

Development of Motifs: Designing the *Barapan Kebo* Motif in *Kre Alang*

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ABSTRACT

The development of the *Kre Alang* motif (traditional Sumbawa Songket woven cloth) is currently limited to changing the shape and positioning of the motif, which is not very different from the existing motif. This makes the *Kre Alang* motif less developed and causes boredom among the artisans and consumers of this woven fabric. The objective of this research is to create *Kre Alang* woven motifs with ideas from one of the traditional games of the Sumbawa people, namely *Barapan Kebo* (buffalo race). This research employs a textile craft creation method, starting from the exploration stage, followed by design, and then embodiment. Research data was collected through observation, literature review, and interviews. The results of the research are two *Barapan Kebo* motif designs on *Kre Alang* woven cloth by incorporating several parts of the *Barapan Kebo* game which will be used as the main motif on *Kre Alang* woven cloth, including the buffalo head, *joki*, and *kareng*. In addition, Lasuji's motif is used as a supporting motif.

KEYWORDS

Weaving, Motif, *Kre Alang*, *Barapan Kebo*, Sumbawa

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INTRODUCTION

There are several types of woven fabrics are produced in Indonesia, including the songket weaving. The distinction between these woven fabrics is determined by the type of thread used and the manufacturing process. Weaving is a technique used to create cloth through the combination of threads in a simple process involving the crossing of warp and weft threads lengthwise and transversely. While songket is a cloth woven using gold or silver thread, the term itself is derived from the word sungkit (Hendra & Agustin, 2022).

The technique of songket weaving is derived from the word *sungkit* in Malay, which means "to pry or hook" in Indonesian. This is related to the principle of making use of additional thread, which is connected to the manufacturing process. This involves taking and attaching a pinch of woven cloth and then inserting gold and silver threads to create decorative patterns (Kartiwa, 1989). In other words, the songket weaving mostly refers to a technique that involves the insertion of silver, gold, and copper threads to create motifs on cloth. The additional thread may be inserted above or below the warp and weft threads, according to the pattern of the motif that is to be created. This is achieved by lifting or tipping several strands of thread and inserting the thread between the woven cavities of the two basic types of thread.

There are some areas in Indonesia where songket-woven cloth is produced, and these are known by different names. Songket weaving from Sumbawa, West Nusa Tenggara is typically designated as *Kre Alang*. *Kre Alang* is a traditional woven cloth of the Sumbawa people. The primary material

employed is analogous to that utilized in the production of songket, namely gold or silver thread for the creation of motifs, while the fundamental woven fabric is composed of cotton and cotton threads of varying hues, predominantly black, red, and blue. The woven products typically comprise woven sarongs, which are employed in traditional ceremonies and daily activities. The lack of innovation and diversification in woven products has resulted in the decline related to the continuity of craftsmen's production activities. This has led to a reliance on orders with motifs that have not experienced significant development (Deni, 2023).

The tools employed in this practice continue to utilise traditional looms, namely the *gedog* loom. This loom has been passed down from generation to generation (Abdurrozaq & Rahma Deni, 2022). The *gedog* loom is a traditional loom with a distinctive construction, whereby the ends are wrapped around the weaver's body, seated on the floor (Anas, 1995). The *gedog* loom is the most traditional loom which is smaller, compared with other looms. The *gedog* loom has several disadvantages. Apart from the lengthy production time for a single piece of cloth, the resulting fabric has a limited width of 65 centimeter, with unlimited length according to demand. Consequently, to create a Sumbawanese woven sarong requires two pieces. These woven fabrics are affixed through a sewing process conducted at the midpoint.

The practice of weaving has become an integral aspect of the cultural identity of the Sumbawa people, particularly for women in the region. In line with the local expression of the Sumbawa people, *siong tau swai, lamen no to nesek*, the ability to weave is considered a defining characteristic of womanhood (Kristian Kemas PJ & Kurnia SF, 2019). Historically, weaving was a fundamental aspect of Sumbawaan culture, with women of all ages engaged in this practice from an early age under the guidance of their mothers. The practice of weaving was undertaken during the period following the conclusion of the harvest. The weaving skill is commenced at an early age and applied by using looms, which have been passed down from one generation to the next generation. In other words, the transfer of knowledge regarding the construction and application of these looms was conducted through generations. This is one of the reasons why *gedog* looms are still maintained today. Given that Sumbawa women are already proficient and comfortable in using *gedog* looms, it will take longer for them to learn more modern looms. Furthermore, active weavers are generally older, namely over 50 years. It will be more difficult for them to learn something new. Furthermore, the financial outlay which requires purchasing a more contemporary loom outside Sumbawa will be significantly higher.

Aside from the weaving tools, another aspect that makes *Kre Alang* weaving different from the typical songket fabric lies in the motif creation process. *Kre Alang* weaving is the use of sticks to lift the warp threads. The number of sticks employed is directly proportional to the number of motifs produced. Furthermore, the woven fabric becomes increasingly intricate, with an exponential increase in motifs observed on *Kre Alang* woven fabric (Deni, 2024). Despite the use of traditional looms, the quality of *Kre Alang* woven fabric is maintained through the use of high-quality materials. In order to produce a *Kre Alang* woven fabric, the weft thread must be doubled. It is possible to use two or three strands of thread, or even up to six threads. Subsequently to create motifs on the *Kre Alang* woven fabric, a distinct type of thread is employed, namely gold or silver thread, which is used in varying sizes. This is the method by which the motifs on the *Kre Alang* woven fabric attain a greater thickness level than the base fabric.

Any discussion of *Kre Alang* weaving will inevitably involve an examination of the motifs that is a defining feature of this traditional craft. The motif is the product of the creator's concept, which is shaped by the local traditions. Each region exhibits distinctive characteristics. In general, the pattern or motif has a repetitive shape resulting from the technique employed (Helmi, 2022). An alternative perspective related to a motif refers to a series of smaller images or picture frames on an object (Novrita & Pratiwi, 2022). From the aforementioned opinions, it can be concluded that a motif is an arrangement of lines that is repeated. This motif is usually influenced by the environment and cultural background, as well as reflecting the character and personality of the people. This differentiates motifs from one region to another. It is hoped that the motif can serve as an educational tool for society and the younger generation.

The motifs found on a piece of songket woven cloth initially spanned the entire surface area of

the cloth, and the intricacy of the workmanship technique was such that it involved the combination of numerous motifs. Consequently, the motifs on a piece of cloth were traditionally characterised by a high level of intricacy and aesthetic value, necessitating a lengthy and intricate production process (Pebriyeni, 2019). However, the motifs on woven fabrics are currently less dense than those in the past, with several parts left blank. Nevertheless, the values and philosophical meanings inherent in these motifs are effectively conveyed.

The people of Sumbawa are devout followers of Islam, and thus the motifs created in the past on *Kre Alang* woven cloth are simplified or stylised into plant forms whose designs purely come from the creativity of the motif makers. This has resulted in the creation of *Kre Alang* woven cloth motifs which characterize Sumbawa as the region where the motifs originally come from. In Islamic doctrine, the creation of images of living creatures (humans and animals) in their entirety is prohibited (haram). However, if one examines the motif more closely, the shape of the creature can still be discerned, albeit with slight modifications. In some instances, one may observe the emergence of new forms. The plants depicted in the motifs, such as the shapes of tendrils and leaves, are simplified and stylised without losing the essential characteristics of the original forms and the meanings associated with them.

The evolution of motifs on *Kre Alang* woven fabric is not particularly noteworthy. It is largely confined to alterations in motif shape and position, which do not deviate significantly from existing motifs. There has been no substantial development in motif creation (Saptiawan et al., 2019). This indicates that the creation of motifs with entirely novel shapes remains a relatively uncommon occurrence in *Kre Alang* weaving. The majority of existing motifs have been subjected to modifications, including alterations in both position and size. It is therefore necessary to create new motifs that originate from the cultural traditions of the Sumbawa people. One of them is the traditional game *Barapan Kebo*. It preserves traditional Sumbawa weaving and the development of new motifs on *Kre Alang* woven cloth, and it also serves as a conduit for the introduction of *Barapan Kebo* to a broader audience. It is anticipated that the creation of new motifs will stimulate consumer interest and generate additional income for *Kre Alang* weavers, which will have a beneficial impact on the wider Sumbawa community in terms of economic, artistic, and cultural development.

Barapan Kebo (buffalo racing) represents a traditional pastime in Sumbawa, West Nusa Tenggara. The game is typically conducted in rice fields that are still wet or flooded with water prior to the planting of rice. *Barapan kebo* has its roots in the ancient tradition of Sumbawa farmers and breeders in cultivating agricultural land known as *maruma*. *Maruma* is the process of cultivating agricultural land (rice fields) by releasing and herding several buffaloes continuously in a rice field plot until the land is sufficiently trampled by the buffaloes' feet to be ready to be planted with rice (Abdurrozaq & Deni, 2023). Initially, *Barapan Kebo* was a community-based activity, held during the planting season since it is applied to plow rice fields and optimize the processing of the land. It helps modify the type of soil in Sumbawa, which is generally clay. Over time, the activity has developed into a competition between one buffalo and another to determine which animal could travel the greatest distance in the shortest time. This practice is now held almost all year round and is even used as a typical Sumbawa cultural event, which can attract foreign tourists and thus improve the economy of the Sumbawa people.

The key difference between *Barapan Kebo* in Sumbawa, the Madurese cattle race, or *Mekepong* cattle race in Bali is *sandros'* fighting of their spells and knowledge and *jokis'* racing ability. The winning moment is when "Sakak" *Sandro* Barrier's magical stick can be touched by the running power of the buffalo with the assistance of *Sandro* backup *jokis* and buffalo participants (Asidah et al., 2023). In the *Barapan Kebo* event in Sumbawa, *sandros* (shamans) compete by disturbing other buffalo during the racing competition so that they fall. The *joki* riding the buffalo also has a *sandro*, resulting in a battle of knowledge between the two *sandros*. Nowadays, the role of *Sandro* as an evil shaman in the *Barapan Kebo* event has become less prominent. However, he continues to serve as a figure who prays for the smooth running of the game, thereby ensuring his own safety from mystical disturbances.

The *Barapan Kebo* game is not merely a pastime or a contest of buffalo speed with prizes; rather, it encapsulates the aspirations and supplications of the Sumbawa people for a bountiful harvest.

Besides its spiritual significance, the game encompasses social meanings and values. These include the fostering of connections between individuals from all social strata, the promotion of hard work and discipline mindset for the treatment of buffaloes, the instilling of responsibility for each animal, and the encouragement of healthy competition for the attainment of a sporting victory. It can be seen that the mentioned values are of great significance and merit appreciation within the context of a *Kre Alang* weaving motif, which represents a traditional Sumbawa weaving style.

There are some researches, which have connections with the topic of this article. The first research journal is "Design and Development of a Web-Based Woven Cloth (*Kre Alang*) Sales Information System". The objective of this research is to enhance sales and extend the marketing scope for *Kre Alang* products via digital platforms (Karisma et al., 2020), with a particular focus on *Kre Alang*'s sales strategy. The research journal entitled "*Kre Alang* Motifs and Patterns in a Cultural Value Perspective" discusses the motifs and patterns of *Kre Alang* weaving as well as the cultural value perspective contained therein (Rosada & Purwati, 2018), In particular, the journal emphasises the cultural values inherent in the motifs and patterns. Subsequently, the research journal "*Peusijek* Tradition as Inspiration for Creating Acehnese Motif Designs on Batik Media" seeks to develop Acehnese motif designs on batik media inspired by the *peusijek* tradition (Dahlia et al., 2023), This endeavour emphasises the creation of batik motifs incorporating the *peusijek* theme, which represents a significant tradition of the Acehnese people.

However, there has been no investigation into the evolution of *Kre Alang* weaving in terms of the creation of new woven motifs, particularly those inspired by the *Barapan Kebo* concept. As a cultural tradition that is still maintained, the idea of *Barapan Kebo* presents an intriguing opportunity for interpretation in the form of a *Kre Alang* weaving motif design. Not only this research aim is to develop a novel *Kre Alang* woven motif, but it also serves to disseminate *Barapan Kebo* to a broad audience through the medium of woven cloth. It is anticipated that the creation of the *Barapan Kebo* motif will stimulate consumer interest and income for *Kre Alang* weavers, which will have a beneficial impact on the economy, arts, and culture of Sumbawa community.



Figure 1. *Barapan Kebo* in Sumbawa

METHOD

The research will employ the craft creation method, which comprises three stages: exploration, design, and realization (Gustami, 2004). Further details can be found in the following scheme.

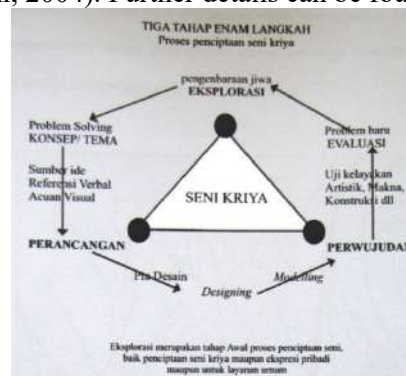


Figure 2. The Scheme of three stages and six steps of craft creation

1. The Exploration Stage

This stage is concerned with the identification of potential sources of ideas through the observation of the surrounding environment. The objective of this stage is to formulate a problem that will yield the desired results or conclusions. This stage encompasses exploratory activities aimed at identifying potential sources of ideas. These activities entail the following steps: identifying and formulating problems, searching for relevant information, extracting pertinent data, and collecting references. In addition, data processing and analysis are employed to derive crucial theoretical problem-solving concepts, which serve as the foundation for the design (Gustami, 2004).

2. The Design Stage

Once the exploration stage has been completed, the design stage can then be initiated. At this stage, the design is created based on the key findings of the analytical process, which are then translated into visual forms through the creation of alternative sketches. Subsequently, the most suitable sketches are selected as a design reference or technical drawing, which is instrumental in the actualisation of the design (Gustami, 2004).

3. The Realization Stage

This phase commences with the creation of a model based on a sketch or technical drawing that has been developed into a prototype and culminates in the attainment of the optimal level of perfection in the work. The model may be created in miniature or to actual scale. If the model is deemed to be of an acceptable standard, the actual work of art is then commenced (Gustami, 2004).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. The Exploration Stage

At this stage, data collection is conducted through observation, literature study, and interviews. Observation is a scientific activity employed in the collection of field facts, both directly and indirectly. The observations conducted as part of this research were carried out through direct observation in the field, specifically in the villages of Samri and Poto, which are home to the *Kre Alang* weaving centres in Sumbawa. Furthermore, observations were conducted to examine the implementation of *Barapan Kebo* in Moyo Hilir District, Sumbawa.

A literature study is a method of data collection that entails an in-depth examination of theories from a range of literature sources pertinent to the research topic. The literature sources employed may include books, magazines, journals, and other research conducted by other scholars. In this research project, a comprehensive literature review was conducted, encompassing analysis of books and research journals, regional archives pertaining to *Kre Alang* and *Barapan Kebo*, and documents obtained from the community and local government through related agencies. Concurrently, interviews are employed to procure information pertinent to the data under investigation, which is then referenced in the creation of the work. The interviews were conducted with individuals, including community leaders, weavers, members of the *Barapan Kebo* ensemble, historians, cultural figures, and local government officials. These interviews were conducted through related agencies. The following images are provided as references for this research.



Figure 3. The Batik Motif of Cattle Racing from Madura

2. The Design Stage

The design stage represents an activity in which a visual representation is created based on data that has been previously analysed. This data is transformed into a series of creative sketches, which are then synthesised into a unified whole. The resulting visualisation is deemed appropriate to the research theme. Subsequently, the selected sketches are combined into a unified technical drawing during the realisation process. This is typically done because the sketches are similar due to their common theme. The objective of this plan is to provide an overview of the intended creation process and to identify potential issues and errors at an early stage, thereby ensuring that the design meets the desired specifications.

The *Barapan Kebo* motif design will be applied to *Kre Alang* woven fabric. In contrast to the technique of batik, where motifs are created through the act of writing, the characteristics of the motifs on *Kre Alang* woven cloth are defined by the crossing of the warp and weft threads, resulting in a stiffer, less flexible, and less detailed appearance than that of batik cloth. Consequently, the motifs on woven fabric will be further simplified with geometric shapes, while retaining the essential characteristics of the motif in question.

The *Barapan Kebo* will be incorporated into the *Kre Alang* weaving motif in several distinct ways. The motifs were selected on the grounds of their close relationship to the *Barapan Kebo* game and their status as the primary components thereof, including the buffalo. The buffalo is a principal figure in the *Barapan Kebo* game. The selected racing buffalo is depicted with a robust physique, robust horns, and the same size and running speed. The selected buffalo motifs do not represent the entire animal, but rather a simplified version of its head and horns.

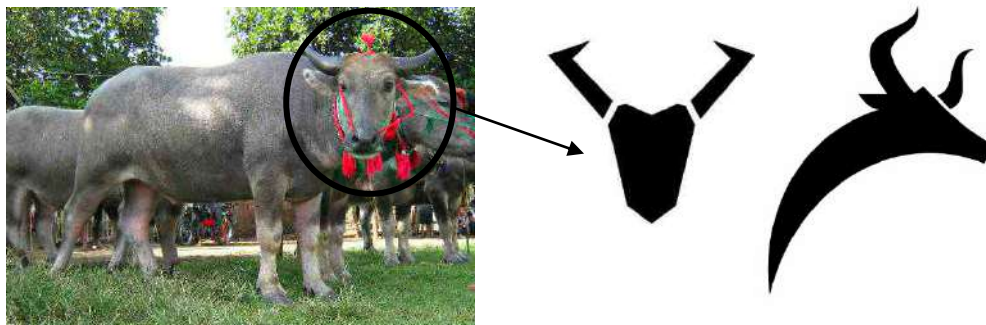


Figure 4. The Process of Designing a Sketch with the Buffalo as a Reference

The next subject is *Joki*, who is a man with the requisite skill or ability to ride a buffalo. This implies that the direction in which the buffaloes run is also under the control of the jockey. The *joki* is positioned on the *kareng* during the race. The *joki* who can touch the *sakak* (the finish marker pole) first, with the strength of the buffaloes and with the assistance of Sandro, is deemed to have demonstrated the greatest power in controlling the buffalo.



Figure 5. The Process of Sketch Design with the *Joki* as Reference

The *Kareng* is a stand or footrest for the *barapan joki*, which is assembled in the shape of a triangle or the letter "A" with a length of 2 metres. At the top end, it will converge with *Noga* in a position that is midway between the two buffaloes. To facilitate the jockey's balance, a wooden

handle, which is approximately 1.5 metres in length, is affixed to the top end of the Kareng. To enhance the aesthetic appeal of the Kareng, the wooden components are often painted or carved with motifs that are related to Sumbawa.

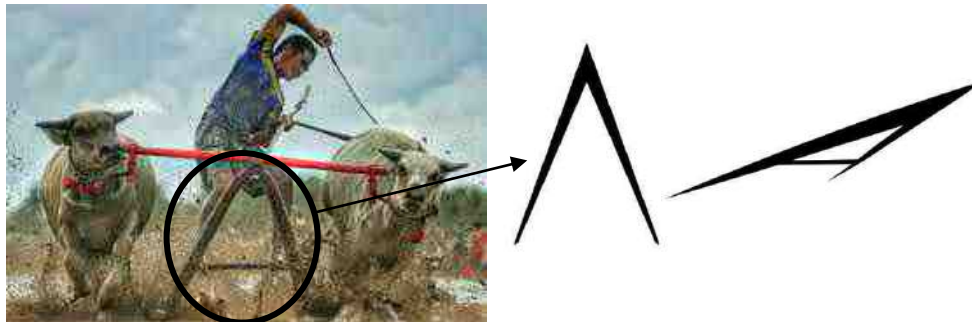


Figure 6. The Process of Sketch Design inspired by *Kareng*

In addition to the aforementioned primary motif, a secondary motif, designated as the *Lasuji* motif, can be observed. The *Lasuji* motif is a geometric motif that resembles a *lasuji* or ketupat shape. It is a ubiquitous feature of *Kre Alang* woven fabrics. In addition to its role as a supplementary motif, it frequently serves as a demarcation between motifs. This motif is imbued with a meaning related to the human experience.

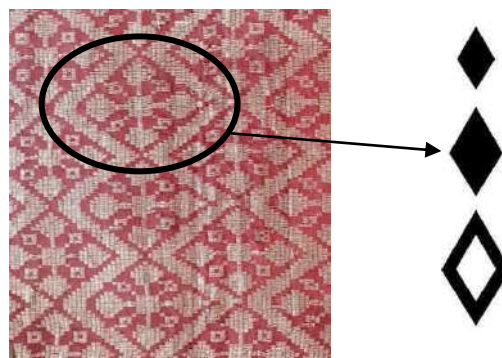


Figure 7. The Motif Design Process of *Lasuji* as a Supporting Motif

3. The Realization Stage

Subsequently, the selected and refined sketch is transformed into a two-dimensional design, specifically the design when attached to the fabric and the shirt. It is to be expected that the design will undergo several modifications from the original concept. However, this is regarded as an organic process of idea generation and evolution. The following section presents the results of the *Barapan Kebo* motif design, which represents a form of development of Sumbawa's *Kre Alang* weaving.

a. Design 1

The work is visualised with a design that incorporates a *Barapan Kebo* speed race. Each group comprises three *Barapan Kebo* motifs, with repetition within each group, resulting in a multitude of *Barapan Kebo* motifs. This indicates that the *Barapan Kebo* game is still practised by numerous Sumbawa communities. It is expected that this motif will serve as an effective promotional tool for this traditional game; therefore, *Barapan Kebo* can become a tourist destination worth visiting.

In addition to the *Barapan Kebo* motif, the *Lasuji* motif serves as a supplementary motif. The *Lasuji* motif is a geometric motif that bears resemblance to the shape of a diamond. The *Lasuji* motif is employed as a supplementary motif due to its prevalence in *Kre Alang* woven fabrics. Thus, it becomes an integral aspect of the *Kre Alang* woven motif. The thread employed in the construction of the primary motif is of a gold hue. The rationale behind the use of gold thread is unclear; however, its combination with maroon, the base colour of the woven fabric, seems appropriate. The colour maroon is classified as red and is associated with positive qualities, including enthusiasm, love, strength and courage. If we consider the significance of motifs, it can be argued that, despite *Barapan*

Kebo being a traditional game, the competitive spirit must be maintained in a fair and good manner to achieve a sporting victory.



Figure 8. Design 1 is a piece of cloth which is then applied to a men's shirt

b. Design 2

The work is represented by a buffalo with the *kareng* encircling a *joki*. A variety of interpretations may emerge regarding the significance of this motif. However, the motif is created to show that the direction in which the buffalo runs in *Barapan Kebo* is dependent on the *joki* since he is responsible for riding the buffalo. A *joki* is defined as a person who possesses the requisite skill or ability to ride a buffalo. The *joki* is positioned on a *kareng* during the race. This type of race is not easy to do since he must maintain balance to prevent falling into the mud. However, if it happens, the *joki* may have injuries, while the buffaloes are still running at a high speed. Hence, all the challenges make *Barapan Kebo* interesting and should be maintained to exist in Sumbawa.

Similar to design 1, design 2 features a *Lasuji* motif, albeit with a distinct shape. The *Lasuji* motif, in this context, is associated with the concept of life. A further investigation of *Barapan Kebo* reveals that it closely links with the daily lives of the Sumbawa people. Plowing rice fields with the help of buffaloes is a part of farming activities which is the primary source of income for the Sumbawa people. The thread used to create the primary motif is silver, as it is a neutral hue that aligns with the fundamental fabric colour, which is black. The colour black is typically associated with negative connotations, such as portraying feelings of sadness or despair. Nevertheless, black is associated with positive qualities and characteristics, including authority, elegance, honour, and strength, which create an elegant impression.



Figure 9. Design 2 is a piece of cloth which is then applied to a men's shirt

CONCLUSIONS

The process of designing the *Barapan Kebo* motif as a form of development for *Kre Alang* Sumbawa weaving uses a textile craft creation method that involves three stages: exploration, design,

and realization. These three stages result in two designs. First, design 1 visualizes the speed race of *Barapan Kebo* as the main motif, with the *Lasuji* motif as a supporting element. Design 1 *Barapan Kebo* symbolizes the spirit of competition in a game that must be conducted fairly to achieve a sportive victory. Second, design 2 visualizes the shape of a buffalo using a *Kareng* (a traditional accessory) circling a *Joki* as the main motif, with the *Lasuji* motif again as a supporting element, although different from the *Lasuji* motif in design 1. This second design represents the meaning associated with daily life, such as plowing fields. From both designs, the motifs are derived from several elements of the *Barapan Kebo* game, including the buffalo's head, the *Joki*, and the *Kareng*. It is hoped that the creation of the *Barapan Kebo* motif will increase consumer interest and income for *Kre Alang* weavers, ultimately contributing to the economic, artistic, and cultural strengthening of the Sumbawa community.

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