

## KUDUS BATIK PARIJOTO MOTIF: FORM, MEANING, AND FUNCTION IN THE CULTURAL LIFE OF THE KUDUS COMMUNITY

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**Abstract.** Batik is an Indonesian cultural heritage that not only has visual beauty, but also holds symbolic meaning and deep socio-cultural functions. One type of regional batik that is rich in local wisdom is Kudus Parijoto Batik, although its interpretation has rarely been studied academically, so there is potential for a change in meaning in this modern era. This study aims to describe the attributes of the Kudus Parijoto Batik motif, express its symbolic meaning, and explain its function in the cultural traditions of the Kudus community. It is hoped that the results of this study will increase knowledge about local arts and culture and help preserve regional batik. This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach with a case study method. Data collection techniques were carried out through direct observation, interviews with batik craftsmen and members of the cultural community, and documentation collection. Data analysis followed the model developed by Miles and Huberman, covering the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The results of the study show that the Parijoto motif is processed in a simple manner and its shape resembles the original plant. It contains meanings of gratitude and hope for fertility and safety, and functions as clothing for traditional, religious, and daily life activities.

**Keywords:** Kudus Batik, Local Culture, Function, Symbolic Meaning, Parijoto Motif

### 1. Introduction

Batik is part of Indonesia's cultural heritage that not only has aesthetic value, but is also rich in symbolic meaning and social and cultural functions (Faiza et al., 2023). Batik is a handmade product created using a canting tool to draw directly with wax, resulting in beautiful works of art. As part of Indonesia's cultural heritage, batik has beauty and philosophy that reflect the identity of a region (Eskak, 2019). In this modern era, batik is often considered only as a commercial textile product without a deep understanding of the philosophical values contained within it. This can also be seen in Kudus Batik with the Parijoto Motif, which has a close relationship with local wisdom, spiritual aspects, and the cultural identity of the Kudus community. Although the Parijoto motif is recognized as a symbol of fertility, blessings, and gratitude, its meaning has not been widely documented in academic studies, so there is a possibility that its meaning may change in the tide of modernization and cultural globalization (Sunnyoto et al., 2020).

Based on initial observations at the Parijoto Kudus Batik production center, particularly in the Sukoharjo, Gribig, Kudus area, it was revealed that the Parijoto motif is still produced using traditional methods that maintain its similarity to the original plant form (Azizah et al., 2021). Initial discussions with batik artisans reveal that the selection of designs, colors, and

motif arrangements is not done arbitrarily, but is rooted in moral and spiritual values that have been passed down from generation to generation. However, this understanding is generally only conveyed orally and has not been studied in depth, so scientific studies are needed to explore, document, and reinforce the cultural meaning of Kudus Parijoto Motif Batik more sharply (Widiastuti, 2024).

A number of previous studies have examined Kudus batik as a representation of local culture, as well as the beauty of batik designs originating from coastal areas, and the role of batik in passing on character values and cultural education (Furqon & Wijayanto, 2024). Other studies have also examined the Parijoto motif in terms of design development and the economic potential of batik MSMEs (Salsabila, 2024). However, many of these studies did not thoroughly discuss the relationship between the visual aspects, symbolic meanings, and socio-cultural functions of the Parijoto motif Kudus Batik (Lusianti & Putri, 2024). Therefore, this study takes a different approach with the aim of analyzing Kudus Batik Parijoto Motif in a more comprehensive manner, connecting the motif form, symbolic meaning, and its function in the cultural context of the Kudus community as the main focus.

The problems addressed in this study include: (1) the form of the Parijoto Kudus Batik motif, (2) the symbolic meanings integrated within it, and (3) the function of Parijoto Batik in the culture of the Kudus community. The purpose of this study is to describe the characteristics of the motif, reveal its symbolic meanings, and explain the socio-cultural function of the Parijoto Kudus Batik motif. The benefits of this research are expected to deepen the study of local arts and culture, serve as an academic reference for similar research, and support efforts to preserve Kudus Batik as a regional cultural heritage. In addition, this research is also expected to raise public awareness of the importance of preserving the philosophical values and local wisdom contained in traditional batik.

This study uses a case study method with a qualitative descriptive approach. Qualitative research aims to explore a deep understanding of phenomena by highlighting their meaning and underlying socio-cultural context (Miranti et al., 2021). The descriptive method aims to systematically describe the form, symbolic meaning, and function of Kudus Batik Parijoto Motif, without making any specific interventions on the research object. The case study approach was taken because this study focuses on the study of one specific cultural object, namely Batik Parijoto Kudus, so that it can be understood in the context of local community life (Eskak, 2019). In this study, the qualitative method serves to explore the aesthetic values, philosophy, and socio-cultural functions contained in the Parijoto batik motif.

The data collection techniques in this study included observation, interviews, and document collection. Observations were carried out directly at the Parijoto Kudus Batik production site located in Sukoharjo, Gribig, Kudus Regency, to examine the motif shapes, the batik creation process, and its role in daily activities. Interviews were conducted with batik artisans, batik business owners, and local cultural figures who have knowledge about the meaning and history of the Parijoto motif. These interviews were aimed at obtaining information about the philosophy, spiritual values, and role of batik in Kudus society (Rahayu,

2024). Document collection was carried out by gathering batik motif images, field notes, and other additional archives aimed at strengthening the information obtained from observations and interviews as well as providing visual evidence in the study (Saputra et al., 2024).

The technique used for data analysis was qualitative based on the Miles and Huberman model, which consists of three main steps, namely data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. Data reduction was carried out by selecting and focusing on data relevant to the objectives of the study. Next, the data was presented in the form of a narrative description to facilitate understanding of the relationship between the motif, symbolic meaning, and function of Parijoto batik. The final step was to draw conclusions based on the results of the data analysis (Maulana, 2025). The research process begins with the preparation stage, followed by information gathering in the field, data analysis, and finally the writing of the research report in a systematic manner.

## 2. Results and Discussion

Kudus Batik with Parijoto Motifs reflects the local wisdom of the Kudus community, combining form, meaning, and function. These motifs are designed simply to resemble the parijoto plant, especially its fruit, and symbolize gratitude and hope for a good and safe life. In daily life, Parijoto Batik serves as clothing material for various traditional, religious, and everyday activities. This aligns with the view (Miranti et al., 2021) that batik based on local wisdom serves as a medium for passing on cultural values and community identity. Thus, based on the results of research on Kudus batik with the parijoto motif, discussing its form, meaning, and function in the cultural life of the community, this can be seen in the following discussion:

### 2.1 Parijoto Motif

Parijoto (*Medinilla javanensis*) is a type of plant that grows in the Muria Mountains, see Figure 1. However, parijoto can also be cultivated in lowlands, but its growth is limited and not as good as in highlands (Radyanto et al., 2024). This plant produces fruit that is believed to be beneficial for the fertility of married couples and pregnant women, so it is widely sold in the Mount Muria tourist market, with buyers being tourists from various regions (Pertiwi et al., 2018). The most recognizable characteristic of the parijoto plant is its fruit. Parijoto fruit is small and purple-red in color, so it is often considered similar to grapes.



**Figure 1.** Parijoto Fruit (*Medinilla speciosa*) from Mount Muria  
(Source: Hasbullah et al., 2021)

The morphology (shape and structure) of the parijoto plant has natural beauty and is referred to as a charming forest shrub (Fahira & Yasin, 2022). The parijoto plant has beautiful pink flowers, and

as the fruit ripens, its color turns dark purple. Parijoto grows upright with branched stems that reach a height of 0.5-1 meter, and can even reach 2 meters in the forest (Salma & Eskak, 2020). Based on knowledge of the morphology of the parijoto plant, it is easier to understand the artistic value of the shape aspect of the Parijoto Motif. The parijoto plant is transformed into a batik motif using simple deformative techniques, meaning that visually, the characteristics of the plant are not stylized too far from their original form (Figure 2).



**Figure 2.** Stylization of the parijoto fruit into the Parijoto Motif  
(Source: Azizah et al., 2021)

## 2.2 The Meaning of the Parijoto Motif

The significance of batik as a cultural art form lies in the meaning contained within its motifs. Meaning can take the form of hopes or prayers through the symbolism of the decorative motifs chosen (Karisa, 2020). The Parijoto motif is used as clothing to express gratitude for the gift of life in the fertile and beautiful land of the Muria Mountains and its surroundings. The Parijoto motif is also used as a spiritual effort (symbolic motif) carried out physically (by wearing it as clothing) to bring goodness or beauty into one's life. This is especially true for young couples or those who are expecting a child, who wear Parijoto motif batik as a prayer for the health and good fortune of their unborn child. However, it is more commonly interpreted physically, namely that the baby will be born beautiful or handsome (Yugeswari et al., 2022). When the child grows up and lives their life, it is hoped that they will have a good life (apik uripe). The people of Kudus say that apik uripe means salvation and happiness in this world and the hereafter. Therefore, the meaning of "good (physical appearance and fate) in life" is manifested in the strong (meaning strong/healthy) and bright (bright fate/future) colors of the batik cloth.

In addition to wearing batik motifs, efforts are also made by eating parijoto fruit, which has benefits for reproductive fertility and fetal growth. Medically and nutritionally, Aji (2020) and Lestari (2021) explain that parijoto fruit has several benefits, including: (1) Helping to increase fertility in women, as it is rich in antioxidant nutrients, such as flavonoids, beta-carotene, tannins, and saponins. (2) Protecting egg cells, as parijoto fruit contains beta-carotene, which is good for the health of women's egg cells. (3) Improving the health of married couples, as it is a healthy food, just like consuming other fruits. Traditionally in Kudus and its surroundings, parijoto fruit is also widely consumed during pregnancy, with the hope that the baby will be healthy and beautiful (Dakwah & Kudus, 2024).



**Figure 3.** Parijoto Seling Pakis Aji motif  
(Source: Researcher Documentation)

The image above shows the Parijoto Seling Pakis Aji batik motif. The Parijoto motif can be recognized by the appearance of small fruits arranged repeatedly and decorated with fern motifs as an accompaniment. The color palette used is striking and bright, symbolizing prosperity, health, and hope for a bright future.



**Figure 4.** Parijoto Seling Kembang motif for clothing/attire  
(Source: Researcher Documentation)

The image above shows that traditional knowledge, which is local wisdom, contains truths and benefits for life that can be proven through scientific research and studies, including in this case the benefits of parijoto, which is a distinctive batik motif in Kudus (Dwi Tri Rahayu, 2022). The conclusion from the description and interpretation of the batik motifs above can be summarized as follows: The Parijoto motif expresses gratitude for the life that has been bestowed by God Almighty (applied to clothing used for worship, such as robes and sarongs), as well as the hope of receiving goodness, beauty, and a high status for the lives of one's descendants in this world and the hereafter (Putri Larasati, 2024).

### 2.3 Function in the Cultural Life of the Kudus Community



**Figure 5.** Parijoto Menara motif for long cloth, clothes, and sarong  
(Source: Researcher Documentation)

The function in this case is the physical function of art (batik works), namely for use in certain



functions in human activities (Septiana & Addiansyah, 2024). The practical function of Parijoto Motif batik cloth in Kudus is as a product that can be used in traditional ceremonies and in everyday life, namely as a material for making clothing. These garments can take the form of jarik (long cloth), shawls, sarongs, and shirts/dresses (Saputra et al., 2024). In summary, it can be said that the Parijoto motif has the function of decorating fabric as material for clothing (jarik/long cloth and other garments) to be worn at traditional events or as everyday wear. For example, jarik for long cloth as a partner for kebaya, sarong for clothing during prayer or for majelis taklim recitation, and so on (Indrahti, 2022).

### 3. Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, Kudus Batik with the Parijoto motif is considered a form of local wisdom from the people of Kudus, combining elements of form, meaning, and function as a whole. The Parijoto motif is designed with simple visuals, but still shows the characteristics of the parijoto plant, especially its fruit, and has a symbolic meaning as an expression of gratitude and hope for fertility, health, and a good life for future generations. In its use, Parijoto Batik serves as clothing material worn in various traditional and religious events and daily activities, thus having aesthetic value as well as social and cultural value. This research is expected to enrich academic studies on regional batik, raise public awareness of the importance of preserving the philosophical values of traditional batik, and have a positive impact on strengthening the local cultural identity and economic sustainability of the Kudus community through the development and preservation of Parijoto Batik.

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