

Local Cultural Aesthetics in The Logo Design of The Museum Batik Indonesia

(Estetika Budaya Lokal dalam Desain Logo Museum Batik Indonesia)

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Abstract. This research is based on the high importance of cultural institutions in designing a strong and contextual brand identity amid the dominance of global design. Batik is not just a motif, but a process, a technique of decorating fabric. Almost all regions in the country have their own batik motifs that symbolize the characteristics of their region. Javanese people wear batik in their daily lives. Batik plays a role in various activities, such as childbirth, weddings, and others. Batik motifs from various regions in Indonesia have specific meanings. For example, the *kawung* motif is a batik motif from Yogyakarta, shaped like a split palm fruit, which symbolizes the four directions as a form of brotherhood. The research method used in this study was descriptive qualitative with visual analysis techniques. Data was obtained through interviews with museum officials and visual observation as well as document analysis. The analysis was conducted using The Function Complex, Brand Identity Elements, Trichotomy Semiotics, and Visual Communication Design (logo principles and design principles). The results of this study indicate that the stylization of batik fabric in museum logos has undergone a transformation in meaning, function, and form that is aligned with the needs of contemporary visual communication. Stylization not only serves as an aesthetic element, but also functions as institutional legitimacy, cultural value, and identity differentiation. This research contributes to the development of a theory of brand identity based on culture and also provides practical recommendations for designing the brand identity of Indonesian cultural institutions.

Keywords: Aesthetics, Culture, Logo, Institution, Batik

Abstrak. Penelitian ini didasarkan pada pentingnya peran institusi budaya dalam merancang identitas merek yang kuat dan kontekstual di tengah dominasi desain global. Batik bukan sekadar motif, melainkan sebuah proses dan teknik menghias kain. Hampir seluruh wilayah di Indonesia memiliki motif batik khas yang mencerminkan karakteristik daerahnya masing-masing. Masyarakat Jawa mengenakan batik dalam kehidupan sehari-hari; batik memiliki peran dalam berbagai kegiatan, seperti upacara kelahiran, pernikahan, dan lain sebagainya. Motif batik dari berbagai daerah di Indonesia memiliki makna khusus. Sebagai contoh, motif **kawung** yang berasal dari Yogyakarta memiliki bentuk menyerupai irisan buah aren dan melambangkan empat arah mata angin sebagai simbol persaudaraan. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah deskriptif kualitatif dengan teknik analisis visual. Data diperoleh melalui wawancara dengan pihak museum, observasi visual, serta analisis dokumen. Analisis dilakukan dengan menggunakan pendekatan The Function Complex, elemen identitas merek, trikotomi semiotika, serta prinsip-prinsip desain komunikasi visual (prinsip logo dan prinsip desain). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa stilasi motif batik pada logo museum telah mengalami transformasi makna, fungsi, dan bentuk yang selaras

dengan kebutuhan komunikasi visual kontemporer. Stilasi tersebut tidak hanya berperan sebagai elemen estetis, tetapi juga berfungsi sebagai sarana legitimasi institusi, representasi nilai budaya, dan pembeda identitas. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada pengembangan teori identitas merek berbasis budaya serta memberikan rekomendasi praktis bagi perancangan identitas merek institusi budaya di Indonesia.

Kata kunci: Estetika, Budaya, Logo, Institusi, Batik

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Introduction

Indonesia has many museums. In 2020, Indonesia had 143 museums. However, the number of museums in Indonesia is not as high as the number of visitors, especially museums in DKI Jakarta (CNBC Jakarta, 2023). Minister of Culture Fadli Zon hopes that there will be standardization of museums in Indonesia to improve education, narrative, and display appeal in order to attract more visitors, especially the younger generation (Antar News, 2024). Museums with a consistent brand identity make it easier for the public to remember, recognize, and differentiate one museum from another.

Batik is not just a pattern, but a process, a technique of decorating fabric. Almost all regions in Indonesia have their own batik patterns that symbolize the characteristics of their region. Javanese people wear batik in their daily lives. Batik plays a role in various activities, such as childbirth, weddings, and others. Batik fabric is now used not only for certain rituals, but also modified and created for various needs such as school uniforms, office uniforms, and other modern clothing. Batik motifs from various regions in Indonesia have specific meanings. On October 2, 2009, Indonesian batik was designated as a world cultural heritage by UNESCO. The government designated October 2 as National Batik Day through Presidential Decree No. 33 of 2009 (Media Indonesia, 2024). This research, entitled Local Cultural Aesthetics in the Logo Design of the Museum Batik Indonesia, examines the relationship between aesthetic values, cultural heritage, and the application of modern design in the brand identity of the Museum Batik Indonesia logo.

Research conducted by Linggar Sevi Andari (2025) entitled “Rebranding Strategy of the Museum Candi Yogyakarta Building Brand Awareness” discusses managerial and business stages, namely rebranding the museum through four stages: Repositioning, Renaming, Redesigning, and Relaunching. The museum discussed is the Museum Kriptologi (the science of codes), which is the only one of its kind in Indonesia and requires special attention in promoting it to the public. The study entitled “Analysis of Wayang Gunung Forms as Representations of Indonesian Culture in the Visual Logo of Halal Indonesia” by Dewi Pigersari (2023) analyzes the kayon form in the halal logo,

which is administrative in nature as a government agency logo, and does not discuss cultural studies in depth. The next study, titled “Representation of Indonesian Culture in the Indonesia G20 2023 Logo” by Fatoni and Juriani (2023), examines the culture in the logo using Erwin Panofsky's iconography and iconology theory. The research by Varlina and Maulini entitled “Representation and Visual Culture of the Haus Logo! on Brand Attractiveness Among Young People” is a study of modern culture that focuses on trends using Gestalt theory in its analysis. Research by Malik et al. (2021) entitled “Charles Sanders Peirce's Semiotic Analysis of the Meaning of the Sukabumi Regency Tourism Logo” discusses the geography and natural elements represented in the logo, using Peirce's semiotics in the analysis. Studies on logos as brand identities have many perspectives.

Several studies have focused on managerial and strategic aspects, such as Andari (2025), national-scale cultural representation in Pugersari's (2024) study, the meaning of symbols in Malik et al.'s (2021) study, and Varlina & Maulini's (2024) study on popular culture. There is a significant research gap in that there has been no in-depth study of cultural aesthetics in brand identity, particularly logos in cultural institutions such as museums. The novelty of this research is the study of cultural heritage, namely batik, as a symbol that has been internalized into the brand identity of a museum. The product exhibited by the batik museum, namely batik, has become the logo of the institution. The purpose of this study is to identify the aesthetic and cultural values contained in the logo of the Museum Batik Indonesia, as an effort to conserve traditional culture into modernity.

Methods

This study uses descriptive qualitative research methods with visual analysis techniques. According to Creswell (2009), qualitative research procedures depend on text and image data (Chapter 9, “Qualitative Procedures”). Logos are examined as “text” to be analyzed using qualitative procedures in order to interpret the aesthetic and cultural values contained within them. The stages of data analysis used are data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions (Ratna, 2010, p. 310).

The qualitative data for this study were collected using three primary techniques: observation, interviews, and document analysis. Observations involved directly examining the logo design of the Museum Batik Indonesia, focusing on both visual elements (pictorial symbols representing fabric folds and the *kawung* batik motif) and verbal elements (the logotype). Interviews were conducted with museum management and officials to explore the design context, the logo's underlying philosophy, and the institution's brand communication objectives. Finally, written documents and supporting literature were analyzed, including the Museum Batik Indonesia profile, historical references regarding the *kawung* motif, and relevant cultural regulations or documents.

The qualitative data analysis process in this study begins with the data reduction stage. At this stage, all verbal and visual data obtained from interviews, observations, and document studies are sorted, categorized, and focused on the logo's primary signifiers. This sorting process distinguishes between visual sign elements (such as the dominance of *sogan* brown, the geometric structure of the *kawung* motif, and the fabric's folds) and verbal signs (the logotype text) to eliminate irrelevant information and sharpen the analytical focus on aesthetic and symbolic functions.

Subsequently, the research proceeds to the data presentation stage, where the organized data is comprehensively presented and analyzed through four theoretical approaches. First, the data is analyzed using Victor Papanek's "Function Complex" framework to examine six dimensions of design function: Method, Use, Need, Telesis, Association, and Aesthetics. Second, visual data is evaluated based on principles of visual communication design and logo creation as outlined by Supriyono—specifically, the ability to define the institution, effectiveness in black-and-white printing, visual scalability when reduced in size, and the level of simplicity and memorability. Third, visual and verbal signs are mapped onto Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic trichotomy, encompassing the relationships of the representamen (qualisign, sinsign, legisign), the object (icon, index, symbol), and the interpretant (rheme, dicent, argument). Fourth, the logo's compositional structure is dissected based on brand identity elements to examine the relationship between the pictorial mark and the logotype in forming the institution's signature identity.

This series of analytical methods concludes with the stage of drawing conclusions. At this stage, the results of the data mapping and the synthesis of the four theoretical approaches are comprehensively evaluated to formulate the research findings. Conclusions are drawn by assessing the degree of alignment between the noble philosophy embodied in the batik cultural heritage and the logo's technical effectiveness as a visual communication tool; this allows for the identification of any disconnect between the aspirations for cultural representation and the technical legibility of the logo design.

Result And Discussion

Aesthetic study

Museum Batik Indonesia is located in Taman Mini Indonesia Indah (TMII), East Jakarta, and was built in 2014. It was established to promote Indonesian batik, which was designated as a Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO on October 2, 2009. Logo of the Indonesian Batik Museum:

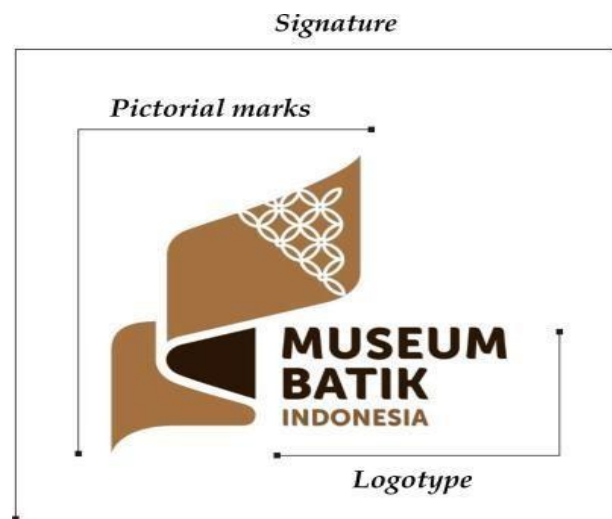


Fig. 1 Signature logo of the *Museum Batik Indonesia* (Source: Ramayanti, 2026)

The image above shows the logo design with text. The structure of the *Museum Batik Indonesia* logo consists of a logotype and pictorial marks. Pictorial marks are literal images that can be recognized immediately, which have been simplified and distilled. (Wheeler, 2009, p. 51). Design is a conscious and intuitive effort to create a structure that holds meaning (Papanek, 2006, p. 4). Designers consciously design logos as visual arrangements by selecting and arranging batik motifs so that their cultural identity and philosophical meaning can be understood.

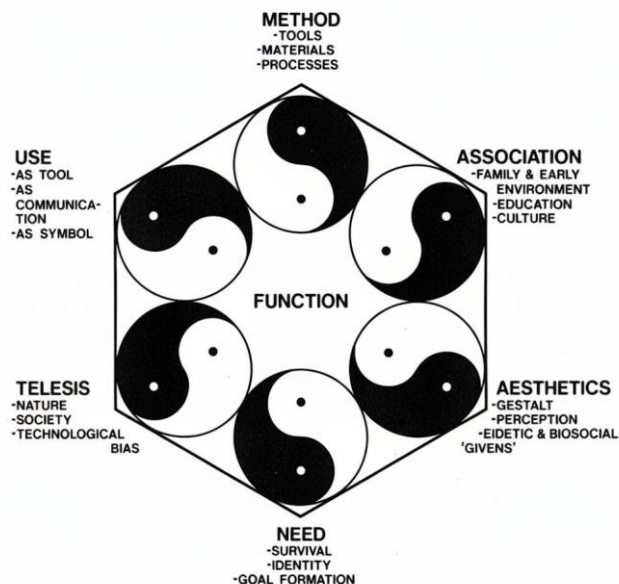


Fig. 2 The Function Complex (Source: Ramayanti, 2026)

Six aspects of Victor Papanex's function in reviewing the *Museum Batik Indonesia* logo:

- 1) Method: Designers use design tools to create
- 2) Usability: Logos must function well as identities, in accordance with logo principles.
- 3) Needs: *Museum Batik Indonesia* needs an identity that distinguishes it from other batik museums and is able to communicate its message of historical value, educational resources, and cultural preservation.
- 4) Telesis: The implementation of batik motifs in the logo is an effort to connect cultural heritage with modern design in order to reflect Indonesia's identity. The kawung motif was chosen because its meaning is in harmony with local socio-cultural values.
- 5) Association: Association is closely related to the emotions and psychology of the audience. The design of the *Museum Batik Indonesia* logo represents tradition, history, Indonesia, and elegance, which come to mind when people see batik motifs distilled into the logo.
- 6) Aesthetics: Related to the principles of design or gestalt techniques applied to logo design, making it visually appealing.

Aesthetics comes from an adjective, which in Greek, *aisthētikos*, means relating to perception. Its noun form, *aisthēsis*, means 'sensory perception' (Surajaya, 2016, p. 1). A work of art has two meanings of truth: first, when its composition is correct, and second, when it is in accordance with the designer's intention (Dufrenne, 1979, p. 508). Referring to Dufrenne's thinking, the logo of the *Museum Batik Indonesia* has two criteria of truth. First, the accuracy of the composition of the design elements used, such as color, illustration, typography, layout, and composition in the Indonesian Batik Museum logo has created visual appeal. However, when examined based on the principles of logo design, according to Supriyono (2010, p. 106), namely; 1) the logo must be able to define the business organization/business entity/ institution or product, 2) It must be effective when printed in black and white, 3) the logo must remain clearly visible when reduced in size, and 4) the logo must be memorable and simple. The logo of the Indonesian Batik Museum has intricate details in its batik motif, namely the kawung motif, making it difficult to remember. When reduced in size, the kawung motif is not clearly visible. This complexity makes the logo difficult to remember. Second, harmony with the designer's (philosophical) objectives, namely truth in terms of meaning and identity. The meaning of the logo design conveys the message of "Batik" and "Museum," as seen in the batik pattern and museum text in the logo structure. The kawung motif is a Yogyakarta batik motif, shaped like a split palm fruit, symbolizing the four directions as a form of brotherhood, symbolizing the brotherhood of all Indonesian people (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2019), this is in line with the vision of the *Museum Batik Indonesia*, which is to preserve cultural

heritage and identity for the welfare of society (Museum Batik Indonesia, n.d.). There are seven kawung motifs, corresponding to the number of exhibition rooms in the museum, namely the Indonesian batik history room, the batik production room, the batik treasure room, the traditional batik use room, the fame gallery, the conclusion room, and the batik development room. The folds in the fabric of the logo are the same as the architectural shape of the *Museum Batik Indonesia* building.

Cultural Studies

De Saussure described the basic principles for understanding culture, namely; 1) signs, consisting of signifiers (signifiant, signifier) and signifieds (signifiē, sifnified), 2) an important idea related to signs is the absence of reference to objective reality. Signs do not have nomenclature, and 3) an issue that is always present in studying society and culture is the relationship between individuals and society (Sulasman & Gumilar, 2013, p. 88). Structuralism and semiotics are some of the theories that can be used to explain the concept of culture as a structure and system (Sulasman & Gumilar, 2013, p. 96). Researchers will use semiotics theory in examining culture as a sign structure. Pierce divides primary signs into three trichotomies: first, qualisigns, sinsigns, and legisigns. Second, icons, indices, and symbols. Third, terms (rheme), propositions (dicent), and arguments (Christomy & Yuwono, 2004, p. 116).

Table 1. Classification of Pierce's main signs

	Relations with Representative s	Relationship with Objects	Relationship with Interpreters
Firstness	Potential (qualisign)	Based on similarity (iconic)	Terms (<i>rheme</i>)
Secondness	Interrelated (sinsign)	Based on the designation (index)	A statement that can be true or false (proposition or dicent)
Thirdness	Agreement-based (legisign)	Based on agreement (symbol)	The relationship between propositions known in a certain form of logic (internal) (argument)

Source: Table should always be positioned *below* the tables.

Visual Communication Design works have two forms of messages, namely visual messages and verbal messages. Visual language plays a dominant role in formulating market concentration, because its messages are faster and easier to understand and remember (Tinarbuko, 2015, p. 31). The *Museum Batik Indonesia* logo has visual and verbal signs, as shown in the following image:



Fig. 3 The mark on the logo (Source: Ramayanti, 2026)

The visual element of the logo is brown fabric with a kawung batik pattern. The verbal element of the logo is the text "*Museum Batik Indonesia.*"

Table 2. Classification of the main features of the Museum Batik Indonesia logo

	Relations with Representatives	Relationship with Objects	Relationship with Interpreters
Firstness	Qualisign: The color brown dominates the visual mark of the fabric. Brown gives an impression of protection and peace (Rustan, 2019, p. 61). The fabric's curves give a dynamic impression.	Iconic  The appearance of batik patterned fabric on the logo.	Terms (<i>rheme</i>): The batik motif, curved fabric, and dark brown color give a traditional, antique, and flexible impression.

Secondness	Sinsign: The logo is printed on promotional media, information media, and signage.	Index: The brown color in batik is characteristic of gosan batik, which is classic batik. The diagonal lines on the fabric are an index of the batik maker's movements or the continuity of history.	Proposition (Dicent): The combination of pictorial marks and logotype forms a single entity that conveys that the logo is the logo of an institution, the brand identity of the <i>Museum Batik Indonesia</i> .
Thirdness	Legisign: The kawung motif symbolizes brotherhood.	Simbol: Overall appearance of the logo 	Argument: The logo is a unified whole. It has a philosophy: The <i>Museum Batik Indonesia</i> logo is a place that accommodates and preserves batik in Indonesia.

Source: Table should always be positioned *below* the tables.

Qualisign: An abstract characteristic or quality present in a sign before it becomes a tangible entity. The brown color evokes a sense of peace, while the diagonal movement of the fabric creates a dynamic impression. These two aspects are noticeable before one notices the kawung motif on the fabric. Sinsign: Actualization or tangible manifestation of quality. Evidence of quality has been realized in tangible objects, such as the brown fabric printed with the logo on media (signboards, uniforms, social media, etc.). Legisign: An agreement, cultural conversion, or rule that carries meaning in a sign. Everyone in Indonesia agrees on the meaning of the kawung motif. Therefore, because it carries a message that is regulated by local cultural values, the motif in the logo functions as a Legisign.

Iconic: describes the visual representation of fabric with a kawung batik motif.

It resembles the original form. Index: explains cause and effect. Brown color like classic batik (*gosan* batik). According to Sarjono in (InfoPublik, 2022), Yogyakarta *sogan* batik is dominated by dark brown, black, and white colors. The diagonal curves of the fabric are the movements of the batik maker's hands. Symbol: a symbol is a logo. As stated by Rand (1985), symbols function as a universal language that allows designers and audiences to articulate abstract ideas into concrete forms. Symbols are not only visual representations, but describe themselves through their function (identification) (p. 6).

Terms (rheme): The symbols on the logo are concepts observed by the audience, such as the brown color or the *kawung* batik motif. At this stage, no conclusion has been reached. Proposition (Dicent): the symbol is informative, where the audience understands that the logo represents a batik museum. The visual batik fabric logo is clarified with the text Museum Batik Indonesia. Argument: reasoning about the value contained in the logo. The Museum Batik Indonesia logo has a philosophy; 1) the *kawung* motif symbolizes the brotherhood of all Indonesian people, 2) the seven motifs represent the seven rooms in the museum, 3) the folded fabric resembles the architecture of the museum building, and 4) the brown color gives a classic impression.

Conclusion

This study found that although the Indonesian Batik Museum logo has significant cultural significance, there are technical errors in the application of its design principles and functionality. This logo is considered suboptimal in terms of Method and Use according to Papanek's The Function Complex aesthetic review. If the principles of a good logo are not applied, such as scalability (readability in various sizes) and simplicity of form, then the aesthetic function of the logo will be limited to mere decoration and will not contribute to professional visual communication.

According to Peirce's idea, this technical shortcoming hinders the process of interpreting signs. At the Rheme level, batik elements that are too complex may still be understood as "culture," but at the Dicent level, the logo does not convey a strong identity because the public finds it difficult to recognize it instantly. This makes it difficult for the logo to achieve the desired level of argumentation; the logo functions as a powerful philosophical symbol, resembling an illustration that is not yet optimal as a sign system. This study shows that there is a disconnect between the noble goal of representing batik culture and the technical implementation of the design.

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