

## The Transformation of Form and Function on Pottery of Banyumulek Lombok



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**ABSTRACT:** The pottery of banyumulek Lombok has existed since ancient times, dating back to the Sasak kingdom, and continues to the present day. This study aims to analyze the transformation of form and function in Banyumulek Lombok pottery. Qualitative research uses data collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. The pottery samples were collected purposively. The data analysis method uses the Miles and Huberman model, which involves data reduction, display, and conclusion drawing. The research findings show that before 1988, the appearance of Banyumulek Lombok pottery needed to be more varied and was used solely for daily household purposes. After 1988, variations on form began to emerge, and today, there are numerous forms with various creative designs.

**KEYWORDS:** Transformation, Form, Function, Pottery, Banyumulek Village

### I. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is immensely rich in regional arts and culture, with hundreds of ethnic groups contributing to this diversity. According to the 2024 National Statistics Agency, there are 633 major ethnic groups in Indonesia, and every Indonesian citizen must preserve Indonesia's region's vibrant cultural and artistic heritage must be preserved.

One such ethnic group is the Sasak people, native to the island of Lombok. Lombok, one of the larger islands in West Nusa Tenggara Province, covers an area of 5,179 km<sup>2</sup>. In 2024, the West Nusa Tenggara Statistics Agency recorded a population of 3,933,780 in Lombok, making up 70% of the province's total population. Lombok is home to various traditional arts, including music, theater, dance, and crafts. One prominent craft in Lombok is pottery, particularly in Banyumulek Village, West Lombok Regency.

Based on an interview with the head of Banyumulek Village's tourism awareness group, Mr. Zainuddin, he stated that the pottery tradition in Banyumulek began with Papuk Mulek and was later continued by Ida Wayan Tata. Banyumulek pottery has existed since the time of Papuk Mulek during the Sasak Kingdom, primarily used as household items. Ida Wayan Tata further developed its function and form in 1859, after the Karangasem Kingdom of Bali occupied some of the Lombok region. Ida Wayan Tata was granted permission to reside in Banyumulek by the Karangasem Kingdom, which held power then. This account aligns with the statement by Ketut Muka and Wayan Suardana (2023), who noted that in 1859, Ida Wayan Tata was authorized to settle in Banyumulek as a representative of the Karangasem Kingdom. In 1862, he converted to Islam, adopting the name Ibrahim, and expanded pottery production to include daily necessities, especially utensils for food, drink, and religious ceremonies.

This pottery-making skill gradually became a tradition in the area, with many locals producing everyday household items from clay. In 1988, New Zealand contributed to developing the pottery industry, helping to market Banyumulek pottery abroad, particularly to Australia and New Zealand. Sastrawati (2021) revealed that in the 1980s, Banyumulek pottery began to grow better and was sold commercially, thanks to the collaboration between New Zealand and Indonesia to support this industry. Following this international collaboration, the form and function of Banyumulek pottery underwent a gradual transformation. The growth of Lombok's tourism industry has significantly accelerated the evolution of pottery designs in Banyumulek, resulting in a wider range of styles.

The enduring tradition of Banyumulek pottery offers a valuable area of study, which can help deepen appreciation for this age-old craft. Previous research on Banyumulek pottery includes an analysis by I Ketut Muka and I Wayan Suardana (2023) titled

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Innovation of Form and Function of Banyumulek Pottery Craftsmanship in Lombok as Heritage of Traditional Culture, which examines the form and function of Banyumulek pottery but does not address its transformation. Another study by Sastrawati et al. (2021) titled Pottery in Banyumulek Village, Kediri Subdistrict, West Lombok Regency discusses the form, function, and decoration of Banyumulek pottery without exploring its transformation. Usman Hadi (2020) conducted a study titled Community Empowerment Through Pottery Crafts in Banyumulek Village, which focuses on efforts to empower local potters but does not address changes in form and function. Finally, Nila Kusuma Dewi (2015) conducted a study titled Tinggang Pottery Crafts in Banyumulek Village, Kediri Subdistrict, West Lombok, which discusses the form and function of Tinggang pottery produced in a hamlet of Banyumulek, without examining the transformation of Banyumulek pottery more broadly.

None of these studies specifically address the transformation in form and function of Banyumulek pottery, particularly before and after the bilateral cooperation between New Zealand and Indonesia. According to the Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language), transformation refers to changes in form and function. Based on this background, the research problem can be formulated as: How has the form and function of Banyumulek pottery transformed over time?

## II. METHODS

This qualitative research focuses on field observations to understand the subject's context in pottery's natural habitat. Sugiyono (2019) notes that qualitative research, often naturalistic, is conducted in real-world settings. The data collection methods included documentation, observation, also with interviews. Pottery samples were selected purposively, and the data analysis followed the Miles & Huberman model, which involves data display, data reduction, also conclusion drawing.

## III. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 1. Form and Function of Pottery

Pottery is a traditionally hand-made craft initially designed to help basic living needs, particularly regarding tools and utensils. Over time, humans, driven by aesthetics, began to create pottery with more attractive designs. Pottery is made from clay, shaped according to necessity or desire, and fired to ensure durability. Putri (2023) notes that pottery is a craft made from clay that is fired and shaped into various household items or used as room decorations.

Pottery has existed for thousands of years. In Indonesia, pottery has been present since prehistoric times. Several studies have confirmed this. For instance, Kasnowihardjo (2017) stated that pottery is a technological advancement that developed during the Neolithic period. Even today, some communities in Central Java, particularly in the northern coastal region of Rembang Regency, continue to produce pottery, such as in the village of Balong Mulyo.

Additionally, Atmosudiro (1998) noted that in Indonesia, pottery in the form of containers emerged during the farming period, approximately 2500–1500 BC. During this period of settled agriculture, the need for tools increased for farming activities and containers such as those used for food, drink, and cooking. Consequently, pottery-making skills were regarded on par with the stone-tool crafting abilities of that era, such as making square axes, also used in farming. Similarly, Rangkuti (2001) argued that combining the four natural elements—earth, water, air, and fire—was an innovation. The innovation of terracotta is believed to have originated during the Neolithic period and developed gradually over a long period. Based on these opinions, it can be concluded that pottery has existed in Indonesia since prehistoric times, specifically during the Neolithic era, around 2500–1500 BC.

Pottery is a three-dimensional object, and it can generally be classified into two forms: geometric (regular) and non-geometric (irregular). Sabatari (2006) explained that geometric forms can be measured or based on geometric principles, while non-geometric forms cannot be measured this way.

Form is one of the critical elements of visual art. According to the Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language), "form" refers to the shape or structure of an object. The principles of visual art analyze the aesthetics of two-dimensional and three-dimensional forms. Hidayatullah (2016) and Dewi (2023) state that the principles of visual art are guidelines used in organizing the elements of art. These principles include unity, harmony, balance, rhythm, emphasis, and proportion.

Based on the explanations above, this study will analyze Banyumulek pottery in terms of its three-dimensional form, using the principles of visual art: proportion, rhythm, harmony, balance, emphasis, and unity. The function or utility of each piece of pottery will also be discussed.

Pottery is a handmade craft initially designed to meet basic living needs, particularly in terms of tools and utensils. Over time, humans, driven by a sense of aesthetics, began to create pottery with more attractive designs. Pottery is made from clay, shaped according to necessity or desire, and then fired to ensure its durability. As noted by Putri (2023), pottery is a craft made from clay that is fired and shaped into various household items or used as room decorations.

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### 2. Lombok Island

The province of West Nusa Tenggara (NTB) comprises two main islands, Lombok and Sumbawa, along with numerous smaller islands. Lombok lies west, bordering Bali, while Sumbawa is on the eastern side, bordering East Nusa Tenggara. NTB covers a total area of 20,153.20 km<sup>2</sup>, situated between 115° 46' and 119° 5' East Longitude and 8° 10' and 9° 5' South Latitude. Sumbawa Island is about two-thirds of the province, covering 15,414.5 km<sup>2</sup> (76.49%), while Lombok accounts for the remaining third, or 5,440 km<sup>2</sup>. The provincial capital, Mataram, is located on Lombok Island. Selong, at an elevation of 166 meters above sea level (m.a.s.l.), is the highest town in NTB, while Taliwang, at 11 m.a.s.l., is the lowest. Mataram, the capital, stands at 27 m.a.s.l. Among Lombok's seven mountains, Mount Rinjani is the tallest, rising to 3,726 m.a.s.l., whereas Sumbawa's highest peak is Mount Tambora at 2,851 m.a.s.l.

Lombok is home to 3.93 million people, making up 70% of West Nusa Tenggara's population. The Sasak people, who make up 80% of the island's inhabitants, are the indigenous ethnic group (<https://ntbprov.go.id/profil-daerah>). Historically, Lombok has experienced a series of conflicts and invasions, from the Majapahit Kingdom to the Japanese occupation. According to Sanusi (2018), historical records indicate that Lombok came under the Majapahit Kingdom's control in 1357. By 1672, the Karangasem Kingdom of Bali had conquered the Kingdom of Selaparang in Lombok. The Dutch took control of the island in 1908, and it was later occupied by Japan in 1942. West Nusa Tenggara was officially established as a province on August 14, 1958, under Law No. 64 of 1958, alongside Bali and East Nusa Tenggara. The province's first governor was AR Moh. Ruslan Djakraningrat.

## IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

As previously mentioned, the collaborative efforts between both the Indonesian and New Zealand governments in 1988 were important in advancing the development of Banyumulek pottery in Lombok, both in terms of form and function. Before this collaboration, the Indonesian government had initiated efforts to support Banyumulek pottery by sending artisans to Kasongan Village for comparative studies. Nurjannah (2004) reports that in 1979, the Department of Industry in West Lombok provided artisans in Banyumulek with production tools, and in 1983, they were sent to Kasongan, Yogyakarta. However, these initiatives needed further guidance on model development and several advancements in Lombok.

In 1988, the Lombok Pottery Centre (LPC) introduced a more comprehensive development program focusing on production techniques and marketing. From 1988 to 2005, the LPC offered intensive training. This center was established as part of a bilateral project between Indonesia and New Zealand (<https://www.fairtradeindonesia.com/> et al.). Thanks to the LPC's support, which included assistance in marketing abroad, Banyumulek pottery experienced a major shift. Initially, artisans produced pottery mainly for home use, but after the program, production became increasingly geared towards commercial sales.




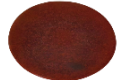

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From the history above, the evolution of Banyumulek pottery can be categorized into two phases: pre-1988, before the training program initiated by LPC in collaboration with New Zealand, and post-1988, when extensive training and support resulted in notable advancements. The following sections will deliver thorough insights into these phases:

### 1. The Form and Function of Lombok Pottery Before 1988

Based on the results of observations and interviews, the following presents several original forms of Banyumulek pottery along with their functions:

**Table 1. Initial Forms and Functions of Banyumulek Lombok Pottery**

No	Category	Form	Function	Description
1	Flower Vase		Flower Vase	The pottery features a symmetrical form and terracotta color, with a height of 22 cm and a base diameter of 8 cm, primarily focusing on functionality.
2	Bowl		Vegetable Bowl	The pottery is symmetrical, terracotta-colored, with an 18 cm diameter and a 9 cm height. It lacks variation and is designed purely for functional purposes.
3	Jug		Drinking water jug	The piece is black in color, asymmetrical, 36 cm tall, and has an 18 cm belly diameter. It is designed solely for practical use.
4	Plate		Food Plate	This pottery has a symmetrical form, is terracotta in color, and has a 21 cm diameter, emphasizing function over aesthetics.
5	Mug		Drinking Mug	The piece is symmetrical, terracotta-colored, with a 7 cm diameter, focusing entirely on utility.


**Source:** Personal Documentation

All pottery forms described above showed little variation in shape and decoration. The production of pottery was primarily aimed at fulfilling daily needs, such as providing utensils or containers for eating, drinking, and other practical uses, rather than being economically driven. Although the craftsmanship was excellent, there was little adjustment on its aesthetic aspects, such as adding decorative elements or adding specialized techniques to enhance the appearance of the pottery.









### 2. Variations in the Forms and Functions of Lombok Pottery Today

Based on observations and interviews, the following presents several types of Banyumulek pottery after receiving guidance and development:

**Table 2. Variations in the Form and Function of Banyumulek Pottery in Lombok Today**



No	Category	Form	Function	Description
1	Flower vase		Flower vase and interior display	Symmetrical Shape, Black Background with Floral and Leaf Patterns. This vase stands 40 cm tall with a wide base and narrow top. The floral and leaf motifs are hand-painted, with large red flowers bordered in black, especially prominent in the center. The bold floral design at the base serves as a focal point. Function: Can serve as a flower vase or decorative piece.

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			Flower vase and interior display	Symmetrical Shape, Terracotta Color, 25 cm Tall. The body features Arabic calligraphy of "Allah" and "Muhammad" created by painting directly onto the pottery surface, which acts as a visual focal point. Function: Works as both a flower vase and a decorative item.
			Flower vase and interior display	Symmetrical Shape, 36 cm Tall. This bottle-shaped vessel is coated with sand, and the surface is colored in a mix of yellow, white, black, and cream, forming abstract curved lines. A black accent on the belly serves as the focal point. Function: Suitable as both a flower vase and display item.
			Flower vase and interior display	Asymmetrical Shape, 34 cm Tall. The background is maroon, adorned with small, neatly arranged cream-colored squares made from eggshell pieces, particularly concentrated at the base. Function: Primarily decorative.
2	Bowl		Food bowl and simple interior display	Symmetrical Shape, 18 cm Diameter. The background is a deep black, with yellow and green variations and a large red flower as the focal point. Function: Decorative.
3	Plate		Food plate and interior display	Symmetrical Shape, 25 cm by 25 cm. The background utilizes the natural terracotta color of the pottery, with a depiction of a traditional Sasak barn (lumbung) in blue at the center. The edges are decorated with yellow and blue ornaments, with the blue echoing the central barn motif for visual unity. Function: Decorative plate.
			Food plate and interior display	Symmetrical Plate, 21 cm Diameter. Adorned with repetitive triangular motifs, the plate's surface is decorated with eggshell pieces. The natural terracotta background is left exposed to create an earthy aesthetic. Function: Decorative plate.
			Food plate and interior display	Symmetrical Plate, 21 cm Diameter. The rim is woven with natural-colored rattan, and a butterfly motif, etched into the center, serves as the visual focal point. The background retains the natural brown terracotta hue, enhancing the organic feel. Function: Decorative plate.
4	Mug		Mug and interior display	Symmetrical Shape, 7 cm Diameter. The background is a deep black with floral and vine ornaments. The vines are painted white and yellow, with a large red flower at the center acting as a focal point, enhancing the overall appeal of the cup. Function: Decorative cup.
5	Jug		Water jug and interior display	Asymmetrical Shape, 35 cm Tall. This water jug has a curved bottle shape, with a handle extending from the top attached to the mouth of the container. The handle is adorned with decorative rings. The surface is finished with white paint sprayed over a dark blue



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			background, creating an abstract pattern. Function: Water jug.
		Water jug and interior display	Asymmetrical Shape, 35 cm Tall. Similar to the previous water vessel, but differing in both shape and color. This jug features a large central body, a narrower base, and an even smaller mouth. The handle and painting technique are the same as the previous piece, but the color scheme is white on a yellow background. Function: Water jug.

**Source:** Personal Documentation

Several examples of pottery in the table above have experienced developments in terms of form and function. The shape of the pottery is varied with incision techniques, eggshell mosaics, weaving, and coloring techniques using paints such as splashes of paint or using a paintbrush.

The shape of the pottery after the guidance from the Lombok Pottery Center, which is a collaboration between the Indonesian government and New Zealand, has experienced rapid development. Many new creations have been produced. Moreover, supported by the rapid development of tourism in Lombok, pottery crafts have continued to develop. Until now, craftsmen continue to be creative to produce new models, although the old models are still maintained. If in the past pottery was only for daily tool needs, now it is switched, becomes a display and souvenir.

### V. CONCLUSION

The shape of Banyumulek pottery before 1988, namely before the bilateral cooperation between the Indonesian government and New Zealand, had not shown any variation, had not been traded and prioritized its function only. The types include flower vases, containers, jugs, jars, plates, and glasses.

Meanwhile, after 1988, Banyumulek pottery experienced many changes in form and function and shifted to an economic function, namely for sale. The forms that have undergone many transformations include jugs or water containers, flower vases, plates, and glasses/cups. Pottery has transformed from a function of use to a function of display/decoration.

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