flame
 What do Jrai girls sing ?
 What do they sing ? The moon rises”

The unforgettable images that the visitors keep in their mind when they come here: from the costumes of the festival with unique color to the melody, the musical instruments and especially the bare feet. They think that stepping in bare feet in the festival will send their wishes to the God and these wishes will become true.

The spiritual life of Jrai people is very copious but their material life is very simple. They only hope for abundant crops, full of pigs, goats, and buffaloes to offer God. Festivals frequently last in the season “Eating and Drinking all year long”. What they do will be served for the festivals so they are very poor. Though they are poor, they are happy and love one another. We can feel this through the song “Chapi musical instrument” by Y Moan.

“...In that place, the white goats stroll around the hills”
 A poor cottage, a peaceful house on stilts
 In that place, they are living happily and peacefully
 Anyone who is poor still has Chapi musical instrument
 When the strings trill, Raglai people are filled with emotion
 Oh, Raglai, the trees and the mountains are attached to the sound of Chapi
 Anyone who loves freedom and green forest comes here to enjoy the sound of Chapi.



They enjoy life, love one another and are hospitable. On celebrating the festivals, the Gong resounds everywhere to inform the neighboring villages of the festival and anyone who goes through the village by chance will be warmly welcomed. Many young men from different places have decided to stay here when participating in the Gong festival night. The attraction of the festivals is so miraculous. Composer Nguyen Cuong used to say

Pleiku, what a beautiful place!
 My heart is fully broken
 Dare not to look into those eyes,
 Pleiku's eyes – full Bien Ho
 In its eyes, there are rows of green pine trees
 In its eyes, there's a Sesan river
 There's the odour of rice alcohol (Can wine)
 There's a lonely flame being kindled

There are not any festivals of Jrai people without a melody night in warm flickering flame and rice alcohol – a leaven which allures many people together with the Gong sounds, the drum beat all day and night.

Through these festivals, I can, to some extent, understand the way of thinking, the concepts of the Jrai people about the outlook on life, the world view, the reality of life, the relationship between community and family, the descent, the supernatural world with Gods present in their daily life.

The education of descendants through the festivals encourages the pride of their homeland, the solidarity, the attachment to the community, the love of homeland and village, the awareness of building wealthy village, the contribution to the preservation of cultural character. This is the pride of Jrai people. This is also the main factor influencing my creativity. (In the thesis, some verses, satirical folk, and some other fine art areas such as sculpture of sepulchre of Jrai people to clarify the topic of the study).



Many artists and sculptors who studied about the festivals of ethnic groups in the Central Highlands in general and Jrai in particular have created many beautiful works for the public such as the late artist XuMan, the artist Nguyen Thanh Son and many other artists. Each artist has his own way of perceiving and expressing the topic “Festivals”, the rhythm of the Gong sounds noisily around the mountain and forest in Central Highlands. The illustrative images.



Figure 17 Artist : Mr. Xu Man

Title : Highland welcome Uncle Ho

Size : 100 x 140 cm.

Techniques : Oil color





Figure 18 Artist : Xu Man

Title : Uncle Ho in the heart of the Central Highlands

Size : 60 x 100 cm.

Techniques : Oil color





Figure 19 Artist : Xu Man

Title : Home containers for rice paddy

Size : 60 x 100 cm.

Techniques : Oil color





Figure 20 Artist : Xu Man

Title : Highlands celebrate release

Size : 100 x 220 cm.

Techniques : Oil color





Figure 21 Artist : Xu Man

Title : Uncle Ho with Highlands

Size : 80 x 120 cm.

Techniques : Oil color



Fine arts experiments

During the creative process, I made effort to find out some ways of expressing. In reference to the layout, I used the way of character arrangement as in the legal perspective, experimenting on the layout according to the current, brief and stylized figures. The layout in the current was not effective so I did not use. I did not have many big experiments upon my use of materials. I only used the oil-paint and acrylic in normal practice and then experimented with some compounds to create the thickness, the thinness, and the false materials for painting. In the third term, I used a compound of gelatin ATM and plastering powder to create the foundation before painting, combining with the float to cover and plaster the positions that needs the thickness to produce the effect of the materials. These experiments gave me the more effective expression and the picture's surface becomes more attractive in materials. The images of characters in my work in the experiments afterwards were simplified, stylized and hemmed with lines to increase the strength of Jrai young men in Gong festival.

The deep blue and purple blue were used to describe the festival costumes of Jrai people. The dark brown was used to describe the skin which indicated that the people are very hard-working and close to the nature. The brown red was used as the foundation of picture to describe the color of the basalt soil of the huge highlands. In some works afterwards I will find out another way of expressing to increase the attractiveness of the work.

Conceptual Framework

1. Idea, concept

The start of my creative work is the idea of painting the activities of ethnic groups in the Central highlands in terms of many aspects of life, not only Gong festival. After a period of being supervised by lecturers, I decided to form the concept of my creative work about the festivals, especially the Gong Festival of Jrai people. This topic



has gone through my creative process and with this work I would like to highlight the picture of festival, a unique character of this ethnic group. The dances and the sounds of the Gong is the voice of faith sent to God in religious life or the confidence of joy and sadness in life to hope for the saving and sharing of Gods.

2. Form

After collecting the documentation about the topic, I conducted an outline for my creative work. I studied how to arrange the layout to express the spirit of the festival, the characters in the work from near to far distance, the main group, the secondary group in the harmony.

The lines of the work were chosen from the real lines - the dancing movement, the drum beating, the gong striking...All were collected to put into the appropriate layout. The image of the dancers and bandsmen in the festival was described in different angles and positions to create a lively work.

The space in the picture can describe the venue of festival with enormous mountains and forests extended endlessly in the Central Highlands, some houses on stilts or a corner of the roof of the big communal house decorated with patterns of Jrai people. The festivals cannot lack the image of pole and jars of rice alcohol with curved pipes next to the shining black gourds full of cool water. These are expressed realistically but reduced details with specific style to emphasize the typical factors that create the unique character of the festival.

Colors and decorative lines originated from the reality of this life. The costumes of the festivals were embroidered and sophisticatedly decorated with black green, purple green patterns on skirts or loin-cloths. The patterns on the costumes include two colors, red-yellow and black-white. I used these colors as the main colors in my creative work.

3. Media and techniques

In the experimental process, I used the oil-paint and acrylic to draw so there was no significant change in the techniques of using creative material. Afterwards, I have developed another technique by using a compound to cover and plaster the pictures to create the thickness, the thinness, or the roughness of the picture's surface. This technique has produced more or less effect of the material.



4. Arts style

The art form used in creative work is realistic style. The images in the work are closely related to the real images but simplified and ordered in accordance with the layout of the picture. During the creative process, I have followed what was mentioned in the topic to describe the atmosphere of the festival with expressive images, the cut layout according to my own angles and viewpoints. The works, to some extent, express my feeling and emotional development about the festivals of Jrai people. I used the common painting method with the oil-paint, acrylic and other materials to express my own feeling to the festival of Jrai people and the realistic style to describe simple and selective images. With this style, I would like to convey what I perceived from the festival of Jrai people truthfully, closely and vividly. In addition, I would like to express my awareness as well as emotion to the manners and customs of those living in the Highlands filled with sunshine and festivals.



CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Sketches

Original from the documents and painting on festival of Jrai people, I outline my work. Outlining is a very important process in drawing leading the nice, good-looking layout. The second process is to choose the best outline from various topic outlines. The outline with different colors and then the best color will be chosen and viewed to enlarge as a big picture. Outlining is a foundation to draw. To show the idea in the perfect work, many outlines must be chosen and viewed the process of idea development in the whole project.

Outlining is the good condition to self figure out the methods to transfer the feeling on the topic through shaping factors as well as the fine- art manner to show the best content and outside form.

The process for completing the outlines will be handled perfectly and closely with the feeling of topic, I plan a line of thought as follows

1. What does the topic content belong to the festival of Jrai People ?
2. What is feeling activity of the people when play Gong in the festival ?
3. In what form of art the ideal will be transferred ?
4. What material used in drawing ?
5. What kind of necessary document is used in drawing ?
6. The rate for frame.

The process will be complemented in these processes

Using the pencil, iron pen, watercolor to outline the trait, main imagine on the small frame, adjust the picture, a group of main and secondary characters.

1. After choosing the outline, it will be attached in the ready frame.
2. To implement to line background substance in necessary position.
3. After background substance is dry, it will be faced with a coat of background color. The light or dark color is based on the outline.



4. Start drawing, the drawing process will be adjusted and revised to make a perfect work for its color and layout. The materials for drawing is oil paint and acrylic.



Figure 22 Sketch of pencil, iron pen to outline the trait



Figure 23 Sketch of pencil, iron pen to outline the trait





Figure 24 Drawing is oil paint and acrylic



Figure 25 Drawing is oil paint and acrylic



Figure 26 Drawing is oil paint and acrylic



Figure 27 Sketch of pencil



Figure 28 Drawing is oil paint and acrylic





Figure 29 Drawing is oil paint and acrylic



Material and Equipment

1. Tool all necessary equipment such as paint brushes with all kinds of size, drawing knife, frame, and fabric painting.

2. Material oil paint and Acrylic, fabric painting and composition of picture background. All is available at the market, it is easy to find and buy.

Material and tool are used in the common way. Only the background lining is made from composition of facing wall power and mixture ATM glue.



Figure 30 power and mixture ATM glue





Figure 31 Material



Figure 32 Material





Figure 33 Material

Work creation

In the process of drawing, I self develop much about the experiment of material and style at the second step of the third term. The experiment of substance creator or image border of this work is a development in innovative research.

From the deep feeling of Gong Festival of Jrai people and outlines on the topic and the analysis to experience itself as well as the board of examiners, lecturer . Through the way of making the trait, picture, color, material... I find out the process and methods to show the good work. However, many elements need to be improved according to the board of examiner's opinion.

In the process of implementing a long term project, many problems of initial trial works have not been handled well. The detail is shown by board of examiners for the following solutions.



1. The period and place for festival to show their own feeling.
2. Divide the color among background ,characters, items.
3. The feeling shown on the characters' surface.

The space for festival is not drawn in details. Some initial pictures are general in color and technique for monotonous and unexpressive material. The contribution of lectures, as well as the awareness of learning from friends and self-evaluation step by step, my limitation is gradually improved.

The topic's thinking as well as dedication's study in the near future, the elements for picture, trait, color and material will be shown more condensely and perfectly. Festival's content and image are indicated more clearly to create the good impression for version, and show clearly the work's idea.

The frame of work is made with the sizes of 1.25 x 170 cm., 150 x 300 cm., 170 x 250 cm. on the fabric painting in oil paint and acrylic.

The topic "festival in the live of the Jrai" helps me to handle my work. The content is always innovated with different frames and layouts. Practicing and thinking of the topic support me with adjustment and improvement of limitation in the implementation. Thanks to evaluation and distribution of conductor , board of examiners , material usage skill and the other elements toward color of trait, whole picture will gradually adjusted condensely to form the own style all pieces of work show their fitness of the content and outside form, of spiritual concept of Jrai's daily activity.

To Research, compose, draw the festival activity of Jrai People is known as a conservation of specific cultural values of this ethnic people. The specific features in the spiritual life related to daily activity, a score part of the people. Festival and Gong is a spiritual and important element when mention about Jrai.



CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Works before thesis

For works first time, iconic characters in the work has not been solved, the rate, composition factors are not dealt with the subject content, so the lack of focus, not highlighted the topic. In terms of visual forms is still not solved. The layout is not the focus, lines and colors have not been moderated to create harmony. The work is to highlight the subject matter.



Figure 34 Works before thesis phase 1



Under the guidance of teachers and the comments, the council proposed test works. I had to adjust and overcome these limitations in the works for next time. Some work has shown relatively good, but the tests work the next time the opinions of the council for my work still encounter many limitations to overcome. Some specific comments follows.

1. Should clearly indicate the amount of time in each time to see the feelings, different emotions.
2. Atmosphere should be shown separately as perceived by students. Do not paint formulas, according to their own habits.
3. Can be distributed to the background color with skin color, faces, human figures, objects and natural elements and materials - in his house Because now all the tone of these ingredients are the same and too rigid.
4. New work stands at the show the gesture. Not showing much emotion. Such as joy, happiness, faith ...
5. Pay attention to detail. To supplement and perfect the skills and techniques in the process of composing.



Figure 35 Works before thesis phase 1

The comments of the instructors, along with a sense of collected experience and assessment work through each stage, the limitations of my works are gradually overcome. However, some files are still having problems on the layout, not a refined processing and finishing. With the help of dedicated instructors some of the work has achieved relatively high results.



Figure 36 Works before thesis phase 2

The elements of the array, lines, colors and materials are presented in a concise and complete than in the work of the year II. Festival Image shown more clearly and make a good impression on a visual, as well as clear expression of ideological content of the work. However, these works still exist some problems in the form of expression, the face of the character is not shown the joy, the happiness of the festival and the motion has not been solved, a the opinion of the board members for comments should focus on the shape of the character movement to create greater efficiency for the work.

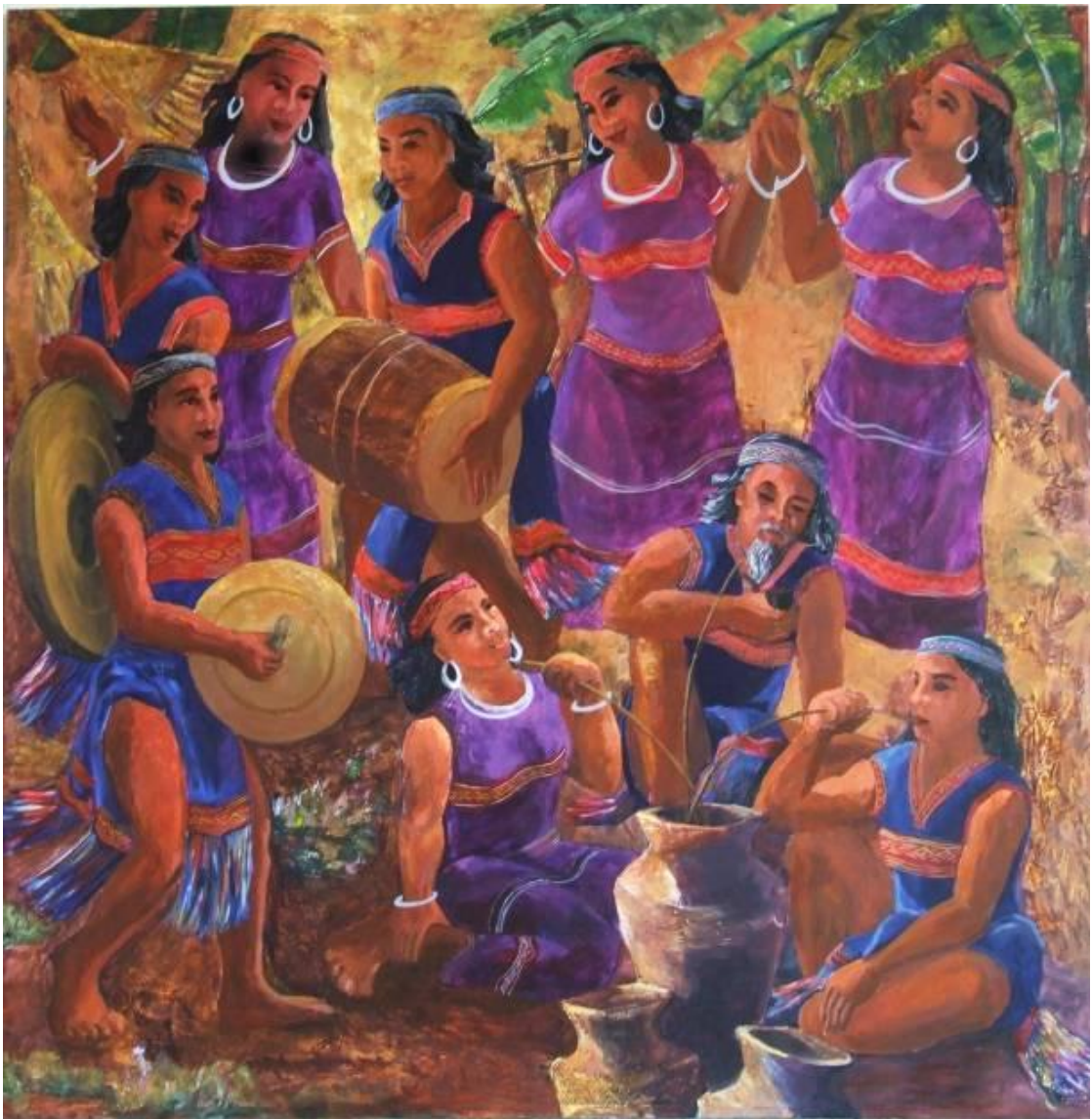


Figure 37 Works before thesis phase 2

Thesis works

From past experience is drawn through the experimental work, thanks for the comments of the instructors and the assessment of the council through the inspections. I have overcome the limitations in terms of content and expression. The works created during this thesis has highlighted the topic. Expressions are also developed high nature expression. But there are still certain shortcomings should be remedied as the dance movements, gestures, facial expressions of the characters.



Figure 38 Thesis works phase 1





Figure 39 Thesis works phase 1



Figure 40 Thesis works phase 1



With the board works good reviews and comments for me to develop visual style so I had to explore and further improvement for the thesis work. The works are created on the emotional circuits throughout the festival image of ethnic Jrai. It was the image of the young men and women dressed in Jrai healthy fun festival with round cavity in the endless festival.

Along with images of young men and women dancing, brandishing type gong drum solo to the rhythm of the festival is a clear picture of the roof looming in the forest floor into the mountains the vast, majestic.



Figure 41 Thesis works phase 1

My initial idea is building all images of Jrai's Festivals under different views and aspects. However, after the first semester when my professor instructs me to explore the images of young men and women's dancing, playing music, my works focus on this important point.

The main topic through my creating process is the festival with image of gongs in immense space of Western Highland - Bazan religion where honest, rustic Jrai people are living. The jars of C  n wine increase and decrease together with exciting and upsetting melody which is a source for inspiration for the creation.



Figure 42 Thesis works phase 2



Figure 43 Thesis works phase 2





Figure 44 Thesis works phase 2





Figure 45 Thesis works phase 2

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION

During the present composition topics, I try to stick to the subject matter. And across the board examinations are comments from that review experiences to perform better in subsequent works. Process of always working with instructors to the quality of the work better and more clearly the subject matter.

1. Conclusion
2. Discussion
3. Recommendation

Conclusion

During the creative process, I made effort to find out some ways of expressing. In reference to the layout, I used the way of character arrangement as in the legal perspective, experimenting on the layout according to the current, brief and stylized figures. The layout in the current was not effective so I did not use. I did not have many big experiments upon my use of materials. I only used the oil-paint and acrylic in normal practice and then experimented with some compounds to create the thickness, the thinness, and the false materials for painting. In the third term, I used a compound of gelatin ATM and plastering powder to create the foundation before painting, combining with the float to cover and plaster the positions that needs the thickness to produce the effect of the materials. These experiments gave me the more effective expression and the picture's surface becomes more attractive in materials. The images of characters in my work in the experiments afterwards were simplified, stylized and hemmed with lines to increase the strength of Jrai young men in Gong festival.

The deep blue and purple blue were used to describe the festival costumes of Jrai people. The dark brown was used to describe the skin which indicated that the people are very hard-working and close to the nature. The brown red was used as the



foundation of picture to describe the color of the basalt soil of the huge highlands. In some works afterwards I will find out another way of expressing to increase the attractiveness of the work.

Discussion

The start of my creative work is the idea of painting the activities of ethnic groups in the Central highlands in terms of many aspects of life, not only Gong festival. After a period of being supervised by lecturers, I decided to form the concept of my creative work about the festivals, especially the Gong Festival of Jrai people. This topic has gone through my creative process and with this work I would like to highlight the picture of festival, a unique character of this ethnic group. The dances and the sounds of the Gong is the voice of faith sent to God in religious life or the confidence of joy and sadness in life to hope for the saving and sharing of Gods.

After collecting the documentation about the topic, I conducted an outline for my creative work. I studied how to arrange the layout to express the spirit of the festival, the characters in the work from near to far distance, the main group, the secondary group in the harmony.

The lines of the work were chosen from the real lines - the dancing movement, the drum beating, the gong striking...All were collected to put into the appropriate layout. The image of the dancers and bandsmen in the festival was described in different angles and positions to create a lively work.

Recommendation

Through the work as well as topics selected for the thesis, I try to convey all his grasp and understand the spiritual life of the Jrai in the festival. The theme of the festival Jrai endless inspiration for artists loving liberal on the vast land of majestic plateau full of sunshine wind.

I hope to get the show works better on the subject of Jrai festivals and have more time to delve on this subject.



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APPENDIX



VITA



VITA

NAME	Mr. Cao Duy Linh
DATE OF BIRTH	July 4, 1970
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ADDRESS	92 Nguyen Thai Binh, Pleiku, Gialai, Vietnam
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EDUCATION	
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