

TROSO FABRIC MOTIFS OF TARO LEAVES AND PEACOCKS AS OBJECTS OF BATIK WORK

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Abstract. This research focuses on the decline of hand-written batik practices in Troso Village, Jepara, which is better known as the center of ikat weaving. The lack of successors of batik artisans and mastery of weaving has made local handmade batik almost disappear. Troso Village actually has tremendous potential in traditional motifs such as the taro leaf (lompong) and the meaningful image of the peacock. This study aims to explore the visual and philosophical strengths of Troso's weaving patterns and peacocks, and to produce mixed-media batik works based on local motifs as a cultural revitalization effort. The approach applied is descriptive qualitative, with data collection techniques through field observation, interviews, and document analysis. The motifs of taro leaves and peacocks were chosen because they have strong visual appeal and symbolic values that symbolize survival and cultural beauty. Both are combined in batik tulis with a visual arrangement that emphasizes the balance between geometric and figurative patterns. The research findings indicate that the use of local motifs combined with attractive media in written batik can revive people's interest in batik art and strengthen the visual identity of the village. This work plays a role not only in cultural preservation, but also creates opportunities for local creative economic development through batik products that have aesthetic and contextual value.

Keywords: Batik tulis, Tenun Troso, Taro Leaf, Peacock, Local Motif, Cultural Revitalization, Motif Design.

1. Introduction

More than just a patterned cloth, batik holds meanings, cultural stories, and philosophies of local people's lives that are passed down from generation to generation (Senoprabowo et al., 2023). Batik was recognized by UNESCO as an Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2009, showing how important batik is as an element of Indonesia's cultural identity (Evita et al., 2022). Unfortunately, the progress of hand-written batik in a number of regions is diminishing, including in Troso Village, an area more famous for its ikat weaving than its batik. The lack of batik enthusiasts and the influx of textile goods from factories have contributed to the rapid disappearance of the value of local batik (Ibarda et al., 2025).

Under these conditions, the production of batik works becomes an important step to address the issue of preserving local visual culture, and also as a new representation of the beauty of batik in Troso village.

The main reason for choosing the medium of batik in this research is its uniqueness that allows the exploration of symbolic values in a more expressive manner through the stylization of motifs. Written batik, compared to other textile media, offers more space to explore figurative elements and visual narratives, making it a perfect medium to display local motifs in a communicative and meaningful way (Aprilia, 2018; Pratiwinindya, 2019). Written batik is considered more personal as each canting stroke reflects the unique thoughts and imagination of the artisan (Fauzi & Maarif, 2024). Thus, choosing written batik is not only a matter of urgency but also a strategic step to revive the potential of Troso cultural batik which is almost extinct due to the lack of batik regeneration. The use of local motifs combined with creative media can be a

form of resistance to the modernization process of batik (Blasius et al., 2023).

On the contrary, Tenun Troso as a superior local product holds extraordinary visual richness. One of the most famous motifs in this weaving is the taro leaf motif (lompong) in the form of geometric motifs that not only have aesthetic value but also philosophical value, reflecting survival and balance with nature (Maulidiyah & Syafii, 2023). The selection of the taro leaf motif not only follows local aesthetic trends, but also as a form of respect for the textile cultural heritage of Troso Village, which has been passed down since the era of Kyai and Nyai Senu in the 1940s (Ulil Albab, 2019). Thus, elevating the Troso weaving motif into batik is an attempt to unite two cultures that have been running side by side but are rarely realized in one work. Previous studies also indicate that the incorporation of culture in textile art can strengthen the visual appeal and increase the value of the object (Saragi, 2018).

More deeply, the peacock motif was chosen to represent a broader visual and symbolic exploration. Peacocks have long been associated with beauty, elegance, and pride as well as values that are actually in line with the character of written batik as a noble cultural heritage (Suherini et al., 2021; Surya & Malang, 2024). Several studies show that the peacock is used as a central motif in narrative batik that illustrates conservation values and exotic beauty (Wardoyo et al., 2019). Peacocks that symbolize elegance also exist in Balinese and Madurese batik, reflecting the value of visual skills in animal motifs (Ningsih & Misgiya, 2025). The combination of the figurative peacock form and the geometric design of taro leaves provides an opportunity to create works that not only have strong visual appeal, but also have rich symbolic meanings that are appropriate to the local cultural context.

The problem that became a big wall was how to incorporate Troso's unique motif heritage such as taro leaves into written batik, while incorporating external visual elements such as peacocks without changing the essence of the taro leaf weaving motif? This issue is crucial because without a suitable design method, the integration of the two elements may result in the impression of being merely an addition or even separate from the batik-more specifically, losing the original visual identity, especially if the elements taken from the tenun are to be transformed into batik. Therefore, a visual approach that emphasizes aesthetic principles such as balance, harmony, and motif style is necessary to produce batik works that are both contextual and communicative (Fitriani, 2022; Ramadhani, 2015).

Therefore, this research not only seeks to create a written batik work, but also provides a visual and cultural strategy to revive the batik culture in Troso through an approach that incorporates woven works into batik in a mixed media manner. This work is a representation of the relationship between tradition and innovation, between local textiles and global stories, and between old identities and new expressions. It is hoped that by producing batik with the themes of taro leaves and peacocks based on the visual structure of Troso weaving, the community's creative spirit can be revived, especially in the midst of the popularity of modern textiles and the lack of interest of the younger generation in their own cultural heritage.

2. Results and Discussion

2.1 Description of Troso Woven Fabric

Troso woven fabric originates from Troso Village, Jepara, which has preserved the weaving tradition since the Dutch colonial era. Weaving skills were initially carried out with Gedog looms, then switched to Pancal looms in the early 1940s, and since 1946 using ATBM (Non-Machine Loom) until now. Local legend tells that this fabric was first made when Mbah Senu and Nyi Senu wore it to meet with famous scholars in Troso, which led to its motifs and techniques being passed down from generation to generation. Administratively, Tenun Troso has been registered as an Intangible Cultural Heritage by Kemdikbud since 2010, which recognizes local techniques, skills and patterns as part of Jepara's cultural identity. Troso weaving originally had two main distinctive motifs: the cypress motif (fir tree) and the lompong motif (taro leaf) which are rich in

symbolic meanings of local nature.

Over time, craftsmen began to create new motifs according to customer desires, such as: Misris, Krisna, Carving, Chain, Rose, Bamboo, Animal (bird) motifs, Dragon, Candle, Antique, Cempaka, and others. Based on media reports until 2024 and predicted until 2025 these motifs continue to change, although the initial motifs of lompong and cypress remain the most desirable visual identity. The main characteristics of Troso woven fabrics include: Local motifs inspired by local flora such as taro leaves and cypress trees, providing symbolic value as well as Jepara's cultural identity. Classic main colors, usually dark brown or dark blue, add an elegant and traditional feel. The manual process with ATBMs includes weaving, thread binding, color dyeing, drying, and weaving by hand, making each fabric unique and of high quality. Aesthetic and philosophical values, the motifs are not produced haphazardly, but reflect the character of the local flora/fauna as well as the aesthetics of visual balance and symbolic meaning of the Troso community. The shape characteristics consist of Geometric and Symmetrical, Simple Flora and Fauna Motifs, Traditional Tie Forms, Contrast Color Combination Motifs, and Woven & Salur Motifs.

2.1.2 Development of Batik in Troso Village

Batik Troso is an adaptation product of textile culture from Troso village, Pecangaan District, Jepara Regency. The village is known as the center of ikat weaving production (Alamsyah, 2014) . The trend of innovation from regional craftsmen encourages the practice of batik as a means to revitalize local textile art. According to Putri, this shift arises from local aesthetic needs as well as economically viable and marketable opportunities (Putri & Syafii, 2024) . The development of batik in Troso was seen since the early 2000s, when some weaving artisans tried to diversify by adding batik in response to market demand. Based on field observations, this effort started with batik experiments applying the hand-drawn batik technique, but with geometric visuals typical of woven fabrics such as lompong (taro leaves) and suma trees, as well as linear ikat shapes.

Over time, Troso batik evolved in form and function. The community no longer only produces sheet cloth to be used as clothing, but also makes derivative products in the form of shawls, suits, bags, wallets, and souvenirs typical of Jepara. Similar findings have also been noted by Maulidiyah & Syafii who pointed out, in the context of arts and culture-based creative industries, that Troso weaving has important educational and application values (Maulidiyah & Syafii, 2023) . During direct observation in field documentation, Troso batik has been adopted by MSME actors as part of the village's creative economy and has been exhibited repeatedly at local and national scale activities. However, the progress made is not linear.

Troso batik is characterized by the combination of hand-drawn batik and ikat weaving techniques, especially the motifs in the form of zigzag lines, crosses, and dark-colored geometric blocks that match the dark blue, maroon, or black and gold Troso weaving. This characteristic, visually, is modern and ethnic at the same time, as described by Wijanarko & Wahono in their research on Troso, which alludes to the symbolic power and visual communication of local identity contained in Troso (Wijanarko & Wahono, 2018).

Observations and interviews conducted with several senior artisans in Troso revealed that batik activities have decreased significantly since 2017. This decline was caused by the lack of young artisans who inherited this tradition, the decline in demand caused by unfavorable economic factors, and the invasion of factory textile products that are much cheaper and more practical. This condition is in line with Alamsyah who states that in many areas known for batik artisans, the preservation of written batik faces serious problems of successor preservation (Alamsyah, 2014) . Currently, artisans who make batik regularly are disappearing, and the lack of documentation on existing motifs has resulted in many people,

especially young people, losing their perspective and no way to continue exploring motifs.

The popularity of Troso batik once gave new hope to the local creative economy. Collaboration between artisans, artists and the village government encouraged the creation of batik products that could enhance the image of Troso village as a creative textile center. However, without a sustainable training system and tangible support from educational institutions and the local government, interest in the art of batik has declined. The lack of comprehensive documentation of the motifs that have been created also worsens the situation, as the next generation loses reference or inspiration. Some senior craftsmen who are still active lament the lack of attention from outsiders to the potential of Troso batik. Actually, if managed properly, Troso batik can become a new cultural symbol that unites two main forces: batik and weaving.

In this situation, real steps need to be taken to revive the spirit of batik in Troso, one of which is by integrating the typical motifs of Troso weaving such as taro leaves and peacocks into more modern written batik works that suit current market tastes. This approach aims not only to save the art of batik from extinction, but also to create opportunities for innovation and creativity within the framework of cultural preservation. Bringing together the two local heritages of weaving and batik could be a strategic step to revive the textile arts in Troso village. This work is not just a textile, but also a symbol of the identity and spirit of the Troso people who always synergize with their ancestral cultural heritage.

2.1.3 The process of making the artwork

The batik making process begins with preparing the necessary equipment and materials. The equipment used consists of canting to incise the night, electric stove to heat the night, bucket for dyeing, gloves as hand protection when coloring, pencil to draw sketches, stove to boil water in the highlighting process.



Figure 1. batik canting

Source: Personal documentation 2025

Canting is the main traditional tool in the process of making hand-drawn batik, used to flow liquid malam (batik wax) onto the surface of the cloth according to the desired pattern, usually used in the ngglowongi (drawing the malam line) and isen-isen (providing small details on the batik blank) stages. Universally, canting is a symbol of the distinctive art of manual batik making in Indonesia, especially in areas such as Yogyakarta, Solo, Pekalongan. Canting consists of three main parts:

- Gagang - the handle (usually made of wood or bamboo).
- Nyamplung - the container for the liquid night (made of copper).
- The prong - the end of a small pipe that flows the night onto the cloth (made of copper).

The main function of the canting is as a "pen" in batik: controlling the flow of night to create the lines, dots and planes that make up the motif. Canting is a fundamental element in hand-drawn batik, distinguishing it from the printed batik technique.

Types and Varieties of Canting Canting can be classified based on its function, size, and number of cusps. The following are the various types of canting that are commonly used:

1. Canting Rengreng (Canting Garis) Function: To create the main line or initial pattern of the motif. Characteristics: Has a single medium-sized cucuk. Position in the process: Used in the early stages after the motif is drawn with a pencil.
2. Canting Isen (Canting Fill) Function: Filling the inside of the motif with small ornaments (isen- isen) such as dots, curves, or filler motifs. Characteristics: The tip of the cucuk is smaller than the canting rengreng. In-process position: Used after the main motif is completed to embellish the work.
3. Canting Cecek Function: To make small dots (cecek). Characteristics: Very small poke, drains a very small amount of night. Often used for: Fine details, intricate fillings, or fine batik techniques typical of Yogyakarta.
4. Canting Tembok Function: Covering large areas of the cloth with wax. Characteristics: Large nib, large capacity nyamplung. Special uses: Blocking a large area of night so that it is not exposed to the dye.
5. Canting Gawangan Function: Commonly used by beginner batik makers or for practice. Characteristics: Medium size, easy to grip. Notes: Widely used in batik education or workshops.
6. Canting Laron Function: To make small wavy stuffing motifs like insect wings. Characteristics: The shape of the cucuk is slightly flattened and spread out.
7. Canting Cawet Function: To create symmetrical flower or leaf motifs. Characteristics: Has two or more teeth, aligned.
8. Canting Cap (Different Function) Although technically different, canting cap is also called "big canting" which is molded in the form of a metal stamp and used for stamped batik.



Figure 2. electric wax melter
Source: Personal documentation 2025

In batik, heating the malam is an important stage that affects the quality of the motif. Nowadays, many batik makers use electric wax melters because they are safer, environmentally friendly, and able to keep the temperature of the night stable. This is very helpful in creating neat lines of motifs when slanting. Malam itself is a special material mixed with rosin, paraffin, and vegetable or animal fat that functions to cover parts of the fabric so that they are not exposed to color. Unlike ordinary wax, malam is flexible, easily absorbs the fabric, and easily dissolves during highlighting without leaving residue. Good wax does not drip excessively, has no pungent odor, and produces clean lines. In contrast, ordinary wax cracks quickly, is difficult to

apply with canting, and spoils the final batik. The use of electric stoves and batik malam reflects a technological adaptation that supports the safe and efficient preservation of the art of batik, especially in education and home production.



Figure 3. bucket for color dissolution

Source: Personal documentation 2025

The bucket is not the only place that can be used to dissolve batik colors, but it is the most practical and cost-effective option for beginner, home and art training batik makers. In the professional or industrial world, large barrels or drums are more suitable. The most important thing is not the container, but its function in storing the color solution safely, stably, and large enough to ensure maximum and even coloring results.



Figure 4. gloves for batik coloring

Source: Personal documentation 2025

The use of gloves when dissolving color or medel (dipping the first color) and nyogra arau dissolves the malam in batik. besides that gloves are important to maintain skin health from chemical exposure, prevent contamination of the fabric, and create a safe and clean work environment. Gloves are part of the batik work ethic that supports the quality of results and the safety of the batik maker.



Figure 5. Pencil for Sketching

Source: Personal documentation 2025

Pencils are used in the early stages of making batik or Nyorek to sketch motif patterns on the fabric as

instructions before the use of malam. The type of pencil that is often used is HB or 2B because it can give a fairly clear line without damaging the fabric. These pencil drawings are not erased, but will be covered by the night and disappear during highlighting. The use of pencils supports the batik in maintaining the proportion and clarity of the pattern, as well as practicing accuracy and drawing skills before the dyeing process begins.



Figure 6. stove to heat water for dissolving.

Source: Personal documentation 2025

The materials used include malam or batik wax, primisima cotton cloth as the main medium, 50 grams of NR black remasol dye, 250 milliliters of glass water to bind the color, and 750 milliliters of water as a solvent and hot water obtained from heating it on a gas stove.



Figure 7. Remasol hita batik dye, NR

Source: Personal documentation 2025



Figure 8. Measure of water in 250 ml

Source: Personal documentation 2025

After all the materials and tools are ready, the next step is to paint a sketch of the batik motif on the surface of the cloth or nyorek. This drawing is made with a pencil, following a previously prepared design. Motifs can be traditional, modern, or follow the inspiration of the creator.

The third stage is scratching or ngelowongi and isen - isen to embellish the result. In this step, the night is heated until it melts, then taken with a canting and applied following the sketch lines on the fabric. This process requires patience because the canting must drip the night accurately so that the motif is formed neatly and does not leak.



Figure 9. Batik sketching and canting

Source: Personal documentation 2025

After the motif is formed, the cloth enters the coloring or medel process (the first coloring process). NR black remasol dye is dissolved with water and mixed with waterglass. The dye can be applied or dyed according to the dyeing method applied. The color will adhere to the area of the fabric that is not covered by the night, while the part exposed to the night will retain the basic color of the fabric.



Figure 10. dyeing the fabric to color

Source: Personal documentation 2025



Figure 11. Soaking the fabric into the color

Source: Personal documentation 2025

The next stage is pelorotan or ngelorod, which is the process of removing the night from the fabric. The fabric is cooked in hot water until the night melts and is lifted from the fabric fibers. Afterward, the cloth is washed and dried in the sun. The product is a batik cloth that has motifs and colors according to the initial design.



Figure 12. Malam run

Source: Personal documentation 2025

The last stage, in this stage, brings the results of the batik that has been dried to work in mix media. In mix media, the taro leaf motif was cut from the woven fabric. Followed by attaching the pieces to the batik cloth according to the pattern. Creating new works from the combination of woven fabric and batik.



Figure 13. Attaching the trasa woven fabric to the range of bird tails.

Source: Personal documentation 2025



Figure 14. Attaching the trasa woven fabric to the range of the bird's tail

Source: Personal documentation 2025

2.2 Implementation of Troso weaving with the use of Talas leaf and peacock motifs in batik

2.2.1 Inspiration from taro leaf motif

Through research and observation, utilizing the taro leaf pattern from Troso weaving as a source of inspiration in the work is not just a visual choice, but also a cultural choice full of meaning where taro leaves are widely used for food. In the context of fine art, especially batik motif design, sources of inspiration derived from local wisdom act as a link between aesthetics and cultural identity. The taro leaf motif (which in the local language is often called lompong) is not only a simple natural form, but also a symbol that has long been bound up in the visual traditions of the people of Troso Village. It is found in weaving patterns as a symbol of serenity, resilience and harmony with nature. Thus, the application of this motif in the art of batik tulis is a form of respect for the visual and philosophical basis of the local community.

2.2.2 Sketch of the work

In the first sketch, there are more than a few taro leaves forming a flower blossom under the peacock, then some taro leaves fill the empty space as isen isen that beautifies the work. In addition, the second sketch shows several taro leaves arranged in a circle behind the peacock, forming the sun but stylized in a simple form, meaning that a new form has been created while the characteristics of the original form are still clearly visible. The taro leaves curling around the circle represent the symbol of the sun.



Figure 15. Batik motif of taro leaves and peacock

Source: Personal documentation 2025

2.2.3 Aesthetics of the work

The taro leaf motif is one of the variants of Troso weaving motifs that will be varied into batik form as one of its main elements. The intrinsic elements of this batik motif include visual depictions of changes in the shape of taro leaves from the Troso weaving motif. The pattern of the taro leaf batik motif is inspired by the Troso weaving motif, which has become a famous icon in the area. For the batik cloth, a dark black base color is used to give an elegant impression, while the white color in the taro leaf motif symbolizes the simplicity of community life with natural harmony. Behind the taro leaf motif, there are several blackish- white lines to increase the aesthetic value/beauty of the batik cloth.

2.2.4 Inspiration from the peacock motif

The peacock motif is a source of deep visual and cultural inspiration in creating batik. Symbolically, the peacock symbolizes beauty, majesty and pride - noble values that are in line with the philosophy of batik as a means of cultural expression. Its physical form and wide, rhythmically patterned tail feathers provide opportunities for abundant stylization in design, especially as a graceful and prominent main motif. Visually, the peacock's wings and tail form a dynamic and highly aesthetic composition, suitable for written batik that emphasizes details and repetition. The motif is also globally appealing, as the image of the peacock is widely recognized as an exotic and artistic symbol, making it relevant for the contemporary batik market, both locally and internationally. Besides being aesthetically strong, the peacock motif also contains messages about conservation and cultural education. I encourage the preservation of animal symbols and local values through art.



Figure 16. Batik of taro leaf and peacock motifs

Source: Personal Documentation 2025

2.2.5 Sketch of the work

In the first sketch, there are two peacock objects facing each other giving the impression of symmetrical beauty. the beauty of the symmetry is also depicted in the peacock's tail feathers that

wave elegantly touching the entire top of the batik. In addition, the second sketch features one peacock object that is used as the point of interest of the work. the depiction as if the peacock is about to fly away brings out the beauty of the peacock to the fullest. the changes only occur slightly in the peacock, in the form of additional lines and dots, meaning that a new form has been created while the characteristics of the original form are still clearly visible.

2.2.6 Aesthetics of the work

The peacock motif is one of the variants of batik motifs that is famous as one of the beautiful motifs. The intrinsic elements of this batik motif include a visual depiction of the changing shape of the peacock. The pattern of the peacock batik motif is inspired by the majority of Troso villagers having a love for the exotic bird Troso weaving motif, which has become a famous hobby in the area. For batik cloth, a dark black base color is used to give an elegant impression, while the white color in the peacock motif symbolizes the beauty that can encourage the beauty of the peacock. Behind the peacock motif, there are several blackish-white lines to increase the aesthetic value/beauty of the batik cloth.

3. Conclusion

This research concludes that the use of local motifs from Troso woven fabrics, namely taro leaves (lompong) and peacocks, as inspiration in making written batik is an effective approach to save and revitalize the art of batik in Troso Village. Both motifs are not only aesthetically strong, but also full of symbolic meaning. The taro leaf symbolizes shade, survival, and connection with nature, while the peacock symbolizes beauty, majesty, and pride of cultural identity. These motifs are then processed through stylization and visual stylization into modern and contextual batik designs. The resulting batik works succeed in presenting a local cultural narrative through a fresh visual language that is easily accepted by the wider community, both as a form of preservation and as a potential creative product. In terms of aesthetics, the use of dark base colors such as black combined with white accents and other contrasting colors strengthens the visual motifs and creates an elegant impression while rooted in local traditions. This research also shows that the integration of two cultural treasures-weaving and batik-not only enables visual transformation, but also opens up opportunities for village cultural branding and local creative economic empowerment. In addition, this research encourages public awareness, especially the younger generation, of the importance of preserving local wisdom in the form of contemporary artworks. This batik work is not only an aesthetic object, but also an educational, symbolic and economic tool that reflects the identity of the Troso community. With a local design-based approach, Troso batik has the potential to revive as a distinctive textile icon of Jepara that is not only known through its weaving, but also through written batik that has a strong and unique character.

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