

# Developing the Motifs and The Strategies to Survive of Semarang Batik Creative Industries, in Semarang Central Java Province, Indonesia

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**Abstract.** This article presents the discussion on the efforts of Batik Semarang craftsmen in developing Batik Semarang designs and their resiliences in the time of covid-19 pandemic. The result of this research shows that Batik Semarang has been in existence for centuries. The existence of Kampung Batik in Semarang is the important evidence which shows that Batik Semarang has been already grew and developed together with the making and the growth of Semarang City. From this research, we can also understand that the designs of Batik Semarang can be differentiated in 2 categories, namely: traditional and contemporary designs. Until now in Semarang City there are several batik craft industries with the creation of motifs that are typical of Semarang. The result of this research also shows that the business of Batik Semarang always organizes in creative industry category, namely the business that is born from the batik craftsman creativities in small industries which have about 4 – 20 workmen forces. Semarang Batik creative industries have never dismissed, they are still in existence until now. Thus, it can be concluded that the Semarang Batik Creative Industry is an important economic asset and Indonesian cultural heritage to support the livelihoods and lives of the people of Semarang City, so that its existence is always maintained and developed continuously for the sake of strengthening the creative economy of the people in this city and Indonesian cultural identity.

## 1 Introduction

On October 2, 2009 UNESCO has assigned batik as Indonesia's cultural heritage as Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity. After receiving recognition as a masterpiece of the Indonesian nation, batik has become a trendy commodity, whereas before that, the use of batik was limited to certain occasions such as weddings, ceremonies, or for uniforms. Even young people are reluctant to wear batik because they think it is old fashion.

Batik deserves to be called the original cultural heritage of Indonesia; This can be seen from the existence of an inscription from the 10th century which explains that at that time in the area of the Hindu Mataram Kingdom there was already batik activity. For example, in the “Gulung-gulung” Inscription (929 AD) there is information that at that time in Java there

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were already handicrafts of cloth and batik. The steps for making cloth and batik are mentioned in the inscription as follows: wusu-wusu (combing the cotton to remove the seeds), anggumarang (making cloth), mangragi (making certain patterns on the cloth for palace officials), mamukat noni (dyeing the cloth) with noni roots to get a red color), manyula noni (infiltrating the cloth with the noni roots), and mangubar (infiltrating the cloth to give a glowing color) [1].

The description in the above inscription shows that the method of making cloth and batik has been owned by the Indonesians since hundreds of years ago, long before the arrival of the influence of Chinese culture (early 15th century) and Western nations (late 16th century) in Indonesia. So batik can be said as a tradition or local wisdom of the Indonesian people in the creation of ornaments and motifs on fabrics. Before printing technology existed, if people wanted to give color and motif to a piece of cloth or clothing, there was no other way, except with batik technology, which is painting and coloring the fabric with special tools made of bamboo and batik wax as a color barrier material [2]. The tools for painting the cloth can be a canting, a wooden blade, or a brush.

The Dutch also acknowledges that Batik is an authentic Indonesian culture by including the meaning of Batik in the Dutch Dictionary Van Dale Nieuw Handwoordenboek der Nederlandse Taal which explains that the word "battiken is Indonesische method om weefsels in figuren te verven" (the Indonesian way of coloring fabrics in the form of designs or pictures. The product of this battiken activity is called batik [3].

In an effort to strengthen the Indonesian national identity, many regions in Indonesia have declared their local cultural identities through batik media, for example: "Batik Pekalongan", "Batik Semarang", "Batik Demak", "Batik Kudus", "Batik Pati", "Batik Rembang", "Batik Lasem", "Batik Sragen", "Batik Banyumas", "Batik Jogja", "Batik Solo", "Batik Palembang", "Batik Papua", and so on. Semarang, an area on the north coast of Java Island and as the capital city of Central Java Province, also shows its cultural richness in the field of batik, because Semarang actually has a batik cultural heritage that has gone through a long historical path, so that it has experienced crystallization of values and characteristics. distinctive and unique, which can exude the charm of the cultural identity of the city of Semarang. The cultural identity is a knowledge about the communicative processes in use by individuals to construct and negotiate their cultural group identities and relationship in particular contexts.

The hallmark of Semarang Batik can be seen from the colors and motifs. The characteristics that can be identified are as follows: the motif is free or not bound by certain rules, the flora and fauna decoration, and the color is bright and striking. Although there are similarities in the characteristics of the Semarang Batik motif with batik from other Java north coastal areas, there are also detailed differences as follows: In general, the basic colors of Semarang Batik are bright colors, such as orange and red, while Demak batik is light brown, and Batik Kudus with a blue base [4]. The creation of Semarang Batik motifs is strongly influenced by elements of Chinese culture, especially elements of mythology, such as: bamboo groves, peacocks, peach trees, phoenix birds, the goddess Shi Wangmu. The creation of batik motifs from other coastal areas was inspired mainly by the natural environment, such as: "latoh" (sea plants), fish, sea horses, jasmine flowers, and bouquets. The uniqueness of coastal batik on the island of Java has been known in international trade for hundreds of years.

The international market demand for batik can be seen in the evidence that during the Vereenigde Oost Indische Compagnie (VOC) era (17th – 18th centuries), batik was recorded as a high-value export product. The export value of this batik can be seen in the results of Gerrit Knaap's [5] research which shows that the annual average export value for batik cloth (Javanese cloth) during the period 1774-1777 was 63.560 rijksdaalders (Dutch ringgit = 2.5 guilders). This value is in third place after the export value of tobacco (amounting to 99.100

rijksdaaders) and the value of rice (amounting to 90.965 rijksdaalders). The export value of this batik cloth also outperformed the annual export value of other products, namely sugar, Indian cloth, gambier, opium, rattan, and iron [5].

Furthermore, during the Dutch colonial period, it was recorded in the colonial report that in Semarang there were 25 batik craft industries in 1919 with a workforce of 234 people; then in 1925 the number of batik industry in this city reached 107 units with a total workforce of 808 people. However, before the Japanese troops arrived in Semarang City in March 1942, the Dutch colonial government in this city gave secret instructions to the residents to burn places that had economic potential, such as warehouses, ports, industrial centers, shops. This condition was exacerbated by the Japanese military government which, during the Five Day War in Semarang in 15-19 October 1945, burned several villages in the city of Semarang, namely: Kampung Batik, Depok, Lempongsari, Taman Serayu, Pandean Lamper. Almost all economic activities in Semarang City were "stop producing" at that time [1].

After Indonesia's independence, the batik industry sector in Semarang began to rise again, which was pioneered by "Tan Kong Tien Battikerij", "Batik Sri Retno", and "Batik Semarang 16". Starting in the first decade of 2000, about 10 batik craft industries appeared again in the city of Semarang. All of these batik craftsmen still maintain the characteristic of "Semarang Batik". The aim is not only for trade, but also for strengthening the cultural identity of Semarang.

National Cultural Identity is one of the elements of national character, namely the characteristics and behavior of individuals within the framework of a nation's collective life which is based on the cultural values of a nation and exudes distinctive characteristics, so that it can be viewed by other nations as the identity or character of the nation. Cultural values that exist in the collective experience or history of a nation can shape the pattern of the nation's character, which includes: nationalism, love for national culture, identity, and national ethos. The four elements of this character are interrelated and mutually strengthening between one element and another. Cultural identity is a cultural characteristic that differentiates the culture of a region from another region, a nation from another nation. Cultural identity is a genuine culture that is a marker of the existence of a community, society, or more broadly a marker of a nation. Without identity, a nation will experience difficulties when it has to show its existence in the midst of the interactions between nations. In the social arena between nations, identity is very much needed to show the "self-esteem" and "self-values" of a nation, so that they are able to show national pride, and feel that they can stand parallel to other nations. Thus, the cultural identity that has crystallized in Indonesia's homeland must always be preserved, strengthened and developed to strengthen the devotion for the nation and state.

Based on the historical perspective since the 5th, 12th, 15th, 17th, and 20th centuries, shipping-trade relations have occurred in the Indonesian archipelago as well as cultural contacts between local and foreign cultures (Indian, Arabic, Chinese, European and Japanese). The aim of the arrival of these foreign nations, was none other than to seek necessities and commodities that were in demand on the world market, such as: spices, sugar, coffee, indigo, and batik cloth. In this trade and cultural relationship, the inhabitants of this archipelago, especially in the coastal areas, are able to be open, adaptive, adoptive, and democratic. These attitudes then form cultural creations that are acculturative.

This acculturative cultural creation also occurs in the society of Semarang City in creating creative economic activities in the form of batik handicraft industry. Semarang Batik handicraft industry has been going on since the mid-16th century, when there was trade and cultural relations with Islamic and Chinese traders. It is said that traders from Gujarat and China sell cloth or clothes with certain motifs, which are then absorbed by the batik crafting community in Semarang to be developed in accordance with the nuances of local Semarang culture. The inter-national or inter-ethnic trade that occurred in the coastal area of Java,

including Semarang, led the emergence of European and Chinese entrepreneurs to establish batik businesses, which used native people as workers. Jakarta, Pekalongan, Semarang, and Surabaya are the important places for the growth of the batik industries in the North Coast of Java [4].

Prior to the arrival of European and Chinese entrepreneurs engaged in the batik craft industry, the Javanese had made batik cloth for their own consumption, or not for trading. For example, that was until 20th century the family of Tasripin in the village of Kulitan, Semarang, has workers to make batik cloth which was used for family clothing. According to Sri Murdijanti, the owner of Tan Kong Tien Batik Craft Industry (late 19th century - 1970s), the batik workers in this company were recruited from the villages of Kulitan, Bugangan, Rejosari, Kampung Batik, and other villages in Semarang City. In general, these workers already have batik skills [1]. The ability of the Chinese to manage the batik craft industry is strongly supported by the presence of indigenous workers who already have skills in batik and they are employed with strict discipline [6].

Thus Semarang Batik is a local cultural product that has great potential as a cultural identity and also a creative economy asset of Semarang City. The creative economy or creative industry is an economic activity based on individual creativity, skills and talents to create individual creativity in creating social welfare [7]. Because it is based on the ideas and creativity of the community in a certain region, the economy or creative industry is able to produce distinctive and unique products, so that it has the potential to produce regional cultural identities.

The city of Semarang is famous for its Batik Semarang products, which since the mid-16th century the center of batik handicrafts has been near the center of Semarang district (in the Bubakan area), namely in Kampung Batik [the Batik Village]. Semarang batik is made carefully and neatly with motifs that are the result of the creativity of the local craftsmen community, so it takes a long time to be produced. Semarang Batik motifs were developed based on experiences and observations of the nature around the craftsmen's location in the city of Semarang. In general, Semarang Batik decorations are taken from natural flora and fauna. Flora, especially bamboo and tamarind, is the background pattern for batik, and fauna, such as butterflies, birds, chickens, beetles, are used as motifs. However, starting in the early 21st century, Semarang Batik motifs were more varied, due to the emergence of creative ideas from Semarang Batik craftsmen by taking various cultural icons of Semarang City, such as: "Lawang Sewu", "Tugu Muda", "Warak", "Dugderan", "Wotprau", "Blekok Semarang", etc.

Eventhough Semarang Batik actually contains cultural and economic values that can support the welfare of the community, its existence must always be monitored, strengthened, and developed continuously. In general, the craftsmen did not come from strong economic groups, but they worked for a living only by relying on creativity. So, when there are external obstacles such as the crisis and the covid-19 pandemic, in general the management, capital, and creativity of the craftsmen have also weaken. For example, in the era of the pandemic of covid-19, the batik craftsmen in Semarang experienced "lying down" or not producing because orders or demand dropped drastically. Before the pandemic there had always been orders both individually and collectively for uniforms for offices or schools, but now the demand has receded and there is no longer any. The craftsmen took steps to stay "alive", they were resilient (able to survive), among others by serving requests for batik training, demonstrating how to make batik in the Old City of Semarang, with a limited number of participants, because of the covid-19 pandemic situation, and online marketing. Because batik is a handicraft product, which has artistic and uniqueness values, there are still online orderers [8].

Based on the outstanding cultural and economic values and the above mentioned problems, research was carried out to find ways to develop the motifs and business prospects

of Semarang Batik, which are now scattered throughout the city of Semarang. Based on the background described above, the following research questions are posed:

1. What is the characteristic of Semarang Batik motifs?
2. How does the Semarang Batik Craft Communities express their creativity through the batik craft business?
3. How are Semarang Batik craftsmen able to survive in the time of covid-19 pandemic?
4. How do the business prospects for the Semarang Batik handicraft industry?

## 2 Method

This The research on "Developing The Motifs and The Strategies to Survive of Semarang Batik Creative Industries" is an analytical descriptive study supported by qualitative and quantitative data. This study uses primary and secondary resources. Primary resources are photographs, oral resources, and other data. Secondary resources are obtained from the results of previous research, and from various relevant libraries. Literature study is used as a comparative study in explaining phenomena that are similar to the research subject, but differ in location and time.

The first research activity is the search for primary data in the form of documents and information from stakeholders, especially Semarang Batik craftsmen. The data includes photos, regulations, and oral sources. These sources are critically tested for both authenticity and credibility.

In order to obtain information about the development of Batik Semarang motifs and business prospects, observations were made about Semarang Batik Handicraft, identity, and Semarang Batik production methods. This observation method will enrich the researcher's insight about the cultural values and activities of batik craftsmen, and the economic creativity of the Semarang Batik craftsman community.

Data collection was also carried out using in-depth interviews. Interviews were conducted with all elements of stakeholders, especially craftsmen, entrepreneurs, workers, relevant community leaders, and interested parties. In-depth interviews were conducted to find out and understand the existence of the Semarang Batik creative industry related to aspects of management, marketing, and the creative process in developing batik motifs. In depth interviews were conducted with the craftsmen or entrepreneurs of Batik Semarang directly. The interview focused on the ways in which Batik Semarang craftsmen in developing their motifs and business management, including business management in this era of the covid-19 pandemic. Interviews were conducted in a relaxed and intimate manner, so that in-depth exploration could be carried out.

An anthropological approach was also used in this research, which focused on the study of the cultural system of the Semarang Batik craftsmen community related to the desires, aspirations, work ethic, spirit, sense of belonging, creativity related to the creative economy activities of Batik Semarang handicrafts.

All data that has been collected through the various approaches above will be classified, verified, interpreted for meaning and determined the relationship between one fact and another, then synthesized in a discussion on "Developing The Motifs and The Strategies to Survive of Semarang Batik Creative Industries". This research method is described in the fishbone diagram as follows.

## 3 Results and Discussion

### 3.1 The Awakening of the Spirit of Batik Semarang Business

Based on the historical fact that Semarang has cultural and economic potential in the field of batik, in 2006 a research team from the Department of History, Faculty of Letters, Diponegoro University implemented a Semarang batik development program as a cultural identity of the city of Semarang. Some of the activities that have been carried out are: making Semarang batik motifs based on Semarang traditional batik motifs, advising batik craftsmen in Semarang City to make designs featuring Semarang City icons (Batik Perdamaian, Batik Lawang Sewu, Batik Warak Ngendog, Batik Kawung Semarang, Swallow Bird, hibiscus flower, and so on). The hope of the researchers is a stronger "helping hand" from the Municipal Government of Semarang and Central Java Province through the Semarang City National Craft Council, Semarang Industry Office, Central Java Province. Without assistance and support from the Regional Government, especially in crisis situations due to the current covid-19 pandemic, many Semarang Batik craftsmen have stopped producing. The decline in the Semarang Batik handicraft was caused by the scarcity of orders or purchases, because the consumer of batik prioritized health as a primary need rather than the need for clothing.

In 2006 a collaboration was initiated with the Semarang City Regional National Craft Council, when the City Government cared about the existence of Semarang Batik which is almost extinct. At that time, the Semarang City Government collaborated with researchers from the Department of History, Faculty of Letters, Diponegoro University hold batik training with Semarang motifs for 20 participants from Kampung Batik, Bugangan, and Rejosari villages. Participants are selected among the residents of these villages who can draw to facilitate the creation of batik motifs. The training was held from June to July 2006 in Kampung Batik with the aim of fostering the enthusiasm and potential of the residents of Semarang City, and at the same time to re-empower Kampung Batik as a center for batik handicrafts. The batik motifs taught are old Semarang motifs, as well as contemporary motifs by highlighting the cultural icons of Semarang City. The researcher of Semarang Batik, suggested that each motif be given a name, so that it is more easily recognized and can become the cultural identity of Semarang City. Several names of motifs can be mentioned here: Merak Semawis, Merak Pertiwi, Merak Puspa Rukmi, Merak Kinasih, Merak Puspita, Merak Kusumo, Sriti Rejeki, Samodra Amengku Negari, Puspa Lestari, Wora-Wari Wigati, Bango Pertiwi, and others. From the above mentioned batik training, now several batik craftsmen have emerged who have succeeded in establishing independent businesses. First, stands the "Batik Semarang Indah" Craft, with a number of workers between 4-5 people, which then until the period before the Covid-19 pandemic was able to recruit a workforce of 15-20 people in Kampung Batik [8]. Below is shown an example of a motif that has received the recognition of Intellectual Work Rights (IWR) and began to be produced by "Batik Semarang Indah" in 2007.



**Fig. 1.** The name of the motif: “Merak Puspa Rukmi”( Peacock surrounded by flowers and golden yellow hair) ; named by the researcher and Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) holder; produced by "Batik Semarang Indah", Kampung Batik;This batik motif has obtained IPR with registration No: 045431. Peacock is an animal in Chinese mythology, which has beautiful appearance and contains philosophical values as a protector of the family.

The revival of the batik craft industry in Kampung Batik has sparked batik industries in the villages of Dargo, Mijen, Tugu, Meteseh, Tembalang, Banyumanik, and even in several schools in Semarang batik skills are also taught, such as at the Extraordinary School (SLB) in Meteseh, Kartini Vocational High School, and others.

### **3.2. “Batik Semarang 16”**

In 2006 Batik craft industry was established, which was initiated by Umi Sumiati Adi Susilo, the owner of the “Batik Semarang 16” Craft Industry. Umi's expertise in the field of batik began with studying batik at the Jakarta textile museum. After that Umi learned to make modern batik motifs. Umi also studied natural coloring from natural dye expert Hendri Suprpto in Yogyakarta. Armed with the knowledge gained during study, starting in 2005, Umi began training batik in a number of schools. Its main purpose is to generate a culture of "Cinta Batik" (“Love Batik”) among the younger generation [9]. In the 2005-2006 academic year, Umi taught batik at SMP and SMA Semesta Bilingual Boarding School in Semarang. “Batik Semarang 16” having its address at Jalan Bukit Kelapa Hijau V Blok BE no. 1-2, Bukit Kencana Jaya, Tembalang, Semarang. Apart from conducting training and producing batik, "Batik Semarang 16" also collaborates with government and private agencies for training programs. Several agencies collaborating with "Batik Semarang 16", namely: Faculty of Letters, Diponegoro University for batik training for students, Department of History, Faculty of Letters, Diponegoro University with the motifs of Semarang cultural icons. Because of Umi's persistence in the Semarang Batik handicraft business, "Sanggar Batik Semarang 16" is growing rapidly, having counters outside Semarang City, namely in Jakarta with the business name "Batik Setu" which is located on Jalan R.M. Kahfi II, South Jakarta, and “Batik Palu” in Palu, Central Sulawesi. Now, “Batik Semarang 16 also has a larger production house, which is located in Sambirejo Village, Tembalang District, Semarang. “Batik Semarang 16” has created hundreds of motifs, some of which are presented in the photos below.



**Fig. 2.** The name of the Motif : “Blekok Srondol!” (blekok is the name of bird and Srondol is the district in Semarang that has some tamarind trees inhabited by “blekoks”), produced by “Batik Semarang 16”, 2007 (source: The documentation of “Batik Semarang 16”)

The motif "Blekok Srondol" has obtained Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) with No. 040504. The originator of the idea for the naming of all motifs was Dewi Yuliati, a Semarang Batik researcher from Diponegoro University, who conducted a joint research with Umi in 2007, in some villages in the city of Semarang. The naming of the motifs is intended so that the characteristics of the Semarang Batik motifs are easily recognized and remembered by the wider community.



**Fig. 3.** The name of the motif: “Lawang Sewu” (Thousand doors, the name of the old building of Railway Office in Semarang), produced “Batik Semarang 16”, 2008 (source: Documentation of “Batik Semarang 16”)

The creation of the “Lawang Sewu” motif was inspired by the icon of Semarang City Lawangsewu Building, which is the former Nederlandsch Indische Spoorweg Maatschappij (NISM) Office, which is now one of the Cultural Heritage Buildings in Semarang City. The creation of this motif is expected to contribute knowledge in the field of railway history in Indonesia, and can contribute to interesting attractions in the tourism sector. This motif was created in 2007, in silk sheets, with a 4 week workmanship. The motive has received IPR with No. 040502.

### **3.2 .1 The Resilience of “Batik Semarang 16” in the Covid-19 Pandemic Era**

In this era of the covid-19 pandemic, there is not a single business sector that is not affected. Sales are “sluggish” and productivity is declining. However, the owner of the "Batik Semarang 16" studio has a strategy to survive, so that production does not stop completely. This batik craft business still employs 15 permanent employees, who are currently being prepared to work on patented batik materials to fill the batik museum, which is currently still under construction. The location of the museum is in the "Batik Semarang 16" studio complex. Productivity is still maintained by employing employees with a putting out system,



which serves orders outside the company's stock. In addition, "Batik Semarang 16" also innovated making batik on woven cloth, which was then made convection in the form of shirts and blouses. These craft items are still in demand, because the design is very distinctive, according with consumer demand, and different from other batik products [9]

### **3.3 "Batik Mutiara Hasta"**

"Batik Mutiara Hasta" was established in 2006, the owner is Rujiman Slamet, who was previously a batik craftsman in Jogjakarta. Rujiman Slamet came to Semarang in 2006, because he was asked by the Semarang Regional National Crafts Council to train batik for Kampung Batik residents who took part in the training organized by the Semarang City government. In this batik training, Rujiman Slamet saw the prospects of the batik business in Semarang City, because at that time the people of Semarang were at the peak of awareness to revive Semarang Batik. Rujiman looked for a place to set up a batik craft business, and finally he found a suitable place on Rogojembangan Timur Street No. 4, Tandang Village, Tembalang District, Semarang, Central Java. His e-mail address is: Mutiarahastabatik@gmail.com.

Rujiman Slamet manages the craft industry of "Batik Mutiara Hasta" very professionally. Its vision is: "to become the largest batik business support institution, trusted, and mutually beneficial by upholding the prevailing ethics and norms." "Batik Mutiara Hasta" Handicraft Industry has been recognized by the National Standardization Agency (BSN) by providing the Indonesian National Standard (SNI) on its batik products, namely: SNI 8302: 2016, SNI 8303: 2016, and SNI 8304: 2016. This SNI is the standard for the feasibility and quality of batik produced by "Batik Mutiara Hasta" [10]. The application of this SNI has been reviewed by the National Standardization Agency on February 5, 2019, and is declared feasible. Rujiman Slamet was able to recruit 19 people, 11 are permanent workers, and 8 are daily workers. Rujiman Slamet has a fairly high social spirit, in 2013 he also recruited deaf disabled workers, who were previously given training on how to make batik. According to Rujiman Slamet, now the deaf workers already have the skills and jobs in the batik craft sector. Now, the deaf workers who work in the craft industry of "Batik Mutiara Hasta" have formed a community called "Katunungu" (Komunitas Tuna Rungu = the Deaf Community) [11].

#### **3.3.1 Business Ethic in The Covid-19 Pandemic**

Starting in the first quarter of 2020, "Batik Mutiara Hasta" has also not been spared the impact of the covid-19 pandemic, and Rujiman Slamet is also working hard to be able to survive in this crisis situation. He did not want to release the employment relationship ("Pemutusan Hubungan Kerja"/PHK) for his workers, but the production system was changed. He still employs them by way of putting-out system, in the sense that workers are allowed to carry out production activities in their respective homes, not bound by working hours, and after the finished product is delivered to the business owner. Wages in this system are not fixed, but are calculated from how much, how fast, and how high the level of quality of the production is. The wages for making a piece of batik cloth ranged from IDR. 50.000 – 200.000. The selling price of written batik is around IDR. 300,000 – Rp.1.000,000, and stamped batik ranges from IDR. 90.000 – 150.000. In addition to surviving to continue to be able to produce, Rujiman Slamet also created a monumental batik motif, namely the "corona" motif with various variants. Below is an example of the "corona" batik motif [11].



**Fig. 4.** A Variant of Corona Batik motif, produced by “Batik Mutiara Hasta, 2021, Source: Photo collection of “Batik Mutiara Hasta”

### 3.4 “Zie Batik Semarang”

“Zie Batik Semarang” is located in Kampung Batik before moving to Kampung Alam Malon 15 RT.02 RW.06, Gunungpati Village, Gunungpati District, Semarang City. Based on information from Zazilah as the owner of “Zie Batik Semarang”, the reason for moving was that she needed more land for batik production [12]. “Zie Batik Semarang” is one of the Semarang City Batik pioneers, who received an award certificate as a Batik Pioneer from the Mayor of Semarang, Sukawi Sutarip, dated May 2, 2010. The award was given to commemorate the 463th Anniversary of Semarang City in 2010. Marheno and his wife Zazilah became batik makers who played an important role in the development of Semarang Batik. Below is presented an example of batik motifs produced by “Zie Batik Semarang.



**Fig. 5.** The name of the motif: “Bima Sakti” [Bima is a figure in the puppet with an honest and powerful character, one of the Five Pandavas], produced by “Zie Batik Semarang”, 2019. Source: Documentation of “Zie Batik Semarang”

#### 3.4.1 Strategy for Survival in the Time of the Covid-19 Pandemic

In the era of the Covid-19 pandemic, Zie Batik benefited greatly from his creativity in producing batik with this legendary motif. Because of this unique batik motif, many orders came from abroad, including the Netherlands, Germany and Japan. Zie Batik is included in the small industry category with around 13 workers. The workers are recruited from people around the place of business, who were initially given insight into the batik business and trained in how to make batik. In this pandemic era, no workers were released, even though in fact income also decreased as a result of the pandemic. However, Zie Batik took a strategy to overcome this by applying the putting-out production method, which produced batik based on orders. Savings during the pandemic era were also made by growing the plants themselves which can be used as batik coloring agents, especially indigo (indigo). In addition, Zie Batik also holds exhibitions, including in Jakarta, such as the one held on 22-25 May 2021. By doing this, Zie Batik is known in other cities, and has also given birth to many customers.

Zie Batik also always follows the trend of batik-making technology, namely by producing eco-prints with a coloring system like in the process of making batik [13].

### 3.5 “Batik Semarang Indah”

Eko Haryanto and his wife, Iin Windhi Indah, started to pursue a batik business after participating in a batik training organized by the Semarang City Government in 2006. Their batik business is named "Batik Semarang Indah", which is located at Kampung Batik Gedong No. 430, Rejomulyo sub-district, East Semarang District, Semarang City. "Batik Semarang Indah" is one of the batik craft industries assisted by the Semarang City Government which has succeeded in developing until now. "Batik Semarang Indah" produces hand-drawn and stamped batik, and creates batik motifs of its own creativity. Eko started producing Semarang Batik at the end of 2006. His batik fabrics have been marketed nationally, covering all of Java, Maluku, Sumatra, Kalimantan, and Papua. Eko guarantees that his batik will not fade. To fulfill this guarantee, Eko guarantees the buyer. This guarantee is in the form of replacing new items for hand-written batik that fades when washed up to three times. This was done as a marketing strategy effort. Apart from consistently producing batik, they are also able to properly manage the waste produced by batik. They have their own disposal of batik waste, so they don't pollute the surrounding environment. Thanks to their persistence and consistency in producing batik, the Government gave them the Semarang Batik Preservation Award Charter in 2010 [14].



**Fig. 6.** Iin Windhi Indah, a Semarang Batik craftsman in Kampung Batik, amidst her various products of Batik Semarang.

Thanks to the diligence and seriousness of the craftsmen in Kampung Batik in developing the Semarang Batik business, the Semarang City government, through the Cooperative Office for Small and Medium Enterprises, provides facilities for the craftsmen in the form of: training, exhibitions, and batik equipment. During the Covid-19 pandemic, a batik training was held in Rejomulyo Village which was attended by 30 participants. As well as in Kampung Batik, the training was also held at Gajah Mungkur Village which was attended by 20 participants, and the trainer was Iin Windhi Indah, a batik craftsman from Kampung Batik Village, who obtained her batik skills from the 2006 training held in collaboration between the Semarang City Government and Research Team from the Department of History, Diponegoro University.

In addition to the Cooperative Office, the State Electricity Company (PLN) also pays attention to the development of the Semarang Batik business by providing support for batik training, batik equipment, and professional certification assistance from the Professional

Certification Institute for 10 Semarang Batik craftsmen in Kampung Batik in 2017, building the gate of Kampung Batik in 2020, and the batik waste disposal site.

### 3.5.1 Strategy for Survival in the Time of Covid-19 Pandemic

These assistances from government agencies can foster the enthusiasm of batik craftsmen in Kampung Batik to be able to survive in an era of crisis due to the Covid-19 pandemic during 2020-2021. Some craftsmen can still produce batik based on orders, they do not dare to stock the products. The production system also uses a putting out system, in which the producers provide the means of production (cloths, wax, canting [tool for drawing batik motif] ), and the batik work is carried out in the workers' homes. The number of workers before the Covid-19 pandemic was around 5-15 people, but in this pandemic era, they were hired when there were orders. The craftsmen do the coloring themselves according to the order. The wage system is not weekly or monthly like before the Covid-19 pandemic, but based on the amount of work produced. A sheet of batik cloth costs between IDR 50,000 and 300,000, depending on the level of complexity. Making patterns of batik motifs costs between IDR 35,000 to 50,000 per sheet. The owners of "Batik Semarang Indah" also have a unique marketing system, namely by individual approach to their customers. In this marketing system they use whatsapp to send some new batik designs with prices around IDR 150.000 – 200.000. By this method of marketing they can successfully to attract some buyers [14]. The photos below are examples of Semarang batik motif designs during the COVID-19 pandemic era. The motif is made simple so that production costs are lower and the selling price is also cheaper when compared to batik with complex motifs.



**Fig. 7.** The name of the motif "Bangau Pertiwi" [the egret of mother land], made by "Batik Semarang Indah, in June 2021. Source: Picture collection of "Batik Semarang Indah"

### 3.6 Batik Pasha

Batik Pasha's address is "dokter Cipto" Street No. 31-33, Sarirejo, East Semarang, Semarang City. This batik business was founded in 2007 by Erna Setyowati. Ability in the batik business begins with participating in batik training organized by the *Dewan Kerajinan Daerah Kota Semarang* (Regional Craft Council of Semarang City) in 2006 in Kampung Batik, Semarang. On February 2, 2007, Batik Pasha held a grand opening for a batik training with 20 participants from Kampung Kebonagung residents and was also attended by the Mayor of Semarang, the Head of Semarang City Service, and the East Semarang Sub-District Head. Batik Pasha displays the icon of the city of Semarang and several regional legends in the city of Semarang such as "Wot Prahu", The figure below is the example of Semarang Batik produced by "Batik Pasha".



**Fig. 8.** “Wot Prahu” motif (Wot Prahu is the name of a village or Kampung in Semarang City), produced by Batik Pasha (Source: Picture Collection of “Batik Pasha”)

## 4 Conclusion

Based on this research on "Developing the Motifs and The Strategies to Survive of The Creative Industry of Semarang Batik", the following conclusions can be drawn:

- 1) Batik Semarang is produced by local craftsmen, so the motifs are distinctive, because they are created and developed according to the taste, intention, and creativity of local craftsmen and the needs of the supporting community.
- 2) Batik Semarang is a cultural heritage which is a form of acculturation of Javanese, Chinese, and European cultures. This cultural acculturation has been formed through a long and rooted historical process, so that it is very potential as a cultural identity for the city of Semarang which has had a heterogeneous population for a long time, especially Java, China, and Europe. Thus, Semarang batik has expressed multiculturalism in a beautiful and peaceful manner.
- 3) Every Semarang Batik craftsman has his own tips in creating batik motifs. In general, Semarang Batik motifs can be categorized as follows: environmental icons (for example: rivers, bridges, markets, churches, parks), traditions (for example: the dugderan tradition, The Performing arts “Gambang Semarang”), cultural symbols (for example: Semawis peacock, woven bamboo, tamarind leaves and fruit, peach tree), and legend (for example: The legend of “Ramayana”, “Joko Tarub-Nawang Wulan”, etc).
- 4) Residents of Semarang City continue to preserve and develop Semarang Batik with new spirits and new values. The spiritual and new values are framed in a management system which includes: development of a production system, enhancing its promotion and marketing system, and expanding the love of batik movement through trainings.
- 5) All the efforts made to preserve Semarang Batik show that the citizens of Semarang City still care about the richness of Semarang local culture. The spirit and act of loving local culture is needed to strengthen the cultural identity of Semarang in particular, and Indonesian culture in general, so as to further strengthen the position of national culture in the midst of the expansion of global culture.
- 6) The Semarang Batik handicraft industry is one of the economic assets of the city of Semarang, because all the time batik handicraft products with their distinctive and unique character always have people supporting them, who are loyal to use them as clothing, souvenirs, uniforms, and so on.

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