

Semarang *Batik* as an Artistic Representation of Coastal and Egalitarian Communities

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Abstract—*Batik* is one of Semarang citizen's art that has unique things. That unique thing comes from the locality as the source of the idea that expressed to its embodiment. This assessment is focused on the question, how the coastal locality representation to Semarang's *batik* expression as the characteristic embodiment. This assessment is to find some descriptions that clearly related to the description of the representation of society and culture to Semarang's *batik*. This research is to find the proof that Semarang's *batik* represents the type of urban society, coastal/egalitarian; and the type of pop culture, eclectic/acculturative.

Keywords—art expression, representation, *batik*, egalitarian, culture

I. INTRODUCTION

The art that appears and grows in Semarang city is locality reflection that it has. Semarang citizen manifests their art as the act of esthetic expression and their culture creativity. Like the expression and the creation, the art is described into form and a typical dish. One of art embodiment means *batik*, which is the *batik* with Semarang typically style for Semarang's citizen is commonly called *Batik Semarang*.

The truth of the development that it has, Semarang's *batik* with the history and social environment background that it has, it appears with its own characteristic. However, because it has not popular enough, Semarang's *batik* still sounds weird to the wide society especially in out of Semarang city. This topic is an interesting problem to be revealed. The expression characteristic of Semarang's *batik* needs to be reviewed to find and explain scientifically about its uniqueness. In this case, Semarang's *batik* can be viewed as culture potential that can represent the locality of Semarang city. This assessment is focused on the question, how the expression of the locality of Semarang's *batik* as its characteristic form. This assessment is synchronized done, which is Semarang's *batik* in a period of time, from 2006 to 2016. This era is chosen with the consideration, because before this era is the vacuum era, which is the stopped progress of Semarang's *batik* because of tragedy since the Japanese colonial era (1942). The assessment of the cause of Semarang's *batik* expression seems important to find a clear description of the locality expression of Semarang's *batik* on the intraestetik assessment as the creative process of Semarang's *batik* craftsman.

A. Art (the element and culture's reflection)

Reviewed from the culture's perspective, the art comes in the konstektual relation with space and time that creation

has made. Its appearance can be representation and abstraction from the local reality that it has [1, p. 1]. The difference of the esthetic expression has given the form and features from its expression into this art that is created by human being [2, pp. 3–4]. So this expression is the main expression of identity [3, pp. 142–143].

On the *batik* contexts, the art of *batik* also comes in the relation which is konstektual with space and time. Its appearance can be a representation and abstraction from reality. *Batik* art with any form and expression features ti the *batik* art which is affected by the culture values and it's society environment.

B. Art Expression Concept

The expression of the art also means disclosure with creatively through a visual medium in the creation form. In this case, art creations is an activity that expresses which is an expression, which is feeling and thinking [4, p. 60]. Eaton [5, p. 12], The Liang Gie [6, p. 11], identified that art expression is an expression about the idea and estetik feeling through face media. The process of creation as estetik expression in art is an explanation of idea through medium visual [5, p. 26]. So, the expression needs the concrete form which is in creation so that the art is not stopped as imagination or only idea [7, p. 18]. This matter tells that in the creation there are steps that have to be passed which are also called the proses of creation or making. According to Chapman [8], the process of creation consists of three steps: 1) the first step, is an inception of an idea of finding the main topic, which is exploration process to find the idea; 2) the next step is to perfect, develop, and consolidate the main idea (elaboration and refinement). This matter also means to develop into a pravisual description which is maybe gifted concrete form later; 3) the last step is visualizations into the medium (mention in a medium) which is utilize certain of the medium.

Creative expression is a self-actualization "self-actualizing person" which involves imagination power, inspiration, and creation. In art, creativity is pressure about the process that produces something new, unique, and interesting from the results of previous ideas. The expression on *batik* contexts, which is disclosure feeling aesthetic, ideas, and minds, or the concept from the artist in creatively on *batik* creation form using medium *batik* through the process or certain steps on *batik*. The steps start from looking for an idea, consolidating ideas, and visualization with certain medium *batik*.

C. Batik Art

Batik according to common sense is a picture on the fabric using the tools like a canting, cap, and brush, also through the process of waxing, coloring, and preaching. According to Hamzuri [9, p. 6], *batik* interpreted as paint or picture on mori fabric which is made by a tool named canting. Then according to Doellah [10, p. 10] *batik* is a fabric made traditionally with certain *batik* pattern which is dyed with rintang and malam 'batik wax' as perintang's ingredient color. Therefore, a wastra called *batik* if it contain two main elements, there are rintang dyed technique by using wax as perintangcolor and ornamental diverse patterns on *batik* itself (see also Purba [11]).

Therefore, can be said that the meaning of *batik* can be referred to two things. The first is fabric coloring technique with using the malam to avoidcoloring in the part of the fabric. In the international literature, this technique known as was-resist dyng.

II. METHODOLOGY

The research paradigm that is suitable for solving the problem of this research is qualitative research by looking for clarity of meaningful descriptions. The explanation is carried out in depth (thick description) regarding the symptoms and relationships between them. Direct data sources and researchers as the main instrument (human instrument) [12, p. 27]. The research setting was determined purposively based on research needs. The research background covers the *batik* community which takes place inside and outside Semarang *Batik Village*. To obtain data in this study, the method used was observation, interviews, and document study. Data validity is attempted by triangulation. Triangulation is carried out in four aspects: sources, methods, researchers, and theories.

Along with the data collection process, data analysis is carried out by reducing and classifying through the domain, taxonomy, and compound analysis, as well as finding themes to describe thoroughly and display the meaning of the research focus that ultimately pays attention to interactions from an emic-ethical perspective or vice versa [13]. The data analysis process includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing whose activities are carried out in an interactive form with the data collection process as a cycle process [14].

Semarang *batik* that includes the whole of activity and productivity the user on Semarang *batik*, the existential can be seen as a representation. This matter is matching on Powells' view [15] which is explain that representation, and identity that builds from the environment, history, culture sites materials, and visuals, culture values, traditions, and social experiences.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. Type of community

According to the identification and analysis of research data which has been done, the arena of semarang *batik* art viewed from society types, represent the urban society, coastal, and egalitarian. Semarang society can be classified as a citizen (urban community).

1. Urban (urban community)

Semarang *batik* represents urban society with some indicators. First, consequences, from the urban society that also formed by the comer, so the *batik* performer also formed by the comer. Even the actors which are personality play a role in Semarang *batik* pioneering and development, all include the comer. The second, *batik* that moved is more orientated on the fulfillment of practical needs and economic value. Theconsimomial lifestyle in the city with the trend of following fashion trends becomes the spirit for the market to constantly prepare and offer their new products. Innovate to the tastes of consumers. third, innovative, in line with the spirit of following the market taste, *batik* Semarang craftsmen are challenged to continue to innovate featuring various *batik* variants, but with the image of Semarangan.Fourth, more rational, that urban society shows more rationality. Then the embodiment of *batik* motive motifs tends to be straightforward with the embodiment of a form of representational form. Lifting the form of the motif from the locality Semarangwith realistic objective depiction or its form seems reasonable and rational. Decorative *batik* is more natural that is a picture of real life, as a disclosure of the characteristics of natural shapes and daily events. Fifth, in a plural city society, tend to be individualistic. In the *batik*, they always try to bring up the Semarang motif but is a creation that becomes his own as an individual. There are even efforts to protect the results of his work personally by patent. sixth, heterogeneous, the urban society is classified multiethnic and multicultural society because it consists of various tribes, groups, groups, even between nations with the diversity of cultures that collected in one city, heterogeneity is also represented in *batiknya*. *Batik* motif motifs Semarang display a lot of heterogeneity.

2. Coastal/Egalitarian

As a coastal city, Semarang has potency and strong cultural capital. Semarang has a unique customs and coastal tradition, plus its contact with the colonial culture and its acculturation thanks to the culture of immigrants, especially the culture of Islam and china into the nature of egalitarian society [16][17]. The term coastal appears because it is located in the northern coastal area of Java island. Ports and coastal areas as a meeting place for various nations in the trade have led to various cultural developments, including patterns and colors in Semarang *batik*. Color in coastal *batik* is also very rich while its decoration is strongly influenced by elements of elements that characterize the region and the influence of outside culture as Semarang locality. This coastal *batik* business has grown rapidly since Dutch colonial times. But this business never stopped during the Japanese period. Coastal *batik* is *batik* that thrives outside the palace [18]. As well as in *batik* Semarang, the function of *batik* produced is not tied to the specific use, but diverse in various uses. This coastal *batik* has a more dynamic, festive, naturalist and influenced by various foreign cultures, especially Chinese, and European, with a pattern that has a variety of colors [19][20]. Characteristic of decorative *batik* coastal is also represented in *batik* Semarang which in the course of history also colored with the influence of Chinese and European culture.

Batik Semarang represents the type of egalitarian coastal community. Egalitarian, free and open nature that is

reflected in *batik* Semarang is a kind of aesthetics of coastal *batik* different from *batik* keraton. Not tied to the grip motif, symbolization, and ethics of use as the order of *batik* keraton which is seen as the Indonesian classical *batik* [21][22].

B. Culture type

Batik Semarang represents the type of pop culture and eclectic / acculturative culture.

1. Pop Culture

Semarang *batik* of cultural analysis can be categorized as a popular culture practice or commonly abbreviated pop culture. Pop culture cannot be separated from urbanization and industrialization. Then the people of Semarang are classified as an urban community identical with the industrialization in the wheels of the economy. Pop culture is included in its popular art. Popular art was born because of capitalist ideology and consumption, commodity goods.

The reality of cultural practice in the arena of cultural production of the art of *batik* Semarang is a cultural reality that represents the popular culture. Popular culture can be defined as a mass culture in industrial society [23]. The facts show that the orientation of Semarang is the orientation of commodities where production is directed to mass products with aesthetics that can characterize Semarang identity. Popular culture is a mass culture produced by the culture industry.

In the context of *batik* Semarang more directed to mass production. This indicates that *batik* Semarang goes with an industrial pattern directed to the commodity. The representation of pop culture in *batik* Semarang indicates the mass production industry and mass market which simultaneously encourage the spread of mass culture to audiences. The production of stout is determined by the system needs and system functions. The system of needs and system of functions in society is organized or created in accordance with the goods of commodities. Stratification and achievement in *batik* Semarang are based on the ability to meet the system of mass culture needs built in Perbatikan. It also encourages commercialism and pursues market advantage as a form of popular culture.

Then the representation of culture in perbatikansemarang is a representation of popular culture or mass culture. Pop culture is melting in mass culture and rationality that is popular culture generated through mass industrial engineering techniques and marketed to benefit from mass consumer audiences. Pop culture is related to art objects, mass culture, cultural industry, identity, and politics. Art objects in the form of *batik* Semarang mass produced through *batik* industry. Identity Semarang constructed through perbatikan that politically aims to imagine Semarang have *batik* culture with uniqueness and characteristic of owned locality. Dominic Strinati [23] calls popular culture to embody various forms of politics. *Batik* Semarang can be viewed as a political identity struggle which is the core of the analysis of popular culture. Politically, the city government of Semarang wants the *batik* Semarang made by the craftsmen to have the character of "Semarangan" as an effort to show "to a typical".

2. Eclectic Culture/Acculturative

The local cultural struggle in Semarang with various cultures from outside, European *batik*, china, and Islam that

influenced this city since its inception, has resulted eclectic of local culture as well as plural as seen in its form of cultural activity. As well as in Semarangperbatikan, eclectic culture and acculturative culture are also represented. This is very clearly seen in the expression of *batik* art.

Cultural mixing is reflected in the art especially the motive motifs that represent the local culture of java, Islam, china, and Europe. This is certainly not separated from the conditions which Semarang is a port area that often visited the nation and the outside culture that has lasted for a long time. This interaction process resulted in the least cultural acculturation of Javanese, Islamic, Chinese, and European (colonial) cultures. Acculturation of culture that arises wealth in the treasures of culture including art especially on *batik*. a description of the aesthetic expression on *batik* Semarang which implies that the condition of sociocultural and the natural surrounding factors that affect the experience and artistic expression that reflects the eclectic culture Semarang. Free and open is reflected in *batik* Semarang.

Finally, the representation of *batik* Semarang can be described schematically in the following chart.

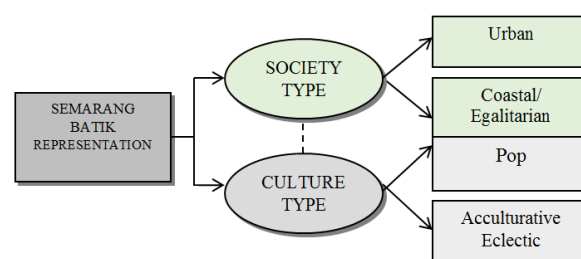


Fig. 1. Representation of *Batik* Semarang

Batik Semarang presented the types of urban, coastal/egalitarian, and the type of pop culture, eclectic/acculturative. The following is shown an example of *batik* Semarang's iconic motif.



Fig. 2. (a) Blekok motive creation of "Batik Balqis", (b) Sekar Jagad motive the icon of Semarang creation of "Batik Blekok" Semarang

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research and discussion, the conclusion that Semarang *batik* represents the type of urban society, coastal/egalitarian, the type of pop culture, eclectic/acculturative.

Semarang *batik* present urban society with some indicators. First, the *batik* actors many played by immigrants, secondly oriented to the fulfillment of practical needs and economic value. Third, innovative, in line with spirit to follow market taste. Fourth, more rational, the

manifestation of motive motifs tend to be straightforward with the form of representational forms. Fifth, tend to be individualistic. Sixth, the multiethnic and multicultural society motifs of *batik* motifs Semarang displaying a lot of heterogeneity.

Semarang *batik* present coastal / egalitarian society, its contact with the colonial culture and its acculturation with the culture of immigrants, especially the culture of Islam and Chinese become the nature of its egalitarian society bring up the uniqueness of style and color in Semarang *batik*. More dynamic, lively, naturalistic and influenced by foreign cultures, especially China, and Europe.

Semarang *batik*, presenting popular culture that cannot be separated from urbanization and industrialization society. Popular culture can be defined as a mass culture in industrial society. The facts show that the orientation of *batik* Semarang is a commodity orientation where production is directed to mass products produced by the culture industry. Production is largely determined by the need system with commodity goods. In this connection, Semarang *batik*, in the end, creates a mass culture that was built in *batik*.

Semarang *batik*, representing the eclectic culture. the local cultural struggle in Semarang with various cultures from outside, both European, china, and Islam affecting Semarang *batik*, especially, the motive motif that represents the local culture of java, Islam, china, and Europe. A description of the aesthetic expression on Semarang *batik* which implies that the sociocultural and natural conditions surrounding the factors that affect the experience and artistic expression that reflects the eclectic culture of Semarang.

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