

Hybridity in Contemporary Craft Art in Yogyakarta: Negotiating Local Identity in a Global Context

Ernawati^{1,2*}, Sri Margana³ and Martinus Dwi Marianto⁴

¹Doctoral Program in Performing and Visual Arts Studies, Universitas Gadjah Mada, 55281, Indonesia

²Department of Visual Communication Design, Faculty of Engineering, Universitas Maarif Hasyim Latif, 61257, Indonesia

³Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Universitas Gadjah Mada, 55281, Indonesia

⁴Faculty of Art and Design, Institute Seni Indonesia Yogyakarta, 55188, Indonesia

(*Corresponding author's e-mail: s.margana@ugm.ac.id)

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Abstract

This study analyzes hybrid aesthetics in contemporary craft art in Yogyakarta through a descriptive qualitative approach and contextual analysis. The study focused on how visual and material hybridity is formed, negotiated, and interpreted by artisan-artists as a strategy to maintain local identity amid the mobility of ideas and values in the global art scene. The findings show that hybridity does not end with the combination of traditional and modern idioms but serves as a space for articulating ideas, spirituality, and layered cultural awareness. The artists' creative process reveals patterns of recontextualizing local values, producing new aesthetic forms that resonate with the discourse of international contemporary art. This research contributes to understanding craft as a material-cultural practice that actively responds to global changes through subtle, reflective identity-negotiation strategies. By positioning hybrid aesthetics as a process rather than merely a visual product, this study expands the discourse on the role of craft in building a dialogue between locality and globality in the contemporary art ecology.

Keywords: Hybrid aesthetics, Contemporary craft art, Cultural identity, Art globalization

Introduction

In contemporary art, craft is no longer understood merely as traditional production, but as an artistic practice that combines materiality, technique, and cultural reflection. In Yogyakarta, this change has emerged through intense interaction between local heritage and global discourse, forming a hybrid aesthetic that develops from the direct relationship between hands, materials, and social context. The idea of hybridity, as proposed by Bhabha (1994) and Papastergiadis (2005), positions this process as a space of negotiation, where local values intertwine with global influences to produce new forms and meanings that are neither entirely traditional nor entirely modern.

The acceleration of information exchange, technology, and cultural networks (Appadurai, 1996)

offers Yogyakarta craft artists opportunities to explore traditional techniques such as batik, carving, and weaving through experimental and conceptual approaches. In many practices, materials are present not only as a medium but also as an epistemic entity that shapes creative thinking, fosters ecological awareness, and produces new readings of spirituality and identity. This approach aligns with the trend in craft studies that emphasizes embodied knowledge, human-material relations, and the reflective capacity of the making process.

However, amid these developments, craft remains underrepresented in the discourse of global contemporary art. The literature shows that modern and conceptual aesthetic hierarchies still place craft as a

manual skill rather than an intellectual practice capable of producing discourse on identity and culture (Adamson, 2013; Smith, 2009). This gap confirms that, although hybrid aesthetics are increasingly prominent in Yogyakarta, systematic studies explaining how hybridity is formed through cultural negotiations, material choices, and artists' creative processes remain limited. To fill this void, this study uses a descriptive qualitative approach and contextual analysis to examine the connections between material processes, creative strategies, and cultural identity dynamics in contemporary craft practices.

Based on this, this study has three main objectives: (1) to identify the forms and characteristics of hybrid aesthetics in contemporary craft art in Yogyakarta; (2) to analyze the mechanisms of negotiation between local values and global influences in the creative process; and (3) to reveal the philosophical, spiritual, and reflective values that underlie the exploration of techniques and materials. Through this focus, the research positions craft not only as a visual object but as a knowledge practice that combines embodied experience, cultural awareness, and artistic innovation.

Conceptually and methodologically, this research contributes to contemporary craft studies by providing a deeper understanding of how hybrid aesthetics function as an arena for identity negotiation in a global context. In addition to strengthening the position of Yogyakarta craft in the transnational art discourse, this research affirms that hybridity in craft is a dynamic cultural discourse space rather than merely a combination of forms or styles.

By answering these questions, this study aims to identify and analyze the forms of hybrid aesthetics that arise from contemporary craft practices in Yogyakarta; explain the cultural negotiation process that occurs in the combination of local and global elements; and explore the philosophical, spiritual, and reflective values that underlie the creation of craft works as an aesthetic strategy and a statement of cultural identity amid the tide of globalization. Through this approach, this study offers conceptual and methodological contributions to the study of craft art and contemporary cultural aesthetics, particularly in understanding Yogyakarta craft as an art practice oriented not only to form but also to awareness, experience, and life values. Thus, this study is expected to enrich the discourse on craft art as

a dynamic, philosophical practice with a high capacity for negotiation in the face of global change.

Literature review

The development of contemporary art shows an increasingly strong connection between material practices, social contexts, and cultural mobility. Smith (2009) defines the field of contemporary art as an open network that allows for cross-media and cross-regional interactions. Within this framework, Hall's (1997) thinking on identity as a constantly negotiated representational process becomes relevant for understanding craft as a practice that aligns with cultural dynamics. Uneven global flows (Appadurai, 1996) and ambivalent spaces where cultures meet (Papastergiadis, 2005) shape conditions of production that enable hybridity to become both an aesthetic and cultural strategy, especially in post-colonial contexts (Alexander & Sharma, 2013). In line with this, Jeffery and Minissale (2009) assert that reading contemporary art practices requires simultaneous attention to local history and global constructions.

In the discourse of craft studies, craft is no longer placed solely as manual labor, but as a conceptual practice that involves material relations, knowledge, and social context. Kikuchi (2015) states that *kriya* operates between tradition and post-colonial history, while Corey (2023) emphasizes its contribution to contemporary art through the exploration of narrative, materiality, and social issues. The transformation of Indonesian *kriya* takes place through a dialectic between traditional values and innovation (Zam et al., 2022).

Barriyah et al. (2025) and Suardana (2020) show that philosophical and spiritual dimensions remain the frame of reference for shifts in modern craft aesthetics, while developments in Asia integrate technology into craft practices (Lin et al., 2025; Al-Zadjali, 2025). Similar negotiations of local knowledge within global systems are also noted in the Indian context (DeNicola & Wilkinson-Weber, 2020).

Yogyakarta provides a space that allows the articulation of local identity to take place in interaction with global networks. The city's cultural identity is projected through mechanisms of *paradiplomacy* (Issundari et al., 2021) and a multicultural arts ecosystem (Sucitra, 2021). In an urban framework, craft is also interpreted as a representation of material identity

(Lufiani et al., 2019). Studies on batik (Kongyok, 2019), contemporary Javanese theater (Hatley, 2005), and regionally oriented architecture (Sari, 2019; Permatasari et al., 2023) show how locality is reformulated through creative practices. The historical foundation of Yogyakarta craftsmanship, as noted by Fibiona and Harnoko (2021), continues to inform contemporary values and aesthetics.

Technological developments have expanded the field of hybridity in craft. The concept of postproduction (Bourriaud, 2002), the hybrid basketry model (Zoran, 2013), and the practices of artists who move between theory and skill (Lam, 2020) show how traditional and digital elements intertwine. The impact of technological change on aesthetic perception (Alsaleh, 2024), ecological orientation in Southeast Asian art (Yi & Abdullah, 2024), and cross-cultural design practices (Darmawan, 2017) confirm that contemporary craft operates within an increasingly complex production landscape.

In the context of cultural globalization, adaptive local mechanisms sustain traditional values (Bollig & Berzborn, 2004). The diversity of Indonesian art strengthens a pluralistic national identity (Jermias H. Van Harling, 2022), while spiritual and philosophical values maintain the continuity of local aesthetics (Sumantra et al., 2021). Ethnographic reflections, such as those on Māori art (Perzycka-Borowska, 2025), reveal patterns that align with the relationship between Yogyakarta crafts and local identity.

Although studies on visual hybridity, technological innovation, and the continuity of tradition are extensive, no integrated research has examined the relationship among aesthetic hybridity, cultural identity negotiation, and spiritual awareness in contemporary Yogyakarta craft practices. This article offers a conceptual contribution by positioning Yogyakarta craft as a space of interaction between local materiality, global dynamics, and cultural reflection, thereby generating new insights into hybridity in Southeast Asian craft studies.

Research method

This study applied a qualitative descriptive approach with contextual and interpretive analysis to examine the forms and meanings of hybridity in contemporary craft art practices in Yogyakarta. This

approach was chosen because the study focuses on artistic experiences, symbolic meanings, and cultural negotiations that cannot be measured quantitatively (Strauss & Corbin, 2007). The researcher serves as the primary instrument (human instrument) in the process of observation, interpretation, and critical reflection (Meloy, 2006; Brown & Baker, 2007).

The research was conducted in Yogyakarta, one of the centers of contemporary craft art development in Indonesia. Informants were selected using purposive sampling based on the following criteria: (1) active artists in contemporary craft art practice; (2) works exhibiting a hybrid aesthetic tendency in terms of materials, techniques, forms, or concepts; and (3) prior involvement in contemporary art exhibitions or networks. The research data consists of primary data in the form of observations and semi-structured interviews with craft artists, as well as secondary data in the form of exhibition catalogs, visual documentation, audiovisual archives, artist statements, journals, and related literature. The scope of data collection includes observations of several studios, exhibition spaces, the production process of artworks, and documentation of selected works that represent hybrid aesthetic practices in Yogyakarta.

Data collection was conducted through participatory observation, semi-structured interviews, documentation, and literature review. Observations were conducted in studios, exhibition spaces, and creative environments to observe the exploration of materials, visual idioms, techniques, and the relationship between traditional and contemporary elements in the works. Interviews were conducted to understand the creative process, aesthetic considerations, and the artists' strategies in negotiating local identity amidst global art discourses. Documentation included photographs of the works, exhibition catalogs, archives of the creative process, and audiovisual recordings.

Data analysis was conducted descriptively and interactively through the stages of identification, data reduction, coding, categorization, and thematic interpretation. The analysis process focused on themes such as material hybridity, cultural reinterpretation, identity negotiation, and the integration of traditional elements with contemporary approaches. Data validity is ensured through triangulation of sources, methods,

and documentation. Interpretation is conducted holistically by connecting empirical data, the socio-cultural context of Yogyakarta, and global contemporary art developments to understand hybrid aesthetics as a strategy for identity negotiation in contemporary craft art.

Finding and discussion

The dynamics of aesthetic hybridization and identity

The relationship between driving factors, the process of hybridization, aesthetic results, and cultural implications in contemporary craft art in Yogyakarta is summarized in Fig. 1. This chart shows how local and global dynamics shape hybrid aesthetics that have

implications for the development of cultural identity in the contemporary realm.

The process of hybridization occurs when craft artists combine traditional elements such as techniques, motifs, or local symbols with forms, materials, and concepts that originate from outside. This process is not linear; instead, it involves stages of exploration, negotiation, and reinterpretation of the cultural meanings inherent in the work. For example, the use of industrial materials such as resin or metal in traditional craft forms reflects artists’ efforts to present a new visual identity that remains rooted in local values. This hybridization demonstrates how artists act as mediating agents, negotiating the boundaries between tradition and modernity.

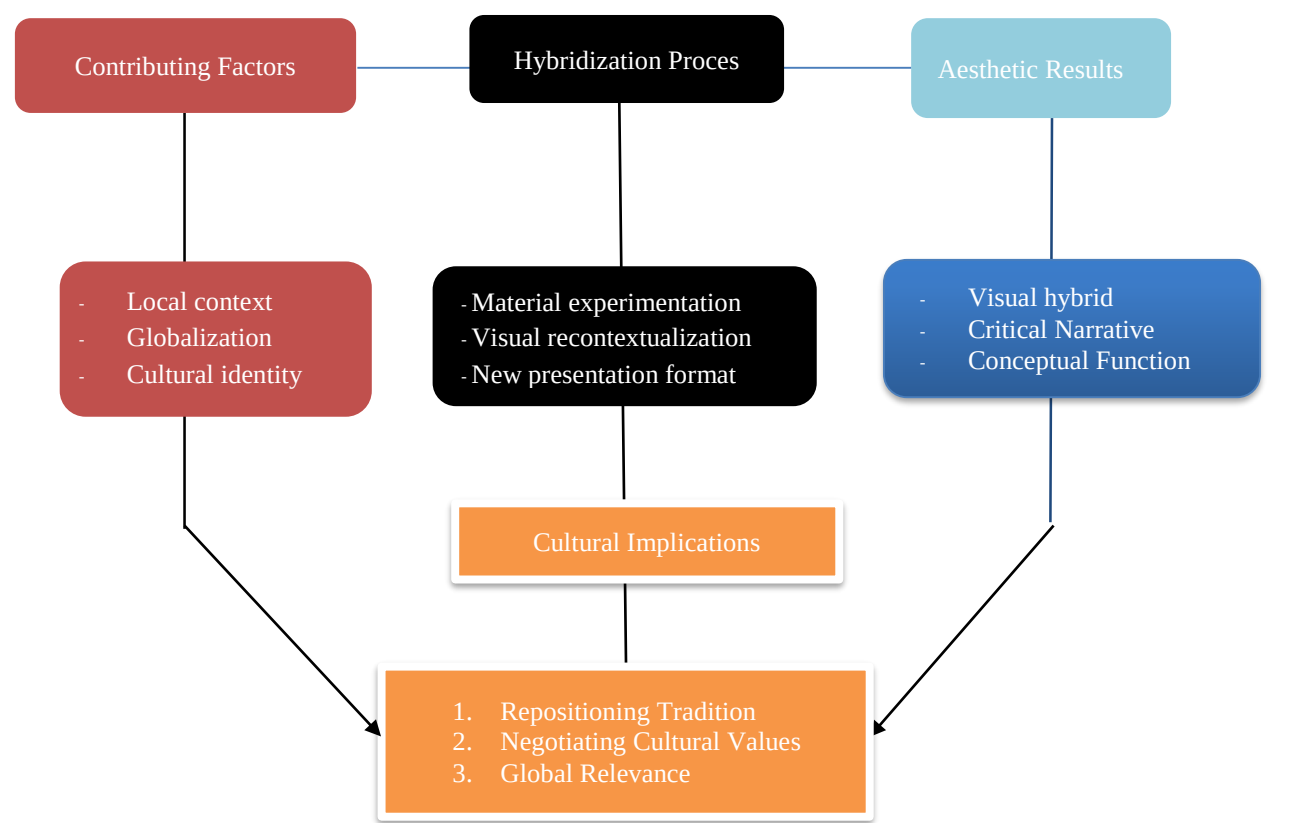


Figure 1 The dynamic relationship in the contemporary craft
Source: Analysis by researchers (2025)

The aesthetic results of this process display an eclectic yet contextual visual character, signaling the birth of a hybrid aesthetic form unique to Yogyakarta. This aesthetic not only represents cultural diversity but also reflects a process of adaptation and resistance to the dominance of global values. Its cultural implications lie in the formation of a new, open, dynamic, and dialogical

cultural identity. Contemporary craft art in Yogyakarta thus becomes not only a medium for aesthetic expression but also an arena for negotiating cultural identity amid the challenges of modernity and globalization.

The process of hybridization in contemporary craft art in Yogyakarta does not occur linearly. It is a series

of creative and cultural stages that are intertwined and form a recurring cycle of exploration, negotiation, and reinterpretation. These three stages mark the dynamics of creating new aesthetics that originate from the encounter between local traditions and global influences.

As Bhabha (1994) stated, the concept of Third Space is a hybrid space where two cultural systems meet and produce new meanings. In the context of Yogyakarta craft art, hybridization occurs when artists work across boundaries between traditional values and the discourse of modernity, producing aesthetic expressions that are no longer purely traditional or entirely modern, but relatively new forms born from the negotiation of cultural identity.

Figure 2 illustrates the hybridization process in contemporary craft art in Yogyakarta, which occurs iteratively and reflectively through three main stages: Exploration, Negotiation, and Reinterpretation. First, the exploration stage is the initial, open phase of the hybridization process, where craft artists begin their search for new forms, ideas, and materials without the rigid constraints of tradition. Exploration arises from the awareness that novelty can only emerge through a reinterpretation of tradition and the courage to challenge established norms.

In Yogyakarta, exploration flourishes thanks to a progressive social and artistic educational environment, including ISI Yogyakarta, alternative art communities, and creative spaces that foster freedom of experimentation. At this stage, craft artists often:

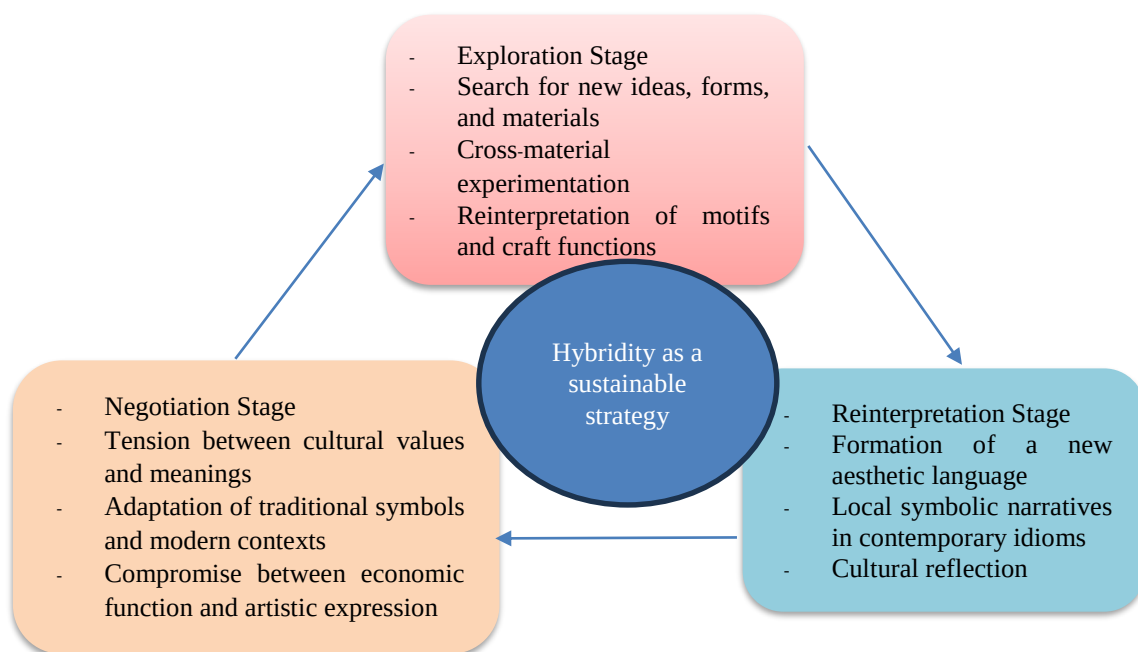


Figure 2 The hybridization cycle in contemporary craft art in Yogyakarta

Source: Analysis by researchers, (2025)

- a. Combine local and industrial materials, such as wood, clay, metal, resin, or recycled materials;
- b. Reinterpret traditional motifs using conceptual or abstract approaches;
- c. Interpret the function of crafts in unconventional ways, for example, transforming utilitarian objects into installations or symbolic works.

Exploration is not only about form, but also about opening up discourse on how crafts can speak in a global language without losing their local context. According

to Canclini (1995), this process is characteristic of hybrid societies, in which artists no longer belong to a single cultural sphere but “cross boundaries to create new combinations.”

Second, negotiation is a phase in which craft artists face tensions of value and meaning between two cultural poles. At this stage, artists are no longer merely experimenting but begin to question the position and meaning of the elements they are processing. This negotiation can be understood as a process of cultural

mediation (Hall, 1997), in which cultural identity and values are not static but are continually forming and adjusting to the social context. In contemporary craft in Yogyakarta, negotiation is evident when:

a. Artists adapt the meaning of traditional symbols to remain relevant in a modern context (for example, transforming the parang motif into a visual structure that signifies strength and continuity, rather than a symbol of feudal power).

b. There is a compromise between economic function and artistic expression, as some crafts now also serve as commodities in the creative economy.

c. Artists negotiate the aesthetic and ideological position of craft works as both cultural heritage and free individual expression.

The negotiation stage reflects the internal dynamics of the hybridization process: a tug-of-war between preserving traditional roots and responding to the challenges of the times. This stage has given rise to a new awareness that tradition is not a frozen past, but a source of value that can continue to be cultivated in the context of modernity.

Third, the reinterpretation stage is the peak of the hybridization process, where the outcomes of exploration and negotiation are manifested in a new aesthetic form that imbues traditional elements with fresh meaning. At this stage, craft artists no longer combine two different elements; they create new interpretations that affirm Yogyakarta's contemporary cultural identity. Reinterpretation is evident in:

a. The use of symbolic narratives drawn from local values, but presented with modern visual idioms.

b. The formation of a distinctive aesthetic language, for example, a combination of traditional patterns with minimalist geometric compositions, or conventional carving techniques with contemporary installation forms.

c. Works that carry social criticism and cultural reflection, such as issues of urbanization, ecology, or globalization, are processed through craft.

As Bhabha asserts, hybrid spaces do not merely create a mixture of forms but offer new positions from which to view and interpret identity. In this case, reinterpretation becomes a means for craft artists to project an "open, dynamic, and dialogical cultural identity," a characteristic that is now prominent in contemporary craft art in Yogyakarta.

Research findings indicate that the process of hybridization in contemporary craft art in Yogyakarta does not result in a break with local traditions, but rather fosters a transformation of the meaning and function of existing cultural elements. Javanese cosmological values, batik traditions, wayang imagery, material knowledge, and traditional craft skills remain the foundation of artists' artistic practices, even when expressed through different mediums, techniques, and contexts. Through processes of exploration, negotiation, and reinterpretation, these elements are recontextualized to respond to technological developments, social dynamics, and global discourses. Therefore, hybridity in contemporary craft art in Yogyakarta does not erase local cultural identity but strengthens its continuity through the creation of new meanings relevant to the present-day context.

Dynamics and cycles of hybridization

The stages of hybridization through exploration, negotiation, and reinterpretation do not occur sequentially and are not closed, but are reflective and dynamic. Each work can be the beginning of a new cycle of the following hybridization process. This process shows that hybridity is not an end state but a continuous strategy for negotiating meaning, maintaining identity, and expanding the visual language of craft amid globalization. Thus, contemporary craft art in Yogyakarta functions not only as an aesthetic product but also as a cultural meeting space where artists, traditions, and communities interact to shape a new cultural narrative unique to Yogyakarta, namely a tradition that continues to be renewed.

The process of hybridization in contemporary craft art in Yogyakarta does not occur in a linear or final manner, but is iterative, reflective, and open to change. The three main stages of exploration, negotiation, and reinterpretation do not occur in a rigid sequence, but operate in a creative cycle that is interconnected and constantly repeating. Each work can serve as a starting point for the next cycle of hybridization, in which artists revisit the relationship among tradition, modernity, and the surrounding social context.

In a theoretical framework, this dynamic aligns with Homi K. Bhabha's (1994) concept of cultural hybridity, which emphasizes that hybridity is not the result of mixing but a strategy for negotiating meaning

in the in-between space. This space becomes a productive area for the formation of new identities that are neither entirely traditional nor modern, but creatively borrow from and reinterpret both. Meanwhile, Néstor García Canclini (1995) asserts that hybrid practices in art and culture reflect postmodern society's efforts to reorganize traditions to make them relevant to the tide of globalization. In Yogyakarta, craft artists reinterpret tradition as a source of dynamic ideas, as synthesized in Table 1 below.

Research findings indicate that the hybridization process undertaken by contemporary craft artists in Yogyakarta is rooted in craft traditions that have long flourished in this region. These traditions include Yogyakarta batik, which flourished within both the royal court and the wider community; the ceramic and pottery traditions that developed in Kasongan; woodcraft, which is prevalent in Bantul and the surrounding areas; the wayang tradition as part of Javanese visual culture; and various craft practices utilizing local materials such as bamboo, metal, and textiles. These traditions not only provide technical skills but also embody philosophical, symbolic, and cosmological values that serve as a source of inspiration for contemporary craft artists in developing a new visual language.

The connection between local traditions and contemporary practices is evident in the artists' choices of materials, techniques, and symbolic systems. Agus Ismoyo and Nia Fliam draw from Javanese batik traditions, exploring traditional batik motifs such as kawung, parang, and Javanese cosmological teachings, which they then transform into contemporary installation formats. Dona Prawira Arissuta and Noor Sudiyati develop ceramic works that connect with the pottery and ceramic traditions of Yogyakarta through explorations of form, glaze, and new conceptual narratives.

Dedi Sofianto draws on his knowledge of woodcraft and traditional carpentry as the foundation for developing technology-based kinetic works, while Lejar Daniartana Hukubun interprets the traditions of wayang and batik as a visual language that intersects with cross-cultural narratives. These findings demonstrate that local identity in Yogyakarta's contemporary craft art does not exist merely as a decorative symbol, but is realized through the concrete transformation of materials, techniques, and cultural values rooted in local craft traditions.

Tradition is not treated as a closed system, but as a cultural resource that can be processed through experimentation with materials, techniques, and concepts. In the context of Yogyakarta, this process can be seen in the way craft artists reinterpret local traditions as a source of dynamic ideas. Traditions are not treated as closed systems that must be preserved literally, but as cultural resources that can be processed, shifted, and enriched through formal, material, and conceptual experiments.

Fariz Hibernasi combines traditional batik techniques with brass metal craftsmanship (Fig. 3). His installation work, for example, is titled *Nusantara Telah Kembali* (The Archipelago Has Returned), Batik on Primisima and Brass Metal, 150 x 150 cm series (2024), presented at the UNDAGI 2025 major craft art exhibition, presents a narrative about ecological relations with a visualization of the beauty of the forest as a paradise and the arcaha of ancestral culture and the role of batik as a local culture through a craft language that transcends functionality and decorativeness. The exploration phase is evident in the excavation of traditional techniques and the use of alternative materials; negotiation occurs when craft techniques are placed in the context of contemporary art galleries; and reinterpretation emerges in symbolic visualizations that challenge the boundaries between craft, fine art, and social activism.

Table 1 Analysis of the works of contemporary craft artists based on the stages of hybridization

Contemporary craft art	Exploration stage	Negotiation stage	Reinterpretation stage	Contextual meaning/findings
The Path to Silk Routes (2024) — Ceramic, Acrylic on Canvas & Board, Ø 80 cm	Exploration of traditional pottery techniques and painting on ceramic surfaces	Functional negotiation: jars as display objects, not everyday items	Reinterpretation of the fable depicted in the reliefs of Sujiwan Temple in modern visual language, combining industrial textures and local symbols.	Affirming craft as a medium for cosmological reflection (water–earth–fire–air) and the preservation of local culture in a global context.
Linggayoni (2012) — Silk Habutae, 256 × 85 cm, 3D batik installation	Experiments with three-dimensional structures in batik, combining writing, stamping, and sewing techniques.	Cross-cultural collaboration; negotiation between Javanese batik traditions and the global context.	The symbolization of the spiritual value of “Pusaka Semen Rama” as inner light and simplicity of life	Presenting batik as an intercultural and spiritual space, craftsmanship becomes a cross-cultural meditative practice.
Crocodile in the Maro River (2018) — Hand-drawn batik, Remasol dye, 200 × 90 cm	Visual exploration of wayang, a Javanese cultural form, and the folk tales of the Malind tribe in Papua.	Combining manual and digital techniques, negotiating cross-ethnic identities.	Presenting wayang visuals as a medium for intercultural dialogue	Demonstrating the formation of a hybrid identity between Java and Papua, craft is a narrative of cultural unity.
Preserving Energy (2024) — Clay Stoneware Pacitan + Singkawang, Temperature 1280°C, 42×47×14 cm	Exploration of local materials from two regions and oxidation firing techniques.	Negotiating traditional combustion processes with modern systems	Representation of natural energy balance through organic forms.	Representing the ecological awareness regarding the relationship between humans and nature.
Manta (2024) — Mixed media, oil paint, dynamo, motion sensor, brass, stainless steel, 50×50×50 cm, Exhibition at UNDAGI 2025	Exploring the combination of woodworking techniques with mechanical elements.	Negotiating craft functions: from static crafts to kinetic installations.	The symbolization of movement as a metaphor for life and human-technology interaction.	Reflecting the adaptation of crafts to the digital age and interactive technology



Figure 3 Fariz Hibernasi. Nusantara Telah Kembali (The Archipelago Has Returned), 2024

Source: Researcher documentation (2025)



Figure 4 Dona Prawita Arrisuta. Ceramic craftwork

Source: Researcher documentation, (2025)

Figure 4 illustrates that this ceramic craftwork is in the form of a jar, with visuals that adopt the local culture of the Candi Sujiwan relief story, using ceramic craft and painting techniques by artist Dona Prawita

Arrisuta. She is also an academic in ceramic art and has developed a hybrid practice that combines traditional pottery techniques with a modern design approach. She combines local cultural visuals through painting

techniques on ceramic mediums, creating works that reinterpret tradition. In her work, Dona reinterprets fables from the reliefs of Sujiwon Temple in widely recognized traditional vessel forms, such as jars, plates, bowls, and other furnishings. These objects feature industrial-textured surfaces or experimental glazes that enrich their visual character.

The artist also transfers the function of jars, which are generally used as decorative or functional objects,

into exhibition spaces as contemporary craft artworks. Through this innovation, Dona expands the boundaries of the ceramic medium by combining painting techniques on three-dimensional surfaces and two-dimensional canvases. Local cultural visuals processed from the reliefs of Sujiwon Temple are arranged with a balanced composition between craft elements and painting techniques, creating a strong aesthetic unity.



Figure 5 Dona Prawita Arrisuta. The path to silk routes, ceramic, acrylic on canvas and board

Source: Researcher documentation (2025)

Whether through her pottery, ceramic paintings, or other crafts, Dona presents artistic and philosophical images rooted in local culture while remaining responsive to the dynamics of the global market. From a material perspective, it involves the basic elements of water, earth, fire, and air as symbols of awareness of cosmological balance in local culture. This approach emphasizes that Dona's works are not merely visual experiments, but also reflect ecological and spiritual awareness in the creative process.

Furthermore, in the field of textiles, artists Agus Ismoyo and Nia Fliam showcase their exploration of contemporary batik craft, combining natural dyes, stamped batik techniques, and sewing techniques with experiments in three-dimensional structures and cross-cultural narratives. Both affirm craft as an intercultural space where collaboration between artists and communities is part of a sustainable cycle of art creation. Through this approach, Javanese culture and its

cosmological values are communicated again in a contextual and lively visual form.

One of their representative works is Linggayoni (2012), which is rooted in the image of Pusaka Semen

Rama, a traditional Javanese batik motif. This work uses 256 x 85 cm habita silk fabric, arranged in a three-dimensional installation in the form of a hanging sarong (Figure 6).

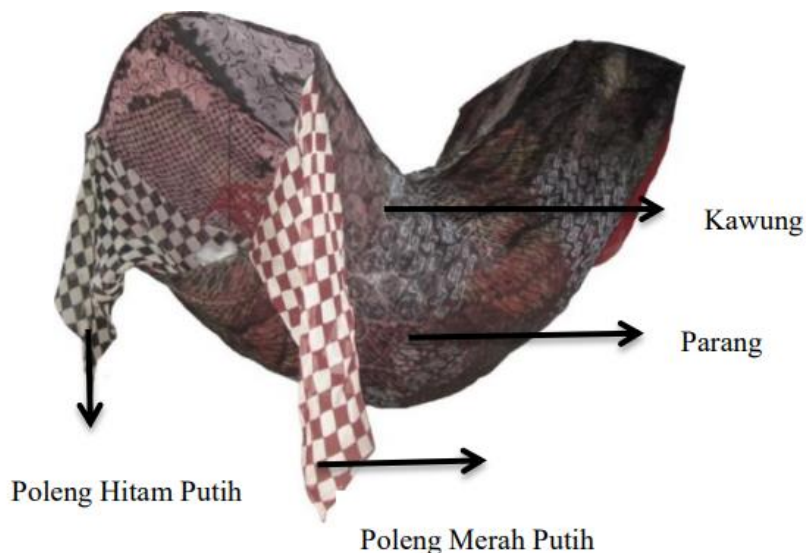


Figure 6 Linggayoni. Contemporary Batik art in the form of installations

Source: Artist Archive, with permission from the artist (2025)

The visual composition consists of layers of kawung, parang, stupa, red, white, and black poleng images, as well as lines that form a symbolic space. Conceptually, Linggayoni interprets the teachings of Astha Brata, a peaceful leadership doctrine that guides humans toward prosperity (food and clothing). However, in this work, Linggayoni is understood more broadly as a symbol of guiding light and tranquility. This spiritual relic depicts simplicity, silence, and man's inner dialogue with himself. The creative process of Agus Ismoyo - Nia Fliam reflects the practice of "finding oneself" through harmony with the rotation of nature and awareness of Javanese spirituality.

Thus, hybridization in contemporary craft art in Yogyakarta cannot be viewed solely as an aesthetic mixture, but rather as a cultural strategy that serves to maintain identity and open up space for negotiation of meaning amid the tide of globalization (Soedarso, 2006; Subroto, 2019). Craft art in Yogyakarta has become a cultural meeting place, where artists, traditions, and communities interact to create new narratives. In this framework, contemporary craft in Yogyakarta represents a living tradition that is constantly renewed, rather than one frozen in nostalgia.

The work of artist Lejar Daniartana Hukubun shows the hybridization between Javanese culture (wayang) and the culture of the Malind tribe of Papua, developed through a combination of manual and digital techniques (Figure 7). This work displays a process of cross-identity that brings together two symbolic systems and expands the meaning of wayang as a contemporary narrative medium.

The work "Menjaga Energi" (Preserving Energy), designed by Noor Sudiyati, reflects the search for balance between the forces of nature and human consciousness. Noor Sudiyati combines dense Pacitan clay with supple Singkawang clay, resulting in a stable yet expressive blend. Through oxidation firing at high temperatures, the work's surface displays natural color gradations and textures that reflect the journey of heat energy. Its organic form evokes a sense of flow and controlled tension, depicting the effort to both contain and channel life energy. This work affirms the artist's perspective that earth and fire are not merely mediums, but partners in the creative process. Preserving Energy becomes a symbol of the harmonious relationship between natural elements, processes, and the creator's consciousness.



Figure 7 Lejar Daniartana Hukubun contemporary Wayang creation

Source: Researcher documentation (2024)



Figure 8 “Menjaga Energi” (2024)

Source: Researcher documentation (2025)

Meanwhile, Dedi Sofianto explores woodworking by combining traditional carpentry techniques with kinetic elements as part of contemporary expression (Figure 9). One of his works, *Manta* (2024), was displayed at the UNDAGI 2025 exhibition at the Katamsi Gallery, ISI Yogyakarta. This work is a mixed media piece that combines oil paint, a dynamo, electronic devices, motion sensors, and metals such as

brass and stainless steel (50 × 50 × 50 cm). Through the integration of technology and traditional materials, Sofianto presents craft as a dynamic system responsive to space and audience movement.

The dynamics of hybridization among contemporary craft artists in Yogyakarta show that their creative processes are rooted in a spirit of preserving local identity while responding to the global context. In

general, they share a common approach to treating tradition not as a static object but as a conceptual resource constantly renewed through the exploration of materials, techniques, and ideas. Hybridization in this context serves as a sustainable strategy for negotiating the position of craft between art, culture, and

technology. Despite sharing the same conceptual foundation, each artist develops a different aesthetic code. Fariz Hibernasi presents an ecological code by combining batik and metal to articulate the relationship between humans and nature.



Figure 9 Artist Dedi Sofianto. “Manta” (2024)

Source: Dokumetasi Peneliti (2025)

Dona Prawira Arissuta presents material-narrative codes through a shift in the function of jars and ceramics into the conceptual realm, illustrated by the visualization of the Sujiwan Temple relief. Agus Ismoyo and Nia Fliam emphasize spiritual-intercultural codes through the exploration of three-dimensional batik that represents cross-cultural harmony. Lejar Daniartana Hukubun highlights the hybrid Javanese-Malind Papuan identity code, while Noor Sudiyati emphasizes cosmological balance through local materials and natural symbols. Dedi Sofianto closes this spectrum with a kinetic-technological code that expands craft into the interactive realm. Thus, hybridization in Yogyakarta craft art affirms tradition as a living entity that continues to transform, not merely as a legacy, but as a creative process that gives birth to a new visual language for contemporary Yogyakarta culture.

The emergence and development of hybrid aesthetics

The main characteristics of the development of hybrid aesthetics in contemporary Yogyakarta craft art consist of three elements. First, experimentation with materials and techniques (left circle) is marked by the integration of traditional materials such as teak wood, bronze, and batik with modern media such as resin, recycled plastic, and laser cutting technology. Second, the processing of motifs and symbols (upper circle) is achieved through the recontextualization of batik motifs, carvings, and traditional ornaments into abstract forms or by combining them with popular visual symbols. Third, the transformation of presentation formats (right circle) shows a shift in the function of craft from merely utilitarian objects to installations, interactive works, and conceptual artifacts.

The intersection of the three circles confirms the birth of a distinctive hybrid aesthetic in Yogyakarta: the

understanding of craft as a conceptual medium rooted in local traditions and in dialogue with global art discourse. This position marks the repositioning of craft from applied art to the realm of critical discourse on par with contemporary fine art.

Observations and interviews with contemporary craft artists in Yogyakarta show that hybrid aesthetics began to emerge in the early 2000s. This development was influenced by the intensity of artists' interactions with international art networks through residency programs, exhibitions, and digital media. This phenomenon manifested itself in three main characteristics:

a. Experimentation with Materials and Techniques: The integration of traditional materials (teak wood, bronze, batik) with non-traditional media (resin, recycled plastic, laser cutting).

b. Processing of Motifs and Symbols: Recontextualization of batik motifs, carvings, and traditional ornaments into abstract forms or combined with popular visual symbols.

c. Transformation of Presentation Formats: A shift in the function of works from utilitarian objects to installations, interactive works, or conceptual artifacts.

This change reflects a paradigm shift from craft as applied art to craft as a conceptual medium with a space for expression equivalent to contemporary art. From the three main aspects of material and technique experimentation, motif and symbol processing, and presentation format transformation, it can be understood that contemporary Yogyakarta craft not only functions as an aesthetic medium but also as a discursive space. Craft appears as an arena for negotiating identity, spirituality, and resistance to global cultural hegemony. By presenting concrete examples of works by artists such as Dedi Sofianto, Agus Ismoyo–Nia Fliam, Noor Sudiyati, and Lejar Daniartana Hukubun, this study shows how hybrid aesthetics are practiced, articulated, and presented in the context of global art.

Factors driving the emergence of hybrid aesthetics

The driving factors behind the emergence of hybrid aesthetics in Yogyakarta are due to various things, such as 1) strong and dynamic craft traditions; 2) a multicultural social and cultural environment; 3) the development of art education and institutions; 4) the

influence of globalization and technology; 5) the need for new identities and styles; and 6) the creative economy and art market as attached in Fig.10.

These factors show that hybridity in Yogyakarta is not only driven by market demands or trends, but also by cultural and ideological needs. Hybrid aesthetics in contemporary craft art in Yogyakarta emerged from the dialectic between tradition and modernity, locality and globality, and idealism and market demands. It is a reflection of Yogyakarta's socio-cultural dynamics, a city that lives between old values and modern impulses, yet remains capable of creating a distinctive and relevant aesthetic language.

Thematic and philosophical awareness of artists

Based on the thematic and philosophical, contemporary craft artists' works originate from a philosophical awareness grounded in a deep understanding of local cosmological values, combined with reflections on global cultural dynamics. In this context, tradition is not viewed as a static legacy but as a source of inspiration continuously reinterpreted in response to social and temporal changes. Through an aesthetic hybridity approach, artists develop creative strategies that enable cross-cultural and cross-temporal dialogue. This hybridity not only presents visual novelty but also creates a conceptual space for the meeting of local values and global discourse.

Contemporary craft in Yogyakarta now transcends its decorative function and becomes a medium for social and spiritual reflection. Each work presents philosophical ideas about the balance between humans and nature, spirituality, and cultural responsibility amid the tide of modernity. Thus, artists position themselves not merely as creators of aesthetic forms, but as bridges of values that reinforce cultural identity while opening up a space for dialogue with the global world. Through this awareness, the works of contemporary craft artists demonstrate their relevance as expressions rooted in the soul and in tune with the times.

Artists and artisans in Yogyakarta consciously incorporate local symbols, Javanese cosmology, and traditional aesthetic elements into their work. These elements serve not only as ornamentation, but also as profound conceptual meanings. For example, symbols of mountains, mythological fauna, and classic batik

motifs such as parang, kawung, and nitik are often used to represent spiritual values and cosmic balance.

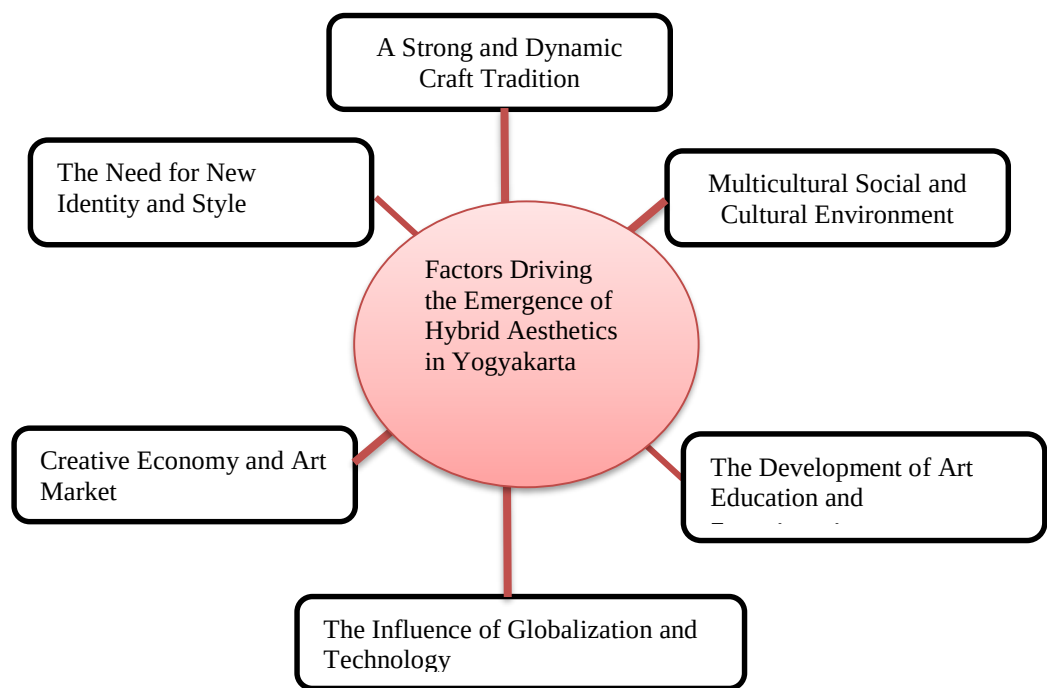


Figure 10 Factors driving the emergence of hybrid aesthetics in Yogyakarta
Source: Analysis by researchers (2025)

Artists creating contemporary craft art in Yogyakarta demonstrate conceptual awareness in their creative processes, which can be categorized into three main themes. First, a connection to local cosmology, reflected through spiritual and ecological symbolism and an interpretation of the harmonious relationship between humans, nature, and life. Second, a reflection on Western cultural hegemony manifested through efforts at aesthetic decolonization, the reinforcement of local cultural values, and the development of a visual language rooted in one’s own cultural experiences and context. Third, the formation of a hybrid identity emerging from the negotiation between tradition and modernity, local and global values, as well as cultural heritage and contemporary developments.

These three trends indicate that contemporary craft art is not merely oriented toward the creation of new visual forms but also serves as a medium for reflecting the philosophical, social, and cultural values evolving within society. The artists’ philosophical awareness is grounded in a deep understanding of local cosmology, intertwined with critical reflection on the dynamics of

global culture. In this context, tradition is not viewed as a static legacy, but rather as a source of inspiration that is continually reinterpreted in accordance with social change and the progression of time.

Through an approach rooted in aesthetic hybridity, artists develop creative strategies that facilitate cross-cultural and cross-temporal dialogue, resulting in works that remain grounded in local cultural identity while remaining relevant to the global context.

Contemporary craft in Yogyakarta thus transcends its decorative function and evolves into a medium for social, spiritual, and cultural reflection. The resulting works not only articulate ideas about the balance between humanity and nature but also demonstrate efforts to preserve cultural identity through processes of negotiation and transformation of meaning. In this capacity, artists do not merely act as creators of aesthetic forms but as cultural agents who bridge tradition and modernity and reinforce the relevance of local values in the contemporary context.

Artists in Yogyakarta are aware that their works are not aesthetically neutral; they carry philosophical

meanings, such as the balance between humans and nature, symbolic hierarchy, and spiritual relationships. In the context of local cosmology, craft works can present metaphysical dimensions, such as symbols of

balance between the supernatural and the real, or between humans and nature, which have traditionally existed in Javanese culture.



Figure 11 Lejar Daniartana Hukubun. “The Robbery of a Young Man” With a hybrid concept of Javanese and Malind Papuan cultures (2023)

Source: Artist Archive, with the artist’s permission (2023)

For example, Lejar Daniartana Hukubun, a contemporary wayang artist, integrates elements of Javanese and Malind Papuan culture in his works. Through wayang inspired by local mythology, Hukubun not only presents a strong visual aesthetic but also conveys a profound meaning that reflects the dialogue between two different cultures. By combining traditional and modern techniques as a form of innovation, he creates narratives that are relevant to the current social and cultural context, making his work a medium for exploring identity and spirituality. “KK” stands for Kreasi & Kakak (Creation & Brother), which reflects Lejar’s creative process in processing the elements of dot, line, color, and composition to produce works of aesthetic value.

This puppet is inspired by a folk tale from the Malind tribe in Merauke, South Papua, titled *Penjarahan Seorang Pemuda* (The Robbery of a Young Man). The story tells of Nggais Wanangga, a diligent young man who lost his fishing gear after his new friend, Alamem,

stole it. This story contains moral messages about honesty, respect for others, and the importance of maintaining trust. This work also reflects the artist’s “hybrid” perspective, which stems from his cultural background in Yogyakarta and Maluku–Merauke. The fusion of these two cultures gave rise to the idea of introducing folk tales through wayang as a creative and innovative effort to preserve culture.

Another example of work is titled *Raja Ikan Bulanak dan Nelayan* (The King of Bulanak Fish and the Fisherman), measuring 2 m x 1 m, and executed in the hand-drawn batik technique in 2025. The theme of this illustration adopts a folk tale of the Malind Merauke–Papua tribe, titled “The Origin of Bulanak Fish,” which was created according to the artist’s imagination.

This story conveys a moral message through visual puppetry: caring for fish as living creatures can bring peace to life in the wild. The artist raises this story

to teach the importance of respecting other creatures and of creating harmony with nature.

At the second level, artists use local materials, traditional techniques, or non-Western cultural symbols to resist cultural homogenization and Western aesthetic domination. The artists' craft works show that visuals and crafts are not merely imitations of Western styles, but reinforce local roots while reflecting the global context.

For example, Agus Ismoyo-Nia Fliam, a collaborative textile artist, draws on Javanese cultural and cosmological concepts in their batik works. Their works, such as batik, combine traditional motifs with contemporary elements, reflecting a dialogue between tradition and innovation. In the creative process, they not only use existing batik techniques but also explore relevant social and environmental themes, thereby creating a critique of cultural hegemony that often ignores local context.

Semar is the main character in the Punakawan group, known as the loyal companions of the knights in Javanese puppetry. Despite his humorous and straightforward appearance, Semar is respected as a symbol of wisdom and truth. He is believed to be the incarnation of a god who descended to earth to guide humans toward moral and spiritual balance. In puppet plays, Semar serves as an advisor to knights such as Arjuna and the Pandawas. His simple yet meaningful words reflect honesty, simplicity, and compassion. Philosophically, Semar represents the concept of *manunggaling kawula Gusti*, the unity between humans and God, and the balance between the physical and spiritual worlds. These values make Semar relevant to this day. Amidst modernity, this figure serves as an important reminder of the importance of living with integrity, humility, and harmony with nature.



Figure 12 Lejar Daniartana Hukubun. Bulanak Fish

Source: Researcher Documentation, (2025)



Figure 13 Wayang Semar

Source: Researcher documentation (2025)

For artists Agus Ismoyo and Nia Fliam, the character of Semar is the primary inspiration for their contemporary batik work, *Semar Jalan-Jalan*. In this work, Semar is interpreted not merely as a mythological character but as a symbol of spiritual journey and cross-

cultural dialogue. Ismoyo and Fliam interpret Semar as a bridge between tradition and modernity, a form of reflection on how local wisdom values can continue to live and transform in the global era.



Figure 14 Agus Ismoyo and Nia Fliam. “Semar Jalan-Jalan”

Source: Researcher documentation (2025)

In Semar Jalan-Jalan, Agus Ismoyo and Nia Fliam reactualize two important elements of Javanese tradition, namely the figure of Semar in wayang and the traditional kawung batik motif. These two elements are reworked in a contemporary context as symbols of dialogue between the past and the present, between spiritual values and modern reality. The character of Semar is presented not merely as a wayang figure, but

as a representation of universal wisdom that guides humans toward inner balance. In this work, Semar becomes a metaphor for a spiritual journey, “jalan-jalan,” as a reflection of the process of searching for one’s identity and humanity’s relationship with the universe. Semar’s visualization is also interpreted as a bridge between the noble values of Javanese culture and the ever-evolving global consciousness.

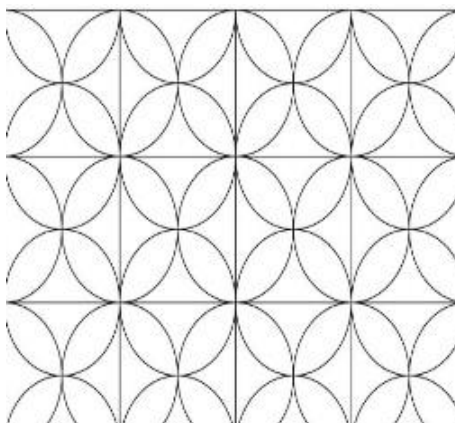


Figure 15 Kawung motif (traditional batik motif) of Javanese culture

Source: From Web, <https://id.pinterest.com/ZahraJsmn/batik-kawung/>, (2025)

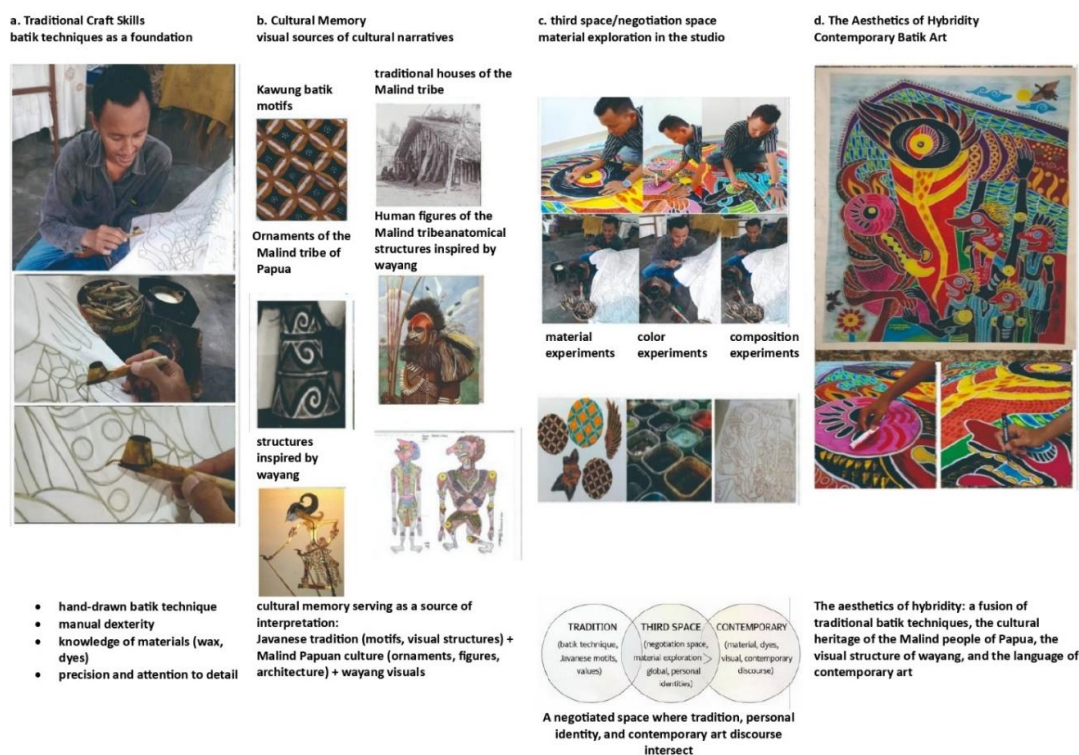


Figure 16 The Process of hybrid identity formation through the transformation of tradition and cultural negotiation in contemporary Batik practice

Source: Research documentation (2026)

Meanwhile, the kawung motif is a traditional Javanese batik motif that symbolizes perfection, cosmic balance, and spiritual awareness. Ismoyo- Nia Fliam adopted the kawung motif not only as an aesthetic ornament but as a visual structure that brings to life the meaning of the cycle of life and the interconnectedness of natural elements. Through the transformation of this motif, the two artists show how batik can be a reflective medium that remains rooted in traditional philosophy, yet open to contemporary interpretations. By combining the figure of Semar and the kawung motif, the work *Semar Jalan- Jalan* becomes a space for dialogue between tradition and modernity, between Javanese spiritual symbols and universal ideas about humanity.

Hybrid identity emerges when artists/craftspeople actively negotiate between global influences (materials, techniques, markets, technology) and local traditional roots (motifs, philosophy, hand techniques, social structure). This hybridity is not merely an aesthetic mixture, but a space for discourse where local and global meanings engage in dialogue, sometimes tense, sometimes productive.

Figure 16 illustrates the process of hybrid identity formation in contemporary craft art practice through four interrelated stages. The first stage demonstrates mastery of traditional craft skills in the form of hand-drawn batik techniques as the foundation of creation. The second stage highlights cultural memory as a source of inspiration, including kawung motifs, wayang visuals, and elements of Malind Papuan culture. The third stage illustrates the space of negotiation (third space) where artists conduct experiments with materials, colors, and composition to bring together various cultural references. The fourth stage presents the final work that represents the aesthetics of hybridity as the result of a dialogue between local tradition, personal identity, and contemporary art discourse. This finding indicates that hybrid identity is not formed through the replacement of tradition, but rather through the process of reinterpreting and recontextualizing cultural values within a new context.

Noor Sudiyati, an artist and academic in ceramic arts, reflects a hybrid identity in her work, combining traditional techniques with contemporary approaches. Her ceramic pieces often feature shapes and textures inspired by nature, as well as symbols from Javanese

cosmology, creating a dialogue between the past and the present.

Dedi Sofianto, a wood craftsman, highlights the characteristics of kinetic art in his work. His pieces, which often combine elements of movement and interactivity, create a dynamic visual experience and invite audience participation. By using traditional woodworking techniques, Sofianto has created works that are not only aesthetically pleasing but also invite the audience to reflect on the relationship among art, culture, and technology.

Thus, a hybrid identity emerges in Yogyakarta when artists/craftspeople choose traditional materials or techniques → providing local roots, update the form, scale, context, or materials → providing contemporary/ global aspects, and make the work a “negotiation” between the two: they do not return to the past romantically, but create a dialogue between the past and the present, between the local and the global.

Contemporary craft works in Yogyakarta develop not merely as aesthetic expressions, but as cultural discourse spaces that mediate between local values, modernity, and global trends. These works transcend their visual and utilitarian functions, becoming mediums for reflection, social criticism, and identity negotiation. In this context, craft artists not only produce art objects but also articulate their cultural position within broader social and cultural dynamics.

The consciousness of craft artists in Yogyakarta is not formed linearly, but rather intertwined in a network of values, ideas, and cultural practices. Local roots serve as a source of values and ethical orientation that reinforce artistic identity while providing a conceptual basis for the creative process. On the other hand, reflection on Western hegemony becomes a critical mechanism that fosters decolonial consciousness, an effort to break free from the dominance of the Western modern aesthetic paradigm (Smith, 2009). Through this awareness, artists construct a hybrid identity that is not trapped in the dichotomy of tradition and modernity, but instead constructs a productive space for negotiation, as proposed by Bhabha (1994) in his concept of the third space.

Within this framework, contemporary craft in Yogyakarta presents a dialogical representation between tradition and modernity that produces new meanings.

These works are not intended as reproductions of the past, but rather as cultural remixes. This creative strategy combines local heritage with global discourse to formulate a new visual language (Bourriaud, 2002). Thus, contemporary crafts function not only as aesthetic objects but also as a medium for articulating identity, critical awareness, and social reflection in the current art and design landscape.

Research findings indicate that hybridity in contemporary craft art in Yogyakarta manifests at the levels of materials, techniques, visual forms, and the transformation of cultural meanings. Javanese cosmology, which emphasizes harmony between humans and nature, is recontextualized into ecological awareness and environmental sustainability. Traditional batik motifs, which originally served as markers of cultural identity, have evolved into a medium for cross-cultural dialogue in a global context. The wayang tradition, which historically served as a vehicle for transmitting moral values, is reinterpreted as a space for negotiating multicultural identities. Meanwhile, craft skills based on ceramics and wood are shifting from practical functions toward becoming a medium for conceptual expression that responds to technological advancements and contemporary issues. These findings confirm that hybridity does not merely combine local and global elements but also repositions traditional cultural values to remain relevant within today's social, cultural, and artistic contexts.

The cultural implications of these research findings indicate that hybridity in contemporary craft art in Yogyakarta does not lead to the loss of knowledge, value systems, or traditional craft practices, but rather serves as a strategy for cultural sustainability through adaptation and recontextualization. Knowledge of batik, wayang, ceramics, woodworking techniques, and Javanese cosmological values remains preserved as the conceptual foundation and artistic practice, even though it is realized through more contemporary mediums, materials, technologies, and presentation formats. Thus, the ability of Yogyakarta's craft art to participate in the global arena rests precisely on its success in preserving the roots of local knowledge while transforming them into new forms of expression relevant to the times. In this context, hybridity functions as a mechanism for cultural sustainability that allows local identity to

remain alive, adaptive, and meaningful amidst global dynamics.

Conclusion

This study confirms that hybrid aesthetics in the contemporary craft practices of artists in Yogyakarta constitute a cultural practice that actively reconstructs local identity within the dynamics of global art. Hybridity does not merely represent an encounter between tradition and modernity, but also serves as an artistic strategy to maintain the relevance of local culture through ongoing processes of adaptation, reinterpretation, and negotiation. In this context, contemporary craft art must be understood not merely as a practice of materials and skills, but as a conceptual medium that produces discourse regarding identity, spirituality, sustainability, and the position of local culture within the currents of globalization. Thus, this study demonstrates that locality does not face marginalization within global culture, but rather finds a new, dynamic form of articulation through hybrid aesthetic practices.

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Declaration of generative AI in scientific writing

Generative AI tools may be used only to improve the readability and language of a manuscript.

CRediT author statement

Ernawati: Conceptualization, Methodology, Data curation, Investigation, Visualization, Writing original draft. **Sri Margana:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Supervision. **Martinus Dwi Marianto:** Writing – review & editing Validation, Supervision.

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