

Visual Style Transformation of Wayang Topeng Malang as Urban Toy Design Inspiration

Dimas Rifqi Novica^{a*}, Andy Pramono^b, Joko Samodra^c, Mitra Istiar Wardhana^d, Ima Kusumawati Hidayat^e, ^{a,b,c,d,e}Faculty of Letters, Universitas Negeri Malang, Malang, Indonesia, Email: ^{a*}dimas.novica.fs@um.ac.id

Wayang Topeng Malang (Malang Mask Puppet) is one of the traditional arts from Malang, East Java, Indonesia that nearly vanished because the majority of adolescents in Malang do not recognise it. Adolescent in Indonesia often find it difficult to learn the traditional arts because of the communication does not match with their interest. They prefer popular cultures that are more exciting and urban toys. Urban toys have a high appeal value because it has a unique concept and is often produced in limited quantities. This research will transform Wayang Topeng Malang's visual style as a design inspiration for the urban toy. Wayang Topeng Malang's and urban toys visual style examined with ATUMICS (Artefact, Technique, Utility, Material, Icon, Concept, and Shape) method to obtain an alternative drawing sketch for urban toys character design. This design is expected to develop further into an urban toy that will reintroduce traditional culture into a type of pop culture that is more appealing to the target audience in order to maintain traditional culture.

Key words: *Wayang Topeng Malang, Visual Style, Urban Toys, Character Design.*

Introduction

Wayang Topeng Malang is a unique traditional culture from Malang City, Indonesia. With its distinctive visual style, Wayang Topeng Malang has a symbolic significance of local values that bind social relations between people in society (Hidayat, 2014). In addition to being a performance, Wayang Topeng Malang also serves as a guide that teaches the norms and values of everyday life. The role of the Wayang Topeng Malang is considered quite significant in the present, but ironically, most adolescents in Malang does not know about it. More than fifty percent of adolescents in Malang does not recognise Wayang Topeng

Malang; either they considered it old fashioned, or they do not have access to it (Nirwana & Setiyati, 2018).

The main reason adolescents in Indonesia find it challenging to grasp traditional culture is because its communication message does not align with their interests. Indonesian traditional culture is considered outdated compared to more interesting foreign cultures that have infiltrated their life (Kuwado, 2017). Regarding this situation, the government's role has become very crucial in supporting the creative industries in Indonesia. Previous research (Kawashima, 2018) shows that the Japanese government succeeded in encouraging its creative industry in producing popular cultures with traditional cultural content. This movement is intriguing because the marketing strategy was carefully designed to follow the community's social development, which shifted from material demand to emotional demand. These creative industry products focused on customer perceptions by investigating their emotional responses, aiming to more affectionate design (Jiang, Ni, & Miao, 2018).

Urban toys are an example of affective design. Urban toys are peculiar toys because they are produced from the city (urban) culture so that urban ideology is intrinsic in its form, discourse, and function (Priyantoro, 2019). Urban toys are also said to have a stronger affective value because of their distinctive design concept and limited quantity. Generally, urban toy enthusiasts are adolescents to adults. Urban toys both presented as products and promotional medium for traditional culture. As a product, it can be marketed to the target audience. While as a promotional medium, it can contain fresh ideas such as traditional culture (Oktaviani & Ichwan, 2019). Urban toys as cultural promotion media have benefits because they are enjoyed physically in their three-dimensional forms. This research aims to explore Wayang Topeng Malang's visual style as an inspiration for urban toy design.

Literature Review

Visual Style of Wayang Topeng Malang

Wayang Topeng Malang has altered its role from the past as a sacred spiritual medium and now as a property of performing arts, although its sacred significance has not entirely vanished. Wayang Topeng Malang continues to develop in the traditional art studio in several regions in Malang, such as in Tamiajeng, Nduwet, Precet, Pucangsongo, Wangkal, Gubuklakah and Kedungmonggo (Astrini, Amiuzza, & Handajani, 2013). One of the survivors is the Asmorobangun Studio in Kedungmonggo, which is still actively performing as cultural tourism destinations (Suprihatin, 2016).

Some attempts have been made to maintain Wayang Topeng Malang by creating a guidebook (Salim, Bangsa, & Christianna, 2017; Amanda et al., 2018), developing technology for the Wayang Topeng Malang art industries (Arifianto & Himawan, 2018; Finahari, 2018), and

creating products out of it (Kusumawati & Abednego, 2017). This research have not yet explored Wayang Topeng Malang visual style transformation into a more modern form like the popular culture product that intrigued the adolescents.

The distinctiveness of the Wayang Topeng Malang’s visual style is observed according to its form and color. Based on its form, Wayang Topeng Malang consisted of 76 figures, with four characteristics of human nature, namely panji (descent), sabrang (malevolent), abdi (servant), and kewan (animal). Based on its color, Wayang Topeng Malang has five primary colors: green, white, yellow, red, and black (Astrini et al., 2013). In addition to the shape and color, the visual style of Wayang Topeng Malang also has human facial anatomy, which is supported by a variety of decorative elements to strengthen the personalities that played in the performing arts. There are at least 14 visual elements of Wayang Topeng Malang that can be observed, such as: eyes, eyebrows, nose, lips, mustache, beard, sideburns, hair, *urna*, *forehead decoration*, *jamang* (gauntlet), *cula* (horn), *sumping* (ear decoration), *isen-isen* (decorative content), and color (Melany & Nirwana, 2015). Another research suggests that Wayang Topeng Malang's visual style depicted from the typology of the nose, eyes, *sumping* (ear decoration) and carving of the head, eyebrows, mustache, and mouth (Armayuda, 2016). The visual element is illustrated and presented simply by using the WASBUMIL (Werno (color), Alis (eyebrow), Sumping (ear decoration), Brengos (mustache), Ukiran (carving), Mripat (eye), Irung (nose), and Lambe (mouth)) diagram which only has eight visual elements.

Figure 1. Wasbumil Diagram



Source: Armayuda, 2016

The most representative icons were identified and converted into urban toy design inspiration for transforming the visual style of Wayang Topeng Malang. Therefore it maintained a close relationship between traditional culture and popular culture.

Urban Toys

Toys are popular objects in human development until adulthood as it has a strong emotional appeal. The appeal of contemporary toys, in this case, urban toys, is developed by designers who work independently from within or even outside the toy industry. Similar to fashion, toys also reflect people's lifestyle, which changes rapidly (Lonnqvist, 2018). Urban toys appear in three-dimensional forms which have many added values, such as narration, character design, and innovative material using vinyl, textiles, metals, or wood (Benedictus, 2018). Thus helping to develop a new toy concept, which has its own unique and distinctive charm (Heljakka, 2017).

Urban toys can be divided into two types based on their concept, namely: completed (finished) and customized (Do It Yourself). The first type is urban toys which already have fixed designs with predetermined details and colours to fit the designer concept, while the second type is urban toys which can be adjusted both in shape and colour based on the toy owner's preference (Priyantoro, 2019). This toy combines art, graphic design, and visual communication to produce distinctive personality with components of ideas and idealism so that each has individual and distinct values (Steinberg, 2010). There are no particular rules for developing urban toys. Thus, designers are free to be creative. Here is an example of urban toys combining traditional culture and pop culture called "Journey To The West Collection Sun Wukong Art Toys."

Figure 2. Journey To The West Collection Sun Wukong Art Toys



Source: <http://stickymonsterlab.com/shop/Edition/SWK/son03.jpg>

Urban toys are cultural artefacts that reflect and transmit social aspects, considering their function as a collectible item. Urban toys are seen as a communication and transmission aspect of culture because its values impart aesthetic procedures and beliefs (Goldstein, 2017). Thus, the uniqueness and distinctiveness of urban toys is used as a means of delivering messages, meanings, and cultural values. Today's technological innovations also contribute to the availability of inexpensive materials, as well as the current growth of the “maker movement” that widely supports activities of consumer participation to create any objects. The phenomenon occurring in the urban toys community is a response to real problems and concerns about the Indonesian cultural crisis.

Methods

Research data consisted of information on the visual style of Wayang Topeng Malang and information on urban toys. The information was collected from observations and documentation of the research subject. Interviews with several respondents consisting of Wayang Topeng Malang collectors and artists, as well as the founder of the urban toys community in Malang was also conducted. The interviews were recorded using a smartphone; then the recordings were converted into transcripts. The transcripts were then broken down to an ATUMICS matrix (Nugraha, 2012) to determine the elements of each culture (traditional culture, and popular culture) so that it was adequately integrated to generate keywords. The basis for character design was created through the keywords, in the aim to draw several alternative character designs for the urban toy.

Discussion

Wayang Topeng Malang is a performance art that tells Panji's tale. There are at least three Panji's tales on Java, notably Panji Kuda Semirang, Panji Anggraeni, and Panji Asmorobangun. Wayang Topeng Malang mainly tells the story of Panji Asmorobangun, about a journey to win a lover named Dewi Sekartaji and to confront his love rival named Klana Sewandana (Irawanto, 2019). Panji Asmorobangun is said to be an ideal Javanese male figure, he depicts a woman but handsome, depicts a man but beautiful, like a mixture of masculinity and femininity, which in Javanese is called the *lanange jagat sempurno* (perfect man in the whole universe) (Yudit Perdananto, personal communication, April 20, 2019). The visual style of Asmorobangun mask observed using the WASBUMIL diagram. Panji Asmorobangun mask has a green *werno* (colour), *alis* (eyebrows) Sineret Blarak are visually thin and pointed, *sumping* (ear decoration) Pundak Mekar with floral and tendrils; *bregos* Kucing Anjlog is visually thin and curved, *ukiran* (carving) contains a mixture of floral and tendrils; *moto* (eyes) Gabahan is visually curved like a grain, *irung* (nose) pangotan with

sturdy visuals, and *lambe* (mouth) Dlima Pecah with a smile expression (6 teeth visible). These visual elements of Panji Asmorobangun mask portray the feminine and masculine facial features of the character's personality.

Figure 3. Panji Asmorobangun masks replica



Source: research document

Wayang Topeng Malang, especially Asmorobangun mask, contains the philosophy of human life which is represented in three visual elements of Wayang Topeng Malang: *urna* (forehead decoration), *sinom* (head decoration) and *cula* (horn) (Tri Handoyo, personal communication, June 16, 2019). Urna is a symbol of human relationships that, according to Wayang Topeng Malang's philosophy, there are four human characteristics in relationships with each other, namely good, bad, humour, and animals. Sinom is a symbol of the human-environment relationship. It foretold that humans must be good towards nature, including to plants and animals, which is reflected in the characterisation of the protagonists and antagonists in the story (the protagonist is symbolised by plants, while animals symbolise the antagonists). Cula is a symbol of the human-god relationship. When combined, the three visual elements will have significance advice that humans in their life must have good relationships with each other, nature, and God, so that they become a whole perfect being.

Wayang Topeng Malang is usually made from wood, but some souvenirs are made out of fiberglass. If described from the concept of its creation, Wayang Topeng Malang has a similar visual style between characters. The distinguishing difference is in its colour, as Panji Asmorobangun mask has a green colour, the Dewisekartaji mask has a black colour, and the Klana Sewandana mask has a red colour. It is possible to observe the characterisation of Wayang Topeng Malang from the colour, Panji Asmorobangun has a green colour, a symbol of peace and fertility. Dewisekartaji has a white colour, a symbol of purity, and Klana Sewandana has a red colour, a symbol of bravery. All of the Wayang Topeng Malang have the same smiling or laughing expression.

Urban toys have the same concept as Wayang Topeng Malang, which has the same basic form but different in colours. With that in mind, urban toys can have a vast range of characters. One example of urban toys brand is ThreeA (3A). 3A results from the collaboration between the Hong Kong company, ThreeZero, and illustrator, Ashley Woods. 3A released the Square that has one similar box-shaped toy with various colours. This toy has a size scale of 1/8, made from PVC material and it also released with vinyl material with a size scale of 1/12 and 1/1.

Figure 4. 3A Square



Source: <https://pbs.twimg.com/media/Cr2eM3dUEAAD0Jt.jpg>

Depending on the visual elements it has, such as colours and decals, each Square character have its narrative. The background story tells that the Square is a helper robot created by Rothchild (character's name) in the World War Robot universe. Toy collectors can customise this collection; for instance, the urban toys community in Malang own this toy series with its community logo identity "3A Malang Legion" (Rino Adi Mahardika, personal communication, June 13, 2019).

Based on the data disclosure above, an ATUMICS matrix (table 1) was developed before producing the urban toy. The table contains four points: mixture ideas, motivations, aspect of production, and a brief description of the urban toys.

Table 1: Matrix Atumics

Mixture Idea						
Elements	Traditional		Modern			
Technique	Chiselling and carving		Printing and moulding			
Utility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spiritual Medium • Performing arts property (face) • Collectible item 		Collectible item			
Material	Wood		PVC/Vynil			
Icon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decorative on the headpiece (urna, sinom, cula) • The main character's colour (green, red, white, yellow and black) • Smiling expression 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban adolescents fashion and accessory trend 			
Concept	Similar shape with different colours		Similar shape with different colours			
Shape	Mask		Toys			
Motivations						
Aspect	Description			Level		
Survival	Traditional culture preservation, especially among adolescents			1	2	3
Creative Self Expression	-			1	2	3
Cultural	Reintroduce traditional culture with popular culture packaging to attract the adolescent's attention			1	2	3
Social	Production activity can help Wayang Topeng Malang craft community and industry economics			1	2	3
Ecological	-			1	2	3
Economic	Providing alternative of Wayang Topeng Malang merchandise design with fresh looks into the craft community and industry			1	2	3
Production Aspects						
Produced by	Craft community and craft industries					
Production quantity/year	100-200 pieces					
Brief Description of The Whole Idea						
The urban toy of Wayang Topeng Malang will explore the main protagonist of Panji's tale,						

Panji Asmorobangun. Its masked face is derived from Wayang Topeng Malang. The visual styles include decorative elements on the headpiece (urna, sinom, and cula), the colour of the mask, and the expression of the mask. This toy will have a visual style of urban toys with humanoid body shape and wearing urban adolescents fashion/style. The mask of the toy made removable and replaceable with various types of masks in the tale of Panji. The production process includes a 3D printed master and moulded results. This concept was created to reintroduce traditional culture to adolescents and provide alternative merchandise design of Wayang Topeng Malang.

ATUMICS table developed keywords for the foundation used in character design for the urban toy. These keywords illustrated in the form of a masked head in urban youth fashion. The iconic visual styles are the decorative headpiece (urna, sinom, and horn), mask colour, and mask expression. Here are some alternative drawing sketches of the urban toy character design.

Figure 5. Alternative drawing sketches of the urban toy character design



Source: Research document

Conclusion

One of the most representative models will be chosen from the alternative sketch, both conceptually and visually. Thus, the selected design will be developed further with character design creation methods. The methods include reference cross-checking, thumb nailing, detailing, creating alternative poses, and colouring. The final design will be modelled in digital 3D and processed according to the production steps of urban toys.

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