



## Lekesan: Interdisciplinary Journal of Asia Pasific Arts

Journal homepage <http://jurnal.isi-dps.ac.id/index.php/lekesan>

### **Coastal Batik Ornament Design : Aesthetic Analysis and Meaning of Batik Ornaments in Ciwaringin Cirebon, West Java**

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Along the coast of the island of Java, there is a wealth of craft art (batik), characterized by its expression of decorative motifs and techniques. In general, the most prominent characteristic of the dominance of primary and secondary colors. Courage in expressing bright colors is also the visual identity of coastal batik. In West Java, Cirebon is one of the popular coastal batik cities. Several villages have become centers for batik crafts, including Ciwaringin Village. The batik that is developed in this village has the characteristics of Cirebon which was born and developed in line with Trusmi batik. Ciwaringin batik is unique in terms of coloring and decorative motifs when compared to Trusmi batik. In terms of typical Ciwaringin coloring is produced by natural dyes (natural dyes), a batik tradition that has long developed in the Cirebon Pesisiran batik culture. This study uses descriptive-qualitative methods with aesthetic and semiotic approaches to reveal the aesthetics and meaning of ornamentation in Batik Ciwaringin. One of the important findings in this study is that in Ciwaringin batik there is no expression of animate motives, which differentiates it from batik motifs in general because Ciwaringin batik was born from the Islamic boarding school community with strong Islamic values. Another finding is that Ciwaringin batik craftsmen transform nature not only as a source of philosophical ideas, but they also care about environmental issues. Concern for the environment is proven by developing coloring techniques using natural dyes (natural dyes) and avoiding synthetic (chemical) dyes.

*Keywords: Ciwaringin batik, natural dyes, aesthetics, symbolic meaning.*

*Peer review 1 - 25 October 2020, accepted 30 October 2020*

## Introduction

Along the coast of the island of Java, there is a wealth of craft art (batik), characterized by its expression of decorative motifs and techniques. In general, the most prominent is the dominance of primary and secondary colors. Courage in expressing bright colors is also the visual identity of coastal batik. In West Java, the city of Cirebon is one of the most popular coastal batik cities. Several villages have become centers for batik craftsmanship, including Ciwaringin. The batik that has developed in Ciwaringin village has a typical Cirebon batik which was born and developed in line with the Trusmi batik. This batik center is in Kebon Gedang Block, Ciwaringin Village, Cirebon Regency. Initially, making batik was an activity of the students of the Raudlotul Tholibin Islamic Boarding School in Babakan Ciwaringin Village in the 1950s. The rapid development of the pesantren has made the pesantren give batik activities to the craftsmen community around it. Based on the history of batik in the archipelago, batik can be grouped into three major groups, namely: (1) palace batik, (2) coastal batik, and (3) coastal batik (Wulandari, 2011). The characteristic of Ciwaringin batik is coastal batik because it is influenced by the Lasem area, while Trusmi batik has Keratonan and Coastal characteristics because it is influenced by Pekalongan. This fact is in line with (Prihyanto et.al., 2014: 18-20):

*“Historically, during the 19th century, Ciwaringin Village was visited by a group of Muslim scholars from East Java who decided to stay in the nearby Islamic boarding school, the Babakan Ciwaringin Islamic Boarding School. At the boarding school that was founded in 1705. they taught batik painting that was strongly influenced by the batik painting of Lasem, Madura, and other coastal areas in Java; hence the Ciwaringin motifs resemble the Northern Coast motifs in Lasem--Rembang. Pekalongan, as well as Madura.”*

The uniqueness of Batik Ciwaringin lies in its simple and simple coloring and decorative motifs when compared to Trusmi batik. For the supporting community, Ciwaringin batik reflects moral-philosophical, aesthetic-symbolic values, as well as creative-economic values. In terms of typical Ciwaringin coloring is produced by natural dyes, a batik tradition that has long developed. Natural dyes are an added value and differentiator from competing products because they make the appearance of batik more *bladus* / soft (Casta, 2015). Moreover, natural dyes are a form of environmental concern from craftsmen to environmental issues caused by using synthetic dyes in the textile industry.

Moral-philosophical and aesthetic-symbolic values can be seen from the depiction of simple motives and

avoiding animate forms. These motifs seem to have no symbolic-philosophical meaning as is found in the Keratonan Batik. Nature is the main inspiration in making batik motifs. This makes the absence of certain standards as a reference.

The freedom of craftsmen in processing batik motifs as well as the strength of the moral-philosophical values behind the use of natural dyes and the making of motifs is an attraction for writers to further investigate the meaning of the motifs studied through the branch of semiotics so that aesthetic values and symbolic meanings can be understood. contained in the motif. Behind the motives that seem free and without grip, the Ciwaringin batik motif contains a certain philosophy that is a sign. This happens because something can be called a sign or not if humans who are associated with the object can perceive it as a sign (Masri, 2010).

From the background that has been stated, the purpose of this study is to describe the design structure and elements of Ciwaringin batik ornaments as Pesisiran batik, to analyze the symbolic meaning contained in the motifs, and to know the point of view of the use of natural dyes for craftsmen. The results of this study are expected to be a reference for scientists and batik lovers in the archipelago, so they can get to know and appreciate the uniqueness of Ciwaringin batik.

## Research Method

The research used a descriptive qualitative method with a semiotic approach. “The term semiotics comes from the Greek word *semeion*, which means sign” (Putri, 2016: 6). Meanwhile, Peirce (in Budiman, 2011: 5) revealed the definition of semiotics, namely, “... another name for logic, namely the formal doctrine of signs.” In this case, the problem under study is related to social-cultural society so that qualitative research methods were chosen, following Creswell’s (2017: 4) opinion, namely “Qualitative research is methods to explore and understand the meaning that is given by some individuals or groups. people ascribed to social or humanitarian problems. “ Meanwhile, the definition of qualitative research according to Moleong (2006: 6) is: “research that intends to understand the phenomena of what is experienced by research subjects such as behavior, perception, motivation, action.” Regarding the descriptive method, Nawawi and Martini (1994, p. 73) reveal the descriptive method, namely: “a method that describes the state of a certain object or event based on visible facts or as it should be which is then accompanied by efforts to draw general conclusions based on facts. historical facts.”

The research location is in Kebon Gedang Block, Ciwaringin Village, Cirebon Regency. The data sources

(subjects) in this study were Mr. H. Fathoni Dimiyati as the leader of the Ciwaringin batik cooperative, a Ciwaringin Batik craftsman represented by Mrs. Ruwedah; and Mr. H. Casta, M.Pd. as a researcher and cultural observer of Cirebon. There are five kinds of Ciwaringin batik motifs that are the object of research, namely: *Pecutan*, *Ganefo (Sekar Jagat)*, *Sekeret Tebu*, *Laseman*, and *Lampadan*. The selection of these five motifs is considered to represent the entire Ciwaringin batik motif and has differences in visual and meaningful aspects.

Data collection techniques used were observation, interviews, and documentation. The collected data is discussed, interpreted, and collected inductively by the methods of analysis: 1) aesthetics, which includes lines, planes, and colors; 2) semiotics, using denotation theory and sign connotation from Roland Barthes, to produce an accurate picture of the things under study. The aesthetic and semiotic analysis methods were chosen according to the main objectives in art research, as expressed by Rohidi (2011), namely, to understand the meaning that implicitly shows its form in the work under study. Also, because batik is one of the arts that refers to a visual form or is often called a visual form, which is formed from the unity of visual elements, and aesthetic analysis knife is also appropriate to use (Kartika, 2004). Furthermore, the method of analysis in this study is described in the table below:

Table 1. Method of Analysis

Aesthetics		Semiotics	
Line	On the Ciwaringin batik motif	Denotation	On the theory of
Fields		Connotation	Roland Barthes
Colour			



The meaning of the batik motif  
The meaning of the puppet

Source: researcher modification, 2020

## Findings And Discussion

### Ciwaringin Batik Motif Design Structure

The motifs in Ciwaringin batik are very diverse, dynamic, and unlimited. This is because there are no rules or standards that limit the creativity of crafters. But in general, several patterns appear in the motives, including the following:

**1) Byur Pattern**, or also known as *Pasek* which means full. This pattern makes the entire surface of the fabric filled with ornaments and does not have a prominent main motif. Sunaryo (2009: 3) states that “the word ornament comes from the Latin *ornare* which means to decorate.” In line with this opinion, this *Byur* pattern seems to make the existing motifs full of decoration, without any meaning in it. *Byur’s* patterned batik motifs are *Yusufan*, *Ucengan*, and *Kapal Kandas*. **2) Ceplak Ceplak Pattern**. In this pattern, the main motifs are arranged infrequently and sometimes alternately to create a rhythm. *Lampadan* and *Ceker Ayam* are examples of batik motifs with a *Ceplak Ceplak* pattern. **3) Geometric Patterns** have a basic structure adapted from shapes such as squares, rectangles, circles, triangles, parallelograms, and line patterns that form lines. The geometric pattern of batik motifs is *Limaran*, *Sekeret Sugar Cane*, *Tali Manis*, *Tiga Negerian*, *Dlorong*, and *Kawung*. **4) Pangkaan Pattern** means a clump of flowers or plants. *Pangkaan* patterned batik motifs for example *Pecutaan* and *Pring Sedapur*. **5) Combination Pattern** is a combination of several patterns. This pattern is dominant in Ciwaringin Batik. Combination patterned batik motifs include *Dlorong*, *Gribigan*, and *Kawung* which are usually combined with the *Wit Ngrambat* pattern. **6) Wit Ngrambat Pattern**. The word *Wit Ngrambat* means a vine (shrub). These patterned batik motifs include *Laseman* and *Seribu Daun*.

In Ciwaringin Batik, there are structural elements that make up the motive, including (1) *Tumpang*; (2) *Dampyang Leber* (resembling a dam whose water is overflowing so that the rhythm of the water is overflowing on several sides); (3) *Poni* (edge decoration on batik cloth); (4) Flora motif, with the types of *uceng (melinjo flower)* and *wuni* (flower in clusters of red-black color to make salad). These two plants are often found in the Sigidang-Gedang Block, Ciwaringin Village; (5) Fauna motif, which is a stylization composed of flora motifs which include the shapes of birds, chickens, butterflies, and peacocks; (6) *Isen-isen*, the types include *Bodong Udel* (protruding navel), *Isen Linsa Gabug* (nits), *Resitem* (small shaded ellipses lined irregularly), *Kembang Cengkeh* (clove flower), *Kembang Eceng (water hyacinth)*, and *Derak Eyes* (dove’s eye).

### Characteristics of Ciwaringin Batik Motif

Regarding the motifs in batik, Lisbijanto (2013: 48) states that: “the batik motif is a picture frame used in batik crafts that embodies the form of batik as a whole so that the resulting batik has a pattern that is recognized by its users.” Therefore, each type of batik must have a unique motif that distinguishes it from other batiks, including Ciwaringin batik. The characteristics that distinguish Ciwaringin batik from Trusmi batik are as follows:

**1. Avoiding Animated Forms.** In Ciwaringin batik,

several motif names come from animal names. However, efforts to stylize flora (leaves and flowers) were made to form the desired fauna motifs to avoid realistic visualization of the motifs. This is due to the influence of strong Islamic values in the history of the development of Batik Ciwaringin. It can be concluded that the main pattern in the creation of the Ciwaringin Batik motif is a series of leaves and flowers that are distilled in such a way.

2. **Making the Motive Without a Standard.** Patterns or standards are not used by craftsmen as a reference in making batik. Instead, the making of motifs is only limited by basic patterns that are passed down from generation to generation. This effort resulted in the resulting motives being free, diverse, and there was no repetition of the motifs on other fabrics.
3. **The simplicity of Form.** The simple form of the batik motif occurs because the technique of making batik uses a canting of the same size for making motifs (*nglengreng*), making ornaments (*ngisen-iseni*), as well as for covering areas of cloth (*nembok*).
4. **Avoid Blank Fields.** The tendency to avoid empty fields means gratitude for the fertility of nature and the happiness of life.

### Meaning of Ciwaringin Batik Motif

The motives analyzed in this study are classified based on the visible patterns in the arrangement of the motifs which are described as follows.

**Tabel 2.** Visual and Meaning Analysis

Name of Motive	Visual Analysis and Meaning
	<p>Inspired by the salvation (<i>selamatan</i>) activities carried out by the community. <i>Piring Selampad</i> means a plate that serves a menu of food for salvation. The <i>isen</i> used is geometric shapes such as <i>limaran coret</i>, <i>limaran tembokan</i>, and <i>limaran doktoran</i>.</p>
<p><b>Lampadan</b> Motive Pattern: <i>ce-plok-ceplok</i></p>	

Name of Motive	Visual Analysis and Meaning
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**Pecutan**  
Motive Pattern: *Pangkaan*

*Pecut* means a whip. *Pecut* is inspired by the form of a whip that is usually used by Kyai Ciwaringin to reprimand his students if they do something wrong.

This motif visualizes a curving bouquet of leaves and flowers with a whip-like tip. The *Pecutan* motif can be classified into connotative signs because it is visually difficult to translate the form as a whip. Regarding the meaning of connotation, Tinarbuko (2010, p. 14) states that “connotations describe the interactions that take place when a sign meets the user’s feelings or emotions and their cultural values.” The meaning contained in the *Pecutan* motif is also closely related to the influence of the cultural values of the *pesantren* as a cultural root.



**Laseman**  
Motive Patter: *Wit Ngrambat*

Inspired by the aesthetics of East Java Lasem batik which has been accepted in socio-cultural contacts in the *pesantren* community, although in the end, the motifs displayed are not closely related to the Lasem batik style.

This motif visualizes a stylized bird developed from tendrils of leaves and flowers. These tendrils of leaves and flowers emerge from *Dampyang Leber* that fill the background, symbolizing bird habitat

Name of Motive	Visual Analysis and Meaning
 <p data-bbox="124 674 375 763"><b>Tebu Sekeret</b> Motive Patter: geometric</p>	<p data-bbox="395 293 691 831">Contains a sliver of sugar cane. This motif visualizes the shape of a rhombus resembling a loose plait of sugarcane stalks arranged diagonally. Not only a batik motif, but <i>Tebu Sekeret</i> is a popular stone ring form of 'emban-emban' in Cirebon. The people of Cirebon also boast of sugarcane as a commodity to be proud of and which has become a regional characteristic because, since the Dutch era, Cirebon is one of the sugar-producing regions.</p>
 <p data-bbox="124 1525 375 1592"><b>Ganefo (Sekar Jagat)</b> Motive Pattern: <i>byur</i></p>	<p data-bbox="395 842 691 1379">Ganefo (Games of New Emerging Forces) was inspired by the Olympics which were followed by new anti-imperialism countries in the era of President Soekarno. Festivities and symbols of the new world are depicted in colorful maps of the country coinciding with hues. Regarding the meaning of symbols, Sukyadi (2011, p. 25) states that symbols are "signs that do not have a natural relationship with the marker."</p> <p data-bbox="395 1413 691 1671">The impression of strength and majesty from the anti-imperialism country is reflected in the use of black which is also dominant in addition to brown (Holzschlag, in Kusrianto, 2009).</p> <p data-bbox="395 1704 691 2016">The word <i>kar</i> in Dutch means map. <i>Kar</i> universe means the map of the world which consists of several regions of the country which are closely spaced apart. The different <i>isen-isens</i> symbolize the different characteristics and potentials of each country.</p>

Source: research data, 2020

### Natural Dyes in Ciwaringin Batik

Apart from being used as inspiration in making motifs, the craftsmen's closeness to nature is also represented using natural dyes as batik dyes. This makes natural dyes an advantage of Batik Ciwaringin. Apart from these reasons, several reasons are underlying the use of natural dyes by craftsmen, including: (1) a form of gratitude and the potential use of natural dyes in the surrounding environment; (2) craftsmen realize the negative impact of using synthetic dyes for the environment; (3) a positive marketing strategy amid environmental damage issues.

The coloring of batik with natural dyes visually results in a less strong and inconspicuous color (*bladus / jepluk*) so that it looks old-fashioned. This unique appearance is very popular with batik enthusiasts from abroad such as from Europe and America, thereby increasing the competitiveness of Batik Ciwaringin products in the market.

Not all the natural dyes used in Ciwaringin batik come from the surrounding village environment but tend to be the same as the natural dyes used in other batik centers. The material consists of tree bark, fruit skin, and leaves. Examples are indigo, *tegeran* skin, *Merbau* skin, *secang* skin, high skin, *jolawe* skin, mahogany skin, mango skin, *rambutan* peel, *jengkol* skin, mangosteen peel, and *noni* root.

To lock in the color and change the color of natural dyes according to the type of metal they contain, a fixation solution is needed. The fixations used by the craftsmen are (1) *alum* (K<sub>2</sub>(SO<sub>4</sub>)<sub>2</sub>), which forms an original but clearer color; (2) *tunjung* (Fe (SO)<sub>4</sub>), which makes the color darker or leads to black; and lime (Ca (OH)<sub>2</sub>), which makes the color lighter.

### Conclusion

The motifs in Ciwaringin batik tend to be diverse, dynamic, and unlimited. The motives of animate living things are not expressed visually-realistically. The craftsmen in making batik are not limited by certain rules/rules in the process of motif design. In visual design, it tends to reveal various patterns of motifs, such as *Pangkaan*, *Byur*, Geometric patterns, *Ceplak Ceplak*, *Wit Ngrambat*, and combination patterns. In Ciwaringin Batik, there are also structural elements that make up the motive, namely: flora motifs, fauna motifs, *Tumpak*, *Poni*, *Dampyang Leber*, and *Isen-isen*. Several characteristics distinguish Ciwaringin batik and Trusmi batik, including: (1) avoiding animate forms; (2) making motifs without a grip; (3) avoid empty fields; and (4) simplicity of form.

The motives analyzed in terms of visual and meaning in this study are classified based on the patterns seen in the arrangement of the motifs. The motives analyzed were: (1) *Sekeret Tebu* which represents the famous ring stone from the Cirebon area and sugarcane as the pride commodity of the Cirebon people as a sugar producer since the Dutch era; (2) *Pecutan*, symbolizing the whip used by Kyai Ciwaringin to reprimand his students for committing mischief; (3) *Lampadan*, means salvation activities carried out by the community; (4) *Ganefo*, symbolizing the excitement and symbol of the new world of anti-imperialism countries which is depicted with pictures of coincided country maps with colorful patterns; and (5) *Laseman*, inspired by the aesthetics of East Java Lasem batik which has been accepted by craftsmen in socio-cultural contacts in the pesantren community.

Natural dyes are a distinguishing factor as well as an advantage of Batik Ciwaringin. The reasons for the use of natural dyes in the Ciwaringin Batik coloring include: (1) a form of gratitude and the potential use of natural dyes in the surrounding environment; (2) craftsmen are aware of the negative impact of using synthetic dyes for the environment; and (3) a positive marketing strategy amid environmental damage issues.

### Acknowledge

Thank you to the people of Ciwaringin Cirebon Village, Indonesian Education University, and all those who supported this research.

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