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DD3016 History of Design

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***IV) What ideals, principles, motto and design qualities might you use to describe and define the next emergent design trend valid over the next 5 years, current to your practices? What name would you give to the design movement?***

### **The Rojak Movement**

The Rojak Movement: Picking what you like, adding however much you like, then mixing them into a unified dish. Inelegant as it may be, I find this term most befitting of the current design trend that would remain relevant over the next five years.

As the word Rojak, which also means "mixture" in colloquial Malay, suggests, this emerging movement is an eclectic one - a combination of different ideas and styles. Affecting all Design Art, works during this trend would be more self-absorbed, with designers creating what they personally want, be it "art for art's sake"<sup>1</sup> ("Art for Art's Sake - Modern Art Terms and Concepts.") or for a larger social, economic, or environmental cause. With designers taking from previous movements and experimenting at the same time, large groups of similar style tend to emerge, but not one main encompassing style.

This rise of this movement could perhaps be attributed to the lack of a defining turning point. Taking a look at a few examples like the rise in Modernism, which came as a result of the industrial revolution, end of world war one and advancement in science in technology (ArtQuid. The Modern Movement, Art History), and Dadaism, which saw the horrors of the world war and thus expressed anti-war views ("Dada Movement Overview and Key Ideas." The Art Story), perhaps it may be said that War and Technological Advancement are major turning points in history that pushed the change in art movements.

The current era can be said to have achieved a level of peace and stability better than the years before (Science X. "The World Has Become More Peaceful." ). While no doubt fortunate, the absence of a world-wide war, or something equivalent in its influence, has

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<sup>1</sup>The notion that art has its own value and should be judged apart from any themes which it might touch on, such as morality, religion, history, or politics

brought about a form of stagnancy in design art. This, along with a steady increase in technology instead of a sudden one, has resulted in less need to come together to express a single common thought through the means of the arts. Rather, this peace and freedom have allowed many to venture and design at a more personal level, fighting for their own causes, or simply enjoying and creating.

With this peace, also comes a higher standard of living and education. More can afford to learn the arts and discover the history of design. This increase in knowledge and exposure to different styles and movements would allow designers of the Rojak movement to experiment; mixing and matching various styles together.

This is not a new phenomenon and can be seen in PostModernism, where artists consciously borrow from a range of styles from the past (Tate. "Postmodernism – Art Term."). Even in architecture, the eclectic movement of the 19th century ("Eclecticism in Architecture." Study.com) suggests this mix and match of styles, piecing different movements to create something new. This pushes the idea of a mixed styled movement having existed before, and perhaps we have once again fallen back to this age of experimentation and play.

This mix of styles within the movement is evident in the results from a simple search of emerging trends online. In one article alone, numerous trends are often stated instead of one main trend. In graphic design, minimalism may be mentioned with its contradicting counterpart abstractionism in the same article (McCready, Ryan, et al. "8 Biggest Graphic Design Trends For 2020 & Beyond [Infographic]."). Product design shows the same, with suggestions of 3D art and its opposing handmade products being on the rise (Rizzato, Elisabetta, et al. "The Biggest Design Trends Now 2020 as Seen at the A'Design Award."), not forgetting eco-designs ("This Year, Hang Your Rugs on Your Walls to Be on Trend." South China Morning Post).

Hence, the key characteristics of the Rojak Movement would be as follows.

It is a movement of experimentation and freedom, with a high level of self absorbance, allowing designers to create what they wish, using the styles they prefer, all to express their own personal thoughts, feelings or activism. A lack of one main trend is evident in this movement, instead having an abundance of contrasting designs.

Works created may be in an attempt to push new boundaries or fall back to old ones in a form of joy, experimentation, or attempt to prove their point (Elizabeth. "What Art Movement Are We in Today."), forming a cohesive idea of expression of thoughts and activism.

This is ties in line with my current practices, whereby I often create for creation's sake with no care for the materials I use, but at the same time, tackle environmental and social problems in others, opting for only recycled materials. This contradiction and constant swapping of goal appears evident in the newer designers in particular, where we delve into constant experimentation, occasionally creating for a larger purpose, yet also self-indulging at other times, with no one constant fixed principle. This brings about a new era of experimental and volatile ideologies, which I personally believe will remain strong for the years to come, all until a larger breakthrough in technology or threat of nuclear war (Miles, Tom. "Risk of Nuclear War Now Highest since WW2, UN Arms Research Chief Says.") disrupts this stagnancy.

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