

Indonesian *Kriya* Today: Yogyakarta Batik and Ceramics – Reflecting and Negotiating Cultural Identities

Doctoral Thesis

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To “Iyang” Wahyu Priyono

Preface

I remember visiting my relatives in Indonesia when I was a child. As soon as we arrived in Jember (East Java), my mother¹ took out batik clothes for me and my sister to wear. These batik clothes were often two-piece sets. The top was a short sleeve shirt with one or two buttons at the neckline, something between a casual blouse and a very fancy T-shirt. The bottom part was a loose pair of shorts, tailored from the same batik fabric, looking like a culottes. My mother provided us with these clothes mainly because of the tropical climate. The airier the clothes, the less we sweated. But I remembered having a little dilemma with wearing these batik clothes. For me, they were indeed very comfortable to wear, but at the same time, I felt that, the beautiful batik patterned clothes were too valuable and noble to wear for playing in the garden. I had the same dilemma in summer in Switzerland during a primary school project week, when I wore batik clothes for plastering. I plastered just as energetically as all the others, but my clothes stayed clean the whole week, while most of the children were covered in white plaster stains relatively quickly. These examples may imply that I could feel and sense the preciousness of batik fabrics as a child, even though my mother meant them to wear while playing or plastering. Years later in 2011, I was similarly fascinated by the beauty of a piece of batik, when I visited the Textile Museum in Jakarta. A batik fabric from around 1900 dyed with natural red, cream, and blue colours that sparked my interest and admiration for the art of batik. The luminosity and authenticity of the colours were simply fantastic, even more than 100 years after its creation. The fine pattern reflected the high craftsmanship, that is required to create such a textile. Undoubtedly, this batik fabric was a treasure.

I associate many extraordinary moments with Jember (the hometown of my mother in East Java), for example the animistic ritual of fumigating the house before dawn. What has always fascinated me as a child, was people's dexterity and their use of leftover materials. I felt that many people were using their craft skills every day for repairing or creating items for their households. It was natural for them, to create objects based on a limited choice of materials and tools, and it seemed that they knew well about the properties of different materials. For me, this was a kind of magic.

At that time, I did not know about *kriya* (their form of craft and art), I just sensed and saw it. Today, after my research for this thesis, I know more about *kriya*, but probably still not enough. I believe, that *kriya* offers enormous potential for future research in art history.

¹ My mother Tri Rüegg-Tamrin is Indonesian-Chinese and was born in Jember in 1949. Since 1975 she has been living in Switzerland.

During my research, my good friend “Iyang” Wahyu Priyono from Yogyakarta, sent me the image below, telling me that the elephant might represent the field of *kriya*:

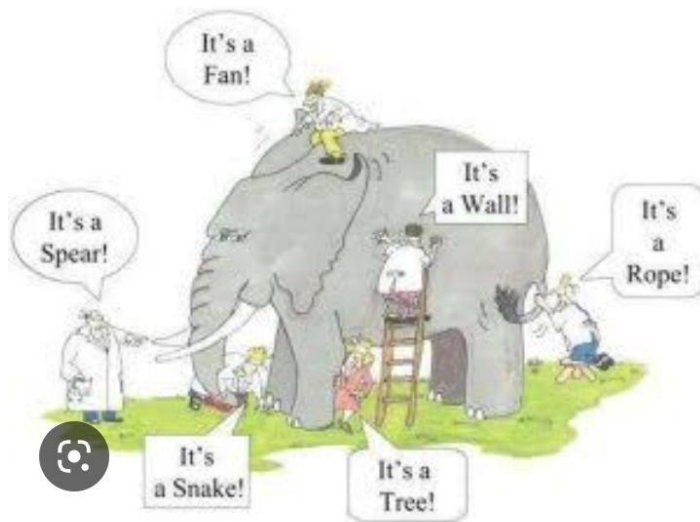


Image sent by Iyang with the words “*Gajah itu kriya ☺*”
(Personal communication, 26th December 2022)

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My research and thesis would not have developed without the support of various persons. First, I would like to convey my gratitude to my main supervisor Professor Dr Birgitt Borkopp-Restle from the Institute of Art History, Department of Textile Art History of the University of Bern in Switzerland. From the very beginning, she has supported me in my wish to focus my research on Indonesian arts and crafts. With her expertise and many years of experience, she provided me with very good advice. I am grateful to my second supervisor Professor Dr Nadia Susan Radwan, from the University of Bern. With her great knowledge and expertise, she offered good help and advice to write and think on global art. In Indonesia I could count on the head of the *Kriya* Department from the art university (ISI Yogyakarta), Dr Alvi Lufiani, who was my main advisor for this thesis. She provided important contacts, and she was willing to share her own research with great patience. I appreciate and acknowledge her help very much. Her husband and former head of the *Kriya* Department, Dr Yulriawan Dafri, had already supported me for my master thesis and answered many of my questions during my PhD research. With his broad *kriya* network he organised many meetings with important *kriya* experts of the older generation from Yogyakarta such as Dr SP. Gustami, Supri, and Suhadji. I would like to thank SP. Gustami for the questions he answered and his

much-appreciated help to provide me with useful books. My words of thankfulness go also to Supri and Suhadji for being my interviewees. Other lecturers from ISI Yogyakarta were likewise willing to answer my questions, thank you to Djandjang Purwo Saedjati, Noor Sudiyati, Mikke Susanto, Arief Suharso, Sugeng Wardoyo and the staff of ISI Yogyakarta. Especially Djandjang Purwo Saedjati, as an experienced lecture and batik craft woman, supported me with information, pictures, and explanations.

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I'm thankful for interesting talks with the two curators Satya Brahmantya and Sujud Dartanto. They both were relentless in answering my questions and sharing inside knowledge of Yogyakarta *kriya*. My work would not have been compiled successfully without so many interviewees. All *kriya* experts, *kriya* makers and *kriya* artists, who I contacted, were very friendly, open and eager to share their knowledge and their experiences. I especially would like to thank Rika Winata, Endang Lestari, Nurohmad, Sapuan (from Pekalongan), Joan Miroe, Meta Enjelita, Dona Prawita Arissuta, Afifah Ashma' Abdillah, Apri Susanto, Dwe Rachmanto, Asmudjo Jono Irianto (from Bandung), Nurdian Ichsan (from Bandung), Bima Rosanto Pratama, Dian Hardiansyah, Kang Pandono, Agung Suhartanto, Taufik Akbar (from Sumatra), Timbul Haryono and Muhamad Nurrudin (from Jepara). My special gratitude goes to my parents, who have always supported my educational path. My mother provided me with her private batik collection, that she supplemented with the textiles' respective stories. My father was a relentless proofreader, who helped me to improve comprehensibility of certain parts of my text. He never became tired of reading. Thank you to my partner Ivan, who also critically read parts of my thesis and who always listened to my thoughts, which helped me to find next steps during my research. My greatest gratitude is owed to my long-term friend and "buddha" from Yogyakarta, "Iyang" Wayhu Priyono, who has opened many doors in Yogyakarta for me. He has a special skill in reading social situations and pull the right strings of his network with his winning and humble character. Iyang assisted me in taking pictures, transcribing Interviews, finding specific information or people in Yogyakarta, whenever I was far away in Switzerland. With his *kriya* knowledge and experience in assisting *kriya* artists, Iyang brought forth many valid thoughts, that helped me during my PhD journey. *Banyak terima kasih!* Many Thanks.

“In between the past and the present, we seem to have a passage of time that brings together the works of the past to the present. How can we combine the wealth of old and new cultural practices beyond existing boundaries and standards. The work, which is a form of life experience, is not only seen, understood/interpreted but is able to touch and awaken a sense of humanity, which can be seen as an artist’s effort to continue participating in the process of [finding a] meaning in life between humans, plants, animals and the universe.”

«Di antara masa lalu dan masa kini, Kita seperti mempunyai lorong waktu yang mempertemukan karya-karya terdahulu ke masa sekarang. Bagaimana menggabungkan kekayaan dari praktek kultural lama dan baru melampaui batasan-batasan dan patokan yang ada. Karya yang merupakan gerak wujud pengalaman hidup, bukan sekedar dilihat, dimengerti/dimaknai tetapi mampu menyentuh dan membangkitkan rasa kemanusiaannya, yang bisa dipandang sebagai upaya seniman untuk terus berperan serta dalam proses pemaknaan hidup antar manusia, tumbuhan, binatang dan alam semesta.»

(Quote by the ceramic artist Dona Prawita Arissuta, 1st June 2021 – English version translated by the author)

Table of Contents

Preface	iii
Acknowledgments	vi
Table of Content	vii

Introduction.....1

Kriya Objects in Colonial Trade

The Introduction of A Western Art Paradigm

Literature on *Kriya*

Literature on Batik

Literature on Ceramics

Western Literature on *Kriya*

Research Questions

Terminologies

Methodology

Chapter 1_The *Kriya* Scene in Yogyakarta 28

- 1.1 Yogyakarta as Capital of *Kriya* on Java 29
- 1.2 *Kriya* Infrastructures..... 36
- 1.3 Collecting and Presenting *Kriya* –
An Insight into Museum and Exhibition Practices 57
- 1.4 The Terms *Kriya* and *Kerajinan* - Social Construction and Positioning Strategy?... 69

Chapter 2_Batik - Innovating Heritages..... 79

- 2.1 The Art and Craft of Batik in Yogyakarta 82
 - 2.1.1 Tools, Techniques and Processes: State of the Art 86
 - 2.1.2 Motifs and Visual Principles..... 95
 - 2.1.3 Classical and Traditional – the Heritage and Environment of Batik 97
- 2.2 The Variety of Batik Today 107
 - 2.2.1 Original and Imitation..... 109
 - 2.2.2 Fashion and Modernity 124
 - 2.2.3 Painting, Abstraction and Digital Designing 138

2.3 Contemporary Batik	148
2.3.1 Collections, Exhibitions and Events	151
2.3.2 Contemporary Batik with a Classical Aura – Afifah Ashma’ Abdillah (1995-) ...	161
2.3.3 Reflecting Social and Political Issues Through Textiles – Caroline Rika Winata (1976-).....	170
 Chapter 3 _What about Clay and Ceramics?	
Balancing <i>Kriya</i> and The Contemporary	180
3.1 The Art and Craft of Earthenware and Ceramics in Yogyakarta	181
3.1.1 Technique and Material	181
3.1.2 Kasongan - the Epicentre of a Pottery Heritage.....	183
3.1.3 Heritage and Modernity	194
 3.2 Initiating Ceramics Discourses - Between Material and Discipline.....	200
3.2.1 The Curator’s Role.....	200
3.2.2 The Jakarta Contemporary Ceramics Biennale – Finding the Multiple Positions of Ceramics	215
3.2.3 Four Ceramist Generations and their Styles – What Ceramists Create and What They Call It	225
 3.3 Contemporary Ceramics	229
3.3.1 Collections, Exhibitions and Events	229
3.3.2 Understanding the Spirit of Clay – Noor Sudiyati (1962 -).....	236
3.3.3 Between Painting and Ceramics – Dona Prawita Arissuta (1969 -)	242
 Perspectives and Concluding Remarks.....	250
Conclusion.....	277
Bibliography.....	281
Exhibition Catalogues	296

Image Attachment, Graphics, List of Abbreviations and Indonesian Terms, Glossary of Indonesian Governmental Institutions and Appendix: **separate volume**.

Introduction

Why is *kriya* today tossed around like that?

Because *kriya* looks to the West with the word *craft*,
but *kriya* and *craft* are different.

– Nurohmad, entrepreneur of Dongaji Batik in Yogyakarta²

Today, *kriya* refers not only to the traditional arts of the Archipelago, but also to their contemporary forms. Nurohmad³ feels that a clear definition and positioning of *kriya* is lacking in the Indonesian art world. For a long time *kriya* has played a marginal role in Indonesian art discourse for two main reasons: it was either related to the government's supported traditional art heritage unable to contribute to contemporary art developments, or *kriya* was mistaken for handicrafts and as such relegated to the place of functional household items.

The lack of a clear position and definition of *kriya* has most likely to do with the fact that today's art world was initiated by European colonisers and their Western art values. These values suggested the division between arts and crafts, and attributed a lower rank to craft. In Indonesian art academies, as well as in museums and exhibitions craft continues to occupy a lower rank than fine art. Giving *kriya* its proper place would mean Indonesians liberating themselves from the Western canon of art values. In this thesis the multiple positions of *kriya* as well as the different perspectives on *kriya* are explored. As *kriya* cannot be translated accurately to English I retain the term *kriya* as such and put it in italics. But what comprises *kriya*, if craft is only one part of it?

When I was researching craft knowledge in Indonesia for my master's thesis in 2017, I visited the *Institut Seni Indonesia Yogyakarta* (ISI Yogyakarta) or the Art University in Yogyakarta, and got a glimpse of different courses offered by the Craft Department. This Department was called *Kriya* Department and consisted of five courses divided by materials. There were courses in wood, metal, textiles, leather, and ceramics. It was the first time I had come across the term *kriya*. The lecturers I spoke to on that occasion explained to me that craft was only an approximate translation of *kriya*. Rather, they said, craft was one part of *kriya*. Hence, I

² This quote was translated by the author from Indonesian (*Bahasa Indonesia*) to English. The original quote is: "Kenapa kriya hari ini sampai terombang ambing begitu? Karena kriya melirik ke Barat dengan kata craft, [tetapi] [...] kriya dan craft itu berbeda." Interview with Nurohmad, *Dongaji Batik*, Yogyakarta, 27th May 2021.

³ Nurohmad is the person's first name. Some Indonesians are given only a first name. In their passport the first name also serves as their surname: Nurohmad Nurohmad.

understood that there was a different concept behind the creation of craft objects than what we know about craft production in Europe. Talking to SP. Gustami, a wood carver, *kriya* master and former lecturer at the *Institut Seni Indonesia Yogyakarta*⁴, I quickly realised that he considered the term *kriya* important to facilitate a discourse on this distinct concept of craft practice. It seemed to me that SP. Gustami was the unspoken initiator of the *kriya* discourse in Indonesia. Through lectures, books and articles, he has pushed forward discussions and awareness of *kriya* in Yogyakarta and Indonesia from the 1960s onwards. However, a broad discourse took off only in the last decade, primarily at art universities and in their circles (alumni). The term *kriya* appeared to be clearly distinguished from craft in this discourse, in which the Indonesian term *kerajinan* replaced the term craft. Even though in academic circles the terms *kriya* and *kerajinan* were precisely distinguished, in society the distinction remained unclear, and the terms were mixed up or used as synonyms.⁵

The Indonesian word *kriya* translates into English as craft, but in Indonesia academic art experts do not agree to equating *kriya* with craft. According to Professor SP. Gustami, *kriya* is the root of all visual arts in Indonesia.⁶ Architecture, sculpture, painting, drawing, craft, and other art forms are rooted in *kriya*. *Kriya* is closely related to the native animistic religions of the Archipelago⁷. Accordingly, *kriya* is not just the artful, technical processing of materials, but it draws on animistic beliefs that include ritual, symbol and mythology. Thus, creating a *kriya* object requires not only a high level of craftsmanship, but also a spiritual mindset.⁸ Since my research is centred around Yogyakarta, it seems useful to me to compare this general definition of SP. Gustami with my own observations of the *kriya* discourse in Yogyakarta. In Yogyakarta, Gustami's definition is consistent with the *kriya* practice. *Kriya* is an art practice that requires high craftsmanship skills in creating hand crafted objects such as batik, ceramics, weaving, wood carving, jewellery, leather puppets (for *wayang*⁹), and others. The creation of such objects is not secular, but closely related to Javanese beliefs, which include the notion of an animistic cosmology. Traditional *kriya* objects in Java are characterised by Hindu-Javanese ornamentation and decoration. However, *kriya* does not only refer to traditional art, as *kriya* experts in Yogyakarta also speak of contemporary *kriya* that does not include Hindu-Javanese ornamentation. So *kriya* is not just Indonesian traditional art,

⁴ *Institut Seni Indonesia Yogyakarta* was the first art university in Indonesia which opened in Yogyakarta in 1984.

⁵ Still today, non-academic Indonesians are much more familiar with the term *kerajinan*, while they do not use the term *kriya*.

⁶ SP. Gustami, "Seni kriya akar seni rupa Indonesia" (Seminar Kriya Internasional Seni Rupa 2002, Yogyakarta: Institut Seni Indonesia Yogyakarta, 2002), 1.

⁷ In this work I write the word Archipelago with a capital initial letter to refer to the Indonesian Archipelago.

⁸ Joop Ave et al., *Indonesian Arts and Crafts*, Hardcover with Jacket Edition (Jakarta: Bab Publishing, 2009), 31-2; Gustami, "Seni kriya akar seni rupa Indonesia", 1.

⁹ *Wayang* is a Javanese shadow puppet theatre and part of the traditional arts.

but also contemporary art. In what follows *kriya* is therefore understood as traditional arts with its contemporary forms requiring high craftsmanship and spiritual practice. The creation of *kriya* objects is guided not only by technical aspects but also by animistic beliefs.

In common usage, curators often speak of the *kekuatan kriya* (strength of *kriya*) or *nuansa kriya* (nuance of *kriya*) when discussing a contemporary *kriya* object in an exhibition context. They refer to three characteristics of *kriya*, firstly the high level of craftsmanship, secondly the incorporation of animistic cosmology, and thirdly the externally visible elements that are reminiscent of the interpretation and further development of traditional ornaments. These ornaments can be traditional Hindu-Javanese ornaments or traditional ornaments from other islands of the Archipelago. *Kriya* in this context is used more like an adjective to denote characteristic elements that arise from a *kriya* practice. What I intend to show in this thesis is that the word *kriya* stands for both tangible and intangible properties: tangible traditional and contemporary objects, and intangible aspects of these objects which incorporate spiritual practice and beliefs.

***Kriya* Objects in Colonial Trade**

The traditional techniques and traditional *kriya* objects also aroused the interest of the colonial powers. From the 17th century onwards, the Archipelago was colonised by the Dutch, and the region was known as the Dutch East Indies until the end of the colonial period in 1945¹⁰. *Kriya* objects such as textiles, woven baskets, wood carvings, metalwork and other objects were collected by the Dutch colonialists and taken to the Netherlands. In the Netherlands the objects were exhibited in the *Koloniaal Museum te Haarlem* (Colonial Museum), which opened in 1871. The relationship between *kriya* objects and the interests of the colonial powers was reflected in the museum's collection. As the museum's establishment was motivated by the colonial trade, some objects sparked Dutch people's interest, while other objects were not collected at all. The intention was to examine the foreign objects in order to identify potential treasures for trade, and to possibly discover interesting materials and techniques. *Kriya* objects in this context were either collected as treasures, or they were kept as examples of a craft technique or how material could be used. A cultural interest in the objects themselves, as we understand ethnology today, or an interest in them as works of art did not exist at that time. The collecting of interesting objects in regard to trade or special techniques diminished at the beginning of the 20th century, when resistance to colonial policy

¹⁰ In 1945 Indonesia declared its Independence, which was followed by heavy years of conflicts, a Japanese occupation and an Independence war that ended in 1949. Political Independence started in 1949, with the first President called Sukarno.

arose in the Netherlands and caused a new regulation called *ethische politiek* (ethical policy). The Dutch ethical policy demanded a commitment to ensuring education for the inhabitants in its colonies. These colonies were no longer places to be exploited for their resources, but had to be respected for their indigenous inhabitants with their own cultures. The new awareness of ethnicity and culture could also be felt in the Dutch art world at that time. Dutch artists became increasingly interested in the Archipelago population's foreign materials and technologies. As a result, more *kriya* objects were perceived and collected as ethnographic objects. The most important batik collection in the Netherlands, comprising around 3000 pieces, dates to this period and is now kept in the Tropenmuseum (a museum about world cultures) in Amsterdam. In the 20th century, batik and other *kriya* objects were donated to the colonial masters by local people such as merchants, civil servants and military personnel. In other cases, *kriya* objects were exchanged or traded, or taken by force by the colonialists.¹¹ While batik enjoyed much attention during the colonial period as a trade good, as a valuable gift, and later also as an ethnological object, earthenware played a less important role for colonial trade, while ceramics did not exist at all at that time. Ceramics became known as a medium in Indonesia much later, namely from the 1960s onwards. In contrast to the export direction for *kriya*, the art medium of painting was brought from the Netherlands to the Dutch East Indies.¹²

The Introduction of A Western Art Paradigm

Kriya in the Archipelago used to be part of culture and everyday life. An understanding of Western art, and the Western use of the medium of painting, only began in the late 19th century through increasing contacts with the Dutch colonial rulers.¹³ Western-adapted

¹¹ The Dutch colonial powers' interest in arts and culture (including *kriya* objects) in the Dutch East Indies only began towards the end of the 19th century. Before that, the *Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie* (VOC) or the United East India Company was more interested in agricultural production for world trade. Itie van Hout, 'Of Love and Passion: Biographical Notes on the Batik Collection in the Tropenmuseum', in *Batik drawn in wax: 200 years of batik art from Indonesia in the Tropenmuseum collection* (Amsterdam: Royal Tropical Institute / KIT Publishers, 2001), 13-4. [you have used single quote marks here but double quote marks elsewhere – make it consistent one way or the other]

¹² van Hout, 8; Daan Van Dartel, 'The Tropenmuseum and Trade: Product and Source', *Journal of Museum Ethnography*, no. 20 (2008): 823-25.

¹³ European painters in Batavia exhibited their paintings in exhibitions organised by the *Bataviasche Kunstkring*. As a consequence, Indonesian artists saw these paintings and started to paint as well. Detailed information will be given in chapter three where I briefly outline Indonesian modern art. But, this was not the first time European painting was shown in the Dutch East Indies. The period around 1930 to 1940 marks the increased contact with Western painting. However, as early as the 17th century, when the VOC was active in the Archipelago, paintings from the Netherlands served as gifts for local rulers who supported the success of the VOC, such as the King of Bali or the sultan of Surakarta. Prof. Dr M. Agus Burhan, *Perkembangan Seni Lukis Mooi Indië sampai Persagi di Batavia, 1900-1942* (Dwi - Quantum, o. J.) 1-8; Susan Helen Ingham, 'Powerlines: Alternative Art and Infrastructure in Indonesia in the 1990s' (University of New South Wales Art History & Theory, 2007) 38-44.

painting did not spread out to the public but was only present among Indonesian elites until the 1940s. However, it gained a foothold as an art medium in Java.¹⁴ Under the influence of the Dutch, a modernisation of Indonesian society began in the 1930s and 1940s, which also had an impact on the understanding of the arts in general. Western values of the art hierarchy were partially adopted, so that *kriya* was no longer valued as art. It was rather considered as craft and as such was a “low art”.¹⁵

While painting and a Western-influenced modern art scene developed in Indonesia, *kriya* remained more or less on the side lines. After the Independence war, the year 1949 marked the beginning of Sukarno’s leadership of Indonesia as an independent republic. As a former architect, Sukarno was very familiar with Javanese *kriya*. Consequently, he used *kriya* for his political purposes. At Independence his prime concern was to generate a sense of nation. Therefore, he suggested using traditional Javanese *kriya* such as *wayang* (Figure K1), batik and wood carving (Figure K2) as “the Art of the Indonesian Culture” to promote a national culture. This was not about lifting *kriya* from its position of low art, but using the traditional cultural elements in *kriya* as a means of building a national identity.¹⁶

This worked well for a while but over time it led to resentment among various peoples in the Archipelago, as they felt their ethnic identities were not included. In the art scene, the governmental propagation of traditional Javanese *kriya* was also badly received, as it excluded any other art forms. However, traditional *kriya* as a form of art was not financially supported by the government. It was merely accepted and propagated. Neither the first president Sukarno during his term in office nor the subsequent president Suharto classified art as a cultural asset of society that would justify financial support. On the contrary, different forms of art were even suppressed, so that only mild, system-compliant art limited to a few media was allowed in public. This led to great discontentment within artists’ circles, which culminated in a counter-movement known as the *Gerakan Seni Rupa Baru*, or New Art Movement, in 1975. This movement marked the beginning of contemporary art in Indonesia. Gradually, from then on, political issues were discussed and expressed through art. Javanese

¹⁴ Before that, paintings had been produced for ritual purposes, but they had no authorship. The colours were made from natural materials such as plants. Tina Schott, “Die lange Suche nach Identität - Eine Einführung in die Entwicklung kontemporärer Kunst in Indonesien”, *Indonesien: Kunst*, 2004, 41.

¹⁵ According to the researcher Helena Spanjaard, the first Indonesian artists were so-called “colonised intellectuals”, that is, Indonesian elites who maintained exchanges with their colonial rulers in the form of meetings in intellectual circles. To be able to discuss things with these circles, an adoption of their values (for example the value that hierarchised art) was inevitable. As a consequence, the first Indonesian modernists favoured painting, while *kriya* was considered a lowly activity that required physical labour. Traditional *kriya* such as wood carving, weaving and, pottery were seen as craft work done by a *tukang* or labourer from a village. This stood in opposition to painting, which was seen as the creative work of a thinker from a modern city. Ingham, ‘Powerlines’, 44.

¹⁶ Amanda Katherine Rath, ‘Indonesian Contemporary Art Across and in Relations’, in *Indonesian Eye: Contemporary Indonesian Art* (Milano, Italy: Skira, 2011), https://www.academia.edu/2602298/Indonesian_Contemporary_Art_Across_Relations, 2; Ingham, ‘Powerlines’, 64-5.

artists used various media to do this, such as painting, drawing, print media, photography, video, installations, and performance. *Kriya* played a subordinate role, as it was relegated to the traditional realm and, as such, was considered too establishment-conforming to be used in contemporary art.

When Suharto came to power in the late 1960s and opened up Indonesia's economy, as well as forging new foreign trade relations, Indonesian *kriya* objects (especially Javanese *kriya* objects) gained more recognition since they were valued as export goods. Original designs were complemented with innovative and appealing designs that particularly showcased the rich ornamentation and craftsmanship of Java. This development can be seen as the beginning of a practical *kriya* discourse. An academic discourse on *kriya* in the form of articles and books did not begin until the 1980s.

Literature on *Kriya*

The first person to write on *kriya* in Indonesia was probably the wood carver, *kriya* master and lecturer Prof. Dr. SP. Gustami, with his article *Perkembangan mutakhir seni kriya di Yogyakarta* or Current Development of the Art of *Kriya* in Yogyakarta. His article was published in SANI in 1984, the *Akademi Seni Rupa Indonesia* (ASRI), The Indonesian Art Academy's magazine. At that time, Gustami was working as a wood carving lecturer at ASRI, and felt an intrinsic motivation to foster academic teaching of *kriya*. Shortly afterwards, the first art university in Indonesia was founded, based on ASRI as a forerunner. In 1985 the *Institut Seni Indonesia Yogyakarta* (ISI Yogyakarta) was ready to open its doors to art students, offering study programmes such as dance, theatre, architecture, interior design, fine arts, photography, and *kriya*. The four-year programmes were structured similarly to today's Bachelor's degrees, with different courses and credit points. As a practising *kriya* master and skilled writer, Gustami had a reputable and positive influence on the academic *kriya* field in Yogyakarta.¹⁷ In the ISI Yogyakarta journal *Seni – Jurnal Pengetahuan Dan Penciptaan Seni II/01 – Januari 1992* (Art – Journal of Art Knowledge and Creation II/01 – January 1992), he writes on the philosophy of Indonesian traditional art of *kriya* by discussing the development of *kriya* in society and its definition. He further mentions the ritual significance of *kriya* objects, as well as different concepts and social structures, used in the creation and production

¹⁷ Interview with Satya Brahmantya, *Galeri Benda, The Intangible and Handiworkman*, 26th May 2021; interview with SP. Gustami, *The History of Kriya in Yogyakarta since 1976*, 22nd December 2018.

of *kriya* objects. He bridges the gap to the 1990s, when *kriya* makers¹⁸ struggled to position themselves in the art world and fought for *kriya* to be considered as a branch of *seni rupa* or visual art.¹⁹ In 1992, Gustami suggested that, the art of *kriya* is the proper root of Indonesian visual art, a thesis which he kept suggesting in later publications such as *Memantapkan Wacana Seni Kriya Indonesia Sebagai Akar Seni Rupa Indonesia* (Strengthen the Discourse of Indonesian Art of *Kriya* as the Root of Indonesian Visual Art).²⁰ This has been an important basis for discussing *kriya* in Indonesia and has been a strategically important publication for *kriya* discourses. Another key article written by Gustami, was entitled *Seni Kriya Indonesia Dalam Konteks Budaya Bangsa* (The Art of Indonesian *Kriya* in the Context of National Culture).²¹ In this article, he discusses the differences between *kriya* and handicrafts makers.²² He succeeds in providing a complex analysis of *kriya* that grew out of traditional art practice, which was changed and shaped by Hindu, Islamic and finally Western influences. He investigates and highlights, how *kriya* has historically developed differently from region to region through the shifting of centres of power as well as social, political, and economic changes.

As a practising *kriya* master and lecturer Gustami was a driving force of contemporary *kriya* discourses, which began in the late 1960s, gaining more momentum in the late 2000s up to the present day.²³ After the first *kriya* publications by Gustami in the 1980s, two to three decades only few publications appeared, because art academics and universities were not used to writing articles. They barely focused on intellectual work and were strongly practice-oriented. Since the 2000s, lecturers began writing *kriya* articles, which were published in their universities' art and craft journals. However, Gustami remains the only Indonesian researcher, who has dealt so deeply and comprehensively with *kriya* in a historical sense. His often-cited

¹⁸ In this thesis I use the term “*kriya* maker” when I refer to craftspeople and producers of *kriya* objects. For people with an academic *kriya* degree I preferably use the term “*kriya* artist”. This is not to say that the *kriya* makers' objects are less artistic than those of the *kriya* artists, but with the terms “*kriya* maker” and “*kriya* artist” I am referring to the (non) academic education of the people and the circles in which they exhibit and sell their *kriya* objects (industry or art world). Similarly, I will use the terms “batik maker” / “batik artist” and “ceramic maker” / “ceramic artist”.

¹⁹ SP. Gustami, ‘Filosofi Seni Kriya Tradisional Indonesia’ in: *SENI, Jurnal Pengetahuan dan Penciptaan Seni*, Edisi II, 1st January 1992, 74, 78-9, 82.

²⁰ SP. Gustami, ‘Memantapkan Wacana Seni Kriya Indonesia Sebagai Akar Seni Rupa Indonesia’ in: *Makalah Yogyakarta: Program Pascasarjana ISI Yogyakarta*, 2002.

²¹ The article was published in the book *Pergelaran Seni, Kria ISI, Fakultas Seni Rupa, ISI Yogyakarta 2003*, The Show of Art, Kriya ISI Faculty of Visual Arts, ISI Yogyakarta 2003, published by ISI Yogyakarta.

²² This difference will be discussed further in Chapter 1.

²³ Gustami got retired in 2006 but remained active as consultant and writer.

publications became standard works and form the basis for ongoing discussions on *kriya*, that began to be more numerous and vivid after 2010.²⁴

At the *Institut Teknologi Bandung* (ITB)'s *kriya* conference entitled *Tahun Kriya dan Rekayasa 1999* (The Year of *Kriya* and Engineering 1999), ITB lecturer Yan Yan Sunarya presents his article *Redefinisi Kriya (=Craft?) Menjelang Abad ke-21*, (Redefinition of *Kriya* (=Craft?) Towards the 21st Century). In this, Sunarya addresses the value and position of *kriya* in Indonesia by reflecting on the European Arts and Crafts Movement, a movement often cited in Indonesia academia. He proceeds to write about a shift of the term *kriya* that helped to crystallise the categories of *kriya* maker and *kerajinan* maker, proving that Gustami was not the only one concerned with the two terms *kriya* and *kerajinan* which are both related to craft-based artistic practices but have different concepts and meanings. A detailed description of the term *kriya* will be given in Chapter 1: The *Kriya* Scene in Yogyakarta.

In his article Sunarya also emphasises the importance of contemporary *kriya* makers, who should keep up with the global market. He argues that an additional value can be added to *kriya* objects when they show a combination of artistic and design elements together with special skills and dexterity.²⁵

In the newspaper KOMPAS 3rd October 2004 the art lecturer from ISI Yogyakarta Anusapati writes an article entitled *Menimbang Paradoks Kriya Kontemporer* (Considering the Paradox of Contemporary *Kriya*). He examines the understanding of *kriya* in society and detects the common misunderstanding of *kriya* being regarded as *kerajinan* or handicrafts. He mentions the first *kriya* exhibition that was based on a proper curatorial system, curated by Sudjud Dartanto called *Objecthood*, and it was shown at *Taman Budaya* (Cultural Garden) in Yogyakarta from 27th September to 7th October 2004.²⁶ He concludes that, all shown objects had one thing in common: they were made with a lot of *kriya* knowledge and a high level of craftsmanship.²⁷ Some of these objects were made by the hands of Yogyakarta's elder *kriya* masters, who have played an important role for knowledge transfer of *kriya* techniques, processes, and visual aspects like decorative ornaments and patterns. Unsurprisingly, these masters are listed in the book *Gelaran Almanak Seni Rupa JOGJA 1999-2009* (Presenting Almanac of Visual Art JOGJA 1999-2009) in which Yogyakarta based *kriya* masters are

²⁴ Examples of Gustami's standard works are: SP. Gustami, 'Filosofi Seni Kriya Tradisional Indonesia'; SP. Gustami, *Butir-Butir Mutiara Estetika Timur - Ide Dasar Penciptaan Seni Kriya Indonesia*, Edition 003 (Yogyakarta: Prasista, 2007); SP. Gustami, *Seni kerajinan mebel ukir jepara*, 5th Edition (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2004).

²⁵ Yan Yan Sunarya, 'Redefinisi Kriya (=Craft?) Menjelang Abad ke-21' in: Konperensi Kriya. 'Tahun Kriya dan Rekayasa 1999' Institut Teknologi Bandung 26th November 1999, 1, 4-5.

²⁶ Earlier *kriya* exhibitions took place before but according to Anusapati it was the first *kriya* exhibition with a curator in charge and who got paid for his work. Anusapati, 'Menimbang Paradoks Kriya Kontemporer', *Kompas*, 3rd October 2004.

²⁷ Anusapati.

grouped through the material they are working with. These artists are presented in main categories called Modern Contemporary Art, Classical Popular Art, and Important Artists Jogja.²⁸

Today, most *kriya* articles are written by university lecturers and published in their respective university journals. For example, lecturer Suyanto from ISI Surakarta writes *Seni Kriya: Teknik dan Kreasi* (The Art of Kriya: Technique and Expression), an article that was published in *Ornamen – Jurnal Kriya ISI Surakarta* in 2004. Suyanto starts his article by articulating the importance of abundant materials available in Indonesia for *kriya* makers. He continues with the meaning of *kriya* and its aesthetic and philosophical values, which are part of Indonesia's cultural heritage. However, he asserts that this heritage is not a rigid tradition, but flexible and dynamic and include changing design values. Suyanto presents different definitions on *kriya* written by Indonesians between 1999 and 2001 to discuss the term in more detail. He states that, there are three functions of *kriya*: a practical, an aesthetic, and a symbolic one.²⁹

Kriya was further classified by researcher I Ketut Sunarya from the Faculty of Culture and Art, *Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta*. In his two articles published in 2005 and 2006 he deals with the value and position of *kriya*, stating that *kriya* has reached a better rank in the art field, but has not yet the status of “autonomous” artworks like in a Western fine art sense.³⁰ Sunarya divides *kriya* into different “castes”, for example mythical *kriya*, classical *kriya*, economic *kriya*, and art *kriya*. He compares the *kriya* scene in the 1960s with the one in the 2000s. Sunarya observes that, the visual appearance of *kriya* objects became more creative and exciting since the 1960s. For Sunarya a *kriya* exhibition organised by ISI Yogyakarta at the National Gallery in 2000, filled a long-lasting gap of *kriya* exhibitions.³¹

Sunarya's colleague from the *Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta*, B. Muria Zuhdi also proposes a classification within *kriya*. In his article written in 2010, *Perkembangan Konsep Kriya* (The Development of a Kriya Concept), he observes three main directions in the *kriya* field. Firstly, a preservation-oriented direction of *kriya* objects, comprising traditional craft processes and techniques. Secondly, a development-oriented direction for commercial and industrial

²⁸ Muhidin M. Dahlan et al., *Gelaran Almanak Seni Rupa Jogja 1999-2009* (I:BOEKOE & Gelaran Budaya, 2009).

²⁹ Suyanto Suyanto, 'Seni Kriya : Teknik Dan Kreasi', *Ornamen* 2, no. 1 (2004): 21-4.

³⁰ I. Ketut Sunarya, 'PERKEMBANGAN SENI KRIYA DI TENGAH PERUBAHAN MASYARAKAT' *Imaji* 4, no. 2 (2006): 200-4.

³¹ I. Ketut Sunarya, 'KASTA SENI KRIYA INDONESIA DALAM PENDEKATAN TEKS DAN KONTEKS', *Ornamen* 2, no. 1 (2005); Institut Seni Indonesia Yogyakarta, Wisma Seni Nasional (Jakarta, Indonesia), and Galeri Nasional Indonesia, Editors., *Pameran Kriya Seni 2000: kriya seni kreasi ISI Yogyakarta "sebuah jawaban masa depan"*, Galeri Nasional Indonesia Jakarta, 9-15 November 2000 (Pameran Kriya Seni, Yogyakarta, [Indonesia]: ISI Yogyakarta, 2000).

interests, referring for example to new designs or products. Thirdly, an expression-oriented direction, which highlights *kriya* objects as art objects. Zuhdi underlines the importance of academic discussions and development of the concept of *kriya* for its better understanding and positioning. Further, he explains differences between *kerajinan* and *kriya* and explains well that, *kerajinan* can be translated to craft, while *kriya* is a much broader term that includes not only craft activities. Zuhdi states that, there are other terms that derive from *kriya* such as art *kriya*, expression *kriya*, design *kriya*, product *kriya* and contemporary *kriya*.³²

In his article *Seni Kriya – Antara Teknik dan Ekspresi* (The Art of Kriya – Between Technique and Expression), published in *Corak Jurnal Seni Kriya Vol. 1 No. 1, Mei-Oktober 2012*, lecturer Rispul³³ analyses how *kriya* is defined, by considering historical development, craft practice, function, and personal expression. He provides an extensive literature analysis of *kriya* definitions of the last two decades comprising several texts from SP. Gustami and from two lecturers called Imam Buchori Zaenuddin³⁴ and Sp Soedarso³⁵. Since *kriya* has strong components of craft and technique, Rispul juxtaposes *kriya* technology with the personal expression of *kriya* artists in today's art world.³⁶

In his book *Produk Kekriyaan dalam Ranah Seni Rupa dan Desain* (Products of Kriya in the Field of Visual Arts and Design), lecturer Agus Mulyadi Utomo from ISI Denpasar gathers various definitions of *kriya* from a language perspective of Old Javanese to recent definitions of the *kriya* discourse of the 2000s. He gives an overview of the history of *kriya*, the development of modern and contemporary art, by referencing Indonesian lecturers, art writers, artists and Western artists and philosophers.³⁷

After around 2012, the topics on *kriya* shifted from the question what *kriya* is, to the questions how *kriya* objects are produced and what position they adopt in the contemporary art world.

In his article *Penciptaan Seni Kriya: Persoalan dan Model Penciptaan* (The Creation of Kriya Art: Problems and Models of Creation), ISI Yogyakarta lecturer and ceramics entrepreneur Timbul Raharjo writes that, experimenting with processes and materials are fundamental approaches for today's *kriya* makers, no matter whether the objects are functional or works of art.³⁸

³² B. Zuhdi, 'PERKEMBANGAN KONSEP KRIYA' *Imaji* 1 (9th April 2010).

³³ Rispul is a lecturer at *Institut Seni Indonesia Yogyakarta* (ISI Yogyakarta)'s *Kriya* Department.

³⁴ Zaenuddin is a *kriya* lecturer at *Institut Seni Indonesia Surakarta* (ISI Surakarta).

³⁵ Soedarso used to be lecturer at ISI Yogyakarta. He is author of several books and articles on *kriya* and art in Indonesia.

³⁶ Rispul, 'Seni Kriya Antara Teknik dan Ekspresi', *CORAK Jurnal Seni Kriya* 1, no. 1, (May-October 2012): 91-100.

³⁷ Utomo Agus Mulyadi, *Produk Kekriyaan Dalam Ranah Seni Rupa dan Desain* (Denpasar, Bali: ISI Denpasar, 2011): 26-41, 93-105.

³⁸ Timbul Raharjo, 'PENCIPTAAN SENI KRIYA: PERSOALAN DAN MODEL PENCIPTAAN', *Seminar Mengembangkan Disiplin Penciptaan dan Pengkajian Seni, Pengembangan Model Disiplin Seni, Pascasarjana ISI Surakarta*, 2013, 1-12.

Zainul Arifin MA, lecturer from the university UNISNU in Jepara writes the article *Kriya dan Desain– Menuju Perkembangan Kekriyaan Indonesia* (*Kriya and Design– Towards the Development of Indonesian Kriya*). Zainul weighs up different Indonesian positions on *kriya*, including the influence and power structures of Western art institutions. He observes that, the term *seni murni* (fine art) was monopolised by certain art institutions and *kriya* makers were not allowed to call their pieces pure or fine art.³⁹ Zainul's article is one of the few voices, which stand up for Indonesian *kriya*, by defining and repositioning the term in the art field. Other than in the 1990s and during the following two decades, after 2012, *kriya* is defined in clear delimitation to craft and the Western art vocabulary with its art values. Another article concerned with this issue, is entitled *The Cross-conflict of Kriya and Crafts in Indonesia*, written by BBKB⁴⁰ researcher and *kriya* artist I Ketut Sunarya. Sunarya explains the difference between *kriya* and craft, and assesses the two terms in relation to tourism, industry and history of court traditions, where *kriya* occupied an important rank.⁴¹

In summary, written publications on *kriya* appeared in the 1980s with SP. Gustami and other *kriya* masters working as university lecturers. Academic *kriya* efforts had been made before – Yogyakarta's *Akademi Seni Rupa Indonesia* (ASRI) was a driving force for *kriya*– but professional publishing just started in the mid-1980s, when art universities were established with their journals as an outlet for academic articles. However, authors of journal articles were concerned with other topics than *kriya* during the 1980s and 1990s, so that written *kriya* discourse started in the 2000s. From around 2010, discourse on *kriya* became broader and was fuelled by an increasing awareness of Indonesia's cultural identities of Indonesia. This national cultural awareness could be partly related to the quarrel over batik as a cultural heritage between Indonesia and Malaysia.

Literature on Batik

Since the beginning of the 20th century, numerous Western publications on batik appeared, whereas Indonesian articles on batik began to appear since 2009. This is most probably due to UNESCO's inscription of Indonesian batik in the representative list of intangible cultural heritage of humanity⁴² in 2009, which proofed batik to be relevant.⁴³ Many articles published

³⁹ Zainul Arifin Ma, 'KRIYA DAN DESAIN MENUJU PERKEMBANGAN KEKRIYAAN INDONESIA', *Jurnal DISPROTEK* 7, no. 2 (2016): 1-12.

⁴⁰ BBKB stands for Balai Besar Kerajinan dan Batik, a Yogyakarta based governmental institution for handicrafts and batik.

⁴¹ I Ketut Sunarya, 'The Cross-Conflict of Kriya and Crafts in Indonesia', *Journal of Arts and Humanities* 09, no. 10 (2020): 11.

⁴² UNESCO maintains three lists of intangible cultural heritage on an international level. The first list is the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity and shows the worldwide diversity of intangible cultural heritage with 569 entries (status in 2022). The list is intended to contribute to greater visibility and awareness of the significance of the

in Indonesian university journals focus on the creation of batik motifs through various sources of inspiration, such as traditional Indonesian wood carving and other media. University journals also deal with modifications of traditional batik motifs and new motif creations.⁴⁴ Regarding literature, creations of new and contemporary batik motifs seem important and have been a special concern of art universities, to keep batik design development alive and to fulfil the requirements of remaining on the list of the UNESCO's intangible cultural heritages. Balai Besar Kerajinan dan Batik (BBKB), the Big Hall for Handicrafts and Batik, is a governmental research and development institution for batik and handicrafts and publishes articles on batik techniques regularly. Relevant researchers and prolific writers of BBKB are Edi Eskak and Irfa'ina Rohana Salma. They write about the imitation of batik in the age of artificial intelligence.⁴⁵ Batik imitations have been on the market long before Indonesia reached Independence. Low prized appealing screen-printed imitations, that were produced in China and Vietnam have flooded the Indonesian batik market in recent years, so that original batik makers see their livelihood in jeopardy.⁴⁶ Researchers Joni Setiawan, Vivin Atika and Agus Haerudin from BBKB cover very technical batik issues, like the physical characteristics of original or imitated batik fabrics, or the composition of batik wax for natural dyeing.⁴⁷ Among these technical articles, there is also one from Titiek Pujilestari from BBKB, that deals with optimisation of natural dyeing with *Indigofera*.⁴⁸ Many of these technical articles

respective intangible cultural heritages. The second list is for intangible cultural heritages in urgent need of conservation that are threatened by local and global changes. The third list shows good practice examples of intangible cultural heritages that are effectively conserved using appropriate methods. 'Kultur und Natur | Deutsche UNESCO-Kommission', Immaterielles Kulturerbe weltweit, <https://www.unesco.de/kultur-und-natur/immaterielles-kulturerbe/immaterielles-kulturerbe-weltweit> (last visit 9th March 2023).

⁴³ UNESCO lists five sections as reasons for including batik in the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage. In brief, the UNESCO committee stated that Indonesian batik has a rich symbolism associated with social status, local community, nature, history and cultural heritage. In addition, batik accompanies Indonesians from birth to death, providing a sense of identity and continuity as an essential part of social life. As another important fact the committee argued that Indonesian batik continues to evolve by retaining its traditional meaning. 'UNESCO - Decision of the Intergovernmental Committee: 4.COM 13.44', UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage, <https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions> (last visit 9th March 2023).

⁴⁴ There are regularly articles on it in the ISI Yogyakarta journal called *corak*. Two examples are Aruman Aruman, Deni Junaedi, and Isbandono Hariyanto, 'PENCIPTAAN BATIK POSTMODERN (Pengadaptasian Elemen Artistik Lukisan Modern Indonesia Dalam Teknik Dan Motif Batik Tradisional Yogyakarta)', *Corak : Jurnal Seni Kriya* 3, no. 1 (28th May 2014); Vincentia Deavy Pamvelia Soeganda, 'PENGARUH PERKEMBANGAN MODE TERHADAP PENGGUNAAN BATIK PADA REMAJA', *Folio* 2, no. 1 (25 May 2021): 33-8.

⁴⁵ Irfa'ina Rohana Salma and Edi Eskak, 'The Existence of Batik in the Digital Era' *Proceedings of the 5th conference on Creativity & cognition - C&C '05* (1st International Conference on Intermedia Arts and Creative, Yogyakarta, 2021), 40-9; Irfa'ina Rohana Salma and Edi Eskak, 'Keeping the Genuine of Batik in the Age of Artificial Intelligence', *SSRN Scholarly Paper* (Rochester, NY: Social Science Research Network, 5th November 2020).

⁴⁶ Masiswo Masiswo et al., 'KARAKTERISTIK FISIK PRODUK BATIK DAN TIRUAN BATIK', *Dinamika Kerajinan Dan Batik: Majalah Ilmiah* 34, no. 2 (29th December 2017): 103-12, 105.

⁴⁷ Masiswo Masiswo, Agus Haerudin and Vivin Atika, 'KOMPOSISI LILIN BATIK (MALAM) BIRON UNTUK BATIK WARNA ALAM PADA KAIN KATUN DAN SUTERA', *Dinamika Kerajinan dan Batik: Majalah Ilmiah* 35, no. 1 (30th June 2018): 25-32.

⁴⁸ Titiek Pujilestari, 'OPTIMASI PENCELUPAN KAIN BATIK KATUN DENGAN PEWARNA ALAM TINGI (Ceriops tagal) DAN INDIGOFERA Sp', *Dinamika Kerajinan dan Batik: Majalah Ilmiah* 34, no. 1 (9th June 2017): 53-62.

provide laboratory data and useful recommendations for batik makers and are printed in the science e-journal of the Ministry of Industry called *Dinamika Kerajinan dan Batik: Majalah Ilmiah*, (Handicrafts and Batik Dynamics: Science Magazine). On their website, they provide an archive with scanned editions of their journals dating back to 1987.⁴⁹

Batik articles do not exclusively address technical or practical issues, but recent publications focus on social, spiritual, and cultural aspects. Salma and Eskak study solidary values of batik motifs. Eskak highlights the importance of encouraging creativity and love for batik for young generations. This is indeed a hot topic, because Eskak observes that young people are not automatically interested in batik anymore. Therefore, he thinks they should be inspired and encouraged to create batik, so that they help to innovate and develop batik as a cultural heritage in line with today's requirements of industry and culture.⁵⁰ Since 2009, the Indonesian government has taken measures to foster and develop batik industries, and to preserve and maintain batik as cultural heritage.⁵¹

Literature on Ceramics

Articles on ceramics appeared more recently, but other than batik articles, they do not deal with technical issues, except for a few exceptions. One of them is written by ISI Yogyakarta lecturers Suharson and Asmara on finishing techniques.⁵² Another technical article written in 2017 by Eskak, Salma et al. from BBKB is entitled *Peningkatan Kecerahan dan Daya Rekat Warna Pada Produk Gerabah Batik* (Improvement of Brightness and Colour Adhesion in Pottery Batik Products),⁵³ and examines how colour can be applied to pottery surfaces using batik reserve technique. Though, this finding has more to do with the exploration of batik technique on other materials, than with ceramics finishing technique. Several artists and

⁴⁹ dKb Majalah Ilmiah: Dinamik Kerajinan dan Batik, *Archives*, 2021, <http://ejournal.kemenperin.go.id/dkb/issue/archive> (last visit 3rd January 2022).

⁵⁰ Edi Eskak and Irfa'ina Rohana Salma, 'Menggali nilai-nilai solidaritas dalam motif-motif batik Indonesia', *Jantra* 13, no. 2 (2018): 107-24; Edi Eskak, 'Mendorong Kreativitas Dan Cinta Batik Pada Generasi Muda Kritik Seni Karya Pemenang Lomba Desain Batik Bbkb 2012', *Dinamika Kerajinan Dan Batik: Majalah Ilmiah* 30, no. 1 (6th June 2013): 1-10; Irfa ina Rohana Salma, 'REVIEW: PENGEMBANGAN BATIK MOTIF KHAS DAERAH DI BALAI BESAR KERAJINAN DAN BATIK', *Dinamika Kerajinan Dan Batik: Majalah Ilmiah* 36, no. 2 (31st December 2019): 149-62.

⁵¹ Salma, 'REVIEW': 153-4, 159.

⁵² Suharson and Asmara examine how innovations and quality in terracotta products can be achieved. They focus on a finishing technique where painting is applied in the water to get unique marble-like appearances. Arif Suharson and Dwita Anja Asmara, 'KONTEMPORER FINISHING PADA MEDIA GERABAH NON SILIDRIS DENGAN TEKNIK PAINTING IN THE WATER', *Corak* 2, no. 2 (28th November 2013).

⁵³ Edi Eskak, Irfaina Rohana Salma and Hadi Sumarto, 'Peningkatan Kecerahan Dan Daya Rekat Warna Pada Produk Gerabah Batik', *Productum: Jurnal Desain Produk (Pengetahuan Dan Perancangan Produk)* 3, no. 1 (16th October 2017): 1-7.

lecturers have experimented with batik reserve technique on other materials than on fabrics. At ISI Yogyakarta trials have been made to batik on wood and leather.⁵⁴

Apart from these technical articles, there are two main branches of literature on ceramics. One branch is about the heritage of traditional pottery and how it has been transferred to the dynamic contemporary pottery and ceramic scene in Yogyakarta. The other branch focuses on three main art cities: Yogyakarta, Bandung and Jakarta, and is about ceramic objects in their multiple positions between *kriya*, design and art.

Concerning a pottery heritage, the village of Kasongan in southern Yogyakarta is often mentioned as birthplace of traditional pottery. The book *Keramik Kasongan Heritage* (Ceramic Kasongan Heritage), written by Gustami et al. in 2014 presents a good overview of how Kasongan became a pottery village, how it gained national and international significance in the last 40 years, and what kind of styles and objects have been produced there.⁵⁵ Timbul Raharjo, a Kasongan-born potter, lecturer, and ceramics entrepreneur writes several articles on pottery and ceramics. In his book *Globalisasi Seni Kerajinan Keramik Kasongan* (The Globalisation of the Art of Ceramics Handicrafts Kasongan) he outlines developments of Kasongan pottery, which is strongly tied to single potters and their creative home studios. His recordings begin around 1900 and cover some 100 years. Raharjo describes market and demand dynamics in the relatively small village Kasongan –counting around 100 families in 1900– as follows: certain potters established and applied their own styles on their products and sold them successfully. These styles were copied by other Kasongan potters, so that soon the whole village produced pottery of these styles. Raharjo notes that, in the 1960 and 1970s Kasongan's pottery products were elevated from the level of functional household ware to the level of beautiful and meaningful art of handicrafts through complex and aesthetically appealing styles and objects.⁵⁶

The second branch of ceramic articles are mostly part of exhibition catalogues. However, an interesting article appeared in 2020, from ISI Padangpanjang in Sumatra written by the lecturers Taufik Akbar and Hendratno Een. In *Membaca Kecenderungan Bentuk dan Isi Keramik Kontemporer Indonesia* (Reading Form and Content Tendencies of Contemporary Indonesian Ceramics), they discuss contemporary ceramics' position between craft, art and design, by citing Asmudjo's⁵⁷ division of factory-based design and handicraft-based design.

⁵⁴ Interview with Arif Suharsan, *Curricula and Ornaments*, 8th February 2018.

⁵⁵ SP. Gustami, Laksmi Kusuma Wardani and Agus Heru Setiawan, *Keramik Kasongan heritage: seni kriya dan kepariwisataan: studi kasus proses kreatif dan inovatif seni kriya keramik Kasongan*, Yogyakarta: buku kenangan (Jakarta, Indonesia: Direktorat Pengembangan Seni Rupa, 2014).

⁵⁶ Timbul Raharjo, 'GLOBALISASI SENI KERAJINAN KERAMIK KASONGAN', First Edition (2009): 1-252.

⁵⁷ Asmudjo is a practising ceramist and lecturer from Bandung, a renowned curator and one of the initiators of the Jakarta Contemporary Ceramics Biennale.

Akbar and Een observe that, three art universities ISI Yogyakarta, ITB Bandung⁵⁸ and IKJ Jakarta⁵⁹ have greatly influenced contemporary ceramics in Indonesia with their different ceramic ideologies. ISI Yogyakarta's ideology is strongly tied to Sudjojono's⁶⁰ concept of *Jiwa Ketok*, which means that the soul of the artist should be visible in the artwork. In contrast to ISI Yogyakarta, ITB Bandung's art ideology tends to be formalistic and technical aspects are highlighted. IKJ Jakarta has a similar ideology to ITB Bandung, because several lecturers from Bandung started working at IKJ Jakarta and brought along their ideological ideas.⁶¹

Great writings on contemporary ceramics originate from a handful of art students from Bandung –now in their mid-forties– who became well-established curators, art critics, ceramic artists and founders or co-founders of the Jakarta Contemporary Ceramics Biennale, which was first held in 2009. Among these people are Asmudjo Jono Irianto, Rifky Effendy, Nurdian Ichsan and Rizki A. Zaelani. All of them use Western ceramics as a reference point. More recently, they have begun expressing their critical view on Western-adapted art categories, that have persisted in Indonesia.

Western Literature on *Kriya*

Discursive literature on *kriya* has been written by Western academics in collaboration with Yogyakarta researchers. One example is a book from 2009 entitled *Indonesian Arts and Crafts* by European researcher Joop Ave, who works together with SP. Gustami, M. Hitchcock and S. E. Jay. In two separate chapters the authors describe traditions and rituals, pointing out that these two topics are closely tied to Indonesian *kriya*. In the chapter on tradition, Ave deals with gender-based divisions of labour. For example, blacksmithing was an activity reserved for men and the creation of textiles one for women.⁶² In many societies of the Archipelago, the mastery of a *kriya* form was given great importance and *kriya* skills and techniques were handed on from one generation to the next within the families. In this way, certain *kriya* forms and objects became a family's hallmark and each family used to guard well its *kriya* knowledge. These *kriya* forms –from a Western perspective regarded as “craft traditions”– were collected and documented by the Dutch in the early 20th century and

⁵⁸ ITB stands for *Institut Teknologi Bandung* or Technological Institute Bandung.

⁵⁹ IKJ stands for *Institut Kesenian Jakarta* or Art Institute Jakarta.

⁶⁰ Sudjojono was an influential Indonesian painter, who was part of a group that constituted Indonesian Modern Art.

⁶¹ Taufik Akbar and Hendratno Een, 'MEMBACA KECENDERUNGAN BENTUK DAN ISI KERAMIK KONTEMPORER INDONESIA', *Corak* 9, no. 2 (2020): 105-7.

⁶² Only in the course of higher demand of batik textiles the copper stamp was introduced to apply hot wax much faster, and this became a male occupation.

comprise batik collections with lavishly made catalogues.⁶³ From the 1920s until the late 1970s many publications followed, also from researchers outside the Netherlands. Many books particularly on batik appeared, expressing great fascination for batik, which is closely tied to identity, social structures and customs. However, in the 1970s and 1980s, the view on *kriya* was still a colonial one, romanticising the “tropical” or “exotic”.

Research Questions

For my research, I started by asking myself how I wanted to approach the topic of *kriya* in Yogyakarta and what my goal might be. As a Western-raised academic, I was aware that a careful and ethnological perspective should be part of my approach. At the same time, as a Swiss-Indonesian, I hoped that not only my knowledge of the language (*Bahasa Indonesia*), but also my cultural knowledge (having grown up partly in the Javanese culture with animist beliefs) would be useful for this research. Another important point for me was the postcolonial debate that was going on in Yogyakarta among a few academics. In this context, Foucault’s theory on the emergence of knowledge was helpful to me. His theory assumes that knowledge and the meaning of concepts emerge through discourse about them. I therefore aimed to investigate which institutions and organisations in the Special Region of Yogyakarta are significant for this discourse. Yogyakarta is a sultan’s city, a city of education, culture and arts, and therefore particularly suitable as a research site. In Yogyakarta *kriya* is exposed to a tension between industry, academia, cultural traditions and a lively exhibition practice. I chose two crafts to focus my study on batik and ceramics, because both are represented in Yogyakarta, and they differ in their history of development as well as in their presence in exhibitions. I picked up themes that I felt were important in both crafts in the hope that they would reveal more about how *kriya* is discussed and positioned in Yogyakarta today. The guiding questions for my research were:

- What is the history and state of the art of batik and ceramics practice in Yogyakarta?
- What concepts and values do *kriya* objects (batik and ceramics) reflect?
- What is the relation between *kriya* and contemporary art in Yogyakarta and why is *kriya* important?
- How and by whom is the Indonesian discourse on *kriya* shaped?

⁶³ Joop Ave et al., *Indonesian Arts and Crafts*, Hardcover with Jacket Edition (Jakarta: Bab Publishing, 2009), 9-17, 27.

With these questions, I hoped to develop a picture of *kriya* in Yogyakarta that was as diverse as possible, but also representative, so that in the end the reader would learn more about batik and ceramics, whilst also being enabled to better understand the discursive field about *kriya*.

So far, art historians from Europe, America and Australia have studied Indonesian contemporary art (paintings, installations, new media), which shows similarities with Western exhibition practice and its esteem and position in society. For many decades *kriya* has taken a secondary role in the discourse on Indonesian arts because it was related to the traditional arts and crafts heritage, or it was mistaken for handicrafts and relegated to the place of functional household items. However, the well-known curators and *kriya* experts Sujud Dartanto and Satya Brahmantya from Yogyakarta take quite a different stance towards *kriya*. Regarding art production in Indonesia, they assert that people speak through their hands, and express their art through weaving, wood carving, making ceramics, batik and other craft-based arts.⁶⁴ I therefore hypothesise that *kriya* is an important cultural art practice that reveals much about Indonesia's art identities. In my opinion, *kriya* as the original form of art in Indonesia has not been given enough attention in the international discourse on Indonesian art. Neither has *kriya* been given enough importance in Indonesia's national discourse. The country's art landscape, with infrastructures such as art universities, museums, the art market, galleries and exhibitions were created through Western influences, bringing along the Western art paradigm of high art (fine art) and low art (craft). This resulted in a low rank for *kriya* in Indonesia itself with *kriya* remaining on the sideline of the art landscape for a long time.

Terminologies

Craft

Keeping in mind Nurohmad's quote that *kriya* and craft are not the same, it is important to me to carefully distinguish between the two terms in this thesis. I therefore use the term *kriya* whenever the Indonesian concept of crafting objects is meant. This includes more than just craftsmanship, but also spiritual skills and the incorporation of animistic teachings. Whenever I refer specifically to manual skills, I use the term craft. This is exactly how the word craft is used among academics in Indonesia. Craft, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, is "An occupation or profession requiring technical skill and know-how, [...] which involves

⁶⁴ Interview with Sujud Dartanto, *Galeri Benda*, 21st May 2021; Interview with Satya Brahmantya, *Galeri Benda, The Intangible & Handiworkman*, 26th May 2021.

using the hands; [...].”⁶⁵, whereas the Cambridge Dictionary adds the component of experience to the term. These definitions suggest that the term craft combines experience and skill, especially in relation to making objects. Craft is an activity or task that requires experience and skill.⁶⁶ Experience is indeed an important aspect of craft, since a craft can only be mastered with a lot of practice leading to increased experience of how to transform materials using certain techniques. The term tradition is also generally used in connection with craft. But how exactly is the term tradition used in Yogyakarta batik and ceramics and what do people mean by it?

Tradition

In Yogyakarta people use the words traditional and tradition when talking about *kriya*. They speak about *gaya tradisional* or traditional style, *motif tradisional* or traditional motif and *batik/keramik tradisional* or traditional batik/ceramics. But what do Yogyakarta people mean by *traditional*? On the one hand they refer to inherited *kriya* knowledge or motifs that are passed on from one generation to the next. On the other hand, they refer to a court tradition at the sultan’s palace called a *Kraton*. At the *Kraton*, *kriya* as a high art form was practised in the same form for decades. This raises the question of how far the sultan served as a patron for *kriya* as an authentic cultural manifestation or to what extent the court tradition was a straightforward invention.

With regard to *invented tradition*, Hobsbawm and Ranger may be quoted as follows:

“‘Invented tradition’ is taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historical past.”⁶⁷

History and chronicles of the Yogyakarta *Kraton* affirm a continuity of certain *kriya* practices, such as batik. How far these practices of courtly arts are a direct continuation of long-

⁶⁵ ‘craft, noun’, OED Oxford English Dictionary, <https://www.oed.com/search/dictionary/?scope=Entries&q=craft> (last visit 2nd March 2023).

⁶⁶ ‘craft’, Cambridge Dictionary, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/de/worterbuch/englisch/craft> (last visit 2nd March 2023).

⁶⁷ Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition*, Canto Classics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 1.

established traditions and to what extent they have been re-invented remains to be examined. An instance of re-inventing a court tradition most likely occurred after the end of Dutch colonial rule in the 1950s. At that time the sultan lost political power and took on a more active role as a patron for Indonesian arts and culture, which comprised *kriya*. Hamenku Buwono was concerned with preserving Yogyakarta forms of cultural art. At the sultan's palace batik⁶⁸ was protected by applying strict design rules which prohibited any variation or development of patterns. Beyond the palace walls the situation was more relaxed. Batik continued to evolve along with changes in the industry and design ideas from batik-making communities. Consequently, palace batik no longer reflected the batik culture of the people but became a means to stratify society and set the aristocrats and sultan apart from the general public.⁶⁹

Even though one can speak of a cultural tradition at the sultan's palace, "traditional batik" itself is not attributed to the sultan's palace, but to the batik that developed outside there. (Chapter 2 on batik provides more details). "Traditional batik" is a term used to describe a particular style of batik, and classify and distinguish it from other batik styles. Traditional batik motifs are defined by being considered mature and perfect due to their long development by the ancestors.⁷⁰ Moreover, the traditional batik motifs have been fostered and preserved over a long time. They have been copied repeatedly until the present day and it can be assumed that they have existed without notable modifications for a lengthy period. Thus, one of their main characteristics is a complete absence of variation. According to Hobsbawm and Ranger invariance is the distinguishing element of tradition as opposed to custom. "Custom" allows change, in the form of both development and innovation.⁷¹ For batik motifs, therefore, the term *traditional motifs* can be used for such cases of invariance, while there are other cases, where batik motifs have undergone a change and are more likely to be classified within the confines of customs of a particular batik-making community. But in Indonesia there is no current discourse about this differentiation.

In the batik scene in Yogyakarta people also use the term *traditional process* when referring to the elemental batik process. This process, inherited from their ancestors, comprises using

⁶⁸ At the sultan's palaces in Yogyakarta and Surakarta batik is called classical batik and refers to a set of old batik patterns worn by the sultan's family members. Classical batik patterns were forbidden for use by ordinary population.

⁶⁹ Dharsono, 'THE DYNAMICS OF SURAKARTA BATIK: The Development of Batik Through Conservation by Revitalization and Reinterpretation in the Development Dynamics of Surakarta Batik', *Arts and Design Studies* 74, no. 0 (2019): 31; Farid Abdullah, 'Yogyakarta Kraton Batik Patterns: Symbolic Constructs Within the Javanese Culture', 2014, 6.

⁷⁰ Interview with Satya Brahmantya, *Galeri Benda, the Intangible of Kriya and Handiwirman*, 26th May 2021.

⁷¹ Hobsbawm and Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, 2.

natural colours for dyeing⁷² and the same materials and tools as has been used for generations. Consequently, the process can be called traditional, as it remained invariant over centuries. Yet many contemporary batik pieces are created adhering to tradition.

In summary, the term tradition in batik refers to both the process and the motifs used inside and outside the court. Furthermore, traditional batik motifs from the court and traditional batik motifs originating from the villages were further classified. These distinctions and other classifications within batik in Yogyakarta will be discussed in Chapter 2.

The term tradition is used differently for ceramics because, unlike batik, ceramics has never been part of a court culture. More precisely, we must note that there might be traditional pottery in Yogyakarta but no traditional ceramics⁷³, as Yogyakarta ceramics are based on a relatively young history. *Gerabah tradisional* or traditional pottery is strongly tied to the village of Kasongan, a potters' village in the southwest of Yogyakarta. Traditional pottery refers to two things: on the one hand, it comprises functional objects with certain decorations that were already being produced in colonial times. On the other hand, it also refers to a decoration style that was introduced by a single potter from Kasongan in the 1970s and soon held sway over the whole village.⁷⁴

Even though, from a social and temporal perspective, the term tradition is used differently for batik and pottery, one is tempted to assume that, for both fields, the term refers to unvaried processes and results of batik motifs or pottery objects. But I doubt that there is traditional pottery in the sense of Hobsbawm and Ranger's meaning of tradition. In this thesis I therefore use the terms tradition and traditional in the very specific sense of the two fields of batik and pottery. I will use traditional batik to refer to the unvaried motifs and style that is classified as such, whereas with traditional pottery I will refer to the distinct style that was introduced in the 1970s from that single potter in Kasongan, and to the style resulting from pottery products in colonial times. For both crafts I will also use the term traditional when I refer to ancient techniques handed down by ancestors. Interestingly, the term tradition is temporarily imprecise and varies in definition depending on the context. For example, in the case of traditional batik there are great differences in the age of various patterns. According to batik experts, some patterns have been used for such a long time that they can no longer be traced back to their origin. Other patterns have been known for three to four generations and are

⁷² To be precise, they refer to times when fine cotton was available and refined pattern were created using a *canting tulis*. Concerning the material, they refer to batik wax (*malam*). Further information on batik technique will be given in Chapter 2.

⁷³ By ceramics I refer to middle to high burning temperature-fired clay items which can be glazed or unglazed. By pottery I refer to low burning temperature-fired clay products, also called earthenware, which are unglazed.

⁷⁴ Interview with Timbul Haryono, *Batik Archaeology*, 15th March 2022.

relatively young. In pottery, the term tradition is closely linked to the beginning of increased records of traditional pottery and can be dated to around the end of the 19th century. However, objects with the well-known Kasongan style of decoration, which only emerged in the 1960s, are also designated as traditional pottery.

If we go back to the question of what Indonesians mean by tradition and look at current discourses on the subject, we find that the concept of tradition is closely linked to local culture. In fact, the term tradition seems to be used as a synonym for heritage, for ancestral *kriya* knowledge, and customs handed down to the current generations. As an example, Javanese tradition refers to ancestral cultural customs which include symbolic, ritual, and religious elements. These customs are associated with high artistic values and are perceived as ingenious.⁷⁵ Consequently, *kriya* objects that reflect Javanese tradition, that is, bear Hindu-Javanese ornamentation, are classified as traditional *kriya*. Another important aspect of “traditional *kriya*” is the person who created these objects and the place they were made. Traditional *kriya* is practised outside the palace, in rural areas or in small villages that form parts of suburbs or districts of bigger cities.

Classical

Kriya objects that were made inside the palace are called classical. Batik was created at the palace as a fine art and, as we learned earlier, special patterns were used and maintained for a long period of time. These patterns have survived to this day and are called classical batik. Today, when batik is created using these unchanged patterns with great care, the textile is also called classical batik. Classical batik has thus become a style of batik.

In the case of pottery and ceramics, the term classical is rarely used, as pottery was not practised at the court as a fine art. Some *kriya* experts in Yogyakarta speak of classical pottery when they mean the objects made for the sultan’s palace, which were decorated using Hindu-Javanese ornamentation.

Modern

When the term modern *kriya* is used two historical aspects must be considered. On the one hand, the emergence of modern art in Indonesia contributed to the use of the term modern for

⁷⁵ The term “local genius” often gets cited in combination with tradition. This term will be discussed in Chapter 2 of this thesis based on the example of batik motifs. Kasiyan, “Representasi tradisi dan budaya lokal dalam seni rupa kontemporer Yogyakarta”, *IMAJI - Jurnal Seni dan Pendidikan Seni, Fakultas Bahasa dan Seni Universitas negeri Yogyakarta* 7, no. 2 (August 2009): 11, 17.

the arts. On the other hand, a modernisation of society took place after Indonesian Independence, which also led to the use of the term modern.⁷⁶ Modern was initially used to delineate the modern art that emerged through the influence of Dutch colonial power. The colonists influenced traditional art forms in Indonesia through their preference for European painting. Painting as an art form, as it was known in Europe, entered Indonesia from the 1930s onwards and marked the beginning of modern art. However, modern art in Indonesia is not a belated imitation of Western modern art, but should be seen as an independent art trend resulting from Indonesian-specific social and political issues at that time.

When the word modern is used to classify batik or ceramics it functions as a derivative of the Western art vocabulary. As such, the term modern has a strong link to temporality, it comes after tradition and before contemporary and is used to describe a style. For batik the term modern has a double meaning as it is used in two different contexts. It refers either to a modern batik motif that is subject to precise rules with a consensus on its classification, or to describe a tailored batik garment, such as a skirt or blouse, implying that it is cutting edge or modern in the fashion sense (fashionable). Thus, a batik fabric with contemporary batik motifs tailored into a blouse can be a modern piece of batik clothing.

Like modern batik, modern ceramics became a classification for ceramic objects that were created as a new style after traditional pottery. However, modern ceramics in Indonesia refer mainly to the work of a handful of Bandung ceramic artists in the 1960s who introduced middle to high-temperature clay firing. Unlike modern batik that is still created and used to refer to a specific style, modern ceramics rarely describes a ceramic style since it is hardly created nowadays.

The term modern *kriya* does not exist, as *kriya* only emerged as a term in the 1960s, just before contemporary art began in Indonesia. But there is the term contemporary *kriya*.

I prefer to use the term modern batik when referring to this batik style and the term fashionable when referring to a modern batik garment. I only use the term modern ceramics when referring to the ceramics of the 1960s and 1970s.

When I mean modernisation, as for example in social and technical developments, I use the term modernisation rather than the adjective modern. I hope that this gives a clear

⁷⁶ The terms modern, modernism and modernisation should be well distinguished with regard to Indonesian art. Modernism in Indonesian visual art developed -similarly as in the West- through economic developments and urbanisation. The modernisation of society took place after the declaration of independence in 1945 and was controlled by strict state leadership over the following decades. An indigenous modern society, as well as a market for modern art, emerged much later, in around the 1970s. For further information, I recommend the careful research of: Susan Helen Ingham, 'A Brief History - Indonesian Contemporary Art', *Indonesian Contemporary Art* (blog), 2023, <http://www.reformasiart.com/history/> (last visit 2nd March 2023).

understanding of what I am speaking about in each case. It seems important to me to keep in mind that modern in Indonesia cannot be equated with modern in the West. For example, Indonesian modern art is constituted differently from Western modern art.

Contemporary

In order to situate the term contemporary, it is worth taking a look at Indonesian visual art from the mid-1970s onwards, when contemporary art emerged. Similar to the case of Indonesian modern art, contemporary art in Indonesia should not be seen as a parallel form of Western contemporary art. Unlike in the West, where the avant-garde broke with art tradition to find a new approach to art, this was less important for the Indonesian avant-garde, which began with the New Art Movement (*Gerakan Seni Rupa Baru*) in 1975. The primary topic of the Indonesian avant-garde was a revolt against the colonial legacy of art values and the strong suppression of socially critical and political art by the Sukarno and Suharto dictatorial regimes.⁷⁷ The term contemporary also found its way into *kriya*. Contemporary batik and contemporary ceramics refer to a set of styles based on certain visual parameters. Contemporary batik emerged in the 1960s and 1970s with the introduction of batik painting and later with a trend for creating abstract batik. Contemporary ceramics arose from the 1980s onwards and were linked to the emergence of academic study programmes. Contemporary batik and ceramics also refer to those works from today which cannot be classified into either a traditional or modern style. Unlike contemporary art, where social, political and structural aspects shaped the term, the term contemporary *kriya* is mainly used as a style designation that emphasises the assumption that there is a historical order of styles such as traditional, modern and contemporary.

Western, Eastern and Asia

The words Western and Eastern, as well as Asian, need to be used with caution in the postcolonial debate. The terms must be read as constructed designations which resulted from the colonial view. With this point in mind, I will use the three terms in this thesis as follows.

⁷⁷ The researcher and art historian Leonor Veiga suggests the term “Third Avant-garde” for the Indonesian avant-garde which, unlike in the West, uses traditional elements in its art. Leonor Veiga, ‘The Third Avant-Garde: Messages of Discontent’, *Southeast of Now: Directions in Contemporary and Modern Art in Asia* 1 (1st January 2017): 91-127.

Susan Ingham writes about the relation between Indonesian contemporary art and global art. She asserts that, Indonesian contemporary art from the 1990s onwards began to be understood as global art due to the structures of institutions, museums and exhibitions. Ingham, ‘A Brief History - Indonesian Contemporary Art’; Susan Helen Ingham, ‘Powerlines’, 207-9.

By Western I mean Euro-American cultures, including Australia and New Zealand. In Indonesia, the term is mostly used to mean Europe and America. By Eastern I mean cultures from Southeast Asian countries, such as Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia and Indonesia.⁷⁸ Asia functions as a purely geographical term, as one cannot speak of an Asian culture. Indonesia is geographically part of Asia and, as its fourth most populous country, makes up a significant part of the cultures in Asia. But, even within Indonesia, it would be a rough summary to speak of one single culture (Malay culture), as numerous ethnic groups on different islands have produced their own cultures. In addition, there is a complex cultural relationship with the West, which has been shaped by centuries of colonial history. Some influences from the West were adopted in Indonesia, while others were rejected.

Industry

Industry is used in English for companies and activities that produce items for sale. This product manufacturing takes place in factories.⁷⁹ In relation to batik and ceramics in Yogyakarta, one can also speak of an industry, as both goods are produced in companies and factories. However, it must be noted that the term industry in Indonesia refers not only to this production in factories, but also to the activities that produce *kriya* products. For batik and ceramic production in Yogyakarta this means that not all *kriya* items are produced in companies, as some are made at home and in small studios. Furthermore, the industrial production in factories in Indonesia does not imply the use of electrically-powered machines. Batik is made exclusively by hand in Yogyakarta. The ceramic goods known as *kriya* are also handmade.⁸⁰ (Machine-made ceramics exist, but they are not called *kriya*.) Consequently, the term industry in Yogyakarta refers to both the companies with factories⁸¹ and also the individual homeworkers who, together, form a kind of economic conglomerate for craft production.

⁷⁸ The term Eastern is often used for other Asian cultures such as China, India and Japan.

⁷⁹ 'Industry', Cambridge Dictionary, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/industry> (last visit 10th March 2023); "Industry", Oxford English Dictionary, 2023, <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/industry> (last visit 10th March 2023).

⁸⁰ In German, the term *Gewerbe* would be accurate.

⁸¹ In Indonesia, the term factory is only defined by the fact that goods are produced at a certain location. I came up with this definition through an experience in 2016, when I was travelling along the south coast in Central Java. In Batu Karas I wanted to visit the production of coconut blossom sugar. The local people explained me the way to the coconut sugar factory. I looked in vain for a factory building between densely overgrown forest and palm trees. On the way I asked another local person about the coconut sugar factory. He accompanied me to the factory. The factory consisted of a well-made hut with a large fireplace in the middle where the coconut blossom sugar was boiled down. All around, the workers climbed the metre-high palm trees with a plastic can around their waists to extract the nectar. So, all this together was the coconut sugar factory.

Methodology

For my research on *kriya* I read articles and book sections mainly published in Indonesian (*Bahasa Indonesia*). I also read exhibition essays which sometimes were written in English. In Indonesia the writing down of information and its archiving is still a relatively young concept. Printed exhibition catalogues began to be more common since the 1970s. From 2015 onwards many *kriya* event organisers and institutions started to make comprehensive e-catalogues of their exhibitions which provided rich information on the exhibited artworks, the artists, and side activities or residency programmes. In addition, these catalogues contained a word of welcome from the curatorial team. For bigger events one can find essays written by curators who outline the exhibition topics. I have limited my description and analysis of artworks to *kriya* objects that have been shown in exhibitions. In doing so, I focused on the discourse of exhibition practice. I am aware of many *kriya* objects in Yogyakarta that are worth being shown but do not find their way into *kriya* exhibitions. This is often the case with the artworks of craftspeople who did not have the chance to get an academic education. Consequently, they did not come into contact with the academic artist network and exhibition organisers, who all have studied at an art university. The inclusion of non-academic *kriya* objects would be exciting but is beyond the scope of this thesis.

To detect current issues of *kriya* discourses I interviewed more than 40 *kriya* experts from Yogyakarta.⁸² These experts were artists, craftspeople, batik and ceramic entrepreneurs, lecturers, curators and *kriya* researchers. Most of the *kriya* experts I interviewed more than once. The *kriya* experts provided me with rich information which I could not access through reading books.⁸³ I tried to validate the oral information of my interviewees by cross checking with information of other interview partners.⁸⁴ As the interviews were an important part of my data collection, I have not made abbreviations, rather I included them with the name⁸⁵ of the

⁸² A list of my conducted interviews can be found in the appendix.

In some cases, I also talked to people outside from Yogyakarta because of their role, influence, or knowledge of *kriya* in Indonesia. One example is Asmudjo Jono Irianto from Bandung, who has an extensive knowledge of *kriya* in Indonesia.

⁸³ All interviews were held in *Bahasa Indonesia* (Indonesian language) because my interview partners felt much more comfortable to speak Indonesian. For a few elder people Indonesian is their second language while their mother tongue is *Bahasa Java*.

⁸⁴ However, much of this cross checking was done through personal communication, which I did not indicate in this work. In some cases, I only cited one interview because the main statement was made in that interview. Other interviews that would back up the information are not listed.

⁸⁵ In Indonesia, especially people of the older generation or from more remote areas sometimes have only one name, their first name. However, the first name also serves as the surname in the passport. Some people who have a first and a last name are addressed by their last name, because their last name distinguishes them better from other people than their first name. In this thesis, I do not consistently call the respective people by their surname. I name them by the name they use and are known in the *kriya* scene. As an example, the curators Sujud Dartanto and Satya Brahmantya are known in Yogyakarta as *pak* Sujud (Mr. Sujud) and as *mas* Bram (Mr. Bram). Therefore, I refer to them in my work as Sujud and Brahmantya. *Mas* is the polite form of addressing a young gentleman, *pak* / *bapak* is the polite form of addressing an elder gentleman.

interviewee, the title of the interview and the date.⁸⁶ It was surprisingly easy to find new valid interview partners because of the friendly and helpful *kriya* community in Yogyakarta. Even though my life data collection was interrupted due to the Corona pandemic from March 2020 until June 2022 I was able to conduct many interviews online.⁸⁷ Whenever I got a new contact from a former interview partner I wrote a WhatsApp message to the new person, introducing my project and telling the person from whom I got the phone number. In all cases people were pleased to talk to me about their engagement to *kriya*. Messaging through WhatsApp was the most successful way to make first contacts as it is the most used messenger app in Indonesia and far more common than writing e-mails.⁸⁸ There is nothing informal or unserious about contacting someone through WhatsApp in Indonesia. Even national and regional museums and many other institutions provide a WhatsApp contact on their websites through which one can chat with the staff.

After the first contact through WhatsApp, I let my interview partners choose to answer my questions through a live video call a WhatsApp chat or to send me their answers in written form via e-mail. Most interviewees preferred talking via a live video call. Follow-up questions often were answered through WhatsApp (Figure K3). In some cases, the first contact was made via the Instagram application. Instagram enjoys a professional status for artists, craftspeople, entrepreneurs, and curators. It is much more likely to find a properly maintained Instagram account of a person or institution than a website.⁸⁹ Interestingly many formal or governmental institutions with established websites have a much more convincing and up to date Instagram account compared to their websites.

To evaluate the data set from my numerous interviews I chose an ethnological evaluation method that is often used for qualitative interviews. This method suggests a content analysis by Kuckartz⁹⁰ and applies hermeneutic principles so that I renounced a predefined system of categories and research questions. The rather inductive approach demanded a repeatedly review of the research material to adjust my category system and may be as well my research

⁸⁶ In the footnotes I did not abbreviate the interviews when citing them for the second time, because I wanted to make clear, to which interview the information referred.

⁸⁷ I could not travel to Yogyakarta due to strict covid-regulations at that time. In November 2021 the pandemic situation in Yogyakarta was under control but for job and organisational reasons I could not plan a research trip to Yogyakarta until June 2022.

⁸⁸ This is since virtually everyone owns a smartphone but not everyone has a laptop or personal computer. Therefore, Indonesians are much more likely and quicker to see and answer a WhatsApp message than an e-mail. I presume that with the establishment of WhatsApp as a general messaging service, Indonesians are used to type long messages into their smartphones. I was often surprised by the length of the answers I got. I felt that my data collection through WhatsApp did not have a negative influence on the completeness of an answer.

⁸⁹ I guess this is because opening a simple Instagram account is for free whereas the maintenance of a website costs.

In the *kriya* scene Instagram seems to be more common than Facebook because of its visually appealing structure.

⁹⁰ Udo Kuckartz, *Qualitative Inhaltsanalyse Methoden, Praxis, Computerunterstützung*, 3., revised edition, Grundlagentexte Methoden (Weinheim: Beltz Juventa, 2016).

questions. I used the programme MAXQDA to code and manage the content of my interviews.

Besides the numerous informative interviews, I also collected data from social media such as Instagram accounts with short videos, photos and describing texts, Facebook posts and personal videos of artworks.

The structure of my thesis is as follows: In the first chapter I present an overview of the *kriya* scene in Yogyakarta. I give a brief historical outline of the religious influences in Java that have shaped the visual arts up to the present day. I present *kriya* infrastructures that play an important role in the development and maintenance of *kriya* in the field of industry and art. In the next two chapters, I highlight the discourse on *kriya* in Yogyakarta and how different terms are discussed in relation to *kriya*. I dedicate chapter two to batik as a traditional and contemporary form of *kriya*. The batik chapter has three sub-chapters. The first two sub-chapters are about the technique, visual principles, the batik heritage, as well as the variety of batik styles. The third sub-chapter describes important batik exhibitions and event in Yogyakarta and two batik artists with their artworks. Chapter three is devoted to ceramics as another form of *kriya*. The ceramics chapter also has three sub-chapters. In the first sub-chapter I write about the technique, materials, about the pottery village Kasongan and about heritage and modernity of ceramics. In the second sub-chapter, I examine the discourse in ceramics exhibitions, which exemplifies the negotiation of different art values but also how Indonesians deal with their cultural identities. The third sub-chapter is structured in the same way as the third sub-chapter of batik. I present important infrastructures for ceramics and two ceramic artists with their artworks. For each *kriya* form, batik and ceramics, I identified the most important themes. As a result, the chapter on batik and the chapter on ceramics differ in content and scope. I hope my choice of batik and ceramics allow me to illustrate the essences of *kriya*. I also hope that the differences and parallels between batik and ceramics will reveal which themes and issues are inherent in the current discourse on *kriya*.

Chapter 1

The *Kriya* Scene in Yogyakarta

1.1 Yogyakarta as Capital of *Kriya* on Java

Early Influences on *Kriya*

The Archipelago, with more than 17,000 islands and about 1,128 ethnic groups,⁹¹ has produced a rich variety of art forms, partly because the islands' geographical location offers many natural materials for crafts. The islands of Sumatra and Java have a long history of trade in the Southeast Asian region. Traders brought various influences from other cultures over a considerable time, beginning quite early from the 2nd century BC. From then to the 8th century BC numerous North Vietnamese people from the Dong-Son culture migrated to the Archipelago, bringing new art forms, patterns, and craft techniques. The Hindu religion and culture, as a significant source of influence, was brought from India to Java by traders during the 2nd century AD⁹² although some researchers suggest that trade connections were already being recorded between India and Southeast Asia in the 1st century AD.⁹³ Scholars agree on the fact that Hindu-Buddhist culture from India decisively influenced Indonesian cultures and their forms of art and craft.⁹⁴ In Yogyakarta, there are numerous remnants of Hindu-Buddhist culture, which can be found in architecture, wood carving, batik patterns, and puppet theatre (*wayang*).

If we follow the chronology, the establishment of the Srivijaya Kingdom in South Sumatera marks the next point of interest. This Hindu Kingdom from the 7th century AD was regarded as a major centre of Mahayana Buddhism. It prove the coexistence of Hinduism and Buddhism in Indonesia that lasted up to the 15th century.⁹⁵ Another example of a Hindu-Buddhist kingdom was the Mataram Kingdom,⁹⁶ which emerged in the 9th century and initiated the geographical shift of cultural strength and influence to the island of Java.⁹⁷ The 8th and 9th centuries are recorded as a fruitful era of Javanese culture, which produced two impressive architectural monuments near Yogyakarta.⁹⁸ One of these is the Prambanan Hindu temple complex, built during the 9th century, that initially comprised over 200 temples and

⁹¹ 'Beranda - DEKRANAS untuk #PerajinBerdaya', Dekranas, <https://dekranas.id/> (last visit 22nd February 2023).

⁹² John Gillow, *Traditional Indonesian Textiles / John Gillow; Photographs by Barry Dawson* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1992), 10.

⁹³ Pepin van Roojen, *Batik Design*, 2nd rev. ed. (Amsterdam: Pepin Press, 1994), 13.

⁹⁴ Gillow, *Traditional Indonesian Textiles / John Gillow; Photographs by Barry Dawson*.10; van Hout, 'Introduction', 8; Pepin van Roojen, *Batik Design*, 15.

⁹⁵ Roojen, 17.

⁹⁶ Not to be confused with the Mataram sultanate, which was Islamic and emerged in the 15th century.

⁹⁷ Gillow, *Traditional Indonesian Textiles / John Gillow; Photographs by Barry Dawson*, 10.

⁹⁸ Roojen, *Batik Design*, 16.

stands as majestic testimony to the Sanjaya dynasty rulers.⁹⁹ The other monument, called Borobudur (Figures K4 and K5), is a mandala-like three-dimensional mega building from the Buddhist Sailendra dynasty; which in fact is the biggest Buddhist temple in Southeast Asia.¹⁰⁰ It was constructed during the 8th and 9th centuries and comprises over four hundred Buddha statues, most of them built in the Hindu Gupta style. Many of its stone carved reliefs depict narratives of Javanese custom and style without any connection to Buddhism or Hinduism.¹⁰¹ Hence, Borobudur is evidence of the peaceful parallel existence of native Javanese animism, Hindu, and Buddhist religions. Even though Javanese people were receptive to Hindu-Buddhist culture they managed to uphold their own indigenous beliefs and cultural practices of animism and ancestor worship.¹⁰² People from the Archipelago modelled their distinct iconography by adapting foreign elements and blending them with their existing ones in unique ways.¹⁰³ This permeability and simultaneous resilience to foreign influences has persisted ever since the first contact with other cultures, and still perpetuates in varied facets to the present day. The impact of Hindu-Buddhist culture is reflected in architectural monuments as well as in many craft objects made for religious and ritual purposes.¹⁰⁴

It is well known that Javanese culture and arts had achieved “a very high level of sophistication” by the 8th and 9th centuries.¹⁰⁵ The refined patterns, ornaments and motifs were adopted from Hindu mythology and were integrated in a visually modified way into Javanese culture, thereby also finding their way into *kriya*.¹⁰⁶ The most prominent motif is *garuda* (Figure K6), an eagle-like bird and Hindu god which is worshipped and associated with power and success. Depicted on Indonesian passports, coins and stamps, and eponymous for the national airline,¹⁰⁷ *garuda* has become the national symbol of the Republic of Indonesia.¹⁰⁸ Its

⁹⁹ For more information about the remains of the complex and the meanings of the temples see <https://kebudayaan.kemdikbud.go.id/bpcbyogyakarta/prambanan-temple-compounds-mahakarya-bangsa-indonesia-untuk-dunia/> (last visit 15th August 2020); <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/id.html> (last visit 12th May 2022); Kartakusuma, Richadiana (2006) “The Influence of Hindu-Buddhism on Javanese Culture and Society: Some Historical Notes from Selected Sources.” In Truman Simanjuntak (Ed) *Archaeology: Indonesian Perspective*. Jakarta: LIPI Press.

¹⁰⁰ M. A. Hann, *Symbol, Pattern & Symmetry the Cultural Significance of Structure* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 232.

¹⁰¹ Roojen, *Batik Design*, 16.

¹⁰² One reason might be that the interest of foreign religious leaders centred around the Indonesian courts. The indigenous law called *adat* remained in power for ordinary people. Roojen, *Batik Design*, 15.

¹⁰³ This absorption of foreign elements happened not only on the visual level but also on the religious level and can be called syncretism. Interview with Sujud Dartanto, *Postcolonial Concept and Theory*, 20th July 2021; Hann, *Symbol, Pattern & Symmetry the Cultural Significance of Structure*, 231.

¹⁰⁴ Agus Mulyadi, *Produk Kekriyaan Dalam Ranah Senirupa Dan Desain*, 34.

¹⁰⁵ Roojen, *Batik Design*, 16-7.

¹⁰⁶ As an example, from the 17th century on, the sultans of the four sultanates in Java were regarded as incarnations of the Hindu God *Vishnu*. Laksmi Kusuma Wardani, ‘The Power of Symbol at Keraton Yogyakarta’ (The International Scientific Conference The Faculty of Fine Arts Centennial: Fine Arts in Egypt 100 Year of Creativity, Helwan University Cairo, 2008), 8.

¹⁰⁷ Beside *Garuda Indonesia* there is another national airline called *Srivijaya Air* based in Jakarta.

¹⁰⁸ Sylvia Fraser-Lu, *Indonesian Batik: Processes, Patterns, and Places*, Images of Asia (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1986), 44-6; Roojen, *Batik Design*, 15, 67, 73. Carved in stone or wood the *garuda* appears on governmental buildings, as well as on

counterpart might be the snake or dragon-like animal called *naga* which symbolises the lower world, water, femaleness and fertility.¹⁰⁹ Today, the Javanese still consider the universe as a spiritual space with an upper world of gods (such as *garuda*) and a lower world of earth, fertility and creatures like *naga* (Figure K7). They see themselves living in between, continuously trying to keep a harmonious balance. According to Javanese mythology, mountains are the homes of gods and ancestors. They serve as places to acquire magical powers. They also symbolise Mount Meru, the centre of the Buddhist world. The Javanese believe in ancestral spirits and their influence on human health or illness. Therefore, they hold religious rituals and feasts to calm and please these spirits. In these feasts valuable *kriya* objects serve as ritual objects as well as gifts to strengthen the soul-force of a family member at a difficult or crucial stage of life.¹¹⁰

The last Hindu-Buddhist empire in Indonesia is known as Majapahit (1294-1478),¹¹¹ whose emperors practised arts and participated in architectural design processes. Both arts and architecture were greatly supported, therefore, this era in history is known as the artistic heyday. Literature prospered, major texts in Sanskrit were translated into Javanese, and Javanese stories were written for *wayang* dramas. During the 15th and 16th centuries Arab Muslim traders brought the Islamic religion to the Archipelago, which led to a gradual conversion of the Javanese palaces.¹¹² The city of Demak on the north coast of Java was a particular centre of Islamic culture. The establishment of the Mataram Sultanate and the shift of the governmental centre from Demak to the inland of the island of Java set the basis and values for further artistic development.¹¹³

In summary, for centuries, Java has experienced many different influences from other regions and cultures. To the Javanese belief in ancestors, spirits and their animistic perspective, first Hindu-Buddhist religious elements from India were added. Then, with Arab and Indian Muslim traders, Java converted gradually into a Muslim island. After that, Chinese immigrants brought their own craft objects and religious symbols, which were received

batik textiles. For batik patterns the variations of the *garuda* have distinct names. A single wing is called *lar*, a pair of wings *mirong* and two wings with a fan-shaped tail ornament is called *sawat*.

¹⁰⁹ Fraser-Lu, *Indonesian Batik: Processes, Patterns, and Places*, 49; Roojen, *Batik Design*, 68.

¹¹⁰ Bronwen and Garrett Solyom 1979 "Notes and Observations on Indonesian Textiles" in: *Threads of Tradition*, Lowie Museum of Anthropology Dec 15, 1978 – March 15, 1979. Also see Gillow, *Traditional Indonesian Textiles / John Gillow ; Photographs by Barry Dawson*, 15, 45; Fraser-Lu, *Indonesian Batik: Processes, Patterns, and Places*, 52. My Indonesian grandmother was an animist and passed ritual habits to her daughters. I remember well my aunt fumigating the house and garden every day in the twilight hours to ward off evil spirits.

¹¹¹ Gillow, 11.

¹¹² Roojen, 18; Gillow, 11.

¹¹³ Laksmi Kusuma Wardani et al., 'Gaya Seni Hindu-Java Pada Tata Ruang Keraton Yogyakarta', *Dimensi Interior* 9, no. 2 (2011): 109.

especially on the north coast of Java. The fourth protagonists in Java's history of interference were the Europeans, with the Dutch colonisation having a major impact upon trade, and thus on batik as well.¹¹⁴ All these influences were absorbed and formed a new blend with the existing culture and habits. Unexpectedly, the Islamic influence on arts and crafts in Yogyakarta was rather marginal compared to the Hindu-Buddhist influences.¹¹⁵ This might be since the Hindu-Buddhist Majapahit Empire and the Mataram Kingdom¹¹⁶ were especially powerful in developing and institutionalising the arts and crafts at the palaces.¹¹⁷

The Sultan's Palace (*Kraton*) – Epicentre of Culture and Arts in Yogyakarta

In the mid-18th century, the region of Yogyakarta became more important, when the Mataram Sultanate fell apart into four kingdoms.¹¹⁸ Yogyakarta served as a central place for one of these kingdoms, while the other three kingdoms settled in Surakarta, Mangkunegaran and Pakualaman. To establish his kingdom at Yogyakarta, Prince Mangkubumi initiated the construction of a *Kraton* (Figure K8), a sultan's palace. The term *Kraton* or *Keraton* in Java refers to a sultan's palace in general; the word *Kraton* originating from *ka-ratu-an* or *ka-dhatu-an*, is a synonym for a sultan's palace. The *Kraton* Yogyakarta follows the architectural rules of former *Kraton* in Java which are based on a cosmological perception of Hindu tradition. In this tradition the *Kraton* is a copy of the cosmos with centrifugal power that radiates out to the environment and humans. Further, the layout of the *Kraton* Yogyakarta implies a *jagad gedhe* – a macrocosmos or the universe, and a *jagad cilik* – a microcosmos, which are humans. The Yogyakarta sultan, Prince Mangkubumi, the crucial person within this cosmological perception, received the title *Sri Sultan Hamengku Buwana I*, meaning “the one who holds the universe”¹¹⁹. This title reflected his absolute political, military, and religious power and his duty to centralise cosmic power. In addition, he was considered to have received the “light of Allah”, being the source of cosmic power that flows to the outer regions, ensuring the stability of social structures.¹²⁰ The sultan's power and authority is also reflected in Javanese literature and chronicles of the time. A Javanese poem from the 14th

¹¹⁴ van Hout 2001, *Introduction*, 8; Gillow, 10-1, 14; Bronwen and Solyom, ‘Some Notes on Textiles in the Indonesian Archipelago’, 31.

¹¹⁵ Roojen, 18; Gillow, 11; van Hout 2001, 8.

¹¹⁶ Not to be confused with the Islamic Mataram Sultanate, which emerged in the 15th century.

¹¹⁷ Roojen, *Batik Design*, 18; Gillow, *Traditional Indonesian Textiles / John Gillow; Photographs by Barry Dawson*, 11.

¹¹⁸ Laksmi Kusuma Wardani, ‘Pengaruh Pandangan Sosio-Kultural Sultan Hamengku Buwana IX terhadap Eksistensi Keraton Yogyakarta’, *Masyarakat Kebudayaan dan Politik* 25, no. 1 (January - March 2012): 56-63.

¹¹⁹ Wardani, ‘The Power of Symbol at Keraton Yogyakarta’, 1-2; Gustami, *Butir-Butir Mutiara Estetika Timur - Ide Dasar Penciptaan Seni Kriya Indonesia*, 284.

¹²⁰ Wardani, ‘The Power of Symbol at Keraton Yogyakarta’, 1-5.

century, *Nagarakertagama*, asserts that all kings are incarnations of the Hindu god Shiva. The Javanese chronicle *Pararaton* mentions the 13th century king Kertajaya from Kediri, who once appeared as the god Shiva with four hands and three eyes, hovering in the air. As an incarnation of Shiva, the sultan was meant to lead and govern the world.¹²¹

Such chronicles and the palace not only underpinned the sultan's power and status, but his behaviour also reflected his rank. He was the epitome of nobility, which meant that he had a soft nature, was extremely courteous and had an organised attitude.¹²² In Javanese culture these manners are also attributed to the gentry, called the *priyayi*, whereas peasant people are called *abangan*, having manners associated with a coarse culture from rural areas. The stratification of Javanese society originated at the time when the first towns and cities were built and people started to live in urban settings. While the *priyayi* gained the position of a cultural elite, the *abangan* stayed in rural areas working as farmers. More precisely, this cultural elite (*priyayi*) originally comprised few men who could trace their ancestry back to the semi-mythical kings of precolonial Java. The definition of this exclusive *priyayi* group became wider when the Dutch began their territorial regency in Java. They employed the *priyayi* to do their bureaucratic work, but in the long run they ran out of true aristocratic Javanese people. As a consequence, they had to resort to urban people. Thus, in the more recent past the term *priyayi* has come to refer to urban people who work for the government and do "fine" work, in contrast to the *abangan*, who do "coarse" work. An Indonesian informant once explained that the division between *priyayi* and *abangan* was a remnant of the old Hindu social system that was predominant before Dutch colonisation. The Hindu system consisted of five groups: firstly, the *Bramans*, who were priests or teachers, secondly, the *Satrijas*, soldiers or kings; the other three social groups were of low(er) class, namely the *Vaisias* (traders), the *Sudras* (peasants or craftspeople) and *Pariahs* (beggars). According to this Hindu system, the *priyayi* had descended from the *Satrijas*.¹²³

Because of these five Hindu groups the social status of craftspeople was perceived as being equal to peasants, belonging to the *abangan*, the group doing "coarse" work. However, there was a special case of some craftspeople, who did "fine" work. This referred to the daughters and wives of the sultan, who practised batik at the court as an art form. Creating batik was in fact one of the six *seni halus* or fine arts at the court.¹²⁴

¹²¹ Wardani et al., 'Gaya Seni Hindu-Java Pada Tata Ruang Keraton Yogyakarta', 111.

¹²² Wardani, 'The Power of Symbol at Keraton Yogyakarta', 2.

¹²³ Clifford Geertz, *The Religion of Java*, Contemporary Javanese Life 1 (Glencoe Ill: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1960) 227-9.

¹²⁴ Interview with Timbul Haryono, Batik Archaeology, 15th March 2022.

These *seni halus* art forms comprised a major part of indigenous Javanese culture and have survived until the present day. It is therefore important to describe the other five art forms as well. Firstly, there is the *wayang*, a shadow play with wooden or leather puppets that tells old stories largely derived from the Indian Mahabharata and Ramayana stories. These puppets are dressed in fine batik fabrics. Secondly, the *gamelan* is a percussion orchestra that accompanies the *wayang* or is played in a concert format. This orchestra consists of about a dozen instruments, but it can also extend to fifty instruments in a large court ensemble. In the orchestra the only exception to percussion instruments is the *rebab*, an instrument like a two-stringed violin, that is sometimes played within the *gamelan*. Thirdly, the *lakon*, a myth that is told orally or dramatised in the *wayang*. Fourthly, *djoged* is the Javanese court dance, also regarded as the opposite to *dangsa*, Western dancing. This court dance reflects Javanese identity and an idealised body image. It is a graceful and calm dance performed by several female dancers wearing batik *sarongs*. Fifthly, *tembangs* are written poems which are read or even sung, accompanied by the *gamelan*.¹²⁵

At the *Kraton* Yogyakarta the arts were described as being harmonious, balanced and having integrity. These characteristics were aesthetic elements of the Mataram¹²⁶ culture and were preserved and developed at the *Kraton*. Consequently, arts and crafts such as dance, clothing, craft objects and furniture of the “Mataram style” became synonymous with the “Yogyakarta style”. In contrast, the sultanate in Surakarta was not regarded as a preserver of the Mataram style, it developed in another direction which is known as “Surakarta style”.¹²⁷

Beside the six fine arts that were practised at the court, Javanese culture had the *seni kasar*, literally meaning the “coarse arts”, which were practised by the peasantry. Examples of *seni kasar* are street and popular dances, folk tales, and animal stories.¹²⁸ The subdivision of Javanese people into gentry and peasantry was further emphasised by a subdivision of the Javanese language into the *Bahasa Java halus* and the *Bahasa Java kasar*, a fine and a coarse Javanese language. Consequently, elite people spoke the fine language, whereas peasants spoke the coarse one. The fine language was more complex and difficult to learn and, while a *Bahasa Java halus*-speaker can understand *Bahasa Java kasar*, the reverse is not the case. A *Bahasa Java kasar*-speaker cannot understand a *Bahasa Java halus*-speaker as they use either partly different words or even more words to build the same sentence. After Indonesia’s

¹²⁵ Geertz, *The Religion of Java*, 261-2, 282-3; Beverly Labin, ‘Batik Traditions in the Life of the Javanese’, in *Threads of Tradition Textiles of Indonesia and Sarawak* (Berkeley: Lowie Museum of Anthropology, 1979), 41.

¹²⁶ Whenever the word Mataram stands alone, Indonesian scholars refer to the Mataram sultanate of the 15th to the 18th century, the quasi predecessor of the sultanate in Yogyakarta.

¹²⁷ Wardani et al., ‘Gaya Seni Hindu-Java Pada Tata Ruang Keraton Yogyakarta’, 109.

¹²⁸ Geertz, *The Religion of Java*, 261-2.

Independence in 1949 the *Bahasa Java* dwindled in importance because from then on the national language of *Bahasa Indonesia* was taught in public schools as the official language, in order to create a common ground for communication within the Archipelago.¹²⁹

Indonesian Independence also had an impact on the sultan's palace in Yogyakarta. Before the Japanese invasion in 1942 the *Kraton* served as the administration centre for the Dutch colonial rulers. Thus, for the Archipelago with 350 years of colonialist foreign regency, it would have been comprehensible to step into a new era of a democratic republic by leaving a sultan's palace behind as a remnant of Dutch and Javanese-aristocratic power. However, it was the ruling Sultan Hamenku Buwana IX who, with his strong personality and modern thinking, prevented the *Kraton* from falling down into cultural insignificance. He was a sultan who valued Javanese culture and tradition just as he felt part of the Yogyakarta community. During the Japanese invasion he stayed in Yogyakarta to support his people, although he was offered the opportunity to escape to Australia. He committed himself to Yogyakarta and regarded his holding on as important to guarantee security for the people and the *Kraton*. A few weeks after Indonesian Independence was declared in August 1945 the sultan stated that Yogyakarta would join the Republic of Indonesia by being conferred special political status. He created a Council of Ministers, an aptitude test for those who wanted to work at the tribunal, and an aid committee for public service. After an appropriate law was passed in 1947 Yogyakarta enjoyed autonomous rights as a "Special Region" (*daerah istimewa*) within the Republic of Indonesia, and still does in the present day.¹³⁰

Sultan Hamenku Buwana IX not only intensively engaged in politics, but also dedicated himself to economic, educational, and cultural issues. As an example, he established the Indonesian Farmers' Credit Foundation (YAKTI) to stimulate the economy. In addition, he supported the foundation of the first Indonesian university, the Gadjah Mada University (UGM), with its campus next to the palace. Furthermore, big areas of palace land were used to build schools on, which helped to transform the region of Yogyakarta into a students' city. Moreover, his positive attitude towards education served as a model for the aristocrats in such a convincing way that they started to provide their houses for use in educational training for

¹²⁹ Interview with Ibu Djandjang, *Batik Technique at ISI Yogyakarta*, 19th December 2019; Interview with Yulriawan Dafri, *Batik and Kriya in Jogja*, 22nd December 2019.

¹³⁰ It was only through Sultan Hamengku Buwana IX who as a convincing leader succeeded in obtaining a special political position (provincial autocracy) within the Indonesian Republic. This is unique in the history of Indonesia, as political self-rule could not be attained by other sultanates, such as Surakarta. The Special Region of Yogyakarta is abbreviated as DIY, *Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta*. Wardani, 'Pengaruh Pandangan Sosio-Kultural Sultan Hamengku Buwana IX terhadap Eksistensi Keraton Yogyakarta', 59, 61.

Yogyakarta society. In this regard the sultan successfully made the aristocrats renounce their previous privileges from the colonial era.¹³¹

When it came to arts and crafts the sultan was said to be an artist in practice as well as in theory. In his childhood he enjoyed an education in traditional Javanese dance which became part of his artistic life. He developed several dances to strengthen and renew the arts at the palace. Two examples of these dances were *Bedoyo Manten* and *Bekso Golek Menak*, which were both influenced by the *wayang*. The sultan's concern was not only centred around dance, but included all fine arts from the court. He was very aware of his difficult position between representing the sultan as a descendant of the Mataram Sultanate upholding Javanese court traditions and customs, and leading a completely new political agenda with modern thinking and the task of nation building. In his progressive inaugural speech in 1940 he stated that his task was not an easy one, namely, to bring together Western and Eastern souls without the latter losing its character. He confirmed that the *adat* (Indonesian custom law) would be carried on at the *Kraton*, insofar as it would not prevent progress. This statement reveals much about the sultan's stance towards the complex social and political situation in around 1940. With his democratic approach and self-perception as a representative of the people, he managed to shift the *Kraton* from a political centre to become the leading institution for preserving culture and arts, as well as sustaining their dynamic developments. As such, the *Kraton* became a significant reference and patron for culture and arts,¹³² and still contains various art styles in peaceful co-existence as a testament to acculturation over centuries.¹³³ Sultan Hamenku Buwana IX thus laid important foundations for art and culture in Yogyakarta that can still be felt today.¹³⁴

1.2 *Kriya* Infrastructures

Yogyakarta's *kriya* infrastructures are linked to three fields: firstly, the field of entrepreneurial and industrial organisation and production of *kerajinan* or handicrafts, secondly, the field of *kriya* events and locations, and thirdly, the contemporary art field comprising contemporary *kriya*. These three fields cannot be separated clearly and sometimes overlap, because *kriya*

¹³¹ Wardani, 60, 62.

¹³² Wardani, 58-61.

¹³³ Wardani et al., 'Gaya Seni Hindu-Java Pada Tata Ruang Keraton Yogyakarta', 108, 111.

¹³⁴ Wardani, 'Pengaruh Pandangan Sosio-Kultural Sultan Hamengku Buwana IX terhadap Eksistensi Keraton Yogyakarta' 56-63; SP. Gustami, L. K. Wardani, and A. Setiawan, 'Craft Arts and Tourism in Ceramic Art Village of Kasongan in Yogyakarta', *Journal of Arts and Humanities (JAH)* 3, no. 2 (February 2014) 37-49.

makers often do both industrial production on a handicrafts or design level and single artworks for exhibitions.

In this Section, I discuss entrepreneurial and industrial infrastructures and *kriya* associations with their respective events. Further, I present selected art spaces and galleries, that display and discuss art and *kriya*. Then, I evaluate the role of *Akademi Seni Rupa Indonesia* (ASRI), The Indonesian Art Academy, that was founded in the 1950s and was the forerunner of the art university *Institut Seni Indonesia* (ISI) (Figure K9) in Yogyakarta, that has become a key player for *kriya* since its existence in 1984. Some of these discussed *kriya* infrastructures presented in this Section, are not from Yogyakarta, but play an important role for *kriya* in Yogyakarta and Indonesia. These are governmental, educational, and industrial institutions located in Jakarta, Bandung and other cities. I discuss a selection of important *kriya* events and exhibitions in the next Section, and batik and ceramics events are discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, in the Section about collections, exhibitions and events specific to batik and ceramics.

Balai Besar Kerajinan dan Batik - BBKB

In 1922 the Dutch East Indies Government established a laboratory for weaving and batik in Bandung (Capital of West Java), which was called *Textile Inrichting en Batik Proefstation*. This laboratory served as a centre for experiments and for textile and batik education. Thirty years later, the centre was split up into a textile laboratory in Bandung and a batik laboratory in Yogyakarta. Until 1971, the batik laboratory in Yogyakarta developed into a centre for research on *kerajinan* (handicrafts) and batik, which executed technical research and provided courses for batik and other kinds of *kerajinan*. Since 2002, the centre is called Balai Besar Kerajinan dan Batik (BBKB), The Great Hall of Crafts and Batik. Although the word “research” is not part of their institution name anymore, one of their core activities are experimenting, improving and developing textile and craft techniques in their different laboratories. In total, BBKB has eleven laboratories, to examine and prove technical processes and to invent tools or digital applications. There is a laboratory for general *kerajinan*, another one for wood, bamboo and ratan, one for garment and patchwork, one each for batik, weaving and jewellery. Further, BBKB has one laboratory each for calibration, testing and design. One laboratory is called SANT *serat alam non tekstil*, non-textile natural fibres.¹³⁵ The word *balai* means hall and gives reference to the educational aspect of BBKB. In former days, before any university-like art institute existed, craftspeople either learned their craft from their parents,

¹³⁵ Juwarso, ‘Sejarah BBKB’, Kementerian Perindustrian Republik Indonesia, 21 February 2023, https://bbkb.kemenperin.go.id/post/read/sejarah_bbkb_0 (last visit 11th June 2023).

neighbours and friends, or they went to a *balai*, to learn a craft. Several lecturers from ASRI (The Indonesian Visual Art Academy) used to teach at the *balai batik* (the forerunner of BBKB), before they started working at ASRI. Today, BBKB's training programmes are addressed to adults (public adult education) in batik, weaving, jewellery, electroplating and wood carving, and are complemented with short *kerajinan* training with different materials like coconut shells, seashells, handmade paper, and dried flowers. Further, apprenticeship places are provided for adolescents.¹³⁶

BBKB is a governmental institution, that needs to fulfil research, development, cooperation, standardisation, examination, certification, and calibration for batik and *kerajinan* industries in Indonesia. It has a great influence on batik in Yogyakarta and Indonesia, and regulates and monitors the batik mark “batik INDONESIA”, a mark that was established to label and protect handmade Indonesian *batik tulis*, *batik cap* and *batik kombinasi*.¹³⁷ Through this mark, Indonesian batik can be distinguished from cheap batik-pattern-printed textiles, yet imitations that have become more elaborate and for an ordinary consumer hard to tell apart from handmade batik. BBKB is in charge of the Indonesian National Standard (SNI), that applies for goods, systems, services and processes. Not surprising batik, as a form of national and cultural heritage has several separate SNI-numbers, for example for the definition and classification of batik patterns, for batik processes, for the *canting tulis* and the *canting cap* technique,¹³⁸ and for the fabric quality used for batik. BBKB's mission is to stay an application-oriented research and development centre, based on local resources. Further, BBKB wants to become a leading provider of technical services for *kerajinan* and batik. The institution works close together with the industry and is interested in recent technical developments, to foster them. For example, the batik Yogyakarta entrepreneur Nurohmad (with his company Batik Dongaji), invented a *canting cap* (batik stamp), made from waste duplex paper. BBKB was interested in his material exploration and creation of a new tool and suggested making it public. Nurohmad agreed, so that he and BBKB's scientific researcher Edi Eskak wrote a publication together on this *canting cap* invention.¹³⁹ I regard BBKB as an important player for the development and protection of batik in the industry, because it provides information for non-academic batik makers and for academics. With the BBKB's scientific and technical approach towards batik, very useful knowledge and laboratory data

¹³⁶ Juwarso, 'Sejarah BBKB'.

¹³⁷ *Batik tulis*, *batik cap* and *batik kombinasi* are three forms of original batik. More information will be provided in the chapter on batik.

¹³⁸ *Canting tulis* and *canting cap* are two tools, that are used for batik making. More information will be provided in Chapter 2.

¹³⁹ Nurohmad Nurohmad and Edi Eskak, 'Limbah Kertas Duplex Untuk Bahan Canting Cap Batik', *Dinamika Kerajinan Dan Batik: Majalah Ilmiah* 36, no. 2 (31st December 2019): 125-34.

about batik techniques can be passed to batik makers, while scientific batik articles contribute to an academic discourse on batik.

Balai Besar Keramik in Bandung (BBK)

Bandung's governmental institution for ceramics is called Balai Besar Keramik (BBK) and developed from the *Het Keramische Laboratorium*, which was founded by the Dutch colonial government, in 1922. After Indonesia's Independence in 1945, the laboratory was taken over by the republic's government and named *Balai Penyelidikan Keramik*, Ceramic Research Centre. Since 2002, it is called Balai Besar Keramik (BBK) and since 2006 it is an officially technical implementing unit in the Ministry of Industry. It has the task of doing research, cooperation, development, standardisation, testing, calibration, certification, and competency development activities for the ceramic industry in accordance with the technical regulations set by the Head of Industrial Research and Development Agency of Indonesia. Its vision is to become an independent, professional institution, that provides technical services for ceramic industries and outstanding ceramics and nano material technology companies. BBK's goal is to offer industrial technical trainings and conduct research on ceramic technology and nano materials in the future. It organises seminars together with the Ministry of Industry, the Agency for Standardisation and the Industrial Service Policy.¹⁴⁰ In 2021 BBK held their *Seminar Nasional Keramik XX* (10th National Ceramics Seminar), to disseminate the latest results of research and development. The topic their seminar was "Down streaming of Indonesian Non-Metal Minerals and Circular Economy in Supporting the Application of Green Industries".¹⁴¹

BBK provides educational services and cooperation with industrial and governmental clients throughout the country, but main activities are based in Java, then in Sumatra and Kalimantan and only very little in Sulawesi and Papua. However, the institution has not yet become independent, which provides technical services for the ceramic industry, as the BBKB does for the batik industry. Ceramists in Indonesia would be pleased to get BBK's consulting and advice for clay properties and technical issues. So far, BBK serves only for academics and not for ceramists, who work in industries.¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ 'Sejarah', Balai Besar Keramik | Kementerian Perindustrian Republik Indonesia, 2021, <http://website.bbk.go.id/index.php/page/index/1/sejarah> (last visit 9th December 2021).

¹⁴¹ Direct citation and translated by the author: Balai Besar Keramik B, *Seminar Nasional Keramik XX 2021*, 2021, <http://www.bbk.go.id/index.php/berita/view/437/SemnasKeramikXX> (last visit 9th December 2021).

¹⁴² Interview with Dian Hardiansyah, About BBK, 17th June 2023.

Association of Exporters and Producers of Indonesian Handicrafts (ASEPHI)

ASEPHI was founded in 1975 to advocate the interests and aspirations of handicrafts entrepreneurs in becoming (more) professional and independent.¹⁴³ The association serves as an umbrella organisation for international and national handicrafts players like producers, exporters, and traders. Currently, ASEPHI has 18 regional management boards on provincial levels and a couple of branch managers in several cities. Additionally, it is member of the Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, member of ASEAN (inter-governmental international organisation in Southeast Asia), and member of the World Craft Council Asia Pacific Region WCC-APR.¹⁴⁴

In the late 1990s, ASEPHI's members felt that, Indonesia had enormous potential in the handicrafts sector, which needed to become more visible and further developed. Therefore, they decided to organise a Jakarta International Handicrafts Trade Fair (INACRAFT) in 1999. This fair was to support and promote Indonesia's handicrafts and to increase the welfare of their producers. Starting with a small event of about 100 small and medium enterprises (SMEs), henceforth many efforts were done, to increase the number of participants. Already in the second year, more than 300 SMEs participated in the fair.¹⁴⁵ When I visited the fair in 2011, it was a large fair with a great variety of *kerajinan* (handicrafts) products like batik, jewellery, metalwork, weaving, fashionable clothing and shoes, accessories made of textiles and wood, small house decorations of various materials, leatherware, beads, and many more. The products' presentations varied from very simple to professional, but all products were of good quality.

INACRAFT is an annually held fair at the convention centre in Jakarta, that has become a major event reserved for domestic handicrafts producers only. During five days, producers showcase their craft goods at their booths. They network and meet national and international traders, who open up distribution channels, which is an important step to increase Indonesia's handicrafts export values.¹⁴⁶

In 2006, ASEPHI launched an INACRAFT Award, to recognise outstanding handicrafts products presented at the fair. To win this award, a high level of craftsmanship is necessary, and the product should be made with traditional skills, patterns, and topics in an innovative way. In fact, these criteria are an adaption of UNESCO's programme to support handicrafts

¹⁴³ 'Sejarah ASEPHI | Menggagas Pameran INACRAFT 2020', INACRAFT, 2020, <https://inacraft.co.id/sejarah-asephi-menggagas-pameran-inacraft/> (last visit 9th December 2021).

¹⁴⁴ The Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, ASEAN and WCC-APR foster the sale of craft products on the national and international level. 'Sambutan Ketua Umum ASEPHI 2014', ASEPHI, 2014, <https://asephi.com/sambutan-ketua-umum-asosiasi-eksportir-produsen-handicraft-indonesia-asephi/> (last visit 9th December 2021).

¹⁴⁵ 'Sejarah ASEPHI | Menggagas Pameran INACRAFT 2020'.

¹⁴⁶ 'Sejarah ASEPHI | Menggagas Pameran INACRAFT 2020'.

producers and keep local identity.¹⁴⁷ Thus, the INACRAFT Award team aims for product innovations, which show Indonesian culture and “tradition as local wisdom”, that should help to keep handicrafts products relevant, valuable, and marketable amidst modernity and lifestyle. The INACRAFT Award further assures, that the product is of high quality, culturally authentic and has been manufactured with respect to the environment. This requires carefully-chosen materials and a manufacturing process, which is done in line with material properties. Products can be awarded within the following eight categories: ceramics, textiles, wood, stone, metal, natural fibre, other materials, and best of best. In 2019, the best of best product was a woven *selendang* textile, in 2018 it was a tea pot and mug product line. In 2020, around 300 handicrafts maker competed for the award, and a ten-member jury committee awarded one product in each category.¹⁴⁸

In 2017, the INACRAFT Award committee decided to establish a special programme for young artisans, including another award, the ASEPHI Emerging Artisan Award. Criteria for this award were much tighter, than for the INACRAFT Award. It addressed newcomers and young talented artisans, who follow a dynamic product design development approach, which means they ideally combine old traditional techniques and skills with new craft skills. They should use varied raw materials, technological innovations, or digital applications, and they should manage to produce in large scale. At the same time, their useful and decorative objects should be made by hand, only by using simple tools. All kinds of materials, like textiles, natural fibres, mouldable or rigid materials, cardboard, and paper were allowed. In addition, the production should reduce the impact on the environment, should have a cooperative character in terms of adapting traditional work to current demands, and the design should be sustainable. Both the INACRAFT Award and the ASEPHI Emerging Artisan Award only addresses Indonesian artisans. The latter award was successfully presented for the first time in 2019.¹⁴⁹

Indonesian Furniture Industry & Handicrafts Association ASMINDO

ASMINDO, the Indonesian Furniture Industry & Handicrafts Association houses furniture and handicrafts companies, that are working with raw materials, semi-finished products or

¹⁴⁷ ‘About the Award’, INACRAFT, 2021, <https://2020.inacraftaward.com/about/tentang-inacraft> (last visit 9th December 2021).

¹⁴⁸ ‘Objectives’, INACRAFT, 2021, <https://2020.inacraftaward.com/about/tujuan> (last visit 9th December 2021); ‘Criteria & Pre-Conditions’, INACRAFT, 2021, <https://2020.inacraftaward.com/about/syarat-kriteria> (last visit 9th December 2021).

¹⁴⁹ ‘Emerging Artisan’, ASEPHI, 2021, <https://emerging.inacraftaward.com/> (last visit 9th December 2021).

finished products. The association cooperates with the Indonesian Ministry of Trade, the Indonesian Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, and the Ministry of Environment & Forestry. Further, it works together with WWF Indonesia and other certification labelling institutions, like the Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission and the Rainforest Alliance. ASMINDO's vision is to develop handicrafts and furniture industries in Indonesia as part of the creative industries, in an environmentally friendly way, based on local sources of raw materials. ASMINDO wants to create a prosperous business climate and elevate Indonesia's competitiveness in international furniture and handicrafts markets. It is its mission, to manage and represent the businessmen's interests.¹⁵⁰ ASMINDO annually holds an international fair called JIFFINA, the Jogja International Furniture & Craft Fair. In 2021, the sixth edition of the fair was held in the Jogja Expo Centre under the title *Innovation Lifestyle for Sustainable Fores*, and presented furniture and decorative crafts from 350 suppliers of Java and Bali. It is a very trade and business-oriented fair, where suppliers mostly do not sell on site, because of their products' size. In comparison, products at INACRAFT are smaller, based on trends, more creative and can be bought at the fair directly and carried by hand. JIFFINA fair furniture needs to be created in a way to be shipped to Europe and America. Thus, practical transportation questions influence artistic processes. In 2021, JIFFINA suppliers consisted of producers, exporters, and small and medium enterprise entrepreneurs, who exhibited furniture and also supplied interior decoration materials, home furnishing decorative items, home accessories, pottery and earthenware, glass art, leather craft, art and craft, and antiques reproductions.¹⁵¹ In the same year the organisers registered around 6000 buyers at the fair, most of them came from the USA, UK, Belgium, France, and the Netherlands.¹⁵² JIFFINA is part of an Asian International Furniture Exhibition Circle, that starts each year in the beginning of march with two exhibitions in Kuala Lumpur, followed by an exhibition in Ho Chi Min, another one in Bangkok, and the IFEX fair in Jakarta, which is shortly held before JIFFINA. The last fair is held by end of march in Guangzhou.¹⁵³

Even though ASMINDO is a business association, it is important for Indonesian *kriya*, because, as member of the ASEAN Furniture industry Council AFIC, it has a political impact and the former governing president of Indonesia (2014-2024), Joko Widodo used to be the

¹⁵⁰ 'About Us', ASMINDO, 2021, <https://asmindo.or.id/web/about-us/> (last visit 14th December 2021).

¹⁵¹ 'JIFFINA - Jogja International Furniture & Craft Fair Indonesia 2023', CBS trade shows guide, 2005-2023, <https://www.cantonfair.net/event/3823-jiffina-jogja-international-furniture-craft-fair-indonesia> (last visit 11th June 2023).

¹⁵² 'Nature Is Back for Eco Lifestyle', PDF 1-12, Jogja International Furniture and Craft Fair Indonesia 2021, 2021, [https://backpanel.kemlu.go.id/Shared%20Documents/flyer%20jiffina%202021%20\(soft%20copy\).pdf](https://backpanel.kemlu.go.id/Shared%20Documents/flyer%20jiffina%202021%20(soft%20copy).pdf) (last visit 11th June 2023).

¹⁵³ 'JIFFINA - Jogja International Furniture & Craft Fair Indonesia 2023'; Interview with Satya Brahmantya (former Head of Market Development at ASMINDO), *Infrastructures & The Strength of Kriya*, 10th September 2021.

chairman of ASMINDO Surakarta. Overall, ASMINDO plays an important role for *kriya*'s production and trade within the furniture and housing field and it is a main supplier and trade network of *kriya* materials.¹⁵⁴

DEKRANAS - The Governmental Handicrafts Council

In the beginning of the 1980s, the Indonesian government established *Dewan Kerajinan Nasional DEKRANAS* (the National Handicrafts Council). DEKRANAS organises and develops handicrafts (*kerajinan*) products, to improve economic wealth of artisans and small and medium enterprises of the creative industries. DEKRANAS emphasises the historical dimension in its work by saying that, many traditional agrarian communities in rural areas have developed and transformed to a modern industry-based community, in which handicrafts has become an economic product and secures daily income.¹⁵⁵ The council is also a national participatory forum, which assists and fosters handicrafts development by supporting creative works in culture, tourism, trade, industry, business and banking.¹⁵⁶ DEKRANAS' smaller community-based unit, called DEKRANASDA (*Dewan Kerajinan Nasional Daerah*), serves to support local *kriya* and *kerajinan* efforts. It also serves as communication representative of the artisans (*kriyawan-kriyawan*) in selected region. From 9th to 12th June 2022, DEKRANASDA Yogyakarta held a *kriya* exhibition at the Jogja City Mall, to showcase various handicrafts products from different regions in Java. The respective DEKRANASDA of Sidoarjo (East Java), Sleman, Bantul, Gunung Kidul, Jambi and other regions were requested to select some artisans, to show their products at this exhibition.¹⁵⁷ DEKRANASDA Yogyakarta is concerned with marketability of *kriya* products and therefore organised this exhibition in a city mall to make handicrafts products more visible and raise awareness and appreciation for domestic products in Indonesia.¹⁵⁸ Even though marketing

¹⁵⁴ Interview Satya Brahmantya, *Infrastructures & The Strength of Kriya*, 10th September 2021.

¹⁵⁵ According to DEKRANAS the export value of Indonesian handicrafts has reached about 500 million US dollars in 2021. 'Sejarah Dekranas', Dekranas, 2021, <https://dekranas.id/sejarah-dekranas/> (last visit 14th December 2021).

¹⁵⁶ 'Sejarah Dekranas'.

¹⁵⁷ The exhibition was also accompanied with small handicrafts workshops. The whole event was part of the city mall's programme "Blooming June". Ary B Prass, 'Jogja City Mall Berikan Pengalaman Belanja Terbaik Bagi Pengunjung Dalam "Blooming June"', *krjogja.com*, 24th June 2022, <https://www.krjogja.com/angkringang/read/229903/jogja-city-mall-berikan-pengalaman-belanja-terbaik-bagi-pengunjung-dalam-blooming-june>; 'JCM Semarakkan Bulan Juni 2022 Lewat Berbagai Event', *kumparan*, 24th June 2022, <https://kumparan.com/tugujogja/jcm-semarakkan-bulan-juni-2022-lewat-berbagai-event-1yKovhXSWaW>; 'Dekranasda Sidoarjo Ikut Pameran Kriya Indonesia Di Yogyakarta, Optimistis Bangkitkan UMKM Kota Delta', *SURYAKABAR.com* (blog), 10th June 2022, <https://suryakabar.com/2022/06/10/dekranasda-sidoarjo-ikut-pameran-kriya-indonesia-di-yogyakarta-optimistis-bangkitkan-umkm-kota-delta/> (all three websites last visit 31st December 2022).

¹⁵⁸ 'Dekranasda Sidoarjo Ikut Serta Pameran Kriya, Optimistis Bangkitkan UMKM Daerah', *Beritajatim.com*, 10th June 2022, <https://beritajatim.com/ekbis/dekranasda-sidoarjo-ikut-serta-pameran-kriya-optimistis-bangkitkan-umkm-daerah/> (last visit 31st December 2022).

aspects has always been important to DEKRANAS, exhibition efforts from craftspeople have been encouraged, because the council also supports *kriya* as a form of cultural treasure.

ASKRINA and PAKRIYO - Two *Kriya* Associations

ASKRINA and PAKRIYO are two *kriya* associations founded by *kriya* lecturers and craftsmen. they have quite different histories and reasons for their creation, and they cover different time frames. ASKRINA was officially founded four years ago and stands for *Asosiasi Kriyawan Republik Indonesia* (the Craftspeople Association of the Indonesian Republic). Unofficially, ASKRINA activities had begun in 2015 with exhibitions, for example, in the hotel Neo in Yogyakarta. ASKRINA mainly organises *kriya* exhibitions with governmental funds. In 2018, when the second biennale UNDAGI #2 was held at Taman Budaya Yogyakarta, the association ASKRINA was founded and inaugurated through that event.¹⁵⁹ It is assumed that, ASKRINA was founded because, governmental funds can only be given to associations, but not to single artists or a loose bunch of *kriya* artists. ASKRINA's mission is to develop *kriya* in the Archipelago and to support the wellbeing of its members. Even though this mission is thought for the whole country, it has effectively had most impact for *kriya* makers in Java, Bali and Sumatra.¹⁶⁰

PAKRIYO has a quite different history in terms of funding. First, lecturers and *kriya* makers established the association, and much later, they were looking for funding. PAKRIYO stands for *Paguyuban Kriyawan Yogyakarta* (Community of Craftspeople Yogyakarta) and was founded in the beginning of the 1990s, by ISI Yogyakarta's senior lecturers, who were known for being *maestros* in their craft fields. These were Dr. SP Gustami, Dr. Sunarno and Mr. Soehadji and others. The probably most considerable *kriya* exhibition was organised by PAKRIYO in June 1995, at the Galeri Nasional Jakarta (Jakarta National Gallery). The organisers displayed over 200 artworks and called the exhibition "contemporary *kriya* exhibition", that sparked the interest of many *kriya* enthusiasts, art lovers, and prospective buyers. Satya Brahmantya was one of the participants of this exhibition and he remembers that, more than 80% of the artworks were sold. It was a very successful event, where many

¹⁵⁹ ASKRINA was initiated by Dr Timbul Raharjo M. Hum., together with other *kriya* people and lecturers such as Agus Sriyono S. Sn., who is the chairman of ASKRINA. Interview with Nurohmad (executive board of ASKRINA), *About ASKRINA*, 29th July 2021; interview with Satya Brahmantya (general secretary of ASKRINA), *Infrastructures & The Strength of Kriya*, 10th September 2021; 'Titik Lanjut Kebangkitan Sains Dan Seni', Radar Jogja, 2018, <https://radarjogja.jawapos.com/breaking-news/2018/05/21/titik-lanjut-kebangkitan-sains-dan-seni/> (last visit 14th December 2021).

¹⁶⁰ Interview with Satya Brahmantya, *Infrastructures & The Strength of Kriya*, 10th September 2021.

artworks were sold at high prices.¹⁶¹ This was remarkable, because most participants were ISI Yogyakarta *kriya* students. About a year later, PAKRIYO organised another exhibition at Purna Budaya in Yogyakarta. This exhibition was smaller than the one a year before, because the venue was smaller. However, the exhibition on two floors was a major event, and took place in one of the biggest venues Yogyakarta could offer at that time. In the years after its launching, PAKRIYO was a social *kriya* community, and functioned as a group, where young *kriya* makers and *kriya* students could meet seniors and masters. This group has never broken up, but it became inactive during the years, may be also due to the retirements of senior lecturers.¹⁶²

The BNI Bank

The bank BNI supports creative industries like batik communities and enterprises, with its *Kampoeng*¹⁶³ BNI programme, that promotes economic potentials of creative communities in rural areas through low-interest loans and development assistance. By supporting them, BNI wants to contribute to the national economy's growth. The bank also sponsors programmes, which provide coaching, information for capacity building and other services for creative communities. The *Kampoeng BNI* programme is based on the principle of community development, where potential products are developed, based on communities' local knowledge. Since 2007, 28 *Kampoeng BNI* programmes have been launched, including four programmes for batik, called *Kampoeng BNI Batik*. These four batik programmes were run in Wiradesa in Pekalongan, in Lasem (north-east of Central Java), in Sasirangan Banjarmasin (South Kalimantan) and in Imogiri, near Yogyakarta. The *Kampoeng BNI* programme is promising in that it does not provide a standardised aid and development package but tries to address local characteristics of each creative community to improve their products' marketability. The BNI bank supports batik and other crafts in various regions of Indonesia and ensures their craft products' visibility by organising exhibitions. For example, in 2014, the *Kampoeng BNI Nusantara* Exhibition was held for the second time, accompanied by a talk

¹⁶¹ For example, Satya Brahmantya's artwork was sold for 4,500,000 rupees (approximately 270 euros). Today, 4,500,000 rupees are worth about 15 million rupees or more. As a comparison, in Yogyakarta in the 1990s, a street food meal cost 2,000 rupees (0.12 euros), (exchange rate in 2021).

¹⁶² Interview with Satya Brahmantya (former member of PAKRIYO), *Infrastructures & The Strength of Kriya*, 10th September 2021.

¹⁶³ *Kampoeng* means village. In Indonesia, many craft products are made in village communities. The current spelling for *kampoeng* is "kampung". The old spelling with "oe" is a remnant of Dutch influence and language.

show, a seminar, a fashion show and an award ceremony. The four-day event was attended by 115 funded partners from all over Indonesia.¹⁶⁴

Other banks, like the United Overseas Bank (UOB), are also committed to art. Unlike the BNI bank, the UOB does not support craft-based industries, but right away (*kriya*) artists. The UOB organises an annual paintings exhibition with awards and prize money. These exhibitions provide important outlets for Indonesian artists.¹⁶⁵

In addition, there are some foreign foundations, that organise exhibitions in cooperation with local curators and artists.

Art Studios and Art Spaces

Yogyakarta's numerous art studios and art spaces focus on fine art, while a small number of them are *kriya*-based or without limitation to either fine art or *kriya*. It would go beyond the scope of this thesis, to list them all here, but I selected a few examples to describe their different concepts.

Art studios often function as open studios, where artists offer classes or courses for the public. One example is Sidik Purnomo's Buntari Studio (Figure K10) in Yogyakarta. The young ceramist and ISI Yogyakarta graduate offers ceramic workshops for beginners, that are well attended. Good documentation and an appealing and professional Instagram profile are Sidik Purnomo's means of promotion. He mainly produces tableware, but every now and then, he creates artworks and takes part in *kriya* exhibitions.¹⁶⁶

Another example of an open studio is Endang Lestari's Teapot Studio. Around 2000, when Endang graduated with a Bachelor's degree in ceramics from ISI Yogyakarta, she opened her own studio, called Teapot Studio, making tableware like cups, plates and items for SPA hotels. At that time, only a few ceramics studios existed in Yogyakarta, so many ISI Yogyakarta students came to Endang's studio to fulfil their mandatory work experience outside the campus. After working for more than ten years as ceramist with her own business, Endang Lestari felt the need to read books again and acquire further theoretical knowledge. Thus, she studied and completed a fine art Master's degree at ISI Yogyakarta in 2010. Four years later, Endang and her husband Sujud Dartanto founded their ArsKala Principle

¹⁶⁴ 'Kampung BNI Nusantara: Perkuat Industri Kreatif dengan 4 Kampoeng BNI Baru', BNI, <https://www.bni.co.id/id-id/beranda/kabar-bni/berita/articleid/2678/kampung-bni-nusantara-perkuat-industri-kreatif-dengan-4-kampoeng-bni-baru> (last visit 11th February 2023); 'Kampoeng Batik BNI – Lasem – Matalensaku', *Matalensaku* (blog), 2023, <https://matalensaku.com/2019/08/28/kampoeng-batik-lasem/> (last visit 11th February 2023).

¹⁶⁵ The UOB and ceramic funding programmes will be described in more detail in Chapter 3.

¹⁶⁶ Interview with Sidik Purnomo, *Ceramic Categories and Styles*, 1st of June 2021.

Studio¹⁶⁷, which is a studio for ceramics, art and research, comprising a library. As Endang and Sujud are both *kriya* artists, they have a special research interest in *kriya*'s philosophical values, their ancestors' culture and cultural contexts of today's *kriya* forms. In their ArsKala Principle Studio (Figure K11), they regularly provide space for artist residencies for the Yogyakarta Open Studios event. Besides that, Sujud and Endang have initiated various projects and collaborations, which has become characteristic for ArsKala Principle Studio.¹⁶⁸ Yogyakarta's art spaces are often founded by private artists. These artist-based venues are literally a room, where the owner's artworks are displayed. Even though, these art spaces are open to the public, they might lack a well-established vision and management to promote the space as an exhibition venue for other artists and public art events.

Pendhapa Art Space (Figure K12) is managed differently though. It is Dunadi's private house but has become a functioning public space for different arts, with regular events and exhibitions. The venue has several rooms and only one is reserved for displaying Dunadi's sculptures. The other rooms can be booked for events and exhibitions. Dunadi's son Ganes, who studied economics and art management, runs successfully the art space.¹⁶⁹ The name Pendhapa derives from the Javanese word *pendopo*, which describes a pavilion of a Javanese traditional house complex. The pavilion is located at the front of the house and serves as a room to receive guests for social gatherings, or ritual performances. The pavilion has a *joglo*¹⁷⁰ roof and is only part of wealthy Javanese people's house complexes.¹⁷¹ Until 2012, Dunadi's pavilion was used for public purposes, like gatherings and feast, and also as an indoor badminton court. Then, the family decided to transform the pavilion into a space for art activities like visual arts, performing arts, dance and traditional Javanese events like *ketoprak* performances, which are cultural dramas. In the beginning, many of Ganes' dance performance friends used the room for practice and performed their shows there. In 2015, Ganes started a programme, that promoted Pendhapa Art Space to the public. Many art and dance events and workshops were held to introduce Pendhapa Art Space to cultural agents and the public.¹⁷² It worked out well, so that Pendhapa Art Space became a popular venue for

¹⁶⁷ The name ArsKala is a composition of the two words *ars* and *kala*. *Ars* means art in Greek and *kala* means time in Javanese language.

¹⁶⁸ Interview with Endang Lestari, *Infrastructures of Kriya Art and Handicraft*, 27th May 2021.

¹⁶⁹ Interview with Ganes, *Pendhapa Art Space*, 22nd January 2022.

¹⁷⁰ A *joglo* roof is a traditional Javanese roof with columns, that become higher to the middle of the roof. The roof's complex shape reflects the owner's social status, which are usually aristocrats.

¹⁷¹ In some dense urban areas, stone walls are erected around the pavilion.

'Arsitektur Tradisional Omah Adat', ARSITAG 2022, <https://www.arsitag.com/article/arsitektur-tradisional-omah-adat-jawa#:~:text=Rumah%20tradisional%20orang%20Jawa%20yang,omah%2C%20pendapa%2C%20dan%20peringgitan.&text=Pendopo.,terletak%20di%20bagian%20depan%20kompleks.&text=Pendopo%20menggunakan%20atap%20joglo%20dan%20hanya%20terdapat%20di%20kompleks%20rumah%20orang%20kaya> (last visit 11th February 2022)

¹⁷² Interview with Ganes, *Pendhapa Art Space*, 22nd January 2022.

kriya, art and dance events with a professional management, that offers different packages, depending on the client. Furthermore, Pendhapa Art Space provides guest rooms and workshops for tourists.¹⁷³ I regard Pendhapa Art Space as a good example of a well-managed art space, which has successfully become one of Yogyakarta's key venues for art and *kriya*.

The 2007 launched Sangkring Art Space is big enough, to provide collaboration, residencies and small exhibitions. Artist Putu Sutawijaya from Bantul, Yogyakarta established this art space as an alternative venue with an open-minded and free character for alternative art practices, open for old and young people to meet, and where marginal groups are welcomed and supported. Sangkring Art Space's core mission is to respect differences, to be solidary in the arts, no matter what cultural and ideological origins an artist might have. The venue is an experimental space, where all forms of art expression are valued equally. Putu Sutawijaya asserts that, Indonesia needs more social and solidarity art spaces. Sangkring Art Space has become an important player in the exhibition landscape and supports artists with its Sangkring Art Project. In 2021, glass artist Ivan Bestari held his solo exhibition there.¹⁷⁴

Galleries and Hotels

In the last 5 to 10 years, several hotels in Yogyakarta have realised, that art and culture is the main draw for tourism, so they started to organise exhibitions in their premises. Conversely, there were private galleries, that started to offer accommodation for tourists, like the Lorong gallery. It provides a small homestay with six rooms, a *warung*, (a place to eat) and a small handicrafts boutique. The gallery's financing is probably better secured through their homestay, than through the sale of artworks. It sells two-dimensional and three-dimensional works by Ninditiyo Adipurnomo, Mella Jarsmaa and around 20 other Indonesian artists.¹⁷⁵ Exhibitions are held four times a year. The Lorong gallery's mission is to discuss critical issues around art and culture. It emphasises that, its aim is "to become a multilayer space, which facilitates artists and the creative world of different disciplines and generations and

¹⁷³ 'CV. Satiaji Mandiri', Studio Satiaji, 2016, http://www.satiajisculpture.com/Studio_Satiaji/Satiaji.html (last visit 8th February 2022); interview with Ganes, *Pendhapa Art Space*, 22nd January 2022.

¹⁷⁴ Ivan Bestari's solo exhibition catalogue can be visited online: <https://sangkringart.com/author/ong>, '[Exhibition] "Belantara Kaca", Ivan Bestari Minar Pradipta', Sangkring Art Space, 1 November 2021, <https://sangkringart.com/exhibition-belantara-kaca-ivan-bestari-minar-pradipta/> (last visit 15th June 2023).

¹⁷⁵ Ninditiyo and Mella are an Indonesia Dutch couple, who founded Cemeti – Institute for Art and Society. Cemeti was the first outlet for Indonesia's alternative art in the 1990s. Alternative art was the art, that was of other media than painting, sculpture and print. It was also the art, that was suppressed by the government, because it was too political, provocative or subversive. Ingham, *Powerlines*, 127-52.

seeks to bridge or to connect various forms of artistic and creative works.”¹⁷⁶ Even though the gallery promotes artists, who are mostly trained in fine arts, it also includes *kriya*, because *kriya* has not been discussed enough in Indonesian art. For the Lorong gallery, *kriya* is not just about materiality, but about art practices, that provide a basis for a broad discourse on art and culture. Therefore, craftsman talks are organised five times a year.¹⁷⁷

Most galleries do not specialise in exhibiting *kriya* artworks, because their promotion and selling is difficult. Fine art artworks are sold in galleries and are part of an existing art market, while only few *kriya* artists are famous and can successfully sell their artworks in galleries. The Omah Budoyo gallery¹⁷⁸ in Yogyakarta specialises exclusively in *kriya* objects and was established by the Australian Warwick Purser, in 2021. Purser is a *kriya* enthusiast and has been involved with Indonesian *kriya* objects, especially *kriya* products for more than 25 years. Despite his focus on exporting *kriya* products, Purser has always been fascinated by the craftsmanship and aesthetics of *kriya* objects. His published book (*Made in Indonesia*, 2005), expresses his admiration for *kriya* products, made from wood, ratan, stone, clay, ceramics, textiles, leather, metal and bamboo. He promoted various *kriya* manufacturers and supports *kriya* industries through his export channels. Purser’s gallery exhibits *kriya* objects, that are not sold as a product but as artworks. Like the Lorong gallery, the Omah Budoyo gallery is cross-funded. The gallery has a restaurant and a boutique, where souvenirs and *kriya* products can be purchased.

Artists, who sell their works at Omah Budoyo, receive 50 % of the proceeds and 50 % goes to the gallery’s owner. This is a common deal for Yogyakarta’s galleries. With the income, galleries finance their maintenance costs, organise exhibitions’ opening ceremonies, pay to produce exhibition catalogues and take care of the advertisements. In the past, selling artworks through galleries used to be more lucrative for artists, because they received 60% of the proceeds of the sale and the galleries hired a photographer to document the exhibition and artworks for the catalogue. Today, artists have to provide the photographic material of their artworks. In most small galleries, curators are not employed, but the artist or gallery owner takes over the curatorial work. Various galleries collaborate for small projects to raise their popularity and the profile of both places.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁶ ‘Galeri Lorong’, Galeri Loring, 2018, <https://galerilorong.com/index.php/eng/post/detail/kriya-di-dalam-seni-rupa-kontemporer> (last visit 23rd December 2022).

¹⁷⁷ ‘Galeri Lorong’.

¹⁷⁸ For images, I suggest visiting their Instagram profile: <https://www.instagram.com/omahbudoyojogja/?hl=de> (last visit 4th April 2023).

¹⁷⁹ For example, ceramic artist Endang Lestari exhibited her artworks in the gallery for 2 months in 2023 to raise awareness of the Omah Budoyo Gallery. As a well-known artist, she served as an advertiser for the gallery and got 70% on the sale of her artworks. Interview with Endang Lestari, *Religion & The Omah Budoyo Gallery*, 19th January 2023.

Larger hotels use their premises for exhibitions or transformed one of their free spaces into an art space or a gallery with curated exhibitions. Paintings and sculptures, but also *kriya* objects –to represent Javanese cultural identity– are displayed. For many hotel managers, it is more promising to display *kriya* artworks than contemporary artworks to their domestic and international guests. One of these hotels is the hotel Phoenix in the city centre of Yogyakarta, that is part of a hotel label called MGallery Collection. This label was given by the Accor hotel group, which acquired and renovated the hotel Phoenix in 2009. With this label the Accor hotel group distinguishes hotels, that are unique and characterful, because of one or several of the four properties which are history, location, design and vision. Built around 1918 by the wealthy Chinese spice trader Kwik Djoen Eng¹⁸⁰, the Hotel Phoenix building initially served as a prestigious manor. The architecture reminds of European Art Deco Style, blended with Javanese and Chinese aesthetics. After Kwik Djoen Eng became bankrupt in 1930, the building was sold to a private person, who converted it into a hotel boutique. Since then, it has always served as a hotel and in 1996 the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture nominated it as a national historic landmark. In recent years, exhibitions are held regularly as a commitment to Yogyakarta's arts and *kriya*. For example, in 2021, on the International Women's Day, the exhibition *The Life of Spices* was held and featured seven Yogyakarta women artists, with their diverse artworks.¹⁸¹ Paintings, drawings, three-dimensional *kriya*-based installations and images were on display. Ceramic artist Dona Prawita Arisuta, exhibited her ceramics integrated into painted images, Rika Winata a batik installation and Agustina Tri Wahyuningsih fabric doll heads painted with acrylic and framed like images. Even though the hotel Phoenix fosters art and *kriya*, it seems to lack a larger vision as a co-creator in the contemporary *kriya* and art landscape in Yogyakarta, as this has been achieved by other hotels successfully. Although the aforementioned-exhibition was well-documented in the form of a carefully designed exhibition catalogue, an established curatorial practice is not yet apparent, nor is any information provided on their website about upcoming or previous exhibitions.¹⁸²

Other hotels, like the Greenhost Boutique Hotel, that regularly organises *kriya* and art exhibitions in their Green Art Space, do not provide online exhibition catalogues of their past

¹⁸⁰ 'Historic Hotel in Yogyakarta - The Phoenix Hotel Yogyakarta - MGallery by Sofitel', Historic Hotels Worldwide, 2022, <https://www.historichotels.org/hotels-resorts/the-phoenix-hotel-yogyakarta-mgallery-by-sofitel/history.php> (last visit 22nd December 2021).

¹⁸¹ In addition, the hotel's "Inspired by Her" programme supports small women-owned businesses, that offer batik, spa products and bags by providing them a point of sale in their hotel. Benjamin Castel, 'Pengantar', in *The Life of Spices | Pameran Seni Rupa* (Yogyakarta: Team The Phoenix Hotel Yogyakarta MGallery, 2021), 3.

¹⁸² 'Historic Hotel in Yogyakarta - The Phoenix Hotel Yogyakarta - MGallery by Sofitel'.

exhibitions. However, all exhibitions are listed with titles and number of participating artists, that have taken place there since the Green Art Space's opening 2015.¹⁸³ The Greenhost Boutique Hotel follows the concept of *Agricrafture*, a mixture between agriculture and craftsmanship. The hotel is designed with natural elements and with a strong reference to materiality and craftsmanship. Their products come from sustainable food production in Yogyakarta and collaborations with craftspeople and craft talks promote local handicrafts. The Green Art Space is used for exhibitions and as a creative space, where artisans give workshops and sell their products. For example, a creative macramé and weaving workshop took place in 2018. In 2019, the hotel offered a pop-up space for Indonesian textiles, where seven local textile artisans could exhibit their craft, share their knowledge in workshops and promote their products for three weeks. In 2021, the Green Art Space served as a venue for the ArtJog MMXXI *Arts in Common - Time (to) Wonder*.¹⁸⁴

The Gaia Cosmo Hotel is probably the most advanced player of Yogyakarta's hotels to explore its role and boundaries as an active promoter and co-creator in the *kriya* and art landscape. It has been a conscious actor in making art and *kriya* accessible to the people. With its Instagram posts of artworks in Changi, Singapore, a design book on colour perception by Josef Albers, notes on the ArtJog event, or exciting artworks from different exhibitions in Yogyakarta, the Gaia Cosmo Hotel takes the role of educating or informing the public on art. Since its inception in 2016, the hotel has always promoted art and *kriya*, and together with *benda art management*, the hotel founded its own art project called Gaia Art Movement. In 2018, it organised an art event called *Hear-Art*. With this major event it "aimed to become part of the active, evolving art and design ecosystem in Yogyakarta"¹⁸⁵. On the opening day, expert discussions were held in the hotel lobby with architect RM Cahyo Bandhono, creative director and interior designer Alvin Tjitrowirjo and ceramist and curator Asmudjo Jono Irianto. The public was invited to participate in a blog writing competition and a photography competition. The first and second winner prize was two and one overnight stay at the hotel, and the third prize was a dinner voucher for the hotel restaurant. The main mission of this art event, however, was a long-term collaboration with young artists and the display of monumental works of art in the hotel grounds. Therefore, the Gaia Cosmo Hotel contracted five local *kriya* artists from the *benda art management* and ask them to create each a

¹⁸³ Between 2015 and 2020, about 20 solo and group exhibitions were held at Green Art Space. Greenhost Boutique Hotel, 'A Brief Note on Green Art Space' (Greenhost Boutique Hotel, o. J.); 'Greenhost Boutique Hotel (@greenhosthotel)', Instagram post from 22nd September 2021.

¹⁸⁴ 'Greenhost Boutique Hotel (@greenhosthotel)', Instagram posts from 23rd May 2018, 2nd September 2019 and 2nd September 2021.

¹⁸⁵ 'GAIA Cosmo Hotel Yogyakarta (@gaiacosmohotel)', Instagram post from 6th January 2022.

monumental artwork for a location in the hotel.¹⁸⁶ Ceramic artist Apri Susanto created a multi-piece ceramic installation for the swimming pool area, Dedy Shofianto covered a long wall with his kinetic wood art, Ivan Bestari created filigree glass art objects, Dery Pratama's artwork was erected in the hotel garden and featured a metre-high open metal cube, gapped with leather upholstery, and Ludira Yudha's organic object, made of metal wires, was exhibited in the hotel lobby. The art exhibition was linked to the theme of nature. Like the Greenhost Boutique Hotel, the Gaia Cosmo Hotel also supports the ArtJog event by providing a venue and promoting the event through their communication channels. The hotel's website shows information on the *Hear-Art* event, supplemented with blog posts and is supplemented with its well-established Instagram account.¹⁸⁷

Public Universities

Art universities are an important part of *kriya* infrastructures in Indonesia. They provide knowledge and physical infrastructures in the form of workspaces, machines, tools, equipment, and materials and they create an academic discursive *kriya* field. In Indonesia, as in other Southeast Asian countries (Thailand and Malaysia), good education is still grouped around centres, in a few large cities of the country. In the periphery, which are rural areas, villages and decentral-located major cities, have fewer and less good educational institutions. For *kriya* education and discourse, Jakarta, Bandung and Yogyakarta are the important cities with art academies, that transformed into universities in the 1980s.¹⁸⁸ Although there were universities established in other cities too, (Salatiga and Surakarta in Central Java, Surabaya, Jember and Malang in East Java, Denpasar in Bali, Makassar in Sulawesi, Padangpanjang and Padang in Sumatra), they still play practically no role for academic *kriya* discourses. Indonesia, with its large land area, with islands geographically difficult to reach and the diversity of ethnic peoples, is still busy, to build good educational institutions on the islands of Sulawesi, Papua, Irian Jaya and Kalimantan. In terms of education, the Indonesian

¹⁸⁶ Sathya Brahmantya and Sujud Dartanto were advisers to find five suitable artists for the hotel. Interview with Endang Lestari, *Religion & The Omah Budoyo Gallery*, 19th January 2023; Kompasiana.com, 'Hear Art', Acara yang Mengajak Masyarakat Mendengar dan Memahami Seni melalui Hati', KOMPASIANA, 30th March 2018, <https://www.kompasiana.com/saptinurulh/5abc17885e13737aab683f72/gaia-art-movement-hear-art-event-yang-mengajak-masyarakat-mendengar-dan-merasakan-seni-melalui-hati> (last visit 26th December 2022).

¹⁸⁷ The Gaia Cosmo Hotel's Instagram account is called @gaia cosmohotel and counts 14'000 followers. Information on the *Hear-Art* Event can be found on their Instagram profile and on the Instagram profile of benda, @bendaartmanagement. The account does not seem active anymore since 2018, but the profile provides interesting documentary pictures of the event. 'GAIA Cosmo Hotel Yogyakarta (@gaia cosmohotel)'; benda Art Management (@bendaartmanagement)'.

¹⁸⁸ 'Sejarah Lengkap – Institut Kesenian Jakarta', IKJ, <https://ikj.ac.id/tentang-kami/sejarah-lengkap/>; 'Sejarah', Institut Seni Indonesia Yogyakarta, 2019, <https://isi.ac.id/profile/sejarah/> (last visit 11th June 2023); 'Fakultas Seni Rupa Dan Desain', Institut Teknologi Bandung, <https://www.itb.ac.id/fakultas-seni-rupa-dan-desain> (last visit 11th June 2023).

government has recognised that, *kriya* is an immensely important part of the Archipelago's many cultures and has an economic potential. Therefore, it became a mandate of *Kementrian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan* (shortly called KEMENDIKBUD), the Ministry of Education and Culture, to promote different cultures and their information exchanges. KEMENDIKBUD has launched several exchange programmes of *kriya* knowledge and culture. For example, in 2019 five skilled craftspeople from Java were selected to travel to Papua and exchange their *kriya* knowledge with local craftspeople. One of these Javanese experts was the skilled wood carver, carpenter and ISI Yogyakarta *kriya* alumna Muhamad Nurrudin. He spent six weeks in Jayapura (North Papua) for teaching and learning wood carving. He learned about North Papua culture and their wood carving art practice. Conversely, Jayapura's craftspeople explored new chisel tools and techniques from Muhamad, that he brought from Jepara (Java). His chisel allowed easier creations of forms, than the Jayapura craftspeople's chisels. Muhamad concludes that it was a fruitful exchange and that he gained new insights and knowledge of wood carving. He felt that he could contribute to Jayapura's craftspeople *kriya* knowledge.¹⁸⁹

Another example is an Indonesian governmental programme, that started out about 10 or 15 years ago to establish more public art universities. At that time, Indonesia had only five *Institut Seni Indonesia*. The oldest in Yogyakarta, the second oldest in Surakarta, one in Denpasar (Bali), one in Padangpanjang (Westsumatra) and the latest was formed in Bandung. The governmental programme chose four of these established *Institut Seni Indonesia*, that were in charge to launch each an art university in a new place. Thus, ISI Yogyakarta oversaw and helped to establish *Institut Seni Budaya Kalimantan*, shortly ISBI Kalimantan. ISI Surakarta was commissioned to develop ISBI Sulawesi in Makassar, ISI Denpasar was in charge of ISBI Tanah Papua and ISI Padangpanjang was responsible for ISBI Aceh (North Sumatra). Even though the former head of the *Kriya* Department, Yulriawan Dafri, made great efforts to establish *kriya* curricula at ISBI Kalimantan, –modelled like curricula of ISI Yogyakarta– ISBI Kalimantan opened in July 2024, one or two years later than the other ISBIs, may be due to internal conflicts.¹⁹⁰ As the capital city of Indonesia will be shifted to the island of Kalimantan, the establishment of ISBI Kalimantan is of great importance. Thus, the opening is scheduled for 2023, with additional support of five lecturers from ISI Yogyakarta, who will be teaching at ISBI Kalimantan. All other ISBI could open in time and all job positions could be filled with local lecturers.¹⁹¹ This programme was an important step

¹⁸⁹ Interview with Muhamad Nurrudin, *The KEMENDIKBUD Programme in Papua*, 2nd January 2023.

¹⁹⁰ Sekretariat Daerah Provinsi Kalimantan Timur. 'ISBI Kaltim Kembali Dibuka, Pendaftaran Mulai 7 Juli', 2024. <https://www.setda.kaltimprov.go.id/berita/isbi-kaltim-kembali-dibuka-pendaftaran-mulai-7-juli> (last visit: 16th September 2024)

¹⁹¹ Interview with Yulriawan Dafri, *ISBI – Institut Seni Budaya Indonesia*, 2nd January 2023.

towards good *kriya* education on other main islands of Indonesia's multi-ethnic state. It is hoped that, in the long term, academic *kriya* knowledge and discourse are not limited to Javanese culture alone.

Indonesia's *kriya* knowledge is transmitted mainly through two channels. One channel is traditional structures in craft families, where children learn *kriya* skills from their parents, while the other channel is an academic career. Specialisation begins at the age of about 13 or 14. Three types of high schools that can be attended: (1) *Sekolah Menengah Atas* (SMA), high school, (2) *Sekolah Menenga Seni Rupa* (SMSR), artistic high school¹⁹² and (3) *Sekolah Menegah Kejuruan* (SMK), vocational school. Vocational schools offer many different orientations, like mechanical engineering, music, tourism, pharmacy and *Seni Rupa* (Visual Arts). SMA are normal high schools without a specific orientation. SMSR are artistic high schools, that prepare their pupils for their Bachelor's studies at an art university. When I spoke with Yogyakarta's *kriya* makers and lecturers, they all stressed the importance of learning *kriya* at an early age. They agreed that, many skilled *kriya* students either had attended an artistic high school (SMSR) before, or had learned *kriya* from their parents when they were still a child.¹⁹³

Today, ISI Yogyakarta's *Kriya* Department comprises several artistic Bachelor's degrees. In 1984, when the art university was founded, only one *kriya* course, namely woodcraft, was offered and was significantly developed and taught by SP. Gustami. Soon after, a course in metal craft was developed and implemented. Both courses were comprehensive and required four years of fulltime study. Since 1993, textile craft was established as a third *kriya* programme. Later, Bachelor's degrees in ceramics and leather craft were added.¹⁹⁴ Despite specialising in one of the five crafts, *kriya* students acquire many basic arts and crafts skills. In the first year, they take subjects like religion, Pancasila, English, Indonesian, design, object drawing, ornamentation and traditional *kriya*.¹⁹⁵ The university also offers a diploma study of three years, called *D-3 Batik dan Fashion* (Figures K13 and K14), which was designed for

¹⁹² Interview with Iyang Priyono, *School System*, 7th December 2021; interview with Joan Miroe, *Batik Technique*, 7th December 2021. For a simple overview of the Indonesian education system see: <https://www.scholaro.com/pro/Countries/Indonesia/Education-System>, (last visit 7th December 2021).

¹⁹³ Interview with Satya Brahmantya, *Galeri Benda, The Intangible and Handiwirman*, 26th May 2021; interview with Sujud Dartanto, *Galeri Benda*, 21st May 2021; interview with Endang Lestari, *Infrastructures of Kriya Art and Handicraft*, 27th May 2021.

¹⁹⁴ The five Bachelor's degrees are called (1) *Seni Kriya Kayu* (wood craft), (2) *Seni Kriya Logam* (metal craft), (3) *Seni Kriya Tekstil* (textile craft), (4) *Seni Kriya Keramik* (ceramic craft), (5) *Seni Kriya Kulit* (leather craft). 'Kriya Seni', ISI Yogyakarta | Fakultas Seni Rupa, <https://fsr.isi.ac.id/jurusan/kriya-seni/> (last visit 11th June 2023).

¹⁹⁵ *Kriya Curriculum of ISI Yogyakarta, Mata Kuliah Kriya OBE 2022*, unpublished document.

students, who are not interested in an academic career, but want to work in batik and fashion industries or possibly open their own company.

Although Indonesia has nine state art universities today, with these four recently established art institutes (ISBI), many prospective art students from other islands still like to choose ISI Yogyakarta, because this university boasts big names of graduates and lecturers, and the Special Region of Yogyakarta offers important *kriya* and art networks and opportunities. ISI Yogyakarta has its own gallery, the *Galeri Katamsi*, where exhibitions are held regularly. Every year students' final works are exhibited at the campus and for some years, the *Kriya* Department worked together with the Yogyakarta Art Directorate, the Yogyakarta Culture Directorate and the state KEMENDIKBUD, to put on a major *kriya* exhibition. This exhibition was held for the first time from 22nd to 28th August 2016, at the Jogja Gallery and was titled *Pameran Besar Seni Kriya UNDAGI*, Great Exhibition of the Art of *Kriya* UNDAGI. The curator in charge was lecturer and ceramist Dr Timbul Raharjo, while Dr Yulriawan Dafri and two other lecturers worked as co-curators. SP. Gustami, Ponimin and others contributed with essays to a comprehensive exhibition catalogue. The exhibition was divided into two categories and featured *kriya* artworks by artists of all ages, with elder artists predominating.¹⁹⁶ The preponderance of older artists in exhibitions has often been criticised by younger generations. They felt that, entering exhibitions was very hard for them, while senior artists got accepted very easily. This theme, as well as the gender theme, has accompanied the Indonesian art and *kriya* scene for some time. In the category *Seni Kriya Heritage* (the Art of *Kriya* Heritage), 11 objects like batik, traditional swords, earthenware from Kasongan, masks, *wayang* figures and wooden instruments, created according to traditional rules, were exhibited. The second category was called *Seni Kriya Populer & Alternative* (The Art of Popular and Alternative *Kriya*) and showed contemporary interpretations of traditional craftsmanship, to very free artworks, but all with a strong craft character. The exhibition did not feature installations, photographs, prints or video works, but handmade objects made of clay, ceramics, textiles, bamboo, teak, leather, metal and other natural materials. With a total of 96 works, this exhibition was extensive and attempted to represent *kriya* as broadly as possible. Artworks by artists from Bali, Papua, Lombok and

¹⁹⁶ In fact, for many governmental funded arts and *kriya* exhibitions elder artists were more likely to be invited, whereas younger artists faced difficulties to establish themselves in the art and *kriya* scene in Yogyakarta. The same problem was apparent in some private galleries. However, the younger *kriya* generation in Yogyakarta has created its own outlet by establishing the *Matra Kriya Fest*. Luqman Hakim, 'Kemendikbud-ISI Gelar Pameran Kriya Undagi 2018', Antara News Yogyakarta, 2023, <https://jogja.antaranews.com/berita/356339/kemendikbud-isi-gelar-pameran-kriya-undagi-2018> (last visit 22nd December 2021).

Sumatra were also exhibited.¹⁹⁷ Two years later, from 9th to 13th May 2018, a second edition was held under the direction and curation of Timbul Raharjo, at Taman Budaya Yogyakarta. The exhibition showed over 100 artworks of 83 artists from Java, Bali and Sumatra.¹⁹⁸

Another academic contribution for *kriya* is ISI Yogyakarta's International Craft Day (ICD). ICD was initiated by the new head of the *Kriya* Department, Dr Alvi Lufiani. Alvi Lufiani grew up in Yogyakarta and studied metal craft, with a focus on jewellery. She wrote her doctoral thesis at ITB in Bandung on *kriya* expansion into Yogyakarta's public spaces. As a Yogyakarta local, with an academic *kriya* training, she has a broad knowledge and good sense for the development of ISI Yogyakarta's *kriya* programmes. Alvi Lufiani felt that academic talks and sharing sessions on *kriya* are still very rare and therefore launched a first online ICD on 6th October 2020, with eight international speakers, who presented each on the topic of *Speaking Through Craft: How is the strategy to face the Covid-19 Pandemic*. The speakers were lecturers and professors from other art universities. The second edition was held a year later, again online, due to the pandemic restrictions. From 22nd to 23rd November 2022, the third edition was held live at ISI Yogyakarta. Only the international speakers' sessions were held online. The ICD #3, titled *The Voice of Object*, was extended with a batik competition and a *kriya* exhibition at ISI Yogyakarta, where 42 students, lecturers and non-academic artists of all ages participated, –from Yogyakarta Noor Sudiyati, Meta Enjelita, Dedy Shofianto, Sugeng Wardoyo, Djandjang Purwo Sedjati, Dwita Anja Asmara and Agung Suhartanto exhibited their works. The event comprised a *kriya* bazaar for *kriya* accessories, fashion and food.

In this Section, I outlined the most important *kriya* institutions. However, institutions like the Jogja Heritage Society, the Jogja National Museum or symposiums like the International Symposium on Javanese Culture 2020 could also be presented, but due to my limited scope, I do not mention them here in detail.

In summary, public universities play a major role in shaping *kriya* discourses, because they provide academic training and more importantly, they provide a network for artists of different disciplines. Some ISI Yogyakarta and ITB Bandung graduates continued to shape *kriya* discourses with their curatorial work. Others started to write academic articles, while working as lecturers.

¹⁹⁷ Timbul Raharjo, ed., *Pameran Besar Seni Kriya UNDAGI #1* (Yogyakarta: Jogja Gallery: ISI Yogyakarta, Directorate Kesenian, Direktorat Kebudayaan and KEMENDIKBUD, 2016), exhibition catalogue.

¹⁹⁸ Hakim, 'Kemendikbud-ISI Gelar Pameran Kriya Undagi 2018'.

1.3 Collecting and Presenting *Kriya* – An Insight into Museum and Exhibition Practices

In this chapter I will discuss specific topics about museum and exhibition practices in the period from Indonesia's Independence in 1949 until today. I have selected these areas in order to highlight the peculiarities of Indonesia's practices of collecting and presenting *kriya* objects, which are different to European's tradition of museum practice.¹⁹⁹ I consider the period from 1949 onwards to be particularly interesting, since that was the time when art institutions began to be governed independently from colonial powers. After 1949 the Indonesian government took over the museums established by the Dutch colonisers. However, a broad exhibition practice evolved only much later. Few documented exhibitions existed from Independence until around the 1980s. More exhibitions (especially for fine art) were presented from the 1980s until 2010, but the really interesting phase of *kriya* exhibitions and events started in around 2010. The *kriya* event that I regard as most important, namely the Matra Kriya Fest examined in this chapter. Additionally, I will discuss selected art events that are not specific for *kriya*, but are nevertheless important to *kriya*.

Collecting, Preserving and Presenting *Kriya*

In the Archipelago people used to collect objects of power, which were believed to convey additional strength and power to their owners. Such objects were kept away from the public because they were believed to retain their power only in the presence of people who possessed divine power. Probably the earliest important institutions that stored valuable *kriya* objects were the sultan's palaces of different dynasties. A limited selection of objects, such as jewellery and clothing, were worn by the sultans on official occasions, so were visible to the public only for brief moments. However, the majority of objects and treasures were stored in safe locations and thus remained inaccessible to the public.²⁰⁰

In the late 19th century, the Dutch began to establish museums on Java to collect and store objects that they appraised as being interesting and valuable. However, the selection was driven by colonial and trade purposes rather than by the idea of preserving culturally significant objects. After Independence the overriding role of Indonesian museums was to

¹⁹⁹ Due to my limited scope, I cannot give a comprehensive overview of museum and exhibition practices. For more information on museums in Indonesia I suggest the article of Amanda Katherine Rath, 'Cultural Sublimation: The Museumizing of Indonesia', *Explorations Southeast Asian Studies* 1, no. 1 (1997).

²⁰⁰ Rath, 9.

promote “Unity in Diversity”,²⁰¹ a political programme for nation building which led to local material cultures being neglected in favour of a hegemonic Javanese culture. These collections were selective and biased by political reasons. In this context the US-American art historian Amanda Rath outlines two arguments: first, there is a common criticism that the Indonesian central government did not respect the sovereignty of the various local cultures with their own art expressions. As a consequence, many Indonesian cultures have tried to reinvent their traditions, to avoid falling into oblivion. The second criticism is about the re-invention of an Indonesian national culture being achieved by imposing Javanese politics, culture and aesthetics on all the country’s other cultures. For *kriya* objects this meant that former ritual, culturally specific and religious objects were pulled out of their contexts to function as pieces of a national material culture in state museums.²⁰² Even today, museums in Indonesia, which are run and funded by the state, are politically influenced in their exhibition practices, as the state sets rules on what should and should not be shown.²⁰³

There is no long-standing tradition of museum practice in the Archipelago, which is also related to its climatic conditions. Indonesia’s tropical fauna and climate, with a relative air humidity of 80 or more percent, make it difficult to preserve and display items for extended periods. In former days a decayed piece of art would be replaced by a copy, because it was not the object itself that was important, but rather its ceremonial function.²⁰⁴

In the past the public paid little attention to museum exhibitions and collections. It is only in recent years that a contemporary and professional museum practice has begun and continues to evolve. Originally state museums were often looked after by unqualified civil servants who were simply assigned a place in a museum during their career. Consequently, for decades collecting, archiving and exhibiting were not done professionally. In some cases, this resulted in the destruction of valuable objects because they were not properly stored or restored. In other cases, valuable objects were stolen and sold. Due to the government’s general lack of interest and awareness in collecting and exhibiting, and especially due to their preference for Javanese traditional arts, many Indonesian masterpieces are not exhibited in Indonesian

²⁰¹ “Unity in Diversity” was not only a political programme of the Suharto era, but the term also encompasses earlier nation-building measures, that had started already in the early 20th century. These measures were mostly applied in a top-down way when elites faced the challenge to unify the numerous ethnic groups of the Archipelago to an Indonesian Identity. Budi Annisa Sidi, ‘Unity and Diversity: National Identity and Multiculturalism in Indonesia’, (Dissertation, University of Otago Dunedin New Zealand, 2019),

<https://ourarchive.otago.ac.nz/bitstream/handle/10523/10106/SidiBudiA2019PhD.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y> (last visit 16th September 2021) 74.

²⁰² Rath, *Cultural Sublimation*, 2.

²⁰³ Interview with Satya Brahmantya, *Museum Practice*, 3rd February 2023.

²⁰⁴ Interestingly, a similar practice can be observed in the contemporary art world. Many Indonesian contemporary artists do not store their artworks for a long period, mainly because they have not got enough space to keep them. As a consequence, many artworks that are re-exhibited ten or more years after their creation need to be reproduced for the exhibition. Rath, 9.

museums but rather in museums or galleries in the Netherlands, Singapore and Australia. There might be several other reasons which explain why originally a culture of collecting did not develop in Indonesia. As mentioned before, the tropical climate makes it difficult to store various materials such as textiles and wood for long periods of time. More solid materials, such as ceramics that would be easier to store, were only known as utilitarian objects and were not considered special works of art in ritual ceremonies or at the sultan's palaces. Ceramics were handled as objects of daily use, and broken objects were simply replaced by new remakes. The tradition of cultural dynasties in the Archipelago was probably another reason that led to the annihilation of valuable objects. Each rising dynasty made sure that all objects and memories of the preceding dynasty were destroyed certainly including valuable works of art.²⁰⁵ But undoubtedly the country's colonial history had the greatest influence on the loss of its valuable objects. For centuries, the Dutch colonial powers exploited the cultural treasures of the Archipelago and took them to the Netherlands. Vast amounts of objects, such as Hindu statues, reliefs, weapons, textiles, jewellery, gold, royal gifts, ritual objects and ancient manuscripts ended up in colonial museums in Leiden, Amsterdam, Delft and other cities in the Netherlands. Since the 1970s, UNESCO has been striving for the return of cultural property. Due to their own policies the Netherlands had already begun to return looted objects to Indonesia before the 1970s. Just recently, 1500 objects were returned to Indonesia that had been stored in the ethnological museum in Delft. But probably the richest collections still remain in Dutch museums. Among these is the treasure of the Cakranegara Palace in Lombok which is displayed in the ethnological museum in Leiden. This treasure was stolen in 1894 and contains three boxes of jewellery, 230 kilogrammes of gold, over 7,000 kilogrammes of silver and 400 manuscripts. According to an academic from Yogyakarta, the professional storage of such returned objects is a challenge given that there is no long tradition of museums and archiving practice in Indonesia.²⁰⁶

Museum Practice

Museum practice in Indonesia developed from around 1900, when the Dutch colonial power began to open museums on Java. After Indonesia's Independence, most of the colonially-built

²⁰⁵ Interview with Satya Brahmantya, *Museum Practice*, 3rd February 2023.

²⁰⁶ 'Netherlands Returns 1,500 Artifacts to Indonesia', Arab News, 11th January 2020, <https://arab.news/rrgmh> (last visit 19th March 2023). The return of cultural property has increasingly been discussed since the 1970s. However, the case of the Netherlands and Indonesia is special as this return started earlier. For further reading I suggest Cynthia Scott, 'Renewing the ,Special Relationship' and the Return of Cultural Property: The Netherlands and Indonesia, 1949–79', *Journal of Contemporary History* 52, no. 3 (2017): 646-68.

museums were taken over and continued by the Indonesian government. However, until recent years the museums did not always harbour appropriate and independent practices of collecting, selecting and exhibiting. As a result, most Indonesians do not perceive a museum as an interesting, educational place but rather as a dusty archive that still embodies the notion of a national culture made up of Javanese traditional arts. Or else, they perceive museums as boring representations of power which serve to glorify the president of the state, as was commonly the case during the Sukarno and Suharto eras. It comes as no surprise that *kriya* museums, which display *kriya* in the form of traditional arts, lag behind the current discourse on *kriya*. The museums managed by the state are often limited to their initial collections, which do not get extended on a regular basis. Additionally, governmental rules and administrative hurdles hamper a dynamic museum practice.²⁰⁷ As a result, *kriya* museums have occupied and continue to occupy, a marginal position in the cultural sphere. The Indonesian government allocates very limited funds to museums. Unfortunately, most state museum directors do not see any point in creating full-time jobs for curators in their museums, just appointing free-lance curators for special exhibitions. Often, museum work is done by civil servants who have little to no knowledge on displaying *kriya*. There is still a lack of appropriate structures within museums, while training opportunities at the academic level are still relatively new. Moreover, in many art universities curation study courses are still uncommon. In 2014 ISI Yogyakarta commenced a study programme called art management. The ISI Yogyakarta lecturers felt that Yogyakarta's special status as an epicentre for arts required people who were trained not only in the field of production, but also in the distribution and display of arts. This art management Bachelor's programme comprises courses in archiving, event management, museology, tourism, communication, presentation, curation, entrepreneurship, and scenography. Since 2014 around 80 students have graduated as art managers. They can work not only as art managers, but also as event managers, curators, conservators, or in archives, tourism and museums. In 2023 ISI Yogyakarta began offering another Bachelor's programme on conservation in collaboration with two universities from Austria and one university from Hungary, to add specific knowledge about conservation. The three collaborating universities have a research branch for conservation in tropical climates.²⁰⁸ According to my observations, efforts for international exchange and new training opportunities come mainly from committed lecturers at ISI Yogyakarta. The Indonesian government dictates structural rather than content-related matters

²⁰⁷ Interview with Satya Brahmantya, *Museum Practice*, 3rd February 2023.

²⁰⁸ Interview with Mikke Susanto, *Curatorial World*, 24th March 2023; interview with Satya Brahmantya, *Museum Practice*, 3rd February 2023.

to the art university. Faculty members at ISI Yogyakarta's Fine Art Department are committed to providing quality training in curation and preservation. This cooperation with the three universities abroad is therefore an ideal way of acquiring missing knowledge and passing on individuals' own experiences on the preservation of art objects in tropical climates.²⁰⁹

Before any professional curatorial training was available, the pioneers such as Jim Supangkat (for contemporary art) or, a good decade later, Sujud Dartanto (for contemporary art and *kriya*), ventured into the profession of a curator autodidactically. I discuss the position and role of the curator further in Chapter 3 in connection with ceramic exhibitions.

Museum practice in Indonesia has changed for the better in recent years due to an evolving consciousness among the arts and *kriya* practitioners and institutions. Several institutions have become aware of the cultural and educational value of collecting and exhibiting arts. Some museums have introduced participatory projects and engaging forms of knowledge transfer.²¹⁰ However, the number of museums in Indonesia is rather modest. In 2005 ceramic artist and curator Asmudjo remarked that some large Indonesian cities with over 2.5 million inhabitants have practically no museums. Even today this situation has only slightly improved. He added that existing mediating places for visual arts were mainly private commercial art galleries or alternative spaces, and that they had not emerged as a counterpart to major national art museums for the simple fact that there are no such large institutions.²¹¹

In summary, during the reigns of Sukarno (1949-1967) and Suharto (1967-1998), no money was donated to create “democratic”²¹² art museums. Rather, museums were misused for political purposes, such as nation-building or to glorify the presidents. Traditional Javanese *kriya* objects served as representations of Indonesian art during this period and were displayed in museums in a decontextualised way, neglecting local material cultures. In the reformation era from 1998 onwards, such *kriya* objects remained in museums. Some *kriya* objects were exhibited as artefacts in natural history museums, while others were displayed as art. One of the most important *kriya* collections is that of the first Indonesian president, Sukarno. His collection is exciting as it comprises *kriya* masterpieces that are valued as traditional high art among the Indonesian people. His collection, together with Suharto's collection, were kept in

²⁰⁹ Interview with Mikke Susanto, *Curatorial World*, 24th March 2023.

²¹⁰ A good example will be discussed in Chapter 2.3.1 on contemporary batik (collections, exhibitions and events).

²¹¹ Asmudjo Jono Irianto, ‘Indonesian Urban Space and Contemporary Art’, *CP Biennale*, 2005, http://biennale.cp-foundation.org/2005/essay_ajirianto.html (last visit 28th January 2022).

²¹² With “democratic” museums I mean museums which are founded for the purpose of exhibiting a wide range of artworks without any censorship or political programme.

a closed archive in Jakarta called the State Palace until 2010 and thus were inaccessible to the public. The ruling Indonesian president at that time, Susilo Bambang Yodhoyono arranged for 2,000 objects²¹³ to be distributed among five presidential palaces in Indonesia. These former presidential palaces are located in Yogyakarta, Bogor, Bali and West Java, and were converted to museums to display the afore-mentioned 2,000 objects. Yogyakarta curator Mikke Susanto was in charge of distributing the objects between the five locations, and he was entrusted with curating the objects in the museum at the Presidential Palace in Yogyakarta. He remembers that there were many *kriya* objects among the collection, but also modern paintings from renowned artists such as Affandi or Sudjojono.²¹⁴

To date, there is little awareness of an active collecting practice which would foresee the acquisition of contemporary *kriya* objects.²¹⁵ The only exception is batik, which is actively collected by private individuals. Additionally, some batik companies who are successful players in the batik industry have large inhouse batik collections, such as the Danar Hadi company. This company will be discussed in Chapter 2 on contemporary batik.

Exhibitions and Events

While museums still struggle to become a popular venue to experience art and *kriya*, art exhibitions and events enjoy high popularity among Indonesians. However, the most popular exhibitions are not mounted by museums, but are those held in Yogyakarta at the Jogja Gallery, Pendhapa Art Space, Taman Budaya and others. These exhibitions are characterised by the fact that they usually last only one or two weeks, are not connected to a museum or gallery, and are professionally curated by freelance curators. Since around 2010 exhibitions and events especially on *kriya* have occurred in Yogyakarta, gaining importance in the cultural sphere. These events have contributed to a viable discourse on *kriya* and are very adaptable to

²¹³ There were 3,000 items in the State Palace from both the Sukarno and Suharto collections. From Sukarno's collection 2,000 items were distributed to the five locations. There are many articles about Sukarno's collection. A short introduction which also reveals Sukarno's preferences for certain paintings and artists and his relentless way of collecting is well described by Louis Zweers, 'Sukarno's Art Collection', *The Newsletter*, Spring 2014; 'Palace Art Collection Belongs to Sukarno Family: Guruh Sukarno Putra', Newspaper, The Jakarta Post, 24 August 2016, <https://www.thejakartapost.com/life/2016/08/24/palace-art-collection-belongs-to-sukarno-family-guruh-sukarno-putra.html> (last visit 31st March 2023).

²¹⁴ Many books on Sukarno's art collection have been published. The best-known publication is a five-volume edition showing reproductions of his collected paintings and other art objects. For more information on these five volumes see 'THE ART-COLLECTION OF PRESIDENT SUKARNO: 'THE SUKARNO COLLECTION'', Indisch Museum, 14th October 2018, <https://indischmuseum.com/sukarno-collection/> (last visit 9th April 2023); Interview with Mikke Susanto, *Curatorial World*, 24th March 2023.

²¹⁵ There is also potential for contemporary art museums. According to curator Mikke Susanto, the acquisition practice of museums in general is not yet well established. Acquisitions are not made on a regular basis and most museums do not explicitly budget for new acquisitions. Interview with Mikke Susanto, *Curatorial World*, 24th March 2023.

emerging trends. Most of them are initiated and fully organised by private *kriya* groups which is the main reason for their success. Private *kriya* groups have much more knowledge about *kriya* and the way to exhibit *kriya* than governmental institutions which often lack these experts. One exception is the ISI Yogyakarta which organises *kriya* exhibitions in collaboration with the Yogyakarta cultural office. Many privately-organised events count on financial support from the Yogyakarta cultural office, with almost no regulatory or administrative tasks being imposed. However, if an entire event is state-organised, many rules and regulations apply. The most obvious example of such an obstructive role was observed at the state-organised Jogja International Batik Biennale (JIBB). Although the JIBB is important as an event, it has not yet managed to become a model for other exhibitions as a top curated exhibition, despite its successful recurrence. If one compares the JIBB with the Jakarta Contemporary Ceramic Biennale (JCCB), it is noticeable that the latter is internationally more successful, and it possibly has a greater national resonance than JIBB. This does not necessarily have anything to do with the medium of ceramics, because ceramics is still less known in Indonesian society than batik. The problem lies with the organisation of the batik event. The JIBB is run by the state and prescribes a clear but suboptimal salary classification for the curators. Curators are paid as local, national or international curators based on their residency card, regardless of their work experience or whether they are successful nationally or internationally. Since many successful and experienced curators live in Yogyakarta itself, they would be regarded as local curators by this state rule and thus very poorly paid for their work at the JIBB.²¹⁶ As a result, they look for other job offers. Consequently, the JIBB is curated by inexperienced art makers, or national curators who are unfamiliar with the Yogyakarta batik landscape. The greatest problem might be the lack of a consistent organising team that takes on responsibilities beyond the event. The current website does not seem to work, the Instagram account is limited to 2018, and there are no exhibition catalogues. This contrasts with the success of the Jakarta Contemporary Ceramics Biennale (JCCB) whose organisation and documentation are professionally managed by a permanent group. The JCCB is the result of many years of effort by passionate ceramists from Bandung, Asmudjo, Rifky, Nurdian and Rizki. Their carefully crafted exhibition catalogues with essays rich in substance, as well as an up-to-date website, show that these ceramists have a vision to promote ceramics as an art form among the people. Through their curatorial texts, they offer a kind of foundation for understanding the discourse on the Indonesian art world which is based on a

²¹⁶ Interview with Satya Brahmantya, *Batik and Ceramic Artists, Islamic Purification*, 2nd September 2022.

mixture of both Indonesian and Western-adapted art values. Asmudjo and his team's vision, their heart and soul and team spirit are palpable in these ceramic exhibitions. Unfortunately, government regulations have posed obstacles for the following edition of JCCB, so that it will take place in 2025. It is going to be renamed to Indonesian Contemporary Ceramics Biennale, because its venues are in Cirebon and Bandung.²¹⁷

Another successful event for *kriya* was established in 2014 and has survived as a perennial event so far. This is the Matra Kriya Fest.

Matra Kriya Fest

In 2014, some *kriya* students at ISI Yogyakarta decided to establish a *kriya* group with the aim of fostering young *kriya* artists in Yogyakarta. The group called itself *Komunitas Titik Lenyap* (KTL), which means Vanishing Point Community. As a first step, KTL created a *kriya* award to recognise the best final projects of ISI Yogyakarta *kriya* students. The award was accompanied by an exhibition, which was held at the university's gallery, Galeri R. J. Katamsi. In the second year, 2015, the exhibition was held in the Ajiyasa Building, and in 2016 at the Jogja National Museum. After that, KTL planned a bigger exhibition in 2017. With support from the Ministry of Culture of the Special Region of Yogyakarta, KTL organised a *kriya* exhibition called *ReLoad* at Pendhapa Art Space. The aim was to pick out ten of the nominated *kriya* works from 2014-2016 which were most significant to the *kriya* scene because these works' artists were actively participating in other exhibitions. The *ReLoad* exhibition can also be seen as a trial run for the larger exhibition called Matra Award that followed. Some of the founders of Matra Award were already part of KTL, and all those involved in the Matra Award were alumni at that time, such as Apri Susanto or Rosanto Bima Pratama, who was the chairperson of the *ReLoad* exhibition and became the project leader of the Matra Award. In contrast to the *ReLoad* exhibition, the Matra Award was not for students only, but was conceived as a national *kriya* competition and exhibition for young artists up to the age of 35. *Matra* is the Javanese term for dimension. Thus, the Matra Award was intended for two- and three-dimensional *kriya* objects in all sorts of materials. In 2018, the Matra Award team selected 32 works, 12 of which were nominated as being particularly outstanding. These 12 nominated works were considered for one of the four awards, namely (1) Best Work Champion, (2) Innovation and Creative Work Champion, (3) Local Content

²¹⁷ Interview with Asmudjo Jono Irianto, *The Position of Art and Kriya Today*, 10th February 2023; Interview with Dian Hardiansyah, *Shaping and Understanding the Ceramics Discourse*, 31st March 2023. Personal communication with Asmudjo, 10th September 2024.

Champion and (4) Favourite Work Champion.²¹⁸ The Favourite Work Champion was voted by visitors to the exhibition. Of the 32 artists taking part in the Matra Award exhibition 21 were from Yogyakarta, while a few came from Jakarta, Bandung, and other cities from Java, as well as from Bali and Sulawesi.²¹⁹ In addition seven senior artists were invited to show their works, including Noor Sudiyati, Dwita Anja Asmara, and Agus and Nia Ismoyo. The event was framed with music and dance performances by Sanggar Seni RnB and various other dance crews. There was also a fashion show, a seminar with *kriya* batik experts Bayu Aria W. K, Rika Winata and Abdul Syukur. Furthermore, there was a gallery tour, an eco-printing workshop and a *kriya* bazaar.²²⁰ This diverse and comprehensive programme accompanying the event shows that the Matra Award team wanted to set a new benchmark in terms of *kriya* exhibitions.

To adjustricate the artworks the young Matra Award team relied on the expertise and artistic appraisal of Satya Brahmantya, Sujud Dartanto and Dunadi, all *kriya* artists of the older generation, who were sympathetic to the Matra Award exhibition and the younger generation. Satya Brahmantya and Sujud Dartanto in particular welcomed the efforts and establishment of this *kriya* event, having made similar efforts with their Galeri Benda a good decade before. Now, however, the time seemed ripe, as the Matra Award event was well received. Moreover, as with the *ReLoad* exhibition, the Matra Award team could count on support from the Cultural Office of the Special Region of Yogyakarta. In 2020, the Matra Award team organised the second edition of the event, which they called *Matra Kriya Fest*. Rosanto Bima Pratama (Figure K15) was again the main organiser and the person in charge of the exhibition catalogue, while Apri Susanto was responsible for overall artistic coordination. In addition, there was a programme coordinator, a documentation coordinator, a media team, a writing team, a gallery tour and bazaar team, and an event team. The 2020 Matra Kriya Fest, titled *Nusantara "in slice"* was again held at Pendhapa Art Space. The title alluded to the multi-layered forms of *kriya* given by the cultural richness of the Archipelago (Figure K16). Despite the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak, the festival was held from 14th-23rd November, with many activities broadcast online, such as a *kriya* talk show hosted by curator Musyaffa with Alvi Lufiani and Sujud Dartanto. As with the first event in 2018, 12 works were nominated to be in the running for the four categories. A total of 40 works by young *kriya* artists and 15 works by

²¹⁸ These four awards were already established for the *ReLoad* exhibition and were adapted for the Matra Award.

²¹⁹ According to the exhibition catalogue, 21 artists were from Yogyakarta, such as Afifah Ashma' Abdillah, Dedy Shofianto, Dyah Retno, and Meta Enjelita, while three were from Jakarta, two from Bandung and one each from Boolali, Purwokerto, Sidoarjo, Bali and Sulawesi. *Matra Award 2018 Dimension Resonance | Kompetisi Dan Pameran Karya Kriya Perupa Muda Tingkat Nasional* (Yogyakarta: Pendhapa Art Space, 2018).

²²⁰ *Matra Award 2018 Dimension Resonance | Kompetisi Dan Pameran Karya Kriya Perupa Muda Tingkat Nasional*.

senior artists were exhibited, including ceramic luminaries Noor Sudiyati and Dona Prawita Arissuta, well-known glass artist Ivan Bestari (Figure K17), and young talented batik and ecoprinting artist Meta Enjelita (Figure K18). To get an idea what was exhibited at the Matra Kriya Fest, I attached selected artworks in the appendix of this thesis (Figures K19-24).²²¹

The decision to hold the Matra Kriya Fest 2020 despite the difficult circumstance of the pandemic, as well as producing the numerous online transmissions and a well-designed, comprehensive exhibition catalogue show that Rosanto and his team spared no effort in professionally putting on a national *kriya* event. The Matra Kriya Fest 2020 not only had good media coverage but was again well received in the *kriya* scene. On a biennial basis, the festival was held again in 2022 (Figure K25), for the first time no longer at the Pendhapa Art Space, but at Taman Budaya Yogyakarta. Some artists who had been invited in 2020 were invited again, and the accompanying programmes remained the same. This was because in 2020 many of these activities could only take place online, with no live audience present. Nevertheless, the festival in 2022 was not a repetition of the previous festival in 2020, but included a good mix of new artworks (Figure K26) and a selection of special activities or artist invitations from the Matra Kriya Fest 2020. As in 2020, a bazaar and a fashion show were also organised in the second edition in 2022. The gallery tour, visits to artists' studios and workshops with artists was organised under the name *Kriyaventura* (*Kriya* and Adventure). In addition, there were matching dance performances (Figure K27) and concerts, as in 2020. The jury was made up of curator Musyaffa, batik artist Bayu Aria, wood artist Dedy Shofianto and batik artist Meta Enjelita.

The newly-created Matra Kriya Fest website is quite extensive and informative. It serves as a kind of archive where pictures of the 2018 and 2020 winners can be seen, documents such as application forms, and the 2018 and 2020 exhibition catalogues are available to download. The Instagram account @matrakriyafest complements the website with chronologically-ordered posts in the form of image, video and text, and is thus another valuable archive. This kind of resource is free and well ordered. At the same time promotion is done very quickly and reaches the right audience. As most people in Indonesian cities have a smartphone but only few own a computer, the smartphone application Instagram has become more important than conventional websites. Therefore, providing information through an active and appealing Instagram account has become more important for art institutions than a website.

²²¹ An exact analysis of these artworks would be exciting, especially in comparison to other years. However, due to the constraints of my study, I will leave this to future research. Unfortunately, the Matra Kriya Fest catalogues of 2020 and 2022 are not accessible online. Only the Matra Award catalogue can be viewed online on the website: matrakriyafest.weebly.com.

Accordingly, the Matra Kriya Fest team feeds its Instagram account very regularly and frequently with pictures, videos and texts.²²²

In the past two decades, several one-off *kriya* exhibitions have taken place. One of these events was held at the National Gallery of Indonesia in Jakarta in 2012 and was organised by Asmudjo and Rizki A. Zaelani. It bore the auspicious name *Reposisi Kriya*, or The Repositioning of *Kriya*.²²³ Other smaller *kriya* exhibitions were organised by private *kriya* artists. I have compiled a list of these events in the appendix, although it is probably far from complete.

Festival Kesenian Yogyakarta and ArtJog

Festival Kesenian Yogyakarta (FKY), the Yogyakarta Arts Festival, is a cultural event held annually between June and July, organised by the Yogyakarta Provincial Government. The event comprises several programmes including art packages, family entertainment and cultural shows and performances. FKY was first held on 7th July 1989, alongside the inauguration of the Jogja Kembali Monument.²²⁴ The event is usually held at various locations in Yogyakarta, such as the Malioboro Street, Vredeburg Fortress, and Taman Budaya Yogyakarta (Cultural Park Yogyakarta). FKY includes several art forms such as art parades, art exhibitions with artists, batik art, open art stages consisting of children's groups, adults, classical dance, and various cultural arts from Yogyakarta (and outside Yogyakarta such as Palakaraya from Central Kalimantan Province and Musi Banyuasin from the South Sumatra Province). In addition, there is an exhibition which invites artists and art communities from Yogyakarta and outside to take part. The one organised by FKY in 2022 was a travelling exhibition in which five art communities in Yogyakarta participated.²²⁵ In

²²² For example, for the festival held from 21st to 28th May 2022, the team posted a first teaser video for the upcoming event on 25th February. By 4th June, shortly after the festival ended, 97 more images had been posted. This means that, on average, one post was made every day. 'Matra Kriya Fest 2022 | 21 - 28 Mei 2022 / Taman Budaya Yogyakarta', Matrakriyafest.weebly.com, <https://matrakriyafest.weebly.com/> (last visit 30th December 2022); 'MATRA KRIYA FESTIVAL (@matrakriyafest)', Instagram posts.

²²³ To get an insight into the exhibition I suggest watching the video on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hUR3YENmz00> (last visit 9th April 2023). Unfortunately, the printed catalogue is not digitised and cannot be accessed online.

²²⁴ This monument was erected in memory of the deceased heroes of the Independence war between 1945 and 1949. Indonesia's Independence fighters managed to repel the Dutch army in Yogyakarta, thus ensuring a functioning government of the Republic of Indonesia in Yogyakarta. 40 reliefs on the monument tell the story of the Independence struggle, like the "1st of March attack" by the Dutch army in 1949 and the Declaration of Independence on 17th August 1949 at the Presidential Palace in Yogyakarta. 'Jogja Kembali Monumen, Remaining The Historical Moment Ever Happened In Jogja', Yogyakarta Tourism Portal, 30th November 2020, <https://visitingjogja.jogiaprov.go.id/en/17764/jogja-kembali-monumen-remaining-the-historical-moment-ever-happened-in-jogja/> (last visit 8th April 2023).

²²⁵ Redaksi, 'Aktivasi Program Pameran Galeri dan Pameran Keliling FKY 2022', Piknikdong, 16th September 2022, <https://www.piknikdong.com/aktivasi-program-pameran-galeri-dan-pameran-keliling-fky-2022.html> (last visit 9th April 2023).

addition to the art exhibition, there is a bazaar for *kriya* and design objects where local artists offer a variety of small products for sale. FKY is important for *kriya* in that a range of diverse traditional arts are displayed and thus strengthened and cultivated. At the economic level FKY is suitable for *kriya* artists because they can sell their products at the bazaar and promote themselves as *kriya* artists. I attended FKY in 2019, and consider it important for *kriya* in Yogyakarta, because it is an authentic festival for arts and *kriya* that is open and welcoming for the general public, as well as for domestic and international tourists. The festival is an opportunity for local *kriya* artists to get a platform in a larger art and festival context (Figure K28).

Art Jog was held from 2008 under the name Jogja Art Fair #1 and presented a series of events within FKY. In 2010, it was separated from FKY and renamed ArtJog. ArtJog was initiated by Heri Pemad, an art manager and painter who graduated from ISI Yogyakarta and established his own art management company in 2004. Heri Pemad serves as ArtJog's managing director, while Bambang "Toko" Witjaksono is its curator. The ArtJog annual art event is supported by the Bakti Budaya Foundation and held at the Jogja National Museum. ArtJog showcases artworks in the fields of painting, sculpture, *kriya*, graphics, photography, film, performance and installation - from mainstream to offbeat.²²⁶ Although ArtJog is no longer called Jogja Art Fair, it has remained an art fair. Therefore, ArtJog is interesting for those *kriya* artists who follow the Western art paradigm in their artistic practice, consisting of creating unique works of art with their personal expression (Figure K29). At ArtJog they have the opportunity to sell their *kriya* objects as artworks.

There are many more art events in Yogyakarta, such as the Jogja Biennale and the Jogja Art Weeks. But these are mainly attended by artists who have studied art and not *kriya*. Of course, there are exceptions of *kriya* artists who are successful in the art world. However, these events are strongly coloured by a Western understanding of art and are therefore less open to *kriya* artists in general.

In my opinion, the exhibitions and events in Yogyakarta are of great importance as they fill an important gap in the art and *kriya* worlds. The fact that these exhibitions and events are not

2023); 'Sejarah FKY | Seperempat Abad Festival Kesenian Yogyakarta', FKY 25 rekreasi, 17th May 2014, <https://web.archive.org/web/20140517121938/http://www.infolky.com/tentang-fky/sejarah-fky> (last visit 9th April 2023); Valentina Seli, 'FESTIVAL KEBUDAYAAN YOGYAKARTA (FKY) 2022 Yogya | GudegNet', gudegnet, 20th September 2022, <https://www.gudeg.net/seni-dan-budaya/6500/festival-kebudayaan-yogyakarta-fky-2022.html> (last visit 9th April 2023).

²²⁶ 'ARTJOG 2023 - About Us', ARTJOG, 2022, <https://www.artjog.id/2023/about-us.php> (last visit 9th April 2023); 'ARTJOG: Dari Jogja untuk Artworld', Goethe Institut Indonesia, 2023, <https://www.goethe.de/ins/id/id/kul/mag/21031617.html> (last visit 9th April 2023).

linked to state institutions or museums but are mainly founded by private *kriya* and art groups has a positive effect on the exhibitions and events themselves, meaning that they are authentic and up to date. As the events and exhibitions come from within the *kriya* and art community,²²⁷ the organisers can count on broad interest and support from their community. FKY and ArtJog are now large and professionally-organised events, yet both were established by private artists and still have that private and welcoming aura. Neither event is specific for *kriya*, but they showcase contemporary Indonesian arts including *kriya* in great variety. Although so far only one event is dedicated to the diverse forms of *kriya* as art (namely the Matra Kriya Fest), Yogyakarta is well positioned in terms of *kriya* events. There are numerous events for batik, traditional *kriya* events, and also events that promote *kriya* products. In Yogyakarta *kriya* is particularly well promoted and supported through governmental funding, as it is the city's mission to maintain its status as a centre for *kriya*, culture and arts.

In the last ten years awareness of *kriya*, as a form of art, has increased in the general public. This could be the result of numerous efforts by academic circles delivered in recent decades. The emerging discourse on the term *kriya* in the 1980s marked an important basis for the appreciation of *kriya*. At that time, some *kriya* experts working as academics started a discourse on a conceptual distinction between the terms *kriya* and *kerajinan*.

1.4 The Terms *Kriya* and *Kerajinan* - Social Construction and Positioning Strategy?

In Indonesian society *kerajinan* is often translated as *handicrafts*, whereas *kriya* is translated as *craft*. However, these translations are imprecise and the terms often get mixed up. It is therefore interesting to question how these two terms evolved and how they were constituted by historical events. To do this we must go back several centuries, when the island of Java came in touch with foreign influences from Hindu, Buddhist and Islam religions with their respective cultural habits. These adopted habits gave rise to the stratification of the Javanese society, resulting in a strong cultural dualism. This dualism separated royal life or *Budaya Agung* (high culture) from peasant life or *Budaya Alit* (low culture). The following

²²⁷ The *kriya* and art community in Yogyakarta comprises many graduates from ISI Yogyakarta, but also artists without any academic background. Mostly, graduates are the initiators of new events.

assumption on the historically-based definition of *kriya* and *kerajinan* is widely accepted by Indonesian academia. It is said that *kriya* was defined as part of *Budaya Agung*, the high culture referring to all activities inside the sultan's palace. The workplace of royal craftspeople was called a *kriyan*, the place where *kriya* objects like swords, batik, masks and others were created. The royal craftspeople truly mastered their craft and were therefore called *empu* (masters).²²⁸ Characteristically, their *kriya* objects reflected aesthetic values, the choice of best materials, skilled hands, and alignment with the *kriya* philosophy. This was a blend of local animistic teachings and the Islamic religion that guided the process of art making. As an example, sword makers undertook a fasting ritual before starting their work. By fasting for many days, they could reach a transcendent state and connect to God Almighty. Though this connection they were able to create the best swords for the sultan.²²⁹ On the visual level, *kriya* objects at the sultan's palaces were created according to strict standards and rules over centuries, and became a heritage of cultural art that was consumed by aristocrats and elite society. Outside the palace walls was *Budaya Alit*, the culture of the non-elite who created *kerajinan* objects. The word *kerajinan* derives from the word stem *rajin* which means diligent. *Kerajinan* objects fulfilled functional daily life uses and their production required more diligence than craftsmanship. The craftspeople were called *pandhe* or *tukang* (workmen / craftsmen).²³⁰

From a social perspective *kriya* and *kerajinan* designated two different kinds of objects made by craftspeople of different ranks. The differentiation between *kriya* and *kerajinan* reflects the existence of a Javanese stratified society which was split into royal and everyday, or elite and non-elite. This duality in society originated in the period when the first sultanates were established. However, the term *kriya* emerged in discourse and was not included in Indonesian art vocabulary until the 1960s. Prior to that, the terms *seni* (art) or *kerajinan* (handicrafts), or a combination of both words: *seni kerajinan* (the art of handicrafts) were prevalently used to describe objects that are called *kriya* objects today. Why did the term *kriya* appear and what does it mean exactly? According to *Kamus Inggris Indonesia* or the Indonesian dictionary, the term *kriya* means "skill".²³¹ The word *kriya* is of Sanskrit origin and can be derived from the word "kr" meaning "to do" or "to work". The Indonesian words

²²⁸ Gustami SP., *Seni kerajinan mebel ukir jepara*, 265–7; Agus Mulyadi, *Produk Kekriyaan Dalam Ranah Senirupa Dan Desain*, 35.

²²⁹ Interview with Satya Brahmantya, *Galeri Benda, The Intangible and Handiworkman*, 26th May 2021.

²³⁰ Gustami SP., *Seni kerajinan mebel ukir jepara*, 265–7; Agus Mulyadi, *Produk Kekriyaan Dalam Ranah Senirupa Dan Desain*, 35.

²³¹ John M. Echols and Hassan Shadily, in *Kamus Indonesia Inggris, An Indonesian-English Dictionary* (Jakarta: Cornell University Press, 1989) 312, 446.

kerja (work), *karya* (piece of work/artwork) and *kriya* are derived from the word stem “kr”.²³² Lecturers at the Indonesian Art Academy (*Akademi Seni Rupa Indonesia*, ASRI)²³³ chose the Sanskrit word *kriya* to designate objects that were created in line with the Indonesian traditional arts. Picking a new word was strategically a smart decision because it offered the opportunity to start a discourse that highlighted the intangible and tangible aspects of Indonesian art heritages and set them apart from Western craft.²³⁴ The intangible aspect of Indonesian art heritage is the *kriya* philosophy which guides *kriya* practice, while the tangible aspects are the different ornamentations, patterns and motifs determined by local cultures. SP. Gustami, a professor and researcher at ISI Yogyakarta is one of the *kriya* masters and a driving force for *kriya*. He devised a definition for *kriya*, which is still cited frequently when speaking about *kriya*. In 1992 he wrote that *seni kriya* or the art of *kriya* is:

“a unique and characteristic work of art that contains a steady and deep content of values concerning aesthetic, symbolic, philosophical and functional values. Therefore, in its realisation it is supported by high “craftsmanship”, as a result [...] *seni kriya* is included in the group of “adiluhung” arts [...]”²³⁵

Gustami’s definition clarifies that *kriya* pieces are not simply craft objects, because they include symbolic and philosophical values. In Yogyakarta these values are strongly tied to Javanese court culture. *Adiluhung* is a term often used in connection with *kriya*, which means a particular type of masterpiece. *Adiluhung* refers to the historical fact that *empu* or the master created masterpieces in the form of *kriya* objects at the sultan’s palace. Accordingly, *adiluhung* is a masterpiece that carries Javanese royal values. It also became a synonym for Indonesian “high art”, but always with reference to the sultan’s palace.²³⁶ In the 1950s, when the art academy (ASRI) was founded, the term *kriya* was no longer used for *Budaya Agung* (high culture) inside the palace walls, but was used outside the palace in the art academy in

²³² Two other words from the same word family are *kryan* and *kriyan*. The word *kryan* designates people at Javanese courts with guardian and officer functions who enjoyed a knightly status. Agus Mulyadi, *Produk Kekriyaan Dalam Ranah Senirupa Dan Desain*, 31.

²³³ ASRI was the forerunner of the art university *Institut Seni Indonesia Yogyakarta* (ISI Yogyakarta).

²³⁴ Interview with Satya Brahmantya, *Infrastructures & the Strength of Kriya*, 10th September 2021.

²³⁵ Gustami, ‘Filosofi Seni Kriya Tradisional Indonesia’, 71. The citation is an English translation by the author from the following original citation in Indonesian: “[...] suatu karya seni yang unik dan karakteristik yang didalamnya mengandung muatan nilai-nilai yang mantap dan mendalam menyangkut nilai estetik, simbolik, filosofis, dan fungsinya. Oleh karena itu di dalam perwujudannya di dukung “craftsmanship” tinggi, akibat nya kehadiran seni kriya termasuk dalam kelompok seni-seni “adiluhung” [...]” Also see Rispul, ‘Seni Kriya Antara Teknik dan Ekspresi’, *CORAK Jurnal Seni Kriya* 1, no. 1 (October 2012): 94.

²³⁶ Interview with Satya Brahmantya, *Galeri Benda, the Intangible of Kriya and Handiwirman*, 26th May 2021.

order to include the high art of the court masters (*empu*). The goal was to incorporate centuries-old craftsmanship, artistic values and standards comprising Javanese rituals, philosophy, and symbolism into the academic curricula.²³⁷

Consequently, when the word *kriya* was established, the term *kerajinan* needed to be redefined. Several lecturers have written about the difference between *kriya* and *kerajinan*. SP. Gustami differentiates *kerajinan* from *kriya* objects by stipulating that *kerajinan* objects are created with an exclusively practical function and utility for ordinary society.²³⁸ The archaeologist, lecturer and descendant of a Yogyakarta sultan's *empu* (master) Dr. Timbul Haryono adds, that *kerajinan* objects are created repeatedly and they lack artistic or aesthetic values.²³⁹ However, the definition is very different outside academia. ASPEHI, the Association of Exporters and Producers of Indonesian Handicrafts, defines *kerajinan* as products made by hand or by a moderate use of tools. Machines can only be used if the direct contribution of the artisan's hand remains the main component of the product.²⁴⁰ *Kerajinan* products are no limited in quantity and can be utilitarian, functional, decorative, culturally attached, aesthetic, artistic, creative, socially and religiously symbolic, filled with meaning. *Kerajinan* products are made from one or several natural raw materials like fibres, textiles, ceramics, wood, metal, stone and others. They can also be made from natural resources like shell, horn or bone. Further components included are recycled or upcycled materials as well as composite materials like acrylic glass.²⁴¹ Thus, the ASEPHI definition shows a blend of the meticulous academic separation of *kerajinan* objects and *kriya* objects. In contrast, in academia, values such as aesthetics, artistry, creativity, and cultural attachment through symbolic and religious meaning are exclusively attributed to *kriya*. It is therefore not surprising that the distinction between *kerajinan* and the newer term *kriya* has not gained recognition by the general public. Thus, *kriya* and *kerajinan* are still used imprecisely within Indonesian society, as the word *kerajinan* has been known and used for much longer than the term *kriya*.²⁴²

²³⁷ Interview with SP. Gustami, *Sejarah Batik dan Kriya di Yogya sejak 1967*, 22nd December 2018.

²³⁸ Interview with SP. Gustami, *Sejarah Batik dan Kriya di Yogya sejak 1967*, 22nd December 2018.

²³⁹ Interview with Timbul Haryono, *The Archaeology of Batik*, 15th March 2022.

²⁴⁰ This definition was adapted from the UNESCO/ITC International Symposium called *Crafts and the international Market: Trade and Custom Codification* held in Manila, Philippines, October 1997. 'Handicrafts Definition', Inacraft Awards - Indonesia Handicraft, 2023, <https://emerging.inacraftaward.com/about/definisi-produk-kerajinan> (last visit 11th June 2023).

²⁴¹ 'Handicrafts Definition'.

²⁴² Interview with SP. Gustami, *The History of Kriya in Yogyakarta since 1967*, 22nd December 2018.

As an example, in 1950 when ASRI, was founded the first *kriya* study programme was called *kerajinan* and *pertukangan*²⁴³. *Pertukangan* is the working field of a *tukang*, a workman or craftsman. In contrast to what was described above, where a *tukang* is of a low rank, SP. Gustami confirms that in olden days, *tukang* meant an appreciated and skilled person, in fact, even literature professors were called *tukang sastra*.²⁴⁴ Another contemporary witness of this shift in meaning is the formal ASRI and ISI lecturer Suhadji. He remembers that, until about 1967, there were just two types of *kerajinan*: *kerajinan rakyat* (people's handicrafts) and *kerajinan adiluhung* (noble handicrafts), which was also called *kerajinan klasik* (classical handicrafts).²⁴⁵ The term *kriya* used in reference to an art object did not exist at that time, but was only used to distinguish between social classes. So, what happened after 1967?

To answer this question, we must investigate the period before that date. After the War for Independence, Sukarno ruled the young republic as the first president of Indonesia from 1949 until 1967. Sukarno was an architect who was known for his affinity with *kerajinan*. During his reign *kerajinan* served as an identity-forming national art. While this may sound romantic, had its downsides, because only *kerajinan adiluhung* was promoted as an art form, which by definition had high artistic value but also followed strict rules and standards set by the sultan's palaces. Thus, on the one hand, Sukarno conserved *kerajinan* to a large extent, but on the other hand he froze any development in this field. In the free art scene (Indonesian modern art), neither innovation nor political statements were possible. When the military dictator Suharto took power in 1967, he immediately initiated some political changes. Unlike Sukarno, who had pursued an inward-looking communist course, Suharto promoted an opening of the country, mainly in regard to the national economy. In August of the same year, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) was founded with headquarters in Jakarta, a political and economic union of five Southeast Asian states comprising Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand.²⁴⁶ With increased and improved trade relations, including with Western countries, *kerajinan* objects became increasingly important as trade products, and were exported successfully from the 1980s and 1990s onwards. The economic value of *kerajinan* products had already begun being clearly recognised in the 1970s. Suddenly, students at ASRI started bringing their works such as wood carvings from home to the academy to be displayed and sold as products. This was a way for them to stay

²⁴³ *Pertukangan* is translated as guild and carpentry. *Pertukangan* refers not only to carpentry but also to the working field of a *tukang* or workman / craftsman.

²⁴⁴ Interview with SP. Gustami, *The History of Kriya in Yogyakarta since 1967*, 22nd December 2018.

²⁴⁵ Interview with Suhadji, *The History of Batik in Yogyakarta since 1967*, 16th December 2018.

²⁴⁶ 'The Founding of ASEAN', Association of Southeast Asian Nations, 2020, <https://asean.org/about-asean/the-founding-of-asean/> (last visit 11th June 2023).

aflot financially, as they often had to support themselves. Thus, it may have been the development and promotion of *kerajinan* as a product with economic value that prompted the subdivision of *kerajinan* and *kriya*.²⁴⁷

Most likely the term *kriya* emerged at around this time to differentiate craft objects from products, economy and commerce. There was no intention to assess craft objects by Western art standards and thus reduce them to their functional and visual aspects, as was done for *kerajinan* objects. Establishing the term *kriya* was an attempt to elevate the elaborate and profusely decorated craft objects to an Indonesian defined field of high art that was driven by the idea of *adiluhung*, which refers to masterpieces by the courts' craftsmen (*empu*). In detail, *kriya* described craft objects comprising three characteristics: 1) the objects were the result of their creator's skilled hands 2) the objects reflected the incorporation of animistic beliefs and cosmology that guides the creation process and 3) the objects referred to traditional ornamentations. Initial attempts to establish the term *kriya* can be traced back to about the mid-1960s. The leaders were the craftsmen and lecturers SP. Gustami, Suhadji, Narno and others who recognised *kriya* as the basis of all visual arts. For these leading individuals the creation of *kriya* objects was about referencing the masterpieces of Javanese traditional art by incorporating their own innovative ideas. They stated that a *kriya* object could be detached from its function but it should be created with cultural meaning and symbolism as its main pillars. With this guideline it was expected that creativity and innovation in *kriya* studies would take place and that *kriya* would get freed from the rigid design rules dictated by the cultural art heritage. However, until the 2000s, the term *kriya* evoked highly contrasting and hotly-debated opinions among students and lecturers at ISI Yogyakarta. The mostly elder lecturers were themselves masters of a *kriya* and they associated aesthetic values very closely with the *adiluhung* value, which required a high level of craftsmanship but also classical (courtly) Hindu-Javanese ornamentation. In contrast, the students interpreted the definition of *kriya* differently. They considered referencing Hindu-Javanese ornamentation, as well as the countless hours of practice leading to a high level of craftsmanship, were less important than discovering and experimenting with (new) craft materials.²⁴⁸

This conflict between students and lecturers which arose in the mid-1990s revolved around a discussion about the *zeitgeist* of *kriya*. This triggered questions about how far *kriya* represented traditional arts, and how far *kriya* was allowed to evolve from traditional arts. But it took well over a decade before these questions were discussed in a wider discourse by

²⁴⁷ Interview with SP. Gustami, *The History of Kriya in Yogyakarta since 1967*, 22nd December 2018; interview with Suhadji, *The History of Batik in Yogyakarta since 19867*, 16th December 2018.

²⁴⁸ Interview with Satya Brahmantya, *Infrastructures & The Strength of Kriya*, 10th September 2021.

Yogyakarta academics and artists. ISI Yogyakarta has posted an educational series on Instagram to explain the differences between *kriya* and *kerajinan*.

In recent years the discourse has been characterised by the predominant question of how to distinguish *kriya* from craft or from *kerajinan*. However, the numerous suggestions on how *kriya* and *kerajinan* could be distinguished have been more of a competition between etymologists. Their different attempts at definitions have not led to a shift in the meaning of the two terms. In discourse, the word *kriya* is often interpreted broadly to emphasise that *kriya* has a fundamental function in art. As an example, *kriya* is used in combination with other words, such as *kriya desain*, *kriya craft* and *kriya art*. This suggestion supports the assumption that *kriya* is the basis of all arts (Graphics 2A, 2B and 2C). The *kriya* expert SP. Gustami emphasises the spiritual pillars of *kriya* and pointed them out in his book entitled *Butir-Butir Mutiara Estetika Timur* (2007), Pearls of the Eastern Aesthetics. He drew a scheme that proposes an aesthetic theory for *kriya*. In this, *kriya* is placed in the middle of two triangles that show important elements on each edge such as the teaching of taste (*rasa*), of ratio, and of the priest; the spirit, the soul and the mind. Gustami refers to these triangles as a trilogy of balance. A translated reproduction of his scheme can be found in the appendix volume of this thesis (Graphic 3). In my opinion the scheme explains well the interconnection between different entities and elements of spiritual life that are important for the creation of *kriya* objects.²⁴⁹

Kriya is also subdivided into functional objects or artistic objects with personal expression. This subdivision emphasises that functional objects are also *kriya*, and not necessarily craft or *kerajinan*.²⁵⁰ Yogyakarta artists, lecturers, academics and curators broadly agree that *kriya* is the root of all visual arts. However, when it comes to more precise definitions, opinions differ. This shows that *kriya* has opened up a discursive field in which art practice, the heritage of traditional arts and contemporary forms of *kriya* are all being negotiated.

***Kriya* Efforts**

The initial efforts to introduce the term *kriya* started with the key lecturers and craftsmen SP. Gustami, Suhadji and others back in 1966. They influenced their students substantially with their vision of a distinct concept of art practice, namely *kriya*, and their consciousness of its importance for Indonesian visual arts. But it took another three decades until the idea of *kriya*

²⁴⁹ Gustami's scheme can be found in his book *Butir-Butir Mutiara Estetika Timur - Ide Dasar Penciptaan Seni Kriya Indonesia*, 312.

²⁵⁰ AGUS ANWAR, 'TEKO EKSPRESI DENGAN MEDIA KERAMIK', (s1, Surakarta, Institut Seni Indonesia Surakarta, 2017) 26.

began to be spread and accepted widely. In the 1990s the group of lecturers mentioned above were teaching at the art university ISI Yogyakarta when they founded PAKRIYO, *Paguyaban Kriyawan Yogyakarta*, or the Community of Craftspeople in Yogyakarta. It was through the efforts of PAKRIYO that probably the best-known *kriya* exhibition took place in 1995 at the National Gallery in Jakarta, with students and lecturers from ISI Yogyakarta participating. A year later another *kriya* exhibition followed, at the Purna Budaya in Yogyakarta. PAKRIYO was not only an association for lecturers but also a meeting point for many craftspeople in Yogyakarta, including *kriya* students. One of these was the Yogyakarta craftsman Satya Brahmantya who studied metal *kriya* at ISI in the 1990s. He remembers PAKRIYO as an open association that welcomed all sorts of *kriya* interested people who wanted to network and combine their forces in order to get things moving. Brahmantya learned a lot from the elder craftspeople at PAKRIYO. Joining PAKRIYO and being in the *kriya* scene inspired Brahmantya to open a *kriya* gallery himself.²⁵¹ He felt that his own skills were not good enough to become a *kriya* master, since he had started his career quite late. He had attended a standard high school only come in touch with craft tools only when he attended ISI Yogyakarta. Whereas most of his skilled friends in the *kriya* scene had enjoyed craft training since they were kids, either because they grew up in a craft family or because they went to a special art high school with a focus on *kriya*, for example, wood carving or batik. Nevertheless, Brahmantya wanted to support his talented student friends who were creating great *kriya* artworks. He felt that their artworks needed to be shown to the public. Luckily, his grandparents owned a house near Malioboro Street in Yogyakarta, and allowed him to use the main room as a gallery. Thus, in 1999 Brahmantya opened Galeri Benda, the Object Gallery, with the support of Sujud Dartanto, a *kriya* friend of his. At 9 meters by 10 meters the space was big enough to display several *kriya* objects. At that time, there were only three galleries in Yogyakarta. First was the government-owned Purna Budaya gallery, which still exists today under the name Taman Budaya. Then there was the Bentara Budaya gallery, which was owned by the newspaper KOMPAS. The third gallery was Cemeti, run by the artist couple Mella Jaarsma and Ninditiyo Adipurnomo. If *kriya* artists had a close relationship to governmental employees, they would exhibit their works at Purna Budaya. If they had close ties to the media, they would prefer to exhibit at Bentara Budaya. Lastly, if they were more into contemporary art with a Western reference to fine art, they would exhibit their works at Cemeti. Thus, the outlet for *kriya* objects was unbelievably limited compared to the population of Yogyakarta. Galeri Benda was intended to show three-dimensional artworks,

²⁵¹ Interview with Satya Brahmantya, *Infrastructures & The Strength of Kriya*, 10th September 2021.

and was not limited to the category of sculpture, installation, or relief. It was a much-needed neutral space for *kriya* artists, according to Brahmantya and Sujud. They were keen to show the strength of the hands, the skilled hands that bear knowledge and memory and can create magnificent *kriya* objects without the master's brain (hand memory). The deep dialogue between *kriya* artist and the materials he or she uses was another topic that Brahmantya and Sujud wanted to showcase in their gallery. A well-known example of this deep dialogue was the Sumatra artist Handiwirman Saputra, who studied with Brahmantya and was invited to the opening exhibition at Galeri Benda. Brahmantya has always been amazed by Handiwirman's artworks, which reflect deep examination of materials, as well as sometimes a struggle with materials. Handiwirman had found his own artistic way to work with various materials. Brahmantya was impressed by the artworks Handiwirman had created when he was a student, knowing that Handiwirman did not have many references to books and Western art which could have influenced him in his early stage as an artist.²⁵²

After five years the Galeri Benda had to be closed again for several reasons. Firstly, both Brahmantya and Sujud were busy with other projects at that time. Sujud had started his career as a curator and art critic, while Brahmantya had plans to establish his own interior design company. However, the predominant reason was that both felt the time was not yet ripe to show *kriya* objects as artworks in public exhibitions. There was too little discourse and understanding of *kriya* objects. Thus, both Sujud and Brahmantya found other ways to disperse their ideas of *kriya*. Sujud started writing as a curator and teaching at art schools, while Brahmantya gained influence in the *kriya* industry.²⁵³

Sujud and Brahmantya's observation was backed by an article by the curator Asmudjo, who reflected on the role of *kriya* objects by stating that there was a lack of discourse about *kriya*.²⁵⁴ In 2005, the situation was difficult for *kriya*. *Kriya* had evolved from the traditional art realm and no longer followed the traditional art principles of mythology, ritual, symbol, and aesthetics. At the same time, it was not self-evident that *kriya* objects should enter the contemporary art scene because Indonesian contemporary art was caught in a dilemma between two issues, namely the cultural aspects of West and East, and the increasing modernisation of society, which produced a spirit of individuation, rationality, and liberalism, a spirit that was so opposed to *kriya* practice.²⁵⁵

²⁵² Interview with Satya Brahmantya, *Galeri Benda, The Intangible of Kriya and Handiwirman*, 26th May 2021.

²⁵³ Interview with Satya Brahmantya, *Galeri Benda, The Intangible of Kriya and Handiwirman*, 26th May 2021.

²⁵⁴ Asmudjo Jono Irianto, 'Kriya Dalam Wacana Seni Rupa Kontemporer', *Majalah Seni Rupa - Visual Arts*, March 2005.

²⁵⁵ Deni S. Jusmani, 'Membaca Eksistensi Produksi Dan Pameran Kriya Kontemporer Di Yogyakarta', *Matajendela - Seni Budaya Yogyakarta*, 2016.

In conclusion, it seems important to me to make a distinction between fine art practitioners who exhibit art objects with *kriya* elements, and *kriya* artists (people with *kriya* training) who show their *kriya* artworks in fine art exhibitions. Since the 1990s, artists (with fine art training) have used traditional Javanese elements in their artworks. They have also exhibited entire artworks in the form of *kriya* objects. But these *kriya* objects were often made with the help of craftspeople and not by the artists themselves. This is an artist's practice that we know from the West. Conversely, it is still rare for young *kriya* students to show their *kriya* objects in fine art exhibitions. In their courses at ISI Yogyakarta, *kriya* students are primarily trained in the craft of *kriya* with a view to establishing their own businesses and selling *kriya* products. Therefore, *kriya* students have little exposure to the paradigm of Indonesian contemporary art.

However, a handful of *kriya* alumni from ISI Yogyakarta felt that an exhibition format for *kriya* objects was missing. Therefore, in 2016, they established the afore mentioned Matra Award, which showcased *kriya* objects in an exhibition and awarded prizes to the *kriya* artist judged to have created the best artwork. For conceptual questions regarding mounting this specific *kriya* event, the alumni group counted on advisory support from Satya Brahmantya and Sujud Dartanto. As outlined above, the Matra Award has given rise to the biennial Matra Kriya Fest. Brahmantya and Sujud are very pleased with the success of this festival, as it represents a renewed and successful attempt to create an outlet specific to *kriya* objects, which the two had tried to create ten years earlier with their Galeri Benda.

Kriya is not only shown in exhibitions as works of art but is also strongly tied to industry. In Yogyakarta the handmade textile industry is quite big. Especially batik, which is produced in large numbers as garments and home textiles exemplifies that *kriya* has a significant industrial aspect.

Chapter 2

Batik – Innovating Heritages

“[...] Batik technique is different from painting or other textile techniques. In my opinion, the batik technique is very unique due to our imaginative power of how to create layers and levels of colour by applying batik wax (*malam*) onto a piece of cloth.”²⁵⁶ – Meta Enjelita, ISI Yogyakarta textile *kriya* graduate and textile artist

This quote from the textile artist and batik maker Meta Enjelita expresses her fascination for batik and in particular for the applied technique. She refers to the reservation technique, where batik wax is applied to reserve parts of the fabric before dyeing. This step needs to be repeated for each colour. For Meta, the creation of a multicoloured batik requires several steps of planning and a good imagination. Other batik makers I spoke to are also fascinated by the batik technique. Kang Pandono from Yogyakarta, who is a third-generation batik maker, describes batik as something mysterious, because only after the last step when the wax is washed out is the result revealed.²⁵⁷ Besides the fascination of seeing the result at the very end of the process, other batik makers are equally fascinated by the whole process, regardless of the result. Moreover, numerous batik makers are fascinated by the cultural aspects of batik and by the fact that batik is a guardian of life philosophies. Accordingly, the batik artist Joan Miroe²⁵⁸ states:

“I feel the vibration of life and I learn to have patience which by itself represents a meticulous discipline and meditation work during the process of learning batik.

I am interested in batik because batik is an honour that has been entrusted to the culture of our ancestors [...] [that] persists until the present day. [Batik] [...] is based on a concept which expresses the value of life and balance and the merit of the outstanding patience

²⁵⁶ Interview with Meta Enjelita, *Batik Style*, 21st April 2021. Meta's quote was translated into English by the author. The original quote in Indonesian is as follows: “[...] teknik batik berbeda dengan melukis atau teknik tekstil yang lainnya. Bagaimana kita berimajinasi membuat lapisan dan tingkatan warna dengan menggunakan lilin batik (*malam*) ke atas lembar kain, menjadikan teknik batik sangat unik menurut saya.”

²⁵⁷ Interview with Kang Pandono, *Local Market & Batik Motif Trends*, 6th April 2021.

²⁵⁸ “Joan Miroe” is Joan's artist name. His real name is Joan Widya Anugrah. He is in his thirties and started batik making in 1999.

required to accomplish a long artistic process.”²⁵⁹ - Joan Miroe, batik artist
from Yogyakarta

Joan refers to the traditional batik technique²⁶⁰ which continues to be used frequently. The traditional batik technique especially requires a lot of patience to learn and master it. For Joan, learning batik is a never-ending process, although he has been making batik for more than two decades. He asserts that batik is like an open book, revealing a lot of knowledge about social life and culture.²⁶¹ Joan’s quote also shows his consciousness that batik has been passed down through generations and has become a form of cultural heritage – and that is not only the technique that has been handed down, but also the cultural and symbolic meanings of social life. Regarding the cultural value of batik, Sapuan, a batik entrepreneur from Pekalongan, says that: “[...] batik is one of the eyes of culture, which vigorously exude the philosophy of life.”²⁶² Sapuan is known for his thematic batiks which depict cultural stories as richly decorated images (Figure B1). As an entrepreneur, Sapuan also assigns economic benefits to batik.²⁶³

In Indonesia the batik industry operates largely without electrical machines; in most cases electricity serves only to heat a wax bucket to keep the wax fluid. Thus, a main characteristic of batik production is that it is largely based on manual power. A lot of research has been carried out into Indonesian batik and batik technique in the last century which underlines the relevance of batik as a textile art, as a refined craft and as a cultural cloth of the Archipelago’s peoples. In this chapter I therefore provide a short historical outline of the batik technique, to make this thesis more comprehensive and intelligible in terms of its context and significance. I highlight Indonesia’s national definition of batik, as well as the state of the art regarding techniques, tools and processes. In addition, I will explain the batik philosophy and the visual principles behind batik motifs which are important for understanding and creating batik patterns. Since batik is also a functional garment, I will describe selected topics to characterise the batik industry. Next, I will focus on the contemporary batik scene in

²⁵⁹ Interview with Joan Miroe, *Batik Painting Artist Yogyakarta*, 27th March 2021. Joan’s quote was translated into English by the author. The original quote in Indonesian is as follows: “Saya merasakan getaran hidup belajar sabar teliti disiplin serta meditasi kerja karya dalam proses pembelajaran batik.

Saya tertarik membatik karna batik itu sebuah kehormatan titipan budaya leluhur nenek moyang [...] [dan] masih berdiri sampai saat ini. [Batik] menyimpan konsep nilai kehidupan dan keseimbangan serta nilai keunikan ketelitian kesabaran proses yang lama dan artistik.”

²⁶⁰ The traditional batik technique is called *batik tulis* and will be described in detail later in this chapter.

²⁶¹ Joan refers to the acronym “kitab” from the word “batik”. *Kitab* means book in Indonesian. Interview with Joan Miroe, *Batik Painting Artist Yogyakarta*, 27th March 2021.

²⁶² Interview with Sapuan, *Visual Art Principles*, 25th January 2022. Sapuan’s quote was translated into English by the author. The original quote in Indonesian is as follows: “[...] batik merupakan salah satu mata budaya yg didalamnya syarat atau penuh dengan filosofi kehidupan. Batik bisa juga memberi manfaat secara ekonomi.”

²⁶³ Interview with Sapuan, *Visual Art Principles*, 25th January 2022.

Yogyakarta, with its numerous events and exhibitions. To round off the topic of batik I will introduce two female batik artists and their works of art.

2.1 The Art and Craft of Batik in Yogyakarta

The batik technique in Yogyakarta does not differ significantly from the batik technique in other regions of Indonesia. Although there are local technical variations, which I will describe in this chapter, I will use the general term “batik technique” for the technique that is used in Indonesia. This is called the traditional batik technique and it is predominantly used in industry as well as in the art scene. I consider Yogyakarta a suitable place to study the history and state of the art of batik, as Yogyakarta is a centre for culture and arts (as explained in the previous chapter) where the sultan’s palace coexists well with a thriving batik industry. The state-run Balai Besar Kerajinan dan Batik (BBKB) (Great Hall of Handicrafts and Batik) is also based in Yogyakarta and contributes significantly to the development and promotion of batik. But let us start with a question: What is known about the origins of batik?

Origins

Batik is a wax-resist dyeing technique which is mainly carried out on fine woven cotton. The word “batik” is derived from the two words *amba* and *nitik* in *Bahasa Jawa* or the Javanese Language. A common notion is that the word *amba* refers to “writing”, while *nitik* in Indonesian is *titik*, meaning dot; so that batik means “writing in dots”.²⁶⁴ A more philosophical notion on batik is suggested by the Yogyakarta craftsman and designer Satya Brahmantya who says that *amba* in Javanese means to read a phenomenon, and *nitik* derives from *niteni*, meaning drawing a conclusion. He goes on to explain that, in former days, batik makers used to translate a phenomenon into their batik motifs. Thus, batik motifs not only have a visual aesthetic, but they are signs of certain phenomena. Consequently, a contemplator of batik can read the phenomenon inherent in the motif and draw conclusions from it.²⁶⁵

²⁶⁴ The special tool required to apply wax onto the fabric might explain why batik was literally described as “writing in/with dots”. For further linguistic references on “batik” see Karsam, *BATIK DARI MASA KERATON HINGGA REVOLUSI INDUSTRI 4.0* (Surabaya, 2019), 2; Alicia Amaris Trixie, ‘FILOSOFI MOTIF BATIK SEBAGAI IDENTITAS BANGSA INDONESIA’, *Folio* 1, no. 1 (1 July 2020): 2-3.

²⁶⁵ Interview with Satya Brahmantya, *Galeri Benda, The Intangible of Kriya and Handiwirman*, 26th May 2021.

If we want to answer the question of where batik comes from, I agree with batik expert and Surakarta palace servant Hardjonagoro, who suggests distinguishing between fabric and technique: batik can refer to the batik technique or to the Javanese batik garment. Let us first look at the batik technique. Even though this textile technique bears an Indonesian term its origins cannot be traced back to the Archipelago. Fragments of batik cloth have been found in archaeological tomb excavations in Egypt (1st, 5th and 6th centuries AD), China (6th century AD) and the Middle East (5th and 6th centuries AD). Decorating ornaments with a resist-dye technique were used in Sumer, Egypt, Turkestan, Peru and West Africa. It appears that batik could have evolved independently in different regions of the world.²⁶⁶ As far as the Archipelago is concerned, one accepted assumption is that the earliest batik fabrics were made in Sunda (West Java) and Toraja (Sulawesi). Rice paste or beeswax was applied to hand-woven cotton with a bamboo nib. The simple but effective motifs such as swastikas, spirals, and swirling sun symbols of these textiles are among the well-known tribal and pre-Hindu motifs of the Archipelago. These motifs can be related to the visual language of Javanese batik motifs. It is generally accepted that the batik technique²⁶⁷ is at least as old as the Hindu-Buddhist religions on Java, or that batik was even made in protohistoric times (megalithic). Another assertion by G.P. Rouffaer is that the batik technique was probably introduced from India or Sri Lanka in the 6th or 7th century AD.²⁶⁸ In contradiction to this suggestion, however research by Dutch archaeologist J. L. A. Brandes reveals that ten elements of indigenous culture, such as *wayang*, *gamelan* and batik, were already present in the Archipelago before the Indian influence.²⁶⁹ Concerning the origins of batik, other experts point to the similarity of batik motifs with those contained in the reliefs and stone carvings of the Yogyakarta temples Prambanan and Borobudur. These Javanese stone carvings from around the 13th century reveal batik ornamentations, as well as figurative illustrations of people wearing batik-like cloth. Repetitive textile patterns were also found in stone carvings on the walls of Prabanan (Hindu temple, 800 AD). This has led researchers to believe that Javanese batik has existed for more than 1,000 years.²⁷⁰ Fraser-Lu states that these early stone carvings are unlikely to be evidence of early batik in Java, but are of a rather more recent

²⁶⁶ Sylvia Fraser-Lu, *Indonesian Batik: Processes, Patterns, and Places*, Images of Asia (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1986), 1; Fiona Kerlogue, *The Book of Batik Featuring Selections from the Rudolf G. Smend Collection* (Singapore: Archipelago, 2004), 17; Gillow, *Traditional Indonesian Textiles* / John Gillow; Photographs by Barry Dawson, 41; Stuart Robinson, *A History of Printed Textiles: Block, Roller, Screen, Design, Dyes, Fibres, Discharge, Resist, Further Sources for Research*. (London: Studio Vista, 1969), 40.

²⁶⁷ However, we have to note that these first forms of batik are a far cry from today's fine Javanese batik, as very rudimentary tools were used at the time.

²⁶⁸ Susan M. Arensberg, *Javanese Batiks*, (Boston: Olympic Marketing Corp, 2010), 17; Roojen, *Batik Design*, 12; Fraser-Lu, *Indonesian Batik: Processes, Patterns, and Places*, 1.

²⁶⁹ Amanah Agustin, 'SEJARAH BATIK DAN MOTIF BATIK DI INDONESIA', *Seminar Nasional Riset Inovatif II*, 2014, 541.

²⁷⁰ Arensberg, *Javanese Batiks*; Fraser-Lu, *Indonesian Batik: Processes, Patterns, and Places*, 2; Gillow, *Traditional Indonesian Textiles* / John Gillow; Photographs by Barry Dawson, 41; Robinson, *A History of Printed Textiles*, 40.

origin. It is argued that the word “batik” cannot be found in *Bahasa Jawa Kuno* (Old Javanese Language) and that detailed Javanese batik patterns were only possible on finely woven imported fabric from India.²⁷¹ Hardjonagoro also doubts the prehistoric existence of batik textiles, and even questions the wearing of batik textiles prior to the Mataram era. His assumption is based on studies of Middle Javanese literature (13th–15th centuries) and information on the dresses worn in this era.²⁷² In summary, experts agree that despite extensive research into the origins of the batik technique, the results remain inconclusive.

Although the origins of the batik technique are not clear, it can be argued that it was the Javanese people who developed batik to its highest level and subtlety through their refined craftsmanship.²⁷³ The Javanese developed the *canting tulis*, a pen-like tool to apply wax precisely in the form of small dots and fine lines. This tool enabled them to draw indescribably intricate and fine patterns that transformed any white cloth into an elaborate and precious batik garment which became a fundamental part of Javanese life and culture.²⁷⁴ Based on his research on Javanese literature and ritual textiles with their respective patterns, Hardjonagoro suggests that batik became common as a garment in Islamic Java after the collapse of the Majapahit Kingdom, and that it began to flourish during the reign of Sultan Agung Hanyokrokusumo, a sultan from the Mataram Empire (Central Java), at the beginning of the 17th century.²⁷⁵

Function

The batik technique was originally used to create fabrics for clothing. Untailored batik fabrics called *sarongs* were simply wrapped around the body and worn by both Indonesian men and women. The *sarong* is a rectangular textile which is sewn together at the two wide ends to form a tube. It is usually 180 centimetres wide and the pattern is divided into two parts, namely a *badan* (body) and a *kepala* (head) (Figure B2). There is a *pagi-sore sarong* – meaning morning-afternoon *sarong* – which refers to two different design parts within the

²⁷¹ Fraser-Lu, *Indonesian Batik: Processes, Patterns, and Places*, 2.

²⁷² K. R. T. Hardjonagoro, ‘The Place of Batik in the History and Philosophy of Javanese Textiles: A Personal View’, in *Indonesian Textiles: Irene Emery Roundtable on Museum Textiles, 1979 Proceedings* (Washington D. C.: Textile Museum, 1980), 224-7.

²⁷³ Arensberg, *Javanese Batiks*, 19; van Hout, *Introduction*, 8, 161; Kerlogue, *Batik*, 17; Tassilo Adam, *The Art of Batik in Java* (New York: The Needle and Bobbin Club, 1935), 3; Fraser-Lu, *Indonesian Batik: Processes, Patterns, and Places*, vii; Gillow *Traditional Indonesian Textiles* / John Gillow ; Photographs by Barry Dawson, 41; Roojen, *Batik Design*, 12.

²⁷⁴ Aruman Aruman, Deni Junaedi, and Isbandono Hariyanto, “Laporan Akhir Penelitian Hibah Bersaing - Batik Postmodern (Pengadaptasian Elemen Artistik Lukisan Modern Indonesia dalam Teknik dan Moti Batik Tradisional Yogyakarta)”, *Institut Seni Indonesia Yogyakarta Lembaga Penelitian* 695 / Kriya Tekstil (2015): 1.

²⁷⁵ Hardjonagoro, ‘The Place of Batik in the History and Philosophy of Javanese Textiles: A Personal View’, 225-8.

sarong. The diagonal separation of the *pagi* design can be worn by cleverly draping it so that the *sore* side is invisible. In the afternoon or evening, the *sore* design is shown, by re-draping the *sarong*.²⁷⁶ There are also other vertical separations of the two design parts (Figure B3).

Another untailored batik fabric worn for more formal events is the *kain panjang*, which literally means long cloth, which is 250 centimetres long and 107 centimetres wide. Women drape their *kain panjang* left over right, ending with narrow pleats in the front, whereas men drape right over left, folding broad pleats also in the front. An even longer cloth is the *dodot*, consisting of two batik fabrics sewn together. As an item of royal clothing the *dodot* is worn over silk trousers and folded as an overskirt. Then there are two garments worn by either only women or only men: women of the royal family also wear a *kemben* (Figure B4), which is a narrow batik fabric tied around the breast, often combined with a *dodot*. The *iket kepala* is a square batik fabric which is tied around men's heads. Through different colours, motifs and ways of tying the fabric around the head, this clothing can express the wearer's personal style.²⁷⁷

Apart from its function as clothing, batik also had and still has, cultural functions. Batik *sarongs*, with their locally varying patterns, reflect the identity of communities from different regions. In the past, batik also served to make social stratification visible. For example, the sultans and their family members wore batik patterns that were forbidden for the rest of the population.²⁷⁸

In colonial times, batik clothing also served to mark social status. Although the Dutch settlers were soon fascinated by batik, they only wore it at home, collected it or valued it as a noble gift. This shows that the Dutch settlers had a paradoxical relationship with batik. They did not wear batik in public in order to clearly distinguish themselves from the natives. However, wearing batik at home showed the settlers' love for the people in the Dutch East Indies and an increasing appreciation of the material culture.²⁷⁹

Another important function of batik is the symbolic significance of certain patterns that used to be important in ceremonies and rituals. A carefully handmade batik fabric with the

²⁷⁶ The *sarong* is a typical dress known in the Malay region. Besides the batik version there are three other versions, namely a simple *sarong* without a pattern made from silk or cotton, a checkerboard or chess patterned *sarong* and another version is the *sarong* decorated with gold tie and embroideries. Jill Condra, *Encyclopedia of National Dress: Traditional Clothing around the World [2 Volumes]* (ABC-CLIO, 2013), 337-8; Tyar Ratuannisa et al., 'Shifting of Batik Clothing Style as Response to Fashion Trends in Indonesia', *Mudra Jurnal Seni Budaya* 35, no. 2 (16th June 2020): 134. For an overview of batik clothing with drawings and pictures see Fiona Kerlogue, *Batik: Design, Style & History: Featuring Selections from the Rudolf G. Smend Collection* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2004).

²⁷⁷ Condra, *Encyclopedia of National Dress*, 338.

²⁷⁸ Kerlogue, *Batik*, 31-2.

²⁷⁹ Van Dartel, 'The Tropenmuseum and Trade', 89-90.

corresponding motif was believed to have magical powers. Nowadays, the significance of traditional batik patterns is appreciated and worn especially during family occasions and ceremonies. In the past, and still today, batik fabrics function as a valuable gift within society.

2.1.1 Tools, Techniques and Processes: State of the Art

Techniques and Definitions

Indonesia's batik techniques definitions are written down in the *Sistem Informasi Standar Nasional Indonesia*, the National Standard Information System of Indonesia, with the number: SNI 0239:2014.²⁸⁰ In cooperation with academics, cultural observers, batik entrepreneurs, and associations, the Balai Besar Kerajinan dan Batik (BBKB) determined the following definition:²⁸¹

Batik is a handicraft [*kerajinan*] resulting in colouring with hindrance using hot *malam* [batik wax] as colour barrier by applying adhesive batik wax with the main tools in the form of *canting tulis* and or *canting cap* to form a motif with certain meaning.²⁸²

Batik making are classified by three main techniques. The first and oldest one, is called *batik tulis*. *Tulis* means writing in Indonesian and implies that, liquid wax is applied on the fabric with a pen-like tool, called *canting tulis* (Figure B12). The SNI defined characteristic parameters of *batik tulis* fabrics, which are: the smell of *malam* (batik wax), irregular wax marks on drawn lines, motif repetition, motif connection, possible colour seepage caused by thin wax scratches or irregularities in the fragments of the *malam* and on its edges (Figure B5). Further, the number, size, distance, and shape of an *isen* (filling) in a motif area, are not always the same and wax crackles are always irregular.²⁸³

²⁸⁰ Badan Standardisasi Nasional, *SNI Batik Pengertian dan Istilah*, Pub. L. No. 0239:2014, 1 (Jakarta, Indonesia: Badan Standardisasi Nasional, 2014), https://www.bsn.go.id/main/sni/isi_sni/5 (last visit 22nd December 2021).

²⁸¹ Interview with Edi Eskak, BBKB & Batik, 16th November 2021.

²⁸² Badan Standardisasi Nasional, *SNI Batik Pengertian dan Istilah*, Pub. L. No. 0239:2014, 1. The original citation is in Indonesian: "Batik adalah kerajinan tangan sebagai hasil pewarnaan secara perintang menggunakan *malam* (lilin batik) panas sebagai perintang warna dengan alat utama pelekak lilin batik berupa *canting tulis* dan atau *canting cap* untuk membentuk motif tertentu yang memiliki makna." English translation by the author.

²⁸³ The *Batik tulis* technique is defined by the Indonesian National Standard Number: SNI 8302:2016. Joni Setiawan, "Pertanyaan: Bagaimana cara membedakan kain bermotif dan kain batik?", *IntranetBBKB Balai Besar Kerajinan Dan Batik* (blog), 14th September 2017, intranet.batik.go.id/index.php/informasipublik/pertanyaan/17757/response/87/dimotius_yoga (last visit 14th July 2022).

The second technique is called *batik cap*,²⁸⁴ which is done by using a copper block called *canting cap* to stamp liquid wax onto the fabric (Figure B6). One *canting cap* usually forms an entire design unit, that can be repeated.²⁸⁵ The design unit can either be repeated in the same way, or with a shift of each repetition. As with *batik tulis*, *batik cap*'s characteristics are also colour seepage and irregular wax fractions. Unlike *batik tulis*, *batik cap* shows the same number, size, distance, and shape of the *isen* (filling) in a motif area, due to the stamp repetitions.²⁸⁶ The copper stamp became popular in the mid-19th century and was probably inspired by India's wooden blocks. In the 1830s, European mass production of printed batik imitations was exported to Java and were purchased by the masses, because batik motifs became fashionable to wear. More wealthy people still preferred authentic batik and demanded much of it. This led the Javanese batik entrepreneurs to respond, by creating the *canting cap*. At that time, the highly time-consuming *batik tulis* production struggled to meet the increasing need for batik fabrics.²⁸⁷ To create a piece of *batik tulis* it takes about two to three months, depending on the motifs.²⁸⁸ In contrast to this slow process, a piece of *batik cap* can be completed within two or three days.²⁸⁹

The third technique is a combination of the *batik tulis* and *batik cap* technique. Usually, a main pattern is stamped with the *canting cap* and details are added with the *canting tulis*, which is a fabric called *batik kombinasi*, combined batik.

There is another technical process, called *batik colet*, that emerged with the introduction of synthetic colours (Figure B7). *Colet* refers to a dab or splotch. To start with, the white fabric is clamped in a wooden frame and laid horizontally on a table, to allow to pour liquid synthetic colours onto the fabric. The beforehand applied wax serves as borders for different colour areas. Smaller parts are coloured with a fine brush. This technique speeds up the creation of a multicoloured fabric, because the piece of textile stays clamped in the wooden frame for the whole process and does not need to be dipped in several dye baths. The *colet* method is the fastest one to get a multicoloured fabric, but it confines the design and appearance of piece. Different colour areas can only be separated by a wax line, which results in a white line (Figure B8). Only synthetic colours are used for this technique, as dyeing with

²⁸⁴ Irfa ina Rohana Salma, 'REVIEW: PENGEMBANGAN BATIK MOTIF KHAS DAERAH DI BALAI BESAR KERAJINAN DAN BATIK', 149-62, 150.

²⁸⁵ Fraser-Lu, *Indonesian Batik: Processes, Patterns, and Places*, 11; Gillow, *Traditional Indonesian Textiles / John Gillow; Photographs by Barry Dawson*, 44; Kerlogue, *Batik*, 20; Robinson, *A History of Printed Textiles*, 47.

²⁸⁶ More details on filling components are given in the subchapter on batik motifs of. Setiawan, 'Pertanyaan: Bagaimana cara membedakan kain bermotif dan kain batik?'

²⁸⁷ Gillow, *Traditional Indonesian Textiles / John Gillow; Photographs by Barry Dawson*, 42.

²⁸⁸ The creation of fine *batik tulis* textiles need up to one year, depending on the complexity of the design.

²⁸⁹ Interview with Djandjang Purwo Saedjati, *Batik Technique*, 10th November 2020. Taufiqoh Binti Rohmani, Ita Nurdevi, and Husnul Khotimah, 'BATIK SEBAGAI WARISAN BUDAYA INDONESIA', vol. 3, 2018, 59.

natural colours is more promising with a dye bath, where the textile is repeatedly dipped into the dye bath.

There are variations of the above-mentioned techniques, that influence the appearance of the batik fabric. One of these variations is a white background, which is not common for the original batik process. To obtain a white background, an old and a new technique are known. In the old technique –known in Nusa Tenggara– the white fabric is covered completely with liquid batik wax and is left to cool down the wax. After that, motifs are stamped out of the wax area with a hot *canting cap*. The fabric is now ready for dyeing. The result looks quite different to usually processed batik, as a white background with coloured motifs look inverted to the common batik textiles.²⁹⁰ The newer technique requires chemicals. First, the white fabric is dyed completely with one colour. After the fabric has dried, batik wax is applied in the desired motifs to reserve coloured areas. Then, the fabric is treated with urea to remove the colour in the background (Figure B9).²⁹¹

Batik textiles are also decorated with gold dust or gold leaf for festive and ceremonial events. Gold elements are either aligned along batik pattern or, they form a new layer of design elements on top of the batik pattern. In Yogyakarta's history, the application of gold has been made with albumen. Gold decorated batik textiles are called *prada*, and they look precious and are expensive.²⁹²

If gold is not used, what makes a piece of batik “fine” and valuable? For the quality of a batik textile the raw fabric is crucial. The finer the fabric is woven, the finer and more uniform the surface becomes, and the better appear the fine lines and dots of batik motifs. Apart from cotton, batik production relies on silk and rayon. Batik on silk is more valuable than batik on cotton or rayon, due to the higher price of the raw material. Labour-intensive *batik tulis* fabrics, which are still being produced in workshops, cost much more than, a piece of *batik kombinasi*, *batik cap* or *batik colet*. Important parameters for the price and esteem of *batik tulis* textiles are the number of colours, motifs and the level of detailedness (*kerumitan*) (Figure B3). Another quality criterion is, how the wax has penetrated the fabric. A well-done piece of batik looks the same on both sides of the fabric and there are no coloured veins

²⁹⁰ Edi Eskak and Irfa'ina Rohana Salma, 'Menggali nilai-nilai solidaritas dalam motif-motif batik Indonesia' in: *Jantra* 13, no. 2 (2018), 115-6.

²⁹¹ Interview with Djandjang Purwo Saedjati, *Batik Technique*, 10th November 2020.

²⁹² Fraser-Lu, *Indonesian Batik: Processes, Patterns, and Places*, 9; Gillow, *Traditional Indonesian Textiles / John Gillow; Photographs by Barry Dawson*, 48.

visible from crackled wax.²⁹³ The use of a colour range similar to traditional natural colours, make batik look more precious than the use of gaudy, flashy colours. In many cases, batik dyed with natural colours, are sold at a higher price than batik dyed with synthetic colours. Natural dyeing takes much longer, and results in a refined and subtle colour appearance (Figure B10).²⁹⁴

Other technical variations for batik processes are the use of alternative materials for the copper stamp or, other resist materials than hot batik wax. Batik makers and academics question the narrow batik definition of Indonesia's SNI, that clearly prescribes, "using hot *malam* (batik wax) as colour barrier"²⁹⁵. Historically, other materials have been used as colour barrier, like glutinous rice paste, tubers and a special kind of mud. Today, batik makers also use "cold wax", which is a mixture of paraffin and beeswax, that has a lower melting point than *malam*, the traditionally used batik wax. Yogyakarta's batik researcher and entrepreneur Nurohmad, suggests a new definition for batik. Nurohmad states that, batik is the result of a combining process through which cloth are being decorated with a barrier technique (*malam* or the like) and with philosophical, intangible meanings."²⁹⁶ Nurohmad's definition is much looser in terms of technical batik processes, and it would better fit the variety of batik fabrics and artworks found in Yogyakarta's batik and *kriya* scene of today. However, SNI's batik definition helps to protect, appreciate, and strengthen batik as a form of cultural heritage.

From a White Fabric to a Masterpiece

The Javanese use a tool called *canting tulis* to apply liquid wax onto the fabric. This tool consists of a wooden or bamboo *gagang* (handle), a *nyamplung*, (a small copper container for liquid wax), and one or several *cucuk* (spouts), through which the wax runs.²⁹⁷ The *canting*

²⁹³ These coloured veins appear, when wax cracks during the dyeing process. In fact, the veining look was esteemed by Western people as a recognition value for batik, whereas in Java, it was a sign for insufficient craftsmanship. Gillow, *Traditional Indonesian Textiles* / John Gillow; Photographs by Barry Dawson, 44.

²⁹⁴ Interview with Ibu Djandjang, *Teknik Batik* 10th November 2020.

²⁹⁵ Badan Standardisasi Nasional, *SNI Batik Pengertian dan Istilah*, Pub. L. No. 0239:2014, 1.

²⁹⁶ Nurohmad, *Definisi Motif Batik, Teknik dan Filosofi*, 3rd December 2021. Nurohmad's quote was translated into English by the author. The original quote in Indonesian is as follows: "Batik adalah kesatuan proses menghias kain dg teknik perintang (malam atau sejenisnya) dan syarat dg makna filosofis nya (intangible)."

²⁹⁷ The white fabric is usually held in the left hand, between the fingers of the open palm. This gives the fabric enough tension to draw the wax on it, with the right hand. The angle of the *canting tulis* to the fabric is crucial to control the amount and speed of the wax that runs out of the *canting tulis* spout. Usually, the batik motifs are sketched out with a pencil on the fabric before drawn with the *canting tulis*. Suerna Dwi Lestari, *Mengenal Aneka Batik* (PT Balai Pustaka (Persero), 2012).

tulis was invented by the Javanese in the beginning of the 17th century and played a prominent role for the development of the refined Javanese batik.²⁹⁸

Finely-woven, untreated and bleached cotton fabrics have been crucial for the creation of Javanese detailed batik patterns. Rayon or silk are additional materials for batik making and together with cotton these three fabrics are called *mori*. There are four different qualities of *mori*, characterised by their fineness of the web, due to different numbers of threads per centimetre. (1) The lowest *mori* quality, called *mori batu*, is quite coarse with 20 threads per centimetre and usually has a weaving width of 115 centimetres. This fabric is used for bags, jackets, and other external layers. (2) The second lowest quality is called *mori biru*, with 30 threads per centimetre. This textile is mainly used for *batik cap* or batik printing.²⁹⁹ The weaving width is either 105 or 115 centimetres. (3) *Mori prima* is of medium quality, and used for *batik tulis* and *batik cap*. This textile comes with 40 threads per centimetre and is woven to a width of 106 or 115 centimetres. (4) The highest quality is called *mori primisima*, and is used for refined *batik tulis* textiles. *Mori primisima* can be subdivided into several types, made by different brands. Each type is distinct in the number of threads per centimetre. Well-known brands are Kain Mori Berkolissima, Kain Mori Cap Gamelan, Kain Mori Cap Kereta Kencana, Kain Mori Tari Kupu, Kain Mori Jepang, and Kain Mori Sanforis.³⁰⁰

Although, cotton is still the most used fabric for batik, other fabrics like polyethylene, polyester, and wool are being used.³⁰¹ Silk is the first choice for luxurious *batik tulis* foulards or blouses (Figure B11). Silk fibres have a very high colour absorption capacity, which facilitates their dyeing with natural colours. Hence, a high-quality *batik tulis* textile is often dyed with natural dyes, to increase its value. Silk qualities differ in the number of threads per centimetre, in their shiny look and their colour absorption capacity.³⁰²

²⁹⁸ Edi Eskak and Irfa'ina Rohana Salma, 'Menggali nilai-nilai solidaritas dalam motif-motif batik Indonesia', *Jantra* 13, no. 2 (2018): 108-109; Roojen, *Batik Design*, 27; Adam, *The Art of Batik in Java*, 7; Fraser-Lu, *Batik*, 7.

²⁹⁹ Batik Printing is a screen-printed or inkjet-printed textile with batik motifs.

³⁰⁰ Interview with Nurohmad, *Batik Technique*, 21st January 2022. Asmi Intan Lestari, *PEMBELAJARAN SISWA DALAM MEMBATIK MOTIF BERBASIS POTENSI LAUT DENGAN MEDIA MALAM DINGIN PADA KELAS V SD NEGERI DEGAYU 02 PEKALONGAN* (Semarang: JURUSAN SENI RUPA FAKULTAS BAHASA DAN SENI UNIVERSITAS NEGERI SEMARANG, 2015), 42; Bahan Kain - Textile Wholesale from Indonesia, *Macam Kain Mori untuk Batik*, 2018, <https://www.bahankain.com/2018/07/30/macam-kain-mori-untuk-batik> (last visit 21st January 2022).

³⁰¹ Bahan Kain - Textile Wholesale from Indonesia, *Products*, 2021, <https://www.bahankain.com/products> (last visit 21st January 2022).

³⁰² For example, a silk fabric, called *Kain Sutra 56*, has a shiny look, is not too thin or thick and ideal for eco printing, shibori and natural dyeing. Another silk fabric, called *Habutai* from Japan, is soft, finer than *Kain Sutra 56*, and has a high colour absorption capacity, when the colour is poured directly onto the fabric. Thus, the fabric *Habutai* is often used for batik painting. Bahan Kain - Textile Wholesale from Indonesia, *Video Perbedaan Kain Sutra 56, 54 dan Habutai*, 2019, <https://www.bahankain.com/2019/06/26/video-perbedaan-kain-sutra-56-54-dan-habutai> (last visit 21st January 2022).

Yogyakarta's Classical Batik Dyeing Process

Classical Yogyakarta batik consists of four colours, namely *wedel* (indigo), *soga* (brown), black and white. Overdyeing blue parts with *soga* brown creates a black colour, and undyed parts stay white.³⁰³ The traditional batik process comprises the following nine consecutive production steps: (1) The batik maker has to *nyorek*³⁰⁴, to draw the motif with pencil on white fabric, and (2) *nglowong* or to draw the main lines of the motif with a *canting tulis* (Figure B12). (3) Then, he *ngiseni* or creates filling motifs with a *canting tulis* for the ornamentation. (4) The batik maker covers bigger parts of the ornamentation, that either remain white or will be dyed *soga* brown, a process called *nembok*. To cover these bigger parts the liquid wax is applied with a brush. (5) After that, he *medel* or dyes the fabric with indigo. (6) Then, he *ngerok*, or scratches off parts of the applied wax, to prepare the fabric for dyeing with *soga* brown. (7) He *mbironi*, or covers the blue parts of the fabric, that will stay blue until the end. (8) He *nyoga*, or dyes the fabric with *soga* brown (9) and *nglorod*, or washes the fabric in boiling water to remove batik wax (Figure B13).³⁰⁵

To create classical multicoloured batik fabrics, three types of *malam* (batik wax), called *klowong*, *tembokkan* and *biron*, are required. They contain distinct amounts of the same ingredients, namely *damar mata kucing* (the juice of a the shorea tree), *resina colophonium* (resin from *pinus merkusii*³⁰⁶), *kote* (bee's wax), *parafin* (paraffin), microwax, *kendal* (animal fat), and *lilin bekas* (residual batik wax) from earlier processes (Figure B14).³⁰⁷ The brittle *klowong* is applied onto the fabric for parts that will be coloured again, because it can be scratched off by hand. On the contrary, *tembokkan* -literally meaning "wall"- is more elastic and is applied with a brush to block bigger parts of the background. *Biron* is used to cover already coloured parts of the fabric.³⁰⁸ Today's contemporary batik makers use also distinct types of batik wax for their process. They buy different wax from special stores or on the

³⁰³ Suryo Tri Widodo et al., 'WARNA PADA RAGAM HIAS BATIK KLASIK SEMEN GAYA YOGYAKARTA', *ATRAT: Jurnal Seni Rupa* 3, no. 3 (25th September 2015).

³⁰⁴ A similar step to this one, is called *nyepat*, which means to divide the white fabric into sections, by drawing main lines with a long ruler. Another first step is called *nganji*, the softening of the fabric, which allows more precise wax drawings and better colour absorption. *Nganji* comprises four steps: first, the fabric is put into brown ash, secondly, stark is added to the fabric, thirdly, the fabric is dried and fourthly, it is treated with a hammer to soften the fibres. Indah Purnama Sari, Siswi Wulandari and Siska Maya, 'HKI PADA BATIK TULIS INDONESIA (STUDI KASUS BATIK TULIS TANJUNG BUMI, MADURA)', *JURNAL EKONOMI PENDIDIKAN DAN KEWIRAUSAHAAN* 6, no. 2 (26th October 2018): 152.

³⁰⁵ There is another step known as *ngeskes*, which is to carefully remove remaining wax from the fabric with a knife. The batik fabric is washed again in clear water and then dried. Interview with ibu Djandjang, *Batik Technique*, 10th November 2020.

³⁰⁶ *Pinus merkusii* is also known as Sumatra pine or "Merkus Kiefer" in German.

³⁰⁷ S. Susanto, *Seni Kerajinan Batik Indonesia* (Yogyakarta: Balai Penelitian Batik dan Kerajinan, Lembaga Penelitian dan Pendidikan Industri, Departemen Perindustrian RI, 1980) cited in: Eskak and Salma, 'Menggali nilai-nilai solidaritas dalam motif-motif batik Indonesia', 2018, 26.

³⁰⁸ Farida et al., *Pengembangan Kualitas Batik Warna Alam* (Yogyakarta, 2010) cited in: Agus Haerudin and Vivin Atika, 'KOMPOSISI LILIN BATIK (MALAM) BIRON UNTUK BATIK WARNA ALAM PADA KAIN KATUN DAN SUTERA', *Dinamika Kerajinan dan Batik: Majalah Ilmiah* 35, no. 1 (30th June 2018): 26; interview Ibu Djandjang, *Batik Technique*, 10th November 2020; interview with Joan Miroe, *Different Types of Malam*, 7th December 2021.

market. Batik wax is mainly produced in small home industries, whereas paraffin is produced by large companies. Yogyakarta batik maker Kang Pandono explained that, experienced batik makers also add paraffin and other ingredients to influence the characteristics of their batik wax.³⁰⁹

For a perfect result, batik wax needs to be well chosen for each working step and of good quality to endure several dye bathes. In the past, dyeing with natural colours was repeated twice every day over one month, to achieve a luminous colour. For a second colour, the same procedure was repeated. Thus, dyeing a multi-coloured batik fabric could easily take two to four months. Only by repeated dyeing, batik makers achieved vivid natural colours, with great saturation and colour authenticity over decades. When I visited the batik gallery at the Textile Museum in Jakarta, I saw batik textiles from around 1900 with magnificent colours, that did not seem to have forfeit their authenticity and colour luminosity.³¹⁰ Today, most batik makers no longer colour their textiles for several month, due to time and cost reasons. In their article on the composition of *biron* batik wax, Haerudin and Atika explain that, 8 to 11 times dyeing per natural colour, is enough. However, they also mention that, in Yogyakarta most batik makers dye 10 to 20 times per colour.³¹¹

By the end of the 19th century, synthetic aniline colours were introduced to Java and in 1926, very user friendly synthetic naphthol dyes became available.³¹² Later, another type of synthetic dyes called indigo-sol was introduced. The range of dyestuff was extended with other synthetic dyes called remasol, indantrend and prosion. Many batik makers use synthetic dyes, since they are less labour intensive and reach high colour saturation after one dye bath. Additional positive properties of synthetic dyes are colour intensity and durability. Synthetic colours have different properties, depending on their brand. Naphthol colours produce intense and rather dark shades and are used preferably for backgrounds in *batik tulis* and *batik cap* textiles. They do not require sunlight to “develop” their colours, which is one of their outstanding advantages. In contrast, indigo-sol dyed fabrics must be exposed to sunlight after dyeing, to develop their colours effectively. The advantage of Indigo-sol colours is their soft

³⁰⁹ Interview with Kang Pandono, *Abstract Batik*, 11th April 2023.

³¹⁰ These exhibited pieces of batik have been stored carefully in the shade. Natural dyed batik fades more quickly when washed regularly and dried in the sun.

³¹¹ Farida et al., *Pengembangan Kualitas Batik Warna Alam* cited in: Haerudin and Atika, ‘KOMPOSISI LILIN BATIK (MALAM) BIRON UNTUK BATIK WARNA ALAM PADA KAIN KATUN DAN SUTERA’, 27.

³¹² Gillow, *Traditional Indonesian Textiles* / John Gillow; Photographs by Barry Dawson, 47.

colour character and that, they can be used for *batik colet*, *batik cap* and *batik tulis* textiles. Remasol colours have a bright and striking character and are suitable for *batik colet*.³¹³ However, natural colours have always been used besides synthetic ones. The Indonesian Ministry of Industry supports research and development for natural dyeing colours. Together with BBKB, they developed NaDin, an online database, that provides over 650 colour samples of natural dyes for batik and non-batik purposes. NaDin comprises samples of different coloured materials (not only cotton), and samples of different fixation materials.³¹⁴

Technical Variations

As mentioned in the Section on technique and definition, batik makers are working with variations of the original batik technique. By original I refer the afore mentioned ancient and still practiced form of *batik tulis*, which is also listed as intangible heritage by UNESCO. Most Indonesians call this technique the traditional batik technique. During the last decades, technical variations emerged or were taken up again and a distinction is made between hot and cold wax (*malam*). As mentioned above, hot and cold wax have different compositions, which result in different melting points. Cold wax is more liquid than hot wax and can be processed by using screens to apply it onto the fabric. This method is used in some large batik companies to speed up the process.³¹⁵ In former days, only hot wax was used that melts at about 43-50°C. Some batik connoisseurs only call a fabric “batik”, if hot wax was used for the process. However, most batik makers agree that, for batik textiles cold wax can be used as well.³¹⁶

As mentioned above, different resist materials and additional tools and chemicals are used for batik making. For example, urea is used to etch away background colours, so that coloured motifs (drawn with a *canting tulis*) remain on a white background (Figure B9). Urea granules can be applied only partly, to create white dots in the background (Figure B15).³¹⁷

³¹³ Interview with Nurohmad, *Batik Technique*, 21st January 2022; Fikky Ananda, ‘EKSPRESI TEKNIK KEROK DAN ZAT WARNA NAPHTHOL DALAM SENI BATIK’ (Yogyakarta, Institut Seni Indonesia Yogyakarta, 2019), 3.

³¹⁴ BBKB, *NADIN – Natural Dyes Indexation*, 2020, <https://nadin.batik.go.id/> (last visit 12th February 2022).

³¹⁵ Omah Laweyan, ‘Teknik Batik Malam Dingin’, *Seragam Omah Laweyan* (blog), 23rd March 2021, <http://seragamomahlaweyan.com/teknik-batik-malam-dingin/> (last visit 10th April 2023).

³¹⁶ Interview with Nurohmad, *Batik Motif, Technique and Philosophy*, 3rd December 2021.

³¹⁷ For the use of urea granules best results are achieved with remazol colours. Interview with Djandjang Purwo Saedjati, *Batik Technique*, 10th November 2020.

In Tuban (North Coast in East Java) parts of the applied batik wax is perforated with a multiple needle-like tool, so that the colour penetrates these small areas and creates a very finely-dotted look.³¹⁸

In terms of tools, batik entrepreneur and lecturer Nurohmad invented a very useful batik stamp. Knowing that, the usual production of *canting cap* from copper is relatively expensive, he created his *canting cap* (batik stamp) from cardboard residues of cigarette packets as a cheaper alternative. The type of cardboard from cigarette packets is called duplex cardboard and has the same thickness as the copper plates used for making *canting cap*. The duplex cardboard is easy to cut and process. The cardboard pieces are cut to a width of 2 centimetres and glued in the desired shapes to an MDF board or other stiff material (Figure B16).³¹⁹ This cardboard *canting cap* can be used 20 to 30 times, which is less than a copper stamp, that is passed from one generation to the next and if necessary small repairs can be made to extend its lifetime. However, to produce fast changing motifs for contemporary batik, Nurohmad's cardboard *canting cap* is practical as a relatively short-lived tool. Other advantages of his cardboard stamp are the low production cost –which is about five to six time lower than the cost of a copper stamp– and the easy handling of the cardboard, that allows a much faster production.³²⁰ Further, batik makers do not depend on copper stamp specialists, who have become rare and who struggle to find well-trained successors.

Nurohmad's cardboard stamp works perfectly with hardly any detectable disadvantage batik made with copper stamps. Only small dots, which are often used as a filling motif, tend to become square instead of round with his cardboard stamps. Therefore, Nurohmad recommends creating dot shaped parts of the stamp with bamboo sticks or nails. Another difference is that, cardboard does not withstand the heat of hot wax as well as copper does, forcing the batik maker to work a little more quickly.³²¹

Another technical variation relates to the design of the motifs, patterns and their placement and distribution on the textile. Usually, batik designs are composed by using pattern books or batik makers' own paper sketches, which are transferred to the fabric with a pencil. However, since 2007, a computer programme called jBatik, was specifically developed to design batik

³¹⁸ Karsam, *BATIK DARI MASA KERATON HINGGA REVOLUSI INDUSTRI 4.0*.

³¹⁹ Edi Eskak and Nurohmad wrote an article on Nurohmad's *canting cap* invention. They provide very specific and useful information, such as which duplex cardboard should be used for the main motifs (350-400g) and which one for filling motifs (250-300g). Nurohmad and Eskak, 'Limbah Kertas Duplex Untuk Bahan Canting Cap Batik'.

³²⁰ As an example, the cost for a 20 cm x 20 cm copper stamp is around 750,000 – 1,000,000 rupees (50-68 euros) and it takes three to six days to produce it. The same stamp size and motif created with cardboard costs 100,000 – 250,000 rupees (7-17 euros) and is produced within one day. Nurohmad and Eskak, "Limbah Kertas Duplex Untuk Bahan Canting Cap Batik", 132.

³²¹ Interview with Nurohmad, *Batik Motif, Technique & Philosophy*, 3rd December 2021.

motifs digitally.³²² More details will be given in the Section on the variety of batik. However, it can be said, that analogue design methods are still preferred by most batik.³²³

2.1.2 Motifs and Visual Principles

Motif (motif), *ornamen* (ornament) and *pola* (pattern) are fundamental terms of batik vocabulary. The Pusmanu Polytechnic Team from Pekalongan³²⁴ defines a motif as the element, which decorates or adorns a batik fabric, and it needs to be repeated to complete the fabric. ITB Bandung's lecturer Sunaryo asserts that, a motif is the characteristic element of an ornamentation and that, a theme or basic idea of the ornamentation is visualised through motifs. He adds, that motifs are either a composition of forms from nature or its representations and that, repeated motifs together form a pattern.³²⁵ Similarly to Sunaryo's definition, batik researcher Ari Wulandari states in her oft-cited book *Batik of the Archipelago: Philosophical Meaning, Creation and Batik Industry*³²⁶ that, batik motif are the basis or subjects of a pattern and they are signs and symbols.³²⁷

Batik motifs consist of three elements, namely (1) *motif utama* (main motif), (2) *motif pendukung* (motif-supporting component), and (3) *isen-isen* (background fillings) (Figure B3).³²⁸ The main motif should be dominant in a pattern, because it reveals the meaning of a batik motif. Usually, a main motif determines the name of the batik fabric. However, the pattern-supporting component does not amend the meaning of a batik pattern. This component is smaller and is used to fill the spaces between the main batik motifs. It is also called interlude ornament. Background fillings are smaller than the pattern-supporting component

³²² Nancy Margried, 'Batik Fractal Community: Creative Engagement through Technology', *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, REFLECTIONS ON CREATIVITY: PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND THE MAKING OF PLACE, 184 (20th May 2015): 214-22; Anggreini Pratiwi, Setyawan, und Tiwi Bina Affanti, 'BATIK FRAKTAL KEMAJUAN TEKNOLOGI OLAH VISUAL DIGITAL', *TEXFILE Journal of Textile* 3, no. 1 (2nd August 2019): 39–54.

³²³ Interview with Djandjang Purwo Sedjati, *Batik Technique at ISI Yogyakarta*, 19th December 2018.

³²⁴ *Tim Politeknik Pusmanu* or the Pusmanu Polytechnical Team was established through the Al Utsmani Pekalongan Foundation in 2002. *Politeknik Pusmanu* is a higher education institution that provides professional education activities in the field of community-based and social enterprises, as for example batik. Politeknik Pusmanu 2021, *Sejarah*, <https://politeknikpusmanu.ac.id/home/profil/sejarah/> (last visit 21st January 2022).

³²⁵ Asmi Intan Lestari, *PEMBELAJARAN SISWA DALAM MEMBATIK MOTIF BERBASIS POTENSI LAUT DENGAN MEDIA MALAM DINGIN PADA KELAS V SD NEGERI DEGAYU 02 PEKALONGAN* (Semarang: JURUSAN SENI RUPA FAKULTAS BAHASA DAN SENI UNIVERSITAS NEGERI SEMARANG, 2015), 31-2.

³²⁶ I have translated the book title into English. The original book title is in Indonesian: *Batik Nusantara: Makna Filosofis, Cara Pembuatan, dan Industri Batik*.

³²⁷ Ari Wulandari, *Batik Nusantara: Makna Filosofis, Cara Pembuatan, dan Industri Batik* (Yogyakarta: Andi Offset, 2011) 113.

³²⁸ Not all batik fabrics follow this rule. Modern or contemporary batik often have only one or two elements, for example a main motif and/or a motif-supporting component. In Figure B3 the flowers, birds and swans are the main motifs, the orange diamond shaped grid is the motif-supporting component, and the orange drops on the white background between the grid are the background fillings.

and serve to beautify patterns and the whole batik piece. They decorate other components and the main motifs, and have different names according to their forms. Straight fine diagonal lines are called *galaran*, curved fine diagonal lines are called *rambutan*,³²⁹ seven dots arranged in the shape of a flower are called *cecek pitu*.³³⁰ Background fillings create dimensionality in a pattern.³³¹ Other means of depicting dimensionality, like overlapping motifs or shading, are not common for Indonesian batik.³³² Another design aspect of batik motifs is called *ngklowongi* (outline). Outlines form the limit of a motif and enhance its visual importance (Figure B17).³³³ The choice and size of batik motifs and their arrangements on the fabric follow aesthetic principles, that are written down and taught at art universities.³³⁴ At ISI Yogyakarta, *kriya* students are taught Javanese and Indonesian ornamentation by copying dozens of ornaments on paper with a fine liner. In students' batik guidebooks visual principles are subdivided into unity, harmony, rhythm, dominance, balance, and proportion. Unity is achieved by applying principles of balance, proportion, and rhythm, to create an intact visual impression. Harmony is created through similar elements or motifs, that do not contradict each other and, that are aligned in an appropriate way.³³⁵ Rhythm comprises a unity in direction and motion of coherent batik motifs. Regularity and repetition also play an important role for rhythm.³³⁶ Dominance can be created in different ways: certain sections of motifs are grouped and dominate the fabric, or an arrangement of motifs show a direction, or the motifs are contrasting each other. Correspondingly, dominance is important to avoid monotonous repetition in a batik pattern. Another important principle is balance, which means weight and location of motifs. A balanced batik pattern has no accumulation of visual weight,

³²⁹ The curved, fine lines are akin to hair and are therefore called *rambutan*, meaning hair in Indonesian.

³³⁰ There are numerous Indonesian books on Javanese batik patterns, fillings and motifs. An often-cited book is by Drs Hamzuri, *Batik Klasik / Classical Batik*, (Jakarta: Penerbit Djambatan, 1985). A well-known European publication on batik patterns is *Batik Design* by Roojen, 1994.

Also see Guntur, 'Inovasi pada Morfologi Motif Parang Batik Tradisional Jawa', *Program Studi Batik, Kriya Seni, Fakultas Seni Rupa dan Desain, Institut Seni Indonesia Surakarta* 29, no. 4 (December 2019): 380.

³³¹ Interview with Sapuan, *Visual Principles*, 23rd January 2022.

³³² I have seen overlapping patterns for example in Pacitan batik, but it is less common. Shading is more often found in abstract, free or contemporary batik.

³³³ Interview with Sapuan, *Visual Principles*, 23rd January 2022.

³³⁴ It would be exciting to compare the batik curricula of ISI Yogyakarta and ISI Surakarta, as both cities are sultanates with a batik tradition. Differences in batik curricula at other universities in Indonesia would also be worth researching. However, covering these questions is beyond the scope of my thesis.

³³⁵ Lestari, *PEMBELAJARAN SISWA DALAM MEMBATIK MOTIF BERBASIS POTENSI LAUT DENGAN MEDIA MALAM DINGIN PADA KELAS V SD NEGERI DEGAYU 02 PEKALONGAN*, 2015, 26-7.

³³⁶ Syafii et al., 'Materi dan Pembelajaran Kertangkes', *SD Jakarta: Universitas Terbuka*, 2006, 51; Aryo Sunaryo, "Nirmana I", *Jurusan Seni Rupa Fakultas Bahasa dan Seni Universitas Negeri Semarang Hand Out* (2002): 35.

but shows a symmetrical, asymmetrical, or radial balance. Proportion requires an appropriate choice of comparative sizes of elements, to create a harmonious unity.³³⁷

Batik experts do not consider batik as complex and fine, if these design principles are not applied. Batik technique and design is taught at university level in art high schools. Since UNESCO's recognition of batik as a form of intangible cultural heritage in 2009, efforts have been made to teach batik in primary schools³³⁸ and not only on an academic level, because most of today's batik makers, who work in an industrial setting, are not university graduates. These middle-aged batik makers (40-60 years old) learned to batik as autodidacts, or with the help of friends, or at their working place. Young batik students prefer to start their own small businesses after graduation, instead of working for larger companies, which do not allow for personal design input.

2.1.3 Classical and Traditional – the Heritage and Environment of Batik

Batik has been changed and shaped by various cultural and religious influences. The Hindu-Buddhist period in Indonesia had a significant influence on *kriya*, and its formal language is still recognisable today as many batik motifs show Hindu-Buddhist influences from the Majapahit era.³³⁹ The Islamic period with the sultans' palaces was significant for batik. In those days batik was designated as one of the six fine arts (*seni halus*), as part of the sultans' palaces' (*Kraton*) cultural heritage, and thus was regularly practised and preserved.³⁴⁰ Batik as a garment was most probably conceived at the beginning of the Mataram era as an institutionalised dress at the courts.³⁴¹ In the 18th century, folk batik makers began working at the palaces and created the finest *batik tulis*.³⁴² As a consequence, skilful batik women saw

³³⁷ Sunaryo, 'Nirmana I' 39; Lestari, *PEMBELAJARAN SISWA DALAM MEMBATIK MOTIF BERBASIS POTENSI LAUT DENGAN MEDIA MALAM DINGIN PADA KELAS V SD NEGERI DEGAYU 02 PEKALONGAN*, 28; interview with Nurohmad, *Batik Technique*, 21st January 2022.

³³⁸ Interview with Nurohmad, *Batik Technique*, 21st January 2022.

³³⁹ Hardjonagoro states that the Hindu-Buddhist influences on the arts from the Majapahit era persisted even though the Majapahit Empire lost its influence and had to cede leadership to the Islamic Mataram Empire established in Demak. The Hindu-Buddhist influences of the Majapahit era had become part of the Javanese cultural heritage, that was preserved and safeguarded at the sultan's palaces. K. R. T. Hardjonagoro, 'The Place of Batik in the History and Philosophy of Javanese Textiles: A Personal View', in *Indonesian Textiles: Irene Emery Roundtable on Museum Textiles, 1979 Proceedings* (Washington D. C.: Textile Museum, 1980), 223.

³⁴⁰ Labin, 'Batik Traditions in the Life of the Javanese', 41; Gillow, *Traditional Indonesian Textiles / John Gillow; Photographs by Barry Dawson*, 41; Fraser-Lu, *Indonesian Batik: Processes, Patterns, and Places*, 3.

³⁴¹ Hardjonagoro, 'The Place of Batik in the History and Philosophy of Javanese Textiles: A Personal View', 228.

³⁴² There are different views among batik experts concerning the question of the beginning of batik making. One view is that batik was initially practiced as an exclusive craft among the *priyayi* class and entered court culture in the 18th century. Another view is that batik was produced by large segments of the population from the 18th century on. Having scrutinised diverse

their status raised from *kawulo* (ruled person) to an *Abdi Dalem Kriya* (royal *kriya* servant), and subsequently enjoyed economic prosperity for their families. Furthermore, the women and daughters of the sultans dedicated their time to batik making as it was considered a spiritual practice to hone great concentration. Royal batik creation was exclusively a women's activity. Existing batik patterns were incorporated into the court culture, further developed, and henceforth called *Batik Kraton* or palace batik. Certain batik motifs were exclusively deemed appropriate for the sultans and their family members to wear, and were considered *larangan* or forbidden for the ordinary population. In the 18th century these *larangan* batik patterns which were added to the repertoire of the two sultan palaces were preserved and perpetuated by strict rules of a design standard called *pakem*. Consequently, the motifs, their arrangement and orientation to the edge of the fabric, and the use of colour could not be changed. The implementation of noble batik patterns served the sultans of Yogyakarta and Surakarta as a legitimation of their power. By not allowing these noble batik motifs to be worn by the general population, hierarchy and class were reinforced. Thus, as early as 1769, the sultan of Surakarta initiated a decree in which the batik motif *jilamprang* (Figure B18) was banned for use by wider society. In 1785, this motif reached the status of being an exclusively courtly motif. From 1792 to 1798 motifs such as *sawat lar*, *cumengkirang* and *udan liris* (Figure B18) were also added to the list of motifs banned for public use in Yogyakarta. In the following decades other forbidden motifs were added to the list, such as *kawung*.³⁴³ It was up to the ruling sultans to decide on the prohibition of certain motifs. When Yogyakarta Sultan Hamengkubuwono VIII came to power at the beginning of the 20th century, the variety of palace batik motifs in use probably culminated, given the fact that Hamengkubuwono VIII attached great importance to determining the degree of nobility by means of certain batik motifs. It is therefore not surprising that Hamengkubuwono VIII published his regulations on court batik motifs in writing.³⁴⁴ Based on a batik collection

literature, it makes sense to me that batik was first practiced in the margins of the population, for example by a certain class (like the *Priyayi*) and then established at the *Kraton* as a fine art. This, in turn, provoked interest in batik from the general population. Only when batik became suitable for the masses was it deemed necessary to define noble motifs that were reserved for the sultans only. Masakatsu Tozu, 'Forming Process of Batik Indonesia One Type of Forming of National Culture in Indonesia', no. 1 (2017): 66-7; Rahmat Roykhan, Sariyatun, and Dadan Adi Kurniawan, 'Batik Klasik Sebagai Media Legitimasi Kekuasaan Sultan Hamengkubuwono VIII Tahun 1927-1939 Dan Relevansinya Dalam Pengembangan Materi Sejarah Sosial', *Jurnal CANDI* 19, no. 1, Tahun X (March 2019): 93-111.

³⁴³ For an overview of classical batik motifs I suggest the Indonesian standard book from Drs Hamzuri, *Batik Klasik / Classical Batik*, translated by Judi Achjada (Jakarta: Penerbit Djambatan, 1985). Much information on the philosophy of classic motifs is provided in the article of Alit Veldhuisen-Djajasoebrata, 'On the Origin and Nature of Larangan: Forbidden Batik Patterns from the Central Javanese Principalities', in *Indonesian Textiles: Irene Emery Roundtable on Museum Textiles, 1979 Proceedings* (Washington D. C.: Textile Museum, 1980), 201-22.

³⁴⁴ The decree was published in *Pranata Dalem Bab Namanipun Panganggo Keprabon Ing Nagari Dalem Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat on the 3rd of Mai 1927*. Dharsono, 'THE DYNAMICS OF SURAKARTA BATIK: The Development of Batik Through Conservation by Revitalization and Reinterpretation in the Development Dynamics of Surakarta Batik', *Arts and Design Studies* 74, no. 0 (2019): 31-3; Rahmat Roykhan, Sariyatun, and Dadan Adi Kurniawan, 'Batik Klasik Sebagai Media Legitimasi

inherited by one of the sultan's sons-in-law, it is evident that some motifs became the standard of the Yogyakarta sultanate, such as *semen rojo*, *parang plenik hok naga*, *tambal*, *gringsing lindri*, *parang sisik*, *huk* and *kawung*. In addition, it is known that the following batik motifs were only allowed to be used by the royal family within the Yogyakarta Palace: *parang rusak barong*, *parang rusak gendreh*, *parang rusak klitik*, *semen gede sawat gruda*, *semen gede sawat lar*, *udan riris*, *rujak sente* and *parang-parangan*.³⁴⁵

The successive sultan who took control from 1939 on, Hamengkubuwono IX, had the existing bans on batik motifs reviewed and decided to soften the rules in line with the liberalising spirit of the times. With Indonesia's Independence and the establishment of a central government for the entire Republic of Indonesia, the sultan's role shifted from that of a power leader and ruler to that of a cultural commissioner. Wisely, he took this as a chance to establish the *Kraton* as the cultural centre of Yogyakarta, with himself being the patron of religion, culture, and art. Further, he did not lose his entire ruling power, as he managed to obtain a Gouverneur's status for his sultanate, which still exists today and is called the Special Region of Yogyakarta. Under Sultan Hamengkubuwono IX, the sultan's palace (*Kraton*) Yogyakarta, with its nationwide reach, became the epitome of Javanese culture and art. In relation to batik patterns, the palace functioned as a preserver of classical motifs, even though the rules on forbidden patterns became obsolete after Indonesia's Independence. Today all motifs, even those forbidden at that time, are used in the batik scene and are worn by ordinary people.³⁴⁶ In colonial times the forbidden batik motifs and the palace batik was called *batik pedalaman* (inland batik), but today more commonly it is called *batik klasik* or classical batik, and has two distinct styles, one of Yogyakarta (Figures B10 and B19) and the other of Surakarta.³⁴⁷

Distinct from classical batik there is traditional batik, which was fabricated outside the palaces and can be found in different regions of Java, as well as on other islands of the Archipelago. These motifs vary depending on the region. Certain batik motifs have become "typical of a region" because they have been created repeatedly over many years by local batik communities.³⁴⁸ Only by repeating and predominantly using certain motifs in a

Kekuasaan Sultan Hamengkubuwono VIII Tahun 1927-1939 Dan Relevansinya Dalam Pengembangan Materi Sejarah Sosial', *Jurnal CANDI* 19, no. 1 Tahun X (March 2019): 100.

³⁴⁵ For images and information on the symbolic meaning of the Yogyakarta forbidden patterns see Roojen, *Batik Design*; Kerlogue, *Batik* 76-7; Roykhan, Sariyatun, and Kurniawan, 'Batik Klasik Sebagai Media Legitimasi Kekuasaan Sultan Hamengkubuwono VIII Tahun 1927-1939 Dan Relevansinya Dalam Pengembangan Materi Sejarah Sosial', 101.

³⁴⁶ Purwadi, *Busana Jawa*, Cet. 1 (Yogyakarta: Pura Pustaka, 2008), 27.

³⁴⁷ Yogyakarta classical batik consists of indigo, brown, and black colours on a white background, whereas Surakarta classical batik consists of indigo, a more orange-brown and black colours on a creamy background. See Widodo et al., 'WARNA PADA RAGAM HIAS BATIK KLASIK SEMEN GAYA YOGYAKARTA', 225.

³⁴⁸ In Indonesian they call it *motif batik khas daerah*. See Salma, 'REVIEW', 150.

community can batik motifs become typical. In the best case a regionally typical batik motif is regarded as the result of *local genius*³⁴⁹. By the term *local genius* Indonesian academics and researchers mean the quality, distinctiveness, and uniqueness of batik motifs of individual regions that refer to the knowledge of the regional natives and ancestors. Therefore, batik motifs reflect a kind of personality of each regional culture. *Local genius* is also used to denote any *kriya* art form typical to a particular region. It describes the sum of all cultural traits shared by a majority of people based on their early childhood experiences.³⁵⁰ In Indonesia's discourse the use of the term *local genius* has become popular, and it functions to strengthen and promote awareness of regional batik motifs.

Let me give an example of the importance of batik at the village level. In Giriloyo, a village in Yogyakarta province, there is a *batik tulis* community. This place is known as a batik village where, according to a villager's account, batik has been made since the 17th century. Today there are about 600 batik makers working in Giriloyo, most of whom are housewives aged between 25 and 75. These 600 batik women are organised into small groups of 20-30 members working with a community-based principle called *gotong royong*. *Gotong royong* – a term that many Indonesians find difficult to translate correctly into English – is not only about craftspeople working together, but also about producing with a focus on community spirit, where financial aspects remain very secondary. The batik women either gather in the morning to create batik together at several outdoor workplaces, or they work independently at home. Working from home enables them to look after their children and take care of the household. Each group is organised in such a way that consecutive work processes can be assigned to different individuals, so that every finished batik ultimately goes through several hands. There are no hierarchies within the groups and the number of working hours completed is not recorded. The batik textiles are sold to batik connoisseurs, designers and tourists. The proceeds are shared equally among the batik women. Batik is not produced in response to a specific demand, but the community creates batik as an expression of their cultural art form and then sells the resulting products. Along with this traditional structure, a traditional motif language of batik has developed because the patterns were handed on from one generation to the next. Batik Giriloyo is described as either traditional or classical, depending on the motif and pattern. However, new designs have been introduced as well.

³⁴⁹ H. G. Quaritch Wales established the term *local genius* in his book, *The Making of Greater India: A Study in South-East Asian Culture Change* (London: Bernard Quaritch, 1951).

³⁵⁰ Kasiyan, 'Representasi Tradisi Dan Budaya Lokal Dalam Seni Rupa Kontemporer Yogyakarta', 10-3.

At least since 2009, when batik was added to UNESCO's list of intangible cultural heritage, the traditional batik community of Giriloyo has become increasingly attractive as a tourist destination. In 2015, Giriloyo was supported by the trade industry to set up a batik gallery in which they can sell their textiles. This was complemented by support from the government, which built a car park and a large welcome board with the words "Kampung Batik Giriloyo", or Batik Giriloyo Village. The construction of a museum is planned as well. In 2016, the Batik Tulis Giriloyo Association was founded to promote the development and marketing of batik. The association looks after 12 batik groups in the village, which are each allowed to place 70 batik textiles for sale in the gallery per year. The selling price of a piece of *batik tulis* is between 4,500,000 and 30,00,0000 rupees, which is about 30 to 190 Euros. These prices are still moderate, considering their one-month production time. According to the Batik Tulis Giriloyo Association, the turnover of income from Giriloyo batik is still relatively low compared to the number of batik makers. But their value has doubled since before the association was formed, reaching 1,5 billion rupees in 2016. The Batik Tulis Giriloyo Association continues striving to increase sales by organising promotional activities and exhibitions. Furthermore, the village has media coverage and support from small and medium enterprises from the Bantul regency, as well as the tourist office and the Department of Industry and Commerce. In addition to the efforts by the association, a large number of the artisans also promote their batik themselves by inviting visitors to their home-based galleries. Despite promotion from various quarters, the Batik Tulis Giriloyo Association still faces the major challenge of raising their sales. Their main point of sale continues to be the local village gallery, which depends on customers and tourists who must get to the somewhat remote village. It is difficult to establish an online shop for two reasons. On the one hand, with the availability of varying batik patterns, there is no guarantee of consistency of certain products. On the other hand, the internet signal is still weak, exacerbating problems with selling online.³⁵¹

Thus, in recent years this formerly non-market-oriented batik village has become a tourist destination to showcase and sell traditional batik making. It is somewhat ironic that the very publicity and marketing of a traditional community has led to changes to the community's own structures. Nevertheless, their traditional batik patterns have remained authentic, some of which are still created using natural dyes.

³⁵¹ Kompasiana.com, 'Kampung Batik Giriloyo Menghasilkan Batik yang Memiliki Filosofi', Newspaper, KOMPASIANA, 21st May 2022, <https://www.kompasiana.com/eunikeloisstefania7297/6287f3fb1583470604586a12/kampung-batik-giriloyo-menghasilkan-batik-yang-memiliki-filosofi> (last visit 11th June 2023); 'Paguyuban Batik Tulis Giriloyo Targetkan Omset Penjualan Terus Meningkat', Newspaper, jogjaaja.com, 26th October 2019, <https://jogjaaja.com/read/paguyuban-batik-tulis-giriloyo-targetkan-omset-penjualan-terus-meningkat> (last visit 16th February 2023).

Interestingly, since 1995 selective efforts have been made by the Balai Besar Kerajinan dan Batik (BBKB) to develop typical regional batik motifs. Behind this quasi-retroactive determining of typical regional batik motifs stands the clear mission to foster and develop the batik industries in certain regions of Indonesia. In order to realise this mission, two approaches have been pursued. In the first approach researchers from BBKB went to certain regions, for example Kalimantan, and looked for traditional motifs in wood carving, silver smithing, and weaving. Then they adapted these motifs for batik. Fifteen typical regional batik motifs from Central Kalimantan were selected and given names.³⁵² According to the BBKB report, batik motifs were identified in this way for the regions of North Sumatra, Melayu, Maluku, Bali, Jember, East Nusa Tenggara and Papua.³⁵³ As a second approach researchers from BBKB held design competitions for batik motifs for certain regions. Batik makers were eligible to participate not only from those regions, but from the whole country. It remains unclear whether only BBKB researchers judged those competitions or if local people were involved too. Furthermore, the report does not state which criteria were used to select these newly-designed typical regional batik motifs. In total 91 regionally typical batik motifs have been developed through BBKB's endeavours since 1996.³⁵⁴ But this is not the only effort that BBKB has made to preserve and foster batik motifs. A further very important contribution is their books and catalogues of batik motifs, which serve as direct templates, being a generous A3 or A2 size, and their smaller books, which can be used to make enlarged photocopies. BBKB has published five books and five catalogues, starting with a remarkable hard cover book in 1973 entitled *Seni Kerajinan Batik* or the Art of Batik Handicraft, compiled by S. K. Sewan Susanto. This book became a standard reference for batik students. In 1981 another book was published that contains a collection of 176 traditional Javanese batik motifs. A year later this book was extended with an A2 catalogue depicting another 125 Javanese batik motifs. Finally, in 1985 these two publications were combined into an A3-sized book that replaced the standard work from 1973 and furthermore was used as an inspiration to develop new batik motifs. This book is still used today to teach the batik process at ISI Yogyakarta, whilst other books and catalogues are used as reference sources for the ornaments.³⁵⁵ In 1997 BBKB published the *Katalog Batik Indonesia* which not only details

³⁵² Salma, 'REVIEW', 152. Some examples of these names are *Garing Ngaderang*, *Kabang Munduk*, and *Batang Pantar*.

³⁵³ Salma, 152-4.

³⁵⁴ Salma, 155, 157, 159.

³⁵⁵ Interview with Djandjang Purwo Saedjati, *Batik Technique*, 10th November 2020.

various traditional batik motifs from different regions, but also gives additional information concerning the understanding of batik, such as the process, material and dyeing.³⁵⁶

Although traditional batik is assumed to be rural or peasant and, as such, is likely to be placed as the counterpart of classical batik, these two types of batik relate to each other. On the one hand, the batik patterns and knowledge used in the noble court batik came to the court from the rural areas. On the other hand, the palace batik, elevated to a fine art, positively radiated back to the traditional batik in such a way that its value and importance was increased.³⁵⁷ Notably, traditional batik is not limited to rural areas, as traditional batik was made in the sultan cities too, outside the palace walls. In summary, traditional batik is batik with ancient motifs that have been used repeatedly for a long time and have gained significance, symbolism, sophistication and ingenuity in society. As such, traditional batik has high value, not only visually but also culturally, because philosophical and cultural considerations are involved in its creative process.

In today's Yogyakarta batik scene, there are fortunately some keepers and guardians of the *filosofi batik* or batik philosophy, although this philosophy is gradually being lost. The philosophy behind batik was already researched in colonial times, but increasingly in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s by anthropologists and art historians who recognised batik as an intrinsic mirror of Javanese culture and art. At this point I would like to take up this philosophy in order to create a basis for the understanding of Javanese culture. I believe that, despite global and market influences, certain elements of Javanese culture still play a significant role in art production. I notice that, in Indonesian discourse, batik scholars and batik makers use the term "batik philosophy" within quite a broad meaning. This is probably due either to the fact that batik used to be part of cultural life encompassing a large field, or that a loose knowledge of Javanese philosophy led to a blurred use of the term. In my literature research I found that "batik philosophy" refers to one or several religious aspects or beliefs of Javanese culture. Two main religious origins appear in literature on the philosophy behind batik. Before Hinduism appeared on Java there was an original animistic religion whose philosophy arguably formed the ground for batik making. The philosophy of the

³⁵⁶ Salma, 'REVIEW', 154-5. Two other books were published, namely *Beberapa Desain Etnik Indonesia* or *Some Ethnic Indonesian Designs* in 2002 and the *Handbook Indonesian Batik* in 2011. Both publications were translated to English.

³⁵⁷ That is to say that over time the preservation of classical batik patterns (*larangan* motifs) at the palace also contributed to a kind of alienation from the batik design of the normal population. Hardjonagoro, 'The Place of Batik in the History and Philosophy of Javanese Textiles: A Personal View', 223.

Kejawen faith that developed after Hinduism arrived formed a second basis for batik making.³⁵⁸

If we look at the first philosophy, we enter the field of the Javanese animistic way of life, where the concept of life energy is crucial. Javanese animists believe in a mysterious and divine energy that circulates around the universe and is present in stones, trees, animals, and other aspects of their surroundings.³⁵⁹ Further, the worship of the deity *Batara Guru* plays an important role in Javanese beliefs. *Batara Guru* is considered the creator of all living creatures and is closely related to the *lingga-yoni* concept, which is personified by the father Akoso and the mother Petiwi. This principle is the union of male and female; it is continued in history and is again recognisable in the *garuda* (eagle) and *naga* (snake) mentioned above, two mystical animals that symbolise the upper world, the father, and the lower world, fertility, the mother. Many batik motifs created in the *Batara Guru* belief depict offerings to the creator, *Batara Guru*, and they also show a connection to the *lingga-yoni* principle.³⁶⁰

The second religious concept that plays a role in batik philosophy is the *Kejawen*³⁶¹ faith, which was spread in society through the palaces of Central Java. The *Kejawen* faith, also called *Agami Jawi* (Javanese religion³⁶²), is a blend of the original animistic religion in Java, the Hindu-Buddhist influences from the Majapahit era, and the Islamic influences from Demak, during the time of the Mataram Empire.³⁶³ It is said that the founding father of the *Kejawen* faith was the first sultan of the Mataram Empire, Panembahan Senopati (1588-

³⁵⁸ Interview with Timbul Haryono, *Javanese Religion*, 25th April 2022; Hardjonagoro, 223-33.

³⁵⁹ Veldhuisen-Djajasoebrata, 'On the Origin and Nature of Larangan: Forbidden Batik Patterns from the Central Javanese Principalities', 203.

³⁶⁰ According to Hardjonagoro *Batara Guru* refers to the creator of all creatures and human beings but *Batara Guru* is not the incorporation of the Hindu God *Siva*. According to Hardjonagoro *Batara Guru* was once connected in a way to *Siva*, but in Java *Batara Guru* became inalienably a part of Javanese culture and a part of a world view that is also valued by Muslims. Hardjonagoro, 'The Place of Batik in the History and Philosophy of Javanese Textiles: A Personal View', 203, 231-2. Other findings in literature do not consider the syncretism of *Batara Guru* and define *Batara Guru* as *Siva*, but as one of the trinity Hindu Gods *Dewa*, *Wishnu* and *Siva* which are a manifestation of God, the creator. Ahmad Hidayatullah, 'REDUKSI NILAI-NILAI NON-TAUHID DALAM KONTRUKSI WAYANG KARAKTER BATARA GURU', *Islamic Communication Journal* 2, no. 1 (12th January 2018): 46; Ajar Permono, 'SANGKAN PARANING DUMADI SUMBU FILOSOFI YOGYAKARTA: DALAM LENSE FENOMENOLOGI-HERMENEUTIKA', *Nun: Jurnal Studi Alquran dan Tafsir di Nusantara* 7, no. 1 (8th August 2021): 164.

³⁶¹ The *Kejawen* faith is an important part of Javanese culture and is a guiding philosophy in Javanese arts such as batik and *wayang* (puppetry). *Kejawen* is said to be the basis of *Kabatinan*, which means the inner, mysticism, and which is more commonly practiced today than the *Kejawen* faith. *Kabatinan* is practiced in the form of a syncretistic Javanese version of Islam that comprises elements of old Javanese and Hindu-Javanese beliefs and values. Veldhuisen-Djajasoebrata, 'On the Origin and Nature of Larangan: Forbidden Batik Patterns from the Central Javanese Principalities', 203.

³⁶² According to Veldhuisen-Djajasoebrata *Agami Jawi* is also called *ilmu Jawa*, or Javanese science, which is the art and form of being truly Javanese. This Javanese science is also simple called "Javanese-ism". Veldhuisen-Djajasoebrata, 203; Samidi Khalim, 'SALAT DALAM TRADISI ISLAM KEJAWEN', *Sabda: Jurnal Kajian Kebudayaan* 6, no. 1 (1 April 2011): 1.

³⁶³ In the Archipelago there are several original animistic faiths or teachings that provide a kind of basis for cultural customs and social life. In addition to the animistic faith, Indonesians practice a religion, such as Islam, Hinduism, Christianity or Buddhism. Although the animistic faiths are partly influenced by religions, most Indonesians align themselves with both: the animistic faiths and a religion. Consequently, there are Christians, Muslims, Hinduists and Buddhists who follow the *Kejawen* faith. In Central and East Java the *Kejawen* faith is predominant, while in Sunda (West Java), the *Wiwitan* faith is most practised. Personal communication with Wahyu Priyono, 18th May 2023.

1601). An important cornerstone of the *Kejawen* faith is *Sangkan Paraning Dumadi*, which is a philosophy or teaching about how people ought to behave in life. In the ancient Javanese language, *sangkan* means origin, *paran* means goal, and *dumadi* means to be. The teaching is about knowing God by following a path or way of life, namely by seeking the origin of life, the journey of life and the meaning of life, and to further recognise, live and realise this world until one is able to rediscover and meet the God who created him or her.³⁶⁴ *Sangkan Paraning Dumadi* further teaches that the main goal of human life is to reach God Almighty; that means that during their lives *Kejawen* believers must attain the noble values of divinity such as dedication, discipline, care, being fair, honest, responsible, kind, and simple.³⁶⁵ The values of *Sangkan Paraning Dumadi* are manifested through the song *Mocopat*, and also through certain batik motifs.³⁶⁶ This means that, for batik heritage in Java, the two philosophical concepts (*Batara Guru* and *Kejawen* with *Sangkan Paraning Dumadi*) play a central role, as they shape the thinking and cultural life of the Javanese. It is remarkable how strongly the Javanese have remained connected to their animistic culture, despite Hindu-Buddhist and Islamic influences. Kangjeng Raden Tumenggung Hardjonagoro, a Surakarta-born batik enthusiast and royal batik maker, once said:

“But what will a Javanese tell you? Does he talk about Siwa, Brahma, Wisnu? No! he worships the Creation. Who is the Creator? Batara Guru. And where does Batara Guru reside ‘Hiang Jagad Giri Noto.’ He does not say Mount Kailasa (Siwa’s abode, and source of the concept), but rather Hiang Jagad (Lord of the Universe) Giri Noto (the King enthroned on the mountain) – i.e. the Creator of the whole world, from the sea to the highest mountain top!

This is the environment and the heritage of batik! He who does not grasp this philosophy of life is highly unlikely to create worthy batik or meaningful patterns. In fact, it’s impossible.”³⁶⁷

According to Hardjonagoro, batik in the sense of a cultural heritage can therefore only be created if this philosophy is embodied. In accordance with this fact, batik is often spoken of as having both a tangible and intangible value. Or the Javanese talk about the two beauties of

³⁶⁴ Sangkan Paraning Dumadi is the manifestation of *innalillahi wa innailaihi roji’un*, a Quarnic command for Muslims. Permono, ‘SANGKAN PARANING DUMADI SUMBU FILOSOFI YOGYAKARTA’, 166-7, 180.

³⁶⁵ Permono, 163–208; Interview with Timbul Haryono, *Javanese Religion*, 25th April 2022.

³⁶⁶ Interview with Nurohmad, *Batik Definition & The Soul of Batik*, 27th May 2021.

³⁶⁷ Hardjonagoro, ‘The Place of Batik in the History and Philosophy of Javanese Textiles: A Personal View’, 233.

batik – the external, aesthetic, which is visible, and the internal, cultural one, which is not necessarily visible. Classical batik, with its meaningful patterns, is also seen as a kind of *tuntunan* or guide to life. On the one hand, just by contemplating classical batik motifs, one can find answers to philosophical questions in Javanese life. On the other hand, by making batik, one can immerse oneself in a patient, meditative condition. At the sultan's palaces, batik making was considered a noble means of character formation.³⁶⁸

The two concepts of batik philosophies I have outlined above contain more details and beliefs than I have described. They concern Javanese life actions and beliefs that have a direct impact on batik making, for example on the use of different colours due to their symbolic meaning. Further, these concepts determine the significance of individual motifs, their usage on certain cultural ceremonies and occasions, as well as the most beneficial days throughout a time cycle to create batik.³⁶⁹ It is, however, beyond the scope of this thesis to elaborate more details of the batik philosophy. Additional valuable research work on this topic has been contributed by European ethnologists and art historians, and several Indonesian researchers and lecturers have written very recently on the batik philosophy from differing starting points.³⁷⁰

According to *kriya* experts in Yogyakarta, the batik philosophy has the same basis as the *kriya* philosophy. But the batik philosophy is more detailed and determined, while the *kriya* philosophy has a loose definition and serves as a guiding philosophy for several forms of *kriya*.³⁷¹

In summary, classical batik, with its specific patterns and as part of the sultan's palace, became a part of Indonesia's cultural heritage that has been preserved and maintained up to today through accordance with certain *pakem* or standards. The *Kraton* not only functions as a patron of culture and art, it also represents the cosmological view of Javanese culture, which is closely related to animistic beliefs. For example, natural phenomena are interpreted as signs related to these beliefs by the Javanese. When batik was defined as one of the six fine arts of the sultan's palace, it acquired the status of *adiluhung* or masterpiece. Traditional batik, that

³⁶⁸ Roykhan, Sariyatun, and Kurniawan, 'Batik Klasik Sebagai Media Legitimasi Kekuasaan Sultan Hamengkubuwono VIII Tahun 1927-1939 Dan Relevansinya Dalam Pengembangan Materi Sejarah Sosial', 94; Dharsono, 'THE DYNAMICS OF SURAKARTA BATIK', 32-3.

³⁶⁹ Interview with Nurohmad, *Javanese Cosmology*, 20th February 2023.

³⁷⁰ For example, the Indonesian batik expert Hardjonagoro's 'The Place of Batik in the History and Philosophy of Javanese Textiles: A Personal View', and the US-American art historian Beverly Labin's 'Batik Traditions in the Life of the Javanese'. The Indonesian researcher Farid Abdullah writes in her conference paper that, for classical and traditional batik, there is a *bahasa batik* or a language of batik. By this term she refers to batik patterns that can "tell" people about many issues in human life and can give an answer to complex problems of human life. Abdullah, 'Yogyakarta Kraton Batik Patterns: Symbolic Constructs Within the Javanese Culture', 1.

³⁷¹ Personal communication with Satya Brahmantya, *Kriya Philosophy & Batik Philosophy*, 1st June 2023; interview with Timbul Haryono, *Javanese Religion*, 25th April 2022.

is, batik made outside the palace walls, was the basis for palace batik, also called classical batik.³⁷² Today, there are still some batik makers who create classical batik according to *pakem* or the standard rules. Local batik communities also keep designing new typical patterns.³⁷³ However, most batik makers working alone or for a company create their own designs according to their personal taste or to meet market demands.

2.2 The Variety of Batik Today

As batik has been a well-studied field there are numerous classifications for it. A very common and simple division is based on visual rules that put batik patterns into two groups, either non-geometric or geometric patterns. Many geometric patterns can be found around the courts of Surakarta and Yogyakarta, whereas non-geometric patterns depicting flora and fauna are more common outside the court and on the coastal areas of Java. Coastal batik often depicts animals from the sea or other motifs from abroad. Even though this classification is based on visual rules, it has a link to geographic and social circumstances, roughly dividing inland royal batik from coastal batik. This division was also made by the Dutch colonisers, who called batik from the courts *batik pedalaman* (inland) and batik from the coast *batik pesisiran* (coast).³⁷⁴ During the colonial period, at around the turn of the 20th century, some of the numerous Dutch settlers in Java founded batik companies and contributed to the diversity of batik with their own design ideas.³⁷⁵

Further, batik patterns are often classified by their geographic origin. Thus, there is batik from Yogyakarta, Surakarta, Pekalongan, Cirebon, Lasem, Madura, Pacitan, Garut, Tasikmalaya, Banten, Jember, Priangan and Sunda among other cities and regions in Java. There is Balinese batik, Sumatra-Jambi batik and Minangkabau batik, as well as other islands within the Archipelago. The geographical attribution of batik motifs emphasises that batik is practiced as a craft in local communities and is a form of cultural expression. Also, batik is classified through foreign influences, for example *batik peranakan* which refers to batik made by ethnic

³⁷² Dharsono, 'THE DYNAMICS OF SURAKARTA BATIK', 33; Farid Abdullah, 'Yogyakarta Kraton Batik Patterns: Symbolic Constructs Within the Javanese Culture', 2014, 4.

³⁷³ As an example, the batik entrepreneur Nurohmad examines and creates *batik weton*, a traditional batik style with symbolic meanings from Java.

³⁷⁴ Trixie, 'FILOSOFI MOTIF BATIK SEBAGAI IDENTITAS BANGSA INDONESIA', 3.

³⁷⁵ Daan Van Dartel, 'The Tropenmuseum and Trade: Product and Source', *Journal of Museum Ethnography*, no. 20 (2008): 89.

immigrants in Indonesia from China, Arab countries, India, and the Netherlands.³⁷⁶ Chinese-influenced batik is characterised with brighter colours and new motifs, for example the phoenix.³⁷⁷ There is *Jawa Hokokai batik* which depicts flowers in a butterfly garden. This motif arose during the Japanese occupation of Java in 1942.³⁷⁸ European-influenced batik depicted new motifs, for example tulips or horse carriages, very often in blue colours as this suited the Europeans' taste.³⁷⁹ Further, there were a few Dutch colonial batik entrepreneurs whose batik was designated by their names, such as batik van Zuylen, batik Van Oosterom and batik von Franquemont.³⁸⁰ Batik as a heritage practice carried out within Indonesian families also became known as the family's name batik, as motifs and patterns were well guarded and handed down.³⁸¹ Batik was a heredity tradition, where skill, knowledge and distinct patterns and motifs were passed on from generation to generation. Thus, old batik patterns can be attributed to a certain region or family.³⁸²

Today in Yogyakarta many batik entrepreneurs use their family name, or invent an appropriate name for their company, so that up to 100 people may work under the name of a family or brand. This working in groups, having a specialised person for each step of the process, is a key characteristic of batik making that has its roots in the time when batik communities started producing batik.

Batik quickly became an area of interest for foreigners coming to Java. Whether as a trade good for the numerous merchants, or to enhance the colonial ruler's economic and power-political interests, batik also fascinated people as a craft in itself, as evidenced by the

³⁷⁶ These immigrants were often traders and encouraged the rapid development of *peranakan* batik between 1800 and 1900. Info Batik, <https://www.infobatik.com/en/indonesian-peranakan-batik/> (last visit 20th April 2022).

³⁷⁷ Trixie, 'FILOSOFI MOTIF BATIK SEBAGAI IDENTITAS BANGSA INDONESIA', 3.

³⁷⁸ The Japanese occupation lasted from 1942 to 1945 and was a crucial turning point in the quest for Independence for the former Dutch East Indies. Prior to the Japanese occupation, the Dutch colonial power pursued a politically oppressive course that prohibited the Indonesians from taking up political or administrative posts. This changed with the Japanese occupation. The Japanese appointed many Indonesians to administrative posts, which encouraged the Independence movement from 1945 onwards. John David Legge, 'Indonesia - Japanese Occupation', Britannica, accessed 11th August 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Indonesia/Japanese-occupation> (last visit 11th August 2022).

Regarding the Japanese influence on batik patterns, the motif mentioned above (*Hokokai*) is well known. In addition, during the same period, the occupation and the Second World War led to a shortage of raw materials, including for batik production. Batik makers were almost unable to buy white cotton fabrics (*mori*) because imports were stopped for a while. The batik makers reacted to this by batikting the available white cotton cloths with much more elaborate patterns, which bridged the time until cotton cloths could be supplied again. Evi Steelyana, 'Batik, A Beautiful Cultural Heritage That Preserve Culture and Support Economic Development in Indonesia', *Binus Business Review* 3, no. 1 (31st May 2012): 119-20.

³⁷⁹ Trixie, 'FILOSOFI MOTIF BATIK SEBAGAI IDENTITAS BANGSA INDONESIA', 3. European tales such as Snow-White, Hansel and Gretel and Cinderella also served as batik motifs for European export. Achmad Haldini Destiarmand, 'Fractalization of Traditional Batik Ornament and Its Challenges in the Modern Style Sector' (Arte-Polis 3 International Conference - Creative Collaboration and the Making of Place, Bandung, 2010), 608.

³⁸⁰ Destiarmand, 'Fractalization of Traditional Batik Ornament and Its Challenges in the Modern Style Sector', 608.

³⁸¹ Ave et al., *Indonesian Arts and Crafts*, 17.

³⁸² Trixie, 'FILOSOFI MOTIF BATIK SEBAGAI IDENTITAS BANGSA INDONESIA', 2; Binti Rohmani, Nurdevi, and Khotimah, 'BATIK SEBAGAI WARISAN BUDAYA INDONESIA', 59; Fraser-Lu, *Indonesian Batik: Processes, Patterns, and Places*, 18.

numerous collections of batik textiles owned by foreign and domestic art lovers. However, the question of original or imitation never became an issue in the context of fine art. Batik in Indonesia found a different way into the Western-adapted art world than through the value of the original batik technique. I will go into this in more detail in the next paragraph. Batik imitations were lucrative for traders, batik makers and entrepreneurs, as an original batik fabric sold for about eight to ten times more than an imitation. Moreover, batik imitations became accepted and opened up a market segment that could be served with good sales. But what makes an original? How is an imitation defined and recognised? In the following chapter, I will answer these questions by providing a historical view that stretches to the present day.

2.2.1 Original and Imitation

The term batik Indonesia is used to denote three aspects within the Indonesian batik world. First, it refers to the national cultural heritage as distinguished from culture from other countries. Second, the term is used to refer to a protected trademark for batik made in Indonesia. The word Indonesia is written in capitals, so the trademark is shown as: “batik INDONESIA”.³⁸³ And third, batik Indonesia is used to designate a particular batik style that serves as national clothing. In this Section I focus on the first two meanings regarding original and imitation and will then discuss batik as national clothing in the next Section (2.2.2 Fashion and Modernity). I proceed chronologically and start by describing a historically geographical difference in the meaning of Indonesian batik. Then, I will mention the Dutch colonial period when imitations of batik first appeared. Next, I consider the market and batik imitations up to the present day. After that, I will explain the visual differences between an original and an imitation. In the following two Sections, I will deal with the topic of original batik fabrics as cultural assets and discuss how they can be protected.

When we talk about Indonesian batik as national batik, it must be said that batik in Indonesia is undeniably closely linked to the expression of Javanese cultural identity. Precisely because batik advanced to become a fine art at the sultans’ palaces, it also gained appeal among the general population. Batik was thus part of culture and everyday life in all social classes. Therefore, I understand batik as a large and diverse field that has undergone artistic and cultural adaptations and assimilations over the centuries. Batik at the palaces (classical batik)

³⁸³ In this thesis I will write the word Indonesia in capitals when I refer to the trademark: batik INDONESIA.

developed differently than coastal batik (as a part of traditional batik). Palace batik was characterised by strict regulations of artistic standards (*pakem*), and was also an expression of the courtly Hindu-Javanese culture. The coastal regions, especially in northern Java, developed strong cultural habits of their own as early as the 15th and 16th centuries, due to the influence of foreign traders and migrants such as the Chinese, Arabs, Dutch, Portuguese, Turks and Persians. Thus, there were some north coast cities (Cirebon, Pekalongan, Semarang and Mojokerto among others) that had an early international character and were accordingly more open to changes in batik. For these coastal cities, batik was subject to aspects of trade rather than purely to culture.³⁸⁴

It was not just trade issues or domestic court regulations that played a role in changes to Indonesian batik, but also colonial history. Until the early 19th century Indonesia imported white cotton fabrics from India for batik production. When the English temporarily replaced the Dutch colonial masters from 1811-1816, they began importing English cottons into Indonesia.³⁸⁵ The British Lieutenant Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles showed great interest in the arts and crafts of the people from the Dutch East Indies. He collected numerous ethnographic objects including 22 Javanese garments, which served as models for the English manufacturing of printed textiles. Consequently, the British began to import batik imitations in the form of printed fabrics to the Dutch East Indies.³⁸⁶ Other European countries such as the Netherlands and Switzerland followed by exporting their printed imitations.³⁸⁷ The much cheaper, industrially manufactured batik imitations flooded the Indonesian batik market and endangered many batik artisans who could not compete in price and speed with these printed imitations. It must be noted that wealthy and royal people did not buy these cheap imitations, preferring authentic handmade Indonesian batik. But it was the masses who often had a small budget who bought the imported fabrics. The situation of the Javanese batik makers was precarious, so a solution had to be found. Luckily, in the mid-19th century the Javanese batik makers invented the *batik cap*, a copper stamp used to apply the wax onto the fabric. With this

³⁸⁴ Tozu, 'Forming Process of Batik Indonesia One Type of Forming of National Culture in Indonesia', 68-9.

³⁸⁵ Other European countries imported cotton to Indonesia after the English colonial rule. Besides European countries Japan had gradually increased its export of cotton fabrics to Indonesia, so that by the end of World War Two, about 85% of the imported cotton fabric in Indonesia came from Japan. More recently Indonesia has produced its own fine cotton. Tozu, 71; Fraser-Lu, *Indonesian Batik: Processes, Patterns, and Places*, 5; Roojen, *Batik Design*, 1994, 27; Gillow, *Traditional Indonesian Textiles* / John Gillow ; Photographs by Barry Dawson, 42.

³⁸⁶ van Hout, 'Of Love and Passion: Biographical Notes on the Batik Collection in the Tropenmuseum', 14.

³⁸⁷ Switzerland exported printed fabrics to the Dutch East Indies in the 19th century. See Marie-Louise Nabholz-Kartaschoff, 'Original or Imitation? Batik in Java and Glarus (Switzerland) in the Nineteenth Century', *The Textile Museum Journal*, 17th October 2019, 190–209.

technique batik production could be accelerated significantly and it marked the start of the mass production of batik.³⁸⁸

A *sarong*³⁸⁹ made by the *batik cap* technique was still preferred to a printed batik imitation by batik connoisseurs. There were sufficient markets for all three types of batik products, namely for the inexpensive printed imitations from Europe, for the *batik cap* textiles, and for the primal *batik tulis* textiles since batik as a garment was becoming suitable for the masses. However, the European printed batik imitations significantly damaged the Indonesian batik industry. In the beginning such printed imitations were easy to distinguish from a genuine batik fabric, because printing technique was not sophisticated enough. European batik imitations declined during World War One and colonial power's trade interests could not be enforced after the Indonesian Declaration of Independence in 1945. Nevertheless, batik imitations experienced a revival since the 1970s and almost brought the local and authentic forms of batik making (*batik tulis* and *batik cap*) to a standstill. These batik imitations were called batik-patterned textiles (Figures B20 and B21) and they once again posed challenges to the Indonesian batik industry.³⁹⁰ These batik-patterned textiles can be categorised by the way they are made. There is a screen-printed imitation where the pattern is printed in one or several colours onto the fabric. Then there is a cold wax screen-printed imitation, where "cold wax"³⁹¹ is printed with the screen technique on the fabric, ready for a dye bath. Another imitation technique is the screen-based chemical removal of colour from a previously-dyed fabric by screen-printing a bleaching paste. There is also combining this technique with normal screen printing.³⁹² With improved printing processes and more sophisticated repeats, the printed imitations became better so that, for non-experts of batik, it became quite difficult to distinguish an imitation from an original.³⁹³

The Batik Analyzer Application

The *Balai Besar Kerajinan dan Batik* (BBKB) took note of this problem and started efforts to protect the often more vulnerable small and medium-sized batik enterprises which produced

³⁸⁸ Tozu, 'Forming Process of Batik Indonesia One Type of Forming of National Culture in Indonesia', 69; Nabholz-Kartaschoff, 'Original or Imitation?', 205–7.

³⁸⁹ The *sarong* is a typical Malay dress worn by women and men as tubular rectangular textile draped around the hips. The *sarong* looks like a long untailored skirt that reaches the ground.

³⁹⁰ Salma and Eskak, "Keeping the Genuine of Batik in the Age of Artificial Intelligence", 2.

³⁹¹ The term cold wax refers to the low melting point of the mixture of paraffin and beeswax. Hot wax refers to the higher melting point of original batik wax (*malam*). Batikindonesia, 'What Is Cold Batik Wax?', 5th December 2021, <https://batikindonesia.com/batik-wax-facts/> (last visit 11th August 2022).

³⁹² Masiswo et al., 'KARAKTERISTIK FISIK PRODUK BATIK DAN TIRUAN BATIK', 104–5.

³⁹³ Salma and Eskak, 'Keeping the Genuine of Batik in the Age of Artificial Intelligence', 2; Interview with Edi Eskak, *Batik Analyzer*, 23rd July 2022.

original batik. They researched into recognising the visual characteristics of original batik fabrics (*batik tulis*) and found these to be irregular repetitive motifs, wax tread found on different positions on the fabric (not necessarily always on the *klowong*³⁹⁴ lines), and colour seepage. In contrast, printed batik imitations show constructed irregularities that seem unnatural. *Klowong* lines for example look more like a painted line instead of original wax shards. Imitating wax marks often look too neat or too untidy, and other imitated errors look unreal because of their exact repetition. Further, very often printed textiles do not look the same on the backside because the printed colour does not penetrate the fabric through to reverse side (Figure B21).

Based on these characteristics the BBKB developed a mobile phone application called *Batik Analyzer* (Figure B22), which is based on image processing and artificial intelligence. This application can be used by ordinary batik customers who are not experts in batik, but also by batik entrepreneurs as an additional checking tool. To determine a batik fabric, one needs to open the smartphone application to scan a batik textile. The fabric must be scanned from a bird perspective and should not be wrinkled. Within seconds the *Batik Analyzer* application will tell the user whether the fabric is an authentic piece of batik or not. BBKB developed this user-friendly application on the basis of visual aspects because it makes the whole process practicable.³⁹⁵

The *Batik Analyzer* application can also determine a *batik cap* fabric, which has more repetition in it because of the copper stamp used. The application developers provide a setting for the sensitive value of repetitions. This setting needs to be adjusted according to the presumed batik fabric. A *batik tulis* fabric has almost no repetition, as hand-drawn repetitive motifs are never the same. A *batik cap* fabric has some repetitions from the same copper stamps, whereas a printed batik imitation has the most number of, and the most precise repetitions. In 2019 *Batik Analyzer* was able to differentiate an original batik from an imitation in three-fourths of all cases. A year later the application was improved significantly so that in 90% of cases it made a correct differentiation.³⁹⁶ Chemical and physical testing of batik fabrics are more reliable but not practicable for consumers.³⁹⁷ BBKB therefore suggests complementing the *Batik Analyzer* application with an additional test of smell; consumers should sniff the batik fabric to determine whether it smells like wax or not. However, very

³⁹⁴ *Klowong* are the drawn wax lines that are part of the main batik motif.

³⁹⁵ Hadi Nugroho, 'Aplikasi Batik Analyzer', Balai Besar Kerajinan dan Batik, 31st October 2022, https://bbkb.kemenperin.go.id/post/read/aplikasi_batik_analyzer_0 (last visit 7th July 2022).

³⁹⁶ Salma and Eskak, 'Keeping the Genuine of Batik in the Age of Artificial Intelligence', 5-6.

³⁹⁷ Masiswo et al. examined batik fabrics and printed imitations regarding air permeability, tear resistance and the visual texture of the fabrics with microscopic enlargement. Masiswo et al., 'KARAKTERISTIK FISIK PRODUK BATIK DAN TIRUAN BATIK'.

brazen batik forgers can also pass this test by treating their printed imitations with wax to create an authentic wax scent.³⁹⁸

Since colonial times batik imitations from Europe have circulated in Indonesia. After Indonesia's Independence though, printed batik production shifted to the Asian region. Today, Chinese printed textiles in particular are flooding the Indonesian batik market. China has the advantage of being able to produce these items very cheaply due to its mastery of technology and raw materials. As China controls the whole production chain, from the supply and management of raw materials to the finished material, production costs can be up to 50% lower than in Indonesia. In Indonesia, some raw materials for batik production must be imported from other countries. In early 2010, the ASEAN-China Free Trade Area scheme came into effect, resulting in a virtual glut of Chinese batik in Indonesia. The potential for mass sales of batik from China is increasing and poses a threat to the Indonesian batik industry. As an example, in 2012 Indonesia imported 1,037 tons of printed Chinese batik imitations with a value of about 30 million US dollars. Of course, the printed Chinese batik is of lower quality, but it sells well because of its cheap price. The Indonesian government has not yet taken any serious measures to prevent these imports. According to Indonesian batik entrepreneurs and academics I interviewed, fabrics from Malaysia, Vietnam and Thailand additionally pose a threat to original batik.³⁹⁹ Interestingly, numerous Indonesian batik makers are also switching camps from making authentic batik to producing cheap printed imitations.⁴⁰⁰

However, if it is not about original products and their imitations in a market sense, but about the use of certain batik motifs and their articulation and safeguarding as a form of cultural heritage, then Thailand and Malaysia enter the scene. Thailand has embraced batik as a form of cultural expression and has created Thai-batik⁴⁰¹. In many touristic sites batik houses have been established, where tourists can learn about the art and craft of batik. Interestingly, Thai-batik has become accepted for uniforms and as a decorating element for other uses. Further, Thai-batik has become popular as leisure clothing among the Thai people, which has had beneficial impact on their own batik industry. Thai-batik is also exported and is a competitive

³⁹⁸ Salma and Eskak, 'Keeping the Genuine of Batik in the Age of Artificial Intelligence', 3-4.

³⁹⁹ Dewi Puspita Rahayu, 'Peta Politik Industri Batik Yogyakarta dan Dampaknya dalam Sistem Perburuan Batik di Yogyakarta', *Jurnal Kajian Ruang Sosial-Budaya* 3, no. 1 (2019): 33-4.

⁴⁰⁰ Rahayu, 33.

⁴⁰¹ Even though the literature does not define how Thai-batik is made, I assume that Thailand creates batik using *batik tulis* and *batik cap* techniques. Thailand probably also manufactures printed batik imitations.

product good due to its cheaper price than Indonesian batik.⁴⁰² Another export competitor is the neighbouring country Malaysia, although, export competition is not the main cause of quarrel between Indonesia and Malaysia, rather it is about claiming a cultural heritage.

I would like to note here that, although the literature on batik as a commodity and as a cultural heritage covers nation states such as Thailand, China and Malaysia, batik craft technique reaches back much further than the formation of states. Early forms of batik – so-called wax-resist techniques – were also known in China (during the Tang Dynasty 618-906) as *miao*, in Thailand as *phanung* and in Japan as *rokechi*. From this point of view, statements about a so-called Thai batik adapted from Indonesia must be viewed with caution.⁴⁰³ In the following Section I discuss the cultural heritage disputes between Indonesia and Malaysia. I would like to preface this, by saying that I have consulted literature written mainly by Indonesian academics who live in Indonesia or in the West. Interpretation of these facts might be biased by an Indonesia view.

Quarrels on Claiming Batik

Batik as a cultural art practice has long been a point of contention between Malaysia and Indonesia, as it is a treasure of cultural heritage in both nations. Historically, the pre-colonial kingdoms such as Srivijaya, Majapahit and others between Malaysia and Indonesia produced affiliations in terms of ethnicities, languages and religions that persist to this day. Intermarriage, trade and migration took place beyond present-day national borders. Together Indonesia and Malaysia form the *Malay World* which geographically encompasses the east coast of Sumatra, the west and southwest coasts of Borneo, the Riau archipelago, and Malaysia. Many scholars agree on three main pillars that make up “Malayness”, which are similar languages, the Islamic religion, and the sultans’ power. Consequently, there is a perception of blood brotherhood or kinship between these two countries.⁴⁰⁴ Accepting batik as a shared cultural heritage became increasingly difficult in the wake of tourism and cultural representation on the world stage. Several cases of disputes in the last fifteen years, not just over batik but also over *wayang kulit* (leather puppet shadow theatre), *tari pendek* (Balinese dance), *reog ponogoro* (east Javanese dance), *angklung* (bamboo instrument), *keris* (sword

⁴⁰² The cheaper price of Thai-batik as an export good has to do with its governmental supports for the Thai-batik industry. Rahayu, 33.

⁴⁰³ Tri Widodo Suryo, ‘Seni Batik Indonesia: Sekelumit asal-usul dan tahap perkembangannya’, unpublished article, *ISI Yogyakarta*, around 2010, 7; Interview with Nurohmad, *Batik Definition & The Soul of Batik*, 27th May 2021.

⁴⁰⁴ JinnWinn Chong, “‘Mine, Yours or Ours?’: The Indonesia-Malaysia Disputes over Shared Cultural Heritage”, *Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia* 27, no. 1 (April 2012): 6-8.

making), *rendang padang* (meat dish), *nasi lemak*⁴⁰⁵ (rice dish) and other items of cultural heritage have led to visibly tense relations between Indonesia and Malaysia.⁴⁰⁶ When batik was ascribed to Indonesia in UNESCO's representational list of intangible cultural heritages in 2009, to many Indonesians it felt like a victory in a long-running dispute. A sense of triumph can still be felt when Indonesians confirm batik as their cultural heritage. It should be noted, however, that UNESCO does not give an automatic right of exclusion when it grants a heritage to a nation. This means that Malaysia could equally apply to UNESCO to batik recognised as an aspect of its national heritage. Due to the cross-border "Malay culture" of Indonesia and Malaysia, these countries share many cultural treasures. In the last two decades both countries have been trying to claim various elements of cultural heritage in a kind of competition and register them with UNESCO. Still, both countries react sensitively when one country claims a cultural treasure as their heritage. Also, the use of certain cultural expressions is observed, commented upon or even insulted. One such famous case happened in 2018 when Miss Grand Malaysia wore a tailored blouse with a *parang* motif for the finals. Indonesian people were affronted by this because they felt their cultural assets had been stolen from; after all the *parang* motif used to be one of the forbidden classical patterns of the Yogyakarta palace. They were appalled that Miss Grand Malaysia was sporting a classical Indonesian batik motif internationally.⁴⁰⁷

Historians and researchers remain cautious when it comes to batik attribution to a nation. Undisputedly, however, UNESCO's recognition in 2009 has had a positive impact on the Indonesian batik industry. As a result, measures and governmental efforts to develop the batik industry, which had already been taken two years earlier, experienced an intensified effect. Further, batik could now be exported more easily and successfully. In 2008 the export value

⁴⁰⁵ Brenda Benedict, 'Apakah nasi lemak benar-benar makanan khas Malaysia?', *BBC News Indonesia*, 20th November 2019, BBC Travel Edition, <https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/vert-tra-50456297> (last visit 14th July 2022).

⁴⁰⁶ Other quarrels arose about *kuda lumping* (Javanese dance with horses), *lagu rasa sayange* (song) and *bunga raflesia arnoldi* (flower). In the 1960s Malaysia and Indonesia fought a war over territory on Borneo Island and several unsolved conflicts over resource-rich islands continue today. In June 2009 the tensions between the two countries reached their peak, so Malaysia's defence minister felt compelled to state that they were not going to war with Indonesia. Peter Gelling, 'Score One for Indonesia in the War Over Batik', *The New York Times*, 14th September 2009, Section World, <https://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/15/world/asia/15iht-batik.html> (last visit 7th July 2022); Hamidulloh Ibda, 'Strategi Memutus Mata Rantai Pembajakan Hak Cipta pada Seni Batik Nusantara', *Jurnal Ilmiah Citra Ilmu* 17, no. 33 (30th April 2021): 71-2.

⁴⁰⁷ Erik Mangajaya, 'Apakah Miss Grand Malaysia 2018 Mencuri Batik Indonesia?', *Uzone*, 20th October 2018, <https://uzone.id/apakah-miss-grand-malaysia-2018-mencuri-batik-indonesia> (last visit 14th July 2022); TFR, 'Cultural Heritage Claimed by Other Countries, What Can Our Country Do?', *The Finery Report*, 14th April 2021, <https://www.thefineryreport.com/articles/cultural-heritage-claimed-by-other-countries-what-can-our-country-do> (last visit 14th July 2022). For an English article with pictures of the Miss Grand Malaysia 2018 issue see Belmont Lay, 'Indonesians angry Malaysian pageant finalist's 'batik' dress appropriates Indonesian culture', *motherhip*, 15th October 2018, <https://motherhip.sg/2018/10/indonesians-angry-malaysians-batik/> (last visit 14th July 2022).

of batik amounted to 32,000 US dollars, while in 2012 that value increased to 278,000 US dollars. In 2013 alone batik exports grew by almost 19%.⁴⁰⁸

Protective Regulations and Laws

Indonesian batik has reached the world stage as a market commodity, a fact that is accompanied by renewed questions about how to protect it. Above all, the government aims to prevent domestic batik motifs and batik patterns from being copied and produced abroad. The government is not just concerned about industrial theft in the form of copied patterns, but also the misuse of batik as cultural heritage in the form of advertising and for tourism purposes. Thus, when it comes to protecting batik motifs, both issues play a role, as they overlap and thus pose a challenge to law enforcement officials.

There are two different forms of legal protection for batik motifs. On the one hand, batik is protected in the form of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) that came with Indonesia's joining the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1994. Batik has been protected in Indonesia since 2002 by law number 19 of copyright as a separate form of creation. The law contains several articles on the batik protection, one of which states that batik is protected because it has artistic value through its forms, motifs, and colour compositions. The same article also includes other Indonesian fabrics such as *songket*⁴⁰⁹ and *ikat*⁴¹⁰, which are protected from being imitated in the same category as batik art.⁴¹¹ On the other hand, batik is a form of Traditional Cultural Expression (TCE) and is thus protected by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). WIPO and UNESCO have been working since 1976 to protect TCE in developing countries.⁴¹² Also, in 2002 Indonesia passed a law for intellectual property, which says that the state retains IPR in folklore and cultural expressions of

⁴⁰⁸ The six most important countries for Indonesia batik export are the United States, South Korea, Germany, Japan, France and Canada (current state in 2019). Rahayu, 'Peta Politik Industri Batik Yogyakarta dan Dampaknya dalam Sistem Perburuan Batik di Yogyakarta', 32-3.

⁴⁰⁹ *Sonket* is a woven brocade fabric.

⁴¹⁰ *Ikat* means to bind and is a resist dyeing technique. Bundles of yarn are tied in certain sections before dyeing. The yarns can be dyed with different colours, generating elaborate patterns when woven together.

⁴¹¹ Batik as a traditional Indonesian textile is protected from copying and imitating in article 12, paragraph 1 letter i of the copyright law. V. Selvie Sinaga, 'Faktor-Faktor Penyebab Rendahnya Penggunaan Hak Kekayaan Intelektual Di Kalangan Usaha Kecil Menengah Batik', *Jurnal Hukum IUS QUIA IUSTUM* 21, no. 1 (2014): 65.

⁴¹² WIPO differentiate between traditional knowledge TK (pengetahuan tradisional PT) and traditional cultural expression TCE (ekspresi budaya tradisional EBT), in the way that TCE is linked to immaterial intangible heritage in the form of activities. Batik making can be regarded as a immaterial intangible heritage. Sari, Wulandari and Maya, 'HKI PADA BATIK TULIS INDONESIA (STUDI KASUS BATIK TULIS TANJUNG BUMI, MADURA)', 147; Kusumaningtyas, Rindia Fanny, 'Perlindungan Hak Cipta Atas Motif Batik Sebagai Warisan Budaya Bangsa' 6, no. 2. (July 2011), 196; Priscilia Sakul, 'PERLINDUNGAN HUKUM TERHADAP HAK CIPTA WARISAN BUDAYA BATIK BANGSA INDONESIA DITINJAU DARI PERSPEKTIF HUKUM INTERNASIONAL', *LEX PRIVATUM* 8, no. 3 (1st July 2020), <https://ejournal.unsrat.ac.id/index.php/lexprivatum/article/view/29865>, 185.

society.⁴¹³ By folklore it means a collection of traditional creations created by groups or individuals in society that are based on Indonesia's social and cultural identity and on the oral transmission of norms and values that have been passed down from generation to generation. These traditional creations include paintings, drawings, carvings, sculptures, mosaics, jewellery, handicrafts, clothing, musical instruments, traditional weaving and batik. For batik this means that traditional batik motifs are automatically protected by the state, and as such, may be used by Indonesian batik makers but not by foreign batik makers. This also means that old batik patterns whose author can no longer be traced can be categorised as traditional or folkloric and thus also belong to the state's intellectual property.⁴¹⁴

Furthermore, in 2007 a couple of young Indonesians founded the Indonesian Archipelago Culture Initiatives (IACI) in Bandung, an institution that is concerned with the country's cultural vision. IACI founders observed that global spaces and influences have entered Indonesia in such a way that young people in the country have little connection left to their cultural roots. In addition, IACI founders argued that the wealth and strength of the nation's integrity lies in its diversity and how Indonesians value this diversity. IACI asserts that diversity is strongly needed to enrich the variety of cultural industries, the economy, and technological innovations. They therefore reinforce the exploration of local cultural wealth. One of their endeavours is to protect of any form of traditional cultural expression. On their website they have recorded 5,849 batik motifs stretching from Aceh to Papua.⁴¹⁵

⁴¹³ In the early 2000s, Indonesia passed several laws on intellectual property rights (IPR) to meet the minimum standards of the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS). This TRIPS agreement must be complied with by all WTO countries. The agreement is intended to prepare and protect Indonesia in the global trade sphere and to foster foreign investment in the country. V. Selvie Sinaga, 'Faktor-Faktor Penyebab Rendahnya Penggunaan Hak Kekayaan Intelektual Di Kalangan Usaha Kecil Menengah Batik', *Jurnal Hukum IUS QUIA IUSTUM* 21, no. 1 (2014): 62.

⁴¹⁴ Batik is protected by the IPR law number 19, dated 2002. Sari, Wulandari and Maya, 'HKI PADA BATIK TULIS INDONESIA (STUDI KASUS BATIK TULIS TANJUNG BUMI, MADURA)', 147; Syarif Nurhidayat, 'Praktek Perlindungan Karya Cipta Motif Batik Kebumen Sebagai Kekayaan Intelektual Tradisional', *Pandecta Research Law Journal* 8, no. 1 (2013): 95-96, <https://doi.org/10.15294/pandecta.v8i1.2356>; Kusumaningtyas, Rindia Fanny, 'Perlindungan Hak Cipta Atas Motif Batik Sebagai Warisan Budaya Bangsa', 192-7.

⁴¹⁵ These motifs are documented and categorised online through geographical origin (www.budaya-indonesia.org). Unfortunately, the website is not very user-friendly. However, the material would serve well as a basis for a digital database on batik motifs. 'Hasil Pencarian Entri Budaya Indonesia', Budaya Indonesia, 2007-2022, <https://www.budaya-indonesia.org/cari?element=4&page=1> (last visit 13th July 2022).

The Indonesian Archipelago Cultural Initiatives (IACI) was founded in Bandung on 29th December 2007 by several members of the Bandung FE Institute and Surya Research International. IACI comprises three main tasks which are spread over three separate institutions, namely the Indonesian Cultural Association (*Perhimpunan Budaya Indonesia* PBI), which is the institution that hosts the website www.budaya-indonesia.org, the Indonesian Cultural Network (*Jaringan Budaya Indonesia* JBI), and the IACI Creative Economy Unit (*Satuan Ekonomi Kreatif* IACI). According to their website IACI has merged with *Sobat Budaya*, however their new website (www.sobatbudaya.or.id) is not accessible.

Kantor Pusat Sobat Budaya, 'IACI » Budaya Indonesia', INISIATIF BUDAYA KEPULAUAN INDONESIA, 2011, <https://budaya-indonesia.org/IACI> (last visit 13th July 2022); Hamidulloh Ibda, 'Strategi Memutus Mata Rantai Pembajakan Hak Cipta pada Seni Batik Nusantara', *Jurnal Ilmiah Citra Ilmu* 17, no. 33 (30th April 2021): 68; Perpustakaan Digital Budaya Indonesia.

Despite the efforts of numerous institutions and organisations, protecting batik motifs remains a difficult task. This is due to several reasons. First, the law protecting batik as traditional cultural expression (TCE) and the intellectual property rights (IPR) for batik are different, and difficult to combine. From the legal point of view, TCE is protected in the IPR system by being included in the IPR field group. While this sounds simple in theory, it has so far required some discussion in practical implementation, as IPR can only be given to an individual or originator,⁴¹⁶ but batik as a TCE is seen as a common heritage and cannot be traced back to a single author.⁴¹⁷

A second reason is that the definition of folklore is not clear and is therefore difficult to apply to batik motifs. Folklore is defined as “traditional creations created [...] in society that are based on [...] cultural identity and on oral transmission of norms and values that have been passed down from generation to generation”.⁴¹⁸ Questions that arise from this could be: How many generations need to have created the same batik motif for it to be determined as folkloric? How much variation is allowed within one motif to still call it traditional? Who oversees these boundaries of definitions? Who determines whether a motif is folkloric or not? The answers to these questions remain blurry. Classical batik motifs are probably easy to determine as folkloric, but variations of it or motifs outside the sultan’s palace are much more difficult to classify. Another difficulty is shown in the following case: if a folkloric batik motif is copied by competitors, a society can only prosecute them through official action provided the competitors are of foreign origin. In other words, if a folkloric batik motif from one region in Indonesia is copied by other batik makers in the country, this law does not apply. It is even regulated that folkloric batik motifs, whose IPR belong to the state, should not be misused by a few individuals to gain economic advantage from them. This is a double-edged sword, because folkloric batik motifs often come from a regional batik community and reflect their cultural identity. If these batik motifs are classified as folkloric, the community loses the right to these patterns as distinct from other batik communities in Indonesia. At the same time, however, they are protected by the state against foreign competitors. Probably the most difficult aspect of these protection efforts is the fact that only documented batik patterns

⁴¹⁶ In her study Sinaga makes an interesting point about the copyright law that protects batik as IPR. Although the copyright law article 12, paragraph 1, letter i does not explicitly define the type of protected batik, batik art specifically refers to contemporary batik, which is often an individual work and thus may meet the requirement of originality for copyright protection. Sinaga, ‘Faktor-Faktor Penyebab Rendahnya Penggunaan Hak Kekayaan Intelektual Di Kalangan Usaha Kecil Menengah Batik’, 65.

⁴¹⁷ Sakul, ‘PERLINDUNGAN HUKUM TERHADAP HAK CIPTA WARISAN BUDAYA BATIK BANGSA INDONESIA DITINJAU DARI PERSPEKTIF HUKUM INTERNASIONAL’, 186-7.

⁴¹⁸ Syarif Nurhidayat, ‘Praktek Perlindungan Karya Cipta Motif Batik Kebumen Sebagai Kekayaan Intelektual Tradisional’, 95.

can be protected. But most batik communities do not document their creations which makes it difficult to prove their authorship.⁴¹⁹

In theory, a batik maker or batik company owner can buy the IPR for their self-created batik motifs. In practice, the costly and intricate process of doing so has rather a deterrent effect. Expensive annual fees are another drawback, and IPR is only granted to a single person, an author, not to an entire batik community. Adding to this, IPR for batik motifs or patterns can easily be circumvented by changing the filling of a motif, so that the whole design is not regarded as an imitation of the protected motif. Further, the expression and style of a motif can be varied greatly using the hand-drawn *canting tulis* method. Many batik makers thus conclude that buying IPR for batik motifs is useless and impracticable. In Yogyakarta only about 350 batik motifs' IPR had been registered by 2014. This is a very small number given the fact that there are over approximately 50,000 batik units and that the batik industry belongs to the manufacturing sector which contributes significantly to the economic strength of Yogyakarta.⁴²⁰

A batik maker who creates and sells batik commercially, could register their batik, for other IPR rights. In the case of special techniques and dyeing processes, the law on trade secrets would apply. However, making batik and dyeing the fabrics is a creative process that is readily shared among the public and also in the batik scene. Even new inventions, such as the cap (stamp) (Figure B16) from thicker paper waste (by Nurohmad from Yogyakarta) is shared and made available to the batik community, in the spirit of preserving and developing Indonesian batik. Furthermore, a batik motif can be protected as an industrial design.⁴²¹ This rarely happens for two reasons. First, in the batik industry, traditional motifs are often supplemented with new elements. This makes it difficult to argue that one is an original work that can be protected as an industrial design. Second, it takes four to five months to obtain the rights for an industrial design. This is way too long, given the fact that new batik designs⁴²² only circulate on the market for a little over three months due to the fast fashion and product world. Another right is that of geographical indication. Batik motifs can be protected by their geographical origin, but this excludes authorship. Therefore, this right is not applicable to

⁴¹⁹ Nurhidayat, 'Praktek Perlindungan Karya Cipta Motif Batik Kebumen Sebagai Kekayaan Intelektual Tradisional', 97-8; Sari, Wulandari and Maya, 'HKI PADA BATIK TULIS INDONESIA (STUDI KASUS BATIK TULIS TANJUNG BUMI, MADURA)', 155; Kusumaningtyas, Rindia Fanny, 'Perlindungan Hak Cipta Atas Motif Batik Sebagai Warisan Budaya Bangsa', 195-7.

⁴²⁰ As an example, the batik industry in the province of Yogyakarta contributed 13.06% to the gross regional product in the province in 2007, which was the fourth highest contribution. Sinaga, 'Faktor-Faktor Penyebab Rendahnya Penggunaan Hak Kekayaan Intelektual Di Kalangan Usaha Kecil Menengah Batik', 64.

⁴²¹ The mass production, motifs and colours of batik are elements consistent with the definition of industrial design in article 1, paragraph 1, number 31, year 2000. Sinaga, 67.

⁴²² To make it clear, by batik design I mean the entire fabric, whereas a batik motif could be just one element of the whole batik design.

individuals or companies. Probably the most practical right is the trademark right, which protects a batik trademark from imitation for 10 years. This right can be renewed after expiry. Since this process again involves bureaucracy and costs, it is more likely to be used by larger companies. For example, *Batik Keris* and *Batik Danar Hadi* (Figure B21), two large batik companies based in Solo, sell their batik in their own stores which are based in several major cities in Indonesia.⁴²³

Signature and Label

In some regions single batik makers have started to sign and label their batik creations with a brand name without being registered for IPR protection (Figure B23). Nonetheless, this has worked well to ensure batik quality, because to some extent it prevents the competitors of copying these batik creations. It has also drawn attention away from concern about the originality or imitation of motifs, since good batik brand that guarantees high quality is more in demand on the market than unique motifs. This means that a good quality batik fabric with an imitation motif (*batik halus*) sells better than a bad quality batik fabric with an original motif. For many individual batik makers or small batik units, registering a trademark is too costly.⁴²⁴ The government's efforts to reduce costs for smaller batik companies are negligible in this context, as they have not led to sustainable improvements in practice.⁴²⁵

Many individual batik makers work at home and do not use any brand name. Since they do not have a financial cushion, or know-how regarding market strategies, they sell batik directly to medium and large batik companies, in a system that is known as subcontracting. Other individual batik makers use their own brand names and sew their woven brand labels onto their products. However, branding batik fabrics with the creator's own label tag in this way only guarantees originality as long as the fabrics are purchased directly from the maker. Often medium and large companies buy products from individual batik makers and remove their brand names, substituting them with their own brand labels before displaying and reselling the

⁴²³ Sari, Wulandari and Maya, 'HKI PADA BATIK TULIS INDONESIA (STUDI KASUS BATIK TULIS TANJUNG BUMI, MADURA)', 155-6; Nurhidayat, 'Praktek Perlindungan Karya Cipta Motif Batik Kebumen Sebagai Kekayaan Intelektual Tradisional', 101; Sinaga, 'Faktor-Faktor Penyebab Rendahnya Penggunaan Hak Kekayaan Intelektual Di Kalangan Usaha Kecil Menengah Batik', 63, 70-7.

⁴²⁴ In 2014, for example, the cost of trademark registration was 700,000 rupees. Sinaga, 74.

⁴²⁵ The Indonesian government knew that this financial hurdle would exclude many small companies. It therefore issued a regulation on the granting of trademark rights that provides a 40% reduction in costs for small companies. However, since this reduction does not apply to initial trademark applications, but only to their renewals, registration remains just as precarious for small businesses. In addition, small businesses wishing to benefit from this discount must be recommended by government agencies. However, such government recommendations occur only after participation in a government assistance programme. Information about these assistance programmes might not be disseminated evenly, resulting in few small businesses overall benefiting from this discount. Sinaga, 74-6.

products in their stores. Consequently, tailored batik blouses and shirts often depict the brand name of the tailoring enterprises rather than that of fabric creator. The system of subcontracting has been common in the batik industry since the 19th century and was also known as *alapan*. It was usually Chinese middlemen who controlled this subcontracting system and further supplied the raw materials for batik production. The home batik makers received a contracted sum for the finished batik fabric. Nowadays, home batik makers obtain the raw materials themselves and get a wholesale price for their batik. This system of subcontracting has made it impossible to attribute batik to its creator. As a result, the brand loses its appeal as a mark of identity and a guarantor of a product's quality on the market.⁴²⁶ In very few cases today can the creator's signature be found on the fabrics (Figure B24), a practice carried over from the last century, when the idea of signing a piece of batik was introduced by European batik entrepreneurs such as Eva van Zuylen.

The Trademark “Batik INDONESIA”

However, there is an official state mark that may not be removed. Based on an idea from the Balai Besar Kerajinan dan Batik (BBKB) and the government's Department of Small and Medium Industries, the trademark “batik INDONESIA” was issued in 2007 and enshrined as part of the copyright act. There are three rectangular labels with coloured fonts on a black background that can be sewn as a webbing onto corresponding batik fabrics. For *batik tulis* the words “batik INDONESIA” are written in gold in the centre and the two words “BATIK TULIS” are placed at the right border. The same layout applies for *batik kombinasi* and *batik cap* (Figure B25). The font for *batik kombinasi* is silver and the words at the right border are “BATIK CAP + TULIS”. The *batik cap* font is white and the words on the right border are “BATIK CAP”. Batik makers in Indonesia can register for this trademark by sending in a batik textile to BBKB. After the BBKB has verified that the batik meets the Indonesian standard, the batik maker is allowed to use the label for their batik fabrics. In addition, their products are regularly verified and quality control checked by BBKB. This trademark distinguishes Indonesian batik from foreign competition and can justify higher prices for an original batik textile. Since the labels are divided among the three different types of batik, they also ensure distinction between elaborate *batik tulis* fabrics and more quickly-produced *batik cap* fabrics. The idea of a protected trademark is good, but there are still many consumers as well as batik makers who do not know about “batik INDONESIA”. In 2015

⁴²⁶ Nurhidayat, ‘Praktek Perlindungan Karya Cipta Motif Batik Kebumen Sebagai Kekayaan Intelektual Tradisional’, 102; Sinaga, 69.

about 160 batik units in Yogyakarta were registered for the trademark, and around 3,000 units across the whole country. This is rather a small number compared to the approximately 50,000 existing batik units in Indonesia.⁴²⁷ Many smaller companies or individuals decide not to apply because of the application costs and annual fees. This is the reason why, in more rural areas where batik makers often have a smaller budget, Indonesian batik is not certified and protected by this trademark.⁴²⁸ In other cases registered companies do not sew the woven labels onto their products because it complicates the production process. According to Dheni Nugroho, one of the Guru Batik company owners from Yogyakarta, the trademark label is printed on paper tags and packages for his batik products (Figure B26). For Dheni's batik company, it is not worth the effort to order and sew on the woven labels, as many customers do not know these trademarks anyway.⁴²⁹

Originally, batik textiles were used only as clothing, which made cultural identity and social status visible. However, this has changed significantly since 1945 when Indonesia declared its Independence. The period that followed was characterised by strong political leadership (Sukarno) that (mis)used Javanese cultural identity as a means to unify the numerous islands and ethnic groups of the Archipelago. Economic development with the use of more machines in the craft sector also shook up the structures of the manually-oriented society. The increased orientation towards the West since the Reformation (1998) and the years afterwards was marked by economic catch-up, global influences and networks, as well as further strong technologisation.

Batik has become very commercial and is produced by different players. As outlined above, there are individual batik home workers who resell their textiles to batik companies; they create their batik from beginning till end. Then there are associations and groups that collectively make batik. In these, each different step of one piece of batik is usually fulfilled by different hands. In these communities the same batik motifs are used repeatedly and serve as a hallmark of the local culture. Then there are batik companies of various sizes, from small,

⁴²⁷ Even before batik was recognised as cultural heritage by UNESCO, in 2007 Indonesia had 48,300 batik enterprises employing 792,300 people. After 2009, the number of enterprises increased rapidly. Gatut Budiono and Vincent Aryanto, 'BATIK INDUSTRY OF INDONESIA: THE RISE, FALL AND PROSPECTS', *Studies in Business and Economics* 5 (1st January 2010): 156–70.

⁴²⁸ Siswi Wulandari, Indah Purnama Sari, and Siska Maya, 'PEMBERLAKUAN BATIKMARK SEBAGAI UPAYA PERLINDUNGAN KONSUMEN', *Seminar Nasional dan Diskusi Panel Multidisiplin Hasil Penelitian dan Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat 2018* 1, no. 1 (14 September 2018): 592, 595, 599; Indah Purnama Sari, Siswi Wulandari, and Siska Maya, 'Urgensi Batik Mark dalam Menjawab Permasalahan Batik Indonesia (Studi Kasus di Sentra Batik Tanjung Bumi)', *Sosio e-Kons* 11, no. 1 (28 April 2019): 17, 19–23; M. Erma Widiani, Karsam Karsam, and Kusni Hidayati, 'Batik Standardization as Batik Artisan Empowerment Model For Marketing Process', *European Journal of Business and Management* 12, no. 27 (30 September 2020): 46–7, 51–2; Rahayu, 'Peta Politik Industri Batik Yogyakarta dan Dampaknya dalam Sistem Perburuhan Batik di Yogyakarta', 38.

⁴²⁹ Interview with Dheni Nugroho, *Batik Label*, 14th April 2023.

medium to large, where accordingly the division of labour is regulated differently, so that one piece of batik also goes through several hands.

The commercially-produced batik is used for clothing, accessories and home textiles, such as bed linens, tablecloths and pillowcases, as well as touristic goods such as purses, bags, sandals, key fobs, wall hangers depicting a map of Indonesia or *wayang* puppets among other items.

Today, the batik market in Indonesia is highly competitive. Indonesian batik competes for export with other countries such as China, Thailand, Vietnam and Malaysia. In Yogyakarta, low-priced printed batik imitations from China threaten the domestic batik industry and intensify competition. These batik imitations are mainly bought by the middle and lower classes, while original batik is preferred by the middle to upper classes. Therefore, the Yogyakarta batik scene is focusing more on marketing their batik to this sales segment, where originality, art and the batik quality are valued. In addition, Yogyakarta batik faces competition from other domestic cities. For example, the pasar Beringharjo and Malioboro – two tourist markets in Yogyakarta – also sell the finest batik from Pekalongan.⁴³⁰

In summary, original Indonesian batik patterns are not protected enough by the regulations and laws of IPR, GI and TCE. However, batik makers working in communities are used to copying patterns from one another and do not have a sense of intellectual property within their communities. In former days, copying batik patterns from certain regions was not an issue because it was either of no interest to the batik makers to do so, or they felt honoured that other batik makers chose to use their motifs. However, UNESCO's recognition of batik as a form of cultural heritage, has raised awareness of property rights among batik makers. But I consider that it is more important to protect the domestic batik industry from imported batik. As a representative of batik, Indonesia should better protect and support its batik makers to develop a stable and robust batik industry which will ultimately attract the younger generation to work in the batik sector.⁴³¹

The Special Region of Yogyakarta has taken several measures to foster batik. For example, in recent years batik was integrated as a school subject in public schools. Vocational schools for batik were opened. The development of batik production and marketing have been fostered by

⁴³⁰ Rahayu, "Peta Politik Industri Batik Yogyakarta dan Dampaknya dalam Sistem Perburuan Batik di Yogyakarta", 35-7.

⁴³¹ According to the newspaper The Jakarta Post, the Indonesian Ministry of Trade and Industry set out a new regulation in 2015 on the import of batik fabrics and batik patterned textiles (imitations). The regulation does not prohibit import but imposes stricter rules and controls, including the need to obtain permission to import and limitations on quantities of fabrics for import, to help to reduce the amount of imported batik. The Jakarta Post Life team, 'Batik: A Cultural Dilemma of Infatuation and Appreciation', The Jakarta Post, 2016, <https://www.thejakartapost.com/longform/2016/11/29/batik-a-cultural-dilemma-of-infatuation-and-appreciation.html> (last visit 18th June 2023).

the Ministry of Trade and Industry. Batik associations and small to medium batik enterprises have been actively supported by being offered special programmes for management, design and natural dyes. In Yogyakarta there are several batik associations that contribute to the appreciation and preservation of batik. One of these associations is called *Paguyuban Pecinta Batik Indonesia Sekar Jagad* (PPBI Sekar Jagad), or the Association of Indonesian Batik Lovers – Universe of Flowers. This association’s goal is to preserve Yogyakarta’s batik heritage by creating and documenting special batik patterns. The association organises events and workshops for the public. Academic batik experts such as Djandjang Purwo Saedjati are important members of PPBI Sekar Jagad and contribute their professional input. On their website the association also provides technical information about specific steps of the batik technique.⁴³²

Such batik associations are important on a cultural level. However, the batik industry is equally important for the development and preservation of batik in Indonesia. The batik entrepreneur Nurohmad states:

“Batik is like a train, regardless of where you are, VIP, Economy or Business class, we are all heading in the same direction, towards prosperity and a better well-being.”⁴³³ Nurohmad, batik entrepreneur from Yogyakarta

Here, Nurohmad is writing from the perspective of batik makers. No matter whether batik makers create expensive, fine batik with natural dyes, or *batik cap* or other batik, the batik industry offers the chance for them to earn a living through batik.

2.2.2 Fashion and Modernity

Batik Becomes Fashionable

In former days Java’s rural people wore other traditional batik motifs than the people from peri-urban regions. As mentioned earlier, there is a common classification of batik motifs,

⁴³² Another batik association in Yogyakarta is called *Paguyuban Batik Sidoluhur Jogja*. There are several batik associations in Java, as for example *KIBAS* in Surabaya, or *Paguyuban Pasundan* in Jakarta. Rahayu, ‘Peta Politik Industri Batik Yogyakarta dan Dampaknya dalam Sistem Perburuhan Batik di Yogyakarta’, 39; ‘Paguyuban Pecinta Batik Indonesia Sekar Jagad’, *Paguyuban Pecinta Batik Indonesia Sekar Jagad Berdiri sejak 17 Mei 1999* (blog), 2017, <http://ppbisekarjagadjogja.blogspot.com/> (last visit 18th June 2023).

⁴³³ anerdgallery, ‘ANERDspective 21 - Nurohmad (Omah Kreatif Dongaji)’, *ANERDgallery* (blog), 25 November 2020, <https://www.nerdgallery.com/blog/2020/11/25/nurohmad-dongaji/> (last visit 18th June 2023).

depending on the geographical location, known as *batik pesisir* (coastal batik) and *batik pedalaman* (inland batik). These geographical terms explain the coastal and inland influences that affected batik motifs. However, in the course of the 21st century, these two terms lost its relevance because batik motifs were classified in a more sophisticated way. Since I am discussing batik clothing from the 19th century onwards, I shortly explain this geographical classification: *batik pesisir* means coastal batik and primarily refers to Javanese batik, which was exposed to outside influences early on, in northern coastal cities such as Pekalongan, Tegal, Semarang and Cirebon. Foreign merchants, for example from China, trafficked their goods and brought objects with foreign motifs and decoration that influenced the motif language of coastal batik. In the 19th and 20th centuries coastal batik was characterised by colourful flora and fauna motifs. In contrast, inland batik, which was worn near the sultan palaces (*Kraton*) was less colourful, and with more geometrical patterns.

Batik motifs in Java were not only exposed to several geographical and trading influences, but also to political and social events. The island of Java became an early centre of power for several kingdoms, and for the Dutch colonial rulers. The latter enacted a law on clothing in 1872 which said that all people in public spaces must dress according to their ethnic identities. The colonial rulers referred particularly to three large ethnic groups that -according to them- were predominant in the Archipelago at the time: the Chinese, the Dutch and the Indonesians. The dress code law was probably related to the fact, that the Dutch turned their limited trade colonialism into direct territorial control to gain more economic and political influence. From then on, the costumes of Javanese people mattered because the Dutch wanted to export fabrics to Indonesia like England did to India. Accordingly, they promoted the idea of ethnic identity with clothing. *Sarongs* with batik motifs were worn by Indonesians, by Chinese women and after 1910 also by Dutch women, who had formerly dressed typical European. Batik became a cultural key to enter the Javanese market with European products. As described earlier, the colonial rulers imported successfully printed batik fabrics to the Archipelago.⁴³⁴

The *Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* (United East-Indies Company, shortly called VOC), which was one of the largest trading companies of the 17th and 18th centuries, played a role in the acquisition of raw materials, but had little influence on the inhabitants' clothing. However, the VOC was important in that it gave rise to numerous trade-related intermarriages. When the VOC went bankrupt at the end of the 18th century, numerous Indonesian wives of Dutch colonials remained in Java, so did European and Indo-European

⁴³⁴ Susan Legêne and Berteke Waaldijk, 'Reverse Images- Patterns of Absence', in *Batik Drawn in Wax, 200 Years of Batik Art from Indonesia in the Tropenmuseum Collection* (Amsterdam: KIT Publishers, 2001), 35; Ratuannisa et al., 'Shifting of Batik Clothing Style as Response to Fashion Trends in Indonesia', 134.

wives of successful colonial traders. These women began to create batik to their own taste, and broke traditional batik design boundaries with new patterns and motifs.⁴³⁵ While Javanese women only created batik at home for their own use, these women also started to produce batik for sale. Probably the best-known character is Eliza van Zuylen (1863-1947), who ran a Dutch batik studio in Pekalongan. Van Zuylen produced batik fabrics with her *buketan* motif in large quantities. *Buketan* comes from the Dutch word *boeket*, which means a bouquet of flowers. The *buketan* motif shows a wide variety of flowers, just as they appear in a flower bouquet, in a free distribution on the textile. Van Zuylen had great market success with it, so that her clients included numerous wealthy European, Chinese and Indonesian patrons. These women entrepreneurs, like van Zuylen, had become very influential for Javanese fashion from 1900 onward. Other women from different parts of the world, who lived in Java influenced the fashion world in Java with their clothing. Their fashion style was different from that of the Dutch women and as such had contributed to more variety.⁴³⁶

The Dutch introduction of the Ethical Policy around 1900 marked a turning point for Javanese society and also influenced batik fashion. This policy aimed to raise the welfare of the Javanese population and was launched after ethical thinkers in Europe had accused the Dutch colonial power of exploitation. The Ethical Policy was seen by its proponents as a noble experiment that should transform Indonesian society by creating an educated elite that could share in the wealth of Western civilisation. This elite should transform the colony into the modern world. During the programme's implementation phase (until 1926/1927), particular attention was paid to agricultural policy and education. Some upheavals took place, but they were not pointed against the Ethical Policy, rather against uncontrolled effects of Western economic development in Indonesia. By 1920, the population of Java increased to 40 million, driving urbanisation and increasing great labour demand of Western companies. This meant that Javanese women, who had primarily been engaged in home-based work, began leaving their homes for work.⁴³⁷ As a consequence, their clothing became more important.

⁴³⁵ Examples and images of such batik are shown in: Kerlogue, *Batik*, 108-17. An extensive batik textile collection is that of Dr. Etty Indriati which can be seen online: <https://www.indonesiantextilecollection.com/batik> (last visit 24th May 2023).

⁴³⁶ Legêne and Waaldijk propose, that around the 1840s an Indo-European batik style emerged in Java. See Legêne and Waaldijk, 'Reverse Images - Patterns of Absence, Batik and the Representation of Colonialism in the Netherlands', 41. Tozu, 'Forming Process of Batik Indonesia One Type of Forming of National Culture in Indonesia', 70; Julie Berger Hochstrasser, 'Batik Belanda: Transformed Identities Cross Boundaries in the Visual Arts (Or: Eliza van Zuylen and Creativity at the Margins)', *Dutch Crossing* 35, no. 2 (1st July 2011): 148-61.

⁴³⁷ It was not mainly through the educational opportunities provided by the Ethical Policy that women began to leave the home, but rather due to their work in Western companies. According to David Legge's research the Ethical Policy had very limited educational success. In the 1930s the programme had produced only a few high school graduates and the literacy rate of the population was just 6 percent. Despite this failure, the programme produced a small, educated elite that became an important group to channel the frustration of the masses. Moreover, historians recognised that the Western currents of thought of the Ethical Policy also fell on fertile ground in Islamic circles, attempting to reconcile religion with the challenges and needs of the 20th century. As a consequence, a self-confident nationalist movement began to develop, culminating in

In the 1940s and 1950s, Indonesian women's fashion style began to develop along with information technology that brought news on fashion trends from Europe and other parts of the world. Batik textiles were previously worn as draped cloth in the form of traditional clothing such as the *sarong* or *kemben*⁴³⁸. Now, tailored batik outerwear as Western cut dresses and outer clothing became popular. Women's fashion magazines such as *Puspa Wanita*, *Femina* and *Dewi* appeared on the market. They all showed batik in various forms of applications, namely as *sarong*, tailored skirts, blouses, *kebaya*⁴³⁹, tops and foulards.⁴⁴⁰ However, batik clothing did not only undergo changes in the form of fashion for Indonesian women, but men's batik clothing was also increasingly worn after Indonesia's Independence (1949). This was due to the new president Sukarno's nation building programme, which was an important task in the early years of the young republic. He took the Hindu-Javanese culture as a model for a national culture and tried to propagate nationalism through Javanese batik clothing. For this purpose, he assigned the batik designer K. R. T. Hardjonagoro⁴⁴¹ from Surakarta to develop a new batik style. Hence, the new batik style *batik Indonesia* was born containing traditional motifs from the Surakarta *Kraton* supplemented with north coastal (mostly Chinese) patterns and colours. Subsequently, Sukarno was ready to enact a batik clothing policy around 1953, that required all primary, secondary, high school students and employees, to wear batik shirts.⁴⁴²

Indonesia's declaration of Independence in 1945. John David Legge, 'Indonesia - The Ethical Policy', Encyclopaedia Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Indonesia/The-Ethical-Policy> (last visit 25th July 2022); Ratuanisa et al., 'Shifting of Batik Clothing Style as Response to Fashion Trends in Indonesia', 135.

⁴³⁸ *Kemben* is a ceremonial batik textile in Java that is worn by women to cover the breasts. For pictures and a recent Indonesian view on *kemben* see: Yuni Ekowati, 'KEMBEN SIMBOL KECANTIKAN WANITA INDONESIA', Gurusiana.id, <http://yunikekowi.gurusiana.id/article/2020/08/kemben-simbol-kecantikan-wanita-indonesia-4842266> (last visit 27th July 2022). For an example of a *kemben* collected and exhibited as an artwork by a Western institution see: 'Breast Cloth (Kemben)', Art Institute Chicago, 2017, <https://www.artic.edu/artworks/180380/breast-cloth-kemben> (last visit 27th July 2022).

⁴³⁹ *Kebaya* is a long-sleeved blouse for women that has been worn by the Indonesian upper class (*priyayi*) since the 15th and 16th centuries. The usually plain-coloured, lace-trimmed long blouse also became popular among the middle class in the 20th century. A batik *kebaya* refers to the cut of this blouse, which was tailored from a batik fabric. For more historical details and pictures see Susanti, '8 Most Popular Types of Kebaya in Indonesia', Factsofindonesia.com, 1st November 2021, <https://factsofindonesia.com/types-of-kebaya-in-indonesia> (last visit 30th July 2022); Vania Rossa and Dinda Rachmawati, 'Identik dengan Ibu Kartini, Ini Asal Usul Kebaya Pakaian Tradisional Perempuan Indonesia', suara.com, 21st April 2022, <https://www.suara.com/lifestyle/2022/04/21/124109/identik-dengan-ibu-kartini-ini-asal-usul-kebaya-pakaian-tradisional-perempuan-indonesia> (last visit 30th July 2022); 'Kebaya - Indonesian Cultures', *Kebaya - Indonesian Cultures* (blog), 2011, <http://nusantara-cultures.blogspot.com/2011/06/kebaya.html> (last visit 30th July 2022).

⁴⁴⁰ Ratuanisa et al., 'Shifting of Batik Clothing Style as Response to Fashion Trends in Indonesia', 135-7; Yongkie Angkawijaya, Ira Audia Agustina, and Alan Ong Tee Chuan, 'Batik as Part of Pop Culture', SSRN Scholarly Paper (Rochester, NY: Social Science Research Network, 5th November 2020), 4.

⁴⁴¹ He was also known as Go Tik Swan. The Jakarta Post Life team, 'Batik: a cultural dilemma of infatuation and appreciation', The Jakarta Post, 2016, <https://www.thejakartapost.com/longform/2016/11/29/batik-a-cultural-dilemma-of-infatuation-and-appreciation.html> (last visit 30th July 2022).

⁴⁴² Itie van Hout and Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen, *Batik drawn in wax: 200 years of batik art from Indonesia in the Tropenmuseum collection* (Amsterdam: Royal Tropical Institute / KIT Publishers, 2001), 65; Hardjonagoro, 'The Place of Batik in the History and Philosophy of Javanese Textiles: A Personal View', 235; Tozu, 'Forming Process of Batik Indonesia One Type of Forming of National Culture in Indonesia', 71-2.

Consequently, batik industry boomed enormously, so that in 1955 the number of batik companies doubled to 10,000, compared to 1950. Sukarno's batik clothing policy was maintained by the subsequent president Suharto, who took power in 1967. However, by the 1980s, the number of batik businesses declined dramatically because cheaper, printed batik imitations from abroad entered the Indonesian market. The 1980s were also marked by economic progress in the country along with a transformation towards a kind of Western-style consumer society that preferably wore comfortable and fashionable clothing, rather than constricting batik *sarongs*, shirts, and blouses. Batik clothing was only worn on special occasions, such as ceremonies and traditional feasts. Finally, on 2nd October in 2009, batik clothing experienced a resurgence, when UNESCO recognised batik as a form of Indonesia's cultural heritage.⁴⁴³ As a result, Indonesia's awareness and pride in batik as a genuine national form of cultural heritage rose. The government henceforth declared the 2nd October as the National Batik Day and henceforth recommended people to wear batik on Fridays. Presumably, Friday is particularly suitable for wearing batik, since in Islam Friday is a special day where everyone gathers to pray together (*Sholat Jumat*). In this context batik serves as festive clothing. Likewise, batik clothing is worn for official occasions or for work. In many offices people are allowed to wear casual clothing on Fridays instead of their uniforms. Most employees choose to wear a batik shirt or batik blouse. The seventh president since Indonesia's Reformation (1998), Joko Widodo, has set a dress code for cabinet ministers of labour that consists of brown batik. Furthermore, in 2014, Sri Sultan Hamengkubuwono X, the sultan of Yogyakarta, issued a regulation on the wearing of traditional clothing for public employees. This regulation states, that all employees should wear traditional clothing typical for Yogyakarta on a certain Thursday of the month. His purpose was to make batik more visible as a form of cultural heritage and raise awareness of batik within society. Batik is not only worn by public service workers on this particular Thursday of the month, but often on a daily basis: batik is used as an overall pattern or as a decorative part on a plain blouse or shirt in many public service uniforms. Even in non-governmental public places, such as restaurants, hotels and other places for tourists, batik is often worn as a uniform.⁴⁴⁴

Although the government designated batik shirts and blouses as official attire for special occasions since the 1950s, batik clothing did not remain trapped within the function of formal

⁴⁴³ Tozu, 71-2.

⁴⁴⁴ Atin Istiarni and Ida Fajar Priyanto, 'Traditional Costumes as Librarians' Uniforms for Work at Public Libraries of Yogyakarta, Indonesia', 2, 2017, <http://library.ifla.org/id/eprint/2242/>; Iskandar and Eny Kustiyah, 'BATIK SEBAGAI IDENTITAS KULTURAL BANGSA INDONESIA DI ERA GLOBALISASI', *GEMA* XXX, no. 52 (August 2016): 2467; Trixie, 'FILOSOFI MOTIF BATIK SEBAGAI IDENTITAS BANGSA INDONESIA', 3, 7; The Jakarta Post Life team, 'Batik: a cultural dilemma of infatuation and appreciation'; interview with Muhamad Nurrudin, *Batik as a Dress*, 30th July 2022.

dress codes. In the 1980s, Indonesian fashion designers began to use batik for their collections. Soon batik was seen on the catwalk, but also in fashion and craft exhibitions. Certainly, Indonesia's most famous fashion designer was Iwan Tirta (1935-2010), who originally worked as a lawyer and only had discovered his love for batik when he was asked by the British Council to give a lecture on Indonesian culture while studying abroad in London. Iwan Tirta was not a descendant from batik makers and did not inherit craft knowledge and batik philosophy from his parents or even continued running an existing batik company. But he was educated in Javanese culture and was surrounded with patterns, motifs and designs of various batik textiles from an early age, because his mother had a private batik collection. Iwan Tirta began his scholarly research on batik in the mid-1960s and dedicated his full attention to it after the passing away of his mother in 1971. He became interested in the haute couture marketing of batik and the application of batik in interior design. As a successful batik researcher and fashion designer, he brought Javanese batik to the international catwalk. With his in-depth knowledge of traditional Javanese batik motifs and their significance, Tirta also appreciated their visual power and adapted traditional Javanese motifs for his own designs. Typical of his design language were traditional motifs enlarged several times over, which became even more massive in their effect.⁴⁴⁵ He saw himself as a “translator” of traditional Javanese motifs, which he interpreted in a contemporary way and made them accessible to people through fashion design. He also saw himself in the role of a caretaker, not just creating batik but rather preserving and nurturing it. Over the course of his career, Tirta's hands created over 10,000 batik motifs. When he died in 2010, he left behind the Iwan Tirta Private Collection, and his company for both batik haute couture and batik products in interior design, which continues successfully to this day. What distinguished Iwan Tirta's work from other designers, were the high-quality batik textiles produced with the *batik tulis* technique.⁴⁴⁶

⁴⁴⁵ To see pictures of his batik style I suggest visiting his website: <https://www.iwantirtabatik.com/> (last visit 18th May 2023).

⁴⁴⁶ ‘The Maestro’, Iwan Tirta Private Collection, 2022, <https://www.iwantirtabatik.com/content/12-the-maestro> (last visit 2nd August 2022); Barbara Hahijary, ‘Iwan Tirta's Diverse Legacy’, *Indonesia Design*, 30th December 2016, <https://indonesiadesign.com/story/iwan-tirta-two-sides-legacy/> (last visit 2nd August 2022); ‘Iwan Tirta, A sequel of royal batik compilation’, waykambas, <https://waykambasdesign.com/works/a-sequel-of-royal-batik-compilation> (last visit 2nd August 2022); Daniell-Robert Gerard Kuhr, ‘Iwan Tirta (1960-2000), the Commodification of Batik: Brokering Past as Present & the Re-Imagination of Indonesian Personality’, *Dissertation, Faculty of the Graduate School of the University of Minnesota*, October 2012, <http://conservancy.umn.edu/handle/11299/142746>, 29-32.

Changing Batik Ethics

For many decades the *batik tulis* fabrics were higher esteemed and seen as the “real” batik. But with fashion development they became less important from the 1990s onwards, because keeping up with an increasingly fast fashion world was important and only possible with (mostly screen-) printed batik imitations (*batik cetak*), which began to be used by numerous Indonesian fashion designers. Thus, these clothes became prominent on the catwalks and in clothing shops. Ultimately, this development has led to a wide acceptance of printed batik imitations, but it has also led to a blurring and fading of knowledge and differentiation of *batik tulis* (traditional batik technique) and *batik cetak* (printed batik).⁴⁴⁷

Printed batik was favoured by the fast fashion world because of its short production time and the low production costs. While an haute couture designer like Iwan Tirta used handmade *batik tulis* as a distinction for a noble product, this was less important for fashion designers of a middle price fashion segment.

As mentioned earlier, printed batik textiles were already in circulation in the colonial era functioning as an affordable garment and thus catered to the low-purchasing masses. Different from today, society bore a collective consciousness and knowledge about original and imitated batik. This awareness was increasingly lost since the 1980s and has been paralleled by a declining awareness and reference to traditional culture and crafts. Therefore, a clear declaration and distinction between *batik tulis* and printed batik seems important to the connoisseurs and advocates of traditional batik crafts. One of these connoisseurs is the fashion designer Carmanita, who is often regarded as the counterpart to Iwan Tirta. As a direct descendant of a court batik maker, Carmanita creates her own batik fabrics and has a private batik collection. Carmanita asserts that, batik refers to the resist dyeing technique, which is characterised by the use of wax (*malam*) and the tools *canting tulis* or *canting cap*. She adds that batik is free of specific patterns and motifs but is characterised by its technique.⁴⁴⁸ This is also the opinion of batik maker Nurohmad from Yogyakarta with his company Batik Dongaji, who produces batik in different styles (Figure B27), by mainly using the *batik cap* technique. His motif languages show that, he moves freely between the traditional and contemporary fields. For example, in 2020, he created a batik design with a covid-19 motif (Figure B28).⁴⁴⁹ Renowned and successful fashion designers or, individual one-man businesses like Nurohmad, adhere to the traditional technique. Larger batik retailers, such as Parang Kencana, are also committed to using the traditional *batik cap* technique for their products because they

⁴⁴⁷ Ratuannisa et al., ‘Shifting of Batik Clothing Style as Response to Fashion Trends in Indonesia’, 136-7.

⁴⁴⁸ The Jakarta Post Life team, ‘Batik: a cultural dilemma of infatuation and appreciation’ (last visit 2nd August 2022).

⁴⁴⁹ Interview with Nurohmad, *Batik Motif, Technique & Philosophy*, 3rd December 2021.

define batik through technique. It is remarkable, that large batik retailers use the *batik cap* technique because they produce in big scale. For example, Parang Kencana runs eleven shops in Surabaya, Jakarta and Bali, and another 12 outlets in department stores in the capital. However, printed batik producers, such as Lie Kok Tie, the third-generation owner of Batik Indraloka, defines batik differently. He says that batik is defined as such by patterns and motifs, but not by technique. He sees printed batik as a technical development, which naturally went hand in hand with a steady evolution of batik technique. He is also convinced that batik technique will continue to develop in the future.⁴⁵⁰

Batik makers, lecturers, and researchers in Yogyakarta have long become accustomed to printed batik textiles and see them as a part of the fashion world and the more affordable market goods. However, they consider it important that society knows more about the difference of authentic batik and printed batik. They further regard the printed batik companies ethically responsible to clearly declare their products as printed batik instead of just batik.⁴⁵¹

Batik found its way into the fashion world, and also into pop culture. Dutch immigrants brought illustrated fairy tales such as Hansel and Gretel or Little Red Riding Hood to Indonesia in the mid-19th century, which served as motifs for batik design. These batik textiles with fairy tale characters were particularly popular in the beginning of the 20th century. If batik is no longer linked to the original goal of transmitting noble statements, symbols in social life and philosophy through certain motifs, it is part of pop culture and can depict anything. Some scholars regard coastal batik (*batik pesisir*) as the first step of this tendency, because coastal batik was not part of classical batik and depicted motifs with less symbolic meaning. In addition, coastal batik was a trade good already at an early stage, with less ceremonial and symbolic significance.⁴⁵²

Since about the 1960s, batik motifs moved into new product areas apart from batik clothes. They were produced for tablecloths, bed linens, purses, bags, household accessories and souvenirs (Figures B19, B29 and B30). These products often featured classical or traditional batik motifs and probably belong more to the field of souvenirs than to pop culture. But after UNESCO's recognition of batik as a form of Indonesian cultural heritage (2009), batik

⁴⁵⁰ Of course, there are academics and people of the batik scene in Yogyakarta who define batik through the technique **and** the motifs, such as the former head of the Craft Department from ISI Yogyakarta, Dr. Yulriawan Dafri. Personal communication with Yulriawan Dafri, *Apa itu, Batik Indonesia? (What is it, Indonesian Batik?)*, 18th December 2019; Also see: The Jakarta Post Life team, 'Batik: A Cultural Dilemma of Infatuation and Appreciation'.

⁴⁵¹ The Jakarta Post Life team; interview with Nurohmad, *The Intangible of Batik*, 6th April 2021; interview with Satya Brahmantya, *Infrastructures & The Strength of Kriya*, 10th September 2021.

⁴⁵² Angkawijaya, Agustina, und Tee Chuan, 'Batik as Part of Pop Culture', 6-7.

boomed in all possible forms of pop culture and in public places. Batik shirts and blouses combined with Japanese anime, colourful football club logos from Italy, and other motifs, that were attractive to foreign tourists, emerged on the market. Motorcycles for private individuals could be purchased with batik motifs. Smaller items such as motorcycle helmets, laptops, cell phone covers and computer mice were hawked by various companies as special batik motif editions. Batik became visible in public spaces because the government and private institutions sought to decorate large and small areas to achieve great visibility and awareness of Indonesian batik as a form of cultural heritage. For this purpose, mostly classical or traditional motifs were used. For example, tourist buses were decorated with the *parang* motif and train waggons prominently carried floral batik motifs from Cirebon, Pekalongan and Pacitan.⁴⁵³

In today's product world, classical batik patterns serve as an icon and recognition marker for Indonesian batik, and thus as a symbol of cultural heritage. This revival of classical batik patterns could also be observed in the fashion world since 2009, in that they were worn more frequently again. However, classical batik patterns have always been part of batik clothing.

In summary, batik fashion has undergone several changes in meaning during the last two centuries. First there was a shift from batik clothing as functional cloth wrapped around the waist or chest (*sarong/kemben*) to tailored outer clothing such as shirts or blouses. Due to the influence of foreign women living in Java, pants, skirts and other clothing made from batik became fashionable. This was accompanied by a rising awareness of women's fashion. Since the 1980s fashion shows with innovative batik creations emerged. Yogyakarta artist and batik maker Rika Winata recalls that around 2000, fashion designer Eduard Hutabarat successfully created batik clothing in Jakarta for young people to go dancing in the club. After 2000, a rising number of fashion designers and artists appeared, who created dynamic and abstract⁴⁵⁴ batik motifs. Two Yogyakarta examples are the brands Siji Batik and Gee Batik.⁴⁵⁵

Since 2009, batik experienced a resurgence as a craft and cultural heritage, and as fashionable clothing such as *kemben* and *sarong*. As a result, the authentic batik technique (*batik tulis*, *batik cap* and *batik kombinasi*) re-gained more appreciation in society. In the fashion world, authentic batik was increasingly used, in addition to the existing printed batik. The following table shows the developments and shifts of batik fashion in relation to the general fashion,

⁴⁵³ Arsianti Latifah, S Pd, and M Sn, 'BATIK DALAM TRADISI KEKINIAN', 2011, 3-10; Angkawijaya, Agustina, and Tee Chuan, 'Batik as Part of Pop Culture', 6-7.

⁴⁵⁴ I will discuss the terms "dynamic batik" and "abstract batik" in the next Section.

⁴⁵⁵ Interview with Rika Winata, *Batik Style*, 8th April 2021.

which was often subject to external influences. It also shows the statement and function, that went along with the wearing of batik.⁴⁵⁶

Table 1: The Shift of Batik Fashion Styles in Indonesia

Time Period	Fashion Trend and Influences	Batik Fashion Style	Batik Motifs	Statement or Function Of Wearing Batik
1800–1870	Clothing to cover the body. Traditional clothing.	<i>Kain panjang, sarong, kemben, shawl.</i>	Traditional and classical motifs.	Batik as cultural identity.
1870–1940	Same as 1800-1870 but with further regulations on clothing according to ethnicity.			Batik as ethnic identity.
1940–1980	Fashion awareness and development through Dutch women’s fashion style that had practical functions. Influences from other people of the world living in Indonesia.	<i>Kain panjang, sarong, dress, trousers, shawl.</i> Upper part: tailored shirt, blouse, <i>kebaya</i> .	Traditional and classical motifs, modified versions of these motifs.	Batik as national identity.
1980–2009	Fashion awareness through foreign influences and through catwalk trends in Indonesia and abroad.			Batik became secondary/forgotten.
2009–2023	Diversification of trends: global, fashionable trends, slow fashion, eco fashion and revival of traditional clothing.	<i>Kain panjang, sarong, kemben, shawl, dress, trousers.</i> Upper part: tailored shirt, blouse, <i>kebaya</i> .	All kinds of motifs and techniques, also traditional and classical motifs.	Wearing batik as a lover and preserver of batik/being proud of a cultural heritage.

When Indonesia’s batik became more important in 2009, private and governmental institutions started supporting traditional and classical batik with different programmes, which fostered a clear differentiation between the two styles.

⁴⁵⁶ Interview with Rika Winata, *Batik Style*, 8th April 2021.

Today's Differences between Traditional and Classical Batik

The biggest difference between traditional and classical batik is that the latter was subject to strict design rules, which prevented visual changes or any further development of motifs. Thus, classical batik is more recognisable as a distinct style, than traditional batik which, in purely geographical terms, extended over numerous cities from the interior of Java to the coasts and to other islands of the Archipelago. Traditional batik features a greater variety of motifs than classical batik, and –as a fundamental part of Javanese society– has developed dynamically along with cultural changes. There are no strict design rules, so that batik communities are creating individual motifs and carry them in their repertoire. This means that, in batik communities design changes and a transition to a kind of modern batik happened smoothly. The term traditional batik, like modern batik is not clearly defined. If only visual characteristics are considered, it is difficult to categorise batik motifs as traditional.

In literature and discourse traditional batik motifs were the first motifs that existed and were distinguished from classical batik since about the 1940s. This was, because traditional batik was practiced as a parallel craft to classical batik at the sultan's palaces until the Indonesian Independence movement. Most documentation of traditional batik came from Dutch colonial rulers and from foreign researchers, who's interest in batik continued until the late 1980s. These documentations are partly based on private collections, partly on academic research and are often coloured by a colonial point of view or a romanticisation of the “exotic”. These documentations often lack an exact dating of the batik textiles. There are also Indonesian publications on traditional motifs which rather function as a visual catalogue, than as an exact historical recording of traditional motifs.⁴⁵⁷

Although there is a lot of information about traditional batik motifs from different cities in Java and Sumatra, the development of traditional batik motifs is still largely unexplored. Recent professional research by Indonesians shows that traditional batik motifs from batik communities have been persisting for a long time. Since 2013 and increasingly since 2019 efforts have been made to revitalise traditional batik motifs. For example, in Bantul and Pakualaman, in the province of Yogyakarta, local traditional batik motifs were redesigned or combined with contemporary elements to make them more marketable. For example, the Sido Luhur Pakualaman Batik Association⁴⁵⁸ invited a design expert from BBKB, to learn creating new contemporary motifs. As a next step the association's 35 batik women combined their

⁴⁵⁷ There is an example of a collection of batik from eastern Java. Interestingly, the title contains the word *keeksotisan* or “exoticisation”. The Indonesian authors probably wanted to emphasise the uniqueness of East Javanese batik. Dr. Yusak Anshori and Adi Kusrianto, *Keeksotisan Batik Jawa Timur - Memahami Motif dan Keunikannya*, 1st Edition (Jakarta: PT Gramedia, 2011).

⁴⁵⁸ In Indonesian the association is called *Perkumpulan Batik Sido Luhur Pakualaman*.

newly created motifs with their traditional motifs, using consistently the *batik tulis* technique. Furthermore, these women achieved a trademark for one of their own distinctive motifs called *Gunung Ketur*, which also resulted in positive media attention. Another example is a research team of the University Negeri Yogyakarta, who established the term “Ethno Modern” for batik motifs. They studied the case of traditional *batik tulis* from the Batik Giriloyo community.⁴⁵⁹ Giriloyo is a village in the Bantul Regency, that is part of the Yogyakarta district. According to the university’s research team, the community’s traditional designs appeared old-fashioned. The research team therefore suggested using more lively colours and more interesting motifs to please the younger customers’ taste. Further, they engaged in helping with market strategies and development of new products.⁴⁶⁰ These products are categorised as modern or contemporary batik.

Modern Batik

In Indonesia the term modern batik is used in various meanings. In the fashion world it refers to new and fashionable batik clothing, which contrast with traditional and classical batik motifs clothing. Yogyakarta’s batik connoisseurs in Yogyakarta have no common definition of modern batik, so that the term is unprecise. Everybody agrees on the definition of traditional clothing, which stands for untailored batik cloth wrapped around the body in the form of a *sarong*, *selendang*⁴⁶¹ or a *jarit/kain panjang/kemben*.⁴⁶²

One definition of modern batik is that it comprises all forms of batik which are not traditional, regardless of which batik motif is used. This means that, even if a traditional or classical motif has been used for a tailored skirt, it would be a modern garment and therefore modern batik. This stance is closely related to the batik philosophy and the symbolic and ceremonial practices, in which the type of garments is important.

⁴⁵⁹ In Indonesian the community is called *Paguyuban Batik Giriloyo*.

⁴⁶⁰ Muafi Muafi, Muchammad Sugarindra and Endar Abdi Prakoso, ‘MENGKALI POTENSI KEKAYAAN MOTIF BATIK MODERN PERKUMPULAN BATIK SIDO LUHUR PAKUALAMAN YOGYAKARTA | Panrita Abdi - Jurnal Pengabdian Pada Masyarakat’, *Jurnal Panrita Abdi* 4, no. 2 (14th July 2020): 246, 250; Sri Wening, Enny Zuhni Khayati and Sri Emy Yuli Suprihatin, ‘PENGEMBANGAN PRODUK DAN STRATEGI PEMASARAN BUSANA BATIK BANTULAN DENGAN STILASI MOTIF ETHNO MODERN’, *Jurnal Penelitian Humaniora* 18, no. 1 (2013): 70-5.

It is not compulsory to change the motifs to make marketable batik. the following article mentions market strategies to place the existing batik properly. Tutun Seliari, ‘Facilitating “Paguyuban Batik Tulis Langensari” In Determining Targets To Respond The Global Fashion Trends’, *Adi Widya : Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat* 3, no. 2 (28th December 2019): 73–7.

⁴⁶¹ A *selendang* is a shoulder cloth worn as a decorative fabric or to carry children. Two highly artistic examples can be found in: ‘Shoulder Cloth (Selendang) | Javanese’, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000 - 2023, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/307893> (last visit 14th February 2023); ‘Shoulder Cloth (Selendang) with Design of Diagonal Bands of Animal, Vegetal, and Geometric Motifs’, Saint Louis Art Museum, <https://www.slam.org/collection/objects/32570/> (last visit 16th February 2023).

⁴⁶² A good overview of traditional clothing with photographs can be found in: Kerlogue, *Batik*, 134-63.

To make this definition understandable, I give three examples. The first example is a traditional garment, such as a *sarong*, that depicts a combination of new motifs and motifs inspired by traditional motifs, but that are not considered traditional or classical. This traditional garment with new motifs is considered modern. The second example is a fashionably cut dress or a pair of trousers with traditional or classical batik motifs. This garment is called modern batik by its cutting pattern and not because of its motifs. The third example is a shirt or blouse with freely created motifs, but in line with the aesthetics of classical and traditional motifs. This shirt or blouse with either traditional, classical or new motifs is regarded as modern batik.⁴⁶³

Batik shirts for men and batik blouses for women with traditional or classical batik motifs (Figure B31) would not be considered as modern batik but rather as traditional, because they have been in use long enough, since the 1950s. Some connoisseurs would call them neither traditional nor modern batik, but just shirt or blouse *with* a traditional motif.

The above-mentioned examples illustrate that, the term modern batik in the fashion world includes the cutting pattern of the garment and the motif and therefore either one of the two may not be traditional or classical to call it a piece modern batik. Another parameter to twist a garment into modern batik are the colours. Any garment –a *sarong*, blouse or shirt– with traditional or classical motif is categorised as a piece of modern batik if the colours are bright, gaudy or differently used as in traditional or classical motifs. The same holds true for different scales of traditional and classical motifs. For example, if a *garuda* motif on a *sarong* is blown up in size, but still has the Yogyakarta traditional colours black, brown, indigo and white, the *sarong* will be understood as modern. This was one of Iwan Tirta's typical design method. Modern batik in fashion mainly emphasises new, visual deviations from traditional-or classical-motif-*sarongs*.

For other items, such as pillowcases, bags, purses and tablecloths the choice of motif, colour, and motif size are changing parameters to achieve modern batik product. These items already appeared in the 1960s and therefore they are not evaluated as new or modern just by its product category. A tablecloth with the classical *parang* motif in the classical colours of black, brown, indigo and white can be regarded as classical *or* modern. The same tablecloth created with vibrant colours is undoubtedly a piece of modern batik. The batik scene is not unanimous reflected in various opinions. Some batik connoisseurs call such items modern, because they do not belong to the traditional clothing, others feel that these items are traditional, because they have been in circulation for several decades.

⁴⁶³ If batik garments such as *sarong*, blouses and shirts depict abstract batik, they are called contemporary batik or abstract batik. Abstract batik and other batik styles will be presented later in this chapter.

Interestingly, batik is sometimes also categorised through a western-tinged view in that its motifs are seen as works of art and are categorised according to western art epochs. This means that, modern batik is to be understood as having emerged in the 1940s as a development and deviation from traditional and classical motifs. But we must note that, traditional batik has been created until today and therefore does not take a clear place as a preceding art movement of modern batik.

However, some batik experts refer to modern batik as a batik style movement that emerged after classical batik and call it neoclassical batik or modern batik. Visual characteristics of this batik style are close to classical batik because modern batik has evolved from the old classical motifs, also in terms of material and colour. While in classical batik certain patterns and colours are strictly defined, modern batik takes classical motifs only as a basis, adding traditional motifs and freely invented fillings and form to the design with a free choice of colours. The biggest visual difference can probably be created by colour, since in classical batik only natural colours were used, while in modern batik a vibrant synthetic colour palette is used. For example, a classic *kawung* motif with its classic colours is enlarged and free spaces are filled with floral motifs that are coloured in a harmonious tone. Or a *parang* motif created with classic Yogyakarta colours (brown, indigo, white) is split up, so that it has diagonal banners in between, which are filled with colourful floral motifs (Figure B43). The bright and cheerful coloured flowers contrast the classic *parang* motif. Another design variation of modern batik is the use of classic colours and a figure from the Hindu-Javanese period, but the different free areas are designed in a painterly free form. Some areas are plain, others filled with traditional motifs, such as the *truntum* motif.

Concerning modern batik's design principles another definitional ambiguity appears, because some batik makers and batik connoisseurs need the word modern for novel. Their sense of meaning does not borrow from Western art categories. So, they use the term modern for a contemporary batik textile. However, Yogyakarta's academic circles agree on four major batik epochs. First, the traditional and classical batik style appeared until 1940/1945, then the modern batik style emerged as a successor of classical batik and was *en vogue* until the late 1960s. After that, several styles, for example batik painting and abstract batik, began to develop and are grouped together as contemporary batik.

2.2.3 Painting, Abstraction and Digital Designing

In this Section I discuss different batik styles that emerged since the 1960s. Different batik styles are based on different technical variations. In the appendix of this thesis, I attached an overview (Graphic 3) of different batik styles, along with other art styles, ceramic styles and the development of *kriya* in Indonesia.

Batik Lukis (Batik Painting)

In the 1960s batik painting emerged in Yogyakarta, which according to some batik connoisseurs, was adapted from Singapore. The term batik painting describes both the technique and the artwork. First trials and experiments were carried out at the Batik Research Centre in Yogyakarta and many ASRI students and alumni pushed the development of the new technique. Indonesia's batik painting pioneers were Abas Alibasya, Bagong Kussudiardja, Kuswadi Kawindrasusanto and Soelardo. As a team, they organised the first batik painting exhibition, which was held at the Sonobudoyo Museum in Yogyakarta from 2nd until 5th August 1965 and featured the works of Kuswadi Kawindrasusanto and Soelardjo.⁴⁶⁴ Other artists of the 1960s, Ida Hadjar, Mudjita, Mustika, Mardianto, A.N. Suyanto, Damas, V.A. Sudiro, Sondak, Sunardi, Soetopo, and Sudarwoto created paintings using the batik painting technique.⁴⁶⁵

Technically, batik painting is done by pouring liquid colour directly onto the white textile which is clamed into a wooden frame. The liquid synthetic dyes (Remazol, Naphthol and Indigosol) are applied with a brush or spoon (*colet* technique). In rarer cases batik makers use natural dyes instead. The *colet* technique was previously used for other batik styles, but only to colour smaller areas with a rich tone. For batik painting, the *colet* technique is being used for large spaces to create a watercolour effect. Typical for this watercolour effect are colour gradations, or gradients from one colour to the next and different colour tones that overlap each other partly. Batik painting makers use colours in such a way that, they create a non-figurative and dynamic colour arrangement. Typically, batik painting is detached from repeated motifs, fillings or pictorial designs, but is often characterised by strong, bright

⁴⁶⁴ Interview with SP. Gustami, *The History of Kriya in Yogyakarta Since 1976*, 22nd December 2018; Kerlogue, *Batik*, 168; Rifqi Nashrul Fuad Amrulloh and Fera Ratyaningrum, 'BATIK LUKIS KARYA GUNTUR SASONO DI DESA CARAT KECAMATAN KAUMAN KABUPATEN PONOROGO PERIODE 2008-2016', *Jurnal Seni Rupa* 06, no. 01 (2018): 656; Media INDOTEX | Indonesian Textile Institute, 'LUKISAN BATIK dan BATIK LUKIS', *BULETIN TEKSTIL* (blog), 29th November 2021, <https://buletintekstil.com/2021/11/29/lukisan-batik-dan-batik-lukis/09/04/10/3280/> (last visit 19th August 2022); Bmaster Aditama, 'Nafiun.com', *Batik Lukis* (blog), 31st March 2015, <https://www.nafiun.com/2015/03/batik-lukis.html> (last visit 19th August 2022).

⁴⁶⁵ Jusmani, 'Membaca Eksistensi Produksi Dan Pameran Kriya Kontemporer Di Yogyakarta', 29.

colours. Thus, batik painting is rarely used for clothing, but more often as wall hanging. Technically, the applied wax is not used for creating white forms as a design element, but it serves as a border or outline for the different coloured areas (Figure B8). These white lines can be overdyed in a second step, but usually the colouring is done in one step. The lines can be pre-drawn on the cotton fabric before applying the wax or the wax is applied spontaneously in a freehand manner. There are batik painters, who do not use wax at all and just pour colour on the fabric. However, these painted textiles are not considered as batik by most of the batik scene, as no resist like wax has been used.⁴⁶⁶

For batik painting another technical variation has become established which was borrowed from traditional batik making. This technique is called *kerok* or scratching off. Instead of washing out the wax by putting the whole fabric in hot water, for the *kerok* technique the fabric is not wetted. The fabric remains dry, and the wax is only scraped away in certain places which saves a lot of time. This means that, when the fabric is dyed again, the parts, where the wax had been scratched off, absorb the colour in a non-homogeneous way and create fine veins and irregular colour density. This uncontrollable optical effect is used by batik painters as a design element.⁴⁶⁷

As described above, batik painting uses techniques, which favour spontaneity and only partly controllable colour application. Thus, the results are each a unique piece of fabric, which can hardly be copied (Figure B32). Batik painting emerged as an artform with a strong link to painting. Instead of oil being painted on canvas with a brush, wax and textile colour is painted with a brush and *canting tulis* onto cotton, to create individual expressions of the artists.⁴⁶⁸

One of the probably most famous representatives of batik painting is Amri Yahya (1939-2004). Amri was born in Palembang (Sumatra) as a son of farmers and was involved in agricultural work, due to the early death of his father. At the age of 22, he could pursue his desire for an academic artistic education and travelled to Yogyakarta to study at ASRI.⁴⁶⁹

Like Amri, other young students in the 1960s from rural areas in Java, Sumatra, Kalimantan and other peripheral regions had to leave home, and travel for several days to pursue an artistic education in Yogyakarta, because there were no other options. Often, these young people could not count on financial support from their parents – their savings may have been

⁴⁶⁶ Interview with Joan Miroe, *Joan's Artworks, Batik Painting*, 27th March 2021; interview with Djandjang Purwo Saedjati, *Batik Technique at ISI Yogyakarta*, 19th December 2018.

⁴⁶⁷ Ananda, 'EKSPRESI TEKNIK KEROK DAN ZAT WARNA NAPHTHOL DALAM SENI BATIK', 3.

⁴⁶⁸ Interview with Joan Miroe, *Abstract Batik Artwork*, 29th August 2022.

⁴⁶⁹ Le Meridien Jakarta, 'Amri Yahya and The Contemporary Art of Batik Painting', Unlockart, <https://unlockartbylemeridienjakarta.com/home/amri-yahya-and-the-contemporary-art-of-batik-painting>; 'LOVE ME IN MY BATIK - Artists', ILHAM Gallery | Kuala Lumpur, 2022-2015, <http://www.ilhamgallery.com/love-me-in-my-batik/batik-artists/>; Kerlogue, *Batik* 168-78.

just enough for the trip to Yogyakarta. Thus, they had to earn their own living soon after their arrival in Yogyakarta, in addition to studying full-time at the art academy. Therefore, it is remarkable when artists like Amri, decide to pursue an academic artistic career. Another well-known artist, who had to endure similar hardships to study in Yogyakarta, is the internationally renowned artist Handiwirman Saputra, born 1975 in West Sumatra. At that time, a similar academy to ASRI, the *Akademi Seni Kerawitan Indonesia Padang Panjang* (ASKI) already existed in Sumatra.⁴⁷⁰ However, Yogyakarta was one of the first cities not only with a good art academy (ASRI), but with art networks and infrastructures, that were to remain non-existent in other regions of Indonesia for a long time to come. Therefore, in the 1980s and 1990s many young artists still chose ASRI (and later ISI Yogyakarta) in Yogyakarta for their studies.⁴⁷¹

When Amri started his studies in 1965, he had no choice than going to Yogyakarta, because ASKI in Sumatra was established some years after his start of study.⁴⁷² Amri studied different art forms and techniques but not batik. He finally encountered batik through his second wife, who owned a batik business. During the 1960s he experimented with batik painting techniques and developed his artistic language. His first batik painting exhibition in 1974 was the starting point to Amri's successful career as an artist.⁴⁷³

The development of batik painting was linked to Indonesian artists' discontent with the art landscape in the 1960s. Young artists felt that many art forms have stayed on the side-line or excluded by educational institutions and the governments' art support. By the mid-1970s, this discontent culminated in an art movement known as *Gerakan Seni Rupa Baru* or The New Art Movement, which paved new ways of art production. Batik painting was an attempt to transform traditional art forms into a new Western-adapted fine arts paradigm, breaking with the previous conventions of art, and particularly with the art of batik. Batik painting became a means of the individual artist's expression. In the 1970s batik painters referenced Javanese cultural heritage through *wayang* figures, Javanese religion, social and everyday issues in their works. In the 1980s batik painting experienced its heyday and it became a common part of the Indonesian art world. Today, it is still used by some artists and batik makers.⁴⁷⁴ In summary it can be said that batik painting became part of contemporary batik art and batik

⁴⁷⁰ 'Sejarah', *ISI Padangpanjang* (blog), 27th August 2014, <https://www.isi-padangpanjang.ac.id/sejarah-isi/> (last visit 2nd February 2023).

⁴⁷¹ Interview with Satya Brahmantya, *Galeri Benda, The Intangible & Handiwirman*, 26th May 2021.

⁴⁷² 'Sejarah', 27th August 2014.

⁴⁷³ Interview with Satya Brahmantya, *Galeri Benda, The Intangible & Handiwirman*, 26th May 2021; 'LOVE ME IN MY BATIK - Artists'; Le Meridien Jakarta, 'Amri Yahya and The Contemporary Art of Batik Painting'.

⁴⁷⁴ Jusmani, 'Membaca Eksistensi Produksi Dan Pameran Kriya Kontemporer Di Yogyakarta', 29.

painting exhibitions are organised until today.⁴⁷⁵ Batik paintings do not follow any formal rules, but they are usually framed as pictures or created as banners to hang on walls. Furthermore, batik painters extended batik techniques by using wax and colour in a free design manner, without being constrained by traditional design rules of batik patterns such as repetition and precise execution of motif and fillings.

Batik Murni or Pure Batik

Agung Suhartanto from Yogyakarta has developed another form of batik, which resembles a painted picture. He calls his batik artworks *batik murni*, which means pure batik. Agung asserts that, he uses the original batik technique, which requires working with a *canting tulis*, wax and dye bathes. He sticks to the original steps of pre-drawing, covering the textile partly with wax, dyeing the fabric and washing out the wax. Nevertheless, his batik textiles look almost like painted pictures, as he works through the batik process countless times, with each colour serving as a layer. Like a painter, he thinks in warm looking and cold looking colours. He starts with the warm looking colours ranging from light yellow, orange to deep red. Then, he adds the cold looking colours ranging from light blue to dark green. The numerous layers of colour, which he skilfully applies in different shades and gradations, result in a complex and spatial colour composition. His designs resemble visual representations of paintings. However, technically, Agung does not use a single brush, but sticks to the original tools. This form of batik requires an incredible amount of time and patience, as well as an extremely good imagination and meticulous planning (Figure B33).

Agung's work *Cinta Bahari Indonesia* was made with this technique (Figure B34). *Cinta Bahari Indonesia* means The Love of Indonesian Seafife. With this title he refers to Indonesia's rich underwater world and species diversity. All of Agung's pieces revolve around the themes of nature, cultures and treasures of his home country. For him, the use of batik techniques is accurate to express his appreciation for the Archipelago. For his piece *Cinta Bahari Indonesia* Agung cannot recall how many times he covered the textile with wax

⁴⁷⁵ Important batik artists, who established batik painting as contemporary batik art in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s are the Indonesians Amri Yahya, Ardiyanto Pranata, Tulus Warsito, Totok H. Kuswadi, Ida Hadjar, Soetopo, Ida, Ahmad Sopandi and the US textile artists Linda Kaun and Nia Flam.

Two examples on recent exhibitions can be found at: FEB UGM, 'Basu S.D. Showcase Batik Painting', Universitas Gadjah Mada | Faculty of Economics and Business, 2012, <https://feb.ugm.ac.id/en/news/130-basu-sd-showcase-batik-painting> (last visit 17th August 2022); TOTOK HADIYANTO KUSWADI, 'Paqmeran tunggal seni lukis batik nuansa baru batik painting exhibition new nuance', Indonesia One Search [J.S.n], 1997, <https://onesearch.id/Record/IOS3318.INLIS000000000020504#holdings> (last visit 17th August 2022); Jusmani, 'Membaca Eksistensi Produksi Dan Pameran Kriya Kontemporer Di Yogyakarta', 29.

and dyed it. He only remembers that he often worked on it over a period of four years, from 2016 until 2019. What is particularly striking in his work and constitutes Agung's style, are the colour overlays, which appear like watercolour painted layers. (Figure B34 shows an enlarged section from *Cinta Bahari Indonesia*, where numerous colour overlays are very well visible in the fish.) Agung masters technical batik effects, such as colour veins, that result from broken wax surfaces. The extremely precise use of both pastel colours and strong colours contribute to a three-dimensional effect. The dark vertical bars, showing up in the eyes of the fish, testify that Agung controls the creation of dark intense colours too. To create areas of dark shadows in the painting, Agung used much more colour so that these areas completely masked all other colours below. He alternated between opaque and semi-transparent colouring, between overlapping colours and the precise juxtaposition of colours, separated by fine *canting tulis* lines. All these technical details were complemented with selected white areas, which –like in paintings– represent light and create the illusion of spatiality and plasticity. Other works in the same style were appropriately recognised in his solo exhibition *Fine Ambatik* at the National Museum Indonesia in Jakarta in 2020.⁴⁷⁶

***Batik Halus* or Fine Batik**

Through batik history we know that in former days a lot of time was invested in creating a single piece of fabric. When Indonesia was occupied by the Japanese from 1945-1949, they stopped the import of white cotton fabrics import to Indonesia. Therefore, batik craftspeople, mostly women, started working on the same piece of fabric in a much more elaborate and fine way, to stay busy until new raw materials arrived. By creating very fine motifs and using multiple colours, they increased the value of their batik textiles. The same rule holds true for royal batik motifs: one of the most important batik motifs called *parang*, consists of several colours, fine details and a conspicuous number of white areas, all of which had to be covered with wax in patient work.

Today, there are some batik makers, who create very fine and expensive batik motifs. For example, the entrepreneur Sapuan from Pekalongan runs a small company, that produces expensive handmade batik in the finest way. He specialised in creating *batik tulis* textiles with motifs of Javanese or other cultural stories from the Archipelago. He calls his batik *batik tematik* or themed batik (Figure B1). His motifs are richly decorated and embedded in a finely

⁴⁷⁶ Agung Suhartanto, 'FINE AMBATIK (@agnshrtnt)', Instagram, 2023, <https://www.instagram.com/agnshrtnt/>; Interview with Agung Suhartanto, *Cinta Bahari Indonesia*, 20th June 2019; Interview with Agung Suhartanto, *Fine Ambatik*, 19th January 2023.

decorated landscape or environment. Sapuan's batik is considered particularly *halus* or "fine", which is a term to describe three things: firstly, the fineness of the fabric, secondly, the delicacy of the *canting tulis* lines and thirdly, the carefully, detailed and complex arrangements of motifs, patterns and fillings. Sapuan batik company had counted around 20 employees before the covid-19 pandemic's outbreak. Since 2020, he has continued producing fine batik textiles with six employees.⁴⁷⁷ Sapuan asserts that, he was not the only entrepreneur in the *kriya* sector, who had to compensate for the slump in demand by laying off workers. In other small and medium *kriya* enterprises the number of workers shrank to a handful of people after the pandemic. In family businesses, often only family members remained employed, while out-of-town employees could no longer be offered work.⁴⁷⁸

Sapuan remembers that, in 2009, three years after he had started his business, his fine batik textiles were sold for up to 20 million rupees. At that time, this price was already double the price of usual batik textiles in this market segment. Until 2011 Sapuan developed his motifs further, so that the price for a single piece rose to 25 million rupees. By 2013, he sold each piece for up to 50 million rupees. In 2015, his batik textiles became well known for their quality and fineness, so that batik lovers started paying up to 100 million rupees. This corresponds to about 615 euros, which is remarkable for a batik textile. Nevertheless, the selling prices are still not as high as for contemporary artworks and it takes several months to complete a fine *batik tulis* textile.⁴⁷⁹

Abstract Batik

Soon after batik painting had emerged, a new style called abstract batik developed to break away from pictorial representations which were typical of batik painting. Technically, abstract batik uses the same colours and application of them: liquid synthetic colours applied with the *colet* technique, but the designs and wax application are different. As the name suggests, abstract batik is a style like abstract painting and shows free forms and areas of colour in a dynamic and spontaneous way. Design principles such as proportion, rhythm, balance, harmony and clarity, that are used for traditional and classical batik textiles, are also important for abstract batik, but there is no symmetrical repetition required. In Javanese the

⁴⁷⁷ Interview with Sapuan, *Batik Halus Pekalongan*, 7th April 2021.

⁴⁷⁸ Ivan, 'Produktivitas Gerabah Kasongan Tak Terpengaruh Pandemi', *krjogja.com*, 20th October 2021, <https://www.krjogja.com/berita-lokal/read/252338/produktivitas-gerabah-kasongan-tak-terpengaruh-pandemi>.

⁴⁷⁹ In 2023 one euro was equal to 16,290 Indonesian rupees.

<https://www.xe.com/de/currencyconverter/convert/?Amount=1&From=EUR&To=IDR>; interview Sapuan, *Batik Halus Pekalongan*, 7th April 2021.

term *ajeg* describes a motion of drawing continuously with the same distance, time and movement. *Ajeg* is used to create classic geometric patterns, in which the motifs are symmetrically repeated in a simple, half or diagonal offset. In contrast, it is not used for abstract batik, as its spontaneous design process runs counter to a continuous motion. The strength of abstract batik is a balanced and appealing use of wax in the form of freehand lines, dots, splashes, brush lines and the choice of colour and its semi-controlled application. Dynamic lines, swirls, circles and splashes with balanced use of different vibrant colours are typical for this style. Batik makers apply wax in two ways, both without sketching out before. One manner is to apply the wax with a *canting tulis* which guarantees a lot of control and sets the line thickness. The other is less controlled because they use spoons, knives or brushes to apply the liquid wax. They must work very fast, otherwise the hot wax easily soaks as coarse stains into the fabric. Hence, with this fast method, lines and splashes are less illustrative, and often slightly curved. Through the skilful use of different colours, a three-dimensional effect can be achieved. The three dimensionality in abstract batik can be regarded as an extension in batik design because classical and traditional batik are not based on spatial effects or light and shade. They rather function as a pattern with no shadows, no overlaps of colours or motifs, but interesting patterns and colour contrasts. Abstract batik can have a rhythm in the design, but it is rather achieved by opposing arrangements or transitory arrangements, whereas in classical batik, rhythm is often created through sameness and repetition. Since abstract batik does not show any pictorial representations, these textiles are often used for clothing. They are also created as works of art and displayed in a frames like paintings.⁴⁸⁰ The technique and the use of different tools can vary depending on the artist's taste. For example, the batik craftsman and artist Joan Miroe often works without *canting tulis*. He uses a brush and spoon to apply the liquid wax with a quick and curved movement. When applying the wax with the spoon, Joan works briskly to create dynamic splashes at the edge of the lines. He works quickly to prevent too thick and shapeless lines. In his work *Psikologi Langit Biru*, Psychology of the Blue Sky (Figure B35)⁴⁸¹ he applied three techniques, namely the *colet* technique, normal dyeing of the whole fabric and *kuas* technique, which is colouring the fabric with a brush.⁴⁸² It took him four days to create this artwork. Joan was inspired by looking at a coastal cliff and a group of clouds up in the sky. He draws much inspiration from

⁴⁸⁰ Sujadi Rahmat Hidayat, Rustopo Rustopo and Dharsono Dharsono, 'Batik Gaya Modern di Surakarta dalam Perspektif Quantum', *Dinamika Kerajinan dan Batik: Majalah Ilmiah* 37, no. 1 (29th June 2020) 59-63.

⁴⁸¹ It is interesting that, the artist photographed his piece of batik without fabric borders. The image could also be an oil painting on canvas. I asked Joan, whether he could take another picture of his artwork including fabric borders, but unfortunately, he already sold it.

⁴⁸² *Kuas* means brush. For the *colet* technique brushes are used to fill a space with wax line borders. For the *kuas* technique the brush is used to paint onto the fabric in a freehand manner and without filling an area.

nature and the environment around him. Joan explains that, creating batik is often a process, where his creative energy melts with a sense of finding consolation. *Psikologi Langit Biru* shows Joan's skilful handling with batik techniques, and his ability to compose a work of personal expression through colours, rhythm and harmony. This artwork is part of the artist's private collection.⁴⁸³

Batik entrepreneur and artist Kang Pandono mostly uses the *canting tulis* in combination with a brush for his abstract batik. As mentioned earlier, Pandono creates batik in the third generation. Interestingly, batik making was handed on from his grandfather to his father and to him, while women in his family did not make batik. In Yogyakarta, abstract batik is associated with Kang Pandono, because he is a successful abstract batik entrepreneur (Figure B36). He creates his batik fabrics by himself, while his employees sew them into blouses and shirts. These garments are sold in Pandono's shop, which he opened in Surakarta in 2017.⁴⁸⁴

Today, abstract batik has been continued to be created and still enjoys great popularity. This style is sometimes called dynamic batik or free batik. The word dynamic is used because often the lines and splashes show a lot of motion that is further supported by vibrant colours. Free batik is the name given to this style to emphasise the almost limitless freedom of creation.

Digital Designing

From a batik maker's perspective, the abstract batik style differs from other batik styles not only visually but also how it is made. As mentioned above, for abstract batik textiles no motifs or pattern are pre-drawn, for all other batik styles careful planning and pre-drawing with pencil on the white textile is an important step. Batik makers use pattern books and templates in the form of big sized paper sheets to create batik textiles. For a long time, this analogue design method remained the main or only way to create elaborately designed batik textiles. In 2007 a design trio from Bandung, called Pikel Indonesia, developed the first batik computer software. Nancy Margried, Muhamad Lukan and Yun Hariadi brought on the market a computer programme called jBatik.⁴⁸⁵ Their programme features all relevant tools for digital creations of motifs and patterns and is based on mathematical rules of fractal. For

⁴⁸³ Interview with Joan Miroe, *Abstract Batik Artwork*, 29th August 2022.

⁴⁸⁴ Interview with Kang Pandono, *Abstract Batik*, 11th April 2023.

⁴⁸⁵ According to the Cambridge Dictionary fractal is a pattern in mathematics which is built from repeated shapes. The shapes get smaller every time they are repeated. For example the way how a tree trunk divides into smaller branches and twigs is a fractal pattern. 'Fractal', Cambridge Dictionary, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/fractal> (last visit 1st February 2023)

example, a group of colours can be changed with a simple command. In other digital image editing programmes such as Photoshop or Corel Draw, which are often used by Indonesia's designers and creative people, colours must be selected individually, or at least created on the same layer, to recolour them as a group.⁴⁸⁶ Further, the programme jBatik facilitates the replacement of single or several motifs, a function that is very valuable for repetitive batik patterns. New motifs can be easily drawn and extended with the common textile design principles such as rosette-shaped arrangements, or half offsets. The motifs can be changed by input of values, so that for example the length or angle of a rosette-shaped motif can be determined.⁴⁸⁷

In 2007 Pikel Indonesia extended their batik activities by founding a batik brand called Batik Fractal, and began selling contemporary batik clothing with ethnic and traditional looks. On their website, including a web shop, they describe the Batik Fractal brand as a symbiosis between traditional production techniques and modern technology. Their motifs and patterns are designed digitally and produced by batik makers using the *canting cap* (batik stamp) technique. For this purpose, Batik Fractal has a network of over 3000 batik makers.⁴⁸⁸ The products are diverse and range from non-tailored textiles, to tailored garments, uniforms, accessories, gift items, home textiles, decorations and digital batik patterns that can be purchased. Interestingly, Batik Fractal also offers batik textiles with traditional motifs and symbolic meaning, which are available for purchase in limited editions of 10 pieces. These textiles are displayed on the website almost as a kind of artwork, with accompanying text explaining the symbolic meaning of the motifs.⁴⁸⁹ In 2012, a new motif was created called *motif sisik* (Figure B37). *Sisik* means scale, measure or dimension. The motif resembles a polygonal record spread diagonally across the entire surface. This motif alludes to the mathematically based design principles and digital technology. The fine circular lines, thickened in a few places, give the impression of vibration and a growth from the inside to the outside. The design language is characterised by an angular geometry, which appears rounded because of short segments and numerous small corners. In 2020, a honeycomb-shaped motif

⁴⁸⁶ With the design programme Adobe Illustrator colours can be changed much easier than in Photoshop or Corel, but as far as I have noticed, Adobe Illustrator is not commonly used among batik lecturers and batik makers in Yogyakarta and Solo. The most used programme is still Corel Draw as it is inexpensive and easy to learn.

⁴⁸⁷ A visual example can be seen in Anggreini Pratiwi, Setyawan and Tiwi Bina Affanti, 'BATIK FRAKTAL KEMAJUAN TEKNOLOGI OLAH VISUAL DIGITAL', *TEXFILE Journal of Textile* 3, no. 1 (2nd August 2019): 42-4.

⁴⁸⁸ 'Tech Meets Tradition', Batik Fractal, 2019, <https://batikfractal.com/> (last visit 25th August 2022).

⁴⁸⁹ Batikfractal, 'Wahyu Tumurun Blue NFT', *Batik Fractal* (blog), 28th March 2022, <https://batikfractal.com/2022/03/28/wahyu-tumurun-blue-nft/> (last visit 25th August 2022).

was created as a reference to this motif (Figure B38).⁴⁹⁰ The brand Batik Fractal is not limited to digital technology only, but equally craftsmanship and batik techniques are being explored. For the latest batik collection, wax is stamped onto the white fabric with bamboo stamps instead of traditional copper stamps. These bamboo stamps are made from pieces that were cut into size only in their lengths but not in their thickness. Therefore, the thickness of the bamboo pieces determines the design (Figure B39). The owners of Batik Fractal know how to reinterpret the tools and craft technique of *batik cap*, to create additional design value with a contemporary look. The clothing fashion of the brand appears very contemporary, because motifs are geometrically, rough and with simple shapes, which is so contrary to the fine, detailed, complex and floral motifs of Yogyakarta's batik tradition. The contemporary impression of the latest Batik Fractal design is further enhanced by the choice of colour. The new collection features only two-coloured garments, namely white and one dyeing colour.⁴⁹¹ Even though jBatik is a very practical design tool, I doubt, that many of today's batik makers design digitally with jBatik or with other software, because most Indonesians do not have a computer. My interview partners agreed that, today the batik scene in Yogyakarta is still creating their motifs with pencil on paper.

This Section includes further questions like, to what extent does digital design influence the creation of new batik patterns or how does digital designing change existing motifs. Due to the limit of this thesis, I leave these questions to future research.

There are two more batik styles known in Indonesia. One is called *batik bebas*, or free batik and refers to contemporary batik textiles, that do not follow any specific rules and cannot be clearly assigned to another category. As mentioned before, abstract batik is sometimes also called free batik. The other one is called *batik ekspresi*, or expressive batik, and refers to all batik textiles that show the personal expression of an artist. Some batik makers in Yogyakarta use this term for artworks like batik sculptures, batik in installations and mixed with other media. The term expressive batik is linked to exhibitions and the contemporary art world and sometimes is synonymous with contemporary batik. However, contemporary batik can refer to both batik as a work of art displayed in exhibitions and batik products such as garments with contemporary motifs.⁴⁹²

⁴⁹⁰ This motif is named after how it was made: *motif ruas-ruas bilah bambu*, which means bamboo blade segment motif. It is part of the *batik pring* collection, created in Pekalongan. For pictures visit: https://www.instagram.com/p/CdKNX9_JD4n/ (last visit 25th August 2022).

⁴⁹¹ 'Tech Meets Tradition'; Social business transforming traditional art through technology, 'Batik Fractal (@batikfractal)', Instagram, 2022, <https://www.instagram.com/batikfractal/> (last visit 25th August 2022).

⁴⁹² Interview with Nurohmad, *Batik Motif, Technique and Philosophy*, 3rd December 2021.

Interestingly, there is no common term for an Islamic batik style, although there is batik influenced by Islamic motifs. Other influences, from China, are called *batik cina* (Chinese batik).⁴⁹³ Yogyakarta's batik variety today is large, so that there is not *one* single Yogyakarta batik style. Rather, different batik styles and their different areas of application, show that Yogyakarta can rightly be called the world city of batik.

Outlets for Batik

For Yogyakarta's batik makers there are different customers and outlets. Some batik makers produce batik in big companies or at home and sell it to bigger companies. Other batik makers work at home too, but take various orders from the tourist office and from the cultural office in Yogyakarta. Alternatively, batik makers often produce their batik textiles without orders and sell their produce in larger shops, such as Mirota Batik and other tourist souvenir shops in the Malioboro area. Batik makers may also work as a one-(wo)man business, and sometimes sell their batik as artworks in galleries. In Yogyakarta there are several galleries for batik painting such as Amry Yahya, Tamansari, Babaran Segoro, Ganesha, and others. Some batik makers have connections to galleries abroad, as for example Joan Miroe, who sells his batik at the MayinArt gallery in Singapore. However, most batik makers produce batik for batik industry and usually earn less than those who sell, batik as art in galleries. In general, the level of craftsmanship and artistic ability of the batik makers is high, so that many batik makers create products, that could be shown as art in exhibitions and galleries. However, the access to the art world is often more difficult for non-academic batik makers than for ISI Yogyakarta graduates, since ISI alumni have a network with curators and event organisers. As the example of Sapuan from Pekalongan shows, there are opportunities to get better prices in the batik industry by producing high quality *batik tulis* textiles.

2.3 Contemporary Batik

As I outlined in the Sections above, batik in Yogyakarta is its "own cosmos", with many different aspects of life. I assert that batik is for the eye, for the soul, for the body and the brain. By stating that batik is for the eye, I am referring to the richly decorated batik patterns

⁴⁹³ In the first half of the last century, Islamic influence resulted in inland geometric batik patterns in Yogyakarta and Surakarta, while coastal batik without Islamic influences depicted animals and flowers.

that are created using high craftsmanship and a sophisticated sense of aesthetics. I argue that batik is for the soul because of the philosophical and symbolic meanings of batik patterns and their high esteem as a cultural textile used for ceremonies and feasts. Obviously, batik is for the body to cover it in the form of traditional and contemporary garments. Lastly, batik is for the brain because it has entered the Western-tinged contemporary art scene in Indonesia as an artwork that is not only sensed but is also understood by the brain.

Batik is currently created and produced in Yogyakarta by diverse batik makers. Based on my research, I have identified four groups of batik makers: (1) There are batik makers who learned the craft from their parents or relatives and educated themselves further autodidactically. These batik makers mainly work alone at home for the batik industry and sell their batik to middlemen at a relatively low price. Such batik makers produce items based on customers' orders and design preferences. (Potential customers are small to larger shops or designers). These batik makers, usually one man or woman, tend to have practically no access to batik exhibitions where batik is shown as art. This is due to their absence from art circles and thus their lack of understanding of the characteristics of the art world. They are more knowledgeable about the batik market, and their batik is exhibited at industry fairs. (2) There are batik communities, such as the aforementioned one in Giriloyo, who work as a group for the batik industry or to directly sell batik as a product. These batik makers, mainly women aged between 25 and 70, operate more in the market field than in the art field. (3) There are batik makers without academic education and batik skills who learned the craft as employees in a batik company. (4) There are batik makers who may be in the first, second or third generation of batik makers within their family after having successfully studied at an art university. Such batik makers have a much higher chance of showing their batik in batik art exhibitions, or even in contemporary art exhibitions, which underlines the fact that the contemporary batik art scene and the contemporary art scene are highly academic. In this chapter I deal with batik that is made by the last group, the batik makers with academic degrees and connections to the contemporary art world.

The number of official and publicly accessible batik collections in Indonesia is less than the number of batik exhibitions and events. There are some large, well-known batik collections located outside Indonesia. Batik is being displayed in museums in the USA, Canada, Germany, Netherlands, Australia, Japan, Singapore and other countries. Additionally, it is

bought by numerous private collectors from abroad, such as the German Rudolf Smend.⁴⁹⁴ In Indonesia the preferred form of preserving, maintaining and developing batik as a cultural asset is to organise art and cultural events. The festivals and fairs mostly stem from the industrial side, from non-governmental institutions such as batik associations, and batik communities, and from the national government or provincial government of Yogyakarta. At these festivals and fairs no precise separation is made between functional object or art object. The emphasis is on the art of batik as a form of cultural heritage as an individual expression of today's contemporary artists and batik makers.

In this chapter I will first describe collections, exhibitions and events that are specific to batik. Secondly, I will show and discuss the artworks of two female batik artists from Yogyakarta, namely Rika and Affifah. Although batik was originally created exclusively by women, there are many men who create batik nowadays. My selection of these two women is therefore not representative of gender. But these women have an interesting approach to batik. Afifah creates traditional batik garments, such as *selendang* and *sarong*, which are prized as works of art for their design complexity, delicacy and sophistication, and are bought by batik enthusiasts as collectors' items. However, no museum has yet purchased either woman's work, as batik museums in Indonesia often rely on their existing collections of older batik. Rika, as an elder and already established artist, has sold some of her artworks to museums. For example, the Museum and Art Gallery in Darwin (Northern Territory, Australia) acquired one of her works. However, it is still rare for Indonesian museums to buy contemporary *kriya* objects from artists. When this happens, it is usually a private museum which buys *kriya* objects within the context of contemporary art. Another batik artwork from Rika can be found in the collection of the Textile Museum in Jakarta. Her piece was only included in this collection because the museum organised a competition which she won. According to Rika, virtually no Indonesian public museum acquires contemporary artworks for their collections. However, some museums have begun to collaborate with artists for specially themed exhibitions.

⁴⁹⁴ Rudolf Smend has become one of the main batik collectors in Europe. He has organised over 250 batik exhibitions and published 15 books on Indonesian batik. For batik collections outside of Indonesia I suggest reading the list in: Kerlogue, *Batik*, 184; 'Galerie Smend: So kam die Batik-Kunst nach Köln', *Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger*, 23rd September 2013, <https://www.ksta.de/koeln/koelner-innenstadt/galerie-smend-so-kam-die-batik-kunst-nach-koeln-203189> (last visit 8th February 2023).

2.3.1 Collections, Exhibitions and Events

Batik Museums

Although Yogyakarta is one of Indonesia's most touristic and culturally rich cities, with numerous museums, the largest batik collection in Indonesia is not there. It is in Surakarta, another sultan's city an hour's drive from Yogyakarta. Even though Yogyakarta won the title of World Batik City and hosts many batik events, many batik insiders refer to Surakarta as the home of batik.⁴⁹⁵ Surakarta is established as a cultural city with a flourishing batik industry. Many small and medium batik enterprises have grown there, but one family business in particular has risen to become one of the three largest batik companies in the country over the last 50 years. This is the Danar Hadi company, set up by Santosa Doellah and his wife Danarsih Hadipriyono in 1967. Both are descendants of batik entrepreneurs.⁴⁹⁶ Together they founded a small batik company named after Danarsih Hadipriyono's abbreviated name. While Santosa was particularly skilled in batik designs, his wife Danarsih was an innovative creator of clothing design. Soon the couple was able to open a small shop in addition to their batik studio. In 1975 another shop followed in Jakarta, and later more shops in Yogyakarta, Semarang, Bandung, Surabaya and Medan. For the Danar Hadi company the batik's traditional roots are the cornerstone of their designs, however they keep looking for innovative ways to make batik exciting for consumers. Therefore, Danar Hadi regularly collaborates with well-known Indonesian designers to bring a breath of fresh air to their collections. In 1997 Santosa bought a former royal house complex in Surakarta and opened a museum there called *Rumah Batik Danar Hadi*, or Batik Danar Hadi House. The museum's collection contains 10,000 batik fabrics, making it the largest batik collection in Indonesia. The collection functions not only as a *Danar Hadi* company archive, also as contemporary testimony of the variety of batik patterns in Surakarta over the last decades. The fabrics show varying cultural influences depending on the decade they were created. For example, there are batik designs influenced by Europe, Japan or China.⁴⁹⁷

⁴⁹⁵ Pekalongan, a batik city on the north coast of Central Java is also considered as a home of batik. Pekalongan is known for its coastal batik patterns that were influenced by traders from other cultures. 'Pekalongan', UNESCO Creative Cities Network, <https://en.unesco.org/creative-cities/pekalongan> (last visit 15th February 2023).

⁴⁹⁶ Danarsih was the daughter of batik entrepreneurs. Santosa was the fourth generation of batik entrepreneurs in his family. For the 50th anniversary of the Danar Hadi company Danarsih and Santosa commissioned batik experts Natanegara and Moersid to write a book about Danar Hadi as part of Surakarta batik. The published book reveals interesting stories around the company, but also information on batik as clothing in Surakarta. E. A. Natanegara and Ananada Moersid, *50 Tahun Danar Hadi* (Surakarta: Batik Danar Hadi, 2017), 21-3.

⁴⁹⁷ Kompas Cyber Media, 'Museum Batik Danar Hadi: Sejarah, Lokasi, Jam Buka, dan Harga Tiket Masuk Halaman all', KOMPAS.com, 16th February 2022, <https://yogyakarta.kompas.com/read/2022/02/16/141000478/museum-batik-danar-hadi--sejarah-lokasi-jam-buka-dan-harga-tiket-masuk>; 'Danar Hadi World - Danar Hadi Batik', Batik Danar Hadi Solo,

Besides Surakarta, some other cities exhibit batik fabrics in their museums. For example, the Jakarta Textile Museum has about 100 batik fabrics on display that belong to the Batik Foundation Indonesia. Among these fabrics are some masterpieces from the early 1900s that were dyed naturally and have lost almost none of their luminosity. In 2014, construction began on the Batik Museum Indonesia in Jakarta, which was designed and funded by the Indonesian government. In 2018 the museum was opened in the form of an ornate, modern building, where batik is presented as cultural heritage in seven thematic rooms. From the technique, traditional batik patterns and special treasures of batik fabrics, to a historical overview of different batik styles, to present-day batik, an extensive body of information is displayed in an interesting and visually appealing way. Additionally, the museum regularly organises batik events. The museum can be regarded as an important government effort to present Indonesian batik.⁴⁹⁸

The port city of Pekalongan, on the north coast of Central Java became a trading centre centuries ago. Therefore, the batik industry flourished particularly well in Pekalongan and advanced to the forefront of important batik centres in Java in terms of pattern language and fineness. Thus, it is not surprising that some batik connoisseurs call the city of Pekalongan the batik city of Indonesia. The Batik Museum Pekalongan was established in 2006 by the then President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono to preserve batik as a cultural heritage. The museum also offers batik courses and has a batik practice centre. The museum collection consists of old to new batik fabrics from Pekalongan, Yogyakarta, Surakarta and other places in Java, as well as batik from Sumatra, Kalimantan and Papua, and some batik from abroad.⁴⁹⁹

The Batik Museum in Yogyakarta was not founded by the government, but through two private individuals in the 1960s. This was the couple Hadi Nugroho and R. Ng. Jumima Dewi Sukaningsih, who felt the need to preserve batik patterns with their original styles by establishing a museum. They were increasingly concerned about the batik industry, which was being flooded with printed imitations in various patterns and styles. Their museum aimed to preserve, promote and even enhance batik culture and heritage. Consequently, they put a lot of effort into establishing a good relationship with the surrounding batik businesses. Although

<https://danarhadibatik.com/id/danar-hadi-world> (last visit 7th February 2023); E. A. Natanegara and Ananada Moersid, *50 Tahun Danar Hadi* (Surakarta: Batik Danar Hadi, 2017), VII.

⁴⁹⁸ 'Museum Tekstil Jakarta | Batik Gallery', Museum Tekstil Jakarta, <https://museumtekstiljakarta.org/visit-us/batik-gallery/> (last visit 9th February 2023); Direktorat Jenderal Kebudayaan und Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi, 'Museum Batik', Museum Batik Indonesia, 2021, <https://museumbatik.kemdikbud.go.id/about-us> (last visit 9th February 2023).

⁴⁹⁹ 'sejarah museum batik pekalonganMuseum Batik Pekalongan', Museum Batik Pekalongan, https://museumbatikpekalongan.info/?page_id=8 (last visit 9th February 2023; Interview with pak Sapuan, *Motif Batik, Teknik dan Filosofi*, 3rd December 2021; Interview with Nurohmad, *Karya Batik dan Pameran*, 8th September 2022.

the museum was acquired by the local government in Yogyakarta in 1979, most of the objects in the museum originate from the Nugroho and Sukaningsih couple's collection. The couple also received some valuable batik fabrics as gifts from their large circle of friends and the batik companies in the area that were well-disposed towards them. The collection of 500 batik fabrics is very extensive. It mainly contains batik from 1960 onwards, but it also has a few batik fabrics from earlier times, such as a sarong from 1840. The batik fabrics are mainly *sarong* and *kain panjang* with motifs from Yogyakarta, Surakarta, Pekalongan and traditional patterns from other regions in Java. However, in addition to these two typical garments, there are also *selendang* and tablecloths from 1960 onwards in the collection. Also included are batik fabrics by Dutch entrepreneur Van Zuylen and Chinese entrepreneur Oey Soe Tjoen. Both entrepreneurs contributed to the diversity of batik styles in the 1960s with their own batik pattern language. Besides batik fabrics, there are 124 *canting tulis* on display, 35 other tools needed for batik making and 600 *canting cap*. The museum offers study tours for groups and schools, as well as batik workshops for tourists. Later, the government built a Batik Museum Hotel nearby to accommodate domestic and international tourists. In 2001, the museum was recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.⁵⁰⁰ With its collection, the Batik Museum Yogyakarta is an important preserver of batik culture. The 500 batik textiles testify to the high level of craftsmanship of *batik tulis* from the 1960s and show the variety of different styles.

The *Kraton* or sultan's palace in Yogyakarta as a cultural centre owns a batik collection as well. In 2005 the *Museum Batik Kraton Yogyakarta* was opened at the West Side of the *Kraton* complex. Royal batik from the time of Sultan Hamengkubuwono VIII to his successor Hamengkubuwono X are on display. Among the royal batik patterns are *parang*, *parang barong*, *semen*, *kawung*, *grompol*, *gringsing*, *nitik* and others. The collection comprises about 2,000 fabrics, most of which come from royal relatives, batik collectors and batik entrepreneurs. About 80 people donated their batik to the museum, including the governor of Jambi (Sumatra), who donated a 150-year-old batik piece. The museum also shows photographs and narratives related to the two sultans Hamengkubuwono VIII and X. In the collection there is also the piece of batik from 1921 which was worn by Sultan Hamengkubuwono VIII at his coronation. Photography is strictly prohibited in the museum,

⁵⁰⁰ 'Museum Batik Yogyakarta', Jogja Belajar Budaya, <https://jbbudaya.jogjabelajar.org/situs/museum-batik-yogyakarta> (last visit 7th February 2023); 'Selamat datang di Museum Batik Yogyakarta!', Museum Batik Yogyakarta, <https://www.museumbatik.com/> (last visit 7th February 2023); 'Museum Batik Yogyakarta (@museumbatikyogyakartaofficial)', Instagram, <https://www.instagram.com/museumbatikyogyakartaofficial/> (last visit 7th February 2023).

as there is still a perception of protecting the originality of classical batik. Thus, the prohibition seeks to prevent imitations of the royal batik patterns. The museum entrance fee is very low for the local population, making the museum accessible to practically everyone. Foreign tourists pay about three times as much for admission, but the entrance fee is still moderate at 15,000 rupees (approximately one euro).⁵⁰¹ This pricing philosophy is followed by many museums and tourist attractions in Indonesia and is intended to prevent the domestic population being excluded from cultural places. However, the higher prices for foreign tourists are important to secure funds for maintaining and developing the sites.

Batik as part of the cultural heritage is also exhibited in historical museums that are dedicated to classical Javanese culture. One such example is the Ullen Sentalu Museum, north of Yogyakarta. Through the efforts of a private family named Haryono, the idea was born for a museum that would adequately display and preserve classical Javanese culture and its treasures. It can be assumed that the Haryono family belonged to the upper class because, on the one hand, they lived in the classical Javanese culture and, on the other hand, they maintained relationships with other upper-class families, such as descendants of the Mataram dynasty. These descendants were very happy to support the idea of the museum and together with other important stakeholders such as the heir to the throne of Surakarta (Paku Buwono VII) and the former First Lady of the first Indonesian President Sukarno, the Haryono family established the Ulatung Blencong Foundation in 1994. This foundation was responsible for planning, financing and launching the Ullen Sentalu Museum, which was officially opened in 1997. The name Ullen Sentalu is an acronym derived from Javanese words that figuratively mean “the light of human life”. In the construction of its several buildings, the Javanese principle of harmonising nature and environmental ecology was consistently applied. Therefore, each building was constructed to suit its location on the museum site, using mainly materials from the surrounding area. The buildings were constructed one after the other, as each additional building was planned and fabricated in harmony with those that were already built. As the museum displays material classical Javanese culture, batik fabrics from the sultanates of Yogyakarta and Surakarta are exhibited. Their intangible culture is made visible through, for example, historical photographs, and information about the history of batik patterns and the rules of dress. The museum’s foundation is committed to carrying out research projects concerning classical Javanese culture, but also to a lively museum practice.

⁵⁰¹ Sukma Indah Permana, ‘Mengintip Ribuan Motif Koleksi Museum Batik Keraton Yogyakarta’, *detiknews*, <https://news.detik.com/berita/d-3033667/mengintip-ribuan-motif-koleksi-museum-batik-keraton-yogyakarta> (last visit 10th February 2023); ‘MUSEUM BATIK KRATON YOGYAKARTA’, *PENEBAR* (blog), <http://www.penebar.com/2012/02/museum-batik-kraton-yogyakarta.html> (last visit 10th February 2023).

A blend of education and entertainment aims to attract many visitors. Therefore, the museum offers a 45-minute study tour, which can be rounded off with a visit to the in-house art gallery or restaurant. Visitors can buy selected items in the museum shop or purchase prêt-à-porter clothing in the batik shop. With these 45-minute study tours, which the museum calls “edutainment”, the museum excels in combining education and entertainment. According to a visitor survey, this “edutainment” is very much appreciated. Considering that in the past museums in Indonesia served more as dusty archives or as a means of glorifying an individual, it is obvious that the form of knowledge transfer called “edutainment” at the Ullen Sentalu Museum is particularly popular and appreciated.⁵⁰²

The Sonobudoyo Museum in Yogyakarta is dedicated to Javanese culture, as well as to other Indonesian cultures. This museum will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3 on ceramic collections.

Private Collectors and Supporters

It is not only since the UNESCO recognition in 2009 that batik has been increasingly collected and exhibited. Even before that, isolated individuals and groups have repeatedly made efforts to keep the batik industry alive and to increase appreciation as well as awareness of batik. For example, *Yayasan Batik Indonesia* (YBI) or the Indonesian Batik Foundation was established in 1994 by the three Indonesians and batik enthusiasts (Mrs. Jultin Ginandjar Kartasasmita, Mr. Ir. Firdaus Ali and Mr. DR. Dipo Alam MEM). Based in Jakarta, the foundation supports batik communities with economic resources, online sales and with research and development of batik designs that sell well. YBI also organises and supports batik exhibitions in Indonesia and abroad. As an example, YBI launched an event called *Batik on Fashion* in 2014 in order to commemorate the national batik day on October 2. The goal of the event was to encourage the young generation to develop and preserve traditional batik patterns. Another example of showcasing batik abroad was the exhibition *Batik for the World* held at the UNESCO HQ in Paris from 6 – 12 June 2018. Recently, YBI organised a batik event for ambassadors with an exhibition and batik workshops on the national batik day.⁵⁰³

⁵⁰² ‘Museum ULLEN SENTALU - Seni, Budaya, Sejarah Jawa’, ULLEN SENTALU, 2023, <http://ullensentalu.com/>; ‘Museum Ullen Sentalu Jendela menuju Alam Budaya dan Seni Jawa Klasik’, DINAS KEBUDAYAAN DAERAH ISTIMEWA YOGYAKARTA, <https://budaya.jogjaprov.go.id/artikel/detail/190-museum-ullen-sentalu-jendela-menusu-alam-budaya-dan-seni-jawa-klasik> (last visit 10th February 2023).

⁵⁰³ ‘Cultural Selection: ‘Batik for the World’ Exhibition at UNESCO | Silk Roads Programme’, UNESCO, 2018, <https://en.unesco.org/silkroad/content/cultural-selection-batik-world-exhibition-unesco>; Indra Radhiyya, ‘Beauty of Indonesian Batik Unites Countries on National Batik Day Exhibition’, The Jakarta Post, 2021, <https://www.thejakartapost.com/life/2021/10/12/beauty-of-indonesian-batik-unites-countries-on-national-batik-day->

Further, YBI provides some hundred pictures of batik textiles and clothing in thematic albums on the internet.⁵⁰⁴

Since 1996, YBI has held an exhibition every other year called *Gelar Batik Nusantara*, or Title of Indonesian Batik. Batik makers from various regions of the country are invited to this exhibition to display and sell their work. For example, during the 11th edition at the Jakarta Convention Centre, batik makers from regions such as Pekalongan, Subang, Surakarta, Jambi and Madura displayed their textiles. Some 13,000 visitors could view and purchase batik products at the 260 stalls. According to the organisers the event was successful, generating a turnover of 27,5 billion rupees. The exhibition provided an opportunity to discuss contemporary issues in the batik industry, such as colour trends, fashion, processes and technologies to track adjustments in the industry. YIB spotted potential in producing more creative and innovative batik products.⁵⁰⁵ The innovative ideas should have a contemporary appearance, but still reflect the traditional values of Indonesian culture. An important vision of the foundation is to preserve, socialise and further develop batik in Indonesian society. Therefore, YIB strives to ensure that batik is chosen as the preferred fashion garment. In addition, batik products in home décor and accessories have also become important industries to strengthen. The exhibition was accompanied by a fringe programme that included talk shows, fashion shows, batik workshops and performances of traditional music.⁵⁰⁶

In addition, the YBI advocates for batik abroad. In 2011 YBI organised a World Batik Summit jointly with the government through the Ministry of Commerce. The aim of this event was an international exchange of knowledge about batik production techniques, practical ideas and marketing methods. An additional scope of the summit was to establish and strengthen good relations with batik producing countries. The World Batik Summit took place from 28th September to 2nd October at the Convention Centre in Jakarta and was ceremoniously opened by the then Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono. The

exhibition.html; 'Yayasan Batik Indonesia – Yayasan Batik Indonesia', Love for Indonesian Batik, <https://yayasanbatikindonesia.id/>; antaranews.com, 'Indonesian batik foundation launches ,Batik on Fashion' 2014', Antara News, 2014, <https://en.antaranews.com/news/95919/indonesian-batik-foundation-launches-batik-on-fashion-2014> (last visit 8th February 2023).

⁵⁰⁴ 'Galeri Batik YBI, Jakarta, Indonesien', Google Arts & Culture, <https://artsandculture.google.com/partner/galeri-batik-ybi> (last visit 9th February 2023).

⁵⁰⁵ Batik became a major industry in the creative industries of Indonesia. For example, in 2018, the batik industry generated a total of US\$52.44 million (equivalent to Rp 734 billion) with exports. 'Kemenperin: Pameran Gelar Batik Nusantara Targetkan Rp27,5 Miliar', <https://kemenperin.go.id/artikel/20653/Pameran-Gelar-Batik-Nusantara-Targetkan-Rp27,5-Miliar> (last visit 10th February 2023).

⁵⁰⁶ capitalsix, 'Gelar Batik Nusantara 2017', Indonesia Kaya, 12th November 2020, <https://indonesiakaya.com/agenda-budaya/gelar-batik-nusantara-2017/>; INDAS-INDONESIA CERDAS, 'Gelar Batik Nusantara (GBN) – Jakarta Convention Center, 08-12 May 2019', indas.id, 26th April 2019, <https://www.indas.id/berita-4778-gelar-batik-nusantara--gbn--%E2%80%93jakarta-convention-center--08-12-mei-2019>; antaranews.com, 'Ada pameran Gelar Batik Nusantara di JCC', Antara News, 8th May 2019, <https://www.antaranews.com/berita/860575/ada-pameran-gelar-batik-nusantara-di-jcc>; 'Kemenperin: Pameran Gelar Batik Nusantara Targetkan Rp27,5 Miliar'.

conference was amended by an exhibition of batik by Indonesian and international designers.⁵⁰⁷

With YBI, Indonesia has a strong supporter for the batik industry and for batik as a cultural heritage. Initiated by three private individuals, a foundation was established that works professionally with the government and with both state and private batik institutions. Particularly valuable are the numerous exhibitions of YBI, the permanent exhibition at the Textile Museum in Jakarta and the pictures posted online about batik clothing and batik textiles.

Besides large institutions such as YBI, there is an unknown number of private batik collectors in Yogyakarta and Indonesia who only show their collections to the public for special occasions. For example, there is a batik collection of KRAY Pintoko Purnomo, the wife of Sultan Hamengkubuwono IX and another collection of KRAY Retno Wilanten, the wife of Sultan Hamengkubuwono VIII.⁵⁰⁸ Yet, there are many older and established batik companies in Yogyakarta, such as Winotosastro, which carry a small in-house collection. These collections are readily shown to potential buyers. Adding to this, some wealthy Javanese families own small collections of fine batik fabrics. These fabrics are either worn for special occasions, or they are passed on as gifts from one generation to the next. Unfortunately, these collections remain private and inaccessible.⁵⁰⁹

Jogja International Batik Biennale (JIBB)

Five years after batik was recognised by the UNESCO as an intangible cultural heritage of Indonesia, elections for the Batik City of the World were held by the World Craft Council in Dongyang, Zhejiang Province, Tiongkok from the 18th to 23rd October 2014. Yogyakarta competed against six other cities in the Asia-Pacific region. Seven criteria were assessed for the elections, namely originality of batik, its preservation and historical value, economic and global value, environmental friendliness and sustainability. In these elections, Yogyakarta

⁵⁰⁷ 'World Batik Summit: Indonesia Tuan Rumah Batik', Newspaper, [beritasatu.com](https://www.beritasatu.com/news/11626/world-batik-summit-indonesia-tuan-rumah-batik), 30th September 2011, <https://www.beritasatu.com/news/11626/world-batik-summit-indonesia-tuan-rumah-batik>.

⁵⁰⁸ 'Gusti Murdo Dengan Koleksi Batiknya - DATATEMPO', Tempo Data Science, <https://www.datatempo.co/foto/detail/P0910201800075/gusti-murdo-dengan-koleksi-batiknya> (last visit 9th February 2023).

⁵⁰⁹ I remember in 2011 my Yogyakarta friend Wayhu Priyono took me to a batik collector, an elder woman living in a tiny house in Yogyakarta. She showed me her batik collection comprising different styles. Her collected batik was of high quality, finely worked with the *batik tulis* technique. I was not allowed to take pictures though, but she did not mind me sketching some of the rare patterns and motifs. It would be exciting to make all these private collected batik fabrics accessible to the public.

won the position as the global centre of batik crafts, because the city historically advanced to become a batik centre early on and has remained so since its beginnings. In addition, Yogyakarta stands out compared to the two other important batik cities in Indonesia, Surakarta and Pekalongan, in that it has enormous economic power in the batik craft sector.⁵¹⁰ Based on this title, the city's cultural office organised a Batik Biennale, which took place for the first time from 12th to 16th October 2016. The biennale was not only conceived as an exhibition but was accompanied by a large supporting programme that included workshops, a symposium, a fashion show, a carnival, a batik competition and a gala dinner. In addition, an international batik workshop was held beforehand with participants from Malaysia, Thailand and African countries.⁵¹¹

The third edition of JIBB took place in 2021, because it was postponed due to the pandemic situation of Covid in 2020. The event was organised even more professionally, and the programme was supplemented with more side activities for the public. JIBB has turned into an important event for Yogyakarta and fosters the appreciation, preservation and development of batik. The activities around JIBB started already in April and continued until October. Especially in online media, the biennale was massively expanded, so that from April onwards interested people could enjoy a rich programme of vlogs, video mapping, podcasts, a TV show, a virtual tour and a small pre-exhibition. There was also a programme for schools, an online seminar and, in addition to the main exhibition, a smaller, exclusive batik exhibition in the national gallery.⁵¹²

World Batik City Festival

Since Yogyakarta won the title of World Batik City in 2014, it was felt important to organise an annual batik event. In 2017 the Jogja World Batik City Festival was launched by the Yogyakarta Industry and Trade Office in collaboration with the regional Crafts Council. The goal was to enhance the cultural and economic strength of batik. The festival aimed at

⁵¹⁰ 'Sejarah Singkat Jogja Sebagai Kota Batik Dunia', Jogja International Batik Biennale 2021, 2021, https://www.batikjibb.com/transition_site/sejarah-singkat-jogja-sebagai-kota-batik-dunia/ (last visit 30th August 2022).

⁵¹¹ 'Yogyakarta Bakal Gelar 'International Batik Biennale'', Republika Online, 23rd March 2016, <https://republika.co.id/berita/nasional/daerah/16/03/23/o4hfss399-yogyakarta-bakal-gelar-international-batik-biennale> (last visit 30th August 2022).

⁵¹² For information about the second Jogja International Batik Biennale see: 'Jogja International Batik Biennale (JIBB)', DINAS PERINDUSTRIAN DAN PERDAGANGAN PEMERINTAH DAERAH ISTIMEWA YOGYAKARTA, 5th September 2018, <https://disperindag.jogjaprov.go.id/v3/jogja-international-batik-biennale-jibb-berita-b137fdd1f79d56c7edf3365fea7520f2.asp> (last visit 30th of August 2022).

Information on the 3rd Biennale can be found on their website: 'MEMBATIK DUNIA – Jogja International Batik Biennale 2021', Jogja International Batik Biennale 2021, https://www.batikjibb.com/transition_site/membatik-dunia/ (last visit 30th August 2022).

promoting small and medium-sized batik entrepreneurs, to expand their networks and to increase markets and production. In the first year the festival was themed *Batik To The Moon* and offered diverse activities during five days like fashion shows, a batik parade, exhibitions, an international fashion design competition, a batik motif competition, and a competition for batik products like souvenirs and other items.⁵¹³ These activities were carried out again in the current edition of the 2022 festival. In addition, there was a special Yogyakarta batik competition. At the Jogja Expo Centre, visitors could view and buy batik products from 170 batik entrepreneurs during five days. The small and medium-sized batik companies came from Yogyakarta, Semarang, Klaten, Surabaya and other cities in Java and from Kalimantan. For the fashion show 80 designers were invited. The event is of great importance for national batik, but also for the cultural city of Yogyakarta attracting over 5000 visitors per day.⁵¹⁴

The regional ministries of culture, industry and trade in other cities in Java also organise annual batik events. Batik events are held regularly in Surakarta, Surabaya, Pekalongan, Mojokerto, Semarang, Jember and many other cities. In addition to the big World City Batik Festival, smaller batik events are also held in Yogyakarta throughout the year, organised by interest groups or associations from the batik industry. Commercial institutions such as shopping malls also have an interest in presenting batik to their domestic and foreign customers. For example, Malioboro Mall hosts the Java Batik Festival, which is relatively small with 16 batik entrepreneurs participating and exhibiting. However, Malioboro Mall is making an important contribution to promoting batik as a consumer good.⁵¹⁵

⁵¹³ Liputan6.com, 'Batik To The Moon, Festival Jogja Dunia 2017', liputan6.com, 21st October 2017, <https://www.liputan6.com/lifestyle/read/3136122/batik-to-the-moon-festival-jogja-dunia-2017> (last visit 30th August 2022); Syaiful Millah, 'Batik To The Moon, Kukuhkan Eksistensi Jogja Sebagai Kota Batik Dunia', *Phinemo.com* (blog), 27th October 2017, <https://phinemo.com/batik-to-the-moon-eksistensi-jogja-sebagai-kota-batik-dunia/> (last visit 30th August 2022).

⁵¹⁴ Ninis Chairunnisa, 'Yogyakarta Gelar Festival Batik 2022, Perajin Kalimantan Hingga NTB Turut Serta', *Tempo*, 20th October 2022, <https://travel.tempo.co/read/1647224/yogyakarta-gelar-festival-batik-2022-perajin-kalimantan-hingga-ntb-turut-serta>; Lia Sisvita Dinatri, 'Batik Festival 2022 Held 19-23 October in Yogyakarta, Indonesia', *Newspaper, Tribunbatam.id*, 22nd October 2022, <https://batam.tribunnews.com/2022/10/22/batik-festival-2022-held-19-23-october-in-yogyakarta-indonesia>; Muhammad Faisal, 'Kukuhkan Yogyakarta Kota Batik Dunia, Festival Batik 2022 digelar 5 Hari di JEC', *Jogjakartanews.com*, 20th October 2022, <https://jogjakartanews.com/baca/2022/10/20/23641/kukuhkan-yogyakarta-kota-batik-dunia-festival-batik-2022-digelar-5-hari-di-jec>; Liputan6.com, 'Batik To The Moon, Festival Jogja Dunia 2017'; antaranews.com, 'Yogyakarta to Hold World Batik City Festival', *Antara News*, 19th October 2017, 202, <https://en.antaranews.com/news/113122/yogyakarta-to-hold-world-batik-city-festival>; 'Festival Batik 2022, Batik Jogja Istimewa Mendunia', *Paniradya Kaistimewan DIY*, 19th October 2022, https://paniradyakaistimewan.jogjaprov.go.id/webv2/detail/id/131/festival_batik_2022,_batik_jogja_istimewa_mendunia (for all websites in this footnote: last visit 15th February 2023).

⁵¹⁵ 'Java Batik Festival', *Dinas Pariwisata Kota Yogyakarta*, 10th December 2019, <https://pariwisata.jogjakota.go.id/detail/index/524>.

Jogja Fashion Week

Jogja Fashion Week (JFW) was launched in 2006 by fashion designer Philipp Iwardono and his friends from the Indonesian Fashion Designers Association (APPMI). When Philipp and his friends returned from a fashion week in Bali, they felt motivated to organise a similar event in Yogyakarta. According to Philipp, Yogyakarta is suitable for a fashion week, as the city has a strong batik industry where new players in the fashion industry were constantly emerging. As a cultural sultan city with classical and traditional batik, a fashion week in Yogyakarta could be an initiator for ethnic fashion that looks fresh and contemporary. The Jogja Fashion Week was therefore also an attempt to change the value and perception of traditional batik. Traditional batik should no longer be seen as old and unfashionable but should be placed in a contemporary form as ethnic fashion. For Philipp, JFW should be a gateway for ethnic fashion that can have a positive impact on traditional textiles from other regions of the country. With the help of *Disperindag DIY* (the Special Region Yogyakarta's Department of Industry and Trade) JFW has been held every year since its inception. JFW showcases the latest fashion trends not only from Yogyakarta, but also from fashion designers from all over Indonesia.⁵¹⁶

Since 2007 there has been a Jogja Fashion Week Carnival organised by the group *Sanggar Seni RnB* from Gunung Kidul, south of Yogyakarta. The carnival is a fashion street show of colourfully designed costumes that become monumental worn structures with attachments, wires and panels. Traditional woven fabrics and classic batik textiles are used as a design element in these costumes. However, the main focus of these costumes is the artistic expression and not batik.⁵¹⁷

There are a few state museums in Indonesia that own a batik collection, such as the Indonesian Batik Museum in Jakarta. However, most of today's state museums were founded by private individuals and were only later acquired by the state. These museums often own an attractive and valuable collection of batik, which was donated by the enthusiasm and love for batik of private individuals. The sultan's palace also plays an important role in the preservation of batik, in that the palace has a batik museum and batik is created until the

⁵¹⁶ JFW was held at the Jogja Expo Centre. Rima Sekarani Imamun Nissa redaksi@dewiku.com, 'Menilik Jogja Fashion Week sebagai Gerbang Fesyen Etnik', dewiku.com, 19th November 2018, <https://www.dewiku.com/fashion/2018/11/19/114500/menilik-jogja-fashion-week-sebagai-gerbang-fesyen-etnik>; 'Jogja Fashion Week 2022 Digelar 5 Hari, Libatkan 100 UKM Fashion dan 79 Desainer Yogya', Newspaper, Tempo.co, 2022, <https://travel.tempo.co/read/1627344/jogja-fashion-week-2022-digelar-5-hari-libatkan-100-ukm-fashion-dan-79-desainer-yogya>; 'Jogja Fashion Week', Facebook, https://www.facebook.com/jogjafashionweek/about_details (last visit 11th February 2023).

⁵¹⁷ Deni Setiawan, 'Jogja Fashion Week Carnival Costume in The Context of Locality', *Harmonia: Journal of Arts Research and Education* 15, no. 2 (27 December 2015).

present day at the court for touristic purposes. However, widespread awareness of museums open to the public only emerged in Indonesia in the last two decades. As an example, the sultan palace Batik Museum in Yogyakarta has only existed since 2005.

Since the UNESCO recognition of batik as an intangible cultural heritage of Indonesia in 2009, numerous batik events were launched in the following years. Some of these have been able to survive in the event landscape of Yogyakarta by being held on a regular basis. Several of these events were initially created through the efforts of the private sector or batik artist circles and only received support from regional ministries later on. These regional ministries (Tourism, Culture, Industry and Trade) of the Yogyakarta Special Region provide monetary support for such events which have contributed to the appreciation of batik, as well as to an exciting event landscape in Yogyakarta.

In summary, the archival preservation of batik is ensured by state and private museums. However, the promotion and development of batik is favoured by numerous events such as fashion shows and exhibitions that have a much higher public radiance than museums. Yogyakarta batik makers play a vital role in preserving cultural values of batik and in developing the craft. In the following chapter two batik artists are presented with a selection of their works.

2.3.2 Contemporary Batik with a Classical Aura – Afifah Ashma’ Abdillah (1995 -)

Afifah’s Life and Work

With her batik style the craftswoman and artist Afifah fills a gap in the contemporary batik scene that has been regarded as very important by ISI Yogyakarta lecturers. Afifah creates batik with a contemporary look in line with the Javanese batik heritage. This fulfils a mission formulated in the *kriya* curricula of ISI Yogyakarta. Some ISI Yogyakarta lecturers miss a deep engagement with Javanese art and ornamentation on the part of their students. They observe that many students fail to incorporate classical or traditional batik patterns into their batik with a contemporary fresh design. Some students break away completely from the classical and traditional motifs to create abstract batik to get a contemporary feel.⁵¹⁸ It is by no means the case that contemporary batik only follows one of two directions: (1) either old fashioned-looking batik with classical and traditional motifs, or (2) contemporary abstract batik. With her batik and her national success as an artist, craftswoman, workshop leader and

⁵¹⁸ Interview with Yulriawan Dafri, *Batik and Kriya in Jogja*, 22nd December 2018.

entrepreneur, Afifah proves that the field of contemporary batik has far more to offer than just reproducing the “old” or creating a “new” that looks completely different from the old. Afifah reworks traditional and classical batik motifs by using them in new compositions and supplementing them with other motifs and appealing fillings. Her batik has a royal appeal, the subtlety and complexity of classical batik. However, Afifah gives her batik a contemporary twist through her choice of colour, pattern and motif.

Born in 1995 in Ponogoro (East Java), Afifah grew familiar with batik at a very early age because her grandfather was a batik maker. In 2014 she moved to Yogyakarta for her studies. Since 2015 she has been working in her creative studio, having successfully completed her diploma studies in Batik Fashion at ISI Yogyakarta in 2017. The fashion awareness and skills she gained in her studies have been useful for her ongoing work as an entrepreneur. Her creative studio is called Avatar Boutique & Design. Together with her husband, the ceramist Apri Susanto, she works in the studio where Apri offers ceramic workshops. Part of the studio functions as a boutique, where Afifah sells her tailored batik and tie dye clothing, as well as home décor. Additionally, she sews clothing with *ikat* weaving parts as decoration.⁵¹⁹ As a keen learner Afifah went back to ISI Yogyakarta to study for a Bachelor’s degree in *S1 kriya tekstil*⁵²⁰ (textile *kriya*), which she obtained in 2020.

The Artwork *Segoro Gando Arum* (2018)

The artwork *Segoro Gando Arum* is 200 centimetres long and 50 centimetres wide, consisting of four batik panels (Figure B40). Afifah created the panels with the *batik tulis* technique using synthetic dyes. She prefers synthetic dyes because of the luminance and durability of the colours and the quick dyeing process. Using natural colours would mean dyeing the fabric several times and, if not done properly, the colours would fade quickly. In contrast, by using synthetic naphthol colours Afifah only dyed the fabric once for each colour. The fabrics she used are of *primisima* quality, which is a finely-woven cotton that is very popular for *batik tulis*. Three panels were worked in two colours, while the fourth panel consists of the three colours black, red and an ecru white (which looks more like a soft light orange-brown). Black and red are found in many traditional *sarong*, whilst ecru white is a colour often found in traditional batik from Lasem, a batik town on the north coast of Central Java. When Afifah started making batik, she was very fascinated by Lasem batik, whose style is characterised by

⁵¹⁹ Afifah Ashma’ Abdillah and Apri Susanto, ‘Avatar Boutique & Design (@avatarboutique)’, Instagram, <https://www.instagram.com/avatarboutique/> (last visit 13th February 2023).

⁵²⁰ In Indonesia S1 is the short term for a Bachelor’s, S2 for a Master’s and S3 for a Doctoral degree. The Bachelor’s programme *S1 Kriya Tekstil* is a programme in which textile craft and *kriya* philosophy are taught.

the influence of a Chinese motif language. Typical of Lasem batik is a cream-coloured background, which can range from ecru to porcelain white to a pastel orange-brown. Also typical of Lasem batik is the addition of delicate floral motifs in strong colours to the cream background.⁵²¹ Afifah has skilfully transferred this Lasem batik characteristic to her panels.

The four panels all have the same structure and are reminiscent of the division of a *sarong*, with a *kepala* (head) and a *badan* (body) (Figure B2). In general, the overall construction and arrangement of the motifs on a traditional *sarong* reflect the rules of social life that follow Javanese cosmology. Such rules are also found in the traditional and courtly architecture in Yogyakarta. In Afifah's work the head at the end of the panel shows a *tumpal* motif which comprises two rows of interlocking staggered mirrored triangles. One row of triangles is of a dark colour, the other is of a light colour. The *tumpal* motif with light and dark triangles is also found in the traditional *sarong* and again refers to the Javanese cosmology which provides the rules of social life. The *tumpal* motif is originally always found around the edge, either at the edge of a fabric, or in architecture near the roof edge. However, in batik the *tumpal* motif does not always adorn one end of the fabric. It has also become accepted to place it vertically in the middle of the fabric. Since the *sarong* is either sewn into a tube or tied around the waist like a skirt, the beginning or end of the textile becomes secondary to the placement of the *tumpal* motif.⁵²²

In *Segoro Gando Arum* each triangle in the upper row contains a floral motif, while the lower triangles are loosely filled with small circles or dots. The rows of triangles are followed by a *papan*⁵²³ or plank (board) that runs to the edge of the fabric. This *papan* is decorated with a fine frame and features delicate flowers with a curved style and small leaves referencing the common floral fillings for *papan*. The main part of the panel consists of the body, which shows a division similar to that in a *sarong* and a *kemben*. The body consists of a floral

⁵²¹ In the mid-14th century, a small kingdom existed in Lasem, which was part of the Majapahit Kingdom. Due to its geographical location Lasem, like other towns on the north coast of Java, was the first port of call for immigrants and traders. Numerous Chinese people immigrated to Lasem and began to produce batik there. As a consequence, Lasem batik features motifs from Chinese mythology such as the dragon and the peacock, but also flowers such as the lotus and rose, in the colours green, red and blue. An example can be seen on the website of 'Batik Laseman', *Yayasan Batik Indonesia* (blog), 2020, <https://yayasanbatikindonesia.id/2020/09/25/batik-laseman/> (last visit 21st February 2023).

Bani Sudardi, 'The Reflection of Socio-Cultural Change in Batik Motifs' (2018 3rd International Conference on Education, Sports, Arts and Management Engineering (ICESAME 2018), Quezon, Philippines: Atlantis Press, 2018), 151; Indah Ayu KUSUMASTUTI, Ahmad Khoirul Anwar, und Bening Tri Suwasono, 'Kajian Motif Parang Produksi Batik Ning Di Surakarta' (Surakarta, Universitas Sahid Surakarta, 2016), 36-8; Interview with Afifah Ashma' Abdillah, *Batik Artwork*, 10th December 2022.

⁵²² Interview with Nurohmad, *Javanese Cosmology*, 20th February 2023; Labin, 'Batik Traditions in the Life of the Javanese', 9.

⁵²³ *Papan* is one of the few terms of a *sarong* that is not borrowed from the human body. In its orientation to the textile, it is reminiscent of a piece of wood used in weaving. However, it is not known whether the term *papan* is connected to the weaving technique.

allover⁵²⁴ which forms the background of a centrally-placed *tengahan*, or an elongated diamond-like monochrome shape often used in *kemben*.⁵²⁵ The fine flowers grow into the shape in a regulated manner and form a natural border. In three of the four panels the diamond shapes feature a delicate floral chain decoration in their central axis. This is Afifah's free design and does not occur in classical *kemben*. In classical *kemben* the centrally-placed *tengahan* is often placed on a monochrome background.

Although Afifah has used synthetic colours, her choice of colours remains relatively close to classic and traditional colours of ecru white, black and red. Indigo blue and white are part of the classic colour palette in Yogyakarta.⁵²⁶ In Javanese cosmology, different meanings are attributed to the colours. According to Kerlogue's research, the colour white represents the East, birth and origin. Red stands for the south, fertility and femininity. Yellow stands for the West and maturity. Dark colours such as blue, black or dark brown stand for the North and death.⁵²⁷ However, in conversation with batik makers in Yogyakarta it became clear to me that Javanese cosmology contains an enormous wealth of knowledge, forming the basis of numerous customs and rules in Javanese social life. Thus, there are also other meanings for the traditional batik colours, for example, in connection with the elements. Red represents fire and the spirit. Black or brown represents the earth and wisdom. Blue represents the air and knowledge. Yellow represents the wind and intelligence. White is a central colour representing light. This is close to the use of white in batik patterns, where it often serves as a form of light.

However, what is striking in Afifah's artworks is her entire dispensing of white colour. This is unusual for traditional and classical batik in Yogyakarta, where white is used as a contrasting colour. This subtle method of using colours differently is typical of Afifah's batik. Her batik differs from often-seen contemporary batik showing classical and traditional motifs in pop art gaudy colours. The use of gaudy colours does not interest Afifah. Rather, she harmoniously balances colours, the type of motifs and the geometric division of the motifs in a clever way to create her contemporary batik. In this way, Afifah succeeds in creating batiks that seem familiar in terms of subtlety and refinement but appear fresh and new through her choice of colours and motifs.

⁵²⁴ An allover describes a textile pattern which shows small motifs repeated over the whole fabric. Often the repeated elements are placed in a diagonal or half offset order depicting flowers.

⁵²⁵ *Di tengah* in Bahasa Indonesian means in the centre. For a beautiful example of a *kemben* see Kerlogue, *Batik*, 158-9.

⁵²⁶ In Surakarta classical batik there is no white colour but a *soja* brown instead.

⁵²⁷ Kerlogue, *Batik*, 78.

The title of these four textiles is *Segoro Gando Arum*, which is Javanese and means The Sea of Fragrant Flowers. The many flowers of the same size join up to form a surface, just as individual water droplets form the sea. Afifah's batik motifs often revolve around nature, flowers and plants, as she herself is a passionate hobby gardener. Her animistic faith is another reason why Afifah draws her inspiration from nature. *Segoro Gando Arum* was exhibited at the Matra Award exhibition in 2018. Her work was the only one of nine textile artworks that made a visual reference to traditional and classical batik. Six of these textile artworks were in the form of dresses, macramés or installations. Two others featured batik, but in a form borrowed from the Western fine art paradigm. One of these was a *batik tulis* artwork that looked like a pop art painting, depicting a portrait on a white background, colourfully designed with tonal separations. The other batik artwork consisted of several equally sized square wooden frames that were partially wrapped with small two-coloured batik textiles. The Matra Award display in 2018 was characterised by showing artworks with reference to Javanese cultural heritage on an equal footing with artworks of free choice of materials and content. This applied not only to batik, but also to other artworks made of ceramics, wood, metal and other media.

When I asked Afifah why she had created four panels, she replied that all numbers are good, but the number four has a special meaning in Javanese philosophy. It stands for unyielding in a positive sense. This corresponds to her working attitude. It is only through her relentlessness that Afifah has been able to take her batik art and technical skills up to such a remarkable level. Afifah also said she had created four panels because the placement of four objects in an exhibition is considered aesthetic.⁵²⁸

A Moon Orchid *Selendang* Series (2020)

This *selendang* collection consists of four equally-sized textiles and is titled *Selendang Ikhlasing manah, sekar orchid*, or sincerity of heart, orchid flower (Figure B41). The collection was shown in the ISI Yogyakarta's student exhibition in 2020, as it was part of Afifah's final work for her Bachelor's degree. However, her *selendang* collection can easily compete with batik made by already experienced and older artists.

In Afifah's collection, the moon orchid is the main motif, while the classic motifs *parang* and *truntum* appear in the background. Even though the moon orchid (*Phalaenopsis amabilis*) is common on various islands in Indonesia, the flower has not become a common motif for

⁵²⁸ Interview with Afifah Ashma' Abdillah, *Batik Artwork*, 10th December 2022.

batik. The moon orchid species is characterised by its broad petals, which are very visible in Afifah's batik. The collection is held together by the striking motif of the moon orchid, the classic batik patterns and the colours. The four *selendang*, each measuring 200 centimetres by 50 centimetres, are made of a cotton fabric called *Primisima Kereta Kencana* and have been dyed with naphthol synthetic colours. The dimensions 200 centimetres by 50 centimetres correspond to the traditional *selendang* in Java, which was worn as a shawl or loosely around the head. Some *selendang* are 150 centimetres long, but also 50 centimetres wide.⁵²⁹

For the first textile in the collection, entitled *Ikhlasing manah, seri lereng sekar* (sincerity of heart, diagonal flower series), Afifah borrowed elements from the traditional *sarong*, such as the *tumpal* motif at the end of the textile (Figure B42). Unlike the traditional division of a *sarong*, her work has just one row of triangles instead of two. The triangles are not arranged directly next to each other as in a *sarong*, but they are each separated by a flower plant. This shows that Afifah likes to borrow motifs from traditional batik and arrange them freely according to her taste. Below the triangles, three diamonds with floral ornamentations decorate the end of the fabric. This is Afifah's own design which does not reference any traditional motif. Above the triangles flows a florally decorated, two-coloured *papan*, a common element of a traditional *sarong*. The main part of the textile shows a *lereng* motif which looks like diagonal bands. *Lereng* is a type of batik motif that was originally only allowed to be used in the Kartasura Palace. The motif was made by the royal family when they fled to the mountains to meditate. They saw the steep slopes of the mountains and translated them into the *lereng* motif, which symbolises fertility, hope for prosperity, courage and determination. The *parang* motif is the best-known *lereng* motif and is also called *parang lereng*. Another well-known *lereng* motif is called *udan liris* (Figure B18), or light rain.⁵³⁰

Afifah's *lereng* motif is decorated alternately with orchid motifs and filigree plant motifs. One diagonal band is dark blue with red and white orchid flowers, and is flanked by two red stripes. The bands in between show red filigree plant stems with leaves on a white background. *Lereng* motifs mostly depict florals or abstracted organic forms. Typically, the motifs are repeated within a diagonal band. This is also the case with Afifah's *selendang*. The alternation of the dark blue band with the white band creates a great contrast. Afifah's first textile of the collection captivates through the geometric division of the textile, the chosen

⁵²⁹ In Sumatra where Islam prescribes stricter clothing rules for women than in Java, the *selendang* is twice as wide, i.e. 100 centimetres, in order to cover the head better. Kerlogue, *Batik*, 137-8.

⁵³⁰ Interview with Timbul Haryono, *Batik Archaeology*, 15th March 2022; Omah Laweyan, '10 Makna Motif Batik di Indonesia Yang Sering Digunakan - Custom Motif', *Seragam Omah Laweyan* (blog), 5th December 2020, <https://seragamomahlaweyan.com/makna-motif-batik/> (last visit 20th February 2023).

colours and their contrasting effect, as well as through the precise elaboration of the finest floral patterns.

The second *selendang*, entitled *Ikhlasing manah, seri sekar anggrek* (sincerity of heart, orchid flower series) has a similar structure to the first one (Figure B43). In the lower quarter, however, it has no triangles and no band, but a floral area. This area ends at its top with four organically shaped triangles, each containing a large orchid. Diagonally below there are three small orchids arranged at regular intervals. As in the first *selendang*, the main area is defined by diagonal bands. For one sort of band the *parang* motif was chosen. The colours *soga* brown, *wedel* blue and their overlap, resulting in black, are modelled on the colours of classical batik.

The third *selendang* bears the title *Ikhlasing manah, seri sekar anggrek* (sincerity of heart, orchid flower series) and is mainly in red and white, with only a small blue spot in a border decoration at the bottom (Figure B44). This border decoration is reminiscent of the *cakar melik* motif, which is derived from *patola ikat* motifs. Nevertheless, Afifah's border motif is not a copy of that motif. The *cakar melik* motif consists of regular circles, each filled with an elongated four-armed star and a cross, whereas Afifah's motifs have a different background filling. Moreover, her circles are filled with a flower rather than a cross. The organically arranged orchids in the main section extend across the entire textile, while the background is filled with a loose *truntum* motif. The division of the textile into head (*kepala*) and body (*badan*) makes it appear traditional and familiar, while the use of the *truntum* motif also brings about a familiarity to this composition. However, Afifah achieves the vibrancy and uniqueness of this design through the independent orchid motif, the subdivision of the body and the *nitik*-like decoration between the body and head.

The fourth *selendang* is entitled *Ikhlasing manah, seri sekar anggrek* (sincerity of heart, orchid flower series) and has a similar border at the bottom as the second *selendang* (Figure B45). The shape of the border is reminiscent of the lace technique. The main component of this *selendang* is a large orchid motif in the lower centre of the main section, which looks like a bouquet of flowers similar to van Zuylen's *buketan* motifs. The background is an intricately designed pattern of diagonal bands showing the *parang* motif in every other band, alternating with various classically inspired motifs like *nitik* and *ceplok*. The colours are classic, as in the second *selendang*.

In general, a batik maker can make a philosophical statement through the main motif, and the name of a batik fabric is often based on the main motif. Afifah chose the orchid to symbolise her dedication to batik, which is similar to that needed to grow orchids. Only through constant

care over a long period of time do orchids bloom during a short period of the year. Analogously, it takes a lot of practice and patience to learn and master the batik technique. Afifah has used the *truntum* motif several times in her batik series. With the *truntum* motif and the orchids, Afifah wants to convey her hope that love will always blossom and continue. Afifah named the series *ikhlasing manah* (sincerity of the heart) because she created the batik series with all her sincerity and with all her heart. Thus, Afifah combines a spiritual practice with the creation of her batik. According to her spiritual belief, her batik is a sincere gift for the future wearer and contains energies to help the person live a happy life and flourish with love in life.

The moon orchids series shows Afifah's characteristic motif and form language with selected colours. Afifah explains that she uses bright and cheerful colours inspired by coastal batik. However, she takes care to use the fresh colours carefully, so as not to make the batik look too gaudy and cheap. At ISI Yogyakarta her works were often perceived as distinctly lively. Afifah knows how to place the large motifs coherently and compose the backgrounds harmoniously and precisely as an equally important layer. She either uses a well-known classical main motif and creates her own matching secondary motifs and fillings to go with it or, vice versa, creates her own main motif, such as the moon orchid, and complements it with familiar classical secondary motifs and matching fillings. Afifah's batiks are also characterised by a balance of light and dark colours, which contributes to their vibrancy. In addition, it seems that Afifah gives equal importance and dedication to all the elements, which makes her textiles appear particularly fine and complex. The incredible care and delicacy of her textiles was already causing a stir in 2014 and was often mistaken for the work of lecturers rather than that of the then-19-year-old student. With her technical and design skills, Afifah clearly stands out among her peers. Since 2013, Afifah has won several *kriya* awards. In 2014 her batik was exhibited through a batik project from the Joshibi University of Art and Design in Japan. In 2018, Afifah won the Creative Youth Competition, organised by UNESCO and the CITI Bank Indonesia. This competition is open to young creative people and the winners are awarded prize money which can help them start their own businesses.⁵³¹ For Afifah, winning this competition was a confirmation of her previous work and was also

⁵³¹ Getting this financial investment to start-up a creative business was ideal. As a batik artist, Afifah had relatively low initial costs compared to her husband Apri, who is a ceramist. Apri had to buy his own kiln, which was quite expensive, whereas Afifah only had to advance about 120-150 euros for her *selendang* collection. The exact cost of materials was as follows: for a moon orchid *selendang* textile the material costs varied from between 450,000 and 600,000 rupees per piece, which is about 27 – 37 euros. The most expensive material is the wax (*malam*), which costs 200,000 to 350,000 rupees per 1,5 kilograms, depending on the quality. For each *selendang* Afifah used about 1,5 kilograms of wax. In comparison, 45 grammes of synthetic colour only costs 40,000 rupees. Other expenses are required for buckets, the *canting tulis* and additives for the dyeing process. Interview with Afifah Ashma' Abdillah, *Batik Artwork*, 10th December 2022.

very good publicity. It gave her the courage to participate more often in events within the batik world and opened up the possibility to open a boutique in her creative studio.

On 21st April 2021 Afifah posted a picture (Figure 41) of her *selendang* collection on Instagram to commemorate the women's rights activist and Javanese princess Raden Ayu Kartini,⁵³² accompanied by some of her own thoughts and words. She also cited a quote from Kartini which says:

“Do you know my motto?” “I want!” Those two simple words have several times supported and carried me over mountains of objections and anxieties. The words “I can’t!” obliterate courage. The phrase “I want!” makes it easy to climb the peak of the mountain.”⁵³³ Kartini

This quote from Kartini inspired the young artist to spread kindness, to keep learning and evolving her craft skills and *kriya* philosophy. Her joy of learning is also clearly evident in her curriculum vitae, as she completed a full Bachelor's degree after her Diploma studies. Still eager to learn, Afifah began her Master's degree in *kriya* at ISI Yogyakarta in 2022.

For Afifah, batik is not just a craft, but also a learning material for history. She feels that, when people make batik, they also unconsciously understand the history of its creation and development. She feels that every batik has its own soul mate. This means that, no matter how aesthetically unpleasing a batik turns out to be, there must be someone who will enjoy it as a beautiful work of art.

Often non-figurative colourful batik is created to gain a diametrically-opposed look to figurative traditional motifs. Few young batik makers try their hand at classical motifs, because on the one hand, creating such motifs takes much more time than an abstract, non-figurative design and on the other hand, these classical patterns require a high level of craftsmanship which is the result of many diligent hours of practice.

⁵³² Kartini was born in Jepara (Central Java) in 1879. Her status as a princess gave her access to education, which she received in the Netherlands. In 1903, she got married and founded the first girls' school in Rembang on the northern coast of Central Java. Her school was open to girls from all social classes. In September 1904 Kartini died at a young age, four days after giving birth to her son. Her efforts and commitment to women's education were crucial for women's rights in Indonesia. To this day, Kartini is honoured and celebrated on her birthday, on 21st April. PT VIVA MEDIA BARU- VIVA, 'Profil R A Kartini - VIVA', Siapa, 2008, <https://www.viva.co.id/siapa/read/401-r.a.-kartini> (last visit 6th September 2022).

⁵³³ The original text is in Indonesian and was cited on Instagram by Afifah as an accompanying text to her photograph of her *selendang* collection (Figure B41). The Indonesian text seems more accurate as the verb “mau” cannot be very well translated to English. It can bear a meaning between “to want” and “to do”. Here is Afifah's citation: “Do you know my motto?” “I do!” Those two simple words have several times supported and carried me over mountains of objections and anxieties. The words “I can't!” obliterate courage. The phrase “I want!” makes it easy to climb the peak of the mountain.” (Kartini), post from Afifah's Instagram account, <https://www.instagram.com/p/CcmvDBrPu6J/> (last visit 6th September 2022).

In recent years batik collectors in Indonesia have become aware of Afifah's high-quality batik, as traditionally-inspired batik with finely worked patterns and appealing colours are in high demanded from collectors. Afifah's batik is considered a unique style among collectors since it incorporates classical elements with very suitable colour combinations.⁵³⁴

2.3.3 Reflecting Social and Political Issues Through Textiles – Caroline Rika Winata (1976 -)

Rika's Life and Work

Caroline Rika Winata, abbreviated to Rika, was born in Bandung (West Java) and studied for her Bachelor's degree in textile *kriya* at ISI Yogyakarta from 1995 until 2000. After graduating Rika focused on her own artistic work while teaching tie-dye and batik workshops in Indonesia and abroad. She also worked as an assistant in the artistic field, for example for Cemeti Art Gallery, for the UNESCO's Artist Award, and for a basketry artist from Japan. In 2007 she founded WIRU, her own company and brand for tie-dye and handmade batik clothing in Yogyakarta (Figure B46).

Rika particularly likes the tie-dye technique because it produces an unpredictable result for each fabric. The surprise she finds when opening up the threads is still great, even though Rika has been working with this technique for over 25 years. The tie-dye technique, better known as *jumputan* in Indonesia has been known in Java and Sumatra for a long time, but never gained as high a reputation as batik, probably because *jumputan* fabrics can be created relatively easy with less time effort than the creation of a batik fabric. Nevertheless, *jumputan* fabrics are used in traditional activities such as Javanese wedding ceremonies.⁵³⁵

As a textile artist and designer Rika has always followed both tracks: one as an entrepreneurial designer and the other as an artist. Adding to this she has collaborated with artists from India, and she has worked with artists from other disciplines like dance and performance. Soon after graduating Rika also started to work as a freelance teacher and, from

⁵³⁴ Liputan6.com, 'Berani Eksplorasi Motif Batik Klasik, Afifah Ashma Diburu Para Kolektor', liputan6.com, 6th April 2018, <https://www.liputan6.com/lifestyle/read/3428217/berani-eksplorasi-motif-batik-klasik-afifah-ashma-diburu-para-kolektor> (last visit 15th February 2023).

⁵³⁵ Harian Jogja Digital Media, 'Rika Bawa Tie Dye Tradisional Ke Kancan Internasional', Newspaper, Harianjogja.com, 20th December 2017, <https://jogjapolitan.harianjogja.com/read/2017/12/20/510/878309/rika-bawa-tie-dye-tradisional-ke-kancan-internasional> (last visit 23rd February 2023).

2017 to 2020, she was a guest lecturer at ISI Yogyakarta. Rika is a textile artisan and artist who explores textile techniques with remarkable consistency and deep interest, skilfully applying them to her entrepreneurial activities as well as to her textile art. Probably the most outstanding feature of Rika's artistic career is her very early start as an artist participating regularly in exhibitions. As early as 1997, when Rika was still a *kriya* Bachelor's student, she exhibited her textile artworks at the *Contemporary Textile Exhibition* in the Royal Palace of Yogyakarta. Since then – except for the year 2010 – she has exhibited her textile works every year at well-known venues in Yogyakarta, for example at Bentara Budaya, Taman Budaya, Jogja Gallery and Jogja National Museum, as well as abroad at the National Gallery of Singapore. She has participated in group exhibitions at Art Jog, Indonesian Craft, Jogja Biennale, Fiber Face, Bali Biennale and many more.

Never Indonesian Enough (2009)

The artwork called *Never Indonesian Enough* (2009) is a dress made of yellow woven labels with the words “made in Indonesia” and the letter “o” filled in with the Indonesian national flag (Figure B47). The short-sleeved dress reaches to the ground and has red embroidery running diagonally from the right neck to the axilla of the right arm.⁵³⁶ This artwork was shown at the Biennale Jogja in the month-long exhibition called *Jogja Jamming – Art Archive Movement* in 2009 at the Jogja National Museum. Biennale Jogja is a contemporary visual art exhibition that aims to make Yogyakarta the art capital of Indonesia, according to the organisers. Rika was one of the 132 invited artists. Her artwork fitted well into the exhibition, which showed a variety of contemporary art, similar to Western biennials.⁵³⁷

Never Indonesian Enough was based on Rika's personal experience. When she got married at the registry office in 2008, she was asked for her identity card or that of her parents, called a SBKRI (*Surat Bukti Keterangan Republik Indonesia*, literally meaning Certificate of Evidence of the Republic of Indonesia). This identity card has been in circulation since 1956 and is often legitimised as securing Indonesian citizenship for Chinese people, since Mao Zedong claimed that all Chinese people around the world, including those in Indonesia, were citizens of the People's Republic of China based on the principle of *ius sanguinis* (blood descent). In reality, this Indonesian identity card was issued mainly to Chinese- and Indian-descended Indonesians and resulted in discriminatory treatment for them in bureaucratic areas

⁵³⁶ More picture of this artwork can be seen on Rika's website: https://carolinerikawinata.com/?page_id=10 (last visit 10th September 2022).

⁵³⁷ Munarsi Sahana, 'Jamming the Jogja Way', *The Jakarta Post*, 17th December 2009, Monday, 21st December 2009 Edition.

such as education, election registrations, passport applications, birth, marriage and death certificates. On her wedding day, Rika was asked for her SBKRI card on the basis of her appearance, a demand that was a violation of the law. In 1996, Suharto issued a presidential decree on the proof of citizenship of the Republic of Indonesia. This stated that, when his decree came into force, all laws and regulations that had previously required the SBKRI card for certain administrative matters were declared invalid.⁵³⁸ This meant that, since 1996, this SBKRI card was not required and no longer needed to be shown. Being aware of that, Rika refused to show her SBKRI card at her civil wedding. But her protest was not accepted, so Rika had to give in and show her identity card in order to get married. Rika mentions that she has also faced various administrative distinctions in other bureaucratic matters because of her ethnic appearance. This inspired her to create the artwork *Never Indonesian Enough*, a dress that one could put on “to be Indonesian enough”. When Rika wears the dress, she is referring to the fact that she was “made in Indonesia” in a biological sense. Chinese Indonesians, also called *peranakan*, were born in Indonesia and have both Indonesian and as Chinese roots. However, culturally they feel Indonesian because they speak Indonesian, were raised within Indonesian culture and have no connection to Chinese culture or to their Chinese relatives or ancestors. *Peranakan* often live in Indonesia in third or fourth generations, or even longer.⁵³⁹ Discrimination against Chinese-looking Indonesians has a long history in the Archipelago and probably dates back to the time of the first Chinese immigrants. Numerous violent incidents and attacks on Chinese and Chinese-Indonesian groups in recent decades are evidence of an unresolved problem. Different motivations are suspected for this discrimination. One explanation is that indigenous Indonesians feel that the Chinese are not adaptable enough. Exclusion is therefore inevitable. Another well-known attempt at an explanation is economic and social envy, as the Chinese were perceived as successful traders and entrepreneurs. Envy also stems from the fact that the Chinese were favoured in Java during the Suharto regime. This favouritism may have been a means for the Suharto regime to scapegoat them as a minority and thus divert attention away from other political problems. Another assumption is

⁵³⁸ ‘SURAT BUKTI KEWARGANEGARAAN REPUBLIK INDONESIA ~ Pusat Ilmu Pengetahuan’, Edunitas, https://p2k.unkris.ac.id/id3/1-3065-2962/Surat-Bukti-Kewarganegaraan-Re_116799_stie-walisongo_p2k-unkris.html (last visit 10th September 2022).

⁵³⁹ There are two major Chinese groups in Indonesia. The *totok* and the *peranakan*. The *totok* are ethnically Chinese who are oriented towards their place of origin in China and speak a Chinese language. The *peranakan* have mixed ancestry with Chinese and Indonesian roots. Before the Dutch colonial period, large communities of *peranakan* already existed in the Archipelago. This was because mostly Chinese men immigrated, who then married local women. The proceeding generations of Chinese immigrants could marry *peranakan* daughters, which favoured the growth of a stable *peranakan* community. Verena Beittinger, ‘Zwietracht in der Vielfalt Indonesiens chinesische Minderheit, das Masalah Cina und die Maiunruhen 1998’, in *Südostasien Working Papers*, Bd. 24 (Seminar für Südostasien-Studien, Berlin: Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin | Philosophische Fakultät III Institut für Asien- und Afrikawissenschaften, 2004), 22.

that the discrimination was a kind of remnant of the Dutch colonial rulers, which fomented negative prejudices against Chinese minorities at the time they held power.⁵⁴⁰

What is additionally interesting about Rika's *Never Indonesian Enough* is the photo documentation of it, which reinforces her artwork statement. Rika is pictured wearing her dress, semi-kneeling, with her back against a wall. With a sad, half-angry, half-resigned expression, the artist looks into the camera, which is positioned higher than Rika's head in order to look down on her. Rika's lower position in the frame symbolises her position with official authorities and offices. Her body posture, with her hands resting in her lap, emphasises the resignation Rika feels about the discrimination she encounters due to her ethnic Chinese appearance.

A New Hope (2009)

This artwork is an installation consisting of a female bust made from white wire, a dress of cream-coloured tulle and several batik origami birds with read threads (Figure B48).⁵⁴¹ The origami birds all seem to be made from the same batik fabric. For many batik makers, it still takes some effort to cut a batik cloth, as batik textiles were originally used directly as garments without cutting. Rika had to cut many pieces for this flock of origami birds, but she was very careful to cut the fabric's edges so that no fringes are visible, and the folded birds look high quality as a result. Some origami birds are attached to the tulle dress in a sitting position, while individual birds are suspended from the ceiling with silk threads in such a way that they appear to be flying away from the dress at intervals of half a metre to a metre. A few origami birds are placed on the floor and seem to be preparing for flight. A closer look reveals red threads running here and there in vertical alignment across the dress, to some of the birds and down to the floor. Rika used a batik fabric with the *truntum* motif to fold the numerous origami birds. The *truntum* motif is very popular in Indonesia because of its meaning and story. The story is that the sultan's queen was sad because she no longer felt loved by her husband. In her grief she created a new batik motif. When the sultan saw his wife absorbed in the creative work, his love for her returned. The motif name *truntum* derives from the word *tun-tun*, which means to return. Consequently, this motif stands for the returning love of a partner and for love in general. Therefore, *truntum* is often worn on the occasion of weddings.

⁵⁴⁰ Beittinger, 10.

⁵⁴¹ *A New Hope* was shown at Bentara Budaya, Yogyakarta in the *TexStyle Project* exhibition in 2009. As the name suggests, the exhibition featured various textile artworks by different artists from Indonesia. The artwork was also shown in a contemporary art exhibition called *Dialogue* in Jakarta.

According to Rika, the origami birds symbolise hope. With this artwork Rika wants to emphasise the importance of spreading love into the world and understanding that love can give hope. The bust with the cream-coloured tulle fabric represents a female body from which love and hope exude. Because the bust hangs from the ceiling and the tulle fabric is semi-transparent, the body appears light and airy. The tulle body appears spiritual, ancestral or even ephemeral in its design. The strong colours and the cotton fabric of the batik birds contrast with this airy torso's appearance. It can be assumed that Rika chose to depict a female body because she is a woman herself. However, gender plays a less important role in this work than the main message of love and hope. The red threads have two symbolic meanings – on the one hand, they indicate a sense of direction leaving the body, meaning that love should be given away, and on the other hand they signify that love and hope can be a guiding element in life, like a thread that helps guiding.⁵⁴²

***Sweet Darkness* (2016)**

Another of Rika's characteristic work is called *Sweet Darkness* (2016).⁵⁴³ This is a batik pattern on paper (Figure B49).⁵⁴⁴ The pattern is reminiscent of the classic batik motif *truntum*, that depicts stars and dots in the same arrangement as Rika's work. Usually, the classical *truntum* motif depicts orange stars with white dots as fillings and a black or dark brown background. Sometimes the stars look more like flowers with rounded petals and are white, while the dots are orange. Rika chose the gaudy pop art-like colour magenta to refer to a contemporary social issue. As in the artwork *A New Hope*, Rika takes the *truntum* batik motif to refer to love. With *Sweet Darkness* Rika has created a motif similar to *truntum*, that shows elements of weapons and bullets in a rosette-shaped arrangement. In this way, she creates a pictorial paradox for love and evil and alludes to the hateful actions of radical believers in Indonesia who legitimise their actions by citing the love of Allah. Through her work Rika expresses her anxiety about the phenomenon of violence in the name of religion that has been occurring in Indonesia since the 2000s, starting with a series of bombings.⁵⁴⁵

Although Indonesia is considered the largest Muslim country in the world, Islam is not the state religion, and several religions are represented, such as animistic religions, Hinduism,

⁵⁴² In Bahasa Indonesia there is an expression "benang merah" (red thread), which exists in German too. It means a common thread, or a guiding element.

⁵⁴³ *Sweet Darkness* was shown at Kersan Art Space in Yogyakarta in 2016.

⁵⁴⁴ The printed pattern is about 20 centimetres wide and about 28 centimetres long. Rika designed the pattern on her computer. The printed piece of paper is not unique and can rather be understood as a printed version of the artwork.

⁵⁴⁵ Interview with Rika Winata, *About My Artworks*, 9th June 2022.

Christianity and Buddhism. During the reigns of Sukarno and Suharto, Islam was lived as a moderate religion alongside the animist religions. The stability of religions was ensured by the dictatorial governments. Only since the Reformation era from 1998 onwards have Muslim fundamentalists been able to gain more ground. Islamist terrorist attacks and social unrest marked the following years from 2000 onwards. The public was particularly shocked and unsettled in 2000 when 13 bombs exploded almost simultaneously in several cities on Christmas Eve. The following year, 81 bombings occurred, 29 of them in Jakarta alone. The Bali bomb in 2002 has claimed the most victims so far. Further bombings in a business hotel in Jakarta, as well as in front of the Australian Embassy, took place in 2003 and 2004. A second bomb went off in Bali in 2005. According to the Indonesian police, the terrorist organisation *Jamaah Islamiyah* was responsible for all the attacks.⁵⁴⁶ Today, the Indonesian government is no longer struggling with terrorist attacks, but with the spreading of Islamic purification. This trend has become increasingly noticeable since Joko Widodo came to power in 2014. Islamic purification in Indonesia means that Islamic groups⁵⁴⁷ are trying to replace animist religions and cultural customs with Islamic beliefs, as they consider some social traditions to be incompatible with their interpretation of Islamic rules and laws. In Yogyakarta, the group *Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia* (HTI)⁵⁴⁸ is particularly active in effectively promoting the priority of Islamic values by seeking new members at educational institutions. For example, at ISI Yogyakarta, some lecturers belong to HTI and are covertly trying to infuse radical Islamic values into campus operations. They might go further and pass on this body of thought to young students. It is unclear how far Islamic purification has progressed at ISI Yogyakarta. Obvious signs, such as turning away from depictions of humans and animals, have not yet appeared. Even though the Indonesian public perceives the increasing Islamic purification as a major problem, state education authorities seem to be turning a blind eye to it so far.⁵⁴⁹ Applied to Rika's work, where the structures of the pattern look similar to the *truntum* motif, the state education authorities see no problem with Islamic purification as the external structures of the universities remain the same. Rika's title of the work, *Sweet*

⁵⁴⁶ Sukawarsini Djelantik, 'Terrorism in Indonesia: The Emergence of West Javanese Terrorists', vol. 22 (International Graduate Student Conference Series, Honolulu, Hawaii: East-West Centre, 2006), 2.

⁵⁴⁷ *Jamaah Islamiyah* is known as such a group. Other groups are *Majelis Mujahiddin Indonesia*, *Majelis Tafsir Al-Qur'an*, *Nahdatul Anwar*, *Ahmadiyah*, *Majelis Tabligh*, *Syiah*, *Nahdatul Ulama*, *Salafiah*, *Muhammadiyah*, *Ichvanul Muslimin*, *Hizbut Tahrir* among others. Dr. Sutiyono, 'Social Traditions and the Islamic Purification Movement in Indonesia', *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences* 6, no. 2 (2015): 252.

⁵⁴⁸ Hizbut Tahrir (HT) stands for "Party of Liberation". It is an international Islamist movement established as a political party in Jerusalem in 1953 by Sheikh Taqi al-Din An-Nabhani and Islamic scholar. Hizbut Tahrir has spread to more than 40 countries. Ali Abdullah Wibisono, 'Hizbut Tahrir in Indonesia: Riding the Wave of the Islamization Agenda', Middle East Institute, 2018, <https://www.mei.edu/publications/hizbut-tahrir-indonesia-riding-wave-islamization-agenda> (last visit 23rd February 2023).

⁵⁴⁹ Interview with Satya Brahmantya, *Batik and Ceramic Artists, Islamic Purification*, 2nd September 2022; personal communication with Wahyu Priyono, 5th September 2022.

Darkness, alludes to the supposed sweetness of religious values, which hold a lot of potential for violence in the underground or darkness due to radical ideas.

Rika's three artworks discussed here are characteristic of her art practice. Although Rika studied textile *kriya* at the university, early in her career she was able to establish her own way of reflecting on and approaching social and political topics. Her art practice is not typical of *kriya* artists but is more commonly followed by fine art artists. When Rika started contributing to exhibitions in Yogyakarta in the late 1990s, she was one of few *kriya* artists who did that. Only Nia Fliam and Agus Ismoyo contributed to the acceptance of textiles as art medium in Yogyakarta. Most other artists at that time were fine art graduates, for example, Ninditiyo Adipurnomo and Mella Jarsmah. Rika's medium of artistic expression is textiles, with which she has grasped their meanings, materiality and position in society. This allows her to create and alter textiles in a meaningful way to make precise artistic statements about political and social issues. Even though Rika has always worked with textiles, she has never felt any restraints from working with other media and artists from other disciplines. With this, Rika has succeeded in bringing batik and textiles as an art medium into fine art exhibitions, making her one of the pioneers in Yogyakarta.⁵⁵⁰

When comparing the two batik artists Afifah and Rika, it is evident that the characteristic feature of Afifah's work is her incorporation of animistic teachings of Javanese cosmology as well as classical and traditional motifs. She researches and explores intimately classical and traditional batik, at the pattern level but also at the level of applying the batik philosophy. However, Rika's artworks do not show batik in a traditional way. Her artistic practice resembles that of a fine art artist, as Rika uses batik as an element of speech. She knows about the meaning of batik patterns and uses them on a meta-level to reinforce her artistic expression. Javanese cosmology is more noticeable as an underlying attitude in Rika's works but does not guide the visual creation. In contrast, Afifah creates batik that has a spiritual function in addition to its clothing function. Her batik is thus close to tradition, where batik as ceremonial and cultural fabrics are supposed to bring the wearer good energies, or other important things in life, such as luck, love, protection, courage or hope. Rika's works have neither a clothing nor a spiritual function, but a socially critical function.

Afifah has so far created batik garments as artworks, such as *selendang* or *sarong*. With her artworks she underlines the essence of batik as a high art, which is characterised by the complexity of their motifs, her harmonious colour combinations and a high level of

⁵⁵⁰ Interview with Rika Winata, *Batik Style*, 8th April 2021.

craftsmanship. In addition to their function as garments, Afifah's batik fabrics contain Javanese symbolic meanings, and technically they come across as absolute masterpieces. Unsurprisingly, Afifah's batik is highly regarded and followed with interest by Indonesian batik collectors.

Rika's textiles are often tied, folded, cut, knotted or loosely draped in installations (such as in the artwork *A New Hope*), and do not follow traditional forms or garments. She often mixes batik with other textiles and materials. Rika's artistic strength is her semiotic knowledge of different textiles and her keen eye for social topics. She skilfully selects and creates certain textiles, bringing them into a suitable form in order to address social themes. A few of Rika's artworks have been bought by foreign museums and galleries.

With her art practice, Rika is rather the exception among batik artists in Indonesia. While she can show her textile artworks in contemporary art exhibitions or in solo exhibitions, batik art such as the batik fabrics created by Afifah are not shown in contemporary art exhibitions. This probably has to do with the fact that art values adopted from the West are still present in the Indonesian contemporary art scene. The hierarchy of art and craft is palpable, so that batik is often related to craft, not to art. Another consequence of the art and craft separation is that batik as a textile medium is less likely to be chosen as an art medium by contemporary artists than other media such as ceramics or metal. Batik in the form of garments (*sarong*, *selendang*) is much more likely to be shown as a product at industrial fairs. The selling prices of the best and most expensive batik products such as *selendang* and *sarong* are below the prices that can be obtained for a textile work of art. However, developments in recent years show that batik is highly valued by the Indonesian population and that product prices for intricately designed high-quality batik are tending to rise. To date, the Matra Kriya Fest is the best-known festival that provides an outlet for batik as a work of art (and for other *kriya* artworks).⁵⁵¹ Other festivals, such as the *Festival Kesenian Yogyakarta*, are known as art fairs, where rather smaller art souvenirs and *kriya* products are sold at affordable prices.

Rika and Afifah both work as entrepreneurs alongside their artistic work. Rika creates mainly tie-dye textiles with her brand WIRU, which she tailors into women's clothing. In her Avatar Boutique & Studio, Afifah sells tailored tie-dye garments, blouses decorated with traditional fabrics, batik *sarong* and *selendang*, and smaller batik accessories such as bags and purses. As a batik artist in Indonesia a second financial pillar is essential, as making a living from *kriya* art is not feasible. Teaching in workshops or at an art university is also a second important source of income for many artists.

⁵⁵¹ To date, the focus of the Matra Kriya Fest has not been on selling the artworks, but on publicising and displaying the *kriya* objects.

If one asks since when has batik been shown as a work of art in Yogyakarta, one must distinguish three cases. In the first case, non-traditional batik was created in the form of batik painting and abstract batik. These artworks, which are more reminiscent of Western paintings, have been exhibited since the 1960s. Their aim is to use the batik technique to create works that are completely different from the batik tradition. In the second case, which occurs less frequently, traditional but also free batik forms are mixed with other media by contemporary artists or shown as part of an installation. This was the case from around the 1990s. These artists do not make the batik themselves but buy the fabrics to underline their artistic statement. In the third case, which has only existed since 2015/2016, batik with traditional patterns and in the form of traditional garments such as *sarong*, *selendang* and *kemben* is shown as artworks in *kriya* exhibitions. This third case is still developing and both artists, Afifah and Rika, are making an important contribution to today's recognition of batik in the art world, as well as to batik development as a form of *kriya* and craft.

Both artists reflect and negotiate cultural identity with their batik artworks. Afifah's batik reflects the courtly Javanese culture of classical batik. At the same time, it is contemporary and in tune with the spirit of the times. She thus renegotiates the Javanese cultural batik tradition and identity, demonstrating a keen sense of the possible scope for combining classical patterns and her own creations.

Reflecting and negotiating cultural identities is central to Rika's work, as she belongs to an ethnic minority as an Indonesian of Chinese appearance. In other works, she addresses social issues, in which she skilfully uses the meaning of batik patterns as an element of speech.

The two artists each have their own art practice and approach to batik in their works. While Rika follows a Western-tinged conceptual approach, Afifah stays close to the batik philosophy and the creation of patterns.

Until around 2009 (UNESCO's recognition of batik as Indonesia's intangible cultural heritage), the Indonesian art scene was strongly influenced by the Western art canon, which distinguished high arts from applied arts. This meant that batik artists like Afifah had few opportunities to show batik as a work of art in exhibitions. However, UNESCO's recognition of batik gave the *kriya* movement, which had already existed for several decades, a new lease of life. *Kriya* was re-evaluated in academic circles and the awareness of *kriya* as a cultural value gained importance from around the mid-2010s. With specific *kriya* exhibitions, the

categories between art and craft have begun to dissolve more and more in Indonesian academies, so that batik is also being re-read as a work of art.

Chapter 3

What about Clay and Ceramics? Balancing *Kriya* and The Contemporary

In today's Indonesian art world ceramics is recognised as a *kriya* form, like other forms, even though it is a relatively young discipline. Its history is very different from that of batik. Therefore, this Chapter 3 on ceramics covers different topics than the Chapter on batik. Only the third Section on contemporary ceramics has the same structure as the third Section on contemporary batik. It is hoped that this Chapter will provide valuable insights into Indonesian ceramics and contribute to an understanding of contemporary *kriya* in Indonesia.

3.1 The Art and Craft of Earthenware and Ceramics in Yogyakarta

3.1.1 Technique and Material

As in many parts of the world, earthenware was already known in the Archipelago in the Neolithic period. This is proven by pottery shards found in Sumatra, Java and Bali. Earthenware, known as *gerabah*⁵⁵² in Indonesian, is fired at low temperatures between 600 - 1050 °Celsius and stays unglazed. Clay, fired at medium temperatures between 1050 - 1250° Celsius and clay, fired at high temperature between 1200 - 1400° Celsius, is called ceramics.⁵⁵³ The term ceramics is often used as a collective term for low to high temperature fired clay, that is raw fired or is glazed. In my thesis, I do not use the term ceramics as a collective term, but distinguish earthenware (low firing temperature) from ceramics (medium to high firing temperatures).⁵⁵⁴

⁵⁵² The word *pecah-belah* is also used for earthenware and literally means broken or divided. It refers to objects, that can break.

In the Indonesian dictionary (*Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia*), the term *tembikar* comprises different meanings: ceramics, earthenware, glazed porcelain and shard. Most Indonesians use the words *gerabah* or *terakota*, to speak about earthenware. When they refer to a shard, they speak of *tembikar*. Some people use the word *tembikar* for ceramics, but more commonly, they use the word *keramik*. The word *tembikar* is not commonly used for porcelain, but the newer word *porcelain* is used instead.

⁵⁵³ Taufik Akbar, 'Kajian Bentuk, Gaya, dan Makna Sibolik Keramik Noor Sudiyati' (Masterthesis, Yogyakarta, Program Pascasarjana dari Institut Seni Indonesia Yogyakarta, 2014), 42; Gita Winata, 'kendi indonesia: bentuk dan tradisi', *Jurnal Sositologi* 18 (10th March 2020): 530.

⁵⁵⁴ Porcelain differs from earthenware in its higher firing temperature and its composition. Porcelain consists of kaolin, quartz and feldspar, which sinter and vitrify during firing and thus become very solid. HKB, KL, 'Porzellanmasse', Material Archiv S1-11, 2019, https://materialarchiv.ch/de/ma:material_2175 (last visit 14th February 2023).

In Indonesia, a traditional low-firing method is still used today. Usually in villages, clay objects are carefully fired in a big fire on an open field.⁵⁵⁵ The oxygen supply is reduced by covering the objects with leaves and wood, to provoke a change of texture and colour of clay. A lack of oxygen reduces metal oxides in the clay to their metallic form, a process called reduction firing.⁵⁵⁶ This method is relatively easy to master using special kilns with a controlled air supply, whereas the field firing method requires the craftsperson's precise feeling for air supply and temperature.

An often-made object with this method in Yogyakarta is *kendil hitam* (black pot). This pot is made of reddish clay and gets black during reduction firing. It is used to store a dish called *gudeg*, which consists of young jackfruit, cooked in coconut milk.⁵⁵⁷ *Gudeg* is a main dish available in the evenings at food markets and *warungs*⁵⁵⁸, and has become Yogyakarta's trademark. Teak leaves are added during cooking and create *gudeg*'s dark reddish-brown colour, which looks very appealing in a black pot. Since the 1950s, when educational institutions in Yogyakarta attracted many young students from other regions, *gudeg* became very popular as a delicious, nutritious, inexpensive food, that lasted well for some days. Students sometimes brought *gudeg* home to their parents, as a souvenir from Yogyakarta. Likewise, *kendil hitam* became a souvenir, which domestic tourists bring home as a Yogyakarta traditional gift for their friends and relatives.⁵⁵⁹

In terms of technique and tools, Yogyakarta's ceramists are using the usual and well-known techniques, like the throwing technique. The pinch technique, in which clay is shaped by hand through kneading and pinching, is often used in Yogyakarta. To produce earthenware pots, turning wheels are used. To decorate ceramic objects, four main techniques are known. The first is called *sgraffito* decoration technique, in which the decoration is scratched into the engobe layer. The second is called *intaglio*, and means that the ceramic body is incised. The

⁵⁵⁵ This method is called field firing. An example of the process can be seen in this video from Sumatra: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EPsAafV6m88> (last visit 14th February 2023). Adding to this method usual firing in electric or gas kilns are done. Interview with Taufik Akbar, *Field Firing*, 4th November 2022.

⁵⁵⁶ Tony Hansen, 'Reduction Firing', *Digital Fire*, 2022, <https://digitalfire.com/glossary/reduction+firing> (last visit 3rd November 2022).

⁵⁵⁷ The added ingredients such as *gula Jawa* or coconut sugar, salt, pepper, ground coriander seeds, onion, garlic and lemongrass are cooked with the jackfruit for up to six hours, which turn *Gudeg* into a delicious taste experience.

⁵⁵⁸ A *warung* is a place to buy street food. It can be a small house, a shack or simply people who place themselves on a street corner with the cooked food in large pots on mobile carts to sell individual portions. In Yogyakarta, the range of *warungs* is very large. With the knowledge of a local, you can eat authentic Indonesia or Yogyakarta dishes prepared without glutamate, colourings and additives for little money.

⁵⁵⁹ Rachma Safitri Yogasari, 'Filosofi Gudeg: Simbol Rindu dan Rekaman Perubahan Kota Yogyakarta', *National Geographic Indonesia*, 14th April 2021, <https://nationalgeographic.grid.id/read/132646756/filosofi-gudeg-simbol-rindu-dan-rekaman-perubahan-kota-yogyakarta> (last visit 3rd November 2022); Koniherawati Koniherawati und Centaury Harjani, 'RE-AKTUALISASI KENDIL HITAM', *Corak : Jurnal Seni Kriya* 8, no. 1 (29th May 2019): 13-4.

third technique, called *cameo*, is carving out a relief. The fourth technique is called *filigree* decoration technique, in which shapes are carved into the ceramic body and holes or fine perforations are created.⁵⁶⁰ In Kasongan another decoration technique has had great success and is called *teknik tempel* (stick-on technique). Kasongan's potters make very sophisticated and original objects with it. I will get back to it in the following Section (about the pottery village Kasongan).

Materials

Glazes and engobes are an important design element and can improve significantly the function of an object, because they increase its stability and have a water-repellent effect. But for Yogyakarta's ceramists the raw material itself, the clay, is more important than glazes and engobes. Clay is carefully chosen for its origin, and is declared for products and artworks. This makes sense, because Indonesia as a ramified island world with active volcanoes and a diverse earth mass with different compositions and properties depending on the region. For example, clay from Pacitan, a city in East-Java, is much more malleable, than clay from other areas. Many ceramists produce their own optimal clay mass by mixing different types of clay. Natural clay colours after firing can range from red-orange, reddish-yellow, brown, beige to grey, depending on the clay's origin.

3.1.2 Kasongan - the Epicentre of a Pottery Heritage

Yogyakarta's pottery craft history is strongly tied to Kasongan, a village in the Bantul regency, south of the city centre. Javanese history tells us, that in the beginning of the 19th century, Kasongan grew out of three hamlets.⁵⁶¹ The oral tradition of Kasongan's community reveals that it was fertile area, where rice and other food plants were cultivated. Village people were not involved in pottery making, but mainly occupied with farming activities. The story goes on with a decisive event, where a saddled horse of a Dutch officer got killed amid the paddies. When the Dutch colonial government confronted Kasongan farmers with this

⁵⁶⁰ Akbar, 'Kajian Bentuk, Gaya, dan Makna Sibolik Keramik Noor Sudiyati', 43-4.

⁵⁶¹ SP. Gustami, Saptoto and Narno S., *Pola Hidup dan Produk Kerajinan Keramik Kasongan Yogyakarta*, Proyek Penelitian dan Pengkajian Kebudayaan Nusantara (Yogyakarta: Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Direktorat Jenderal Kebudayaan, 1985) 13-4; Gustami, Wardani and Setiawan, 'Craft Arts and Tourism in Ceramic Art Village of Kasongan in Yogyakarta', 38-40.

occurrence, the latter did not want to reveal the owner of the fields, to not be accused of killing the Dutch horse and to avoid drastic punishments from their foreign rulers. Since Kasongan's people did not indicate the owner of the field, they had to cede their fertile land and lost their right to own ancestral land. From then on, they settled on an arid region within the village and began to produce pottery. This arid region was further transformed by Kyai Abdulraupi⁵⁶², a Koran teacher and soldier of prince Dipanegara. Kyai was a leading figure for artisans and for potters and was much involved in turning the arid Kasongan region into a well-known residential place for potters (Figure C1).⁵⁶³

In the past, pottery making was dominated by women, but since several decades, men also engaged in it. Today, more men than women practise pottery in Kasongan.⁵⁶⁴ Around 1825, pottery making became popular and functional earthenware household objects were produced. The potters burned these objects in simple wood kilns at temperatures under 1050°C.⁵⁶⁵ For creating and processing clay, they used typical manual tools like shaping dies, trimmers, abrasion tools and scrapers. Typical household earthenware were *kendil* (a pot for cooking rice), *kuwali* (a pot for cooking vegetables), *kendhi* (a pitcher), *genthong* (a big vase for keeping water in the kitchen or bathroom) (Figure C3), *padasan* (a pot with a pipe to store water for washing hands) (Figure C4), *keren* (wood fire stove), *cuwo* (a bowl) (Figure C5), *cowek* (a plate, and it also refers to a spice mortar). Further, they produced *jun* (a water carrier), *anglo* (a stove for cooking with coal) (Figure C6), *plempem* (sewerage pipes) and flowerpots. Especially *keren* and *anglo*, were popular objects used in Dutch families, because these two stoves were heat efficient and did not produce too much smoke. Kasongan's craftspeople usually went around Yogyakarta's residential areas of local and Dutch inhabitants, to sell their products.⁵⁶⁶

Until around 1995, most Kasongan potters fabricated their own ceramic mass. They took soil from Yogyakarta's Godean Sleman area. This soil contains kaolin and was mixed with other soil from Dusun Gendheng Bangunjiwo, an area in the mountains west of Kasongan. Eventually, the mixture was supplemented with soft sand, which was mined from sediments along the Bedog river, which runs along the pottery village. These sediments were volcano

⁵⁶² Kyai is also known as Kyai Abdulraup, Kyai Kasongan or Kyai Song. Gustami, Wardani, und Setiawan, *Keramik Kasongan heritage*, 24.

⁵⁶³ Gustami, Wardani, and Setiawan, 'Craft Arts and Tourism in Ceramic Art Village of Kasongan in Yogyakarta', 38-40.

⁵⁶⁴ According to a statistics of 1983 there were about four times more men living in Kasongan than women. Gustami and S., *Pola Hidup Dan Produk Kerajinan Keramik Kasongan Yogyakarta*, 19-21; Gustami, Wardani, and Setiawan, *Keramik Kasongan Heritage*, 43.

⁵⁶⁵ Gustami, Wardani, and Setiawan, 'Craft Arts and Tourism in Ceramic Art Village of Kasongan in Yogyakarta', 40; Raharjo, 'GLOBALISASI SENI KERAJINAN KERAMIK KASONGAN', 5.

⁵⁶⁶ Gustami, Wardani, and Setiawan, 40, 43-4; Raharjo, 75.

Merapi's alluvials, located next to the headwaters of the Bedog river. This fine sand mixed with clay, ensured the pores building in the pottery body, favoured the drying process and allowed the low temperature burning method. Further, this soft sand also reduced shrinkage of the objects. Hence, a lot of parameters needed to be taken in account by Kasongan's potters. Their workflow was based on a "try and error" concept. In 1975, the *Unit Pelayanan Teknis* (Technical Service Unit) (UPT), provided a manual with a recipe for high quality clay. This recipe suggested a quarter of Godean clay, a quarter of Kasongan clay and one half of soft sand. The blending of these two clays was recommended, because of their complementary features. Godean clay was known for its high amount of kaolin and resistant capacity. It was mainly used to produce floor and roof tiles, while Kasongan clay was appreciated for its malleability. To create a qualitative fine clay, the right quantity of different clays was important, and the earth materials needed to be milled well. In 1980, UPT provided a non-portable diesel-driven mill. Thus, Kasongan's potters transported their heavy earth materials to a central place in the village, where the machine was set up. In 1988 the machine got equipped with wheels, which facilitated the workflow for many potters, because they could mill near their working place. In the 1990s, some craftspeople could afford an own mill and henceforth produced their own clay at home. Some years later, the situation got better as well for craftspeople, who could not afford their own mill, because in the mid-1990s several businesses began producing clay and sold it to potters. These businesses emerged, because of an increasing demand of earth materials. Craftspeople could order their needed quantity of prefabricated clay and got it delivered to their homes, which was usually the place where they worked.⁵⁶⁷ Later, these craft suppliers developed a range of different clays. Depending on what the potters wanted to create, they were recommended a certain type of mixed clay. After working with it, potters gave feedback to their suppliers, so that they could improve knowledge about their mixtures.⁵⁶⁸

Influential Potters

Beside household objects, Kasongan's potters also created other objects. A well-known example was the piggy bank, that became known in the beginning of the 20th century. Yogyakarta's craftswoman and researcher Larasati Soeliantoro Soelaiman recalls, that there

⁵⁶⁷ Gustami, Wardani, and Setiawan, 43; Raharjo, 75-6.

⁵⁶⁸ Pembayun Sekarintyas, 'Knowledge Dynamics in Indonesian Cultural Industries – The Case of Kasongan Pottery Cluster and Kotagede Silver Craft Cluster in Yogyakarta Region' (Master Thesis in Urban and Regional Planning, Department of Human Geography, Stockholm University, 2015), 34, 39.

was a Dutch man called Smith, who ordered a statue and a piggy bank from a craftsman in Kasongan. The piggy bank was called *celengan*. *Celeng* means boar, the ending *-an* translates to “in such a kind”. *Celengan* was a typical round shaped piggy bank to save up coins and to be shattered in the end. After the first order, this product was reproduced and successfully sold to other consumers. From then on, piggy banks supplemented Kasongan’s traditional household products and gradually, other animal forms like frogs, hens and horses were developed. These new piggy bank forms were still called *celengan*, because of their same function as the initial *celengan*. A wide variation in colour and form followed, so that over time, *celengan* became a decorative element in households. *Celengan* paved the way for decorative clay objects in Yogyakarta’s households like deer heads, water buffalo heads and others. The idea of a deer head came from a potter called Jembuk (1860-1942). He was known for his innovative and creative mind. Jembuk was asked to create a pair of tiger statues for a carnival in 1930 (to commemorate the crowning of the Dutch Queen Wilhelmina). The tiger statues were inspired by the Dutch Kingdom’s symbol and served as mascots during the carnival. After the event, the statues were exhibited, and another statue was ordered for the Dutch guard base. Jembuk received orders from Dutch colonial rulers, and simultaneously managed to become a servant during the recencies of Yogyakarta’s sultans Hamenkubuwono VIII and IX. He mainly produced plant pots with decorations, which were used in the Royal Garden. Whenever Jembuk was lacking work and money, he went to the *Kraton* and ask for an order. Jembuk’s objects repertoire comprised animal statues, different kinds of *celengan*, pots, seats and decorative wall hangings. Jembuk was not Kasongan’s only skilled potter at that time, but his particular interest in creating artistic and decorative pottery, influenced his fellow potters significantly.⁵⁶⁹

Another notable Kasongan-born potter was Ngadiyo (1955-), who learnt the craft from his father. Ngadiyo prospered with his creations, because of a new finishing technique (*teknik sungging*) and oil-colour decoration. He was frequently asked by customers to restore their objects with his finishing technique. He also supplied traditional market with fine ceramic objects, decorated with oil paintings. His oil painting finishing technique was new in Yogyakarta and therefore attracted attention at the Gampingan market. A lecturer from the nearby Art Academy ASRI, had a keen interest in integrating this new technique into ASRI’s curricula. Together with Ngadiyo, they organised practical workplaces for their art students at Ngadiyo’s home. It was the beginning of a lively exchange between Ngadiyo and several lecturers from ASRI. Another guest in Ngadiyo’s house was Sapto Hoedojo, who encouraged

⁵⁶⁹ Raharjo, ‘GLOBALISASI SENI KERAJINAN KERAMIK KASONGAN’, 9-14.

him to create *garuda* (eagle) (Figure C8) and *naga* (snake-dragon) (Figures K6 and C7), two important animals of Javanese culture. Hoedjo also introduced him to a new stick-on decoration technique (*teknik tempel*), which became a core element of Kasongan pottery. Further, Hoedjo took Ngadiyo to Japan for an artisan and artist residency. As usual for artist residencies, Ngadiyo was given the opportunity to create ceramics in a studio and to show them in an exhibition there. In 1976, Ngadiyo started working in a ceramic company of Indonesia's president Sukarno. Ngadiyo's ceramic products created in that company, were well received and also exported to Japan, Korea and Hongkong. Three years later, the successful potter decided to quit this job, to have more time for his own creativity. He started working at home again with two other potters. One of them was Arjo Sidal.⁵⁷⁰

After working together with Ngadiyo, Arjo Sidal decided to open his own small ceramic business in the 1970s.⁵⁷¹ He was enormously successful with his ceramics. Whatever he placed in front of his house for display, got sold within no time. What was his secret? At that time, there were already many skilled potters working and selling their products in Kasongan, so there was something that made his work sticking out from the others works. Like Ngadiyo, Arjo also learnt pottery making from Sapto Hoedjo and was equally introduced to the new stick-on decoration technique (*teknik tempel*). The word *tempel* is the word stem for *menempel*, which means to glue or to stick. With great patience, skill and diligence Arjo stucked-on many supplementary smaller clay parts, often in the form of flakes or bird feathers to the body of the clay object, which was still in wet condition (Figures C2, C7 and C8). Mostly these clay objects were big sized animal shapes. The supplementary feathers or flakes, placed all over the body, serve as a beautiful decoration and increase the value of the object, because complexity and refinement of ornaments, are important elements of Javanese aesthetics. Further, these applied feathers and flakes remind of traditional wood carved ornaments. So, this was Arjo's secret, which wouldn't last for long his property. *Teknik tempel* spread among other Kasongan potters and was eagerly learnt and applied. It put forth a unique decorative style in ceramics, which became known throughout the country, also because of Arjo's ceramics, which were shown in different exhibitions in Jakarta. Gradually,

⁵⁷⁰ Raharjo, 14-6.

⁵⁷¹ The exact year could not be determined by the author. Information is taken from Raharjo, 17, but it seems that, there is a mistake with annual figures. Raharjo recounts that, Ngadiyo started working with Arjo Sidal in 1979. However, in another part, he states that Arjo Sidal separated from Ngadiyo in 1973 to start his own business. For one of the two information the annual figure must be wrong, (unless the two potters worked together, separated and worked together again, to separate completely.) The information about Ngadiyo's work with Arjo Sidal in 1979 come from an interview with Ngadiyo, so I guess this annual figure is more reliable.

this decorative style became a hallmark of Kasongan's ceramics and helped the village to develop economically.⁵⁷²

Another interesting character of Kasongan's potters was Sarijo, who the son of a farmer's family. Since he was a child, he has always been attracted to artisanal work. Born in 1959, Sarijo learned farming, which was economically more viable than pottery. Eventually, at the age of 24, he entered the *Institut Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan* (today the *Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta* UNY) to study ceramics at the Art Department. After earning his diploma in 1985, Sarijo started working as a potter producing Kasongan's common ceramics, like animal shaped pots, bowls or piggy banks. He also got involved in the building trade, when the Prambanan Park (the park around the Hindu temple Prambanan) near Yogyakarta was being restored. Sarijo was hired to add ceramic decorations to the roofs of the buildings.⁵⁷³ These roof decorations are called *wuwungan* and have been used for traditional Javanese houses (Figures K6, C7 and C8). They have a conspicuous form, made of ceramic and sometimes with added glass mosaics, that reflect the sunlight.⁵⁷⁴ A *wuwungan* serves as decoration and has symbolic meaning, stemming from Javanese aesthetics and ethics. A traditional Javanese house is considered to fit in the cosmological perception of micro- and macro cosmos, and artistic elements function to show the relation to Javanese customs and beliefs. By erecting a *wuwungan* on the roof, the house owner gives his building symbolic meanings and knowledges Javanese beliefs.⁵⁷⁵

Sarijo wanted to create roof decorations (*wuwungan-wuwungan*⁵⁷⁶), that fitted well into the architectural concept of the Hindu temple Prambanan, thus he focused on elaborated details. They were characterised by thoroughly processed ornaments with three dimensional details attached to the ceramic body with the *teknik tempel*. At that time, roof Central Java's decorations tended to have less details than Sarijo's creations. Therefore, Sarijo's *wuwungan* design for the Prambanan park, were different because of its shape and details. The main form looked like a duck tail, with hundreds of added feathers, which showed Sarijo's devotion for his craft, because these details could hardly be seen from far on the roof top. After this special order for the Prambanan Park, he was asked for other decorative and functional objects within

⁵⁷² Raharjo, 17-18, 32.

⁵⁷³ Raharjo, 18-9.

⁵⁷⁴ Arif Suharson, 'The Fundamental And Philosophical Values Of Javanese Culture In The Decorative Art Of Wuwungan In Kudus Traditional House', *Journal International Seminar on Languages, Literature, Arts, and Education (ISLLAE)* 1, no. 1 (2019): 47.

⁵⁷⁵ Arif Suharson, 'ESTETIKA DAN ETIKA WUWUNGAN RUMAH TRADISIONAL JAWA DALAM ERA GLOBAL', *Corak* 8, no. 2 (3rd August 2019): 126-7.

⁵⁷⁶ *Wuwungan-wuwungan* (roof decorations) is the plural form of *wuwungan*.

the building trade. He created many more detailed *wuwungan-wuwungan*, floor tiles, and other ceramic decorations for fences. He was known for being a master at incorporating Javanese symbolic meaning into roof decorations and for creating new ceramic designs through colours. His coloured floor tiles were a novelty for the building industry.⁵⁷⁷

Unlike Sarijo, who studied ceramics at a higher educational institute, the 1964 born Mukhayat had never seen any art university from inside. His biography represented a typical career of a Kasongan potter, who was taught the craft by his parents. His mother used to create simple household products in their garage, and taught pottery to her son, when he was a child. Mukhayat supplemented his knowledge by studying ceramic objects and by watching other potters working. Eventually, he managed to open his own business, where his younger brothers and sisters assisted him for production. In 1983, Mukhayat was given the chance to do a youth exchange in Klampok, another pottery region (next to Malahayo and Brebes) about 290 kilometres from Kasongan, in the north of Central Java. Mukhayat was introduced to their pottery knowledge, but what stroke him most, was Klampok's different clay quality, which had other characteristics than Kasongan clay. He concluded that, only Kasongan clay enabled potters to use the *teknik tempel*. He therefore continued creating ceramics with the *teknik tempel*. His masterpieces comprised animal statues or animal shaped seats, pots, fountains and tables of *naga* (snake-dragon) and peacock. Many Chinese immigrants, who were living in Surabaya, ordered a *naga* statue at Mukhayat's firm, because the dragon is an important symbol in Chinese culture. One of his greatest artworks was a 2.5-meter long *naga*, with beautifully decorated scales, applied all over the body with the *teknik tempel*. Whenever a special order with complicated details arrived in Kasongan, potters went to Mukhayat to ask for his advice or to hand him over the order. The mastering of complicated details was not Mukhayat's only interest. He experimented with different clays, to get different natural colours of his ceramic pieces. He managed to get tones of grey, yellow, red and dark red. As the ceramic products often were glazed with colours, his natural clay colours did not meet the customers' interest, so he abandoned this idea. It took another two decades, until natural clay colours began to be interesting for ceramic artists. In summary, Mukhayat managed to identify and use the characteristics of Kasongan clay, and consequently refined the *teknik tempel* in a remarkable way.⁵⁷⁸

⁵⁷⁷ Raharjo, 19-20.

⁵⁷⁸ Raharjo, 20-2.

Governmental Support

Kasongan pottery's development was forwarded by the above-mentioned potters and also by private and governmental institutions, that began to support Kasongan craftspeople in the 1970s. This measure was quite necessary, because usual household ceramics from Kasongan were not very much on demand anymore. Yogyakarta customers rather began to buy their household ware from big factories, that supplied the market with cheaper and more solid products. Consequently, an important step for Kasongan ceramics had to be taken: The goal was to support further development of new products, that incorporated a high craft-based aesthetic value different from cheap factory household ware. The Indonesian government provided monetary support for several potters, and worked together with ceramic representatives, like Sapto Hoedjo, the craftsman who encouraged Ngadiyo and Sidal to use the *tempel* technique. Another important representative was craftswoman Larasati Soelianto Soelaiman. Together with Larasati, the Ministry of Labour, Industry and Trade invited many Kasongan ceramists, to show their artworks in Bandung and Jakarta. In 1979, the government of the Special Region of Yogyakarta founded the *Unit Pelayanan Teknis*, UTP (Technical Service Unit) to support small industries. UTP offered technical trainings and ceramic information. The unit also provided an instruction and recipe for qualitative good clay. Likewise, educational institutions, like ASRI, were interested in sustaining the craftspeople knowledge and collaborating with them. ASRI played a major role in developing new Kasongan ceramic designs with an artistic value. The *Universitas Gadjah Mada* (UGM) did a lot of ceramic research and headed for further development. Private institutions, like the Sahid Garden Hotel supported the Kasongan craftspeople by providing a showroom in their hotel, where ceramic artworks were displayed for sale.⁵⁷⁹

Export and Immigration

Thanks to these efforts, Kasongan became known as a breeding ground for elaborately decorated ceramics and as a dynamic pottery village with an entrance gate to global markets. Export of Kasongan pottery succeeded from about 1985. Before that, Kasongan was a small pottery village, with rough roads and modest studios, where earthenware was produced for local markets. Potters often went door to door, to sell their household items like pots and jugs. When the first goods were successfully exported, wide paved roads were built to make transport of fragile goods easier. Large trucks entered the village weekly, to bring ceramics

⁵⁷⁹ Raharjo, 30-1, 38, 41-3.

and earthenware to ports for shipment.⁵⁸⁰ From 1985 until today, exports have been maintained and a range of products, like vases and pots, have been established for sale. Selling prices of these items depend on their shape, size and decoration details. Europe has been the largest buyer of Kasongan pottery with 1500 pieces per month in 2022. Most of the products are shipped to the Netherlands and from there, they are distributed to other countries.⁵⁸¹

Kasongan's export activities and flourishing business attracted craftspeople from other regions to live and work in Kasongan. Especially in the beginning of the 1990s, many potters from Malahayo Brebes, a place north of Central Java, started to work in ceramic companies or small businesses in Kasongan. Unlike Kasongan potters, who used the traditional wheel-throwing technique by *hand*, Brebes potters mastered this traditional wheel-throwing technique by using their *feet*. This allowed them a much faster process and the possibility to form tall cylindrical pottery vases. So, different techniques and skills were added to the Kasongan pottery knowledge and these tall cylindrical vases from Brebes became part of the Kasongan ceramic repertoire.⁵⁸²

When Kasongan's export activities began in 1985, production grew fast. Additional potters from Brebes and other migrant potters and workers helped to produce an enormous capacity of pottery. Timbul Raharjo –a potter and ISI lecturer from Kasongan– asserts that, 40 containers with about 400 pottery objects were shipped every month in 2007.⁵⁸³ This corresponds to 1600 pottery objects per month, which required a considerable mass of raw material. Inevitably, Kasongan's soil was used up within a very short time. After Kasongan's soil was gone, potters took soil from Slarong, until nothing was left there, either. Then, they used soil from Godean, which has also disappeared. Today, Kasongan potters take clay from Kebumen and Klaten. The local government in Bantul is aware of this exploitation of natural resources, which will have drastic consequences. The government therefore suggest potters to

⁵⁸⁰ Companies from abroad settled in Indonesia and exported Indonesian craft objects. For example, an Australian company called "Out of Asia", started business in Indonesia in 1990. Jan Fransen and Erwin van Tuijl, 'Chapter 5 Kasongan Pottery Cluster (Yogyakarta)', in *Delivering Sustainable Competitiveness: Revisiting the Organising Capacity of Cities*, published by L. Carvalho et al. (Routledge, 2016) 78; Gustami, Wardani and Setiawan, *Keramik Kasongan heritage*, 41.

⁵⁸¹ Simple flowerpots cost 5,000–100,000 rupees (0.25–0.60 euros), room decorations and flower vases cost 50,000 – 500,000 rupees (3–30 euros) and large objects, like 100-centimeter-high jugs, cost up to 1,000,000 rupees (60 euros). Media Harian Jogja Digital Arief Junianto, 'Ekspor Gerabah Capai 1500 Buah Per Bulan, Begini Asal Mula Kasongan', *Harianjogja.com*, 2022, <https://jogjapolitan.harianjogja.com/read/2022/10/09/511/1114157/ekspor-gerabah-capai-1500-buah-per-bulan-begini-asal-mula-kasongan> (last visit 14th February 2023).

⁵⁸² Raharjo, 'GLOBALISASI SENI KERAJINAN KERAMIK KASONGAN', 17-18, 32, 76-77; Sekaringtyas, 'Knowledge Dynamics in Indonesian Cultural Industries – The Case of Kasongan Pottery Cluster and Kotagede Silver Craft Cluster in Yogyakarta Region', 36; Akbar Adhi Satrio, 'KRIYA KERAMIK: WUJUD, POSISI, DAN PERANNYA DI MASA KINI', *Corak* 1, no. 2 (28th November 2012): 172.

⁵⁸³ Arief Junianto, 'Ekspor Gerabah Capai 1.500 Buah Per Bulan, Begini Asal Mula Kasongan'.

create more recycled and upcycled products.⁵⁸⁴ It is hoped that, more effective measures against exploitation of clay and sand are implemented soon, to avoid irreversible damages.

Labour Groups and Working Structures

The immigration of potters and an increasing demand for Kasongan pottery changed the originally small-scale organised industries, in which individuals often worked at home and only had to leave the house to prepare clay and burn their items for sale. In addition to the sales method of the flying merchant, who went from door to door, a method of displaying objects in front of the house became popular. More and more Kasongan potters placed their products in front of their houses, and other potters followed, so that soon entire street sides were lined with pottery goods. Various products transformed from everyday household items to artistic utilitarian and decorative objects. New creations and shapes by single potters were imitated by the others, so that Kasongan pottery objects gradually looked each other alike and became a unique style.

Economically, Kasongan is a pottery cluster. The term cluster describes connected groups of firms or institutions, that are geographically and substantively close to each other.⁵⁸⁵ From the mid-1980s, buildings and manufacturing sites grew into small companies, that employed local people and skilled immigrants from Brebes and other places. Some companies were organised differently, in that they did not supply a working space, but contracted several single potters, who worked from home. These companies provided their potters clay and picked up the finished products from their homes. In 2003, 336 potter units were registered, with 1662 people employed. This is about the same number of employed potters, before the Bali bombing in October 2002, that damaged Indonesia's reputation as a safe tourist destination for some time. As a result, Yogyakarta saw a 50% drop in tourist numbers, which affected Kasongan too. The pottery village managed to make up for the missing revenue, by exporting more goods.⁵⁸⁶ In 2006, when volcano Merapi erupted, Kasongan, with other quarters of the city of Yogyakarta, got heavily damaged. About 80% of the potter's stock was damaged and production capacity was halved. Despite this destruction, the potter industry managed to hold on. With immense effort and social cohesion, and help of NGO's, destroyed buildings were

⁵⁸⁴ Agus Sulistyana, 'Kolaborasi dan Sinergi Pentahelix dalam Pengembangan Potensi Lokal' (International Craft Day #3 - ISI Yogyakarta, Yogyakarta, 22nd November 2022).

⁵⁸⁵ Harald Bathelt, Anders Malmberg and Peter Maskell, 'Clusters and Knowledge: Local Buzz, Global Pipelines and the Process of Knowledge Creation', *Progress in Human Geography* 28 (1st February 2002), <https://doi.org/10.1191/0309132504ph469oa>, 11.

⁵⁸⁶ Fransen and van Tuijl, 'Chapter 5 Kasongan Pottery Cluster (Yogyakarta)', 79.

rebuilt and daily business was kept going. Two years after the disaster, Kasongan even recorded more pottery units, namely 421.⁵⁸⁷

The Bali bomb and the volcanic eruption in 2006, were not the only crisis Kasongan had to cope with. In 2008, the pottery village was hit again hardly by the global financial crisis. Demand for export goods dropped rapidly, but the potters were able to increase local sales. The Kasongan cluster proved its resilience to all three crisis because it could respond fast to various market channels. Kasongan's potters have a strong social cohesion and network, which is organised in cooperative-like associations. Two large associations hold meetings every few months and address problems, market innovations, and exchange other information. The older association of the two, exists since 1984 and is called *Satya Bawana*. The newer association was founded with NGO funds after 2006, and is called *Koperasi Usaha Bersama* (KUB).⁵⁸⁸

Besides Kasongan, other pottery centres can be found in Klampok, Pagerjuran and Melikan (in Central Java), in Sitiwinangun, Ciruas and Plered (West Java), on the island of Lombok, in Pejaten (Bali), in Singakawang (West Kalimantan), in Takalar and Pulutan (Sulawesi).⁵⁸⁹

Compared to these other centre, Kasongan ceramic industries has flourished well. The geological location had an influence on its success, because the clay from this region is particularly malleable. Only with Kasongan clay potters managed to create elaborate decorations with the *teknik tempel*. As part of the sultan's city Yogyakarta, Kasongan is embedded in a cultural and artistic epicentre, which encouraged ceramics' artistic aspects. Thus, new ceramic designs were well received and developed further. International and domestic tourists created demand for additional product segments, like souvenirs.

Nevertheless, Kasongan has already passed its production prime; golden years were between 1995 and 2006.⁵⁹⁰ Changes in social structures, new job opportunities for younger generations, and sourcing of clay from further away, are some of the factors, that led to a decline in traditional pottery production. In 2022, about 3000 pottery items were produced per month. Many of the formerly large producers, who employed potters from Brebes, do not work in that field anymore, or they only work with the help of family members, and not with

⁵⁸⁷ Gustami, Wardani and Setiawan, *Keramik Kasongan heritage*, 28.

⁵⁸⁸ Sekaringtyas, 'Knowledge Dynamics in Indonesian Cultural Industries – The Case of Kasongan Pottery Cluster and Kotagede Silver Craft Cluster in Yogyakarta Region', 28.

⁵⁸⁹ Other pottery craft centres in Central Java like Pleret (Purwakarta), Bayat (Klaten), Klampok (Banjarnegara), as well as Banyumulek in West Nusa Tenggara also produce products for export. Timbul Raharjo, 'Creation of Arts Craft Pottery for Export Commodity: Based on Earthenware and Local Technology' (The 2nd IBISM, International Conference on Business and Mangement, Chiang Mai, Bankok, 2013), 2; Deni Yana, 'Potensi Kerajinan Keramik Dalam Seni Tradisi Pertunjukan Indonesia', *Panggung* 24, no. 4 (1st December 2014) 29.

⁵⁹⁰ Fransen and van Tuijl, 'Chapter 5 Kasongan Pottery Cluster (Yogyakarta)', 78.

additional employees. One example is Subandi from Kasongan, who produces up to 1,500 pottery objects per month with his family. He used to employ workers from Brebes, but since the covid-19 pandemic outbreak, sales figures have declined drastically, so that he could no longer employ workers.⁵⁹¹ Subandi is one of a few Kasongan potters of today, who continues his potter family tradition. Until the 1980s, it was common in Yogyakarta, to pass on pottery knowledge within the families. Few potters went to art academies for training. Although Kasongan potters expanded their product range with innovative designs, the interest in succession on the part of the coming generation waned. This is probably due to low wages and an assumption that of pottery making is traditional and old fashioned. One part of the young generation simply prefers to pursue a profession with better wage prospects and better international recognition. Another part of the young generation is highly interested in learning pottery and ceramic craft but prefers to create middle to high fired ceramic object, because ceramics offers many design possibilities through colourful glazes and engobes. Further, ceramics is more solid than earthenware and therefore a better choice for creating functional products. Ceramics courses at art universities further encouraged ceramics products. Ceramics graduates can work in ceramics industries and in the field of contemporary art, while potters usually work only in industries.

3.1.3 Heritage and Modernity

The pottery village Kasongan, that succeeded in entering the global market with traditional objects, is a special case in Indonesia's ceramic history. These potters, who used to produce simple utilitarian wares, managed to establish themselves as a pottery centre with cultural significance by creating traditional decorative objects and artworks. Most pottery villages in Indonesia still produce functional earthenware for home and garden, and sell only on local or regional markets. One example is a village called Panjangrejo, which is about 11 kilometres west of Kasongan. Kasongan and Panjangrejo are the only two pottery centres in the Yogyakarta region. Panjangrejo consists of 14 hamlets, Semampir, one of them, produces traditional earthenware, four others produce contemporary earthenware or ceramics. Semampir can be seen as a representative example of a traditional pottery village, where acquisition of craft knowledge, work structures, distribution of roles within the families and

⁵⁹¹ Ivan, 'Produktivitas Gerabah Kasongan Tak Terpengaruh Pandemi', *krjogja.com*, 20th October 2021, <https://www.krjogja.com/berita-lokal/read/252338/produktivitas-gerabah-kasongan-tak-terpengaruh-pandemi> (last visit 11th January 2023).

the type of products have remained the same for decades. Earthenware technique, vessel shapes and ornamentation have been passed on from one generation to the next. The chronicle of Semampir does not go back so far as to date the beginning of pottery production. However, it is known that, certainly since the 1940s, traditional pottery of Semampir became known outside the village. The division of labour between men and women has remained the same in Semampir village for generations: most men worked as farmers and labourers on call, and women worked at home and made earthenware vessels, pots, vases, bowls and tableware for their own use. Only after 1940, women began producing more earthenware items, to sell them at local markets. Men only engaged in heavy work steps during earthenware production, for example they helped to load large earthenware objects.⁵⁹²

Despite Semampir's traditional working structures and traditional earthenware design, products continued to develop. From around 1989, ornamental ceramics were created and supported by a government funding programme. Soon, craftswomen sold their ceramics in surrounding regions like Wonosari, Sleman and Kasongan. Their decorative souvenirs sold best in Kasongan and accounted for a bulk of sales. In 1998, another export branch opened up for Semampir ceramics. Bu Yuni, a Balinese woman, started a cooperation with Semampir's craftswomen to sell their products in Bali. She opened a showroom and store in Bali. In best times, at least 1000 objects were sold per week. Unfortunately, this sales channel came to a halt in 2002, when the bomb went off in Bali. Nevertheless, another opportunity arose, when middlemen began to buy large quantities of Semampir earthenware, to sell it in Yogyakarta and other regions. Around 2012, demand for decorated ceramic souvenirs declined, so that Semampir's craftswomen focused exclusively on the production of traditional household items. A 2020 study reveals that, today 2 craftsmen and 23 craftswomen in Semampir produce earthenware daily. These women are between 40 and 60 years old. They take on the classic dual role of housewives and craftswomen. For them, pottery is both a vocation and an identity. They feel proud to carry on their family tradition. Half of Semampir's potters name family tradition a reason to keep up their craft activity. One third of them assert that, the required craft skills motivate them, to keep creating earthenware objects. Only one fifth says that, making earthenware improves their income. For most of these women, who in general having little education, it is probably hard to find other monetised activities, so they keep producing low-paid earthenware. Wages of traditional potters from Semampir and other little-known regions are estimated to be much lower than the average wages of traditional potters from Kasongan. Kasongan engages in direct sales and export, while smaller pottery villages

⁵⁹² Priaji Iman Prakoso, 'Peran Wanita dalam Industri Kerajinan Gerabah di Dusun Semampir, Bantul, Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta', *JURNAL TATA KELOLA SENI* 6, no. 2 (2020): 101-5.

have not established direct marketing and export channels. Semampir potters receive 1,500 Indonesian rupees for a medium pot, and the pot is sold by a middleman to the wholesaler for 2,000–25,000 rupees. The end customer pays about 4,000–6,000 rupees.⁵⁹³

When the Dutch colonial government established the *Keramische Laboratorium* in Bandung in 1922, an important foundation stone was laid for ceramics knowledge and its development in Indonesia. The *Keramische Laboratorium* was taken over by the Indonesian government after Independence and is known as Balai Besar Keramik (BBK). BBK became an institution for ceramics experiments, and technical knowledge. Today, Bandung is considered a place for ceramics pioneers, even though the biggest ceramics biennale (Jakarta Contemporary Ceramics Biennale, JCCB) is held in Jakarta. JCCB's renowned curators are mainly graduates from the Bandung Art Institute called *Institut Teknologi Bandung* (ITB). In 1963, ITB was the first tertiary educational institution in the country to incorporate ceramics in their curriculum of the Fine Art Faculty. Subsequently, ceramics was included in the curricula of the Art Academy, *Akademi Seni Rupa Indonesia* (ASRI) in Yogyakarta⁵⁹⁴ and in 1977, in Jakarta's Art Institute, *Institut Kesenian Jakarta* (IKJ).⁵⁹⁵

Yogyakarta had a relatively young pottery tradition (starting around 1825) and earthenware was not pioneering as a medium. When in the 1970s ASRI adopted craft knowledge from the village of Kasongan, like the *teknik tempel* of Ngadiyo, ASRI was not so interested in earthenware itself, but more in techniques of how to form clay by hand. Offering ceramics at ASRI meant to establish a craft academically, which was still not very common. Before that, young craftspeople learned pottery craft in Kasongan and not at art academies.

In the 1990s, ceramics was launched as a Bachelor's degree at ISI Yogyakarta's Craft Department and focused more on middle to high firing temperatures, glazes and engobes, than on traditional earthenware, because ceramics was more promising and interesting as a *kriya* material and for the creation of fine art in a Western sense. However, the handling of different sorts of clay and its processing remained important. Lecturer Noor Sudiyati always asks her students to bring some clay from their homeland, so that its characteristics can be explored together and used optimally. Some students at ISI Yogyakarta come from far away, sometimes from Kalimantan, Sumatra or Sulawesi and will return to their home island after completing their studies. That's why it has been particularly important to Noor that, these

⁵⁹³ Koniherawati and Harjani, 'RE-AKTUALISASI KENDIL HITAM', 20.

⁵⁹⁴ However, when ASRI merged with two other academies, to form the art university ISI Yogyakarta in 1984, ceramics was not offered as a Bachelor's programme, but as a minor programme.

⁵⁹⁵ Yana, 'Potensi Kerajinan Keramik Dalam Seni Tradisi Pertunjukan Indonesia', 356; Akbar, 'Kajian Bentuk, Gaya, dan Makna Simbolik Keramik Noor Sudiyati', 42.

students know how to work with their clay at home and not only with the clay available in Yogyakarta.⁵⁹⁶

Modern Ceramics

In the 1960s, modern ceramics in Indonesia emerged with a quite unique genesis. Unlike Japanese ceramics tradition, Indonesia has a short history and draws inspiration and knowledge from Japan. Japanese modern ceramics began around 1910, with the emergence of two new directions in art. One direction was a response to the decline of handicrafts, due to increasing industrialisation and internationalisation since the beginning of the 19th century. Craft representatives created a folk crafts movement, which was known as *Mingei*. This *mingei* movement was established by Yanagi Muneyoshi and his friends. They fostered promotion, distribution and collection of everyday ceramic objects for ordinary people, that were made by anonymous artisans.⁵⁹⁷ The other movement took place around the same time and was a new perception of ceramic vessels initiated by Kenkichi Tomimoto. In short, Tomimoto managed to establish utilitarian objects as art objects.⁵⁹⁸

In Japan and other countries, the beginning of modern ceramics was linked to increasing industrialisation and modern ceramic production. Differently to that, no significant industrial ceramics production emerged in Indonesia. When Japan's countermovement *mingei* took place, in Indonesia handmade pottery was predominating. Indonesia's ceramic history did not follow the one of Japan a few decades later – the emergence of modern ceramics was closely related to tertiary educational institutions, that were under Western influence. The 1963 established ceramic studio at ITB in Bandung, contributed to a spread of ceramic technology and initiated the growth of an Indonesian ceramic scene. The founders of this ceramic studio were Eddie Kartasubarna and Angkama Setiadipradja, two painters, who studied ceramics for one year at the Alfred University in New York. There, they learned ceramic techniques, and a Western way of thinking, that lifted ceramics from its position of useful products (applied art) to a material for art (fine art). Consequently, their ceramic studio was opened at the Fine Art Faculty and not at the Craft Department. However, what was initially a problem for teaching ceramics, were the poor technical skills of the two painters (Eddie and Angkama), due to their

⁵⁹⁶ Interview with Noor Sudiyati, *Ceramics Philosophy*, 6th June 2021.

⁵⁹⁷ 'Mingei Revisited: Looking at Japan's Folk Art Movement Nearly a Century On', *artscape Japan*, 2022 1996, https://artscape.jp/artscape/eng/focus/2112_01.html (last visit 22nd November 2022); Kim Brandt, *Kingdom of Beauty: Mingei and the Politics of Folk Art in Imperial Japan* (New York: Duke University Press, 2007), 3. For further information on the *mingei* movement I suggest reading the introduction of Kim Brandt, *Kingdom of Beauty: Mingei and the Politics of Folk Art in Imperial Japan*.

⁵⁹⁸ Nurdian Ichsan, *Mengenal Seni Keramik Modern* (Bandung: PT Dunia Pustaka Jaya, 2012), 56-8.

short training in the United States. The ceramic studio's simple infrastructure posed another challenge for teaching ceramics at ITB.⁵⁹⁹ Nevertheless, ceramic education germinated and gained strength and importance in Bandung. Although in the beginning only few graduates took ceramics further, ceramics gained increasingly ground outside Bandung, in other educational institutions. For example, Hildawati Soemantri, a ITB Bandung graduate, turned out to become an important figure for ceramics' development. In 1971, she graduated from ITB and went to the United States, to deepen her ceramics knowledge at the Pratt Institute. When she returned to Indonesia, she began her work as a ceramic lecturer at the Jakarta Art Institute, *Institut Kesenian Jakarta* (IKJ) and opened a ceramics studio there. Hildawati dedicated her life to teaching and to her academic career – she was the first Indonesian woman to earn a PhD in art history.⁶⁰⁰ Despite her academic career, Hildawati was a practising ceramic artist. Already before her graduation, in 1967, she held her first solo exhibition at IKJ. Her ceramic installations were strange to the public, because of her unconventional approach towards ceramics. For example, she created reinterpreted forms of traditional clay vessels, ceramic installations and ceramic works, that looked like three-dimensional paintings. Soon, Hildawati became a representative of modern ceramics (Figure C9), and a pioneer of Indonesia's contemporary ceramic art.⁶⁰¹

Other ITB graduates, like F. Widayanto, influenced modern ceramics too. He produced commercial tableware and became known for his ceramic sculptures, that humorously incorporated themes from Javanese high culture (Figure C10). Hendrawan Riyanto also produced tableware, from which he made a living after graduating from ITB. A few years later, he devoted himself to ceramic art. His works were characterised by a high degree of technical experimentation. He combined iron wires, bamboo and wood with his ceramic objects, sometimes worked on a very large scale and made ceramic installations and performances.⁶⁰² Suyatna, a graduate from IKJ, was a ceramic artist, whose technical skills and knowledge were pottery based (Figure C11). His ceramic art featured rustic pots, which he created by using a traditional wheeling technique, but showed elements of Zen philosophy,

⁵⁹⁹ Ichsan, 63-64.

⁶⁰⁰ In her doctoral thesis, Hildawati wrote on terracotta artefacts in the royal site of Majapahit.

⁶⁰¹ 'Hildawati Soemantri – Biennale Jogja XV', *The Fineglobe Wordpress Theme* (blog), 2022, <https://www.biennalejogja.org/2019/hildawati-soemantri/> (last visit 23rd November 2022); Ichsan, 67; Kurniawati Gautama, 'Ceramic Art in Indonesia', in *6th Bandung Creative Movement 2019* (6th Bandung Creative Movement 2019, Bandung: Telkom University, 2019), 229.

⁶⁰² Several artworks of F. Widayanto, Hildawati Soemantri and Hendrawan Riyanto can be found in Nurdian Ichsan's publication: *Mengenal Seni Keramik Modern*, 68-9. Some of Hendrawan's artwork are published online: <https://jakartacontemporaryceramic.wordpress.com/history-of-the-jccb/jccb2-dec-2012-jan-2013/artists/hendrawan-riyanto-1959-2004/> (last visit 9th June 2023).

that he had learned in Japan. Suyatna experimented with clay's natural properties and dye oxides.⁶⁰³

Indonesia's modern ceramic techniques and perception of ceramics was formed by individuals, who had studied in the United States. It is therefore not surprising, that the Indonesian public initially found it difficult or impossible to understand this new ceramic art. An example of this, was the exhibition *Apresiasi Keramik Kreatif* (Appreciation of Creative Ceramics) at the *Galeri Soemardja* in Bandung in 1996. Moreover, Indonesian ceramic discourse, ceramics magazines, specific journals or ceramics galleries, that would have formed a basis for understanding these exhibitions, were absent at that time.⁶⁰⁴

It took several decades, before modern ceramics became popular and was understood by the public. ITB has remained an important centre for ceramic art since its beginning. Many ceramic key figures had studied at ITB. They have successfully opened a discussion on ceramic art in Indonesia and keep shaping discourses by their curatorial work and essays for the largest ceramic exhibition in Indonesia, namely the Jakarta Contemporary Ceramics Biennale (JCCB).

Modern and contemporary batik has evolved into two lively batik styles, whereas modern ceramics has not survived as a ceramic style. Today, traditional pottery and contemporary ceramics are known. In summary, ceramics emerged as a new discipline in the 1960s and was promoted and practised by a small group of Bandung artists. These artists created artworks, which were called modern ceramics. While in 1975, a New Art Movement (*Gerakan Seni Rupa Baru*) took place and paved the way for contemporary art, a similar engagement for ceramics did not happen. Consequently, modern ceramics persisted only until around the year 2000. With the dawn of the Reformation era in 1998, an intensification of international influences and contacts took place and led to a renewal of ceramics' formal language. These ceramics, inspired by global art and design trends, became known as contemporary ceramics.

⁶⁰³ Ichsan, *Mengenai Seni Keramik Modern*, 67-70.

⁶⁰⁴ Ichsan, 64-5; Kurniawati Gautama, 'Ceramic Art in Indonesia', 229.

3.2 Initiating Ceramics Discourses – Between Material and Discipline

Ceramics is used as a material by fine art artists but it has also established as an own discipline. Academic institutions, like ITB, IKJ and ISI have contributed to ceramics position as a discipline, that is practiced by craftspeople and artists. In this Section, I will outline the discourse on ceramics' position in the Indonesian art world, which has become increasingly global through international events like JCCB.⁶⁰⁵

Indonesian ceramists maintain a close relationship with the contemporary art world. In contrast to other *kriya* forms, like batik, weaving and jewellery, ceramics is frequently presented in contemporary art exhibitions. This is, because ceramics are often created as three-dimensional objects and therefore have sculptural features. Another reason is, that Indonesian contemporary art exhibitions take their cue from Western exhibitions, in which ceramics are used as a material to embody artists' personal expressions and statements.

I will present three selected themes, to give an insight into current ceramics discourses. The first theme is devoted to the role of curators and their discursive power in the ceramic scene. The second theme deals with the most famous contemporary ceramics exhibition in Indonesia, the Jakarta Contemporary Ceramics Biennale (JCCB). The third theme is about different artwork categories, which I discuss with the examples of a handful of typical ceramic artworks from Yogyakarta.

3.2.1 The Curator's Role

The profession of curator in Indonesia emerged in the 1990s when the first international exhibitions with Indonesian artists took place in the Asia-Pacific region and in the United States. The curator's profession in Indonesia is strongly linked to the emergence of art infrastructures and their connection to the global art world. Indonesian curators have gained importance in international exhibitions by taking over the role of displaying and writing on Indonesian art.

In this chapter I will first outline the emergence of Indonesian modern and contemporary art to facilitate an understanding of how Indonesian art infrastructures came into being. I will highlight selected themes of Indonesian contemporary art, which began in 1975 as a countermovement to modern art. The artist and ceramist Jim Supangkat was one of the

⁶⁰⁵ The Jakarta Contemporary Ceramics Biennale invites artists from countries around the world – see Section 3.1.3.

initiators of this countermovement. For many years Jim Supangkat was the only curator in Indonesia, and therefore he was a key figure in displaying and speaking on Indonesian contemporary art. In the 1990s, Jim Supangkat started to work as a curator in international biennales and took on the role of shaping a discourse on the postcolonial debate. I will discuss his viewpoints as well as other opinions that relate to seeking an Indonesian path for presenting art. Next, I will describe the educational and career opportunities for curators. For their education and professional work, curators need a theoretical basis in the form of *kriya* publications and Indonesian art theories. However, such written theoretical knowledge and the corresponding discourse did not exist until recently, leading to the absence of a theoretical common ground for curators on how to speak and present art and *kriya*. Finally, I will discuss the curatorial situation for contemporary ceramic art and cover topics of the Indonesian contemporary art world. This context is important as ceramics has a close relationship to contemporary art in Indonesia. Ceramics first emerged from the Fine Art Faculty at ITB Bandung and was introduced as a material for fine art artists. In the Indonesian art world ceramics is appreciated for the same reasons as in Western art: ceramics can have sculptural characteristics and is an ideal material to embody an artist's ideas.

Through my selected topics I hope to underline the importance of Indonesian curators and their role in the national and international setting for *kriya* and art.

Indonesian Modern Art

In the 1930s Indonesian modern art in the form of painting developed under Western influences.⁶⁰⁶ The Archipelago was dominated by the Dutch colonial powers for almost 350 years, from the 16th century until 1945. Western values of an art hierarchy were partially adopted, so that *kriya* was no longer valued as art, but was considered instead as craft and, as such, was a “low art”. Until the 1940s modern art did not penetrate the mainstream public but was only present among Indonesian elites. These elites socialised with Dutch colonial residents and visited European painting exhibitions organised by the *Bataviasche Kunstkring* (Batavian Art Circle). The *Bataviasche Kunstkring* was an art circle of Dutch colonisers located in Batavia (the former name of Jakarta) which only welcomed Dutch people and

⁶⁰⁶ Before the 1930s only few Indonesians were familiar with modern art painting. One of these was the painter Raden Saleh (1811-1880). He was the first and probably best-known Indonesian artist to be trained in painting in the Netherlands, and to make a career as a successful painter in Indonesia. In 1829 Raden Saleh went to the Netherlands to study painting under the guidance of Shelfhout and Kruseman. Saleh lived in Europe for almost two decades before returning to Indonesia in 1852. Burhan, *Perkembangan Seni Lukis Mooi Indië sampai Persagi di Batavia, 1900-1942*, 2; Yvonne Spielmann, *Contemporary Indonesian Art Artists, Art Spaces, and Collectors*, English edition, first published in German under the title “Indonesische Kunst der Gegenwart”, Logos Press, Berlin 2015 (Copenhagen: Nias Press, 2017), 63.

Javanese elites.⁶⁰⁷ Between 1935 and 1939 this art circle organised perennial exhibitions of European painters which influenced local Indonesian painters as well as the general public. To understand Batavian society at that time, we need to go back to the year 1870. After that date private enterprises were allowed to engage in trade in the colony which resulted in a sudden increase of European merchants settling in Batavia and other cities of Java. The Europeans enjoyed an exclusive status within Javanese society. With their trading businesses they were financially better off than many locals. The numerous European settlers created a kind of European flair in Batavia which intensified social stratification in Javanese society. Among the European elites, there were painters whose works were shown in the *Bataviasche Kunstkring*'s annual exhibitions. As a consequence, Javanese elites also began to paint in the European style at around the beginning of the 20th century.⁶⁰⁸ This European style can be described as romantic landscape painting and was called *Mooie Indie* (Dutch: beautiful Indie). *Mooie Indie* paintings depicted magnificent Javanese landscapes with lush green rice terraces, tropical flowers, plants and volcanoes in the background. However, this type of painting was soon criticised by Indonesian painters, as they perceived *Mooie Indie* paintings to be a romanticising and one-sided depiction of Indonesia, which predominantly pleased the colonial masters' taste.⁶⁰⁹ The first Indonesian artists, the so-called "colonised intellectuals", were elite individuals who maintained contact with the colonial rulers in the form of meetings in intellectual circles. In order to be admitted to these circles, it was necessary for them to adopt the Western art paradigm. As a consequence, the first Indonesian modernists favoured painting, and considered *kriya* a lower and less prestigious activity that required physical labour. Traditional *kriya* such as wood carving, weaving, and pottery were regarded as craft work done by a *tukang* or village labourer. This work formed a strong contrast to painting, which was regarded as the creative work of an intellectual person from the modern city.⁶¹⁰

Indonesian Contemporary Art - Long Suppressed Voices

Like other Southeast Asian countries, Indonesia went through a period of postcolonial authoritarian leadership that affected the arts decisively. These regimes propagated

⁶⁰⁷ In the beginning, only European artists were allowed to exhibit their paintings in the annual exhibition organised by the *Bataviasche Kunstkring*. From 1938 onwards Indonesian painters could also show their paintings in the exhibition. Ingham, 'Powerlines', 39.

⁶⁰⁸ Daan Van Dartel, 'The Tropenmuseum and Trade: Product and Source', *Journal of Museum Ethnography*, no. 20 (2008): 83; Burhan, *Perkembangan Seni Lukis Mooi Indië sampai Persagi di Batavia, 1900-1942*, 2-4.

⁶⁰⁹ For more information on Indonesian modern and contemporary art see Yvonne Spielmann, *Contemporary Indonesian Art Artists, Art Spaces, and Collectors*, 61-3; Ingham, 'Powerlines'.

⁶¹⁰ Research on the "colonised intellectuals" was conducted by Helena Spanjaard and is mentioned in Ingham, 'Powerlines', 44.

“modernity-as-development” and controlled cultural and political expression through strong compulsion and censorship. In Indonesia during the era of the New Order (1966–1998), artists who expressed political discontent through their works risked persecution and imprisonment.⁶¹¹ Ethnicity, religion, and race were other topics artists could not address.⁶¹² In that way the Suharto regime silenced any subversive actions from the art scene. Instead, a harmless and mild “modern art” that was inspired by Western modernism was favoured. *Kriya* in the form of Indonesian traditional ornaments, motifs and a Javanese visual vocabulary of beauty and harmony, was also accepted by the regime.⁶¹³ The reaction to this long period of obstruction of the arts was called *Gerakan Seni Rupa Baru* (GSRB), The New Art Movement, which is known for heralding contemporary art in Indonesia. GSRB was initiated in 1975 by art students in Yogyakarta, including were Jim Supangkat from Bandung and FX Harsono from Jakarta.⁶¹⁴ Their rebellion was directed against Suharto’s national united culture programme that neglected ethnic, religious and social diversity, as well as disparities in the country. The rebellion was also directed towards the censorship in modern art that only accepted very few forms of media, such as painting and sculpture. Thus, these young art students broke with the tradition of Indonesian modern art. As the Australian art historian Susan Helen Ingham analysed, the members of GSRB practised “alternative art”, art that was alternative to the art market and the government’s supported art forms. As such, they proclaimed the liberation of art from Western adapted “high art”-media like painting and sculpture and instead expanded art making to installations, found objects, photographs and paintings rendered in a photorealistic manner.⁶¹⁵ *Kriya* was regarded as a traditional art form and was related to the government’s supported cultural programmes of heritage or tradition. Therefore, *kriya* was relegated to a secondary position with no hope of being able to contribute to the New Art Movement. In fact, the principle of harmony and unity in *kriya* released much fewer subversive forces than the Western-tinged concept of Indonesian contemporary art at the time. Not surprisingly, contemporary art (or alternative art) was chosen as a channel for making political statements. Hence, Indonesian contemporary art functioned as a critical voice against both the state-supported modern art and the repressive political atmosphere in general. The emergence of GSRB was testimony of a postcolonial

⁶¹¹ Rath, ‘Indonesian Contemporary Art Across and in Relations’, 1-6.

⁶¹² Amanda Katherine Rath, *Taboo and Transgression in Contemporary Indonesian Art*, Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art Ithaca, New York January 8 – March 20, 2005 (New York: Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University, 2005) exhibition catalogue, 15.

⁶¹³ Rath, 1-6.

⁶¹⁴ FX Harsono, ‘Meraba Peta Komunitas Seni Rupa Indonesia* Deciphering the Map of Indonesian Visual Arts*’, no. *Karbon* (5) (2003): 16-25.

⁶¹⁵ Susan Helen Ingham, ‘Powerlines: Alternative Art and Infrastructure in Indonesia in the 1990s’, 62-5.

group within society, namely the artists who urged for the freedom of speech in a democratic republic.⁶¹⁶

The GSRB members' efforts to promote democratic values such as freedom of the press and freedom in art continued after The New Art Movement in 1975. As a result, a contemporary art scene emerged with mostly young artists, some of whom made an important contribution to the postcolonial debate two decades later. This postcolonial awareness in the Indonesian art scene was strengthened by the first international biennales with participating artists from Southeast Asia.

The Emergence of Art Biennales in Southeast Asia

The history of art biennales and major exhibitions in Indonesia dates back to 1968. This year marked the beginning of the perennial ASEAN exhibition, which was first held in Jakarta, with artists from the founding ASEAN countries. According to the art historian Leonor Veiga, biennales in Southeast Asia emerged during the following three periods: 1) between 1970 and 1990, when new perennial and biennial art exhibitions were established in Indonesia and the Philippines as a result of the ASEAN exhibitions; 2) from the 1990s onwards, art from the Asia-Pacific region was regularly exhibited due to increased interest from Australia; 3) after 2000, when a number of new biennales were established in several ASEAN countries, among them the Jakarta Contemporary Ceramics Biennale.⁶¹⁷

The second period from the 1990s onwards is interesting with regard to Indonesia because of the Asian Pacific Triennale (APT) in Queensland to which Indonesian artists were invited. According to the Australian art historian Susan Ingham, the first edition of the APT in 1993 was a significant exhibition as it set a benchmark for biennales in Indonesia. The APT was organised by the Queensland Art Gallery (QAG) and involved curators from the participating Southeast Asian countries. Among them was Jim Supangkat, who collaborated with QAG for the three editions of the APT in 1993, 1996 and 1999. The intention of involving curators from the respective countries was to prevent a generalised representation of foreign countries in international exhibitions.⁶¹⁸ In her essay for the first APT, QAG curator Caroline Turner outlined the exhibition's aim to facilitate new ways of looking at art by emphasising an egalitarian stance. She underlined the importance of the cultural exchange that can take place in an international exhibition like the APT. She argued that art should not be viewed from a

⁶¹⁶ Ingham, 'Powerlines' 61-5.

⁶¹⁷ Leonor Veiga, 'Southeast Asian Biennales: Local and Global Interactions', *MODOS: Revista de História Da Arte* 5, no. 2 (15th October 2021), 241-2.

⁶¹⁸ Ingham, 'Powerlines', 325.

centre or from centres.⁶¹⁹ By this she meant that Euro-American culture⁶²⁰ should abandon the notion of being the centre of culture and art. Ultimately, her suggestion also resonates with the call to overcome the legacy of colonial thoughts of cultural hegemony. I consider Caroline Turner's essay a remarkable contribution to the postcolonial debate of Southeast Asian countries. It remains to be explored to what extent the postcolonial debate at that time also included abandoning the adopted art and craft dichotomy, or whether it was first and foremost about critically examining the format of Western art exhibitions.

In connection with the history of biennales in Southeast Asia the Portuguese art historian Leonor Veiga mentions the term "biennale of resistance". This term refers to a form of biennale that appeared as a kind of counter-model to the tradition of European biennales in the 19th century. Speaking for the Southeast Asian context, Veiga says that "[...] several biennales emerged from the need to promote unrepresented art from the centres of production (against state-promoted art)".⁶²¹

Although *kriya* is an important part of the Indonesian arts, there is only one *kriya* biennale, the Matra Kriya Fest which was established in 2018 – see Section 1.3. Contemporary ceramics, as well as other contemporary *kriya* forms practised by *kriya* artists, are still massively underrepresented in the Indonesian exhibition landscape. This is mainly because, in the 1990s, contemporary art with a Western art paradigm gained momentum in Indonesia, favouring the development of art infrastructures such as a lucrative art market and international exhibitions. Since, traditional arts or traditional *kriya* forms did not connect to the Western art paradigm they were instead promoted as products of the creative industry.⁶²² Contemporary *kriya* forms made by *kriya* artists often fell through the cracks altogether, as they were generally neither counted as high arts in an Indonesian traditional sense, nor could they be presented as artworks in exhibitions with a Western art paradigm.

⁶¹⁹ This part of Turner's essay is from Caroline Turner, 'The First Asia-Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art', *Queensland Art Gallery (Brisbane, Australia)*, 1993, exhibition catalogue, 1-120. Supangkat reflects on Turner's essay in his own curatorial essay: Jim Supangkat, 'Art With an Accent', CP Biennale: 2003 OPEN BIENNALE - ESSAYS, 2003, <http://biennale.cp-foundation.org/2003/essays01.html> (last visit 11th June 2023).

⁶²⁰ By Euro-American culture I mean the culture of Australia and New Zealand as well, except for the native cultures such as the Aborigines and Māoris.

⁶²¹ The term "biennales of resistance" was suggested by MARCHART, O. The Globalization of Art and the 'Biennials of Resistance': A History of the Biennales from the Periphery. *World Art* 4, no. 2 (2014): 263-76. Veiga mentions the term in her article 'Southeast Asian Biennales', 243.

⁶²² Nevertheless, in some cases *kriya* objects such as batik, weavings, swords, jewellery, leather puppets, masks and wood carvings have been appreciated and bought as pieces of art by collectors of traditional arts. But these sales were not connected to the international contemporary art market and auction houses.

The Relation between Indonesian Contemporary Art Exhibitions and Western Models

From the 1990s to the present day Indonesian contemporary artists have contributed to a discussion that questions the role of Indonesian art infrastructures and exhibition practices in relation to the West. This discussion has not been conducted in the general population, nor in large art circles, but has been limited to a handful of artists. The best-known of these is the curator Jim Supangkat. With his critical essays and curatorial work, he became a driving force for both, the development of professional curators and postcolonial debate in the Indonesian art world. I will present a selection of his viewpoints and supplement them with other experts' opinion on exhibition practices in Indonesia.

Contemporary art exhibitions are mainly organised by private artist groups, whereas only a few exhibitions are organised by the state. This imbalance between the number of private and state-organised art events is a remnant of decades of governmental neglect of the arts. Unsurprisingly, some of today's state-organised events are less professional due to a lack of training and experience. But above all, the main problem of state-organised art events is that their poorly-structured organisation hinders the involvement of experts.

The international discourse on Indonesian contemporary art only arose about two decades ago after the Indonesian art boom in the 1990s, when Indonesia first appeared on the global art landscape.⁶²³ Indonesia was greatly influenced by the West and significant areas of modern and contemporary art were created through Western models and efforts. However, it is evident in Indonesian contemporary art that Western influences have been integrated into Indonesian culture and arts, rather than having merely been flatly imitated. The integration of foreign cultural elements into a country's original cultures is called cultural hybridity. Indonesia's cultures have a long tradition of being hybrid or syncretistic. Early cultural influences began with Hindu-Buddhist religions hundreds of years ago. Later, Moslem Arab traders brought Islam to the region. European colonial powers and migration within Asia continuously shaped many religious, ethnic, and cultural aspects of the Archipelago's cultural identities, including the arts.⁶²⁴ Keeping this cultural hybridity in mind helps to understand Indonesia's modern and contemporary art in their respective contexts of production, which are different from a Western understanding of modern and contemporary art.⁶²⁵

⁶²³ Michael Vatikiotis, 'Riding Indonesia's Art Boom', Griffith Review (Brisbane: Griffith University, Queensland Australia, 2009), <https://www.griffithreview.com/articles/riding-indonesias-art-boom/> (last visit 21st June 2021).

⁶²⁴ A more detailed perspective on these influences is given in Section 1.2.

⁶²⁵ Yvonne Spielmann, *Contemporary Indonesian Art Artists, Art Spaces, and Collectors*, 5, 8, 42.

Indonesian contemporary artists used to have an ambivalent relationship with *kriya*. In the 1970s and 1980s they rejected *kriya* as a state-conforming art form. But, from the 1990s onwards they started to use traditional *kriya* elements in their artworks. As Indonesian artists began to participate in international exhibitions in the 1990s, they became increasingly concerned with the question of their identity and how they wanted to present themselves in the global art world. Jim Supangkat was also concerned with these questions in his curatorial work. His tireless work contributed greatly to the negotiation of Indonesia's cultural identities within the art world. Supangkat organised and curated many exhibitions and wrote numerous curatorial essays. One essay that sparked my interest in the postcolonial debate is *Art With an Accent* (2003) that he wrote for the CP (Centre Point) Biennale in Jakarta. In this essay Supangkat critically discusses the effect of Western modern art theories on the understanding of non-Western art and questions the format of international exhibitions that are linked to Western modern art theories.⁶²⁶ Supangkat underlines the effort that was made at the international CP Biennale to set out a new view of Indonesian art, an art that has developed outside of Europe and America. He criticises “internationalism” for apparently having ignored art developments outside of the West or putting them in a minor position. He continues to discuss an aspect of Western modern art theory from the first half of the 20th century, which is that he observes the intention to define “what was art and what was not art”. According to Supangkat this intention makes it impossible for Western modernists to understand works of modern art that were influenced by traditional elements, such as Indonesian art. Supangkat also observes a new way of thinking about identifying and evaluating art in the second half of the 20th century in the West – a thinking that emphasises the social context and is based on the theory of George Dickie. According to Dickie the art world is a cultural construction. Supangkat points out the tendency of Western art theories to regard the social context as important for reading works of art as “cultural texts”.⁶²⁷ But the emphasis on art as cultural texts has led to a Western tradition of presenting cultural objects as authorless and as objects of a timeless culture. Supangkat therefore suggests that international exhibitions in Asian countries should find their own path without referring to Western art institutions.⁶²⁸

The Portuguese art historian Leonor Veiga takes this one step further by asserting that international audiences are trapped in their reading of cultural constructs and artworks. Moreover, she claims that international audiences, biased by invented traditions promoted by

⁶²⁶ Supangkat, ‘Art With an Accent’.

⁶²⁷ Supangkat.

⁶²⁸ Supangkat.

the tourism industry, fail to see the critical potential in artworks with traditional elements.⁶²⁹ I agree with Veiga's statement and therefore regard the professional work of Indonesian curators as important. Indonesian curators, who have a broad inherent knowledge of their own culture, but also of other cultures in the multi-ethnic state of Indonesia could act as a bridge to gaining a better understanding and presentation of Indonesian art in the global art world. Or as the Yogyakarta curator Sujud Dartanto puts it: the curator is an articulator.⁶³⁰

An interesting example of an exhibition that sought to tread its own path was the exhibition called *Contemporary Art in Asia: Traditions/Tensions* held in three locations in New York from October 1996 until January 1997. This exhibition was curated by Dr. Apinan Poshyananda from Thailand and showcased artworks from Asian artists, including Indonesian artists such as FX Harsono. Harsono used traditional materials and elements like masks in his artwork to criticise Suharto's regime that instrumentalised traditional arts for politics.⁶³¹ Veiga designates these artists as "the Third Avant-garde". Contrary to the European Avant-garde in the 20th century, Indonesian artists do not reject visual resemblances of traditional motifs and elements in their work, but they use them in a transformative way as an element of speech. In doing so, they do not allude to the styles of the past, nor do they re-invent tradition, as was done in Suharto's politics. This shows the artists' confidence in reading and choosing cultural elements to clarify their artistic statements. However, such Avant-garde artworks only entered the international forum in exhibitions that were directed by Asian curators.⁶³²

A more recent example of finding an appropriate way in the exhibition format is the Biennale Jogja. The Biennale Jogja is an international visual arts biennale that has been held in Yogyakarta every two years since 1988. From 2011 onwards, the biennale has been collaborating with countries located around the equator in a range from 23 degrees northern latitude to 27 degrees southern latitude. The equator is taken as the starting point to gain differing views of the world and to rethink politically-constructed geographical designations such as Asia, Africa, America and Europe. The equator project develops new perspectives of how to present art and challenges the "establishment" or the conventions of biennales and

⁶²⁹ We have to note that Veiga made this statement around 15 years later than Supangkat's assertion. Her article includes observations of a wider time span in which international exhibitions had become more common in South-East Asia. Veiga, "The Third Avant-Garde", 105.

⁶³⁰ Interview with Sujud Dartanto, *The Curator as Articulator*, 25th March 2023.

⁶³¹ Harsono's artwork is called *The Voices are Controlled by the Power* (1994/2011) and shows a collection of similar-looking carved wooden masks, arranged in rows and columns in a square area. For detailed information on his artwork, but also on the exhibition, I particularly recommend Leonor Veiga's article 'The Third Avant-Garde: Messages of Discontent'. A picture of Harsono's artwork can be found in her article on page 92.

⁶³² The Australian art historian Susan Ingham suggests the term "alternative artists" instead of avant-garde in order to avoid reference to the European avant-garde. Veiga, 'The Third Avant-Garde: Messages of Discontent', 92-3, 100-2.

similar events. The Biennale Jogja is organised by the *Yayasan Biennale Yogyakarta* (YBY), the Yogyakarta Biennale Foundation. YBY also organises an Equator Symposium, which takes place in the same year as the biennale. For each event, YBY collaborates with partners from several countries or regions and invites artists from different countries in the equator region, with the purpose of stimulating collaboration, meetings and dialogues with Indonesian artists, and groups, as well as arts and cultural organisations in Yogyakarta.⁶³³

The discourse on presenting and reading non-Western art like Indonesian contemporary art in international exhibitions requires an understanding of complex global and local relationships. This holds true not only for Indonesian contemporary art in the international realm but also for Indonesia itself, a country with over 1,000 different ethnic groups.⁶³⁴ Thus, a valid cultural representation of the arts has been a major challenge for the republic's cultural agents. Major international and national exhibitions in Indonesia are mostly organised by governmental and private institutions on Java. The island of Java continues to function as a power centre for culture and arts. Therefore, most curators work in big cities on Java such as Jakarta, Yogyakarta, and Surabaya.⁶³⁵

The Profession of Curator

Ceramics (understood as burned clay objects of medium to high firing temperatures) in Indonesia has existed for about seven decades. As mentioned in the previous chapter, ceramics were established in Bandung and then launched as a degree programme at ITB in the 1960s. Although the ceramics scene has grown steadily since then, the discourse on contemporary ceramics is led mainly by a few curators. These curators play a special role in the development and discourse on Indonesian ceramics. With their curatorial essays, they have not become part of an existing discourse on ceramics but rather initiated a novel discourse on contemporary ceramics, with discussions and exhibitions going on over the last 20 years. However, the first professional curators emerged in the field of fine art, only in the ceramics field much later.

⁶³³ 'Tentang Biennale Jogja - Yayasan Biennale Yogyakarta', <https://www.biennalejogja.org/tentang-biennale-jogja/> (last visit 9th April 2023); 'Yayasan Biennale Jogja', Koalisi Seni, 3rd December 2019, <https://koalisiseni.or.id/en/anggota/yayasan-biennale-jogja/> (last visit 9th April 2023).

⁶³⁴ DEKRANAS - Dewan Kerajinan Nasional, *Sejarah Dekranas*, 2021, <https://dekranas.id/sejarah-dekranas/> (last visit 14th December 2021).

⁶³⁵ The island of Bali is also a centre for culture and arts with a vibrant exhibition landscape connected to the global art world.

In Indonesia, the profession of curator is still relatively young. Until the 1990s, the term curator was virtually unused in Indonesia. Preceding this profession there were art critics from around the 1930s on, who wrote exhibition reviews in the emerging media. The profession of art critic was supplemented by the work of artists and gallery owners, who organised exhibitions and later called themselves curators. The most important figure in Indonesia for curation as a profession was the ceramist and ITB graduate Jim Supangkat. He had the chance to study some courses on curation in Europe. After returning to Indonesia, Supangkat was the first to understand the role and importance of a curator and to establish himself as a curator adapted to the Indonesian context. With his success Supangkat became a master and role model in curation. But Supangkat, with his degree in ceramics, was not a curator of ceramics exhibitions but worked primarily in the field of modern and contemporary art. This was due to several reasons: first, the ITB degree in ceramics was opened in the Fine Art Faculty, so Supangkat is actually a fine art artist, with a focus on ceramics. Second, a large ceramics scene with regularly-held ceramics exhibitions did not exist yet. But there were some other curatorial job opportunities for art exhibitions.

In Indonesia there were no professionally-trained curators for a long time because art universities did not offer any training. Furthermore, the state sector did not support the arts, disabling museums and other institutions to afford training for curators nor provide permanent jobs for curators. As a result, curators in Indonesia, like Jim Supangkat, work as freelancers. In Bandung, a small group of ITB graduates moved up as curators and benefited from Jim's curatorial practice and experience. Examples of these graduates are Asmudjo Jono Irianto, Rizki A. Zaelani and Agung Hutjaknikjennong, who have an interest in theoretical discourse and art history. Rifky Effendy is another curator who belonged to the second generation after Jim Supangkat. Rifky enjoyed a three-month residency at the Fukuoka Asian Art Museum in Japan. Other foreign institutions in Australia and the United States supported the training of Indonesian curators.⁶³⁶ Asmudjo suggested the term freelance curator while others speak of independent curators. It is true that curators in Indonesia work independently from museums and can move freely between different art institutions. But, according to Asmudjo, the term freelance curator is more accurate because there are no curators who are dependent on museums, so there are no counterparts who could be called independent curators. From this summary one can ascertain that curators generate their own financial income and thus represent a true freelance model.⁶³⁷

⁶³⁶ Ingham, "Powerlines", 160-6, 185.

⁶³⁷ Interview with Asmudjo Jono Irianto, *The Position of Art and Kriya Today*, 10th February 2023.

The role of the curator in Indonesia is also linked to the art market. Therefore, the curator at a gallery must know about the art market in order to sell the gallery's artworks. In the past most galleries, as well as the art market in Indonesia, exclusively focused on painting. In the 1990s a veritable art boom⁶³⁸ took place and many artists sold their paintings for high prices. But did the art boom with its focus on painting affect ceramics and other forms of *kriya*?

The Indonesian Art Boom of the 1990s

When ceramics became popular in the 1960s in Indonesia, the spirit of modern art prevailed which was based on a Western-shaped art paradigm and its dichotomy between art and craft. As a consequence, *kriya* in Indonesia (regarded as craft) received little appreciation. Among the various *kriya* forms, only ceramics from Bandung was not fully regarded as a craft but as a material used by fine art artists at the ITB. Ceramics was a side line in the art scene, while painting became increasingly important. For decades painting remained the main medium in art exhibitions and the main interest for the art market. In 1987 the Japanese cooperation Fire and Marine Insurance bought Van Gogh's painting *Sunflower* for a sum of 39.9 million US dollars, which triggered an art boom in the Asia-Pacific region. Since its Independence, Indonesia had been striving to stabilise its domestic economy. Suharto's goal in particular was to kick-start the economy with his *Orde Baru* (New Order) by opening the country up to the global market and creating attractive conditions for foreign investors.⁶³⁹ The art market became an interesting field for Indonesian investors, who – through international trade - developed an awareness of art as capital. However, not all forms and styles of art sold well. The art critic and lecturer Rizki A. Zaelani from ITB in Bandung observed two trends within contemporary art in Indonesia in the 1980s. One trend reflected art that critically examined socio-political issues not only with the medium of painting but also with other media such as installations, performances, photography and mixed media. This type of art was an alternative to the usual paintings and was not considered as capital within the art boom. However, this alternative art continued to develop, and found outlets in places such as the Cemeti Gallery in Yogyakarta and later in international exhibitions. The other trend reflected art that represented national economic progress, the country's prosperity and the establishment. These works were

⁶³⁸ There were several art booms in Indonesia. The art boom in the 1990s was significant because it was fuelled by foreign auction houses. There was another art boom in 2006.

⁶³⁹ Suharto was known for being a corrupt leader who primarily ensured wealth and rising living standards only for few people close to the government. During his reign he used his power to enrich his close friends and family. Yuliana Kusumastuti, 'Market Forces: A Case Study of Contemporary Art Practice in Indonesia' (Masterthesis, Semarang, Semarang State University, 2006), 29-33.

mainly paintings and were sold at good prices, providing the material and capital for the art boom. Painters of such successfully sold artworks were Affandi (1907-1990), Sudjojono (1914-1986), Hendra Gunawan (1918-1983), and others. The domestic appreciation and the pricey art works in Asia-Pacific countries attracted international interest, so that in the 1980s and 1990s major auction houses such as Christie's and Sotheby's began to focus on that region. In Indonesia, as well as in other Asia-Pacific countries painters began to sell their works internationally.⁶⁴⁰

It was different for *kriya* artworks. They did not find their way into the booming art market, because internationally *kriya* was read as traditional arts and crafts, which was not considered as modern or contemporary art. Also, within the Indonesian discourse *kriya* was strongly associated with the concept of a rigid traditional culture, so *kriya* could not follow the paradigm of the art market.⁶⁴¹

Nevertheless, the art boom had a positive effect on the entire art landscape in Indonesia, from which *kriya* would profit some decades later. In the course of the art boom numerous galleries were established, which was paralleled by a growing influence of Western exhibition practices. Ceramics began to be exhibited more often, particularly in a fine art context as solo exhibitions of individual ceramic artists. However, it took almost another four decades until a large ceramics exhibition with an international and recurring character, the Jakarta Contemporary Ceramics Biennale, was set up by ITB graduates in 2009.⁶⁴²

The art boom also favoured the further development of a vibrant contemporary art scene in Yogyakarta. This art scene was significant for *kriya* because during the 1990s and 2000s art infrastructures such as exhibitions and galleries were established, mostly by private artist communities. This development created a positive atmosphere of displaying art to the public which still continues today. This art atmosphere has been beneficial for *kriya* by encouraging craftspeople and *kriya* artists to create their own outlets for presenting *kriya* objects, in the form of exhibitions and events which have particularly gained momentum since 2010.⁶⁴³ As well as establishing specific outlets for contemporary *kriya* artworks *kriya* makers and *kriya* artists increasingly show their artworks in contemporary art exhibitions.

⁶⁴⁰ Kusumastuti, 29-31.

⁶⁴¹ The role of traditional art elements and materials used in modern art is also discussed in Ingham's thesis. She cites Supangkat's observation on Indonesian Modernism, which does not have the same relation to traditional art forms as Western Modernism. See Ingham, "Powerlines", 201-2.

⁶⁴² The first Contemporary Ceramics Biennale was called Indonesian Contemporary Ceramics Biennale (ICCB). All subsequent biennales have been called the Jakarta Contemporary Ceramics Biennale (JCCB).

⁶⁴³ Between 2000 and 2010 *kriya* exhibitions were already being organised, for example by the ISI Yogyakarta. Some *kriya* exhibitions were organised from 2004 onwards by ISI Yogyakarta students and alumni. See the list of *kriya* events in the appendix.

***Kriya* Publications as a Theoretical Basis For Curators?**

The role of the curator is to equip themselves with a theoretical knowledge of art so as to understand the discourse and be able to evaluate it. However, it is not so easy to acquire a theoretical body of knowledge in the *kriya* field, since hardly any Indonesian *kriya* publications were available for a long time. Much knowledge has circulated orally and was not written down anywhere. While the number of *kriya* exhibitions grew from 2010 onwards, the *kriya* community lagged behind in terms of a theoretical basis, a written discourse on *kriya* and trained curators. This is not surprising considering the general lack of curatorial training in Indonesia. Art history, to give an example, cannot be studied as a full Bachelor's programme at art universities where it is offered only as a secondary minor study topic. Theoretical knowledge on ceramics and earthenware could not be studied at art universities until the first major ceramic programmes were established. Until the 1980s, Indonesian art history was compiled and published by foreign art historians. In the field of craft, these publications had an ethnological approach, focusing much more on foreign culture with its anonymous artworks than on the actual crafts and arts. In the 1980s, leading craftsmen from Yogyakarta such as SP. Gustami, the late S. Narno and others began to selectively write down historical events in the field of *kriya*. In 1985 Gustami, Narno and Saptoto published a book on the pattern of life and production of Kasongan earthenware.⁶⁴⁴ Luckily, other *kriya* lecturers have continued to publish *kriya* articles and books. However, the theoretical field of *kriya* still offers much potential for further research and publications, considering how richly and diversely *kriya* is manifested in the Archipelago.

With the emergence of international exhibitions, the profession of curator began to gain more importance in the 1990s. As Supangkat notes, many curators lack academic training, so the essays in exhibition catalogues were often characterised by individual opinions rather than by a theoretical, art-historical background. Supangkat's curatorial work was inspired by the Indonesian artist Sanento Yuliman, whose art historical approach was based on observation and research, not just on personal opinion. The Yogyakarta curator Sujud Dartanto, also states that a common methodology was lacking in the curatorial field. As a result, each curator designed their exhibitions and wrote their essays quite personally, without any reference to the existing discourse. This limited methodology and curatorial knowledge gave rise to a diverse exhibition landscape with few approved rules, thus impairing the development of a theoretical discourse based on a common ground. According to Sujud Dartanto, such a

⁶⁴⁴ The 142-page book is quite comprehensive and offers information gained from field studies and interviews. Gustami et al., *Pola Hidup dan Produk Kerajinan Keramik Kasongan Yogyakarta*.

discourse and reference to theory have only recently become more common in curatorial practice.⁶⁴⁵

Although Western and Indonesian art history have been taught at Indonesian art universities for some time, there is still potential for a deeper, historical and theoretical engagement with art, *kriya*, exhibition and documentation practice. Art and *kriya* discourses continue to take place predominantly within art universities of three big centres: Jakarta, Bandung and Yogyakarta. But most students at these art universities prefer creating art to writing or researching about the arts. There is no full study programme for curators yet, but a degree programme in art management was initiated at ISI Yogyakarta in 2014, followed by another degree programme in 2023 for conservation. Indonesia's professional field of curators is still developing, and it is anticipated that other universities will follow ISI Yogyakarta's example by offering study programmes for curators. Hopefully in the future museums will provide full-time employment for curators, which will contribute to a permanent and broad discourse on art and *kriya*.

Curators For Contemporary Ceramic Art

Indonesian contemporary ceramic art is still very young, dating back to the early 2000s, preceded by a small modern ceramics scene which emerged in the 1960s. In Indonesia modern ceramics stood on thin stilts, because it was both a new material and a new form of art among the Indonesian arts, and it had to struggle to attain its position in the art world. Initially, the dissemination of ceramic art depended exclusively on the Western-oriented art university in Bandung called the *Institut Teknologi Bandung* (ITB). The discourse on ceramic art is shaped by only a few actors. One of these is Asmudjo Jono Irianto, a Bandung-based ITB graduate who became known as a driving force and supporter of ceramics. One of his first supportive action was to build a simple kiln. For ceramists who wanted to open their own studio, this kiln was an ideal starting point. It was small enough to fit into modest, living conditions and it was affordable, so enabled young graduates to start working on their own. With the idea of such a kiln Asmudjo laid an important foundation for the spread of ceramic art. Asmudjo did not only promote practical approaches, but was also concerned with writing on ceramic art. With his essays and advice, Asmudjo advanced to become one of the most important ceramic connoisseurs, curators and critics in Indonesia. Together with ITB graduate Nurdian Ichsan, he organised an exhibition of young Indonesian ceramic artists in the

⁶⁴⁵ Interview with Sujud Dartanto, *The Curator as Articulator*, 25th March 2023.

National Gallery in Jakarta, in 2004.⁶⁴⁶ It was a welcome outlet for ceramic artists to show their works. Five years later, Asmudjo succeeded in establishing a contemporary ceramics biennale, which has been held almost every two years ever since. The biennale was conceived as an event that borrowed heavily from Western exhibition biennale practices. Accordingly, each event was accompanied by an exhibition catalogue and curatorial essays, which were written not only by Asmudjo himself, but also by other curators, namely Rifky Effendy, Nurdian Ichsan, Sujud Dartanto and Rizki A. Zaelani.

3.2.2 The Jakarta Contemporary Ceramics Biennale – Finding the Multiple Positions of Ceramics

An Indonesian Contemporary Ceramics Biennale

The first contemporary ceramics biennale was called the Indonesian Contemporary Ceramics Biennale (ICCB) and was held in 2009 at the North Art Space in Jakarta. It featured the works of well-known ceramists such as F. Widayanto, Noor Sudiyati, Endang Lestari, Evy Yonathan, Nia Gautama, Titarubi, Ponimin, Nurdian Ichsan, and Tromarama from Yogyakarta, Bandung and Jakarta. Other ceramists were invited from Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Philippines, the Netherlands, Italy, Australia and the United States. The curators were Asmudjo Jono Irianto and Rifky Effendy. They entitled the biennale *Ceramic Art: Between the Contemporary Art and Contemporary Craft*. In his curatorial essay Asmudjo wrote a kind of educational ceramic art history to provide a basis upon which the audience could understand and read ceramic art. His text starts with a clarification of the term ceramic art, which he asserts bears both a commonly-known meaning but also a new meaning. The common meaning of ceramic art points to the art of making and the skills required to create ceramics. The new meaning of the term is linked to the Western concept of art and the division of art into high art and low art. In this new meaning, the term ceramic art refers to the production of a work of art that is exhibited as high art and that embodies the artist's idea. Asmudjo carries on by explaining the Western conventions of art and craft, including the differences between the two. He emphasises the infrastructures and paradigms in the West that have grown historically and have formed different values within art and craft, in comparison to Indonesia. He further states that the idea and the concept are important in

⁶⁴⁶ Rifky Effendy, 'Jakarta Contemporary Ceramic Biennale 2009 In Between Space of Contemporary Art', in *Jakarta Contemporary Ceramic Biennale 2009, In Between* (Jakarta: Ancol Art Space, 2009), exhibition catalogue, 3-4.

Western art, and the attitude of “anything goes” (anything is valid as an artwork) prevails. In contrast, craft is about mastering a certain material and making a statement with it. For Asmudjo, the historical structure explains the separation of art and craft in the West. However, he goes on to emphasise that in Indonesia, despite Western influences, ceramists have never been in opposition to high art.⁶⁴⁷ I agree with this statement for two reasons: firstly, ceramics entered the Indonesian art world through ITB as an academic fine artist’s material. Secondly, Indonesian ceramic art is relatively young and has only joined the international contemporary art stage in the last two decades, when the rigid boundaries between art and craft in the West had lost their importance.

Even though ceramics used to be a material for fine art artists, it has become a specialised discipline in Indonesia. Asmudjo believes that any ceramics exhibition should display technical qualities, such as material processing and the artist’s skills, thus preventing ceramics from losing its relevance as a skill-based *kriya* form with traditional roots.⁶⁴⁸

Asmudjo’s 2009 curatorial text was of utmost importance for generating an initial understanding of ceramic art, since no other basic texts existed at that time. It is only in the last few years that individual lecturers or curators in Yogyakarta, Jakarta and Bandung, such as Taufik Akbar, Muria Zuhdi, Nia Gautama, Anusapati, Akbar Adhi Satrio, and Hendratno have begun to write scholarly articles on contemporary ceramic art. However, not all voices are represented wherever contemporary ceramic art is taught and exhibited. There is a lack of discursive contributions, for example from Bali, Sumatra, Kalimantan and Sulawesi.

The other curator of ICCB #1, Rifky Effendy, also wrote an essay for this biennale, which he dedicated to the pioneers of ceramic art, namely Eddie Kartasubarna, Hildawati Soemantri, Suyatna and Hendrawan Riyanto. Like Asmudjo, Rifky refers to the historical position of ceramic art in the West. He gives the example of fine art artists in the West who use ceramics only during their spare time with no serious creative ambition in mind. He names two Indonesian painters who had also played with ceramics as a leisure activity in the 1980s. This could give the reader the impression that no serious artistic work was done with clay in Indonesia, yet this was not the case. The example of the pottery village Kasongan shows that very elaborate and technically skilful clay objects were being created. But, due to their production structure and low firing temperature, these artworks were perceived as traditional earthenware and not ceramics. Throughout his essay, Rifky omits earthenware and only

⁶⁴⁷ Asmudjo Jono Irianto, ‘Ceramic Art: In Between the Contemporary Art and Contemporary Craft’, in *Jakarta Contemporary Ceramic Biennale 2009 - In Between* (Jakarta: Galeri Nasional Indonesia, 2009), <https://jakartacontemporaryceramic.wordpress.com/history-of-the-jccb/jccb1-2009-2010/text/asmudjo-j-irianto/>, exhibition catalogue.

⁶⁴⁸ Irianto.

mentions the function and ritual significance of ceramics when speaking about the entire Asian cultural area. Accordingly, the spotlight in his essay, as well as in the exhibition itself, is on ceramic art and not on earthenware. Rifky dates the beginning of ceramic art⁶⁴⁹ in Indonesia to the 1970s which he says was only made possible through the emergence of universities. ITB Bandung was the first art university to establish a ceramics major in 1963, at its Faculty of Fine Art and Design. This important advancement in academia gave birth to a rising awareness and use of clay in Indonesia's art scene. Effendy also names the female artist Hildawati Soemantri as the initiator of Indonesian modern ceramic art, since 1976 when she showcased her first ceramic installation.⁶⁵⁰ In the same year she founded a ceramic studio in today's IKJ, the Jakarta Arts Institute. As a lecturer she taught and influenced the younger ceramics generation to a great extent. Rifky concludes by stating that the appreciation for ceramic art has grown in Indonesia, although contemporary ceramic exhibitions are not as common as painting exhibitions. He also mentions changes within ceramic art practice, suggesting that a clearly noticeable change took place at the beginning of the 2000s. From then on, access to materials and kilns became more affordable, so that small ceramic studios were increasingly founded by young graduates of ITB, ISI and IKJ, which was crucial for the burgeoning ceramic scene.⁶⁵¹ Every year a few ceramic graduates from the universities joined the ceramic scene and contributed to a stable field where new approaches were developed for ceramics in terms of content and form.⁶⁵²

The Jakarta Contemporary Ceramics Biennale (JCCB)

At the second biennale, entitled the Jakarta Contemporary Ceramics Biennale (JCCB), held in Jakarta from 21st December 2012 to 20th January 2013, the commissioned curator Sujud Dartanto set the theme *Crafting Identity - Ceramic Art as Knowledge Archive*. With this theme, Sujud points to the identity created and worked out with the hands through ceramic art. He regards the individual ceramic art objects as part of a knowledge archive about culture and society. Sujud's curatorial stance is inspired by the theory Foucault's put forward in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. Foucault's theory suggests that we should free the history of ideas from "work", "epoch" and "authorship", and instead examine historical texts and

⁶⁴⁹ With ceramic art Rifky refers to the middle to high fired objects in the context of art exhibitions.

⁶⁵⁰ Unfortunately, I could not find any documentation or pictures of her artwork.

⁶⁵¹ Effendy, 'Jakarta Contemporary Ceramic Biennale 2009 In Between Space of Contemporary Art'; Ingham, 'A Brief History » Indonesian Contemporary Art'; 'About', Cilanguk Art District, 2013, <https://cilangukartdistrict.wordpress.com/about/> (last visit 13th January 2022).

⁶⁵² Effendy, 'Jakarta Contemporary Ceramic Biennale 2009 In Between Space of Contemporary Art', 2-5.

testimonies to devise rules of discursive practices. In accordance with Foucault's theory, Sujud takes a new approach as the curator of JCCB #2. He deliberately refrains from classifying the works into predetermined or adopted, conventional categories. Rather, he sees the ceramic artists' works as part of discursive formation processes. He also echoes the curatorial essays written by Asmudjo and Rifky for the preceding biennale in 2009 in a pleasing way, without repeating them. Sujud skilfully relates the historical background and Western categories of high and low art to Indonesian contemporary ceramic art, to highlight the singularity of its genesis. He writes about the beginnings of ceramic art in Indonesia from a meta-level. Aptly, he mentions earthenware that appeared from time to time in the contemporary ceramic art landscape in Indonesia, on the one hand as a deliberately chosen sign of tradition or low social status, and on the other hand as a re-contextualisation of household objects. Sujud's view of ceramics as a medium rather than a discipline serves as a strategy for him to free himself from the art versus craft dichotomy of Western art history. However, he is aware that ceramic art in Indonesia is secure enough to take its own place in the contemporary art world, and says that this is exactly what was happening. Therefore, the exhibition title was aptly chosen to invite viewers to enjoy the ceramic identities created, without stylistic, formalistic or technical frameworks. Sujud's curatorial stance demonstrates a high level of confidence in Indonesian ceramic art, as well as in the importance and possibility of ceramists to help shape the discursive formations. However, when we read the subsequent essays of JCCB #3 in 2014, it seems that Sujud's thinking and pioneering stance as a curator was a few years too early.⁶⁵³

Unlike Sujud, Asmudjo still seems preoccupied with the desire to classify ceramic art for JCCB #3. Consequently, he establishes three categories to showcase the artworks. In his essay Asmudjo claims that ceramists in Indonesia were faced with problems of finding their identity. He again takes up the theme of the Western dichotomy of art versus craft, but he also emphasises that he does not want to reopen the debate about this in the exhibition, but rather wants to show differences and overlaps between these two fields. Asmudjo examines ceramic art in the different categorical contexts. Interestingly, he states that a non-functional ceramic art object belongs to the category of contemporary craft as this object reflects something different than a fine art object. It stands out through its beauty and high craftsmanship, two characteristics that he asserts do not apply to fine art. Asmudjo also mentions Bernhard Leach who, in the history of Western ceramic art, has been associated with the values of function,

⁶⁵³ Sujud Dartanto, 'Crafting Identity - Ceramic Art As Knowledge Archive', in *The Jakarta Contemporary Ceramic Biennale 2012/2013 - Crafting Identity*, 2012, exhibition catalogue, 11-7; Interview with Sujud Dartanto, *Postcolonial Concept and Theory*, 20th July 2021.

aesthetics and skill, as well as continuing the spirit of the Arts and Crafts Movement. In contrast, Asmudjo mentions the US-American ceramic artist Peter Voulkos and his companions in the 1950s, whose novel ceramics caused discord in the Western ceramic world. The conservative ceramic artists wanted to stick to their values, while Voulkos' followers wanted to adopt fine art concepts for their ceramic works. Asmudjo elaborates on the peculiarities of Western values of ceramic art by naming two opposing positions. The first position was that of Peter Dormer and Bruce Metcalf, who were upset about what they called the ignorant hold of the contemporary art world (in the West), where the handmade, skills and function were completely ignored. The second position was Joseph Beuys' propagation of art where everything is possible, a kind of "anything goes" attitude. Asmudjo adds that it is precisely this "anything goes" attitude that made it easy to incorporate ceramic art into the contemporary art arena.⁶⁵⁴

Rifky also reflects on the relationship between ceramic art and the contemporary Indonesian art world. For JCCB#3 he wrote an essay entitled *Ceramics as Signs* in which he reflects on the term ceramic art, which is quite new in Indonesia. The term, as well as the discipline, has only recently emerged in Indonesia and does not yet have a strong tradition of its own. This probably also contributed to the relatively easy entry of ceramics into the art world. Rifky clarifies that the term art in non-Western cultures like Indonesia is a wider one, that comprises the practices of modern art, fine art and craft-art.⁶⁵⁵

The Third Jakarta Contemporary Ceramics Biennale (JCCB #3)

For the third edition of JCCB the curators in charge, Asmudjo and Rifky, decided to create three categories in which to show the ceramic artworks. In the ceramic art category, they exhibited ceramic works that were free of function and artistic expression predominates. In the ceramic design category, there were works that have a function and a contemporary and clean touch. These works were either from ceramists or from studio brands. In the ceramic

⁶⁵⁴ Asmudjo Jono Irianto, 'Coefficient of Expansion: Ceramic Art in Context', in: *The 3rd JCCB 2014 - Coefficient of Expansion*, 2014, exhibition catalogue, xxxiii-xxxix.

⁶⁵⁵ Rifky Effendy, 'Ceramics as Signs', in: *The 3rd JCCB 2014 - Coefficient of Expansion* (Jakarta: Galeri Nasional Indonesia, 2014), exhibition catalogue, xii-xvi. Nia Gautama and Asmudjo Irianto state that art in Indonesia comprises more than what is known as art in the West. See Nia Gautama, 'An Introduction', in: *The 3rd JCCB 2014 - Coefficient of Expansion* (Jakarta: Galeri Nasional Indonesia: 2014), exhibition catalogue, xx; Jono Irianto, 'Coefficient of Expansion: Ceramic Art in Context', xxxvi.

craft category, they showed works that have a function, not a contemporary appeal, but rather appear as a reminiscent of traditional pottery.⁶⁵⁶

In the exhibition catalogue, the ceramic artworks are listed in order of art, design, and craft. The art category is the largest, with 47 ceramic artworks, each created by an individual artist. Non-ceramists like fine art artists working with ceramics were also invited to the exhibition. For example, works by Dadang Christianto (Indonesia) and Ai Weiwei were on display. The art category comprised a range of ceramic objects, ceramics mixed with other media, installations, video projections, mechanical systems, prints and photographs. In the design category, 13 works were shown, ranging from tea pots, cups, tableware collections, vases and jewellery. In the craft category, works from the craft community in Bayat and from another craft community in Ciruas were shown, as well as works from a manufactory and various ceramics studios, some of which were one-person studios. The artist's name was only given for one of these works (F. Widayanto), as all the others were labelled with the name of a craft community or a ceramics studio, none of which claims authorship of a single artist.

Asmudjo mentions in his essay that the three categories of art, design and craft overlap. It is therefore exciting to see how Asmudjo dealt with objects that cannot be clearly assigned to a category. I have selected some of these objects and will discuss them in terms of art, design and craft as follows: the work SEEDFORFOOD SERIES (Figure C12) by Steven Low Thia Kwang (Singapore) was placed in the design category, even though the work has a high expressive value, is exhibited as an installation, and these unique containers' function to hold small amounts of food is rather marginal. However, the work the artist created was probably placed into the design category as he was doing a residency programme at the JCCB in a design ceramics studio in Bali.⁶⁵⁷

The four artworks from Keramiku⁶⁵⁸ (a creative studio founded by Evy Yonathan) (Figure C13), BOYS BAND (2012), HOLIDAY... YES! (2013), HAPPY THOUGHT (2014), and ALONE 1 & ALONE 2 (2014) comprise figurative ceramics with coloured glazes. In each work, non-functional ceramic figures address social, cultural and societal issues, an artistic practice we know from fine art. However, these works were placed in the craft category, most probably because they do not come from a single artist's hands, but from the Keramiku ceramic studio, which employs several ceramists.⁶⁵⁹

⁶⁵⁶ Nia Gautama and Sakti Nuzan, ed., *The 3rd JCCB 2014 - Coefficient of Expansion* (Jakarta: Galeri Nasional Jakarta, 2014), <https://jakartacontemporaryceramic.wordpress.com/2014/09/26/pdf-catalogue-of-the-3rd-jccb-2014/>, exhibition catalogue.

⁶⁵⁷ Gautama and Nuzan.

⁶⁵⁸ Keramiku is derived from the word *keramikku* (*keramik aku*), meaning my ceramics. The studio was founded by Evy Yonathan.

⁶⁵⁹ Gautama and Nuzan, *The 3rd JCCB 2014 - Coefficient of Expansion*, 74.

The 2014 work SHANKALA SERIES (Figure C14) made by the RukuRuku studio consists of five clocks created using a combination of clay and bamboo. The dial of each clock has a different glaze colour. Although the objects are very modern and design-oriented, they were exhibited in the craft category. The curators probably decided to put this artwork in the craft category because in Indonesia bamboo is regarded as a widely used material that is often associated with craft.⁶⁶⁰

The Fourth Jakarta Contemporary Ceramics Biennale (JCCB #4)

For the fourth edition, held from 7th December 2016 to 11th January 2017 the curators Nurdian Ichsan and Rizki A. Zaelani were in charge. Nurdian and Rizki are two ceramists who graduated from ITB in the 1990s. The exhibition was named *Ways of Clay, Perspectives Towards The Future*, and showcased the works of 42 artists. As in the previous editions of this biennale, artists non-ceramists participated alongside ceramists. Compared to JCCB #3, a significantly smaller number of artworks were exhibited - almost half as many. However, what is particularly noticeable was the complete absence of the three categories art, design and craft. It seemed as if the two categories of design and craft were omitted, as the exhibited works were predominantly fine art in character. There were numerous mixed media works, videos and projections, as well as other works by fine art artists. There were also some works on display which were made with unfired clay. According to the event title, Nurdian and Rizki were interested in showing different ways or perspectives of using the material of clay. This was noticeable in the exhibition in the sense that there was indeed a wide range of different clay objects. The topic of *Perspectives Towards The Future* was predominantly told through a contemporary, international and professional flair alluding to Western, international biennales. Compared to JCCB #3, the Indonesian spirit or Indonesian clay identities were less represented in JCCB #4. Instead, the organising committee showed a high degree of professionalism and international networking. Preceding the exhibition 20 artists participated in a residency programme at 11 different locations in Java and Bali.⁶⁶¹

In their curatorial essays Nurdian and Rizki write a kind of continuation of Asmudjo's educational art history of the West, which they say – serves as a reference through which to become aware of one's own values. Rizki cites the example of Alberti, who declared the principle of mimetic experience, the visual idiom and optical accuracy to represent reality as

⁶⁶⁰ Gautama and Nuzan, 76.

⁶⁶¹ Yacobus Ari Respati and Axel R. Ramadhan, ed., *The Fourth Jakarta Contemporary Ceramics Biennale - Ways of Clay - Perspectives Towards The Future* (Jakarta: Galeri Nasional Jakarta, 2016), exhibition catalogue, 53.

an aspiration for art. Rizki adds that in contrast to Alberti's stance, in the *Ways of Clay* exhibition it is not necessarily the representation itself that is important, but rather the material and what and how an artist's idea is expressed. Nurdian takes up Alberti's stance by saying that, in the Western world, this claim has led to art being very visually-oriented, in contrast in Indonesia, where the sense of touch and hearing are equally important demands of art. He emphasises that ceramics in particular have a strong sensory aspect due to their materiality, whereas in the West, where a painting tradition has prevailed for a long time, artists are more concerned with the observation of light (and the representation of material) than with the materiality itself.⁶⁶²

In the second part of Nurdian's essay his great enthusiasm for clay as a material, as well as for ceramic art, becomes palpable. He reflects on the status of clay and ceramics by stating that clay is democratic, and will never become elitist. By democratic he means that clay contains a primitive, creative energy which can be used by everyone, regardless of social class or education. He adds that clay has a rawness that allows a very free malleability, which is different from other materials such as wood or stone which have certain restrictions due to their texture and structure. In summary, for Nurdian the rawness of clay is both a quality and a democratic aspect. He observes that clay and ceramics could find a position within the contemporary art world in Indonesia because they have never been an art form for the elites only, like painting in Western art. In his curatorial essay *Ways of Clay* Nurdian is not concerned with the three categories of art, design and craft but he recapitulates a question that often arises in the discourse whether ceramics is regarded as a discipline, or there are several disciplines that use ceramics as their material. Nurdian does not bring up this question in order to answer it, but to point out that many approaches had been made to reposition ceramics in Western art history. This negotiation of ceramics' position and status is not an issue that Nurdian wants to keep up, as he asserts there are several varied ceramics histories in the world, each with its own values. Nurdian is much more interested in the materiality itself, and he concludes that clay and ceramics as material remain fascinating to many art makers. Consequently, Nurdian's curatorial work for the exhibition was guided by questions of what inspired these art makers to use clay or ceramics and in what ways these materials are relevant to contemporary art practice.⁶⁶³

I find Nurdian's curatorial stance for JCCB #4 compelling, as it does not address a categorisation of objects, but rather the diversity of artistic statements made with clay and

⁶⁶² Rizki A. Zaelani, 'Ways Of Clay - Perspectives Toward The Future', in *The Fourth Jakarta Contemporary Ceramics Biennale - Ways of Clay* (Jakarta: Galeri Nasional Indonesia, 2016), exhibition catalogue, 31–9.

⁶⁶³ Nurdian Ichsan, 'Ways Of Clay - Perspectives Toward The Future', in *The Fourth Jakarta Contemporary Ceramics Biennale - Ways of Clay* (Jakarta: Galeri Nasional Indonesia, 2016), exhibition catalogue, 11–2.

ceramics. I consider the exhibition an important art event for ceramics in Indonesia and for ceramists around the world. Moreover, the Jakarta Contemporary Ceramics Biennale is a good advertisement for Indonesian art and ceramic and evidence that international art exhibitions with great resonance are being professionally organised by Indonesian artists and curators. In 2018, the fifth edition was held, with Asmudjo again being the driving force, although the curation was done by an art collective, namely the Jati Wangi Art Factory from Majalengka, West Java. In 2021, Asmudjo and his team organised the sixth edition under the new name Terracotta Triennale, with the Jati Wangi Art Factory again taking over the curation. Asmudjo has put an enormous amount of heart and work into the numerous ceramic exhibitions since 2004. His enthusiasm for another exhibition in 2024 has been somewhat dampened as organisational hurdles related to the Indonesian government have become greater. Contact persons from the government have changed several times since 2004, so Asmudjo has had to explain and advocate for his exhibition again with each change. This is a very laborious task requiring immense energy in addition to organising this elaborate international exhibition. Therefore, Asmudjo was not sure in 2022, whether he will have enough strength to put on the exhibition again in 2024. He thought about holding the exhibition in Bali instead of Jakarta. In 2024, Asmudjo told me, that the exhibition is planned for summer 2025 and will take place for the first time in Cirebon and Bandung. He will call it Indonesian Contemporary Ceramics Biennale.⁶⁶⁴

It is sad to see that such a successful art exhibition is not freely supported by the government, but adhering to government rules and obtaining permits to mount such an event costs the JCCB organising team a lot of time and energy. It is hoped that committed artists and curators will continue to engage in creating and continuing high-calibre art exhibitions such as the JCCB, and thus possibly pave the way in the longer term for unbureaucratic cooperation with the Indonesian government.

With regard to the three exhibitions discussed above, JCCB #2, #3 and #4, I would like to conclude by reflecting on the curatorial stance concerning categories.⁶⁶⁵ To do so, I draw on an example from the ceramic artist Endang Lestari. She once took a similar approach to Nurdian's curatorial stance for a ceramics group exhibition she organised and curated. (Endang does not recall the exact year of the exhibition, but it was between 2011 and 2018.)

⁶⁶⁴ Interview with Asmudjo Jono Irianto, *The Position of Art and Kriya Today*, 10th February 2023. Personal communication with Asmudjo, 10th September 2024.

⁶⁶⁵ I have not discussed the exhibitions ICCB #1, JCCB #5 and the Terracotta Triennale 2021 in detail here, as I did not have exhibition catalogues for them. According to Asmudjo, there is no exhibition catalogue for ICCB #1, while the catalogues for JCCB #5 and the Terracotta Triennale are not ready yet, or will not be produced.

She focused on the objects and materials and showed ceramic objects from different *kriya* makers. Some of these had had academic training as *kriya* or fine art artists, some were ceramists making functional objects, while others were potters working for the ceramics industry. Endang recalls that visitors to the exhibition perceived all the works as art and could not distinguish who the objects had been made by. Thus, as a curator and ceramist, she had achieved her goal: to exhibit earthenware and ceramic objects with artistic as well as craftsmanship qualities to the public without categories.

For international as well as national ceramics exhibitions in Indonesia, I consider it important for attention to be focused on the objects, the materiality, the cultural, artistic and content-related aspects. In my opinion, there is no need for categories such as art, design or craft, nor for categories like contemporary and traditional. These categories, which are familiar from the West, are difficult to transfer to Indonesia anyway, because academic and non-academic art, industrial production and the notion of time have grown there differently historically than in the West. I agree with Sujud Dartanto's assertion that the following two questions can work as a guideline for exhibitions: What material(s) do artists use? What do the artists want to say with these materials and how do they do it? Using these guidelines will bring historians and curators much closer to the artworks and the artists' expressions. In my opinion, these two questions open up a discursive field in which cultural identity, materiality and artists' statements can be explored and evaluated in a global and regional context.

Bridging the biennale topic from ceramics to batik, I would like to comment that the Jogja International Batik Biennale (JIBB) is quite a different event than the Jakarta Contemporary Ceramics Biennale (JCCB). As an event organised by the Indonesian government, JIBB is not a contemporary art biennale, but rather has a batik fair character. Consequently, there are no exhibition catalogues with accompanying essays. In general, documentation of the several editions of JIBB are very scarce. For these reasons I decided to dispense with any close examination of JIBB in this thesis.

3.2.3 Four Ceramist Generations and their Styles – What Ceramists Create and What They Call It

Three Currents within Modern Ceramics

In the era of modern ceramics (1960–2000s) there were three well-known styles of currents. The first current was characterised by ceramists who created ceramic objects that resembled pottery and were made with the turning technique and a potter's wheel. Such ceramic works were characterised by the sensitivity of the handmade moulding process. The second current consisted of sculptures which were usually formed without a wheel. These sculptures showed a wide variety of forms and were typified by the choice of clay and their formal languages. In the third current ceramists created installations with combinations of different objects such as shards of clay, fired ceramic objects, unfired clay that they freely combined with other materials and objects. For these ceramic installations the handmade aspect was secondary, while the artistic statement and concept were more important.⁶⁶⁶

Categories of Contemporary Ceramics

Yogyakarta curator and *ISI Yogyakarta* graduate Sujud Dartanto describes three categories that have become established in the discourse on ceramic art. He calls them the Decorative, the Sculpture and the Object. Decorative ceramics refers to ceramics that generate their message primarily through their decorative elements. They are therefore not necessarily an entirely decorative object but a ceramic work that contains decorative elements. The decorative elements may be small, large, numerous or limited in number, but they make up the main statement of the ceramic work. An example are Noor's pots from her work *Menuju Hybrid?* (2020) (Figure C15), which are reminiscent of the function of a pot which however merges with decorative elements at its rim. The sculpture category refers to ceramic works that are similar to sculptural works made by other media such as bronze and which are exhibited free-standing on a plinth. Ceramic sculptures, in contrast to bronze, are not hollow but completely solid. Sujud further narrows down the formal language of the sculptures by stipulating that all sculptures contain an association with humans, animals or natural objects. Most of Endang Lestari's ceramic works belong to this category. Her artworks often show human figures or a combination of different organic forms. The clear delimitation of

⁶⁶⁶ Ichsan, *Mengenal Seni Keramik Modern*, 66-7.

associations to humans, animals or natural objects is understandable when the category of objects is looked at more closely. Ceramic art categorised as object is abstract in its formal language and has no reference to humans, animals or natural objects. It is the form itself which gets explored and developed. Often these ceramic works strongly deal with material experiments of clay such as experiments with firing, glazes, but also with mixtures of different media.⁶⁶⁷

In summary, I did not come across these three categories in published form, but only in the oral discourse on ceramic exhibitions. My conclusion is that these categories serve as a tool for curators to structure and speak on different ceramic artworks in exhibitions.

Four Ceramist Generations

Several contemporary art events in Yogyakarta provide outlets for ceramic art. These include events, like ArtJog, Jogja Art Weeks (JAW), Festival Kesenian Yogyakarta (FKY) and Bumbon⁶⁶⁸. ISI Yogyakarta organises regular exhibitions for alumni and ceramists. The ceramics collective IWAK, founded by and for ISI Yogyakarta ceramics students, has organised ceramics exhibitions twice.

Although, since 2010, several art and ceramics exhibitions have taken place, Indonesia's ceramics scene is still modest and manageable. This is, because ceramic art was established quite recently, in the 1960s and 1970s. Since then, the scene is represented by four ceramic generations. First-generation ceramists mostly worked in Bandung or Jakarta and have already passed away. Second-generation ceramists are still active and live in Bandung, Jakarta and Yogyakarta, like Hendrawan Riyanto in Bandung, Engsing in Jakarta and Noor Sudiyati in Yogyakarta. The third generation in Bandung is represented by Asmudjo Jono Irianto and Rifky Effendi and forms a solid basis for an emerging discourse on ceramic art. Yogyakarta's third generation is represented by Leli, Endang Lestari and Dwita Anja Asmara, and in Jakarta by Nia Gautama, Evy Yonathan, Antin Semboda and Lidia Poetri.⁶⁶⁹

Fourth generation ceramists graduated from ITB, IKJ or ISI in the last five to ten years. What unites them all, says curator and ceramist Sujud Dartanto, is their search for a development of

⁶⁶⁷ Interview with Sujud Dartanto, *Sculpture, Decorative and Object*, 9th January 2022.

⁶⁶⁸ *Bumbon* is an annual art exhibition in Yogyakarta, that was launched in 2016 at Sangkring Art Space. Ceramic objects, textile art and other media are exhibited. For further information and images see: 'Bumbon', IndoArtNow, 19th April 2016, <https://indoartnow.com/exhibitions/bumbon> (last visit 20th December 2022) and 'Bumbon #2', *Sangkring Art* (blog), 17th February 2017, <https://sangkringart.com/bumbon-2/> (last visit 20th December 2022).

⁶⁶⁹ Dwita Anja Asmara is a bit older than Endang Lestari. Lidia Poetri is about the same age as Dwita Anja Asmara. In the third generation, ceramic artists have several years of age differences. Interview with Sujud Dartanto, *Ceramic Artists*, 15th May 2023.

forms, ideas and techniques by using clay. These ceramic graduates create different ceramic art in terms of form and style, depending on their institution. Until around the last five years, the influence of the three art universities ITB, IKJ and ISI, was noticeable in the ceramic style practised in their respective city (Bandung, Jakarta and Yogyakarta). In Bandung, a fine art spirit, acquired from the US, by the two Indonesian painters Eddie Kartasubarna and Angkama Setiadipradja, was clearly noticeable, in that personal expression was central to ceramic artworks with a tendency to formalism. Formalism became predominant in the form of sculptures, which gradually gained popularity in Bandung's contemporary ceramic practice. The Jakarta style of the fourth generation was like the Bandung style, because some ITB graduates of the third generation had been working as lecturers at IKJ. Some experts assert, that the Jakarta style was less formalistic and incorporated more international influences. In Yogyakarta, artists of the fourth generation created a wide variety of artworks, but often with strong *kriya* characteristics. Elements of Javanese cultural heritage still resonated in their contemporary ceramics' practises. Their ceramic objects were characterised by craftsmanship and Javanese decorations. ITB focused on personal expression and formalism, because their ceramics course was launched by two painters at the Fine Art Department and has continued to this day.⁶⁷⁰ In Jakarta, ceramics was placed in the Craft Department, where a ceramic course was offered by Hildawati Soemantri, a fine art artist and ITB graduate. Therefore, the orientation of IKJ's ceramic course was similar to that, at ITB. In Yogyakarta, a ceramic course was also placed in the Craft Department and complemented with Kasongan's technical pottery knowledge. Therefore, ISI Yogyakarta's ceramic course was strongly craft-based. However, ceramics expert and co-founder of the BakarTanahLab collective (a ceramics collective in Yogyakarta), Dian Hardiansyah, asserts that, in the last five years, ceramic objects cannot be assigned anymore to the style of ITB, IKJ or ISI, because Indonesia's ceramic scene has become very lively and less formal. Young graduates find their own ceramic language, independently from their art university's style.

Yogyakarta's Fourth Ceramists Generation

Traditional *kriya* artworks are created by collectives and cannot be assigned to a single artist. Often, these artworks are created with traditional formal elements and Javanese *kriya* philosophy in mind. Today's fourth generation ceramic artists work individually but draw inspiration from traditional *kriya* practises and philosophy. They are interested in mastering

⁶⁷⁰ Interview with Asmudjo Jono Irianto, *The Position of Art and Kriya Today*, 10th February 2023.

their materials and create artworks with high craftsmanship.⁶⁷¹ One example is ISI graduate Apri Susanto, who co-founded the Matra Kriya Fest, and runs his own ceramics studio called Avatar Boutique, where he produces ceramic goods, sells ceramic utensils and regularly creates his ceramic artworks. Apri went to an artistic high school and majored in wood craft. This training gave him a technical advantage during his craft studies at ISI Yogyakarta. He chose to study ceramics, because he was interested in processing clay, and in philosophical aspects of the material. Apri states, that working with clay is reading ourselves as human beings, since we come from the earth. For Apri, fire as a form of purity, and through the process of burning, purification is achieved, therefore fired clay is a form of purity and also a form of essence.⁶⁷²

Apri does not use Hindu-Javanese ornaments or other traditional Javanese decorations in his work. But his ceramic objects demonstrate a deep engagement with Javanese philosophy.⁶⁷³ Representing Yogyakarta's young ceramic scene, Apri was selected as one of five artists to work with the Hotel Gaia Cosmo. He was commissioned to create a piece of art for the swimming pool area. His work *The Flow of Life* (2018) (Figure C16) consists of numerous oversized ceramic beads, that hang on vertical wires on a wall in front of the swimming pool. This work is typical for Yogyakarta's young ceramists. Free of traditional Javanese ornaments, ceramists experiment at a technical level, seeking appropriate forms and statements, that refer to contemporary ceramics, and to Indonesian cultural and social aspects. Fourth generation ceramists do not shy away from using popular idioms and designs and mix them with their own ideas. Apri's work *The Flow of Life*, exudes a Javanese wisdom, despite the pop art allusion, that results in bright and commercial colours. According to Apri, his beads on wire symbolise our life from birth to death, with its many colours, that stand for work and other activities and events, we experience during life. Other artworks of Apri's hands, demonstrate his engagement with the essence of traditional Javanese culture. This essence is not clearly evident in his formal language, but in his ceramic art practice. He manages to speak a contemporary ceramic language that, addresses social issues with a Javanese philosophical approach. His spiritual artistic practice, which is accompanied by meditation, is also characterised by a great interest in technique and material

⁶⁷¹ Interview with Sujud Dartanto, *Galeri Benda*, 21st May 2021; interview with Sujud Dartanto, *Postcolonial Concept and Theory*, 20th July 2021.

⁶⁷² Interview with Apri Susanto, *Exhibit Ceramics*, 10th December 2022.

⁶⁷³ Unfortunately, Apri did not document a lot of his artworks. Therefore, I cannot provide any picture of artworks that would show these philosophical aspects. Interview with Apri Susanto, *Exhibit Ceramics*, 10th December 2022; interview with Satya Brahmantya, *Batik and Ceramic Artists, Islamic Purification*, 2nd September 2022.

experimentation.⁶⁷⁴ This sets him apart from many young ceramists in Yogyakarta who have a high level of craftsmanship, but simply borrow idioms from other ceramists. They lack an independent and strong ceramic language and semiotic knowledge, to make more precise statements through their works. Many young ceramic artists underestimate Java's cultural potential of inspiration and reference system for the arts. As a result, their works seem interchangeable and not mature enough, to create a powerful meaning.

Ceramics Between Javanese Tradition and Contemporary Art

ISI Yogyakarta ceramics graduates find themselves in a tension between a formal richness of traditional Javanese ornamentation and contemporary ceramic languages. To be successful, they must find their own artistic approach, between these two fields, relating to them without copying them flatly. Ceramic artist Endang Lestari creates strong works with *kriya* philosophy and without involving Javanese ornamentation. Nevertheless, her works are formally interesting and have independent and individual expressions. As a successful ceramic artist and ISI Yogyakarta alumna, Endang has pursued her ceramic career since 2000 and have become known internationally. She has exhibited in Japan, Singapore, Australia, the Principality of Liechtenstein and various other countries. Endang has devoted her ceramics to several thematic areas, for example, to social issues in Indonesia, which she translated into figurative ceramics with a conceptual and intellectual approach (Figure C17). Endang is also concerned with topics of relationship between man and nature and the protection of nature. With these themes in mind, she creates unfigurative works, in which materials, modifications of natural forms and arrangements of different objects come together in an installation (Figure C18).

3.3 Contemporary Ceramics

3.3.1 Collections, Exhibitions and Events

Indonesia's ceramics collections are rare, because until recent years, ceramics were not regarded worth collecting. In contrast to batik, ceramics and pottery were not part of the six

⁶⁷⁴ Interview with Satya Brahmantya, *HTI and Jogja Ceramic Artists*, 3rd September 2022; interview with Sujud Dartanto, *Creative Industry & The Contemporary Kriya Discourse*, 15th January 2023; interview with Apri Susanto, *Exhibit Ceramics*, 10th December 2022.

royal fine arts and got minor appreciation and preservation.⁶⁷⁵ This situation was exacerbated by the fact that, it was uncommon in the Archipelago to keep and archive original objects for a long time. Most of today's museums are based on colonial-era predecessors, that were built by the Dutch. These museums are located in Java, because this island served as an important transport hub and centre of power for the colonial rulers. Until today, Java is the most populated region in Indonesia and governmental and financial actors are based in Jakarta. The few art and *kriya* museums are based in Java, mainly in the cities of Jakarta, Bandung, Yogyakarta, Surakarta, Surabaya and Pekalongan. In this Section, I present specific ceramics museums, exhibitions and events. Although Indonesia's ceramics scene is still relatively manageable, a comprehensive presentation of all institutions and events would go beyond the scope of this thesis. I listed Yogyakarta's ceramic events and exhibitions in the appendix of this work and describe the most important ones here. I do not limit myself to the city of Yogyakarta, but to Java, because important ceramic museums and exhibitions are located in Jakarta. The masterminds and founders of these ceramic events come from ITB Bandung, which is still considered as a birthplace of Indonesian ceramics. Interestingly, Bandung has not established as a city for ceramics exhibitions. When ceramists, like Asmudjo and Rifky from Bandung, started to organise ceramics exhibitions, they chose art venues in Jakarta, because it was easier there, to reach an international audience. According to Asmudjo, Bandung does not offer a big enough art community to serve as an audience for ceramics exhibitions.⁶⁷⁶

In Yogyakarta, there are ceramic associations of younger generations, who plan to establish ceramic exhibitions and events. It will be interesting to observe, how they will present ceramics and whether they will find their own way, to do so or, whether they will copy ceramic exhibition formats from Jakarta.

Currently, there is only one Yogyakarta museum, that exhibits ceramics, namely the Sonobudoyo Museum, which preserves and displays Indonesian cultural assets in a historical cultural context.

⁶⁷⁵ Kasongan's beautiful and sophisticated pottery objects emerged in an industrial setting, so that these objects were not meant to be a pure work of art. They were not collected by museums but were exported.

⁶⁷⁶ Asmudjo asserts, that Bandung has not an art atmosphere like Yogyakarta or Jakarta. This makes the establishment of art events in Bandung quite difficult. Jakarta is geographically close to Bandung, so that most art events take place in Jakarta. Interview with Asmudjo Jono Irianto, *The Position of Art and Kriya Today*, 10th February 2023.

Museum Sonobudoyo

Initially, colonial rulers wanted to study cultures of Java, Madura, Bali and Lombok and founded the *Java Instituut* for this purpose. The 1919-founded institute organised a congress in Surakarta in 1924. During that venue, its members decided to establish a museum with collections of artefacts from these four regions. In 1935, this museum, which was built in the style of a traditional Javanese house (*Joglo House*), was opened. The museum's is Javanese and consists of the words *Sono* (place) and *Budoyo* (culture). Since 1939, museum activities have been supported by the *Sekolah Kerajinan Seni Ukir* (Wood Carving School), which was founded for this purpose. In 1974, the Sonobudoyo Museum was placed in state hands, the Ministry of Education and Culture. Sonobudoyo has ten types of collections, like a heraldic, biological, geological, archaeological and a ceramic collection. The ceramic collection contains artefacts from the Neolithic period and includes statues and bronze objects from 8th to 10th centuries' temples of Central Java, and leather dolls, masks, a gamelan orchestra, ancient weapons, looms and other old valuable objects from Bali. The museum owns the second most complete collection of cultural artefacts, after the Central Museum in Jakarta. Newer ceramic objects, which are not considered artefacts, but works of art, are not exhibited in the museum. However, the Sonobudoyo Museum strives to be a living museum, that is not just a custodian of artefacts, but a cultural agent, that makes the treasures of cultural heritage visible and links them to contemporary arts. The museum tries to be an interesting place for all generations, for domestic as well as foreign tourists. It intends to attract and stimulate visitors, by exposing various participatory elements. Numerous events are organised regularly, like art, theatre and dance competitions, fashion shows⁶⁷⁷, an art exhibition called AMEX, various talks, training courses, free courses and lectures on topics like deciphering ancient Javanese scripts or reflecting on exhibition practices.⁶⁷⁸ The museum maintains a very active Instagram account with over 25,000 followers and about 1800 posts.⁶⁷⁹ It is quite

⁶⁷⁷ For a cross-institutional event called *Welcome Back To Museum*, a Fashion Day, accompanied by traditional dances, was held at the Sonobudoyo Museum on 19th November 2022. The museum strives for collaboration between fashion shows and museums as an innovative event format. The following day, museum ambassadors from the generation of 2012-2022 met to strengthen intergenerational relationships and discuss innovations in museum practice. These efforts were made with the larger goal of establishing the Special Region of Yogyakarta as a museum city. 'Museum Sonobudoyo (@sonobudoyo)', Instagram, 2022, <https://www.instagram.com/sonobudoyo/> (last visit 13th December 2022).

⁶⁷⁸ For example, the Museum Sonobudoyo participated in a conference of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) that took place on 24th August 2022. In this conference missions and tasks of museums in general were discussed and new points were added to a list of tasks for museums. The management of the Sonobudoyo Museum got their museum practice confirmed, because it was in line with the missions and tasks formulated in the conference. The Sonobudoyo Museum would like to include different educational experiences and establish a lively exchange of knowledge. Furthermore, inclusion and participation should be clearly promoted and lived. 'Museum Sonobudoyo (@sonobudoyo)', Instagram, 2022, <https://www.instagram.com/sonobudoyo/> (last visit 13th December 2022).

⁶⁷⁹ For example, the Museum of Fine Arts & Ceramics in Jakarta has only 146 posts with 1800 followers. Instagram has become an important channel for Indonesian artists, craftspeople and even bigger institutions to provide information on their

conceivable, that the museum will also exhibit contemporary ceramics with reference to cultural heritage in the future.⁶⁸⁰

Museum Seni Rupa dan Keramik

The construction of the *Museum Seni Rupa dan Keramik* (Museum of Fine Arts & Ceramics⁶⁸¹) building, dates to colonial times, but the impetus and idea for such a museum came about in the 1970s. In the late 20th century, some old colonial buildings in Jakarta were transformed into museums. The today's Museum of Fine Arts & Ceramics building was constructed by the Dutch in Batavia (now Jakarta) in 1870 and the Justice Council. In 1974, it was renovated, and the Vice City President Adam Malik suggested to use it as a *balai seni rupa* (public art space). In 1977, part of the building was segregated, to create a ceramics museum. In 1990, the entire building was reunited and became the Museum of Fine Arts & Ceramics. The museum has a fine art collection of about 450 paintings and drawings, dating from 1880 to the 1990s. The ceramics collection comprises about 5,000 objects from different parts of the Archipelago, some of which show objects from sunken ships, and ceramics from the 14th century Majapahit era. It includes works by Indonesian and foreign ceramic artists, authorless ceramics made by ceramic craft centres in Indonesia. The collection is further enriched by foreign ceramics from Japan, China, Thailand and Europe. The museum strives to be an active participant in contemporary ceramics. Thus, it supported the second Jakarta Contemporary Ceramics Biennale as a partner and exhibition venue in 2012/2013.

Jakarta Contemporary Ceramic Biennale (JCCB) Venues

Likewise, the North Art Space (NAS) served as a second exhibition venue for that biennale. NAS already served as an exhibition venue for the first Jakarta Contemporary Ceramics

work. Often, a well-established Instagram account replaces a proper website. The application Instagram is for free and favours the use of a smartphone instead of a computer. Most Indonesians have a smartphone but not necessarily a computer. The number of followers and posts of the Museum of Fine Arts & Ceramics refers to status in mid-December 2022. 'Mitra Museum Jakarta (@mitramuseumjkt)', Instagram, 2022, <https://www.instagram.com/mitramuseumjkt/> (last visit 15th December 2022).

⁶⁸⁰ 'Sonobudoyo Museum Tourism', Indonesia-Tourism.com, 1998-2019, <https://www.indonesia-tourism.com/yogyakarta/sonobudoyo-museum.html> (last visit 13th December 2022); 'History' Museum Sonobudoyo Yogyakarta, 2022, <https://www.sonobudoyo.com/en/museum/sejarah> (last visit 13th December 2022); 'Museum Sonobudoyo (@sonobudoyo)', Instagram, 2022, <https://www.instagram.com/sonobudoyo/> (last visit 13th December 2022).

⁶⁸¹ It is also known as Mitra Museum Jakarta, <https://www.mitramuseumjakarta.quastechnologies.com/> (last visit 14th December 2022).

Biennale in 2009/2010.⁶⁸² For JCCB's third edition, the two venues were no longer chosen, but replaced by a larger exhibition space, namely the National Gallery in Jakarta.

During the last years, JCCB's curators became more professional, so that the exhibition venue and the exhibitors were in a business relationship with each other. Responsible people of exhibitions, who were often curators and organisers at the same time, became increasingly important in the ceramic art world.

A whole series of ceramics exhibitions have taken place since the 1970s, and became more numerous after 2004. Those exhibitions were held mainly in Jakarta, Bandung and Yogyakarta. Many exhibitions were held between 2011 and 2013. New exhibitions from individual ceramic groups increasingly emerged in 2018. I will discuss a few interesting examples in the following Section, the remainder are listed in the appendix of this thesis.

Cultural Exchange Programmes and Foundations

Indonesia's contemporary ceramics have been positively influenced by an increasing number of ceramic exhibitions in Taiwan and South Korea. In 2008, a group exhibition entitled *The Light of Millennium Of Korean Ceramics* was held under the banner of a cultural exchange and showed works from South Korean and Indonesian ceramists. The exhibition was organised by the Icheon Ceramic Art Association in Senayan City in Jakarta.

Often, foreign institutions act as important donors, with funding for culture and arts. Their focus is not necessarily on joint exhibitions, like in the example before, but culture is promoted in a broad sense. For example, in 2015 the *Lembaga Indonesia-Jerman* (Indonesian-German Institute) organised a ceramics group exhibition entitled *Story of Earth and Fire*, where only Indonesian artists showed their ceramic artworks. The 1972 established Japan Foundation, promotes Japanese international cultural exchanges and has become an important supporter of Indonesian culture and ceramics. The Japan Foundation has numerous seats abroad, like in Asia, Europe, Russia, Egypt, USA, Canada and Brazil.⁶⁸³ In Indonesia, its headquarters are in Jakarta, with premises, where solo exhibitions can be held. For example, in 2006 and 2009, young ceramic Jakarta artist Nia Gautama, and Bandung artist Nurdian

⁶⁸² 'Garis Waktu Sejarah', Mitra Museum Jakarta, 2022,

<https://www.mitramuseumjakarta.quastechnologies.com/new/seni>; 'Museum of Fine Arts & Ceramics', *Jakarta Contemporary Ceramic Biennale 2012/2013, Crafting Identity, Galeri Nasional Indonesia*, 21st December 2012 - 20th January 2013; 'North Art Space (NAS)', *Jakarta Contemporary Ceramic Biennale 2012/2013, Crafting Identity, Galeri Nasional Indonesia*, 2013. The North Art Space was opened in 2009 within the *Pasar Seni*, or Art Market, a permanent venue covering five hectares, containing 114 studios and a theatre arena. *Pasar Seni* is part of the Ancol Dreamland, a tourist park in North Jakarta built in 1976. 'Home', Ancol, 2020, <https://korporat.ancol.com/sejarah-ancol--85> (last visit 14th December 2022).

⁶⁸³ 'About Us', The Japan Foundation, <https://www.jpf.go.jp/e/about/index.html> (last visit 15th December 2022).

Ichsan displayed their ceramics in a duo and solo exhibition.⁶⁸⁴ The Japan Foundation also regularly facilitates residencies in Japan for Indonesian artists.⁶⁸⁵

Chitaru Kawasaki – Japanese Ceramist and Ceramic Supporter in Central Java

Another important figure for the support of Indonesian ceramics is Japanese ceramic artist and lecturer Chitaru Kawasaki, who dedicated over 25 years of his life to ceramic art in Indonesia. He commuted between a pottery village in Bayat, Klaten (Central Java) and Kyoto to establish an exchange programme for ceramists, that was funded by the Kyoto Seika University. He promoted research and development of terra cotta in Klaten and has become familiar with its community. After his retirement in 2008, he founded an art school there and a secondary school with an art profile called SMK N 1 ROTA BAYAT, that opened in 2009. Teaching ceramics has always been an important concern of Chitaru Kawasaki, so that he accompanied various ceramics exhibitions with workshops. He carried them out under the title *Ceramics Putaran Miring I* (Ceramics of the Angled Wheel I) in 2000, and again in 2007. Both exhibitions and workshops took place at Bentara Budaya Jakarta.⁶⁸⁶

The Birth of a Jakarta Contemporary Ceramics Biennale

When Asmudjo Jono Irianto organised the Indonesia Young Ceramic Artist exhibition at the National Gallery in Jakarta in 2004, nobody would have believed that it would become the most important and best-known ceramics biennial in Indonesia. On the one hand, the focus of large exhibitions was still on fine art, on the other hand, it was still a challenge to find the necessary financial means for a large exhibition. But the difficult circumstances did not stop Asmudjo and together with Rifky Effendy he managed to organise a renowned ceramics exhibition in 2009, which they then confidently called Indonesia Contemporary Ceramics Biennale. Somewhat belatedly, the second edition took place in December 2012 and January 2013 – the exhibition was renamed Jakarta Contemporary Ceramics Biennale, or JCCB for short. So far, the fifth edition has taken place in 2018/2019. In the course of its staging, the JCCB has gained in professionalism, especially the documentation and accompanying

⁶⁸⁴ Nia Gautama had a duo exhibition in 2006 with a Japanese ceramist. Their exhibition was entitled *Come'n Play in our Backyard*. Nurdian Ichsan's solo exhibition *Nowhere Man* took place in 2009.

⁶⁸⁵ For example, in 2008, Nurdian Ichsan was granted a residency at the Shigaraki Ceramic Cultural Park in Koka.

⁶⁸⁶ 'Chitaru Kawasaki', *The 5th ICCB 2018 - 2019* (blog), 7th December 2012, <https://jakartacontemporaryceramic.wordpress.com/history-of-the-jccb/jccb2-dec-2012-jan-2013/artists/chitaru-kawasaki/> (last visit 16th December 2022).

programmes have been expanded. Insightful interviews with ceramic artists and the curators involved in the JCCB have been captured through short YouTube videos and are embedded in the comprehensive JCCB #5 website. In addition to this major event, numerous smaller exhibitions were launched by ceramic collectives in Bandung, Surabaya and Yogyakarta.

Two Collectives: Ruang Bakar and BakarTanahLab

The Yogyakarta ceramic collective Ruang Bakar (room for firing/fuel) is led by ceramic artists and ISI Yogyakarta alumni Apri Susanto and Rosanto Bima Pratama. In 2018, they organised an exhibition called *Ruang Bakar – Pameran Seni Keramik* (Fuel – Ceramic Art Exhibition) at Pendhapa Art Space. 13 ceramists from Yogyakarta, including Apri Susanto and Noor Sudiyati, exhibited their works. The week-long exhibition was accompanied by ceramic workshops. The event was supported by private individuals and by Dinas Kebudayaan Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta (the Cultural Office of the Special Region of Yogyakarta).

The collective's activities declined after 2019/2020. On the one hand the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak made cultural events impossible, on the other hand Apri Susanto and Rosanto Bima Pratama had other professional ideas for future. While Apri devoted himself to his own studio Avatar, Rosanto got more assignments as a young curator. In 2022, the collective got a fresh boost from ceramist Dian Hardyansyah, who had returned to Yogyakarta after completing his Master's degree in Nanjing, China. Dian took up the collective and proposed to continue it under a new name: BakarTanahLab (Firing Clay Lab). He has a great interest in working collectively and collaborating with other ceramic collectives. The collective's name translates as firing clay laboratory, which provides information on why and how this collective is outstanding. Dian asserts that, BakarTanahLab is a ceramic laboratory, where material experiments, development and discursive discussions with research are practised.⁶⁸⁷

Besides BakarTanahLab, there are mostly ceramic studios of single ceramists. In these studios utilitarian ceramics are produced and workshops for domestic and international tourists are offered. Some of these ceramists pursue artistic projects. Examples are Buntari Studio, Lucita Keramik and Avatar Studio.

In the following Section I will present two women ceramists, who are both established artists in Yogyakarta. This selection is not representative of age and gender. In the 1960s and 1970s,

⁶⁸⁷ Interview with Dian Hardyansyah, *Peluang Keramik dan Wacana Keramik*, 10th March 2022. Dian's full name is Nur Jamil Hardyansyah.

when ceramics became popular in Indonesia, men and women have been working with ceramics equally. I chose the two women ceramists Noor Sudiyati and Dona Arissuta, because of their strong reference to Javanese cultural values. I observed that, elder Yogyakarta artists often refer to Javanese cultural values, which distinguishes their ceramic approach from Bandung and Jakarta ceramists. Both Noor and Dona found an interesting and individual approach to refer to these values. For Yogyakarta's fourth ceramic generation, these cultural values play a less important role, so that today, Yogyakarta ceramics comprises an interesting diversity in terms of form, material, technique, content and cultural values.

3.3.2 Understanding the Spirit of Clay – Noor Sudiyati (1962 -)

Noor Sudiyati's Life and Work

Noor Sudiyati was interested in art from a very early age. From the time she was able to determine her own professional career, she always chose art, especially ceramics. It seems that ceramics have had a special attraction for Noor ever since. Several times during her education she made sure that she could expand her knowledge of ceramic technique, material and design language.⁶⁸⁸

Born in Blabak, near Magelang (Central Java), Noor grew up with her siblings in a large family where Javanese cultural values were important. Her first childhood memory of ceramics was a large clay barrel used to store drinking water. Often neighbours would ask Noor's family for medicine, meaning some of the special water from the clay barrel. It was Noor's job to scoop water from the big barrel with her hands for the neighbours. This story reflects the value of *kriya* objects, which in Javanese culture are not only utilitarian objects, but often have a connection to customs, certain beliefs, and healing power. At high school age, Noor decided to leave home to continue education, a step that some of her brothers had already exemplified for her. She attended an arts high school in Yogyakarta, majoring in decoration. At that time ceramics was not yet a major study programme, so Noor could only learn ceramics for two semesters. Even then, though, she realised that ceramics gave her deep joy and she resolved to learn as much as she could about ceramics.⁶⁸⁹

In 1979, Noor began her wood craft studies at the Sekolah Tinggi Seni Rupa Indonesia (STSRI), a predecessor of today's art university ISI Yogyakarta. Noor would have preferred

⁶⁸⁸ Akbar, 'Kajian Bentuk, Gaya, Dan Makna Sibolik Keramik Noor Sudiyati'.

⁶⁸⁹ Interview with Noor Sudiyati, *Ceramics Philosophy*, 6th June 2021.

to major in ceramics, but this possibility did not exist at the time, so she switched to the wood course and was able to minor in ceramics. At STSRI Noor attended all the courses and subjects that had to do with ceramics with enthusiasm; she seemed to just soak up knowledge about ceramics. When she finished her studies in 1989, she decided to finally devote herself fully to ceramics, as she had long felt that this was her element to work with artistically. Therefore, she decided to travel to Bali to study ceramics with the artist Agung Oka. She also had the opportunity to deepen her ceramic skills in other cities in Bali. Her decision to travel to Bali and stay there for a long term is all the more remarkable because Noor was already married at that time (1986) and had a child, who she took with her. After two years in Bali, Noor had gained enough experience and skills to return to Yogyakarta and open a ceramic studio together with her husband. In 1990 they founded the Studio Keramik Kreatif. Noor well remembers her first customer order from Miyako, the first Japanese restaurant in Yogyakarta, which needed an entire tableware set for their opening in 1991. At that time, Noor and her husband did not yet have their own kiln. Therefore, they had to rent a kiln from the Centre for Development and Education called P3GK. This required precise planning for their clay work so that they could make the best use of the kiln in the few free time windows. As the kiln was used by P3GK students during the day, Noor and her husband worked at night, firing their products until 4 o'clock in the morning. After this experience, Noor and her husband considered building their own kiln.⁶⁹⁰

Over the years, the Studio Keramik Kreatif grew larger, with several employees working there. The studio's trademark was a particularly beautiful green glaze that was applied in many designs. Noor recalled that their product range did not follow a single style, but they produced contemporary, classic and traditional products with great freedom. By traditional products, however, Noor did not mean the terracotta vessels that are fired at low temperatures in Kasongan without being glazed, but described in more detail how, in her studio, products were created that "continued the tradition". This meant, for example, that Noor took her inspiration from traditional food containers folded from banana leaves. She translated these interesting yet very familiar forms into her ceramic objects, which in turn served as food containers. For example, there is a *pincuk*, a banana leaf folded on one end into a triangle which then serves as a flat bowl for rice with vegetables like the popular dish *gado-gado*.⁶⁹¹ When the banana leaf is folded around on all edges like a bowl, it is called *sudi*, and it is used

⁶⁹⁰ Interview with Noor Sudiyati, *Ceramics Philosophy*, 6th June 2021.

⁶⁹¹ *Gado-gado* is a typical Javanese meal with steamed vegetables, raw tomato and cucumber served with a spicy peanut sauce and white rice.

for cakes. There are around ten different shapes used for different dishes.⁶⁹² To close the banana leaf containers, long wire-like fibres of the coconut plant are used. Unfortunately, Noor had not documented any of these ceramic products and no longer makes them, as her ceramic activity shifted over time from product making to ceramic art.⁶⁹³

Only one year after opening her ceramic studio Noor started teaching in the Craft Department of ISI Yogyakarta. When ceramics could be chosen as a major from 1993, it was clear that Noor would take over as head of ceramics. In addition to her leadership role and her work as a lecturer, she completed her Master's degree at ISI Yogyakarta and graduated in 2003. Noor is still teaching at ISI Yogyakarta to this day. Even though the 1990s are considered Noor's most productive artistic period, she has always continued creating her ceramic art. Her artistic activity, which runs like a thread through her life, is considerable as, in addition to teaching at ISI, she also raised three children with her husband and, in 2012, gained a Doctoral degree from the Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM).⁶⁹⁴

Referring to Politics

Noor Sudiyati's artistic works are informed by her Javanese faith and spirituality. Nevertheless, she has occasionally addressed political events with her works, such as *Donut Demokrasi* (Figure C19) in 1997. This artwork shows a gloomy donut with thorns, which refers to "the case of Udin", a political event that was omnipresent among the Indonesian population in 1996 and 1997. Udin, full name Fuad Muhammad Syafruddin, was an Indonesian journalist working for the daily newspaper *Bernas*. He wrote several articles about a development project in Parangtritis (Yogyakarta) that caused environmental destruction, land conflicts and other negative consequences. He also wrote about rigged elections and misappropriation of government funds in several villages in the Bantul district (Yogyakarta). Among these cases was a relative of Suharto who embezzled money as the head of a district. It is believed that Udin's exposure and publication of these corrupt schemes cost him his life; he was assassinated in 1996. However, "the case of Udin" became notorious, not only because of this gruesome murder, but especially because of the reaction of civil society, which massively rebelled against this injustice. Events took place in the following order: first, the

⁶⁹² For images of eight different banana leaf food containers see: redaksi, 'Ternyata Ada 8 Tradisi Membungkus Makanan Pakai Daun Pisang, Ini Arti Masing-masingnya', *KlikPositif.com - Media Generasi Positif* (blog), 28 July 2020, <https://klikpositif.com/ternyata-ada-8-tradisi-membungkus-makanan-pakai-daun-pisang-ini-arti-masing-masingnya/>.

⁶⁹³ Interview with Noor Sudiyati, *Ceramics Philosophy*, 6th June 2021.

⁶⁹⁴ Akbar, 'Kajian Bentuk, Gaya, Dan Makna Simbolik Keramik Noor Sudiyati', 56–64.; personal communication with Noor Sudiyati, 25th April 2024.

police said they were looking for a suspect, and they found one by arresting a driver for an advertising company. However, the driver, named Iwik, was innocent. Through this arbitrary arrest, the police and authorities tried to get “the case of Udin” out of the way as quickly as possible. However, their action achieved the opposite. In order to thwart the authority’s cover-up, several commissions of enquiry were formed by society groups, such as independent journalists’ associations. These commissions of enquiry incessantly commented and reported on the current state of the arrested man Iwik, so that the civilian population was well informed about the work of the state’s investigating authority. It became known that the police had made a one-sided selection of witnesses and also manipulated their statements by means of bribery. This was not an isolated case of such corrupt legal proceedings in the Suharto era, but a textbook example of a cruel and militaristic sham democracy. Events spilled over when Iwik was charged despite the lack of evidence. Demonstrations and solidarity actions among the population followed, and prominent national lawyers in Indonesia also backed Iwik, so that he was finally acquitted in 1997.⁶⁹⁵

Noor’s artwork is a metaphor for the painful and tragedy-ridden democracy efforts in Indonesia in the 1980s and 1990s. For Noor, it is clear that “the case of Udin” stands for numerous tragedies that occurred due to the corrupt and arbitrary legal system in the Suharto era. She regrets that courageous compatriots, such as the journalist Udin, who had exercised his democratic rights (freedom of the press), were punished with threats or even murder. Noor sees the problem not only as being against journalists, but notes that many individual voices, opinions and analyses within the population also remained suppressed.⁶⁹⁶

The artwork *Donut Demokrasi* was made of Pacitan clay, a clay from East Java that Noor likes to use for its homogeneous and shape-retaining properties. The artist mixed the clay with another clay from Tangerang (West Jakarta) to increase its malleability and strength. To obtain the dark colour, Noor mixed in manggan paint and added chamotte to achieve the donut’s rough texture. Using the pinch technique and the *piji* technique (a kind of massage technique), she shaped the donut and its spines. Multiple firings and a partial application of glaze completed the production process. Noor intends to represent the violence of the regime through the object’s rough texture. The donut stands for the sweet temptation of democracy, but it is decorated with sharp thorns. Noor has thus succeeded in creating a clear metaphor for the Indonesian democracy of the time, which, when citizens tried to make use of it, hurt themselves, just like eating a donut with thorns that would rip your throat apart on the spot.

⁶⁹⁵ Andreas Ufen, *Herrschaftsfiguration Und Demokratisierung in Indonesien*, 348 (Hamburg: Deutsches Übersee-Institut Hamburg, 2002), 361-2; Noor Sudiyati, "Donat Demokrasi" (Institut Seni Indonesia Yogyakarta, 2019), 1.

⁶⁹⁶ Interview with Noor Sudiyati, *Ceramic Artwork*, 3rd October 2022; Sudiyati, 'Donat Demokrasi', 1-10.

By creating *Donut Demokrasi*, Noor expressed her concerns about the political situation in her country in 1997, while at the same time paying tribute to all those who had the courage to speak out and fight for truth and real democracy. *Donut Demokrasi* has been exhibited several times, including at the National Gallery in Jakarta in 2020. The work is in Noor's private collection.⁶⁹⁷

Thoughts on the Art World in Yogyakarta

Since the end of the Suharto era in 1998, political issues have taken a back seat and other issues related to Western and global influences have taken centre stage. At that same time the return to Javanese culture, questions of national culture as well as local cultures began to become important and still receive great interest and attention in the art world as well as among the population. Noor's artwork *Menuju Hybrid?* (2020) (Figure C15) which translates as: On the Way to Hybrid[ity]? deals with this issue. On the craft level, Noor has created two pot-like vessels for plants that open out into plant tendrils at the top edges. She used the pinch technique with applications of leaves and irregularly-added glaze. In this way, she created hybrid vessels that stand between the pot and the plant. For Noor the two vessels are in dialogue together, like artist and curator, or artwork and viewer. Figuratively, she is making an allusion to contemporary artworks, which she perceives as hybrid – hybrid because these artworks are created with elements of Javanese cultural heritage and elements of the global world. Many young artists use traditional elements that they mix liberally with new stylistic elements to break up traditional design patterns.⁶⁹⁸

The Artwork *Badan Alus Badan Kasar* (2016)

Badan Alus Badan Kasar (Figure C20) was created by Noor in 2016 and exhibited at ISI Yogyakarta's UNDAGI exhibition that same year. The oval shape looks like a three-dimensional closed wide band with a rough unglazed exterior. On the left outer side, the body of the form has elongated undercuts, creating dark caves. The inside of the oval is smooth, glazed and has a pair of spines on the left and right sides. The artwork stands on several pegs that function as feet. Using the pinch and slab technique, Noor created her artwork with the easily mouldable and stable clay from Pacitan (East Java). The clay was left in its original

⁶⁹⁷ Interview with Noor Sudiyati, *Ceramic Artwork*, 3rd October 2022; Sudiyati, 1-10.

⁶⁹⁸ Interview with Noor Sudiyati, *Ceramic Artwork*, 3rd October 2022; Sudiyati, 1-10.

colour and was first fired at 800°C and at 1270°C after glazing. The object, with dimensions 23 x 16 x 45 cm is in Noor's private collection.⁶⁹⁹

Noor's inspiration for *Badan Alus Badan Kasar* stemmed from the embodiment of the human being, which she believes consists of a physical body and a subtle or fine body. *Badan Alus Badan Kasar* translates into Fine Body Coarse Body. Noor explains that the physical body does the eating, working, exercising and socialising for us and it has the five senses. By the fine body, Noor means the soul life, the mind, the emotional world, meditating, contemplating and viewing. The coarse or physical body is for living a worldly life, the fine body is for living spiritual values. The word *alus* is connoted with "going in to the inner" in Javanese culture. In virtue ethics, *alus* is a social value that is considered the core of humanity. Furthermore, a person can be called *alus* when their behaviour is balanced, and an inner strength is noticeable. In other words, a person's spiritual development is called *alus* when it is mature. In her artwork *Badan Alus Badan Kasar*, Noor refers to the physical body of the human being with the haptically rough outside. The inside is smooth and fine and refers to the inner spiritual body of the human being. The thorns can be interpreted as trials of life, such as tragedies in individuals' lives.⁷⁰⁰

Noor grew up in a family where Javanese cultural values were important. This meant that spiritual teachings and soul development were central. She follows a Yogyakarta local religion called *Penghayat Kepercayaan* which can be translated into The Faith of the Ancestors. The religion is supported by *Majelis Luhur Kepercayaan kepada Tuhan yang maha Esa Indonesia* (MLKI), or the Indonesian Supreme Council of Belief in the Almighty God which also supports other local religions in Indonesia. Noor's idea for creating the artwork was therefore closely related to her culture and spirituality. With *Badan Alus Badan Kasar*, Noor expresses the point that human life is not only a physical body, but a true human need is to grow the soul towards awareness in order to understand the meaning of the essence of life. According to Noor, it is a matter of paying equal attention to the gross body and the subtle body in everyday life to attain harmony between the actions and the values of the heart and soul. Noor's work is also about realising that there is a unity of self, of body and soul.⁷⁰¹

Each of Noor's artistic works spring from a phase of reflection on mental and spiritual themes of human life. Noor compares creating a work of art to being pregnant. She carries an idea

⁶⁹⁹ Interview with Noor Sudiyati, *Ceramic Artwork*, 3rd October 2022; Noor Sudiyati, *Badan Alus Badan Kasar* (Institut Seni Indonesia Yogyakarta, 2016), 1-10.

⁷⁰⁰ Interview with Noor Sudiyati, *Ceramic Artwork*, 3rd October 2022; Sudiyati, 1-10.

⁷⁰¹ Interview with Noor Sudiyati, *Ceramic Artwork*, 3rd October 2022; Sudiyati, *Badan Alus Badan Kasar*, 1-10.

around with her for a long time until she finds a suitable metaphor for it to translate it into the form of a ceramic object. The relationship Noor has with clay is particularly important because she does not see clay as a simple working material, but she cultivates a deep, spiritual and appreciative connection with it. She regards clay as something philosophical, a mass from which we humans were created and which we become again after death. For Noor, clay has an uncanny living power, because all seeds, that fall to the earth, whether soy, rice or maize, can grow. So, the earth, which is what clay is made of, is something fertile, is the basis for plants and thus also the basis for life. Noor therefore pays great respect to clay, and enters into dialogue with the material in a philosophical and spiritual way. Clay is not only the basis for the life of plants, but also in a figurative sense breathes life into her works of art.⁷⁰²

Fittingly, the well-known Indonesian curator Jim Supangkat wrote about Noor's artworks that "[...] she has explored ceramic art not as a material world, but as a spiritual world."⁷⁰³ On the occasion of the fifth Jakarta Contemporary Ceramics Biennale in 2018/2019, where Noor's artworks were also exhibited, Supangkat wrote that Noor's "[...] art works show an exploration to a new idiomatic invention."⁷⁰⁴ Through her consistent and unique art language, Noor achieves an art of ceramics that is outside mainstream conventions. Furthermore, Supangkat stated that "her ceramic art concept refers to the clay's materiality, and her artworks often show soil characteristics."⁷⁰⁵ The artworks radiate a strong presence and are reminiscent of the four elements of fire, water, air and earth. For the creation of her haptic objects, it is precisely these four elements that Noor masters, and which she approaches with great care and a spiritual attitude. Her artworks radiate the search for strong values and deal with spiritual and worldly themes of human life.

3.3.3 Between Painting and Ceramics – Dona Prawita Arissuta (1969 -)

Dona Arissuta's Life and Work

Dona was born in 1969 in Sleman, north of the city of Yogyakarta. She attended the Visi Design School in Yogyakarta where she studied fashion design. Dona explained with a laugh

⁷⁰² Interview with Noor Sudiyati, *Ceramic Artwork*, 3rd October 2022.

⁷⁰³ 'Noor Sudiyati', The 5th ICCB 2018 - 2019, 30th November 2009, <https://jakartacontemporaryceramic.wordpress.com/history-of-the-jccb/jccb1-2009-2010/artists-2/noor-sudiyati/> (last visit 29th October 2022).

⁷⁰⁴ 'Noor Sudiyati'.

⁷⁰⁵ 'Noor Sudiyati'.

that she did not graduate from that school because she preferred to study at ISI Yogyakarta.⁷⁰⁶ After several attempts she was finally admitted onto the ceramics course in 1998, from which she graduated with a Bachelor's degree in 2005. Dona's interest in ceramics sparked relatively late. She recalled that she had preferred painting during her studies at ISI Yogyakarta and was captivated by the idea of getting a degree in painting. Although she did all her homework as part of her ceramic studies, she often painted pictures on canvases in her spare time, which she also exhibited. She created textile dolls as well. Through her final project in ceramics Dona began to develop a preference for ceramics and concurrently felt gifted enough to express herself artistically through ceramics. As her final masterpieces she created large ceramic objects with very colourful glazes, which were not fashionable at that time. Due to these unconventional objects, Dona received several invitations to participate in exhibitions. Her ceramic art was well-received and Dona won several awards as a finalist. This success kickstarted her artistic career. In 2001 she was a finalist in the regional Nokia Awards. In the same year she was also a jury favourite for the Kedawung Glassware Print design competition award.⁷⁰⁷

These successes were followed by teaching opportunities, which made Dona decide to start a career as a ceramic lecturer at the *Universitas Sebelas Maret* in Surakarta. Dona has continued to work in the university in Surakarta as a lecturer at the Faculty of Fine Art and Design. Similar to batik and tie-dye artist Rika Winata, Dona can look back on a very consistent participation in numerous exhibitions since 2000. After her first exhibition at Benteng Vredeburg in Yogyakarta, she has been invited to participate in several exhibitions every year from 2001 onwards. To cite a few: she participated in *Festival Kesenian Yogyakarta* (FYK) or Art Festival Yogyakarta, the Exhibition of Young Ceramic Artists, the Summit Event Bali Biennale, the Jogja Biennale, the Indonesia Contemporary Ceramics Biennale, and numerous other exhibitions in Indonesia, as well as abroad. Her works were also shown at the Art and Ceramics Museum in Jakarta in 2018.⁷⁰⁸

In her artistic practice Dona deals with themes of human relationships, such as her relationship with her own children, her twins. What her memory has retained is central to her works. Dona takes a great interest in stories, irrespective of whether they revolve about contemporary history or ancient stories in the form of folk tales and fairy tales. For Dona, folk tales, folklore and remembered experiences are valuable sources of inspiration from which

⁷⁰⁶ It is not uncommon to drop out of schools and universities in Indonesia, because the lack of a degree has no consequences for an artist's career.

⁷⁰⁷ Interview with Dona Arissuta, *Creating Ceramic Artworks*, 1st June 2021.

⁷⁰⁸ The exhibition at the Art and Ceramic Museum in Jakarta was called *Temperature Affect Seeing Self, Observing Others*, and showcased ceramic objects from various contemporary ceramic artists.

she derives the ideas for her visual worlds. Her works range from purely ceramic pieces often with painted glaze, to installations in which she mixes ceramics with other media. Particularly characteristic of Dona are her naïve paintings on canvas with integrated ceramic objects. In these works, Dona equips her paintings with deep picture frames, which serve as a showcase and support surface for the ceramic figurines in the picture. This form of Dona's artwork oscillates between both two dimensions and three dimensions, between painting and ceramic artwork. Her artworks have been shown several times in ceramics-only exhibitions as well as in painting exhibitions.

Participation in Painting Exhibitions

Dona's works were shown at the UOB Painting of the Year exhibition in 2018 and 2020, with Dona being a finalist in 2018. This painting exhibition was established in 1982 by the bank UOB (United Overseas Bank) in Singapore and is considered the oldest annual art exhibition in Singapore. In recent years it has gained prominence in Southeast Asia, with artists participating not only from Singapore but also from Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia. In addition, the UOB also organises the Painting of the Year exhibitions on a country-specific basis. In Indonesia, the first Painting of the Year exhibition was held in 1990, when the UOB Bank Group opened its own branches in Indonesia. In 2020 Dona exhibited her artwork *Saudara Dalam Kemanusiaan* or Siblings in Humanity (Figure C21) at the exhibition UOB Painting of the Year.⁷⁰⁹ Her artwork consists of a series of three paintings. Two paintings are square-shaped and of the same size. These two paintings are similar in content and form. The third painting is rectangular-shaped and differs formally a little from the two others, but it is still recognisable as part of the series.

The two square images are formally reminiscent of a comic strip. One picture has a white background, the other a pastel rose-coloured background. Both pictures show three horizontal bars filled with colourful, illustrative, simple paintings of trees, flowers and silhouettes of household objects. Dona chose a limited colour palette of pink, red, burgundy, brown, golden yellow, black and white for the paintings to create an atmospheric overall impression. The paintings came with carefully planned blank spaces, which Dona filled with small glazed ceramic figures in relief, such as people, animals, *wayang* figures, symbols and tiles. Although the two paintings appear quite narrative, no sequence or clear reading direction can

⁷⁰⁹ 'UOB and Art | UOB Painting of the Year', UOB, <https://www.uobgroup.com/uobandart/uncovering-talent/uob-painting-of-the-year.html> (last visit 24th January 2023); 'Awards - UOB Painting of the Year', LASALLE College of the Arts, <https://www.lasalle.edu.sg/about/awards-showcase/uob-painting-year> (last visit 24th January 2023).

be discerned. Dona does not intend to create a storyline with a clear formal beginning and ending. It seems rather as if these illustrated stripes are individual snapshots with no attributes to create a clear distinction.

The third painting has a pastel rose-coloured background but no horizontal stripes. As in the other two pictures, this painting has been brought together with ceramic figurines to form a complete work. The third painting has a deeper wooden frame, which also serves as a display case for ceramic robots and a *wayang* figure on the left of the painting. The painted elements are similar in form and colour to those in the other two paintings, thus connecting the three paintings.

In all three works, the simple painting, which might be called a naïve style, is additionally supported by the fact that Dona puts the painted elements, as well as the ceramic figurines, in a front or side view.

All three works reflect the diversity of human beings in the midst of nature and the domestic environment. The various ceramic human figures allude to the past, namely to the Hindu-Javanese period, to the present and to a robotic future. They are all lined up harmoniously in the three pictures and look at ease in their surroundings. Dona presumably wants to emphasise that all people from different times are brothers and sisters, who all pursue values of high importance to mankind.⁷¹⁰ Despite her ceramic figures, her work was exhibited at the painting exhibition. However, in 2020 Dona and one other artist, were the only two exhibiting mixed media work, as all the other artworks were paintings.

Connection #1 and Connection #2 (2019)

Dona has been active in the art scene for over 20 years and regularly participates in art and *kriya* exhibitions. At the beginning of her career, Dona was particularly interested in dolls and figures that stood between humans and mythical creatures. Later on she went through a phase which was devoted to realistic ceramic objects in the form of functional objects. She created an old-school food series, as well as a teapot and teacup series.⁷¹¹

This creative phase was followed by Dona focusing on the role of women in Indonesian society and the relationships and networks between women. When Dona gave birth to her twins, she dealt with the theme of human relationships from the perspective of a mother to her children. Her ceramic works *Connection #1* and *Connection #2* deal with exactly those themes. In *Connection #1* (Figure C22), Dona is concerned with expressing her happiness

⁷¹⁰ Interview with Dona Arissuta, *Creating Ceramic Artworks*, 1st June 2021.

⁷¹¹ Interview with Dona Arissuta, *Creating Ceramic Artworks*, 1st June 2021.

about the beautiful relationship she has with her children. Dona made the ceramic plates herself and painted the illustrative images with glaze. While the rectangular plates illustrate the theme more clearly, the round plate serves as a complement to the series.

In *Connection #2* (Figure C23), individual plates stand for the individual women in a society. Again, in this work, Dona created the plates and painted the women's portraits in glaze, adding floral motifs in her typically naïve style. Dona asserts that women should strengthen their mutual help, stand together and interconnect. Dona hopes that a good connection and relationship between women will create a better starting point for young women or even a better world for all women in Indonesian society.

The Javanese Hermit Series (2020)

After dealing with the relationships between women and between mother and children, Dona started to explore new topics through her artistic work. From 2018 onwards *wayang* in the form of small ceramic figures can be seen in her framed paintings combined with glazed ceramic figures (as we have seen in the artwork *Saudara Dalam Kemanusiaan* that Dona exhibited in the UOB Painting of the Year exhibition in 2020).⁷¹² *Wayang* is a puppet shadow theatre in which the puppet master (*dalang*) tries to convey a moral message to the audience through the stories that are being passed down. This form of theatre has existed for hundreds of years in Java and remains a form of cultural heritage that is still cultivated today. Two of Dona's artworks are entitled *Sembrada* (Figure C24) and *Petruk* (Figure C25). *Sembrada* and *Petruk* are two figures from *wayang* stories that derive from the Ramayana and Mahabharata epics. *Sembrada* was the fourth wife of Arjuna, who is a main male character in the Mahabharata epic and considered a strong, cunning warrior. *Sembrada* was also the grandmother of Parikshit, who was known as the incarnation of the goddess Dewi Sri. Dewi Sri, the goddess of fertility and rice, is still worshipped in ceremonies in Java, Bali and Lombok. As y grandmother and in association with other strong figures, *Sembrada* is an important figure in the Mahabharata epic. The *wayang* puppet theatres are based on the Ramayana and Mahabharata epics written in Sanskrit, which originated from the Indian subcontinent. However, their own unique versions have developed in the Archipelago. The Indian *wayang* and the Indonesian *wayang* differ in respect to the Punakawan figures, which only appear in the Javanese version. The Punakawan figures are four funny, cheerful puppets

⁷¹² Since the following two artworks belong to the same series and are formally similar in structure to the already discussed artwork *Saudara dalam Kemanusiaan*, I will not provide detailed descriptions of the images in this Section, nor will I make any comments on the style of the image. I will discuss the artworks' content.

who, with their clownish manner, brighten up the puppet show and contribute to a light atmosphere. They poke fun at current social issues, but also at the audience. The Punakawan characters are Semar, with her three children Gareng, Petruk and Bagong. Petruk is described as a person who likes to joke, either through speech or behaviour. In Dona's artwork *Petruk*, the *wayang* figure Petruk is made of a large ceramic figure in the centre left of the painted plate. Petruk is not shown as a joking figure but rather in a contemplating mood and looking at the animals.⁷¹³ It also looks as if Petruk and the hare are conversing about the ceramic animals below them. Perhaps it is Petruk's joking that makes the ceramic animals in the foreground smile or laugh.

Dona's artwork *Sembrada* depicts painted simplified trees in blue tones with small dots, cacti and two hills in the foreground. Dona uses few and contrasting colours in her artwork, such as blue, white, yellow and brown. The left part of the picture shows a white horse with blue floral filling and three young horses in the form of beige glazed ceramic figures. The *wayang* figure Sembrada is placed on a yellow-lit background above the horse. This draws the viewer's eye to the ceramic figure Sembrada and emphasises its importance.

Dona recalls that she had always been interested in *wayang* stories as a child and enjoyed reading *Jokolodang* magazines, which featured *wayang* stories. *The Javanese Hermit Series* shows her love and interest for *wayang* stories. But her artworks do not require any prior knowledge of *wayang* figures or stories, as the artist does not link the figures' characteristic to their pictorial messages. Rather, she shows these two well-known *wayang* figures in the Javanese cosmos in which humans, animals and nature are happily united and live peacefully together. In both artworks the *wayang* ceramic figures do not occupy a special or symbolic place, but are set amid their surroundings, as if they were part of that society. According to Dona, the *wayang* stories from the past are still a valid source for learning social and societal values that could be integrated into society. Through her *Javanese Hermit Series*, she intends to remind viewers to reflect on Javanese *wayang* stories despite their modern lifestyles.

Dona's Art Practice

In 2018/2019 Dona held her first solo exhibition called *Cosmic Turn* at the art space Miracle Prints in Yogyakarta. In the exhibition, she showed nearly 50 artworks representing her work

⁷¹³ Sulistiyani and Dewi Rosaria Indah, 'The Symbolic Meaning of ,Punakawan Javanese Wayang' (a Value Imaging Study in Character Education at the Character Education Course in STKIP Bina Insan Mandiri Surabaya)', *SELL (Scope of English Language Teaching, Linguistics, and Literature) Journal* 4, no. 2 (26th August 2019): 99-106; Fuad Noorzeha, Agus Sutono and John Abraham Ziswan Suryosumunar, 'Lakon Punakawan as a Form of Religious and Cultural Transformation of Javanese Community', *Al-Adabiya: Jurnal Kebudayaan Dan Keagamaan* 17, no. 1 (30th December 2022): 107-21.

over the previous few years. The works were framed pictures with integrated small ceramic figures, painted ceramic plates and free-standing ceramic objects. All the ceramic objects were painted with pigment colours and glazed transparently. The five main groups of artworks bore titles such as *Pilgrim #1* (Figure C26), *Pilgrim #2*, *Pilgrim #3*, *Cosmic Turn* and *Kekuatan Dalam Kesunyian* or The Strength of Silence. These titles allude to the role of religion and religious practice in modern life, which is a main concern in Dona's art practice. Dona also questions today's information-rich and fast-moving lifestyle. For her, the title *Cosmic Turn* refers to the re-establishment of a close relationship between humans and nature, in other words it refers to the idea that humans feel themselves as being part of nature and so also become connected to the cosmos. Dona grew up as a Javanese citizen with an animistic faith and therefore has a strong awareness of the interconnection between humans and nature. She expresses this cosmic awareness in her artworks with her own strong visual language, offering a moment of pause and reflection in today's lives. She claims that the modern Indonesian lifestyle is taking its toll on nature and that Javanese people today find themselves in a fast-paced consumer society, facing issues of climate change, pollution and deforestation. In addition, the secularisation of education and other shifts in values have contributed to fundamental changes in the traditional Javanese way of life. Dona's exhibition title *Cosmic Turn* suggests two interpretations: on the one hand, lifestyle changes over the last few decades can be seen as a cosmic turn in the Javanese cosmological system,⁷¹⁴ or on the other hand, the title could be meant as a call that another turn is needed, to restore the balance between humankind and planet Earth.

Both ceramic artists Dona Arissuta and Noor Sudiyati work as lecturers at an art university in addition to their artistic activities. They both participate regularly in ceramics exhibitions and their works are representative of contemporary ceramics in Yogyakarta. Dona and Noor have a strong connection to Javanese culture and animist beliefs. However, this connection is reflected in their works in different ways. Noor Sudiyati stays very close to the material with her artistic statements, and glazes her works only partially or not at all. Coloured glazes remain a rarity and Noor mainly prefers to use the different natural colours of the clay as a design element. Her works appear sensual, philosophical and unagitated, yet attractive and very meaningful. Noor is concerned with spiritual teachings and often observes nature as being translated into her artwork in a subtle and delicate way. Unlike Noor, Dona's works are less provocative and less political. She shows a strong connection to painting, illustration and

⁷¹⁴ The Javanese cosmological system does not mean the actual cosmos, but the relationship between humans and nature.

colour in her artistic practice. Dona's artworks are figurative, and she combines small ceramic objects with illustrative paintings. Her ceramics are often colourfully glazed or even intricately painted. Dona's artworks are often described as naïve in style, yet her work shows great craftsmanship and artistic expression. In my opinion, her work is characterised by her ability to tap into an inner fantasy world which she expresses with a supportive colour concept. The imaginative worlds that Dona opens up are rich in animistic teachings and everyday themes.

Perspectives and Concluding Remarks

At first glance batik and ceramics in Yogyakarta differ in that batik has a far greater cultural history and significance than ceramics. However, both crafts batik and ceramics, are practised in Yogyakarta as a form of *kriya*, in traditional and contemporary ways of art. In this last Section, I will discuss comparable and conflicting aspects of batik and ceramics, as for example traditional and more recent labour structures of the two crafts. I deem it important to offer some reflections on the discourse on *kriya* knowledge, on the notions of Western and Eastern knowledge and on tradition. Finally, I will consider the distinct *kriya*-related views of art writers, curators, lecturers, artists and *kriya* makers in Yogyakarta.

Collectivism and Individualism

Yogyakarta is considered a city where Javanese cultural values have been well preserved and are still anchored in society.⁷¹⁵ Although Yogyakarta was repeatedly confronted with foreign influences affecting culture, arts, education, politics, religion, and trade the Sultanate of Yogyakarta managed to maintain many of its original cultural and artistic values tied to social patterns. One of these patterns is called *gotong royong*, or communal cooperation, which is a working principle that has persisted in *kriya* communities until the present today. *Gotong royong* means working collectively without viewing financial turnover and profit as the basis of a business model, but focusing on collaborative work as a form of cultural expression which is independent of any market and demand. The principle of *gotong royong* is practised in many parts of Indonesia, tending to be more prevalent in rural areas than in large cities. One example is the batik village of Giriloyo, which I discussed in Chapter 2. Although the village nowadays has an organised sales channel through the Batik Tulis Giriloyo Association, the working structure based on the *gotong royong* principle is still preserved. At the Jogja Biennale 2019, batik from Giriloyo, including the *gotong royong* principle, was exhibited by the curator in charge, Alia Swastika.

However, it is by no means the case that wherever traditional *kriya* is created, the *gotong royong* principle is predominant. For example, the wood craftspeople in Jepara (on the northern coast of central Java) have an output-oriented and economic work structure, with companies that professionally carry out commissioned work or supply certain markets with their goods. These companies get orders in line with a predetermined budget. This cost

⁷¹⁵ Jusmani, 'Membaca Eksistensi Produksi Dan Pameran Kriya Kontemporer Di Yogyakarta', 28.

estimate includes purchasing the wood, paying the workers, transport costs and other expenses. Although craftspeople in Jepara help each other, their work structure is based on an economic principle and not on the *gotong royong* principle. Nevertheless, I would describe the collective consciousness in Javanese society as an important aspect of social life. My interviewees often emphasised with pride who they were friends with.

In the 1980s, the majority of earthenware in Kasongan was produced in communities with the *gotong royong* principle. However, work structures have changed massively since Kasongan earthenware found its way into the world export market. *Kriya* communities have transformed into companies that are producing high-quality, precisely crafted Javanese pottery which is shipped to various countries. The spread of ceramics knowledge from Bandung in the 1970s led to the emergence of ceramic studios that either consisted of one person or were run by one person with several employees. In these ceramic studios, the work structure was not organised along the *gotong royong* principle, but rather as a market economy. As *kriya* increasingly found its way into contemporary art with the advent of ceramics, the awareness of individualism instead of collectivism was strengthened. This development was favoured by the contemporary art world in Indonesia and gave rise to the concept of an individual artist who makes a personal statement with his or her *kriya* artwork. This idea contrasts with the idea of a *kriya* community that creates *kriya* objects as a collective and in doing so makes collective statements about their local culture and identity.

Labour Structures and the Emergence of Product Designers

In Yogyakarta there are various labour structures, as well as various creator and producer profiles within the craft sector. *Kriya* objects are produced and sold as functional products, as gifts or as artworks. From a market perspective, craft objects are divided into two main groups. First, functional objects made by hand are called *kerajinan* or *kerajinan tangan*.⁷¹⁶ These objects have been made over decades with unchanged techniques and few variations of their form. The knowledge required has been passed on from one generation to the next within families. Until the 1970s, *kerajinan* was often produced by communities that worked with the *gotong royong* principle, as was the case for the pottery village of Kasongan. However, *gotong royong* communities increasingly transformed into small, commercially-oriented enterprises when the demand for pottery products increased in the 1980s. At that time new objects were being created by changing the shape and especially by adding rich

⁷¹⁶ *Kerajinan* means diligence, while *tangan* means hand. Detailed information can be found in Section 1.3.

decorations, to the items. Kasongan's pottery transformed from purely functional *kerajinan* products into objects with aesthetic appeal (Figures K7, C7 and C8). Their decorations were based on Javanese ornaments derived from wood carving. As a result, the Kasongan objects appeared high-quality, noble and in accordance with Javanese aesthetics and ornamentation. In the course of this transformation new objects were created that served exclusively as decorative pieces. These richly decorated objects were no longer called *kerajinan* but *kriya*, because it was not just diligent hands that were required, but also a high degree of craftsmanship and artistry. These *kriya* objects became very sought after and a main driving force for Kasongan to enter the export market.⁷¹⁷

These richly-ornamented objects therefore contributed to a shift from *kerajinan* products to *kriya* objects. In batik, such a shift took place at the conceptual rather than the product level. Although in the past all batik textiles were called *kerajinan* batik, nowadays they are called *kriya* batik. This has less to do with the type of batik textiles and more to do with the emerging notion of *kriya* and the discourse around appreciating the dexterity of their makers' hands, as well as their rich cultural achievements in Indonesian arts. Today, the term *kerajinan* batik is only used when referring to traditional batik communities who collectively use their own local batik patterns for their products. *Kerajinan* batik refers to the combination of a communal work structure with the production of local batik designs. The term *kerajinan* is not only used for batik or ceramics, but also for other crafts that work with wood, bamboo, metal, textiles, natural fibres, leather and recycled materials. Although creating functional *kerajinan* products mainly requires endurance and diligence of the hands, this does not mean that anyone could produce such objects. *Kerajinan* products also require a certain dexterity of the hands, as well as a lot of practice. In summary, the term *kerajinan* refers to products which have remained unchanged in their shape over many years, or have even been produced over decades in craft families. *Kerajinan* products do not require visionary innovations, but the solid, skilful, and diligent processing of materials.

Although the working principle of *gotong royong* has become rare in the Special Region of Yogyakarta, production of *kerajinan* products has increased in the last 15 years. As a result of the political reformation, that was initiated in 1998, numerous export opportunities have opened up for *kerajinan* and *kriya* goods. For many craftspeople, the formation of a small or medium-sized enterprise has provided an opportunity to earn their living. Small and medium craft enterprises have been supported by numerous governmental programmes launched after 2000. The government realised that there was a lot of untapped economic potential in the

⁷¹⁷ Sekarintyas, 'Knowledge Dynamics in Indonesian Cultural Industries – The Case of Kasongan Pottery Cluster and Kotagede Silver Craft Cluster in Yogyakarta Region', 45.

creative industries, which include all businesses and activities in which intellectual and cultural values form the basis for human creativity. In 2009, according to the Presidential Instruction on Creative Industries, Indonesia's creative industries were classified into the following categories: Publishing and Printing; Film, Video, Animation and Photography; Architecture; Fashion; Design; Crafts; Art and Antiques Market; Music, Performing Arts; Advertising; Television and Radio; Interactive Games; Information Technology and Software; Research and Development, and Culinary.⁷¹⁸

In both batik and ceramic crafts, small and medium-sized enterprises have emerged and contributed significantly to Indonesia's growing creative economy output. The number of ceramists who make utilitarian ceramics is much smaller than the number of batik makers. Therefore, in the context of *kriya* and manual production, it is much more common to speak of a batik industry than a ceramics industry. Only pottery industries like Kasongan generate successful export products. Handmade ceramics make up a small proportion of utility ceramics, while the batik industry (using the traditional batik technique) is mainly based on manual labour. Machine-manufactured ceramics are still imported in large numbers, whereas Indonesian handmade tableware series tend to serve a more luxurious customer segment, such as hotels and wealthy private individuals. This shows that batik and ceramics are differently produced and serve different market segments.

While in German-speaking countries in Europe the term industry is closely associated with industrialisation and the introduction of steam-powered machinery, Indonesians use the term in a much broader sense: referring to a market-oriented production of craft goods in general. Whether mechanical or electric machines are used is not a defining characteristic of industry, as many small and medium-sized enterprises in the craft sector function with little to no machinery. While large and small electric machines are used for preparational steps in wood crafts and carpentry, no machines are used for batik except for the wax bucket. All the working steps in ceramic crafts are made by hand, only the firing is done using an electric or gas-fired kiln.

Due to the increasing export opportunities since the 2000s, the profession of product designer has gained importance. Furniture and interior designers are particularly in demand, as harnessed Indonesian woods offer a wide range of precious materials to create sought-after

⁷¹⁸ According to the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) the creative economy sector in Indonesia generated more than 7 percent of its gross domestic product (GDP) in 2017, employing 15.9 million people. Catherine Jewell, 'Leveraging Indonesia's Creative Economy', WIPO MAGAZINE, 2019, https://www.wipo.int/wipo_magazine/en/2019/05/article_0003.html (last visit 21st May 2023); Aulia Ardista Wiradarmo, 'Analisis Profil Alumni Desain Produk dalam Relasinya dengan Pendidikan dan Keprofesian Desain Produk di Indonesia - Studi Kasus ITB Angkatan 2001 – 2008' (Final Thesis in Product Design, Bandung, Institut Teknologi Bandung, 2014), 35.

furniture and decorations for many homes and gardens. A precursor to a product design course was founded in Bandung as early as 1947 at the Balai Pendidikan Universiter Guru Gambar, the Education Centre for University Drawing Teachers (*Universitaire Leergang voor de Opleiding van Tekehenlaren*). These developments prompted a product design degree programme to be established in 1972 at ITB. However, it was not until 2000 that ITB experienced a massive increase in the number of product design students. A good decade later, ITB could boast nearly 600 product design graduates. By creating the product design course, ITB helped other universities in Bandung, Jakarta, Surabaya and Tangerang to follow suit from the 1990s onwards. In 2001, a declaration on the profession of product design was made at the International Council of Industrial Design (ICSID)'s annual congress in Seoul. With a global perception in mind Indonesia adopted this declaration as an important guide for the profession to catch up with the international community of product designers or industrial designers. This agreement included the claim of ethical, global, enlightened, humanistic and responsible product design. In Yogyakarta it was not until 2005 that product design could be studied at the university level, when Kristen Duta Wacana University inaugurated a product design course at its Faculty of Architecture and Design.⁷¹⁹

Designer Maker

In Yogyakarta, another occupational group emerged between 2005 and 2010. During this time there was a high demand for *kerajinan* products to export. But these *kerajinan* products lacked innovative, new designs that could sell internationally. Thus, a demand for innovative designers became evident, combined with a need for new ideas for shapes and designs to replace the rather old-fashioned *kerajinan* products. They were called designer makers because they were in charge of making new designs or redesigning existing products. The development of new designs was worked out on the basis of sketches on paper and discussed with the executing craftspeople. A designer maker is therefore neither a *kriya* maker nor a *kerajinan* maker, but a creator of shapes, forms, patterns and ideas.⁷²⁰

The term designer maker is also used for product designers who work in manual-based industries. They design the product and make them by themselves, which is why they are not simply called designers but designer makers.⁷²¹

⁷¹⁹ Aulia Ardista Wiradarmo, 35.

⁷²⁰ Interview with Yulriawan Dafri, *Designer Maker*, 12th January 2023.

⁷²¹ Interview with Satya Brahmantya, *Tradition and Industry*, 5th September 2022.

The Dissemination and Location of *Kriya* Knowledge

Kriya knowledge in Indonesia differs according to its region, *kriya* community and higher education institutions. Since the 1980s, creative industries and their production and sale of *kriya* objects have increased. These creative industries have contributed to the revival and preservation of *kriya* knowledge. As I have mentioned earlier, there are two main forms of work organisation in the creative industries. The older form is working together in communities with the *gotong royong* principle, which means having a flat hierarchy and no precise recording of hours worked. The more recent working form is employment in a company with regular wages and working hours. Although these two type of work organisations are different, preservation and transmission of *kriya* knowledge in today's communities and companies persist equally in both. While the potters of Kasongan can be called a pottery cluster, the batik makers in Yogyakarta consist of several clusters, like the Batik Giriloyo cluster or several single batik makers in Yogyakarta who produce similar products and therefore form a cluster. *Kriya* knowledge circulates in clusters in several ways. Earthenware and batik knowledge especially were passed on from parents to children in earlier generations. Today, knowledge is still passed on from older to the younger generations and among peers. There is a tendency for *kriya* knowledge to be transferred more in companies and communities than in families. This is because, within a company or community setting, a direct face-to-face exchange takes place, where peers with more knowledge teach the craft to beginners, and hierarchies are mostly flat. At most there is a natural respect for older *kriya* masters, but they do not enjoy significant privileges within a cluster or community. The predominant method by which *kriya* knowledge is transmitted is through direct observation and imitation, as well as monitoring by masters. The amount of written and theoretical material is rather limited. Even in universities, all *kriya* students do an internship in a *kriya* company in Yogyakarta.⁷²² Imitating and copying batik patterns, as well as pottery decorations, is a recognised method of imparting knowledge. For example, *kriya* students at ISI Yogyakarta take the course *Ornamen I + II* or Ornamentation I + II, in the first and second semester. As the module title indicates, the aim is to learn about ornaments. Thus, students learn to copy more than 100 Javanese ornaments by drawing them on paper. The drawings are graded according to their copying and overall accuracy.⁷²³

⁷²² In the curriculum this programme is called *Kerja Kuliah Nyata* (KKN) or Real Work Studies. ISI Yogyakarta curriculum *Kriya OBE 2023*, unpublished documents.

⁷²³ Interview with Arif Suharson, *Kriya Curriculum*, 12th December 2018.

In *kriya* clusters knowledge is also passed on by imitating the technique, as well as by copying patterns and ornaments. The “industrial atmosphere”⁷²⁴ in clusters has a positive effect on the transmission of knowledge, as can be well observed in the pottery village of Kasongan. Due to Kasongan’s early established export channels, the village attracted many potters from Malahayu Brebes in the 1980s and 1990s. Although the potters from Malahayu Brebes were very skilled and had a lot of pottery knowledge, they had not managed to establish a functioning export trade due to their more isolated geographical location. Therefore, many of them migrated to Kasongan where they worked in the flourishing pottery industry for many years⁷²⁵ and introduced their knowledge to the Kasongan pottery cluster.⁷²⁶

In the case of Yogyakarta’s batik, the transmission of knowledge functions in differing ways, depending on the cluster. There are traditional batik communities where members learn the technique through watching and trying by themselves. Along with this copying of motifs and patterns, cultural values are also transmitted through speech. Through watching and copying batik knowledge and technique used to be passed on from mothers to daughters within families. Similarly, batik knowledge was transmitted at the *Kraton* in Yogyakarta from mothers to daughters. However, external batik experts also served as teachers for the female batik practitioners of the sultan’s family.⁷²⁷

Another category of clusters is the batik companies, which focus on “their” specific patterns. In batik companies, knowledge transfer is particularly limited to the technical skills and the execution of these company-owned patterns. Often there is a specialisation of labour so that not every batik maker learns how to compose a complex pattern, but rather becomes an expert in executing the complex, fine pre-drawn patterns with their *canting tulis*. Another person in the company takes on the design task of planning and sketching the patterns out on the white

⁷²⁴ In their human geography working paper the authors Bathelt et al. refer to the “industrial atmosphere” as a *buzz*. They explain that *buzz* is an information and communication circuit based on a geographical settlement of people and companies in the same industry in one place. At this location, sector-specific information is continuously exchanged, supplemented and expanded through common presence and personal contacts. Unforeseen learning processes are shared, while patterns of interpretation of new knowledge, new technologies, as well as common cultural habits within a technology area lead to an institutional formation of conventions. Harald Bathelt, Anders Malmberg and Peter Maskell, ‘Clusters and Knowledge: Local Buzz, Global Pipelines and the Process of Knowledge Creation’, *Progress in Human Geography* 28 (1st February 2002), 11.

⁷²⁵ After the earthquake in 2006 many non-local potters returned to their hometowns as the local potters from Kasongan could not offer them a job anymore. It is assumed that a similar wave took place in many *kriya* firms after the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020.

⁷²⁶ To get a bigger picture and understanding of the circulation of *kriya* knowledge in Yogyakarta I suggest Pembayun Sekaringtyas’ thesis from 2015. In her case study she examines and discusses knowledge dynamics of the Kasongan pottery industry and the silver craft industry in Kotagede, two vibrant creative industries in Yogyakarta. Sekaringtyas, ‘Knowledge Dynamics in Indonesian Cultural Industries – The Case of Kasongan Pottery Cluster and Kotagede Silver Craft Cluster in Yogyakarta Region’, 42-4.

⁷²⁷ Dharsono, ‘THE DYNAMICS OF SURAKARTA BATIK’, 30.

fabric. Often the compositions are created by transferring patterns directly from pattern books or by combining given patterns from various books, completing them with fillings.

ISI Yogyakarta, as the oldest academic educational institution, plays an important role in preserving and transmitting *kriya* knowledge. The *kriya* knowledge taught within the university is based on various sources. Older lecturers still belong to the generation of *kriya* masters, who have learned the craft as well as *kriya* philosophy through many years of practice and study with a master. Younger teachers are mostly ISI Yogyakarta graduates who either come from a *kriya* family or have studied *kriya* as a subject at the university. Due to the growing modernisation of the Indonesian population, *kriya* education at ISI Yogyakarta has changed over the last two decades. Nowadays there is less time for undergraduate studies than there was in the 1990s and 2000s, and new subjects, such as business management and packaging, are replacing intensive specialisation courses.⁷²⁸

ISI Yogyakarta is much more bound to traditional *kriya* in its curricula than ITB Bandung, because of the influence of the sultan's palace. Nevertheless, Western values resonate in the educational structures, so that *kriya* lecturers often feel less valued than fine art lecturers. Fine art still has a higher status than *kriya*. The *kriya* curricula are oriented towards Western art institutions and include topics like Western art history.

ISI Yogyakarta is particularly important for the contemporary art network, as academically trained *kriya* and art makers find access to exhibitions much easier than their non-academic peers. Through the contacts they make at ISI Yogyakarta, students and alumni can exhibit their works in contemporary art exhibitions. *Kriya* and art collectives are formed at ISI Yogyakarta, who create new events independently and contribute to a lively art and *kriya* scene in Yogyakarta.

As I have outlined above, *kriya* knowledge exists and is passed on in different settings and groups in society. The circulation of *kriya* knowledge and *kriya* techniques within and between creative industries, families, communities and educational institutions is certainly an interesting topic for further research.

Contemporary *Kriya* and The “Mindful Hand”

The Yogyakarta curator, entrepreneur and *kriya* expert Satya Brahmantya has emphasised several times that *kriya* is culturally and economically important for Indonesia. In his opinion, the strength of *kriya* consists of two elements, namely, of the “mindful hand”, which stands

⁷²⁸ Marlies-Aryani Rüegg, ‘From *Desa* To Campus’. (Masterthesis in Art History, Department of Textile Art History, Bern University, 2019), 22-56.

for the hands' inherent knowledge of how to process materials because of many years of practice; and the intangible philosophical aspect of *kriya*. These two elements of *kriya*, practice and philosophical intangible knowledge, were not initially rated equally at ISI Yogyakarta. The *kriya* curricula at ISI Yogyakarta covered Western art and Javanese ornamentation, but did not devote enough time and importance to the *kriya* philosophy. In fact, until the late 2000s, copying a Javanese classical *kriya* object as closely as possible was deemed particularly important by ISI Yogyakarta lecturers. In their opinion, working and labouring over classical forms was the best way to master *kriya*. But in doing this, they neglected the intangible philosophical aspects of *kriya* and denied the young students any chance of innovation. As a former *kriya* student, Satya Brahmantya remembers being frustrated by his lecturers' attitude in 1994. As a young *kriya* student at ISI Yogyakarta, he technically lagged far behind his fellow students in the first year. This was because most of his fellow students came from *kriya* families and had already been practising the craft for years. Other fellow students had attended an art high school and had at least been learning a craft for a few years. In contrast, Brahmantya lacked these years of practice. When he and his fellow students had to carve Javanese ornaments in class, Brahmantya had no chance of accomplishing the task to a similar standard as his classmates. On the one hand, his own shortcoming in craft skill increased Brahmantya's admiration for classical Javanese art. On the other hand, he felt a growing aversion to the limited definition of *kriya*. Interestingly, this aversion also arose among his fellow students, because for the 20-year-olds, it was boring to just copy classical works. They tried to create more contemporary forms but were met with rejection from their teachers. Subsequently, Brahmantya organised a small *kriya* exhibition at the Bentara Budaya. For a week, he exhibited his *kriya* artwork and those of his classmates. Visitors perceived the artworks as *kriya*, which the ISI Yogyakarta lecturers did not. Some of the lecturers felt that the works were too contemporary and therefore did not regard them as *kriya*. After this experience, Brahmantya strongly felt that he wanted to understand and defend *kriya* in its entirety. So, a few years later, he founded Galeri Benda together with Sujud Dartanto to provide a platform for *kriya* objects that differed from his lecturers' taste and definition. The Galeri Benda was therefore not only an exhibition space, but a discursive space where mainly young *kriya* students discussed *kriya* objects, in contrast to the limited view of the ISI Yogyakarta lecturers.⁷²⁹ In my opinion, the different *kriya* perceptions of the students and lecturers were not only a generational problem, where the students also defined "the new" as *kriya*, while their lecturers only considered "the traditional" to be *kriya*. I believe

⁷²⁹ Interview with Satya Brahmantya, *Galeri Benda, the Intangible and Handiwirman*, 26th May 2021.

that the students were concerned with liberating *kriya* from the rigidity of traditional ornamentation. They wanted to create *kriya* objects as a cultural and artistic form of a personal expression to be connected to the contemporary art world. In contrast, the lecturers were rather alarmed when *kriya* objects appeared too contemporary because they worried about the continuation of cultural heritage and, ultimately, they were afraid of losing the high level of craftsmanship.

When I asked the curator Satya Brahmantya how he would describe these contemporary *kriya* objects at Galeri Benda, he drew on the example of the now-renowned artist Handiwirman Saputra. For Brahmantya, *kriya*'s characteristics are evident in Handiwirman's early works. Handiwirman studied *kriya* at the same time as Brahmantya. They both joined ISI Yogyakarta in 1993, but Handiwirman chose to major in wood craft. Like Brahmantya, Handiwirman did not come from a *kriya* family, nor had he attended an art high school before. Handiwirman travelled from Sumatra to Central Java to study at ISI Yogyakarta. Like many students who came to Yogyakarta from other cities or islands, Handiwirman had to finance his own living in addition to his studies. Handiwirman lacked sufficient money for a large piece of wood from which he could have carved a rich ornamentation as his final work. Thus, out of necessity, he came up with the idea of collecting leftover wood, which he got for free. He cut the wood into small fine sticks and skilfully glued them together to create an irregular pyramidal sculpture. Brahmantya was delighted with this work of art. For him, Handiwirman's piece was a *kriya* artwork because it translated the essence of *kriya* into the present day. Handiwirman's artwork made the intangible aspect of *kriya* visible through deep engagement with the material through his hands, which in a way expressed what the mind could not tell. Brahmantya also considered Handiwirman's sculpture very artistic, as it did not refer to existing artworks.⁷³⁰

From my observations on the discourse on contemporary *kriya*, I am convinced that there is a close connection between the immaterial knowledge called *kriya* philosophy or batik philosophy and the performing hands of the *kriya* makers. The hands are connected to the mind and, through the spiritual practice, a connection to ancestral knowledge can be established while creating *kriya* objects. Ultimately, creating a *kriya* form is a kind of spiritual practice.

Despite Brahmantya's enthusiasm for Handiwirman's artwork, Handiwirman encountered resistance to his final work from his *kriya* lecturers. The lecturers did not consider the work

⁷³⁰ Interview with Satya Brahmantya, Galeri Benda, *the Intangible and Handiwirman*, 26th May 2021.

worthy of *kriya*. They had probably expected carved Javanese ornaments rather than a glued sculpture with a fine art character.

In both the past and today, *kriya* objects are mainly made of natural materials, with no or only little synthetic additional materials. However, in the last decade young artists have broadened the concept of *kriya* on a material level as well as on a formal level. They use synthetic materials such as glue, plastic, synthetic paints, synthetic fibres, mixed and recycled materials for their *kriya* artworks. The material and formal diversity of *kriya* objects is related to the emerging awareness of *kriya* as a contemporary art form. Since around 2010, *kriya* exhibitions have been organised in Yogyakarta that conceptually resemble contemporary art exhibitions. This trend has certainly contributed positively to the awareness and status of *kriya* in society.

Kriya and Politics

If one investigates the possible factors that have reinforced awareness of *kriya*, one is bound to land on the political map. Politics has greatly influenced the status of *kriya* in society after Indonesia's Independence in 1949. As mentioned earlier, Javanese *kriya* became a vehicle by which to unify the young republic after it gained Independence. Sukarno, the first president of Indonesia, governed during the Old Order from 1949 to 1967. As an ITB alumnus and architect, he was an art and *kriya* supporter and collector who owned an extensive private collection of *kriya* objects and paintings. During his reign he used traditional Javanese *kriya* as a tool to bring about a national identity. Upon Indonesia's Independence Sukarno's greatest concern was to build a nationwide feeling of unity, which he thought could most easily be achieved through culture. In order to propagate a genuine Indonesian culture it was imperative to distinguish the new state from its former colonial rulers as well as from the sultans' formal monarchical ruling structures. Hence, *kriya* and other traditional Javanese arts like dance, *wayang* and poems were welcomed. In painting, only *Mooi indies* were accepted as art, while other paintings and art media were not supported nor exhibited by Sukarno's regime. For the time being, imposing *one* culture on the multi-ethnic state of Indonesia seemed to work to some extent in the frenzy of Independence. Resentments against such generalisations as well as other social oppressions developed over time during the second President Suharto's reign and led to reactions in the art scene such as the *Gerakan Seni Rupa Baru*, The New Art Movement (GSRB), in 1975. Since *kriya* was needed to strengthen national identity, it was always accepted during the Sukarno and Suharto era. Therefore, no movement similar to

GSRB emerged from *kriya* makers. It was only much later, in the 1990s, that ISI Yogyakarta students became discontented with their lecturer's rigid *kriya* definitions. Their resentment gradually turned into positive aspirations for creating a discursive space with their own exhibitions or galleries, such as the Galeri Benda opened by Sujud Dartanto and Satya Brahmantya in the 2000s.⁷³¹

Both presidents chose the field of *kriya* through which to implement social and structural changes in society, knowing well that much of Javanese culture is anchored in *kriya*. However, in the first years of the Reformation Era, after 1998 *kriya* did not seem to be the right tool to implement political changes, so *kriya* gradually fell into oblivion. However, in the mid-2000s and 2010s *kriya* gained importance in the tourist industry as a cultural hallmark of the country. Not surprisingly, tensions increased between Malaysia and Indonesia over the claim of cultural heritage. The situation came to a head in 2007 when the dispute over batik was at stake. Finally, it was Indonesian batik that was inscribed on UNESCO's List of the World's Cultural Intangible Heritages. This victory over batik, as it was often perceived in Indonesia, raised awareness of batik as a national cultural treasure that could be skilfully used in the tourism sector as a symbol of Indonesian culture. Batik became one of the first national symbols. However other *kriya* forms from Java, such as wood carving, ceramics, weaving and *wayang* puppets, were also valued as a symbol of the Republic in touristic advertisements by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism.⁷³² The preference for using Javanese art to represent all arts of Indonesia was already an issue during the reigns of Sukarno and Suharto. This led to conflicts among the diverse ethnic groups, as most peoples did not feel represented by Javanese art. Today, Javanese cultural hegemony is still evident in the tourist industry, where Indonesia is often advertised using Javanese *kriya* such as *wayang* or classical batik from Yogyakarta and Surakarta. Only in recent years have honest efforts been made in academic circles, as well as at the government level, to strive for a more comprehensive representation of Indonesia's rich range of distinct cultures. In this context, *kriya* functions as a connecting link between all the cultures in Indonesia. In other words, different regions with different languages and crafts have one treasure in common: their cultures with diverse forms of *kriya*. Ultimately, the discourse on different *kriya* forms has also opened up the discussions on cultural heritage.

⁷³¹ Interview with Sujud Dartanto, *Galeri Benda*, 21st May 2021; interview with Satya Brahmantya, *Galeri Benda, the Intangible and Handiwirman*, 26th May 2021; Zweers, 'Sukarno's Art Collection'.

⁷³² Puspita Ayu Permatasari und Lorenzo Cantoni, 'Indonesian Tourism and Batik: An Online Map', *E-Review of Tourism Research* 16, no. 2/3 (30th January 2019): 185.

Heritage

Batik has long been anchored as a form of cultural heritage in Indonesia. The disputes between Malaysia and Indonesia over batik as cultural heritage, which reached a climax in 2007, reflected how important it was for Indonesians to be able to call batik their cultural heritage. UNESCO's recognition of batik as a form of cultural heritage in Indonesia in 2009 was undoubtedly seen as a victory, as noted above. This victory also served to strengthen the narrative of Indonesia as a culturally significant nation with a rich tradition of diverse arts. As a result, other *kriya* forms such as wood carving, weaving, silversmithing, basketry also regained social and economic importance. In tourism, as well as in public offices, this narrative about Indonesia has been further promoted. Consequently, Indonesian batik is strongly perceived as an important part of cultural heritage. Indonesian discursive literature like journal or newspaper articles also tend to emphasise the centuries-old tradition of this craft.

In history, it was foreigners who reinforced a focus on the heritage aspect of batik. Batik first captivated the interest of the Dutch colonial powers as a trading good. As batik was deeply anchored and worn in their colony's society, it was the Achilles heel by which to influence consumer behaviour. Batik's use in garments became particularly interesting when the Dutch sensed the economic potential of exporting cheap imitation batik from the Netherlands to the Dutch East Indies. Consequently, the Dutch promoted the sales of batik in the Dutch East Indies as a cultural garment for the locals. This Dutch market strategy might have reinforced the idea of batik as cultural dress, but most probably, also redefined batik to some extent.

After Indonesia's Independence, batik technique and motifs enjoyed special interest among numerous foreign ethnologists, art historians, collectors and researchers until the late 1990s. Javanese batik undoubtedly reveals values of cultural identity, its changes, external influences and historical events. Batik is an expression of culture, it is a high and refined form of art, batik is used as a garment, a ritual object, a status symbol, and it is as important for the people as it is for the sultan. Thus, it is correct to call batik a part of Indonesia's cultural heritage, but the use of the term tradition requires close scrutiny in this context. In Indonesian society, the terms batik heritage and batik tradition are often used as synonyms and both terms are associated with a sense of cultural richness of which the Indonesians are very proud. Batik is also associated with a sense of Javanese or Indonesian identity. The term batik heritage refers to the cultural heritage of the batik technique, which is characterised by a particularly refined design using a *canting tulis*, and the language of forms and patterns of Hindu-Javanese iconography and a natural colour chart. The term traditional batik is used to describe non-

courtly batik. Courtly batik is better known as classical batik, and has certain established court motifs which are not found in traditional batik. The size of motifs, the colours, the rhythm, and the reference to Hindu iconography is the same for both traditional and classical batik.⁷³³

In Yogyakarta people speak about traditional batik or batik as their tradition, but various questions remain unanswered. How are traditional batik patterns defined? And to what extent were the current traditional batik patterns passed on from one generation to the next? Why are certain batik patterns considered traditional in Java and how old are they? Traditional batik patterns are defined by three factors. One factor is the length of time the same pattern has been used in the batik scene. If the batik pattern has been used for more than one generation and was created by the generation of batik artists now aged 60 and older, it is considered traditional. Another factor is its visual design. If the batik artists follow certain design rules that correspond to the courtly batik patterns, then their creation is considered a traditional batik pattern, which is also called a classical batik pattern. The third factor is related to customary colouring and motif designs and is furthermore constituted by a batik community. If a batik pattern is repeatedly used by a local batik community, it is perceived as traditional and as the community's local wisdom and property. This definition works very well, so in Java a few batik communities have been able to protect their patterns in recent years through a registration process with the state BBKB in Yogyakarta. At BBKB batik communities can register their batik patterns as local wisdom, provided they can prove that they have been using these patterns in their community for a long time. On the one hand, this provides protection from imitations in the market economy, and on the other hand, successful registration results in large media resonance, which can have a positive effect on the sales of these batik patterns.⁷³⁴

The situation is different with ceramics, as there are neither protected forms, decorations or ornaments, nor any copyrights on specific objects and decorative styles. Nevertheless, there is a strong awareness of local *kriya*, which is also called local wisdom in the case of ceramics. With regard to ceramics in Yogyakarta, the discourse on the term tradition is particularly exciting. When it comes to ceramics with a medium to high firing temperature, all experts from the *kriya* scene would deny this as traditional. The Indonesian experts like to compare Indonesia's young ceramic scene with those of China and Japan which have been firing ceramics at high temperatures for a very long time. However, Yogyakarta ceramists would unanimously describe the earthenware of Kasongan as traditional, even though some objects,

⁷³³ Abdullah, 'Yogyakarta Kraton Batik Patterns: Symbolic Constructs Within the Javanese Culture', 3.

⁷³⁴ 'Menperin Agus Dorong Komunitas Batik Ajukan HKI Indikasi Geografis', Newspaper, Industry.co.id, 2 October 2022, <https://www.industry.co.id/read/113494/menperin-agus-dorong-komunitas-batik-ajukan-hki-indikasi-geografis> (last visit 18th June 2023); Salma, 'REVIEW'.

such as the ornamental horses, dragons, and snakes, which were made using the *teknik tempel*, or sticking technique are hardly older than 80 years. Interestingly, modern ceramics in Indonesia, which originated at around the same time, are not described as traditional. As far as ceramics are concerned, I would argue that it is not time that is important for the definition of tradition, but the objects' aesthetics. Kasongan earthenware, which is described as traditional, makes use of Javanese-Hindu ornamentation which is also used in other crafts, such as wood carving. Kasongan earthenware establishes a connection to the past through their ornamentation, and therefore appear traditional. Moreover, the way objects are made is another factor which classifies them as either traditional or contemporary. Kasongan retained its traditional working structure, namely the *gotong royong* principle, until the 1980s. Through many years of engagement in the pottery industry the artists acquired their technical skills and knowledge of materials, as well as the associated cultural and spiritual wisdom.

Re-Inventing and Re-Defining Tradition?

Kearifan lokal or local wisdom is another term used by *kriya* communities. The English translation "local wisdom" originated from European ethnologists in the 1950s and refers to the ability of a culture bearer to form a local identity despite external influences. A local identity comprises material knowledge such as historical heritage and cultural objects. It also includes intangible knowledge such as religious activities or the meaning of distinct cultural objects.⁷³⁵ In Indonesia the term *kearifan lokal* became popular in recent years in academic and governmental circles, and was supplemented with the term *local genius*. Both terms, *kearifan lokal* and local genius, are used to refer to distinctive *kriya* objects that can be assigned to a place through their materials and visual appearances. The terms assume that there is a kind of local knowledge, or authentic knowledge to a region which, through communal practice, results in distinctive *kriya* objects. This distinctiveness is also conferred by certain materials, tools and techniques of a region.⁷³⁶ The Archipelago has an incredible diversity of ethnicities and cultures, which has given to a great variety of crafts. In the last few years, local *kriya* knowledge has increasingly been emphasised and discussed by the government and academic circles driven by cultural, economic and strategic considerations. If the appreciation of local *kriya* objects grows, jobs and markets can be created especially in rural and decentralised regions of Indonesia. In other words, with a growing appreciation of

⁷³⁵ Mufti Riyani, 'LOCAL GENIUS MASYARAKAT JAWA KUNO DALAM RELIEF CANDI PRAMBANAN', *Jurnal Seuneubok Lada* 2, no. 1 (June 2015): 12-3.

⁷³⁶ Alvi Lufiani, 'TRANSFORMASI KRIYA DALAM BERBAGAI KONTEKS BUDAYA PADA ERA INDUSTRI KREATIF', *Jurnal Seni Rupa & Desain* 21, no. 2 (August 2018): 133.

local *kriya* objects, craftspeople from different regions can sell their objects on other islands within the Archipelago, or even abroad. For example, if the Dayak⁷³⁷ tribe's woven textiles, ceremonial mats and baskets are considered distinctive enough, they can be sold in other parts of Indonesia as "*kriya* Dayak". Thus, as a form of local cultural goods, their *kriya* objects can provide additional income.⁷³⁸

When discussing local knowledge, questions arise about the authenticity of this knowledge, and about old and new knowledge. The assumption that old knowledge is locally authentic, while new knowledge is not local and therefore not authentic, leads us into a discursive field without precise definitions. Knowledge is dependent on time and place, which can be defined distinctively depending on the point of view. The term "new knowledge" implies that there had been "old knowledge" before, which was enhanced or even replaced by "new knowledge". Moreover, the equation "old knowledge equals local and authentic knowledge" is supplemented with the idea of tradition. However, I suggest that *kriya* knowledge has always been a changing body of knowledge in terms of techniques, practices, symbols, patterns, forms and their meanings. Even in a so-called traditional *kriya* community, elements of new knowledge have always been added. Thus, it is a delicate matter to make such sweeping statements about old and new knowledge in relation to *kriya*.

The Assumption of an "Eastern Knowledge"

Many batik makers feel that creating batik is a meditative occupation through which they can connect with their ancestors' great artistic works. Creating batik is also a valuable way to train in patience, because the craft requires a lot of time and precision. Many ceramists in Yogyakarta feel that working with clay is a form of spiritual work, since humans were ultimately also shaped from the clay of the earth, to which they will return after death. For the creation of both batik and ceramics, many Yogyakarta artists evoke their Javanese spiritual and animistic practices. Mindfully, they enter into a dialogue with the (natural) materials to create their *kriya* objects. Although modernisation has long since set in in Yogyakarta and the predominant religion is now Islam, habits and values of the animistic Javanese faith are still alive, also among younger generations. According to lecturers and artists, the presence of the Javanese faith has been supported by the environment of the Special Region of Yogyakarta because it was a sultanate. As such, *kriya* as a part of culture and court tradition, has been

⁷³⁷ Kompas Cyber Media, 'Mengenai Suku Dayak, dari Asal Usul hingga Tradisi', Newspaper, KOMPAS.com, 25th August 2022, <https://regional.kompas.com/read/2022/08/25/175141478/mengenai-suku-dayak-dari-asal-usul-hingga-tradisi> (last visit 5th May 2023).

⁷³⁸ 'Kalimantan', Threads of Life, 26th January 2022, <https://threadsoflife.com/pages/kalimantan> (last visit 5th May 2023).

practised, preserved and politically fostered, in contrast to other regions of Indonesia, where *kriya* knowledge was lost due to a modern lifestyle. In my opinion Yogyakarta has remained one of the few cities which retains both cultural roots and simultaneously a viable *kriya* and art scene.

Kriya practice is characterised by acquiring and expanding knowledge through the exploration of materials and working experience. Knowledge is also acquired through the mindful copying and modifying of ancestral forms and patterns. Knowledge and experience which constitute *kriya* are called *ilmu* or science. In Western countries, the term science is used differently— science means undertaking research that produces verifiable, comprehensible knowledge, and to question this knowledge using rational parameters. The term science applies to the fields of nature, humanity, politics, engineering, and computer science among others, but rarely to the field of art. In contrast to the West, the term *ilmu* is often used in art in Indonesia to refer to *kriya* knowledge. Learning and mastering a craft and establishing a *kriya* practice (including a spiritual attitude) is regarded as a science. Furthermore, the term *ilmu* is used for all sorts of knowledge acquirement, so as for an alternative knowledge acquirement based on one's own experience and practice.⁷³⁹

Indonesian discourse on *kriya* knowledge is characterised by an emerging awareness of local cultures with their respective forms of *kriya*. Different forms of *kriya* are regarded as expressions of distinct cultural identities.⁷⁴⁰

Postcolonial thoughts by Homi K. Bhabha, Edward W. Said, Gayatri Spivak and Michel Foucault have formed an important basis on which to strive for a genuine Indonesian path into the global art world as a former colony. However, discourse and discussion on *kriya* knowledge is not yet a main consideration of many art institutions and scholars. It is rather a concern of few individuals, such as the curators Asmudjo Jono Irianto, Nurdian Ichsan, Rifky Effendy, and Rizki A. Zaelani in Bandung and the *kriya* experts and lecturers Sujud Dartanto, Satya Brahmantya, B. Muria Zuhdi and I Ketut Sunarya in Yogyakarta.⁷⁴¹ These individual lecturers and curators have been criticising the Western concept of “Western knowledge” and “Eastern knowledge”. According to the curator and lecturer Sujud Dartanto, the assumption that Western knowledge is rational and scientific, while Eastern knowledge is emotion-driven and spiritual, is invalid and outdated. The Archipelago's numerous temples, such as

⁷³⁹ Interview with Satya Brahmantya, *Infrastructures & The Strength of Kriya*, 10th September 2021; interview with Noor Sudiyati, *Ceramics Philosophy*, 6th June 2021; interview with Yulriawan Dafri, *Batik and Kriya in Jogja*, 22nd December 2018; interview with Sujud Dartanto, *Postcolonial Concept and Theory*, 20th July 2021.

⁷⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁷⁴¹ As discussed in Chapter 3 on ceramic discourses, Jim Supangkat in Jakarta has also contributed to his own singular Indonesian path in international exhibitions.

Prambanan or Borobudur, clearly prove that rationality and scientific engineering were necessary for their construction. The same kind of knowledge is necessary for creating a *kriya* object. As a consequence, in Indonesia the term *ilmu*, or science, is also applied to art and *kriya*.⁷⁴² Considering the concept of a Western and Eastern knowledge, it is interesting to refer to Foucault's book *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, in which Foucault establishes a hitherto unfamiliar "way of talking about history". His method of discourse analysis examines the set of "things that are said". In doing so, all preconceptions of historical unity or continuity are abandoned. Instead, processes of discourse are described, along with their differences, their breaks and complex variations. According to Foucault's view, knowledge is not structurally created (for example, by a Western society and an Eastern society), but emerges through discourse. This means that the categories of "Western knowledge" and "Eastern knowledge" must have been shaped by a discourse, namely by discourse in the West. *Kriya*, which is still translated as craft in the West, has long been an ideal projection field for "Eastern knowledge". This is particularly to do with the fact that the creation of *kriya* objects is not a secular process. For example, producing a *keris* or sword requires religious and spiritual acts. In the past, the *empu*, or master at the sultan's palace, performed a long fasting ritual to prepare ideally to create a sword. All sword makers were men. Since the sword was a symbol of masculinity, the cultivation of masculinity and spirituality was also part of this preparation. The shape of the *pamor*, or sword handle, had to be created not only according to its functional aspects, but also by means of *olah rasa*, which is the cultivation of taste. Through these preparations, an *empu* could communicate with God in the process of creation. Thus, *kriya* was seen as a communication between the divine parts of the *empu* and God, and between the *empu* and the spirits.⁷⁴³

This example shows that spirituality is an important part of *kriya*. But to conclude that a spiritual practice excludes rationality would be too short-sighted. The Western assumption of *kriya* practice being merely spiritual but not rational, is a remnant of colonial history where a Western notion of "otherness" created dichotomies and invented ideas of foreign cultures. Even if the discourse has not yet reached the general public, I have observed discursive efforts from curators and *kriya* experts who discuss their cultural values and the position of *kriya* related to the Western concepts of "Eastern knowledge" and "craft". It is hoped that these

⁷⁴² In his article Jacob Eyferth cites Lissa Roberts, who showed through her research that much of our science today is based on the "mindful hand": it is a result of the close collaboration between non-elite workers and elite thinkers. See Jacob Eyferth, 'Craft Knowledge at the Interface of Written and Oral Cultures', *East Asian Science, Technology and Society: An International Journal* 4, no. 2 (1st June 2010): 185.

⁷⁴³ Interview with Satya Brahmantya, *Infrastructures & The Strength of Kriya*, 10th September 2021.

discussions will contribute to an increasing self-confidence which will facilitate a genuine Indonesian path in the arts and in the global art world.

The Preference for Exhibitions over Museums and The Relation between *Kriya* and Contemporary Art

Today in Indonesia there are several art infrastructures such as galleries and museums that exhibit paintings and art according to the Western art paradigm. The emergence of these exhibition venues is tied to the history of Dutch colonial power. From the end of the 19th century the Dutch introduced European painting in their colony and established the *Bataviasche Koonstkring*, an art circle for the Dutch and elites in society. Painting exhibitions were mounted by this art circle and marked the beginning of Western painting exhibitions in the Dutch East Indies. During the colonial period the Dutch also established various historical museums and, after Independence in 1949, the Indonesians proceeded with these historical museums and painting exhibitions. Art galleries were only established some decades later, an occurrence that was reinforced by a functioning art market connected to the global art market in the 1980s and 1990s.⁷⁴⁴ In contrast, *kriya* was not exhibited as a separate art form for a long time, but was merely visible in three areas: firstly, as part of everyday life adorning households and was visible in fashion, for example, in the form of batik garments. *Kriya* was also displayed as artefacts in old-fashioned museums that had more of an archival than displaying purpose. And last but not least, *kriya* elements became popular in contemporary art from the 1990s onwards, but as an art medium of contemporary artists rather than an art form in its own right. *Kriya* elements mostly served as a means to refer to issues of Javanese cultural hegemony. In my opinion there is a difference between *kriya* elements that are used by fine art artists (or visual artists), and *kriya* artworks by *kriya* artists that are exhibited in contemporary art exhibitions. In the first case, fine art artists use *kriya* elements to refer to tradition; this is very often done in Indonesian contemporary art. Some artists create the *kriya* elements by themselves, others get the *kriya* elements executed by *kriya* makers. In the second case *kriya* artists create an artwork with probably less conceptual ideas, by entering into a dialogue with the materials. They are guided by the *kriya* philosophy during their creation and not by the contemporary art paradigm. Today, *kriya* artists and visual artists exhibit their work together in contemporary art exhibitions. However, *kriya* as an art form by itself only became significant when *kriya* exhibitions began to appear more frequently after

⁷⁴⁴ Ingham, 'Powerlines', 101-25.

2010. The most important and successful *kriya* exhibition is the perennial Matra Kriya Fest, which was founded by a group of ISI Yogyakarta alumni, as discussed in Section 1.3. A wide range of *kriya* objects are on display at this festival. There is a tendency for contemporary batik to be slightly underrepresented compared to other *kriya* forms like mixed media artworks. There are more batik and textile artists in Yogyakarta than ceramic artists, but the number of ceramic artworks shown at the festival is higher than the number of batik artworks. The underrepresentation of batik may be because the selection of *kriya* objects for the Matra Kriya Fest is designed to show an exciting range of different *kriya* objects rather than to reflect a demography of the different *kriya* artists. Nevertheless, in my opinion the Matra Kriya Fest is a successful and important *kriya* event which has its own way of presenting *kriya* artworks that reflect the current state of the art of *kriya* practitioners and artists.

Kriya makers who work in the industry find it difficult to exhibit their works in contemporary art exhibitions because they often lack an understanding of the art paradigm and have no network in the contemporary art scene. Even graduates of an art university are confronted with unfair chances. Batik artists who received their training from an art university have more difficulty participating in a contemporary art exhibition than ceramists, because batik is usually shown less often in contemporary art exhibitions than ceramics. Ceramic artists have easier access to contemporary art exhibitions because these exhibitions follow Western models which prefer ceramics, thus reducing the chance to expose batik. Many ceramists follow one of two paths: either working with their own company and selling to industry, or exhibiting artworks as a ceramic artist. In general, ceramists receive their training from an art university which provides them with a network for participating in contemporary art exhibitions.

However, I would like to emphasise that visual art artists and *kriya* artists cannot be defined through their academic degree (visual art graduate or *kriya* graduate), but much more through their art practice. Successful Indonesian artists who regularly exhibit their work in contemporary art exhibitions can be *kriya* graduates, as the examples of Handiwirman Saputra, Ivan Bestari⁷⁴⁵ and Endang Lestari show. In the contemporary art exhibition landscape, no separation is made anymore between *kriya* artists and visual art artists, but often visual art graduates know more about the contemporary art paradigm in Indonesia and therefore have a higher chance of showing at exhibitions.⁷⁴⁶ I assume that some *kriya* artists' artworks are shown in contemporary art exhibitions not because of their *kriya* character, but

⁷⁴⁵ Ivan Bestari is a glass artist who has become famous for his glass sculptures (Figure K17).

⁷⁴⁶ Interview with Satya Brahmantya, *Access to Contemporary Art Exhibitions*, 17th June 2023.

because they appeal sufficiently to contemporary viewers.⁷⁴⁷ According to several Yogyakarta *kriya* experts, *kriya* makers should become more self-confident in creating *kriya* artworks and positioning them in the art world.⁷⁴⁸ On the one hand, it is pleasing that the contemporary art world has become increasingly open to *kriya* artists. On the other hand, I regard specific contemporary *kriya* events as important for the identity and presentation of *kriya*, because without them young *kriya* artists might adapt their work more and more to the contemporary art paradigm and lose the essence of *kriya*. It is hoped that both worlds in Indonesia, the contemporary art world and the *kriya* world, will keep interconnecting and working together, without converging too much.

Even though textiles seem to be underrepresented in contemporary art exhibitions in Indonesia, there are numerous events dedicated exclusively to batik, such as the Jogja Batik Biennale. In various other events and exhibitions batik is shown as a product, art and cultural heritage. This shows how much batik is part of Indonesian culture and society, and it is therefore not surprising that batik is struggling to enter the conceptual and intellectually-driven contemporary art world.⁷⁴⁹

As a cultural heritage batik enjoys special status in the museum landscape, as there are numerous batik museums. Large historical museums and textile museums have their own batik sections. While batik is displayed as a distinct art form in batik museums, other *kriya* forms such as swords, *wayang*, masks, weaving, jewellery and wood carving are often displayed together as traditional art in historical museums. In general, *kriya* objects are much more likely to be displayed in cultural contexts than in art contexts because only traditional or classical *kriya* objects are displayed whereas contemporary *kriya* is virtually absent from museums. In isolated cases, museums organise special exhibitions where ancient objects are shown together with contemporary objects. But the appreciation and importance of contemporary *kriya* as works of art, and accordingly collecting and exhibiting them, does not yet seem to be a point of interest for museums. This might be because Indonesian art

⁷⁴⁷ For example, wood *kriya* artist Dedy Shofianto is very successful with his kinetic wood installations and sculptures. *Kriya* expert Brahmantya says that his artworks are successful not because of their *kriya* characteristics, but because they have a contemporary appeal. For pictures of Dedy's artworks, I suggest visiting his Instagram profile: <https://www.instagram.com/dedy.shofianto/> (last visit 17th June 2023). Interview with Satya Brahmantya, *Access to Contemporary Art Exhibitions*, 17th June 2023.

⁷⁴⁸ Interview Nurohmad, *Batik Artworks & Exhibitions*, 8th September 2022; interview Satya Brahmantya, *Batik and Ceramic Artists, Islamic Purification*, 2nd September 2022.

⁷⁴⁹ However, in the 1960s and 1970s batik was influenced by modern painting, with batik artists beginning to experiment with the batik technique and creating artworks called batik painting. Later on, batik was also influenced by contemporary art, so that batik artists created abstract batik that were strongly inspired by abstract painting. Today, batik makers experiment with different techniques and mix batik with other media, as this is known as an art practice of contemporary artists. Interview with Endang Lestari, *Infrastructures of Kriya Art & Handicraft*, 27th May 2021.

museums are still dominated by a Western art paradigm, so have a lot of painting on display, and fewer three-dimensional objects.

In summary, contemporary *kriya* objects are much more likely to be shown in exhibitions than in museums. Contemporary exhibitions are more popular than museums with many Indonesians, who consider museums to be boring dusty places that are too intellectual and distant from their everyday life. Performances, festivals and exhibitions are generally preferred to museums. Indonesian academic education is still relatively young (the ASRI was established in 1949) while performance, dance and theatre have a long tradition. In Indonesian society, oral tradition is preferred to reading books. According to the ceramist and curator Asmudjo, his carefully written essays in the exhibition catalogues are hardly read, whereas the exhibitions themselves are well attended. There is not a single ceramics magazine or *kriya* magazine in Indonesia, because such publications would not find enough readers. In contrast, numerous small and privately-organised exhibitions are very popular.

Whether a contemporary *kriya* museum will be opened in the future remains to be seen. Perhaps Indonesians feel that the character of contemporary *kriya* does not fit into the format of a museum. Perhaps it does not seem appropriate to show *kriya* objects as an authentic and genuine Indonesian art form in the Western-style art institution of a museum. I therefore suggest that the absence of contemporary *kriya* objects in museums should not be deemed a failure, or a conclusion that *kriya* is not art. Instead I see this fact as an emancipation from the Western art canon and its institutions. Even if museums in Indonesia are perhaps passively ascribed less value than festivals and events, I see this liberation from the Western art paradigm as an active process, especially from those at the centre of the *kriya* scene. The successful recurrence of the Matra Kriya Fest is the result of many years' discourse and efforts to acknowledge *kriya* as an Indonesian form of art.

The Intangibility of *Kriya*

According to the *kriya* master and former teacher SP. Gustami, *kriya* is the root of all arts in the Archipelago. *Kriya* is dexterity, craftsmanship and spiritual practice. In Yogyakarta, there are differences in spiritual practice between younger and older *kriya* makers. There is a tendency for the older generation to be familiar with the *Kejawen* religion and to incorporate it into their artistic work. Among the younger generation, there are entrepreneurs who make their products relatively detached from an awareness of Javanese religion and spirituality.

There are many young batik and ceramic artists who answer the call of contemporary art with a Western art paradigm. Their works show good craftsmanship, but in terms of content they merely borrow from existing art idioms. However, there are some young batik makers and ceramists, such as Afifah and Apri, who find their own expressions of *kriya* through meditation and spiritual practice.

When it comes to the intangible aspects of *kriya*, the case of batik is particularly intriguing because batik as a cultural asset is rich in intangibles. In the batik world, a distinction is made between symbolic-mystical patterns and contemporary batik patterns. While the symbolic-mystical patterns are seen as cultural heritage, contemporary batik patterns are solely attributed to the field of art. Those patterns are therefore made for visual purposes only and have no mystical or symbolic powers. Therefore, some batik experts even call batik painting (a form of contemporary batik) devoid of identity and character.⁷⁵⁰

But there are many *kriya* experts who clearly appreciate the intangible value in contemporary *kriya* objects. They see not only its high craftsmanship, which is considered an intangible heritage of the *empu* (the masters at the sultan's palace), but also inherent values of indigenous religions. From this point of view, well-crafted *kriya* objects are valuable, contain the spirit of *kriya* and the entire past and intangible heritage of *kriya*. The intangible cultural heritage lives on in contemporary objects and is not bound to individual objects from the past. As a result of this belief the culture of archiving old objects is not prevalent in Indonesia. However, it is especially important to ensure the survival of the intangible cultural heritage in the creation of new *kriya* objects. To do this, ISI Yogyakarta professor SP. Gustami formulated a learning objective for his students by stipulating that contemporary *kriya* artists should create objects in which spirituality and Javanese philosophy become visible, yet the objects should be designed according to the spirit of the current times or *Zeitgeist*. In my opinion, Gustami's learning objective offers a suitable proposal for safeguarding the resilience of the intangible cultural heritage in the face of the *Zeitgeist*. Showing resilience means to balance values of traditional philosophy, religion, contemporary art forms, modern life and market demands.

Batik and Ceramics Makers – A Question of Gender?

Originally, batik makers and potters were women who found time to practise these crafts in addition to housework. Men used to work outside their homes in agriculture, as labourers or in

⁷⁵⁰ Santosa Haryono, *Filsafat Batik*, 1st edition (Surakarta: ISI Press, 2019), iv.

political office. At the beginning of the 20th century, education became increasingly feasible for women and the hard delineation of women and men's traditional labour roles started to soften. Gradually, women were enabled to take up jobs outside their homes due to their education, while men became active as entrepreneurs for batik and pottery. In Yogyakarta, there are numerous examples of men already working in the third generation of batik makers or potters. Women and men are equally represented in ceramics, which emerged through art academies. I would argue that today the creation of batik, earthenware and ceramics is not gender-specific anymore, rather there are gender-specific differences in the labour structures. The kind of *batik tulis* produced according to the *gotong royong* principle is mainly practised by women. *Batik cap* produced in an industrial setting using heavy copper stamps is mainly practised by men. Earthenware in Kasongan, which is produced by numerous small and medium-sized companies, is dominated by men. Batik companies that engage employees are often run by men. Among the one-person companies producing batik, there tend to be more men than women. Men can engage in running an enterprise, while women's careers are often interrupted by raising children. In the field of contemporary art, there is no clear tendency for one gender to dominate. In recent years, numerous art programmes have been launched that actively promote female artists. This has led to snide remarks among male artists in Yogyakarta who say that if you are not successful as an artist, try being a female artist.⁷⁵¹ Certainly, competition in the art world is fierce, so for many young ISI graduates the dream of being an artist has to be abandoned in order to make a living through producing craft objects. However, I consider supportive programmes for female artists important because women are systematically disadvantaged in society by their child-care work. In addition, in traditional Javanese culture wives are supposed to follow their husbands in opinions and views, and have little leeway for their own desires and professional goals.

Women's voices were especially silenced during the New Order, in art and politics. In retrospect, the political attitude of the New Order towards women is referred to as "ibuism" (mother-ism), as the strategy consisted of controlling women and reducing them to be only good mothers and housewives. Any artistic activities carried out by women, including batik, pottery and ceramics, were regarded as hobby crafts and not artistic work at all. However, even during the New Order, this categorisation of *kriya* arts into either female hobby activities (making textiles and ceramics) or male arts (sword forging, wood carving, etc.) became fluid.⁷⁵² It is encouraging to see examples of couples among the younger generation, such as

⁷⁵¹ This is a common saying among artist in Yogyakarta. Personal communication with Wahyu Priyono, 2nd March 2022.

⁷⁵² In her book chapter, Alia Swastika analyses the role of women in the Indonesian art landscape from the 1970s to the 1990s. She mentions interesting events, such as the banning of an important women's movement called *Gerakan Wanita*

Apri (ceramist) and Afifah (batik maker), who both work as entrepreneurs at home and are able to pursue their professional goals on an equal footing.

Discourses on The Position of *Kriya* – in the Past and Today

In *kriya* discourses the conception of time is a debated topic. *Kriya* was practised by the ancestors and is still practised today. Many of today's *kriya* makers feel connected to the knowledge, philosophy and powers of their ancestors when practising *kriya*. Yet, regardless of time, the intangible cultural heritage survives in *kriya*. This is a different conception of time than art historians in the West are accustomed to, where precise dating and chronologies are a tested means to examine and validate a piece of art. I would argue that *kriya* objects of today reflect the connection between the past and present, and also how *kriya* makers negotiate with the *kriya* heritage of the past.

The position of *kriya* has been debated since the 1960s when the term *kriya* was first proposed by lecturers at ASRI. At that time, the aim was to recognise *kriya* as the root of all visual arts in Indonesia and to lift *kriya* up from the status of a craft and a low art. However, this goal was not achieved quickly. When the Indonesian contemporary art scene began in 1975 *kriya* was still regarded as a craft and in the following decades, *kriya* continued to play a minor role.

The paradigm of Western art was brought to Indonesia in the 20th century by Dutch painters. It was adopted and had a strong impact on Indonesian academic educational institutions, and on public opinion. The *kriya* expert Brahmantya adds that, in the Suharto era, *kriya* makers were regarded as simple workers earning low wages. He suspects that Suharto favoured the socially low position of *kriya* makers in order to maintain a broad class of working people in his Indonesian society. This class was supposed to contribute to Indonesia's economic performance by producing *kriya* products. But Suharto did not want *kriya* makers to become academic artists with a potential for rebelling against the political system. It is hard to determine how much significance Brahmantya's assessment had. However, the fact that Suharto's wife was appointed to the post of *Dewan Kerajinan Nasional* (DEKRANAS), The National Craft Council, shows that Suharto intended to implement his political agenda in the field of *kriya*. Today, the position of *kriya* is not debated at state level. *Kriya* is recognised and promoted as a significant part of the creative economy, cultural heritage and tourism.

Indonesia (Gerwani for short), which originated in the 1950s and 1960s and had links to the Communist Party. Alia Swastika, 'New Order Policies on Art/Culture and Their Impact on Women's Roles In Visual Arts, 1970s-90s', in *Living Art: Indonesian Artists Engage Politics, Society and History*, ed. Virginia Hooker, Elly Kent, and Caroline Turner (ANU Press, 2022), 250-52, <https://doi.org/10.22459/LA.2022>.

The term *kriya* was introduced in the 1960s by artists and academics to emphasise and highlight high art within the arts as differentiated from *kerajinan* (handicrafts). Accordingly, *kriya* not only meant craft, but included spiritual and religious aspects of local cultures in Indonesia. The discussion about the position of *kriya* has changed and evolved since the 1960s. Today the discussion is often characterised by the attempt to free artistic endeavour from common (Western) art categories. Paradoxically, it was the introduction of the term *kriya* in the 1960s that opened up a new category within the traditional arts. At that time, a strong distinction was made between high art (*kriya*) and the mass production of functional objects (*kerajinan*). But nowadays the term *kriya* has a wider and much more open meaning, and serves to dissolve outdated categories such as fine art, craft and design. For most of my interviewees the term *kriya* designates traditional and contemporary art that reflects local cultures' high craftsmanship, philosophical and religious values. For example, some *kriya* experts include painting in *kriya*, as painting can have a manual, religious and cultural basis. The discourse on *kriya* striving for an art-thinking without Western categories is also visible at the universities. Formerly, art educational institutions had a Fine Art Department and a Craft Department. This was, because these institutions drew so much on Western education models and adopted classifications of fine art and craft.⁷⁵³ In Yogyakarta academic craft education was first called *kerajinan* education. In 1985 when ISI Yogyakarta was founded, the Department was called *Kriya* Department. To soften the dichotomy between fine art and *kriya*, today at ISI Yogyakarta *kriya* courses are called *seni kriya* (the art of *kriya*), and the term *seni murni* (fine art) is replaced by *seni rupa* (visual arts).⁷⁵⁴

In the 20th century, Western discourses reduced Indonesian *kriya* to craft, while in the last two decades of Indonesian discourse, art critics have reduced Western art to conceptual and intellectual art. I suggest that such reductions and struggles over the sovereign territory of art become obsolete when a parallel co-existence of culturally differently-conditioned views of art can be seen as an opportunity to learn from each other.

In my opinion, the debate about the position of *kriya* in Indonesia reflects efforts to emancipate it from Western art values. I observe that there were three important phases in achieving its own path for the Indonesian arts (*kriya*, fine arts, traditional arts). (1) The first phase was characterised by *Gerakan Seni Rupa Baru*, The New Art Movement, of 1975. Artists Jim Supangkat, FX Harsono and others initiated the struggle for democratic values, such as freedom of expression and freedom of the press, but also freedom in art. This was also

⁷⁵³ Jono Irianto, 'Ceramic Art: In Between the Contemporary Art and Contemporary Craft'.

⁷⁵⁴ In the past, the term fine art was translated as *seni murni* (pure art). But this translation is considered outdated and is therefore no longer used.

the beginning of contemporary art in Indonesia. Supangkat and his friends' resistance was directed against the hegemony of *Mooi Indie* painting and against the hegemony of Javanese traditional arts as a state-compliant art form. These artists were concerned with finding an alternative aesthetic in art which would allow democratic expression in art without state censorship. (2) Following the development of political resistance in the art scene, themes of postcolonialism developed from the 1990s onwards, parallel to the first international art biennales held in the Asia-Pacific region. In Indonesia a postcolonial discourse emerged that advocated local cultural identities instead of a single monocultural national identity. The presentation of artworks on the global stage prompted both Indonesian and Western curators to critically question ways of exhibiting. (3) The third and current phase began in around 2010 and is characterised by a growing appreciation of *kriya*, in line with UNESCO's recognition of batik as a form of intangible cultural heritage of Indonesia in 2009. Since the 1990s contemporary artists (with a fine art degree) have been using *kriya* elements in their work, whereas from 2010 onwards *kriya* makers have increasingly positioned themselves as artists who want to show their work in contemporary art exhibitions. This development has been followed by *kriya* exhibitions that are professionally organised by circles of academic *kriya* makers in Yogyakarta. *Kriya* exhibitions emerging after 2010 can be seen as an analogy to the already established and widespread contemporary art exhibitions. I regard the third phase as a logical consequence of postcolonial discourse in Indonesia, which is about emancipation from Western values and hierarchies in art. It is no longer enough to make one's own art, but to also critically question and renegotiate exhibition formats, art terminologies, and the question of what characterises an artist. I consider it to be a self-conscious attitude from the *kriya* scene that *kriya* makers should be regarded as artists, and that their works are shown in contemporary art exhibitions as well as in recently established *kriya* exhibitions. Ultimately, the focus on Indonesia's own cultural identities also requires a return to original art "languages", which are based on the *kriya* philosophy.

Conclusion

Production and Industry

Batik as a cloth of the Archipelago has always been a part of Indonesia's cultural identities. In rural areas and suburbs, local batik patterns are produced in batik collectives using the *gotong royong* principle, while one-person companies produce batik for sale direct to customers or for wholesalers. In cities, small and medium-sized enterprises produce handmade batik on a large scale and specialise in original batik (*batik tulis*, *batik cap*, *batik kombinasi*), while electric machines are only used to produce printed batik imitations or other deviations from the original batik process. Yogyakarta's batik variety is inexhaustible, since many entrepreneurs create their own original designs every other month. Batik can be divided into several styles: classical batik, modern batik, batik painting, abstract batik and contemporary batik. All these styles continue to be designed today. Classical batik patterns have symbolic meanings, while the other styles are created according to each batik maker's taste. Today batik is worn as fashionable clothing and to make a general statement about the wearer's love of batik. The symbolic meanings of batik patterns and the correct wearing of such fabrics has gradually been lost over the last decades. Yet batik lovers and experts try to keep batik heritage and knowledge alive by continued creation of symbolic batik patterns and by teaching younger generations accordingly.

Pottery has been created in Kasongan since the 19th century and met the need for household items. Water containers, jugs, bowls, cooking pots, small stoves and vases were produced from the malleable clay of the Kasongan region. In the mid-20th century Kasongan became famous for its richly decorated Hindu-Javanese sculptures and objects (*garuda*, *naga* and other animals) made with the *teknik tempel* (glue/add-on technique). These decorations consisted of hundreds of small feathers or scales added to the clay body and were reminiscent of Javanese traditional wood carving. In the 1980s export opportunities for Kasongan products arose and the years between 1995 and 2005 are known as the golden years for Kasongan due to its very high export volumes. Many potters from Brebes and other cities on Java moved to Kasongan to work in its vibrant pottery industry. Today Kasongan still exports pottery and produces items for the domestic market, but the number of potters has declined since volcano Merapi's outbreak in 2006 and the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak in 2020.

The high-fired products known as ceramics have been produced in Indonesia since the 1960s. The ceramics industry is less significant than the batik industry because there is no ceramics tradition in Indonesia that would contribute to an appreciation of handmade ceramics by the

general public. One-person companies produce ceramics mostly for hotels and restaurants, while the masses buy cheap imported manufactured ceramics from China. However, ceramics has become popular as a form of *kriya* and is created in ceramics studios and collectives for both functional and non-functional purposes.

Batik and Ceramics: Two Forms of *Kriya*

Batik and ceramics are two *kriya* forms with very different histories. Batik is part of a cultural heritage and has been practised for centuries. Batik reflects the cultural identities of the multi-ethnic state of Indonesia. It shows technical sophistication, cultural and spiritual practice which are typical for *kriya*. This contrasts with the much younger form of *kriya*, ceramics, which only gained a foothold in Indonesia since the 1960s. Indonesian ceramics is closely related to the Western contemporary art paradigm. This is clearly visible in the Jakarta Contemporary Ceramics Biennale, which draws heavily on Western contemporary art exhibition models. However, successful Indonesian ceramists manage to balance traditional elements and contemporary art idioms. Their works seem contemporary but reflect their engagement with the *kriya* philosophy. Therefore, I argue that *kriya* is not only traditional arts and crafts, but *kriya* is an art practice based on craftsmanship, as well as cultural and spiritual aspects that have emerged *from* the practice of these traditional arts and crafts.

Batik and ceramics in Indonesia are in a discursive tension between traditional art and contemporary art but are also stuck between finding their own way to present art or drawing from Western models. Despite the large temporal difference in the emergence of the two *kriya* forms, both batik and ceramics reflect the essence of *kriya*. From my research I have found that *kriya* refers to two things: to a cultural philosophy and to an artistic object made with a high level of craftsmanship. The *kriya* philosophy consists of a hybrid of local animistic teachings and the Islamic religion. While this philosophy serves as a guideline for intangible aspects of *kriya* practice, the local cultures of the Archipelago determine tangible aspects such as the formal languages and ornamentation of the *kriya* objects. In the Indonesian discourse *kriya* is often examined and discussed without reference to a chronological perspective, but with a cultural dimension because the intangible aspects of *kriya* have always been present.

The Importance of *Kriya*

The discourse on *kriya* that was initiated in the 1960s by Yogyakarta artists and lecturers was an attempt to separate Indonesia's craft-based arts from the (Western) category of craft. The categorisation of art and craft was the result of Dutch colonial rule until 1945, which, on the one hand established the discipline of painting in Indonesia and, on the other hand, introduced the Western art paradigm of high art (fine art) and low art (craft). In Indonesian art academies (e.g. ASRI 1950), and later in its art universities (e.g. ISI Yogyakarta 1984), the dichotomy between art and craft was further reproduced. In Yogyakarta, *kriya* artists were therefore not represented in the contemporary art scene for a long time, but were much more active as *kriya* makers and entrepreneurs in craft industries. Organised action and resistance against the repressive policies of the Suharto era came from the contemporary art scene and not from *kriya* circles.

The search to create a distinctive path for the Indonesian arts (including *kriya*) can be divided into three phases. The first phase, between the 1970s and 1990s, was about the struggle for art forms other than painting and traditional arts. It was also the beginning of contemporary art as a mouthpiece for political discontent. The second phase, between the 1990s and 2010s, was about the presentation of Indonesian artists in the international art world (biennales) and finding a position on the global stage. The third phase, which began in around 2010, is about finding Indonesia's own art languages and forms of expression (*kriya*), including ways to present arts.

Kriya (as both a philosophy and as a material culture of the past and present) plays a significant role in Indonesian art. Its immaterial aspects are kept alive by passing on and practising a craft. There is no museum tradition in the Archipelago, so the value of *kriya* is not bound to distinct objects that must be preserved and exhibited. Instead, the value of *kriya* is reflected in many individual *kriya* objects of the past and present. Yogyakarta curators and lecturers like to talk about *kriya* in an asynchronous time dimension and they think, that *kriya* connects today's artists with their ancestors.

However, *kriya* is not only important in terms of art, but it has also become significant as a product for the Indonesian creative industries. Many high-quality craft products are produced in Indonesia, in contrast to other countries in the region which have lost their production facilities and associated knowledge in the process of modernisation. Although a large part of the younger generation prefers to take lucrative office work in big cities, vibrant discourse on *kriya* since 2010 has made the profession of a *kriya* maker more attractive again. Lecturers and curators in Yogyakarta are convinced that *kriya* is a part of the Indonesian identity and

that attractive well-paid jobs need to be created to continue to strengthen and develop *kriya* in industry, art and culture.

I would like to invite readers to expand their art vocabulary with the term *kriya* to better understand the arts in Indonesia. I am convinced that broadening our terminologies, our concept of art and of time can improve our discipline (art history). By adding the term *kriya* to our art vocabulary, I do not aim to establish a counter-concept to art in the West, but rather to ensure the coexistence of divergent concepts of art. The Archipelago's history is marked by the peaceful coexistence of several cultures and religions. It is not a contradiction for a Muslim to follow an animist religion, and the same animistic religion can equally be practised by a Christian, Buddhist or Hindu. Contemporary art in Indonesia was initially strongly influenced by Western models, but in recent decades its art landscape has developed in favour of a hybrid art paradigm: a conflation of Western-adapted contemporary art and *kriya* objects with traditional elements, in line with the *Zeitgeist*.

With my thesis, I hope to have contributed to illuminating the discourse on *kriya* and, ultimately, on the Indonesian understanding of art. Further research into other *kriya* forms, such as wood, bamboo, textiles, and metalwork would be desirable. The topic of academic knowledge transmission of *kriya*, but also of curation, restoration and preservation provide equally important areas for further research.

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Yacobus Ari Respati and Axel R. Ramadhan, *The Fourth Jakarta Contemporary Ceramics Biennale - WAYS OF CLAY*, (7 December 2016 – 11 January 2017), National Gallery Indonesia, Jakarta: The 4th JCCB and Bumi Purnati, 2016.

Nia Gautama and Sakti Nuzan, eds., *The Third Jakarta Contemporary Ceramics Biennale - Coefficient of Expansion*, (23 September – 13 October 2014), National Gallery Jakarta: The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy Republic Indonesia, 2014.

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Rosanto Bima Pratama, ed., *Pameran Seni Rupa - Peraih Nominasi Kompetisi Kriya Award 2014-2016 / ReLoad*, (20-27 October 2017), curators: Komunitas Titik Lenyap, Pendhapa Art Space Yogyakarta: Komunitas Titik Lenyap and Dinas Kebudayaan Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta, 2017.

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Kala Gaelan – Fashion Catalogue 19 (July 2019), Batik dan Fashion D3, ISI Yogyakarta: ISI Yogyakarta, 2019.

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Queensland Art Gallery, ed., *The First Asia-Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art*, (17 September – 5 December 1993), director: Doug Hall AM, Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane: Queensland Art Gallery, 1993.

CP Foundation, ed., *CP Open Biennale – Interpellation*, (4 September – 3 October 2003), National Gallery Jakarta: CP Foundation, 2003.

Hendra Gunawan, *2020 UOB Painting of the Year*, (2020), PT Bank UOB Indonesia: UOB Bank, 2019, <https://www.uobgroup.com/uobandart/pdf/The-2020-uob-poy-catalogue.pdf> (last visit 17th June 2023).

Maneka Sekani – art exhibition S1 Kriya Seni & D3 Batik Fashion 2019 (2019), Institut Seni Indonesia Yogyakarta: ISI Yogyakarta, 2019.

Robertus Ganjar, ed., *Pameran Seni Rupa - The Life of Spices*, (27 March – 9 April 2021), The Phoenix Hotel Yogyakarta: The Phoenix Hotel Yogyakarta MGallery, 2021.

Image Attachment & Appendix

Doctoral Thesis

Indonesian *Kriya* Today: Yogyakarta Batik and Ceramics – Reflecting and Negotiating Cultural Identities

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Table of Content

Image Attachement

Figures K1–K29	Chapter 1 <i>Kriya</i>	page 5
Figures B1–B51	Chapter 2 Batik	page 24
Figures C1–C26	Chapter 3 Ceramics	page 52

Graphics

Graphic 1: Indonesian <i>Kriya</i> and Art from Around 1900 Until 2020	page 70
Graphic 2: The Perception of <i>Kriya</i> in Relation to other Arts in Indonesia	page 71
Graphic 3: <i>Kriya</i> 's Aesthetic Theory and Trilogy of Balance	page 72

Lists of Events

Lists of <i>Kriya</i> Events	page 73
Lists of Batik Events	page 74
Lists of Ceramic Events	page 76

Abbreviations and Glossary

List of Abbreviations, Indonesian Expressions and Terms	page 78
Glossary of Governmental Institutions	page 80

Appendix page 81

- List of Interviews

Picture Attachment



Figure K1 Leather wayang puppets from Mr Kampek's store *Putro Wayang Puppet* in Yogyakarta. Image by Wahyu Priyono.



Figure K2 Muhammad Nurrudin, *Ornamen Yogyakarta*, 2016. 65 x 26 x 3 cm, wood carving on teak wood. Image by the author.



Figure K3 WhatsApp Screenshot in conversation with Sapuan from Pekalongan, May 2021. Image by the author.



Figure K4 Borobudur temple complex. Image by Jacob Rüegg.



Figure K5 Stone carved relief at the walls of Borobudur. Image by Jacob Rüegg.



Figure K6 Garuda (eagle) on a 500 rupee coin and on a stamps.
Images by Wayu Priyono.



Figure K7 *Naga (snake) wuwungan (roof top decoration). Kasongan production.*
Image by Wahyu Priyono.



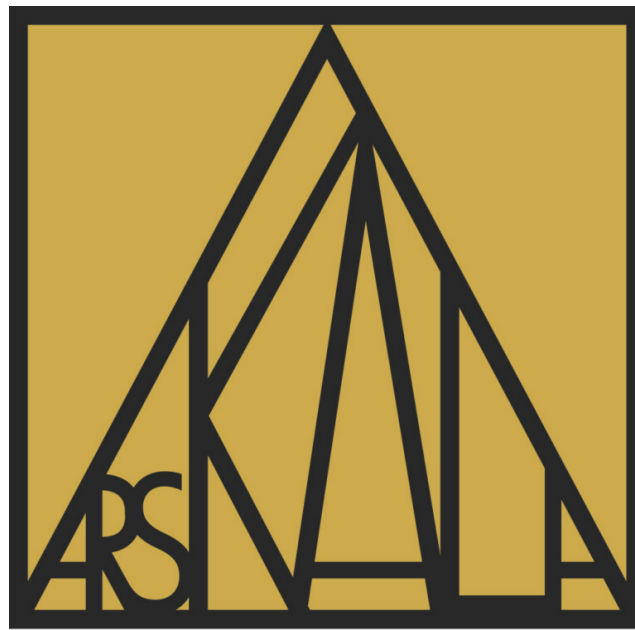
Figure K8 *Main entrance of the Kraton Yogyakarta (sultan's palace).*
Image by Wahyu Priyono.



Figure K9 ISI Yogyakarta Campus in Sewon, Bantul district of Yogyakarta.
Image courtesy of ISI Yogyakarta.



Figure K10 Buntari Studio, Sidik Purnomo's ceramics studio. Left: Studio setting, right: an artwork in progress, (post from Buntari's Instagram profile: 29th October 2019)
bottom right: Sidik Purnomo. Images courtesy of Sidik Purnomo.



PRINCIPLE PROJECT

Figure K11 The Logo of ArsKala Principle Studio. Image courtesy of the founders Endang Lestari and Sujud Dartanto, Yogyakarta 2022.



Figure K12 Pendhapa Art Space in Yogyakarta. Image courtesy of Ganes.



Figure K13 Yuli Astuti, *Krem Kemuning* (yellow cream), 2018. Mori Primisima fabric, size M, *batik tulis*, naphthol colours. Final work of the bachelor's programme Batik Fashion D3. Image courtesy of ISI Yogyakarta and Djandjang Purwo Saedjati.



Figure K14 Yoki Osanai, *Niskala* (noetic), 2022. Fabric, rayon, cotton bordure, toyobo cotton, one size, *batik tulis colet*, remasol colours. Final work of the bachelor's programme Batik Fashion D3. Image courtesy of ISI Yogyakarta and Djandjang Purwo Saedjati.



Figure K15 Rosanto Bima Pratama at the opening ceremony of the Matra Award in 2018, (post from the MKF's Instagram profile: 22nd November 2018).
Image courtesy of Bima Pratama.



Figure K16 Logo of the Matra Kriya Festival 2020, (post from the MKF's Instagram profile: 3rd November 2020). Image courtesy of the MKF Team.



Figure K17 Ivan Bestari, *Ombak (Wave)*, 2020. 70 x 15 x 35 cm, glas bottles.
Image courtesy of the artist.



Figure K18 Meta Enjelita, *Ecogenesis*, 2020. 12 x 18 cm (20 Panels), Rust Dye and Ecoprint on Paper. Image courtesy of the MKF Team.



Figure K19 Sidiq Abdullah, *Wicaksana*, 2020. Two batik garments, *batik tulis* technique. Image courtesy of the MKF Team.



Figure K20 Gabriella Nadya Anggia, *Soja Charta - Eco Friendly in Style*, 2020.
18 x 18 x 15 cm, wood, soy paper leftover from tofu making, lamp components.
Image courtesy of the MKF Team.



Figure K21 Faiq al Fahmi, *Baldaton toyyibatun wa Rabbun Ghofur* (the condition of a country that is prosperous, fair and equitable), 2020. 30 x 20 cm, glazed stoneware.
Image courtesy of the MKF Team.



Figure K22 Devis Zainur, *Anxiety*, 2020. 40 x 40 cm, tapestry.
Image courtesy of the MKF Team.



Figure K23 Arif Hanungtyas Sukardi, *Under The Sun*, 2020. 31.5 x 3 cm, stoneware, underglaze, glaze. Image courtesy of the MKF Team.



Figure K24 I Kadek Joning Pragoya, *Selami dan Nikmati*, 2020. 30 x 22.5 x 40.5 cm, cardboard, wood, clay. Image courtesy of the MKF Team.



Figure K25 Logo of the Matra Kriya Festival 2022, (post from MKF's Instagram profile: 16th May 2022). Image courtesy of the MKF Team.



Figure K26 Anton Nurcahyo, *Harmony Kwek Kwek* 2019. 68 x 68 x 200 cm, mixed media. Favourite Artwork of the Matra Kriya Festival 2022, (post of MKF's Instagram profile: 26th May 2022). Image courtesy of the MKF Team.



Figure K27 Performing art on the fifth day of the Matra Kriya Festival 2022, (post from the MKF's Instagram profile: 30th May 2022). Image courtesy of the MKF Team.



Figure K28 *Festival Kebudayaan Yogyakarta 2019 (Yogyakarta Cultural Festival)* entry gate. Image by the author.



Figure K29 Annisa P Cincerakasih, *Wander, Wonder*, 2012-2019. Variable dimensions, mixed media. Exhibited at ArtJog 2019. Image by the author.



Figure B1 Sapuan's thematic batik fabrics. Left: *Congres Kodok* (frog congress), 2019. *Batik tulis* on cotton, (a post from Sapuan's instagram profile: 16th of May 2019). Right: *Semar Suwung* (empty *Semar*), 2018. *Batik tulis* on cotton (a post from Sapuan's instagram profile: 16th January 2018). Image courtesy of Sapuan.



Figure B2 A contemporary *sarong* from Yogyakarta, 2022. 252 x 106 cm, with a *kepala* (head) showing a *tumpal* motif and a *badan* showing a contemporary geometrical motif. Image by Wahyu Priyono.

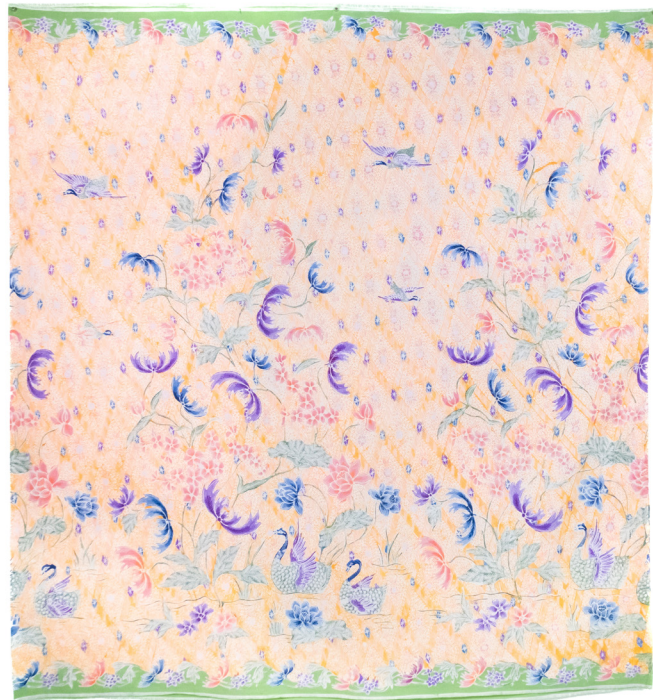


Figure B3 A tubular *pagi-sore sarong* by Netty Kwee from Kedungwuni (Central Java), around 1975. 105 x 205 cm, *batik tulis* on cotton. Chinese colourway and motifs (flowers, birds and swans). Heirloom of Tri Rüegg-Tamrin from her mother Sutiya Tamrin. Images by the author.



Figure B4 *Kemben* (breast cloth) with a blue *tengahan* from the *Kraton Yogyakarta*. 52.5 x 253 cm, Rudolf Smend collection. Courtesy of Rudolf Smend.



Figure B5 Souvenir tablecloth (unknown artist) with Javanese *wayang* figures. 134.5 x 41.5 cm, *batik tulis* on cotton. Tri Rüegg-Tamrin's private collection. The white background shows fine blue coloured veins. Image by the author.



Figure B6 The copper stamp called *canting cap* in use (left) and exhibited in the Textile Museum in Jakarta (right). Image (top left) by Wahyu Priyono, at *Batik Winoto-sastro* in Yogyakarta. Image (left bottom) by Caroline Poernomo, batik workshop in Bandung, image (right) by the author, Textile Museum Jakarta.



Figure B7 A piece of *batik cap* which will be coloured with the *colet* technique. Image by the author.



Figure B8 A beach towel (unknown artist) made with the *batik colet* technique. A gift and part of the private collection of the author. Image by the author.



Figure B9 Batik on cotton (unknown artist) with a white background, yard goods from Yogyakarta, 2019. Private collection of the author. Image by the author.



Figure B10 *Batik tulis* fabric (unknown artist) from Yogyakarta around 1980. Classical Yogyakarta colours and a crab as main motif. The fabric was sewn into a dress for Tri. Tri Rüegg-Tamrin's private collection. Images by the author.



Figure B11 A silk foulard (unknown artist), around 2015. Made with the *batik tulis* technique. Private collection of the author. Image by the author.



Figure B12 A *canting tulis* with copper tank and bamboo handle, Yogyakarta 2011. Image by the author.



Figure B13 The traditional *batik tulis* process. Images on the top: dyed fabric with waxed motifs and a woman applying wax with the *canting tulis* at the Batik Winotosastro company in Yogyakarta 2023. Image on the bottom: eight stages of the fabric in the traditional process, from the catalogue of Batik Winotosastro. Images by Wahyu Priyono.



Figure B14 Two different batik wax, called *malam*, from two different stores in Yogyakarta. The colour depends on the ingredients ratio. Image by the author.



Figure B15 Urea granules experiment on dyed fabric at ISI Yogyakarta, 2020. Image by Djandjang Purwo Saedjati.



Figure B16 Nurohmad's cardboard *canting cap* invention. Image on the top: centre oriented square ornament. Image on the bottom: water and fire inspired *tumpal* motif.
Images by Nurohmad.



Figure B17 A *batik tulis* fabric from Surakarta (unknown artist) with a flower as main motif and with a cream coloured outline, around 1990. Tri Rüegg-Tamrin's private batik collection. Image by the author.



Figure B18 The motif *jilamprang* with contrasting colours, batik on cotton, Yogyakarta 2023. Image by Wahyu Priyono.



Figure B19 Table cloths (unknown artist), Yogyakarta around 2000. 28.5 x 28.5 cm, batik on cotton. Yogyakarta classical motifs of *Sawat Lar* (open feather tail) of *Garuda* (eagle) and with classical colours. Tri Rüegg-Tamrin's private collection. Images by the author.



Figure B20 Batik imitation, printed motifs (*parang* deviations, fillings and butterflies) on cotton. Tri Rüegg-Tamrin's private collection. Image by the author.



Figure B21 Two printed table cloths with a detailed view of the backside (right). Image on the top: Batik from Danar Hadi, 100.5 x 107 cm, Surakarta. Image on the bottom: unknown company, 99 x 104 cm, probably bought in Jember, East Java. Both table cloths are part of Tri Rüegg-Tamrin's private collection. Images by the author.

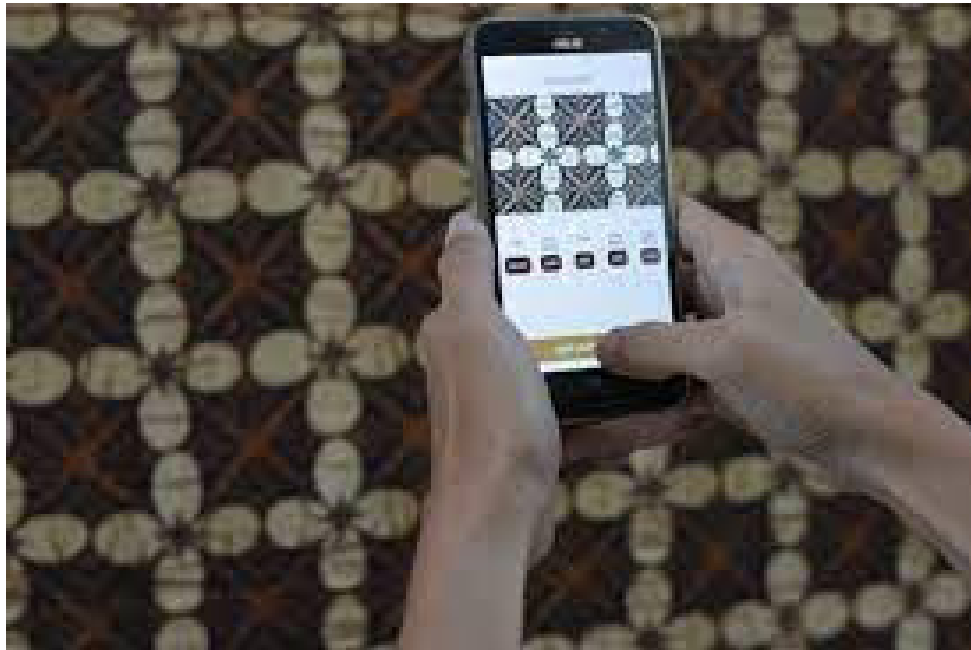


Figure B22 The batik analyzer application for the smartphone. Image by BBKB.

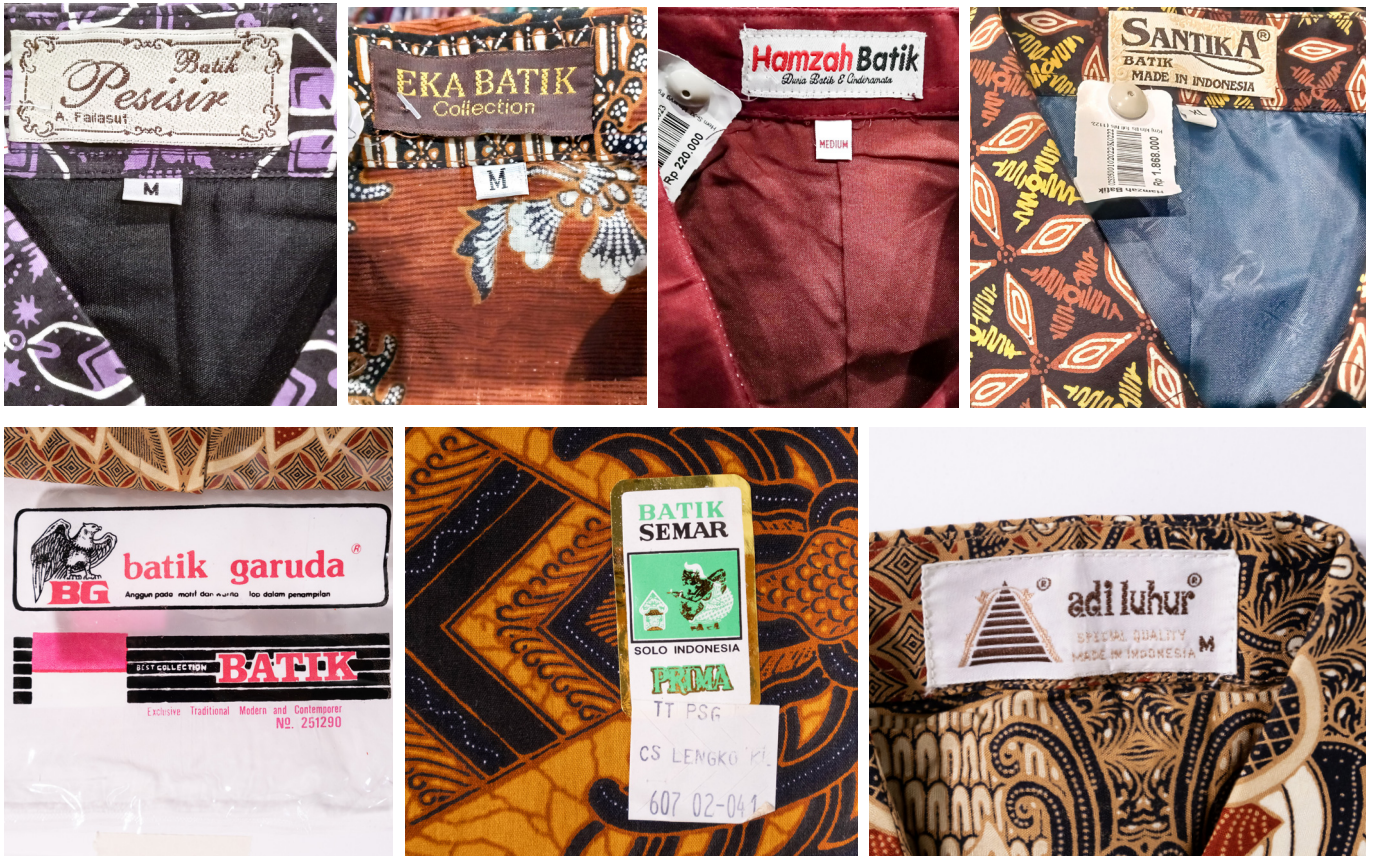


Figure B23 Batik brands and labels. Images upper row: photographed at Batik Mirota in Yogyakarta 2023. Images by Wahyu Priyono. Images lower row: batik brands and labels of Tri Rüegg-Tamrin's private collection. Images by the author.



Figure B24 Signatures on batik fabrics. Left: Same sarong as in Figure B3. „Netty Kwee“ from „Kedungwuni“, near Pekalongan, Central Java. Right: Tablecloth with name, style, origin and date. „Ivan Zyuli“, „Batik HP“ from „Purwokerto“, „Saturday 23 Oktober 2010“. Images by the author.



Figure B25 Woven labels for original *batik tulis* and *batik cap* fabrics. Images courtesy of BBKB.



Figure B26 The label of BBKB is printed on the flyer and the packages, instead of sewing them directly onto the batik fabrics. Examples of the batik company Guru Batik from Dheni Nugroho. Images by Wahyu Priyono.



Figure B27 Two *batik kombinasi* fabrics from Nurohmad's company Batik Dongaji in Yogyakarta, 2023. *Batik cap* on cotton, synthetic colours. Images by Nurohmad.

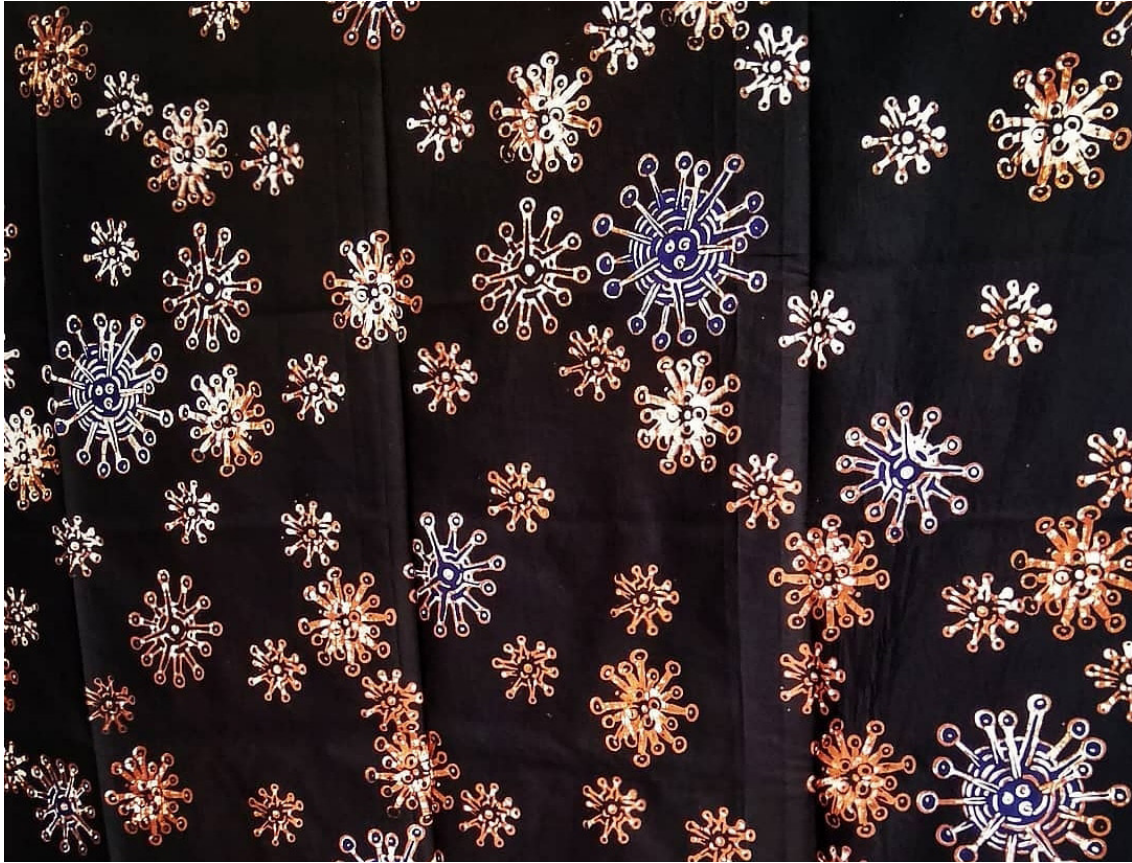


Figure B28 Nurohmad's covid motif, 2020. *Batik cap* on cotton, synthetic colours. Image by Nurohmad.



Figure B29 Unknown artist, *Prahu Nelayan* (fisherman's ship). Souvenir (wall hanging) by the company Batik Keris. 45 x 75 cm, *batik tulis* on cotton, synthetic colours. From Tri Rüegg-Tamrin's private collection. Image by the author.



Figure B30 Unknown artist, Indonesian map. Souvenir with Yogyakarta classical motif fillings and Yogyakarta classical colours. 104 x 51 cm, *batik tulis* on cotton. Tri Rüegg-Tamrin's private collection. Image by the author.



Figure B31 Man's shirt with a classical *parang* motif, for sale at Mirota Batik in Yogyakarta 2023. Image by Wahyu Priyono.



Figure B32 Abstract batik by Joan Miroe. Synthetic colours on cotton.
Image courtesy of the artist.



Figure B33 Agung Suhartanto, *Gemah Ripah Loh Jinawi*, 2016. 300 x 150 cm, *batik tulis* on cotton, synthetic colours: naphtol & indigosol. (Post from Agung's Instagram profile: 20th of September 2016). Image courtesy of the artist.



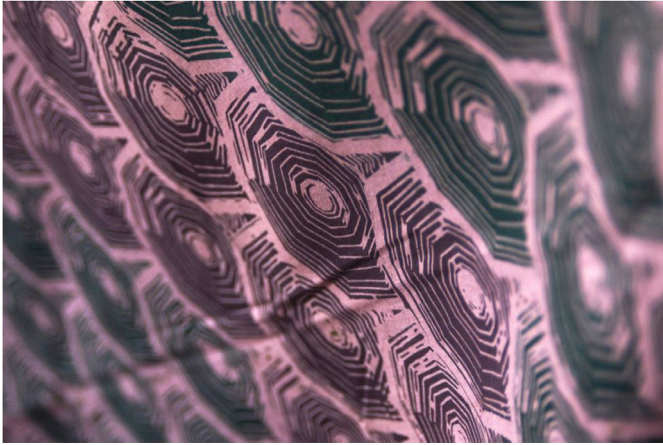
Figure B34 Agung Suhartanto, *Cinta Bahari Indonesia* (Love the Indonesian Maritim Life), 2016 - 2019. 150 x 150 cm, *batik tulis* on *primmissima* cotton, synthetic colours: naphtol & indigosol. The artwork was shown in 2019 at Katamsi Gallery at ISI Yogyakarta. Images by the author.



Figure B35 Joan Miroe, *Psikologi Langit Biru* (Psychology of the Blue Sky), 2019.
215 x 115 cm, *kuas* (brush) and *colet* technique on cotton, synthetic colours.
Image courtesy of the artist.



Figure B36 Kang Pandono's abstract batik. Left: *Burung Merak* (peacock), 2022. *Batik tulis* and *kuas* technique on cotton, synthetic colours, (post from Pandono's Instagram profile: 10th April 2022). Right top: *Seniman Terkontaminasi Pasar* (the artist contaminates the market), 2022. Same technique and colourtype as *Burung Merak*, (post from Pandono's Instagram profile: 5th April 2022). Right bottom: Pandono creates an abstract batik, (post from Pandono's Instagram profile: 25th March 2021). Images courtesy of the artist.



B37



B38



B38



B39

- Figure B37 Top left: Batik fraktal with the *sisik* motif. Retrieved from <http://batikfractal.com> (2012).
- Figure B38 Middle left & top right: Honeycomb inspired motif created with a wooden stamp.two coloured women's blouse, (posts from batikfractal's Instagram profile 3rd & 16th December 2022).
- Figure B39 Bottom right: A bamboo stamp for batik cap fabrics, (post from batikfractal's instagram profile 3rd November 2022). Images courtesy of batikfractal.



Figure B40 Afifah Ashma' Abdillah, *Segoro Gando Arum* (sea of fragrant flowers),
2018. 200 x 50 cm (4 panels),
batik tulis on *primisima* cotton, synthetic colours: naphtol. Image courtesy of the artist.



Figure B41 Afifah Ashma' Abdillah, *Ikhlasing Manah Seri Sekar Anggrek* (sincerity of heart, orchid flower series), 2020. 200 x 50 cm (4 panels), batik tulis on *primisima kereta kencana* cotton, synthetic colours: naphtol. (Post from Afifah's Instagram profile: 21st April 2023). Image courtesy of the artist.



Selendang 1

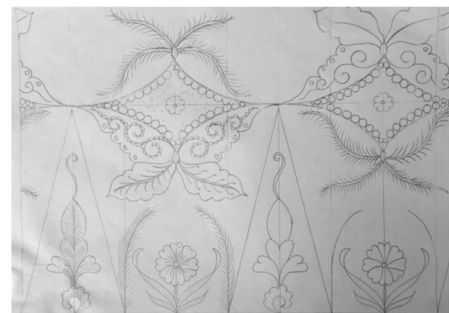
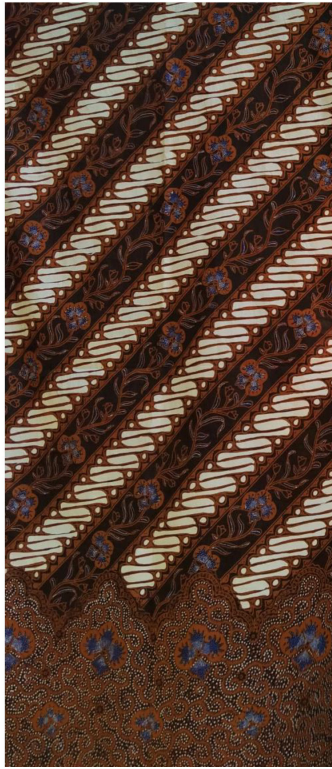


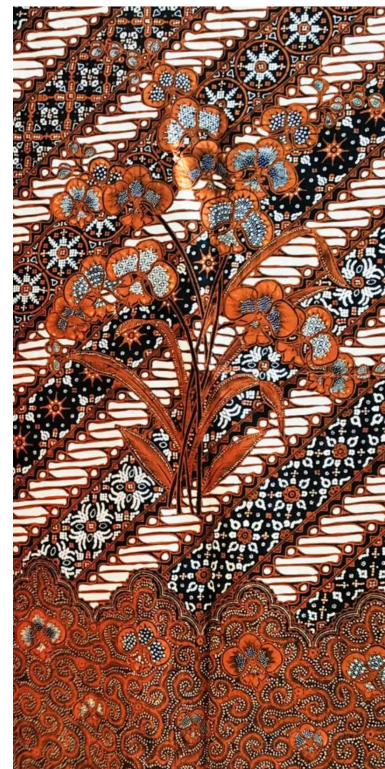
Figure B42 Afifah Ashma' Abdillah, *Selendang Ikhlasing Manah, Seri Lereng Sekar* (Selendang sincerity of heart, slope flower), 2020. 200 x 50 cm, batik tulis on *primisima kereta kencana* cotton, synthetic colours: naphtol. Right: Afifah's sketches. Images courtesy of the artist.



B43 - Selendang 2



B44 - Selendang 3



B45 - Selendang 4

All three *selendang* are made by Afifah Ashma' Abdillah with the *batik tulis* technique on *primisima kereta kencana* cotton, synthetic colours: naphtol, 200 x 50 cm each panel.

Figure B43 *Ikhlasing Manah, Seri Sekar Anggrek*, (sincerity of heart, orchid flower series).

Figure B44 Same title as B43.

Figure B45 Same title as B43.



Figure B46 Rika Winata wearing *jumputan* cloths from her own fashion brand WIRU, (post from Rika's Instagram profile: 18th December 2022).

Image courtesy of the artist.



Figure B47 Rika Winata, *Never Indonesian Enough*, 2009. Sewn woven labels, embroidery. Image courtesy of the artist.



Figure B48 Rika Winata, *A New Hope*, 2009. Variable dimension, installation with batik tulis origami birds, thread, wire, tulle. Image courtes of the artist.

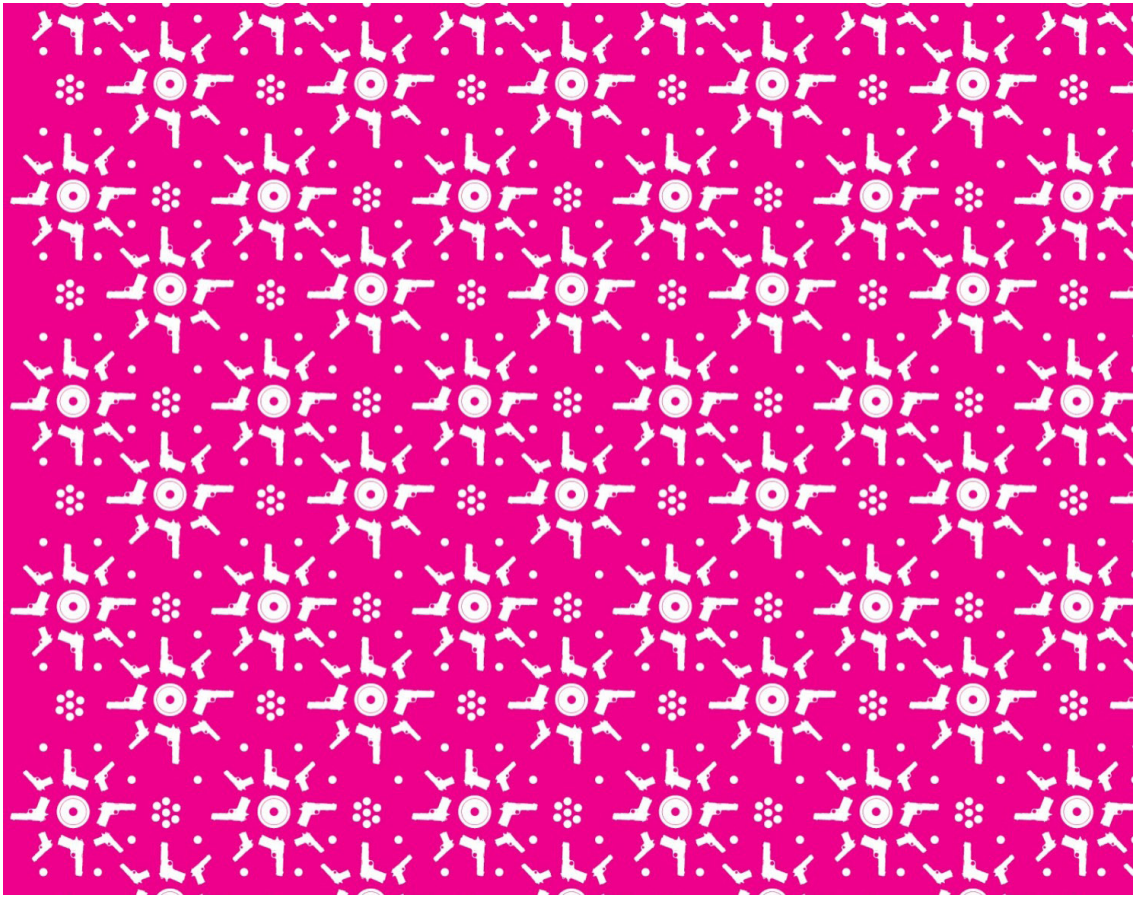


Figure B49 Rika Winata, *Sweet Darkness*, 2016. Variable dimension, digital artwork, printed on paper. Image courtesy of the artist.



Figure C1 Kasongan gate. Image by Wahyu Priyono.



Figure C2 Detail of the Kasongan gate, two eathenware horses flank the gateway. Image by Wahyu Priyono.



Figure C3 *Genthong* (water pot) to keep water in the kitchen or bathroom, made by potters from Kasongan. Image by Wahyu Priyono.



Figure C4 Left: *padasan* (water tank) to wash hands.

Figure C5 Right: *cuwo* (bowl). Figure C4 & C5: made by potters from Kasongan. Images by Wahyu Priyono.



Figure C6 *Anglo* (stove) for cooking with coal. Image by Wahyu Priyono.



Figure C7 Symmetric *wuwungan* (roof top decoration) with a two *naga* (snake).
made with the *teknik tempel* (glueing technique), by potters from Kasongan.
Image by Wahyu Priyono.



Figure C8 *Wuwungan* (roof top decoration) with a *garuda* (eagle). Approximately 25 x 20 x 80 cm, made with the *teknik tempel* (glueing technique), by potters from Kasongan. Image by Wahyu Priyono.



Figure C9 A modern ceramic artwork by Hildawati Soemantri, *Jendela di Victoria II* (the window at Victoria II), 1996. Image courtesy of Nurdian Ichsan.

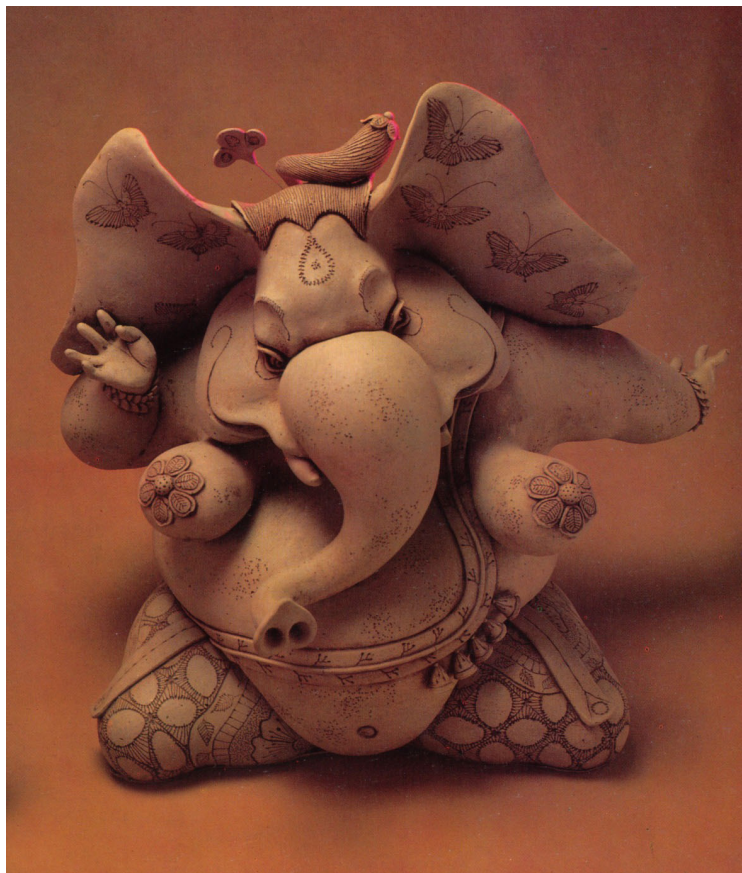


Figure C10 A modern ceramic artwork by F. Widayanto from his *ganesha-ganeshi* series, exact year unknown. Image courtesy of Nurdian Ichsan.



Figure C11 A modern ceramic artwork by Suyatna, *Nude in Coffe Break*, exact year unknown. Image courtesy of Nurdian Ichsan.



Figure C12 Steven Low Thia Kwang (Singapore), *Seedforfood Series*, 2014. Variable dimensions between 7.5 x 7.5 x 7.5 cm and 15 x 15 x 15 cm. Ceramics, glaze. Image courtesy of Asmudjo Irianto.



I



II



III



III



IV

Figure C13 I-IV artworks by *Keramiku*, Images courtesy of Asmudjo Irianto.

I: *Boys Band*, 2012. 7-10 cm x 17-23 cm, stoneware.

II: *Holiday ... Yes!*, 2013. 10-11cm x 33 xm, stoneware.

III: *Alone 2*, 2014. 9 x 16 cm, stoneware. *Alone 1*, 2014. 15 x 15 cm stoneware.

IV: *My Happy Thought*, 2014. 7-9cm x 14-17 cm, stoneware.

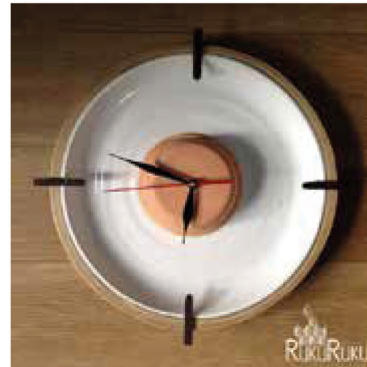


Figure C14 Rukuruku, *Shankala Series*, 2014. 30 cm. Bamboo, ceramic, clock machine. Image courtesy of Asmudjo Irianto.



Figure C15 Noor Sudiyati, *Menuju Hybrid?*, 2020. Glazed and unglazed ceramics. Image courtesy of the artist.



Figure C16 Apri Susanto, *The Flow of Life*, 2018. Variable dimensions, glazed ceramics, wire. Installation at the pool area of the hotel Gaia Cosmic.
Images courtesy of the artist.



Figure C17 Endang Lestari, *Koper Merah dan Perempuan Pekerja* (Red Suitcases and Working Women) 2009. 40 x 15 cm each ceramic figurine, 40-50 figurines. Image courtesy of the artist.



Figure C18 Left and right: installations by Endang Lestari. Left: *Nature Allure's*, 2022. Variable dimensions, earthenware, stoneware and glaze. *Nature Allure's* was part of Endang Lestari's solo exhibition *Regrows and Recovers* at the Gallery Omah Budoyo in Yogyakarta, 9th Decembe 2022 - 10th January 2023. Right: *MIOPMIC 5*, 2017. Variable dimensions, glazed stoneware. Part of a working series of imaginary objects. Images courtesy of the artist.



Figure C19 Noor Sudiyati, *Donat Demokrasi* (Democratic Donut), 1997. Unglazed ceramics. *Donat Demokrasi* was shown in several exhibitions, recently it was shown at the National Gallery in Jakarta in 2020. Image courtesy of the artist.



Figure C20 Noor Sudiyati, *Badan Alus, Badan Kasar* (Fine Body, Coarse Body), 2016. 23 x 16 x 45 cm, glazed ceramic. The artwork remains in Noor's private collection. Image courtesy of the artist.



Figure C21 Dona Prawita Arissuta, *Saudara Dalam Kemanusiaan* (Siblings in Humanity), 2020. 63 x 63 cm | 63 x 63 cm | 63 x 125 cm, stoneware, glaze, acrylic on canvas and board. Image courtesy of the artist.



Figure C22 Dona Prawita Arissuta, *Connection #1*, 2019. (Three plates) stoneware, cobalt oxide, pigment colour, transparent glaze. Image courtesy of the artist.



Figure C23 Dona Prawita Arissuta, *Connection #2*, 2019. (Five plates) stoneware, chrome oxide, pigment colour, transparent glaze. Image courtesy of the artist.



Figure C24 Dona Prawita Arissuta, *Sembrada (The Javanese Hermit Series)*, 2020. 27 x 57 cm, ceramics, acrylic on board. Image courtesy of the artist.



Figure C25 Dona Prawita Arissuta, *Petruk (The Javanese Hermit Series)*, around 2019/2020. 35 x 45 cm, stoneware, glaze, acrylic on board. Image courtesy of the artist.

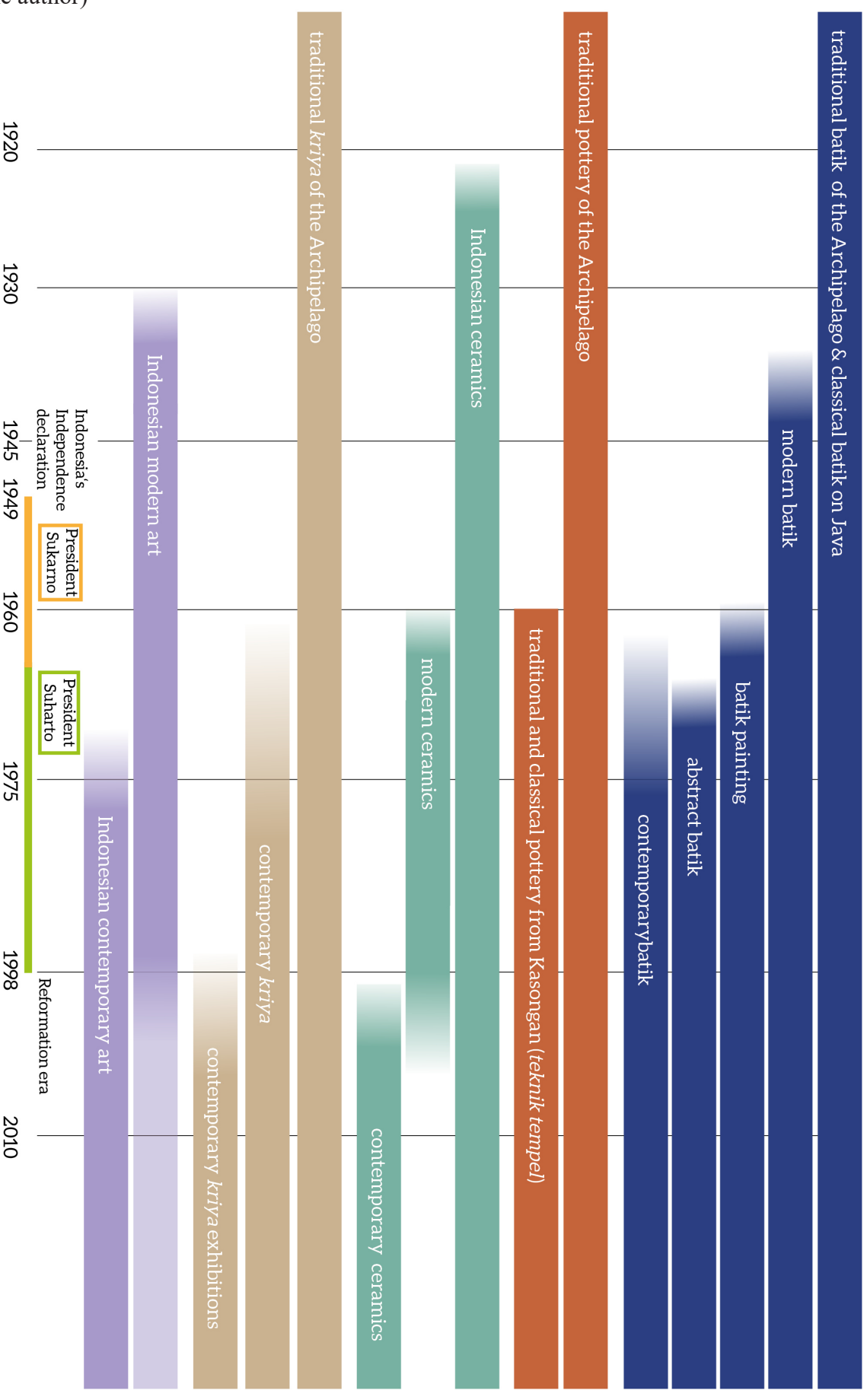


Figure C26 Dona Prawita Arissuta, two works from the *Pilgrim #1* series, 2016-2018. Stoneware, pigment colour, transparent glaze. Image courtesy of the artist.

Graphics

Indonesian *Kriya** and Art from Around 1900 Until the Present: an Overview

* Batik, pottery and ceramics are forms of *kriya*.

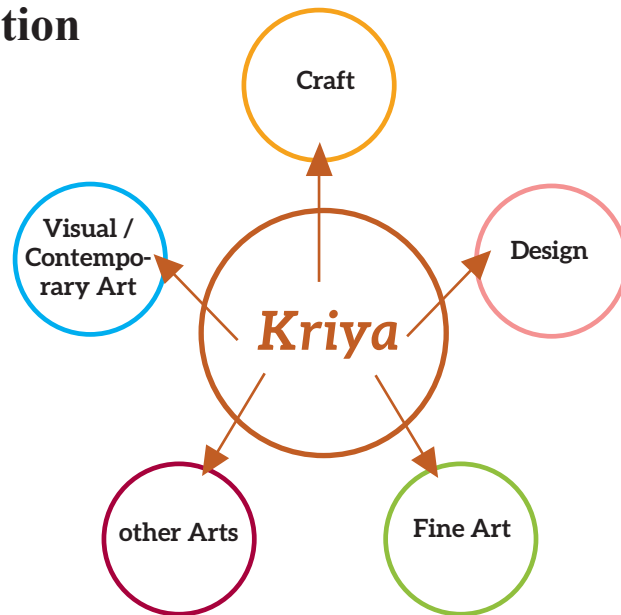


Graphic 1
(by the author)

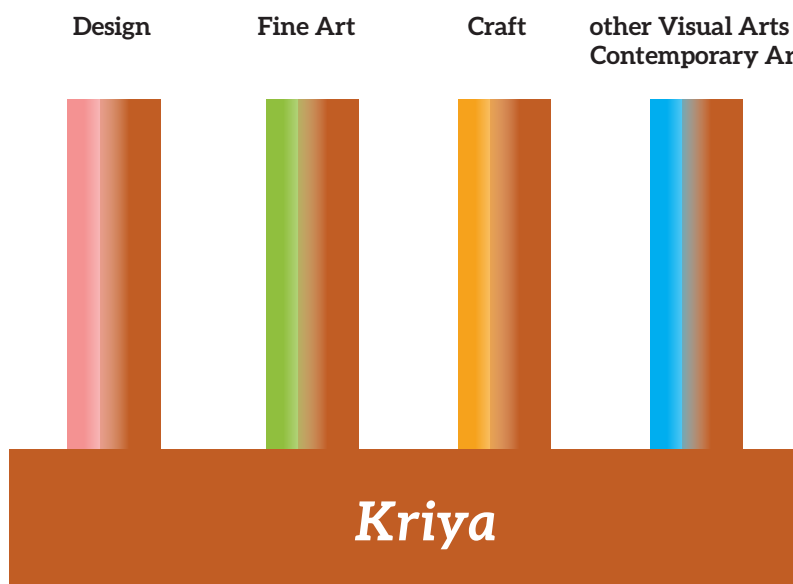
Graphic by Marlies-Aryani Ruegg

Yogyakarta's Lecturers, Curators and *Kriya* Makers' Perception of *Kriya* in Relation to other Arts in Indonesia

2A

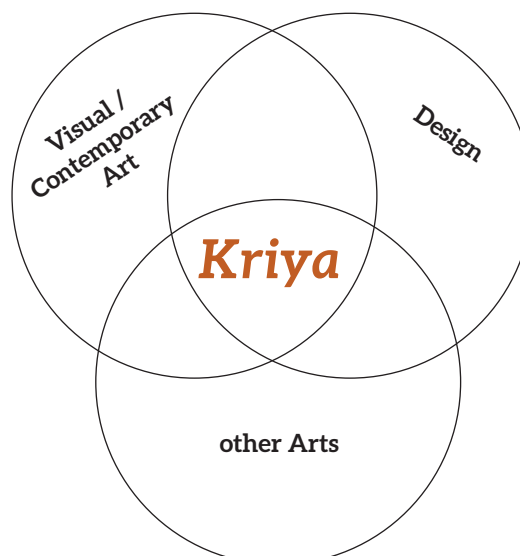


2B



Kriya comprising the *kriya* philosophy is a guiding philosophy for art practice in Indonesia. *Kriya* is the basis or the root of all visual arts and it permeates all arts. The *kriya* philosophy is based on animistic teachings and the *kejawen* religion.

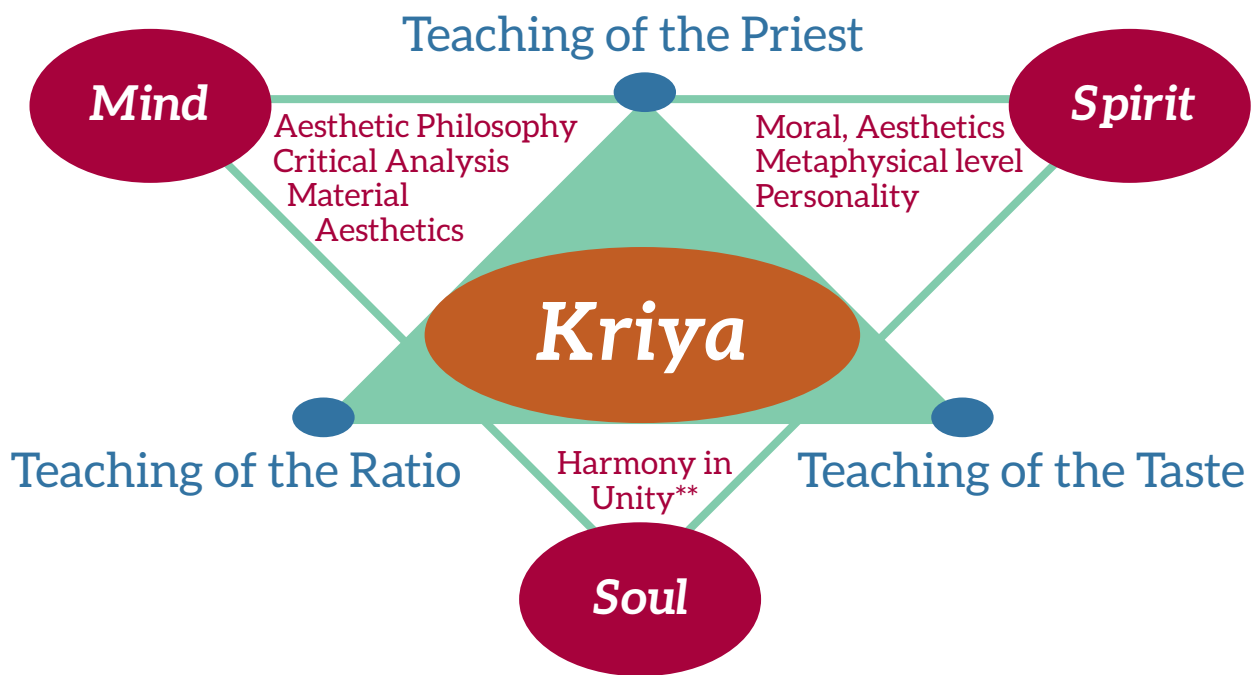
2C



Graphic 3 (modified and translated by the author. Original scheme from SP. Gustami*)

The Aesthetic Theory and Trilogy of Balance for *Kriya*

- three teachings and three pillars that form the identity of *kriya*



**Gustami differentiates two harmonies:
 1) Harmony in Unity of the Unit
 2) Harmony in Unity of the Overall

This graphic is based on Gustami's scheme from his book *butir-butir mutiara estetika timur*, Yogyakarta: Prasista, 2007, 312.

Kriya Exhibitions (1999–2023 in Yogyakarta and Jakarta)

Date	Title	Location	Curator / Organisator
Since 1999 (anually)	INACRAFT**	Jakarta Convention Centre	ASEPHI
2000	Pameran Kriya Seni 2000	National Gallery Jakarta	A collaboration between ISI Yogyakarta and the national Department for Education
Since 2001 (anually) April	ICRAFT**	Jakarta Convention Centre	PT Adiwastra Mitra Kinarya in collaboration with Kreasia Foundation and DPD Diponegoro University Alumni Association Jakarta
2004 27 Sept.–4 Oct.	Objecthood	Taman Budaya Yogyakarta	Sujud Dartanto
2009 15–24 May	Memoar Mainan (seni rupa kontemporer)	Sangkring Art Space	Sujud Dartanto
2012 14–24 Sept.	Pameran Kriya Indonesia «Reposisi»	National Gallery Jakarta	Asmudjo Jono Irianto
2013–2014 19 Dec.– 19 Jan.	Biennale Desain & Kriya Indonesia «EcoEthic»	National Gallery Jakarta	Tourism and Creative Economy Ministry
2014	FastKrina Festival Kriya Indonesia	Online virtual exhibition	ISI Yogyakarta
2016 22–28 August	Pameran Besar Seni Kriya UNDAGI #1	Jogja Gallery	Kurator : Timbul Raharjo Co. Kurator : Y. Dafri, A. Nizam, A. Sriyono. Supported by: KEMENDIKBUD, DITJEN KEBUD
2017 20–27 Sept.	ReLoad	Pendhapa Art Space	Komunitas Titik Lenyap
2018 9–13 May	Pameran Besar Seni Kriya UNDAGI #2	Taman Budaya Yogyakarta	Timbul Raharjo. Supported by: KEMENDIKBUD
2018 21 – 30 Nov.	Matra Award «Dimension Resonance»	Pendhapa Art Space	Matra Team
2020 14–23 Nov.	Matra Kriya Festival «Nusantara in Slice»	Pendhapa Art Space	Matra Kriya Festival Team
2022 21–28 May	Matra Kriya Festival «From Hands To Something / <i>Hasta Makirtya Rupa</i>»	Taman Budaya Yogyakarta	Matra Kriya Festival Team
2022 9–12 June	Kriya Indonesia	Jogja City Mall	DEKRANASDA DIY

Batik Exhibitions and Events in Yogyakarta (2006–2023)

Date	Title	Location	Curator / Organisator
2006 (annually)	Jogja Fashion Week	Atrium Plaza Ambarukmo, Yogyakarta	Phillip Iswardono and APPMI (Asosiasi Perancang Penguasa Mode Indonesia)
Since 2007 (annually)	Karneval Jogja Fashion Week (KJFW)	streets in the city centre of Yogyakarta	G. K. R. Pembayun, A. Syakur and I. Indarto. Supported by: Business Service Centre, Office for Industry, Trade and Cooperation, Tourist office of DIY, Office for Education and Culture
Since 2009 2 Oct. (annually)	National Batik Day	celebrations in several cities in Indonesia	Private and governmental organisations
2012–2013 21 Dec. – 24 Jan. (annually)	Pasar Malam Perayaan Sekaten (Night Market)	Alun-Alun Utara, Yogyakarta	DIY and BBKB
2016 26–28 Aug.	Tebakin 2016 Exhibition of Weaving, Batik and Original Textiles of the Archipelago	Gedung Wanita Yogyakarta	PT. Yuka Mitra Promo
2016 First time held from 12–16 Oct. (every two years)	Jogja International Batik Biennale (JIBB) <i>Tradition for Innovation</i>	Jogja Expo Center	Didit Purwadi
2017 19–21 May	Batik Tanah Surga	JEC (Jogja Expo Center)	MJA Entertainment Sekretariat: PYRAMID CAFE
2017 25–29 Oct.	Festival Jogja Batik Dunia <i>Batik to The Moon</i>	JEC and Malioboro Street Yogyakarta	Industry and Trade Office DIY
2019 11–14 July	Gaya Jogja	Serangan Oemoem Monument Yogyakarta	Government DIY
2019 2–12 Dec.	Java Batik Festival	Atrium Extension	Malioboro Mall
2018 26 Feb.–4 March	Cerita Di Balik Goresan Canting	Taman Pintar, DI Yogyakarta	Putri Gubernur DIY GKR Bendoro (governor's wife of DIY)
2020 9–10 March	International Symposium on Javanese Culture 2020	Hotel Ambarukmo, Yogyakarta	Gusti Kajeng Ratu Hayu
Since 2021 April	Muslim Fashion Festival (MUFFEST) Before 2021: in Jakarta, since 2021 in 5 cities	Grand Atrium, Hartono Mall, Sleman, Yogyakarta	Indonesian Fashion Chamber

Batik Exhibitions and Events in Yogyakarta (2006–2023)

2021 Oct. (planned as biennial event)	Jogja Batik Carnival <i>Pesona Batik Nuantara</i>	Tebing Breksi, Sleman	Tourist office DIY
2022 19–21 Aug.	Jogja Fashion Week 2022 <i>Panca Kartika</i>	Sleman City Hall	Industry and Cooperation office DIY
2022 26–30 Aug.	Jogja Fashion Week 2022 <i>Bangkitkan Ikm Fashion</i>	Jogja Expo Center	Industry and Cooperation office DIY
2022 19–20 Oct.	Jogja Art Fashion Festival 2022	Jogja Nasional Museum	Industry and Cooperation office DIY
2022 28 Oct.–3 Nov.	Pameran Batik Keraton Yogyakarta & Pura Pakualaman <i>Adiwastra Narawita (Kain Indah Sang Raja)</i>	Dome Area, Gedung Oval Lantai 1 Taman Pintar Yogyakarta	Sultanate Pakualaman
2022 19–20 Nov.	Museum Fashion Day 2022	Museum Sonobudoyo	Ambassador Association of Museums DIY & Museum Sonobudoyo
2022 19–23 Oct.	Festival Batik 2022 <i>Jagaddhita: Batik Jogja Istimewa Mendunia</i>	Gedung Jogja Expo Center (JEC)	Industry and Cooperation office DIY
2023 6 June–28 July	Pameran Abhinaya <i>KAMALA PADMA; Laga dalam Hening, Pijar dalam Petang</i>	Museum Sonobudoyo	Museum Sonobudoyo

Ceramic Exhibitions*

(1991–2023 in Jakarta, Yogyakarta and Majalenka near Cirebon)

Date	Exhibition Title Notes	Location	Curator / Organisator
1991–1996	Ceramic Creative	The Japan Foundation Jakarta	The Japan Foundation
1998	Terra Indonesia – Ceramics Exhibition	National Gallery Jakarta	–
1999	7 Ceramikus Exhibition	National Gallery Jakarta	–
2000	Keramik Putaran Miring I	Bentara Budaya Jakarta	Chitaru Kawasaki
2001	Jejak Tanah dan Api – 3000 Years Terracotta	National Museum Jakarta	Nurdian Ichsan
2004	Indonesia Young Ceramic Artists	National Gallery Jakarta	Asmudjo Jono Irianto
2006 Feb.	Beauty Behind The Flame	Bentara Budaya Jakarta	Tanah Liat 9 (?)
2007	Fire no Fear	Galeri Hadiprana, Jakarta	Galeri Hadiprana (?)
2007	Keramik Putaran Miring II	Bentara Budaya Jakarta	Chitaru Kawasaki
2008	The Light o Millennium of Korean Ceramics	cultural exchange with Korean Ceramist at Senayan City, Jakarta	Icheon Ceramic Art Association
2009/2010 19 Dec.–20 Jan.	The First Indonesia Contemporary Ceramics Biennale (ICCB)	North Arts Space, Pasar Seni Ancol, Jakarta	Asmudjo Jono Irianto and Rifky Effendy
2011	When Ceramics Speaks – Ketika Keramik Berbicara	Bentara Budaya Yogyakarta	–
2011 12–27 March	Contemporary Archeology Chapter Two	SIGIarts Gallery, Jakarta	SIGIarts Gallery
2012	Liat Tanah Liat	Hadiprana Gallery, Jakarta	Hadiprana Gallery (?)
2012 21–25 Nov.	Indonesia Creative Power	Rasuna Episentrum, Jakarta	Indonesia Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy
2012 9–17 Nov.	Ceramic Exhibition	Jatiwangi, Majalengka near Cirebon, West Java	Jatiwangi Art Factory
2012 19 May–3 June	Indonesian Contemporary Ceramics: A Progress Report	Museum of Fine Arts & Ceramics, Jakarta	Museum of Fine Arts & Ceramics
2012–2013 21 Dec.–20 Jan.	JCCB #2 – Crafting Identities	North Art Space (NAS), Ancol Jakarta. Supported by: NAS & Museum Seni Rupa dan Keramik Jakarta	Asmudjo Jono Irianto and Team, curator: Sujud Dartanto
2013 28 March–2 April	FUTURE PROGRESS OF THE MILENIUM	Korea-Indonesia Cultural Exchange: The 40 years Diplomatic Relationship between Korea-Indonesia, Jakarta	
2013 19–27 May	Vacuum Learning	Bentara Budaya Yogyakarta	IWAK – Ikatan Mahasiswa Keramik (ISI Yogyakarta)

Ceramic Exhibitions*

(1991–2023 in Jakarta, Yogyakarta, Bandung and Majalenka near Cirebon)

2014	Membaca “Bayat”	UGM Yogyakarta	PPKH Bulak Sumur
2014	JCCB #3 Coefficient of Expansion	National Gallery Jakarta	Asmudjo Jono Irianto and Team
2016–2017 7 Dec.–11 Jan.	JCCB #4 Ways of Clay – Prospectives Toward The Future	National Gallery Jakarta	Asmudjo Jono Irianto and Team, curator: Nurdian Ichsan
2018 21–28 July	Ruang Bakar – Pameran Seni Keramik	Pendhapa Art Space, Yogyakarta	Ruang Bakar (ceramics collective from Yogyakarta)
2018–2019	ICCB #5 Kota – Terrakota	Jatiwangi, Majalengka	Jati Wangi Art Factory, curator: Arif Yudi
2019 27 April–11 May	Story of Earth and Fire	Yogyakarta	Indonesian-German Institute / Lembaga Indonesian-Jerman (LIJ)
2022	Terra Cotta Triennale	Jakarta	Asmudjo Jono Irianto and Team
2025	ICCB #6	Cirebon, Bandung	Asmudjo Jono Irianto and Team

*The list shows predominantly ceramic group exhibitions and not solo exhibitions of fine art artists or ceramic artists. Several solo exhibitions of Yogyakarta’s ceramists (for example Endang Lestari, Dona Prawita Arissuta and others) took place and are not included in this list.

List of Abbreviations, Indonesian Expressions and Terms

<i>adiluhung</i>	a adjective to describe high art originally from the sultan's palace, a masterpiece
APT	<u>A</u> si <u>a</u> n <u>P</u> aci <u>f</u> ic <u>T</u> riennale organised by the Queensland Art Gallery starting in 1993.
ASRI	<u>A</u> kademi <u>S</u> eni <u>R</u> upa <u>I</u> ndonesia Indonesian Art Academy in Yogyakarta
<i>bagong</i>	one of the four <i>punakawan</i> figures
<i>Bapak</i>	Literally: father, to address elder men, commonly abbreviated to <i>pak</i>
<i>Bhinneka Tunggal Ika</i>	Unity in Diversity, national motto of Indonesia
BBK & BBKB	See Glossary of Indonesian Governmental Institutions
<i>canting cap</i>	A copper stamp to apply hot wax onto the fabric, also abbreviated with <i>cap</i>
<i>canting tulis</i>	A pen-like tool with a copper container and a spout to write or apply hot wax onto the fabric
<i>dadahan</i>	field furnace, for low temperature firing of earthenware
<i>Dewi Sri</i>	Godess of Rice and Fertility (worshipped in Java, Bali and Lombok)
DIY	<u>D</u> aerah <u>I</u> stimewa <u>Y</u> ogyakarta, special region of Yogyakarta (special self-governed status within the Republic of Indonesia)
<i>gareng</i>	one of the four <i>punakawan</i> figures
<i>gerabah</i>	earthenware
GSRB	<u>G</u> erakan <u>S</u> eni <u>R</u> upa <u>B</u> aru, the new art movement initiated in 1975 in Yogyakarta
HTI	<u>H</u> isput <u>T</u> ahrir <u>I</u> ndonesia Islamic Group in Indonesia
ICCB	<u>I</u> ndonesian <u>C</u> ontemporary <u>C</u> eramics <u>B</u> iennale
IJK	<u>I</u> nstitut <u>K</u> esenian <u>J</u> akarta Jakarta Art University (public)
ISBI	<u>I</u> nstitut <u>S</u> eni <u>B</u> udaya <u>I</u> ndonesia Indonesian Art and Culture University, derived from ISI
ISI Yogyakarta	<u>I</u> nstitut <u>S</u> eni <u>I</u> ndonesia Yogyakarta The Yogyakarta Art University
ITB	<u>I</u> nstitut <u>T</u> eknologi <u>B</u> andung The Bandung Art University
JCCB	<u>J</u> akarta <u>C</u> ontemporary <u>C</u> eramics <u>B</u> iennale
<i>keramik</i>	ceramics
<i>kraton</i>	sultan's palace, also written as <i>keraton</i>
<i>malam</i>	literally: night, but it is also a term to describe batik wax to covers/reserve parts of the fabric
<i>Mooie indie</i>	literally: beautiful Indies, a painting style favoured by the colonists, depicting romantic Indonesian landscapes
<i>Nusantara</i>	Archipelago, a term often used when referring to cultural heritage that had existed before the formation of the Indonesian Republic

List of Abbreviations, Indonesian Expressions and Terms

<i>orde baru / orde lama</i>	New order (Suharto's period of reign) old order (part o Sukarno's period of reign)
<i>pakem</i>	Standard, rule for the creation of classical batik patterns
<i>Petruk</i>	one of the four <i>punakawan</i> figures
<i>priyayi</i>	Yogyakarta aristocrats, related to the sultan's family and part of a high social class
<i>Punakawan</i>	four <i>wayang</i> figures that only exist in the Javanese version of <i>wayang</i> and not in the Indian versions
<i>Semar</i>	one of the four <i>punakawan</i> figures
<i>Sembrada</i>	one of the four <i>punakawan</i> figures
STSRI	<u>S</u> ekolah <u>T</u> inggi <u>S</u> eni <u>R</u> upa <u>I</u> ndonesia higher Art School in Indonesia, precursor of <i>ISI Yogyakarta</i>
<i>Taman Budaya</i>	literally: cultural garden exhibition space in Yogyakarta
<i>tembikar</i>	earthenware
<i>tukang</i>	worker (for manual work)
UGM	<u>U</u> niversitas <u>G</u> adjah <u>M</u> ada, Public University Gadjah Mada in Yogyakarta
YBY	<u>Y</u> ayasan <u>B</u> iennale <u>Y</u> ogyakarta, Yogyakarta Biennale Foundation. The foundation organises the Equator Symposium to collaborate with countries located around the equator.

Glossary of Indonesian Governmental Institutions

<i>Balai Pelayanan Bisnis Dinas Perindustrian Perdagangan dan Koperasi</i>	Business Service Centre of the Industry Trade and Cooperatives Agency
<i>BBK</i>	<u>Balai Besar Keramik</u> , The Great Hall of Ceramics A governmental institution for ceramic research and development in Bandung (West Java).
<i>BBKB</i>	<u>Balai Besar Kerajinan dan Batik</u> , The Great Hall of Craft and Batik A governmental institution for batik research and development in Yogyakarta.
<i>DEKRANAS</i>	<u>Dewan Kerajinan Nasional Indonesia</u> , Indonesian National Craft Council
<i>DEKRANASDA</i>	<u>Dewan Kerajinan Nasional Daerah</u> , Local National Craft Council
<i>DEKRANASDA DIY</i>	<u>Dewan Kerajinan Nasional Daerah Istimewah Yogyakarta</u> , Local National Craft Council of the Special Region of Yogyakarta
<i>dinas</i>	office, department
<i>Dinas Kebudayaan</i>	cultural office, cultural department
<i>DIKTI</i> (former directorate)	<i>Direktorat Pendidikan Tinggi</i> , Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia
<i>DITJEN DIKTI RISTEK</i> (new directorate)	<i>Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Tinggi Riset dan Teknologi</i> , General Directorate for Higher Education, Research and Technology
<i>Dinas Pariwisata Provinsi Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta</i>	Tourist Office for the Province of the Special Region of Yogyakarta
<i>Dinas Pendidikan dan Budaya</i>	Office for Education and Culture
<i>KEMENDIKBUD</i> (until 27 th April 2021)	<u>Kementerian Pendidikan dan Budaya</u> , Ministry of Education and Culture
<i>KEMENDIKBUD RISTEK</i> (since 28 th April 2021)	<u>Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi</u> , Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology This ministry is a combination of the former two ministries <i>KEMENDIKBUD</i> and <i>KEMENRISTEK</i> .
<i>KEMENRISTEK</i> (until 27 th April 2021)	<u>Kementerian Riset, Teknologi dan Pendidikan Tinggi</u> , Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education
<i>Kementerian Pariwisata dan Ekonomi Kreatif</i>	Ministry of Tourism and Creative Industry
<i>ITJEN</i>	<i>Inspektorat Jenderal</i> , General Inspectorate <i>ITJEN</i> has the task of coordinating the implementation of tasks, coaching and providing administrative support to all organisational elements within the ministry.

Appendix

- List of Interviews

Overview of my Interviews

Data Collection (2018–2023)

Number	Batik	Ceramics	Kriya Experts: Curators, Lecturers
1	Joan Miroe Batik Galleries <i>Galeri-Galeri Batik</i> 4 th Dec 2020	Noor Sudiyati Ceramic Philosophy <i>Filosofi Keramik</i> 6 th June 2021	Djandjang Purwo Saedjati Batik Technique <i>Teknik Batik</i> 10 th November 2020
2	Joan Miroe Joan's Artworks, Batik Painting <i>Karya-karya Joan, Batik Lukis</i> 27 th March 2021	Kei Pottery Always Changes <i>Selalu Perubahan</i> 11 th May 2021	Bima Rosanto Pratama Matra Kriya 16 th Sep 2021
3	Joan Miroe Batik Style <i>Gaya Batik</i> 8 th April 2021	Apri Susanto Ceramics and Pottery <i>Keramik dan Gerabah</i> 1 st June 2021	Dwe Rachmanto IVAA – Indonesian Visual Art Archive 24 th May 2021
4	Kang Pandono Batik Style, Local Market <i>Gaya Batik, Pasar Lokal</i> 6 th April 2021	Sidik Purnomo Ceramic Categories and Styles <i>Kategori dan Gaya Keramik</i> 1 st June 2021	Sujud Dartanto Galeri Benda 21 st May 2021
5	Meta Enjelita Batik Style <i>Gaya Batik</i> 12 th April 2021	Dona Arissuta Creating Ceramic Artworks <i>Pencipta Karya Keramik</i> 1 st June 2021	Sujud Dartanto Postcolonial Concept and Theory <i>Konsep dan Teori Poskolonialisme</i> 20 th July 2021
6	Nurohmad The Intangible of Batik <i>Intangiblenya dari Batik</i> 6 th April 2021	Leli Ceramics Arwork <i>Karya Seni Keramik</i> 8 th April 2021	Satya Brahmantya Galeri Benda, the Intangible and Handiwirman <i>Galeri Benda, Intangible dan Handiwirman</i> 26 th May 2021
7	Nurohmad Batik Definition & The Soul of Batik <i>Definisi Batik & Jiwa Batik</i> 27 th May 2021	Endang Lestari Infrastructures of Kriya Art and Handicraft <i>Infrastruktur Seni Kriya & Kerajinan</i> 27 th May 2021	Satya Brahmantya Infrastructures & The Strength of Kriya <i>Infrastruktur & Kekuatan Kriya</i> 10 th Sep 2021

Overview of my Interviews

8	Nurohmad About ASKRINA <i>Tentang ASKRINA</i> 29 th July 2021	Dian Hardiansyah Clay Materiality and Ceramics Discourse <i>Material Tanah dan Wacana Keramik</i> 10 th March 2022	Sujud Dartanto Sculpture, Decorative, Object <i>Sculpture, Dekoratif dan Obyek</i> 9 th January 2022
9	Pak Sapuan Fine Pekalongan Batik <i>Batik Halus Pekalongan</i> WA 7 th April 2021	Dian Hardiansyah About BBK WA 17 th June 2022	Ganes (Pendhapa Art Space) Pendhapa Art Space ZO 25 th January 2022
10	Rika Winata Batik Style <i>Gaya Batik</i> 8 th April 2021	Noor Sudiyati Ceramic Artwork <i>Karya Seni Keramik</i> 3 rd October 2022	Timbul Haryono Batik Archaeology <i>Arkeologi Batik</i> 15 th March 2022
11	Sekar Djagat – Mbak Lia Fasion Corak & Gaya Batik 11 th May 2021	Taufik Akbar Open Firing Method <i>Pembakaran Api Terbuka</i> e-mail 4 th November 2022	Alvi Lufiani Kriya and Batik in Yogyakarta <i>Kriya dan Batik di Yogyakarta</i> 1 st April 2022
12	Mas Hanang Entrepreneur Batik 6 th April 2021	Apri Susanto Exhibit Ceramic <i>Merpamerkan Keramik</i> 10 th December 2022	SP. Gustami The History of Kriya in Yogyakarta since 1976 <i>Sejarah Kriya di Yogyakarta sejak 1976</i> 22 nd Dec 2018
13	Edi Eskak BBKB & Batik 16 th Nov 2021	Endang Lestari Religion & The Omah Budoyo Gallery <i>Agama dan Galeri Omah Budoyo</i> 19 th January 2023	Suhadji The History of Batik in Yogyakarta since 1967 <i>Sejarah Batik di Yogyakarta sejak 1967</i> 16 th Dec 2018
14	Nurohmad Batik Motif, Technique and Philosophy <i>Motif Batik, Teknik & Filosofi</i> 3 rd Dec 2021	Endang Lestari Ceramic Industry <i>Industri Keramik</i> 20 th January 2023	Yulriawan Dafri Batik and Kriya in Jogja <i>Batik dan Kriya di Jogja</i> 22 nd December 2018

Overview of my Interviews

15	Joan Miroe Different Types of Malam <i>Bermacam Malam</i> 7 th Dec 2021	Dian Hardiansyah Shaping and Understanding the Ceramic Discourse <i>Terbentuk dan Mengerti Wacana Keramik</i> 31 st March 2023	Supri Kriya di Yogya 17 th December 2018
16	Nurohmad Teknik Batik 21 st January 2021	Muhamad Nurrudin The KEMENDIKBUD Programme in Papua <i>Program KEMENDIKBUD di Papua</i> 2 nd January 2023	Timbul Haryono Javanese Religion <i>Agama Jawa</i> 25 th April 2022
17	Pak Sapuan Visual Art Principles <i>Prinsip-Prinsip Rupa</i> 25 th January 2022		Satya Brahmantya Batik and Ceramic Artists, Islamic Purification <i>Seniman Batik dan Keramik, Purifikasi Islam</i> 2 nd September 2022
18	Sugeng Wardoyo Batik Technique at ISI <i>Teknik Batik di ISI</i> December 2018		Satya Brahmantya HTI and Jogja Ceramic Artists <i>HTI dan Seniman Keramik Jogja</i> 3 rd September 2022
19	Djandjang Purwo Sedjati Batik Technique at ISI Yogyakarta <i>Teknik Batik di ISI Yogyakarta</i> 19 th December 2018		Satya Brahmantya The Position of Kriya in the Suharto Era <i>Posisi Kriya dalam Era Suharto</i> 4 th September 2022
20	Nurohmad Batik Philosophy <i>Filosofi Batik</i> 25 th April 2022		Satya Brahmantya Tradition and Industry <i>Tradisi dan Industri</i> 5 th September 2022
	Rika Winata About my Artworks <i>Tentang Karya Saya</i> 9 th June 2022		Yulriawan Dafri ISBI – Institut Seni Budaya Indonesia WA call 2 nd January 2023
21	Joan Miroe Abstract Batik Artwork <i>Karya Batik Abstrak</i> 29 th August 2022		Yulriawan Dafri Designer Maker 12 th January 2023

Overview of my Interviews

22	Afifah Ashma' Abdillah How to Create Batik <i>Cara Membatik</i> 31 st August 2022		Sujud Dartanto Creative Industry & The Contemporary Kriya Discourse <i>Industri Kreatif & Wacana Kriya Kontemporer</i> 15 th January 2023
23	Abdul Syukur Batik Nitik Taman Lumbini 7 th September 2022		Satya Brahmantya Museum Practice <i>Praktek-Praktet Musium</i> 3 rd February 2023
24	Nurohmad Batik Artworks & Exhibitions <i>Karya Batik & Pameran-Pameran</i> 8 th September 2022		Asmudjo Jono Irianto The Position of Art and Kriya Today <i>Posisi Seni dan Kriya Masa Kini</i> 10 th February 2023
25	Afifah Ashma' Abdillah Batik Artworks <i>Karya-Karya Batik</i> 10 th December 2022		Mikke Susanto Curatorial World <i>Dunia Kuratorial</i> 24 th March 2023
26	Agung Suhartanto The Artwork Cinta Bahari Indonesia <i>Karya Cinta Bahari Indonesia</i> 20 th June 2019		Sujud Dartanto The Curator as Articulator <i>Kurator sebagai Artikulator</i> 25 th March 2023
27	Agung Suhartanto Fine Ambatik 19 th January 2023		Mikke Susanto Discussing Kriya <i>Berdiskusi Kriya</i> 26 th March 2023
28	Meta Enjelita Kriya Events <i>Acara-Acara Kriya</i> 6 th February 2023		Sujud Dartanto Ceramic Artists <i>Seniman-Seniman Keramik</i> 15 th May 2023
29	Rika Winata Museums and Collections <i>Musium dan Koleksi</i> 9 th February 2023		Satya Brahmantya Access to Contemporary Art Exhibitions <i>Akses ke Pameran Seni Kontemporer</i> 17 th June 2023

Overview of my Interviews

30	Nurohmad Javanese Cosmology <i>Kosmologi Jawa</i> 20 th February 2023		
31	Kang Pandono Abstract Batik <i>Batik Abstrak</i> 11 th April 2023		
32	Dheni Nugroho Batik Label <i>Label Batik</i> 14 th April 2023		