

The Creation of Fiber Artworks Sourced from Aesthetic of *Lurik* Woven Fabrics

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Abstract—This article aims to describe the process of making fiber artworks that originates from aesthetic values and philosophical meanings in traditional *Lurik* woven fabrics. The method is carried out by collecting information, developing preliminary products, preliminary products testing, revising main products, and testing main products. The discussion includes: (1) a description of the aesthetic values and philosophical meaning of the *Lurik* woven fabric, which has a visual style of vertical lines and colors in a repetitive and rhythmic composition. In each pattern, there are philosophical meanings about life guidelines, such as patience, fortitude, strength, protection, and hope for a better life. (2) a description of the process of making fiber artworks originating from the aesthetic and philosophical significance of *Lurik* woven fabric, through the development of techniques and mixed media; weaving, embroidery, and painting. The result of the discussion or findings of this research is that the philosophical and aesthetic meaning of *Lurik* woven fabric can be used as a source of ideas for creating new artworks. Matters relating to philosophical meanings can be realized through messages and new visual symbols according to the current situation, while those relating to the aesthetics of the medium and the structure of the *Lurik* fabric can be developed in the form of fiber artworks.

Keywords: *Lurik, woven, fabrics, fiber art, philosophical*

I. INTRODUCTION

The development of contemporary art in the Western world has blended the boundaries of discipline in fine arts. In this condition, many artists do artistic-aesthetic exploration through various expression media, including textiles which create fiber artworks as part of the development of contemporary art [1].

On the other hand, Indonesian contemporary artists who carry out artistic and aesthetic exploration through textile media are still relatively small when compared to the media of painting, sculpture, and graphic arts. Textiles are often only regarded as handicraft products, making it difficult to enter the discourse of Indonesian contemporary art [2].

This happens because traditional textile crafter and contemporary Indonesian artists rarely collaborate in the creation of works of art. Thus, the practice of textile crafts in Indonesia becomes distanced from contemporary art [1]. If they can collaborate to raise various symbols, cultural traditions, and norms in traditional societies, textile crafts are

not only regarded as functional products but also contain philosophical values that represent the human side.

The craft of Indonesian traditional textiles of its existence until now can still be found in several regions, one of which is in Surakarta. In some areas of Klaten and Sukoharjo, there are still traditional craftsmen who create *Lurik* woven fabrics using *Gendhong* looms and non-machine looms [3]. As a traditional textile product, *Lurik* woven fabric has a visual aesthetic in the form of variations in the composition of lines and colors lined up transversely and longitudinally with geometric ornamental patterns and ornamentation of plant and animal forms. In each style contained symbolic meanings and noble philosophical values [3].

Until now, actualization in the form of clothing is still shown by the public in various social activities and ritual ceremonies. For example, *Lurik* fabrics of *Tambar Pecah* that are used in the ritual when the baby is 7 months in the womb, it is believed to be a symbol of hope so that the baby can be born easily [4].

Lurik pattern of *Tambar Pecah* with the composition of crossing vertical and horizontal lines means the unity between men and women. Vertical lines symbolize men (masculinity) while horizontal lines symbolize women (femininity). These *Lurik* fabrics as a symbol of love that needs and complement each other [4].

It has become a tradition and culture of Javanese people that in creating various patterns they have a specific purpose. The name pattern generally has meaning and is used as a symbol that reflects the beliefs, the majesty of the universe, the spirit of ancestral spirits, philosophy of life, hope, example, warning and so on. Humans, plants, rocks, rivers, mountains are elements of the universe that are in a relationship of order and stability which also means order. The regularity and consistency are seen by the Javanese as being in a position which is not parallel but always in a hierarchical relationship [3].

Based on the description above, the material on visual beauty and philosophical values on *Lurik* woven fabric can be developed, made explicit, and related to life today so that it can be implemented into ideas, themes, forms, techniques, and media for the creation of contemporary fine art. in the form of

fiber art. Thus, the artwork produced can add new treasures to the practice of contemporary art in Surakarta.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. *The Development of Contemporary Art in Indonesia*

Open globalization has made it easier for Western values, models, and parameters to spread to the East. Contemporary art discourse and its parameters that are formed by the regions of the Western art field can easily enter Indonesia [5]. The loss of boundaries due to global interaction has pushed art to multicultural characters. Today, the world of contemporary art is very open to a variety of aesthetic frameworks of local culture [6]. Observing the openness of contemporary art, it is possible to make it as a 'political area' to uplift a deep-rooted local cultural identity. Contemporary art can also be used as a tool of struggle and emancipation for the displaced local art groups. Therefore 'identity politics becomes important in the discourse and praxis of contemporary art, so as not to confuse [7].

At present, there has been an increase in the number of connoisseurs of world art towards the existence of Indonesian artists as indicated by the increasing enthusiasm of world stakeholders in exhibiting Indonesian contemporary artworks. The development of information technology that makes the world without limits has an impact on the exchange of discourse quickly so that works of art have a global content that is easily understood universally despite using traditional symbols [8].

B. *Art and Culture Tradition as a Source of Creative Inspiration*

In the era of globalization, a work of art is not enough if it only meets international standards, it also needs to have a local knowledge. It will be useful to preserve traditional works of art while developing contemporary works of art that have an identity and character so that they are competitive at the international level. Because it is multicultural, then art has a role to develop social sensitivity, the ability to appreciate and instill awareness about cultural diversity so that the values in it can inspire [9]. The values of local wisdom contained in traditional arts can be used as inspiration to create works of art that are in harmony with the changing times. Because besides having a wealth of visual aesthetics, traditional artworks also contain philosophical meanings of life teachings that are still relevant to human life now [9].

Biranul Anas, Tiarma Sirait, Agus Ismoyo, and Nia Fliam are Indonesian contemporary artists who are intensely involved in textile crafts as a source of creation of their artwork. Biranul Anas creates fiber artworks with natural or synthetic fiber materials. He is interested in developing fiber art as a medium of expression because of the abundant potential of textile and material craft traditions in Indonesia. The fiber artwork shows intense dialogue with personalized abstract painting. Biranul Anas' works are typical cases of art development in the map of the development of Indonesian art, which until now has not been much touched on and received the spotlight [2].

Unlike Tiarma Sirait, who was quite intense in exploring textiles to create fashion art performance and fiber, and fashion installation work. Her ideas depart from the daily life of the local community which he interprets. Meanwhile, Agus Ismoyo and Nia Fliam are artists who often collaborate to create textile art based on the exploration of traditional creative processes. The aim is to understand the basic principles of intangible culture that have grown in society and make it a guide to the practice of creative contemporary art.

In general, the idea of artistic creation from the artists above is constructed from personal perception and does not focus on one type of traditional textile product. It is different from this research which focuses on the study of *Lurik* fabric aesthetics and people's perception so that visual ideas and idioms can be found that involves a general understanding so that the resulting artwork can be absorbed and understood globally and openly.

III. METHOD

This article is the result of research conducted in-depth and thoroughly about the aesthetic values of *Lurik* woven fabric in Surakarta, especially those relating to ideas, themes, visual forms, philosophical meanings, technical and the medium of its creation. The results of a study of the aesthetic values on the *Lurik* fabrics, used as a source of creation of fiber artworks. The method is done by research-based development with the following stages:

A. *Information Collecting*

At this stage, data collection includes ideas, themes, visual forms and philosophical meanings in the *Lurik* pattern of *Tuluh Watu* and *Udan Liris*. Data collection techniques using in-depth interviews and observations involved with contemporary artists and *Lurik* crafters, analyzing documents by *Lurik*, Focus Group Discussion involving artists, *Lurik* crafters, curators, cultural observers, art academics. Data validity uses triangulation of sources, peer debriefing, and rechecking, while data analysis uses interactive of model analysis including data reduction, data presentation, verification or conclusion.

B. *Develop Preliminary Form of Product*

At this stage, ideas for the creation of fiber artworks were developed based on the aesthetics of the *Lurik* pattern of *Tuluh Watu* and *Udan Liris* which was realized through sketches with visual symbols based on their philosophical meanings.

C. *Preliminary Product Testing*

At this stage, sketches are tested to be realized into fiber artworks, then criticized and validated by senior artists and curators.

D. *Main Product Revision*

At this stage, the work of fiber art is revised based on expert advice, especially aspects of visualization of symbols and idioms related to the concept of creation.

E. Main Field Testing

At this stage, the trial of fiber artworks is done through an art exhibition at Gallery to get appreciation, criticism and constructive suggestions from appreciators, art observers, or contemporary art critics.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The process of creating this fiber artwork begins with collecting data and studying subject matter about the aesthetic and philosophical of *Lurik* pattern of *Tuluh Watu* and *Udan Liris*. From this stage, various ideas, themes, patterns, and visual elements have been discovered. The data is analyzed from the formal aspect and interpreted its symbolic meaning. Here are the results of the analysis.

A. Analysis of *Lurik* Fabrics of *Tuluh Watu* and *Udan Liris*



Fig. 1. *Tuluh Watu* pattern.

Visually, *Lurik* pattern of *Tuluh Watu* consists of 4 colors; black, gray, yellow, and white with the composition of vertical lines lined up from the left; black lines, gray lines, yellow lines, gray lines, black lines, and white lines. The thickness of each line is different; the black line is 1.5 cm, the gray line is 1 cm, while the yellow and white lines are 0.5 cm. Color lines that stand out are yellow and white. Yellow lines flanked by gray lines look brighter, while white lines flanked by black lines appear as the binder.

In Javanese, the word *Tuluh* means light and *Watu* means stone so *Tuluh Watu* means 'shining stone'. Besides, the word *Tuluh* also means strong or mighty. In the *Tuluh Watu* pattern, light is represented by yellow and white lines while stone or strength is represented by black and gray lines.

For Javanese, *Lurik* pattern of *Tuluh Watu* is considered as a repellent. This *Lurik* is usually used in *Ruwatan Sukerta* ceremonies and as a complement to *Labuhan* ritual offerings. *Lurik* pattern of *Tuluh Watu*, including sacred cloth that used to be only used by people with strong personalities and virtuous. In the countryside, merchant women wear this cloth in the form of a shawl to carry their wares because *Lurik* pattern of *Tuluh Watu* is considered to have strength like a stone.

The *Udan Liris* pattern in Fig. 2 is dominated by turquoise green as background, which is varied with small red and white lines arranged vertically at random. The technique to bring up these small lines is by making triplicate threads; red thread, white thread, and the thread turquoise. Mixing is done by twisted yarn so that when the process is carried out jointly with

the weft weaving turquoise color of the line will display small red and white.

In Javanese, *Udan Liris* means light rain. Rain contains the meaning of bringing fertility, prosperity and God's grace so that it is trusted by the community as a symbol of fertility and prosperity. In ancient times *Lurik* fabrics of *Udan Liris* was only used as the clothes of a leader in the hope of being blessed by the almighty and bringing prosperity to his followers.

In history, the name *Lurik* pattern of *Udan Liris* was taken from the name of a traditional batik pattern that was created in the middle of the XVIII century when King of Surakarta Pakubuwono III underwent *Teteki* behavior or mortal worship. One of the rituals is *Kungkum* or bathing in the Premulung river in Laweyan Village. The river flows near the tomb of his ancestor, Kyai Ageng Henis. While doing the ritual, it was pouring rain and the wind was blowing. This atmosphere inspired Pakubuwono to create the *Udan Liris batik* pattern. From this event, a philosophical meaning emerged that *Udan Liris* could mean fortitude, although many life problems befell a couple in the family, but had to remain patient and strong.



Fig. 2. *Udan Liris* pattern.

B. The Process of Making Fiber Artworks

After obtaining data about *Lurik* pattern of *Tuluh Watu* and *Udan Liris*, the next step is Develop Preliminary Form of Product by developing ideas for the creation of fiber artworks through design experiments or sketches and determining visual symbols based on the philosophical meaning of *Lurik* pattern of *Tuluh Watu* and *Udan Liris*. After discovering some ideas from the development of aesthetic value and symbolic meaning, the incubation process was carried out by leaving for a moment all the problems that were the source of artistic creation. Incubation is done by refreshing to precipitate the idea to be more focused and mature. Furthermore, some ideas that emerged began to be concrete in the form of sketches and determined the type of technique, material, and format of the artwork to be created. Following are some of the selected sketches to be translated into fiber artworks.



Fig. 3. Some sketches of fiber artworks.

Preliminary Product Testing conducted by realizing sketches into works of fiber art through a combination of techniques of weaving, embroidery, and painting. The dominant technique used is the technique of weaving uses Non-Machine Loom. Whereas embroidery and painting techniques are used to create visual variations.

Making *Lurik* woven fabric using non-machine looms is carried out through several stages as follows:

1) *Yarn dyeing process*: The initial stage of making *Lurik* fabrics begins with the process of coloring the yarn adjusted to the sketch. The yarn coloring process uses a color recipe made for 1 pack of yarn consisting of 6 bunches; 25-26 thread strings. The coloring agents used are naphthol plus TRO (Turkis Red Oil), caustic soda, starch, and vinegar. The yarn dyeing process is carried out as follows:

- Yarn soaked in tub I which contains water and TRO solution for about one night, then the next morning washed and squeezed. The recipe used for a packet of yarn is 100 g naphthol, 8 g caustic soda, and 8 g TRO which is dissolved in hot water and then added with 10 lt of water. In tub II, 10 l of water was added with 200 g of diazo salt.
- Yarn inserted in the tub I about 10 minutes later lifted and squeezed and then is removed and dipped into a tub II, soaked about 10 minutes. This process is repeated 4 times.
- Yarn is washed clean and put in a tub that already contains water mixed with the vinegar solution. Furthermore, washed and squeezed.
- Yarn boiled in the boiler containing water and TRO about 10 minutes, then removed, squeezed, and washed in water that has been mixed with starch solution and then squeezed, aerated and dried.

2) *Yarn spinning process*: This process is called *kelos* or spools and pallets (spinning) to make it easier to arrange the yarn, after the process of dying and drying. In this process, the yarn is spun into small rolls. *Pengelosan* process is done by moving the thread from string shape in the form of spools, using a spun (*Erek*). This process is carried out to repair rudimentary yarns, as well as to obtain yarn spools in spools that will be used for the casting process; arranging warp threads.

The process of spinning the yarn is also carried out by wrapping which is to move the yarn from the string form into the *Keteting* to become a pallet using a spun (*Erek*) tool. The spun yarn may not pass through the tip of the *Keteting* because it can make it difficult to pull the thread from the *Teropong* or binoculars. To make it easier to get the thread out of the *Teropong* or binoculars, the rolling of the yarn arrangement is more in the middle.



Fig. 4. *Teropong* (above) and *keteting* (below).

3) *Process of penyekiran*: *Sekiran* is a device used to arrange warp threads. The process of *Penyekiran* is carried out by rolling yarn from spools into a *Tambur* (big roll) in a parallel position to each other and forming a layer. All threads that are coiled and arranged must have the same tension, if the thread is broken when it is wound, then it must be connected as soon as possible so that when weaving there is no looseness or holes in the fabric. This process requires accuracy in paying attention to the color arrangement thread and the smoothness of the spools in *Sekiran*, for example, to produce a 70 cm wide lurik fabric pattern, it requires the arrangement of 2100 thin strands of yarn.

4) *Process of penyucukkan*



Fig. 5. Process of *penyucukkan*.

The fourth process is *Penyucukkan*, which moves the design pattern into the loom. After the basic pattern is finished arranged on the *Sekir* tool, then transferred to the loom. In this process, 2100 strands of yarn are arranged and put one by one into a comb-like tool on the loom. This process must be carried out by two people. One person is in charge of sorting the threads one by one and another person receives and pairs the yarn on the loom.

5) *Weaving process*: By using non-machine looms, the yarn that has been made in the previous process is then woven into striated fabric according to the specified sketch. From this weaving process often also produces yarn residue or yarn residue. Therefore, to minimize yarn waste, we can use a reverse weaving system; that is by utilizing warp yarn and stripped weft. With this reverse weaving process, it is possible to create various design patterns. In this weaving process, not all sheets of fabric are colored, some parts are left white. The

white part is used to apply embroidery and painting techniques when creating visual objects in fiber artwork.

Painting techniques used are; block and blur techniques. Block technique for making flat colors on objects with three levels, namely: tint, tone, and shade. Tint for the brightest part of object color (exposed to direct light) is made with colored paint mixed with white paint. The tone for the color of objects that are not exposed to direct light made with the original color of the object mixed with gray. Shade for parts of objects affected by the shadow made following the color of the object mixed with black. The blurring technique is used to disguise the color to achieve gradations. This painting technique is used to make the main objects and supporters. While the embroidery technique is used to provide variations on several parts and to add artistic value.

The fiber artworks that have been produced are subsequently criticized and validated by senior artists and curators. Some criticisms or suggestions from the experts, especially those relating to the visualization aspects of symbols and idioms were followed up by revising using embroidery and painting techniques. The process of revising works based on suggestions from these experts is part of the Main Product Revision stage.

The last stage of the creation of this fiber artworks is Main Field Testing, which is testing the quality of fiber artworks widely through organizing fine art exhibitions at the Central Java Cultural Park Gallery. The results of the review of the exhibition that the audience can appreciate it well and provide constructive suggestions for further progress.

C. Fiber Artworks Produced

The fiber artwork entitled "Protection" was created from the aesthetic of *Tuluh Watu* fabric. Visually, the composition of the repetitive lines on *Lurik* pattern of *Tuluh Watu* is made into the background, with the main object of a woman hiding behind a grove of roses. The colors in this work are predominantly black and white. The techniques used are weaving, embroidery, and painting. Embroidery and painting techniques are used on the main object, while weaving techniques are used in the background. At the center of this work is a picture of a female figure behind a pile of roses located in the center of a colored ellipse. The focus effect is also reinforced by the thin vertical composition of the vertices around the elliptical field.

In general, the symbols in this work represent an idea of self-protection. The picture of a woman behind the rose flower represents a woman's protection of her beauty and fragrance. The position of the ellipse in the middle of the *Tuluh Watu* line pattern represents a strong and quiet shelter. From the visualization of this work, the philosophical value of the *Tuluh Watu* woven fabric which has a strong, mighty, shining, and functions as a reinforcement is still clearly visible even though it is made using different symbols.



Fig. 6. Fiber artwork entitled 'Protection', 70 x 120 cm, yarn, textile paint on woven fabric.



Fig. 7. Fiber artwork entitled 'Meditation', 90 x 110 cm, textile paint on woven fabric.

The idea of creating artworks titled 'Meditation' was inspired by the aesthetics *Lurik* pattern of *Udan Liris*. Its main object is a female figure sitting cross-legged and bowed his head. Composition reps dotted lines on the *Udan Liris* pattern used as background and foreground objects blocking the main. The dominant color in this work is pink which is located on a woman's dress or some dotted lines in the background. While other supporting colors are brown, ocher, blue, yellow, and white. The main object embodiment technique uses painting techniques, while the background and foreground objects use weaving techniques. The main characteristic of the *Udan Liris* pattern that resembles raindrops is used to support the realization of the creation of this work.

The position of the female figure who sat cross-legged and looked down, wearing a pink dress represented an attitude of resignation, stoicism and continued praying to be blessed by God Almighty. The position of the background and foreground is in the form of a dotted line like a raindrop that flushes over a woman's object, representing the fulfillment of prayer and hope for prosperity.



Fig. 8. Fiber artwork entitled 'Devotional', 70 x 110 cm, textile paint on yarn.

The idea for the creation of the work entitled "Devotional" is sourced from *Lurik of Udan Liris*. The visualization of this work consists of the main object of the figure of a woman who is sitting contemplating with her hand supporting her chin. The supporting object is a picture of mountains lined up in front of and behind female objects.

This work was made with a painting technique using textile paint on several bundles of threads arranged repetitively stretched from the top down to form a flat plane resembling sheets of fabric.

Visualization of the main and supporting objects is made using block, brushstroke, and blur techniques. The block technique is used to create flat objects in the shape of mountain objects. While the brushstroke technique is used to create objects of female figures that display dark shades of light to create the impression of volume and space in a two-dimensional plane.

In general, this work represents the meaning of fortitude, patience, and strength. The symbols are realized through the object of a female figure with a contemplative position in the middle of the mountains. The visualization contains the impression of contemplation of life's problems that demand

patience and strength as illustrated by the surrounding mountainous objects.

V. CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion of the three works of art above, it can be concluded that the philosophical and aesthetic meaning of *Lurik* woven fabric can be used as a source of ideas for creating new artworks. Matters relating to philosophical meanings can be realized through messages and new visual symbols according to the current situation, while those relating to the aesthetics of the medium and the structure of the *Lurik* fabric can be developed in the form of fiber artworks

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