

Preserving Majapahit Cultural Heritage through Sustainable Batik Design Innovation: A Visual Analysis of Candi Tikus Motifs at Negi Batik Majapahit

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ABSTRACT

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Batik, as an Indonesian cultural heritage, holds aesthetic, symbolic, and cultural identity values that can support sustainable design innovation in the creative industry. One source of inspiration with strong visual and historical potential is Candi Tikus in the Trowulan area, Mojokerto, which represents the grandeur of Majapahit culture. This study aims to analyze the visual aspects, symbolic meanings, and sustainability-oriented design innovation in the development of the Candi Tikus batik motif produced by Negi Batik Majapahit. This motif is the result of a visual transformation of Candi Tikus architecture through a stylization process into a decorative batik form that preserves local heritage while enabling contemporary product development. This research employs a descriptive qualitative method with a case study approach. Data collection was conducted through observation, interviews, and documentation, and then analyzed using a visual analysis approach based on Edmund Burke Feldman's theory, which includes the stages of description, formal analysis, interpretation, and evaluation. The results show that the Candi Tikus batik motif has a strong visual character through the use of geometric elements, symmetrical composition, and a structured spatial division into three main zones. The transformation process involves simplifying architectural elements without eliminating their distinctive features. In addition, the motif is enriched with supporting elements such as Surya Majapahit, maja fruit, duit kepeng, gateway, water wave, and isen-isen motifs, which strengthen its aesthetic value, cultural identity, and narrative of heritage preservation. Symbolically, this motif embodies meanings of purity, balance, historical memory, and the sustainability of Majapahit cultural values.

INTRODUCTION

Batik is one of Indonesia's cultural heritages that holds strong aesthetic, symbolic, and cultural identity values, and continues to evolve alongside the dynamics of time. In the context of art and design, batik is not only understood as a textile product but also as a visual medium that contains philosophical meanings and representations of local culture. Each batik motif is essentially the result of a visual construction emerging from a creative process that involves idea exploration, form development, and the interpretation of cultural values embedded in its source of inspiration. Research shows that the creation of batik motifs generally goes through stages of idea exploration, motif design, and reflection, emphasizing that batik is the result of a systematic creative process rooted in local culture (Asri Ramadhanti et al., 2025). Furthermore, batik also plays a role in the creative industry as a product with high economic value, making motif development an important strategy to enhance competitiveness and product differentiation in the market (Nurannisaa et al., 2021). Therefore, the study of batik

motifs, particularly from a visual perspective, becomes important to understand how a motif is formed, developed, and interpreted within cultural and industrial contexts. In the development of batik motifs, local cultural objects are often used as primary sources of inspiration due to their rich visual and historical values. The transformation of cultural objects into batik motifs is carried out through processes such as stylization, deformation, and abstraction, resulting in distinctive visual compositions while preserving the original character of the source. Studies on the development of batik motifs based on local culture indicate that visual elements from cultural artifacts, such as reliefs, ornaments, and traditional symbols, can be adapted into batik motifs through creative and structured design processes (Bagus Ramadhan, 2023). In addition, innovation in batik motif design is also driven by technological advancements and market demands, so the design process considers not only aesthetic aspects but also production efficiency and applicability in fashion and craft products (Rini et al., 2025). This shows that batik motifs are the result of a combination of traditional values and contemporary design approaches.

One cultural source of inspiration with strong visual potential is the historical heritage of the Majapahit era, particularly Candi Tikus located in the Trowulan area, Mojokerto. Candi Tikus is known as a bathing site (*petirtaan*) with a tiered pool architectural structure featuring distinctive geometric arrangements, offering strong visual potential for development into batik motifs. Cultural artifacts such as temple structures not only possess visual aesthetic value but also contain symbolic meanings related to spirituality, balance, and the life of past societies. Research on Majapahit-based batik motifs shows that temple architectural elements can be interpreted as symbols of grandeur, cultural identity, and high historical value, making them a frequent source of inspiration in the development of local batik motifs (Mustaqim, 2025). Thus, the transformation of Candi Tikus visual elements into batik motifs not only produces new visual forms but also serves as a medium for preserving cultural values. This is consistent with Andhisti (2022), who shows that Majapahit temple ornaments can be transformed into batik motifs while retaining Mojokerto and Majapahit heritage identity.

In the context of visual analysis, batik motifs can be examined through visual elements such as line, shape, color, and texture, as well as design principles including balance, rhythm, and harmony. Visual analysis is essential to understand how these elements are arranged and processed within a motif to produce a particular visual character. Previous studies indicate that batik motifs function not only as decoration but also as representations of regional cultural identity, reflected through their visual forms and symbolic meanings (Rohisa & Haryana, 2022). Therefore, a visual analysis of batik motifs based on Candi Tikus is relevant to explore how the architectural forms of the

temple are transformed into motif designs, as well as how their symbolic meanings are interpreted within the context of contemporary batik.

Negi Batik Majapahit, as one of the batik SMEs in Mojokerto, plays an important role in developing batik motifs based on Majapahit cultural icons, including Candi Tikus. The development of these motifs is not only oriented toward aesthetics but also toward cultural sustainability, the preservation of local knowledge, and the enhancement of the economic value of batik products. In practice, artisans carry out processes of selection and simplification of visual forms so that the resulting motifs remain visually appealing while also being easy to apply in batik production. However, studies that specifically analyze the visual aspects of batik motifs based on Candi Tikus are still relatively limited, indicating the need for more in-depth research to reveal their visual characteristics, transformation processes, sustainability orientation, and underlying symbolic meanings. In a broader sustainable fashion context, Parung (2024) explains that Indonesian contemporary fashion brands strengthen cultural sustainability by adapting traditional values into contemporary products and brand identity. Likewise, Wahyuningsih et al. (2026) emphasize that batik motif innovation can bridge local cultural preservation with contemporary visual preferences.

This study employs a visual analysis approach in design based on the theory of Edmund Burke Feldman, combined with theories of form transformation (stylization) in visual art and design innovation in the creative industry (Feldman, 1994). Feldman's visual analysis theory is used as the primary framework because it offers systematic stages in interpreting visual works, namely description, formal analysis, interpretation, and evaluation (Alashari et al., 2022). Through these stages, the Candi Tikus batik motif can be examined comprehensively, from its visual elements (line, shape, color, texture) to the symbolic meanings embedded within it. This approach is relevant because batik is not only understood as a craft product but also as a visual work with aesthetic structure and cultural messages. Studies in the field of visual arts show that Feldman's method is effective for analyzing culturally based works, as it connects formal aspects with symbolic meaning.

In addition, this study also applies theories of stylization and form transformation commonly used in craft and batik design studies. These theories explain how real objects in this case, the architecture of Candi Tikus—are transformed into decorative motifs through processes of simplification, stylization, deformation, and pattern repetition. The use of this theory is important because batik motifs are essentially the result of visual adaptation rather than realistic representation. Studies show that the visual transformation of cultural objects into batik motifs is key to creating a distinctive visual identity while maintaining a connection to the original source of inspiration.

Thus, stylization theory is used to explain the creative process carried out by artisans in transforming the form of Candi Tikus into applicable batik motifs.

Based on the above discussion, this study aims to conduct an in-depth analysis of the visual aspects of the Candi Tikus batik motif at Negi Batik Majapahit, including visual elements, design principles, and the process of form transformation from architectural objects into batik motifs. In line with the new focus on sustainable batik design innovation, this research also examines how the motif contributes to preserving Majapahit cultural heritage and strengthening the competitiveness of local creative industries. This research is expected to contribute to the development of batik design studies, particularly in visual analysis based on local culture, and to serve as a reference for artisans and designers in developing innovative, meaningful, sustainable, and competitive batik motifs within the creative industry.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative method with a case study approach, aiming to gain an in-depth understanding of visual phenomena, heritage preservation, and sustainable design innovation in the development of the Candi Tikus batik motif at Negi Batik Majapahit. A qualitative approach is chosen because the research focuses on interpreting meaning, creative processes, visual analysis, and cultural sustainability values that cannot be measured quantitatively, but instead require contextual and in-depth understanding of the research object. The case study approach is used to intensively explore a specific object, namely the batik motif based on Candi Tikus, in order to produce a comprehensive description of its visual characteristics, stylization process, symbolic meanings, and relevance to sustainable cultural-heritage-based design innovation (Rohisa & Haryana, 2022).

Data collection in this study was carried out through three main techniques:

1. **Observation**, conducted by directly examining the produced batik motifs and their design processes to identify visual elements such as line, shape, color, and composition.
2. **Interviews**, conducted with designers or artisans at Negi Batik Majapahit to obtain information regarding the creative process, sources of inspiration, and aesthetic as well as production considerations in motif development.
3. **Documentation**, including photographs of motifs, design sketches, and visual archives used as supporting data to strengthen the analysis.

The collected data were then analyzed using a visual analysis approach by examining visual elements and design principles in the batik motifs, interpreting the symbolic meanings embedded within them, and evaluating their relevance to sustainable heritage preservation and creative industry development (Qomaruddin & Sa'diyah, 2024). This approach is supported by studies stating that visual analysis is

effective for examining artworks and design objects, as it connects formal aspects with broader cultural meanings.

The data used in this study consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data include visual data in the form of documentation of the Candi Tikus motif through images and direct observation of the artifacts used in the motif. Secondary data consist of literature related to visual language theory, design principles, and symbolic analysis (semiotics).

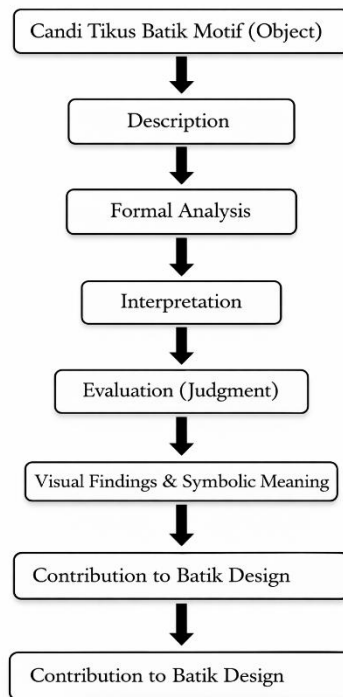


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of Visual Analysis by Edmund Burke Feldman

The conceptual framework in this study refers to the stages of art analysis proposed by Edmund Burke Feldman, which consist of four main stages: description, formal analysis, interpretation, and evaluation (Feldman, 1994). These stages are used to systematically examine the Candi Tikus batik motif as a visual object containing aesthetic and symbolic values.

1. **Description**, which is the process of identifying and objectively describing the visual elements present in the batik motif without making judgments. At this stage, the researcher describes the motif forms, patterns, ornaments, and visual elements such as lines, shapes, and colors found in the Candi Tikus batik motif. This stage is important as an initial foundation for understanding the overall visual structure.
2. **Formal Analysis**, which examines how these visual elements are arranged and organized based on design principles such as balance, rhythm, harmony, proportion, and unity. At this stage, the researcher analyzes the relationships between visual

elements in the batik motif, including how the architectural form of Candi Tikus undergoes stylization and becomes part of the batik composition.

3. **Interpretation**, which is the process of interpreting the meaning contained in the batik motif based on the results of the description and formal analysis. In this study, interpretation is conducted to understand the philosophical and symbolic values of the motif inspired by Candi Tikus, such as meanings of purity, balance, and historical values related to Majapahit culture.

4. **Evaluation (Judgment)**, which is the assessment of the overall visual quality and meaning of the batik motif. This evaluation includes aspects such as aesthetics, design uniqueness, and the relevance of the motif within the context of contemporary batik development and the creative industry. This stage also produces conclusions regarding the contribution of the Candi Tikus batik motif to design innovation based on local wisdom.

Through these four stages, this conceptual framework enables the research not only to visually describe the motif but also to understand its formation process and the meanings embedded within it in a comprehensive and structured manner. Thus, this research method is expected to provide a comprehensive understanding of the visual characteristics of the Candi Tikus batik motif and its relevance in the development of sustainable batik design based on local wisdom and Majapahit cultural heritage.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Result Structural Characteristics of the Candi Tikus Motif

Based on observations, interviews, and documentation conducted at Negi Batik Majapahit, it was found that the Candi Tikus batik motif is a result of visual development derived from the architectural form of the Candi Tikus site, which is then processed through a stylization process into a decorative motif and a heritage-based sustainable design innovation. This motif is characterized by the use of geometric elements inspired by the tiered pool structure, symmetrical building arrangements, and simplified architectural ornaments. The motif creation process involves stages of visual exploration, design sketching, form simplification, and pattern repetition adapted to both hand-drawn and stamped batik techniques.

3.1.1 Visual Exploration

Visual exploration is a creative process in art and design aimed at discovering and developing various possibilities of form, color, composition, and other visual elements before producing a final work. This process involves experimenting with ideas, gathering references, and processing visual elements to create innovative and communicative design solutions (Homan, 2024). This study is based on the utilization of Candi Tikus in Trowulan, Mojokerto, as a source of visual inspiration in the development of batik motifs rooted in Majapahit local wisdom. The architectural form of Candi Tikus has unique characteristics that distinguish it from typical temples, as it is not a vertically towering

structure but rather a bathing pool structure located below ground level. Overall, its form resembles a rectangular pool surrounded by red brick walls with a symmetrical and orderly composition (Iqbal Rifqy et al., 2025).

The architectural form of Candi Tikus is dominated by simple geometric elements such as squares, rectangles, and tiered shapes. This can be seen in the arrangement of the pool walls, terraces, and the main structure, which create a symmetrical and centralized composition. Surrounding the main structure are neatly arranged water spouts, adding visual rhythm while reinforcing the temple's function as a ritual bathing site. Overall, the form of Candi Tikus can be described as a combination of a horizontal pool structure and a vertically tiered structure at the center, with a symmetrical composition and a dominance of geometric forms. These characteristics give Candi Tikus strong visual potential to be developed into batik motifs, particularly through elements such as repetitive patterns, tiered forms, and distinctive symmetrical compositions (Sugandi et al., 2025).



Figure 2. Architectural Structure of Candi Tikus

3.1.2 Transformation of Candi Tikus

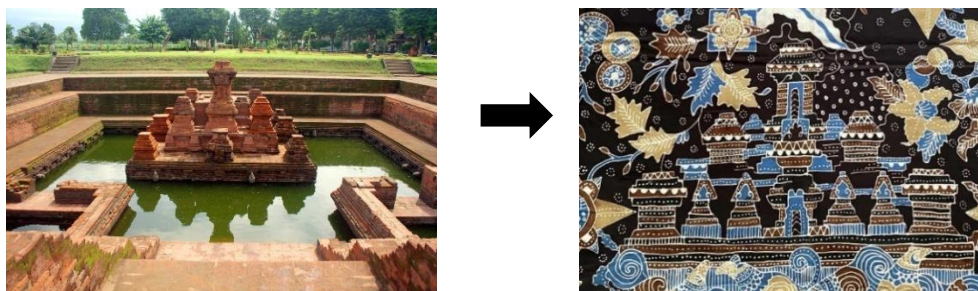


Figure 3. Transformation of the Candi Tikus Batik Motif

The transformation of Candi Tikus forms into batik motifs is carried out through a stylization process, which involves simplifying and enriching architectural forms into decorative elements. The original forms of the temple, such as tiered structures, rectangular pools, and small towers, are not represented realistically but are transformed into geometric patterns, lines, and repetitive ornaments that are simpler and more flexible. In this process, complex details are reduced, while the main characteristics such as symmetry, tiered forms, and centralized composition are preserved. This

transformation becomes a sustainable design strategy because it keeps Majapahit heritage recognizable while adapting the visual form for contemporary batik products.

3.2 Formal Analysis (Visual Characteristics of Candi Tikus Batik)

3.2.1 Main Motif Structure

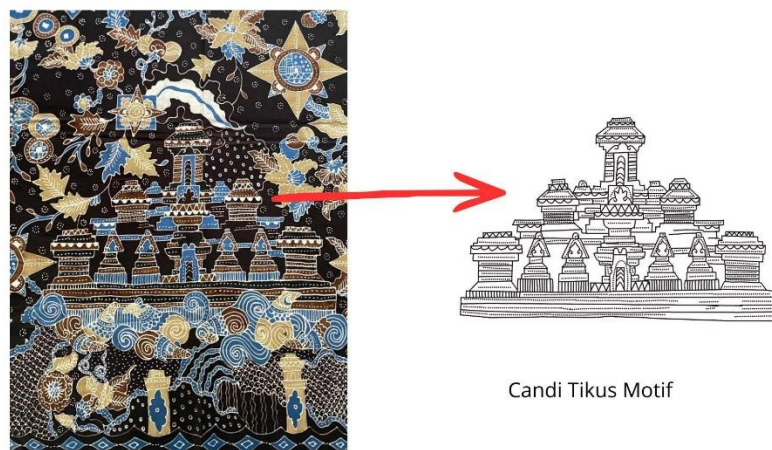


Figure 4. Main Motif

The main motif shown in the image represents a visual interpretation of Candi Tikus that has undergone a stylization process into a decorative batik form. The tiered and symmetrical architectural structure of the temple is presented as the central composition, emphasizing the main building structure in the middle, which appears taller than the surrounding elements. Distinctive features such as tiered towers, geometric arrangements, and architectural ornaments are retained, but have been simplified into more decorative patterns of lines and shapes.

3.2.2 Supporting Motifs

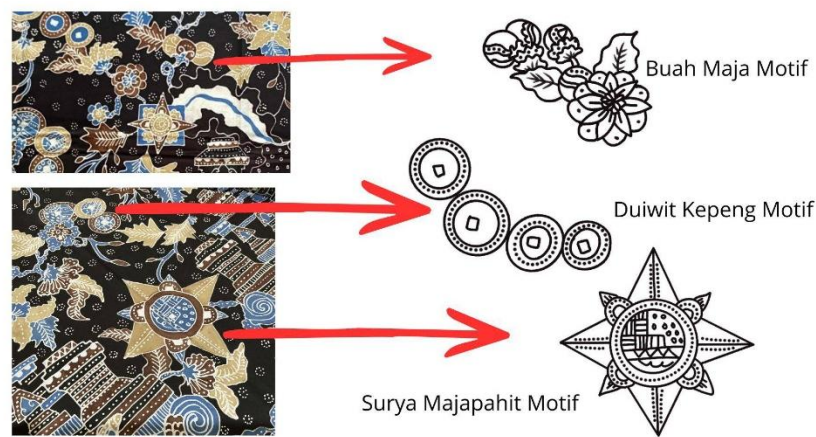


Figure 5. Supporting Motif

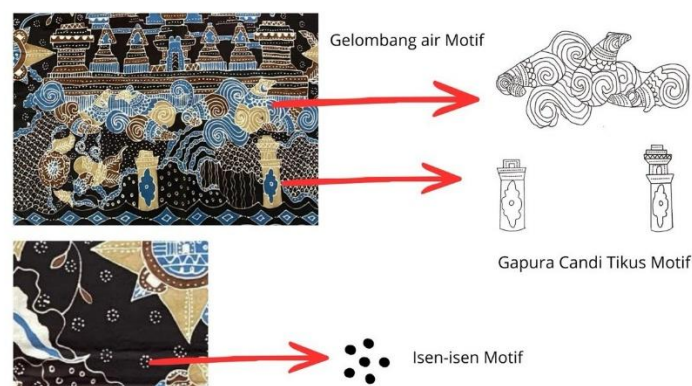


Figure 6. Supporting Motif

The supporting motifs in the batik design consist of several elements that enrich the visual composition while reinforcing the cultural meaning of Majapahit.

- First, the *maja fruit* motif is presented in a stylized floral form with curved lines and decorative details. The maja fruit holds historical significance as the origin of the name “Majapahit,” thus symbolizing identity, origin, and the kingdom’s glory. In batik, its form is simplified into an ornament that harmonizes with other elements.
- Second, the *duit kepeng* motif is visualized as repeating circular shapes with a hole in the center, resembling traditional coins. This motif symbolizes prosperity, welfare, and economic activity. The repetition of circular forms also creates a dynamic visual rhythm in the composition.
- Third, the *Surya Majapahit* motif is a sun-shaped symbol with eight directions, representing power, protection, and cosmology in Majapahit culture. In batik, this motif is stylized into a decorative geometric form that serves as a strong visual accent and focal point in certain areas.
- Fourth, the *water wave* motif is depicted through repetitive curved lines, spirals, and rhythmic patterns that create a dynamic and flowing impression. Symbolically, this motif represents the element of water, which is directly related to the function of Candi Tikus as a sacred bathing site (*petirtaan*).
- Fifth, the *Candi Tikus gateway* motif is represented through tiered and symmetrical geometric forms resembling the temple entrance. The original elements are simplified

into bold lines, square or trapezoidal shapes, and repetitive patterns, making them decorative while retaining their architectural identity.

- Sixth, *isen-isen* (filler patterns), in the form of circular dots, are used to fill empty spaces in the batik motif and enhance its aesthetic quality.

Overall, these supporting motifs function not only as complementary elements but also as enhancers of the visual narrative and symbolic meaning related to Majapahit cultural identity.

3.2.3 Composition and Spatial Division



Figure 7. Composition and Spatial Division

The spatial division of the batik motif is structured into three main zones:

- **Upper zone**, the top section is filled with decorative elements such as floral motifs, Surya Majapahit, small ornaments, and *isen-isen* in the form of five-dot patterns. This zone creates a dynamic and light impression and is often interpreted as representing the upper world or spiritual realm.
- **Central zone**, the middle section serves as the main focus of the composition by featuring the Candi Tikus motif as the dominant element. This zone functions as the point of interest and represents the human world or real life, where cultural and historical values are visually expressed.
- **Lower zone**, the bottom section is filled with water wave motifs and geometric patterns. This zone provides a sense of visual foundation and symbolizes the lower world or natural elements, particularly water, which relates to the function of Candi Tikus as a *petirtaan* (ritual bathing site).



Figure 8. Pattern Repetition

The Candi Tikus batik motif is repeated four times across the length of the fabric.

3.2.4 Color Composition



Figure 9. Color Composition

The color composition of the batik motif is dominated by a combination of dark tones as the background (black) with brighter colors such as *sogan* brown, cream, and blue as the main motif elements. The black background provides strong contrast, making the motif more prominent and enhancing the visibility of ornamental details.

The brown and cream colors reflect the traditional character of classical batik, creating a warm and elegant impression associated with Majapahit cultural values. Meanwhile, the use of blue adds a fresh and dynamic accent, representing the element of water related to the function of Candi Tikus as a *petirtaan*.

Additionally, white or light-colored dots are used as *isen-isen*, functioning as visual separators and balancing elements within the composition. Overall, this color composition creates a harmony between traditional and contemporary impressions, with strong yet balanced visual contrast.

3.2.5 Interpretation



Figure 10. Elements of the Candi Tikus Batik Motif

The main motif, which is a stylized form of Candi Tikus, can be interpreted as a symbol of purity and self-purification, reflecting its original function as a *petirtaan* or ritual bathing site. The water element, visualized through wave motifs at the bottom, further reinforces this meaning as a medium for both physical and spiritual cleansing. Moreover, the tiered and symmetrical structure represents the concept of balance and order, both in the relationship between humans and nature and in the spiritual dimension. Supporting elements such as Surya Majapahit, maja fruit, and *duit kepeng* further enrich the symbolic meaning. Surya Majapahit symbolizes power, protection, and cosmology; the maja fruit represents identity and the origin of the Majapahit kingdom; while the *duit kepeng* motif reflects prosperity and economic well-being.

Overall, these elements demonstrate that batik motifs function not only as decoration but also as a medium for conveying cultural and historical values. Thus, through the interpretation stage, it can be understood that the Candi Tikus batik motif embodies complex meanings, combining values of purity, balance, and Majapahit historical identity. This interpretation reinforces that the development of batik motifs based on cultural artifacts produces not only aesthetically valuable works but also those with deep cultural significance that contribute to the preservation of local heritage.

3.2.6 Evaluation

From an aesthetic perspective, the Candi Tikus batik motif demonstrates strong visual quality through balanced composition, harmonious color usage, and rich ornamental detailing. The combination of a dark background with *sogan*, cream, and blue creates a strong yet cohesive contrast, resulting in an appealing and distinctive visual character. In terms of design uniqueness, this motif has a high level of differentiation as it adopts the architectural form of Candi Tikus as its primary source of inspiration. The stylization process successfully simplifies complex forms into decorative motifs without losing their original visual identity, reflecting creativity in transforming local cultural elements into innovative and non-monotonous batik designs.

In the context of relevance to contemporary batik and the creative industry, the Candi Tikus motif has strong potential to be developed as a leading product based on local wisdom and a model of sustainable batik design innovation. The incorporation of Majapahit cultural elements provides strong historical value and identity, enhancing the competitiveness of batik products in the market. Furthermore, the simplified design makes it more flexible for application across various products, including fashion and crafts, while supporting the continuity of local cultural narratives.

3.3 Discussion

The results of this study indicate that the Candi Tikus batik motif developed by Negi Batik Majapahit is a form of visual transformation of temple architecture into a decorative motif through a stylization process that retains key characteristics such as tiered forms, symmetry, and centralized composition.



Figure 11. Majapahit Batik with Candi Tikus Motif by Negi Batik Majapahit



Figure 12. Majapahit Batik with Candi Tikus Motif by Negi Batik Majapahit

Based on visual analysis, this motif has a compositional structure divided into three zones (upper, middle, and lower), representing a cosmological concept, with Candi Tikus as the focal point in the central zone. Visual elements such as lines, geometric forms, *sogan* brown, cream, and blue colors, as well as the use of *isen-isen*, demonstrate a

well-developed and integrated aesthetic treatment. Furthermore, the interpretation reveals that this motif carries strong symbolic meanings, such as purity (through the water element as a *petirtaan*), balance (through symmetrical structure), and historical values related to Majapahit cultural identity. These findings confirm that batik motifs function not only as visual elements but also as media for representing cultural values.

Compared to previous studies, most research on batik motif development based on local culture tends to focus on form exploration or design innovation without deeply analyzing visual aspects and symbolic meanings. Other studies generally emphasize the creation process or final product, whereas this research applies a systematic visual analysis approach based on Edmund Burke Feldman's theory, including description, formal analysis, interpretation, and evaluation. Therefore, the main distinction of this study lies in its more comprehensive analytical approach in examining the relationship between visual form, meaning, and cultural context. In addition, the object of study the Candi Tikus batik motif remains relatively under-researched, thus providing a new perspective in the study of Majapahit-based batik. The discussion is also strengthened by Andhisti (2022), whose study on Majapahit temple ornaments demonstrates that heritage-based motif transformation can preserve cultural identity while creating new decorative forms.

The contribution of this research lies in strengthening the study of sustainable batik design based on local wisdom through a structured visual analysis approach. This study highlights that the development of batik motifs should not be limited to aesthetic aspects but must also consider the philosophical, symbolic, and heritage-preservation values embedded in their sources of inspiration. Practically, this research can serve as a reference for batik designers in developing motifs based on cultural artifacts in a more contextual, meaningful, and sustainable way. Academically, it enriches the literature on visual analysis in the fields of craft and design, particularly within the context of contemporary batik and cultural heritage preservation. This position is in line with Parung (2024) and Wahyuningsih et al. (2026), who highlight that cultural sustainability and design innovation are important strategies for making traditional visual heritage more adaptive, relevant, and sustainable in the creative industry.

Overall, the findings of this study demonstrate that the Candi Tikus batik motif has significant potential as a sustainable design innovation that integrates aesthetic, cultural, and economic values. This motif not only represents the local identity of Majapahit but is also relevant for development within the modern creative industry. Thus, this study confirms that the transformation of cultural artifacts through appropriate design approaches can produce works that are visually appealing, rich in meaning, culturally sustainable, and highly competitive.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the Candi Tikus batik motif developed by Negi Batik Majapahit is the result of a visual transformation of temple architecture into an aesthetic, meaningful, and sustainable batik design innovation through a stylization process. Based on visual analysis using Edmund Burke Feldman's theoretical approach, the motif

demonstrates an integration of design elements and principles, balanced composition, and harmonious color treatment. In addition, the motif contains strong symbolic values, such as purity represented through the water element, balance reflected in its symmetrical structure, and historical values associated with Majapahit culture. These findings confirm that batik motifs function not only as decorative elements but also as a medium for preserving and conveying cultural values. Therefore, the development of batik motifs based on local wisdom, such as Candi Tikus, plays an important role in preserving Majapahit cultural heritage, supporting sustainable design innovation, and enhancing the competitiveness of the batik industry within the context of the creative economy.

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