Creative Technology and the Transformation of Barongan Blora's Mask Shapes

Muksin, Dharsono, Sri Hastanto, Nuning Y. Damayanti

Abstract --Barongan mask is a communal folk art that is developed in Blora Regency and surrounding areas. Traditional barongan masks function as an integral part of rituals, namely tolak balak, murwakala, lamporan and arak-arakan. There is a time shift when barongan masks are used for stage and souvenir art purposes. As time shifts, changes in function affect the appearance of barongan masks and their production processes (creative technology). The objectives of this research are 1) to find out the function of the barongan mask as time shifts; 2) to see the transformation of the form of a barongan mask related to the appearance of its shapes and functions; and 3) to explain creative technology in the transformation of shapes of Blora's masks. Using qualitative methods, the data collection includes observations that directly observe the development of Barongan Blora's masks and interviews. The achievement is the development of Blora's barongan mask shapes related to its functions and production processes. If the development of the form of barongan masks is related to the functions and production processes, it will be closely connected to economic issues. For this reason, creative technology is an effective effort, and it is also an effective way to get around creatively to support the development of baronganBlora's masks as a traditional object that should be preserved.

Keywords - Barongan masks, functions, production processes (creative technology), and effectiveness

I.   INTRODUCTION

The barongan art in Blora Regency and its surroundings still exists. In almost all corners of the village, barongan art becomes an iconic tradition staged at important events, such as village salvation ceremonies, commemorating an independence day, welcoming important guests, circumcision and wedding ceremonies. Children and adults know that this traditional artis one of the cultural assets of the Blora tradition that is popular after the Tayub's art.

Barongan art uses a barongan mask as a medium of extremely simple shape resembling a tiger. Holt (2000: 130) explains that barongan art uses a tiger-like lion mask, because it uses hair on the head. As the time shifts, the shape of the barongan mask is getting better and more like a real tiger. The development of this shape is inseparable from the function of barongan mask itself, from the initial idea of the barongan mask to the megalithic site in the form of a totem head statue, a prehistoric relic on the hill of Trajan village, Rembang Regency, exactly in the northern part of Kendeng Mountain, the border region of Rembang and Blora Regency. Sukendar (1986: 42-43) articulates that "Aesthetics in Indonesian Archeology" can be learned through the concepts of beauty in megalithic relics, transforming an idea of the origin and the shapes of the

barongan mask. The further development of the totem statue was transformed into a mask. Holt (1967: 23-24) argues that in Java and Bali, the slow evolution of primitive rites to theatrical art has reached the peak in the production of stylized, beautifully carved masks. On the stage, barongan masks were originally used for the purposes of ritual ceremonies developed into the stage performance using new masks that had been modified according to their functions. Baronganmasks take typical forms of other new creations such as children's toys, interior decoration and other souvenir products.

In terms of new creations in the development of the shapes of barongan masks, the role of creative technology is to process creative products especially to find out solutions for the design development and production efficiency in a community-based craft industry. In this industry, there will be a transformation of the shapes of barongan masks as a shape development in line with their functions. In this sense, the theme of this research is "Creative Technology in the Transformation of the Shapes of Barongan Blora's Masks."

The problems concerning the transformation of the shapes of Barongan Blora's maskscoincide with their functions as well as the role of creative technology in the development of their shapes, as formulated below:

Why there is a change in the functions of Barongan Blora's masks during the time shift.

How the transformation of Barongan Blora's mask shapes is related to the appearance of their shapes and functions.

How is the creative technology related to the transformation of the shapes of Blora's masks.

This research focuses on the role of creative technology in the transformation of the shapes of Barongan Blora'smaskspertaining to functional changes that affect the development of shapes. In detail the objectives of this research are stated as follows:

a) To find out the functions of the barongan masks as the time shifts.

b) To describe the transformation of the barongan mask shapes related to the appearance of their shape and functions.

c) To explain the creative technology in the transformation of the shapes of Blora's masks.

This research will need more efforts to develop barongan masks as a creative industry, and it can be developed by barongan craftsmen in Blora and other regions in Indonesia that have similar cultural assets, and by utilizing the creative technology for the development of design and production efficiency in an economy-based craft industry society.

II.   METHOD

This research used a qualitative method along with a multidisciplinary scientific approach related to the research problems in reference to the ethnographic method of James P. Spradly, namely participant observation by directly observing the old objects that still exist, until the current form of the mask. Interviews with surviving figures and barongan arts actors directly involved personal experiences as Blora people, and literature studies related to the development of history, mythology and legends in Blora. Besides, the researchers took heed of the following dimensions: a) Blora's old forms of barongan masks are still there; b) the new barongan masks are related to the functions of the performance; and c) the development of forms of currently available souvenirs and children's toys.

The Blora's barongan mask, in addition to having historical background and accompanying myths, when viewed from its existence as an object / media of performing arts, has transformed into traceable development and functions, namely 'a form follows a function' and 'a function follows a form' platforms. The development of forms deals with the result of creation, and collaboration between performance artists and craftsmen artists. Therefore, a search for this creation is related to its function, the process of creating and producing the barongan mask mainly concerned with economic issues, effectiveness and the result of creative technology.

III.   DISCUSSION

The Function of Barongan Mask and Time Shifting

In his book entitled *Seni Pertunjukan Indonesia di Era Globalisasi*(Indonesian Performing Arts in the Era of Globalization), R.M. Soedarsono (2002) mentions that "barongan is a name that refers to a four-legged mythological animal, and its presence in this world as a manifestation of a sacred beingin mythological stories. Not surprisingly, the performance of barongan in Blora is closely connected to the rituals of the local community and their sacred power. Barongan is an expression of community art, and it is a communal art of the Blora community. Barongan masks were initially used for ritual ceremonies. As the time shifted, the barongan mask changedits function. This is a phenomenon in the society where demands of the economy, politics, and culture become an influential factor of interest and the change of function, including the development of the mask's shapes.

Based on its obvious functions, a Blora's barongan mask is used for ritual ceremonies, stage performance, and souvenirs.

a)   Barongan masks for ritual ceremonies consist of murwakala, tolak-balak, arak-arakan, lamporan and sedhekah bumi.

b)   Barongan masks for stage performance include guest reception events, circumcision events, weddings and other events classified as entertainment for the community.

c)   Barongan masks as souvenirs include children's toys, interior decorations and so forth.

As an integral part of ritual ceremonies and stage performances, the barongan mask is necessarily decorated and worn to make a difference. As souvenirs, the barongan mask displayed or decorated for the interior of the room, so that the functions and shapes have changed completely, and they are no longer been displayed except for the masks of children's toys.

The Transformation of Barongan Mask is Related to the Appearance of Its Shapes and Functions

A form follows a function. When the function changes, the appearance of the shape adjusts. As happened in the form of the Barongan Blora mask as a traditional object, through a fairly long journey, from the mask of barongan as a medium of public expression for ritual ceremonies to the experience changes in functions and, at the same time, adjusting the shape. Adhi Nugraha (2012) in his book: "Transforming the Tradition, a Method for Maintenance. The tradition of Craft and Design Context." It outlines the transformation of product forms of traditional objects into objects of daily functions in relation to changes in the lifestyle of traditional cultures in the modern era. In this case, there is a change of function, and traditional objects are originally used for daily needs or rituals, and the function is turned into interior decorations, and so forth.

In line with the changes in function and appearance, the barongan mask formcan be grouped into three phases of form transformation, namelya) the shape of the totem head statue as an idea, b) the form of a barongan mask worn in rituals and/ or performances, and c) barongan masks as souvenirs. The development of this form results from the influence of internal factors. Slamet MD (2014: 21) explains that the development of barongan in Blora is more likely influenced by internal factors, namely artists' activities and creativities. In this context, the artists referred to as a community of barongan arts of performers (performing arts) and barongan mask artisans. As the appearance of the barongan mask rests on its function, it becomes varied, and there is even something like a tiger.

Figure 1.The transformation of barongan mask includes 1) the totem head stone statue, 2) the form of the barongan mask worn in a ritual and or a show, and 3) a barongan mask for souvenirs (Source: Muksin Md., 2017)

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The process of transforming the form of a barongan mask results from internal factors, namely artists' activities and creativities involving people who play barongan arts (performing arts) and artists who make barongan masks. Activities without creativities will not yield results, and creativities without activities will not bring about any changes. The activities and creativities of craftsmen and artists produce creative technology to form of the development of barongan masks. Without creative technology, the development of Blora's bar form would not undoubtedly be what it is today. Things classified as creative technology in the transformation of Blora barongan's mask shapes includesmaterials, tools and techniques to support the creation of forms and improvements of forms.

The form of developmentfrom old barongan masks to new ones and new functions is described, as follows:

a) Barongan masks with pointed teeth assuming like the real tiger's teeth. The process of working a barongan mask like this requires precision, perseverance and precise calculation, otherwise the mask's mouth will not be opened and closed because the teeth are not right but their sizes are right.

Gambar 2. The shape of an old barongan mask and the form of a new barongan mask (Source: Muksin Md., 2017)

b) Modified barong masks that completely change in terms of functions. They are no longer worn in the ritual performance, wall decoration, table displays, key chains, tissue boxes and so forth. Raw materials to design barong masks are freer, easier, more efficient and economically valuable.

Figure 3.A tissue place as well as a display table, a basic idea of a barongan mask's form (Source: Muksin Md., 2013)

The refinement of simple forms as they are and less neat is stated below:

a) The working processes on parts of the barongan mask, such as eyes previously made of mirror glass are redesigned with the resin; noses previously invisible are reformed and given a pink color (see Figure 2); the tiger's scalp genuinely originated from the original tiger's skin is replaced with the goat's skin colored with a striped motif like a real tiger's head; and other related mask heads.

Figure 4. From old barongan mask eyes to new creations. They are made of 1) the mirror glass; 2) plastic mica bottles used for the mineral water; and 3) resin (Source: Muksin Md., 2018)

b) The improvement of structural shapes of the head and hair includes the head structure of an originalrectangular box becomes more rounded and shorter; the part of hair that previously existed stands like the Reog Ponorogo with an additional crown.

The materials development is no longer fixated on old habits such as using the local spiritual wood (*eno, dadap, waru*) and soft, strong and easily available wood (*sengon, randu*). Theeconomic and practical needs are closely connected to certain functions, and other materials such as resin and silicon rubber are used for the sake of printing techniques and the production of barongan souvenir masks.

The equipment used to make barongan masks depends on the needs, for example, conventional equipment such as chisels, saws and hammers. Currently, craftsmen have utilized woodworking technology such as chainsaws, grinding machines and compressors for coloring. Some equipment must be used to modifythe drill bit or gurinda to make the oral cavity in the barongan mask. The tool is made of resin in a semicircular round, nailed, and the position is reversed (the head part of the nail is plugged into the resin).

Figure 5. The modification tool for making a barongan mouth cavity basin (Source: Muksin Md., 2013)

IV.   CONCLUSION

Creative technology is an effective way to support the development of barongan Blora'smasks as a traditional object to preserve. Its form transformation and development are related to the functions and production processes, the economic problems of the community, creative technology, and effective and efficient efforts.

Changes in the function of barongan Blora's mask are related to a phenomenon in the societywhere economic, political, and socio-cultural demands are an extremely influential factor of interest that changes the function, including the development of its form, because the form follows the function. Changes in the function and appearance of the barongan mask are categorized into three phases of transformation, namely: a) the shape of a stone statue totem head resembling a tiger's head; b) the form of barongan maskworn in rituals and performing arts; and c) the barongan mask for souvenirs. This happens because of the artists' activities and creativities, namely people who play the barongan arts culture and barongan mask craftsmen as internal factors.

Creative technology in the transformation of the Barongan Blora's masks includes: materials, tools and techniques to support the creation of forms and improvements. The development of forms undergoes significant changes in shape from the very simple form of the old barongan mask (*kawak*) to its much better form, just perfect like a real tiger's shape, from the structure of the head shape, tooth shape, eye shape, scalp motif , hair shape and supporting accessories. The process of making barongan masks undergoes development in terms of the production needs, concerning materials, equipment and manufacturing techniques. Materials previously used wood from trees are believed to be sepiritual wood (*eno, dapap and waru*) for rituals of barongan masks, then used the *sengon*or *randu*wood to mask barongan art stage performances, or to make it lighter. In further developments, no longer wood is used, instead of the artists used resin, paper and silicon rubber. The use of semi-mechinal equipment makes the appearance of the barongan mask more perfect. Modifying equipment and making molds can simplify and speed up the production.

An important point to considerin the development of Blora's barongan mask form is how to figure out the distinctive character problem of barongan mask as the Blora's cultural identity. As it is seen, the shape change is more likely the shape of a real tiger, so that the transformation of Blora's barongan mask changes significantly. This characteristic is an effort to preserve cultural assets of tradition and identity. Whatever the form of development is, if the development adheres to the form elements, the transformation of the baronganBlora's maskis an effort to preserve cultural assets and identity.

As a suggestion, the parts of the barongan mask are the most important visual elements worth considering in terms of its characteristics, especially in the mouth part that consists of gums and teeth. These changes are quite significant, so changing the image of the barongan mask resembles a real tiger because the shape of the mouth is more realistic. If you are going to develop the form of Blora's mask, you need to take heed of the shape of the mouth. If it is applied in any form and from any material, it will remain unique.

V.   REFERENCES

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