

# REPOSITION OF BATIK STORIES PANDEMY PERIOD

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## Abstrak

Pandemic Covid -19 dianggap bencana dunia, yang secara tragis banyak merengut nyawa orang. Diantara ketrugisan tersebut justru melahirkan ide kreatif dalam mengembangkan motif batik yang diangkat dari cerita rakyat. Permasalahan dalam penelitian ini bagaimana ungkapan visual batik bercerita yang digagas dari penggunaan masker. Studi ini bertujuan menganalisis secara komprehensif ungkapan visual batik bercerita yang digagas dari ketentuan pemerintah, untuk menggunakan masker dalam kehidupan sehari-hari. Eksplorasi *subject matter* pada batik bercerita dengan figur *central* Roro Kidul menjadi studi kasus dalam penelitian ini. Peneliti mengidentifikasi 5 cerita dengan tema Nyai Roro Kidul yang dipilih dari cover buku, film, lukisan dan batik bercerita. Kecenderungan dari visualisasi tersebut figur Nyai Roro Kidul divisualisasikan mistis, cantik, berambut panjang, dan menggunakan kostum berwarna hijau. Reposisi batik bercerita divisualisasikan dalam figur Roro Kidul yang bermasker, kekinian dalam batik bercerita ini juga divisualisasikan dalam gagasan pemilihan warna yang cukup mencolok. Pemilihan warna digagas untuk mereposisi batik bercerita muncul dalam tampilan yang berbeda dan diharapkan dapat menghidupkan industri kreatif dimasa pandemic ini. Suasana pandemic menjadi jembatan untuk melahirkan banyak kreativitas dalam mengolah gagasan batik bercerita yang diangkat dari cerita rakyat, diharapkan keberadaan batik bercerita semakin berkembang dan dapat meningkatkan potensi ekonomi dari industri kreatif.

Keywords: batik bercerita, figur, reposisi batik, Roro Kidul.

## Abstract

The Covid -19 pandemic is considered a world disaster, which has tragically claimed many lives. Amongst this tragedy, it actually gave birth to creative ideas in developing batik motifs that were adopted from folklore. The problem in this research is how the visual expression of batik tells a story that was initiated from the use of masks. This study aims to analyze comprehensively. The visual expression of batik tells a story that was initiated by the government regulation to use masks in everyday life. Exploration of the subject matter in batik telling stories with the central figure of Roro Kidul is a case study in this research. The researcher identified 5 stories with the theme of Nyai Roro Kidul which were selected from book covers, films, paintings and batik stories. The tendency of this visualization is that Nyai Roro Kidul is visualized as mystical, beautiful, with long hair, and wearing a green costume. Repositioning of batik tells a story visualized in the figure of Roro Kidul who is wearing a mask, the present story in batik is also visualized in the idea of choosing a color that is quite striking. The choice of color was initiated to reposition batik as it tells stories that it appears in a different way and is expected to revive the creative industry during this pandemic. The pandemic atmosphere is a bridge to create a lot of creativity in processing the idea of telling stories based on folklore. It is hoped that the existence of storytelling batik will grow and can increase the economic potential of the creative industry.

Keywords : batik, folklore, pandemic

## INTRODUCTION

The story of batik is known in several cities in Indonesia, one of which is Pekalongan, Central Java. This batik has a market segment. During this pandemic, even though the economy began to grow, batik enthusiasts experienced a very large decline in their purchasing power, because leverage was needed to increase people's purchasing power. What is needed is an attractive motive and a price that is acceptable to the market. This study aims to 1) develop storytelling batik motifs adopted from folklore. 2) Analyze comprehensively the visual expression of storytelling batik starting from government regulations, to the use of masks in everyday life.

The identification of the problem is how to reposition the folklore-based storytelling batik works during the pandemic?

The method used in this research is a qualitative method. Data collection in this qualitative research was carried out in stages [1] (Creswell 2014b): 1) 1) Collecting field notes; 2) Interviews 3) logbooks, photos or videos, as well as documents from textbooks, resumes and academic texts related to various mythological figures, objects, forms, meanings and their development [2] (Saddhono et al. 2014); 4) Audiovisual material, which is studying evidence of physical traces through artifacts to be studied, recording in video, studying objects or objects of artwork.

This study will interpret the data obtained from various kinds of social phenomena [3] (Creswell 2014a). Triangulation techniques are used to test the validity of the data, which consists of sources, methods and theories. Triangulation of sources means that sources will be compared, in order to find validity. Sources are tested using other sources in different contexts through; (1) comparing observation and interview data, (2) com-

paring public and individual observation data, (3) comparing textual data with situational data, (4) comparing individual argument data and public arguments and (5) comparing interview and documentary data [4] (Sumartono 2017). In principle, the triangulation method is a validity level test strategy based on comparison of data collection techniques and different data sources.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The batik motif in Java Island, as well as other areas that have initiated batik by raising local wisdom, continues to grow and develop. [5] (Manun 2018). Various batik motifs continue to emerge, regions that are not batik-producing areas have even initiated their regions to become batik-producing areas [6] (Ratnadewi, Pandanwangi, and Prijono 2020). This has become the center of the growth of the creative industry, so that more and more local governments include batik development in their strategies for achieving success targets for their regions. The potential for cultural diversity possessed by the Indonesian nation should be further optimized.

Batik motif is a combination of lines, shapes and isen that form a unity [7] (Hartono Sumarsono 2016). Many batik motifs are made in a geometric plane, such as triangles, rectangles or circles, and in them are various motifs such as flora which are visualized by plants in the form of flowers, leaves, vines, and many more, while fauna motifs are visualized in the form of animals which are distillation, as if avoiding real animal form [8] (Natanegara and Moersid 2017). The visualization of human figures is not found in ancient batik motifs. This is different from the motifs in batik, which tell stories that mostly carry the figure of the evil one and similar figures. The shape of the figure has shifted in the visualization of batik. In the past,

ancient batik did not present a human figure, now batik tells the story that it dares to present a human figure. This right is due to the existence of a main character in batik storytelling who cannot be replaced with other objects. Several batik stories circulating in the market, the main character only appears in symbolic form.

Batik that tells can be seen from several aspects, namely the origin of the story / area, regional / regional characteristics can be raised as ideas in making motifs, regional colors can be a strength in producing characters. The depiction of a figure does not need to be detailed, but it is enough to represent the character of the character. Furthermore, the batik process stage, then the batik product that needs to be considered is quality, so that good fabrics are considered in the batik process. In terms of batik quality, several areas of written batik have a number of batik standards that must be applied in their use [9] (Septiana and Kurniawan 2016). The standard includes rules for making patterns and rules for the use of motifs along with the rituals that will be held, so that not just anyone may use certain patterns [10] (Sutiyati 2016). This is in the batik of telling that has been abandoned.

### Visual Study

This study is an idea in the process of making batik telling. The visual study data comes from the storybook cover (Figure 1), Movies on You-



Fig. 1. Cover Book Story Nyai Roro Kidul  
(Source: [shorturl.at/swJL8](https://shorturl.at/swJL8))



Fig. 2. Movies on Youtube - Nyai Roro Kidul  
(Source: [shorturl.at/eBDH9/](https://shorturl.at/eBDH9/))

tube (Figure 2), Nyai Roro Kidul Dance (Figure 3), Nyai Roro Kidul Painting (Figure 4).

Many artists are inspired by stories that have existed and developed in society, which then interpret and reinterpret them into works of art.

Another Indonesian myth that is well known in the beliefs of people on the island of Java is Nyai Roro Kidul, who is believed to be the mythical figure of the ruler of the South Sea (South), there are many other myths and legends in Indonesia. Rodriguez, an expert who has analyzed some of the aims of myths, legends and fairy tales in cultural development, said that: fairy tales are not only considered the best supervisors of language and cultural heritage, but also great helpers in the socialization process, they teach children knowledge which is sometimes difficult, about how to interact with others, and what happens when good meets evil [11] (Samovar 2010). Belief in myths



Fig. 3. Nyai Roro Kidul Dance  
(Source: [shorturl.at/mtuN7](https://shorturl.at/mtuN7))





Fig. 4. Nyai Roro Kidul Painting  
(Source: [shorturl.at/cFY09](http://shorturl.at/cFY09))

shapes the human mindset [12] (Afif 2010). Barthes believes that all objects can become myths, if they contain a message. Myth is not determined by the material, but the message conveyed. Myths are not always verbal, so there are myths in films, paintings, sculptures, photography, advertisements, comics and others [13] (Barthes 1972). Furthermore, Barthes analysis that myth is a special system built from a pre-existing sociological chain.

**Exploration of the subject matter in batik tells a story**

The diversity of traditions and culture of the Indonesian people, especially the tradition and culture of batik when traced from existing historical developments, is an invaluable source of inspiration because it contains high philosophical values and contains social institutions. Innovative batik stories inspired by the myth of coastal areas in batik patterns are still rare. In addition, the development of storytelling batik patterns can be an

effort to reintroduce the myth of coastal areas and in the waters of the island of Java. It is hoped that batik with a pattern inspired by the myth of coastal areas will become an alternative to a new style in the coastal areas of Java.

**Repositioning of Batik with a Story from a Pandemic Period**

The pandemic atmosphere became a bridge to give birth to new patterns created by batik artists and craftsmen. They continue to strive to increase creativity in processing visual expressions, especially in telling batik with daily themes, folk tales and daily events.

Culture and human needs continue to develop along with the times and the demands of society’s needs, as well as the need for the creation of cultural products in general. This shows that thinking, civilization, and needs continue to develop to seek and find new creativity in their respective corridors, namely culture, technology and art.

Batik with new creations is the result of thoughts based on the past, modernist, postmodern to contemporary. Visualization of batik patterns with various motifs continues to emerge, carrying out local regional potential. This new creativity in the batik world has received special attention from the batik user community both on a local and global scale.

Currently, most of the development of batik motifs, especially the art of batik painting, which refers mainly to traditional decorations, the re-



Fig. 5. Obtained Data: Pangeran Diponegoro  
(Source: Mr. Sapuan, Pekalongan)



Fig. 6. Obtained Data: Cinderela  
(Source: Museum Batik Pekalongan)



Fig. 7. **Sketch Nyai Roro Kidul**  
(Source: Author)



Fig. 9. **Batik which telling Nyi Roro Kidul using mask on silk baron. 210 x 110 cm**  
(Source: Author)

sults tend to appear monotonous. It needs a visual refresh and a diversification of ideas to produce a new, unique, creative, and innovative style of modern batik painting.

Batik storytelling, which is lifted from folklore and repositioned through a situational pandemic, becomes an attractive offer in the development of storytelling batik. It is hoped that the existence of storytelling batik will grow and can increase the economic potential of the creative industry.

Batik with a narrative style offers a mystical nuance to Indonesian myths through various reinterpretations of the story of Nyai Roro Kidul as the queen of the rulers of the southern coast of Java. These motifs are combined with decorative patterns inspired by the flora and fauna of marine life. The purpose of repositioning the Nyai Roro Kidul myth is to explore coastal features as well as to revive the myth and legend narrative of Nyai Roro Kidul, Queen of the South Coast of Java Island through Batik works.



Fig. 8. **Digital Nyai Roro Kidul**  
(Source: Author)

Below is one of the motifs for the development of batik, which was taken from the story of Nyai Roro Kidul. The creative process in the creation of painting in contemporary batik basically rests primarily on original ideas, skills and sensitivity of the maker.

The distinctive feature of the art of batik is that it is based on the mythical background of Nyai Roro Kidul, which is the motif that is applied to today's batik decorated with unique coastal motifs, without leaving regional elements. This batik design is the result of experimentation and reinterpretation of the mythical narratives of the coast of Java.

The atmosphere background was inspired by the modified machete motif which seemed to be dominant. The maroon line divides the machete motifs from one another. Nyai Roro Kidul, dressed in green, was inspired by various visual studies that maintain the public's belief that Nyai Roro Kidul likes green (films, paintings and even pictorial stories also depict Nyai Roro Kidul dressed in green). The sea appears to be crashing in waves, the fish in the sea appear to be arranged symmetrically, in contrast to the waves in the sea which are depicted boisterously rolling between the main figures. The pandemic atmosphere using masks and the Corona 19 virus is visualized on this batik. Nyai Roro Kidul is made using a mask

on the mouth, while the virus is scattered everywhere. On the right side, the motif that is carried in this batik artwork is unique because it is a sign of a pandemic.

## CONCLUSION

Repositioned batik paintings offer an aesthetically pleasing offer. Nyai Roro Kidul interpreted, conditioned during the pandemic, so that the interpretation in developing motives in formulating his visual language seemed free. The repositioned narrative visualization does not completely leave the core and meaning of Nyai Roro Kidul's story. Interpretation is carried out to seek and find egalitarian and philosophical artistic ideas in conveying narrative and the value of expression.

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