

# Tradition Spcace in the Making of Batik Tulis Yogyakarta Inspire by Javanese Ancient Manuscript

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## TRADITION SPACE IN THE MAKING OF BATIK TULIS YOGYAKARTA INSPIRE BY JAVANESE ANCIENT MANUSCRIPT

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**Abstract**— The understanding of space is no longer predicated on massive limits such as walls or a ceiling. However, space may be generated through the creative process of generating works, history, culture, and even narratives. Based on this, the research aim is to present another viewpoint on space connected to the process of creating Yogyakarta batik designs inspired by an old Javanese text, namely *Jaya Lengka Wulang*. This qualitative study employs a phenomenological approach with narrative presentation. The research results in the disclosure of several components that make up the traditional space. This research provides better knowledge of Indonesian traditions and creative ideas for making cultural products for a wide audience.

**Keywords**—Tradition Space, Javanese Culture, Batik Tulis, Yogyakarta, Ancient Manuscript

### INTRODUCTION

This research is based on the author's experience in the process of making batik tulis (written-batik) Yogyakarta motifs based on ideas from an ancient Javanese manuscript named Serat Jaya Lengka Wulang with library code MSS Jav 24 (hereinafter referred to as Serat JLW). Why use Serat JLW as a source of inspiration for making Yogyakarta batik motifs? Because this ancient manuscript is one of the original ancient manuscripts belonging to the Kraton Ngayogyakarta in Javanese script written in 1803 but still stored in the British Library. The Serat JLW was displayed at the Yogyakarta Kraton Manuscripts Exhibition in March – April 2019 at the Yogyakarta Kraton Exhibition Hall. In addition, the Serat JLW contains the proper moral teachings to be represented in Yogyakarta batik motifs. This manuscript also includes the Kraton Ngayogyakarta script which is seen from the style of writing, the opening illumination or *wedana*, *rerenggan*, and the design in it [1]. Even though it has a rich history, culture, and creative value, no publication examines the creative process of developing batik motifs inspired by ancient Javanese manuscripts, Serat JLW. This research is expected to provide fresh value and benefits in art, culture, and history for many people, and at the same time can show that ancient manuscripts can be an invaluable source of inspiration for making works of art such as batik.

Before delving deeper into the process of creating batik designs, it's vital to first grasp what batik is. This research emphasizes Javanese batik from Yogyakarta, Central Java, Indonesia. Batik is a term used to describe a piece of cloth that has been painted with hot liquid wax known as

malam using the canting process. A copper wax pen with a bamboo grip is used for the canting. Batik was chosen for study because it is more than just a piece of cloth; it also requires the maker's creativity as well as the creativity of those engaged in the process. In addition, batik was chosen because it contains a journey of life and spiritual values contained in the colors and patterns. This is what made UNESCO designate batik as an intangible cultural heritage in 2009 – “The craft of batik is entwined with the cultural identity of the Indonesian people and depicts their creativity and spirituality through the symbolic meanings of the colors and patterns” [2].

The investigation is limited to one batik tulis Yogyakarta influenced by numerous illuminations from the JLW Fiber, namely pages 22v, 30v, 31r, and 41v. Because it incorporates texts of cultural value that are the concepts for constructing cultural object motifs, notably batik, the process of creating batik works offers cultural spaces. Based on this description, this research aims to discover alternative viewpoints on the development of space throughout the batik-making process in Yogyakarta. As a result, the research question emerges: what elements comprise the cultural tradition space?

### RESEARCH METHOD

Research related to culture is very appropriate if it is examined from a qualitative point of view. Culture is something complex involving art, beliefs, values, and customs. This does not allow culture to be processed through mathematical calculations [3]. Moreover, this research relates to the author's experience in making batik tulis Yogyakarta motifs, so a phenomenological qualitative approach is ideal. The experiential point of view is assisted by a phenomenological approach to interpretation. This approach analyzes the experience of specific circumstances or phenomena that occur in a person [4].

### Stage of Research

Some of the image elements are taken from each selected Serat JLW illumination, then drawn manually and arranged so that they become a new motif. These motifs are arranged to form a typical Yogyakarta batik pattern. This process is assisted with the help of digitization so that it is easier to print on paper. The motifs on the paper were consulted by experts on the ancient manuscripts of the Kraton Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat, namely Mrs. Amiroel and KRT Widjowinoto from the Palace Library.

Apart from that, they also consulted with a batik expert from Puro Pakualaman Yogyakarta, namely Mrs. Amy. After getting approval, it is sent to the batik maker. The whole process takes place from July to September 2022 and can be enjoyed as batik cloth in March 2023.

## DISCUSSION

The definition of space varies greatly when it comes to cultural traditions. Traditional space not only defines the type of space in which traditional activities are carried out, but the cultural values that occur in it are related to the environment and the perceptions of the people around it [5][6]. This statement is by the author's experience in the process of making batik tulis Yogyakarta motifs. Experts' experience and perceptions of Yogyakarta's ancient manuscripts and batik are needed. Kraton's guidelines and recommendations for creating batik motifs from ancient manuscripts must be taken into account. The same may be said about Yogya batik experts and batik artisans.

### A. Tradition Space

There are certain motifs from several Serat JLW



FIGURE 1. Illumination page 22v – peacock figure (above) & page 30v – floral figure (below)  
 Source: British Library -<https://www.bl.uk/manuscripts>

illuminations that are used as ideas to create new motifs to be painted on batik cloth. The illumination motifs are from pages 22v, 30v, 31r and 41v (figure 1 & 2).

The process of selecting figures in the illuminations has been selected based on the suitability of the shape for Yogyakarta's written batik. There are 4 figures, namely a peacock, a plant and its tendrils, as well as a scale-like motif. All of these figures are composed so that they are suitable for making batik motifs. The motifs are made manually and then digitized to facilitate the process of transferring them to the fabric which will go through the canting process (figure 3). The process of making a manual sketch is an important stage because it not only tries to find the right composition but indirectly provides a "bond" between the writer and the motif. It provides more imagination and memory about related cultures. This assertion is in line with Pallasmaa's phenomenological concept, that when someone is involved in manually sketching something, it will provide a strong experience



FIGURE 2. Illumination page 31r – floral figure (above) & page 41v – scale motif (below)  
 Source: British Library -<https://www.bl.uk/manuscripts>



and memory of what he draws [7]. This condition also triggered the establishment of a "traditional-cultural space" due to the creation of communication between the illumination figures and the sketchers.

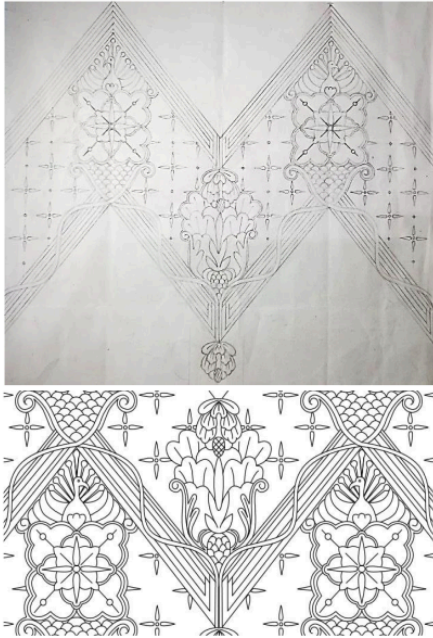


FIGURE 3. Manual Sketch New Motif for Batik (above) & motif's digitization (below)

The perception of local batik artisans is also needed so that batik motifs still have a local Yogyakarta identity with certain distinctive characteristics, such as distinctive colors, namely the dominance of black, *sogan* (brown-like) and blue, and typical motifs, namely *cecek* or many dots as *isen-isen* or additional details for Javanese batik motifs. (figure 4). Batik designs that display a wealth of *isen* are valuable because they can build aesthetic narratives [8] and even build a space for tradition because they succeed in tying the main motifs with the background of the cloth so that the motifs can "speak" about their identities more clearly.

The motifs on the batik cloth that are created acquire an identity since they already contain stories from illuminated figures of the ancient manuscript of the Serat JLW. Based on the figures in the motif, the batik cloth is named in

Javanese, namely *Manyura Ngambareng Jagad Kusuma* which means Peacock Flying in the Flora World. The batik motif signifies a beautiful shape surrounded by beauty. This means that anyone who uses this batik cloth will radiate beauty and will always be surrounded by beautiful things. The designs of the motifs, colors, names, and descriptions expand the narratives and values of this batik tulis Yogyakarta, and particular conditions can give an image to its users [9].



FIGURE 4. Consultation with local batik artisans (above) & batik motif with colour (below)  
 Source: Authors Documentation

## CONCLUSION

The long process of making batik tulis Yogyakarta motifs based on illumination motifs from the Serat JLW illustrates the formation of cultural spaces. These spaces were born from history, cultural stories, the creativity of illumination makers, consultations and communications with experts on ancient manuscripts and with Kraton batik experts, as well as with local Yogyakarta batik makers. This situation is proof that space is no longer limited by walls, floors, and roofs that are tangible, but it is very possible to be born from something intangible. The finished results of batik tulis Yogyakarta which are discussed also create a space for cultural traditions that can be seen from the interaction of the main motifs and isen-isen, colors, and the giving of names and descriptions of traditions to batik. This traditional space indirectly becomes one of the cultural identities.

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