

# ISMAIL MAT HUSSIN AND KWAN CHIN'S “KOTA BAHRU MARKET”

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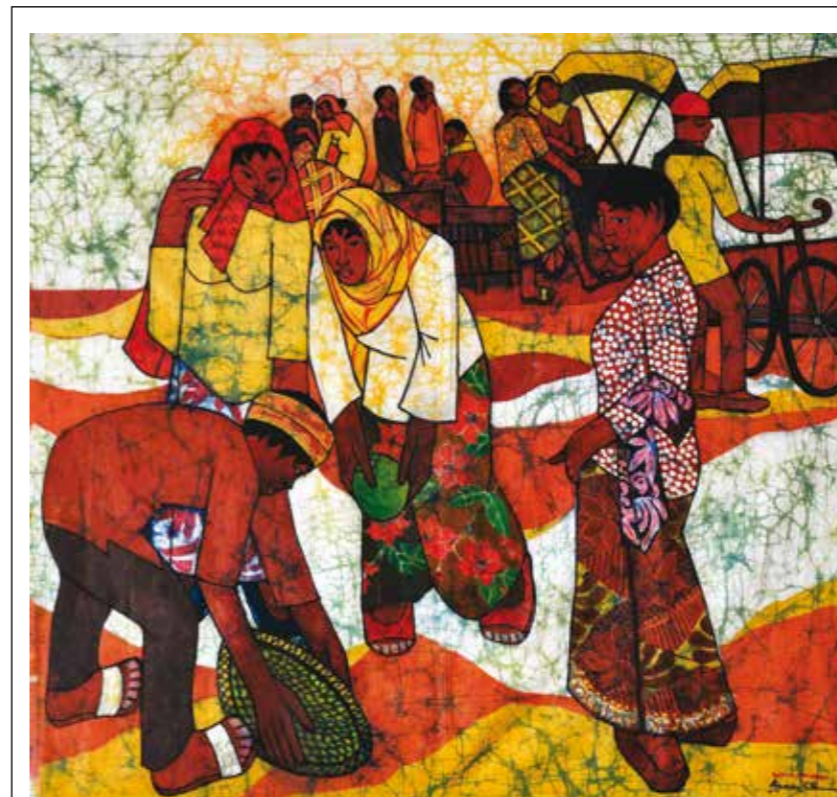
Ismail Mat Hussin signing the batik

In the 1960's, there was a wave of experimentation with batik painting among local artists and it produced many legends, including Khalil Ibrahim, Datuk Chuah Thean Theng and Chua Siew Teng.

Khalil Ibrahim, Malaysia's batik painting master soon inspired Ismail Mat Hussin's foray into this art medium. Batik painting came naturally to Ismail, having patience in spades and his innate talent for combining warm and earthy hues from a restricted palette of colours to illustrate beautifully the everyday rural scenes.

While Khalil was trained in rendering human figures and Ismail followed suit, he did not embody Khalil's stylised depiction. Instead, Ismail's figures illustrate real-looking people. Ismail's batik paintings may be found in the art collections of the National Art Gallery Kuala Lumpur, Petronas, Bank Negara Malaysia, ESSO Malaysia and Maybank, among others, including a handful of notable individuals such as N.A. Rahman, Tan Sri Abdullah Ayob, Muhammad Haji Saleh and Tan Sri Eric Chia.

Kwan Chin, on the other hand, is an outstanding batik painter whose works depict a hint of the Nanyang style. His paintings generally feature bright atmospheres, paired with excellent contrast of colours. He was briefly a commercial artist, then turned to oil painting and finally ventured into batik art, as a professional artist. The beauty of this artist's works is his ability to capture the essence of wayang kulit (puppet shows), the activities of the Malaysian wet markets, the shoreline with fishermen, the farmers with fruits, family lives and the likes, reflecting a true Malaysian artist. Kwan Chin's works have been exhibited locally and internationally, and collected by Bank Negara Malaysia, Penang Batik Painting Museum and other institutions, besides private collectors.



Kota Bharu Market unfinished batik.

**Ismail Mat Hussin & Kwan Chin**  
Kota Bharu Market, 2014  
Batik 106 x 113 cm  
**RM 8,000 - RM 16,000**  
KLAS Art Auction 15 April 2018  
Sale XXXI



**Kwan Chin**  
Market Scene, 1968  
Batik 53.5 x 152.5 cm  
**SOLD - RM 15,950.00**  
KLAS Art Auction 30 September 2012  
Edition I

## THE COLLABORATION OF ISMAIL MAT HUSSIN AND KWAN CHIN

Ismail Mat Hussin and Kwan Chin are two pioneers who stand shoulder to shoulder among legends and are synonymous with the Malaysian batik painting scene. Both, Ismail and Kwan Chin ventured into batik almost during the same period, 1960's and 70's.

“Kota Bharu Market” (2014) is a masterpiece forged by the artistic brilliance of both Ismail and Kwan Chin respectively. It's almost as if it is meant to be that two artists who share the same fervour for batik painting and who catapulted into the art scene at almost the same period would collaborate on this painting. This painting in its inception, was a mere drawing on a batik fabric, executed by Ismail in its totality in the 1990's and was left unfinished.

Seeing the need to bring life to his work, Ismail agreed for his work to be completed by Kwan Chin in 2014, not before signing the drawing. Kwan Chin, in his figurative style added his flavour and his niche of using vibrant, contrasting colours to the painting, which highlighted Ismail's drawing of the rural setting in Kota Bharu. The result is a distinct, aesthetically-pleasing and heart-warming painting that evokes nostalgia among its viewers.