

# Tiru macam saya? Fesyen kebaya Saloma jadi inspirasi

Koleksi busana lulusan fesyen Lasalle, 'Sunburnt Heart', teroka identiti Melayu, segarkan pakaian tradisional

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SETIAP kali menemani bapanya menonton filem klasik P. Ramlee yang memaparkan biduanita Saloma yang anggun berkebaya, Cik Iris Zulfa Mohamed Isa, dipenuhi rasa kagum tentang fesyen bintang legenda era 1950-an hingga 1960-an.

Cik Iris, 22 tahun, lulusan Sarjana Muda (Kepujian) dalam Reka Bentuk Fesyen dan Tekstil di Maktab Seni Lasalle, lebih dikelilingi teman berbangsa Cina berbanding Melayu sebelum ini.

Namun sejujur memulakan kursus fesyen yang mengaitkan tekstil dengan budaya, beliau mula merengung dan menyelongkar identitinya sebagai anak Melayu.

Bagi merapatkan jurang keterasingan dengan budaya Melayu di samping teruja dengan fesyen bintang filem Melayu klasik, Cik Iris mengusahakan projek tahun akhir berupa koleksi busana yang dipanggil *Sunburnt Heart* yang memberi perspektif baru tentang tradisi Melayu. Ia menyanjung Saloma sebagai ikon fesyen filem Melayu malar segar dengan Cik Iris berusaha memberi kesedaran pada rekaan kebaya.

Beliau menggabungkan teknik tekstil seperti 'heat setting' dan motif batik untuk menghasilkan corak digital baru. 'Heat setting' adalah proses meletakkan fabrik pada suhu panas untuk tempoh seketika bagi menjadikannya bahan yang mantap serta kekal bentuknya meskipun dibasuh dan diseterika kelak.

Koleksi busana *Sunburnt Heart* ini meneroka apa itu kebaya dan bagaimana ia beresuaian dengan cita rasa wanita Melayu moden.

Ia juga memberi respons pada isu terkini dengan mengembalikan pakaian berunsur etnik untuk kegunaan

harian dengan memanfaatkan busana hibrid.

Ketika dihubungi *Berita Harian*, Cik Iris, anak kedua dalam tiga beradik, yang baru menerima ijazahnya di majlis konvokesyen Maktab Seni Lasalle di Singapore Expo, berkata:

"Saya anggap fesyen dahulu 'cool'. Saloma dan pelakon lain menyanyi dan memakai kebaya yang cantik dipandang mata, sesuai dengan suara mereka yang gemerik merdu. Susah nak cari filem zaman sekarang dengan busana sebegitu indah. Saya tertarik menarik jika saya boleh kaji tentang zaman kegemilangan filem Melayu – segalanya tentang pelakon, filem dan fesyen yang mencerminkan budaya Melayu.

"Kebanyakan bintang era 1960-an itu menyuarung kebaya moden dan saya tidak tahu jika kebaya sebegitu masih wujud lagi sebab ia jarang kelihatan. Saya menganggapnya sebagai topik kajian yang baik untuk diselenggarakan sebagai projek tahun akhir. Selain itu, saya ingin menemui dan meneroka identiti saya sebagai wanita Melayu dan bagaimana saya boleh kaitkan diri saya dengan budaya Melayu pada era moden kini.

"Sebagai belia Generasi Z, saya dapat rasakan setiap benda sekeliling saya agak terasing dengan budaya sendiri kerana pengaruh kebaratan. Saya fikir bagaimana nak satukan dua aspek ini – fesyen tradisi Melayu dengan unsur kemodenan."

Antara cabaran yang dihadapi Cik Iris adalah tidak banyak bahan kajian fizikal mengenai busana Saloma yang boleh ditemui di Singapura.

Beliau hanya mampu merujuk pada buku tentang busana biduanita itu yang disimpan arkhiv di Malaysia. Gambar dalam talian juga terhad. Satu lagi cabaran ialah membuka perbincangan tentang budaya dan pemodenan atau proses pembaratan yang agak kontroversial.



SANJUNGAN BUAT SALOMA: Selepas meraih inspirasi daripada menonton filem P. Ramlee yang memaparkan biduanita Saloma anggun berkebaya, Cik Iris Zulfa Mohamed Isa mengilhamkan koleksi kebaya yang memberi takrifan baru dan menyatukan seni tradisional dan moden pada penghasilan kebaya. – Foto-foto BH oleh KHALID BABA

"Ada orang yang agak tegas tentang tradisi dan berasakan kita tidak harus mengubahnya tetapi mengkalkan dan memelihara. Saya berbincang dengan penyair saya bagaimana perbincangan ini dapat diteruskan tanpa menyinggung perasaan sesiapa atau bagaimana memastikan ia tetap sejajar dengan tuntutan budaya Melayu. Justeru, ada maksud tersirat di mana saya takkan melangkah batasan tertentu tetapi akan tetap memperjuangkan sesuatu yang baru dan segar. Saya tidak mahu merosakkan tradisi tetapi memberi interpretasi semula pada kebaya," jelas Cik Iris yang yakin seni tradisional dan moden boleh wujud secara bersama.

Selepas menjalankan projek ini, beliau percaya seni tradisional harus dipelihara dan masih perlu dipaparkan.

"Namun, saya berasakan masih ada ruang bagi seni moden untuk wujud sama-sama. Penting untuk orang ramai menghadam seni moden dan tidak rasa terasing daripadanya. Saya berasakan mengapa anak muda tidak begitu menghargai seni kebudayaan sewajarnya adalah kerana mereka melihatnya daripada perspektif lama. Mereka ingat ia hanya disasarkan pada generasi berusia. Bagi saya, tentunya tidak. Seni tradisional harus mengikut peredaran zaman, berubah mengikut cita rasa generasi

masa kini," katanya lagi.

Secara umum, Cik Iris bereksperimen dengan meninjau corak tekstil dan bagaimana renda sebagai bahan boleh dimanipulasi dengan dipotong, diasingkan dan diubah suai coraknya bagi mewujudkan corak renda yang lebih unik. Corak renda ini kemudian beliau cetak secara digital.

Cik Iris yang meminati fesyen kerana meraih inspirasi daripada dunia fesyen dongeng dalam francais filem *Barbie* kini kembali pada nyala rasanya dalam perihal fesyen mampan. Beliau kini adalah pereka kitar tinggi di kedai tukar ganti pakaian The Fashion Pulpit yang menyediakan cara alternatif bagi pelanggan membeli pakaian kitar tinggi.

"Selain itu, saya juga ingin melanjutkan kajian dalam koleksi saya kerana saya percaya ia tidak harus terhenti di sini sahaja. Saya merancang untuk meneroka tekstil Melayu lain selain batik. Seni kemelayuan kita luas.

"Saya ingin teruskan perbincangan tentang merapatkan jurang seni tradisional dan moden. Kebanyakan jenama di luar negara melakukannya. Mungkin ia tidak begitu berleluasa di Singapura. Jadi mengapa tidak saya melakukannya?" tambahnya

## Saloma's kebaya fashion becomes an inspiration

Each time she accompanied her father to watch P. Ramlee's classic film featuring the graceful and well-dressed artiste, Saloma, Miss Iris Zulfa Binte Mohamad Isa, was filled with admiration for the legendary fashion star of the 1950s to 1960s.

Iris, 22 years old, who graduated with a BA(Hons) Fashion Design and Textiles from LASALLE College of the Arts, used to be surrounded by more Chinese friends than Malays.

However, as soon as she started a fashion course that linked textiles with culture, she began to reflect and explore her own identity as a Malay.

In order to bridge her gap of alienation from Malay culture and at the same time her excitement with the fashion of classic Malay film stars, Iris worked on her final year project in the form of a fashion collection called *Sunburnt Heart* which presents a new perspective on Malay tradition. Iris praises Saloma as an evergreen Malay film fashion icon who inspires her to try to inject freshness into the kebaya designs.

She combines textile techniques such as 'heat setting' and uses batik motifs to produce new digital patterns. 'Heat setting' is the process which places a fabric under hot temperatures for a short period

of time to make it a stable material and to enable it to retain its shape even after being washed and ironed later.

This *Sunburnt Heart* clothing collection explores what kebaya is and how it suits the modern Malay woman's taste.

It is also a response to current times in terms of bringing back ethnic clothing for everyday use by leveraging hybrid fashion.

When contacted by *Berita Harian*, Iris, the second child of three siblings, who recently received her degree at the LASALLE College of the Arts convocation ceremony at the Singapore Expo, said:

"I think the fashion of those days is 'cool'. Saloma and other actors sang and wore kebaya that were eye-catching, matching their melodious voices. It's hard to find a movie these days with such beautiful clothing. I thought it would be interesting if I could study about the heyday of Malay films – everything about the actors, films and fashion that reflects Malay culture.

"Most of the stars of the 1960s wore modern kebayas and I don't know if such kebayas still exist because they are rarely seen. I considered it a good research topic to explore as a final year project. In addition, I wanted to discover and explore my identity as a Malay woman and how I could relate myself to Malay culture in today's modern era.

"As a Generation Z youth, I can sense that everything around me is somewhat alienated from my own culture due to the influence of westernisation. I thought of how to unite these two aspects — traditional Malay fashion with modern influences."

Among the challenges faced by Miss Iris is that there are not many physical research materials on Saloma's clothing which can be found in Singapore.

She was only able to refer to books about the artiste's clothes which are kept in archives in Malaysia. Online pictures are also limited. Another challenge was in sparking discussion about culture and modernisation or the process of westernisation which is quite controversial.

"Some people are quite strict about tradition and feel that we should not change it but maintain and preserve it. I discussed with my lecturer about how this discussion could continue without offending anyone and how to ensure that it remains in line with the demands of Malay culture. I developed an implicit understanding of areas where I could not step beyond certain limits, but could still fight for something new and fresh. I don't want to destroy tradition. Instead, I want to reinterpret the kebaya," explains Iris, who is confident that traditional and modern art can coexist.

Having completed this project, she believes that traditional art should be preserved and still needs to be featured.

"However, I feel there is still room for modern art to exist together. It is important for people to digest modern art and not feel alienated from it. I feel that the reason why young people don't really appreciate cultural art is because they see it from an old perspective. They think it is only targeted at

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the older generation. Not so, for me. Traditional art should follow the times and change according to the taste of the current generation," she added.

In general, Iris experimented by looking at textile patterns and how lace as a material could be manipulated by cutting, separating and modifying the pattern to create a more unique lace pattern. This lace pattern is then digitally printed.

Iris became interested in fashion because she was inspired by the world of fairytale fashion in the *Barbie* movie franchise. She has now returned to ignite her passion for sustainable fashion. She is currently an upcycling designer at The Fashion Pulpit, a thrift store that provides an alternative way for customers to buy upcycled clothing.

"In addition, I also want to continue the research in my own collection because I believe it should not stop here. I plan to explore other Malay textiles besides batik. Our Malay art is vast.

"I want to continue the discussion about bridging the gap between traditional and modern art. Most overseas brands do. Maybe it's not that prevalent in Singapore. So why don't I do it?" she adds.