Sungging
Jurnal Seni Rupa, Kriya, Desain dan Pembelajarannya

Vol. 3, No. 1
pp. 90-101

https://journal.uny.ac.id/index.php/sungging/article/view/74846

https://doi.org/10.21831/sungging.v3i1.74846

Batik Smock at the Galbita Gallery home industry in Banaran village, Sukoharjo, Central Java

Nandini Ayu Safitri[1]*, Aida Roihana Zuhro[2]
[1,2] Pendidikan Kriya, Fakultas Bahasa, Seni dan Budaya, Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta,
Jl. Colombo No. 1, Kabupaten Sleman, 55281, Indonesia
**Corresponding Author: nandiniayu.2020@student.uny.ac.id*

ABSTRACT
This study aims to describe the process of making batik smocks produced by the Galbita Gallery home industry. This research is a descriptive qualitative research. This research is focused on the comparison of smock techniques in fabrics with batik combined with smock techniques. Data collection was obtained by observation, interview, and documentation techniques. The subject of this study is Home Industry Galbita Gallery, and the object of the research is the batik smock at Home Industry Galbita Gallery. The research instruments are the researcher himself accompanied by observation guidelines, interview guidelines, and documentation guidelines, as well as using voice recording aids, cameras, and notebooks. The technique of checking the validity of the data was obtained by triangulation. Data analysis is carried out by collecting data, reducing data, presenting data, and drawing conclusions. The results of this study show that batik smocks are made at Home Industry Galbita Gallery by combining two techniques, namely the smock technique and the batik stamp technique. The smock and batik combination smock technique produces fabrics with different uniqueness and aesthetic value. The smock technique offers an elegant three-dimensional texture, while the combination of smock and batik creates a fabric with more prosperous and artistic dimensions and colours. Both are valued in the world of textiles and fashion because of their uniqueness and high added value.
Keywords: *Batik smock, smock technique, manufacturing process*

ABSTRAK
Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan proses pembuatan batik smo*ck* produksi *Home Industry* Galbita *Gallery*. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kualitatif deskriptif. Penelitian ini difokuskan pada perbandingan teknik *smock* di kain dengan batik kombinasi teknik *smock.* Pengumpulan data diperoleh dengan teknik observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Subjek pada penelitian ini yaitu *Home Industry* Galbita *Gallery* dan objek penelitian yaitu batik *smock* di *Home Industry* Galbita *Gallery*. Instrumen penelitian adalah peneliti sendiri disertai dengan pedoman observasi, pedoman wawancara, dan pedoman dokumentasi, serta menggunakan alat bantu rekam suara, kamera, dan buku catatan. Teknik pemeriksaan keabsahan data diperoleh dengan triangulasi. Analisis data dilakukan dengan cara pengumpulan data, reduksi data, penyajian data, dan menarik kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukan bahwa: terdapat proses pembuatan batik smock di *Home Industry* Galbita *Gallery* dengan cara menggabungkan 2 teknik yaitu teknik *smock* dan teknik batik cap. Teknik *smock* dan batik kombinasi *smock* menghasilkan kain dengan keunikan dan nilai estetika berbeda. Teknik *smock* menawarkan tekstur tiga dimensi yang elegan, sementara kombinasi smock dan batik menciptakan kain dengan dimensi dan warna yang lebih kaya dan artistik. Keduanya dihargai dalam dunia tekstil dan *fashion* karena keunikan dan nilai tambahnya yang tinggi.
Kata Kunci: Batik *smock*, teknik *smock,* proses pembuatan

Article History

Sent:	*Accepted:*	*Published:*
June 2024	*June 2024*	*June 2024*

Citation:
Safitri, N. A. and Zuhro, A.R. (2024). Batik Smock at the Galbita Gallery home industry in Banaran village, Sukoharjo, Central Java. *Sungging: Jurnal Seni Rupa, Kriya, Desain dan Pembelajarannya* 3(1), 90-101.

INTRODUCTION

Batik is a traditional craft that has existed since the 17th century. It represents a skill and expertise passed down through generations by our ancestors. The origins of batik in Indonesia are closely linked to the development of the Majapahit, Solo, and Yogyakarta kingdoms. Indonesian batik is the most advanced, unique, and intricate form of batik compared to that of other countries (Supriono, 2016). Traditional Indonesian batik is distinguished not only by its patterns and motifs but also by the tools and materials used in its production.

The diversity of batik motifs in Indonesia is remarkable. In the modern era, these motifs have been updated and creatively adapted to contemporary trends. Batik is more than just fabric adorned with beautiful ornaments; it also holds profound symbolic meanings. Each shape and colour in batik often embodies the philosophical, historical, and cultural values of the region. According to Trixie (2020), the number of recorded batik motifs has reached 30 types. Over time, as market preferences evolve, batik-making techniques have also developed. Initially limited to traditional motifs, batik has expanded through various methods such as stamped batik, printed batik, screen-printed batik, and, subsequently, smock batik. This progression aligns with efforts to preserve batik's significance in a modern context and adapt to the ever-changing demands of the market.

Smock batik is a distinctive batik-making technique. It is a relatively new and unique method originating from Central Java, Indonesia. This technique gained popularity in the 1990s when smock batik started to be recognised, and batik artisans began creating distinctive and appealing smock patterns. Smock batik involves applying the smocking technique, which is traditionally associated with sewing, to batik production. The process entails stretching the fabric, gathering it horizontally, and then vertically, which creates specific patterns on the areas dyed with batik colours. This technique produces a smock effect on the fabric, adding a distinct texture and introducing a new dimension to the world of batik.

Smock batik has been well-received in the market due to its unique technique and its ability to produce more modern and experimental forms. This development is driven by the efforts of artisans and designers to innovate new methods and motifs in batik production. Smock batik not only serves as a symbol of the beauty of batik but also reflects the aesthetic richness embedded in each pattern and colour. The aesthetics of smock batik encompass the selection of colours, motifs, and compositions that harmoniously convey beauty and uniqueness. Therefore, the aesthetic appeal of smock batik is not limited to the visual beauty of its motifs but also involves the creative and innovative processes of combining traditional techniques to produce unique works of art. In Indonesia, batik is a highly esteemed art form with significant aesthetic value.

One city renowned for its batik industry is Solo, often referred to as the "City of Batik." Solo is a municipality that includes six regencies: Klaten, Boyolali, Sragen, Karanganyar, Sukoharjo, and Wonogiri. Among these, the regencies of Sragen, Sukoharjo, and Karanganyar serve as major batik production centres.

Galbita Gallery is one of the batik artisans based in Sukoharjo Regency. The owner of Galbita Gallery is a renowned batik artisan, Bambang Purwo Widodo. Bambang has produced various types of batik using different techniques, and smock batik is one of his creations. Research on smock batik remains limited and underexplored, resulting in a lack of knowledge about this specific batik type. Therefore, the author aims to observe some of the smock batik crafts at the Galbita Gallery. The study focuses on these works due to their uniqueness, determining them to be worthy of further exploration. The author seeks to delve deeper into and reveal more about the smock batik production process at Galbita Gallery's home industry.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach, with data collected through direct observation, interviews with artisans, and document analysis. The smock-making technique and the combination of smock and batik are analysed in detail, including the tools and materials used, the stages of the process, and the specific methods applied.

The qualitative research method is grounded in post-positivist or interpretive philosophy. It is used to examine the natural conditions of the subject, with the researcher serving as the key instrument. Data collection is carried out using triangulation techniques (a combination of observation, interviews, and documentation). The data obtained is primarily qualitative, the analysis is inductive/qualitative, and the results aim to understand meanings, capture uniqueness, construct phenomena, and develop hypotheses (Sugiyono, 2023: 09).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. Background of Galbita Gallery Home Industry

Galbita Gallery is a home industry specialising in batik production, located in Banaran Village, RT/04, Pondang, Grogol Subdistrict, Sukoharjo Regency, Central Java, Indonesia. Sukoharjo Regency comprises 12 subdistricts, 17 urban villages, and 150 rural villages. Known as "The House of Souvenirs," Sukoharjo is home to many local artisans producing goods for souvenirs. One of the region's iconic products is batik, with batik production centres spread across various subdistricts, including Banaran Village.

Banaran Village, located in the northernmost part of Grogol Subdistrict, borders Laweyan Subdistrict in Surakarta City. The village hosts numerous home-based batik industries and serves as a significant contributor to the batik workforce in Laweyan. The batik industry in Banaran has reached international markets, exporting products to countries like the United States and Europe. Various fabrics, including tie-dye and stamped batik, are produced in the village.

Based on an interview conducted on 2 March 2024 with Mr. Bambang Purwo Widodo, it was revealed that Galbita Gallery was established by him and his son, Mr. Galang Pacitra Yogyawan. Born on 17 October 1961, Mr. Bambang has been dedicated to the art of batik since his university days, initially learning the craft with his friend, Mr. Sujoyono. After graduating, he taught in Lampung for a year before joining PT Batik Keris, marking the start of his professional journey in batik.

In 1988, Mr. Bambang began working at PT Batik Keris. However, in 2005, he left the company to join Aneka Sandang Buana, where he worked until 2007. That same year, he and a colleague established their batik industry, named Batik Priya Tampan. After seven years, Mr. Bambang decided to leave the enterprise in 2013. In 2014, he co-founded Tentrem Rahayu Batik with two friends, focusing on exporting batik. After three years, he left the business and briefly worked at Ratna Maya Batik.

Following his extensive experience collaborating with others, Mr. Bambang decided to establish his batik industry with his eldest son, Mr. Galang Pacitra Yogyawan, in 2017. This new endeavour was named Galbita Gallery, inspired by the names of Mr. Bambang's three children: *Galang* (Gal), *Abi* (bi), and *Yuta* (ta).

Initially, Galbita Gallery operated a factory in Manang Village, Grogol Subdistrict, Sukoharjo Regency. However, in 2023, the factory was taken over by its owner, prompting the gallery to transition into a home-based industry. Currently, production takes place in the backyard of Mr. Bambang's home, which is managed collaboratively by him and his son. When additional labour is required, they collaborate with suppliers to complete tasks.

Since its inception, Galbita Gallery has been involved in exporting batik, particularly to the United States. Mr. Bambang's prior experience in international markets during his tenure at Batik Keris facilitated the gallery's entry into global markets. This success lasted for three years before challenges arose, including the COVID-19 pandemic, which disrupted exports and increased the cost of raw materials. These difficulties led to higher product prices, limiting consumer purchasing power. Despite these obstacles, Mr. Bambang remains steadfast in his commitment to batik production.

Galbita Gallery produces a variety of batik types, including smock batik, straight-fibre batik (*batik serat lurus*), and mendeley batik (*batik mendeley*). This diverse range of products aims to provide consumers with innovative alternatives to traditional batik. The gallery focuses on

modernising batik by integrating traditional craftsmanship with innovations, thus offering fresh and creative approaches to this timeless art form.

A. The Production Process

1. Smock Technique:

Gambar 1. Smock Technique

The smock technique is a sewing art that involves folding and gathering fabric to create a three-dimensional texture. This process requires precision and advanced manual skills. The tools and materials employed include fabric (cotton, linen, silk), dyes, sponges, buckets, and tubs. Below is a detailed description of the steps involved in the smock technique:

a. Selection of Fabric
   The first step involves selecting fabric with the appropriate texture and durability for smocking. The fabric must possess high quality to maintain the structure of the folds.
b. Washing the Fabric
   The fabric must be washed with water before commencing the smocking process. It is then hung on a drying rack to reduce excess moisture.
c. Gathering the Fabric
   The fabric is laid flat on a surface such as a table or floor, ensuring it is smoothed out and aligned to create straight lines. Once the fabric is appropriately arranged, the gathering process begins. The gathering is done manually, where one hand adjusts the fabric while the other forms the pleats. A repetitive up-and-down motion is applied to create uneven or non-linear pleats. Avoiding straight or uniform pleats is crucial, as they may result in linear effects during the dyeing process.

When gathering, care must be taken not to make the pleats too tight, as this may hinder the penetration of soda ash, leading to unsatisfactory colour effects. Additionally, the size of the pleats must be carefully regulated to prevent uneven colour distribution across the fabric. By adhering to these guidelines, the smocking process can yield high-quality results.

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Figure 2. Gathering Fabric

d. Dyeing the Fabric

The dyeing process for smock batik utilises Remazol dyes. Two primary dyeing techniques are employed: the three-colour technique and the four-colour technique. The smock batik dyeing process incorporates a "5/6 formula," which dictates the application of the first colour six times repeatedly, followed by five repetitions below it. This sequence is then repeated continuously throughout the fabric.

Once the dyeing process is complete, the fabric is dried under direct sunlight. Subsequently, soda ash is evenly sprinkled over the fabric. The purpose of soda ash is to enhance the effects of the dye on the fabric, creating the desired colour and texture.

Figure 3. Dyeing the Fabric

e. Final Stage

Once the fabric is completely dry, it is treated with water. Waterglass functions as a fixative to lock in the colour, preventing it from fading. The fabric is left to absorb the water for two hours before being washed and hung to dry.

Figure 4. Final Stage

2. Smock Technique Combined with Batik

Figure 5. Smock Batik

The creation of smock batik combines two distinct traditional techniques: batik and smocking. The dyeing process for smock batik involves gathering the fabric into pleats, followed by applying dye using a sponge soaked in colour. According to Bambang (2 March 2024), the process of creating smock batik depends on weather conditions—hotter weather accelerates the work, whereas cloudy weather slows it down. Below are the steps involved in creating smock batik:

a. Preparation of Dye Solutions

In this stage, the preparation of dye solutions is tailored to the length of the fabric and the desired colour intensity. Darker colours require a higher concentration of dye, while lighter colours need less. Plastic bags containing the dye are filled with water in specific proportions. The water is added to the bag until the dye fully dissolves, after which the dye solution is transferred into small buckets.

Galang (3 March 2024) explains that the standard dye measurements in plastic bags are set at 100 grams, except for export production, where the specific recipe requires weighing the dyes individually. For darker colours, more dye is used, while lighter shades require less.

Figure 6. Preparation of Dyeing Materials

b. Washing the Fabric:
Before smocking the fabric, it must first be washed with water and air-dried briefly until excess water is reduced. Washing the fabric helps remove the starch present in the fabric fibres and eliminate any adhering dirt. During the drying process, the fabric should not be wrung out; instead, the water should be allowed to drip off naturally. It is crucial to ensure that the fabric is not overly wet, as excessive moisture can cause the dye applied to the fabric to fade. However, the fabric must also not be excessively dry, as this would hinder the dyeing process. Therefore, the key to successful fabric dyeing lies in carefully managing the fabric's moisture level to achieve the desired results.

c. Smocking the Fabric:
After washing, the next step is the fabric smocking process. First, the fabric is laid out on a carpeted floor, spread evenly, and aligned in rows. Once the alignment is complete, the smocking process can begin. Smocking is carried out manually using both hands: the left hand is used to arrange the fabric, while the right-hand forms pleats in the fabric. This pleating process involves repeated up-and-down movements, ensuring the pleats are not uniform or straight, as this could result in line patterns during the dyeing process.

Figure 7. The Process of Smocking the Fabric

It is important to note that during the smocking process, the fabric should not be pleated too tightly, as this would reduce the space for soda ash to penetrate and hinder the creation of colour effects produced by the soda ash. Additionally, the size of the pleats must be carefully regulated to avoid making them too large, which could result in uneven colour distribution on the fabric. By paying close attention to these details, the smocking process can be carried out optimally.

d. Base Dyeing Process
After the smocking process is complete, the next step is base dyeing. The purpose of this base dyeing is to apply a foundational colour to the batik motif, which will later be covered by wax. The dyeing process for smocked batik utilises Remasol dyes. There are two primary techniques for dyeing smocked batik: the three-colour technique and the four-colour technique. This dyeing method follows the 5/6 formula, where the first layer of colour is applied six times in a parallel pattern, followed by five applications beneath it, repeating this sequence.
The dye application involves dabbing the fabric with a sponge soaked in dye. The sponge is first dipped into a bucket containing the dye, then gently dabbed onto the fabric twice without pressing too hard, ensuring that the dye applied is not excessive. The 5/6 formula

is also followed during this stage. Once the fabric has been coloured, it is dried under sunlight. The duration of drying depends on the intensity of the sunlight; the hotter the sun, the faster the fabric will dry.

Figure 8. Base Dyeing Process

After the fabric is dried, soda ash is evenly sprinkled over it. The purpose of soda ash is to create effects on the fabric's colour. Once the soda ash has been applied, the fabric is dried again until completely dry. Following this, water glass is applied to the fabric to lock in the colour and prevent it from fading. The water glass is left to set for two hours, after which the fabric is washed and dried.

e. Batik Stamping Process

In the production of stamped batik, unlike hand-drawn batik, there is no need to create patterns beforehand. The process can proceed directly by applying wax using a stamping tool. The stamping process begins by placing the fabric on a stamping table, which is lined with a padded surface that has the appropriate level of moisture to facilitate the stamping process. The moisture level of the stamping table is crucial to ensure the fabric does not stick to the padding when the wax is stamped onto it.

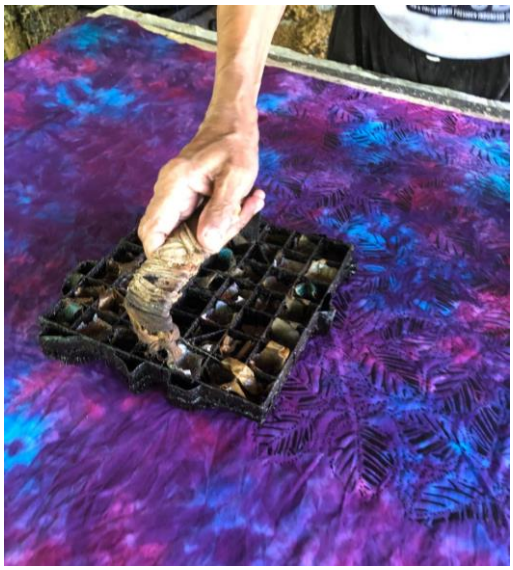

Figure 9. Batik Stamping Process

Before starting the stamping process, the tray and stamping tool are preheated using a stove. Heating the stamping tool ensures that the wax penetrates through to the back of the fabric.

Fabric stamping can commence once the tray and stamping tool are sufficiently heated and the wax has started to melt. Before stamping, the stamping tool is lightly splashed to ensure the wax does not clump when applied to the fabric. During the stamping process, the tool is pressed slightly onto the fabric to allow the wax to penetrate fully into the fibres. The stamping begins at the edges of the fabric, and it is essential to ensure that one stamped motif aligns precisely with the next to create a neat and cohesive design.

The stamped wax patterns can be distinguished by their texture: the front side will be more raised and smooth, while the reverse side will feel rough and uneven.

f. Colour Removal Process

After the batik stamping process is complete, the next step is to remove the colour from areas of the fabric not covered by wax. This process involves the use of chemicals to strip away unwanted colours, leaving the fabric white and ready to be dyed again with a different colour. The dye protected by the wax remains unaffected by the chemicals, as the wax serves to shield the areas intended to retain the original colour, preserving the desired pattern.

Figure 10. Colour Removal Process

In the process of colour removal, two types of materials can be used: liquid chlorine and powdered (crystal) chlorine. Other materials such as sulfurite, sodium hydrosulfite, or liquid soda ash can also be used, as they serve the same purpose. The colour removal process using powdered and liquid chlorine begins by soaking the wax-coated fabric in a tub filled with liquid chlorine. The fabric is soaked until its colour starts to fade, and the duration of soaking depends on the darkness of the colour. After soaking in liquid chlorine, the fabric is air-dried briefly. Next, it is submerged in a solution of powdered chlorine mixed with hot water. This second soaking should not last too long—just enough for the colour to start fading. Afterwards, the fabric is air-dried again, during which the colour will continue to fade. However, over-drying must be avoided as it can damage the fabric, reducing it to a pulp-like state. Once the colour has sufficiently faded, the fabric must be cleaned thoroughly by washing it at least three times to ensure it is spotless.

g. Smocking the Fabric

After the fabric's colour has been removed, the next step is the smocking process. This step is similar to the initial smocking process. The fabric is placed on a carpeted floor, spread out evenly, and aligned in rows. Once arranged, the smocking process can begin. The

smocking is done manually using both hands: the left hand arranges the fabric while the right hand creates pleats. This process involves repeated up-and-down movements. It is essential to avoid creating uniform or straight pleats, as this may result in unwanted line patterns during the dyeing process. In this second smocking stage, the pleats should be slightly looser than in the initial smocking process. It is crucial to note that the fabric should not be pleated too tightly, as this would reduce the space for soda ash to penetrate and prevent the desired colour effects from forming. Additionally, the size of the pleats must be carefully monitored to ensure they are not too large, as this could lead to uneven colour distribution on the fabric.

Figure 11. Fabric Smocking Process

h. Background Dyeing Process

After the fabric has been smocked, the next step is background dyeing. The purpose of this process is to apply colour to the fabric that has been stripped of its previous colour. The background dyeing follows the same principles as the base dyeing process, utilising either the three-colour or four-colour technique based on the 5/6 formula. This formula entails applying the first layer of colour six times in a parallel pattern, followed by five applications beneath it, repeating this sequence. According to Gilang (6 March 2024), *"For background dyeing, colours different from the base dye can be used. The background colour may be darker or lighter, depending on preference."* The dye is applied to the fabric using a sponge. The sponge is first dipped into a bucket containing the dye and then dabbed onto the fabric twice without applying excessive pressure to avoid overloading the fabric with dye. Once the fabric has been coloured, it is dried under sunlight.

Figure 12. Background Dyeing Process

After the fabric is dried, soda ash is sprinkled evenly across its surface. The application of soda ash during background dyeing is more generous compared to base dyeing. Soda ash is used to create specific effects on the fabric's colour. Once the soda ash has been applied, the fabric is dried again until completely dry. After the fabric has thoroughly dried, water is used. The purpose of water glass is to lock in the colour and prevent it from fading. The water glass is left to set for two hours in a closed space before the fabric is washed.

i. *Ngelorod*

Ngelorod is the final stage in the batik-making process. After all the preceding steps are complete, the wax is removed from the fabric through a process known as *melorod*. This involves boiling the fabric in hot water to release the wax. The *melorod* process begins by boiling water in a pot. Once the water reaches its boiling point, the fabric is submerged in the pot. While the fabric is in the water, it is stirred with a wooden stick to ensure that all the wax is removed. When no wax remains on the fabric, it is washed with soap and dried under sunlight.

Picture 13. Ngelorod.

There are significant differences between the outcomes of the smock technique and the combined smock and batik technique, primarily due to the distinct production processes involved. Fabrics produced using the smock technique have a unique and appealing three-dimensional texture. The folding patterns create an elegant and classic visual effect. However, the aesthetic variations are generally limited to the folds and stitching patterns. The final result of traditional smock fabric is neat and structured, with well-defined pleat patterns that heavily depend on the artisan's skill in creating and sewing the folds.

In contrast, the combination of smock and batik techniques produces fabrics with richer dimensions and colours. The vibrant batik motifs combined with the textured smock patterns result in a more artistic and dynamic finish. Fabrics created using the smock-batik combination technique exhibit high aesthetic value, featuring complex patterns and colours. The final product reflects a harmonious blend of batik motifs and smock textures, creating visually captivating textiles.

Additionally, both techniques offer unique value-added benefits. The smock technique enhances the fabric through its distinctive texture and folding patterns. Smock fabric is often used for children's clothing, traditional garments, and decorative accessories. It can be applied to various products, such as apparel, cushions, and wall decorations. This technique can also be combined with embroidery to enhance its aesthetic appeal further.

On the other hand, the combination of batik and smock techniques not only elevates the aesthetic value of the fabric but also adds cultural and artistic significance. These products are often valued more highly in the market due to their complexity and beauty. Fabrics using the smock-batik combination technique are suitable for high-fashion apparel, traditional garments for special occasions, and exclusive decorative accessories. Such products also hold great potential for export

to international markets that appreciate high-quality textiles. In conclusion, both the smock technique and the combined smock-batik technique offer distinct uniqueness and value, making them highly esteemed in the textile and fashion industries.

CONCLUSION

Berdasarkan Based on the discussion and research on Batik Smock at the Galbita Gallery Home Industry in Banaran Village, Sukoharjo, Solo, Central Java, the following conclusions can be drawn:

Galbita Gallery Home Industry is a home-based batik business located in Sukoharjo, Central Java. It was founded by Mr Bambang Purwowidodo and named after his three children. The gallery successfully exported batik to the United States for three years before the COVID-19 pandemic brought operations to a halt. A surge in raw material costs has posed challenges, yet Mr Bambang remains determined to continue his business.

The production of batik smock at Galbita Gallery combines two techniques: the smock technique and the stamped batik technique. Each technique contributes distinct qualities to the final fabric. The smock technique produces fabrics with an elegant three-dimensional texture. In contrast, the combination of smock and stamped batik techniques results in fabrics with richer dimensions and more vibrant artistic value.

Both techniques are highly regarded in the textile and fashion industries due to their unique characteristics and high aesthetic value. The smock technique provides intricate textures, while the combination technique blends textures with dynamic colours and patterns, offering significant creative and commercial appeal.

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