

A Carved Motif Design Development on a Kudus Gebyok Door, Indonesia

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Abstract.

The *Pencu* traditional house was originally built between 1749 AD - 1945 AD and reflected the culture and the prosperous and established economic welfare order of the Kudus people. The traditional culture of the *Pencu* house is one of the multitudes of cultures of Indonesia. Kudus traditional house is unique because of the carvings of the *gebyok*. This study explores the various forms of carving art with sacred motifs on *gebyok* of Kudus. This can be useful for preserving the culture of the Kudus people and the advancement of carving in the city of Kudus. The carving motifs applied in the *gebyok* design develop the previous motifs. However, the shapes and patterns are still maintained in their originality. The results show that the design of the Kudus *gebyok* door engages carving motifs. Several motifs have been developed and applied to the design of the Kudus *gebyok* door, namely leaf stalks, shells, flowers, *kala*, *nanasan*, and *sulur-suluran*.

Keywords: carving motif, *gebyok* Kudus, *Joglo Pencu*

Introduction

The needs for carving in Indonesia are growing because there is influence from the royal circles who want the art of carving to be applied to handicraft products which are not only tools with practical functions, but also have aesthetic, artistic, philosophical and symbolic functions (Noor & Kho, 2003; Ministry of Trade of the Republic of Indonesia, 2009; Lufiani, *et al.*, 2017). In Indonesia, there are several motifs, namely the *Pajajaran*, *Mataram*, *Jepara*, *Kudus*, *Pekalongan*, *Madura*, *Cirebon*, *Surakarta*, *Yogyakarta*, *Bali* and *Semarang* motifs. These motifs certainly have unique characteristics distinguishing one from the other. Indonesian people, especially Javanese people, have always understood the concept of aesthetics as the basis for creating a carving (Jazuli, 2016; Prabowo, 2019; Farikha, 2020). In the Java area, especially those that are enriched with Javanese culture, the art of ornamental carving adorns the architectural corners of buildings (Iswanto and Sardjono, 2013). The art of carving in Java can be found in traditional *Joglo* houses whose buildings are attached to traditional carved doors (*gebyok*) which are part of the *Joglo* traditional house which represents traditional Javanese values (Rudiyanto, 2018). Kudus is one of the districts located in the province of Central Java, Indonesia, and has a variety of diverse cultural potentials, one of which is *Gebyok* Kudus. These have carvings on its wood (Theresia, 2013; Marta, *et al.*, 2020).

The uniqueness of living in the Kudus community can be seen from the *Pencu* house, which shows the culture of the residents of the Kudus city, which is based on a prosperous economic welfare order (Said, 2008).

The Kudus *Joglo Pencu* traditional house has been built in two periods: the first after 1749 AD - 1870 AD and the second during the 1870 AD - 1945 AD. If a traditional house has a *gebyok* door, then the whole house is full of distinctive carvings (Ashadi, 2010; Said, 2013). The *Pencu* house has its characteristics compared to the traditional Javanese houses in the interior when viewed from the shape of the roof and the structure and elements of the space. The top of a *Pencu* house in Joglo is higher than in other areas of Java. It is broadly divided into three core rooms: *Jogosatru*, *Gedongan* and *Pawon* (Iswanto & Sardjono, 2013; Tarigan, 2015; Anisa, 2018; Putri *et al.*, 2021).

Jogosatru is a space whose function is similar to the porch of a Javanese house, for gathering and guarding (Sardjono, 2009). Then *Gedongan* is a room whose privacy must be maintained, such as a place to store valuables and a bedroom. In *Gedongan*, a main room is decorated with a special *gebyok* at the entrance, located in the living room (Anisa, 2018). While *Pawon* functions as a kitchen, and can usually be used as a gathering place with the family (Putri *et al.*, 2021). What leads the Joglo Kudus to have its characteristics is the carvings applied to the *gebyok* as a constituent element of the house building, which has a concept guided by Islamic religious values (Theresia 2013; Suharson *et al.*, 2021). The more complicated the *gebyok* carvings installed on a *Pencu* house, the more it shows its inhabitants' high level of wealth (Sudarwanto and Murtomo, 2013). The carving motif applied to the *gebyok* at a *Pencu* house is intrinsically meaningful about the close relationship between art, society, and God (Rudiyanto, 2018).

The *gebyok* Kudus motif results from acculturation between Hindu, Chinese and European cultures and has a symbolic meaning as delivery of messages related to the cultural values adopted by the Kudus community (Arifin, 2018). *Gebyok* is carved by applying decorations that have aesthetics, are unique, *ngremit* or complicated, special, and have a unique characteristic. Thus, they are called Kudus traditional houses (Gustami, 2000). Decorative arts are used as a medium of cultural communication, both personally and communally, and as self-actualization of the Kudus people who have economic power (Suharson *et al.*, 2021). The carving motifs applied to *gebyok* usually include floral motifs and motifs that resemble the silhouette of a mosque dome, symbolizing fertility, peace, protection, and sacrifice to God Almighty (Arifin, 2014). *Gebyok* Kudus can also be applied to weddings, placed as a stage background that gives the impression of luxury and majesty while maintaining the traditional elements of Kudus (Iswanto and Sardjono, 2013).

To face the challenges of maintaining cultural heritage, a new and creative breakthrough is needed to keep the existence of cultural heritage (Irianto, 2017). This research is necessary because many people argue nowadays that the art of carving is something ancient and does not suit modern times. Thus, it needs to be preserved to keep up with the times. The aesthetic values of the Kudus *gebyok* can be studied by examining the values contained in the carvings, which have various decorations or patterns that are full of visual beauty and meaning (Isfiaty, 2015; Irsyada, 2019). In addition, it is necessary to preserve the art of carving because it has an important role, especially in the domestic and international economic sectors. This is because the art of carving is included as a group of creative industries that contribute to the financial aspect (Priatna, 2017; Landrawan and Purnamawati, 2018; Kurniawan, 2019). It is hoped that a deeper exploration of various forms of carving with the Kudus *gebyok* motif can help preserve the culture of the Kudus people and the advancement of carving in the city of Kudus.

Literature review

Motifs are used as decoration to add to the beautiful impression of an object. The *gebyok* Kudus motif results from acculturation between Hindu, Chinese and European cultures and has a symbolic meaning as the delivery of messages related to the cultural values adopted by the Kudus community (Arifin, 2014). Some of the Kudus *gebyok* house motifs symbolically

have their meaning and uniqueness. There are several motifs of *gebyok* Kudus described by Arifin (2014), among them the shell motif is broadly shaped and inspired by shells. This carving motif is applied to the *gebyok* wall pillar, which symbolizes a command from God Almighty with the meaning to always uphold and perform the five daily prayers according to the obligations of Islamic teachings. In addition, there is also a *kala* motif whose carvings are shaped like leaves and flowers. In the Kudus *gebyok* house, this motif is usually placed on *alisan* of the wall panel. The motif of *kala* symbolizes the repellent of reinforcements, which means self-awareness of bad things that are likely to happen. The motif located in the middle of the *plipitan* or *kleweran* at the entrance of the *gebyok* is the pineapple motif. As the name implies, this motif is shaped like a pineapple. The pineapple motif is symbolized gratitude and human humility. The pineapple motif warns humans that if you want to be successful, work hard to get pleasure in life, when success is achieved, stay humble (Arifin, 2014).



Fig. 1: Motif of Kerang
Source: Arifin, 2014

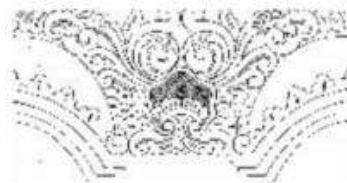


Fig. 2: Motif of Kala
Source: Arifin, 2014

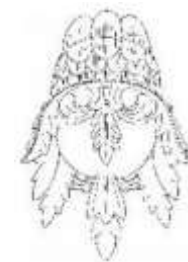


Fig. 3: Motif of Nanasan
Source: Arifin, 2014

Besides these three motifs, there is also a leaf stalk motif. This leaf stalk motif is shaped like a plant with a root or can be called a plant out of place (Arifin, 2014). In the Kudus *gebyok* house, this motif is placed on the *gebyok* wall panel as a symbol of the fertility of the Kudus community (Iswanto and Sardjono, 2013). In contrast, the motif that symbolizes the attitude of wisdom is called the *ukel* or *besusul* motif with the shape of a tapered circle. These ornaments are placed on poles alternated with diamonds, braids, shells, and highlights. It is intended because it resembles the shape of a conch house and is also similar to Buddha's hair combined with a medallion motif. It is located on a *pracik* pole arranged in various or alternating ways with decorative diamonds, braids, shells, and highlights. The *tumpal* / highlight motif on the Kudus *gebyok* house is triangular, placed parallel to the upper column parallel to the *isen - isen*. It symbolizes three things that illuminate life, namely faith, Islam, and *ikhshan*, meaning that every human being is always devoted to God. The motifs are inspired by the shape of vines such as betel plants, *gadung*, and so on and are described flexibly called tendrils motifs.

Theresia (2013) explains the tendrils motif, shaped like a creeper, symbolizing fertility in human life. It is also stated in this research that the eastern dragon motif was positioned in front of the main door of the Kudus *gebyok*. Symbolizes strength and goodness as a spirit of changing aspects of life. The motif of rope is shaped like a pole located in front of the door of the Kudus *gebyok*. Like the motif's name, the braided cord symbolizes the string or bond of affection (*mawaddah - warahmah*). It means that the bond of love between family members must be maintained, especially the relationship between husband and wife. The pillar is an integral part of the Kudus *gebyok* house, and if it is only on the left, it means that the house owner is a wife who no longer has a husband. The floral motifs are included in the ornamental variety of plants or flora. The inspiration in making this motif is usually inspired by nature or the surrounding environment and is made repeatedly. According to Hasmah (2020), floral motifs symbolize success and happiness apart from being a decoration. The overall meaning of flower ornaments is that success and happiness in life can be achieved if humans practice something good. The tendrils motif of jasmine flowers symbolizes the presence of the holy religion of Islam. While other motifs in the form of leaf petals, whose number is five, reflect someone is doing *takbir* (raising hands) in prayer.



Fig. 4: Eastern dragon
Source: Theresia, 2013



Fig. 5: Rope pattern motifs
Source: Theresia, 2013



Fig. 6: Flower motifs
Source: Theresia, 2013

Research Method

After reviewing several pieces of literature, it was recognized that there are many ways one can perfect the skills in creating art and design. This research is creation research: research that examines the process of creativity and beauty (Chapman and Sawchuk, 2012) and engages that process to create a design through which knowledge is produced.

This research uses work methods delineated from several studies with work concepts (Räsä, 2018). A characteristic of creation research or design research that involves an artistic creation and design cannot compare with other research methods. There are several common factors in art creation and design, namely: producing an initial idea, information gathering, experimentation, articulation, improvement, generalization or generalization, human reaction, and the production of artwork. The methodology is an art creation or design that includes a framework, intuition, and emotion to determine the quality of work. The important thing in art and design research is how researchers can explain the process because every study has its function (Gray and Malins, 1993). Moreover, it generates knowledge in the process.

The research was conducted from May to October 2021. The data collection techniques used in this study were observation on Kudus *gebyok* house motif, documentation related to Kudus *gebyok* as the results of previous studies and photos of Kudus *gebyok* motifs, and also interviews with Mr. Bambang Agus Siswanto who lived in Kudus and worked as a wood craftsman for 12 years. In this research, the researcher developed a data analysis through several stages namely identifying the motif of the Kudus *gebyok*, producing the sketch motif design of Kudus *gebyok*, and creating the Kudus *gebyok* carving motif.

In this study, researchers collaborated with carving craftsmen to create carving Kudus *gebyok* motif. In creating a door with the engraving of the *gebyok* Kudus motif, researchers carried out several stages such as identifying the source of the *gebyok* Kudus motif idea and identifying the raw material. After the identification stage was completed, the next stage was to design a *Pencu* traditional house sketch and a design sketch for the Kudus *gebyok* door. Researchers and carving craftsmen carried out the design stage. The design modified the previous motifs, but the shape and pattern still retained their authenticity. The production stages were carried out by carving craftsmen through several stages such as tool preparation stage, the wood leveling stage, the pattern connection stage, the pattern carving stage, and the pattern attachment stage. After all the stages were completed, this product could be applied to the *Pencu* traditional house.

Findings and the Discussion

Identification of *Gebyok* Kudus Motif

The traditional house of the Kudus area can be identified as having its uniqueness compared to traditional houses in other areas. One of the unique things that can differentiate it from other Javanese traditional houses is the carving motifs applied to house building (Theresia, 2013). The carved ornament motifs used in the Kudus *gebyok* usually resemble plants and the mosque dome's shadow, symbolizing fertility, protection, peace, and sacrifice to God (Arifin, 2014).

One of the historical buildings with a *gebyok* is a traditional house at the Kudus Kretek Museum. The building consists of *Dalem* and *Pawon* on the left, while in the front, there is a *Pekiwan* with a well and two bathroom cubicles (Iswanto and Sardjono, 2013). Another building that applies to the *Gebyok* Kudus is a traditional house in the Puri Maerokoco tourist area. The areas in the traditional house include the *Jogosatru* area (living room), *dalem* area (restroom), and the *pawon* area (family room). The walls that limit and separate the spaces in this house are the Kudus *gebyok* which have various typical Kudus carving ornaments (Theresia, 2013).



Fig. 7: Kudus traditional house
Source: Authors

Furthermore, various studies identify the uniqueness and meanings of the carving motifs on the Kudus *gebyok*. The following is a table that generally explains the terms related to previous studies that reveal the identity and intentions symbolically contained in the *gebyok* Kudus carving motif.

Teak wood (*Tectona grandis*) is well known as high-quality wood material, resistant to decay, and has natural durability. The durability of teak wood is suitable for various purposes related to the construction of buildings, houses, furniture, and other purposes that require solid and sturdy materials (Miranda *et al.*, 2011; Niamké *et al.*, 2014; Adi *et al.*, 2016). The choice of color can also affect human thoughts, behavior, and psychology (Madden *et al.*, 2000; Elliot and Maier, 2007; Kurt and Osueke, 2014). The teak wood used for the *gebyok* door has a brown color, which in the perspective of color psychology has meanings such as seriousness, warmth, trust, and stability (Tavaragi and Sushma, 2016).

The Design of the *Gebyok* Kudus

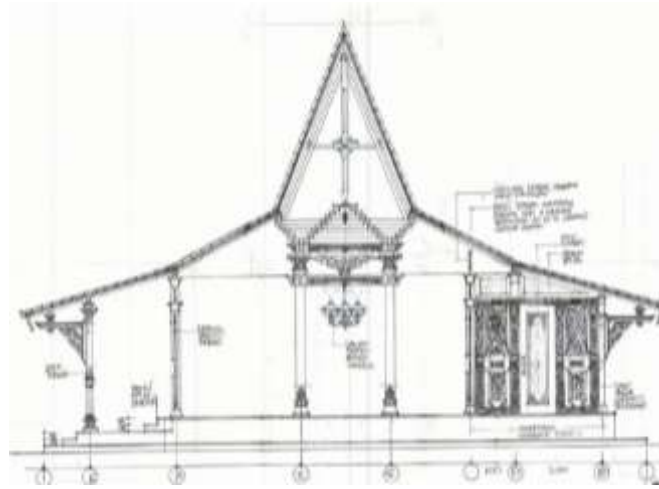


Fig. 8: Sketch of the design of the Kudus gebyok

Source: Authors

Fig. 8 shows what the researcher produced as the design of the Kudus *gebyok joglo*. It can be seen from the design of the Kudus *gebyok joglo*, which has its peculiarity: the center of attention, especially in the carvings of each element of the house. In its application, the original *Joglo Gebyok* Kudus uses teak wood and is filled with carvings, giving the impression of relief. There are no windows in the design of the *Joglo Gebyok* Kudus, because the wall ornaments are carved with holes for air circulation (Theresia, 2013). It can be seen in Fig. 9 below that there are carving motifs that have been developed into new motifs. Fig. 9 details the *Joglo Gebyok* Kudus design sketch on the door. The design modifies the previous motifs, but the shape and pattern still maintain their authenticity. The carving motifs developed and applied to the Kudus *gebyok* are leaf stalks, shells, flowers, *kala*, pineapple, and tendrils motifs.

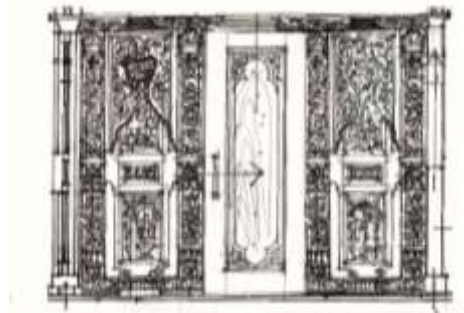


Fig. 9: The design of the Kudus gebyok carving motif

Source: Authors

After the design of the *gebyok* has been made, it enters the production stage. The wood chosen to manufacture this Kudus *gebyok* door is teak (*Tectona grandis*) because teak is quite complex and heavy, has good natural durability, and has high dimensional stability in terms of pleasing aesthetics. The production of Kudus *gebyok* is handled by wood craftsmen and carving craftsmen. Before entering the production stage, you must prepare the necessary equipment first. The equipment needed by wood craftsmen in the Kudus *gebyok* production process is a planer, drill, clamp, router machine, sanding machine, *serkel* saw, and a table saw. The equipment needed by the carver includes chisels, clamps, and jigsaws. The connection process requires glue, and the inside is connected with dowels (wood connectors). For the finishing stage, a compressor is needed. The production process of Kudus *gebyok* is divided into four

steps: 1) the grading process; 2) the process of connecting; 3) the carving process; 4) the process of pasting the pattern.

The process of leveling the wood is ground using a tool such as a rub and then put into a planner to distribute the results evenly and follow the size. Then the next step is the connection process. In this process, the wood is joined according to the splicing pattern that can level the surface of the wood, and then gluing is done to adjust the code on the wood surface. After the connection process is done, it goes to the next step, the carving process.

In carving, tools are needed, such as chisels and hammers made of brown wood because it has a hard texture, so it is suitable for hammering, tables, and clamps. Before carving, the chisel must be sharpened to make it easier to use to carve the wood. The types of chisels used were the cabbage chisel used to sculpt concave patterns, the chisel to carve straight designs, the curved chisel to carve curved and curved patterns, the strike chisel to make strokes at the corners of the pattern, and the cross chisel to cause strokes, whose size is larger than the scribbled chisel.

The last step is the process of pasting the pattern. A pattern must be pasted with holes and perforated using a punching tool. Two perforators are used, namely, a large perforator used to make a large hole and a small perforator used to make a small hole. After going through the production stages described above, the final results of the development of the Kudus *gebyok* door design can be obtained. The following is the final result of developing the design of the Kudus *gebyok* door design.

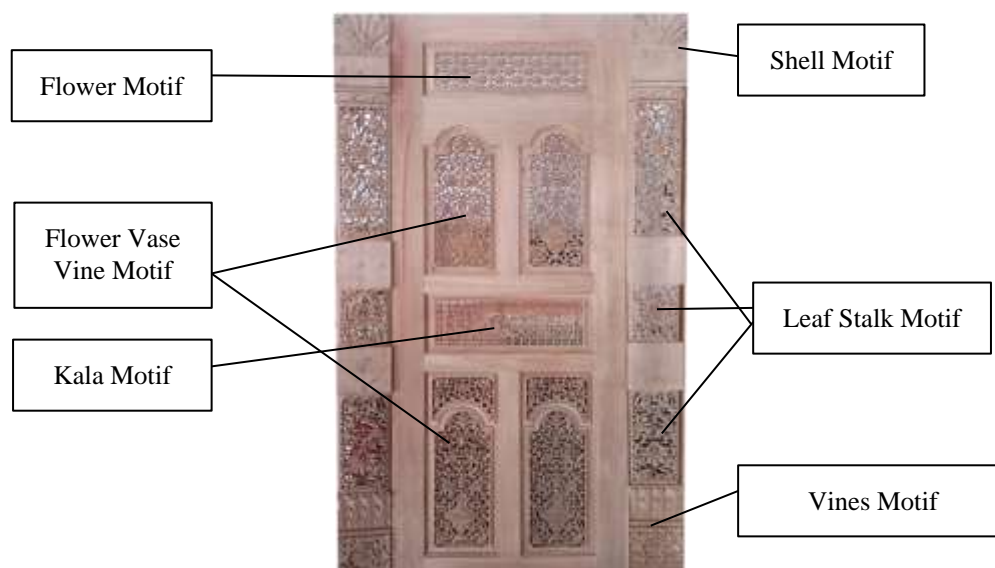


Fig. 10: The Design of Kudus *gebyok* door
Source: Authors

Fig. 10 is also a detailed part of the *Joglo Gebyok* Kudus design sketch, which shows the development motif and will become a new motif for the Kudus *gebyok*. The design modifies the previous motifs, but the shape and pattern still retain their authenticity. You can see the carving motifs applied to the Kudus *gebyok* door, namely the motifs of leaf stalks, shells, flowers, *kala*, pineapples, and tendrils. Pineapple, *kala*, and flower motifs are dominantly carved in the center of the door, while the shell motif is carved on the top right and left sides. Then the motifs of leaf stalks and tendrils are carved on the right and left sides of the door, which adorn and add to the aesthetics of the *gebyok* carved door.

Discussion

The result has indicated that the *gebyok* Kudus carved door can be developed into a new motif by applying the carving motif. The carving motifs involved in this *gebyok* design are modifications of the previous motifs, but the shape and pattern, in general, are still maintained

in their originality. The original motif, modified following current business developments, aims to maintain it and keep the Indonesian economy alive, especially the Kudus community (Irianto, 2017; Priatna, 2017; Landrawan and Purnamawati, 2018; Kurniawan, 2019). The motifs applied to the Kudus *gebyok* take many geometric, abstract, natural, and plant forms. It is rare for Kudus *gebyok* to adapt from human or animal forms. When adapting human and animal forms, the motif has been stylized because it is guided by Islamic teachings, which do not allow the depiction or creation of structures that resemble humans or animals to be used as worship (Arifin, 2014).

The carving motifs applied to the development of the design for the Kudus *gebyok* door are leaf stalks, shells, flowers, *kala*, pineapple, and tendrils motifs. The shape of the surface inspires the shell motif. It can be seen in Fig. 11 that the shell motif developed by the researcher is made more superficial than the original motif, especially in the ornaments that are next to the shell motif. In contrast to the original motif, the number of segments of the shells is less. It's the same thing in Fig. 12, the tendril motif inspired by vines. The researchers developed the motif by making it more straightforward than the original motif. The circular shape is kept simple, and the flower in the middle is still maintained.



Fig. 11: Shells Motif
Source: Authors



Fig. 12: Motifs of Sular – Suluran
Source: Authors

The researchers developed a pineapple motif design by combining the leaf stalk ornaments on the sides, as shown in Fig. 13. As in Figure 14, namely the leaf stalk motif, the researchers made it more straightforward than the original motif but still had a distinctive shape like a leaf stalk.



Fig. 13: Flower Vase Lantern Motif
Source: Authors



Fig. 14: Leaf Steam Motif
Source: Authors

It is almost similar to the motif of tendrils. Floral motifs also include decorative flora or plants. Here, the floral motifs are more organized and neat than those shown in Fig. 15. The last motif the researchers developed in this study is the *kala* motif. In Fig. 16, the *kala* motif is a combination of geometric lines on the top, bottom, right, and left sides that characterize the development of a new motif on the *kala* motif



Fig. 15: Motif of Ceplokan
Source: Authors



Fig. 16: Motif of Kala
Source: Authors

The carving motifs applied in this Kudus *gebyok* door design have their meaning. According to Arifin (2014), the shell motif conveys that the house's residents must uphold the five daily prayers. The leaf stalk motif is considered a symbol of fertility for the Kudus people. The pineapple motif means that before achieving the enjoyment of life, people must work hard to be successful, and there is no sense of degrading other people. The motive of *kala* means to ward off evil and be wary of nasty things. Then according to Suharson *et al.* (2021), floral motifs are meaningful as a means of self-reflection to achieve a higher level of spirituality. The tendril motif symbolizes fertility in human life (Theresia, 2013).

The choice of color on an object can affect human thoughts, behavior, and psychology. Color can also affect the comfort of the environment, namely the environment in which people live (Madden *et al.*, 2000; Elliot and Maier, 2007; Monica and Luzar, 2011). In developing the design of this Kudus *gebyok* door, the color brown was chosen according to the color of teak wood. Judging from its location on the color wheel, brown is included in natural dyes obtained from secondary and tertiary colors with low or dark color tones (Meilani, 2013). From the perspective of color psychology, brown has meaning as seriousness, warmth, trust, and stability (Tavaragi and Sushma, 2016). The brown color is also related to the natural color of tree trunks and is also associated with ethnic colors and antique and traditional impressions.

The size of the *gebyok* door is made smaller than the doors in general because according to the philosophical values adopted by the Javanese tribe, which prioritizes and teaches guests to respect the owner of the house so that when entering the house, guests must look down and bow their heads (Subiyantoro, 2011).

Conclusions

The traditional house of the Kudus area could be identified as having its uniqueness compared to traditional houses originating from other regions. The characteristic that distinguishes it from other Javanese traditional houses is the carving motifs applied to the house and *gebyok* buildings. The carving motifs used in Kudus *gebyok* are increasingly diverse in their development. The carving motifs applied to the carved doors made by researchers are not entirely new but based on original motifs developed following market demand and current business developments. Aesthetically, *gebyok* Kudus can give the beauty of a traditional Javanese interior and give the impression of luxury to maintain the *gebyok* carving door. This study focused on developing the carving design on the Kudus *gebyok*. Further research can be undertaken by making carved doors with a combination of the original Kudus carving motifs and carving motifs from other regions to create collaboration and synergy between cultures and add to the richness of Indonesian culture.

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