

**WEAVING PHILOSOPHY, BUILDING TOGETHERNESS:
INTRODUCING BATIK TO THE YOUNGER GENERATIONS OF INDONESIA AND MALAYSIA**

Ari Kamayanti, Novrida Qudsi Lutfillah, Aji Dedi Mulawarman

Politeknik Negeri Malang, Jl. Soekarno Hatta 9, Malang, Indonesia
Universitas Brawijaya, Jl. MT Haryono 135, Malang, Indonesia
*ari.kamayanti@polinema.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This community service program aims to provide in-depth guidance on batik as one of the cultural objects of the Indonesian archipelago that is rich in life philosophy and religious values. The method used is a hybrid approach, combining offline and online guidance sessions. Offline activities are carried out directly at batik centers, where participants have the opportunity to practice the batik process firsthand. After that, online mentoring continues by presenting professional batik observers and activists from batik art studios to enrich the participants' understanding. The target participants in this activity are participants from Indonesia and Malaysia. The main output of this activity is a scientific paper compiled by the participants, which reflects their understanding of the cultural heritage of batik.

KEYWORDS: Batik; Cultural heritage; Nusantara Paradigm; International Service

INTRODUCTION

Global information disruption and technological acceleration have triggered the uprooting of the nation's original noble knowledge from its cultural context, reducing its meaning to merely an economic commodity. In this era of globalization and accelerated information flow, unfortunately, the philosophical values and local wisdom embedded in cultural products tend to be displaced by market logic and the speed of trends, shifting the primary function of culture from spiritual heritage and identity to assets calculated based on material gain. This process of "de-sacralization" threatens the sustainability of cultural substance. One of the legacies facing this challenge is batik. Batik among young people is also fading because young people prefer foreign fashion styles (Utami and Demartoto, 2022). Although recognized by UNESCO, understanding of the motifs, rules, and rituals surrounding its creation is often lost, replaced by a simplistic understanding that batik is a fashion product whose main function is to generate profit and follow trends.

Cultural elements such as batik, amid commercialization and the rapid flow of information, must be preserved through re-contextualization and education based on local wisdom. A deep understanding (not merely functional) of the symbolism and philosophical values in each motif of batik, such as Sido Mukti or Parang Rusak, is crucial to prevent it from becoming merely a meaningless print on fabric (Sariroh et al, 2022). Therefore, educational and research institutions have a vital role in reviving the 'noble knowledge' (indigenous knowledge) that forms the foundation of culture. Without instilling awareness of the 'intrinsic

value' and 'social value' contained in culture, heritage such as batik will lose its spirit and become nothing more than silent artifacts that are traded, failing to fulfill their main function as a pillar of national identity and collective morality.

The Peneleh Research Institute (PRI), as an international institution engaged in research that is deeply concerned with cultural preservation, is naturally concerned about this situation. As an international research institution, PRI's network of cooperation extends not only to institutions in Indonesia but also abroad, such as Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM). In early 2025, PRI was asked to assist USM students, one of the higher education institutions included in the QS world ranking of the top 200 universities, to learn about batik.

"Batik Arts and Making" is an initiative born out of this concern. Together with the Center for Policy Research (CPR) USM, PRI collaborates in community service at the international level. This article is one of the results of PRI's international community service activities, targeting the USM academic community.

METHOD

On August 6, 2025, the "Batik Arts and Making" activity was carried out with PRI's partner, Soendari Batik Malang. The partner provided teachers, batik practitioner assistants, batik tools, and a practice venue. The community service activity was held at Soendari Batik, with the majority of participants (15 people) from USM and the rest from other universities. The activity involved mentoring foreign and domestic participants in learning batik.



Figure 1. Activity Flyer

This activity was announced on the penelehresearch.institute website and social media. Figure 1 shows the flyer used to spread information about this activity. The activity started at 8 a.m. and ended at 12 p.m. The various activities included listening to presentations about batik and its values, batik-making practice, and ending with a showcase of Indonesian batik products, especially Malang-an batik.

The accompanying mentors from PRI were the authors of this article, Dr. Ari Kamayanti, Dr. Aji Dedi Mulawarman, and Dr. Novrida Qudsi Lutfillah. This activity was also attended by student mentors from USM, Dr. Illisriyani Ismail and her team from CPR USM.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Established in 2015, PRI focuses on action research and collaborates with various parties, such as indigenous communities, researchers, government, corporations, and others, with the aim of community empowerment. Although Peneleh Research Institute is a research institution with a broad scope of work (including economics, social, and religion), its role in preserving culture is a top priority. This is also related to the Nusantara Paradigm that is currently being developed.

PRI emphasizes the application of the Nusantara Paradigm (Mulawarman 2023) in its research methodology. This paradigm is a perspective or framework of thinking that draws from the wealth of knowledge and local wisdom of the Nusantara (Indonesia). By promoting and utilizing this paradigm, PRI hopes to elevate and preserve Indonesia's indigenous knowledge and local wisdom as a valid scientific basis, and to integrate local cultural values into academic studies and empowerment activities.

PRI regularly holds international conferences (e.g., International Conference on Religious and Cultural Sciences) and publishes high-quality research results in books and academic journals. Through these activities, PRI plays a role in documenting and examining various aspects of culture and religion, making them accessible as learning materials and scientific references both nationally and internationally, and spreading understanding of Indonesian culture to the global stage through research collaboration and international agendas.

In essence, PRI places great emphasis on education, research, and academic activism by placing the values and knowledge of the archipelago as the main framework for solving social problems and achieving prosperity. This is a form of PRI's commitment to the decolonization of science.

The "Batik Arts and Making" activity is in line with the implementation of this Nusantara Paradigm. On August 6, the event began with a presentation on batik. A representative from Soendari Batik explained the philosophical values behind all batik motifs:

"Yes, that's how life is... we can complain about life. [Batik] ultimately serves as a reminder. [For example] this motif is called Sidomulyo. Every bride and groom in Java must wear this motif. Why? It represents the parents' hope that their children will have a glorious future."



Figure 2. Presentation by Soendari Batik Assistant

Batik is God's teaching through art, and it accompanies Javanese people throughout their lives, for example when a woman is pregnant. Batik is a prayer in art:

"In Java, there is a tradition called mitoni, where a woman who is seven months pregnant is dressed in a cloth with seven motifs during a Javanese ceremony. Everyone who attends the ceremony says, 'Eh, it's fitting to change it again before that, right? It's fitting, isn't it?'"

The mitoni ceremony is a hope conveyed to the baby that their life will always be beautiful in the future. The guide also explained the parang motif, which signifies the dynamism of the waves of life, reminding us of the value of struggle. Therefore, certain batik motifs are better used for specific activities that are in line with the expected values.

The next activity is batik practice. Participants are accompanied by batik assistants and taught how to use a canting. Some documentation related to this activity is shown in Figures 3-5.



Figure 3. Participants of the “Batik Arts and Making” activity



Figure 4. Batik Mentoring

CONCLUSION

The Peneleh Research Institute (PRI), established in 2015, plays a central role in community empowerment through action research by prioritizing cultural preservation, which is explicitly manifested through the development of the Nusantara Paradigm. This paradigm is an epistemological framework sourced from local wisdom and indigenous Indonesian knowledge, serving as a scientific basis for integrating cultural values into academic studies, research, and social action. Through regular programs such as international conferences and scientific publications, PRI actively documents, examines, and disseminates a deep understanding of various cultural aspects, affirming its commitment to the decolonization of science by placing Nusantara values as the main framework for problem solving and achieving prosperity through the Nusantara Paradigm.

PRI's attention to culture is concretely manifested in activities such as "Batik Arts and Making," which serves as a tangible embodiment of the Nusantara Paradigm. This activity highlights that cultural products such as batik are not merely economic commodities, but rather a medium for teaching God (prayer in artwork) and a philosophical reminder that accompanies human life's journey. This activity is PRI's effort to restore the understanding of batik's material functionality to its noble value among the international community.

REFERENCES:

- Kamayanti, A., Lutfillah, N.Q., Sokarina, A., Suhendri, H., Briando, B., Ekasari, K. Darmayasa, I.N. (2023). *Metodologi Paradigma Nusantara*. Penerbit Peneleh. Malang.
- Mulawarman, A.D. (2023). *Nusantara Paradigm*. Peneleh Publishing House, Malang.
- Sariroh, L, Aulia, R.N, and Purnawirawan, O. (2022). Systematic Literature Review: The Role of Local Wisdom of Indonesian People in Preserving Batik Culture in the Era of Industrial Revolution 4.0.
- Utami, C. M., & Demartoto, A. (2022). The Metroseksual Student Lifestyle as a Representation of New Masculinity (Case Study of Metroseksual Students at Sebelas Maret University). *Journal of Development and Social Change* , 5 (1), 1–10.