

Abau and Libau the Mythic Warrior from Saribas

By

Author: Aloysius Yapp

Co-author: Lim Chai Kim

Introduction

This is a practice led research conducted by using the local mythic warrior from Saribas. Saribas is an area in Borneo Island. Lots of folklores have been told here from generation to generation throughout the century.

A myth is a traditional story, especially one concerning the early history of a group of people or explaining some natural or social phenomenon, typically involving supernatural beings or events.

Myth

The term **mythology** can refer either to a collection of myths (**mythos**, e.g., Inca mythology) or to the study of myths (e.g., comparative mythology). According to Alan Dundes, **myth** is a sacred narrative explaining how the world and humankind assumed their present form, although, in a very broad sense, the word can refer to any traditional story. Bruce Lincoln defines myth as "ideology in narrative form". Myths may arise as either truthful depictions; overelaborated accounts of historical events; allegory for or personification of natural phenomena; or as an explanation of ritual. They are used to

convey religious or idealized experience, to establish behavioral models, and to teach. Early rival classifications of Greek mythos by Euhemerism, Plato's *Phaedrus*, and Sallust were developed by the Neo-Platonists and revived by Renaissance mythographers as in the *Theologies Mythologicae* (1532). Nineteenth-century comparative mythology reinterpreted myth as evolution towards science (E. B. Tylor), "disease of language" (Max Müller), or misinterpretation of magical ritual (James Frazer). Later interpretations rejected opposition between myth and science, such as Jungian archetypes, Joseph's "metaphor of spiritual potentiality", or Lévi-Strauss's fixed mental architecture. Tension between Campbell's comparative search for Monmouth or Ur-myth and anthropological mythologists' skepticism of universal origin has marked the 20th century. Further, modern mythopoeia such as fantasy novels, manga, and urban legend, with many competing artificial mythoi acknowledged as fiction, supports the idea of myth as ongoing social practice.

Borneo

Borneo is the third largest island in the world and the largest island in Asia. At the geographic centre of Maritime Southeast Asia, in relation to major Indonesian islands, it is located north of Java, west of Sulawesi, and east of Sumatra.

The island is divided among three countries: Brunei and Malaysia on the north and Indonesia to the south. Approximately 73% of the island is Indonesian territory. In the north, the Malaysian states of Sabah and Sarawak, along with the federal territory of Labuan, make up about 26% of the island. The sovereign state of Brunei, located on the north coast, comprises about 1% of Borneo's land area. Borneo is home to one of the oldest rainforests in the world.

According to ancient Chinese, Indian and Javanese manuscripts, western coastal cities of Borneo had become trading ports by the first millennium. In Chinese manuscripts, gold, camphor, tortoise shells, hornbill ivory, rhinoceros horn, crane crest, beeswax, lakawood (a scented heartwood and root wood of a thick liana, *Dalbergia parviflora*), dragon's blood, rattan, edible bird's nests and various spices were described as among the most valuable items from Borneo. The Indians named Borneo *Suvarnabhumi* (the land of gold) and also *Karpuradvipa* (Camphor Island). The Javanese named Borneo *Puradvipa*, or Diamond Island. Archaeological findings in the Sarawak river delta reveal that the area was a thriving trading centre between India and China from the 500s until about 1300 AD.

The Story

Abau and Libau lived in the bushes of Tansang, Saribas. Libau started as a normal human being, a hunter, who later gained super natural powers from a Jin in Eng'muk. Abau is a creature about the size of an adult elephant with magic powers. It lived at the foot of Mount Keramat. The people of Mount Keramat treat Abau like their pet. Only the people of Mount Keramat are able to control Abau. Abau is able to bring humans to another dimension to gain knowledge in war. In particular, knowledge on the practice of beheading people. Libau tried his best to reach Mount Keramat to seek Abau. He managed to convince the people of Mount Keramat to gain the trust of Abau. The condition was that he needed to achieve it by himself. After years of practice and determination, at last he managed to control the creature and gained support from the forces in Tansang. Libau later became a warrior in Sebyan which is warlord stronghold in another dimension. After that, Abau and Libau went back to the real dimension and led the people of various places in the land of Borneo against the tyranny of the northern Black Cave. Many lives were sacrificed until the last

blood from Libau brought the last force from the South led by his son, Tubau. They won the war and peace was finally restored on their land. This is the mythic warrior story told from generation to generation in Borneo.

The Background

The researcher set up a study which consists of a combination of myth and new media.

Long before human knew how to preserve knowledge using a proper education system, they used a storyteller. The storyteller travelled from village to village, town to town with the cause of delivering messages and information.

During the era of feudalism or kingship, education was only delivered in palaces. Noble families attended studies through the in-house trainer or teacher. Besides trainers or teachers, the storytellers were very important during that time. They share with their audience via dramatic narrations.

New media are those media which consists of practices of technical and structural. For example in this study the research is done using concept and comic to deliver the storyline/plot.

Practice was carried out from the stage of ground study in Saribas area for three years from 2000-2003.

Then the survey is from tracking sources from longhouse to longhouse and crossing division to collect as much data as possible from the local folks.

Research Stages

The first stage of research was carried out lot by collecting data from the locals. From south to north Saribas, there were several practices which look alike yet there are differences.

In the second stage, the researcher brought back the data and sources to studio for the process of decoding, recording or documentation. From year 2004 to 2010, the researcher used a lot of resources to transfer the data into digital form, so that storage practice can help to preserve the first-hand information.

From year 2010-2012, the researcher tried to adapt the decoded data into the form of visual interpretation. In this practice, the researcher used the understanding of visualization from written and verbal source to convert into a sequence of visuals and images.

By using images, the researcher mind mapped the sources. Those images needed original data to back up the origin. The theory of fidelity of transformation is the theory from adaptation to assist in this stage.

Stage three directed by the project preparation. In this stage, all data from the adaptation version needs to put into the format of storyline sequence. Apparently the storyline has to come out before preparing the art.

The Modules

S-M-C-R is the module of study. This is to encompass my research towards the significant practice in practice led research. It is a loan module from the original theory of communication, known as Magic bullet theory.

S- Source, the researcher sourcing the material from local myth, folklore and some other local content such as, the story of Libau, the myth in the South of Borneo.

M- Media, the media introduced in this study is new media- concept art and comics.

C-Channel, the research proposing the concept art and comics is presented online in deviantArt.

R- Receiver, the receiver in this context is for the young generation who loves concept art and comics.

The Methodology

The working methodology is to conduct a production for concept art and comic. Developing a pipeline for working environment is needed in this matter.

From beginning of the practice, the research prepared a production pipeline which consists of mind mapping, data collecting and sourcing for electronic and printed material for reference. Then data processing stage took place. The collected data and material needs to be analyzed. Documentation is the next step to carry the tasks of preparation for visualization practice.

Visualization practice takes place after documentation. The art works produced in this stage are the sketches and drafts. By using the sketches, the production process can easily set up a good drafting for production journal. The main purpose in this stage is to introduce production journal which compiles the concept, synopsis, script, storyboarding, character design, background design, props design and environment design.

After the stated workflow, the next move is concept production. In this context, digital approach took place. All sketches needs to be inked and cleaned up then scanned into digital form. From digital format, the images can be opened in image processing software which contains a lot of functions to process the images. The researcher used Adobe Photoshop in this matter.

By using AdobePhotoshop, an image is further cleaned up. The quality of lines is leveled up before coloring. After level up, to make sure everything is in a clean environment, the curve function is used. Then the Alpha Channel panel played a main role to clear the background. This is a normal practice in concept art preparation. The next move is saving the file into the correct and prepared folder and name after the process for documentation on a computer.

Concept art is the presentation art which consists of the concept behind the entire set up for the story. By following the sequence of shots adapted from script, the concept artist prepares the painting, sketch or drawing to portray the art. It's a storytelling process using visuals.

After the preparation of concept art, comes the creation of comics. By using the concept art, comics are put up as strip presentation or by using boxes which tell a story by frame.

The Finding

The finding of this practice-led research is a sequence of concept art and comic about Abau and Libau. The visualization process in this study is the main focus toward the concept art and comics output. From concept, idea, synopsis, script, storyboarding, production journal and lastly the concept art and comics were the main stream of pipeline for the production. From data collection, analysis, documentation until storyboarding, theory of adaptation was used. It is a complex and structural practice known as Art engineering in the context of BorneoArt from Midlewood, Borneo.

Recommendation

This research is toward the objective of concept art and comic presentation. It is a good start for production journal for animation. The researcher hopes that this study can become a guide for new media, 2D or 3D CGI animation production.

Conclusion

This is a practice led research which the outcome is an artwork presentation. In this context, a production of concept art and comics is the finding. Besides that is also a compilation of the production pipeline by-products from concept until the final output. This research is also about the working methods. Research modules also play a main role to discuss the production of new media presentation, for instance concept art and comic. Lastly it is also a preparation for 2D and 3D CGI animation production in future.

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