

THE ROLE OF BASIC DESIGN COURSE IN THE INTRODUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL CULTURE VALUES

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ABSTRACT

Indonesia has been known as a country which upholds moral values, cultural values, and philosophy delivered through artworks media. Almost every Indonesia artworks have their own cultural values, philosophy, and meanings, starts from dancing, performance art, until the art of processing textile materials, e.g. batik and woven fabrics. Batik has a very special place in the world archipelago. No other cloth in Indonesia archipelago, perhaps in the world as well, contains so much symbolism and meanings (Kerlogue, 2004: 11). Batik is a term that refers to a cloth which has been decorated by a wax resist technique. But sadly, as the globalization emerge and tendency to exalt developed country's culture in

school life, the young generation became no longer care about their own country's moral and cultural values. Batik consider obsolete, not fancy, and only suit to the old generation because of its values. But the presence of contemporary batik become one of a solution to introduce and preserve cultural values to the young generation, such as mutual aid, patience, respecting others and nature, and the introduction to hierarchy. In modern design world, in this case for interior design, there is a basic design subject which gives a lesson to the young designers of composing the elements and design principals as design sensitivity training. One of the tasks is making a pattern composition using local content and batik is a complex local pattern that commonly use. Therefore, this subject may become a good tool to introduce the local values and meaning to the young designers so that they can apply it in their future design to compete in global market. This research is an initial effort that has been done to enhance the knowledge, sense of belonging, and deeper comprehension to the local Indonesia values through basic design subject which the result may be applied into furniture and interior element.

Keywords: basic design, local content, batik

INTRODUCTION

Culture is a pattern of meaning that is thoroughly intertwined in symbols and transmitted historically (Abdullah, 2006: 1). Culture is often considered as a blue print that has become guidance in the course of human life which affect their behavior. Furthermore, culture is a system of inherited conception in a form of symbol that in this way people can communicate, preserve, and develop knowledge and attitude towards life. Culture may come in a form of physic and non-physical objects.

Human beings are social being who require socializing and communicating with each other day by day. They may communicate verbally and symbolically to deliver their ideas or intention and to teach their next generation about life values. Our ancestors used to imply their means in some kinds of media, which one of those is through batik process making, besides its etiquette and pattern symbols. The techniques of batik making generally delivered through informal ways and became daily activities.

The Javanese word "batik", commonly, refers to a cloth which has been decorated by a wax resist technique. However, batik initially refer to a technique to create a pattern by using wax as resistance, which allow it to be applied in any kind of materials such as fabrics (cotton, silk, and drab in common) as cloths, woods as furniture or partition, or even paper as decorative elements. These wide ranges of material possibilities should be responded as an opportunity to develop batik even more.

To enter the era of global market, the industry of creative media is begun to be ogled as the industry with a broad market share. Our local designers are those who are expected able to sustain this industry. Designers are creative groups whom are hoped able to apply and develop batik especially in global market era by 2015. Unfortunately, young Indonesia's designers tend to see batik as obsolete things to do and too ancient to compete in modern era. However, the claim of batik as Malaysia's heritage awoke Indonesians to preserve batik and develop it. As a response to introduce batik to the young designers and allow them to develop batik in their creations, batik is now applied as one of the subject to learn especially in basic design course.

METHODOLOGY

This research is done by using qualitative method. Researchers did observation, literature studies, and interview to collect information. Observation made by observing students in basic design studios (during pattern making subject) while interviews are done to the lecturer and tutors for this basic design studio, students who had done this pattern making subject in basic design studio, batik makers, batik experts, and batik workshop owners in Surabaya. This research use basic design studio in Interior Design Department Petra Christian University Surabaya as a sample which include 1 lecturer, 3 batik experts, 10 tutors, 123 students of class 2010 as respondents excluding some batik makers and batik workshop owners in Surabaya. The information will be arranged and presented descriptively.

BASIC DESIGN

1 Design Elements

2 Every design may consist of some elements to be developed and composed in every creation

that is called design element. Design elements are basic units of a visual image. The design elements are:

- Spot
- Line
- Shape
- Color
- Texture
- Form / mass (3 dimensional object)
- Pattern

3 Elements of the existing design are a work of art that is automatically formed. Every artwork must have certain form, which when it simplified will become a competition of spot, line, or shape with the use of certain color to bring depth. In every shape, it may include the use of size, direction, colors, and textures, which occupy a space of design whether in 2D or 3D (Sanyoto, 2010: 7). These elements can be found in batik since batik is an example of Indonesian complex pattern.

4 Design Principals

The **design principles** are concepts used to organize or arrange the structural elements of design. Good applications of design principals in composing design elements may come up to a good design which we call it have achieved the “unity”. According to Sanyoto (2010:7), to achieve unity, design principles that can be used are:

- Balance
- Proportion
- Rhythm
- Emphasis
- Clarity
- Simplicity

INDONESIA BATIK

1 Batik is one way of making a fabric. Besides, it may also refer to 2 definitions. The first one, this term may refer to a process to give color to a fabric by using wax to prevent color staining to other portion of fabric. In international literature, this process often called as wax resist dyeing. The second definition refers to batik as fabric and clothing made with this techniques including use of certain motifs which have peculiarities (Efianingrum, 2011: 9).

2 Indonesian Batik has been designated by UNESCO as Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity by October 2nd 2009. According to Ani Bambang Yudhoyono (2010: 111) Indonesian Batik has been considered to fulfill three out of six UNOSCO which are:

- Indonesian Batik involves a tradition where knowledge and wisdom have been passed down orally for hundreds of years.
- Indonesian Batik is a social practice where symbolism inherits in the art pertains to the social roles and the structure of social relations.
- Indonesian Batik contains noble values that were created to honor traditional customary ceremonies.

The interaction between each culture at various levels may raise the possibility of rivalry and elimination. Those cultures that often exposed may stay preserved rather than those cultures that less exposed. For example, there are some cultures in Indonesia that better known than others namely of Java, Betawi, and Batak cultures.

In global discourse, local cultural resistance present as a form of opposition to global culture. The focus of this local resistance identified in popular culture and lifestyle of the community comes from the effects of modernization. In order to increase young generations' resistance to the influence of global culture that incessantly invades, some efforts and strategic steps are necessarily needed by involving various related institutions.

The need to continue preserve Indonesia Batik is our collective responsibility as nation regardless of ethnicity or culture. Even though Indonesian Batiks are before better known as a heritage come from the land of Java, now it became our nation responsibility to keep. Since Indonesian Batik declared by UNESCO as world heritage it is now become our nation culture to preserve.

3 Batik Making Processes

4 The process to make traditional Indonesian Batik can be defined as “the work of many hands” because to make a piece of handmade batik it will need a group of artisans. In this case, as an example, to make a single piece of batik cloth, the traditional batik process involves an extended network of some specialist such as:

- Spinners and weavers of cloths
- Cloth priming specialist
- Designers and motif owners
- Pattern artists
- A mix of canting artists with different specialties in wax application
- Natural dye makers
- Wax removal specialists, using scrapping or boiling techniques which may need to be repeated to produce the design's color scheme
- Batik cloth finishing specialists

(Yudhoyono, 2010: 13)

By knowing those specialists who involved in making a piece of handmade batik, it is clearly known that batik is never a work of a single person. It has always been about network, communities of creative workers, who work silently together as equal partners, in bringing piece batik to life (Yudhoyono, 2010: 13).

According to Ani Bambang Yudhoyono (2010: 94), there are some grades of quality determined by its fabric materials. It is divided into 4 categories which are *primissima* cloth (the best), prima cloth (medium quality), unbleached cotton (low quality), and gray unbleached cotton (poor quality). A batik making process generally consist of the following steps in order:

1. Ketel

A cloth is primed before it is deemed viable to be waxed and dyed. Some prepare the cloth by boiling it in a mixture of water and rice straw. Sometimes peanut oil is added into the mix to smoothen the cloth's texture, soften the body, and even out the threads. In the village of Sukapura, Tasikmalaya, West Java, priming a piece of cloth involves the regiment of soaking and rinsing up to 15 times.

2. Nyoret

Nyoret is drawing the pattern onto the cloth with pencil. Some batik designs, such as geometric patterns or visual narratives require this additional step in prior to the

n glowong step.

3. *N glowong*

This is the first application of wax using a cap (hand stamp) or a canting (the traditional Javanese wax-pen). The application of wax on one side of the cloth is called *ngengreng*.

4. *Nembok*

This is the application of the second layer of wax. It reinforces the blocking effect of the first layer after the second dye-dipping. The wax used in this step is usually thicker and adheres more securely to the cloth.

5. *Medel*

This is the first dip in the dye. In the case of classical batik of the interiors, *medel* refers to dyeing in deep blue dye (indigo) to set the background color and define the outline of patterns. In contemporary batik, *medel* can use any color since traditional rules no longer apply.

6. *Ngerok* or *ngelorod*

This is the step to remove the wax with *cawuk* (dull knife), a brush or some other scraping tool is referred to as *ngerek*. Removing the wax by boiling the cloth is known as *nglorod*.

7. *Mbironi*

This is the third application of wax in the purpose to emphasize the pattern. *Mbironi* only covers those parts of the pattern which are to remain dark in color.

8. *Nyolet*

This is the additional application of color using a small brush over areas of pattern which have been outlined with wax. This is intended to give colorful effects to the design or to create accents on motifs. This treatment is used mostly in coastal area batik.

9. *Nyoga*

This is the second immersion of dye. The term is derived from the word *soga*, a type of hardwood. The bark of its branches is used to obtain the brown color characteristic of the batik of the inland.

5 Etiquette of Batik

Talking about Batik, then it will never be separated from traditional Batik which came from the old Java. Batik for the old Javanese has a communication function. The classical batik, which originally came from the ancient Javanese royal courts, is essentially an array of symbol and codes stipulated by the monarchy (Yudhoyono, 2010: 107). It represents a hierarchy/status in social life which also includes a person's blood-range, rank, and affiliation.

As it functions to represent social status, there was a code of using batik in old Java. The strict boundaries set by the code were most dramatically illustrated in the exalted batik motifs reserved exclusively for some monarch and their successors. So that, some batik motifs may not be able to be worn by the civilians. As it functions to communicate, some motifs may also contain historical values (even for particular group).

As an example, in Solo there are two types of batik, *Batik Kratonan* and *Batik Saudagaran*. *Batik Kratonan* is batik consist of motif that should be only worn by the royal family in certain events. For example, *parang* motifs, according to this etiquette, should only be used by *Senoto Dalem* (son of the queen); *sido drajat batik* shall only be used by the law families for the wedding ceremony (<http://forum.upi.edu/v3/index.php?topic=12675.0>).

Figure 1. Parang and Sidodrajat Motifs (Source: <http://abduh1.blogspot.com/2011/01/mistik-dan-mitos-seputar-batik.html> and <http://batikshuniyya.wordpress.com/batik-tulis-khas-kabupaten-batang/>)

On the other hand, *Batik Saudagaran* is batik consist of motifs that can be worn by civilian and available for trading. Modern batik, that freely trade nowadays may included in this type of batik. Modern batik can be viewed from several points of view. First it may considered as modern batik from the sense of motif (as if making a new pattern or modifying previous traditional motifs) and second reason from the technique it made (modern stamp or even print). Modern batik generally have more “pop” motifs and mass-product oriented which may neglect some values in traditional batik making process.

Figure 2. Modern Batik Motifs (Source: <http://techno.okezone.com/read/2009/10/02/56/261908/batik-fraktal-kawinkan-seni-batik-dengan-sains>)

Batik Values

Talk about batik values, people tend to talk about batik motifs philosophy. For example, the *kawung* motifs represent purity and human relationship with the cosmic universe. However, the depth of our cultural identity merely not only determined from the choice of motif and imagery sheer clothing. According to Efaningrum (2011:10), there are things more substantial inside traditional batik that should be highlighted which are:

1. The ethos
2. The spirit
3. The culture
4. The service
5. The sincerity to serve

Based on those substantial batik values and how it made, then to produce a good quality of batik, batik artisans are required to have these characteristics:

1. Patience
Batik pattern came from a deep thought of it creator. For example, in Keraton Surkantan Sultanate, before creating batik, the artisan need to undergo the process called *lelaku* where he contemplated an event and observing her surroundings. It causes each curve motif, and each scratches canting has deep meaning if dissected (<http://forum.upi.edu/v3/index.php?topic=12675.0;wap2>).
2. Calmness, fidelity, and accuracy
e.g.: to make batik fillings (*isen-isen*) the artisan needs to be calm enough and not in a rush, good fidelity, and accuracy. So the fillings can be neatly made.
3. Notions of hierarchy
Traditional batik motifs are made by considering their users afterward according to

their social status and gender. A batik artisan needs to understand the batik etiquettes.

4. Willingness to serve

Talk about batik making, and then we will not talk about economic orientation. For some artisan, they make batik to please their soul and as a dedication to preserve their previous generation heritage.

5. Great work ethos and working spirit

Traditional batik is not a fabric that can be done instantly by manufacturing process. To produce a batik cloth the artisan needs to devote their time and attention.

6. Creativity

Nowadays, since batik come to industry, batik makers need to be more creative than before. They need to come up with new pattern to compete with other batik makers as well as to compete with imported fabric. Their creativity also needed to conserve batik and attract the young generation as their new market.

7. Able to work in team

It has been explained in previous part that batik is not “a work of many hand”. It takes groups of artisan to complete a whole batik cloth.

8. Good networking

To compete with other modern and imported fabric also printed batik, traditional batik artisans need to have a good networking to market their creation and protect their community.

BATIK AND EDUCATION

Education is a civilizing process, and therefore, the development of national identity through education means that this process occurs within the scope of a culture. As revealed in a statement on the importance of the following concepts:

1. Education about culture requires the transmission to younger generations through various forums.
2. Education in the culture requires the transmission in social cultural context, rather than happened in a vacuum environment.
3. Cross-cultural education in a pluralistic society that requires an attitude and way of life of mutual respect and mutual respect.

Cultural change can occur through a revolution in the field of education (Huntington & Harisson, 2000). Traditional education aims to prepare young people to integrate with the community or environment. Education is nothing but a tool of socialization. The kind of education system it emphasizes more on the conservative function as cultural transmission/ maintenance and less developed transformative function learning as an innovative cultural/ innovative learning (Efianingrum, 2010: 12). Studio base learning process enables students to develop their way to create and understand about design through trial and error method which in accordance with innovative learning.

1 Batik Pattern Modification Process in Basic Design Studio

In the learning process of batik which is done in the studio base learning process, the students are advised to recognize that there are several types of batik in Indonesia. From the selection of batik the students are expected to understand all the processes of batik making, such as the batik origin, when it will be worn, the reason of pattern used in batik, philosophy of each pattern they chose, selection of colors, and development possibilities.

For some Indonesian Batik, they have certain colors and patterns for certain ceremonies. After understanding all the uses and character of batik, students are encouraged to modify the characters of batik into a new composition while still maintaining the values and characters that have been learned. The expected result when the process is running is students can experiment and dare to develop their ideas.

Here are some of students batik modifications based on previous traditional batik pattern:

(a) (b)
Figure 3. (a) reconstruction of “Batik Merak Ngigel” (b) reconstruction of “Batik Bada” designed by Interior Design Petra Christian University Students of 2010

(c) (d)
Figure 4. (c) reconstruction of "Batik Ceplok" (d) reconstruction of "Batik Hokokai" designed by Interior Design Petra Christian University Students of 2010

Students' and Lecturers' Responds to Batik Reconstruction

Now, education centers such as families, communities, schools and even universities have experienced a lot of lost in values, such as: a sense of identity, sense of humanity, sense of community, sense of culture (values), and a sense of respect (Suyata, 2000). The introduction of cultural values through studio base learning process are hoped to decrease this value lost especially in this paper to decrease of sense of culture lost. By introducing batik to the young designers, it is hoped to increase their sense of belonging to the local heritage and their desire to develop it in further design.

Among 123 interior design student of Petra Christian University for 2010 class, approximately 80% of the students know batik even better and aware that batik is include in basic design as pattern and possible to be developed as interior element or furniture design pattern and accessories. But unfortunately only 20% of them willing to learn batik even more and have their sense of belonging to batik increased.

According to the basic design studio educators (lecturers and tutors), this process are already expected that may only increase the awareness of student about batik but merely increase the inner values consisted in batik. The tight schedule may distract the students focus to learn more about batik and only focus to learn about the reconstruction and composition. According to them process of reconstructing batik is an introduction to Indonesian culture adopted from a work of art.

Dra. Anik Rahmawati and Ir. Titien Wahono as a team of educators to Petra Christian University majoring in Interior Design, batik courses in Basic Design, is a process to enhance a sense of love for the culture of Indonesia as well as introducing a composition with a sense of the elements and principles of design. The formation of someone's character occurs because of their supportive environment. For example, if someone grow in family which use batik daily or even making batik in daily life, the person may have a huge love and sense of belonging to batik. On the other hand if a person grows in a total modern paradigm family which may look batik as obsolete that that person will see batik with the same point of view. So to develop batik in interior design, we need a continuous subject that can implement batik in it.

As a result of the observations and interviews conducted during the research, it can be obtained the opinion of some of the teaching team. The influence of basic design in terms of batik only affects a few students' character. The things that influence them such as, students have a better appreciation to the works of art and culture of Indonesia. But in daily life, the value must be done gradually. One of the effort that can be made such as wear it as clothes wore daily. Person's character is formed because they have used to do it. Better education of the nation's culture through basic design, it needs to be done by put it inside the other main interior educational programs. Good and humble characters can be taught from the batik process, while creativity and bravery to develop batik can be learned from the young designer.

How we use and develop batik in our modern culture show how we respect our local culture. The preservation of batik is our collective responsibilities as a nation. A collective effort to preserve our long standing tradition and ensure that batik does another thousand years.

CONCLUSION

The role of basic design course in the introduction and development of local culture values

through batik may only serve as a mean of introduction about local heritage richness. In this studio, students haven't got their design course yet. But through basic design studio, student are begin to aware that batik is worth to developed and applied in further interior or furniture design to give local touch.

Reconstruction of batik as the production of local to the broader public space requires the constant creation and effort. To produce future young local interior designers who has such local values awareness, the lesson about local culture, one of those are represented by batik, shall be given continuously and followed by continues demand and appreciation. Because batik application in interior design shall not merely trend but have to become an identity to compete in global market.

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