

Exploration of Batik Motif Designs in the City of Surabaya on Men's Shirts Inspired by the Folk Tale of *Sura* and *Baya*

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ABSTRACT

Keywords:

Contemporary batik
Sura and Baya
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This research aims to develop contemporary batik motifs by raising the folklore of Sura and Baya as the main visual elements in men's shirt designs. The design process uses the *Double Diamond Model approach*, which includes the stages of exploration, synthesis, development, and design validation. Data were obtained through literature studies, observation of men's batik design trends, and analysis of Sura and Baya's visual motifs. Four motif designs were developed and evaluated based on three aspects: the suitability of the motif with the theme, color combinations, and batik patterns. The results of the evaluation showed that Design 4 had the highest score with an average score of 4.23, especially prominent in the aspect of color combination (4.48) and batik patterns (4.28). Meanwhile, Design 1 and 2 have an advantage on the narrative side, despite their lower aesthetic scores. These findings show that a combination of local narratives and modern visual design approaches can produce batik works that are aesthetically and meaningfully accepted by target consumers. The novelty of the research lies in the integrative approach between local culture and men's fashion product design, as well as the application of batik as a contextual visual communication medium. This research contributes to the development of narrative batik that is relevant to regional identity and contemporary fashion trends.

INTRODUCTION

Surabaya, a city of heroes full of history and the spirit of struggle, has a rich culture that is not only reflected in monuments or events, but also in legendary folklore. One of the most iconic stories is the legend of Sura and Baya, two sea creatures that are said to be the origin of the city's name. The legend of Sura and Baya comes from the story of two powerful sea animals, namely a shark named Sura and a crocodile named Baya, who are friendly but end up at odds over territory and food. To avoid conflict, they made a deal: Sura controlled the sea, while Baya controlled the river. However, the dispute broke out again when Sura violated the treaty and entered the river territory. A fierce battle ensued, and the battle area became known as Surabaya, which comes from the name of the two animals (Wedawati, et al., 2022).

The folklore of *Sura* and *Baya* has been closely attached to the identity of the city of Surabaya. The story of the fight between sharks and crocodiles is not only the origin of the city's name, but also represents the character of courage, strength, and fighting power of the people of Surabaya. Therefore, *Sura* and *Baya* were raised as visual icons of the city, widely known through its various monuments, statues, and official symbols of the city's government (Hanindharputri, et al., 2022). One of the most famous representations is the *Sura* and *Baya* Monuments, located in front of the Surabaya Zoo. The sculpture depicts a shark and a crocodile facing each other in a fighting position, in a dynamic style that reflects the tension and power of the two animals. This monument is not only a visual landmark, but also a tourist attraction and an iconic photographic object for residents and visitors alike. In addition, the symbols of *Sura* and *Baya* are also used in the official logo of the Surabaya City Government, seen in various documents, city gates, and public architectural ornaments. The existence of this visualization makes the folklore not only live in the collective memory, but also continues to be passed on as part of the local cultural pride that shapes the image of the city in the eyes of the world. This story is a symbol of courage and fighting spirit, and is an important part of the cultural identity of the city of Surabaya. The legends of *Sura* and *Baya* are not only a heritage of folklore, but also a rich source of inspiration to be processed in visual form, including in the design of batik motifs.

Batik as Indonesia's cultural heritage has undergone a transformation of form and meaning, from traditional media to a dynamic and contextual means of visual communication (Wesnina, Prabawati & Noerharyono, 2025). Analytical studies also note that batik motifs have survived for more than 10 centuries due to their ability to adapt to the times, from palace batik to coastal batik with new colors and motifs relevant to today's global market (Supriono, 2024). In the midst of the spirit of modernization, there is an effort to re-elevate local values through batik design innovations that are not only aesthetically beautiful, but also have a strong narrative. The story of *Sura* and *Baya* is one of the unique and distinctive sources of inspiration, which is able to give new life to contemporary batik motif designs, especially in men's fashion products such as shirts. Previous research has explored batik motifs with the source of the idea of Cindelaras folklore on batik shirts (Tyasningrum, et al., 2025). Dalam penelitian Indarti, et al., (2024), menilai bagaimana produk kerajinan batik di kawasan bekas daerah prostitusi terbesar di Asia Tenggara dapat meningkatkan dampak sosial dan ekonomi yang berkelanjutan.

Men's shirts as one of the functional and representative clothing on various occasions are now starting to be looked at as a medium of cultural expression (Yuningsih, Destiarman & Tresnadi, 2020). Combining batik motifs with modern men's clothing styles is a challenge as well as an opportunity to create works that are not only fashionable, but also meaningful. The batik design inspired by *Sura* and *Baya* offers a visualization of courage, conflict, and balance, which is in harmony with the characteristics of masculinity in the context of fashion. This article explores how elements of *Sura* and *Baya* folklore can be translated into batik motifs applied to men's shirts. Starting from the visual forms of

sharks and crocodiles, symbols of resistance, to the combination of Surabaya's typical colors, this exploration is expected to be able to encourage the creation of a strong batik design that is narratively strong and relevant to local identity. This approach not only strengthens the position of batik in the realm of men's fashion, but also enriches the visual narrative of the city of Surabaya in the eyes of today's generation.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study used the Double Diamond Model approach which consists of four main stages: Discover, Define, Develop, and Deliver, to explore and develop the design of Sura and Baya-themed batik motifs on men's shirts (Indarti, et al., 2023). This model was chosen to support a systematic, iterative, and solution-focused design process based on user needs.

Discover

At this stage, data collection was carried out to understand the cultural and visual context of Sura and Baya folklore as well as the existence of batik in the city of Surabaya. The methods used included: literature studies on Sura and Baya folklore, the history of Surabaya batik, and men's shirt design trends. Observation of batik motifs patterned in men's shirts online was conducted by looking at references on Instagram.

Define

Findings from the exploration phase were analyzed to identify design opportunities. At this stage, the synthesis of the results of literature studies was carried out to formulate the main insights related to the visualization of Sura and Baya and the preferences of male batik motifs. A design statement was prepared, highlighting the focus of the design—developing batik motifs that represent the stories of Sura and Baya with a masculine, modern, and contextual visual style for consumers in Surabaya.

Develop

In this phase, the process of ideation and development of design concepts is carried out. The choice of the main theme is the shape of the Sura and Baya animals as icons and symbols of the city of Surabaya. At this stage, a moodboard is created that functions to collect various visual elements (photos, sketches, textures, colors, motifs) that can inspire the design creation process. The selection of photos of Sura and Baya statues, pointed bamboo monuments, Heroes monuments, batik motifs and patterned batik references on men's shirts have been collected and arranged into a moodboard (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Moodboard

Deliver

The final stage focuses on completing the design and evaluating the results: finalizing the design of the Sura and Baya batik motifs in a print-ready format. The production of prototype men's shirts uses the motifs that have been developed. Evaluate the prototype through user testing on target consumers to assess aspects of theme suitability, color combination, and batik motifs. Participants were 29 men who worked in offices aged 41-55 years (41.4%), 20-30 years (31%) and 31-40 years (27.6%).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Planning Process

Desain 1. The main ornament is in the form of sura and baya stylization. The Sura and Baya motifs are ornamentally drawn and surround two-pointed bamboo stems. Classic-style visualization with scaled textures, ornate tails, and symmetrical poses that show a typical confrontation of Surabaya folklore. Additional ornaments are a combination of traditional batik motifs of machetes, banji, and flower styling. The Sura and Baya motifs depict the balance between strength and wisdom in life. Overall, the design of contemporary batik motifs with a vertically and symmetrical organized structure.

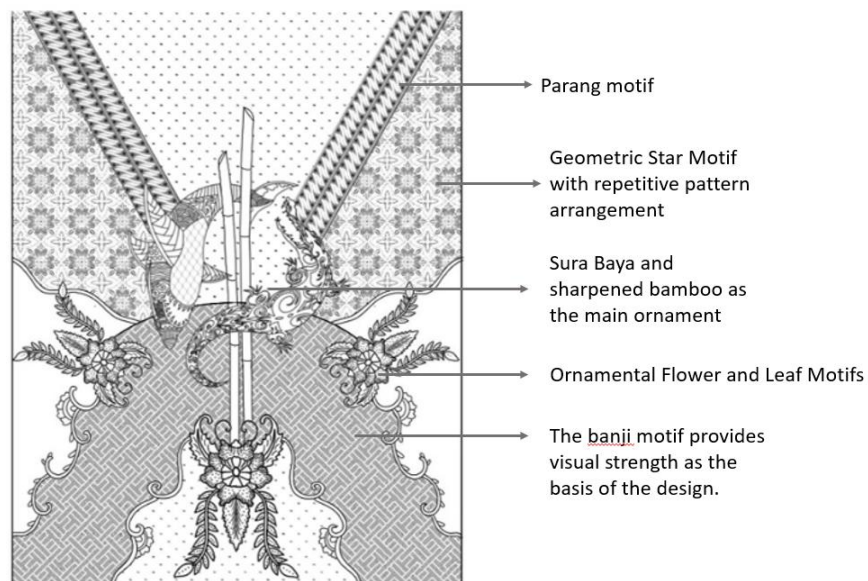


Figure 2. Design 1

Desain 2. The batik motif is patterned inspired by folklore from the origin of the city of Surabaya. The main ornaments are Sura and Baya, sharpened bamboo, and hero monument icons. Sura and Baya's body shapes are both depicted firmly naturalist, with simple yet expressive lines that support easily recognizable visuals. The main motif is decorated with wavy flame ornaments that burn upwards, depicting the spirit of struggle and strengthening the local narrative of the city of Surabaya. Additional ornaments are tendrils, flowers, and machete motifs. The repeating small floral motif fills the space evenly and gives it a soft feel, balancing the narrative power of the main motif. In some parts of the background there are machete motifs that enrich the visual rhythm in the composition. The combination of Sura and Baya motifs, pointed bamboo, and the Heroes Monument creates a design that is rich in meaning and symbolism, depicting the spirit of struggle and deep respect for the nation's history and heroes.

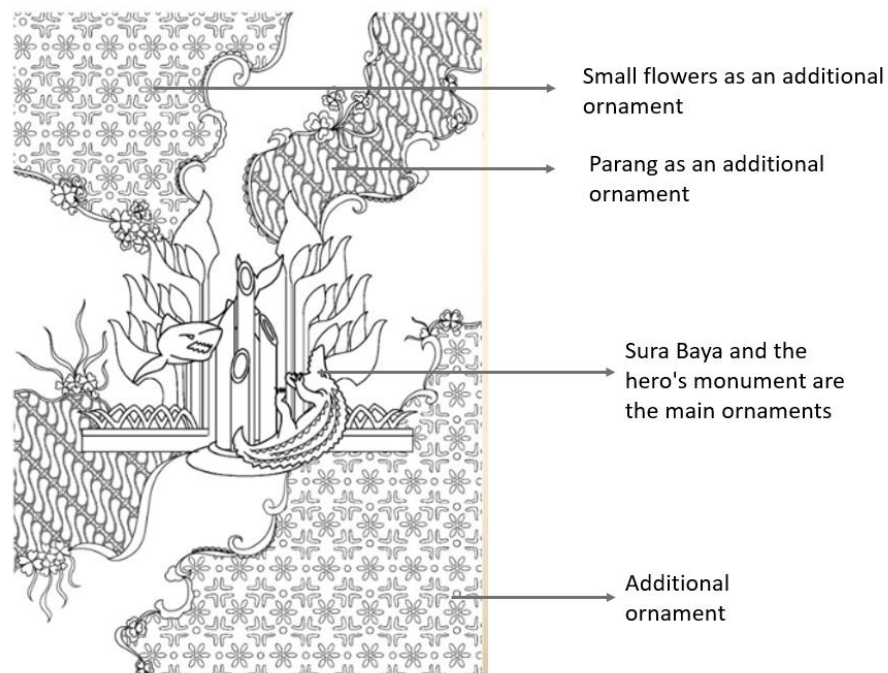
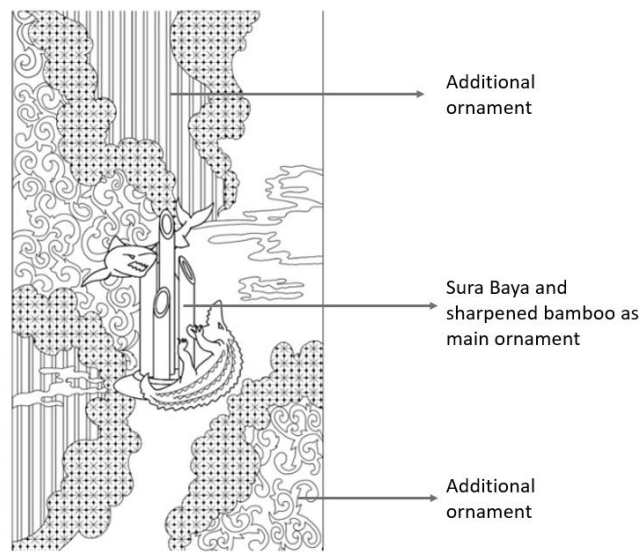


Figure 3. Design 2

Design 3. The batik motif is patterned inspired by folklore from the origin of the city of Surabaya. The main ornament is in the form of the stylization of the Sura and Baya statues that surround the Runncing bamboo. The statues of Sura and Baya have become icons of the city of Surabaya. Pointed bamboo is a symbol of the struggle of the people of Surabaya on November 10, 1945 and is enshrined as a pointed bamboo monument in the city of Surabaya. Additional ornaments are in the form of carved motifs and geometric motifs. Surabaya, pointed bamboo, carvings and geometric motifs depict struggle and courage. Figure 2 is an illustration of a narrative batik motif that depicts the typical Sura and Baya folklore of the city of Surabaya, with a composition of ornaments that are traditionally structured but packaged in a contemporary style.



. **Figure 4.** Design 3

Design 4. The batik design displayed is a rich composition of ornaments with a vertical-symmetrical structure, featuring the main characters of Surabaya folklore (*Sura* and *Baya*) with typical Javanese ornaments. The main ornament is the style of *Sura* and *Baya* that surround pointed bamboo. The main ornaments are in the center of the picture, the two facing each other to form a dynamic movement as if they are fighting. Additional ornaments form a panel of vertical stripes containing a classic spiral motif (*Javanese swastika*), creating a rhythm, and reinforcing the up-down direction of view. At the top, there is a Diamond Geometric motif that functions as a top background with a stable repetitive pattern and fills the space with a light texture. Additional ornaments are also in the form of plant lungan lugs, especially creeping tendrils, ornamental flora, and wide leaves.

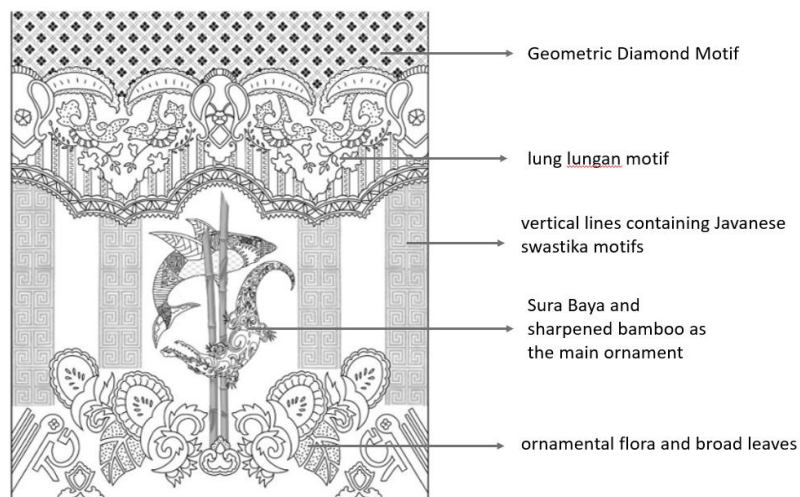


Figure 5. Design 4

Prototype Production

Prototypes are early examples of design products that are made to realize concepts in real form before they are mass-produced. The goal is to test the shape, motif, function, and appearance of the design. Prototype production is carried out through several stages, including material selection, application of motifs, treatment, dyeing, and sewing. The material used is *prmissima* fabric with a length of 2.5 meters. *Prmissima* is a type of high-quality *mori* fabric that is often used as the main medium in making fine written batik. This fabric is very popular among batik artisans because of its soft, tight, and comfortable texture. The application of batik motifs in a pattern will be placed on the front and back bodies, while the arms and collars take part in the main motif. The batik process is carried out using writing techniques, while dyeing uses synthetic dye *remasol*.

The finished result of batik fabric in designs 1 and 2 in Figure 6 below. The fabric is spread on the wicket and folded in half, so that it appears that the batik motif will be the back (back body). The main motif is placed in the middle of the body; additional motifs are drawn on the entire rest of the fabric to the edges according to the sketch design (Fig. 6a). This batik combines local cultural icons with modern aesthetics (symmetrical composition, contrasting colors). The motifs of *Sura* (shark) and *Baya* (crocodile) face each other symmetrically in the center of the fabric, becoming the main icon. There is a division of color fields. The top uses a dark brown color, giving it an elegant and warm impression. The lower left and right sides use bright *sogan* (golden orange), typical of the classic color of batik. The lower center is gray and black to emphasize the focus of the main motif.



Figure 6. Prototype Batik Design

This image shows the finished finished batik cloth that features a contemporary design

with a touch of Surabaya's typical cultural elements (Fig. 6b). The main motifs of *Sura* and *Baya* and the ornaments of the hero's monuments are like flames. The supporting motifs of small flowers (*isen-isen*) are scattered around the dark blue plane, which mimics the natural but orderly impression. On the upper right and lower left sides – yellow is an adaptation of the classic batik damaged machete motif. The composition of batik has a dynamic asymmetrical layout, with a pattern that remains balanced between right and left.

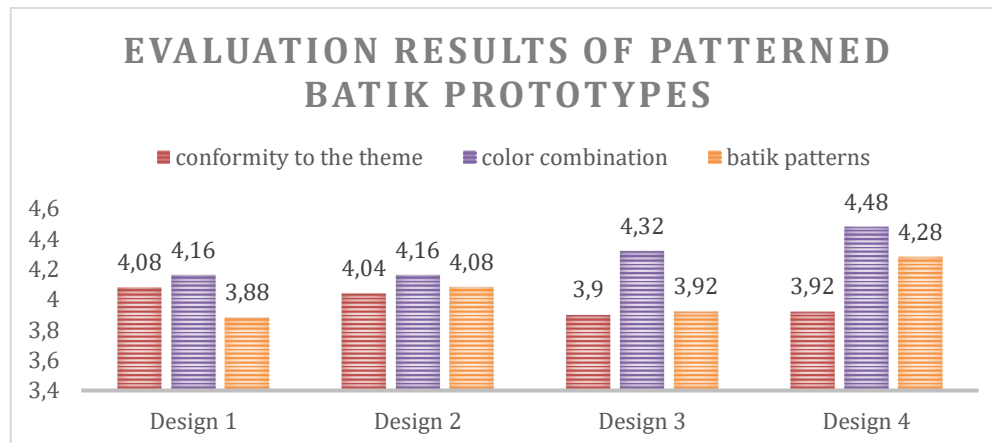


Figure 7. Application of batik on long-sleeved shirts

Long sleeve men's batik shirt with shades of olive green and black, which has a distinctive ethnic and local design (Fig. 7a.). The main motifs of *Sura* and *Baya* appear dominant on the front and back of the shirt, representing the icon of the city of Surabaya. The truntum motif or a kind of geometric dots fill several areas, creating a dynamic visual texture. The other part is filled with wavy line motifs and silhouette-style plant shapes, giving an impression of nature and flexibility. The use of detailed motifs and more focus on the visual impression of large blocks and the play of negative-positive spaces.

Classic collared long-sleeved men's shirt models. The main motifs of *Sura* and *Baya* appear dominant on the front and back of the shirt, representing the icon of the city of Surabaya (Fig. 7b). There are patterns such as pillars, mountains, or ornaments resembling gates and carvings that reinforce the nuances of local culture. There are *isen-isen* (filler) motifs in the form of spirals, tumpals, flowers, and geometric curved lines as fillers of the plane. The design composition is symmetrical, giving a formal and elegant impression. The center of the motif is in the front chest as the focal point. The dominance of the earth brown color with light brown filling, gives a traditional impression but is still masculine and elegant.

Prototype Evaluation



The average score of the finished results of patterned batik designs with the theme of Surabaya can be described as follows:

Design 1 scored quite well in terms of theme suitability (4.08) and color combination (4.16), but batik pattern score (3.88) was the lowest among all designs. This shows that narratively, this design succeeds in telling the story, but it needs to be strengthened in the visual structure and complexity of the batik pattern to make it more attractive overall.

Design 2 shows balanced results in all aspects with a score of 4.04 (theme), 4.16 (color), and 4.08 (pattern). This balance shows that this design has consistency both conceptually and visually, making it a safe and acceptable design for a wide range of users. **Design 3** had the highest score in terms of color combination (4.32), demonstrating visual power in terms of color selection and harmony. However, the theme suitability score (3.90) and batik pattern (3.92) are relatively low, indicating that while visually appealing, these designs have not fully integrated the value of the story and the power of the pattern as cultural representation. **Design 4** was the design with the highest score overall, especially in the aspect of color combination (4.48) and batik pattern (4.28), although the theme suitability score (3.92) was still below Design 1 and 2. The visual advantages of this design make it the most aesthetically pleasing. This achievement demonstrates the success in adapting Surabaya's local values into the form of visually and contextually strong motifs in menswear.

An exploration of Surabaya's batik motif design on men's shirts inspired by the fairy tales of *Sura* and *Baya* offers an innovative approach in developing fashion products that reflect local cultural values while meeting the needs of the modern market. This research shows that the integration of meaningful folklore, such as the stories of *Sura* and *Baya*, has great potential in creating batik designs that not only highlight cultural identity, but are also able to compete in the global fashion industry. Through a design process that involves complementary patterns, shapes, and colors, this batik motif is expected to answer the needs of the market that wants modern, masculine, and still pays attention to cultural diversity (Poon, 2020). In this regard, batik not only serves as a symbol of cultural

identity (Febriani, Knippenberg & Aarts, 2023), but also as an important element in the sustainability of the fashion industry that supports the principles of the creative economy and cultural diversity (Hertz, 2024), in line with the goals contained in the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals), especially in goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and goal 12 (Consumption and Production who is responsible).

The design of this batik motif inspired by *Sura* and *Baya* also reflects the effort to adapt cultural heritage with contemporary technology and trends in the fashion world, creating products that are not only aesthetic, but also have a high selling value in the international market. By combining traditional and modern elements, this batik is expected to become a fashion icon that not only attracts the attention of domestic consumers, but also opens wider export opportunities. Through this approach, batik designers can contribute to creating products that enrich Indonesia's cultural identity, while encouraging the creative industry sector to further develop and compete in the global market. The creative industry, particularly in the fashion and handicraft sectors, is able to utilize the richness of local culture as a source of inspiration, which in turn can produce innovative products that are highly competitive in the global market (Roy & Mohapatra, 2023). This approach supports the SDGs' goal of supporting the creative industry and sustainable cultural preservation, while having a positive impact on the economy and social of the community.

CONCLUSION

This research shows that the legends of *Sura* and *Baya* have great potential to be raised as inspiration in the development of contemporary batik motifs, especially in men's shirt products. Local stories full of meanings such as courage, conflict, and the spirit of struggle, are successfully translated into visual form through a systematic design process using the *Double Diamond Model approach*. The four batik motif designs developed show variations in aesthetic approaches, composition, and narrative strength, taking into account masculine characteristics and local identity of the city of Surabaya. Evaluation of the prototype showed that the aspect of the combination of colors and patterns of batik greatly influenced the visual reception of consumers, while the suitability of the theme remained an important narrative basis in building emotional closeness with the user. Design 4 became the most aesthetically and structurally superior design, although designs 1 and 2 were judged to be more narratively strong. Overall, the design of this batik with *Sura* and *Baya* motifs not only enriches the treasures of modern batik, but also strengthens the role of batik as a cultural visual media that is adaptive to the context of the times and market needs. This research proves that the combination of folklore and design innovation is able to produce functional, aesthetic, and meaningful fashion works, while strengthening local cultural identity in Indonesia's creative industry.

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