

# “A” New Museum of Indonesian Batik: An Architecture of “Showing off”

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**Abstract:** For the “A” New Museum of Indonesian Batik, Ivan Saputra was the architect winner of the Museum Design Competition in 2013. Preparation for the competition required architectural design guidelines, which were an important part of the terms of reference for the project. This paper aims to provide an overview of the issues surrounding the work involved in the collaboration work between the Indonesian government and multi-disciplinary participants to establish museum design guidelines for this competition. By articulating and elaborating the characteristics of several famous museums design in the world, by defining relevant architectural theories, and by exploring an in-depth analysis of “batik”, which UNESCO designated as Intangible Heritage of Humanity of UNESCO in 2009, the architectural design guidelines were developed based on findings revealed by inserting “batik” itself as the museum storyline into contemporary architecture. By referring to trans-disciplinary methods and concepts, then the process of batik making is potentially a kind of architectural “showing off” to expose the uniqueness of Indonesian batik as well as the Architecture-Event theory promoted by French philosopher Jacques Derrida.

**Key words:** Architecture-event, architectural guidelines, Indonesian batik, museum storyline, “showing off”.

## 1. Introduction

The “*Love Our National Museums Movement*” started in the year 2010 as part of Indonesian Museum Reform initiative to reform iconic museums. The National Museum of Indonesia, which was also popularly known as the “Elephant Museum” or Museum Gajah (1862), a building with a bronze statue of an elephant, was presented in 1871 by Thailand’s King Rama V (Thailand), also known as King Chulalongkorn of Siam. In 2013, the statue theme “Struggle” was created by the Balinese artist Nyoman Nuarta, as the symbol for the National Museum of Indonesia. Then, The President of Republic Indonesia Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono named the statue “I Know I Can Reach There (*Ku Yakin Sampai Di Sana*)” (Museum National, 2013).<sup>1</sup>

The Ministry of Education and Culture manages around 400 Indonesian museums, most of which take advantage of their status as heritage buildings. The

strict heritage guidelines result in the fact that museums are limited in regard to museum design. According to the author, with such restrictions, the general public often perceive the final design to be “gloomy” or “boring”, which is hardly an incentive to visit a museum to see what appears to be leftover displays. This reaction is particularly ironic, since the museum exists to reflect the highest degree of a nation’s civilization. During Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono’s era (2004-2014), Indonesia started a museum reform initiative called, “*Love Our National Museums Movement*”, under the auspices of the “Visit Indonesia Museums” (2010–2014) project. One of the goals of those programs was that the museum revitalization should be dynamic, efficient, and attractive in accordance with international museum standards [1]. Additionally, the objective was to build a new thematic museum in order to encourage the public to visit. The state program of “Visit Indonesia Museums” (2010–2014) was held in museums throughout Indonesia in seven provinces, namely Capital City of Jakarta, Yogyakarta, West Java, Central

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<sup>1</sup><http://www.museumnasional.or.id>.

Java, East Java, Bali, and North Sumatra. "A" new thematic museum project focused on "showing off" Indonesian Noken (woven bags from Papua, 2013) and Indonesian Batik. Fig. 1 shows the Noken of Papua and Fig. 2 shows the Indonesian batik (hand-dyed cotton and silk using wax resistive technique, 2009), which were both designated as being the Intangible Culture Heritage of Humanity that had been recognized by UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization).

To prepare "A" new thematic museum, the Ministry of Education and Culture had planned to build "A" New Museum of Indonesian Batik by creating a Museum Design Competition in 2011, repeated it in 2013. The design results of the First Competition in 2011 explored traditional Javanese architecture, so it did not reflect a contemporary architecture as the spirit (zeitgeist) of modernity. Then they prepared architectural design guidelines as an important part of the TOR (terms of reference) for the Museum *Indonesian Batik* Design Competition in 2013 by inviting a multi-disciplinary team to work in collaboration with historians, architects, museologists, interior designers, and batik collectors. Over a six-month period, we have two tasks: first, to prepare the proposed a Museum *Indonesian Batik's* academic study included to find a term of reference; second, to evaluate the design's of the architect's winner in order to assure appropriate with the Museum *Indonesian Batik's* academic study during preparation the construction.

By referring to the spirit of the Indonesian Museum Reform (Museum National, 2010), the Museum Indonesian Batik's academic study adopted the philosophy of project by creating "batik" knowledge as the information centers, promotion, development and also conservation. So, the new museum was expected to become a spatial learning center for experiencing Indonesian Batik appreciation. Batik as the intangible culture heritage of humanity designation

may also encourage economic value in tourism and creative industries by considering the museum's role.

## **2. Study Case to Find the Architectural Design Guidelines**

Aimed at the Museum Indonesian batik's academic study which is appropriate with the spirit to reform iconic museums, the collaborative work needs to be elaborated and analyzed among others: (1) the contemporary museum concept, (2) the architecture's theory concept, (3) famous museum design precedents or study case. By referring to case studies and combined strategies method in a qualitative research approach, a case study is adopted [2]. To elaborate the contemporary museum concept related the main issue of the international museum conference, for example, the Museum Year Conference [3] and the conference of ANMA (the Asian National Museum Association) [4], they were both accommodated. To describe the theory of architecture, design making is referring to the Derrida's architecture-event theory. Because of the "batik", related with the fashion design world and closely with the way to "show off", then the idea of architecture-stage theory in fashion-architecture genre is also adopted [3].

To learn more about related issue of the famous museum design, four prominent museums building precedents were adopted: (1) The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York City (1943-1959) by Frank Lloyd Wright; (2) New Acropolis Museum, Athens, 2005 by Bernard Tschumi; (3) The Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao, (1991-1997) by Frank Gehry; and (4) The National Museum of Australia, Canberra (1997-2001) by Ashton Raggatt McDougall and Robert Peck von Hartel Trethowan. By describing the uniqueness of them, thus, the collaboration team can learn and put architectural design guide into the Museum Indonesian batik's academic study.



**Fig. 1 The Noken of Papua.**

Source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Noken>.



**Fig. 2 The Batik Indonesia Patterns.**

Source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Batik>.



**Fig. 3 An image of “A” New Museum of Indonesian Batik.**

Source: Ivan Saputra, 2014.

### 3. The Adopted 4P of Museums 2000 Concepts

The 4P Museums 2000 Concepts: politics, people, professionals and profit, were introduced to the Museum Year Conference (1989) in London. Considering museological space as an environment for learning, a museum concept evolved and was called

“Museums 2000”. These concepts outlined the basic ideas on how to improve museum services and facilities [5]. After the Museum Year Conference (1989), this list of priority factors became a matter of central importance to museums and art galleries worldwide. In my opinion, these factors should have included the impact of politics on museums at both national and local levels.

At the National Museum of China 100th anniversary, Masami Zeniya spoke about the mission and roles in Society of a Museum for the Future. He spoke about the three missions and roles in society of the Tokyo National Museum: first, focusing on two missions and roles in society of a museum for the future; second, the essential activities of the museum, by focusing on the preservation and conservation; and third, the essential activities of the museum, by focus on exchange and cooperation with other museums [6]. The museum needs to improve and maintain facilities to deal with the deterioration of air-conditioning equipment and to provide barrier-free access to allow visitors to view artworks in comfortable environment. The first mission is how to create awareness for the younger generation and to determine how to attract younger visitors and deepen their understanding of the museum. He spoke about how to improve the use of the museum buildings by great awareness of the following two roles of the museum: (1) conveying culture to future generations by increasing the number of young people visiting the museum initiatives including free entry to the regular exhibition; (2) conveying culture to the world by participating in the Google Art Project so that the internet users can experience the Tokyo National Museum virtually. He also concerned the preservation and conservation by continuing to pass on these irreplaceable cultural properties to future generations. According to Zeniya, act of the Tokyo National Museum reflected the 4P Museums 2000 Concepts: politics, people, professionals and profit. He concern about the first P—politics, by exchanging and cooperating with other museums program. He concerned P—people, by concerning the virtual museum to next future generation that familiar with internet-connected and free entry to the regular exhibition, the P—professionals reflected by improving and maintaining the air-conditioning equipment, and providing barrier-free access to be comfortable in order to create awareness for the younger generation. Zeniya did not explicated the

P—profit, but he stated about conveying culture to the world by participating the Google Art Project. It had reflected how Japan need to invest the world civilization. The efficiency of the 4P of 2000 Museum Concepts [5] and the Zeniya's speech [6], both of the concepts were accommodated in Museum Indonesian Batik's academic study.

#### **4. Derrida's Architecture-Event Theory**

French philosopher, Jacques Derrida describes architecture-event theory as a phenomenon and a practice in architecture, which results in a turn towards discursive and socially-engaged architecture. Derrida links this way of working to architectural design performance and it describes the effect of the viewer in the architectural design making process [7]. He elaborated the phenomenon by investigating the architectural works of prominent architects Peter Eisenman, Bernard Tschumi, Frank Gehry and Zaha Hadid in the 1980s. Jacques Derrida linked this way of working to architectural design performance in relation to "form" and describe the effect on the viewer in the architectural design making process. Derrida stated: *"...la structure même du dispositif architectural: séquence, sérialité ouverte, narrativité, cinématique, dramaturgie, chorégraphie (...the structure of the architectural system is: sequence, open seriality, narrativity, cinematic, dramaturgy, choreography"* [7]. Then, he declared trans-architecture or an architecture-event theory by guiding how to present the "event" by presenting a "wow effect". By inserting the six criteria into the building concept, architects will find a new extraordinary building "form". The spirit behind the architecture-event criteria has reflected the spirit of the museum reform initiative to reform iconic museums by making them dynamic, efficient, and attractive in accordance with international museum standards, then the Derrida's guides adopted "A" New Museum of Indonesian Batik Architectural Design Guidelines.

## **5. The Idea of Architecture-StageTheory**

The quality of uniqueness of an iconic buildings shows an unusual building's envelope or façade. Architect composes by adopting the four basic principles of fashion elements and principles of design, namely color, silhouette, line, and texture into the architectural body and façade [3] by enriching the façade and placing fashion details on the elements; accessories, millineries, and cosmetics, etc. The unusual building appearances and architectonic form are similar to that of a statue or a sculpture. The architecture phenomenon is also a part of the ideas in the “architecture-stage” theory [8]. Finally, the architecture-stage concept adapted into the main architectural design guidelines.

## **6. Famous Museum Design Precedents**

To find an excellence concept for “A” New Museum of Indonesian Batik, the team was intensively discussing a way to define the design guidelines by analyzing several famous museums designed of prominent architects to enrich the guidelines for the competition held in 2013.

### **7. The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York (1943-1959) by Frank Lloyd Wright**

One of the most famous museum precedents is The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (1943-1959) in New York City. The prominent architect Frank Lloyd Wright created the landmark museum through his interpretation of the Founder's message: “I want a temple of spirit, a monument!” [9]. Wright expressed the uniqueness in modernist architecture's rigid geometry by arranging a symphony of triangles, ovals, arcs, circles, and squares which are repeated throughout the oval-shaped columns. To counterbalance the static regularity of geometric design,

Wright combined geometrical forms, basically an inverted ziggurat, with the plasticity of nature. Since its opening, the Guggenheim museum role is as an inspiration, challenging artists and architects with Wright's well-recognized polemic of organic design. The rotunda is the key of museum's architectural forms which enable all the museum collections to “show off” at once as the circulation concept in order to make the spectator comfortable. Because of this, the Wright concept has accommodate in architectural design Guidelines in the competition in 2013. The “batik” as the heritage artifact is the fabric material which quickly faded, so rigid geometry of the building is perfectly protecting the “batik” collection from the daily sunlight.

### **8. New Acropolis Museum, Athens, 2005 by Bernard Tschumi**

Architecture is always a reflection of society. Likewise in the late 20th-century, Bernard Tschumi simply adopted a geometric form for the New Acropolis Museum (2005) in Athens. Tschumi applied an event-cities (Praxis) [10] to the New Acropolis Museum Design Competition. Referring to the “six concepts: excerpt from architecture and disjunction”, namely: (1) technologies of de-familiarization; (2) the mediated “metropolitan” shock; (3) de-structuring; (4) superimposition; (5) cross-programming; (6) events: the turning point [10], he adopted the turning point by combining spaces, events, and movements without any hierarchy or precedence among these concepts. Tschumi's work of Athens (2002) exposed the ruins of the old city of Athens by building the structures right in the middle of the heritage site. Tschumi argued that the building column's structural role was the symbolism to connect between the old Athens and the contemporary city by using the transparent glass granted access to all of the floors from the ground floor [3]. According to Tschumi's concept, its relevance with “batik” as the

spirit of the turning pointed to connect the museum building.

### **9. The Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao, (1991-1997) by Frank Gehry**

In 1991, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (1959) presented the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao. The Guggenheim Museum of Bilbao is one of the Gehry's museum design masterpieces [9]. Frank Gehry's design was successful to encourage the “reinventing themselves” to produce a landmark for the city, then the media talked about and named: “the Bilbao Effect” which is related to the socioeconomic impact. He successfully explained how the commodification and result-oriented development of the museum design practices by combined with architectural-event theory of Derrida's by seeking a more touching connection with “a wow effect”. The “a wow effect” also means a special state of mind referring to a special “view”. Then, the design principle of “the Bilbao effect” of Guggenheim was inspiring to adopt into the architecture design guide of museum Indonesian batik.

### **10. The National Museum of Australia, Canberra (1997-2001) by Ashton Raggatt McDougall and Robert Peck von Hartel Trethowan**

The National Museum of Australia (1997-2001) is located on the Acton peninsula on Lake Burley Griffin in the capitol city of Canberra. Designed by Ashton Raggatt McDougall (ARM) and Canberra practice of Robert Peck von Hartel Trethowan, together with Sydney landscape architects Room 4.1.3 won an international design competition in 1997 [11]. The architects adopted a contemporary design approach, by creating a dramatic way of “showing off” with monumental forms (Derrida, 1986). When visiting the museum in 2014, the dramatic effect of the museum was held by the contrast of the capitol city of Canberra with the iconic form of the multi-colored façade in opposite to the blue sky. They accommodated the 4P of

Museum 2000 Concept, by following desirable characteristics among others: (1) institutional visibility—brand and buzz; (2) collections—definitive quality and scope; (3) exhibitions and programs; (4) stewardship and attention to long-term responsibilities; (5) scholarship, including original research and its promulgation; (6) education—innovation in learning practices and technologies; (7) memorable visitor experiences; (8) management and governance with rigour, transparency, accountability; and (9) facilities and their strategic use [12]. Then, the dramatical principle of the National Museum of Australia, Canberra was adopted to the architectural guide of “A” New Museum Indonesian Batik.

### **11. Architectural Design Guidelines for the Indonesian Batik Museum Design Competition (2013)**

Finally, the Architectural Design Guidelines for “A” New Museum of Indonesian Batik Design Competition was finished [13]. The museum was located at *Taman Mini Indonesia Indah* (TMII) (beautiful Indonesia Miniature Park) Jakarta, covering an area of 6,451 m<sup>2</sup>. The site is next to three existing museums, namely the Soldiers' Museum, the Heritage Museum and the Insect Museum. All museums need to be synchronized at the main gate, according to the district rules in TMII's regulations. The guidelines is adopting the contemporary architecture by: (1) exploring Derrida's architecture-event to “show off “ the “batik”; (2) exploring the “batik” making process as the storyline to direct the visitors flowing. Today, the return to eco-oriented natural dyes is in preference to chemical substances [14]. So, the outdoor are required to produce the “batik” natural colors include: various kinds of roots, wood, leaves, flowers and seeds. Naturally-colored batik dyes are derived from the following species: guava (*Jambu Biji* or *Psidium Guajava*) as natural red color, *Kesumba* rivet or *Bixa Orellana* (crimson), turmeric (*Kunyit* or *Curcuma Mengkudu*) as natural yellow, Indian mulberry or



cheese fruit (Noni or Morinda Citrifolia) (brownish-purple), or indigo (Nilaparvata indica) (blue), the flamboyant or yellow flame tree (Soga or Peltophorum Pterocarpum) wood produces one of the natural dyes in a brownish color (soga), Soga Tinggi or Ceriops candolleana as natural red, tea (Tegeran or Cudrains Javanensis, Teh) as natural brown [2]. They planted rare plantations outdoor. Then, the uniqueness of the museum's concept is potentially becoming the embryo of an eco-museum [14].

## **12. The Open Seriality of Indonesian Batik**

The open seriality of the “Batik period” was classic from the early 10th-century up until contemporary times. In the 19th century, “batik” became highly developed to serve the cultural life of the Javanese Royalty of the Sunan of Surakarta and the Sultan of Yogyakarta. The Batik Nusantara's Discourse introduced a philosophical, location map indicating coastal “batik” and inland “batik”. The diversity of Batik Nusantara was formed with influences from Dutch, Arab and Chinese cultures [2, 15]. Then, the technology of batik describes a variety of techniques, such as stamping (cap), drawing (canthing), or combinations in relation to the “batik” making process. The next sequence is traditional batik clothes, which includes: the Great Dodot—a classical Javanese “batik”, such as the royal wedding cloth, a long “batik” (kain panjang/tapih, jarik), gloves (kain sarung batik), scarf, (kain selendang), a Javanese bustier (kain kemben), headband (ikat kepala), baby carrier (lendang), etc. (Kahar, 2012). Finally, the open seriality is related to batik development, which describes a new role and form of the “batik”; such as clothes, and fashion accessories—jewelry, shoes, handbags, wallets, home accessories and daily appliances, such as pillowcases, sheets, blankets, table cloths, napkins, etc.

The climax of the museum is the “Hall of Fame of Indonesian Batik” which exhibits the dedicated actor(s)

of Indonesian batik, which are organized as follows: (1) The Colonial Era represented by Raden Ajeng Kartini; (2) The Soekarno Era represented by Go Tik Swan and Ibu Soed; (3) Soeharto Era represented by Iwan Tirta, Ramli and Obien; (4) Gus Dur Era represented by Adjie Notonegoro, and Megawati Era represented by Classical Lady's Batik; and (5) Susilo Bambang Yudoyono's Era represented by the woven-batik of Carmanita. The next sequence is the presence of “The Dressing of Indonesian Batik”, especially, the Dodot Mataram Dynasty, the Indonesian Batik Collection of Hartini (Soekarno's wife), the Sarimbit Batik—the Spouses' Batiks during the Soeharto Era. And the mannequins of the former President of United States of America, Bill Clinton and the former African President, Nelson Mandela are shown dressed in Indonesian Batik. To complete the museum's role as conservation, “A” Visible Museum Storage as Archive's space to restore and to care for more than 10,000 pieces of “batik” collection as well as a warehouse without direct sunlight to preserve the “batik” collection was created.

## **13. “Showing off” the Museum of Indonesian Batik**

Finally, a young Indonesian architect, Ivan Saputra, won “A” New Museum of Indonesian Batik Design Competition 2013. Fig. 3 shows his architecture design. He designed the building façade by using a massive material as the replicated “batik” patterns etched into copper cladding to express the history behind the “batik” making process. He had composed color, silhouette, line, and texture into building façade in reference to fashion-architecture theory [3]. To encourage all people included to accommodate the handicapped persons, Saputra adopted a flowing circulation by creating a ramp system at once in order to hold the visitors comfortably. In general, Saputra presented the architecture design of “A” New Museum of Indonesian

Batik suitable which the design guidelines are a way to "show off" Indonesian batik as UNESCO's intangible culture heritage of humanity.

## 14. Conclusions

In fact, contemporary museums need to attract and to educate the younger people by accommodating politics, people, professionals, and profit to successfully meet the vision of the Museum 2000's future concepts. The uniqueness of "A" new museum building may be adapted to the architecture-event theory in order to express a contemporary architecture of exploration in accordance with the following: sequence, open seriality, narrative, cinematic, drama, choreography and inserting "a wow effect" which is "showing off" its main attributes to attract younger generation visitors.

## Acknowledgments

The author would like to express his great appreciation to the Program Bantuan Seminar Luar Negeri Ditjen Penguatan Riset dan Pengembangan, Kemenristekdikti of Indonesia to facilitate to the Inclusive Museum Conference.

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