



Batik Kawung as Key Visual for the Graduation Ceremony of the UMN

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Abstract. Pattern design that serves as key visual has an essential role to captivate audience's eyes and becoming a design identity that can display a strong message in many creative projects. In Indonesia, especially in the region of Central Java and Jogjakarta, there are multiple traditional Batik pattern designs that have deep philosophical meaning, symbolism and cultural values that can be utilized as a key visual for many design forms, including Batik Kawung Pattern. In a creative perspective, Kawung Pattern offer many opportunities to be explored as a primary design element due to it's strong philosophy and design adaptability, which suits Universitas Multimedia Nusantara's need to uphold local heritage as a main theme of each of their graduation ceremony. This paper breakdown the research and creative process to develop a pattern design for the 24th graduation ceremony of the UMN that conveys traditional Batik Kawung pattern and translate it to a contemporary design for exhibition purposes. The development process starts by researching a historical and philosophical meaning that is implanted in Batik Kawung motives, designing pattern for the main mock up asset and its implementation towards various design derivatives, such as stage panel mock up, photo booth panel, and motion graphics videos.

Keywords: Batik Kawung, Pattern, Design, Key Visual, Graduation, Ceremony, Exhibition.

1 Introduction

Nurul, Supadi, and Lasmedi [1] stated that Batik is a well-known art heritage with high artistic value, including batik Kawung. The aesthetic richness of batik Kawung is embedded visually and metaphorically on its design and has been utilized for generations for various purposes. Traditionally, Batik is used as garment for clothes, but eventually, batik design and pattern evolved to other commodities such as handbag, shoes, wall frame and many others [2]. According to Muliani [3], batik could be a part of an aesthetic element for an interior design, especially in public spaces due to its applicative pattern. Furthermore, the initial design of batik Kawung that consists of four angled ellipses that support each other offers flexible pattern design options and can be utilized as a visual identity for many design derivatives [4].

Kawung batik motifs also comprise of teeming philosophical values. According to Wahida et al. [4], a classic Kawung motif offers a philosophical meaning of teaching goodness and benefiting each other while living together. The relevance of Kawung motif's metaphor is still strongly stand and can be utilized as an inspirational asset to be developed for a contemporary art that is keeping up with soul of the era. This substantial advantage from Kawung motifs are in line with its own visual resiliency that offers many opportunities to be incorporated as a key visual for many design necessities, including for the Universitas Multimedia Nusantara (UMN) 24th graduation ceremony that attempted to promote Yogyakarta values towards its whole ceremonial programme. Key visual itself, according to Kohlbacher [5], is used as guide or visual reference for a campaign that clearly express the emotion and tone to the audience.

Immersion [6] added that key visual is a foundation for a visual identity that should be timeless and tasteful. These statements amplify the opportunity for Kawung motifs as a key visual element for the graduation ceremony identity due to its timeless and famous design that is still currently well acknowledged by public. Therefore, this research presents the thought process of designing batik Kawung pattern as a key visual identity design and its derivatives, such as logo, stage decoration, and motion graphics, for the Universitas Multimedia Nusantara 24th Graduation Ceremony due to its adaptable visual and rich philosophical meaning that is suitable for the event that highlighted Yogyakarta as the main theme. In summary, the question formulated for this paper is how Batik Kawung motif is designed as a key visual for the 24th graduation ceremony of the UMN?

2 Methodology

In this research, qualitative research methodology was utilized using case study approach. The case being used is how to design batik Kawung for key identity for UMN Graduation Ceremony by doing an in-depth research on Batik kawung visual and metaphorical values through written resource and online observation. Sources used to include journals, website and books that provides any written information and visual references about batik Kawung motifs, colour, and cultural significance.

All the visual information then gathered and connected to the event's information regarding target audience, including age group, geographic, and even income. As Dang [7] mentioned that understanding the group of the brand is an essential step to develop a proper visual identity before jump into the next processes which are designing a mock up by formulating colour, typography, shape, logo, and touchpoints.

This guide was formulated by Dang [7] are used in this research considerably for research base framework. The final mockup was later processed with different methods to produce various design derivatives such as stage decoration and motion graphics. All of these derivatives were developed under various design methods and software, depends on the designs expected outcome.

3 Result

3.1 The history and meaning of Batik Kawung

The history of Batik kawung motif is a set of four ovals or ellipses that are arranged in a repetitive diagonal composition, tilting on the left and right and usually colored in ochre, black, and dark brown. In general, Kawung motifs are inspired by the seed of kawung fruit (also known as palm or aren) that is splitted into two so the cavity formed into four corners.

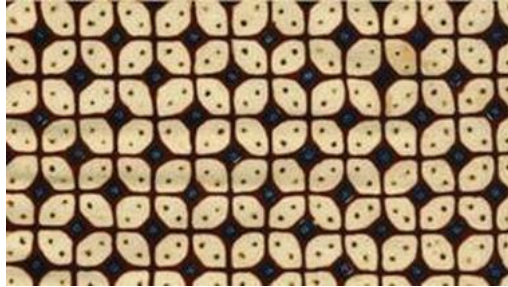


Fig. 1 Batik Kawung pattern. Retrieved December 6, 2023, (Source: Wikimedia Commons, <https://rb.gy/vwd4to>, Picture owned by National Museum of World Cultures, Public domain).



Fig. 2. Batik Buah Aren. Retrieved December 1, 2023, (Source: from <https://rb.gy/ydtf01>, Actual photo taken by W.A. Djattmiko, August 2008).

Batik Kawung was designed by Sultan Agung Hanyokrokusumo, a king from Mataram using natural material and create batik motif with it. In Kawung motifs, the king's power is symbolized in the center of the motif while the other four shapes are the source of the universe's energy [4]. Wahida then added that in Javanese cosmology, the concept of four shapes with a center is also known as Panca Pat, a concept that upholds traditional cosmology of life, politics, economy, and many more. For example, the Mataram king is assisted by four advisors for politics, economy, spiritual, and defense/security [4]. Another examples of Panca Pat are how humans are embodied by four desires, Muthmainah, Amarah, Aluamah, and Supiah. Muthmainah is a positive desire that always conflicted with the other three. These four desires need to be controlled by each human so he/she can achieve balance in life. Kawung also correlated

with the word *suwung*, which means empty. *Kawung* motif then become the symbol of empty and purity, neutrality, detachment from worldly desire and follow the flow of life.

3.2 Knowing Target Audience

With Dang [7] approach, the first thing to be put in consideration is knowing the target audience. Based on the gathered data from the official graduation committee, the graduation ceremony of UMN was attended by the universities rectorates, officials, graduates, and formal guests which were the family members of the graduates themselves. Most of the audiences were mostly coming from an educated, mid-high society as a considerable amount of fee is objected to the graduates to secure their spot on the ceremony. The event is formal and structured. Thus several keywords such as “formal”, “ceremonial”, and “structured” were collected as a base to develop further design varieties.

3.3 Choosing Colours

On colour choosing process, the design team gathered data about common batik *Kawung* colour, the history or philosophy behind it based on the Javanese values (the use of *Panca warna*) through journals and other online resources. The data was analyzed and combined with the target audience data provided by the committee. Then, the design team create a number of alternative colours in Adobe Illustrator based on the data result be to formulated it with colour theory method by Dang [7]. Dang’s theory and method are crucial as it exposed the importance of colours and how they connected to the target audience.

After a thorough process by the design team, teal green was selected as the main colour and orange as the secondary color. Both colours are complementary that can give each other enough contrast and still suitable to be highlighted for a formal event with a specific target audience such as graduation ceremony.



Fig. 3 Complementary colour. (Source: Retrieved December 6, from Freepik.com, <https://rb.gy/vnmrir> , Taken by author through personal Freepik premium account).



Fig. 4 Teal green & orange combination. (Source: Retrieved December 6, 2023, from <https://www.schemecolor.com/or-ange-and-teal.php#download>. Using author personal account)

On the other side, according to Azka & Adisurya [8], batik from Yogyakarta have white coloured background with a blueish undertone. With big and thick motif that shows bold characteristic. Despite of the domination of earthy colour such as black and brown in most batik design, teal green was chosen as the primary colour due to its correlation with Javanese people's value on living and its psychological effects towards the audience.

3.4 Designing Shape for Key Visual

To design the overall shape of the Kawung main motifs, moodboards and references of an actual batik Kawung were gathered as an initial guidance for the shape before it can be developed using Adobe Illustrator. Initially, Kawung motif was inspired by the shape of elliptical palm fruit meat. The elliptical shapes were arranged diagonally to form a crossing pattern. This crossing pattern is applied towards the key visual design and later incorporated with the selected colours (Teal green, orange & yellow).



Fig. 5 Main Kawung Motif (Source: Personal Documentation)

Despite the fully elliptical traditional design, the final looks of the single Kawung main motif were modified by sharpening the highest and lowest point of each motif so it would shape a full circle foundation when all four Kawung motifs are leaning on each other. Based on the Panca Pat concept, yellow eight point stars was placed in the middle of four ellipses. The yellow stars are correlated with power, potency, and nobility that is surrounded with four human desires (ellipses).

During the designing process, a set of simpler kawung motifs were developed as a secondary pattern to supplement the main design. The design itself consists of multiple basic kawung motifs with orange outline without fill colour. The size was significantly

smaller and the design is more simplistic compare to the main Kawung motifs in order to keep the main motifs outstanding as this secondary element using bright orange that is visually more vivid than the main motif.



Fig. 6 Secondary Kawung Motif (Source: Personal documentation)

3.5 Designing Logo & Choosing Typefonts

By exploiting the modified design, The 24th Graduation Ceremony Logo of UMN were initially developed by creating several logo alternatives. All of them were made directly in Adobe Illustrator after sketches were made beforehand.

Most of the logo alternatives were a modified versions of the main pattern from mock up. This approach was taken to shorten the developing process time and to directly encapsulated the main element visually without having to reset all the thinking process by creating new logo from scratch. Eventually, the final logo was selected after unanimous decision between the team. The final logo itself was made by isolating a set of four angled modified ellipses that facing each other and added an eight points stars in the middle of the ellipses with similar colour. This approach was taken in consider of the Panca Pat concept, where the eight points star become the highlight that surrounded by four ellipses that formed a full circle when they combined together.



Fig. 7 Main Logo (Source: Personal documentation)

On the next stage, typefonts was also considered to complete the design. The typeface Albertus was then selected as the regular font for the overall design. Albertus is a serif typeface that is usable for big headlines and printed displays (Freefonts) due its decent readability and complete family fonts.

3.6 Design Derivatives

Based on the mock up, several designs derivatives were made to complete the event's needs, including photobooth panels, stage panels, motion graphics, and graduation books. The combination of main desain pattern, secondary pattern, logo, typography, and colour were combined accordingly to provide various design needs. All designs mostly made in Adobe Illustrator, Sketch Up, and Adobe After Effects, depending on which design is being made. All designs varieties were rooted from the mock up design that was made in Adobe Illustrator before being dissected, resized and/or elaborated independently by the design team.

For example, the stage decoration was sized at +/- 2 meters wide and 5 meters in height. The design team then opened up the mock up files, select some of the asset or elements inside the file and rearrange them in new Illustrator with the actual size of the stage. After the stage design was done, the design team create a mock up photo of the actual stage using Sketch Up.



Fig. 8 Stage Panel (Source: Personal documentation)

For motion graphics assets, similar steps were taken. The only differences were the actual dimensions of each specific video, the software used to process the design, and the final output. Some of each motion graphics video have specific dimensions up to 4000+ pixels wide. All of them were processed in Adobe After Effects and rendered as MP4 videos to be played during the ceremony.



Fig. 9 Motion Graphic (Source: Personal documentation)

4 Discussion

Weingerl & Javorsek [9] said that colour is an essential component in visual design and graphic design promotion. Many designers consider colour as one of the most essential element in the design itself. Hence, the process formulating colour in this study was taken in a thoughtful process in order to create an effective colour combination that can support the whole design. Wahida et al [4] added that ancient Javanese use *panca warna*, or five colours, to portray human characters. *Panca warna* consists of red, black, yellow, green, and white that symbolises anger and lust, known as *Amarah*, *Aluwamah*, *Supiah*, and *Muthmainah*. Despite the ill-favoured meaning, the core of these set of colour is enunciating hope for people that can hold their desire to be a noble character, wisdom, and good energy.

In *Panca warna*, red means blood or birth, prosperity and courage. Black is connotated with wisdom, equality, and leadership. White is associated with purity and cleansing. Yellow (or goldish) symbolised with hope, deity, prosperity, and nobility. Meanwhile the colour green projects living hope and nature that live harmoniously with human as people mostly take their living resource from it. The colour teal green was chosen as the main identity colour because of its connection with mountain. Kusuma & Damai, 2020 [10] once cited that mountain symbolized hope and prosperity for Javanese people that rely their living and on mountain's resource.

Hanada [11] also stated in his research on colour that greenish colour indicates "calmness", "quietness", "secure feeling" and "relief". Dang [7] also added that green is a vibrant yet stable colour and best matched with any design that relates wealth, stability and nature. Green also correlates with growth and new beginnings. In addition, the bluish colour in the teal green indicates "lucidity", "happiness", "freshness", "calmness", and "comfort". Meanwhile, the colour orange shows "happiness", "joy", and "brightness". These symbolisms provide by the selected colours evoke the spirit of joyful yet solemn graduation ceremony that will bring hope towards the graduates as they will face a new beginning in their professional career.

On Javanese perspective, orange is also a mixed colour between yellow and red that is included in *Panca warna*'s set that portrays hope, prosperity, and submission to God. While goldish yellow offers nobility, prosperity, and pure hope of safety to the God. Yellow is considered a sacred colour that is closely identified with spiritual deity. For example, this colour is used for *Nasi Kuning* or Yellow Rice for ritual offerings. White was chosen as tertiary colour due to its resiliency and contrast towards the main colour. White also symbolized purity that is connected to new beginnings or untainted future of the graduates.

On the main motifs, numerous of orange-filled *Kawung* motifs were spread randomly as symbol of diversity among the graduates that not only added accent to the design, but also gave another positive message towards the graduates to support each other beyond any differences. Also, on the main *Kawung* pattern, each individual motif was modified where the top and bottom edges were cornered instead of elliptical like the actual batik references. This approach was taken in order to improve the pattern versatility because the motif itself would be used as a basis for a logo, and a logo needs to be versatile to be effective according to Dang [7].

The official logo of the 24th Graduation Ceremony of UMN consists of four angled Kawung motifs that facing each other so they made a complete circle when combined. This approach is suitable to make a simple yet modern logo that is versatile to be applied in many design applications since it can be rearranged into a pattern immediately. The logo also brings up the Panca Pat concept with the eight point stars becomes the symbol of nobility, happiness, and hope for a prosper life towards the graduates. This stars were hidden inside four ellipses that symbolizes the four desires that need to be controlled by the graduates when they face the real world while still maintaining their nobility and hope within.

Then, choosing Albertus MT as the main font because it's generally matched with overall key visual design since serif fonts is usually used for formal context, including documents and academic paper due to its formal looks that conveys trustworthiness [7]. Garfield [12] once cited Jonathan Pelham opinion on Albertus. Pelham explained that Albertus possesses a modern and old fashion looks at the same time. It also looks formal yet eccentric, folkloric and also empirical. Jonathan Abbot, as also cited by Garfield [12] added that Albertus is a timeless typeface that has a quality of modern and traditional looks, despite being a historical font. These qualities brought by Albertus typeface is synchronized with the ceremony's concept to elevate local wisdom in a modern yet formal manner.

To summarize, besides the Kawung motif that rich in philosophical values, other elements that were part of the key visual identity have equal opportunity to be extracted deeply as a graphics asset, both in technical and substantial aspect. On the other side, one of the difficulties of this study is how to connects the event's theme with the design concept without leaving the University's identity completely. Fortunately, the head committee give enough freedom on developing completely new and separate visual identity for the main event. Coman et al. [13] stated that having multiple identities within an organization is an existing practice to build a favorable relationship to the public. Thus, to established a good identity, the organization has to manage the way they communicate with the public to express their identity. In this statement, the visual identity of the graduation ceremony was a temporary identity for the UMN by using Yogyakarta and its wisdom to gain a strong relationship with the graduates and attendees.

5 Conclusion

To conclude, it is safe to say that Kawung Motif offers substantial amount of values to be elevated through all design element for the university's ceremonial event. The pattern is adaptive to be applied on so many different design forms. However, a comprehensive research is needed to build a strong key visual as a primary identity for the 24th Graduation Ceremony of UMN. Numerous aspects, such as colours typography, and shape needs to be accordance with the historical and philosophical values possessed by Kawung Motif. In addition, designers are bounded to study the story, symbolism, and visual behind the motif deeply so it could still be preserved on a considerable level of

modification to suits with the university's objective and identity. Because a drastic design modification is needed to find a balance between presenting a traditional heritage and mix it with a newly proposed identity for the sake of building a strong relationship between the organization and the audience.

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