



International Journal of Humanity Studies
<https://ejournal.usd.ac.id/index.php/IJHS>
Sanata Dharma University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

THE CONCEPT OF ARRANGING TRADITIONAL JAVANESE ELEMENTS AS AESTHETIC COMPONENTS IN PUBLIC INTERIOR SPACES

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<https://doi.org/10.24071/ijhs.v9i2.61>

received 4 November 2025; accepted 22 April 2026

Abstract

This study emerges from the vivid presence of traditional Javanese cultural expressions, such as masks, *batik*, *wayang* puppets, *gebyog* carvings, and the iconic *Loro Blonyo* (the inseparable bridal) statues. All of those continue to shape the visual language of modern public interiors. Their quiet persistence within contemporary settings speaks to an enduring aspiration among the Javanese to breathe new life into ancestral heritage while embracing modern design sensibilities. Yet, weaving these worlds demands a carefully framed design concept that respects the past while enlivening the present. Field observations conducted across hotels, restaurants, and office buildings in Surakarta offer glimpses into this living dialogue between tradition and modernity. Through qualitative descriptive analysis, this study reveals that implementing Javanese elements into contemporary interiors does more than enrich the visual appeal. More importantly, it fosters a quiet yet profound renewal of cultural identity within the shifting urban landscape these days. The combination of the old and the new invites designers, users, and visitors alike to pause and reconsider what it means to occupy spaces where inherited symbols persist. Besides, it shapes modern interiors as vessels that carry the community's living memory forward, rather than as mere functional settings.

Keywords: aesthetic elements, interior aesthetics, public space, traditional elements

Introduction

The Javanese community is known for its vast and layered cultural heritage. They are categorized into two dimensions: mentifacts and artifacts. Mentifacts refer to the intangible aspects of culture, which include codes of conduct, systems of governance, and philosophical principles that guide daily life. Meanwhile, artifacts represent tangible cultural expressions that could range from houses and temples to masks, kris, batik textiles, spears, the *Loro Blonyo* statues, and *wayang* puppets. Each of these objects brings distinct forms and functions along with symbolic meanings—all of which are shaped by the unique contexts in which they appeared. For example, traditional Javanese houses—whether *tajug*, *joglo*, *limasan*, *kampung*, or *panggung pe*—illustrate variations in social status and local



usage. Many of these cultural artifacts are known as *adhi luhung*, which means profound philosophical and spiritual values that reflect how sophisticated the Javanese civilization was in its time. Yet, as society evolves, the original uses of these objects have gradually faded while opening up for new contexts and interpretations. For instance, masks once vital to dance rituals are now often mounted as decorative pieces in restaurants and hotel lobbies or offices. Likewise, the *Loro Blonyo* figures, once revered as fertility symbols within sacred spaces, now serve as ornamental accents in modern interiors.

This reappearance of traditional elements within contemporary public spaces hints at a collective urge to reconnect with local heritage while infusing modern environments with deeper layers of identity. Interestingly, it can feel culturally sterile. Alvin Boskoff considers that cultural forms naturally transform through both external encounters while shifting in social roles (Tomars, 1964). Similarly, Soedarsono (1996) notes that cultural changes are spurred by internal artistic innovations as well as external cultural exchange. These changes lead to innovations that incorporate existing cultural elements, resulting in new cultural expressions (Lauer, 2003).

The use of traditional Javanese elements in public spaces can be evaluated based on cultural criteria such as pastiche, parody, kitsch, and camp (Piliang, 2003). Widayat (2018) discusses the concept of *wangun* in traditional Javanese aesthetics, indicating that items not adhering to this concept are considered *ora wangun*. This shift from traditional aesthetics (*estetika trep*) to contemporary tastes (*estetika selera*) is also highlighted by Budiwiyanto (2021). Artworks often serve as status displays, showing the social status of their owners (Morris, 1977).

To achieve both visual harmony and cultural depth in interior design, traditional elements must be crafted with a careful understanding of certain guiding principles. These include size, scale, proportion, unity, harmony, variety, contrast, balance, rhythm, emphasis, patterns, and ornamentation (Pile, 1988). Additionally, these principles play a vital role in arranging the interior elements, which include shapes, motives, textures, colors, and even lightings (Stepat-De Van et al., 1980). As long as they are thoughtfully integrated, the traditional elements can bring back the cultural values to live as well as enrich the aesthetic appeals of modern spaces that often seem somewhat monotonous.

Several recent studies emphasize the great potential of the combination of local cultures and contemporary designs. A deep understanding related to historical contexts, as well as social and aesthetic values of a culture, is key so that the traditional elements can be relevantly adapted. On the other hand, the visual 3D technology allows more innovative processing for the traditional architecture decoration details, as well as bringing them to today's interior scenes. These contemporary approaches present that heritage is not only relevant but also is more valuable for creating modern spaces that are rich in identity as well as aesthetically pleasing (Rui & Aziz, 2023; Wang, 2024; Zhao & Yaacob, 2023).

Method

Several stages were involved in this research; each of them was related to the others. Those stages were identifying the traditional Javanese elements, understanding the functions and uses of each element, analyzing changes of functions, and formulating arrangement concepts. The identification of Javanese

culture as interior elements began with field observations in several public spaces. These included commercial spaces and office buildings in Surakarta. Ramada Hotel, Surakarta Royal Heritage Hotel, Kusuma Sahid Hotel, Sahid Raya Hotel, Ibis Hotel, Omah Selat, Adisucipto International Airport, and several other places in Surakarta were the observation spots. Additionally, the identification included Javanese elements in traditional houses or daily items. This stage's findings would become the baseline for further observations of the use of Javanese artifacts in public spaces.

The use of Javanese cultural elements and traditional artifacts as aesthetic elements in public spaces' interiors was the main source of this study. Instead of using numbers, the data would be presented through narrative and visual forms, considering that this is a qualitative study (Moleong, 1985). The sources of qualitative data included informants, physical artifacts, photographs, recordings, documents, and archival materials (Sutopo, 2002), enriched by written and spoken as well as recorded accounts (Soedarsono, 2001).

The next stage involved uncovering the functions, symbolic meanings, and practical uses of the Javanese cultural elements. The findings then served as a benchmark for comparing how their roles shift once adapted for modern public interiors. This comparative reading formed the groundwork for developing concepts of arranging traditional Javanese features within contemporary spaces. Qualitative description and interpretation were used for analyzing data as they emphasize meaning explanations, detailed descriptions, clarifications, and the contextual placement of each finding (Faisal, 2005).

Findings and Discussion

The identification process of traditional Javanese elements most commonly featured as aesthetic elements in public spaces' interior shows several key findings. Those elements include *batik* textiles, masks, the *Loro Blonyo* statues, *gebyog* wood panels, ornamental carvings, partitions or *rana*, wayang puppets, sets of Gamelan, traditional games, *robong* lamps, *benggala* mirrors, and classic Javanese cabinets. Each of these elements was further analyzed to reveal their functions, uses, and also the shifted meanings, which later became the groundwork for formulating the arranging and concepting patterns in modern interiors. The following sections present these findings in detail.

Identification of traditional Javanese elements and their applications as interior features in public spaces

Batik

Batik textiles are traditionally used for various purposes in Javanese society. Besides ceremonial dresses, the society uses the fabrics for ritual attire and everyday clothing. Over time, batik has also become popular as official uniforms and daily wear. Batik motifs, such as *kawung*, *parang*, *sidomukti*, *gurda*, and *sekar jagad*, carry significant symbolic and philosophical meanings, guiding human life to prosperity (Sudardi, 2021).

The presence of batik in public spaces' interiors across Surakarta is visible in various locations, such as Royal Heritage Surakarta Hotel, Adisumarmo International Airport, the Ibis Hotel's lobby, Sahid Raya Hotel, and several other communal spaces. The integrations are varied, including accents on the walls,

floors, and ceilings, as well as other decorative elements. For instance, *batik* motifs such as *parang*, *sekar jagad*, and *sidomukti* wrap around columns in the baggage claim area of Adisumarmo Airport. They neatly frame the space with contrasting materials for added emphasis.

Batik motifs also embellish the entrances, guest rooms, and elevator areas of The Royal Heritage Surakarta Hotel. The *kawung* motif is used as a vertical border for entry doors and as a horizontal decorative element on walls, while the *Parang* motif finishes the door panels. Batik motifs are also extensively used as floor decorations. Field observations revealed several public interiors, such as Hotel Ramada, where batik motifs (specifically, floral or *ceplok* motifs) are prevalent. These motifs are found in restaurants, lobbies, terraces by swimming pools, and hallways. The floral motif is predominantly used.

In several public buildings in Surakarta, such as the Ibis Hotel, batik motifs are integrated into wall designs. The *sekar jagad* motif, combined with *wayang* motifs, is used in the hotel lobby area. This continuous design extends from walls to ceilings, incorporating *gunungan* motifs paired with *sekar jagad* motifs. The continuous design from the walls to the ceiling, featuring prominent *gunungan* motifs and several *wayang* figures from the *Pandawa*, creates a cohesive and strong ethnic ambiance. The composition of colors, elements, lighting, and motifs is harmonious, enhancing the ethnic, beautiful, and attractive atmosphere.

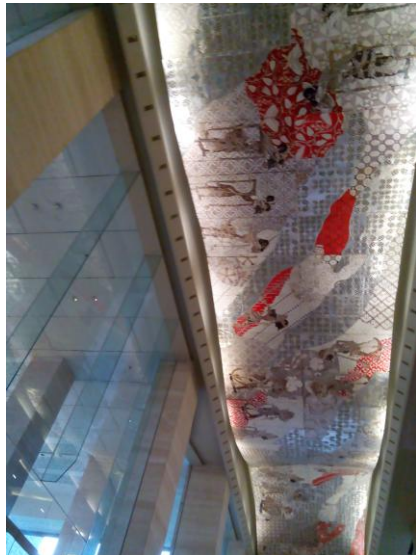


Figure 1: The *sekar jagad* motif as a ceiling element in Ibis Hotel Surakarta. Photo: Budiwiyanto, 2021.



Figure 2: The *kawung* motif as a decorative element of the food counter at Surakarta Royal Heritage restaurant. Photo: Budiwiyanto, 2023.

Masks (topeng)

Masks are objects shaped like human or animal faces used to cover the wearer's face during dance performances or cultural rituals. A mask can be interpreted as a work of art that imitates a specific character's face, serving as a cover or substitute for the wearer's face (Subiyantoro et al., 2023). In some Indonesian communities, masks are used as costumes in dance performances. The most commonly found mask is the *Panji* mask, which is based on the *Panji* stories

featuring the main characters Raden Panji Asmoro Bangun and Dewi Sekartaji. These masks are typically made of wood. Some masks are painted according to their intended use, while others retain a natural wood finish. Other types of masks include the *Barong Blora* mask, the *Dadak Merak* mask used in *Reog Ponorogo* performances, and the *klono* masks, among others.

In their application in interior design, masks are used as wall decorations. They are systematically arranged on the walls to create an orderly and attractive display. The use of masks as aesthetic interior elements on walls can be found in the restaurant area of Ramada Hotel Surakarta and the hallway of the meeting room at Surakarta Royal Heritage Hotel.



Figure 3: Masks as aesthetic elements in a restaurant of Ramada Hotel, Surakarta.
Photo: Budiwiyanto: 2023.

The Loro Blonyo statues

The *Loro Blonyo* is a pair of wooden statues representing Javanese bridal couples in traditional attire. These statues are typically depicted in a seated position and placed in front of the *krobongan*, the sacred area within a Javanese home. The *Loro Blonyo* statues are believed to bring good fortune and prosperity to their owners. Additionally, they symbolize the aspirations upheld by the household, with implicit values considered a source of strength (Subiyantoro, 2009). The pair represents Dewi Kamaratih and Kamajaya, embodying the divine aspects of fertility and marital harmony.

The *krobongan*, often referred to as *amben tengah*, is a sacred space within the Javanese house. It is an elaborately decorated area featuring a bed (*amben*) adorned with pillows, bolsters, bedspreads, and curtains, designated for Dewi Sri, and used for the couple's first night (Budiwiyanto, 2021). The term *amben tengah* denotes its central location, flanked by *senhong tengen* and *senhong kiwa* (right

and left rooms). Consequently, the *krobongan* serves as an altar-like space for venerating Dewi Sri.

In public interiors, the *Loro Blonyo* statues are predominantly used as decorative elements. Their placement is versatile, found in various settings such as restaurants, lobbies, hallways, halls, and meeting rooms. These statues are typically positioned on furniture pieces like console tables, credenzas, display tables, or sometimes stand alone as focal points on walks. Examples of the *Loro Blonyo* usage in public spaces include the restaurant, lobby, and hallway of Surakarta Royal Heritage Hotel, the lobby of Rumah Sakit Jiwa Surakarta, Kusuma Sahid Hotel, Sahid Raya Hotel, and the Omah Selad Restaurant.

Gebyog

According to the Javanese-Indonesian Dictionary, *gebyog* generally refers to a wooden wall. This term is often associated with traditional Javanese houses, known as *omah gebyog*. These houses typically have walls made of wooden planks or boards tightly arranged vertically or horizontally between the house's pillars (Budiwiyanto, 2021).

In modern public interiors, the use of *gebyog* is quite prevalent. Examples include the lobby of Ramada Surakarta Hotel, Surakarta Royal Heritage, and several restaurants in Surakarta, such as Omah Selad, Dapur Solo, and Palm Resto. *Gebyog* is typically utilized as a decorative element and a point of interest within a space, particularly in hotel lobbies. Additionally, it serves as both a wall element and a decorative feature, as seen in its application at Omah Selad.

Partitions (rana/warana)

Warana can be categorized into two types: massive and portable. Massive *warana*, made from fixed walls and immovable, are referred to as "*kelir tembok*" (Pitana, 2014). The portable type, made from wood, is simply called "*warana*". These wooden partitions are used to temporarily divide spaces and can be moved as needed. *Warana* are typically rectangular with a hollow center, often filled with fabric or glass (Budiwiyanto, 2021).

There are two main shapes of *warana*, namely low (approximately 1 meter in height) and tall (the height of average Javanese men), usually consisting of three foldable panels. The low *warana* is used to divide spaces during indoor activities, commonly placed in the *dalem ageng* to block the view between the *pringgitan* and the *dalem ageng*. *Warana* serves as an ethical visual barrier, separating spaces for different activities (Pitana, 2014).

In public interiors, the use of *warana* can be classified into two categories: as visual barriers and as aesthetic or decorative elements. For instance, at Handari Restaurant in Klaten, *warana* are used to section off areas, serving as visual barriers. Meanwhile, in the meeting room hallway of Surakarta Royal Heritage, *warana* are primarily used as decorative elements. Functionally, they still serve as dividers, but their placement has shifted more towards aesthetic purposes. In traditional Javanese homes, *warana* in the *dalem ageng* serve as barriers to prevent direct visibility from the *pringgitan*. However, in public interiors, they are more often used for decorative purposes or as aesthetic elements.

Ornaments

Ornaments are art components intentionally created as decorations (Gustami, 1980). Often referred to as decorative patterns, ornaments are used to embellish objects, furniture, and various parts of a house. They function as a medium to enhance or elevate a work of art. In addition to improving the visual appearance of an object or building, ornaments also reinforce character or stylistic identity and convey specific meanings. Ornaments serve both sacred and secular functions. The sacred function includes symbolic or magical purposes, while the secular function encompasses aesthetic purposes (Guntur, 2004). In practice, ornaments are commonly applied to materials such as wood, metal, fabric, leather, and paper.

Wooden ornaments, such as stylized *gunungan*, the *Loro Blonyo* statues, and traditional game tools (*dakon*), are used as decorative elements, both as standalone objects and as part of interior decoration. Metal ornaments, particularly those made from copper, are frequently used as room dividers and column coverings. Techniques such as embossed ornamentation on wood are also common. Fabrics are widely used as wall hangings, bed covers, and decorative elements on curtain tops. The types of fabrics used include *batik*, woven textiles, and *lurik*. The use of ornaments imbues public interior spaces with a strong traditional Javanese character.

Wayang

The term *wayang* refers to images or human replicas made from materials such as leather or wood, used to perform narratives (Anggoro, 2018). The primary purpose of *wayang* performances is to offer a ritual or *caos dhahar* to ancestral spirits to achieve peace, prosperity, and overall well-being (Mulasno, 2013). Over time, the function of *wayang* has evolved from sacred to profane. Originally performed as religious ceremonies, *wayang* performances have transformed into tools for religious teaching, propaganda, information dissemination, social events, and now primarily serve as entertainment (Mulasno, 2013).

Wayang has been extensively modified and used as an aesthetic element in public interiors (Toddy, 2017). For instance, *wayang* figures shaped like *Gunungan* are used as wall backgrounds in hotel lobbies. These *Gunungan wayang*, combined with batik motifs printed on media, create a space that feels strongly traditional yet retains a modern impression. Different forms of *wayang*, such as the *Pandawa* characters, are depicted on circular ceilings. The depiction of *Pandawa* characters in circular shapes with colorful backgrounds brings a contemporary feel to the room. Despite using traditional forms, the packaging, composition techniques, and carefully chosen colors give public spaces a traditional-modern or contemporary character.



Figure 4: The *gunungan* as an aesthetic element and focal point in the lobby of the Ibis Hotel Surakarta. Photo: Budiwiyanto, 2023.

Gamelan

Gamelan is a set of traditional Javanese musical instruments used to accompany Javanese songs, dance performances, *wayang* shows, and traditional Javanese ceremonies. Gamelan serves not only as entertainment but also holds social and religious functions within the community (Kristanto, 2022). In Javanese homes, gamelan is typically placed in the *pendapa* (the front pavilion).

In modern times, gamelan is often displayed in hotel lobbies, restaurants, and occasionally in multifunctional rooms. The primary purpose is to play Javanese music to welcome and entertain guests. The sound of gamelan in a room can create a serene and peaceful atmosphere. Additionally, when not being played, gamelan serves as an aesthetic element in public interior spaces (Scott-Maxwell, 1984; Walton, 2007).

Gamelan comes into today's public interior scenes in a more interesting approach to enrich the aesthetic values as well as strengthen the cultural nuances. Gamelan sets, for instance, are often being seated in the hotel's lobby as a decorative element that brings elegant touches of Javanese heritage to the room. In addition to adding visual appeal, this arrangement also informs the visitors about the values or cultural meanings behind gamelan. Gamelan presence in the room also adds calming yet colorful atmospheres that feel distinctive.

What makes gamelan so adaptable within contemporary interior design is its unique blend of traditional craftsmanship and modern sensibility. Designers often put these sets in strategic spots in the building as a focal point. In addition to emphasizing the cultural meanings of gamelan, the decision strengthens the aesthetic appeals in the entire room.

Traditional game tools

Bakiak, benthik, jamuran, gobaksodor, dakon—all of those are a view of numerous traditional Javanese games. *Dakon*, on the other hand, stands out as a classic game that comes with intriguing uniqueness. Typically crafted from a solid wooden block, a *dakon* board features two rows of paired holes, usually totaling twenty. Its boat-like shape has two dragon head carvings at each end and is supported by four sturdy legs. *Dakon* was often played by noble children back then (Supeni et al., 2019).

Besides a game for children, adults also enjoyed this playing activity. This fact emphasizes *dakon*'s timeless appeal. The design is distinctively unique, while the cultural values make this board game a cultural artifact. Today, *dakon* has become part of decorative elements in hotels' interior settings, restaurants, cafes, or even offices. The placements are supposed to highlight the uniqueness of *dakon*'s shapes as well as emphasize the Javanese identity in public spaces (Sarkiwan et al., 2023). *Dakon* is commonly placed on a long table and paired with the Loro Blonyo statues or other art pieces.

Dakon continues to inspire modern interiors in public spaces and has been creatively processed to enrich and highlight the cultural values. The carving details often become wall decorative elements or are transformed into parts of cultural installations in the lobbies and restaurants (Ismanto et al., 2020). In addition to adding an artistic layer to the space, the presence of *dakon* also introduces visitors to the richness of Javanese heritage.

Lampu robyong

Robyong lamps are antique decorative fixtures known for their ornate golden embellishments, characterized by an elegant yet striking presence (Gunawan et al., 2022). These lamps come in several types, including crystal variants as well as *robbyong* lamps in gold, silver, and black. The most commonly used *robbyong* lamps in traditional Javanese houses are the gold and black types. Meanwhile, crystal *robbyong* lamps were primarily incorporated in the houses of noble families, including royal households and affluent communities. Black *robbyong* lamps, on the other hand, were more commonly found in the homes of prosperous commoners.

In modern interiors, especially public spaces, *robbyong* lamps are widely used in hotel lobbies, restaurants, and sometimes in meeting rooms. The most commonly used types are crystal *robbyong* lamps and black *robbyong* lamps, distinctive to the Javanese style. The arrangement is done in such a way that it appears harmonious and balanced. In interiors, these Javanese-style lamps are sometimes adapted as wall lamps, installed on either side of main entrance doors or other doors. Generally, *robbyong* lamps are installed in *pendapa*-style buildings. The main purpose of using *robbyong* lamps in public interiors is to establish a Javanese character, enhance the space, provide lighting, and serve as aesthetic elements.

Kaca benggala

Kaca benggala is typically placed on either side of the main entrance of a Javanese house and, in some cases, on both sides of windows. Its primary function is as a reflective medium, allowing individuals entering the house to check their

appearance. Beyond this practical role, *kaca benggala* also carries a symbolic function as a medium for self-reflection and introspection. It invites individuals—whether occupants or visitors—to engage in a moment of self-awareness before entering the domestic space. (Widayat, 2016). It serves to check whether one's appearance and behavior reflect Javanese etiquette and culture. Thus, *kaca benggala* holds significant symbolic meaning in the Javanese house.

In public interiors, *kaca benggala* is applied similarly to its use in traditional Javanese houses, although it is not typically positioned at the main entrance. Instead, it is more commonly placed on either side of a room's entrance. In this context, *kaca benggala* functions both as an aesthetic element and as a practical mirror for visitors. At the same time, it serves to articulate Javanese spatial nuances within the interior setting. Despite its adaptation into contemporary environments, *kaca benggala* retains its distinctive Javanese character, particularly through the preservation of carved ornamental motifs. In current interior practices, this element is often produced using modern materials while maintaining traditional visual language. This approach allows the integrity of cultural values to be preserved while enabling a more contextually relevant expression within contemporary interiors.

Traditional Javanese cabinets

Known locally as *almari*, traditional Javanese cabinets are typically found in key areas of Javanese houses, such as the *dalem ageng* (main room), *gadri* (living room), or sometimes in *senhong tengen* and *senhong kiwa* (the right and left bedrooms). These cabinets function as storage and, in some cases, as display units for the household's valued belongings. Characterized by detailed carvings and sturdy wooden construction, the *almari* reflects the craftsmanship and cultural heritage of Javanese artisans.

In contemporary public interiors, the traditional *almari* is often repurposed as a decorative element rather than serving its original storage function. These cabinets often decorate the hotel's lobbies, restaurants, or other public spaces, becoming focal points that emphasize the Javanese cultural atmosphere. The detailed carvings and traditional motifs on the *almari* make them ideal for introducing a sense of Javanese elegance and heritage to modern settings (Zhao & Yaacob, 2023).

The changes in function and use of traditional Javanese elements in public interiors

Traditional Javanese elements are essentially works of art, each possessing functional, symbolic, and aesthetic roles. According to Merton, as cited by Kaplan and Manners (2000), everything is functionally related to everything else. Furthermore, Merton introduces the distinction between manifest and latent functions (obvious and hidden functions) in a cultural act or element. This leads to changes in the function of traditional Javanese elements when used in different contexts or places.

Several factors influence the changes in the function of Javanese artifacts in public spaces. The primary factor is the use change. Initially, these elements were used for practical purposes, symbolic roles, ritual functions, performances, or games. Over time, they have been repurposed as aesthetic elements (decorative

functions) and as reinforcers of Javanese character. For example, elements with practical functions include batik, cabinets, *kaca benggala*, *dakon*, lamps, *gebyog*, and *warana*. Symbolic elements include the Loro Blonyo statues, batik, masks, and wayang. Ritual elements include wayang, gamelan or traditional music ensemble, and masks. Elements used in games include *dakon*. Additionally, there are purely decorative elements, such as various crafts adorned with ornaments.

In some cases, a single artifact can serve multiple functions. For example, batik serves as clothing from a utilitarian perspective. Symbolically, batik patterns carry philosophical meanings and prayers for a peaceful and prosperous life. In rituals, batik is used in ceremonies such as *mitoni* (a Javanese prenatal ritual) and weddings. Similarly, wayang and masks, primarily used in performance, have symbolic and philosophical meanings behind the characters, forms, and narratives, providing life guidance.

Ultimately, these Javanese artifacts are extensively used as interior elements in public spaces, primarily for their aesthetic value and to reinforce Javanese character, often overlooking their philosophical, symbolic, and ritual meanings. Nonetheless, the forms of these artifacts remain true to their originals, either in their original forms, modified forms, or reproduced to mimic the original designs.

Table 1. Changes in function and use of several Javanese artifacts in public interiors

No	Javanese element	Initial function	Function and use in public interiors
1	<i>Batik</i>	Practical use as clothing for traditional ceremonies, rituals, and everyday wear; carries symbolic and philosophical meanings, representing social status.	Interior aesthetic element, enhancing Javanese character. Used on walls, floors, ceilings, and other decorative elements.
2	Masks or <i>topeng</i>	Performance property (theater), cultural and symbolic meaning, representing characters and philosophies.	Interior aesthetic element, enhancing Javanese character. Used as wall decorations.
3	The <i>Loro Blonyo</i> statues	Ritual functions, symbolizing fertility and harmony, representing Dewi Kamaratif and Kamajaya (symbolic function).	Interior aesthetic element, enhancing Javanese character. Used in hotels or restaurants.
4	<i>Gebyog</i>	Wooden wall panels, practical use in Javanese houses, carrying symbolic and aesthetic functions.	Interior aesthetic element, enhancing Javanese character. Used as wall panels and room dividers.
5	Ornaments	Aesthetic elements, enhancing the character of objects or houses, carrying symbolic meanings.	Interior aesthetic element, enhancing Javanese character. Used on walls, pillars, doors, windows, and furniture.
6	Partitions (<i>rana/warana</i>)	Movable room dividers, practical use, symbolic and aesthetic functions.	Interior aesthetic element, enhancing Javanese character. Used as room dividers and wall decorations.
7	<i>Wayang</i> (shadow puppets)	Performance property, cultural and symbolic meanings, representing philosophical usage.	Interior aesthetic element, enhancing Javanese character. Used as wall and ceiling décor.

8	Gamelan (traditional music ensemble)	Accompanying traditional music, carrying symbolic and philosophical meanings.	Interior aesthetic element, enhancing Javanese character. Used as decorations and sometimes played.
9	Traditional games or <i>Dakon</i>	Traditional Javanese games, carrying symbolic and philosophical meanings.	Interior aesthetic element, enhancing Javanese character. Used as decorations.
10	<i>Robyong</i> lamps	Lighting, aesthetic elements.	Aesthetic elements, providing lighting.
11	<i>Kaca benggala</i>	A place for self-reflection, symbolic and philosophical functions, and aesthetic elements.	Interior aesthetic element, enhancing Javanese character.
12	Traditional Javanese cabinets	Storing valuable items, practical use, and symbolic function.	Interior aesthetic element, enhancing Javanese character.

Concept of arranging Javanese artifacts as aesthetic elements in modern interiors

The use of traditional elements in modern interiors aims to reintroduce Javanese characters into interior spaces. The formation of Javanese character and aesthetics in modern interiors considers several aspects: (1) the use of original forms of their modification, (2) the disregard of Javanese aesthetic rules, (3) the neglect of sacred and symbolic values, and (4) the prioritization of user preferences and enjoyment (Budiwiyanto & Rosmiati, 2023). The use of original forms or their modification refers to the application of traditional Javanese elements either in their original form or adapted to suit spatial needs, such as *batik*, masks, *wayang*, and lamps. These artifacts are incorporated into modern interiors by setting aside Javanese aesthetic rules and their inherent sacred and symbolic values. As each Javanese artifacts carriers such meanings, its use in contemporary settings often shifts toward visual and experiential purposes. Thus, the primary objective of incorporating traditional Javanese elements in modern interiors is to reintroduce Javanese character or ambiance. Consequently, their function is oriented toward aesthetic purposes, character reinforcement, and the enhancement of spatial appeal.

Traditional Javanese elements, when positioned as aesthetic components, primarily function as decorative elements. Their arrangement follows the spatial composition and focuses on key activity areas within public interiors, such as lobbies, restaurants, meeting rooms, and halls. In this context, their primary role as decoration often involves setting aside their sacred and symbolic functions. The arrangement techniques may still draw from Javanese compositional principles, including symmetry, repetition, and unity, as seen in the placement of elements such as masks, batik motifs, and *kaca benggala*. These elements are typically positioned on prominent surfaces to ensure visibility.

Beyond their decorative role, traditional Javanese elements are also intended to evoke a distinct Javanese atmosphere within modern interiors, thereby enhancing spatial identity and appeal. The presence of these artifacts is expected to reinforce a sense of Javanese character within the space. Overall, the incorporation of Javanese artifacts in public interiors involves a shift from their original functions, symbolic meanings, and traditional arrangement rules.

Nevertheless, despite this transformation, the cultural character and distinctiveness of Javanese tradition remain perceptible within the spatial experience.

The concept of arranging Javanese artifacts as aesthetic elements in modern interiors also incorporates modern design principles. These principles include size, scale, proportion, harmony, unity, variety, contrast, balance, rhythm, emphasis, pattern, and ornamentation (Pile, 1988).

Size, scale, and proportion

Size, scale, and proportion relate to the comparison between the human body as a user and the furniture used, as well as the overall space. To achieve an ideal, comfortable, and visually pleasing design, it is necessary to consider the size and proportion of the human body in relation to the furniture or space being used.

Harmony and rhythm

Rhythm arises from the repetition of design elements. Regular repetition creates a regular rhythm, which leads to harmony. Therefore, in interior arrangement, the selection of aesthetic elements for interior aesthetics needs careful consideration. This is important because it involves determining the shape, material selection, texture, color, pattern, and ornamentation to be applied. Additionally, the arrangement and management aspects must be considered to achieve a harmonious design. An example of harmony and rhythm can be seen in the arrangement of masks displayed on a wall. The repetition of mask shapes to the right and downward, forming a box, creates harmony through the rhythm of repeating mask shapes.

Unity

To create a visually cohesive whole, arranging interior elements requires incorporating unity as a key principle. Placing similar shapes close together in a deliberate order, for instance, is a way to achieve this unity look. It may also come from combining different items into one well-organized composition. A simple example of this can be seen in the way plates are lined up to form a box-like pattern. This box arrangement is later mirrored on both the left and right sides. This repetition is complemented by a floral-patterned wall texture with a brownish color as the background. The addition of indirect lighting accents behind the box containing the porcelain plate arrangement creates a unified and elegant room impression.



Figure 5: Integrating similar elements into a single wall composition can create a harmonious and unified design. Photo: Budiwiyanto, 2023

Variation, contrast, and emphasis

Variation, contrast, and emphasis in design are intended to attract attention and add value to a space, preventing it from becoming monotonous. These elements also provide accents that serve as focal points. Accents in a room can be singular or multiple, but should not be overused. For example, using batik patterns on walls, lampshades, and furniture adds variety. Contrast is also used to draw attention, such as combining traditional elements with modern ones within a cohesive design.

Emphasis in a room might include the use of *gebyog* in interior spaces, batik accents on walls, or batik and *wayang* motifs on ceilings. *Batik* motifs can provide variety, contrast, and emphasis, such as golden batik borders around lift doors to make them easily recognizable. In essence, variation, contrast, and emphasis are used to draw attention to specific areas within a room, enhancing its overall appeal and interest.



Figure 6: Golden batik motifs are used for variation, contrast, and emphasis at the lift entrance to ensure easy recognition by visitors. Photo: Budiwiyanto, 2023

Balance

Balance is defined as a stable or equilibrium condition. It includes both symmetrical and asymmetrical balance. Symmetrical balance occurs when the visual weight of design elements is evenly distributed horizontally or vertically. This type of balance emphasizes the equilibrium of two similar or almost identical elements on different sides. Symmetrical balance in a room is reflected in the arrangement of various room elements and decorations in a symmetrical manner, meaning the placement of furniture and accessories on the right and left sides is identical. Asymmetrical balance occurs when the visual weight of design elements is not evenly distributed along the central axis of the room's elements. This type of balance focuses more on the shape, texture, color, and size of design elements arranged in a non-identical manner, but provides balanced visual weight. Often, we see aesthetic elements placed in different shapes and arranged asymmetrically. With proper arrangement, asymmetrical balance can create a dynamic room impression.

In Javanese culture, symmetrical forms are often preferred in creating artworks, as symmetry is believed to provide balance. The concept of balance (symmetry) is not only used in art but also in various aspects of daily life, such as balancing worldly and spiritual life, microcosm and macrocosm, living in harmony with nature and the environment. The concept of balance in Javanese houses and their elements is also arranged symmetrically (Budiwiyanto, 2021). Odd and symmetrical forms are often referred to as "*loroning atunggal*," "*kiwa-tengen*," and "*keblat papat lima pancer*" (Hartono, 1999). According to Javanese beliefs, this concept symbolizes life balance. This life balance, according to Ronald (1990), is known as the theory of symmetry. The theory of symmetry is an extension of aesthetic theory, which includes the principles of axis, symmetry, hierarchy, and rhythm. The application of the axis of symmetry concept in Javanese houses can be seen in the left and right *senhong*, left and right *gandhok*, door placement, and symmetrical arrangement of household furniture (Budiwiyanto, 2008). This concept is often called dualism. Dualism is not a contradiction but a relationship between two different yet harmonious elements. The central point (the third point), representing the absolute or God, acts as the balance controller (Ronald, 2005). Symmetrical appearance represents the perfection of life (Ronald, 1990). Although the concept of symmetrical arrangement has a profound meaning, it is less considered in public interior aesthetics. Public interior aesthetics tend to prioritize visual beauty.

Patterns and ornaments

Patterns are always associated with motifs. In batik works, patterns consist of motifs. Motifs include main motifs, supporting motifs, and fillers (Kartika, 2007). In this study, patterns and ornaments are the primary elements and the main focus. Thus, patterns and ornaments are essential elements in arranging traditional Javanese elements as aesthetic components in public interior spaces.

Conclusion

This study stems from explorations of functions and integrations of Javanese elements within public interiors. The findings suggest that the appearance of Javanese cultural features in modern interior settings marks a shift in how they are perceived and applied today. Many traditional Javanese elements are now reimagined and repurposed as aesthetic or decorative elements, as well as the symbols of Javanese characters. Thus, the arrangement patterns are shifted as well. According to field analysis, the arrangement patterns of traditional Javanese elements in public interiors can be summarized in three main points: 1) serving as aesthetic features, 2) reinforcing cultural characters while enhancing the space's overall appeal, and 3) being arranged in symmetrical compositions that also respect modern design principles.

Bringing traditional Javanese elements into contemporary public interiors illustrates a considerate cultural adaptation that blends rich historical meaning with modern aesthetics. In addition to maintaining the heritage to live, this approach also enriches the visual quality and experiences in public spaces. By guiding the balance between traditions and modern design principles, these arrangements may bring immersive cultural atmospheres for both local communities and international visitors. This blending underscores the living nature of Javanese culture and its ability to evolve and remain meaningful in today's settings.

Acknowledgment

We would like to express our gratitude to the Rector of the Indonesian Institute of the Arts Surakarta, through the Chairperson of LP2MP3M, for providing financial support for this research.

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