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# Expression and Visual Narration of The Jakarta Marunda Batik

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## ABSTRACT

Marunda batik is a centre originating from the empowerment of residents affected by relocation in the Marunda flat in North Jakarta. The identity of Marunda motif finally become an artwork with visual expressions and narratives in the perspective of seeing the nature and environment around Jakarta. Coastal expressions because they are geographically close to the coast, because the Marunda people are not born of coastal culture. This method uses qualitative methods and field exploration, which emphasizes the findings of data in the field holistically. Focused on batik which tells the story because this batik can respond situationally, grow and develop in the middle of a tightly competing industry but can find its own character. We use cultural theory as an approach to analyse visual expressions and narratives on Marunda batik because of the expression of the constituent factors, such as points, lines, fields, colours and textures that form a series of stories.

**Keywords:** Expression, Visual Narration, Jakarta Marunda

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In the history of batik in Indonesia, batik in Jakarta region has its own development. Batik in Jakarta is has been well-known hotel para Giu known since the colonial era, Hartono Sumarsono (83), a batik collector in lives and owner of a workshop owner in Bendungan Hilir-Jakarta, explained that the batik industry had grown rapidly in Karet Tengsin, Palmerah, Kebon Kacang, and Bendungan Hilir. But, along with economic growth and several regulations regarding industrial estate governance, finally many areas that were originally the centres of batik in the Betawi region shifted towards outside Jakarta. Saidi (2012), explained that batik motifs that have developed are de Nabang, Langgara, Cincau, Meja Nyai, Mak ronda, Pucuk Rebung, Jamblang and others. In general, batik Betawi has bright colors, its characteristics include red, orange and yellow [1].

In a history it is told that batik which was famous during the colonial period was the output of the houses of fashion van Zuylen and Matt Zellar, where their production of batik was very often used by the nobles and elite circles of Belda, China and indigenous. High-quality batik orders of nobles at that time were referred to as batik Kapitan, but only certain of people who can afford it,

because the price of batik were very expensive. Another note also states that Jakarta batik began to develop its own motifs in the early 19th century, where many arrivals of batik entrepreneurs from Pekalongan and Solo began to develop the batik business in Jakarta, even though at that time the Dutch batik entrepreneurs still dominated.

One motif that is well known by the Betawi people and still found today is the *Tumpal* motif. In this motif there is a triangular element which symbolize mountain. The clump or fork that is associated as a mountain, often stopped by force, in ancient people's beliefs in Indonesia, mountains are often interpreted as the source of strength, this implanted value is usually a philosophical guide for its users. If traced in full, the *Tumpal* motif, in the form of a triangle or fork is found in many batik motifs that are scattered in the archipelago, it is one of the ornaments that have been found since the prehistoric times whose meaning is different from the present. *Tumpal* is closely related to magical meanings and symbolizes the concept of unity of the cosmos, microcosm- human, macrocosm-universe, but for now the shift in eating occurs until its meaning only becomes an aesthetic element that is related to the element of beauty.

The role of batik in the Betawi people is generally used as a completeness in daily activities, as well as traditional ceremonies, and as revealed above that the arrival of batik

closely with the presence of immigrants, batik motifs and ornaments in the Jakarta region develop with patterns and motives resulting from assimilation of various cultures from immigrants, besides the motifs that have long existed in this region, so it is not surprising that the batik Betawi was found in the types of batik in the early evening, spear motifs and others, absorbed from immigrants from the Java region. But for different uses and functions, where the role of batik in Java is often associated as a marker of strata and a symbol of Javanese feudalism, with the palace and kingdom as the center of its development. Batik in Jakarta generally does not have a philosophy and standard, "...in the old days, only the high nobility was allowed to use the *Parang Rusak*, at that time the aristocrats were not allowed to wear the damaged Parang motif for the daily, but only for state ceremonies [2]. Not surprising that in the development of various styles of batik development in various regions, in the Marunda region, which was designated as an area to allocate Jakarta residents who had previously settled in an area, settled with residents from other regions, which resulted in assimilated plural cultures from the various cultures that exist in the region.

The problem in this research is how the narrative and visuals contained in the marunda batik motif, considering that this batik comes with social conditions and background than other batik histories. Focuses on analysis, the transformation of forms and narratives contained in Marunda batik ornaments, using descriptive qualitative methods. Data obtained from interviews with direct sources, with primary and secondary source tracking methods, the analysis will strengthen visual analysis. According to Rohidi (2011), that a work of art to understand a work of art must look at the work from two fundamental elements, namely intra-synthetic and extraesthetic elements. Intraesthetic elements are related to physical manifestations in form, style, structure, elements of aesthetics, media and techniques for creating works, as well as concepts or ideas for the creation of works [3]. Extraesthetic elements are related to determinant or significant factors that are integrally supporting the presence of related artworks, including psychological, social, cultural, and physical natural aspects as well as changes that embody the realization of a work of art.

## 2. MARUNDA BATIK

The idea of establishing a batik business was according to Mrs. Irma Sinurat, coach of Batik Marunda initiated by Mrs. Iriana Joko Widodo, who at that time served as the Governor of DKI and saw how to develop and restore the economy of the residents who were evicted at the Marunda flat so they had additional activities and income. The existence of marunda batik has experienced a phase where there are political issues that influence the development of its motives, this was revealed by one of the Marunda batik designers, Wendy Sibarani in an interview with the author, it was agreed upon by the Marunda batik team not to use iconic elements or objects typical of Jakarta or Betawi. They could be free to explore and use elements that actually gave rise to other narratives that could be appreciated by the wider *people*, to get motifs which had different visuals, with others, besides that batik

users also have other insights from the development of Marunda's batik motifs.

Making batik or working on batik cloth, is similar to painting activities, Nian S Djoemena (1986), explains that batik is basically the same as painting on a white cloth, the difference is only in the painting tools, where *canting* is the material for painting [4]. In painting activities there is a narrative that the artists want to build, as well as the batik makers. Like most batik in the archipelago, on a batik sheet there are various compositions, in which there are colorized, shapes, decorations, compositions and names and expressions. There are similarities in the concept of Sundanese batik and Marunda batik, which is not bound to the standard of Javanese batik, which is freer, both from the coloring aspect and the pattern / motif used. But in general, the batik motif produced is a reflection, a symbol that implies the customs, culture and habits of the local *people*. Usually comes from the way of life, tradition, habits, customs, as well as ways of looking at and experience with the environment. Moreover, batik ornaments are used for ritual activities or traditional ceremonies, usually the symbolic meaning is intentionally implanted, so that the user can appreciate the philosophy instilled by the ancestors.

Wendy Sibarani, one of designer in Marunda Batik, the motives and administrators of the Marunda batik foundation revealed that the concept of narration presented in each motive produced was how ideas and diversity attached to the city of Jakarta and the Betawi people were not only attached to discourse about the life of the metropolis, hedonism, all busy impressing inhuman, here there is a spirit of designers who want to show the narrative that the city of Jakarta is a city that remains comfortable to inhabit, a city that has many cultures and still has humanitarian aspects in its life. The idea of not taking cultural symbols that are already mainstream, such as Monas, *Ondel-Ondel*, *Gigi Balang* and others was deliberately not appointed as the main ornament in Marunda batik, this consideration was taken so that the narrative regarding the nature of fauna and other symbols could be appreciated by the wider *people* [5].

Narrative concept that the creators want to convey is how the motifs and ornaments applied to the batik can be seen in its character, however the identity in batik is also necessary, because it is a mirror where the batik originates. The identity of motifs and distinctive features revealed by the style of stylization tends to be realistic, where the form of stylization on the object raised in the motif is studied in advance the structure and habitat, so that the meaning and visuals contained in the motif are revealed in the resulting batik. Other visual elements are added as a complement, but do not use traditional idioms such as other Betawi batik. This is also related to the segment that the craftsmen and managers of Marunda batik want to build, as if they want to give a different image with other Betawi batik, of course this concept is deliberately presented because they realize that Jakarta is a multi-cultural city, to accommodate characters and segments. want to be addressed in the manufacturing process, so it is not surprising that batik is often referred to as one element that is able to reflect the cultural character as well as representation of certain groups.

### 3. VISUAL NARRATIVES ON MARUNDA BATIK MOTIFS

Batik as part of cultural products, because its existence is closely related to human civilization, where action and creativity that develop cannot be separated from the legacy of its predecessors, this is also implied in the idea of Koenjaraningrat which describes culture as human action and results in the context of *people* life which is made property of humans [6]. Culture is everything that human's way, do and produce, which includes material, human-created and non-material objects, there closely related to cultural values, dynamics that occur in Jakarta society are one of the bases for analysis in reading this visual narrative.

Basically, every work of art contains aesthetic or beauty value. A work is arranged in such a way that visualized beauty is present and can be impregnated sensually by the eye of the beholder. In the analytic phase, it will be revealed and a discussion about the visual and narrative elements built in batik is used as the object of research. The narrative revealed in Marunda batik shows some visual symbols of what the designers and craftsmen see in the surrounding conditions, from observations of several classifications that can be used as studies. The analysis in the narrative is divided into several classifications: (a) Flora: *Bunga Telang*, *Lee Kwan Yu*, *Babandotan*, *Widelia*, *Pohon Asem*, (b) Fauna: *Bulus*, *Ikan*, *Kupu-kupu*, (c) Landscape: *Monas*, *Jalan Cawang*, Museum, road signs and others. The visual style used by batik designers is generally stylized naturalistic decoration. There is simplification and also some modifications to the object. Generally batik is full of details and ornaments, but in Marunda batik, filling the field is not much done, because the impression and character is not so much traditional, and designers realize that the use and segments are urban people who generally behave actively and dynamically, to the design style applied, of course, supports urban lifestyles that symbolize the image of modern and elegant, of course, with not many ornaments and elements that are applied are generally simple, firm and characterized.

The narrative built on batik with flora ornaments is how the various types of plants around Jakarta can be increasingly recognized by the audience. The process of sorting out the various flora that exists by making visual observations and observing the data that is used as a reference, it turns out that there are many types of flora found and not native to the Jakarta area. In the Icons of Jakarta, 2015, various types of flora native to Jakarta were mentioned, including *Flamboyant*, *Bunga Telang*, *Nona Makan Sirih*, *Bungur*, *Tapak Dara*, *Melati Gambir*, *Sirih Kuning*, *Kerak Telor*, included in the Jakarta icon, found in visual ornaments on Marunda batik. Some of the types presented in the ornaments include *Lee kwan yew*, *Widelia*, *Babandotan*, *Flamboyant* and others. The observations from Wendy Sibarani, the designer of the Marunda batik motif, explained that various types of plants were found in almost every region, as if they were untouched, but their existence grew in every season. In the narrative that was built by the designer that of the many scattered shrubs, many plants escaped the potential of their beauty from the human eye, *Babandotan* is found around

the *Menteng garden*, so he explored the potential of unexplored beauty, one of a wild plant turned out to be useful as a plant that can treat various types of diseases. This flowers are generally disliked by farmers, because they are considered weed plants and are not useful, but the designer analyzes further, behind that there are a myriad of benefits that this plant has, so he feels that this plant is lifted from the aspect of beauty and finally people will care and ultimately want to know the benefits, existence and charm of flowers.

The narrative to be built on other types of flowers is the *Widelia* and *Seruni* flower, which is often found in the *Ayodya garden*, this flower for the designer is a flower that grows anywhere, but its beauty is alluring especially because its color is very striking, and the function of this plant is generally as a decorative plant on the edge of the road, the shape is lush and in groups. In the process of making visuals for batik ornaments, the designer makes analysis from various angles, and it turns out visually, the shape of the petals from the side is much more interesting than from the top. The characters of the petals that are piled up into visual ideas are realized, of course the character of the flower is maintained so that people still recognize the identity of the flower [7]. The table below shows how the designer makes *Widelia* visual in a stylized style, where only curved petals are processed into ornaments. The existence of this flower, for those who believe and believe, can bring happiness and laughter in the family, the meanings that are present are joy, optimism, charm, abundance and friendship. This visual turns out to be one of the favorites of batik buyers, the funds can be said to be the motif most ordered by batik buyers. In some fashion shows that were presented, the composition of flower batik ornaments most often received warm reception from the visitors, because the appearance can give an elegant and casual effect for its users. *Flamboyant* flowers that are made as one of the batik motifs narrated as beautiful plants are able to live in the hot sun, remain beautiful, and always bloom in the rainy season, and are found in the Kali Ancol region, the philosopher who wants to implant is that flamboyant light can give light to every human being and reflects light to the person who looks at it.

Motifs with a fauna theme applied includes *Kupu-kupu Butterfly*, *Capung* (dragon fly), *Burung Kipasan* (*Kipasan Bird*), *Elang Bondol* (Eagle) and others. The type of flora that is used as an object is in accordance with the narrative that is intended to be built by batik designers, where the exotica of fauna in Jakarta is revealed in its own style. *Burung Kipasan* is one of the faunas would be found in Pulau Seribu, its characteristic has melodious chirps, is active and often moves to places. The narrative that is to be built is that we as humans always move actively, dynamically, and must share with others. In the motif of Lotus, the narrative that is to be built is how designers want Jakarta residents to know that *Bulus* is one of Jakarta's iconic animal good for breed. Because the machete character who likes to live in calm water, he prefers the lake as his place of residence, and one of the plants around the Sunter Lake, namely white lotus. The narrative that is built is how Lotus always look attractive to every person who sees them, even though they live in even unclean water, their existence wants to be interpreted

as elegance that is maintained even though the surrounding environment is not in line with their expectations.



**Figure 1.** Babandotan and Bunga Telang. Source: Ayoeningsih, 2019

Marunda's batik narrative on landscape object classification was also carried out by designers and craftsmen, on the findings made on objects, it was found that craftsmen and designers recorded all things that could represent Jakarta differently from other cities. Where the workshop is an icon of the Museum Nasional, as a hectic city, fast and close to the life of the metropolis.



**Figure 2.** Lee Kwan Yu and Bulus-Teratai. Source: Ayoeningsih, 2019



**Figure 3.** Semanggi and Museum Nasional. Source: Ayoeningsih, 2019

Iconic objects such as the Semanggi bridge was with the concept of inspired by semanggi flower and arranged in geometric shape, stylizing of road construction as well as dense buildings. Semanggi flower arrangement strengthen the image of the Semanggi, because this is very iconic. In some of the motifs found in batik craftsmen, landscape representations are also often used, such as the Mesjid Krukut, Semanggi bridge, Istiqlal mosque and others, but the visual style is made semi-realistic, so the object is still recognized by the audience. The consideration taken by the designer is to display the beauty and charm

of the iconic area, not necessarily the visual verbalization of object duplication, but it is the object's charm that the audience wants to highlight and receive from the message.

Likewise, on the road marking motif, a line of lines and geometric shape are drawn on the entire fabric, across diagonally. On the transverse lines there are fields arranged in rows, as an images of row vehicles that are on each road in the Jakarta area. The row is an interesting composition, and arranged in such a way, it becomes like a regular line, as if implying the impression of desired conditions and expectations about the regularity of road conditions in every corner of Jakarta. This implies criticism, and regular street narratives, because all this time that has been built and is a very bad traffic jam in the capital, there are even predictions that signal Jakarta will be totally jammed due to unbalanced conditions and governance between road conditions and number of vehicles who crossed the streets of Jakarta.

Another motif is the ornament of the National Museum, one of the iconic buildings in the city area, the selection of objects chosen by designers, on the basis that the building visually has a timeless beauty. The characteristics and identities of Dutch architecture that are inherent, appear elegant with a firm line that dominates the nuances of the building. The predominance of lines and geometric fields on the motif was balanced with visuals of the leaves of tamarind trees around the downtown area of Jakarta. Daun Pohon Asam accent to the ornament in order to give aesthetic value to the motif, especially when applied to fashion products.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The narrative that was built on Marunda's motifs and batik was more about the Jakarta identity, not just the Betawi elements that were revealed, because the designers and craftsmen agreed that ornamentation must show an identity that could be attached to one area and become a feature remembered by users. The identity of Betawi culture is not raised because it is realized that the culture in Jakarta is heterogeneous, Jakarta does not represent a culture. If the Betawi element is used only for a number of ornaments, it does not necessarily eliminate the indigenous ethnic identity of the indigenous people of Jakarta, but provides alternative and other visuals related to the insights and narratives to be conveyed through the media of batik artwork. The selected objects is based on research and insight from the designers, which were freely developed by craftsmen in accordance with the concept initiated, namely to produce batik with an identity that displays novelty, modern value and can be used by all people, without being based on a strict concepts such as Javanese and coastal batik, which generally has a standard which must be followed by the users and their designation.

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