

# LOCAL IDENTITY INTERVENTION IN SIGNAGE DESIGN: A CASE OF SRI BADUGA MUSEUM

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## ABSTRACT

*The existence of signage helped visitors to find the desired direction in one area more quickly and easily. With good and systemized signage, visitors could explore the museum even if there was no museum guide. Besides, a less informative, signage of Sri Baduga Museum had not yet had identity which depicted image to the museum. The purpose of this study was to design a signage that was informative and systemized as well as to characterize the local identity. Data were collected through literature study to obtain the theories that support the study. Observations were conducted to some museums to understand the conditions occurred more closely. Direct and structured interviews with the museum manager and practitioners were done to reinforce the observations that have been made. Questionnaires were distributed to 100 respondents who had visited and were visiting Sri Baduga Museum to find out their opinions on signage at the museum. Matrix analysis was used to compare four visual objects from four different museums. Kujang (cleaver) as the identity of West Java is used in visual concept. Pictogram shape used came from the stylized shape of Kujang. The form of designed signage and wayfinding derived from stylized ornamentation found on the roof of this museum building. It was expected that the proposed design can produce signage and wayfinding with visual and good continuity to be more informative, interesting, and can give a good impression for visitors.*

**Keywords:** local identity, signage, design, museum

## INTRODUCTION

Trips to the museum is not only to aim for a vacation but also to gain knowledge as well as to preserve the cultural wealth of the nation. According to the Ministry of Education and Culture (*Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan RI*) (2015), the museum has a strategic role as the spearhead of communication and information center as well as the development of science and education for the public. Museum of Sri Baduga is one of the museums located in Bandung. Based on the theory in the book *Museum Basics 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition* (Sektiadi, 2014), Museum of Sri Baduga is classified into a historical museum by the types of collections, government regions museum by the management, and regional museum by the area. Based on visitors, Museum of Sri Baduga is classified into a public museum. While based on the type of exhibition, Sri Baduga Museum is classified into a conventional museum.

Museum of Sri Baduga has thousands of collections of cultural history that occurred in West Java. The number of visitors itself continues to increase every year. To support it, one of the strategies is to improve the comfort and satisfaction for the visitors by serving supporting facilities and services provided by museum. However, visitors who came to the museum sometimes do not get a guide or special attention from the management. They will look for information on their own way. Thus, signage has a very important role. Signage is necessary as a means of identifying location at airport, railway stations and location of mass activity and transit as well as public places (Ciochetto, 2003).

Signage and wayfinding can help to determine the direction to the destination when nobody can be asked (Calori, 2007). In addition to have a role as a wayfinding and placemaking, signage can communicate various kind of information such as warning, operational, and interpretation of information. Signage and wayfinding is a facility that is quite important in the museum. Its presence can address the issues that need to be considered at the museum as well as circulation, wayfinding, language difficulties, or the complexity of the architecture. Signage and wayfinding are also required to maintain an interest in a museum. Signage can create a real impression about the characteristics of an organization. Visitors can also recall the image of the museum, which can be told to others to be interested. However, the design of signage at Museum of Sri Baduga does not show the continuity and certain characteristics. Supposedly signage and wayfinding are designed carefully to conform to corporate brand and the interior atmosphere (Berger, 2005).

Currently, in some areas of Museum of Sri Baduga, there are no signage that makes visitors confused. Information content system has many functions in the signage and provide various types of information. In a holistic signage program, all types of information is displayed in a variety of signage. Here are some categories of signage required in a museum (Calori, 2007) i.e. identification signs, directional signs, warning signs, regulatory and prohibitory signs, operational signs and interpretive signage.

Signage and wayfinding can help create a comfortable atmosphere for visitors. If the signage at the museum were complete and efficient, visitors could enjoy the storyline flow of exhibition at the museum with more comfort and less confusion. The existence of signage help visitors in finding the desired direction and destination in one area more quickly and easily. Therefore, it takes the design of informative and effective signage. With the good signage, individual or group visitors can explore the museum itself and not be confused even if it is not accompanied by a guide. Signage and environmental graphics are designed not only fulfill the communication function to inform, direct, and identify something but also can improve the aesthetic and psychological quality of the environment (Calori, 2007).

Based on the phenomenon that has been described, the problem is identified as follows: (a) the lack of information in some areas in the museum makes visitors confused; (b) visitors who are not accompanied by guide would face difficulties to get some information or directions in Museum of Sri Baduga; (c) signage design of Museum of Sri Baduga has not yet had an identity which imaged the museum. Based on the problem identification above, the problem formulation is: "How to design signage of Museum of Sri Baduga that is systemized and informative so that it can provide the right information to the visitors?". This research aims to recommend signage of Museum of Sri Baduga that is systemized and informative to provide the right information to visitors as well as to characterize the local identity.

## **METHODS**

This research was conducted in January to May 2016. To complete the analysis, a variety of reference sources were collected from different books and journals to get the supported theories. Theories that were collected include museum theory, signage theory and visual design theory (typography, layout, color, and pictogram). Observations related signage were conducted in museums such as the types of signage, visibility, installation, etc. Observations made to several museums in Bandung and Jakarta to understand the conditions that occur more closely, including Museum of Sri Baduga, Museum of Geology, Museum of Asian-African Conference and Museum of Bank Indonesia.

Direct and structured interviews with the museum guide and signage practitioner were conducted to strengthen the results of the observations that had been made. The results of the interview can assist in finding aspects that must be considered in designing informative and effective museum signage. The questionnaires were distributed to the audience who had visited Sri Baduga Museum in March to April 2016. From 100 respondents, it can be known their opinions on signage at the Museum of Sri Baduga. Matrix analysis was used as a method of data analysis in the design of this study. Matrix analysis is a method used to compare by aligning the relevant visual objects. (Soewardikoen, 2013). The objects in this study is Museum of Geology, Museum of Asian-African Conference and Museum of Bank Indonesia.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Museum of Sri Baduga has some kinds of signage. However, there are still some deficiencies in its signage to deliver information and directions clearly to the visitors. The signage design located in the museum also does not have one system (Figure 1). The colors, fonts, and other design elements are still different. Some signage even less readability because of the less contrast among the letter and background color.



Figure 1 Signage and Wayfinding in Museum of Sri Baduga  
(Source: Rushar, 2016)



Figure 2 Directional Signage on the Floor  
(Source: Rushar, 2016)

Moreover, there is a wayfinding using the footprint stickers on the floor (Figure 2), but they are less effective because the visitors rarely looked down. However, those directions are only found on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor.

Whereas signage in Museum of Geology is good enough with a more organized design and has a distinctive color (Figure 3). The information provided is sufficient to help visitors while in the museum.



Figure 3 Signage in Museum of Geology  
(Source: Rushar, 2016)

Museum of Asian-African Conference has signage that is attached to certain parts of the museum to provide information to visitors. Some signage already has an interesting design, but there are still some signages that are improvized. Thus, signage design of this museum doesn't have a particular system (Figure 4).



Figure 4 Signage in Museum of Asian-African Conference  
(Source: Rushar, 2016)



Figure 4 Signage in Museum of Asian-African Conference (Continued)  
(Source: Rushar, 2016)

Based on observation, Museum of Bank Indonesia has a good signage and located in appropriate area to direct and inform visitors. Design of signage is interesting and have continuity (Figure 5).



Figure 5 Signage in Museum of Bank Indonesia  
(Source: Rushar, 2016)

Comparisons are made against certain types of signage that are found in the museum. Comparative objects in analysis matrix are Museum of Geology, Museum of Asian-African Conference (KAA), and Museum of Bank Indonesia (Table 1).

Table 1 Analysis Matrix





Identification Signs				
	Museum of Sri Baduga	Museum of Geology	Museum of Asian-African Conference	Museum of Bank Indonesia
				
<b>Typography</b>	Sans serif typeface, font size is readable.	Sans serif typeface, font size is readable.	Sans serif typeface, font size is readable.	Sans serif typeface, font size is readable.

Table 1 Analysis Matrix (Continued)









Identification Signs				
<b>Color</b>	Less contrast and has no relation with the identity of this museum.	Contrast and has color system	Contrast but has no color system	Contrast and has color system
<b>Layout</b>	Side-by-side position, proportion of symbol and typography is good so it is readable	Side-by-side position, proportion of symbol and typography is good so it is readable	Stacked position, symbol placed above typography. The proportion between elements is not good; the logo or symbol is too small compared to the size of the	Side-by-side position, proportion of symbol and typography is good so it is readable and organized.
<b>Pictogram</b>	Symbol "I" means <i>information</i> .	Arrow and symbol	No specific symbol.	Symbol "stairs" means exit door. Symbol is simple yet easily to understand.
<b>Material</b>	Acrylic	Acrylic	Acrylic and cutting sticker	Acrylic combined with stainless steel
Directional Signs				
	Museum of Sri Baduga	Museum of Geology	Museum of Asian-African Conference	Museum of Bank Indonesia
				
<b>Typography</b>	Serif typeface, fontsize is readable.	Sans serif typeface, font size is consistent and readable.	Sans serif typeface, font size is readable and distinguish between information in Bahasa and English make audiences can focus on one of them.	Sans serif typeface, font size is readable. Font size is distinguish between information in Bahasa and English
<b>Color</b>	Contrast, show the identity of this museum i.e. brown	Contrast, good color harmony, consistent, readable.	Contrast black and white, has an identity color i.e. red for the logo of this museum	Contrast, good color harmony, consistent, readable.
<b>Layout</b>	Side-by-side position, proportion is balance but the size of typography and arrow is not consistent. And narrow margin	Side-by-side position, proportion of symbol and typography is good so it is readable.	Side-by-side position, proportion of symbol and typography is good so it is readable but space between logo and message is too narrow	Side-by-side position, proportion of symbol and typography is good so it is readable.
<b>Pictogram</b>	Use arrow to show direction	Use arrow to show direction and icon to symbolize something	Use arrow to show direction. Icon is on toilet sign (male/female).	Use arrow to show direction
<b>Material</b>	Solid wood	Acrylic	Acrylic	Acrylic



Table 1 Analysis Matrix (Continued)

Prohibitory Signs				
	Museum of Sri Baduga	Museum of Geology	Museum of Asian-African Conference	Museum of Bank Indonesia
				
<b>Typography</b>	No type	Sans serif typeface, font size is consistent and readable	Sans serif typeface, font size is consistent and readable	Sans serif typeface, font size is consistent and readable
<b>Color</b>	Contrast but has no identity of this museum	Contrast, good color harmony, consistent, readable	Contrast, readable, no color identity	Use red as color coding for prohibition, contrast, and readable
<b>Layout</b>	Centre alignment, margin space is good enough	Stacked position, symbol placed above typography. Balance proportion	Side-by-side position, symbol placed above typography. Balance proportion	Stacked position, symbol placed above typography. Balance proportion
<b>Pictogram</b>	Icon make visitors confused, because the shape of a circle with a diagonal line that defines the prohibition is behind an object, it should be vice versa	Icons are clear and understandable.	Icons are clear and understandable.	Icons are easily recognizable and understandable.
<b>Material</b>	Acrylic.	Acrylic	Acrylic	Acrylic

(Source: Rushar &amp; Swasty, 2016)

Based on the observation to the museum, it can be concluded that the signage at the Museum of Sri Baduga is currently lacking both in terms of information and design. Some of them are not maintained, so faded and illegible. Based on the questionnaire, it can be seen according to most respondents (43%) that signage design at the Museum of Sri Baduga is still less attractive. There are 28% respondents who didn't even pay attention to the signage at that museum.

From the interview conducted to the museum guide, signage found in Museum of Sri Baduga are less effective. It is need to add signage at several locations within the museum to help visitors to avoid confusion, because not all visitors are accompanied by a guide. From interview with signage practitioners, it can be concluded that an effective signage is informative, easy to read, clear, simple typography and consider the graphic elements to add to the aesthetic value of the signage.

Based on the results of comparison to the three museums, it can be concluded that the use of typography in signage using sans serif typeface has a clear readability level. Afterwards, contrasting colors affects good legibility. Pictograms required on signage museum. The most common material used for signage is acrylic. However, that material can be combined with other materials i.e. stainless steel.

Based on data and analysis above, it can be seen that the existing signage at Museum of Sri Baduga is not currently designed using various aspects of visual communication design so it cannot convey effective information to visitors. That museum needs signage design that suits the character and visual identity of the museum and in accordance with the rules of design that has continuity. It's expected that with a new signage design, it would be more informative, interesting and can give a good impression for visitors.

According to Safanayong (2006), the purpose of communication can be divided into identification, information, promotion (persuasion, propaganda, etc.) and ambience (sense of environment). Based on this theory, the purpose of the communication concept design of this study is information. The designed signage is aimed to provide information such as directions, the rules in the museum, artifacts information which can facilitate visitors while in the museum area. Target audience is people 5-40 years old, men and women and middle social class who are interested in the historical, cultural care, and have a high curiosity. Verbal communication approach to designing signage is served in Bahasa as the primary language. However, English is also added so that the message can be understood by domestic and foreign visitors.

Creative strategies which are classic and familiar are designed to convey information effectively and attract visitors. The selection of this creative concept is based on mind mapping that has been made. Visual identity that will be used is the identity of West Java (in this case the culture) as well as a museum building itself. Culture is the commonly held and relatively stable beliefs, attitudes and values that exist within the organization (Williams *et al*, 1993 in Melewar & Akel, 2005). Identity of West Java that will be used is kujang. Kujang is traditional cleaver from West Java which is used as an icon of West Java. Part of the building that will be used are the ornaments on some parts of the walls in Museum of Sri Baduga. The selection of the base color for signage is also based on the dominant color of the building of this museum.

Signage design for Museum of Sri Baduga is divided into four types; identification signs, directional signs, regulatory/ prohibitory signs, and interpretive signs. The form of signage is taken from the elements contained in the museum building and the identity of West Java. The use of these elements aims to provide consistency on any signage and reveal the identity of that museum.

Based on the questionnaire, 92% respondents agreed that effective signage consists of pictogram and typography. Therefore, signage design for Museum of Sri Baduga use two elements (pictogram and typography). Based on the theory and analysis above, the selected font type is sans serif family. The font used is Candara (Figure 6), which is simple in shape and clear legibility.



Figure 6 Candara Typeface

Layout used is side-by-side position where a pictogram is placed horizontally with typography. The proportion and spacing will be adapted to other elements of signage to make it clearly readable and easy to understand. Melewar and Jenkins (Melewar and Akel, 2005) point out that color is an important element of the corporate visual identity. Moreover Russel (2001) in Melewar and Akel (2005) state that buildings can communicate an organization's philosophies and values so architecture



should be used as a medium of communication. Signage must also be sensitive to the design and color of the environment in which it's placed (Triedman, 2015). Therefore colors used is the identity color of the museum building (Figure 7). The color brown used is also selected to give the impression of a comfortable and familiar in accordance with the creative concept. The typography color has contrast reaches 70% of the background color. In order to make a strong statement, signage doesn't have to be bold, but consistent visual traits including color design and material (Triedman, 2015)



Figure 7 Color Concept  
(Source: Rushar, 2016)

Based on mind mapping, *kujang* (cleaver) as the identity of West Java is used in pictogram. The form is derived from the stylized shape of *kujang* (Figure 8). Whereas the forms for signage and wayfinding are derived from stylized ornament found on the roof of museum building (Figure 8).



Figure 8 Pictogram  
(Source: Rushar, 2016)

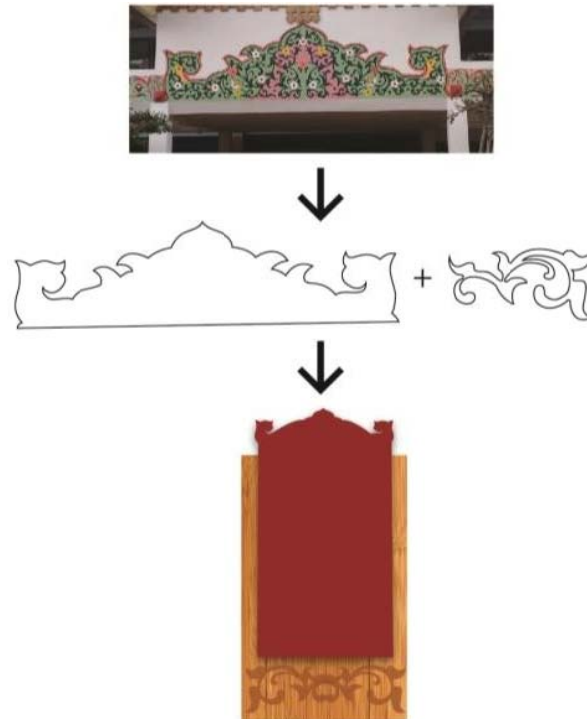


Figure 9 Form Concept  
(Source: Rushar, 2016)

In addition, arrow shape is taken from a reference of Ied Meeker & Associates and it has been approved by the Federal Highway Administration. The arrows used can be clearly read from a distance of 146.9 meter (Figure 9 and 10).

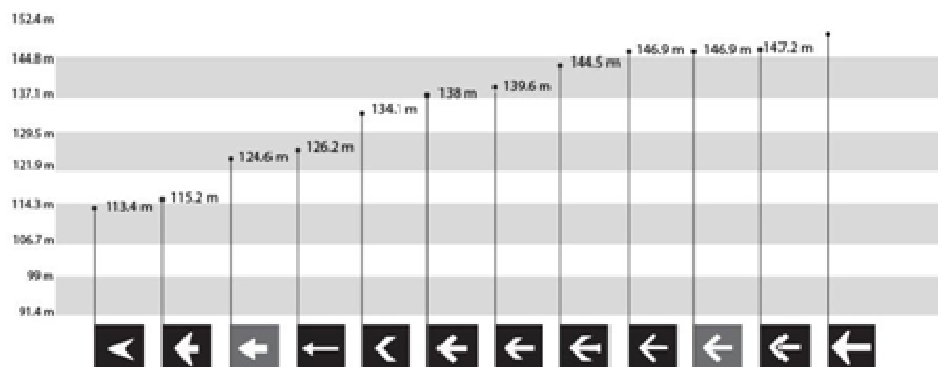


Figure 10 Arrow Standard  
(Source: Calori, 2007)

Based on an interview with signage practitioner, material selection should be adapted to the character of the museum and should consider the budget. Therefore, in designing signage Museum of Sri Baduga, the material selected are bamboo laminate and acrylic (Figure 11). Bamboo is often used in vernacular or traditional buildings in West Java. In addition, bamboo has equal power to solid wood and the raw material is abundant in Indonesia. However, bamboo is identical with traditional. Therefore, bamboo is processed with modern technology into bamboo laminate in order to make it look modern

and to blend with the modern building itself. To save costs, the material is only used in some parts of the signage only. Another material used is acrylic because it is easily molded, lightweight and relatively low in price. This material is used on most of the signage.

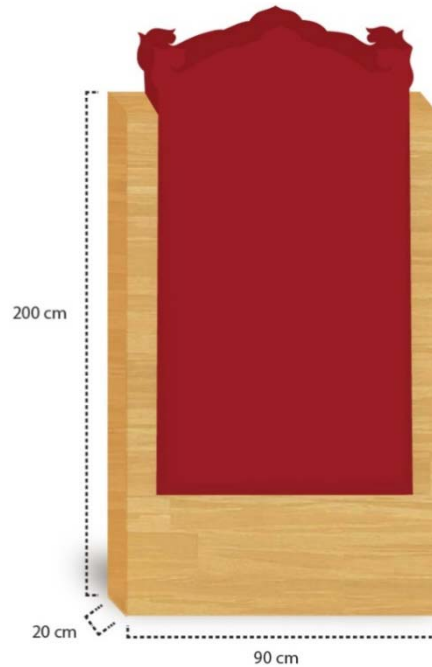


Figure 11 Bamboo Laminate Combined with Acrylic for Signage Design  
(Source: Rushar, 2016)

The Figure 12 shows the proposed signage design based on study and analysis. The sign types include freestanding, wall-mounted, overhead/ ceiling hung and flag mounted signage.

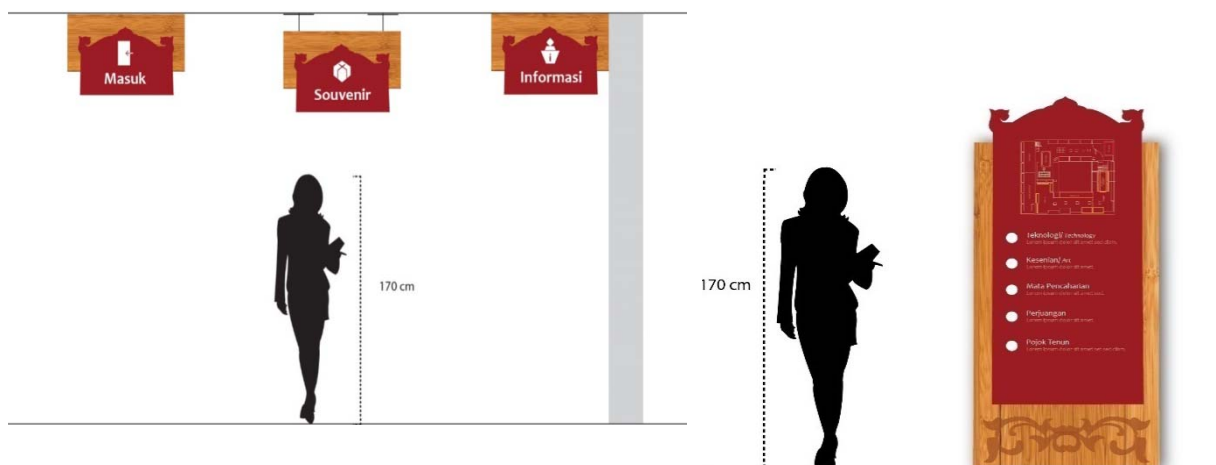


Figure 12 All Sign Types Recommendation  
(Source: Rushar, 2016)

## CONCLUSIONS

It can be concluded that signage is a system which uses the media as a sign of information, direction, regulatory and prohibition. Effective signage is an attractive visual appearance in terms of graphics and information system that can be observed and understood by target audiences. Well-designed signage typically serves visual to unite a place and a role as a placemaking to create an identity that is unique, thus effectively creates a brand image in the built environment.

The research is expected to add insight into how the local identity and the building can inspire design. It is expected that the proposed design can produce signage and wayfinding with visual and good continuity to be more informative, interesting and can give a good impression for visitors. With local identity intervention in signage design of Museum of Sri Baduga i.e. *kujang* and the building, it can show an identity which imagined the museum. For further research, it is interesting to study about the philosophy of *kujang* and local community perceptions of the stylized *kujang* as pictogram.

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