

# A DEVELOPMENT OF VISUAL ELEMENT OF *BATIK* ORNAMENTS AS A *BATIK* PRESERVATION ATTEMPT (CASE STUDY: *BATIK* RIFA'YAH)

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## Abstract

Nowadays, there are many cultural heritage of Indonesia that are threaten to extinct which caused by Indonesian young generation's low interest on the said cultural heritage, such as *batik Rifa'iyah*.

*Batik Rifa'iyah* is a kind of batik which its ornaments' visualization is based on Syaikh Ahmad Rifa'i teachings, a National Hero of Republic of Indonesia as well as an *ulama*, whose Islam actions purely emphasized on *madzhab* Imam Syafi'i and *ahlul sunnah wal jama'ah*. As far as it is known, documentations discussing about *batik Rifa'iyah* are very limited, while Rifa'iyah people have started making new batik alternatives without preserving the uniqueness of batik Rifa'iyah's motif, so that batik Rifa'iyah is threaten to extinct.

Preservation attempts on cultural heritage can be conducted by introducing and developing ornaments of Indonesian cultural heritage following graphic design trends nowadays to attract young generation's interest.

In this research and creative working process, there are field survey, interview with some Rifa'iyah public figure, batik public figure and local people to know batik Rifa'iyah and its ornaments development using visual element exploration based on *dwimatra* theory of Wucius Wong, exploration of ornaments visual element based on aesthetic theory of Dharsono Sony Kartika and Nanang Ganda Perwira, and exploration of ornaments color element based on Sulasmi Darmaprawira.

It is expected that this project will give contribution in preserving the Indonesian cultural heritage.

**Keywords** : batik, Rifa'iyah, preserving, fashion

## 1. Introduction

Batik Rifa'iyah, is a *batik* from Pekalongan which gains big influence from Islam teachings of Rifa'iyah people's great teacher, Syaikh Ahmad Rifa'i, he is a National Hero of Indonesia, Your Highness President Susilo Bambang Yudoyono gives an honorary title as National Hero by Presidential Decree No.: 089/TK/2004 as well as a great *ulama*, where

according to Syaikh Ahmad Rifa'i, Islam has a regulation in drawing that should be obeyed, especially living creature drawing.

There are only few people know Batik Rifa'iyah especially if it compares with other batik. So far, there is very limited data explains regarding this batik Rifa'iyah, there is no book explains about it, there is only one final paper of a student in Solo, while now Rifa'iyah people have started making alternative contemporary batik for their own wears without any uniqueness batik Rifa'iyah itself, so that it will be bad if classic batik Rifa'iyah, this uniqueness of this classic batik Rifa'iyah cannot be immortalized, forgotten and gone just like that.

Preservation and development attempts on batik Rifa'iyah's ornaments are by renew the design using exploration of ornaments' visual elements based on *dwimatra* theory by Wucius Wong, *Beberapa Azas Merancang Dwimatra*, 1986, exploration of ornaments' visual elements based on aesthetic theory according to Dharsono Sony Kartika and Nanang Ganda Perwira, *Pengantar Estetika*, 2004, and exploration of ornaments' visual elements according to Sulasmi Darmaprawira, *Warna, Teori dan Kreativitas Penggunaannya*, 2002.

## **2. Methodology**

To achieve the targeted aim, some attempts are conducted in designing contemporary ornaments of batik Rifa'iyah as follows:

### **1. Research Paradigm**

This research uses qualitative method which is presented descriptively, explains literature and field research result to have a theory base in design.

### **2. Research location**

In Pekalongan, Central Java, as majority of Rifa'iyah community lives.

### **3. Research Period**

In the year of 2012

### **4. Type of Data**

Literature regarding Indonesia batik, batik Rifa'iyah, Rifa'iyah community, the archipelago's ornaments, base theory of design, interview result and pictures documentation from on field survey.

## 5. Method of Collecting Data

### a. Interview

Interview is conducted with cultural intellectuals, Pekalongan batik experts, Bandung batik experts, Rifa'iyah batik maker and public figure of Rifa'iyah community.

b. Observation is conducted for on field study regarding batik Rifa'iyah.

c. Creative working process that covers designing and developing ornaments on fabric.

6. Exploration of ornaments' visual elements based on *dwimatra* theory by Wucius Wong, from his book "Beberapa Azas Merancang Dwimatra" (Guidances in Designing Dwimatra), 1986.

In some part of contemporary batik design, Rifa'iyah uses *dwimatra* theory, Wucius Wong, 1986, where a flat surface could give a deep illusion space as the mixture of form elements manipulations until it gives an image where an object could be seen in front of or at the back of the other object.

7. Exploration of ornaments' visual elements based on aesthetic theory by Dharsono Sony Kartika and Nanang Ganda Perwira, from the book *Pengantar Estetika*, 2004.

In some part of contemporary batik design, Rifa'iyah uses aesthetic theory according to Dharsono Sony Kartika and Nanang Ganda Perwira, 2004, to mix and match elements of batik Rifa'iyah that will be explored.

8. Exploration of ornaments' visual elements based on Sulasmi Darmaprawira in her book *Warna, Teori dan Kreativitas Penggunaannya*, 2002.

## 2. 1 Analysis

### 1. *Batik* Rifa'iyah

Rifa'iyah people believe that batik Rifa'iyah ornaments visualization is legal and *halal* to be used, especially to pray, where the figure is drawn in accordance with the Islam teachings by a great *ulama* and national hero, Syaikh Ahmad Rifa'i, where his *madzhab* is Imam Syafi'i dan ahli sunni (ahlul sunnah wal jama'ah).

### 2. Figure Law of Rifa'iyah

Syaikh Ahmad Rifa'i's teachings is in accordance with Muhammad SAW the prophet, to avoid Muslim to become musyrik, therefore it is prohibited to draw living creature, unless it is framed.

The Law is as follows:

- a. It is prohibited to draw living creatures except plants, including clothes, except if it has been a frame or it won't get alive because his body is cut.
- b. For user, it won't be a sin if part of the picture is worn below knee, even if it is a full picture (have not cut). But for the drawer, still, it will be a sin; both of them are connected to make a sin, therefore it is better to avoid it.

Therefore, animal motif on batik Rifa'iyah is drawn in form of frame, means that part of the body is cut at its neck, chest or stomach, which it won't get alive or make it as if it is totally broken, such as draw the head with red color and unspecified shape.

### 3. Design Element Theory based on Wucius Wong

A composition in a design that involves element, a concept, a form, a relationship or role related with the picture medium and frame. All these aspects or elements unite until it forms into a composition. The unity and totality of these elements influence and determine form and content of a design.

## **2.2 Ornaments Development on Batik Rifa'iyah**



**Figure 1.** Batik Rifa'iyah with Pelo Ati ornaments  
(Picture doc. Bulan Prizilla, 2012)

Batik Rifa'iyah with Pelo Ati ornaments is the only one Batik Rifa'iyah's which is Rifa'iyah still know about its philosophy.

### **2.3 Result of Batik Rifa'iyah's Ornaments development; "DNA"**

"DNA" only uses motif of Pelo Ati rooster that is arranged using *dwimatra* theory of Wucius Wong, 1986, and color creativity based on Sulasmi Darmaprawira taken from the book *Warna*, 2002.

#### 1. Design



**Figure 2.** Design of fabric ornament "DNA" (250 cm x 105 cm)

## 2. Theme

It comes from a collaboration of analogical meanings on its motifs and colors to convey the ornaments message.

## 3. Ornaments

The element concept of "DNA" is contemporary with *maya* spacing shown in form of rooster "Pelo Ati" motif.

## 4. Color

The main motif on the body is a mixture of contrast colors of hot color and cold color which its intensities are adjusted so that it results a dynamic contemporary colors.

## 3. Conclusion

Through the provided time, this project of ornaments on batik Rifa'iyah has been conducted a research which thereafter has resulted a design concept to a design development of ornaments of Pelo Ati, batik Rifa'iyah. The aim of this research has been achieved, by preserving ornaments on classic batik Rifa'iyah, that almost extinct and limited documentation, which is thereafter developed from the visual elements of the ornaments.

It is expected that batik maker, Rifa'iyah community, developer, middle-up class consumer and Indonesian fashion unite in preserving the cultural heritage. And also ignite Muslim's motivation to be more attentive on batik ornaments with Islam nuance and become an inspiration for the batik maker to create batik ornaments with Islamic nuance more vary sssaccording to the world's fashion trend.

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Kyai Abdul Aziz Tsani, Rifa'iyah's figure, Bojong, Pekalongan.

Miftahutin, Rifa'iyah's batik maker, Kalipucang, Batang.

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