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GOTIKSWAN AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF NUNGGAK SEMI

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Received August 22, 2026; Revised Sept 19, 2026; Accepted Sept 21, 2026; Published Sept 22, 2026

ABSTRACT

Go Tik Swan Hardjonagoro (Gotikswan) is one of Indonesia's cultural figures who has played a significant role in the development of Indonesian batik and the preservation of Javanese culture through the Nunggak Semi philosophy. This study aims to reconstruct Gotikswan's thoughts on the Nunggak Semi philosophy and analyze its implementation in the development of Indonesian batik and the preservation of the keris. The study employs a library research approach, drawing on published scholarship and UNESCO institutional heritage records analyzed descriptively and interpretively through data reduction, categorization, and thematic interpretation. The results of the study indicate that the Nunggak Semi philosophy views culture as a dynamic entity; thus, cultural preservation is not interpreted as a static effort to maintain traditions, but rather as ensuring the sustainability of cultural values through a process of innovation that remains rooted in tradition. Gotikswan embodies this philosophy through the development of Indonesian batik that integrates the cultural diversity of the Indonesian archipelago, as well as through the preservation of the keris tradition, which emphasizes the regeneration of knowledge, skills, and cultural communities. Thus, Nunggak Semi offers a paradigm for cultural revitalization that blends tradition and innovation as a strategy to ensure the sustainability of Indonesia's cultural heritage.

Keywords: *Gotikswan, Nunggak Semi, cultural revitalization, Indonesian batik, keris.*

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is one of the most culturally diverse countries in the world. This richness encompasses languages, customs, arts, traditional knowledge, and various cultural practices that have developed within communities some of which have been recognized as part of the world's cultural heritage. This cultural diversity not only forms the nation's identity but also represents its historical journey, systems of knowledge, and social values passed down through generations. Therefore, cultural preservation plays a vital role in safeguarding the nation's identity amid social change, technological advancements, and the increasingly intense tide of globalization (Koentjaraningrat, 2002; UNESCO, 2003). In this context, cultural preservation is no longer understood merely as an effort to maintain traditional forms in their entirety, but rather as a process that allows culture to remain alive, evolve, and remain relevant to society in every era (Harrison, 2012; Smith, 2006). Recent peer-reviewed studies show that contemporary preservation problems also

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concern the continuity of community participation, intergenerational transmission, and the capacity of living traditions to adapt without losing locally recognized meanings. Katapidi (2023) demonstrates that top-down conservation may weaken local understandings when the living dimension of heritage is insufficiently considered, while Abdul Aziz et al. (2023) identify community participation and cultural knowledge as central to the continuity of living heritage. In the Indonesian context, Safitri & Ikaputra (2024) likewise argue that living-heritage conservation must bridge inherited authenticity with future continuity. Technological and demographic change further complicate transmission, as shown by Chung (2024) in the case of Cantonese opera.

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This perspective aligns with the concept of cultural revitalization, which views culture as dynamic and constantly undergoing transformation. Traditions are not merely regarded as relics of the past but also as sources of inspiration capable of fostering new creativity without losing their connection to the underlying cultural values. Smith (2006) explains that the meaning of cultural heritage is shaped through an ongoing process of social interpretation, while Ashworth, Graham et al. (2016) emphasize that cultural preservation is a process of negotiation between identity, collective memory, and the needs of contemporary society. Thus, cultural revitalization is not understood as an effort to fully revive the past, but rather as a process of adaptation that maintains the continuity of cultural values through innovation and intergenerational transmission. This perspective is also consistent with the concept of “living heritage,” which positions communities as the primary actors in ensuring the sustainability of cultural heritage through cultural practices that remain alive today (Harrison, 2012; UNESCO, 2003).

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Within this preservation problem, Nunggak Semi offers a specific conceptual response: continuity is maintained at the level of cultural roots, values, knowledge, and meaning, while cultural forms are allowed to develop in response to new circumstances. It therefore avoids two opposite risks freezing heritage into a static form in the name of authenticity, and pursuing innovation that becomes detached from inherited cultural meanings (Grafita & Rudianto, 2023; Pramono, 2019, 2021; Rustopo, 2008).

One Indonesian cultural figure who embodies this idea is Go Tik Swan Hardjonagoro, or Gotikswan. He is known as a batik master and cultural figure who is deeply committed to the preservation of Javanese culture, particularly batik and the keris. Through his cultural thought and practice, Gotikswan introduced the philosophy of Nunggak Semi as a perspective on cultural sustainability. This philosophy holds that culture will remain alive if it is able to give rise to new forms without severing its connection to the values that form its roots. Thus, renewal is understood not as a break with tradition, but as a process that allows tradition to continue to evolve in step with the changing times (Pramono, 2019, 2021; Rustopo, 2008). The idea of “Nunggak Semi” does not remain merely a philosophical concept; rather, Gotikswan has brought it to life through various cultural practices. One such implementation is evident in the development of Indonesian batik, which combines the visual richness of various batik traditions across the archipelago into a national batik identity without losing the symbolic meanings embedded within them (Pramono, 2021). On the other hand, Gotikswan also

24 plays a role in preserving the tradition of keris-making through its support for the regeneration of master craftsmen (empu), the development of besalen (keris workshops), and efforts to ensure the continuity of knowledge regarding tosan aji (Rustopo, 2008). These two practices demonstrate that innovation and preservation are not two conflicting concepts, but rather two processes that go hand in hand in ensuring cultural sustainability.

Studies on Gotikswan have been conducted by several researchers with diverse focuses. Pramono, (2021) highlighted the social and political meanings embedded in Gotikswan's batik through visual semiotics, while Pramono, (2019) highlighted the social and political dimensions embedded in his works through a visual semiotics approach. Meanwhile, Pramono, (2021) examined the national spirit expressed in his batik works during 1956-1966. More recently, Grafita & Rudianto (2023) analyzed Indonesian Batik in Surakarta and identified Nunggak Semi as an important conceptual basis for Gotikswan's creative process. These studies provide essential foundations, but they remain centered primarily on batik aesthetics, visual meaning, nationalism, or particular episodes of Gotikswan's cultural practice. The novelty of the present study does not lie in introducing Nunggak Semi as a previously unknown term. Rather, it lies in reconstructing Nunggak Semi as an integrated cultural-philosophical framework that connects Gotikswan's intellectual journey with two different forms of cultural practice: creative renewal through Indonesian batik and intergenerational regeneration through keris preservation. By bringing these dimensions into dialogue with living heritage and cultural revitalization, this study examines Nunggak Semi as a unified logic of cultural continuity rather than as a motif-specific, biographical, or batik-only concept.

3 Based on this background, this study aims to reconstruct Gotikswan's thoughts on the philosophy of Nunggak Semi through a literature review, explain the development of these ideas based on his intellectual journey, and analyze their implementation in the development of Indonesian batik and the preservation of the keris. This study is expected to provide a more comprehensive perspective on the contribution of Gotikswan's thought to the discourse on cultural revitalization in Indonesia, while also broadening the discussion on the preservation of cultural heritage as an adaptive, sustainable process that is relevant to the challenges of contemporary society.

3 RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a library research approach within an interpretive qualitative paradigm to examine the ideas of Go Tik Swan Hardjonagoro (Gotikswan), specifically the Nunggak Semi philosophy and its implementation in the development of Indonesian batik and the preservation of the keris. The library research approach was chosen because the research objects consist of ideas, concepts, and cultural practices documented in various academic sources; thus, the analysis is conducted through the synthesis and interpretation of relevant literature. Zed, (2025) explains that library research not only serves to gather information but also to build conceptual understanding through a critical examination of various sources. In line with this, Zed, (2025) emphasizes that literature-based research enables researchers to systematically reconstruct a line of thought based

on available documents. Therefore, this approach is considered appropriate for explaining the development of Gotikswan's thought and reconstructing the philosophical meaning of Nunggak Semi in the context of cultural revitalization.

The research data sources consist of primary and secondary sources. The source corpus is classified according to its evidentiary status, not simply according to whether a publication discusses Gotikswan. Rustopo's historical study (2007), Pramono's article and dissertation (2019, 2021), and Grafita and Rudianto's study (2023) are secondary accounts used to interpret his biography, cultural ideas, batik, and keris practices. Their descriptions of works constitute mediated evidence, rather than original documents authored by Gotikswan. Original batik textiles or designs, personal correspondence, direct statements, and contemporary workshop records would constitute primary evidence of his practices if independently examined; however, no such original Gotikswan-authored documents, artifacts, or firsthand transcripts can be established from the sources documented in this study. The analysis therefore makes no claim to firsthand examination of these materials. UNESCO's 2003 Convention and its 2005 and 2009 heritage-list entries are original institutional records for UNESCO's safeguarding framework and inscriptions; they are not primary evidence for Gotikswan's own intentions or actions. Accordingly, the conclusions about Gotikswan are a critical synthesis of the cited secondary accounts, not an archival reconstruction based on directly consulted personal records.

Secondary sources include peer-reviewed journal articles, scholarly books, dissertations, conference proceedings, and UNESCO documents concerning cultural revitalization, living heritage, batik, the keris, and Gotikswan. The literature corpus was traced through Google Scholar, GARUDA, journal and publisher portals, and UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage repository. Search terms included "Go Tik Swan," "Hardjonagoro," "Nunggak Semi," "Indonesian batik," "keris," "living heritage," "cultural revitalization," "intangible cultural heritage," and "cultural preservation," used individually and in combination. No lower date limit was imposed on primary or historical sources because older materials are necessary to reconstruct Gotikswan's intellectual trajectory. For secondary scholarship, priority was given to works published from 2006 to August 2026, with studies from 2021-2026 prioritized when discussing contemporary living-heritage and revitalization debates. Sources were included when they were directly relevant to the research questions, had identifiable scholarly or institutional provenance, and contained sufficient historical, conceptual, or comparative evidence; duplicate, non-scholarly, and tangential materials were excluded (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

Data collection was conducted through a documentary study by tracing, identifying, classifying, and recording information related to the research focus. Subsequently, various sources were critically compared to identify similarities, differences, and connections among ideas regarding Gotikswan's intellectual journey, the Nunggak Semi philosophy, and their implementation in the development of Indonesian batik and the preservation of the keris. This process aims to achieve a more comprehensive

understanding while minimizing reliance on a single source, thereby ensuring that the resulting interpretation is more objective and accountable (Zed, 2025).

Data analysis was conducted qualitatively through the identification of themes, patterns, and relationships among concepts emerging in various literature (Krippendorff, 2018). The stages of analysis included data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions, as outlined by Miles et al. (2013). To make the analytical process systematic, the sources were first organized into five categories: (1) Gotikswan's biography and intellectual-cultural journey; (2) explicit descriptions of Nunggak Semi and Gotikswan's statements on cultural renewal; (3) the development of Indonesian batik; (4) keris preservation and regeneration; and (5) conceptual literature on living heritage, cultural revitalization, and intangible cultural heritage transmission. Data reduction involved removing duplicated or marginal information and retaining passages that directly addressed the research objectives.

The retained materials were then compared in a source-category matrix to identify convergent, complementary, or contradictory interpretations. Historical claims were assessed against the cited biographical and specialist studies and cross-checked across those accounts where possible, original personal archives or workshop records were not directly analyzed. The final interpretive stage connected the categories to reconstruct the relationship between Gotikswan's intellectual journey, the philosophy of Nunggak Semi, and its implementation in batik and keris preservation. The results of the analysis were then interpreted to reconstruct the relationship between Gotikswan's intellectual journey, the philosophy of Nunggak Semi, and their implementation in the development of Indonesian batik and the preservation of the keris. Thus, this study not only describes the content of various sources but also produces a conceptual synthesis regarding the contribution of Gotikswan's thought to the discourse on cultural revitalization in Indonesia.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Gotikswan's Life

To address the research objectives consistently, the results and discussion are organized around three connected dimensions. Gotikswan's intellectual journey, the philosophical formulation of Nunggak Semi, and its implementation in Indonesian batik and keris preservation. Go Tik Swan Hardjonagoro, also known as Gotikswan, is an Indonesian cultural figure who has made significant contributions to the development of batik and the preservation of Javanese culture. Born into a family of Chinese descent, Gotikswan grew up in an environment that exposed him to a variety of cultural traditions. His close ties to the Surakarta Royal Palace, batik masters, artists, and cultural figures shaped his perspective on culture as a constantly evolving space for dialogue. For his dedication to the field of culture, he was later awarded the noble title of Kanjeng Raden Tumenggung Hardjonagoro, reflecting recognition of his contributions to the preservation of Javanese culture (Pramono, 2021; Rustopo, 2008). This life journey demonstrates that cultural identity is not shaped solely by ethnic origins but rather through a process of

interaction, learning, and active engagement in social and cultural life (Geertz, 1973).

This experience shaped Gotikswan's understanding that culture is not merely a historical relic that must be preserved in its original form, but rather a living legacy that continually gains meaning through the processes of transmission, interpretation, and renewal. Therefore, throughout his career in the field of culture, he viewed tradition as something dynamic that constantly evolves in response to changes in society. This perspective is reflected in his various cultural activities, which seek to bring together traditional elements with new ideas without eroding deeply rooted cultural values. This perspective aligns with the understanding that the sustainability of cultural heritage depends on society's ability to continually revitalize, practice, and reinterpret traditions in accordance with the context of the times (Harrison, 2012; Rustopo, 2008; Smith, 2006).

Gotikswan's contribution became even more prominent during President Soekarno's administration, when he responded to Soekarno's request to develop a batik expression capable of representing Indonesian national identity. Pramono's dissertation places this mandate within the 1956-1966 period and shows how Gotikswan's works combined multiple ethnic and regional visual traditions in a nationalist cultural project (Pramono, 2021). This historical account is reinforced by Grafita & Rudianto (2023), who identify Go Tik Swan as the creator of Indonesian Batik inspired by President Soekarno's instruction and describe his synthesis of classical court and coastal batik traditions. Unlike batik traditions associated mainly with particular regions, Gotikswan sought to create designs that incorporated the visual richness of different parts of the archipelago while retaining a recognizable connection to Javanese cultural roots (Grafita & Rudianto, 2023; Pramono, 2019; Rustopo, 2008).

Through this approach, he demonstrated that Indonesia's cultural diversity can serve as a source of creativity in building a national identity without erasing the local characteristics that form its foundation. For him, cultural development does not mean abandoning tradition, but rather carrying forward inherited values through new forms relevant to the times. This idea aligns with the view that cultural heritage will endure if it can adapt to social change without losing the meaning that underpins its existence (Pramono, 2021, 2019; Graham et al., 2016; Harrison, 2012).

This perspective was later articulated in the Nunggak Semi philosophy. Stronger evidence that Nunggak Semi represents Gotikswan's own philosophical orientation can be traced to Rustopo's biographical reconstruction of Go Tik Swan's cultural thought and to later studies of his artistic practice (Rustopo, 2008). Grafita & Rudianto (2023) explicitly identify the Nunggak Semi concept as the conceptual basis through which Gotikswan developed Indonesian Batik: renewal could produce modern and multicolored forms while remaining connected to Javanese cultural roots in motif, process, and meaning. The philosophy therefore explains that a culture will endure if it is capable of giving rise to new developments without severing its connection to the values that form its roots. Like a sprout growing from a tree stump, new life is never separated from the roots that sustain it. In Gotikswan's view, renewal is not a rejection of tradition, but a mechanism that allows tradition to remain alive, relevant, and capable of adapting to

changing times. This idea became a foundation for the development of Indonesian batik while also informing his concern for the continuity of other Javanese cultural traditions, including the keris (Pramono, 2021; Rustopo, 2008; Smith & Akagawa, 2009; UNESCO, 2003).

Through his life journey and his work as a cultural figure, it is clear that Gotikswan views cultural preservation as a process that connects the heritage of the past with the needs of the present. Tradition is not positioned as a relic that must be preserved in a static form, but as a source of values that can continue to evolve through responsible innovation. The Nunggak Semi philosophy serves as the most comprehensive embodiment of this perspective, as it asserts that cultural sustainability can only be achieved when the process of transmission proceeds hand in hand with renewal. It is this line of thinking that subsequently became the basis for Gotikswan's contributions to the development of Indonesian batik, the preservation of the keris tradition, and various other Javanese cultural practices, while also serving as the conceptual foundation for the discussion of the Nunggak Semi philosophy in the following section (Rustopo, 2008; Pramono, 2019, 2021; Harrison, 2012; Smith, 2006).

The Philosophy of *Nunggak Semi*

One of the main challenges in cultural preservation is maintaining the sustainability of traditional values amid continuous social change. In many preservation practices, culture is often understood as something that must be preserved in its original form, so that change is viewed as having the potential to diminish the authenticity of a tradition. This perspective tends to view tradition as a static legacy. In contrast to this view, Gotikswan, through the philosophy of Nunggak Semi, offers the understanding that a culture's sustainability is not determined by its ability to preserve old forms, but rather by its ability to uphold the core values that define its identity while continuously adapting to the changing times. Thus, change is not positioned as a threat to culture, but as part of a process of continuity that allows traditions to remain alive amidst the dynamics of society (Rustopo, 2008; Pramono, 2021). This view aligns with developments in contemporary cultural heritage studies, which view culture as a process continually negotiated by society, rather than merely a fixed relic of the past (Graham et al., 2016; Smith, 2006).

In Gotikswan's thinking, Nunggak Semi illustrates the inseparable connection between the roots of tradition and the emergence of new cultural forms. The analogy of a shoot growing from a tree stump suggests that development always springs from the same roots, even though it produces different expressions. Therefore, what is passed down across generations is not merely artifacts or physically visible cultural forms, but also the values, knowledge, perspectives, and meanings that accompany them. Each generation has the freedom to reinterpret this heritage in accordance with the social context and challenges of its time without losing its connection to the inherited cultural identity. From this perspective, innovation is not a deviation from tradition, but rather a mechanism that allows traditions to remain relevant and continue to be practiced by society. This

understanding demonstrates that cultural sustainability depends on a community's ability to both transmit and develop cultural values in accordance with the social dynamics it faces (Rustopo, 2008; Smith & Akagawa, 2009; UNESCO, 2003).

This line of thought aligns with the concept of "living heritage" proposed by Smith, (2006) and further developed by Harrison, (2012). Both scholars view cultural heritage not as an object with a fixed meaning, but as a social process that is continually shaped through the experiences, practices, and interpretations of the community. Recent peer-reviewed research reinforces this community-centered understanding. Quang (2022) shows that conservation at Cham living-heritage sites becomes problematic when official preservation approaches overlook the lived relationship between communities and heritage. Katapidi (2023) similarly demonstrates that expert-driven conservation can conflict with local understandings when the living dimension is subordinated to preservation priorities. Abdul Aziz et al. (2023) find that community knowledge and participation are positively related to the continuity of living heritage, while Safitri & Ikaputra (2024) describe living heritage as an approach that connects the authenticity of inherited heritage with future sustainability. In this context, Nunggak Semi can be read as a concrete cultural expression of living heritage because it makes creativity part of transmission, culture remains alive not because it is kept unchanged, but because communities continue to practice, reinterpret, and pass on its underlying values (Harrison, 2012; Smith, 2006; Smith & Akagawa, 2009; UNESCO, 2003).

In addition to its connection to the concept of living heritage, Nunggak Semi is also relevant to the theory of cultural revitalization. Ashworth et al. (2007) and Graham et al. (2016) understand heritage as continuously reinterpreted in relation to contemporary identities and needs. While Lam et al. (2022) show that revitalization projects often emphasize adaptive reuse, planning, public acceptance, and the improvement of community environments. Recent living-heritage studies, by contrast, stress the need to keep communities and lived meanings at the center of conservation (Abdul Aziz et al., 2023; Katapidi, 2023; Safitri & Ikaputra, 2024). Gotikswan's perspective converges with these studies in rejecting static preservation, but differs in the mechanism it emphasizes. Rather than beginning primarily from heritage policy, site management, or institutional planning, Nunggak Semi begins from a cultural-creative principle: new expressions should grow from inherited roots, while the knowledge and communities that sustain those roots must continue to regenerate. Thus, Gotikswan's approach combines creative reinterpretation with continuity of cultural transmission, as demonstrated through Indonesian batik and keris preservation (Ashworth et al., 2007; Graham et al., 2016; Harrison, 2012).

The implementation of this philosophy is evident in the various cultural activities undertaken by Gotikswan, particularly through the development of Indonesian batik and the preservation of the keris tradition. In both of these fields, he does not rigidly adhere to tradition, nor does he pursue innovations that sever ties with inherited cultural values. Every creative process always begins with an understanding of the roots of tradition, which is then developed through innovation that continues to respect the symbolic

meaning and cultural philosophy of the Indonesian archipelago. This approach demonstrates that batik and the keris are not merely positioned as historical artifacts, but as a living cultural heritage sustained through practice, creativity, and the intergenerational transmission of knowledge. This perspective demonstrates the tangible implementation of the principle of “living heritage” that cultural values are sustained through ongoing social practices, not merely through the preservation of cultural objects alone (Harrison, 2012; Pramono, 2021; Rustopo, 2008; Smith, 2006; UNESCO, 2003).

Based on this description, the Nunggak Semi philosophy can be understood as a paradigm for cultural revitalization that positions tradition and innovation as two complementary elements. This philosophy demonstrates that cultural preservation does not always mean maintaining old forms in their entirety, but rather ensuring the continuity of values through a process of ongoing renewal. Thus, Gotikswan’s primary contribution lies not only in the development of Indonesian batik and the preservation of the keris but also in his concept of a cultural sustainability strategy capable of bridging the heritage of the past with the needs of contemporary society. This perspective demonstrates that Nunggak Semi is not only relevant within the context of Javanese culture but also offers a conceptual framework that can be used to understand the revitalization of various aspects of Indonesia’s cultural heritage more broadly. In this context, Nunggak Semi can be viewed as an approach that brings together the concepts of living heritage, cultural revitalization, and the transmission of intangible cultural heritage within a single framework centered on the sustainability of cultural values through innovation that remains rooted in tradition (Ashworth et al., 2007; Graham et al., 2016; Harrison, 2012; Smith, 2006; Smith & Akagawa, 2009; UNESCO, 2003).

The Implementation of the *Nunggak Semi* Philosophy in the Development of Indonesian Batik and the Preservation of the Keris

An understanding of the Nunggak Semi philosophy cannot be separated from its application in cultural practice. For Gotikswan, the idea of cultural preservation must not stop at the conceptual level but must be realized through concrete actions that allow traditions to endure while evolving with the times. This principle is reflected in the two areas that are the focus of his work: the development of Indonesian batik and the preservation of the keris tradition. These two fields demonstrate that safeguarding cultural heritage is not merely about preserving the relics of the past, but also about creating space for innovation, regeneration, and the sustainability of cultural values so that they remain alive in the lives of the community. This perspective aligns with the concept of “living heritage,” which positions the community as the primary agent in ensuring the continuity of a tradition through practices that are constantly evolving (Rustopo, 2008; Pramono, 2021; Smith, 2006; C., 1937; UNESCO, 2003, 2009, 2005).

The implementation of Nunggak Semi is most clearly evident in Gotikswan’s concept of Indonesian batik, which developed from the late 1950s through the early 1960s. At that time, there was a need to create a form of batik capable of representing the identity of the newly independent Indonesian nation not merely the cultural identity of a

single region. In response to this need, Gotikswan conducted an in-depth study of various batik traditions across the Indonesian archipelago. In addition to delving into the court batik of Surakarta as his aesthetic foundation, he also studied the motifs, symbols, and philosophies of batik from various regions in Indonesia. This process gave rise to the concept of “Indonesian Batik” a form of batik that integrates the visual diversity of the archipelago without losing the philosophical values that define the essence of the batik tradition. This approach aligns with the nature of Indonesian batik as an intangible cultural heritage that evolves through community creativity and continually adapts to social and cultural dynamics (Pramono, 2021; Tirta, 1996; UNESCO, 2009).

The process of creating Indonesian batik demonstrates how the Nunggak Semi philosophy operates within the realm of cultural creativity. Gotikswan does not merely reproduce traditional motifs but reinterprets various cultural symbols into visual compositions with new contexts. Various elements such as birds, flowers, mega motifs, and symbols rooted in Javanese cosmology are transformed into new works, including Sawunggaling Layar Banyumili, Kudowati Ilat Geni, Pisan Bali, Gedebyah, and Parang Bimo Kurdo. Furthermore, he introduces a more diverse exploration of color compared to the typical characteristics of court batik, while still preserving the symbolic meanings embedded in the classical motifs. Thus, the renewal he undertakes is not the creation of a culture detached from the past, but rather a process of developing meaning through new interpretations of existing heritage. This approach demonstrates that Indonesian batik is a form of cultural revitalization born of creativity without erasing the cultural identity that serves as its foundation. This perspective aligns with the view that cultural heritage achieves its continuity through the process of reinterpretation carried out by the communities that support it (Harrison, 2012; Pramono, 2019; Smith, 2006; UNESCO, 2009).

The implementation of the Nunggak Semi philosophy is also evident in Gotikswan’s commitment to preserving the keris tradition. He views the keris not merely as a heirloom, but as a cultural heritage that embodies a system of knowledge, skills, aesthetic values, a philosophy of life, and the identity of Javanese society (Rustopo, 2008). This perspective drove his involvement in reviving the keris-making tradition in Surakarta, which had previously experienced a decline. Together with KGPH Hadiwidjojo through the Paguyuban Bawa Rasa Tosan Aji, Gotikswan played a role in reviving besalen activities while supporting the continuity of the empu as the heirs to the craft of forging keris. These efforts were further strengthened by the establishment of the Surolayan Forge at Ndalem Hardjonegaran in 1988, which serves as both a center for preservation and a space for the regeneration of keris makers. Through this initiative, the preservation of the keris is directed not only toward the protection of artifacts but also toward the continuity of the knowledge, skills, and cultural communities that underpin the tradition’s existence. This approach aligns with the principles of Intangible Cultural Heritage, which positions communities as the primary agents in passing on culture to future generations, as well as with scholarly studies on the keris that characterize it as a fusion of cultural objects and traditions of knowledge (C., 1937; Smith & Akagawa, 2009;

UNESCO, 2003, 2005).

When compared comprehensively, the application of Nunggak Semi through Indonesian batik and the preservation of the keris demonstrate two distinct yet complementary strategies for cultural revitalization. In the development of batik, revitalization is achieved through creative innovation that produces new cultural forms without severing ties to existing traditions. Conversely, in the preservation of the keris, revitalization is realized through the strengthening of the regeneration of knowledge, skills, and the cultural support community to ensure the continuity of the transmission process. Both approaches demonstrate that cultural sustainability depends not only on the ability to produce new works but also on the success in maintaining the intergenerational transmission of cultural knowledge and practices. This perspective aligns with the concept of “living heritage,” which views cultural heritage as a social practice that remains alive through its supporting communities, while also supporting the idea that cultural revitalization must go hand in hand with knowledge transmission (Harrison, 2012; Smith, 2006; Smith & Akagawa, 2009; UNESCO, 2009).

The main conceptual novelty of this study lies in this integration. Nunggak Semi is not treated merely as a synonym for living heritage or cultural revitalization. Instead, the analysis shows that it brings together three processes that are often discussed separately in heritage scholarship: continuity of inherited values, creative reinterpretation of cultural forms, and intergenerational regeneration of knowledge and cultural communities. Living-heritage scholarship emphasizes the continued practice and community ownership of heritage, while revitalization literature emphasizes adaptation and renewed contemporary function (Abdul Aziz et al., 2023; Katapidi, 2023; Lam et al., 2022; Safitri & Ikaputra, 2024). Nunggak Semi connects these processes through the metaphor and principle of new growth from an existing root. In the present study, Indonesian batik demonstrates renewal through creative reinterpretation, whereas keris preservation demonstrates renewal through the regeneration of knowledge, skills, and practitioners. This conceptual integration is the study’s principal contribution to discussions of Gotikswan and cultural revitalization.

The findings of this study have both theoretical and practical implications for the preservation and revitalization of cultural heritage. Theoretically, the concept of Nunggak Semi offers a culturally grounded perspective for understanding living heritage as a dynamic process in which continuity is maintained not through the rigid preservation of inherited forms, but through value-rooted adaptation, reinterpretation, and intergenerational transmission. In this sense, Nunggak Semi may be used cautiously as a comparative heuristic for examining living traditions beyond Javanese and Indonesian contexts, particularly where communities negotiate tensions between continuity and change. Recent studies in Melaka, Greece, Vietnam, and Hong Kong similarly emphasize the importance of community participation, locally recognized meanings, adaptive practices, and intergenerational transmission in sustaining cultural heritage (Abdul Aziz et al., 2023; Chung, 2024; Katapidi, 2023; Quang, 2022). Practically, this perspective suggests that heritage preservation policies and revitalization programs should not focus

solely on protecting cultural objects or maintaining fixed forms, but should also strengthen the communities, knowledge systems, creative practices, and transmission mechanisms that allow traditions to remain socially meaningful. Accordingly, Nunggak Semi does not offer a universal formula for preservation, but provides a conceptual orientation for designing revitalization strategies that balance inherited cultural values with innovation, enabling living traditions to adapt to contemporary social conditions without losing their historical and cultural foundations.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that Nunggak Semi constitutes the central principle of Gotikswan's cultural thought, framing cultural preservation as an adaptive process that maintains continuity with inherited values while allowing tradition to develop in response to changing social contexts. Its implementation is reflected in two complementary strategies: creative renewal in Indonesian batik through the reinterpretation of traditional elements, and intergenerational regeneration in keris preservation through the transmission of knowledge, skills, values, and cultural networks. These findings show that cultural preservation extends beyond maintaining cultural objects to sustaining the practices, meanings, and communities that enable traditions to remain alive. The study contributes to existing scholarship by repositioning Gotikswan not merely as a batik artist and cultural figure, but as a cultural thinker whose concept of Nunggak Semi offers a framework for understanding cultural revitalization and living heritage. However, because the study relies primarily on a literature review, future research should incorporate archival investigation, fieldwork, interviews, and comparative studies with other Indonesian cultural figures to further examine the empirical relevance and applicability of Nunggak Semi in contemporary heritage preservation.

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