

Block Batik: Appreciation of Traditional Malay Motifs

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Abstract:

This research is to get information about the appreciation of motif block batik traditional melayu. It aims to show the beauty found in the carvings and earnings on these motifs in terms of patterns and meanings that are produced. The investigation was conducted around the area of Kota Bharu, Kelantan. The approach of the researcher is qualitative which involves two materials namely secondary (text materials) and primary (artifacts). Batik is a symbol of the culture of the Malay community, the artistry of each piece of cloth, has a specialty and uniqueness. The resulting block batik cloth begins with carved wood designed by the craftment on pieces of wood dyed with dyes and applied to the cloth. The beauty of the value of batik cloth lies in the motifs and manufacturing techniques that are applied to the surface of the cloth. According to Juhari Azmi, (2009) traditional design in Tanah Melayu was initially influenced by the value and culture of art from outside the country [1]. Batik cloth illustrates and reflects the modesty of Malay women associated with the wearing of batik sarong cloth on the body. Every batik work that is produced and the method of wearing batik cloth has a symbolic and identity of Malay culture. Appreciation in this concept is an appreciation and assessment of the beauty and interpretation of motifs on batik blocks or the art of carving motifs on batik blocks. This study is about the appreciation of batik block design, where batik blocks are used as material in analyzing their content. In this investigation the reviewer uses the theory of sociology of knowledge, it is to understand the carvings on batik blocks as well as the relationship with society and how this motif can be preserved. This study is expected to provide knowledge to the community and maintain Malay cultural arts from the loss technology that is increasingly developing forward because the success of a nation depends on the greatness of the nation's cultural arts.

Keywords —Batik block, appreciation, motif, traditional melayu.

I. INTRODUCTION

Batik is a unique and artful handicraft, produced according to the creativity and imagination of the natural world by its craftsmen. The history of the development of batik block production began with

the entry of skilled craftsmen from Java by Haji Che Su bin Ibrahim. He is an entrepreneur who has brought this technology to be cultivated with the desire to enliven the batik industry again in Tanah Melayu. According to Wan Nurul Hasyati Mohd Pauzi, (2018) batik art

produced by the Malay community is symbolic of the culture and identity of the Malay community. This fact is also supported by HanipahHussin , (2011)[2] which states that batik art is a cultural root that forms the identity of the Malaysian nation. The word batik is no stranger to the old and new generations, where batik sarong cloth was used as a complementary clothing for the

Malay community at one time in the past and it is still a daily batik cloth habit for the current generation. One of the batik techniques in Malaysia is block batik or also known as stamp batik or batik *terap*. Batik *terap* is an abbreviation of making and the verb stamp which means printing composing and processing using equipment that is carved and patterned. The block is the main equipment used to produce applied motifs on the fabric. The initial process of producing blocks is from wood or known as 'flower nests'. The high proficiency by craftsmen in producing motifs on batik blocks is influenced by status, religion and socio-cultural factors. Wooden blocks are carved into motifs and the motifs are dipped in colour or wax and then stamped on the surface of the blank cloth. This nest is used to stamp a type of black dye and is applied to the white surface of the cloth. This early technique was called 'Black Stamp'. In the 1920s, the use of wax in the application process was first introduced by batik makers on the East Coast. In parallel, blocks made of steel and copper chips began to take over the duties of the earlier wooden blocks. The patterns of these steel blocks were more neat and finely crafted. Special blocks were provided for applying wax on the *kepalakain*, *apitkain* and *badankain*. There are various studies done on the origin of batik but it is difficult to find the origin. The various interpretations and immigrations made by the scholars in interpreting the historical origin and production of batik. The technique of making batik blocks begins when the designer gets the inspiration to carve potatoes to produce motifs. Potatoes are used as a material to stamp and produce motifs before being used to copy on the surface of paper or cloth. Potatoes are carved into motifs according to the creativity inspired from the natural world such as flora, fauna and it is also influenced by socio-

cultural factors. According to HaziyahHussin , (2006)[3] before metal batik blocks were introduced, blocks were made from potatoes and taro potatoes to produce motifs on cloth. After that batik blocks continued to develop to the use of blocks made of wood. The material used for carving motifs on wood is such as wood beheadings. There are 3 types of batik such as batik block, batik canting and batik screen.

II. OBJECTIVE

1. To study about batik block motif in Malaysia

III. BATIK BLOCK

A batik block is a nest or applying material for making ornaments on the surface of a white cloth. It is also called a flower nest (Abdullah Mohamed 1990) [4]. Block batik @batik *terap* is one of the techniques in the production of batik products in Malaysia. Batik *terap* is an abbreviation of making and the verb stamp which means to print compose and process using equipment that is carved and patterned through the skills and creativity of the craftsmen. Block batik which is made of metal and became the main production tool from the 1960s developed block-printed batik schemes and patterns into articles of clothing other than sarongs. Block batik is one of the techniques in the process of making batik, where the block is a nest or reference to produce various types of patterns to be applied to the surface of the fabric, using wax as a material to prevent colours from meeting and not mixing among each other. Batik cloth is a method of producing patterns using the resist technique Zaharah Ahmad Osman & ZalihaShaari (1995) [5]. However, there are various types of materials used in block making. Starting with materials such as banana tubers, potato tubers followed by blocks of carved chunks of wood and then materials of metal chips, iron, zinc and copper are used. this fact is supported by Noor HafizaGhazali (2021) who said The choice of material in the making of the block is dependent on the effect of the action, it refers also to some steps that need to be taken into account in identifying the value of the usefulness of the

function of use in the production of a batik work.[6] Soft chunks of wood are used to produce batik block motifs. The motifs are painted on the surface and carved using embossed carving. According to NorhaizaNordin (2010) said carving is an important manuscript in the study of Malay history that was left in sculptural form[7]. Through it we can identify the nation, era and stage of thought of the people at that time. This is because the wood block is used to stamp the colour on the motif and not to colour the fabric ground where the fabric ground is always the original white colour of the fabric base. The wood block is limited in the use of colours that can be used this is because the block will be applied to the surface of the color and applied to the fabric. The resulting colour is also not clean due to wood carvings that have been used for other colours. According to Juhari, (2009), the results of products using wood blocks are somewhat limited in the use of colour [8]. After that innovations took place where the use of blocks rather than wood was replaced with iron and copper zinc metals. The iron or copper block is the frame of the motif that serves to stamp or apply wax on the surface of the white cloth. With this, the effect to the applied wax will leave lines, dots or white flowers when it is applied colour through the process of dyeing or brushing with colour. Through copper or iron blocks the shape of the motif can be produced in a soft, meticulous and more organic form. This situation is due to the colour dyeing process, which can be done several times through the use of copper blocks or iron blocks after being applied with wax. The use of blocks rather than copper iron or zinc is easier and results in a finer pattern. Patterns are more compact and fine lines can be copied repeatedly and more colours can be used. In addition, the use of copper blocks can give a more interesting and high quality design.

IV. MATERIAL OF BLOCK BATIK

A batik block is a nest or applying material for making ornaments on the surface of a white cloth. It is also called a flower nest (Abdullah

Mohamed 1990). Batik blocks made of metal and being the main means of production from the 1960s developed block-printed batik schemes and patterns into articles of clothing other than sarongs. Block batik is one of the techniques in the process of making batik, where a block is a nest or reference to produce various types of patterns to be applied to the surface of the cloth, using wax as a material to prevent colours from meeting and not mixing between each other. Batik cloth is a method of producing patterns using the resist technique. However, there are various types of materials used in the production of blocks starting with materials such as banana tubers, potato tubers followed by blocks of carved pieces of wood and then materials of metal chips, iron and zinc.



Fig.1Block Batik <https://www.prihatinspanco.com.my/2020/10/22/2246/>



Fig.2Metal Block <https://www.mycraftmuseum.com/>



Fig.3 Wooden Block <https://www.kraftangan.gov.my/>



Fig. 4: Motif flora

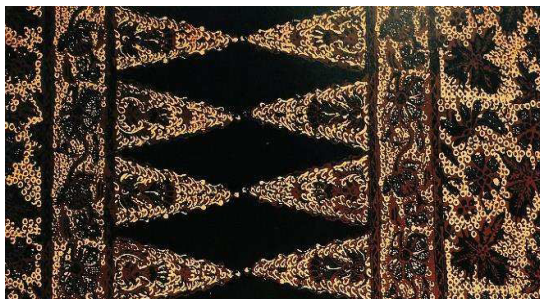


Fig. 5: Motif flora

.MOTIF

Motifs in batik block making are images formed through the repetition of pattern design applied to the surface of the fabric. Nature naturally is the main driver to the creation of motif pattern design. Various inspirations are obtained from nature such as flora, fauna and cosmos. According to (Khalijah Ahmad, 2014) the definition of motif is an organic style or geometric style that exists in one form to be the main element of the pattern [9]. The production of patterns takes into account various aspects other than organic or geometric shapes such as the use of colour and the level of colour absorption on the surface of the fabric to produce a unique and beautiful pattern. Types of motifs are classified into various parts of the flower, it consists of flowers, leaves, buds, tendrils, fruits, stems, bark and roots. Motifs produced according to the arrangement are classified as single or multiple arrangements that can produce patterns, which function as decoration HaziyahHussin (2009) [10]. The repetition of a single or multiple arrangements will produce patterns such as repeated blocks, elbow gaps, half falls and various other types of pattern repetition. Motifs are produced when arranged either with one type of motif or with combined motifs. This arrangement can form ascending or descending flower petals. Most of the applied block motifs are made into sarong cloth; motifs inspired by nature undergo an additive, organic, geometric and stylized process to form patterns on the fabric. The block batik process has the same motif where it is

stamped repeatedly on a white cloth. The pattern has the same repeated elements in the form of vertical, transverse and oblique lines.

Types of batik block motifs

- a) Flora
- b) Fauna
- c) Organic and geometric
- d) Cosmos

RESULTS

This study is carried out by identifying the source of motifs found in traditional Malay batik blocks. Motifs sourced from inspiration from nature and carved on chunks of wood become a source of inspiration to work by using the uniqueness of the existing motifs of the batik block to produce a design on a piece of cloth. Using a qualitative study method, starting with collecting batik block motifs by category, the filtering process is carried out by selecting blocks that are often used in the fabric production process. The specialty of the batik block motif is that the resulting pattern can be repeated to form a pattern design according to arrangements such as vertical, transverse, horizontal, reflection and various types of repetition. The choice of material is dependent on the impression of reciprocity; it refers to several steps that need to be taken into account in identifying the value of the benefits of function and use in batik works.

Most batik block motifs are produced and applied to sarong cloth. There are various patterns produced on batik blocks and made into sarong cloth. Patterns that identify with the nation such as *pucuk rebung, bungaraya, akarkayu, bungamelur and bungateratai* carving wood as the subject of study and processed by the block maker repeatedly to form a pattern design with a batik composition that has a structure such as the head of the cloth, the edge of the cloth, the flap and the body of the cloth, this is what is the specialty of batik block cloth.

Most of the motifs that are blocked can be seen in the design of batik sarong.

CONCLUSIONS

This study shows the patterns that are the source of inspiration in the production of batik blocks. The results of this study identify the motifs that are often used in batik block making. The environment plays a major role for the crafted in carving and generating the inspiration for the work. Each work produced has its own identity, beauty and purpose.

The glory of craftsmanship will not be preserved if this skill is not inherited from time to time. Craft art is an ancestral heritage that symbolizes the culture and identity of a society and civilization. It needs to be preserved and passed on to future generations so that it will not be forgotten by the times. The softness, subtlety and beauty of pattern design through motifs that have been adapted from nature and translated onto a piece of cloth is so that the next generation will appreciate the heritage art and wealth of the country

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