

Giriloyo Batik Association: From Plain Cloth to Artwork - Batik Production Process in Wukirsari Village, Imogiri District, Bantul Yogyakarta

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Abstract.

Batik is an Indonesian cultural heritage recognized by UNESCO in 2009 as a Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity. Among its various forms, hand-drawn batik is considered the most intricate and culturally rich. This community engagement program took place in Giriloyo Batik Village, Wukirsari Village, Imogiri, Bantul, Yogyakarta, a village renowned for preserving traditional batik skills. Conducted on 21 May 2025, the activity included preparation, socialization, production, monitoring and evaluation sessions led by local artisans. The participants were introduced to each step of the batik-making process: cloth preparation (pengemplongan), sketching (nyorek), wax removal (nglowong and nembok), coloring (medel and nyoga), and wax removal (nglorod). This experience provided insight into the technical and cultural aspects of batik. The program strengthened the community's appreciation of written batik as a cultural heritage and emphasized the need for documentation and education to support cultural sustainability in the Giriloyo community.

Keywords: *Batik tulis; cultural heritage; Giriloyo; traditional textiles; community empowerment*

I. INTRODUCTION

Batik is an Indonesian cultural heritage that has been recognized worldwide since 2009 by UNESCO as a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity. Batik art not only offers visual beauty, but also contains deep philosophical meanings in each motif, reflecting the values, beliefs, and social order of Javanese society. Etymologically, the word “batik” comes from the Javanese “ambhatik” which means drawing dots on cloth. The process of making it is not merely technical, but a form of cultural expression that is passed down across generations.(Susanti & Azhar, 2020).



Figure 1 is an initial sketch of a hand-written batik motif used as a guide in the winding process.

Written batik is a type of batik with high artistic and cultural value because it is made manually using canting and malam. The process requires patience, perseverance, and special skills, making it a high-value work. Of the many batik centers in Indonesia, Giriloyo Batik Village located in Wukirsari Village, Imogiri Subdistrict, Bantul Regency, Yogyakarta Special Region, is known as one of the most consistent in maintaining the traditional hand-written batik production process.(Harsoyo et al., 2019).

The majority of artisans in Giriloyo are women who have acquired batik skills from generation to generation. Although this community has long been entrenched in traditional batik practices, they have not escaped challenges along the way. One event that had a major impact was the disastrous earthquake in 2006, which significantly crippled the local economy. However, thanks to the support of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the local government, and the Bantul Tourism Office, the Giriloyo community managed to recover and transform into a batik tourism village that is now recognized internationally. This success shows that local culture not only has symbolic value, but can also be a source of social and economic resilience (Joakim, 2013).

However, this transformation also requires strengthening the community's capacity for documentation and innovation. There is still a lack of systematic documentation of the production process, which is an important part of Giriloyo's identity that needs to be preserved and introduced to the younger generation and tourists. In addition, knowledge about the stages of production from pengemplongan to nglorot has not been fully written down in an educational format that can be used for learning or regeneration purposes (Hikmi & Firdarini, 2024).

In the midst of modernization and changing preferences of the younger generation, Giriloyo faces serious challenges in terms of batik regeneration. The majority of active artisans today are elderly women, while the younger generation's interest in the profession tends to decline (Suliyanto et al., 2016). Some of the factors that influence this condition include a lack of understanding of the cultural value of batik, the limitation of interesting learning media, and the lack of systematic documentation of the batik production process. This situation raises concerns about the sustainability of batik knowledge in the future. The regeneration of batik makers is a crucial aspect to maintain the continuity of the batik tradition. The complex production process of written batik, including the stages of

pengemplongan, nyorek, nglowong, nembok, medel, nyoga, and nglorod, is still not fully documented and educative. This incompleteness complicates the process of passing on skills to the next generation, and narrows the opportunity for batik to be utilized as a medium for cultural learning in schools or communities.

In response to this situation, community service activities are needed that prioritize an educational and participatory approach. The aim is to document the batik production process directly, reintroduce the cultural values contained in it, and foster the younger generation's interest in this cultural heritage. This kind of activity also has the potential to be the first step in strengthening the regeneration of local batik makers as well as the preservation of written batik as a living cultural identity.

II. METHODS

This community service activity was carried out in Giriloyo Batik Village, Wukirsari Village, Imogiri District, Bantul Regency, Yogyakarta Special Region, which is known as one of the most active and maintained traditional hand-written batik centers in the Yogyakarta area. The implementation of the activity was carried out on May 21, 2025, by directly involving the craftsmen who are members of the Giriloyo Batik Association.

Before the core program began, there were: (Preparation, Socialization, Production, Monitoring and Evaluation)

1. Preparation

The preparation stage includes direct observation of the batik process and the preparation of visual and narrative documentation media to record all stages of the activity in a complete and educational manner.

2. Socialization

The activity was conducted directly at the location of Giriloyo Batik Association. The socialization was facilitated by the management of the association and attended by the craftsmen as participants. Located in the batik community hall, the socialization atmosphere was informal and open, allowing for a two-way dialogue between the implementation team and the craftsmen. In this session, the objectives of the activity, the expected benefits, and the support needed from the community were clearly conveyed. This activity is the first step to build trust and ensure the suitability between the program plan and the needs of the community.

3. Knowledge transfer and hands-on introduction to the production process of

Batik tulis, led by senior craftsmen from Paguyuban Giriloyo. Participants were introduced to the stages of batik making, starting from making the mori cloth, pattern making process (mola), coating (nglowong and nembok), dyeing (medel), color reinforcement (nyoga), to the last stage which is nglorod or boiling to remove the night.

4. Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation were conducted directly during and after the activities through participatory observation, documentation of the production process, and reflective discussions with participants and craftsmen to assess the achievement of program objectives, the effectiveness of knowledge transfer, and the potential for sustainability of future activities.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Community service activities carried out in Giriloyo Batik Village provide direct experience to participants in understanding the production process of hand-written batik as a form of art rooted in local traditions. This activity became a shared learning space that brought together traditional knowledge with an educational approach based on field experience.

After the initial socialization carried out directly at the batik community hall, the activity continued with an introduction session to the stages of batik production. The craftsmen who are members of the Giriloyo Batik Society guided the participants through the entire process, starting from the pengemplongan of the mori cloth, which is the process of softening and flattening the fabric fibers by beating them with a special tool. This process aims to make the fabric smooth, wrinkle-free, and ready to receive batik night (Hutami et al., 2021).

The next stage is nyorek or mola, which is making motif patterns on the fabric using a pencil or other tools. This process is important as a guide in weaving and maintaining visual proportions on the fabric. According to (Nugroho et al., 2022), The mola stage plays an important role in maintaining the harmony of the shape and rhythm of batik motifs, especially for classic hand-written batik that carries a certain philosophy.

Next, participants were introduced to the nglowong process, which is the initial glazing of the motif lines using traditional canting. This technique is also called wax-resist, where liquid wax is applied manually to hold the color during the first dipping (wibawanto et al. 2020). This stage requires high skill and hand stability so that the motif does not expand or break.



Figure 2 Original documentation from Giriloyo Batik Association craftsmen showing the nglowong process, which is the stage of coating the motif lines using canting.

After the main motif is laminated, the nembok stage is carried out by coating the area outside the motif using thick malam to protect the fabric background from the dye. This process aims to make the base color absorb only in the desired part. This technique is an important part of the multicolor hand-drawn batik process (Prabowo et al., 2020).

Then, the cloth is dipped into the dye solution in a stage called medel. The colors used can be synthetic or natural depending on the type of batik being made. This basic coloring becomes the first layer of color that will appear in the final motif.

After medel, the ngerok and mbironi stages are carried out. The night that covers certain parts is scraped off, then new night is reapplied to protect the previous color before further dyeing. According to (Anggarani Pribudi, 2020), This repeated layering allows complex color gradations to be formed without disturbing the already established base color.

Nyoga is the advanced dyeing stage, using natural dyes such as soga (jelawe or tall tree bark). These dyes give brown shades typical of classic Yogyakarta and Solo batik. Natural dyes are used to strengthen the traditional identity of batik and maintain environmental sustainability (Habib et al., 2023).

The final stage in this process is nglorod, which is the release of the night by boiling the cloth in hot water. The night will melt and lift, leaving the batik motif according to the initial design. This is the final stage that determines the success of the motif and the clarity of the color (B et al., 2022).



Figure 3 The final result of the hand-written batik cloth that has gone through all stages of production, from pengemplongan to nglorod.

After that, the fabric is rinsed and dried in the shade so that the color does not fade. The drying process is done carefully so that the fabric remains clean and does not get stained. A final check is done to ensure that there are no motif defects or color misses. Participants were directly involved in some of the simple steps, such as trying out the pattern and observing the dyeing process. In informal discussions with the artisans, it was shared that the process of fine hand-drawn batik can take up to three months, depending on the complexity of the motif and the number of colors.

This activity reinforced the understanding that the production of hand-drawn batik is not just a technical process, but also a cultural activity full of values, perseverance and skill. The transformation

of a plain cloth into a work of art reflects the fusion of aesthetics, philosophy and dedication passed down through generations by the people of Giriloyo.



Figure 4 Giriloyo Batik Village

Not only providing knowledge transfer to the participants, this activity also succeeded in fostering a deeper appreciation of hand-drawn batik as a cultural heritage that has historical, aesthetic and economic values. The participation of participants in every stage of batik production is a tangible form of respect for local expertise that has not been systematically documented. Through a participatory and educational approach, this activity is expected to be a starting point for sustainable documentation efforts and wider promotion of Giriloyo batik production processes, both in the context of cultural preservation and the development of educational tourism potential based on local wisdom.

IV. CONCLUSION

Written batik is an Indonesian cultural heritage that not only has high aesthetic value, but also contains philosophy and cultural identity that is passed down across generations. Giriloyo Batik Village in Wukirsari Village, Imogiri Subdistrict, Bantul Regency, is one of the real representations of the preservation of the batik tradition for generations. In the midst of rapid modernization, the Giriloyo community still maintains the authenticity of batik techniques, from fabric stitching to nglorod, without ruling out adaptation to the times.

The implementation of participatory community service activities is a means for participants to gain direct experience in understanding and following the production process of Giriloyo hand-drawn batik. Each stage, from mola, weaving, coloring, to boiling the night, not only shows the technical aspects, but also reflects the cultural values, patience, and skills typical of the local community.

This activity proves that the production of hand-drawn batik is a process of transformation from plain cloth to high-value works of art. The active participation of the community in conveying knowledge and guiding participants in batik making is a tangible form of community-based cultural sustainability. In addition to strengthening understanding of the art of batik, this activity also provides a space for appreciation of local expertise that has been less systematically documented.

In the future, this kind of activity is expected to encourage more complete documentation of the

hand-drawn batik process and expand the reach of local cultural promotion through educational approaches and creative tourism. Strengthening cooperation between the community, academics and stakeholders will be key in ensuring the sustainability of hand-drawn batik as a cultural identity and source of livelihood for the people of Giriloyo.

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