

The Gayo Kerawang Motifs at the Keni Gayo Statue in Central Aceh Regency

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to systematically describe the names, patterns, and motifs of kerawang Gayo applied to the keni Gayo Statue in Central Aceh Regency, as well as to explain the contribution of this statue to cultural preservation and the strengthening of Gayo community identity. This study uses a qualitative descriptive method, data sources were obtained through observation, documentation and interviews with seventeen informants, in addition, data were also obtained through libraries, theories and other literature. The data obtained were summarized, described between categories and concluded. There are six main motifs applied to the Gayo keni statue, such as emun berangkat, saraq opat, tali mestike, pucuk rebung, bunge lawang, and emun beriring. Each motif is applied in a structured manner, adhering to the aesthetic principles and cultural values of the Gayo people. The research findings reveal that the keni Gayo statue serves not only as an aesthetic element in public space but also as an effective medium for cultural communication. The statue fosters a sense of identity, strengthens social solidarity, and nurtures collective pride among the community. Through its presence in open spaces, the statue plays a significant role in introducing cultural values to younger generations and reinforcing local cultural narratives amid globalization. A model like the keni Gayo statue can serve as an inspiration for efforts to reinforce national cultural identity through contemporary visual media rooted in local traditions.

KEYWORDS

Kerawang Gayo
Keni Gayo Statue
Cultural Preservation
Cultural Identity
Public Art

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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia, as an archipelagic country, is home to diverse cultural expressions that have emerged from the long history of local civilizations across its various regions (Fuadi, 2020). Each region possesses unique cultural characteristics reflected through language, customs, visual arts, and heritage artifacts imbued with philosophical and symbolic meanings. This diversity constitutes a fundamental strength of the Indonesian nation while simultaneously posing challenges in preserving and maintaining local identities amid the tide of global modernization (Setiawan, 2022). One form of visual cultural expression that plays a vital role in safeguarding identity is ornamental art or decorative motifs, which function not only as adornments but also as mediums for communicating noble values, moral teachings, and the spiritual aspirations of the community (Setiawan, 2022; Syafiq, 2023). In this context, *kerawang* Gayo, as a cultural heritage of the Gayo community in Central Aceh Regency, Aceh Province, occupies a highly significant position.

Kerawang Gayo is a visual system developed from the Gayo community's ability to represent their worldview, cosmology, and social structure through geometric forms and figurative stylization (Dafrina et al., 2022). The *kerawang* Gayo motifs, such as *emun berangkat*, *saraq opat*, *pucuk rebung*, and *tali mestike*, originate from representations of natural phenomena, flora, fauna, and cultural values that are translated into unique decorative patterns (Restiyadi et al., 2009). This ornamental art is not only found on traditional clothing such as *upuh ulen-ulen* and *baju kerawang* but also adorns traditional houses like *umah pitu ruang*, *alas penalas* (traditional mats), and clay-based crafts such as the Gayo *keni* or *kendi* (readers.id, 2023; Salihin et al., 2019).

Ornaments on certain objects are elements or parts of decoration taken and developed from natural forms, concepts of nature, humans, plants, animals, and other objects, and these concepts essentially have magical values. Technically, these patterns are made repeatedly, either symmetrically or asymmetrically, to form certain patterns. "The term 'Ornamen', in its limited sense, includes such of the elements of decoration as are adapted, or developed, from natural foliage. These differ from the Geometrical elements, inasmuch as the are organik. Possessing stem, leaves, flower, &c., while the latter are inorganic" (Meyer, 1955).

The decorative motif patterns we observe today are representative results of certain forms or objects that become specific qualities of form. The presence of these forms is inspired by the entire universe-animals, plants, humans, and geometric motifs. Among these motifs, some are very prominent, continuously evolving, and have been utilized as decorative materials until the present (Gustami, 2008). This geometric pattern decorative variety has been known since prehistoric times, proven geometric decorations have been found on pottery shards from the mesolithic, neolithic and then the bronze age, in the bronze age geometric decorations were found on the drum in the form of circular lines, meanders, swastikas, zigzags, spirals or double twists, rosettes, tumpal, rhombuses, sun rays, stars, clouds, hooks, and keys. Fauna and flora decorative varieties also inspire decorative patterns in clothing. (Kartiwa, 1973).

The prominent material culture of the ancient Gayo people's life journey on the shores of Lake Laut Tawar is the discovery of pottery fragments. Pottery is one of the material cultures that marks the neolithic period in the ancient Gayo tribe, each pottery is decorated, and the decorative patterns have similarities with those in the Gayo community. Some of them are found decorative patterns and vertical line patterns, this fact is the evidence that the existence of decorative patterns in prehistoric pottery is a legacy from the ancestors of the Gayo ethnic group to the current generation. Setiawan, (2015).

Throughout its history, the presence of ornamental art in various Nusantara cultures has consistently served as a symbol of civilization and spirituality. For example, the *kawung* motif in Javanese batik symbolizes eternity and perfection (Gustami, 2008), while the *patola* motif in Sumba woven cloth represents social status (Anggriandy et al., 2022). Similarly, *kerawang* Gayo functions as a marker of customary values, honesty, monotheism, and the moral guidance of the Gayo community (Salihin et al., 2019). Thus, *kerawang* Gayo is not merely a visual ornament but a medium conveying meanings that bind the Gayo community to their ancestral heritage.



Figure 1. Keni Gayo Statue

(source: <https://lintasgayo.co/2015/06/06/foto-gerabah-mendale-pola-hias-kerawang-gayo>)

Efforts to preserve cultural heritage have become increasingly important in the contemporary era. Modernization brings new challenges in the form of cultural homogenization, value shifts, and the loss of local heritage amid the rapid forces of globalization (Sari et al., 2022). Acknowledging these challenges, the community of Central Aceh took the initiative to erect the *keni* Gayo statue at the intersection of Jalan Soekarno Hatta, Kebet, Bebesen District, as a tangible form of cultural identity preservation. This statue represents two traditional types of *keni*, namely *keni rawan* and *keni banan*, and is artistically adorned with selected *kerawang* Gayo motifs (Nasution, 2018). Its presence in public space serves not only as a visual landmark but also as a medium for cultural education, a symbol of collective pride, and an effort to revitalize local identity amidst changing times.

So far, studies on *kerawang* Gayo have been widely conducted such as in the field of Gayo traditional house architecture (Salihin et al., 2019) studying *kerawang* Gayo carving motifs on Gayo traditional houses in Central Aceh Regency, confirming that the motif has a strong philosophical and aesthetic meaning in the construction of traditional houses of the Gayo people. In addition, ethnographic research in Bebesen Village highlights *kerawang* Gayo as a decorative variety on traditional clothing and handicrafts that preserve cultural values as well as being a source of local economy (Oktaviani et al., 2023; Rosdiani & Chalid, 2022), and the expression of Gayo *keni* as an idea for creating interior crafts (Mustakim et al, 2024) studying the expression of Gayo *keni* as a basic element in expressing interior crafts, this paper examines the symbols of traditional idioms as a material for expression.

Furthermore, (Joni, 2019) emphasizes that the *kerawang* Gayo functions as a cultural communication system encompassing the customary and religious values of the Gayo community. These motifs serve not only as decorations but also as mediums of proselytization that convey strong moral, social, and religious values (Rezeki, 2023). From the vast literature examining Gayo *kerawang* motifs found in traditional houses, clothing, and interiors, the author wishes to examine the Gayo *kerawang* motifs found on the Gayo *keni* statues of Central Aceh Regency, Indonesia. The presence of contemporary artifacts in the form of *keni* statues with Gayo *kerawang* motifs in public spaces, along with their philosophical approach to the visual preservation of Gayo culture in modern spaces, demonstrates the open scope for further exploration in the fields of contemporary art and the preservation of visual culture in modern spaces.

This paper seeks to further examine how *kerawang* motifs are applied to Gayo *keni* statues, and how these works function not only as aesthetic public spaces but also as a

medium for expressing cultural identity and resisting global cultural homogenization. Therefore, the novelty of this research lies in its interdisciplinary approach, integrating the study of fine art, cultural anthropology, and visual semiotics in analyzing the existence of Gayo *keni* statues. This research goes beyond identifying the names and patterns of ornamental motifs but also elucidates their symbolic meaning and contribution to strengthening the cultural identity of the Gayo people in the modern era.

Based on the aforementioned background and analysis, this study aims to systematically describe the patterns and *kerawang* Gayo motifs found on the *keni* Gayo statue in Central Aceh Regency, as well as to explain the statue's contribution as a medium for cultural preservation and the strengthening of the Gayo community's identity. It is hoped that this research will enrich the discourse on the transformation of traditional visual culture within modern public spaces and serve as a reference for developing local cultural preservation strategies based on contemporary art in Indonesia.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach aimed at understanding and interpreting the meanings (Moleong & Lexy J, 2021) embedded in the *kerawang* Gayo motifs on the *keni* Gayo statue in Central Aceh Regency, Aceh Province. The qualitative approach was chosen due to the nature of the data under study, which comprises cultural phenomena, visual expressions, and philosophical meanings that cannot be quantified but must be comprehended through in-depth interpretation of symbols and living cultural narratives within the community.

This type of research is qualitative descriptive research, the number of informants that the author took was six people. These six people have knowledge in the fields of culture, customs, law, art and others, while the duration of this research was carried out from December 13, 2024 to March 11, 2025 starting from observation, documentation and interviews. From the data obtained, the researcher attempted to describe systematically and factually the form, pattern, name, and meaning of the *kerawang* motif applied to the *keni* Gayo Statue.

The data sources in this study consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through direct observation of the *keni* Gayo statue located at the four-way roundabout on Soekarno Hatta Street, Paya Ilang, Kebet Village, Bebesen District, Central Aceh Regency. Additionally, data were collected through semi-structured interviews with key informants, including customary leaders, artists, and Gayo cultural experts who possess in-depth knowledge of *kerawang* Gayo and the philosophy behind it. Secondary data were gathered through a literature review of relevant documents, including books, articles, previous theses, and other pertinent written sources.

Data collection techniques were carried out through three main methods: participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Participatory observation involved directly observing the detailed *kerawang* ornaments on the *keni* Gayo statue, paying attention to visual aspects such as patterns, structure, composition, and color. In-depth interviews were conducted using an open-ended approach to explore cultural narratives, philosophical interpretations, and the symbolic meanings attached to each motif. Documentation included recording detailed photographs of the statue, taking notes from interviews, and collecting relevant supporting documents or literature. The data analysis technique in this study follows the interactive model of (Miles & Huberman, 1994), which involves three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing or verification. During the data reduction stage, information obtained from observations,

interviews, and documentation is selected, sorted, and classified according to the research focus. Data presentation is conducted by organizing findings into descriptive narratives, tables, or images to facilitate interpretation. Conclusion drawing involves identifying thematic patterns emerging from the data, interpreting the philosophical meanings contained in the *kerawang* motifs, and relating them to the socio-cultural context of the Gayo community. To maintain data validity, this study applies source and method triangulation techniques. Data source triangulation is carried out by comparing information from various informants, documents, and observations. Observations are carried out through observations through the work of the five senses of the eye and assisted by the other five senses. (Bungin, 2007). This is done directly on the research object with the aim of observing the entire research object. In library research or document studies, researchers collect secondary data and use it in formulating concepts and theories as a basis for research, through a review of various literature sources, books, scientific manuscripts, journals, research reports, documents and others. Document data can be in the form of photos, pictures, maps, graphs, structures, organizations, historical records and so on. (Mukhtar, 2007). while method triangulation is carried out by combining the results of observations, interviews, library studies and documentation. In addition, interpretation validation is carried out through member checking, namely by confirming the findings with informants to ensure that the interpretations made are in accordance with the meaning intended by the cultural community.

With this qualitative approach, it is expected that the study will produce a deep and comprehensive understanding of the role of the Keni Gayo statue as a medium for cultural preservation, as well as illustrate how the noble values of the Gayo community are articulated through the forms, patterns, and meanings of the *kerawang* motifs that adorn it.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Description of the *Keni* Gayo Statue

The Keni Gayo statue, which stands at the four-way roundabout on Jalan Soekarno-Hatta, Desa Kebet, Kecamatan Bebesen, Central Aceh Regency, presents a harmonious fusion between the traditional keni forms of the Gayo community and the distinctive *kerawang* Gayo ornaments. The results of the study show that in the form of this Gayo *keni* statue there are two imitation forms of traditional Gayo objects called *keni* (pitchers), both *keni* pieces stand firmly on a base that serves as a stand for the Gayo *keni* statue, and become the main canvas for the application of various Gayo *kerawang* motifs adapted in the form of reliefs. In both forms of *keni* statues have the same names such as head, neck, body and funnel. Both *keni* statues are imitations of the form of *keni rawan* (male jug) and *keni banan* (women's jug). The form of *keni rawan* visually slightly higher because it has *pawak* (feet), while the form of *keni banan* is slightly lower because it does not have *pawak* (foott). This Gayo *keni* statue uses copper media and the *kerawang* motif is golden, while the base is black. On the base of the *keni* Gayo statue, cement media is used with black, yellow, green colors while the colors on the *kerawang* motif are white and green. On both objects of *keni* statues there are Gayo *kerawang* decorative motifs, such as on the head, neck, body, funnel, *pawak* (foot), and on the base or stand. The *kerawang* carvings on the *keni* statue are made using a casting technique, while the *kerawang* carvings on the base of the *keni* are made using a slap technique.

Basically, each color in the Gayo *kerawang* motif has a philosophy and meaning such as *koning* (yellow) Reje, mulie musuket sipet (a respected, authoritative king, symbolizing festivity and beauty and full of charisma), *ilang* (red) *musidik sasat* (courage in upholding

the truth, and arranging strategies to solve problems, for the sake of truth), *ijo* (green) *muperlu sunet* (leaders and other figures must provide policies and decisions that give birth to peace, and as citizens must maintain peace), *poteh* (white) *keramat*, *muliye* (maintaining purity, nobility, cleanliness and not burdening each other, *item* (black) *tanoh*, land or basis (understanding the origin, humans were created from the earth and will return to the earth). The colors applied to each *kerawang* motif on the base of the *keni* statue are not bound by the meaning that has been embedded from generation to generation, the colors of each *kerawang* motif on the base of the *keni* Gayo statue sometimes change. when commemorating major events such as the anniversary of the city of Takengon, the anniversary of the independence of the Republic of Indonesia, under the pretext of maintenance or repainting to celebrate the big day, while the *keni* statue only displays a golden color in the form of *kerawang* motifs and a blackish color for the base color. The use of this black base color is only to provide a contrast between the color of the *kerawang* motif and the base color of the motif.



Figure 2. *Keni Gayo Statue* (Doc. Maulidha Sa, 2025)

The forms of *keni rawan* and *keni banan* exhibit several differences and similarities in specific parts. The male vessel (*keni rawan*) consists of the head (*ulu*), neck (*rongok*), body (*beden*), mouth or spout (*awah/corong*), and legs (*pawak*), whereas the female vessel (*keni banan*) includes the head (*ulu*), neck (*rongok*), and body (*beden*). Additionally, the pedestal base of the statue has four levels and supporting legs. When comparing their forms, *keni rawan* features a spout (*awah*) and legs (*pawak*), while *keni banan* lacks both the spout (*awah*) and legs (*pawak*). The following provides a more detailed explanation:

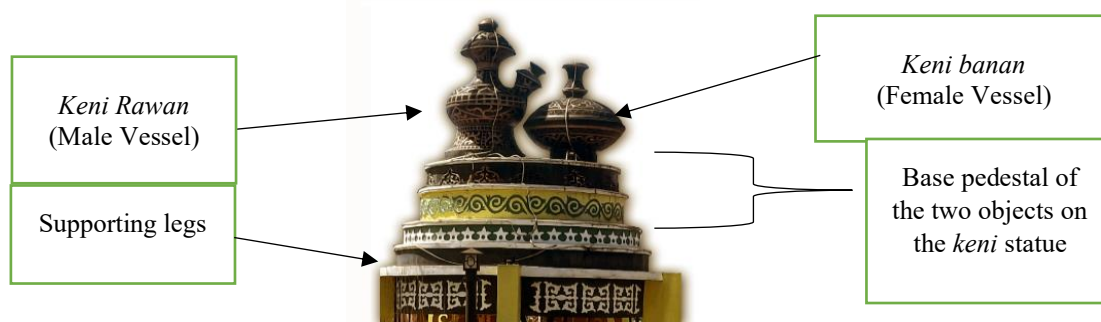


Figure 3. *Keni Rawan and Keni Banan Statues and Their Pedestals* (Doc. Maulidha Sa, 2025)

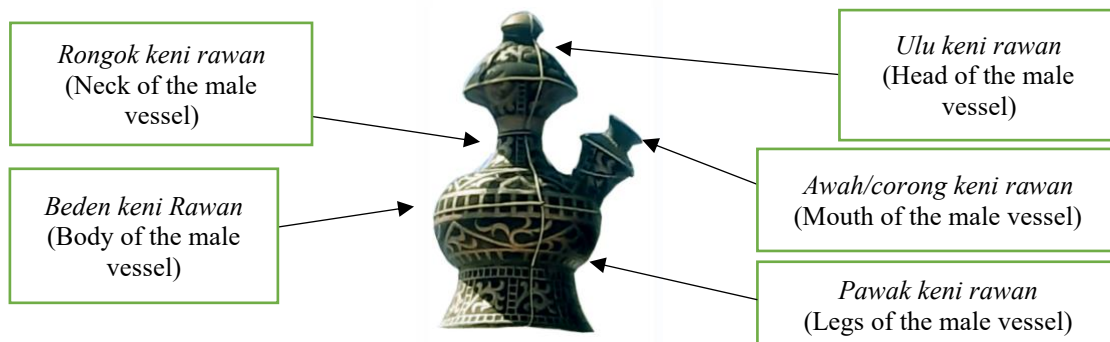


Figure 4. Parts of the *Keni Rawan* Statue (Doc. Maulidha Sa, 2025)



Figure 5. Parts of the *Keni Banan* Statue (Doc. Maulidha Sa, 2025)

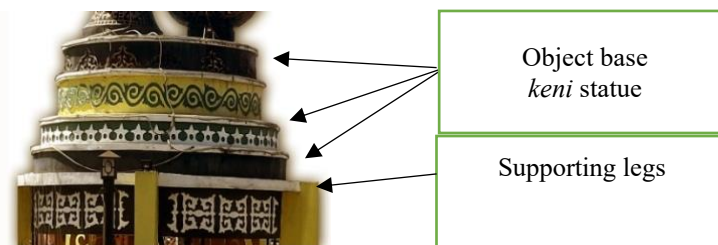


Figure 6. Parts of the Pedestal Base of the *Keni Gayo* Statue (Doc. Maulidha Sa, 2025)

Kerawang Gayo Ornamental Motifs on the *Keni* Statue.







On the *keni rawan* statue there are *kerawang* motifs of *emun berangkat*, *saraq opat*, *tali mustike*. The *kerawang* motif of *emun berangkat* is located on the *ulu* (head), *rongok* (neck), *beden* (body), *awah* (funnel) and *pawak* (feet), *emun berangkat* is a representation of the shape of a cloud that is moving. The connotation of *emun berangkat* is a guidance, suggestion, appeal or motivation for Gayo people wherever they want to step or travel to not be lazy, always honest, enthusiastic, full of inspiration so that no activity is in vain, *ike beluh ara sirai ike mewen ara siwei*, (wherever the feet want to step, the goal must be clear). The *kerawang* motif of *saraq opat* is located on the *rongok* (neck), *beden* (body) and *pawak* (feet), The *kerawang* motif of *saraq opat* is a representation of vertical and horizontal line arrangements. The connotation of *saraq opat* is holding on to religious and customary law, the established religious and customary rules, looking after each other, reminding each other,

salah bertegah benar berpapah, salah besemah elit berisi (admonishing each other in doing evil, supporting each other in the truth). The *kerawang* motif of the *tali mustike* is located on the *beden* (body), the motif of the *tali mustike* is a representation of a piece of rope. The connotation of the *tali mustike* is the importance of togetherness in diversity, this togetherness will build strength, strength is dignity or self-respect for the Gayo people, *keramat mupakat behu mendedele*, (deliberation will give birth to strength).

On the *keni banan* statue, there are motifs of *tali mustike kerawang*, *pucuk rebung*, and *emun berangkat*. The *tali mustike* motif is located on the *beden* (body), the *tali mustike* motif is a representation of a piece of rope. The connotation of the *tali mustike kerawang* motif is the importance of togetherness in diversity, this togetherness will build strength, strength is dignity or self-respect for the Gayo people, *keramat mupakat behu mendedele*, (deliberation will give birth to strength). The *pucuk rebung* motif is a representative result of bamboo plants. The connotation of the *pucuk rebung* is a recommendation to parents, community leaders have an obligation to guard, guide, foster, educate, direct and protect the next generation of Gayo, hoping that the generation will have a strong foundation in running their lives in the future, and vice versa for the younger generation to behave well and obey all guidance and direction from their parents, *bujang berama, beru berine*, (for parents it is obligatory to advise, reprimand the young generation of Gayo even if they are not their biological children if they make mistakes, and for the younger generation, both men and women, it is obligatory to respect and honor their parents even if they are not their biological parents). The motif of *emun berangkat* is located on the *beden* (body), *emun berangkat* is a representation of the shape of a cloud that is moving. The connotation of *emun berangkat* is a guidance, suggestion, appeal or motivation for Gayo people wherever they want to step or travel to not be lazy, always honest, enthusiastic, full of inspiration so that no activity is in vain, *ike beluh ara sirai ike mewen ara siwei*, (wherever the feet want to step, the goal must be clear).

On the base of the *keni* statue there are four levels, the first level or base has the motif of *emun berangkat*, the second level has the motif of *bunge lawang*, the third level has the motif of *emun beriring* and the fourth level has the motif of *emun berangkat*. The motif of *emun berangkat* located on the first and fourth levels is a representation of the shape of a cloud that is moving. The connotation of *emun berangkat* is a guidance, suggestion, appeal or motivation for Gayo people wherever they want to step or travel to not be lazy, always honest, enthusiastic, full of inspiration so that no activity is in vain, *ike beluh ara sirai ike mewen ara siwei*, (wherever the feet want to step, the goal must be clear). The motif of *bunge lawang* located on the second level is a representation of star anise. The connotation of the *bunge lawang* motif is speech or ethics in speaking *remalan bertungket berperi berabun*, (prioritizing morals and ethics in speaking with children, peers and parents). The *emun beriring* motif located on the third level is a representative result of the shape of clouds that are walking in a row during the day. The connotation of *emun beriring* is maintaining unity, respecting and implementing the results of deliberation, *beluh sara loloten mewen sara tamunen*. (solidarity, steadfastness in the results of agreements in order to maintain togetherness, maintain relationships, the residential environment and wherever one is).

Table 1. Forms and Names of *Kerawang* Motifs on the *Keni Gayo* Statue

No.	Forms of <i>Kerawang</i> Motifs on the <i>Keni</i> Statue	Names of <i>Kerawang</i> Motifs on the <i>Keni</i> Statue
1.		<i>Emun Berangkat</i>
2.		<i>Saraq Opat</i>
3.		<i>Tali Mustike</i>
4.		<i>Pucuk Rebung</i>
5.		<i>Emun Beriring</i>
6.		<i>Bunge Lawang</i>

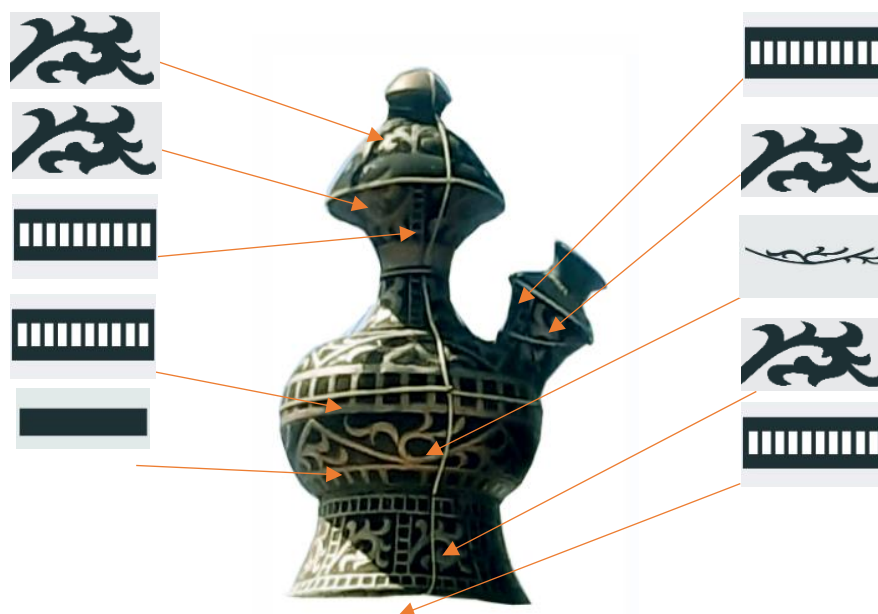


Figure 7. *Kerawang* Ornaments on the *Keni Rawan* Statue (Doc. Maulidha Sa, 2025)



Figure 8. Kerawang Ornaments on the *Keni Banan* Statue (Doc. Maulidha Sa, 2025)



Figure 9. Kerawang Ornaments on the Pedestal Base of the *Keni Gayo* Statue (Doc. Maulidha Sa, 2025)

Names, Representations, and Ornament Patterns of *Kerawang Gayo* on the *Keni* Statue

Table 2. Names, Patterns, and Locations of Motifs on the *Keni Gayo* Statue

No	Name of Motif	Representative	Ornament Pattern	Location of Motifs on the Statue
1.	<i>Emun berangkat</i>	The name of the <i>emun berangkat</i> motif is a representation of white clouds moving in the morning. The representation of the cloud shape is realized in the form of a basic curved line, the end of the line almost touching the base of the initial line, each curve is always followed by several small line branches that oppose the direction of the main line curve. These small line curves are sometimes used as starting points for the next repetition of the shape. These curved line branches that oppose	The <i>emun berangkat</i> motif falls under the cosmos pattern, as it represents clouds moving in the morning, and clouds are classified as celestial objects.	On the male vessel statue (<i>keni rawan</i>), the <i>emun berangkat</i> motif is located on the head (<i>ulu</i>), neck (<i>rongok</i>), mouth (<i>awah</i>), body (<i>beden</i>), and legs (<i>kiding/pawak</i>). Meanwhile, on the female vessel statue (<i>keni banan</i>), the <i>emun berangkat</i> motif is found on the body (<i>beden</i>). On the pedestal base of the <i>keni</i> statue, the <i>emun berangkat</i> motif is positioned on the first and fourth levels of the base.

No	Name of Motif	Representative	Ornament Pattern	Location of Motifs on the Statue
		the direction give the impression of being lively, rippling, fiery, enthusiastic, dynamic and give the impression of being full of inspiration. The <i>emun berangkat</i> motif on the Gayo <i>keni</i> statue gives the meaning that every effort, activity must start from goodness as the white clouds that move every day.		
2.	<i>Saraq opat</i>	The <i>kerawang saraq opat</i> motif is a representation of vertical lines, the representation of the line shape is realized in the form of a line arrangement with the same height, the <i>saraq opat</i> motif is not bound to one color only. The <i>saraq opat</i> motif found on the <i>keni</i> statue gives the meaning that every agreed rule must be enforced and remind each other if an error occurs.	The <i>saraq opat</i> motif is a geometric pattern because it consists of combinations of basic vertical and horizontal lines.	On the male vessel statue (<i>keni rawan</i>), the <i>saraq opat</i> motif is located on the neck (<i>rongok</i>), mouth (<i>awah</i>), body (<i>beden</i>), and legs (<i>kiding/pawak</i>). Meanwhile, the <i>saraq opat</i> motif is not found on the female vessel statue (<i>keni banan</i>) or on the pedestal base of the <i>keni</i> statue.
3.	<i>Tali mustike</i>	The name of the <i>kerawang</i> motif of the <i>tali mustike</i> motif is the result of the representation of the shape of a rope, this rope representation is realized in the form of a straight line, the presence of the <i>tali mustike</i> motif is often made as a divider between one motif and another. This <i>kerawang</i> ornament motif of the <i>tali mustike</i> is found in the form of a <i>keni banan</i> statue with a position surrounding the body, and in the <i>keni rawan</i> it is found on the body as a motif divider. The color that is often used in general is white, this <i>tali mustike</i> motif gives meaning to the need to maintain togetherness in diversity, not to be divided, togetherness will give birth to strength.	The <i>tali mustike</i> <i>kerawang</i> motif is a geometric pattern because it is based on horizontal lines.	On the male vessel statue (<i>keni rawan</i>), the <i>tali mustike</i> motif is found on the body (<i>beden</i>). Meanwhile, on the female vessel statue (<i>keni banan</i>), the <i>tali mustike</i> motif is located in the central part of the statue, specifically on the body (<i>beden</i>). Additionally, the <i>tali mustike</i> motif is also present on the pedestal base of the statue.

No	Name of Motif	Representative	Ornament Pattern	Location of Motifs on the Statue
4.	<i>Pucuk rebung</i>	The <i>kerawang pucuk rebung</i> motif represents the life of a bamboo tree. This representation of the bamboo tree is expressed in the form of zigzag lines dominated by green. This <i>pucuk rebung</i> motif is found only on the <i>keni banan</i> statue. This <i>Pucuk rebung</i> motif conveys the meaning of resilience, patience, in guiding and directing children as the next generation, as well as obedience in accepting guidance and advice from their parents.	The <i>pucuk rebung kerawang</i> motif encompasses the entire bamboo plant, including shoots, buds, mature bamboo tips, and others. This motif is classified under the plant pattern category.	On the male vessel statue (<i>keni rawan</i>), the <i>pucuk rebung</i> motif is not found, whereas on the female vessel statue (<i>keni banan</i>), the <i>pucuk rebung</i> motif is located in the central part, specifically on the body (<i>beden</i>). Additionally, the <i>pucuk rebung</i> motif is also present on the pedestal base of the statue.
5.	<i>Emun beriring</i>	The <i>emun beriring kerawang</i> motif is a representation of clouds that are walking in a procession in the sky. This representation of clouds that are walking in a procession is poured into a slightly circular line shape almost resembling a vortex, on the outside of the main line circle there is a slightly sharp line that goes against the direction of the main line, this sharp line only stands alone and is not used as a basis for repeating the next shape, and the color that is often used is white. This <i>emun beriring</i> motif gives the meaning of fostering solidarity, being firm in commitment or agreement, establishing relationships in the group environment, residential environment and maintaining the good name of the group.	The <i>emun beriring kerawang</i> motif falls under the cosmos pattern because it represents clouds moving in procession during the daytime, and clouds are classified as celestial objects.	The <i>emun beriring</i> motif is not found on the male vessel statue (<i>keni rawan</i>), nor on the female vessel statue (<i>keni banan</i>); however, this <i>kerawang emun beriring</i> motif is present on the third level of the statue's pedestal base.
6.	<i>Bunge lawang</i>	The <i>bunge lawang</i> ornamental motif is a representation of the star anise flower, this representation of the star anise flower is realized in a pointed shape that points upwards and is followed by	The <i>bunge lawang</i> motif is classified under the plant pattern category because it represents the star anise plant.	The <i>bunge lawang</i> motif is not found on the male vessel statue (<i>keni rawan</i>) nor on the female vessel statue (<i>keni banan</i>). This motif is only present on the second level of the statue's pedestal base.

No	Name of Motif	Representative	Ornament Pattern	Location of Motifs on the Statue
		two pointed lines that open to the right and left and between the crossing lines that open to the right and left there is a small circle that usually uses a white base color, the color of the <i>bunge lawang</i> motif uses green. The meaning of the <i>bunge lawang</i> motif is the rules in communicating such as ethics, speech, politeness in speaking.		

Contribution of the *Keni* Gayo Statue to Cultural Preservation and Identity Strengthening

The research findings indicate that the *keni* Gayo statue has become a concrete form of visual cultural preservation for the Gayo community in the modern era. Interviews conducted with several customary leaders and Gayo cultural experts revealed that the presence of this statue in public spaces serves not only to beautify the city but also functions as a medium for strengthening cultural identity, preserving traditional values, and educating the younger generation.

The presence of this replica of a Gayo *keni* object, complete with Gayo openwork motifs, demonstrates the authority and ownership of the Gayo tribe's distinctive culture, inherited from their ancestors. The intrinsic meanings and values inherent in each of the symbols in the replica of the *keni* object and the Gayo openwork motifs displayed are a sign of the richness and strength of Gayo culture. This Gayo *keni* statue demonstrates that the Gayo community relies not only on cultural preservation through traditional ceremonies or celebrations, but also through visual strategies in public spaces. (Interview: Abdullah AR, December 17, 2024), the *keni* form and *kerawang* motif are signs of the richness and strength of Gayo culture that have existed since ancient times, (interview: Wien Elma Naura, March 11, 2025), The *keni* statue building is a symbol of cultural history, strength, norms, and guidelines from the ancestors of the Gayo people in the past.

Table 3. Contributions of the *Keni* Gayo Statue to Cultural Preservation

No	Aspect	Contribution
1.	Cultural Identity	Serves as a visual symbol of the Gayo community's existence in public spaces
2.	Preservation	Preserving <i>Kerawang</i> Gayo motifs in the form of modern public art
3.	Social Solidarity	Strengthening pride and togetherness among the community
4.	Cultural Education	Serves as a medium for cultural education for the younger generation

Based on Table 3, Contributions of the *keni* Gayo Statue to Cultural Preservation, the following points can be highlighted: First, from the aspect of cultural identity, the presence of the *keni* Gayo statue reinforces the existence of the Gayo community amid the progress of modern times. By displaying visual symbols rooted in local culture, this *keni* statue serves as a cultural landmark that distinguishes Central Aceh Regency from other regions. This

aligns with (Barthes, 1967), who argues that symbols in public space play an important role in building collective awareness in strengthening identity.

Roland Barthes prioritizes three pillars of thought in finding signs, the first pillar is denotative, the second pillar is connotative and the third pillar is myth. Denotative is a level of signification that explains the links between signifiers and signifieds. Connotation is a sign whose signifier has an implicit meaning, connotation explains the relationship between signifier and signified, meaning operates in it clearly and as it is and is open to possibilities related to emotional, cultural and ideological aspects. Other meanings will emerge when linked to various aspects such as feelings, psychological aspects, emotions and beliefs. Myth is a message conveyed in writing or implied, the message is formed by linking local social and cultural, myth functions as a message or communication system or semiology that is interpreted by humans, myth is also a sign that develops in society due to the influence of customs and social, myth or ideology is a historical process and created by a particular culture that is presented as if eternal. Hoed, (2008).

Second, in terms of preservation, the *keni* Gayo statue demonstrates that traditional visual culture can be adapted into new media without losing its original values. The application of *kerawang* Gayo in three-dimensional fine arts shows the flexibility and vitality of this cultural heritage amidst modernity. This supports Gustami (2008), idea that Indonesian visual traditions possess strong adaptive capabilities throughout cultural development processes.

Third, from the perspective of social solidarity, the statue becomes a source of shared pride for the Gayo community. It acts as an emotional binder connecting residents to their cultural roots while serving as a collective reference point that strengthens a sense of togetherness amid diversity.

Fourth, from a cultural education standpoint, the *keni* Gayo statue functions as a tool for introducing traditional values to the younger generation. In an era when youth are increasingly exposed to global culture, the presence of tangible local cultural elements is crucial to maintaining the continuity of local cultural knowledge.

The significance of the Keni Gayo statue's contribution is evident in how it facilitates the natural transmission of cultural values within social spaces. It is not merely a static artifact but a living "cultural communicator" connecting the past, present, and future of the Gayo community. For future research, further studies on the social and cultural impacts of the *keni* Gayo statue's presence are recommended, including analyses of younger generations' perceptions of this cultural symbol and the potential development of similar models in other regions to strengthen local identity in the context of modern urbanization.

CONCLUSIONS

This study reveals that the *keni* Gayo statue incorporates six main *kerawang* Gayo motifs, namely *emun berangkat*, *saraq opat*, *tali mustike*, *pucuk rebung*, *emun beriring*, and *bunge lawang*, applied with visual patterns that preserve the aesthetic and cultural values of the Gayo community. Beyond its aesthetic function, the statue acts as a powerful medium for cultural communication, strengthening cultural identity, social solidarity, and collective pride within modern public spaces. The *keni* Gayo statue serves more than just an aesthetic object; it serves as an effective cultural communication medium for fostering a sense of identity for future generations, strengthening social solidarity, and building pride within the community and the tourism sector. This demonstrates that visual expressions based on local cultural heritage can be adapted into contemporary art without losing their underlying cultural values. These findings demonstrate the close relationship between traditional visual expressions and efforts to strengthen cultural identity amidst dynamic social change. In addition to strengthening cultural identity, the *keni* Gayo statue also plays a role in the cultural education process for the younger generation, by presenting local cultural symbols visibly in public spaces. These ideas about the values of Gayo cultural life will be visible for decades, even hundreds or thousands of years to come, if placed in the right medium.

The results of this study open up opportunities for further studies on the socio-cultural impact of the *Keni Gayo* statue. Furthermore, this public art-based cultural preservation model can serve as inspiration for strengthening the cultural identity of other regions in Indonesia, particularly in facing the challenges of cultural homogenization due to globalization. *Keni Gayo* and its *kerawang* ornamentation are legacies from the ancestors of the Gayo people that we must preserve. A detailed program is needed to maintain the sustainability of this Gayo culture going forward. Given the current diversity of the Gayo population in Central Aceh, stakeholders such as the local government, artists, and community leaders need to conduct accurate assessments of development programs and plans for tourism, government buildings, monuments, gates, places of worship, and other structures, ensuring that Gayo *kerawang* motifs are used as the primary decorative motifs. Prioritizing traditional Gayo *kerawang* motifs in architectural structures will strengthen the identity of the Gayo people going forward.

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