

自由研究発表

From Museums to House Galleries and Art Exhibitions:
Displaying Lasem's Culture and Identity

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Lasem, a *kecamatan* located in Rembang Regency, Central Java, is known as *Kota Pusaka* or *Kawasan Pusaka* due to its rich cultural heritage. The region features a Chinatown, numerous Islamic boarding schools, and Batik artisans renowned for their distinctive craft. In 2022, the Ministry of Public Works completed a public construction project in Lasem. Meanwhile, a separate process to nominate Lasem as *Kawasan Cagar Budaya Nasional* (National Cultural Heritage Area) is still ongoing. In addition, various community groups have formed, with members collectively discussing, celebrating, preserving, and developing their culture and heritage.

As Lasem garners increasing attention, various public displays and exhibitions reflecting its rich multicultural identity and heritage were being organized. For example, local community members showcase their artifacts and archives to the public. This presentation will discuss the findings of an ongoing ethnographic study, reviewing different forms of exhibitions that represent Lasem's identity. It will explore the communities and stakeholders involved, as well as the dynamics through which this representation is constructed.

The case study begins with the two recently established museums in Lasem: Museum Nyah Lasem and Museum Islam Nusantara. Comparing these museums shows different perspectives of Lasem's history and identity. Beyond 'museums', there are also old houses repurposed and opened to the public, where certain rooms are dedicated to displaying the family's history through everyday objects (e.g. clothes, home decors, personal collections). Additionally, over the past years, local artists and activists have held temporary exhibitions of artworks, objects, and photographs. Held both in and outside Lasem, these exhibitions and series of related events were inspired by Lasem's cultural heritage and history.

In examining this phenomenon of exhibiting one's culture, I will consider the practices of collecting and displaying by community members. Locals, in collaboration with experts and communities beyond Lasem, have organized programs and events aimed at celebrating, preserving, and developing Lasem's heritage. It is important to note that even though each exhibition may have its own 'curators', there are no formal rules or general guidelines dictating what is acceptable as a representation of Lasem as a whole. Anyone involved can challenge the mainstream narrative and express their own perspective. Furthermore, individuals and community groups have utilize social media to promote and amplify their voices. The implications of the findings contribute to a broader study on cultural representation and the display of identity in Lasem, which also intersects with elements such as tourism.