

## THE DYNAMICS OF BATIK ARTS AT KAMPOENG BATIK LAWEYAN OF SURAKARTA

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**Abstract:** Laweyan sub-district of Laweyan district in the city of Surakarta has been popularly known as the center of batik industry, which has experienced a glorious period as it did in the early 20th century and also experienced a downturn from the 1980s until the 1990s. In its downturn, there were even many appearing young craftsmans who are ductile pioneering batik making business and was able to survive until now (2017). Thus, the batik industries at Laweyan have been secured from extinction. In 2004 Laweyan Village area was officially used as a tourism destination named Kampoeng Batik Laweyan along with the goals to revive the glory of Laweyan batik.

The main problem in this research is the survival ability of batik making business in Kampoeng Batik Laweyan, having seen from the dynamics aspect of the decoration which is shown on the fabric processed through the process of making batik. This research is exhibit from the aesthetic, economic, and consistently to upright the approach of historical aspect. The qualitative research used direct observation techniques and in-depth interviews to obtain information from relevant informants.

This research concludes that: 1) The Laweyan craftsman are able to produce art of batik handicrafts dynamically and competitively with a variety of ornaments; 2) Every batik company has always presented superior product in the form of batik along with the ornament of special character distinguishing them from other company. In every batik company has always pursue the excellence of both quality and quantity of the products, 4) Begining from 2004 Laweyan Urban Village became a tourist destination under the name of Kampoeng Batik Laweyan, the artisans began to adapt and make batik with a more dynamic decoration, such as souvenirs for tourists.

**Keywords:** batik Laweyan; industry; craftsmen; tourism destination

### INTRODUCTION

The name of Laweyan has been many associated with the name of the market with the main commodity in the form of *lawé* an acronym for the expression *boelah lemboet sing arep ditenum* (Poerwadarminta, 1939: 264), or fine yarn to be woven. The market, which lies north of the Jenes / Kabanaran River, is getting more and more crowded by buyers from different regions, so the market is known in various regions as pasar *lawé* 'traditonal market of *lawé* or pasar *Lawéyan* (Mlayadipoera, 1987: 1). Laweyan as the center of trade *lawé* and economic center during the kingdom of Pajang, then shifted into a batik industrial center with an ancient elite settlement of batik merchants.

Laweyan batik's glory did not last all the time, because in 1980 to 1990, there was the hardest time for the batik industry in Laweyan, one of the causes is batik and batik cap produced by batik artisans in Laweyan, pushed by new competitor in the form "Printing Batik" or batik-patterned textiles made with screen printing techniques, as one of the printing techniques using screen (Doellah, 2008:25). There was a shift in the market interest, the existence of batik printing has shifted the traditional hand-made batik (Soaloon, 1998: 77), so many batik companies are out of business, and the batik industry in Laweyan is almost extinct. At the time of the most difficult conditions (1980 -1990), it appears several new generations that have the ductile properties (diligent, steadfast, and diligent) who are pioneering the batik making business which is a proof for the current survival of traditional hand-making batik (2017).

Laweyan community, especially the batik crafters do not want to dissolve in a prolonged slump, and began to pioneer the establishment of Kampung Batik Laweyan in synergy with the Government of Surakarta. Thanks to the synergy of Laweyan community with Surakarta City Government, Laweyan Batik Kampong was opened as one of the tourism destination in Surakarta, on September 25, 2004. The inauguration was conducted by Slamet Suryanto who at the time was the Mayor of Surakarta, the inauguration was done symbolically by laying the first stone, the construction of the Laweyan monument located in the former location of Pasar Lawé or the dead market.

After Laweyan Village area became a tourism destination called Kampong Batik Laweyan and became batik industry cluster, of course there are some interesting events record related to various kinds of tourism activities supported by various facilities and services managed by Forum Pengembangan Kampong Batik Laweyan (FPKBL) or Kampong Batik Laweyan Development Forum. The crafters began to adjust in response to the arrival of tourists by making new products that are displayed or dipamerkan in show room in front of the houses of production.

Laweyan batik art craft phenomenon made by batik crafters for the life of the crafters family and for the survival of the company, it is interesting to be studied further in regard of the newly found designs that are more innovative. Research on the art of such batik handicrafts is closely related to social and economic problems, so that interdisciplinary study is highly required.

## DISCUSSIONS

Based on the development of batik in Java Island, batik pattern can be broken down into three main elements: (1) main ornament (*klowongan*), (2) isen-isen or isen which is ornament which fill the main decorative parts, and (3) ornamental fillers commonly placed on a pattern background as a counterweight. Furthermore, Doellah (2002: 19-20) explained some criteria of batik on the shape of the patterns can be divided into two major groups, namely: (1) the pattern of geometric batik (*ceplok, parang, lereng*), and (2) non-geometric patterns (*semen, or lung-lungan, buketan, pinggiran*), and special patterns. Tirta (2009: 60) additionally argued that the existence of a combination of geometric patterns with free patterns called patchwork-like design (*patcwork*), patch design consists of: *tambal kitiran, tambal sripamiluta, tambal kar/sekar jagad*.

Initially batik cloth with a certain pattern was only used as a fashion in the form of *jarit, sarung, kemben, iket, gendhongan, and dodot*. Nowadays batik fabrics are present in various uses in textile needs that are not limited to clothing, but have been extensively included in functions for interior furnishings (tablecloths, bed sheets and pillowcases, curtains), objects-sauvenirs, banners, electronics covers (laptops, etc.), bags, and wall hangings.

Batik cloth in the 50s has actually been used as a clothing / clothing material, and the resulting clothing is still bound to the rules of batik cloth rules. Batik clothing is generally produced according to the size of classical batik kebaya fabric. Furthermore, because the goods are produced with quality and low production costs, then this batik into consumer goods. In 1956 known as batik téjo produced no longer follow the pattern of the size of batik cloth but more free to follow the size of the meter. (Soedarmono, 2006, 45)

Pioneering fashion designers have been able to lift classic batik fabrics for fashion (haute couture), do not stop at the classical style that is displayed, batik designers also designed the appearance of batik style which is a mixture of decorative traditions and modern traditions, and pure new patterns for clothing and fashion is increasingly "worldwide", because it is often followed up by holding a fashion show abroad. Batik's position grew steadily ahead of the 70s, thanks to the Governor of DKI (Ali Sadikin), who decided that for government officials to attend official events wearing long-sleeved batik shirts, while for everyday wear wearing short-sleeved batik shirts. The impact of this decision is the development of new designs especially for shirts for formal events of traditional ornaments processed with richer colors (not to restrict the blue, brown, and beige colors). The emergence of batik meter products are generally directed to men's shirts (batik tejo) that adopt the pattern of tradition.

Traditional batik ornament still processed at some of the batik centers in Surakarta. Tradition patterns often made are: truntum, sidomukti, and revelation down. These patterns are often made, because the marriage ceremonies are still in the process of Javanese tradition (Jogja and Solo), which require batik dress with traditional pattern as component in marriage procession, in urban as well as in district and village.

The flexibility of traditional batik use by reducing pattern isen and reducing the number of colors, this is mainly the tradition pattern processed with batik cap, the reduction of "decorative fineness" is more due to the demands of people who want to have batik with a relatively cheap price. which is widely used for work costume on certain days.

Merging traditional decorated variants with abstract-motive. The influence of the development of batik art in Europe, America, Malaysia, and Singapore, in the 1960s combined with the concept and expression in the oil painting, which in the future may provide inspiration for the painters in Indonesia to create paintings by guided batik method. In Yogyakarta there are several painters who created their work through batik method. The works of batik painters are inspired by the big bangs in Candik Sanggar to produce batik cloth for clothing, which was originally only used for uniform "janur decoration" by their group.

Batik with a variety of ornamental traditions is not only flexible developed further, and has the flexibility to be combined with non-batik visual elements, as well as the combination of decorative resulted from the structure of weaving / weaving, traditional batik flexibility has been tested in a very long time, by various consumers in various regions and various countries, and tested with traditional batik tradition to remain used as symbols and components of Javanese traditional traditions, as well as the ability to be customized, modified as desired by the community in the needs of textile craft items as one of the creative industry products.

From the results of observations and interviews, about the dynamics of batik art in Kampong Batik Laweyan, can be delivered as follows:

### ***Dynamics of Decorative Variety***

The craftsmen still make batik with the pattern of tradition, among others: *truntum*, *sidomukti*, *sidomluhur*, *sidomulyo*, *sido drajat*, *wahyu tumurun*. Patterns are often made, because the marriage ceremonies are still in the ordinance of tradition that requires batik cloth with traditional patters as a component in the procession of marriage tradition in Surakarta society. The other frequently made patterns are *parang*, *kawung*, *semen*, and *debyah*.

- a) The craftsmen begin to reduce and simplify the main decoration, isen-isen and decoration of background filler in classic batik, so as to produce batik decoration with less perfect overall appearance.
- b) Adding "rich" main decoration, isen-isen in the main decoration, and decoration isene background pattern isne with other decoration (non tradition).
- c) The element in the pattern of traditional batik combined with the results of expression in abstract batik art from the painters in Jogja, and creations in the group "Canting Kakung" in Sondakan. Changes from abstract art to the expression of the artists into the art of batik craft "abstrakan" for the function of clothing.
- d) Reduction on the number of colors in traditional batik, leaving only one color, such as blue only, or brown only).
- e) Changing and adding the color of traditional batik (beige, brown, and blue), becomes more rich in color variations.
- f) In 2010 the batik process developed by developing traditional decoration on the surface of lurik cloth, developed in Bayat, especially in the Village of Jarum. Results blend batik and lurik display is often called "lutik" or lurik batik (Source: Mrs.Purwanti, from Village of Jarum). Lutik fabric has two characters, namely decoration raised through the process of batik that gives decoration on the surface of the fabric and decoration produced through the weaving structure that provides decoration through arrangements in meeting the threads of lungsi and feed yarns.
- g) Combining elements of decorative batik tradition with a variety of ornaments that appear from the process of jumputan, and the combination of batik with

smokan, and the combination of batik process with printing has been widely developed in the Laweyan area.

- h) Adding the traditional elements of color in paintings for wall hangings. In Pandana batik and Setya batik in Laweyan.
- i) Matching the ornamental tradition with a variety of ornamental non tradition.
- j) New ornamental / floral decoration for beach sheath, just adopt batik technique with dye remasol coletan technique.
- k) Making batik *abstrakan*, but sometimes still combined with traditional batik isen.

### ***Excellent product with dynamic decoration***

Laweyan batik decoration has a dynamic character in the sense that the visual element is easily adjusted to the trend that is always changing or adjusted with dynamic user demand, including the demand of tourists who visited Kampong Batik Laweyan since 2004. The uniqueness of the Laweyan batik handicraft, not only based on the customer's personal wishes, but also lies in the artist's understanding and desire to always perfect his work.

Batik Company that survives is a company that has excellent products with excellent ornaments as a distinctive company. Batik cloth with truntum ornaments, tirtateja, batik village monument, white sand abstract, and ox cart, buketan, special ornament for overseas consumer, have competitive nature or high salable behavior, so as to improve the crafters' economy.

### ***Pursuing excellence in quality and quantity of production***

Most of the batik craftsmen in Kampong Batik Laweyan, have left the dye and old ways that produce less economic value, such as the manufacture of batik in a traditional way that uses blue of *indigo* and *soga* colors. Furthermore, the craftsmen develop the basic process in making batik, namely: 1) the preparation of fabric by cutting the fabric according to the desired size, 2) sticking the wax on the cloth by writing, stamp, and write combination with the stamp, the use of liquid night in cold temperatures with the technique screening, 3) coloring the fabric by dyeing and smearing, using synthetic dyes (naphtol, indigosol, rapid, and remazol), and 4) nglorod or wax removal by adding tapioca starch to boiling water. The craftsmen develop the embodiment process through new ways with different variations that are considered faster, more practical, more varied, the raw material is easy to obtain, and economically more profitable than the traditional way.

Business owners are constantly developing materials, tools, and methods to make batik to find excellent products that are also a hallmark of the company. Batik companies that have advantages in the embodiment process, will be able to produce batik with high quality and in a faster time with a cheaper cost compared to other companies, and the results are difficult to imitate by other companies

### ***Batik as souvenirs for tourists***

Since Laweyan Urban Village became a tourism destination called Kampoeng Batik Laweyan in 2004, batik craftsmen began to adjust to make products souvenirs in the form of batik cloth as basic materials, apparel products (garment), and various accessories of batik materials. Souvenir products can be purchased directly by the tourists through the local market, namely through a batik showroom that mushroomed in Kampoeng Batik Laweyan. The marketing strategy through showroom as a new phenomenon after Kampoeng Laweyan batik was inaugurated in 2004 and enable the people to increase the interaction between buyers and batik entrepreneurs. The interaction is then cultivates creative ideas of batik entrepreneurs, and make Laweyan community attitude become more open to the presence of "outsiders" in their home environment. The openness of batik artisans community in Kampoeng Batik Laweyan, does not stop at batik product marketing aspect in their showroom. The openness of the community also appeared after 2008, the owners of batik making business began to accept "the outsiders" or tourists who want to learn making batik in the home environment or in the business are to enable their own batik making.

Through educational tourism activities, tourists get direct experience in the manufacture of batik in the home environment or in the environment where batik making business, so in a relatively short time it can occur increased knowledge, skills, and increased appreciation of tourists to the art of batik craft. The main output of creative educational tourism activities, is the production of batik cloth as a work made by tourists with a tour guide or batik crafters. The produce batiks were used by tourists as a souvenir or unique souvenir from Kampung batik of Laweyan.

### **CONCLUSION**

This study concludes that the dynamics of the art of batik Laweyan, 1) the batik craftsmen in Kampoeng Batik Laweyan are able to produce batik art with decorative style which is dynamic and competitive; 2) in every batik company always have superior product in the form of batik with ornament which have special character different from other company; 3) in every batik company always want to survive by pursuing the excellence of quality and quantity of production, 4) starting 2004 Laweyan Village became tourism destination named Kampoeng Batik Laweyan, the artisans began to adapt and make batik with more dynamic decoration, especially as a souvenir for tourists.

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