

Jagad Raya: Representation Of Flora And Fauna In Wooden Craft From A Cosmological Perspective

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ABSTRACT

The art of teak wood carving was one of the leading export commodities, especially wood carvings with flora and fauna motifs. Javanese culture and Hindu mythology influenced the flora and fauna motifs, so they had their meanings. This research aimed to develop carvings of flora and fauna motifs inspired by classic batik motifs using wood media. The results showed that the media used was teak wood with a finishing process without painting to produce a natural color. It was adjusted to its function and use in creating teak wood carvings. Wood carving did not only function to be enjoyed for its aesthetic value but as a decorative and sacred medium where each motif influences one's beliefs when creating artwork. In addition, teak wood carvings were used as symbols of a culture, and the designed motifs often contained the meaning of teachings to humans in carrying out life. Based on the economic aspect, the teak woodcarving industry strategically improved the community's income, especially for craftsmen in tourism centers. By making woodcarving crafts with flora and fauna motifs, it hoped that woodcarving crafts would not only use as decorative objects, but it used as an educational media for fine art, history, and Javanese culture, which were full of meaning to the broader community so that they could increase knowledge and encourage people to behave following the concept of cosmology.

KEYWORDS

Carving Art
Teak Wood
Flora
Fauna

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INTRODUCTION

The art of carving began to develop in Indonesia in 1450 BC. At first, the carving motifs were only symbols of beliefs that contained specific messages and meanings in a belief ritual (Afrizal & Prabowo, 2022). The form of carving designs and motifs underwent a rapid transformation after the entry of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam into the *Nusantara*. It is often the case that the motifs and their uses have shifted from their original meaning. However, some regions still maintain certain boundaries in each style, such as the motifs of Pajajaran, Majapahit, Pekalongan, Mataram, Bali, Cirebon, Madura, Jepara, Surabaya, Yogyakarta, and other motifs originating from outside Java (Farera, 2021).

The standard of the carving pattern in each region at least have something in common with the classic batik motifs of the *Nusantara*. Classic batik motifs are a local cultural heritage widely developed in the Java region. This classic batik motif was initially created in the palace or *keraton* of the Mataram Kingdom. Thus, the making of Classic batik motifs was inspired by the Palace motif and a reference for making other batik motifs (Dharsono, 2014). The symbols in classic batik motifs symbolize the cultural values of the *Keraton* community and the philosophy of life of Javanese aristocrats. The philosophy of life is

believed to emphasize the importance of respect for the creator's rules as a provision for the journey to eternity (Roykhan et al., 2019).

In its assessment, a work of art is not only viewed from its physical and particulate aspects. More than that, works of art are often used as a medium of communication and information, thus containing meanings or messages that certain groups want to convey (Marianto, 2002). Classical batik motifs are a group of ornamental motifs derived from the cosmology of Javanese culture, some of which have been stylized not to show their original form. Javanese people believe that the decorative motifs in classical batik are oriented towards the concept of the mother culture, namely "*sangkan paraning dumadi*", which means that there is a balanced relationship between all living things and their Creator (Geertz, 1981). This view also teaches that the good and bad in this world result from cause and effect. Therefore, classical batik ornamental motifs are often associated with cosmological relationships related to the *Triloka/Tribuana* concept.

The cosmological teachings contained in the ornamental motifs of classical batik depict humans as part of the universe (Hastangka, 2013). Therefore, humans should be careful in their behavior in this universe. The mandala circle reflects the regularity and order of living things in the universe and the harmony in the interaction relationship to create unity and balance in the cosmos (Widodo et al., 2017). The concept is expected to be an example for humans of the meaning of harmony in life. Thus, there will be a complementary nature between living things, especially when facing complex and chaotic situations (Dharsono, 2014). The craft art created reflects educational and cultural values that are very suitable as a medium for revealing a story and culture that develops in society (Prihatin, 2022).

High-quality craft art holds esoteric values, containing a complexity of values in the context of science and technical skills (Gustami, 2004). In addition to its philosophical and methodological content, the art of carving can radiate educational, moral, ethical, and aesthetic values for those who see and feel it. The emerging values awaken creativity, taste, and intention; thus, the works created are expected to improve the dignity of personal life and the social entity of its supporters. The presence of craft art contains a meaningful message, guiding people to the path of truth (Gustami, 2006).

Previous research conducted by Prabowo & Marwati (2020) explained that the use of traditional *Gurdha* and *truntum* motifs as a source of ideas for the creation of carved artworks could be made by utilizing geometric and organic elements and by considering the horizontal composition of the transverse wood fiber direction to produce 3-dimensional carved works. Meanwhile, in her research, she attempted to make a typical Palembang carving motif dominated by floral decoration as a source of ideas for creating typical Baturaja batik. Based on these relevant studies, it is known that there are similarities between batik motifs and wood carving motifs. Thus, both are often used as a source of ideas for the creation of works. If in previous studies, the creation of wood carving artworks still rarely uses motifs inspired by batik motifs and is more inspired by floral and geometric motifs, but in this study the motifs that appear refer to Javanese Classical batik motifs with floral and fauna ornaments that are believed to be sacred ornaments in the concept of Javanese cosmology and Hindu mythology. Therefore, the purpose of this research was to visualize the form of classical batik motifs in cosmological reviews through carved craft works using wood media.

METHODS

The method used in this applied research is creating artworks through several stages, including ideas, materials, tools, techniques, meaning, or messages to be conveyed to the public. In the methodological context, this research refers to S.P. Gustami's creation method.

Gustami's theory of creation includes three stages-six steps of craft creation. The three stages of craft creation are exploration, design, and realization. In contrast, the six steps to creating craft art are exploration, concept/theme identification, planning, designing, realization process, and evaluation (Gustami, 2007).

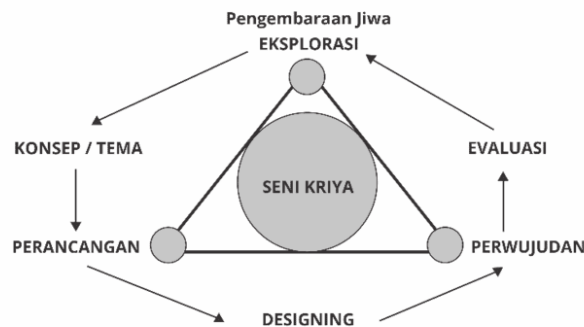


Figure 1. Schematic of the woodcarving process of "Jagad Raya"

Figure 1 shows that the exploration stage is the first stage in the process of creating craft art. The exploration stage involves studying the source of ideas, in-depth observations and searching for literature related to flora and fauna motifs. Second, the design stage includes pre-design (sketches), design, techniques, media, and manufacturing. Third, the realization stage includes making, finishing, and final results, followed by assessment and evaluation of the finished work.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Exploration Stage

Identification of Classical Batik Motifs

Classical batik is created based on developing traditional motifs that refer to the *Keraton* culture. The development of classical batik is based on the philosophy of Javanese culture that contains spiritual values and a view of life-related to the order, balance, and harmony of living things in the universe. This situation is displayed in the visualization of contemplative, orderly, symmetrical iconography and has limited colors (Anas, 1997). The types of classical batik motifs are diverse, and each motif has a philosophy.

1. Analysis of Floral Ornaments

The decorative variety of flora is the main element in Classical batik motifs, with the addition of various other supporting features. The decorative array of flora in Classical batik includes plant elements and their parts, namely vines or *lung-lungan* complete with stems, leaves, and flowers, as well as living trees in stylized form (Susanto, 1973).



Figure 2. Floral Motifs in Classical batik

2. *Analysis of Fauna Ornaments*

The other main ornamental variety in Classical batik is in the form of animal elements (*fauna*). The animal elements in Classical batik include air animals, such as the wings of the garuda bird in the form of one wing (*lar*) and two wings (*sawat*), butterflies, and other air animals. Then, land animals, such as deer, cows, chickens, and slithering animals, while water animals are dragons or water snakes (Jasper & Pirngadie, 1916).



Figure 3. Fauna Motifs In Classical Batik

The elements in classical batik motifs that develop cannot be separated from the concept of micro-meta-macrocosm in the teachings of *Tribuana/Triloka*, namely:

- 1) The *niskala* realm (Upper realm) maintains a vertical relationship with the macrocosm and a vertical relationship towards Divinity.
- 2) The *sakala-niskala* realm (Middle Realm). This nature is depicted with the tree of life motif as the metacosm, horizontally connecting and balancing the upper universe (*niskala*) and the lower universe (*sakala*).
- 3) The *sakala* realm (Lower realm). This realm is the lower realm, functioning as a place of punishment for misbehaving humans. This realm is depicted with motifs related to the underworld, such as dragons or water snakes.

Therefore, in creating this carving artwork, the researcher was inspired by Classical batik motifs, predominantly *flora* and *fauna ornaments* full of meaning and life teachings. The carving combines each Classical batik motif that depicts the natural life of the universe and its living beings, which is organized, orderly, and harmonious as a manifestation of the cosmological values embraced by the Javanese people.

Design Stage

Preparation of Tools and Materials

The primary materials used in creating the "*Jagad Raya*" carving motif are teak wood, size 60 x 60 cm and a piece of plywood with a, size 80 x 120 cm. The tools used to draw the

carving sketch include chalk, pencil, paper, eraser, compasses, straight ruler, and triangular ruler. Meanwhile, the equipment needed to carve wood includes screws, nails, glue, carving tools, *ganden*, *pasah*, and jigsaw or air saw. After all the equipment has been prepared, the next stage is the production stage.

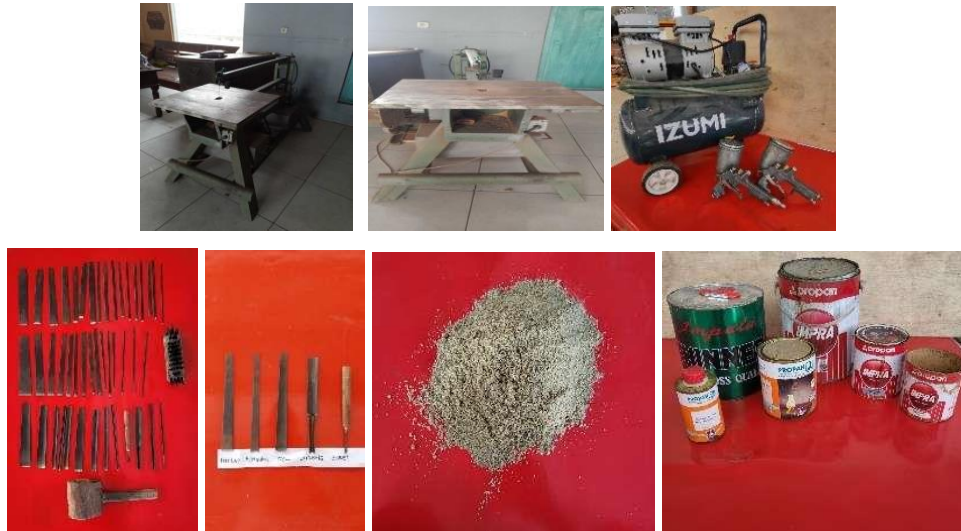


Figure 4. Carving Equipment

Designing

The pre-design stage is carried out by sketching the desired design following the source of the idea. To facilitate the making of the global form of this "Jagad Raya" carving work, the initial sketch/*mal* is made on thin paper/oil paper according to the size of the desired work design. Sketching the motif begins with outlining the carving on plywood according to the desired size. The length of the drawing process depends on the level of complexity of the carving motif. The method of drawing the carving motif takes about 8 hours. Initially, the carving motifs are drawn by craftsmen using chalk. Chalk material was selected because it is easy to remove.



Figure 5. Carving Sketch

After the sketch drawing is completed, the carving craftsman discusses the picture. Revision is needed if the carving motif image is still not suitable. If the drawing is deemed sufficient based on the design study, production methodology, and structure, then the chalk sketch will be thickened using pencils and markers; thus, the carving pattern will look firm. The finished picture is then copied onto paper using the tracing method. Next, a paper is placed on the drawn plywood to be traced. Then, the paper with the traced image is transferred to the carving media using the *dibledoki* method first. The original drawing on the plywood is not immediately discarded because it will later be used as a guide when the picture on the carving media has disappeared.

Realization Stage

Production process

The production process of "Jagad Raya" wood carvings requires the help of competent craftsmen. The reason is that wood carving requires a high level of accuracy and neatness because the motifs used are very complicated. Thus, the effectiveness of processing time dramatically affects the carving results. The craftsmen consist of drafters, carpenters, jigsaw operators, woodcarvers, and finishing operators. Teak wood was chosen as the primary raw material for making these carvings. Teak wood (*Tectona grandis*) was selected because it is strong, aesthetic, durable, and decay-resistant (Haryanto et al., 2022). Teak wood is very suitable as the primary material for buildings, furniture, crafts, and other objects that require sturdy materials (Niamké et al., 2014). The teak wood used is old wood above 50-100 years old because the older the wood, the better the quality and the better the level of fiber quality that makes it easy to carve (Wahyudi et al., 2014). The teak wood drying process is carried out before being processed into carvings. The drying process is carried out until the moisture content is below 15% to make it more durable and not exposed to pests that can damage the wood structure. After drying, the wood is processed into a square shape of 60 cm x 60 cm x 5 cm.

The second process is the carving process. Several stages must be passed in this process, including carving global shapes, detailed shapes, and *ngerot*. The global shape carving stage means creating a carved form by hollowing out, chiseling, or cutting gaps in the wood with a drill press or hand saw. The next stage is the formation of carving details with a high level of complexity. Various types of chisels and wooden hammers dominate the tools used in making these details. Lines are chiseled in certain parts to form sculptures according to the flora and fauna designs in Classical batik

The next stage is the *ngerot* stage, which is the stage of smoothing the design simultaneously, thus creating a motif that matches the carving pattern. The motif smoothing stage uses sandpaper, grinders, and sand spray to smooth the wood surface. The last process is the finishing process. The finishing process in making this carving craft is done without painting because the researcher wants to emphasize the aesthetic elements of the teak wood texture. It becomes a characteristic that adds artistic value and creativity in creating the "Jagad Raya" work. Meanwhile, explained that in psychology, the brown color of teak wood gives the impression of warmth, softness, trust, stability, and seriousness.

Development Results

The following are the results of the development of flora and fauna carving motifs usually inscribed on Classic batik cloth. Then in this study, they were applied to wood media. The flora and fauna motifs presented in this work are closely related to Hindu cosmology and mythology that the Javanese people still believe. In Figure 5, it can be seen that the floral

motifs presented use plants carved on a circular plane. Floral ornaments combine plant parts, such as leaves, stems, and roots.

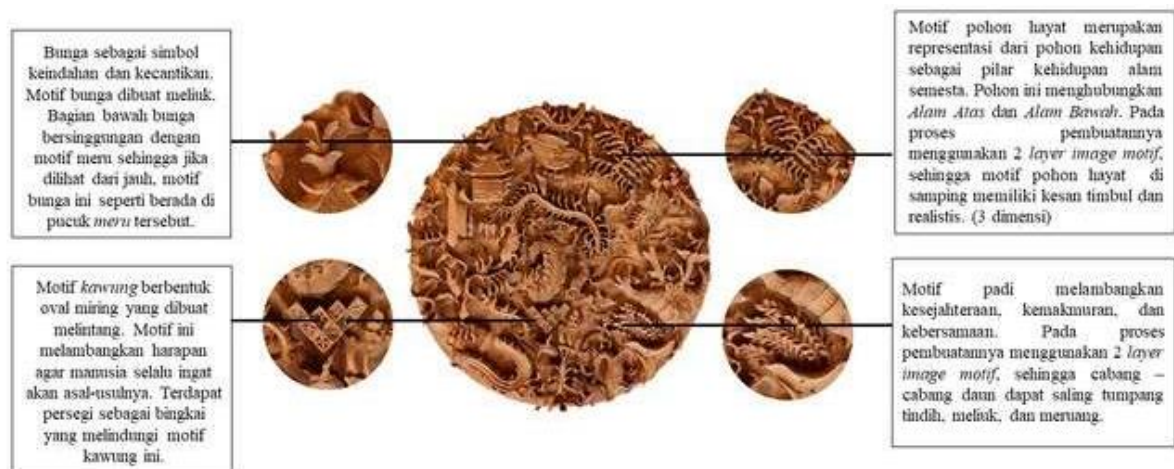


Figure 6. Floral Motifs

Figure 6 combines plant motifs in the "Jagad Raya" craft art. The motifs consist of the Tree of Life motif, grain motif, *Kawung* motif, and flower motif. The life tree motif is a whole plant consisting of plant roots that are made like sticking down, trunks, branching tree branches making the leaves appear twisted, and flowers at the top of the tree. The next motif is the rice motif made with four stems that are made to bend to the left. Each rice stem has a different number of leaves, the leaves are made with a high level of accuracy and use 2 layers of wood, making the leaves overlap to create a raised and realistic impression, and the shape resembles a plant being blown by the wind. The third motif is the *kawung* motif which resembles oval-shaped pieces of the palm fruit. In the work, at least 8 *kawung* motifs look like a flower with four corners when viewed from above. Unlike the other motifs left open, the *kawung* motif in this work is given a rectangular frame. Therefore, the *kawung* motif is often called the *ceplok kawung* motif because it has a unique character. The pattern is dominated by geometric shapes filled by a flower petal-shaped pattern with a circle in the center. Like the motifs inscribed on batik cloth, the *ceplok kawung* motif in this work is also made using repeated symmetrical elements. The last motif is a floral motif that is right above the *meru* motif. The flower motif uses 2 layers of wood to display a realistic impression, like the petals of a blossoming flower.

In addition to floral motifs, the fauna motifs in this "Jagad Raya" wood carving work are directly related to Javanese culture, which still believes that the animals that appear in Classical batik motifs are the embodiment of the Gods and as a form of representation of the life of living things in three different realms based on the concept of mandala in Javanese and Hindu cosmology teachings.

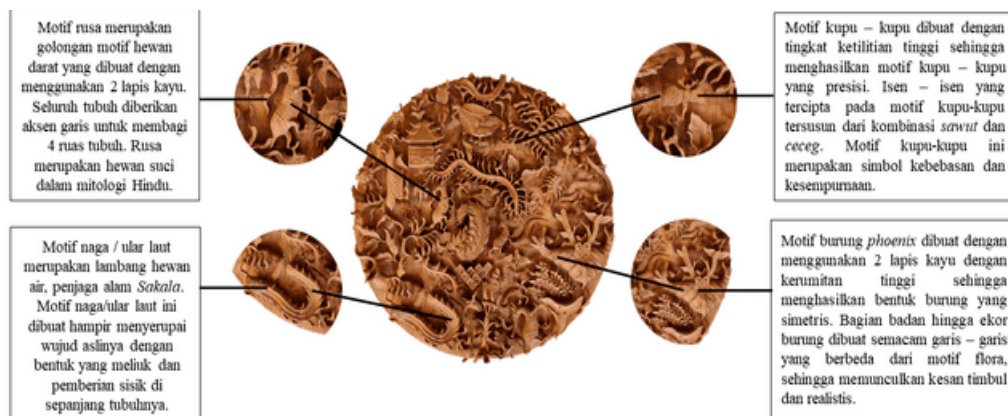


Figure 7. Fauna Motifs

Figure 7 embodies the decorative fauna carved in the "Jagad Raya" work. The fauna motifs created are divided into three groups: land animals, water animals, and air animals. One of the land animal groups found in the carved decoration is the deer. Based on the *Triloka* understanding, land animals like deer symbolize the middle world or *Arcapada/Madyapada*. Land animals are also considered the incarnation of Lord Vishnu with its *brata*, namely *candra* (moon). The deer motif also symbolizes a high level of vigilance and a passive and quiet animal. The decorative arrangement of the deer in the wood carving is to the left of the flame tongue, a supporting element of the *Sida Mukti* Classic batik motif. The next ornamental variety is the dragon/water snake motif. This decorative variety represents the water animals that guard the *Sakala* realm.

The dragon symbolizes extraordinary power and magic. In Hindu mythology, the dragon is also a symbol of the character (*brata*) of Lord Baruna, as a teaching of compassion and forgiveness. In addition, still in cosmology, the water dragon is a symbol of *pangruwating dur angkoro murko*, namely as a means of preventing the bad nature that occurs in the Middle Realm without considering the balance of the Upper Realm. The decorative dragon/water snake in the carving is made by giving scales along its body and the body shape is deliberately twisted to display a realistic impression on the carving made. The third animal ornament is the phoenix (Hong). The phoenix is known as a bird of paradise that symbolizes the Upper Realm, as well as a mythological bird that is a symbol of good luck. In this carving, the phoenix is depicted in good detail with lines that emphasize the segments of the bird's body. The last ornamental variety is the butterfly which is made of a smaller size than other animal carvings. With its small size, craftsmen must have high accuracy to make the details in the butterfly carving visible.

Evaluation Stage **Religion and Beliefs**

The elements of nature, in the form of flora, fauna, and inanimate objects, are symbolic of the existence of natural levels in this universe based on Hindu philosophy, which is grouped into Lower Realm (*sakala*), Middle Realm (*sakala-niskala*), and Upper Realm (*niskala*). The ornamental variety of natural elements in the Lower realm in the form of water dragons is a symbol of *pangruwating dur angkoro murko*, which is a tool to prevent the lousy nature that occurs in the Middle Realm without taking into account the balance of the Upper Realm (Susanto, 1973). The Middle Realm contains living trees, *meru*, four-legged animals, heirlooms, flowers, and other plants. The Middle Realm is visualized as the place

where humans live. The existence of the Tree of Life in the Middle Realm is a balance or link between the Lower Realm, through the Middle Realm to go to the Upper Realm. Meanwhile, Gunung, or *meru* in the Middle Realm is a symbol of Jagad Gede, surrounded by mountain vegetation as the dwelling place of the Gods (Pujiyanto, 2003). The decorative carvings in the Middle Realm reflect that human life will not last forever and like life, humans will be tested with bad and good. If humans in this Middle Realm make mistakes, it will result in misery (Lower realm), but if humans do good, they will get glory reflected in life in the Upper Realm (Dharsono, 2014). Meanwhile, the Upper Realm is filled with ornamental birds, butterflies, tongues of fire, and other flying animals. This realm is a reflection of the glory and place of the Gods. The symbolism indicates that humans need to balance the microcosmic relationship (vertical relationship with God) and the macrocosmic relationship (horizontal relationship between the human mind and the universe) (Wessing, 1986). Therefore, this "Jagad Raya" carving craft conveys that humans must never forget the Almighty to achieve a peaceful and serene life (Widodo et al., 2015).

Culture and Social Society

The community uses woodcarving to tell history, symbols that must be obeyed daily, and a reflection of solidarity in a community structure. Moreover, the motifs developed in wood carving can explain the social situation of the people in the area. Sastra (2008) states that carving motifs from each region will be different. Therefore, each region certainly has a characteristic carving motif different from other regions. In this research, the flora and fauna motifs developed are different from the flora and fauna motifs in other carving arts. If in general, flora motifs are made in the form of tendrils or *lung*, then in this study the flora motifs are made clear from the roots to the top of the leaves. Other floral motifs are often found as decorations in mosques or gates that symbolize the social life of Muslims. Fauna motifs are generally found in Hindu and Buddhist places of worship as cosmological symbols. Thus, this research tries to combine the cultural and social values of the community to become an educational medium in a pluralistic society. In addition, the flora and fauna motifs used in this study powerfully illustrate the orderly, harmonious, and organized social life in the Javanese region according to the teachings of *sangkan paraning dumadi*. Ramadhan & Ismurdiahwati (2022) explained that the floral ornaments developed in carvings symbolize the flexibility of a human being in living life with courtesy, mutual assistance, and gentleness towards others. The socio-cultural values expressed in a work of carving art are expected to preserve the original Indonesian culture and uphold tolerance to create harmony, regularity, and order in the life of the nation and state.

Decoration

Ornamental motifs on wooden crafts have aesthetic value. Thus, their existence will give an impression of beauty to an object, both objects and spaces. The results show that people use woodcarving as an element of home decoration because it has a beauty value that comes from the arrangement of motif patterns, symmetrical shapes, and colors. Moreover, this woodcarving craft does not use chemical dyes because the natural colors produced are maximally exposed. This wood carving craft is not only used as an element of home decoration but as a symbolic decoration in worship buildings or sacred buildings because it contains symbols of Hindu cosmology and mythology, which are believed to be the philosophy of life of Hindus.

Economy

The presence of the woodcarving industry has a significant influence on the economic field of the surrounding community. The Indonesian people use woodcarving as a source to meet daily life's needs. The results show that this woodcarving craft which uses teak wood as the primary basic material, can increase economic income and the welfare of the craftsmen and entrepreneurs. The complicated and meticulous manufacturing process makes this "Jagad Raya" 's selling value very high. It is common for the wood carving craft business to be used as a family business carried out for generations. Deviansa & Yuliarmi (2018) explained that many wooden craft products with flora and fauna motifs had entered the international market and are used as the primary export trade commodities in tourism areas. This certainly has a positive impact on the development of the woodcarving craft industry.

CONCLUSIONS

In its development, the woodcarving craft "Jagad Raya" pays attention to many things that support the aesthetic aspects of design, including the use of teak wood as the primary raw material, the use of flora and fauna motifs that contain cosmological values, and the absence of painting in the finishing process to give a natural impression to the craft work. The woodcarving craft "Jagad Raya" functions as a storytelling medium and affects other aspects of life such as religion or belief, culture and social community, decoration, and community economy. With the making of wooden carving crafts with flora and fauna motifs, it is hoped that the craftwork will not only function as an ornamental object but will be able to become a medium for educating art, history, and Javanese culture, which is full of meaning to the broader community to increase knowledge, and encourage humans to behave well according to the teachings in the cosmological concept. Thus, this "Jagad Raya" carving art contains a message that to achieve a peaceful and serene life, humans must harmonize vertical relationships with the Almighty and horizontal connections in the form of mutual respect and respect for others, including other living things to create balance and order in this universe as contained in the philosophy of Javanese culture.

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