

TRANSFORMATION OF AESTHETIC ORNAMENTS IN MANGKUNEGARAN PALACE ANCIENT NOBLE TOMBS INTO THE "HAYU" BATIK MOTIF IN INDONESIA

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Abstract

The Hayu batik motif is a recent innovation in Surakarta's traditional art, developed by the University Centre of Excellence Javanologi (PUI Javanologi), Universitas Sebelas Maret, in collaboration with artisans on the slopes of Mount Lawu. Inspired by the royal tombs of the Mangkunegaran Palace, Hayu represents a Mahardika motif, an artistic expression of freedom that moves beyond conventional geometric, floral, faunal, or figurative patterns. This study employs a cultural semiotic and qualitative approach to examine how sacred imagery is transformed into a contemporary batik motif. The process integrates symbolic heritage with modern aesthetic sensibilities and shifts the image of tombs from associations with death, mysticism, and sacredness to notions of elegance, beauty, and novelty. Findings reveal that Hayu batik embodies three functional categories in the evolution of Solo batik: fashion (aesthetic and material prestige), ageman (ethical and intellectual aura), and rasukan (spiritual integration between values, clothing, and the wearer). It also exerts multilayered influences on its wearers: perbawa (sociological impact and status), kawibawan (psychological charisma and authority), and pangaribawa (spiritual refinement and transformative perception). Beyond its artistic breakthrough, Hayu batik represents cultural knowledge production and identity-making, showing how traditional symbols can be reinterpreted as part of the cultural commons.

Keywords: Batik hayu; Symbolic transformation; Surakarta; Noble tombs; Cultural identity

Introduction

Surakarta Batik, better known as "Batik Solo," is a traditional textile that has evolved as both an expression and a product of royal and Javanese society culture [1], [2]. Batik developed as a "Prime Cultural Image" of the city of Surakarta, initially emerging to meet society's basic clothing needs. During the reign of traditional royal governance in Surakarta (1745–1945 CE), batik experienced fluctuations in prominence as a royal product, alongside other cultural traditions such as royal cuisine, gamelan, weaponry, royal titles, and ceremonial traditions held both routinely and occasionally [3].

From the reign of Sunan Paku Buwana III (December 15, 1749–1788 CE) to Paku Buwana IX, batik saw rapid growth. Under the reign of Paku Buwana X, it reached its golden peak, achieving high cultural prestige and becoming an enduring symbol and flagship product of Surakarta. After the independence of the Republic of Indonesia, particularly between 1980 and

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1990, the batik industry rebounded. Investors outside the royal walls began developing handwritten batik businesses in the surrounding regencies, such as Sragen, Karanganyar, Wonogiri, and Klaten. In Surakarta itself, batik production centers emerged in Kauman and Laweyan villages and spread to Kratonan, Pasar Kliwon, and Banjarsari [4].

This development led the Surakarta City Government to declare the city as the “City of Batik,” with Kasunanan Palace and Pura Mangkunegaran serving as key symbols. However, Solo batik’s advancement is also strongly supported by batik production in these surrounding regions. The uniqueness of Solo batik lies in the elegance of its historic motifs, such as *Parang*, *Truntum*, *Kawung*, *Sidomukti*, and *Sidoluhur*, among others [5], which are believed to carry profound local wisdom. Nevertheless, newer motifs such as domes, moons, animals, triangles, and millipedes are also being created and accepted by society [6].

Today, batik production in Surakarta continues through large community groups, especially in Laweyan and Kauman, as well as in smaller groups producing and selling batik in shops. Unfortunately, the batik industry has recently shown signs of decline. Several major batik producers such as Semar, Keris, Danarhadi, and Gunawan have had to reduce production due to global economic pressures. Even Indonesia’s largest textile company, PT Sri Rejeki Isman Tbk (Sritex), officially closed on March 1, 2025, after being declared bankrupt, leading to mass layoffs [7].

This global condition has shifted public taste toward printed textiles due to the rising cost and time-consuming process of handcrafted batik. In response, creators, academics, and batik entrepreneurs are formulating strategies to address this challenge. For example, developing signature *sogan* batik colors using natural dyes from herbs, tree sap, and other organic sources. There is also an effort to adapt “prohibited batik motifs” (*batik larangan*) for contemporary use, targeting the younger market. These include motifs such as *Parang*, *Bangun Tulak*, *Lar*, *Cemukiran*, and *Lenga Teleng* [8].

The emergence of the Hayu motif in 2024 presents a new phenomenon in Surakarta’s batik scene. Its uniqueness, which is derived from the aesthetic elements of ancient royal tombs, has become an unexpected appeal, while also posing a challenge for designers to continue creating new motifs amid a conservative society with deeply rooted understandings of batik’s meaning. Batik *Hayu* is a breakthrough. *Hayu* (meaning “life”) was designed by processing and stylizing core elements, repeating and combining them with cultural preferences to form new life symbols rich in aesthetic and philosophical value [9].

Why draw from ancient royal tomb elements? The reasoning lies in their authenticity as historical structures, whose artistic and technical features represent the finest expressions of their era. These objects and topics have rarely been studied outside the fields of archaeology, history, folklore, and myth. The Hayu motif, rooted in the aesthetics of royal tombs, expands upon traditional patterns such as *Kawung*, *Sekar Jagad*, and *Mega Mendhung*.

Theoretical Framework

The Concept of Batik Hayu Work

Since 2023, several experts at the University Centre of Excellence Javanologi (PUI Javanologi), Universitas Sebelas Maret in Surakarta, have developed a new roadmap amidst the growing urgency to create and downstream culturally significant products. One of the research focuses is on developing batik motifs, which have recently shown signs of decline. Preliminary studies indicate a trend of “taste migration” among consumers toward modern textiles that mimic

batik patterns (often also referred to as “batik”), driven by their variety, affordability, and availability in batik shops throughout Surakarta.

This reality has drawn researchers' attention to identify opportunities for revitalizing batik by discovering new sources of inspiration, whether in ideas, materials, or values. The main research question emerged: Are there vital objects that could be utilized as foundational design elements for new batik motifs? Several alternative loci were examined one by one, ultimately identifying the aesthetic, ethical, and spiritual values found in the ancient royal tombs of the Mangkunegaran Palace in Surakarta.

The systematic and structured use of aesthetic elements from these royal tombs in batik design has resulted in motifs considered “unique, visually appealing, rich in philosophical meaning, and modern.” The name *Hayu* was chosen for this new motif. Etymologically, '*Hayu*' means 'safe' or 'life,' derived from the Old Javanese word '*ayu*,' which has cognates such as '*arja*,' '*harju*,' '*arjaya*,' '*asapta*,' '*rayu*,' '*ramya*,' and '*rahayu*' [10]. The term '*Hayu*' was deliberately chosen to dispel the symbolic association with death or suffering. In onomastic and toponymic studies, the naming of people, places, objects, and items is an interdisciplinary field that combines linguistics with social sciences, history, culture, and philosophy [11].

Furthermore, the *Hayu* batik design considers various aspects, including functionality, aesthetics, and user context, from motif planning to pattern and design. The *Hayu* motif is expressed in geometric and abstract forms by blending representations of the tomb's aesthetic elements with traditional art, Javanese nature, and the personal imagination of batik artists. This combination of elements results in symbolic and philosophical meanings, transforming symbols of death into new symbols of life (*Hayu*), hope, and blessings that carry meaningful strength for the wearer.

The Concept of Cultural Semiotics

The term *semiotics* or *semiology* was first introduced by Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913) and Charles Sanders Peirce (1839–1914) and later developed by modern semiotic scholars. The term became widely known alongside others in the field, such as *semasiology*, *semic*, and *sememic*. Prominent figures in modern semiotics include Charles Morris (1901–1979), Umberto Eco (1932), Roman Jakobson (1896–1982), Roland Barthes (1915–1980), A. J. Greimas (1917–1992), and Thomas A. Sebeok (1920–2001).

Cultural semiotics systematically analyzes how symbols, signs, and cultural interpretations construct and express values, beliefs, and behaviors [12]. Ancient tombs can be interpreted as “signs” that reflect specific concepts. Barthes [13] described a sign as consisting of three components: the *sign* (encompassing material concepts), the *signifier* (the material form), and the *signified* (the mental, behavioral, or conceptual aspect). In this context, cultural semiotics offers a framework for understanding how culture is constructed and experienced through meaning-making processes [14].

Within this research, four main principles are emphasized: (1) The royal tombs of Pura Mangkunegaran are cultural products of the past, containing complex networks of symbols, signs, and meanings [15]. (2) These meaningful signs are historically and diachronically bound to Javanese cultural contexts. (3) The possibility of new interpretations exists to generate new meanings in different cultural contexts [16]. (4) Based on this complexity, a multidisciplinary approach is applied, focusing on the symbolic representations of the present to build and express new forms as dialogical representations of ideas and realizations [17]. These four core principles form the foundation of the cultural semiotic concept.

The Development Concept of Batik Hayu Motif

The purpose of motif development in this context is to elaborate various aesthetic components of the Mangkunegaran royal tombs as foundational elements in the creation of new patterns and motifs on a piece of fabric. This means that various aesthetic elements found at the royal tomb site are transformed using techniques of translation, reflection, rotation, and dilation [2] into new motifs and design patterns. Several parts or elements referred to include: (1) The main ornament, which serves as the central focus of the batik fabric. (2) Supporting ornaments, which enhance the overall visual appeal of the batik composition. (3) *Isen-isen* ornaments, which add distinctive characteristics to the motif in the form of small patterns such as *cecek* (dots), *sawutan* (lines), and *ukel* (curves) [17].

The development of Hayu motifs and batik involves the entire process of creative planning. Three key aspects that must be considered are aesthetics, functionality, and user preference. Motifs derived from the tombs of Mangkunegaran royal figures are systematically and structurally modified by integrating various disciplines, including fine arts, graphic design, literature, and product design. The objectives of motif and design development are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1. Development of *Hayu* Batik motifs and designs.

<i>CRITERIA</i>	<i>MOTIF</i>	<i>DESIGN</i>
Purpose	Compiling various basic elements of the source of the tombs of the kings of Pura Mangkunegaran as initial work.	Changing the image of the tomb, the king, and creating new designs and narratives.
Focus	Forming aesthetic elements and structured patterns.	Adapting to function, aesthetics, artistic context, and users (consumers).
Characteristic	Repeating, combining, and rearranging with eclectic creations.	Maintaining the regularity of motifs, sequence, consistency, and forming designs.
Example	Geometric patterns in batik: floral, fauna, human, and fictional creature motifs.	Can be used in interior design, product design, and graphic design.
Role	Building patterns and making a new inspiration.	Solving problems, creating final works.

Methods

Research Form and Strategy

This study adopts an exploratory approach, aiming to gain a deeper understanding, particularly in developing Solo-Indonesian batik motifs inspired by the ethnic ornaments found in the royal tombs of Pura Mangkunegaran in Surakarta. In other words, this research critically and carefully examines every potential and strength in stylized design, grounded in intellectual creativity, imagination, and skill. Based on this explanation, the selected research form is exploratory qualitative research [18], with the expectation of discovering new information, accurately identifying issues, and gaining a comprehensive understanding of emerging phenomena. This form was chosen for its flexibility and openness, which allows for new insights and possibilities for further similar research [19]. Meanwhile, the chosen research strategy is a focused single-case study [20], so that the process of reconstructing local wisdom values and transforming the design characteristics of the form and beauty of the ethnic ornaments from the royal tombs of Pura Mangkunegaran can be composed and visualized in a detailed and comprehensive manner [21].

Source and Research Data

The data sources for this study are the three royal tomb complexes of Pura Mangkunegaran located in the Surakarta region: Astana Mangadeg, Astana Girilayu, and Astana Nayu (Oetoro), as presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Kasuwargan, Kapingsangan, Girimulya Ancient Tombs

No	Tomb Name (Astana)	Interred King	Tomb address	Aesthetic elements taken
1	Astana Mangadeg, (1800s)	KGPAA Mangkunegara I, II, and III with the families	Babadan, Girilayu, Kec. Matesih, Kabupaten Karanganyar	flora, fauna, relief, decoration, head, and body of the tombstone
2	Giri Layu (1795)	KGPAA Mangkunegara IV, V, VII, VIII, and IX with the families	Girilayu, Matesih, Kabupaten Karanganyar	Reliefs of the gate, flora, fauna, tomb decorations, headstones, <i>gimbals</i> , monuments, depictions of tomb myths.
3	Nayu (Oetoro)	Mangkunegara VI	Banjarsari Surakarta	Gate, <i>kepo</i> h tree, and ornaments on the dome.

The steps taken include:

- a. Conducting an in-depth exploration of the object through a series of meetings (focus group discussions) to ensure, describe, and compile important notes before entering the tomb sites [19].
- b. A series of field activities at the research sites consisted of:
 - (1) Meeting key informants at the three royal tomb locations, including Sudarmo (72 years old, Mangadeg Tomb), Sukirman (68 years old, Mangadeg Tomb), Mr. Sudarno (69 years old, Girilayu), Pasiran (66 years old, Nayu [Oetoro]), and Hartadi (52 years old, Nayu [Oetoro]).
 - (2) Documenting the tomb situation and photographing the core ethnic ornaments, supporting ornaments, and other ornaments found throughout the tomb complex;
 - (3) Identifying secondary sources such as documents, photographs, historical objects, and others.

Data Collection Techniques

Data collection was carried out using three methods: (1) In-depth interviews on topics related to history, traditional activities, notable figures involved, tomb renovations, and other information [20] related to the royal tombs of Pura Mangkunegaran; (2) Surveys of selected royal tomb sites, including photographing the site and the detailed aesthetic elements of the tombs, and video documentation to identify the energy and atmosphere of the ancient royal burial sites [22]; (3) Collecting documents from Old Javanese manuscripts; tomb renovation reports; and details on repaired sections to ensure the authenticity of selected ornaments and reviewing, selecting, and analyzing forms suitable for batik design development.

Data Analysis Techniques

The data analysis technique employed is the "interactive analysis model." The research moved through three stages: (1) Data condensation, which includes processes of sharpening, directing, and organizing the data; (2) Data display; and (3) Conclusion drawing [18]. This technique is appropriate for technical consideration of time, research location, the age of selected

royal tombs, data validity, and important field notes. Since one of the main data sources is selected informants, both emic and etic approaches were used in data presentation to respect the feelings and cultural context of the informants [22]. The conclusions of this study were kept objective and rational by ensuring accuracy and validity through data triangulation techniques and strict selection of informants [19].

Results and discussion

Form and Style Transformations

Form transformation in the design of *Hayu* batik is a series of processes that change the basic form into a “new” batik motif characterized by greater complexity and aesthetic value. These basic forms are transformed into new visual elements such as points, lines, and flat planes using techniques like translation (shifting), rotation, reflection, or dilation (scaling), in order to create a unique motif. This process requires precision in altering forms. Whether in geometry, size, proportion, merging, or separation, while constantly referring to the main objective: to shape a new image and style derived from the aesthetic foundations of the ancient tombs of the kings and nobles of Pura Mangkunegaran, with the expectation that the resulting motifs will be accepted by modern consumers.

Translation

Translation or form-shifting can be achieved through the following methods:

- (1) Subtractive transformation: a technique of reducing the volume or mass of the original form, such as removing frames, omitting ornaments, or simplifying ornamental details;
- (2) Additive transformation: a technique of adding new elements to the basic form;
- (3) Dimensional transformation: a technique of altering the dimensions (lengthening, shortening, or heightening) of a part without changing the fundamental form; and
- (4) Geometric transformation: a technique of changing the basic shape into another geometric form.

The practice of form transformation is illustrated in figure 1.

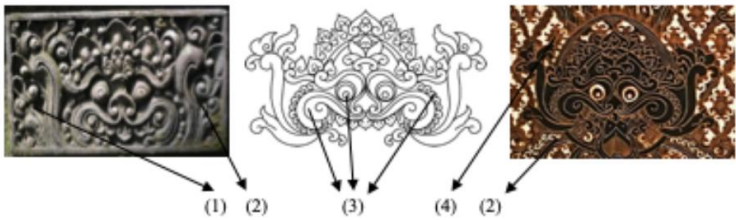


Fig. 1. Design Translation of Batik Hayu

Rotation

The rotation of a basic form around a specific point. The rotation technique in *Hayu* batik aims to create a dynamic impression, enrich visual variation, and enhance the aesthetic appeal of the batik motif. With careful execution, the ornamental imagery from the tombs is transformed into new patterns by rotating the basic form clockwise or counterclockwise at specific angles. This produces symmetrical and dynamic motifs, adding to the visual beauty of the batik fabric.



Fig. 2. Form Rotation in *Hayu* Batik Motif

Dilation

The creation of batik motifs by altering the size of the basic form, either by enlarging or reducing it, and rotating it at a certain angle. The techniques of rotation and dilation are also found in other batik motifs, such as *Tembakau Jember* and *Batik Besurek* from Bengkulu. Similarly, the *Parang* motif (in Surakarta) also tends to employ these approaches.

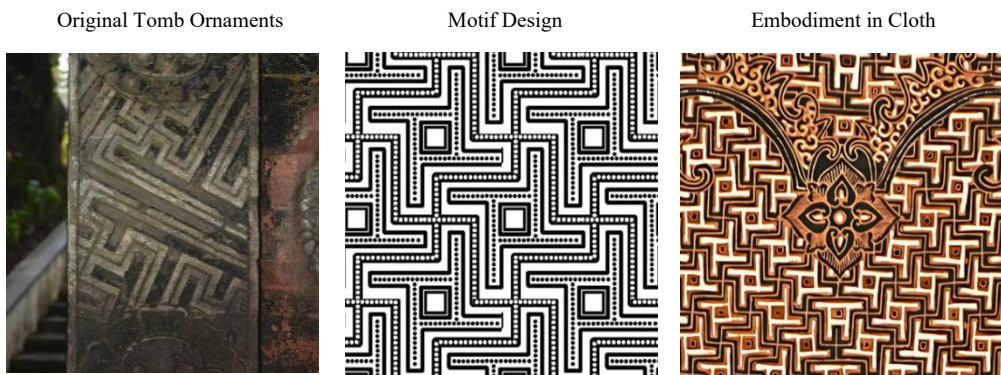


Fig. 3. Form Dilation in *Hayu* Batik Motif

Reflection

Reflection is the mirroring of a basic form across a line or plane. *Hayu* batik features patterns that are both intricate and visually engaging. The techniques of translation, rotation, and dilation are effectively utilized to create symmetrical, varied, and rich visual impressions. This results in a “new” visual beauty based on geometric principles.

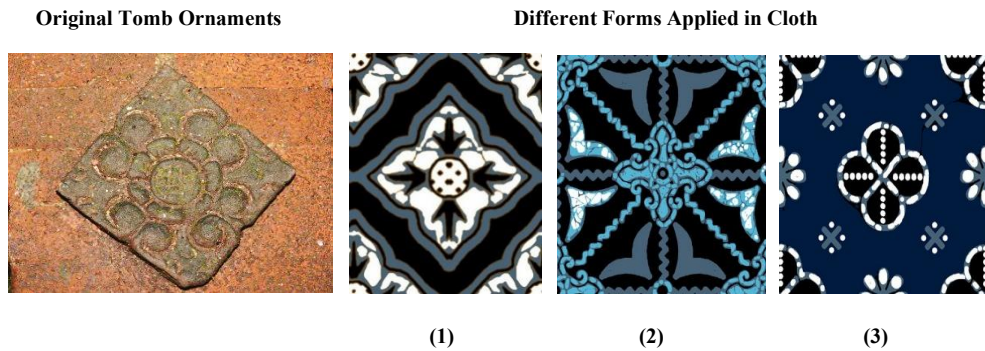


Fig. 4. Form Reflection in *Hayu* Batik Motif

Aesthetic Transformations

In general, aesthetic transformation in *Hayu* batik is understood as an effort to shift our mindset regarding how we perceive, appreciate, and experience various forms of artistic beauty, meanings, and values embodied in a piece of fabric. Aesthetic transformation can occur in many fields: fine arts, design, architecture, and others. The essence of this transformation lies in redefining and expanding the concept of beauty, which inherently lacks a universal standard. Thus, it opens new opportunities for artists and creators to express themselves freely, unburdened by the fear of being "wrong." This is what can be seen as the creation of a new myth of liberation.

Historically, batik has reached its peak as an essential identity accompanying the lives of the aristocracy in Surakarta. A batik cloth featuring specific motifs and patterns symbolized certain social statuses in traditional Javanese society [6], which embraces various ceremonial customs. In traditional wedding ceremonies, commonly used batik motifs include *Truntum*, *Sido Asih*, *Sido Mulyo*, *Sido Mukti*, and *Semen Rama*. It is also common for people to wear different batik motifs for different life ceremonies, such as *khitanan* (circumcision), *taraban* (first menstruation), *mitoni* (seven-month pregnancy ceremony), *tingkeban*, and death (e.g., the *Slobok* motif).

The research findings show that *Hayu* batik embodies the process of aesthetic transformation. First, it successfully reinterprets the concept of beauty in the aesthetic elements of royal tombs, originally manifested in natural stone, marble, granite, and ceramic, into the beauty of a single piece of batik fabric. The process of conceptualizing this artwork is long and intricate, as it not only involves a change in media and visual aesthetics but also a shift in spiritual message, moral values, and social meaning. *Hayu* batik intentionally shifts the image of tombs from one of death, mysticism, and sacredness to one of elegance, beauty, and novelty [23].

Interestingly, the emergence of *Hayu* batik influences prevailing standards of beauty, functionality, and perceived quality for many people regarding the unshakable identity of batik. *Hayu* Batik is a "new breath" in the world of Indonesian Batik. However, this does not imply a total replacement of existing aesthetic concepts, but rather an enrichment of what already exists. Second, it has influenced the atmosphere of artistic appreciation within the batik world. The long-held belief that classical batik holds the highest artistic value is now being challenged by the presence of *Hayu*'s contemporary design, even though it still belongs within the category of traditional batik. Third, it marks a shift in design orientation. *Hayu* batik products tend to prioritize functionality, yet aesthetic value remains a central consideration. Fourth, it influences lifestyle developments by presenting a

new source of inspiration. In this case, the aesthetic elements of the royal tombs of Pura Mangkunegaran are a novel source of creativity in the batik world.



Fig. 5. Hayu Saraswati Form and Style Transformation



Fig. 6. Hayu Murti Form and Style Transformation

Batik Hayu Making Process

Hayu batik uses distinctive colors and goes through 3 stages of coloring.

1. Creating a Hayu (*molani*) Batik design. The finished pattern is transferred onto a prepared piece of unbleached cotton cloth. The motif is created by following the pattern created on the paper (Step 1 on Fig. 7).
2. Painting with wax (*lilin*) using a *canting* (hand-held tool) follows the basic pattern. Covering with wax the parts that retain the original color of the fabric (white). This process requires great care and precision (Steps 2 and 3 on Fig. 7).

3. The first dyeing process is carried out using the immersion technique, followed by the first stage of fabric drying.
4. Once dry, the next batik process continues by applying wax with a *canting* on the areas designated to receive the first color layer (see Step 4 on Fig. 8).
5. The process continues with the second dyeing stage. Afterward, the wax is removed by immersing the fabric in hot water over a stove until completely clean, and then the fabric is dried (Step 5 on Fig. 9).
6. The next waxing stage is carried out by applying wax to preserve the first and second color layers.
7. The process of waxing and dewaxing is repeated multiple times, depending on the number of colors used and the complexity of the motif.
8. The *nglorot* process, or final wax removal, is done by boiling the fabric in hot water. This is followed by the final washing stage after wax removal. The batik cloth is then dried by air-drying it in the shade, avoiding direct sunlight to ensure color consistency and durability (Steps 6 and 7 on Fig. 9).



Fig. 7. Drawing Batik Pattern Process



Fig. 8. Wax-Applying Process to the Batik Cloth

Step 5



Step 6



Step 7



Fig. 9. Dyeing and Wax Removal Process

Four Hayu Batik Design Motifs

Presented below are four *Hayu* batik motifs resulting from two years of research: (1) *Batik Hayu Dirda*, (2) *Hayu Murti*, (3) *Hayu Loka*, and (4) *Hayu Saraswati*, each accompanied by a brief description of the design.

Hayu Dirda Batik Motif

The *Hayu Dirda* Batik Motif conveys a sense of elegance and beauty (Fig. 10). This motif depicts a garden of life filled with various kinds of plants and beautiful flowers, growing on fertile earth beneath a sky full of stars and a captivating horizon.



Fig. 10. Hayu Dirda Batik Motif

The entire composition symbolizes prosperity, beauty, material strength, and high social status. Carefully and deliberately arranged, the design captivates and draws the viewer's attention. This motif represents a hope for nobility and glory achieved through hard work, perseverance, and noble character. In Javanese values, attaining a dignified life status is essential for fulfilling one's *dharma*, the next stage of life's purpose.

Hayu Murti Batik Motif

The Hayu Murti Batik Motif carries a philosophical meaning of nobility, intelligence, and well-being in the life of its wearer (Fig. 11).



Fig. 11. Hayu Murti Batik Motif

The word *Murti* means “embodiment” or “form,” signifying that the highest manifestation of life is the attainment of knowledge that can be used to *memayu hayuning jagad*, “enhance the beauty of the universe.” This motif is well-suited for formal occasions such as celebrations, traditional ceremonies, and professional gatherings, as it embodies symbols of intellect, luxury, and high status. The impression of prosperity is strongly emphasized, reflecting a universal aspiration shared by many.

Hayu Loka Batik Motif

The Hayu Loka Batik Motif, meaning “*a beautiful world, admired by all*,” serves as a symbol of high spiritual value (Fig. 12).



Fig. 12. Hayu Loka Batik Motif

This motif reflects the spirit of *memayu jagat*, which means “nurturing and beautifying the world,” and symbolizes spiritual strength, loyalty, and resilience in achieving balance between

human duties and fundamental rights. The design evokes an image of serenity, harmony, and inner strength, offering protection against various forms of malevolent threats. It projects a noble and dignified aura upon its wearer. This batik motif represents the continuity of virtuous values, meant to inspire all who see it.

Hayu Saraswati Batik Motif

The word “*Hayu*” accompanies *Saraswati*, and together they form a symbol of the highest level of spirituality, attainable only through knowledge, wisdom, art, and refined emotional sensitivity (Fig. 13).



Fig. 13. Hayu Saraswati Batik Motif

Saraswati represents the embodiment of *olah rasa*, or the deep cultivation of emotion, in mastering the mind, heart, and feelings. This batik motif radiates a sense of grace, joy, and serenity. It carries a silent prayer for lasting spiritual peace, attainable only by those with a composed and centered self. This explains why the motif consistently draws admiration from all who see it, evoking a deep sense of feeling and pride for its wearer.

Synthesis: From Ornament to Wearer's Character

The transformations discussed above ultimately converge into a broader shift in how Hayu batik shapes the character of its wearer. The visualization of this convergence is seen as three radiating dimensions extending outward from the wearer at the center: an aesthetic dimension (*Aesthetic Command* → *Array/Attire* → *Perbawa*), a moral dimension (*Moral Authority* → *Habit/Apparel* → *Wibawa*), and a spiritual dimension (*Spiritual Immanence* → *Ethical Vestment* → *Pangaribawa*) (Fig.14). Each dimension moves from an inner quality experienced by the wearer toward an outward effect perceived by others, positioning Hayu batik as a medium through which personal character is materialized and socially recognized.

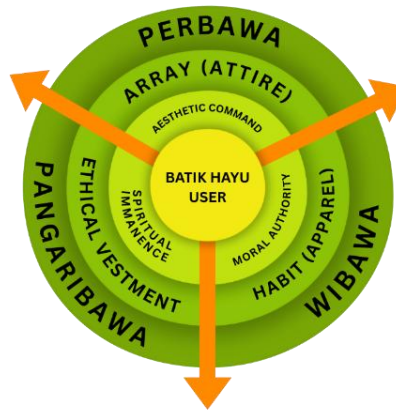


Fig. 14. Hayu Batik Character Transformation Chart

Conclusions

The *Hayu* batik motif is a “newcomer” in the landscape of traditional art forms in Surakarta. As a motif rooted in the cultural history of royal and noble lineages, *Hayu* represents a *Mahardika* motif, meaning “free” or “liberated,” as an artistic expression that moves beyond conventional motifs such as geometric, floral, faunal, or figurative forms [24]. The meaning embedded in *Hayu* is directly related to its conceptual origin drawn from the aesthetic elements of royal tombs at the Pura Mangkunegaran Palace in Surakarta. *Hayu* is classified as a modern hand-drawn batik (batik tulis) created using the traditional *canting* tool, an instrument made of copper and bamboo used to transfer hot wax onto fabric to form motifs [3].

Designed with rich symbolic meaning, the *Hayu* motif is more than just traditional patterned cloth; it stands as a symbolic cultural expression, a marker of identity, and holds great potential as one of Solo Batik’s signature motifs. The design also embodies spiritual values translated into form, style, and aesthetic principles. This study identifies three functional character categories in the evolution of Solo batik:

- Batik as *Fashion*: It delivers aesthetic appeal, luxury, and elegance, giving the wearer a “showcase” of prosperity and prestige.
- Batik as *Ageman*: This presents an ethical impression. It conveys moral values, norms, and intellectual aura, offering not only beauty but also projecting inner elegance.
- Batik as *Rasukan*: This reflects a deeper spiritual connection, uniting the clothing, the values, and the wearer in harmony.

In relation to the transformation of functional character, this research reveals three key influences of the *Hayu* motif:

- *Perbawa*: A sociological impact that communicates high social status, including position, rank, property, and material wealth.
- *Kawibawan*: A psychological influence indicating intellectual strength, charisma, and authority.

- *Pangaribawa*: A spiritual influence that goes beyond rank or power, reflecting the wearer's spiritual refinement and shaping how others perceive them.

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