**Latiff, Jaafar (1937- )**

Jaafar Latiff, born in Singapore, established his reputation as an abstract artist in the 1960s. He was self-taught and his talent saw him easily find work as an art educator, a role he has continued for much of his career. After experimenting with realism then abstract painting, Latiff turned to the medium of batik– a well-known traditional technique for decorating textiles with strong ties to Malay and Indonesian identity– in the late 1960s. Latiff integrated the conventional techniques of batik with his abstracted art style, creating contemporary batik patterns that challenged preconceived ideas of tradition. He has continued to focus on the batik technique, further stretching the boundaries between tradition and change. Latiff’s abstractions are characterised by his generous use of colour in large swathes as if working on a canvas. Indeed, he experiments with using acrylics in his batik works. More recently Latiff has been including Islamic motifs in some of his designs, adding a further layer of complexity to the understanding of batik, tradition and cultural change. Recognised internationally as a leader in batik design and innovation, Latiff’s work is exhibited regularly in major exhibitions and his work is found in public and private collections.

**References and further reading**

Ministry of Culture. (1982) *Singapore Artists*, Singapore: Co-published by the Singapore Cultural Foundation and Federal Publications.

Kolesnikov-Jessop, S. (2005, Oct 01). ‘With steady hands and eyes, batik artists make their mark.’ *International Herald Tribune*. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/318710786?accountid=8330>