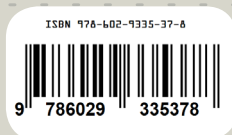


2nd International Conference
on Visual Culture and Urban Life

Proceeding



17 January 2019

PROCEEDING

XVICTURE
2nd International Conference
on Visual Culture and Urban Life
VISUAL TURN

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Publisher

Fakultas Seni Rupa
Institut Kesenian Jakarta
Jl. Cikini Raya No. 73
Jakarta 10330



Printed 2019

ISBN 978-602-9335-37-8

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Decorative Ornaments of Rumah Gadang As The Basic Idea for Designing Ethnic Typography

Niken Savitri Anggraeni | Joachim David Magetanapuang

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Abstract

Indonesia has cultural diversity spread throughout the archipelago in the form of physical and non-physical cultures. Physical culture can be seen and maintained in its shape, composition and supporting decorative elements. Whereas non-physical culture is present through social norms and values. Traditional house represents as one physical culture sample and also the diversity of tribes in Indonesia, each has its own traditional house character along with its decorative elements, such as decoration.

Decorative elements in Indonesia has various forms and meanings. The motifs that generally found are in the form of plants, animals and some geometric ornaments that have certain meanings. In the *Rumah Gadang* decoration, there are many different variations of decorative forms generally in the form of tendrils as a decorative element of the traditional house. The various forms of the *Rumah Gadang* decoration are then used as design ideas to create ethnic.

Ethnic typography design which based on decorative elements transformation from the *Rumah Gadang* house can be used as the source for designers, typographers, and users in terms of introducing the distinctive character of West Sumatra and also can be used on customized design media.

Keywords:

Typeface, Decoration, Gadang House, Ethnic, Traditional.

Preface

Humans activities to gather information have actually been done since prehistoric time which is represented by creating symbols in the form of pictograms (images that explain an object) that can be simply understood by the observer. The pictogram can be found from cave paintings in the various form of animals, people, places, and objects dated back to 25,000 BC. The first writing system was believed by experts starting in 3200 BC in Mesopotamia created by the Sumerians as Cuneiform writing system. Then around 3000 BC, the Egyptians developed the Hieroglyphs. At the first Hieroglyph created in the form of a pictogram only and later the forms developed into a complex combination of pictograms, ideograms (symbols that explain abstract thoughts or ideas) and also phonograms (symbols that represent certain sounds).

Writing is known as a medium for communication. Human needs for communication media can be conveyed through a series of letters that form a word or sentence. The creation of letters similar to Modern letters themselves began in ancient Greece around 800 BC which adopted the Phoenician alphabet from the Mediterranean by making consonants and vowels. The need for communication media is not enough by creating consonants and vowels only but also created based on aesthetic terms. Humans are basically never satisfied and always create different types of innovations not only for personal satisfaction but also for economic values. In modern times, where letters can be traded for certain purposes always encouraging artists, typographers, and designers to create new variants in typography. The ideas are taken from what they see every day can be ideas from nature, humans, animals or ethnic elements. This activity is increasingly intense because there is a new form of trade on social media based on the need for new typeface variants.

Indonesia has a variety of typeface originating from tribes along the Archipelago. For example, in Java, it is known as the Hanacaraka letter but unfortunately, some part of these typefaces are becoming extinct because they are not well preserved. This then prompted typographers and designers to start creating new typeface variants which inspired from Indonesian ethnic elements.

Along with the development of times, the human needs for typography are increasingly diverse not only as a media conveying information as in print or electronic media but the meaning has shifted to represent certain expressions of a message in which typography can express atmosphere, describe situations through certain font characters. The more font variants created the more flexibility the user gets in applying the expression of the message he wants to convey.

This condition encourages typographers and designers creating various types of fonts which are then creating a new form of business which is not only bought and sold conventionally but has been traded online on social media. Many sites and applications provide font creation and sale services where buyers can then create fonts, enter competitions or choose and download typeface they like or need.

This form of businesses eventually developing very fast because providers of a specific application can get typefaces from creators everywhere at a fairly cheap price. For designers and creators of the typeface itself, this is certainly very beneficial because it can be done freelance and anywhere without large capital and get the benefits if their design is in great demand.

The idea of creating a typeface can come from anywhere, including the ethnic elements of an area. Indonesia has a rich variety of cultures from various ethnic groups living along the archipelago. Many ethnic elements can be taken as a basic idea for typeface design, one of which is ethnic decorative elements.

Decorative elements are components of art products that are intentionally added or made as decorations to have more value, both spiritually and materially. Often the decoration has symbolic value or contains certain meanings according to the purpose of the maker. In the end, the presence of a variety of decorations is not merely a filler of empty parts but is then associated with functions, including purely aesthetic functions, symbolic functions, and also constructive technical functions. The development of decorative elements into the basic idea of a typeface design is certainly very interesting.

Socio-Culture of the Minangkabau Community

West Sumatra Province is very synonymous with its rich culture, inhabited by Minangkabau tribes. The tourism potential of West Sumatra is supported by many natural resources such as mountain scenery and agricultural areas and supported by human resources such as the form of wood carving crafts, weaving crafts, traditional arts and others in part. The original Minangkabau area, formerly known as Luhak Nan Tigo, namely Luhak Tanah Datar, Luhak Agam, and Luhak 50 Koto are all within the West Sumatra Province.

In a brief history, Minangkabau is one of the villages in the Sungayang, Tanah Datar, West Sumatra District. The village was originally a field but due to the growing issue that Pagaruyung's Kingdom would be attacked by the Majapahit Kingdom from Java, so both kingdoms settled this issue for the peace treaty with buffalo fighting. The buffalo represents the battle of both kingdom and then after the Minang buffalo managed to win the fight, the word Manang Kabau appeared, which later became the name of the Nagari or village.

The Minangkabau people, the majority of the population make agricultural business as a basic livelihood but there is another side of livelihoods, which is namely carving. For some Minangkabau people, making a livelihood as a carving craftsman is the second source of income and the ability of the community as smart carvers affect the rural economy of the region.

The work of carving out a traditional house is not carried out continuously, but only if there is work. The status of a carving craftsman in the Minangkabau community is not too prominent, meaning that as a member of the community his position is the same as that of others in the communities. Thus a carving craftsman cannot be used as a basic livelihood.

In the ability to think symbolically, it can abstract its experience in a system that is full of meaning, so that one can pass on and communicate their experiences and thoughts to others.

Rumah Gadang for Minangkabau people

Rumah Gadang or Rumah Godang is known as Minangkabau traditional house of the West Sumatra province, whereas the people of West Sumatra, this traditional house is better known as Rumah Bagonjong. According to its original history, not all areas in West Sumatra can be built this traditional house. Bagonjong houses are only established in certain areas with Nagari status. For this reason, the existence of a Rumah Bagonjong or Rumah Gadang outside Minangkabau occurs because of the weakening of customary rules.

In general, Rumah Gadang has a very distinctive shape and uniqueness that lies in its architecture, one of which is the building pattern of the Rumah Gadang which is influenced by nature and customs values. The natural environment plays a dominant role in such a way to the shape and arrangement of the Rumah Gadang shape. The building pattern of the Rumah Gadang is not the same as the building pattern with other traditional houses or ordinary houses specifically the roof of the Rumah Gadang.

In terms of its distinctive shape, the Rumah Gadang is very different from other traditional houses, which distinguishes it from the shape of the structure of a house which is curved or formed like a ship. The formation of a pattern like a ship certainly has its own reasons for West Sumatra people. Based on a story that has been developed for generations in West Sumatra, the Rumah Gadang structure was taken from or imitated a sassy or ship shape and other uniqueness seen from a tapered roof and can be called or known as Bagonjong, because the roof is getting tighter and tighter. The form found in Minangkabau traditional houses has been commonly known everywhere which is symbolizes unique characteristic of West Sumatra. Luhak Nan Tigo is an area of origin of the Minangkabau people and also the center of Minangkabau culture. During the Dutch administration, the Luhak region was a territorial area of government called Afdeling headed by a resident; Minangkabau people still call it the luhak head of his government by the community called Tuan Luhak (Navis, 1984: 48). The Luhak Nan Tigo area covers six second-level regions, three districts and three municipalities, namely Agam district, Tanah Datar regency and 50 Koto municipal districts. Therefore the Minangkabau Traditional House has its own 3 Rumah Gadang form which is found in Luhak 50 Koto, Agam and Tanah Datar, each with a specific different color that represents the area in Red, Yellow and Black bases. The colors for the Tanah Datar Rumah Gadang are yellow, for the Agam Rumah Gadang is red and the 50 Koto Rumah Gadang is black. While the Rumah Gadang Istana Basa Pagaruyung is a traditional house of Luhak Tanah Datar, which represents the entire Luhak carving differences in Minangkabau.

The smoothness of the roof of the Rumah Gadang is related to the tambo story which states the victory of West Sumatra people in fighting buffaloes with the king of Java and to preserve the victory or event of the buffalo fight, the West Sumatran people make their house like a buffalo horn, but not only on the smoothness of the roof, in terms of carvings that are located in the body of the Rumah Gadang also has their respective meanings. The Rumah Gadang is not only used as a family residence but is also an institution in the big Minangkabau family.

As the times progress, it is increasingly difficult to find the Rumah Gadang due to the high cost required to build the Rumah Gadang compared to ordinary brick houses. Minangkabau carvings automatically began to be used no longer even forgotten their beauty. Basically, Rumah Gadang has a variety of names and in the naming, it is given according to the shape, size, and style of solubility and luhak style (less or less). According to its form it is also called “Rumah Bagonjong” or a jug house. In the tradition, the Rumah Gadang is family owned, but it can be said that it does not belong to individuals but a high wealth of pusako besides rice fields, fields, forests, and land that may not be traded or pawned.

The Minang people now generally modify their brick houses in addition to making horn roofs or can be called Bagonjong in their homes to keep showing the Gadang House or can be called the Modern Gadang House. Today’s Minangkabau people prefer to only use Bagonjong, while for the body parts they use brick.

Every decoration at Rumah Gadang can be marked as a class sign for the homeowner and has a good meaning in life. Because Minang people show a way of thinking inspired by nature.



Picture 1 Rumah Gadang at Minang Village Padang Panjang (Source: Author Documentation)

The shape of the Minangkabau Rumah Gadang is formed in a square that is not symmetrical but expands upwards. The outside pillars are not straightening up but slightly tilted outward. The roof of the Rumah Gadang is curved like a buffalo horn, while the sloping part of the house is like a ship. The length of the building usually varies from 3,5,7 to 9 spaces, even though there were 11,17 and 20 rooms, this was not common. The width is no more than 4 pounds. Rumah Gadang with three rooms are found in rural areas called “balah bubuang” or referred to as split bubung.



Picture 2. Rumah Gadang Istana Basa Pagaruyung (Source : www.situsbudaya.id)

In the past, shaking or canopy on the type of gossip on Minangkabau traditional houses was one of the hallmarks of the Minangkabau building, its founders had to be parallel to the lifting of the Andiko head so that the gonjong showed greatness in tradition and should not be used carelessly in buildings. But now the use of gonjong or artificial forms that resemble gonjongs of Minangkabau traditional houses is no longer showing greatness, but only for pleasure (Zainuddin, 2014: 54). Minangkabau traditional houses are used for living quarters and the implementation of traditional ceremonies such as the appointment of princes, marriages, deaths, and others. The Minangkabau traditional house is the work of the ancestors of the past, built according to the tradition which has declined. The physical form of the building, function or use and construction in the management of the use of building materials which is a self-portrait of one of the primary needs of the home.



Picture 3. Rumah Gadang Matur. (Source : Author Documentation)

Motifs and Philosophy of Rumah Gadang Decorative Elements

One of the most important things in Minangkabau traditional house carvings is the name of the decorative motif. The name of the decorative motif can be seen from the relation between the motive and the life of the community. Each motif symbolizes a phenomenon of life in the community that becomes a guideline in the implementation of the life of the Minangkabau community. The depiction of the life of natural phenomena can be seen from the names of decorative motifs derived from plants and animal names. While the depiction of the system of values of human life in society can be seen from the name of the carving that comes from traditional words.

The traditional Minangkabau ornament in West Sumatra is expressed in 120 kinds. But this is only in expressions, while those found in reality are only 60 kinds. This was motivated by a custom of the ancient Minangkabau people in expressing a very large number. The previous

person mentioned that the amount of goat food is 120 as well, while the traditional gulai (vegetable) herb in an area in Minangkabau says there are 120 shots, then the number 120 is not absolute.

Ornaments in Minangkabau are dominated by plant forms rather than animals or people. The name of the motif given is in accordance with the name of the animal but from its shape does not describe the shape of the animal, for example, the motives of Tatandu Bararak, Labah Manyirok, Itiak Pulang Patang and some of them will not at all see animal-shaped carvings. A distinctive feature of the Rumah Gadang decorative motif is its abstract nature. The state of nature, natural symptoms and part of it that want to describe the depth of the carving and depicted in the form of flowers, leaves, stalks, and roots (Yunizar, ahli ukir dan teknisi Wisata Istano Basa Pagaruyung).

The uniqueness of this Minangkabau ornament is its contradictory form of motif and naming. For example, the ornamental “Running Deer”, does not mean describing a deer that is running but more accentuate the floral form as a symbol of the embodiment of deer. The dominance of floral forms is thought to be a manifestation of Islamic influence in the 16th century. The strong influence of Islam, especially on the north coast of Java, Sumatra, and Aceh, is supported by the increasingly crowded trade routes in the archipelago, the ornamental elements of plants are increasingly enriched and rapidly developing, while the human and animal motives are getting less attention and even abandoned. Descriptions of living things that are avoided because of religious teachings are finally disguised as a figure whose symptoms have existed in the past, for example by means of very distillation so that the symptoms are more of a form of abstraction.

In the Minangkabau area, the ornamentation of highly developed natural-oriented engraving is very decorative. Nature is an example or example to be excavated and packaged into messages that are deposited in carved ornaments, according to the Minangkabau proverb “alam takambang jadi guru, cancan taserak jadi ukia” (the vast realm can be exemplified and every touch carved into carved ornaments). A blend of geometric motifs with straight-line elements angled and twisted curls of plant tendrils into a harmonious braid pattern, reminiscent of the Arabesque pattern.

Specific color template on the ornament in the Rumah Gadang must have 3 colors which are the same as the symbol of the “Merawa” flag consisting of red, yellow and black. In Tanah Datar the majority are yellow, Agam is red and 50 Koto are black. In tradition, the use of yellow is a property in Minangkabau.

The following is an explanation of some decorative items according to the book of Traditional West Sumatra Architecture contained in Minangkabau traditional house carvings:

Flora

In general, flora motifs are depicted realistically, namely imitating natural forms as seen. This is useful as a reminder for humans to see natural conditions as a guide for facing future events. The natural forms he saw were reproduced back into the form of carvings.

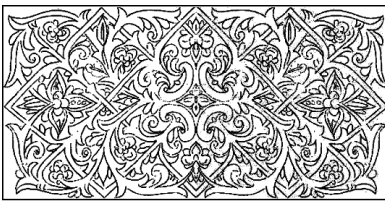
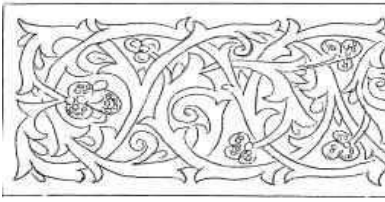

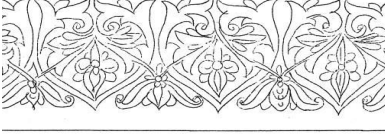
Fauna






The shape described is the actual form of the state and type of animal itself and is added to the natural conditions that affect the characteristics of the animal or the state of nature where the animal is located.

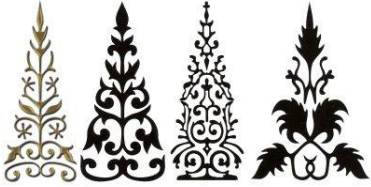



Nature

Apart from the names of fauna and flora, there are still more decorative motifs that are taken from the names of nature or objects that are often used in everyday life or that can liken the nature of one's disposition to be imitated or not used.

In general, the layout of the Minangkabau traditional house motifs is different from one house to another. The following are some examples of the location of the motif carving layout at the Rumah Gadang at the Basa Pagaruyung Palace according to the book from the Istano Basa Pagaruyung carving expert, among others:

NO	MOTIF NAME	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	PICTURE
	House terrace			
1	Saluak Laka	Pereng rumah		
2	Labah Mangirok	Papan Galuang		
3	Kalalawa Bagayuik	Upper wall		
4	Salimpat	Papan Salangko		

5	Tatandu Manyosok Bungo	Papan Sabalik Anjuang		
6	Itiak Pulang Patang (Itik pulang sore)	Paso-paso rumah	Describes a relaxed life after trying and working everyday livelihood. Here we can see personality social systems as well as the values of life that apply in economic institutions, namely how the rules apply in an effort to carry out livelihoods.	
House wall				
7	Pisang Sasikek	Door head		
8	Aka Cino Sagagang/ Duo Gagang	Swing doors		
9	Sikambang Manih	Windows cushion or wall edge		
10	Kudo Menyipak	Windows cushion		
11	Ukir tirai	Pada lambai-lambai di atas garebek		
12	Kuciang Lalok Jo Saik Kalamai (Kucing tidur)	Windows mirror	Describing the condition of a lazy person like a sleeping cat, a cat when he is full he will lie down, but in the meantime, if there is delicious food taken too. This lazy nature is contrary to the Minangkabau traditional philosophy. In order for these qualities to be exhausted from the community, they were commemorated through the carving of Kuciang Lalok.	

Public places				
13	Pucuak Rabuang	Pada penutup ukiran		
14	Bungo mengarang Buah	Pada papan dinding		
15	Sijamba Makan	Pada dinding		
16	Bada Mudiak (iringan ikan teri ke hulu sungai)	Pada tepi ukiran / tempat	Carving on bada mudiak describes life as one word in community relations, there is no mutual conflict. If there is a conflict, it will be discussed together. Even though the number of bada is very large, the procession is not messy, everything faces upstream on a regular basis.	
17	Alang Babega	Pada tuturan atap		
18	Jalo Tataka / Taserak	Pada hamparan		
19	Jarek Takambang (Jerat terkembang)		This engraving symbolizes the dividing line between the legitimate and the innocent, between good and bad in society. In this case, the highest guideline lies in the teachings of religion, namely Islam. So the size of the bad according to the Minangkabau custom is not only according to our personal judgment but also must be judged well by others.	
20	Kaluak Paku Kacang Balimbiang (gulungan pucuk pakis muda)		Symbolizes that one's mother's responsibility towards a nephew in a parent's house, also as a father in the wife's house. In this case, the responsibility of both the nephew at home of the parents and the children in the wife's house is not independent.	

Thus it is reflected in the flexibility of using Minangkabau traditional house motifs in all circumstances and places.

Process and Design Concept

The design with the typeface concept based on ethnic typography was taken through the character of Minangkabau traditional house carving motifs. The characters contained in each of these carving motifs give their own meaning and philosophies in detail so that the meaning given can be understood by the target audience. The structures of designing this typeface is in the form of things that start from making letters transformation, letter arrangement, letter measurement and application to other media.

In these typeface design concept, the writer has more focus based on ethnic decorative elements, which was taken from the forms of Minangkabau traditional house carving motifs by taking a distinctive motif, namely Itiak Pulang Patang and the incorporation with other carving motif patterns that dominant with floral pattern. For this visual element, it will illustrate the theme by elevating elements from the Minangkabau characteristic, which are shaped in a carving. As for designing the typeface, it will be combined using attractive color combinations with its specific cultural colors so it represents the characteristics and aesthetics aspects for the target audience. The composition appearance of visual and text elements of the typeface design of this is 40% for visual or image and 60% for text or captions that explain some of these visual elements.

Creative Strategy

Positioning :

The making of this typeface was designed by combining several decorative motifs of Minangkabau traditional houses that have specific meaning and philosophy of the Minangkabau people. The characteristic of this typeface is the display type according to the characteristics of the decorative motifs of the Minangkabau traditional house.

Visual Strategy

The form of visual strategy in designing this typeface is:

Using several forms of dominant decorative motifs and then simplified again in order to create an appearance that still has the decorative side of the decorative motif

Integrate visual elements from decorative motifs into typeface so that they can still preserve the Minangkabau culture itself.

Providing colors of distinctive characteristics which are characteristic of the motifs of decorative motifs of Minangkabau traditional houses.

Keyword

Minangkabau

Is one of the cultures found in Indonesia. This typeface will later feature a traditional characteristic in Minangkabau and is combined with the characteristics of Minangkabau traditional house carvings

Traditional

With this typeface, it is hoped that it can provide traditional values that have become a part of life, especially for the Minang people, to be preserved

Carving

The complexity of the process of carving out decorative items on Minangkabau traditional houses requires patience and thoroughness, therefore making typeface is aimed at display type.

Motive

The motif is taken from several visual elements of the Minangkabau traditional house as the main reference that aims to show the typical motifs of Minangkabau traditional houses.

Key Visual

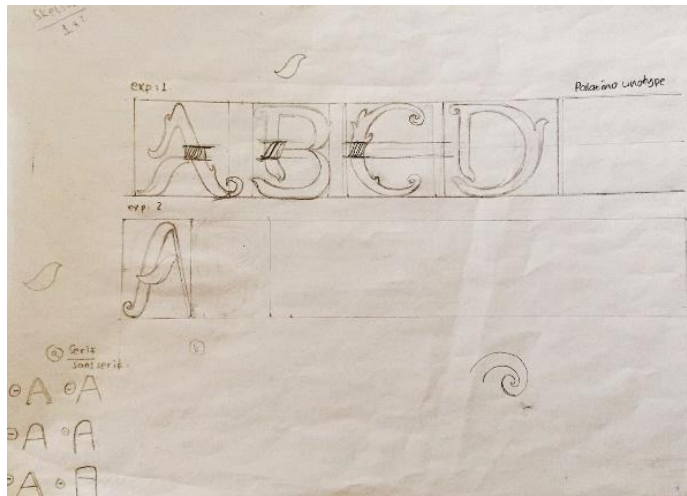
The key visual purpose of designing typeface is to make the shape of distinctive features of the Minangkabau traditional house become more attractive and functional according to the target audience point of view. Therefore this visual is to explain the knowledge and meaning contained in the motif of the traditional house's decorations.

Creative Design Process

1. Sketching Process

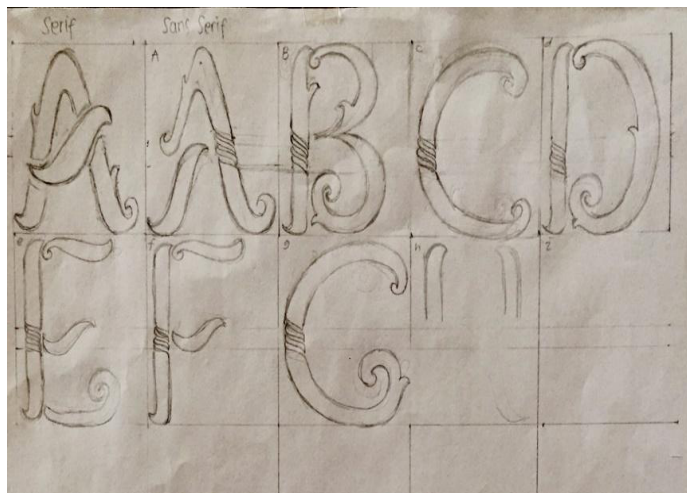
The preliminary process in designing this typeface is based on manual rough sketching. This aims to get a picture that can make a typeface merged from decorative motifs.

- Initial sketch forming the font character

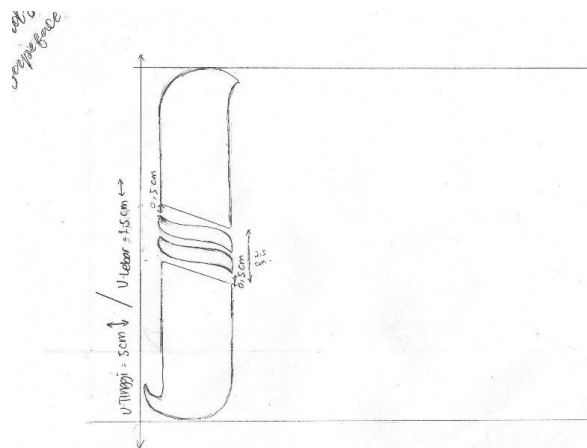


- Initial sketch combining decorative elements forming the font character using the serif typeface

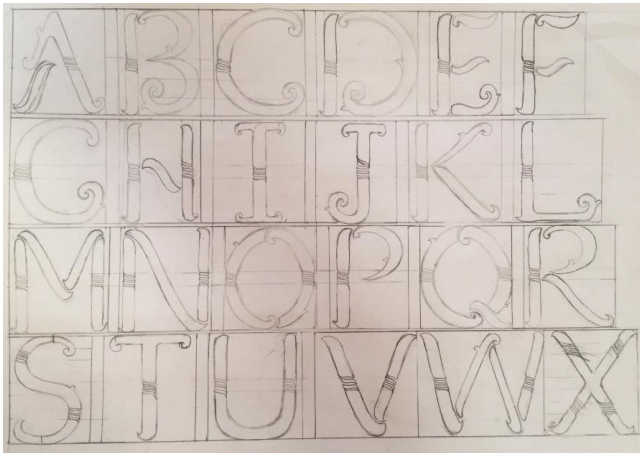
305



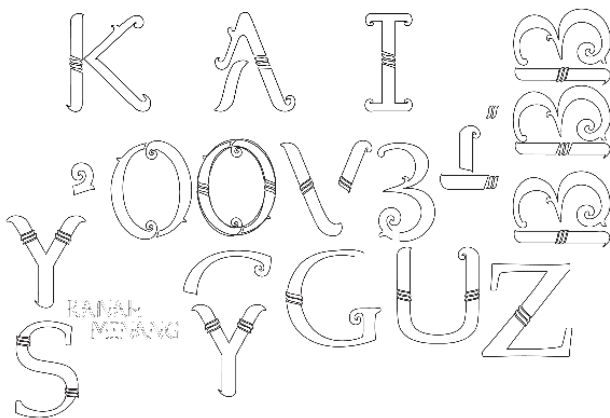
- Initial sketch of the slope formation of font characters



- Initial sketch forming the font specimens



- Digital sketch forming the font specimens



The characteristic form that will be used in the typeface design is taken from a well-known term which represents the carving motifs of Minangkabau traditional house motifs.

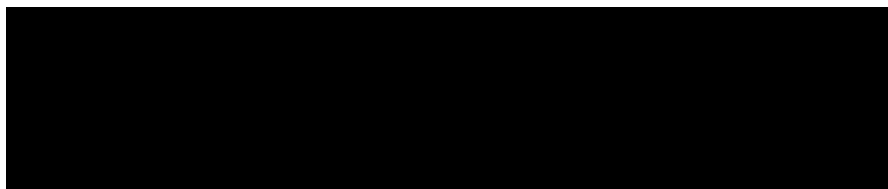


Figure 4 Patang Typeface . (Source : Author Design)

This type of letter specimen is taken from the elements of the “Itiak Pulang Patang” pattern by adding several elements of the floral pattern which represent all carved motif patterns. For naming this typeface is taken from the last name of the motif it is called “**Patang**” which means “Afternoon”. The initial term meaning of this motif is “Ducks Returning in the Afternoon”

means to describe a relaxed life after trying and working every day to fulfill their daily needs. This meaning is found in the daily lives of the Minangkabau people.

The following is an example of some pieces of engraving motif pattern taken for designing the typeface :

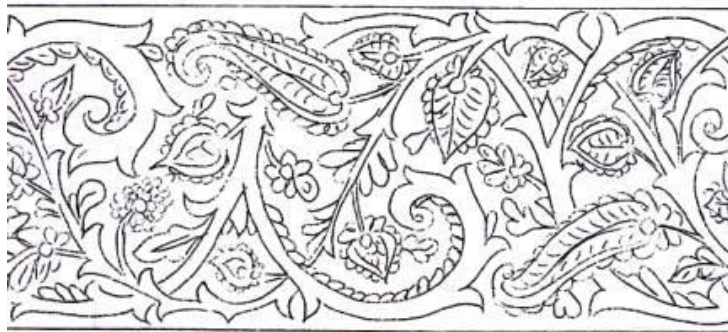


Figure 5. Carving Motif Element For Patang Typeface (Source : www.zulfikri.orgfree.com)



Figure 6. Carving Motif Element For Patang Typeface. (Source : www.zulfikri.orgfree.com)

In designing this typeface, the author places some accents on the typeface. The laying of accentuation is intended as a differentiator in an expression so as not to seem monotonous and boring. Another element is to describe the motives taken from “Itik Pulang Patang”



Figure 7. Patang Typeface Accentuation. (Source : Author Design)

In another explanation about the shape of the motif “Itiak Pulang Patang” presents a harmonious arrangement of shapes that is taken from the movement of the rhythm of the duck when marching home after searching for food. That meaning explains about:

- Alignment and harmony of life of the Minangkabau people with their nature.
- Governance in daily life among individuals in society
- Government system in order.
- The synergistic kinship relationship systems between mamak (mother) and niece.

- Perseverance in carrying out the principles of life, togetherness and cohesiveness in the life of the Minangkabau people.

2. **Typography**

The choice of typeface is adjusted to the character shape of the decorative motif. In the process of making this typeface it does not change the original form of typeface so that the messages and cultural values placed in this typeface can be conveyed clearly and understood by the target audience.

Palatino Linotype Light

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

.,:““!?”{}[]()&

Palatino Linotype Bold

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

.,:““!?”{}[]()&

3. **Color**

The selection of colors on this ethnic typeface the author will give colors based on the colors of the “Merawa” flag which is the color of the characteristics of Minangkabau citizens of West Sumatra. The color of the Merawa flag is red, yellow, black. Of the three colors, they are located in each region of 50 koto, Agam, and Tanah Datar.

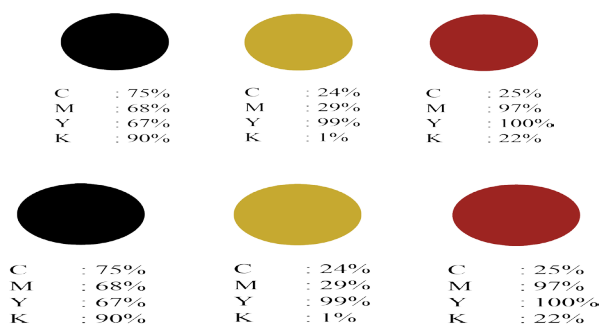


Figure 8. Patang Typeface Accentuation. (Source : Author Design)

The following is the meaning of the color of the bedera Merawa of the Minangkabau community

- Red: Dare and hold the test
- Yellow: Glory, brilliant, and shining
- Black: Eternity

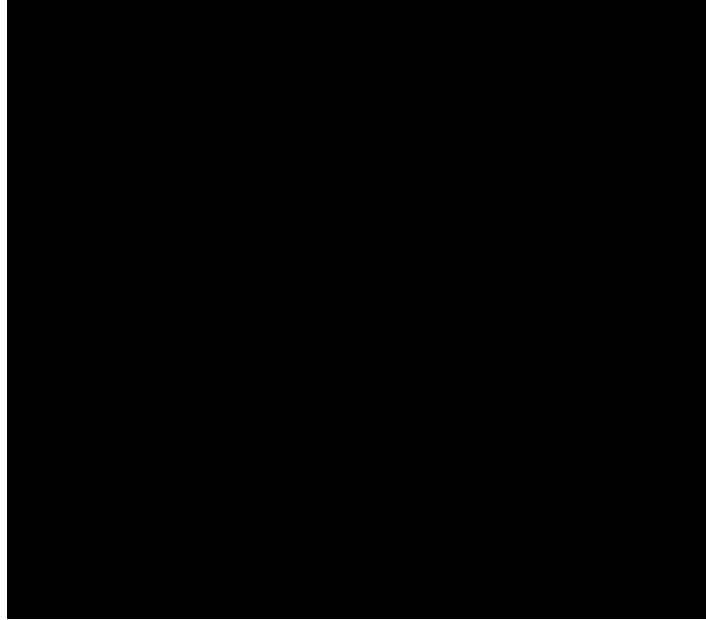


Figure 9. Patang Typeface Alphabets

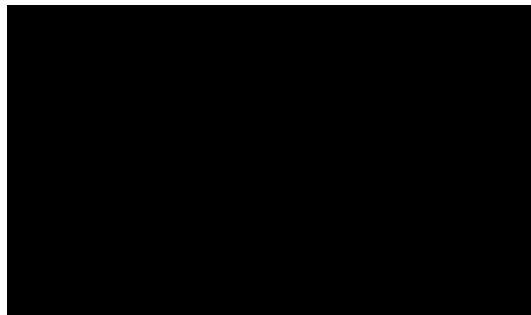


Figure 10. Patang Typeface Numbers