

## **KYAI RAJAMALA BOAT' CANTHIK IN COUTURE BATIK PATTERN**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The Historically, the Javanese palaces relied on boats for transportation, like *the Kyai Rajamala boat* used by the Surakarta palace. At the time, Paku Buwana IV used the boat to cross the Bengawan Solo river. *Kyai Rajamala boat's canthik* is a decorative element on the end bow of the Surakarta palace's boat. Apart from being a decorative element on the boat's end bow, the *Kyai Rajamala boat's canthik* is also an heirloom used to ward off bad luck. Because the *Kyai Rajamala boat's canthik* has a high value for life, it is critical to communicate the *Kyai Rajamala boat's canthik* through easily accepted media. One medium that can convey the beauty of the *Kyai Rajamala boat's canthik* is the batik textile art, which can be used to meet basic human needs. Clothing is not only a means of covering the body; it can also be used to convey messages. The *Kyai Rajamala boat's canthik* was reinterpreted and dyed with remasol into handmade *batik*.

**Keywords:** *Canthik Rajamala*, fashion, and batik

### **ABSTRAK**

*Keraton di Jawa pada masa dahulu menggunakan alat transportasi berupa perahu. Perahu yang digunakan pada masa Keraton Surakarta yaitu perahu Kyai Rajamala. Canthik perahu Kyai Rajamala merupakan hiasan yang ada di ujung haluan perahu milik keraton Surakarta. Perahu tersebut pada masanya digunakan untuk mengarungi sungai Bengawan Solo oleh Paku Buwana IV. Selain sebagai penghias ujung perahu, Canthik perahu Kyai Rajamala juga menjadi pusaka sebagai tolak bala. Canthik perahu Kyai Rajamala memiliki makna nilai yang tinggi bagi kehidupan, maka menjadi penting untuk menyampaikan Canthik perahu Kyai Rajamala melalui media yang mudah diterima oleh masyarakat. Salah satu media yang dapat menginterpretasikan canthik perahu Kyai Rajamala yaitu seni tekstil batik, karena dapat digunakan sebagai busana untuk kebutuhan utama bagi kehidupan manusia. Busana tidak hanya sebagai penutup tubuh, namun bisa menjadi media komunikasi untuk menyampaikan pesan. Canthik Kyai Rajamala tersebut berhasil direinterpretasi dan pewarnaan batik tulis menggunakan pewarna remasol dengan teknik celup.*

**Kata kunci:** *Canthik Rajamala*, fesyen, dan batik

## 1. Introduction

Surakarta is an area that is very thick with Javanese culture, because it witnesses the story of the Kasunanan Palace. It is natural that people have the desire to come to Surakarta, especially the Radya Pustaka Museum to know or learn Javanese culture. Radya Pustaka Museum is a museum with a national perspective as an arena for developing knowledge and national culture. Radya Pustaka Museum was founded in 1890, initially as a library where books or important manuscripts belonged to the Surakarta Kasunanan Palace. Local people who come to the Radya Pustaka Museum to learn about Javanese culture by reading books or ancient manuscripts belonging to the palace. However, in its development the museum also stores historical relics from the palace. The main goal is to preserve Javanese arts and culture and educate a nation that has knowledge and has a national spirit (Bratahiswara, 2000). Radya Pustaka Museum as a place of cultural heritage has a foundation for preserving historical heritage objects. The establishment of this museum was pioneered by KRA Sosrodiningrat IV and cultural artists in 1890 with the aim of preserving ancient manuscripts from the Kasunanan Palace in order to maintain their sustainability (Padmopuspito, 1960). The relics in the Radya Pustaka museum include ancient weapons, wayang puppets, ancient artifacts, and ancient manuscripts that number no less than three thousand pieces. One object that is interesting to examine more deeply is a *canthik* (a display in front of a boat in the shape of a head).

In ancient times the boat was the main means of transportation, this can be seen from several historical sources. The palaces in Java can be categorized as big kingdoms, if they have a fleet of boats. Keraton Surakarta is one of the descendants of the Mataram dynasty, the early establishment of the kingdom made boats as the main means of transportation. *Canthik* Kyai Rajamala's boat was built during the reign of Paku Buwana IV. The pioneer of Kyai Rajamala's building was RM Sugandhi, who was the crown prince of PB IV when he was still Pangeran Adipati Anom. Kyai Rajamala's beautiful artifacts are still stored and maintained at the

Radya Pustaka Surakarta Museum.

One of the local wisdoms of Javanese culture that contains a deep philosophical circulation is batik. Batik is one of the nation's cultural heritage which is spread throughout the archipelago, especially in the life of the Javanese people (Koentjaraningrat, 1954). Batik is a piece of wastra or textile that is made traditionally and used in traditional matrices of various decorative patterns of certain batik which is made using a barrier dyeing technique with batik wax or wax as a color barrier material (Santosa, 2002). Javanese society has long labeled batik as a product of traditional culture that represents the human life cycle. Each decoration contains historical value and becomes a medium of communication to the public. This has become an interest in the adoption of the idea of *Canthik* Kyai Rajamala. *Canthik* Kyai Rajamala gives ideas on aesthetic aspects and historical aspects to produce a masterpiece of written batik with the motif of *Canthik* Kyai Rajamala. The work is expected to have meaning and value with the hope that if people wear the clothing, they can uphold the historical value and the beauty of a *Canthik* Kyai Rajamala. The work that will be created needs a fundamental and thorough thought so that the development of the creation does not conflict with the core of the fashion work, fashion is designed by considering aesthetic and ergonomic values. Clothing is a communication engine (Barnard, 2011). Clothing has a communication function, through clothing humans can convey messages to other people. The human need for a medium to communicate is a basic need because communication is the most important part of the dynamics of social life. Clothing contains several functions, namely as body armor and as a cover for the body, besides that clothing also functions to beautify the appearance (Ernawati, Izwerni, & Nelmira, 2008). The creation of craft or clothing does not only pay attention to the functional aspects, but also its aesthetic value, because it can serve as a means of introducing the values of traditional Indonesian art and culture to the wider community (Triana & Marwati, 2020).

The motif that will be included in the costume is the *Canthik* Kyai Rajamala

motif, which is a stylization of the forms and elements contained in *Canthik Rajamala* which will have its own value and be attached to the dress. The creation of this work is expected to be a bridge and communication medium to tell the beautiful history of Rajamala to the current generation and the wider community. Taking the source of Kyai Rajamala's *Canthik* idea into a functional fashion that can be worn at various events and looks more flexible. The purpose of the creation of this work is as a form of representation of *Canthik* Kyai Rajamala as well as a style of batik work through fashion through the object of lifting ideas sourced from *Canthik* Kyai Rajamala.

## 2. Literature Review

Ari Wulandari, 2011, *Batik Nusantara*, Publisher Andi Offset, Yogyakarta. This book provides a comprehensive review of batik, starting with the history of batik in 24 provinces throughout Indonesia, regarding batik ornaments, patterns, and motifs. Then proceed with a discussion of the philosophical meaning of batik, then also discuss how to make batik (Wulandari, 2011). The book is used as a written reference source in creating written batik works.

Dharsono, 2016, *Kreasi Artistik Perjumpaan Tradisi Modern dalam Paradigma Kekaryaannya Seni*, published by Citra Sains. This book contains various issues designed to be able to understand, explain, and be able to apply the concept of artistic creation in the art creation. This Artistic Creation book is also used as a step-by-step guide for art creation, art design, and the process of creating art.

Dharsono, 2020, *Estetika*, published by Citra Sains. This book contains the ability to see through the senses, perception, feeling or sensitivity, which is closely related to one's ability to interpret the existence of art works (Dharsono, 2007). This aesthetic book is used as a written reference source regarding visual elements.

Malcolm Barnard, 2011, *Fashion sebagai Komunikasi*, Publisher Jalasutra, Yogyakarta. This book provides insight into the rhetorical function of fashion to determine the place and space for fashion to shape and maintain roles, rules, rituals, and cultural responsibilities. The book is used as a written reference source on the

concept of fashion.

Sri Marwati, 2005, "*Bentuk dan Makna Canthik Kyai Rajamala Ciptaan KGPA Hamengkunagara III*", ISI Surakarta Journal Repository. Sri Marwati in her journal describes the meaning of *Canthik* Kyai Rajamala and reviews the visual form of *Canthik* Kyai Rajamala (Marwati, 2005). The journal can be a written reference source related to the concept of the works creation to be created.

SP. Gustami, 2007, *Butir-Butir Mutiara Ekstetika Timur: Ide Dasar Penciptaan Seni Kriya Indonesia*, Publisher Prasista, Yogyakarta. This book contains the philosophical concepts and methodologies of craft art creation (Gustami, 2007). The book is used as a written reference source as the basis for creating works.

### **3. Creation Methodology**

Method of creation is the work steps carried out in the creation of art works. The steps for creating the work include utilization of data sources, data collection techniques, experimentation, contemplation, and formation of works. The method of creation includes the following:

#### 1). Utilization of Data Sources

Research was conducted by utilizing ethical and emic data sources. The explanation of the two data sources is as follows:

- a). Ethics data sources are data sources that come from libraries related to the source of the ideas raised. Sources of ethical data are sources of data collected through a literature review, which is carried out by means of a literature review; scientific books, scientific diktats, scientific articles, and scientific papers (Kartika, 2016).
- b). The sources of emic data are Radya Pustaka Museum and resource persons. Utilization of emic data sources is carried out by observation, carried out to observe the object of creation research according to the scope, and targets in accordance with the aspirations of the work to be created or compiled. This data collection technique is supported by documentation tools in the form of photos of data (Kartika, 2016).

#### 2). Data Collection Techniques

Data collection techniques present the results of data information from ethical and emic data sources. Ethical data sources contain data information in the form of documents and emic data sources contain data information in the form of interviews with sources. The description is as follows: (1). Literature study, data collection through library research was conducted to obtain data in the form of literature that supports writings related to *Canthik* Rajamala and adibusana. Literature study is carried out by reviewing the literature in the form of books, reports, scientific articles, and other sources that have relevance to the source of the ideas raised; (2). b). Interview, techniques for collecting interview data, were conducted on several sources, also known as interviews.

### 3). Experimentation

There should be opportunities for unlimited creativity and experimentation (Guntur, 2020). The experimental stage is a trial or exploration stage in order to determine the media, techniques, and materials to be used. The results obtained are the technique of transforming the idea object into a batik motif sketch and color testing. The experimental stage is carried out by trying alternative choices of materials, techniques, tools, and layout concepts that will be used in visualizing the design of the work (Kartika, 2016).

### 4). Contemplation

Contemplation is the artist's inner odyssey in search of symbols or metaphors (Kartika, 2016). The contemplation is carried out to seek and find symbols that will become icons in the artistic creative process in the creation of art works. The result obtained in the process of contemplation is the transformation of *canthik* Kyai Rajamala's into the form of a batik motif through stylization techniques. The device that will be transformed into a batik motif is the shape and facial elements found on the *canthik* Kyai Rajamala. The shape and elements of the transformed face of *Canthik* Kyai Rajamala have a philosophical meaning which will then be transformed as the main motif. The contemplation stage is interpreted as a form of searching and finding the symbols that will be transformed in the process of creating

a thesis work of art. The use of an aesthetic approach in the process of creating works pays attention to design elements such as: points, lines, planes, spaces, textures, and colors to achieve the visual beauty of the work. Beauty as a form of expression of the soul is global, universal, and valid for anyone (Toekio, 2013).

#### 5). Formation

The formation stage is a layout design or composition designed to get the form or structure of the work (Kartika, 2016). The results obtained are grouping objects and prototypes. *Canthik* Kyai Rajamala will be grouped into several titles. The next stage is the production of works. This stage emphasizes the workflow scheme of the creation of the artwork, so this stage is more technical in nature. The medium in the written batik technique is to use a gamelan brand primisima cloth which has a width of 105 cm. The application of the motif uses the technique of written batik. The color used is a type of synthetic dye, namely Remasol using alid batik technique dyed.

The process of realizing written batik works starts from the *nyorek*, *nglowongi*, *ngiseni*, *nembok*, and *nglorod*. The next application is realized in fashion through the sewing process.

## 4. Discussion

### 4.1. Creative Process

Data sources are an important factor in the process of creating works, photo and document data sources help explore and hone creativity in creating art. Data sources can also provide clear boundaries regarding the concept of the work to be created. The data collected provides space in the process of creating the work, the source of the data was obtained by the author by carrying out library research and observations on *canthik* Rajamala and fashion adibusana. The completeness of the data obtained from literature studies and observations on *canthik* Rajamala and adibusana can assist the process of creating works. Thus the process of creating works truly contains the meaning contained in *canthik* Rajamala which is then manifested in masterpieces.

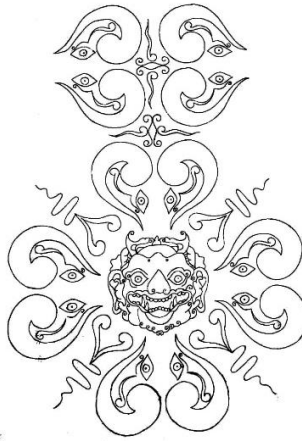


Figure 1. Sketch of the *Canthik Rajamala*  
(Designer: Kristanti, 2021)

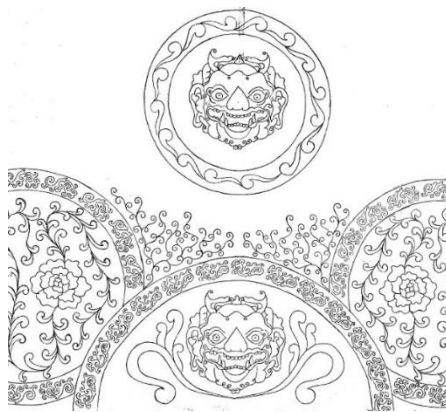


Figure 2. Sketch of the *Canthik Rajamala*  
(Designer: Kristanti, 2021)



Figure 3. Sketch of the *Canthik Rajamala*  
(Designer: Kristanti, 2021)





Figure 4. Sketch of the *Canthik Rajamala*  
(Designer: Kristanti, 2021)

In the creation stage of this work, the author appoints *canthik Rajamala* as a source of ideas for creating works of art. *Canthik Rajamala* will be reinterpreted on the fabric with a stylization technique using a repetition arrangement. *Canthik Rajamala* is the main motif in batik and is varied with the addition of supporting motifs taken from elements of *canthik Rajamala*'s face, such as: lips, nose, eyes, eyebrows, hair, *jamang*, and pilis. This motif is manifested on a cloth using a written batik technique, namely using canting. The use of fabric dyes to produce appropriate colors using synthetic dyes, namely remasol dyes and waterglass as color locks. The processing technique uses written batik techniques, dyeing, dabbing, sewing, and installing beads. This batik motif is realized for high fashion.

#### 4.2. Artwork Description

Artwork specification:

Title : Baita Rajamala  
Technique : Batik Tulis  
Designer : Kristanti  
Year : 2021



Figure 5. *Canthik Rajamala* in *adibusana*  
(Photo: Harry Hartantio, 2021)

The work "*Baita Rajamala*" tangible fashion haute couture women with piece outerform, dress and trousers. The creation of this masterpiece uses primisima fabric and satin as the main materials bridal, while the supporting materials used are SPTI furing and tricod. The use of a combination of satin fabrics makes the clothes look more modern, this dress prioritizes the comfort and confidence of the wearer but the aesthetics of this dress are also presented elegantly and attractive to look at.



Figure 6. *Canthik Rajamala* in *adibusana*  
(Photo: Harry Hartantio, 2021)

*Sanggit's* form in this work uses the concept of reinterpretation. The concept of reinterpretation is the creation of works of art by reinterpreting idioms, traditional arts as models of conservation (preservation of development) or what can be called cultural personal expressions. The work "*Baita Rajamala*" is realized by presenting the aesthetic form of *canthik* Rajamala. This work uses the aesthetic concept of reinterpretation and contains a symbolic meaning. The color composition used in this work is black. This fashion creation applies the Rajamala *canthik* motif in the form of a head (*canthik*) with a distillation repetition arrangement. Arranged the same or similarly arranged in a balanced manner or in a batik pattern called geometry, with this balance containing a spiritual meaning in its manufacture which reflects a relationship between humans and God, the balance of the human mind to understand, explore, explore, and fight against their passions. The form of inner war in humans is reflected in the character of Rajamala who is hard-hearted, brave, and wants to always win alone. This work is about human existence in a world that is surrounded by the natural qualities of God. In Javanese cosmogony, known as *keblat papat lima pancer*, these traits are represented in symbols of elements in the world, colors that imply human character.

## **5. Conclusion**

Facing the global, one must be able to find his own identity as an Indonesian human (how to master the modern with a touch of tradition). In accordance with the new paradigm of higher arts education in Indonesia, namely: exploring, studying and processing the potential of local cultural plurality as capital to be able to compete in the global arena. To face the global, it is necessary to study local, the more global the more local. Now that the old culture is being sought again as an alternative to art development, it can be concluded that the development of traditional art with a modern touch, which is then called *sanggit* aesthetics in the paradigm of artistic creation, is a phenomenon that appears as a work of symbolic reinterpretation. Traditional idioms are the result of reinterpretation, which is a

composite structure using modern exposition techniques, so there will be various versions of styles according to the results of the reduction in the processing of the artist. Although these works depict a certain engineering story, the idea of the story is only the result of the stimulation of the expression of the artist feelings.

This work of art was created to gain inner satisfaction, not only expressed in visual form but capable of providing meaning, philosophy, ideas, concepts, and balanced technique, resulting in a work that is not only beautiful but has character and contains a deep symbolic meaning. The creation of this work represents *canthik* Rajamala which has its own meaning and understanding in aspects of life. The use of motifs that have their own meaning plus their application to fashion accessories will give a new touch. In addition, the use of colors that seem sharp adds to the impression of *canthik* Rajamala and the various kinds of meanings contained can be seen and matched in meaning and visually displayed.

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*ARTISTIC : International Journal of Creation and Innovation*

Publisher:  
Program Pascasarjana  
Institut Seni Indonesia (ISI) Surakarta

Available online at:  
<https://jurnal.isi-ska.ac.id/index.php/artistic>

How to Cite:  
Kristanti & Guntur. (2021). *Kyai Rajamala Boat' Canthik* in Couture Batik Pattern. *ARTISTIC : International Journal of Creation and Innovation*, 2(2), 120-132