

# Dugderan Art Dance as an Expression of Semarang Society

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**Abstract**—Dugderan performance is a local art culture from Central Java's north coast. The purposes of this study are to explain and find the process of before the performance, while on the performance, and after the performance in the shape of Dugderan dance work. This study applies a performance studies approach with the work concept analysis and or intra aesthetic. The result of this study showed that a Dugderan performance consists of before the performance, while on the performance, and after the performance that is realized in the making of a Dugderan art dance.

**Keywords**—dugderan, performance studies, artwork, intra aesthetic

## I. INTRODUCTION

The development and the growth of knowledge are dialectically connected with the reality change of material, practice, as well as socialization of humankind which pushed by inner or outer factors in the academic field. In academic field itself, it can be said that knowledge is growing and developing through the addition of object of study with propositions that are not asked yet, through the application of new perspective to the same object of study, or the combination of both. This kind of dynamic move also happened in another discipline which situates art and other categories and/or other then art as its object of study.

On the other hand, there is another reason that is different from the practice and the shape of artwork which is suspected by the existence of blur or rejection to the conventional art boundaries, either conventional blur or rejection about the grouping of art to various fields (fine art, music, dance, theater, linguistic, etc.). As a result, the academic boundaries toward art, that once so strong and tight, gradually become unstable and loosen.

The study of performance and/or art performance was usually done by using two basic strategies. First, the study that considers artwork physically, and second, through an exploration of background contexts (space and time) expressions of related art. The first one is related with textual, the physical manifest in term of shape, style, structure, matters or elements, media and work technique, concept or creation idea, which usually stated as intra aesthetic factor. The second one is related to contextual, determinant or significant factors which become the support of artwork presence. The second strategy covered political aspects, social, culture, and natural-physical environment and also their transformations. The background or context where the artwork itself related to

usually called extra aesthetic factor [1] [2]. The study was done by using *performance study* approach which is offered by Victor Turner and Schechner[3] [4], that is a unique and typical cultural performance study namely Dugderan performance which born, lived, and developed on the Java's north coast (Pantura).

Therefore, starting from the academic anxiety and the debate that is not solved yet about the important of traditional dance work existence, which needs to be realized in the shape of creation and presentation of the dance. Even though the strategic and important effort that will be done, the result of this study is expected to be able to give a positive contribution. The contribution towards the downstream of art transformation that could improve the character of the nation and also developing the art industry, either in the national or international level.

## II. DISCUSSION

The exhibition of Dugderan parade in Semarang is held every year approaching fasting month in Ramadhan month. The parade is held approaching the fasting month because it is the tradition that is still on going up until now. The tradition still attached among Semarang society. When it is held, Semarang people and also other people from other cities come and watch it, the street full of merchants with their various goods and various children toys. The people are so enthusiast and no one wants to be left behind. The preparation is already prepared a long time before since the parade involves many people and each of them has his/her own duties. The parade consists of the performers or pilgrims, spectators, movement, accompaniment, cosmetics and wardrobe, the performance time and space all related to each other and can not be separated.

In the Dugderan traditional parade performance, there are also some elements that are supporting and correlating with each other. Those elements are the embodiment that can be enjoyed by the spectators. Those are the performers or pilgrims, spectators, movement, accompaniment, cosmetics and wardrobe, property, the time and the place of the spectator, all correlate and can not be separated. It goes the same as the process of the creation and presentation of Dugderan dance work can be seen from before the performance, while on performance, and after the performance.

The creation and presentation of Dugderan dance work are done by academic steps through several phases that can be accounted with scientific principles. In this context, the writer used dance work technique or artistic investigation about dance work in a manner of research by practice. It means an investigation that derived from performance study about the phenomenon of culture that born, lived, and developed among society that became a shape of work idea that is expressed in the art practice which called as artwork. Therefore, it needed several steps, systematically, in the process of artwork creation. This study emphasized and oriented on the strategies and techniques of artwork experimentation which included the observation, exploration-improvisation, experiment, illumination-establishment, presentation-staging, and evaluation systematically.

Coherently, the steps of the artwork creation are observation, exploration- improvisation, experiment, illumination-establishment, presentation-staging, and evaluation. An observation was done descriptively, focused and ended with selective regarding artwork, event, performer, space or place, activity, time, event, and the goal of the Semarangish art performance [1]. Particularly, the writer made observations in Pecinan village, temple, Arab village, Melayu village, a village that occupied by native Semarangan, and art groups that exist in Semarang city.

Exploration-improvisation phase, the beginning of a dance creation process is through improvisation. Improvisation was done in order to get new movements that are fresh and spontaneous. Besides that, by exploring or finding movement, that is the searching consciously toward the possibilities of a new movement by considering the movement elements, those are timing, power, and space [5] [6]. In the phase of developing the creativity, exploration is as the first experience for dance creator in exploring the ideas and stimulation from outside. The object exploration in a dance work started from the experiences that involving full conscious of observing an object. Explicitly, the exploration phase in the dance making process was explained by Sumandiyo Hadi [7] as below.

Generally can be interpreted as an exploration, which is as an experience to respond to an object from outside, or the activity got stimulus from outside. Exploration consists of thinking, feeling, and responding.

The beginning of dance creation process started from idea or thought. The writer as well as the choreographer thought, imagined, felt, and responded to the phenomenon that exists around her neighborhood. The writer carefully and repeatedly observed a cultural phenomenon that is held a long time ago up until now, that is the phenomenon of Dugderan parade performance. The observation had started on a 2006 research about Dugderan parade performance in Semarang city. Based on the result of the preceding observation, the writer realized an artwork as a coastline dance choreography model characterized by Semarangan dance.

Exploration and improvisation movement was searched, extracted, and realized by various movement

stimulus. Visually or auditory movement stimulant was processed in such a way without leaving the characterization of Semarangan dance that is blatant, aggressive, flirty, and agile. Visual stimulus was done by looking at and observing the Dugderan parade phenomenon that is held near Ramadhan fasting month. Auditory stimulus obtained by listening to various music accompaniment or Semarangan *gendeng* that already exists.

The movement from the various stimulus was processed through exploration and improvisation of movement until it became the movement that was wanted by the choreographer. The movements from the process of finding through exploration and improvisation were sorted and grouped based on each character. These movements were still temporal, still rough, and have the form of movement motives that needed to be arranged to be movement phrase and sentence.



Fig. 1. The dancers were doing exploration and improvisation process. (Photo: Cahyono, 2018)



Fig. 2. Exploration and improvisation movement to produce loose motion (Photo: Cahyono, 2018)

**Experiment phase**, in this phase the writer used experiment methods that were done by trying or testing several possibilities of motion works. The possibility of motion work, especially on the motion work that led to the Dugderan choreography in the shape of new work with different patterns, as an offer of appreciation and creation to the young generation. Of course by choosing and sorting out the motion that suited with the

character of Semarang dance movement that is agile and blatan that is liked by most teenage girls.

**Illumination-establishment phase**, in this phase, sensitivity and sensibility became so important, that is how to put the idea, which made an impression on the cognition of the artist's anxiety, forward. Presentation-performance phase, this phase was that the creative process of creating art was done and or reached to the concept and shape preparation phase to be presented on the front of the spectators. The last was an evaluation, this phase became reflection, conception or construction of dance work holistically so that it reached the harmony between Dugderan choreography idea, shape, and the resource of thought.

The performance consisted of before, while, and after the performance. Those also apply for Dugderan performance, a new dance work creation that derived from an idea and thought of Dugderan parade phenomenon in Semarang. The performance was also can be seen by observing the preparation of the performers before the performance started. The preparation itself was a performance that was interested to watch. From the preparation of practice, rehearsal, until the preparation of dancers' make up.

Dugderan dancers, helped by the make up artist, were doing make up according to the corrective make up that strengthen the native face line of the dancers. This makes up event was an interested spectacle. The activities were, starting from cleaning the faces, giving a base powder, unto making or bolding the eyebrows became interested spectacles to watch.



**Fig. 3.** The dancers were preparing themselves by applying to make up (Photo: Cahyono, 2018)

The while performance was the most important part of a Dugderan performance. It was the main event that became the center of all spectators' attention. The Dugderan dance performance was played in the World Dance Day on April 29, 2018, that was held at Village Culture UNNES. The blatan, graceful, agile, and dynamic moves took place. The characterized coastline dance moves as model of Semarang dance.



**Fig. 4.** One of several various Dugderan moves (Photo: Cahyono, 2018)

Another important part of this performance was the after performance itself. This part was the cooldown in a Dugderan performance. After the uproarious of the event, the performance after itself was becoming another attraction. The exhaustion, fun, disappointment might happen after the show. The attraction after the show was also the evaluation and correction phase for the dancers, choreographer, and other supporting roles. The event after the show itself was another attraction for the spectators. The dancers and the spectators usually became one in the stage and overflowed the excitement after the successful performance.



**Fig. 5.** The dancer and a spectator danced together in the same stage after the performance. (Photo: Cahyono, 2018)

### III. CONCLUSION

The observation of art creation creates a Dugderan performance that consists of before, while, and after the performance that was realized in Dugderan dance work creation. Dugderan dance was a dance work of research by practice, a conservative observation from coastline dance that was derived from performance study about the cultural phenomenon that born, lived, and developed among Semarang society became a working idea which expressed in practical art.

Dugderan dance as an expression of Semarang society which came from Dugderan parade phenomenon that is still going on up until now. Dugderan dance expressed the agility and happiness of multicultural Semarang's teenage girls that are from Javanese, Arabian, and Chinese cultures in order to celebrate the upcoming Ramadhan month called Dugderan tradition. The word Dugderan came from the work *dug* and *der*. *Dug* is a sound of beaten *bedug*, whereas *der* comes from the sound of canons that were sounded like a sign of the start of holy month of Ramadhan.

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