

## Hare as a Motif of Batik in Mojokerto

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### Abstract

The paper focus on *Hare* motif as one of the motif which shows an identity and characteristic of batik in Mojokerto. This study used the action research approach. Visual data of *Hare* figures found by observation on some reliefs in East Java included Kesiman Tengah temple, Minakjinggo temple, and Bajangratu temple in Mojokerto. Visual data were analyzed and interpreted, and then used it for the base in concept and designing of *Hare* motif of Mojokerto batik. The result of the research is some of motifs such as *Hare Tarung* motif, *Hare Awang* motif, *Hare Megan* motif, dan *Hare Muluk* motif. Finally, the motifs can empower the identity and the characteristic of batik in Mojokerto

**Keywords:** motif, *Hare*, relief, batik, and Mojokerto.

### 1. Introduction

Mojokerto batik is a batik which growing and develops in Mojokerto, East Java. Mojokerto is area which the Majapahit kingdom located built in the past. In Mojokerto, batik dispersed in several village, growth as home industries. Almost all home industry of batik in Mojokerto have the same problem, that is financial problem which is very important for their sustainable. However, there is another chance for solving their problem, that is developing batik by the approach of designing in batik motif.

Each of the home industry of batik in Mojokerto try to develop their batik quality and characteristic. In the field of batik, quality and characteristic of batik can be seen through its form especially the motif, the color, and the material of batik. For example, the motif of batik in hinterland area tends to abstract-decorative, it is so contrast with the motif of batik in coastal area which tends to natural-narrative. In the color, batik in hinterland area is dominated by dark color (*soga*, Java), while batik in coastal area is dominated by bright colors. The material of batik can use *kain mori* (calico) or *kain tenun* (woven cloth). And, in fact the style of Mojokerto batik is coastal batik.

Even though the Mojokerto batik is new coming generation than others, it shows the good development significantly. We can see how the craftsmanship of batik try to find the batik identity and its characteristic. One of the identity which is dominant in Mojokerto batik is the motif of Surya Majapahit. It is claimed by Mojokerto society that it is the representation of the characteristic of Mojokerto batik.

Until now, craftsmanship of batik in Mojokerto still try to develop that motif and the color as the distinguishment from another batik. According to Mojokerto's societies perspective, motif of *Surya Majapahit* or motif of *Mojo* assumed as representing characteristic of Mojokerto batik. The motif of *Surya Majapahit* refer to the relief of the temple, while motif of *Mojo* relate to *Mojo* tree. The last motif is an abstraction from natural phenomena (*Mojo* tree) and the name of city (Mojokerto). Beside that, the color of batik tend to red like the color of the bricks. The color refers to some temples in Mojokerto, omission of Majapahit kingdom, which the temple building used brick, such as Bajangratu temple, Wringin Lawang temple, Brahu temple, and Tikus temple.

However, there are opportunities to develop motifs of Mojokerto batik. On the relief of temples in Mojokerto there are a lot of ornaments and figures which can be used as the reference for batik motif. That unique figure is *Hare*. It is rodent animal which is bigger than rabbit. The figure visualized like deer but its long auricle ear like rabbit. The figures can be seen on the relief of Minakjinggo temple, Bajangratu temple, and Kesiman Tengah temple in Mojokerto, East Java.

In Jombang, a city near of Mojokerto, also knew *Hare* ornament. In other cities, the figure of hare also found on the relief of Penataran temple in Blitar, Jago temple in Malang, Surawana temple in Kediri, and Sanggrahan temple in Tulungagung. It's seem that terminology for *Hare* figure is not found in the ancient manuscripts. It's just that this figure has also been found in previous eras enshrinement in Central Java, namely at Borobudur temple and Prambanan temple. So it is possible that *Hare* figure has an important meaning in the past.

Based on these ideas, that *Hare* figure are often found at temples in Mojokerto, and it can be developed

into a very typical motif for Mojokerto batik characteristic.

## 2. Literature Review

"Hare" as the term for rabbit figure is known in various cultures around the world, such as Greece, Germany, Egypt, India, Japan, and Indonesia. According to Mikiyung Bak, in the Japan folklore, "Hare" is known in the Shinto (Shinto belief), as non-daily life (Cosmos), along with the "Ke" (Nomos) and "Kegare" (Chaos), which is described in a triangular pattern.

J.E. Cirlot in his book, *A Dictionary of Symbols* (2001), stated that the *Hare* figures is a product of physical culture in the form of ornaments which is very old. *Hare* in Egyptian hieroglyphs are determinative signs and symbols define the concept of making causal existence. In the Indian tradition, the Great Hare is the creator of the animal world. *Hare* in Greece is the goddess of the moon associated with rabbits. Hecate in Germany, goddess Harek, was accompanied by a rabbit. *Hare* in China is an animal that has the ability in astrology and lives on the moon. In general, the rabbit is a symbol of procreation, lust, fecundity (reproductive). Rabbits also have a feminine character. According to Cirlot (2001:104) *Hare* figure visually resembles a rabbit, which is a metaphor that symbolizes the reproductive capacity (fecundity), or in other words, fertility and lust (lasciviousness). A.T Mercatante and J.R. Dow in *The Facts on File Encyclopedia of World Mythology and Legend* (2009) stated that the rabbit is one of the sacred animals and is believed to be the god of love, while in the plant world are represented in the form of roses or apples.

*Hare* found in Hare Krishna is a title. In Hinduism, the concept of Krishna as the supreme god (Mercatante and Dow, 2009:577). Hare Krishna followers and monks wear yellow robes sacred. In America, the Hare Krishna is a movement, formally known as the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, is a religious group founded in New York (Rochford Jr.:2).

Symbol of *Hare* figure as a representation of the month, also found in Paderborn Cathedral and Germany, namely Three-Hares-Window (Paderborn) and Three-Hares-Motif (Germany). *Hare* is a symbol for the Trinity of God. The motif can be understood as a symbol of light, with the circle, due to the animals' nocturnality, representing the moon.

While in Indonesia, *Hare* found in relief enshrinement since in the beginning of the Hindu culture era in Central Java to the heyday of Majapahit in East Java. According to Van Stein Callenfels (in Annisa, 2008:105) *Hare* animals associated with Indra, king of the gods, as depicted in the reliefs of *Arjunawiwaha* story on the Surawana temple. Similarly with the opinion from Klokke Marijke, *Hare* depiction in relief of the story *Sri Tanjung* on the Penataran temple, estimated as a symbol of royal Indra.

According to N.R. Purnomo in a study entitled "*Candi Bangkal: Konstruksi, Latar Belakang Keagamaan dan Tinjauan Kronologi*" (2009) stated that the *Hare* is a mythical animal which is depicted resemble deer leafy long ears like a rabbit. At the Bangkal temple in Mojokerto, this figure is framed by a motif *Surya Majapahit*. *Hare* figures can be found as an ornament on the art building of East Java style in XI-XV centuries. This figure depicted on a medallion-shaped artefact (NR Purnomo, 2009:60). However, unlike the Kesiman Tengah temple and Minakjinggo temple, *Hare* figures depicted on the panels of the temple.

According to Hariasni Santiko (in Annisa, 2008:75) *Hare* term used to refer to 'animal moon' that has the shape resembles a large rabbit ears, and a long tail. Besides, *Hare* figure also horned, four-legged, and around decorated with ornaments tendrils. *Hare* figures are often portrayed in a position facing each other as they are found at the Minakjinggo temple, or even two heads of *Hare* forming *Kala Makara* figure such as found in the Temple of Bajangratu.

According to Annisa (2008:76), *Hare* is a beast month, attributes of the moon god, is associated with the moon as a representation of rebirth, novelty, revival, and intuition. Meanwhile, according to Choper (in Annisa, 2008:76), *Hare* is associated with the fire of purification and life after death. As the moon, which appears in the sky and then disappear, and will appear again at a later date. So it is like that way, humans also will die and then live again.

## 3. Methodology

This study is an action research. The research is oriented to solve problems practically and in a solutif way. Problems faced by batik craftsmen in Mojokerto were related with the survival and development of batik in this case is the aspect of design. Especially batik design that can be used as a distinctive identity for Mojokerto batik. Stages of research pursued by collecting visual data of *Hare* figures, analyze visual, interpretation, reinterpretation, and transforming into the design of *Hare* motif. Data collected through observation and documentation of the reliefs. Observation was done directly by visiting the temples in Mojokerto. Documentation is done by recording in the form of photographs.

The data consists of *Hare* figures further classified and analyzed visually in particular shape, character, and properties or attributes. At a later stage, we do the interpretation and reinterpretation of the *Hare* figure. Interpretation is done to find the meaning of *Hare* figure. Then the result of interpretation proceeds to

reinterpretation. Reinterpretation made to find new meaning of *Hare* figure. Reinterpretation is done by transforming *Hare* figure in the Mojokerto batik motif. The results of transformation embodied in the form of an alternative design of *Hare* motif. Then, that design alternatives are evaluated and revised to obtain a final design in the form of two-dimensional. The final design became the base for formulating a Mojokerto batik master-mall or patterns. Pattern processed into Mojokerto batik model. The pattern is a reference in batik making.

#### 4. Result

##### 4.1 *Figure of Hare in the Relief of Temples in Mojokerto*

Kesiman Tengah temple is located in the village Kesiman Tengah, district Pacet, Mojokerto. The temple is built of andesite stone and is estimated as a Hindu worship in the past. The result of identification of visual elements in temple reliefs in Mojokerto shows some depictions of *Hare* figures. These figures can be found on the Kesiman Tengah temple reliefs. In contrast to other temples in Mojokerto, *Hare* figure depicted with carving which is shallow because the temple was built with andesite, while other temples made of red bricks.

At the reliefs of Kesiman Tengah temple, *Hare* figure depicted as a rabbit-like animals are in a circle (medallion). Visualization with shallow chisel technique is to form the volume. In this figure pictures walking overlooked the front leg to the left with the right side in front. Head looking towards, large ears, tail hung up and shaped leaves. In the background looks trees and carved. On the outside there is a circular shape that make up the medallion. The circle consists of outside and inside lines. And in the middle there are ornaments sculptured lined up to follow the circle line.



Figure 1. *Hare* in the relief of Kesiman Tengah temple  
(Photo by Ranang AS, 2013)

*Hare* figures also can be found on reliefs at the Minakjinggo temple. *Hare* figures depicted resembles the shape of a lion with a good running position facing to the left or to the right. Head facing forward, wearing a crown, grinning mouth, ears sculptured by stylistic. Front legs raised position and sculptured by stylistic, and the legs look stylized. The body depicted with looks from the side. Stylized tail carved leaf shape elongated and arched back. Figure depicted with the male sex. In the background there are carved motifs *sulur-suluran* (tendrils). The ornaments looked decorative style of the Majapahit era.



Figure 2. *Hare* in the relief of Minakjinggo temple  
(Photo by Ranang, 2013)

*Hare* figures can also be found on reliefs of Bajangratu temple. Existence of *Hare* figure is a dominant in the temple reliefs, especially in the roof of the temple, while in the body of the temple there is no *Hare* figure. Figure depicted resembles the shape of a lion face each other in a crouching position. There are feathers on its neck, and tail upwards. A blend of the two heads of *Hare* figures looks forming *Kala Makara* completed with antlers, canine teeth, and tongue protruding. The relief seems very attractive because the temple is made of red bricks, so it impressed lit in the middle of the park that looks green.



Figure 3. *Hare* in the relief of Bajangratu temple  
(Photo by Ranang, 2013)

#### 4.2 Designing Motifs of *Hare* for Mojokerto Batik

Based on those visual datas of *Hare* figures from reliefs of Kesiman Tengah temple, Minakjinggo temple, and Bajangratu temple, researchers conducted the interpretation and reinterpretation of the figure *Hare*. Through the visual data, researchers conducted a reinterpretation and transforming into predesign and final design. Results of the process can be generated into form several design motifs, those are *Hare Tarung* motif, *Hare Awang* motif, *Hare Megan* motif, and *Hare Muluk* motif.

From the Bajangratu temple, *Hare* figure can be designed in motif *Hare Tarung*, as the depiction *Hare* in the temple facing each other. Motifs of *Hare Tarung* designed with reference to the *Hare* figure in the Bajangratu temple. *Sulur-suluran* (tendrils) on the tail *Hare* simplified, and shape of the *Kala Makara* form does not appeared on the motif batik, in contrast with the ornaments on the temple reliefs. *Hare* head position facing each other with open mouths. From the *Hare* figure on the relief to *Hare* figure in the batik motifs have been carried reduction of some of the elements that *Hare* character is more prominent. From the batik motif, it can be created in three variants background of *Hare Tarung* as needed. The use of yellow on the *Hare Tarung* motif refers to the color of the robes of monks generally use yellow symbol of purity. So, this motif is meant to symbolize the sanctity of the enlightening in the middle of sadness and darkness.



Figure 4. Motif of *Hare Tarung*, Mojokerto batik

From the figure at Minakjinggotemple, *Hare* can be done reinterpretation and transforming into *Hare Awang* motif. Motif depicted with his head looking back. Tail visualized decorative arched back as ornaments Majapahit style in general. Majapahit ornaments character retained in the particular pattern is intended to reinforce the distinctiveness motif of batik Mojokerto. The color in motif using red bricks color, like the color of the temple of Majapahit era in Mojokerto which use materials of bricks. Besides of *Hare Awang*, motif also can be modified into *Hare Megan* motif, with slight differences in the background. In the background of *Hare Awang* motif is dominated by the repetition of *Hare Awang* motif with a smaller size, while *Hare Megan* motif, background looks ornament leaf tendrils. Both motifs are a symbol of the rebirth of the human soul.

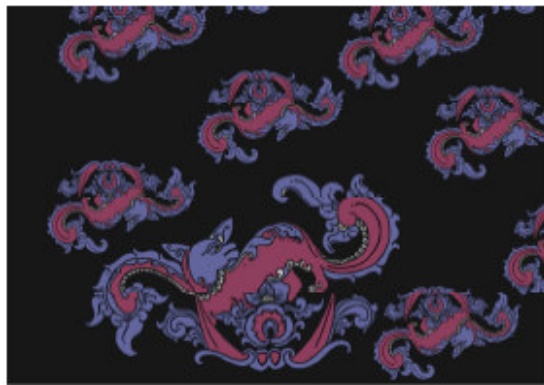


Figure 5. Motif of *Hare Awang*, Mojokerto batik

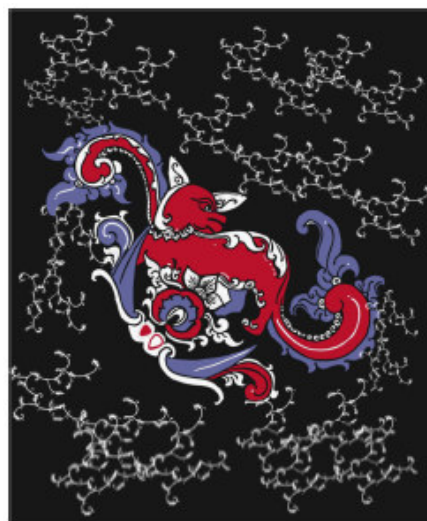


Figure 6. Motif of *Hare Megan*, Mojokerto batik

In addition, from the designing of batik motif based on the reliefs of temples in Mojokerto is also designed *Hare Muluk* motif with red bricks and yellow background. This motif is more stylistic than the previous motif. The shape of *Hare* looks more ornamental so the original shape almost lost. Likewise, the shape of its tail made very decorative. This motif is described as a symbol of sanctity and purity of heart when people come to the self-liberation of lust.

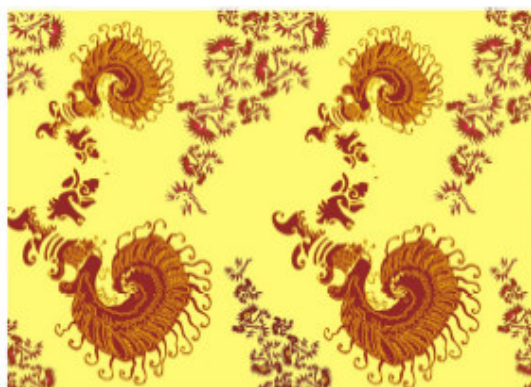


Figure 7. Motif of *Hare Muluk*, Mojokerto batik

## 5. Conclusion

*Hare* figure is a visual element to the reliefs of Kesiman Tengah temple, Minakjinggo temple, and Bajangratu temple in Mojokerto, East Java. This figure is realized through a flat chisel technique. *Hare* is a symbol of reproduction or rebirth, purity, and lust. Excavation on the local potential richness expected to strengthen local identity. In line with that, interpretation, reinterpretation, and transformation of *Hare* figure to batik design is expected to be the identity and character strengthens Mojokerto batik. From designing batik motif gained *Hare*

*Tarung* motif, *Hare Awang* motif, *Hare Megan* motif and *Hare Muluk* motif expected those motif strengthen the identity and distinctiveness of Mojokerto batik.

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